

The Collections at Bridport Museum: A Guide



At Bridport Museum we care for high quality, unique and exciting collections for people to enjoy and learn from.

We collect items:

- To document Bridport and its surroundings environment
- To celebrate and reflect local people and culture
- To inspire people to connect and be creative

Our decision making about what we collect is based on our **Collections Development Policy** – a document checked by Arts Council England (the organisation which decides whether we are at a high enough standard to be called an 'Accredited Museum').

You can find the full policy on our website bridportmuseum.co.uk

How do we decide what to collect?

To give some background, the museum team did a four-year project called 'The Right Stuff' asking the community about what they wanted us to have in our collection, and what they didn't want. It helped us answer these important questions:

Why do we have certain items?

Should we have them?

Who cares?

We now **only** collect those items which tell strong stories of Bridport and surrounding areas - people, places and events.



We only collect items from, or with a strong connection to, the following areas:

Allington,
Askerswell,
Bettiscombe,
Bothenhampton,
Bradpole,
Bridport,
Broadoak,
Burton Bradstock,
Charmouth,
Chideock,
Chilcombe,

Dottery,
Little Bredy,
Litton Cheney,
Loders,
Long Bredy,
Marshwood,
Monkton Wyld,
Morcombelake,
Netherbury,
North Poorton,
Pilsdon,

Powerstock,
Puncknowle,
Salway Ash,
Shipton Gorge,
Stanton St Gabriel,
Swyre,
Symondsburry,
Walditch,
Whitchurch Canonorum,
Wootton Fitzpaine.

What do we collect?

We are **happy** to consider offers of these types of items – as long as there is a strong local connection:

- Fossils
- Fine Art
- Items associated with the rope and net industries
- Items that help to show social, cultural and economic life
- Oral histories – spoken recordings of people's memories
- Photographs and documents

We are **unlikely** to accept an offer of these types of items, unless they have a very strong local connection:

- Archaeology
- Coins, medals and tokens
- Costume and textiles
- Dolls
- Firearms
- Natural history and taxidermy
- Large agricultural objects

We will **not normally** accept an offer which involves any special conditions, such as a requirement to always be on display.

Why do we have to choose?

As an Accredited Museum we have to meet strict guidelines in caring for our collections, and this takes time and resources. We also have to be responsible and make sure that the collections grow in a way which provides the **maximum public benefit**.

Sometimes other organisations may be better places to store, care for and provide access to particular items.

We work with

- Dorset Museum
 - The Dorset History Centre
- and others to help us make these decisions.

What happens when we are offered something for the collection?

Wherever possible, we like to assess offers of items before they arrive at the museum - and photographs help!

The decision to accept offers of items generally lies with the Museum Manager, who can consult with the Collections Sub-Committee (part of the Board of Trustees) if necessary.

You can contact the Museum Manager at office@bridportmuseum.co.uk

We think about:

- The identity of the item and information known about it
- Its potential use
- Its condition
- Whether it duplicates other items within the collection
- Our ability to care for and manage it
- Our ability to provide access for the public and research