

# National Museum of Ireland Acquisitions & Disposals Policy

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1. Introduction</b>	
1.1 <i>Introduction</i>	2
1.2 <i>Background</i>	2
1.3 <i>Authority</i>	2
1.4 <i>Purpose of document</i>	3
<b>2. The Collections</b>	
<i>Definitions</i>	4
<i>Background</i>	4
<i>Description of the existing collections</i>	5
<i>Period of time and/or geographical area         to which collecting relates</i>	7
<b>3. Acquisitions policy</b>	
3.1 <i>Definition</i>	8
3.2 <i>Acquisition</i>	8
3.3 <i>Acquisitions not covered by the policy</i>	10
3.4 <i>Limitations on collecting</i>	10
<b>4. Deaccessioning and Disposals</b>	
4.1 <i>Deaccessioning</i>	11
4.2 <i>Disposals</i>	11
<b>5. Acquisitions Policies</b>	
5.1 <i>Art and Industrial Division</i>	14
5.2 <i>Irish Antiquities Division</i>	21
5.3 <i>Irish Folklife Division</i>	24
5.4 <i>Natural History Division</i>	30
<b>6. Appendix 1</b>	35

# National Museum of Ireland Acquisitions & Disposals Policy

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Vision and Mission

#### 1.1.1 *Our Vision*

*A world-class museum that promotes the widest understanding of Ireland's distinctive culture and place in the world.*

#### 1.1.2 *Our Mission*

*Our purpose is to:*

- *Collect, preserve and exhibit Ireland's portable material heritage and natural history*
- *Promote the collections and make them accessible to audiences at home and abroad*
- *Be an authoritative voice on Irish heritage and cultural issues*
- *Take the lead in education, research and scholarship on everything pertaining to the collections*

### 1.2 Background

1.2.1 The National Museum of Ireland was officially established in 1877 under the terms of the *Dublin Science and Art Museum Act*. However, its collections date back over 250 years and are based on earlier museums of a number of institutions.

1.2.2 The collections of the Dublin University Museum (1777); Royal Irish Academy (1790); Royal Dublin Society (1792); Museum of Irish Industry (1845) and the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland (1849) form the nucleus of the collections of the National Museum of Ireland.

1.2.3 Under the terms of the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997*, (section 10 (1)) the Museum is governed by Bord Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann, or, in the English language, the Board of the National Museum of Ireland (hereafter "the Board"). The first Board was appointed on 3 May, 2005.

### 1.3 Authority

1.3.1 Under the terms of the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997* (Section 11 (1)) "the principal functions of the Board of the Museum shall be to maintain, manage, control, protect, preserve, record, research and enlarge the collection of museum heritage objects for the benefit of the public and to increase and diffuse in and outside the State knowledge of human life in Ireland, of the

natural history of Ireland and of the relations of Ireland in these respects with other countries.”

1.3.2 Collections are at the core of the National Museum of Ireland’s purpose and the museum may acquire objects through gift, purchase, exchange, field collection and loan or through provisions in statutory law.

1.3.3 This policy document takes account of the National Museum of Ireland’s *Statement of Strategy 2008-2012* as approved by the Board on 29-05-2008.

#### **1.4 Purpose of Document**

1.4.1 This is the acquisitions and disposals policy of the National Museum of Ireland as approved by the Board on 29-05-2008. This policy will be reviewed from time to time and at least every five years.

1.4.2 The aim of this policy document is to define what the museum collects and to establish the rationale for the collections. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration.

## **2 The Collections**

### **2.1 Definitions**

- 2.1.1 Under the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997* (Section 2 (1)), a “museum heritage object” is defined as “any object (including archaeological objects, objects relating to the decorative arts or natural sciences or to history or industry or folklife) over 25 years old considered appropriate by the Board for inclusion in the collection of the Museum concerning human life in Ireland, the natural history of Ireland, and of the relations of Ireland with other countries, and...any other similar objects”.
- 2.1.2 Under the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994* (Section 14) an archaeological object is defined as “any chattel whether in a manufactured or partly manufactured or an unmanufactured state which by reason of the archaeological interest attaching thereto or of its association with any Irish historical event or person has a value substantially greater than its intrinsic (including artistic) value, and the said expression includes ancient human, animal or plant remains.”
- 2.1.3 Under the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997* (Third Schedule) the decorative arts are defined as consisting of “toys, games, glassware, articles of goldsmiths’ or silversmiths’ wares, furniture, optical, photographic or cinematographic apparatus, musical instruments, clocks and watches and parts thereof, articles of wood, pottery (including ceramics), tapestries, carpets, wallpaper, arms, costumes, antique objects”.
- 2.1.4 Objects acquired by the museum include those objects listed in Sections 5.1-5.4 as well as archaeological objects as defined by the *National Monuments Acts, 1930 to 2004*.
- 2.1.5 For the purposes of this document, the museum distinguishes between acquisition and accessioned material. Acquisition is the transfer to museum ownership of an object or a collection of objects while accessioned material constitutes the museum’s core, permanent collections.

### **2.2 Background**

- 2.2.1 The collections of the National Museum of Ireland are grouped under four curatorial divisions – the Art and Industrial Division, the Irish Antiquities Division, the Irish Folklife Division and the Natural History Division.
- 2.2.2 The collections of the National Museum of Ireland are currently estimated at around four million objects.
- 2.2.3 Material from all four curatorial areas is still being actively collected and is subject to coherent but distinct collecting strategies.

### **2.3 Description of the Existing Collections**

#### **Art and Industrial Division - Please see Section 5.1 for further details**

- 2.3.1 The Art and Industrial Division is responsible for around half a million artefacts reflecting Irish decorative and applied arts as well as Ireland's economic, social, industrial, political and military history over the last three centuries. The division also holds collections of non-Irish material, primarily decorative and applied arts objects.
- 2.3.2 The objects in the Historical Collections are defined by their relevance to documenting events and people from Ireland's history. Objects held in this area include arms and armour, militaria, flags, uniforms, coins, medals, stamps and postal history, scientific instruments, transport, as well as graphic and illustrative material, manuscripts and documents.
- 2.3.3 The Division holds a significant quantity of material illustrating the 1916 Easter Rising and subsequent political and social events.
- 2.3.4 In addition to these objects the Division also maintains collections of Irish, European and Oriental Decorative Arts, which give an understanding of international design and culture as they relate to Ireland.
- 2.3.5 The fine and decorative objects in the collection include glass, ceramics, furniture and silverware.

#### **Irish Antiquities Division - Please see Section 5.2 for further details**

- 2.3.6 The Irish Antiquities Division is responsible for an estimated 1.65 million objects, primarily antiquities of Irish origin as well as collections of Classical, Egyptian and European antiquities and Ethnographical collections.
- 2.3.7 The Division is the national repository for portable archaeological material from Ireland, and since 1930, all archaeological objects found in the State must be reported to the Director of the National Museum of Ireland or (under the terms of the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997*) to a designated museum.
- 2.3.8 A significant proportion of the Division's collections is comprised of material recovered in the course of licenced archaeological excavations.
- 2.3.9 The Division's holdings include collections of foreign antiquities, including Egyptian and Classical material from the ancient cultures of the Mediterranean.
- 2.3.10 The Division's Ethnographical collections were collected in the main in the period between 1760 and 1914 and represent a range of cultures. They include objects from Oceania and Australia, the Americas and the Arctic, Africa and Asia and smaller amounts of material from the Middle East and Europe.

**Irish Folklife Division – *Please see Section 5.3 for further details***

- 2.3.11 The Irish Folklife Division was established as a separate division in 1974. Prior to this it formed part of the Irish Antiquities Division. The Division is responsible for about 35,000 objects.
- 2.3.12 These collections reflect Irish traditional life, with particular emphasis on rural Ireland. They include objects dealing with agriculture, fishing and hunting, clothing, architecture, vernacular furniture, trades and crafts, transport, sports and leisure, religion domestic metalwork and food-related material, glass, ceramics, straw, hay and wicker work, education, music, calendar customs and commercial activity.
- 2.3.13 The original acquisitions policy of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was to “gather objects illustrative of the domestic life of times which have passed away recently”. This collecting policy still pertains, but with the substitution of the word “traditional” for “domestic”. The assessment of elements of everyday living that have become part of traditional and popular culture is the challenge for the Division’s collecting policy.
- 2.3.14 The Division will continue to collect objects in the areas described above to fill gaps in the collection. Conscious that life in Ireland is evolving very rapidly and that social and economic developments are having a transforming effect on how people live and do things, and on the objects they use, the Division will review its collecting ethos and practice with a view to more adequately reflecting a changing Ireland.

**Natural History Division - *Please see Section 5.4 for further details***

- 2.3.15 The Natural History Division cares for the national collections in the scientific disciplines of Zoology, Entomology and Geology. Until 1972 this also included Botany, which is now the responsibility of the National Botanic Gardens. Current holdings of the Division are estimated to be in the order of 1.6 million specimens of animals, fossils, minerals and rocks.
- 2.3.16 These collections have been accumulated over two centuries. The early origins of the museum lie with the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) who began gathering these collections in the 18th century. The enactment of the *Dublin Science and Art Museum Act, 1877* led to the transfer of the Natural History building and its collections to State ownership.
- 2.3.17 The largest of the collections in terms of numbers is the insect collection, which accounts for approximately one million specimens.

**2.4 *Period of Time and/or Geographical Area to which Collecting Relates***

- 2.4.1 The National Museum of Ireland will collect material that illuminates knowledge of Irish civilisation and natural history. It will also assemble collections of objects from outside Ireland where they reveal the relationship of Ireland, its material culture and natural history to those of other countries.
- 2.4.2 The National Museum of Ireland will take into account the acquisition policies of other national museums and, in particular, the acquisitions policy of National Museums Northern Ireland.

### **3 Acquisitions policy**

#### **3.1 Definition**

3.1.1 **Acquisition** is the transfer to museum ownership of an object or a collection of objects. Such objects are not necessarily part of the museum's collection at this stage. An example would be the purchase of a lot at an auction, comprising a number of objects from which the museum may only desire to have a selection of these added to its collection.

#### **3.2 Acquisition**

3.2.1 Bearing in mind the national remit of the National Museum of Ireland, in broad terms the objects to be acquired will be of one or all of the following:

- Be of national importance
- Have potential for display
- Be of research and educational use
- Be an artefact which will fill a gap in the collection

3.2.2 Objects may be collected subject to the following general criteria:

- Provenance or locality in which the object was used
- Place of manufacture
- Scientific importance
- Associated links with a particular place and social and cultural context, providing a record of a way of life
- Comparisons with other parts of the world
- Role in enhancing comparable areas of the collection and providing completeness to other objects in the collection
- State of completeness and associated conservation requirements and costs
- Aesthetics of the potential acquisition and the degree of excellence of its manufacture and design
- Part in bridging known gaps in a particular curatorial area and role in identifying future collecting considerations
- Potential for exhibition and use in education services
- Ability to build on the strengths of the present collection

- 3.2.3 The museum will not 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 object 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 Ireland.)
- 3.2.4 In the case of field collection of Natural History specimens all reasonable steps will be taken to establish legal title.
- 3.2.5 Where purchase of an object is involved, the authority to make decisions on acquisitions is delegated by the Board to the Director. according to prescribed authority limits which will be laid down from time to time.
- 3.2.6 Any object acquired by the museum, which is subject to agreed conditions must have those conditions indicated in writing at the time of acquisition.
- 3.2.7 The museum will not acquire any item where the vendor or donor seeks to impose onerous restrictions or impractical special conditions on its use.
- 3.2.8 In the case of a collection of objects being offered for acquisition, the museum will reserve the right to select from these material deemed fitting for addition to the collections.
- 3.2.9 The terms of the UNESCO 1970 *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* oppose the illicit trade of such material. Although Ireland is not at present a signatory to this convention the National Museum of Ireland subscribes to its principles.
- 3.2.10 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that is known to have been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of Ireland or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- 3.2.11 All acquisitions will be documented in accordance with best museum practice.
- 3.2.12 The National Museum of Ireland holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera as a scheduled body under the terms of the *National Archives Act, 1986* and will be guided by the provisions of that Act.
- 3.2.13 The activities of the National Museum of Ireland are subject to the provisions of statute law, official policy, international conventions and European Union regulations and directives. (See *Section 6: Appendix*).

### **3.3 *Acquisitions not covered by the Policy***

- 3.3.1 This acquisitions policy is predicated upon the provisions of legislation and nothing in the policy statement outlined here negates the statutory functions of the Director of the National Museum of Ireland under the relevant acts (*National Monuments Act, 1930-94, National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997; Merchant Shipping (Salvage and Wreck) Act, 1993*).
- 3.3.2 This acquisitions policy does not cover objects acquired specifically for educational and outreach purposes, for example handling collections.

### **3.4 *Limitations on collecting***

- 3.4.1 The museum recognises its responsibility in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure adequate care of collections, documentation arrangements and proper use of such collections. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as finance, staffing, curatorial expertise, storage and care of collection arrangements as well as the condition of the object and the quality of any associated documentation.
- 3.4.2 The museum is committed to treating human remains in accordance with the National Museum of Ireland's policy on human remains.
- 3.4.3 The National Museum of Ireland (with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction) may act as a repository of last resort for material which may have been illegally traded. The National Museum of Ireland will only act with the express consent of the appropriate authorities and only in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.4.4 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields.
- 3.4.5 Specific reference is made to the following state bodies, museums, galleries, libraries and archives:
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government:
    - National Monuments Branch
  - Office of Public Works, Heritage Service
    - National Archives
    - National Gallery of Ireland
    - National Library of Ireland
    - Irish Museum of Modern Art
    - Chester Beatty Library
    - Geological Survey of Ireland
    - National Botanic Gardens
    - National Museums Northern Ireland
    - Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
    - Certain natural sciences university departments

## **4 Deaccessioning and Disposals**

### **4.1 Definitions**

4.1.1 **Deaccessioning** is defined as the formal removal of accessioned objects from the Museum's permanent collection, while remaining in the ownership of the museum. Objects removed from the unaccessioned collections of the Museum are not considered deaccessions.

4.1.2 **Disposal** is the act of removal from museum ownership of an object or a collection of objects.

### **4.2 Deaccessioning and Disposals**

4.2.1 There are no specific provisions in the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997* to either deaccession or dispose of objects in the national collections.

4.2.2 By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The Board accepts the principle that there is a strong presumption against the deaccessioning and disposal of any objects in the museum's collection.

4.2.3 Full records will be kept of all decisions on deaccessions and disposals and the objects involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the objects concerned, including photographic records where practicable.

### **4.3 Deaccessioning**

4.3.1 Deaccessioning should not imply that an object will be disposed of by the Museum but reflects a formal change in the recorded status of an object. This may, for example, occur if an object is transferred to the museum's handling collections.

4.3.2 Deaccessioning is the result of a thoughtful and well-documented process. The critical steps in this process are outlined below.

4.3.3 Written curatorial justification linked to the acquisitions policy should be provided. This should include an explanation of the decision criteria that apply.

4.3.4 The Museum's legal title to an object must be verified in order to establish what (if any) restrictions exist for the original purchase, gift, bequest, deposit or loan.

4.3.5 The decision to deaccession will be made by the Board on the recommendation of the Director.

#### **4.4 Disposal**

- 4.4.1 Before disposal can be considered it must be established that the object/s concerned have not been accessioned or have been deaccessioned.
- 4.4.2 Any decision to sell or otherwise dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration and approval of the Board on the recommendation of the Director.
- 4.4.3 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by exchange, sale, gift or destruction (in the case of an object too badly damaged to be of use) will be the responsibility of the Board acting on the advice of the Director and professional staff and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.
- 4.4.4 An amendment to the *National Monuments Act, 1994* in the *National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997* (Section 68 (2)) outlines the disposals procedure in the case of archaeological objects which are the property of the State as follows: “the Director may, at his or her discretion, if he or she is of opinion that the object is not of sufficient archaeological or historical interest to justify its retention by the State, dispose of the object by whatever means he or she thinks fit.” Furthermore, the same section of the Act states “Where an archaeological object becomes the property of the State and the Director is of opinion that the object is predominantly more of local rather than national interest, the Director may place the object in the care of a designated museum.” It goes on to state “An archaeological object that has been placed in the care of a designated museum ... shall not be disposed of other than by means of its transfer into the care of another designated museum or the National Museum of Ireland”.
- 4.4.5 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the Museum will endeavour to establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any valid conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant.
- 4.4.6 Criteria for disposal of material may include the following: the object is unfit to be retained by reason of damage, physical deterioration, or infestation by destructive organisms; the existence of duplicate or similar material in the collections; continuing costs of conservation and storage or which is otherwise unsuitable for retention and can be disposed of without detriment to its potential for exhibition, study, publication or research.
- 4.4.7 A decision to dispose of objects will not be made with the aim of generating funds.
- 4.4.8 Any monies received by the museum from the disposal of objects will be applied in the acquisition of objects to be added to the collections for the benefit of the collections.
- 4.4.9 Should an object be disposed of by sale, one or more outside appraisals will be sought to confirm its value, provenance and authenticity.

- 4.4.10 Once a decision to dispose of an object has been taken, priority will be given to retaining the object within the public domain and with this in view it will be offered first, by exchange, gift or sale to museums as deemed appropriate by the National Museum of Ireland before disposal to other institutions is considered.
- 4.4.11 In the case of objects that are to be transferred to other institutions any copyright or trademark restrictions should be reviewed as these rights will not automatically transfer to a new owner.
- 4.4.12 The museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of material. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of 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. At the end of this period if no expressions of interest are received the National Museum of Ireland may consider the disposal of the material to other organisations.
- 4.4.13 A conservator will physically examine an object highlighted for disposal, by what ever means, to help establish the most appropriate means of disposal including transfer, sale or destruction. In the event of the object posing a physical environmental risk, advice may be sought from specialist consultants.
- 4.4.14 Final approval for the disposal of objects will be made by the Board on the recommendation of the Director.

## **5.1 ART AND INDUSTRIAL DIVISION ACQUISITIONS POLICY**

The role of the Art and Industrial Division is to maintain Ireland's heritage in decorative arts as well as its political, military and social history. Its aim is to promote a wider understanding Ireland's decorative arts, culture and historical heritage as well as Ireland's contribution to European decorative arts and an understanding of international cultural heritage. The division's collections are estimated to number some 530,000 objects.

### **INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS AND ACQUISITION POLICIES**

#### **ARMS and ARMOUR – Collection**

The collection consists of 800 swords, 300 pistols and 300 longarms, mainly of Irish and English weapons from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and with some from Europe and the USA. There is also a sizeable number non-Western muskets and swords collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The collection consists of pistols and long arms including flintlocks, percussion and semi-automatic weapons. There are also a number of cannons. The edged weapons consist of swords, daggers, bayonets, pole-arms, some crossbows and clubs.

#### **ARMS AND ARMOUR – Acquisitions policy**

To collect material of Irish manufacture, including accessories and documents, and to develop a representative collection of the work of Irish weapon makers since c.1600-c.1900. Criteria for collecting includes stylistic development and technical innovation and incorporates the work of Irish makers living and working abroad. It also aims to collect material of Irish significance, relating to individuals or events in Irish history or related to the activities of the Irish abroad. There is also a need to develop a policy in relation to post-1900 material.

#### **TRANSPORT COLLECTIONS - Collection.**

The collection consists of fifteen 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century carriages as well as material (schedules, models, photographs, drawings) related to 19<sup>th</sup> century railways. The transport collection complements the carriages collected by the Folklife Division focusing on the carriages owned by the landed gentry.

#### **TRANSPORT COLLECTIONS – Acquisitions policy**

There is no active acquisitions programme for this collection at present.

#### **MILITARY HISTORY - Collection**

The collection consists of some 10,000 items, documents, books, personal papers, uniforms, medals and ephemera related to Irish soldiers in the British, American and Irish armies. The largest parts of the collection are the uniforms, which consist of 500 uniforms including headdress, the earliest dating from the 1780s.

Adopted 29<sup>th</sup> May 2008

### **MILITARY HISTORY - Acquisitions policy**

To collect material relating to Irish soldiers who have fought in armies abroad from 1550 to the present day, material of Irish significance relating to individuals or specific events in Irish military history and material relating to the Irish soldier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **FLAGS - Collection**

The collection consists of 50 flags from 1641 to the present day.

### **FLAGS - Acquisitions policy**

To collect flags relating to Ireland's past, in particular military flags carried by Irish soldiers at home and abroad.

### **FURNITURE – Collection**

This collection consists of some 4,500 pieces, covering a wide range of material from the late 17<sup>th</sup> to the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is most representative of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and covers a wide number of makers and firms. It is comprised of Irish, English, European material. There is also material from the first half of the twentieth century and a modest collection of contemporary furniture. The division also hold a major collection of the work of the Irish designer Eileen gray.

### **FURNITURE – Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to collect material of Irish manufacture to develop a representative collection of furniture, wood work, decorative wood work and related material from c.1600 to the present day; pieces representing known makers, stylistic development, models, drawings and technical development. It is also the policy to collect material of Irish significance relating to individuals or events in Irish history, Irish houses and demesnes or related to the activities of the Irish abroad.

### **MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS – Collection**

The collection consists of 600 pieces and includes British, French and Irish instruments. The harp collection is significant and it is well represented from the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The harpsichord collection tends to focus on the 18<sup>th</sup> century and includes some rare pieces. The piano collection is well represented from the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and focuses on Irish makers. It also has a rare lychord, the only one ever made by the firm Broadwood. There is also a small body of stringed instruments. The musical instrument collection is weak on 20<sup>th</sup> century material.

### **MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS – Acquisitions policy**

To collect instruments made by Irish makers for both their musical and historical/contextual value.

Adopted 29<sup>th</sup> May 2008

### **SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS – Collection**

The collection consists of 3,800 objects relating to surveying, navigation, weights and measures, measurement of time, astronomy, drawing and communications mainly from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS – Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to collect instruments which illustrate the development of the scientific instrument trade in Ireland and the excellence of Irish makers and inventors.

### **EILEEN GRAY COLLECTION – Collection**

The collection 2,225 objects and represents the various artistic forms of the designer and architect. It embraces the many different disciplines which interested Gray throughout her life: photography, graphic art, new media, lacquer work, architecture and design.

### **EILEEN GRAY COLLECTION – Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to acquire a representative collection of furniture, lacquer work, carpets, design work, architectural material and related material which explore Eileen Gray's stylistic and technical development and material relating to individuals or events which directly shaped Gray's career and her work.

### **CERAMICS – Collection**

This collection consists of some 20,000 objects, originally collected to influence local ceramic industries and to illustrate the evolution of fine ceramics, e.g. Continental European, and British porcelain, Italian Maiolica, French faience, Dutch delftware,, Hispano-Moresque ware etc. The collections also includes Irish delftware, Belleek and Carrigaline, and a modest collection of high quality contemporary Irish/Irish-related works.

### **CERAMICS – Acquisitions policy**

To collect historical and contemporary pieces of Irish manufacture or of an Irish significance which helps to document industrial and artistic developments relating of the medium.

### **GLASS – Collection**

This collection consists of some 4,500 pieces of Irish, American and European glass from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Traditional collecting centred on the industrial manufacture of Belfast, Cork, Dublin and Waterford, late 18<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is also a modest collection of high quality Irish/Irish-related contemporary works.

Adopted 29<sup>th</sup> May 2008

### **GLASS – Acquisitions policy**

To collect historical and contemporary works of an Irish manufacture or significance, to illustrate the industrial and artistic development of the medium.

### **ASIAN COLLECTIONS – Collection**

This collection consists of around 7,000 objects and is incorporated within the existing areas of arms and armour, textiles, metalwork, glass, ceramics, musical instruments.

### **ASIAN COLLECTIONS – Acquisitions policy**

There is no active policy to collect further examples of this material but in the event of material becoming available and where this material would fill gaps in the established collections the Museum would endeavour to acquire it.

### **EASTER WEEK - Collection**

This collection consists of some 13,000 pieces and consists principally of material acquired following the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rising, in 1936. The collection contains a number of key documents and manuscripts relating to the Rising and its leaders, for instance, three copies of the Proclamation of the Republic, and two copies of Pearse's order to surrender. The immediate aftermath of the Rising is also well covered, with items produced in the internment camps and prisons. The collection also covers the period up to the end of the Civil War, and incorporates commemorative material produced up to the present day.

### **EASTER WEEK - Acquisitions policy**

To collect objects that illuminate the Independence period, while simultaneously avoiding undue replication of objects already represented in the collection and more specifically material produced in the camps and prisons between 1916 and 1924.

### **HISTORICAL - Collection**

This collection consists of around 4,000 objects and is strong in material such as medals, documents and personal memorabilia relating to the Volunteer movement of the 1780s, the Repeal movement, and the Land War. The collection is weak in other important areas, such as the Plantations, the Famine, Ireland of the 1920s to the 1940s, and generally in objects that tell the social and economic story of the 'building of Ireland' in those decades.

### **HISTORICAL - Acquisitions policy**

To collect material that tell the social, economic and political story of Ireland's history from the seventeenth century onwards. The aim is to broaden the Historical Collection to include items that tell of the 'quiet revolutions' in social and economic history, as well as those political events that traditionally demand the greatest attention in terms of research and acquisition.

### **PHILATELIC and POSTAL HISTORY - Collection**

The 'Duke of Leinster' bequest of some 18,500 stamps and related material forms the core of Philatelic and Postal History collection. The collection spans British and Irish philately and postal history. It also includes covers and proofs. It includes a selection of Mulready caricatures and of particular note is a series of British Departmental stamps in unique mint blocks of four, and an example of the Western Australian 4d. blue of 1854 with the frame inverted in relation to the central swan. Of the remainder of the collection, the vast majority is made up of Irish and world stamps, sheets and first-day covers, issued by the Universal Postal Union, Berne, Switzerland. The overall collection (estimated to include some 400,000 stamps) is growing continuously with the regular acquisition of new stamps from around the world.

### **PHILATELIC and POSTAL HISTORY - Acquisitions policy**

To continue to collect, through the Universal Postal Union, and to fill in the gaps in the existing collection of Irish material.

### **FINE AND GRAPHIC ART - Collection**

This collection consists of some 200 watercolours and drawings by Irish and European artists, mainly compiled prior to the 1920s but it is not museum policy to collect further examples.

### **METALWORK - Collection**

The collection consists of over 5,000 objects. The principal element of this collection is Irish silver, which ranges in date from c.1500 to the present and which contains over 2,800 pieces. There are also collections of pewter (over 100 pieces) as well as enamel, brass and ironwork which number about 1,500. The non-Irish elements of these collections are not active, except those collected for context.

### **METALWORK - Acquisitions policy**

To collect Irish material, with an emphasis on style, maker and provenance and taking into account function, period, geographical provenance and extant examples in the collection. In the case of ironwork, as with scientific instruments, physically large objects are not normally because of storage difficulties.

### **NUMISMATICS - Collection**

This consists of some 10,000 pieces, the main body being Irish coins from the Viking period to the present. This in turn is divided into two elements, a systematic chronological collection and a body of hoard material. Hoards (whether of Irish or foreign material) are always collected, except where composed of the very commonest pieces, where the decision may be to record rather than acquire.

Adopted 29<sup>th</sup> May 2008

The Irish chronological collection is augmented by denomination, style and provenance in the same manner as the silver collection

The numismatic collection also includes a considerable body of Roman, English, European and Asian coins, which may occasionally be used to provide contrast or comparison.

There is a large collection of Irish medals, 3,700 in all, covering such topics as history, politics, agriculture, sport and education as well as tokens, banknotes and associated numismatic material. The collection also includes a small group of around 100 seals.

### **NUMISMATICS – Acquisitions policy**

To collect material of Irish origin and significance taking into account condition, provenance and extant examples in the collection.

### **TOYS , DOLLS and ACCESSORIES – Collection**

This collection, approximately 7,00 items, consists of a large collection of Irish, English and European dolls, a small collection of dolls houses as well as fittings and toys, including board games, tin plate and clockwork toys.

### **TOYS , DOLLS and ACCESSORIES – Acquisitions policy**

To collect pieces of Irish origin or significance and contemporary examples of Irish production and examples of popular/iconic toys available in the past in Ireland.

### **COSTUME – Collection**

This collection consists of around 2,000 items, and is comprised mainly of Irish and English costume (mostly female) from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Twentieth century Irish designers are also represented. There also examples of religious vestments, court dress, legal and academic robes.

### **COSTUME – Acquisitions policy.**

To collect costume of Irish manufacture and/or made of Irish fabrics or of Irish significance from 1700 to the present taking account of condition and extant examples in the collection; also to collect other material and ephemera relevant to the design, production, marketing and consumption of Irish designed/manufactured clothing.

### **COSTUME ACCESSORIES – Collection**

This collection consists of around 1,600 items of costume accessories including hats, shoes, shoe-buckles, parasols and fans.

### **COSTUME ACCESSORIES – Acquisitions policy**

To collect pieces of Irish manufacture or with an Irish connection from the 1600s to the present and contemporary pieces reflecting the quality and innovation of Irish design.

### **JEWELLERY – Collection**

The collection consists of some 1,700 items ranging from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It consists mostly of good-quality costume jewellery. It also includes pieces of early 20<sup>th</sup> century arts and crafts, Celtic Revival and contemporary Irish jewellery. There is also a large collection of carved cameo and intaglio seal stones and Tassie paste copies.

### **JEWELLERY – Acquisitions policy**

To collect pieces of Irish manufacture or with an Irish connection or pieces which reflect a particular fashion and contemporary pieces reflecting the quality and innovation of Irish design; to collect other relevant material and ephemera relating to the design, production, marketing and consumption of jewellery in Ireland.

### **LACE – Collection**

The collection consists of 1,100 items of Irish and European lace accessories ranging from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The collection of Irish lace and lace designs is strong from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, with specimens purchased directly by the National Museum from lace schools, co-operatives and Industrial Exhibitions across the country.

### **LACE – Acquisitions policy**

To collect historic and contemporary pieces of quality design and production of Irish manufacture and other material relating to the design and production of Irish lace.

### **TEXTILES AND SOFT FURNISHINGS - Collection**

This collection consists of around 2,500 items and contains carpets (mainly Irish-made), tapestries, curtains, embroideries, sampler quilts, fabric fragments and lengths, equipment, pattern designs, sample books relating to mainly Irish textile production. The Irish silk and poplin industries of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are represented as well as Irish sprigging or whitework, and Mountmellick embroidery.

### **TEXTILES AND SOFT FURNISHINGS – Acquisitions policy**

To collect examples of the textile manufacturing industries of Ireland, taking account of condition and the extant collection; to collect other material relevant to the design, production, marketing and consumption of Irish textiles..

## **5.2 IRISH ANTIQUITIES DIVISION ACQUISITIONS POLICY**

The Irish Antiquities Division is responsible for the curatorial care and management of collections of Irish and foreign archaeological objects and their associated archives. It has also responsibility for caring for the Museum's collection of foreign ethnographical objects. In addition to a core collection of some 150,000 Irish and non-Irish antiquities, the Division holds growing national collections of finds from archaeological excavations in Ireland currently estimated at some 1,500,000 objects. Its activities are regulated by statute law - in particular the *National Monuments Act* (1930 to 2004) and by various policies and EU directives (see below).

### **INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS AND ACQUISITION POLICIES**

#### **IRISH ANTIQUITIES - Collection**

The Irish archaeological collection is the primary repository of ancient Irish artefacts and is indispensable to research into the development of Irish civilisation from prehistoric times until the end of the Middle Ages and beyond.

The collection is significant in extent, diversity and quality and three areas are of acknowledged international standing. These are the prehistoric gold collections; ecclesiastical metalwork and personal ornaments of the medieval period and the Viking Dublin assemblage.

While the cut-off point for material collected by the Division is around the year 1550, material of later date will be collected where they have a sufficient archaeological find context. This applies primarily to material such as coins, weapons and militaria but can include other material of archaeological interest. Some antiquities of post-medieval date have been deposited in the Irish Folklife Division.

#### **IRISH ANTIQUITIES - Acquisitions policy**

Legislation provides an operational framework for the National Museum's activities and is also a statement of public policy in relation to it. Under the *National Monuments Act* archaeological objects found in Ireland are State property. Objects may be deposited with designated museums (see below).

Whenever the opportunity may arise the Irish Antiquities Division will also attempt to acquire (by donation or by purchase) Irish archaeological objects from private collections formed prior to the Supreme Court ruling on the State's ownership of archaeological objects.

It is the policy of the Irish Antiquities Division to acquire all archaeological objects found in Ireland that are deemed to have a sufficient level of archaeological, historical, scientific, or artistic merit attaching to them. This can be taken to mean all archaeological objects other than:

- Objects that are damaged beyond usability
- Objects of low scientific or cultural value

- Relatively modern mass-produced objects that are without a meaningful archaeological or historical context or that are artistically or otherwise unexceptional.
- Objects for which a more suitable repository exists.

### **EXCAVATION FINDS - Collection**

The National Museum is the legal repository of all finds from licenced archaeological excavations. This is a fast-growing collection particularly in light of the increasing amount of archaeological excavations being carried out on major infrastructural projects in recent years and which poses particular challenges to the Museum.

### **EXCAVATION FINDS – Acquisitions policy**

As the legal repository, under the *National Monuments Act* of finds from excavations carried out in the State, the Museum is charged with the care and maintenance. Licensed excavators must employ appropriate retrieval strategies to recover archaeological objects from sites and ensure that finds are conserved, numbered, labelled, packed properly in standard-sized containers and kept in a secure and stable environment. Objects must be recorded fully and processed before they are handed to the care of the National Museum of Ireland. Excavation finds may be deposited with designated museums (see below).

Collections or portions of collections of excavated finds that consist of worked timbers, faunal or palaeobotanical specimens etc. may be retained by the Irish Antiquities Division following consultation and advice from relevant experts and in accordance with best practice. Some excavated faunal remains is curated by the Natural History Division but recent finds are held by the Irish Antiquities Division which also curates a human Anatomical Collection which is covered by a separate policy document.

### **EUROPEAN ARCHAEOLOGY - Collection**

The Division has a relatively small collection of around 1,000 British and European antiquities that were acquired mainly for comparative purposes.

### **EUROPEAN ARCHAEOLOGY – Acquisitions policy**

The Division does not aim to acquire objects in these areas but will on occasion acquire material that has a particular connection with an Irish historical person or event or which provides a significant addition to our knowledge of the existing collections.

### **CLASSICAL AND EGYPTIAN - Collection**

The Irish Antiquities Division's holdings include collections of foreign archaeology, including Egyptian and Classical material from the ancient Mediterranean. There are around 3,000 objects in the Egyptian collection, 1,000 Roman antiquities, about 600 Greek objects, mainly vases, and around 400 Cypriot antiquities. These collections are not being added to currently.

### **CLASSICAL AND EGYPTIAN – Acquisitions policy**

The Division does not aim to acquire objects in these areas but will on occasion acquire material that has a particular connection with an Irish historical person or event or which provides a significant addition to our knowledge of the existing collections.

### **FOREIGN ETHNOGRAPHY - Collection**

The Ethnographical collections number around 11,000 objects which were acquired mainly during the period between 1760 and 1914 and represent a range of cultures. The collections reflect Irish exploration of the world from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, as well as their role within the British Empire. The main collections come from Oceania and the Pacific (3,600 objects), West and Southern Africa (4,500 objects), the Americas (1,700) and South and East Asia (1,100). There is some overlap with the Art & Industrial Division with regard to material of Asian, Classical and Egyptian origin.

### **FOREIGN ETHNOGRAPHY – Acquisitions policy**

The Division does not aim to acquire objects in these areas but will on occasion acquire material that has a particular connection with an Irish historical person or event or which provides a significant addition to our knowledge of the existing collections. In particular, objects will be acquired to fill gaps identified in the context of the forthcoming permanent exhibition of the collections in Collins Barracks.

### **DESIGNATED MUSEUMS**

By agreement with the National Museum, museums designated under *The National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997* may acquire archaeological objects that are State property and which have greater significance in local rather than national terms. The Designated County Museums are as follows: Donegal County Museum, Monaghan County Museum, Cavan County Museum, Louth County Museum, Carlow County Museum, Waterford Treasures, Cork Public Museum Kerry County Museum, Clare County Museum, Limerick Museum and Tipperary South Riding Museum.

Where archaeological objects having a Northern Ireland provenance become available for acquisition, it is the policy of the National Museum to allow the Ulster Museum first option to purchase.

### **ACQUISITIONS – Legislation and Policy Documents**

The activities of the Irish Antiquities Division are subject to the provisions of statute law, official policy, international conventions and European Union regulations and directives. (See Appendix 5)

## **5.3 IRISH FOLKLIFE DIVISION ACQUISITIONS POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Irish Folklife Division collection amounts to c.35,000 objects complemented by extensive archive documentation which includes a specialist library, field recordings and image collections. The aim of the Division is to collect and preserve objects representative of the material culture that forms part of the traditional way of life of Ireland.

The collections are divided broadly as follows:

#### **Farming and Fishing**

Farming has been Ireland's principal economic activity throughout the ages and this is reflected in the Division's collections. Because farming and fishing in Ireland were on a small scale in many regions, this led to the late survival of many traditional agricultural hand implements and fishing gear, a wide range of which has been collected. A representative sample of horse-drawn farm machinery which was made in factories and foundries has also been collected.

#### **Trades and Business**

Much of Irish industry began as various crafts based in the homes and various small workshops in cities and country towns. A whole range of trades people and craftspeople supplied the communities' needs and the objects which they made and the tools used in their manufacture are represented. A small collection representing small industries such as foundries, weaving and basket makers is also included.

#### **Social Life and Pastimes**

The social activities associated with traditional life, calendar customs and festivals reveal a wide panorama of popular tradition including religious practices, belief in divination and healing and aspects of amusement and entertainment. Some are of great antiquity, others are Christianised pagan feasts, while more are recent introductions from medieval and post medieval times.

#### **The home and daily routine**

As the centre of all daily activity of the household, and of much of the social activity as well, the dwelling house acquired its own collection of objects, beliefs and practices. Cooking utensils, furniture and furnishings, and the objects associated with industry in the home from spinning and weaving, making and repairing clothing and making and repairing objects used in and around the household are all represented.

### **INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS AND ACQUISITIONS POLICIES**

The collection, however, is quite complex and many objects could be categorised under a number of different headings and there are, naturally, areas of overlap. For practical purposes, management of the collection is divided as follows:

### **AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY AND HAND TOOLS – Collection**

There are several thousand objects in this collection. The collection is rich in the hand tools representative of farming on small subsistence farms in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are more than 1,000 hand tools – spades and spade heads, turf slanes, flails, sickles, scythes, hoes, shovels and forks. There are c. 150 horse-drawn machines – mainly ploughs and also seed sowers, grubbers, rollers, hay rakes and potato diggers – along with a small collection of horse-drawn transport vehicles (slipes and sledges). The motorised element consists of 4 tractors. The 15 or so stationary machines include winnowers, threshing machines, pulpers and crushers. There is one combine harvester. Objects connected with animal husbandry include tethers, feeders and veterinary instruments.

### **AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY AND HAND TOOLS – Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy will be to collect examples of regional variations of agricultural hand tools and horse-drawn machinery not already represented in the collections. As a matter of general principle the Division will not normally collect motorised or tractor-drawn machinery because of storage and conservation difficulties and because material of this type is already adequately represented in other collections. However, certain key examples may be acquired in order to illustrate economic change subject to adequate storage space being available. Consideration will be given to the disposal or deaccessioning of certain agricultural machines which are in very poor condition.

### **FISHING AND HUNTING - Collections**

There are about 1,000 objects in this collection. The fishing collection is primarily representative of inshore and freshwater fishing and consists of a range of objects – fish spears, gaffs, nets, pots, strokehauls, weights lines and hooks. (The associated collections of boats and boat models are representative of the inshore fisheries and fishing on rivers and lakes.) Objects associated with hunting are mainly for the trapping and snaring of birds and small animals. They include bird cages and cribs, snares and traps and a small number of hunting firearms.

### **FISHING AND HUNTING - Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to collect fishing traps, artisan fishing rods, children's fishing gear, and modern pots to fill gaps in the collection.

### **LAND TRANSPORT - Collection**

The transport collection consists of about 80 horse-drawn vehicles, mainly of agricultural and commercial use, and accessories including lanterns, cart covers and many hundreds of examples of leather harness, saddles and straddles. There are examples of regular wheeled transport vehicles – block wheeled carts, side cars, spoked wheeled carts, traps, drays, jaunting cars, a brougham, a landau and a shooting brake. The collection also includes a bread van, a laundry truck, hearses, street cabs, a furniture removal van, a victualler's cart, two "tinker's" caravans and a "tinker's cart". There is a small collection of slipes and slide cars and 12 bicycles.

### **LAND TRANSPORT – Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to address the typical examples of 20<sup>th</sup> century transport which had become traditional by the middle of that century. In this regard consideration will be given to acquiring not only examples of brand name bicycles, but also a few examples of motor vehicles which had a major influence on popular life in the countryside – e.g., a Honda 50 motorcycle, a Morris Minor, a Ford Anglia and a Volkswagen Beetle. These will be acquired subject to suitable storage space being available.

### **BOATS - Collection**

There are 30 boats in the collection. They are all rowing boats apart from one sailing *gleoiteog*. There are 15 currachs, 2 Boyne coracles and 2 rush rafts as well as 5 flat-bottomed freshwater cots and 4 other freshwater/estuarine wooden boats.

### **BOATS - Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to fill the gaps in the vernacular boat collection to include the following: Boyne River salmon canoe, Seine boat, Gandelow, Derry cot, Bann cot, Currach *adhmaid* and a Clare currach. These will be acquired subject to availability and also the availability of suitable storage space. When filled, the Irish vernacular boat collection in the National Museum should prove to be the most important of its type.

## **CLOTHING, TEXTILES, JEWELLERY AND ASSOCIATED ACCESSORIES**

### **- Collection**

This collection consists of some 2,000 objects. It consists of everyday and working dress of men and women dates mainly to the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The richest section is a selection of traditional clothing of the Aran Islands, county Galway. The collection includes 25 black hooded cloaks, 45 shawls, and about 250 examples of headgear and knitted footwear, trade banners and religious vestments.

With the widespread availability and affordability of mass-produced clothing we can no longer refer to traditional clothing in an acquisitions' policy and must adopt a separate collecting strategy for these objects. The starting point for this alternate approach is the 1950s.

The textiles collection contains 50 woollen quilts, 40 cotton quilts, 85 woollen blankets, 50 patchwork quilts and 100 linen sheets and towels.

The jewellery collection is in its infancy and most examples date from the 1950s.

The clothing and textile accessories consist of about 700 objects and includes needles, threads, spinning wheels, looms, lengths of fabric, altar lace, clock reels, carders, flax scutchers, hand reels, irons and laundering related objects.

## **CLOTHING, TEXTILES, JEWELLERY AND ASSOCIATED ACCESSORIES**

### **- Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to collect a representative sample of traditional clothing. These items will be acquired as they become available. In relation to post-1950 material the aim is to collect typical clothing for a family group of man, woman, boy and girl in each decade. The aim is to continue to collect representative examples of home made and Irish produced textiles of everyday use. Jewellery will be collected in line with the collection of everyday and working dress and will reflect the acceptance into everyday life of male and female jewellery in the decades since the 1950s. Clothing and textile accessories will continue to be collected and recorded.

### **FURNITURE AND WOODWORK - Collection**

This collection contains approximately 650 objects and is comprised mainly of painted and unpainted pine furniture from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It consists of chairs, dressers – both hanging and cleevy – settles, presses and an array of small wooden chests and miscellaneous wooden containers. Its countrywide distribution is very uneven with the majority of collected pieces from the provinces of Munster and Leinster.

### **FURNITURE AND WOODWORK – Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to collect pieces of 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century date, and pieces which will assist in redressing the distribution balance of the predominance of the provinces of Munster and Leinster. Post 1920s everyday furniture will be collected to furnish at least one room per decade of a small to medium sized family home, as well as children's furniture.

### **ARCHITECTURE - Collection**

The total number of objects in this collection amounts to c. 400. It includes latches, bolts, hinges and water pipes. Associated material in the organic fibres collection include samples of thatch such as bobbins, scallops and ropes. Slates, bricks, nails and other house building materials are included in the tradesmen's and craftsmen's tools section of this policy. There is also a collection of architectural drawings of vernacular and other buildings from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **ARCHITECTURE - Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to continue to collect objects illustrative of traditional building practice where these are not yet in the collection.

## **DOMESTIC METALWORK AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS - Collection**

This collection consists of about 200 objects and includes oatcake toasters, rush light holders, flesh forks, cutlery, hardening stands and some examples of hearth cranes and attachments. It also includes objects of local manufacture such as pots, pans, copper, tin and wooden utensils as well as "shop-bought" material which includes early gas cookers and ovens, washing machines and stoves.

## **DOMESTIC METALWORK AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS -**

### **Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to selectively collect electrical, gas and battery-operated household objects and to obtain representative examples of the decades from the 1940s to the present.

## **GLASS AND CERAMICS VESSELS - Collection**

There are some 1,560 objects in this collection, of which about 800 are glass and 760 are ceramic. The glassware includes bottles, drinking glasses and containers. This collection will also include examples of the range of early plastics. The ceramic vessels are mainly of earthenware and of British manufacture and include mugs, jugs, cups, bowls, dishes and plates and platters. There is also a collection of spongeware vessels.

## **GLASS AND CERAMICS VESSELS – Acquisitions policy**

Future collecting will concentrate on Irish produced ware. The collection of objects in this area has closer links than any other with two other Divisions in the National Museum – Irish Antiquities and Art and Industry from opposite spectrums, i.e the ancient and continuity and the contemporary and modern design. Good communication between all three divisions will both enlighten the acquisitions policy and avoid duplication.

## **STRAW, HAY, RUSHES AND WICKERWORK - Collection**

The collection of objects made from straw, hay and rushes, together with the collection of wickerwork, consists of more than 2,000 objects and includes mats, mattresses, animal collars, harness, bridle, straddles, hens' nests, containers, ropes, tethers, spancels, brushes and besoms, and the associated festive costume, crosses, *brídeoga* and harvest knots.

## **STRAW, HAY, RUSHES AND WICKERWORK – Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to continue to collect the few objects which may become available from time to time. As the material from which the objects was made is fragile and perishable, it is not envisaged that there will be objects of any quantity available. The Division also aims to develop a small collection of material made by contemporary workers in the medium, and its acquisition will be biased in favour of those workers who produce their own raw material and produce functional pieces.

## **TRADESMEN'S AND CRAFTSMEN'S TOOLS - Collection**

This collection consists of about 2,500 objects including tools, implements, and associated documents and photographs relating to blacksmiths, coopers, thatchers, carpenters, tinsmiths, basketmakers, cobblers, saddlers, turners, weavers, clogmakers, tailors, wheelwrights, nailers, sievemakers, clay pipe makers, wooden pump makers, printers, book binders, plumbers, stonebreakers/miners, watchmakers, slaters and bricklayers.

## **TRADESMEN'S AND CRAFTSMEN'S TOOLS – Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to collect a representative range of materials produced by contemporary trades- and crafts-people.

**SPORTS, LEISURE, MUSIC AND CHILDHOOD - Collection**

This collection consists of about 1,950 objects including sports equipment, musical instruments, old records, books, travel posters, postcards, toys, children's books and school-related items, guidebooks and maps, radios and cameras.

**SPORTS, LEISURE, MUSIC AND CHILDHOOD –Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to augment the small number of traditional musical instruments, sports equipment and school-related items and toys. The travel poster collection will also be added to as suitable opportunities arise.

**RELIGION AND CALENDAR CUSTOM - Collection**

The religion collection, which is almost exclusively representative of the Roman Catholic religious tradition, consists of some 1,150 objects including 18<sup>th</sup> century silver rosaries, crosses, reliquaries and altar stones, a collection of some 300 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century wooden “penal” crosses, rosaries, crucifixes, framed prints with religious motifs and a small collection of plaster statues. The calendar custom consists of about 750 objects associated with celebrating the main festivals of the year including St. Brigid, May Day, St. Patrick's Day, Lúnasa, Christmas and Halloween.  
include

**RELIGION AND CALENDAR CUSTOM – Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to address the imbalance in representation of religions and the celebration of festivals by religious groups other than those of the Roman Catholic faith.

**PROFESSIONS AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY - Collection**

This recently-formed collection consists of about 1,200 objects dealing with shop and public house activities and the professions and includes tobacco related objects, including several hundred clay pipes and a small collection of wooden smoking pipes, cutters, snuffers, shop ledgers, invoices and receipts, product packaging and advertisements. There are objects relating to dentistry and medicine.

**PROFESSIONS AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY – Acquisitions policy**

The acquisitions policy is to develop the commercial activity related collection and the priorities will be tobacco-related material, material related to mills and milling, product packaging and material related to marts and co-ops.

## **5.4 NATURAL HISTORY DIVISION ACQUISITIONS POLICY**

The Natural History Division cares for the National Collections in the scientific disciplines of Zoology, Entomology and Geology. Until 1972 this also included Botany, which is now the responsibility of the National Botanic Gardens. Current holdings of the Division are estimated to be in the order of 1,600,000 specimens. The history of development of the collections over two centuries has included significant acquisitions of specimens from other countries and this high proportion of non-Irish material has significance for various policies, including that of acquisition.

The collections may be divided between the life sciences (zoology and botany) and earth sciences (geology and palaeontology). The life sciences incorporate all living things, be they animal or plant. The Museum no longer includes responsibility for the National Collections in the field of botany, and plants (apart from fossil examples) are not included in our acquisition objectives. The earth sciences incorporate the study of our planet, its origins, composition, history, structure and processes. In a museum context this is reflected in collections of minerals, rocks and fossils. Minerals are the basic building blocks of all rocks. Rocks are composite materials that are formed from a range of minerals in various combinations. Fossils are the remains of animals and plants preserved in rocks.

The Division also houses a small collection of replicas, models and other support materials.

### **ACQUISITIONS – General Principles**

#### **Data**

The value of a museum specimen to a scientist is greatly influenced by information accompanying the object. Priority will be given to specimens or collections that are well labelled, with data appropriate to their category.

#### **Reference and voucher specimens**

Priority will be given to material that forms the basis of publications as these support data that is already in the public domain. This includes type specimens, specimens which have been illustrated ('figured specimens') and representative voucher material that supports lists of species mentioned in a publication. Great significance in science is given to 'type' specimens. These are the fossils used by a palaeontologist to define a particular named species for the first time.

#### **Survey collections**

A number of projects include collection of specimens as part of their activities. These may be major surveys (e.g. the BioMar baseline survey of coastal marine biodiversity) or small-scale environmental impact assessments. Acquisition of such material will be made in light of resource implications for accessioning and maintenance. It is likely that only representative material may be acquired and that the onus for its documentation, conservation and storage materials will be placed on the organisation responsible for the survey. In this regard it will be necessary to press for funding

agencies to include these costs in the project budget. As many are State or EU funded this is a realistic ambition.

### **Private collections**

The lack of secure futures for a number of collections in private hands suggests that major acquisition opportunities may arise in coming years. There is also a potential future problem for universities and some government agencies that may have significant collections but fail to meet the requirements for their curation and look to us as an alternative home, something that experience has already demonstrated. Research is required into such collections and discussions needed with their owners in order to plan for the long-term.

### **Unpublished collections**

Material which has not been published prior to acquisition will be judged on its future potential for research, exhibition or teaching.

### **Irish material**

In this instance Ireland is considered as the entire land mass, offshore islands and surrounding seas. The logical scientific unit is Ireland as a whole. The existing collection was developed on an all-Ireland basis before the establishment of the Ulster Museum, but that organisation is now seen as the most appropriate repository for material from Northern Ireland.

### **Well-documented reference collections**

A primary role of a natural science collection is to assist in the identification of specimens. It is important to have examples of animals, fossils and minerals to act as a reference collection. It is important that specimens in these collections have been identified by experts in relevant fields.

### **Specimens already named by experts over unidentified material**

A specimen without identification is often of little use, particularly if the small scientific staff of the museum has neither the time, library nor the specialist expertise to identify it readily.

### **Rare species**

Some specimens are encountered by chance and would be very difficult to collect again. For example, this applies to deep-sea animals which are recovered accidentally during commercial fishing.

### **Foreign species of potential future occurrence in Ireland**

Pests are a particular concern to the Irish economy. As an island we are particularly prone to the effects of alien invasive species. It is important to have reference material available for use by Irish scientists in recognising exotic animals with potential for significant environmental impact.

### **Good quality of preservation**

Specimens should be in good physical condition to ensure potential for long-term storage in the museum. Minerals and rocks may contain pyrite or salts that have begun to decay before arriving in the museum.

### **Specimens associated with significant individuals**

The museum already holds specimens associated with Roger Casement, Charles Darwin, Nathaniel Hone, Charles Haughey, William Wilde, to name but a few. The specimens may not necessarily be of great scientific significance in their own right but can be used in small thematic exhibitions.

### **Archives and ephemera associated with collectors and collections**

Aside from documentation about particular collections it is desirable to acquire personal effects directly related to collectors and collections of note, for both historical context and potential value in interpretive exhibitions. Such objects might include books, notebooks, equipment, manuscripts and instruments.

## **INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS AND ACQUISITIONS POLICIES**

### **ZOOLOGY - Collections**

There are approximately 600,000 specimens in these collections. These are arranged on a taxonomic basis, with related species housed together. Coverage is worldwide with particular strengths in Irish material, which is the main area of active acquisition through staff fieldwork and regular donations by zoologists working on the Irish fauna.

All major invertebrate and vertebrate groups are well represented in the collections, with particular strengths in Irish material. The level of representation of Irish invertebrate species is variable with dry Mollusca (shell collections) up to 95% of Irish species are represented and up to 60% of Irish crustacean species represented. In contrast, less than 5% of Irish species of parasitic worms are represented in the collections. Of vertebrate groups, up to 95% of known Irish fish species are represented in the collections. There are 12,500 study skins of which 3% or more represent very rare or extinct foreign species. While vertebrates may be the most visible grouping in the collections, they are numerically much smaller than the invertebrate collections.

### **ZOOLOGY – Acquisitions policy**

**Invertebrates:** Priorities for continued development include support of fieldwork by staff. As for other collections, much material is freely donated by amateur and academic zoologists. It is intended to acquire representatives of every major invertebrate family, many of which will be foreign and require development of networks with other zoologists to achieve.

**Vertebrates:** Development opportunities include encouraging the donation of selection of specimens from research projects. It is also intended to continue to add to the representative specimens of bones of mammals, which are used as a reference collection by archaeologists.

Animals from other countries do have relevance in a number of areas that will be developed. Invasive alien species are a major threat to Irish wildlife and a collection of the potential pests will be a target for acquisitions. The museum will also aim to build a reference collection of species that are illegally traded, through liaison with the Customs and Excise section of Revenue. Species kept as pets will also be

considered for acquisition as part of a reference collection for students of veterinary anatomy and to aid in the identification of exotic animals brought in by the public.

### **ENTOMOLOGY - Collections**

Entomology is a subset of zoology but because of the significant scale of the insect collections, this is considered separately here from the rest of zoology. There are approximately one million (1,000,000) insects in the collections. Most are mounted on pins and stored in cabinets in the Natural History Museum. In addition, there are slide-mounted specimens prepared for study using microscopes and some collections preserved in spirit. These various forms of preservation are necessary for particular insect groups or to provide specimens in varying states of preservation in order to be fully representative of the species concerned. Coverage is worldwide with particular strengths in Irish material, which is the main area of active acquisition through staff fieldwork and regular donations by entomologists working on the Irish insect fauna.

### **ENTOMOLOGY – Acquisitions policy**

The principal strengths are in Irish material, which includes a large proportion of specimens that have been published, either as type specimens or as voucher material supporting species lists. This is the most significant collection of Irish insects in the world.

Priorities for continued development include support of fieldwork by staff and their research associates who collaborate on numerous publications. Most acquisitions are voluntary donations by entomologists who have used our collections in their research and see us as a logical repository for their own specimens. Central to their continued support for the museum is the employment of knowledgeable staff, access to collections and library and the provision of workspace with microscopes for examining specimens.

### **MINERALS AND ROCKS - Collections**

Irish minerals are very much underrepresented in the collection of 2,000 specimens. Many are of historic significance. The 8,000 foreign minerals are more representative of the diversity of mineral species and form a good general reference collection suitable for exhibition and research. Rock collections are poorly known, with only 4000 of the specimens catalogued to any level. There is good general representation of various rock types.

### **MINERALS AND ROCKS - Acquisitions policy**

The range of species represented in the minerals collection needs to be expanded. This is a relatively straightforward exercise, purchasing specimens from international dealers has been a practice for over a century. Irish specimens should be acquired through staff fieldwork and by development of contacts with Irish geologists.

The rock collections need to be better understood before decisions are made regarding acquisitions policy. It would certainly be worthwhile and relatively simple to build a collection of building stones, including materials commonly used in industry. Collections forming the basis of research projects will also be acquired.

Representative specimens from other countries will continue to be acquired to demonstrate global geodiversity.

### **FOSSILS - Collections**

The fossil collections are better known than the mineral or rock collections, major acquisitions are listed in publication (Monaghan 1992 *Geological Curator* **5** (7): 275-282). There are considerable strengths and many significant fossils in these collections. The 4500 specimens in the Griffith collection underpin the stratigraphy of the first geological map of Ireland (published from 1838-1855). This collection was the basis for 522 new species in publications of 1844 and 1846. In addition to research strengths the collections are broadly representative and well suited to exhibition. The galleries housing the collection were demolished in 1962 to make way for Dáil expansion. Few specimens have been exhibited since.

### **FOSSILS – Acquisitions policy**

Research collections will be actively sought, although it should be borne in mind that there are museums in most university departments of geology. An exception is University College Dublin where research students have been donating collections in recent years. The concern is that most university museums are poorly funded with no trained curators. This issue may apply to most categories of natural science material. Some fossils will be acquired to complement the existing broad coverage and fill gaps in the collection with future exhibition in mind. In many cases these will be replicas (e.g. a woolly mammoth skeleton acquired in 1990), particularly if the public demand for dinosaurs is to be met.

Representative specimens from other countries will continue to be acquired to demonstrate global geodiversity.

### **SUPPORT MATERIALS – Collections**

The Division holds a small collection of support material including replicas and models. The most important of these are a collection of some 100 glass models of animals made in the late nineteenth century by Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka. The collection also includes casts of fossils.

### **SUPPORT MATERIALS – Acquisitions policy**

Biological and geological models will be acquired primarily for exhibition. Palaeontological replicas have a research value and will be acquired for this purpose as well as for exhibition. Where possible the manuscripts, archives, illustrations, photographs and personalia relevant to the collection of specimens will also be acquired. It is intended to selectively acquire popular ephemera with a geological or zoological themes as opportunity arises. Examples of such objects may include dinosaur related items, books, films and film related merchandise, phone cards, first day cover postage stamps, toys and models etc. This category of ‘merchandise’ objects also helps chart the development of popular natural history awareness through mainstream media.

## Appendix 1

The activities of the National Museum of Ireland are subject to the provisions of statute law, official policy, international conventions and European Union regulations and directives.

### **Statute law**

*The National Monuments Act, 1930 (Amended 1954, 1987, 1994, 2004)*

*The Merchant Shipping ( Salvage and Wreck) Act, 1993*

*The National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997*

*Turf Development Act, 1998*

*The Gas Act, 1976*

### **Policy documents**

*Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, 1999*

*Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation, Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, 1999*

*National Heritage Plan, Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, 2002*

### **International Conventions**

*UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, Paris, 1970, (ratified by Ireland 1992)*

*UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, Paris, 2001*

*European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, Valetta, 1992, ratified by Ireland in 1997*

*United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Montego Bay, 1982, ratified by Ireland, 1997*

*UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects, Rome, 1995*

### **European Union Regulations and Directives**

*European Union, Council Regulation on the export of cultural goods, 9 December 1992 (EEC No 3911/92).*

*European Union, Return of Cultural Objects Regulations, 1994.*

*European Union, Council Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.(85/337/EEC). (1985.06.27) (EIA Directive) 06/27/1985.*

*European Union, Council Resolution on cooperation between cultural institutions in the field of museums, 24 November 2003 (2003/C 295/01).*