

Wigan Council

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust - Wigan Heritage Services

Acquisition and Disposal Policy

3 September 2008

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Name of governing body

Wigan Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body

2nd October 2008

Date at which this policy is due for review

September 2013

1. Introduction

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust (WLCT) was formed in 2003. The organisation is a charitable trust working on behalf of Wigan Council to manage and support Leisure and Cultural facilities, initiatives and events for over 300,000 residents across the Wigan Borough.

WLCT is sustained by a combination of external funding and income generation, including an annual Community Services Fee from Wigan Council. The Trust is a registered charity and a social enterprise, which means that any surplus income generated must be invested in improving facilities and services for the people of the Borough.

WLCT manages a range of heritage facilities through the Heritage Services section.

Wigan Council retains ownership of the museum collections.

The aim of this policy is to specify the criteria, procedures and guidelines to assist the decision making for the acquisition and disposal of museum objects. It also serves the purpose of making public the reasons behind this decision making in a clear and unambiguous manner.

This acquisition and disposal policy relates to the museum collections. Separate policies exist for the Wigan Council archive and local studies collections.

2. Statement of purpose

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust deliver heritage services on behalf of Wigan Council through a number of venues and delivery points. Heritage Services is learning led; the vision is:

Purpose:

To engage people in their own and Wigan's heritage through creative management and use of archives, collections and heritage resources.

Objectives:

- Local Identity and Pride
- Increased Use and Awareness
- Improved Understanding and Learning
- Relevant Archives, Collections and Resources

Services:

- Visitor Services
- Lifelong Learning
- Conservation and Interpretation
- Local and Family History
- Heritage Resources

Where:

- History Shop
- Wigan Pier
- Leigh Archive and Local History
- Outreach

3. Existing Collections

The museum collections are an important community resource, reflecting the history and heritage of the Borough.

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, on behalf of Wigan Council, are currently undertaking a review and rationalisation of Wigan Council's collections. This project will

- Enhance WLCT's understanding of the collections it holds
- Ensure that all collections held are representative and relevant to the lives of people living in Wigan.
- Provide adequate care and resources for all collections in the Trust's care
- Ensure that future additions to the collections will be appropriate and avoid duplication.

Collections are currently organised within a traditional system of subject headings. On completion of the collections review and rationalisation the current collections descriptions will be revised. New descriptions will be provided for all existing collections, to reflect the Heritage Services vision and the themes identified in the current collecting area of this policy

The attached appendix provides a description of the collection's current subject headings.

The collections relate to the geographical area of the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan.

4. Criteria governing future acquisition

4.1 The current ongoing review and rationalisation of collections, means that in the short term collecting will be strictly limited.

Artefacts considered for addition to the permanent collections will be subject to consideration by the collections panel. Membership of the panel includes representation from across Heritage Services,

including staff with expertise in collections management, learning and outreach. Additions to the collections will be made only on consideration of the following:

- How collections can be used in the future
- The impact on resources, for the care, storage and use of the item
- Gaps in existing collections

4.2 In line with the vision of Wigan Council and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, future collecting will focus on items that represent local identity and pride. The items should explore the cultural identity of Wigan and celebrate people's lives, in the community and borough.

Collecting will generally cover all periods, including the 20th century. Special emphasis will be placed on post World War II, as this period is particularly underrepresented.

Priority for contemporary collecting will be given to oral history, photographic material and ephemera, and documents.

Priority will also be given to

- Objects with a particularly strong borough connection
- Items which are unlikely to be duplicated in the collections of neighbouring museums
- Objects with a story, which are supported with contextual material

The collection of duplicate material for the permanent collection will be avoided.

Emphasis will be placed on how artefacts can fit within the following collecting themes:

- **Cultural Traditions**

- Ritual surrounding birth, marriage and death
- Religious life and places of worship
- Walking days
- Customs and legends
- Childhood games, rhymes and songs.
- Food and Drink
- Changes in cultural traditions brought about by the settlement of different ethnic groups in the borough.

- **Sport** – To reflect the depth and breadth of community and local sporting clubs and activities practiced in the Wigan area, both amateur and professional. May include sports trophies, equipment and ephemera.

- Rugby, Football, Swimming, Cricket, Athletics, Angling, Athletics, Billiards, Chess, Croquet, Curling, Darts, Golf, Hockey, Rowing, Bowling, Boxing, Clog Purring, Cricket, Cycling, Ice Skating, Pigeon Racing, Rounders, Swimming and Water Polo, Tennis and Wrestling.
- Wigan Sportspeople and Olympians e.g. Addin Tyldesley, June Croft, Ben Jones etc

- **Entertainment and the Arts** – To show the wide variety of cultural activities local people have enjoyed, experienced and participated in. To cover

- Brass Bands
- Wigan Casino and Northern Soul
- Performance artists of local origin
- Cinema and Theatre
- Community venues - libraries, parks and halls
- Community events - fairs, carnivals
- Public Houses

- **Organisations and societies** – To represent the social and community organisations that operate, and have operated in the borough. To explore the purpose of these organisations and societies and how they enriched people’s lives.
 - Social – Freemasons, Discharged Soldiers and Sailors Club, RAOB
 - Interest groups – Photographic, Botanical, Literary and Philosophical Societies
 - Political – local political parties, women’s suffrage campaigners (Helen Silcock) and local activists
 - Charitable – e.g. Wigan Infirmary Ladies Linen League
 - Religious societies

- **Local Government and Services** – to show the impact local government and services have had on people’s lives.
 - Individual townships – UDCs, MBCs
 - The post-1974 Borough – Wigan MBC
 - Civic pride and achievements
 - Local politics
 - Law, Punishment and Control - police force
 - Other local services - fire service, hospitals (to complement an existing collection of early 19th century police material).

- **Conflict** - The impact of conflict on Wigan and Wigan people, to include the Civil War, the two World Wars and also more recent conflict.
 - Material relating to local regiments (Wigan Rifle Volunteer Corps, 1st and 5th Battalions Manchester Regiment).
 - The home front

- **Education** – Local schools and colleges
 - To include Wigan and Leigh College, Wigan Grammar School, Tyldesley Technical College, Wigan Mining and Technical College etc

- **Work** – The impact of working life in Wigan People
 - Types of employment
 - Pay and conditions
 - Industrial relations – the unions, strikes, disputes etc.
 - Health and safety at work - industrial diseases, pit disasters
 - Apprenticeships and training

- **Made In Wigan** – the products of manufacturers in the borough and associated material, ephemera and photographs.
 - Inland Waterways – associated with the Douglas Navigation, Leeds and Liverpool Canal, Lancaster Canal, and the Bridgewater Canal (Leigh branch).
 - Roads – associated with local companies.
 - Railways - all items collected will be unique to the borough, ephemera, photographs and documents; small items such as lamps, signs and clocks etc connected to local stations and depots, and local industrial concerns principally involved in the transportation of coal.
 - Coal Mining – small items used and manufactured locally eg. miner’s lamps, surveying equipment, underground communications equipment; ephemera etc.
 - Textile Manufacturing
 - Engineering – colliery equipment manufactured by Haigh Foundry, Worsley Mesnes Ironworks (Coupe & Co.), John Wood & Sons, Gullick Dobson, Walker Brothers, ‘Albion’ agricultural machinery made by Harrison McGregor; representative collection of small products made by local light engineering companies eg. J. H. Naylor and Pepper Mill.
 - Clothing Manufacture _ Timothy Coops Ltd
 - Agriculture – ‘Albion’ agricultural machinery; hand tools, dairy equipment and ephemera.

- Food and Drink Manufacture –Mainly associated with Elsey’s (vinegar), Santus and Sovereign (confectionery), Mathers (preserves), Richmond (potato crisps), Harvey’s (bread and cakes), RHM (bread and cakes), Waterfield’s (bread and cakes), Rathbone’s (bread and cakes) Barr’s (soft drinks), Patak (spices), Heinz, JM Nicholls (Vimto soft drinks).
- Crafts – products and tools of bell and mortar founding; pewter ware; clock and watch making (preference given to watches and clocks other than long-case, by manufacturers not already represented.); clay pipes (local manufacturers); cross-bows (designs and makers not already represented); basket-making; nail-making; pottery (John Dwight and Smallbrook Lane, Leigh).

4.3 Archaeological Material

Archaeological material will be collected, covering all periods, including chance finds and excavated material (including coins, medals and tokens) from within the borough’s boundaries.

Large excavation archives may not be collected due to lack of storage space, in this event, storage and access will be negotiated with other museums.

4.4 The Learning Collection

Additions will be made to the collection of objects designated for use with outreach, learning activities and handling. Heritage Services may occasionally acquire or be offered certain items, which are not intended to be retained for the permanent collections. As these objects will be used by learning groups and the general public, they will be viewed as support collections and not accessioned or afforded the same level of curatorial care as the permanent collections. The Learning Collection will be recorded

separately, outside the main accession record and items within it will not be treated as part of the permanent collection, since their intended use implies that preservation cannot be guaranteed.

To ensure the Learning Collection remains relevant and adequately resourced, all proposed new additions to the collection will be assessed and agreed by the Collections Panel.

Documentation will clearly indicate the intended use of the object; donors will be made aware of this at the time of entry and informed as soon as a decision has been made regarding the material.

The collection will include original material of non-Wigan or unknown provenance, replica items and duplicate items transferred from the main collections.

The Learning Collection will be maintained by the Education and Outreach section. All objects will be listed and catalogued within the education and outreach section and marked to distinguish them from the permanent, accessioned collection.

In particular additions to the Learning Collection will seek to:

- Enhance engagement with heritage linked themes outlined within the National Curriculum, at all Key Stages;
- Interpret the vision for Wigan Heritage Services, particularly in the areas of sense of place, identity, pride, working life and 'Made in Wigan'.

5. Limitations on collecting

5.1 Wigan Council 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.

- 5.2 Wigan Council will only collect items, which fulfil the criteria set out in this policy. In addition, no item will be collected unless –
- a. it is in good condition (requiring no immediate remedial conservation, except in cases of exceptional significance).
 - b. it can be stored to acceptable professional standards, now and (in the case of permanent collections) in the future.
 - c. the costs of care, preservation and interpretation now and (in the case of permanent collections) in the future, are within the museum budget.

6. Collecting policies of other museums

Wigan Council 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.

Specific reference is made to the following museum(s):

Lancashire County Council Museums Service

Bolton Museum

The Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester

Astley Green Colliery Museum

7. Policy review procedure

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.

The MLA North West or its successor body 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

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

9. Acquisition procedures

a. 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 or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

b. 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).

c. 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 will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or

natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

e. The museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because Wigan Council 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 Wigan Council will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

g. As Wigan Council holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the "Guidance for the care of human remains in museums" issued by DCMS in 2005.

10 Spoliation

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. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

Wigan Council, acting on the advice of Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust's professional museum staff, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the "Guidance for the care of human remains in museums" issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 13a-13d, 13g and 13s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the "Guidance for the care of human remains in museums".

12. Management of archives

As Wigan Council holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, it will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

13. Disposal procedures

Disposals preliminaries

- a. Wigan Council will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, Wigan Council has a long-term purpose and holds

collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. Wigan Council therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the collections.

c. Wigan Council will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

d. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, Wigan Council 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.

Motivation for Disposal and methodology of disposal

e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

f. 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 13g-13m and 13s will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body 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

g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by Wigan Council only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the 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

h. 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 Wigan Council acting on the advice of Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust's curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

Use of Proceeds of Sale

i. Any monies received by Wigan Council 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 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.

j. 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

k. 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.

l. 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.

m. 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

n. 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 will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.

o. In cases where Wigan Council wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 13a-13d and 13g-13h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 13p-13s.

p. 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.

q. 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.

r. 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, Wigan Council must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Documenting Disposal

s. 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.

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Appendix

Existing Collections

1.1 Social History

The collection comprises c.12, 000 objects illustrating domestic, civic, religious, leisure and working life in Wigan Borough from the 17th century to the present day. The period most represented is the late 19th century to mid 20th centuries. The range and quality of the items is diverse, and most of the categories of the SHIC classification are represented. Most were acquired as a result of passive collecting (from local families or worthies) therefore the collection as a whole is eclectic, rather than comprehensive or selective. Documentation (both the museum's own and that of, and relating to individual collectors) is scanty.

Subject areas include:

Domestic items - eg kitchen equipment, laundry equipment, tableware, furniture, textiles, ornaments and lighting and heating appliances. Mainly dating to the late 19th century to mid 20th century. Of note are -

- The Pennington Glass Collection - c. 250 examples of British and continental domestic tableware collected by Major W Peers Groves, a Salford Brewer, and dating to the 18th and 19th centuries. This material is not local to Wigan.
- The Buckley Collection - c.500 examples of household textiles and haberdashery collected by a Mrs Buckley, most dating from the early to mid 20th century.
- The Birtwistle Collection - c.300 tin boxes once used to contain biscuits, sweets and chocolates etc.

Personal items - eg, items relating to various local 'worthy' families, limited costume and accessories, books, photographs and ephemera, sewing kits, and items of personal hygiene and smoking. Of note are -

- A small collection of material relating to the Leyland family of Hindley, including personal jewellery, sewing equipment and decorative objects dating from mid to late 19th century, and a collection of late 18th to early 19th century samplers.
- A small collection of material relating to the Eckersley family of Wigan and Hindley, mainly decorative objects.

Leisure related items - eg television, radio, gramophone, gramophone records, wax cylinders, photographic equipment (including cinematic and projection equipment), books, games, toys, ephemera, and musical instruments. Of note are -

- The Rimmer Collection of 22 brass and woodwind instruments collected by William Rimmer, a local and leading brass band conductor. These date from the late 18th to late 19th century.
- A collection of Wigan Rugby League Football Club (and its forerunners) programmes dating from the late 19th to early 21st century.
- A collection of c.1000 glass lantern slides mainly of topographical interest in the Wigan and Lancashire area.

Civic and community life related items - eg commemorative items, such as keys, trowels, mallets and ceramics etc, items relating to civic office, such as chains, badges, caskets, costume, and ephemera etc, World War I & II items, such as ARP, Home Guard, ration books, clothing coupons, military items etc, education, sporting trophies and trophies awarded by the local councils. Of note is

- The Cheetham-Hibbert Collection - c.1000 French postcards 1914-18 War.

Religious related items - eg, ephemera, such as memorial cards, Christmas cards, concert and tea party programmes, mourning jewellery, and commemorative items relating to the anniversaries of local churches and Sunday schools.

1.2 Industrial History

The collection is also diverse, ranging from small hand tools to large machinery. There are five major categories of material.

a. *Textiles* - the majority of the artefacts, dating from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, relate to cotton manufacture, and include twelve machines which process raw cotton into yarn by the ring spinning method; four power looms and a variety of yarn testing equipment. In addition there is a rope-walk, which made the ropes which drove mill engine flywheels. The remainder relates to the silk industry including hand tools and a collection of silk pattern books of mid to late 19th century date.

b. *Coal Mining* - mainly large structures and machinery, including a wooden headgear dating to c.1870, a colliery ventilation fan and steam driven ventilation engine and a steam driven haulage winch, with a number of small items, including lamps, hand tools, surveying equipment and winding engine control gear.

c. *Heavy Engineering* - consists mainly of the products of local manufacturers eg hand tools, bolt-making and foundry equipment. Of special note is, the steam hammer from Ince Forge; mobile crane and a steam powered gas compression engine made by Walker Brothers, plus their archive of 3,000 engineering drawings; the Harrison McGregor Albion agricultural machinery.

d. *Light Industry* - examples of local manufacturer's products and production machinery, including shoe and clog making, food and drug processing, brewing and tin-smithing.

e. *Transport* - a small collection including models, wagon plates, station name-plates, railway platform trucks and ephemera eg bus and train tickets. The major item is a signal box with interior fittings (Douglas Bank).

1.3 Archaeology

Consists of locally excavated material, chance local finds and material from the personal collections of some local worthies. The local material ranges in date from Roman to 18th century. The subjects areas covered are Egyptology,

Greek, Roman (British and continental, British Neolithic, British medieval and post medieval, and African prehistory.

1.4 Ethnography

A small collection of c.150 objects from Africa, Asia, N America, the Pacific and Europe. Most were acquired by donation in the early to mid 20th century. Like many other museums, Wigan acquired a few items from well known collectors eg Seton-Karr, Sir John Scott and Stathom. Local donors were prominent families eg the Bankes and the Eckersley families, who acquired objects whilst working or touring the British colonies. Wigan no longer collects in this field, and this collection needs to be assessed for rationalisation.

1.5 Natural History

Consists of c 1,600 items. The most significant is a collection of c.1, 500 marine shells collected in 1750-80 from the Pacific, W Africa and the Caribbean by a member of the Bankes family of Winstanley Hall. A previous member of staff tried to establish a link with Joseph Banks, but without success. There are also small number of plants, insects, reptiles and mounted birds and mammals, mainly collected as curiosities, although some mounted specimens may be of local Victorian taxidermy. In 1991 the collection was surveyed by the North West Collection Research Unit (NWCRU). Their report indicates nothing of significance. Natural History is no longer collected, and any material offered is referred to Bolton Museum and Art Gallery. This is another collection which needs to be assessed for rationalisation.

1.6 Geology

This collection was mainly acquired through purchase and local fieldwork by a former member of staff who was a geologist. There are c.1, 000 minerals rocks and fossils. Many of the fossils have been collected locally and relate to coal measure deposits. There is no record of the collecting criteria used or the objectives in building up the collection. The NWCRU are of the opinion that the specimens are of good quality and the palaeontology of regional significance. Wigan no longer collects in this field.

1.7 Fine art

This is a diverse collection of c.2, 000 objects including c.180 oils, c.120 watercolours and c.1, 400 prints of various types. The majority were acquired by bequest and donation from four local collectors.

- a) the Peer-Groves Collection – water colour and ink and wash drawings.
- b) The Dootson Collection – mainly oils and watercolours including the work of several well known 19th century British artists eg Lord Leighton, Birket Foster, Luke Fildes and Alma Tadema.
- c) The Prosser-White Collection of 19th century local historical and topographical subjects.
- d) The Crawford Collection of c.1, 242 hand coloured political caricatures of the period 1789-1815, mainly French, but some British, including Gillray and Cruickshank.

1.8 Numismatics

A small collection consisting of

- a) c.175 trade tokens dating from the 17th to 20th centuries relating to Wigan, Lancashire and various industrial activities.
- b) 11 gaming counters.
- c) The Sir Leslie Scott Collection of 19 Graeco-Roman coins.
- d) The Boars head Hoard of 131 Roman coins dating from Nero to Septimus Severus.
- e) C.330 British colonial, American and European coins of the 17th to 20th centuries.
- f) C.230 commemorative and active service medals.

Gaming counters will no longer be collected, and coins and medals will only be collected from excavated archaeological context or because of their social history significance.

1.9 School Loans

This is a collection of c.2, 000 items especially collected for educational purposes. There are three subjects' areas, and all include original artefacts or specimens, replicas, books, charts and audio-visual material.

- a) Biological Sciences – spirit collections, mounted specimens of plants, invertebrates, fish, reptiles, birds and mammals illustrating basic

botanical and zoological classification and representing wildlife found in the Wigan area. All material is British.

- b) Earth Sciences – mineral, rock and fossil specimens, models and agricultural samples.
- c) History – artefacts both original and replicas covering the subject areas of Egyptology, Prehistory, Roman, Post Roman, Medieval and modern history. The majority of the material consists of 19th to mid 20th century social history artefacts.

Most of the material has been acquired through purchase, some donated and some transferred from the museum's reserve collections.