

Report To: Museum Committee

Date of Meeting: Monday, 5 September 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 disposal.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. To accept this report and recommend 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. Collections care activities have continued behind the scenes. New insulation has been installed in the attach to regulate and humidity in the bonery store and stabilise the temperature.
3. Through the *Democratising Collections* there is a range of collections work underway. This includes work on the archeology, local history and ceramics collections. The project participants, volunteers and museum team have been researching objects and updating records. For example, 500 items in the ceramics collection have been catalogued as part of this activity. Up to 40 objects have now been identified as potentially suitable for curatorially motivated disposal. Work is now underway on these objects to establish if they meet the criteria for disposal. The outcome of this will be reported to the committee as part of our normal disposals processes.
4. Repacking the Native North American Collections continues. This work has been funded by a grant from South East Museums. The team and volunteers are making bespoke boxes for large and delicate items to improve their storage and care. Alongside this the collections have had their documentation checked and our records updated accordingly. Objects are also being photographed where no existing images exist. The team have been working through the collection in priority order, tackling the most vulnerable objects first, with a significant number having been re-boxed and rehoused. Smaller items are being repacked more logically to make best use of available storage space.
5. The Integrated Pest Management programme has continued. No measures or interventions have been required over the summer period.
6. SmartWater is now being used to mark collections in the grounds. It is a clear liquid solution that carries a unique forensic code. The museum is now registered on their national security register. The means any objects removed from the grounds can be traced by the police. Deterrent signage also been added to let people know we are using SmartWater. It adds a new layer to our security measures.

Collections Access

7. Since March the curators have received 25 enquires related to the collections.

8. The local studies room continues to operate well using the appointment system. This allows for a better experience for users. Demand for these appointments has slowed. Potentially this is due to more access to other archives and research rooms due to the ending of lockdown restrictions. Since May, the Local Studies Room has also been open for drop-in visits on the third Saturday of each month. This gives working people an opportunity to explore the collections, and has resulted in Wednesday appointments being booked so individuals can follow-up on their investigations.
9. The main accession registers have now been transcribed to allow for quick cross referencing with the collections database. The volunteers are set to begin work transcribing the small registers with historical numbers which should help resolve one of the documentation backlog issues we have. This is in addition to the work being undertaken by volunteers and staff included in the Update Report.

Acquisitions

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

HASMG:2021.16-38	COVID-19 Lockdown Journals
HASMG:2021.8-14	LGBTQI+ project acquisitions
HASMG:2022.15	Collection of fossil insects and other arthropods,
HASMG:2022.16.1	Fossil reptile footprint in a block of rock
HASMG:2022.16.2	Fossil pterosaur femur in block of fine sandstone
HASMG:2022.16.3	Maps of dinosaur trackways

Loans

11. Two loan requests have been received since March. Pallant House Gallery have requested to borrow HASMG:1991.62 *The Boat* by Laetitia Yhap (b1941). The painting would be included in their forthcoming exhibition *Sussex Landscape: Chalk Wood and Water*. The loan is from November 2022 until April 2023. The exhibition will include works by Turner, Constable, Ravilious and contemporary artists. The Collections Working Group have considered this request and recommend approval.
12. Groundworks South have requested the continuation of the loan of fossils to the visitor centre in Hastings Borough Council. The original loan was made in the 1990s and not actively managed. Long term loans are no longer regarded as acceptable practice. As such the Collections Working Group have recommended the loans of the following objects for three years. This will ensure the loan is regularly reviewed actively managed.

HASMG:G.393	Fossil plant root
HASMG:1992.1.85.b	Fossil plant Cycadites. Leaf in matrix
HASMG:1992.1.209	Fossil plant Onychiopsis. Leaves and bark fragments in matrix
HASMG:1992.1.210a	Fossil Fish Lepidotes. Scales in matrix
HASMG:GP68	Cycad, Zamites buccianus

13. No loans have been returned in this period.

Disposals

14. No requests this period.

15. All objects being considered for disposal are now listed on the museum website. This page will be updated as objects are reviewed. Not all objects listed on the site will make it through the disposal process. Those that do will be included in future reports for the committee to make their recommendation.

Collections Policies

16. No updates

Options

2. To accept this report and recommend approval by Cabinet.

Public Exemption

3. This report contains no exempt information.

Timetable of Next Steps

4. 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 2022	Museum and Cultural Development Manager
Approval by Cabinet	Cabinet	October 2022	Museum and Cultural Development Manager

Wards Affected

All Wards

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 43.4

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	Y
Anti-Poverty	N
Legal	N

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.

Officer to Contact

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