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

Our Mission is:
- To be a nationally accredited independent organisation
- To 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.

Background

The purpose of this policy is to set out overarching guiding principles for documenting the Great Western Society Ltd (GWS), Great Western Preservations Ltd (GWP) and Great Western Trust (GWT) collections, as required by Museums Accreditation.

The policy

GWS, GWP and GWT will meet the SPECTRUM minimum standard, within the constraints of Didcot Railway Centre, for each of the following procedures[1]:

SPECTRUM Procedure: Object entry

GWS, GWP and GWT must maintain a unique written record of any item which enters their respective collections, whether for identification, loan or as potential acquisition.

SPECTRUM Procedure: Accession

(a) Accession: GWS, GWP and GWT must maintain an Accession Register which records the formal acceptance of items into their permanent collection, allocates a unique identity number, and provides sufficient information for collections management purposes.

(b) Security Copy of Accession Records: A second, back-up copy of the GWS, GWP and GWT's Accession Register must be created and maintained. Both registers must be held securely, with one available to authorised staff for reference and the other stored off-site. Where accession information is wholly computerised, it must be supported by a copy of key accession information produced in an alternative medium which meets proven archival standards. Updates must be made to the stored copy at regular intervals so that the two copies remain consistent.

(c) Marking and Labelling : Each accessioned item, or group of items, must be marked and/or labelled with its/their unique identity number in a way that is as permanent as possible without damaging the item.

SPECTRUM Procedure: Location and movement control

The location and movement of items within the museum must be recorded.

SPECTRUM Procedure: Cataloguing

GWS, GWP and GWT must maintain appropriate indexes or equivalent information retrieval facilities. The accessions register provides a method of retrieving information about items in

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[1] Source: Accreditation Standard, 2004

the collection by their identity number. There must be at least one other method of retrieving information, such as by location, donor or subject classification, according to the needs of museum users.

SPECTRUM Procedure: Object exit
There must be a unique written record of any permanent collection item which leaves the museum premises. In the case of an object returning to its owner, (e.g. an unwanted offer of a gift) it will not be necessary to create separate exit documentation as the object did not enter the permanent collection and its removal will be logged on the appropriate entry form. In other cases a separate exit record will need to be created.

SPECTRUM Procedures: Loans in, Loans out
GWS, GWP and GWT must maintain records of all loans, whether incoming or outgoing. Loans should be for fixed terms and for a stated purpose; there may be an option for renewal at the end of the term. GWS, GWP and GWT must operate an effective collection management regime which includes auditing loans on a regular basis and reviewing periodically the terms and conditions relating to all loans.

Supporting procedures
This overarching policy is supported by:

- GWS Documentation Procedure – Version 2

- GWP Documentation Procedure – Version 2

- GWT Accession Control and Cataloguing, Issue 6

- GWT Collection Management, Issue 1

- GWT Use of the Collection, Issue 1

Monitoring and audit
The Museum Mentor shall be given the opportunity to audit the documentation.

All matters arising from this policy are to be determined at any GWS Board meeting at which all GWS, GWP and GWT are represented.

Approval and review
This policy was approved by GWS Board on 2nd July 2016 (16.07.53), by GWP on 15th October 2016 and by GWT on 19th November 2016.

The policy shall be monitored and reviewed every five years.

Ann Middleton
Version 2.1
December 2016