



# Combe Mill Society

## Acquisition and Disposal Policy

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## Contents

Contents.....	2
Glossary .....	3
Museum Details.....	3
1. Museum’s statement of purpose .....	3
2. Existing collections.....	4
3. Criteria governing future acquisition policy .....	5
4. Limitations on collecting.....	5
5. Collecting policies of other museums .....	5
6. Policy review procedure .....	5
7. Acquisitions not covered by the policy.....	6
8. Acquisition procedures.....	6
9. Spoliation .....	7
10. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains .....	7
11. Management of archives.....	7
12. Disposal procedures .....	7
Disposal preliminaries .....	7
Motivation for disposal and method of disposal .....	7
Responsibility for disposal decision-making.....	8
Use of proceeds of sale .....	8
Disposal by gift or sale .....	8
Disposal by exchange.....	9
Documenting disposal .....	9

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## Glossary

**Governing body:** this is the organisation which normally owns the collections. If another legally separate organisation has been given powers to acquire and/or dispose of collections on behalf of the governing body, this must be made clear in the policy.

**Disposal:** the permanent removal of an item accessioned into the collection from the ownership of museum's governing body by the process of gift, sale or exchange.

**Public domain:** represented by organisations which are run by public bodies or operate as charities.

## Museum Details

Name of museum	Combe Mill
Name of governing body	Combe Mill Society
Approved by governing body on:	xx
Policy is due for review by:	xx

### ***1. Museum's statement of purpose***

The objects of the Combe Mill Society are:

- (a) to advance the education of the public by the operation of Combe Mill at Combe, Long Hanborough, Oxfordshire, demonstrating, recording, preserving, practising and disseminating the whole range of skills in the construction, maintenance, operation and associated activities of water- and steam-powered mills, along with items directly associated with Combe Mill, the Blenheim Estate and Oxfordshire.
  
- (b) to research, establish, restore, maintain and equip Combe Mill to demonstrate, improve and teach the design, construction, operation and use of water- and steam-powered mills for the purpose of the education of the public, together with the dissemination of the results of any research conducted and to carry out works for the improvement, development and promotion of Combe Mill.

## ***2. Existing collections***

Combe Mill was once the powered workshop and blacksmiths' forge within Combe Yard that served the Blenheim Estate until the sawmill and yard were closed in 2000.

The workshop building occupied by Combe Mill museum is the original two-storey Victorian building.

The internal machinery of Combe Mill is complete and includes a rare surviving example of 1852 A-frame steam beam engine with Cornish boiler and fuel store connected by line shafting to the rear room (workshop) where there are bellows and a mid-C19 forge and grinding wheel (whetstone), and upstairs to the mid-C19 wood lathe (and band saw). Dual-drive water wheel to rear with 1926 breast fed 'Poncelet' style water wheel.

The Mill was listed at Grade II\* for its complete and working set of machinery including the 1852 beam engine and boiler, line shafting and gearing, forge and lathe, which altogether is a rare survival of importance in a national context, and of interest as an originally dual-powered mill whereby water or steam power could be used depending on the water supply. It is also architecturally distinguished externally and has historical and group value within the Blenheim Estate.

As well as the artefacts and craftsmen's tools that belonged to the premises when the Combe Mill Society began restoration in the mid 1960s, some further items and collections have been acquired as gifts or permanent loans in the following years.

The museum explains the timber life cycle from 'sapling to sawdust' making use of the nearby Mill Wood, which is also part of the Blenheim Estate, and telling the story of timber production, harvesting, seasoning and manufacturing.

In particular the collections in Combe Mill comprise:

- Stationery steam engines showing the development of such
- Working waterwheel and associated gearing
- Historic church tower clocks (all working)
- Combe Yard ledgers dating from mid 1800 until approximately 1920 (CHECK)
- Trade catalogues for materials purchased for the development and maintenance of Blenheim Estate.
- Shoe and bootmaker's tools and patterns
- Working blacksmiths' double hearth forge and tools
- Wheelwrights' tools and patterns
- Pattern making and metal casting
- Metal working
- Domestic artefacts
- Carpenters wooden tools

NOTE: All machinery and clocks are in working order and demonstrated to the public.

### ***3. Criteria governing future acquisition policy***

Criteria governing future acquisition policy including the subjects or themes, periods of time and/or geographic areas and any collections which will not be subject to further acquisition.

Any future acquisitions will need to meet the following criteria:

1. an item must have a close relevance to the type of work that would have been carried out in the Mill or in Combe Yard within the period 1850 until 2000.
2. an item must have relevance to what might have existed in Blenheim Palace and its estates during the same period.
3. there must be space in the museum to display (or securely store) the item

While farming implements form part of the existing collection, priority is not given to the acquisition of such items in future.

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

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

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

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

Specific reference is made to the following museum(s):

None

### ***6. Policy review procedure***

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

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

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

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

### **8. Acquisition procedures**

**a.** The museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

**b.** In particular, the museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

**c.** 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.

**d.** The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

**e.** The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

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

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

acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or

acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or

in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

**g.** The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

## ***9. Spoliation***

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.

## ***10. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains***

Not relevant to Combe Mill

## ***11. Management of archives***

As the museum holds / intends to acquire 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) or successor publication.

## ***12. Disposal procedures***

### **Disposal preliminaries**

- a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.

### **Motivation for disposal and method of disposal**

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 12g-12s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons
- g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, 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 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. External 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.

### **Responsibility for disposal decision-making**

**h.** 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 of the collection acting alone.

### **Use of proceeds of sale**

**i.** Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. 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 MLA.

**j.** The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

### **Disposal by gift or sale**

**k.** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

**l.** If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums 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 an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

**m.** 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.



### **Disposal by exchange**

**n.** 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.

**o.** In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 12a-12d and 12g-12h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 12p-12s.

**p.** 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.

**q.** If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

**r.** 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.

### **Documenting disposal**

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.