

Thank you for your interest in Portsmouth Museums and Records Service

Portsmouth City Museum and Records Office, The D-Day Museum, Charles Dickens Birthplace, Southsea Castle, Eastney Beam Engine House and the Cumberland House Museum of Natural History are full of objects generously donated by members of the public that help us show the history of Portsmouth and the D-Day Landings.

So, you'd like to offer us your object?

We hope that this will explain why we will accept some objects and not others.

What do we collect?

We collect objects connected to all aspects of the lives of the people of the City of Portsmouth – community, home, personal and work. This includes photographs and archaeological finds as well as objects of local interest. The Service is interested in pieces of fine and decorative art such as paintings, prints, furniture, ceramics, glass, metal work and sculpture. We also operate the D - Day Museum that records the history of the D – Day landings and the Battle of Normandy (June – August 1944).

In addition we collect rocks, fossils and other examples of natural history originating from the Hampshire basin and coastal plain. We are also interested in objects associated with Charles Dickens to supplement the displays at the Birthplace Museum.

We also collect items relating to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, who was another famous Portsmouth resident.

Portsmouth City Records Office, which is based at our Museum Road site, collects documents relating to the people, organisations, businesses and properties of Portsmouth.

Most importantly, particularly in the areas of social history and archaeology, we usually only collect objects with a strong connection to Portsmouth (by this we mean, for the most part, within the boundaries of the City of Portsmouth). We are always pleased to fill “gaps” in our collection, for example with objects that show the contribution made by minority communities to life in Portsmouth or First World War objects.

How do we decide what we collect?

We collect items of any age, right up to the present day. However, what we look for in an object is mainly summed up by these questions:

- Is the object local? i.e. Made or used in Portsmouth.
(though we do collect things from further afield if they are art objects, archaeological finds or to do with D-Day and the Battle of Normandy).
- Can you tell us about its history? For example, who did it belong to, where did they get it from and what did they use it for?
- What condition is it in?
- Have we already got something similar?

This is set out in more detail in our Collecting Policy. Our collecting policy is a plan that helps us to define and restrict what we collect to a manageable level and makes sure that we don't have objects in our collection which would be more appropriate in another museum or gallery.

What should you do if you wish to offer us an object?

If possible, save yourself a journey by phoning in advance on 023 9282 7261 to discuss your object with us. Or you could contact us via our website www.portsmouthcitymuseums.co.uk. Unfortunately we can only accept items for identification or donation during weekday opening hours (Monday to Friday 10am – 4.30pm) at the City Museum and Records Office.

When you bring an item to us we will give you a receipt that we call an Entry Form, to make sure that we have correctly noted your details and the object's history. This helps us decide if your object fits in with our Collecting Policy. The Entry Form also gives us permission to look after your object while a decision is made. This doesn't mean that the object is no longer yours.

Within four months we should have taken a decision about your object and you will be contacted. We cannot hold objects on Entry Forms for longer than this. If they are not collected after this time and we have reminded you - we will be forced to dispose of them.

What happens if we decide to take your object into our collections?

If your object is just what we need we will take it, or accession it, into our permanent collections. The object will then be kept safely for future

generations, in our ownership. Items in the permanent collection are used for display and research only. Objects from our permanent collections are occasionally loaned to other museums as part of exhibitions.

Sometimes we might ask to put your object in the handling collection. This means that it will be used for educational purposes, for example with school children, special needs groups or in reminiscence sessions with senior citizens. Objects in the handling collection will be enjoyed by lots of people who will touch them, pick them up and possibly use them. However, wear and tear may eventually mean that it can no longer be used.

Please note that only in exceptional circumstances are we able to purchase objects.

What happens if we can't take your object into our collections?

Please do not be offended! Please do not hesitate to come to us with another object! You might be surprised at what we would want to collect. It may be that for a variety of reasons we can't accept your object and if this is the case we will contact you to arrange a time for you to collect your item(s) from us.

We have about 50,000 local history objects alone. We often already have large amounts of similar objects. Your object may simply be too large for us to look after or be of a type that we don't collect. Our staff will be able to tell you if another museum in Portsmouth or elsewhere might like to have it.

What happens next...

If your object is accepted, we will send you a Transfer of Title form to sign. It changes the ownership of the object from you to us permanently. This means that you or your family cannot reclaim the gift of the object to the museum. However we very happy to fix appointments with donors so that they can view their gifts if they are not on display. This form will also deal with the matter of copyright if applicable to your gift.

Please do not be disappointed if you don't see your object on display straight away. The Museum and Records Service cares for around several hundred thousand objects and exhibitions have to be carefully prepared, often years in advance.

What if your object seems interesting, but you don't want to give it to us?

As we are a museum service we cannot give valuations but if you would like to know more about your object, we offer an identification service. This would mean leaving your object with us and we will give you an entry form for it. We can also offer advice on how to care for your object.

If you have objects which were dug up out of the ground locally that you might think are of archaeological importance, please let us see them even if you don't want to give them to the museum collections. It is very important that we record them and the location they came from, as evidence of Portsmouth's past.

Thank you again for your interest!

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss making gift of an object to us. Although our staff often work at different sites and may not always be available at short notice other colleagues will be happy to pass your details on to a curator who will then contact you.

If you have any enquiries or any items that you might want to offer to us or if you would like to see a copy of our collecting policy, please phone: 023 92 827261 and ask to speak to one of our curators or click on www.portsmouthcitymuseums.co.uk and use the 'Enquiry' link.

All personal information given will be restricted to our use under the Data Protection Act 1998.