

SCRUTINY COMMISSION
Art Collection Light Touch Review
Final Report to the Scrutiny Commissioners
8th December 2009
From: Mr. P.G. Lewis & Mr. M. Hunt

Preamble:

There are three County Council collections:

- ArtWorks held by Heritage and Arts (Community Services Department (CSD) and Adult Social Care (ASC))
- Fine Art, held by Heritage and Arts (CSD/ASC)
- Art held by Children and Young People's Service (CPYS) for Leicestershire Schools and by Leicestershire Outdoor & Residential Learning Service

Artworks is a loan collection for schools and community groups in Leicestershire. Works have been acquired over the last 50+ years for educational purpose and purchased from the artists usually at discounted rates for that reason. The bulk of the collection is regularly used; some items rarely selected by schools are currently being evaluated by staff to establish 'Fitness for Purpose'.

There is a full inventory available, but no up to date valuation. The County Council's insurance policy covers the collection.

2. Fine Art Collection

This collection is documented on Multi-mimsy (the national system for cataloguing museum collections) and listed in storage boxes for the non-racked items. Most were donated to the County Council, and a few purchased. All are held by the County Council in trust for, and on behalf of, the people of Leicestershire.

Displays of the Fine Art Collection are in county museums, at County Hall and loaned to other institutions as required. There is no up to date valuation. The County Council's insurance policy covers the collection.

3. Valuations

As CSD do not have any specialists in valuation, there would be significant specialist costs in getting this done.

1. Artworks

The **Artworks Collection** is a self contained discrete collection operated through the Arts and Outreach Section within Environment and Heritage Services. This collection is different from the Schools Collection which is held by Children's and Young People's Services (CYPS).

Artworks is a loan collection dating from 1947 onwards and was last valued in 2001. There is a full inventory and it is also catalogued on Multi Mimsy. A significant part of the collection is out on loan to schools. A copy of the inventory has been provided to us and is available on request. We would

advise a visit which would enable Members to see some of the collection at first hand.

The major consideration regarding the collection generally is that many of the items have been purchased at discounted (and not commercial) rates because the artists and/or galleries recognise the training / educational use of the collection. As regards works acquired since 1992/93 it is unlikely that there are any specific covenants although the very limited number of works purchased through use of external funding *might* fall into this category.

Costs:

The major cost associated with Artworks is the salary of the Artworks Officer (£35,364 including on costs) who is responsible for both the care of the collection and the management of the Artworks services to schools and community groups. The annual revenue budget for Artworks is £1,250. In addition to this figure Artworks has received external funding to undertake project work (08/09 £20,000, 09/10 £10,000). There is a reducing, fixed *acquisitions fund* of £9,250.

Artworks last acquired 13 small sculptures for use in schools in March 2009. This purchase was externally funded. We are currently in the process of finalising the purchase of a number of works through the acquisitions fund.

The Artworks Collection and associated functions currently occupy approximately 25% of a building being occupied by other Museum services. The annual budget associated with the building as a whole is £13,730. Given the multiple occupancy of the building this cost would, for the most part, still apply if the Artworks Collection and associated functions was not present in the building.

2. Fine Art Collection:

The Fine Art collection is an accessioned collection held by the County Council, recognising the Museums' Association's Code of Ethics and other MA guidelines for Acquisitions and Disposal. It is housed at the Collections Resources Centre in Barrow upon Soar, and there are items on display at Snibston, Melton Carnegie, Charnwood and Harborough Museums, as well as at County Hall and at Beaumanor Hall. A number of works are on loan to Newarke Houses Museum and New Walk Museum, and from time to time items from the collection are loaned to regional, national and international museums.

There are 105 oil paintings and in the region of 500 works on paper.

The inventory is on MimsyXG and this is available at the Collections Resources Centre, or a print out of a report of the records could be provided if this is more convenient.

The only conditions associated with any of the Fine Art collections will be for those that have been acquired with the financial support of grants from either the Friends and/or various funding bodies (mostly the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) purchase Grant Fund administered by the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A). These will be outlined in the acquisition fields on Mimsy and there will be further information in the history files for the objects. If required it would be possible to produce a report that separates those works out from the rest of the collection.

The terms of object donation on the museum's object entry form states that we accept gifts without any conditions, so there should be no covenants or other restrictions on items given to us by local people [excepting MLA guidelines above].

Costs:

The costs associated with the collections are a little complicated because of the universal collections care and interpretation approach that we adopt, but in basic terms these are:

50% of the Collections Access Officer (Fine Art & Exhibitions) post, funded by Renaissance East Midlands until March 2011	£13,352
Approx 10% of the Principal Curator Leicestershire Life	£ 4,837
Approx 5% of the Curator Collections Care	£ 1,587
Total	£19,776

The operating budget allocated from the Service's Conservation budget is £500 per annum.

There is a variable amount allocated from the exhibitions and events budget depending on activity. For 2010-2011 there is a proposed allocation of £3,500 to support a touring exhibition of Leicestershire landscapes.

MimsyXG is a shared database for the whole museum collections and it is not possible to extract an amount attributable to the Fine Art collection.

Purchases are made by applying to the Service's purchase fund (held by the Head of Museums) and supported by funding from other bodies or grant aid.

The last oil painting that was purchased by the Service ('The Meet of the Fernie Hunt' by S Marriott) was in February 2009 for display at the Melton Carnegie Museum.

The last work on paper that was purchased by the Service ('Ragdale Hall' by AH Findley) was in June 2009 for display at the Melton Carnegie Museum.

The last oil painting that was given to the Service ('Tubes Factory, Desford' by Mark Ferrow) was in May 2008

The last work on paper that was given to the Service ('Loughborough Museum, Queens Park' by John Perry) was in April 2009.

3. Acquisitions (Heritage and Arts)

Acquisitions to the **Artworks** collection are primarily through purchases from individual artists or through purchases from galleries. In addition we also receive donations, often through negotiations with particular artists. The Artworks Collection is specifically limited to 20th and 21st century British art. Selection for the collection is made on the basis of local significance, national significance and more importantly, their fitness for purpose in terms of the use of the works by schools. In reference to the latter this will include both practical considerations such as durability, size, weight and conservation requirements together with requirements relating to the use of the works by pupils in respect of their curriculum relevance and likely general appeal.

All works are chosen initially by the Artworks Officer in consultation with other museum colleagues, artists and educators including school teachers. Selections by the Artworks Officer are derived from our knowledge of what is already popular with schools e.g. particular artists or themes, relationships with artists and also through lessons learned as part of externally funded pilot research projects in schools. The recent commissioning of the 'Held in Hand' sculptures was a direct result of such a research project in schools. All acquisitions are subject to approval by the Head of Environment and Heritage.

Acquisitions to the **Fine Art** Collections are determined against the collecting policy which was agreed after the Collections Sharing Process which followed re-organisation in 1997.

The Collections reflect the people, natural and built landscapes, working life and pastimes of Leicestershire and record the work of local artists.

Items enter the collections in two ways; as gifts (or bequests) or as purchases.

Gifts or bequests are accepted or declined on the basis of being relevant to the collections (having a Leicestershire subject matter), being in a condition that makes them fit for purpose and being of a size that we can safely manage within our galleries, storage areas and transport.

Purchases are decided by the Principal Curator of Leicestershire Life, working with the Collections Access officer (Fine Art and Exhibitions) and with the agreement of the Head of Museums who administers the Purchase Fund. These are selected from relevant works from local artists' displays in exhibitions, or more historic from local dealers or sales.

http://cis/community_services/environment_heritage_services/arts/arts.htm

4. CYPs Works of art held by Leicestershire Schools and by Leicestershire Outdoor & Residential Learning Service

Background

From the 1950's to the late 1980's the County Council's Education Department purchased works of art for the educational benefit and enjoyment of children and young people. Since the early 90's, when staffing for this scheme ceased, the Outdoor and Residential Learning Service (ORLS) has unofficially carried out "caretaker" function.

Currently there are records held at Beaumanor Hall of nearly 6,000¹ works of art, most of which are placed in schools. Some are by artists of international renown and some may be valuable, but there is no overall estimate of their value or of their physical state. Many schools will not know the provenance the works of art in their school buildings. Some pieces of art were purchased through a mixture of local authority budgets, school funding and school fundraising and therefore ownership, and therefore accountability for the care

¹ 5113 pieces in schools; 451 as floating stock for schools at Beaumanor Hall; 108 damaged pieces at Beaumanor Hall; 198 pieces on display in LCC buildings.

of artworks, may be unclear. More details of the scheme and how it currently operates is given below.

In August 2004, 58 paintings were valued by Bonhams Auctioneers and Valuers. Their estimated value ranged from £20,550 to £32,060. These paintings are currently stored at Beaumanor Hall.

The development of the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS), the new relationship with schools, and the operation of the ORLS as an entirely traded service (i.e. receiving no local authority funding) means that this function is no longer appropriately situated in the CYPS and that the ORLS no longer has the capacity to undertake the administration of the scheme. Additionally, the ORLS does not have the staff knowledge and expertise to ensure the proper care of these potentially valuable County Council assets which are likely to be under-insured and are physically deteriorating

The works were purchased from the 1950s to the late 1980s to give young people direct access to works of art, for their educational benefit and enjoyment. It was intended that they were to be seen and used and not to be kept as museum pieces.

For many years funding was available for several members of staff who facilitated the purchasing of new works for schools, ran a programme of regular inventory checks and repairs and administered the Float and Stock collections. This ceased in the late 1980s/early 1990s and since 1994 the Residential Service/Outdoor & Residential Learning Service (unofficially, on an ad hoc basis, with an assurance that the situation will be resolved) has assisted schools with inventory queries, returns of works and maintained the Float and Stock systems at Beaumanor Hall.

Works in Schools

Most schools in the County have a collection of works in their possession. It has been previously agreed that, unless bought entirely with private funds (which applies to very few works), these works belong to the County Council. Since funding for Art Administration has ceased, schools have not been reminded of this fact. Therefore, with changing staff and governors, some schools may not now be aware of the genesis of the works, of their value or of the fact that they cannot sell or dispose of them. It is likely that some works will have been 'lost' over the years.

This policy does have the advantage that schools have to keep the works for the benefit and enjoyment of young people, but can create problems relating to insurance and up-keep of the works, particularly if they are valuable. Also, sometimes schools can no longer house works through lack of space or for health and safety reasons. This is when they will contact Beaumanor who take the works into the Float system.

At Beaumanor there is a record card for each school and each artist which cross-reference each other. Since the programme of visiting schools to update their art cards ceased (about 20 years ago), schools records have only been up-dated if they have contacted Beaumanor for information on their works.

In 2004 the school cards were put onto a database and the number of works counted.

Collections currently held at Beaumanor Hall

In addition to the works in schools and other CYPS establishments, the following collections are held at Beaumanor Hall:

- ***Float***

This is the swap/returns system. When a school no longer wants to keep a work or would like a change, they return unwanted items to the Float and take something away to replace it if desired. The item is then removed from the school's card, transferred to the Float list and then other schools can come along and take something from the Float system at any time. When a school returns a work, they sign to say that they no longer require it and that they understand another school may take it in the future. Ownership of a work always remains with the County Council, but "belonging" temporarily to its current school.

There are currently 523 works on the Float list, of which 128 are in schools, therefore leaving 395 works in storage at Beaumanor Hall. This list reflects the movement of works since 1994, however, there are many other works that have gone to schools from the Float system that pre-date this. These should appear on the schools cards.

- ***Stock***

These works were bought centrally over the years to sell on to schools, often for occasions when they had money available through capital programme projects (a small percentage used to be set aside for works of art). The capital programme system ceased in the mid-1990s and some 60+ works remain in the stock at Beaumanor Hall.

- ***Damaged Works***

There are some 108 damaged works held at Beaumanor Hall. These are treated in the same way as an item returned to the Float, but kept on a separate list. The majority of these works have been the subject of a condition report carried out by the Museums Service in the mid-1990s but no decision has been made as to what to do with the works as a result of this.

All of these collections are stored in unsuitable conditions, where they will be subject to deterioration over a period of time. Owing to this and the sheer number of works, they cannot continue to be kept in this way:

5. Conclusion: Options and future proposals:

Having examined the range of work and its management in some depth here, and in view of the workload placed on Members, we feel that a fuller Panel need not be required. Instead, we suggest that, through the Commissioners and Commission, the comments and options below be referred to the appropriate Lead Members and thence to Cabinet.

- **Fine Art:**

- (a) It is advised that costs be contained and held as at present. At a future date, consideration should be given to greater public exposure

of the work in existing galleries within and, if requested, even beyond the county;

(b): Consideration should be given to exploring a sharing of the service with Leicester City Council and Rutland County.

- **CDS Artworks & CYPS Schools Collection:**

(c) We suggest the merging of the collections within Heritage, where appropriate expertise exists, and due care can be given.

(d) The current CYPS Schools Collection needs improved storage, which at present is dry but totally inadequate. The task of caring for this Collection at Beaumanor Hall has to date been a labour of love, which of its nature contains the inherent risks to the service that might concern auditors. Without any criticism whatsoever of the current staff involved with this CYPS Collection, it is imperative that what is required now is professional curating, maintenance and auditing - which could be provided through (c above)

(e) With regard to the CYPS Schools Collection we should employ temporary staff to have the works valued and make decisions about their future care, funded from revenue from sale of any recommended works. We should pursue informal discussion with Auctioneers to explore valuation, and assess the advantages and disadvantages of any repair work

(g) While lists of current CYPS Schools Collection work located in schools/colleges exists, it needs updating.

(h) Consideration might be given to allowing the work to remain with the current holder (School/College) to become the property of that institution, but with written safeguards regarding future maintenance. Donated works given to the County as a gift might need to be exempted from such an offer. Given that the location would be known and on record, such work could be borrowed by other organisations through direct reference to the holder.

(i) Other public buildings, used mainly for or by young people, might also be given the opportunity to borrow from a newly merged collection (c above), thereby ensuring wider public access.

Overall we do not believe there should be any wholesale relinquishing of the County's current holdings, but there is room for rationalisation in the management of the whole body of work, which in turn might well result in some savings, and with expert advice some variation in current holdings. Any future purchases might only arise from replacing existing artefacts in line with MLA policies. In order to ensure the people of Leicestershire have access to the collection, and that it is maintained properly, long term there should be the ambition to find space for displaying a significant number of works in a worthy and large gallery setting. One possible location might in fact be Snibston - but that issue goes beyond the Brief given us here. Clearly there may be a cost involved in this if existing space is inadequate.

Peter Lewis

Max Hunt

Artworks and Resource Box Services

- ▣ The use of the Artworks Collection as a learning resource was enhanced through the development of a new “Held in the Hand” box. 13 artists from across the UK were commissioned to create tactile objects small enough to be “held in the hand”. This small collection is housed a special box that includes support material and artist information. It is now available to go on loan to schools and community groups in Leicestershire to inspire a range of creative projects. Each object is designed to provoke a different response to both visual and tactile stimulus. Each will also be used to explore the nature of different materials providing a rich source inspiration for learning especially in art and creative writing as well as other cross curricula subjects.?
- ▣ A pilot programme involving artists working with teachers using Artworks in selected schools was successfully completed. The project demonstrated how the art from the collection can be integrated into non art disciplines and cross curricula activities to support creative learning in schools. It was found that art can help less confident children with their vocabulary and descriptive language and was particularly effective with creative writing activities
- ▣ Over 43,000 people used Artworks and Resource Box in the year. This includes, education sites from nursery to university, community groups, historical societies, independent museums, hospitals, prisons and charities covering an age range of 4 to 103.
- ▣ Resource Box delivered over 1000 loan items in a single term. The majority of these were used by schools to enhance national curriculum topics.
- ▣ 37 new loan boxes were created for Resource Box. These include a range of Faith boxes, replica Roman armour in child size and character boxes for creative writing and reminiscence.

Arts & Outreach, Open Museum – Resource Box

Darren Schofield, Brocks Hill Primary School

“Thank you for sorting out such a good selection of Roman artefacts. We have had a great term with the topic. We had an Ofsted inspection this term and they graded us “Outstanding” with one of our strengths being our rich curriculum full of “hands-on” working. I am very grateful for the part your service has played in this, providing great resources to enrich our work”



Artworks and Resource box activities

