

# **Museum Accreditation Scheme**

## **Acquisition and Disposal Policy**

**Museum: The World of James Herriot**

**Governing Body: Hambleton District Council**

### **1. Existing collections, including the subjects or themes for collecting**

1.1 Hambleton District Council confirms its responsibility to collect, document, preserve, exhibit and interpret material evidence and associated information pertinent to the study of the history of veterinary science and its impact on rural life with particular reference to its practice in North Yorkshire for the benefit of the general public. It may also to some extent collect material relating to the life and times of Mr Alf Wight, author of the James Herriot series of novels, who practiced and resided in the property which is now The World of James Herriot. The property has been restored to depict the period and lifestyle that the author illustrates in his books

The current collection consists of:-

- 3,000 items of veterinary equipment varying from small test tubes, syringes, medicine bottles to x-ray equipment and approximately 300 veterinary text books collected during a nation-wide appeal in 1997. A collection of documents from the veterinary practice of Alf Wight and his partner Donald Sinclair
- A small, but important group of items on loan from the Wight family relating to Alf Wight's life

### **2. Criteria governing future collecting policy, including the subjects or themes for collecting**

2.1 In view of the limited storage facilities and staff time future collecting will focus on the following areas:-

2.1.1 Personalia of Alf Wight, his immediate family and his veterinary partners

2.1.2 Veterinary Medicine in North Yorkshire from the establishment of veterinary medicine as a profession in 1891 to the death of Alf Wight in 1995.

2.1.3 Future collecting will occur as a result of one or more of the following:-

- appeals to North Yorkshire veterinary practices for specific material
- offers of donations from the general public
- pursuit of individual items which may appear on the market from time to time

### **3. Period of time and/or geographical area to which collecting relates**

3.1 The collection will relate to the period of 1891 – 1995 and be limited to the North Yorkshire area.

### **4. Limitations on collecting**

4.1 The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

4.2 In view of health and safety concerns and the high cost incurred in disposing of veterinary medicine to health and safety standards the World of James Herriot will not collect any vessels that contain veterinary medicine. Empty vessels and packaging that contain no residue of veterinary medicine may be collected if the acquisition is in accord with the acquisition policy for new acquisitions

## **5. Collecting policies of other museums**

5.1 The museum 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.

5.2 Specific reference is made to the following museums

- Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, Pickering
- Bedale Museum, Bedale
- Craven Museum, Skipton
- Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes
- Nidderdale Folk Museum, Pateley Bridge
- Richmondshire Museum, Richmond
- Ryedale Folk Museum, Hutton-le-Hole
- Yorkshire Museum of Farming
- York Castle Museum, York

5.3 Items offered for donation which fall within the collecting policies of these museums will first be offered to the relevant museum before they are accepted into the World of James Herriot Collection.

## **6. Policy review procedure**

6.1 The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

6.2 MLA will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

## **7. Acquisitions not covered by the policy**

7.1 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 itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

## **8. Acquisition procedures**

8.1 The museum will exercise due diligence and 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 a valid title to the item in question.

8.2 In particular, the museum 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).

8.3 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 November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by DCMS in 2005.

8.4 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum 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.

8.5 The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

8.6 Any exceptions to the above clauses 8a, 8b, 8c, or 8e will only be because the museum is either:

acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or

acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement 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 the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

## **9. Spoliation**

9.1 The museum will use 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions', issued by the National Museum Directors' Conference in 1998, and report on them in accordance with the guidelines.

## **10. Repatriation and Restitution**

10.1 Not applicable to this museum.

## **11. Management of archives**

11.1 As the museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

## **12. Disposal procedures**

12.1 By definition, the museum 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, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

12.2 The museum 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.

12.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum 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.

12.4 Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.

12.5 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 MLA.

12.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale 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, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

12.7 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 Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

12.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited 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.

12.9 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, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations.

12.10 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.