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NOTES FROM THE LATITUDINARIAN UNDERWORLD

Subscribers to the theoretical journal WOMAN'S OWN will already be familiar with the Prime Ministerial proposition that there is no such thing as Society, that there are only individuals and their families. If there is no such thing as society, then we must assume it has no past. It follows then that there should be no such thing as "social history". Indeed, the historians and educationalists of the "New Right" are already falling over themselves in an unseemly rush to become pall-bearers to a history that admits peasants, factory workers, women and children, and other undesirable minorities into its sphere. The American Gertrude Himmelfarb, for instance, breathing sulphur in her denunciations of E.P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm and other recidivists, urges a return to the "proper" foundations of history. That's right, the politics and ideas of great men (and the occasional great woman). What most excites her scorn is "the kind of latitudinarianism that passes for principle in the profession today"; in other words, the suggestion that history should embrace such dubious topics as demography, social organisation or the development of popular attitudes. Joining the chorus are pressure groups such as the Centre for Policy Studies, which calls for a return to the teaching of chronological, 'value-free' history in schools. Their recently published squib, HISTORY IN PERIL - MAY PARENTS PRESERVE IT, argues that the past should be "regarded for its own sake, rather than a source of lessons or a prelude to our current affairs." In other words, history is something that is (safely) over and done with.

Of course "value-free" history is no such thing. Its motives are as firmly rooted in contemporary political interest as the frequent exhortations to readopt "Victorian Values". Ironically the Home Secretary asks what has happened to the "amazing social cohesion" which he believes co-existed with those very values. Perhaps he has not understood that we are all individuals now. Clearly he has not enquired too deeply into this alleged disappearance. Should we enlighten him? Many social history curators and others have been carefully collecting the very evidence he seeks. All it requires is a little latitudinarianism.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee met on February 9th 1988 in Nottingham at Brewhouse Yard Museum. Items discussed included the following:

1. OGEL Limits

The proposed new list of values for export licences was published in the last issue of the News. SHCG responded by welcoming the new differentiations but regretting that the limits still do not take account of the local or historical values of social history material. We recommended the broadening of the Advisors' Panel to include consultation with the local social history curator where necessary.

2. Social History Museums under Threat

Through the Specialist Groups Meeting, we have asked the MA to take the lead in the cases of threatened museums and to set up a structure whereby specialist groups can be drawn in as necessary.

3. Finances

The Group's finances are still very healthy. The proceedings of the Labour History in Museums seminar, published jointly with the Society for the Study of Labour History, will appear shortly.

4. Membership

Membership now stands at 304 paid up members. Arrears are gradually being received.

5. Training

The Training Working Party is putting together an exciting programme of seminars and meetings. Details to follow.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription time is here again! An invoice for 1988/9 membership is enclosed in this edition of S.H.C.G. News. Please pay promptly and make Judith Edgar's day.



**A PLACE TO STAY: SPRINGBURN HOUSING, 1780-1987
EXHIBITION REVIEW**

Springburn Museum is situated in North East Glasgow in what was once the largest locomotive manufacturing centre in Europe. The museum serves a community that has been threatened by the loss of its economic base and the extensive redevelopment of the area. Occupying the defunct reading room of Springburn Library space within the Museum is severely limited. The policy of the museum is to provide a programme of changing exhibitions rather than a permanent display, and around five are generated each year. This is a very ambitious programme for the curator Mark O'Neill and his staff. Around 1,000 visitors come to the museum each month, many on a regular basis, and the demand for change appears to be there. The exhibition programme also forms the basis for collecting objects and photos which is done in a thematic fashion.

As so much of the break up of the community in Springburn has been a result of the drastic redevelopment and resettlement of the residents into new homes, the topic of this exhibition is highly relevant to the sense Springburn people make of the way the community has changed.

The exhibition consists of panels of photos, text and oral history quotations and five cases of objects. It traces the story of housing in Springburn from the farms and country mansions, through the spate of 19th century tenement building (with their subsequent overcrowding and appalling living conditions), to state intervention and the schemes built under the various housing acts. Both private and public sector housing provision come under fire. Post-war corporation housing was marked by the demolition of streets of tenements and the removal of people into isolated tower blocks during the 1960s. The final note is more optimistic stating current council policy to refurbish rather than demolish houses and providing for a greater consultation of tenants.

The chronological pattern of the exhibition works well and the information is clearly and logically laid out. This exhibition is about housing in its widest sense: the influx of labour into the area to find work and their expectations of housing standards; the low wages, unemployment, poverty and drunkenness; the overcrowding, lack of ventilation, bad sanitation and resultant poor health of the residents; the way of life in the area and the way this has changed; the increase in housing provision for the elderly and the current work of the housing associations. There is even a panel on middle class housing to provide some balance.

The panels are clearly headlined and numbered. Each one contains a good mixture of black and white and colour photos. The text is informative but not too wordy with important points clearly emphasised in bold type so that an impact is made for visitors who do not wish to read all the text. Oral quotations come from interviews carried out by Springburn Oral History Project. These are mounted on blue and, with this colour coding, can be easily identified. They do tend to be rather lengthy and as many are placed low down on the panels they are difficult to read.

The panels describing the houses built under the different schemes work well, and are popular with visitors who can identify their houses on the enlarged sections of the map. Put in this context they can also see how their home fits in with the overall pattern of development in Springburn.

The five cases of objects relate to childrens toys and games, recreation and leisure, small domestic items and budgeting and saving. These objects are not interpreted and contain very few labels. Although this is a refreshing break from the panels, a general label may help here to relate the objects a little more easily.

At the end of the room a display of large domestic items is treated quite differently. A horizontal barrier carries the interpretation which consists of panels with object labels, illustrations and short oral quotes. This section of the exhibition is a delight to go through. The quotes make the objects come alive and give a vivid impression of the way people in Springburn lived. A mangle, sink and tub and modern washing machine are accompanied by reminiscences on meal times, favourite foods and household chores. There are also illustrations of appliances and furniture complete with retail prices from a local shop catalogue of 1936 - quite a gem.

Each quotation has the name and date of birth of the interviewee and in some cases one early and one recent photo of them. This emphasises that the quotation is from a real local person - an obvious point, but one which is not always appreciated. While I was there the wind up gramophone was demonstrated to a group of schoolchildren.

The last panel is called "The Good Old Days?" and asks questions about education, health, employment and housing such as:

"Do we remember the time we grew up as better?"

"Is education the way to a better life?"

"Do people have more say about living conditions now?"

Next to this is a panel entitled "What do you think?" where people can pin up their answers on paper which is provided. It doesn't work, partly because the panel asking the questions is too crowded, but also because visitors are not used to writing down opinions which may have been inspired by an exhibition - other than the usual "interesting" in a visitors book.

It is a good idea and with some refinement would be useful both in providing an indication of how successful the exhibition is in conveying ideas about social change, and in giving visitors an opportunity to make a contribution. The comments on the "What do you think?" panel were about how much they enjoyed the exhibition and what they thought of the council!

As a result of this exhibition the museums collections have been widened considerably as there are many objects which would not normally be associated with housing. The exhibition itself work on many levels and can be dipped into as well as followed in chronological sequence.

It succeeds in giving a well researched detailed account of housing development and a vivid impression of the way people lived in an industrial community which is enhanced by the contribution through oral testimonies from the people themselves.

The exhibition is on, I believe, until next summer and is definately worth a visit.

Helen Clark (Huntly House, Edinburgh).



REVIEW : WOMEN'S HISTORY

A day conference sponsored by the Historical Association, York 24 October 1987

This conference, sponsored by the Historical Association, was hosted by members of the History and Women's Studies Departments of York University. About 30 people attended, mostly from the region. The day fell into two rather uneasily related halves; the morning was spent considering the lives of Early Mediaeval and 16th Century Women, particularly those in religious orders; in the afternoon, the discussions covered womens' work during the Industrial Revolution and the two World Wars. It would probably be fair to say that the afternoon's lectures were of more general interest and perhaps this was to the benefit of the day as a whole, since those who came with an interest in one period left with an increased awareness of both.

One of the prevailing themes of the morning's lectures was the importance of the family in the Mediaeval and Early Modern period; family, not personal, considerations usually decided whether a woman was dedicated to a religious life or given in marriage. A woman might even be removed from her convent in order to marry, if family needs so dictated.

Another important theme was the difficulty in freeing ourselves of modern preconceptions when looking at the distant past. Dr. Pauline Stafford, of Huddersfield Polytechnic, dealt with both of these themes in her examination of the concept of a 'Golden Age' for women in the Early Middle Ages. She showed how the idea of a 'Golden Age' of individual liberty originated in the distaste of 17th century radicals for certain aspects of contemporary political and legal practice. These restrictions were identified with the 'Norman Yoke', imposed in 1066, and the 'Golden Age' was placed in the Anglo-Saxon period. This view was reinforced by pro-Germanic nationalism in the 19th century. The role of the convents, so prominent in the Early Middle Ages as a 'liberating' or 'enabling' factor in mediaeval women's lives, was further developed by late 19th century feminists seeking a model for female educational institutions.

All of these projections had a tenuous link with a complex reality. The legal status of women in the Early Middle Ages was equal to that of children, since adulthood was defined as the ability to bear arms. Women's rights to hold property were extremely limited (less than 10% of the landowners listed in the Domesday Book were women). Yet this situation was mitigated both by common practice, which ensured provision for women during marriage and widowhood, and by individual status. Rich and powerful princesses could enjoy many of the privileges of their male peers, and members of a powerful family were liable to better treatment under the law than the powerless. Until the 9th century, women who were able to gain entrance to the exclusively aristocratic and royal monastic houses were able to exercise real influence in the world. This, however, was gradually eroded by reforms which shifted the emphasis of the church from monasticism to the male hierarchy of priests. Even the autonomy gained through embracing an ascetic ideal was liable to turn against women, who were increasingly identified with the 'sinful flesh', one of the chief obstacles to religious salvation.

Professor Claire Cross, of York University, followed with an examination of Yorkshire convents in the years leading up to the Dissolution in 1539. One of the main surprises of her talk was the relative poverty of most of these establishments; 20 out of 25 of them had an

income of less than £50 in 1536. The houses were also very small, with an average of only ten sisters. By contrast, their inhabitants came from comfortable or wealthy families, who would continue to support their relatives by gifts of money and goods. The contrast between a wealthy family background and an impoverished convent was probably responsible for many of the breaches of discipline remarked on by Ecclesiastical reformers in the 1530s; poor convents were unable to attract suitably qualified abbesses. At a deeper level, the continuing interest of families in their offspring created divisions within communities and encouraged nuns to leave their convents in search of worldly goals such as inheritances or even marriage!

Some measure of family support seems to have been assumed by the Commissioners at the final Dissolution in 1539. Ordinary nuns were given a pension of £1 a year, rising to £6 for abbesses - this when £5 was seen as a low salary for a cleric! A few nuns may have lived in poverty after 1539, but most lived comfortably on money supplied by their families. Of those who chose to marry, some may have done so from economic necessity, but not many. The majority of the married former nuns who had been forcibly divorced by Mary Tudor chose to return to their husbands on the accession of Elizabeth.

Taken together, the morning's talks admirably demonstrated the dangers of misguided assumptions in relation to the past. They showed how apparently separate modes of existence, such as monastic communities and secular life, can be shaped by the same forces of family interest and economics; while seemingly absolute rulings, such as those of the civil law, can have very different applications.

The afternoon's lectures covered an even greater variety of experience than the morning's, though these were united by a common theme of 'Women's Work' and the ways in which this is defined by society. Dr. Jane Rendall, of the Women's Studies Department of York University, gave a survey of women's work in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and the ways in which it was affected by the Industrial Revolution. Like Dr. Stafford, she began by outlining the reasons why this area has proved so fruitful for later historical research. Depending on the writer's perspective, the Industrial Revolution can be seen either as oppressive, taking women away from their 'separate spheres' (particularly in agriculture and textiles) to make them 'slave to a machine'; or it can be seen as the bringer of greater leisure and financial autonomy through its separation of home and the workplace. The achievements of past women workers have also been cited as reasons to remove later restrictions such as the marriage bar. More recently, we have been able to revise our views on the nature of industrialisation by tracing its progress in the 'traditional societies' of the Third World.

Of course the Industrial Revolution bore very heavily on men in traditional trades, such as the textile industry. But where their hand skills were devalued, it was assumed that some of them at least would be able to gain machine skills in compensation. Women, by contrast, seem to have been assumed to be lacking in such skills and needing male supervision and 'protection'. Where women did take over 'male' skills, such as weaving, this was usually because the work had become semi-automated. Some female hand skills, such as spinning, passed to men during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, and then back to women and girls once the work had been 'de-skilled' by the introduction of more advanced technology.

Perhaps the most destructive aspect of industrialisation for women was the codification of working life brought in with factory-based working methods. Set rates of pay usually allowed women around a third to a half of men's wages, while long working hours increased the difficulties of working mothers. To these internal restrictions were added an increasing number of regulations imposed by central government from the 1840s onwards. The Royal Commissions on 'heavy' industries such as mining and agriculture found that conditions in these industries affected the physical and (more importantly) the moral welfare of working women. Their solution was not to improve conditions, but to remove the women workers.

The same kind of double-thinking affected employers such as the Courtaulds, who offered 'improving' facilities such as childcare, lodgings, and housewifery classes for their six hundred women weavers. The response was unenthusiastic, probably because the working women recognised that the middle-class view of women's needs held by their employers was one which held little relevance for them. By contrast, the Courtauld-sponsored Band of Hope and Y.M.C.A., which appealed mainly to the male overseers and foremen, were well attended. (These findings were taken from Judy Loan's research on the Courtauld workforce).

One reason why domestic service was recommended as the most suitable occupation for working-class girls in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was that it fitted the middle-class idea of what was 'suitable' work for women. The idea of 'innate skills' in this sphere was all too often exploded by the arrival of a fourteen year old maid with no knowledge of polished floors, fish-knives, and other necessities of middle-class existence. Unfortunately the notion of women as particularly suited to repetitious assembly-line work has been more tenacious, and may even have been hardened by the experiences of two World Wars.

The ambivalence of women's attitudes to war-work was highlighted by Dr. Penny Summerfield of Lancaster University. Her lecture was based on a recently published book, written by herself and Gail Braybon, each researching one of the

two wars (Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars, Pandora, £6.95). Previous commentators have tended to emphasise the benefits gained by women's participation in war work, such as the award of the vote in 1918, and the recognition of equal pay after 1945. However, by interviewing the workers themselves Summerfield and Braybon give a much more ambivalent picture of the emotional and financial constraints which sometimes encouraged women into war work and sometimes resulted from it.

The number of women involved in this work was vast: 1.5 million in each war. Many of these workers were moved sideways from non-essential industries such as retailing, or were older women returning to work after a period at home. Where the two wars differed was in the attitude to 'women in uniform', who during World War II, reached about 500,000, with the same number in Civil Defence, about ten times the World War I total. Class divisions between the types of work preferred were common to both wars, with upper class women taking jobs as V.A.D.S. and policewomen during World War I and joining the 'glamorous' W.A.A.F. and W.R.N.S. during World War II.

The differences between the status of women workers in the two wars is demonstrated by their treatment once peace was established. By the end of 1918, 500,000 women had been 'released' from war work, and found that unemployment benefit would be stopped if they refused 'traditional' employment. The same ethos of providing jobs for 'returning heroes' determined the treatment of women in manual trades in 1946. Women in white-collar jobs such as local government and teaching were more able to keep their jobs, though they might be expected to train their new (male) supervisors!

The pressures placed on married women were much greater during World War II than previously, both because of shortages and because their married status was seen as exempting them from war work. The marriage bar was removed from civil service posts in 1944 and part-time work was introduced to attract women with families. However, no concessions were allowed for married women either in respect of shiftwork (women might be on 'nights' while their families were on 'days') or help with childcare. This lack of support may have contributed to the apparent breakdown of family life during the War, with divorces and illegitimate births both rising. In fact, these may be partly accounted for by the new circumstances of the war itself, with up to 1.5 million foreign soldiers stationed in Britain with time to kill!

The financial independence brought by war work was welcomed by most women, even though there was resentment at the low rates of pay. Sometimes women were able to obtain a pay parity, as at Hillington Steel plant, where the male workers supported the women's claim for fear of being ousted by their 'cheap labour'. Employers in many industries tried to tempt women to say on as part-timers after 1945, pointing out the financial benefits both to the workers themselves and for the economy. Many women took up the offer, although the tasks they were given were often those refused by full-timers. As much as the money, many women wanted to maintain the independence they had known during the war. There was a feeling, especially among younger women, that after 1945 relations between men and women would be conducted on a basis of equality. Even if this hope has not been fully realised, the knowledge that 'it ain't necessarily so' is perhaps one of the greatest lessons we can learn from distant or recent history.

Clare Rose (York Castle Museum)



You are needed in the fields!

APPLY TO NEAREST EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE FOR LEAFLET & ENROLMENT FORM
OR WRITE DIRECT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR SCOTLAND
15 GROSVENOR STREET, EDINBURGH.

**REVIEW : WALLPAPER HISTORY SOCIETY
INAUGURAL CONFERENCE**
Victoria and Albert Museum, 12 March 1988

This first gathering of the Wallpaper History Society attracted almost 200 delegates from a wide range of disciplines, and approached its central subject from almost equally diverse points of view.

I was not present for the first lecture so cannot comment on Katie Scott's paper on the manufacture and use of wallpapers in 18th century France. The second speaker was Anthony Wells-Cole, Keeper, Temple Newsam House, Leeds, who spoke on the historic paperhanging in the house. He gave a lively and well illustrated introduction to the varied papers extant within the house, indicating the origins of many of the designs from damask and chintz patterns. He also underlined the co-existence in the house of a range of designs from different periods. This rarified atmosphere was interrupted all too briefly by slides of a number of papers from the maid's closets, and the Owen Jones wallpaper found in the Butler's Pantry.

The walls of one room at Temple Newsam are decked out in hand painted Chinese wallpaper, and the conservation of this paper formed the subject of the lecture by conservator Allyson McDermott. The prospect was a daunting one. Beneath the paper lay three lining papers, a second wallpaper (a French printed paper), more lining paper and a canvas ground. There followed an account of the processes involved, the washing of the paper, and its rehangings. Among the sources of damage to the Chinese paper was corrosion caused by the copper based 'gold' printed design on the French wallpaper, and in spite of its damaged state this paper was also conserved in its entirety. The most urgent question this whole exercise brought to mind, and the first question asked when opportunity arose, was how much had it all cost; the answer, about £50,000.

The morning concluded with Anthony Little, Co-Director, Osborne & Little plc giving a very personal account of 'Wallpapers Today'. He outlined the development of his own firm from small beginnings 20 years ago producing hand screen-printed papers. Along the way he summarised the main methods now used to produce wallpapers, went on to the importance of design only as a vehicle for colour, the potential use of computers in design, and the likely increase in simple colour texture papers. Unfortunately he undertook this survey without one single visual illustration which substantially undermined his ability to communicate his obvious knowledge and understanding of his subject.

The afternoon began with a paper by Elisabet Hidemark, Curator, Department of Household Furniture & Furnishing, Nordiska Museet, Stockholm. She spoke in considerable detail of the Sub Rosa Collection from Stockholm. She explained how English wallpapers had been sold over a period of four years 1892 - 1895, from one particular shop. Sales were limited, and while papers by Walter Crane, Voysey, and Liberty were all available it was the cheaper unnamed papers that were most popular, even with the more wealthy customers. How influential these papers were is unclear. Unlike the previous paper illustrations were many. Of particular interest were samples shown from a catalogue of Thomas Wardle of Leek, Staffordshire.

Joanna Banham, Archivist, Arthur Sanderson & Sons Ltd. gave the concluding paper on 'Wallpapers Between the Wars'. This proved to be the most useful informative session of the day. We were provided with a lively summary of the major swings of taste in commercially produced wallpapers of the period. It left me with a vivid and coherent impression of the changing

styles, and of the continuance of the more traditional styles with which they co-existed. From the post war doldrums via traditional styles juxtaposed with wilder flights of fancy of the same date, to the developing variety of applied borders onto plainer papers, and the expansion of wallpaper firms into paint and fabric production in the '30's, with a brief diversion into natural forms on the one hand and stylised geometrics on the other, we finally concluded with an illustration of a World War Two blackout paper for windows printed with a chintz pattern.

The gathering inspired no profound conclusions but if the society maintains its original intention of remaining as broadly based as possible it should prove a most useful source of contacts and information.

Rachel Iliffe (Ironbridge Gorge Museum)



TRAINING WORKING PARTY

The Training Working Party met at Brewhouse Yard, Nottingham, on 11 March 1988. The problems of training, specifically diploma training, in relation to S.H.C.G. were discussed. It was agreed that the group had a continuing and important role in providing social history training. Seminar provision should be spread across the country to enable the widest participation. Seminars should also be kept as cheap as possible.

Ideas for future seminars were discussed and a programme was drawn up for the period up to March 1990. Topics proposed for training seminars included ceramics, metals, ephemera, shoes and leather, wood and plastics. An ambitious programme for 1989, with a seminar almost every month, was seen as one of S.H.C.G.'s major contributions to 1989 Museums Year. S.H.C.G. should be seen as a very active and responsive specialist group. A special 1989 seminar leaflet would be produced for distribution in late 1988.

Any suggestions for future seminars and feedback about training needs would be welcomed. Please contact Peter Jenkinson, Seminar Organiser.

FAST PAST? : THE HERITAGE BUSINESS

BBC TV UP NORTH 16th March 1988

This recent television programme was presented by Robert Hewison (author of "The Heritage Industry") as part of the series "Up North", a set of documentaries looking at life beyond the Trent. Our intrepid reporter was investigating now the heritage industry is shaping up in Northern England. In doing so he presented us with a Northern version of his thesis that so much of "heritage" is bogus history, in this case made horribly ironic by the fact that it is celebrating a vanished way of life in an attempt to revive a grim present. Cue images of the wastelands of Consett and the idle dock cranes of South Tyneside.

History is about change says Hewison. But the past is really a good day out. So off we went, on a roller-coaster (Oops! a vintage steam train?) ride through a number of attractions, HMS Cavalier, Wigan Pier, Beamish, Camelot Theme Park and Catherine Cookson Country.

In all these thumb nail portraits the camera and commentary combined in an attempt to illustrate how successful all of this was, attracting large scale investment but little real employment and all at the expense of the real history of the areas. Those selected could all be accused of this, by choosing to re-create, they are possibly more selective than a traditional exhibition. The problem is that Hewison only looked at large scale ventures and ignored the work that many museums do in the fields of collection research, oral history recording, education and outreach. (Beamish and Wigan do most of these).

I felt these to be deliberate omissions, to have included them would have complicated the argument. This was annoying, as nobody could call the Camelot Theme Park (fairy tale castles and all) and Beamish (a bona fide museum) the same thing.

The Wigan Pier area is still there, which is more than can be said for most of "Catherine Cookson Country", the creation of something out of almost nothing. You have seen the tourist attraction of the future - and its a stainless steel signboard!

You just can't tar everyone with the same brush, but you can detect how some new projects are becoming more processed, more digestible. Are we on course for the production of "Fast Past"? "Museums" for the McDonalds generation, go in, pay, eat it up and get out in the acceptable throughput time. If we are, it's not just in the North. You can use the past to revive regional pride, but you can use it for anything you want.

But is it heritage? It must be, as one of the programme's commentators, Professor Peter Fowler of Newcastle University noted, "The Heritage is that which we are prepared to spend money on". If only that were true.

Mark Suggitt
(Yorkshire & Humberside Museums Council)

BLACKLISTED BUILDINGS?

The first 18 post-war buildings to be listed by Department of the Environment include the T.U.C. Headquarters in West London and Stockwell Bus Garage. Both have been given Grade 11* status, which means that they cannot be demolished or altered. Grade 1 status, which signifies exceptional interest or value, has only been given to two buildings, Coventry Cathedral and the Royal Festival Hall. A list of 50 buildings built between 1939 and 1958 had been submitted by English Heritage. It is believed that this was severely pruned partly as a result of Mr Nicholas Ridley's antipathy to 'conservation'. According to his junior Lord Caithness, the quality of much post-war architecture is still the subject of fierce controversy, making it too early to judge some buildings.

The following buildings were also listed: Grade 11* status : St Paul's Church, Bow Common, London Grade 11 status (buildings of 'special interest') : a detached house built by Peter Moro, 20 Blackheath Park, Greenwich; 15-19 Aubrey Walk, Kensington; The Pediment, Aynho, Northants; 1 Dean Trench St., London; St. Columba's Church, Kensington; Exeter University Chapel; St. John's Church, Newbury, Berks; Time-Life Building, New Bond St., London; Burleigh Primary School, Cheshunt, Herts; Hallfield Primary School, Paddington; Cripps Hall of Residence, Nottingham University; the Runcorn-Widnes Bridge, Cheshire; and Three Standing Figures by Henry Moore, Battersea Park.



QUIZ

Who, reviewing which book in which newspaper, described which museum in these terms: "a world heritage site where authentically dressed young MSC slaves bring history to life before your very eyes."

Answers on a postcard to no, second thoughts, don't bother.

GEORGE EWART EVANS 1909-1988

An exhibition of the work of this well known writer and historian had been planned in South Wales for some time before his death in January 1988. George supported the idea and his family are keen for it to go ahead as a tribute to his life. The exhibition will be toured by the Council of Museums in Wales.

It will consist of extracts from his books, plus photographs and objects that illustrate his work. There will hopefully be a cassette to accompany the exhibition with George and some of the people he interviewed in his pioneering work as an oral historian. The exhibition will be bi-lingual English and Welsh, although the latter can be removed for touring. There will be emphasis on some of the lesser known aspects of his work, but an opportunity is also given for local museums to use the rural material to interpret their agricultural collections.

"George Ewart Evans" opens at Cyfarthfa Castle Museum, Merthyr Tydfil (the nearest museum to his birthplace at Abercynon) in April 1989.

It will be available for hire from July 1989, for details contact Paul O'Brien, Exhibitions Officer, Council of Museums in Wales, 32 Park Place, Cardiff, CF1 3BA Tel. 0222 25432.

A commemorative study day is planned at Cyfarthfa Castle Museum on Saturday 1 April 1989; speakers booked so far are Alun Howkins and Hwyl Francis. For details contact Nick Mansfield, Cyfarthfa Castle Museum, Merthyr Tydfil Mid Glamorgan, CF47 8RE Tel. 0685 723112.

THE LIGHTOWLER COLLECTION

Recently Leeds City Museum acquired a collection of over four hundred examples of advertising and packaging material. The group is of considerable interest, since it was all produced in the Hunslet Printing Sheds of Charles Lightowler between 1891 and 1975. A former employee, Mr. Bernard Barber, had carefully built up the collection over many years, each piece of the chromo-lithographed offset-printed tinplate being in 'as new' condition since it had neither left the factory nor been put to practical use.

The first part of the collection shows the processes of manufacture - the Bavarian litho stones still with their original artwork, and the aluminium sheets which took their place; the wood engravings, inking rollers, and sets of colour proofs. Then there are the uncut sheets of tin, each bearing units of sides or lids for a variety of containers, all printed in anything up to ten superimposed colours.

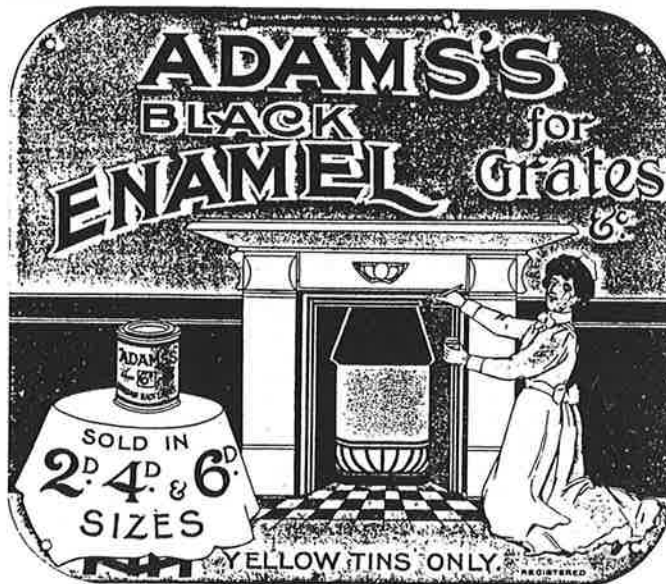
As to the products, the most impressive are large advertisements, mainly for the First World War period. Superficially similar to enamels, they were not fully weatherproof, and were largely intended for shop window or counter display. Subjects range from products of the County Chemical Company, beautifully printed and embossed to advertisements for flour, for bread and for whisky, all featuring the same lady and the same artwork, only the lettering and the content of her tray being changed as necessary.

The bulk of the collection is of cylindrical or rectangular tin containers for all manner of products; sweets, household supplies, medication, shaving soap, tobacco etc., all having hinged or press-on lids rather than the sealed tops of canned foods. The majority of these are pre-war, many dating from the earliest years of the factory around the turn of the century.

A number of archival specimens have also been acquired, such as the inventories of plant at the works, photographs of Lightowler and his relations, the tin stock book, pricing calculations, and the text and exercise books used by Bernard Barber himself, when he was being trained as a tin printer at the Leeds Technical College. This section also includes two remarkable volumes into which were pasted proofs taken from each of their lithographic stones between 1899 and 1901 (Vol. I) and 1909-1911 (Vol. 2). Most of these are for the printed paper labels which were pasted around the sides of tin cans.

A full catalogue of the collection has now been compiled and an index is in preparation. It is then intended to reproduce a limited number of bound catalogues by means of photocopying, these then being available at almost cost price to any museum or individual who would find them useful. It should be stressed that although the tins were made in Leeds, they were ordered by hundreds of companies operating both in this country and beyond - anywhere from Ramsbottom to Rangoon.

Although a small part of the collection will be shown at the City Museum later this year, it is hoped that it will form a major touring exhibition organised jointly with the Yorkshire & Humberside Museums Council in a couple of years' time.



LABOUR HISTORY AND MUSEUMS

The papers from this joint SHCG/SSLH seminar have now been published, priced £1.50. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Society for the Study of Labour History' and sent to the Publication and Sales Section, The Co-Operative Union, Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester M60 0AS.

SOCIETIES SUPPLEMENT

Many SHCG members also belong to other groups and societies with similar areas of interest. We asked a number of these societies to provide a summary of their aims and activities. We hope that this will encourage increased participation in other societies by members of SHCG, as well as facilitating the dissemination of information and ideas.

THE SOCIETY FOR FOLK LIFE STUDIES

Preparing a description of the Society for Folk Life Studies for the Social History Curator's Group is no easy matter, since in many ways their aims are so similar, and yet their approach is so different. That this situation exists at all, and that the Group should require details of the Society, is a particularly strange phenomenon. When I formed the Group on the suggestion of Geraint Jenkins in 1974, 'to serve as a channel for the exchange of information and ideas, publishing information sheets, bibliographies, recording forms, etc., and by arranging conferences, courses and seminars on relevant topics', virtually the entire membership was drawn from the Society. This close relationship only broke down in the early 1980s, when new members of the Group decided to adopt a much more politically orientated stance both with regard to its activities within the profession and to its concept of social history/British ethnography. Expressed in its most extreme form only Marxists could now claim to be social historians - anathema to those who choose to record and interpret society in a disinterested manner. (See Stuart Davies, Mus. J. Dec. '85). Since that time most curators have been active in either the Group or the Society, quite a number belonging to both in order to enjoy the benefits of the different conferences and publications etc.

In simple terms, the Society for Folk Life Studies is the major society devoted to the ethnological study of Britain and Ireland, a position it has maintained from its formation in 1961. Its founding members included scholars and curators such as Iorwerth Peate, Caomhin O'Danachair, and Sandy Fenton who were all well-versed in the European tradition of folk-life studies, and recognised members of the European academic community. Others ranged from leading figures in their particular fields; George Ewart Evans, Ann Buck, Frank Atkinson, Geraint Jenkins, etc., to farmer's wives, doctors or textile men, who all shared and contributed to their common interest in the traditional and changing ways of life within these islands. Since that time the Society has continued to develop, now having over six hundred members, some living as far away as Japan, Turkey and China.

The two main activities of the Society are its annual conference and its publication, 'Folk Life'. The conference takes place in late September each year, the location following a rotation from England to Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Unlike most other academic bodies, it is good to find that the English do not predominate. Instead, there is a fairly equal representation from each of these countries, thus enabling the greatest breadth of experience and knowledge to accrue into lecture topics and discussions. The social life of the Society is similarly enriched both in the informal dialogues which take place at conference, and more particularly in the ceilidhs where songs, stories and recitations proceed long into the night. To make members' journeys worthwhile, the conference assembles on

a Thursday evening at a convenient hotel or hall of residence, and spends the following three full days in lectures following particular themes and in visits to local buildings, workplaces and museums. Over the past few years, for example, members have descended coal mines in Durham, gone to sea in pilot cutters off Anglesey, or toured china-clay works in Cornwall. Further local colour is experienced by evenings of traditional music and dance; Welsh brass bands and penillion, Northumbrian pipers, Yorkshire longsword dancers etc., and by trying local foods - Cornish pasties baked and served in by a Cornish W.I., stotties, oatcakes and local cheeses at Beamish, or prolonged and highly educational whisky tasting in Kingussie. Undoubtedly the conferences are extremely enjoyable experiences, but this enhances, rather than diminishes their academic value. The quality of the papers is usually quite high, the subjects frequently broadening one's outlook, as accounts of various practices or studies enable the knowledge of your own area to be set into a broader context. To this end, a visiting lecturer from Europe or America is organised whenever possible. Just as important is the opportunity to discuss your ideas with some of the most experienced ethnographers extant. Along with many others, I have found conversations with scholars such as Caomhin O'Danachair (trained in Germany before the war, followed by long periods in Scandinavia and a lifetime of fieldwork and academic activity in Ireland) truly inspirational, giving a depth of knowledge and understanding inconceivable to most unlearned, self-taught and self-opiniated curators.

As for the journal, it appears every summer in the form of a soft-bound volume of some hundred pages carrying perhaps eight or nine articles either on particular folk-life themes, or on the academic and theoretical aspects of the subject. Most papers published to date have been concerned with traditional ways of life, often within a rural setting, but this reflects the nature of the manuscripts submitted, rather than the editorial policy of the Society.

Over the past twenty years numerous specialist groups, ranging from Post-Medieval Archaeology to Furniture History, Vernacular Architecture, and SHCG, have been formed to study aspects of human life which had formerly been covered by the Society for Folk Life Studies. Even so, the Society still has a vital role to play since, by maintaining its ethnographic approach to people 'their customs, habits and differences', it can put these specialised interests into their widest context, leading to a seminal understanding of their significance in human terms.

Peter Brears (Leeds City Museum)



THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF LABOUR HISTORY

The Society for the Study of Labour History was formed in 1960 by a group of historians, including Asa Briggs, J.F.C. Harrison, Eric Hobsbawm, Royden Harrison and Sidney Pollard. The last two named became the first editors of the Society's Bulletin, and between them clocked up many years of service. Earlier editions of the Bulletin, which was published twice a year, took a 'tool of the trade' approach and largely consisted of bibliographies, reviews, notes and queries and conference reports. These issues, reproduced from typescript, were some 40-50 pages in length. Since 1986 three issues of the Bulletin have been published each year. One is entirely bibliographical - an annual list of publications relating to British labour history, together with details of recently-awarded theses and new archival deposits. The other two parts include material under a wide range of headings, some in keeping with the Bulletin's 'tool of the trade' function, the rest similar to the scholarly essays found in other historical journals. Typically, each year's Bulletins now consist of over two hundred pages.

The objects of the Society, in the words of its constitution, 'are to educate the public in the field of Labour History and to safeguard the preservation of labour archives'. Though the Bulletin is our principal means of communication, the Society also organises a twice-yearly conference. Most conferences have taken place on Saturdays in London, but several have been held in other parts of the country. In the course of organising over fifty conferences, the Society has covered a wide range of historical subjects. It would probably be true to say that the topics considered at conferences (reports of which can be found in the Bulletin) indicate a trend away from study of just the institutions and organisations of the Labour Party and the trade union movement to a treatment of such themes as working-class culture and consciousness. Plans are now being made for the Autumn conference, to be held at Birbeck College, London, on Saturday 26 November, on the theme "Sexual Division of Labour in the Family and at the Workplace".

Despite the areas of its interest, the Society is non-political. Although many of the founders, and those currently holding membership, have been involved in labour movement activities, the Society is open to all with an interest in labour history and has never identified or been associated with any part of the political spectrum. Its charitable status, and recognition by the Inland Revenue as a learned society, confirm this independent standing.

Such considerations, have not, however, prevented the Society from campaigning vigorously on a number of issues. Probably the most consistently fought of these has been directed at reform of the restrictions on access to government and other official records. In evidence to the Wilson Committee on Public Records and in numerous editorials attention has been drawn to the inconsistencies - and, indeed, the idiocies - arising from current access policies. The Society has also been active in trying to ensure that the records of the labour movement are properly safeguarded. Our Archives Sub-Committee takes an especial interest in such matters and has issued a leaflet, "Keeping your Records" (aimed primarily at trade union and Labour Party secretaries not professional archivists).

The committee concerned with archives includes a museums' representative (currently Nick Mansfield), a reflection of the Society's increased interest in this aspect of labour

history in the last few years. In October 1985 a seminar on "Labour History in Museums" was held jointly with the Social History Curators' Group; the papers arising from it are scheduled for publication this year. The Bulletin has also published brief reports on Museums - the Manchester Jewish Museum and the Merseyside Museum of Labour History, in vol.51, No.3 - and plans to include more: the editors would welcome proposals for such short articles.

Currently, membership of the Society is approaching 900, of whom some two-thirds are in the UK. Individual members tend to predominate slightly in this country; overseas, institutional membership is in the majority. The annual subscription, for both individuals and institutions in the UK, is £11 (£10 for payment by bankers' order). For further details please contact David Martin, Hon. Secretary, Society for the Study of Labour History, Department of Economic & Social History, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, S10 2TN.

THE PLASTICS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Plastics Historical Society, believed to be the first of its kind in the world, was founded in London on 4th February 1987. That Britain should be the first with such an organisation was entirely appropriate in that the world's first plastic, PARKESINE, was shown at the Great International Exhibition in London in 1862 by its inventor, Alexander Parkes of Birmingham.

The Plastics Historical Society exists to promote the study, preservation and sharing of information on all historical aspects of plastics and to encourage the recording of any current developments adjudged to be of value to future generations.

The Society acts as an information centre for the growing number of private collectors of early plastics artefacts. It has also begun a collection of early films and documents associated with the industry and a start has been made to record on audio-cassette the memories of the pioneers of the industry. A long-term project is to work for a National Museum of Plastics.

The PHS is an independent society affiliated to the Plastics and Rubber Institute of London which itself was formed in 1921 and has an international membership of 11,000. It is the authoritative polymer materials and engineering body in the U.K. and has the world's finest collection of Parkesine objects.

Membership is open to individuals and groups in both U.K. and overseas. From 1 May 1988, the membership fee will be £5 p.a. Application for membership should be made to: The Plastics Historical Society, c/o P.R.I., 11 Hobart Place, London, SW1 0HL.

Membership currently stands at nearly 500 and includes people from industry, education, research, museum, auction houses and collectors. Activities have included lectures on early plastics by some of the pioneers of the 1920's and 1930's; a full-day symposium on early plastics at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum; a major exhibit at the 1987 Interplas Exhibition at Birmingham and a collectors evening last December. Currently, work is going on to establish a high level organisation to tackle the problems of conservation of early plastics. The next meeting, on 26 April 1988, will be at the Royal College of Art in London when a distinguished designer will be discussing some of the 'classic' plastics artefacts of recent decades.

THE FOLKLORE SOCIETY

The Folklore Society was founded 110 years ago by a group of distinguished writers and anthropologists - Andrew Lang, George Lawrence Gomme, Alfred Nutt, Edwin Hartland, Edward Clodd and William Clouston. However, the word 'folklore' is said to have been coined in 1846 by William Thoms who later founded the Notes and Queries series in 1849.

Before then collections and essays on customs and superstitions had been published, notably Henry Bourne's The Antiquities of the Common People (1725); John Brand's Observations on Popular Antiquities (1777), (these two were amalgamated and expanded by Sir Henry Ellis in 1813), Joseph Strutt's Sports and Pastimes of the People of England (1801) and William Hone's Every Day Book (1825-27).

It was with the founding of the Folklore Society that a more objective, systematic and academic approach was brought to folklore studies. The Society was founded with the object of promoting research into and the recording of folklore in all parts of the world, and to make the results of such studies available to all. To this end the society maintains a library (housed, with its office, in the D.M.S. Watson Library of University College, London), issues a twice yearly journal, FOLKLORE, which will be in its 100th year of publication in 1989, and publishes monographs in the Society's own Mistletoe Book series.

For many years the Folklore Society promoted a series of Wednesday evening lectures at University College, London. Following a survey of member's views, these have now been discontinued in favour of out-of-London seminars and conferences. The first such one-day meeting was held at The Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, Suffolk in 1985.

Other Society activities include conducting nation-wide surveys such as the Unlucky Plant Survey and the Folklore of Colour Survey; the results of the former have been published in the Mistletoe Series, (price £4.95), and the response to the second is so vast that the co-ordinator is still trying to arrange the results into a presentable form!

Members of the Society are kept informed about its activities through the twice yearly F.L.S. News which also acts as a means of communication between members with an active Notes and Queries section.

Since 1981 the Society has promoted a lecture each November in memory of the late Katharine Briggs, an eminent British folklore scholar whose mammoth four-volume work The Dictionary of British Folktales is still widely acclaimed and has recently been re-issued by the publishers. The lecturers are chosen from international scholars alternating each year between a lecturer from Britain and abroad. The 1987 lecturer was Dr. Rayna Green from the Smithsonian Institute. It is hoped that this year's lecturer will be the historian E.P. Thompson presenting his research into Rough Music. The 1988 Katharine Briggs Lecture will be on 8th November at University College, London.

In 1982 the first Katharine Briggs Folklore Award was presented. This is an annual book prize for a work of scholarship in the field of folklore studies (interpreted very widely) having its first original and initial publication in the United Kingdom between 1st June and 31st May. The award is presented at a reception following the Katharine Briggs Lecture.

Last September the first specialist group within the Folklore Society was launched, the Children's Folklore Group. The launch was at one-day conference in London; the papers from this meeting are now being edited for publication. Meanwhile, members of the group are kept informed via a newsletter. The next group conference will be on Saturday 24th September 1988.

Membership of the Folklore Society is open to all by application to the Hon. Secretary, Folklore Society, c/o University College, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BJ, (telephone 01-387-5894). The subscription is £15 per year (membership of the Children's Folklore Group is £5 to non-F.L.S. members; £3 to members). Members not only receive the journal and newsletter but are also eligible to apply for membership of the University College Library and are able to borrow books from the Society's Library.

THE TEXTILE SOCIETY

For the study of textile art, design and history

The Textile Society is a recognised charitable organisation formed by people from different walks of life who have a common interest in either working with textiles or investigating the historical background and development of textiles both in Britain and abroad. The Society seeks to cover the whole spectrum of textile-related subjects, providing an important medium of communication between scholars, educationalists, practitioners and collectors.

The Society organises frequent visits to museums, private collections and centres of manufacture and design. Study days and conferences on textile-related topics are held at regular intervals. The Society also offers an annually updated list of lecturers qualified to speak on textile subjects.

The Society's magazine, which appears twice a year, includes informative articles concerned with various aspects of textile study, together with book reviews, exhibition notes and topical comment on current textile manufacture.

For further information, contact Freda Chapman, Bryony, Gasden Lane, Witley, Godalming, Surrey, GU8 5RJ.

THE DESIGN HISTORY SOCIETY

The Design History Society was founded in 1977 to promote the serious study of the subject and to provide a new forum for the communication of interests and research.

Members can now be found as far away as North America and Australasia. Talks, visits, and conferences are held, and the Society publishes a quarterly Newsletter, filled with news, reviews, and details of future events, keeping the membership informed and up to date. Currently, the Society is focussing upon the Spring 1988 launch of the Journal of Design History, to be published by the Oxford University Press. This will be the leading international journal in its field, reflecting the recent rapid expansion of design history studies, and appealing to all those who recognise the vital cultural significance and economic importance of design.

New members are always welcomed, particularly students, and are actively encouraged to contribute to publications and events.

For further information, contact the Secretary, Keith Bartlett, School of Business, Cultural, and Historical Studies, Bournemouth and Poole College of Art and Design, Wallisdown Road, Poole, Dorset, BH12 5HH.

THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Membership of The Historical Association is open to all interested in history, the young and old, the very committed and those just dabbling, those who teach at all levels and those who study. It is not concerned with just one or two areas of the past but spans the entire historical world.

As well as representing its own members' interests the Association acts as a pressure group supporting numerous causes ranging from the preservation of archive collections to the protection of our natural heritage. It has recently fought hard to ensure that history is taught as part of the proposed national core curriculum in schools and it is at present co-ordinating the debate on the content and skills of that history.

The variety of the Association's services reflects the broad scope of its membership. Members receive a fully illustrated magazine *The Historian* four times a year. This includes articles, updates and information on The Historical Association and the historical world. Membership also provides access to the journals, *HISTORY*, *TEACHING HISTORY*, *THE ANNUAL BULLETIN OF HISTORICAL LITERATURE*, pamphlets and other publications. Two new series have been recently launched, the *New Appreciations in History* and the *Historical Association Studies*. Members can also participate in the Association's many activities: tours, the Annual Conference, the Summer Revision School, primary and secondary education conferences and regional activities. In July 1988 a residential conference will be held in Plymouth to celebrate the Armada.

At the local level members are attached to one of the Association's 82 branches. This allows them to meet members in their vicinity and attend meetings, outings and social activities. Branches are able to draw from an unparalleled list of distinguished historians who lecture to even the smallest and most remote meetings.

For further information please write to The Historical Association, 59a Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4JH or telephone 01-735-3901.

THE WALLPAPER HISTORY SOCIETY

The study of wallcoverings has traditionally been regarded as a somewhat esoteric subject, of interest to only a handful of specialist researchers and enthusiasts. More recently, however, it has become clear that a much larger audience is now interested in this field and today articles on period decorations are a regular feature in many journals and magazines. Even so information on, for example, the whereabouts or appearance of historic and contemporary patterns can still be hard to obtain. The Wallpaper History Society has been founded to help answer queries of this kind.

The Society's aims are threefold: to encourage research and provide information on all aspects of wallpaper production, consumption and design; to foster an awareness of the importance of preserving period decorations; and to provide a much-needed point of contact for all the different groups and individuals now interested in these issues. Members will receive regular newsletters. Copies of the forthcoming journal, and be encouraged to participate in events such as visits to wallpaper collections and historic houses, and tours of design studios and manufacturer's archives. The first of these events was a one-day conference on Wallpapers and Interior Decoration held at the Victoria &

Albert Museum on March 12 1988. Organised to provide potential members with an introduction to the kinds of issues and topics that the Society proposes to address, the conference covered the role of wallpaper design in Britain today, the history of manufacture in 18th century France, and a case study on conservation and country house archaeology pointing to new techniques in the detection and reconstruction of historic patterns.

So, if you are a historian, a student of art or design, a conservator, retailer or manufacturer, or simply someone interested in the ways in which people in the past have decorated their homes, and you would like to join the Wallpaper History Society write now for further details to: The Secretary, Wallpaper History Society, Victoria & Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Next Directory

The Garden City Utopia : A critical biography of Ebenezer Howard, by Robert Beevers (Macmillan, £27.50)

Irish Farming : Implements and Techniques, 1750-1900, by J. Ball and M. Watson (John Donald, £14.00)

Church and Parish : A Guide for Local Historians by J.H. Bettey (Batsford, £14.95)

Out of the Cage : Women's Experiences in two World Wars, by Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield (Pandora, £16.95)

Working for Victory : Images of Women in the First World War, by Diana Condell and Jean Liddiard (Routledge, £19.95)

Automatic Pleasures : The history of the Coin Machine, by Nic Costa (Kevin Francis Publishing, £16.95)

The roots of football hooliganism : an historical and sociological study, by Eric Dunning, Patrick Murphy and John Williams (Routledge, £20 hardback, £11.95 paperback)

Women and War, by J.B. Elshtain (Harvester Press, £9.95)

Spoken History, by George Ewart Evans (Faber, £9.95)

Country Life in Scotland, by Alexander Fenton (John Donald, £7.50)

British Piers, by R. Fischer and J. Walton (Thames & Hudson, £12.95)

Metroland (1932 edition), introduction by Oliver Green (Oldcastle Books, £9.95)

Brightening the long days : Hospital Tile Pictures, by John Greene (Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society, £11.00)

From Mangle to Microwave : the Mechanisation of household work, by Christina Hardyment (Polity Press, £16.50)

Collecting Teddy Beafs, by Pam Herbs (Collins, £12.95)

As Good as Gold, by V.H. Hewitt and J.M. Keyworth (British Museum Publications, £15.00)

I'll be seeing you : Picture Postcards of World War Two, by T. and V. Holt (Moorland, £15.00)

Learned pigs and Fireproof Women, by Ricky Jay
(Hale, £12.95)

The Tapestry Makers : Life and Work at Lee's
Tapestry Works, Birkenhead, by A. Johnson and
K. Moore, (Merseyside Docklands Community
History Project, £1.95)

In Flagrante, by Chris Killip (Secker and Warburg,
£20)

The Museum Time-Machine, edited by Robert Lumley
(Comedia/Routledge, £18.95)

Listening to History : the authenticity of oral
evidence, by Trevor Lummis (Hutchinson, £7.95)

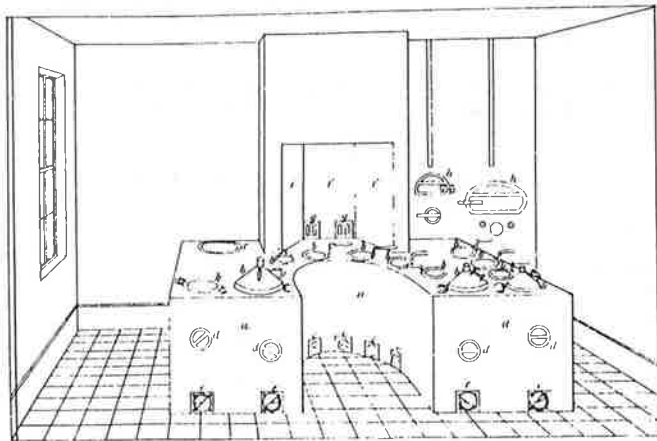
Manliness and morality : Middle class masculinity
in Britain and America, 1890-1940, edited by J.A.
Mangan and J. Walvin (Manchester University
Press, £12.95)

Property and Landscape : A Social history of
land ownership and the English countryside, by
Tom Williamson and Liz Bellamy (George Philip,
£17.95)

Coming of Age in Wartime, by Phyllis Willmott
(Peter Owen, £13.50)

Wheels of Misfortune : the Rise and Fall of the
British Motor Industry, by Jonathan Wood
(Sidgwick and Jackson, £15.95)

COMING EVENTS



12 MAY 1988 : KITCHEN STUDY DAY
Design History Society/Central School of Art
& Design, London

This study day aims to bring together people
from different disciplines who share a common
research interest in the kitchen and related
materials. It aims to examine the various
approaches and methodologies that can be
applied to studying the kitchen and to promote
further study. The day will focus on the way
in which the kitchen as a designed environment
is structured and presented to the consumer.
Changes in the design of kitchen-related
services, appliances and fittings will be
considered, together with changes in the range
of activities carried out in the kitchen.

(Contact : Pierre Elena, Central School of Art
and Design, Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AP).

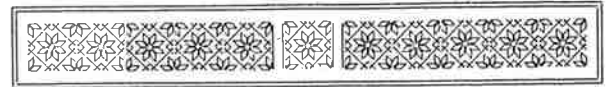
19 MAY 1988 : QUILTS AND QUILTERS
Society for Folk Life Studies Study Day,
Beamish

(Contact : Rosemary Allan, Beamish Museum,
Stanley, County Durham, DH9 0RG).

ANNUAL STUDY WEEKEND

The full programme and booking form for the
1988 ASW, SOCIAL HISTORY IN WONDERLAND, are
enclosed in this issue of SHCG NEWS. A lively
and imaginative series of talks, discussion
groups and events has been organised, and
it looks like being another enjoyable and
stimulating weekend. Readers are reminded
that time is allocated on the Sunday morning
for members papers. This is an important
part of the weekend, providing participants
with an opportunity to share their experiences
and opinions.

Don't delay. Send off your form today and
ensure another record attendance.



MPG ANNUAL STUDY WEEKEND, 1988

This year's Annual Study Weekend will be held
in Oxford on 8 - 12 September. The theme of
the weekend is entitled: 'Medium and Message:
Do Museums Communicate?'

A major function of any museum is to communicate
information about its collections to the public.
This is frequently done on the most basic level
of letting the objects speak for themselves,
often accompanied by labels that are descriptive
rather than interpretative. Although effective,
this is just one approach among many that the
museum should exploit. Why do museums
persistently fail to communicate simply the
ideas and concepts that the objects represent,
binding them into a story which is understand-
able to everyone? This and other problems will
be examined by our eight speakers.

Speakers include Dr Susan Pearce from Leicester
Museum Studies course who will look at the
application of academic theory to museum
interpretation, Dr. Robert Bloomfield from the
British Museum (Natural History) will explain
the special skills required for successful
interpretation, Dr. Gareth Griffiths who is
Development Officer of Oxfordshire Museums will
look at different methods of conveying information
to the visitor, and Barbara Woroncow of Yorkshire
and Humberside Museums Council will examine the
advantages and disadvantages of interdisciplinary
displays.

The study sessions will be balanced by two
afternoon trips. The first trip will be to
Wantage Museum and Cogges Farm Museum, the
second to three Oxford City museums: The Oxford
Story, Christchurch Picture Gallery and the
Museum of Modern Art.

Accommodation will be at Jesus College. The
total cost inclusive from Thursday lunch until
Monday breakfast is £141 for MPG members and
£149 for non members. Membership subscription
is included in the non members rate. MPG is
sponsoring a free place to this year's Study
Weekend. To be eligible you need to be a
member of MPG, unable to obtain sponsorship
from your employer and attending the Study
Weekend for the first time. Any applications
should be sent to the Conference Organiser
(address below).

Booking forms, to be returned by July 29, are
available from Julia Arthur, Hon. Conference
Organiser, Guildford Museum, Castle Arch,
Guildford, Surrey.