

Issue 65

June 2010

shcg news

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIAL HISTORY CURATORS GROUP



Digital Storytelling in Cardiff's Hinterland

What to do with Wooden Spoons review

Museum of Wigan Life opening

SHCG seminars and reviews

Join SHCG?

If you're reading this and you're not a member of SHCG but would like to join please contact:

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Write an article for the SHCG News?

You can write an article for the News on any subject that you feel would be interesting to the museum's community. Project write ups, book reviews, object studies, papers given and so on. We welcome a wide variety of articles relating to social history and Museums.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:
19TH OCTOBER 2010

SHCG NEWS will encourage and publish a wide range of views from those connected with history and museums. The NEWS aims to act as a channel for the exchange of information and opinions about current practice and theory in museums.

The views expressed in the newsletter are wide ranging and do not necessarily express the views of the SHCG committee or SHCG, unless otherwise stated.

Articles for the NEWS should be between 500 to 2000 words. Please submit a typed copy of your article along with a copy on disk, saved as a PC word file or richtext format, or you can send it as an Email. Illustrations for articles are always welcome. Original photographs can be returned.

Alternative formats:

Electronic copies and alternative formats are available on request.

Send all contributions to:

Lydia Saul,
Keeper of Social History, Bedford
Museum, Castle Lane, Bedford,
MK40 3XD. Tel: 01234 353323 Email:
Lydia.Saul@bedford.gov.uk

Front Cover: Creating a future for the past: Digital storytelling in Cardiff's valley hinterland, pg 6.

Dear SHCG Members,

As summer approaches again and of course the SHCG Conference 2010 in July at Birmingham and Coventry, we find out what is happening in the world of Social History in museums.

In the Bulletin there is all the latest information about the SHCG Conference 2010, SHCG Nominations for Committee in July, up and coming seminars, the opportunity to use our Object Lessons resources, email list and website updates, and news of the re-opening of the Museum of Wigan Life, following its refurbishment.

In this issue we look at two very different, but newly developed museum galleries in Theory and Practice. Firstly the Hawley Gallery at Kelham Island Museum, Sheffield illustrates a worthwhile collaboration between the museum and a contemporary collector, to provide detailed contextual interpretation for their visitors. Secondly, we explore The Cardiff Story's digital storytelling project and their ambition to gather together stories not just from the city, but the Valleys communities also.

If you missed the SHCG seminar held in partnership with the Histories of the Home SSN "What to do with wooden spoons" at The Geoffrye Museum in April, it is reviewed by one of the delegates, Megan de le Hunt, who gives you all the inside information.

We have a treat with the object focus articles featuring the heroic story of Peggy the Dog and her special collar awarded for bravery on display at the Museum of Wigan Life. You can also discover how at Aberdeen Museums a simple Autograph book has a very interesting and moving tale to tell of the soldiers of the First World War.

Finally we have a book review of Nina Simon's "The Participatory Museum" and a special feature of Cartoonist Ronald Searle's "A Night at Wrestling" courtesy of the Cartoon Museum featuring their current exhibition of his work.

Issue 65 is the last issue I will be compiling as News Editor, as I will be standing down from the SHCG Committee in July. I have enjoyed editing the news over the last three years very much and thank all those who have contributed articles and those who have enjoyed reading the newsletter. It has been a pleasure to bring SHCG News to you, in colour at last! I encourage any members who think they would like to get involved with the SHCG Committee to find out more, get hold of a nomination form and give it a go. Please do still keep sending any ideas for articles to me at Lydia. Saul@bedford.gov.uk for the December Issue of the News. I will be forwarding these to the new SHCG News Editor who will be appointed in September. Have a relaxing read of Issue 65.

Lydia Saul

SHCG News Editor



9. Reading Pictures at the Hawley Gallery, Sheffield

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SHCG Matters

SHCG Conference:

**'More for Less:
Big Impacts with
Small Resources',
Birmingham, 8 – 10th July 2010**

You can now book your place for the SHCG Conference 2010. This year's exciting programme includes:

- Almut Gruner from the Thackray Museum talking about 'financial paramedics' for our museums in this tough economic climate
- Steph Mastoris from the National Waterfront Museum on how to 'ride the snake' and stand up for our threatened museums
- Mike Benson, the 'unconventional', Museum Director with the inspirational tale of how he has rejuvenated the previously ailing Ryedale Folk Museum
- Jane Findlay from the London Transport Museum on how to engage with our local communities using the cheap but effective method of social networking
- Rachel Madan from Greener Museums explaining how even a small environmental budget can help your museum do its bit for the planet
- A tour around the recently redeveloped and highly acclaimed Herbert Art Gallery & Museum
- Whatever the size of your museum, and whatever the challenges you face, we are confident that there will be something to inspire, encourage and reassure you at this conference.

Full conference schedule and booking forms are available to download from the SHCG website www.shcg.org.

Michelle Day

For more information please contact Michelle Day, Conference Organiser.
Michelle.Day@hullcc.gov.uk

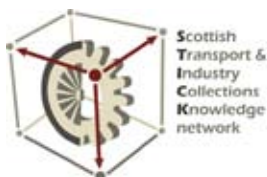
Up and coming SHCG Seminar

Marvellous Medicine

Friday 17th September 2010,
location to be confirmed

Those strange medical implements and potions in your collections are nothing to fear! Find out how to identify and make use of them at this seminar.

Please keep an eye on the website and email list for further details of future seminars. If you have any suggestions for topics or require more information please contact Adam Bell or Kylea Little, seminar organisers.



Old Tools, New Uses

Does your museum have duplicate or unprovenanced collections of the following objects:

Woodworking tools, blacksmiths' or cobblers' tools, sewing machines or typewriters?

If so, the Scottish Transport and Industry Collection and Knowledge network wants to hear from you!

STICK and National Museums Scotland are working in partnership as part of a Museums Association Effective Collections Project to identify the treasures and duplicates of tools and domestic technology in Scottish

Object Lessons available for booking

SHCG's Object Lessons resources incorporate a detailed information pack and a box of objects covering Conservation, Plastics and Woods. The benefit of having real objects to demonstrate, alongside the information pack, makes Object Lessons a cost effective option, without the usual travel expenses and time restrictions.

If you are interested in borrowing the Object Lesson boxes and using them as training aids within your organisation, then these are available to order from Kylea Little at Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums.

There is a small fee for



museums. Participants will learn the importance of items in their collections from an independent advisor, have access to a schools resource and get the opportunity to dispose of duplicate items to artisan communities in Africa in partnership with the charity Tools for Self Reliance. STICK will also create a toolkit for reviewing collections and a summary of the collection findings as a legacy of this project.

Drop-in Workshops for Museum Professionals

Come and learn about how you can participate in this exciting project and meet our independent subject specialist advisor at the following free drop-in workshops:

9th June 2010 - National Piping Centre, Glasgow

24th June 2010 - Cowdray Hall, Aberdeen

7th September 2010 - Highland Folk Museum, Kingussie

27th September 2010 - Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh

For more details visit www.stickssn.org, or to register contact Megan Combe, National Partnerships Officer at NMS, tel: 0131 247 4024, email: m.combe@nms.ac.uk

transporting the resources via DHL Courier. The Conservation box will cost £10.76 (each way). The Plastics and Woods will be a little more at £22.46 (each way).

SHCG Website News

The SHCG website continues to be our chief way of communicating with our membership, and of spreading the word about SHCG to the not yet converted. Make sure you stop by regularly and see what's new. In recent months I am glad to be able to say we have added a section for training handouts from SHCG seminars. So if you missed the recent "What to do with Wooden Spoons" session and want to catch up, or if you would like to refresh your memory of the 2003 seminar on "Expressing Belief," just have a look at the website and click on "Resources" and "Training Handouts."

I am also pleased to announce that the errant Journal 23 has also finally been tracked down and is now available to download from the Resources section of the website.

Visit us at <http://www.shcg.org.uk/>

Mailing List Update

The Mailing List is consistently noted as being one of the most useful and enjoyable aspects of SHCG membership, and recent months have demonstrated a whole spectrum of messages. In addition to the usual postings of job adverts and calls for papers, there have been some interesting and dynamic discussions on issues such as the ever thorny subject of charging for the commercial use of collection images and also using collection images on retail items. There has recently been a lively discussion on the uses and merits of SHIC, with a whole range of opinions expressed, and some fascinating insights into how different museums use the classification system, and how helpful they find it to be. Of course, there has also been a wonderful range of identification queries that members of the list have been able to help with, from an image of Admiral Aleksey Samuilovich Greig, of the Imperial Russian Navy, to a set of mini saucepans,

to WWI flechettes! Items offered by museums for transfer to others have ranged from books about coal mining to a collection of model animals.

The Mailing List is a great way to virtually network with colleagues, keep up to date with the issues facing your counterparts in museums throughout the UK and sometimes even help to solve interesting collection-based puzzles, so if you aren't already a member, just send an email to shcg-list-request@mailtalk.ac.uk, stating your name and whether you are a personal member or employed by an institutional member. If you work for an institutional member, please also state the name of the institution.

Facebook

The SHCG Facebook page continues to flourish and is proving to be an excellent way to reach out to interested parties, not just in the UK but across the world. At the time of writing, we have 152 followers on Facebook, representing an international spread of museums and individuals. Facebook has recently started emailing weekly statistics to the administrators of pages, and I have to say I have been astounded to realise that the SHCG page frequently receives between 300 and 600 views a week. This is clearly a powerful platform for communication, so why not find us on Facebook and start a discussion, add some interesting images, or tell the world your museum's news? If your museum has its own Facebook page, why not link it to the SHCG page by adding us as one of your favourites? Send me a message to let me know you've done it, and I'll be sure to add you as an SHCG favourite in return!

 **Find us on Facebook**
search Facebook for
"Social History Curators Group."

Ellie Swinbank

Web Editor
Assistant.curator@scottishminningmuseum.co.uk

museum of WiganLife

The new Museum of Wigan Life, formerly known as the History Shop, opened its doors on 9 April 2010, following a £1.9m HLF refurbishment. The building was originally a library and was designed by Victorian architect Alfred Waterhouse. Waterhouse also designed the Natural History Museum and Manchester Town Hall.



Youngster exploring the History Study Area.

The ground floor of the museum has a new permanent exhibition called 'Our Borough' and a temporary exhibition area. The first temporary exhibition 'Revealing Roman Routes' was developed in partnership with Wigan Archaeological Society. A new lift has increased access to the first floor Local and Family History Study Area and there are also improved educational facilities.

For further information visit www.wlct.org/heritage.

SHCG Committee needs you!

Since it was established in 1974, SHCG has led the way in improving not only the status of social history in museums, but also museum interpretation, care of collections and how museums involve their communities. Several committee positions will be falling vacant this summer, so if you are interested in becoming more active in SHCG, and help it continue its good work, now's your chance!

Nominations are needed for 5 x Ordinary Members and Chair Elect. Duties that Ordinary Members undertake include Conference Organisers, Seminar Organisers, Web Editor, Membership Secretary, Journal and News Editors. These roles are allocated at the first committee meeting following conference.

Completed nomination forms should be given to any member of Committee during conference before 9pm Friday 9th July, or emailed to Georgina Young, SHCG Secretary (georgina.young@croydon.gov.uk / enquiry@shcg.org.uk) by 5pm Monday 5th July. Elections will be held at the AGM on 10th July at Austin Court, Birmingham.

Committee 'role descriptions' are available on the SHCG website (http://www.shcg.org.uk/about/about_index.asp - scroll down to the bottom) and current committee members will be happy to discuss their duties with you in more detail if required.

Serving on committee does involve some hard work, but it's great fun...and looks good on your CV and/or CPD!

Victoria Rogers MA AMA
Chair, SHCG Committee

Creating a future for the past: Digital storytelling in Cardiff's valley hinterland

The Cardiff Story and the University of Glamorgan are creating digital stories as part of a one-year Knowledge Catalyst Post through the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The post holder is based at the museum as Digital Stories Curator, and works closely with the University's George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling.

The digital stories being created are usually two minute long films. They are made by the people to whom these stories belong. The participants record their own voice, select a small number of usually still images, and use computer technology to create the films. This can be done increasingly easily and cheaply as the technology develops, although sometimes sensitive intervention is required in the process. In sharing these stories, whether with family and friends, school mates, on the internet or broadcast on television, they illuminate storytelling as one of the ever present habits of the heart that makes the un-heroic heroic and the ordinary extraordinary.

Personal stories are at the heart The Cardiff Story and the museum is working with many object donors to build up the first museum collection dedicated to the Welsh capital. The new galleries will be filled with individual narratives from people who have known Cardiff through home life, work, and play. Their stories will be woven into a historical narrative of Cardiff,

which is broadly chronological and cross-cut with themes from everyday life. Within the first gallery will also be a section entitled Cardiff: a View from the Valleys in which digital stories will be screened. Digital stories will also be taken into the permanent collection.

Much of Cardiff's wealth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century can be attributed to the exportation of coal from the collieries of the South Wales Valleys. Since the closure of the collieries, many areas of the Valleys are still experiencing low employment, and many people now travel to the city for work and leisure. In this project, digital stories are a way for individuals from the Valleys communities to contribute to a body of knowledge about

"The digital stories project has already thrown up some interesting results, both in terms of content and methodology."

the historic and contemporary relationship between Cardiff and the Valleys. Contributors have significant editorial control over their story and how it is presented in a way that has the potential to further challenge the relationship between curator and public. It is therefore fitting that digital stories be used to tell the tale of the relationship between a city and its hinterland, one which is sometimes perceived as imbalanced.

The Digital Stories Curator has been running digital storytelling workshops with five community groups in Rhondda Cynon Taff and Caerphilly, two of the Valleys areas that have closest proximity to Cardiff. Sessions have been run at each group's usual meeting place, starting with group workshops followed by one-to-one sessions to complete the digital stories. Each group represents a slightly different demographic, and sessions have been adapted to meet the needs and interests of participants.

Youth Drop-In Centres

The first session held with this group was a taster activity in which individuals were asked to choose an image from a bank of photos of Cardiff and contribute a sound bite about their experiences of the city. These were then edited into a short film presentation, which was played back to the participants. These participants will go on to interview older members of the community, forming the basis of a series of inter-generational stories about people's experiences of Cardiff.

Mother and Toddler Group

In this group, members were asked to create memory boxes to encourage a dialogue about generation and change in their family and local area. Following this, one-to-one sessions were then held to construct a narrative for each person's story. Participants are writing their story at home and then recording audio pieces during a drop-in session. This will form the basis for their digital stories which will be put together using photos and objects from their memory boxes.

Christian Community Centre

Working with a group of committee members of a Christian Community Centre, story scripts were combined with family photos to create digital stories. Again, storytellers wrote most of their stories at home after taking part in group story games and discussions.

Construction works training programme

Participants were invited to

the University of Glamorgan in Cardiff for a storytelling workshop, in which narrative and digital storytelling were explored. Participants went on to discuss their relationship with Cardiff, and part of the day was used to collect their own audio and photos. As an alternative to participants writing their stories down, which proved to be off-putting, one-to-one sessions were used to discuss their proposed narrative. Structured interviews were then recorded, forming the audio piece for each digital story.

Young Adults Group

Using plans for the new gallery as a starting point, we explored what participants felt should fit into the space Cardiff: A View from the Valleys. In the coming sessions we will be exploring narrative and piecing together people's digital stories.

The digital stories project will run until August 2010, but has already thrown up some interesting results, both in terms of content and methodology.



Memory Box and contents.

The success of digital stories as a medium has been in part because they allow people to tell a story that they are passionate about. Stories can be deeply touching because they often offer a very personal insight into the storyteller's life. Introducing a complex theme like the relationship between city and hinterland brings additional responsibility on the part of the story facilitator to relate personal passions within the bigger topic. With enough groundwork with the participants, this can be successfully achieved, but inevitably digital stories are sometimes created that may not quite fit into the museum collection.

Digital stories are a great way for museums to invite contributions from individuals who may otherwise not be able to do so. For example, individuals who do not have 3D objects to donate, individuals who may not

have objects which fall within a museum's collections policy, or younger people who enjoy working with new technology. Through the inclusion of digital stories, The Cardiff Story has opened up the museum to voices which might not otherwise be heard in the city's story.

'The Valleys' are not a homogenous area and individual experiences of Cardiff vary greatly, not least because of the services that are available to people in different areas, such as transport. Towns like Pontypridd, Aberdare and Merthyr Tydfil are used by many people for services and leisure, while Cardiff remains the metropolis to the south. The stories already collected have also shown that factors like age and gender can make Cardiff a more or less attractive prospect for people from the Valleys.

Over the coming weeks and months the digital stories will

continue to come together and some examples will be previewed online. We are greatly looking forward to seeing the 'view from the valleys' that takes shape once all the stories are compiled. It is hoped that the first raft of stories from this project will act as a catalyst to create more, and that through disseminating stories online they can kick-start a dialogue on Cardiff and its hinterland beyond the geographic areas covered in this project.

To see this project's progress and to catch up with The Cardiff Story visit www.cardiffstory.com and search for 'The Cardiff Story' on Facebook, Twitter, Vimeo and Flickr.

Mari Lowe

Digital Story Curator,
The Cardiff Story
Hamish Fyfe, University of
Glamorgan



An interview taking place.

Reading Pictures at the Hawley Gallery, Sheffield

The Hawley collection is a working collection, a library of knowledge, which is loaned out, shared, and constantly used and changed. This keeps it active, relevant and exciting to work with. It has been amassed over 50 years by the vision and determination of Ken Hawley the collector. This article discusses how by working with the collection's collector, to create the new HLF funded Hawley Gallery at Kelham Island Museum, helped to explore new ways of understanding these objects.



Ken Hawley the collector.

'Do you know what one of these is then, shouldn't think you do?' Ken Hawley challenged, a glint in his eye as he pulled open a box of what to an untrained eye looked like lots of screwdrivers. Obviously it was a trick question, they weren't screwdrivers they were turn screws, (screwdriver being a later American term, made popular by Stanley Tools in the 1960s). It was the first of many questions I got wrong, but as long as I learnt from my mistake (and never made the same one again!) 82 year old Sheffielder Ken Hawley, world leading tool specialist would teach me.

It is not often you have the privilege to work with a collector, to delve into a collection and have answers at your fingertips. What's one of those? What does it do? How? Where did it come from? Why did you collect it? Why have you got ten? The answers to these questions were never straight forward and often provoked healthy debate about the nature,

purpose of collecting and who should do it.

A former tool shopkeeper in Sheffield, Ken started to collect after his curiosity was triggered when seeing a joiners brace hanging on the wall of an undertaker's workshop. Its shape interested him, and he wanted to know more. It was given to him as a gift, the first of many objects, which together tell the story of a city's manufacturing legacy, and a collector's drive to understand and teach it to others.

Ken had the foresight to see that the city he had grown up in and its manufacturing landscape was ever changing and that as traditional crafts disappeared so part of Sheffield's heritage would vanish, unless it was rescued.

He made it a mission to visit companies that were relocating or closing and looked out for those things people usually throw away from works in progress to trade

literature. Sometimes he took cine films and audio recordings.

Ken describes himself as having an 'enquiring mind' and this constant thirst to discover has created a uniquely rounded collection. From an exhibition development perspective no object in the collection stands on its own. For example, take a beautifully crafted pocket knife. Ken will have collected the tools which made it, a photograph of the craftsmen at work, have examples of each of its stages of production, its raw materials and the catalogue it could be bought

"Do you know what one of these is then, shouldn't think you do?"

from, as well as the printing blocks used to make the catalogue!

Ken still collects and when donors phone up to see if he wants to find their objects a home they often know of him by reputation and word of mouth. He will take the time to have a cup of tea and chat gathering a background story to objects. It's this very personal approach, which has made the collection full of 'old friends' for a collection of industrial objects there is a voice and person behind everything.

Central to developing the new displays was a commitment to capturing Ken's spirit of 'enquiry' and curiosity with the aim of leaving visitors asking more questions than they came in with. This was achieved by providing layers of interaction, including key questions within the text, samples to handle, interactives, resource folders, film footage, a workbench demonstration area and a phone where visitors can 'dial Ken' for mini tutorials about some of the objects on display.

The gallery has a carefully designed flexible display infrastructure, which allows this enormous collection to tell different stories, to be refreshed and added to by Ken, the team of Hawley Collection researchers, volunteers and staff at Kelham Island Museum. As Ken himself stated, you would need a British Museum to display everything 'properly' and that kind of space we certainly didn't have. The display cases used are a mixture of mesh and pegboard set in KeeKlamp units, often used for scaffolding in the building trade, made bespoke through large frames and workbenches of English oak. [The generic story text is printed on metallic panels mounted in oak frames hung onto the pegboard, which can be easily taken out and re-printed.]?

The gallery is split into five sections, Starting the Journey, Investigating Design, Investigating Making and Investigating Selling. Investigating Selling also includes the open store high density display area designed as Ken's



tool shop with warehouse storage. This means that there is no fixed route through the displays, like Ken's approach to his collection, you can start in any area and take the story backwards or forwards.

One of my favourite displays is called Reading Pictures. It is a giant photographic reproduction of a pen and pocket warehouse. However, it's the way the image was 'read', which for me represents the way the collection is so important. Placing overhead projector film over the

photograph, Ken split it into a grid and examined each square separately, exploring small details in order to understand the bigger picture. Everybody will 'read' a picture differently and Ken was also keen to ask everyone else what they saw, in case extra information could be added. This rich attention to detail, methodical approach and wish to capture every scrap of information to pass on is what makes this collector's approach to discovering the past so engaging.

This is section B of Ken's reading of "Inside the Pen and Pocket Warehouse". The photograph is split into 25 squares in a map-like guide: A-E horizontally, 1-5 vertically.

- B1 This warehouse is on the top floor of a building. The heavy timber is part of a King Post Truss, holding up the roof above.
- B2 There are some mysterious silhouettes of equipment in the far room, a laboratory perhaps?
- B3 The girls on this bench are wiping pocket knives from small work boards. These may be put onto cards, which are being put together by the lady to the left.

B4 All benches at the time were made of wood, tongued and grooved floorboard was a favourite timber to use, nailed to a heavier framework.

B5 The protrusion on the floor near the front bench, is part of a metal tray on which the heating stove stands so as to catch any red hot embers and not set fire to the building!

Working on the Hawley project has taught me a great deal, and has been a surprising and inspiring journey. Not only has it given me an introduction to the complex and fascinating history of tool making, but it has also been a lesson in how to align the lifelong vision and knowledge of a collector with the needs of an accessible project outcome.

Fundamentally, collections like the Hawley Collection show that when specialist knowledge is nourished and used, it can generate a momentum for knowledge sharing. It is the curatorial duty to champion that enquiring spirit and to actively seek out opportunities, whether through initiatives like Effective Collections or the Monument Fellowships, to capture, document and use specialist knowledge and find ways of building it into the day to day workings of collection management.

Learn more about the Hawley Collection at:
<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hawley>

Gwendolen Whitaker

Former Exhibition
Development Officer,
The Hawley Gallery



Inside the Pen and Pocket Warehouse.

A review of

‘What to do with Wooden Spoons?: Interpreting Domestic Collections’

held at the Geffrye Museum, London.

On 16 April 2010 I was very pleased to attend my first SHCG event ‘What to do with Wooden Spoons?: Interpreting Domestic Collections’, a joint seminar with the Histories of the Home Subject Specialist Network held at the Geffrye Museum in London. The seminar addressed a wide range of approaches to interpreting domestic collections including exhibition design, the use of audiovisual guides, school group sessions, live interpretation and contemporary collecting.

The day began with a presentation by Zoë Hendon from The Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture (MoDA) about their exhibition ‘Designer Style: 1950’s wallpapers and fabrics for the people’. I was interested to learn about MoDA’s approach of looking at their collections from a social history as well as a design perspective. By putting consumers at the centre of the narrative of the exhibition, rather focusing too much on ‘big name’ designers, MoDA encouraged visitors to engage with the collections on a personal level and make responses based on their own experiences. Following on from the first presentation, Emily Toettcher from Osterley Park and House, a National Trust owned property in Middlesex, spoke about the very successful audiovisual

guides they have developed for the interior of the house. She provided inspiration through her description of the potential of the guides to provide new layers of interpretation, such as costumed role plays, interactive games and the opportunity to show parts of the house not usually open to the public. Emily also gave practical advice with regard to the development, distribution and maintenance of the guides. After a quick coffee break we reconvened for a presentation by Dr. Victoria Kelley from The University for the Creative Arts and The Royal College of Art, addressing how studying domestic collections can reveal fascinating details of use and processes, such as cleaning and mending. She discussed the difficulties museums face in interpreting





objects that were once in constant use and states of change, but which are now preserved 'out of time'. She cited several examples of live interpretation of collections and replicas to demonstrate domestic processes. Dr. Kelley recognised the value of such methods, but addressed the risk that this form of interpretation, if not carefully researched and carried out, can become formulaic or removed from a sound historical basis.

The next presentation was from Rachel Mercer from Weald & Downland Open Air Museum, who talked about the ways they interpret domestic collections to museum led school groups. In 2005 the museum began a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with the University of Reading when Dr Danae Tankard joined the museum to research the history of the museum's buildings. One use for this research has been to produce a new online resource for schools based on source material relating to the museum's 19th century 'Whittaker's Cottages'. The resource was a great success when first tested by a Year 5 class from a local primary school and has been well used since then. It was an inspiring project to hear about and one which brilliantly disproves the notion that broadening interpretation in museums to include a wide range of different audiences means compromising the quality of the content.

A brief introduction to the Geffrye Museum by Alex Goddard, Assistant Keeper of Interpretation and Exhibitions was followed by lunch. After lunch we were fortunate to have time to explore the museum and the fantastic current temporary exhibition 'A Garden Within Doors', an exhibition about the use of plants and flowers in the home. I found this exhibition both informative and very well presented. Each period room also contained a flower or plant arrangement in keeping with its setting, which very effectively continued the exhibition's theme throughout the rest of the museum. As it was the school holidays it was great to see busy groups of children engaged in family learning activities too. While looking around the museum I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet and talk to other delegates and find out their impressions of the day so far. All those I spoke to were enjoying the day and, in particular, appreciated the diversity of presentations we had heard and the inclusion in the programme of academic as well as museum perspectives. However, one delegate said they had noticed the lack of any mention of wooden spoons! To start the afternoon session, Eleanor John, Head of Collections and Exhibitions at the Geffrye Museum, gave a presentation outlining the history of the museum and how the interpretation has evolved

up to the present day. Eleanor talked about the processes and techniques used to ensure 'rigour' and accurate interpretation in the period rooms, including the use of paintings and photographs as source material. It was interesting to learn that one of the challenges the museum has faced is the instability of the materials used in the modern furniture in the 1990's room. The lack of knowledge of how modern materials will survive in the long term creates difficulties for the museum when collecting contemporary objects. The final presentation of the day was from Louisa Knight, Documentation and Research Assistant at the Geffrye Museum. She spoke about the 'Documenting the Home' project she is working on to collect information from museum visitors about their homes, in particular photographs and details about the way they furnish and use their living rooms. This has received an enthusiastic response and provided a wealth of information to add to the collection, including some very detailed accounts of home layouts, decoration and family traditions. She also mentioned the need to be clear with contributors about how their material may be used and to make sure that the necessary copyright procedures are put in place. Overall I greatly enjoyed the day and came away with lots of ideas for future projects. As I have a particular interest in how representation in collections can increase engagement among previously under represented groups, I found it very useful to hear throughout the day of plans to use methods, such as the Revisiting Collections framework and Stories of the World, to record audience responses to domestic collections for future use. To conclude, I would like to thank the organisers and speakers for providing such a well organised and inspiring day and I look forward to attending further SHCG events in the future.

Megan de la Hunt

Documentation Assistant,
Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

“But make me fit for the front again”: Jeannie Daniels’ Autograph Book

This autograph book is a very unassuming object. A small black notebook embossed “Autographs” on the cover; inside it contains a fascinating collection of verse, notes, drawings and even a Wild Woodbine cigarette. It perfectly captures the essence of social history: the people of the past. It’s the kind of object that reminds me why museums are important.

Jeannie Daniels’ autograph book was created between 1917 and 1918, while Jeannie worked at Oldmill Hospital in Aberdeen. Originally the site of a reformatory, and later a poorhouse, Oldmill Hospital briefly became the No. 1 Scottish General Hospital and the home

for many disabled soldiers, casualties of the war in Europe.

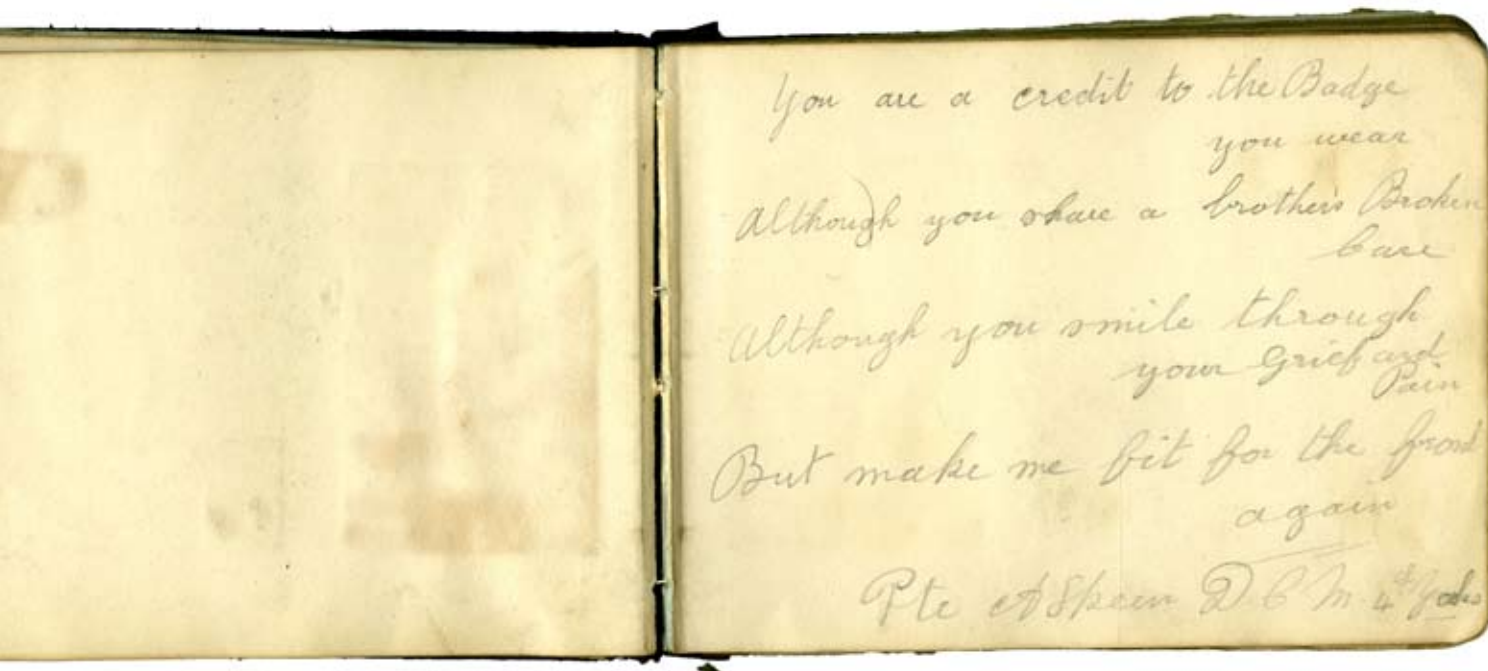
Rehabilitation of these military men was the central task. Recovering casualties would spend many months confined to the hospital. Patients were encouraged to come to terms with their disabilities and to look to developing skills appropriate to their circumstances. This might be making appliances for amputees, mending nets or engineering. Under the supervision of John Marnoch this facility gave some hint of how future civilian orthopaedic hospitals might be organised.

It’s not clear whether Jeannie Daniel was a nurse or a hospital visitor, although the references to a badge Jeannie wears in some entries suggest the former. What is clear is that she spent a lot of time getting to know the recuperating soldiers in her care.

They have added their sometimes harrowing experiences of life in the trenches and wartime through the medium of poetry, often humorous.

Entries include “The Bullet” by Joseph Lee from Dundee who served with the Black Watch in Belgium and France before being taken prisoner in 1917, only a year after publishing his first volume of poetry. There’s also the chorus from “Whizz Bang Lane”, which appears to have been a popular soldiers’ song – the British Library has a recording online. Not only that but some soldiers have drawn small sketches and cartoons. Adding their thoughts and drawings to the volume probably helped relieve the tedium of long-term hospital care, and must have been therapeutic for some.

Every schoolchild learns about World War One and most of us





can name a few war poets, but there's something very immediate about reading these handwritten poems. Like all great museum objects, it helps us cross the intervening years. Suddenly the soldiers become real people, injured, weary, and scared, but all the same getting fit for the front again.

Jeannie Daniel's autograph book is currently having conservation treatment, but will return for a temporary exhibition later this year, after which it will be part of Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums plans for the 2014 anniversary of the start of the First World War.

Visit www.aagm.co.uk to search Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Collections.

Jenny Brown

Curator of Industry,
Aberdeen Art Gallery
and Museums

When Fritzzy held a winning
And man power problems ^(Card) pressed
Then women stepped into the ^{us hard} breach
And proved more than a ^{peach}
Adaptable to a degree
She substituted you and me
And soon made good and ^{reached her goal}
In many an unfamiliar role
She drives a car with dash and ^{verve}
Or fills shells with unshaken ^{nerve}
She's proved her worth time and ^{again}
In what was once termed ^{man's} domain
In short all round we must ^{admit}
Women has loyally done her bit

When world's Campaign is know ^{more}
And peace our war worn world ^{broods o'er}
To women we shall say "Well ^{done!}"
But now dear that the war is ^{won}
Will you retire into your shell
That home you used to tend ^{so well?}
Will you give up this larger life
And fill your proper sphere ^{as wife?}
Will you renounce the wages big
With tasks for your sea infra dig
And casting off your overalls
Return to crotchet, socks and ^{shawls?}
Then women with a knowing ^{wink}
Will promptly answer
"I don't think"

Rfn 13/11/14
Oldmill

Peggy's collar for Bravery



Peggy.



Close-up of Peggy's collar

Museum displays often contain medals and certificates commemorating human bravery. On display at the new Museum of Wigan Life you will find the medals of war veteran Charles Hogg and mines rescuer Thomas Hulme. Alongside these medals you will find the collar of Peggy the dog.

Peggy lived in Wigan with her owner Harry Harman. On the 22nd September 1939 she performed a life-saving act. A young boy named Tommy Brown was collecting blackberries along the bank of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal when he fell into the water. Peggy jumped in and kept him afloat until help arrived. She was awarded the Daily Mirror Brave Dogs award for saving Tommy's life. For years afterwards Peggy attended the Wigan Carnival to raise money for charity.

Peggy's collar comprises a leather band with four medals attached, a silver presentation plate, silver studs and a silver buckle. Two of the medals are from Cruft's Dog Show and were won by Peggy in 1932 and 1933. The third medal is an identity plate provided by the "TAILWAGGERS" Club. The final medal has a cross with the words 'FOR BRAVERY' underneath. The silver presentation plate says 'PRESENTED BY / The Daily Mirror / TO "PEGGY" / FOR BRAVERY.'

In preparation for display the collar was conserved by Jenny Truran at Lancashire Conservation Studios. The silver elements were showing signs of light corrosion and tarnish. There was also a build up of greasy dirt around the silver studs, which had been stained green through



copper corrosion products arising from the base metal within the silver. The leather itself was in good condition. The grease and copper corrosion products were removed using bamboo skewers and swabs of white spirit. The silver fittings were cleaned with silver dip, rinsed and then finished with a silver polishing cloth. The other metal fittings were given a general surface clean with swabs of white spirit to degrease and remove any corrosion products. The leather was very supple and only required a small amount of surface cleaning with a soft brush.

We also have two other items in the museum collection related to Peggy, these are a certificate and a photograph. The photograph is black and white and in a card frame. On the frame above the photograph is a light blue circle containing a silver cross and the words 'FOR BRAVERY'. On the bottom of the frame in light blue lettering it says 'PEGGY'. Below this in white lettering it says 'Awarded a Daily Mirror "V.C." Collar for Bravery'. The certificate is mounted on card and is signed by Daily Mirror editor, Leigh D. Brown. It says that

Peggy 'has been placed on the Roll of Honour for Conspicuous Bravery and Faithful Service'.

The Museum of Wigan Life opened its doors on 9 April 2010. Peggy's story is told in the 'Our Champions' section of the new permanent exhibition. 'Our Champions' celebrates the achievements of local people (and dogs!) from sports people and

entertainers, to leaders and brave individuals.

For further information visit the Museum of Wigan Life website at www.wlct.org/heritage.

Jenny Broadbent

Collection Officer,
Museum of Wigan Life



Peggy's certificate from the Daily Mirror.

The Participatory Museum

Nina Simon's new book 'The Participatory Museum' is 'a practical guide to working with community members and visitors to make cultural institutions more dynamic, relevant, essential places'.

The book reflects an age of web 2.0 interactions. Simon argues that visitors have become accustomed, through the social Web, to responding to information; they expect to discuss, share and remix what they consume. She advocates cultural institutions engage in active participation in order to demonstrate their value and relevance to audiences today.

'The Participatory Museum' is easy to read and brimming with ideas for involving audiences in meaningful ways. The ideas are taken from museums, art galleries, science centers, coffee shops, social networking sites, casinos and even volleyball clubs (to name but a few). They are varied in terms of budgets and technologies so hopefully there is something for everyone interested in having a go.

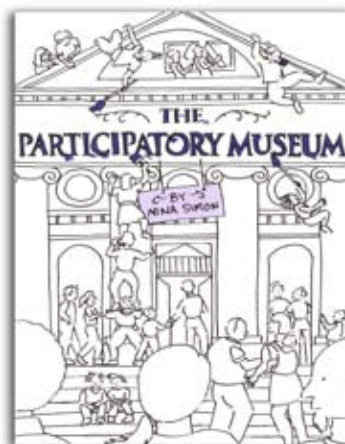
Simon does not suggest that one approach fits all. She recommends that each institution should think carefully about the participatory technique they adopt since choosing the 'wrong' approach could lead to difficulties and unsuccessful projects. There are useful chapters detailing different types of participation; visitors as contributors, collaborating or co-creating with visitors and hosting participants.

'The Participatory Museum' was a thought provoking read. It has inspired me to try out some different participatory techniques and to be on the look-out for participatory ideas from outside of museums. It has also provided me with the opportunity to reflect on my previous experience of participation; to gain a deeper understanding of my experiences in terms of Simon's participatory framework and discussion.

The book is available to buy or read online at <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/> where

readers are encouraged to share their reactions, additions, arguments, case studies and ideas and, since social history curators have been working with communities and individuals routinely for years there will be, undoubtedly, lots that we can contribute to the discussion.

Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, (Museum 2.0, California, 2010) ISBN 13: 978-0-615-34650-2



Reviewed by Kylea Little

Keeper of History,
Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

Ronald Searle - Graphic Master A 90th birthday celebration

Ronald Searle celebrated his 90th birthday on 3 March 2010. Regarded as 'The Master' by cartoonists not only in Britain but around the world he is still drawing and continues to inspire cartoonists, illustrators, animators, film makers and artists in many fields. This exhibition shows 140 works from across his seventy- five-year career, from his early cartoons for the Cambridge Daily News in the 1930's to political cartoons for Le Monde in the 2000's. Many of the

pictures have been lent by Searle himself. The focus is particularly on his reportage drawings which show Searle's skill for capturing the essence of an event, character or situation.

'To say he is an artist is no more than the truth, but he is more than that: he is our greatest living cartoonist with a lifelong dedication to his craft ... His work is truly international, yet absolutely grounded in the English comic tradition.'

Steve Bell

'He had a huge effect on me. I wanted to draw like him. His pen was always searching, exploring every nook and cranny of his subject. His exciting, electric style fascinated me.'

Gerald Scarfe



A Night at Wrestling, Punch, 5th March 1958

In the late 1950's Searle began a series of collaborations with the writer Alex Atkinson. The New Mayhew series in Punch, after Henry Mayhew's 1851 London Labour and the London Poor, purported to reveal 'the New Poor', but were in fact Atkinson's invention. Searle's drawings were imagined, but informed by experience. His father had been a boxer and as a child the young Ronald would go to watch his father's matches.

© Ronald Searle. Reproduced by kind permission of the artist and the Sayle Literary Agency. Donated to the Cartoon Museum Collection by the artist.

From 1942 to 1945 Searle endured three and a half years as a prisoner of war of the Japanese working on the infamous Thai-Burma Railway. His 400 secret drawings, some of which he hid under the mattresses of prisoners dying of cholera, recorded life and death in the camps. Some of these fragile drawings are included in the exhibition. His experience as a POW transformed his life and formed the basis of his later reportage work. In the 1950's Searle captured life on the London streets, drawing sewer men and street sweepers, horse auctions and the funeral of George VI for the News Chronicle. In the 1950's and 60's he travelled the world for American magazines such as Life and Holiday. In 1961 alone he drew the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem and the newly built Berlin Wall.

As an observer of life Searle is unparalleled: his unerring eye for the surreal and the comic can be seen in his drawings - both entertaining and revealing - from America, Canada, Germany, France, Ireland and Casablanca. In Britain he is still best known for his St Trinian's and Molesworth drawings, but these are but one tiny chapter in his career. This exhibition shows the quality and diversity of the work he has produced over his long life. In 1995 at the age of 75 when most people are enjoying retirement, Searle took on a new challenge when he was asked by the French newspaper Le Monde to draw a weekly political cartoon. He continued to do so until 2007 when cutbacks at the paper brought the association to an end. Ronald Searle has been closely involved in the mounting of the exhibition, lending artwork and drawing materials and assisting with research through an in-depth interview. The exhibition is accompanied by a 160-page catalogue.

The Ronald Searle exhibition runs until the 4th July 2010 at the Cartoon Museum, Little Russell Street, London.

For more information or images:

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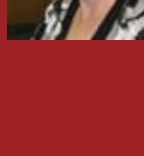
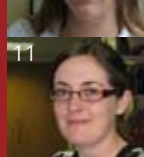
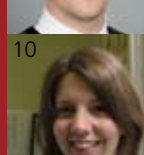
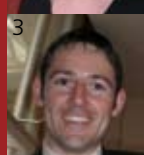
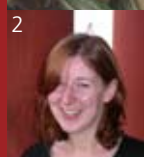
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