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councils have twigged to this and have not approved policy statements because they fear being bound to future financial/staff commitments. If this happens, keep trying - don't use it as an excuse to do nothing. If necessary operate it as a part of the internal management practice of the institution. Redraft the statement and keep any comments on staff size etc. for separate reports. Policy statements are about aims and guidelines not staff resources.

Finally make sure that your policy is known to all staff. Lodge copies with the Area Council, the Museum Association and neighbouring museums and don't forget that the M.A.'s draft Code of Conduct requires the curator to take "all possible steps" to produce an acquisition policy and, if a registration scheme for museums gets off the ground, written policies will be required from all museums wishing to register - with the possibility of 'no registration - no grants'!

Don't forget policies can be changed. Policy reviews can be built in (say) every 5 years and if a policy is seen to be to the detriment of a department it can and should be amended.

So, if you have not yet drafted your collecting policy get on with it. If you think its not important, I think that history will prove you wrong.

Michael A Taylor
Keeper of Natural Sciences
Perth Museum and Art Gallery

The History of Provincial Museums

Many of the national museums have had their histories written, but the history of provincial museums and their collections has been almost ignored.

Stuart Davis of the Local History Department at Birmingham and I are interested in holding a one-day seminar on the subject in Birmingham in the early part of 1984. I should be interested to hear from anyone

a) who would like to attend (no deep commitment necessary at this stage)

and

b) feels they could contribute a talk on some aspect of the history of provincial museums and their collections. We would also be interested in brief reports on work in progress.

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