



# **North East Museums Collections Development Policy for Museums and Galleries**

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(Regular internal review through Collections Working Group)

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# Collections Development Policy

Please note: this policy contains references to Collections Appendices - these will be updated separately and are available at request.

## Policy review procedure

The Collections Development Policy (formerly known as the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy) was last reviewed in 2021 by TWAM (now NEM) Strategic Board. The policy is published on the NEM website. The Collections Working Group will monitor the policy and ensure it is updated as necessary, with a formal review at least once every five years.

The date when the policy is next due for formal review is 2026. Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

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

### 1.1 North East Museums' statement of purpose:

**Our mission** is to welcome and connect people to the past, present and future of the North East through stories, shared spaces and experiences.

We will help people understand and act on local and global challenges:

- **Equality** – we will provide a warm welcome to everyone, break down barriers caused by inequality and discrimination and share diverse stories.
- **Wellbeing** – we will use our spaces and services to support people's physical and mental health.
- **Social mobility** – we will deliver learning experiences, volunteering opportunities and pathways for personal development for people of all ages and backgrounds.
- **Climate** – we will raise awareness about the environment and encourage people to act for a sustainable future.
- **Place** – we will celebrate North East England, inspire local pride and use our resources to support research, innovation and economic regeneration.

Our vision for the future is for everyone to have access to our provision in Tyne and Wear and Northumberland, to use this access and to value it for the significant and positive impact that it makes upon their lives. We will provide real or virtual, worldwide access to our museums and archives and their collections

- 1.2 The Strategic Board will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

- 1.3 By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The Strategic Board therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.4 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5 NEM recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements. Acquisitions will be guided by the advice of NEM conservators regarding any hazards inherent in the collection and consideration of an object's condition. Acquisitions will take into account NEM's current and future storage capabilities.
- 1.6 NEM will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.7 NEM will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.
- 1.8 This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- The Great North Museum's Acquisitions and Disposals Policy
  - The Great North Museum's Human Remains Policy
  - The Great North Museum's Repatriation Policy
  - The Great North Museum's Sacred Objects Policy
  - Sunderland Museums Acquisitions and Disposals Policy.
  - NEM's Archives Collection, Acquisition and Disposal Policy
  - NEM's Documentation Policy
  - NEM's Collections Care and Conservation Policy and Documentation
- Procedural Manual (in development) are also relevant as these documents outline procedures to be followed to complete an acquisition and care after an acquisition has been accessioned.

- Appendix A to this policy which detail the collections which make up NEM including details on: history; scope; collection priorities; areas for rationalisation.

1.9 The Collections Development Policy is intended as a guiding document for the governing body and museum staff and for public understanding of NEM's collecting remit and activity.

## **2. History of the Collections**

2.1 NEM brings together a wide range collections from Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside and South Tyneside councils. Appendix A details the history and development of each area of the collection. The Fine Art, Maritime and Science and Industry Collections were designated by the Government as of national importance in 1997. These individual collections are subdivided into, and discussed under, the following collections areas:

- Archaeology
- History
- Maritime
- Social History
- Costume and Textiles
- Fine Art
- Decorative Art
- Contemporary Craft
- Design
- Ethnography
- Biology
- Geology

2.2 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 NEM assumed management responsibility for the collections of Northumberland County Council. This is treated as a specific collections area in its own right. See Appendix A for a detailed description.

## **3. Overview of the current collections**

3.1 North East Museums (NEM) holds collections in the fields of archaeology, art (including fine art, decorative art, contemporary craft and design), history

(including social history, costume, maritime history and engineering, science and industry) and natural sciences (including geology and biology), as well as, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, the specific collections of Northumberland County Council. These are listed separately as they were never part of the broad Tyne & Wear Metropolitan Borough Council collections.

- 3.2 Please see Appendix A for very detailed descriptions of the existing collections, their history and collecting themes.
- 3.3 Please also see the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy for the Great North Museum (revised October 2021), which is governed by a separate body and so requires a separate policy document.
- 3.4 The collections held by Tyne & Wear Archives are covered by a separate Collection, Acquisition and Disposal Policy (revised March 2022).
- 3.5 NEM is engaged with Sunderland Museums in an ongoing process of separating out collections belonging to Sunderland Council. In the case of any recommendations for rationalisation, agreement from both governing bodies will be sought.

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

All collecting activity must take account of the following principles:

- 4.1 Items collected should normally have a strong connection with North East England or with existing collections.
- 4.2 Future collecting will reflect the diversity of the North East's people and places both past and present. The contemporary collecting programme will continue to be inspired and guided by diverse audiences. Items collected should serve NEM's statement of purpose and be useful for research, a broad range of exhibitions, learning and other public programmes in order to promote and share diversity in all its forms.
- 4.3 Future collecting will show particular regard for people with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) and for people in different socio-economic groupings. This will be especially so where there are gaps in representation within the existing collections.
- 4.4 Please see Appendix A for more detailed information relating to future collecting by collection and/or venue.
- 4.5 Where appropriate, items collected should be in good condition and require minimal conservation treatment (with the exception of archaeological items).

- 4.6 Items collected should not contain materials that pose a risk to health or safety, without a plan in place to manage the risk presented and should take account of current legislation, for example, Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017 (IRR17) and the associated approved code of practice (L121 Work with Ionising Radiation ACoP).
- 4.7 Items collected must not duplicate items already in the collection unless an exceptional case can be made, for example, group value for display purposes or better provenance.
- 4.8 Items that are in better condition or have better provenance may be collected to replace items already in the collections; the items replaced will be disposed of in accordance with the Disposal section of this Policy (see 13 below).
- 4.9 Where appropriate, transfer to NEM of copyright/and or reproduction rights will be sought at the time of acquisition. If this is not possible, then permission to make and use reproductions will be requested.
- 4.10 All available sources of funding for purchases will be explored and made use of where appropriate.
- 4.11 Loans will be accepted where these would enhance displays and/or contribute significantly to research or project work. Five years is the maximum period before review with the lender. Where a loan meets the criteria laid out (points 4.1-4.4) they will be considered for acquisition in the event of being offered as such.
- 4.11 Advice will be sought from qualified persons outside NEM where existing curatorial advice in the particular field is limited.
- 4.12 NEM 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 staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 4.13 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by NEM Strategic Board itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

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

- 5.1 NEM recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or

significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

- 5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.
- 5.3 Please see Appendix A for each collection/venue's approach to rationalisation and disposal. The documentation backlog remains the priority in order to support any future rationalisation projects.

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

- 6.1 NEM recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museums Association Code and Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.
- 6.2 NEM will abide by the legal and ethical standards as detailed below (9 to 13).

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

- 7.1 NEM will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
- 7.2 Please see Appendix A for details of specific organisations whose collecting policies relate to NEM by venue/collection.
- 7.3 NEM would consider any opportunities presented regarding joint acquisition.

## **8. North East Museums Archival holdings**

- 8.1 The collections held in Tyne & Wear Archives are covered by separate policy but there are significant areas of overlap in particular through the history collection, please see appendix A for details.
- 8.2 As NEM holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, the Strategic Board will be guided by the Archives and Records Association 'Code of Ethics' (February 2020) and the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

## **9. Acquisition procedures**



- 9.1 Normally, acquisitions are authorised by the Keepers of the collections. Major acquisitions will be authorised at senior management level. Access to museum/gallery purchasing funds requires permission from the Director and a financial limit will be agreed in advance of any purchase, e.g. at auction.
- 9.2 As per 1.6 NEM will undertake vigorous due diligence in order to determine that the donor/vendor of a potential acquisition holds full legal title to the object being acquired.
- 9.3. In particular, NEM will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- 9.4. 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, NEM will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.
- 9.5 NEM will not acquire any material without reference to the NEM Collection Care and Conservation Plan or without reference to NEM conservation officers to ensure that specific and potential health and safety hazards are considered as well as potential costs to the service to dispose of hazardous items in future.

## **10. Human Remains**

- 10.1 If NEM were to acquire human remains under 100 years old, it would obtain the necessary licence under the Human Tissue Act 2004 and any subordinate legislation from time to time in force.
- 10.2 As NEM holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005. See also Great North Museum Policy for the Care of Human Remains, and the Great North Museum Human Remains Research Access Policy.

## **11. Biological and geological material**

- 11.1. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, NEM will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or

otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

## **12. Archaeological material**

- 12.1. NEM will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.
- 12.2 In England, Northern Ireland and Wales the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

## **13 Exceptions**

- 13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses 10,11 or 12 will only be because NEM is either: acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970. In these cases NEM will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

## **14. Spoliation**

- 14.1 NEM will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

## **15. The Repatriation and restitution of objects and human remains**

- 15.1 The Strategic Board, acting on the advice of NEM'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. NEM will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures

described in 16.1-.5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

- 15.2 The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the “Guidance for the care of human remains in museums”.

## **16. Disposal procedure**

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken openly and with transparency. By definition, NEM holds collections long term and in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before any consideration is given to disposal of any item in the collection.
- 16.2 Any disposals will be undertaken with reference to: the SPECTRUM Procedures on disposal; the Museums Association (MA) disposal toolkit ‘Off the Shelf’ and to NEM’s documentation procedures.
- 16.3 NEM will confirm to the best of its knowledge that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account. Where gaps in knowledge exist it will take a risk based approach to proposed disposals (see Disposals Risk Matrix).
- 16.4 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, NEM will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.5 In most circumstances disposal should only be motivated by curatorial reasons. NEM will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.
- 16.6 The only exception to the above will be objects where there is considered to be an unmanageable hazard present.
- 16.7 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken via a system of delegated authority (as recommended in the MA Disposal toolkit ‘Off the Shelf’, 2023), NEM’s Director will have authority to authorise disposals of objects considered ‘low-risk’. The Strategic Board only will have authority to authorise disposals of all objects which are ‘high risk’ and some objects which are considered ‘medium risk’. See Disposals Risk Matrix for details. Objects going to the Strategic Board must first be assessed by the Audit Committee who will make a recommendation to the Strategic Board.
- 16.8 The decision to dispose of an object will only be taken after a full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the

implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

- 16.9 Decision to dispose of an object cannot and will never be taken for financially motivated reasons.
- 16.10 No decision to dispose of a specimen or object will be taken by one individual alone. For both Director level and Strategic Board level disposals the decision to recommend disposal will have been considered by curatorial, collections and conservation staff applying the above mentioned Disposals Risk Matrix.
- 16.11 Where a decision to dispose has been made the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift (transfer), sale, recycling, exchange or, as a last resort, destruction.

## **17. Methods of disposal**

- 17.1 A proportional approach to disposal will be taken and will follow guidelines and suggestions laid out in the MA disposal tool kit 'Off the Shelf', 2023.
- 17.2 Where there is a good likelihood of an object finding a new home priority will be given to retaining the object or specimen within the public domain. NEM may choose to prioritise another Accredited Museum but it will also seek to benefit other public institutions including but not limited to heritage organisations and educational institutions (as per updated guidance from the MA 'Off the Shelf' disposals toolkit, 2023).
- 17.3 In finding a home for an object NEM will make use of resources including but not limited to: the MA's Find an Object web listing service; an announcement in the MA's Museums Journal and in other specialist publications and websites.
- 17.4 NEM will ensure accountability and impartiality in decisions of transfer by measures including but not limited to; ensuring at least 2 months advertising period; informing other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas of the proposal and inviting comment;
- 17.5 NEM will consider disposal by exchange for objects in another collection.
- 17.6 Sale of an object or specimen may be considered in very limited circumstances: no uptake when offered for transfer (NB- all objects being disposed of by this method should go via Strategic Board for approval); where an object is damaged beyond repair as scrap. Any income generated from sale

will be invested in the long-term benefit of the museums of NEM and its collections.

- 17.7 Recycling of an object will also be considered in the above circumstances with the additional circumstance of very low risk objects which have an unlikely transfer value.
- 17.8 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer, sale or recycling, it may be possible for NEM to destroy it. Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required. The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of NEM's workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.
- 17.9 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.

## **18. Documenting disposal**

- 18.1 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal. In accordance with NEM's Documentation Policy, item 4.7, disposals will be documented on Emu as part of the object exit procedure.

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## Appendix A 1 Archaeology

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### 1.1 History and overview of existing collections

#### South Tyneside

The majority of the collection consists of material and archives from excavations at Arbeia Roman Fort and its surroundings (South Shields). The largest part of the material comes from Victorian excavations at the site from 1875 onwards and from the excavations carried out by Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (now North East Museums) in 1977-1981 and 1983-2016. The collection also includes: archival material and ephemera relating to Hadrian's Wall, watercolours by Ronald Embleton, and currently also houses the Bruce Library of antiquarian books (belonging to the Laing Art Gallery). Material from archaeological fieldwork in the district also forms part of the collection. South Shields Museum and Art Gallery has a small collection, dating back to the nineteenth century, of archaeological artefacts from a range of locations and periods.

#### North Tyneside

The bulk of the collection is made up of material and archives from the excavations at Segedunum Roman Fort and its surroundings (Wallsend) from 1975-84 and 1988-2001. There is a small collection of post-medieval industrial material from the excavations of the Colliery B pit at Wallsend. Material from archaeological fieldwork from the district is also kept at Segedunum.

#### Newcastle

The Laing Art Gallery has a small collection of British prehistoric artefacts, medieval pottery, coins and ancient Greek vases acquired as part of bequests and gifts in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Great North Museum: Hancock, which holds a large collection of archaeological material, has a separate development policy of its own.

## **1.2 Themes and priorities for future collecting**

Most acquisitions occur as a result of archaeological excavation, although chance finds are occasionally donated by members of the public. Research policies for archaeology, guided at a national level by English Heritage, are therefore vital in influencing the future Collections Development Policy. However, many excavations are carried out in advance of development, which means that the flow of objects into the collections is partly a random process.

### Themes for collecting

- Prehistoric: The opportunities for research excavation are few so most discoveries will be development-led.
- Iron Age and Romano-British Native settlements: A large number of these are known in the north but there have been few recent excavations. These sites are usually poor in objects, but excavation is a high priority in order to interpret this period in museum displays.
- Roman military sites: North East Museums has responsibility for two fort sites, at South Shields (Arbeia) and Wallsend (Segedunum). Both are within the 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire' World Heritage Site (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/430>). Nationally agreed policies support the excavation and display of these sites together with lengths of Hadrian's Wall throughout urban Tyneside. There are currently no plans for further excavations at Arbeia and Segedunum, though opportunities may occur from time to time.

Hadrian's Wall and its environs (including the fort at Benwell) inside the City of Newcastle upon Tyne is excluded from the collecting area as it falls within the Great North Museum: Hancock's collecting remit.

- Early medieval: There are three major sites of this period in the collecting area: Jarrow, Tynemouth and Newcastle (castle area). All are protected against development and there are no plans at present for research

excavation. There may be other remains of this period elsewhere which might come to light in the course of development.

- Medieval and early post-medieval: The largest site, the City of Newcastle upon Tyne, is excluded from the collecting area as it falls within the Great North Museum: Hancock's collecting remit. Please see the Great North Museum: Hancock Acquisition and Disposal Policy for more details. Material from elsewhere may come from development-led excavations.
- Post-medieval: In this period there is an overlap with industrial archaeology and building conservation. However, many development-led excavations are of multi-period sites and some important post-medieval remains are encountered.

### **Period of time and geographical area**

The collection covers all archaeological material from the prehistoric to early post-medieval period (1600s) and, in some circumstances, later post-medieval. The geographical collection area has been established by agreement by other museums in the region, particularly the Museum of Antiquities of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne which formerly collected throughout the North East. This museum's collections now form part of the Great North Museum: Hancock.

The area comprises the areas of the four district authorities of Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside and South Tyneside with the following exceptions (which are in the Great North Museum: Hancock's collecting remit):

- The city of Newcastle upon Tyne within the area of its medieval walls, and the area of its medieval suburbs
- The Roman fort of Benwell and its surroundings
- Hadrian's Wall and its associated works in Newcastle District
- Finds from the Anglo-Saxon monastic site at Jarrow are housed at Jarrow Hall and St Paul's Church, Jarrow.



- Collecting activity will inform museum research, exhibitions and other public programmes. Keepers will be mindful of the opportunities presented by archaeological acquisitions to inform the public about diversity of people in the past, in particular through ethnicity and gender studies. Archaeological collecting activity and public programming will take into account the direct connections archaeology can make with diverse audiences living in the North East.

### **1.3 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

Disposal is not a priority for this current period. Disposals will only be undertaken for legal, safety or care and conservation reasons, or if material from archaeological excavations or museum displays not currently accessioned are deemed unworthy of accessioning after being studied by relevant experts.

### **1.4 Collecting policies of other museums**

North East Museums will take account of the collecting policies of the following museums:

- Great North Museum: Hancock.
- Sunderland Culture

## Appendix A 2 History

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## 2 Collection: History

### History – Broad Principles

North East Museums' History collections are broadly divided into science and industry, maritime, social history and costume and textiles. The collections reflect the industrial, working and domestic lives of Tyneside people and help to tell stories about people from a variety of diverse communities. North East Museums' contemporary collecting activity ensures that tomorrow's history reflects regional diversity in all its forms and enhances and illuminates past collecting practice.

### 2.1 Collection: Science and Industry. c 45,000 items

#### Team: History

#### Existing collections

North East Museums' science and industry collections were Designated by the Government in 1997 as being of national and international importance.

### **2.1.1 A brief history of the collections to 1975**

North East Museums' science and industry collections were established in the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by various municipal authorities and learned societies.

For the purposes of this report, collections are arranged by current Tyne & Wear Council areas.

#### **South Tyneside**

South Shields Museum was established in 1876 and its collection chiefly reflects the significant maritime related industries of the South Tyneside area.

#### **Newcastle upon Tyne**

This extensive collection was founded in 1931 as an initiative of The North East Coast Institution of Engineers and Shipbuilders, a regional body representing the engineering and shipbuilding industries. Inspiration and many early donations coming from North East Coast Exhibition in 1929. In partnership with Newcastle Corporation a joint committee was appointed to plan a completely new venture, the Municipal Museum of Science and Industry, which opened in 1934. Its principal objectives were to celebrate Tyneside's history of innovation and enterprise, to inform the people of the region about contemporary developments, and to be an up-to-date resource for educational and vocational training.

The collection was largely established through the corporate generosity of many of Tyneside's internationally renowned industrial firms. The new museum was also encouraged by the Science Museum in London, with the loan or transfer of many objects. Some important private collections were presented to the museum. By the early 1970s some 10,000 accessions had been made, comprising around 25,000 separate artefacts. A selective catalogue was first published in 1950 and revised in subsequent years. A reference library was established to support research and access. Today, the

Newcastle collection underpins displays in several of North East Museums' venues on Tyneside, most importantly Discovery Museum in Newcastle.

### **Gateshead**

A museum of local and industrial history was opened in Saltwell Park in Gateshead in 1933 (it closed in 1969 and some of the collections were transferred to The Shipley Art Gallery). The Gateshead collections represent some important manufacturing industries, the products of which were exported worldwide from the town. There are also artefacts relating to prominent scientists and industrialists associated with Gateshead. Again, decorative glass and ceramic products are well represented in the decorative art collection.

### **North Tyneside**

There was no significant public museum collection in North Tyneside prior to 1975.

#### **2.1.2 The history of the collection since 1975**

Since 1975, collecting has been carried out on a regional basis, but with due consideration for the importance of individual items to the different districts. Discovery Museum in Newcastle has, since its foundation in the 1930s, maintained a 'Tyneside' outlook so far as the development of the science and industry collection is concerned, and this continues today.

Liaison with other public museums and archives in the wider region, especially when dealing with acquisitions, which have major resource implications, has encouraged a balanced regional perspective. Despite the withdrawal of Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens from North East Museums in 2013, communication continues with Sunderland staff over formerly jointly curated collections.

Liaison with national museums occurs, and North East Museums has negotiated the loan of important objects from their collections. North East

Museums also has a long record of successful application to the PRISM Fund for acquisition and conservation grants.

### **2.1.3 Overview of the science and industry collection**

#### **Physical Science**

During the 19th century there was an intense awareness in the North East of the potential for scientific discovery and advancement. Audiences of several hundred at the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne witnessed, for example, George Stephenson demonstrating his miner's lamp, William Armstrong illustrating the power of hydraulics and the phenomenon of static electricity, and Joseph Swan illuminating the room with his first successful incandescent filament electric lamp. Similar presentations also drew large numbers of people to the Sunderland Athenaeum.

Many of Tyne and Wear's scientists and experimental engineers applied their minds to a range of challenges - for instance Swan also pioneered improvements in photography, and Charles Parsons' work embraced propeller theory, machine tool design, the attempted production of artificial diamond and numerous other activities.

The North East Museums collection is appropriately broad in range, and includes:

- more than 100 items of 19th century physics demonstration apparatus.
- experimental and demonstration apparatus associated with notable scientific investigators - for example William Armstrong's large Wimshurst machine and Charles Parsons' propeller cavitation apparatus.
- general scientific instruments, including astronomical telescopes; optical microscopes; surveying and navigational instruments; drawing, measuring and calculating

instruments; and analytical balances. The Robson Collection (see Medical Science) contains examples of the work of this prominent local instrument maker.

- specialist scientific instruments and apparatus, including a Metropolitan Vickers electron microscope (Type SM3, introduced 1949) and a Duddell Oscillograph by the Cambridge Instrument Company.
- locally designed and manufactured instruments, in particular representing the activities of Sir Howard Grubb, Parsons & Co. Ltd.
- an extensive photography collection numbering over 400 items of equipment and, additionally, examples of early processes.

The above is supported by a general collection which includes standard weights and measures and engineering metrology.

### **Medical Science**

The two important collections are:

- 25 17th century surgical instruments used by the Company of Barber Surgeons of Newcastle upon Tyne (long-term loan from the Society of Antiquaries).
- The Robson Collection, presented by F. Robson & Co., instrument makers and opticians of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1980. The collection includes ophthalmic and optometric equipment, 166 pairs of spectacles and 99 spectacle cases.

### **Civil Engineering**

The civil engineering collection is primarily focused on port/harbour works and bridges and includes a number of important models.

There is a suspension chain link and hanger from the Scotswood Bridge of 1831; a pair of iron columns and a composite cast/wrought iron beam of about 1850 from the Elswick Engine Works; and a section of built-up wrought iron

beam of c.1849 from the train shed roof of Newcastle Central Station. A number of large models.

### **Coal-Mining**

The coal-mining collection currently includes over 1100 items, but significant associated material is also available within the Fine Art (paintings and prints), Applied Art (pottery and commemorative 'disaster' glasses) and Geology (coal measure fossils and rocks) collections in North East Museums. The collection comprises more than 200 lamps, mining equipment, machinery and tools, steam related models and machines, surveying instruments, and a substantial collection (nearly 700 items) of archival material, including plans and sections, coal tickets, accounts, photographs and posters and video films.

### **Mechanical/Marine Engineering and Munitions**

Broadly, the collection consists of

- objects representing the region's engineering achievements, demonstrating its standing as a centre of engineering excellence;
- examples of engineering technology used in the region, but designed and/or made elsewhere;
- items acquired for comparative purposes, to provide depth and diversity.

### **Wind and Water/Hydraulic Power**

- A small collection which contains items of great significance, particularly William Armstrong's original water-pressure motor (1839) and a near-contemporary demonstration model of Armstrong's first hydraulic crane (1847). The practical application of hydraulics is represented by valves, pumps, rams, motors and models, including loans from the Science Museum and National Museums of Scotland.
- Some 10 well-detailed models show various types of wind and watermill equipment, and there is a full-size sectioned Pelton wheel.

### The Reciprocating Steam Engine

The early development of the steam engine is represented by detailed demonstration models, which include examples of the Savery, Newcomen, Smeaton and Watt types.

The earliest original examples are three beam engines of the 1830s and 40s, and there is also a sizeable side-lever marine engine which, though one of the last of the type built (1882), is typical of the earlier period.

Later examples include simple, compound and triple-expansion types for both land and marine use, and there are advanced medium- and high-speed designs for electricity generation. Two unique multiple-expansion test-bed engines represent the importance of the research and teaching carried on in the region's universities and technical colleges.

50 engines support a large collection (around 100) of mostly high-quality scale models, and also various full-size components, accessories and fittings.

### The Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engine

The collection includes gas engines made between c.1882 and 1951, and around 30 oil and petrol engines, the earliest from 1912. There are also several builders' scale working models.

There is also a large 5-cylinder oil engine of Sulzer Bros. design built by Armstrong Whitworth in 1937.

Aircraft engines include examples of the LeRhône and Gnome rotary designs, and a 'straight' six-cylinder Beardmore.

Other engines represent such makers as Crossley Bros., Kelvin, Lister, Petter, Ruston & Hornsby, Tangye, Villiers and Wolseley.

### The Steam Turbine

The collection includes 12 steam turbines and around 10 models of turbines and turbine installations.



The earliest is a Clarke, Chapman & Parsons turbine-generator of 1888; the most recent is the high pressure section of a 600MW C.A. Parsons unit of the 1970s acquired in 2010 from Drax Power Station. Historically, the most significant machines are the four (three forward, one astern) propulsion units of *Turbinia*.

The important early technical development (1884-1904) of the steam turbine by Parsons is well represented, and most of the machines are from this period. Further development increased the size of machines beyond the range of collectability, but models, photographs and other records document later progress.

### The Gas Turbine

North East Museums' two gas turbine engines are a Parsons experimental machine of 1948, and a sectioned 1960s Rolls-Royce *Conway* aircraft engine.

### Boilers

The cylindrical single-flue boiler of the locomotive *Billy* (see Railways and Locomotive Engineering) is the earliest in the collection. There is an original-pattern locomotive-type boiler on an 1876 Hornsby portable engine, a vertical fire-tube boiler on a Merryweather fire engine of the 1880s, and four locomotive-type boilers on three railway locomotives and a road roller.

There are models of many of the generic types of boiler devised for stationary, locomotive and marine use. Additionally, detailed models show boilers developed in Tyne and Wear, in particular by Clarke, Chapman, for use in power stations, and there are several examples of boiler fittings and components.

### Munitions

The world's first rifled breech-loading field gun of 1855 by William Armstrong is one of North East Museums' most significant objects. Britain supplied, from Tyneside, many of the world's armies and navies - not only with ordnance and munitions, but also with the equipment and ships to carry them. There is also a 4" MkV Armstrong Whitworth naval gun of c.1914.

Additional items and models represent the design and manufacture of guns, shells and fuses. There are examples of full-size torpedoes and a detailed model of a broadside torpedo and its firing tube.

A small collection of about 40 military firearms, including automatic types, is held; North East Museums maintains authority to hold such weapons through a Museum Firearms Licence with appropriate provisions.

### Machine Tools

Machine tools have been, and are, intensively used in Tyne and Wear's engineering industry. There were some important regional manufacturers, for instance Noble and Lund, the Lumsden Machine Co., and Churchill Gear Machines. However, machine tools (other than hand-held) are not well represented in the collection, principally on account of their size and the resources required to move and house them.

There is a small number (around 8) of basic generic types (lathes, drilling machines); additionally some specialist machine tools have been collected - for example a very large shipyard plate punching and shearing machine and a small broaching machine of American manufacture.

### General Engineering

Examples of general engineering products include:

- equipment for ships - steering gear, thrust bearings, winches, pumps, cranes and cargo handling equipment (models), generators and other auxiliaries.
- equipment for collieries - pumps, winders and headgear (models), conveyors (models), (see also Coal-Mining).
- specialist locomotive accessories and components supplied to railway workshops - springs, crank axle, injector, mechanical lubricator.
- a portable engine of c.1876 by R. Hornsby & Sons, a Merryweather *Metropolitan* steam fire engine (1880s) and a 1947 Newcastle-built Aveling Barford steam road roller.

## Measurement and Instrumentation

The collection includes equipment used in engineering manufacturing and research for measuring such properties as dimension (e.g. rules, callipers, plug gauges, micrometers, vernier gauges, measuring machines), flatness, angle, thread type and pitch, hardness, revolutions, frequency, force and torque. There are examples of a variety of types of indicator for steam and internal combustion engines.

## Supporting Material

There is a variety of other equipment for such purposes as printing, sewing and knitting, fastening and weighing. In addition to the aircraft engines noted above, there is a small number of models of aircraft, including airships.

## Railways and Locomotive Engineering

The North East has played a pivotal role in the development of railways from the era of wooden waggonways to the evolution of the iron railway, steam locomotives and the application of electric traction.

North East Museums' collections are focused on the contribution made by the North East to what became The Railway Age, and also the substantial contribution which railway manufacturing and operation has made to the economy of the region for most of this century.

Highlights include:

- 89 locomotive construction drawings includes possibly the earliest of all such plans, dating from about 1823, probably the work of George Stephenson
- Locomotive models in the collection illustrate the complete evolution of the steam locomotive and include: *Rocket* made in the Robert Stephenson Works, the first Stockton & Darlington Railway locomotive, Comet, (Newcastle and Carlisle Railway Locomotive 1835)
- Locomotives and Rolling Stock including George Stephenson's *Billy*

- A collection of history and contemporary railway permanent way (rails, sleepers, fastenings and joints) (first established in the 1930s and enhanced in 2013 by the discovery and retrieval of a well-preserved section of a late 18th century wooden waggonway on Tyneside).

### **Road Transport**

A collection of bicycles includes all the principal stages of evolution, including modern on-street 'hire bike' developments.

The collection also has an example of a much earlier attempt to diversify the economy of the region in the shape of a 15/20 h.p. car produced in 1911 by the Newcastle armaments, hydraulic machinery and general engineers Armstrong Whitworth and local coachbuilder Angus Sanderson. An exhibition *Austin 7* chassis of the late 1920s complements both this earlier 'bespoke' motor car and the later monocoque construction *Bluebird*.

The patentee of the first windscreen wiper lived in the region and his patent specification, blueprint drawing and working model are held by North East Museums.

### **Electrical Science and Engineering**

This is a long-established and extensive collection containing around 900 documented objects and approximately 700 items of supporting material, books, photographs, drawings etc. The scale of the collection reflects the important role played by Tyneside in the world-wide development of the electricity industry.

The main body of the collection covers the important early years of the industry and focuses upon the work of the Tyneside-based electrical pioneers Joseph Swan, Charles Parsons, John Henry Holmes and Alphonse Reyrolle.

The core element of the collection is the lighting section holding approximately 370 items, including examples of Swan's Crag-side lamps, early commercially available lamps and over 100 examples of switches and fittings.

Supporting the lighting section is an important collection of generation equipment. This contains five examples of Parsons turbo-generators including an 1888 24 kW Clarke, Chapman, Parsons & Co. machine and the 1891 patent-beating radial flow machine (turbine section only). In addition to the Parsons machines there are also examples of generating equipment by Siemens & Halske, Clarke Chapman, Wilde, J.H. Holmes & Co., Emmerson & Murgatroyd and the Anglo-American British Electric Light Corporation.

The remainder of the collection covers the broad spectrum of electrical developments, with examples of transmission cables, electric drive equipment, control equipment, electric railway traction, measuring instruments, domestic electrical equipment and communication apparatus. Notable items are a Parsons 800 hp drive motor and associated control equipment; a Brush transformer; Reyrolle circuit breakers; an early Ferranti power station switching panel; instruments by Ayrton and Perry, Groves, Gambrell Bros., Kelvin and White, Evershed and Vignoles, and Siemens Bros.; and domestic sound equipment by Leak, Garrard, Decca and Ferrograph.

In recent years the collection has been extended to cover changes in the electricity industry; it continues to develop, and features increasingly in displays and exhibitions.

### **Manufacturing Industry**

Tyneside's extensive manufacturing traditions embrace a wide range of activities. The collection represents many of these through examples of plant, machinery and tools; equipment (including office equipment); products, and photographs, drawings and other archive items.

Significant material is held on the following industries:

- metal refining and manufacture (especially iron and lead);
- ropemaking;
- lens/mirror grinding and polishing;

- brick manufacture;
- tool manufacture (especially files);

Other industries represented include chemicals, asbestos, graphite, and manufacturing for the CWS.

### **Trades and Crafts**

The following are represented by significant items or groups of items:

Plumbing and Coppersmithing: a collection of work in lead, copper and other materials, numbering over 50 items, was received in 1937 from the Northumberland and Durham Master Plumbers' and Domestic Engineers' Association.

Clock and Watchmaking: there are four lathes together with other tools and equipment, and examples of watch and clock movements.

Ornamental Turning: a Holtzapffel & Deyerlin lathe with associated tools and fitments, and a compound geometric chuck and dividing head.

Model Engineering: around 200 engineering models in the collection represent a high level of proficiency in model engineering practiced in both professional and amateur capacities.

Gunsmithing: the firearms collection includes examples of expertly made and decorated sporting guns.

Trades and crafts featured to a lesser extent are coach-building, hand tool manufacture, pattern making, moulding, boatbuilding and several others.

### **Utilities and Service Industries**

Water Supply: six examples of wooden water pipe.

Gas Supply: samples of coal and coal tar products; diagrams of retort plant; types of pipe joint; manometer gauge; burners; gas valves and pressure wave controllers; stages of preparation of pipe joints; stages of

manufacture of gas mantles; early and 1930s gas meters.

gas appliances, c.1880 to 1960s, including cookers, water heaters, boilers, fires, refrigerator.

Electricity Supply: see Electrical Science and Engineering

Fire and Rescue: appliances include a steam pumping engine of the 1880s and a mid-20th century motor appliance.

### **Technology for Business, the Home and Entertainment**

The business and technology collection includes typewriters, calculating, duplicating and dictating machines and some electronic word processing and computing equipment.

Domestic technology includes equipment for cooking, washing, ironing, cleaning and polishing, heating and non-electronic music reproduction, totalling around 100 items.

### **Personal Items**

The collection includes significant personal items, portraits or apparatus associated directly with many of the region's pioneering scientists, engineers, and industrialists.

W. G. Armstrong - experimental apparatus; portrait.

R. Hawthorn - personal drawing instruments.

J. H. Holmes - the extensive contents of his engineering and experimental workshop.

R. S. Newell - experimental apparatus; exhibition medals.

C. A. Parsons - auxetophone (audio amplifier); freedom casket and citation; desk and many other items.

G. Stephenson - powder flask, shot bag; surveying level.

R. Stephenson            - drawing instruments.

J. W. Swan                - collar made from artificial silk.

There are also portraits and portrait busts of many prominent people associated with science and industry in the North East Museums Fine Art collections.

### **Reference Library**

The Reference Library contains more than 13,000 works of reference and an important collection of nearly 2,500 trade catalogues. The collection includes important specialist periodicals, transactions of many regional and national professional institutions, and significant historical and contemporary works of reference. The Trade Catalogues represent a diverse range of mostly British manufacturers and their products during the present century. The collection is recognised as one of the best outside a national institution.



## **2.2 Collection: Maritime. 14,893 items**

### **Team: History**

#### **2.2.1 History and overview of existing collections**

North East Museums' maritime collection was Designated by the government in 1997 as being of national and international importance.

North East Museums' maritime collections were begun in the 19th and 20th centuries by the various municipal authorities with significant guidance and support from local shipbuilders, ship owners and industrialists. The collapse of shipbuilding in the 1970s and 80s led to a round of collecting to secure the future of important items of the regional maritime heritage.

Before 1975 Newcastle and South Tyneside collected maritime material and the collection contains elements from these districts. After 1975 collecting has been carried out on a regional basis, but with due consideration for the importance of individual items to the different local authorities.

More recently, the closure of the Trinity Maritime Centre (2002) led to the transfer of a further 250 objects to the North East Museums collections, and in 2011 an important collection of items relating to the Wellesley Nautical School (founded in 1868 to train destitute boys for a career at sea) was also acquired.

The major components of the collection are:

- Ship models: There are approximately 400 models in the collection, mostly builders' and half-block models. Many of the models are of the very highest quality and represent the output of famous yards on both the Tyne and the Wear.
- Photographs: A collection of some 11,000 images shows construction at many of the shipyards, and the finished ships. There is an outstanding collection of photographs from the Armstrong Mitchell yard (1876-1931).
- Full-size vessels: The internationally renowned speed machine Turbinia graces the entrance of Discovery Museum, while the fishing coble Fulmar and the replica foyboat, Bonny Tyne, are also on display in the same building.

Other regional wooden craft are stored in sound and accessible conditions at the Regional Museums Store located at Beamish – The Living Museum of the North.

- Marine Technology: Experimental model propellers tested to maximise Turbinia's performance and other items of marine technology form a significant proportion of the collection.

There are gaps in the following areas

- Conversion work and ongoing development on the riverside in terms of contemporary work in the leisure craft field
- There is a serious deficiency in material representing the wooden shipbuilding era (1640-1880).
- Full-size engines of local provenance/association or models representing marine engineering.
- Material illuminating ship repair work including relating to work practice and trades
- Maritime Supply and Port Dependent Industries.
- Trade and associated vessels.
- Material relating to fishing which may be lost in a rapidly changing economic and environmental situation.
- Holdings of relevant naval material, reflecting regional activity in this area from Collingwood, through Armstrong to Swan Hunter.
- River Commissioners/Port Authorities: items that reflect changes in the port authorities' activities.
- Items of modern equipment relating to harbour and river works.
- Port and River Services: Includes functions such as pilotage, mooring services, ferries, river transport and waterborne waste disposal.
- Ship Provisions and Chandlery including contemporary leisure industry suppliers.
- contemporary material relating to Lighting, Navigation and Lifesaving:
- Holdings relating to maritime leisure and sport particularly 19th century rowing material and contemporary maritime sports and leisure activities.

## **2.3 Collection: Social History. 78,320 items**

### **2.3.1 History of the collections**

The collecting of what could now be described as social history material in Newcastle dates from the mid 1970s when the John George Joicey Museum (Newcastle's first 'social history' museum) opened. Up until then, any collecting of the genre in Newcastle was carried out from the Laing Art Gallery. Not surprisingly, collecting in the main was passive; collections were accepted for their decorative / applied art attributes rather than for any social history merit.

The John George Joicey Museum was opened in the 1970s, partly managed by the Joicey Trust. Displays focused on a number of period rooms (largely created with reserve collections from the Laing Art Gallery), which illustrated changes in the development of English furniture and the key interests of its first curator, William Wake, namely fine & decorative arts and militaria (collections of the 15<sup>th</sup> /19<sup>th</sup> King's Royal Hussars, Northumberland Hussars, sword makers of Shotley Bridge, armourer's workshop of the Percy Tenantry Volunteers from Alnwick Castle). There were, however, occasional room displays which touched more directly on the history of Newcastle such as an audio / visual presentation of the Great Fire and Flood of Newcastle of 1771.

With the opening of the Joicey Museum, a 'history'-type keeper was later appointed and other collections were acquired but mainly in the folk life / regional studies tradition. That said, in the late 1970s, the music hall museum closed in Sunderland and some of its collections, most notably the Robert Wood (from Hartlepool) collection of theatre playbills and posters, was transferred to the Joicey Museum. At this time, the biggest exponents of social history were in Tyne & Wear Museums venues at Sunderland and South Shields whose main museums had recognised the value of collecting social history material specific to the locality since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It was not until the late 1980s that the imbalance between not only the social history collections across the Districts but also between the much more developed and advanced subject – related disciplines (now all part of the remit of the History team)

was recognised and began to be addressed. Initially this imbalance was redressed through the exhibition programme. For example, exhibitions such as the Football Show in 1988 /89 necessitated the collecting of football material relating to Newcastle United FC, a collection not hitherto represented. The arrival of the then assistant director, later to become director, Dr David Fleming, encouraged and drove this initiative. Time Tunnel, the first people-focused exhibition to tell the history of Newcastle from Hadrian to the 1980s opened in 1990/91. It encouraged museum visitors to think about and engage with the City's history and hopefully, in consequence, they would respond by recognising and in time help to plug collection gaps. Time Tunnel evolved into Great City! (1993) the first people-centric permanent gallery to open in the City which told the story of the City during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The opening of Great City! was a landmark event as this marked the launch of Discovery Museum.

The Joicey Museum closed in 1994 and its collections were transferred across to Discovery Museum. Collecting followed the lines adopted in the Social History and Industrial Classification (SHIC) system – community life, personal life, domestic and family life, and working life.

A strategic focus on history collecting was introduced in 1991, since when collecting has been better structured and organised.

The Making History project in 2000 activated the start of a programme of contemporary collecting which continues. The Keeper of Contemporary Collecting post was established in 2004 and existed until 2018, it enabled the acquisition of more material to represent the diversity of communities within Tyneside.

### **2.3.2 Overview of the collection**

Strengths and highlights of the collection include:

#### **South Tyneside**

South Shields Museum & Art Gallery – personalia relating to the life and work of individuals with connections across South Tyneside, including ladies' hairdresser Joe Cunningham, sea captain James S. Hooper, poet and author James Kirkup, the

acclaimed novelist Dame Catherine Cookson, and MP for Jarrow Ellen Wilkinson. Also, an important collection of photographs, ephemera, artefacts and artworks relating to Jarrow and Hebburn, from the former Bede Gallery, and a collection of items associated with Wright's Biscuits of South Shields.

### **Newcastle upon Tyne**

Discovery Museum – the 15<sup>th</sup> century Town 'Hutch' (chest) which originally contained Newcastle's money and precious documents (TWCMS : 2000.4302); the Blaydon bell – rung by the Lord Mayor each year to herald the start of the famous road race (TWCMS : H2788); a stained glass window from the Blast Furnace Inn on Scotswood Road (TWCMS : F5835); a collection of items associated with Scott & Turner's world-famous proprietary 'Andrews Liver Salt' (TWCMS : 2015.2452 - 2015.2491); a rare 1962 acetate recording of the Kon Tors – the precursor to the band The Animals (TWCMS : 2008.2672.2); a collection of gay pride badges from the 1970s and 1980s (TWCMS : 2005.3066 - 2005.3093); the original neon sign from the cult 1980s TV music programme The Tube (TWCMS : 2005.5057); Newcastle Airport memorabilia (TWCMS : 2015.1753 - 2015.1785); and a complete original Punch & Judy set (TWCMS : 2010.3593 – 2010.3647). In 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic the museum collected a range of material to represent how it affected the lives of people in Tyneside (TWCMS : 2022.762 - 2022.773, TWCMS : 2022.789 - 2022.790).

Oral history collection – around 500 recordings of interviews covering themes such as religion, sexuality, working life, disability, music and sport. Particular projects include Memorynet, a collection of recordings from the maritime communities of the North East coast; a collection of interviews representing 'Jewish lives' in Newcastle, and Cultureshock!, which created 6000 digital stories documenting the lives of people across the North East in 2009.

Making History – a collection of 1000 contemporary objects donated by 200 people at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Contemporary material acquired since 2000 includes objects collected in consultation with members of the community from previously under-represented

groups in Tyneside. For example, objects representing campaigns for equality for LGBT communities, objects to represent disability using the social model of disability, material representing stories of migration to Tyneside and global majority communities, and objects representing people experiencing poverty and social deprivation.

The collection has multiple examples of the following domestic equipment & furnishings:

- Cookers
- knitting machines
- sewing machines
- gas irons
- sad irons
- griddle irons
- prams
- radios (unless unusual e.g. solar powered, clockwork, digital)
- toilet cisterns
- mantelpieces
- televisions (unless very modern e.g. hand held, flat screen, digital)
- washing machines
- mangles
- sofas, chairs and desks from 1930s-60s
- vacuum cleaners
- electric fires
- gas fires

Office/business equipment:

- early mobile phones (1980s)
- early computers (e.g. Sinclair ZX Spectrum)
- typewriters
- dictaphones

General/ephemera:

- glass bottles
- bibles
- magazines from the 1990s
- ration books (tend to be post 2WW... few related to 1939-1945 war years)
- national identity cards
- trade tokens

## **2.4 Collection: Costume and Textiles. 13,000 items**

### **Team: History**

#### **2.4.1 History of the collection**

Before the formation of North East Museums (previously Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums), individual museums, such as the Laing Art Gallery, collected items from Northumberland and County Durham. North East Museums operated a flexible approach to objects such as North Country quilts, which were part of the heritage of rural areas in Northumberland and Durham.

The collection was brought together at the Laing in 1975, and an acquisitions drive following this promoted the collection to great effect. Small exhibitions of loaned historic costume in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in major gifts of important local dress relating to local families in Tyneside and Northumberland.

The collection contains a number of major gifts and bequests from named collectors. These comprise the JG Joicey bequest of 1919, the Hodgkin gift of 1945 and bequests of 1946 and 1947, and the Bosanquet gift of 1945.

Robert Carr Bosanquet (1871-1935), an archaeologist from Northumberland, collected Eastern Mediterranean Embroideries when Director of the British School of Archaeology in Athens. He was one of the first people to see the value of these textiles, and his students, Wace and Dawkins continued this work and their collections are divided between the V&A, Liverpool Museum, and the Textile Museum in Washington D.C.). Ann French (Wace's grand-daughter and conservator at the Whitworth Art Gallery) has researched Wace and Dawkin's collecting – in an unpublished PhD. French found that these textiles were shared between them. The family still live in Northumberland (Rock), and Northumberland Archives have material relating to the family, particularly Charles Bosanquet (1903-1986), RC's son and Vice-Chancellor of Newcastle University (and probably the originator of the 'permanent loan').

Catharine Hodgkin, née Wilson (known as Katie) (1864-1946) was the wife of Thomas Edward Hodgkin (1872 – 1921), son of the historian Thomas Hodgkin



(1831-1913). She collected embroideries, costume and textiles, along with her brother and sister-in-law Robert Carr Bosanquet and Ellen Sophia Bosanquet (1875-1965, TE Hodgkin's sister). She visited the Bosanquets in Athens, and was friendly with Louisa Pesel (who was the first President of the Embroiderers' Guild and whose personal collection is at ULITA). Mrs Hodgkin taught embroidery at the University and the Laing Art Gallery, and was part of the Northumberland Guild of Handicrafts.

The Joicey Bequest of 1919 consists of mainly 18<sup>th</sup> century costume, woven silk textile fragments, and ecclesiastical textiles.

The curator responsible for the costume & textiles collection was originally part of the Art Team, but responsibility for the collection was later transferred to the History Team. The collection was moved to a newly created store at Discovery Museum in 2003, facilitating a much improved standard of collections care. The curatorial specialism was subsequently lost through staff changes. Early collecting extended outwith of Tyne & Wear's geographical borders into neighbouring counties, however more recent collecting has focused strictly on Tyne & Wear and, since Sunderland Council's withdrawal from North East Museums, solely on Tyneside.

#### **2.4.2 Overview of the collection**

North East Museums' costume and textile collection numbers some 13,000 items. These range from Coptic textiles of the 4th century AD, to present day street fashion.

The collection generally reflects the people of the North East of England, in Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead and South Tyneside. The collection mainly reflects urban middle class culture, and ranges from the late 1600s to today. The costume collection covers all aspects of male, female and children's dress including jewellery and accessories. The textile collection is small, mainly comprising samplers and lace, but also including banners and household textiles. There are a few examples of North Country and patchwork quilts, and local rag rugs. North East Museums also collects tools and equipment relating to textile crafts, dressmaking and making shoes.

The collection is housed in one store, but comprises the collections of

Newcastle, South Tyneside and Gateshead.

#### Highlights of the collection

- a 'Bizarre' silk dress of the early 1700s (TWCMS: J9805)
- an 18<sup>th</sup> century quilted wrapping gown (TWCMS: J9817)
- an 18<sup>th</sup> century hooped petticoat (TWCMS: G1086)
- an 18<sup>th</sup> century printed cotton gown (TWCMS: P990)
- a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century replica Cullercoats' fishwife's outfit (TWCMS : K13990)
- an early example of J.J. Fenwick's work (TWCMS: H8342)
- a Molyneux evening dress (TWCMS: J15136)
- a Bill Gibb leather outfit, (TWCMS: E4113.1 & .2)
- a Bruce Oldfield dress (TWCMS : S1215)
- Aage Thaarup turban (TWCMS: H8719)
- an 18<sup>th</sup> century bed tent from the Greek island of Rhodes (TWCMS : K12389)
- an English cord quilted bedcover of around 1725-50 (TWCMS : E1045)
- Louise Trotter graduate collection (TWCMS: S1233 to S1235)
- Two Dior toiles made up at Fenwick of Newcastle (TWMS: J4174 & J4175)

**Footwear** - the collection has been identified by specialists as being a really good large collection covering a long time span, and other cultures, with some significant pieces. The 18<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century footwear is stronger than the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but men's shoes are under-represented. H16907.1 & .2 were considered important and rare examples by June Swann. There are a few 18<sup>th</sup> century shoes decorated with 'silver lace' – a contemporary term for silk braid patterned with silver thread.

**Headwear** – The Headwear collection is quite large, but not comprehensive. There are few 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century examples, but the 20<sup>th</sup> century collection is good and contains examples of famous milliners and millinery firms such as Aage Thaarup and Mitzi Lorenz:

- Aage Thaarup made hats for the Queen Mother, and famously designed them on his clients' heads. The turban, H8719, is an extremely good example of this practice.

- 18<sup>th</sup> century calash hood (TWCMS: B801) and 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘uglies’ (TWCMS: B802 and B802): rare surviving examples of hoods – uglies were designed to shield the face from sunlight (as seen in William Powell Frith’s *Ramsgate Sands (Life at the Seaside)*).
- Examples of North East working women’s sunbonnets, and cycling bonnet.
- Jane Corbett, milliner to the Duchess of Cambridge, started her business in Newcastle. She worked at the Laing Art Gallery in the 1980s,
- Baby bonnets, including cord quilting, and Hollie Point needle lace.
- Bergère hat and snood (TWCMS: M5532 and M5533)

**Other embroideries** – North East Museums has a good embroidery collection, particularly of samplers covering most types, except Quaker samplers and English darning samplers. There are some good and interesting early samplers, and a piece of stumpwork.

TWCMS : J8068 and TWCMS : J6264 were deemed significant fans by the Fan Circle.

Parasol – Walking stick parasol covered in green silk trimmed with a short silk fringe, 1770s – 1800s (TWCMS : J1383).

The collection has numerous examples of the following items

- Wedding dresses, unless dating from post 1980s
- Mourning capes, unless well provenanced as made by local firms
- Chemises or nightgowns dating from 1860 to 1910
- Baby or children’s wear dating largely from the 1850s to the 1920s
- Christening robes
- Evening gloves
- Trimmings
- Furs
- Knitting sheaths, mat-making tools, hat pins
- Large scale framed embroideries or samplers.

There are gaps in the following areas

- Informal 18th century dress, particularly a 1780s chemise dress
- Cotton dresses of the late 1780s and early 1800s
- Corsets of any date
- 19th century footwear
- Utility fashions (Second World War and subsequent period of rationing)
- Menswear of all dates, except formal wear
- Local workwear and traditional dress
- Contemporary fashion trends
- Local school uniforms
- Embroideries, including local samplers
- Late 19th to early 20th century Arts and Crafts
- Traditional forms of domestic furnishings - quilts, hooky and
- Proggy mats
- Banners and commemorative textiles

## **2.5 Future Collecting**

All offers are referred to the acquisitions group, with representatives from curatorial, archives, conservation and documentation teams.

### **2.5.1 Themes and priorities for collecting**

- The development of the history collection will be guided by ongoing review of historical significance and contemporary relevance.
- We continue to welcome all offers of material that demonstrate historical significance and fits within one of our collection areas. For the period covered by this policy we particularly welcome offers across all collection areas that relate to women, climate change and global majority history on Tyneside.
- Collecting the context, story and background to any donation will be a determining factor in the decision-making process. In particular, potential acquisitions are more likely to be made if North East Museums is also able to source supplementary items (or copies of such items) to help interpret those acquisitions now and in the future, e.g. photos showing individuals wearing the garments, receipts for their purchase, written accounts or oral histories referencing the items. Where an object or objects is also supported by a more extensive archive collection North East Museums will usually accept this material for Tyne & Wear Archives.

### **2.5.2 Period of time and geographical area**

- All material collected will demonstrate exceptional historical significance and have a close association with Tyneside whether produced or used here.
- Collecting will usually represent the post Roman period to present day.
- New acquisitions will be assigned a jurisdiction relating to the council district most appropriate to its historical significance.

### **2.5.3 Limitations of collecting**

- Archival material will not be added to the collection and will usually be offered to Tyne & Wear Archives.
- Large/over-sized items will not be collected unless they have an exceptional historical significance and a budget is available to make them safe for transport, display and storage.
- Hazardous items will not be collected unless they have an exceptional historical significance and a budget is available to make them safe for display and storage.
- The museum will avoid duplication by not collecting further examples of items that are already well represented either in our collections or elsewhere unless they have an exceptional historical significance.
- Roman and some archaeological material will not be added to the collection will be usually offered to GNM, Segedunum or Arbeia.

### **2.5.4 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and transfer**

- Transfers may be undertaken for legal, safety, collections care and conservation reasons.
- North East Museums intends to begin a routine rationalisation programme; identifying material that does not fit the Collections Development Policy to put forward for rationalisation. Items for consideration will be identified as part of an ongoing process some of which will be targeted interventions and some will be ad hoc as we progress the documentation backlog or work in stores. Addressing these disposals will be actioned as and when resources are identified to manage the process.

### **2.5.5 Collecting policies of other museums**

North East Museums will take account of the collecting policies of the following museums:

Beamish – The Living Museum of the North

The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle

Sunderland Museums and Heritage Service

Bowes Railway

Hopetown, Darlington

National Maritime Museum, Royal Museums Greenwich

Science Museum Group

North East Land, Sea and Air Museum

Tanfield Railway

Durham Record Office

North East Film Archive

Hartlepool Arts and Museums

Sunderland Culture

Northumberland Archives

Tyne & Wear Archives Service

V&A

Other curatorial teams within North East Museums e.g art, contemporary craft

## Appendix A 3 Art

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### **3.1 Collection: Fine Art**

#### **Team: Art**

#### **3.1.1 History and overview of the collections**

North East Museums' fine art collections were Designated by the government in 1997 as being of national importance.

#### **Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle**

The Laing Art Gallery was built in 1904, and the fine art collections were founded on a number of bequests and gifts in the first half of the 20th century.

The fine art collections range in date from the 15th century to the present day. The important British oil paintings collection is particularly strong in 19th century and early 20th century works. It includes some major Pre-Raphaelite paintings and important pictures by locally-born 19th century artist John Martin. There are also some significant works by non-British artists, notably Paul Gauguin. The collection of watercolours is especially important including works by J.M.W. Turner, Thomas Girtin and David Cox. Nineteenth century local art is strongly represented. The large print collection has a strength in 20<sup>th</sup> century examples by artists including Howard Hodgkin and Elisabeth Frink; among the 19<sup>th</sup> century material, highlights include a group of woodblocks by the local printmaker Thomas Bewick. A small sculpture collection includes a bronze by Henry Moore, and there is also a small but growing collection of works in all media from the 1980s to the present day.

Like many art galleries established in the early twentieth century, we are aiming to address the representation of women artists and artists from

culturally diverse backgrounds in our collections. Recent acquisitions of works by women artists and artists from diverse backgrounds include the archive and collection of the artist-curator Nerys Johnson, who lived with rheumatoid arthritis, and works by contemporary artists including Helen Baker, Vicken Parsons, Christiane Baumgartner, Mike Silva, Emma Stibbon and Nahem Shoa.

### **Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead**

The Shipley Art Gallery opened in 1917 having received special dispensation to continue construction during World War I. The gallery's varied collections originated with J.A.D. Shipley's bequest of Old Master paintings and Victorian paintings and watercolours. The highlight is a group of outstanding Dutch and Flemish 16th and 17th century paintings, including work by Joachim Wtewael, Hans Leonard Schäufelein and David Teniers. There are some fine Victorian paintings including work by Richard Redgrave, Walter Deverell and John Atkinson Grimshaw. Later acquisitions have supplemented these, including sculpture, prints and works of local interest. In particular, a regionally significant painting – The Blaydon Races, by William C Irving – was purchased for the gallery in 2002 with significant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other public and private gifts and donations.

### **South Shields Museum & Art Gallery**

The collection of oil paintings, watercolours, drawings and prints has developed steadily since the museum came into being in 1876. While the collection is strong in works with a local connection, there are also some 19th and 20th century paintings by nationally-known artists such as William Frith, Charles Napier Hemy and Harold Harvey. The collection was enhanced by Thomas Reed, who gifted many artworks in the 1920s. More recently, the acquisition of artworks from the Bede Gallery collection, Jarrow and the personal collection of the Bede Gallery's director Vince Rea, has increased the museum's representation of mid and late 20th century art.

### **3.1.2 Themes and priorities for future collecting**

Fine Art at the Laing Art Gallery is a priority collecting area within the art collections and available resources will be directed towards developing the collection.

Acquisitions will be made, where appropriate, which reflect cultural diversity, social issues and under-represented sections of society, e.g. women artists.

#### **Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle**

The Gallery may respond to favourable opportunities to acquire works which would develop the historical collections. These opportunities will take into account lack of available budget and the need for strategic partners support, for example from the Art Fund and Contemporary Art Society, or the opportunity to acquire via the Arts Council England Acceptance In Lieu scheme.

The display and use of new acquisitions will form part of the development process in acquiring new works for the collection. Priority areas are articulated below:

- Priority is given to the acquisition of art in any medium produced over the last 40 years, particularly works by major British artists. This will include works on paper to develop the Laing's outstanding watercolour collection
- Priority is also given to the acquisition of contemporary work in any medium from the last ten years that reflects developing issues and trends, and/or the social and cultural diversity of artistic practice in Britain. This includes works by non-British artists that relate to contemporary British practice
- Priority is also given to the acquisition of historical and modern fine art of cultural significance to the North East

- Priority is also given to historic works that have a strong connection to the existing collections and which will enhance their interpretation and display

### **Period of time and geographical area**

The collecting period is 14th century to the present day.

The geographical collecting area is Britain. In exceptional circumstances, international art of the last 10 years that is strongly related to British art may also be included.

### **Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead**

When opportunities arise to acquire exceptional quality works, acquisitions will be considered which enhance the existing collections. These are likely to have a very strong connection with Gateshead or the existing historic collections and are most likely to arise as gifts or bequests from members of the public, or via the Arts Council England Acceptance In Lieu scheme, without cost to the venue.

### **Period of time and geographical area**

14th century – 19th century European and British.

14th century – present day works closely connected with Gateshead.

### **South Shields Museum & Art Gallery**

Works of local interest through subject matter or the artist's association with South Tyneside.

### **Period of time and geographical area**

19th century to the present day

Works closely associated with South Tyneside.

Collecting activity across the Art Galleries will inform museum research, exhibitions and other public programmes.

### **3.1.3 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

Disposal of any item from the fine art collection will only be undertaken for legal, safety, or care and conservation reasons.

### **3.1.4 Collecting policies of other museums**

North East Museums will take account of the collecting policies of the following museums:

Tate (John Martin, British Romanticism, Pre-Raphaelites, modern and contemporary British art)

Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle (European paintings)

Sunderland Culture (North East works)

Great North Museum: Hatton Gallery

Mining Art Gallery, Bishop Auckland (North East works with mining/industrial subjects)

## **3.2. Collection: Decorative Art**

**Team: Art**

### **3.2.1 History and overview of the collections**

#### **Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle**

The decorative art collections comprise over 5000 objects and are extensive and varied, ranging from artefacts of the ancient world to industrial manufactures of the late twentieth century. The Laing opened in 1904, with no collection of its own. The inaugural loan exhibition featured applied arts of all periods and cultures, which subsequently informed the Laing's broad acquisition policy. The collection has been built from gifts, bequests and purchases. National funding has been obtained successfully for key purchases, particularly from the National Art Collections Fund and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund.

The majority of the collection comprises 18th and 19th century British and European ceramics, glass and metalwork. The collections also include a small World Cultures collection and a large Japanese collection containing much of high quality. The collections of local glass, pottery and silver are particularly important and the Laing is a recognised centre for the study of these objects. Highlights of the collection include Newcastle silver, Beilby enamelled glass, Sowerby glass and, of increasing importance, North East pottery, notably early 19th century creamwares and 19th and 20th century earthenwares by the Maling pottery. The 20th century collection includes a Laura Knight dinner service, ceramics decorated by contemporary artists and late twentieth century 'High Street' design. The collections are notably weaker from the mid-20th century onwards. The furniture collection is small with some significant pieces.

#### **Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead**

The Shipley Art Gallery was opened in 1917, following Joseph Shipley's bequest in 1909 of funds and paintings for the creation of a gallery.

There are important collections of Gateshead pressed glass by Sowerby and Davidson, church silver, local pottery and furniture including the Shakespeare sideboard by Gerrard Robinson, a 19th century Newcastle woodcarver.

### **South Shields Museum & Art Gallery**

The decorative art collection has been developed since the museum came into being in 1876. There is a collection of largely 19th century glass, and a small number of ceramics. This includes around 200 pressed glass items made by Edward Moore & Co., Tyne Flint Glass Works, South Shields, much of which was acquired through major purchases in 1981 and 1991.

#### **3.2.2 Themes and priorities for future collecting**

Acquisitions will be made, where appropriate, to be as inclusive as possible, reflecting cultural diversity, social issues and under-represented sections of society.

When opportunities arise to acquire exceptional quality works, acquisitions will be considered which enhance the existing collections. Additions to the decorative art collections are most likely to arise as gifts or bequests from members of the public without cost to the venues.

### **Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle**

- Priority is given to works that would develop the historical collections. In particular ceramics, metalwork and glass that relate to the strengths of the fine art collections whether via the designer/maker or the historical and artistic context.
- Priority is given to the acquisition of 20th century and contemporary objects, that are representative of the design considerations of their period; production work by artists and designers
- Priority is also given to the acquisition of historical and modern applied art of cultural significance to the North East.

**Period of time and geographical area**

16th century to the present day

Britain and Europe

**Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead**

Exceptional examples of Sowerby and Davidson glass.

Exceptional examples of Gateshead Art Pottery.

**Period of time and geographical area**

19th–20th centuries

Gateshead

**South Shields Museum & Art Gallery**

Items closely associated with South Tyneside.

**Period of time and geographical area**

19th–21st centuries

South Tyneside

Collecting activity across the Art Galleries will inform museum research, exhibitions and other public programmes.

**3.2.3 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

Disposal of any item from the decorative art collection will only be undertaken for legal, safety, or care and conservation reasons.

**3.2.4 Collecting policies of other museums**

North East Museums will take account of the collecting policies of the following museums:



National Glass Centre, Sunderland

Sunderland Culture

Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Broadfield House Glass Museum, Dudley

The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle

### **3.3 Collection: Contemporary Craft**

**Team: Art**

#### **3.3.1 History and overview of the collections**

##### **Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead**

Since the late 1970s the Shipley Art Gallery has established a nationally significant collection of contemporary British craft. This includes ceramics, glass, textiles, jewellery, woodwork, furniture and metalwork. The collection is deliberately wide-ranging, encompassing all media and emphasising quality of craftsmanship and the use of innovative techniques and materials. New acquisitions prioritise recent work by makers based in the UK, but the collection also includes a number of historical examples of the traditional crafts of the North East: quilting, rag rug making, gansey knitting and stick dressing.

The collection of studio ceramics ranges from functional country pottery to sculptural and decorative forms. The primary emphasis is on work by British ceramicists. The collection includes work by Gordon Baldwin, Alison Britton, Hans Coper, Philip Eglin, Elizabeth Fritsch, Bernard Leach and Takeshi Yasuda. The Henry Rothschild Collection of Studio Ceramics comprises gifts, long-term loans (to be bequeathed to the Gallery), and 22 pots received in 2013 via the Acceptance in Lieu scheme. The studio ceramics collections were also greatly enhanced with over 500 pieces from the collection of John Christian received via Acceptance in Lieu in 2019. Together, these collections represent the leading 20<sup>th</sup>-century ceramicists from the UK and Europe. Recent acquisitions include ceramics by contemporary artists including Kate Malone, Nao Matsunaga and Aaron Angell.

The collection of studio glass initially concentrated on the work of regional makers, however the work of major British makers now dominates, showing a wide variety of glassmaking techniques and forms. Makers represented include Keiko Mukaide, Steven Newell, Stephen Proctor, Colin Reid, Bruno Romanelli and Max Jacquard. An important piece by David Reekie was

purchased in 2006 for the Gallery through the Northern Rock Craft Acquisition Fund and with the support of the V&A Purchase Grant Fund.

The textile collection features embroidery, weaving, knitting and quilting, illustrative of a full range of techniques. Of particular importance is the holding of quilts, placing the local tradition of quilting within a national context by its representation of leading contemporary makers. Included in this is the work of Amy Emms. Other textile artists represented include Heather Belcher, Pauline Burbidge and Peter Collingwood. Recent purchases recognise the importance of tapestry and embroidery, with works by Audrey Walker and the West Dean Tapestry Studio. In 2009 the Gallery purchased a major pair of tapestries by Sara Brennan.

Metalwork has been strengthened considerably since the mid 1990s to reflect a national increase of interest in this field of craft, with new emphasis on concept, technique and use of materials. The collection includes important pieces by Amanda Bright, Chris Knight, Michael Lloyd, Robert Marsden, Michael Rowe and Hiroshi Suzuki.

The small collection of furniture consists of prime pieces by renowned makers such as Fred Baier and Wales and Wales. Contemporary woodwork includes work by Chatwin and Martin, David Pye and others. In 2009 the Shipley purchased work by new maker Gareth Neal.

Jewellery has been chosen to represent the innovative use of the widest range of materials, precious and non-precious. Amongst the leading makers featured are Caroline Broadhead, Peter Chang, Cynthia Cousens, Pierre Degen and Wendy Ramshaw.

### **3.3.2 Themes and priorities for future collecting**

Contemporary craft at the Shipley Art Gallery is a priority collecting area within the art collections and available resources will be directed towards developing the collection.

Acquisitions will be made, where appropriate, which reflect cultural diversity, social issues and under-represented sections of society.

## **Shipley Art Gallery**

These opportunities will take into account lack of available budget and the need for strategic partners support, for example from the Art Fund and V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Contemporary Art Society's Omega Fund.

The display and use of new acquisitions will form part of the development process in acquiring new works for the collection. Priority areas are articulated below:

- Work collected will be Contemporary Craft made by nationally important designer/makers living and working in Britain. Work by new and emerging designer/makers will also be included in the collection.
- Work will include a wide range of media illustrating innovative design, materials and quality of craftsmanship. It will also include working drawings and photographs etc, related to the craft acquisition.
- Work exploring the overlap between craft and fine art will be included in the collection.
- Gifts and bequests will be accepted, providing they place the collection in its 20<sup>th</sup> century and international contexts.

### **Period of time and geographical area**

20th century to present day

Work by designer/makers who are based in Britain

Collecting activity across the Art Galleries will inform museum research, exhibitions and other public programmes.

### **3.3.3 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

Disposal of any item from the contemporary craft collection will only be undertaken for legal, safety, or care and conservation reasons.

#### **3.3.4 Collecting policies of other museums**

North East Museums will take account of the collecting policies of the following museums:

Crafts Council

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Nottingham Castle Museum

Manchester Art Gallery

Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (mima)

Sunderland Culture

York Museums Trust (York Art Gallery Centre of Ceramic Art)

### **3.4 Collection: Design**

#### **Team: Art**

#### **3.4.1 History and overview of the collection**

##### **Shipley Art Gallery**

Whilst the Shipley Art Gallery holds collections of Contemporary Craft including handmade objects in a variety of media by UK-based makers, and Decorative Arts including handmade and industrially produced objects in a variety of media made in the North East area, notable gaps exist in the collection when exploring Design as a principal theme.

Other areas of the North East Museums collections, such as the Social History or Science and Industry collection include objects that can be identified as important within the history of design. However, a coherent strategy for creating a Design collection which can explore many narratives in the history of design has not been established in previous Acquisition and Disposal policies.

The Shipley Art Gallery opened the Designs for Life gallery in 2008 and is quickly becoming established as a leading venue for Craft and Design. It became clear while developing the brief for the new gallery that a more strategic approach to collecting design was critical to the success and development of the Art collections in Gateshead.

In 2008, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (now known as North East Museums) was awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the Collecting Cultures funding stream. This grant funded the project Collecting Design, and has provided funding for new acquisitions and staff development as well as public engagement relating to the theme of Design.

#### **3.4.2 Themes and priorities for future collecting**

When opportunities arise to acquire exceptional quality works, acquisitions will be considered which enhance the existing collections. Additions to the design collection is most likely to be through gifts or bequests from members of the public without cost to the venue.

Acquisitions will be made, where appropriate, which reflect cultural diversity, social issues and under-represented sections of society.

Collecting activity will inform museum research, exhibitions and other public programmes.

### **Shipley Art Gallery**

Collecting of design will continue to concentrate on objects designed on a domestic scale, following the strengths of the existing collections particularly in the areas of glass, ceramics and metalwork and ensuring that new technologies are also explored.

New acquisitions will:

- Complement and extend existing areas of the collections and provide them with a wider national or international context.
- Include objects by seminal British designers and manufacturers; including key figures in British design history such as William Morris, Christopher Dresser, Susie Cooper, Terence Conran and Jasper Morrison.
- Include objects by seminal émigré designers who resided in Britain such as Wells Coates and Marcel Breuer.
- Illustrate the influences of non-British culture on design, including for example Islamic metalwork and ceramics, South Asian crafts, and French, Scandinavian and Italian products.
- Include prototype versions of objects along with popular versions.
- Include objects that represent design movements and styles from 1880, filling in gaps that are particularly apparent from the 1940s onwards.
- Include domestic printed textile designs.
- Include objects that capture the zeitgeist of their time.
- Illustrate the use of new materials, particularly plastics.

- Illustrate the use of innovative manufacturing processes and technologies.
- Include products designed specifically for babies and children.
- Include work by successful designers from the North East or those trained in the region.
- Include objects designed for accessibility.
- Include design objects that are influenced by craft traditions and practices.
- Include objects that demonstrate sustainable practices.
- Include objects that have been influenced by societal trends such as youth culture, an increasingly design conscious market, commerce and migration. These objects will include electrical items such as mobile phones, radios and domestic appliances.

### **Period of time and geographical area**

1880 – present

Work by British and international designer/makers

### **3.4.3 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

Disposal of any item from the design collection will only be undertaken for legal, safety, or care and conservation reasons.

### **3.4.4 Collecting policies of other museums**

North East Museums will take account of the collecting policies of the following museums:

Design Museum, London

V&A Museum, London

Brighton and Hove Museums



Geffrye Museum

Sunderland Culture

### **3.5 Collection: World Cultures**

**Team: Art**

#### **3.5.1 History and overview of the collections**

##### **South Shields Museum and Art Gallery**

A small but impressive ethnographic collection was assembled at South Shields Museum, but because of poor record-keeping in the early years many of the donors are unknown. The majority of the collection is currently in storage at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens.

##### **Laing Art Gallery**

The Laing Art Gallery holds a small World Cultures collection (about 200 items) that includes a selection of clubs and other weapons from Polynesia mostly donated by William Parker Brewis (North East archaeologist and antiquarian) and two ceremonial turret adzes from Mangaia (Cook Islands).

#### **3.5.2 Themes and priorities for future collecting**

Active collecting will be restricted to acquiring objects for display, or to support exhibitions or learning and community programmes. These collections have a particular relevance for cultural diversity work.

##### **Period of time and geographical area**

In accordance with the criteria above, consideration will be given to material from all geographical areas.

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

There will be a presumption against building the collection further, except where historic collections of value to local communities may be acquired as part of cultural diversity work (see above).

#### **3.5.3 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

Disposal of any item from the World Cultures collections will only be undertaken for legal, safety, or care and conservation reasons.

#### **3.5.4 Collecting policies of other museums**

North East Museums will take account of the collecting policies of the following museums:

Great North Museum: Hancock (large and diverse World Cultures collection)

Captain Cook Birthplace and Dorman Museums, Middlesbrough (general World Cultures collection, and a separate body of material relating to areas visited by Cook)

Hatton Art Gallery (West African sculpture)

Sunderland Culture

## Appendix A 4 Natural Sciences

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### 4.1 Collection: Biology

#### Team: Natural Sciences

#### 4.1.1 History and overview of the collections

##### South Shields Museum and Art Gallery

The displays at South Shields Museum were dominated by Natural Science from its foundation in the 1860s until the 1970s. The main collection at South Shields comprised the exotic birds and mammals prepared by local taxidermist William Yellowley (1823-1893).

Following a period of expansion in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, there was little development for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and much of the material deteriorated badly and was discarded in 1974. Most of the remainder is currently held in store at Sunderland Museum.

## **Shipley Art Gallery and Saltwell Towers, Gateshead**

Shipley Art Gallery opened to the public as an art gallery in 1917, and basement rooms were adapted to display the Earl of Ravensworth's bird collection in 1920. Later, Saltwell Towers was refurbished for use as a museum, and the Natural Science collections were transferred there in 1933. Following an infestation of dry rot, Saltwell Towers was closed to the public in 1969 and the collections were moved into store. The 350 birds in the Ravensworth collection are in an extremely fine state of preservation, and include a number of rare and exotic species. Saltwell Towers attracted other donations, including several major Birds' Egg collections, the most extensive being those of H. Russell Eastcott and Captain Hammond Nash. As with the South Shields collections these are currently held at Sunderland, which has indicated that it wishes to continue collecting for Vice County 66 (Durham).

## **Great North Museum : Hancock**

Note that the majority of North East Museums' biology collections are at the GNM: Hancock and are owned by the Natural History Society of Northumberland and Newcastle University. Please see the Great North Museum: Hancock Acquisition and Disposal Policy for further information.

### **4.1.2 Themes and priorities for future collecting**

Future collecting for Vice County 66 will be undertaken by Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens, as has been the case since the 1970s. Ownership of existing collections is unaffected. Any future collection will inform museum research, exhibitions and other public programmes.

Collecting in natural history has traditionally demanded obtaining duplicates in order to study variation in species and to have sufficient

material to provide statistically valid evidence. The word duplicate also has different meanings across the realms of natural history – so in botany a duplicate is a specimen of the same species collected on the same occasion from the same location. While recognising the value of duplicating scientific material, it is only sensible if specimens are collected for specific scientific purposes, for educational needs or for exhibition, and if financial and technical resources are available for specimen preparation, documentation and storage. Unless these criteria are met, there will be a presumption against passive collecting of duplicate specimens.

#### **4.1.3 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

Disposal of any item from the natural science collections will only be undertaken for legal, safety, or care and conservation reasons.

#### **4.1.4 Collecting policies of other museums**

North East Museums will take account of the collecting policies of the following museums:

Great North Museum: Hancock

Sunderland Culture

## **4.2 Collection: Geology**

**Team: Natural Sciences**

**4.2.1 Overview of the collections (see section 4.1 above for historical details).**

### **South Shields Museum and Art Gallery**

Most of the geological material consists of mineral specimen with a small number of Carboniferous and Jurassic fossils.

### **Shipley Art Gallery and Saltwell Towers, Gateshead**

Whilst the geology collections are quite small, they include important Carboniferous fossil vertebrate material from the Coal Measure strata of Tyne and Wear. The Saltwell Towers collection, comprising some 5-600 items is currently held at Sunderland Museum, which has indicated that it wishes to continue to collect for Vice County 66 (Durham).

Note that the majority of North East Museums' geology collections are at the GNM: Hancock and are owned by the Natural History Society of Northumberland and Newcastle University. Please see the Great North Museum (GNM) Acquisition and Disposal Policy for further information.

### **4.2.2 Themes and priorities for future collecting**

Future collecting for Vice County 66 will be undertaken by Sunderland Culture, as has been the case since the 1970s. Ownership of existing collections is unaffected. Any future collection will inform museum research, exhibitions and other public programmes.

### **4.2.3 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

Disposal of any item from the geology collections will only be undertaken for legal, safety, or care and conservation reasons.

#### **4.2.4 Collecting policies of other museums**

North East Museums will take account of the collecting policies of the following museums:

Great North Museum: Hancock

Sunderland Culture

Killhope Lead Mining Museum



## Appendix A 5 Northumberland

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## 5.1 History and overview of the collections

The Northumberland Collection, once managed by four separate local authorities, was brought together in 2010 to form a single entity, initially under Woodhorn Charitable Trust which was later rebranded as Museums Northumberland. In April 2025, North East Museums (formerly Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums) took over management of the Northumberland Collection on behalf of Northumberland County Council, the collections owners.



*Community Advisory Panel member conducting inventorying work in a collections storeroom*

### **5.1.1 Local context**

Northumberland is a county of contrasts, local communities are widespread and drawn from residents living in small historic and semi-rural settlements; market towns such as Morpeth and Hexham; post-industrial towns such as Ashington; and the remote farming communities of the Cheviots, North Pennines, Tyne Valley, and coastal plains. Northumberland faces numerous social and economic challenges. It is divided by the dichotomies of a rural economy and tradition and an ever-changing industrial context, the legacy of which is communities which are often at odds with each other culturally and socially. Some residents endure extreme poverty and hardship, rural isolation, lack of opportunities, low academic attainment, ill health, and lower life expectancy while others live in affluent areas and experience higher levels of privilege.

### **5.1.2 Woodhorn Museum**

Woodhorn Museum is a former colliery and scheduled ancient monument located in Ashington, once the largest pit village in the world. It occupies the site of the former Woodhorn Colliery, one of a group of collieries that originally formed part of the Ashington Coal Company. The colliery closed in 1981 and in 1989 the site was re-

opened by the former Wansbeck District Council as a museum. The Museum re-launched in 2006 following a £17 million re-development that saw the restoration and re-interpretation of the colliery buildings and the construction of a new iconic building, 'The Cutter' which provided new gallery spaces and storage space.

At the heart of the collection are the thirteen extant colliery buildings, some of which are Grade II listed. Collecting has focused on objects relating to the history of coalmining in the North-East Coalfield and relating particularly to coalmining in south-east Northumberland. The collection also contains a smaller proportion of social history and art. The museum is home to the Ashington Group Gallery which displays artworks on long term loan from the Ashington Group Trustees. This is made up of what is known as the 'Permanent Collection' and a group of paintings by Oliver Kilbourn (a prominent member of the Group) called 'My Life as a Pitman.' Over the years further works by members of the Ashington Group have been added to the museum's collection. Another important part of the collection are 18 banners from Northumberland branches of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), five of which are regularly displayed on a rotational basis.

The site is also home to the main branch of the Northumberland Archives which is run by Northumberland County Council.



*Community Advisory Panel and volunteers condition checking and vacuuming a trade union banner*

### **5.1.3 Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum**

Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum is housed within the grade I listed, 5th century Chantry Bridge Chapel of All Saints, which at various times in its history has been used as the town grammar school, a coach house, concert venue and mineral water factory. The museum was established in 1987 as the world's first Bagpipe Museum. It is based on the collection of William Alfred Cocks of Ryton (1892 –1971), a player and maker of bagpipes as well as a prolific collector of pipes, manuscripts, letters, and piping memorabilia between 1920 and 1971. Upon his death, his collection was bequeathed to the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne (SANT) who continue to be the legal owners. SANT first displayed the collection at the Black Gate in Newcastle upon Tyne, and then transferred the display to Morpeth Chantry Museum in 1987. The collection focus is primarily on Northumbrian pipes and bagpipes, though there are objects from Scotland, the rest of the UK and Europe. It consists of over 150 Northumbrian and international pipes as well as other ephemera and archives relating to Northumbrian and traditional music.

#### **5.1.4 Hexham Old Gaol, Moot Hall, and House of Correction**

Hexham Old Gaol is the oldest purpose-built prison in England, a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade 1 Listed, fourteenth century building. The building was used as a jail until the Hexham House of Correction was built in the early nineteenth century. The collections are made up of permanent and handling collection objects. Much of the collecting has focused on the Border Reivers, Hexham, and crime and punishment, in keeping with the building's history. Hexham also houses the Border Library (amassed by The Butler Trust), a wide collection of books, manuscripts, and recordings. Collecting has been primarily sporadic and inconsistent. The majority of the objects were part of a handling collection which was mistakenly accessioned in the past. Many of the objects have no connection to Northumberland and have been flagged for rationalisation. Ethically transferring objects which are marked for deaccessioning, will free up the limited storage, enabling us to actively collect objects which tell the stories that our communities want to share.

In addition there are the House of Correction (a grade II listed building built in 1784) and Hexham Moot Hall (a grade I listed building), one of the best surviving examples of a medieval courthouse in the north of England. Built for the Archbishop of York in 579 as a residence, office, and court for the archbishop's bailiff, it now houses the Hexham collections store and serves as a venue for local community groups. Both are occasionally open to the public for Heritage Open Days and other events.



*Community Advisory Panel session reviewing objects in the Hexham collection*

### **5.1.5 Berwick Museum and Art Gallery**

Berwick Museum was established in 1867 by members of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, with the natural history collections of Dr George Johnson (1797 – 1855) forming its core. Governance was later transferred to Berwick Council in the 1920's. Sir William Burrell (1861 -1958) & Lady Constance Burrell (1875-1961) gave a small collection of international significance consisting of fine and applied artworks to form the nucleus of an art gallery between 1930 and 1954. The first professional Curator was employed in 1985, when the museum moved into its current site in Berwick Barracks. The collections were expanded to include social history, archaeology, and work by local artists after a call out to the local community. In 1992 Berwick Museum and Art Gallery acquired a sizeable collection relating to Thomas Wardale Smith, a Freeman of Berwick, consisting of library material, family memorabilia, and a range of social history items predominantly from outside Berwick. The collection includes items of both local and global significance.

Berwick Museum & Art Gallery was situated within the Clock Block of Ravensdowne Barracks, an eighteenth-century, grade I listed building which is managed by English Heritage. North East Museums manage the collections on behalf of Northumberland County Council but do not manage the venue. The site is part of the Living Barracks Project, a partnership between Northumberland County Council, English Heritage, The Maltings (Berwick) Trust, The King's Own Scottish Borders (KOSB) and the Berwick Barracks Heritage Trust. 2027 will see a new museum open on the site. The Berwick collection is on loan to English Heritage from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027, for the duration of the redevelopment project.



### 5.1.6 Community Advisory Panel

In order to develop the collections sustainably and holistically in a way which reflects and is directly influenced by the local community, a Community Advisory Panel was set up in 2022 by Museums Northumberland. The Community Advisory Panel continues to advise on acquisitions, disposals and future themes for collecting relating to Northumberland. The Community Advisory Panel is made up of diverse local voices from Northumberland and is open to all ages and backgrounds, giving the communities we serve the chance to shape the county's collections both now and in the future.

The Community Advisory Panel has been actively involved in discussions and hands-on sessions to facilitate thinking on the current collections and the future ambitions for the collections, the stories that we tell about them, and how we continue to better reflect communities in Northumberland. We work closely with the Community Advisory Panel, supporting them to develop a collection that is recognisably Northumbrian and speaks to and for the people of the county. This method of working and regular consultation with these communities have informed this appendix. This document has been written in partnership with the Community Advisory Panel and is intended for our colleagues, stakeholders, and audiences to understand the decisions we make to preserve and develop the county's collections.



*Community Advisory Panel session on the ethical transfer, reuse, and disposal of objects as part of collections management*

## 5.2 Overview of the Collection

The collections comprise approximately 25,000 objects or object groups. Subject areas include art, social and industrial history, textiles, and discrete collections of archaeology and natural sciences. Each museum has a particular focus: Woodhorn as a mining museum, Morpeth as a bagpipe museum and Hexham as a range of historic buildings with collections relating to the Tynedale area and crime and punishment. In addition, the Berwick collection focusses on art, social history and natural sciences.

*Please see notes on page 23 for image credits and object information featured in this section.*

### 5.2.1 Art

#### Ashington Group

We care for the Ashington Group or 'Pitmen Painters' collection, believed to be the first assemblage of work by amateur artists to go on permanent display anywhere in the world. The Ashington Group produced hundreds of paintings showing what life was like both above and below ground for their mining communities in Northumberland. The paintings on display in the Ashington Group Gallery at Woodhorn Museum and the series 'My Life as a Pitman' by Oliver Kilbourn, are on long term loan from the Ashington Group Trustees. We also hold a substantial number of drawings, sketches, paintings, prints and newspaper clippings by several members of the group which were donated to Woodhorn Museum in 1994 and 2003.



#### Burrell Collection

Sir William and Lady Constance Burrell made an important donation of fine and decorative art to the people of Berwick-upon-Tweed in advance of their gift to Glasgow. Collectively the Glasgow and Berwick bequests are the most significant private donation to the public ever made in Europe. The collection given to the "ancient and loyal town of Berwick" in recognition of Sir William's Northumbrian ancestry as well as the town's distinctive character. This collection features a Degas drawing, easel paintings by



Boudin and Daubigny, Raeburn and Ramsay, and watercolours by Joseph Crawhall, as well as fine examples of East Asian porcelain, medieval carvings, Islamic art, and fine glass.



### Northumbrian Art

We care for a fine collection of work by Northumbrian painters such as Frank Watson Wood, James Wallace, and Myles Birkett Foster. We collect art by historic and contemporary Northumbrian artists, both well-known and more obscure, which demonstrate some level of skill. We do not usually collect works by amateur artists unless there is a significant reason, such as they are a member of the Ashington Group or are a key Northumbrian figure. We are open to collecting art depicting Northumberland, whether the artist is from or resides in the county or not. Occasionally we will collect art created by projects and programmes which are a response to our wider collections or current events, such as a recent acquisition of *Northumberland Folk* artworks by contemporary artist Jonny Hannah. We acknowledge gaps within the collection caused by focused collecting based on museum location and theme and look to identify and fill those gaps. For example, Woodhorn Museum holds predominantly mining art and the local art collection for Berwick Museum and Art Gallery is notably strong in late 19th- and early 20th-century artists, though earlier artists such as Thomas Sword Good (1789 - 1872) are under-represented in the collection.



## 5.2.2 History

### History of Coalmining

The highlight of our industrial collections is our Great Northumberland Coalfield Collection which contains working models; core samples and surveying equipment; pumps, ventilation, and electrical equipment; early wooden drainpipes, corfs and trolleys; equipment from mining training centres; items related to health and safety, first aid and rescue equipment; and surface and service industries from across Northumberland. We also have a particularly noteworthy collection of memorial glasses and a considerable number of colliery machinery and tools; clothing and equipment issued to mineworkers; colliery notices and signs; manuals and other printed works often issued by Coal Companies, NCB/British Coal; miners' lamps; photographs; and artefacts and papers relating to Miners' Strikes. One of the most important objects in this collection is the material record of the Hartley Pit Disaster, including the actual timber bunton which broke and blocked the exit shaft, entombing 204 men and boys. This calamity resulted in the revision of mining legislation which subsequently saved countless lives throughout the world.



### Social History

The social history collection mostly dates from the 19th and 20th centuries, consisting of objects, papers and photographs relating to the south-east, west and north of Northumberland. This diverse collection includes amateur sporting and leisure trophies, Codd-neck bottles, pigeon clocks, Coal Queen paraphernalia, Northumberland seaside souvenirs and postcards, amusement arcade games and Berwick Cockles sweet manufacturing equipment. We have quirky and unusual items too, such as the 'bread shoe' made by prisoners of war at Wooler camp, a taxidermy head of a bull from the Chillingham herd, a Jacobean fresco, Grace Darling's weathervane and a collection of diabolic stereoscopic slides popular as a form of entertainment in the mid-19th century. Our numismatic collections include Edward I silver pennies struck at the Berwick mint and banknotes engraved by Thomas Bewick depicting Tweed scenes. Other key pieces include Northumberland's weights and measures, a working telephone exchange,

leather working products such as the internationally renowned Hexham Tans, and Robert Stephenson's original plans for the Royal Border Bridge.



## Maritime History

We have an extensive range of items relating to Northumberland's maritime history. This includes a full-sized salmon fishing boat, fording box, and ladder as well as fish crates and postal boxes; early 18th-century boards listing Berwick fishing smacks; ships' bells from HMS Berwick and HMS Tynedale; and town adoption shields from the Second World War. We have shipbuilding plans relating to the Fairmile ship building company and a plethora of related paintings and photographs.



## Music History

The main collection of bagpipes at Morpeth Bagpipe Museum is owned by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne (SANT). The Cocks Collection of Northumbrian small pipes, manuscript music and related ephemera, is of local and international significance, testifying to an unbroken living music tradition now unique among English counties. The Northumbrian collection is contextualised by rare examples from other piping traditions including a set of pipes played at the Battle of Culloden and a set from the court of the 'Sun King,' Louis XIV. A small collection of modern instruments, the '1991 Collection', was purchased with help from a donor who wished to remain anonymous.

At Hexham we hold a special collection of music manuscripts and local history publications relating to the culturally important oral tradition of Border Ballads. We care

for the most substantial collection of Chater books (annuals written in local dialect) in public hands. At Woodhorn Museum, we hold brass and marching jazz band instruments, music and ephemera representing another strand of a longstanding north-eastern musical tradition.



### 5.2.3 Costume and Textiles

The textile collection includes an important and comprehensive collection of banners, the most important of which are those of Northumberland branches of the National Union of Mineworkers. We also hold banners relating to Co-operative Guilds; Freemasons' Lodge; local branches of the Labour Party; the Miners' Strike of 1984-1985; Primrose League; a local antinuclear campaign and a rare workhouse banner from Hexham. The collection also includes quilts and several examples of hooky and proggy mats and related mat-making tools. The costume collection is predominantly from the Berwick area with a range of garments from the 19th and 20th centuries. We care for shepherds' plaids, as worn by the Duke of Northumberland's personal Northumbrian piper, Hexham tans (leather gloves) and mayoral robes. The wedding dresses, pageant sashes, christening gowns and mourning clothes in the collection all have a story to tell about the lives of local people. These highlight stories of women and children which are in general underrepresented within the wider collection. We also have a collection of mining clothing and associated kit, worn by the four men who worked the last shift at Ellington Colliery in 2005.





### 5.2.4 Archaeology

The archaeology collections date from the Mesolithic to the post medieval period and include Bronze Age cup-and-ring-marked stones from Northumberland's iconic prehistoric landscape and early medieval sculpture dating from the 10th century which represents the story of Northumbria's pivotal role in the spread of Christianity. Medieval finds from Berwick represent one of the country's most important ports and strategic settlements.

To date, objects found during archaeological excavations in Northumberland are not actively sought, as this is the remit of Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (SANT). Although the Berwick collection is a repository for archaeological material excavated within the town.



### 5.2.5 Natural History

Berwick Museum and Art Gallery was founded as a natural history reference collection, however, much of the original collection no longer exists. What remains is a large number of fossils and shells, a notable collection of mosses, and some herbarium specimens.



### 5.2.6 World Cultures

The world cultures collection reflects the type of colonial collecting that was typically taking place in the Victorian period. Southern Africa and the Pacific are the best represented, in addition to an unusual collection of Inuit artefacts donated in the early 1960s. This material is predominantly part of the Berwick collection.



### 5.2.7 Contemporary Collecting

Objects which tell contemporary stories about Northumberland, often connected to significant current events are actively collected. In 2023 the Community Advisory Panel recommended to collect several knitted dolls which were made and used by the donor to thank key workers in Ashington during the Covid-19 Pandemic. A project was also commissioned to photograph key workers in Northumberland in 2020 to document life during the Pandemic. We are aware of the ongoing industries and companies in the region and collect objects which enhance the historic industrial collections and give a contemporary insight into the development of Northumberland. Of particular interest is how to tie historic energy (coal) related collecting to modern green technologies, linking in with our commitment to climate justice.



### 5.2.8 Oral Histories

Several oral histories have been recorded by the Northumberland Curatorial Team since 2010, for example recordings of people who knew Sir William Burrell or could remember Berwick Museum in his day. We have access to digital copies of a larger collection of oral histories held by Northumberland Archives, recorded prior to 2017 (when Archives and Museums separated). As oral history recordings have historically been cared for by Northumberland Archives, any future recordings will be deposited with them at either Berwick Record Office or Woodhorn.

## 5.3 Future Collecting

The themes and priorities for future collecting are based on known strengths and weaknesses in the collections, as well as input and co-curation from the Community Advisory Panel.

### 5.3.1 Northumberland – a holistic approach

Previous collecting has been venue specific with a focus on mining at Woodhorn, art and social history at Berwick, bagpipes at Morpeth and a handling collection at Hexham. This collecting methodology, while appropriate at the time, has led to gaps where large areas of Northumberland and specific themes are not represented. Taking a new, more holistic, approach to collecting will allow us to identify and fill those gaps to ensure that the Northumberland collection reflects the stories and people of the county. Its remit is Northumberland, defined by current county boundaries, with recognition that these boundaries have changed many times over 1,000 years. We also recognise that Northumberland is a border county, and regional identity will mean different things to different people across the county. We will work to better understand and rationalise our existing collections to ensure balanced coverage which reflects the people of Northumberland today.

### **5.3.2 Addressing Empire and Marginalised Communities**

The World Cultures collection at Berwick Museum and Art Gallery reflects the colonial ethos of Victorian donors and early museum administrators. The collection comprises objects from Southern Africa and the Pacific as well as Inuit made material from Canada. Documentation is limited for these objects, and we therefore do not know if the method of their collection was ethical. We look to work with specialists and members of source communities to increase our knowledge and understanding of the objects in our care. Consideration for North East Museums' Repatriation Policy and Sacred Objects Policy will also be taken into consideration.

We are committed to exploring the whole story of objects within our collections, even if sometimes those stories are uncomfortable. Traditionally research and displays have employed a clearly western approach, often overlooking the object's significance to its source communities. We recognise that some of these objects may need an enhanced set of ethical guidelines when considering their display, storage and conservation. The MA Code of Ethics and MEG Guidance Notes on ethical approaches in museum ethnography (2003) guide our approach. Further research is required in order to enhance our documentation and produce labels or displays which share these stories appropriately.

Mining is also deeply connected with colonial activities and exploitation as coal from Northumberland was transported all over the world, fuelling the industrial revolution and sparking the development of the railways. Woodhorn Museum is linked to this trade and, by its association with the then landowner, the Duke of Portland, to sugar plantations in the Caribbean and thus the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Although the Duke of Portland (4<sup>th</sup>) was not himself a plantation or slave owner at the time of Woodhorn Colliery's initial development on his land, his predecessors and a contemporary cousin were actively involved in slavery. Our intention is to review the permanent exhibition at Woodhorn Museum and consider how we can enhance information already presented by introducing this wider context which is an important but currently hidden element of the story.

Our decolonisation work sits alongside our wider activism work which identifies individuals and groups within society who have been mistreated, maligned, or ignored, often meaning that their stories are hidden. Our aim is to share these stories in a way that demonstrates the humanity of these marginalised people and brings communities together, particularly as Northumberland has a growing refugee community. In all our work we consider North East Museums' Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

### **5.4 Priority Themes**

The Community Advisory Panel have identified several themes which are underrepresented in the collection. We will actively collect objects which tell stories from within these themes as detailed below. A closer examination of items in the existing



collections may also reveal hitherto lesser-known stories, which we would seek to draw out and amplify.

#### **5.4.1 Women**

Within the collections which have a heavy industrial focus, the Community Advisory Panel have identified that the stories of women are lacking. We will actively collect objects which have interesting supporting stories about Northumbrian women and girls.

*“Women were the backbone of the miners and the community in Ashington, keeping the home going in the early days for extended families to get up, work and managing the home and family with the constant uncertainty if the mine would last or having to move to get another job. I have relatives that moved around Northumberland where the jobs were. They later had jobs connected to the mining sites, mainly in clerical and domestic but beavering away too in the important background. I think this is one place where more could be highlighted about what woman did.*

*There is some representation of woman in some of the Ashington group paintings and in coal town with the home and videos, which is great, but is that enough? Are there more we could show? In some walks of life and communities, women were undervalued for their roles, and I feel we somehow need to put this right helping to celebrate their worth. The wheels couldn't turn without the cogs” –* Community Advisory Panel member.

#### **5.4.2 LGBTQIA+**

We have very few objects with a clear LGBTQIA+ story, although we recognise that there may be many hidden stories within the collection. This is an area of focus in which we will work with partners to conduct more research and prioritise for future collecting. For example, we do not have any original ‘Lesbians and Gays support the Strike’ badges in our collection and would actively look to fill this gap as it shares a significant story of solidarity between the mining industry and the LGBTQIA+ community.

*“To better reflect the increasing importance of our understanding of the LGBT+ community I would like to see an increase of relevant objects, costume and documents collected that further our understanding of this community” –* Community Advisory Panel member.

#### **5.4.3 Non-mining industries**

Due to the venue-centric collecting of the past, certain industries are under-represented including agriculture, salmon and herring fishing, salt pans, shipbuilding, ship breaking,

railways and import/export trade. We aim, working in partnership with local communities, to collect objects related to these industries that will give a broader picture of industry in Northumberland, both historic and contemporary, such as collecting the story of the emerging renewable energy industry in Blyth.

*“I’m very proud that many of my Northumbrian ancestors were agricultural workers. My great grandfather worked on local farms, but was eventually attracted into the developing coal mines and since then my grandfather, father, brother and myself have worked in jobs associated with the coal mines. As a member of the Community Advisory Panel, I enjoy seeing all of the exhibits associated with the county’s mining heritage, but it would be wonderful to see greater acknowledgement being given to our local agricultural past and present, and recognition being given to the difficult transition that men faced when moving from working on the land to toiling underground” – Community Advisory Panel member.*

#### **5.4.4 Migration Stories**

The story of migrants, particularly from Eastern Europe who were displaced following the Second World War, is not a story that we have previously given prominence to. Although we do have objects within the collection which belonged to these individuals, it is an area which we seek to further develop. Our community reflects the past and current migration of people to Northumberland, and we want to share these stories to bring people together.

*“There are a lot of refugee families in the area, how you would collect these stories I’m not sure, but it is an area that should be looked at” – Community Advisory Panel member.*

#### **5.5 Active Collecting**

North East Museums is interested to collect in the following categories which have been identified by the Community Advisory Panel or curatorial staff. These objects either augment existing collections or fill known gaps.

##### **Art**

- Art, artefacts and papers relating specifically to the Ashington Group and other Northumbrian ‘Pitmen Painters.’
- Art and associated material which is connected to Sir William Burrell or strengthens the existing collection.

## History

- Objects significant to the Ashington Coal Company or Northumberland in general.
- Early coal mining in Northumberland and the sea coal industry – both currently underrepresented in the collection.
- Bedlington Rail Shoe
- Objects which enhance our maritime collection, with consideration to size and storage capacity.
- Object which complement and consolidate the pipes collection.
- Pipes and bagpipes with a Northumbrian link or to fill a gap in the collection.
- Memorabilia, ephemera, and manuscripts, while audio-visual material may be collected if related to the existing collections.
- Objects, ephemera and recordings connected to the mining heritage of Northumberland, with particular emphasis on band music, which enhances the existing collection.

## Costume and Textiles

- Banners connected to a range of organisations, but particularly trade unions.
- Our collection of mats and mat-making tools is very comprehensive and therefore we would only look to collect examples which are not already represented in the collection.
- Northumbrian quilts which demonstrate regional craft and design.
- Costume from a wider geographical region than previously collected
- Earlier garments worn by miners are of particular interest as our collection is predominantly focused on the end of the mining industry in the region.

## Natural History

- Locally relevant specimens, taking into consideration the collecting policies of other nearby repositories such as the Great North Museum: Hancock.
- Examples of the tetrapod fish, plants and invertebrates found in the Northumberland Borders by the recent groundbreaking TW:eed Project.

## World Cultures

- Contextualise existing material in terms of local storyline rather than to extend the coverage worldwide, taking into consideration the collecting policies of other nearby repositories.

## Oral Histories

- Any significant or powerful story, particularly when the story is underrepresented by objects in the collection. Any recordings will be deposited with Northumberland Archives in line with our current practice at Berwick Museum and Art Gallery. The Community Advisory Panel agreed with continuing this practice due to the existing specialism and resources within the Archives.

## Contemporary Collecting

- Objects relating to migration e.g from people displaced around Europe after World War II to modern day world affairs which have seen people displaced from the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Africa, now living in Northumberland
- Objects relating to the experience of Northumberland's children
- Objects reflecting the representation of increased neurodiversity and disabilities (both hidden and visible) in our communities.
- Objects relating to the Re-opening of the Northumberland Railway Line
- Painted stones from the Covid-19 pandemic
- Objects relating to Berwick Hospital being rebuilt
- Objects relating to the Northumberland Pride

## **5.6 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

Any rationalisation and disposals within the period of the policy will likely focus on the Hexham collection which is predominantly a handling collection which was mistakenly accessioned. Any rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection. Disposals from other collections may be undertaken as required if legal, safety, or collection care and conservation reasons apply. The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. The Community Advisory Panel will be part of the decision-making process and there will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

## **5.7 Collecting policies of other museums**

North East Museums will take account of the collecting policies of the following organisations:

- Northumberland Archives

- Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne (SANT)
- Beamish – The North of England Open Air Museum
- Bailiffgate Museum and Gallery
- The National Mining Museum
- Scottish Borders Museums
- The King's Own Scottish Borderers Museum
- Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums
- Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery
- Newbiggin Maritime Centre
- Grace Darling Museum
- National Trust
- English Heritage
- Sunderland Culture
- Durham Mining Museum
- Mining Art Gallery (The Auckland Project)
- Paxton House
- Hexham Abbey

## **Notes: Collection Overview - Object Image Details**

In the spirit of writing this Collections Development Policy, the object images used in the Collection Overview section were chosen by Museums Northumberland's Community Advisory Panel and volunteers. Object details, from left to right, are below.

### **Art**

#### **Ashington Group**

- *Propping the Mat*, Oliver Kilbourn (1904-1993), ASHMM:1989.17.12
- *Fish and Chips*, Fred Laidler (1918-1998), ASHMM:1989.17.39
- *Sea Coal*, Arthur Whinnom (1899-1962), ASHMM:1989.17.7

#### **Burrell Collection**

- *Danseurs Russes*, Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas (1834-1917), BERMG:1432
- *A Shepherd and His Flock*, Frans Pieter ter Meulen (1843–1927), BERMG:1461
- *Dear Lady Disdain*, Sir John Lavery (1856-1941), BERMG:1442

#### **Northumbrian Art**

- *Fishing Girls*, William Marshall Brown (1863 – 1936), BERMG:1408
- *View of Berwick-upon-Tweed Pier, Northumberland*, Henry Hancocks, BERMG:2004.5.1
- *Beach Scene*, L. S. Lowry (1887-1976), BERMG:2020.1

### **History**

#### **History of Coalmining**

- Sinker's hat, leather, ASHMM:1990.1
- Carbide lamp, ASHMM:1992.4.6.1
- Trimmer's Shovel

#### **Social History**

- Cap with strike and NUM pin badges, ASHMM:2003.64
- *Kingfisher Sprint* car, made in Rothbury, MNORT:2024.10
- Pigeon Trophies 1964 and 1965, NRO 8657.2.1-2

#### **Maritime History**

- Fishing boat, Berwick, BERMG:1985.11.1
- Eel trap, Berwick, BERMG:1988.11.2

- Weathervane from Longstone Lighthouse, BERMG: L1989.5.1

## **Music History**

- Northumbrian small pipes made by Lionel Miller, MOPBM:M16/D
- Photograph of Hannah Mary Charlton (d.1922) with Northumbrian pipes, MOPBM: Mu218
- Euphonium, TEMP 153

## **Costume and Textiles**

- Cambois and Bates NUM banner, ASHMM:1990.7
- Salmon Queen's cloak, BERMG:1996.20.1
- Northumberland Quilt '*The Big Quilt*' (detail), NRO 07367

## **Archaeology**

- Prior Leschman alnage seal (Hexham), E00193
- The Ord Cross, discovered at East Ord, near Berwick, MNORT:2022.1
- Fragment of a grave cover from Woodhorn Church

## **Natural History**

- Ammonite fossil, BERMG:2786
- Ichthyosaur fossil (detail), BERMG:586
- *Unio margaritifera*, large mussel found near Coldstream, BERMG:2977

## **World Cultures**

- Cribbage board, made of caribou antler, Inuit, BERMG:2679
- Model of Japanese palanquin (a covered litter for one passenger, consisting of a large box carried on two horizontal poles by four or six bearers), BERMG:712
- Carved head of a man wearing laurel wreath, Hellenistic, Roman Empire, BERMG:1609

## **Contemporary Collecting**

- Hand painted denim jacket, Jonny Hannah, ASHMM:2021.65 © The artist  
The jacket was worn by the artist when busking and then displayed at Woodhorn Museum as part of the multi-site exhibition *Northumberland Folk* in 2021.
- *Untitled Puddle Painting (The Hole)*, Narbi Price, ASHMM:2019.6 © The artist
- Knitted dolls, made during the Covid-19 pandemic to thank key workers, and attached to gate outside of makers home in Ashington, ASHMM:2023.26-32 © The artist