

MALTON MUSEUM

Procedures for the Deposition of Archaeological Archives

Contact: Collections Manager

Address: 36 Yorkersgate, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 7AB

Email: collections.maltonmuseum@gmail.com

Telephone: 01653 691262

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1 Overview and Procedure

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines apply to all bodies and individuals wishing to deposit archaeological archives with Malton Museum. They cover the results of field archaeology, buildings recording and photographic, geophysical and desk top survey.

Malton Museum is a volunteer-run museum with limited resources. Following these guidelines will help the Museum to manage the archaeology collections effectively and maintain public accessibility for study and enjoyment.

1.2 Malton Museum Collections Policy

All Accredited museums are obliged to have a written Collections Policy which includes clear ethical considerations for collecting. Malton Museum's Policy is available on request. In summary, Malton Museum collects archaeological material from all periods from Malton and Norton. Material from other areas of Ryedale will be collected if relevant to the Museum's existing collections. It also collects social history material that has a specific connection with the life of the towns.

The Museum can only take well ordered, stable and accessible archives. The Museum is bound ethically not to accept archives resulting from excavations which it believes have been undertaken unlawfully, for example without the consent of the landowner or on a protected site without proper permissions.

1.3 Accessions Committee

Any offer of material to the Museum will be discussed by the Accessions Committee which has the power to accept on behalf of Malton Museum CIO. There is no obligation on the Museum to accept material, and each offer will be judged against the collecting policy and restraints on museum collecting.

1.4 Written Notification of Planned Fieldwork

To help in forward planning and to aid smooth transfer of archives, the Museum would like to be informed in writing of proposed fieldwork at the earliest opportunity (*see form in Appendix 1*), and if possible before work begins on site. In return the Museum will be willing to accept in principle a well prepared archive within agreed conditions and for a deposition (box) fee.

1.5 Museum Accession Code / Site Identification Number

Once there is agreement in principle that Malton Museum will take the archive, the Museum will issue an Accession Number. If the Museum issues an accession number please quote it in all correspondence, reports and publications and mark it on all site files, pottery, human bone, finds bags and boxes.

1.6 Selection, Retention & Dispersal

It is recognised that informed sampling and dispersal or disposal of material of low research value enables more effective curation of the remainder. Early agreement between a Unit and Malton Museum on a selection and retention strategy should remove any need for further selection by the Museum on or after deposition of the archive. **It is expected that such a strategy will take into account the wider archaeological context. Un-stratified material of intrinsic archaeological value should be retained.** Any material discarded should be clearly and fully documented.

Any small (registered) finds not retained in the archive (e.g. retained by the landowner) must be suitably recorded in the archive with photographs or illustrations.

The Museum may refuse to accept an archive if it is felt that the selection, retention and disposal process has not been carried out to acceptable professional standards.

The Museum is happy to discuss possible educational uses for material that will not be included in the long-term archive.

The Museum might need to discard material after its transfer and where necessary this will be done in consultation with specialists and the original excavator as appropriate.

1.6.1 Human remains

Malton Museum adheres to 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums', Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2005) and 'Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England', Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England (2017).

Unless there is requirement for immediate reburial, the Museum will normally accept stratified articulated inhumations, stratified disarticulated inhumations (depending on the quantity and condition of bone present) and cremations. It does not accept unstratified human bone unless it can be shown to be associated with stratified material.

Arrangements for reburial of human remains if required are the responsibility of the Unit including liaison with coroners and registrars and all costs pertaining to ethical reburial. Please include as part of the documentary archive a record of the reburied material, the reasons for reburial, details of the location of the reburial site and copies of all correspondence. For further guidance on best practice regarding reburial, Units are directed towards section 4.4.1 of 'Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections', Society of Museum Archaeologists (1993), and 'Updated

Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains', ClfA/BABAO (2017).

1.6.2 Environmental samples

Malton Museum is not in a position to receive unprocessed soil samples taken for environmental analysis.

1.7 Removal of Finds for Specialist Purposes

Malton Museum expects that no material will be permanently removed from an archive for retention by the Unit or a finds specialist (e.g. for inclusion in a type series) without consulting the Museum. All material removed from the archive for such a purpose should be fully documented and proxy cards placed in the appropriate archive boxes.

Please consult the Museum on any proposed destructive analysis. Comprehensive records of the object and the processes involved should be included in the documentary archive. Destructive analysis of human bone should be allowed only in very exceptional circumstances.

1.8 Transfer of Legal Title

By law all excavated material is the property of the landowner, with the exception of those items owned by the Crown or falling under the Treasure Act 1996. The Museum will only accept an archive if ownership has been formally transferred in writing to Malton Museum CIO. The person signing the Transfer of Title Form (see *Appendix 2*) must have the legal authority to do so.

The Museum is prepared to discuss acceptance of partial archives, but the Unit must be able to demonstrate that efforts have been made to obtain the full archive. Please include a clear list of material kept by the landowner in the archive. If significant individual objects or a significant number are retained by the landowner, the Museum may accept only the documentary archive or refuse to accept the archive altogether. Units should contact the Museum as soon as a problem with transfer of title arises and no promises should be made to the landowner on the Museum's behalf.

The Unit should not request an accession number if from the outset the landowner wishes to retain all the finds.

Malton Museum CIO will never purchase an archive, and will only accept an archive on loan in specific circumstances, such as excavations on Crown land, and only when the Museum has been approached prior to deposition. It will refuse transfer where there is a suspicion that material has been recovered without permission of the landowner.

1.9 Transfer of Archive

Transfer can only occur when all material is assembled and complete. Two copies of an indexed inventory of all the material and the completed Notification of Fieldwork / Transference of Archaeological Archive form (see *Appendix 1*) should be sent to the Museum along with a purchase order.

1.10 Copyright

The Museum should be informed of any restriction of copyright that may pertain for parts of the record. The intellectual rights to the documentary archive are owned by the field unit as originator of the work unless otherwise specified in the contract. The Museum prefers that copyright be transferred in full to the Museum. Alternatively, the Museum can be granted full licence to research, study, display, publish and provide public access to all the information and finds contained in the archive. The depositor must arrange for sub-contracted specialists to transfer copyright ownership to the Museum or allow the Museum to curate and use their work fully. The copyright status of the archive must be clearly stated.

All licenses must be stated in writing in the documentary archive. The Museum will not pay for the granting of any licence.

The Museum will acknowledge the originators of the archive if it uses the information and will pass on to the originators any requests for publication of parts of the archive for anything other than academic journals.

The Museum acknowledges that elements of the archive, such as Ordnance Survey maps and original illustrations may remain the copyright of third parties.

1.11 Timescales

Delivery will be arranged in consultation and with plenty of advanced warning for the Museum to make the necessary preparations to receive the archive.

1.12 Delivery

Arrangements for the transport, care and insurance cover for material whilst in transit to the Museum is the responsibility of the depositor.

The Museum prefers archives to be personally deposited. If an independent courier service is used, it is the responsibility of the depositor to ensure that the archive is properly insured and that the courier is made aware of the nature of the material being transported.

If the Museum finds that the archive does not meet the standards set out in this document, the field unit is responsible for collecting the archive at its own expense

1.13 Deposition (Box) Fee

The Museum charges the sum of £80.00 per standard size low-acid card box. Where the bulk of material is too small to justify a large box or in the case of metals in Stewart boxes, smaller boxes will be worked out to the equivalent volume of a larger box and charged accordingly and loose items, such as architectural fragments, will be treated in the same way.

This charge is reviewed annually. Please note that the current charge applies to all transfers, regardless of when the material was excavated. The field unit must issue the Museum with a purchase order. An invoice will be issued once the archive has been checked and agreed by the Museum.

The Museum may waive box charges for amateur excavations at its own discretion.

2 Presentation of the Finds Archive

2.1 Nomenclature

Malton Museum advises the use of the standard Collections Trust (formerly MDA) Archaeological Objects Thesaurus. It is recognised that, in addition, there may be standard specialist terminology and a list of such terms should be included in the documentary archive.

2.2 Small (Registered) Finds Numbers and Context Numbers

It is essential that small find and context number sequences are unique within the site archive. Numbering should continue sequentially and not start again at the beginning of separate field seasons, nor should there be separate small find numbering sequences for different classes of material.

2.3 Conservation and Analysis

All finds should be stable before transfer. In particular, Malton Museum does not have the facilities to accept wet-packed finds. Conservation work must be undertaken by a trained Conservator and detailed conservation records, X-radiographs and photographs should be included in the archive.

2.4 Finds Marking/Labelling

It is of vital importance that all archaeological material remains associated with its documentation and the written site archive. All finds packaging should be clearly labelled with the Museum accession number, context and small (registered) find number (as appropriate), using approved permanent pens which are light and water resistant. The Museum recommends conservator-tested *Artline 70* pens.

All finds marking should be neat, legible and reversible.

All pottery, architectural fragments and human skeletal material should be marked using Indian ink within a base and top layer of Paraloid B72 in acetone.

Human bone should not be marked on articulating surfaces or evidence of pathology. Skulls should be marked discreetly on the outside in small legible writing.

Pottery should be marked on the inside of the vessel if possible, and not on breaks, or fragile or flaking surfaces.

Large items should also have a tie-on label. This must be waterproof (e.g. made of Tyvek), written with an Artline 70 pen and tied on with polyester twine.

Where appropriate for singly packaged items, an image of the object attached to the outside of the box would be useful.

2.5 Finds Packaging

Malton Museum conforms to recognised conservation standards for packaging. Archives can only be deposited in the Museum if packed in a satisfactory manner. If incorrect packing materials are used the Museum may have to delay acceptance of the material until it is packed correctly or pass on to the Unit all costs incurred in bringing it up to standard. All items should be packed in a way which is appropriate to their stability and fragility. The Museum will not accept any wet-packed material. As a guidance:-

Bags

Except for very large objects, finds should be in standardised re-sealable polythene bags with write-on panels, perforated to allow air circulation. Bag sizes should be determined by the size of objects they are to contain in order to ensure efficient use of storage space. Paper bags or other non-suitable plastic bags are not acceptable. Small finds and other fragile objects should be placed in pierced bags with Jiffy foam, the ridges running vertically for maximum support.

Boxes

Standard size low-acid card boxes with brass staples (*See Appendix 3 for details of sizes and a supplier*) should be used for bulk finds and non-metal small finds. Dry metal finds should be in sealed Stewart boxes containing an appropriate amount of silica gel in stitched fabric sachets and humidity indicator cards.

Boxes must not be overfilled and must not weigh more than 10kg.

2.5.1 Bulk finds

The majority of material such as pottery, building material and animal bone is classed as bulk finds for the purpose of this document.

Non-sensitive Bulk material should be washed, *thoroughly* dried, bagged (with the bags pierced), boxed and labelled as above. Finds should be boxed by material type and contexts boxed in sequential order. When material has been extracted from its context sequence, for example a whole pot, sherds chosen for publication/illustration, or where the item is too big, proxy cards should be placed in the context boxes from which the objects have been taken. In the case of small sites, e.g. watching briefs, different materials may be boxed together, provided that more delicate material is provided adequate protection.

Complete, near complete and reconstructed pottery should be packaged separately according to need. Friable pottery, sherds of tin-glazed wares and porcelain requiring special attention should be provided with adequate physical protection.

Small mammalian, avian or piscine bones should be packed in small transparent labelled plastic boxes to protect them before being placed in the box with the rest of the animal bone or else boxed separately according to the quantity.

2.5.2 Coal and charcoal

Coal and charcoal can be boxed in a miscellaneous box.

2.5.3 Human skeletal material.

Following washing and marking, skeletons should be packed in pierced mini-grip bags (as above) with Jiffy foam padding and placed in standard sized low acid card boxes. To avoid crushing and other damage and to allow ease of access for research, heavier bones should be placed at the bottom of the box.

2.5.4 Shell

Shell, in its natural form, should be provided with adequate physical protection and boxed with the animal bone.

2.5.5 Slag

Slag should be thoroughly dried and stored in mini-grip bags by context within polythene boxes or low acidity cardboard boxes.

2.5.6 Small (Registered) Finds

All small finds must be in a suitable and stable condition. Objects of leather, wood, glass and other wet-packed material should be treated and conserved, and fully dried before bagging. Small finds should be packed in pierced mini-grip bags and divided into metals and non-metals before boxing appropriately; metals in Stewart boxes and non-metals in low acid cardboard boxes. Coins should be grouped together in a separate Stewart box where practical.

An accredited archaeological conservator will be able to advise on the appropriate number of silica gel sachets required for specific objects and box sizes. Please make sure that the RH indicator strip is visible through the box wall to avoid the lid having to be removed. RH strips will be checked before the archive is accepted to ensure silica gel is suitably conditioned to provide an adequate micro-environment.

2.5.7 Structural timbers and architectural stonework

Because of limited space, any finds of structural timbers or architectural stonework should be discussed with Malton Museum at the earliest possible opportunity.

3 Presentation of the Documentary Archive

3.1 Documentary Archive

The archive should be prepared to the standards defined by 'A guide to best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation of archaeological archives', the Archaeological Archives Forum (2007), and following guidelines detailed in 'Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage', UKIC (1990).

All records compiled during the project should be included in the archive, along with two copies of the final report.

All staples, paper clips etc should be removed. Malton Museum prefers papers to be packed in archival flat document cases. Within these cases documents and photograph envelopes should be held in A4 archival sleeves and the cases should have applied labels, held in archival labels holders on the outside. The first case must include a list of contents for the documentary archive and a clear list of all the finds held in the artefactual archive and of those which may have been retained by landowners or otherwise dispersed. Documents should not generally be folded, rolling is preferred. Negatives, contact strips and slides should be inserted into archival quality filing sleeves. Photographs should be stored in archival quality polyester sleeves.

Digital material should be recorded on good quality CD-ROM or DVD-ROM for inclusion with the paper archive. As far as is possible, printouts of digital files should be included in the archive.

Please state the software and version that was used to create digital files. In general the Museum will accept text files in PDF, PDF/A, DOCX, DOC, XLSX or XLS formats, images in TIFF or JPG formats and exports of data from databases in CSV format. For other types of applications, (e.g. GIS), please consult the Museum about acceptable file formats.

Digital media submitted to the Museum should also be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service and to the OASIS database.

APPENDIX 1

Malton Museum

Notification of Fieldwork / Transference of Archaeological Archive

Field Unit:

Anticipated Start Date:

Anticipated Deposition Date:

Type of Fieldwork (*please circle*):

evaluation / trenching / watching brief / field walking / excavation

Site Manager:

English Heritage Code (if applicable):

Site Name:

Civil Parish:

Unit Reference Code:

Type of Site Expected (*please circle*)

Prehistoric/ Roman/ Medieval/ Post-Medieval

Quantity of Material Expected (boxes): <10 <20 <30 <40 <50 >50

Conservation Problems anticipated:

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APPENDIX 2

TRANSFER OF TITLE FORM

To Malton Museum

Site Name:

.....

Site Address:

.....

.....

Museum Accession code:

I am the legal owner of the finds from the above named archaeological site. I hereby agree to donate the artefacts from the site to Malton Museum. This donation is an absolute gift to the museum without condition. I relinquish all legal claims for the ownership of the artefacts in favour of the Malton Museum CIO.

Signed:

Print:

Position:

Organisation:

Address:

.....

.....

Date:

APPENDIX 3

Low Acid Card Boxes:

420 x 310 x 125mm; 50mm lid

2250 mic kraftlined board

Available from:

Prima Yorkshire

Hillam Road Trading Estate

Hillam Road off Canal Road

Bradford

BD2 1QN

Web: www.primayorks.co.uk

Email: richard@primayorks.co.uk

Tel: 01274 481222

Fax: 01274 482111