

Craven Museum: sorting the store

What was the issue?

Craven Museum staff were having great difficulty keeping up with their backlog of unaccessioned or unrecorded objects. Over the museum's 90 year history, many items had come into their possession without formally being accessioned. The aisles and shelves in the external store were cluttered with boxes and many of the objects were unaccessioned. Retrieving objects was frustrating and sometimes impossible. Dealing with the problem and improving access to their assets was one of their accreditation targets.

How did Museum Development Yorkshire help?

They were given advice from the MDY team, particularly Alan Bentley, about the process of catching up with the backlog. They then secured an MDY grant to employ two Curatorial Interns who would work in situ to inventory all the items in the store.

What happened?

The two Curatorial Interns worked systematically through every box in the museum store, checking that the contents were correct. Any item they found that was not accessioned was listed on the inventory. They reduced the storage footprint by decanting objects into fewer boxes and updating the record. They also managed to clear the aisles in the store room, making it easier to access and a safer place to work.

At the end of the project, a full inventory list was completed which was vital for completing two subsequent projects. Firstly the external store was moved into the museum and secondly a deaccessioning project, which ultimately removed around 1000 objects from the collection. The overall effect that the work has had on the collection is immeasurable and invaluable. Before this project they had little confidence in their cataloguing and object location records – going to the store to retrieve items was difficult and sometimes the items could not be located.

“Today, our store is fantastically organised and items are always located. The assistance, both advisory and financial, from MDY has gone so far and has improved our institution and collection in so many ways.”

Find out more

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