

Donating an Object



**Museum
nan Eilean**



We are always very interested to hear from individuals, families or organisations who wish to donate an object. The purpose of this leaflet is to explain the process we go through in order to assess an object you offer, and what happens if we decide to accept it.

What should I do if I have an object I think may be of interest?

If you've got something you think could be added to the museum collection, please take some photographs of the object, measure and describe it, and bring that information to us along with copies of any documentation you may have about it. Don't forget to leave your contact details. One of our staff will contact you if we need more information.

Please don't bring the object to the museum without discussing it with us first as we will need to make special arrangements for storage.

How does the museum decide which objects to accept?

A Collections Committee, composed of the professional staff of the museum, meets regularly to assess potential donations. We will consider the information you have sent us, and we may ask if you can bring the object in for us to look at.

We have a Collections Development Policy, approved by the Comhairle, which describes the objects the museum will collect. The policy includes this summary:

“Museum nan Eilean will seek to collect material illustrating the prehistory, history and culture of the Outer Hebrides. It will collect material dating from the time of the earliest human settlement in the Outer Hebrides until the present day.”

In operating the policy we consider whether the object offered was made or used in the Outer Hebrides or by someone from or living on

the islands. We consider whether the object will be unique within our collection and those of the Comainn Eachdriadh, or whether it duplicates objects already held.

We also consider the condition of the object and what conservation work may be required in order to ensure it can be safely kept for future generations. In doing so we also work out whether we can safely store or exhibit the object.

Often we decide to defer a decision on an object in order to consult experts and colleagues at other museums, or with your permission to appeal for further information from the public.

As the museum is obliged to care for objects appropriately and keep them in trust permanently for the public benefit once they are in our collection, we can't accept every object offered to us.

What will happen if the museum decides to accept an object?

If we decide to accept your object, we will write to you to confirm this decision. We will also fill out some forms with you which describe the donation and legally sign over the object from your possession to Museum nan Eilean. In the case of high value or very rare objects we may need proof that you are the legal owner and have authority to make the donation.

We will also make arrangements to collect the object and to record any information you would wish us to use when displaying it, such as its provenance and any credit line to be used on a label.

What if my object is not accepted?

If we decide not to accept your object into the collection we will write to you explaining why. We may recommend another museum that may be interested in the object and will help you get in touch with them if that is the case.

If you accept my object, will it go on display in the museum?

We will most likely not be able to put your object on display immediately. This is because the main museum displays are intended to last for several years. As the cases contain loans from other museums we also need their permission to open them up and rearrange the contents.

Most of the museum's collection is in store so only a small portion of it is on display. We collect objects that may be of interest to people and for future reference. So even if an object is not on display we try to make it accessible for people wanting to do research.

If your object fits with an upcoming special exhibition it may be included.

Whenever we display an object, we first need to ensure that it is in a fit condition and is not likely to either be damaged or to damage other objects in the collection. This assessment and any necessary treatment may take some time.

If your contact details are kept up to date we will do our best to inform you if your object will be displayed.



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