



Moray Museums Service Social History Collections Audit

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Contents	Page		Page
SECTION 1 Context		SECTION 3 OPTIONS	
1.1 Introduction & Audit Aims	4	3.1 Summary	18
1.2 What is a Collections Audit?	4	3.2 What is Rationalisation?	18
1.3 Audit Objectives	5	3.3 The Rationalisation Process	18
1.4 MMS Collections Context	6	3.4 Stakeholders	19
1.5 Timeline of the Collections	7		
1.6 Methodology	8	SECTION 4 Next Steps	
1.7 Data Sources	8	4.1 Options Appraisal	20
		4.2 Proposed Actions	20
SECTION 2 Audit			
2.1 Audit Parameters	9	SECTION 5 Endnotes	
2.2 Collections under consideration	10	5.1 Endnotes	21
2.2.1 Collections and objects acquired post 1996	10		
2.2.2 Peter Anson Collection	10		
2.2.3 The Moray Council Collection	12		
2.2.4 Firearms	13		
2.2.5 The Tolbooth Collection	14		
2.2.6 Technology Collection	15		
2.2.7 Moray Community Collections	15		
2.2.8 Loans	17		

SECTION 1: CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction & Audit Aims

The pretext of the audit is to support the transition to a new operating model for Falconer Museum with a review and rationalisation of certain parts of the Moray Museums Service collections (MMS) following the decision in October 2019 by Moray Council to close the Service or transfer to another organisation [1]. The audit responds to the proposed outline put forward in the Moray Council EDIS Report 'Future Falconer Museum', 2nd September 2025 using the recommendations and timescales outlined in the identified supporting reports by Culture Radar [2] and Helen Avenell Heritage Associates [3].

The Future Falconer Museum Report produced by Culture Radar in October 2024 outlined a pathway for the future of the Moray Museums Service collections and the reopening of the Falconer Museum. As part of the report recommendations implicit within the preferred Operating Model for the Falconer Museum, the MMS collections would be rationalised leaving only the Moray wide, non-Forres, social history collections and the Peter Anson collection in Moray Council hands [4]. The audit identifies the MMS social history collections that sit outside The Falconer Museum collections as defined by a new Collections Policy (see section 2.1). The audit offers a pathway of workable next steps to assist Moray Council in understanding where accountability sits for the items it holds in its collections and enables a logical and evidenced decision-making process to be followed around the future of these identified collections. .

The work was undertaken by Helen Avenell Heritage Associates between January and March 2026 and included a combination of desk-based research and onsite recording in the Moray Museums Store in Forres.

1.2 What is a Collections Audit?

A systematic procedure that verifies the accuracy and completeness of records regarding objects in a museum's possession, ensuring physical items match documentation. It involves checking object locations, condition, and identification numbers, often helping to identify missing, stolen, or misplaced items, while enhancing security and improving cataloguing standards.

The Collections Trust, 2026



1.3 Audit Objectives

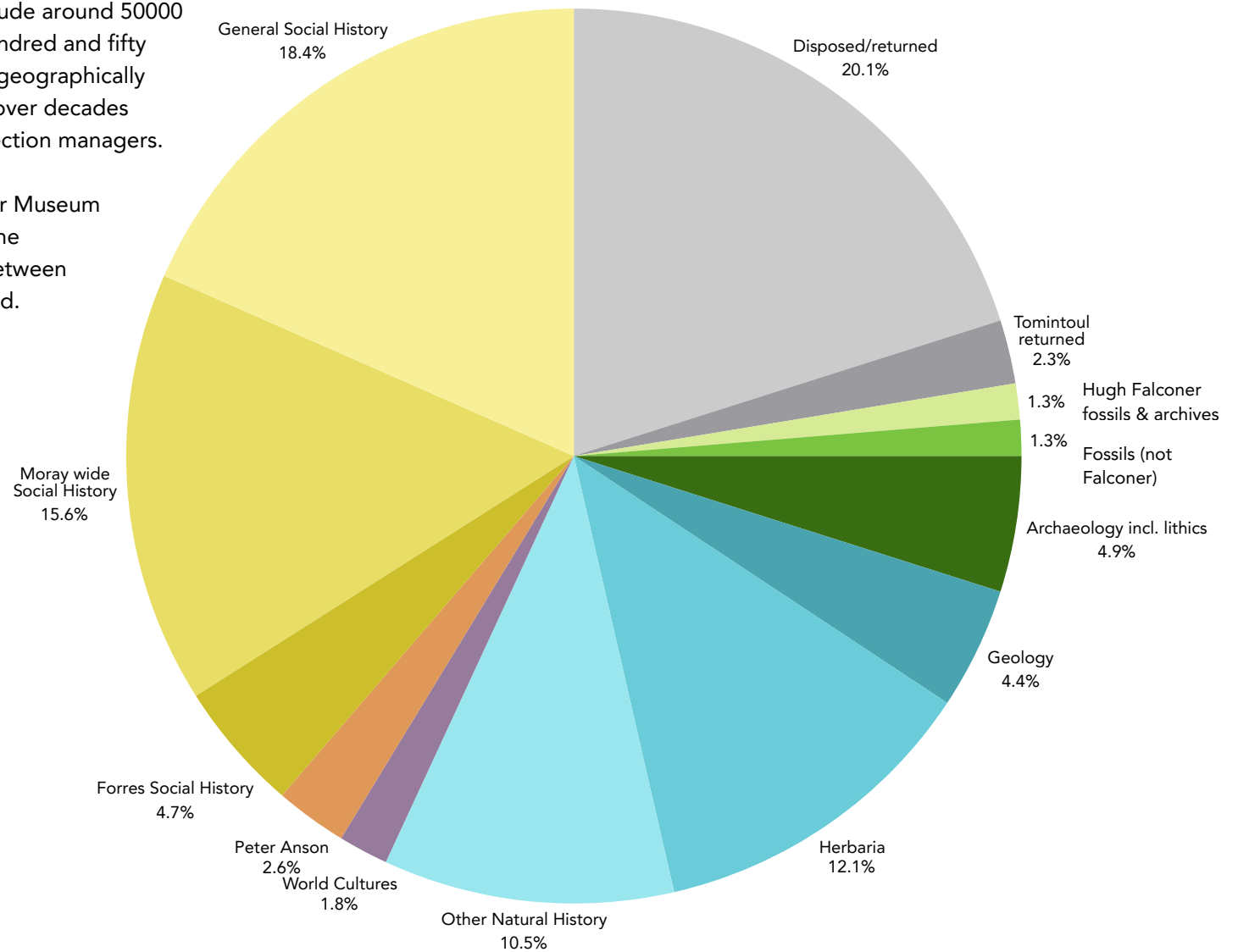
To review the significance of the social history collections in relation to:

- 'the original 'Falconer collections' and 'in relation to geographical area of Moray with reference to future decision making on what should remain in the collection'
- To improve knowledge about the MMS social history collections where little is known beyond entry level information
- To understand the condition and care needs of the MMS social history collections
- To understand the learning & engagement potential of the MMS social history collections in relation to rationalisation

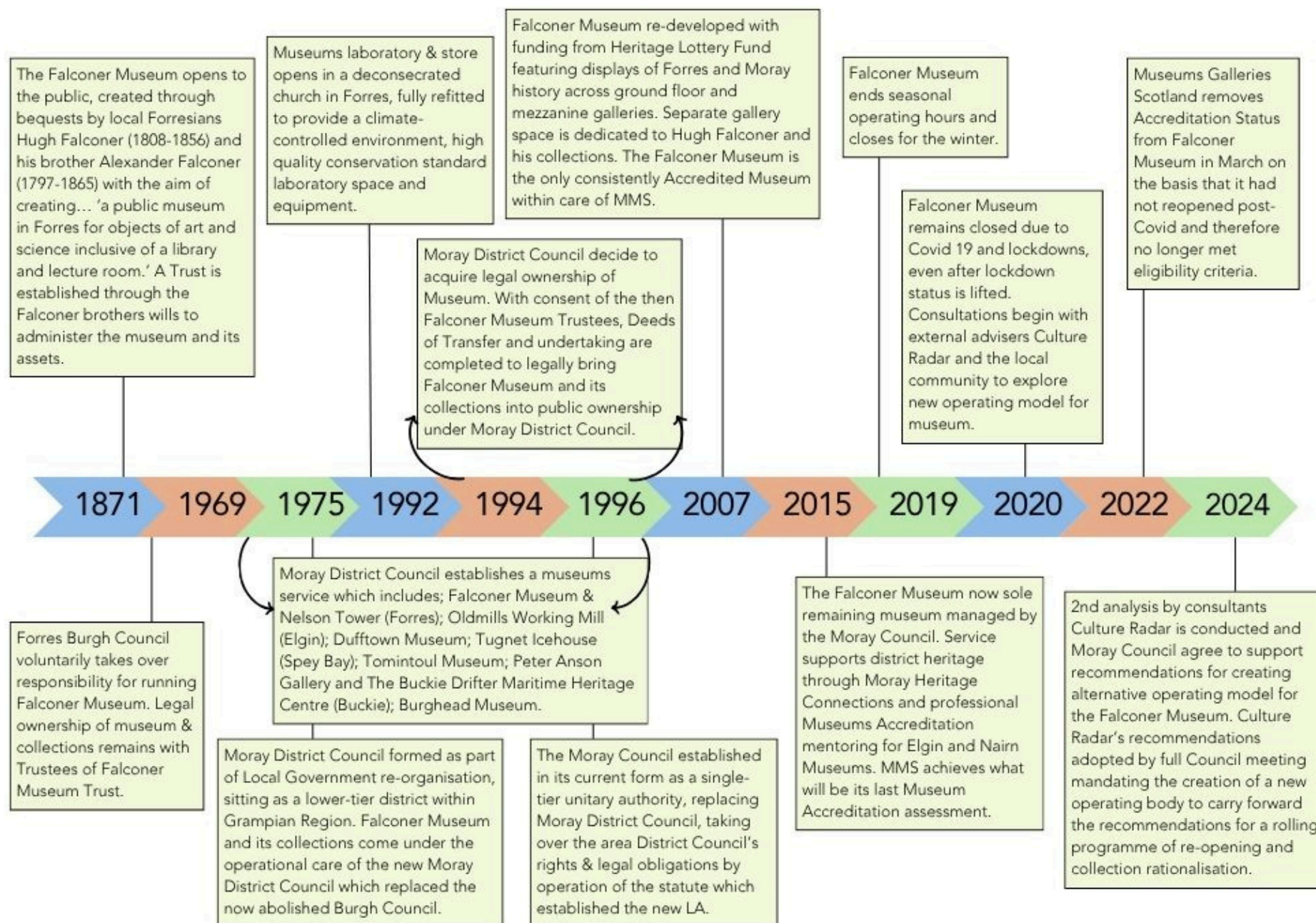
1.4 MMS Collections Context

The Moray Museum Service collections include around 50000 objects, collected across more than one hundred and fifty years. The collections are rich, diverse and geographically spread, made up of collecting undertaken over decades by a series of custodians, curators and collection managers.

The collection includes the original Falconer Museum collections as well as objects collected by the Moray Museums Service which operated between 1975 and 2019, when the Service was closed.



1.5 Timeline of the Collections



1.6 Methodology

The methodology followed the advised audit process structure outlined by The Collections Trust, the UK recognised standards body for working with museum collections to Accreditation Standard. A bespoke framework was created, building from published and peer reviewed methodologies identified by The Collections Trust. The approach sought to measure the defined collections area (Social History) against a range of criteria:

Primary criteria

- Significance (in relation to geographical area of Moray)

Secondary criteria

- Condition
- Learning & engagement potential

1.7 Data Sources

Museum record keeping is a key function of museum operations. It involves systematically creating detailed documentation for every object, including provenance, condition reports, and unique identification numbers, which are managed through physical accession registers as the core procedure, supported by digital Collection Management Systems (CMS) [5].

Until its closure in 2019, MMS record keeping followed agreed industry museum standards and kept up to date through physical Accession Registers held in the MMS Store, using the collections prefix 'MORMS' [6].

Documentation was supported by the steady and methodical work of volunteers who undertook inventory work, including working through documentation backlogs.

During the early 2000s, MMS also held a licence for AdLib, an industry standard CMS which was used as the primary collection management system. The MMS licence expired some years ago and in January 2024, AdLib's parent company Axiell announced the end of support for AdLib rendering the database inaccessible.

The primary collections data source for this report was derived from an excel spreadsheet extracted from the MMS AdLib Collections Management System (CMS) some years ago. The initial desktop research phase of this project yielded a Microsoft Access database created by MMS staff to manage a full collections audit undertaken on an ongoing basis between 2012-2015, supported by the museum volunteer team. This Microsoft Access database offered a more detailed categorisation of the collections which allowed the extrapolation of more granular detail on different collection categories.

Both data sources have presented limitations for undertaking collections audit research with issues around searchable functionality, missing or incomplete fields due to documentation backlog [7] and volume of data. The timescale of this report necessitated much of the collection in question to be reviewed at a group level or by 'review unit', with an object-by-object approach only undertaken with prioritised objects.

SECTION 2: AUDIT

2.1 Audit Parameters

The collections under review for this audit are identified as the Moray Council Museums Service Social History collections:

General Social History	18.4%
Moray wide Social History	15.6%
Forres Social History	4.7%

These collections include objects both with a defined connection to Forres and/or Moray more widely, and objects with a broader social history value. The collections include personal possessions, ephemera, tools, furniture, uniforms, transport and civic memorabilia. Most of the objects within these collections date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although there are some objects from earlier periods such as those reflecting Forres Tolbooth.

The social history collections represent a broad span of objects that represent the identity, place and lives of the people of Moray [8]. The objects are spread and interspersed across the breath of the whole collections.

Due to the size and breadth of these collections, further parameters were required to construct feasible, workable and actionable decision making. For the purposes of the audit, these parameters have been defined as:

- **Collections and objects acquired post 1996**

Ownership of the Falconer Museum and its collections did not formally come under Moray Council ownership until 1996 [9]. Therefore, any objects acquired before this date can reasonably be assumed to be part of the Falconer Museum collections.

- **Objects collected pre-1996 out with the scope of the proposed purpose of the new Falconer Museum**

The 2024 Culture Radar report recommended a revised Statement of Purpose;

'The Falconer Museum is a museum constituted as a charity for public benefit. It has a collection and programme focus on archaeology, geology, palaeontology, natural history, herbaria, Hugh Falconer, Forres heritage and local history. It works in partnership with its key partners and stakeholders (including its volunteers) to protect, conserve and share its collections with its local audiences and tourists' [10].

There are objects and collections that, whilst acquired pre-1996, will not fit into a new Collecting Policy for Falconer Museum. It is reasonable therefore, to examine these collections and consider appropriate options for their future.

2.1 Collections under Consideration

The following section deals with the collections identified for consideration under the audit and outlines brief recommendations for each.

Section 2.2.1

Collections and objects acquired post 1996

Section 2.2.2 – 2.2.8

Objects acquired pre-1996 that sit outwith the scope of a reopened Falconer Museum operating under the proposed new Operating Model

2.2.1 Collections and objects acquired post 1996

Records indicate a total of 771 object entry forms from the period 1996 to 2016, representing an estimated 5000 objects. This figure was calculated based on analysis of the excel spreadsheet, taking into account that one accession into the collection often consists of numerous individual objects. This figure includes loans to the MMS such as the final Peter Anson accession (see below). The objects and collections donated during this period reflect the collecting policy of the MMS [11] and includes objects with clear Forres connection as well as from across the Moray area. A summary investigation of the Accession Registers indicated that around 40% of the accessions could have a direct provenance with Forres, with the remaining 60% having a provenance or significance to the wider Moray area or beyond.

Recommendation

Further work is required to identify and separate objects that fall into the new proposed Collections Policy and then undertake a Collections Review (see section 4.2).

2.2.2 The Peter Anson Collection

Peter Anson (1889-1975) was an artist, scholar and author who devoted his life to his interest in the sea, fishing, and the Church. Anson spent much of his adulthood among the fishing communities of Northeast Scotland, recording a way of life that has now disappeared, with a distinctive artistic style based on his original training as an architect [12]. Much of Anson's work, especially his paintings, are a unique artistic and historical record of life around the fishing ports of Moray's coastal towns and villages. The Moray Council is the legal guardian of the complete Peter Anson collection which contains paintings, drawings, photographs, a library including first editions of his publications, and his personal archive of correspondence, diaries and letters.

In 1973 Peter Anson offered 400 of his paintings to the people of Buckie (MORMS.1973-002aa-oj) through a donation to Buckie Town Council for display in the newly opened Maritime Museum in the Town House, Cluny Square, Buckie. Anson donated another 16 paintings (MORMS.1975-006a-p) shortly before his death in July 1975. An additional 430 accessioned items associated with Peter Anson were acquired on loan by Moray District Council in 1979 from Anson's last home, Nunraw Abbey in East Lothian (L1979-018) which included his personal archive.

In 1994, 'The Peter Anson Gallery' was created following major refurbishment at the Town House in Cluny Square, Buckie and a selection of Anson's paintings went on permanent display on rotation.

In 2006 a collections review found that the Anson collection required revised conservation and care conditions to protect their long-term future. Most of the paintings are watercolours which had been stored and displayed throughout their life in a variety of venues, not always suitable for their preservation.

A decision was taken to close the permanent gallery in Buckie with a commitment to digitise the entire collection of paintings, drawings and sketches, including many that had never been on public display. A full catalogue of Peter Anson's paintings in the Moray Council's collection was completed in 2007 [13]. The Peter Anson collection is now stored in its entirety in the MCMS Store.



Detail of watercolour by Peter Anson

A final collection came into the MCMS collections in an agreement from 2015, on long term loan from the Apostleship of the Sea (L2015-214, L2015-001). This loan is subject to agreements with terms that confers rights to reproduce or to publish for "education, research or... to offset storage and care costs" but not copyright [14]. The collection

"...shall be displayed in any museum operated by the Borrower and which is Registered or Accredited."

and that

"In the event of the closure or the dissolution of MCMS then the Officer of MCMS shall work with the Director of the Apostleship of the Sea (Great Britain) to find alternative suitable heritage grade accommodation for the loaned collection. The cost of transfer to suitable heritage grade accommodation shall be met by The Moray Council' [15].

The Anson collection can be quantified as follows:

Paintings	797	Newsletters	2
Books	211	Ink Drawings	17
Periodicals	175		

These figures have been drawn from the available data sources but should not be seen as definitive. Further work is required to fully audit the Anson collection and produce an appraisals report which can inform any future decision making on the collection.

Recommendation

The Peter Anson collection contains a wealth of material representing a unique record of the Scottish fishing industry alongside the artist's personal archive, correspondence and library which elevates the collection and its potential for research. It is stored in exemplary conditions in the MMS Store, in climate-controlled conditions and with excellent inventory documentation although much of the collection is fragile and unsuitable for anything other than temporary public display.

The potential of the collection is huge, and it should be considered as a whole, with an emphasis against any potential piecemeal dispersal. The 2007 digitisation project should be located and investigated to assess its quality and reproduction value and used to support the undertaking of a fully comprehensive audit of the of the associated archive. The paperwork attached to the donations and the later loans of the Anson collection should be further investigated to fully ascertain the legal conditions attached to ownership. This audit has already identified some conditions attached to the 2015 loan and it is reasonable to expect that there will be conditions attached to the earlier donations that may impact decision making around potential disposal.

2.2.3 The 'Moray Council' collection

'This collection of around 780 objects with provenance from across Moray and includes art, artefacts, books, documents, paintings and Council regalia such as robes and chains of office. Many of these objects entered the collection from previous Burgh and/or District Councils following series of Local Government reorganisations across the latter 20th century. It is likely that some of these objects and collections from former Burghs (Aberlour, Buckie, Burghead, Cullen, Dufftown, Elgin, Findochty, Forres, Keith, Rothes, Lossiemouth and Portknockie and) are Common Good property as defined as,

'property owned by a local authority which has been passed down, through local government reorganisation, from former burghs. Those burghs would have received it as a gift or purchased it. It includes land and buildings, and moveable items such as furniture and art. It may include cash where property has been sold and income received' [16].

Provost's Robe for the Burgh of Keith, 1998-66



Some objects within this collection have location identifiers outwith the Falconer Store, for example in Elgin HQ or in libraries across Moray. This collection is eclectic and include objects such as,

MORMS.2004-5

1:100 scale model of new library in Elgin (transferred from Council HQ)

MORMS.1979-1a-h

Selection of metal embossing stamps 'obtained from locked safe in former Burgh Offices, Aberlour. Transferred from Finance Department via District Archivist'.

MORMS.2005-.6

A remarkable collection of glazed prints or photographs of every Cullen provost from 1798-1975; glazed photographs of town clerks and other dignitaries with Queen Victoria. Transferred to Moray Council Museums.

MORMS.2011-089

Photograph album of Aberlour orphanage.

Recommendation

Any rationalisation of this collection will present challenges. An initial step would be to conduct further investigation to establish which objects might fall into the category of Common Good and required to be documented within a Register to comply with existing legal guidelines. The collection could be included in the rationalisation process (see section 4.2) but Moray Council should consider how it wishes to deal with the future of objects that sit directly in its care, i.e. chains of office, ceremonial robes, civic objects etc. A possible solution could be to agree terms of care within a defined section of the proposed Service Level Agreement with the new Operating Body of Falconer Museum.

2.2.4 Firearms

MMS holds a small collection of approximately 20 firearms, falling into different restricted categories. The law has a specific definition of what constitutes a Firearm and Guidance is clear in the care requirements of different categories (Firearms as a whole, Shotguns (which have a different legal status) and Section 5 Prohibited Weapons which are defined as,

'a firearm that is designed or adapted to allow for two or more missiles to be discharged without repeated pressure on the trigger (e.g. automatic firearms, pistols and short-barrelled shotguns, as well as some non-firearm devices, such as gas dischargers and flamethrowers' [17].

The MMS collection has several firearms that fall into restricted Section 1 and/or prohibited Section 5 categories, including two World War One machine guns (1919-002-c-h, 1978-147) and at least 2 shotguns (1979-105a, 2000-005). MMS also has a small collection of approximately 6 antique firearms including Russian muskets (1978-022), (1978-139a) and a German sporting rifle (1978-141). The term 'antique' sits within specifically defined parameters which assess that,

'firearms of a vintage and design such that their free possession does not possess realistic danger to public safety.' [18]

Antique Firearms can be held without certification only on the premise that they are kept as a 'curiosity or ornament' - without ammunition and without being fired. All firearms held by Moray Museums Service are currently cared for under the required procedures on the care and storage of firearms which requires all restricted Section 5) firearms be kept in an additional alarmed firearms cabinet within the Museum Store, covered by a Firearms licence issued by The Scottish Executive in Edinburgh (through Grampian Police) to a named Moray Council licensee. The Licence negotiated requires the licensee to be responsible for access to, and security of, the Museums Store and must be onsite when any store access is required.

Recommendation

The security and care of firearms is understandably and rightly strict and controlled, and therefore by definition, restrictive. The weapons in question came into the collection in 1919 as part of the War Trophies Committee, established in 1916 by the British War Office to manage the massive influx of captured enemy equipment brought home as souvenirs by troops during and after World War One. Beyond this, the provenance of the weapons is not particularly strong and therefore disposal should be considered in the first instance to an appropriate peer museum (i.e. locally Highlanders Museum, Fort George or nationally the National War Museum, Edinburgh).

Any process of legal disposal must follow set procedures that include liaison with the local police force (typically the use of a secure vehicle (or vehicle with a secure storage area for firearms) and an adequate number of accompanying staff, or by using external shippers who hold a Prohibited Weapons Authority. In the meantime, the most feasible and workable option is to look to add an additional name to the licence. This could be written in as an element of the proposed contracted post to deliver actionable next steps (see section 4.2). This would allow for more flexibility around Museum Store access whilst still maintaining security requirements for the collection.

2.2.5 The Tolbooth Collection

Forres Tolbooth houses oil paintings belonging to The Moray Council Museums Service. Forres Heritage Trust also have on loan numerous crime and punishment objects including a large gaol gate, handcuffs, thumbkins and other objects defined as 'Crime & Punishment' totalling around 91 objects, the majority of which are now held in Forres Tolbooth. The workings of the original Tolbooth clock are also on display [19].

Recommendation

Any loan agreements that might have been in place between Moray Council and Forres Heritage Trust are now out of date and new agreements should be put in place, either the drafting of new negotiated loan agreements or proposals for donation, which can take account of the new collection management structures going forward.



The Riding of the Marches by C Cranmer, 1840, PCF2

2.2.6 Technology Collection

The MMS holds a collection of late 20th century technology containing approximately 30 early computers including a Sinclair ZX 81 (MORMS.2002-010), an Apple II (MORMS.1997-48c) and a BBC Acorn from 1981 (MORMS.1998-029a). The collection also comprises another 100+ objects relating to computer accessories such as floppy discs, disc drives, printers, keyboards, user manuals and other computer related accessories. Most of these objects were collected under one specific curator, between the late 1990s and the early 2000s and represents an interesting and valuable picture of the early years of personal computing.

Recommendation

As a collection, these objects are an interesting example of contemporary collecting with the value being in the early examples of mass produced technology. The objects came from venues across Moray and so may not all easily fall into a new Collecting Policy but should be considered carefully as part of any rationalisation project (see section 4.2).

2.2.7 Moray community collections

These collections refer to objects that have come into the MMS collection that relate to communities across Moray, out with the local Forres area. They include collections comprising of two primary types,

1. Objects and collections from museums or heritage organisations previously cared for by Moray District Council and Moray Council that were moved to the MMS Museum Store when a venue closed, as in the example of the Buckie Drifter Maritime Heritage Centre.
2. Collections that came into the MMS collection from heritage centres (not under the care of Moray Council) or other organisations or businesses when they folded or closed, as in the example of the Seafield & Kynoch Mills collection or the McIntyre Shop collection.



Tickets, Elgin Horticultural Society, 1985-059

The McIntyre Shop Collection

McIntyre's was a local shop in Aberlour, in operation for over a hundred years and a mainstay of village life. The last owner Mr Archie MacIntyre bought the premises in the early 1920s and ran it until ill-health forced him to retire in 1978. Mr MacIntyre kept meticulous records and never had a stock clearance, leaving his shop as a 'time capsule' of everyday products. Following Mr MacIntyre's death, the shop was maintained by local residents as a shop-cum-museum and became a popular visitor attraction. Visitors were free to browse and to open the drawers and boxes in the store which remained in situ to as far back as World War One.

In 2003, despite a campaign to save the 'shop', a change of lease holder and building sale forced its closure. Moray Council Museums Service staff were able to salvage a small portion of the collection and accessioned it as a single group in March 2004 (Object entry 2052), totalling around 2000 objects. The accession was designated as a handling collection for use with community groups and was consistently used by museum staff over the following years, providing a rich resource for learning and engagement. The collection is held in the MMS stores, primarily across Stacks 4, 6 & 7 all in labelled archival boxes and drawers. Volunteers supported the full documentation of the collection which exists in hard copy folders in the Stores Office. Historic documentation associated with McIntyre's Shop went to Moray Archives Service.

Woollen Mills Collection

MMS collections include a significant number of objects relating to weaving which represent the rich history of industrial weaving in the Northeast of Scotland, particularly the town of Keith. The late 18th century saw the expansion of Keith as a mill town and in 1788 Kynoch's woollen mill opened at Isla Bank Mill [20]. Page 15 Across the 19th century, the spinning and weaving industry developed and in 1900 Robert Laidlaw set up the Seafield woollen mill in the town. Production peaked during World War Two and continued to be a good source of employment until the late 20th century. Kynoch's was sold in 1993 and, after a succession of owners, the Seafield Mills was liquidated and closed in 1998. Isla Bank Mills were bought by the Local Authority and converted into business units [21]. The objects came into the MMS collections around this time and include,

MORMS.1998-05

6 pattern books, assorted tweed samples, miscellaneous advertisement plaques, copper plates for advertising

MORMS.1992-59

Large collection of material from Kynoch's of Keith. (Some objects deaccessioned in 1998 and transferred to National Museum of Scotland).

Detail of Kynoch Woollen Mill pattern book, 1994-58



Moray coastal fishing objects

MMS holds a small number of objects relating to Moray's coastal fishing communities, in particular relating to Buckie. The Buckie Drifter Maritime Heritage Centre was a purpose-built museum opened in 1994 near Buckie harbour to showcase the Moray Firth's herring fishing history with displays featuring a 1920s fish quay replica and a "drifter" boat. The museum was run as a charitable company with support from The Moray Council and maintained Registration (an earlier iteration of Accreditation) during its operation. The museum closed permanently in 2005, with closure attributed mainly to low visitor numbers and high costs. Records show that most of the objects from the Buckie Drifter were either 'dispersed' or 'disposed of' following the museum's closure, possibly to Buckie & District Fishing Heritage Centre. The objects remaining in the MMS collections may be residual objects from this collection dispersal or may have come into the collection as distinct acquisitions.



Ships Compass, 1979-456

Keith Heritage collection

Approximately 50 objects 'Transferred from Keith Heritage Group' in 2016 with accession paperwork defining conditions including objects to be made 'available for exhibition by group in future'.

Recommendation

There are heritage groups across Moray (see section 3.3, Stakeholders) who may be able to accept objects from MMS to their own organisations where they might be better displayed or made accessible within their own local communities. It should be noted however that none of these organisations hold Museum Accredited Status. Sector standards recommend that, in the first instance, objects are returned to peer institutions who have facilities and structures to care for the objects. In the case of the Keith Woollen Mills objects, Kynochs remains a flourishing business based in the Scottish Borders and holds an archive of heritage material relating to the company. Objects could possibly be rehomed there but further investigation and discussions would need to be established.

2.2.8 Loans

Loan mechanisms were in place and operational until the Falconer Museum closed in 2019. There was a backlog in the tracing of existing loans (prior to 2007), but work had been ongoing until the MMS closure to remedy this, and either convert any loans to donation or to return objects [22]. A collections data search revealed 560 loan entries, predominately social history material but also books.

Recommendation

Further investigation is required to adequately quantify the actual number of loans in (and out) of the MMS. It is possible that some of these entries relate to objects within the Moray Council collections and that further work to properly document that collection will resolve this issue in part.

SECTION 3: OPTIONS

3.1 Summary

Whilst the Moray Council Museum Service as previously structured has ceased to exist, the collections within the Service remain as tangible assets that require careful, considered attention. There are discrete elements of the MMS collections that could be rehomed with another external heritage organisation where their significance might be more relevant and where they can serve new audiences. The process of undertaking this work is called rationalisation.

3.1 What is Rationalisation?

Collections rationalisation is a procedure whereby a museum improves its understanding of a collection so that the collection can be used more effectively for the benefit of its users. Rationalisation is not simply about disposal, and it is not a quick fix to make space and save money. Rationalisation is about refining collections and making them more accessible and making the museum more effective. Although rationalisation can lead to disposal of objects, rationalisation can also provide ways of considering new and different uses for collections.

Museums Association, 2025

3.3 The Rationalisation Process

The process of rationalisation is usually undertaken as part of a Collections Review. Applying a clear and systematic approach to rationalisation will assist in clarifying decision making and a Collections Review will help structure this process. A Collections Review should include, for each object under review:

- Relevance – does it relate to the collecting policy the museum
- Quality – is it a good example of its kind
- Duplication – is it one of many examples
- Condition – is it in decent state of repair, Health & Safety issues?
- Ownership – does the museum own the object or is it on loan
- Size – is it taking up more space than is viable
- Allocating objects a different use – i.e. set dressing or handling collection
- Returning loaned objects
- Recalling loaned objects
- Converting existing loans to donations
- Disposal to other Accredited Museums or if not possible to other orgs
- Disposal by sale to other Accredited Museum – or to other organisations
- Disposal by destruction or decommissioning

3.4 Stakeholders

There are a range of community partners and stakeholders who should be considered in the next steps for the collections identified within this report. Some of these may be possible locations or venues for objects that are agreed for relocation. There may be work in bringing these groups together or to open conversations about possible object relocation and capacity should be identified for this in next steps. The following groups and organisations should be considered as priority stakeholders, but additional partners may be identified as work progresses.

- Local community museums/heritage organisations
- Forres Heritage Trust
- Tomintoul Discovery Centre
- Buckie & District Fishing Heritage Centre
- Lossiemouth Fisheries & Community Museum
- Cullen Heritage Centre
- Fochabers Folk Museum & Heritage Centre
- Knockando Woollen Mill
- Findhorn Heritage Centre
- The Moray Society (The Elgin Museum)
- Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service
- Aberdeen City Council Museums
- University of Aberdeen Museums
- Scottish Fisheries Museums
- National Museums of Scotland
- Independent Highland museums (Nairn Museum, Grantown Museum)
- Highlife Highland



Collection of Kynoch Mills objects, 1993-3a-dl

SECTION 4: NEXT STEPS

4.1 Options Appraisal

This audit has identified the parameters of the MMS collections that sit out with a new proposed Collections Policy for Falconer Museum which would guide the new operating body, 'The Falconer Museum'. It also reflects the recommendations made by the Culture Radar report which set out a clear pathway for the rationalisation of the MMS collections and outlines three possible options for the collections identified within this audit [23].

Option 1

'Falconer Museum' manages MMS Social History Collections as part of Service Level Agreement

Option 2

MMS Collections are dispersed on loan and by gift where possible

Option 3

MMS Collections are disposed of

This audit supports a combination of the three options. Option 1 is required to initially move forward with the wider reorganisation, initiate the wind up of MMS and move the collections and Falconer Museum into the care of the new Operating Body. Options 2 & 3 can then be actioned and timetabled under the resource allocation as set out in the proposed Business Model [24]. This could most feasibly be delivered through capacity budget identified in the Culture Radar report and allocated to a freelance role with clear, defined objectives aligning with the options appraisal.

4.2 Proposed Actions

These proposals are based on making use of appropriate resource allocation as identified in Culture Radar's report. The requirements identified could form the basis of a fixed term, freelance contract working closely with 'The Falconer Museum' to cover a period up to March 2027 when progress can be reviewed.

- Provide ongoing professional guidance in museum operations including advising on the required Business & Development Plans and required policy development.
- Support 'The Falconer Museum' in beginning working towards meeting the Museums Accreditation Standard. To include: developing appropriate policies including a Collections Policy; training requirements, volunteer support, conservation standards.
- Facilitate and supervise volunteer access to the Falconer Museum Collection Store.
- Lead on collections care and forward planning & support The Falconer Museum's Collections Lead Executive Volunteer on collections volunteer training.
- Undertake collections review work as time allows, for example starting conversations with stakeholders, further quantifying the collections in question for potential rationalisation.
- Create links with peer institutions locally, regionally & nationally.

SECTION 5: ENDNOTES

1. Kirsty Conti, 'Future Falconer Museum, Forres', Report to Economic Development & Infrastructure Services Committee, The Moray Council, 2025, Section 4.1
2. Culture Radar, 'The Future Falconer Museum – The research, options appraisal, recommendations and business case', 2024
3. Helen Avenell, 'Moray Museums Service Collections Overview, February 2025
4. Culture Radar, 'The Future Falconer Museum', p.60
5. Collections management system (CMS) is specialised software used to catalogue, track, and manage the entire lifecycle of museum objects. It acts as a central database for tracking locations, acquisitions, loans, conservation, and detailed information on artifacts. These systems ensure compliance with museum standards, aiding in preservation, research, and public access.
6. Collections Trust - SPECTRUM Standard
7. The Moray Council Museum Services, 'Documentation Policy (2015), Section 2.5.4, p.2
8. Culture Radar, 'The Future Falconer Museum', p.31
9. Ibid., p.26
10. Ibid., p.63
11. Defined as 'To collect; record; care for; promote understanding and appreciation of; and support the history, culture and heritage of Moray for the benefit of local communities, schools, and visitors to the area'.
12. Culture Radar, 'The Future Falconer Museum', p.31
13. Moray Council, Peter Anson online exhibition
14. Ibid., p32
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