

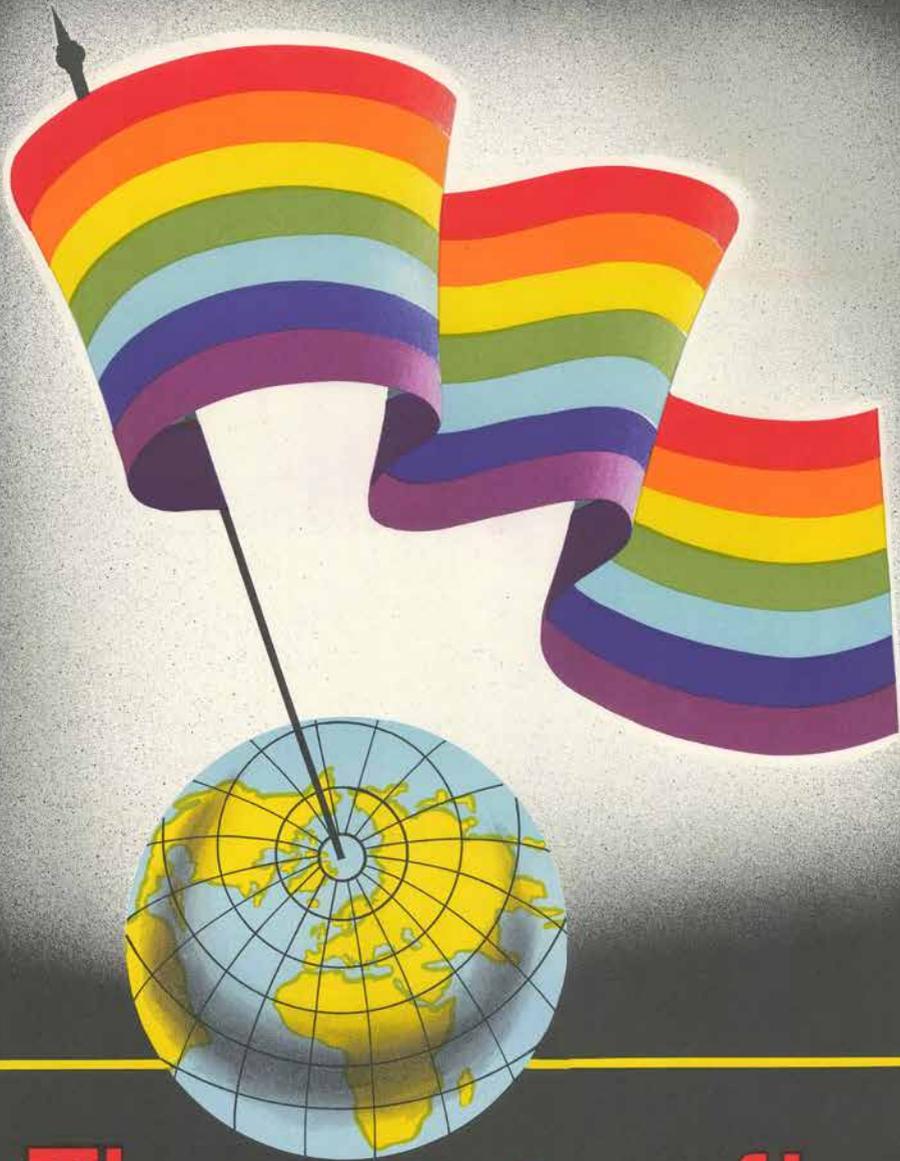
# Pearls and wisdom

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*Arts Council England's  
vision for the Designation  
Scheme for collections of  
national significance*





The **CC-0-P** flag  
covers the world

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*Front cover: Astrolabe for Shah Abbas II, by Muhammad Muqim al-Yazdi, Persian, 1647/8.*

*Credit: Museum of the History of Science, University of Oxford*

*Inside cover: 'The Co-op flag that covers the world' Credit: National Co-operative Archive*

*Below: Coronet worn by Princess Patricia to King Edward VII's coronation in 1902*

*Credit: Historic Royal Palaces*



# Foreword

The Designation Scheme exists to recognise cultural collections of outstanding richness and resonance – collections that help deepen our understanding of the world, and what it means to be human.

Designation is a mark of distinction. It identifies pre-eminent collections of national and international importance held in non-national museums, libraries and archives across England.

We are extraordinarily fortunate to have such a rich material legacy of our collecting culture, and this is reflected in the brilliant variety of our Designated collections; covering subjects as diverse as Churchill's archives, the Romantic movement, the history of London's transport, and the surgeon's profession.

Such collections, often shaped by strong characters and enduring enthusiasms, merge disciplines, crossing art and science in fascinating ways; they tell gripping stories, help us to understand our past, and suggest how our future might be different.

These vital collections are located in rural and urban centres across the country, from Cornwall to Suffolk, from the South Coast to Cumbria.

The Arts Council invests its funds and resources according to the objectives set out in its 10-year strategy, *Great art and culture for everyone*. The recent review of the Designation Scheme has been an opportunity to reflect on the purpose and principles that underpin the Scheme and its effectiveness in delivering against the needs of the sector and the Arts Council's strategic aims.

During the course of the review we have consulted extensively and are grateful for the informed opinion of our stakeholders, including The National Archives and English Heritage. Such relationships are essential to the future of Designated collections – and to the future of England's arts and culture.

We have listened to the views of colleagues across the sector and thought carefully about the direction of the Designation Scheme. It is clear that the fundamental principles that underpin Designation continue to receive strong support and that it should continue to reward the quality and national significance of collections. We are also clear that the bar must remain high for attaining the award – there should be no lessening of the significance and quality of collections coming into the Scheme. It continues to be important that the best collections are identified and supported and most importantly – used and enjoyed.

This publication sets out our vision for the future of Designation. We are sure that these plans will provide the basis for the Scheme to thrive, and will focus attention on the exceptional value and potential of these outstanding collections.

**Alan Davey**

Chief Executive

Arts Council England

# The development of the Scheme so far

The Designation Scheme has developed over seventeen years since it was initiated to identify pre-eminent collections held in England's non-national museums. Over this time we have seen awards made to 140 distinct collections and around £32 million of funding has been invested towards fulfilling our objectives, and those of our predecessor bodies, to help ensure that Designated collections are well looked after and that they are widely accessible – both for wide enjoyment and focussed research.

The Scheme was set up with the belief that these collections, which lacked the resources and protection afforded to collections in national institutions, were nonetheless of national importance. The establishment of the Designation Scheme was a commitment set out in the government review of museum

policy, *Treasures in Trust* (1996). Its founding principles were to raise the profile of these vital collections and encourage safeguarding of them. Following *Treasures in Trust*, we have seen the development of the Renaissance programme and Major Partner Museums in which Designated collections have a core role.

In 2005 the Scheme expanded its remit to include collections in non-national archives and libraries in order to champion and celebrate these collections alongside those held in museums. This was a welcome development which helped overcome the sometimes false distinctions between collection domains; Designated collections, by their nature, are extensive and often multi-dimensional, as will be seen in the full list of the recipients provided at the back of this publication.

Although there have been a number of discrete reviews since the Scheme was established, this has been the first detailed review focusing on the fundamental purpose and principles.

As we further integrate museums and libraries within Arts Council England and strengthen our commitment to supporting and measuring excellence, the time feels right to ensure that

Designation continues to deliver clear benefits and value to the sector and remains fit for purpose.

A key consideration has been looking at the alignment of Designation alongside other schemes that exist to protect cultural property and heritage, as well as those that focus on organisational development. This review complements the in-depth review of Accreditation for Museums which took place between 2009 and 2011, as well as the recent introduction of Accreditation for Archive Services by The National Archives, which is closely guided by and aligned with the Scheme for museums.

Although we knew the award of Designation was valued and coveted, we were also aware of some inherent tensions in the Scheme, both strategically and structurally, that needed to be addressed. The second assessment bar – looking at collections management and services to the public – could be problematic in practice. It was introduced in 2005, when the Scheme broadened its remit to include archives and libraries, because at that stage there was not an equivalent of Accreditation for Museums for either archives or libraries which provided

a view on organisational structures, policies and performance.

Over the years Designation had expanded from being solely a judgement of quality and significance of the collection to acting like a quasi-standard with a view being taken on the performance of the holding organisation. As well as being structurally difficult, it understandably caused confusion with Designation being perceived as the next natural developmental progression after Accreditation.

We also knew that, because of the upfront commitment that applying for Designation required, we needed to do more to filter the serious contenders earlier in the process.

We have consulted widely during the review. We wrote to key stakeholders and held a round table discussion, had many face-to-face conversations, conducted an extensive online survey and asked for email responses to our proposal paper. The message that we heard, loud and clear, was that Designation should be refocused back on its founding principles of identifying and celebrating the very best collections and that is the key principle that we are carrying forward.



**C**E SERPENT hideux avec ses deux piedz  
& sept testes couronnées, fut apporté embasme.  
d'un marchand d'Afrique a Constantinople,  
es fut achepté deux mille escus par les Venitiens : puis ilz.

An embalmed serpent sent by the Venetians to King Francis, 1560. From "Histoires prodigieuses" by Pierre Boaistuau. Credit: Wellcome Library, London

# Arts Council England's vision for the future of Designation

Designation will continue to identify nationally significant collections in museums, libraries and archives.

We are reasserting the founding principles of the Scheme – celebrating and helping to safeguard vital collections for present and future generations. The consultation with key stakeholders told us that it is neither desirable nor realistic to seek legislative protection for Designated collections, but we will actively articulate the value of these collections for the very long-term.

We feel there is scope to make more awards; Designation will continue to be an application-based scheme. We are redeveloping the relevant processes in support of the refocused requirements and will continue to work with experts

in the field and awards will be made by an independent panel of senior heritage professionals.

In the revised criteria there will no longer be an assessment of the performance of the holding organisation. We absolutely believe that healthy organisations should continue to maintain and build upon the Accreditation standard and we will continue to advocate for the value of Accreditation for museums and for archives, however, it will not form part of the assessment process for the award of Designation.

Designation is an enduring award. Where there are changes of governance or questions about collections development, this may necessitate a review of the original award. We will, where relevant, review awards of 'all holdings' to clarify the extent of the Designated collection. We think that this approach complements our desire to clarify the core purpose of the Scheme and we will explore this further in consultation with current award holders and sector bodies.

The Scheme for collections sits alongside a range of other cultural protection mechanisms. Some of

these are managed within Arts Council England, like the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme or the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, which are a means to bring pre-eminent objects into the public domain. Others are external, such as those managed by English Heritage and National Historic Ships.

Unlike the Listing Scheme for buildings, where private owners are key partners, Designation cannot cover collections in private ownership. Although nationally important collections may indeed reside in private hands, these are outside the Scheme's remit. For Designation, collections need to be in constituted organisations with a clear focus on public access.

In relation to these extraordinary collections, Arts Council England is one stakeholder among others. We will play our part in helping to highlight their cultural value and the role they play both within the sector – for example as key players within subject specialist networks – and as significant cultural assets within their locality. Clearly key relationships for us are with The National Archives as the strategic lead for the archive sector and the range of public,

academic, independent and specialist library networks.

We will develop our advocacy for the Designation Scheme with a view to leveraging in more support for the collections it recognises.

We will continue to encourage ambition and leadership in relation to these collections and their wider role for society. We believe that Designated collections should be mature and coherent assemblages of items and associated information with an established or emerging reputation as a research resource. We will actively promote the potential of Designated collections as essential research collections and will seek to develop and broker partnerships with relevant research bodies, including universities, the Higher Educational Funding Council for England, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

We will use our public investment to support the development and enrichment of these collections for the long-term public benefit. We will continue the active dialogue we have with other funding bodies to promote the potential of their investment in

Designated collections in addition to Arts Council funding.

Over time the fortunes of some of the organisations that hold collections will inevitably wax and wane. As Designation is focused squarely on the collection, this means that occasionally Designated collections may be exposed to some degree of risk, whether through neglect, risk of sale or risk of dispersal. We are actively reviewing our intervention principles and protocols in relation to how we work with organisations holding Designated collections in recognition of the fact that they are custodians of nationally important cultural assets.

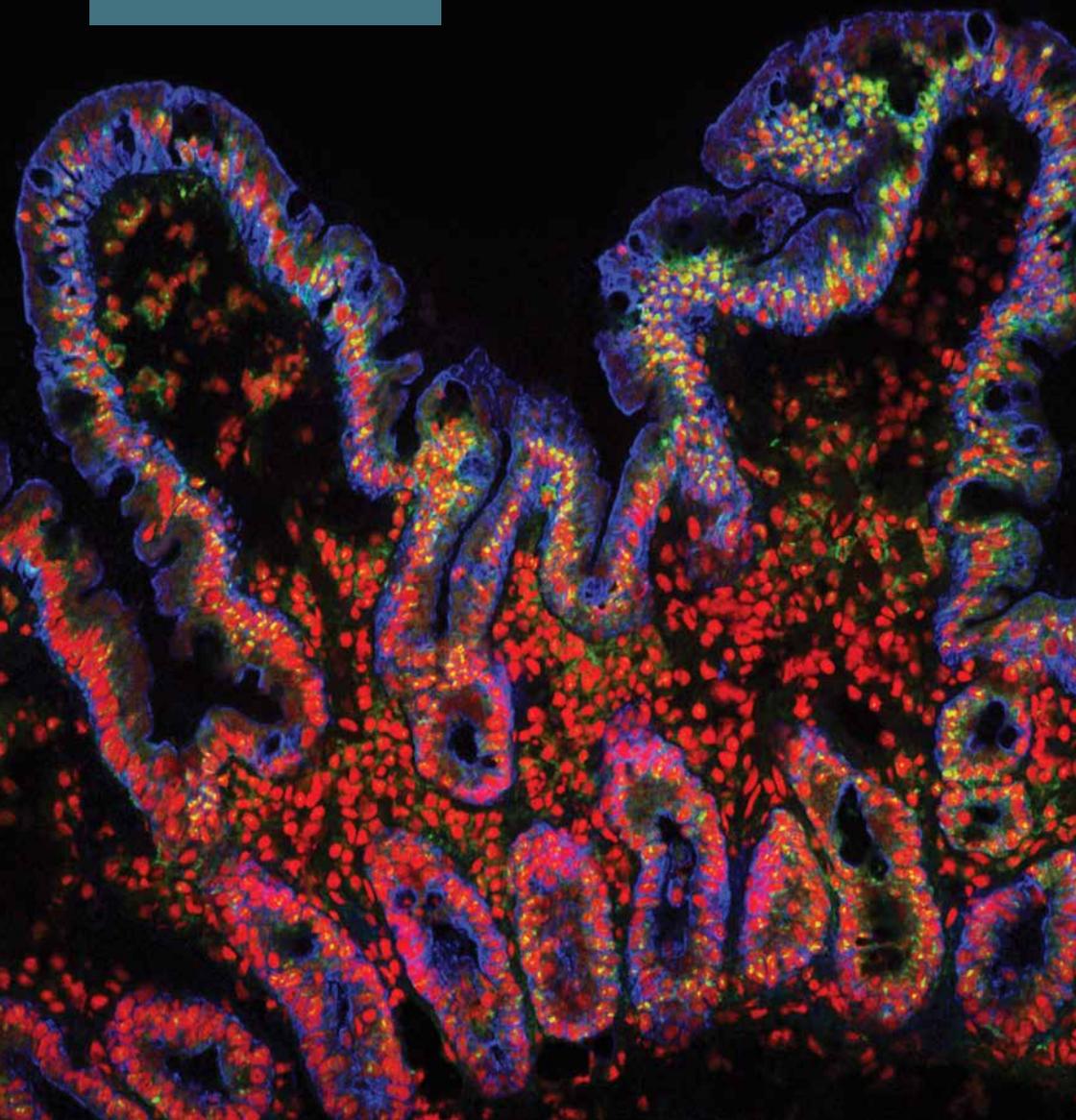
Arts Council England is passionate about collections and their ability to impact on and enrich our lives. Collections assembled and codified over time help us to understand the world and stand as evidence of individual obsessions and collective endeavours. Designation gives us great reach and is a visible assertion of our belief in the enduring cultural value of collections.

We strongly value our relationships with Designated collection holders who in turn value the contribution the Scheme makes to their collections

and organisations. Here are some insights from our colleagues into what Designation has delivered for them and the extraordinary collections they care for on behalf of all of us.

*Villi from the human small intestine.  
Confocal micrograph by Stephanie Schuller  
Credit: The Wellcome Library*

## Case studies



# Beamish, The Living Museum of the North

Beamish, The Living Museum of the North, contains over three million objects relating to the life and work of the people of north east England. From folk art and taxidermy to bicycles, horse drawn vehicles and whole buildings preserved in situ, objects include the 100 Ruston bucurus steam navy, the 1855 Joicey vertical steam winding engine (the only surviving example), and the medieval, Grade II listed Pockerley Manor, which dates back to 1441.

Beamish applied for Designation because they wanted the significance of their collections to be nationally recognised. Richard Evans, Museum Director, says: 'It is often easy to dismiss some of the objects we hold as simply everyday items – Designated status confers upon the collection the recognition it deserves.'



Designation has contributed to increased visitor numbers to Beamish, including visitors from low income families. Evans says, 'Beamish's visitor numbers were up 19 per cent during 2013/14 to 598,000 – a record year for us. Over half our visitors are in C2DE group, 55 per cent from outside the region, 45 per cent from within. Our fastest growing audience segment is low income local families from the region.'



*Folk art plate created using cigar labels and representing the political views of the creator.*

*Credit: Beamish, The Living Museum of the North*

Designation has also served as a guarantee of professionalism, strengthening applications to funders and helping to facilitate inter-museum loans and transfers. Evans says, 'It is a clear and useful tool in dealings with other museums – especially if they may

be nervous of the status of open air museums.

Equally it is useful in pointing out to people, from donors to governors, that the behaviour and activities of the museum are closely regulated by clear guidelines, whether that is conditions of archive storage or ethical behaviour relating to the stewardship of our collections.'

# The Library of Birmingham

The Library of Birmingham has six Designated collections. They include: the Photographic collections with more than two million photographs from the early beginnings of photography to the present day; one of the finest collections of material on Shakespeare in the world; and a recently rediscovered collection of rare silent film scores.

The Central Library, now the Library of Birmingham, applied for Designation to gain independent acknowledgement of their collections, which they believe to be the best collections of heritage material of any public library in Britain. Designation also enabled them to engage with funders, potential donors and many other key stakeholders in a way that might not have been possible without that recognition. They were successful in funding bids to organisations such as the Heritage

Lottery Fund, the Arts Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Wolfson Foundation and many others.

Designation has also resulted in more visitors to the library. Paul Hemmings, Senior Manager, Special Collections at the Library of Birmingham, recalls: 'Designated status for the collections at the Central Library formed a large part of the case for the new Library of Birmingham which has proved such an amazing success since it opened in September 2013, with over 1.7 million visitors through the doors in the first seven months.'

David Lammy MP, said, 'Few of the world's other major cities can have as rich and diverse history as Birmingham's, from its rural origins to its status as an industrial giant with its own full and unique cultural identity. And the library collections, recognised by the award of Designation, cover every aspect of this history... These wonderful collections provide another tool to make those links as well as something, quite rightly, Birmingham's people can take great pride in.'

*White pelican – hand coloured plate from Audubon's "Birds of America" in the Early and Fine Printing collection.  
Credit: The Library of Birmingham*



*American White Pelican.*  
Pelecanus Americanus, Linn.  
Plate CCXXI.

# Derby Museums Trust

The Joseph Wright of Derby Collection at Derby Museums Trust is the world's largest collection of Joseph Wright's work, comprising 34 oil paintings and over 300 drawings and prints, original frames, personalia and related documents. Joseph Wright of Derby was one of the most exciting and innovative British artists of the 18th century, and his unique series of paintings on a wide range of themes capture the spirit of the Enlightenment age.

The Joseph Wright of Derby Collection was awarded Designation in 2011. This official recognition of its significance and pre-eminence helped garner support from key stakeholders and funders, including Derby City Council, whose investment led to the long-awaited redevelopment

of the Joseph Wright Gallery in February 2012.

The Designation process also helped establish new relationships for the Trust which have benefitted the organisation and its collection. During its application for Designated status, Derby Museums Trust received many recommendations and letters of support from external institutions and individuals – including Tate, the British Museum, the University of Nottingham, the University of Derby, and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. These contacts now form the nucleus of the Joseph Wright Steering Group which advises on Derby Museums Trust's Joseph Wright agenda and future plans for the collection, and has been instrumental in the development of the new Joseph Wright Gallery and Joseph Wright Institute. These two projects will provide visitors access to nearly all of the Designated collection, and improve its care and management with high specification equipment, thus safeguarding the collection for future generations.

Lucy Bamford, Keeper of Art at Derby Museums Trust, said, 'Designation has radically altered the organisation's, and community's, perceptions of the

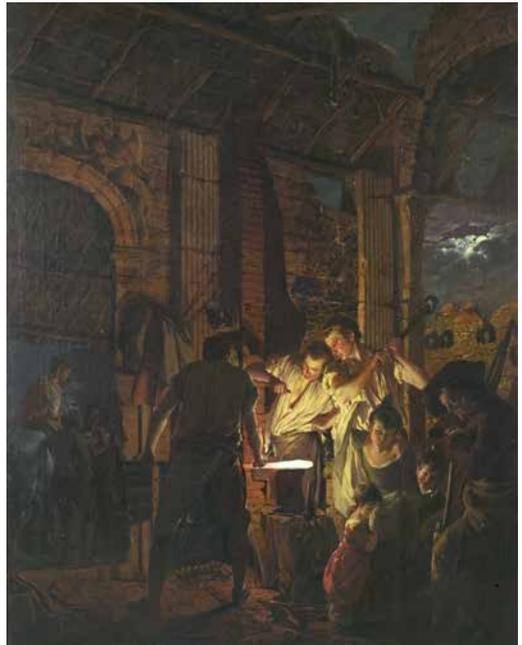


Joseph Wright Collection.  
It has opened discussions  
with potential partners in  
the cultural sector, leading  
to greater opportunities both  
around Wright and more widely.'

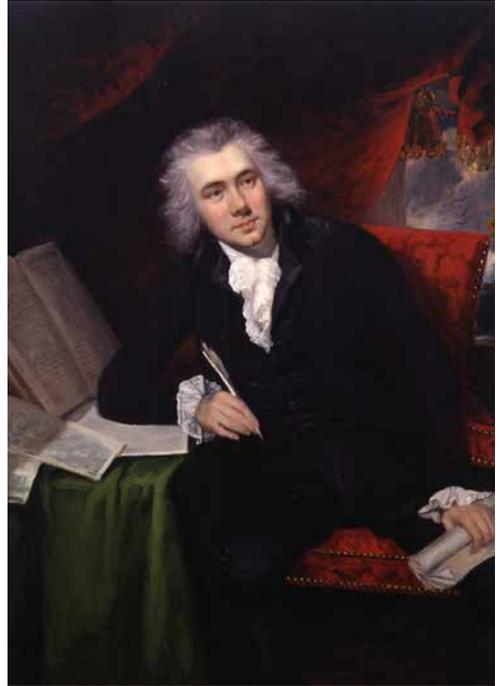
*Above: Landscape with a Rainbow  
(1794) Joseph Wright.*

*Right: A Blacksmith's Shop  
(1771) Joseph Wright*

*Credit: Public Catalogue Foundation*



# Hull Museums



Collections across five of Hull Museums' sites – Streetlife Museum, Ferens Art Gallery, Hull & East Riding Museum, Hull Maritime Museum and Wilberforce House Museum – were granted Designated status in 1999. From Roman mosaics and a 40 foot Iron Age log boat at Hull and East Riding Museum, to items relating to William Wilberforce and his campaign to end slavery in the early 19th century, displayed at his former home in Hull, these collections reveal the rich and varied history of the area.

Through recognising the national importance of its collections,

Designation has raised Hull Museums' profile, but it has also helped them argue the case for their collections' importance to stakeholders and bodies, thus securing grant funding to improve their care or display – such as new racking for collections stores at the Hull Maritime Museum. Designation has also helped Hull Museums become involved in high profile projects such as the Wetwang and Garton Slack English Heritage funded project in partnership with the University of Bradford, to assess the finds from these nationally important Iron Age cart burial sites.



Hull Museums have many plans for their Designated collections, including funding a project to document the Mortimer archaeological archive. Regarded as one of the foremost collections in the country, this archive encompasses Neolithic, Bronze Age and Anglo-Saxon grave-goods, derived from 360 barrows on the Yorkshire Wolds.

Paula Gentil, Curator of Archaeology at Hull Museums, said: 'Designation highlights and safeguards the huge international and national research potential within the regional archaeological archive'.

*Left: Portrait of William Wilberforce, c.1790, by John Rising*  
*Above: SS Forefarshire leaving Hull on her Last Voyage, by John Ward, dated c.1836.*  
*Credit: Hull Museums*

# Norfolk Museums Service

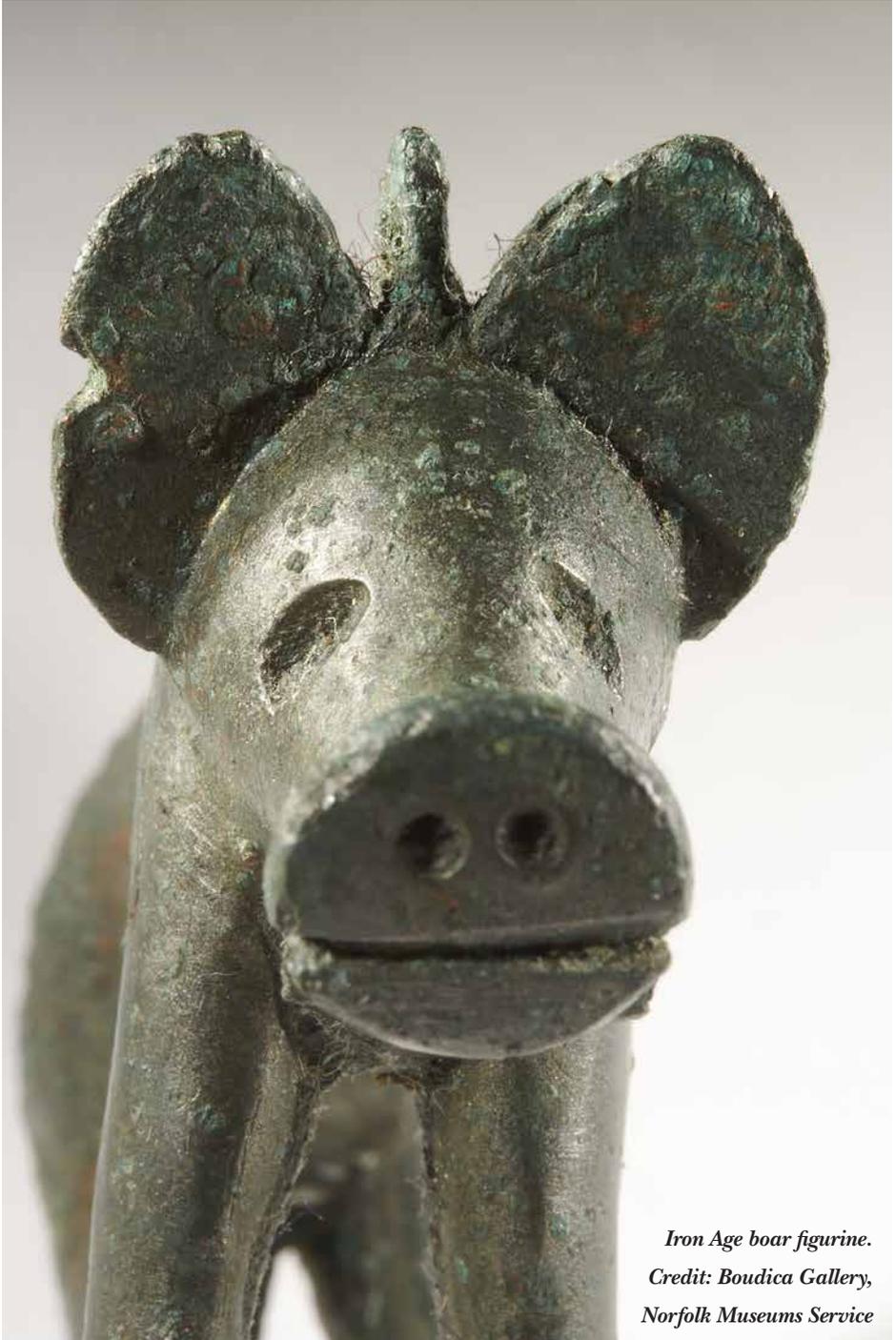
Norfolk Museums Service's Boudica Gallery showcases objects from the late Iron Age to the end of Roman Britain. Their Designated collections include one of the most extensive and important Iron Age collections in the country, the Snettisham Treasure, and one of the best collections of Romano-British votive objects in Britain.

Being Designated is of great importance to Norfolk Museums Service, who believe it is a recognised symbol of excellence in the sector, in part because it is so difficult to achieve. Dr John Davies, Chief Curator at Norfolk Museums Service, says, 'The case for Designation has to be robustly justified. When it is given, it is a recognition of real credibility. So, it is a highly important endorsement as to the importance of the collection and to the organisation.'

Designated status allowed Norfolk Museums Service to apply for other funding streams, including the Designation Challenge Fund, which provided funds for them to develop more extensive displays of archaeology, and to create the Anglo-Saxon and Viking Gallery. They were also awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund Collecting Cultures grant – through this, and by individual funding applications, they have actively continued to develop the collection, through strategic and targeted collecting.

Designation also helped reinforce Norfolk Museums Service's relationship with other partners, including the Tate and the British Museum. Since the award of Designation, the British Museum have loaned important material from the Snettisham Treasure, together with Iron Age objects from other parts of Britain, to complement Norfolk Museums Service's own material on display. The British Museum are also loaning medieval objects to enhance their new displays inside the Norman Castle Keep.

Dr John Davies, Chief Curator, Norfolk Museums Service, says: 'The award of Designation has significantly enhanced the profile of our outstanding collections. It has also enabled us to re-assess and strategically develop key areas of the holdings, through targeted acquisition'.



*Iron Age boar figurine.  
Credit: Boudica Gallery,  
Norfolk Museums Service*

# Oxford University Museums

Oxford University Museums hold over 8.5 million objects representing the natural world and all major global cultures. All their collections, held at four museums across Oxford, are Designated. The Ashmolean, the oldest public museum in the UK holds rich and diverse collections of art and archaeology including the most important group of Raphael drawings in the world; the Museum of the History of Science cares for the world's largest collection of historic scientific instruments, and range from Einstein's Blackboard to some of the earliest experimental photographs; the Museum of Natural History houses internationally important mineralogical, palaeontological and zoological collections including the earliest surviving British natural history specimens, the only surviving dodo soft tissue and the first scientifically

described remains of dinosaurs; and the Pitt Rivers Museum holds collections of ethnography, anthropology and archaeology from across the globe, representing all periods in human history and include great cultural treasures such as those collected by Captain Cook on his voyages to the Pacific.

Lucy Shaw, Oxford ASPIRE Manager at Oxford University Museums, feels that the Designation Scheme provides 'a recognised hallmark of distinction', which marks out the collections as being of national and international significance, and allows more people to benefit from them. She says, 'Through the excellence it promotes and the funding it unlocks, it enables our audiences to experience and engage with our unique collections through enhanced scholarship, research, collections care and interpretation.'

Designation enabled Oxford University Museums to successfully apply for the Arts Council's Major Partner Museum funding which, as well as benefitting Oxford University Museums, also helped the sector as a whole. Shaw says, 'Through it we have been able to share our knowledge and expertise with the wider museum sector,

working with colleagues in other organisations to develop and improve their collections.'

As for the future, Oxford University Museums are enhancing their Designated collections (partly through Designation Development Funding) by developing unified collections management systems across the museums, and making collections more accessible through high-resolution imagery and detailed metadata. Shaw says, 'Our vision is for Oxford University Museums to pioneer ways of developing and sharing knowledge and expertise so that everyone, wherever they are in the world, can engage with and find inspiration through our collections, activities and scholarship. Designation enhances and supports this vision and encourages us to put our collections at the heart of what we do.'

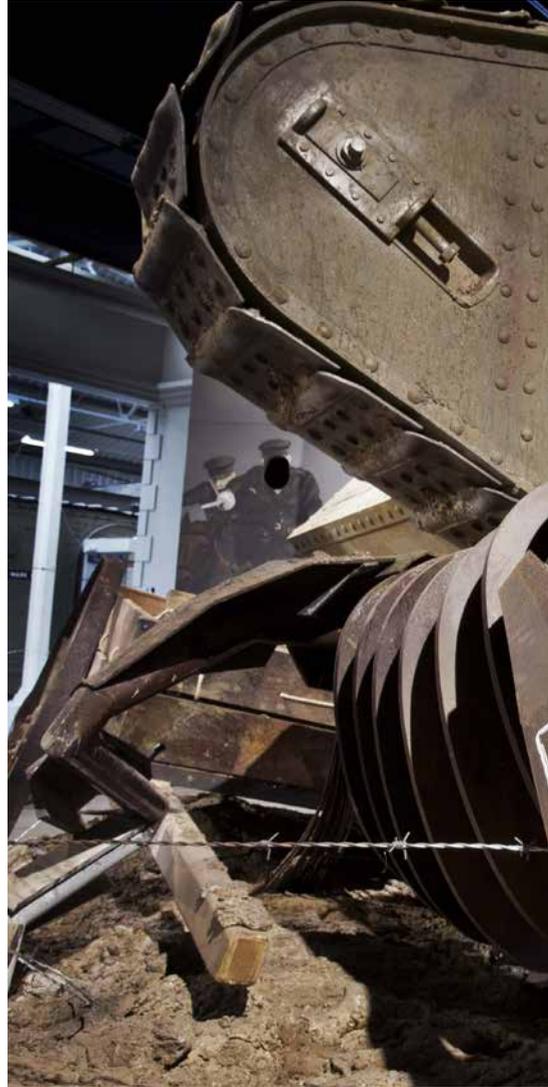
*Wooden war shield showing cartoon hero Phantom with Pidgin inscription 'the man who never dies,' Wahgi People, Papua New Guinea. Credit: Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford*



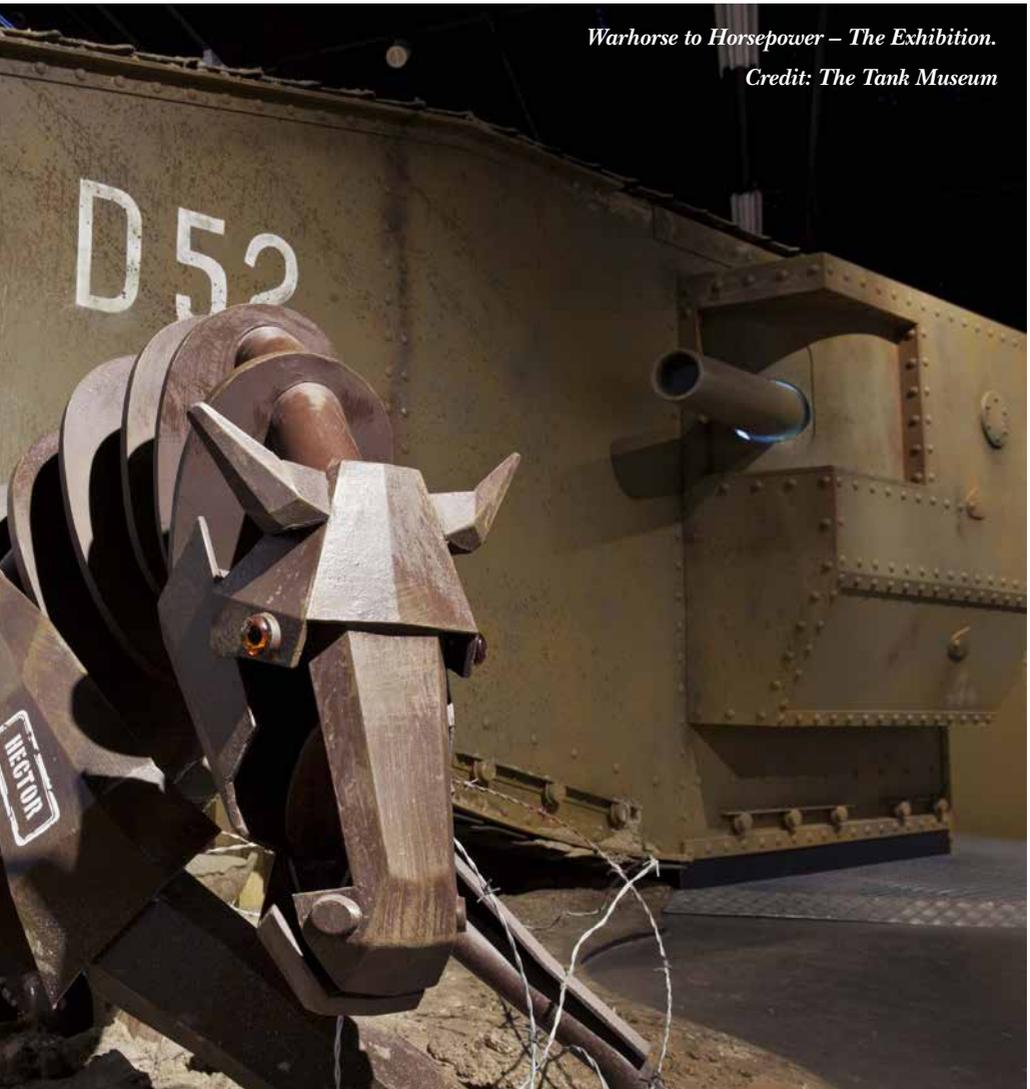
# The Tank Museum

The Tank Museum holds the world's finest collection of armoured fighting vehicles, from 1915 to the present day. Highlights include 'Little Willie', the first ever tank, and 'Tiger 131', the only working Tiger Tank from the Second World War. The tank was a British invention in the First World War, designed to save British lives in trench warfare, and embodies the use of technology instead of blood to solve complex battlefield issues.

The Tank Museum applied for Designation because, as a niche collection in a rural area, it was vital that the UK heritage system recognised their collections as world class, in order to attract the funding they required for long term sustainability. Richard Smith, Director of The Tank Museum recalls: 'During our transformation programme, At Close Quarters (1998–2009), the role



of our Designated status was pivotal in our ability to convince major funders that this was a cause worth supporting. This was of great significance with the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Ministry of Defence, the Regional Development Agency and major private donors.'



In the past, The Tank Museum had to work hard for recognition of the significance of their collection, but Designation has changed that. Smith says: 'The scheme short circuits conversations about "is the collection important enough" or "is it worth it".'

With a quality kite-mark we can start any discussion, whether internal, external or overseas with an agreed position of significance... It gives our visitors and donors confidence that they are supporting something special.'

# The Wellcome Library

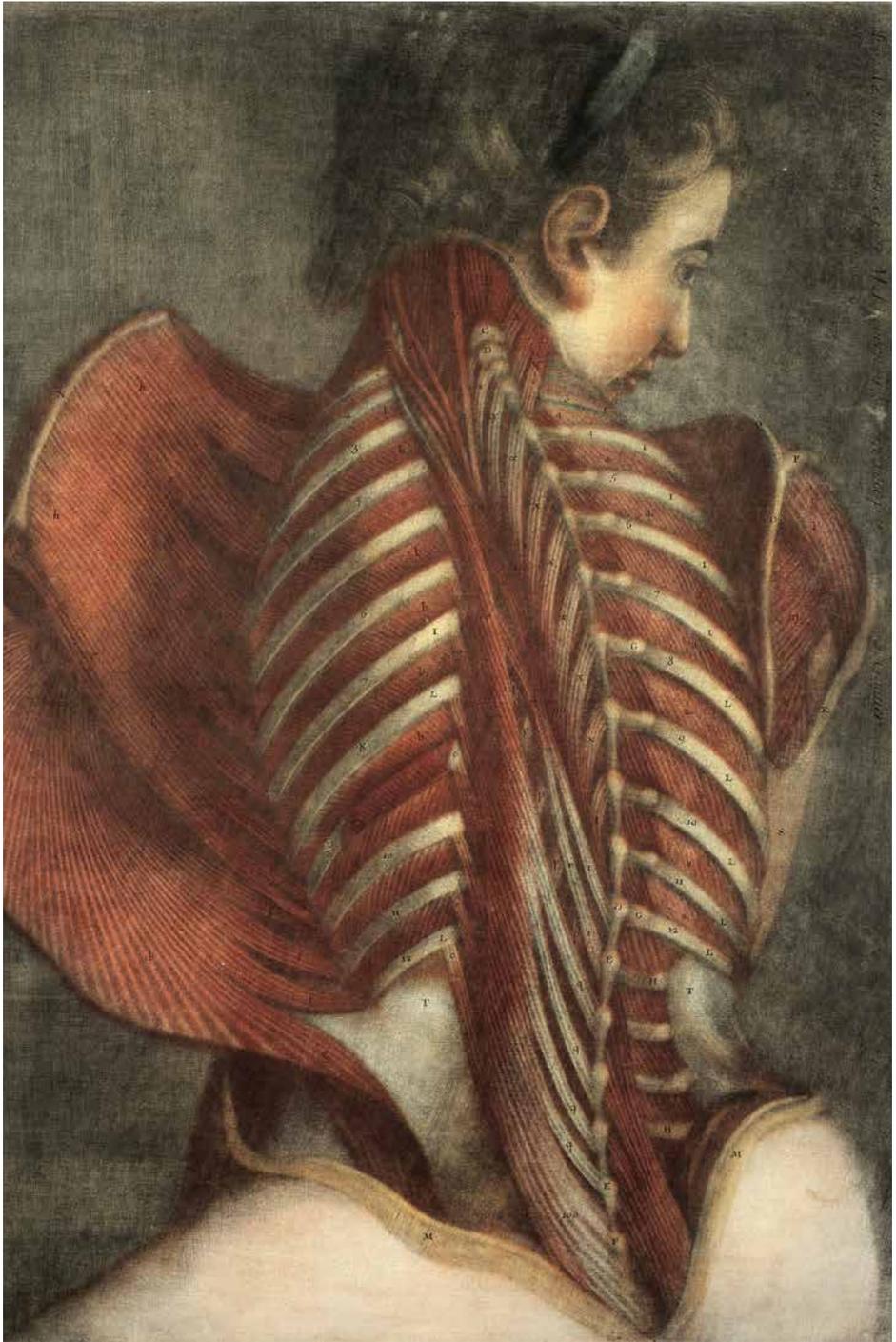
The Wellcome Library is part of Wellcome Collection, a free cultural venue that hosts permanent and changing exhibitions and events. It takes its name from the pharmacist and collector Henry Wellcome, who created the largest museum of medical history anywhere in the world. Since Wellcome's death in 1936, the library has continued to grow, and in 2001 acquired the personal archive of Nobel Prize-winner Francis Crick, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA. In 2013 the complete Crick archive – together with those of his contemporaries Rosalind Franklin, Maurice Wilkins and James Watson – was digitised and made freely available online.

Designation has helped raise public interest in the collection, encouraging people to want to find out more. Since

2005, the number of research visits to the Wellcome Library has more than doubled to over 40,000 per year. But Designation has also helped promote the library to new visitors, who may not previously have been interested in the history of health and medicine. 'It has encouraged us to think about how we engage with new audiences, reaching beyond our traditional academic research users', says Simon Chaplin, Head of the Wellcome Library.

For the Wellcome Library, Designation has also been crucial in highlighting the significance of its collection, by providing an independent and objective assessment of it, 'not just in comparison to similar collections elsewhere but against the whole range of heritage collections preserved in England's libraries, archives and museums.' Chaplin says, 'We're proud to be a Designated Collection – it is a great mark of distinction, but also reminds us of the duty of care we have to a collection that is of global significance.'

*Muscles of the back in a female (1746) Gautier Dagoty.*  
Credit: Wellcome Library, London



# The Wordsworth Trust

The Wordsworth Trust is home to a world class collection of manuscripts, rare books and visual artefacts. It includes over 90 per cent of Wordsworth's verse manuscripts, Dorothy Wordsworth's notebooks, and correspondence spanning the whole of Wordsworth's life.

When the Wordsworth Trust applied for Designation in 1997, the collection was housed in a cramped former barn. Designation enabled the Trust to demonstrate the collection's importance both locally and nationally, and make the case for a new, purpose-built centre. The Jerwood Centre opened in 2005 and was immediately acclaimed as 'the global centre for Wordsworth studies, and the study of British Romanticism generally'. It now attracts researchers and student groups from all over the world and

has provided the Wordsworth Trust with a venue to hold public talks, workshops and other events based on the collection. These events – which didn't exist before Designation – are hugely popular, attracting around 1,200 people in 2013.

Michael McGregor, Director of the Wordsworth Trust, says, 'Looking back, being awarded Designation in 1997 was a major milestone for the Wordsworth Trust. It has been like a quality assurance scheme for the many institutions and individuals who support financially the ongoing development of our collection, whether through making new acquisitions, doing research, or producing exhibitions and publications. Becoming a Major Partner Museum in 2012, as part of the Cumbria Museum Consortium, has significantly increased our capacity to benefit people of all ages and backgrounds, and this was entirely down to Designation.'

The Wordsworth Trust has exciting plans to improve access to its collection, including a complete refurbishment of the Wordsworth Museum, and the creation of new indoor and outdoor spaces that will enable more people to discover the power of Wordsworth's poetry.



## English Folk Dance and Song Society

The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML), held by the English Folk Dance & Song Society is a unique multi-media collection of folk art materials. These archive, published and rare materials – including books, periodicals, film and ephemera – come principally from the English-speaking world and are regarded as England's national collection.

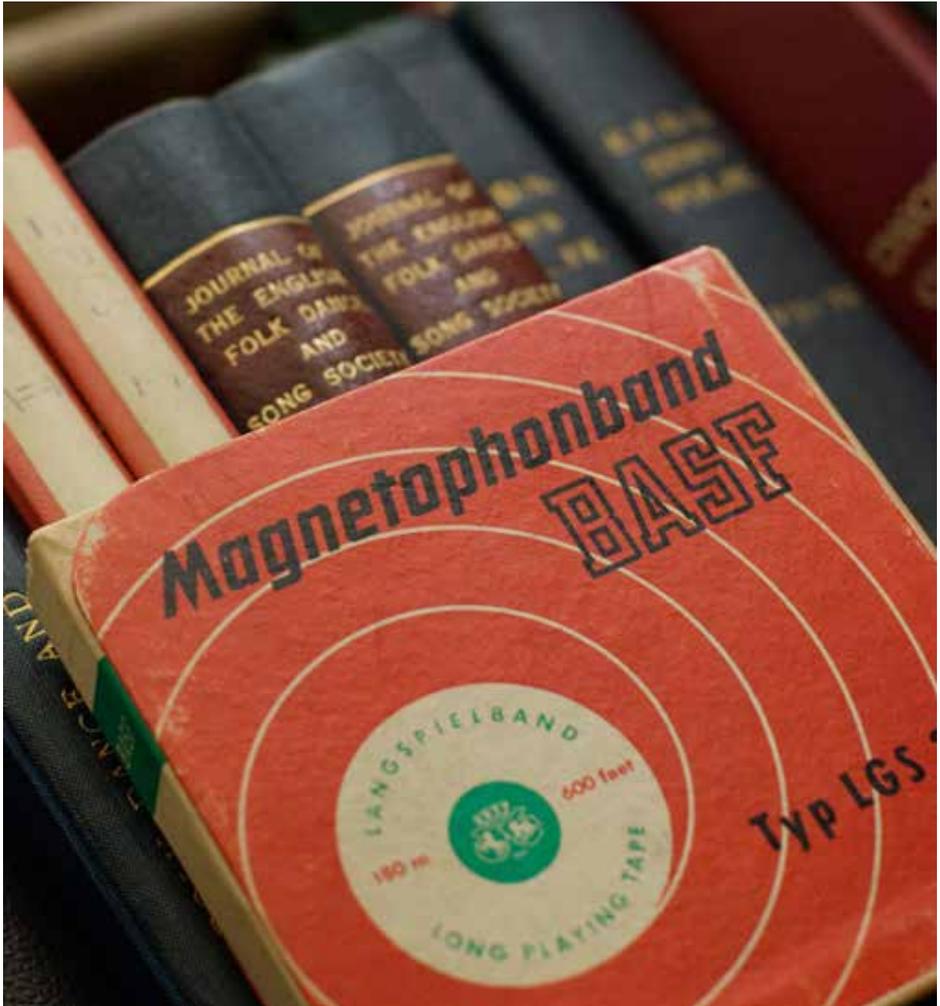
For VWML, becoming a Designated collection was not easy. Katy Spicer, VWML's Chief Executive, remembers that it was 'a necessarily tough process but worth doing. It has given us the status that we feel our library and collections deserve and also served to raise our standards of collection care and management.'

Spicer also sees the Scheme as giving the library recognition: 'It provides

public recognition that VWML is *the* resource for the folk arts of the English speaking world and beyond', she says. It also helped them secure Heritage Lottery Funding for a digitisation and learning project, and has 'raised the bar in terms of care and management of the collections and the English Folk Dance and Song Society's responsibility for that.'

The success of Designation for VWML can be seen through the rise in visitors to the library. Spicer says, 'we have now given the public – the world – an unprecedented access to primary materials through TFE and a deeper insight into our holdings via our burgeoning online catalogue and indexes. This has helped raise the profile of VWML and the subject as a whole. This whole part of our work is growing year on year.

Lee Hall, (playwright and author *Billy Elliott*) said "The VWML is absolutely one of the most important and remarkable libraries in Britain and has a world-class collection which is of unique and unparalleled value. It is the lifeblood of British Folk Music, a living place of learning and creativity that serves as a lodestone for hundreds of thousands of people who share in the work done there daily.



To connect the highest scholarship with the lifeblood of culture makes the VVWL a very precious institution. It is a workshop, a gold mine, a word-hoard, a college, a talking shop, a sanctuary, and for those interested in the subjects housed there, the most important and precious repository of information.”

*Cecil Sharp Sound Library.*

*Credit: Peter Locke*

## Designated Collections by Area

### London

- **The Baring Archive,**  
The entire holdings
- **BT Heritage,** BT Archives
- **Corporation of London,**  
The History of London Collection
- **Courtauld Institute Gallery,**  
The entire holdings
- **Dulwich Picture Gallery,**  
The entire holdings
- **English Folk Dance and Song Society,** The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library
- **Firepower, The Royal Artillery Museum,** The entire holdings
- **Horniman Museum and Gardens,**  
The Musical Instruments Collection and Ethnographic Collections
- **Royal College of Surgeons of England,** The Hunterian Museum Collection, library and archives
- **The Institution of Civil Engineers,**  
The library, archive and works of art
- **Institution of Engineering and Technology,** The entire holdings
- **Jewish Museum,**  
The Ritual Judaica Collection
- **Kensington Royal Palace,**  
Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection
- **King's College London,** Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives
- **Lambeth Palace Library,**  
The entire holdings
- **The Library and Museum of Freemasonry,** The entire holdings
- **London Transport Museum,**  
The entire holdings
- **London School of Economics and Political Science,** The British Library of Political and Economic Science and the Women's Library at LSE
- **Middlesex University, Museum of Design and Domestic Architecture,**  
The Silver Studio Collection
- **Museum of London and Museum of London Docklands,**  
The entire holdings
- **University College London, Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology,** The entire holdings
- **Royal Academy of Arts,**  
The collections, library and archive
- **Royal Academy of Music,** The special collections and archives of the Royal Academy of Music Library

- **Royal Geographical Society (with Institute of British Geographers),** All geographical collections
- **Royal Horticultural Society,** The Lindley Library
- **Royal Institute of British Architects,** The British Architecture Library
- **The British Postal Museum and Archive,** The Royal Mail Archive
- **Sir John Soane's Museum,** The entire holdings
- **Wellcome Trust,** All collections within the Wellcome Library
- **Westminster Libraries and Archives,** The Art and Design Collection
- **Canal and River Trust,** The Canal Museum, entire holdings
- **Compton Verney,** The Archaic Chinese Bronzes
- **Culture Coventry, Coventry Transport Museum,** the entire holdings
- **Derby Museum and Art Gallery,** The Joseph Wright of Derby Collection
- **Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust,** The entire holdings
- **National Tramway Museum,** The entire holdings
- **Lincolnshire Archives,** The Lincoln Episcopal Rolls and Registers
- **Northampton Central Museum and Art Gallery,** The Boot and Shoe Collection
- **Shakespeare Birthplace Trust with Royal Shakespeare Company,** All collections relating to Shakespeare's life and times
- **Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service,** The entire holdings
- **Stoke on Trent Museums Service,** The entire holdings
- **University of Birmingham Lapworth Museum of Geology,** The entire holdings
- **University of Birmingham Library,** The Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern Manuscripts

## Midlands

- **Barber Institute of Fine Arts,** The entire holdings
- **Birmingham Museums Trust,** Fine and decorative arts, science and industry (housed at Thinktank), Birmingham history (including numismatics) and the Pinto Collection
- **Birmingham Libraries,** Archive collections, the Birmingham Shakespeare Library, special collections, the Early and Fine Printing Collection, and the Birmingham Collection
- **Black Country Living Museum,** The entire holdings

- **University of Nottingham,**  
The Portland (London), Portland of Welbeck and Newcastle of Clumber Archives. The DH Lawrence Collection
- **University of Warwick Modern Records Centre,** The entire holdings
- **Wedgwood Museum,**  
The entire holdings

## North

- **Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum,**  
The entire holdings
- **Bowes Museum,**  
The entire holdings
- **Bradford Industrial Museum,**  
Worsted Collection
- **Canal and River Trust, The National Waterways Museum,** the entire holdings
- **Chetham's Library,**  
The entire holdings
- **Durham University Library,**  
The Bishop Cosin's Library and the Sudan Archive
- **Durham University Oriental Museum,** Egyptian and Chinese Collections
- **Harewood House,**  
The entire holdings
- **Kingston upon Hull City Museums and Art Galleries,**  
Collections relating to the city and region
- **Lancashire County Museum Service,** The Textile Industry Collections
- **Leeds Museums and Galleries,**  
Natural science, fine and decorative arts and industrial collections
- **Liverpool and Merseyside Record Offices,** Photographic Image Collection
- **Manchester City Galleries,**  
Fine and decorative art, and costume collections
- **The National Co-operative Archive, The Co-operative College,** The entire holdings
- **National Football Museum,**  
Museum's Core Collection
- **The People's History Museum,**  
The entire holdings
- **Sheffield City Museums,**  
Metalwork Collections
- **Sunderland Museums and Heritage Service and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums,**  
Fine and decorative arts, natural sciences, and science and technology museum collections
- **Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums,** Shipbuilding, marine and maritime trade archive collections
- **Unilever Archives & Records Management (Unilever PLC),**

Archive of the United Africa Company, and all permanent archive collections

- **University of Leeds University Library Special Collections,** The English Literature Collection, the Romany Collection, the Cookery Collection, the Liddle Collection and the Leeds Russian Archive
- **University of Manchester John Rylands University Library,** Special Collections and Manchester Medical Society Library
- **University of Manchester Manchester Museum,** The entire holdings
- **University of Manchester Whitworth Art Gallery,** The entire holdings
- **Wordsworth Trust,** The entire holdings
- **York Museums Trust,** The entire holdings

## South East

- **Oxford University Library,** Special Collections at the Bodleian Library
  - **Royal Engineers Museum,** The entire holdings
  - **Royal Pavilion, Libraries and Museums (Brighton and Hove),** Decorative arts, world art and anthropology, and natural history collections
  - **University of Cambridge Churchill Archives Centre,** The entire holdings
  - **University of Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum,** The entire holdings
  - **University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology,** The entire holdings
  - **University of Cambridge Museum of Zoology,** The entire holdings
  - **University of Cambridge St John's College,** The Old Library Collection
  - **University of Cambridge Sedgwick Museum of Geology,** The entire holdings
  - **University of Cambridge Whipple Museum of the History of Science,** The entire holdings
  - **University of Oxford Ashmolean Museum,** The entire holdings
  - **University of Oxford Museum of the History of Science,** The entire holdings
  - **University of Oxford Museum of Natural History,** The entire holdings
- **The Britten-Pears Library,** The entire holdings
  - **Colchester Castle Museum,** The Archaeology Collections
  - **Norfolk Record Office,** All collections relating to the history of Norfolk
  - **Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery,** The entire holdings

- **University of Oxford Pitt Rivers Museum**, The entire holdings
- **University of Reading**, Archive of British Publishing and Printing, The Beckett Collection
- **University of Reading Museum of English Rural Life**, The entire holdings
- **University of Sussex Library**, Mass Observation Archive
- **Weald and Downland Open Air Museum**, The entire holdings
- **Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum**, The Arts and Crafts Collection
- **Cornwall Record Office**, The archives relating to Cornwall's hard-rock mining industry
- **Hampshire Record Office**, The entire holdings
- **Mary Rose Trust**, The entire holdings
- **National Motor Museum**, The entire holdings
- **Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery**, The Cottonian Collection
- **Porthcurno Telegraph Museum**, The core collection of submarine telegraphy objects and the historic archive collections

## South West

- **Bath and North East Somerset Heritage Services**, The entire holdings of the Fashion Museum and the Roman Baths Museum
- **Bath Record Office**, The entire holdings
- **Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives**, Collections related geology, eastern art and Bristol's role as a manufacturing city and major seaport
- **Bristol City Record Office and Bristol Central Library's Local Studies Service**, All collections relating to the history and development of the city of Bristol
- **Canal and River Trust**, Waterways Museum at Gloucester Docks, the entire holdings
- **Royal Albert Memorial Museum**, The World Cultures Collections
- **Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum**, The archaeology collections
- **Southampton City Council Cultural Services**, Fine Art Collection and Archaeology Collection
- **Tank Museum, Bovington Camp**, The entire holdings
- **Wiltshire Heritage Museum**, The entire holdings

*The silver swan at The Bowes Museum.  
Credit: The Bowes Museum by Sasa Savic*



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Charity registration no 1036733

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ISBN: 978-0-7287-1547-9

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