

## **Loughborough Carillon Tower & War Memorial Museum**

### **Documentation Policy**

Dated September 2020

#### **Purpose of this policy**

1. This policy outlines the museum's approach to the documentation of collections. Through this policy the museum acknowledges that maintaining high standards of documentation are critical to the running of an effective museum.

#### **Aims and Objectives**

2. The aim of this Policy is to ensure that we fulfill our guardianship, stewardship and access responsibilities. Through implementation of this policy, our objective is to:
  - Improve accountability for the collections
  - maintain at least minimum professional standards in documentation procedures and collection information and attain the very highest standards wherever possible
  - Extend access to collection information
  - Strengthen the security of the collections

#### **Accountability**

3. The museum will follow the accountability principles defined by the Museums and Galleries Commission;

*"to enable museums to fulfill their fundamental responsibilities for collections and the information associated with them. The principles are that a museum should know at any time exactly for what it is legally responsible (this includes loans as well as permanent collections), and where each item is located."* (MGC 1993)

#### **Level of documentation**

4. The museum is committed to record significant information about the objects in our care so that each object we are legally responsible for (including loans as well as long term collections) can be identified and located.
5. For the majority of our collections, curatorial staff will document to individual item level. However, for certain collections, for example quantities of ammunition, it is neither feasible nor practical to document the material in this detail, and we will document items at group level. We therefore aim to have a basic 'inventory' record for all identified items and groups within the collection; whilst some items will be documented to a more detailed 'catalogue' level.
6. We will document our collections to either Inventory or Catalogue level, as described below:

- Inventory level: This includes sufficient key information to allow any object(s) in our care to be individually identified and verified. All accessioned items, loans inward and outward, and any other un-accessioned objects as appropriate are documented at this level.
- Catalogue level: We will identify the collections/objects that merit further, more detailed, documentation, thus raising the standard of information to catalogue level. Such documentation will include the known history of an artifact, and references to any relevant publication etc.

### **Computerised records**

7. The collection is computerised using the 'Modes Compact' programme. In order to ensure that our current electronic system does not become obsolete, the museum will remain informed of technological advances and ensure the long-term accessibility of the information held. This is achieved by paying an annual registration fee to Modes.

### **Controlled Access to Sensitive Information**

8. We will review requests for confidential data such as donor information, environmental information, valuations or site details on a case by case basis, and in accordance with the applicable legislation and any legal agreements or conditions of gift. Donor information will not be accessible by the public on the online copy of the catalogue

### **Security Against Loss of Irreplaceable Collection Information**

9. We have in place measures to ensure the physical security and long-term preservation of all documentation records, whether paper or computerised. We will update all manual and computerised records as appropriate. Regular backups will be made to secure digital data. Where collection information is wholly computerised and managed centrally, we will make backup copies of all key files.
10. All primary documentation will be held securely at the museum and backup copies of all necessary documents will be made to comply with the Accreditation standard. All computerised records will be regularly backed up and the backup copy held in a secure location at Charnwood Museum premises. Only authorised personnel will have access to the backups.

### **Long Term Preservation of Documentation**

11. Due regard will be given to the preservation of museum documentation and documentation will be held in appropriate conditions to ensure that it does not degrade. Wherever possible, documentation will be kept in fireproof cabinets or boxes.