Dorking Museum Collecting Guidance for volunteers and donors

Dorking Museum’s Collections Development Policy has been agreed by its trustees. The Policy sets out the Museum’s geographical area of collection and priorities for future collecting. Decisions on collecting are determined with reference to the Museum’s charitable remit to engage the public in the history the local area as defined in the Museum’s governing documents. Items may be acquired that enable the Museum to better fulfil that remit either through display (in permanent or temporary exhibitions, online or in its publications), through use by the family and educational teams, or through facilitating research or study.

Acceptance of items into the collections represents a long-term commitment to store, care for and catalogue them in suitable environmental conditions. The Museum has limited resources of space, money and volunteer time and items that do not enable us to better fulfil our remit will not be accepted into the collections. Allocating storage space, time and/or financial resources on the storage, cataloguing and conservation of items that will never be displayed, used for educational purposes or which are never likely to be studied is not an effective use of charitable resources. So the Museum team must be selective in terms of what is accepted into the collections.

These notes have been put together to give guidance to the curatorial team and potential donors as to what the Museum is seeking to acquire and what it is unable to accept.

**The Museum will consider accepting items into the archive, artefact and painting collections** that relate to the history of the town and surrounding hills and villages, including (but not limited to) the development of the town/villages and their architecture, local industry and agriculture, local institutions (civic organisations, churches, leisure clubs and societies), local events and the impact of wider events on the area, and persons of significance who have lived and worked in the area.

The Museum is interested in acquiring paintings, drawings and photographs of the locality, its landscape and built environment, events and people, as well as art works by artists of note working or living in the area.

**The Museum will generally not accept**:

* Items that fall outside the Museum’s published geographical area, (including international, national and regional newspapers);
* Items that duplicate material already in the Museum’s collection;
* Items that are in poor condition and which would require significant investment to restore;
* Items that require environmental conditions that the Museum is unable to provide;
* Large items or collections that are beyond the capacity of the Museum to display, catalogue, care for, store and/or make available to the public;
* Items that are of a social-history nature which have no specific local relevance. This includes household and domestic items of a generic nature that have been used in the town/owned by someone in the town but not produced locally and which have no other connection to the town/villages than that they were in use here;
* Items of a personal nature which do not otherwise relate to the history of the town and villages, such as clothing and jewellery, personal photographs, coin or stamp collections, scrapbooks, identity cards, ration cards and licences, educational or professional certificates, inscribed books, royal, event or holiday souvenirs, tools and records of employment or involvement with organisations based outside the town and villages. Exceptions may be made for personal items relating to persons of national or regional significance with a strong local connection;
* Paintings that do not depict the landscape, built environment, life or people of the area, unless by an artist of note who lived and/or worked in the area.

**In addition to items falling into the categories above, the archives will generally not accept:**

* Secondary sources and publications from recognised mainstream publishers. (Published articles from magazines and journals that can be digitized may be accepted, as may publications from small, independent publishers which are not likely to be found in other library collections, publications of societies with small memberships or items with a limited circulation that may not easily be found elsewhere);
* Copies of original sources obtained from other libraries or archive collections;
* Local newspapers – in part or whole - which present conservation difficulties and which are generally available in digital format.

All items that are offered to the Museum are carefully considered and discretion is used in the interpretation of these guidelines to ensure that all items entering the collections can be properly cared for and will contribute to the Museum’s ability to deliver on its charitable remit.