

Designated Collections



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Introduction



The Designation Scheme exists to celebrate collections of outstanding resonance, that deepen our understanding of the world and what it means to be human.

The Arts Council is passionate about collections and their ability to impact upon and enrich our lives, and the Designation Scheme is an important and visible assertion of our belief in their enduring cultural value.

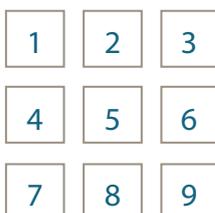
The Designated collections cover such diverse areas as political and ecclesiastical archives, art history, literature and theatre, economics, the history of transportation on land and on water, and the medical profession. They demonstrate eclectic tastes and intellectual journeys, the emergence of disciplines and theories and the careers of our famous figures. They bring art, science and industry together in stimulating ways. Our collections hold the key to who we are and they are an irreplaceable resource.

Designation is an enduring award and it is crucial to the Arts Council's mission to bring great art and culture to everyone. Designated collections are located in both rural and urban centres across the country, from Cornwall to Cumbria.

The Designation Scheme was introduced at the behest of government, and since 1997, has identified pre-eminent collections held in museums, libraries and archives across England. The founding aims were to raise the profile of these vital collections and encourage safeguarding of them. Designated collections benefit in numerous ways.

During 2013-15 the Designation Scheme was reviewed and in 2014 we published Pearls and wisdom, our vision for the future of the Scheme. The review reasserted the founding principles of national significance and quality as key attributes of a Designated collection.

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1. Crown. Photo: Kensington Royal Palace.
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The Canal and River Trust

The Canal Museum

The museum charts the fascinating story of the inland waterways of the British Isles, from the 18th century to the present day. The collection includes objects painted by boatmen in the traditional 'Roses and Castles' style, costumes worn by boating families, waterways souvenirs from the 1950s, a large collection of photographs and extensive archive material such as canal company share certificates. Splendidly located within a 19th century warehouse, in what was once a busy working dock, the museum houses many examples of sacks, pulleys and dockside tools. Located on the surrounding quayside are floating exhibits that include a Victorian narrow boat, a steam dredger and a concrete barge. All collections at the Canal Museum, the National Waterways Museum, and the Waterways Museum at Gloucester Docks are Designated.

Please note: this Designated collection is held on several sites; these sites also appear in the North West and South West lists.

Derby Museum and Art Gallery

The Joseph Wright of Derby collection

This collection, relating to the celebrated 18th century Derby artist Joseph Wright, Associate of the Royal Academy (1734-97), comprises 34 oil paintings and over 300 drawings and prints, original frames, personalia and related documents. The paintings include portraits, landscapes, subjects from literature and scenes of industry and scientific equipment that represent this exciting period of pioneering discovery. This is the largest collection of the artist's work in any public gallery in the world, public or private.

Joseph Wright has been acclaimed as 'the first professional painter to express the spirit of the Industrial Revolution'. His paintings of the birth of science out of alchemy, often based on the meetings of the Lunar Society, a group of very influential scientists and industrialists living in the English Midlands, are a significant record of the struggle of science against religious values in the period known as the Age of Enlightenment.

All of Wright's interests are represented in Derby's collection, ranging from scientific discovery and experimentation, industry and landscapes, through to literature, the classics and contemporary history.

Lincolnshire Archives

The Lincoln episcopal rolls and registers

The size of the pre-Reformation Diocese of Lincoln makes this a key archive for English history from the mid-13th century onwards, especially up to the Reformation in 1542. The collections are nationally important and reflect the international nature of pre-Reformation England.

The national significance of the collection particularly stems from the episcopal rolls of Bishop Hugh of Wells which are the earliest surviving examples of their kind, and they contain details relating to diocesan property, ordinations (up to 1820), inductions of clergy to benefices, changes to parishes, appointments of diocesan officials, memoranda, royal writs etc. Registers up to the 16th century also include copies of wills and other probate material.



Two early episcopal rolls.
Photo: Lincolnshire Archives.

National Tramway Museum

The entire holdings

Home to over 70 trams and a host of associated equipment, the museum has sought to acquire an example of each important stage in the evolution of the British tramcar, a vehicle that dramatically influenced the growth of towns and cities. Significant foreign tramcars are also included. Selected tramcars are operated in a period street setting, thus allowing trackwork and overhead fittings to be viewed by the public in context. This is complemented by 16,000 square feet of exhibitions.

The extensive library, archive, photographic and postcard collections, with material which ranges from company records and contemporary journals to personal items such as uniforms and papers, provides a source for the technical, social and economic history of urban transport world-wide.

Northampton Central Museum and Art Gallery

The boot and shoe collection

The boot and shoe collection held at Northampton's Central Museum and Art Gallery is one of the most extensive collections of its kind in the world. It includes everything from Roman and Medieval footwear to the work of contemporary designers and reflects the vital role of Northampton in the history of shoemaking. As well as footwear the collection includes: shoemaking tools and machines; accessories such as buckles, button hooks and polish; fine and decorative art depicting shoes and shoemaking, and documentary material including trade catalogues and journals, books, documents, and photographs. Associated indexes include an index of shoemakers and shoemaking firms, and an index of shoes which are concealed in buildings for luck.



Geta sandal, Japan, 1963.
Photo: Northampton Central
Museum and Art Gallery.

Nottingham City Museums and Galleries

The Lace Machinery and Lace Collections

These collections tell a distinctive story of the city's industrial and textile past, and explain how a domestic craft became an important mass market commodity. The lace industry was at the cutting edge of technology, one which moved production and people away from the home and countryside, and into factories in the new urban environment. In the process it made the town of Nottingham world famous as the centre of the trade. Whilst important both culturally and aesthetically, lace's primary significance lies in its being the first machine mass produced luxury goods. The development of the industry can be regarded as a key element in what can be called the 'democratization of taste' - permitting beautiful products of a consistent, repeatable quality to be created, making them inexpensive and available to all.

University of Nottingham

The Portland (London), Portland of Welbeck and Newcastle of Clumber

The archive collections of the Portland family comprise familial, estate, political and literary papers from the 12th to the 20th centuries. These collections relate to both the dukedoms for Newcastle upon Tyne and Newcastle under Lyme, and are of outstanding significance for the study of how these families influenced the political, literary and economic history of England.

The papers are particularly interesting for their breadth of content, which includes urban estates, minerals, port and railway developments, law suits, and both great wealth and great debt.

The D H Lawrence collection

This collection forms one of the major international research resources for the study of D H Lawrence (1885-1930) and is particularly strong in original material relating to his native Nottinghamshire. The collection clearly demonstrates the significant cultural impact of Lawrence on the latter half of 20th century, including that on the publishing industry, and demonstrates his status as a figure of both national and international importance.



Sculptures of Britten and Pears.
Photo: Britten-Pears Library.

The Britten-Pears Library

The entire holdings

The Britten-Pears Library is an outstanding music archive and library of national and international significance. It is centred on the papers of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, but its scope is much wider than these two individuals, providing a broad context for the development of 20th century music in the United Kingdom.

Britten was one of the foremost composers of the 20th century and developed a creative partnership with the tenor Peter Pears which both inspired Britten's music and led to the founding of the English Opera Group and the Aldeburgh Festival.

Colchester Castle Museum

The archaeology collections

Colchester Castle is an award-winning museum featuring many hands-on displays to help explain the townspeople's experience of Colchester's varying fortunes.

A visit to Colchester Castle Museum takes you through 2,000 years of the most important events in British History. Once the capital of Roman Britain, Colchester has experienced devastation by Boudica (Boadicea), invasion by the Normans and Siege during the English Civil War.

Colchester Museums were Designated in respect of their outstanding archaeology collections. Among the many objects to note are the famous Colchester Vase and the tombstone of the Roman Centurian Marcus Favonius Facilis. The extensive archaeology collections are of superb quality and reflect the central role played by Colchester at the start of Britain's recorded history.

Norfolk Record Office

All collections relating to the history of Norfolk

The Norfolk Record Office collects and preserves records of historical significance for the county of Norfolk and makes them accessible to as wide a range of people as possible. The Record Office's collections (circa 12.5 million documentary items) date from the 11th century to the present day, and are among the largest for any county record office in the UK. This reflects the exceptional wealth and population density of Norfolk in the middle ages, and its stability thereafter. Many individual collections are outstanding examples of their kind; together, they constitute an unrivalled source which underpins the study of almost every aspect of life in Norfolk during the last millennium.

Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery

The entire holdings

Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery reflects the importance of the city, one of England's richest and largest settlements from the Middle Ages to the 18th century. Some of the displays are in the magnificent Norman Keep, which was built as a royal castle, the most ambitious secular building of its generation in Western Europe.

The museum has comprehensive collections of the Norwich School of Artists, 18th century Lowestoft porcelain and a world-beating assemblage of nearly 3,000 British teapots. Prominent amongst the collections are birds and butterflies from around the world, and Britain's biggest, oldest and most complete fossil elephant. There is outstanding Bronze Age and Anglo-Saxon archaeology and much of the Snettisham Treasure, the largest collection of Iron Age gold neck rings from Europe.

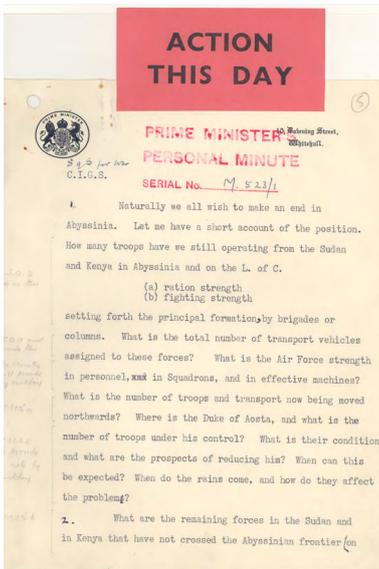
University of Cambridge, Churchill Archives Centre

The entire holdings

The Churchill Archives Centre was purpose-built in 1973 to house Sir Winston Churchill's Papers - some 3,000 boxes of letters and documents ranging from his first childhood letters, via his great war-time speeches, to the writings which earned him the Nobel Prize for Literature.

The Churchill Papers served as the inspiration and the starting point for a larger endeavour - the creation of a wide-ranging archive of the Churchill era and after, covering those fields of public life in which Sir Winston played a personal role or took a personal interest.

Today the collection comprises papers of other leading politicians, diplomats, civil servants, military commanders and scientists. They form an incomparable documentary treasure trove. A recent acquisition of major significance is the collection of Lady Thatcher's personal and political papers.



Archive material.
Photo: University of Cambridge
Churchill Archives Centre.

University of Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum

The entire holdings

The Fitzwilliam Museum has magnificent permanent collections of international importance, including antiquities from Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome; English and European pottery and glass; furniture, clocks, fans, armour, coins, medals, manuscripts and rare printed books; paintings, including masterpieces by Simone Martini, Titian, Van Dyck, Gainsborough, Constable, Monet and Picasso, portrait miniatures and 20th century art, and changing displays of drawings, watercolours and prints. Few museums in the world contain on a single site collections of such variety and depth.

The Museum was founded in 1816 by Richard, VII Viscount Fitzwilliam of Merrion who, in 1816, bequeathed his works of art and library, together with funds to house them, to the University of Cambridge to further "the Increase of Learning and other great Objects of that Noble Foundation". The collection is housed in splendid buildings, the first of which, designed by George Basevi opened in 1848.

University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

The entire holdings

This museum was founded in 1884 on the basis of two important collections: the Cambridge Antiquarian Society collection relating to British archaeology; and anthropological artefacts from the South Seas acquired by, among others, the museum's first curator, Baron Anatole von Hügel.

The collections now comprise approximately half a million archaeological items and over 150,000 ethnographic objects. Most have been acquired through Cambridge-based research and are exceptionally well documented. The strengths of the archaeological collections include their worldwide scope and the extensive Palaeolithic and Mesolithic material. Important anthropological collections include artefacts from Cook's first voyage to the Pacific in 1769 and artefacts and photographs from the 1898 Cambridge Expedition to the Torres Strait.



Madagascar Sunset Moth,
University of Cambridge Museum
of Zoology.
Photo: Russel Stebbings.©

University of Cambridge, Museum of Zoology

The entire holdings

The museum's collections date back to 1814, and draw many of the earlier specimens from the great collecting expeditions of the 19th century, including Charles Darwin's 'Beagle' voyage.

The collections, which rank amongst the finest in the world, represent all major animal groups and contain a high proportion of scientifically important material such as types and holotypes, particularly noteworthy insect and mollusc material, and fine examples of extinct fauna such as the Great Auk, Thylacine, fossil tetrapods and giant marine reptiles. They provide essential baseline data from which to assess the current distribution and status of global species, and comprise a unique record for use by public and academics alike.



Iguanodon.
Photo: University of Cambridge
Sedgwick Museum of Geology.

University of Cambridge, Sedgwick Museum of Geology

The entire holdings

With a collection of more than 1.3 million specimens, this museum has grown from the 1728 bequest of the collection of Dr John Woodward.

One of the earliest and most complete geological collections and housed in its original 17th century cabinets, this remains a highlight of the museum. The museum now holds highly significant palaeontological, petrological and mineral material, much of it collected under the aegis of Professor Adam Sedgwick, who was elected Woodwardian Chair of Geology in 1818. His own work, and his close links with major scientists and fossil collectors of his time, including Charles Darwin and Mary Anning, contributed enormously to the development of the museum.



University of Cambridge, St John's College

The Old Library collection

The Old Library dates back to 1624 and houses St John's College's magnificent and nationally recognised research collections. These collections are consulted by scholars from all over the world. The upper, original part of the Old Library is still very much as it was in the 17th century.

The collection covers books, manuscripts (Medieval, post-Medieval, Oriental and papyrus), personal papers, maps, photographs, artefacts, and early and rare printed books. The Library also houses a cohesive and meaningful collection of college alumni papers. Miscellanea held at the Library includes an astronomical clock by John Shelton, a 14th century French ivory plaque depicting the crucifixion, an Egyptian scarab ring, a set of silver oriental bowls, busts of William Wordsworth and Thomas Gisborne, Samuel Butler's sheep-brand, and Sir Fred Hoyle's telescope and ice axes.

University of Cambridge, Whipple Museum of the History of Science

The entire holdings

The Designated collections of this museum play a central role in the teaching and research of the Department of the History and Philosophy of Science.

Visitors can see a variety of displays created by staff and students. Microscopes and telescopes, sundials, early slide rules, pocket electronic calculators, teaching and demonstration apparatus, scientific toys, and laboratory equipment are included in the collections. The holdings represent diverse but inter-related scientific and cultural activities over a broad span of time.

The Whipple Museum supports and encourages a wide range of people in the study of the history of science in its material and cultural contexts, including school children and enthusiasts, historians, philosophers and practising scientists.

London



The Baring Archive

The entire holdings

The Baring Archive is one of the finest archives of a financial institution anywhere in the world and is a vital resource for England's economic and business history. The archive contains material from the establishment in 1762 of the London merchant house of John & Francis Baring & Co, later known as Baring Brothers, right through to the firm's acquisition by ING in 1995. The firm's business was international from the outset of the company, with clients based in all the major international trading centres. Correspondence received from overseas agents and stored in the archive provides graphic accounts of the economy, politics and society of innumerable countries.

The British Postal Museum and Archive

The Royal Mail Archive

The Post Office (now Royal Mail Group Limited) is a public business which has affected countless everyday lives for nearly 400 years and helped to shape the modern world. The British Postal Museum & Archive illuminates the lives of people in the Post Office, and the messages carried by Royal Mail. All aspects of the organisation's unique history, from employment records to stamp artwork, are held within The Royal Mail Archive, one of the oldest business archives in the world.

The Designated collection includes employment records and staff magazines, business records, Postmaster General's papers, wartime history records and original stamp artwork. The collection is outstanding in terms of its evidential, historical and cultural value, and represents comprehensive and complete coverage of the role the Post Office has played in employment history, overseas expansion, communications and community cohesion.



Proposed coronation stamp of Edward VIII, never issued, 1936. Photo: British Postal Museum and Archive.

BT Heritage

BT Archives

BT Archives documents the leading role that BT and its predecessors have played in communications technology development; the provision of communications services around the country and across the globe; their profound influence on society; and their impact on improving people's lives.

The collections include the records of BT itself (including photographs and film), records of the Post Office telecommunications function, and archives of the private telephone and telegraph companies taken over by the Post Office in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The collections document the development of the UK communications infrastructure and services to overseas from its earliest days, as well as major milestones such as the development of transatlantic communications from the earliest telegraph service to satellites and fibre optic cables.



Archive material. Photo: BT Archives.

London



City of London Corporation

The History of London collection

This is a unique collection of material on the history of London and its influence over the rest of the country and beyond. Managed by the City of London Corporation, it is based at Guildhall Library in the City of London and London Metropolitan Archives in Clerkenwell.

Guildhall Library is a public reference library specialising in the history of London. The Library's printed book collection comprises over 200,000 titles dating from the 15th to the 21st century. The collection includes books, pamphlets, periodicals, trade directories and poll books, covering all aspects of life in London. Extensive special collections cover specific subject areas such as maritime and business history, ecclesiastical and civic government.

London Metropolitan Archives is the largest local government archive repository in the United Kingdom. With records on parchment through paper to electronic records including images, maps and films for the Greater London area and the City of London dating from the 11th century to the present.

Courtauld Institute Gallery

The entire holdings

All the Courtauld Gallery's collections are Designated and are characterised by quality, richness and variety within the broad field of western fine and applied arts from circa 1300 to the present day. The collections of European paintings include examples of the work of many of the great masters, with the work of Rubens and Tiepolo being represented in depth.

The collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, assembled by Samuel Courtauld, is especially famous, as are the drawing collections of Robert Witt and Antoine Seilern. The provenance of many of the Gallery's objects is fascinating: the Rubens 'Landscape by Moonlight' formerly belonged to Joshua Reynolds and before that possibly to James Boswell; Gauguin's 'Nevermore' was purchased by Frederick Delius soon after it was painted.

Dulwich Picture Gallery

The entire holdings

The paintings in this collection are housed in England's first purpose-built art gallery, designed by Sir John Soane in 1811. The remarkable story of the Gallery's foundation adds another dimension to its special charm. The collection was put together by two art dealers, Noel Desenfans and Sir Francis Bourgeois, for the King of Poland.

When the king was forced to abdicate in 1795 it was left in their hands and subsequently bequeathed to Dulwich College 'for the inspection of the public'. In this way England's first public art gallery was founded. The founders are still buried on site in the mausoleum and the collection is still here to enjoy.

The collection is unmatched for a gallery of this size: three Rembrandts, seven Poussins, 11 Rubenses, seven Gainsboroughs, four Murillos, two Claudes, two Canalettos and a Watteau.



Girl at a Window by Rembrandt.
Photo: Dulwich Picture Gallery.

London



English Folk Dance and Song Society

The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library

The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library is the library and archive of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Established in 1930 with the opening of Cecil Sharp House in London, it is now a multi-media archive which is claimed to be England's national collection for the folk arts. Of particular significance are its paper archives, containing major collections from the 'Golden Age' of fieldwork in the years leading up to the First World War. These include the papers of Lucy Broadwood, George Butterworth, Anne Geddes Gilchrist, Maud Karpeles, Mary Neal, George Gardiner and Henry Hammond, plus additional papers of Cecil Sharp, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Percy Grainger. The Library also holds a significant audio-visual collection (including phonograph recordings dating back to 1909 and Kinora films of the same vintage), an estimated 20,000 photographic images and printed literature dating from 1600 to the present day.

Horniman Museum and Gardens

The musical instruments collections and ethnographic collections

The ethnographic and musical instrument holdings rank among the two or three largest collections of their type in the UK. The ethnographic collections, numbering some 80,000 items, contain substantial material from all five continents, including important folk art from all over Europe, nearly 17,000 objects from Africa, and 30,000 from Asia. The musical instrument collections, amounting to some 8,000 artefacts from cultures all over the world and all periods of history, is probably the most comprehensive in the country.

In the last 40 years, the museum acquired much of its holdings from field research targeted at areas not well represented in other UK collections. The museum has a programme of temporary exhibitions, education and loans to ensure that knowledge about its collections is readily available to the widest possible audience.



Photograph of the engineering staff on the Severn Railway Bridge, by George Keeling, 1870s. Photo: Institution of Civil Engineers.

The Institution of Civil Engineers

The library, archive, and works of art

The Institution of Civil Engineers' library is recognised as the first civil engineering library in the UK. It offers unrivalled subject coverage of: structures, soil and rock mechanics; engineering materials; irrigation, drainage, water and wastewater systems; transport engineering in all forms; urban and rural planning; as well as management, power, energy, health and safety, and contract administration and law. The library holds over 130,000 titles and is one of the largest specialist resources on civil engineering in the world.

Institution of Engineering and Technology

The entire holdings

The Institute of Engineering and Technology Library is a world-class collection of digital and printed resources on all areas of engineering and technology. It specialises in electrical, electronic, control and manufacturing engineering, telecommunications, computing and IT. The archive has collected and preserved the Institute's records since its foundation in 1871, and also holds collections related to the history of science, engineering and technology since the 14th century. It holds a range of media covering manuscripts, printed materials, films, photographs, technical drawings, maps, and plans.

The highlights of the collections include the papers of Michael Faraday, Sir Francis Ronalds and Oliver Heaviside. There is also a large corporate archive recording the activities of a number of engineering businesses since the early 19th century and the archive of the Women's Engineering Society.

Jewish Museum

The Ritual Judaica collection

The collections held by The Jewish Museum are unique in the UK for their rich representation of items of Judaica, in particular with an English provenance. The collections of the museum as a whole are of a high quality, but there are some particularly rare items within the Designated collection of Jewish ceremonial art, which is considered among the finest in the world. Highlights include a 16th century Venetian synagogue ark and magnificent silver Torah ornaments from the Great Synagogue in Duke's Place, City of London, destroyed during the Blitz.

In addition, the museum has an outstanding collection of synagogue textiles, metalwork and illuminated manuscripts reflecting Jewish religious life and practice, and tells the story of Jewish history in Britain from the Norman Conquest until recent times.

Kensington Royal Palace

Royal ceremonial dress collection

Through its 12,000 items, the Royal ceremonial dress collection tells the story of British monarchy. It falls into three main parts: clothes worn by members of the royal family from the 17th century to today; uniforms worn by people performing official roles in British court ritual; and fashionable dress worn by the people who attended court functions at the royal palaces from circa 1700-1958. The collection also emphasises the role of the trades-people who made the costumes.

The collection: acts as an outward manifestation of the significance of royalty and governing institutions in Europe; gives insights into important events in the nation's history; and helps to explain the complex hierarchy of courtly life.

The collection includes the UK's most extensive grouping of men's court uniform, the best British collection of court mantuas (enormous dresses which were the 'uniform' of the Georgian court), and the intimate items worn by some of Britain's most charismatic royals: George III, Queen Victoria, Queen Elizabeth II and Diana, Princess of Wales.

London



King's College London

Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives

Founded in 1964 the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives is a leading repository for research into modern defence policy in Britain - its strategy, planning, and conduct. The archives contain the papers of over 700 of the 20th century's senior defence personnel, authors and commentators, and cover all wars, campaigns and peacekeeping initiatives in which British forces were engaged.

The collections comprise many types of material: diaries, correspondence, working papers and files, texts of lectures, unpublished memoirs, audio and video tapes of events and recollections, transcripts of interviews, photographs, maps and plans, and press cuttings. The archive is of national and international significance to the study of the First and Second World Wars.

Lambeth Palace Library

The entire holdings

Lambeth Palace Library is the historic library and record office of the Archbishops of Canterbury. As such it holds the manuscripts and printed books of the archiepiscopal collections and is the principal repository of the documentary history of the Church of England. Its collections have been freely available for research since 1610.

The records held date from the ninth century to the present day, and their broad scope reflects the office of Archbishop as head of the province of Canterbury and leader of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion worldwide. They also show the wealth and power of Archbishops in previous centuries which enabled them to collect books and manuscripts of the highest quality and significance.

The collection is of national and international importance to the understanding of organised religion and the influence of the Church of England on the life of the nation.

The Library and Museum of Freemasonry

Freemasons Hall

These collections illustrate the international, social and ethnic diversity of the Freemasons' membership, including royalty, public figures, scientists and writers. The museum contains an extensive collection of objects with Masonic decoration including: pottery and porcelain; glassware; silver; furniture and clocks; jewels; and regalia. Items belonging to famous and Royal Freemasons including Winston Churchill and Edward VII are on display, together with examples from the museum's extensive collection of prints and engravings, photographs and ephemera.

The library and archives contain a comprehensive collection of printed books and manuscripts on Freemasonry throughout the world, as well as subjects associated with Freemasonry or with mystical and esoteric traditions.



The Gutenberg Bible.
Photo: Lambeth Palace Library.



Papier-mache snuff box,
1846, Library and Museum of
Freemasonry.
Photo: Painton Cowen.

Linnean Society of London

The entirety of the Linnean Society's library, archive and biological specimen collections

The Linnean Society Collections comprise a world renowned library (in all languages, with especially strong collections of eighteenth and nineteenth century titles) and collections of plant and animal specimens, books, letters, portraits and art including items collected by some of history's most famous scientists, such as Carl Linnaeus, Sir James Edward Smith, Alfred Russel Wallace, Charles Darwin and Sir Joseph Banks. The Linnean Society of London was set up in 1788 by James Edward Smith, one of the most pre-eminent British botanists of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Smith acquired and brought to the UK the personal collections of the great Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus, who created the binomial system (genus & species) of biological classification (now used throughout the world). Linnaeus is acknowledged as the father of classification and thus modern natural history and is referred to as "the prince of botanists".

The Linnaean Collections comprise biological specimens (14,000 plants, 3,198 insects, 158 fish and 1,564 shells, including the first ever cultured pearls) together with the personal Library of Linnaeus (some 1,600 volumes which he used as reference material, many of them given to him by fellow naturalists and admirers all over the world), his letters and manuscripts, and those of his son. The significance of the Linnaean Collections lies in the fact that they contain many "type" specimens and as such are a vital reference for modern-day science and scientists, especially taxonomists and systematists. The Society has been at the heart of many scientific and cultural developments relating to our understanding of the natural world: most notably, Charles Darwin's and Alfred Russel Wallace's epoch-making papers on the theory of evolution by natural selection were first read at a meeting of the Society.

London School of Economics and Political Science

The British Library of Political and Economic Science and the Women's Library @ LSE

The library collects social sciences material in the widest sense, with subject matter including economics, statistics, political science and public administration. The library's archive collections offer unique primary source material of outstanding value for research into British political, economic and social history, social anthropology (mainly post-1890) and the history of philosophy.

Individual collections include government publications, political caricatures, campaign flyers, posters, books and journals. The collection of 90,000 pamphlets covers areas of political, economic, social and international history, and public affairs. Areas of particular strength include transport history, housing, the Welfare State, and the Poor Laws.

The Women's Library @ LSE documents all aspects of women's lives, with a particular emphasis on the great political, economic and social changes since the mid-19th century. The collection covers a variety of topics, such as women's rights, suffrage, sexuality, health, education, employment, the family and the home, and tell the history of activism from the campaigner's perspective. Unrivalled in scope, the print collection includes over 60,000 books and pamphlets and 3,000 periodical titles. The archive and museum collection includes over 500 archives and 5,000 museum objects including photographs, posters, badges, banners, textiles and ceramics.

London



A view of the Museum.
Photo: London Transport Museum.

London Transport Museum

The entire holdings

This museum's wide-ranging collections, including vehicles, posters, uniforms, photographs, film, architectural fragments, engineering drawings and oral testimonies are all Designated. The wealth of material is used to chart the development of the first public transport system in a major city. Of special significance among the vehicle collection is a locomotive and carriage from the City and South London Railway of 1890, the first underground electric railway in the world. The reserve collections are now accessible to the public at the Depot, the museum's open-access store, whilst more information about the collections continues to be made available through the museum's website and electronic databases.

Middlesex University, Museum of Design and Domestic Architecture

The Silver Studio collection

The Silver Studio collection is the archive of one of Britain's leading commercial design studios active between 1880 and 1963. The collection contains over 40,000 original designs on paper, 5,000 wallpaper samples, 5,000 textile samples, pattern books, and the studio's working records (including letters, diaries, reference material and trade cards).

The Silver Studio was always responsive to the fashions and tastes of the moment, designing in all the major styles such as the flat stylised Art Nouveau of the late 19th century, as well as perennially popular traditional and historical styles. Its work provides a vivid insight into pattern design in the English home between 1880 and 1960.

The comprehensiveness of the Silver Studio collection makes it relevant both nationally and internationally for research covering subjects as broad as business and labour history, consumption of domestic furnishing, marketing and the history of studio practice.

Museum of London and Museum of London Docklands

The entire holdings

The Museum of London charts the history of the capital and its people from the prehistoric period to the present day. Its galleries and exhibitions make sensitive use of both traditional and modern interactive techniques, and the museum has long been committed to educational and outreach services.

The extensive collections contain highly significant ranges of archaeological material from London, and include the London Archaeological Archive of finds and records from over 25 years of excavations.

Social and working history collections; costume and decorative arts; and paintings, pictures and photographs illustrate London's development since 1700, and the museum's contemporary collecting policy seeks to reflect the ever-changing pattern of life in London.



Marble head of Mithras.
Photo: Museum of London.

London



A Mermaid by John Hammond, oil on canvas.
Photo: Royal Academy of Arts.

Royal Academy of Arts

The collections, library and archive

The Royal Academy is a highly important part of British national cultural history, holding rich and varied collections which include many spectacular items. The collections, library and archive reflect the Royal Academy's membership and its pedagogic role, encompassing a broad range of subject matter which reflects the prime identifiers of British Art since the mid-18th century: historical and mythological subjects; genre scenes; images of work and industry; landscapes; flora and fauna, and abstract works.

Religious subjects are represented both in works by British artists and in full scale, historical copies after the Old Masters. Illustrations of literary texts are extensively represented in paintings, prints, drawings and in the Special Illustrated Books Collection; notable examples include Flaxman's illustrations to Homer and Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery. These holdings provide a complete and coherent record of the Royal Academy as well as wider institutional art which is relevant to the study of any aspect of British art within the Academy's history.

Royal Academy of Music

The special collections and archives of the Royal Academy of Music library

The library's historical collections make it a recognised centre for academic research. The collection contains early printed and manuscript music and books dating from the 16th century to the present day. This is a rich collection of pedagogical, institutional and social history dating back to the foundation of Britain's earliest musical college in the 1820s. Any study of the history of music pedagogy in Britain, especially in the last two centuries, would be incomplete without reference to this archive.

The library has over 125,000 items, including significant collections of early printed and manuscript materials. It also houses a Sir Arthur Sullivan archive, a Sir Henry Wood archive and the Robert Spencer collection of early English song and music for lute and guitar. Among the library's most valuable possessions are the manuscripts of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, Sullivan's *The Mikado*, Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* and *Serenade to Music*, and the newly-discovered Handel *Gloria*.

Royal College of Surgeons of England

The Hunterian Museum Collection, Library and Archive

At the heart of the Hunterian Museum is an astonishing 18th century medical collection. It is the legacy of the anatomist and surgeon John Hunter FRS (1728-1793), who built up an extensive museum which he used for teaching and for research on topics as diverse as the transplantation of teeth and the breeding of bees.

The collection reflects Hunter's wide-ranging network of correspondents, students and patrons - including Joseph Banks, Edward Jenner and Queen Charlotte - and contains paintings by artists such as George Stubbs and Benjamin West. After Hunter's death his collection was given to The Royal College of Surgeons, where over 3,500 Hunterian preparations are still displayed alongside many more gathered over the course of the last two centuries.



Crocodile and egg.
Photo: Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons.

Royal Geographical Society (with Institute of British Geographers)

All geographical collections

The Geographical Society of London was founded in 1830 as an institution to promote the advancement of geographical science. Under the patronage of King William IV, it later became known as The Royal Geographical Society and was granted its Royal Charter under Queen Victoria in 1859. In 1912, the society moved to its current location, Lowther Lodge. The society's purpose remains the same today as when it was first founded, namely the 'advancement of geographical science'. It enshrines such famous names as Livingstone, Stanley, Scott, Shackleton, Hunt and Hillary.

The Designated collection includes cartographic material, the picture library, the library material, the archives, and artefacts. These collections are essential for the study of the history of exploration, discovery, mountaineering and modern geography. They also offer a unique access point to the understanding of cultural exchange and encounter around the world.

Royal Horticultural Society

Lindley Library

The Lindley Library is the world's finest horticultural library, with books, journals, pictures and a unique collection of botanical art relating to the British Isles and beyond. The collection covers a wide array of subjects such as horticulture, practical gardening, garden history, garden plants and design from 1514 to the present day.

A significant collection of nursery catalogues, postcards, garden guides and ephemera provides a unique insight into the social history of gardening, and an important part of our nation's cultural heritage. The collection of horticultural trade catalogues conveys much about plant history and gardening trends. These collections are important historical records and are of use to historians and researchers, and vital to the Society's botanists.

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

The British Architecture Library

The RIBA British Architectural collection is the largest and most comprehensive resource in the UK for research and information on all aspects of architecture, and is one of the finest collections of architectural material in the world.

The library was established in 1834 as part of the newly-founded Royal Institute of British Architects. The collections are extensive, and comprise the Sir Banister Fletcher Library of books and periodicals, drawings, archives and photographs.

A wide spectrum of international subjects is represented, ranging from prehistory to the present. In addition to architectural theory, practice and history, there is material on associated subjects such as building and construction, civil engineering, structural engineering, landscape architecture, interior design and decoration, the decorative arts, town and country planning, and construction law.

London



Sir John Soane's Museum

The entire holdings

The house, museum and library of the celebrated architect Sir John Soane (1753-1837) at No. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields in London has been a public museum since the early 19th century.

Soane acquired, demolished and rebuilt three houses in Lincoln's Inn Fields between 1792 and 1837 to house his extensive collections. These include antiquities, paintings (by Canaletto, Hogarth, Turner and many early 19th century artists), furniture, architectural fragments, casts, architectural drawings, models, and much else, arranged in an 'inspirational' way in Soane's picturesque and 'poetic' interiors. All the collections of the Museum are Designated as, together with the house itself, they constitute a unique surviving example of an early private house museum.

University College London, Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology

The entire holdings

The Petrie Museum's collection - numbering over 80,000 objects - covers the full range of Egypt's complex history from Palaeolithic to Islamic times, and includes artefacts from all types of archaeological sites in Egypt. It is largely based on the artefact collections gathered by the pioneering archaeologist Sir Flinders Petrie on his many excavations, and includes his own detailed documentation.

Spectacular decorative objects - including pottery, mosaics and superb funerary portraits, are complemented by a comprehensive collection of everyday objects, from tools and weapons to weights and measures, and from garments to cooking vessels. Collections of geological, botanical, zoological and some mummified human material help to give a complete picture of the ancient Egyptian world.

Wellcome Trust

The Wellcome Library

The Wellcome Library is founded on the collections formed by Henry Solomon Wellcome (1853-1936), whose personal wealth, gained through the pharmaceutical company that he developed and owned, allowed him to spend the last four decades of his life indulging one of the most ambitious collecting visions of the 20th century. Wellcome's primary collecting interest was the history of medicine, but he interpreted this subject in an extremely broad manner, including not only ancillary subjects like alchemy and witchcraft, but also anthropology and ethnography.

Through its collections and services, the Wellcome Library provides insight and information to anyone seeking to understand medicine and its role in society, past and present. The library's collections include over 750,000 books and journals, an extensive range of manuscripts, archives, films, and more than 250,000 pictures. The collections are outstanding as a historical, evidential and cultural resource of national and international importance in the field of the history of medicine.



Illustration from *Histoires Prodigieuses*, showing 'monstrous' female twins, 1559.
Photo: Wellcome Trust.

Westminster Libraries and Archives

The Art and Design collection

The Art and Design collection at Westminster Libraries and Archives was Designated because of its centrality to the study of the decorative and fine arts both nationally and internationally.

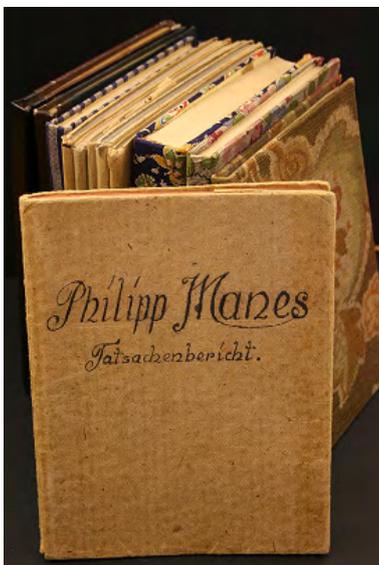
The collection consists of over 40,000 volumes, covering painting, drawing, antiques, installations, fashion, furniture, architecture, ceramics, sculpture, textiles, jewellery, graphics, gardens, and interiors. It also houses a wide range of art magazines including cutting edge titles such as Wallpaper, Flash Art, I-D, Artforum and Blueprint as well as long backfiles of Apollo, Burlington, Country Life and Vogue.

Wiener Library

The Entire Holdings

The Wiener Library is the world's oldest Holocaust archive and Britain's largest collection on the Nazi era, the causes, and legacies of the Holocaust. The collection, which started in 1933, contains approximately 70,000 books and pamphlets, 2,000 physical document collections, 45,000 photographs, 3,000 periodical titles, 1 million press cuttings, as well as posters, objects, artworks, digital collections, and audio visual materials. It represents the largest collection on this subject in the United Kingdom. The Wiener Library's collection includes over 400 titles of original Nazi works used to indoctrinate children in the Third Reich with Nazi ideology alongside the Library's most infamous object, the anti-Semitic 1930s board game for children, Juden Raus! (Jews Out!).

The Library is a crucial resource for understanding the wider consequences of the Holocaust. In December 2011, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office deposited the UK's digital copy of the International Tracing Service Archive at The Wiener Library. This unique archive contains over 30 million pages of Holocaust-era documents relating to the fates of over 17.5 million people who were subject to incarceration, forced labour and displacement during and after World War II. In 2011 the Wiener Library moved to Russell Square, ahead of its 80th anniversary year in 2013.



Notebooks by Philipp Manes which offer a comprehensive account of daily life in Theresienstadt, 1942-1944.

Photo: Wiener Library.

William Morris Gallery

William Morris and Morris & Co. collection

The William Morris Gallery collection comprises over 10,000 objects and is uniquely placed to tell the story of the life and work of Morris and his artistic circle. Holdings include original designs, textiles, wallpapers, furniture, stained glass, ceramics, metalwork, books and archival materials as well as personal items, such as his coffee cup and satchel. They offer a comprehensive view of the varied aspects of Morris's career – as a poet, designer, craftsman, retailer and social activist. His closest collaborators, including Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Philip Webb are also well-represented.

In addition to the Morris holdings, the Gallery owns a wide-ranging collection of Arts and Crafts material. This includes significant works by Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo and the Century Guild, William De Morgan, Walter Crane, May Morris, George Jack and Christopher Whall to name but a few.

Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum

The entire holdings

Beamish, founded in 1970 to illustrate the development of industry, agriculture and the way of life in the North East of England, is situated in 300 acres of woodland and farmland. Home Farm, a fine 19th century model farmstead, and Pockerley Manor, with its medieval stronghouse dating to the 1400s, are both Listed Buildings preserved in situ. Other typical buildings brought together represent an early 1900s town, colliery village, farm and railway, linked by an electric tramway.

The early 1800s period is represented by Pockerley Manor and an exhibit on Early Railways. The museum's collections are all Designated and include a photographic archive, a trade catalogue collection, folk art, agriculture and transport items.

Bowes Museum

The entire Holdings

This collection contains paintings, ceramics, items of woodwork, objets d'art and textiles. Before Josephine's death in 1874, John Bowes and his French wife had amassed some 15,000 objects of all types of European fine and decorative arts from the period 1400-1870. The bills for this collecting activity survive in the museum's archive. Acquisitions made more recently, such as the Enid Goldblatt collection of porcelain, have reinforced the continental feel of the museum.

Chesterholm Museum - Vindolanda

The Vindolanda Trust Collection

Chesterholm Museum's unique Vindolanda collection is central to our understanding not only of life at the frontier fort of Vindolanda but, more generally, of life on the northern frontier of Roman Britain, and of the Roman army internationally. The Vindolanda writing tablets are probably the most famous objects to come from the site and they throw an invaluable light on the lives of the people of Vindolanda. These documents make up the oldest known archive of written material from Britain. The collection is also rich in organic materials due to the exceptional soil conditions. These include shoes, bags, wagon axles, parts of furniture, animal bones, a wig and a child's sock.

Durham University Library

The Bishop Cosin's Library

The Bishop Cosin's Library is still housed in its original building and, as an integral element of the World Heritage Site, has significance for the history of libraries and for ecclesiastical history both locally and nationally.

The Sudan Archive

The Sudan Archive is indispensable to the study of the Sudan in the period of British administration. It is significant to British national life through its illustration of the impact of the colonial power on the country at many levels of administration.

Durham University Oriental Museum

Egyptian and Chinese collections

The Egyptian collection is one of the best Egyptology resources in Britain. It ranges from the Pre-Dynastic to the Coptic periods in date and includes a wide selection of objects ranging from monumental sculpture to woven sandals. Numerous items of exceptional quality and international significance are included. Particular highlights are a unique 18th Dynasty boxwood carving of a Nubian servant girl; the 18th Dynasty polychrome sycamore boxes of Perpawty; and a fine 13th Dynasty granite statue of the vizier Paser.

The Chinese collection is one of the most comprehensive in Europe. It is a significant and representative collection of pieces from earlier dynasties as well as numerous fine examples from later dynasties, and right up to the work of contemporary Chinese printmakers.



'Laus Veneris' by Edward Burne-Jones. Photo: Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

Sunderland Museums and Heritage Service and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (museum collections)

Fine and decorative arts, natural sciences, and science and technology museum collections.

The Designated science and technology collection includes important material relating to marine engineering, such as Turbinia, the world's first vessel driven by steam turbine. The collections relating to coal mining, railways and mechanical engineering are also strong. The Designated decorative and fine arts collections feature significant holdings of Newcastle silver, contemporary craft and Sunderland glass, including the exquisite Londonderry Dinner Service, as well as paintings by artists such as Lowry and Burne-Jones. The large and diverse Designated natural science collections include the work of John Hancock and Thomas Bewick.

Please note these collections are held over multiple sites.

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (archive collections)

Collections relating to shipbuilding, marine engineering and maritime trade in the Tyne & Wear area.

The collections at Tyne and Wear Archives comprise tens of thousands of items, including plans, photographs, and administrative, contract and employee records from nearly all the shipyards formerly operating on the Tyne and the Wear, one of the most important shipbuilding regions in the world. They also include the records of related engineering and fitting companies and ship-owners.

The archives hold documents relating to Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland, and preserve documents relating to the area from the 12th to the 21st century

North West



A view of the National Waterways Museum.
Photo: Canal and Rivers Trust.

The Canal and Rivers Trust

The National Waterways Museum

The museum is situated in a 200-year old historic dock complex on the south bank of the River Mersey, close to the Port of Liverpool. The museum houses the largest collection of canal boats in the world, a working lock, and dock workers cottages, and provides a glimpse to what life was like during the heyday of the waterways. The open air museum brings to life the many elements which were essential to a successful canal port in the 19th century. In the Pump House are steam driven pumping engines which supplied the power for the hydraulic cranes and capstans around the dock, and the Power Hall houses a range of engines that supplied the power for a variety of boats and other canal related activities.

On the upper floor of the warehouse visitors can find out more about those who lived and worked on the canals through interactive displays and recordings of surviving members of old canal families. Please note: this Designated collection is held on several sites; these sites also appear in the East Midlands and South West lists.

Chetham's Library

The entire holdings

Chetham's Library was founded in 1653 and is the oldest public library in the English-speaking world. The library sought to be the main repository for printed literature and study materials in Manchester so began acquiring books in August 1655, and has been adding to its collections ever since. Originally the library sought to acquire books on what was then seen as the whole range of human knowledge, but since 1945 when the current collection policy was redefined, has focused on books, manuscripts and archives relating to the history of North West England. Collections are particularly strong in theology, history, science, medicine and the classics.

The library holds over 100,000 volumes of printed books, of which 60,000 were published before 1851. These include particularly rich collections of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printed works, periodicals, journals and broadsides. As well as this fine collection of early printing, the collections include a wealth of ephemera, manuscript diaries, letters and deeds, prints, paintings and glass lantern-slides. The printed books, and to a lesser extent the manuscripts, are important less by virtue of what they are – as copies or examples of texts – than because of how and when they came into the collection. Chetham's can be seen as a museum of collecting, a repository which shows not only what was acquired, but when and how it was acquired.



Archive material. Photo: National Co-operative Archive, The Co-operative College.

The Co-operative College, The National Co-operative Archive

The entire holdings

This collection is an outstanding record of the development of co-operation from its beginnings in the 19th century to the present day, and includes many rare and unique records such as the correspondence of the 'Father of Co-operation' Robert Owen. As well as the history of co-operation the archive covers a wide range of subject areas including advertising, education, employment, funerals, gender studies, politics, retailing, and youth groups. The depth and richness of the material held by the archive reflects the co-operative movement's proud claim to look after its members from the cradle to the grave.

Lancashire County Museum Service

The textile industry collections

These museums trace the history of weaving and spinning through the displays of handlooms, power looms, flying shuttles, dobbies, jacquards, water frames, drop spindles and powerful spinning mules. Many contain original machines, and a number are still in working order and demonstrated on a regular basis.

Queen Street Mill contains a unique collection of machinery which has been preserved in situ, including the original Lancashire boiler, the 500 horse power tandem compound steam engine 'Peace, the line shafting throughout the mill and the 19th century looms connected to it.

Please note this collections are held over multiple sites.



St George's Hall, pre 1900.
Photo: Liverpool and Merseyside Record Office.

Liverpool and Merseyside Record Offices

Photographic image collection

The extensive photographic archives at Liverpool Record Office consist of around 180,000 photographs from the late 19th century onwards. They cover topics as diverse as town planning, city engineering, housing, transport and public health, and document the changing face of this internationally important city.

Also held in the collection are a large number of portraits, landscapes and local scenes by Edward Chambré Hardman (1898-1988), who was one of the most admired portrait and landscape photographers of the 20th century. 150,000 of his portrait photographs of local people and visitors including Ivor Novello and Margot Fonteyn are held at the Record Office.

Manchester City Galleries

Fine and decorative art, and costume collections.

This group of galleries house Designated collections of fine and decorative art and costume. Manchester Art Gallery is renowned for its collections of fine and decorative art, including internationally famous Pre-Raphaelite paintings and significant holdings of English ceramics. The art gallery re-opened in 2002 after a £35 million expansion which doubled the amount of display space available.

The Gallery of Costume holds one of the country's finest collections of clothing, textiles and fashion accessories. The collection consists of more than 21,000 items from the 17th century to the present day, including rare examples of the everyday dress of working people.

Please note these collections are held over multiple sites.

National Football Museum

Museum's Core Collections

The National Football Museum holds the world's finest collection of material culture and archives relating to Association Football. The collection covers the broadest possible spectrum of the game's rich social history and includes: paintings, prints, posters, advertising, sculpture, fans' memorabilia, toys and games, ceramics, trophies, other silverware, printed ephemera and programmes, archives, books, kit and equipment, medical equipment, players' records, film, video, photography, and oral history.

Highlights include the FIFA Collection, the ball from the 1966 World Cup Final, an England shirt from the world's first international game in 1872, the Littlewood's Pools Collection, the Football League register of players from 1889, Stuart Clarke's photographs of fan culture, Thomas Webster's painting of football from 1839, the world's oldest football board game and Spitting Image puppets of Paul Gascoigne and Eric Cantona. The collection documents a national obsession and the world's most popular sport, with all its associated memories and emotion.

The People's History Museum

The entire holdings

The People's History Museum explores the world changing events led by the working people of Britain, with collections covering the last 200 years. The museum holds a highly regarded collection of 18th and 19th century political cartoons; significant poster collections, particularly some 1,500 political posters relating to the Spanish Civil War and to the Labour Party; around 3,000 badges from a variety of organisations; and an important collection of political tokens and medals. There is a collection of commemorative ceramics, prints, ephemera and around 70,000 photographic images covering labour history, the Labour Party and more general social history.

The museum holds the largest collection of historic trade union and political banners in the world. There are over 400 banners in the collection including the world's oldest trade union banner, that of the Liverpool Tinplate Workers of 1821.

Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery

The Natural Science collection

The Natural Science Collection at Tullie House dates to 1893 but includes material from a century earlier. The specimens mainly originate from Cumbria which has the most biologically diverse range of habitats of any English county. The collection comprises entomology specimens including type material, and species discovered new to Britain; an extensive botanical collection; geological specimens including cited, figured and type fossil material; minerals, bird eggs and animal taxidermy, and the records in the world's first data recording centre. Due to this the collection is of great geological and biological importance. The collection supports extensive academic and specialist research, as well as a wide range of engagement, from festivals and workshops to talks and exhibitions.

North West



Unilever Archives & Records Management (Unilever plc)

Archive of the United Africa Company

This archive is of primary significance for the study of the evolution of British business and corporate organisations; the character of the transnational enterprise; the economic and political development of the main West African societies from colony to sovereign state, and the problems of growing indebtedness and economic decline from the 1960s.

All permanent archive collections

This collection reflects the global significance of the company and its predecessor companies. The comprehensive nature of the records held in the archive are considered to reflect Unilever's place in world trade, with the oldest document dating from 1295. Well-known branches of the Unilever company, such as Colman's, Wall's and Lipton, as well as brands such as Persil, Pears Soap, Lux, PG Tips and Marmite, all feature in the archive. The records include minute books, printed sources, financial records, advertising and examples of packaging, images and film, and architectural plans and maps.



The Living Worlds gallery.
Photo: Manchester Museum.

University of Manchester, Manchester Museum

The entire holdings

This purpose-built museum is housed in a series of impressive Gothic style buildings at the heart of the University of Manchester. Whilst the first building was designed by Alfred Waterhouse in 1885 to house the natural history collections, the Manchester Museum soon developed important humanities collections. Today, the natural science collections comprise several million specimens, including several thousands of taxonomically unique 'types'.

The collections are divided into subject areas and are curated by specialist keepers. The natural sciences include Botany, Entomology, Geology, Mineralogy and Zoology, and the humanities collections comprise Archaeology (Mediterranean, European and Western Asiatic), Egyptology, Ethnology, Numismatics and Archery.

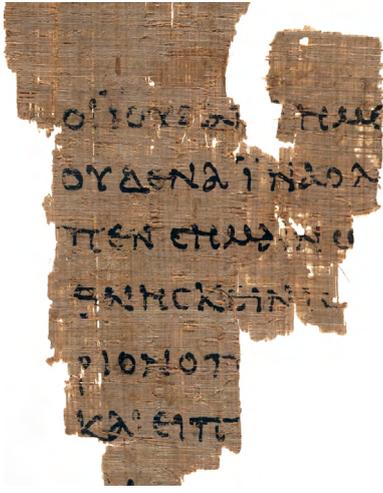
University of Manchester Whitworth Art Gallery

The entire holdings

The Whitworth Art Gallery's collections cover the areas of fine art, textiles and wallpapers. Both textiles and wallpapers are amongst the finest collections in the country, outside of London. The wallpaper ranges from 17th century to the present day, including several important French pieces. Amongst the highlights of the textile collection are the post-Pharaonic Egyptian textiles which illustrate all of the main textile techniques in use from 300-1000 AD.

Arts and crafts design is well represented in both textiles and wallpapers, and the gallery has near-comprehensive holdings of Morris & Co. textiles. The fine art collections are particularly strong in works on paper and include important works by JMW Turner and William Blake. The 20th century drawing is well represented as well as a number of Pop Art works and prints by British artists.

North West



Fragment of St John's Gospel, c.200AD. Photo: University of Manchester, John Rylands University Library.

University of Manchester, John Rylands University Library

Special Collections and Manchester Medical Society Library

The John Rylands Library, Deansgate, houses some of the most significant books and manuscripts ever produced. The special collections represent an outstanding national and regional resource, combining material of international significance with collections directly relevant to the history and wider impact of Manchester and the North West.

The collections include medieval illuminated manuscripts, examples of the earliest forms of European printing including the Gutenberg Bible, and the personal papers of distinguished historical figures including Elizabeth Gaskell and John Wesley. The printed collections encompass almost all of the landmarks of printing through five centuries: illustrated books, examples of fine printing, landmark works in typography, key historical texts and exquisite book bindings. The collections cover a wide range of subjects: theology and philosophy; literature, drama and music; art and archeology; science and medicine; economic, social, political and military history; travel and exploration; and more than fifty languages. The Manchester Medical Society Library contains medical printed books dating between c.1800-1950 associated with the Manchester Medical Society.

Wordsworth Trust

The entire holdings

The collections held at Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Museum are founded on the papers, books and personalia which Wordsworth bequeathed to his family.

Through this material, and subsequent collecting, the museum covers not only the lives and works of Wordsworth and his circle, but the wider phenomenon of British Romanticism, and the role of the Lake District in inspiring writers and artists of the Romantic Movement.

Aside from its outstanding manuscript and portrait collections, the museum holds important paintings, prints and drawings of the Lake District. Among these is Joseph Wright of Derby's painting of Ullswater, David Cox's 'Morecambe Bay Sands', and drawings by Joseph Farington.

Cambridge University Library

Special Collections

Cambridge University Library's Special Collections comprise one of the world's great collections of global documentary cultural heritage, spanning some 4,000 years of recorded thought. They encompass archives, manuscripts, rare printed books, and maps and music in both manuscript and print.

There are outstanding examples of early writing on clay, bone, bark, papyrus, palm leaves, animal skin and paper, representing developments in human record-keeping in over two thousand languages. The oldest inscribed item is a Sumerian clay tablet with lines of text in cuneiform script, dated to ca 2200 BCE. The scale and scope of the collections mean they provide a documentary record of every conceivable aspect of human culture and experience, representing and underpinning some of the most significant developments in human history—from written records of world religions or oracle bones recording some of the earliest examples of the Chinese script, to the scientific discoveries contained in the papers of Sir Isaac Newton or Charles Darwin. They demonstrate a depth and richness stemming from an unbroken tradition of collecting in one of the world's great Universities over some 600 years and are of great and enduring significance to society.



St Luke and Ox from the Book of Cerne, a 9th-century prayerbook (MS LI.1.10).

Photo: Digital Content Unit, Cambridge University Library

Reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library

Hampshire Record Office

The entire holdings

Hampshire Record Office holds: parish registers; wills and inventories; school log books; tithe and enclosure maps; and archives of many significant institutions and organisations which have proved key to an understanding of national trends and events. Among these are the records of the medieval bishops of Winchester, which include an unusually complete series of bishops' registers, and also the internationally renowned Winchester pipe rolls – manorial accounts for the bishops' vast estates which date back to 1208/9. There is also the extensive archive of the city of Winchester, dating back to the 12th century and one of the most complete for any medieval borough in the country.

Hampshire Record Office also houses a regional audio-visual archive – Wessex Film and Sound Archive – which has film footage and recordings from the earliest days of cinematography and sound recording.

Mary Rose Trust

The entire holdings

The Mary Rose is the only recovered 16th century warship and is of international significance in maritime archaeology and beyond.

Weighing some 300 tons, and standing as high as a four-storey building, the hull is revolutionary in design and provides vital evidence of shipbuilding techniques for a period when ship plans do not survive. Moreover, the breadth and completeness of the military, domestic and personal objects found within her, in many cases unique, together with the ecofacts and human remains, form one of the largest groups of well preserved associated material.

Designation recognises the importance of the whole of the collection which acts as a benchmark for scholars and a fascinating insight into Tudor life.



Watercolour sketch of Florence Nightingale and her pony, Peggy.
Photo: Hampshire Record Office.



Land speed record toys, National Motor Museum.
Photo: Tom Wood.

National Motor Museum

The entire holdings

The National Motor Museum was established as an independent charitable trust in 1972. Collecting had begun 20 years earlier, through the enterprise of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu.

The museum tells the story of motoring Britain from 1895 to the present day and is home to the world's oldest surviving Fiat and Renault cars. More contemporary attractions include the 1993 Jaguar XJ220. Among a host of unique exhibits are Donald Campbell's 1960 Bluebird Land Speed Record-breaker and the 1910 Bugatti Type 15 once owned by Ettore Bugatti himself.

Significant reference, photographic, film and video library collections have a world-wide remit in terms of material holdings, enquiries received and services provided.

Oxford University Library

Special collections at the Bodleian Library

The special collections of Oxford University Library Services comprise the largest and richest university special collections in the world due to their breadth and quality. The collections comprise: rare printed books; manuscripts (historical, literary, and political); archives; printed ephemera; maps in both manuscript and print; and printed and manuscript music, and are equally strong in western and non-western materials of all dates and periods from antiquity onwards.

The collections contain a significant proportion of the world's cultural heritage (the Bodleian's collections of early Sanskrit materials are the largest outside of the Indian sub-continent, and the early Hebrew books are the most significant outside Israel or New York). The collections include many rare and important items, such as the only Shakespeare First Folio still in its original home, Handel's conducting score of Messiah and Holst's autograph of The Planets.

The collection held by Oxford University Archives (OUA) comprises the administrative records of the University itself. Dating from 1214 to the present, these document the history and development of the first university to be established in the UK.

Royal Engineers Museum

The entire holdings

The collections at the Royal Engineers Museum tell the history of the Corps and its central contribution to military construction and engineering through courage, creativity and innovation. In peace and war the Corps has been everywhere and involved in everything.

The museum galleries display: exquisite Chinese embroideries given to General Gordon: maps: drawings: letters and airgraphs: paintings and fine uniforms; Zulu shields from Rorke's Drift; tanks, torpedoes; bridges; and chemical weapons. The museum also holds a particularly comprehensive collection of British medals.

The library, founded in 1813, holds material as diverse as 1860's photographs of Canada, classic military histories and World War One unit war diaries.



Asante batakari gown from Ghana.
Photo: Royal Pavilion, Libraries and Museums.

Royal Pavilion, Libraries and Museums (Brighton and Hove)

Decorative arts, world art and anthropology, and natural history.

Brighton's museums were Designated in respect of several important collections. The collections of decorative arts include the Regency furniture and silver-gilt displayed in the Royal Pavilion, the Macquoid furniture at Preston Manor, the Willett Collection of ceramics illustrating popular history, and outstanding holdings of British and European 20th century decorative design and craft.

The Designated collections of non-western art and anthropology include particularly fine textile collections, such as the Green Collection from Burma.

The collections, in the Booth Museum of Natural History, were the first in Brighton to be Designated. Containing over 700,000 items, these collections are strong in world-wide and British insects, vertebrates (especially birds), UK plants and fossils. Please note these collections are held over multiple sites.

Southampton City Council Cultural Services

Fine Art Collections

Southampton City Council's Designated fine art collections have particular strengths in 20th century British art before 1914 and since 1970. The policy of collecting art within two years of its creation has resulted in the acquisition of fine examples of work by many Turner Prizewinners.

Archaeology Collection

The archaeology collections are also Designated, and include spectacular medieval glass and imported pottery collections. The size and range of the archaeology collections reflect the importance of Southampton in the past and at present, and the 50 years of systematic archaeological investigations in the city.



Sperm whale skeleton, University of Oxford Museum of Natural History. Photo: David Gower.

University of Oxford, Ashmolean Museum

The entire holdings

The Ashmolean Museum was founded in 1683, the first institutional museum in Britain, and arguably in Europe.

Notable among antiquities are the Egyptian collections, the Classical Greek collections including the 'Arundel Marbles' and the Felix Gem, and the Alfred Jewel. Paintings date from early Italian to Pre-Raphaelite and there are outstanding drawings by Raphael and Michelangelo.

The arts of China, Japan, South East Asia and Islam are well represented, as are Maiolica, Renaissance bronzes and numismatics.

University of Oxford, Museum of the History of Science

The entire holdings

This museum occupies the original home of Elias Ashmole's museum, the oldest purpose-built museum in Britain. Its Designated collections are dominated by an exceptional collection of early mathematical and scientific instruments, including the largest collection of astrolabes in the world.

A highlight of this group of objects is the earliest known Persian astrolabe, dating from the 10th century. The early sundial collection comprises 750 examples, the earliest being a portable Roman dial from around 250AD.

The microscope collections, an important collection of telescopes, and photographic equipment including items that belonged to Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) and TE Lawrence, are further important facets of this remarkable museum.

University of Oxford, Museum of Natural History

The entire holdings

Housed in an exceptional Grade I listed Victorian building (1860) of cast iron and glass, the University's collections are heavily used in research, teaching and public education. Highlights include: the collections of Hope and Dale: the oldest known pinned insect (1702) in entomology; Buckland, Phillips, Daubeny, and Lyell (geology); Simmons (mineralogy); smaller collections from Burchell, Darwin, Wallace, Livingstone, Bell; and extensive modern collections. The Tradescant collection, bequeathed to Oxford by Elias Ashmole in 1677 contains some of the oldest documented zoology specimens in the world, including the Oxford Dodo. Equally prominent are the associated archival materials, including those of the 'father of English geology', William Smith.

University of Oxford, Pitt Rivers Museum

The entire holdings

The Pitt Rivers Museum takes the world for its province, with collections of artefacts that date from earliest times to the present day and extensive photographic and archival collections. The museum is famous for its 'typological' displays in which material is organised not by origin or date but by function. Every aspect of human life is presented in displays of basketry, body adornment, magic, masks, medicine, music making, navigation and textiles, among dozens of other themes. These are complemented by a number of culture-specific displays, such as that devoted to material from the South Seas collected on Captain Cook's Second famous Voyage of Discovery.

University of Reading

Archive of British publishing and printing

The archive covers the full range of British publishing activity from 1800 to the present day. Most of the major literary, general and educational publishers are represented including Allen & Unwin, Heinemann Educational Books, Macmillan, and Random House.

University of Reading (continued)

Library - The Beckett Collection

This collection demonstrates Beckett's profound impact upon European theatre in the 20th century and upon the continuing evolution of performance in formal and informal settings.

Museum of English Rural Life - the entire holdings

The Museum is dedicated to the spirit of the English countryside and its people. It was founded by the University of Reading in 1951 at a time when the motorised revolution was changing the face of farming and sweeping away implements and techniques that had evolved over many generations.

Today, the museum is a national centre for the history of food, farming and the countryside, and continues with the task of recording and interpreting rural change. It is both a public resource and an academic research centre, preserving Designated collections of national and international significance. These comprise, in addition to the objects, a library of over 50,000 books, archives of business and organisational records, and extensive photographic collections.

University of Sussex Library

The Mass-Observation Archive

This archive provides a written record of everyday life in the 20th and 21st centuries. This collection is a unique social document of the lives of ordinary people in the UK in the 20th and 21st centuries. It is of outstanding importance for the study of the social history of this period and for the development of social research methods. The collection is also invaluable for the study of the nature of personal representation and associated disciplines.



The Market Square, Weald and Downland Open Air Museum.
Photo: Julian Bell.

Weald and Downland Open Air Museum

The entire holdings

Over 45 buildings, illustrating the development of buildings in Kent, East and West Sussex, Surrey and eastern Hampshire, have been reconstructed on the museum's site. They include four medieval houses, seven later houses and cottages (including Tudor and Victorian), a medieval shop, agricultural buildings, and craft and trade workshops. The museum's buildings, together with the expertise gained in dismantling and reconstructing them, are essential for the study of the vernacular architecture in south-east England and of timber framed building. Each building has been carefully reconstructed to a particular period in its history and provides insights into aspects of working domestic life. The primary collection of buildings is supplemented by important collections of building parts, craft and building tools, and agricultural equipment.

The museum offers an extensive programme of lifelong learning based on the collections.

Bath & North East Somerset Heritage Services

Fashion Museum

The collection at the Fashion Museum includes over 30,000 items of fashionable dress for men, women and children from the late 17th century to the present day. From shifts and corsets to Lycra and Versace, the collection is the most amazing resource if you want to find out more about fashion history.

Roman Baths Museum

Some of the best known finds from Roman Britain are to be found amongst the 50,000 objects in the Roman Baths Museum. The collections include objects from the mesolithic to the present which tell the story of seven thousand years of human activity around Britain's only hot springs, which are the heart of the World Heritage Site at Bath.

Bath Record Office

The collections held at the Record Office relate to the history and development of Bath as a World Heritage City.



Bristol Lodekka Bus, Bristol City Museums. Photo: Neil Philips.

Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives

City of Bristol Collections (including relevant Applied Art, Geology and Far Eastern Collections).

The strengths of Bristol's collections are linked to its role as a manufacturing city and a major seaport. The museums were Designated in respect of outstanding collections relating to the City of Bristol, including topographical paintings and prints, maps and archaeological collections.

The collections relating to the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries are particularly rich, and reflect the importance of Bristol in those centuries.

Among the Designated applied art collections with a strong Bristol connection are important collections of delftware and glass.

Also Designated are Bristol's geology collections and fine and applied arts from the Far East, including the celebrated Schiller Collection. Please note these collections are held over multiple sites.

Archive, History and Literary Collection relating to the history and development of the City of Bristol.

All collections relating to the history and development of the city of Bristol. This comprehensive collection is essential to the study of the city and its place in national history.

The Canal and Rivers Trust

Waterways Museum at Gloucester Docks

The Waterways Museum is in the heart of Gloucester's historic docks, and tells the fascinating story of Britain's 2,000 miles of waterways and life in working docks. The displays cover many aspects of waterways from the ingenious engineering to home life on board a narrowboat, and from the wildlife of our canals to different kinds of waterways crafts.

The museum is housed in a handsome Grade II listed warehouse. On the museum docksides visitors can see and climb aboard a range of different boats including the impressive steam dredger. There are hands-on displays and archive films to watch and visitors can also take a boat trip on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal.

The Designated collections include objects painted by boatmen, costumes worn by boating families, and waterways souvenirs, along with photographic and archive material. Please note: this Designated collection is held on several sites; these sites also appear in the East Midlands and North West list.

Cornwall Record Office

The archives relating to Cornwall's hard-rock mining industry

Cornwall was the most important metal mining county in the United Kingdom, with the longest history of continuous production. It produced most of the country's tin and arsenic and a large proportion of its copper.

Most of the land-owning families in the area were involved in mining enterprises and consequently family and estate archives may include setts, bounds certificates, accounts, plans, and correspondence. Records of individual mines or adventures can also be found in the Record Office's smaller miscellaneous deposits, and a few collections relate specifically to mining.

The archives at Cornwall Record Office are of outstanding historical, technological, cultural and economic value in evidencing the growth and decline of one of the South West's most important industries.

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery

The Cottonian Collection

The Designated Cottonian Collection was bequeathed to the city of Plymouth by William Cotton (1794-1863) from whom it takes its name, but the collection was largely assembled during the 18th century by Charles Rogers (1711-1784). His connoisseurship, combined with an extensive network of contacts in the art world, resulted in a collection of some 20,000 prints, drawings and paintings, regarded by his contemporaries as one of the finest in England. A 30-day sale in 1799 reduced the collection by two thirds but, nevertheless, the collection inherited by Plymouth is of outstanding quality and provides rare insights into the history of printmaking.



Morse code punched on slip.
Photo: The PK Trust.

Porthcurno Telegraph Museum

The core collection of submarine telegraphy objects and the historic archive collections of key international telegraph cable companies.

These collections of archives and objects in their original setting tell the story of the development of international communication that changed the world.

In 1870, Porthcurno began its life as an important centre of communications, as it was in this year that a chain of telegraph cables linking Britain with India was completed. Porthcurno was chosen as the landing point for the British end of this cable link. At its height, Porthcurno was the world's largest cable station, with 14 telegraph cables in operation.

Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM)

The World Cultures collections

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum's World Cultures Collection contains important items from cultures in every continent outside Europe. The objects represent the wide variety of connections established between local donors and members of communities in other parts of the world over the past 250 years, and contain material from all three of the 18th century's trans-Pacific ventures (those of Cook, Bligh and Vancouver).

Examples of important pieces include a Tahitian mourner's costume donated by Lt. Francis Godolphin Bond, and various items relating to the second and third voyages of Captain Cook including a contentious sheet of bark cloth allegedly from the Cook Island. Particular strengths are in the collections from the Pacific, North America, Southern Nigeria and Zaire.

The Montagu Collection

The George Montagu collection of land, marine and freshwater shells is the most intact and taxonomically important collection of British shells of the early 19th century (1800-1816) to be found anywhere in the UK.

Montagu was a new breed of naturalist and not merely a collector of curios; he was one of the British naturalists responsible for establishing the foundation of modern scientific study. His area of expertise was very broad ranging from birds to marine invertebrates. He was the first person to scientifically describe the common bottlenose dolphin.

In 1803 he published 'Testacea Britannica', the first fully comprehensive monograph on the molluscs of the British Isles including 470 species. During his lifetime Montagu described 199 mollusc species that he considered were new to science – 120 of these are represented in his collection at RAMM. These 'type specimens' are in demand internationally as they are an essential resource when studying the taxonomy of molluscs across Europe.



British shells collected by George Montagu.
Photo: Simon Tutty. © 2020 Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter City Council

The Royal Artillery Collection

The entire holdings

The Royal Regiment of Artillery holds an internationally important Designated Collection of guns, rockets, missiles, equipment and vehicles spanning over 600 years. It includes prototypes and models that were used to teach Gentleman Cadets from the 18th Century onwards, and continue to be used today to educate serving officers and soldiers. The Collection continues to expand as technology moves on and the Regiment's history is added to by contemporary Gunners. The Collection also contains a wealth of artefacts, paintings and medals which tell the human story of the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

The embryonic Collection was first exhibited to the public in 1820 in Woolwich, and a small residual display remains there as part of a permanent exhibition in the Greenwich Heritage Centre. In 2016 the Collection moved from The Royal Arsenal, Woolwich to Larkhill, Wiltshire, the new home of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. The Collection and Archive remain accessible for research and viewing.

Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum

The archaeology collections

This archaeology collection contains rich and varied material from major pre-historic and later excavations.

Finds from excavations at the unique monument of Stonehenge are held at the Museum, as well as important discoveries such as the Monkton Deverill Torc and the Amesbury Archer burial.

The Roman collections reflect the rural nature of South Wiltshire and include finds from villas and farms. From the Anglo-Saxon period there is a remarkable array of grave goods from cemeteries found locally.

The medieval collections include an incredible number of everyday items found in the old drainage channels that used to run through the streets of Salisbury. The Museum also has items from archaeological excavations at Old Sarum, Clarendon Palace and the medieval pottery kilns at Laverstock.

ss Great Britain

The ss Great Britain Collection

Brunel's ss Great Britain is a former passenger steamship that has become one of the UK's finest and best-loved visitor attractions.

After enjoying over 170 years of adventure, travelling a million miles at sea and circumnavigating the world 32 times, the ship returned to the dock where she was built in 1970.

Today the ss Great Britain Trust Collection, based in the Brunel Institute alongside the ss Great Britain, is central to the study of three major national and international themes: the development of Victorian maritime technology and the rise of the British mercantile marine; the history of nineteenth century emigration; and particularly the work of Isambard Kingdom Brunel.



Tiger Tank 131, Tank Museum.
Photo: Roland Groom.

Tank Museum, Bovington Camp

The entire holdings

This museum charts the history and development of one of the 20th century's most important weapons.

The vehicle exhibits number about 150 and cover an unparalleled historical and geographical span.

The collection is particularly strong on the origins of the tank and its use in the First World War. There is a large landscape exhibition about the first tank attack in 1916 which illustrates both British and German trenches. More recent exhibits cover several theatres of the Second World War, Korea and the Gulf War, as well as illustrating types from at least 25 different nations.

The Wilson, Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum

The Arts and Crafts collections

Cheltenham's Designated collection relates to the British Arts and Crafts Movement spanning the 1880s to about 1940.

The Cotswolds were an important centre for one of Britain's most inspiring and influential art movements. The collection has a strong local base featuring furniture, silver, metalwork, plasterwork, leatherwork and embroideries by designers such as C.R. Ashbee and Ernest Gimson. Since the 1970s the collection has been developed to give a national overview with work by William Morris, C.F.A. Voysey, Baillie Scott, Eric Gill and many others.

Visitors are captivated by the colourful designs and craft skills on show as well as the thought-provoking social message of the Movement with its emphasis on creative manual work.

Torquay Museum

Quaternary Cave Collection and associated archive.

The Kent's Cavern quaternary collections at Torquay Museum provide a unique window on the prehistory of the South West region and the origin of early man in Britain. The collection includes over 500 stone tools from Acheulean, Mousterian, Aurignacian, Creswellian and Magdalenian cultures.; fine bone needles; harpoon points; and a Mammoth ivory rod. The collection also includes a tiny piece of human jaw, radio-carbon dated to 31,000 bp making it the oldest fragment of anatomically modern human in Europe and confirming an early date for the presence of humans in Britain.

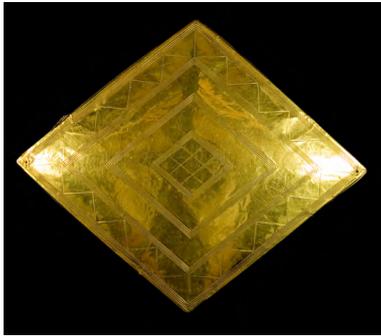
The cave archaeology at Kents Cavern is exceptional because it represents habitation or use of the cave in every major period of time, from the lower Palaeolithic to the late Medieval, a fact that can be stated about no other site in the British Isles.

Wiltshire Museum

The entire holdings

The Wiltshire Museum, Library and Gallery were set up by the Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society, founded in Devizes in 1853. This followed the acquisition of the John Britton library of topographical and antiquarian books and manuscripts by a group of Wiltshire gentlemen. Wiltshire Museum is now home to outstanding collections that trace the fascinating history of Wiltshire, its environment and its people over the last 6,000 years. It tells the fascinating story of the pioneers who created the science of archaeology in Wiltshire 200 years ago and contains items from some of the very first archaeological excavations at the World Heritage Sites of Avebury and Stonehenge.

The collections contain Early Bronze Age items, along with objects related to Avebury and Stonehenge including gold ornaments and jewellery made of various materials.



The Bush Barrow Lozeng, excavated in 1808.
Photo: Wiltshire Museum.

University of Bristol

University of Bristol Theatre Collection

The Theatre Collection was founded in 1951 to support the establishment of Drama as an academic discipline in the UK and has grown to become one of the world's leading collections relating to the history of British theatre and live art. The Theatre Collection comprises over 140 named collections and archives, including that of the actors and collectors Raymond Mander & Joe Mitchenson. We also hold artworks, audio visual material, costumes, designs, set models, playbills and programmes of this most ephemeral of art forms. The collections are particularly strong from the late eighteenth century onwards, and document the onstage and off stage life of theatre. We provide a unique insight into theatre and live art, their creative processes and broader cultural contexts. Our holistic approach to collecting across archives and objects, and the interconnectedness between the collections, make it an outstanding research resource.



Design for Romeo & Juliet by Yolanda Sonnabend
Image Credit Yolanda Sonnabend/University of Bristol Theatre Collection

Barber Institute of Fine Arts

The entire holdings

The Barber Institute houses one of the finest small collections of European art in the whole of the United Kingdom, featuring works ranging from the 13th to the 20th centuries. The holdings are a gathering of some of the most influential artists of the previous millennium, with particular strengths lying in the Old Master and Impressionist collections.

The collection is made up of paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture, and amongst the artists represented are Bellini, Botticelli, Holbein, Veronese, Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Poussin, Gainsborough, Turner, Delacroix, Ingres, Rossetti, Whistler, Manet, Degas, Monet, van Gogh, Rodin, Gauguin, Picasso, Matisse, Magritte, and Schiele.

The Barber Institute also houses a rare collection of coins, seals and weights, chiefly from Rome, Byzantium and the Middle East.

Birmingham Libraries

[The Photography Collection](#), [The Archives](#), [Early and Fine Printing Collections](#), [Literature Collections](#), [The Birmingham Collection](#), [The Music Collection](#).

The Central Library has over 2 million photographic items and holds the only national collection of photography in a public library. It also holds over 6000 archive collections including many of national and international importance such as the archives of industrial innovators James Watt and Matthew Boulton; the Birmingham Shakespeare Library, which is one of the world's most comprehensive Shakespeare collections; a superb collection of war poetry; an excellent music collection; and a significant collection of Children's books and games. The Early and Fine Printing Collections incorporate over 8,200 books printed before 1701, 4,500 examples of fine printing, and outstanding hand-coloured illustrated books. The Birmingham Collection charts every aspect of Britain's second city, bringing together material available nowhere else.



Proserpine, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1882. Photo: Birmingham Museums.

Birmingham Museums Trust

[Fine and decorative arts](#), [science and industry](#), [Birmingham history \(including numismatics\)](#) and the [Pinto Collection](#).

An 1885 inscription at the entrance to the Museum and Art Gallery proclaims that 'By the gains of Industry we promote Art'. The Designated collections in Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery reflect both the promotion of art and Birmingham's pioneering role in the Industrial Revolution. The Designated science and industry collections consist of around 40,000 objects, including James Watt's Smethwick engine of 1779, the oldest working steam engine in the world. The wide-ranging Designated fine and decorative art collections are particularly celebrated for works by pre-Raphaelite artists and for 16th and 17th century Italian painting.

Also Designated are the Birmingham history collections, the Pinto Collection of wooden objects, and the numismatics collection.

The quality, range and depth of the city's combined collections reflect its status as Britain's second city; the collections have broader significance in terms of the social, industrial, commercial and cultural history of the city, the region and the nation.

Please note these collections are held over multiple sites.



Locksmith's House parlour, Black Country Living Museum. Photo: Joanne Moody.

The Black Country Living Museum

The entire holdings

The Black Country played a vital role in the nation's industrial history: it was the world's first industrial landscape and one of the most intensely industrialised regions of the UK. Black Country industries – based on the rich natural resources of coal, ironstone, limestone and fireclay – expanded hugely during the Industrial Revolution.

The museum preserves a microcosm of the Black Country's industrial landscape, including two mine shafts, limekilns and a canal arm. Historic buildings from all around the Black Country have been moved and authentically rebuilt at the museum, to create a tribute to the traditional skills and enterprise of the people that once lived in the heart of industrial Britain. As well as this core, the museum cares for approximately 61,000 items which include a wide range of the equipment, tools, manufactured goods, domestic furnishings and everyday objects which represent the life and work of the people of the Black Country.

British Motor Museum

The entire holdings of motor cars, motoring related artefacts and archive material

The British Motor Museum owns the world's largest collection of historic British cars and features vehicles produced by notable manufacturers including Austin, Morris, Mini, MG, Wolseley, Riley, Triumph, Rover and Land Rover.

Together with the equally extensive archive of films, images and other associated artefacts, this comprehensive collection describes the history of Britain's motor industry, from its beginnings in the 1800s to the current day.

The motor industry in Britain was one of the most defining in terms of the national and international economy of the 20th Century. Its sphere of influence was not just directly that of manufacturing but also technological advance, labour relations and workforce development, change in the landscape, social mobility, design, fashion and recreation as well as economics and politics.

Compton Verney

Archaic Chinese Bronzes

The collection of Chinese bronzes at Compton Verney is one of the best in Britain outside the British Museum. The vessels were produced over a period of over 1500 years under many different Chinese rulers, and date from the early Shang Dynasty (about 1700-1050 BC) to the Han Dynasty (206 BC to AD 220). They were used during religious rituals and ancestor worship, and were buried in the tombs of the deceased. The collection also includes cloisonné and pottery pieces, such as a set of twelve painted pottery equestrian figures made for placing in a tomb to guard the deceased. The earliest pottery vessel in the collection dates back to the Neolithic period (4500-2000 BC).

Culture Coventry

Coventry Transport Museum

Displaying the most comprehensive collection of the products of the Midlands motor industry, this museum demonstrates the central role played by the road transport industries of Great Britain, and the City of Coventry in particular, in the industrial, economic, social and cultural development of the world.

The museum's splendid collection of cycles ranges from an 1818 Hobby Horse to the latest BMX. Its superb motor vehicle collection, incorporating: the largest display of British Daimlers; Thrust 2, the previous world land-speed record car; commercial vehicles; and motor cycles and archives, sustains the argument that the car has been the greatest instrument of social change of the past century.

Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

The entire holdings

The pre-eminence of the Trust's collections lies in two areas: the remarkable sequence of monuments and buildings representative of key phases in Britain's growth as an industrial nation; and in collections of machines, products and possessions shown in their original context.

The Elton collection is one of the largest devoted to art and memorabilia on industrial subjects and complements a large volume of social history material. The Darby Collection includes the homes, furnaces, possessions and records of the ironmasters as well as fine Coalbrookdale castings and steam engines. The decorative arts material includes definitive collections of Coalport china and Maws tiles. The Gorge is a World Heritage Site.

Please note these collections are held over multiple sites.



Lidded vase produced for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.
Photo: Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust.

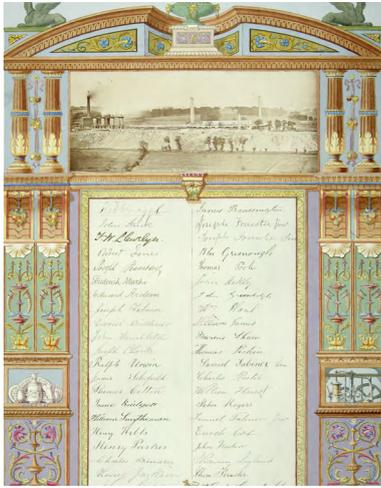
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Royal Shakespeare Company

All collections relating to Shakespeare's life and times

This collection also includes items concerned with the performance and study of his works from the 16th century to the present day.

The collections comprise an outstandingly deep, rich and varied source for the study and enjoyment of all aspects of the life and works of one of the world's most celebrated literary and historical figures.

The collections relate not only to Shakespeare and his works, but also to literary context, local history and the continuing evolution of theatre and performance.



Presentation volume to George Melly, MP for Stoke on Trent, 1875, Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service. Photo: Howard Dixon.

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service

The entire holdings

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent on Trent Archive Service holds over 7,000 unique archive collections, dating from the 10th to the 21st centuries, reflecting virtually every aspect of past life in Staffordshire. This collection has major strengths in family, estate, industrial and ecclesiastical records. Many documents contain references or context which relate to a far wider geographical area, throughout Britain and the world.

Among the collections are the estate papers of former major landowning families including those of the Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham; a collection of documentation relating to 17th century government office and 18th century colonial North America; business collections relating to pottery, coal, iron and steel; the records of James Brindley's construction of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal; and the archive of the Diocese of Lichfield. It also holds collections from public and private institutions, the professions, clubs, societies and charities, as well as personal papers, including those of J Enoch Powell, MP.

Stoke on Trent Museums Service

The entire holdings

This museum service, all of whose collections are Designated, tells the story of the North Staffordshire Potteries from the medieval period to the present day. The archaeological and arts collections provide a wider context for the display and an understanding of the ceramics collection that includes arguably the finest and most comprehensive assemblage of British ceramics in the world. The owl jug, which memorably came to light on BBC Television's Antiques Roadshow, is perhaps the most famous exhibit. Supporting this is a wide range of local study material which celebrates the people, skills, products and landscape of an area named after its main industry, The Potteries.

Please note these collections are held over multiple sites.



Fossil fish, University of Birmingham, Lapworth Museum of Geology. Photo: Daniel Salter.

University of Birmingham, The Lapworth Museum of Geology

The entire holdings

The Lapworth's collection is one of the most important in the country. As well as outstanding geological specimens it includes important collections of scientific instruments, geological models, zoology, comparative anatomy, archaeology and photography and a unique and very extensive geological archive relating to influential geologists of the 19th and 20th centuries, notably those of Charles Lapworth and Fred Shotton. Together these collections explain key advances and detail the resolution of a number of major geological controversies which drove scientific debate during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

University of Birmingham Library

The Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern Manuscripts

The Mingana Collection is made up of over 3,000 Middle Eastern manuscripts in over 20 languages, which include Arabic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Georgian, Hebrew, and Armenian, but is extremely coherent. This unique and rich collection was brought together during the 1920s by an Iraqi priest called Alphonse Mingana, who had settled in England.

The value of the collection to scholarship is enormous. The Syriac section, with its 662 manuscripts rates third in the West after the British Museum and the Vatican Library, and the Christian Arabic section is surpassed in the West only by the Vatican Library and the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris. The large Islamic Arabic section is also noteworthy.

The collection contains a great deal of primary material relating to Islamic, Christian and Judaic scholarship, so is very relevant to contemporary multi-faith politics and understanding.

University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre

The entire holdings

The principal objectives of the centre are to locate and preserve primary sources for modern British social, political and economic history. The centre focuses in particular on the national history of industrial relations, industrial politics and labour history.

The main strengths of the archive holdings are: the records of trade unions and related organisations; the records of trade associations, employers' organisations and related bodies; motor and related industry records (especially through formal agreement with Rover/British Motor Industry Heritage Trust); records relating to cycling (the National Cycle Archive); records of radical British political movements; and records of pressure groups and other organisations concerned with social and penal reform, human rights, disarmament, education and health.



Spinning machinery. Photo: Bradford Industrial Museum.

Bradford Industrial Museum

Worsted Collection

This collection clearly demonstrates Bradford's unique and internationally significant role in the worsted industry.

Worsted played an important part in the industrialisation of England, and the development and mechanisation of the wool textile industry. Moorside Mills, the site of the museum and an original spinning mill, is full of machinery which once converted raw wool into the world's best worsted cloth. The collections illustrate the process of making worsted from fleece to completed clothing, including spinning, looms, and combing.

Harewood House

The entire holdings

This great 18th century house was designed by John Carr of York for the Lascelles family. Robert Adam designed the interiors, Thomas Chippendale the furnishings and fittings, and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown landscaped the garden.

Harewood contains rich and diverse collections; internationally important Chippendale furniture; Renaissance masterpieces; works by Gainsborough, Romney, Reynolds and Turner; an outstanding collection of Sèvres porcelain, including a tea service made for Queen Marie-Antoinette; and clocks made by the royal clockmaker Benjamin Vulliamy.

Visitors can see fine decorative schemes in the setting for which they were commissioned; royal memorabilia associated with Princess Mary and The Princess Royal; and the present Earl's modern art collection.

Kingston upon Hull City Museums and Art Galleries

Collections relating to the city and region

Kingston upon Hull City Council operates eight museums in the city, which together attract a third of a million visitors each year.

The collections relating to the City and region are Designated. The maritime collections with their strong emphasis on whaling, fishing and scrimshaw are internationally known, as are the collections relating to William Wilberforce.

The archaeological collection from Hull and East Riding includes important Roman mosaics and Celtic material.

The prehistoric Hasholme Boat (currently undergoing conservation) is the oldest boat in Britain.

Streetlife contains a remarkable collection of Victorian motor cars and horse drawn carriages.

Please note these collections are held over multiple sites.



Shells. Photo: Leeds Museums and Galleries.

Leeds Museums and Galleries

Natural science, fine and decorative arts and industrial collections

The City Art Gallery's 20th century British art collection, especially the sculpture, is particularly fine. 18th and 19th century English watercolours are also well represented. The decorative art and old master painting collections installed in restored period settings at Temple Newsam and Lotherton Hall are rich in: outstanding furniture, notably Chippendale; silver; textiles; wallpapers; and ceramics, with an excellent collection of Leeds creamware.

The industrial collections reflect the crucial role played by the city in economic and social affairs over the last 200 years at national and global levels. Particular strengths lie in the fields of textiles and engineering.

The world-wide natural science collections contain over 700,000 specimens collected over a 200 year period. These include a wide selection of specimens of great historical importance, particularly invertebrate and mineral items and exotic mammals.

Please note these collections are held over multiple sites.

Sheffield City Museums

Metalwork collections

Sheffield's metalwork collection is made up of cutlery, flatware and hollowware made in the city, together with an outstanding selection of comparative material from Europe and many parts of Africa and Asia. It includes silver, pewter, stainless steel and Old Sheffield Plate and is the best collection of its kind in this country and almost certainly the world.

The collection dates from the 14th century to the present day and includes unique, handcrafted one-off pieces and examples of the mass-produced cutlery for which Sheffield has an international reputation.

The Metalwork Gallery, within the Millennium Galleries, is home to over 1,000 items from this vast collection of some 8,000 objects and with further pieces on display at the Weston Park Museum.

University of Leeds, Leeds University Library

The English Literature Collection

This is a comprehensive manuscript and printed collection particularly strong in: poetry and drama of the period 1600-1750; the work of diverse 19th century authors; extensive correspondence of major literary figures of the 19th and 20th centuries; archives of 20th century literary magazines; and manuscripts of a wide range of later 20th century writers.

The Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Collection

This is a printed and manuscript collection, and is a comprehensive resource for studying the history and culture of the gypsy, traveller and Roma communities from the 16th to the mid 20th century.

The Cookery collection

This collection is chiefly made up of printed books but with some manuscripts, and covers cookery in the UK (and to a lesser extent in Europe) from the 16th to the mid 20th century.

The Leeds Russian Archive

The Russian Archive is a major international resource for the study of Anglo-Russian relations in the 19th and 20th centuries, and of Russian emigres in that period, especially literary figures. Constituents include the world's largest archives for the authors Ivan Bunin (Nobel Laureate) and Leonid Andreev, and the massive archive of the emigre organisation Zemgor.

Liddle Collection

The Liddle Collection includes the personal papers of well over 4,000 people who lived through the First World War, and approximately 500 who experienced the Second World War. The Liddle collection includes original letters and diaries, official and personal papers, photographs, newspapers and artwork, and written and tape-recorded recollections, which preserve first-hand individual experiences of the First World War.



Clock. Photo: York Museums Trust.

York Museums Trust

The entire holdings

York, one of England's best-loved historic cities, has housed museums since 1821 when the Yorkshire Museum was founded.

The rich collections which York Museums Trust has amassed since then range widely from: archaeology, biology, geology and numismatics at the Yorkshire Museums; fine art at the City Art Gallery; and social history, costumes, textiles and military history at the Castle Museum. Ceramics are held at all three institutions.

Outstanding exhibitions include Anglo-Saxon and Viking metalwork, Romanesque sculpture, fossil marine reptiles, and paintings by Parmigianino, Bellotto, Hogarth and Nash, while Kirkgate, the famous reconstructed Victorian street that forms the core of the Castle Museum, is a milestone in the history of museums.

Please note these collections are held over multiple sites.



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