

Appendix F

University of Aberdeen Pathology and Forensic Medicine Collection

Existing collections, including the subjects or themes for collecting:

The collection is a unique historical record of disease manifestations in the population of north-east Scotland in the middle third of the 20th century and includes a few artefacts relating to crimes of note committed in the Aberdeen area around the same period. The collection also contains models dating from the late 19th/early 20th centuries demonstrating a range of pathological appearances. The collection as a whole represents the work of a succession of Regius Professors of Pathology and Professors of Forensic Medicine - and their staffs - in the University of Aberdeen.

The main collection types are:

- *Fluid-preserved Specimens of Human Organs (around 1800 in total)*

showing both pathological conditions (covering a range of functional body systems and demonstrating the features of disease in each) and traumatic pathology (which includes objects such as murder weapons linked to the specimens).

The pathological specimens are presented in preservative fluid and sealed in Perspex containers. They have strongly associated contextual information in the form of anonymous clinical case files that allow the pathology to be viewed in the appropriate clinical settings.

The forensic medicine specimens shows examples of traumatic pathology relating to crimes of note committed in the Aberdeen area. The specimens are presented in the same way as the pathological ones. In many cases, specimens are accompanied by supporting contextual material such as weapons and photographic evidence.

- *Models*

Wax, papier-mâché and ceramic models showing a variety of pathological appearances, dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These models form an important aspect of the University's wider anatomical model collection (held also by the Anatomy and Zoology Museums).

- *Scientific Instruments*

used in the preparation and examination of pathological specimens

- *Archival Material*

providing anonymous clinical details for the fluid-preserved specimens that allow the pathological appearances to be considered in the appropriate clinical setting.

- *Forensic Photographs*

illustrating forensic remains and other objects connected with crimes committed in North East Scotland.

Overall there are several thousand objects in the collection. The material is of historical significance as it represents a snapshot of disease and death mainly from the middle third of the 20th century. Some disease conditions represented in the collections are no longer prevalent, so the opportunity to collect such material no longer exists. Complete collections, such as this, are rare anywhere in the UK: there are no others in the north of Scotland. Access to, and display of, parts of the collection is restricted by the Human Tissues Act (1961), as amended by the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006.

| The Collection has registered status.

Significant objects or individuals:

The growth of the Pathology and Forensic Medicine collection occurred alongside the development of the Joint Hospitals Scheme from 1926, pioneered by Matthew Hay. Hay had the vision to bring together public health services and medical education on one site. Following the completion of the Joint Hospitals Project, the Pathology and Forensic Medicine collection grew significantly over the following two decades to support the resulting expansion in medical teaching. From the 1940s, there was a Pathology Museum within the medical school which existed until the early 1990s.

Unique items within the collection that attract interest include a skull in old age used in the 1991 Hollywood production of Hamlet starring Mel Gibson, a small box of thin sections of comparative pathology prepared by Professor of Forensic Medicine Matthew Hay (1855-1932) and a skull with exit bullet wound from the collection of Professor of Surgery Alexander Ogston (1844-1929). A number of prominent model makers also feature in the collection, including Auzoux of France, Bock Lips Steger of Germany and Towne of London.

Criteria governing future collecting policy, including the subjects or themes for collecting

The Pathology and Forensic Medicine Collection's principles and priorities for collecting are to ensure the preservation and active use of the existing collection in the education of health care professionals. New acquisitions will only be accepted if accompanied by appropriate documentation.

In the current climate surrounding the retention of human organs and tissues, it would probably be impossible to build up such a collection again. That climate - as well as funding issues - means that at the moment, the expansion of the collection to contain more human remains is unlikely.

Were it possible to do so:

- new acquisitions would be centred on material not yet represented in the collection, eg new variants of disease.
- any future collecting would follow the highest ethical standards and only take place with the informed consent of the individuals concerned.

Due to the ethical and legal constraints associated with the retention of human material, the acquisition activities of the Pathology and Forensic Collection do not conflict with those of any other body where human remains are concerned. The incorporation of material (eg anatomical or archaeological) of interest to one of the other University collections would only be considered after discussion with the relevant curator.

Objects of relevance to the Pathology and Forensic Medicine collection that are not human remains may still be acquired from time to time (if storage and collections care conditions permit). For instance:

- Pathological or forensic models may be acquired if they are of particular interest, fill an existing gap in the collection, or are useful for teaching, interpreting or displaying the museum collections.
- The Pathology and Forensic Medicine Collections may collect scientific instruments and other equipment related to the research and practice of pathology and forensic medicine at the University of Aberdeen. Scientific and medical instruments may also be accessioned into other University collections as appropriate.

- Drawings, paintings, prints, photographs, film and digital media may be acquired if they are of relevance to research and teaching in pathology and forensic medicine at the University of Aberdeen.
- The Pathology and Forensic Medicine Collections may collect printed and manuscript ephemera – e.g. instruction manuals, trade catalogues, leaflets, advertisements, letters – when the material relates to objects in the collection or to teaching and research in forensic pathology and medicine.
- Medical case files may be acquired when they relate directly to specimens held in the collection, or in some instances where the case file refers to a specimen that no longer exists. The Pathology and Forensic Medicine Collections will acquire and use such material in a way that takes regard of current standards in ethics, data protection and freedom of information.
- In the event that the Pathology and Forensic Medicine Collections seek to acquire any further material related to forensic pathology, the collection will take place with sensitivity to any possible conflicts with the collecting policy of the Grampian Police Museum.

Period of time for future collecting:

The Pathology and Forensic Medicine Collections will acquire material relating to the time period of the existing collections: from the nineteenth century to the present day.

Association/ geographical area to which collecting relates

Were future collecting of pathological or forensic human tissue specimens to take place, such material would almost always be obtained from within the north-east of Scotland (e.g. from operative specimens) unless in very exceptional circumstances (for example it is possible that individual items of exotic (e.g. tropical) disease might come from elsewhere).

Other material collected - e.g. scientific instruments or archival material - will be associated with pathology and forensic medicine at the University of Aberdeen or, exceptionally, in North-East Scotland.