

Appendix 2

Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum Management Committee

June 2026

Disposal Reports

Disposal Report for – Loan in 1970.378 (T12.6.2008.4) Washstand



Introduction

The RCAGM (Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum) is considering the disposal of the above in-line with sections 5.3 and 5.4 of its Collection Development Policy which has identified that some areas of its collection, including local and social history, as surplus to requirements and constitute a drain on limited resources.

Section 3.9 of the Collection Development Strategy identifies much of the non-fine art material or memorabilia within the RCAGM's Local/Social History Collections as incompatible with the 'Core Offer'¹ of the RCAGM. Section 3.9.2 states the insignificance and irrelevance of parts of the Local/Social History collection, and Section 5.4 suggests the disposal of any material which does not directly relate to the Russell-Cotes family and their activities and/or the 'Core Offer'².

Object Description and Provenance

The specific details of the item under consideration in this report are as follows³:

Loan in 1970.378 (aka T12.6.2008.4) a marble topped wooden washstand, dated to 1880-1920, with a splashback formed from tiles in style of, if not actually by, Kate Greenaway. The tiles seem to depict children (often a boy and a girl) throughout the seasons but they might not be in a narrative sequence. The washstand has five drawers, four small and one large, with brass handles. It has eight legs arranged four on either side of the kneehole. A shelf fills the bottom of each of the leg areas. Each leg finishes in a caster allowing easy movement of the washstand. A label on the reverse indicates that it was once held in a furniture depository in Bournemouth which might explain why the RCAGM/Bournemouth Museums Service were approached by the owner. There is no provenance information on file.

¹ See Appendix for the full text of the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM

² See Appendix for the full text of the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM

³ See Appendix for images of the item

The condition of the washstand is good overall but there are numerous chips to the marble top and minor damages to the woodwork. A section of wooden trim from the right-hand shelf area is missing.

The washstand was presented to the RCAGM/Bournemouth Museum Service as a loan by a Mrs Beatrice Irene Magraw of Hillside, Batcombe, Shepton Mallet, Somerset in 1970. After the initial entry in the Loans Register there does not seem to any communication between the RCAGM and Mrs Magraw. She died in 1980 and her only child, a daughter, died childless in 2010. Her daughter lent the dressing table recorded under Loan in 1980.698 (T1.7.2008.3).

The display history of this item is obscure, but it does seem to have been on show prior to its current temporary use in the 'Flower Fairies: Enchantment by the Sea' exhibition⁴. When removed from the store the drawers were found to have been secured with nylon wire to prevent their opening by members of the public (see photos in Appendix).

Dimensions: 1010mm x 1355mm x 645mm

The Case for Retention

Meeting the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM

This washstand does not fit within the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM (see below).

Relevance to the RCAGM Interpretation Strategy

This washstand is completely irrelevant to the RCAGM Interpretation Strategy (see below).

Public Benefit

The retention of this washstand by the RCAGM would not benefit the public in any way.

Effect of Disposal on Remaining Collections

The disposal of this washstand by the RCAGM would have no detrimental effect on the rest of its collections.

Implications for Public Collections Holding Similar Material

No other public collections in the UK would suffer from the RCAGM disposing of this washstand.

⁴ The washstand is currently being used to support various learning and activity materials for visitors in the exhibition.

The Costs of Retention (Including Conservation)

The washstand is in good condition. Currently this washing machine does not place an excessive cost the RCAGM other than storage and insurance (although that cost is small as it is a low value item).

The Case for Disposal

Meeting the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM

This washstand does not meet the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM. It is not connected to our Founders in anyway.

Relevance to the RCAGM Interpretation Strategy

This washstand is not relevant to the RCAGM Interpretation Strategy as it does not meet the 'Core Offer' around which the strategy is based. It is very hard to see any reason why the RCAGM would use this washstand in its public programme other than as a table as there is no dedicated local/social history display space in the RCAGM. The provenance of this washstand is unknown, although it is possible that it was used in Bournemouth given the furniture depository label on the reverse. When it opened the RCAGM's bathroom facilities were removed so we do not know what they looked like for sure, but it does seem that fitted units were used. There are Persian/Turkish style tiles in the collection which were used as splashbacks and are still in the wooden surround which would have been over a sink unit in the Main Hall toilet – the only space large enough to ever consider accommodating washstand like this.

Public Benefit

The RCAGM is not benefitting the public in any way by retaining this washstand. The RCAGM is not a social history museum (despite have some such material in its collections as a legacy from the Bournemouth Museums Service) and it is not perceived as such by the visiting public or researchers.

Effect of Disposal on Remaining Collections

The disposal of this washstand by the RCAGM would have no detrimental effect on the rest of its collections. The disposal of this item will not adversely impact the integrity of other collection items.

Implications for Public Collections Holding Similar Material

No other museums/collections in the UK would suffer from the RCAGM disposing of this washstand.

The Costs of Disposal

The cost of disposing of this washstand would be minimal. There is no grant aid or funding to be repaid.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The disposal of this type of material is indicated in the Collection Development Strategy under section 3.9.2. This object lacks relevance to the RCAGM and its current activities which are based around its 'Core Offer'. While the RCAGM holds social history related material, it is primarily art or souvenir related or embedded within and integral to wider collections of ethnographic artefacts. This washstand is isolated and does not relate to the 'Core Offer'.


Additionally, this item is an unclaimed and unreturnable loan. As a matter of policy the RCAGM seeks to return long term loans to their owners or, if appropriate, seek their donation to the collections.

It hard to see how this washstand would be displayed in the RCAGM or form part of its public programme going forward. Future exhibitions held by the RCAGM would be focused on art rather than objects such as this. Such an item is much better in the hands of an organisation specifically interested in and dedicated to social history. The disposal of this item would also free up much needed storage space.

Therefore, this report recommends that this washstand is disposed of, ideally to another UK public collection. Should no institution be interested, sector best practice and the RCAGM's own procedures mandate that all disposals should be advertised to the wider museum community via the Collections Trust website's Find an Object service. This will allow any museum or public collection to express an interest.

Transfer to another collection holding institution would mean that the item remains in the public domain. However, should no such institution be interested then sale via a suitable auctioneer remains the option of last resort. In accordance with sector best practice and ethical guidance the funds raised by such a sale would be ring-fenced and placed back into the budget relating to collection care and development.

Duncan Walker MA, AMA
Curator, RCAGM

 14.5.2026
Said News 14 May 2026

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Images





















Appendix 2 – The RCAGM Statement of Purposes – Our Core Offer

Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum is an outstanding celebration of late-Victorian art collectors; their passions and achievements; how they lived and encountered the world; and how they presented their collections to enrich the lives of others.

We are entrusted to present the Russell-Cotes' personal vision and legacy in the most authentic way possible, and to enable learning, enjoyment and access to the house and collections for residents and visitors to Bournemouth.

The 'core offer' is focused on the historic building, East Cliff Hall, its stunning seafront setting, and its internationally-known collections, which attract and astound visitors. However, this is only part of the offer. In addition to the original house, we also have four art galleries added in the early 1900s. We will use this offer to:

1. Explain the story of the Russell-Cotes, the Victorian /Edwardian house and world cultures/art collections, putting it into local, national and international context
2. Encourage use of the galleries, collections, and unique energy and atmosphere of the house to inspire great art, and to stimulate creativity and curiosity
3. Explore aspects of the human condition, which were recognised by the Victorian innovators, philanthropists and social reformers, and which matter to communities today.

Finally, the spaces available at Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum are not the exclusive domain of the Victorians. We are developing a vibrant cultural programme which, while rooted in the era of our founders, will be a stage for wider participation and engagement. We will continue in the spirit of two of Bournemouth's most forward-thinking citizens by striving to make a significant contribution to the development of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum as a cultural flagship for Bournemouth. (MBTS, 2012)

We want our art gallery and museum to do what the very best galleries and museums do: to be spaces where the past, present and future come together in an irresistible mix of life, culture and heritage - a place where everyone can feel at home with a world of art.

Disposal Report for Taxidermy Mounts of British Birds Currently Held at RCAGM Study Centre

Introduction

The RCAGM (Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum) is considering the disposal of the above in-line with section 5.4 of its Collection Development Strategy which has identified that some areas of its collection, including natural history, are surplus to requirements and constitute a drain on limited resources.

Section 3.15 of the Collection Development Strategy identifies the natural history material within the RCAGM collections which does not relate to its 'Core Offer'¹ as a disposal priority. Section 5.4 states that all natural history material not acquired by our Founders should be disposed of.

Additionally, best collections care practice dictates that the retention of unnecessary examples of taxidermy be reviewed due to the extremely hazardous and toxic chemicals used in their production.

Object Description and Provenance

Please turn to Appendix 1 for basic details and images of the items concerned. More specific details are as follows:

:254.31.5.1 - A group of seven taxidermied birds from Cumberland mounted in a case. The group consists of three Snipes, three Mallards and a Bean Goose set against a wetland type backdrop and scene dressing. They are all labelled within the case, but no beyond them being collected in Cumberland. The case is rectangular and has a glass front and sides, with a wooden base, top and back. Given as a gift by Mr C.H. Clough of Burton-on-Sea in 1931. Damage to top left corner of case glass which has been crudely repaired with masking tape. H900mm x W1190mm x D320mm

:394.35.76 - A case of four taxidermied game birds mostly shot by a Dr F. Winson Ramsey. The group consists of a Rock Ptarmigan, a Grey Partridge, a Black Grouse and a Red Grouse. No specimen collection data given. The case is decorated with a winter type backdrop and scene dressing. The front of the case has been formed from moulded picture frame wood and is delicately carved interweaving swirling gilt patterned band with leaves and berries around the outer edge. Slight damage to case. Given as a gift of Mrs Ramsey of Bournemouth in 1935. H955mm x W950mm x D495mm

¹ See Appendix 2 for the full text of the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM

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Sue Beamer

:405.35.98.5 - A case containing six taxidermied birds against a shoreline backdrop and scene dressing with shells and seaweed. The group of birds consist of a Lapwing, a Common Snipe, a Common Greenshank, a Grey Plover, a Sandpiper and an unidentified specimen (possibly a juvenile). No specimen collection data given. Treated for possible pest infestation in 2007 by freezing at -38 degrees centigrade. Given as a gift by the executors of A.H.B. Hartford of Christchurch in 1935. The Hartford collection was held at the RCAGM until 1951 when records indicate that the entire collection was dispersed to other sites, but it is unclear on what basis as there is no corresponding entry in the Loans Register and it is not clear which items went where. It seems probable that this item was back in RCAGM/Bournemouth Museum Service's possession by the 1970s. H430mm x W760mm x D210mm

:426.36.26.2 - A pair of taxidermied Golden Eagles in a case with a lamb as prey animal against a Scottish Highlands type backdrop and scene dressing. A page from the Inverness Courier of 11.8.1896 titled 'List of Shootings, 1896' stuck to the reverse of the case suggests scientific collection data. Given as a bequest by Dr S.H. Snell of Winton, Bournemouth in 1936. The entire Snell bequest was sent to the Red House Museum at Christchurch in 1951. At some point, probably in the 1970s or 1980s this item was returned to RCAGM/Bournemouth Museum Service. H1240mm x W1645mm x D560mm

:426.36.26.15 - A case containing a single taxidermy mount of a Common Snipe against a marshy bog type backdrop and scene dressing. Another specimen may have been removed, as there is a large space on the other side of the case. No specimen collection data given. Treated for possible pest infestation in 2007 by freezing at -38 degrees centigrade. Given as a bequest by Dr S.H. Snell of Winton, Bournemouth in 1936. The entire Snell bequest was sent to the Red House Museum at Christchurch in 1951. At some point, probably in the 1970s or 1980s this item was returned to RCAGM/Bournemouth Museum Service. H375mm x W480mm x D180mm

:T29.8.2007.5 - A case containing a single taxidermy mount of a Grey Heron against a riverbank backdrop and scene dressing. Provenance unknown and no specimen collection data. Given a temporary inventory number in 2007 as part of the Renaissance in Regions funded documentation project. A sticky label on the glass reads 'Keep RH' which might imply that it was on loan to the Red House Museum at Christchurch at some point. H975mm x W530mm x D360mm

:T29.8.2007.7 - A case containing three taxidermy mounts of Pheasants, two male and one female, against a heath/moorland backdrop and scene dressing. Provenance unknown and no specimen collection data. Given a temporary inventory number in 2007 as part of the Renaissance in Regions funded documentation project. H925mm x W930mm x D365mm

:T29.8.2007.8 - A case containing three taxidermy mounts of Red Grouse, two females and one male, against a heath/moorland backdrop and scene dressing. Provenance unknown and no specimen collection data. Given a temporary inventory number in 2007 as part of the Renaissance in Regions funded documentation project. H850mm x W945mm x D365mm

The taxidermy is in good condition, and the specimens were professionally stuffed and mounted at the time of their creation. Some items have been given conservation treatment during their ownership by RCAGM.

This recent display history of all of these items is obscure. They certainly have not been displayed since at least 2007 and probably not since being moved the Study Centre in the late 1990s.

The author has not been able to match the items on temporary inventory numbers to proper accession register entries to a lack of specific information in the RCAGM paper records.

The Case for Retention

Meeting the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM

This material does not fit within the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM (see below) as these specimens were not collected by our Founders. While Lady Russell-Cotes had an interest in natural history it was canted towards the exotic mammal and bird species that the Russell-Cotes' encountered on their travels, especially in New Zealand. She did not have an interest in British indigenous species.

Relevance to the RCAGM Interpretation Strategy

This material is completely irrelevant to the RCAGM Interpretation Strategy.

Public Benefit

The retention of these specimens by the RCAGM would not benefit the public in any way. The RCAGM is not widely known as a repository of natural history.

Effect of Disposal on Remaining Collections

The disposal of this material by the RCAGM would have no detrimental effect on the rest of its collections.

Implications for Public Collections Holding Similar Material

No other public collections in the UK would suffer from the RCAGM disposing of this material.

The Costs of Retention (Including Conservation)

Currently stuffed specimens do not place any cost only the RCAGM other than the usual costs of storage and insurance. These taxidermy mounts do not currently place a financial burden on the RCAGM as they are low cost items

The Case for Disposal

Meeting the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM

This material does not meet the 'Core Offer' of the RCAGM. It is not associated in any way with Lady Russell-Cotes. While she did have an interest in natural science and formed a collection of taxidermy it was based on non-UK specimens linked to her travels and it was decorative in nature rather than scientific.

Relevance to the RCAGM Interpretation Strategy

This material is not relevant to the RCAGM Interpretation Strategy as it does not meet the 'Core Offer' around which the strategy is based. It is very hard to see any reason why the RCAGM would use this collection in its public programme when we know that Lady Russell-Cotes was primarily interested in non-UK species, especially birds from New Zealand.

Public Benefit

The RCAGM is not benefitting the public in any way by retaining this material. The RCAGM is not a natural history museum, and it is not perceived as such by the visiting public or researchers.

Effect of Disposal on Remaining Collections

The disposal of this collection by the RCAGM would have no detrimental effect on the rest of its collections. In fact it would improve matters as taxidermy is very attractive to insect pests and is created using hazardous chemicals such as Mercury and Arsenic posing a health and safety risk to staff members. Such a risk is out of proportion to the benefit received in retaining such specimens.

Implications for Public Collections Holding Similar Material

No other museums/collections in the UK would suffer from the RCAGM disposing of these items which are, except for 426.36.26.2, without any scientific collection data. Even the data given for 426.36.26.2 is vague at best.

The Costs of Disposal

The cost of disposing of this material would be minimal and of the usual amount one would expect to see as part of the disposal process. There is no grant aid or funding to be repaid.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The recommendation is for disposal from the collections of the RCAGM.


The disposal of this type of material is indicated in the RCAGM's Collection Development Strategy under section 5.4. This material lacks relevance to the RCAGM and its current activities which are based around its 'Core Offer'. The RCAGM is interested only in retaining that natural science material which compliments its 'Core Offer' i.e. material which was, or is similar to, that collected by Lady Russell-Cotes.

The lack of scientific data associated with these specimens the health and safety risk posed by their inherent nature should be noted in combination with the above. Disposal of these items would free up precious storage space whilst at the same time reducing the pest infestation risk to other parts of the RCAGM collections.

Therefore, this report recommends that the taxidermy should be advertised to the wider museum community² via the Collections Trust's 'Find an Object' website as per sector best practice and the RCAGM's own procedures. This will allow any museum or public collection to express an interest.

Duncan Walker MA, AMA

Curator, RCAGM





8.5.2016



² The RCAGM understands that the Bournemouth Natural Science Society's stores are full and that they are not taking in any more bird specimens.



Appendices

Appendix 1 - Listing of Taxidermy Held on Loan by Hampshire Cultural Trust Subject to this Report

Accession No. (or equivalent)	Description	Provenance	Image
:254.31.5.1	A group of seven taxidermied birds from Cumberland mounted in a case. The group consists of three Snipes, three Mallards and a Bean Goose. H900mm x W1190mm x D320mm	Given as a gift by Mr Cloughs of ? in 1931	
:394.35.76	A case of four taxidermied game birds mostly shot by a Dr F. Winson Ramsey. The group consists of a Rock Ptarmigan, a Grey Partridge, a Black Grouse and a Red Grouse. H955mm x W950mm x D495mm	Given as a gift of Mrs Ramsey of Bournemouth in 1935.	

<p>:405.35.98.5</p>	<p>A case containing six taxidermied birds. The group of birds consist of a Lapwing, a Common Snipe, a Common Greenshank, a Grey Plover, a Sandpiper and an unidentified specimen (possibly a juvenile). H430mm x W760mm x D210mm</p>	<p>Given as a gift by the executors of A.H.B. Hartford of Christchurch</p>	
<p>:426.36.26.2</p>	<p>A pair of taxidermied Golden Eagles in a case with a lamb as prey animal. They were shot in Scotland in 1896. H1240mm x W1645mm x D560mm</p>	<p>Given as a bequest by Dr S.H. Snell of Winton, Bournemouth in 1936.</p>	

:426.36.26.15	A case containing a single taxidermy mount of a Common Snipe. H375mm x W480mm x D180mm	Given as a bequest by Dr S.H. Snell of Winton, Bournemouth in 1936.	 A taxidermy mount of a Common Snipe is displayed in a dark wooden case. The bird is shown in a naturalistic pose, standing on a small patch of ground with some foliage. The background of the case is a painted backdrop of a landscape with trees and a blue sky.
:T29.8.2007.5	A case containing a single taxidermy mount of a Grey Heron. H975mm x W530mm x D360mm	Found in store, 2007	 A taxidermy mount of a Grey Heron is displayed in a dark wooden case. The bird is shown in a naturalistic pose, standing on a small patch of ground with some foliage. The background of the case is a painted backdrop of a landscape with trees and a blue sky.

<p>:T29.8.2007.7</p>	<p>A case containing three taxidermy mounts of Pheasants, two male and one female. H850mm x W945mm x D365mm</p>	<p>Found in store, 2007</p>	
<p>:T29.8.2007.8</p>	<p>A case containing three taxidermy mounts of Red Grouse, two females and one male. H850mm x W945mm x D365mm</p>	<p>Found in store, 2007</p>	

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