

Documentation Policy

1. Introduction

This Documentation Plan has been prepared by Chertsey Museum as part of the Museum's application for Accreditation. Procedures cover the following areas:

- Object entry
- Accessioning and Cataloguing
- Location and movement control
- Object exit
- Loans in and out

Currently Chertsey Museum has a small documentation backlog due to a recent donation of 100s of documents dating back to the 1830s from a local estate agent.

2. Definitions

2.1 **Documentation** (or Collections Information) is the information the Museum

2.2 **Accessioned** objects are those that have been formally accepted into the permanent collection.

2.3 **Unaccessioned objects** are not considered part of the permanent collection and have not been formally accepted therein. These can be reference material, such as secondary sources/publications, or handling items used by the education department. Handling items are recorded in a separate database and are marked with HC

2.4 **Catalogue** is defined in SPECTRUM1 as: 'The compilation and maintenance of key information, formally identifying and describing objects. It may include the provenance of objects and also collections management documentation, e.g. details of acquisition, conservation, exhibition and loan history.'

3. Review of Current Procedures

3.1 Chertsey Museum Entry Procedures

All objects, whatever their reason for entry, have a Collections Trust Entry Form completed for them. The triplicate form specifies the reason for entry and any agreed return date, with one copy staying in the master file, one copy going to the depositor and one copy remaining with the object at all times or until they are accessioned into the collection. Museum reception staff are regularly trained in the procedures and on the limitations of the museum's collecting policy to ensure that objects that cannot be accessioned are not left by their owners.

Objects are then locked in the Research Room for the curator to action, and all objects on loan to the museum are covered by the museum's insurance in case of loss or damage.

The Entry Form also contains a section for items which are being donated to the museum regarding transfer of title, and all staff are aware of the need to highlight this section and ensure that the donor signs to say they understand that the object will cease to be their property.

3.2 Chertsey Museum Accessioning and Cataloguing procedures

Once an object has been accepted into the collection by the curator it can be accessioned. This is undertaken by a member of museum staff and a volunteer who is supervised at all times.

The following steps are undertaken as part of the accessioning procedure:

- Completion of an accessioning checklist which sets out the various steps and dates when they are completed
- Object record card completed with full details of object in accordance with Spectrum (see attached)
- Object files are created for any additional information, accompanying letters, photographs and are stored in the curator's office
- Object entered into an Accessions Register using archival ink and given unique number (*CHYMS.year.3 digit object number.2 digit part number*)
- Object marked with unique number using archive ink and standard MDA techniques
- Object photographed/scanned
- Details from record card entered on ADMUSE collections database and image(s) attached to record
- Admuse recorded checked by separate member of staff for accuracy
- Object put away in store/location
- Record card stored off site

Whilst the Accessions Register is kept in the museum office, copies are kept at off site locations.

3.3 Chertsey Museum Location and movement control

Chertsey Museum has the following procedures in place when objects are moved from their permanent location

- Object movement cards are left in the permanent location as specified on Admuse stating the object number, reason for removal and date of removal. If a return date is known i.e. the end of an exhibition, that is also added
- The current location on Admuse is updated to reflect objects that have been relocated to be displayed in exhibitions or on loan to other institutions or removed from the premises for conservation purposes
- Object movement cards are destroyed when the object is returned, and the current location is updated to reflect the normal location

3.4 Chertsey Museum Object Exit

All objects, whatever their reason for exit, have a Collections Trust Exit Form completed for them. The triplicate form specifies the reason for exit and any agreed return date, with one copy staying in the master file, one copy going to the depositor and one copy remaining with the object at all times or until they are returned.

Exit forms are completed for all accessioned objects as well as all schools loan boxes, resource packs and reminiscence boxes and packs.

3.5 Chertsey Museum Loan Procedures

3.5.1 Loans In

All objects on loan to Chertsey Museum are accompanied by an Entry Form whilst loan agreements from the lending institution are filed in the loans in section of the curator's filing cabinet.

Objects will only be taken on loan for specific exhibitions and not for general display with the acceptance of items taken in as part of either the Olive Matthews Collection Trust or the SA Oliver Charitable Settlement (see Collecting Policy).

3.5.2 Loans Out

Requests to borrow collection items will be actioned on a case by case basis with the borrowing institution agreeing to comply with the museum's loans policy (see attached). All items exiting the museum will be accompanied by an Exit Form, condition report and record shots showing any existing damage/marks.

4 Accessibility

Chertsey Museum has an advertise policy of allowing access to all collections when requested. Members of the public need to notify the museum in advance so that off-site items can be retrieved. Exceptions to this are made if items impact on the museum's and/or RBC's legal obligations e.g. GDPR

5 Security

The museum has 2 off-site stores which have monitored alarm systems, as does the main museum building. Members of the public are not permitted in the stores unaccompanied and are to be supervised at all times. Whilst members of the public are in the Research Room the collections must not be left unattended in any circumstances.

5 Chertsey Museum Action Plan

Since 2003 a concerted effort has been made to eliminate an accessioning backlog of more than 20 years. This was finally cleared in 2010 and now Chertsey Museum aims to accession all items within four months of entry.

In 2013 work started to review the catalogue descriptions for the museum's photographic collection. Each photograph was researched to expand on available information. This project was completed in 2017 and since then a similar project has been undertaken for the documents collection. This is expected to be completed by 2023 when attention will be turned to other areas of the collection to ensure our catalogue is as detailed as possible.

ACCESSIONING CHECKLIST – Local History

| | |
|---|--|
| Entry form No. | |
| Date Object enters Museum | |
| Catalogue card completed | |
| Accession number allocated (add here) | |
| Details entered in Accession Register | |
| Accession number marked on object | |
| Permanent location found | |
| Entry form signed & item signed off in Day Book | |
| File created and supporting ephemera and copies of entry form etc. included | |
| Item scanned/photographed | |
| Item put away in permanent location | |
| Paperwork passed to Curator | |
| Thank you letter sent | |
| Catalogue details added to Admuse | |
| Item ticked in Accession register to show it is on the database | |
| Process completed | |

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