

**Didcot Railway Centre
Home of the Great Western Society
Museum Management Board**

ACQUISITION & DISPOSAL POLICY

Museum: Didcot Railway Centre (Museum Registration No 1463)

Date at which policy due for review: September 2013

1. Constituent bodies

1.1. The constituent bodies of the Great Western Society – Didcot Railway Centre Museum Management Board who are parties to the Acquisitions & Disposal Policy agree that they will only undertake actions in relation to their own collections as follows:

- Great Western Society Ltd [buildings and road vehicles]
- Great Western Preservations Ltd [locomotives, coaches and wagons]
- Great Western Trust [‘Small Relics’ and paperwork items]

2. Statement of purpose

2.1. Our Vision is to recreate the golden age of the Great Western Railway.

2.2. Our mission is:

- To be a nationally accredited independent organisation
- To develop and maintain Didcot Railway Centre as a working museum dedicated to the Great Western Railway
- To provide suitable facilities to demonstrate restoration and maintenance of the Collection
- To be open to the public for the enjoyment, benefit and education of the community.

Our challenge is to become a more commercially orientated organisation in order to achieve the Vision.

3. The existing Collection

3.1. The museum has collected objects and artefacts pertinent to the Great Western Railway (GWR) Company, constituent companies, absorbed companies and joint undertakings, as well as its successors (e.g. British Railways, predominantly Western Region) – this is the Core Collection. The Core Collection’s aim is to cover the era from the conception of the GWR to the demise of the diesel hydraulic period on British Railways (Western Region).

3.2. The Core Collection comprises a representative collection of:

- locomotives [original, rebuild or replica]
- carriages and wagons [original, rebuild or replica]
- road vehicles [original, rebuild or replica]
- buildings and structures [original, rebuild or replica]
- ‘Small Relics’ items, such as locomotive nameplates, number plates, documents, maps, posters, photographs, books, tickets, cast iron signs, station signs, clothing, cutlery, crockery, furniture, stationery, models, social history items, trolleys and signalling equipment, etc.
- items of particular historical significance, both in the general and specific sense, to the Didcot locality plus local railways such as the Didcot, Newbury &

**Didcot Railway Centre
Home of the Great Western Society
Museum Management Board**

Southampton Railway, Lambourn Valley Railway, Abingdon Railway, located in the counties of Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

- items and memorabilia which reflect the impact and influence of the Railway Age upon the public at large and upon social history. These include be children's toys and books on social and railway history not directly referring to the Great Western Railway, newspapers and film archives of a transport nature.

3.3. Documentation will distinguish between original, rebuild and replica items.

4. Criteria governing future Acquisition Policy

4.1. Future collecting of items will be undertaken by the governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] to supplement and enhance the collection in the areas defined in Paras 3.1 and 3.2.

4.2. Collecting of items that enhance the study, display and enjoyment of the collection by the public and members of the Great Western Society will continue. Acquisitions in this context will be assessed on their individual merit, the pursuit of such material will not generally be given precedence over the key focus of the collection.

5. Limitations on collecting

5.1. 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.

6. Collecting policies of other Museums

6.1. 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 specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

6.2. Specific reference is made to the following museums:

- National Railway Museum [York]
- STEAM – Museum of the GWR [Swindon]
- Bristol Industrial Museum [Bristol]

7. Policy review procedure

7.1. 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.

7.2. MLA South East 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.

8. Acquisitions not covered by the policy

8.1. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body [Great

Didcot Railway Centre
Home of the Great Western Society
Museum Management Board

Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

9. Acquisition Procedures

- 9.1. 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 [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 9.2. 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).
- 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 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 [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.
- 9.4. The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.
- 9.5. The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.
- 9.6. Any exceptions to the above 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.

- 9.7. The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.
- 9.8. Gifts and bequests shall only be acceptable on the basis that any conditions are approved by the governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] of the museum, and in all cases reference will be made to the limitations on collecting as specified in the policy. The governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western

Didcot Railway Centre
Home of the Great Western Society
Museum Management Board

Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] shall reserve the right to refuse any offer of an item or material.

- 9.9. Due to the nature of the museum's activities, the museum may occasionally acquire certain items and material which are not intended to be retained for the permanent collections. These items may be used as educational or school handling collections, or, in the case of industrial or transport museums, as spares or consumable parts.
- 9.10. In the cases of such material, documentation will clearly show the intended use of the object and donors will be made aware of this possibility at the time of entry and informed as soon as a decision has been made regarding the material. These objects will be recorded separately outside the main accession record and shall not be treated as part of the permanent collection since their intended use implies that preservation cannot be guaranteed.

10. Spoliation

- 10.1. 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.

11. Management of archives

- 11.1. As the museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd Edition, 2002).

12. Disposal Procedures

Disposal preliminaries

- 12.1. The governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- 12.2. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] 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.
- 12.3. 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.
- 12.4. 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.

**Didcot Railway Centre
Home of the Great Western Society
Museum Management Board**

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

- 12.5. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 12.7 to 12.19 will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- 12.6. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below in paragraphs 12.7 to 12.13 and 12.19 will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:
- the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection,
 - the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit),
 - the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored.

The disposal decision-making process

- 12.7. 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 [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] 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

- 12.8. 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 [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] 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

- 12.9. Any monies received by the museum governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] 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

**Didcot Railway Centre
Home of the Great Western Society
Museum Management Board**

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.

- 12.10. 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

- 12.11. 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.
- 12.12. 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.
- 12.13. 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

- 12.14. 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 [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 12.15. In cases where the governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 12.1 to 12.4 and 12.7 and 12.8 will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 12.16 to 12.19.
- 12.16. 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.
- 12.17. 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.

**Didcot Railway Centre
Home of the Great Western Society
Museum Management Board**

- 12.18. 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 [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.
- 12.19. 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 deaccession and disposal.

13. Loan policy

- 13.1. The museum's governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] will not normally accept items or material on loan unless for the purposes of temporary exhibition or copying, or where the item is of exceptional interest to the museum. Any loan will be agreed in writing by the lender and the curator, including allocation of responsibility for insurance and transport arrangements and shall be for a specified fixed-term only, renewable in writing. The term 'permanent loan' has no legal status, and items will not be accepted on this basis.
- 13.2. The museum's governing body [Great Western Society, Great Western Preservations or Great Western Trust, as appropriate in line with Para 1] will only loan an item or material to another museums or body subject to confidence in their status and adequacy to provide physical protection, and if appropriate operating standards and procedures. Any loan will be agreed in writing by the museum, setting out the allocation of responsibility for insurance and transport and shall be for a specified fixed-term only, renewable in writing.

This policy was formally adopted by the constituent bodies of the Great Western Society Didcot Railway Centre Museums Management Board at the following meetings:

GREAT WESTERN SOCIETY LTD

Council meeting	November 2008	Reference	Minute 8/11/16
Signed		Position	

GREAT WESTERN PRESERVATIONS LTD

Board meeting		Reference	
Signed		Position	

GREAT WESTERN TRUST

Trust meeting	November 2008	Reference	
Signed		Position	