

Report To: Museum Committee

Date of Meeting: Monday, 14 March 2022

Report Title: Collections Report

Report By: Damian Etheraads, Museum and Cultural Development Manager

Key Decision: N

Classification:

Purpose of Report

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

Recommendation(s)

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

Reasons for Recommendations

- Your report must clearly present reasons for all the recommendations so that these can formally be published as a matter of public record. This is a statutory requirement.

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. Collections care activities have continued under the supervision of the Collections & Engagement Curators. The banquettes in the Durbar Hall have been cleaned and wrapped in specialist material to protect them from further deterioration. This work included cleaning the spaces behind them where some objects were found and catalogued. The museum's association is leading [on crowd funding efforts](#) to have them fully conserved.
3. Activity funded by the South East Museum's Collections Care Grant is ongoing. It is being used to re-pack particularly fragile and vulnerable items from the Native North American collections. A workspace has been created in the Plains Gallery to allow this work to happen. The curatorial team are working with volunteers on completing the re-packing by the end of the year.
4. *What's in the box?* came to a close in January. Over 3000 objects were successfully documented across all collections and 6510 register entries were transcribed by volunteers and project participants.
5. The Integrated Pest Management programme is continuing. Evidence of pest activity was found in part of the Upper Durbar Hall, thought to be due to water ingress which has since been addressed. The design of these displays also make them a high-risk area for pests. Measures have been taken to reduce the potential for problems in the future.
6. The museum has taken part in a new initiative to scope out the prospect of digitising the UK's natural science collections. Led by the Natural History Museum, the project is a part of the European initiative, [Distributed System of Scientific Collections](#) and the UK project, [Towards a National Collection](#).

Collections Access

7. Since September, the curators have received 29 enquires related to the collections. The Local Studies Room has continued to operate with a pre-booked appointments system. There are a number of repeat visitors undertaking long-term research alongside new and single-visit researchers exploring specific topics such as the history of their house. Over 90% of the available appointments have been full. During Hastings Week the Local Studies Room volunteers ran four bookable workshop sessions to explain the resources available on site to research the history of a house.
8. Since September volunteers have been working on a range of inventory and documentation projects including work with: archaeological material, Local Studies Room reference books, Hastings Observer photographs, ceramics and rolled plans/ maps. They have also been digitising the bomb damage records from the Second World War and similar work has begun on the museum minute books as well.
9. In October there was a volunteer recruitment drive. This led to eight new volunteers joining the team. There have been an average of 13 people volunteering each month at the museum, contributing a total of 616 hours of their time. since September

Acquisitions

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

HASMG:2022.1 Archaeological archive for excavation at Darwell Close, St. Leonards-on-Sea

Loans

11. The following loans requests have been received.
12. *Signor de Rossi* by Walter Richard Sickert (HASMG:1949.8.1) and *Dieppe, France* by Laura Sylvia Gosse (HASMG:1979.80) have now been returned to the museum after their loan to the Walk Art Gallery, part of National Museums Liverpool (LO2021.01). They featured in *Sickert: A Life in Art*, the is the largest retrospective of work by Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942) to be held in the held in the UK for more than 30 years.

Rationalisation

13. No requests this period.

Collections Policies

14. The museum is the designated archaeological archive repository for the Hastings Borough Council area. To help with this duty we have drafted a policy for use by archaeological units showing the Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives. The policy has been created using industry standard template adapted for Hastings' local circumstances.

Options

15. To recommend the approval of this report, including the accessions and Archaeological Archives policy, by Cabinet.

Timetable of Next Steps

16. 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	March 2022	Museum and Cultural Development Manager
Approval by Cabinet	Cabinet	April 2022	Museum and Cultural Development Manager

Wards Affected

All

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 43

Have you used relevant project tools?: Y

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

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

Additional Information

HMAG Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives

Officer to Contact

Officer Damian Etheraads
Email damian.etheraad@hastings.gov.uk
Tel 01424 451151