

# C.I.R.C.A

(Catalogued, Interpreted, Researched, Conserved, Accessible)

## Project Brief

Project funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's Museum and Heritage Strand

***Project Type:*** Collections Management

***Dates:*** May 2012 – November 2013

***Total Project Budget:*** £82,785



# Contents

	Page No
<b>1. Background</b>	
1.1. Introduction to Doncaster Museum & Art Gallery	3
1.2. The Palaeontology Collection	3
1.3. C.I.R.C.A & Taking Stock	4
<b>2. C.I.R.C.A Project Outline</b>	
2.1. Work Plan and Timescale	5
2.2. Milestones	7
2.3. Desired Outcome	7
<b>3. Project Management</b>	
3.1. Management structure flow chart	10
3.2. Contract Descriptions	10
3.2.1. Contract 1	10
3.2.2. Contract 2	11
<b>4. Timescale</b>	12
<b>5. Submission/Application requirements</b>	13

## **1. Background**

### **1.1 Introduction to Doncaster Museum & Art Gallery**

Doncaster Museum was first opened in 1900 in a small room in the old Guildhall. In 1909 it moved to the ground floor of Beechfield House with its 'stock' of 1006 museum objects. From 1955 the Museum ran a small zoo in the grounds of Beechfield and some of the occupants, suitably mounted, form a part of the current natural sciences collections. In 1962 the Beechfield premises were closed and in 1964 the replacement Museum & Art Gallery was opened on Chequer Road by the Borough Council - the first purpose built museum building to be entirely funded by a local authority since 1945. Doncaster Museum is home to a range of collections, including Natural Sciences, Archaeology, Industrial Social History, World Cultures, Decorative and Fine Arts.

Doncaster Museum Service is responsible for Doncaster Museum and Cusworth Hall Museum & Park, a Grade I listed Country House and social history museum 3 miles from the centre of Doncaster.

### **1.2 The Palaeontology Collection**

The Palaeontology collection sits within the Earth Sciences collection. A basic inventory of the collection using M.O.D.E.S has generated 3024 records, although individual fossils probably total closer to 6000± since in some cases one record can constitute a box of related items numbering in excess of 50.

The historic core of the collection (largely of localised specimens) consists of a poorly documented and poorly understood founding collection, a significant element of which consists of fossils from the collections of H. Corbett and H. Culpin both senior members of Doncaster Microscopic and Scientific Society and key instigators in the establishment of Doncaster Museum. There is a sizeable collection, covering many of the major fossil bearing localities of the British Isles (largely excluding Scotland and Wales), the private collection of a notable late 19<sup>th</sup> Century collector from Leeds which is housed in two wooden cabinets and still includes original labels for almost all the specimens.

Up until the 1960s the rest of the collection appears to originate from local residents through donation. Prior to and after the opening of the new Museum and Art Gallery in 1964 there appears to have been a concentrated effort to build critical mass by accepting collections (often through the rationalisation process being undertaken in other Museums) from Brighouse Museum, Worksop Museum, Woodend Museum; Scarborough, Bridlington Museum, Lincoln Museum, Wakefield Museum, The Natural History Museum and the Dick Institute (from which 22 Eurypterid specimens were transferred) to name but a few. During the 1980s and 1990s the collection was added to by the donation of material of British origin belonging to Don Bramley (a museum

volunteer) alongside the occasional purchase of pieces such as the Dinosaur egg and Ichthyosaur (which current research has shown to be of significant scientific importance), probably purchased primarily for display and public engagement. This period saw the last major effort to grow the collection, after which it effectively became a closed collection with the loss of the Geology curator.

The majority of the collection consists of fossils from the Carboniferous and Jurassic and largely originate from Yorkshire, although there is a significant amount of material from bordering counties. The majority of Jurassic material seems to come from the Jurassic Coast around Whitby.

Alongside the formal collection is a relatively high quality collection (used by the Museum's Education Service), which appears to have been purchased in the 1980s by the then Curator of Geology, Anne Pennington George (who later became the Museum's Education Officer. However it is unclear how much of this collection was purchased solely for educational purposes and whether it contains any specimens from the formal collection.

### **1.3 C.I.R.C.A & Taking Stock**

This project whilst having a much broader remit including research, publication and preparation for public and academic access is also designed to be part of a holistic collections review called 'Taking Stock'.

The objective of 'Taking Stock' is to review all of the Doncaster Museum Service collections to ensure the collections best serve the borough, by reflecting the heritage, culture and educational needs of its communities and representing the best use of public money.

This is being achieved through a curatorial assessment of all of the Museum Service collections to determine whether or not they would be better placed with another museum or public body. It will also deal with items not of a suitable quality for collecting, unnecessary duplications and past discrepancies in collecting in line with current professional museum standards. The decision process is supported and informed by a focus group and ultimately approved by an appointed Member of Doncaster Council's Cabinet.

Therefore this project includes a collection assessment process designed in line with 'Taking Stock'.

## 2. C.I.R.C.A Project Outline

### 2.1 Work Plan and Timescale

The table below summarises the work we would like to do and proposed activities and timescales:

Work Planned	Associated Activities	Timescale
Collections review	Creation of review methodology, identification of specimens for disposal (including transfer etc), identification of specimens for conservation treatment, identification of candidates for research and publication & identification of key specimens for display and educational uses	First six months of project.
Documentation	Identification of specimens, checking specimens against log books, accession registers & history files. Allocating temporary numbers where applicable or matching to existing accessions	Ongoing over the course of full 18 months of project. Will form part of the collections review process
Selection of specimens for research	Preliminary research to identify specimens significance and history	To be finalised at end of collection review (end of first 6 months)
Re-packing and organisation of collection	Design a reference system (for use by non specialist staff), select and purchase appropriate packaging, re-pack, mark and label specimens	To begin after collection review is complete and be tied into and governed by decisions on storage cabinets and siting of storage of collection (approx 6 months into project and to continue for life of project)
Storage arrangement of collection	Research, selection and purchase of storage cabinets	To be started at end of collections review and to inform and guide re-packing and organisation of collection as a whole. Solutions will be

		considered during the collections review and form part of the final stages of that review.
Conservation of specimens identified during review process	Work plan to determine which specimens are priorities (if all identified specimens cannot be dealt with), setting up of temporary storage area. Liaising with Lincoln University and the Museums' conservator to determine which specimens might be dealt with by trainee conservators at Lincoln University.	Should be undertaken under contract 3 (contract to deliver conservation work) after collections review is complete (month 6 onwards) in discussion with the Asst Manager (Conservation & Collections Care) and the work undertaken under contract 3 should be completed by the end of the project.
Purchase of reference material	Assessment of future display and interpretation needs and building a list of useful reference books and other reference materials (e.g. CDs, DVDs etc)	To be drawn up and discussed with museum management team at the start of the project (and informed by the collection assessment phase) and purchased at appropriate intervals through out the life of the project
Addition of information enabling display/educational use to database records	Should evaluate visitor feed back and successes/strengths of Fabulous Fossils and consider Service Policy documents & needs of curatorial and education team. Selection of specimens from collection to receive this second tier of information	Tied into ongoing documentation, but should begin after the collections review stage at end of first 6 months.
Identification of star specimens and key specimens for display and educational outreach	Selection of specimens informed by collections review	Should be an integral part of the collections review and should be completed within first 6 months (during review process)
Research for publication	Identifying key contacts and collections, carrying out research	To be informed by collections review process.

	visits/correspondences	
Preparation and submission for publication	Writing up for publication. Determining which journals to submit to and securing submissions	All papers to be submitted by the end of the project.

## 2.2 Milestones

Time Period	Milestone
0-18 months	Documentation/identification work
0-6 months	Collections Review, selection of objects for research and conservation, identification of star/key specimens and specimens for display and educational use.
6-18 months	Re-packing, storage
6-18 months	conservation of selected specimens
0-18 months	Purchase of reference material (books, DVDs, CDs etc)
6-18 Months	Creation of additional information (enabling display/educational use) to database records
6-18 months	Research and submission of articles for publication

## 2.3 Desired Outcome

The desired outcomes follow from the project aims and objectives set out in our outline proposal document, which were as follows:

1. Assessment of the Palaeontological collection (1817 Modes records which equates to approximately 6000 individual specimens) to feed into following tasks
2. Identify items for disposal (dispersal) in line with the museum's *Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2006-2011* and the *Taking Stock* project. Complete disposal (Disposal as defined by the *Museum Association Disposal Toolkit, a guideline for museums*) process
3. Augmented documentation: Comprising of more detailed specimen identification and matching specimens to donor/provenance information
4. Conservation of items identified through assessment phase (undertaken under contract 3 for the conservation work and Lincoln University Conservation Students).

5. Re-packaging and storage of collections to meet Accreditation standards, improve storage and access.
6. Research and Publication of a selection of the most interesting/important specimens to increase academic and public access and awareness of the collection.
7. Highlighting and generating specialist information on specimens to facilitate curatorship by non specialist staff.

Set against these our desired outcomes are as follows:

1. The assessment/collections review will generate a flexible but robust methodology which will shape the collection to ensure that it matches the criteria of the Museums Service *Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2006-2011* and that it incorporates the desired outcomes of the museums collection review '*Taking Stock*', which are as follows:
  - A more focussed and relevant collection which the Museum Service is capable of caring for and which meets professional Best Practice standards
  - Improved access to the collections
  - Enhanced information about the current strengths and weaknesses of the collections that will lead to an informed and responsible future collecting strategy
  - Empowerment to achieve improved collections care

It will create the platform from which the following desired outcomes to be achieved:

2. To identify candidates for transfer to alternative institutions, or which are suitable for disposal (in line with the museum's *Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2006-2011*) and to provide recommendations for appropriate venues in conjunction with the Museum Associations '*Disposal Toolkit, Guidelines for Museums*'. To ensure that the collection meets the current and future needs of the Museum Service by complementing the objectives of the following museum policies or their successors: *Doncaster Museum Service Forward Plan 2006-2011*, *Doncaster Museum Service Audience Development and Access Strategy 2005-2010*, *Doncaster Museum Service Education and Learning Plan 2008-2012*. [These plans are currently being revised]. This will ensure that the collection is focused according to the core aims and objectives of the Museum Service and meets the needs of service users.
3. To have all specimens documented on Modes (the Museum Service's digital database currently being upgraded to MODES Complete) with at least the following information: Simple name, classified name, description, geological period/date, donor/provenance (where achievable), condition (brief description), location (in store) and an image. This will allow curatorial staff to know exactly what is in the collection, where gaps exist for future



collecting or loans and what is available for loan, exhibition or facilitating educational outputs.

4. To conserve the most important and vulnerable specimens and stabilise the collection to ensure its long term care. To ensure that the collection is in a state that allows the museum to effectively care for it according to available resources.
5. To create a well ordered and logically organised collection which is packaged/stored in a way that affords the specimens maximum protection; facilitates ease of access (reducing the need for over handling and facilitating regular conservation checks) and is stored in a way which makes access by non specialist staff achievable. To maximise the use of available space and to ensure the best method of storage is employed and the most suitable environment for the collection is created.
6. To achieve publication of the most important/interesting specimens in regional or national journals, to establish good relations with other institutions (with linked collections) and to raise the profile of the collection (and its research potential) within the academic community and the general public. To generate interest in the collection by museum visitors/service users and therefore increase the use of the collection.
7. To capture and record (by adding information to the collection database and incorporating key information onto labelling and packing) information which will allow the collection to be effectively curated by non specialist staff (i.e. staff without a geological or palaeontological expertise), enabling them to generate displays and facilitate research requests and public collections enquiries. The strengths of the collection, local and regional connections and star objects will be clearly identified and recorded.
8. An additional desired outcome is that under Contract 1, there will be the development of professional knowledge and skills for museum staff and contract staff as appropriate.

### **3 Project Management**

#### **3.1 Management structure**

The Museums Officer (Human History) will act as Project Manager for these contracts.

#### **3.2 Contract descriptions:**

##### **3.2.1 Contract One**

**£19,450, Fixed Sum over 18 month period to start no later than 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012.**

Contract 1 is a contract to lead on the delivery of the desired outcomes to an agreed work plan (which will be reviewed at intervals with the Project Manager), manage the project budget, monitor and report on progress and also provide professional advice and guidance as required. The contract to be delivered over an 18 month period.

Contract requirements :

- To take a lead on the project, overseeing progress (including spend against the project budget) and reporting back to the Project Manager through monthly written updates and meetings.
- To provide professional guidance/mentoring to museum staff/contract staff as required.
- To design the project methodology and strategy
- To work with the Project Manager and other contract staff to develop and review the work plan and assign tasks.
- To review and assess the collection in conjunction with other contract staff to compile the formal written review for the Project Manager at the conclusion of this phase (timescale agreed in the work plan).
- To work with the Project Manager and other contract staff to identify specimens for research and to research and submit for publication an agreed number of specimens working within the allowed budget.
- To identify specimens for disposal/transfer to other museum collections and provide monthly updates to the Project Manager and at the end of the review period to prepare a report for the Project Manager and the museum's Acquisition & Disposal Panel detailing the specimens and reasons proposed for disposal.
- To work with other contract staff to evaluate visitor feedback and use this to assist in the identification of specimens for future display and use by Education staff.

- To use the allowed budget to develop a research library for the museum with research material that can be used for the project but also by non-specialist staff following the conclusion of the project.
- To work with other contract staff to augment the basic documentation of the collection to criteria agreed with the Project Manager and in conjunction with other contract staff at the start of the project and to ensure that it is easily accessible to non-specialist staff.
- To work with the Assistant Manager (Conservation & Collections Care) to determine the number of specimens requiring conservation at the end of the review process and to prepare a list of these specimens for the conservation.
- To work with the Assistant Manager (Conservation & Collections Care) and Project conservation contract staff to identify new storage cabinets and materials for the collection and to prepare a detailed order for the Project Manager. Also to devise a methodology and system that can be implemented for the re-storage of the collection.

Key Essential experience/skills:

- Relevant substantial experience within Palaeontology and/or Museum experience
- Substantial experience of working with palaeontological collections/specimens
- Experience of researching into and publication of palaeontological collections/specimens
- Experience of managing similar projects including staff and budgets
- Substantial experience of the management, documentation, storage, development and interpretation of palaeontological collections

Desirable:

- Knowledge of fossils of Yorkshire, specifically the Coal Measures, Permian Limestone and Jurassic North East Coast.

### 3.2.2 Contract Two

**£28,900 Fixed Sum over 18 month period to start no later than 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

Contract 2 is a contract to deliver the agreed work plan and to undertake the majority of the basic documentation, re-packing and labelling and much of the basic research. The contract to be delivered over an 18 month period.

#### Contract requirements :

- Requires a minimum basic level of museum and palaeontology knowledge.
- To re-pack and label every specimen in the collection.
- To ensure a basic documentation entry for every specimen in the collection.
- To work with other contract staff to provide enhanced documentation of the collection to criteria agreed at the commencement of the project.
- To work with the Project Manager and other contract staff to identify specimens for research and to research and submit for publication an agreed number of specimens working within the allowed budget.
- To work with other contract staff to evaluate visitor feedback and use this to assist in the identification of specimens for future display and use by Education staff.
- To re-store the collection according to the methodology prepared under Contract 1.

#### Key Essential experience/skills:

- At least six months experience of working within a museum environment or similar
- Experience of working with Palaeontological collections/specimens
- An understanding of and experience of using museum collection management systems
- Experience of handling museum collections/object

#### 4 Timescale:

The project must start no later than 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012 and should be completed 18 months from the start date.

#### 5 Project Activity Budget

Activity	Budget
Disposals (packaging and transportation)	£ 1,300
Conservation & packing materials	£ 5,000
storage cabinets	£ 12,000
Research visits	£ 3,000
Publication	£ 1,000
Literature (reference library)	£ 500

## 6 Submission/Application requirements:

Applications are invited to make a submission to deliver one or both of these contracts as outlined in section 3.2.

We are looking for submissions up to but not beyond the amounts specified for each contract. Doncaster Museum Service will not be held responsible for any expense or losses incurred by the applicant(s) in the preparation and presentation of the quotation.

Submissions must answer the following questions (the importance of which are weighted as detailed below):

Reference	Question	Weight
Q1.	Please provide your understanding of the key requirements of this contract in no more than 300 words	10
Q2.	Please provide details of your previous experience of engaging and delivering similar services or undertaking similar projects for museum organisations	25
Q3.	Please tell us how you propose to address each of the requirements of the contract that you are applying for.	25
Q4.	Please outline the number of days you'd expect to spend on delivery and what proportion of this would be travelling to and from the museum	20
Q5.	Please provide details of your relevant specialist qualifications and experience in relation to the project post which you are applying for	20

An overall price is required which must include all expenses and details of any discounts offered (e.g. for early payment etc).

Any applicants wishing to view the collection should contact Laura Nugent, Collections Registrar on 01302 734293, email [laura.nugent@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:laura.nugent@doncaster.gov.uk).

### **Closing Date and time for applications: 5pm Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

Applications should be delivered as a hard copy or electronic copy via e-mail. As well as a submission document, applicants are asked to include the following information:

- Covering Letter with full address and contact details
- Current CV ( + CVs of all proposed project staff, if submitting as a company or group of associates)
- Names and contact details of references

Applicants called for interview will be notified no later than 5pm Friday 30<sup>th</sup> March.

Interviews will be held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 5th April, 2012.

**Submissions should be sent to:**

Peter Robinson  
Museum Officer (Human History)  
Doncaster Museum & Art Gallery, Chequer Road, Doncaster, DN1 2AE,  
Tel: 01302 734290      E-Mail: [peter.robinson@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:peter.robinson@doncaster.gov.uk)