



ss Great Britain Trust

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

This policy document summarises the principles governing the management of the ss Great Britain Trust Collections.

1. THE COLLECTIONS

- 1.1. The Trust will maintain and develop two defined collections over which it has legal title: The Primary Accessioned collection and the Secondary Handling collection.
- 1.2. The Collections will be the primary means by which the Trust fulfils its charitable goals. They will be preserved and/or used for the benefit of the public, to inspire, educate, and increase the sum of public knowledge, and to demonstrate a tangible link with the past and present of maritime and industrial engineering, science, maritime archaeology and history.
- 1.3. The Primary Accessioned collection will be maintained in accordance with the terms laid down by the MLA Accreditation scheme.
- 1.4. The Secondary Handling collection will be maintained in accordance with guidelines set out in the Documentation Procedural Manual.

2. STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

- 2.1. The Curator is responsible for the maintenance and development of collections management procedures for the Trust's collections.
- 2.2. All volunteers and staff employed by the Trust have a duty of care towards the collections whatever their capacity.
- 2.3. The Director and Board of Trustees will oversee collections management and consider any changes to policy or procedure recommended by the Curator as required.

3. BUDGETS FOR COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

- 3.1. Collections management expenditure will be maintained under the curatorial budget. The budget holder for collections management is the Curator.
- 3.2. Proposals for exceptional expenditure relating to the collections including acquisitions, collections development, conservation etc that may fall outside of the curatorial budget will be put to the Director, the Director of Finance and the Board of Trustees for consideration as required. The Curator will

apply for external grant aid for collections related work as appropriate in conjunction with the Development Team.

- 3.3. Fees or other monies gathered from use of the collections by outside agencies will be used for the benefit of the collections.

DOCUMENTATION & PROCEDURES

- 3.4. All objects and archives in the collections will be documented to inventory level as a minimum.
- 3.5. The Trust will work to maintain its status as an Accredited Museum under the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) Accreditation scheme (previously Registration Scheme) and will complete returns as required. The Curator is responsible for achieving and maintaining the Trust's Accredited status.
- 3.6. The Trust will work to the Museums Documentation Association 'SPECTRUM UK Museum Documentation Standard' in compliance with the standards set by the Accreditation Scheme (currently version 3.0) for collections management. It is the policy of the Trust to maintain the following eight Primary documentation procedures and meet SPECTRUM minimum standards for each in order that the Trust continues to meet the statutory requirements of the MLA Accreditation Standard:
 - 3.6.1. Object Entry
 - 3.6.2. Object Exit
 - 3.6.3. Acquisition
 - 3.6.4. Cataloguing
 - 3.6.5. Loans in
 - 3.6.6. Loans out
 - 3.6.7. Location & Movement Control
 - 3.6.8. Retrospective Documentation
- 3.7. The Trust aims to exceed the Accreditation minimum standard in all of its documentation procedures through a process of gradual incremental improvement over time.
- 3.8. The Trust will maintain an up-to-date Documentation Procedural Manual describing in detail how each of the primary collections management procedures is to be undertaken and of any further procedures to be followed as required.
- 3.9. It is the policy of the Trust that the procedures described within the Documentation Procedural Manual are followed at all times.
- 3.10. The Trust will maintain a searchable computer accession database of its Primary Accessioned collection, backed up in compliance with the Accreditation Standard, to aid collections management.
- 3.11. The Trust will maintain object information files holding information relating to accessioned objects held in hard copy and organised by accession number.

- 3.12. The Trust will maintain general information files holding information relating to the Trust's collections held in hard copy and organised by subject heading.
- 3.13. The Trust will maintain a Backlog Documentation Plan and work towards realistic goals for the completion of all backlogs. The Trust will maintain a Retrospective Documentation Plan where appropriate.
- 3.14. Following completion of the requirements of the Accreditation Scheme, the Trust will become eligible for and aim to benefit from recognition of the status of the collections through the Designation Scheme.

4. ACQUISITION & DISPOSAL

- 4.1. Collecting or disposals will take place within the terms of the Acquisition & Disposal Policy.
- 4.2. Only the curatorial staff or Director can accept objects of any kind on site or into the museum, using the Trust's object entry procedure.

5. COLLECTIONS CARE

- 5.1. The Trust undertakes as a priority to look after and preserve all objects in its care in the Primary Accessioned collection as far as resources are available.
- 5.2. The Trust will abide by the principles and policies of the Conservation Plan, supplemented by the Collections Conservation Policy, in all matters relating to the care of the Primary Accessioned and Secondary Handling collections, and the historic landscape.
- 5.3. The Trust will not collect Primary Accessioned collection objects that it cannot reasonably preserve and maintain in appropriate environments.
- 5.4. Conservation or restoration work will be carried out using methods and by conservation staff or subcontractors employed and approved by the Curator, in conjunction with the Director.
- 5.5. Evaluation of loan requests (inward and outward) will take into account the physical condition of an object in the form of a written condition report, and the ability of a borrowing institution to look after it properly, before agreement is reached. There will be a presumption in favour of making loans available whenever possible.
- 5.6. The Trust will provide appropriate secure storage or display for the Primary collection objects and archives in its care, reducing the risk of physical deterioration while still allowing access in so far as this can be shown not to place the objects at unreasonable risk.
- 5.7. Primary Accessioned collection objects and archives in store and on display may be insured if appropriate.
- 5.8. Emergency plans and procedures for sites where objects and archives are stored or used will be in place and operational

6. SECURITY

- 6.1. The security of the Trust's collections will be maintained at all times using security systems approved by the Curator, Director of Technical Services and the Director.
- 6.2. All staff will remain vigilant to the threat of damage, loss or destruction to the collection. All issues regarding security of the collection, however minor, will be reported to the curatorial staff immediately.
- 6.3. Only the curatorial staff or a staff member given special dispensation by the Curator will have access to curatorial keys. Security precautions for the labelling and safe storage of keys and their duplicates will be followed at all times.
- 6.4. Buildings must be secured against risk and the systems in place maintained by the Director of Technical Services. A regular system of maintenance of key buildings must be in place and maintained by the Director of Technical Services.
- 6.5. An up to date Disaster Plan must be in place, and Disaster kits must be in place as required.
- 6.6. Insurance values must be up to date for the collections, where required.
- 6.7. Staff bringing contractors on site who may work near to any of the Trust's collections or any items in its care MUST inform a member of the curatorial staff prior to the commencement of works.
- 6.8. Risk Assessments relating to the collections should be completed and updated from time to time as required and their recommendations acted upon in good time.

7. HANDLING & USE OF THE COLLECTIONS

- 7.1. The Curator is responsible for maintaining physical and intellectual access to the collections in line with the Equal Access Policy. Use of the collection by outside agencies or individuals will conform to relevant Trust policies, standards, legislation and guidelines as required by the Trust.
- 7.2. Decisions relating to handling and use of the collection will be made in the light of issues relating to the long-term care of the collection and in line with relevant policy, in particular the Conservation Plan, Conservation Policy and Access Policy.
- 7.3. Methods which aid access to heavily used information held within the collections that do not pose ongoing risks such as digitisation, high quality photography or other means of facsimile will be followed where appropriate or practicable.
- 7.4. The Secondary Handling Collection will be maintained primarily as an educational resource where the presumption will be that materials held within them will be used until their eventual destruction or disposal.
- 7.5. The Trust will seek and ensure proper credit when the collection is used in any way by outside parties. Loans et al will be acknowledged in the form "By courtesy of the Trustees of the ss Great Britain Trust".

- 7.6. In so far as is possible or known, all copyright issues relating to the collections will be followed up and resolved.
- 7.7. If any part of the collections has conditions of use attached to it as a result of its deposit then these will followed.

8. REVIEWS AND RATIONALISATION

- 8.1. There is a strong presumption against disposal from the Primary Accessioned collection.
- 8.2. The Primary Accessioned Collection will be reviewed from time to time and rationalised where necessary to ensure they remain relevant to the Acquisition & Disposal Policy.
- 8.3. Audits will be carried out where required to check that the collections are catalogued to approved standards and documentation plans put in place where backlogs have developed.

9. ETHICAL & LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1. The Trust will operate within the legal framework established by current legislation and authorisations in respect of the acquisition and disposal of materials from the collection. Staff responsible for the collection must ensure that their activities comply with the letter and spirit of current relevant legislation and guidelines.
- 9.2. The Trust will comply with the Museums Association Code of Ethics.
- 9.3. The relevant authorities will be informed if staff have reason to believe that items offered to the Trust have been acquired illegally.