

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Education, Learning & Leisure

ABERDEENSHIRE HERITAGE

**ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL
POLICIES**

2007-2012

August 2007

Aberdeenshire Council

Acquisition and Disposal Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This is Aberdeenshire Council's Policy Statement regulating the acquisition of items for the Collections of Aberdeenshire Heritage. The adoption and implementation of such a policy by Aberdeenshire Council is a requirement of the MLA Accreditation Scheme for Museums in the UK.
- 1.2 This represents the aims and plans of Aberdeenshire Council at the time of its adoption in August 2007, and as such will be subject to revision as Aberdeenshire Heritage develops. It is intended that this policy should be reconsidered at least once every five years and no later than October 2012, and a revised statement brought before Aberdeenshire Council for its agreement. The Scottish Museums Council will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy and the implications of such changes for the future of existing collections.
- 1.3 This Policy Statement supersedes all previous and existing practices and policies, formal or informal, relating to the acquisition of items for the collections of Aberdeenshire Heritage.
- 1.4 Aberdeenshire Council and its staff will be guided by the Museums Association's *Code of Ethics for Museums* (2002), as approved by the Council's Education & Recreation Committee in August 2002.
- 1.5 **Description of the collections of Aberdeenshire Heritage and Future Collecting Policy**

A. FINE AND APPLIED ART COLLECTIONS

For ease of consideration the Art collection has been divided into sub-headings:-

- a) Fine Art – includes paintings (oils and water-colours), drawings (pencil, ink, charcoal and pastel) and prints.
- b) Applied Art – includes sculpture, silver, glass, ceramics, furniture, horology, metalwork and some miscellaneous domestic and religious material.

A.1 Fine Art

The core of the Fine Art collection largely comprises the former burgh collections of Peterhead, Banff, and Inverurie, together with the Dora Scott bequest to the Arbuthnot Museum, Peterhead. While there are four pre-19th-century portraits, the greatest concentration is on 19th- and early 20th-century Scottish

painting, particularly portraits, maritime paintings and a few landscapes, and some contemporary 20th-century material by North East artists.

A.1.1 Oil Paintings

This group comprises portraits (mainly of former Provosts of Peterhead, Banff and Inverurie), maritime paintings, landscapes, still life and some genre paintings. Important names in this group include G. Fiddes Watt, Sir George Reid, Joseph Farquharson, and Robert Brough. Aberdeenshire Council holds the only collection in public hands in Northern Scotland of works by the Peterhead artist James Forbes, who was the teacher of John Phillip. In recent years there has been a policy of acquiring contemporary paintings by North East artists.

Recommendations

The Service will acquire works of quality of relevance to Aberdeenshire, including work by North East artists.

A.1.2 Water-colours and Drawings

This is a small group, the most significant of which are the 18th-century portraits by James Ferguson, and the series of water-colours of Peterhead painted in 1795 by Montague Beattie. There are few contemporary water-colours and drawings by North East artists.

Recommendations

The Service will acquire works of quality of relevance to Aberdeenshire, including work by North East artists.

A.1.3 Prints

This group falls into two distinct sections. One group is of 19th-century prints, largely landscape views, nearly all of which are of North East scenes. The other group is a larger collection of 20th-century prints, mostly by contemporary North East artists.

Recommendations

The Service will acquire topographical views of quality of Aberdeenshire and contemporary examples of North East printmakers.

A.2 Applied Art

The Applied Art collection covers a wide variety of objects and materials, of which the Banff silver sub-collection is of National importance.

A.2.1 Silver

This group of artefacts includes material produced in Banff, Peterhead, Ballater and Stonehaven. The collection of Banff silver is the largest in Scotland and forms the centrepiece of Banff Museum. Although just under half of the known Banff silversmiths are represented in the collection, this includes eleven out of thirteen silversmiths for whom marks are recorded. The collection would be strengthened and improved by acquiring pieces by these two other silversmiths and by filling gaps in terms of type of article especially hollowware (cups, mugs, bowls, teapots, etc). There is an important series of silver prize trophies associated with the mid-19th-century Volunteer movement in Aberdeenshire.

Recommendations

The Service will acquire material of quality that:

- a) fills identified gaps in examples of local makers
- b) fills identified gaps in type of object
- c) fills gaps in examples of modern local studio silver
- d) has an historical association with Aberdeenshire.

A.2.2 Sculpture and Ceramics

There are a small number of sculptures and ceramic works, some of which are by contemporary North East artists.

Recommendation

The Service will acquire sculpture which is of relevance to Aberdeenshire as identified by donation, bequest, purchase or loan, subject to restrictions on space and the nature and weight of the material.

A.2.3 Furniture and Horology

This is a small collection, the most significant items being several 17th-century chairs and a few longcase clocks, as well as the chair of William Thom, the Inverurie poet, and a 19th-century veneered cabinet made for the Banff Museum shell collection. In view of the varied nature of the existing material and current storage restrictions further acquisitions should only be considered where the material is of significant relevance to Aberdeenshire.

Recommendation

The Service will only acquire furniture of significant relevance to Aberdeenshire by donation, bequest, purchase or loan.

A.2.4 Metalwork

This group of material includes brass, copper, pewter and plated wares. It incorporates secular and religious material such as presentation gifts and trophies and community plate, mostly of local manufacture and association.

Recommendation

The Service will acquire metalwork which is of relevance to Aberdeenshire by donation, bequest, purchase or loan.

B. NATURAL SCIENCES COLLECTION

For ease of consideration the National Sciences Collection has been divided into sub-headings: the collection is composed of Vertebrate Zoology, Invertebrate Zoology, Botany and Geology.

B.1 Vertebrate Zoology

B.1.1 Mounted Birds

This collection consists largely of British birds, with some foreign species. Much of the material represents what survives of the 19th-century collections of Banff Museum and the Arbutnot Museum, Peterhead. Some 20th-century specimens have been acquired for display purposes.

Recommendation

There is at present no active research collecting policy; the Service will acquire new specimens for display purposes only by donation, bequest or purchase.

B.1.2 Bird's Eggs

This is a small collection, largely of British birds, with some exotic species (e.g. Ostrich). Legislation now prohibits the collecting of eggs of British birds and it is not anticipated that this collection will expand in the future.

Recommendation

The Service will only acquire eggs of local species where the specimens have been offered by the Police with accompanying data following investigation of illegal egg collecting.

B.1.3 Other Vertebrates

This group of collections contains mammals, some reptiles and fish. The older part of the collection consists of faded and somewhat decayed mounted specimens, now of little display value. Modern mounted mammal specimens have been acquired purely for display purposes.

Recommendation

There is at present no active research collecting policy; the Service will acquire new specimens for display purposes only, by donation, bequest or purchase.

B.2 Invertebrate Zoology

This is the largest collection in the Service comprising several thousand specimens from a number of sources. The two principal components are mollusc shells and insects.

The mollusc shell collection is largely of foreign species; much comes from the historical collections of Peterhead and Banff, with a modern donation to Banff Museum. The historical collections reflect scientific collecting during the 19th-century period of "Scots abroad" and require new curatorial research work to highlight this feature, while the modern collection has good accompanying data.

The insect collection derives from the historical collections of Peterhead, Banff and Inverurie Museums; no recent additions have been made to this section.

Recommendation

It is not anticipated that further additions will be made to this collection at present. The Service will carry out research work to highlight the 19th-century scientific/social element of the mollusc and insect collections.

B.3 Botany

The botanical collection consists solely of a single small herbarium of Arctic plants which has a connection with the Franklin expeditions.

Recommendation

It is not anticipated that further additions will be made to this collection at present.

B.4 Geology

The collections of rocks, minerals and fossils are small and variable in quality.

B.4.1 Rocks

The rock collection consists of a few hundred specimens from Aberdeenshire, Britain and Europe. There is patchy coverage of local rock types, though there is a representative collection of granites. It is anticipated that additions to the collection will be made in order to document local geology.

Recommendation

The Service will actively collect and acquire by donation, bequest or purchase, local rock types not represented in the collection and will acquire such British rocks as are needed for comparative purposes by donation or bequest. The Service will refer potential donations of overseas material to an appropriate institution.

B.4.2 Minerals

This collection contains a fairly representative group of minerals, not all of display quality. It is anticipated that additions to the collection will be made in order to document local geology.

Recommendation

The Service will only acquire specimens of local minerals by curatorial fieldwork and will ensure that such specimens are collected solely from recognised sites.

B.4.3 Fossils

The Fossil collection includes representative specimens of the major fossil groups, and has important Old Red Sandstone fish material. Much of the material, however, is not of display quality (although the Old Red Sandstone fish material has been the subject of recent research work) and there is a need for specimens from other parts of Britain for comparative purposes.

Recommendation

The Service will collect and acquire fossils from Aberdeenshire and seek to acquire such typical British specimens as are required for comparison by donation, bequest and purchase.

C. HUMAN HISTORY COLLECTION

For ease of consideration the Human History Collection has been divided into the following sub-headings:

Social History	Archives	Costume & Textiles
Archaeology	Numismatics	Ethnography
Arms and Armour	Photography	

Loans, which currently form an extremely small percentage of the collections, are encouraged only to fulfil a specific requirement such as exhibition, recording, etc. Where loans are accepted they are done so on a fixed period, recorded accordingly and may be renewed or terminated by mutual agreement.

C.1 Social History

The Social History collection covers a wide range of material from bicycles to prams, shop fittings, industrial and agricultural

machinery to ship models, medical, musical and scientific instruments, commemorative and ornamental items, toys and games, weights and measures, photographic and textile equipment.

Much of the material has a definite association with Aberdeenshire. In particular, the maritime collections relate to the herring fishing, the whaling trade and harbour development, while the agricultural collections of the Aberdeenshire Farming Museum are of national importance (MGC report 2000).

Some of the material, notably domestic utensils, has been collected as duplicates for use in school loan kits and for demonstration purposes.

Storage space, at present, is a problem, and precludes the acquisition of many large items. Where material of specific importance to Aberdeenshire does become available, every effort will be made to acquire it.

Recommendation

The Service will acquire Social History material which reflects the history of Aberdeenshire by donation, bequest, purchase or loan. It will only acquire un-provenanced material where it would strengthen the existing collection or be useful as handling material.

B.2 Archaeology

The Archaeology collection comprises material from North East Scotland and some foreign material. The North East material is generally confined to individual items from Aberdeenshire and was part of the old collections of the Peterhead, Banff and Inverurie Museums.

In the past individual finds came to the collection mainly by donation, a few items have been allocated more recently by the Treasure Trove Advisory Panel (now Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel (SAFAP)).

The collection is strongest in Neolithic and Bronze Age material, with a large collection of flints of various ages, a number of beakers and cinerary urns, and a significant collection of carved stone balls. The collection needs to be strengthened with material from the Early Historic period. (The collection is also weak in Iron Age and Roman period material, but under the terms of the collecting concordat with Marischal Museum at the University of Aberdeen, the Service will not actively seek to acquire material of this age.)

Recommendation

The Service will acquire archaeological material from Aberdeenshire with special reference to the periods identified, through the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel (SAFAP), the Historic Scotland Finds Disposal Panel and the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service. The Concordat with Marischal Museum at the University of Aberdeen means that Aberdeenshire Heritage will bid for SAFAP material from Aberdeenshire from Early Historic and later periods; Marischal Museum will place bids for SAFAP material from Aberdeenshire from earlier periods. Where there is likely to be conflicting bids, this will be resolved by mutual discussion and agreement.

B.3 Arms and Armour

This is a small and varied collection of British and foreign firearms, swords and daggers, shot and powder flasks and a few pieces of armour. There are two significant sub-collections: (a) the arms and armour donated to Banff Museum by the Duke of Fife; and (b) the Anderson Bey collection of North African militaria formerly held by Rhynie School.

Recommendation

The Service will acquire arms and armour of relevance to Aberdeenshire by donation, bequest, purchase or loan.

B.4 Costume & Textiles

This collection comprises costume, textiles and accessories. The collection comprises mainly ladies' costume, with some notable 19th-century dresses, but also includes the banner of the Banff Hammermen.

The collection has very little gents' or children's costume and it would benefit from such additions, concentrating mainly on the years from 1800 to the present day. There is also a lack of ladies' costume from 1800 to 1850 and 1940 to the present day. The collection of items, which represent distinct fashions during these periods would strengthen the collection.

Recommendation

The Service will acquire material with an Aberdeenshire association and fill gaps in the present collection as identified, by donation, bequest, purchase or loan.

B.5 Archives

This collection contains local material such as the account books associated with the McBain shoemakers artefacts from Whitehills and some Customs Records from Peterhead. Other single small items with display value or associated with artefacts will be retained by Aberdeenshire Heritage.

Recommendation

The Service will refer most offers of archival material to the Aberdeenshire Archives.

B.6 Numismatics

The core of this collection is the Arbuthnot Coin and Medal Collection from the Arbuthnot Museum, Peterhead. This is a representative collection which includes Greek, Roman, English, Scottish, and British coins, and 18th- and 19th-century commemorative medals. There is a more general collection from the Carnegie Museum, Inverurie which includes trade and church tokens.

There is a lack of bank notes in the collection. It would be beneficial to collect notes, particularly of the North East banks. It would also be beneficial to acquire examples of Scottish coins which are not currently represented in the collection and to bring the coinage up to date by including examples of pre-decimal and decimal coinage, and current Scottish bank notes.

The trade token collection requires some curatorial research to ensure that new acquisitions relating to Aberdeenshire do not duplicate existing material unless the existing example is in poor condition. The church tokens form a representative collection across Scotland; new acquisitions should be confined to Aberdeenshire.

The core of the commemorative medal collection is the Arbuthnot collection. There is a small collection of military medals. Duplicates of commemorative and military medals should not be collected unless the existing material is in poor condition.

Recommendation

The Service will acquire numismatic material to fill gaps and strengthen the existing collection as identified by donation, bequest, purchase or loan.

B.7 Photography

This collection holds some 14,000 catalogued images, as glass negatives, original photographs, postcards and copy negatives. Over half of this material relates to the Peterhead area.

The glass negatives are primarily the Shivas collection from Peterhead and provide a record of the area between about 1860 and 1910. Original photographs and postcards provide a record up to the 1960s supplemented by copy negatives. The recently-acquired Broughall collection (uncatalogued at present) comprises negatives from the Peterhead area during the last two decades of the 20th century.

There are also two large uncatalogued accessions from the Banff area: the Bodie collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century glass plates, and the Ritchie collection of early- to mid-20th-century roll film negatives.

In addition to collecting period photographs, it is important to keep the collection up to date by developing a contemporary photographic record of important modern aspects of Aberdeenshire. There is a need to maintain dialogue regarding the collecting of photographs with Aberdeenshire Library and Information Service and with various community heritage groups.

Recommendation

The Service will acquire historic and contemporary photographic material of relevance to Aberdeenshire by fieldwork, donation, purchase or bequest.

B.8 Ethnography

The Ethnography collection is based on the Arbuthnot Collection of the Arbuthnot Museum, Peterhead and on material from the Carnegie Museum, Inverurie. The most significant section in the collection is the Inuit material, brought back by whaling ships in the 19th century. Other items come from Africa and China.

Recommendation

The Service will not acquire further ethnographic material unless there is a strong connection with Aberdeenshire or the existing collection.

2.0 General Rules for Acquisition

- 2.1 Aberdeenshire Heritage recognises its responsibility, in making new acquisitions, to ensure that care, documentation and use of the collections will meet the Accreditation Standard. Accordingly, it will consider limitations on collecting imposed by factors such as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collections arrangements. Where the acquisition of any item would result in significant financial implications, the matter will be referred to Aberdeenshire Council for decision.
- 2.2 Aberdeenshire Heritage will exercise due diligence and will make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire valid title to the item in question.
- 2.3 In particular, the museum service will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom.
- 2.4 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from 1 November 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, Aberdeenshire Heritage will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. Aberdeenshire Council will be guided by the UK national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by DCMS in 2005.
- 2.5 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, Aberdeenshire Heritage will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- 2.6 Under the legal principles of Treasure Trove and *bona vacantia*, the discovery of antiquities in Scotland is a matter for report to the Crown. Scottish archaeological material will therefore not be acquired by any means other than allocation to Aberdeenshire Heritage by the Crown, normally on the advice of the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel (SAFAP), unless the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer, acting on Aberdeenshire Council's behalf, is satisfied that valid title to the item in question can be acquired, such as by certificate of 'No Claim' from the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel Secretariat.
- 2.7 The only exceptions to the above General Rules – 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6 - will be in specific circumstances where Aberdeenshire Heritage is either:

acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material from the UK; or

acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgment of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or

acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or

in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases Aberdeenshire Heritage will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the permission of an appropriate outside authority.

- 2.8 Aberdeenshire Heritage will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period' issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

3.0 Collecting Procedures - including gifts and loans

- 3.1 The Senior Museums & Heritage Officer, as Aberdeenshire Council's senior museum professional, will normally have delegated authority and responsibility for the acceptance or rejection of potential gifts or bequests to Aberdeenshire Heritage, for soliciting gifts of material for the collections within the terms of this policy, and for making recommendations and taking action on the purchase of material in accordance with this Policy and within Aberdeenshire Council's normal standing orders.

- 3.2 Items offered to the Museum as gifts or bequests will not normally be accepted if they are subject to any restrictive covenant or special conditions, such as that they be displayed in a particular way. In exceptional circumstances, if the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer feels that the item(s) in question are of over-riding importance, Aberdeenshire Council may be asked to approve the acquisition of a specific item to which conditions are attached. A general exception to this rule will be deemed to exist in respect of restrictive covenants or conditions intended only to assure the permanent protection of the item concerned in the Museum's collections, such as restrictions placed upon any legal powers of disposal that Aberdeenshire Heritage may have; under such circumstances, the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer may reasonably recommend that Aberdeenshire Council accept the gift or bequest in question.

- 3.4 The acceptance of items, on loan, normally for a finite period for display or specific study, may be authorised by the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer acting on Aberdeenshire Council's behalf. In exceptional cases, a privately owned item of major importance that falls within the scope of this Policy may be accepted on a finite long loan, whether or not it is required for immediate

display or study. No item will be received on “permanent loan”, a term which has no legal status. The period of all loans will normally be agreed in writing between the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer and the owner of the item at the time of deposit. Where the term of a loan has expired, it may be renewed or extended for further finite periods, at the discretion of both the owner and the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer.

4.0 Collecting Area

- 4.1 The Collecting Area for Aberdeenshire Heritage will be that defined by the Aberdeenshire Council boundary.
- 4.2 As the collection is a very varied one, from rocks over 500 million years old to photographs from the 1990s, there is no restriction on the time period covered by the collections.
- 4.3 Aberdeenshire Heritage will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museums:

- Grampian Transport Museum
- The Auld Post Office Museum and Session Cottage, Turriff
- The Inch Connection
- Blairs Museum
- Gordon Highlanders Regimental Museum
- Tarves Heritage Project
- Museum of Scottish Lighthouses
- Fraserburgh Heritage Centre
- Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen

- 4.4 Items made in, at some point used within, or otherwise provenanced to Aberdeenshire Heritage’s Collecting Area, may be acquired, regardless of their location at the time of acquisition. Where this involves the collection of items from a place within the geographical sphere of influence of another museum, a principle of open actions and good communications will apply.
- 4.5 In an emergency, and to ensure the preservation locally [and in public ownership] of important material, the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer is exceptionally authorised to collect material from outside Aberdeenshire Heritage’s stated collecting area, relating to those parts of Scotland not yet covered by any museum service. Such material is acquired on the understanding that it may be transferred to other museums at a future time.
- 4.6 Where Aberdeenshire Heritage seeks to collect the work of “local” artists, or to acquire “local” views, the area defined at 4.1 and 4.2 above will normally be used as the basis for decisions.

- 4.7 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy should be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

5.0 Disposal – General Principle

- 5.1 By definition, Aberdeenshire Heritage has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. Aberdeenshire Council accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons and in very specific circumstances, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

6.0 Reasons for Disposal

- 6.1 To remove from the collections any item which is too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any further use for the purposes of Aberdeenshire Heritage.
- 6.2 To improve the curatorial care of the collections by the disposal of duplicate or unprovenanced material of low intrinsic relevance to the Acquisition Policy.
- 6.3 To transfer to the ownership of another Accredited museum any item which, by reasons of changes in public, social or educational need, administrative responsibility, development priorities, or the establishment of a new Accredited museum, the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer advises Aberdeenshire Council would be more appropriately placed elsewhere.

7.0 Authority for Disposal

- 7.1 No museum item may be disposed of without the specific authority of Aberdeenshire Council, through the approval of the Education, Learning & Leisure Committee. Such a decision will be the responsibility of Aberdeenshire Council, acting on the advice of the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer and not of the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer or any person acting alone.
- 7.2 Aberdeenshire Heritage will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Any decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration.
- 7.3 Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.
- 7.4 If the disposal of a quantity of similar material is proposed, Aberdeenshire Council may, however, give the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer delegated authority to act in the specific, once a general principle has been approved.

7.5 Where recommendations concerning the disposal of museum items are to be made, it is understood that there will need to be certain preliminary investigations before a report can usefully be brought before Aberdeenshire Council. This may include such matters as obtaining valuations, seeking the views of donors, and contacts with other Accredited museums which may be interested in accepting transfers. Within the terms of this policy, it is understood that the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer has authority to act in this way, without prejudice to Aberdeenshire Council's eventual decision.

8.0 Disposal of Purchases, Gifts and Bequests

8.1 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, Aberdeenshire Heritage will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant.

8.2 Items given or bequeathed will not normally be disposed of without prior consultation with the original donors or their families within the first generation, and wherever possible their approval should be obtained to the course of action proposed. This is, however, a matter of courtesy rather than a legal requirement. The Senior Museums & Heritage Officer shall be entitled to waive this requirement where all reasonable efforts to trace a donor have failed, and additionally where no details of the donor exist.

8.3 In appropriate circumstances, having taken account of the procedure set out in paragraphs 7.1 – 7.5 and 9.1 – 9.3 of this Policy, the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer may recommend the return of an item to its original donor.

9.0 Disposal Procedure

9.1 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift, exchange or sale, directly to other Accredited (or Registered) Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

9.2 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited (or Registered) Museums to which it was offered directly, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal*, and in other professional journals where appropriate.

9.3 The announcement will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, Aberdeenshire Heritage may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations.

10.0 Disposal by Destruction

- 10.1 The destruction of a museum item will only be acceptable if it has been seriously damaged, or has deteriorated beyond the point of further usefulness to the collection. The decision to de-accession in this way must be authorised by Aberdeenshire Council acting on the advice of the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer. The item will need to be formally de-accessioned and the destruction must be carried out in a discreet, confidential and permanent fashion.

11.0 Procedure Following Disposal

- 11.1 Full records and photographs will be kept of all disposals from Aberdeenshire Heritage. Where items have been disposed of, this shall be recorded in the appropriate register.
- 11.2 Where a museum item is transferred to another Accredited Museum, all the associated documentation must accompany the item or follow within a period of one month. Where appropriate, this will include any photographic records. Aberdeenshire Heritage will retain on file copies of key sections of the documentation for future reference in accordance with the SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.
- 11.3 Any money received by Aberdeenshire Council as the result of the sale of a museum item must be used for the benefit of the collection. Normally this will mean it is placed in the Aberdeenshire Heritage Artefact Acquisition Fund or Aberdeenshire Farming Museum Purchase Fund, as appropriate, and used for the acquisition of further items but in exceptional cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases will be sought from MLA.

12.0 Repatriation and Restitution

- 12.1 Aberdeenshire Council, acting on the advice of Aberdeenshire Heritage's professional staff, may take a decision to return human remains, objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. This is entirely a matter for individual museums to consider, taking into account the ethical implications and within their legal position.

13.0 Management of Archives

- 13.1 As Aberdeenshire Heritage holds archival material, including photographs and printed ephemera, Aberdeenshire Council will be guided by the *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom* (3rd ed., 2002).

Definitions

These definitions are an Appendix to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy.

1. Aberdeenshire Heritage is defined as those premises, staff and collections of original material which may from time to time be under the control of the Senior Museums & Heritage Officer. At the time of adoption of this Policy, this principally encompasses:

- Aberdeenshire Heritage – Mintlaw (the HQ/Stores building)
- Aberdeenshire Farming Museum*
- Arbuthnot Museum, Peterhead*
- Banchory Museum*
- Banff Museum*
- Brander Museum, Huntly*
- Carnegie Museum, Inverurie*
- Fordyce Joiner's Workshop*
- Garlogie Mill Power House Museum*
- Macduff Store
- Maud Railway Museum*
- Peterhead Maritime Heritage
- Sandhaven Meal Mill*
- Tolbooth Museum, Stonehaven*
- Tortorston Store

* indicates museums Registered under Phase 2 Museums Registration.

The term "Museum" is used in a functional sense, and may at all times be taken to subsume the terms "Gallery", "Art Gallery", "Heritage Centre" or otherwise as appropriate.

2. "Collections" are defined as:

"any item entered in the Accession Registers of Aberdeenshire Heritage (or its constituent predecessors), whether as gift, or purchase, together with any item not entered in the Accession Registers, but in the possession of Aberdeenshire Heritage at October 2007, which was donated or purchased with the intention that it should become part of the Collections."

"Valid title" is defined as valid legal ownership.

3. The Senior Museums & Heritage Officer is defined as being the professional officer responsible to Aberdeenshire Council for the operation of Aberdeenshire Heritage according to proper professional standards. The Senior Museums & Heritage Officer must be an Associate of the Museums Association (AMA) and hold a relevant degree or other substantial relevant experience of the principles and practice of museum operation and management as may be determined to be acceptable by the Scottish Museums Council.