



British Deaf History Society

ACQUISITION POLICY

for the

Deaf Museum & Archive

**(including resources designated for
exhibitions and museum displays)**

July 2008
Updated July 2014

BDHS Deaf Museum and Archive Acquisition & Disposal Policy

1. Mission Statement

- 1.1 The Deaf Museum & Archive (DM&A) is dedicated to managing the long term preservation of, and access to, the unique deaf historical resources in its care. It will endeavour to provide a service that meets the needs of its researchers and customers to the best standards of quality and value possible.
- 1.2 As well as documenting and preserving the past, DM&A sees a key part of its role being the accurate reflection of past and present society. DM&A will aim to collect material relating to the many diverse Deaf communities and organisations, with a view to widening community engagement with these collections.

2. Statutory Position and Obligations

- 2.1 DM&A endeavours to abide by all current legislation impacting on the administration of archives. It will endeavour to adhere to the best of its ability to the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts *Standard for Record Repositories*. As far as is currently possible it aims to store its holdings in accordance with British Standard BS5454 *Standard for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Material*.
- 2.2 DM&A recognises and is bound by the following legislation:
- 2.2.1 Public Records Acts, 1958 and 1967 (as far as they apply to DM&A).
 - 2.2.2 Data Protection Acts 1984 and 1998
DM&A will endeavour to operate within the legislative framework of the Data Protection Acts. All material in the care of the Archive that contains personal data relating to living individuals will be treated in strict accordance with the Act.
 - 2.2.3 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2005
DM&A will operate within the legislative framework of the Freedom of Information Act. Where appropriate, all material will be made accessible to the public under the terms and of FOIA, unless an exemption applies.
- 2.3 The day-to-day management of the Deaf Museum & Archive will be the responsibility of the Curator, who shall report to and be supported by the Deaf Museum & Archive Management Committee (DM&A Committee).
- 2.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Collections Development Policy created in January 2014 as part of the Arts Council's Accreditation process.

3. Methods of Acquisition

3.1 Transfer: Internal transfers from BDHS departments.

3.2 Donation or Bequest: The donor or executor will be required to sign a deposit agreement and archive materials will not be accepted without evidence of clear and valid title of ownership. It is the responsibility of each donor or seller to demonstrate that they are the valid owners of the archives that they offer to DM&A. When assigning ownership of archives to the DM&A, the copyright owner(s) will be asked to consider assigning copyright or agreeing to licence copyright to DM&A.

3.3 Gift: Legal ownership is transferred to the DM&A. A legal agreement agreeing to the transfer of ownership and of copyright will be required to be signed.

3.4 Deposit/Long-term Loan: The Archives will only exceptionally accept material on deposit or long-term loan, and any such acquisitions will only be accepted for periods of not less than twenty years.

3.5 Purchases: Purchases will be made only of archives or artefacts that make a significant contribution to our existing collection strengths. Such purchases will be made only from legal owners or reputable dealers who can produce the appropriate provenance.

4. Development of the DM&A collections

The DM&A cannot afford to be a warehouse, storing material in the pious hope that it may one day be used; nor can the DM&A be a treasure-house, indiscriminately accepting the rare and the beautiful. It is essential that the purchase, storage and administrative cost of every acquisition be justifiable in terms of its likely use as a research and resource tool for the benefit of the Deaf community and those who have interest in it.

5. Consultation on acquisition

Minor, day-to-day, acquisitions will be made by the Curator of the DM&A and members of the Curatorial Team on the basis of professional assessments of the costs of acquisition (including, e.g. purchase price, cataloguing/listing, conservation and processing) and the value of the material to the DM&A.

Major acquisitions for/from other Historic Collections will be subject to consultation with the Board of Trustees or any committee as it may so designate.

Any acquisition of archival/manuscript material will, where appropriate, be undertaken with full recognition of the statutory and otherwise determined

responsibilities that come with such acquisition, including restriction of access issues.

6. Additional Considerations

The size, format and physical condition of archives will be considered when deciding whether to accept new acquisitions or not.

- **Size versus intellectual value:** The space occupied by each archive collection must be justified in terms of its research value. Where its retention cannot be justified, the Archives may reject a collection, or may wish to select part of it for permanent preservation. This process of appraisal is common practice, based upon sound archival principals, informed judgement and knowledge of potential research interest.
- **Format:** The DM&A accepts paper, photographic, audio-visual and digital archives. It is committed to developing appropriate storage and access facilities for these varied media: these issues will be addressed through the purchase of appropriate digital software management systems. Film Archives will normally be offered to a recognised National Film archive (for example, the North West Film Archive) for transfer into digital format, which shall be returned to the DM&A with the original films being retained by the film archive.
- **Physical condition:** Items will be rejected if their poor physical condition prohibits public access and if the cost of undertaking the necessary conservation treatment is disproportionate to their historical value.
- **Restrictions:** Consideration will be given before accepting collections with material that need to be closed for between 30 and 100 years because of the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, or other legal/confidentiality issues. In these cases, the historical worth of the material must be sufficient to justify the expense of their storage while not being available to the public.
- **Access Issues:** The offer of collections containing material that present problems in access issues because of size, condition or restrictions will be referred to the DM&A Committee for a decision.

7. Exemptions – what we will not collect

In assessing material for acquisition, a number of specific exemptions apply to our collection policy:

- Archives that might be more appropriately deposited elsewhere (for instance, archives that are known to be collected by other, local, national, or specialist repositories). In such cases, we will advise potential depositors of the appropriate repository to contact;
- Archives whose contents duplicate current holdings, or which are so similar as to not justify their inclusion;
- Copies of archives held elsewhere –unless, there is an exceptional reason for keeping them. (This exception does not apply to magazine and other printed

material collections where copies also exist in, for example, the RNID Library, or where the DM&A needs to hold collections to provide an alternative location for research).

- Artefacts or materials prohibited under Arts Council criteria as laid out in the Collections Development Policy

8. Selection and de-Accessioning

The DM&A reserves the right to conduct a periodic review of all records, artefacts and other material held, and where necessary to recommend their disposal, destruction or transfer. Such disposal, destruction or transfer will be done on the basis of clauses 4 and 6 as detailed above.

9. Loans

9.1 Applications for loans of archive material and artefacts to external parties or institutions must be made in writing to the Curator. Such loans will normally only be made to an established museum, gallery or institution for the purposes of them putting on local or national exhibitions.

9.2 The loan to such museums, galleries and institutions is made only on the condition that:

- standards of display and security are met;
- insurance cover is arranged on a nail to nail basis

9.3 Where the collection/item(s) held by the DM&A is on a loan agreement from a depositor, the views and approval of the depositor will be sought before the loan is permitted.