



Collection Development Policy 2015 – 2020

Approved on behalf of the New Room Trustees

NAME	SIGNATURE
Rev Ward Jones, Chair New Room Trustees Meeting	_____
Mr Gary Best Warden, New Room	_____
Mr Michael Culshaw, Deputy Warden, New Room.	_____

Name of museum: The New Room (John Wesley’s Chapel)

Name of governing body: The New Room Trustees

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 10/11/15

Policy review procedure:

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: 2020

Arts Council England: will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organization:

The collections development policy is overseen by the governing body of the New Room-see para 2 a- and therefore informs the Forward Plan.

1) The museum's statement of purpose is:

- a) To promote the New Room as a place of historical and contemporary significance in the spiritual and social life of Bristol, the nation and the world.
- b) To tell the stories of John and Charles Wesley so as to increase people's understanding of their respective contributions and their relevance to thought, belief and action today.
- c) To develop the New Room as a sustainable heritage attraction, educational resource, cultural venue and community facility in the heart of the city.
- d) To offer people passing through the centre of Bristol opportunities for reflection, challenge and spiritual encounter.

2) Ownership and governance of the collection

- a) The legal title to the collections housed at the New Room is held by the trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, a Corporate Body established by the Methodist Church Act 1939, the Custodian Trustees.
The governing body of the New Room are the managing trustees who meet at least twice a year. The trustees are subject at all times to the Standing Orders of the Methodist Conference.
- b) The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- c) 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.
- d) Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- e) The museum recognizes its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum 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.
- f) The museum will undertake 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.
- g) The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

3) History of the collections

The New Room museum was returned to the ownership of the Methodist Church in 1929 having been bought back from the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists by a private benefactor, Mr E S Lamplough. Mr Lamplough paid for the building's restoration, erection of the equestrian statue of John Wesley on horseback and several artefacts for the collection. Since 1929 the collection has grown mainly as a result of gifts made by private Methodist collectors and Methodist institutions.

4) An overview of current collections

- a) Period of time and/or geographical area to which collecting relates
 - i) The main part of the collection dates between 1739 and 1850 with a few items relating to the Wesley family prior to 1739. The collection relates to the United Kingdom and North America with a particular focus on the influence of the Wesleys in Bristol.
- b) Busts and Commemorative ware.
 - i) Various head and shoulder busts (mainly Staffordshire) of John Wesley. Including plaster bust thought to be either Enoch Wood original of 1781 or Coade 1793. Early and mid 19th century pottery figures of John Wesley. Pottery niches and pulpits. 19th century teapots and jugs. Three- legged teapot said to have been used by John Wesley. 19th century mugs and love feast cups. 19th and 20th century pottery plaques of John Wesley and others. Commemorative plates depicting Wesley and others. Various tea services. Wax portraits of Wesley and unknown subjects. Various seals and wax impressions.
- c) Furniture.
 - i) Tables, chairs and sideboards – 18th and 19th century. John Wesley's communion table and study chair; Adam Clarke's elm root 'garden' chair; a 1626 chair with hidden compartment. 17th century grandfather clock from Epworth. The New Room clock.
- d) Manuscripts and books.
 - i) Three collections of letters made by Rev Dr William L Watkinson, brought together in the early part of the 20th century.
 - ii) A number of letters and journals and notebooks making a total of around 1200 items of which most are 19th century.
 - iii) 18 letters by John Wesley and those of major figures of 18th and 19th century Methodism.
 - iv) 850 circuit plans.
 - v) The MS works of Victory Purdy 1747.
 - vi) Approximately 120 hymnbooks from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.
 - vii) Early editions of works of John and Charles Wesley and their parents Samuel and Susannah Wesley.
 - viii) Around 195 pre-1850 books and 22 pamphlets.
 - ix) The Library at the New Room is available for reference use by the public.
- e) Medals and coins.
 - i) Methodist centenary medals (1838). Various coins including two given by John Wesley to children for good behaviour.

- f) Metalwork
 - i) Pewter and silver chalices. Silver candlesticks. Pewter plates.
- g) Paintings, prints and photographs.
 - i) Portraits of 18th and 19th century Methodist ministers (around 1250).
 - ii) A number of original portraits of John Wesley, Charles Wesley's family and early Methodists.
 - iii) The John Renton Portrait of John Wesley.
 - iv) The John Russell portraits of Sarah Wesley, Samuel and Charles Wesley (the sons of Charles Wesley). Numerous 19th century prints of the Wesleys.
 - v) A collection of photographs of Methodist Presidents.
 - vi) Photographs of the New Room from 1929 to the present day.
 - vii) Glass slides from the late 19th century to the 1930s.
- h) Relics
 - i) A lock of John Wesley's hair, his riding crop and shoe buckles. Wood from Epworth Rectory, Captain Webb's eye patch.

5) Themes and priorities for future collecting

- a) The New Room takes into account the restrictions imposed by display space, storage space and staffing. It is aware of the collecting policies of other museums both locally and nationally. New acquisitions are sought in the following areas:
 - i) The origins of Methodism in Bristol. 1739 – 1850
 - ii) The history of the New Room. 1739 – present day
 - iii) The work of the first Methodist societies, circuit and district based in Bristol (which at times included extensive parts of the South West, Wales and Ireland). 1739 – 1850
 - iv) Methodist hymnody and its impact
 - v) The lives of John and Charles Wesley and those of their immediate family (parents, siblings and children).
 - vi) Methodist preachers and preaching places in Bristol. 1739 – present day
 - vii) The impact of Methodism on social justice
 - viii) The origins of Methodism in North America.
 - ix) Early British Methodist missionary activity. 1739 - 1850
- b) New acquisitions must be significant in one of these areas. In exceptional circumstances items may be acquired which do not conform to one of these areas but only with the agreement of the Trustees Committee (the governing body). Normally, objects offered which fall outside these areas should be directed to Methodist Archives in Manchester or other Methodist heritage sites.

6) Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- a) Whilst the Museum will continue to accept additions to its collection which fall within its acquisition criteria, no significant rationalisation and disposal will take place until the Museum is further developed, extended and opened in March 2017.
- b) 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.

c) 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.

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

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

8) Collecting policies of other museums

a) The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organizations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organizations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

b) Specific reference is made to the following museums/organisations: The Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives, The Methodist connexional records and archives held at John Rylands University Library Manchester, The Museum of Methodism in London, The Old Rectory Epworth, Englesea Brook in Cheshire. , Bristol Record Offices and Bristol City Museums.

9) Archival holdings

a) 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).

10) Acquisition

a) The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

- i) All acquisitions must be approved by the Managing Trustees executive committee, namely the New Room Strategy Committee in collaboration with the Museum Committee.
- ii) 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).
- iii) 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 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

11) Human remains

a) As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

12) Biological and geological material

a) 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.

13) Archaeological material

a) 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.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (ie the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners and Justice Act 2009).

- b) Exceptions - Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:
- i) acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - ii) 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.

14) Spoliation

a) 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.

15) The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

a) The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless

covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.a-e will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

b) The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

16) Disposal procedures

a) All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.

b) The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

c) When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organization. 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.

d) 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.

e) The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body 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 organizations 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.

f) 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 the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.

g) 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.

h) If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered 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 MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).

i) 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 organizations giving priority to organizations in the public domain.

j) Any monies received by the museum governing body 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 the Arts Council England.

k) 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.

l) 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 de-accession and disposal.

17) Disposal by exchange

a) The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.

b) In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organizations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.a-e will apply.

c) If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.

d) If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organization or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums

Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).

e) Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

18) Disposal by destruction

a) If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.

b) It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.

c) Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organization's research policy.

d) Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.

e) The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.