

**Report To:** Museum Committee

**Date of Meeting:** Monday, 6 September 2021

**Report Title:** Collections Report

**Report By:** Damian Etheraads, Museum and Cultural Development Manager

**Key Decision:** N

**Classification:**

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### **Purpose of Report**

To update the committee on collections care, access, acquisitions, loans and objects being considered for rationalisation.

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### **Recommendation(s)**

- 1. To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.**

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### **Reasons for Recommendations**

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## 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 *What's in the box?* project has been running since last summer. The project is about working with target groups and volunteers to document, clean and repack the stored collections. 350 marine biology, 175 fine art and 600 local history objects have been documented. Since last summer nearly 1500 objects have been documented by project participants in total. In addition to this, during lockdown digital volunteers have transcribed 5085 accession register entries covering the period c.1930 – c.1989. The project is coming to an end and will be followed by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund project *Democratising the collections for the 21st Century*.
3. The museum received a Collections Care Grant from South East Museums in March 2020. The grant is been used to purchase packing materials to rehouse items from the Native American collection and plate glass negatives. Volunteers will begin working on repackaging vulnerable, outsized and awkwardly shaped objects from the collections. This collections work is scheduled to start in Autumn 2021.
4. The Integrated Pest Management programme is continuing. It is the practice of monitoring and managing pest and environmental information with pest control methods to prevent pest damage to the collections and building. Moth and carpet beetle was detected in the in the Sub Arctic gallery earlier in the year. The design of the displays makes it a high-risk area for pests. Additional traps and cleaning have been introduced. Recent checks have shown no evidence moth or carpet beetle in the area. Pest damage was identified in the marine biology collection. The collection has been cleaned and repacked. Measures have been taken to reduce the potential for problems in the future.
5. The museum's environmental monitoring equipment will come to the end of its useable life in the next couple of years. Its demise is be hastened by necessary upgrades to council systems and equipment. An up-to-date cloud-based system monitoring temperature and humidity system throughout the museum will cost around £5000. Additional funding sources for this will need to be identified.

## Collections Access

6. Since March, we have received 76 enquiries. The number of enquiries appears to be increasing. The most popular enquiry area continues to be the local history collections, followed by natural science and then art questions.
7. The local studies reopened again in May along with the museum. There have been 11 researchers using the room since then with 50% of the available slots booked. Covid-secure guidelines people using the room are required to book a two-hour session. The sessions are bookable through the [museum website](#) or by calling 01424 451052.
8. Sarah French, PhD Brassey Researcher, is continuing to work on her dissertation. She is funded until end 2021, with a submission deadline of September 2022.

9. The museum has been approached to join the Francis Crick Institute project [Uncovering 5,000 years of genetic evolution: from the Stone Age to the 21st century](#). The project is looking at the genetics of people who lived in the Britain over the last 6000 years to investigate ancestry, change, migration and natural selection through time. It has the potential to tell us a great deal about the people who lived in East Sussex and how this has changed over thousands of years. It will involve the testing bone samples from human remains in the collection. This will be destructive sampling and will result in irreversible changes to the items tested. The sampling will follow the guidelines laid out by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport DCMS and the Advisory Panel on Archaeological Burials in England. They the information gained from samples for the museum to use without restriction.

## Acquisitions

10. The museum has accepted the following objects for accessioning since the last formal meeting:

HASMG:2021.1	Fossil of the genus <i>Scheensita sp.</i> CF. <i>mantelli</i>
HASMG:2021.2	Multi-storey by JD Roberts, 2018, oil on canvas
HASMG:2021.3.1	The Showman by Richard Spare, watercolour
HASMG:2021.3.2	Delicate Steams by Richard Spare, etching
HASMG:2021.5	Ceremonial trowel used for the closing brick of the railway tunnel between Hastings and St Leonards, 1850
HASMG:2021.6	Human jawbone found in Castle Hill Passage, dated to c.1175-1205
HASMG:2021.7.1-5	Five untitled works by Margaret Fisher Prout, c.1890
HASMG:2021.8.1-12	13 Hastings and Rother Rainbow Alliance Newsletters, digital photograph and film
HASMG:2021.9.1-2	Digital photograph and film of a tapestry showing two women, Hastings Queer History Collective
HASMG:2021.10.1-3	Plaster cast blue plaque for Marianne North, digital photograph and film, Hastings Queer History Collective.
HASMG:2021.11.1-3	A used face wipe, digital photograph and film, Hastings Queer History Collective
HASMG:2021.12.1-3	Digital photographs and film of a 'little envelope of heartbreak', filled with ephemera of romantic relationships, Hastings Queer History Collective
HASMG:2021.13.1-3	Digital photograph and film of donor's Doc Martins and stiletto heels, Hastings Queer History Collective
HASMG:2021.14.1-2	Digital photograph and film of a handmade mahogany box, Hastings Queer History Collective
HASMG:2021.14.1-2	Digital photograph and film of a 'coming out' post-it note, Hastings Queer History Collective
HASMG:2021.16-27	11 COVID-19 Lockdown Journals
HASMG:2021.36-40	11 digital COVID-19 Lockdown Journals
HASMG:2021.41	<i>Pilgrims of the Wild</i> by Grey Owl published, 1935, signed by the author
HASMG:2021.42.1-15	Grey Owl-related ephemera x 15

## Loans

11. *Signor de Rossi* by Walter Richard Sickert (HASMG:1949.8.1) and *Dieppe, France* by Laura Sylvia Gosse (HASMG:1979.80) have now gone on loan to the Walk Art Gallery, part of National Museums Liverpool (LO2021.01). They will feature in *Sickert: A Life in Art* from 18 September 2021 to 27 February 2022. This is the largest retrospective of artwork by Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942) to be held in the UK for more than 30 years. They are due to return in March 2022.
12. No loans have been returned in this period.

## Rationalisation

13. In line with our Collections Development Policy, contained within the Collections Management Framework, the curatorial team have advised the following objects be removed from the collection:

HASMG: 2020.1	Bottle/jar from the wreck of the Amsterdam
HASMG:1989.38	Four netting needles, each with initials
HASMG:1984.11	Iron harpoon head
HASMG:1987.3-5	Three augers
HASMG:1985.29	Eight fishing weight
HASMG:1989.38.18	sailmakers palm made from leather
HASMG:1989.38.16	Five wooded netting needles
HASMG:1989.38.3	Penknife
HASMG:1989.38.9	Two wooded net measures
HASMG:1989.28.17	Netting needle made from wooden rule with tallow
HASMG:1977.96	Brass netting needle
HASMG:LA866	Yoke rope for captain's gig
HASMG:LA867	Shackle rope
HASMG:1914.62.8	Steal eel spear
HASMG:LA307	Wooden herring tally stick
HASMG:1975.43	Plastic netting needle
HASMG:1975.56	Wooden netting needle belonging to George Moon
HASMG:1984.29	Life jacket lamp clip made from nylon rope
HASMG:LA362	Wooden wedge belonging to boat builder
HASMG:1991.10.3	Silver boatswain call engraved
HASMG:1945.17	Portable mirror, captain Cook G Jarvis
HASMG:LA505	Model of beam trawl for model fishing boat EVG
HASMG:1976.49	Model of cinque port ship in a bottle
HASMG:1927.25	Model of rowing skiff with four oars built by WR Hilder
HASMG:1952.23	Model of a rowing dinghy by WR Hilder
HASMG:LA504	Model of Hastings punt by WR Hilder
HASMG:LA500	Model of Hastings lugger by WR Hilder
HASMG:1975.86	Ships fender made from rope, by HJ Gasson & Sons
HASMG: Unnumbered	Steel sailmakers needle

Breeches buoy  
Model of ships bell lanyard  
Five examples of knots  
Wooden float  
Model of clinker build rowing dinghy

Reason for disposal: Objects have been on long term loan to Hastings Fishermen's Museum. In their current location they are on display for people enjoy in setting appropriate to their provenance. If retained by the Hastings Museum & Art Gallery they are likely to be returned to the store.

Method of disposal: By gift, through transfer of ownership to Hastings Fishermen's Museum.

## Collections Policies

14. No updates

## Options

16. To recommend approval of the museum's participation in the Francis Crick Institute project,  
17. To recommend approval of the accessioning of the objects listed.  
18. To recommend approval the rationalisation of the objects listed.  
19. To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

## Public Exemption

20. This report contains no exempt information.

## Timetable of Next Steps

21. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Discussion by Museum Committee	Museum Committee	September 2021	Museum and Cultural Development Manager
Approval by Cabinet	Cabinet	October 2021	Museum and Cultural Development Manager

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## Wards Affected

Castle;

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## Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 40

Have you used relevant project tools?: Y

### Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	Y
Risk Management	Y
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	Y
Economic/Financial Implications	Y
Human Rights Act	Y
Organisational Consequences	Y
Local People's Views	Y
Anti-Poverty	Y
Legal	Y

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## Additional Information

Insert a list of appendices and/or additional documents. Report writers are encouraged to use links to existing information, rather than appending large documents.

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## Officer to Contact

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