



Shetland Museum Service Collections Policy 2023-2028



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Policy review procedure:

The Collections Policy will be reviewed and published at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: April 2028

Museums Galleries Scotland will be notified of any changes to the Collections Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy regulates the acquisition and disposal of items to and from the collections of the Shetland Museums Service. The adoption and implementation of such a policy by Shetland Islands Council (SIC or 'the Council') in respect of the museum is a requirement of the Accreditation Scheme for museums and galleries in the United Kingdom, and of the Service Level Agreement between the Council and Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT or 'the Trust').
- 1.2 The Council and the Trust will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3 By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.4 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5 This policy supersedes all previous policies, formal or informal, relating to the acquisition, disposal and loan of items for the collections.
- 1.6 The Museum recognises its responsibility in acquiring additions to the Council's collections to ensure that care of collections, documentation and use of collections meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. This includes using Spectrum primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.7 The Museum will exercise due diligence and will make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen for the Museum, unless the responsible staff member is satisfied that the Museum can acquire title to the item.
- 1.8 The Council will provide insurance for the collection and for all items on temporary loan to it. The Trust shall furnish inventories as required and all other necessary information for this purpose.

2. Statement of Shetland Museum's Service Aims

- 2.1 Delivery of the Museums and Archives Service currently comprises three key elements: Museums and Archives, Outreach and Lifelong Learning as well as Collections, Facilities and Management.

Museums and Archives service requirements:

- Maintain and develop permanent exhibitions
- Host and curate temporary exhibitions that explore and interpret Shetland's unique cultural heritage and identity, and the wider world
- Host and curate temporary exhibitions that explore the diversity and breadth of the surrounding national/international heritage and arts scene

- Provide a public resource for academic and other enquiries
- Research our collections and archives
- Make research available to the public.

Outreach and Learning service requirements:

- Ensure lifelong learning is integral to all services
- Offer a wide range of sustainable formal and informal learning opportunities
- Actively encourage new audiences to engage with services and Collections.

Collections, facilities and management service requirements:

- Hold in trust, for present and future generations, the material, written, printed, oral and visual evidence of Shetland's people and their environment
- Acquire, preserve and make available objects and records for the benefit of the public
- Ensure facilities are accessible to all
- Provide Museum mentoring services to six nationally accredited community museums
- Advise and promote good standards of management and collection care to the network of Shetland museums and heritage groups.

3. Definition of Terms

- 3.1 "The Museum" means the Shetland Amenity Trust's service and comprises that part of the Trust's operation whether provided by the Trust itself or by a third party under contract, concerned with the collection of historic and artistic items owned by the Shetland Islands Council, together with the associated premises and staff, and delivered under the terms of the Service Level Agreement with the Council. This principally encompasses the Shetland Museum, Hay's Dock, Lerwick; the Crofthouse Museum, Dunrossness; offsite stores at the Staney Hill Industrial Estate, Lerwick.
- 3.2 "The collection" is all the historic and artistic objects entered in the Accession/Registration registers of the Museum, together with any additional artefacts not entered in the registers but in the possession of the Museum, acquired with the intention that it should become part of the collection.
- 3.3 A "collection item" is defined as any individual artefact from the collection of the Museum.
- 3.4 "The curatorial staff" are appropriately qualified professionals appointed to support the care of, research on and access to the collection in accordance with this policy and other professional standards. The service is provided directly by the Trust, and the curatorial team shall be responsible to the Trust and line managed by the Culture and Heritage Manager. Issues concerning ownership of the collection itself shall be referred to Governance and Law, Corporate Services.
- 3.5 "The Trustees" are trustees of Shetland Amenity Trust, the remit of which includes responsibility for the Museums service. At the date of this policy the relevant Shetland Islands Council committee is the Development Committee.
- 3.6 "Acquisition" is defined as the act of adding to the Museum's collection by donation, purchase, bequest, and fieldwork or otherwise.

- 3.7 “Donations Form”, “Loans Form” and “Purchase Form” refer to the documentation in use by the Museum.

4. History of the collection

Shetland Museum opened in Lerwick in 1965, with local historian Tom Henderson as its first curator. The collection was established with nearly 700 objects catalogued in its first year. More than half were archaeological artefacts, many of which were transferred from the Burgh Collection and other Lerwick Town Council collections to the new museum.

The Museum service is fortunate to have a generous and knowledgeable local public as key stakeholders. They offer objects and information, greatly contributing to the physical and intellectual development of the collection. Private collections have boosted holdings of early or rare objects, most notably from the estates of curator Tom Henderson and E. S. Reid Tait, and by Elizabeth Morewood, T. M. Adie & Sons, Margaret Stuart, Joy Sandison, and the family of A. I. Tulloch.

The collection has grown to nearly 200,000 objects, with 200 to 300 artefacts accessioned each year. Two areas of the collection, Archaeology and Textiles, have attained Recognised Status as being nationally significant. 20,000 objects are registered, with the majority of unregistered objects from archaeological assemblages and 98% of the collection is housed at the Museum Store at Staney Hill.

5. Themes and Priorities for Future Collecting

The Museum will seek to collect material illustrating the prehistory, history and culture of the islands. The Museum is committed to working with the community to ensure the co-ordinated development of collections within Shetland to ensure representation of the place, its social, economic and cultural characteristics and its regional differences.

This policy outlines a proactive approach to remedy significant gaps by clearly setting out higher priorities where more dynamic collecting should be encouraged and actively facilitated. There is recognition that post-1945, and particularly post-1970 collecting should be a priority across most item categories and contemporary collecting is specifically highlighted in key areas. Ensuring the collection is more broadly representative in terms of gender, class, race, and nationality will further help to inform future acquisitions.

Through mutual co-operation the Museum will seek to avoid unnecessary collection duplication and to ensure the appropriate care of the collection given the nature and significance of artefacts.

6. Themes and Priorities for Rationalisation and Disposal

- 6.1 The Museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any

subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

6.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

6.3 The Museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

7. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

7.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics¹ when considering acquisition and disposal.

8. Collecting policies of other museums

8.1 The collecting area for the Museum is Shetland and the seas around its shores and includes material relevant to Shetlanders' lives out with Shetland. The period of collecting will cover from the islands' geological beginnings to the present day.

8.2 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 specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

8.3 Specific reference is made to the following museums:

- National Museums of Scotland
- Aberdeen Maritime Museum
- Scottish Fisheries Museum
- Natural History Museum (London)
- Accredited Museums in Shetland: Unst Boat Haven, Unst Heritage Centre, Old Haa Museum, Tangwick Haa Museum, Shetland Textile Museum and George Waterston Memorial Centre.

9. Archival holdings

9.0 Regarding archive collections held by the Museum, which include photographs and printed ephemera, the Museum shall be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom.

¹ [Code of Ethics for Museums - Museums Association](#)

10. Acquisition

- 10.1 All acquisitions (purchase and donation) will be agreed at frequent Museum Collections Team Meetings. An acquisition report will accompany the completed Donations Form, Loans Form or Purchase Form for consideration by the team.
- 10.2 Any item which becomes available out with timescales for a meeting (e.g., due to a time-limited auction) then a purchase can be authorised by the budget holder providing a retrospective acquisition report is considered at the next meeting.
- 10.3 Any single acquisition that has specific storage requirements or is of a value exceeding £5k must be approved in consultation with Shetland Amenity Trust and the Executive Manager, Assets Commissioning & Procurement, or their nominee
- 10.4 The museum will not acquire any object 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, including the United Kingdom.
- 10.5 In accordance with the provisions of the U.N.E.S.C.O. 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the U.K. ratified in 2002, 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 the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport in 2005.

11. Human Remains

- 11.1 The museum retains human remains from any period as part of archaeological excavation. Human remains are considered *extra commercium* in Scots law and therefore it is not possible to assert rights of ownership over them. In this way they differ from the rest of the collection. Shetland Museum will follow the guidelines in the *Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums* issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011².

12. Biological and geological material

- 12.1 Regarding biological and geological material, the Museum will not acquire by 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 U.K. or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

² [Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museum Collections](#)

13. Archaeological material

- 13.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.
- 13.2 In Scotland, under the laws of *bona vacantia* including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities, although such material as human remains and environmental samples are not covered by the law of *bona vacantia*. Scottish archaeological material of chance finds, and excavation assemblages are offered to museums through the treasure trove process and cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to Shetland Museum by the Crown. Where the Crown chooses to forego its title to a portable antiquity or excavation assemblage, a curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of Shetland Museum, can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of “No Claim” has been issued on behalf of the Crown.

14. Exceptions

- 14.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will be in specific circumstances where the museum is either:
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material from the U.K.
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

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. The Museum will document when these exceptions occur.

15. Spoliation

- 15.1 The Museum 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.

16. Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 16.1 Regarding repatriation and restitution of objects and human remains, the Trust, acting on the advice of the Museum’s curatorial staff, may decide to return human remains (unless covered by the Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums issued by Museum Galleries Scotland in 2011), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The Museum will take decisions on a case-by-case basis, within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance.

- 16.2 The disposal of human remains from museums in Scotland will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.

17. Disposal procedures

- 17.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the Spectrum primary procedures on disposal³. Certain artefacts, such as firearms, are subject to additional disposal conditions as per the Museum's Firearms Licence.
- 17.2 No item may be disposed of without the authority of the Council, through the acceptance of a recommendation for disposal from the curatorial team. Such a decision is not the decision of one person alone and as such would be considered at the Shetland Museum Planning Group, which includes representatives of the Council and the Trust.
- 17.3 The Museum will take all possible measures to confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
- 17.4 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 and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 17.5 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort – destruction.
- 17.6 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities, and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 17.7 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 or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of professional curatorial staff, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 17.8 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

³ <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum>

- 17.9 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through a notice on the Museums Association's (MA) Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the MA's *Museums Journal*, or in other specialist publications and websites where appropriate.
- 17.10 The announcement relating to gift or sale 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, giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 17.11 Any monies received by the Museum service from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from Museums Galleries Scotland.
- 17.12 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 17.13 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.

18. Disposal by exchange

- 18.1 The museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another accredited museum. The curatorial team will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on the decision.
- 18.2 If the proposed exchange to be made with an accredited museum, but other accredited museums collect in the same or related areas, they will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be considered.
- 18.3 If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited organisation, the museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate. The notification must provide information on the nature of objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be received in exchange.

19. Disposal by destruction

- 19.1 The destruction of a museum item will only be acceptable if its retention in the collection would not be appropriate, and no alternative public or private home can be found for it. Collection items which have become in some way seriously damaged, or have deteriorated beyond further usefulness for the collection, may need to be de-accessioned. In such circumstances, Shetland Amenity Trust and the Council acting on the advice of a curator may authorise the destruction of an item.

20. Existing Collection and Acquisition Areas

20.1 Archaeology

Shetland is one of Britain's richer archaeological areas. The Recognised Archaeology collection encompasses over 5000 years of the islands' history from the Mesolithic/Early Neolithic period onwards. The great distance of Shetland from the British mainland and its close affinity with Scandinavia have led to a separate and unique cultural development. The collection comprises stray finds and excavation assemblages. The former category consists of unstratified artefacts, but which are often typologically datable. The Museum will continue to bid through the Treasure Trove process for all stray finds and ongoing and forthcoming excavation allocations. Assemblages expected in the near future are from excavations at Bayanne, Yell, Sumburgh runway extension, Sandwick South (Unst), and Broo, Dunrossness. Due to excavation assemblages, there is a large backlog of uncatalogued material, and funding will be pursued to supply resources to register the finds and upgrade storage.

20.1.1 Neolithic/Bronze Age

The collection is strong in stray finds, such as ploughshares and felsite tools including the unique "Shetland knives", arrowheads, and much of the undatable hammerstones and querns *etc.* probably pertain to this period. Excavated assemblages include Mesolithic/Early Neolithic remains from West Voe, a cist burial at Sumburgh, and farmsteads at the Scord of Brouster and Sumburgh.

20.1.2 Iron Age

The greatest mass of finds is from excavations, such as Old Scatness Iron Age Village, Upper Scalloway and Clickimin, and which encompass cooking pots, loom weights, gaming, adornment, and grain processing. The finest artefacts are contained amongst stray finds, such as wooden cultivation implements like a plough, spades, and a clod-breaker. Collectively, the artefacts reflect societal changes like burial rites, metalworking, trading, village settlement, fortification.

20.1.3 Pictish and early Christian

Cultural changes in the later Iron Age are demonstrated by religious and artistic artefacts, in the main from stray finds. These include symbol stones from Cunningsburgh, carved discs from various locations, and painted pebbles from excavations and as chance finds. Excavations include a Pictish burial at Sandwick, Unst. Celtic Christian finds include high-status objects including altar stones and gravestones from St Ninian's Isle and Papil, Burra.

20.1.4 Viking

Characteristically Viking, as opposed to Medieval finds are few in number: lamps, pots, and whorls range into the Medieval period (*q.v.*). The collection includes some prominent Viking stray finds; a silver penannular brooch from Gulberwick, a silver “tortoise” brooch from Fetlar and a bronze example from Dunrossness. Excavations at Underhoull and Norwick, Unst and Aith, Fetlar, provide stratified artefacts, including line sinkers and boat rivets.

20.1.5 Medieval and Early Modern

There is a broad range of artefacts, both as chance finds and from excavation. These include stone lamps, beads, fishing sinkers, a boat’s bailer, gravestones and amulets. Excavated sites include Sandwick, Unst, Upper Scalloway, and the Biggins, Papa Stour. Most finds from the Early Modern period are from excavation, such as Muness Castle, and stray finds of Hanseatic imported pottery, coins and cloth/bag seals, *etc* from different parishes throughout the isles. Ongoing excavations include a 16th century house at Broo, Dunrossness. Collecting of items recovered by metal detecting will be primarily those reported to the Treasure Trove panel.

20.1.6 Marine archaeology

The Museum holds material from many major archaeological shipwreck sites in Shetland. Of particular note is the material from *El Gran Grifón*, *Kennemerland*, *de Liefde*, and *Drottningen af Sverige*. Investigated sites range from the late 16th to late 18th centuries, and finds encompass ship components, weaponry, trade goods, coins, and personal possessions. The bulk of excavation took place in the 1970s-1990s, and a great many artefacts from this period were dispersed, including by auction, so the Museum’s holdings are comparatively weak from many ships. The Museum will actively seek to acquire any such items from older excavations as they appear on the market, building on our strong core of objects from the above shipwrecks.

20.1.7 Human remains

Shetland Museum retains human remains only acquired by professional archaeological excavation. Currently the Museum holds the remains from about 43 individuals, comprising 19 adults, 22 juveniles, and two of unknown age. A further 24 individuals have been excavated at Upper Scalloway and are expected in the next few years. The Museum will allow access for professional research by the scientific community. It will make determinations about disposal, i.e., the re-internment of remains, when retention is no longer deemed necessary.

20.2 Ethnology

Shetland’s ethnological material culture is one of the greatest strengths of the collection. The objects represent a tradition based on subsistence living made mainly from local materials by Shetlanders for their own use. The collection is important for the history of pre-modern Scottish and Highland and Island populations in its scope and quantity of artefacts, as well as representing Shetland’s Norse heritage in object types and nomenclature. Shetlanders’ reliance on the land and sea for their existence. Subsistence farming, fishing, and domestic life continued until commercial industries gained a foothold in the economy, while imported technologies and ideas eroded indigenous practises. Artefacts from the 1700-1900 period loosely display cultural continuity from earlier times, and the maximisation of local resources. Artefacts no longer being made or used (e.g.,

klibbers, luder horns, animal buoys) with will be a priority for active collecting regardless of provenance. The museum may have replicas made of items fashioned from locally sourced materials to augment the handling collections.

20.2.1 Agriculture

Artefacts relate to livestock husbandry, arable farming, rural and coastal land use, and buildings. The collection is strong, and the artefacts, being specific to Shetland, are of particular significance. Items include packsaddles, basketry, peat harvesting and soil working tools, grain processing equipment, architectural components, ropemaking, carpentry and blacksmithing tools. The collection lacks certain items, such as a peat sled, and agricultural items will be sought as a priority.

20.2.2 Subsistence fisheries

Objects pertaining to indigenous fishing comprise handlines, shore fishing by rod and net, freshwater fisheries, baskets, and boats. The commercial deepwater longline fishery of the 18th-19th century (Da Haaf), relied on indigenous technology and such artefacts fall under this category. These include bailers, items from fishermen's storage booths, boat components, halers. The collection lacks domestic items for use onboard and at fishing stations.

20.2.3 Domestic

The collection is strong in a broad spread of objects, amongst which are: milk processing tools, culinary implements, lamps, personal footwear, furniture, fireside implements, and objects relating to childhood. Identifiable gaps in the collection are a baking board, examples of basketry (especially an asek and a hovi) and toys.

20.2.4 Folk belief

Any objects specifically related to folk beliefs, whether incorporating established religions or considered pre-Christian should be collected where their use and meaning can be verified with considerable certainty.

20.3 Social History

Economic development in Shetland since 1800 was evidenced by the adoption of non-Shetlandic technologies and practises, with a specialisation into various trade sectors, and a convergence with broader British trends.

20.3.1 Business, trade, and industry

The collection is strongest in office and retail items, primarily acquired through the dissolution of long-standing general merchants, such as J. & T. Abernethy and T. M. Adie & Sons. Artefacts range from office equipment, weighing apparatus, shop fittings, advertising, merchandise, and packaging. There is need to acquire artefacts from long-standing and specialist firms, with an emphasis on the 1950s to the present period. The existing retail collection is clustered around the c.1880-1930 period and collecting representations from local merchants from 1930 onwards should be proactive, particularly from trades poorly represented, such as butchery and food retailers, including independent artisans.

The collection would be strengthened by acquiring further items from non-retail sectors such as banking, legal, real estate, insurance and architectural businesses.

Representation of manufacturing trades is imbalanced: carpentry (especially cooperage) and cobbling are covered by a large collection of tools; blacksmithing is more limited, although the artefact range is well-spread; stonemasonry objects are limited to a few tools.

Other principal trades, especially dressmaking, are inadequately represented. Further collecting of carpentry and cobbling should occur only in special circumstances, such as locally made tools. Modern engineering and building services, shipping and haulage, service industries such as beauticians, barbers, and alternative therapies are poorly represented. Businesses and events related to tourism are represented but are skewed to events such as Hamefarin, Tall Ships and Up Helly Aa.

Various industries have been active in Shetland, e.g., mining, quarrying, oil and gas, green energy and space technology with little or no representation in the collection. Items pertaining to this sector are numerous, generic, and often large in scale. The selection of artefacts to represent trade and industry should be targeted, with consideration to storage and display. Modern crofting/farming practices should also be considered, including organic producers.

20.3.2 Social life

Encompassing education, religion, leisure including music and society in general. The collection should chart the changes in Shetland's story with representations from all aspects of society within the islands' communities.

Scholastic items are reasonably well-ranged within the collection, with a degree of duplication: slates, schoolbags, blazers, bookcase, and stoves. Principal items required are a pupil's desk and a blackboard, plus classroom educational aids from all eras. Post war education should be represented and contemporary collecting from schools outside Lerwick, especially where they are threatened with closure, be prioritised. The historic Anderson High School relocation is not fully represented and should be pursued prior to redevelopment of the site.

Ecclesiastical activities are represented: communion tokens and cups; fittings such as an architectural cross, bell, and pulpit; furnishings including desk and chairs; clergy family household items. Items from the sale of Church of Scotland kirks should be considered, however the collection has very little representation beyond the Church of Scotland and active collecting of artefacts from other religions requires to be prioritised.

Organised sports and leisure only dates from the late 19th century and the collection is small, mainly trophies and medals. Entire private collections of any object category should be carefully reviewed before acceptance.

There are few items to represent hobbies and pastimes such as model making, photography, needlework, cards and games, arts and crafts.

Main collecting priorities should reflect sporting, hobby and social club organisations, such as drama and dance clubs, sports teams, charitable groups etc. The Museum holds Boys'

Brigade artefacts, but the collection lacks representation of other childhood organisations, such as the Girls Brigade and Sea Scouts.

Collecting in the area of social movements and protest should be prioritised with an emphasis on local protests against local, national, and international issues.

Musical instruments are limited to a few fiddles, a bugle, organ, drum, and whistles, while the collection lacks iconic instruments such as a guitar and an accordion, and organised activity (e.g., Lerwick Brass Band instrument or uniform). Artefacts relating to current Shetland musicians and organisations should be actively collected, with input from the local community to tackle obvious gaps in the collection.

There is a collection of local musicians' and composers' music on LP and 78rpm records, however, further collecting should not be pursued.

20.3.3 Technical, communications, science

These collections consist mainly of optical instruments (microscopes, cameras, and projectors) and communications equipment (telephones and wirelasses). The rationale for further collecting of such generic items is to illustrate social change in Shetland. Main gaps are artefacts showing the advance of postal and telegraphic systems. Collecting targets include letter carriers' delivery satchel, postman's uniform items, Post Office hardware (especially telegraph apparatus). Although the museum has a few wireless sets and accumulators, it requires a typical receiver from the 1930s-40s.

There is a small but reasonably balanced selection of medical equipment, covering doctors, nursing, emergency services and opticians. Such items will continue to be collected on a passive basis.

There are several clocks and watches from institutions or private persons, besides watch repairer's toolkit. Priority items for acquisition are clocks and watches with local maker or retailers' labels (e.g., James Tait, George Goudie).

20.3.4 Agriculture

Mechanisation of farming techniques and the supplanting of local tools by imported ones is poorly reflected in the collections, and efforts will continue to address this. The Museum has devices such as a threshing machine and a two-wheeled tractor. Given the generic nature of such equipment and space constraints, the museum will not collect such large devices as tractor-drawn ploughs, harrows, and other machinery. Regarding civilian firearms, see [20.10](#) for security considerations.

Artefacts demonstrating the resourcefulness of crofters and the cultural transition from Indigenous equipment to generic imports are a collecting priority. Some comprise hand-made versions of manufactured archetypes (e.g., the Museum holds a home-made cartridge loader and timber copy of steel lock).

20.4 Fishing

The Museum holds a large collection of items relating to domestic and commercial fisheries, reflecting its development since the early modern period (fisheries before 1700 are covered in [20.1.5](#) Medieval and Early Modern Archaeology).

20.4.1 Inshore fishing

Small boat inshore fishing, whether for home or commercial purposes, is well represented in the collections; holdings include handlines, rods, nets, plus full-size open boats. The broad range of inshore fishing techniques, by line, net and other methods, means that passive collection should continue. There is a lack of trout-fishing gear and early crustacean and molluscan fisheries equipment.

20.4.2 Whitefish

Artefacts here pertain to fishing after the deep-sea line fishery (see [20.2.2](#) Subsistence fishery). Although numerically small, the collection has a good representative range of material from the cod smacks of the 19th century. These include boat components such as blocks, a wheel and a figurehead, and fishing gear including quadrant, ditty box, loudhailer, and bale stencil. Any further additions to this category are desirable, given their scarcity as a whole.

The line fishery in home waters by sail, and later, motor vessels, is historically important but is a notable gap in the collection. There are several sets of haddock line gear, but little else besides. Items to be sought actively include components of boats (*e.g.*, a 1920s engine), iced-fish boxes with unrepresented boat names, and domestic items from the Lerwick “Scotties” community.

White fishing by net, from the 1940s onwards, is a large sector that is scantily represented in the collection. Artefacts are strongest in electronic units, fish baskets and boxes, but otherwise coverage is sparse and priority acquisitions include objects relating to marine engineering, below-decks life, factory employees’ work, and family items from fishing homes. An area of future collecting would be to represent the changes in the Shetland-based fish market.

20.4.3 Pelagic fisheries

The collection representing the herring fishery is particularly strong. There are boats’ fittings; nets, buoys and other gear; garments; barrels and boxes; net-mending items and gutting paraphernalia. The weakness is the post 1950s period, and there is nothing beyond 1970. The Museum needs to acquire selected items to show the huge growth of this sector, including fish-finding systems, bureaucratic ephemera, crew accommodation, onboard fish processing, mechanisation of factories. Considering such items may be large, acquisition must be carefully evaluated before acceptance.

Notable gaps are the foreign fisheries that were formerly important. Dutch items are limited to a few items of fishing gear or personal possessions, and further collection is needed. Of note are items locally bought by crew to take home to the Netherlands, *e.g.*, garments, as well as crewmen’s paintings of Lerwick. The Russian fishery (“klondykers”) of the 1950s-’80s is not well represented, and the active acquisition target is items that were traded by crewmen to Shetlanders.

The modern pelagic fishing narrative, including mackerel fisheries and salt fish export, is lacking within the Museum collection. This could be expressed through the collection of models of pelagic trawlers, memorabilia, oral, documented and photographic history.

Items that evidence the Scandinavian pelagic fishery of the 1960s-70s should also be sought.

20.4.4 Whaling stations

Local shore-based whaling stations are not well represented in artefacts. Collections include a harpoon, flensing knife and grindstone. There is obvious scope for further acquisition, including items from workers' barracks, objects made in station smithies, objects made from whale products, equipment re-used after stations were closed.

20.4.5 Aquaculture

Fish and shellfish farming are not represented within the collection. Potential smaller artefacts include feed equipment, workboat gear, and merchandise packaging. Active collecting of key objects around the development and growth of the aquaculture in Shetland will be identified through consultation with industry experts.

20.5 Shipping

Shetlanders' reliance on the sea as a source of employment dominated the early 19th to mid-20th century. To represent this crucial historic phase in a balanced way, the collection should record the work of crewmen, the type of vessels they shipped on, the type of trades pursued, and the family experience back home.

20.5.1 Arctic whaling

There is a good collection of objects, some from working life (lances and harpoons) but mostly crewmen's personal items (chests, games, handicrafts, souvenirs). The Museum will seek to secure further additions where possible.

20.5.2 Merchant shipping

Given the pre-eminence of merchant shipping in the Shetland economy, the size of the collection is large, but still underrepresents its importance. The collection is strong in crewmen's items from sailing vessels (chests, sail-making implements) but there is a dearth of ships' equipment and redressing would benefit the collection. There are several artefacts from the period of steam and motor ships, but these are mostly in the field of officers' navigation items, or seamen's souvenirs. There is great scope for further expansion, such as artefacts illustrative of specific shipping lines, memorabilia from particularly important trades (*e.g.*, colliers, Baltic timber, St Lawrence approaches salvage), and items concerning cargo or ships themselves.

20.5.3 North Boats

This concerns the regular sea link to the Northern Isles from Scotland. There is an extensive range of tableware, menus and tickets, paintings, and models. Holdings, however, are limited beyond the 1950s, and there are few artefacts representing personnel on the ships, as well as items pertaining to dockers' work. It is desirable to actively collect objects related to changes in North Boat contracts, *e.g.*, P&O to Northlink, going forward as well as from the regular cargo boats.

20.5.4 Shipwrecks

By their nature, such items are diverse, comprising items washed ashore, hauled up by fishing net, or retrieved by scuba divers. Dominant items tend to be more showy pieces like bells, nameboards, lifebuoys; there are fewer more prosaic items like deck equipment or

engine room components. The purpose of non-archaeological shipwreck (as opposed to [20.1.6](#)) collecting is to demonstrate marine traffic around Shetland, the human impact of wrecks, and the salvage opportunities.

20.5.5 Antarctic whaling

Reflecting the relatively recent period of the industry, this collection is very strong. The collection includes a catcher's gun, handicrafts by whalers and painted eggs. Collecting should continue as the generation of whalers age. The Museum will work with the South Georgia Museum and the Shetland Ex-Whalers Association to look at ways of collecting narratives of this once commercially important industry and sharing digital exhibits to better convey the story of Shetland's involvement in South Atlantic Whaling.

20.6 Boats

The Museum has built a balanced collection relevant to the islands' history, without needless duplication. The core of the collection is a specimen of each principal type of locally built vessel including a yawl, a pram, cod boat, haddock boat and a maid. The collection also includes examples of combined square sail + fore-and-aft rig, inboard engine conversion, and constructional changes.

Any built before 1890 is rare and represent the earliest specimens of their type. If a boat has a well-recorded or significant history, this may favour its acquisition for example, the collection contains a lifeboat from H.M.S. Oceanic and a jolly boat from the St Sunniva I.

Specimen boats by different builders are desirable although many of the main commercial builders are already represented (e.g., Thomas Scott, Jack Shewan, Davie Leask), but notable builders are absent (e.g., Walter Shewan). Regional boatbuilders such as Johnny Smith from Yell, Davie Bruce from Skaw, Whalsay, and modern prolific builders of the modern racing maid built by people such as Alan Moncrieff are also absent.

Currently the story of the development of recreational sailing and rowing boat use ends in the 1960s and this should be actively remedied. The resources to store, conserve and exhibit boats are finite. The museum might be best placed to work collaboratively with other local museums to record and safeguard the Shetland story.

20.6.1 Boat models

There is a collection of over 150 model boats in the Museum collection, which range in size, purpose and calibre and many reflect the experiences of Shetlanders in travel, shipping, fishing and trade. There are models of tall ships, fishing boats and cargo vessels as well as boatbuilder patterns and prototypes, ships in bottles and souvenirs. Active collecting should centre on local boat model makers who are not yet represented such as Robbie Tait and consideration must be given to models by expert makers such as Jack Shewan, even though they are already present in the collection. Future collecting should consider commissioning models of significant craft.

20.7 Textiles

For convenience, the Recognised Textile collection is considered as a whole, although it comprises parts of other artefact disciplines; namely [20.2](#) Ethnology and [20.4](#) Fishing. As with fishing in both 20.2 and 20.4, the artefacts reflect subsistence origins leading to commercial development into an industry that eventually combined indigenous techniques

with industrial machinery and methods. Given the design value of the objects, provenance may be a secondary priority for objects from sources such as charity shops, local auctions. Priorities for collecting are from 20th- and 21st-century small firms or independent makers, especially those of short duration with their own branding.

20.7.1 Weaving

Includes manufacturers' tweed samples, lengths of fabric, garments made of Shetland tweed, tools for finishing processes, packaging labels and promotional material. The collection is strengthened by manufacturers' records held by Shetland Archives. The fabric was exported from Shetland, so the collection has few garments. This should be remedied through collecting to inform the economic scope of the sector. Artefacts mainly represent larger firms, and efforts should be made to obtain products and advertising materials of small firms and self-employed weavers. There are a few examples of home-woven cloth for clothing, bedding, and household use. Such items should continue to be passively collected, including archaeological examples.

20.7.2 Rugs

Woven pile rugs, known as "taatit" rugs, are unique to Shetland and directly relate to Ethnology ([20.2](#)) and Folk Belief ([20.2.4](#)). It is desirable to acquire further specimens to build on the collection, especially rugs dating to the first half of the 19th century or before. The collection is supported by research culminating in a 2015 publication, which identifies and provides historical data on taatit rugs held in private collections, should any be later acquired.

20.7.3 Plain knitting

Encompasses everyday woollen garments made for sale or for personal use by knitters and their families. These include undergarments, haps, scarves, baby clothes and knitted underwear. The category also contains commercial products, such as the "Everest" jumper produced following the 1953 ascent, the expedition being supplied by a local firm.

Gaps in the collection include home-made knitted toys such as stuffed animals and clothing for dolls. Plain hand-knitted items dating from before 1950 or with specific reference to working garments (haps, fish gutter garments, sea mitts, fishermen's underwear, stockings and caps traded to foreign fishermen) are poorly represented in the collection and are a priority.

20.7.4 Colour-stranded knitwear

The textile collection encompasses colour-stranded (i.e., "Fair Isle") knitting, beginning with 19th century fishermen's caps. By the 1920s fair isle style knitting became internationally fashionable and the collection contains garments from the 1920s-1930s, reflecting local knitters' experimentation with design and colour. Additional items from circa 1915 to the 1950s are necessary to reduce the amount of wear from access by the public to existing pieces in the collection.

By the second half of the 20th century, Shetland-made garments were copied by the fashion industry and fair isle knitting adapted to the commercial challenge by moving to machine-knitted garments finished by hand. Locally produced knitwear made on machines in outworker or factory settings are a priority, particularly where they show changes in style, design innovation or from specific knitwear firms.

By definition the collection contains home-dyed wools using imported and locally sourced plants, lichens, and minerals. Dyeing increased in the 19th century to increase the value of knitwear for the burgeoning tourism industry. This development, and the reliance on native plants and minerals to satisfy demand, is poorly understood from a historical, economic, and object research (i.e., dye and mordant analysis) viewpoint. Further collecting of items made before the 1920s are important for understanding the scope of the trade, especially fishermen's caps and knitwear sold to tourists before the First World War.

20.7.5 Fine lace

The collection contains important shawls and stoles from the founding of this industry in the 1830s. It includes examples of lace made by the Sutherland family, who designed and made lace garments for wealthy clients, including royalty. The collection is supported by recent digitisation, a 2015 PhD on the local industry, and a forthcoming book on design to define its unique character. Holdings include mourning accessories in black (full mourning) and grey (half mourning), and a c1880 shawl donated by the family of Sir Andrew Huxley.

Two recently donated private collections have somewhat alleviated gaps in accessories (tidies, headscarves) and soft furnishings (bedspreads, pillow covers) and passive collecting should continue for these uncommon objects.

The Museum should limit collecting to garments with unusual motifs or design, special order garments where these can be identified, lace knitted in non-wool fibres, very fine hand-spun pieces, samplers, and documentation about identified designers. Key garments for collection would be a 19th century opera cloak and a 1950s cocktail dress.

20.7.6 Embroideries

The few stitched or embroidered samplers in the collection date from the early 19th to 20th centuries and demonstrate needlework techniques taught to girls within a schoolroom context. Their survival rate is poor, and any further examples of embroidery, especially from the 19th century, should be actively collected.

The collection also includes embroidered and sewn needlework by seamen in the form of ditty bags and embroideries of ships. More examples should be accepted into the collection where the maker and ship can be identified.

20.7.7 Textile tools

The Museum has a good range of textile tools, from both hand and industrial manufacture. Wool processing tools include wool combs and hand cards; the iron and horn wool combs should be collected when possible, whereas no more imported hand cards are required.

Yarn-making equipment includes muckle, lint, and various styles of spinning wheels. Only muckle and lint wheels should be collected in future; spinning wheels of 19th and 20th century date need not be collected except where makers are assuredly known. Wheels with makers' marks made by locally are a priority, particularly by Stuart Thomson (Fair Isle) and Hamish Polson (Yell).

Whole spindles (i.e., with whorl) and toam spinners are represented but by only a few items and these should be collected. The collection contains niddy noddies, swifts, and upright yarn winders and no more of these objects are required.

Hand-knitting equipment includes sheaths, belts and needles. Sheaths and ivory, bone and wooden needles should be actively collected, whereas only belts with interesting provenance or made locally where the maker is known should be considered. Three knitting machines are represented in the collection, a Singer Mark 1, a Harrison, and an unknown make. Additional knitting machines are not a priority, although a Dubied make with strong provenance is an omission.

Weaving equipment is poorly represented and mainly includes small equipment used in a factory setting, other than items like reeds and shuttles from unknown looms. The collection includes a cast iron Hattersley loom but no pre-1950s wooden loom, or warping board, despite the economic importance of weaving. Unlike cobblers' or sailmakers' tools, there is not a full set of equipment belonging to an independent or outworker weaver.

The collection of dressing boards is extensive and includes boards for jumpers, spencers, scarves/stoles, gloves, stockings, mittens, berets, haps and shawls. No more such boards are required. Boards for knitted skirts, nightgowns, and long underwear have only single examples and should be sought, especially where they differ in shape from current examples or where makers are known.

20.8 Costume

The costume collection reflects a natural inclination by people to “value the valuable” and the Museum holds a much larger proportion of special occasion clothing than everyday wear. The collection rightly focusses on locally made clothing, even where the cloth was imported. Collecting should continue for any items of clothing entirely hand-sewn, to reflect the period before sewing machines became available c1865. For convenience, items used specifically by amateur and professional tailors and seamstresses are included. Many items in this section are part of categories [20.3](#) Social History, [20.5](#) Shipping and [20.10](#) Naval and Military.

20.8.1 Women's wear

There is a good collection of mid-19th to mid-20th century items, consisting mainly of 19th century skirts and undergarments, although blouses are poorly represented and should be collected. Except in unusual circumstances no more wedding dresses need be acquired, except a woollen suit worn by a bride c1940s-1950s, a 1960s “mod” or mini-skirted wedding ensemble, or a bespoke wedding dress designed and made by Sana Isbister. Important weaknesses in the collection are women's work wear (*e.g.*, shop, servant, and gutters' overalls, aprons, finger wraps) and everyday clothing (including sleepwear and undergarments), except coats.

Accessories such as handbags, footwear, and jewellery are poorly represented. The collection is adequate in furs, feathered accessories, and mutches but bonnets pre-1880s and late 19th century ladies' large hats are obvious gaps.

20.8.2 Men's wear

The men's wear collection is particularly limited, consisting mainly of formal clothing of the late 19th century. Further acquisition is required in the area of work wear (e.g., labourers' overalls, dungaree jacket, footwear), and in garments made from locally produced cloth. Underclothing, sleepwear, accessories, and special work garments related to industry should also be actively collected. Men's clothing dating from before the mid-19th century is a priority, especially sheep-skin oil skins, sea mitts and boots.

20.8.3 Children's wear

This collection is weak in that it consists mainly of poorly-provenanced fine-quality infants' garments. This atypical selection should be rectified by collecting footwear, underwear, everyday clothing, and older children's garments made locally from any period.

The collection is supported by hobby and sporting costume, such as sporting team shirts, Boy's Brigade and Girl Guides' uniforms (see [20.3.2](#)).

20.8.4 Sewing and Tailoring

Much clothing was made locally as late as the mid-20th century by small firms and professional or amateur individuals. Little research has been done on this sector and that is reflected in the collection. Recent donations of home-made clothing have included haberdashery and collecting should continue to reflect the availability from local merchants of cloth, especially 19th century cottons, trims, thread, ribbons, buttons, and millinery adornments. The collection contains several 19th century sewing machines but other tools used by tailors and seamstresses should be collected where provenance is strong.

20.8.5 Uniforms

This constitutes part of [20.3](#) Social History, [20.5](#) Shipping, and [20.10](#) Naval and Military. Items comprise tunics and trousers, headgear, belts and other accoutrements. This collection is extensive, but markedly imbalanced – there are many army officers' items, but few Naval uniforms. This is inversely proportional to Shetland's history, and very active collecting of Naval apparel is needed to redress this anomaly.

Recent acquisitions includes a uniform from the Northern Lighthouse Board. There is insufficient coverage of civilian services uniforms, namely a few examples of police, nursing, fire brigade, merchant shipping, lifeboat, coastguard. There are very few early 20th century pieces. A priority acquisition is a postman's uniform from the early 20th century.

The collection lacks women's military and other service uniforms other than for nursing. A priority would be WWII female uniforms from the various services.

There is a good range of regalia from closed societies like the Freemasons and Oddfellows.

20.8.6 Jewellery

The jewellery collection consists mostly of 19th century mourning items, plus some pieces associated with gold prospecting. There are few specimens of decorative jewellery, and efforts should be made to collect material produced by local individuals or firms.

20.8.7 Up Helly Aa costumes

The collection contains examples of costumes from the Up Helly Aa festival, mainly from Jarl squads. Given the superfluity and ephemeral nature of costumes, collecting must be limited. The exception is pre-1940s squad outfits. Post-1950s costumes should only be collected if the squad theme had obvious reference to Shetland-based issues of the day, *i.e.*, not television programmes. Outfits after the 1970s were increasingly mass-produced, and generally will not be collected. However, the expensive manufacture of jarls' squad costumes following the establishment of the oil industry, contrasting with previous costumes home-made from locally bought materials, should be reflected in the collection with one or two post-1980 jarl squad outfits. The collection contains no costumes from the non-Lerwick festivals, and donors will be encouraged to offer these to the relevant local museums.

20.9 Photography

Shetland Museum has around 100,000 glass and film negatives, lantern and celluloid slides, photographic prints and postcards.

20.9.1 Negatives

The collection ranges in date from 1870s-1990s, with the greater part covering 1900-1940. A number of large collections are held, e.g., Arthur Abernethy, Robert Ramsay, Lollie Scott, Jack Peterson.

20.9.2 Positives

The collection comprises glass lantern slides and celluloid slides covering 1900s-1990s. As with [20.9.1 Negatives](#), the collection represents the work of many photographers, and covers multifarious subjects.

20.9.3 Postcards

The postcard collection numbers around 7,000 items, which are virtually all related to Shetland. Non-local topics are only accepted in exceptional circumstances, such as a large group received by one family in the 1900s-1910s, a collection of First World War postcards sent by Shetlanders serving overseas, and individual cards associated with a larger donation such as merchant seamen's belongings.

20.9.4 Photographs

In the early years of the Museum, photographic prints were collected indiscriminately and, as such, often have inadequate documentation; however, all have a Shetland connection.

All existing photographs of historic import have been scanned. Most images (photographic prints, negatives and positives) have been digitised to a common format and made available online. However due to advancements in technology the online archive will be migrating to a new platform and active collecting of physical images should be halted and a new policy for the processing of images for the photo archive devised.

20.10 Naval and military

(Also see [20.8.5 - Uniforms](#)). This collection is large, with a good range of artefacts, in good preservation and well-provenanced. These are mainly from the two World Wars and include: standard issue kit, weapons, mess and shipboard memorabilia, war souvenirs, civilian war-related mementoes, training equipment, gasmasks, insignia. From these wars,

weaknesses in collection balance are: Royal Navy artefacts, merchant seamen at war, women in armed and civilian organisations, air force personnel, non-officer ranks.

The collection of items from the Napoleonic, Crimean and Boer war is small, and there is priority to acquire artefacts connected with Shetland during those conflicts.

20.10.1 War medals

The medal collection reflects Shetlanders' role in conflicts from the late 18th century onwards. These range from single to multiple awards, and encompass campaign, bravery, and long-service medals. The Museum shall continue collecting such artefacts where there is full documentation of the recipients' service, but also consider the collections of other museums and heritage organisations in Shetland.

20.10.2 Weapons

Shetland Museum holds approximately 170 items of weaponry, such as shotguns, rifles, pistols, revolvers, bayonets, dress and military swords, daggers and knives, as well as humane killers, powder horns, and bullet moulds. Some weaponry is on permanent display, the remaining objects are housed in a strong-room at the Museum Store, excepting flensing and gutting knives, and harpoons.

The Museum holds a Firearms Licence (DDG 9/8) and has acted as a repository for local firearm owners who wish to relinquish these objects. The licence requires that adequate records are kept of all firearms under licence, and no live ammunition is kept. In the event the Museum wishes to deaccession a firearm, it cannot sell or transfer the object without permission from Scottish Ministers.

20.11 Art

The art collection has been accumulated principally by donation and bequest and has been supplemented by pieces purchased from practising artists directly or at auction. The oil and acrylic paintings and sculpture in the collection prior to 2010 has been available online through ArtUK.⁴ For convenience, cartography and numismatics shall be considered in this section.

20.11.1 Paintings

The collection consists of pieces in various media – primarily oils and watercolours – and mainly includes portraits, land- and seascapes, and paintings of ships, from a date range of c.1800 onwards. Notable pieces include early 19th century portraits by John Irvine, late 19th-century scenes by visiting artists, profile paintings of North Boats, local amateurs' work (e.g., Henry P Taylor watercolours, Francis Walterson cartoons, Fred Irvine drawings), and late 20th century professional artists' work. The museum shall actively acquire any further works by mainland British artists who visited Shetland during the 19th century. Those in the collection already include Frank Barnard, Sir Oswald Brierley, and Robert Pain. Established contemporary Shetland artists should be actively but prudently collected to ensure representation.

⁴ <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/search/venue:shetland-museum-and-archives-6658/page/2>

20.11.2 Prints

The number of art prints is very limited and active collecting of works by Shetland-based artists, particularly those not already represented in the collection, should be pursued. In addition, examples of printmakers' blocks and tools are desirable additions to be pursued.

20.11.3 Sculpture

The sculpture collection is small in scope, comprising a few items in carved timber, formed plaster, and metal. Relatively few local practitioners have worked these media – most significantly is woodcarver John Walterston – and the collection would be strengthened by pieces made by locally-prominent artists such as stone carver John Williamson. The Museum holds one carving by Adam Christie and additional pieces of his work should be sought at auction when available. Contemporary additions to this collection will likely be possible through commission or purchase.

20.11.4 Applied art

This comprises functional articles containing a decorative element covering the fields of ceramics, silverware, and jewellery. Artefacts include souvenirs, crockery, ornaments and brooches. The collection does not represent Shetland-born or resident potters, and steps should be taken to actively collect a representative collection of such material, particularly items bearing the Burgh of Lerwick coat of arms. The collection of silver and pewter is composed mainly of military and sporting trophies, church communion ware, and domestic tableware. There are a few items of art basketry, and it is desirable to broaden this to other unrepresented makers. This collection requires to be developed with input from local makers and artists.

20.11.5 Cartography

This collection comprises over 200 items, and there are few gaps from the pre-1900 period. Holdings include maps and charts, contemporarily hand-coloured specimens, atlas sheets, folding maps, government surveys, and variant editions. The three prime gaps are Olaus Magnus (1529), and "Estland" (1555), and Robert Sibbald (1711). Twentieth century folding maps are relatively poorly represented, and examples should be actively sought. Geological maps and Admiralty charts are other areas in which the collection should be augmented. The Museum's collection is held in the Archives repository due to storage limitations within the Museum Store. The Museum will continue to curate and make additions to the collection.

20.11.6 Numismatics and philately

The collection is strong in various points. Most Shetland church communion tokens are represented, although a few 18th century ones are absent. Prominent existing holdings include a large group of 18th century coins from the Fetlar church collection and early modern coinage from hanseatic trade, shipwrecks and other assemblages. Recent and future acquisitions is shaped by chance finds, allocated by the Treasure Trove process. There are few banknotes, all of which have specific provenances related to Shetlanders. Included within the collection are currency from the Cocos Islands, an archipelago which belonged to a Shetlander. A high priority acquisition is a Quendale Copper Mine share certificate of c.1800.

The collection consists of civic and professional awards, including OBE, coronation medals and lifesaving awards. Further collecting should consider provenance and duplication.

Besides medals, there is insignia relating to local associations, e.g., membership of women's guilds, nursing associations, and sports clubs. Further collection of these will continue.

The philatelic collection is incidental and mainly commemorative stamps or first covers. Collection should continue to be passive, and any offers to donate a private collection requires to be diligently considered.

20.12 Natural history

In general, and with few exceptions, the collections are sparse in coverage and poorly documented. They comprise a few scientifically recorded mainly botanic assemblages, several sporadically collected items, and private collections. The collection as a whole does not reflect the rich and dynamic natural history of Shetland, limiting the Museum in what it can offer visitors via display, learning and research. Key issues affecting Shetland's natural history, such as climate change and oil and gas development, cannot be expressed through the current collection. The Museum has not had specialist staff and collecting has been in atypical circumstances.

20.12.1 Zoology

The zoology collection is small and poorly represents Shetland's wildlife diversity and uniqueness. It does not form a comprehensive baseline of present species, against which future collecting can be directed as environmental changes affect the diversity of species present in the islands.

There is a collection of mounted birds and skins, containing around 350 specimens, mostly within two large collections formed in the early 20th century. It is supplemented by other additions, including 140 mounted birds from the previous Anderson High School location. The three large collections are uncatalogued and untested for early taxidermy chemicals and therefore not available to the public. These collections are of historical ornithology, rather than scientific collections, since they have no specific collecting provenance by the original collectors. Collection should remain passive, targeted towards historical specimens of local taxidermists or Shetland specimens not represented in the present collection.

There are several collections of birds' eggs, but most egg specimens are duplicated, species not identified, and have no collecting data, limiting their interpretive use. Whilst legislation (Wild Birds Protection Act 1954 and Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981) prohibits the acquisition of modern birds' eggs, the Museum is still enabled to collect historic specimens. In such cases the Museum must satisfy itself beyond doubt that anything offered constitutes pre-1954 collecting. The Museum has acted as local repository for pre-1954 collections but it should not accept such collections as a matter of course. Future collecting should not duplicate what is already held.

The mammalian collection is very small, consisting of about 30 specimens. Examples of two cetaceans and a single otter are poorly preserved. There are no examples of mice and rats, hares and rabbits, stoats and ferrets, hedgehogs, and bats.

There are no examples of amphibians and only a cast of Shetland's single reptile.

The invertebrate collection is random in coverage, and the historic collection methodology unscientific in nature. The exception is a donation of beetles from the Natural History Museum (London), most of which are Shetland in origin. The vertebrate collection should be focussed on obtaining well-preserved specimens of indigenous species.

The Museum holds several small collections and individual examples of marine animals numbering about 130 specimens. Most of this collection was donated by the Marine Conservation Society in 1988 from the Sublittoral Survey of Shetland (1987). Wet preservation is problematic due to changes in legislation regarding shipment and use of preserving chemicals. There is also a small collection of tardigrada, and although no longer preserved in fluid, the specimens may still be viable due to their specific physiology.

20.12.2 Botany

The botanical collection contains some 3,250 specimens, none of which are catalogued, although most have been itemised on hand lists. About 1,400 specimens of mainly seed-bearing plants are represented, the majority collected by local botanist Walter Scott, with good collecting provenance of scientific interest. The collection also contains fifty-one dried specimens of local seaweeds collected by D. E. G. Irvine in the 1970s and 1,800 lichen specimens mainly collected by Kery Dalby, with good collecting provenance. The seaweed⁵ collection has been digitised by the Natural History Museum, London. Both of these collections are only partial to what the collectors gathered but the whereabouts of the remaining specimens are uncertain. Should these come to light, they should be accepted into the collection. Bryophytes (mosses and liverworts), pteridophytes (ferns and horsetails), and lycophytes (club mosses) may be included in some of the collections above. Any new acquisitions should only accepted when collected to scientific standards of data collection and preservation, as well as due observance to protected species or sites.

20.12.3 Geology

The geological collection is strong in minerals, mostly collected by Professor Derek Flinn of Liverpool University. The collection is poor in rocks and fossils and examples need to be collected to fully illustrate Shetland's geological past accompanied by detailed finds information.

20.12.4 Palaeontology

Examples of fossilised plants and marine animals, as well as geological and invertebrate trace fossils are represented in the collection. They are mainly from Dunrossness area and are poorly identified and provenanced. Examples from local collectors should be accepted as any duplication can be used in Handling Collections.

20.13 Transport

There is a small but significant transport collection (boats are not included, see section [20.6 Boats](#)) including a gig, cart, invalid car and several bicycles and motorbikes. All the artefacts are made in Shetland or have a Shetland-related provenance. Associated objects such as bicycle lamps are also held. Future collecting should be targeted at areas not already represented such as local transport firms.

⁵ [Shetland Museum and Archives \(ZCM\) | Seaweed Collections Online \(myspecies.info\)](#)

20.14 Ephemera

This collection provides context to the artefacts, provides important information for researchers alongside objects and are used in Museum displays. The collection is extensive and varied, covering all of the categories listed above. There are collections of such disparate items as trade labels, seamen's discharge papers, textile advertisements, propaganda sheets, steamship tickets and electioneering leaflets.

This collection also contains a large number of, mainly 19th century, lithographs and engravings from published books and magazines, such as Samuel Hibbert's Description of the Shetland Islands and Sir Walter Scott's Pirate. Due to the published nature and digitisation of the material, duplication must be avoided.

20.15 Contemporary Craft

To address the need for collecting craft objects that continue to be made locally, a Contemporary Craft collection designation was initiated in 2021. Its aim is to identify crafts and their makers whose quality work is representative of Shetland craft today. The initiative was supported by a grant from the National Fund for Acquisitions to purchase important pieces for the Textiles collection. These included a knitted lace and silk dress made by Angela Irvine for her UHI degree and a knitted wire bracelet by Helen Robertson. The designation has also been applied to the few existing objects in the collection by contemporary makers such as basketry by Jimmy Work. Future active collecting will focus on woodworking, blacksmithing, and leatherwork, among other crafts.

20.16 Handling Collection

There is a large resource of non-collection objects for learning opportunities. These items are not part of the collection described in the foregoing document and are excluded from acquisition due to their lack of provenance or duplication in the main collection. Objects for this collection will be sought as required for hands-on interpretation for school pupils, community groups, care homes and museum activities including the Croft House Museum.

SMAA Service Planning Group

Terms of Reference

(To be updated when Collections Policy Approved)

Remit

Shetland Islands Council and Shetland Amenity Trust have established this working group known as the Shetland Museum & Archives Planning Group. The group has been established in order to ensure a collaborative approach to self-evaluation and service planning.

The group will be responsible for engaging fairly and broadly in reviewing progress on delivery on service objectives as well as assessing best evidence to inform future service plans. The group will advise and make recommendations to the Council and the Trust as required.

Specifically, the group shall:

1. Review Quarterly Service Reports
2. Take account of external revisions and monitoring from national bodies
3. Review stakeholder feedback (including customers)
4. Support annual service planning, ensuring the following points are considered:
 - Strategic links
 - Resource requirements
 - Performance measures
 - Delivery targets
 - Service risks
5. Explore longer-term development opportunities.

Scope

All aspects of the provision of an effective Museum and Archives service in Shetland.

Frequency of Meetings

The Planning Group shall meet no less than four times each year. The timing of meetings should take account of agreed service reporting requirements.

Membership

The quorum for all meetings of the group shall be five (with minimum of 2 from each organisation).

The Planning Group may be attended by members of SIC/SAT staff or by external advisers. The purpose of such an invitation will be to provide specialist information and advice to assist the group in its deliberations.

Reports and agenda management will be led by the Culture and Heritage Manager.

Group membership should be not less than six representatives (3 from each organisation). At least one member from SAT must be from the Museum or Archives team. At least one member from the Council must be from the Development Directorate. Till March 2024 one member from the Council will be a representative from the PMO.

Council	Tommy Coutts, SIC Development Maurice Henderson, SIC Development Robert Sinclair, SIC Corporate Services Noelle Henderson, SIC Education & Families Michael Duncan / June Porter, SIC Development Representative from SIC PMO
SAT	Hazel Sutherland, Chief Executive - CHAIR Jacqui Birnie, Cultural & Heritage Manager Ian Tait, Curator Brian Smith, Archivist