

group for regional studies in museums



newsletter 9

NEWSLETTER No. 9: SEPTEMBER 1981

Contents:

Editorial		1
Letters to the Editor		2
Questionnaires		7
Group Activities 1980-1		
Willow weekend, Lincoln October 1980	Helen Clark	8
Agricultural Machinery Seminar, MERL Reading February 1981	Roy Brigden	11
Agricultural Machinery Now and in the Future	Roy Brigden	13
The Science Museum and Agriculture	Andrew Patterson	18
Collecting Agricultural History in Hampshire	Gavin Bowie	26
Acton Scott Working Farm Museum	Lisette Davies	32
Regional Furniture	Crispin Paine	36
Annual Study Weekend & AGM		38
Developments at Birmingham		48
Future Meetings - see details as released in 'Bulletin' July 1981 for Manchester meeting in September		42
Work in Progress		
Museum of Lincolnshire Life		44
West Midlands Collections Research Unit	Stuart Holm	45
Bibliographies		
No. 10 The Grocery Trade		49
No. 11 Willow Basketmaking		52
Information required		57
Recent Publications of Interest		62
Officers of the GRSM		65
Contributors to this issue		66
<u>ULTIMATUM !</u>		67

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:

Henry James, grocer and provision dealer, outside his shop at No. 28 Mardol, Shrewsbury c 1888. One of a fine series of shopfronts and tradesmen taken by an unknown photographer, now in possession of Shrewsbury & Atcham Museums.

North Shropshire was an important area for cheese production, centred on markets at Whitchurch. Photos such as this are an invaluable source for the everyday shop stock and provisions of the late Victorian era, but looking at them under a glass can be a mouth-watering experience.

EDITORIAL

Although still early days for the new diploma courses at Leicester, the general direction of diploma training gives cause for widespread concern among the broad church of social historians represented in the GRSM. While the difficulties encountered in practical arrangements cited in the letter concerning last October's 'A' course should be overcome by now, the broader concern over the neglect of training in the specialist disciplines is still to be answered.

The wide range of subjects encompassed by the study of a region's heritage are only rarely touched by first degree courses. The History Option in the current graduate certificate at Leicester is almost entirely museological, concerned with the history of museums and their role in the community. There is now no opportunity within the timetable at Leicester to make use of the Dept. of English Local History, where Hoskins, Eden and Everett amongst others have inspired our generation of local historians and the first fifteen years of Museum Studies students at Upper New Walk.

How then are newly-qualified Leicester graduates to assess the priorities for research and collection for example in their first post as the only social historian in a small county museum service or one-man-band district council museum? Where in their formal professional training will they have acquired the means to deal with recording a building threatened with demolition, an ageing craftsman and his workshop, a metal detector's 'treasures', with picture research for a new exhibition, display methods on a budget of £50 or £5,000, or a familiarity with local history documents and other sources? These are all an everyday feature of the job yet find scant mention in the Learning Goals of the Dept. of Museum Studies.

The balance between "some understanding of the institution's basic purpose, and its role in the community which it serves ..." (Raymond Singleton, Bulletin, April 1931) and the means to undertake a programme of research and collection within a region, seems to have tipped almost exclusively in the direction of museology. The specialist disciplines are not the "vital elements within the curriculum of curatorial training" (Singleton *ibid*) which they ought to be. The old diploma courses, inconsistent as they were, did look at working museums through the eyes of those actively concerned with regional studies. Now students must rely on visiting lecturers to Leicester, our own occasional GRSM meetings, the AMSSEE courses and above all the interest, time and initiative of diploma tutors. Is this not a hit-or-miss way to equip us to rescue and research this country's past regional patterns?

Sam. Mullins, June 1981.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"The fresh and acerbic tone of the GRSM newsletter is to be welcomed, but I wonder if the account of what is happening at Styal (GRSM No. 8 p 17) isn't slanted? I hope members will come back to see what progress the Museum project is making but meanwhile, for the benefit of those who missed the visit, I hope the following observations will add to their perspective. (Styal, it will be recalled, is one of the country's best preserved factory colonies and the Quarry Bank Mill is aiming to illuminate the early days of the cotton industry and the factory system).

It is nonsense to say that there is a lack of accumulated background of local information; the Mill possesses a voluminous archive, certainly one of the most complete cotton industry records. It is the foundation for the project's publications and numerous displays. It is well researched and much used by both the Museum staff and consultant historian, as well as the general public. This is backed up by a continuing local history programme. So it is mischievous of your reviewer to assert that the project will not be able to interpret the historical significance of the site due to lack of information and research.

Your reviewer also suggests that Styal exhibits the frailties of what he calls the 'independent (sic) situation'. This implies putting commercial preoccupations (visitor numbers, tear om, gift shop) before curatorial and research functions. I agree that we would like to be able to employ more curatorial staff, but we are glad to be in charge of our own financial circumstances and have no doubt that we shall soon be able to afford additional staff in this area.

The ability to generate funds or sponsorship for capital expenditure from the private sector is not frailty. It enables us, for example, to open a study room, class room, and lecture room later this year. Nor are we ashamed of attracting good and increasing numbers of visitors, who help to pay the running costs of the project. I would maintain that the independence of Styal is in the long term a source of strength.

There are many difficulties ahead of us in presenting the human consequences of the Industrial Revolution; and demands of balance, scholarship, perspective and integrity. I sincerely hope we can achieve higher standards when we extend and improve our introductory displays and guided tours. There are numerous aspects for us to improve on, but we are determined not to sacrifice the assets of Styal with the sort of ill-informed bias exhibited by your reviewer".

David Sekers, Director, Quarry Bank Mill Development Trust,
23rd February 1931.

Editor :

I cannot let this robust attack on the integrity of contributors to this publication go unanswered. Many of those who visited Styal were disappointed, perhaps because your publicity promised more than you had achieved at that time but also in the embarrassingly thin guided tour we were given, by a 'local expert', of 'one of the best preserved factory colonies' and by your own rather diffident account of the methods and aims of the Styal project. The size of the task facing you was appreciated by all on the GRSM visit, but how were we to know of your achievements in restoration, recording and retrieval? Thus our reviewer merely reflected the attitude of the group and the sketchy outline we were given of your work. We look forward to seeing the results of research into the site and to visiting Styal in a more finished state and at greater leisure than last year.

As editor it is my intention to initiate a constructive and critical attitude in reviewing exhibitions and other museum projects. The often bland accounts of exhibitions in the Museums Journal, with museums staff patting each other on the back, are the only alternative.

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION COURSE 'A' - LEICESTER
OCTOBER 13-31 1980

We were told that Monday October 13 1980 was a historic day because it marked day one of the first Museums Association Diploma course A, to be held in the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester. Diploma training now takes the form of 2 courses, each lasting 3 weeks. Course A covers the museum context and collection management, while course B deals with museum management and museum studies. The departmental staff consists of 6 lecturers, a technician and 2 secretaries. Accommodation was provided in 2 large houses adjacent to the department. Each of these had a small kitchen in which we could prepare food. Most of the teaching took the form of lectures. There were 4 outside speakers, Raymond Singleton, Paddy Boylan, Stephen Locke and Jennifer Stewart from the MDA. We had practical sessions on climatology, photography and collection handling; conducted a clientele survey in Leicester and went on a day visit to Oxford. The evenings, weekends and Wednesday afternoons were free and intended for private study.

On the historic day none of the students knew quite what to expect, nor did some of the lecturers it seemed, for three of them were in the unenviable position of having arrived only a short time before ourselves. Due to unfortunate circumstances, the department had been unable to send the syllabus, bibliography and booklet of learning goals to us in advance. Due to even more unfortunate circumstances, certain facilities were altogether missing: in some rooms in the houses - curtains and heating, in the self-catering kitchen - cups and plates and in the departmental library - tables, chairs and books. Many of these items were provided during the course and I understand from students who have recently attended the 2nd A Course, that information reached them the day before they left for Leicester, (better late than never) and that there are now teapots in the kitchens! Another immediate problem was that 3 students expecting to sit the exams in January, discovered that they had been sent on the wrong course! (Rumour also had it that several students on the first B course should have been on our course). The department did compensate by giving the discontented 3 extra tutorials in museum management. Our feelings of dissatisfaction with the lack of organization and facilities simmered for a week, but were finally sparked off by the clientele survey.

In the morning we had been given one copy of last year's questionnaire from which we were expected to interview 20 people; told the wrong answer to the question "who is the fat man of Leicester?" and sent off in the rain to waylay unsuspecting members of the public. The result was a morning of great embarrassment due to the amateur nature of the exercise. By lunchtime, the smell of mutiny was in the air and after 8 hours of discussion we drew up a list of grievances which were presented to the staff. The organization and facilities (or lack of them) were only a small part of this. Of greater concern was the course content and teaching; students on the 2nd A course and on the 1st B course have expressed similar complaints.

One of the main bones of contention was that with courses of this nature, there should be an opportunity for people from a variety of different backgrounds to share information and view points. However, as the main teaching was by formal lecture, there was little opportunity for real discussion. This occurred informally over coffee or the inevitable pint. Small group discussion or seminar would be a far better way to deal with subjects such as the nature of collections, methods of acquisition, research, storage and publications. In this way, instead of the distillation of the literature, the experiences of the students and the situation of their museum could be drawn on.

Geoffrey Lewis (March Bulletin) says the aim of the lecture is to bring dispersed material together. I would agree that this is of value for subjects such as the organization of museums and museums and the law. However, lectures could be improved if supplemented with photocopies of the basic points, that have been distributed in advance, along with small bibliographies. This would avoid the situation of scribbling statistics and diagrams from the overhead projector and at the same time attempting to listen to the lecture. With the diversity of knowledge and experience of students attending the course, subjects such as photography and conservation would be far better dealt with in small groups, where their degree of previous knowledge and experience is taken into account.

Most of the students hoped for more opportunities to visit museums in that part of the country and for formal contacts with Leicestershire County Museum Service. When we discussed these points with Geoffrey Lewis, he said that this would occur on the B course, but from what I have heard it did not appear to have happened. The contact with a specific service seemed to be one of the good points of the old style courses where problems were studied with reference to a particular museum, rather than in a vacuum.

Another criticism of the course was that more time was not available for private study to make good use of the libraries in the university and in the department. A more flexible system of teaching could be one which would enable students to choose the sessions they felt they needed to attend, and to miss those where they felt that they had knowledge and experience. Their time could therefore be spent more profitably. The specialist discipline teaching was confined to one hour, to discuss an exam question from the Human history section on paper G. Only a third of this time was actually spent discussing the Folk Life studies question! Apparently a little more time is now being allocated to specialist subjects, but it is still a matter of great concern as no other formal training exists. Leicester should be the correct place for this, rather than putting extra burden on the tutors. It is still not clear whether course assessment and the between course project (polite title!) will count towards the final exams. This has caused a problem as students on the first A course were told that they would not be assessed, while those on the 2nd A course were told that they would be assessed and they understandably thought this to be most unfair. I am not sure who it is most unfair to, as I think that any system of marking which places less emphasis on exam performance is a good thing.

Despite these comments I did actually enjoy the course and at times found it very informative and stimulating. The booklet setting out the learning goals contains clearly defined objectives and has, along with the bibliography been useful for private study. The lectures given by visiting speakers were informative and did generate some useful discussion. I particularly valued the opportunity to meet colleagues with whom to exchange ideas over a period of time. It was worthwhile, not least for the social life, pubs and curries. What visit to Leicester is complete without a vindaloo?

The course can however be improved. It has remarkable potential, and I can't see that the implementation of some of the suggestions made by the students should be such an insurmountable problem. Geoffrey Lewis talks of an evolving situation when it comes to the teaching of museum studies, but let's all hope that natural selection will leave some of the first generation of students to witness the development of the technique, content and subject to which he refers.

QUESTIONNAIRE

I have received some 30 completed questionnaires from the membership of just over 150 which I imagine is about par for the course. They have been fed into Shropshire County Council's bio-cumputer, the midden at Acton Scott, and the results are now filtering through inscribed in a binary system on last year's mangol crop.

There were almost as many suggestions for meetings and bibliographies as there were replies but some consensus is discernible. Meetings are already in the pipeline on small museums and probate inventories and the large vote in favour of practical meetings will find details of a day hand-harvesting at Acton Scott in this issue. Another popular topic was vernacular architecture and the tools of the building trades, while picture research and the collection and care of photographs received several votes.

Interior decoration, especially in working class housing, was a popular request for a bibliography and I hope to include at least a draft in the next newsletter, although this is a very broad subject. There were individual requests for fishing, iron-making, tanning and the leather trades, quarrying, urban functions such as weights and measures, law and order and marketing, quarrying, tobacco and lighting. If anyone is working in these fields and has at least a basic listing that could be circulated we would be pleased to put it into the next newsletter.

Another need which your replies indicated was for a guide to the principal collections held by individual museums. It might be tackled county by county or by region, (much as the series in the Local Historian), but requires much collation. Should the Museums Yearbook be extended to include a brief summary of each museum's collections? We can make a start by including details of significant collections with each bibliography and if your museum has a collection relevant to any of these bibliographies so far published please send me details.

Contrary to the title, the weekend had nothing to do with patterns on Chinese porcelain or the works of Kenneth Graham. No, not even Nankee Poo was there! In fact, it turned out to be nothing more than a ploy by the Museum of Lincolnshire Life to get their osiers cut for nothing. No, not quite for nothing, for they offered in return great hospitality and entertainment.

In 1979 the Museum took on the lease of the last surviving willow holt in Lincolnshire at Saxilby, 5 miles west of Lincoln. The aim was to preserve the techniques of willow cutting and processing in the county and to supply local basket makers with home-grown material. It belonged to a basket maker who, as a result of arthritis had stopped making baskets and let the willow grow uncut for 5 - 6 years. In spring 1980 the one-acre holt was cleared with a power saw and the first crop was ready to be harvested last October.

On Friday evening six enthusiastic GRSM members turned up dripping at the Museum. Catherine Wilson and Rodney Cousins introduced us to the basket making tools; showed us examples of different products made from buff, white and brown willow and then confused us with the designs of upsett, fitch slew and rand. It was still raining when we tropped off to the pub. Did they really expect us to cut half the holt of very wet willow? The contingency plans sounded much more attractive!

However, we arrived at Saxilby the next morning to find the osier beds bathed in bright sunshine. We had a quick demonstration of the right way to use and sharpen a bill-hook and set to work amongst the, by now, steaming whissenders (the name for this type of willow). Layers of waterproofs and sweaters were soon shed with the effort. It was actually quite pleasant at one point, hacking away in time to the local church bells although I was quickly brought down to earth with a reprimand that I was not cutting my rods at the correct angle. They should have put a protractor on the equipment list! The bill hook should cut the rod, as near to the stump as possible, by a sharp upward movement so that the cut ends are left nearly vertical to prevent the penetration of rain. A good crop for the next year relies on good harvesting.

While some of us cut, others removed the branching growths to leave a good straight rod. The skin was left intact for use as brown willow, to supply a blind basket maker at Boston who specialises in potato baskets. The rods were next sorted into different lengths, which took a surprisingly long time. All the rods were put in a dustbin and the largest picked out until only the shortest were left. These were stacked into bundles and bound with a willow (what else?) band in an ingenious knot to hold it fast. Although they drove us hard we only managed to harvest a third of the acre, still, it was a very enjoyable day.

After a quick change and clean up, we crowded into various cars to visit John Olco, the only surviving basket maker in Sulton-on-Trent. You're right if you don't think that Olco is a local Nottinghamshire name. He comes from Poland, where he learnt the craft of basket making. He

specialises in shopping baskets, angling baskets and carries out repairs to baskets and chairs. He gave us a demonstration of his work using buff willow. This had been boiled so that the tannin in the bark stained the rods to a rich golden brown colour. The rods had then been stripped and soaked to make them more pliable. For much of his work he uses the rod split in half, but for fine material the rod is split into 3 or even 4 pieces, this is done with a small tool called a cleaver. He demonstrated this, and also the shave which takes off the inner pith and the upright which reduces the skein to the same width. He then started to make a waste paper basket, to demonstrate the slath, or round base. Even though the willow has been soaked and is pliable, it is difficult to weave and requires great strength in the fingers. John is only able to make baskets part-time as the demand is not enough for him to make his living. He uses cane as well as willow and makes many non-traditional items to cater for some current tastes. He taught basket making at the local technical college, but had to stop as there was little demand to learn the craft, now he sometimes teaches W.I. groups. He is quite depressed about this, for, being the last basket maker in the area, he feels he has no-one to whom he can pass on his skills.

John and his wife joined us for an excellent meal at the local pub. Somehow we ended up with an extra meal which was polished off in no time by the hungry workers. After the meal the home darts players were not allowed their dubious request to play Lincolnshire darts, and after a disastrous start for the visiting players the game was pretty well matched.

It was raining on Sunday morning, but no problem, we thought, as we were not intending to cut more willow. Little did we know what they had in store for us. At the Museum Rodney gave an illustrated talk on willow growing and basket making in the Trent valley. The industry reached its height before World War I and started to decline after 1918. Many of the holts had grown over during the war, there was a shortage of labour and eventually the demand for baskets fell. A recent knock to the industry has been the banning of willow waste paper baskets as a potential fire hazard. After the depressing stories of declining traditional industries, Rodney opened a bottle of wine to revive our spirits. Yes, it was willow wine! We were warned that it was not quite ready for drinking! I don't think that I was quite ready for the assault on my nostrils which came next. We were to make wattle hurdles, but as it was raining, this had to be done inside. This itself was no problem, but it was the offensive smell of the daub, composed of olfactory manure, mud, straw and a ducks egg, that was to coat the hurdles once we had made them. To make a hurdle, brown willow rods were placed in the holes in a mould, with larger ones at the outside edge which form the sails. Small willow twigs were then woven between the uprights and beaten down. By the time we had built up a reasonable amount, the smell was so bad that no-one felt like chucking daub at the hurdles. We tried our hands at using the tools instead. It is surprisingly difficult to cleave a willow rod into 3 pieces and to keep each piece intact.

We managed again to get an extra lunch in the pub, I don't know what it was about our group that kept prompting this generosity. No-one

seemed anxious to leave after lunch so we enjoyed a tour of the Museum and also of a fine example Lincolnshire tower windmill acquired by Lincoln Civic Trust.

So, cricket bats and country dancing aside, it certainly was a willow weekend. We had cut, sorted, banded, cleaved and split it, knotted it, woven it and even drunk it. The only thing we didn't do was strip it! I wonder if they'll want us back in the spring? Many thanks to those at Lincoln for a very enjoyable and informative weekend.

G.R.S.M. SEMINAR ON AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY, FEB. 27TH-1981 AT THE
MUSEUM OF ENGLISH RURAL LIFE, READING

A few reflections on what I hope was an enjoyable seminar at MERL. I said in my introduction at the beginning that I thought the G.R.S.M. was the natural and probably the only professional grouping that could bring rural and agricultural museums together. And this was borne out on the day by the presence of representatives from many of the major museums operating in the rural sector in this country. The capacity of the G.R.S.M. to act as a point of contact is most important and it is absolutely essential that this should be encouraged and developed.

Without these lines of communication, we are no more than a random scattering of rural museums around the country with no cohesion or sense of joint purpose. By working together, we can foster the continued growth of the regional framework that has been evolving over the last decade and we can stimulate the effectiveness of a rural museum lobby. We have no national museum of agriculture in England and over twenty years of talking about it has not produced one. In my view there are two options open to us. We can carry on talking about a national museum or we can get on with the job in hand. I am for the latter course for, by strengthening what we have at present, we will be in a better position to really know what we want in the future.

An obvious characteristic of the rural museum sector in this country, and one that makes contact all the more essential, is its diverse nature. It was with the object of drawing out some of the many facets of this diversity that agricultural machinery was taken as the theme of the seminar. Accordingly, the five contributors represented five different museum organisations and five different approaches to the same basic problems.

The Science Museum and MERL illustrated the more purely technological outlook that is possible with the multi-regional museum. Their primary concern is with the material itself rather than with using it as a vehicle to portray a way of life in any one part of the country. Their distinctiveness was also revealed. The Science Museum has the advantages of prestige and financial resources that accrue to a national museum and, at Wroughton, it has the great benefit of space. It therefore has the capacity to collect and deal competently with material that is at present beyond the reach of many other museums. This must surely be a development of the greatest significance for the rural museum sector in the 1980s. The factor that sets the Museum of English Rural Life apart is the vast resource of two-dimensional material available to it which cannot be matched anywhere else in the country. It is reflected in the current exhibition programme where the development of agricultural technology is portrayed using objects to spark off in each case a story that is also told in two-dimensional form.

Chris Page and Gavin Bowie both demonstrated the strengths of county museum organisations operating rural museums. Local resources can be mobilised to advantage to provide volunteers for the manning of

a working demonstration or to raise money for the purchase of a desirable addition to the collections. These reserves of goodwill pay off also in supplying contacts within the farming community upon which the accumulation of local knowledge, so important to these museums, relies.

In another vein, these two contributions, together with Andrew Patterson's from the Science Museum, revealed the depth of the debate that is still going on around the country over the treatment of agricultural machinery: to paint or not to paint; to restore or to conserve; to replace or to repair. And quite obviously differences of opinion, or differing shades of opinion, exist even for different objects in the same collection. This was taken a stage further when, through Lisette Davies' talk on Acton Scott, we looked at a museum where parts of the collections are regularly used in the day to day business of a small working farm. Here the interpretative benefits of using horse drawn cultivating and harvesting equipment have to be weighed carefully against the detrimental effects on the objects themselves. When the further consideration of safety requirements is added, we have a nest of problems for which there is no simple or straightforward answer.

These were certainly the points that were taken up most strongly during the discussion period, a report of which has been provided by Stuart Davies. But at the end I found myself with my original opinions still holding. I don't think there is any standard formula of correct and incorrect practice in this area of museum activity. It is beneficial that we have side by side in this country working farm museums, museums that offer a programme of summer demonstrations and museums that see their sole aim as the preservation intact of their collections. The inherent diversity is perhaps our greatest strength. There are many approaches to the interpretation and preservation of farm machinery. We may not be doing everything right all of the time but I think the important point that came across was that we are all very much aware of the problems involved.

As a final reflection, I think there is enormous heart in the rural museum sector. Many of the museums are still very young and nobody would deny that there is still a long way to go. But there is a great deal of work going on up and down the country often in very difficult circumstances. We need to stick together, continue to develop together and above all else have confidence in ourselves.

I am very grateful to Andrew Patterson, Gavin Bowie, Chris Page and Lisette Davies for their contributions to this seminar.

AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Agricultural machinery was chosen as the thread running through this seminar because it is the bedrock of the specialist agricultural museum and to a large extent of the more general rural life museums as well. What you do with your machinery dictates the character of your museum. And I think that in the foreseeable future the problems of collecting, housing and interpreting agricultural machinery are going to provide us with our greatest challenges.

That we are now in an age of heavily mechanised farming goes without saying. Many of the agricultural museums in this country were founded with the purpose of interpreting the agriculture and way of life that existed prior to the last war. And this objective was reasonably attainable. The transition from horse and steam to internal combustion engine power, for example, is easily grasped by even an urban audience. With the additional element of nostalgia, success was assured.

But - and this is the problem that is beginning to hit us now and will do so more and more in the future - what do we do about the agriculture of the 1950s, 60s and 70s? It is essentially the story of increasing technological sophistication where the pace of change can be very rapid although superficially, to the inexperienced eye, fairly minor in detail. And as we move into this age of computerised milking parlours and axial flow combine harvesters, we are concerned with an agricultural industry whose characteristics are governed as much, if not more, by the EEC farm policy as by its regional traditions. We are concerned with an agricultural industry that is becoming progressively incomprehensible to the layman and progressively remote from the common impression of what life in the countryside is all about.

Because time doesn't stand still, because we are working in a continuum this is the major problem that agricultural museums will have to confront over the next twenty years. Even now, machinery from the 1960s is becoming collectable in museum terms. So what are we going to do about this post-war and relatively recent machinery? Surely it is important that we do not turn our backs on the problem and put it off until the future. It would be absolute madness for museums to lose out again just as they did in the 1950s and 1960s, with the steam engines, tractors and stationary oil engines, when much of the best material was snapped up by the private collector market.

If you take our position here, for example, our latest mechanical exhibit is a Ferguson tractor dating from 1946. And in our new permanent exhibition, now nearly half-finished, we set out to say something about the development of agricultural technology from about 1800 through to the end of the Second World War. But I would hate it to have to end there. I would like, in time, for it to continue and take the story through the second half of the twentieth century as well. In order to do that, however, we have to think in terms of increasing our exhibition space by at least 100 per cent, of providing all the additional storage and back-up facilities and demanding of our technical staff engineering skills that were not required of them in the past. In effect, we have

to think in terms of grafting a completely new museum on to the one that already exists.

Now obviously I am a realist, money is in short supply and these can only be dreams for the present. But somewhere along the line these dreams have to be taken seriously. Because what is the alternative? Some might prefer to concentrate on the two-dimensional material - the manufacturer's records, catalogues, technical literature etc. Well, we have done that as well but there is no substitute for the real thing and in any case two-dimensional material can, as we have found, ultimately create exactly the same kind of space and accommodation problems. The only alternative to the developments I have outlined is that we shut the doors at 1946 and we become, with the passage of time, an archaeological museum dealing solely with the distant past. That is no real alternative at all.

So we have to be thinking ahead, planning and working out our approach to these problems. How are we going to house this more recent machinery which grows bigger in size year by year? A number of agricultural museums that were established in the 1970s were based in attractive, traditional farm or rural buildings. But if a traditional type of barn, for example, is being utilised for storage and exhibition space, that can be a very expensive building to restore and maintain in proportion to the volume of material it holds. Such buildings will not take many 4-wheel drive tractors or combine harvesters. So perhaps our whole attitude to housing agricultural machinery is going to change. Perhaps the facilities that the Science Museum now has available at Wroughton are the forerunners of a trend in the future.

Here we are based in modern, unit-construction buildings, not the most romantic or attractive of architectural features, and in the past I think considered as something of a handicap. But in the course of our re-development work here over the last couple of years these buildings, curiously, have emerged as one of our greatest assets. The big exhibition hall, for example, has a solid floor, maximum ceiling height of 16 feet, and big double doors on either side so that we can drive things in and out at will. It has track lighting, it is heated and has an acceptable natural relative humidity range throughout the year. So we have a large enclosed volume of space inside of which we can do whatever we like. Nobody is going to come along and say, 'You can't do that, you are destroying or obscuring the architectural features of the building'. And in today's terms these buildings are very cheap. The museum complex can grow and adapt itself very easily to the needs current at any one time.

In contrast, we have on the other side of the university a large barn, once part of a farm, that is now used for museum storage purposes. That building is in need of renovation and the university have agreed to carry out the work. But it also happens to be a listed building and, as a result of listed building consent etc., what began as a fairly routine roof patching job has escalated into a total re-roofing job. It has developed into a whole architectural conservation exercise which is going to cost the university more than a small fortune. And if we had complete discretion on how this sort of money was spent, we could do much better by

putting it towards a new purpose-built storage or even display building that comes much closer to meeting our present requirements.

To continue these thoughts of the future, the working farm museum movement is very buoyant at present and I think will remain so. But how will this movement develop in the future? Just as we now have working farm and demonstration museums centering around the First World War period, are we ultimately going to see others being established to practise publicly the agriculture of the 1930s, of the 1950s and 1970s? Quite apart from the financial considerations, I imagine much will depend upon whether we come to identify amongst these decades a watershed period comparable in magnitude to that now represented by the First World War. Perhaps we won't. Perhaps a new phase of working farm museum will only begin when the tractor, for example, is no longer part of current agricultural practice and has been superseded by an entirely new technological revolution. Too hypothetical? Possibly. But if we have considerations of this sort in our minds from an early stage we can plan ahead and, who knows, we may even thereby achieve some control over our own destiny.

Three of the principal machinery problems that will face us and already are facing us involve firstly the collecting policy, secondly conservation and restoration, and thirdly interpretation. Let me make one or two general points about these. Over deciding what we should be collecting, I think we have to keep well in touch with new farming developments and farming as it is practised today both through the local farming community and through the pages of Farmers Weekly and the rest of the agricultural press. By appreciating the present we can come to an understanding of the recent past and develop a legitimate historical perspective while the material is still available for us to collect.

As the machinery is now becoming so big, I think we are going to have to get our heads together when we decide what we want to collect. We have moved beyond the period when a museum could concentrate largely on material that was manufactured within its area or region. The last thirty years have been dominated by the multi-national companies and in museum terms this means that the location of manufacture is now of less importance. All of us are, or will be, collecting standard, mass-produced machinery and I think it would be worthwhile us attempting to collect as a group.

None of us will be able to collect right across the complete range of machinery because we simply will not have the space. So in a few years time it would be a pity if we were all collecting rotary balers when nobody had a pea harvester. So, in the present context, many of us are now collecting combine harvesters. It would be unfortunate if, by chance, we all went for the same manufacturer, or even the same model, without trying to manipulate things so that collectively, around the museums of the country, there was a broad spread of types and models. The only way we can achieve this is by keeping in close contact with each other and knowing what each other is doing.

Conservation and restoration are entire subjects in themselves and I cannot say very much about them here. But again there are problems for

the future. The sophistication of machinery, when we move into the post-war period, is out-pacing the capacity or expertise of the conservation and restoration facilities at many museums. We can fill the gap to some extent with the technical skills that volunteer labour can provide. I am sure that we have all made use of that. But even so, I think it is a very rare and special kind of volunteer that can handle competently the kind of machinery produced over the last twenty years when it is not just a wire brush job. We have been developing a very rewarding relationship with a local college of agricultural engineering where staff and students have been putting some of our equipment into working condition. This must be a sign for the future. But it could not be the full story. To be credible in the years to come, our museums are going to have to extend their workshop facilities to a significant degree and think in terms of the resident employed agricultural engineer. In some cases this is already happening and will surely continue.

Finally, we come to interpretation and here there is enormous scope for development. While I think in this country we do a good job in presenting agricultural machinery through the working demonstration, I don't think we have ever really explored the possibilities of interpreting machinery through the museum exhibition. Too often we simply park it in an exhibition area, perhaps following the sequence of the farming year, and give it a small label to say what it is. We have tried to make the machine do all the talking for itself. We have not put over our ideas about why a machine worked the way it did; why we think it is significant and what part it played in the development of agricultural practice; or even what kind of social changes were sparked off by new applications of machinery. We have rarely tried to impose a coherent theme upon a machinery exhibition so that each machine has a precise place in the context and relates to all the others on view.

When we came to work on a new permanent exhibition in our extension area we began by consciously deciding that through that exhibition we would make a statement; we would present an idea at the outset and we would follow and develop that idea throughout; and we would select objects for display according to their relevance to that idea. Our main aim was to say something about the development of agricultural technology in the period 1800 to 1950 and within that central theme there would be a sub-theme, agricultural power; horse power, steam power and internal combustion engine power. Our objective was to demonstrate the gradual shift away from a craft technology based on local village workshops to the technology of mass production based on the assembly lines of the multi-national companies. So, in effect, the exhibition becomes the story of the growth of the agricultural engineering industry.

Two factors operate in our favour with an exhibition of this kind. Firstly, because we are a multi-regional museum we are in a position to isolate a general theme and let it take us where it wishes without having to limit ourselves to one small geographical area of the country. Secondly, the objects themselves can only indirectly convey the ideas underlying the exhibition. We are using photographs and text as the intermediaries in each case in order to highlight the elements that are of most importance to the overall theme. And here we are fortunate in possessing such rich

collections of two-dimensional material which we can draw upon to make the objects say what we want them to say.

Very little of the exhibition text is written by us. It nearly all comes in the form of contemporary quotes from a variety of sources. In this way we have three lines of communication - objects, illustrations and text - that are all more or less contemporary with each other. The three media are, therefore, in tune and together can evoke an impression of the feel of the period. By using good quotes selectively, we can also adhere very much more strictly to our themes. We don't have to attempt the impossible of condensing the history of plough development or steam cultivation, for example, into 200 words of text which nobody would ever read. Instead, we can use the 200 words in the form of a quote to say something specific about ploughs or steam cultivation that is relevant to our theme. So we build up the picture by means of selective vignettes rather than through a boring straightforward chronological sequence.

Our means of dealing with agricultural technology and the agricultural engineering industry is to focus upon the manufacturing firms. A horse gear built by Reuben Hunt of Earls Colne gives us an opportunity to put the spotlight on Hunts in our two-dimensional material and say something about the growth of the firm and the range of its products. From there we can move on to other firms that made horse gears and to the various agricultural uses that were found for them. In this respect, the great fund of material, both for text and illustrations, is the Implement and Machinery Review, the trade journal of the industry, which first appeared in 1875 and carried on through to the late 1960s. Through the IMR we can bring alive Reuben Hunt, one of the transitional figures in the industry. The firm began as a small country millwrighting business and grew very rapidly in the second half of the last century. A considerable proportion of the output was by then being exported and Reuben Hunt himself went on long business trips around the world to open up new markets. So through this one man's life, we can encapsulate the message of the exhibition.

Similarly, we shall be using our portable steam engine as a starting point to paint a picture of Clayton & Shuttleworth, one of the biggest names in agricultural engineering, who were employing 1,800 men by the end of the century. When we come to harvesting machinery, we can talk about Adam Carlisle Bamlett, a natural mechanical genius who, by the age of 32, had taken the highest prize for English mowing machines at the 1878 Paris exhibition. It is very much a technological story that we are telling but one that we are trying very hard to tell in human terms, because then it has colour and depth and, I think, interest for a wide audience.

The increased involvement of the Science Museum in the field of Agriculture, has I know, been viewed in the rural and local authority museum world with some interest. Before exploring our present attitudes and thoughts in relation to the subjects that Roy has suggested for discussion today, it may be useful to relate a little of the history of the Science Museum's coverage of Agriculture.

Stimulated by the success of the Great Exhibition it was determined that a Department of Science and Art should be established, and included in the concept was a museum "by which all classes might be induced to investigate those common principles of taste which can be traced in the works of excellence of all ages". The Museum of Science and Art opened in 1857 in corrugated iron buildings described as being of "a plain and economical nature", which would seem to be a slight contradiction of the idealism quoted earlier. Housed in these buildings which were popularly nicknamed the Brompton Boiler were a number of collections, including that of Agriculture. Some of the items in this collection had been specifically made for the Great Exhibition itself, and we display them still, not only to represent the machinery of that era, but because they are fine examples of the craftsmanship of that age.

This original Museum in South Kensington was split in 1909 to create the Victoria and Albert in that year and the Science Museum which was delayed by the first world war and opened in 1928.

The bulk of the agricultural collection at this time came on loan from the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh. It was mainly in model form, and although a few items have been retained on display in the present gallery, the bulk of the collection was returned in the early '70s.

The second world war delayed the improvements due on the Agricultural Collection. However in the rethinking that took place after the war it was realized that it was necessary to move away from the earlier concept of rows of glass cases and it was decided to create a new style of gallery, making use of artificial lighting only, so as to create a constant visual display, unaffected by changes in weather, season or time of day.

After various experiments with scale models the gallery was established, divided into three bays - the first dealing with tillage, the second with sowing, reaping, threshing and milling, and the last - work on a modern farm.

For the latter the Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers were approached and as a result it was possible to create a display in model form, with consistent scale throughout.

In 1961 the Centre block of the Museum was completed and extra display space was allocated to Agriculture. This new area was used to give some coverage of the Livestock sector, particularly that of dairy, but also the rest of the gallery was updated, including the modern sector, once again with the enthusiastic support of the machinery manufacturers.

Since that time only minor alterations and replacements have taken place. For the historical displays this hasn't mattered very much, but unfortunately the modern section is taking on a distinctly historical appearance, and thought is being given to alter this state of affairs.

The ever present problems of storage space have also seriously affected the collection, with the result that acquisition had all but stopped by the late sixties. However the Science Museum obtained the use of Wroughton aerodrome in 1978, and access to six hangars has put new life into the Agricultural collection, among others. The picture is not quite as bright as it might at first appear since only three of the hangars are heated at present, and therefore suitable for storage. Nevertheless the extra space had meant, for the Agricultural Collection at least, the move into actual size objects.

For the immediate future Wroughton is essentially a storage area. However as some of you will know we held our first open day there in September last year, and on the basis of that success the second will be held on September 13 of this year.

For Science Museum objects, the display is without theme, simply labelled and is essentially an exercise in showing what we have, rather than illustrating an historical story with what we have. As time, labour and finance become available the latter will be developed, but until that time arrives it is generally felt that it is much better that the public should see our objects in this way, rather than not at all.

The site is of course ideal for working exhibitions and demonstrations and for these we have relied on outside enthusiasts. This gives us a little breathing space to resolve in our own minds the problems of using inventory objects for working displays, and it involves us with local groups, and they with us to, I hope, mutual benefit.

The boom years in the growth of Rural and Agricultural Museums occurred too late to take advantage of the mass of material lying about the countryside for the taking - or maybe the number of museums has in itself created the supply and demand situation which makes the acquisition of objects an expensive business. The comparative financial strength of the Science Museum gives it an obvious advantage over smaller museums, and this may I believe have caused a little disquiet in the minds of those who fear poaching on their territory. I hope that as our contact with local museums develops this feeling will be eased. Because our criteria for collection is different from the local museum I don't believe in fact that the situation will ever arise that we shall be in competition, and since in the final reckoning the most important consideration is that an object of historical value must be preserved, our appearance on the scene can only be of positive value, since we are often in the position to ensure the safety of objects either too expensive or too large to be handled by the smaller museums. Once in the care of the Science Museum of course, there is still the possibility of the loan of such an object for a length of time that can be agreed between ourselves and the local museum. I should perhaps emphasise that we are only concerned with objects of technical significance.

Having claimed that there is no area where conflict should arise I can however think of one aspect, and that is the use of our site at Wroughton for open days and its effect on those in the area doing similar things. I have spoken to Chris Page and Gavin Bowey about this, though they have been so generously enthusiastic about our activities at Wroughton that it would appear that they do not feel it to be a threat. It is a topic however that I feel should always be kept open to discussion.

When I joined the Museum I decided that I needed an exercise to put my mind into some order with regards to the collection of objects. I therefore began to write a policy document, initially for my own use, though in fact it later developed into a more formal form. Realising the dangers that such a document could be restricting in future years I was careful to point out that it was only of value as a guide and that it was not a fixed declaration of intent, but must be open to review.

Before looking closely at a particular group of machinery it was first necessary to look at the aims of the Science Museum. Its purpose, as outlined in its guide to officers in charge of collections, is to illustrate the développement of those branches of Science and engineering which fall within its field, from earliest times to present day. The implications of this statement are that the museum's scope is international, rather than national, though for a subject as broad as agriculture the inclusion of such items as for example rice or coffee, makes the concept too large, and the policy to date has therefore generally confined itself to these shores and to a large extent the arable side. I would be inclined to suggest that as far as objects are concerned the policy will be to deal with all that we produce on this island, but to view these products globally. Thus for example the Australian binder reaper should be included in machinery for the corn harvest, although its significance lay outside the U.K.

The methods for fulfilling this purpose are several and include the following, though not necessarily in this order of priority. The preservation of objects by acquisition; the use of these objects so as to explain their significance; the conservation of these objects, and also others that it is impractical to display but necessary to hold for private scholarship; historical research, and publication.

I find the most difficult question to answer is "What are you looking for?" Perhaps the best way I can answer this here is to look at the various models of one particular type, giving reasons for my decisions.

Our story must begin with Bell's reaper, which we are fortunate to own through the generosity of Patrick Bell himself. Our only representation of his perhaps more significant rival McCormick is in model form in a display case nearby. However a later development, of which we have an actual model is from the same stable - namely the Folding Daisy Reaper. These machines all contributed to the speeding up of the harvest, and removed some of the toil from the task, but the appearance of the reaper binder I feel made the really significant break from the traditions of the harvest gangs. Its importance in the harvest scene lasted long after the combine was first introduced to these shores in 1928. Between

that date and the beginning of the war only about 120 were bought in to this country, mainly because labour was cheap and plentiful. Through a contact supplied by Chris Page I was lucky enough to find 2 of these machines on the same afternoon. Now it might at first glance seem rather greedy to acquire both. However on technical grounds there are enough differences to justify both. John Deere has the unusual feature of a slatted conveyor belt rather than straw walkers - the height control mechanisms for the tables differs and the John Deere has a different feed system to the drum, to name three. Historically also there are justifications. The International is very similar to the original International brought into this country and is interesting for this reason. The Deere, that we have is more recent, but the model was the original Holt design. This I have yet to research properly but goes back at least as far as 1929 and probably further. When John Deere took over the Combine side of the Holt Company in 1935, they continued with the production of this model, and in fact were still producing it up to 1951 - an extraordinary history for one model.

However the acquisition of these two machines does raise a further question, and that is the responsibility that a curator of any museum must have when he finds an object of value and rarity. If these machines had been exactly the same would I, or the person involved not have an obligation to do something about preserving them? A tree was already establishing itself in the machine when it was found, and kept in this site it really had very little time left in a useful state. In this hypothetical situation that I have created I would suggest that with our present storage situation we should have acquired both in order to check the deterioration of the one we didn't require whilst an alternative home was found. The situation will I daresay rarely arise but it is worth discussion if only to establish where our responsibilities to objects lie.

The next stage in Combine development was the self propelled. International claim their Model 123 to be the first to reach these shores, Massey claim their Number 20. However by 1947 Massey-Harris had 90% of the self propelled market and it is perhaps therefore fitting that we should choose the successor to the No. 20 as our representative of the early self propelled. Ideally we should have the No. 20 but the opportunity of a 21 in working order presented itself, and was taken up. Although their appearance is very different, they are very similar in their technical details, which are our main concern.

The No. 21 like its predecessors used canvas belts as the means of feeding the crop from the table into the drum. The straw sugar had been tried, and was I believe fitted to later models of the No. 21 but the arrangement was not ideal until John Deere came up with the Retractable Tynes incorporated in its centre, as now appear on modern machines.

The first machine to have these was the No. 55. Only two were introduced into the U.K., but Clayson and Class bought models and imitated this feature and others, in their later models. The general layout of these 55's is to be found in all subsequent Combines. Only now with the International Axial flow is the concept being challenged.

The Ransome MST 56 is included in the collection as an example of the continuing use of towed combines after the war, and also because it shows the move to narrow cut combines in an attempt to win the market of the small farmer, and lastly because it illustrates the use of power take off.

Moving nearer to the present day we have the Massey Ferguson 780 on display in the gallery. Although now out of date it displays most of the features of a modern machine, and being a cut away model displays some of the internal features. It is linked up to an electric motor, and therefore can be set in motion and is a very popular exhibit. This eventually brings us to the present day. International's new Axial flow has yet to be proven, but should be within a collection which looks at technical developments. However we shall have to wait a few years for that since they are a bit expensive.

I mentioned earlier that our criteria was to look at crops grown in this country, but to view the machinery involved with them on a global basis. Therefore to complete this picture we must include the Australian header-reaper since it was, and still is a significant development. There is perhaps one more example to add. Only one combine is now built in the UK and that is the British-Lely. If or when the last of these has been built and completed its working life, this too should join the ranks of historic machinery. Historic in its own right, and technically interesting also because of its unique folding table.

I have followed the line of development directly from the reaper to the combine and left out the threshing and Winnowing aspects of the machine. However I hope the list has to some extent explained our basis for collection and indicated the way we would look at all acquisitions.

The condition of the machines that we have in the collection ranges from immaculate to extremely tatty, and those which would qualify under immaculate are in that condition because they are brand new, or because they have been restored to that condition. Aesthetically I do not regard such a situation as particularly pleasing, but shall have to come to terms with this because of the decisions we have made or are making with regards to restoration and conservation. Now this is an area that will certainly come into discussion and argument, and it will be valuable that it does so. I want therefore to throw a few ideas into the arena in the hope that it will spark off that discussion. The Science Museum is perhaps peculiar in that it will frequently have on loan modern machines in show room condition, it is of value that this should occur in order to give some idea of modern developments and techniques - it does however set a standard by which all the machinery displayed with it will be compared. The next group of machinery that will be available are those which have finished their useful working life, but have been cared for up to that time. These I feel should be cleaned up, missing or broken parts replaced (and recorded as having been replaced), and then displayed in this condition.

Next down the scale come those which have spent some time in the hedge, and I must admit I am uncertain as to the best way to handle these. Some would maintain that they should be handled in the same way as the last mentioned group. In most cases I would contest this by saying that this

is not the condition in which they would be found at work, that this condition is impossible to recapture and that another approach is necessary. To my mind the most satisfactory treatment is to sand blast the whole machine and carbon black it. Others might suggest a complete restoration to original colours, but this method never really works - the deep rust scars will still be apparent and the object is presented in a form which is to my mind almost dishonest. The amateur collector is perhaps most guilty of this form of restoration, and since he must be a source of materials such objects will occur on museums collections. At this stage there is nothing the Museum can do about it, but I am convinced that it is not the way that Museums themselves should be treating objects.

It has been stated with some authority that spare parts will still be largely available for the pre-war combines we have recently acquired. I therefore think that the replacement of solid bearings, pulleys, piston rings or such like is justified provided an accurate record is kept of this procedure, and that all methods for freeing the originals have been exhausted without success.

Having made up one's mind, and completed the work one then has a machine that is ready to start harvesting and the question that immediately arises is should one use it?

The answer can only be made on the merits of one item, rather than being a general policy. For the sake of discussion I shall keep to the two pre-war combines previously mentioned. Our first consideration must be that we view them not in terms of the next 20 or 30 years, but that if they are worth collecting now, then their value as objects in two hundred years must be even greater, and to use them so that their condition of today is in any way diminished is unacceptable. Set against that argument I could say that in order to put them into a condition that makes them recognisable as machines for cutting corn we have already used a number of genuine replacement parts, and that if using them means a few extra genuine parts, then its originality as far as will be valued in 200 years time will not be jeopardized. It is likely that in 200 years time they will be static display objects only - it does not really matter if every bearing is seized solid, as long as they are there. In other words its value in 200 years time can only be as a static display item, whereas its value today will be wasted if we do not make some use of it. However if we determine to use it now we must lay down strict rules for ourselves as to the state that we can reach before it reverts to a static object. Any part fabricated in 1980 and broken in demonstration is of no consequence. Any part replaced in 1980 by a genuine spare part and broken, but which can be replaced by a second genuine spare is also of no consequence. However the first time a genuine original part is broken, which cannot be replaced other than by fabrication, then the originality of the machine is diminished, and any future workings must be stopped.

An alternative to the use of one's own machines is to use those of a local enthusiast. This has several advantages - it first removes the problem mentioned above and in so doing leaves the museum clear of repair bills. It also involves the local collector with the museum, with its work and aims, and also increases the museum's contacts with the local community. It also helps to reduce the museum's commitment to staff for

its open day allowing them to tend other areas.

We haven't as yet declared for ourselves a policy, but we shall have to, between now and the time that these machines are actually workable. The statements made above may be rationalizations to allow me, with a clear conscience, to put these machines to work. They may on the other hand be perfectly reasonable statements - and I would be interested to hear your comments on them later.

Whilst on the subject of working displays there is another aspect that I would like to mention, and that is Safety. This can be split into two - the safety of ourselves the curators, and the safety of the general public.

I think all of us get some sort of kick out of working old pieces of machinery - if it were not so we would not be interested in that aspect of agricultural history. However I think we should all be aware of the accidents that occur every day on farms in this country to men who are experienced with the machinery that they handle. Most of us will have only limited experience with such machinery and the enthusiast who offers assistance may have even less. It is therefore essential I feel that very strict discipline should be maintained on all who are assisting in demonstrations. Though this may mean being a kill-joy in certain circumstances, this must, for example, mean no sky-larking on top of the threshing machine, nor test drives on tractors by the inexperienced except under expert supervision.

A working demonstration will give its full value to the spectator if he can be made a participant, and I am sure that there are numerous displays that can be devised to achieve this. However there are certain activities which have to be fenced off at sufficient distance to protect under any circumstances - for example the snapping of a cable whilst steam ploughing. The use of outside assistance at Wroughton produces a situation which some of you will also experience, and that is that one does not really know the mechanical condition of the machinery taking place. Steam engines and the like have to take regular tests and the certificates issued should be made available for inspection by the organisers. The relaxed atmosphere which we accidentally created at our open day, and I would hope will manage to maintain brought its own surprises. One was the arrival of 15 juggernauts for display which caused us consternation, though no real problems because of the space we had available. Although the airfield is covered by a government indemnity we insisted that all exhibitors were covered by their own third party insurance. The insistence must be extended to the unexpected arrival as well, and those that bring machines without this cover, or proof of this cover, must be content with exhibiting their machines as static displays.

The working demonstration has a value in the visual impact presented, however it must be backed up by commentary, by someone used to and good at the chatty approach, and also by someone who is approachable for questioning. One of the delights for me of Wroughton were the reports from

exhibitors themselves of the interest and informed questioning that came from the general public. This curiosity must be fed, or one is wasting the effort that has been put into providing the demonstration in the first place.

I have tried to give some indications here, under the headings that Roy outlined, of the way that we are looking at the problems of Agricultural machinery display at the Science Museum. The last section in Roy's brief was that of Research. There is perhaps some significance that he places it last, and that I tackle it last since it always seems the last thing for which one has time. The bulk of my time spent on research in the Science Museum so far, has been in building up the background and technical information on the objects already in our collection. Essentially that is a never-ending task, but as it becomes more complete, so it must rely more and more on the chance find. This year I want therefore to at least begin to collect together information which will throw light on the appearance of the internal combustion engine on the agricultural scene. My brief for this must essentially be technical, however for agriculture perhaps more than any other industry, the social and economic factors play an important part in the acceptance and spread of new technology, and these aspects must therefore be drawn into the attempt to analyse the transitions to the modern era.

I hope this brief outline will give you some idea of the way in which we are moving, and hope to move. Hopefully you will agree with some of what I have said. Perhaps more importantly I hope it will provide scope for disagreement and discussion.

REF: SH3

PAPER FOR SEMINAR ON AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY AT THE MUSEUM OF ENGLISH RURAL LIFE, UNIVERSITY OF READING, 27 FEBRUARY 1981.

COLLECTING AGRICULTURAL HISTORY IN HAMPSHIRE

BACKGROUND

Hampshire County Council works by delegation to a number of "Programme Area Committees", and the County Museum Service is one of four departments which report to the Recreation Committee.

Hampshire County Museum Service was formed in 1967 to co-ordinate the resources and activities of the local museums at Christchurch, Alton and Basingstoke. The Headquarters have been established in a former farmhouse and riding stables at Chilcomb House, Bar End, Winchester, and as well as being an administrative centre, most of the Collections are stored here. New Branch Museums were recently established at Havant, Rockbourne Roman Villa and Andover, and preparations are well advanced towards the creation of the Hampshire Farm Museum at Manor Farm, Botley.

The Social History Collections occupy about 75% of the storage area at Chilcomb House, and the larger items, including the Tasker Collection of steam traction engines and farm implements, are housed in a former indoor riding arena. None of these stores is normally open to the public, except for an Open Weekend each year in mid-June when all Departments provide a display and demonstration of their work. During the years 1977-80 a Harvest Steam-Up was held on or about the last weekend in September, where the emphasis was on the realistic demonstration of threshing corn by steam power and related rural trades such as thatching.

The Social History Collections are reasonably comprehensive, and are mainly the result of systematic collecting by the Curtis Museum, Alton, during the last seventy years or so. The tools, machinery and products of rural trades and industries are well represented, and the collection of agricultural hand-tools is excellent. The minor gaps in these collections are filled as and when local material becomes available.

ESTABLISHING A COLLECTING POLICY

The Agricultural History Collections were critically appraised during the last few months of 1976, and a Collecting Policy established for what may be broadly described as 'large' agricultural machinery. At that time the existing collections were large in bulk, but did not reflect that which was typically used in Hampshire farming, c 1850 - 1950, and there were also major gaps in the groups of machinery and implements represented.

The collection of historical agricultural machinery in 1976 mainly related to the post-1900 period, and for practical reasons this emphasis has continued with the present comprehensive collecting policy. Generally in Hampshire, items made and used before 1900 have either long rotted away, or are consciously preserved as 'antiques' by private individuals and

institutions. Farming in Hampshire may be considered as comparatively advanced, and in such a situation out-moded machinery has been generally either sold for scrap, or pushed outside to rot and thereby free much needed storage space for other purposes. Another factor is the virulence of woodworm attack and some of the Museum's own collections have been literally eaten away in the past!

It was established from the outset that the machinery to be collected should either be made in Hampshire, or at least used on Hampshire farms, and be over twenty-five years old. This latter was essential as trends in farming are only apparent after such a lapse of time, even though major restoration work may be required. In practice this has been slightly modified insofar as a production model may remain virtually unchanged over many years.

Having once established what should be collected, it was then necessary to consider how best to go about collecting this machinery. Traditionally, such collections were the result of donations or bequests, but the needs here were so specific it was decided that items would also have to be purchased either privately or at auction. An underlying assumption, which has subsequently been proved in reality, was the availability of 50% grants from the Science Museum's fund for the Preservation of Technological and Scientific Material towards purchases. In practice, implementing this policy has made Hampshire farmers aware of Museum needs and aspirations, and has led to a significant increase in the number of donations, and as such a collection from one farm may well consist of both donated and purchased items.

It was also necessary to establish from the outset just how many items should be collected under each group heading, as there was already an acute storage problem at Chilcomb House. This has been tackled partly by making better use of the storage area available, permitting the temporary storage of items outside under awnings until the modern barns at Manor Farm are made available, and disposing of unwanted items where practicable, but this has been mainly dealt with by sticking closely to the established collecting policy. This is not to deny flexibility, particularly where the 'typicality' of some items need to be re-assessed, but it does guard against collecting too many examples of a particular type just because it is interesting, pretty or happens to have a high survival rate.

The most obvious gap in the agricultural collections was under the group heading of 'Farm Tractors', and the following simple list, relating to age and function, was made in the first instance.

- Any tractor from the 1910-25 period
- Two or three conventional TVO tractors from the 1924-45 period
- A Field Marshall diesel tractor
- A three or four-wheeled Row Crop tractor
- An early tractor with hydraulics (presumably Ferguson)
- A half-track tractor
- A full-track tractor
- An early example made by County Tractors of Fleet

This list reflects the main technological developments in the evolution of farm tractors, and also indicates that about ten models may provide a reasonably comprehensive collection. This was tested by detailed discussion with older farmers and farm workers, who also advised on the models most widely used in their experience, and what faults and problems they had working them.

Most of the vintage tractors required had been collected within a couple of years, at farm sales and auctions, but mainly through farming contacts who kept a look-out for the models required. Wherever possible, tractors were acquired in working order.

A somewhat different approach was tried in the summer of 1978, which was aimed at filling some of the gaps in the cart and wagon collection. It was essentially a search for a number of types of cart, and the appeal was taken up by local newspapers and journals in the county as well as the local BBC station, Radio Solent. The results were encouraging, and in one case quite dramatic. Here the owner of a Hampshire-made three-quarter tip cart finally tired of it lying useless in his shed, and was about to put a match to it when he heard our appeal on the local radio!

Another aspect of this campaign was that it served to remind the farmers about other pieces of obsolete machinery lying neglected or occupying valuable storage space, and the 'spin-off' effect of this has assisted the development of the rest of the agricultural collections.

The major gaps in the agricultural machinery collection had been filled by the end of 1979, and the emphasis has shifted towards the acquisition of implements and machinery in reasonable condition for day-to-day farmwork and demonstration at the Hampshire Farm Museum, Manor Farm, Botley. Hence a good working Fordson Super Major diesel tractor of c 1959 was purchased with the aid of a Science Museum grant as a reliable tractive unit for which spares are still readily available, and mounted and trailer ploughs for actual work were bought at local farm sales. This is the current collecting policy, so far as financial restrictions permit.

ETHICS AND CONSERVATION

The underlying principle here is the normal museum function of selective preservation, the on-going compromise between the selection of representative material and the provision of adequate storage for the items collected. What still remains a 'minefield', and may well be the subject of radical revision in the near future, are the approaches to the treatment, repair and restoration of historical items.

The concepts of being 'usable', and of 'demonstrating' historical value, are particularly relevant for the conservation of agricultural machinery when considering how far repair and restoration should be undertaken on a range of related items. It may be as well to emphasise at this point that the private individual who buys a rusty piece of old farm machinery is probably intent upon restoring it to immaculate working order, with the intention of displaying it for the edification of others at rallies and shows! It may well be argued that this is also what working farm museums should be about.

The current major problem at HCMS, however, is not the extent to which an item is repaired or restored, but how best to delay the process of decay in such a large collection. Protection with ventilation are the keys to the preservation of wooden machinery, and should be supplemented with treatment for woodworm infestation as necessary. Unfortunately, however, the thin sheet metal found on more modern farm machinery continues to rust away even in a sheltered, normal, environment, and as such humidity control should also form a part of storage requirements.

The motive here is to maintain the Collection in being, so that all items are capable of restoration at some future time, and are available for research. Beyond this basic level of conservation, different states of repair/restoration can be achieved, and a number of other factors should be considered. The HCMS Agricultural Machinery Collection consists largely of items which are less than seventy years old, were 'factory-built', and are made up of standard components. Repairs in this case are at normal workshop level, except that spare parts for vintage machinery are harder to come by and may have to be made up, and stabilising existing metalwork may be considered.

Repairs on wooden carts, wagons and implements were traditionally undertaken on the farm, and were concerned primarily with replacing worn, load-bearing parts. It follows logically that similar practices and techniques be employed in the museum workshop, so that the item is maintained in, or restored to, working condition.

There comes a point however, where woodwork is so decayed that this approach ceases to be cost-effective in any way. Recent experience with the restoration of a market cart at HCMS indicated that it would have been cheaper to stabilise the woodwork of the unrestored cart, and to have purchased a similar, restored working example from outside instead.

It follows that the idea of preserving as much as possible of the 'original' is no longer tenable, particularly in the museum workshop where techniques and methods of repair and restoration can be strictly controlled. The act of restoring a piece of agricultural machinery to good working order also ensures its continued preservation anyway - it is the best possible way of arresting deterioration and decay.

Using and demonstrating restored agricultural machinery in a working farm museum can cause additional problems. Working farm tools have generally been built for an eventful life and are robust in construction, but are wide open to abuse due to accident, lack of instruction and mismanagement. This situation may be exacerbated where volunteer labour is used, and the proper maintenance and care of the working exhibits is dependent upon firm, unremitting managerial vigilance and control.

Lest too gloomy a prospect is presented, it should also be remembered that most of the working exhibits will never be required to work as hard or continuously as they once did. Examples may be cited such as a restored threshing drum which is unlikely to be used to thresh more than a few acres of corn a year, and so should last indefinitely. This applies even to more vulnerable implements such as the plough, as the acreages used for demonstration purposes are likely to be quite small. In such a situation, working

exhibits should wear out very slowly indeed.

DEMONSTRATING THE WORKING FARM MACHINERY

Until 1980, farm activities at the annual Harvest Steam-Up, Chilcomb House, were limited to the demonstration of a threshing drum and trusser at work making long straw for thatching, a stationary ram baler making wire-tied bales, and horse-gear driving a straw elevator. However, it was always a problem to get the right quantity of wheat sheaves at the required quality, and so it was decided that the Agricultural History Department should grow its own crop for the 1980 Steam-Up. The Museum was fortunate enough to be able to use land located immediately behind the main agricultural machinery storage block at Chilcomb House, which is owned by Hampshire County Council.

The ground had been in ley for forty-five years, was full of couch, and the Museum was delayed in taking possession of it until December 1979. Two acres of the field were ploughed and disc-cultivated in January, and a Springwheat sown in early March. A 'cambridge roll' was used during the subsequent drought to consolidate the seed-bed, and this also had the effect of helping the crop to tiller.

The crop came on quite well despite the extremes of weather in Spring and early Summer 1980, and one of five reaper-binders in the collections was renovated and used to harvest the wheat at the end of August. Both staff and volunteers helped to stook the sheaves into shocks, and because the weather was so changeable at that time, a seventh sheaf was placed long-ways over each shock for protection.

The centre part of the field was left uncut one day so that the Press and TV cameras could be brought in the next, and this provided useful advertising for the Harvest Steam-Up to come. In fact, it was reasonably good drying weather, and the sheaves were carried and built into a rick after two Sundays had passed.

The combination of steam traction engine, threshing drum and ram baler, where the ram baler was driven via a belt from the main threshing drum pulley, was commonly used by threshing contractors in south-central Hampshire during the period 1934-51, and just such a farmyard scene was re-created for the Harvest Steam-Up on the weekend of 27/28 September. The staff and volunteers who helped work the drum were dressed as they would have been in the late 1930s, which contributed to the realism of the display. Over 3½ tons of milling wheat were threshed out during the week-end, and the sale of this crop helped to offset the cost of other demonstrations and activities at the Steam-Up.

This activity was a precursor of the farmwork and demonstrations that will be an integral part of the Hampshire Farm Museum project. The latter is based at Manor Farm, Botley, and Phase I, concerned with the restoration of the farmhouse, staddle granary, barn, chickenhouse, piggeries and stable,

should be completed by March/April 1981. The southern part of the farmhouse has been converted into a dwelling, and Mr Tom Thomas, the Museum Farm Manager, took up residence there in October 1980. It is hoped to begin arable cultivation at Manor Farm in September 1981.

GB/CB

Gavin Bowie.

14 January 1981

ACTON SCOTT WORKING FARM MUSEUM.

Acton Scott is one of the earliest working farm museums to come into operation in this country, and I thought it might perhaps be useful and informative to examine some of the problems that have arisen and to discuss some possible solutions. I had better begin by talking briefly about the origins, form and aims of Acton Scott.

The farm museum, and indeed the entire Shropshire County Museum Service, was a by-product of Local Government re-organisation. The newly appointed County Museum Curator felt that there was a great need for a farm museum in what has been, and still remains, an overwhelmingly agricultural county. He was also firmly committed to the concept of a working museum, and a site was therefore sought where such a museum could be set up. After considerable examination and negotiation, the Museum was established at Acton Scott, a tiny village about 5 miles from Craven Arms in south Shropshire.

The Museum itself is centred on the buildings of what was originally the Home Farm of the Acton Scott Estate. Most of these buildings date from the second half of the 18th Century. The site is approximately 25 acres in extent - not large, particularly when one recalls that that area includes a car park and picnic facilities. The land is still owned by the Acton family and the County Council are their tenants; an arrangement which reflects the situation of many farmers in the area, past and present. What we have, therefore, is a small, upland (650 ft. a.s.l. approx.) mixed tenant farm, a fairly common situation in our part of Shropshire.

The concept has always been to have, as far as possible, a working farm rather than an agricultural museum with occasional demonstrations. For this reason, to maintain consistency, it was necessary to select a particular period to illustrate, and after some consideration it was decided to choose a date round about 1900. This date stretches both back and forward, but gives some indication of the period we are aiming at. (I should point out that this date limitation applies only to the 'working' part of the Farm Museum's activities - research, collecting, etc. covers a much wider period). The date 1900 was chosen because of the large scale survival of machinery and implements from the beginning of this century, and not only machinery but people who can clearly recall the era of horse husbandry. Shropshire is in any case an agriculturally conservative county, and horses were used at Acton Scott until the 1950s. The collections have as their basis two earlier collections, that owned by Mr. Acton, our landlord, but on loan to the County Museum Service, and an agricultural collection put together by a County Council educational advisor for use as a teaching collection for schools. These items formed the core of the present collections but extensive collecting has gone on since to supplement both the working aspects and the static display side of the Museum. As far as the working implements are concerned, we compiled a list of what we felt was necessary to work the Farm effectively and accurately in historical terms, and have collected on that basis. The working collection is a self-contained unit within the much larger agricultural collections.

Because Acton Scott is a mixed farm, we have livestock - beef and dairy cattle, pigs, sheep, poultry, grazing and hay meadows, and an arable area

where we grow crops on a Norfolk 4-Course rotation. In addition we have a working dairy, a farrier who shoes once a week, and a technician demonstrating wheelwrighting techniques. All these activities use equipment from the collections. The selection of working implements, their use and repair provide us with a wide range of problems.

These problems fall into two main categories, the ethical and the practical. I propose to confine myself largely to the latter - they are easier to define and to illustrate, and I have no doubt that the ethical difficulties will be discussed at great length both now and later. I should just say that as far as the actual use of objects is concerned, it is our contention that Acton Scott is a Museum of techniques as much as of objects, and such use is therefore necessary to illustrate and preserve the method. The amount of use an implement is subjected to, even at Acton Scott where work is carried out daily, should not be sufficient to produce serious wear and tear, though accidental damage can and does occur. The working implements at Acton Scott are normally duplicates of items already within the main (non-working) collections, and they have been acquired specifically as working implements.

As far as conservation is concerned, our ethic is dictated to some extent by necessity - in our case, inadequate storage and insufficient staff. This means that some parts of the collections spend much of their time outdoors, a problem that applies particularly to all-metal objects such as ploughs. After experiment and trial, it is our experience that paint provides the most satisfactory protective cover for such items, though I appreciate that some people would be unhappy about this method. We would be most interested to hear about any alternative methods of metal conservation which will stand up to the rigours of an English winter (not to mention summer!). Our most serious conservation problem, however, has probably arisen in regard to our working wooden vehicles. There are three such vehicles in use at Acton Scott, all of which have, over the seven years we have been open, been almost entirely rebuilt, so that very little of the original material remains. As far as the regular use of such vehicles is concerned, I think that serious consideration might be given to the production of replicas.

In practical terms, the problems of conservation and repair are fairly obvious. Spare parts are difficult, and at times impossible to come by. It is often easier to acquire a whole machine than to obtain specific spare parts. Repairs to the working collections often need to be carried out immediately so that particular farm activities can be continued, and this can present problems if our small workshop staff is committed elsewhere. Then again, the conservation and repair of agricultural machinery requires specialist skills of blacksmithing, wheelwrighting etc. which the average museum technician may not possess. We have found the advice and assistance of local retired craftsmen invaluable in this context.

Safety is another problem which is becoming increasingly the concern of the museum curator, particularly in the context of the working museum. Many agricultural implements are potentially dangerous, particularly when some of the workforce may be inexperienced volunteers, as is the case at many working museums. At Acton Scott we have experienced considerable

difficulties recently in our attempts to set up some belt-driven barn machinery for food preparation. The amount of guarding and barriers necessary to conform with the legislation and to safeguard operator and visitor is often destructive of historical accuracy and appearance.

I hope that this brief outline will serve to indicate the range of activities at Acton Scott, some of the difficulties we have encountered, and in some cases the solutions we have arrived at.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION:

Much of the discussion after the papers had been presented focussed on the ethics of using machinery. All working museums represented at the seminar seemed to distinguish between their 'historic' and their 'working' collections, the latter being apparently regarded as expendable, as are school loan collections.

A distinction emerged between those museums who organise demonstrations, on-site open days, exhibitions at shows etc. and those who run working farms. The occasional demonstration and light use of a machine was defended on the grounds that it helped to maintain the object, showed care for the object to potential donors, lent useful publicity to the collecting role of the museum and was an attractive 'event' for the public.

The working museums were criticised for their failure to manage a finite resource, particularly in the light of the absence of a co-ordinated approach amongst museums collecting and using agricultural machinery. This criticism was answered in the case of Acton Scott by Lisette Davies who countered that only a tenth of her collection was a 'working collection' and that they were all duplicates. Nothing is more dead than a stationary machine and no a/v aid or other interpretative device can compensate for this. If techniques as well as objects are to be preserved and demonstrated, machinery will be needed, and the profession and public alike have doubts about the use of replicas. If it is 'dishonest' to use replicas, some present felt it was dishonest to farm six acres with machinery of several periods. On the other hand the fact that a machine is to be used rather than just become another 'museum object' does seem to be important to potential donors.

This discussion emphasised the need for regular contact amongst agrarian curators to produce a co-ordinated approach to collection and use of agricultural machinery. We extend our thanks to Roy Brigden and MERL for providing the forum for this interesting and constructive seminar.

REGIONAL FURNITURE

The small attendance at this enormously interesting GRSM seminar reflected the curious neglect regional furniture has received in this country. Until Temple Newsam Museum's first exhibition on the subject in 1971 almost no serious work had been done on the subject, whereas in America researchers are desperate for new material.

On a small table at the back of the room Mr. Chinnery laid out virtually the complete bibliography of the subject:

Kane Patricia E. Furniture of the New Haven Colony, 17th Century Style. New Haven Colony Historical Society 1973.

Twiston-Davies, L. & Lloyd-Jones, H.J. Welsh Furniture. Cardiff 1950.

Margaret Berwind Schiffer. Furniture and its makers of Chester County, Pennsylvania. University of Pennsylvania Press 1966.

R.W. Symons - articles in The Connoisseur, June 1948, June 1957.

Oak Furniture from Lancashire and the Lake District. Temple Newsam 1973.

Ed. Robert Trent, Pilgrim Century Furniture. New York.

Oak Furniture from Gloucestershire and Somerset. Temple Newsam 1976.

Victor Chinnery. Oak Furniture: The British Tradition. Antique Collector's Club, 1979.

What is 'regional furniture' and how does one recognise it? Recognisably regional furniture almost all dates from between 1550 and 1700, and much of it is therefore made of oak. It is the period during which each major provincial town had its joiners making furniture for the middle-class market, and many had a Joiners Company as well. Mr. Chinnery stressed the point that regional styles reflected not some vague geographical affinity, but production centres, and research should therefore concentrate on the furniture-making towns and their market areas.

The antique trade had now been shifting oak furniture around Britain for almost 200 years; to attribute a piece to a region, at least one of five pieces of evidence was needed. The five pieces of evidence were:

- 1 Documentary evidence of origins: the very rare accounts, bills of purchase or early descriptions which could be firmly tied to surviving pieces. Good examples were the chairs preserved in Trinity Hall, Aberdeen, for which early inventories survive.
- 2 Inscription or heraldry relating to the original owners. A 19th century mock-up chair with an original back bore a symbol of the Stanleys which pointed to a South Lancs origin, but a 1609 chair with a Welsh inscription may well have been made far from Wales.

- 3 Known history of long association with the site, from at least before 1800. The early 19th century saw a great many churches acquiring old chairs and 'coffin stools', either from local houses or else from the trade.
- 4 Close correlation with fixed woodwork at the same site or nearby. Mr. Chinnery's own work on the Salisbury joiners illustrated this point very well.
- 5 Close correlation with other moveable furniture in the same area. In the present state of knowledge this is the weakest piece of evidence; there are (for example) far too many Yorkshire pieces in the south.

A number of regional styles have already been identified; Salisbury and district, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Aberdeen, Yorkshire, Lancashire and the Cheshire Plain, Westmoreland and the Lake District and Wales.

The furniture of these various regions is some more, some less, readily identifiable. The Yorkshire Dales chair, with its strong double-scrrolled crest and ear-pieces is highly characteristic, as is the caquetteuse chair of the Salisbury district. Paired dragons are typical of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Monmouth, while furniture from Lancashire, Cheshire and Shropshire was originally often picked out in red and black paint.

The present state of knowledge is admirably summarised in Victor Chinnery's 'Oak Furniture: the British Tradition', where each style is illustrated with many examples.

This is really still a new subject, in which anyone with the curiosity can quickly make a real contribution. We look forward to seeing a steady stream of museum exhibitions on their local regional furniture.

Crispin Paine

GRSM ANNUAL STUDY WEEKEND & AGM, EDINBURGH 1981

In concluding a most successful weekend in Edinburgh, our chairman expressed the fear that we would be going home with new and expensive tastes. The disappearance of half a bottle of Lagavulin aside, we came home with a better understanding of the broad impact of the malt trades on central Scotland both now and in the past. We hope to be able to publish a number of papers from the conference in the next newsletter, but we take the opportunity to let those not at Edinburgh know what they missed.

We arrived in Edinburgh on Thursday afternoon, with only a superficial frisking at the border for Japanese 'scotch', brush-nylon tartans and clipped accents. After a brief debate with a no. 37 bus driver as to the ultimate destination of his vehicle, we took a no. 3 to our hall of residence accommodation. Old acquaintance resumed and new ones made over a good dinner and local ale, John Shaw welcomed us to the conference and introduced us to the architectural evidence of the local impact of the drink trades in huge maltings, bonded warehouses, and decorative pub facades and interiors. A strenuous evening's fieldwork followed among the gilded and mirrored interiors of Edinburgh's pubs, much to the amazement of the city's stoic male drinkers, baffled by this bunch of sassanachs staring at the stained plasterwork ceilings and politely sipping halves of 60/- ale.

The weekend was intended to provide a broader picture of the malt trades than presented by the annual publication of yet another glossy book on Scots whisky, to include the role of barley in the agrarian economy, the industrial archaeology of the brewing and distilling industries, the mass impact of the temperance movement in the last century and the problems wrought by alcoholism. Gavin Sprott (Head of Country Life Section, National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland) led off on Friday morning describing the importance of barley in the rural economy, particularly before agricultural improvement. Barley served as a food source, its straw had many applications such as thatch, straw ropes, bee skeps, baskets and bedding for beasts, while home-distilled whisky was widely relied on in the Highlands and islands as a source of cash for the rent.

Ian Donnachie (Staff Tutor, Open University) then spoke on the brewing industry in Scotland, stressing the contrast between the high capital investment on plant and the brewer and cooperage apart the unskilled labour requirements of the industry. Factory methods were introduced early and by the late 18th century Scottish brewing was urban in location, although still closely linked to the harvest cycle, and already the preserve of several large brewing concerns. Ronny Hartwich (Dundee Museum & Art Gallery) then introduced the place of the pub as a focal point of the local community. She drew attention to the extremely useful plans of pub interiors demanded by the licensing courts in Dundee. They throw considerable light on the design and usage of space inside a bar. It was suggested that they indicated a trend away from table service to larger bars with increased standing room.

Lunch was followed by the visit to the Caledonian Brewery, Edinburgh where cask-conditioned beers are produced by traditional methods. This brewery was part of the Vaux group of Sunderland, another example of the close ties between the North-East and central Scotland. We toured the brewery, following the process from the now-disused malting floors, the last coal-fired brewery boiler in Scotland, the great copper mash tuns and stainless steel fermenting backs to the final product, Lorimer and Clark's 70/- and 80/- ales, descriptions of mild and bitter beers by former levels of duty. We were then invited to sample and sample again, just to make sure. Several of us were most impressed by the strong ale, a barley wine type beer known north of the border as a 'wee heavy', an accurate description in both respects.

Next stop was the Royal Highland showground, outside Edinburgh at Ingliston, where the Country Life Section of the NMAS has established the Scottish Agricultural Museum. The value of a presence at agricultural shows is well-known to rural museums and permanent if limited building here should prove of great value to the hard-pressed Country Life Section who certainly do not have the resources or manpower of their Welsh equivalent.

Our skittles evening at the Unicorn, Dalkeith, was the scene of a lively match between the GRSM Anglos and a so-called 'select' RSM/NMAS team. Despite a stunning performance by your editor, universally acclaimed as man-of-the-match, the fierce competitiveness and underhand gamesmanship of the home side proved too much for the subtler skills of their novice visitors by a slender 4 - 3.

Next morning Graeme Cruikshank's enthusiastic rendering of the unusual tavern names to be found on the Royal Mile demonstrated great scholarship, if also an unhealthy familiarity with the many pubs concerned. We then briefly toured the Mile, which I personally find rather tacky with the lower half in particular an extraordinarily tasteless succession of concrete-clad blocks of flats.

One of the best lectures of the weekend was given by Ann Glenn, author of a work on Islay's distilleries. She traced the history of distilling in Scotland from the medicinal and cordial origins of the Middle Ages, through the substantial domestic and craft activity of the 18th century, the considerable investment of commercial distilleries in the 19th century to the modern heavily-marketed world-wide product.

The modern 'product' of the patent stills, grain whisky, was very much the keynote of the afternoon's visit to the Cumbus Distillery, Alloa. This large integrated plant produces raw spirit capable of being used in vodka, gin or whisky for the giant Distillers Group and devotes considerable investment to the processing of cattle feed from the spent malt. The presence throughout the distilling process of excise padlocks was witness to the long-standing government interest in the control and duty revenue of the whisky industry. The drying plant in the cattle feed process was the largest in Europe when installed 15 years ago but is now considered redundant and due for replacement. An interesting problem for museums, the plant being three storeys high and it was agreed that a photographic record was the only practical solution.

The AGM has in recent years been a rather soporific Sunday morning affair, but this year we met in very different circumstances on the Saturday evening in the lounge of the 'Green Tree' Cowgate, a friendly pub, despite its grim exterior, the surrounding deserted and boarded-up property and despite the obligatory smoke-filled and earnestly male public bar. The detailed minutes of the meeting will be available in the next newsletter, but two issues, closely related, took up much of the time.

The issue of professional training and the current lack of opportunity within the diploma course for training in the specialist disciplines was raised by several members disappointed by their experience of courses they had recently attended. It was heartening to know that this situation was not entirely unappreciated at the Leicester Dept. and that specialist topics were being introduced as the opportunity occurred. Discussion followed on the merits of museology, the increased burden that fell on diploma tutors when so little specialist training was included in the formal courses and the neglect of the valuable facilities and expertise of the Leicester University Dept. of English Local History. It was the feeling of the meeting that the GRSM should not only criticise diploma arrangements but also offer positive proposals to improve them. For instance we have recently achieved the acceptance by the Board of Studies of the inclusion of ~~Crafts~~ as a social history as well as fine art option. The GRSM is being consulted on the scope of the practical and we intend to make positive recommendations for both the practical and a wider option for social historians in Diploma Paper G. The scope of the term 'social historian' within the museum world is probably as wide as the natural history range of subject and at the moment there is in effect a compulsory question paper G for social historians.

The need to arrive at a working definition of just what we mean by social history also entered discussion on the Manual of Curatorship and after these issues had been well aired it was agreed that the committee should give them their consideration at the committee meeting accompanying the Manchester Conference in September.

The Treasurer's report indicated that our membership was not in as healthy state as we had thought and all present were urged to make sure their respective museums were institutional members and canvass for members amongst their colleagues. This tempered discussion following the Editor's report. The Newsletter had gradually improved in quality since the first issues and it was now proposed to investigate the feasibility of printing an offset litho issue annually with bibliography, longer articles and minutes with a smaller more frequent newsletter being produced cheaply at least twice a year, containing requests for information, notice of future meetings, reviews of exhibitions and scurrilous gossip. A bibliographic no. 10 would follow shortly after no. 9 and any correction and additions to the bibliographies so far published were sought by the editor.

Sunday began appropriately with an account of the Temperance Movement by Elspeth King (People's Palace, Glasgow). The various organisations and political movements which sought to provide an acceptable social alternative to the society of the public house in the last century have been largely ignored by social historians. Yet this was a mass movement which produced a large body of artefacts such as banners, regalia, commemorative ceramics,

pledge cards as well as documentation and architecture such as temperance halls. The People's Palace mounts an exhibition each year to serve as a focus for collecting objects and information. We were treated to an excellent lecture which opened up a whole field of hitherto neglected material and which included a marvellous lantern slide lecture on the benefits of temperance to family life, complete with a recording of the lady who had narrated this show for many years. Later in the day, as we summed up the weekend, the role of the GRSM in bringing forward neglected topics such as this became obvious and we hope to be able to draw material together in a future issue from other parts of the country.

Later in the morning, Susan Kirby (Carlisle Museum) described the operation of the Carlisle and District Management Scheme, a local brewery nationalisation scheme introduced in the area in 1915 to regulate the drink trade and prevent alcohol impairing the war effort, particularly at a large munitions camp nearby. Stuart Davies (Birmingham Museum) then introduced the new local history gallery at Birmingham which whetted our appetites to visit the second city which since the late 19th century has been promising an exhibition about the extraordinary growth and change of the city.

After an afternoon in the stunning architecture of the Royal Scottish Museum, we made our way home to investigate the stores for articles related to temperance and friendly societies, to record local breweries and disused maltings and ruminate on the properties of the peat reek. John and Helen are to be congratulated on an excellent conference. Coaches arrived on time, speakers were left in no doubt as to how long they were to speak, and the hall of residence provided a good standard of food and were even quite enlightened in preparations for the vegetarians amongst us. An excellent bar stock of local beers and whiskies contributed to those long evenings of arsenic and old anecdote. Above all this was achieved with unobtrusive efficiency. The mood of the conference was encouraging, not only in the feeling that we would go home and look at topics afresh but also that the GRSM was to act as a focus and flux for the results of our disparate efforts.

We intend to publish papers presented at the Conference in the next issue of the newsletter.

FUTURE MEETINGS

HARVESTING BY HAND AT ACTON SCOTT

Friday August 21st/28th

An opportunity to harvest using hand tools at Acton Scott Working Farm Museum, Church Stretton, Shropshire. Join a reaping gang for the day under a burning sun with costrels awaiting you in the hedge.

Camping facilities with kitchen and bathroom available and spouses and children welcome. Floors also available for the less hardy.

It is obviously impossible to fix a firm date in advance due to the vagaries of our climate. Contact Acton Scott at the beginning of August for the date.

Fee: £1.00

OTHER MEETINGS TO NOTE

Short Courses at the Institute of Industrial Archaeology, Ironbridge:

10-11th October

The Market Town Foundry

7-8th November

The English Household before the Industrial Revolution

Further details from Institute of Ind. Arch., Ironbridge Gorge Museum, The Wharfage, Ironbridge, Telford, Shropshire (Tel: 095245 3522).

FUTURE MEETINGS

Small Museums Forum: exhibitions for the smaller museum,

October 2nd & 3rd.

It is intended to aim one meeting every year or so at the large number of our members working in the smaller museums, both private and local authority institutions. This will be an opportunity for curators in similarly straitened circumstances of limited budgets, little technical assistance and generally under-staffed and over-burdened to meet and discuss problems and exchange ideas.

The first of such meetings will consider means of mounting exhibitions on a limited budget. The Shropshire County Museum Service is one of the smaller county services. It has re-displayed each of its three museums over the past three years. We do not pretend any great display expertise but the exhibitions at Much Wenlock and Ludlow will serve as useful case studies for the design and realisation of local history exhibitions.

Accommodation will be provided for those who wish to stay for the optional second day.

Provisional programme:

- 10.30 Meet at Much Wenlock; lifts can be arranged to meet trains at Shrewsbury. Coffee.
- 11.00 Introduction to the Shropshire County Museum Service and to the exhibition aims and methods of Much Wenlock.
- 1.00 Lunch at the 'George'.
- 2.00 Travel by mini-bus/car to Ludlow to view and discuss new exhibition in the Buttercross.
- 4.30 Tea at Old St. office.
Discussion of day's theme.
- 5.30 Disperse.

Optional:

- 7.30 Dinner at the 'Three Tuns', Bishops Castle with tour of the brewery.

Saturday:

- 10.00 Meet at White House Museum, Aston Munslow.
- 12.30 Lunch at 'Royal Oak', Cardington.
Acton Scott Working Farm Museum/Clun Museum.
- 2.00
- 5.00 Disperse.

FEE: Unlikely to exceed £4 depending on numbers, mini-bus etc.
Accommodation for Thursday night can be arranged for those travelling long distances to Shrewsbury.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Museum of Lincolnshire Life

Following extensive restoration work, the North Wing is now open to the public. This new exhibition area enables the Museum to illustrate the rooms of an Edwardian house; nursery, bedroom, kitchen, parlour and wash-house through to a tack room and stable. All the fittings such as fireplaces, pump and copper are in working order and will be demonstrated on special occasions.

Next to the stable is a smithy where a blacksmith will work during the week and the last room in the new wing is devoted to the work of the wheelwright.

WEST MIDLANDS SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS RESEARCH UNIT

Social History Curators within the West Midlands were recently invited by the Area Museums Service to an exploratory meeting at Birmingham to consider the possibility of establishing a Collections Research Unit along similar lines to those already successfully established throughout the country by Natural Historians (1).

David Downe, Director of the area service opened the meeting and offered the support of his organisation. Charles Pettitt, who has been closely involved with establishing and servicing the natural history units, outlined their development and current function and suggested some of the problems which would have to be resolved before progress could be made by social historians whose collections and research requirements differ fundamentally from those of the natural historian.

From the ensuing discussion it became clear that those present had widely differing views as to, amongst other things, the definition of social history and the degree of detail in which collections should be recorded. The question of classification of data was raised and several possible systems suggested. A minority expressed doubt as to the feasibility of actually collecting data and several curators indicated that they felt such a project, whilst laudable in the long term, was a low priority at present.

A vote was then taken on the proposal "Do the social historians present wish to form, or work towards the formation of, a social history collections research unit?". The motion was carried by eight votes to three with eight abstentions. The high number of abstentions suggests that a number of those present preferred not to commit themselves until more concrete ideas have been worked out.

An informal committee was proposed to investigate in detail the formation of a Unit and four of those present expressed their willingness to serve on it. Subsequently several curators unable to attend this initial meeting indicated their desire to be involved and the committee now consists of about fifteen curators representing most of the major museum services in the region. Two further meetings have been held and considerable progress made.

It has been decided that the provisional working title of the unit should be the "West Midlands Social and Industrial History Collections Research Unit". The following subjects are amongst those considered as being within the scope of the unit: Local history, Regional studies, Material culture, Folk life, Social history, Urban history, Industrial history, Industrial archaeology, Science and technology, Agrarian history, Trades, Crafts, Professions, Transport, Commerce, Military history, Personal and specialist fields such as Buildings, Costume and textiles, Decorative arts, Numismatics, etc. This list is by no means exhaustive. Collections in such fields as natural history or foreign ethnography may be briefly mentioned if they or their collectors are likely to be of interest to social historians.

(1) See Hancock, E.G. (1978), 'The North West Collection Research Unit', Museums Journal 77 (4), p.188; Hancock, E.G. and Pettitt, C.W. (1980): 'A Register of collections and collectors in North West England (Botany, Geology and Zoology): First Edition, March 1979', Museums Journal 79 (4) pp. 185-7.

It is hoped that the Unit will eventually register the collections of all museums, stately homes, preservation societies, significant private collections, etc. within the region and will also seek to obtain information concerning local material held outside the area. Archives and photographic material will be considered when held by any of the above types of institution. In the long term it is to be hoped that similar work by libraries and record offices might allow the compiling of a unified register of local material including artifacts, illustrative material, archives and other documentation. As an investigation of all the collections falling within the terms of reference of the unit would at present be out of the question it is intended that work will be phased over a number of years with collections held by museum bodies taking highest priority. A comprehensive list of collections to be registered will however be started immediately. Although the collections investigated by the unit will normally consist of a large number of items it is felt that single objects in private hands could be registered if they were considered sufficiently important.

Security of information relating to private collections is obviously of vital importance. Collectors' names and addresses will certainly not be entered into computer records and the current suggestion is that they will not even appear in any written records held by the Unit. It will be necessary to refer any enquiry to the museum in personal contact with the collector. It is hoped that this level of security will reassure collectors who will undoubtedly be reluctant for the location of valuable collections to be freely accessible.

Both the collection of data and its subsequent arrangement will necessitate the use of a suitable universal classification system. The new Social History and Industrial Classification (SHIC) appears to be the best system available and has performed well in initial trials by the Unit. It has, therefore, been provisionally adopted although the final decision will be deferred until the full version of SHIC is published and unit members have had more experience of its use.

The initial trials conducted by the unit have involved registering unit members' own collections. From this experimental work it has become clear that it is feasible to record collections to the third level of the SHIC hierarchy and obtain useful results. It has been suggested that in many areas it would be desirable to go into greater detail and this appears to be quite feasible. As yet the results of this initial work have not been computerised but there is no reason to suppose that this will present any insurmountable problems. A useful feature of the programme which is to be used is its ability to cope with different degrees of detail in the input data. An enquiry concerning ploughing equipment, for example, would result in the generation of a list detailing those collections registered in sufficient detail to indicate the presence of such material but also noting those collections which are less thoroughly recorded and only have entries down to the levels of Agriculture or Crop husbandry and might include ploughing material.

Work is now in hand on the preparation of a standard data form for recording information for computer input. It is intended that this will

list the SHIC classification numbers alongside which the approximate number of items held in each category can be recorded together with any comments the recorder may wish to add such as the precise nature of the material or some assessment of its significance. General information concerning the accessibility of the collection, storage conditions and the extent to which it is catalogued and indexed will also be recorded.

The next meeting of the Unit will be held in September when it is hoped that Mr. Charles Pettitt from the Manchester Computer Unit will be present. Main topics for discussion will be the data form and the computerisation of collected data.

July, 1981.

WORK IN PROGRESS

DEVELOPMENTS AT BIRMINGHAM

Gun Quarter Project

This summer the Department of Local History, Birmingham City Museum, is sponsoring a programme of fieldwork in the city's gun quarter. Two graduates from Leicester's Department of Museum Studies are compiling an historic record of the quarter, recording its architectural remains and interviewing those who work, or have worked, there. The project is being carried out with the co-operation of the West Midlands County Planning Office. The results will be prepared for publication and may be the subject of a temporary exhibition.

New Coin Gallery

During the next few months part of Birmingham's 1885 building is to be restored to its original appearance, exposing a cast iron roof and balconies long hidden by false ceilings. This Industrial Hall will be largely used to display the museum's applied art or industrial art collections. However also included in the scheme is a new coin gallery. Most of the museum's collections (which are among the largest outside London) are the responsibility of the Department of Local History. It is intended to take this opportunity to produce displays with a particular emphasis on the local and economic history of coins, tokens and medals, reflecting Birmingham's importance in this area.

Local History Gallery : Visitor Survey

A series of pilot surveys were carried out in June 1981 to attempt an assessment of visitor reaction to this new gallery and to provide useful data for the conducting of a full survey later in the year.

A brief summary of the results will appear in December's Museums Journal as part of an article on the gallery, but anyone who wishes to have a full copy of the results should contact the Department of Local History.

New Bulk Stores

The City Museums and Art Gallery are in the process of moving into Curzon Street Railway Station which has been converted for display and storage use. The building dates from 1837-8 when Curzon Street was the terminus for lines from Birmingham to London and Liverpool. The Department of Local History has been allocated the ground floor which will enable it to considerably increase its collections over the next few years.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Grocery Trade

This is potentially a huge subject, if containers, packaging, shop fittings, advertising and other allied subjects are included. This is a basic book list, prepared by Veronica Hartwich, Dundee City Museum. As always we would be interested to hear of additions to the list, bibliographies of those allied subjects and museums with significant collections of material.

Manuals & Educational Publications

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Beeching, C.L.T. | Goods of the Grocer & Provision Dealer. 1920s. |
| Beeching, C.L.Y. (Ed) | The Modern Grocer & Provision Dealer. 4 Vols. 1920s onwards. |
| Law, Copsey et al. | Law's Grocer's Manual. 1890s onward. |
| Copsey, W.G. | The Modern Grocer & Provision Dealer. 1919 onward. |
| Copsey, W.G. | The Practical Grocer. |
| Copsey, W.G. | Goods of the Grocer. |
| Copsey, W.G. | Grocery for Beginners. (Teach Yourself Series) 1956. |
| Simmonds, W.H. | The Practical Grocer. 4 Vols. 1909. |
| Philpott, W.J. | Retailing Made Simple. (Made Simple Series) 1977. |
| | Common Commodities & Industries (Pitman's Series) 1910 onwards. |
| Carter, S. | Commerce: An Introductory Study. |
| Russel, Thomas | The Twentieth Century Shop. 1914. |
| Turner, G. | Business in Britain. 1969. |
| Walsh, J.M. | Tea Blending as a Fine Art. 1896. |
| Anon. | The Grocer's Window Book. (Published by "The Nest" Magazine for Nestles Ltd.) 1922. |
| Anon. | The Business Letter Writer: A Complete Guide to Mercantile Correspondence. |

Histories & Memoires

- Adburgham, Alison Shops & Shopping. 1964.
- Davis, Dorothy A History of Shopping. 1966.
- Harrison, Molly Shops & Shopping (Our Modern World Series). 1965.
- Harrison, M. People & Shopping. 1975.
- Hudson, Kenneth Food, Clothes & Shelter. 1978.
- Jeffrys, J.B. Retail Trading in Britain 1850-1950. 1954.
- Mathias, P. Retailing Revolution. 1967.
- Ferry, J.W. History of the Department Store. 1960.
- Alexander, D. Retailing in England during the Industrial Revolution. 1970.
- Cunningham, W. The Growth of English Industry & Commerce in Modern Times. 1905.
- Whittock The Complete Book of Trades. 1837.
- Hilton, W.G. The Truck System. 1960.
- Yudkin, J., Barker, J.C.,
MacKenzie, J.C. (Eds) Our Changing Fare: 200 years of British Food. 1966.
- Oddy, D.J. & Miller, D.S. (Eds) The Making of the Modern British Diet. 1976.
- Havenhand, G. Nation of Shopkeepers, 1970.
- Rees, J.A. The Grocery Trade: Its History & Romance. 1932.
- Waugh, A. The Lipton Story.
- Corina, Maurice File it High, Sell it Cheap.
(Story of Tesco's) 1971.
- Boswell, J. (Ed) JS. 100: The Story of Sainsbury's. 1969.
- Platts A Family Album 1877-1948 (Platts Stores, Hounslow).

Greig, Mrs. D.	My Life & Times 1940.
Benthall, R.	My Store of Memories. Benthall's Kingston. 1975.
Ferris, A.	Lamberts of Norwich. Norfolk Fair. Nov. 1975.
.....	Copeman's of Norwich. 1946.
Bennet, J.D.	Simpkin & James Ltd. (Leicester) 1976.
Bridges, T.C., & Tiltman, H.H.	Kings of Commerce. 1928.
Turner, M.L. & Vaisey, D.	Oxford Shops & Shopping. 1972.
Law, A.D.	Shops & Shopping in Walthamstow. 1975.
Hickling, R.G.	Where to Shop in Norwich. 1894.
Sawyer, Jean	Our Shop (Eynsham, Oxfordshire).
Forrest, D.	Tea for the British. 1973.
Scott, J.M.	The Tea Story. 1964.
Griffiths, P.	The History of the Indian Tea Industry. 1967.
Gardner, B.	The East India Company: A History. 1971.
Deere, N.	The History of Sugar. 1949.
Heal, A.	Signboards of Old London Shops. 1947.
Hoffman, P.C.	They Also Serve (Trade Union Movement in Retailing) 1949.
Cole, G.D.H.	Century of Co-operation. 1914.
Bonner, A.	British Co-operation. (Co-operative Union) 1961.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON WILLOW BASKETMAKING

"The Osier commonly groweth at his own self, and is also planted of his rodde, in watrie and marsh grounds; it is planted and springs most plentifully, where the earth is beaten up with rage and the overflowings of the water. Osier serveth for making baskets, chayres, hampers and other countrey stuffe."

Gervase Markham, c 1620, North Notts.

Contents:

- a) Willow-cultivation and harvesting.
- b) Willow-rod processing.
- c) Willow Basketry.
- d) Basketry references in general Craft literature.
- e) Sources of further information.

A. WILLOW CULTIVATION & HARVESTING

1. BLACKBURN M Willow growing & basket making, Southport Area, Lancs.. Unpub. thesis, Dept of Folk Life Studies University of Leeds.
2. ELLMORE W P Cultivation of Osiers & Willows. Dent 1919.
3. ELLMORE W P & HUTCHINSON H P Willow growing & Basket making, Journ. of the Board of Agric. 1913, 1922, 1935, editions.
4. FOSTER T E Willows & Willow growing.. Article Industrial World, July 1926 (refers to Mills Factory, largest firm in Trent Valley).
5. SCALING W Salix or Willow. c 1850 (compiler unable to trace a copy).
6. STOTT K G Cultivation & Use of Basket Willows. Article Quart. Journ. of Forestry, April 1956. (Stott-Willow Officer, University of Bristol Research Station, Long Ashton).
7. Unknown Cultivation of Basket Willows, article Country Gents Estate Book 1923, pp 305-308.
8. Unknown Machines come to the Withy beds. Article Farmers Weekly, April 25th, 1980.
9. Unknown Osiers & Willows, Bulletin 89. Min. of Agric. Fisheries & Food, 1st edition 1913.

E. SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

1. "The Willow Basketmaker", 40 frame filmstrip and notes - Shiremark, 58 Whitepit Lane, Flackwell Heath, High Wycombe, Bucks.
2. Basketmakers' Association. Secretary: Joy Viall, Bierton House, Deanway, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks.
3. Worshipful Company of Basketmakers, London.
4. Largest collection of willow basketry in UK Museum - Museum of English Rural Life, Reading.
5. Researcher into basketry collection held by Museums - Alistair Hazletine, Willow Tree Farm, Assington, Colchester, Essex.
6. Willow Holt (plantation) - only one remaining in Trent Valley, on lease to the Museum of Lincolnshire Life.
7. Basket & Cane Trades & Willow Growers Journ., No. 1 issued July 1928, defunct shortly afterwards. Copy at MERL, 18pp Ref. D71/9.
8. * Brit. Amalg. Union of Journeyman Basket, Cane & Wicker Furniture Makers, est. 1865, later abbrev. to Brit. Amalg. Union of Basketmakers..
9. * Employers Fed. of Cane & Willow Workers Assoc. of Gt. Britain & Ireland.
10. * Nat. Fed. of Manuf. from Cane, Willow & Woven Fibre.

NB * Records relating to the three bodies above have not been traced by the writer, and would welcome information.

I have received the following references to the straw plait industries of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire and would appreciate additions in order to compile a full bibliography (contributor: Judith Hodgkinson, Abington Museum, Northampton).

Horn, P. 'Child Workers in the pillow lace and straw plait trades of Victorian Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire' Historical Journal XVII, 4 (1974).

'The Romance of the Straw Hat' Luton Museum (1933) superseded by :

Freeman C., Luton and the Hat Industry Luton Museums (1976)
Workwoman's Guide (1840), reprinted 1975.

Extract from the Morning Chronicle reprinted in the Northampton Mercury, April 13th 1850.

INFORMATION REQUIRED

I seek any information on Mr. Edward Lovett (1852-1933).
He was a banker and amateur folklorist, who spent most of his life in Croydon and Caterham Valley. He published two privately printed books compiled from observations made in London and the immediate countryside over a period of many years. He was a member of the Folklore Society and an active contributor to their journal. He was also connected briefly and informally with the Imperial War Museum as an Honorary Curator, to whom he gave a large collection of charms. During the first World War, he was much sought after for his lectures on mascots and amulets. Many of the dolls and toys from his large collection can now be found in Edinburgh's Museum of Childhood and the National Museum of Wales, in Cardiff. He also gave to the Smithsonian, among other institutions.

James Sage
13 Edgehill Street
Princeton, N.J. (USA)
08540.

INFORMATION REQUESTED

Public House Checks

One theme discussed in GRSM's stimulating annual conference in 1981 was that of public houses and the artefacts associated with them. Over a number of years Birmingham Museum has been accumulating a representative collection of the nineteenth and twentieth century inscribed metal discs of about 25 mm in diameter which were used in licensed public houses and beer shops. Most of these discs were made by Birmingham diesinkers and stamping workshops and were used by the individual taverns as a form of small change and advertisement.

Each check bore some indication of the issuing establishment and/or its proprietor and most showed a monetary value. Their generic term is 'checks' rather than 'tokens' because they could be spent only at the premises of issue. There they were redeemed for beer, either at the bar or counter or, as some particular checks indicate, at the attached concert hall to which those served as free admission passes. How they were issued to customers is conjectural: perhaps variously as games prizes, bonuses to regular patrons or in change. It has also been suggested that they may have been used to evade laws relating to the use of money for gambling in public houses. Their basic function seems to have been to publicize the particular premises or the particular proprietor's arrival there; correspondingly, those bearing a proprietor's name would clearly lose validity when he left. Finally, the checks often bear the name of the diesinker who made it.

The Department of Local History at Birmingham Museum is anxious to receive any information relating to the use of these checks. It is also trying to collate lists of checks held by museums in England. A number of people are working on the compilation of county lists but large numbers of checks must still await location in many museums.

Useful literature on the subject includes R.N.P. Hawkins', 'Dictionary of Makers of British 19th Century Metallic Tickets and Checks' serialised with supplements, in Seaby's Coin and Medal Bulletin between 1960 and 1976. The same author has written Public House Checks of Birmingham and Smethwick, published by Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery in 1978 (price £3.50). Birmingham is also to shortly publish a catalogue of the museum's collection of checks (including those relating to other retail trades, not just public houses) compiled by Antony Gunstone.

Stuart Davies
July 1981

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT : "MUSEUMS : A BAD CASE OF ROT"

Peter Cannon-Brookes ; The Guardian; Mon. April 27th, 1981.

Museums, and public art galleries, in Britain today are facing a future bleaker than at any time since the 19th century, but why it is that record attendances and unprecedented public demands for museum services should be accompanied by an acute financial crisis and, with certain conspicuous exceptions, a little short of catastrophic decline in scholarly output, requires careful analysis. Inflation is not the sole reason, and it must be asked to what extent have the policies adopted by the museums themselves and their governing bodies contributed to the crisis.

Despite their evident popularity, museums and art galleries have always occupied an ill-defined place in British society and the attitude adopted during local government re-organisation served to emphasise the lack of comprehension of their true role. The decision to assign them to leisure, recreation and amenities services demonstrated a fundamental lack of understanding of the basic functions of museums and art galleries as against the more visible secondary activities based on them.

Too often these responsibilities have been lost sight of and the secondary activities developed to the extent of undermining the integrity of the structure supporting them. Thus it is worth re-stating the basic principle that the museum, or art gallery, is a storehouse of objects and knowledge about those objects.

Before being gathered into that storehouse, they must be studied and a conscious process of selection exercised so that the gathering of objects and knowledge are different facets of one and the same undertaking. However, from this stems a clear logical catena and once gathered in, those objects must be conserved and the knowledge assembled must be organised rationally so that it can be analysed.

Finally, upon the firm foundations of properly conserved collections and a coherent body of knowledge concerning them and allied material, the task of interpretation and publication can be undertaken. This last stage includes the provision of displays for the public, temporary exhibitions, printed publications, lectures, educational services, and the vast range of activities commonly associated with museums today.

The danger has always been that the allocation of an excessive proportion of the available resources to the last stage will undermine the whole structure and the rot will be concealed until such time as serious damage will have been sustained.

The collecting activities can be reduced or even halted, but the conservation of the existing collections and the research on them cannot. These must take precedence. Thus, a reasonable standard of security and environmental control to prevent loss or rapid destruction of the collections and the maintenance of the intellectual standards of curatorial departments are fundamental to the operations of a museum.

The community which has once accepted responsibility - in perpetuity - for a collection is holding it on trust for the world community. It is not at liberty to abandon that trust or neglect the collection at will. Thus the fundamental absurdity of the administration of so many important museum collections in Britain as part of leisure and recreation services.

On the other hand, the Victoria and Albert Museum is an integral part of the Department of Education and Science and its director, when faced with massive cuts, has with characteristic integrity if reluctance, sought to preserve the basic function of his institution. If the community will not assign sufficient resources to a great museum, the secondary services enjoyed by the general public, such as the National Slide Collection, must suffer first. The maintenance of adequate security, for example, takes precedence over keeping galleries open to the public.

However, if the public were to be excluded altogether from many museums, the reduction in their net operating costs would be, to the uninitiated, surprisingly small whilst the loss to the intellectual life of the nation would be immense.

Already the retrenchment forced on museums by the present financial constraints is inflicting damage totally out of proportion to the real economies achieved.

The immense riches of the British museums and art galleries are some of the most neglected assets which we possess. The museums can both serve the nation and earn their keep, but only if they are assigned sufficient resources to maintain a high level of activity without compromising the integrity of the foundations in which the secondary services are based.

The authorities responsible for museums, advised by their curators, have too often preferred to assign resources to new ventures instead of tackling the formidable problems posed by the decaying buildings and collections concentrated in our city centres.

Perhaps we will emerge from the present crisis having learnt at least that in the allocation of limited resources, existing liabilities and the maintenance of the essential basic functions of the museum cannot be neglected in favour of secondary activities, no matter how desirable they be, without endangering the integrity of the whole institution.

Peter Cannon Brookes is Keeper of the Department of Art at the National Museum of Wales.

A NOTE ON THE MOVING OF BRICK BUILDINGS

Stuart Holm of the Black Country Museum writes to qualify the marking of brick structures referred to in our account of the 'Recording Craft Workshops' meeting (Newsletter).

"Although I stated that chalked numbers on the face of brickwork can be surprisingly durable (indeed in relatively sheltered positions they can last for several years), I possibly laid insufficient stress on the fact that as the bricks are removed we paint a more permanent number on the upper surface of the brick. At the time of my talk we were using emulsion paint which is convenient to use in most situations but obviously cannot be used on very wet bricks or when rain is falling. We now use a paint originally intended for boat decks known as 'Dekaplex' and manufactured by Plastics and Resins, Cleveland Street, Wolverhampton. This can be supplied successfully in remarkably wet conditions.

We have also refined our method of transferring bricks from upper storeys to ground level. Lengths of large diameter plastic pipe when attached to the scaffolding at an appropriate angle allow bricks to be slid in a more controlled fashion to the point at which the crate is to be loaded. More reliable than the 'old mattress method' but less fun!"

Stuart would be happy to discuss his experiences with any curator contemplating a brick by brick removal of a building.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Thomas Wyatt Bagshawe Basket Making in Bedfordshire
Luton Museum & Art Gallery, £1.60
+ 25p postage.
- Marian Nichols Smocks in Luton Museum
Luton Museum & Art Gallery, £1.30
+ 25p postage.
- N. Harvey The Industrial Archaeology of
Farming in England & Wales
B.T. Batsford, 230pp, £15.00
Includes chapters on land reclama-
tion, field systems, water supplies,
sources of fertility, drainage,
crops, livestock tools & machines,
farm buildings.
- Scottish Labour History Society A Catalogue of some Labour Records
in Scotland 1978
Includes an extensive bibliography
on the Co-operative Movement.
- J.L. Bolton The Medieval English Economy, 1150-1500
J.M. Dent & Sons, 1980, pp400, £10.95,
(pb £6.95).
- Newbury, Maggie Reminiscences of a Bradford Mill Girl
City of Bradford Library, Local
Studies Dept. From the publisher,
45p + 20p postage.
- E.C. Cawte Ritual Animal Disguise - a historical
and geographical study of animal dis-
guise in the British Isles.
D.S. Brewer Ltd and Rowman and
Littlefield for the Folklore Society,
293pp, illus., £7.00. 1978.
- Roy Judge The Jack in the Green a May Day custom
ditto, Folklore Society, 145pp, 1979,
£7.50.
- Roger Elbourne Music and Tradition in early
industrial Lancashire
ditto, Folklore Society, 117pp,
1980, £10.00.
- J.H. Bettey Rural Life in Wessex, 1500-1900
Moonraker Press, 151pp, 1977, £4.95.

10. Fire-Fighting in Birmingham, (Stephen Price).
11. Thomason's 'Warwick Vase', (George Learmonth).
12. The Toy Trades, (Ruth Frost).
13. Birmingham Japanning & Papier Mache Industries, (Yvonne Jones).
14. Sarehole Mill, (Stephen Price).

The sheets, which are of an A4 four-page illustrated format, cost 10p each and are available in the museum's shop or from The Publications Manager, City Museum and Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3DH (Tel. 021-235-2834).

Also available is a free information sheet (15 two-page format) entitled 'Local History in Birmingham : How do I find out more?'. This can be obtained from the Department of Local History.

OFFICERS OF THE GRSM

MEMBER OF THE PARLIAMENT

Chairman : Peter Brears, Director, Leeds City Museums.

Secretary : Gaby Porter, Keeper of Social & Industrial History,
Stockport Art Gallery & Museum Service,
Vernon Park Museum,
Turncroft Lane,
Stockport,
Greater Manchester. Tel : 061-480-3668.

Treasurer : Jane Legget, Lecturer,
Dept. of Museum Studies,
105 Princess Road East,
Leicester LE1 7LG. Tel : 0533-553560.

Editor : Sam. Mullins, Assistant Keeper Social History,
Shropshire County Museum Service,
High St.,
Much Wenlock,
Shropshire. Tel : 0952-727773.

Committee : Helen Clark, Museum Assistant, Royal Scottish Museum.

Veronica Hartwich, Trainee (Curatorial), Dundee Central
Museum & Art Gallery.

Ken Howarth, Sound Archivist, North-Western Scund
Archive.

Crispin Paine, Director, Area Museum Service for
South Eastern England.

John Shaw, Country Life Section, National Museum of
Antiquities of Scotland.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

- Roy Brigden . . . Curator, Museum of English Rural Life, Reading.
- Gavin Bowie . . . Keeper of Social History, Hampshire County Museum Service.
- Andrew Patterson . . . Research Assistant, Dept. of Earth & Space Sciences,
The Science Museum.
- Lisette Davies . . . Keeper of Agrarian History, Shropshire County Museum
Service.
- Chris Page . . . Keeper, Manor Farm Museum, Cogges, Oxon.
- Stuart Holm . . . Keeper of Social and Industrial History, The Black
Country Museum.

GRSM JUNIOR SECTION : NEW MEMBERS

31st July ; Edward William Samuel, proposed by Diana and Sam Mullins.

14th August ; Stephen Patrick, proposed by John and Pam Shaw.

Both mothers and sons are 'doing well', the respective fathers
bleary-eyed, hands bleached by Nappysan, punctured by safety pins
and on a bottle of Paracetamol a week.

.... U L T I M A T U M

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THOSE READERS WHO HAVE
NOT YET PAID THEIR SUBSCRIPTION FOR THIS YEAR
1981 - 82

This is the LAST issue of the Group's newsletter that you will
receive unless you pay up NOW.

You are reminded that the annual subscription rate for 1981-82 is

£2 for personal membership.

£5 for institutional membership.

Subscriptions should be sent as soon as possible to the Treasurer :

J.A. Legget
Department of Museum Studies
105 Princess Road East
Leicester LE1 7LC.

Cheques/postal orders should be made payable to the Group for
Regional Studies in Museums.

Guilty consciences may be further eased by sending subscriptions
due for earlier years to the same address. No absolutions given.
