

Report To: Museum Committee

Date of Meeting:

Report Title: Collections Report

Report By:

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 – overview

Collections Access Officer has been reviewing Collection Storage areas and making recommendations for improved Collections storage, housing, disposals, digitising and updating information on Modes. She is also reviewing historic records in consultation with the Council's Data Retention Policy and Museum Collection Policy. She is identifying large projects for volunteer support including digitisation and auditing of Collections.

Collections Access Officer is also reviewing loans to other Collections and condition checking the collections and updating terms of loans.

HASMG:1960.27 Hastings, looking towards Westfield

In April, the painting suffered a large vertical tear with missing canvas fibres and central loss; pigment was also disturbed. Additionally, there was surface blooming evident on both the work and the frame.

Corinne Farmer, ACR MPhil PgCE, from Towner Art Gallery, has reviewed it and it and is working on the repair.

Storage capacity at the Tunbridge Wells store has been increased further with the re-racking and audit of archaeology along with additional racking being installed. This has added an additional 8m of shelf space. This will be used to better arrange the collections to improve access to objects for review and use and to increase capacity at John's Place by moving some objects from John's place to Tunbridge Wells.

3. The Integrated Pest Management

In April, a substantial insect pest infestation was identified in the main store in boxes of ethnographic material. The infestation was found to have spread to part of the taxidermy collection. The team have put in place a system of freeze treatment of affected objects and objects suspected to be affected. This has involved the purchasing a chest freezer. Preventive measures being put in place in addition to the programme of freeze treatment are the bagging of the taxidermy collection, the installation of pheromone and baited traps and increased monitoring and creating space in other areas of the museum as a quarantine area.

4. Other collections related things – review of our objects on display with Cllr Evans and members of the African Caribbean Community. Identified areas that can be updated to be

more inclusive and how we can tackle some of the issues of colonialism. Started with some reinterpretation.

Also working with First Nations groups to reinterpret our collections. We have been approached by Trinity Church and His Place Church to work with them on their National Lottery funded redevelopments and reinterpretation using our collections.

Concern over the Durbar Hall, might be a big fundraising project that we need to look at, wood affected by rain coming through the roof this means pests are getting into the cases. Lights and gauze below lights affected badly, needs replacing.

Plaines Gallery reopened in July. Gallery now fully interpreted, more objects out on display, The space is now working as a gallery again rather than a space left from a repacking project, previously objects in there had no labels and we now represent more First Nations rather than just the Plains tribes.

Collections Access

5. Since March the curators have received 45 enquires related to the collections.
6. The local studies room – The Local Studies Room has had 20 booked appointments since March which has included research by Academics, artists, students, hobby historians, family interest, local projects. We continue to be extremely thankful to Andre and Bill for their continued dedication to the local studies room and facilitating these research visits which are vital in terms of local history but also collections access, being able to go the extra mile when the Curators may not have capacity to do so.
7. Other collections access updates (website, etc)
Collections Access Officer is working through Modes to update and standardise catalogue terminology and templates to ensure that the database is easily searchable by both the Public and Museum staff; a proposal is in development to link the database and website so that staff can easily promote and share the Collection online in concurrence with events and exhibitions.

Collections Access Officer and Curator (Art) ran a Collections handling session for Project Artworks (PAW) earlier in August in which PAW explored the collections and made art in response to the museum.

We are working with Hastings College Jewellery makers to create work in response to our collections which can then be sold in the shop.

Acquisitions

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

HASMG:2023.3 May Queen Crown from 90th May Queen Crowning
HASMG.2023.2 Local folk musician Barry Dransfield folk art doll and portrait
HASMG.2023.2.1

Collections Access Officer is reviewing and processing several objects which have been approved for accession and yet to be processed and housed.

Loans

9. Loan requests received since March – Request from National Gallery Thérèse Lessore, The Dare-Devils, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 71.1 cm. *Discover Degas and Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando*, to be held at the National Gallery, London from 6 June – 1 September 2024

Sainsbury Centre Norwich Museum – Native North American Art exhibition to be open in Spring 2024 with the Cherokee/Choctaw artist Jeffrey Gibson. – objects being reviewed currently

10. loans returned in this period - Laetitia Yhap, The Boat, Oil on board, 1987 (HASMG:1991.62) For an exhibition: *Sussex Landscape: Chalk, Wood and Water at Pallant House Gallery*, 8-9 North Pallant, Chichester, PO19 1TJ. 12 November 2022 – 23 April 2023.

Disposals

11. 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:

Collections Access Officer has drafted a gift/transfer of title agreement to share with organisations. She is finalising the transfer of five objects to the Fishermen's museum:

HASMG:1985.44 – Ship's Dead Eye

HASMG:1975.101 – Otter Board

HASMG:2004.8.1-3 - Three painted wooden fishing boats, produced for Millennium Fishermen's Arch, by artist Cathy Pope.

Collections Access Officer is in communication with the Council regarding first refusal for objects on the approved disposals list before listing them on the Museums Association website.

Collections Access Officer is also in touch with several members of the public about the return of items not accessioned.

HASMG:NUMBER TITLE (D2023.2)

Unaccessioned Unprovenanced Archaeology. Unused in storage in Tunbridge Wells for last few years. Limited potential future use. Legal right to dispose: Low risk of future claim

Reason for disposal: - Objects with little or no provenance

- Method of disposal:
- Recycling of object
- Destruction of object

HASMG:NUMBER TITLE (D2023.3)

Accessioned Unstratified Archaeology. Unused in storage in Tunbridge Wells for last few years. Limited potential future use. Legal right to dispose: Yes

Reason for disposal: - Objects with little or no provenance

- Method of disposal:
- Recycling of object
- Destruction of object

HASMG:NUMBER TITLE (D2023.4)

Unaccessioned Unstratified Archaeology. Unused in storage in Tunbridge Wells for last few years. Limited potential future use. Legal right to dispose: Low risk of future claim

Reason for disposal: - Objects with little or no provenance

- Method of disposal:
- Recycling of object
- Destruction of object

Collections Policies

12. 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	11/09/23	
Approval by Cabinet	Cabinet		

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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