

## **METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF OLDHAM COUNCIL**

### **MEETING BETWEEN CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE AND LEISURE AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & CULTURAL SERVICES**

**12<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2004**

### **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & CULTURAL SERVICES**

#### **Revision of Gallery Oldham Collections Management Plan**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Collections Management Plan includes an overview of the collections, the Acquisition & Disposal Policy, Documentation Plan and Conservation & Storage Plan.
- 1.2 Registered Museums and Galleries are required by the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council to produce a Collections Management Plan and ensure that it is kept up-to-date.
- 1.3 This Plan reviews the Collections Management Plan produced in 1995.

#### **2. CURRENT POSITION**

- 2.1 The 1995 Plan, although circulated as a model of good practice by North West Museums, Libraries & Archives Council as recently as February 2003, needs to be reviewed to take into consideration recent developments within the service, the museum profession and the Borough of Oldham.

#### **3. AIMS OF THE SCHEME AND ANTICIPATED OUTPUT(S) / OUTCOME(S)**

- 3.1 The Plan has been updated to take into consideration the Cultural Quarter Developments, staff restructure, results of recent collections surveys, and OMBC's corporate priorities and equality & diversity policy.

#### **4. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES**

- 4.1 It is good practice to conduct a full review plans of this nature every five years (minimum review period).
- 4.2 The next Phase of the Museums & Galleries Registration Scheme will take place in 2005/06 and the service will be assessed according to its collections management procedures and policies.
- 4.3 Delaying a review of the plan is not a feasible option.

## **5. PREFERRED OPTION / WAY FORWARD**

- 5.1 To approve the Collections Management Plan 2004-09 and implement the associated action plans.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Exhibitions & Collections and Education & Outreach staff were consulted as part of the review process.
- 6.2 The revised Plan makes reference to the need to reflect the diversity of the Borough's population and to consult with local, and in particular under-represented communities, to ensure the relevance of the collections to local audiences.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None

## **8. IT IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Documentation Plan outlines the need to progress towards the full computerisation of collections records which will require new databases to be established.
- 8.2 As part of the Cultural Quarter Phase 3 Development, funding is being sought to introduce Calm collections management software which will integrate museum, local studies and archives databases.

## **9. PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Current storage arrangements for the natural history and social history collections are inadequate in terms of available space and environmental conditions.
- 9.2 As part of the research and development for Phase 3 of the Cultural Quarter a full review of collections storage and an assessment of storage needs will be undertaken with Local Studies and Archives Service. An integrated and realistic approach to collections storage will be drawn up. This might require measures to significantly improve environmental conditions in certain parts of the building and/or off-site storage improvements.
- 9.3 The development of Phase 3 might also necessitate the temporary removal and storage of collections to facilitate building work.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Funding for Calm collections management software has not yet been identified. A rolling programme of conservation is funded from the service's conservation budget and this is supplemented by grant funding where possible. However, it is anticipated that preparations for the Phase 3 development will require an increase in conservation resources.

## **11. TREASURERS COMMENTS**

- 11.1 The proposal involves reviewing the Collections Management Plan, as the current policy does not reflect the Gallery as it is today. The Collection is about Improving the Service Level of the Gallery whilst working within its existing resources. This will involve: -  
Documentation Plan - members of the existing staffing structure to prepare a plan for the Collections Management, and staff will document different parts of their collection.  
Acquisitions & Disposals – through external funding and sponsorships, and provision within the current budget.  
Conservation – getting work up to an exhibitable state (securing external funding for the restoration of exhibits).  
Storage - reviewing current storage arrangements. Currently Gallery Oldham have exhibits stored in the Old Museum & Oldham Library (Social & Natural History Collections), Gallery Oldham (Fine & Decorative Arts).  
When Phase 3 funding commences Gallery Oldham will ask for proper offsite storage for the Social & Natural History Collections.

Provision does NOT exist within the existing estimates.

The cost of the proposal will be met from a variety of external funding bodies. Where necessary the cost of the proposal will also be match funded from within the existing mainstream funds of the Gallery Oldham Budget, and the Gallery does not anticipate approaching OMBC for any additional funds. All the Collections Management Plans will be externally funded, if the funding isn't secured then the plan will not go ahead. The only possible cost to the Authority could be the cost of the Calms Database. This is estimated to be approximately £10,000 and Sheena MacFarlane may put in a bid for this to be funded from IT. This is not imminent and the cost of the database could be deferred and added when Gallery Oldham apply for the external grants for Phase 3 funding. (MP/

## **12. ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 None

## **13. COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 The revised Collections Management Plan acknowledges the need to reflect the diversity of the Borough and to actively promote community cohesion.  
13.2 Consultation with local audiences, and in particular under-represented communities, will play an important part in the development of the collections and of Phase 3 of the Cultural Quarter.

## **14. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 None

## **15. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 15.1 That the Collections Management Plan be approved.

## **FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE**

**Key Decision:** YES / NO  
(delete as applicable)

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following is a list of background papers on which this Report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100D(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by that Act.

<b>DOCUMENT</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>FILE OR OTHER REFERENCE</b>	<b>PLACE OF INSPECTION</b>
Gallery Oldham Collections Management Plan	May 2004		

**IS THIS THE FINAL VERSION REPORT** YES / NO  
(delete as applicable)

<b>AUTHOR OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>TEL NO</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>ID NUMBER</b>
Sheena Macfarlane (Head of Museums, Galleries & Arts)	Ext 4664		

<b>Signed</b>  <hr/> <b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Dated</b>  <hr/>
<b>Signed</b>  <hr/> <b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Dated</b>  <hr/>

**Ref:**

# **Gallery Oldham**

## **Collections Management Plan**

**May 2004**

# **GALLERY OLDHAM**

## **COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The History of the Collections
- 1.2 Mission Statement

### **2.0 THE COLLECTIONS**

- 2.1 Natural History
- 2.2 Social History
- 2.3 Fine & Decorative Art

### **3. ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY**

- 3.1 General Considerations
- 3.2 Specific Considerations
  - 3.2.1 Natural History
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- 3.3 Limitations on Collecting
- 3.4 Disposal & De-accession
  - 3.4.1 General Considerations
  - 3.4.2 De-accessioning Procedure

### **4. DOCUMENTATION**

- 4.1 Documentation Requirements
- 4.2 Current Documentation
  - 4.2.1 Natural History
  - 4.2.2 Social History
  - 4.2.3 Art
- 4.3 Future Improvements in Documentation
  - 4.3.1 Natural History
  - 4.3.2 Social History
  - 4.3.3 Art

### **5. CONSERVING THE COLLECTION: STORAGE**

- 5.1 Current Storage
  - Natural History
  - Social History
  - 5.1.3 Art
- 5.2 Improvements in Storage
  - 5.2.1 Natural History
  - 5.2.2 Social History
  - 5.2.3 Art

### **6. CONSERVING THE COLLECTION: REMEDIAL CONSERVATION**

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1 Documentation Action Plan**

**Appendix 2 Conservation Action Plan**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**2004 - 2009**

The Collections Management Plan 2004 – 2009, for Gallery Oldham, is largely based upon the 1995 Plan. The 1995 Plan was circulated as a model of good practice by NWMLAC as recently as February 2003. It has however been updated to include key new developments within the museum itself and the museum community in general.

Significant developments include:

- The opening of Gallery Oldham as a combined museum and gallery service in February 2002, as part of Phase 1 of the Cultural Quarter Development
- Transfer of photographic collections to the local studies Library
- Staff restructure
- Proposal to house and display additional museum and gallery collections in the Central Library building as part of Phase 3 of the Cultural Quarter development
- Establishment of the Access database currently holding about 34500 records – proposed transfer to CALM database
- Installation of a Meaco data-logger

The new Collection Management Plan will also refer to the extensive collection and storage surveys carried out in recent years and will closely reflect OMBC's corporate priorities.

After a period of re-development, Gallery Oldham is currently fully staffed and well resourced. There are ongoing major developments in which the Gallery is involved however, and the Collection Management Plan will need to be revised on a regular basis. A full, formal review of the Collection Management Plan will be carried out in March 2009 with annual reviews of the action plans.

## 1.1 HISTORY OF THE COLLECTIONS

Oldham Free Library, Art Gallery and Museum was established in Union Street in 1883. Both art and museum displays were held in the Union Street building throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries but growing collections demanded additional storage and display space.

In the 1930's the bequest of the Lees home in Werneth Park provided an opportunity for expansion and the natural history collections were transferred there, where they remained on display for the next 40 years.

By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, various bequests had led to the addition of other collections such as archaeology, ethnography, geology, numismatics and antiquities. In the absence of properly qualified staff the collections were stored and, occasionally, displayed in haphazard fashion.

The early 1970's saw the establishment of the Local Interest Centre, an innovatory combination of Library and Museum. The inadequacies of the building soon became apparent, however, and the Local Studies Library moved to the Old Post Office in Union Street in 1984 leaving the Local Interest Centre to house museum exhibitions and stores.

Until 2002 three facilities were provided; Oldham Museum, in Greaves Street, the adjoining Local Studies Library and the Art Gallery, housed in the original 1883 Library, Museum & Gallery building.

Gallery Oldham opened in February 2002. It is a new building in Greaves Street connected via a link bridge to the original Library & Museum, which provides a combined gallery and museum service. The majority of the fine & decorative art collections were moved into Gallery Oldham, with social and natural history collections remaining in the old Museum building and in the Library basement.

The collection currently comprises more than 15,000 social and industrial history items, more than 2,500 works of art, about 1,125 items of decorative art, more than 80,000 natural history specimens, over 2,000 geology specimens and over 3,000 archaeology specimens. About 15,000 photographs were transferred from the Museum to the Local Studies Library in the 1990s

Where "Oldham" is referred to, take this to mean "Oldham Metropolitan Borough", not simply the town itself.

The Museum and Gallery accepts and will adhere to the definition of a museum as adopted at the 1984 Museums Association AGM:

“an institution which collects, documents, preserves, exhibits and interprets material evidence and associated information for the public benefit.”

## **1.2 MISSION STATEMENT**

“Oldham Museum exists to preserve, develop and interpret its collections of social and natural history, fine and decorative art in order to promote lifelong learning and the principles of community cohesion.

## **2. THE COLLECTIONS**

### **2.1 NATURAL HISTORY**

#### **Natural History**

**Gallery Oldham** holds one of the best and most extensive natural history collections in the North West, including a number of collections of national importance. A substantial proportion of the material is of local origin and some dates from the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century providing a magnificent record of the changing ecology of the area over two centuries.

The vertebrate collections include 700 birds, representing 250 British species, and the Taylor Egg collection, a major collection of almost 5,000 eggs, which is fully documented and dates from 1900 to 1930.

The invertebrate collections include nationally important collections of lepidoptera (moths and butterflies), coleoptera (beetles), diptera (flies) and conchology (shells). The lepidoptera collection dates from 1850 to 1980, comprises over 100 drawers and 50 storage boxes, providing a unique example of environmental change in the region. The conchology collection consists of more than 12000 shells, including the Taylor British Land and Freshwater Mollusc Collection and a wide range of foreign molluscs.

**Gallery Oldham** has recently taken custodial responsibility for the Oldham Microscopical Society’s important herbarium due to recurrent dampness in their stores at Werneth Park Study Centre. The collection represents over 85% of all British higher and lower plant species.

The natural history department has an excellent library relating to the collection and consisting of about 2,000 natural history reference books, identification keys and scientific journals some of which date from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

#### **Biological Records**

In addition to the 40,000 records of species occurrence throughout the Borough, which date back to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Gallery Oldham is increasingly active as a repository for current natural history information. As well as information gained from the 1992/93 Amphibian Survey, the 1990/91 Butterfly Watch, the 1995 and 1997 Pond Surveys and

1996 Mammal Survey, Oldham has acquired information and maps from the 1991 Oldham Phase One and Two Habitat Surveys.

This information provides a framework for collecting new information on species occurrence, thus increasing our understanding of the inter relationships and importance of wildlife. As a consequence of its biological records, Gallery Oldham has been the lead body on the creation of a Biodiversity Action Plan for Oldham. It also provides ecological advice to other council departments as well as other outside bodies.

## **Geology**

The geology collection, which consists of over 2000 specimens, contains a range of British fossils, a representative collection of world minerals and a small collection of local rocks.

The fossil collection includes specimens from the Lower Cambrian to the Pleistocene, and Carboniferous fossils organized by phyla and class. Much of the collection lacks locality and collector data but most probably originates from the renowned local geologist, James Neild (1825 – 1895). It has recently taken possession of voucher specimens from Glodwick Lows Site of Special Scientific Interest.

A report on the Museum's geology collection written by Herbert Bolton (Assistant Keeper at Manchester Museum) in 1896 concluded that the collection "is of considerable importance and contains many specimens of high value and great interest to geologists".

A more recent report by Rosemary Roden (a peripatetic geology curator) describes the collection as "of rare excellence" and "a valuable educational resource".

## **2.2 SOCIAL HISTORY**

The social history collection consists of around 15,000 items. The collection comprises mainly domestic and household items, along with material representing local industry. There are various large specific collections such as archaeology, costume, ephemera, photographs, as well as some small specialist collections of numismatics, horology and militaria.

The collections grew steadily over the last 100 years, but increased at a meteoric rate with the opening of the Local Interest Centre in 1972.

The collection is of enormous value as material evidence of the social history of Oldham and its people. Almost without exception, each item in the collection was made in Oldham or owned by one of its residents. It contains items which are unique to Oldham as well as objects of more general interest which reflect the history of the town and its communities.

## **Industrial History**

Although the lack of suitable storage accommodation has severely restricted the growth of the industrial history collection, a number of important items have been acquired such as items from the local textile industry (Platts), including a section of a Mule (1927), a slubbing machine (1952) and a drawing frame.

There is a locally made Braddocks' gas meter, Spencer lathe, Bradbury motor cycle and a range of Bradbury sewing machines as well as a number of items produced by the local Ferranti company. Traditional crafts such as wheel wrighting, clogging and hatting are also represented, as is the now extinct local coal industry.

## **Archaeology**

The archaeology collection comprises local Mesolithic and Neolithic flint tools, about half of which have an identifiable provenance. It also contains a small Egyptian and Greek collection. Prior to 1987, the Roman collection contained some 100 items of pottery, metalware and glass from the Ammon Wrigley dig (1897) at Castleshaw Roman fortlet. The collection grew considerably in the 1980s, with the addition of material excavated at Castleshaw excavation by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit, and now contains some 3000 items and related field documentation.

## **Costume / Fabric**

There is a large costume collection which includes everything from Victorian costume donated and worn by the Lees family of Werneth Park to work-wear worn in the local mills and uniforms. There is also an extensive collection of associated material including underwear, footwear and accessories from hats to jewellery. The costume collection also incorporates a large collection of everyday domestic fabrics. There is also a collection of banners - religious, military and trade union.

## **Ephemera**

There is an extensive collection of ephemera (over 1000 items) collected to represent everyday life in the borough, from local tram tickets to magazines on the Apollo moon landings. This material was extensively catalogued during the 1990s. There are also a number of distinct collections, such as printed posters, which includes many unique items such as election material relating to Winston Churchill, who was MP for Oldham from 1899 to 1906.

## **2.3 FINE & DECORATIVE ART**

### **Fine Art**

The majority of the fine art collection was built up from the mid 1800s to the late 1930s, with an emphasis on British painting. Since the 1930s the collection has benefited from the gift of works from the Contemporary Art Society as well as by numerous purchases and donations.

The collection consists of over 450 oil paintings, ranging from pre-Raphaelite, British Realism and late Victorian genre to post-war painting including, Pop and Abstract art; 450 watercolour paintings, including early English topographical and Twentieth Century works; around 700 prints, mostly contemporary, covering the emergence of print as an important medium for artists since the 1960s and an unspecified number of engravings.

There are also a small number of photographic prints (around 100), including the Arts Council North West collection of contemporary photography on long term loan, drawings, mixed media works and sculptures. In recent years a number of artworks by artists of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin have been added to the collection.

Of particular interest is the Charles Lees collection of oil paintings, watercolours, drawings and engravings, presented in 1888. Additions were made by Charles Lees in the 1890s and by Marjorie Lees in 1952 and 1970. The National Arts Collections Fund gave an additional 55 watercolours and drawings from the SC Turner Collection in March 2004.

### **Decorative Arts**

The decorative arts collection consists of over 150 examples of glass dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century; more than 50 examples of 20<sup>th</sup> century studio pottery, miscellaneous ceramics from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including commemorative pottery; domestic wares and figures; various East Asian collections, including Chinese and Japanese pottery and export wares from the Francis Buckley Collection of 1936 – 37; a small collection of ivory and soapstone figures; the Charles Lees Collection of Oriental Art Metalwork including tsuba and other sword fittings, and the Newton bequest of 1964. There are also a small number of items of silverware and electrotypes including civic items. Craft works by South Asian makers have been acquired in recent years and the Contemporary Art Society purchase scheme has provided a small number of acquisitions.

## **3. ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY**

### **3.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Gallery Oldham will collect actively through purchase and through considered documentation projects, as well as passively through gift or bequest.

To promote community cohesion and to reflect the diversity of the borough, Gallery Oldham will actively collect material from, or of particular relevance to, under-represented sections of the community. We will consult with local and particularly under-represented communities to stimulate the donation of relevant material and to ensure the relevance of acquisitions to local audiences.

Gallery Oldham will also continue to accept gifts and bequests which fall specifically within the scope of the existing collecting policy.

It is recognized that areas of shared interest exist within the service, particularly with the Local Studies collection, and that there is a need for the various parts of the service to take steps to establish agreed areas of responsibility in order to avoid duplication.

The collection of objects in very poor condition will be avoided, except where such items are particularly scarce or when existing collections would benefit from their acquisition. **Similarly the collection of objects which present particular storage or handling problems will be avoided.**

Duplication of individual items is to be generally avoided except where such items are particularly scarce or when existing collections would benefit from their acquisition. Duplicate items may also be acquired for use in loan or handling collections.

Gallery Oldham will take full advantage of outside funding in the acquisition of material including matching grants, partnership/sponsorship schemes and subscription to gift or grant making institutions.

Gallery Oldham will seek at all times to acquire outright possession of items by gift, purchase or bequest where they fall within the collecting remits outlined ahead. Only in exceptional circumstances and for specific purposes (such as identification) will items be accepted on loan. Such items will be the subject of formal, fixed term agreements. Loans will however, be requested for exhibition purposes.

## **3.2 SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS**

### **3.2.1 Natural History**

Gallery Oldham will collect specimens which show the complete range of flora and fauna within Oldham Metropolitan Borough. That is:

Specimens collected in Oldham.

Specimens collected by Oldham people.

Gallery Oldham will:

- collect specimens from outside the Borough for comparative and display purposes where they compliment existing collections and do not infringe on the collecting policies of neighbouring Museums.
- collect archival and historical materials, including photographic material, associated with the collections and local naturalists.
- collect biological records relating to sites and species in the Borough.

- continue to develop a collection of specimens suitable for handling purposes, especially for school loans.

Priority will be given to the following areas:

- |               |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|
| Botanical     | - | local specimens with full data.<br>voucher specimens from survey work.<br>under-represented groups e.g. alien flora, fungi  |
| Vertebrates   | - | local specimens with full data.<br>better quality display specimens.<br>handling specimens suitable for school loans.<br>skeletal material.                                     |
| Invertebrates | - | local specimens with full data.<br>voucher specimens from survey work.<br>immature stages.<br>under-represented Orders e.g. hymenoptera.<br>material suitable for school loans. |
| Geology       | - | local specimens with full data<br>under- represented fossils and minerals<br>handling specimens.  |

▪ **Social History**

Gallery Oldham will collect objects and related information relevant to the people and communities of Oldham Metropolitan Borough, past and present.,

In general:

- items made in Oldham or by Oldham people.
- items in common use by the people of Oldham and associated oral, video, digital and written records

In particular Gallery Oldham will collect:

- material to reflect the recent history, culture and traditions of the communities resident within Oldham Metropolitan Borough, with particular emphasis on minority ethnic communities and other groups of people under-represented in the collection. The gallery will work with Archives, Local Studies, the Library and local community groups to stimulate the donation of relevant material to the collections from under-represented communities.
- material which stresses the key social and industrial features of distinctive geographical areas e.g. Oldham (coalmining and cotton), Failsworth (silk and

hatting), Saddleworth (wool), Chadderton (agriculture) Crompton and Shaw (cotton).

- manufactured objects and machinery relevant to Oldham's industrial and commercial life of any age, up until the present day, with a view to displaying such material in working order where possible, and subject to the availability of suitable storage and handling facilities.
- oral and video history to augment the social and industrial history collections. It will also collect photographs and copy photographs for the collection. This work will be done in consultation with the local Studies Library and Archives and Libraries Service who will be offered historic photographic material in the first instance
- archaeological material of the Oldham area through donations or bequests, but only from bona-fide archaeological sources and in consultation with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit based at Manchester University. The Museum will concentrate its collecting on existing archaeological collections and specific locally known sites e.g. Roman and Industrial, due to the limited in-house resources and expertise.

### **3.2.3 Fine & Decorative Art**

Gallery Oldham will collect work in the following media: painting, drawing, print, photography, sculpture, ceramics and new media.

Gallery Oldham will collect:

- work which consolidates its existing historical collections of 18<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century British art.
- works by living artists and works which are contemporary in nature, including works of contemporary subject matter and/or experimental in terms of media.
- historical and contemporary work that relates to the cultural heritage of the minority ethnic communities of Oldham, in particular work by South Asian artists, British artists of South Asian origin and artists who explore cultural diversity in British society.
- work by contemporary artists who engage with issues related to the natural and social history collections and artists associated with the Oldham area.
- 20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary studio and mass-produced ceramics as well as work which complements the existing historic collections.

- South Asian decorative arts and craft and work by contemporary British makers of South Asian origin.

## ○ LIMITATIONS ON COLLECTING

Gallery Oldham will observe all legal and ethical considerations concerning the acquisition of material as laid down by the Museums Association and adopted as the Codes of Practice at the 1987 Annual General Meeting. It will endeavour to comply with all revisions and up-datings of the Code.

In particular Gallery Oldham will abide by the following guidelines:

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy should only be made in very exceptional circumstances and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums. The North West Museums Libraries & Archives Council should be notified of any changes to the acquisitions policy.

Gallery Oldham will not acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any work of art or object unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question and that it has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. For the purposes of this paragraph "country of origin" includes the United Kingdom.

So far as biological and geological material is concerned, Gallery Oldham will not acquire, by any direct or indirect means, any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred, in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection, or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom, or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside body.

So far as British or foreign archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) are concerned, in addition to the safeguards above, Gallery Oldham will not acquire by purchase, objects in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any reasonable cause to believe that the circumstances of their recovery involved the recent unscientific or intentional destruction or damage of ancient monuments or other known archaeological sites, or involved a failure to disclose the finds to the owner or occupier of the land, or to the proper authorities in the case of a possible Treasure Trove (in England and Wales) or Bona Vacantia (in Scotland).

Gallery Oldham will take into account the collecting policies of neighbouring museums, in particular, Saddleworth Museum run by an independent trust, 'Portland Basin' run by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and 'Touchstones' run by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

Gallery Oldham will only accept material which it is able to store and handle properly. In accepting responsibility for the care of material in collection, we acknowledge that conservation, and the funding thereof, is an essential prerequisite of a collections policy.

### 3.4 DISPOSAL AND DE-ACCESSIONING

#### 3.4.1 General Considerations

The Museum and Gallery will observe all considerations regarding the disposal of works of art as laid down by the Museums Association and adopted as the Code of Practice at the 1987 AGM.

In particular the Museum and Gallery will abide by the following guidelines:

A Museum should have a long term purpose and possess substantial permanent collections in relation to its stated purpose. The Museum authority accepts the principle that there is **a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the museum collection.**

In those cases where the museum is legally free to dispose of an item (if this is in doubt, advice will be sought) it is agreed that any decision to sell, or otherwise dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds. Once a decision to dispose of an item has been taken, priority will be given to retaining the item within the public domain and with this in view it will be offered first, by exchange, gift or sale to registered museums before sale to other interested individuals or organizations is considered.

In cases in which an arrangement for the exchange, gift or sale of material is not being made with an individual registered museum, the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of material. This will normally be through an announcement in the Museums Association *Museums Journal* and/or other appropriate professional journal. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed.

A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by exchange, sale, gift or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged to be of any use for the purposes of the collection), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum, acting on advice of professional curatorial staff, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone. Full records will be kept of all such decisions and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable.

Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This should normally mean the purchase of

further acquisitions but in exceptional cases, improvements to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases may be sought from the Museums' governing body, the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council (MLA).

▪ **De-accessioning Procedure**

Before disposal, any object must be de-accessioned. The date and the reason for an object's removal from the collection must be clearly indicated on all relevant Museum records.

Gallery Oldham staff will be informed of any object suggested for de-accessioning at collection planning meetings.

Every effort must be made to determine title to the object and that it is free of any relevant, special considerations:

Check -       accession register.  
                  entry form.  
                  history file.  
                  council minutes.

Every effort must be made to inform the original donor of the object of its impending de-accession and disposal, so that they may have the opportunity to retrieve the object. The object should be offered for free transfer to another museum in an appropriate publication, e.g. the Museums Journal.

A report on the object(s) must be produced containing:

copies of all documentation.  
photographs.  
list of duplicate objects.  
condition report.  
copy of current collecting policy  
valuation by third party.  
copy of De-accession/Disposal Policy

The above report is to be submitted to the Executive Director Education & Cultural Services and to the Cabinet Member for Education, Culture & Leisure by the Principal Officer, for approval to de-accession.

Once de-accessioning is agreed to, a curatorial officer should record this information and all relevant and associated records. No records should be destroyed or removed.

#### **4.0 DOCUMENTATION PLAN**

#### **4.1 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS & PROCEDURES**

The following procedures have currently been in use since 1995:

**Entry and Exit Records.** Using the MDA Entry and Exit Forms, all items entering or leaving the museum (for whatever reason) are recorded in order for easy, future identification and location purposes prior to formal accessioning (where appropriate).

**Movement Records.** Using forms drawn up within the museum, objects can now be accurately tracked as they are moved, internally or externally.

**Accession Records.** When an item is formally added to the museum collection after the donor has signed a Transfer of Title section of the entry form, an entry is made in an archival quality Accession Register which is kept in a secure cabinet. The record is also added to the computerized database at this time, the database is backed up by OMBC IT section and a paper copy is kept in the Museum Office.

**Marking & Labelling.** Whenever an item is recorded on an Entry Form, it is labelled with that unique number and similarly, when formally accessioned, it is marked with a (different) unique Identity Number which is permanent but removable.

**Information Retrieval.** Beside the Accession Register, a comprehensive range of indexes (such as Donor, Simple Name, Location) are available through the computerized database, which contains records on all accessioned items.

**Loan Records.** Using the MDA Exit and Entry Forms, records are maintained of “Loans Out” (to other museums, schools or other groups) and “Loans In” (for exhibitions or identification

#### **o CURRENT DOCUMENTATION**

##### **Responsibility**

Documentation of the permanent collections is the responsibility of the three Exhibition Coordinators who curate the collections of 1. Natural History. 2. Social History. 3. Fine & Decorative Art.

#### 4.2.1 Natural History – current documentation

Although Accession Registers have been in use since the Museums opening in 1883, standards of recording have varied considerably. Approved MDA Registers are now in use and sufficient object information is now recorded for all accessions.

All information in the natural history accessions register has been entered onto an Access computerized database. Unfortunately, the accessions register was not up-dated during the 1980s when there was no dedicated natural history curator, when parts of the collection were disposed of and when many labels were disconnected from specimens. This has necessitated a systematic check of all specimens in the natural history collection to ascertain which specimens still exist and to re-associate labels with objects. An audit of the birds and mammals collections has now been completed as part of this process.

Over the past 8 years, computer entries have been made for

- all the higher plants in the Nield Herbarium and Squire Ashton Herbarium (c.4200 items)
- the Taylor Egg Collection (over 1000 records of over 5000 specimens)
- the fossil and mineral collection (over 1250 records)
- the natural history library (1860 books)
- all species of British lepidoptera (1622 species)
- shell specimens (330 entries)
- Oldham naturalists (about 100 records)
- the main natural history database now contains 2800 individual entries, consisting mainly of birds, mammals, fish and models. It also includes items from the Accessions Register, which have been destroyed or unaccounted for.

There are over 80,000 specimens in the natural history collection. Details of about 20% of it have now been entered onto a computer database.

Separate databases, with additional/alternative fields to the main database, have been created for plants, eggs, geology, lepidoptera, Oldham naturalists, books and shells. These were tailored to the specific data characteristics of each specialism e.g. size of egg clutch, taxonomic hierarchy, stratigraphy, epoch, dewey number etc.

This allowed greater speed of data entry, easier searches and a less cluttered data entry screen.

The transfer of database systems from Angoss to Access may allow for the merger of some of these or searches across common terms such as 'collector' or 'location'.

Selection of specific documentation projects has been determined largely by responses to the need of specific exhibitions, and the availability of volunteers or contractors with specialist knowledge. For instance, in 1996 a local entomologist listed, conserved and re-

ordered the AE Wright Collection of Syrphidae (Hoverflies) which number over 1900 specimens. These have yet to be entered onto Access database.

A large part of the biological record database (over 3000 records) has been inputted onto new software called Recorder 2002. This has been designed to act as the standard biological recording software in the UK, backed by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee of Great Britain and run by the National Biodiversity Network. There remains a few hundred data entries, mainly related to ponds and flora in Saddleworth, that can only be accessed on Access. The transfer of this data onto Recorder 2002 is possible but technically complicated.

Index cards onto which thousands of mainly invertebrate records have been written, have yet to be computerised. Also, there has been no systematic transfer of Oldham related specimens data to Recorder 2002.

#### **4.2.2 Social History – current documentation**

Although Accession Registers have been in use since the Museums opening in 1883, standards of recording have varied considerably. Approved MDA Registers are now in use and sufficient object information is now recorded for all accessions.

For the first 50 years or so of the Museums existence, unique identifying numbers were not assigned to individual objects; during the following period, numbers were assigned but not always marked onto the objects, or marked poorly, so that the link has been lost between the object's record and the item itself.

As a result of these practices there are many objects which are un-numbered, with an inventory of the collection indicating more than 5000 such items.

Objects formally added to the collection are now assigned and marked with a unique identifying number, ensuring the link between an object and its associated information.

A considerable amount of retrospective documentation work has been carried out and is also ongoing. This has involved checking through the old accession registers and MDA cards and updating the computer database accordingly and matching up with items that had lost their number. It has also meant that many original, basic records are now fully documented.

A database of temporary identity numbers also exists and this records those items which are unmarked. These temporary numbers and records will be gradually being matched up with existing records.

The addition of previously unlisted collections onto the database has been accomplished with most of the paper ephemera now listed and accessible. These collections included numerous valuable historic items which were not individually listed, eg a collection of over 500 local posters which is now fully documented.

- **Fine and Decorative Art – current documentation**

Although Accession Registers have been in use since the Museum's opening in 1883, standards of recording have varied considerably. Approved MDA Registers are now in use and sufficient object information is now recorded for all accessions.

Objects formally added to the collection are now assigned and marked with a unique identifying number, ensuring the link between an object and its associated information.

Catalogue cards have been produced for most of the fine art collection but the information recorded is of variable quality.

Basic records relating to the fine art collection have been transferred from the register to an Access database. Following the removal of the fine & decorative art collections to Gallery Oldham, a complete review of the documentation of these collections is required. In particular, all location records will need to be brought up to date.

- **FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS IN DOCUMENTATION**

- **Natural History**

About 65,000 specimens in the natural history collection have still to be computerised. Butterflies, moths, beetles, molluscs, bird eggs and mosses constitute the largest part of these 65,000 specimens.

Due to the specialist nature of these specimens, it is very difficult for non-specialists to input data. Many of the species names on labels have changed over the past century, many labels have abbreviations which need expert translation, some degree of identification is needed to spot misplaced labels and some database fields require a good knowledge of taxonomic order. This severely restricts the number of volunteers, Front of House staff or contractors who can input. Therefore, it is not possible to affix firm documentation targets for some of the most specialist family groups, only broad intentions.

Very little of the collection has been photographed. Recent proposed developments of an on-line database will necessitate images being produced for featured parts of the collection but generally, the need to photograph all of the collection is not as necessary as individual artworks. Special consideration should be given to parts of the collection which are visually most important such as colour variation in butterflies and birds eggs, or mutations: these are likely to be unique to Gallery Oldham's collections.

There is an inconsistency in accessioning. Within certain orders, some individual specimens may be accessioned whereas others are accessioned under a group number. For example, individual butterflies compared to a drawer of butterflies. Likewise, the Nield Herbarium is listed under one number containing up to 10,000 specimens. The status of specimens added to the herbarium therefore becomes confused.

There are also several thousand hand-written biological records that need to be inputted onto Recorder 2002. These are index cards, specimen labels, contained within reports, sheets of paper and on maps. There are also many thousands of records kept by amateur naturalists and countryside professionals in the Oldham area. Holders of these records have expressed willingness to help input them on Recorder 2002.

Gallery Oldham is not only a keeper of biological records but also disseminates information. There is a commitment in Oldham's Unitary Development Plan to the conservation of habitats and species in Oldham's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The success of this commitment is dependant on the successful operation of Recorder 2002, which will be greatly enhanced by the addition of a few thousand more entries.

### **Priorities 2004 - 2009**

In the next five years, the following tasks should be completed:

- Computerise and accession each specimen (where required) within the Nield Collection of Mosses.
- Add all mollusc specimens to the database.
- Create a database of Coleoptera species names, similar to the database created for Lepidoptera. Although this will not include data from all labels, it will increase access of the collection generally.
- Computerise and accession all bird eggs with data.
- Identify which parts of the collection have unique or uncommon colour, size or shape variation for the purposes of photography.
- Be in a position to react positively to the availability of locally available specialist volunteers and contractors, particularly those with a good knowledge of butterflies, moths, beetles, molluscs and mosses.
- Computerise small miscellaneous collections, such as lantern slides, slide mounts, dragonflies and spiders, whenever their use could benefit a specific project or exhibition.
- Create a satellite network of Recorder 2002 users and input volunteers across Oldham by the end of 2003.

- Aim to have 10,000 biological recordings on Recorder 2002 by the end of 2004, including transfer of all data from index cards by end of 2005.
- Continue to set up and support specific species and habitat surveys across Oldham. Priority will be given to those species and habitats listed in Oldham's Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Aim to transfer relevant data from the collections to Recorder 2002. To this end, encourage volunteers to catalogue the Cottam Lepidoptera Collection which contains many locally relevant specimens.
- Update storage location details for all specimens, both computerised and non-computerised.
- Ensure that acquired specimens which complement fully documented collections be computerised as soon as possible.
- Establish more consistent approach to accessioning, including retrospective re-appraisal.

**TIMETABLE – See attached Documentation Action Plan – Appendix 1**

▪ **Social History**

There are a number of unfinished projects which need to be completed for the benefit of the collections and their users.

The retrospective documentation project, aiming to determine links between existing objects and records will continue, as well as the process of allocating every item within the museum stores usable location addresses (in order to facilitate their quick and easy retrieval).

The oral and visual history archives need to be documented.

Movement controls are now in place using specifically designed movement forms, their consistent use must be established as soon as possible.

A comprehensive documentation procedures manual, covering all aspects and processes involved, needs to be produced in order to standardize procedures across all disciplines.

**Priorities for 2004 - 2009**

- Create a location address for every accessioned object in the collection.
- A programme of retrospective accessioning to be carried out.

- Photographs to be organised and secured.
- Establish a Procedures Manual for documentation
- Establish consistent use of movement control forms
- Document audio and video tapes.

## **TIMESCALE – Documentation Action Plan – Appendix 1**

### **4.3.3 Fine & Decorative Art**

Though the majority of the fine art collection is recorded on the database the information on some records is minimal, many records do not have an up-to-date location and a considerable amount of data inputting and data cleaning is still required.

Priorities for 2004 – 2009

- Locations need to be recorded and a full location index produced.
- An audit of the art collection needs to be undertaken to assess how many objects still require accessioning and/or improved documentation and to identify and document unnumbered/unmarked objects.
- With the exception of the Charles Lees collection, only a small proportion of the fine and decorative arts collections have been photographed.
- The transfer of Decorative art records onto the computer database needs to be completed with accurate locations recorded. Photographing the decorative arts collection is a priority as the collection is likely to be stored in boxes and therefore not easily accessible.
- Insurance valuations of the collection are out of date and need to be undertaken as soon as possible.
- A full audit of art works on long-term loan to other departments is an immediate priority. Procedures need to be established regarding off-site loans and covering such issues as physical and environmental security, insurance cover, periodic checks etc.

## **TIMESCALE – See Documentation Action Plan – Appendix 1**

## **5.0 CONSERVING THE COLLECTION: STORAGE**

### **5.1 CURRENT STORAGE**

The fine and decorative art collections have been transferred to new stores in Gallery Oldham. Storage in this new facility now needs rationalising and location records need to be brought up to date. There are still problems with some off-site stores and, where possible, vulnerable collections will be moved to more appropriate storage or prioritised for re-storage as part of Phase 3 of the redevelopment of the cultural quarter.

Conditions in the stores are monitored using a Meaco data-logger. Data-logger records need to be consistently monitored and analysed to provide a firm basis for future storage improvements.

#### **5.1.1 Natural History – current storage**

The natural history stores are located in the basement beneath Oldham Library. Environmental conditions in the area are not ideal, with low relative humidity being the main problem. Monitoring of both temperature and relative humidity take place, although there are few environmental controls in place. Natural light is completely excluded however and the area is covered by both fire and security alarms.

There has been a recent increase in available storage space due to the transfer of the art collection to new storage within Gallery Oldham. This has effectively doubled the available storage area but there is a major problem with a rising, undulating parquet floor, caused by concrete foundations expanding due to water seepage. Whilst this appears not to be a threat in terms of humidity or flooding, new storage shelves have to work around the ‘ripples’ on the floor.

The improved space has allowed the transfer of the 1800+ books belonging to the natural history library; for the improved shelving of the Nield and Squire Ashton Herbaria; for the transfer of the Stubbs Sea Cliff, and for the re-shelving of the larger and cased taxidermy specimens, away from the ceiling pipes.

Entomological collections are stored in wooden cabinets, some of which are enclosed within a separate room within the basement, but some cabinets and storage boxes are spread throughout the natural history area. Both the lepidoptera and syrphidae collections have recently benefited from documentation projects. These have also led to many rusty pins being replaced and specimens freshly ordered to accommodate modern changes to taxonomic order.

The vertebrate collections are stored variously in cabinets, boxes and in a loose state (covered with acid free paper). Storage space remains inadequate and relatively inaccessible, necessitating the movement of some specimens in order to gain access to others. Storage is largely arranged according to size rather than taxonomic order. A large part of the bird collection is stored in cabinets, which require the removal of large plate glass frontages to access them: this requires two strong people to remove them each time.

The shell collection is stored in two large cabinets and in a set of drawers. They are largely undocumented and laid out according to size as well as taxonomic and geographical order. Documentation would greatly influence re-storage.

The Taylor Egg collection is housed in a beautiful hand made cabinet. Other egg collections are stored in boxes and loosely in drawers. These would benefit greatly from documentation and re-housing, either into purpose built cabinets or accessible boxes.

The two herbaria have recently been re-stored in new Solander boxes and stored together on new shelving. Loose specimens have also been remounted and the whole collection of higher plants organised taxonomically.

The geology collection is stored in stratigraphic order on purpose built shelves.

The collection of fish casts has been re-housed in cardboard boxes and placed into shapes cut out of plasterzote, similar to the fossil collection.

**ACTION PLAN – See Appendix 2 Conservation Action Plan**

### **5.1.2 Social History – current storage**

Social and industrial history collections are stored in a variety of locations, some of which provide sub-standard environmental conditions.

The main stores are located in the basement beneath the Local Studies Library, 84 Union Street. These stores comprise 5 individual, secure rooms, each having a programmable electric heater. There are also 3 portable de-humidifiers which can be used where required. Natural light is absent throughout the area.

These stores have all been recently re-organized and largely repainted. All items are now easily accessible and all locations are clearly marked. One of the five stores suffers from excessive humidity which cannot be adequately controlled. This is a priority for removal to more suitable storage.

A secure storeroom on the first floor of the old museum houses costume and accessories, textiles, paper ephemera and photographs. Regular environmental monitoring has revealed poor environmental conditions here with very high temperatures and large ranges (caused by central heating pipes), and associated low relative humidity. The store is very overcrowded, with poor access to the collections and requires re-organization.

The largest items of machinery are stored at a nearby secure industrial unit. However, environmental conditions are not monitored or controlled and the store needs re-organizing to improve access to collections.

Improvements in collection storage are ongoing within the constraints of existing storage areas. A lot of material has been boxed and old boxes standardised and re-labelled where

appropriate. The banner collection has been re-located to environmentally controlled storage in Gallery Oldham's new fine art store, due to its poor condition – purpose-built racking is required for this collection.

**ACTION PLAN – See Appendix 2 Conservation action plan**

### **5.1.3 Fine & Decorative Art**

The majority of the fine and decorative art collections are now housed in a purpose built Art Store in Gallery Oldham. Larger paintings are stored on mobile racking and the remainder of framed paintings are stored on shelves. Decorative art objects are stored in boxes on shelves.

Environmental conditions are good, except that the store is not fully blacked out and natural light gets in through cracks in the window boards.

Plan chests containing unframed works on paper, photographs and some framed paintings and are currently stored in the Upper Picture Store adjacent to Gallery 4. This store is unsatisfactory for works on paper as there is no space to look at them carefully.

**ACTION PLAN – See Appendix 2 Conservation Action Plan**

## **6.0 CONSERVING THE COLLECTION: REMEDIAL CONSERVATION**

6.1 The importance of remedial conservation is recognized, as is the need to use only appropriately qualified and experienced conservation staff to carry out such work.

It is also recognized that awareness of the extent and condition of the collection is a basic prerequisite to establishing a meaningful conservation programme. The establishment of consistent documentation standards is ongoing, and a programme is being established to deal with the documentation backlog.

A number of collections surveys have been carried out, which establish priorities for remedial conservation, as follows:

- Trade Union banner surveys
- Geology Collection Survey & Assessment Report 1989
- Egyptian Collection report 1990
- Survey of Collection Condition 1999
- Conservation Survey of Easel Paintings 1993
- Concise conservation survey of easel Paintings 2000

- Banner Survey 2003

The surveys will provide the basis for future remedial conservation action planning, together with recommendations from the Exhibition Co-ordinators. A number of additional areas would benefit from comprehensive condition surveys, e.g. works on paper in the social history and fine & decorative art collections.

**ACTION PLAN – See Appendix 2 Conservation Action Plan**

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Documentation Action Plan @ May 2004**

#### **Fine & Decorative Art**

2004/5

- Location list and digitised images for the decorative art collection by July 2004
- Updated location list by December 2004
- Works on paper re-valued by March 2006
- Establish up to date location list and procedures for off-site loans by March 2005

#### **Social History**

N.B. Documentation priorities & timetable to be agreed with new Exh & Coll Co-ordinator (Social History)

- Backlog of new accessions (400 items = 7.5 weeks)
- Poster collection (500 items = 5 weeks)
- The Street (package and update database = 4 weeks)
- Transfer information from accession records to database = 46 weeks (low priority once back accessioning completed)
- Archaeology database needs updating 200 records = 2 weeks
- Back accessioning Temporary numbered items = 60 weeks
- History files – rationalise = 4 weeks
- Photographic records of collections – rationalise and index = 4 weeks

#### **Natural History**

Priorities 2004/5

1. There are presently 367 drawers containing the majority of the Insecta and Mollusca collections. Of these drawers only 82 have had their contents recorded.

Record the contents of the remaining drawers = 427.5 hours

If one allows 30 hours per week for documentation:

$$\frac{427.5}{30} = 14.25 \text{ weeks}$$

A digital photograph of each drawer should be taken at the same time.  
Complete by March 2005

2005/6

Complete no.2, overview of Insecta boxes and 40% of no.3 (see below)

2. An overview, containing any available information on the contents of the loose Insecta boxes should be made:

$$\frac{100 \times 1.5}{30} \text{ (hours per box)} = 5 \text{ weeks}$$

2006/7

Complete no.3

3. Audit and record Osteichthyes, Amphib/Reptilia, Mammalia and Aves:

Approximately 1145 specimens at 30 minutes each:

$$\frac{1145 \times 30}{60} = 572.5 \text{ minutes} = 19.08 \text{ weeks (based on 30 hours)}$$

Once again, a digital image will provide a reference for the public and may be used as a record of condition.

Therefore, the total manual resource requirement (excluding equipment) for documentation is:

$$14.25 + 5 + 19.08 = 38.33 \text{ weeks over 3 years}$$

## **REVIEW**

**Review date 21 March 2005 – review achievements and re-set targets**

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Conservation Action Plan @ May 2004**

Storage improvements 2004/5

#### **Natural History:**

The provision of appropriate storage furniture and the reorganization of the collection are now possible due to the recent increase in available storage space. Future plans to convert the Central Library into a local history centre mean that alterations to current storage are likely to be short-term. The move of the library may have an impact on the heating system that services the stores.

The state of the parquet floor may also necessitate unwanted changes to storage. Therefore, future adjustments to storage in the natural history stores will only be functional short-term benefits such as wall shelving, re-arrangements of cabinets and re-arrangements of specimens.

Actions 2004/5

Monitor condition of parquet floor. Monitor environmental conditions for any changes this may have.

- Move glass fronted vertebrate storage cabinets away from dimly lit fire escape route to more accessible position.
- Ensure that the natural history collection is an intrinsic part of the development of a local history centre. Investigate ideas of open storage ready to input into development plans.

Undertake a programme of deep-freeze treatment to eradicate moths etc from taxidermy collection

#### **Social History storage**

- Remove street display to storage as soon as possible

- Reorganize the off-site industrial unit housing the collections' larger objects. (September 2003)
- De-accession non-local large-scale artefacts.
- Research storage / display requirements for social history collections for input into Phase 3 planning process.
- Environmental controls need to be implemented in the costume store by means of pipe lagging and thermostats. (asap budget item April 2004)
- Monitor and assess data logger records to determine future housekeeping requirements. Ongoing March 2003)
- Investigate funding sources to implement remedial conservation programme.
- Prioritise re-packaging and removal of vulnerable artefacts to more suitable storage areas

## **REMEDIAL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES**

- Natural History – conservation of the natural history collection has been closely linked to documentation projects. Consequently, there have been important improvements to the conservation of the lepidoptera, syrphidae and higher plant collections over the past 5 years. The most obvious need is to conserve the vertebrate collection. Many of the birds and mammals in the collection will have accumulated dirt over the past half century and will have suffered movement damage. Other concerns are the AE Baron Bird Egg collection which is largely stored loosely in boxes and draws. The Nield Moss Collection is stored in Solander boxes that are packed full of specimens packed in envelopes. These would benefit from being stored more systematically, in smaller numbers and in many cases, fresh envelopes.

### *Actions – 2004/5*

- Obtain an estimate for the remedial conservation of the vertebrate collection, and where necessary, more intense conservation.
- Bring together and make more secure the AE Baron Egg Collection.
- Re-store the Nield Moss Collection.
- Investigate funding sources for remedial conservation

### *Social History – Priorities for conservation*

- Banner collection

- Printed ephemera
  - Textile collection – survey required
- N.B. HLF bid for banner collection conservation project submitted May 04

Fine and decorative art – Priorities for conservation & timetable

Clear priorities exist for the conservation of easel paintings based on the condition survey carried out in 2000. Funding will be sought from a range of sources, grants, trusts, sponsorship etc. to tackle the immediate priorities.

N.B. Woodmansterne Award granted May 2004 for Edward Stott The Ferry

## **REVIEW**

Review achievements and reset targets 21 March 2005