



THE
WEST·COUNTRY
HISTORIC OMNIBUS & TRANSPORT TRUST

Collections Management Plan:

Collection Policy

The West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust

Member of the National Association of Road Transport Museums

Registered office: Kalmia, Church Road, Colaton Raleigh, Devon, EX10 0LW

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COLLECTION POLICY

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1 Introduction

The West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust (the Trust) was founded in 1999 and comprises a body of Trustees registered in England as a Company Limited by Guarantee (Number 3780463) and in 2000 became a Registered Charity (Number 1079795). The Trust is bringing together a substantial collection of material relating to the development and operation of public and commercial road transport in the West Country. This policy statement describes the Collection and governs the acquisition and disposal of such material and is one of a series of policy statements being developed to interpret the objects of the Trust as stated in the Trust's Memorandum of Association. It has been produced in line with guidance from the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and MLA South West (MLASW).

1.1 Museum status

At the time of preparing this revision of this policy statement the Trust has its collection housed in several locations in the South West. Principal among these are:

- Vehicles at Knowstone (Mid Devon), Loddiswell (South Devon) and Burras (West Cornwall).
- Archives and ephemera at Westpoint near Exeter.

The Trust is preparing plans for a permanent museum where much of the collection will be brought together under one roof although it remains Trust policy to outstation some operational vehicles within the collection at locations convenient for their custodians to maintain them and take them to events and other locations in order to afford greater public access over the large area of the West Country.

1.2 Amendments and review

The Policy shall be subject to review by the Trustees at periods not exceeding five years. MLASW will be notified of any changes to the Policy and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections. The next review date appears on Page 1.

2 Definitions

A1) An object is defined as being part of the Collection if, at the time in question it:

- i) appears in the Trust's inventory as an individually numbered accession or as part of a group accession.
- ii) is held by the Trust and is programmed to be accessioned.

A2) Excluded in this definition are, inter alia:-

- i) materials temporarily held by the Trust but not formally accepted for inclusion in the Collection
- ii) stocks of spares for vehicles and other machinery
- iii) material loaned to or temporarily deposited with the Trust for exhibition or evaluation purposes
- iv) items acquired solely for use as display "props".

B) Throughout this document "WHOTT" and "The Trust" means the West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust and the "Policy" means the Collection Policy. The West Country is taken to mean the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset.

3 The Collection

The Trust's holdings represent a significant collection of material directly and indirectly related to public and commercial road transport operations in the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset. The period covered extends from the nineteenth century through to the present day. Items include full size buses, coaches and commercial vehicles, operating equipment, architectural fragments, signs, street furniture, posters, photographs, drawings, badges, uniforms, tickets and small items of ephemera.

The scope and quality of the Collection not only illustrates transport developments, but also serves as a basis for studies in geography, and economic and social history.

4 Acquisition Policy

All material offered to the Trust will be considered under the terms and conditions set out in this Policy. The Trust is, nevertheless, always interested to learn of any items that may be available, though its ability to collect by purchase is limited.

4.1 Procedure

The addition of material to the Collection shall require the approval of the Trustees. The founding Trustees have expended considerable effort in establishing the Trust with the objective of providing a secure, permanent home for the objects which have been collected, restored and preserved in order that they will be available for future generations to learn from and enjoy. There is, therefore, an absolute presumption that these objects shall not be disposed and that security and protection of the pre-existing collection shall take priority over subsequent acquisitions.

4.2 Title

The Trust shall not acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object unless the Trust can acquire a valid title to the item in question, and that in particular it has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. For the purpose of this paragraph "country of origin" includes the United Kingdom.

4.3 Archaeological antiquities

So far as British or foreign archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) are concerned, the Trust shall not acquire by purchase objects in any case where there is reasonable cause to believe that the circumstances of their recovery involved the recent unscientific or intentional destruction or damage of ancient monuments or other known archaeological sites, or involved a failure to disclose the finds to the new owner or occupier of the land, or to the proper authorities in the case of a possible Treasure Trove (in England and Wales) or Bona Vacantia (Scotland).

4.4 Limitations on collecting

In acquiring material, the Trustees recognise their responsibility to ensure adequate conservation, documentation and proper use of such material having regard to limitations on collecting imposed by such factors such as finance, staffing, storage and conservation resources.

4.5 Acquisitions not covered by the Policy

Acquisitions outside the current stated Policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consultation by the Trustees, having regard to the interests of other museums.

5 Documentation

An inventory shall be maintained of all objects held or acquired by the Trust. Cataloguing and storage shall be in compliance with the recommendations made by the Museums Documentation Association (MDA), the Code of Practice originally published by the Museums & Galleries Commission (now MLA), and the Standard for Record Repositories published by The Royal Commission on Historic Manuscripts, as appropriate. Under these combined guidelines the Archivist will ensure that all accession records are carefully supervised and that they will only be available for scrutiny on the premises.

5.1 Loans

For collection management purposes, any object designated as “on loan” to the Trust shall be recorded on the inventory register.

5.2 Disposal

Full records shall be kept of all disposal decisions and return of loan items. Proper arrangements will be made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the object concerned, including photographic records where practicable.

6 Collecting Criteria

The Trust shall collect and display items that truly represent the history of public transport and road haulage in the West Country. They will liaise with the appropriate county archivists and any other representative persons/bodies to advise on best measures to safeguard items of importance and/or heritage. The Trust holds and intends to acquire archives, including photographs, drawings, tickets and printed ephemera. The Trustees may decide to hold albums or collections of material even though part of such album or collection contains material not directly associated with the West Country. This contingency would normally apply when an album or collection cannot easily be segregated. The Trustees shall abide by the *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums in the United Kingdom (1996)*; the recommendations made by the Museum Documentation Association (MDA) 1998 and adhere to the ethical guidelines for Acquisition and Disposal as published by the Museums Association (MA) 1996.

6.1 Policy links with other Museums

Where items of material cannot be firmly defined as being solely representative of the West Country, there will be instances when the interests of other museums come into play. The Trustees of the WHOTT will maintain close contact with the administrators of other museums and organisations to avoid the need for cross collecting between them. If the Trustees become aware of the availability of transport related material which does not fall within the Trust’s collecting criteria, they will take every reasonable step to ensure that the most appropriate home can be found for the item concerned.

6.2 Representation

As a general policy, and where choices must be made, the Trust will collect material typical of normal production rather than curiosities and/or prototypes.

6.3 Duplication

In general the Trust will seek to collect and hold a single example of any particular object. Collection of multiple examples will occur, however, in the following circumstances:

- a) For vehicles where there is scope for demonstration. Although duplicates will be accessioned into the Collection and generally given the same level of care as any other item,

they will be subject to lesser limitations on wear and tear and regarded as ultimately expendable.

- b) Where there is considerable scope for display, loan or reference, especially in the case of sensitive material such as printed ephemera. In particular this applies to timetables, photographs, publicity material, posters and maps.
- c) Where the existence of multiple examples of the same type of object enhances their historical value. For example, the Trust holds a rack of tickets of the same denomination.

Wherever practicable, duplicates should be stored at a separate location to minimise risk of loss.

At the time of preparing this revision, the Trust is entering details of its considerable holding of ephemera, all of which has been accessioned either as individual items or as part of a group accession, onto a computer system. This has revealed a significant number of instances of multiple copies beyond those required to meet the duplication requirements above and of Section 11. In such cases, subject to approval by the Trustees, the surplus items may be disposed of in order to generate funds to assist in meeting the Trust's objects.

6.4 Models

Models are of value in that they can convey an impression of events, processes and locations more vividly than other media. They allow for a broader range of large objects than might otherwise be possible and in some cases act as a three-dimensional "summary" of original research. Models will be collected where they convey a good attempt at recreating an appropriate transport scene using materials contemporarily available. Accuracy is difficult to define, especially where prototypes and drawings do not exist, but for the purposes of this Policy, models are required to be the best possible representation of the original, taking into account the quality of information and the constraints of scale.

7 Vehicles

This section covers policy towards buses, coaches and commercial road vehicles of which the Trust will aim to build and maintain a representative collection. Vehicles will not be collected on account of age, scope for operation or where the significance primarily relates to components which can be preserved separately.

7.1 Opportunities

The Trustees are familiar with various sources and possibilities include historical vehicles owned by various private individuals, bus, coach and commercial vehicle operators and also those in other museums from which a period of loan could be arranged. Some types of vehicle may still be in regular daily use but could be earmarked as possible future candidates if they meet the Trust's collecting criteria.

7.2 Passenger carrying vehicles

Vehicles in this category will form the greater part of the Collection and should be chosen to ensure that they contribute to the overall balance and historical significance of the Collection or illustrate an important aspect of design and development. The Trustees shall be very conscious of the selection of vehicles held and will ensure the greatest justification is made for vehicles which, externally, appear to be similar but on closer inspection do actually provide examples of important development.

7.3 Commercial vehicles

Vehicles in this category will form the lesser part of the Collection. However, they will demonstrate the development of the commercial vehicle, and particularly its application in the West Country.

7.4 Vehicle components

This category includes any part of a vehicle which, in normal circumstances, is permanently fixed to that vehicle when in operational use. The majority of components in the Trust's care are held as spares for working vehicles. In general only those which have a primary function will be accessioned. This will apply to components which may be from vehicles that could, but not necessarily are, in the Collection eg. a wooden slatted seat from a wartime bus.

8 Equipment and Fittings

This section covers non-vehicular three-dimensional material which includes items from the fixed infrastructure of the transport system, machinery and tools used in vehicle operation, maintenance, architectural material and staff equipment.

8.1 Opportunities

This area stimulates a lot of interest in that it illustrates the functions of operating rather than the "platform" itself. The Trust will obtain items of personnel clothing, uniforms, badges, ticket issuing machinery, insignias and various items of street furniture.

8.2 Street furniture

The Trust will attempt to collect items such as bus stops and shelters, tramway breaker boxes, sections of weigh bridge, overhead or conduit power supply and inspectors' kiosks. Also worthy of consideration will be enamel advertisement signs, sign posts, benches, bins, etc each being evocative of the transport scene.

8.3 Staff equipment

The Trust will collect representative examples of working clothes, uniforms and badges, and any equipment used in the course of work. The Trust already holds several examples of uniforms and badges.

9 Relics

There is a small but significant range of three-dimensional artefacts that do not easily fit into other categories. A good example of this is a set of commemorative cutlery as might be presented to a long serving member of staff. The Trust will not collect exhaustively in this field but will consider items on their own merit.

10 Artwork

This section covers any original piece of fine or graphic art commissioned for the production of posters. It also includes two and three-dimensional works of art, commissioned or otherwise, and may include sculpture and photographs.

Items such as this are usually discovered in private hands so may only be obtainable by purchase. If this is the only means of securing a significantly important piece, then the Trustees will only do so providing the cost can be met within approved budgets or fund raising can achieve the asking price.

Some architectural fittings such as tiles are now regarded as art objects. Normally these will be collected under Equipment and Fittings (Section 8). Published posters produced from the artwork are classified as Ephemera (Section 11).

11 Ephemera

This section covers printed material such as posters, hand bills, special passes, headed note paper, invoices, headed correspondence and compliment slips. Due to the delicate nature of some printed material, the Trust will protect the originals by the best possible means and restrict handling as far as possible. If duplicate or triplicate copies can be obtained, then the Trustees shall endeavour to keep further examples under safe custody.

11.1 Opportunities

This area has much public appeal and serves to illustrate the many varied and colourful items of timetables, tickets, passes, advertisements, posters, booklets and examples of company stationery that unexpectedly become available. Unlike large exhibits, these items are quite often found in the possession of individuals who have held on to them for many years as a memento, but who would now consider making them available to the Trust.

11.2 Posters

The Trust holds examples of publicity posters and will seek to enlarge its collection when original examples come to light.

11.3 Public information maps

The Trust holds examples of bus and coach service route maps, either for booking office display or for timetables. It will seek to enlarge its collection when examples come to light.

11.4 Public information timetables

The Trust holds fairly long runs of timetables for many bus and coach operators in the West Country. It will encourage the acquisition of further timetable literature to fill gaps in the existing runs or to enlarge the Collection with timetables from other operators not already represented.

11.5 Tickets and passes

The Trust holds a fairly extensive collection of bus and coach tickets and passes and will attempt to collect a representative coverage of the styles used over the years.

11.6 Printed books

The Trust library holds a quantity of published books and magazines that have particular reference to public service vehicles and road haulage in the West Country. It also carries a fairly complete run of house magazines for the larger public transport operators and will strive to add further copies to fill gaps or have back-ups in store.

11.7 General publicity and other miscellaneous material

The Trust holds a range of items such as publicity photographs, photographs of accident damage, special announcement leaflets etc which are difficult to categorise. The Trust may enlarge its collection of any typically non-de-script material where it has made a valid contribution to the operations as a whole.

12 Archives

This section covers Trust policy towards the collection of archival material which includes administrative records of any transport company which operated wholly or partly within the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset. The Trustees hold a large amount of original material which is being catalogued and indexed for study purposes. Strenuous efforts will be made to protect the original documentation by embarking on a programme of microfiche or digitally recorded images.

12.1 Opportunities

Items cover legal documents, company files, records, extracts of company minutes, timetables, official forms and stationery, photographs, film and video footage, books, notices, vehicular and architectural drawings, extracts from newspapers and journals etc.

12.2 Drawings

The Trust holds a collection of engineering and architectural drawings and will seek to enlarge the scope of this source of reference.

12.3 Photographs

The Trust holds an extensive collection of photographs of personnel, buildings, vehicles, and associated fittings. It will encourage the expansion of the photographic library so that it provides a fully comprehensive illustrative record covering all aspects of bus, coach and commercial road transport in the West Country.

12.4 Audio and visual material

The Trust will collect audio recordings, film, video, CD and other optical or electronic media where the information is useful for research and reference or display. In the case of nitrate film stock, the Trust will retain a copy and transfer the original to the National Film Archive.

12.5 Oral history

The Trust will develop its own archive of oral history material which will require it to take a more proactive “field collecting” role. In this instance there will be an equal emphasis on both the history of the operators within the region and the regional social history framework.

12.6 Internal publications

The Trust will hold a small collection of internal correspondence and booklets, such as the company rule book, driver instruction book and trades union conditions of service etc. which were issued to staff for operational and administrative purposes. Few examples of this material survive. Efforts will be made to persuade West Country operators to deposit such material as it is superseded by revised material. The Trust will not collect exhaustively in this field but concentrate on material useful for research and reference.

13 Disposal Policy

There is a strong presumption against the disposal of material from the Trust’s Collection (Section 4) and that security and protection of the pre-existing collection shall take priority over subsequent acquisitions. It is recognised, however, that disposal may become necessary in the event of deterioration, accidental damage, or the discovery of accessioned items not appropriate to the Collection. The Trustees are also conscious that on occasion a disposal may become necessary in the light of a similar example becoming available in far better condition. For the purposes of this section “disposal” means first de-accessioning an item from the Collection followed by exchange, sale, gift and/or transfer to another institution or individual, or for destruction in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of use. Decisions to dispose of items will only be made with full consideration and not with the aim of generating funds.

13.1 Procedure

The disposal of any object or group of objects will require the specific approval of the Trustees who may additionally seek professional advice or secondary opinion in reaching their decision. Following this the Trustees will be free to dispose of any item of material. Significant items should be offered to other registered museums before being made more widely available. Where necessary to achieve this aim, the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material and of the basis on which transfer to another institution is

offered. A period of at least two months shall elapse for an expression of interest to be received.

Any money received from the disposal of items shall be applied for the benefit of the Trust.

13.2 Accidental loss or destruction

In the event of accidental loss or destruction of any item from the Collection, the matter will be reported to the Trustees and authority sought for the de-accessioning of the item.