

Editor: Mark Suggitt, York Castle Museum, York, YO1 1RY

## EDITORS NOTES

Collecting Policies! love them or loathe them we are all going to have to think about them as museum registration approaches. Social History museums will have to think long and hard about such documents, given the enormous range of objects they collect. New objectives may appear when we look closely at one of our functions.

On the surface I have found Social Historians do not squabble over where things should go and do pass things on. But, we act without any real guidelines, as I found out when researching for a paper on Collecting in Social History for the Museums Association/M.P.G. seminar "Collecting Policies - Conflict or Co-operation". It was daunting (and impossible) to speak for the whole of "Social History", so I presented a personal view based on consultation with a wide number of colleagues. The paper should be published in the Museums Journal.

If anyone has published a recent policy or attempted to formulate collecting agreements please let the News know about it.

Bookings for the Annual Study Weekend are filling up fast. This is your final reminder to book for what promises to be one of our most stimulating events yet.

## IRON

### SHCG TRAINING SEMINAR - PREVIEW

The development of the iron industry during the 18th and 19th centuries was central to the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. All social history and technology collections in museums contain a wide range of iron objects and this seminar will examine the types and uses of iron, and the development of its production. In addition, there will be a unique opportunity to see a working foundry, the extensive collections of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, the remains of three blast furnaces and recent progress at the Blists Hill Wrought Ironworks.

September 12. (see Coming Events)

## COMING EVENTS

September 4-8: MPG Annual Study Weekend - "Bias in Museums". Exeter. (Contact Julia Arthur, Hon. Conference Organiser, Guildford Museum, Castle Arch, Guildford, GU1 3SX tel. 04 83-505050 ext. 3542).

September 12: Iron. SHCG Training Seminar - Ironbridge. (Contact Mike Day, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, The Wharfage, Ironbridge, Telford, Shropshire, TF8 7AW Tel. 0952 583003).

September 25th-28th: SHCG Annual Study Weekend - "Social History Museums and the Media." Portsmouth (Contact Shirley Davey, City Museum and Art Gallery, Museum Road, Old Portsmouth. PO1 2LJ)

October 16: Contemporary Documentation - Philosophy or fad? - Scottish Museums Council/Leicester University. (Contact Michelle Adams, SMC, County House, 20/22 Tropicen Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8JB

October 29: Into the Interior - Museums approaches to domestic life. SHCG Seminar - York Castle Museum, York YO1 1RY. Tel. 0904 53611).

November 28: Industrial History In Museums. SHCG Training Seminar - Armley Mills Industrial Museum, Leeds. (Contact Jenny Mattingly, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry, CV1 5RW. Tel. 0203 25555 ext. 2466).

See previews in this News

### GSTMC Seminars

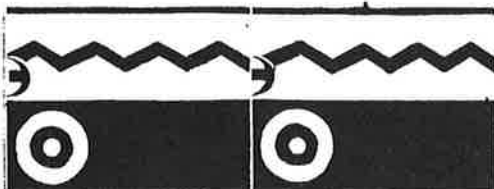
October 8th : Museums on Industry : Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry.

November 3rd : Great Exhibitions : London

November 29th : Museums Artefacts and the History of Science : London (Contact for all three - Stella Butler at Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry).

## REALLY NEW MEMBERS

Congratulations to Janice and Terry Murray on the birth of Thomas Michael on the 22nd March, and to Katy and Mike Turner on the arrival of Richard James on the 17th April.



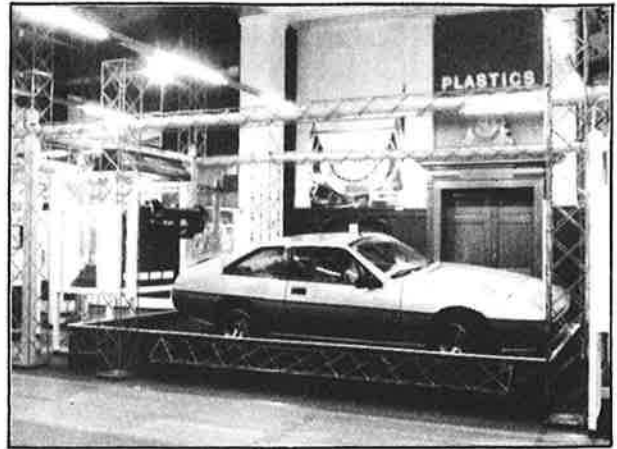
## PLASTICS AT THE SCIENCE MUSEUM

There is nothing very scientific about the Science Museum. For an institution dedicated to the preservation and presentation of systematised knowledge, its galleries are peculiarly irrational and disorganised. If there is a grand plan to which all the museum's staff are working it is certainly not apparent to the average visitor who is overwhelmed by the sprawling and utterly illogical layout of the place. This observation is highly relevant to the particular displays under review here because the first point that strikes the visitor to the new Plastics Gallery is that it has been crammed into a difficult and inconvenient space. The second point is that there is no set path round the exhibition. Admittedly the site is not easy to use, because it can be approached from four different directions, but it does help to be given some guidance as to the best starting point. As it is, anyone wanting to begin by looking at the history of plastics has to find his or her way to the farthest point from any of the entrances and work back.

The design of the exhibition, whilst allowing for the maximum amount of material to be displayed in a very small area, does not help the visitor to make sense of it. There is no numbering sequence for the showcases, nor even a system of floor arrows which would offer assistance to someone who does not want to turn at random from one aspect of the subject to another. The rather overpowering use of a red lattice framework structure for the exhibition, much of it for purely decorative rather than functional effect, tends to emphasise the confusion. It also gives the exhibition a highly contemporary eighties look, which is fine now but could seem very dated in a few years' time. A trendy design may be unwise for a display which will probably not be changed again until the next century.

Most of the display elements work well on an individual basis. Texts and captions are admirably short and simple, in contrast to many of the Science Museum's other galleries, which require a fairly advanced scientific or technical knowledge in the visitor. In this gallery no prior knowledge is assumed, but the benefits of this simplicity of approach in the individual display modules is somewhat marred by their fragmented layout. It is not easy to build up one's understanding of plastics in a coherent sequence.

The gallery makes good use of electronic aids, with a number of video programmes and inter-active computer displays. The videos are both historical and contemporary, ranging from a 1930's promotional documentary made for the Bakelite Company to an explanation of the use of glass-reinforced polyester (GRP) by Lotus for their car bodies. There are also a couple of extracts from comedy feature films which help to lighten the serious scientific tone: Alec Guinness attempting in vain to explain his invention of a new indestructible fibre to Joan Greenwood in 'The Man In The White Suit' and Jacques Tati causing chaos in a plastics factory in 'Mon Oncle'. Most of these videos are on small screens fitted neatly into the showcases and activated by lifting a telephone handset. This is not an ideal listening arrangement because the sound quality is poor, particularly where there is music on the sound track. It allows the viewer to listen without sound leakage to other areas of the exhibition, but it does not cut out the high level of general noise from the rest of the museum. This is a common problem with A/Vs integrated into an open display. Perhaps the answer is to provide headphones, which would give better sound reproduction and allow the listener to cut out ambient noise. The computers in the exhibition seem to attract more visitors than the videos, but perhaps this only reflects a general observation that children in particular prefer inter-active exhibits to those that require passive concentration on looking, listening or (especially) reading.



*A Lotus Excel with GRP body shell, one of the star exhibits in the Science Museum's new Plastics Gallery. The manufacturing process is well explained with a video (right), but the lattice work and ten foot high graphic panel add unnecessary confusion.*

In the centre of the exhibition is a working injection moulding machine, which produces label holders on demand. This has given a lot of trouble and is regularly out of action. It is also not particularly instructive as a working exhibit, and the large space it occupies could perhaps have been put to better use. Nearby is a Concorde nose cone which I only noticed on my third visit because it has been obscurely mounted well above eye level, another casualty of the cramped exhibition layout.

The Science Museum has a very good range of 'domestic' plastics, particularly those in the collections acquired from John Jesse and Roger Newport a few years ago. Much less of this is on show in the new galleries than in the old, which is understandable but disappointing. There is, however, now at least some attention given to the social history of plastics as well as their scientific and technological significance. Even the bizarre ritual of the Tupperware party gets a brief look in. If more space were available one would hope that the social history could be developed further (e.g. working conditions at plastics factories, changing social attitudes to plastic products, the impact of plastics on everyday life and the rise and subsequent fall(?) of the British plastics industry). I would also like to have seen some consideration of the artistic design of plastics, which is barely touched on in the new displays. Indeed, two well known 'classic' plastic designs, the Philco 'People's Set' Model 444 radio of 1935 and the Bush TV12 table television set of 1949 are both included without any identifying captions. Some of the showcases still have that familiar 'not quite finished for the opening and then abandoned' look. No captions at all is even more frustrating than the Science Museum's usual 500-word technical essay on each exhibit.

A social history or decorative arts curator would certainly have approached the subject differently, though in either case, I suspect, would the entirety of the subject have been properly covered. The new Plastics Gallery is a particularly welcome addition to the displays at South Kensington because it represents a significant move towards more accessible interpretation which the average visitor can understand. The next step must be to draw up that logical development plan for the whole museum, but no doubt the new Director is already working on it.

Footnote: In SHCG Journal No. 12, December, 1984, Gordon Watson provided a useful brief survey of plastics. He commented then that very little had been written on the social history of plastics. This is still the case, but mention should be made of 'Classic Plastics' by Sylvia Katz, published by Thames and Hudson in 1984 and now available in paperback, also her earlier more detailed book 'Plastics - Designs and Materials' (Studio Vista 1978). One of the best general works is still 'Plastics' by V. E. Yarsley and E. G. Couzens, first published by Penguin in the Pelican series in 1941. It is long out of print but it does turn up in second hand bookshops. In the absence of easily available published material a guidebook and reading list would be a worthwhile addition to the Science Museum's new gallery. At present the SM's dreary and poorly stocked new shop does not even sell the Katz Book.

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#### NEW PUBLICATIONS

Hello Campers - 50 Years of Butlins by Sue Read (Bantam Press £7.95)

Elizabeth's Britain 1926-1986 by Philip Ziegler (Country Life £14.95)

House and Home - A History of the Small English Home by Anthony Quiney (BBC £9.95)

The True Story of H.P. Sauce by Dinsdale Landen and Jennifer Daniel (Methuen £4.95)

Oh Yes it is! A History of Pantomime by Gerald Flow (BBC £12.95)

David Low - cartoonist by Colin Seymour - Ure and Jin Schoff (Secker and Warburg £9.95)

The Inspiration of the Past - Country House Taste in the 20th Century by John Cornforth (Viking £20.00)

A Guide to the Georgian Buildings of Britain and Ireland by Dan Cruickshank (Weidenfeld and Nicholson. £12.95)

Smothered by Invention - Technology in Women's Lives ed. Wendy Faulkner and Erik Arnold (Pluto £7.95)

Yesterday's Naughty Children - Victorian Values? by Joan Rimmer (£2.50 from 375 Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester).

Follies - A National Trust Guide by Gwyn Headly and Wim Meulenkamp (Jonathan Cape £15.00)

The Hornby Companion Vol. 6. - The Meccano System (New Cavendish £30.00)

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#### FREE BOOKS!

Yes! Your chance to get free books from the Museums Association. But theres always a catch isn't there. If you feel the urge to review a recent book on Social History write to Lucie Carrington at the Museums Association for a list of recent titles available for review. Send off the review, Keep the book. A cheap way to fill your shelves with books you've actually read!

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#### EVERY HOME SHOULD HAVE ONE : DOMESTIC DURABLES AT YORK CASTLE MUSEUM

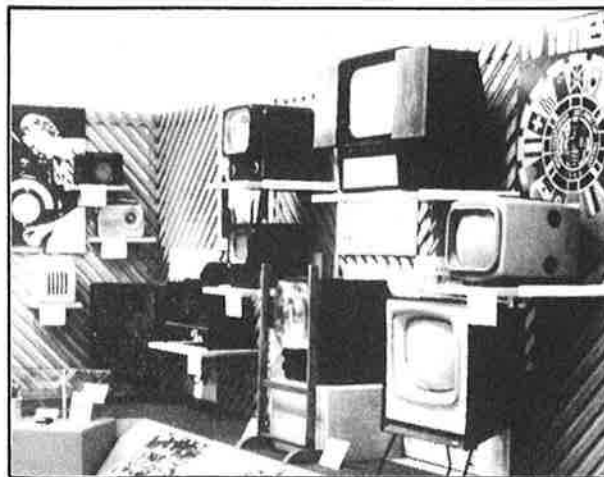
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The 'Every Home Should Have One' exhibition opened at the York Castle Museum last April - the first exhibition to be produced in the modernised Chapel Gallery. Ideally, according to the Keeper of Folk Life, it should have a life of some five to ten years. How does it look after just one year?

The gallery is smart, clean and bright, and provides a pleasant space in which visitors can wander around the displays. And this is an exhibition which makes you want to linger. It sets out to show the history behind the modern devices in our homes, concentrating on their development over the past century and showing that this development continues today. As a review of domestic technology it is absorbing. There is material here to engage the memories of older visitors and the curiosity of the young.

'Every Home Should Have One' chooses eight themes to illustrate technological change in the home : Cleaning, Heating, Bathrooms (and sanitation), Laundry, Lighting, Music, Hobbies, and Radio and Television. 'Laundry', for instance, runs through the technology of washing from the dolly and tub to the automatic electric washing-machine; more bizarre past models include early suction cleaners and electric fires. There is also a small display which pinpoints the declining role of servant labour in the twentieth century. Each section is self-contained; but the whole exhibition is unified by the mode of display and by an attractive in-house design.

York Castle Museum's commitment to contemporary collecting is reflected in the choice of items. It is pleasing to see a 'St. Michael's Lipstick Paintbox' and a bottle of Opium perfume among the toiletries, and a compact disc stereo as one of a range of record players in the Music section. Overall there is an appropriate feeling of consumerism to the exhibition - large reproductions of advertisements plug their competing products and utilities, and with most of the objects on open air display the exhibition mimics the lay-out of a department store. The visual interest in the gallery is strong, particularly due to the advertising posters and to a series of memorable stills which portray the impact of television on our everyday life. A sound dimension has recently been added with videotapes of old television favourites.



Certain parts of the exhibition do explore the work implications of the gadgets on display. This is true of the Laundry section which brings out the types of work, both unpaid and paid, that washing involved and the changing methods that were used. Also the technique of giving a prices-and-wages comparison for some of the objects, in order to convey some idea of who could afford the new machines, is a good one. However I feel that in general not enough information is provided on the social differences in ownership of the material. The contrast between a lavish Edwardian bathroom suite and the tin-baths that remained a necessity for many working-class households in the early twentieth century is pointed, but it is a lone example. Otherwise the exhibition slips at times into an Ideal Homes approach to history.

Another major omission is any treatment of cooking and eating in the home. This subject is dealt with in a subsequent gallery. Unfortunately, the display there of kitchen ranges and contrasting kitchen interiors from the 1940's and the 1980's is in an older style which does not match the new gallery. Nor is it explained within the gallery that this important aspect, (one integral to domestic heating), is covered separately.

In the Castle Museum's current guide-book the commentary on 'Every Home Should Have One' asks:

Does all this miraculous domestic equipment make life easier? Or is it, that we now demand much higher standards of cleanliness, heating, lighting and sanitation than our forebears?

It is debatable whether this fascinating and enjoyable exhibition gives us enough understanding of the implications of change to answer the first question. Perhaps there is scope for further research on the reception and ownership of such machinery in the local area which would supplement the outline offered by 'Every Home Should Have One' and would reach the people who used our most mundane domestic artefacts.

David Stockdale  
(Department of Museum Studies,  
Leicester University)




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MERSEYSIDE MUSEUM OF LABOUR HISTORY - The People's Story

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Merseyside Museum of Labour History opened to the public on 25th March, 1986. The aim of the museum is to portray aspects of working class life on Merseyside over the last one hundred and fifty years.

The museum is housed in the former County Sessions House, in the centre of Liverpool, next to the Walker Art Gallery and opposite St. George's Hall. A grade II\* listed building, the Sessions House was built in 1884 to serve as courts for the Kirkdale division of the County of Lancaster. The architects were George and Francis Holme.

The museum occupies two floors and displays cover a total area of 5,000 square feet. On the ground floor there is an audio-visual presentation entitled 'Merseyside - The People's Story' which introduces the museum displays and galleries on Housing and Employment. The Housing gallery incorporates a version of the popular Victorian 'street', which was part of the Port of Liverpool Gallery in the County Museum and a reconstructed scullery based on a house in Bootle prior to modernisation in 1970. The audio-visual theatre and Employment gallery are linked by a 'Lifestyles' gallery, comprising three stage sets relating to the 1840s, 1940s and 1980s: a cellar dwelling based on John Finch's 'The conditions of the Working Class in Liverpool', 1842; a diorama of a National Union of Mineworkers banner which depicts a miner walking up the steps to Socialism on the horizon - on each step are the election pledges of the 1945 Labour government; and a scene from Alan Bleasdale's 'Boys from the Blackstuff' in which George describes to Chrissie his memories of the Liverpool docks.

Having set the scene, the visitor proceeds to the first floor where he/she can not fail to be impressed by the Italian Renaissance style architecture. This principal floor comprised two courts, judges' chambers, a barristers' library and jury rooms. The former magistrates' meeting room which now houses the 'Building the Union' display, has fine oak and walnut panelling and a highly ornate plaster ceiling and a splendid view of Lime Street and St. George's Plateau. The smaller of the two courts is used for education purposes - we recently had a mock trial in it - and trade union banners are hung in 'the main' court. There are also displays on Leisure, Merseyside Left Theatre and Education on this floor.

The project became 'live' on 23rd September with the appointment of three research assistants and an Acting Curator. As well as drawing on existing collections within the County Museums service, public appeals for material were made to try and fill gaps in our knowledge and in the collections. The response to these appeals was good and our broad definition of labour history seems to have struck a harmonious chord. Converting a building and researching, designing and producing six exhibition areas in six months was not an easy task but public response has proved it to have been very worthwhile.

Lorraine Knoles  
Curator

The museum is open Monday-Saturday 10-5, Sunday 2-5, admission free, and is administered by the Trustees of the National Museum and Galleries on Merseyside.

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 DOCUMENTATION IN SOCIAL HISTORY
 

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A training seminar held at the Verulamium Museum, St. Albans on 29th April, 1986

Today museums are increasingly being judged on the quality of their documentation. The Wright Report (1973) stated that museums should provide firstly, "a numerical and adequately descriptive record of the collection to allow access from the specimen to the related information through its accession number" and secondly, "classified card index facilitating access to the specimens from the recorded information". Collection documentation is the fundamental curatorial activity as it is an integral part of virtually all aspects of museum work. It is vital for activities which include collection management (storage, security, insurance, auditing), acquisition policies (gaps and duplication), and finally research (for, and by, scholars or the public, for education purposes and museum display). Such was the basic message which all speakers reiterated at the seminar in Verulamium Museum, St. Albans, at the end of April. From Sunderland to Somerset, nearly forty of us gathered to hear the speakers, to sympathize with some all too familiar problems, and sometimes to disagree with their solutions.

The seminar opened with Stuart Holm from the MDA presenting a "global view" of documentation. This included an account of the conception and genesis of the MDA, a detailed answer to the question why document, a description of the services available from the Association, and a "theoretical framework" or model for the "perfect" documentation system. With the aid of diagrams an imaginary object was taken through each stage in the cataloguing process: pre-entry, entry, acquisition, itemization, output (indexes), and control (movement within the museum). Suited for either manual operation or computerization, the system as presented was able to accept any number of records of infinite size, was easy to maintain and readily understandable, and could be used to catalogue a wide range of different items.

Next, through a series of case studies we saw how problems of documentation were dealt with in specific situations. St. Albans Museum seriously faced its documentation problem in 1978 as the result of a robbery. With an ever-growing archaeological field unit this presented a daunting prospect. The solution? St. Albans purchased a portable Epson microcomputer into which was entered basic data which was then sent to the MDA for processing. What emerged from the St. Albans example was that many of the qualms inexperienced people felt about operating computers were unfounded and that the cost of adequate documentation by computer was not prohibitive even for the smaller museum.

Whereas St. Albans approached their problem from the object to the documentation, David Fleming explained how at Leeds they approached the problem in reverse. In his talk entitled "Backlog without Tears", he described how he extracted relevant information from old accession registers dating back to the early nineteenth century. Processed by the MDA, this information was returned to Leeds as a series of computer-generated indexes. The Leeds case underlined the importance of one person being in overall control of documentation to ensure consistency of terminology and syntax, and also the standardization of spellings. To this end, David Fleming suggested that all decisions concerning documentation should be written down and conventions adhered to even in multi-disciplinary museums.

In-house computing facilities were the subject of Mark Suggitt's talk. In 1982 York Castle Museum decided to computerize its extensive collections on the advice of auditors. Like Leeds many of the records, where they existed, were in manuscript form and difficult to read. Using a terminal

attached to the City Treasurer's mainframe computer and a programme designed around the MDA Decorative Arts card, York developed a system which allowed for maximum flexibility in information retrieval whilst maintaining a degree of confidentiality and security. In operation now for almost three years, the system has proved to be a success, though it is not without its problems. The lack of additional terminals and a printer, and the lack of a permanent member of staff with sole responsibility for documenting the enormous backlog - in short, the lack of a proper financial budget for documentation, has restricted the speed of cataloguing the collection.

The final paper was given by David Eveleigh from Bristol. He described the manual card system which was operating at the Blaise Museum. A computer being unfeasible, the museum has built-up a manual system based upon the use of different coloured index cards (green for objects, blue for documents, yellow for photographs) filed in SHIC number order with supplementary information in folders filed in accession number order. The main advantage of this system is, of course, the small financial outlay; however, the one main disadvantage is the amount of effort needed to produce additional indexes.

The point of such a training seminar? As is so often the case, the real worth of the day was as much concerned with the discussion outside the seminar as any debate that took place within. The main conclusions which emerged from the seminar were that both museums themselves and their governing authorities should recognise the importance of realistic budgets for documentation; that computers are increasingly playing a major role in documentation and we should therefore familiarize ourselves with their operation; that the scale of the museum's collection influences the type of documentation system best suited to it; that one person should be ultimately responsible for an institution's documentation programme so that all work is co-ordinated and agreed conventions used. From listening and talking to other museum workers at the seminar it became clear that more formal training in documentation would be welcomed, more seminars like this one where people could exchange experiences and feel less isolated. Moreover, they wouldn't feel as if they were re-inventing the wheel each time a problem arose.

Nicky Ingram  
(Towner Art Gallery/Local History Museum)

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 UNDERTAKERS TO INDUSTRY?
 

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 INDUSTRIAL HISTORY IN MUSEUMS - PREVIEW
 

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Two recent ventures in the field of Industrial Museums provide the focus for this seminar, the aim of which is to examine Industrial Museums and technology and social history. Where do we overlap? How can we help each other?

Amlley Mills is an appropriate setting for the day. It has moved away from the "power halls" of isolated machinery to interpreting the industries of its region. There will be ample opportunity to see the museum and the site under development. Ron Fitzgerald, Keeper of the museum will describe the philosophy behind Amlley and the background to its development. Sara Craggs of Kelham Island, Sheffield will describe the background to this museum, placing it within the context of the Industrial Museum World.

Discussion should be interesting. How do the "technologists" view the "social history" approach? What is more important, the machinery or the workers? Do industrial museums celebrate Victorian capitalism or do they begin to explain our industrial decline?

November 28 (see Coming Events).

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee met on 12th May, 1986 at Nottingham. Seven members attended. Business concerning Training and other meetings and the Annual Study Week-end is covered elsewhere in this edition of the News. I report on three other items.

Firstly, the Society for the Study of Labour History is willing to make up the balance required for publication of papers from the joint SHCG/SSLH seminar on Labour History held on 18th October last year. This should appear in late summer.

Secondly, there are still plans afoot for a Manual of Social History Curatorship. Committee will inform the membership of any further developments at the AGM in Portsmouth.

Thirdly, Graeme Cruickshank has now completed a report on the export of social and local history items which is to be submitted to the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Work of Art. (See next article).

Your hard-travelling secretary has at last persuaded committee to come and visit Carlisle where the next meeting will be held on 21st July.

Sue Kirby  
Hon. Secretary.

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THE EXPORT OF SOCIAL AND LOCAL HISTORY. ITEMS: A REPORT FOR SUBMISSION TO THE REVIEWING COMMITTEE ON THE EXPORT OF WORKS OF ART.

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During discussion after a paper on Folk Art at the 1982 Annual Study Week-end it was suggested that the Group should press for a revision of the regulations concerning the export of social and local history items. As much of the material handled by the social history curator is neither of great antiquity nor of high financial value it is not subject to any form of export control. A general awareness that items were being lost and worry over the use of container - loading for bulk export was supplemented by the collection of a number of specific instances of losses reported by museums. Acting on behalf of committee, Graeme Cruickshank met with members of the Office of Arts and Libraries and the Secretary of the Reviewing Committee. In October 1983 he drew up a report which was accepted by SHCG committee the following month. Since that date he has been able to study the Waverley and the other reports forming the basis of the export controls system and to prepare a full submission for the Reviewing Committee. Unfortunately the situation has worsened as in 1985 the monetary limit regulating control of items for export has actually been raised from £8,000 to £16,000.

Graeme Cruickshank completed a final draft (somewhat later than planned because of his other commitments in March of this year. A summary of its recommendations follows:

1. That the Reviewing Committee considers changing its name, replacing "Works of Art, Etc" with "Items of Cultural Heritage".
2. That the Reviewing Committee gives greater consideration to items of local significance, especially with regard to softening the vigorous application of export control criteria.

The export control criteria are defined by the Waverley Report's Principles of Control (1950).

3. That the Reviewing Committee (building upon recommendation 2) considers - either, establishing 'local interest' as a fourth criterion;

or, interprets the first criterion in such a way as to give effective recognition to 'local interest' being one of the criteria.

4. That the Reviewing Committee expands its system of expert advisers so that each major subject discipline is adequately represented, and ensures that there is a properly-structured and wide-ranging network of sub-advisers capable of making truly authoritative pronouncements on all categories object destined for export.
5. The Committee should seek to establish a formal means of liaising with representatives of the trade, in order that such points may be made in a structured manner. Consideration should be given to the introduction of a section on the export manifest whereby background details of each item should appear, even briefly. It might even contain a column whereby the dealer would indicate whether or not they had contacted a relevant museum (in appropriate cases.)
6. The Committee is urged to recognise that the differential values pertaining to various categories or objects is so great as to render the single-limit export regulations virtually inoperable in certain cases, and therefore it is necessary to introduce different value-limits, at least for major class of object.
7. The Committee is urged to recognise the importance of a collection as a cohesive unit by introducing regulations governing the export of collection, particularly in relation to means of bulk exportation.

- (i) Is the object so closely associated with our history and national life that its departure would be a misfortune?
- (ii) Is the object of outstanding aesthetic importance?
- (iii) Is the object of outstanding significance for the study of some particular branch of art, learning or history?

This will be presented to the Reviewing Committee of the Exports of Works of Art. It will also go to the Museums Association Council for endorsement.

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INTO THE INTERIOR

MUSEUM APPROACHES TO DOMESTIC LIFE - PREVIEW

The domestic scene is one of the largest subjects covered by social history in museums. It has always been popular for display, able to elicit a response from visitors. In the past domestic life in museums did not get much further than the parlour or kitchen of the early 20th century. Times change, and the time is now ripe for a review of recent projects.

We will be looking at didactic displays, reconstructions and the result of research and recording. There are different ways to approach the subject which should get an airing, either in the papers or in discussion. We all have domestic material in our collections. It's time to see what's going on in the interior.

October, 29 (see Coming Events)

Minutes of AGM of SHCG held at the Mowbray Hotel, Sunderland,  
8.30 p.m. Fri 26 July 1985

1. Apologies

J. Leggett, Sue Kirby, Crispin Paine

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of 21 July 1984  
Were approved as a correct record with following amendments:  
Personal Overseas members £9.00

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

4 (ii) Export of social and local history items  
G. Cruickshank had written to the Committee on the Export of works of art (see S. Kirby's letter).  
Graham reported on a 3 hour meeting with the secretary of the Committee and officials of the Board of Trade. He outlined to SHCG Committee 5 areas in which existing legislation (Maverley Report) could be altered. Upper limit of £8,000 proposed to be raised to £20,000. Compromise is £16,000.

- His proposals and response of official body will be put together as an article for the Museums Journal in the future.  
Change of name proposed - Committee on export of Items of Cultural Heritage.

- Meeting thanked Graham for work and agreed to pursue line of enquiry.

Museums under threat

- Guildhall Museum Carlisle - Summer opening guaranteed.  
Whitehaven - exhibition gallery opened  
Colmans Museum - no change, closed.

- 2nd letter may help.
- Resolved that letter should go to Museums Association to take up the matter with Colmans.
- Wham report - had been distributed free to all SHCG members.

AOB

8 b) - Reduced rate for Unwaged £1 per day

5) Tax relief - formal application has been made to tax officers so that members may claim relief on subscriptions.

Survey of Social History

- Catherine Starkey added she had restricted her survey of Social History Museum Provision to the North West.

4. i) Chairpersons Report

- Copies of these were distributed.  
A letter from Stephen Kay of New Lanark, a Member of SHCG - was then read by the Chairperson in which Mr Kay took strong exception to the Chairpersons recent presentation for SHCG at the Museums Association Conference. Namely that it did not do service to SHCG to criticize the aims and objective of the group.

Stuart defended that M.A. Conference should be one area that we should not have to trumpet only our success.

Mike Day said that we should not sell ourselves short to Museum Directors as Conference was the only time that many of them would hear of SHCG.

Rex Blake commented that we must not sell ourselves short to institutional members who only see us at Conference.

- Others said that it was up to the Chairperson to present comments to M. Associations. D. James - Role of Chairperson to represent organisation not his own views.

Sue Underwood asked how often will we get the chance to present the aims and activities of SHCG. The response was that every 4 years the opportunity was planned to be offered by the M. Associations.

The chair was asked to elucidate on proposed Manual of Social History Curatorship. However no concrete proposals from C. Paine were yet available. A working party of Crispin Paine, John Rhodes and Gaynor Kavanagh was to meet shortly.

ii) Secretary's Report - circulated

Confirmed Portsmouth's desire to host next years Conference.

iii) Treasurer's Report - circulated

A query was raised on the cost of Journal which was higher than originally quoted for. Chair replied that surplus at bank had covered it.  
Problems in covering next journal anticipated.

Mem Sec: 160 Subs still not received 1985-86.

iv) Editor: Journal's Report - circulated

A query was raised regarding comment on committee's drift into politics as to division. It was noted that was not only paper to contain such comments. A hope expressed from the floor that next years committee would be of one mind.

v) Editor: News' Report - circulated

- Congratulations from the floor to both editors on the high standard of publication achieved.

vi) Report by the Training Seminar Organizer - circulated

The reasons for the cancellation of the Documentation seminar was asked. The reply was that the decision by the committee to cancel at the last minute was made in light of information they possessed at the time. In retrospect that information was incorrect and incomplete, but at the time no other decision could have been taken. The Documentation seminar would definitely be held and had been rescheduled for early 1986.

The Training Seminar Organizer also represented the group at the annual Specialist Group meeting. It was explained that this specialist group meeting was a replacement for the Professional Consultative Committee; and the specialist groups were trying to get the Museums Association to hold seminars of relevance to the various groups.

Concern was expressed that an annual meeting is most insufficient for specialist group representatives and bi-annual meetings were at least needed.

Views of Group

SHCG should be officially represented?  
Federation of Specialist Groups?  
Affiliation to Museum Association?  
Should we sponsor representation.

Proposal moved by  
C. Paine: seconded by  
J. Murray: that the matter should be remitted to Committee along with question of affiliation.

Membership Secretary Report

93 new members this year  
46 struck off for non-payment of subscriptions for two years  
345 - Members. 163 not paid up. At present 182 paid up members.  
Commended Membership Secretary for her work.

Curatorial Board of Studies

2 meetings this year  
One cancelled because of Museums Association looking at New Museum Education Executive Committee.

21 Candidates took Social History.  
76% pass rate. Better than any other group.

- 5. Increase in Subscription  
No increase proposed.

6. Election of Officers

John Shaw, Helen Clark, Stuart Davies, Sam Mullins, all retired from Committee.

Chairperson: Suella Postles  
prop Sue Kirkby

Journal Ed. D. Fleming - prop Stuart Hall  
News Ed Mark Suggett - prop Helen Clark

Ordinary Committee  
Catherine Starkey proposed by Mike Hall  
Karen Hull " " C. Paine.  
Olive Green " " D. Fleming  
Mike Day " " J. Murray  
John Williams Davies " " J. Shaw  
Lesley Colsell " " S. Postles  
Elected; John Williams  
Davies  
Lesley Colsell  
Mike Day  
Oliver Green

7. AOB

1. Proposer of vote of thanks to Rosie Crook and the other
2. Appointment of Auditors: Bob Rutland, Leicester Museum
3. Title of forthcoming conf: Museums and Armed Forces. Suggested by committee and Dan Chadwick at Portsmouth Museum.
4. Recommendation of Committee  
- to replace item 6 in the constitution.

Moved David Fleming  
Seconded Mark Suggett  
Amendment to Clause 6 of the Constitution

"they be entitled to receive copies of the News and Journal free of charge in the current subscription year, and advance notice of events organised by it. Other publications which the group may produce may or may not be distributed free of charge, at the discretion of the Committee".

5. Passed new con. The membership to be balloted in the new SHCG News.  
The outgoing officers and committee members were thanked by the meeting for their hard work over the last and previous years and wished the best of luck in their future endeavours.