Great North Museum: Hancock

**Loans Out – Exhibition & Display**

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**1. Introduction**

Part of the GNM: Hancock’s mission is to inspire curiosity, learning and debate, and we believe that access to science and culture enriches everyone. Loaning out our collections to other museums and cultural & heritage institutions can play a major role in this.

The GNM: Hancock collections encompass natural history, geology, archaeology and World Cultures. Only a percentage of the overall collection is on display. An initial source of information on these collections for potential borrowers can be found on the GNM: Hancock website (greatnorthmuseum.org.uk). The online catalogue may also be useful (collectionssearchtwmuseums.org.uk).

The GNM: Hancock is managed by Tyne and Wear Archives & Museums on behalf of Newcastle University. The majority of the collections are owned by the two learned societies: The Natural History Society of Northumbria (NHSN) and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne (SANT) and in some areas by Newcastle University.

The purpose of this document is to assist potential borrowers navigate and understand the guidelines and procedures involved when loaning objects from the GNM: Hancock (hereby known as “the GNM”) for exhibition and display.

**2. Guiding Principles**

**2.1** The GNM will consider loans to public museums, galleries, libraries, archives, educational institutions and other public domains that can prove to have an acceptable level of security and suitable environmental conditions. Requests will be welcomed from the UK and international institutions.

**2.2** In order to secure a loan from the GNM, borrowers will have to demonstrate that the objects they have requested form an essential part of their display, and that the exhibition itself is intellectually valid and will provide public benefit.

**2.3** The GNM can only agree to a borrower’s request if/when either the NHSN or SANT formally agrees to a loan.

**2.4** Loans will be made by the GNM for a maximum period of 5 years. If loans are being made to new or existing permanent displays, there will be an option to renew the loan at the end of the 5-year period.

**2.5** The GNM will consider the rarity and significance of an object when determining whether to lend.

**2.6** The GNM will only lend in circumstances when the perceived risk to the object is considered reasonable and when the borrower guarantees that the object will be returned at the end of the loan period.

**2.7** The GNM will not make loans in circumstances that would be damaging to its standing and reputation.

**2.8** The GNM will not lend to any exhibition which includes objects that are known to have been stolen, illegally exported or illegally excavated.

**3. Requesting a loan**

**3.1** It is recommended that preliminary discussions should take place between the borrower and the relevant curators of the collection that is of interest to the borrower. Information required from the borrower will include:

* Title of the exhibition or display
* Exhibition venue and dates
* name, address and contact details of exhibition organiser
* scope of the exhibition
* list of objects requested, quoting the museum accession number where possible.

**3.2** Relevant curators to contact can be found in Appendix A

**3.3** If the relevant curator feels that a loan request is appropriate and meets the GNM’s criteria, the borrower will be notified of the next steps required by them.

**3.4** In the case of an object that belongs to the NHSN, the borrower will be required to fill out a small form that will be forwarded by the curator to the NHSN Director. At this point in the procedure, a UK Facilities Report will also be requested from the borrower.

**3.5** Following advice from the museum, the governing bodies of the NHSN and/or SANT will then formally decide whether to proceed with the loan or refuse it. The curator will then notify the borrower of the decision.

**4. Period of notice**

**4.1** The Museum will need as much notice as possible for new loan requests. This is so that all departments involved in loans can schedule the administration and object preparation into the Museum’s other work.

**4.2** The Museum requests that any loans should be submitted no less than 6 months before the exhibition opening date.

**5. Refusals**

**5.1** While the GNM will strive to remove all potential barriers to a loan, there may be some occasions when a loan may be refused:

* There are legal or ethical issues surrounding an object that prevent a loan.
* The object is fragile, in a poor or unstable condition, unable to travel or made of hazardous material.
* Removing an object that is currently in one of the GNM’s permanent galleries would have a significant impact on the overall displays.
* The object is already committed to another exhibition.
* There is insufficient time to consider and prepare the loan.
* A compelling case for the loan has not been made by the borrower.
* The proposed use of the object is not appropriate.
* Suitable display, environmental and security conditions cannot be met.
* The object will not be accessible to the public.

**5.2** The GNM will always explain the reasons behind any refusal.

**6. Sensitive collections**

**6.1** In accordance with the GNM’s Sacred Objects policy, the GNM may loan sacred objects from the collections for exhibition and display purpose. In such cases, the museum would expect the lending institution to adhere to guidance laid out in the Policy for the Care of Culturally Restricted Objects.

**6.2** The GNM will refuse loan requests of culturally restricted material for display purposes. Such items include, but are not restricted to, secret-sacred Australian Aboriginal objects that were intended to be viewed by men only.

**6.3** In accordance with the GNM’s Human Remains policy, the GNM may loan human remains from its collections for exhibition and display purposes. In such cases, the museum would expect the lending institution to adhere to guidance laid out in the Policy for the Care of Human Remains and in DCMS 2005.

**7. Hazardous collections**

**7.1** The GNM collections contain material that have specific health and safety issues- for example, specimens preserved in alcohol. While these objects will still be considered for loan, the borrower will have to follow guidance provided by the GNM’s Conservation specialists.

**8. Costs**

**8.1** The GNM does not charge administration or loan fees. However, borrowers will be responsible for certain costs. These will be agreed between the museum and the borrower and may include the following:

* Any form of special preparation an object may need to make it ready for display, e.g., mounting, framing, display supports, mannequins.
* Replacement of objects if they have been part of the GNM’s permanent displays. Substitutes for the GNM might have to be sourced in the form of replicas or image reproductions.
* External conservation work if outsourcing is required.
* Insurance premiums
* Packing cases, where bespoke travelling crates may be required.
* Unless otherwise agreed with the GNM in advance, objects should travel with specialised museum/art handlers
* For international loans, air freight may have to be considered.
* Courier travel costs and subsistence: In most cases the GNM will send one or two members of staff to

1. Accompany the object as it travels
2. Assist with its installation in an exhibition.

The borrower should expect to cover the cost of their travel and subsistence.

* Objects should normally be picked up by couriers during the museum’s regular opening hours. If the courier needs to be at the museum outside of these hours, the borrower will be responsible for the cost of keeping the building open and out-of-hours staffing costs.

This is not an exhaustive list; other costs may also need to be considered when organising a loan.

**9. Insurance and Government Indemnity**

**9.1** The borrower must insure all objects at valuations determined by the GNM against “all risks” and on a “nail-to-nail” basis. The GNM reserves the right to revise the value of any object (especially for long term loans) to take into account changes in the market value of cultural and scientific artefacts.

**9.2** The GNM accepts British Government Indemnity and may be able to accept indemnities offered by foreign governments provided that a copy of the indemnity terms and conditions is sent to TWAM’s Documentation Office at the beginning of the loan preparation period for approval.

**9.3** Where indemnity is not available, the GNM may accept a borrower’s commercial insurance. A copy of the insurance terms and conditions should be sent to TWAM’s Documentation Office at the beginning of the loan preparation period for approval.

**10. Borrower Facilities**

**10.1** In order for the GNM to obtain information about the borrowing venue’s access, security, storage, display and environment, the borrower may be expected to complete the following:

* UKRG Standard Facilities Report
* UKRG Security Questionnaire
* UKRG Standard display case questionnaire

**10.2** Objects in store awaiting display should be kept in area with suitable security and environmental conditions.

**10.3** There must be no smoking, eating or drinking in the area where the objects are stored before display as well as in the exhibition area. If the exhibition gallery is to be used for functions, this must be agreed with the GNM in advance.

**11. Display**

**11.1** Methods of display must be agreed in advance with the GNM: Hancock.

**11.2** Object cases should be glazed and conform to European safety standards (BS EN356:2000 P4A and BS5544). Case should be lockable, dust proof and exchange air at a rate of one air change per day.

**11.3** Any case materials, mounts, plinths and mannequins may need to be assessed by TWAM’s conservators and Oddy test results may be needed for some materials where display is long term.

**11.4** If any new coatings, sealants or adhesives are used within cases, a minimum of two weeks must be given for off gassing before objects are installed.

**11.5** Any objects approved for open display should be placed at least a metre behind barriers unless otherwise agreed with the GNM: Hancock.

**12. Environmental conditions and monitoring**

**12.1** All objects must be stored, housed or displayed in a suitably stable environment avoiding direct sunlight and extremes of temperature and relative humidity. We would also expect all areas to be monitored as part of the borrowing organisation’s integrated pest management programme.

**12.2** If borrowers do not have environmental control systems, suitable conditions that may be accepted by the GNM can be achieved by enclosing the objects in display cases with low air exchange rates.

**12.3** To ensure the proposed venue meets the specified conditions, the GNM: Hancock will require environmental monitoring data from the borrower for a similar period of time as the proposed loan duration, for approval. The GNM: Hancock will require the borrower to monitor the conditions for the duration of the loan and make this available if requested.

**12.4** See Appendix B for general environmental conditions that would be expected at the borrower’s organisation.

**13. Condition checking**

**13.1** Condition reports will be prepared by the GNM or TWAM Conservation staff for all objects. These will be checked against the objects and agreed upon arrival at the borrower’s venue, at the end of the loan period and again upon return to the GNM. If the loan is short term, the borrower will be expected to keep the condition reports for the duration of the loan.

**13.2** Any changes to the condition of the objects during the loan period must be reported to the loan supervisor at the GNM immediately. If changes have taken place to any object while on loan, the GNM reserves the right to recall them.

**13.3** In the case of long-term loans, the GNM: Hancock may ask the borrower to check the condition of objects at certain intervals during the loan period.

**14. Handling and installation**

**14.1** Installation of the objects may not take place while areas of the exhibition are under construction. If any glue or adhesives have been used in the exhibition area, 72 hours must be given before objects are installed.

**14.2** Unless otherwise agreed, loans that have been couriered by GNM or TWAM staff, the GNM will expect the courier to witness the placing of the loan in its final display location and the courier should witness the securing of the case.

**14.3** Display cases must not be opened, and objects moved without the permission of the GNM except in an emergency. In this event, the loans supervisor must be notified immediately.

**14.4** Any labels or identifying markings on an object must not be moved or obliterated, and no mark in pencil, ink paint, or other material should be made on the objects.

**15. Packing and transport**

**15.1** The GNM: Hancock will pack objects ready for transit. The costs for any bespoke packing crates that are required will be met by the borrower.

**15.2** All transport arrangements will be organised by the borrower and agreed with the loan supervisor. Transport, collections and delivery arrangements should be agreed upon well in advance of the loan period.

**15.3** Any packed crate which has travelled by air should be allowed to acclimatise in its final destination for 24 hours before unpacking.

**15.4** Unless otherwise agreed with the GNM, transport must be handled by an approved fine art shipping agent.

**15.5** The borrower will be responsible for storing the packing materials and crates in a secure and environmentally suitable place throughout the loan period.

**16. Couriers**

**16.1** The GNM may ask that one or more members of staff accompany objects in transit to oversee packing and installation. This may happen during de-installation and repacking. The GNM may request the presence of couriers depending on:

* The complexity of the journey
* If the borrowing venue is unknown to the GNM
* The fragility of the loan objects or if they require special handling
* High value loans

This list is not exhaustive, other criteria may arise that would lead to couriers being necessary.

**16.2** Couriers must receive, where appropriate:

* A reasonable level of hotel accommodation if overnight stays are required.
* Correct and appropriate tickets for any train journeys or flights.
* An adequate level of subsistence (to be agreed in advance) to cover all expenses.

**16.3** The GNM will consider sharing couriers with other lenders, depending on the individual circumstances.

**17. Right to withdraw**

**17.1** The GNM: Hancock reserves the right to withdraw objects from an agreed loan list, or to recall objects on loan at any time if it is known that the borrower/borrower’s venue has not complied with the Loan conditions.

**Appendix A**

GNM: Hancock collections and curators

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For all requests encompassing archaeology, Egyptology and ethnography:

**Andrew Parkin**

Keeper of Archaeology

andrew.parkin@twmuseums.org.uk

**Jo Anderson**

Assistant Keeper of Archaeology

joanne.anderson@twmuseums.org.uk

For all requests encompassing Natural History

**Dan Gordon**

Keeper of Natural Sciences

dan.gordon@twmuseums.org.uk

For all requests encompassing palaeontology and mineralogy

**Sylvia Humphrey**

Assistant Keeper of Geology

sylvia.humphrey@twmuseums.org.uk

**Appendix B**

General environmental conditions

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**Relative humidity**

35-70% RH (depending on object) with fluctuations of no more than 10% within these limits in any 24 hour period.

**Temperature**

16-26 degrees centigrade with no more than a 5 degree variation within these limits in any 24 hour period.

**Lighting conditions**

Light levels will be 50-300 lux depending on the light sensitivity of the object . Where some daylight or other variable light source is present, levels based on expected cumulative exposure (lux hours) will be considered.

Exposure levels are based on a 10 hour/day exposure; where this is likely to be exceeded on a regular basis then the GNM: Hancock must be informed.

UV levels must be below 15 microwatts per lumen at the above illumination levels. Daylight or other light sources that exceed this must be fitted with a UV filter.