

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

52 volumes of Parkin Press Clippings are currently with Townsweb Archiving for digitisation. We have determined that a number of these are in such poor condition that they will be added to our disposals list for review.

Curator of Natural Sciences has spent several days with the support of volunteers preparing collections stored at Tunbridge Wells for the move to Pevensey. This move will make collections offsite more accessible; we can also review our collections on site to see what can be moved offsite, freeing up more space in the store allowing us better access and safer storage. We would like to start behind the scene store tours both off and on site and this will allow us the opportunity to do that.

Curator of Natural Sciences has also begun working on a re-boxing project with Bill to better care for the Markwick library.

We continue to deal with the ongoing issues in the Durbar Hall, the roof leaks, this will be repaired but the job has been listed for over a year. We would like to start to re-do the lighting and making the cases more boxed in to stop insects trying to get in, however we cannot do this until the roof is done. The leaks put the collection and the fabric of the hall at risk and I would urge this job to be pushed through urgently.

Environmental monitoring – we are in need of an upgrade to our data loggers (these monitor the relative humidity within our galleries and store) due to one or two of them failing this year. We have had them repaired but this is not a long term solution, we applied for funding for new data loggers however we were not successful this time around.

3. The Integrated Pest Management

Other than the on-going Durbar issues, no major issues have arisen since the last report. Several boxes of -the marine biology collection have been freeze treated due to possible active pest activity.

4. Other collections related things

Agata Read is continuing her fantastic work on digitising and scanning the Connold Collection of glass plate negatives. In addition to this, two of our wonderful volunteers are imputing their records on Modes.

We had two school-aged placements that helped to measure the glass plates for new housing.

We will now look to re-house all of our glass plate/slide collections and also look at how we can obtain funding for Agata to continue her work, which concludes at the end of March 2024.

We have carried out a survey of objects on loan at Smugglers' Adventures (since 1990s). The works will need to be de-framed to locate their HMAG numbers. Smugglers' Adventures is keen to work with us to develop their exhibition offer and are likely interested in some disposals for their collection.

Collections Access

5. Since September the curators have received 120 enquires related to the collections
6. The Local Studies Room has had 21 booked appointments since September, with particular interest in the Burton collection from various different researchers including Fleetwood museums and Trinity clocktower who will be using our collection to inform some of their new interpretation. 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. We are looking at reorganising the room to include the filing cabinets which contain subject folders relating to local history this would free up space in the curatorial office and allow Bill and Andre direct access to a great source.
7. Other collections access updates (website, etc)

We are in talks with Surface Impression, our website hosts to look at ways to do live updates from our collections database. This would break down a huge barrier to the access of our collection with online searches giving instant access to our collection. Currently we have to do a yearly update of our entire Collections database then export it and ask the website

hosts to upload it, which means people are not searching everything we have, not everything has a photograph and means new acquisitions are not added until the update.

Due to high demand, a new Hastings rarities display has been completed.

Acquisitions

8. The museum has purchased a limited edition print by Artist David Hockney, courtesy of the Went Tree Trust. David Hockney completed his National service at St Helens Hospital. The print is currently being framed and will be accessioned when it returns to us.

5 High Street Archaeological Finds HASMG:2023.114

Loans

9. Loan requests received since September
 - Request from National Gallery Thérèse Lessore, *The Dare-Deviils*, 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 – objects currently on loan. with the Cherokee/Choctaw artist Jeffrey Gibson. – Parflesche and Belt

OBX (Observer building) requested the loan of several (9) vintage televisions from the collection that were stored off-site.

10. loans returned in this period – N/A

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:

As mentioned above, we will identify which Parkin Press clippings volumes are in too poor a condition to retain post digitisation.

We have an ongoing list of disposals to work through and will concentrate on this once we move the collection from Tunbridge Wells to Mint House.

We have done a retrospective survey of all of the previous disposals and are seeking confirmation in writing that Cabinet has approved so that we may progress with posting the disposals on the Museum Association website.

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		
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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