



Combe Mill

Documentation Procedure

Work in hand to adapt an example document

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Museum Details

Name of museum Combe Mill
Name of governing body Combe Mill Society
Approved by governing body on: t.b.d
Policy is due for review by: t.b.d

1. Scope

This procedure aims:

- to enable access to the items in the collection
- to provide a method of audit for staff
- to give public accountability and evidence of ownership
- to enable interpretation of items and collections, particularly through associating objects and specimens with their histories
- to ensure consistency and continuity of practice.

2. Object Entry

Each object entering the Museum will be recorded on an Object Entry Form. These are kept in a ring binder in the steel cupboard in the Education Room

This is a three part form; one copy will be given to the depositor as a receipt, one kept with the object and the third copy filed by the Museum.

White copy: Museum (to be retained with the object)

Yellow Copy: the receipt for the Depositor

Blue copy: if items are offered as donations this should be put in a ring binder for consideration at the next accessions meeting,

If items are on loan the form should be put in the **Loans File**.

The form must be completed as fully as possible giving as much detail as possible as to the provenance of the object, its date and when and how it was used and any other interesting information about it.

Each form shall have a unique Object Entry number written on it that is the next available entry number in the **Object Entry Register**.

Refer to our *Object Entry and Accession Policy* for complete information about the entry process.

The person receiving a new object shall place it inside a plastic bag or box together with its entry form and keep it separate from other exhibits. The Curator must be notified immediately of any new receipt.

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3. Object Exit

Accessioned objects

Any object from the permanent collection, which leaves the Museum premises, must be documented.

This applies to an item that temporarily leaves the premises whether on loan, or for conservation, copying, or permanent transfer to another site.

See the Object Exit Form.

The forms are in three parts:

- White copy: retained by the Museum and filed in object history envelope papers
- Yellow: passed to the Collector to stay with the object until returned
- Blue copy: a) **put in Loans file** for Loans out until returned.
Then filed with object history papers when loan returned
- b) **Temporarily Removed** ring binder file for items removed for conservation, copying etc.
when object returned, filed with object history papers
- c) **Permanent transfers** – keep the blue with white forms and add to history file papers.

On return of an object:

- a) Countersign/date the Yellow as the Collector's return receipt
- b) Take the Blue from the **Loans** file or the **Temporarily Removed** file on the immediate return of an object, countersigned/date confirming return, and keep with the bagged object until it is condition-checked and replaced in storage by the curators – then file the blue with the object history papers.

This information should be entered onto MODES. Information should include:

Exit Form no.
Remover name
Reason for removal
Intended destination of object
Expected return date (if required)
Comments

See also the separate sections on Loans Out and Disposals

b) **Non-collection objects**

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The return of an unwanted offer to its owner should be noted on the Entry Form, which should be signed by the depositor, and then filed with the yellow file copy in the ring binder **Entry Forms** file. There is no need for a separate Exit Form.

4. Loans

a) Loans **In**

The museum only borrows items from personal collections and not from other Museums

The lender should supply an inventory of objects. A curator should check this.

An "Entry Form" should be made out and one copy given to the lender as a receipt.

All items received from one lender may be entered onto one form.

Objects lent for an exhibition should be entered in the **Loan Register** together with the Object Entry Number, owner's name and the case number in which it is displayed.

The reason for a loan and the period of the loan must be made clear and the arrangements for return of the object at the end of the loan period.

If the object is not collected within 3 months of the end of the loan period the museum reserves the right to dispose of the object.

Temporary loans are not recorded on MODES

b) Loans **Out**

An Exit Form should be completed for all Loans Out.

If an object is out on loan there must be a written agreement on the length of the loan and a signature of acceptance from the borrower.

An inventory should be supplied by the Museum, checked and signed by the borrower, and checked and signed by the Museum on return and checking of the loan. This inventory can be the Exit Form, in the case of a single or few-items object loans. For larger loans, a separate inventory list should be attached to each copy of the Exit Form.

Loan information should be entered onto MODES. Information should include:

Exit Form no.
Remover name & Institution
Reason for removal
Intended destination of object
Expected return date (if required)
Comments

5. Accessions

Acquisition:

The curators will assign all objects accepted for the Museum's collection (the next consecutive) MODES accession number.

Accession meetings are held as necessary and involve at least 2 curators and sometimes the Patron. Objects are only accepted in accordance with the separate Museum Acquisition & Disposal Policy procedure.

Accessions Register:

The object will be entered into the Accessions Register with the object name, name and address of the donor and the next accession number.

An Accession Form will be completed describing the object, its provenance, function and use and other useful/ interesting information, and the Entry Form no.

This information will also be entered onto MODES by one of the curators.

Historic Documents:

The Accession Forms and associated 'object history' papers are filed in envelopes containing 50 forms in boxes of 1000 forms. The completed forms are stored in the Museum storeroom.

The offer of Donations form, the Entry Form and the Accession Form are kept together.

Security copy of Accessions Register

The Accessions Register is kept in the Museum and a photocopy is kept by one of the curators.

Condition check, labelling & marking

After checking and cleaning as necessary by the conservators, the object will be marked in permanent ink (or as appropriate to the object) with its accession number and packed in a box.

Its position will be recorded on MODES.

Cataloguing

MODES is kept on 3 computers, which are regularly updated. One is kept in the Museum Education Room; the others are kept in the homes of one of the curators and the registrar.

Currently only one of the curators and the registrar have editing access to MODES.

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There is also a printed catalogue, which is a list of accessioned objects in numerical order, with its classification and name of donor. There is a copy kept in the museum and each of the curators has a copy.

6. Disposals

Normally for an item deteriorated beyond repair or for an item transferred to another institution.

If an item is disposed of, the date and reason must be recorded on MODES and the Accession Form, after following the procedure as laid down in the separate Acquisition & Disposals Policy. An Exit form will be completed for Transferred objects.

7. Location & Movement Control

Only the curators have the authority to remove objects from storage boxes or from display.

If an object is removed from its storage box a coloured card should be placed in the pocket on the outside of the box with the object number, the date removed and where it has gone. If removed from a display case, the card will be left in the case.

The date the object is returned to its box or display case should be entered onto the card. If all the objects have been returned to the box the card should be removed from the box.

Items removed from the premises under the Object Exit procedure will be updated on MODES.

8. Valuation

The Museum does not offer any valuation service for object identifications.

Any valuation of individual objects would be for collections management procedures only, including insurance and indemnity purposes should these arise. Such valuations would remain confidential between Curators and Registrar.

9. Insurance & Indemnity

The Museum does not insure collection objects.

Except in the case of negligence on the part of itself, or its officers, the museum's governing body does not accept liability for loss or damage to, or deterioration in, items left in its care.

No valuation indicated verbally or written on an Entry Form at the time of deposit would be admitted by the museum.

10. Reproduction

With reference to all forms of object reproduction, including physical reproduction by means of electrotyping or laser copying, as well as photography, scanning and digital imaging -

The Museum will make every effort to establish the ownership of any copyright to which it is unsure that it possesses the title to, particularly for photographs. For loan objects, requests will be referred to the object owner.

The Museum will retain copyright, intellectual copyright and publication rights over all reproductions unless formally agreed otherwise. Reproduction should only be authorised by the responsible Curator.

The Museum retains the right to assess the suitability of an object for reproduction and refuse permission to do so on any grounds. No object that might be damaged by the reproduction process will be released for reproduction.

Reproduction approvals will be noted on MODES.

11. Use of the Collections

Procedures for controlling and facilitating the use of collections for any purpose, including display, handling, research and reproduction; applies to both internal and external users.

The Museum aims to allow full access to its collections subject to the restrictions required to care for the collections in a professional manner and to protect individuals from hazardous materials; and full access to its information resources subject to the restrictions laid down in the Data Protection Act and the need to protect sensitive and confidential information. Access to objects will be authorised by Curators, and to the collections database on MODES by Curators and Registrar.

12. Conservation & Condition Check & Audit

Conservation & condition check:

The Museum gallery displays are changed annually. All objects for display are condition checked and noted on MODES before display, and condition checked and noted on MODES on returned to storage. Only the Curators and Registrar may put an object away.

All objects have been recently repacked in a whole-collection repacking and storage exercise. Following this process, the Conservators are now undertaking an ongoing box check, checking the condition of the contents

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It is estimated that the whole collection will be checked through this process in a cycle of 3 years.

Audit:

The collection is currently being photographed for entry onto MODES. As this is done the contents of each box is audited.

This is in addition to the return of display items audit on MODES at the end of each season.

At the conclusion of this process the whole collection will have been twice audited (once for the re-packaging project and once for the photography project).

Following conclusion of the photography project audit, a scheme for regular ongoing audit of the collection will be considered.

13. Risk Management

Please refer to the separate Emergency Plan for risk management procedures for regular premises maintenance.

Gallery humidity and temperature environment is monitored twice yearly through data loggers.

Pest traps are located in gallery and storage areas.

Stored objects are packed to reduce light, air pollution & temperature/humidity fluctuation damage.

14. Documentation backlog

There is currently a backlog of objects to be accessioned.

The Museum's collection is being listed on MODES and there is a backlog of details to be entered. This work is ongoing.

The aim is to photograph enter all the Museum's accessions onto MODES. This is ongoing.

15. Review

This Documentation Procedures Manual is reviewed every 5 years.

Next review due: t.b.d

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