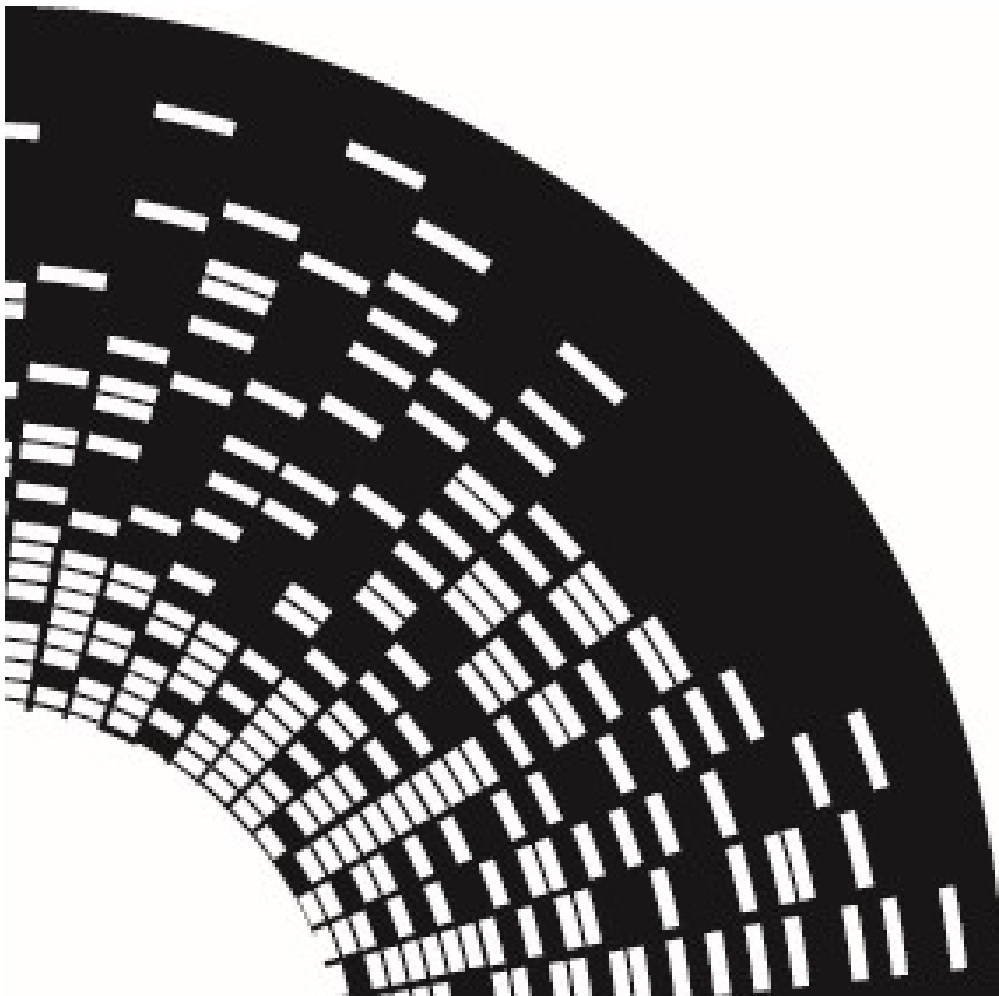




# Collections development policy

## **Stromness Museum**



**2024**

**Name of museum:** *Stromness Museum*

**Name of governing body:** *Orkney Natural History Society Museum*

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** *6<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2024*

**Policy review procedure:** *Reviewed as necessary by Curator and reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees every 5 years.*

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** *3 June 2029*

***Museums Galleries Scotland* will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.**

**1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:**

**1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:**

The Stromness Museum exists to promote natural science, to preserve local history and to offer an enjoyable educational and informative experience to as large a range of people as possible.

The organisation's purposes are:

1. The advancement of education in local history;
2. The advancement of the heritage and culture of Orkney, in particular of Stromness and the ethnographic, natural and maritime history of the islands.
3. In furtherance of this we will establish and run a Museum in accordance with the Museum Association Code of Ethics 2015, as amended.

**1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.**

**1.3. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.**

**1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.**

**1.5. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.**

- 1.6. The museum will undertake 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.**
- 1.7. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons**

## **2. History of the collections**

The Orkney Natural History Society was founded on the 28<sup>th</sup> December 1837. Its' statement of purpose was "For the promotion of Natural Science by the support of a Museum and by any other means" and this remains the case. Since then the collection has expanded to include areas of social history relating to Stromness and ethnographic material relating to the world travels of people from Stromness and other places in Orkney. Maritime history, shipwrecks and lighthouses are also included.

Until 1992 the museum was owned and administered by the Orkney Natural History Society. Its ownership and administration were then transferred to the Orkney Natural History Society Museum Trust. The museum is referred to by its popular name of Stromness Museum.

In May 2014 ONHSMT changed to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and is now known as Orkney Natural History Society Museum (ONHSM).

## **3. An overview of current collections**

The existing collection at Stromness Museum is very diverse but can be broken down into five main collections: Archaeology, Ethnography, Natural History, Social History and Archives. The Social History Collection is then broken down into different themes.

### **3.1 ARCHAEOLOGY**

The archaeological collection consists mostly of material from early excavations at Skara Brae and other sites within Orkney. The total archaeology collection has approximately 230 items. It includes a fine polished bone pin with human head from the Bay of Skail (date unknown), and a bone comb from Stromness churchyard. Spindle whorles from Sanday and Sandwick, a glass ring from a Viking grave in North Ronaldsay and a glass lined smoother from a Viking grave at Howe, Stromness. Three carved stone balls, Neolithic axe heads, loom weights and stone rubbers. Flint arrowheads, scrapers and a spearhead. The Skara Brae collection includes a necklace of bone and teeth beads, pot lids, polished bone pins and a square paint pot containing ochre. In 2016, a rare whalebone figurine (thought lost) was rediscovered in our collection by Dr David Clark. It is thought to be one of the earliest human representations in the UK. It is now known as the Skara Brae Buddo. Some of the Skara Brae collection is on loan to Historic Scotland and is on display at the Skara Brae Visitor Centre.

ONHSM acknowledges that Orkney Islands Council bids for and collects Archaeology within Orkney and does not intend to add to its archaeology collection.

### **3.2 ETHNOGRAPHY**

The ethnographic collection has approximately 350 objects. Orcadians travelling abroad have taken back a variety of objects over the years from all over the world. There are objects from Egypt, China, Canada, Alaska, North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, India, Singapore, Melanesia, Polynesia and elsewhere. The collection has many individual pieces as well as collections associated with significant individuals. These include Captain James Cook, Dr John Rae, Dr William Balfour Baikie, Hudson's Bay Company, Jack Renton the Cree and the Inuit.

Items include; Egyptian scarabs and blue glass statuettes, Chimu Blackware Guaca (water jars) Navajo Indian crafts and turquoise work, Chinese and Turkish shoes, Australian boomerangs, Roman pottery fragments, lamp spindle whorl, African Chief chair inlaid with shell, ear weights from West Africa. Objects with a strong local connection will be considered for collection if the opportunity arises.

### 3.2.1 Dr John Rae (1813 – 1893)

Born in the parish of Orphir, John Rae pioneered the practical exploration of the Canadian Arctic in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century while being employed by the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1853/54 he discovered a stretch of water (Rae Strait) between Boothia and King William Island thus establishing the existence of a North –West Passage. At this time he also discovered the first evidence of the fate of the Franklin Expedition. His adoption of native techniques of survival was admired and emulated by Shackleton and other 20<sup>th</sup> century explorers. Artefacts in the collection relating to John Rae include: a powder horn with the inscription 'L \* D 19' acquired from the Inuit at Kugaaruk, formerly Pelly Bay which was a relic of the Franklin expedition; fiddle; shotgun; octant; snow goggles; a very rare Halkett Cloth boat and an oil portrait of Rae in later life.

Also in the collection is a rare Arctic medal awarded posthumously to Thomas Work of Shapinsay. He was lost on Sir John Franklin's expedition to trace the North West Passage. The medal was claimed by his g g granddaughter Cynthia Muir Scott and donated to the museum so it could serve as a tribute to many Orcadian seamen who were involved in Arctic Exploration over the years.

In 2010 another Arctic Medal was donated to the collection by Dr Rosalind Rawnsley, g-g-grand niece of Catherine Rawnsley, ward and niece of Sir John Franklin. Subsequent research has established that this is the Arctic Medal awarded to Sir John Franklin.

Objects relating to John Rae and the Franklin Expedition will continue to be collected when the opportunity arises.

### 3.2.2 Hudson's Bay Company (HBC)

The Hudson's Bay Company first started to recruit Orcadians in 1702 and by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century they made up more than three-quarters of the Company's workforce and recruitment continued until 1891. Many items relating to the Hudson's Bay Company and life in the North of Canada have made their way to the museum collection. They include family collections taken home by men employed by the company and their families.

The most important of these is a collection of textiles taken back by Chief Factor W H Watt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which are on long-term loan. Items include an Octopus bag with a European influenced design; leggings and a hood; a knife sheath; comb cases. Also on long term loan is a pair of snowshoes that belonged to Dr John Rae. There is a particularly fine embroidered purse brought back by Tom Rae, brother of John Rae the explorer and an Octopus bag brought home by Chief Factor Thomas Anderson from Moose Factory.

Multi-cultural families were created when Orcadians employed by the Hudson's Bay Company married into the native population. Some of these children were sent to Orkney to be raised. The Miller sisters were born in Canada and had an Orcadian father and a native Canadian mother. When their mother died they were sent to Orkney to be brought up by their Aunt Mrs Mary Ann Swanney in Stronsay. Two toy sleds and a kayak, which they took from Canada are now in the museum collection. Elizabeth and William were born at the Red River Colony, and were sent to Orkney to be brought up. In the collection we have an ambrotype of William Flett, who went on to be a Wheelwright in Finstown, and a Cree beaded watch holder.

Other items in the collection include; recruitment poster; HBC flag with coat of arms; point blankets; rye whisky stone bottle; doll; HBC tokens; a five shilling bill; skinning knife; net needle; snow shoes and a huskie whip. Material relating to Orcadians working for the HBC will continue to be collected.

### **Trade Goods**

Native trappers brought beaver and other furs to the HBC trading forts. In exchange they received knives, guns, tobacco, blankets, glass beads, and other trade goods. The collection includes; a selection of beaver pelts and other furs; knife, cook pots, and a leg trap from Fort Chipewyan.

#### **3.2.3 Captain James Cook**

A collection of 12 Polynesian pole clubs and spears believed to be part of Captain James Cook's collection, sold to Orcadians when his ships called at Stromness in 1780 after his death in Hawaii. There are also two plates and a small, lidded tureen from Captain Cook's Oriental Lowestoft dinner service on long term loan.

#### **3.2.4 Dr William Balfour Baikie**

Dr William Balfour Baikie, explorer of the Niger, brought home some of these artefacts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are 52 items in the collection which include; textiles made from plant fibre; raffia fan; straw work discs and baskets; wooden stool with female support figure; Queens offering of Cowrie shells; carved wooden food vessels; ivory and glass armlets; clay pots; leather beaded sandals; leather saddle cover; Chiefs beadwork jewellery; arrowheads; dagger; slave irons; brass statues; hippo tooth hair pin.

#### **3.2.5 Jack Renton**

After being 'Shanghaied' in San Francisco in 1868 Jack Renton from Stromness ended up living among the Salt Water People on the Solomon Island of Malaita for eight years before escaping on a trading schooner and returning to Stromness. He later returned to the Pacific and was employed by the Australian Government to recruit local labour to work on sugar plantations in Queensland. He was murdered in the island of Aoba in the New Hebrides on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 1878. In the collection there are ten assorted spears, which were taken back from the Solomon Islands by Jack Renton's nephew, David Renton Baikie who travelled to the Solomon Islands in the 1930s to see where his uncle had lived. There is also a necklace of human teeth, a finger ring and hair comb of tortoise shell on loan from the National Museum of Scotland.

#### **3.2.6 Moravian Mission**

The Moravian Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel established a mission in Labrador in 1769. They supported their work by trading with the Inuit in sealskins, seal oil, fur and whalebone.

The Mission ships called at Stromness early each summer en route from London to Labrador and many Orcadians served as crew. The Mission sold its trading interests to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1931. In the collection there is an oil painting of the Mission Ship *Harmony* and a piece of Labrador Spar which was part of the ballast. Also; snowshoes, moccasins, snow goggles, harpoons, carved toggles, caribou, Inuit figures, dog sled and dogs, Ivory toilet pot and bone scraper, sewing kit, toy kayaks and tools. A dog sled and figures are among the oldest exhibits.

### 3.3 **NATURAL HISTORY**

The Natural History Collection consists mainly of stuffed birds but also eggs, fossils, sea creatures, seaweeds, mammals, butterflies and moths.

#### 3.3.1 **Birds**

The magnificent bird collection is a rare survival of the Victorian period. It includes native species as well as the more exotic. There are approximately 240 birds in the collection the majority of which are on display. The most recent acquisition was a Honey Buzzard in 2000. It is a rare visitor to Orkney and was found in poor condition. It died two days later and was presented to the museum. Only on rare occasions are taxidermy specimens now collected and only when the provenance is within acceptable ethical guidelines. The collection includes examples of other birds of prey, puffins and seabirds, swans and ducks, plovers and corn-craikes, pipits, starlings, and buntings. There are two cabinets of Victorian Bird Egg Collections on display and another two in store. No more egg collections will be acquired in the future.

#### 3.3.2 **Mammals**

There is a small collection of approximately 10 native mammals. There are 3 North Ronaldsay Sheep, an Orkney Vole, a rat, 2 hares, 2 rabbits and 2 otters and 1 seal. There are no plans to add to this collection but specimens may be replaced if an opportunity arises.

#### 3.3.3 **Moths and Butterflies**

The majority of the moths and butterflies are on display. The main collection of moths and butterflies was the personal collection of R I Lorimer.

##### Lorimer Collection (approx 1130)

The Lorimer collection is a comprehensive collection of moths and butterflies found in Orkney over a period of 30 years. R I (Ian) Lorimer (1919 – 1994) wrote, *The Lepidoptera of the Orkney Islands* 1983, which will remain to be the basis for all further recording.

#### 3.3.4 **Botany**

The Herbarium was collected in the late 19<sup>th</sup> / early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Magnus Spence (1853 – 1919). It contains 918 specimens, including 556 species of vascular plants, 7 algae and 5 bryophytes. All except 4 species were collected in Orkney. Spence wrote "Flora Orcadensis" (The Plants of Orkney) in 1914. The Herbarium was arranged by Henry Halcro Johnston and presented to the museum by his family in 1926. It was catalogued in March 2012 by John Crossley BSBI Vice – County Recorder.

Henry Halcro- Johnston (1856 – 1939) was President of the Orkney Natural History Society from 1927 – 1931. He was a distinguished botanist whose collection of 4000 Orkney plants are in the Botanical Gardens, Edinburgh. The museum still holds an archive of his notebooks,

diaries and letters which are on loan to the Orkney Archives in Kirkwall. The museum still holds a collection of his miscellaneous plant specimens.

### Seaweed Collections

The seaweed collections are normally kept in storage but are available to researchers by appointment. In 2007 a selection of the pressed seaweed samples were featured in the winter exhibition titled "Seaweed Garden". Local photographer Rebecca Marr combined black and white 'photograms' of seaweeds with a historical look at Victorian seaweed collections. The exhibition went to Westray Heritage Centre for their opening exhibition in the summer of 2008. Consideration would be given to adding to the seaweed collection if offered something different. There are approx 390 specimens of pressed seaweed held over eight collections.

#### Robert Rendall Seaweed Collection (approx 130 specimens)

Poet and naturalist, author of *Mollusca Orcadensia*, (1956, Proc. Royal Society of Edinburgh), *An Orkney Shore* (1960, Kirkwall). Collected during 1961 & 1962 mainly round Carness, Kirkwall and Birsay in Orkney.

#### Gunner Collection (50 specimens)

Notebook labelled "Orkney Seaweeds Presented by a Gunner at Hoxa Battery" (South Ronaldsay, 1914 – 1918) Inside the cover of the notebook is the name James Cursiter, collector unknown. Collected from all over Orkney.

#### Traill Collection (12 specimens)

A small collection, which has one sample from Orkney, and several from Firth of Forth and Falmouth. George William Traill (1836 – 1897) was from a prominent Orcadian Family. He lived in Joppa, near Edinburgh and was author of *The Marine Algae of the Orkney Islands*, (1890 Botanical Society of Edinburgh, supplementary notes 1892 & 1985)

#### Pollexfen Collection (60 specimens)

Rev. John H Pollexfen (1813 – 1899). Based in Kirkwall and also a known Algologist. Thought that his collection is most probably from Orkney.

#### 'Neat Pencil' (22 specimens)

Small collection annotated in pencil in neat writing but no dates or locations. Thought to be a collection of named seaweeds that were presented from North Ronaldsay.

#### George Ellison Collection (45 specimens)

For many years in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century George Ellison from Liverpool spent his summer holidays in Stromness. A keen naturalist, artist and photographer he spent his time recording many aspects of Orkney life, which included this collection of seaweeds collected 1927 – 1930.

#### Miller Collection (60 specimens)

Mrs A Miller, Stenaquoy, Eday collected seaweeds from her native island of Eday and artistically pressed them onto small cards, many of which are also decorated with shell sand. There are two folders; one from 1929 which has 24 specimens and one from 1930 which has 36 specimens.

#### Lawrence Collection (10 specimens)

Small collection by Mr Alec Lawrence, Stromness dated 1928.

### 3.3.5 Shells

There is a comprehensive collection of Orkney shells by local naturalist Robert Rendall (1898 – 1967) who published 'Mollusca Orcadensia' (The Sea Shells of Orkney) in 1956.

Dr William Balfour Baikie (1825 – 1864) explored the river Niger in West Africa, taking back ethnographic material (see paragraph 2.2.4) as well as a collection of exotic shells.

## 3.4 GEOLOGY

The oldest rocks found in Orkney are 'basement' granitic-gneiss, migmatite and schist exposed in the West Mainland at Yesnaby, Stromness and Graemsay. They represent the metamorphic core of an ancient mountain chain.

Although these rocks were not directly dated, workers assigned them an early Moine age of 1,500 million years. They bear a strong likeness to migmatized Moine rocks, the Loch Eil Group, found in eastern Sutherland, with a sedimentary age of about 950 million years. Therefore, the Orkney basement rocks now are assigned a corresponding age. Rims of Zircon crystals from the Loch Eil Group give an age of 461 million years, a middle Ordovician (Taconic) timing for the migmatization, metamorphic event. This is in contrast to the age of migmatization found in Moine rocks of the central Highlands where the main event is 840 million years.

After uplift, exhumation and erosion these hills of metamorphic rocks formed islands in the middle Devonian ( $\pm$  380 million years) Lake Orcadie. Rivers flowed into the lake, bringing mud and silt. This settled on the lake bottom, forming flagstone. This characteristic sedimentary facies within the Orcadian Basin is lacustrine and developed as a series of monotonous cycles alternating from deep permanent Lake Laminites ( $\pm$ 1.5m thick) to shallow playa lake sediments with ripple marks and mud cracks.

These sedimentary cycles follow the Milankovitch, 100,000-year, orbital eccentricity cycle of the earth-sun system. In Orkney, we find 108 lacustrine cycles in the Stromness, Rousay and Eday Flagstone Formations each cycle averaging about 9m thick. Fish fossils are not present in every cycle and are normally restricted to discrete horizons within each cycle laminite.

Laminites represent a time when a deep permanent lake existed in all parts of the Orcadian Basin. The 20m thick Sandwich Fishbed level represents one extra-large lake system that lasted for three cycles (300,000 years) and yielded most of the 16 fish species in the collection.

The Orcadian Basin continued to subside through the Carboniferous and early Permian and covered by about 2000 m of sediment none now recognised in Orkney. During the upper Permian times (250 million years), the basin was uplifted and intruded by a suite of  $\pm$  200 Lamprophyre Dyke Rocks.

### Fossils

The characteristic fossils within the lacustrine succession are stromatolites, fish, plants and spores found principally in laminite facies.

The bony fish, which lived in Lake Orcadie, were the ancestors of land creatures. The fish developed lungs and strong bones in their fins to enable them to travel overland from one pool to another during the dry season. Plants developed, covering the land with ferns and mosses. Later in the Devonian flowering plants and trees developed seeds.

Dead fish and plants buried in the anoxic silt and mud at the bottom of the lake, and are preserved as fossils.



### 3.4.1 Thomas Stewart Traill M.D., F.R.S.

Born in Kirkwall (1781 – 1862) became Prof. of Medical Jurisprudence, Edinburgh. As a noted local naturalist, he catalogued marine mammals, fish, crustacea et cetera. In the report of the 4th meeting of the British Association for the advancement of science, Edinburgh 1834 he published a paper "On the Geological Structure of the Orkney Islands" being one of the earliest treaties on the Geology of Orkney.

*"Dr. Traill exhibited many specimens of the fossil fishes discovered in the slaty flag of Orkney. Dr. Traill described a location at Skaill in Pomona, about two miles north of the granitic chain. They occur in a quarry about 100 feet above the sea (Ramna Geo). The quarry is covered by 3 feet of soil then 9 to 11 feet of solid strata of flag. No fish appear until we reach the two lowest beds, which are together about 2 feet in thickness. The uppermost chiefly contains fishes, of a flattened form, with a granular skin (Coccosteus cuspidatus). The lowest bed of the quarry abounds with fishes, and from it almost all the specimens exhibited were extracted. These fishes, in a high state of preservation, were carefully examined by the distinguished naturalist M. Agassiz, who detected among them eight distinct species, five of which were quite new to him, and even belonged to three new genera. M. Agassiz considers the species of the fish to indicate that the rock in which they occur is of an era prior to the coal formation (Carboniferous)".*

Many of Dr Traill's specimens of fossil fish were lodged with the Stromness Museum and some of the better specimens borrowed for study at Newcastle University in the 1960s and not returned. Nevertheless, many of the specimens still in the museum stores belong to the original collection. There are approximately 200 samples or hand specimens in store.

### 3.4.2 Hugh Miller

Hugh Miller (1802–1856), the famed geologist from Cromarty whose life was brief, left a heritage of new discoveries including Silurian sea scorpions (eurypterids), and many Devonian fishes from Orkney, Cromarty and Caithness including several placoderms described in his popular books. Though he had no academic credentials, he is one of Scotland's premier palaeontologists.

Apprenticed to a stonemason his work in quarries, with walks along the local Cromarty shoreline, led him to the study of geology. He published poems, religious treaties and books on geology becoming inevitably involved in political and religious controversy.

The fossil, which led Hugh Miller to write "Footprints of the Creator" (*Homosteus milleri*), is one of Stromness Museum's most prized exhibits, found on the West Shore of Stromness approximately 10 cycles above the base of the section. This book provided background material from which Charles Darwin developed his theory of evolution, changing forever the way we see the world.

### 3.4.3 Ted Kellock

Amateur geologist and Naturalist Ted Kellock (1920 – 2009) served in India & Burma during the war in the REME and lived in Orkney for a time in the 1960s as Customs & Excise officer at Scapa Distillery. He collected mainly igneous and metamorphic rocks from Orkney, Shetland, Scotland and worldwide. He was responsible for collection, cataloguing and describing the upper Permian suite of ± 200 Lamprophyre Dyke Rocks, as well as studying the Devonian igneous rocks of Deerness published in the Scottish Journal of

Geology 1969 "Alkaline basic igneous rocks in the Orkneys". The hand specimens he cut, prepared, ground and mounted as microscope thin sections all on equipment designed and built by himself. With his unique rock preparation equipment and microscopes, he donated his collection of about 4000 rockslides and associated hand specimens to the Museum as a study collection.

### 3.5 MARITIME

The museum holds an extensive collection of all aspects of Orkney's maritime past including approximately 50 ship models of all different shapes and sizes. Recently acquired are 2 examples of St Kilda Mailboats. Ship modelling was encouraged as a leisure activity among Victorian seamen and was also a pastime of lighthouse keepers. Themes such as Deep Sea sailors, shipbuilding, sail making, fishing, the herring fishing industry, the Orkney yole, Life boats, light houses, ship wrecks, Arctic whaling, Sail Traders and Ferries are all represented in the collection.

Whaling: Arctic whalers from Hull and Dundee and other East Coast ports called at Stromness to collect additional crewmen – sometimes hundreds in a season. The whaling collection includes harpoons from Orkney's only whaler, the *Ellen* of Kirkwall. Also a fine collection of scrimshaw work on whale and walrus teeth and an umbrella frame made from whalebone.

Lighthouses: Orkney has 11 major and 11 minor lighthouses to protect shipping from treacherous shoals and skerries. In the collection is the original catadioptric lens (1851) and the lightroom table from the Hoy Low Lighthouse in Graemsay and the Chronometer from Sule Skerry Lighthouse and the visitor's book signed by Thomas Stevenson and his son R L Stevenson in 1869 (all on extended loan).

Sail Traders: Orkney merchants had their own small trading vessels to export farm produce, salt fish and other local products in exchange for wood, coal and manufactures goods. Two commemorative bowls of the *Isabella* and the *Annie* owned by Alexander Rousay who traded across the sea to the Baltic.

Deep Sea Sailors: Countless Orcadians "served before the mast". Many became sea captains. At home their parlours were rich with treasure from distant lands. A walking stick made from the vertebrae of a shark, exotic treasures brought back from all over the world adorned Stromness parlours.

#### Development of the Renewable Energy industry in and around Stromness.

This theme is related to the development of the recent maritime history of Stromness. Orkney and especially Stromness has been at the forefront of the development of renewables and items representing climate change impact or net zero innovation. Collecting takes account of the fact that the Orkney Renewable Industry has been identified as a major theme of interest for future collecting of Orkney Arts, Museums and Heritage.

### 3.6 SOCIAL HISTORY OF STROMNESS

#### Commerce and Industry - Stromness

Our most important artefacts in this collection are those unique items that tell the story of the development of Stromness as a Merchant town.

Commercial Food Production: Packaging and ephemera relating to food production within Stromness including Robertson's Orkney fudge, Orkney herring, lemonade and milk bottles.

Distilling: Stromness distillery was the original producers of "Old Orkney Whisky" The museum has a fine collection of memorabilia from the distillery including advertising material, engraved glassware, packaging, a bottle of the product and gravity beads used by distillers in testing their product and also a lead spout from an illicit still.

Kelp Making and Straw Plait: Sample of kelp ash collected and burnt on the shore to be exported for the glass and soap industries. Kelp smokeless fuel brickette produce by Thronley Binders. Bronze medal won by Mr J Rendall for Straw Plait at the 1851 'Great Exhibition' at the Crystal Palace.

Shops, Restaurants, Hotels: The collection consists of printed paper bags from the 19th and 20th centuries, advertising material and engraved or printed hotel glassware and china. There is also sweetie moulds, and a coffee grinding machine from local shops. Johnston the Tailor's pattern book shows patterns for moleskin trousers which were ordered and sent out to employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. Gaps in the historical collection should be filled, and collecting of photographs and ephemera kept up-to-date, but for practical purposes no attempt should be made to collect shop furniture and equipment beyond the 1920s, with the exception of items bearing the name of local businesses.

Trades: Cobbling, coopering, sail making, and boatbuilding tools are represented in the collection. For practical purposes no tools should be collected beyond the 1920s. There is a rare flint seam rubber used for flattening seams and stitching, and a selection of 40 sail making tools.

Tourism: The collection consists of Stromness souvenir china from the late 19th/early 20th centuries, a variety of souvenirs produced from the 1960s, along with guide books and other ephemera. The collection on this now important industry will consist mainly of ephemera and photographs

#### Domestic and Community Life - Stromness

Small representational collection of uniquely Orcadian items whose use dates from the centuries predating the agricultural improvement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when equipment and methods began to be standardised with the rest of Scotland. These traditional artefacts include home made tools and utensils; ale cogs, horn spoon moulds and horn spoons. Straw backed Orkney Chair. Items made and used in Stromness should still be collected where possible but Stromness Museum recognises that home made items relating to farming and agriculture within Orkney are collected by Orkney Arts, Museums and Heritage and displayed at Corrigall Farm Museum or Kirbuster Museum.

Textile Collection: Fine collection of Victorian ladies clothing from the Baikie family. Jacket and jumper which belonged to poet George Mackay Brown and examples of textiles made by Tait & Style when they were based in Stromness.

## EDUCATION

A collection of school photographs from throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century which are very popular with the public. Also other school memorabilia such as school caps and badges.

### Clubs, Societies & Institutions: Sports & Entertainment: Writers & Musicians.

Original and rare edition of Daniel Defoe's account of the trial of John Gow, the Stromness man who was hanged in London for Piracy. Collection of memorabilia relating to Poet George Mackay Brown.

Orkney Volunteer Artillery uniform, photographs, badges etc of local clubs and organisations including Stromness Football Club medals. Badges, ephemera and photographs relating to local institutions covering all aspects of community life and personal items related to particularly well-known sporting, musical or literary personalities and groups should continue to be collected and kept up-to-date.

### Wartime Stromness and Scapa Flow

This theme is related to Orkney's major role in two World Wars as a naval base. ONHSM collects artefacts and memorabilia, which are related to Scapa Flow and to Stromness and the surrounding area. The collection includes the rangefinder from *HMS Vanguard*, destroyed in Scapa Flow by an internal explosion on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1917. Memorial plaque for Boy 1<sup>st</sup> Class Frank Potter who was lost on Kitchener's ship *HMS Hampshire* when she struck a mine off Orkney, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1916. One of the torpedoes fired at *HMS Royal Oak* when she was sunk in Scapa Flow on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1939, with the loss of 833 lives.

Collection of wardroom china, domestic and other items from the German High Seas Fleet which was scuttled in Scapa Flow on the orders of Admiral Von Reuter after the Armistice of 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918. Also items from the German light cruisers Dresden, Brummer and Köln oil pumps, ships' furniture, uniforms, photographs and ephemera. Collecting takes account of the fact that the sunken German Fleet in Scapa Flow is a major theme in the collections of Orkney Arts, Museums and Heritage and the displays at Scapa Flow Visitor Centre & Museum.

## **4. Themes and priorities for future collecting**

Orkney Natural History Society Museum seeks to add to existing collections when the opportunity arises through bequest or donation but has no active plan or budget for collecting. In exceptional circumstances grant funding may be sought to secure an artefact of particular importance.

Of particular interest at this time are artefacts relating to Dr John Rae, the arctic explorer and other Orcadians who were employed by the Hudson's Bay Company.

The museum seeks to add meteorological scientific instruments to its collecting policy.

The museum seeks to expand its collecting policy to accommodate the future collecting of artefacts and material relating to the development of the Renewable Energy Industry in Orkney, in particular the geographical area of the burgh and parish of Stromness. The heart of the Renewable Energy Industry is in Stromness and it is felt that this is an important area in the development of Stromness and the future history of the town. This is a natural continuation of the Orkney Natural History Society purposes and specifically relates our natural and maritime history collections.

The museum seeks to expand the Natural History Collections as opportunities arise for the purpose of addressing identified gaps in the collection.

## **5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

Rationalisation and disposal of collections is an important aspect of collections care. The disposal of artefacts which do not fit the collecting policy (through appropriate and ethical procedures) enables curatorial staff to focus their time and energies on caring for artefacts which have a relevance for local people, researchers and visitors. Rationalisation and disposal can therefore increase access to artefacts and information about collections, and enable improvements in the care of relevant objects.

Orkney Natural History Society Museum are guided by the Museums Association Code of Ethics, and the Museums Association Disposal Toolkit. Orkney Natural History Society Museum are aware that unethical and inappropriate disposal (e.g. financially motivated disposal to generate short-term revenue) can result in loss of Accreditation status and removal from the Museums Association. Appropriate advice will be sought from the Museums Association in any instance of disposal.

### **5.1 The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.**

Certain areas of the collections may be considered for potential rationalisation or disposal after assessment to identify any duplicate artefacts but this will be after the period covered by this policy.

Disposal will only be undertaken during this policy period for legal, safety or care and conservation reasons.

#### **Archaeology**

ONHSM currently have no plans to rationalise or dispose of any part of the archaeology collection.

#### **Ethnography**

ONHSM have no plans to rationalise or dispose of any part of the Ethnographic collection

#### **Natural History**

ONHSM may consider plans to rationalise or dispose of part of the Natural History collection in the future after assessment of the collection to identify any duplicate artefacts for potential disposal.

#### **Geology**

ONHSM have no plans to rationalise or dispose of any part of the Geology collection

#### **Maritime**

ONHSM have no plans to rationalise or dispose of any part of the Maritime collection

#### **Social History of Stromness**

### Commerce & Industry

ONHSM have no plans to rationalise or dispose of any part of the Commerce & Industry collection

### Domestic & Community Life

ONHSM have no plans to rationalise or dispose of any part of the Domestic & Community Life collection.

### Wartime Stromness and Scapa Flow

ONHSM have no plans to rationalise or dispose of any part of the wartime collection in the next 5 years, but may assess the collection in future years to identify and duplicate artefacts for potential disposal in the future.

### Works of art

ONHSM have no plans to rationalise or dispose of any part of the Fine Art collection

### Archives

ONHSM have no plans to rationalise or dispose of any part of the Archive collection.

## **5 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items**

- 6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.**

## **7 Collecting policies of other museums**

- 7.1 The museum 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 specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.**

- 7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):**

Orkney Arts, Museums and Heritage,

Stromness Museum reserves the right to collect and exhibit, in consultation with Orkney Arts, Museums and Heritage, items on these themes which are beyond the scope of that museum's display facilities.

It remains our policy to consider all offers of items related to Wartime activities in Stromness and Scapa Flow.

Stromness Museum reserves the right to collect and exhibit, in consultation with Orkney Arts, Museums and Heritage, items on the theme of renewable energy, relating to the geographical area of Stromness burgh and parish.

## **8 Archival holdings**

Stomness Museum will continue to collect relevant archival material such as photographs and documents pertinent to Stromness and its existing collections.

## **9 Acquisition**

### **9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:**

The Curator is authorised by Orkney Natural History Society Museum to accept acquisitions on their behalf. If there is a financial implication relating to the purchase or long term care of the object then a report will be taken to the board members of Orkney Natural History Society Museum for a decision.

**9.2 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).**

**9.3 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, 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.**

## **10 Human remains**

**10.1 The museum holds one human cremation but does not intend to acquire any other human remains.**

**10.2 As the museum holds human remains, it will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.**

## **10 Biological and geological material**

**11.1 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.**

**11.2 The Museum will not acquire any artefact or specimen which contravenes the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. (CITES) 1975.**

## **12 Archaeological material**

**12.1 The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.**

**12.2 In Scotland, under the laws of bona vacantia including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities, although such material as human remains and environmental samples are not covered by the law of bona vacantia. Scottish material of chance finds and excavation assemblages are offered to museums through the treasure trove process and cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to Stromness Museum by the Crown. However where the Crown has chosen to forego its title to a portable antiquity or excavation assemblage, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of the *Orkney Natural History Society Museum*, can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of 'No Claim' has been issued on behalf of the Crown.**

## **13 Exceptions**

**13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:**

- **acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin**
- **acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin**

**In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.**

## **14 Spoliation**

**14.1 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.**

## **15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains**

Stromness Museum holds one Human Cremation in its collections, which is of local origin. Pottery urn containing human bone cremation from a mound at Upper Lyking, Sandwick. 1838. (Accession no A190)



- 15.1** The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the "Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums" issued by MGS in 2011), 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 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.
- 15.2** The disposal of human remains from museums in Scotland will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.

## **16 Disposal procedures**

- 16.1** All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2** The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3** When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum 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.
- 16.4** When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5** The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. 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.
- 16.6** A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, 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 the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. 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.

- 16.8** If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered 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 a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9** 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.
- 16.10** Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly 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 Museums Galleries Scotland.
- 16.11** The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12** Full records of all decisions and disposals will be retained by the museum.

### ***Disposal by exchange***

- 16.13** The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

### ***Disposal by destruction***

- 16.14** If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15** It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.

- 16.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.**
- 16.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.**
- 16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.**

## **17. Decolonialisation**

**The museum recognises that our ethnographic and natural history collections contain artefacts which may relate to the role of empire and colonial activities. The development of decolonial practice will be carried out during the time period of this policy.**

# **Collections Care Policy ONHSM**

**03/06/24 – 03/06/29**

Collections Care includes:

- Provision of appropriate buildings for museums and stores
- Monitoring and control of temperature, humidity and light levels
- Housekeeping and preventative conservation
- Repacking and labelling as required
- Pest control
- Condition assessment of artefacts entering the collection
- Routine checks of artefacts
- Location and movement control
- Storage materials and methods
- Display materials and methods

Caring for the collections is a fundamental duty for all museums. It is the responsibility of all board members, staff and volunteers, and appropriate training and guidance will be given.

Stromness Museum will make use of a combination of preventive and remedial conservation measures, designed to ensure long-term preservation.

Preventive conservation covers the measures necessary to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum objects and specimens and structures. Daily housekeeping and cleaning is mainly undertaken by the museum's dedicated cleaning staff with advice sought from the curator if needed. During the winter closure a more in-depth cleaning is undertaken. Cases and displays are opened and cleaned under the supervision of the curator.

Remedial conservation involves a treatment to an object or specimen to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value. When treatment of an object is necessary advice is sought by the curator from accredited conservators such as those at The Scottish Conservation Studio, Edinburgh, or other professional colleagues.

Regular inspections of the building are carried out by the honorary technical manager and a report is given at every quarterly meeting. Designated powers are given to the honorary technical manager for the purpose of ongoing building maintenance and security.

1. Collections care and conservation will be guided by relevant ethical guidelines or legislation that govern museum documentation to which museum staff are required to work to.
  - e.g (but not exhaustive)
  - Museum Association Code of Ethics
  - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
  - COSHH Regulations 2002

2. Stromness Museum will be guided by relevant standards and guidelines, in this instance Museums Libraries Archives Benchmarks in Collection Care.
3. Stromness Museum is committed to meeting the standards as set out in Museums Libraries Archives Benchmarks in Collection Care.
4. Collection care and conservation will also be guided by the following policies and plans:
  - Orkney Arts, Museums and Heritage Forward Plan
  - Emergency Plan
  - Collections Care and Conservation Plan or planning information on Collections care and conservation included within a wider plan.

Updated by Janette Park  
Curator 03/06/2024

# **Documentation Policy ONHSM**

**(30/05/18 - 30/05/23)**

In relation to the collection held by Orkney Natural History Society Museum (Stromness Museum), for the purposes of this policy, documentation will include the following, but is not exhaustive:

- Entry forms
- Accession registers
- Images and electronic databases
- Movement control records
- Loan documentation
- Disposal Documentation

The aim is to ensure that the museum fulfils its responsibilities in relation to security, management and access to the collections, and will:

- Improve accountability for collections
  - Maintain at least minimum professional standards in documentation procedures and collection information
  - Extend access to collections information
  - Strengthen the security of the collections
- a) It will be guided by relevant ethical guidelines or legislation that govern museum documentation to which museum staff are required to work to.  
e.g (but not exhaustive)
- Museum Association Code of Ethics
  - Data Protection
  - Freedom of Information (if relevant)
- b) Stromness Museum will maintain such records as are necessary to manage the collection, for which they are legally responsible and any movements therein, including loans documentation.
- c) Stromness Museum is committed to following SPECTRUM, The UK Collections Management Standard. Specifically;
- Object entry
  - Acquisition
  - Loan in

- Loan out
  - Location and movement control
  - Cataloguing
  - Object exit (disposal)
- d) Stromness Museum is committed to ensure that documentation allows for access to information for staff, researchers and the general public through a variety of methods and are working towards an online presence.
- e) Stromness Museum is committed to ensuring the physical security of the records in their documentation systems and the long-term preservation of those records, including a regular back up of electronic data and security copying of key records such as Accession registers.

Accession registers and other key documentation are kept secured in a fire proof cabinet. Electronic records and systems are backed up regularly by the technical manager.

Software is updated regularly in accordance with the contract held with the provider.

Created by Janette Park  
Curator 30/05/18 (review date 30/05/23)

## Access Policy – ONHSM

(30/05/18 - 30/05/23)

As a service provider, Orkney Natural History Society Museum (Stromness Museum) creates inspiring and educational visitor experiences for all through its collections, permanent displays and temporary exhibitions and public events within Stromness Museum to encourage participation and inclusion within the local cultural heritage of Stromness and in Orkney.

It is our aim to ensure access to all who would like to use our services and to develop a culture of continuous improvement in service provision. Promoting equality means recognising that everyone has different needs, and taking positive action to ensure that everyone is able to participate in society wherever possible.

Stromness Museum is committed to enabling access to our collections for education, research and enjoyment by all and, wherever possible, we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure access for all, within the reasonable constraints of resources, conservation, and security and resources.

1. Our approach to access will be guided by relevant ethical guidelines or legislation that govern museum practice and the public sector such as:  
e.g (but not exhaustive)
  - Museum Association Code of Ethics
  - DCMS Guidance for the Care of Human Remains 2005
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Orkney Community Planning Partnership's Equality and Diversity Strategy
  - Orkney Islands Council Equality Outcomes 2013 - 2017
2. Stromness Museum is committed to assessing, identifying and addressing access issues by means of internal checklists, access audits and / or working with local advocacy groups. We will undertake this through a regular review of access which will take place every five years as a minimum, and more frequently if possible. The review will include consultation with the Orkney Access Forum, and seeking advice from the Council Access Officer as to up to date best practice and requirements.
3. Stromness Museum understand that users have different needs and are committed to reducing barriers to both physical and intellectual access to our collections.

To engage visitors with the collection, information is delivered in a variety of ways which include the following, at appropriate sites;

- Temporary exhibitions
- Permanent displays
- Hands on activities in galleries
- Audio visual listening and viewing points where appropriate
- Large Print exhibition text available by request
- Custodial staff trained in customer service, including specialist training on meeting visitors' needs.
- Website, Facebook and other forms of social media



- Loans
- Outreach visits to the local school and community groups

Stromness Museum will review and assess our current provision, in relation to access, when re-displaying galleries or setting up new exhibitions. Any specific requests for assistance will be considered.

Stromness Museum is committed to listening to our users and non-users and to respond pro-actively to visitor feedback in order to reduce barriers to access that they have identified.

4. Restrictions to access to parts of our collections due to the sensitivity of material held, will be guided by;
  - Museum Association Code of Ethics
  - DCMS Guidance for the Care of Human Remains 2005
5. Stromness Museum will aim to balance its long term responsibility for the preservation and care of the collections, with public access.

Created by Janette Park  
Curator 30/05/18. Review date 30/05/23