



BRIEF

Collections Documentation – Freelance Support

Title: Collections Documentation Planning & Support

Status: Freelance

Budget: £2200

Duration: 10/11/25 to 15/2/25

Closing date: 22nd October 2025

Background:

The Ravenglass Railway Museum is located on the west coast of Cumbria in the Lake District National Park. It exists to tell the story of the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway's rich heritage, by collecting, protecting and presenting a collection of artefacts that represent the history of local railways from 1849 to the present day, for the benefit of local people, visitors to the Lake District National Park and interested people world-wide.

The museum began as an exhibition to celebrate the Centenary of the opening of the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway in 1976, which gathered a number of items of equipment and small objects with a photographic display. It attracted interest and funding to convert a disused station building with wheelchair access for a permanent museum site which opened in 1978. The museum was recognised by the Museums & Galleries Commission and subsequently Arts Council England. A two-stage programme to refurbish and extend the original Museum buildings achieved its first phase in 2015 and continued with a new Train Shed for rolling stock with an Archive Room which was completed and opened to the public in June 2017.

The Ravenglass Railway Museum has a recorded collection of over 9,000 objects - the largest items being narrow gauge and miniature railways rolling stock and locomotives connected with the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway in Cumbria dating from 1875 to the present. The Museum also holds library, archive and image collections of material about the Railway company and the associated Preservation Society. This collection currently stands at almost 46000 recorded images.

In 2018, the museum received a bulk donation from the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Co. Ltd in the form of the majority of the files and other contents from the General Manager's office. More recently, the museum has been given custodianship of a large collection of narrow-gauge railway documents and images in the John Milner Collection. This has created a backlog.

In recent years, the museum has seen a reduction in staffing. The museum currently operates with a Board of Trustees, Museum Manager (part time) and a small team of volunteers, to oversee the daily management of the museum.

The Brief

We are looking to commission some freelance support to work with the Museum Manager and volunteers to review existing documents and develop a Collections Documentation Plan which breaks down our backlog into manageable projects.

We would like this plan to include;

- a clear breakdown of each project
- the time each project might take based on existing resource
- how much time each project would take with additional capacity

Going forward, this would provide us with evidence and a costed plan to help us in future fundraising. We have ambitions to apply for an ACE NLPG in early 2026 for a collections development project which would allow us to tackle the backlog and open up opportunities for collections research for use in public engagement and education programming.

Scope

Based on the brief, we believe the contract could include the following, though we would be guided by the freelancer advising us;

- an online inception meeting with the Museum Manager;
- an on-site workshop with the Museum Manager and Collections Volunteers to develop the outline plan;
- a review of our current Documentation Procedural Manual and update of a previous Documentation Plan to ensure Spectrum 5.1 compliance;
- additional time with the Museum Manager and Collections Volunteers to refine the plan and allocate resources

Budget & Timescale

The budget will be £2200 grant to complete this project.

We envisage the contract with a consultant might involve 5 days work. Assuming a successful grant application, we plan to start this project in early November 2025, having completed the full plan by mid-February 2026.

Payment schedule will be 80% upfront and 20% upon completion of the plan.

Project Management

The Museum Manager, Claire Winter-Moore, will oversee this project with support from volunteers.

How to apply

Please submit tender by email to Claire Winter-Moore, Museum Manager: claire.wintermoore@ravenglass-railway.co.uk by 22nd October 2025. Successful applicants will be contacted by 30th October.

Please include;

- your relevant experience and qualifications
- number of days allocated to the project
- your proposed start date
- your daily rate and a breakdown of your budget
- contact details for 2 recent referees

Ravenglass Railway Museum, Ravenglass, CA18 1SW. ravenglassrailwaymuseum.co.uk. 01229 711382