

**THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM'S POLICY FOR COLLECTIONS
DEVELOPMENT**

CONTENTS	Page no.
1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the Museum	2
2. History of the collections	4
3. An overview of current collections	5
4. Themes and priorities for future collecting	8
5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal	10
6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items	11
7. Collecting policies of other museums	11
8. Archival holdings	11
9. Acquisition	12
10. Human remains	13
11. Biological and geological material	13
12. Archaeological material	13
13. Exceptions	13
14. Spoliation	13
15. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains	13
16. Disposal procedures	14

THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM'S POLICY FOR COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT

Name of museum: Royal Air Force Museum

Name of governing body: Trustees of the Royal Air Force Museum

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 21 March 2016

Policy review procedure:

The Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed biennially. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted at the start of the document.

Date at which this policy is due for review: 21 March 2018

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 existing collections.

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the Museum

1.1 The Museum's statement of purpose is:

Our Vision:

The vision of the Museum is to ensure that the Royal Air Force's story endures and enriches future generations. The RAF Museum will be a world-leading visitor destination that engages, inspires and connects everyone with the RAF story through exploration of its people and its collections.

Our Purpose:

The purpose of the Museum is to tell the story of the Royal Air Force through its people and collections.

For our nation, we help people to understand the impact of the RAF on the world.

For our visitors, we make our collections and the RAF story relevant and stimulating.

For current and former RAF personnel and their families, we preserve, honour and share the stories of their service.

Our Values:

INtegrity: we are open, transparent and ethical.

Sharing: we work as a team to ensure our collections and expertise are accessible to all

Passion: we care deeply about sharing our collections and their stories

Innovation: we tell our stories and develop our business with creativity and imagination.

Relevance: we ensure our legacy by linking our histories with today and tomorrow.

Excellence: we are professional and strive to ensure excellence in all that we do.

Our Strategic Priorities:

The Museum has a unique opportunity to help the RAF to celebrate its Centenary in 2018 while improving our story telling and building up our resilience into the 21st century.

Three strategic priorities will shape our activities for the next five years:

1. Interpret the RAF story
2. Focus the Collection
3. Invest in the RAF Museum

The key principle for the future strategy is the RAF story. The RAF is at the heart of our stories, our collections and our mission.

1.2 The governing body will ensure that both acquisitions and disposals 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 embraces 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 The Museum recognises 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.

1.6 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.

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

2. History of the collections

The Museum was formally established under a Deed of Trust in 1965 and opened to the public on 15 November 1972.

Little control was exercised over the quantity or quality of material accepted into the collections between 1965 and 1986. This was due to:

- Enthusiasm to build the Museum's collection from scratch.
- A huge public response to the creation of the Museum leading to vastly more material being offered than the staff had capacity to appraise.
- Acceptance of material in preference to risking giving offence.
- Accepting poor examples as insurance against better ones never being offered.

This resulted in several undesirable effects, primarily:

- Continued acceptance of duplicated material (partially due to an incomplete catalogue).
- Accrual of surplus artefacts because the Museum lacked a policy or procedure enabling their disposal.
- A growing body of artefacts in need of identification and assessment.

A more restrained collecting policy began to operate in 1986, although its parameters were not formally recorded. In 1994 a formal, general collection and disposal policy was drawn-up, but it was not actively applied until 1997 with the introduction of the Museum's formal Collecting Statement.

The Museum's Inventory Project to record every item within our collections began in 1998 and informed collecting decisions as it went along. This can be viewed as the beginning of conscious and conscientious collecting at the Museum.

3. An overview of current collections

3.1 Definitions

The Museum currently distinguishes between different classes of object within the Collection. As part of the Museum's Collections Development Strategy 2016-2021 and associated programmes, notably Collections Review, these classes will be reappraised and restructured to meet the Museum's 'Interpret the RAF story' objectives.

Core Collection

3.1.1 The Core Collection is preserved by the Museum in perpetuity for long-term public access, engagement and research.

Collection Department	Objects*
Aircraft & Exhibits	80,000
Archives	660,000
Film & Sound	13,000
Fine Art	7,000
Library	200,000
Photographs	340,000
TOTAL	1,300,000

* includes accessioned and unaccessioned objects.

Accessioned

3.1.2 Accessioned objects are those that have been formally acquired and accepted into the Core Collection. They are documented in accordance with SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on the Museum's Collections Management System (CMS).

3.1.3 Long-term loans (six months or more in duration) are managed by the Collections team and recorded on the CMS for administrative purposes.

3.1.4 Interpretive objects are managed by the Collections team in conjunction with the Head of Exhibitions & Interpretation and are currently recorded on the CMS for administrative purposes. They are contextual items of low RAF relevance that are or have been used to interpret the RAF story within a wider context (e.g. civilian tea cups formerly used in the Battle of Britain Hall's 'Blitz Scene').

3.1.5 Surrogate objects are managed by the Collections team. Some are recorded on the CMS while others are recorded in departmental files. Surrogates are analogue or digital copies of or substitutes for objects already held in the Museum's Core Collection or temporarily deposited for the purpose of copying. They are produced in order to preserve original material and provide more effective means of accessing collections.

Unaccessioned

3.1.6 Unaccessioned collections represent two thirds of the Core Collection. They include (a) objects on loan to the Museum and (b) objects deposited with the Museum which have yet to be catalogued or passed through the Collections Review process. It is therefore likely that many unaccessioned objects will be accessioned in future.

3.1.7 Deposited unaccessioned objects are recorded through entry forms (new acquisitions or potential new acquisitions) or allocated temporary T-numbers (unaccessioned inventory backlog). Due to their uncertain provenance and documentation they require the same level of management and care as accessioned objects.

Handling Collection

3.1.8 The Museum's Handling Collection is managed by the Access and Learning Development (ALD) team using Transfer of Title forms to document acquisition and a spreadsheet catalogue. It consists of replica or duplicate original static items handled or worn by members of the public (e.g. uniforms and flying clothing). Every effort will be made to ensure that like-objects in the Core Collection are of superior significance and condition to those used in the Handling Collection.

3.2 Overview of Core Collection

3.2.1 The Museum operates from two public sites, Hendon in North London and Cosford in the West Midlands. Additionally a third site, located at Stafford, is used for storage.

3.2.2 The Core Collection includes aircraft, personal equipment, uniforms, medals, film, photographs, fine art, publications and archive documents. In order to explain the full history of the Service these date from before the formation of the Royal Flying Corps in 1912 to the present day.

3.2.3 The Museum's Core Collection is acquired, stored and documented by specialist curators at the three sites detailed in 3.2.1 above. The following is an outline of the Core Collection material held by each department:

Aircraft & Exhibits: 80,000 items

3.2.4 The A&E collection is dominated by aircraft-related material, such as airframe components and internal equipment, (over 40,000 items) and clothing (over 20,000 items). Other notable sections include commemorative items (3,500), medals (3,000) and survival equipment (3,000).

3.2.5 The majority of the collection relates to the RAF's first 50 years. Since 1965 material has largely been collected on a type basis with proactive collecting limited to

a relatively small number of specific purchases for exhibition. Items relating to specific people and people stories are therefore limited and generally relate to senior RAF officers.

Archives: 660,000 items

3.2.6 The Archives collection is approved by The National Archives (TNA) as a Place of Deposit. Papers have been gathered from 1965 onwards with active collecting taking place since 1970. It incorporates drawings and technical papers (300,000), personal papers (200,000) and administrative records for the RAF Museum.

3.2.7 The strength of the current collection lies with the material relating to the First and Second World War. The Inter-War period is reasonably represented but coverage of the Cold War era and the last few decades is weak. A major strength of the collection overall is the personal papers of those who have served. This material includes items relating to men and women of all ranks serving in numerous theatres.

3.2.8 The material relating to the aerospace industry is one of the largest outside of the industry itself. The Archive also includes material which complements and supports artefacts held within the other Museum collections.

Film & Sound: 13,000 items

3.2.9 The collection includes official RAF and Air Ministry training films, documentaries, amateur material shot by RAF personnel, films documenting trials of aircraft, weapons and other equipment and unedited footage from a variety of producers, including the RAF and MoD film units.

3.2.10 The collection also includes a growing number of oral history recordings, documenting the memories and experiences of RAF personnel from the First World War to recent operations in Libya and Afghanistan. Areas already covered in this way include Cold War air defence, with emphasis on operations by Lightning and Phantom aircraft as well as transport flights by the RAF Lockheed Hercules fleet.

3.2.11 Particular strengths of the collection include Second World War training and documentary films, footage produced by manufacturers during the 1940s and 1950s and material relating to the Cold War in Europe.

Fine Art: 7,000 items

3.2.12 The art collection consists mainly of paintings (over 2,100), drawings (2,400), posters (1,600) and smaller number of sculpture (90) and ceramic (4) works. It incorporates the Air Ministry War Artists Collection (around 300 pieces).

3.2.13 The collection is an illustrative tool which permits access to many aspects of the Service, its people, operational methodologies, noteworthy events and many other facets which cannot easily be put across by using other forms of museum

object. It also provides a view of the RAF in colour, which photography cannot match in any quantity until the mid-1950s.

3.2.14 Since the mid-1990s a policy of acquiring works which were painted at or close to the time during which particular aircraft were in service has been pursued. The collection is largely illustrative and narrative in its intention and is not intended to demonstrate styles of art or schools of artistic thinking or fashion.

Library: 200,000 items

3.2.15 The collection consists of RAF publications used for operational, training, public relations or recreational purposes, commercial publications about RAF history, units, stations, equipment and personnel. These include large collections of books and periodicals (over 76,000), technical publications (70,000), maps and charts (13,000).

3.2.16 The collection is a valuable source for supporting the Museum's internal research activities, answering public enquiries and aids research into the history of the RAF.

Photographs: 340,000 items

3.2.17 The collection primarily comprises of photographs covering the first 50 years of the RAF's existence. Most of the collection is made up of small collections from individuals, usually former service personnel or their families. There are a number of large collections, however, including Charles E. Brown (photographer), British Aerospace, Kingston (aircraft manufacturer) and Jack Bruce (aviation historian).

3.2.18 The collection is used to provide images for museum exhibitions and publications, in addition to aiding internal research and answering public enquiries.

3.2.19 The museum obtains images from all possible sources, including aerospace companies and other service providers working with the Royal Air Force. In certain circumstances material unsuitable for the Core Collection will be acquired for the Interpretative Collection, supporting exhibitions and other forms of interpretation.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1 The Museum's future collecting aims are:

- a) to ensure the continuing development of the Core and Handling collections for the purpose of providing relevant and up-to-date coverage in accordance with the Museum's stated Vision and Purpose;
- b) to support exhibitions at both public sites;

- c) to provide objects for close-up visual and tactile exploration by visitors;
- d) to provide access to primary evidence and key secondary sources. For example, for research, online access, publishing and broadcasting.

4.2 The priorities for proactive collecting will focus on the following areas, with collecting material that supports a personal story as an overarching priority. These have been identified as significant gaps in the Core Collection:

- a) Personal – material, including diaries, letters and mementoes relating to service life in the RAF;
- b) Cultural – material relating to the Royal Air Force’s ethos, values, spirit and character;
- c) Diverse – objects of social, cultural and material diversity, relating to a wider range of military purposes and personal roles;
- d) Contemporary – material relating to current and recent RAF personnel and activities, with a specific focus on meeting exhibit, graphic and audio-visual content priorities for the RAF Centenary exhibitions and programme;
- e) Born-Digital – material that originates in digital form. Born-digital material relating to the RAF story, with a specific focus on meeting content priorities for the ‘Now and the Future’ exhibition;
- f) Local – material relating to service life and activities at RAF Cosford and RAF Hendon.

The Museum will avoid collecting:

- a) Duplicates – duplicates of material already held unless they (a) are for a defined, justified and approved purpose, such as research, interpretive, handling, or surrogate use or (b) have greater provenance and associated collections that tell a wider or different story;
- b) Copies – copies of material already made publically accessible by other bodies;
- c) Hazardous material – notably items containing asbestos, radium (in many instrument dials), compressed gas, cellulose nitrate film (unless for the purpose of copying to a safe format) or Polychlorinated Biphenols (PCBs). Where asbestos, radium, PCBs or gas canisters form part of an aircraft or other large object a risk assessment will be undertaken and a decision made on the Museum’s ability to manage the acquisition and mitigate the risk;

- d) Items in poor condition – material in a poor state of preservation, unless notably significant or unique;
- e) Resource-dependent items – material likely to adversely impact on the management of existing collections. For example, large objects or large collections of poorly preserved, duplicate or like-material for which the Museum does not have sufficient resource or capacity to manage long-term care, storage, development, digitisation, exhibition and other public access.

4.3 Work will be undertaken to communicate the message that we want to collect material relating to all current Service personnel and veterans including their still and moving images, and any diaries, memoirs, letters, emails and personal objects relevant to their RAF story as soon as they are ready to share them.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 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 relevant, usable, well managed collection.

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

5.3 Following the introduction of a new vision and purpose, the Royal Air Force Museum has introduced a 5-year Strategic Plan leading to the RAF Centenary in 2018, which includes a review of the Collection. This process began in July 2014 with a review of the Aircraft collection. The guiding principles of the review are articulated in the Collections Review Policy (RAFM/DCM/2/6/29/1).

5.4 The Royal Air Force Museum Board of Trustees accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection. However, rationalisation and disposal will be considered as a course of action in the following cases:

- a) to remove material that does not tell or support the telling of the RAF story;
- b) to eliminate unnecessary duplication of artefacts;
- c) to re-classify artefacts to the most appropriate collection: Core, Handling or Interpretive;

- d) to remove from the Collection any artefact whose condition has become such that it is no longer a viable constituent of the Collection;
- e) to remove from the collection any artefact which is irrelevant to Royal Air Force Museum collecting policies.

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

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

7. Collecting policies of other museums

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

7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museums:

- Science Museum Group
- Imperial War Museums
- National Army Museum
- National Museum of the Royal Navy
- Museum of Army Flying
- The National Archives

8. Archival holdings (for details please refer to section 3.2)

The Museum is approved by The National Archives as a Place of Deposit. As the Museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, it will aim to meet the standard required under the Archive Service Accreditation scheme administered by The National Archives and achieve Accredited Archive Service status.

9. Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

Following due consideration of long-term costs associated with preserving the artefact authorisation for the acquisition of an artefact, by whatever means, will be given as follows:

- a) For an artefact valued up to £5,000, approval by appropriate Head of Department;
- b) For an artefact whose value lies between £5,001 and £30,000, via line management, by the Director of Public Programmes;
- c) For an artefact whose value lies between £30,001 and the upper limit of the approved Purchase Grant, via line management, by the Chief Executive Officer;
- d) For an artefact valued above the approved annual Purchase Grant, via line management, by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees;
- e) Any novel or contentious item, regardless of value, should be referred to the Board of Trustees for their approval and/or advice.

9.2 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.)

9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from 1 November 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.

9.4 In some cases where title cannot be obtained, for example anonymous donations or due to a lack of response from a written request to sign a Transfer of Title form, the Museum may still acquire the item but it will be clearly noted on the catalogue record that title has not been secured. In addition a record will be retained of all attempts made to contact depositors (e.g. correspondence, telephone calls).

10 Human remains

10.1 As the Museum holds human remains it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

10.2 The Museum holds, and may acquire, material from military crash sites. When considering the acquisition of such material the Museum will observe the requirement of paragraph 10.1 above, and also ensure that the material has been obtained with an appropriate licence according to the terms of the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986.

11. Biological and geological material

11.1 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.

12. Archaeological material

12.1 The Museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

13. Exceptions

13.1 Any exceptions to the above collecting clauses will only be because the Museum is:

- a) acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- b) 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.

14. Spoliation

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

15. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

15.1 The Museum's Trustees, acting on the advice of the Museum's professional staff 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 16.1-5 below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

15.2 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

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

16.2 The Museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account. The Museum may consider the disposal of material to which it cannot prove title only after thorough consultation and with the approval of the Collections Development Committee. Advice will be sought from the Museums Association or other sector bodies as appropriate.

16.3 When disposal of a Museum object is being considered, the Museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, or – as a last resort – sale or destruction.

16.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the Museum only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the 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 where appropriate. Any expert advice received will be recorded in the minutes of the Collections Development Committee and of the Board.

16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections 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 and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.

16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It

will, therefore, be offered by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museums to which it was offered directly as a gift, 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, on the Museum's website and/or in specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).

16.9 The announcement relating to gift 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, the Museum will assess any expressions of interest, including its own requirements, such as transfer to the Handling Collection. 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. Sale will be considered only as a last resort after options to transfer the material to the public domain have been thoroughly explored.

16.10 Any monies received by the Museum Trustees from the disposal of items will be applied 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.

16.11 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.

16.12 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 SPECTRUM¹ Procedure on de-accession and disposal.

16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

¹ SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2011 Version 4.0
Collections Trust - p. 88

16.14 Where items recommended for disposal are subject to legal restrictions, such as those imposed by the Official Secrets Acts, Data Protection Acts, or privacy agreements, the Museum will only dispose of the items to an organisation authorised by the relevant legislation to hold such material, with preference being given to Accredited museums where possible. If no suitable organisation can be found, and it is not possible to remove the restrictions (for example by requesting downgrading) then the material will be destroyed in accordance with the procedures detailed below.

16.15 In instances where the Museum transfers Core Collection material to the Handling Collection, subject to satisfactory assessment and approval, it will ensure that this material is given adequate support to ensure its long-term utility, while recognising that handled objects may, due to wear and tear, not be held in perpetuity.

Authorisation

16.16 Authorisation for the disposal of an artefact is required as follows:

- a) If the value does not exceed £30,000 disposal may be on the authority of the Director of Public Programmes.
- b) If the value lies between £30,001 and £50,000 disposal may be on the authority of the CEO.
- c) If the value exceeds £50,000 authorisation for disposal by the Board of Trustees will be required.

Disposal by destruction

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

16.18 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.

16.19 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 organisation's research policy.

16.20 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.

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

Documenting disposal

16.22 Disposal decisions will be made in monthly meetings of the Museum's Collections Development Committee².

16.23 Special meetings of the Collections Development Committee may be called outside the usual schedule to discuss urgent or special cases.

16.24 Full details of funds raised through disposal by sale of any objects from the Collection will be reported to the Chief Finance Officer and published in the annual accounts. The Museum Registrar will maintain an up to date list of current disposals, including valuations.

Any comments concerning the contents of this document are to be addressed to the Department of Collections Management:

E: dcm@rafmuseum.org

T: 020 8358 4889

© 2016 Trustees of the Royal Air Force Museum

Version 12: Approved by the Trustees 21 March 2016

² The Collections Development Committee (formerly Acquisitions and Disposals Committee) is made up of at least two senior curatorial staff, the Director of Public Programmes, the Head of Collections Management and the Museum Registrar.