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# **ST ALBANS MUSEUM SERVICE COLLECTIONS POLICY 1997-2002**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This statement is intended to provide a framework for collections management and collecting within the Service. It examines current strengths and weaknesses of the collections and sets out priorities for active and passive collecting, documentation, storage, and conservation over the next five years. Copies of this statement, as approved by the Planning and Heritage Committee of the City and District of St Albans, will be deposited with the South Eastern Museums Service [SEMS] and all museums in Hertfordshire.
- 1.2 The Museum Service's Acquisition & Disposal policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The policy will next be due for review in 2001/02. The Museums & Galleries Commission [MGC] will be notified of any changes to the policy, and of the implications of any such change for the future of existing collections.

## **2.0 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- 2.1 St Albans Museums Service exists to collect, record, conserve, exhibit and interpret the human and natural heritage of the City & District of St Albans, and to provide access through the provision of quality services for the public benefit. Collecting is defined as including not only artefacts, specimens, samples, or the written record, but also data, such as may be held in the environmental record, excavation archive, sites and monuments records, photographs, films, oral recordings, etc.
- 2.2 St Albans Museums Service aims to build a comprehensive record of the lives of the people of the City and District. Donations of material will be considered within the criteria of this policy, regardless of the age, sex, marital status, race, religion, sexual orientation, colour or disability of the potential donor.

## GENERAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 3.0 GENERAL POLICIES

- 3.1 The Museums' governing body, the City & District of St Albans, has accepted and agreed to follow the current *Code of Practice for Museum Authorities* issued by the Museums Association and its subsequent amendments.
- 3.2 The Museum staff of St Albans Museums Service accept and follow the *Code of Conduct for Museums Curators* issued by the Museums Association and its subsequent amendments.
- 3.3 The Museums Service will not acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that it can acquire a valid legal title to the item in question, and that in particular it 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).
- 3.4 The Museums Service recognises its responsibility, in acquiring material, to ensure adequate conservation, documentation and proper use of such material and takes into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and conservation resources.
- 3.5 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the Museum Service, having regard to the interests of other museums.
- 3.6 *Prospective acquisitions which bear resource implications will be reviewed by a working group of Director, Principal Keeper, subject Keeper, and Conservation Officer.*

### 4.0 COLLECTION AREA

- 4.1 The Museums Service will take due account of the collecting policies of other museums collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields and will consult with such organisations where conflicts of interest may arise, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
- 4.2 The Museums Service shall normally restrict its collecting to the City & District of St Albans.

- 4.3 It is recognised, however, that this is a modern political boundary which does not reflect the true historical or ecological situation. The Service may therefore collect material from adjoining districts significant for the understanding and use of our own collections. Individual examples are outlined in the relevant sections below. The Service will inform the relevant local museum or archive if it intends to collect outside the District.
- 4.4 The Service may passively collect/accept material from adjoining districts with no Museum Service, or whose museums do not collect in a particular subject area, until such time as an acceptable 'Registered' Service is established in these areas, when consideration will be given to the relocation of finds.
- 5.0 ENQUIRIES POLICY
- 5.1 The Museums Service shall operate an enquiry service in all sections. It shall be the policy of the Museums Service, where appropriate, to pass on to another relevant Museum Service information (including illustrations and photographs where possible) concerning material bought in as enquiries from outside the District.
- 5.2 The Service will not value works of art or specimens brought in as enquiries, unless for purposes of acquisition by the Service, in which case at least one independent valuation will normally be obtained for items likely to exceed £100.
- 5.3 The Museums Service reserves the right not to provide written descriptions of an object where the officer concerned has reasonable ground to believe that such a description will be used as validation/authentication of material in a future sale.
- 5.4 The Museums Service reserves the right not to identify objects found with the use of a metal detector, especially if a satisfactory context or findspot is not provided.
- 5.5 The Service reserves the right to refuse to identify or otherwise give an opinion on any object where the officer has reasonable cause to suspect that an object has been stolen, illegally imported, acquired or retained in contravention of British nature conservation, ancient monuments, antiquities (including the Treasure Act 1996), or other legislation.
- 5.6 Notwithstanding §§5.3-5.5, the Service may, in confidence, make identification of portable antiquities at the request of the Department of National Heritage under its Portable Antiquities recording initiative. Such identifications may be made regardless of the circumstances of discovery, so long as information on the findspot is forthcoming.

## 6.0 LOANS POLICY

6.1 Loans from the collections shall be made with due consideration to the following points:

6.1.1 that the material is properly insured

6.1.2 that the officer concerned is satisfied that the use of the loan is suitable and proper

6.1.3 that the Conservation Officer is satisfied with the environmental conditions of the receiving institution

6.1.4 that the security of the object is satisfactory

6.1.5 in the case of material held by the Service but not owned or held in trust by St Albans District Council (e.g. a loan), that the lawful owner of the material is consulted.

6.2 Loans will only be accepted into the collection after due attempt has been made to acquire material by donation and after due consideration of storage, conservation and curation implications, including long-term costs. There shall normally be a specific purpose in view, e.g. display. Written fixed-term agreements shall be made with the lender.

6.3 All loans accepted into the care of the Museums Service shall be subject to the same conditions of curatorial care as if they were the property of St Albans Museums Service.

6.4 Loans will only be accepted if they fall clearly within this Collections Policy.

6.5 The Service will seek to return items on long-term loan which it cannot display.

### *Policy*

6.5.1 *During the period of this policy existing loans will be identified as far as possible through a search of correspondence and formal documentation records. They will be individually reviewed and renegotiated where appropriate.*

## 7.0 DISPOSALS POLICY

7.1 By definition, the Museums Service has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principle that there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Museums Service's collection except as set out below. (but see 4.4

above). It recognises, however, that under certain conditions such disposals may be necessary.

- 7.2 In those cases where the Museums Service is legally free to dispose of an item (if this is in doubt, advice will be sought) it is agreed that any decision to sell or otherwise dispose of material from the collections will be made only after due consideration. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principle aim of generating funds. Once a decision to dispose of an item has been taken, priority will be given to retaining the item within the public domain and with this in view it will be offered first, by exchange, gift, or sale to Registered museums before disposal to other interested individuals or organisations is considered.
- 7.3 In cases in which an arrangement for the exchange, gift or sale of material is not being made with an individual registered museum, the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of material. This will normally be done through an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal* and other professional journals if appropriate. The announcement will indicate the nature and number of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed.
- 7.4 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by exchange, sale, gift or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone. Full records will be kept of all such decisions and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to items concerned, including photographic records where practicable.
- 7.5 Disposals from the collections will only take place in the following cases:
- 7.5.1 where the material falls outside the collecting policy of the Museums Service.
  - 7.5.2 where the item is too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of use for the collection
- 7.6 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions but in

exceptional cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases will be sought from the MGC.

7.7 Where a museum object has been acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation, permission from that organisation will need to be sought before the object is deaccessioned or transferred to another museum. If the object is sold repayment of the original grant may be required.

7.8 *The Museums Service's duty of care to its collections cannot be maintained in overcrowded conditions. Areas where disposals appear desirable will be identified as outlined in §9.3.4. Recommendations for disposal will be carried out by a working group of the Director, Principal Keeper, subject keeper, Education Officer and Conservation Officer, working to the guidelines set out above.*

# GENERAL STATEMENT OF COLLECTION MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

## 8.0 DOCUMENTATION

8.1 Sound documentation is vital to the running of museums. Its essential purposes are: to establish the identity of objects in the collection; record essential information relating to them; to allow rapid search and retrieval without physical handling; and as an essential aspect of security and audit.

8.2 The Museums' documentation will be maintained:

8.2.1 from 1997, on registers for Verulamium and the Museum of St Albans, assigned, year by year, the numbers *yyyy.1-4,999* for archaeology, *yyyy.5,000-9,999* for social history, and *yyyy.10,000-14,999* for natural history

8.2.2 on an in-house local computer network, employing a purpose-built relational database. Currently STANDARD COLLECTION is used, and there are in excess of 35,000 recorded items on the database

8.2.3 for pre-1997 material, on a bound word-processed copy of the computer documentation, once the data is adequately checked to act as a register

*The production of this retrospective register will be a Service priority, for completion by 2002.*

8.2.4 on existing card indexes until in practice these are found to be redundant. No new record or amendment will be added to the card indexes.

8.2.5 for donations, on a copy of the MDA Entry Form. Related correspondence will be kept in a history file for the object.

8.2.6 in history files where there is sufficient extrinsic information on an objects to warrant them. See also 8.2.5.

8.3 All items in the Museums' care should be entered into the documentation system *except*:

loans and enquiries

text, graphics, and photographic materials generated within the service since *c* 1960

the working library

educational (e.g. handling) material

bulk finds in the excavation archives

special finds in excavation archives whose final destination is undecided. Such finds will normally possess a separate site designation.

8.4 New acquisitions will be entered into the documentation system without delay

8.5 Backlog will generally be added to the database in subject groups, taking a view of the importance of the material and other factors such as the availability of volunteer staff

8.6 No object in the collections should be displayed, lent, conserved or photographed, until it has been fully accessioned

8.7 A history file will be maintained for objects which justify one

8.8 *Conservation records will be copied to and maintained as electronic files by 2002.*

8.9 *Digital storage and access for the photographic records and collections will be investigated early in the term of this policy, both for internal management and with a view to the establishment of one or more public access modules.*

## 9.0 COLLECTIONS CARE

9.1 Long-term preservation of the collections requires a suitable and stable environment in stores and displays, archival-quality storage and display materials, proper storage equipment, and good handling, loan, and security procedures.

### 9.2 The Museum Environment

9.2.1 The Conservation Officer will maintain a constant record of the temperature and relative humidity of all museum displays and stores. Regular spot checks will be carried out on visible light and UV levels, and insect traps will be maintained in strategic areas of each building. The source of particulate and other pollution will be investigated on an *ad hoc* basis. Where conditions are unsatisfactory for the type of material being displayed or stored, or where improvements are identifiable, the Conservation Officer will report the matter to the Principal Keeper or Director for action.

9.2.2 *Electronic data logging should replace analogue thermohygrographs in all Museums and stores during the term of this plan.*

### 9.3 Storage equipment and materials

9.3.1 Many areas of the core collections are unsatisfactorily stored, often because storage materials bought in the past have come to the end of their life, or were obtained at a time when their long-term behaviour was not appreciated. They may now pose a threat to the collections they were intended to preserve.

9.3.2 The Conservation Officer, Photographer & Image Librarian, or a consultant conservator in the case of special groups of material, will identify areas for improvement and the optimum use of storage space, and report to the Principal Keeper or Director for action. Improvement in these areas should be regarded as a permanent aspect of the Museum Service's work.

9.3.3 Materials and furniture used in the museums should normally be of the quality used in the National Museums and Galleries; compromises are a false economy. Opportunities should be taken to replace display structures containing sensitive materials with low-formalin MDF or other materials.

9.3.4 *Improvements in storage invariably require extra space, often radically so, but extra buildings are unlikely to become available within the term of this policy. The Conservation Officer and Keepers will therefore confer with a view to dispose of objects from the core and teaching collections which have deteriorated or are of doubtful value. Particular attention will be paid to social history and natural history collections (especially large objects) and recently excavated archaeological material.*

'Disposal' in this context includes such mechanisms as transfer, and will be considered as set out in §§ 7.1-8 above.

### 9.4 Preventative conservation

9.4.1 In addition to monitoring the Museum environment and storage/display conditions, the Conservation Officer will view all prospective acquisitions, and may recommend refusal on conservation grounds, or carry out preventative treatments against infestation or corrosion.

### 9.5 Active conservation

9.5.1 The rolling programme of active conservation will be maintained, based on plans produced by the Conservation Officer or a consultant conservator. Plans should identify priorities for active conservation of

individual items or groups of material, on the basis of the threat posed to the objects, and their importance. Plans exist for prints, water-colours & drawings; textiles; and farm (etc.) vehicles.

9.5.2 In addition, *ad hoc* active conservation will be undertaken to prepare objects for display purposes, and on material submitted by other museum authorities.

## 9.6 Handling and transport

9.6.1 Objects should be handled as little as possible.

9.6.2 Cotton gloves will be used to handle bright/polished metal, and mounted pictures. Otherwise they are used at the Conservation Officers / subject Keepers' discretion.

9.6.3 Wherever possible, objects should be lifted and moved in padded containers (trays, baskets, trolleys, etc.), rather than lifted directly.

9.6.4 Packing for transport, and transport itself, should be undertaken with the advice of the Conservation Officer, and preferably carried out or supervised by staff who have attended a short course in handling and packaging.

## 9.7 Disaster plan

9.7.1 *A separate Disaster Plan will be prepared early in the course of this Policy to identify the risks associated with each of the buildings, and the procedures to be used in each case.*

9.7.2 Further risks posed by buildings (for example from overhead pipework) will be reviewed from time to time by the Conservation Officer and Keepers, and reported to the Principal Keeper or Director for action.

## SPECIFIC COLLECTING PRIORITIES

### 10.0 ARCHIVES

10.1 As the museum holds or intends to acquire archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums in the United Kingdom* (1996). The Museum will also aim to meet the standards outlined in the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts' *Standards for Record Repositories* (1990).

10.2 The bulk of St Albans City & District Archives are in the process of physical transfer to Hertfordshire County Record Office. Where there is doubt on the proper home of a paper document, the Keeper of Local History or the Principal Keeper will liaise with the County Record Office.

### 11.0 ARCHAEOLOGY

#### 11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 The Museum Service's archaeological material is largely housed at the Verulamium Museum and forms the bulk of the current collections. The Verulamium Museum was founded in 1939. Initially the collections were those from the excavations conducted by the Wheelers within the Roman Town. These have subsequently been added to by further excavations and the inclusion of the archaeological collections from the Hertfordshire County Museum, now the Museum of St Albans, in 1956. Virtually all the items within the archaeology collections are the property of the City & District of St Albans.

11.1.2 The active collecting arm of the Museums Service is the archaeological field unit based in Kyngston House, the museum resource centre. Material from recent unpublished archaeological excavations and medieval and later finds are stored in an HBMC [English Heritage]-approved store within this building. The broad policies outlined below are intended to encompass the work of all archaeological sections within the Museums Service.

11.1.3 So far as British or foreign archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) are concerned, in addition to the safeguards under paragraph 3.3 above, the Museums Service will not acquire objects in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has reasonable cause to believe that the circumstances of their recovery involved the recent unscientific or intentional destruction or damage of ancient monuments or other known archaeological sites, or involved a failure to disclose the finds to the owner or occupier of the land, or to the proper authorities in the case of a possible treasure under the terms of the Treasure Act 1996.

## 11.2 Archaeological archives

The term 'archive' in this context refers to the totality of records and objects resulting from an archaeological excavation or other site-based activity.

11.2.1 The Museums Service is an HBMC [English Heritage]-Approved Store for local archaeological material, and undertakes archaeological fieldwork on behalf of SADC and under contract to developers. It cannot control the quantity of newly excavated material, but will exercise control over what is stored in the medium- and long term. There is a strong presumption against the preservation of 100% of bulk finds (such as tile and animal bone), especially from unstratified contexts, and in particular following specialist reports. The right is reserved to sample such collections on a pragmatic basis. In the case of material not owned by the City & District of St Albans this will be carried out only after due consideration with the legal owners.

### 11.2.2 Acceptance of archaeological archives.

Development-led archaeological evaluation and excavation under the guidelines supplied by the Department of the Environment's *Planning & Policy Guidance No. 16 [PPG 16]* will increasingly lead to the offer of archives which do not conform to the priorities laid out in §§ 11.4-9, and/or contain material of little archaeological value. Such material may originate with excavation agencies outside the control of St Albans Museums.

11.2.3 Following consultation with Hertfordshire County Council, the SADC District Archaeologist, and other archaeological agencies and repositories in the County, the Museums Service will from time to time issue guidance on the expected standard of preparation for material to be deposited with SADC. This will emphasise:

1) that SADC reserves the right to refuse all or part of the archive

2) that SADC may request a once-for-all payment, based on volume, at the time of deposit; and that this should normally be a matter for negotiation between the developer and the excavating agency, in advance of excavation.

## 11.3 General Archaeological Priorities

11.3.1 Although the collections are based around those from the Roman town of Verulamium they include material of all periods. Throughout, however, the collections are weak in material from outside the pre-1974 St Albans City boundary.

*Policy Statement*

11.3.2 Archaeological survey and fieldwork will be used to generate material from areas of the District outside the pre-1974 boundary.

11.4 Prehistoric

11.4.1 The collection is generally weak in all prehistoric material, particularly prior to the late Iron Age. Similarly, little is known of the location of sites.

*Policy Statement*

11.4.2 The under-representation of prehistoric material within the collections is a matter for concern and a priority for future collecting. Apart from the passive collection of all 'stray' finds, the opportunity should be taken to collect data through survey and fieldwork where possible.

11.5 Late Iron Age

11.5.1 The late Iron age *oppida* at Wheathampstead and Verlamion and their associated dykes are sites of National and European significance. However, with the exception of ceramics, the collections, are weak in these areas. Two of the most significant finds, material from the cemetery at King Harry Lane (British Museum) and from the 'Harpenden burial' (Luton Museum) are not held by the Museum.

*Policy Statement*

11.5.2 All finds of the period should be pursued, whether by 'passive' collection of stray finds or by active fieldwork. A particular priority should be the acquisition of coins of the Verlamion mint and other significant metalwork.

11.6 Roman

11.6.1 This is the strongest area of the collections. The Verulamium collections are of national importance though there are recognisable gaps in the area of 'luxury' items. Although Verulamium is one of the best known Roman towns in Britain we still know relatively little about its hinterland and this is reflected in the collections.

*Policy Statements*

11.6.2 Any threat to the archaeology of Verulamium, its cemeteries, or immediate environs, will be a major priority for the rescue excavation programme.

11.6.3 The passive collection of all casual finds from throughout the district should continue. Where possible active fieldwork should be

undertaken in rural areas to identify sites and to provide further data on those already known.

11.6.4 Acquisition of material significant to the interpretation of Verulamium and falling outside the district should be continued. In particular this should include material from the villas in the Verulamium hinterland and products from Verulamium-region kiln sites. This should normally take the form of passive collection and will not usually involve fieldwork in any form outside the district of St Albans.

#### 11.7 Saxon

11.7.1 The Museums' collections are very weak in all material of this period and we still have limited knowledge of the immediate post-Roman history of Verulamium, the founding of the Abbey and the early origins of St Albans.

#### *Policy Statements*

11.7.2 Full attention should be given to fieldwork as a means of identifying Saxon and early Medieval sites.

11.7.3 Every opportunity to collect material of this period from throughout the District should be taken.

#### 11.8 Medieval

11.8.1 Recent excavations within the Medieval town have provided a considerable amount of data in terms of collected material. There is still a need to locate and explore the pre-twelfth century town. Excavations at the Abbey have provided a considerable body of material from the religious centre. Our knowledge of the hinterland of St Albans is still very weak.

11.8.2 The passive collection of all casual finds should be continued.

11.8.3 Attention should be given to fieldwork and survey and to the recording of buildings especially in and around existing or former villages (see also 11.9.2).

#### 11.9 Post-medieval sites and buildings

11.9.1 Fieldwork should record post-medieval buildings, deposits and finds wherever this can be done without jeopardising the investigation or preservation of earlier deposits.

*11.9.2 Within the term of this policy the Museum Service will attempt to establish efficient mechanisms for the recording of historic buildings during the course of development.*

11.10 Historical archives

11.10.1 The Service will actively collect archival material, such as photographs, relating to past campaigns of excavation at Verulamium / St Albans.

11.11 Human remains

11.11.1 St Albans Museums Service reserves the right, under the terms of Home Office Exhumation Licences, to store, study, and display human skeletal material from archaeological contexts within its collecting area. In the great majority of cases excavation will have been saved this material from damage and uncontrolled dispersal in the course of development. Normally material will be held in store until it can conveniently be studied; subsequently it will be reburied with appropriate rites. Samples may be retained for display or if they have strong pathological significance.

11.11.2 In these matters, and especially as regards the display of human remains, a sensitive approach will be maintained and current best practice in the archaeological and museum professions closely observed. Responsibility in this area lies with the Keeper of Archaeology and the Principal Keeper.

11.12. Foreign Material (closed collection)

11.12.1 The collections include small but significant assemblages of material from Ireland, and from Egypt, Cyprus and other Mediterranean areas. These objects were acquired from the Hertfordshire County Museum in 1955 having been collected by past residents of St Albans.

*Policy Statement*

11.12.2 No more continental material will be collected, unless, exceptionally, comparative material is needed for the Roman collections. Existing objects will be retained, however, as they relate directly to the activities of past inhabitants of St Albans.

## 12.0 NATURAL SCIENCES

### 12.1 Introduction

The Museums Service's Natural Sciences collections are housed at the Museum of St Albans and in the adjacent museum bungalow. The Natural Science Collections are largely 'historic' in nature, the majority of the material being derived from the Hertfordshire County Museum and the collecting activities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Substantial purchases were made, for example, as late as the 1940's for educational purposes but no large and/or important groups have been given to the Museum in recent years. More recent donations have been largely of individual items. Field collecting has been severely restricted.

### 12.2 Existing collections

#### 12.2.1 British Vertebrates (closed collection)

The current vertebrate collection consists of 300 mounted specimens and associated field material, 200 microscope preparations of vertebrate histology, 200 fish in spirit and 1200 birds eggs. There is little documentation associated with these collections, which are mostly 'historic' in nature. There is also a small collection of osteological material.

#### 12.2.2 Invertebrates (closed collection)

The current collections consist of 17,500 lepidoptera (including important regional and national collections) 5,000 other insects (including the important Victorian county collections) and 5,000 mollusca.

#### 12.2.3 Botany (closed collection)

Although a large section of the vascular plant herbarium (including most of the county flora of 1832) was destroyed in the 1950s much important material is still extant. The County herbarium function passed to Hitchin Museum during the 1950s. Important collections of bryophytes and other non vascular cryptograms are held. There is a small collection of fungi which includes two particularly important groups.

#### 12.2.4 Earth Sciences

The petrology, mineralogy and palaeontology collections comprise: a representative collection of major British rock types and local building stones; a small collection of minerals, many of them unprovenanced; and a good collection of fossils representing the local Chalk and

Pleistocene deposits, together with characteristic non-local British material of all periods

### 12.3 Legislation

So far as biological and geological material is concerned the Museums Service 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 any natural history conservation law or treaty of the UK or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority (e.g. a British court in the case of a specimen seized from a third party under the Wildlife Protection Act 1981).

### 12.4 *Policy Statements*

12.4.1 It is recognised that the collections do not provide adequate systematic coverage of the historical flora and fauna of Hertfordshire; but it is not the Service's policy to attempt to fill the gaps with new acquisitions. Instead its efforts should be directed towards:

1) the preservation and where appropriate the enhancement of existing habitats and geological exposures.

2) education to help the appreciation and enjoyment of the natural history of the District.

3) acting as a local biological records centre.

4) collecting from and recording threatened habitats and geological exposures

5) recording local biological and geological features of special importance, and collecting from them where appropriate.

6) passive collection of rare or unusual material unlikely to be otherwise obtainable.

12.4.2 Active collecting will otherwise be confined to the establishment of representative collections of local rocks, and Chalk and Pleistocene fossils.

12.4.3 The existing historical collections will be maintained in the best possible conditions and fully documented; but for some areas of the collection countywide developments may suggest the loan or transfer of material elsewhere in future.

## 13.0 SOCIAL AND LOCAL HISTORY

13.1 The Museum Service's social history section is based in the Museum of St Albans with outlying stores at the Museum Resource Centre, Kyngston House, and SADC Depot, Sandridge Road. The social history section is responsible for both social and local history as well as fine and decorative arts. Most of the items held by this section are owned in trust by the City & District of St Albans. The current collections contain the following elements:

13.1.1 *Hertfordshire County Museum 1898-1956* As the first Museum in the County, a very wide range of material relating to the whole of the County of Hertfordshire and not merely St Albans was collected. Although much of the material is unprovenanced, many other items have, in recent years, been passed on to the appropriate museum within the County. Where material forms part of a discrete collection this has been maintained intact (e.g. Lewis Evans Collection). The main body of the collections include a number of small groups of material such as:

Hodgson Collection of silver spoons (closed collection)

Curtis Collection of fans (closed collection)

Lewis Evans Collection of books, pocket compasses and music staves (closed collection)

Evan Roberts Collection of watches (closed collection)

13.1.2 *St Albans City Museum 1956-89* The most significant addition to the collections during this period was the purchase of the Salaman Collection of trade tools in 1969.

13.1.3 *Museum of St Albans 1989-* The policy of the Museum of St Albans will be to collect material of local provenance, i.e. items used or made within the City and District of St Albans.

## 13.2 General

13.2.1 Much past collecting has been of a passive nature, and the current collections reflect a distorted picture of the City's material culture, being biased towards items small or light enough to be carried into the Museum or which were considered 'interesting' by the general public. There was no programme of active collecting or recording. In this way, for example, the craft trades are well represented at the expense of industrial trades and service industries, costume is represented by fine and fashionable female garments rather than male working

clothes, and fine ceramics rather than everyday crockery. Many objects were collected without adequate provenance.

#### *Policy Statements*

13.2.2 The Museums Service's view of the District's local history shall include social history in the broadest sense. It will record the history of the urban and rural environments, local agriculture, industry, politics and the experiences of work, leisure, home and personal life. Attention should be given to collecting and recording the experience of the Italian and Asian communities in St Albans.

13.2.3 Collection over such a wide field could easily overwhelm the Service's existing resources. The emphasis in collecting for twentieth century and contemporary subjects should shift from objects towards photograph, film, sound recording and printed ephemera. Mass-produced twentieth century three-dimensional objects shall be collected, but with caution, and with special attention to the quality of local provenance. The Service will take every opportunity to encourage co-operative collecting with other Hertfordshire museums, archives and SADC Planning Division, in order to reduce unnecessary duplication of social and local history holdings.

13.2.4 Where not part of discrete collections, material from areas outside the District will be transferred to the relevant registered Museum. Where this is not possible, such material will be held 'in trust'.

#### 13.3 Social and Local History

13.3.1 New items will be added to the collections only where a local provenance can be established. This shall relate to the domestic, rural and industrial environment of the District and shall be interpreted in its widest sense. Collection of non-local material will only be made where outlined below to fill gaps in existing significant collections or for use in teaching. 'Duplicates' will only be collected for teaching or other purposes where long-term preservation is not an important consideration. The permission of donors will be sought for such use, normally at the time of acquisition.

#### 13.4 Local Trades and Industry

13.4.1 The collections are particularly weak in this area. There is, for example, little, or no, material from the brick makers noted by Dickens in Bernards Heath, coats made by Nicholsons of Hatfield Road, shoes from the Lees factory, or marine chronometers from Thomas Mercer Ltd. In general twentieth century industry from the City is under-represented.

*Policy Statement*

13.4.2 Collection of material from local trades and industries is a Service priority. This should include not only the objects associated with these trades both in terms of tools and the finished objects but also all associated written and printed material and oral reminiscence.

13.5 Costume

13.5.1 The collection of costume have grown rather haphazardly and although it contains some very fine items is not representative of everyday wear of any particular period or class.

*Policy Statement*

13.5.2 Costume shall be collected to provide a broad reflection of social classes of the district, with particular emphasis on male and female working clothes, leisure wear and the products of the City's clothing manufacturers.

Until there is sufficient, purpose-made, storage for the costume collection, collecting will be restricted to important local items, particularly those made for a local event, e.g. the Pageant, or in local factories (13.4.1 above).

13.6 Dolls and Toys

13.6.1 The collections range from dolls of the eighteenth century but include few items with a local provenance. Future collection should be restricted to important items with a clear local association.

*Policy Statement*

13.6.2 Material with a local association shall be actively collected.

13.7 Farm Vehicles and Implements (closed collection)

13.7.1 The collections include a number of large agricultural vehicles which cannot be displayed at present. The Salaman Collection contains many agricultural hand tools. Other agricultural collections are slight: photographs, reminiscence, costume and printed ephemera.

*Policy Statement*

13.7.2 Given the difficulty of storing and displaying the material, and the availability of collections elsewhere, further large objects will not normally be collected. The consultant's report on these vehicles (1996) will be implemented during the term of this policy. Vehicles related to 'core' themes of the collections will be retained and conserved (e.g. wagon by George Casbon of Barley, items with clear St Albans and district associations), but others will be deaccessioned. Agricultural tools will be collected as examples of the toolmaker's art

(Salaman Collection); and photographic, oral and other records of the District's agricultural past will be actively collected.

### 13.8 Furniture

- 13.8.1 The collection of furniture includes items important to the civic past of the City. But acquisitions of local domestic items are particularly needed.

#### *Policy Statement*

- 13.8.2 Space is a problem in collecting these items but this is an area where future acquisitions reflecting all aspects of the life of the District are a priority. Collecting will be restricted to items with a very strong local association.

### 13.9 Decorative Arts

- 13.9.1 In both ceramics and glass the Museum holds small, but representative collections of general interest rather than of local relevance.

#### *Policy Statement*

- 13.9.2 Material with a strong local association, including that made after 1945, shall be actively collected. This should reflect a cross section of material available at all periods.

### 13.10. Prints and Drawings

- 13.10.1 The Service holds a particularly fine collection of prints and drawings relating to the County and acquired/collected by the curators of the Hertfordshire County Museum. The collections date from the eighteenth century onwards but there is a lack of post-1920 material. There is also a near absence of oil paintings and works by locally significant artists, the result of the concerns of the County Museum.

#### *Policy Statements*

- 13.10.2 This material will be retained and items relating to St Albans and district will be actively collected. In particular, gaps in the collections shall be filled, by purchase where necessary. Such material shall include local views or works of local artists such as Buckingham, Kitton etc. Local subjects by better-known artists including Harry Hine, Cornelius and John Varley, and Sir George Clausen will be sought, as will important work by Louis Wain illustrating his years at Napsbury Hospital. The chronological gap of 1920-1960 in the collection should be filled where possible. Further views of the Abbey will not be a high priority for acquisition.

- 13.10.3 *During the term of this policy a campaign of documentation and improved storage will attempt to clarify the extent of the Service's holdings in this field. The importance of the Lewis Evans Collection*

*material relating to Hertfordshire outside the City & District will be investigated, and, if appropriate, external funds will be sought for its conservation.*

### 13.11 Numismatics

- 13.11.1 The Museum has a good collection of Hertfordshire Trade Tokens but is not comprehensive in St Albans material.

#### *Policy Statement*

- 13.11.2 St Albans trade tokens will be collected when the opportunity to acquire good specimens arises.

### 13.12 Photographs

- 13.12.1 The collection includes photographic material relating to St Albans in the early twentieth century but little after the 1930s. The modern photographic collection includes material taken by the Museums Photographer/Image Librarian based at Verulamium Museum and an important Historic Buildings Survey conducted by the Field Archaeology section.

#### *Policy Statement*

- 13.12.2 Photographic material relating to the District, in particular early material, will be actively collected.

### 13.13 Other Printed Material

- 13.13.1 The Museum has a wide collection of ephemera, with particular strengths in political posters from *c.* 1840, theatre bills, chap books, mourning cards, W.W.II official notices etc. There is also a collection of bound copies of various local newspapers covering the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

#### *Policy Statement*

- 13.13.2 Printed items will be actively collected in consultation with the Herts County Libraries Local Studies Collection which holds much similar material. The Service will seek books and pamphlets relating to St Albans and district, and to its printing industry, from the *Boke of St Albans* to the Campfield Press.

### 13.14 Residues of transferred Collections (closed collections)

- 13.14.1 The collections of Arms and Armour are a legacy the Ball Collection held by the Hertfordshire County Museum during the 1920's until the 1950's. Although withdrawn by the 1950's the collection had attracted other local donations.

13.14.2 Ethnographic material previously held has been passed to Ipswich Museums' Ethnology Department, though some items have been retained as representing St Albans citizens' past activities such as campaigns in India.

13.14.3 Hertfordshire Regimental items have mostly been passed to Hitchin Museum

*Policy Statement*

10.14.4 Only material with strong local associations will be collected.

13.15 Salaman Collection of Trade and Craft Tools

13.15.1 This is the most important single grouping of artefacts in the history collections. Purchased from Raphael Salaman in 1969 it was assembled by trade rather than by locality and is drawn from all over the country. The collection is therefore truly national in scope and importance.

*Policy Statements*

13.15.2 It is proposed to develop the tool collection as a 'museum within a museum', and to encourage publication, exhibition and research as well as permanent display. Material specifically related to Salaman and his collecting activities will be acquired, and links maintained with other bodies holding elements of his collections (Science Museum, Barley Village Hall). Gaps will be filled by active collection of tools and supporting documentation such as maker's catalogues, advertisements, pattern books, film/videos and audio tape. Workshop photographs will be especially sought.

13.15.3 Emphasis will be placed on collecting from the urban trades, which are least well represented in public collections elsewhere.

13.15.4 Contemporary material will be selectively collected to illustrate modern developments in tool manufacture and use. Other tools which illustrate specific aspects of history, design, construction or use will also be individually acquired, and this will develop as a strong aspect of the collection.

13.15.5 Products representative of particular trades and processes will be selectively acquired for education or display.

13.16 Film

13.16.1 The Museum Service has very limited collections of moving image material made in, or depicting, St Albans. There is no comprehensive list of such material, whether in private or public ownership.

*Policy Statement*

13.16.2 Research will be to identify films depicting, made in and otherwise related to St Albans district, and copies made where feasible. Further efforts will be made to document and obtain the work of Arthur Melbourne-Cooper.

Original film stock will be transferred to the Hertfordshire Film Archive, and video copies obtained for the Museum Service's use.

13.17 Twentieth century Collecting and Contemporary Recording

13.17.1 In most areas the Museum's collections of post 1930 material are very thin. The Museum Service has devoted considerable time to recording change within St Albans over the past 10 years. Areas covered include Food, Domestic Interiors and the Home Front. Nevertheless much remains to be done.

*Policy Statements*

13.17.2 The retrospective collection of twentieth century life in the district is a Service priority, while it remains a living memory. The selective recording of contemporary life should be designed obviate the need for major retrospective collecting campaigns in the future.

13.17.3 The Museums Service will attempt to collect and document both the twentieth century and contemporary life of the District. An integrated approach is favoured, combining material evidence with sound, video, photographic and other forms of record.

*13.17.4 In the term of this policy, the Museums Service will begin to record and collect from local minority groups, especially the Italian and Asian communities.*

13.18 Building Records

13.18.1 The Museums Service holds the results of photographic building surveys of St Albans City Centre and similar surveys are held by the Planning Division.

*Policy Statement*

*13.18.2 Over the term of this policy the Museums Service will liaise with the Planning Division with the object of producing a unified listing of these and other historic buildings records.*

14.0 EDUCATION COLLECTION

14.1 The Museums Service recognises the public demand for, and educational potential of, objects which can be freely handled and examined in the museum or in schools loans boxes. The reserve collections cover most periods outlined in the History National

Curriculum and can be used as recommended elements in English, Geography, etc.

*Policy Statement*

- 14.2 Handling and other education material is appropriate within most areas of the Museum's collections. Considerations of storage capacity aside, the constraints of this collections policy need not apply when collecting for this purpose. But objects in handling collections run the risk of damage or loss; this will always be borne in mind when selecting them, and the choice should be made by more than one member of curatorial staff. Donors must be informed before their gifts are used for educational/handling purposes, and whenever possible consulted at the time of donation if this seems the best use for the material.

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