

Orkney Museums

Funded in round 4, March 2011

Main Fund grant - £10,000

Scapa Flow Visitor Centre & Museum is part of Orkney Islands Council's Arts Museums and Heritage Service. We applied to Effective Collections to conduct comprehensive conservation and significance reviews on our wartime collections, which are mainly displayed there.

The museum was originally set up by local enthusiasts, only coming under professional museum management in 2000.

It includes objects relating to the following:

- Scuttling and salvage of the German High Seas Fleet in 1918
- HMS Royal Oak and HMS Hampshire
- Arctic Convoy
- Fire arms, uniforms, personal effects
- Large and heavy working objects such as a steam crane, military boats and vehicles

There was no collecting policy so many objects had no local provenance. No primary conservation work had been undertaken on the numerous artefacts recovered from the sea, which gave cause for concern.

Janette Park, Sheila Garson, Curators

Our aims were to rationalise the collection through disposal of objects that had no provenance and conservation of important objects thus freeing up store space and enabling new displays. We needed specialist advice to know where to start so three reports were commissioned.

Reports were:

- Collections Condition Survey
- Significance Review
- Engineering Conservation Assessment of Steam Crane

By cross referencing these reports it was possible to make informed decisions on which objects should be conserved and which should be put forward for disposal. The remainder of the grant went towards carrying out some of the conservation recommendations.

Effective Collections has given a fantastic opportunity to really look at the collection in depth and pay for expert reports and advice which otherwise we would not have been able to afford. This has enabled us to make important and informed decisions on the future of artefacts in the collection.