

Appendix I

Developing the Collections of Museums in North-East Scotland

A CONCORDAT TO FOSTER COLLABORATION

General Principles

A wide range of material from the North-East of Scotland is curated by a variety of different museums. While no one institution has ever attempted to collect all types of item, together they make up a spectacular range of material, ranging from geological and archaeological specimens from the North-East to zoological and ethnographic items collected from throughout the world. These collections have been created by the exploits of many different people since the 18th century and so in themselves give a valuable insight into the recent history of the region.

In recent years, the collecting activities of these museums have become more formalised, with written collecting policies. This offers museums the opportunity to work together, understanding and respecting their varied collections, resources and interests. This concordat reflects that shared concern, highlighting in particular the benefits to be gained from working together when acquiring new material for the collections. Three aspects are of particular note:

- The need to ensure the long-term preservation of material worthy of collection by a museum.
- The value of working together to minimise competition between museums when collecting.
- The benefits to be gained from providing access to each others' collections for research, teaching and display.

From these statements of principle flow a number of policies that apply to all material to

be considered for acquisition by one of the partner museums.

- Each museum will provide to the others a copy of its collection policy, outlining the key areas for future development of the collection. As changes to collecting policies are adopted, they will be circulated to the other museums.
- Where a museum is offered material that does not fall within its collecting area, it will make this known to those museums that might be interested or direct people to those museums.
- If a museum believes that it is in competition with another museum over the acquisition of material, it will contact the other museum to discuss whether there is scope for collaboration.
- Each museum expresses its willingness to lend material for display in the other museums agreeing to this concordat, subject to security and conservation conditions and other uses of the material. Requests for loans will be considered favourably.
- The museums express their willingness to work towards publicly accessible on-line catalogues of their collections.

Principles for the collection of Scottish archaeological material

The acquisition of archaeological material through the Treasure Trove procedure and Historic Scotland's Finds Disposal Panel is governed by external procedures. These ensure that information about competing bids is circulated and that an independent decision is made about allocation. Any registered

museum is entitled to bid for material within its collecting policy. The museums agreeing to this concordat respect each other's collecting areas, recognising that there are overlaps in their collecting interests. This concordat is the first step in minimising overlaps and conflicts in the collection of material.

Material made available through these procedures will range from high-value attractive items to large assemblages of excavated material of little display value and with no monetary valuation. While the National Museums of Scotland has expressed its willingness to accept material for which no museum has made a bid, this concordat expresses the willingness of museums in the North-East to try to ensure that this is not necessary.

To achieve these aims, the museums agreeing to this concordat will abide by the following policies.

- To eliminate competing bids wherever possible, each museum that wishes to bid for material agrees to contact other museums with a possible interest in the material to discuss possible collaboration or withdrawal of bids. This should be done as far as possible in advance of the deadline for bids. If there is no agreement, competing bids will be submitted for assessment by the relevant Panel.

- In order to encourage the retention of as much relevant material as possible in the North-East, if a museum decides not to bid for material for which it has expressed a general interest in its collecting policy, it will contact the other museums with a possible interest in the material to discuss possible collaboration. If no museum is willing to bid for material, this should be reported to the relevant Panel.

The published collecting policies of museums are the only authoritative source of information about the collecting interests of each museum.

Maritime Finds and Wreck Material

Any items of wreck material recovered from the seabed, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant must be reported to the Receiver of Wreck under the terms of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995. Any items of Wreck handed in to the museum will be registered with the receiver of Wreck who will establish legal title to the item.

On [designated](#) and [scheduled](#) historic wrecks, as well as certain military wrecks covered by the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986, other restrictions apply and the museum will seek advice on the application of the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 from the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments Scotland.