

TRANSFER OF LADY NUFFIELD'S WOLSEY 8 TO THE NATIONAL TRUST

1. The Museums Service has received a request from the National Trust to transfer ownership of Lady Nuffield's Morris 8 to them. The Museum Services' Collections Management Policy 2013 -18 requires a transfer of this nature to be reviewed and approved by the Service's governing body. This report therefore reviews the circumstances of the original acquisition and makes recommendations as to future ownership.
2. Built at the Morris Motors works in Birmingham in 1946 the black Wolsey 8 was used by Lady Nuffield until her death and then by her husband until his death in 1963, both their names appearing in its log book. Throughout this time the car was garaged at their home at Nuffield Place, near Nettlebed, Henley-on-Thames.
3. In 1987 the Museums Service purchased the car at no cost to the County Council from a private owner for £4,000, with funding from the Friends of Nuffield Place and a grant from the Science Museum's Prism Fund.
4. The Wolsey was purchased with the express purpose of displaying it at Nuffield Place which, by then the property of Nuffield College, had recently been opened to the public with the support of the Friends of Nuffield Place.
5. The Wolsey remained on site at Nuffield Place under the supervision of members of the Friends, who helped to maintain it, where it continued to be of great interest to visitors.
6. Following their recent acquisition of Nuffield Place from Nuffield College the National Trust approached the Museums Service with a request that ownership of the Wolsey be transferred to them. This would then enable them to obtain funds to undertake a programme of work to restore the car and to improve its interpretation and make it more widely accessible.
7. The Museums Service's Collections Management Team reviewed the request in the light of the context of the Collections Development Plan 2013 -18 and reached the following conclusions:
 - i. the Service does not possess the resources, nor the necessary specialist technical expertise, to restore and maintain a working vehicle of this type
 - ii. the Wolsey was acquired with the express purpose of displaying it in its original home at Nuffield Place where it is fully accessible to visitors
 - iii. were the car to be returned to the Museums Service it would not be possible to put it on open display as we have no suitable premises in which to do this and it would have to be returned to store where access would be severely limited

- iv. by agreeing to the transfer Oxfordshire County Council would be ensuring that in future this significant historic vehicle receives the highest possible standard of care and is preserved, interpreted and made accessible for future generations
- 8. Were the transfer to be agreed then the National Trust have confirmed that they will accept terms of the transfer which will ensure that should in future they decide to dispose of the car then they be required first to offer to return it to the Museums Service. A decision could then be taken whether to accept or decline such an offer, whatever was felt to be appropriate at that time.

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