

Editor: David Fleming, Leeds City Museum, Caverley St., Leeds LS1 3AA

EDITOR'S NOTE

It is obvious that six months under the roasting Egyptian sun has, contrary to expectation, actually improved Crispin Paine's powers of perception and analysis. His first action on returning to Milton Keynes (there is still room for improvement Crispin) was, not once, not twice, but three times to deny "that nasty little sheet". He refers, of course, to SHCG News. "I spit upon your mother's shadow!" was all that poor old John Shaw could get out of our erstwhile News Editor when he begged him to resume his duties. So, we have to say a fond farewell to our bronzed colleague, thank him heartily for his mighty efforts on behalf of the Group, and hope that the taint does not last too long.

Meanwhile, not having had the benefit of too many exotic sights this year, I am rather intrigued at the prospect of editing the News. I joined SHCG just over a year ago, and I have found that through becoming involved with the Group's activities I have met a great many interesting people, learned a great deal from them, and have recognised the genuine and powerful will to improve museums that there exists, especially at the younger end of our profession. This bodes well for the future of our museums, but we are far from being out of the woods, and one of the major functions of a specialist group such as SHCG is to fight for the continued improvement of standards in our subject. I ask members, therefore, to support our meetings and propose ones of your own; to use the News to disseminate information, on exhibitions and publications, as well as opinion and reviews. SHCG does have a reputation for being radical and lively, but it requires effort on the part of many people to keep it that way.

Publication dates for the News are 1 August, 1 December and 1 April. Copy dates are 1 July, 1 November and 1 March respectively.

* * * COMING EVENTS * * *

- Aug 30-Sept 3: Museums and Industrial Decline - MPG Annual Study Weekend at Liverpool (contact Loraine Knowles, 051-4307787).
- Oct 11: 20th Century Collecting in Social History SHCG Seminar at York Castle Museum (see enclosed Preview and booking form).
- Oct 26: The Conservation of Folk Life and Industrial Material - UKIC/AMSSEE seminar at London (contact AMSSEE, 0908-563997).
- Oct 31: SHIC Users' Seminar - at Bristol (contact Michael Vanns, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, 095245-2751).
- Nov 1: SHIC Users' Seminar - at Black Country Museum (contact Stuart Holm, Black Country Museum, 021-5579643).
- Nov 8: Rural History in Museums - SHCG Training Seminar at York (see enclosed Preview and booking form).
- Nov 16-18: Farm Buildings: Their History and Conservation - at Oxford (contact Kate Tiller, Univ. of Oxford, Dept. for External Studies, 0865-52901).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, NORWICH, 1984

This year's AGM was a somewhat discordant affair, and featured a motion of censure against SHCG Committee (1983-4) for its action in not distributing free to members of the Group the publication of its WHAM! meeting proceedings. The motion was defeated, but only by the Chairperson's casting vote. The closeness of the vote demonstrates that feelings were running high, and this is probably because of Committee's failure fully to inform SHCG membership of the precise relationship between the Group and WHAM! It is most unfortunate that the great success of the Group's WHAM! meeting, and the probable success of the publication which will result, has thus been clouded by misunderstanding. John Shaw's article in this News sets out to remedy this. A further proposal at AGM to distribute free to SHCG members the proceedings of WHAM! was also defeated, but a proposal was passed that in future all publications of SHCG will be distributed free to members unless prior permission to the contrary has been given at an AGM.

Other decisions taken at AGM were that the subscription for personal membership should be raised in 1985 to £6, for institutional membership to £10, for overseas membership to £13, and that a household membership will be introduced costing £9. The new Constitution published in SHCG News 5, with subsequent amendments, was adopted, and under this new Constitution the following Committee members were elected for 1984-5:

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| Chairperson | Stuart Davies (Kirklees Leisure Services, Huddersfield). |
| Secretary | Sue Kirby (Carlisle Museum & Art Gallery). |
| Treasurer | Sherri Brown (Newarke Houses Museum, Leicester). |
| Journal Editor . | Sam Mullins (Market Harborough Museum). |
| News Editor | David Fleming (Leeds City Museums). |
| Membership Secretary | Helen Clark (Beamish). |
| Seminar Organiser | Jenny Mattingly (Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry). |
| Ordinary Members | Rosie Crook (Sunderland Museum & Art Gallery);
Janice Murray (St. Helens Museum & Art Gallery);
Suella Postles (Brewhouse Yard Museum, Nottingham);
John Shaw (NMAS, Edinburgh);
Mark Suggitt (York Castle Museum). |

It was agreed that next year's Annual Study Weekend will be held in Sunderland. Finally, a proposal was carried to waive SHCG seminar fees for unwaged members of the Group. A full report of the Annual Study Weekend will appear in the next SHCG Journal.

The sadly ill-tempered nature of parts of the AGM culminated in a dismally inadequate message of thanks from the incoming Chairperson to John Shaw, who has led the Group ably and sensibly during the past year - a period during which SHCG has held its most successful meeting ever, when membership has risen to an unprecedented level, when the quality of the Group's Journal has exceeded that of all previous issues, and which has seen the reinvigoration of the Group's training programme. I should like personally to thank John now. It has been a pleasure to work with him.

Chairperson Grata?

Meanwhile, a welcome to our new Chairperson, that tempestuous old timer, Stuart Davies. He has lately loaded up his wagon and headed north, and as Birmingham breathes a sigh of relief at the departure of the enfant terrible, Huddersfield holds its breath in anticipation of great events. Stuart brings to the office of Chairperson many qualities, including those required to lead a Group with inherent internequine tendencies. It should be an interesting and productive term

David Fleming (Leeds City Museums).



Suella Postles salutes her election to Committee.

WHAM! : SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

SHCG's meeting on Women, Heritage and Museums came too late to be reported in SHCG News 5. From the misconceptions apparent amongst members at our AGM it is clear that WHAM's subsequent development has led to anxieties over the nature of SHCG's financial involvement. That these might be allayed, it is essential that the situation be clarified.

Plans for a major SHCG meeting on Women in Museums date back to 1982, and were reported at the 1983 AGM. A Working Party was set up, comprising the then SHCG Treasurer (Jane Legget), Secretary (Gaby Porter) and two committee members (Sherri Brown and Sue Kirby). Prior to the WHAM! meeting, in April 1984, they undertook an immense volume of work, in arranging for accommodation, speakers and workshop leaders, exhibitions, bookstalls, resource lists and handouts. Undoubtedly their greatest achievement was in securing, for SHCG, a £500 grant from the Equal Opportunities Commission towards the cost of the conference and a further £300 from Marks & Spencer plc towards a published report.

The meeting was unquestionably the most successful ever held by SHCG. It attracted nearly 100 participants, it gave the group valuable media coverage, and it brought 30 new members. Above all, and thanks to the efforts of the Working Party, it made a substantial net income of over £300, for SHCG. No money has been given to any other organisation; on the contrary, the WHAM! meeting has brought SHCG £800 in sponsorship.

In July 1984 the impetus created by the meeting led to the setting up of a separate group which, perhaps confusingly, bears the name of the original SHCG meeting. Under its own auspices it will take on an independent existence. I wish it every success for the future. SHCG's only remaining involvement in WHAM! is in the publication of a report on the SHCG meeting of that name, and it is here that the greatest confusion has arisen.

Already, £300 had been offered towards the cost by Marks & Spencer. When the committee met in November 1983, the new Treasurer (Sherri Brown) was still piecing together the state of SHCG's finances. It was obvious then that the first call on the group's funds would be Journal 11 and that this would cost substantially more than Journal 10 had done. For the £300 from Marks & Spencer to be secured, it was essential that the balance of the cost of the WHAM! report be found, but until other group expenses could be defined, committee could only agree in principle to meet this. Funding for Journal 11 was never in doubt, and work continued on it.

By the time that committee next met, in February 1984, the Treasurer had produced a draft budget, from which it was clear that funding for the WHAM! report could not be found during the financial year 1983-4. Committee acknowledged this.

Funding from the 1984-5 budget had not been ruled out, and prior to the WHAM! meeting the then Chairman of SHCG (John Shaw) and Gaby Porter from the WHAM! Working Party devised a plan under which up to £200 could be allocated by SHCG to meet the short-fall between the cost of its conference report and the £300 from Marks & Spencer. It was agreed that only those attending the conference should receive a free copy of the report, their conference fees being more than sufficient to cover the cost; other SHCG members would be offered the report at a cost close to that of production. To allow SHCG to capitalise on the considerable interest from outside the Group, and from outside the profession, further copies, at a higher rate, were to be offered to non-members and retail outlets. Thus for its £200 SHCG was to have a £500 publication in its own name, a good source of publicity, plus a full return on its investment. Profits, which could be expected to top £250, were to be reinvested in the Group.

The proposals were put to committee at its next meeting and communicated in advance to those unable to attend. The plan was adopted without dissent. At the time when the plan was drawn up, it was merely a gesture of faith in the importance to SHCG of its WHAM! meeting. By the time that committee met to agree it the WHAM! meeting had already produced a net income of more than £300. In view of this the sum allocated for the conference was increased to £240.

And so to the AGM. What committee had failed to recognise was that in seeking to charge members for the report it had acted unconstitutionally. It should be added that this is the only respect in which it did so. While a motion to distribute the report free to all members was defeated, SHCG members are still entitled under the new constitution, to "receive a copy of each of the Group's publications in the current subscription year".

Whatever the eventual outcome, the WHAM! conference, far from diverting group funds to other organisations, has brought and will bring to SHCG, considerable sponsorship, a substantial profit and invaluable publicity. The misgivings expressed

at the AGM are a product of the speed with which WHAM! has taken on a life of its own, and it must be admitted, failure of committee to pass on information soon enough. Mis-information within committee is another matter. I would like to think that committee has learned from both problems; I am sure that by this time next year we will all know that it has.

John Shaw (National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland).

WOMEN, HERITAGE AND MUSEUMS

Review of the SHCG Conference

The WHAM! meeting was held on April 7th and 8th at Woolton Hall, Manchester. It was of great significance as it was the first meeting of its kind to be organised. It brought together over 80 women (and 3 men) from different disciplines, museums and related organisations, all of whom were concerned with the way women are portrayed by museums and the status of women working in museums. The weekend was certainly dynamic and packed with talks, workshops and discussions. In between these there was a chance to look at the exhibitions on women's work, home working and women in the war, and also the well stocked bookshop and stalls of leaflets and information sheets.

After the welcome and introduction on Saturday morning Dale Spender spoke on reclaiming women's heritage. This was a rather disappointing talk, concentrating on the women of ideas rather than on the history of all women which is so often ignored and forgotten. It was slightly ironic that when speaking at a meeting on women and museums, Ms. Spender said she had never even thought of using museums as a resource when carrying out the research for her books. The talk was followed by a discussion which emphasised that we need to alter the hierarchical view of history where women are often found at the bottom in the class of unskilled labour or in the home. The discussion widened into the poor quality of interpretation in museums. If the story of the past was properly told then women could not be ignored. Many thought that women's history should be treated separately as it had been ignored for so long.

In the afternoon members split up to attend collections workshops which were subject orientated, and after tea strategy workshops which looked at the practical ways museums deal (or do not deal) with women's history.

After dinner there was a report back from the workshops. There is not enough space here to outline these but the main conclusions were that women's history was too often ignored or misinterpreted and this was often perpetuated in male dominated museums and academic circles. The workshops also discussed ways in which this imbalance could be rectified.

Sunday morning opened with Jane Legget talking on the profile of the museums profession. This was based on the results of a questionnaire sent to museums asking for a breakdown of staff. The results showed, not surprisingly, that there are more women at entry level, but the picture is reversed considerably at higher management and director level. Jane suggested some reasons why this should be the case. Not all women wish to join the competitive world at the top, but how far are those who want promotion prevented from doing so by male bias?

Jane Little and Sherry Jespersion then spoke on The Women in Libraries Group. The group has been going since 1981. They have an annual conference, publish a newsletter called WILpower, and have a network of regional groups. In its early days the group was regarded with a great deal of hostility, but it is now being taken more seriously. Elizabeth Ball from NCCL outlined the bias in selection and recruitment of staff in the GLC and the recent changes that are attempt-

ing to rectify this. The last session of the morning was by Vicki Roslin from NALGO who spoke of the problems women have working in male dominated trade unions. The discussion that followed included several suggestions as to how opportunities for women wishing to work in museums could be increased.

After the morning session there was an electric atmosphere and an enthusiasm that something positive should come out of the weekend. The most obvious conclusion was to follow the example of the women in libraries and form a Group. This was a little too simplistic as too many issues were covered by the meeting for there to be a consensus. The two main strands were the ways museums interpret women's past, and the position of women in museums today. The disagreements arose over the usual issue of whether it should be an all women group like WIL and whether it should cover all women in museums, including clerical staff, cleaners and attendants. There was a split over these issues. There was really not enough time to discuss the form a group could take, its aims and its organisation. It was thought that the concept of a group was too structured and that a loose network would be better able to cover all the issues. There was a definite request for an annual meeting and for regional group meetings.

The meeting was a success in that it has inspired regional meetings, and a follow up meeting took place in Leicester on July 13th to discuss the planning of an exhibition and other future plans. Transactions of the meeting will be available later in the year.

It was certainly the most stimulating and well organised SHCG meeting I have been to. All praise and thanks are due to those who initiated and organised it.

Helen Clark (Beamish North of England Open Air Museum).

DAUGHTER OF WHAM!

Following the success of the Women, Heritage and Museums conference organised by SHCG in Manchester earlier this year, the first WHAM! meeting was held at Leicester on 13 July. In response to motions put forward at the plenary session in Manchester, the meeting - comprising thirty people from a wide range of museum backgrounds - voted to establish WHAM! as an organisation with the aim of promoting women's heritage in museums, and give support to women working in the profession. It is hoped to achieve these aims through regional WHAM! groups, based loosely around Area Museum Services, and representatives for all regions apart from Wales and the South West have now come forward as regional contacts. Each region is to take responsibility for different WHAM! activities or will take regional initiatives on proposed WHAM! projects including a register of collections relevant to women's heritage, a travelling exhibition designed to alert the museum visitor to the wealth of women's heritage in museums, and the establishing of a register for women who wish to work part-time or job-share in museums. It is hoped that this regional basis will allow as many people as possible to participate in WHAM!, and provide local support and information networks, whilst regular meetings of regional representatives will allow WHAM! to take up and respond to issues within a national context.

WHAM! would like to thank SHCG for organising the meeting which has since led to the formation of the new group. The Manchester meeting succeeded in attracting many new members to SHCG, and we hope that these close relations may be maintained between the two groups. WHAM! would certainly welcome the support and membership of SHCG members. Further details of membership, which is open to both men and women, working in or using museums for research or leisure, are available from myself or the membership secretary, Elizabeth St. Hill Davies, Stevenage Museum, St. George's Way, Stevenage, Herts.

Sian Jones (Southampton Museums and Art Gallery).

WHAM! REPORT

This two-day conference (reported elsewhere in the News) was a lively event, packed with information, discussion and proposals on the issues of the representation of women in museum collections and policies, and the position of women working in museums.

The published report contains papers by Dale Spender on 'Reclaiming Women's Heritage' and by Jane Legget on 'Women in Museums - Past, Present and Future'. It also has summaries of other speakers' papers, reports from workshops and discussions, and conference proposals.

Publication date: 20th August. Further details from Gaby Porter, 14 Grove Gardens, Leeds LS6 4EG.

THOSE DIPLOMA EXAMINATIONS, 1984

Students registered in Folk Life comprised the largest group taking exams this year - 22 candidates out of a total of 79. Of these 22, 11 passed, 7 were referred, and 4 failed outright and have to re-sit the whole exam. Paper C and (especially) Paper G seem to have caused most problems, but contrary to popular opinion the infamous Practical only caught out 3 of the 22 candidates. There must be a lesson here somewhere. The specialist option has now been renamed 'Social History' after a request was made for the change by SHCG.

TRAINING - BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR DIPLOMA STUDENTS

The following list has been compiled at the request of SHCG by Peter Brears, a former Practical Examiner, as an aid to Social History students. It is highly selective, and lists those books which Peter believes to be the most useful in each of the subject areas for object identification and care:

Agriculture

- Evans, G.E., Ask the fellows who Cut the Hay, Faber, 1960.
Partridge, Michael, Farm Tools through the Ages, Osprey, 1973.
Stephens, Henry, The Book of the Farm, various editions.

Classification

- SHIC Working Party, Social History and Industrial Classification, C.E.C.T.L., 1983.

Furniture

- Chinnery, Victor, Oak Furniture, the British Tradition, Woodbridge, 1979.

Heraldry

- Boutell's Heraldry, revised by J.P. Brooke-Little, Warne, 1983.

Iron and Brass

- Brears, P.C.D., The Kitchen Catalogue, York Castle Museum, 1979.
Lindsey, J. Seymour, Iron and Brass Implements of the English House, Tiranti, 1970.

Pewter

- Cotterell, H.H., Old Pewter, Its Makers and Marks, Batsford, 1969.

Photographs

- Weinstein, R.A., and Booth, L., Collection, Use and Care of Historical Photographs, A.A.S.L.H., 1978.

Pottery and Porcelain Marks

- Cushion, J.P., Pocket Book of British Ceramic Marks, 1976.
Godden, G.A., Encyclopaedia of British Pottery and Porcelain Marks, Barrie & Jenkins, 1964.

Silver and Gold

- Bradbury, F., Bradbury's Book of Hallmarks.
Jackson, C.J., English Goldsmiths and their Marks, MacMillan, 1905.

Textiles

- Jenkins, J.G., The Wool Textile Industry in Great Britain, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.

Tools

- Jenkins, J.G., Traditional Country Craftsmen, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965.

Treen

- Pinto, E.H., Treen and other Wooden Bygones, Bell & Hyman, 1969.

Vernacular Architecture

- Brunskill, R.W., Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture, Faber, 1971.

Care of Collections

- Sandwith, H., and Stainton, S., The National Trust Manual of Housekeeping, Allen Lane & National Trust, 1984.

General

- Life and Tradition series, Dent, 1968-
Folklife, journal of the Society for Folk Life Studies,
Shire publications.

N.B. Committee has for some time been considering the production of a Social History Curators Manual, a suggestion made originally by Crispin Paine. That Committee should continue to investigate the possibilities of such a publication was endorsed at the AGM in Norwich this year. Group members are, therefore, asked to put forward suggestions and ideas on this subject to Committee members.

SPECIALIST TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE

Of the 65 students registered for the Social History (formerly Folk Life) option of the Museums Association's Diploma, 48 (73%) eventually replied to the questionnaire devised by the SHCG Training Working Party. This questionnaire was designed to discover:

- (1) The amount of support given to students by their employers in terms of time and money.
- (2) The preferences of students for duration of seminars, and the length of time they were prepared to travel to a training seminar.
- (3) The interest of students in attending handling sessions and mock practicals on various types of social history material.
- (4) The interest in one day seminars on specific materials.
- (5) The preference of students for attending a seminar and/or obtaining a bibliography on various social history subjects.

The findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Attendance at seminars is possible at least four times yearly for 74% of students. All expenses were paid for 55% of students, whilst another 32% received most of their expenses. The unsupported students were volunteers, locals, free-lance workers, or had been referred on their exams.
2. A very large majority, 91%, preferred one day seminars and 90% were prepared to travel for 1½ hours or more each way to attend such seminars.
3. The interest shown in handling sessions and/or mock practical exams was as follows:-

Subject	Number of People
Domestic Life	39
Agriculture	38
Craft Tools	38
Customs & Traditions	32
Costume & Textiles	28
Printed Ephemera	23
Vernacular Architecture	22
Civic	19
Coins & Tokens	19
Military	11

4. Interest in Material Seminars of one day's duration were as follows:-

Subject	Number of People
Wood	39
Metal	36
Textiles	33
Leather, Bone & Ivory	28
Plastics	27
Ceramics & Glass	26
Paper & Printing	25

5. Preference for a seminar and/or a bibliography on the following subjects:-

Subject	People Wanting	
	Sem.	Bib.
a. Role of Social History Museum	30	28
b. Manuscript and Printed Sources	14	30
c. Industrial Archaeology and fieldwork recording	26	25
d. Vernacular Architecture	23	24
e. Oral History	34	29
f. Collection classification and documentation	22	31
g. Urban History	32	35
h. Rural History	28	32
i. Customs and Traditions	27	33

It appears that a large majority of the registered students are both able, and keen to attend a wide range of training seminars.

The information gained through the questionnaire will help the working party to devise training seminars of particular interest to students. If you have any comments, could you contact the writer at Brewhouse Yard Museum, Nottingham.

It is proposed to circulate a similar questionnaire to the entire SHCG membership to assess their specific training needs. Please do try to return this questionnaire quickly when you receive it.

Suella Postles (Brewhouse Yard Museum, Nottingham) on behalf of SHCG Training Working Party.

URBAN HISTORY IN MUSEUMS

Report

29 people attended this one day SHCG Training Seminar held at Manchester Studies Unit, Manchester Poly, on 11 May. The recent opening of two museums close to the city centre made Manchester a highly suitable venue for this event.

The morning session dealt with Manchester Studies and two of its projects. Audrey Linkman briefly described its founding in 1974, and its aim of collecting material relating to working class history. The unit's archives consist of film, photographs and taped interviews. The methodology for this collection is published in History Workshop, no. 8 (1979). Audrey then dealt in some detail with family photographs in the collection, giving a critique of their subject matter, imagery, and history. (see also Family Albums by Audrey Linkman & Caroline Warhurst, Manchester Studies, 1982 ISBN 0 9506905 1 1).

Next, Bill Williams, the founder of Manchester Studies and also a trustee of the Manchester Jewish Museum, explained how the museum had grown from a Manchester Studies project. Artefacts relating to Jewish history had been donated to the centre along with archives, forming the nucleus of a growing collection. The museum is now housed in a de-consecrated Sephardic synagogue built in the 1870s. Bill explained that the aim of the museum was to broaden the horizons of Jewish history and also to provide an information point on other ethnic minorities in the city, and so help combat racism. The museum's positive approach to the latter provoked animated discussion. The Manchester Jewish Museum hoped it would be objective, concentrating on the experience of Manchester Jewry, which naturally responded to events abroad. Its commitment to anti-semitism remains a clear priority. It was also stressed that the museum was not there to promote any political view of the Jewish past, present or future.

The afternoon session contrasted the urban environments of Manchester and Cheltenham. Patrick Greene of the recently opened Greater Manchester Museum of Science & Industry quoted at length from J.P. Kaye's terrifying account of Manchester's slums in the early 19th century, and stressed why the social dimension should be integrated with displays of reconstructed buildings and machinery. In this way, technological exhibits could be put into a greater historical context than found in most "industrial" museums. This "social history" approach to an "industrial museum" featured in discussion and how it affected interpretation. A balance between the popular and the technical was taken.

Steven Blake of Cheltenham Museums & Art Gallery explained how the economy of Cheltenham in the 19th century centred on the building and service industries. His approach to explaining the urban experience, therefore, was to examine the building development of the town. In this he had concentrated on the Pittville Estate, a speculative development for the wealthy, and on the more proletarian Fairview area. In discussion it was suggested that such research could involve the residents of such areas. Steven agreed but felt that they needed to be prompted by professionals to feel that their area was worth studying.

In addition to these papers there was an opportunity to examine the workings of the Manchester Studies photo archive. Although periods of discussion followed each of the papers there was unfortunately no time for a final summing up. Lack of time is a problem that besets all one day events. This aside for the organisers and speakers are to be thanked for a stimulating and useful seminar, and we look forward to others in the Training Series.

Steph Mastoris (Brewhouse Yard Museum, Nottingham)
Mark Suggitt (York Castle Museum).

P.S. Next one in the series is Rural History in Museums on November 8 (see preview and booking form).

RURAL HISTORY IN MUSEUMS

Preview

The next seminar in SHCG's Training Series will be held at the Yorkshire Museum of Farming, Murton, York, on 8 November 1984. Entitled Rural History in Museums the aim of the seminar is to examine the current state of collecting, display and interpretation in museums concerned with rural life, and in particular farming. Such museums continue to proliferate, and soon it will indeed be a rare county which does not have its own, complete with steam weekends, blacksmith, sheep clipping and corn dollies. "Where" asks one of the speakers, "will it all end?"

Our speakers will be dealing with issues such as whether museums have been acting irresponsibly in portraying farming in an unhistorical, sentimental way; whether museum collections are truly representative of farming practice; whether museums must reach out into the countryside, acting as nuclei for extensive, regional interpretive schemes.

The meeting will include a visit to one of Europe's biggest livestock markets, York Livestock Centre, the partners in which were instrumental in the foundation of the Yorkshire Museum of Farming. There will be ample opportunity for discussion throughout the day, and time to view the Museum itself. These Training Seminars are open to all - see enclosed booking form.

Jenny Mattingly (Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry) on behalf of SHCG Training Working Party.

 TWENTIETH CENTURY COLLECTING IN SOCIAL HISTORY

Preview

This long-awaited SHCG seminar will take place at York Castle Museum on 11 October 1984. It is an opportunity for social history curators to gather together and concentrate upon approaches to collecting which will ensure that we are fulfilling our obligations - whatever they may be - to future generations.

There will be three formal papers delivered. Two of our speakers work in urban environments, and their respective interests both place an emphasis on collecting recent materials. The third speaker has been collecting social history items, urban and rural, since before I was born, and his approach has become semi-legendary. The speakers will make a variety of observations and proposals which will stimulate discussion, both in groups and in open session. For example, are museums succeeding in identifying the yawning gaps left by pre-war collectors, and if so, are they managing to fill them? Are museums at all capable of even beginning to tackle the problems caused by the increasingly rapid rate of change in taste, design and technology, or are we doomed to be overwhelmed in this age of independent youth cultures and mass production? Are the days numbered of the emphasis on material culture in museums? How objective can our bourgeois profession hope to be? Do we suffer from male bias? What price collecting policies in a Disposable World? If our present tactics are inadequate, is it too late to change them? Is there still room for curatorial idiosyncrasy, or is there an urgent need for concerted action?

There will be ample opportunity for discussion, and study group leaders include Gaynor Kavanagh (University of Leicester), Gaby Porter (National Photographic Museum) and Hilary Woolley (Swansea Museums). Only 60 places are available so please apply early if you wish to attend (see enclosed booking form).

David Fleming (Leeds City Museums).

 AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH CERAMICS, 1650-1930

Report

Stoke City Museum and Art Gallery hosted two seminars, in June and July, on ceramics from 1650 - 1930. These comprised an invaluable introduction to an extremely complicated subject, and all thanks are due to Pat Halfpenny, Keeper of Ceramics at Stoke, for her efforts in organising and teaching the course.

From slipware, tin glazed earthenware and salt-glazed stoneware, through to Art and Studio Pottery, Susie Cooper and Clarice Cliff - Stoke's vast collections were used at every point to illustrate materials, shapes, decorative techniques and glazes, in Pat's masterly survey. There were two visits, one to Gladstone Pottery Museum to see the historical galleries, the lovely Tile Gallery, and pottery making demonstrations; the other to Spode Ltd. where our eighteen-strong group had a fascinating tour of a factory which has occupied the same site for 200 years, and where a surprising number of processes are still undertaken with minimal use of machinery.

As a Diploma student I found these seminars tremendously useful from the point of view of impending examinations. Far more important, though, was the opportunity to give one's undivided attention to an expert using a wide range of objects to illustrate a subject with such enthusiasm, that one could not fail to be inspired to learn more.

Susan Underwood (National Railway Museum).

 DEALING WITH DECORATIVE ARTS?

Pondering over pottery? Struggling with silver? Trouble with textiles? If you have problems can we help you? If you have no problems can you help us? It is proposed that a Society of Decorative Arts Curators be formed in order to open up a channel of communications between colleagues.

Our main aims are:-

1. To compile an index of collections in a computer format.
2. To enlist the expertise of the membership with a view to assisting colleagues.
3. To disseminate information relating to decorative arts.

Work is already underway in the south-west of England, where a pilot scheme for a computerised record of collections has begun. It seems sensible that a national society should be inaugurated with wider aims which will encompass regional schemes and offer a comprehensive support group for Decorative Arts Curators. The Society will have its first meeting in the Autumn. Any constructive comments, from those with experience of forming similar curatorial groups, would be welcome.

If you would like to join us or be kept informed please write to:-

Pat Halfpenny, Keeper of Ceramics, City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 4HS, Staffs., or Simon Olding, Assistant Curator, Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, 65 The Close, Salisbury, Wilts, SP1 2EN.



When did you say the next Journal is due out, Sam?

Social History Curators Group

RURAL HISTORY IN MUSEUMS

A SHCG Training Seminar to be held at the Yorkshire Museum of Farming, Murton, York on Thursday 8th November, 1984. These seminars aim to invite and promote discussion; it is hoped that participants will take this opportunity to explore and evaluate the approaches to rural history presented during the day.

PROGRAMME :

- 10.30 Assemble at the Yorkshire Museum of Farming; coffee.
- 10.50 " From Shepherds' Smocks to EEC : Interpretation in Farm Museums".
David Fleming (Leeds City Museums)
- 11.45 Visit York Livestock Centre.
- 12.45 Lunch.
- 1.45 " Farming Collections : A Regional Museum's View ".
John Gall (Beamish North of England Open Air Museum)
- 2.40 " Towards 2000 - The Role of the Rural Life Museum ".
Roy Brigden (Museum of English Rural Life)
- 3.35 Tea, Open Forum and Summary.
- c4.15 Depart.

FEE : £2 for SHCG members (£3 for others), cheques to be payable to SHCG.
To apply please complete the attached form and send it, with fee,
to David Fleming, Leeds City Museum, Calverley Street, Leeds, LS1 3AA.

.....

Please enrol me/us for the SHCG Training Seminar "Rural History in Museums"
on 8th November, 1984.

Number of places required Name

I enclose £..... fee Address

Signed
Date

Do you wish to be collected from York Railway Station?

A map showing how to get to the Museum by road will be sent to all persons
who register for the seminar.