



**UPPER NENE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
THE PIDDINGTON ROMAN VILLA MUSEUM**

ACQUISITION & DISPOSAL POLICY

1. Mission Statement

"To collect, record, preserve, interpret and display material from the Society's excavation of a late Iron Age settlement, Romano-British villa and early Saxon burial site, at Piddington, Northamptonshire in a single site Museum, in the former Wesleyan Chapel, Piddington, to inspire, educate and give enjoyment to all visitors".

2. Existing Collections

2.1 The Upper Nene Archaeological Society's existing collection consists of the archaeological archive relating to prehistoric activity, a late Iron Age settlement, Romano-British villa and Saxon activity, centred on Holey Field, Piddington, Northamptonshire (hereinafter referred to as 'the site') comprising artefacts, ecofacts and documentation.

2.2 While excavation by the Society continues at the site, the collection is constantly increasing.

2.3 By the terms of the Transfer of Ownership agreement between the landowner on which the site is situated and the Society (dated 19 September 1994), all the archaeological objects from the site, already found by the Society, and those which have yet to be discovered, became the absolute property of the Society, in perpetuity.

2.4 In addition, there are a small number of items, such as photographs, attendance books and religious items, relating to the Museum building's previous use as a Wesleyan Chapel and Sunday School.

2.5 It is the intention of the Society to continue to restrict collecting to the site and to items associated with the Wesleyan Chapel, except in exceptional circumstances.

3 Future Collecting Policy

3.1 The Society will actively collect:

3.1.1 archaeological material of any period, which has been, or will be, excavated/found at the site of the prehistoric activity, late Iron Age settlement, Romano-British villa and Saxon activity, centred on Holey Field, Piddington, Northamptonshire;

3.1.2 material relating to the history of the Wesleyan Chapel, Piddington and its activities.

3.2 In exceptional circumstances, the Society may collect significant provenanced material from the parish of Hackleton (which incorporates the villages of Piddington, Hackleton, Horton and Preston Deanery). The Society reserves the right to refuse material.

- 3.3 Other material may be accepted on loan, for recording, study, or display, subject to a fixed term agreement with the owner(s).
- 3.4 It is anticipated that sufficient environmentally controlled storage space exists to accommodate the archive resulting from excavation of that part of the site (as defined above), which remains to be excavated by the Society.
It is expected that the current excavation of the late Iron Age, Romano-British and Saxon site is mostly completed and that any further acquisitions (as defined above) are likely to be very limited.
Should the present storage prove inadequate, there is scope to increase the space available by extending the mezzanine floor.
While material is being acquired through excavation, and after excavation of the relevant site has finished, it is expected that staffing levels will continue to be adequate to perform the necessary museum functions.
The Forward Plan, the Collections Management Policy, together with the environmentally controlled storage, allow for a continuing programme of care and conservation, which should prove adequate for the eventual size of the collection.
- 3.5 Archival material (such as the site documentation and photographs and printed matter relating to the history of the Wesleyan Chapel) will be treated according to the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums in the United Kingdom and the Society will aim to meet the standards specified in the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts' Standards for Record Repositories.

4 Relationship to Other Museum Collections

- 4.1.1 Some archaeological material from the above site was donated to Northampton Museums before the Society's excavation of the site began in 1979. This material is currently on loan to the Society by agreement.
- 4.1.2 Northampton Museums' present archaeological collecting policy precludes further collecting outside the boundaries of Northampton Borough Council (Piddington falls within the area of South Northamptonshire Council). There is, therefore, no conflict between Piddington Museum's and Northampton Museum's collecting policies.
- 4.1.3 As far as is known, neither Northamptonshire County Council, nor South Northamptonshire County Council holds archaeological material relating to the Piddington site.
- 4.3 The small quantity of material in the Society's collection, relating to the Wesleyan Chapel / Sunday School, was included in the original purchase of the building. If any more such material became available through gift or purchase, it would be uniquely relevant to the history of the Wesleyan Chapel / Sunday School and, therefore, most appropriately added to the existing collection.

5 Acquisition Criteria

- 5.1 The Museum will not acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest, or exchange, any object or specimen, unless the governing body (the General Purposes Committee of the Upper Nene Archaeological Society) is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question, and that, in particular, it 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).

- 5.2 So far as British archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) are concerned, in addition to the safeguards under 3.1.1. and 3.2 above, the Museum will not acquire objects in any case where the governing body has reasonable cause to believe that the circumstances of their recovery involved the recent unscientific or intentional destruction or damage of ancient monuments or other known archaeological sites, or involved a failure to disclose the finds to the owner or occupier of the land, or the proper authorities in the case of notifiable material, as defined in the Treasure Act 1996.
- 5.3 The Museum will not make acquisitions outside the current stated policy, except in very exceptional circumstances and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the Museum, having regard to the interests of other museums.

6 Disposal of Collections

- 6.1 By definition, a museum has a long-term purpose and must possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principle that there is a strong presumption against the disposal of items in the museum's collection, except as set out below.
- 6.2 In those cases where the museum is legally free to dispose of an item (if this is in doubt, advice will be sought), it is agreed that any decision to sell or otherwise dispose of material from the collections will only be taken after due consideration. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds. Once a decision to dispose of an item has been taken, priority will be given to retaining the item within the public domain and, with this in view, it will be offered first, by gift or exchange, to Registered or Accredited Museums, before disposal to other interested individuals or organisations is considered.
- 6.3 In cases in which an arrangement for the gift or exchange of material is not being made with an individual Registered Museum, the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of material. This will normally be through an announcement in the Museums Association's 'Museums Journal' and other professional journals as appropriate. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed.
- 6.4 If the decision is taken to dispose of an object or specimen by sale, it cannot be offered for sale unless the Society still has title to the material after the provisions in section 2 of the Transfer of Ownership (between the Owner of Fields OS Nos. 6600 and 8925 in the Parish of Piddington and the Charity Trustees of the Upper Nene Archaeological Society, dated 19th September 1994) have been followed.
- 6.5 Items in the collection relating to the history of the Wesleyan Chapel would be disposed of according to the above procedures, with the exception that they are not subject to the provisions in the above-mentioned Transfer of Ownership.

- 6.6 A decision to dispose of an object or specimen, whether by exchange, gift or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum, acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff. Full records will be kept of all such decisions 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.
- 6.7 In the event of the Society being formally dissolved, the Museum's assets will be disposed of according to the Trust Deed and the stipulations of the Charity Commission.
- 6.8 Any monies received by the museum's governing body from the disposal of items will be disposed of according to the Trust Deed and the stipulations of the Charity Commission.

7 Review of Acquisition & Disposal Policy

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed every 5 years, the next review being due in 2012.
- 7.2 The Museums Libraries & Archives Council will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition & Disposal Policy, and the implication of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

Drawn up 1997

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