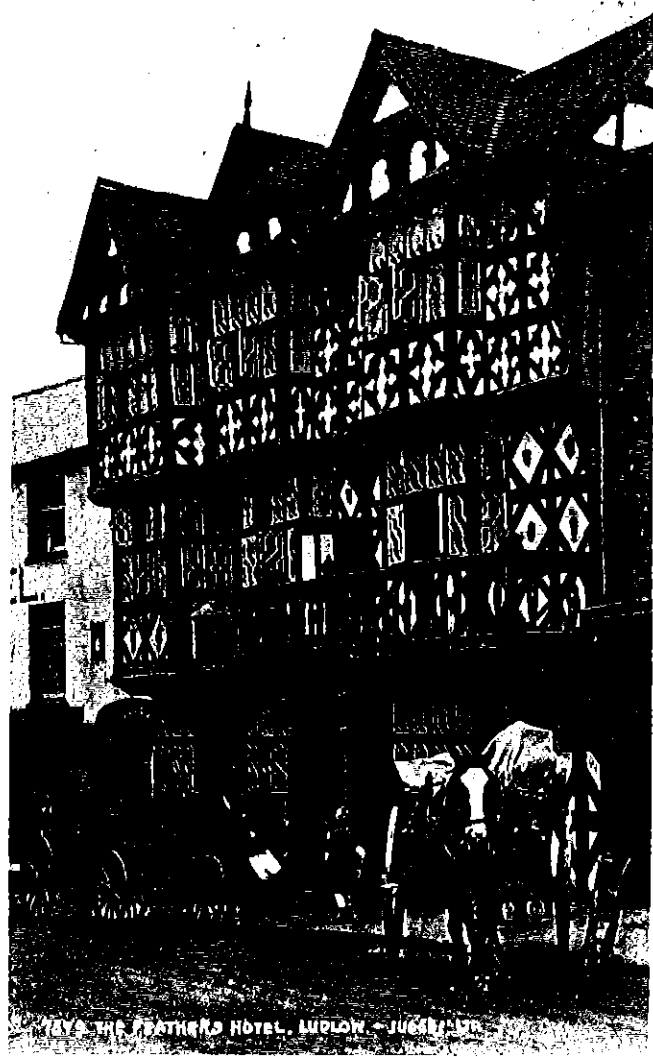


**group for
regional studies
in museums**



newsletter 8

GROUP FOR REGIONAL STUDIES IN MUSEUMS

NEWSLETTER NO.8 - OCTOBER 1980

CONTENTS:

Editorial

A Collector's Collection

Linda Fletcher

The Nordic Museum & Research

Vicky Airey

Group Activities 1979-80;

Recording, dismantling & rebuilding structures
at the Black Country Museum

Chad Goodwin

Occupational Costume

Gaby Porter

Annual Study Weekend & AGM

Health & Safety in a social history museum

Future Meetings

Work in Progress

Recent developments at Birmingham

Stephen Price

Brass Foundry at Bewdley

Charles Fogg

New exhibitions at MERL

Roy Bridgen

Research at Ludlow

Bibliographies

No. 10 Besom making

No. 5 Brushmaking - additions

No. 9 Cheesemaking - additions

Bibliographical work in progress

Recent publications of interest

Officers of the GRSM

Membership List

THE OPINIONS expressed in this newsletter are those of the Editor or the contributors and are not necessarily the views or policy of the GRSM. Material published in this newsletter may be reproduced upon application to the Editor.

COVER ILLUSTRATION: Feathers Hotel, Ludlow, built as residential property in the early 16th century, with balconies and fenestration added in the 19th century, one of the finest examples of the many timber-framed houses of the period in Ludlow. The original photo was a Judges Ltd. (Hastings) postcard. It depicts the horse-drawn carriage used to transport hotel guests to and from the railway station until just before the Second World War, and a horse and trap belonging to Mr. Meredith the miller at nearby Stoke St. Milborough. The card was posted to Mrs. Meredith in 1924 from Leist with the message: "Dear Grandma, we all arrived home safely. We are glad the first day is over, it has been very hot in the mill today. With love to all, from Jack xxx". Was this the miller's grandson continuing the trade elsewhere and writing after a visit home?

EDITORIAL

The skills and approaches represented within the ranks of the membership of the GRSM exhibit a greater variety than any other museum discipline with the possible exception of natural history. We are obliged to spread our influence and interest over a broad range of subjects if our work is to record and present a balanced picture of our region or town's distinctive past. More than a passing knowledge of the methods and priorities involved in local history documentation, oral testament, sites and monuments fieldwork, folk-life studies, industrial and technological history, architecture, archaeology, costume studies, not to mention the museological skills of conservation, interpretation, cataloguing etc. None of these fields can be considered purely in isolation if the trap of mere antiquarianism is to be avoided. It is difficult to keep up with developments in so many areas without regular contact, both formal and informal, with fellow professionals and those working in closely-related subjects.

The GRSM can provide points of contact, especially for those of us working in more isolated situations, through its meetings and this newsletter. The current constraints being imposed upon expenses for travelling to meetings and conferences threatens an important source of information and inspiration for the social history curator. We have limited contact with university and polytechnic departments working within our sphere of interest. Birmingham Museum have recently advertised a higher degree place in conjunction with Aston University for a PhD student to base research on the museum's collections. How might a better channel of communication be opened for museums to indicate subjects where a research degree could do valuable work normally beyond the resources of time available to museum staff? It is also unfortunately true that many museums do not provide the focus for interest in their collections of objects and information suggests they should.

Faced with the difficulty of taking over the newsletter from an editor who has caused it to be one of the best of the specialist group publications, my intention is to widen our coverage to include details of meetings and seminars right across the spectrum indicated above, to continue the series of bibliographies, to include reviews of new exhibitions in social history museums and to leaven the mixture with scurrilous gossip and the occasional light-hearted contribution. It has been said before but this will depend on the membership and I look for short notices of work in progress, requests for information, longer articles, practical advice on display and publications and the relevant or otherwise press clipping and cartoon. So be prepared for the late night phone call demanding news of your work on the typology of medieval mid-Wilts dung flails.

As you will find in the list of officers, there has been a considerable change in the committee. We should express our thanks to all those hoary characters who have guided the GRSM

since its inception in the heady days of the '70's and provided a most sociable forum. It is also noticeable that the membership of the GRSM has changed in the last year or so. A list of current members is included in this issue. In planning future meetings it would help us to know something of the hopes and demands of the members so please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to the editor.

In the stop-press section I am able to report that the first meeting of the new committee has outlined a programme for the next year including a weekend seminar in Leeds on probate inventories and their contents, the annual conference in Edinburgh on drink and the drink trade, and a meeting accompanying the Manchester conference of the Museums Association on the regalia and relicts of trade unions, co-operatives and friendly societies. In addition we hope to set up a day school on regional furniture styles, a weekend gathering the harvest by hand at Acton Scott in Shropshire and one or two further meetings of a practical nature. If you are undertaking a project such as the recording of a workshop or building and need some help there are always GRSM members willing and interested to lend a hand for a day or weekend.

' A COLLECTOR ' S COLLECTION '

The editor's comments in Newsletter no.5, reminding us of the importance of recording immediately and fully 'the transient details of provenance, history and use... usually only obtainable at the point of collection', cannot be overstressed and this can well be illustrated by defects in the Pinto Collection. Deficient background information is, however, just one area where the Pinto Collection shows up the sort of problems which may face a museum which acquires a 'Collector's Collection'. This is the term which I would use to describe a collection handed over in its entirety to a museum after a lifetime of collecting by someone with an interest in a particular field. In the case of the Pinto Collection it is a collection of over 6,000 objects, all made either wholly or partly of wood, brought together by Mr. and Mrs. E.H. Pinto of Northwood, Middlesex in the course of their lifetimes.* This was handed over to Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery in 1965 as part gift, part sale. The motivation behind the formation of this particular collection had been a fascination with the beauty and utility of woods of all types and especially their use in history.

I believe that the motivations behind the assembling of such collections inevitably lead to certain defects and losses which the museum curator has, all too late, to try to come to terms with. The two chief problems that I have come up against have been the general lack of documentation on usage and provenance, which should have been made at the time of acquisition, and the unreliability of such information as has been passed on to the museum.

I might also add that, in a situation where Mr. Pinto's Treen and Other Wooden Bygones (G. Bell & Sons, 1969) seems to be used by many museums as a bible on the subject of wooden bygones, these deficiencies should, I feel, be brought into the open.

On the first point - the lack of original documentation, this can be attributed partly to the method of acquisition employed and partly to the particular interests of the collector. The Pintos were very keen 'Collectors' and the object of the exercise was to acquire as many examples of the different uses to which wood was put as possible. Since details of use, age and provenance were, therefore, only of secondary importance to them, relatively few attempts were made to discover and record such details. Added to this is the inevitable loss of information due to making acquisitions almost wholly through antique dealers and auctioneers. Mr. and Mrs. Pinto were a wealthy couple who were not dependent upon gifts. Instead they patronised antique shops up and down the country and purchased anything that took their fancy. Quite a lot of information is inevitably lost when using middlemen but it is not even possible in the case of the Pinto Collection to arrive at a rough provenance from the dealer's name and address, because the Pinto inventory often only records their names. For example:

IM43 13.11.50 Clothes Line Winder..... with initials & date 1805 (Fisher)
£1.10.0 (fig. 1)

Since they did not limit themselves to purchasing items just from Middlesex and the Home Counties, but travelled and bought continuously, the objects can only be assumed to originate from somewhere between John O'Groats and Land's End - or even beyond!

* Both died in 1972

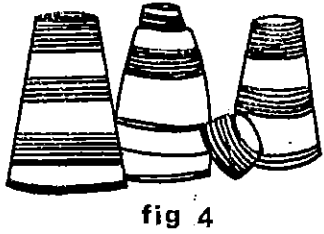
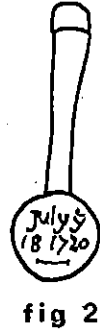
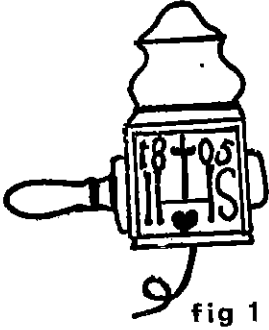
Where there were gifts to the collection one might expect to fare better, for here the Pintos were faced with the possibility of recording direct testimony. Again, however, the lack of interest in this side of things is evident. The information gathered varies from, if we are very lucky, some limited correspondence with the donor, to, more generally, just a name. One particularly unhelpful entry concerns the gift of an unusual ebony love spoon:

EL38 1956: Small black love spoon Present G.B. (fig. 2)

The combination, therefore, of these peculiar motives and methods of acquisition have resulted in a vast and potentially very interesting collection without the documentation to back it up and put the meat onto the bare bones.

The reader may, at this stage, be thinking to him/herself that this is not the impression of the Collection given by Treen. This is so, and it brings me to my second point - that of the unreliability of such information as has been handed down to the museum; in the form of the Pinto inventory and, to us all, in Treen. A little, basic historical research soon reveals that there is quite a lot of dubious material posing as 'fact' in this archive. This is particularly unfortunate in a situation where the information has been given the added stamp of authority by appearing in print - and in the book on the subject. Many of the details which the reader of Treen automatically assumes to be well-substantiated facts can be shown to be based on no more than assumptions, heresay, sales talk and/or a vivid imagination. These have been given full rein by the lack of historical objectivity and sensibility which seems to go hand in hand with the 'Collecting' bug. The reason for this, I would suggest, is that the 'Collector's' main aim in life is to increase the size, quality and value of his collection above all others. In the case of the Pintos this is very evident from the frequent mentions, in their letters and in Treen, to numbers of visitors and from which corners of the world people came to view the Collection. It is also obvious in the Pinto inventory and in Treen where the uniqueness of items and the quality of old and rare pieces is so frequently stressed. The pride of the Collector is evident in this fairly typical statement in Treen, "17th century specimens (are) so rare that I only know of five additional to the three in the Pinto Collection" (p. 305). The original inventory and Treen abound in such adjectives as 'very fine' and 'exceedingly rare'. These adjectives are almost certainly verbatim transcriptions of antique dealers' sales-talk and, in a situation where both the dealer and the Collector have prestigious and financial advantages to gain by being seen to buy and sell such rarities, we must treat such descriptions with great caution. Nothing can be accepted without further investigation.

Sometimes the research reveals nothing either to definitely refute or back up a statement. For example there are a pair of walnut wig stands which Mr. Pinto purchased, and accepted, as dating from the reign of Charles II (fig. 3). Traditional barley twist designs, however, elude dating and, apart from using the introduction of mens wigs in the 1660s as a terminus post quem plus the fact that these particular wig stands are well patinated, all we can really say is that they might possibly date from the late 17th or early 18th century. To give a definite date cannot be justified and gives a false impression of the amount of background information available to Mr. Pinto. The dating of many items illustrated in Treen is, however, based on no more information than I have shown to be the case here.



Sometimes facts can be established. For example, Mr. Pinto purchased a set of flasks as having been ones especially designed for Captain Scott to use in the Antarctic (fig. 4). This is based on a name and date written in ink inside one container which reads: 'Capt. Scott 1899'. Just a quick look in the Dictionary of National Biography reveals, however, that Scott was not made a Captain until 1904. The point being made is that it would have been a very easy matter to check up on this attribution but the Pintos did not do this. It therefore illustrates not only the Collector's eagerness to acquire rare and unusual pieces but also the likely reluctance on his/her part to take the necessary steps to confirm or refute definitely the genuineness of the purchase.

Other so-called facts can be shown to be based on nothing more than assumptions. In the case of the Collection's culinary moulds Mr. Pinto had virtually no information to go on and assumed that, apart from the delicate moulds obviously for icing, almost all the moulds were English, were for gingerbread and depicted English characters. The descriptions of these moulds in Treen as English are therefore based not on fact but on assumptions. One example is the 'gingerbread' mould which is supposed to show Punch and Judy (fig. 5). Correspondence with the Netherlands reveals that this is in fact a Dutch mould for a confection called 'taai-taai' and that the figures are traditional Dutch pedlars ('kramer'). Although anyone obviously could have made this mistake of identification it is not so much the error in itself that is worrying as the way that an identification based on assumptions is presented to the public as fact.

Thus we see from these examples the way in which the Collecting bug may stimulate motives of self interest which can distort the truth and which can conflict with a proper historical approach to collecting and research.

There are some ways in which a collection of this sort can, however, serve a useful purpose. This was illustrated recently when Peter Brears, Director of Leeds City Museum, came to study the seventy or so knitting sheaths in the Collection. The Collection could supply no data on provenances but it did provide him with the earliest known example of any kind - 1615 - and the earliest Weardale type as yet recorded - 1703. Such information can help us ascertain the length of time that a piece of equipment has been in general use. A collection assembled at random, as this one was, can also give the researcher a much needed awareness of the wide variety of types throughout the country, which a study of very localised collections might fail to reveal.

A complete re-inventorying of the Pinto Collection has been going on since 1965 and, although there is still a lot of work to do, many errors and anomalies have come to light, just one or two of which have been used to illustrate this article. Until such time as either a catalogue of the Collection is produced or a revised version of Treen appears, the latter should be treated with due caution bearing in mind the type of errors and omissions that one might expect to find in a collection such as this.

THE NORDIC MUSEUM AND RESEARCH.

The Nordic Museum in Stockholm was opened in 1873. Its founder, and inspiration was Artur Hazelius, Scandinavian philologist and teacher, who saw in the collections a means of arousing national consciousness among the Swedish people in an age when industrialism was just beginning in Sweden and the consequences for the earlier industrial nations had already been noted. Skansen the sister museum, opened in 1891 and also founded by Hazelius, was seen as the indispensable living museum in relation to the reference collections of the Nordic Museum, for he was keen to emphasize the importance of the total living environment; soon Skansen became the centre for national events, customs and traditions: already sited in Djurgarden the fashionable and popular Victorian and Edwardian leisure district of Stockholm, people flocked to the hillside to celebrate the Swedish National Day and Midsummer Day.

It was not only a sentimental nationalism Artur Hazelius had in mind, but also a very positive approach to the use of both museums for research and education, and for scientific collecting, recording and publishing. But the founder himself was not an ethnologist or historian: he set about the task of finding those who had such a background and a dedicated group of men and women formed a research unit; it became natural in such a pioneering field to wish to train others to continue and develop the work. In 1921 a special course was set up in conjunction with the Folk University comprising lectures and demonstrations given by the museum staff. By this time too the library, another of Hazelius' chief concerns, had become one of the most important of its kind in Europe.

Sigurd Erixon (1888-1968), the second holder of the Chair of Scandinavian and Comparative Folklife, was installed in 1934, and became the leading figure in the development of research and scholarship. He too was interested in the total environment and in its social implications and in 1942 he established the Institute for Folklife Research which still continues today as both a University Department and a department of the Nordic Museum, where not only the Institute's staff, but also a number of staff from Skansen and the Nordic Museum lecture and make extensive use of the collections as an integral part of the courses given.

In common with other museums in Sweden the Nordic Museum and Skansen produce a year book annually containing a research theme or themes; recording and research projects set up jointly between national and provincial museums and between museums and universities form a basic working approach. The paper summarising the work of the Cultural History Department and here translated, is by Prof. Mats Rehnberg, the present head of the Institute. The translations speak for themselves, but other sample questionnaires sent to me include:

Servant Women and their work.

Food preparation and customs associated with mealtimes.

Us and our cars: private motoring.

When the gramophone came.

SUMMARY INTRODUCTION TO FORTHCOMING CATALOGUE OF QUESTIONNAIRES AND FIELDWORK

The Museum's archive has been established together with the field research unit since 1st June 1978 as a separate department, "Cultural History Research and Nordiska Museet's Archive". The Cultural History fieldwork section has

been in existence since the foundation of the museum in 1873; on a large scale in the first place from 1916 working on the culture of the rural population and from 1922 also on the upper classes. The collection of writings with the aid of questionnaires filled in by voluntary contributors throughout the country has been organised on a broad base from 1928. The section compiling questionnaires and doing fieldwork based on the rural population was named the Ethnological Research Unit (E.U.). When research on the upper classes was put together with the E.U. in 1965 the name was changed to the Cultural History Research Unit (K.U.).

The material consists of notes, jottings from observations, measurements, sketches, photographs and film. The notes, which together amount to at least half a million pages, have come mainly through the questionnaires and curatorial fieldwork. Some of the material has been sent in spontaneously from people, some through competitions or appeals for help through the mass media.

The first questionnaire was sent out in 1905. After that there followed sporadic questionnaires from 1928 onwards, then collecting was intensified. A network of contributors was built up over the whole country. They have at times numbered over 500. In 1978 around 280 people answered the questionnaires regularly. The contributors out in the country do not constitute a cross-section of Sweden's population. Most of them are older people: women particularly.

The questionnaires have since the 1960's begun to concentrate more and more on present-day conditions. They have also been made shorter. Additionally they now enquire about individual circumstances whereas earlier one asked more about how conditions were generally in a community. The value of this great flood of information has thereby increased.

Up to 1978 421 main questionnaires have been sent out and so-called special questionnaires. The number edited is from one to three per year.

A very important collection started in 1945. At that time the museum in conjunction with the trade unions federation began to give notice of competitions for memoirs of different types of work. Up to now some 30 groups have taken part. As a framework to the memoirs there is a simple questionnaire of about 20 points. The best contributions have been published. The great part of the material contains not least a wealth of information of social history interest.

Curatorial fieldwork is financed in part by subsidy or by contributions from communes (i.e. local councils) and industry. In the department some ten people take part in fieldwork. Casually employed personnel help too. Many researches take place in the form of a project and concentrate on present-day conditions in all sections of society.

All the incoming material is accessioned in numerical order, and clean copies are in process of being made of all typed material. This is then transferred to the topographical register and to the register recording what all the contributors and curators have sent in. Properly speaking, an objects register is lacking, but work on abstracting is in process. The material from different questionnaires and fieldwork is kept separately in box files or on tape bound. There too relevant photographs are kept and there are besides a number of duplicate registers 'the original register' which are very detailed. A great many photocopies and notes

from meetings are inserted there too.

There are four further large archives in the country containing traditional material. Many museums also have large or small collections of that type. Songs and folk music recordings are kept in the Swedish Song Archive in Stockholm.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS AND COLLECTORS OF INFORMATION:

(a) To Nordiska Museet's writing contributors

Nordiska Museet has for many years collected in experiences of life in Sweden from interested people from all over the country. These contributors return questionnaires on different topics sent to them by one of the museum's departments, CULTURAL HISTORY RESEARCH. The returns are processed and deposited for future research in Nordiska Museet's archives.

The work on the questionnaires is always in need of new contributors from the whole country: people of all ages and from different backgrounds, because it is intended that the material collected by the museum should shed light on Sweden from as many sides as possible.

The questionnaires lay no claim to being exhaustive in subject matter. The contributor is always welcome to make further additions which haven't been catered for but which are relevant to the topic.

The museum has up to now sent out over 400 questionnaires but nevertheless they still fall short of covering all the things we should like to know about. Many lists are still not done and we are therefore very happy to receive "free" accounts of different sorts from our contributors. In the first place it is the contributors' own experiences we are interested in. But one may also interview others about their experiences. A person whom the contributor interviews is called the storyteller. The storyteller's name, age, occupation and home area should always be stated just as should the contributor's. It is also important always to state the point in time when the information was given.

It is the contents, rather than handwriting, spelling or style, which are vital. Sketches and diagrams and plans are welcome, as are black and white photographs. These can also be loaned to the museum for copies to be made.

To encourage such research a small sum of money or a book will be sent, according to the contributor's wishes. Unfortunately the museum has not got the economic resources to pay writers at the going rate. Since the museum does not pay tax for anyone on the honorarium you must yourself do something about that too.

So that the researchers shall be of uniform standard in the archive they must be written on a typewriter, or in ink, indelible pencil, lead pencil, biro or fountain pen. Other kinds of pens do not maintain the required standard.

The museum sends out a certain amount of paper for research, where there is also room to fill in name, district, age, etc., etc. The paper is lined for handwriting, and unlined for typewriter use and drawings. The cover may be used for continuing the text, and since paper is expensive one should preferably write on both sides of the page.

Since the different questionnaires are stored in different sections of the archive, the answers should be kept on different papers. Copies of the answered questionnaires may be kept. Perhaps you will find occasion later to complete an earlier answer.

Besides the questionnaire and research paper the contributor is issued with a large envelope to send in the researches post-free, a small envelope for correspondence with the museum and a requisition card for ordering more paper.

Contributors are always welcome to write and discuss points of view and proposals. You are also welcome to give us an idea of other people you know who are suitable for, and interested in, work on the questionnaires.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAKING DOWN NOTES ON MEMORIES ABOUT WORK AND OCCUPATIONS

1. The chosen person's date and place of birth. Parents' work/occupation, age, descent and background and living circumstances.
2. Childhood and upbringing. Brothers and sisters. Work in the home. Family living conditions, economy, interests. Going to school, confirmation.
3. Childhood home. Describe the houses where the family lived, equipment, furniture, sleeping arrangements, mealtimes. Cooking, cleaning, washing. Daily life and high days and holidays in the home. Circle of friends.
4. Describing the surroundings of the home, land, the area of the city or town or the cottage, tenement or industrial area. Describe the shops and other establishments in the area, neighbours and life in this section of society during different times of the year.
5. First job outside the home. The nature of the job, place of work, times of work, friends, superiors. The way the older people treated the younger ones. Pay for the job. At what age did he/she leave the family home?
6. Upbringing and youth: describe way of life, sad and happy experiences, interest in life, leisure time and entertainments, beginnings of interest in boys/girls.
7. Marriage and family: how did marriage partners meet. Describe the engagement, wedding and marriage, family life, children, own home, circle of friends and society, leisure time etc.
8. Work in industry or elsewhere. This is one of the most important sections. Describe in detail work places and the type of work, where the person concerned was employed. The reason for change of jobs. Describe the course of their work in the different places, the structure of work laws, the organization of the working days. Describe the work places and different arrangements there, rests and mealtimes, work mates and superiors. Work-times, wages during different periods. How was one employed and how given the sack? Points of view on different working conditions during different periods of time of the person's working life.
9. Describe interest in religion and spiritual and intellectual matters. What role did the church and the non-conformist church play? Which popular movements did the person come into contact with? e.g. the temperance movement, working men's clubs, sports clubs etc.

This questionnaire can be used as a basis for describing a great variety of jobs. Choose those questions which are relevant to the work of the person you are interviewing.

POINTS TO REMEMBER FOR NOTING REMINISCENCES

It happens from time to time that older people get in touch with Nordiska Museet and want to write about their life. We most gratefully accept such writings from people of all ages. We in the museums are naturally conscious that the writer often remembers his childhood and upbringing best and we see very well that this section consequently becomes the most detailed. As one of the museum's contributors writes "strangely enough it is so that childhood memories, however simple and poor they are, stand out very sharply in one's memory. One has only to play the film of one's own life backwards and the pictures of childhood stand out most clearly".

The following short and very general observations are only thoughts to make the arrangement easier and to be an aid to memory. There is nothing to stop you taking up something which is left out of this document and which you think important or illuminating.

DONT FORGET to give your name, date and place of birth, village or town parish and (if you are an imigrant) home land.

CHILDHOOD

Childhood Home. Parents name, work, ages, place of origin. Size of family, servants. Father's and mother's parents. How would you describe the family's social position? Which people were socially above and socially below yours? Give examples of how you noticed social differences (forms of address, circle of friends and acquaintances etc.).

Life in Childhood Home. Family's economic circumstances, house, furnishings and their uses, sleeping areas, surroundings of the house, society in the area, neighbours, shops, play areas, bathing places, possible summer cottage, allotment cottage, etc.

Occupation in the Home. Describe the daily and periodical home routine. Who did what and how? Cleaning, washing, cooking, washing-up. Mealtimes, meal preparations, table manners, seating arrangements, grace at table. Personal hygiene. Clothes during different times of the year, and for different occasions. working clothes, Sunday clothes, underclothes, night clothes etc. Comfortable and uncomfortable clothes (how were they put on, how did they feel?). Care of clothes, and storage of clothes, buying clothes (who sewed them?).

LEISURE TIME INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE HOME

Holidays, church festivals, festivals, ordinary evenings. Books, radio, Newspapers and journals, walks, journeys, excursions, dances, songs and music, theatre, films (cinema), open-air life, sport, games. Activities in associations and societies, which ones, how often, write about meeting places and how such meetings were conducted.

Childrens Upbringing. Who was in charge of it? Rules for behaviour, demands made on children of different ages, punishments and pocket money. Lullabies, bedtime stories, bedtime prayers, fear of the dark, how it felt to be a child, who you went to on different occasions. Going to school, homework, playing,

friends, Sunday school. Children's actual contribution to the support of the family.

Family Society. How and in what form did the family and its members communicate? Letters, telephone conversations, visits without an invitation, coffee parties, invitations to meals (when). What rules were there for communication (table manners, placing, serving, methods of address). Yearly parties and red-letter days, who invited on different occasions (friends from work, neighbours, relatives, those who shared the same outlook, whole families, only grown-ups, exclusively men or exclusively women). How did people enjoy themselves? Conversation (what subjects), songs music, dancing, excursions, working together?

YOUTH

Education in the home, in school or elsewhere, more advanced education. How much importance was attached to confirmation classes? When did you leave home? Where did you move to? Military Service?

First job. Write about the work, the place where you worked, times of work, labour management, colleagues, work-mates, wages/salaries.

Reasons for choice of job. Parent's work, financial reasons, lack of choice, force of circumstances, talents and interests?

Describe your way of life, house etc. according to the same pattern as during "childhood". Friends, gang, meeting places, for young people, organized activities, interests, leisure pursuits, contact with brothers and sisters and parents.

ADULT LIFE

Describe your life as an adult, your own home, relations, circle of friends, social position, free time etc. in the same way as for the period of your childhood. Describe your life as someone living on their own, married or living with someone (Sweden), and according to circumstances, how you met your partner, about your engagement, wedding, life together, family life and children.

Describe in detail the job (or other jobs) you have had during your life. Describe the skills of the job, the course of the job, tempo, different moments in your working life, place of work, clothes, mealtimes and rest periods, method of travel to work, and possibly unemployment. Describe also union, professional work and contracts how important it was to your working conditions. Changes in your working life.

If you are a pensioner, describe what it is like, what adjustment in your way of life did it call for in different ways?

THE BICYCLE

We would ask our contributors if possible to distinguish between their memories and their experiences of the bicycle.

Do you know which people or establishments in your area first got bicycles? How was the idea of cycling taken up in your area? Were the first cyclists most often men or women?

When did you yourself get your first bicycle? Write about its appearance and qualities (freewheel). Note down whether it was made in Sweden or abroad. Do you know anything about local manufacturer? Where did you buy your bicycle and how much did it cost? Did the price seem high? Did you or your parents make any financial sacrifices in order to be able to afford your bicycle? Why did you get it? How did you learn to cycle?

How did you use your bicycle and how was cycling regarded? As a useful way of getting to work, for instance, or as a pastime or a plaything? How important was the bike as a means of living some way away from work?

Did the bike make any difference to, for instance, contact between young people and the sort of spare time activities they went in for? The role of the bike in leisure time and as a means of activity.

Can you think of anyone or any category of worker who particularly used or avail themselves now of the bike as transport or a means of getting around?

Have you any idea who the first cycle repairers were?

Do you wear any particular clothes for cycling?

Do you still use your bike? If not, when did you stop, and why?

We are particularly anxious that the above questionnaire should be applied also to the motorbike and the moped. For instance, who or which people first got a motorbike; how did your area regard motorcycling; what did people think about women motorcyclists, etc., etc.

GRSM SEMINAR, RECORDING CRAFT WORKSHOPS,
BLACK COUNTRY MUSEUM, SEPT 7 9

Close by Tipton Crossroads in the Black Country stands a well-known building-site, although this particular one is a bit peculiar since it appears to have a number of funny, brightly-coloured boats floating around in it, and just happens to contain a re-built (and re-dedicated) chapel. It was here on a pleasant autumn day that we gathered to hear worthy pronouncements made upon the subject of 'Recording Craft Workshops' - indeed, I might suggest that more of our meetings be held in chapels, since this day proved to be both enjoyable and highly instructive, so the Great God of Museology (or at least a couple of the lesser Muses) were definitely on our side.

Following the ritual welcomings of old friends and accompanying (confidential, of course) denouncements of Principal Officers (many, and various), we took our pews to hear our host, Stuart Holm describe the methods used by the BCM to record their buildings during all stages of demolition, and re-erection. I remain convinced that the slide showing Stuart lying on a floor photographing a particular roof angle was just one that he put in on its side to confuse us, but I'm equally sure that all of us were extremely impressed by the thoroughness with which the BCM approaches this work. Dealing exclusively with brick buildings, Stuart laid great emphasis on the need to record even the minutest detail of each building as it came down, to fully research documentary evidence for the building, and to compare the 'museum object' to others of its kind. Being equally fastidious about noting the exact position of every hook in the wall over a workbench as with the actual fabric of the building - and don't forget those settlement cracks - Stuart's talk proved to be very stimulating and the ensuing debate ranged widely over all aspects of recording buildings, whether for museum re-erection or not, to the finer points of actually using the workshops 'live' following re-erection. The suggestion of holding a seminar on the subject of 'Working Museums and the Law' is surely due for further consideration?

The scurrilous thought that some delegates only attended the seminar in order to sample the justifiably praised Bathams bitter at the 'Bull & Bladder' is of course totally unfounded, although after our long lunch break there, I believe that the suggestion of all chipping in to take a barrel back with us for the afternoon session was at least half-serious.

Anyway, back in the temperate atmosphere of the Darby Hand Methodist Chapel, Terry Murray of York Castle Museum told us about the recent removal to York of a Jet worker's shop from Whitby. Again, the need for detailed recording of all fittings, location of tools etc., and for a comprehensive photographic survey was stressed. The fact that a Jet workshop represents a specialised, and geographically local craft led the following debate onto the lines of just how typical are, say, blacksmiths shops throughout the various regions represented by the delegates, and should we, as a group be doing more to record, comparatively, such buildings. Whilst on a practical level, the chance to peruse some of the BCM's highly detailed site note books, and the comments made by several delegates about the difficulty in obtaining replacement coach bolts, or correct shades of paint led to an enthusiastic swapping-of-notes, although what happened to the offers of co-ordinating information concerning possible suppliers?

The day finished with a general sauntering around on the site (delegates, please bring your own pointing trowels), a demonstration of How to Shower GRSM Members With Sparks And Not Set Fire to Them, Whilst Chain-making, and for those who didn't have to rush off for trains, a short boat trip through the Dudley Tunnel with a specially skillful display of 'legging' (or was it how not to.....?) by, of course, the ever-enthusiastic Lincolnshire contingent.

True, some die-hards managed to find excuses to stay on for a swift lun at Ma Pardoe's in the evening.... but then what do you expect?

All in all, an extremely informative day, although thank god I'm not in the building re-erection business myself, the thought of going to bed at night counting numbers on endless piles of bricks.....

To complement Chad's remarkable feat of memory, some notes and tips on the Black Country Museum's method of recording and moving buildings; (by courtesy of Stuart Davies)

RECORDING;

1. Clear rubbish out of a building carefully as the lower levels may contain tools, fittings etc. Record everything before moving even modern material. There is always the danger that the currently insignificant detail may be held in greater esteem by subsequent enquirers.
2. Photograph exterior from every angle with plenty of overlap. BCM reckon to take 200-300 photos of a small workshop.
3. Site note book contains a complete measured survey of the building. It may have to be altered later to fit into a museum site.
4. Research the documentary evidence before dismantling; early photos, deeds, late 19th century 'building notices', maps, rentals etc.
5. Research and observation of local buildings of a similar type can supply missing details such as original fittings, plan etc.
6. Record fully the interior. Divide interior and fittings into numbered sections and photograph extensively with wide overlapping. Every hook and nail in teh BCM chainmaker's shop numbered, photographed in position, removed and placed in numbered polythene bags.

DISMANTLING;

1. Each brick marked, initially in chalk which does not wash off in rain but can be later easily rubbed off. Coding system used, each course having a number and each brick a related letter. Special care to be taken with the complicated parts of a building such as facade, corners and decorative detail.
2. Slates not recorded individually, but tiles are if there is some evidence of replacements.
3. BCM use team of three for dismantling; one to remove the bricks (can often be lifted by hand, especially if lime mortar has been used), thrown down

onto old mattress (usually available in disused buildings) for second person to clean and the third to paint a number in emulsion on the top of the brick before packing. Emulsion is fine if brick is not wet and the number on the top can be read by the bricklayer as he lays a course.

4. Pack bricks in wooden crate for transport. Crates cost c.£10 and have lasted as long as three years in use. Each crate labelled and covered in polythene and moved around the site by a fork-lift truck.
5. Health and Safety aspects can be a problem.
6. All wooden and metal internal and external fittings marked and bagged. Samples of original paint, plaster, and wallpaper taken. Sometimes it is necessary to use bricks and fittings from similar houses elsewhere.
7. To aid rebuilding, vertical dimensions taken every fourth course at significant points e.g. corners.

REBUILDING;

1. Rebuild on a concrete base, with footings of new bricks, of varying height if subsidence effects are to be reproduced. This is not only desirable but may be necessary if the structure is to go back together again properly.
2. Any new sections blended in to look like the original.
3. The photographs are kept in logical order in plastic wallets in a folder, thus easily referred to during rebuilding. Detailed drawing of at least the front elevation supplied for the brick-layer to refer to.
4. A good bricklayer is essential. (Some difficulties have been encountered with the bricklayer wanting to lay bricks properly, not the way in which they were actually laid).
5. Try to work straight out the crates, but the bricks may have to be laid out on the ground to sort out numbering problems.

OCCUPATIONAL COSTUME SEMINAR,

PLATT HALL, 27 JUNE 1980

Costume is in danger of being 'taken over' by art; the Museums Association now requires costume specialists to register for the Diploma in Fine and Decorative Arts (formerly, they became students of Folk Life); and many museums have placed their costume collections under art curators.

Both folk life and costume specialists bemoan this, and the seminar at Platt was held jointly by the Group for Costume and Textile Staff, and the Group for Regional Studies, to strengthen the ties between the groups. Instead, however, it seemed to highlight the differences in approach. Some GRSM members felt the contributions were irrelevant, or superficial; but folk life specialists are clearly doing little work on costume themselves: the GRSM was unable to supply a speaker.

The seminar began with an introduction to the collections at Platt Hall, by Jane Tozer and Joanna Hashagen. The Gallery (part of Manchester City Art Gallery) has a large photographic archive, increased considerably by the recent Archive Retrieval Project at Manchester Polytechnic's Manchester Studies Unit. The core of the costume collections is the Cunningtons' collection, which claims to be representative of all strata of society, but was not provenanced. Articles of working dress have been identified by comparison with literary and pictorial references - mistresses' gowns passed down to servants, simple print dresses, hunting coats. An identifiable group of occupational costume - that of the uniformed working class - is represented at Platt, with nurses' and servants' uniforms. But the three-dimensional remains are sparse: the mill girls of Lancashire are represented only by a shawl and a gay flowered cotton overall.

Avril Lansdell, of Weybridge Museum, described her work in Surrey and used photographs and tape recordings which she has collected to illustrate methods and sources in fieldwork.

In the afternoon, Naomi Tarrant spoke on regional dress. She emphasised the regional nature of all dress: even in portraits of national figure-heads the clothing is culturally specific and, in a sense, regional, although the region differs from that which defines regional working dress for agriculture and trades. She also suggested that much 'traditional' working dress has a comparatively short history - such as the smock.

Madeleine Ginsburg (V & A) then described the pictorial sources available for studying working costume, and showed lots of slides. She pointed out, however, that many illustrators in the nineteenth century represent the same workers and the same places - particularly the London street traders - rather than broadening our sources for different trades and regions.

At the end of the day, I felt that the concept of occupational costume still had not been defined: was the queen in Naomi Tarrant's slide of the 16th century wearing her occupational dress? And would the bin-liners with holes cut for arms and head, which the dustbin-men in north Manchester had been wearing that morning, ever find their way into a costume collection? Many of the problems brought out by the seminar seemed to be aspects of a much wider problem - that of collecting the material evidence of an informal, transient culture which has been described by social historians in recent years, but which is still largely ignored in museums.

This year our annual conference was held at Manchester in June, its theme the recent drastic decline of the cotton industry in the face of cheap imports and the consequent implications for museums and other interested bodies in the North-West. The demise of the cotton industry, the earliest application of the factory system, throws out a challenge to the folk-life approach, perhaps more used to recording relict handicrafts and small vernacular structures than technically-sophisticated industrial processes employing a large work force. Furthermore - the exclusive concern of industrial museums with the technology of industry leaves a serious gap in the recording and understanding of working conditions and the patterns of life associated with a factory system.

After meeting over dinner at our hall-of-residence accommodation on Friday, we visited David Seker's project at Quarry Bank Mill, Styal. Here on the rural Cheshire fringe of Manchester, Samuel Greg established a water-powered cotton mill in 1784 and subsequently built houses, a school, an apprentice house and a church to attract and retain his work force. The mill buildings, village and surrounding estate were given to the National Trust in 1939 and they in turn have fostered an independent trust to establish and manage a site museum. The mill only ceased production in 1959 but all the machinery was then removed. In 1855 the mill had contained 5,952 throstle spindles, 5,184 mule spindles and 305 looms but now it is another empty building that would 'make a good museum'. It will be a problem to suggest convincingly the mass of machinery once employed there.

Several of us felt that the admittedly early days of the 'museum in the making' at Styal revealed the frailties of the independent situation. In recent years the independent museums have been trumpeted as the way forward for museums of the future. That they have considerably advanced the cause of museums cannot be doubted, attracting a wider spectrum of the public and preserving important monuments of our industrial past such as Ironbridge and Gladstone. However, the often small professional staff, only David at Styal, preoccupied with the administration and publicity of the project cannot hope to provide the bedrock of research on which any interpretation however sensational or superficial must rest if an institution is to call itself a museum. At Styal there appeared to be a danger that the interpretation of the site was slipping towards a very romanticised picture of industrial paternalism. Our guided tour of the village certainly strayed far in this direction, skating over the tied village, truck shop and low level of wages compared with contemporary local mills.

One of the most valuable functions of the museum is to act as a focal point for its neighbourhood, a touchstone for the historical identity of its hinterland. The limited resources at Styal cannot perform this role, despite the stress in their publicity on the historical significance of the site. The lack of that accumulated background of local information and of research will hamper the trust's interpretation, leaving it an exhibition area within a country park, with curatorial concern at the beck and call of commercial preoccupation.

On Saturday morning our two speakers highlighted the possibilities of the use of oral testament for the social historian. Jill Liddington of the Manchester Studies Unit at the Manchester Polytechnic spoke admirably on the Cotton Industry Records Project. This is an attempt to make a record

of the working conditions and attitudes characteristic of the cotton mills of the North-West, principally by means of tape-recording the memories of millhands. Using MSC resources the project has been able to concentrate on cotton, producing over one hundred interviews to date. The use of travelling exhibitions, a local radio programme, and a comprehensive schools information package to seduce informants from the area and feed the results back to the generation who know only of mill closures demonstrated the positive and thorough nature of the project. I felt that this was oral history at its best, with an exhaustive investigation of a single theme possible only with the resources and time normally unavailable to the museum curator.

Ken Howarth's work at the North-West Sound Archive made an interesting contrast. He is the only person staffing the Archive with the brief to "make, collect and preserve sound and related visual recordings of the life, character, history and traditions of the North-West". This is a huge field to cover and he is unable to catalogue or make available his material without further staff. His recordings included the last hand tenting frame in the region, a family memory stretching back to the Peterloo massacre and environmental records of the background noise in a weaving shed. When the scope of Ken's collecting of oral records is considered, the gaps in recording elsewhere are considerable and have little chance of being filled.

In the afternoon we visited Higher Mill, Helmshore, where two mills have been acquired by the Lancashire County Museum Service to preserve the buildings and machinery in situ and interpret the life and work of the mill. Ian Gibson guided us around the late 18th century fulling and weaving mill and the water-powered spinning and weaving mill on the same site. Although at a less advanced stage as a museum site than Styal, the depth of knowledge behind the Helmshore project was reassuring. Doubtless it will not attract as many visitors, the cafe and giftshop not being considered a priority, but two representative mills with some proportion of their original machinery will be preserved.

Helen Caffrey (Tameside Museums) contributed a short talk on her recording and collection of machinery used in the production of 'donkey stones', which gave the window sills and lintels of the North-West a distinctive yellow hue. Peter Brears illustrated his scheme to link Leeds' disparate museums and sites with an interpretative trail. This is an interesting attempt to unify sites as different as Kirkstall Abbey, the city museum and the new industrial museum, using their proximity to the canal towpath, into a Museum of Leeds.

Following the AGM of Sunday morning, we discussed with a panel of speakers from the region's museums, the problems and possibilities of industrial museums. After brief descriptions of the museum services represented and being reminded again of the regional variations within the North-West's cotton industry, the discussion ranged around the difficulties of interpreting industrial processes. In particular, given the theme of the conference being the need to record the operatives and not just the technical processes how might the working day in a mill be conveyed? If conventional displays are inadequate how, far beyond the occasional demonstration of otherwise static machinery should we go in an effort to reproduce the sight, sound and smell of a working mill or the tedium of the repetitive millhand's ady? Few of us liked the use of costumed demonstrators with the inevitable M & S label peeking out from beneath 'authentic' costume.

Further serious objections are made by the factory inspectorate and current Health and Safety legislation. The economics of offering working exhibits in a mass-production industrial process pose problems such as disposing of large quantities of spun yarn and buying in the raw material.

The AGM was remarkable only for the low attendance which resulted in one half of those present retiring from the committee and proposing the other half to take over from them. (the new committee is listed at the back of this issue) The perennial question about the state of the manual of curatorship and our contribution to it was aired with no firm answers available. The problems posed by the location of the Association Conference in London this year were raised with particular reference to the awkward timing of the professional groups session.

We expressed our thanks to Gaby Porter for organising at somewhat short notice a stimulating and sociable weekend. The hall of residence provided a reasonable standard of plain institutional food spoiled only by the warm muddy liquid passed off as coffee. The subterranean accommodation had enough doors for a season of Brian Rix farce and walls thin enough to embarrass an amorous spider. The weekend was marked as usual by the late night rituals of Birmingham and MERL over the declining beer crates and by a world record number of people travelling in a Ford Fiesta from Reddish to Manchester Piccadilly. I look forward to a sedate conference in Edinburgh next year on drinks and the drink industries.

SEMINAR: HEALTH & SAFETY IN A SOCIAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Ironbridge Gorge Museum, 15th October, 1980

The interpretation of working machinery to the visiting public has been one of the most significant contributions to museums' range of exhibitions in the last decade, particularly in the 'new' subject of industrial archaeology and open-air industrial and agricultural museums. Whereas in the conventional cased museum the only danger to the visitor was slipping on a highly-polished floor, the presentation of working machinery is fraught with hazards. Such exhibits bring museums within the scope of health and safety legislation by exposing both visitor and demonstrator to potentially maiming and fatal machinery and dangerous open air sites.

Neil Cossens introduced the seminar by stressing the acute and diverse problems faced by the Health and Safety Executive's Inspectorate in factories and industrial plant. A museum hoping to operate 70 or 80 year-old exhibits can only present their problem to the local inspector and ask for advice. One of the recurring points through the day was that Health and Safety legislation cannot pass anything as safe, there are no hard and fast rules. Safe working conditions for authentic demonstrations of historical processes can only be agreed with an inspector if the museum exhibits a willingness to co-operate in all aspects of safety and thus gains respect and a high rating from the inspectorate.

Stuart Smith (Deputy Director and Safety Director) stressed the changes introduced by the 1974 Health & Safety at Work Act, which moved the burden of responsibility from the employers, as specified in the old Factory Acts, to every person in factory or other concern. The 1974 Act had brought the Museum within the scope of health and safety legislation for the first time and he described how the Museum had set up the safety committee and established a Safety Policy by collating the policies of local industrial companies. The contribution made by health and safety to the efficiency of any concern was stressed, in that safety is essentially about using the right machinery in the way it was designed to operate and establishing written rules for methods of working. A mass of safety literature is available from the British Safety Council, TUC and other organisations but the importance of the personal intervention and example of those people in positions of responsibility was repeated by several subsequent speakers.

The Accident Book played an important part in the identification and elimination of hazards to the Museum's staff and visitors alike and was reviewed at each monthly meeting of the Safety Committee.

John Steele (Exhibits Manager, Blists Hill) referred to the difficulties of demonstrating old working methods on period machinery but he had found the Inspectorate willing to compromise when they realised that the Museum was trying hard to comply with his requirements. The only serious accident at the site had been when a brand new machine had been misused with the guards removed and in this case it was the injured man who came close to prosecution and not the Museum. John Whetton

(Visitor Services) also emphasised the need for personal influence, in his case regularly checking every site open to the public and taking immediate action where necessary, tomorrow always being too late. An arrangement with the local fire service ensures regular drills and inspection of extinguishers.

Phil Evans (Supervisor, Work Experience Scheme, Blists Hill) raised the problems of instilling safe methods into his team of 16 and 17 year-old lads, mostly of low educational achievement and despite working in workshops at school. Tim Evert (Manager of Training Workshop, Maw's Tileworks) had been faced with particularly aggressive health and safety legislation consequent from the 1950's on the ceramic industries' appalling reputation on safety. At Maw's former works, the Museum is making hollow wares and decorative tiles using much of the former equipment and training 16-19 year-old young people in its operation. The high staff ratio of 1:5 makes supervision easier but he had found a low level of awareness of health and safety matters. The efficiency of correctly installed and positioned machines in a workshop was again underlined. There will always be accidents but the opportunities and hazards can be minimised. The morning session was concluded by a representative of the West Midland Industrial Health Service, a specialist occupational health service to which firms without their own medical staff subscribe, generally those employing from 1 to 1,000 employees. For 30p per employee per week a full service of preventative medicine and counselling is provided, as well as an emergency service.

After a sumptuous lunch we were guided around the open-air site at Blists Hill to consider the safety aspects of pit winding gear, working stationary steam engines, a sawyard, inclined plane, corrugated iron chapel and squatter cottage. Precautions were restricted for the most part to barriers to keep the public back from hazardous exhibits and the operation of historic machinery and sites seemed unhampered by this. The proposed smelting of iron will however undoubtedly call for more drastic measures. It was instructive to hear comments of 'our inspector would never let us get away with that'. The world of the museum is a new one to the inspectorate, one facet of a very wide brief. Until a degree of trust and mutual confidence has been built up between the museum and their inspector, he will obviously err on the safe side in deciding just how large a safety margin to advise. This was emphasised by Mr. Rogers, the Safety Officer from Wyre Forest District Council who answered questions and concluded the seminar. He revealed that each factory or firm was given a rating based on their performance in observing the advice of the inspectorate. It was noticeable in comments from other members that local authority safety officers often seem to have demanded more stringent precautions than the Health and Safety Inspectorate, perhaps an inevitable consequence of lengthening the chain of those responsible for establishing safety limits.

The seminar's lesson was that safety in the working museum should not be an occasional concern but a specific managerial skill and daily preoccupation. Museums will inevitably have problems in demonstrating dangerous machines such as saw-mills and steam engines. The key to operating without so many guard rails or mesh-protective sheets as to make the exhibit meaningless is either constant manning and supervision or a compromise based on an understanding dialogue with your inspector or officer.

EDITOR'S SPACE - FILLER

As in many other museums, we at Much Wenlock encourage our customers to sign a visitor's book, both as an indication of the geographical origins of our clientele and an opportunity for the recording of appropriately laudatory comments. It would seem that the visitor's book is one of the hidden corners of our cultural life, offering a medium for self-expression equalled only by the tiled walls of the pedestrian subways of our larger towns.

Foreign travellers are particularly susceptible, feeling great pride at having reached Wenlock from Waga-Waga and marking the full extent of their travels for posterity. One Australian was kind enough to inform us that her "great-grandfather was born in Wolverhampton". Amongst the many plaudits won by our excellent exhibition, "very interesting", "well presented", "fascinating" etc. are the less orthodox reactions to the mystery of interpretation; "ace", "cool", "magic", "good except the myth of Darwinism", "boldly goes where no man has gone before".

Other comments of an equivocal nature perhaps refer to the curator and his staff; "needs to be preserved for future generations", "sexy", "could be bigger", "nice to see children's work". Tucked away in rural Shropshire, the passing trade includes some singular characters such as the "humanoid" from Bournemouth (presumably a temporary resting place from intergalactic wandering) who had "seen better", though not in this world, or the gentleman of the old school who thought it all "spiffing". The singularly named Mr. Whiteass from Harpenden, noted for its northern comics, judged us "by gum, passable I suppose". Then there are the inevitable jokers signing themselves John Travolta, Erol Flynn, Clint Eastwood, Ann Idiot, etc. Watch this space for news of Joanna Lumley's impending visit.....

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

February 27th 1981 - MERL, Reading University

AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING

A one-day seminar to examine the problems posed by the collection, conservation, interpretation and use of agricultural machinery. Details are enclosed with this Newsletter.

May 14th - 15th 1981 - Birmingham & Ironbridge

THE CONSERVATION OF INDUSTRIAL OBJECTS: ETHICS AND PRACTICALITIES

A consideration of the neglected issues that should determine the techniques and end results of conservation for industrial and open-air museums: whether the aim should be to simply to arrest decay, to restore objects to original form, or to restore but retain evidence of use and adaptation: the implications of display conditions or running machinery: the relevance of established principles such as reversibility and the visible distinction between original and replacement elements.

The first day will be based in Birmingham and present these issues, highlighted by practical case studies of differing materials and objects. There will be contributions from conservators and curators from a range of museums. The optional second day will take delegates around the Birmingham Museum of Science and Industry and Ironbridge Gorge Museum with a presentation of the problems and the solutions adopted.

Further details from Michael Stratton, Institute of Industrial Archaeology, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Ironbridge, Telford, Shropshire.

May 1981 - ? Wiltshire

REGIONAL FURNITURE

A one-day seminar on Regional Furniture is being planned for May. It is hoped that Victor Chinnery, author of 'Oak Furniture' will be the principle speaker. Details will be sent out with the next Newsletter.

'Spring' 1981 - Shropshire

EXHIBITIONS FOR SMALL MUSEUMS

Sam Mullins, who is currently working on new displays for Ludlow museum, hopes to arrange a small meeting on this theme in the Spring.

July 2nd - 5th 1981 - Edinburgh

AGM & CONFERENCE: DRINK AND THE DRINK INDUSTRIES

This 1981 conference will be on the theme of Drink, and will include visits to distilleries breweries and a great many Edinburgh pubs. It is envisaged that it will last from the Thursday evening until the Sunday afternoon.

September 25th 1981 - Manchester

WORKING CLASS ORGANISATIONS

The Group's session after the Museum Association Conference will be devoted to Working Class Organisations and their relics. Trade Union and Friendly Society banners will get particular attention.

Late October 1981 - Leeds

PROBATE INVENTORIES

Peter Brears is arranging a weekend seminar on the use of Probate Inventories as a source for social history.

November/December 1981

COLLECTING FOR THE 20TH CENTURY

It is hoped to arrange a joint meeting on this theme with the Museum Professional Group.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Recent Development at Birmingham

On May 1st 1980 the department of Archaeology, Ethnography and Birmingham History ceased to exist and was replaced by two new departments: Archaeology and Ethnography, and Local History. The formation of a separate Department of Local History is a major step forward in the development of local and social history in Birmingham.

The new department has responsibility for the history of Birmingham, modern numismatics, the Pinto Collection and the branch museums at Blakesley Hall and Sarehole Mill. The staff consists of: Stephen Price (Keeper), Stuart Davies (Deputy Keeper), Linda Fletcher (Assistant Keeper), Dennis Smart (Technician) and Wendy Barson (Secretary).

First priority of the department is the opening of a new local history gallery in the Central Museum. This will illustrate the history of the town and city of Birmingham from the end of the Middle Ages until the present day. It is hoped to have this open by the middle of 1981.

Brass Foundry at Bewdley

Work on restoring and weather proofing the Brass Foundry Buildings which stand behind the 18th century Shambles that house Bewdley Museum, has now been completed.

The foundry, formerly belonging to Messrs. H.J. Exley Ltd. was given to the Wyre Forest District Council in 1977 by the Guild of St. George, on the undertaking that it was to be restored and opened to the public as a museum.

It provides the museum with the first opportunity to expand since it was opened in 1972 and it is intended to set up the foundry as a working exhibit, where the public will be able to see brass or other metals being cast and finished. Further research is now being undertaken in preparation for the design of static displays which will explain the various processes involved and also give details about the history of the brass industry and its products.

New exhibitions at MERL, Reading

The Museum of English Rural Life is one year into a three year programme of rejuvenation designed to consolidate its individuality and establish a course for the new decade. When the first specialist agricultural museum was established at Reading nearly thirty years ago, farm horses were workers instead of Sunday afternoon performers, the only value of a traction engine was as scrap, and the combine harvester was still in the early stages of its revolutionary march through England. Much has happened since then both in the public sector of the museum world and the private sector of the collector market. While other museums were undergoing their birth pangs, Reading was able to build upon the solid foundation of a collection of great variety and depth by diversifying into other areas: farm records, photographs,

trade records and books. These collections, as now represented in the Institute of Agricultural History, have seen Reading emerge as the richest resource centre for the history of rural England.

The common elements in many of today's rural museums are demonstrations, an area in which MERL was dabbling in the mid-1950's, and exhibitions based on philosophies that evolved in the 1960's, often on that now tired display cliché, 'The Farming Year'. The middle ground, with scope for interpretation of the rural community in terms of the social, economic and technological fabric of the country has remained relatively untouched. In addition, heavy emphasis on the lower orders of rural society and everything traditionally associated with the term 'Folk Museum' have reinforced the myth of rural England so glibly and so frequently trotted out by the Sunday supplements.

As a consequence, the new permanent exhibition under construction at Reading is an exhibition of agricultural technology and aims to manipulate the unique character of the collections in order to mark the progress of industrialised farming over the last 200 years.

The setting for the exhibition, due for completion in 1982, is the 8,000 sq. ft. Museum extension, a building of inherent flexibility with large unimpeded floor area complemented by a balcony along one wall. There are two concurrent themes to the ground floor of the exhibition. Firstly, the rise of the agricultural engineering industry from the small village workshop to the manufacturing giants of the late nineteenth century and the multinationals of today. Secondly, the development and use of various forms of motive power on the farm from the ox to the engine. Thus objects such as horse-gearing, steam cultivating machinery, barn engines, tractors and combine harvester play their part in the exposition of both themes. Two dimensional material, in the form of photographs and reproductions from catalogues, is widely used to provide the link and add the elements of impact and atmosphere to the visual effect. The story is told largely through short extracts from contemporary writers and journals so that the three media, objects, illustrations and text are in tune with one another. An exhibition by David Eveleigh in the balcony, looks at farmers collectively as a social grouping, as pioneers of new techniques and as consumers of the products of the agricultural engineering industry on view in the displays below.

A parallel development, due for completion by the end of the year, is taking place adjacent to the new exhibition area. Storage buildings that have outlived their usefulness are being demolished to be replaced by open-fronted single storey structures arranged around a courtyard. Here approximately half of the wagon and cart collection will be on public view in conditions both attractive as well as sound from the conservation viewpoint. The remainder of the farm transport material will be available for study purposes in a refurbished barn, a short distance from the museum on the other side of the university campus.

At the same time, efforts are being made to strengthen the educational role of the museum. The temporary exhibition room now doubles, during term-time, as a school/lecture room. In co-operation with a local Teachers Training College, teaching packs, consisting of notes, slides, pictures and objects, are being prepared for school parties on themes relevant to the exhibitions. A successful Extra-Mural Course was also launched this year and will be repeated and extended next term. Temporary Exhibitions will generally now be confined to the summer period and one produced by Jonathan Brown, Research Associate, illustrating the story of the malting industry over the last 200 years has recently opened.

Research at Ludlow

Over the past few years, the Ludlow Local History Research Group has undertaken a far-reaching programme of research of this well-documented town. Over the winter months the Shropshire County Museum Service is mounting a new exhibition in the Buttercross to take account of the considerable increase in the state of knowledge of the town's past and its buildings heritage. This exhibition will illustrate and interpret the history of the town from the building of the castle in the late 11th century to the life and work of a Victorian country market town, including town's rôle as border stronghold, political centre for the Council of the Marches, prosperous wool town, a centre for polite Georgian society and the foundation of the Natural History society and Museum in 1833.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A future issue of the newsletter will contain all the bibliographies published so far, with recent additions:

1. Agricultural Technology
2. Steam in Agriculture
3. Slaughtering and Butchery
4. Breadmaking
5. Brushmaking
6. Charcoal Burning
7. Horn Working
8. Rope-Making
9. Cheese-Making
10. Besom-Making

We have a bibliography on the retail grocery trades under preparation and would be interested to hear from anyone with useful references in this field. Suggestions and initial lists are also required for subsequent subjects. If you have been working on a particular subject and accumulated a few useful references do not hesitate to send them in so that they can be circulated and supplemented by others in the field.

BIBLIOGRAPHY NO.10: BESOM MAKING

Excluding references in COSIRA's Select list of books and information sources on trades, crafts, and small industries in rural areas (1973) p.40.

(A) General

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Yorkshire

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Ingilby, J. Life in the moorlands of north-east Yorkshire
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MUSEUM COLLECTIONS OF BESOM-MAKING TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Museum of Lakeland Life and Industry, Kendal

1. Two birch bundles, besom and clamp on bench used by Mr. Milligan of Outgate, Hawkeshead. Apart from besoms he made bundles up 44.0cm. long and 7.0cm. diameter, tied with twine, for the vinegar industry. (69/719-721)
2. Clamp on softwood spar used by Mr. Barker of Fellfoot, Newby Bridge. (69/717).
3. Clamp (handle and bench missing) used by Mr. Joseph Fletcher of Bridge End, Levens. (69/718).

Kendal Borough Museum

Clamp and shears (no details)

Hampshire County Museum

(no details)

North of England Open Air Museum, Bearish

Collection of small hand tools used by Mr. Willie Lamb of Teesdale, County Durham.

Bewdley Museum, Worcestershire

Collection of tools and moveable fittings from the workshop of Christopher and Alfred Birch, basket and besom makers of Wyre Hill, Bewdly. (73/326; 73/335) Photographs, written descriptions and tape-recordings of craftsmen.

Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading

1. 42 photographs of Mr. West of Mulfords Hill, Tadley, Hampshire.
2. 28 photographs of C.F.F. Snow including Mr. Appleton of Baughurst, Hampshire.

The Castle Museum, York
(no details)

Craven Museum, Skipton
(no details)

Tyedale Folk Museum, Hutton-le-Hole, Yorkshire

1. A sample of birch clippings in the form in which the raw material was received at the workshop.
- 2 - 4 Samples of firsts, seconds and thirds after sorting.
5. A partially-made broom head after tying and lapping, with a sample of the twine used.
6. A partly-made broom head after binding (still retaining its lapping with the sample of the sisal used.
7. A finished broom after shafting and setting, ready for use.
8. A broom after its short working-life.

Published: Bruikshank, G.D.R. "Building Birch Brooms at Portobello" in Folk Life vol. 18 1980.

Interin bibliography compiled by S.J. Price with assistance from J.S. Creasey, Miss R. Allan, J.W. Anstee, P.C.D. Brëars.

January 1980.

Additions to Bibliography No. 5: Brushmaking

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Rollinson. W. | <u>Life & Tradition in the Lake District</u> (1974) pp.127-128 and plate 135 photograph of brushmaker's sign "The Black Hog of Strickland-gate, Kendal". |
| Marshall. J.D. & Davies-Shiel. M. | <u>The Industrial Archaeology of the Lake Countries</u> (1969) pp.177-179 brushmaking - the Kendal trade and mills in the Furness area. |
| Anon | <u>Brushmaking through the Ages</u> (Kleen-eze Brush Co., Hanham, Bristol. n.d. but c. 1947) Copy in Lancashire County Library (Probably more useful for history of Kleen-eze Co.) |
| Richard Mudie - Smith ed. | <u>Sweated Industries being a Handbook of the "Daily News" Exhibition</u> (Bradbury, Agnew and Co. Ltd., London and Tonbridge 1906) "BrushMaking" pp. 70-72 "From a description by the late Mrs. Hogg. |

Museum Collections of Brush Making Equipment

- Birmingham Museums 1. Tools and equipment from Lawrence Long of Vaughton St. South, Birmingham. F646-F700'78.
- Lancashire County Museum 1. Handles and stocks for a wide variety of brushes from Willow Mill, Caton, Mr. Lancaster (a former bobbin and brush mill closed 1973).
2. Woodtwining equipment and tar table, descriptive notes, patterns, catalogues and large variety of samples of brush handles and heads from the firm of Mackay Pope of Preston.
- Nottingham Museum - 1. Foot-powered lathe, handles, Fibres.
Brewhouse Yard

Additions to Bibliography No. 9: Cheesemaking

Kindly supplied by John Creasey of MERL.

Books

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Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, 2nd ser., v.25 1889, p.419-426.
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Journal of the Bath and West of England Society, 4th ser., v.2, 1891-92, p.144-193
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JRASE, v.98, 1937, p.61-89.
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- Taylor, D. The English dairy industry, 1860-1930. Economic History Review, 2nd. ser., v.29, 1976, p.585-601.
- White. H. A detailed account of the making of Cheshire cheese: prize essay. JRASE, v.6, 1845, p.102-125.

Holdings at Institute of Agricultural History, University of Reading

Printed trade catalogues of firms supplying cheese-making equipment including the Dairy Supply Co., Ltd., London and Pond & Sons Ltd., Blandford.

Papers of Joseph Harding (1805-76) of Marksbury, who helped to achieve standardization in the manufacture of cheddar.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL WORK IN PROGRESS - INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

J.S. Creasey (Librarian and Information Officer, Institute of Agricultural History and Museum of English Rural Life) is undertaking research on agricultural history libraries and literature. A directory of agricultural history library collections is planned and his bibliographical essay, Agrarian history and biography, to be published in a volume of the Butterworth guides to Information Sources, Agriculture and Food Science, edited by G.P. Lilley, is in an advanced state of preparation. The essay surveys the historical literature of agriculture, horticulture and food.

Raine Morgan, the Institute's Bibliographer, has already collected 30,000 classified references to the printed literature of British agricultural history. The classified card index in the Institute Library is available for consultation by visitors. Two specialised bibliographies are planned for publication next year, Dissertations on British agrarian history: a bibliography and History of agricultural tools, implements and machines: a bibliography, both compiled by Raine Morgan.

FOLK-LIFE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jane Legget (Dept. of Museum Studies, Leicester) and Stephen Price (Keeper of Local History, Birmingham Museum) are preparing the first draft of this bibliography. It will be arranged in two sections; museological articles particularly relevant to the subject and a subject bibliography arranged according to an agreed classification system.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

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Chinnery, Victor The Kitchen Catalogue
Oak Furniture: The British Tradition
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British Isles and New England.
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- Forty, Ann Treen and Earthenware 128 pp. Mida Books 1979 £3.95.
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- Hughes, Anne The Diary of a Farmer's Wife 1796-97 162 pp. Allen Lane 1980 £5.50.
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Croom Helm, London, 1980 £22.50.
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- Standing Conference for
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of postage from 26 Bedford Square,
London WC1B 3HU.
- Thornton, Peter Seventeenth-century Interior Decor-
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£30.
- Waterson, Merlin The Servants Hall: A Domestic
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- Willmott Dobbie, B.M. Pounds or Pinfolds, and Lockups -
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Paintings of Rural Life in Britain
(Catalogue of an exhibition) 42 pp.
1979 50p.

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We felt that it would be useful to publish the current list of our membership with the year for which subscriptions were last paid where known. Some addresses here are out of date and the new Treasurer would be interested to hear from anyone wishing to pay back-subscriptions or notify a change of address. We apologise in advance if we have committed any frightful calumnies in this list but it seemed the best way to bring our records up to date and start the new regime off on the right foot.

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St. Fagon's
Cardiff,
CF5 6XB 80/81

Nancy Stebbing,
Asst. Keeper,
Wantage Museum, 77/78
Civic Hall,
Portway,
Wantage, OX12 9BX

D. Sekers,
18 Oak Cottages,
Styal,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire. 80/81

Elwign Scourfield
St Fagan's Folk
Museum,
St. Fagan's
Cardiff
CF5 6XB.

Miss J.A. Schofield,
Municipal Mus &
Art Gallery,
Clifton Park,
Rotherham,
SG5 2AA 78/79

Salford Mus. &
Art Gallery,
Peel Park,
Salford, 80/81
M5 4WN

John Shaw
National Mus. of
Antiquities of
Scotland,
Queen Street,
Edinburgh,
EH2 1JD.

J.S. Swithinbank,
38 Ashford Way,
Hastings,
East Sussex.
TN34 2HQ. 80/81

G. Shearer,
Hereford & Worcester
County Museum,
Hartlebury Castle,
Nr. Kidderminster,
Worcs. 78/79

Anna Tucker,
Abergavenny Mus.
Castle Street,
Abergavenny
Gwent 79/80

A.E. Truckell,
Curator,
Dumfries Mus.
Corbelly Hill,
Dumfries. 78/79

Marilyn Tolhurst,
Museums Teacher
Norfolk Castle Mus.
Riverside Farm,
Low Road,
Fornsett St. Mary
Norfolk. 78/79

Anthony Tibbles,
Curator,
Speke Hall,
The Walk,
Liverpool,
L24 1XD. 80/81

David Taylor
Museums Asst.
Scunthorpe Mus.
Oswald Road,
Scunthorpe
DW15 7BD. 80/81

Claire Tarjan,
Bruce Castle Museum,
Lordship Lane
Tottenham,
London, N17 8NU.
79/80

Edith Tyson,
Curator,
Lancaster City Mus
Market Square,
Lancaster. 79/80

David Viner,
Corinium Museum,
Park Street,
Cirencester,
Glos. GL7 2BX.
80/81

Gilliam Varndell,
Asst. Keeper of
Social History,
John George Joicey
Museum,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
Tyne & Wear. 80/81

E.V. Vingeon
Senior Keeper,
Social Hist. & Antiq
Salford Mus & Art
Gall.
Ordsall Hall Mus.
Taylorson Street,
Salford, M5 3EX.

Judith A Walker
Staffordshire County
Museum,
Shughborough,
Stafford. 79/80

Bruce Walker
Duncan of Jordan-
stone Coll. of Art,
University of Dundee,
Perth Road,
Dundee 79/80

Kate Walters,
Asst.
abbots Hall Mus. of
Rural Life
Stowmarket
Suffolk
1P14 1DL. 78/79

Gordon Watson,
c/o Wakefield Mus.
Wood Street,
Wakefield,
Yorks. 80/81

Deidre P. White
Asst. Keeper of Arch.
Birmingham City Mus.
37 Cheviot Way,
Lutley,
Halesowen. 77/78

Mrs. C.M. Wilson,
Mus. of Lincoln. Life
County Centre,
Burton Road,
Lincoln LN1 3JY.

David Wilson,
Southend on Sea Mus
Service,
Victoria Ave.
Southend on Sea,
Essex. S52 6EX. 80/81

Jean S. Wilson,
Alma Cott.
52 Moss Street,
Elgin,
Morayshire. 80/81

K. Wilson, 77/78
Hon. Director,
Alderney Soc. Mus.
The Old School,
Alderney,
Channel Islands.

H.J. Woolley
Cooper Art Gallery
Church Street,
Barnsley, 80/81

Vicki Worthington,
Flat 1
480 Bristol Road,
Selly Oak,
Birmingham
B29 6BZ. 80/81

Phillip Wright
72 Wroughton Road
London SW11
80/81

Clara Young
Dundee Mus. of Art
Gall.
Albert Square,
Dundee
Scotland. 79/80.

Bridget Yates
Norfolk Rural Life
Mus.
Gressenhall,
Derham,
Norfolk
NR20 4 DR.

Richard de Peyer
Transfer Officer
Wellcome Institute for
History of Medicine
183 Euston Road
London NW1

John Williams-Davies
Assistant Keeper
Welsh Folk Museum
St. Fagans
Cardiff CF5 6XB

Maxwell Craven
Assistant Keeper of Arch.
Derby Museums & Art Gall.
The Strand
Derby

Ken Teague
Assistant Keeper
Horniman Museum
London Road
Forest Hill
London SE23 3PQ

Miss J.E. Hayes
Warrington Museum &
Art Gallery
Bold Street
Warrington
WA1 1JG