

Sub-Category	Significance	Curators Assessment
Natural History Current Size Estimate: 55m2		
County Herbarium	National Significance	<p>The natural history collection contains around 100,000 items collected over the last century and continues to grow due to the collection being an ongoing continuous record of the natural world in this locality. The items in the collection has significant local value and large parts of them are of regional, national and in the case of our chalk stream collection, even international importance. Examples include the County herbaria (collection of dried plants) for flowering plants and for bryophytes (mosses, liverworts and hornworts), the large Lepidoptera collection (butterflies and moths) and the extensive geology collections (Regional Significance); the small but rare Myxomycete (fungus) collection and first and last records for various species of birds and animals such as the Blue Rock Thrush and both Red and Black Squirrels (National Significance); records of fauna (animals) and flora (plants) relating to chalk streams (International Significance). This special but very threatened habitat is almost unique to England, which has 85% of the 200 chalk streams in the world. Most of the streams in our area fall into this category.</p> <p>This collection contains a broad range of examples which have been used for academic study and help us to chart the local impact of climate change on biodiversity, including plant life and migration patterns. Our collection is the only record of this at a local level. The Natural History collection is the only sub set of our collection which transcends administrative boundaries given that nature itself does not recognise such boundaries and the presence of specimens within the locality is therefore often indicative of a broader presence in the region and vice versa. For these reasons we do have samples within this collection from outside of North Herts, whilst the County herbaria is a county collection rather than a district collection. Lots of our specimens are what are known as Indicator Species, which essentially means that their presence is often indicative of the presence of a wider pool of species in an area. We are therefore able to monitor and investigate the changing profile of the natural world in North Herts through time as a result of this collection, including the impact climate change has had and is currently having on the area.</p>
Naturalists Notebooks	National Significance	
Taxidermy and Insects	National Significance	
Birds Eggs Collection	Regional Significance	
Butterfly Collection	Regional Significance	
Archaeology Current Size Estimate: 104.5m2		
Cadecote Deserted Village Excavations	National Significance	<p>The archaeology collection contains around 250,000 items, collected over the last century. As the official depositing museum for archives generated by external organisations through the planning process, the collection</p>

Hitchin Lower Palaeolithic Handaxe Collection	International Significance	<p>is constantly growing. Our archaeology collection boasts finds from Caldecote deserted village, taught on all undergraduate medieval archaeology courses; the Hitchin lower palaeolithic handaxe collection, which is of international significance due to the rarity of these early tools; and finds from the various Baldock excavations, which include the largest collection of human remains from Roman Britain. These latter are often used for research by postgraduate students, looking into, for example health and lifestyle in the Roman period.</p> <p>The collection also includes a good sample of Iron Age and early Roman brooches, local coins from the second century BC onwards, including many rare or unique examples, and prehistoric flints. Every period in the archaeology of the district is represented, with the Late Iron Age and Roman periods particularly strongly.</p>
Baldock Excavation Finds	National Significance	

Fine Art
Current Size Estimate: 71.5m2

Henry Moore	International Significance	<p>Our art collection contains around 3,400 works in total. The collection contains a number of works by internationally famous artists, such as a maquette by Herts sculptor Henry Moore, 2 Letchworth oils by the artist Spencer Gore, artwork by Letchworth born Richard Smith, and a stained glass design by Pre-Raphaelite Burne Jones. Of national significance are the many paintings by Letchworth resident William Ratcliffe, and etchings by Hitchin-born F L Griggs, one of the early 20th century's most important printmakers. Also nationally significant are the 3 paintings by E R Frampton, a turn of the 20th century British Symbolist artist, and a 1930s painting by Letchworth-born Brynhild Parker</p> <p>Of regional importance are the oils by the Belgian Gerard Ceunis and the Austrian Theodor Kern. Both were refugees before the 1st and 2nd WW respectively, and both settled in Hitchin. Kern taught art at Luton School of Art. Works by Hitchin's Samuel Lucas depicting farming in the district in the 19th century are also regionally important – the British Museum has examples of his work.</p> <p>The collections also hold very many watercolours, prints and drawings by local artists, which often show views in North Hertfordshire which have now disappeared, or have changed beyond recognition, making them of great local significance.</p>
E Burne Jones	International Significance	
Spencer Gore	International Significance	
Richard Smith	International Significance	
William Ratcliffe	National Significance	
Edward Frampton	National Significance	
F L Griggs	National Significance	
Brynhild Parker	National Significance	
Various Local Artists	Local Significance	

Social History
Current Size Estimate: 159.5m2

The World's first football museum	National Significance	<p>The social history collection contains around 31,000 items collected across the last century. Objects within this collection relate to human life in North Herts. The collection is used for research and temporary display. For example, a recent display inspired by D-Day reflected stories of local life in WW2, including medals won by local citizens, a can of coffee-substitute dandelion coffee, the casing of an incendiary bomb which fell in Hitchin and a local air raid warden warrant.</p> <p>Hitchin had the first football museum in the UK, and almost certainly the world. Our collection is of national importance. It contains material previously lent to the National Football Museum, which was returned when North Herts Museum opened, including Bert Trautmann's neckbrace, a pair of Stanley Matthews' football boots, and a very rare 1889 velvet cap from Burnley, donated by the FA.</p> <p>Our suffragette collection is primarily based around Elizabeth Impey, a prominent local suffragette. the collection includes items of national importance, like her Vote for Women rosette, and her husband's Men's League for Women's Suffrage badge, both rare items.</p> <p>The costume collection was mainly collected by Hitchin Museum. It is stored behind the stage at HTH as the items are too delicate to be stored at Burymead. The collection contains a couple of nationally notable items; an 18th century man's suit and 18th century silk dress. Also notable are 18th century embroidered waistcoats. There is a good local collection of dresses from the late 18th and entire 19th centuries, and many good items of militaria, Herts Yeomanry and WW2 uniforms. The militaria is often regionally significant. The shoe collection is good (mainly 20th century but with 18th and 19th century examples) but sadly there is often only one of a pair due to an earlier curatorial practice of disposing of one to make space. The Queen Mother's christening gown is of national significance.</p>
Suffragette Collection	National Significance	
Costume Collection	Regional Significance	
Wartime Collection	Local Significance	
Agricultural Collection	Local Significance	
Archives, Library, Journals and other documents Current Size Estimate: 110m2		
Local history Book Collection	Local Significance	<p>The books, maps, newspapers and documents held by the museum are used every week by local and regional researchers, and occasionally by national researchers/TV companies. They are invaluable to staff when answering enquiries and to those researching the subjects contained within them as they provide so much specific information on a broad range of matters. The information held in these documents is often extremely rare and difficult to source from anywhere else.</p> <p>This local history collection includes biographies of local figures and studies of the development of the district's</p>
Document Collections	Local Significance	
Maps	Local Significance	
Newspaper Collection	Local Significance	
Photographs	Local Significance	

		<p>towns and villages. It includes many notable local documents, ranging from late 15th century to modern land transactions, with manorial documents, sale catalogues and documentation relating to large-scale slum clearances in the inter-war years and beyond. The collections of local historian Reginald Hine are of regional significance.</p> <p>The archaeology library contains general works and site reports relevant both to the museum collections and to the local area. We have the principal period journals through to about 2010 (there have been few purchases since then). Not all these journals have yet been fully digitised, and they contain important information about the area and excavations relating to items in the collection.</p> <p>There are also over 700 maps of the local area, including some manuscript estate maps and printed maps for the 18th century. There is a large collection of local newspapers stored at Burymead, mainly 19th century and early to mid 20th century, which are often requested by reseachers and used by staff to answer enquiries..</p> <p>The museum also has several thousand photographs of the local area by amateur and commercial photographers, especially TB & TW Latchmore, a Victorian Hitchin father-and-son team. Some of these are of regional rather than purely local importance.</p>
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School Loans and Learning Collection
Current Size Estimate: 49.5m2

Loans Boxes for Schools	Local Significance	<p>The loan collection was started at Letchworth Museum before WW2, as a collection of sturdy boxes containing a range of items for schools to borrow. It contains around 3000 items and has recently been re-organised, to make it easier for teachers to borrow everything they need for a specific curriculum subject in one lightweight box. The collection now includes original and replica items covering the last 40,000 years of history. We have Stone Age hand axes and scrapers, ancient Egyptian shabti and mummy wrappings, real Bronze Age axe heads and a replica Bronze Age sword; many Roman artifacts including pottery, helmets, scutum and a child size lorica. There are also natural history specimens.</p> <p>The loan items allow children to touch objects of great historic age; the impact of carefully holding something made 40,000 years ago cannot be overstated and is one of our USPs. Although mainly used by schools, boxes may now be borrowed by care homes for reminiscence.</p>
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