

# Annual General Meeting

**2012**

**Minutes**

**Start time 15:33**

1. **Apologies and Attendance**

Apologies were received in advance from Joe Carr, Adam Bell, Jenny Broadbent and Laura Briggs.

A full list of attendees can be found under Appendix A.

1. **Minutes of the 2011 AGM**

The minutes of the 2011 AGM were passed as a true record.

**Proposed:** Kitty Ross

**Seconded:** Steph Mastoris

1. **Matters arising from the previous minutes**

No matters were arising from the previous meeting that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**4. Officer’s Reports**

2011-12 Reports incorporated in the meeting papers and can be found under Appendix B. Members attending the AGM were given time to read through and follow up with comments and queries.

* **Chair**

2011-12 Report incorporated in meeting papers.

Michael Terwey highlighted that SHCG will need to reconsider its plans for charitable status over the coming year, in particular whether we continue to wait for CIO status to pass into law or use one of the existing legal structures for charities.

Three members are retiring from committee this year: Georgina Young, Karen Oliver-Spry and Freya Folasen. Each was thanked for their contribution.

* **Treasurer**

2011-12 Report incorporated in meeting papers.

Georgina Young read through the Treasurer’s report in Joe Carr’s absence noting that while the balance looks healthy a significant part of this is restricted grant income and the underlying trend is a year on year loss.

Steph Mastoris emphasized this significant underlying loss and commended membership reform.

Michael Terwey added that Committee will be looking to change the way SHCGs accounts are presented to separate out restricted and unrestricted funds now that SHCG is regularly receiving grants for project work.

There were no further queries or questions.

**Proposer:** Karen Oliver-Spry

**Seconder:** Michelle Day

* **Summary – Officers Reports**

Zelda Baveystock asked how Object Lessons was going. Jenny Brown reported that the boxes have been in constant use this year and are currently available from September. The membership survey showed up some demand for new resources, but that a decision on whether to take this forward would follow on from completion of the First BASE project. Victoria Rogers noted that the FirstBASE grant included money for content generation that might be used to support this need.

1. **FirstBASE Sub-committee Report**

Steph Mastoris ran through the report of the FirstBASE sub-committee (which can be found in Appendix C) and stressed that thanks were due to Museums Association Esmee Fairbairn Collections Fund for the financial support and to Victoria Rogers and the FirstBASE editorial team for all the work they have put in to make this year’s redesign happen.

Conference will get a sneak peak at the new version of FirstBASE tomorrow.

There were no questions relating to this report.

1. **Membership Motion 1**

The text of the motion is incorporated in the meeting papers and can be found in Appendix D.

Michael Terwey ran through the thinking behind the proposed increases in membership fees. SHCG membership fees have remained static for 8 years and inflation over that period has left the Group in a situation where its core costs significantly exceed its core income. We need to readjust to make the Group sustainable. Rather than necessarily increase costs for all, Committee has taken the opportunity to reform the membership structure and introduce a digital membership rate. Several changes have been made to the motion in response to consultation over the last four weeks including the reintroduction of an unemployed rate, a slight uplift in the digital rates to cover design costs, a simplified institutional fee structure and a staged introduction of the increase over two years.

The motion was opened up for questions from the floor. Zelda Baveystock asked at what point it does not stack up to offer print at all. Michael indicated that we have done some modelling, but could only guess at take up rates. The indication is that enough people are willing to pay extra for print to make it viable at the moment.

Steph Mastoris noted that the Society of Folk Life Studies had taken on Maney Publishing (online only) to manage its journal publishing and membership service. SHCG would need an offer from a publisher, but it would be a good idea to investigate this option. There are lots of benefits including the opportunity to make the work of the group international. Print add-ons are simple supplied by the Society for those who need them.

**ACTION: Committee to investigate and report back to next AGM**

The motion was put to a vote with the following outcome:

**For 42**

**Against 0**

**Abstain 0**

The motion was unanimously passed.

1. **Membership Motion 2**

The text of the motion is incorporated in the meeting papers and can be found in Appendix E.

Michael Terwey explained that this motion gives SHCG Committee the ability to apply a modest increase to membership fees without voting on the increase at AGM. It should help to prevent large annual increases in future (partly caused by Committee being reluctant to ask AGM to lift fees every year) by keeping fees in line with inflation.

The motion was opened up for questions from the floor. Robert Excell asked whether this percentage increase approach will this result in odd membership rates (e.g. £8.40) and whether it gives Committee enough leeway. Michael Terwey responded that at the moment with interest rates as they are, this seems like enough room for manoeuvre and that not being able to round up wasn’t a major issue.

There was a query about whether this was how other similar membership organisations work. Georgina Young responded that she did not have a sense of a common approach; few SSNs currently work on a membership basis. It was noted from the floor that the Scottish Museums Federation simply increase membership fees as and when and that the Museums Association goes to AGM every year with its proposed increases.

The motion was put to a vote with the following outcome:

**For 38**

**Against 1**

**Abstain 3**

The motion was passed on a majority vote.

 **8. Election of Committee Members**

**8.1 Chair Elect**

One nomination was received for the post of Chair Elect:

**Michelle Day**

Exhibitions Organiser, National Media Museum

**Proposed by:** Victoria Rogers

**Seconded by:** Michael Terwey

Michelle Day is duly elected unopposed to Committee for three years, under the terms of the current constitution, as Chair Elect.

**8.2 Secretary**

One nomination was received for the post of Secretary:

**Jenny Brown**

**Curator (Social and Industrial History), Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums**

**Proposed by:** Michael Terwey

**Seconded by:** Michelle Day

Jenny Brown is duly elected unopposed to Committee for three years, under the terms of the current constitution, as Secretary.

**8.3 Ordinary Members x 5**

Seven nominations were received and verified by the Secretary in advance of the deadline for five Ordinary Member vacancies. The nominations are detailed below and an election was duly held.

**Adam Bell**

Assistant Keeper of Social History, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums

**Proposed by:** Georgina Young

**Seconded by:** Crispin Paine

 **Jenny Broadbent**

Museum Manager, Rochdale Pioneers Museum

**Proposed by:** Michael Terwey

**Seconded by:** Ellie Swinbank

**Ciara Canning**

Curator of Community History, Colchester & Ipswich Museum Service

**Proposed by:** Kylea Little

**Seconded by:** Catherine Newley

 **Emily Fuggle**

Curator and Research Officer, Imperial War Museum London

**Proposed by:** Michelle Day

**Seconded by:** Briony Benge-Abbott

**Jude Holland**

Interpretation Manager, ss Great Britain

**Proposed by:** Michael Terwey

**Seconded by:** Georgina Young

 **Jen Kavanagh**

Audience Engagement Manager, Science Museum

**Proposed by:** Anna Renton

**Seconded by:** Georgina Young

 **Helen McConnell**

Social History Curatorial Trainee, Herbert Art Gallery

**Proposed by:** Ali Wells

**Seconded by:** Martin Roberts

The count was undertaken by Steph Mastoris, National Waterfront Museum and verified by Jill Holmen, Epping Forest District Museum Service with results as follows:

**Adam Bell 33 Elected on count**

**Jenny Broadbent 37 Elected on count**

**Ciara Canning 38 Elected on count**

**Emily Fuggle 17**

**Jude Holland 33 Elected on count**

**Jen Kavanagh 17**

**Helen McConnell 19 Elected on count**

 **9. Any Other Business**

Retriring committee members were handed thank you cards.

No other business was raised.

 **10. Close of Meeting**

**End time: 16:30**

**Appendix A – List of attendees**

1. Victoria Rogers Cardiff Story Committee

2. Zelda Baveystock Newcastle University Individual

3. Kathrin Pieren Petersfield Museum Individual

4. Sarah Maultby National Media Museum Individual

5. Hannah Crowdy National Museums Northern Ireland Individual

6. Ciara Canning Colchester & Ipswich Museums Individual

7. Jill Holmen Epping Forest District Museum Service Individual

8. Lydia Saul Bedford Museum Institutional

9. Jude Holland SS Great Britain Trust Individual

10. Megan de la Hunt Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums Individual

11. Tabitha Cadbury Plymouth City Museum Institutional

12. Jane Brown Swansea Museum Individual

13. Emma Williams Swansea Museum Individual

14. Fiona Hayes Glasgow Museums Individual

15. Isobel McDonald Glasgow Museums Individual

16. Aileen Strachan Glasgow Museums Individual

17. Lyndsey Mackay Glasgow Museums Institutional

18. Robert Excell London Transport Museum Individual

19. Steph Mastoris National Waterfront Museum Individual

20. Manda Gifford Canterbury City Council Individual

21. Esther Elin Roberts Gwynedd Museum & Art Gallery Individual

22. Paul Connell Chippenham Museum and Heritage Centre Individual

23. Nicola Dyke Harrogate Museums & Arts Institutional

24. Amy Western Cardiff Story Museum Institutional

25. Eleni Kostarigka Cardiff Story Museum Individual

26. Lucie Connors The Cardiff Story Institutional

27. Arran Rees Access to Heritage Blaenau Gwent Individual

28. Rachael Lovering Museums & Heritage Consultant Individual

29. Helen McConnell Herbert Art Gallery & Museum Individual

30. Steph Gillett West Berkshire Museum Institutional

31. Kate Chatfield People’s History Museum Individual

32. Catherine Littlejohns Bristol Museums Institutional

33. Emma Harper British Postal Museum & Archive Individual

34. Micahla Hill Lancashire Museum Service Individual

35. Kitty Ross Leeds Museums & Galleries Individual

36. Freya Folasen British Postal Museum & Archive Committee

37. Cat Newley St Albans Museums Committee

38. Jenny Brown Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museum Committee

39. Karen Oliver-Spry Science Museum Group Committee

40. Michelle Day National Media Museum Committee

41. Michael Terwey National Media Museum Committee

42. Georgina Young Clore Fellow Committee

**Appendix B - Compiled Committee Reports 2012**

**Chair's Report 2011-12**

For me, the last year as chair of SHCG has been about securing the group's sustainability. Internally, we have undertaken a review of our finances, of the cost of our activities, and a survey of our membership to understand how we can continue to survive in what is a difficult financial climate for all our individual and institutional members. Externally, we have also sought to establish a relationship with Arts Council England (ACE), who have taken responsibility within the museum sector for supporting subject specialist networks from the former Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) agency.

Our review of internal costs has resulted in the proposed reforms to membership rates which we have submitted first to consultation and now to the AGM. Work to keep costs down and to find efficiencies is on-going and over the next year we will look to continue this work while maintaining all our existing activities which, we know from our membership survey, are all valued highly by members.

The external environment continues to be challenging, but by establishing a good relationship with ACE we not only help to build links with an important funder, but we are also able to help shape the approach that they will take to supporting SSNs in the coming years. At the end of last financial year ACE gave us funding to develop our website and to overhaul our membership database, and this year we are in the final stages of negotiating funding which will allow us to run a series of free object identification seminars and create online resources based on those sessions. While these funding opportunities should never replace our membership income for funding core activities, they are a positive sign for the future.

Frustratingly, we are still waiting for legislation to be enacted which will create the particular form of charitable status which meets our needs, and which we discussed at last year's AGM. We will continue to pursue this option for the time being, but as we receive more and more funding from organisations like ACE we must establish SHCG as a more formal legal entity in the near future.

We are unlucky to have three highly valued committee members retiring this year: Georgina Young, who has served on committee for 5 years, the last three as Secretary; Karen Oliver-Spry, who is standing down after two years as an ordinary members and who has been the driving force behind the last two years' conferences; and Freya Folåsen who is leaving after only a year as our fundraising officer (was it something we said?) to return to her native Norway. All will be missed greatly.

**Michael Terwey**

**SHCG Chair**

**Treasurer’s Report 2011-2012**

I am pleased to be able to present the accounts for SHCG for the last financial year 2011-2012.

Although the accounts seem to be in a strong position at the end of 31.3.2012 with a healthy balance, it should be noted that this is largely due to a substantial grant income for this year. In reality we are seeing high rising costs for core activities and steady reduction in income.

SHCG’s assets are held in a Cooperative Bank Community account which was opened in February 2009.

**Receipts and Payments Account**

**For the Year Ending 31st March 2012**

**Co-operative Account**

**Receipts**

Bank Interest £21.12

Annual Conference £7367.00

Membership Subs £5,558.00

Seminars £34.00

Grants £26,000.00

 Total £38,980.12

**Payments**

Committee Expenses £ 3,559.90

Seminar Expenses £9.05

Conference Expenses £9,129.69

Newsletter Expenses £2,476.26

Journal Expenses £3,845.29

1st Base Expenses £1,334.80

Website Expenses £242.03

Accounts £264.27

Misc £283.00

Conference 2012 £1,516.00

 Total £22,660.29

Net Excess £16319.83

Balance Carried Forward from 2010-11 £12,289.03

Cash Balance Carried Forward 2011-12 £28,608.86

**1 April 2011- 31 March 2012**

**Membership subscriptions**

Membership subscriptions have fallen over the year to 356 members as of May 2012. Subscription payments for this year will fall into the 2010-11 accounts as well as 2011-12 accounts.

**Seminar Programme**

Expenditure listed under seminar expenses relate to seminars organised by SHCG during this financial year.

**Conference 2011**

The Social History Curators Group 2010 Conference made a profit of £230.31 which includes the cost of two free places and offering a 10% early booking discount. This is a reflection of the popularity of the conference and the hard work of the SHCG Committee and Conference Organisers.

**Journal and News**

Two editions of the News and one edition of the Journal were paid for within this financial year. The cost of producing the News has remained stable after its second year in colour format. The cost of printing the Journal has remained stable from last year when its production saw a sharp rise in cost due to increased content and design. In the next financial year there are likely to be a similar number of issues.

**Grant Income**

SHCG has been fortunate in obtaining a grant of £26,000 from the Museums Association for the development of firstBASE and website projects.

**Interest**

Interest continued to be paid in the Co-Operative Business Account. Interest has been constant but relatively low over the period of the last financial year.

**Committee Expenses**

Four Committee meetings were held during the year. Costs of Committee travel has increased from 2010-11, which reflects both the substantial increases in rail fares and air fares, and the broader more widespread distribution of the Committee. Committee tries to take advantage of early booking reductions where possible.

**Website and firstBASE**

Fasthosts continues to host the SHCG website. Costs shown within the accounts include renewal of the Mailtalk list and hosting payments, the cost of which has risen slightly over this period. Costs within firstBASE reflect committee expenses as well as firstBASE site development.

**Joe Carr,** **Joe.carr@btinternet.com**

**Treasurer**

**July 2012**

**Independent Examiner’s Report to the Social History Curators Group**

We report on the accounts of the group for the year ended 31 March 2012

Respective responsibilities of members and examiner

The members are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The members consider that an audit is not required for this year and that an independent examination is needed.

It is our responsibility to:

* Examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act;
* State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiners statement

Our examination was carried out in accordance with general accounting policies. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as members concerning any matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no option is given as to whether the accounts present a “true and fair view” and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner’s statement

In connection with our examination, no matter has come to our attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, that requirements:
	* to keep accounting records; and
	* to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records

have not been met; or

1. to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

I S Webster FCA

Larking Gowen

Faiers House, Gilray Road, Diss, Norfolk IP21 4WR

2nd July 2012

**Secretary’s Report**

The Committee has held four meetings this year as follows:

Friday 19 August 2011 at the National Railway Museum, York

Friday 18 November 2011 at Museum of Wigan Life, Wigan

Friday 27 January 2012 at the British Postal Museum and Archive, London

Friday 4 May 2012 at the National Media Museum, Bradford

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The Committee would like to thank the staff at these venues for hosting the meetings without charge. The main business of this year’s meetings has been monitoring the progress of The Esmee Fairbairn Collections Fund project to renew FirstBASE, analysing the results of our membership survey, setting a strategy and forward plan for SHCG, and reviewing membership rates and categories. Committee also monitors the progress of conference, seminars, SHCG News, Social History in Museums Journal, special projects and the website. Agendas and minutes of all Committee meetings are available on request to anyone who would like to know more from enquiry@shcg.org.uk

The primary task of Secretary this year was to be the adoption of charitable status, however, due to an indefinite delay in bringing in the legislation required to establish the Charitable Incorporated Organisation model progress has not been possible in this area. The bursary scheme announced at last year’s AGM has also been put on hold due to financial constraints.

The Secretary is responsible for any correspondence addressed to the Group. Thanks go as ever, to the members of the SHCG-list who have helped to resolve some complicated enquiries; your knowledge is invaluable. As I am stepping down from Committee this year, I’d also like to say a huge thank you to my fellow committee members and the wider SHCG membership for making the last five years such a joy.

**Georgina Young**

**Secretary** enquiry@shcg.org.uk

**July 2012**

**Membership Secretary’s Report**

Current net membership totals -

 **2011- 2012 2012-2013**

Personal 218 220

Institutional 127 125

Overseas 8 8

Honorary 4 4

TOTAL 357 357

Membership levels have remained constant; although some have ended their SHCG membership in the last year due to changes of circumstances or non-payment, we have had a steady flow of new members joining.

Our 4 honorary members are: The editor of the Museums Journal; Sharon Heal; Suella Postles; Collections Trust and the Newcastle University Library who house the SHCG full run of journals & newsletters.

Thank you to those who have responded to my request for up to date email address for the membership database. This will help in our effort to reduce postage costs and we will send invoices by email in the future.

**Laura Briggs**

**Membership Secretary,** membership@shcg.org.uk

**July 2012**

**Journal Editor’s Report**

*Social History in Museums* Vol 36 (2012)

This is my second year as Journal Editor. Volume 36 contains 7 main articles and 2 exhibition reviews and is 62 pages long. This year saw a number of changes and influences on journal. Firstly we carried out an SSN wide evaluation. Journal had three questions to ask, the first one ‘*Do you read Social History in Museums?’* received a favourable response with 15% saying ‘yes from cover to cover’ and 65% saying they read selected articles. An equal 15% said that they only read it when researching. As Editor I found this really encouraging that a combined 80% enjoy reading Journal for it for interest.

**Going Digital**

A digital version was offered for the first time this year. 9 members took up the option. This was in response to the evaluation where we asked ‘*Should SHCG provide Social History in Museums in a digital or downloadable format for a reading device /iPad/pc?’* 61.5% said yes.

The advantages of the digital version are that it doesn’t incur printing and postage costs, it’s in colour throughout and it has live web links and an interactive contents page.

**Costs**

The cost of producing journal always vary according to print run, paper cost, ink costs and rises in postage. This year I was able to beat the increase in postage at the end of April 2012. The Designer, Simon Collins and Quacks quoted the same prices as last year, so we made a small saving.

Costs for a print run of 360:

Simon Collins £894

Quacks £1375.50

Postage 2nd class £219.51

**Total costs £2489.01**

Each copy costs £6.91

**Next year Vol 37**

I have already received a number of unsolicited contributions regarding Collecting, Communities and Exhibitions.

**Michelle Day**

**Journal Editor**

**July 2012**

**News Editor’s Report**

Two issues of *SHCG News* have been published in the last 12 months, issues 68 (December 2011) and 69 (June 2012).

As mentioned in the editorial accompanying issue 69, the SHCG membership survey yielded a lot of valuable information which will help the committee shape the development of the organisation. It was great to read the many positive comments about *SHCG News*, along with some constructive suggestions for improvement. Of the nine core offers SHCG currently provides its membership, *SHCG News* was considered the 2nd most valuable (the e-mail list achieved pole position) and 100% of respondents said they read *SHCG News*.

90% of respondents said they would find a digital archive of past issues of *SHCG News* useful. Some of the more recent back issues (2002 onwards) are now available at www.shcg.org.uk/newsletter and more are currently being digitised, to be uploaded in the coming months. 51% said they would like to receive *SHCG News* in a digital format; please email the Editor if you would like a PDF file of the latest issue, in addition to your printed copy (the most recent issue will not be uploaded onto the website until the following one comes out).

The next issue, number 70, is due out in December 2012. Submissions should be received by 19 October.

**Adam G. Bell**

**Editor, *SHCG News***

**July 2012**

**Web Editor’s Report**

**Website**

Our website not only provides details about the group, its activities and how to join, it also serves as a repository for resources such as hand-outs and papers from SHCG seminars and conferences and back issues of the Journal. In the past couple of years however, the website’s content management system became increasingly difficult to use. The web editor frequently had to contact the original web designer to update pages, it wasn’t possible to add or delete pages and it was a slow, frustrating process to upload documents and images.

An opportunity arose at the end of 2011 to apply for some funding from the Arts Council. The committee put together a successful application and the grant allowed us to commission a new website. Working with the company assigned to revamp firstBASE, we launched a new website, which is not only much easier to maintain and develop but which also integrates our presence on Facebook, twitter and the email list. However, the work is by no means complete: we are keen to populate the new website with even more resources and images useful to those working with social history collections so if anyone has any suggestions, please do get in touch with me. I am also working with the News Editor towards making back issues of all past SHCG newsletters available online for download. Although this has been started, there’s still a long way to go!

# SHCG-List

The mailing list remains one of the key attractions of SHCG membership. It currently has 188 members, which has remained a steady figure over the last year. Emails continue to focus on asking for help with object identifications and gathering advice from colleagues. The subjects of the most recent five emails in the list have now also been incorporated into the front page of our website, with the hope that it encourages new members to join.

# Social Networking

Our Facebook page has grown, with 63 new people liking us since this time last year. The page can be an excellent way to spread the word about the group and allows members to post items of interest. Now that work on the website is finished, I hope to continue to broaden our reach using both Facebook and Twitter. We have also created a Linked In page, in response to feedback from the membership survey, for those who like to keep personal and professional networking separate.

**Cat Newley**

**Web Editor**

**June 2012**

**Sponsorship and Development Officer’s Report**

This year a new committee role was created to help grow SHCG’s fundraising and sponsorship work. The main tasks for the Sponsorship and Development Officer are to monitor the funding environment, apply for funding and seek targeted sponsorship.

In June 2012 SHCG was granted funding for from Arts Council England to run a series of ‘Identifying Whatchamacallits’ study days in 2012/13 and to create film content based on the study days for firstBASE. This is wonderful news, and the Committee is currently working with ACE to finalise the plans and discuss how the project learning outcomes can benefit the wider museum sector.

To aid future sponsorship work a Sponsorship and Advertising Pack has been made, outlining what SHCG does and our advertising options and rates.

**Freya Folåsen**

**Sponsorship and Development Officer**

**July 2012**

**Seminar Organisers’ Report**

### Ceramics Seminar (CANCELLED), National Museums Scotland, 14 October 2011

SHCG requested this seminar as part of NMS’ Knowledge Exchange Programme with places given preferentially to SHCG members. However, due to low take-up NMS could not run the seminar. Feedback from the SHCG list indicated that our members felt Edinburgh was too far away despite the seminar itself being free.

### Geology Masterclass, Manchester Museum, 20 April 2012

The Geology Masterclass was attended by 11 delegates, of which 3 were SHCG members. The majority of delegates were from England (8 delegates, mostly from the north west of England, where the seminar was held), 2 from Wales and 1 from Scotland. Total income was £307 and total expenditure was £204.86. SHCG wishes to thank Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums for supporting the travel costs for Jenny Brown to attend as seminar organiser.

Feedback (10 out of 11 delegates) was very positive. Some found the session on outreach uses less useful, but not significantly. Suggestions for future seminars included herbarium/entomology collections, archaeology, numismatics, historic house collections, ethnography, identifying materials, industrial archaeology. We also asked how delegates had funded their attendance – employers paid for 7 delegates, 1 was self financed and 2 were a mix of employer and self funded (including staying with friends).

After feedback from the Full Membership Survey requesting more online content for seminars, the hand-outs for this seminar are on the SHCG website. We also experimented with tweeting from the seminar and David Gelsthorpe agreed to do an online Q&A session via his blog a few weeks after the seminar. The follow-up session did attract some questions, but the tweeting was not useful for this kind of seminar. We will be using this feedback to inform the development of future seminars.

### Future seminars

We are currently exploring two seminars for autumn, in partnership with the Crime and Punishment network and the Social History Society respectively.

**Jenny Broadbent and Jenny Brown**

**Seminar Organisers**

**July 2012**

**Conference Organiser’s Report**

Last year SHCG Conference went from three days to two and we trialled some new and more varied session formats. Evaluation of this new format revealed that the two-day format worked for the vast majority of attendees and that including some variety in the programme was beneficial. We also learned some valuable lessons about what kind of content delegates value and how we can deliver this at Conference

This year we have continued very much in the same vein, hoping to build on the success of last year and put into practice some of the lessons we learned. Back by popular demand is a lively and irreverent, yet also thought-provoking debate which we hope will stimulate just as much discussion as last year’s, both from the floor and on Twitter.

The very experimental skills development sessions of last year, (which seemed to have the characteristic of marmite, dividing delegates into love/hate camps), have this year been tweaked to maintain the general premise (which was generally deemed to be good) but delivered slightly differently. Having listened to delegate’s thoughts on the sessions from last year we have extended them into slightly longer workshop-style sessions, located them in separate rooms and endeavoured to ensure a balance of sessions appropriate to the breadth of experience in the room. We look forward to finding out if this format works better for delegates.

This year’s conference theme of interpretation, and particularly the question “*do we always get it right*?” came directly from suggestions from delegates and non-delegates alike (the latter we surveyed for the first time as part of our evaluation of Conference 2011). I was particularly struck by the question, which posed a direct challenge to the often-presented conference paper that sets out to paint a positive picture of success tempered by an acknowledgement of one or two problems that were easily overcome. The subtext for this conference could be “*Go on – be honest*” and this level of openness and honesty with each other is exactly what I hope will be achieved at SHCG Conference 2012.

**Karen Oliver-Spry**

**Conference Organiser**

**June 2012**

**Appendix C - firstBASE Sub-Committee Report 2011-12**

At the AGM last year, we announced that we had been successful in getting a grant for £26,000 from the Museums Association Esmee Fairbairn Collections Fund.  Our application was one of seven successful applications from a total of 85 to the Fund.  The grant, together with our match funding from SHCG funds, is to create a redesigned and reinvigorated firstBASE enabling us to create a more dynamic, user friendly, improved firstBASE, but has also seen us working with the Collections Trust to commission an electronic version of SHIC.

We went out to tender in December last year and held interviews on 3 February. Four companies were interviewed, and Surface Impression appointed. Many thanks are due to Gemma Sturtridge of the Museums Computer Group who acted as our technical advisor throughout the tender, interview and initial briefing stages.

Many thanks to those of you who responded to the firstBASE questions in the SHCG membership survey. The good news is that all respondents echoed the aims of the project – to make the site much more user friendly and intuitive to use, more dynamic and interesting in its design, more immediate and responsive to suggestions and additions and to improve the amount and type of resources held on it. The results of the survey have fed into the plans for firstBASE’s redevelopment.

During the last four months Surface Impression and the firstBASE Editorial Committee have designed a new version of firstBASE, migrated all 1600 records from the existing site to the new, and added additional information to them in order to increase their use to users of the site. Our partner Collections Trust has also completed the work we commissioned to produce an XML version of SHIC which will be used to help code the data on firstBASE in order to make sure it is much easier to search and get accurate and complete results. This XML version is also now available for download from the Collections Trust website for embedding in collections management systems.

In the meantime, the firstBASE Editorial Committee has been working hard to source new content for the site, so that when it launches, firstBASE will be bigger and better. We currently have around 400 new records ready to input, including many more ‘immediately available/downloadable’ resources.

Over the summer we will be working to iron out all the obvious issues with the site, test with users and improve the design of the site, aiming to launch in the autumn. We have ten volunteers from the membership who have put their names forward to be testers throughout this process, plus the seven members of the editorial committee.

After launch, we will be commissioning further content and resources for the site, for which we are still looking for nominations of the themes/collection types that members need support in identifying or adding to knowledge about the most. Please email your nominations and suggestions to firstbase@shcg.org.uk

Thanks are due to the members of the Editorial Committee (Emma Harper, Jill Holmen, Briony Hudson, Steph Mastoris Cat Newley, Catherine Nisbet, Victoria Rogers, Ellie Swinbank) for their hard work and enthusiasm, to Gemma Sturtridge for her advice and guidance, to Sarah Daly and Jordan Taylor for their work in inputting and scanning content, to Collections Trust for creating the XML version of SHIC and to Surface Impression for their interest in and dedication to the project.

**Victoria Rogers and Steph Mastoris**

**FirstBASE Sub- Committee**

**Appendix D - MEMBERSHIP MOTION 1**

1. There will be two categories of membership: Individual, and Institutional.
2. Individual members who are full-time students or are unemployed are eligible for a discounted rate for one full membership year. After the end of this year their membership will revert to full individual membership unless they provide evidence of their status to the Membership Secretary.
3. Individual members must opt to receive either print copies of publications (one journal and two copies of the newsletter each year), of digital versions of the same publications. Print subscribers will also receive digital copies of all publications.
4. Institutional members must categorise themselves as small/medium or large based on their annual visitor numbers across all site which are open to the public. Small/medium institutions will receive one print and digital copies of each publication, while large institutions will receive an extra print copy of each publication.
5. Universities and other institutional members which are not museums or open to visitors will be considered small/medium institutions for the purposes of determining their membership rate.
6. Institutions based outside the UK will be considered International Institutions, and receive the same membership benefits as small/medium institutions regardless of their annual visitor numbers.
7. Rates for the years 2012-13 and 2013-14 will be as follows:

 2012 2013

Individual (print) £28 £32

Individual (digital) £16 £18

Student/unemployed (print) £20 £20

Student/unemployed (digital) £8 £8

Institutional (small/medium) £45 £48

Institutional (large) £55 £60

Institutional (international) £50 £50

Visitor numbers defining small/medium and large institutions will be as follows:

Small/medium institutions 0-50,000 visits per annum

Large institutions over 50,000 visits per annum

**Appendix E - MEMBERSHIP MOTION 2**

Motion to authorise committee to increase membership rates annually by up to 5%

1. The executive committee shall be authorised by the membership to raise membership rates by up to 5% each year.
2. Any membership rate rises above 5% or any changes to the structure or categories of membership must be specifically approved by the group's AGM.