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Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.

Heatwave Edition
Rottweiler free zone

MUSEUMS UNDER THREAT

SHCG continues its policy of lending support to Social History museums whose staff and collections are under threat. Here is a roundup of those we have been supporting during the past year.

Hackney Museum

On 30 December 1988 an article appeared in the Hackney Gazette which indicated that the museum might have to close as part of a wide ranging programme of cuts throughout the local authority. The Chairperson wrote expressing our concern over this, especially as Hackney is a new service with enormous promise.

The museum received a great deal of support from many bodies, including the Museums Association, and we were pleased to receive a letter from Hackney Museum in April 1989 stating that Hackney Council had rejected the idea of closing the museum. Instead it has had £500 redirected from its budget as part of the 10% redirection in the Arts and Entertainments service. It seems that 'redirection', like 'restructure', is a new word for 'cut'. At any rate, it is better than 'closure'.

Slough Museum

Slough Museum started the year under a cloud; their local council grant could have disappeared severely curtailing the museum's activities and threatening its long term future. SHCG wrote to a selection of Slough Borough Councillors. We received no replies (in contrast to Hackney) but are pleased to learn that the Council gave a substantial grant for 1989/90. This can only be welcomed and we hope it all goes well for 1990/91.

Monks Hall Museum, Eccles

Monks Hall was a small branch museum run by Salford Museums Service. Originally a local history museum, it now houses a childhood collection and temporary exhibition space, as well as local collections.

It closed in Spring 1988 for an unspecified period. SHCG wrote to Salford Council expressing hope that it would re-open, hopefully with a full time curator. The Council wrote back stating that it would re-open, probably as a re-vamped museum of childhood. Nothing has happened yet. We shall wait and see.

The role of SHCG

SHCG Committee continues to believe that the Group's role as a pressure group is a vital one, especially as the range of potential threats is increasing. If you feel that your museum could soon be in the firing line do contact the Secretary.

THE REAL COST OF COLLECTING

Readers of the Museums Association Journal will now be aware that this report, a joint initiative between Museum Enterprises Ltd (MEL) and the Office of Arts and Libraries is soon to be published.

The final report will have benefited from the advice of SHCG Committee, who were asked to comment on the draft.

We felt (and still feel) that the real problem with the report is how it will be presented. Being overlong it runs the risk of being 'gutted' for the 'juicy bits' and therefore misinterpreted. We must remember the fate of the National Audit Report at the hands of Fleet Street (sorry, should that be Wapping?).

We pointed out that the title was misleading in this respect. The report states that two thirds of annual operating budgets are spent on collecting and preserving the collections. "The Real Cost of Collecting" suggested a 'hidden agenda' behind collecting that had now been exposed. We suggested a change of title to "The Real Cost of Collections Management". This has not been taken up.

We also felt that the benefits of collecting were not stated strongly enough. Some notice of this was taken in the final draft.

With regard to Social History Collections one wonders about the potential use of a capitalised £ per square foot shorthand as an aid to management, especially when Social History collecting still lacks a clear methodology in so many places. I just had to laugh when one curator, interviewed in the report, stated that "the backlog is essentially a creation of increased expectations and that existing records provided adequate access to collections".

Tell that to the District Auditor!

We would urge all Social History Curators to get hold of a copy of the published report. We are responsible for large collections, collections which need to grow in a selective, controlled manner. The Cost Of Collecting Report will raise a cost centred agenda which will eventually lead to us having to justify our activities more and more. As public servants, we should not necessarily see that as a bad thing.



SHCG COMMITTEE

Committee meetings have been held at the City Museum, Stoke-on-Trent (8 February 1989) and at the offices of the Museums and Galleries Commission, St James Square, London (16 May). Among the items discussed were the following :

1. Museums Year

The Chair has been liaising with the Museums Association respecting SHCG involvement in the centenary Conference at York. It was agreed that the Group should contribute to the Conference and two speakers from SHCG Committee are to prepare papers on the subject of public involvement in social history museums.

2. Conservation of social history collections

Attending the Stoke meeting was Simon Cane, Conservator at the Castle Museum, York, who outlined the proposed survey on the conservation of social history collections. A sample questionnaire was discussed, and it was agreed that SHCG would support the project. Questionnaires were distributed with NEWS 19 and an encouraging number have already been returned.

3. The Museums Journal

Maurice Davies, the new editor, discussed the 'new look' Journal with Committee at the May meeting. Copy was invited from SHCG members ; If job-related there would be no fee, but if opinion then freelance rates would apply. Letters will be edited but not censored. It was agreed that Committee should raise any social history items for inclusion in the Journal. This should be undertaken on a regular basis.

4. Museums under threat

Committee continues to monitor events in Slough, Hackney, and elsewhere. A more detailed report appears elsewhere in this edition of the NEWS.

5. 'Social History in Museums'

SHIM is in the final stages of completion and should appear during Museums Year. Its appearance is eagerly awaited.

6. Membership

Following the Museums Journal mail shot 33 new members had enrolled. Membership now totals 398. Members in arrears have received reminders.

7. SHCG Seminars

The seminar programme has been revised. Details are included in this edition of the NEWS.

8. Membership fees : concessionary rates

It was agreed to present the following to the A.G.M. in July :

- i) That the membership rates for the financial year 1990/91 be increased as follows :

Individual member	£8.00
Two people living at the same address	11.00
Institutional member	18.00
Overseas personal member	11.00
Overseas Institutional member	18.00

- ii) That an unwaged rate be introduced as follows :

Unwaged member	£4.00
Student member	4.00

WORKING IN THE POTTERY INDUSTRY

A study day led by Dr Jacqueline Sarsby, Stoke-on-Trent, 27 April 1989

Dr Sarsby, who started her career as a social anthropologist, now works as a freelance oral historian. She began the study day by explaining how important oral history is in providing information which cannot be gained through statistics alone. She illustrated her talk on the background of the pottery industry with slides, which set the atmosphere for her discussion of the conditions in which people worked. Wisely, she recognised the experience of her audience, either as historians or people who had lived or worked in the Potteries, and encouraged them to speak about pottery processes and their lives.

The second section of the day was entitled 'Interviewing people and dealing with data'. Dr Sarsby described in detail her methods of interviewing, the equipment used and the collation and analysis of information. She outlined her method of interviewing people, which she frankly admitted was a 'Do as I say, not as I do' approach. The stages she recommended were -

Plan Project : Decide what information you want. What jobs, ages and geographical areas to cover. Is the tape for information only or archival ?

Access : The interviewer should be regarded as a 'friend of a friend'. Dr Sarsby found working through the Union helpful, also through local radio and newspapers.

Place : Interviews are best conducted at home so that people feel relaxed. But avoid noises such as TV and the budgie. Sit close.

Questions : Plan your questions carefully. Short clear questions so that the interviewee can elaborate. You need to be well versed in the subject but act as if you are not.

The Interviewee : Put the interviewee in the picture. Tell him or her your area(s) of interest. State what you will do with the information. Have a form available to sign stating what the tape can be used for and if the interviewee's name can be used. Keep the speaker to the subject, but be diplomatic. Do not dismiss highlights of their life as unimportant.

Corroboration : Talk to a number of people to ascertain accuracy and typicality.

Equipment : Use good equipment. A good microphone is essential, as is a battery indicator. Place the machine where it can be seen but is not intrusive. A transcribing machine is worth investing in.

Aids to memory : take something to stir the interviewee's memory. The first questions should relate to events such as birth, leaving school and marriage 'signposts' to the rest of their lives. Be polite and thank the interviewee.

Working with the tapes : Make synopsis of tape contents, with number counter references. Make a copy of the tape to work from, keeping the original as evidence. Transcribe soon after the event, as faithfully as possible, and in full. Compile indexes of topics, giving name, transcript and tape references.

In the third session of the day, Dr Sarsby spoke of her findings from a series of interviews in the Potteries, which have been described in the book *Missuses and Mouldrunners* (Open University Press, 1988, £8.95). She described the period



between the wars as being one of 'Comfort and Cruelty, Paternalism and Neglect'. A selection of interviews was played to illustrate the range of information about women's lives provided. Dr Sarsby gave statistics of death and birth rates, age of marriage, working hours and rates of pay, but mostly her talk described the experiences of real women, drawn from the interviews. A picture was drawn of women who were placed in their first job through their mothers influence. They started as an assistant to a 'missus' and were paid by her, or deductions were made from the missus's wage by the factory. The mother/daughter relationship was of vital importance; the mother obtained a place at work for her daughter, who, in return, gave her wages to her mother, receiving pocket money back. The daughter would also help with the housework. Because her money and services were needed mothers were often reluctant to lose a daughter in marriage - something born out by statistics for late marriage in the Potteries.

Girls met their future husbands on 'monkey runs', set walking routes around the town. Happy memories were obviously evoked in the audience by these descriptions. Several older women spoke of the 'monkey runs' in the different pottery towns. After marriage daughters often still lived with their mothers, who minded the children while they worked. Women were flexible in their working lives, responding to the needs of their families and the demands of the pottery industry.

The terrible working conditions in a dust laden atmosphere were described, but the bronchial diseases to which the potters are prone were painfully obvious by the shortness of breath of the ladies on the tape.

Women were not just paintresses! Dr Sarsby attacked this myth with enthusiasm. The women interviews worked in all stages of the pottery industry, and statistics bear this out. She produced a slide showing the ceramic mural on the front of the City Museum, which shows potters at work. All but one were men. The only woman depicted is a genteel looking paintress.

She also dismissed the myth of the 'family atmosphere' at work. Although members of one family might work at the same factory they did not all work together. Although factory managers might know the names of their employees (and go to their funerals) they had no family feelings for the conditions they worked in. Although the dangers of dust and lead had been known for more than a century working conditions did not finally improve until legislation compelled the factory owners to take action.

Jackie Sarsby brought all her enthusiasm for her subject to this meeting, and despite the sombre subject matter her talks were informal and even humorous on occasion. The audience was invited throughout the day to contribute their personal knowledge, the day being completed with discussions and women telling of their experiences in the industry. Kathy Niblett of the City Museum's Ceramics Department thanked Dr Sarsby for making her work available to others, and especially for compiling the tape of interviews. I am sure that everyone who attended will agree with her that we learned of 'real women with real experiences'.

Angela Lee
Gladstone Pottery Museum



"THE PEOPLE MUSEUM"

Garry Lyons' new play reviewed by our Drama Correspondent

Trying hard not to look like a museum professional (not too difficult a task!), I and several others from the North of England Museums Service crept into the Theatre to see "The People Museum", a play which, so the programme informed us, would keep us on the edge of the seat. But hang on ... no sooner had we arrived than we were directed to the centre of the stage, forced to stand around a coffin, while a young woman, Jenny, told us of her Jack's death. We passed from the room setting back to our seats feeling uneasy and embarrassed! From then on, the play began in earnest.

The setting was Burntashdale Colliery, a former pit village in the North of England. The action took place either in Jenny's cottage or at the pit head. It was a fast play, with witty (and thoughtful?) one-liners. The plot was simple on the one hand, and, much like museums, totally incomprehensible on the other. The actors were playing the part of employees, role-playing life earlier this century. The place closely resembled Beamish. Two journalists arrived to write a story and got swept into macabre events along the way. The main thrust of the play was whether the employees, Jenny, Ethel and the miner Arthur, were in reality actors, or had they been brainwashed into believing that it really was 1900? If this was the case, then for what purpose? Clearly for commercial reasons, for, as the Director said, "Why bother with real museums when Burntashdale sells". Give the visitors what they really want - in his view a tightly controlled heritage 'museum'. The only inconvenience in his eyes was that the 1920s period would have been far more elegant than the 1900s.

According to the press release, the whole play was meant to question the role of the heritage industry today. Is Britain becoming a huge theme park dedicated to the past? Should the theme park manager (curator?) feel somewhere that the commercialised presentation of history is degrading - not only to the memory of our forebears whose lives are parodied, but also to the employees obliged to put on fancy dress and act quaint scenes for the amusement of tourists? Personally, I felt that the play didn't answer or really address these questions. It also left so many others unanswered. How did Jack die? Where was he? Why did the 'actors' not leave their village? How did they get there in the first place? Why have the public had a 'belly load of truth'? Why was the Director so powerful? Did the journalists, or the audience, learn anything?

The final scene was the opening of Jack's coffin, to find ... no Jack! The discussion (in the pub afterwards) led to the general agreement that perhaps (why is there always one who disagrees?) the empty coffin signifies the state of the museum profession at present. The despair of Jenny's last words could be echoed by many Curators today. "What's to become of us, Jack?" (Patrick, Graeme, etc.).

All in all, a good night's entertainment. The Metro Theatre Company are toring the play. It is definitely worth seeing.

Sue Underwood
North of England Museums Service

POSH FROCKS, SHOULDER PADS AND CULTURAL POLITICS
COLLECTING 20TH CENTURY COSTUME AND TEXTILES

The 20th Century collecting debate continues, thanks to a joint seminar organised by the Group for Costume and Textiles and the Yorkshire and Humber Federation. Clothes and textiles are often the responsibility of Social History departments and although they pose different and difficult collection management techniques, their collection and interpretation need to be seen within the broader context of museum work.

Rosemary Ewles (MGC) offered just that, a wide perspective on Collections and Collecting. She noted that in 1989 museums were getting a high profile due to Museums Year (and the antics at the V & A). She also emphasised that nearly all museums rely to some extent on public subsidy and that more of this was needed as higher standards led to greater resource implications. Public funds remained fixed and were therefore declining in real terms; the Government gives more money to the removal of graffiti than it does to the MGC! Rosemary considered the problems of the 'Heritage Boom' which allowed social and industrial museums to easily amass mounds of material without any recourse to an intellectual framework for that collecting. This naturally led into a brief introduction to the Museum Registration Scheme which will introduce minimum standards with regard to collecting policies and collections management. The groundwork was laid, past mistakes had to be faced, but not duplicated.

Next came Tina Levey (ex V & A) to consider collecting on a national scale. She quite rightly stressed that MGC standards apply to a national as well and that a national shares similar problems to those of the hard pressed local government sector. In addition, a national had other expectations; as a centre of excellence that needs to respond to a wide public and provide expert advisors. In short it needs to maintain an international reputation. Moving onto collections, she outlined the vast range of material available and the need to build up complementary rather than competing collections.

Despite having a policy there are gaps; the department feels it has to collect ahead of fashion. They also collect pattern books, photographs and designs. Another area of concern are videos of fashion shows which need a national policy of their own.

Tina concluded by looking at problems on the horizon. A new store for 20th century Dress and Textiles has been scrapped and from 1 June the Department is to be merged with Furniture. Apart from her own departure this poses serious problems over the management and development of the collection. A current "success" is that the Getty Foundation are funding the cataloguing of the 20th Century Collection on to video disc. Meanwhile the fabric of the building crumbles, morale collapses and grotesque advertising billboards disfigure the Cromwell Road facade.

Cue Valerie Cumming (Museum of London) on Counting the Costs of Collecting. She began by referring to a crisis in curatorship over "costume". Is it Social History or Decorative Art? Whatever they are, she knew they were popular and her own museum could not display enough of it.

With regard to cost, Costume is expensive to preserve and display. It is just not made to last. To do it properly costs a lot of money that has to be justified.

She felt that 10 years of Thatcherism had led to an anti-professional, anti-intellectual atmosphere in which we need to escape from. She quoted a business maxim which professed "Financial success through professional excellence" and felt this could be hijacked to -

"Curatorial success through financial expertise"

In other words curators need to define policy and organise themselves, to talk and understand the language of the opposition, to be aware of the costs of collecting and be able to justify them as positive benefits.

She then drew our attention to the OAL Cost of Collecting Report. Like many of us she feared how it would be received and urged all of us to be ready to face up to the questions it will raise.

Pat Clegg (Harrogate) picked up on this. In examining the Status Quo (or new initiatives?) she felt she was also talking a new language. Using Harrogate as an example she showed how things can change rapidly.

A Council initiative to solve the storage problem led to the suggestion that the collection be sold off. This move was countered by YHMC and MGC advice. Harrogate Museums are soon to have a new store.

Within this store the Costume will be part of the Social History Collection. Once the stores are sorted a refined policy will emerge. Pat wondered how this would go: should they try and reflect the area covered by their Local Authority. Given its diversity a huge range of material would have to be collected. Harrogate is not just Jaeger and Windsmoor suits with pearls!

They would also have to consider what other museums were doing, bearing in mind the stop/go policy of some neighbouring services.

Pat suggested that in future we may have to be more selective and specialize. One service could work an arrangement to collect Marks and Spencer, another Next. Better sponsorship deals could result.

She concluded with a list of late 80's buzz words to take home and ponder

- Performance monitoring
- Service standards
- Compulsory competitive tendering
- Performance related pay

Next came Barbara Woroncow (YHMC) to consider the role of the AMCs. Barbara laid out the background behind AMC support. There was pressure on grant aid, which, being fixed for 3 years was declining in real terms.

Despite this new museum schemes are still proposed at an alarming rate and storage schemes continue to be a high grant priority. There had been proposals that AMCs set up and run huge regional stores but Barbara argued that the AMCs could simply not afford to fund such object mountains which were invitations to hoard and forget. Clearly, information was the key to better policy. In 1986 YHMC set up an Industrial and Social History Collecting Working Party which surveyed the region by Questionnaire. The results were depressing - half the stores were estimated full, 1/4 - 90% and 1/4 - 70% full. These figures came from the curators and there was no standard applied. Some stores could in fact be 150% full if correct storage standards were applied.

The survey also showed poor environmental control and that only one third had written collecting policies. Following this a Research Assistant has been appointed (with OAL/MGC funding) to gather more detailed results. Her role will be to examine such difficult areas as Duplication and definitions of "Local".

Social History Curators Group



HOUSING IN SOCIAL HISTORY

A Social History Curators Group seminar to be held at The Old Grammar School, South Church Side, Hull, on Thursday, 19th October, 1989.

PROGRAMME :

- 10.00 - 10.30 Assemble at The Old Grammar School, Hull : Coffee.
- 10.30 - 10.40 Welcome and introduction by Liz Frostick, Keeper of Social History, Hull, seminar organizer.
- 10.40 - 11.20 "Not then ... now! Housing the City of Hull in 1989" Stephen Brindley (Director of Housing, Hull City Council).
- 11.20 - 12.10 "Homes for the People : council housing in social history" David Fleming (Principal Keeper, Hull City Museums).
- 12.10 - 12.50 "Housing and Community - approaches to interpretation in Edinburgh" Susan Jeffrey (Museum of Childhood, Edinburgh).
- 12.50 - 14.00 Lunch - own arrangements. Several eating places nearby.
- 14.00 - 14.45 "Housing and Community - approaches to interpretation in Glasgow" Mark O'Neill (Curator, Springburn Museum, Glasgow).
- 14.45 - 15.30 "Moving House : the rescue and reconstruction of homes at St. Fagans open air museum" Eurwyn Wiliam (Keeper of Buildings and Domestic Life, Welsh Folk Museum).
- 15.30 - 16.15 Tea, Discussion and Summary.

Fee : £4 for SHGC member (£6 for others), cheques to be made payable to SHGC. To apply please complete the attached form and send it, with fee, to Liz Frostick, Hull City Museums, c/o Town Docks Museum, Queen Victoria Square, Hull, HU1 3DX.

Telephone 0482 222737.

Please enrol me/us for the SHGC seminar on Housing in Social History on October 19th, 1989.

Number of places required ... I enclose £ registration fee.

Name

Address

.....

Map required YES/NO Signed Date

Social History Curators Group



SEMINARS



HOUSING

19 October 1989
HULL

Following on from SHCG's "Interiors" seminar we now move outdoors to look at recent museum initiatives in restoring, interpreting and rebuilding different types of housing.

Contact: Liz Frostick (Hull City Museums, Town Docks Museum, Queen Victoria Square, Hull HU1 3DX - 0482 222737)

FOOD

15 November 1989
BRISTOL

Food, by its very nature, is not an easy subject to present in museums. This seminar, based at Blaise Castle, will look at the history of food and at ways of interpreting food, from production to consumption, in social history museums.

Contact: Mark Suggitt (YHMC, Farnley Hall, Hall Lane, Leeds LS12 5HA - 0532 638909)

EPHEMERA

5 December 1989
LONDON

This seminar, at the new Hackney Museum, will examine the care, conservation and documentation of ephemera collections in museums and consider the challenges of contemporary collecting in this field.

Contact: Christine Johnstone (Hackney Museum, Central Hall, Mare Street, London E8 1HE - 01 986 6914)

LABOUR HISTORY

26 April 1990
Manchester

Organised jointly with the Society for the Study of Labour History, this important day seminar will review major issues in the study of histories of organised and unorganised labour and consider new directions for the 1990s.

Contact: Nick Mansfield (National Museum of Labour History, 103 Princess Street, Manchester M1 6DD 061 236 2922)

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* All seminars are £4.00 for SHCG Members and £6.00 for Non Members.

* If you are interested in attending please contact the addresses above for a programme and booking form.

Barbara concluded by stressing that the role of the AMC is to advise, not police, and to create an atmosphere where selective collecting and co-operation could flourish. The AMC could achieve this by its advisory and training services to both the Local Government and "Independent" sector.

Conservation came into focus again with Sheila Landi (V & A) confronting prospects and decisions. She felt we can be blasé about 19th century and 20th century objects although we should not. Natural fabrics have well known properties. 90 years of developing synthetic fibres have left conservation with problems.

Chemical Dyes - Will they fade quicker?

Synthetic Fibres - Will they deteriorate quicker?

Finishes - How long will they survive?

Plastics - How long will they survive?

Methods of Construction - Adhesives and machine stitching.

In other words do you take the foam shoulder pads out of your leather jacket because the glue could rot them. If you replace them what should you do with the originals? Are they culturally significant!

Last on was Anthea Bickley (Bradford) who considered Costume within a Social History Collection. The Clothes and Textiles within her collection were firmly based on the area. Bradford was a town that proudly produced ordinary cloth for the middle and working classes. The decision to collect this had been taken in the 1970s. Before then haphazard collecting had led to the usual mish-mash of uniforms, Wedding Dresses and Christening Gowns. As part of the Social History Collection clothes were now collected as social documents, not Decorative Art and could be interpreted in a variety of different ways. The key factor in her approach was selection which would be better informed through documentation.

The final discussion stressed the need for increased selectivity though collecting policies and regional planning. It was apparent to me that costume has to be integrated into general policies and that like so much of general "Social History" it has grown up without an intellectual, enquiry led framework for collecting. One curator explained that her department no longer collected modern clothes because "a trendy member of her department had left". Such a slap-happy approach should no longer be tolerated. The real problems of global fashion, the rise of male fashion, mass production (to name a few) have to be approached in a logical way by truly active collecting.

The seminar raised some familiar issues for Social Historians as well as some new ones. Most of the speakers stepped outside the confines of their subject to relate it to the wider political issues that effect us all.

Ten years of Thatcherism have changed the way we view our collections and the framework in which we have to operate. If this seminar had been held 10 years ago, I doubt if we would have touched the political issues. In 1989 we simply cannot ignore them, nor can we ignore the cultural value of, collecting and interpreting something that is both fun and fundamental. As Umberto Eco said "We speak through our clothes".

Mark Suggitt
Yorkshire and Humberside Museums Council

CHOCOLATE SELECTION

Rowntree Mackintosh will be opening a heritage centre in York towards the end of 1990. The attraction will be in the centre of the City in a converted Victorian Mill on the River Foss.

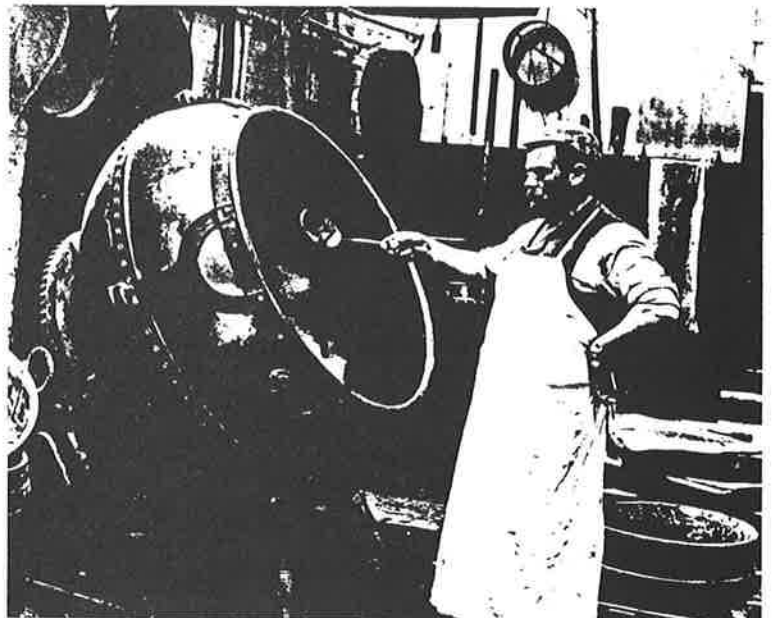
There will be exhibitions about the manufacture of chocolate explaining the process from growing cocoa trees in West Africa and other areas to producing the finished products in Rowntree's factory in York.

We will also tell the history of chocolate from its origins in the Aztec civilisation, through its introduction to Europe by the Spanish and its gradual increase in popularity and availability.

There will be major exhibitions on the history of Rowntree's. The company was built up by Joseph Rowntree in the latter years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century. The Rowntree family were Quakers and we will explain how the beliefs and traditions of the Society of Friends shaped the early policies of the company. Denied entry into the Universities which were only open to the established church, opposed on principle to joining the Armed Forces and unwilling to pursue any career which required the swearing of an oath, the closely-knit Society of Friends channelled their abilities into commerce. It was from this commercial tradition that Rowntree's emerged. The Quaker traditions of paternalism, philanthropy and strict morality are all evident in the company's development.

Rowntree's work in the fields of industrial welfare and democracy was particularly interesting. For example, The Social Department was founded in 1898 and a pension scheme was introduced as early as 1906. Education classes were compulsory for boys and girls after 1908 and gardens, playing fields and allotments were provided for employees. In 1981 Rowntree's introduced a Central Works Council which enabled workers to participate in the management of the company and in 1922 the company introduced one of the earliest Profit Sharing schemes. This early history is a fascinating mixture of far-sighted reform and stern Victorian paternalism.

The Rowntree family extended their work beyond the company. Joseph Rowntree founded three Trusts to fund social and political projects and created the model village of New Earswick. His son Seebohm became famous for his study of poverty in York and his work is still used as a measure by researchers today.



The story of Rowntree will also include exhibitions about working life in the confectionery industry, the commercial development of the company, its merger with Mackintosh's of Halifax and its future as part of the Nestle group following its takeover last year.

There will also be a demonstration area in which visitors will be able to see the traditional skills of the confectionery industry.

We would be interested to hear of any items held in museum collections which might contribute to the above exhibitions. In particular we are seeking, for both Rowntree and Mackintosh: tins, packaging and advertising before 1945 (particularly early colour posters); and shop display cases, mirrors, showcards and enamel signs from before 1939. We would also be very interested to hear of any tools, equipment or machinery used in the confectionery industry. Please contact: Public Relations Dept., Rowntree Ltd., York YO1 1XY. Tel. (0904) 653071 Ext. 3645.

Ian Rayson
Rowntree Heritage Centre

THE ROSE REVEALED

Excavations by the Museum of London's Greater London Archaeology Department at 2-10 Southwark Bridge Road have revealed that this is the site of the Rose Theatre, the first of the four famous Tudor/Jacobean playhouses on London's south bank, and that substantial remains of the theatre survive.

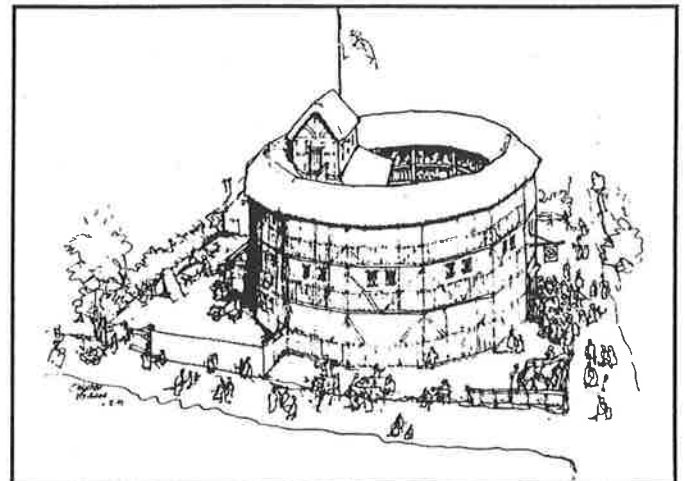
The Rose was built in around 1587 by the impresario Philip Henslowe. It was followed by the Swan (1595) the Globe (1599) and the Hope (1613). Most of Christopher Marlowe's plays were performed there, along with works by the likes of Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker and John Webster. Two of Shakespeare's early plays received their first performances at the theatre - Henry VI in 1592 and Titus Andronicus. The last known performance at the Rose took place in 1603. The theatre may have been demolished by c.1606, but this is uncertain.

Contemporary evidence for the appearance of these early playhouses is limited and often conflicting. This site is therefore of great importance in its potential for providing the first tangible evidence of what later Elizabethan theatres may have looked like.

Despite frequent subsequent redevelopment of the site, including a 1950s office block, survival of the remains of the Rose has surpassed expectations. Excavations reveal that the theatre was small - the diameter of the inner 'yard' or 'pit' and stage area was perhaps no more than 13 metres. Its inner and outer walls were 3.5 metres apart, giving us the width of the galleries. A weathered strip around the edge of the yard shows that the eaves of the roof overhung the structure slightly. An extensive humic layer may represent the remains of thatch, and the demolition debris shows that the theatre had lath and plaster walls. The yard appears to have been floored, when the theatre was first built, with a layer of mortar on which spectators could stand; the southern half of this floor was level, but the northern half sloped down towards the stage.

At some point, possibly in 1592, the design of the theatre was changed, perhaps to accommodate a larger audience in the yard. The stage was moved back 3 metres and the theatre seems to have been extended to the north. A new yard floor was laid, consisting of a layer of clinker and hazelnut shells.

The excavations seem to be finding the answer to one of the great questions of theatrical history: what exactly was the shape of the Elizabethan theatre, and what was the size of the stage? In fact, it seems that there was more than one stage; a first phase, in which parallel inner and outer walls formed an irregular polygon, and a second phase, when it was extended. This resulted in a yard and a stage area with a plan of almost mushroom shape, and an exterior which resembled something like a closed horseshoe in plan. The information gleaned from the excavations will be of enormous importance in assisting students of the early stage to understand how Shakespeare and his contemporaries intended their plays to be staged and viewed. The discovery of the Rose, a site of such significance in English literary history, has stirred the imaginations of many people, but it remains to be seen how effective the campaign to 'save' the Rose will be. English Heritage has promised the Rose Theatre Campaign that any fresh discoveries made while excavating the site will be protected. If necessary English Heritage will seek alterations to the developer's plans for a ten-storey office block to be built on stilts above the site. According to Jim Burns, archaeological advisor to the campaign, English Heritage have given an assurance that "if the archaeologists find anything at 16th century level, or at post-theatre deposit level, they will go to Southwark Council and negotiate at once to remove the piles".



The Secretary of State for the Environment, latter-day Renaissance man Nicholas Ridley, was unmoved by the campaigners' pleas to schedule the 16th century theatre's remains as a protected ancient monument. Although he accepted that the Rose site was of national importance (but obviously not as important as the 13000 existing scheduled ancient monuments) Mr Ridley believed that the revised plans of the developers offered sufficient protection. He was advised in the matter by English Heritage, the quango headed by Lord Montagu, who argued that scheduling would cost millions in compensation. Without scheduling, the developers are not, of course, required to give legal assurances that they will not damage the site.

In the meantime, the debate over how best to preserve the remains of the Rose continues. The site has now been covered with sand and polymer, to protect the remains from the weather. The Museum of London archaeologists, who have been dismissed, had estimated that it would take six months to excavate the unexplored part of the site. According to English Heritage, whose own archaeologists have taken over, it will take a mere three weeks to excavate the remaining portion. The campaigners plan to challenge in court Mr Ridley's decision not to schedule the Rose, a resonant reminder of an age in which the theatre was a real and vibrant part of popular culture.

HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

At one time the only things Australia exported were wool and uranium. Nowadays the high street is full of lurid knee-length shorts. TV exudes Australian soap stars and even that rather elegant caff in South Ken has jumped on the popular bandwagon with an exhibition of Australian fashion.

The latest addition to this vast array of Antipodean exports is that most unfashionable of items, a social history classification system. The Historical Collections Classification Scheme for Small Museums has been produced by Patricia Summerfield for the Western Australian Museums Association. The classification is a three part process arranged in PRIMARY/Secondary and tertiary columns. The Primary category is the widest classification and the tertiary most often the specific object that has been recorded. There is also an alphabetical list of the terms used. The system emphasises the object and not the subject orientation. As such it acts as a nomenclature rather than a way of organising themes, although there is limited scope within the sets of 'functional categories' and 'thematic categories' for this. Though this may seem inconsistent, the refreshing aspect of HCCSSM is that it acknowledges its own compromises. After all, all classification systems involve compromises; the HCCSSM makes a virtue of it in its flexibility.

As a simple practical system for use by small museums with manual card indices the HCCSSM is a welcome addition to the existing range of schemes. However it is not an exhaustive nomenclature and as a classification system it may well be too restrictive and too object based. For these reasons it would be advisable to use it in conjunction with both Murdoch and Chenhall.

The Historical Collections Classification Scheme by Patricia Summerfield is available from the Secretary, Museums Association of Australia - WA Branch, c/o Western Australian Museum, Francis Street, Perth WA 6000, price SA 26.50 surface mail.

Tim Corum
Stoke-on-Trent City Museum

SOCKS 'N' RAGS 'N' ROCK 'N' ROLL

Yet another anniversary to set you in a spin. Expect to find yourselves awash in commemorative exhibitions entitled something along the lines of 'Goodbye Washday Blues' or 'Time and Tide'. Yes, 1989 sees the 40th anniversary of one of Britain's longest running soap operas, the launderette. Like so many aspects of mid-twentieth century British popular culture, the launderette was an American import. The first of many was opened in London in May 1949 by Bendix Home Appliances. Launderettes revolutionised washday for families up and down the country, consigning the dolly tub and the mangle to the scrapyards (or, often as not, and don't we all know it, the local museum). They became a familiar feature of British urban life during the 1950s, providing a social focus for their customers, a place for a chat while the machines did their work.

Today, they are on the decline, mostly as a result of widespread washing machine ownership. The number of launderettes has fallen from over 8000 in the 1960s to under 4000 today. The big screen success of *My Beautiful Launderette* failed to invest the local launderette with glamour or cult status. However, Dot Cotton's launderette plays a central role in Britain's most successful soap, *Eastenders*. Perhaps taking its cue from this is a new venture in Manchester which may hold the key to the future. Called, inevitably, *Soap Opera*, it offers a coffee bar and non-stop soaps on TV while the socks and pants spin round.

IN PRINT

Recent Publications

Lost children of the Empire : The untold story of Britain's child migrants, by Philip Bean and Joy Melville, Unwin Hyman, £12.95.

City Centres, City Cultures, by Franco Bianchini et al, CLES, £3.75.

Football in its place : An environmental psychology of football grounds, by David Canter, Miriam Comber and David Uzzell, Routledge, £10.95.

The Making of the English Middle Class : Business, Society and Family Life in London 1660 - 1730, by Peter Earle, Methuen, £20.00.

Music for Pleasure : essays in the Sociology of Pop, by Simon Frith, Polity Press, £7.95.

Days in the life : Voices from the English Underground, 1961 - 1971, by Jonathon Green, Minerva, £4.99.

Eccentric Spaces, by Robert Harbison, Secker and Warburg, £7.95.

Prudent Revolutionaries : Portraits of British Feminists between the Wars, by Brian Harrison, Oxford University Press, £29.50.

Hiding in the Light, by Dick Hedbridge, Comedia.

The Children's War, by Ruth Inglis, Collins, £12.95.

Dismantling Truth : Reality in the Postmodern World, ed. Hilary Lawson and Lisa Appignanesi, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, £16.00.

Lipstick Traces : A secret history of the Twentieth Century, by Greil Marcus, Secker and Warburg, £14.95.

Riding the Skies, introduction by Jan Morris, Bloomsbury, £16.95.

The East End : Four centuries of London Life, by Alan Palmer, John Murray, £14.95.

The Rise of Professional Society, by Harold Perkin, Routledge, £40.00.

We make Ships, by Tom Pickard, Secker and Warburg, £12.95.

Towards a social Architecture : The role of school building in post-war England, by Andrew Saint, Yale University Press, £19.95.

The Past meets the Present : Essays on Oral History, by D. Stricklin and R. Sharpless, University Press of America.

Hooligans Abroad, by John Williams, Eric Dunning and Patrick Murphy, Routledge, £9.95.

THE HISTORICAL WORLD

A section within the *Historian* (the Historical Association's members magazine), 'The Historical World' provides details on organisations, courses, conferences, events and celebrations, exhibitions, displays and the opening of new museums housing historical collections. Contributions and photos (preferably black and white and glossy prints) are welcomed. The copy date for the November issue is 1 September.

Further details available from Madeline Stiles, Association Secretary, Historical Association, 59a Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4JH.

FAIRYTALES

The Folklore Society's annual Katharine Briggs Lecture will be delivered by Dr Marina Warner on 14 November 1989 in the Large Physics Lecture Theatre, Univeristy College, London. Marina Warner is an acknowledged expert on fairytales and has recently completed some work on the Cinderella story. Enigmatically, she says that she is now studying hair in fairy tales !

The winner of the 1989 Katharine Briggs Folklore Award will be announced at a reception following the lecture. The books submitted this year for the award, which is attaining increasing stature within the field of folklore studies, cover a wide and varied range of interest. Entries have been submitted by Britain's top academic publishers and several American publishers have also expressed an interest in entering books for the award, although entry is restricted to works having their first original and initial publication in the United Kingdom.

Further details are available from the Secretary, the Folklore Society, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.

FESTIVE FOODS

The Folklore Society is conducting a survey of festive foods. The Society would like to know what foods you and your family associate with Christmas, New Year, Shrove Tuesday, Lent (surely lack of food, Ed.), Good Friday, Easter Day, Hallowe'en, birthdays, funerals and at any other festival. Contributors are asked to describe the foods that they remember eating on these occasions in the past, particularly during childhood, stating where and when, and what they typically eat at these festivals today. Later in the year the Society will be mounting an exhibition on the subject of Food in Folklore at Univeristy College, London.

Any information on festive foods will be gratefully received by the survey co-ordinator, Roy Vickery, 12 Eastwood Street, London, SW16 6PX.

SEMINARS AND COURSES

Interpretation and Communication
North West Museum and Art Gallery Service
5 October, Manchester

A one day course examining the methodology of interpretation and communication. It will cover the integration of copy and objects, living history, the written word and copy writing. Contact NWMAGS, Griffin Lodge, Cavendish Place, Blackburn BB2 2PN (tel. 6254 670211)

Museums and Galleries in Cornwall
NWMAGS Study Tour
October, Cornwall

A three day study tour exploring current museum practice in Penzance, Truro, Camelford and Plymouth.

Disaster Control Planning
Scottish Museum Council seminar
18 October, Perth

Housing
SHCG Seminar
19 October, Hull

Following on from the 'Interiors' seminar we now move outdoors to look at recent museum initiatives in restoring, interpreting and rebuilding different types of housing. Contact Liz Frostick, Hull City Museums, Town Docks Museum, Queen Victoria Square, Hull HU1 3DX (tel. 0482 222737).

Museums in the Community
AIM Seminar
20 October, Bristol

Includes sections on the practical relationship of museums to local history groups. Speakers include Springburn's Mark O'Neil and Martin Heighton, Bristol's Director of Arts. Contact Kate Tiffin, The Exploratory, 131 Duckmoor Road, Ashton, Bristol (tel. 0272 634321).

ORAL HISTORY AND THE SEA
Oral History Society Conference
14-15 October, Southampton

This conference will look at the history of dockland communities and at work on the seas. It will reflect the recent work carried out by a number of community projects working in different dockland areas in Britain. Contributions about any aspect of oral history and the sea are welcome. Contact Donald Hyslop, Oral History Section, City Museum Offices, 125 High Street, Southampton, Hants SO1 044 (tel. 0703 632493).

New Ideas for Activities in Museums
Scottish Museums Council seminar
1 November, Stirling

CLASS, COMMUNITY AND CONFLICT
History Workshop
3-5 November, Manchester University

Offers of contributions on the theme of community are welcome. Offers to do workshops are welcomed from academic and non-academic groups aloke. Contact Roger Laidlow, Jesus College, Oxford, OX1 3DW.

Is history nice ? The danger of the Deferential Museum

Ironbridge Institute course
6 November, Science Museum, London

Must museums be obsequious, deferential and 'even-handed' when tackling contentious issues ? Are major museums preoccupied with image and house styles ? This course considers how the interpretation of industrial and technological history can move away from the celebration of sleek cars and shiny locomotives to tackle less romantic subjects such as the chemical industry and contentious issues relating to industrialisation.

Food
SHCG Seminar
15 November, Bristol

Food, by its very nature, is not an easy subject to present in museums. This seminar, based at Blaise Castle, will look at the history of food and at ways of interpreting food, from production to consumption, in social history museums. Contact Mark Suggitt, YHMC, Farnley Hall, Hall Lane, Leeds LS12 5HA (tel. 0532 638909).

