

Report to: Museum Committee

Date of Meeting: 11th March 2019

Report Title: Collections Report

Report By: Damian Etherington, Museum and Cultural Development
Manager

Purpose of Report

To update the committee on collections care, access, acquisitions, loans and objects being considered for rationalisation. The report also includes collections policies for review.

Recommendation(s)

1. To accept this report and recommended approval by Cabinet.

Reasons for Recommendations

Introduction

1. This report outlines the collections related activities that have taken place at the museum since the last formal meeting of the committee.

Collections Care

2. The museum's offsite store as now been moved. This work was undertaken as the building has been allocated as the main depot for the council's new in-house street cleaning service. The collections were cleaned, checked and packed by the museum team with support from other council colleagues before being moved to a new temporary storage facility. The museum aims to eliminate the need for an off-site store over the next two years through the reorganisation of current storage arrangements and through a targeted programme of rationalisation.
3. The mould issues reported at the previous Museum Committee have now been addressed with all collections checked, cleaned and repacked. Integrated Pest Management has been introduced to the museum. This means we are now monitoring and managing pest and environmental information in a coordinated way so that control methods can be introduced to prevent pest damage to collections.

Collections Access

4. Since November the curators have received 165 enquires related to the collections. The Local Studies Room has been well used since its re-opening in November. From April the Local Studies Room will be open on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 10am – 4pm and the 2nd Saturday of the month from 10am – 1pm, except for August. We are grateful to our Local Studies Room volunteers for their hard work.
5. The museum was featured as a case study in the ICOMOS/ACE publication 'Exploring Intangible Cultural Heritage in Museum Contexts: A Pilot Project'. The Brassey collection was featured in a journal article in Journeys periodical, part of the Pacific Presences AHRC-funded project at the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, University of Cambridge.
6. We have received a request for a doctoral research project from the University of Sussex for our Native North American collections. There have been on-going talks with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the volunteers who set up the Pier Archive about its future. While the Collections Curator met with Hastings Civic Society to discuss their application for a project on the West Hill.
7. The Brassey collaborative doctoral research project, 'Doings of the Sunbeam: Reintroducing Photography with the Ethnographic Collections of Annie, Lady Brassey (1839-1887)', is now well underway. A literature review of Brassey-related publications has been completed and the process of building partnerships with other organisations is underway. This has included working with Hastings Library who

hold complimentary Brassey material, and supporting the Hastings Creatives' Spring programme by MSL. The next stage of the project, subject to securing funding, is an international placement at the Huntington Library, USA in order to draw more connections to the photographic volumes in America and the ethnographic collections here.

Acquisitions

8. The museum has accessioned the follow objects since last Museums Acquisition Report in 2018:

- HASMG: 2018.24 Eight boxes of photographic prints from the Hastings Observer archive, dating from the 1980s, 90s and 00s
- HASMG: 2018.25 Black and white portrait of George Glyde (1885-1939)
- HASMG: 2018.26 Teapot from Hastings Pier
- HASMG: 2018.27 Warrior Square Station painting by Vincent Lines
- HASMG: 2018.28 Reserved for archaeological archive
- HASMG: 2018.29.1 Piece of molten metal from the 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.2 Brass arcade token burnt in the 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.3 Brass arcade token burnt in the 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.4 Brass arcade token burnt in the 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.5 Brass arcade token burnt in the 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.6 Brass arcade token burnt in the 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.7 Brass arcade token burnt in the 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.8 Brass arcade token burnt in the 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.9 Concrete from the ballroom burnt in 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.10 Piece of decking burnt in the 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.11 Piece of decking charred in the 2010 Hastings Pier fire
- HASMG: 2018.29.12 Core sample from under Hastings Pier
- HASMG: 2018.29.13 Core sample from under Hastings Pier
- HASMG: 2018.29.14 Core sample from under Hastings Pier
- HASMG: 2018.29.15 Core sample from under Hastings Pier

9. Two drawings by Clifford Hall, *Indian Girl*, 1946, pen and ink wash (LH0248) and *Female Figure Study*, 1948, pencil and black ink (LH0250), have been transferred to the museum from the Leighton House Museum, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. The two figure drawings were selected as they act as contextual work for HASMG: 1971.20 *Shrouded Figure* by Clifford Hall, already within our collection. They have yet to be given an HASMG accession number.

Loans

10. There have been no loan out requests.

11. The fireback (HASMG: 1911.60.7) was safely returned from the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford (LI4217.1) in January. The

fireback was on display from 31st August 2018 to 20th January 2019 as part of their *Spellbound: Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* exhibition.

Rationalisation

12. A number of large objects have been identified as having potential for rationalisation:

HASMG: 1995.52 Lamp post
HASMG: 1971.48 Threshing machine
HASMG: 1974.30.1 Georgian door
HASMG: 1974.30.2 Georgian doors
HASMG: 2010.35 Shop sign

13. A report will be presented at the next formal Museum Committee for consideration.

Collections Policies

14. The museum's collections policies are due for renewal as they have not been updated since the closure of the branch museum.

15. The Collections Management Framework brings together policies for the development, documentation, care and access to our collections. This integrated approach will help improve collections management process over time. The Framework includes four policies:

- Collections Development Policy
Sets out our framework for the responsible and ethical acquisition and disposal of collections
- Collections Information Policy
Outlines what information we record about the collections and how this applies to the Accreditation Standard
- Collections Care and Conservation Policy
Sets out what can damage the collection and how we try to reduce or manage those risks
- Collections Access Policy
Affirms our commitment to reducing the barriers that stop people enjoying the museum's collections

16. The Care and Treatment of Human Remains Policy and Loans Policy are both updates of current policies. They reflect changes in the museum, legislation and standards since both were initially adopted.

