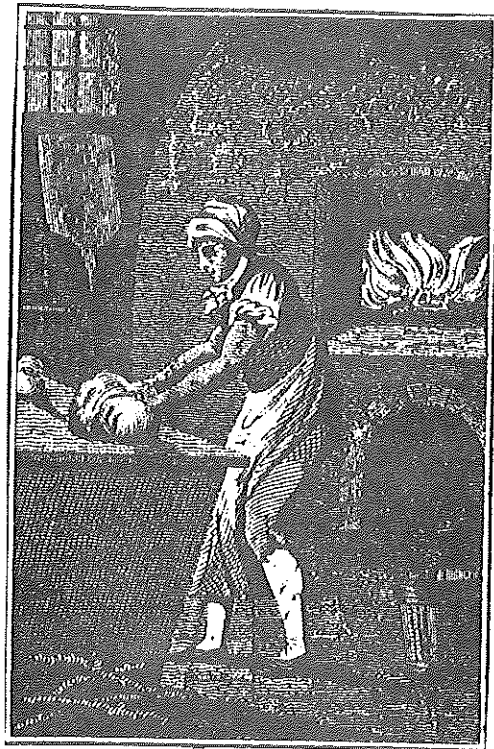


Group for Regional Studies in Museums



Newsletter
no 5

Group for Regional Studies in Museums

NEWSLETTER NO. 5 : SEPTEMBER 1978

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EDITORIAL

"How these curiosities would be quite forgott, did not such idle fellowes as I am putt them downe!"

John Aubrey Brief Lives

A vital but all too often neglected aspect of museum work in social and local history is fieldwork. The value of our collections to future scholars will depend largely on the care with which we document the material we are presently collecting. Given suitable storage, display and security conditions the material itself will be available for detailed analysis in the future, but those transient details of provenance, history and use are usually only obtainable at the point of collection.

The extent to which we record this information will depend on a number of factors; the curator will need to be constantly asking a series of questions assessing the relative value of the material with which he is dealing, how it fits into his collecting policy, what foreseeable use is envisaged, as well as deciding just how much of his time can be spared on fieldwork. Regrettably fieldwork is so often the activity which is dropped simply because the pressures of other museum activities demand the curator's attention.

An early Recording Form issued by the Museum of English Rural Life to owners of material stresses that "the collection of information is as important to the Museum as the collection of objects". The form gives us guidelines to the kind of questions we should be asking donors at the point of acquisition. All this is straightforward enough. What is not so clear is the extent to which the curator should become involved in recording the details of provenance and context. Faced with the removal of the contents of a craft workshop the curator might be expected to produce photographs and measured drawings prior to dismantling, together with an oral account from the craftsman himself. The relationship of that workshop to ancillary buildings, and/or the dwelling house should not be overlooked. To place the building in some kind of context local parallels should be sought. It is not enough to pass responsibility to students of vernacular architecture even if they are active in our area; they are more likely to be interested in the primary and early phases of a building's history, whereas our interest will usually be with the more recent past.

How though should the curator react to a situation where the material offered for the collection is standard and already duplicated in the collection, but its context is most distinctive? The writer was recently offered a standard type of captive bolt pistol from a local butcher's shop and slaughterhouse and whilst there was nothing of particular interest about the gift to the collection, a site visit to the business showed a highly compact layout on a tight urban site in sharp contrast to rural counterparts. Such a context had implications on the organisation of this particular business. Surely we have a responsibility to record what we see; very often it is on the point of disappearance, so that a parallel may be had with our archaeological colleagues faced with a rescue situation. The archaeologists have though on the whole organised themselves more effectively

in the shape of field officer posts based either on museums or in excavation units. Should we not be shouting as loud about the threats to the historic environment above ground and ensuring our institutions are making adequate provision for its careful recording ?

Only by the establishment of field officer posts in social history can we ever hope to tackle the problems of fieldwork faced by most provincial museums. Fieldwork as a preliminary to collection should surely be the norm to isolate those distinctive elements of our region and so provide guidelines for organised collection. All too often at present fieldwork in social history becomes an eleventh hour rescue and the curator is left with a compromise between the ideal of what he would like to achieve and the reality of the museum record.

LOCAL HISTORY IN LONDON

Greater London has over 100 museums. With the recently opened Museum of London and a scattering of 14 local history museums throughout the 32 London Boroughs it would be easy to assume that the provision of local museums has been carefully organised to cover the many local communities within the sprawling suburbs. Alas this is far from being the case!

There is no doubt that local history is thriving. There is an enormous number of local history societies, some of long standing and some very



new. A few have museum collections and some even run their own museums such as those at Wimbledon, Waltham Abbey and Barnet. WEA classes in local historical topics are numerous and many technical colleges and other further education institutions run courses which include some local history. In some areas, however, there is no local history society and no local museum - when this is the case there is often an amenity society with a few members with a particular interest in the history of the area they serve, and often there are members of staff in local government departments, particularly planners, who are working in this field.

Every London Borough has a local history collection within its library service, usually housed with the Reference Library at the main library in the borough, or housed in 2 or 3 district libraries (the "districts" often correspond to the old boroughs which were amalgamated to form the present "London Borough" in 1965). The quality of these collections is very varied as is the way they are housed and cared for. One or two boroughs are exceptionally well-organised: Camden has a specialist staff of 5 including a paper conservationist and excellent collections covering an area stretching from Holborn and Bloomsbury to Hampstead and Highgate; Hammersmith has a team of archivists and a highly-organised records management scheme for the whole of the Borough's services as well as local history librarians in two branch libraries. In Brent, where I work, and in Haringey, the local history library/archives collections are housed in the museum with the 3-dimensional local history material. In many boroughs however, the local history material is housed in a dingy corner and is only a part of a huge information and reference service, usually staffed by someone with no specialised training in the local history field. And in some cases it is the reference librarian who also looks after (or by force of circumstances stores) the "museum" collection, generally a motley assortment of items of local interest collected haphazardly but usually worthy of better treatment than it is getting at present. Even when specialist staff have been appointed to run a local history/archives collection, there is often no attempt made to provide enough specialist staff, and blissful ignorance of the need to provide another type of specialist staff, i.e., museum staff, when a collection of local objects exists. The London Borough of Barnet is a case in point - an archivist has been appointed to care for the archives and local history collection - she has been moved with this collection to a building near to the central library but quite separate from it. She has no assistants: if she is ill or goes on leave the building and the collection are simply closed to the public. The same Borough has a local museum - a furnished 17th century house called Church Farm House which has rooms used for temporary exhibitions. This has been run by a caretaker for 20 years who has done some marvellous work, but has had no professional guidance. He has amassed a large collection of material, none of it documented (except in his head!) and he retires this summer. The Reference Librarian is sympathetic to the idea of establishing a professional post for the museum to match the archivist already employed by the Libraries Department, but no decision has yet been reached.*

Nevertheless a scheme was started a few years ago under the wing of the Guildhall Library in the City to list the types of material held by each London Borough relating to local history. This is still in

* Museum Assistant Post for Church Farm House advertised : Museums Bulletin September 1978 (Ed.).

progress and about half the boroughs have compiled their entry for this "Guide to London Local Resources". A standard format is used for each borough's list, and the broad outlines with rough quantities of types of material is set down. Perhaps this sort of scheme for museums in a region or within a county, both private and public collections, is one to consider.

There are oddities as well! Centerprise in Hackney, founded in 1971, is one of these. It opened with a bookshop and community meeting rooms and has grown impressively. For the local historian the most interesting part of its work is in the field of collecting local reminiscences, particularly those of working-class people whose lives are all too often unrecorded, and they have published a number of booklets (including one of old local photographs) which have sold in far greater numbers than the usual best-selling paperbacks such as "Jaws" in their bookshop! They have worked with the Borough's libraries and also acted as host to two WEA classes. They are not working with local history alone - they aim to act as a centre for debate and discussion, to publish a wide range of people's ideas, to offer information and advice and to politicise people by making them aware of their surroundings and the importance of their own lives within their community.

So far I have concentrated on documentary and illustrative material and the collecting of oral historical information. What of the collecting of museum material in the Greater London area? The Museum of London inevitably concentrates on the historic city of London and the inner areas which were influenced by the city and taken into its orbit at an earlier stage than most of the present extensive suburbs. When dealing with later periods, say the last three centuries, outer areas have to be considered, but one museum sited in the City itself cannot adequately cover the vast and densely populated area of the County of Greater London, either in terms of collecting and documenting or in the exploitation of its collections to provide a service for the numerous small communities within the suburbs.

A number of Libraries Departments within the London Boroughs have good local collections in store or active local history/archaeology societies who are collecting. Wandsworth and Lambeth have both expressed keen interest in the idea of setting up a local museum in recent months and a few years ago Redbridge decided to start collecting material, but refusing all advice offered (especially by the Area Museum Service) only granted £100 in the first year and said no professional staff would be needed for the museum until they had collected some material together! The burden of doing this was handed to an already busy Reference Librarian whose responsibilities also include the local history/archives collection. Richmond has a good local collection (and I understand it also has a geological collection which I was not allowed to see) and already runs a small gallery with a collection of local topographical prints and drawings at Orleans House in Twickenham. There has been interest expressed in recent years in setting up a museum concentrating on Richmond's Royal Connections (of which there are many!) for the tourists but this has not got off the ground. The museum collection is stored in a series of locked cupboards under staircases in the main library building and has a card index but has little hope of seeing the light of day in

the near future. Camden also has a museum collection (including a private collection of early 19th century toys) housed by the libraries department. I have not seen it, though the Borough Librarian tells me he thinks small museums in suburban London are irrelevant, and I believe there have been several suggestions that local history societies should be given the collection to display in a historic house run on a voluntary basis. Squabbling about which house would be most suitable and who should pay for its maintenance have prevented this little scheme going ahead so far.

I have worked in two suburban museums in London - a brief account of these two will illustrate some of the problems of London's small museums.

A. Vestry House Museum (London Borough of Waltham Forest)

Established in the early 1930s in an 18th century workhouse building, the museum was originally staffed by volunteers from the Walthamstow Antiquarian Society. Professional staff were appointed in the late 1940s and by 1965, when the new borough was created from the old Boroughs of Leyton, Chingford and Walthamstow, there were three professional staff and a caretaker. The museum's new role was never defined and it continued to be a Walthamstow museum. No additional staff or extra funds were available and relations with the reference librarian who kept all the Leyton material under her wing were strained. In Chingford there is a small collection of local material which the society is reluctant to see transferred to a museum in Walthamstow. Temporary displays in branch libraries in Leyton and Chingford, active collecting from these areas in the last ten years or so and the loan of material from the area covered by the modern borough by the British Museum have helped to make the museum more representative of its area, though the collections will always be biased towards Walthamstow. A new member of staff, an archivist, has also been appointed within the last three years.

B. The Grange Museum, Neasden (London Borough of Brent)

The first museum keeper was appointed towards the end of 1975 (myself) and the museum was officially opened to the public in 1977. There was no museum in either of the boroughs which were amalgamated to form Brent in 1965, though Willesden libraries had a superb local collection of two-dimensional material and Wembley had an active local history society with an extensive local collection. The new museum is situated in an early 18th century farm outbuilding converted into a gothic cottage in about 1807 and heavily restored in the early 1970s. The library collection from the old borough of Willesden and the Wembley History Society's Collection (on loan) have been moved into the building together with what remains of the private museum collection of a local Wembley eccentric (mainly ceramics, furniture and kitchen equipment). A great deal of domestic material and some craft tools have been collected from local people within the last 18 months. The museum is staffed by a museum keeper, a local history librarian/archivist and a part-time assistant with a resident caretaker/attendant. Temporary displays are being planned for branch libraries (the museum comes under a borough librarian), shops and community centres to provide something for each little local community in the long term.

All the London Boroughs face the problem that they are artificial units as is true of the new provincial districts, etc. Even after thirteen years people do not feel that they belong to a particular new borough, and probably feel closer ties to their local shopping centre rather than the former boroughs as the centre of their community. London has so many of these little communities that the ideal solution would be a museum service that can take these into account, perhaps by providing small displays in each of them, a wide range of information sheets and a central museum with stores and administrative sections, larger display facilities and room for temporary exhibitions. This does not need to be organised under the wing of the Museum of London but could continue to be run by individual boroughs with groups of them perhaps combining for the financing of certain aspects of the service. The London Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow jointly finance Gunnersbury Park Museum, but because it is in Hounslow, Ealing people do not seem to think of it as theirs - this parochialism is very difficult to overcome. In east London the Passmore Edwards Museum, founded early this century as the museum of the Essex Field Club, provides a service which covers a group of boroughs between the Lea and the Thames though it is now financed only by the London Borough of Newham. Its constitution makes this inevitable and its large staff makes it possible; advice on archaeology and people to do the digging can be provided for example without a charge being made to the boroughs where this happens. But even this is not really adequate for the population of this quarter of Greater London.

Finally, what should small suburban museums be collecting? It is easy to see what is specifically local where documentary material is concerned but when it comes to collecting predominantly 19th and 20th century material which is virtually identical in all the suburban areas of London is this needless duplication? I think it is not. The policy of my museum is to collect material which will illustrate the way people have lived in our area in the past - the fact that they will have used similar household goods in north-west London is surely a valid point and not a reason to stop collecting - though it is difficult to convince borough librarians where there is no museum of this fact. Then there is the question of our relationship with the Museum of London which appears to have no specific policy towards the suburbs whether they have museums of their own or not. And of course, the whole vexed question of what to collect from the 20th century - we are making a point of collecting items made in the area covered by the present borough of Brent, including their packaging, on the grounds that no-one else will do it if we don't!

Val Bott

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RECORDING TRANSITIONS

Penshurst is a parish in the Weald of Kent, four miles from the Sussex border. For 800 years its prosperity has been linked with that of the dominant landlords - the Sidneys, who owned land extensively throughout the British Isles. However, Penshurst Place is their ancestral home, and it was from Kent and Sussex that they

accrued most of their wealth from the Wealden Iron Industry.

The survey, with the initial aim of establishing a collection of farm hand tools and machinery at Penshurst Place, was restricted to the parish itself. Both soils and relief vary considerably over the area, from rich alluvium along the river valley to greensand outcrops and iron bearing Wadhurst clay on the slopes. This variety perhaps accounts for the traditional pattern of small - 40-100 acre mixed farms - with orchards, hops, dairy and store cattle, sheep, arable and leys (seeded meadowland). The area has been famous since the 14th century for "its fine growth of trees", and forestry still plays an important part in the economy, with coppice, soft and hardwood plantations.

The land is not the exclusive property of the De L'Isle (Sidney) family; there are several other substantial estates, some of many centuries standing, others resulting from Victorian fortunes. Due to enforced sales at the beginning of the century, several opportunists were able to buy their own farms; so an interesting pattern of landholding emerges with long established tenancies, owner occupiers and farmers who may both own some of their land and rent off three or even four different landlords simultaneously.

During the course of the survey, which involved interviewing most of the farmers, practising and retired, as well as farm labourers and seasonal workers in and around Penshurst village, it became apparent that not only agriculture itself but also people's attitudes were in a state of transition between the traditional and the progressive.

1. Agricultural Transition

Within the farms on the De L'Isle estate there is the most astonishing cross section of agricultural practise. The traditional pattern is still followed by a few ageing tenants - 4-8 acres of orchards, about 20 dairy cows plus followers, about 50 sheep, the family pig, a few acres of wheat, beans, turnips, kale, meadow and two or three hop gardens. Tools are antiquated or non existent; one farmer still sows with a seed barrow, uses a wooden harrow, harvests with a scythe and cuts chaff manually. In such circumstances there is no question of profit. The farms barely break even; returns are low due to lack of capital investment in fertilizers, sprays and concentrates, and the sole cash crop, hops, require such heavy labour costs that most potential income is diverted into production. These farmers resist change and still lament the demise of the heavy horse.

Then come the "fence dwellers". They have invested in large scale machinery and buildings, combines, silos, louvred drying sheds, but lack the conviction to grub their orchards, get rid of their livestock and specialize. Profits are low as the farm acreages are not sufficient to justify the machinery.

Some have taken the step and have concentrated either on dairy, beef or arable and pursue that end remorselessly - replacing hedges and gates with electric fencing, increasing field sizes to accommodate new machines, tearing down old barns, granaries and oasts to erect milking parlours and Dutch barns. All the labour intensive activities - tree pruning and therefore orchards, hop stringing and picking,

sheep shearing are done away with, and a much more streamlined, heavily capital and equipment orientated model emerges. Although Penshurst is reknown as one of the highest yielding hop areas, only one farmer is increasing his acreage and most of the hop gardens have been grubbed out.

A consequence of the transition is the actual size of the farms is increasing and the number of farm units is decreasing. Lord de L'Isle has taken over four farms in the last eight years and now devotes well over 1000 acres exclusively to dairying. In 1924 twelve farms employed 70 men, now only six remain, employing 15 men. Furthermore the numerous people involved in seasonal labour - sheep shearers, harvesting gangs, threshing gangs, hop pickers, orchard pruners, charcoal burners have virtually disappeared in the last twenty years.

2. Transitional Attitudes

The relationship of landlord to tenant is never an easy one. If a landlord tries to help he is accused of meddling; if he holds back he is said to be indifferent. Most tenants feel they get very little in return for their rents. However, the degree of hostility varied considerably from estate to estate. Amongst the De L'Isle tenants complaints of high rents, lack of maintenance of farm buildings, and problems over the use of previously tied cottages (of which there are 4-8 per farm) were voiced openly. Other tenants seemed more satisfied with their landlords.

The feudal attitude remained strong among the older generation, a pride in the eminence of their lord despite their complaints, and a willingness to doff their caps and obey his injunctions. The younger bloods showed little or no respect and wished for a business relationship on equal terms rather than a subservient one. The traditional loyalty of the retainers remained quite unshakable, though most near retirement age and such devotion to a 7 day week is unlikely to be found among their replacements.

The idea of "farmer" itself is undergoing a change. Previously families who lived in the parish for less than 3 generations were considered "foreigners". This is still true of the 8 families from the West Country and the North East who all arrived independently in the '20s to benefit from the dairying boom around London. Now a completely new breed has arrived - the farm manager, who is usually college if not university trained, a middle class outsider, whose imprint on the landscape is transient as he passes from 'job' to 'job'.

A further attitude that seemed to have altered recently was the view of women. The older informants (in their 80's and 90's) seemed to completely ignore the fact that female labour was extensively used on the farms - not for dairy work, but as field labour. Indeed from their comments alone and the testimony of detailed wage books women simply do not appear on the farming scene. However it is a fact that such labour continues to be used for many jobs, but only became 'respectable' during the Second World War when the Land Army girls were a feature of every farm. As the number of farm labourers has dropped so dramatically the farmers' wives now play a much larger part in running the farms, either manually or with office work, and their importance is recognised.

The oral information received during this study proved to be a most enlightening and at times extremely amusing adjunct to the collection of rusty old farm tools. A fascinating pattern of reciprocity and exchange, rivalries and dependencies built up a picture of this small area that was, until the 1940s, almost self sufficient. Now economic necessity is sweeping away much of the tradition and with it some of the fine timber-framed farm buildings, many of which date back to the 16th century. Luckily not all the old tools have reached the scrap yard due to the activities of several private collectors. Unfortunately such well intentioned people who dog our lives throughout the country seldom catalogue or list their material, but are usually only too happy to oblige if an interest is shown in their hobby.

Thus Penshurst shows on a small scale a process that is common throughout the country, but this study caught it midway between the old and the new.

Harriet Geddes

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KELLS OF GLOUCESTER: AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT MAKERS

Following appeals for information in this Newsletter and in the Museums Bulletin a preliminary checklist of the company's products now held in museums is possible.(1) To assist those who find themselves in possession of any implement made by this important West Country firm I offer the following brief outline of its history. The changing nomenclature is superficially confusing but can in fact help to localise the date of production of an implement quite considerably.

The best collection of Kell catalogues is in the Museum of English Rural Life, though Gloucester Museum holds copies of these and a few others. Once again I would be grateful to hear from anyone knowing the whereabouts of catalogues.

Mr. Samuel Kell came from Suffolk to the West in about 1838 and established his works at Brookend, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire.(2) He was joined there by his brothers Alderman and Henry. We know very little about this early phase of the company's history. Evidently the demand for their products grew beyond the capacity of the Ross works, and it was decided to expand. The advantages that Gloucester presented as a trade centre made it the choice for the new foundry. This was set up in 1856 or 1857 not as a replacement for Ross but to complement it.(3) From henceforth the company was known as S.A. & H. Kell of Gloucester and Ross.

Although the two establishments were closely connected there was a distinction between the kinds of work done at each. All machines in which timber was largely used were made at Ross. Implements consisting wholly of iron were made at Gloucester, as also was the greater portion of the ironwork for those machines, partly of iron and partly of wood, which were finished off at Ross.(4)

On the death of Henry Kell, Samuel and Alderman were joined by Albert Meats. This resulted in the formation of "Kell, Meats & Co. (engineers, ironfounders and Agricultural implement makers)" in about 1877-8.(5) Samuel Kell seems to have been mainly responsible for the Ross end of the business while Meats ran the foundry at Gloucester.(6)

Meats stayed with the company until c.1890 when he left to form Meats, Peake & Co., of the Central Engineering Works, Cheltenham. They did general repair work especially to mowing machines and other haymaking equipment. By the beginning of the century "Meats & Co." had moved to the Montpellier engineering works.(7)

On his departure the name reverted to Kell & Co. of Gloucester and Ross. The final modification came in 1904 when the firm became a limited liability company under the title of "Kell & Co. Ltd., of Gloucester and Ross". The two establishments were both maintained until 1913 when the Ross works were closed down. To accommodate the carpentry division extensions were made to the Barton Foundry in Gloucester.(8)

Catalogues of the early twentieth century gives us a good idea of the range of products that Kells made. A number of different metal ploughs were made as well as several types of root and corn drills (notably the "British Economical Drill" and the "John Bull" multiple seed drills). They also produced winnowing machines and a number of all metal small implements such as chaff cutters and potato sorters. Not only were their implements widely marketed in this country but the Port of Gloucester allowed them a considerable international trade as well.

Ironically enough the twentieth century is the least well documented phase in the company's history. Suffice it to say that after the Second World War they went into a decline until they were amalgamated into Helipebs Ltd. in c.1956.(9) They still trade separately, however, and have in recent years enjoyed something of a revival as machine tool manufacturers.(10)

Stuart Davies

Notes

1. I would like to thank Jeff Garner, Harriet Geddes, Andrew Jewell, Josephine Holmes, Stephen Price, Elfyn Scourfield, Kate Walters and David Viner for kindly supplying information.
2. Gloucester Journal 3.11.1883
3. Gloucester Journal 22.3.1856; Gloucester Journal 2.1.1858
Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory 1856; Slater's Gloucestershire Directory 1858-9.
4. Gloucester Journal 3.11.1883
5. Morris' Gloucestershire Directory 1876; Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory 1879
6. Gloucester Journal 3.11.1883

7. Gloucester Journal 25.1.1890; Gloucester Journal 16.5.1891; Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory 1894 and 1902
8. Gloucester Reference Library 17271 f.118
9. Kelly's City of Gloucester Directory 1955 and 1957
10. The above information may be used for the dating of nameplates found on surviving machinery thus:
 - S.A. & H. Kell, Ross c.1838 - c.1856
 - S.A. & H. Kell, Gloucester and Ross c.1856 - c.1877
 - Kell, Meats & Co., Gloucester and Ross c. 1877 - c.1890
 - Kell & Co., Gloucester and Ross c.1890 - 1904
 - Kell & Co. Ltd., Gloucester and Ross 1904 - 1913
 - Kell & Co. Ltd., Gloucester 1913 - c.1956
 It should be emphasised that the use of a nameplate may continue beyond the actual change of name, but the length of time of overlap is unlikely to be significant.

Checklist of Kell's Implements Held in Museums

This list is no doubt incomplete, but it does give an impression of the range of products of which examples are preserved. It should be noted that the Lloyd-Baker Collection will shortly pass into the hands of the Corinium Museum, Cirencester and will form a new agricultural museum at Northleach. (see Newsletter No. 4, January 1978).

Lloyd-Baker Collection

Winnowing Machine, Box type; AG2	Kell & Co., Gloucester & Ross
Winnowing Machine, Box type; AG2	S.A. & H. Kell, Gloucester & Ross
Double Seed Drill, Single joining box	Kell, Meats & Co., Gloucester & Ross
Double Seed Drill, In one	Kell & Co., Gloucester & Ross
Multiple Seed Drill	S.A. & H. Kell, Gloucester
Double Seed Drill	Kell, Gloucester
Single Seed Drill	Kell & Co. Ltd., Gloucester
Single Seed Drill	Kell & Co. Ltd., Gloucester
Double Furrow Hoe (skimming hoe)	Kell & Co. Ltd., Gloucester
Ridging Plough (no coulter)	Kell & Co., Gloster
Boulting Plough	Kell & Co., Gloucester
Potato Plough Type BP2	Kell & Co., Gloucester

Gloucester Folk Museum

Single Seed Drill	Kell & Co., Ltd., Gloster
Single Seed Drill	S.A. & H. Kell, Gloucester & Ross
Multiple Seed Drill	Kell & Co., Ltd., Ross
Winnowing Machine, Box type AG2	Kell, Meats & Co., Gloucester & Ross
Winnowing Machine, Box type	S.A. & H. Kell, Ross
Chaff-cutter	S.A. & H. Kell, Gloucester

Acton Scott Farm Museum

Root Drill	Kell, Gloucester & Ross
Root Drill	Kell & Co., Ltd., Gloucester
Corn Drill	Kell & Co. Makers, Gloucester
Seed Drill	Kell, Meats & Co., Gloucester & Ross

Welsh Folk Musseum

Root Drill

Kell, Meats & Co., Gloucester & Ross

Root Drill

Kell & Co., Gloucester & Ross

Corn Drill

Kell & Co., Ltd., Gloucester 234

Museum of English Rural Life

Root Drill

Brecknock Museum

Seed Drill

Kell, Meats & Co., Gloucester & Ross

Mary Arden's Cottage, Stratford

Winnowing Machine Box type AG2

Kell, Meats & Co., Gloucester & Ross

The Almonry Museum, Evesham

Seed Drill, hand-operated

Kell & Co., Ltd., Gloucester

Bewdley Museum

Seed Drill, Hand-operated

Kell & Co., Gloucester & Ross

Birmingham City Museum

Root Drill

Kell, Meats & Co., Gloucester & Ross

CONFERENCE ON ORAL HISTORY IN SCOTLAND

This Conference was held on Saturday 11th March at the School of Scottish Studies, and jointly sponsored by the School and the National Register of Archives (Scotland). It proved to be a great success, and was attended by over 60 people from all over the country. Two concrete decisions were taken at the end of the Conference, which augur well for the lively future of the subject in Scotland - firstly, an ad-hoc committee of people representative of the various areas of the country was instructed to explore the feasibility of establishing a Scottish Oral History Society, and to organise a further meeting in the Autumn; secondly, the Conference expressed its approval for the suggestion that the National Register of Archives should act as a depository of information on the location and content of oral history recordings on a national basis. Detailed discussions are to be started shortly on the practical problems involved.

It was good to hear reference made to oral history work being undertaken in a number of Scottish museums, including Aberdeen, Paisley, Inverness and Dumfries, and the speakers included Michael Robson, of

Hawick Museum, giving an illuminating and detailed paper on Oral Tradition in the Borders. One of the most interesting contributions was that of John Hume (University of Strathclyde) on "Oral History in relation to Industrial History", in which he developed the view that oral history is ideally placed to answer certain questions in this sphere which often cannot be documented elsewhere. The real reasons for the establishment of the company often form part of family tradition; details of the links between the firm and its customers, or its suppliers can be elucidated; changes in its organisation and its ownership can be uncovered; as can the changes which have taken place in "product technique" - the methods of production. These points were illustrated by reference to an extensive survey of the Scottish ironfounding industry which the speaker had been undertaking for some years.

The papers fully illustrated the distinctive development and character of oral history in Scotland and one awaits the future, more formal development of a Scottish Oral History Society with considerable interest.

Graeme Farnell

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THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES 1978

1. Report on the Birmingham Conference 14-16 April 1978

An interesting and active weekend was enjoyed by delegates to the Annual Conference organised this year by Stephen Price and Deirdre White of the City Museums.

On Friday evening Stephen Price introduced us to the subject matter for the weekend, giving an outline of Birmingham's historical development and indicating some of the problems that the museums officer faces in interpreting the social history of urban conurbations. The rest of the evening was given over to entertainment in the bar by Jon Raven, singer and author. His subject was "The Urban and Industrial Folk Songs of Birmingham and the Black Country" and he neatly combined spoken narrative with a series of songs to put across his theme. This was basically that the changes brought about by industrialisation are reflected in the folk song traditions of the area.

The following morning a series of lecturers outlined three important aspects of Birmingham industry, all of which have left material and/or topographical evidence; they were Alan Crawford ("The Evolution of the Jewellery Quarter and its architectural evidence"); Stephen Fisher ("The Processes of the Jewellery Trade"); Deirdre White ("The Button Industry") and Keith Dunham ("The Gun Trade"). After an information-packed morning session we were suitably revived by an excellent buffet lunch.

In the afternoon we were guided by Stephen Price and Alan Crawford (Chairman of the Birmingham branch of the Victorian Society) around the Gun and Jewellery Quarters. We were accompanied by a representative of the Birmingham Museum of Science and Industry who explained

their policy towards collecting and reconstructing workshops. This seems to consist in essence of retrieving the main machinery but leaving the smaller items and shop fittings which social historians would consider an essential ingredient in the reconstruction. The afternoon was rounded off with a visit to the Museum of Science and Industry.

A novel attraction on Saturday evening was a pub crawl around Victorian Public Houses in Aston and Handsworth. This turned out to be a colourful affair and one not soon forgotten. We concluded the evening in the sanctity of an upper room of The New Inns, Handsworth.

After the A.G.M. on Sunday morning we were treated to a short talk by Dr. Jennifer Tann of the University of Aston in Birmingham, on working class housing. She followed this by showing two short films: "From Back to Back to Bournville" and "Aston's Villas". These stimulated a considerable amount of discussion and much admiration for Dr. Tann's achievements. She may well be in an unusually fortunate position in having access to a University Film Unit, but it does nevertheless illustrate what can be done in this line given the facilities.

In the afternoon Michael Dillon guided a small party around part of Aston, explaining the various types of housing and architectural styles that could be seen. The session then concluded with visits to Blakesley Hall, Yardley Village and Sarehole Mill. Blakesley was particularly instructive for the way in which a branch museum can be used to interpret the local history of the area in which it is set.

The general impression left by the conference was that of the daunting problems faced by those trying to interpret urban regions. It seemed to many of us that the only sensible way of tackling these was to concentrate on specific aspects, such as particular industries and district suburbs or parishes, rather than trying to spread thin resources even more thinly. The thanks of all those who attended are extended to the organisers who clearly put a great deal of effort and expertise into producing such a full and varied programme of events.

Stuart Davies

2. Report on the Annual General Meeting 16 April 1978

The Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 16th April at Wyddrington Hall of Residence, University of Birmingham. The treasurer, Pamela Murray, reported our current membership to be 74, remaining static over the year. Income from membership subscriptions was just sufficient to meet present needs, postage, production of the newsletter, general running costs etc. Meetings and Conferences provided a small profit for Group funds. The Editor, Stephen Price, emphasised the difficulty in producing the newsletter due to lack of contributions from members and appealed for greater co-operation in the production of future issues. Some discussion took place on the format of the newsletter, some members feeling that a higher standard product was desirable. However the finances of the group do not allow for a more

expensive format and the general opinion was that the newsletter served its purpose well and that attempts should be made to see whether it might be possible to produce more permanent publications of such items as bibliographies, Museological guides etc.

There was lengthy discussion of the regional ethnology summer school being run by the Group together with Richard Harrison and Vicky Airey as the last of the specialist curatorial courses for the diploma. It was hoped to bring over two lecturers from Sweden to teach a substantial part of the course, but unfortunately Carnegie turned down a grant to cover the costs of this. It was the feeling of the Group that with so little time left before the course that we should go ahead and organise a fresh programme through Peter Brears. (Since the Annual General Meeting, Richard Harrison has approached a number of other bodies for grants and if no financial assistance is available by the end of May, the Group will go ahead with a new programme as decided at the Annual General Meeting.)

During discussion on this course, many members expressed concern that the Museums Association should be dropping finally the specialist curatorial courses and it was decided that a working party be established to consider the whole question of training for the subject. Hope was expressed that perhaps the Group might be able to run annual courses which would provide both a service for students taking the diploma and those members who had passed their diploma but wished to keep up to date with the subject.

Finally elections were held, with four places on Committee to be filled, Chris Page, Geraint Jenkins, Gavin Bowie and Bridget Yates retiring. Graeme Farnell of Inverness Museum, Suella Postles of Nottingham Museum, Gaby Porter of Bury Museum and Stuart Davies of Gloucester Museum were elected to fill these places.

Richard Langhorne

3. Submission to the Blake Committee

Following the notice in the last newsletter regarding the request of the Committee to Review Local History for submissions from groups and societies from their views on the current state and future of local history, your committee made a four page submission on 24 February. This has been circulated to group members but if any member failed to receive one, copies may be obtained from the Editor.

The Review Committee, under the chairmanship of Lord Blake, received over 600 submissions which are now being considered. The Review Committee membership consists of Patricia Shaw, Chairman, National Federation of Women's Institutes, Norman McCord, Professor in Social History, University of Newcastle, Professor Edward Miller, Chairman of the Victoria County Histories of England Committee, Trefor Owen, Curator, Welsh Folk Museum, Rev. Henry Stapleton, Secretary of the Bishop of Norwich's Committee for Books and Documents, and John West, Chief Inspector of Schools for Dudley, West Midlands.

The Group was invited to send a representative to meet the Review Committee on 13 July when three other representatives from the museum

profession were also present. Discussion centred on the problems of defining spheres of activity between libraries, record offices and museums (Group submission paragraphs 7-8). It was quite apparent that representatives held widely differing views and that agreement on the role of a local history museum would not be reached. The Group's main recommendations were reinforced and amplified, namely the improvements of standards of recording and documentation of collections in local history, the need for the provision of field officer posts within local authority museums (Paragraphs 10-12) and the need for a greater awareness of the value of museum collections to local historians (Paragraph 6). The Review Committee is also meeting representatives from other professional bodies. Its report and recommendations will be eagerly awaited as essential reading for all of us involved with the study of local history.

4. Specialist Session: Museums Association Conference 5th July 1978

The Group met in Huntly House, Edinburgh's Local History Museum, to hear three talks on various aspects of this speciality. The general theme of 'Scottish Museums and Regional Studies' was deliberately broad and open-ended, to allow the speakers free rein in describing their own museum situations.

Elsbeth King from the People's Palace Museum in Glasgow recounted her difficulties in operating in a city which has been so outward-looking as to largely overlook what was in its own back yard. She described in vivid - sometimes even dramatic - terms the great variety of field operations in which she and her assistant indulge in order to secure objects desired for the collections. The frequent urgency and hazardous nature of these activities were shown to be often fully equal to those faced by rescue archaeologists.

Moving on from a purely urban setting, Graeme Farnell from Inverness drew an equivalent picture for his situation, that of a town-based museum serving a largely rural area. The expected differences were illustrated, as well as a number of common aims and shared problems. He was able to demonstrate the twin facets of regional studies - that which is unique to a certain locality, and that which has close parallels, yet existing under different circumstances, in other parts of the country.

The third speaker came from a private trust museum devoted to type rather than locality - Gordon Clarkson of the Scottish Fisheries Museum in Anstruther. It's a fair way from most places to Anstruther, situated on the south coast of Fife, and so the speaker gave, in words and pictures, a tour of his museum - not simply as an alternative to a visit, but also as an encouragement to undertake one. The considerable success of the Scottish Fisheries Museum demonstrates again the valuable part which such establishments have to play within the entire museum world.

All three talks were illustrated with slide selections of a quality which I have not seen surpassed at any seminar or course. It is an intriguing diversion to note the sometimes unorthodox causes of a museum's popularity, such as the fame accorded to the 'mini Crystal Palace' attached to the rear of the committee-designed People's Palace Museum of Glasgow Green, known as the Winter Gardens, which

apparently was the only place in the city during the last War where bananas could be obtained!

The discussion session which followed the talks was both vigorous and constructive. One of the many valuable points raised was that regional studies, which caters for the overlapping fields of folk life, local history, and social history, must improve its standards (and its image as a discipline) by adopting a more professional approach to the writing up and publishing of fieldwork. A publication along the lines of 'Discovery and Excavation' from the archaeological camp was suggested - modest in scale at first, but at least ensuring that important information is recorded, and transmitted to interested parties. The Group for Regional Studies in Museums was joined at this meeting by the Museum Ethnographers Group, and we are happy to learn that their members found it worthwhile.

The allied bus outing in the afternoon went first to see the new Agricultural Museum at Ingliston, just west of Edinburgh, which is, after a long wait, providing proper display facilities for the very rich collections belonging to the Country Life Section of the National Museum of Antiquities. How pleasant it was to see a modern building of this type which not only looks like a barn, but is meant to look like a barn. The theme of this year's exhibition for the Royal Highland Show was 'Corn', and in the wake of last year's 'Muck', one is left to ponder on what other agricultural four-letter words remain to be exploited!

After driving some twenty-five miles south-west of Edinburgh through scenic countryside (the visual elements of its land-use being interpreted for us by Gavin Sprott of the Country Life Section), we arrived at the little Lanarkshire town of Biggar. This is the home of the famed Gladstone Court Museum, built almost entirely by the efforts of one man, former provost Brian Lambie, yet with the sympathetic backing of the whole community behind him. Our main regret here was that time was so tight, and the lure of the reconstructed shop interiors proved so strong that only those especially fleet of foot managed to see the re-erected Greenhill Farmhouse as well. One unexpected bonus was a brief visit to the local gasworks, and its quaint charm surprised those who had anticipated that such an establishment was more the province of the science and technology people, for here indeed is a 'folksy' gasworks. The generous hospitality provided by Biggar Museum, coupled with (at last) warm and sunny weather, made this a pleasing finale to the day.

One further item of Group business of particular interest to Scottish members should be mentioned. The Group has made a strong submission to the Committee to Review Local History, though it had been noted that the Committee's brief extended to England and Wales only. This had already been pointed out to the Scottish Local History Council, and now the Group has expressed the wish that their representative on the Council should formally raise the matter of a separate review for Scotland. With a number of meetings being planned, including one on the basics of recording both rural and urban vernacular buildings, to be held in Dundee next May or June, the Group looks forward to a very active future.

Graeme Cruickshank

EDUCATION

1. Museums Association: Working Party on Museums in Education

The above working party is charged with producing, for the museum profession, a document that will produce statements of policy with guidance and recommendations on the way in which institutions and museums, large and small, might tackle the problems of a comprehensive educational service, in both formal and informal activities and with both young and old.

David Addison, Director of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum Service, is anxious to obtain the views of specialist groups. He has asked for the views of the Group in the field of museums education, in particular along the following lines:

- 1) the educational possibilities and potential of the service
- 2) the present provision of educational facilities and activities
- 3) the problems preventing the provision of comprehensive educational activities within individual institutions or in connection with the group's specialist concern.

The Group for Regional Studies has established a small sub-committee to examine these problems and prepare a report to the Association's working party. Any member interested in submitting material to this sub-committee and joining in discussions is invited to contact the Secretary, Richard Langhorne.

2. Professional Training

In addition the Education Working Party is looking at the question of professional training. Its first report appears below:

Background

The Working Party was set up because various members of GRSM have expressed concern that specialist courses have been dropped from the syllabus and course structure of the New Museums Diploma Scheme. Many of us feel that there is a continuing need for expert instruction in a particular specialist discipline.

Discussion

It is clear that there are two distinct issues. Firstly, how can such instruction be achieved, and secondly what should it consist of.

1) Organisation

Should specialist instruction be conducted separately by the GRSM or should the group press for it to be re-introduced into the Diploma Scheme?

We felt sure that since the proper academic training of professional staff ought to be the responsibility of the Museums Association, GRSM should attempt the latter course of action. The group would have to decide whether to press for a widening of the scope of the 'Curatorial'

course or whether to ask for a new course altogether. If the latter was chosen the question of its length and location would have to be considered. On balance we felt that a separate specialist course was preferable to trying to cram more into the existing 'Curatorial' course.

The problem of finance might have considerable bearing on the details of course organisation.

2) Content

How far should we duplicate the general advice which may be given on the 'Curatorial' paper of the new two paper Diploma structure? The subjects to be covered are outlined in the Manual of Curatorship and Museum Management, at present only a series of headings. (see Museums Bulletin, January 1978).

Certain of these headings could profitably be studied with special reference to Social History-Regional Studies. We suggest that these might include:

- a) Collecting Policy with special reference to Regionalism.
- b) Cataloguing of Social History collections. Particularly with regard to the need for a standardised satisfactory system.
- c) Information retrieval, its value for Regional Studies.
- d) Display techniques, with special reference to re-constructing of buildings, workshops, domestic rooms etc.
- e) Types of Museums, the role of the specialist and site Museums, rural, urban, and industrial Museums. Working and static Museums. Specialist departments at Leeds and Reading.
- f) The provision of information services, its role in Regional Studies.
- g) Educational Services, especially extra-mural and adult Education Services. Relationships with local societies and amenity groups.
- h) Identification of Social History objects.

In all these cases the specialist approach should be to give 'Depth' to the general principles put forward in the 'Curatorial' course.

In addition there are certain aspects which the Manual headings suggest may not be touched upon and which therefore a specialist course ought to provide tuition in. For example:

- a) Theory and Practice of Regional Studies. How to conduct a Regional Study. Ethnographical mapping. Fieldwork techniques. The value of comparative studies. Putting Museum collections in their social and economic context. The need for a comprehensive approach to Regional History.
- b) Oral History, techniques, aims, limitations, use of correlation etc.
- c) Vernacular architecture and industrial archaeology. Specialist recording techniques necessary. Relationship to Museum collections.
- d) The compilation of equivalents to archaeological sites and monuments

records e.g. Devon Folk Life Register. How valuable is such an exercise? How should one go about it?

- e) Traditional customs, foods, dance, song. Study importance, relevance and incidence of.
- f) Regional Literature, does this exist?
- g) Dialect Studies.
- h) Use of documentary sources in research. Guides to basic classes of public records, both manuscript and printed. How to use them in relation to Museum collections and information files.
- i) Case studies e.g. fishing, farm wagons, architecture. To bring out the good and the inadequate aspects of Regional Studies.

Any course would naturally include its fair share of site visits but these should be strictly geared to content of lectures, seminars etc., not just jaunts into the countryside.

On the subject of teaching techniques we would lay greater emphasis on seminars rather than large scale lectures. Wherever possible Students should be directed to suitable reading matter. The course should be where Students can pick up the unwritten advice that comes only with experience etc., and can also benefit from a free exchange of views and opinions.

3) Conclusions

We recommend that a detailed argument for the provision of a short specialist course (in addition to the two main courses of the New Diploma Scheme) should be presented to the Museums Association, and detailed negotiations commenced with them as soon as possible.

Stuart Davies & Gavin Bowie

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A.I.M.

A joint working party with members of the Association of Independent Museums has been established with the object of producing a guide to those involved with small private museums, the documentation, care and display of their collections.

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FUTURE MEETINGS

(1) Friday 6 October - Sunday 9 October 1978 : COVENTRY
The theme of this week-end meeting will be working class history with visits to the National Union of Vehicle Builders Museum, the Herbert Art Gallery for the Friendly Society Exhibition and speakers on a range of working class themes.

(2) Friday 24 November One day meeting in Birmingham to examine classification systems. It would be very helpful if members with existing classification systems would send details of their systems to the Secretary as soon as possible. It is the intention to produce a discussion document based on existing systems for this meeting. No charge for the meeting. Please inform the Secretary if you will be attending. Venue: School Room at the City Museums and Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham, 10.30 a.m.

(3) Friday 8 December - Sunday 10 December 1978 : NOTTINGHAM
A weekend meeting to look at some local trades and industries, including coal-mining and framework knitting, together with their interpretation through site museums.

(4) Friday 6 April - Sunday 8 April 1979 : GLOUCESTER & CHELTENHAM
Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting. The general aim of the meeting will be to compare and contrast these two rather different towns and to examine in the process the roles of their respective museums.

The Group's Committee is very much aware of the problems facing members unable to find finance to attend residential weekend meetings. Accordingly a number of day meetings are being planned, including a Spring meeting in Cardiff on recording workshops. Meanwhile Suella Postles, organiser of the Nottingham meeting, has promised an economy package! Full details of these meetings will be circulated to members.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

(4) Addenda to Breadmaking Bibliography

Stuart Holm of the Black Country Museum has kindly supplied bibliography Number 4 Breadmaking, based on the work of his colleague Alison Cleal. Since producing the bibliography further work has brought a few more useful works to light. Stuart has asked me to stress that "the more work we do on the subject the more incomplete the list appears and the more worried we get about the select lists". Despite these fears I feel sure that members would wish to thank Stuart for this very useful contribution. He tells me that he is hoping that other members of the group will send additions, corrections or constructive criticisms for a revised second edition on the basis of such feedback. The additional items are:-

1. ACCUM, Friedrich Christian. A treatise on the art of making good and wholesome bread of wheat, oats, rye, barley and other farinaceous grain, etc. London: T. Boys, 1821
 2. AUSTIN, G.W. Bread, baking and bakers - London, 1891. 31p.
 3. BLANDY, J. The baker's guide and practical assistant - London, 1899, 242p.
 4. BURNETT, John "The baking industry in the nineteenth century" in Business History, June 1963, p.98
 5. BURNETT, John Plenty and want : a social history of diet in England from 1815 to the present day. - Harmondsworth : Pelican, 1968 - 368 p., 19 cm., index.
- Very useful for background social history and for placing the bread-making trade in the context of food production, diet and eating habits of the nineteenth century. Includes information on the decline of domestic breadmaking (p.17 - 18), prices and consumption of bread (p.52, 90, 113), legislation (p.141) and mechanical developments in the industry (p. 139-142). Has many excellent references to sources on baking and allied subjects.
6. GOODFELLOW, J. Elementary principles of bread-making - London 1895, 198p.
 7. READ, George The history of the baking trade - 1848
 8. ROWE, J.F. The Bread Acts - London, 1894, 49p.
 9. RICHARDSON, Sir B.W. On the Manufacture of Bread - London, 1894, 49p.

10. Sanitary regulation of bakehouses - London, 1884, 108p.
11. SKILLMAN, J. The baker's guilds and library - Bristol, 1898; 125p.
12. WEDLAKE How to make bread at home - (Pre: 1858).
13. WELLS, R. The bread and biscuit baker's assistant - London, 1896, 110p.
14. WELLS, R. Modern practical bread baker - Manchester, 1892, 139p.
15. WELLS, R. Pastry cooking and confectioner's guide - London, 1892, 108p.
16. WELLS, R. Wells' cakes and buns - Manchester, 1898, 70p.

A most useful source of additional titles may be found in:

BRITISH MUSEUM CATALOGUE Subject index of modern works added to the library of the British Museum 1881 - 1900.

See under BREAD : Baking.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

- Ambler, R.W. "The Transformation of Harvest celebrations in 19th century Lincolnshire" in Midland History vol. iii No. 4. Autumn 1976 pp. 298-306.
- Cornforth, John English Interiors 1790-1848 (1978) £15. Barrie and Jenkins (largely aristocratic level).
- Creasey, John S. Victorian and Edwardian Country Life from Old Photographs (1977) £3.95 Batsford
- Dirsztay, Patricia Church Furnishings : A Nafas Guide (1978) 246 pp. £2.50. Routledge and Kegan Paul (useful for terminology applicable beyond churches).
- Fitzrandolph, H.E. and Hay, M.D. The Rural Industries of England and Wales vol. I (1977) 256 pp. £5.95 vol. II (1977) 172 pp. £4.95 E.P. Publishing Ltd. (leaflets enclosed about the reprint of this classic).
- Harris, Richard Traditional Farm Buildings (1978) 40pp. Catalogue to accompany Arts Council Exhibition. 70p from Arts Council, 105 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AU
- Machin, R. "The Great Rebuilding : A Reassessment" in Past & Present No. 77 November 1977 pp. 33-56
- Major, J. Kenneth and Watts, Martin Victorian and Edwardian Windmills and Watermills from Old Photographs (1977) £3.95 Batsford.
- Roberts, K. ed. Tools for the trades and crafts: an 18th century pattern book: R. Timmins & Sons, Birmingham (1976) £ 22.70 from Ken Roberts Publishing Co., P.O. Box 151, Fitwilliam, New Hampshire, NH 03447. (An extremely useful catalogue essential for the identification of tools. Birmingham Museum acquired a large collection of this firm's products in 1976. They include a wide variety of craft and trade tools, as well as domestic items such as sugar nippers, cork screws and curling tongs). Copies usually stocked in The Shop in the Square (Ironbridge Gorge Museum) Ironbridge, Telford, Salop.
- Rogers, Alan ed. Group Projects in Local History (1977) £7.00 William Dawson.

- Simpson, M.A. and Lloyd, T.H. ed. Middle Class Housing in Britain (1977)
217 pp. £6.50 David & Charles
- Storey, R. and Madden, L. Primary Sources for Victorian Studies (1977) £3.50 Phillimore
- Thompson, Paul The Voice of the Past - Oral History (1978) 258 pp. Hardback £4.50
Paperback £2.25 O.U.P.
- Vigeon, Evelyn Clogs or Wooden Soled Shoes (1977)
Reprinted from the Journal of the Costume Society approx. 30p plus p & p from Ordsall Hall, Salford
- Warren, Geoffrey Vanishing Street Furniture (1978)
160 pp. £7.50 David & Charles
- Woodforde, John Georgian Houses for All (1978)
177 pp. £4.95 Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Exeter City Museums Service Devon Folklife Register (1978)
40 pp. 50p from Exeter City Museums.
- Avoncroft Museum of Buildings Bricks and Brickmaking (1978)
20 pp. 75p from the museum at Stoke Heath, Bromsgrove, Worcs.
- Forthcoming Titles:
- Griffith, Christina Woman's Work : An Illustrated Social History of Domestic Appliances 1851-1939 (October 1978) 144 pp.
£6.95 hardback; £3.95 paperback
Ash & Grant
- Rickards, Maurice This is Ephemera : Collecting Printed Throwaways (November 1978) 64 pp.
About £2.95
David & Charles

WORK IN PROGRESS

Members are invited to contribute to a section summarising important additions to their collections, supporting documentation and its study. What I have in mind is trying to compile a summary of work completed or at least sufficiently advanced to be available as an interim report to colleagues working on similar topics in other museums. To my mind it would be helpful to know about specialist craft collections recently acquired and recorded prior to removal, for example details of the layout and organisation of a tinsmith's. Such reports would provide valuable comparative evidence where there is a shortage of published material. It is envisaged that copies of a curator's file report might be available to others (perhaps for the

cost of xeroxing). This might also act as an incentive to those of us who delay writing up our activities as long as possible and perhaps never quite get round to it....

The suggested provisional format of entries might be as follows:

Subject

- 1) Location : County and parish (historic and modern) NGR.
- 2) Name of business and address with dates.
- 3) Nature of business
- 4) Nature of material in museum
- 5) Nature of record in museum, number of pages, date.
- 6) Name of recorder
- 7) Institution

The success of such a scheme will depend entirely on members' contributions. As a start I offer the following:

- BUTCHERY :
- (1) West Midlands, formerly Worcestershire
Yardley parish. Part of City of Birmingham. SP13468625
 - (2) Frank Harrison, 423-25, Church Road.
Established c.1848; closed c.1955.
 - (3) Rural slaughterhouse and butcher's shop.
 - (4) Shop fittings, tools and equipment, approx. 200
items, butcher's smock, 19th century photographs.
 - (5) Building survey 1977: plans, elevations, sections
and details. Typescript 20 pp. (1978).
 - (6) S.J. Price.
 - (7) City Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham.

INFORMATION REQUIRED

(1) Baking Displays

Stuart Holm of the Black Country Museum sends the following:

"In connection with the Black Country Museum bakery project, I would like to appeal to G.R.S. members for information on displays relating to baking (both commercial and domestic). Whilst I would be pleased to hear of static collections of baking utensils, etc., I am particularly anxious to make contact with museums with operational or potentially workable ovens. I know that some museums do bake bread using traditional equipment and I would be very interested to hear how they cope with current public health legislation. Any information which emerges from this appeal could perhaps be published in a future newsletter.

Just to start the ball rolling, members may be interested to know that the B.C.M. is currently reconstructing a small commercial

bakehouse basically dating from the mid-nineteenth century but with later minor modifications and equipped with two coal fired side flue ovens. In addition, we are rebuilding a late nineteenth century domestic 'brewhouse' which incorporates a small wood fired bread oven. Both projects are due for completion later this year and both will be used for baking, the bread produced probably being sold as petfood, since our ovens will not satisfy current health regulations. We may even end up feeding half the inmates of Dudley Zoo!

Whilst on the subject of ovens, we have on offer a steam oven dating, I suspect, from the 1920s, although the present owner believes it to be earlier than this. We are unable to do anything with it, but if any other museum is interested and contacts me, I will supply further details."

(2) Hurdle-making - a regional survey

Paul Clear, a Sussex hurdle maker, is undertaking research into the regional differences found in his craft and would like to hear from museums with collections of hurdle maker's tools and products. Details of supporting documentation and accounts of local processes would be appreciated particularly. Mr. Clear's address is North Norris, 123 North Lane, East Preston, Littlehampton, Sussex.

The Group for Regional Studies : Officers

- Chairman : David Sekers, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke, Staffordshire.*
- Secretary : Richard Langhorne, The Lancashire Museum, Stanley Street, Preston, Lancashire.
- Treasurer : Pamela Murray, Museum of Staffordshire Life, Shugborough, Staffordshire.
- Editor : Stephen Price, City Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham

September 1978

* From October new address : Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, Cheshire.