Social History Curators Group

Journal 17 (1989-90)

THE SOCIAL HISTORY CURATORS GROUP

SHCG is the largest of the specialist museum groups. Founded in the mid-1970s as the Group for Regional Studies in Museums, the diversity of interests of its membership was clearly recognised in 1982 by the Group's change in name, and its subsequent growth.

In common with other specialist groups, SHCG's primary role is helping to raise standards of curatorship. A *News* is issued three times a year. This includes reviews of meetings and exhibitions, opinions on current issues, and items of news. *SHCG Journal* is issued annually, and features articles on various aspects of social history, on research, collecting, recording and interpretation. As well as the regular publications the Group has also produced, free to members, the proceedings of the Women, Heritage and Museums conference (organised by SHCG), out of which sprang the WHAM specialist group. Another special publication produced by SHCG, in association with the Society for the Study of Labour History, is the proceedings of a meeting on Labour History held at Congress House. A special edition of the *Museums Journal* (June 1985) was produced at the Group's urging, and featured articles arising out of an SHCG meeting, with others, on twentieth century collecting. Currently in preparation is a *Manual of Social History Curatorship*.

The Group organises several meetings a year which cover a wide range of subjects and themes, from practical seminars on materials such as iron, glass and plastics, to major discussions on Twentieth Century Collecting and the Disposal of Museum Collections. A programme of training seminars is currently in progress. In addition, the annual study weekend provides a forum for fuller analysis of major subjects such as Museums and the Media, or Interpretation in Social History.

SHCG is a point of contact for other organisations as well as its own members. It has a voice in Museums Association affairs, and represents the interests and concerns of members by liaising with Area Councils, Federations, the Museums and Galleries Commission and other bodies. Its role will continue to reflect those interests and concerns as the importance of museums, and the relevance of social history, grow.

Backnumbers of the *SHCG Journal* are available from the Editor.

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The Editor welcomes articles and notes of work in progress for inclusion in the next issue of *SHCG Journal*. The copy date is the end of December, 1990. Contributions should be typed, double spaced, on one side of A4 paper and may be accompanied by line or monochrome illustrations (no slides). They should be addressed to the Editor, Steph Mastoris, The Harborough Museum, Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7LT, (0858-32468).

All reviews should give full details of cost, postage and packing, date and place of publication. They should be sent to the Reviews Editor, David Stockdale, Dundee Museum & Art Gallery, Albert Square, Dundee, DD1 1DA, (0382-23141).

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Editor:
S.N.Mastoris
Leicestershire Museums

COVER ILLUSTRATION: Glove leather tanyard workers, 1918. One of a series of photographs commissioned by the Women's Work Sub-Committee of the National [Imperial] War Museum, formerly in the archives of the Home Office Industrial Museum. (Crown copyright)
An article by Gareth Griffiths on the Home Office Industrial Museum and its photographic archive appears on page 42

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EDITORIAL

The majority of the articles published here originated as papers given at the group's 1989 annual study weekend. This examined theoretical and practical aspects of popular culture and ways they could be interpreted in history museums. The article by Mike Glasson is based upon an introductory talk given at the group's seminar on leather, held at Walsall in 1989. Likewise, Susan Jeffrey's contribution was intended for a seminar on housing, which had to be cancelled. It is pleasing to include review articles on two new museums - both in Scotland - which have opened during 1989. A regular supply of these for future issues of the journal would be most useful and welcome. Finally many thanks are due to Gareth Griffiths and Felicity Premru for submitting unsolicited articles which fit well into the 'popular cultural' theme of this journal.

This edition of *SHCG Journal* is likely to be the last in its present format. Although the now familiar lay-out has served well as a means of getting as much as possible printed decently and at the lowest cost, many of us feel the time has come to upgrade the style and format of the journal. Plans are now in progress to make succeeding volumes easier to read and handle, with a more attractive cover. Further details will be available in September at the next A.G.M. of the group in Hull.

Other editorial developments can be seen already in this issue of the journal. In the middle of last year David Stockdale agreed to become Reviews Editor, and his sterling efforts have resulted in a well filled section on recent publications. Anyone submitting reviews for future issues should send them directly to David.

Steph Mastoris

READING THE ILLEGIBLE

Mark Suggitt

> *'Every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society, for there is no law, whether natural or not, which forbids talking about things'.*
>
> **Roland Barthes** - *Mythologies* **(1957)**
>
> *'I remember when scampi represented an ideal of the good life.'*
>
> **Gilbert Adair** - *Myths and Memories* **(1986)**

The Journal contains the papers presented at the SHCG Annual Study Weekend in Glasgow in July 1989. The Group was invited to Glasgow by Mark O'Neill, Curator of Springburn Museum. Committee gladly accepted his offer, especially in light of the forthcoming European City of Culture celebrations in 1990. This event sparked debate about what type of culture was to be represented. Meanwhile, SHCG was also considering things cultural.

So, why did we choose popular culture as a theme? Well, like most Annual Study Weekends an idea was thrown in the air, Committee caught it, dropped it, kicked it around and lo and behold a programme appeared. In this case Crispin Paine suggested that we look at the rituals of everyday life. Thinking about this, we felt that everyday 'observances' were very much part of what can be called 'popular culture'. The 'we' in this case was a sub-committee of Liz Frostick, Bill Jones, Mark O'Neill, Ian Lawley, Sue Underwood and myself. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all the hard work they put in to produce the programme. We are all painfully aware of the enormous scope of the subject and hope that this Journal will act as a stimulus to further debate.

The role of this paper is to examine some of the problems and questions that need to be asked of the subject. The papers that follow will amplify the themes I have outlined, as well as providing case histories of museum projects in this area.

One of the key problems is that of definition. What is this thing we call 'popular culture'? It is one of those catch-all phrases that covers an enormous area of human activity and experience. Historically popular culture has been seen as the oral, folk or 'little' tradition of the pre-literate mass. It has been seen as oppositional to the high culture, access to which required an understanding of its artefacts, texts and scores, only the wealthy were perceived as the pioneers of tastes and styles that filtered down to the rest of society. The industrial and intellectual activity of the early nineteenth century led to changes. As Raymond Williams noted 'Art' moved away from being any human skill to being one particular kind in the fields of painting, literature, music and sculpture.[1] The rest of the century saw 'cultural relationships fundamentally transformed with the working out of capitalist industrialisation'.[2] A previously rural population was adapting to becoming urban. Coming through into the twentieth century this process appears to have forced the expansion of the term, which has grown alongside the increasing complexity of western liberal democratic capitalist society.

In museum terms we can see a parallel with the expansion of the parameters of Social History out of Folk Life. In museum terms popular culture can no longer be seen as 'Folk' paintings. Is 'folk art' an unsatisfactory, if not misleading term? 'Folk' objects, country pottery for example, also present problems being over-emphasised for their utilitarianism on one hand and their artistic nature on the other, instead of being seen as innovative designs working within a framework of tradition.[3]

So, do we now see 'popular culture' as including not just material folk forms but active processes and practices that continue to develop? This includes such vast areas as the cinema, popular magazines, radio and TV. We must consider the dominant, mainstream forms as well as those which react against them. We will have to look at new 'sub-cultures' such as 'youth culture' and their

obsession with objects and symbols, but we should not over emphasize these, simply because they are the most interesting.

Should we see popular culture as being of the people, produced by the people, for the people, with little or no relation to other cultural trends? Or should we see it as a combination of 'folk culture' and modern cultural production where 'ordinary people' develop relationships with such artefacts as *Eastenders* or become involved in media-induced guilt and tear jerkers like *Comic Relief*? And what of mass produced objects designed for popular consumption? Is the *Garfield Cat* industry popular culture? How often are they subverted into something that gives them a completely new meaning, witness the rapid spread of plastic bananas across the football terraces of Britain in 1988. The need for a theory (or theories) of popular culture is crucial to our understanding of it in 'museum terms'. A theory of historical enquiry is the framework for producing histories of these cultural forms largely, although not entirely, through the three-dimensional traces of society: objects.

The programme for the ASW deliberately included papers examining actual museum projects. They highlighted how museums can 'Read the Illegible' as the title suggests. Our problem is that we usually write and disseminate the history we produce through the interpretation of objects. You can put books on walls but who reads them? A fundamental concern should therefore be that of meaning. In order to produce a sensible coherent interpretation of our source material, be it pub culture, pop culture, car culture or home culture, we have to look for the way that so much of popular expression is transmitted through signs and symbols which give our objects a number of meanings.

Objects need to be interpreted if we are to produce displays that argue a point, that say something. If we fail to interpret those objects they will continue to say something; our visitors will have to attempt to read the illegible presented before them. If we are to present them with a history, and not a mythical objective truth we must be prepared to look at the mythologies of popular culture.

The complexities of past and present societies can appear mystifying because we do not want to read them as systems of signs that communicate in an unwritten language, hence the title of the weekend. It is taken from an article by Steven Marcus, who was looking at 1840s Manchester.[4] He felt that to understand the condition of this seemingly chaotic urbanising world one had to read the language of the city, to read the illegible.

By reading such signs we can gain a greater understanding of the experiences of everyday life, the mythology of everyday life. Myths, as Gilbert Adair has stated, are expressed as signs of:

> the falsely evident, of what goes without saying, of the victory of a (simple and seductive) stereotype over a (complex and daunting) reality.[5]

We are moving into the realms of semiotics and the *Mythologies* of Roland Barthes. As it is our job to examine the nature of 'things' I feel we must enter that world, for what Barthes did was to profoundly distrust these media:

> whose task is to define and diffuse culture, that wilful confusion of Nature and History and the reassuring notion that every cultural manifestation, be it a wrestling bout or a national dish, could therefore, in its secure, inalterable meaning be taken for granted.[6]

His answer was not to try and replace them with other mythological truths but to de-code society, to expose the messages he saw within a wide range of cultural forms; Wrestling, Cinema, Soap Powder, Toys, Food, Striptease, Cars and Plastic, to name a few. Most of these are subjects covered by museums!

Let us take a modern example of object as symbol, with mythological connotations; the *Filofax* - one of the most contested symbols of the 1980s. It can be seen as a symbol of social, personal responsibility or of thrusting yuppiedom.[7] When, at the 1988 Labour Party Conference, Arthur Scargill brandished a filofax in one hand and a party card in the other he was laying down a challenge - one set of symbols against another. Now, if a museum decides to collect one they also have to be able to read the culture that surrounds it. It is a part of popular culture which has meanings for people, hence its appearance in advertisements and cartoons. This is a modern example but I would suggest the same applies, for example, to political prints of the mid eighteenth century and mourning dress of the mid nineteenth century or Victorian Valentine Cards. Their meaning is as important, if not more important than their physical properties. Despite his love of Jaguar motor cars, Scargill was expressing a belief in commodities as symbols of class, and class is the next crucial area to consider. In such a class conscious country as Britain we cannot avoid it. We must look at how popular forms do affect high culture, be it performing animals at Convent Garden in the 1850s or the clothes of Jean Paul Gaultier in the 1980s.[8] We must examine the crucial differences between influence and appropriation.

We must also consider attacks on popular recreations, from the mid eighteenth century onwards, a process which continues with the football card scheme.[9] We should also consider the less attractive forms such as cock and dog fighting, which are also undergoing a revival. We should not delude ourselves that popular culture is full of noble workers and robust pastimes, much of it has been pure escapism from an unacceptable present, be it a trip to the music hall or the video shop. The rise of non participative leisure, especially cinema, radio and television has contributed to a global concept of popular culture inspired and produced by America. The production of identical products has not yet produced identikit cultures. Objects such as *Levi 501s* and *Marlboro* cigarettes are now universal but are de-coded differently in different countries. In considering class and 'difference' we should also note how different the British attitude has been towards its folk tradition. Unlike many European countries Britain did not use its folk tradition to re-establish nationalism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As *the* imperial power it did not need to. Instead, to use Eric Hobsbawm's phrase it 'invented tradition', the new improved royal family and the trappings of state now suffuse the public culture and give continued meaning to a hereditary aristocracy whose country houses now form part of the experience of 'Englishness'. Such latent conservatism is part of a popular jingoistic vision of nationhood that last surfaced when the Falklands task force sailed. The writer Jonathan Raban cried with pride at the sight, then he bitterly reflected ....

> Absurd. It was like crying over a bad movie in an empty cinema. The insidious British genius for impromptu ceremonial... It was an involunary throwback, like a genetically inherited disease - some sort of patriotic dystrophy whose course was triggered by the sound of bugles and the rippling of flags[10]

So, popular culture is not essentially progressive, in fact much of it could be said to be highly conservative.

Finally, there is the problem of survival and preservation of popular culture in museums; after all, culture is not something that you preserve, it is something that you do. If parts of it die then they are usually replaced by something else. If history is the record of change, should we play an active part in maintaining genuine tradition while resisting the phoney revivalism symbolised by suburban Morris dancers? So, whatever we may end up thinking it is, popular culture is always going to be linked to our collections. We are here to record forms of everyday life that are fused to material culture by both emotion and experience. It may appear illegible but we have to try and read it. I hope that the papers in this journal will act as a useful primer.

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4. Steven Marcus, 'Reading the Illegible' in *The Victorian City, Images & Realities*. (Dyos & Wolf ed.), (Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1973), pp. 257-276.

5. Gilbert Adair. *Myths & Memories*, (Fontana. 1986), p.xiii.

6. *Ibid*.

7. Beatrix Campbell & Wendy Wheeler, 'Filofaxions' *Marxism Today* (December 1988), pp. 32-33.

8. Hugh Cunningham, 'Class & Leisure in Mid Victoria England' in *Popular Culture: Past & Present*, p. 67.

9. Robert Malcolmson, 'Popular Recreations under attack' in *Popular Culture: Past & Present*, pp. 20-41.

10. Jonathan Raban, *Coasting* (Picador, 1987), p. 115.

WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE?

David Russell

Several years ago, after a particularly frustrating day spent screwing up pieces of paper covered with half-finished definitions and considerations of popular culture, I found myself concurring with a friend's observation that popular culture should be consumed not discussed. It was altogether too slippery a concept to tie down. This seemed a profound statement, delivered as it was from the warmth and safety of a public house. The 'pleasure of the Tetleys' had clearly overcome the 'pleasure of the text'.

Now I find myself screwing up pieces of paper once again. The roots of my frustration are twofold. For the unsuspecting, the issue of definition represents a swamp from which rescue rapidly becomes impossible. At the same time, the area of study which might broadly be categorised as falling within 'popular culture' is both massive and diffuse, encompassing an extremely wide range in terms of subject matter and methodological and theoretical perspectives. The pages that have been ironed flat and presented here, are, therefore, of necessity modest in scope. In essence, the paper deals in fairly general terms with definition, considers some aspects of the academic treatment of popular culture, and speculates as to how popular culture – rather narrowly defined – has contributed to the construction of social formation. It is very much informed and directed by the perspectives of a social historian of nineteenth and twentieth centure Britain especially interested in popular music and sport.

It is obviously essential to begin with a walk at least around the fringes of the swamp. It would be possible to construct a none too slim volume cataloguing the anxieties of writers on the issue of definition. Tony Bennett, a sociologist with the Open University *Popular Culture* course team, called it a 'difficult...infinitely elastic term... As soon as you try to put your hand on it, it evaporates'. Asked to define the term in a recent series of articles in the popular history journal *History Today*, a number of the most outstanding writers in the field could not quite pin the beast down. Asa Briggs claimed it to be 'easier to participate in, to enjoy, to deplore, or to explore popular culture than it is to define it'. Peter Burke began with the cautionary: 'We may think that we know what we mean by 'popular culture'. At any rate, we thought we knew what we meant by it when we discovered . . . that it had a history.' Stephen Yeo simply warned that we are in 'dense thickets'.[1] Indeed, it does seem that most historians at least, only use the term as a very wide umbrella under which to shelter as they attempt to map out a field of study and to demarcate their work from that being carried out in more 'traditional' fields. Many would prefer to label themselves as social historians, early modernists, historians of sport, music, body-building or whatever, according to the particular historical constituency to which they feel the greatest loyalty. Popular culture for many is merely convenient shorthand.

All this partly reflects the fact that historians like to do rather more than they like to define, but also suggests a suitable awareness of the impossibility of constructing a watertight, universally applicable definition. Having accepted that impossibility, it is nevertheless instructive to explore some of the many usages of the phrase. The term is, of course, the problem child of problem parents. Raymond Williams has described 'culture' as 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language'. Undoubtedly, he could have said the same of 'popular'. 'Culture' can refer in Matthew Arnold's famed words to 'the best that has been thought and known in the world', or to a whole way of life, or to a set of artistic practices, artefacts and products.[2] The second or third usages are now the most frequently invoked. 'Popular' can simply mean 'liked' by lots of people. Alternatively, it can be used to denote accessibility to non-specialists; the word was to an extent used thus in an earlier paragraph when describing *History Today*.

Both of these meanings inevitably overlap with a further related pair in which the word refers to something 'of' or alternatively, 'for' the people. But which people? Sometimes, the word is clearly intended to refer to subordinate groups and can in such circumstances become coterminous with the working class or classes. Popular is here set against 'elite'. However, on other occasions,

the term can be used so as to absorb even the dominant social groups. 'Popular' television audiences would, for example, incorporate people from across the whole social spectrum.

Many of these varied usages collide, coalesce and overlap in the variety of ways that the term 'popular culture', and its associates such as 'popular music', have been used. The multiple meanings of culture, for example, are reflected in the varied approaches that have been taken in regard to subject matter. Some writers on popular culture concentrate almost exclusively on artistic products: song, film, literature and so forth. This definition is sometimes widened to include most other leisure activities, such as sport. In this sense, (and it is the one I will generally adopt in the latter stages of this paper) the study of popular culture and leisure become almost synonymous. Finally, the term can be used very broadly to describe the 'lived culture' of – usually – the subordinate classes, encompassing almost all aspects of their material and ideological condition from clothing or rites of passage to political attitudes.

There is no fundamental problem here, provided individuals state their chosen preference clearly and remain faithful to it. Defining the exact boundaries of popular culture, however, and above all defining them in relationship to other 'types' of culture, is far more problematic. There have been essentially three main approaches in this respect. The first stresses the quantitative. Popular culture is what is 'liked' by most people as defined by various indices of popularity such as sales, box office returns and ratings. Such an approach has been promoted by the American musicologist Charles Hamm and informs *Yesterdays*, his magisterial survey of American Popular music.[3] More common than this usage, however, are those rooted in less precise terms. The second, and the most common of all seeks to analyse popular culture 'in terms of what it is not'.[4] Popular culture is what is left when some other form of culture, suitably adorned in quotation marks of course, has been defined. Popular or 'low' (and sometimes mass) is set against 'elite' or 'high'. That process of definition can be constructed through either aesthetic/stylistic or sociological criteria. In the former there is usually a stress, implicit or explicit, on the higher level of complexity and intellectual challenge in the realm of the 'high'. If a more sociological interpretation is offered, then 'high' is usually associated with social elites. In both cases there has often been an assumption of the moral superiority of 'high' over 'low'. Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, published in 1869, was enormously influential here, investing the key oppositions, high/low, elite/mass with the loaded meanings (positive/pejorative) that they have held for so long in the 'culture' debate. It is, of course, impossible to boil down Arnold's philosophy into a sentence, but, in essence, writing against the background of the political upheaval surrounding the 1867 Reform Bill, he proposed 'to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere' through a system of public education. Culture, with a large and conservative 'C' was thus to enter on its career as a bulwark against a perceived decline in traditional patterns of authority.[5]

Popular has also often been set against 'folk'. Historically, in this pairing popular was invariably used pejoratively, as when used by the English folksong collectors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For them folksong was a product of an agrarian society, pure and untainted by the incursion of printed urban culture. Such a view is now accepted as a romantic construction saying more about the collectors than the songs.[6] Some recent writers, however, still attempt to maintain the distinction, although with less overtly ideological intention. Chris Bigsby, for example, claims the distinction to be useful if only to separate those cultural activities which are communal (folk) 'in which the distinction between audience and performer is imprecise' and those (the popular') in which that distinction is clear and vital. For Bigsby, folk cultures belong to pre-literate, pre-industrial communities, popular to the industrial, urban and technological.[7]

In yet another opposition, popular has been set against 'mass'. At least until the 1950s, 'mass' and 'popular' were often used interchangeably. Thus one of the first collection of readings in the field, published in the USA in 1957 was entitled *Mass Culture. The Popular Arts in America.*[8] However, for many the two words have taken on divergent meanings. In many recent pairings popular becomes proud and positive, mass, pejorative. Popular culture stands as the culture 'of' the people: something actually created by them or at the very least articulating their feelings. Often, it is also seen as challenging and oppositional, class struggle by 'other means' at best, a possible source of inspiration at the least. Mass, however, implies standardised, manipulative, imposed and passively consumed; decidedly culture 'for' the people.[9]

The most recent and most sophisticated solutions to the problem propose almost the abandonment of attempts at definition in terms of content and style. Such a view was implicit in many of the writings on youth culture which emerged in the 1970s, but received its most enthusiastic and influential endorsement in the teaching materials and related articles for the Open University *Popular Culture* course, launched in 1981. Here culture was viewed as a totality, with popular culture the 'area of exchange between the cultures and ideologies of dominant and subordinate classes.' The focus here is not so much on the uniquely upward or downward flow of culture but on interrelationships, negotiations and appropriations, on how and why groups use cultural forms and practices 'borrowed' from other social groups.[10]

It is possible to point to strengths and weaknesses in all of these approaches. An attempt at measurement is certainly to be encouraged in that it focuses attention on areas of popular experience which mattered to audiences. If a record or sheet music sold large numbers or a film attracted a sizeable audience, it is presumably worthy of study. It has sometimes worried me when studying the political and social meanings of music hall song texts that I might be analysing songs which were not at all representative of contemporary taste but which had simply leapt out at me because they 'suited' my purpose or had some particularly appealing reasonance for the late twentieth century (and, occasionally, because they had irresistible titles such as *Never Leave Your Mother When Her Hair Turns Grey*). How I longed for a Victorian *Melody Maker*. Measurement can also offer provocative challenge to received opinion: it is surely at least noteworthy that in 1956, the year of rock n' roll, the four best-selling records in Britain were by Pat Boone, the Dream Weavers, Doris Day and Winifred Atwell respectively. (Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers with *Why do Fools Fall in Love* did manage fifth).[11] At the very least, questions about continuity as well as change are thus raised.

However, there is not necessarily safety in numbers. Many statistical sources, for example, many pop charts, are far from reliable. Moreover, excessive emphasis on the legible and measureable might draw us away from forms of culture which leave little evidence of this type. Finally, such an approach does not really help those interested in popular culture in stylistic terms. Bach, Sibelius and Tchaikowsky may all be late twentieth bestsellers but is it really helpful to perceive their music as a result as 'popular' culture?

Moving to the second approach, there is not space here to consider 'popular' in opposition to all the terms it has been set against, but, concentrating purely on the high/popular pairing, again, advantages can be seen. Using the relevant terms in a social sense, it is possible to make some reasonable generalisations. Chamber music can be fairly confidently associated with social elites, industrial folksongs with those lower in the social scale. Similarly, sculpture might be set against commemorative china. Again, in the more narrow aesthetic and stylistic senses, the high/popular opposition has become so much part of our 'common sense' debate over the arts that the terms have become invested with a certain degree of useable meaning. In this sense it would not be too controversial to describe Chuck Berry as popular culture and - well, it has to be, - Beethoven as high.

However, there are some huge problems in this sort of enterprise. The most obvious ones relate to the value judgments that will inevitably flow if, as is so often the case, 'high' becomes coterminous with 'better than'. The much loved cry 'lack of space prevents me from exploring this issue' neatly (and, in this instance, justifiably) offers an escape route from that particular debate. It does force us, though, to face the central point that popular and high culture are constantly shifting social constructions and not static entities. At the very least, we have to alter our perception of them according to the historical context. Since approximately the middle of the nineteenth century when these distinctions became increasingly fashionable, the categories have been constantly reshaped and reconstructed. In the nineteenth century, Dickens would

certainly not have been placed amongst the literary elite, a position he has since been accorded by an act of appropriation by literary critics. Similarly, few would now think of opera as popular culture. However, when looking at the nineteenth century, especially in the industrial regions of Britain, it would not be inappropriate to do so in the sense that it was appreciated by a wide cross-section of the population, and, in the albeit altered form of the brass band selection, performed by an influential group of working class musicians. In particular, early Wagner and mid-nineteenth century Italian opera formed a staple part of the band repertoire. In 1907, one commentator could even claim that an aria from *Il Trovatore* was 'so well-known that every (brass) bandsmen can whistle it from memory'.[12]

Related to all this is the problem of the middle ground. If Berry is popular and Beethoven high, where lies the salon music of Elgar, the rags of Scott Joplin, the symphonic jazz of Paul Whiteman? To answer such questions, we have invented a whole category of evasive phrases like, popular classic, middlebrow (I've given up on inverted commas for the moment), light music and so forth, which are often extraordinarily arbitrary and probably most useful as terms of abuse when challenging the taste of friends.[13]

In the light of all this, the appeal of the third approach, with its stress on the interchange between cultures is very clever. It liberates us from some of the problems of subjectivity, and it allows for the multi-dimensional flows of culture that have so obviously taken place, to give a far more satisfying history. Moreover, it allows us to appreciate the ways in which ideas and institutions were appropriated by different social groups. Especially relevant here is the honoured working class tradition of reworking the cultural initiatives of the middle and upper classes to suit their own needs and aspirations. A simple example is provided by one individual's response to organised youth movements. Undoubtedly perceived by their founders as agents of social reforms and carriers of certain elite moral and ideological codes into working class society, those on the receiving end often deflected the elements they did not wish to receive. Robert Roberts, remembering life in Edwardian Salford, noted how in his troop of the decidedly muscular christian Church Lads Brigade, 'our local ranks were continually thinned by the rector's insistence on member's weekly attendance at classes for Bible reading and drill'.[14]

Yet even here, problems emerge if one has to try and differentiate between certain artistic categories or lifestyles, dependent on which definition is being used, in the type of shorthand, common sense way that is often necessary when writing or lecturing. During the course of almost any discussion, it would be necessary to use to maintain some sort of popular/high duality in order to set up the context in which interchange and appropriation could take place. We may just have to learn to love inverted commas. Perhaps the key job for the student of culture, and especially the historian, is not to try and fit past cultural practice into a set of neat categories, but to examine the processes behind the generation of those categories.

There now follows the troublesome moment known to many writers on this topic, when, having illustrated some of the problems inherent in the phrase 'popular culture', one has then to discuss it in operation. In the following section, concerned with the study of popular culture, I am ranging fairly widely, which seems appropriate, given the vast range of work which has been grouped under this canopy. However, in the final sections, on the study of popular culture by historians and on the possible social and political ramifications of cultural practice, the much narrower definition of popular culture as popular leisure noted in the introduction comes into play.

In a crucial sense the study of popular culture in Britain dates back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, at the very time when many aspects of that culture were under attack from the complex network of social and economic changes associated with urbanisation and industrialisation. Faced with the decline and even disappearance of certain aspects of local culture, a number of gentleman antiquarians set out to record passing traditions. This process of rescue continued right through the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, underpinned by a variety of motives. Most notable was the (R)romantic search for a pure 'folk' tradition untainted by the influences of industrial society, although some of the most committed supporters of that industrial society provided another major inspiration for this work through their efforts to generate a strong sense of civic and regional pride. Some of the products of these endeavours, such as Joseph Strutt's *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801) have become invaluable sources for later historians, while many others, on library shelves and in archives, await exploration.[15]

Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* might be taken as a convenient starting point for the academic concern with popular culture, although it is perhaps not until the 1930s that it really becomes possible to talk about a set of continuous academic traditions in the field, leading right through to our own age. That continuity is a great deal clearer in North America than in Britain, or indeed, anywhere else in Europe. It was in the USA where mass communication in the form of the press, broadcasting and cinema had advanced so much further than in Europe, that what was eventually to evolve into such fields as media studies and communications sociology, emerged in this decade. Decidedly empirical, very much focused on audience research and now viewed by many as decidedly *passe*, it nevertheless opened up some important avenues for exploration.[17]

In Britain at this stage, there was certainly fierce debate about popular culture and especially the impact of American culture on the British politics, morals and culture. Academic enterprise, however, did not in general follow the social scientific path as in America, but rather the more traditional Arnoldian paths of philosophical and cultural criticism. Of considerable influence in this area was F.R. Leavis's *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture*, in many ways Arnold restated for the media age. The one really notable exception was Mass Observation, founded by Charles Madge and Tom Harrison in 1936. Harrison, an ethnographer by training, sought to use the same techniques of observation he had developed in Borneo on the tribes of industrial England. He and his team of observers gathered a great deal of information about the habits and customs, especially of 'Worktown' as they anonymised Bolton, information which is proving valuable to the growing army of thirties scholars.[18]

The coming of age of popular cultural studies in Britain, and indeed in most of Europe, occurred in the late 1950s and 1960s. This is simply illustrated by a list of 'key' events; the publication Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* (1957), Raymond Williams *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961), the discovery of both Frankfurt Marxism and the semiological French tradition of cultural studies in the 1960s, and the founding of three centres, for Contemporary Cultural studies at Birmingham in 1964, for Mass Communication at Leicester and for TV Research, both in 1966, at Leicester and Leeds Universities respectively.[19] By the late 1960s, the study of popular culture was a clear and expanding element of British higher education where it has as secure a place as anything in a world where the rules are changing so dramatically.

It is not particularly difficult to propound reasons for the take off at this time. It would have been stange indeed if the great expansion of TV ownership in Britain had not generated some interest in both television and its effects, and in the media in general.[20] On a narrower front, the growth of sociology and social history in the 1960s were bound to shed light on previously neglected or patronised aspects of popular culture, although in honesty, historians were amongst the very last arrivals in the field. Although individuals had shown flashes of interest, it was not really until about the mid-1970s that there emerged a clear, albeit small, group which could loosely be labelled as historians of popular culture. Further stimulus was provided by the arrival into higher education of students and some academics – Williams the son of a signalman, Hoggart from working-class Hunslet – from social backgrounds which gave them first hand experience of the cultures previously despised or looked on with only aloof academic interest. It is, of course, also worth mentioning the decidedly prosaic point that the simple need for young academics to find new areas of research in order for them to compete in a massively overstocked job market has doubtless helped open up this area for study.

One of the most obvious features of so much of the 'serious' literature on popular culture from at least the mid-nineteenth

century until the 1960s and perhaps even beyond, has been its overtly political nature. So much of the writing has been the product (and the generator) of specific debates about power relationships within society at certain times, and about the use and abuse of technology in those societies. In many senses, entire sections of the canon of cultural studies are now far more valuable as primary sources, as insights into conflicts within past societies than they are as 'academic' texts. Some of the early literature on the impact of television illustrates this point.[21]

In some senses, the second feature of note, follows from the first. Historically, popular culture was invariably explored from the top down. Much writing at least until the 1970s and beyond in many cases, centred on what might be termed a 'hypodermic' theory of popular culture, which viewed the audience as an essentially passive receipient of doses of a particular product.[22] Such an approach was perhaps inevitable given the concern with the *effect* of popular culture. This version of cultural practice was given a boost within the empirical, social scientific school of study by the work of the American writer Harold Lasswell. In 1948 he propounded what was to become a profouundly influential dictum in which the key question for the student to ask became:

who
says what
in which channel
to whom
with what effects?

It is easy to jibe at this information some forty years later and, provided some of these questions are opened up and explored more carefully, to this day this simple formula can provide a not totally worthless starting point.[23] However, there is no doubt that it led to audience study and content analysis of rather mechanical and untheorised type.

The emphasis on downward flows has been noticeable in the writings of scholars from right across the political spectrum. Some of its bleakest statements are to be found in the Marxist writings of the so-called Frankfurt School and, most particularly, in those of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer.[24] To an extent, their pessimism stemmed from their experience as Jews, of the German 'culture industry' under the Nazis. For them, this industry, which included popular cinema, music, theatre, comics and sport, was in the hands of a capitalist class which cynically sought to delude the consumer, to offer them in the guise of 'free choice' images and experiences which simply reproduced existing social relations. 'The concepts of order which it (the culture industry) hammers into human beings are always those of the status quo. They remain unquestioned, unanalysed and undialectically presupposed...The power of the culture industry's ideology is such that conformity has replaced consciousness'.[25] In these, the darkest moments of Frankfurt theory, a picture emerges of subordinate social classes disarmed and disabled it seems almost forever by the all-embracing web of commercial popular culture.

A similarly pessimistic strain underpins the writings of the French Marxist sports commentator Jean-Marie Brohm. Heavily influenced by both Althusser and Foucault, with their interest in the regulatory/disciplinary power of the state, Brohm sees sport, at all levels, as a mechanism for transmitting the values of the modern, capitalist/militarist state. 'Sport has the function of justifying the established order. Sport is a positivist system and as such always plays an integrating function and never an oppositional one ...Sport is a stabilising factor for the existing system: – by conning people into identifying with the champions, sport has a depoliticising effect. The champions are the positive system of the system.'[26] Plentiful examples could also be offered here of conservative writers bemoaning the deadening touch of much popular culture. Their lament, of course, would not be for its de-radicalising tendencies, but rather the Arnoldian reverse, for its undercutting of elite values, its threat to the existing order.

Such one-way models of cultural influence are at present far less fashionable. The last twenty years has seen a willingness to accept a greater complexity, as has already been noted in earlier comments about modes of definition of popular culture based on a model or appropriation and negotiation. This approach is clearly visible both within both the older, empirical tradition and the Marxist tradition. In the latter area, this is indicative of the huge influence of the ideas of the Italian marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) on academic thought in the last two decades.[27] His emphasis on the establishment of 'hegemony', the exercise of political control through a constantly fought for popular consent, rather than through simple physical coercion (although that remains the ultimate weapon), has attracted many students of popular culture, aware of what a central area of conflict it has been in this particular struggle. Equally appealing is his stress on the potential for conter-hegemony, ideas from 'below', resisting, challenging, deflecting the elite values. In many senses, the crucial question has become, 'not what does the media do with the audience, but what does the audience do with the media?[28]

Potentially the greatest aid in providing answers to that question, and, of course, another major reason why we have learnt to pose it in the first place has been supplied by the massive growth within in the field of literary theory since the 1960s. As an historian, and by training and inclination a fairly empirically inclined one, and as an individual with a growing preference for popularisation and broad appeal rather than closed specialism and academicism, I have some very clear reservations about the critical revolution. There is more than a whiff of intellectual arrogance about some of the writing and we must be careful of intellectual gurus who speak a language and preach theories that, because of their extreme and often perverse complexity, flatter the cogniscenti and exclude most others.

However, such an argument, pushed too far becomes merely an excuse for avoiding some difficult reading and not facing up to some central intellectual challenges. We have to be aware of these developments and learn from them at whatever level seems appropriate.[29] At the very least, historians have shown a far greater sensitivity to the issue of language in the last decade and historians of popular culture are showing at least some awareness of the critic's stress on the polysemic nature of texts.[30] One of the biggest tasks for the next decade is for historians and those at the more rigourously theoretical end of the cultural studies project, to come together in rather more fruitful communion than they have to date.

We seem to have come round to historians and I will stay with them for the rest of the time. Historians of popular culture have tended to suffer from an inferiority complex. To an extent it flows from working within what Bigsby has termed 'an academic tradition suspicious of material so generally available' and also from the related sense that somehow popular cultural topics are (usually) interesting and accessible and thus 'easy'. I still myself occasionally fall prey to such anxieties, most recently when I discovered that while my students were analysing Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* a colleague and her charges next door were interrogating Hegel. It just did not seem right.

In fact, there is little reason for such panics. The study of popular culture has added enormously to both our academic culture and to our understanding of social relationships. I will focus here specifically on the achievements of historians working in the period after about 1750, although many of these comments are applicable to work in other fields of history and to other disciplines. Perhaps the least controversial point is that interest in the field of popular culture has greatly broadened the conception of what historians might legitimately study. Some of the earliest forays into these fields were greeted with amusement and/or suspicion. How important those early products now seem. Malcolmson on popular recreation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Walvin on football, Stedman Jones on the music hall, Bailey on rational recreation, these and others set a standard and generated an interest that allowed dozens of others to follow.'

These writers have done more than simply free those who wish to study the social history of golf, male voice choirs or whatever, from their inferiority complex. In *The Making of the English Working Class* E.P. Thompson gave a rationale for his endeavours which has been both much quoted and much imitated. He sought 'to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' hand-loom weaver, the 'utopian' artisan, and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott, from the enormous condescension of posterity.'[31] During the course of one of the most influential history books of the century, he succeeded. Thompson insisted

that we heard the voice of the excluded, the voice of those radicals who had 'lost' some of the key engagements in that critical period between 1790 and 1832. However, there are lots of different types of condescension. Historians until very recently have tended to suffer from a variant of the work ethic, which seemed to hold that if a topic was not about work or politics (in an overt form) then it was not to be studied. That particular condescension has now gone.

It needed to. Such an approach accorded little with the reality of past perception. Only the most cursory and anecdotal glance at the field of popular culture illustrates its centrality in the popular experience. Probably the largest crowd to gather for a funeral in nineteenth century Newcastle was for one Harry Clasper; 70,000 supposedly came to pay their respects. Harry Who one might ask, vainly searching standard works of reference for some mention of this obviously central figure? He was in fact, or had been in earlier times, a professional oarsman at a time when rowing was one of the great spectator sports of Tyneside. Funeral attendances are in fact very revealing in this sense. Hundreds of thousands are reputed to have lined the streets of London when the music hall star Marie Lloyd – 'our Marie' – was buried in 1922. Just as impressive, given the very local nature of his success was the crowd of 'several thousand' for the funeral in 1890 of Willie Lee conductor of Dewsbury Old Band and Dewsbury hand-bell ringers.[32] Writing in the 1960s, the cricket writer C.L.R. James was quite right to state that: 'I can no longer accept the system of values which could not find in these (history) books a place for W.G. Grace'.[33] Did we really use to write history books that did not mention, other than in some light, throwaway reference, the music hall (annual attendance of 14 million at just 35 London halls in 1892), the cinema (990 million admissions nationally in 1939), soccer. . . there is no need to carry on. There are still, inevitably, unbelievers, but the place of popular culture within the historical community is a great deal more secure than seemed likely fifteen years ago.

All this emphasis on the need to provide a corrective to a history rooted in the overtly political, however, is not to argue that the popular cultural is somehow apolitical. Here indeed, lies the third major contribution of historians of popular culture. They have broadened the terms of our enquiry as we seek out the forces which reflect, structure and shape our social experience and social relationships. They have alerted us to sites of political and cultural conflict previously hidden from view. Episodes such as the suppression of the Stamford Bull Run between 1837-1840, when evangelical reformers finally succeeded in ending this local sport, but not before a detachment of 300 special constables enlisted against the 'bullards', swopped sides and joined in the merriment, 'running down the stairs shouting and yelling Bull for Ever! Yahoo, Yahoo'.[34]

For what it is worth, my own view is that the field of popular culture (fairly narrowly defined, remember, as almost co-terminous with popular leisure activity), has tended to reinforce conservative elements of British political culture. This has worked in a variety of ways. The mass entertainment industry in the form of the music hall and the cinema has so often tended to portray a cosy, consensual Anglo-centred view of society. What else can one say of the music hall, an institution that could give houseroom to a song which claimed

> Though some may think us 'lax-uns',
> Thank God we're Anglo-Saxons,
> And the English speaking race shall rule the world,
> John Bull.[35]

Jeffrey Richards has dissected the art of Gracie Fields and argued convincingly for seeing her as a figure promoting national unity and consensus in the 1930s.[36] The Broadway/Hollywood musicals of the 1940s and 1950s may well have had an influence on contemporary attitudes to women. In a period when women were being encouraged to see their wartime work experiences as a form of war service that had to be abandoned in favour of more 'traditional', home and family-centred roles, the musical reflected and reinforced the climate of opinion. It is inescapable that so many films – *Annie Get Your Gun, Kiss Me Kate, Guys and Dolls* are good examples – focused on the domestification of problem women. Doubtless, like the 'sobbin women' kidnapped by Howard Keel and the brothers in *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*, 'secretly they were overjoyed'. 'Oh yeah!'

Popular cultural forms may well have been conservative in other ways. Sport, for example, especially soccer and rugby, certainly provided safety valves for anger and emotion which might otherwise have found a political outlet, while local identity and loyalty to a team could cut across wider class identities. There was certainly a sniff of the vendetta at Middlewich station in 1889 when:

> After a match between Nantwich and Crewe, both parties assembled on opposite platforms waiting for trains. They commenced operations by alternately hooting and cheering, and then one man challenged an antagonist to a fight. Both leapt on the metals and fought desperately until separated by the officials. Then a great number of the Nantwich men ran across the line, storming the platform occupied by the Crewe men. Uninterested passengers bolted right and left.[37]

Certainly many socialists and leaders of organised labour saw popular leisure as a barrier to the development of appropriate industrial and party political strategies. A speaker at a miners' picnic in the early 1900s told his audience; 'to keep their heads right, and remember that a crust of bread to starving beings was of more value than all the Cups and the Leagues in the country.'[38] Perhaps most important of all was the capacity for leisure activity to provide individuals with intellectual, emotional and social satisfactions denied to them in their working lives, thus nudging some of them away from the political arena.

Some of this may seem a trifle 'hypodermic'. In fact, many of the points above, especially the latter, hinge on the premise that, to a considerable extent, subordinate groups make their own decisions, structure their own existence, rather than simply act as blank pages to be written on by a succession of external agencies. It must be stressed that there were always deflections, reworkings of 'intended' codes, of radicalisation through cultural activity, sometimes in the most unlikely ways. (I have recently talked to a Lancashire textile worker who found Gracie Fields as cheering as Jeffrey Richards claims, although her effect was to give him back his sense of humour, spirit and resolution to keep fighting against the social iniquities of the period). There is also no claim here that popular culture operated as the primary organiser of consciousness. It is simply that, overall, the content of popular culture and the outcome of battles over its position and meaning have tended to be resolved in ways not entirely unsatisfactory to the taste of social and political elites.

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2. M. Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (1960 ed.), p. xxxv.

3. C. Hamm, *Yesterdays; Popular Song in America* (1979) For a perceptive review of his ideas, *Popular Music*, 1 (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 180-5.

4. C. Bigsby (ed.), *Approaches to Popular Culture* (1976), p. 17.

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6. See especially, D. Harker, *Fakesong* (1985) and V. Gammon, 'Folk-song collecting in Sussex and Surrey, 1843-1914', *History Workshop Journal*, x (1980).

7. C. Bigsby, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

8. Edited by Bernard Rosenberg.

9. S. Hall and P. Whannel, *The Popular Arts* (1964), has many useful comments.

10. Block One, Units 1/2, pp. 77-86 is the key reading. The quote comes from page 86. Anybody with an interest in the general field of popular culture would benefit from working through the coursebooks for this huge but challenging course. It has not run since 1988, so the course material is already quite hard to find. If most of the above seems too enthusiastic, I must stress that I had no hand in the preparation or teaching of this course! For further developments of this approach, see S. Kaplan ed., *Understanding Popular Culture* (1984).

11. T. Jasper, *The Top Twenty Book. The Official British Record Charts 1955-1983* (Poole, 1983), p. 23.

12. *British Bandsman*, 2nd February 1907.

13. For some helpful work on the key role of the BBC in the development of this type of language in Britain, see P. Scannell, 'Music for the multitude? The dilemmas of the BBC's music policy', *Media, Culture and Society*, 3, 1981, pp. 243-260.

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19. C. Bigsby, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

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21. Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, contains some examples of this.

22. The phrase is Jeffrey Richard's. *The Age of the Dream Palace* (1987), p. 7. I am not sure, however, he would use it to describe all the work discussed below.

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30. See, for example, P. Bailey, 'Champagne Charlie: Performance and ideology in the music hall swell song', in J. Brattan, ed., *Music Hall, Performance and Style* (1986), pp. 49-69.

31. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1968 ed.), p. 13.

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'SUPREME VALUE': HOUSEHOLD CATALOGUES AS A SOURCE FOR SOCIAL HISTORIANS

Gordon Watson

This article stems from a member's paper given to the S.H.C.G. annual study weekend in Glasgow, which in turn was a result, simply, of my enthusiasm for household catalogues as a source for social history.

Household catalogues have a vast amount of information in them and the few that have been reprinted, and are in most museum libraries, represent a very limited selection of the many different types that have been produced. I refer, of course, to examples such as the Army and Navy Stores catalogue for 1907 or the Harrods catalogues from 1895 & 1929. These shops, although they had very comprehensive stocks, were supplying wealthy purchasers and were not used by the vast majority of people. In contrast mail order catalogues, particularly after the mid 1930s, showed items that many more families could either save up to buy through the company's savings clubs or at least believed they had some hope of owning. Spending power was of course, for most people still very limited and it is really only since the 1950s that it has increased for the majority.

My observations are based on the collection of catalogues held by Wakefield Art Galleries and Museums, which is quite wide ranging, particularly for the 1920s and 1930s. The catalogues have come to the service through, I suppose, typical channels. Over half came into Pontefract Museum where Richard Van Riel, the curator, obtained them from Holmes, printers of Pontefract. Mr Holmes had obviously sent for a sample of catalogues whenever he decided to make a major purchase – one year a chicken house, the next a new kitchen range. Somehow they were put to one side for around 50 years and were then given to the museum in the early 1980s. Other examples came from a small cycle shop in Wakefield where the owner, Fred Gill, seems to have had a sideline in acting as an agent for London mail order companies. A few of the catalogues have been purchased from market stalls or from local people who previously had run savings clubs for, for example, Littlewoods and Great Universal Stores.

Ordering instructions in the catalogue of Great Universal Stores of Manchester for 1939 (Wakefield Museums).

Decorative pottery from the catalogue of Great Universal Stores of Manchester for 1939 (Wakefield Museums).

Historical Notes

The most successful large mail order catalogues in the nineteenth century were those that were produced in the United States, but their history in North America is rather different from that in Britain. In the former, enormous annual volumes were particularly important in rural areas where they offered a much greater range of goods than could be stocked by the local store. In addition, because they did not have to provide the same long term credit as the local shopkeeper, who was often only paid at harvest time, they were able to sell at a lower price. It is hardly surprising that the first of these companies, Montgomery Ward & Co of Chicago, which was established in 1872 by Aaron Montgomery Ward, had within twenty years built up annual sales of over three million dollars.[1]

In Britain the earlier catalogues were those issued by large stores such as Harrods from before 1890. These supported the main shop as they advertised both what could be bought over the counter and what could be delivered by van near to London, or sent by post or rail elsewhere. Apart from the very thick complete catalogues there were sometimes also supplementary booklets listing part of the stock. At Wakefield, we have these, for example, for 'Exclusive Lingerie' sold by Harvey Nichols of Knightsbridge in 1926-27 and clothes for young persons sold by D.H. Evans and Co. of Oxford Street around 1910. Companies outside London also set up mail order towards the end of the nineteenth century, usually with catalogues filled mainly with ready made clothes. An example in our collections was issued by Pryce Jones Ltd., of Newtown, North Wales.

Much more competitively priced catalogues, primarily for mail order, started around 1900 and operated rather differently. Companies such as Great Universal Stores and Littlewoods sold mainly through agents or 'organisers' who ran clubs of members. The Littlewoods catalogue for 1939 explained clearly:

> A group of friends agree to club together a shilling or so a week each, for twenty weeks. They in turn, choose from the Catalogue something they want . . . A sporting element is added to the zest of membership by the 'draw'. This decides the rotation in which members shall make their selection of goods from the Catalogue.

The Great Universal Stores catalogue for the same year claimed 'The odd pennies, sixpences & shillings will buy all your needs for home and family.'

By the 1930s the catalogues themselves compared very favourably with the much more conservative products from the big shops. To start with more than half of the pages were printed in colour. Enthusiastic descriptions replaced the simple list of specifications and these were often headed with such phrases as 'Very much the vogue', 'Smart in style and materials' and 'Luxury within your reach'. Brand names were seldom mentioned, but quality and good value (if not 'Supreme value') were frequently referred to. Prices were set so that they easily added up to £1, with 5s (25p), 10s (50p) and 15s (75p) the most common figures. It seems most likely that the weekly contribution came from the family as a whole or the family budget, although the catalogues appear to have been aimed mainly at women. They were dominated by household items and clothes for adults, but included children's toys and clothes. As you might expect they show women doing the washing and cleaning, leaving lawn mowing to the men.

The whole approach was obviously successful for Great Universal Stores claimed to have three million members in 1939 at a time when the average weekly wage for a male manual worker was only just under £3.10s and unemployment benefit was less than a quarter of this at 17 shillings (85p). Even in the cheaper mail order catalogues a summer dress cost from 10s to £1 and a pair of men's trousers were priced at 5s to 10s.[2]

Numerically the largest group of catalogues is the type printed to list and advertise the products of an individual company – anything from lightbulbs to complete prefabricated houses. These usually contain technical information and cover a much wider range of items than shop or mail order catalogues.

Catalogues are still being produced, perhaps in greater numbers than ever, in the 1990s. George Davis's *Next Directory* forced major changes in mail order companies in the last years of the 1980s and

Boy's suits – miniature versions of adult fashions – in the catalogue of Great Universal Stores of Manchester for 1939 (Wakefield Museums).

Men's underwear in the catalogue of Great Universal Stores of Manchester for 1939 (Wakefield Museums).

most now produce more than one catalogue each season aimed at different groups of people. High Street shops print special christmas gift catalogues which are given away free. The Argos catalogue (with a new rival in *Index* at Littlewoods Stores) has for years been an accurate guide to what people are really buying for their homes and is a necessary contrast to Habitat, Traidcraft and Oxfam.

The Information Inside

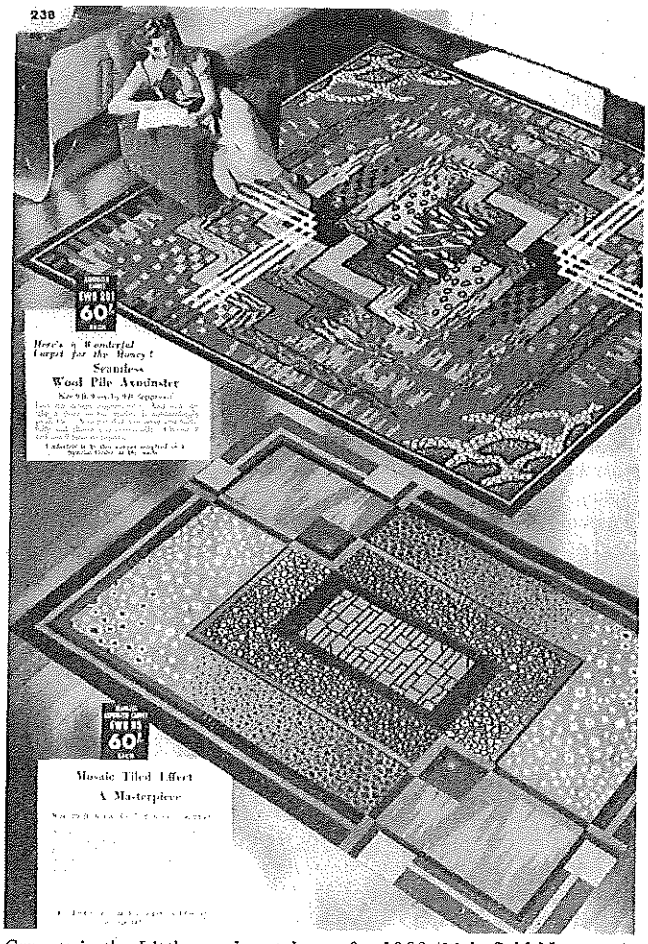
So what is it that catalogues can tell the social historian about the past century? In many ways this is directly linked to their ephemeral nature. They were printed for a particular year or a season within a year. They showed the latest products (admittedly alongside goods that seldom changed), gave the current prices and were designed, at least for the more successful companies, to look modern and eye catching. Thus they reflect fairly accurately changes and trends and have an immediate relevance to the history of design or improvements in living standards.

At the most basic level catalogues can help to identify and date objects and provide an original price. It is here that the large shop catalogues are at their most useful and a photocopy of a page from one of these can answer many enquiries. There are, however, some immediate pitfalls for it is not unusual to find an illustration in a catalogue of the 1930s that had first been used over 40 years earlier. Kitchen equipment, for example, changed very little over this period and items that are pictured in the 1907 Army and Navy Stores Catalogue reappear in an edition for 1939. Prices, of course, need to be related to contemporary wages and, if possible, to other major items of expenditure in the household budget such as rent and food.

It is nothing new to point out that museums show an unrepresentative selection of items from the past with a bias towards *cherished objects*, such as Coronation souvenirs, the *indestructable*, such as mangles and sewing machines and the *obscure*, such as a sewing basket made from an armadillo for example. Turn to household catalogues and you will see few such items for here we have the boringly everyday – cheaper plain white china, enamel cookware and clear glass, or electrical plugs and sockets, pottery drains and chimney pots and wooden windows and doors. In other words, the unremarkable objects that most people either used or had making up the fabric of their house.

So, at the very least, catalogues can be used to balance the items we display. It is interesting that often the catalogues successfully glamorise these basic products. We tried to bring this out in an exhibition of catalogues that we mounted in 1989 at Wakefield and Pontefract Museum, by showing some objects alongside an original description or illustration. Somehow the sofa covered in rexine or moquette looks comfortable in the pictures, or the electric fires less dangerous. Consider these words above a picture of a galvanised dolly tub with a rubbing board and a posser alongside a gas clothes boiler in the Littlewoods catalogue 'There are many women who actually enjoy a good washday. Those who own this complete and efficient set certainly will do so . . . here's everything necessary to start off right'.

Design textbooks generally take their examples from the more expensive and 'classic' items of a particular decade. Looking through catalogues soon shows how these designs were watered down for cheap mass produced goods or failed to be represented at all. Art deco seems to have worked downwards more than art nouveau style and the cleaner lines of the 1950s are definitely shown up in everyday furniture, glass, ceramics and household equipment. The catalogues show how the strong original designs are debased and altered to suit the general public. In the 1930s, bright and attractive art deco geometric patters were incorporated into cheap carpets and linoleum and, to a lesser extent, curtains and wallpaper. Mantle clocks, radios, lamps and lamp shades were often rather solidly art deco. The sunburst, perhaps the best known popular design of the 1930s, is seen in many forms in glass woodwork and rugs. The catalogues also depict other popular motifs of the 1930s. For example, the 'crinoline' lady ornaments and barbola mirrors (with raised designs attached to the face), the sailing ships, which appeared on anything from a firescreen to a cigarette box, the homely cottages, the dancing lady lamps, Lucie Attwell soap etc. and the stylised wings which, apart from appearing on the badges of fast motor cars, were also featured on down to earth objects like fenders and furniture. Changes in design can be seen, but they do



Carpets in the Littlewoods catalogue for 1939 (Wakefield Museums).

Washing equipment in the Littlewoods catalogue for 1939 (Wakefield Museums).

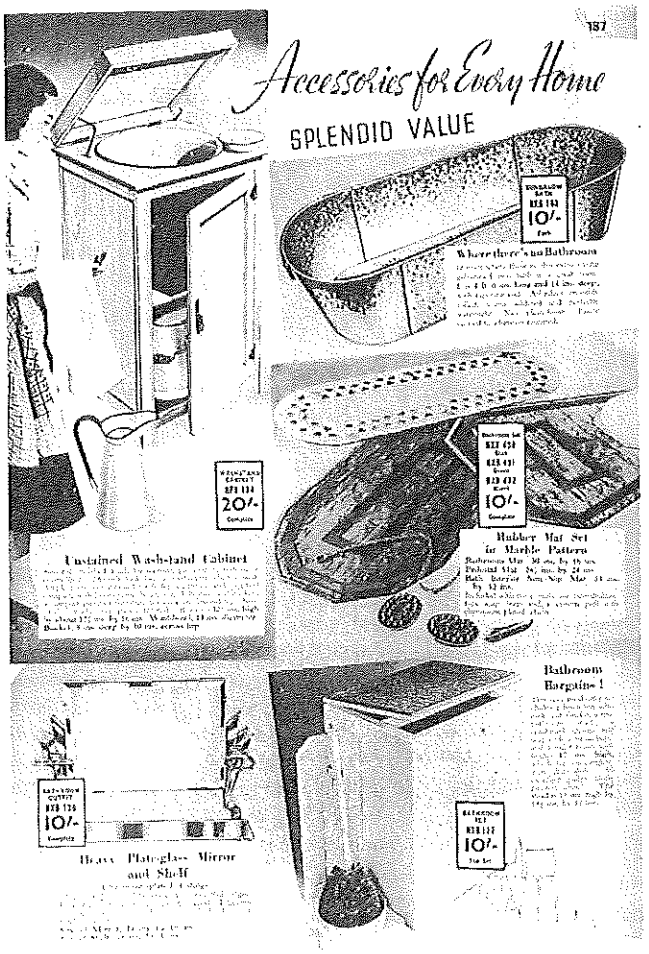
not occur quickly and real alterations in style can only be traced over a period of five years or so and many quite distinctive designs continue for 10 or 20 years.

A good range of catalogues show, when collected together, much of what people actually bought and can be used to place products within their correct social context and to chart improvements in living standards. Examples of both these points appear in the catalogues at Wakefield. For instance, those for caravans and their various derivatives show them as a 'new' product of the late 1920s and 1930s. The market for them, however, lay amongst the wealthy for they were not cheap and the purchaser required a powerful car to tow them. The caravans were beautifully finished inside with art deco detailing. The catalogues show well dressed men and women enjoying the new freedom of a caravan holiday. The salesmen, who are also pictured, wear plus-fours and appear to be placed firmly in the middle class.[3] A more universally popular hobby is cycling which was featured in many catalogues, particularly at the end of the nineteenth century and in the 1930s. Although bicycles improved a little in this time, the most dramatic alteration was in cycling fashions. New crazes are often recorded in catalogues. A contemporary example I am sure will be the sudden appearance in 1990 of 'green' and recycled products, even in the Argos catalogue.

The spread of electricity down the social scale can also be illustrated. Ward and Goldstone in 1912 listed only such things as wiring, bell pushes and accumulators obviously designed for larger houses, probably with their own generators. By the 1920s Edison Swan was issuing a catalogue of light fittings with an illustration on the cover of a detached house, and G.E.C. produced leaflets showing very grand electric fires which would only have been designed for well fitted out houses. In the 1930s smaller electric fires, toasters, kettles and hairdryers appeared in the Littlewoods and Great Universal Stores catalogues, but with plugs for lamp sockets as few houses had 15 amp wall sockets. These catalogues make a bigger feature of oil lamps and oil heaters and cooking stoves as well as gas cookers. All of this changed in the 1950s and 1960s as electrical items including radios, record players, washing machines, fridges and even televisions came to be much more affordable and most homes were given a proper electricity supply, originally of 2, 5 and 15 amp and later a universal 13 amp with a 5 amp lighting circuit.[4]

The very late installation of a bath in most houses is similarly shown up in catalogues. Between the two world wars baths were only fitted in larger houses and the catalogues illustrated elaborate bathrooms with, perhaps, the latest pink and grey or lemon tiles and one included an idealised scene of a mother and her baby in a new bathroom entitled 'The happiest hour of the day'. Other catalogues showed the *Bungalow Bath* of galvanised sheet metal 'for the house without a bathroom'.[5]

I hope that this article has shown a few of the general ways in which catalogues can be of use to the social historian, and has justified, if it is needed, their collection from the past and from the 1990s. I know that much more specific information can be found within them and I have made only brief mention of the thousands of one product catalogues issued by individual companies. It would be good if some of the true mail order catalogues issued by companies such as Littlewoods were reprinted. Firstly, for the information contained within them and, secondly, as a balance to the more exclusive catalogues printed by the large department stores such as Harrods and Gamages.[6]



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Notes

1. The Bon Marche department store in Paris may have produced the first general mail order catalogue in the early 1860s. It was very successful and by 1894 one and a half million copies were being distributed in France and around the world.

2. Smaller mail order catalogues in the collection at Wakefield include those issued by Yorkshire Progressive Providers Ltd., Leeds (1932), S. Lessor & Sons (1928) Ltd., London (in the 1930s and 1940s,) L. Frankenberg, London (1939), and H.J. Searle & Son Ltd., London (1953).

3. The Jubilee Caravans catalogue of 1938 is a good example.

4. Brown Brothers Ltd., of London, and other cities produced electrical catalogues with more expensive radios, fridges and vacuum cleaners etc., in the 1930s.

5. Wilsons & Mathiesons Ltd., Leeds in 1921.

6. The complete run of Littlewoods catalogues are available on microfiche, but cost £4,170 (+ V.A.T.) (see *SHCG Journal* 14 (1986-87), p.35). I know of two catalogue dealers: Alan and Rudi Kipping, 1 Ritson Road, London E8 1DE, and C. Hogben, 9 Heathrow Gardens, London SW15 3SZ.

THE ART OF THE PEOPLE ?

James Ayres

The one feature about which we probably all agree is the question mark in the title of this paper – but then questions are the substance of academic conferences. However, a couple of years ago I was asked to write some articles on 'Folk Art' for the new *Dictionary of Art* (to be published in 28 volumes by Macmillans) and dictionaries are far less elastic than gatherings such as the SHCG Annual Study Weekend. In response to Macmillans I argued that 'folk art' could not be defined in Dictionary terms – that it was indefinable if not indefensible. In conversation Hugh Brigstock accepted that 'Vernacular Art' would be a more appropriate heading but unfortunately one of his sub-editors reversed that decision. Under protest I proceeded with an article on 'Folk Art' because I felt that, one way or another, 'the art of the people' should make an appearance in the *Dictionary*. My article began as follows:

> *Folk art* may be broadly defined as comprising those arts that exist outside the received canons of taste established by or on behalf of the leaders of a given society. Implicit in such a definition is the existence of a society which is sufficiently complex to permit more than one level of cultural activity to thrive. The art of the elite may be dominant, but it is usually a minority aesthetic. In countries or regions that have at some time formed part of larger political entities the elite culture may have dwindled whilst the folk culture has developed as a symbol of nationalism. Folk art existed in clearly defined geographical regions amongst peoples with shared characteristics such as language or religion. Tradition usually provides some component, not only in terms of content, subject matter or use but also in structure, craft techniques, tools and materials. Folk art is as inseparable from folk building as it was inseparable from daily life. Painting, sculpture and the 'applied' or 'decorative arts' (eg furniture) have their 'folk' equivalents.

All that might suggest that some unanimity exists concerning the nature of folk art and the nomenclature with which to discuss it. However, as Michael Owen Jones has observed:

> There is no consensus in definitions as to what folk art is, no criteria are exclusive and no distinguishing characteristics are consistently employed. 'Folk', 'peasant', 'primitive', 'popular' or 'naive' are some of the many 'labels' that have been appended to this level of artistic activity. None are exactly synonymous, for whilst words like 'primitive' have other associations, alternatives such as 'peasant' exclude art which is urban but not urbane.

Furthermore many of these words carry some sense of condescension. The position is further confused by those who incorporate the vaguries of 'folk art' within the still wider scope of 'ethnographic' art. The problems of a word like 'folk' were best summarised by Kenneth Ames who asked why, of all the States in the American Union, was Kentucky so well known for being 'full of folks'.[1] Perhaps inevitably Macmillans changed their minds yet again and, for an extra fee, I agreed to write a short article on 'Folk Art' as a means of cross referencing 'Vernacular Art'.

All these uncertainties over definition go back at least to the 'International Congress on Popular Art' held in Prague in 1928. In 1950 the magazine *Antiques* invited thirteen 'authorities' to answer the question 'What is American folk art?' a request that inspired definitions that were almost as numerous as the contributions. For Edith Halpert folk art was the art of the middle class whereas for Janet MacFarlane and Louis C. Jones it belonged to the working class. For others it was above all 'non-academic'. Seven contributors considered folk art to be the work of highly trained craftsmen ('artizan painting' as Flexner termed it) whilst an equal number, sometimes even the same individuals, considered it to be the work of the untrained. A further cause of confusion arose from the use of the phrase 'formal training' which presumably implied 'academic schooling' whilst ignoring the important and potentially no less formal values of craft training. E.P. Richardson was of the opinion that folk art was either the product of professional craftsmen or the work of untrained professionals. Many objected to the

term 'folk art'. More recently, in 1967, the Swiss writer Robert Wildhaber in referring to 'the many facets of folk art' concluded that it was a field that comprised 'articles decorated in traditional styles, associated with specific communities'.[2] This seems reasonable as far as it goes, but it does not help us with 'free-standing' works such as buildings, easel-paintings, or sculptures.

The main difficulty with a term like folk art in a field that is in the process of establishing parameters is that many other aspects of 'creativity' are outside the confines of the patrician and polite arts. 'Outsider art' has indeed come to mean the work, mainly two-dimensional and pictorial, of those confined within their own preoccupations, some of whom have been, or are sufficiently obsessional to have been, confined in mental institutions. The interest in these 'outsiders' in *l'art brut*, is a post-Freudian phenomenon. However, it has been argued that this is 'an art without precedent or tradition' – and as such it is the antithesis of folk art. In George Melly's memorable phrase 'a tribe of one' refers to 'outsider artists' the true individuals, the monads. In contrast the vernacular artist is not an 'outsider' and neither is he necessarily a 'loner'. The vernacular artist is a member of a tradition. In discussing these conflicting values in Canadian 'folk art' Michael Bird has observed that 'a given folk artefact ... expresses one of two basic tendencies: the idiosyncratic (individually centred) or the 'ethnosyncratic' (ethnically centred)'.

Further confusion arises with the 'artistic amusements' indulged in by aristocratic amateurs (in both the exact and inexact meaning of the word) whose circumstances might result in a 'tasteful' watercolour that may be 'naive' in execution but which is sophisticated in outlook. With the development of manufacturing and the availability of watercolour paint in cakes and oil paint in collapsible metal tubes easel paintings were produced by persons from *all* walks of life and the 'Sunday painters' were born.

The definitions of the two words 'folk' and 'art' also produces imponderables. Does 'folk' encompass the whole of humanity? Does 'art' in this context include architecture, painting, sculpture and the decorative arts? Would not each be better described as building, picture making, carving and furnishing etc.? In the United States these questions have been seriously and provactively considered by Henry Glassie and Kenneth Ames. To Glassie 'popular culture' is fashionable and, therefore, by definition, largely non-traditional. For example the products of the mass media, the printing press or television which are among the logical and natural capitalist responses to the demands of a consumer society. As such 'popular culture' may be understood as distinct from folk art (which was generally made in craft workshops in response to the smaller scale demands of a client society) although there may be points at which they overlap. Thus whilst Glassie draws no distinction between 'folk culture' (including building) and 'folk art' he sees clear distinctions between 'popular culture' and 'folk culture'; 'Most of 'folk art' is not folk because it is popular; the paintings made on velvet by young ladies in seminaries ... for example' – an example of a product created on a small scale which is nevertheless 'popular'. Large scale production does not necessarily equate with 'popular culture' any more than small scale creative activity may be seen as 'folk culture'!

It is Glassie's view that folk material may show great variations over geographical space and minor variation through time, an observation which provides a valuable autonym to 'high art' which has more often obeyed opposite laws. This interpretation corresponds to Ames' analogy of folk art with archaeology, in which 'tradition' is regarded as a characteristic of long duration over a relatively small geographical area in contrast to 'horizon' in which a feature occurs for a limited duration over a wide geographical area. In the Western tradition folk art is characteristically marked by tradition, whereas in high art 'horizon' is of greater importance. On the other hand Ames argues that folk art is non-professional and is therefore 'not so much simple as based on widely shared capabilities'. In my opinion this is a very doubtful claim, although in the sense that many folk painters and carvers define the world as they believe it to be (subjectively) rather than as they observe it to be (objectively), this view may have some validity. In the decorative arts Ames's reference to 'widely shared capabilities' has a particular value (in relationship to textiles for example). This notion of certain crafts being on ontogenous art needs further examination.

These then, in brief, are some of the structures that have been created as a means of examining folk art. It seems to me however that one of the most useful systems of analysis was developed in Germany in the early years of this Century amongst students of traditional music – I refer to the twin theories of 'reception' and 'production'. Much of the confusion that has arisen in the study of the art of the people is perhaps caused by an undue emphasis on the 'reception' of such work with insufficient value being given to the circumstances of its 'production'. The anonymity of much of the work under review is the likely cause of this situation. Even so, where authorship is known, certain trends do manifest themselves – principally the profoundly vernacular nature of most 'folk art'. This vernacular art was the product of traditions that were rooted deep in the materials and crafts which such materials both disciplined and inspired. Work of this kind is profoundly empirical, it was created by those for whom making and designing were simultaneous activities.

Vermacular art (architecture, painting and sculpture) was the product of artisans trained in a relevant skill working within a client economy. The grammar of this visual dialect depended upon materials, structure and convention. Where innovation and 'polite' details occur they are superficial. Vernacular art is more susceptible to definition than the all-encompassing implications of 'folk art'. Although vermacular art is almost as wide in scope as folk art, it is fairly closely defined in terms of its creators not so much with regard to the biographical details of an individual craftsman as in the relationships between craft traditions and the artistic and practical needs of the maker and the client. The often repeated, but seldom justified assertion that 'folk art' is the work of the untrained is possibly the result of the vagueness of that term but the more probable cause is an undue reliance on 'reception-based' interpretations. A monument to the view that all such artists were self-taught 'hobbyists' is Sidney Janis's book *They Taught Themselves* (1942). However, where authorship is known it is evident that 'folk art' is, more often than not, the product of a person professionally engaged in an appropriate or related craft or a person whose daily work encompassed a relevant craft – a shepherd who worked wood from the hedgerows for example. It is for this reason that such work is perhaps more aptly termed vernacular.

In general the vernacular artist was, as a member of the 'client economy', beholden to the views and needs of the customer. It was a productive partnership. The availability of art 'off the peg', which may be associated with the foundation of academies of art, is less common at the vernacular level. An eighteenth century English exception was the trade signs which were produced in quantity (in Harp Alley in the City of London) in anticipation of their purchase. In such instances the impact on the arts of an emerging consumerism may be discerned. It was a development that would ultimately lead to the decline in the need for craftsmen - artists (as distinct from artist-craftsmen). The speculative production of (for example) a weathervane could more efficiently and, therefore, more cheaply be achieved by factory methods to the standardised standards of the 'consumer society'.

Although vernacular art is a visual language spoken outside patrician circles it is not necessarily inimicable to them. In architecture as Brunskill has shown, there are numerous examples of works that move beyond the threshold of the 'vernacular' towards the 'polite'. It is a threshold that is no less important in other aspects of the vernacular arts. This is not to say that such work has no claim to an historical existance – it does, but as so often in the arts, it is a relative rather than an absolute term. Despite this difficulty there is some evidence for asserting that those who worked within the disciplines of the vernacular traditions saw themselves as separate from those who obeyed the conventions implicit in academic training. The trade directories issued in a number of metropolitan centres in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries list 'provincial' though 'polite' painters under the heading 'Artists: portrait, landscape, miniatures &c.' In contrast the 'vernacular' artists will be found under 'Painters; house sign &c.' Such men (they were generally men) were trained in the craft of paint and are known to have produced 'easel paintings', but they saw themselves

as distinct from their more academic if less craft-trained contemporaries.

The tidy compartments of the trade directories obscure the subtleties that are known to have existed. Many house painters, in extending their activities to easel painting, ultimately transferred their activities wholly to canvas and panel. Some drifted to the more academic expectations of 'provincial art' and others emerged fully into the 'polite arts'. Nevertheless, the distinctions between vernacular and polite artists (and by extension the same is true of their work) was real. That some of these artists crossed the Rubicon which separated the vernacular from the polite only reinforces the view that the history of art should more often than is usual, reflect not one but several streams of excellence, each of which was capable of providing vital cross-fertilization for the other.

The rise in the awareness of the vernacular arts outside their point of production is an important aspect of the history of aesthetics. Perhaps one of the first, if not the first to acknowledge publicly the importance of this level of art was William Hogarth. In 1762 Hogarth together with Bonnell Thornton organised an exhibition of signboard art in London ostensibly as a persiflage of the annual exhibition of the (Royal) Society of Arts. For those with the wit to see with Hogarth's eye the exhibition evidently reflected a more serious intent. Many of the contempoary reviews are interestingly equivocal: should they see the joke or have they missed the point? The famous 1908 dinner-party given in Paris by Picasso, Brague, Gertrude Stein and others in honour of the painter Henri Rousseau was no less ambiguous. Was the dinner held in honour of a great painter or in derision of an inferior one? The answer must ultimately reside in the importance of Rousseau's work as a painter. However, it could reasonably be argued that Rousseau (like the much earlier John Collier/Tim Bobbin) was a 'Sunday painter', (his full time job was as a customs official) rather than a true vernacular artist based in a craft tradition. The recognition accorded to both 'vernacular artists' and 'Sunday painters' has perhaps obscured the important socio-historical differences in their origins and, therefore, in their work. It is these differences in background ('production-based' analysis) which define their position within the history of art with more exactitude than their work ('reception-based' analysis). Even so it is noticeable how often in the past vernacular artists (like 'Sunday painters') and their work were first accepted without condescension by practising artists. As we have seen Hogarth is a noticeably early example of this perceptive view but by the early twentieth century he was joined by many others including (in addition to Picasso and Braque), Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood, Franz Marc and Vassily Kandinsky, Charles Sheeler and Elie Nadelman. Recognition by artists was followed in due course by dealers, collectors and the general public. The more recent hegemony of the art historian has been challenged in the last few years by folklorists and social historians who doubt the validity of something which appeared so often to be identified retrospectively on the basis of a subjective aesthetic judgement rather than objective truths – the values of which would be recognisable to the artist/artisans under review. These folklorists cast doubt on the validity of the historical existence of 'folk art' in ways which the greater provision of a term like 'vernacular art' might have forestalled. As we have seen it is in the absence of a serious theoretical framework that American folklorists like Henry Glassie and social historians such as Kenneth Ames have enjoyed the freedom to apply the rigours of their respective fields of enquiry to what they perceived to be the rather lax word of 'folk art' studies as pursued by art historians. In essence the argument is between aesthetes and the revisionist historians (for whom art should be read as a document). For the revisionists 'art' as part of 'material culture' is a further ingredient in the writing of the 'new history'. Those wishing to follow this debate in further detail may wish to consult the January 1989 issue of the magazine *Antiques* in which the views of the seven contributors are no less various than the 1950 *Antiques* 'symposium' mentioned earlier.

The decline in the vernacular arts (if one accepts that there has been any such decline?) is not easily understood and inevitably varies from region to region. Industrialisation was not necessarily its cause since in certain circumstances mechanisation actively encouraged the deveopment of a vernacular art – canal boat painting and fairground carving are two British examples. Accordingly the explanation for the loss of vigour in the vernacular arts must be sought in more profound social circumstances.

In another context ('rough music') E.P. Thompson has noted that in both rural and urban communities traditions decline in association with the weakening of dialects and regional accents – and that this in turn may be associated with the ever decreasing importance of an oral culture.[3] On the basis of this hypothesis the growth of literacy may be measured against the decline in the vernacular culture (an urban as much as a rural trend). In addition: in regions where twentieth century warfare destroyed old communities and the patterns of life they sustained, folk traditions and the vernacular arts associated with them disappeared. The naive 'art industry' of Yugoslavia is no substitute. In some remote areas of America genuine 'Sunday painters' such as Clemtine Hunter 1887-1988, a black artist and native of Louisiana, retained an authentically independent vision but artists of her kind were not working within the vernacular tradition of the craft of paint. It is a shift of circumstance that Herbert Hemphill and Julia Weissman acknowledge in conceding that such a phenomenon as 'folk art' produced before the First World War possesses a sense of 'engagement between individual art statement and folk craft' – a vernacular art. Unlike some writers they see 'a difference between folk 'art' and folk 'arts and crafts'', the latter being functional the former being those objects of daily use decorated beyond the call of duty.

In setting aside the term 'folk art' I believe a convincing argument may be made for stating that 'vernacular art' had, and in some remote districts retains, a real existence. Ultimately vernacular art also exists, as with the arts such things must, in the eye of the beholder. In the West this eye focuses on architecture, painting and sculpture: in the East ceramics and textiles come into greater prominance. In Latin countries religion provides both an inspiration and a theme, whereas in Northern Europe and much of North America the objectives are more domestic. Whatever the circumstances of their production and function the vernacular arts raise important questions concerning the nature of art.

Viewed in its historical context vernacular art was to its maker factive with the activities of its creation and use as important as the static nature of the resulting object. In this transition from verb to noun retrospective observations from the twentieth century have generally been more conscious of art than artefact.

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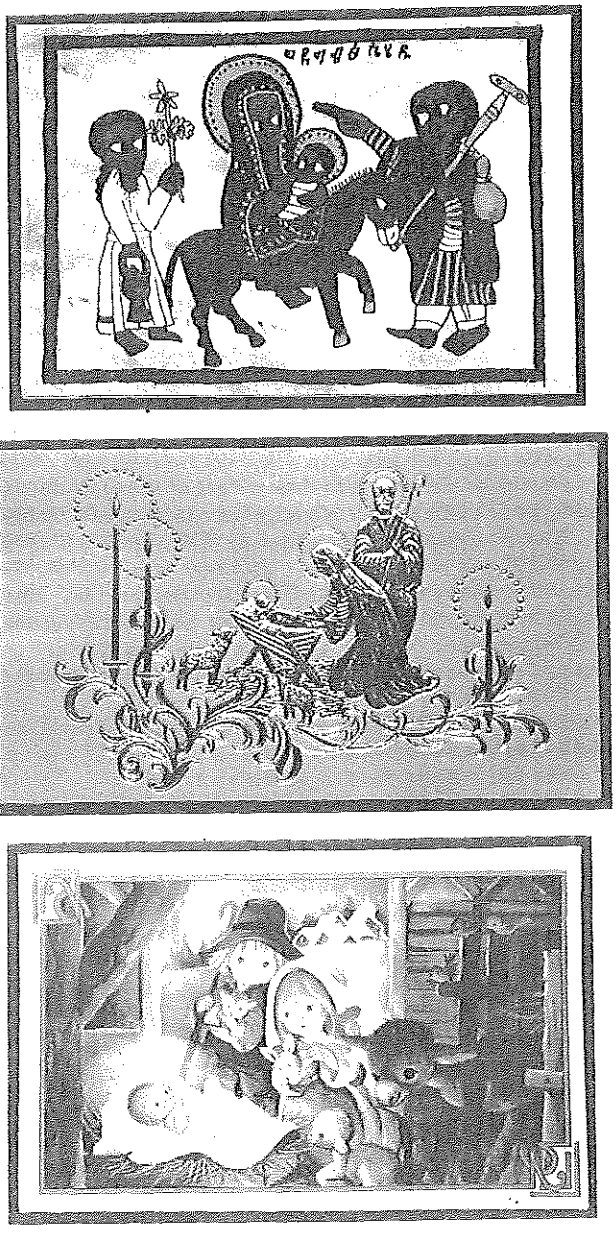
1. K.L. Ames, *Beyond Necessity*, p. 26.

2. H.J. Hansen (ed.), *European Folk Art*.

3. The Katharine Briggs Memorial Lecture, The Folklore Society, University College, London, 8th November 1988. Thompson is at present working on a book on *Rough Music*.



Contrasting treatment of the Nativity in 1980s Christmas Cards (Harborough Museum, Leicestershire).

GLAD TIDINGS . . . : COLLECTING CONTEMPORARY CHRISTMAS CARDS AT THE HARBOROUGH MUSEUM

Steph Mastoris

Greetings cards have been an essential item in the celebration of Christmas in Britain for at least a century. Although initially an expensive middle class fad invented in the 1840s, Christmas cards soon became an important part of the popular culture of the festive season, being an easy way of not only sending greetings, but also exchanging gossip and paying off social obligations. By 1880, 11 million cards were being sent through the post, and the fashion has never since flagged. In the late 1980s, over 1,500 million cards were sold each year, with countless more being made by hand.

However, despite this proliferation, Christmas cards have always been extremely ephemeral, with few surviving past Twelfth Night. This poor survival rate, combined with the vast range of cards on sale each year, has made them difficult items for the history museum to collect comprehensively. The result is that the cards in most museum collections are in no way representative of the varieties current at any one time. Most have been retained by their original recipients because of sentiment or unusual design and have been donated to a museum by dint of their age or association. This paper describes an attempt to make a museum collection of Christmas cards more representative of current trends by actively acquiring complete samples of cards given to selected donors.

The Harborough Museum, as a branch of the Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service has access to a fairly extensive, if mediocre, collection of historic cards. Spread across several parts of the service, the collection contains approximately 400 cards which have been donated to the museums since the 1950s. These had come from around 60 donors, and although the items date from 1860 to the present, most were produced in the fifty years from 1880 to 1930. There is little indication in the documentation of this collection as to the age and social status of the recipients, and no details of how representative these cards are of their period. It seemed worthwhile therefore to bring the existing collections up to date with items which were both representative of the range of cards currently available and well provenanced. It was hoped that this body of material could be then analysed a little more rigorously than the existing collection so as to ascertain trends and fashions in this important element of popular Christmas celebrations.

Collection and Curation

In 1987 the Harborough Museum began actively collecting Christmas cards. This is done by acquiring all the cards sent to a number of selected volunteers who agreed to donate them after the Christmas period. These donors are chosen according to their age, sex or occupation, with a view to building up a collection of cards sent to people representing most social groups in and around Market Harborough.

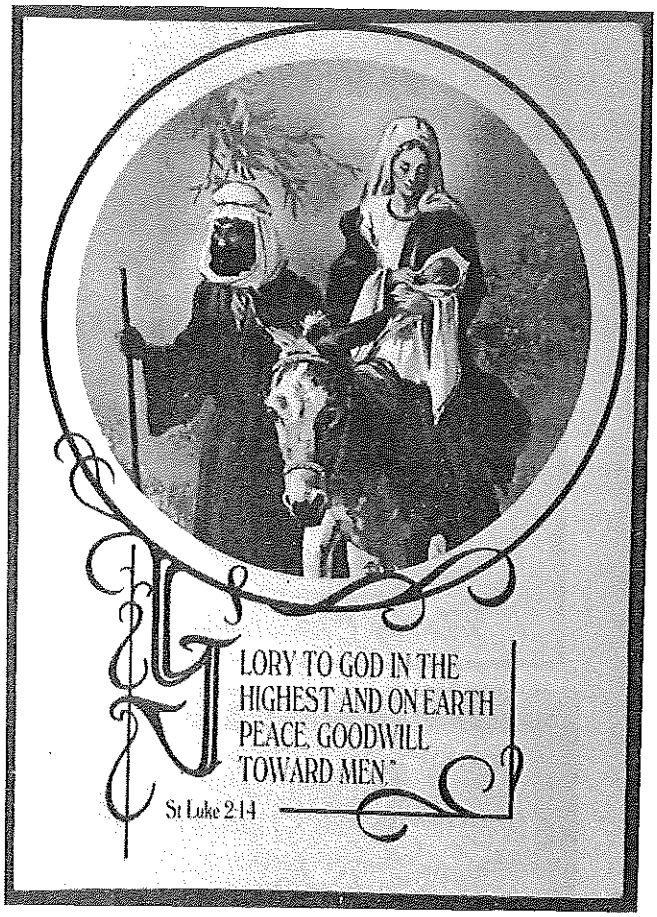
To date (the end of 1989), 12 samples have been acquired from a total of 21 people who, between them, have passed over 900 cards to the museum. These people include 7 couples aged between early 30s and mid 70s, and 7 individuals, aged between 10 and 60. All are white Europeans and 9 are female; 6 are school or university students while the rest work or have worked in mainly skilled manual, professional or managerial occupations.

Full details of each donor are of course recorded and each discrete collection is given a separate accession number. Each card is numbered on the back using a soft pencil and stored in boxes arranged by the image shown on the front.

Analysis

The analysis of the cards has so far concentrated on the methods of their production, their publishers and the nature and treatment of the images portrayed on the front.

Most of the cards in the collection have been produced by photolithography, using a variety of art papers. A few have been home



Contrasting treatments of the Nativity in 1980s Christmas Cards (Harborough Museum, Leicestershire).

made using monochrome xerography, with individual embellishments in pen or crayon, and only one is made from re-used cards. In form, most are a standard folio, standing as either landscape or portrait. Only a small number have inner paper leaves for the messages, very common in cards of the inter war period. Applied decorations such as silk bows or glitter (again, formerly very popular) are quite rare, as is die-cutting. A small proportion (about 5%) have embossed details. Two cards contain a microchip to play synthesised music and flashing lights.

Over 100 separate publishers are represented in the Harborough collection. However, cards by two publishers - Fine Art Graphics and Celebration Arts - dominate the collection, constituting approximately 40% of the total. These seem mainly to have been sold in boxes of assorted cards through a number of multiple retail outlets. Branded cards from three other national retailers (Boots, W.H. Smith and Marks & Spencer) account for a further 10% of the collection. Cards produced or sold in aid of registered charities make up a further 25% of the collection. Over 40 bodies are represented here, most notably Oxfam and two charity card companies (Care Cards and Help Cards), whose profits go to a consortium of institutions. The distribution of these cards throughout the collection was not uniform, most being sent to middle aged donors in professional or managerial occupations.

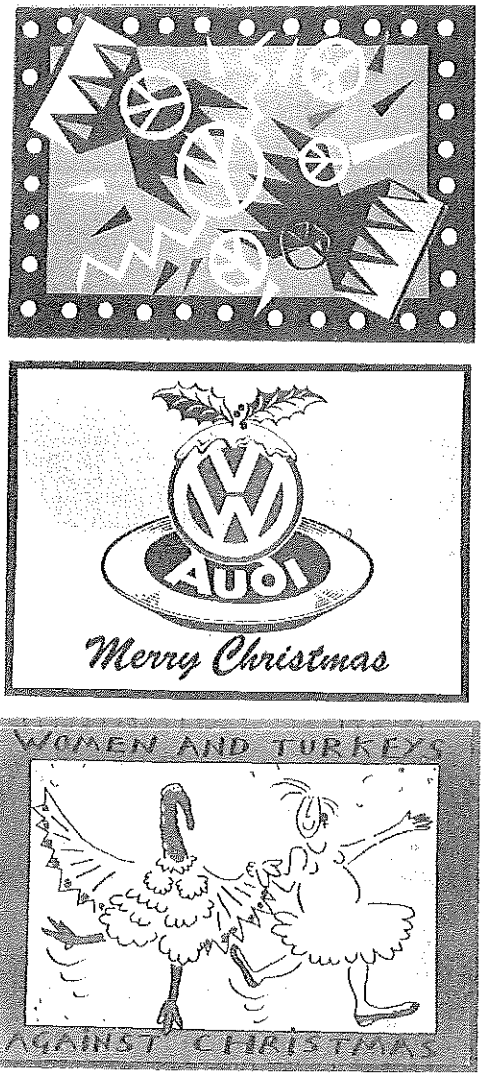
The plethora of images found on the cards in the Harborough collection can be divided up into 23 subject groups, some of which can be amalgamated to create 11 main subject headings. All these are listed in Appendix 1. A breakdown of the types of card sent to each donor is given in Appendix 2.

The three most popular subject groups overall were animals (22%); snow scenes (20%) and Santas etc. (14%). The middle group encompassed a wide range of images, from reproductions of landscapes by Breugel and the Dutch Masters through contemporary snow scenes to a curious sub group classified as 'Byegone' scenes. Here the basic ingredients (besides snow) are timber framed buildings, stage coaches and people dressed in a mixture of Regency and Edwardian costume. The most degenerate versions are almost cartoon caracatures of cuteness and show sweet, ragged children with over-large eyes doing seasonal things. Many of the animals shown on the cards are, ironically, the sorts usually eaten at Christmas time. However, a considerable number of the beasts depicted have no seasonal relevance at all. Perhaps because of their mythical nature the treatment of the Santas and snowmen tended to be mainly humorous and rarely retrospective in style. Occasionally a degree of social comment is brought into play, with (for instance) Santa being stopped by motorway police for not using a seat belt or being breathalysed.

Ironically, religious subjects were not very popular (12% of total). However this subject provided probably the widest range of treatments found in the collection. Although the standard Nativity scene was predominant this image was also reduced to very subtle symbols, or used in a political cartoon against the Poll Tax and even reinterpreted in the traditions of the Australian outback (two koala bears and a kangaroo playing the role of the Magi).

The inter-relationship between these images displayed on the cards, their style of presentation and the type of people sending and receiving them is one of the most interesting points raised by studying this collection. Although many people protest otherwise, much care is taken in selecting (or creating) apt Christmas cards and choosing a card depends to a degree on an assessment of the recipient's age, religion, politics and personality. In the run-up to Christmas most of us consciously or unconsciously play the (surprisingly easy) game of 'Guess who sent *this* card'. But to record and analyse these very subjective impressions made by each recipient about the senders of every card entering the museum collection seems an impossible task of documentation.

With the limited time and resources available for the Harborough collection programme, only the ages, sex and occupations of the recipients/donors have been recorded. Analysis has therefore concentrated on the interrelationship between the types of card sent to donors and their age and social status. So far however, there



Getting the message across – advertising and propaganda in 1980s Christmas cards (Harborough Museum, Leicestershire).

have been too few donors from the unskilled manual occupational categories to make a close assessment of the effect of recipients' social class upon the types of cards sent to them.

Nevertheless there does seem to be a significant relationship between the images on the cards and the ages of the recipients. Those under the age of 20 were sent mostly cards showing children, Santas etc., and animals (around 70% of their totals). Over 50% of the cards sent to those over the age of 50 showed snow scenes or animals. The recipients aged between 20 and 50 got a wider range of subjects, but snow scenes, santas and animals each accounted for about 20% of their totals. The old age group got most of the cards showing Christmas fare, while the lion's share of those cards with religious subjects and Christmas texts on them were sent to middle aged groups, the latter perhaps due to active patronage of businesses, which were responsible for a large proportion of this type.

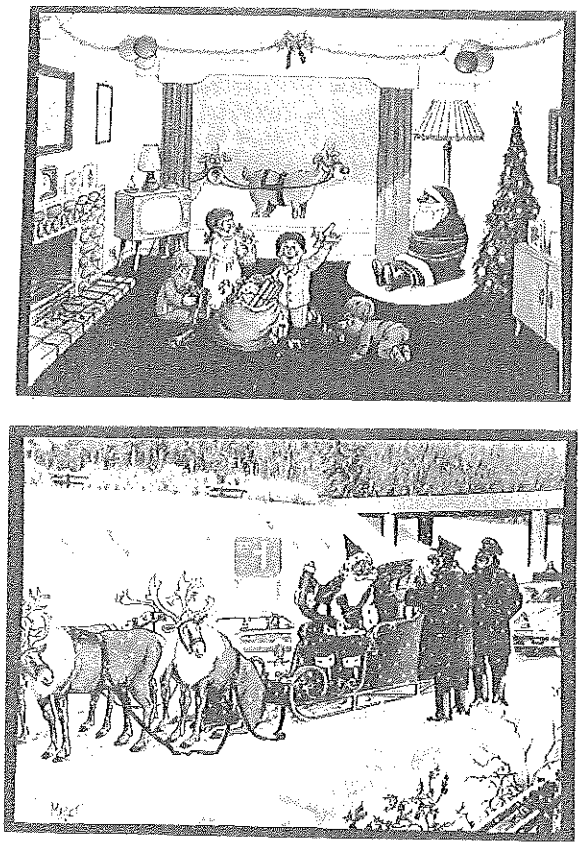
The Future

Despite the large number of cards already in the collection, further acquisitions will be necessary. In future Christmasses a two fold collection policy will be implemented. Firstly further complete collections of cards will be made from targetted individuals and families whose age or socio-economic class are not already represented by the museum's holdings. Secondly the existing collection will be amplified by selective acquisitions of cards whose style, manufacture or design are not already represented. As the number of targetted recipients decreases this second, less intensive, method of collection will become the main thrust of the acquisition programme. In this way the rapid initial rate of acquisition will steadily decrease as the priority shifts from establishing the base collection to keeping it up to date and filling gaps.

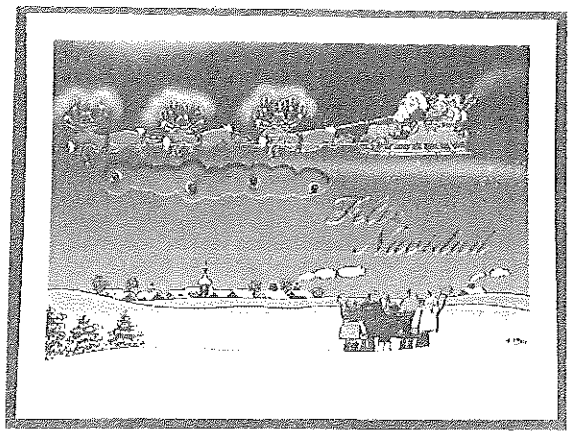
This collection programme has shown the advantage of actively acquiring contemporary items for history museums. With the increasingly diversified production of most items used in contemporary British society and their ephemeral treatment by users, curators can no longer rely solely upon an impressionistic, passive collections policy. The creation of comprehensive samples from well documented provenances are essential if our museums in the future are to lay any claim to representing and interpreting adequately today's material culture.

Acknowledgements

Every active collection programme of contemporary material relies on the help and goodwill of many people, and this exercise has indebted me to more than usual. Thanks are due, therefore, to Pam Aucott, John Carter, Yolanda Courtney, Hazel Edwards, Mabel Goodwin, Derrick Ingleby, Nora Kavanagh, Lynne Mastoris, Janet Smith, Susan Stretton, Gwen Williams and Reg Wright, for their help in collecting, processing and analysing what seems like an ever-rising tide of Christmas cards.



Santa and his Reindeers – a popular butt for humour and social comment in 1980s Christmas cards (Harborough Museum, Leicestershire).



This Spanish card of 1989 contains a microchip which plays a medley of three Christmas tunes and flashes the lights when the front is opened (Harborough Museum, Leicestershire).

Appendix 1

Subject headings and sub groups used to classify the Harborough collection of contemporary Christmas cards

Snow scenes
- Snow scenes
- 'Byegone' scenes

Religious
- Nativity
- Angels
- Doves

Animals
- Birds
- Real animals
- Mythical animals and Teddy bears

Santa etc
- Santa Claus
- Reindeer
- Snowmen

Christmas plants
- Christmas trees
- Holly
- Other flowers

Christmas fare
- Food & drink
- Candles
- Decorations

Christmas texts
- Greetings
- Christmas rhymes, hymns etc.

Landscapes and buildings (without snow)

Children (including choir boys)

Reproductions of early adverts (not classified elsewhere)

Miscellaneous

Appendix 2

Break down of the Harborough collection of contemporary Christmas cards by donor and subject group

Recipient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Subject Group												
Snow scenes	68	14	12	31	3	12	3	7	2	23	7	2
Religious	63	7	5	15	1	7	1	7	–	10	1	1
Animals	46	17	15	34	16	12	5	10	5	16	6	21
Santa etc.	32	3	2	18	14	11	3	8	13	10	5	9
Xmas plants	24	7	3	11	2	5	3	–	1	4	–	2
Xmas fare	25	7	2	11	1	4	–	5	1	3	3	2
Xmas texts	9	6	4	18	–	4	–	1	1	5	–	–
Landscapes & Buildings	13	1	2	5	–	1	–	–	–	3	–	–
Children	35	3	3	7	9	1	–	–	1	5	4	4
Repro: adverts	2	–	–	2	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Misc.	2	1	–	4	–	3	–	–	–	2	–	–
	319	66	48	156	47	61	15	38	24	81	26	41

Recipients:

1: A couple (early 30s); all cards sent between 1985 and 1987.
2: A couple (early 70s); all cards sent in 1987.
3: A widower (mid 50s); all cards sent in 1987.
4: A couple (mid 40s); all cards sent in 1987.
5: Daughter (18) of recipients 4; all cards sent in 1987.
6: A couple (late 40s); all cards sent in 1989.
7: Two sons (early 20s) of recipients 6; all cards sent in 1989.
8: A couple (early 40s) all cards sent in 1989.
9: Two sons (early 'teens) of recipients 8; all cards sent in 1989.
10: A couple (mid 50s and mid 60s); all cards sent in 1989.
11: A couple (early 40s); all cards sent in 1989.
12: Daughter (13) of recipients 11; all cards sent in 1989.

THE AMERICANISATION OF THE MASSES: CULTURAL CRITICISM, THE NATIONAL HERITAGE AND WORKING-CLASS CULTURE IN THE 1930s

Chris Waters

In July 1937, with the aid of Collett's bookshop, the Fabian labour historian, G.D.H. Cole, along with several colleagues, put together an exhibition in London of labour history. While the exhibition was primarily concerned with the political history of the British labour movement, it also dealt, at least to some extent, with the material culture of the working class, devoting particular attention to the Rochdale Pioneers and the history of working-class cooperation. By all accounts the exhibition was a success, leading Cole to call for the establishment of a permanent library of radical and working-class documents, attached to an exhibition hall. Cole believed that this was the first time that such an exhibition had ever taken place in Britain.[1] While Cole exaggerated the importance of his 'left' history exhibition in London, it is indeed the case that the 1930s witnessed a remarkable transformation of the ways in which working-class life in Britain was represented. This essay seeks to examine the nature of that transformation and to offer some thoughts about the reasons for the emergence of a new fascination with working-class culture between the wars.

In the late nineteenth century exhibitions like the one sponsored by Cole in 1937 would have been unthinkable. Once the majority of workers had obtained the vote in the third quarter of the nineteenth century they were presented with an entire range of images of the national heritage that they were supposed to recognise and cherish. The prominent late Victorian economist and sociologist Alfred Marshall argued that workers need to claim a part of the 'social heritage', as he called it. Marshall desired what he termed an 'organic culture', accompanied by a 'civilising process' that would stress the importance of the true, 'national heritage' (the term is again Marshall's) for all inhabitants of the nation, workers included.[2] But the heritage of which Marshall spoke was largely a bourgeois heritage, constructed *for* the working class and consisting of virtually no representations of working-class life itself. Workers were invited to feel proud of their nation, citizens of a country enmeshed in a rich iconography of 'Englishness', increasingly characterised by rural nostalgia and imperial glory. Citizenship, argued its advocates, should replace class loyalty for all workers. Moreover, citizenship was to consist of a series of shared assumptions about the nation, based on the possession of a common culture – a culture, however, that took no stock of working-class achievements. As the economist for the Gasworkers and General Labourers Union argued in 1909 – echoing the thoughts of Matthew Arnold – 'all that has been great and good in what has been said and written in the past ... should be accessible ... to every boy and girl of the nation.'[3]

At the same time that workers were being asked to see themselves as heirs of a consciously-articulated national culture, social investigators were slowly becoming aware that workers had a unique culture of their own. The forays into 'Unknown England' made by Charles Booth, B. Seebohm Rowntree, Margaret Loane and others resulted in a number of works that explored, in a quasi-anthropological manner, a whole way of life in which 'citizenship' and the 'national heritage', as Marshall had defined it, played virtually no role. For the first time the working-class was constructed as a unique cultural entity, not as a group of people without culture, as had been the case in the mid-nineteenth century.[4] And yet this is not to suggest that elements of working-class culture were articulated as part of an increasingly dense and well-defined national culture: indeed, until the 1930s the national culture failed to include the urban working-class in its repertoire of essential 'Englishness'. Those who contributed to the construction of the national heritage at the end of the nineteenth century did not simply ignore the working class. Tony Bennett has suggested that mass production and class conflict in the late nineteenth century led to a growing desire to celebrate fast-disappearing craft customs, while Dave Harker has documented the way in which folksong collectors were able to bring an entire repertoire of rural folksongs into the national heritage.[5] And yet bourgeois interest extended only into the sphere of a rural and socially harmonious working-class culture and it was not for another generation or two that elements of urban working-class culture were celebrated in the same way that folk customs were before 1914.

All of this would change during and after World War II. In 1941, for example, George Orwell, in his essay 'England Your England', attempted to pinpoint those characteristics of English identity that appeared to him to make the nation worth fighting for. Gone are the trappings of rural nostalgia – the essential Englishness of an earlier generation – and instead Orwell stressed the importance of popular, working-class customs: 'All the culture that is most truly native', he wrote, 'centres around things which even when they are communal are not official – the pub, the football match, the back garden, the fireside and the 'nice cup of tea'.[6] Orwell's definition of 'Englishness' (more explicitly his definition of 'Englishness' as the embodiment of customs and traditions central to working-class life) has, since 1945, increasingly been shared by a large number of individuals who have come to view working-class culture as a major component of national identity. From the 1950s onwards social investigators – from Richard Hoggart to Jeremy Seabrook – have sought to define the essential characteristics of urban, working-class culture in Britain, even as they have lamented the decline of that culture.[7] Beginning with 'Coronation Street' in the 1960s, traditional working-class communities have also become central to televised representations of the national past.[8] More recently, reconstructed working-class communities at Beamish, Ironbridge Gorge and Wigan Pier have become central of the success of the heritage industry.[9]

Historical forms of working-class culture have, then, become increasingly articulated as key components of the national heritage. But the relationship between working-class culture and the national heritage, and the extent to which that relationship has changed dramatically during the past century, has been little studied by historians. Nevertheless, the twentieth century has witnessed an important dislocation, transfiguration and recombination of the various elements that constitute the forms of 'essential Englishness' that comprise the national heritage. More precisely, the twentieth century has been the site of a series of historical moments that have severed the national heritage from its dependence on the idea of natural beauty (the Lake District, for example), from the traditional canon of literary and cultural excellence, and from the built monuments of the nation (such as the country house) and redefined at least part of that heritage in terms derived from everyday social life. The process has been a complicated one, and the current obsession with placing working-class cultures on display in museums, or in outdoor theme parks, has a largely unexplored history.

G.D.H. Cole may have exaggerated the importance of the exhibition he mounted in 1937 in London. Nevertheless, the 1930s are a crucial decade in the history of the process by which working-class culture has gradually become central to an understanding of national identity in Britain. It was then that intellectuals, largely on the left, become fascinated by working-class culture, often because they sought to identify with forms of popular creativity that could reassure them that not all workers in Britain were being duped by imported forms of mass culture that swept across the Atlantic from the United States. To put it another way, in the 1930s the left attempted to discover some aspect of national life in Britain that could be used as a defence against the formidable threats that appeared to them to emanate from the Americanisation of British customs. In short, critics first extolled the virtues of actually-existing working-class culture in Britain because they so disliked American mass culture and because they feared that it was undermining what they viewed as a more 'authentic' British way of life.

As the contemporary sociologist and cultural critic Dick Hebdige has reminded us, between the 1930s and the 1950s debates about popular culture and popular taste in Britain revolved around two key terms: 'Americanisation' and the 'levelling down process'. On the right, literary critics like F.R. Leavis and T.S. Eliot pledged themselves to a defence of minority culture against the threats that appeared to them to be associated with new forms of mass entertainment. On the left, writers like George Orwell became interested in extolling the virtues of (and increasingly attempting to preserve the texture of) everyday working-class life against the same threats. Working-class communities were thus constructed,

ideologically, as a central component of the national culture, as a bulwark against the perceived mindless hedonism associated with American forms of mass culture. As Hebdige has argued, from the 1930s the United States 'began to serve as the image of industrial barbarism; a country with no past and therefore no real culture, a country ruled by competition, profit and the drive to acquire. It was soon used as a paradigm for the future threatening every advanced democracy in the Western world.'[10]

Most of all it was the Hollywood film industry that drew scathing criticism from individuals alarmed by these trends. As the *Daily Express* wrote in 1927, 'the bulk of picture-goers are Americanised to an extent that makes them regard the British film as a foreign film ... they talk America, think America, dream America; we have several million people, mostly women, who, to all intents and purposes, are temporarily American citizens.'[11] And as the *Daily Telegraph* put it, 'Control of the world's entertainment has passed into the hands of a group of American banking, insurance and electrical interests. Their total combined capital has been estimated as not far short of £2,000,000,000 . . . The trust exercises a complete, rigid and watertight monopoly.'[12] Nor was it just the press that carried such dire warnings about the effects of the American culture industry on the quality of life in Britain. In 1926, for example, a lecturer for the Independent Labour Party called for the creation of a circuit of municipal theatres, which, he hoped, would put 'elevating' ideals before the public and would counter the influence of American jazz, which he termed 'crude, savage [and] cacophonous', and American films. '[T]o the majority of us', he wrote, 'the word 'pictures' means nothing more or less than American films. And these, on the whole, are inane, vulgar, and disappointingly trashy.'[13] The outrage, intense in the 1920s, became even more intense in the 1930s with the advent of the talkies, leading the government for the first time to inaugurate a quota system in order to protect the British film industry.

For many individuals, the best defence against the threat to the national heritage posed by the American culture industry seemed to be a reassertion of the importance of the rural elements of that heritage. As historians have argued for many years, opposition to industrialisation in the nineteenth century often took the form of rural nostalgia, whether in the poetry of the Romantics, in books like Cobbett's *Rural Rides*, or in the form of the back to the land movement that became so popular at the end of the century.[14] Although the land, particularly in the south of England, was swallowed up by successive waves of suburban growth between the wars, and although the pastoral response to technological and cultural change may have appeared increasingly anachronistic, rural nostalgia actually enjoyed a new lease of life in the 1920s and 1930s. It permeated the Convervative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin's immensely popular book, *On England*, first published in 1926 and reissued as a best-selling Penguin paperback in 1937, and it also characterised the work of liberal intellectuals like C.E.M. Joad. In *Diogenes or the Future of Leisure*, published at the end of the 1920s, Joad argued that country life served as a bulwark against a passive populace, duped by the American culture industry. 'The future is an American future', warned Joad, who described the process of suburbanisation in terms derived from the Lynd's study of *Middletown*, in the United States, a year earlier:

> Cut off from the life of the spirit, keeping ourselves to ourselves, suspecting our neighbours, living in one place and sleeping in another, we pass our lives in perpetual transit between workshop and dormitory. We lack the strength of those whose roots are in the soil; we are deprived of the social pleasures of those who live in a community.

Joad's conclusion is of some significance for the argument developed here: if community was now viewed as the best defence against anomie, the result of suburbanisation, and if, as many observers began to argue, workers had developed their own rich communities over the course of the past two generations, then working-class community was equally important as a bulwark against change as any other kind of community. Still, Joad failed to make this connection and instead stressed the importance of rural life, as did Flora Thompson at the end of the 1930s in the fictional trilogy she wrote, published between 1939 and 1943 under the title *Larkrise to Candleford*. Lamenting the decline of self-sufficient village life in Oxfordshire, Thompson complained bitterly about the demise of local, self-made community cultures and the threat increasingly posed to them by the growing intrusion of the cinema and the radio in everyday life. Old rural labourers, she wrote, merged themselves into the 'mass standardisation of a new civilisation'.[16]

Laments for the loss of an 'organic community', somehow rooted in the soil, were not new. What was new, however, was the direct equation now being made between the decline of community and the products of a new, largely American, consumer culture. In the 1930s the relation between the two were central to the arguments put forward by F.R. Leavis and the *Scrutiny* movement. Outlining the position he would defend again and again throughout his life, Leavis argued, 'it is commonplace that we are being Americanised ... And Americanisation means more mass-production and more standardisation'.[17] In particular, Leavis attacked Hollywood films, which, he claimed, involved 'surrender, under conditions of hypnotic receptivity, to the cheapest emotional appeals'.[18] In 1939, in the study he co-authored with Denys Thompson, *Culture and Environment*, Leavis developed these themes further, blaming the automobile, the cinema and the radio for the decay of social life in Britain, just as they had, he argued, already led to the decay of social life in the United States. Like Flora Thompson, Leavis and Denys Thompson contrasted the present with an idealised picture of a mythical, past organic community, usually located in a bucolic village, uncontaminated by the modern entertainment industry. In order to make their point, Leavis and Thompson seized upon the nostalgic memoirs of George Sturt, which appeared in the 1920s in two books, *Change in a Village* and *The Wheelwright's Shop*. 'Such a craft as the wheelwright's', they argued, 'embodying the experience of centuries, was part of the national culture, along with time-honoured ways of living and the inherited wisdom of the folk.'[19] But all of this, lovingly recalled by Sturt, was now gone and England was going the way of the United States: 'The loudspeaker is now turned on at eight in the morning and continues to bawl uninterruptedly until midnight, so that the housewife shall never be cursed with a moment of silence in which she might think. The wireless, the car and the movies have become three insidious drugs.'[20]

Leavis argued that to 'revive or replace a decayed tradition is a desperate undertaking',[21] although he spent his entire life dedicated to such an undertaking, to preserving 'civilised' values against machine-made values imported from the United States. A self-confessed elitist, Leavis had little faith in working-class culture as it existed in the 1930s: he sought a revival of traditional learning and of the traditional 'organic community', always located in villages characterised by the prevalence of pre-industrial crafts.

Writers on the left shared many of Leavis's fears about standardisation and homogenisation. Unlike Leavis, however, they began to envisage working-class culture as it actually existed in the 1930s as the soil out of which the kind of organic culture Leavis so desired might grow. The Communist Party historian, A.L. Morton, writing in Leavis's journal, *Scrutiny*, argued that a proletarian revolution would sweep away commercial culture and that in an ideal society, characterised by popular control, a new organic community would arise.[22] Derek Kahn, writing in the *Left Review*, argued that it was not enough simply to study the effects of the American entertainment industry on working-class life in Britain. Rather, he suggested, one needed to study the whole material culture of the working-class anthropologically in order to recognise its many achievements – just as G.D.H. Cole had attempted to do in his 1937 exhibition.[23] In other words, while the right often wanted to turn the clock back to some rural ideal, back to some mythical and presumably organic community – back to a time before one could speak of the Americanisation of the masses – the left began to see elements of a vital organic community in the present, amidst contemporary working-class life itself. Like the Leavisites, socialist intellectuals opposed the American entertainment industry, but in response they often desired to nurture working-class creativity in Britain and to stress the vitality of what they now viewed as a national asset: those pockets of working-class life uncontaminated by Americanisation. As Simon Frith has argued, 'Mass culture was resisted in the name of working-class 'community''. Frith continued, however, somewhat parenthetically, to suggest that such visions of community were themselves 'more often than not, the product of a decidedly middle-class nostalgia.'[24]

The validity of Frith's comments can be demonstrated by turning to one of the most important documents of social observation written in the 1930s, J.B. Priestley's *English Journey*, first published in 1934. The book is not merely a chronicle of Priestley's personal search for 'essential Englishness', as he called it, for it also made an important contribution to redefining the components of the national culture in such a way as to include – perhaps for the first time – images of working-class creativity. Like Leavis, Priestley was concerned about Americanisation, and in the south of England, Priestley's starting point for his trip around the country, he encountered aspects of a new way of life that he found disturbing. Commenting on the road from Southampton to Bristol, for example, he wrote, 'they only differ in a few minor details from a few thousand such roads in the United States, where the same tooth-pastes and soaps and gramophone records are being sold, the very same films are being shown.'[25] Later, Priestley journeyed to the industrialised Midlands and the North, for it was there that he hoped to find an 'enduring England'. But even when he arrived in Blackpool Priestley discovered that it was all 'machine made and not really English' (p. 252). 'Essential Englishness', Priestley concluded – the true national heritage – was to be equated with the nation's natural beauty: 'The beauty of the Cotswalds', he wrote, 'belongs to England and England should see that she keeps it' (p. 67).

Up to this point Priestley's observations are similar to those made by the many other critics of Americanisation who sought comfort in rural nostalgia. But at the end of his book Priestley reflected on his travels and began to offer a new interpretation of them through his discussion of the existence of three, quite distinct modes of national identity. The first 'England' he called into being was 'Old Merrie England', the England that existed before the industrial revolution and that he desired to see preserved. Priestley's second 'England' was the product of the nineteenth century, of an industrial revolution that had 'found a green and pleasant land', as Priestley put it, 'and had left a wilderness of dirty bricks' (p. 372). Then there was a third 'England', largely a creation of the post-1918 period: 'America, I suppose, was its real birthplace', claimed Priestley in describing this 'England' as a nation of congested roads, factories looking like exhibition halls, Woolworths', cinemas and cocktail bars. Priestley clearly disliked this new 'England', expanding all around him, but ironically this forced him to reconsider his second 'England' – that brought about by industrialisation. While this 'England', he complained, did more damage than good to the real, enduring 'England', it was, nonetheless, much better than the new England that was beginning to replace it. At least the old factories, he argued – those that looked like factories and not like exhibition halls – had 'solid lumps of character in them' (p. 378).

Priestley went on to praise those 'solid lumps of character', insisting that a large number of workers were not simply mindless and passive consumers of Hollywood entertainment. In Bradford, for example, Priestley's home town, he noted that there was a small civic theatre, part of a chain of such ventures that stretched across the country and that had come into existence 'after Hollywood had nearly wrecked the declining professional theatre of the provinces.' 'I see them as little camp-fires twinkling in the great darkness' (pp. 188-9), he wrote, praising such ventures because they seemed to demonstrate the existence of a thinking, acting populace, eager to make its own amusements. 'It is ... symptomatic', he concluded, 'of a general desire for more movement and colour and imaginative activity in life, and of a new and healthy protest against the merely passive amusement which is regarded as one of the weaknesses of our mechanical civilisation' (p. 191).

In his *English Journey*, Priestley began to develop a populist and patriotic socialism that conceived of the national heritage in broader terms than it hitherto had been conceived.[26] The heritage, he believed, was indeed in danger from Americanisation. But what Priestley and those who shared his sentiments wished to see protected was not just the natural beauty against the ravages of the automobile and suburbanisation, nor simply the great cultural monuments of the nation against the 'levelling down' tendency. Rather, Priestley contrasted the 'people' with the 'masses', praising the former and wishing to encourage their creativity, largely because he so disliked the latter. In so doing, he sought to reshape the way in which people comprehended the components of the national heritage, creating a new space in that heritage in which the character and lifestyle of the common people at their best could be inserted. Priestley would go on to develop these themes in much more detail in his radio broadcasts during World War II. For our purposes, suffice it to say that in the 1930s Priestley was engaged in one of the earliest attempts to study urban, working-class culture in some detail in order to discover in its midst pockets of vitality and creativity that, because they served as a bulwark against Americanisation, could now be characterised as a national asset.

Priestley was not alone in praising elements of actually-existing working-class culture and contrasting them favourably with new forms of mass culture. When, in 1938, B. Seebohm Rowntree compiled his second, comprehensive study of poverty in York, he devoted an entire section of his book to working-class amusements, believing that 'the way in which communities spend their leisure is a criterion of the national character.'[27] He divided amusements into the 'active' and the 'passive', identifying the 'passive' amusements in order to condemn them: 'how much greater today than in the past', he wrote, 'is the temptation to seek fullness of life by indulging too largely in forms of recreation which makes no demands on physical, mental or spiritual powers' (p. 476). Rowntree, however, also praised the ability of workers to resist the appeal of mass culture during the depression. He discovered that 38% of all males over the age of eighteen in York were members of clubs affiliated with the Club and Institute Union, eager to devise their own amusements (p. 333). And while he noted that drink was ever-present in working-class life, 'no observer', he claimed, 'can fail to be impressed by the good humour of the majority of men and women in public-houses' (p. 359). Like Priestley, Rowntree was part of a widespread movement that came to represent particular aspects of working-class culture as virtuous, using his own fear of Americanisation to construct a sphere of alternative values he could identify as part of the national heritage.

In his 1937 study of life and leisure in London, Andrew Sinclair engaged in a similar process. On the one hand, he condemned a new breed of 'fun bosses', as he called them, inspired by American business principles'[28] On the other, he discovered in local music halls – 'that curious survival which acts as an occasional aperient to a cinema-fed people', as he put it – 'robust' forms of creativity, uncontaminated by American practices (p. 117). In short, the more writers like Rowntree and Sinclair began to attack American influences on British popular culture, the more they tended to romanticise certain elements of working-class culture in Britain. If American mass culture was the enemy, then native working-class culture – at least where it demonstrated 'positive' tendencies – should, they believed, be praised, encouraged and protected.

The documentary film movement, which can be dated from John Grierson's 1929 classic, 'Drifters', also played an important part in remapping the components of the national heritage in the 1930s. In so doing, it contributed a new set of images that challenged the hegemony of a series of national characteristics that had been articulated largely through the idiom of rural nostalgia. Documentary film makers turned their cameras loose in what were known as the 'Depressed Areas' of the North of England, South Wales and industrial Scotland, portraying workers in the process as 'heroic examples of British fortitude'.[29] They were, like Priestley and Rowntree, also interested in exploring popular culture and depicting how, in the face of economic adversity, working-class creativity continued to flourish. Hence the importance of films such as John Taylor's 'Lancashire at Work and Play' and Humphrey Jennings' 'Spare Time'. Both films were made in the late 1930s as documents of working-class culture, although perhaps they can best been seen as particular constructions of a new entity: working-class culture as national heritage. John Grierson was the most important spokesperson for documentary cinema and was explicit in arguing that working-class customs and habits should indeed be considered part of the national heritage. By presenting the 'bone and substance of national life', Grierson wrote, the documentary film movement captured a 'deeper sort of national story'.[30] Despite the fact that most of the films made by the new generation of film makers had a limited audience, largely fueling the cultural appetite of the metropolitan intelligentsia, Grierson claimed that the 'insistence on the part of the documentarists that the working-class experience should be included in the national culture . . . was to be much more

influential than a counting of their viewers would suggest.'[31]

Grierson made an important point here. Whatever the response of the working-class to the intrusion of social investigators – armed not only with their note pads but with cameras – might have been, the response of broad sections of the middle class was emphatically enthusiastic. Never before had detailed, anthropological investigations of working-class culture permeated middle-class life to such and extent. Moreover, amidst an intellectual climate dominated by a fear of the threat posed by Americanisation, working-class culture was no longer viewed as being alien to the national culture. Rather, it was seen as a central part of the nation's heritage itself, in need of defining, cataloguing, encouraging and preserving. In other words, the components of the national heritage had, in the 1930s, been enlarged, and the national past had come to incorporate images not only of the nation's natural – and largely rural – beauty, but of the customs and habits of 'ordinary' people as well. In an article on 'Tyneside' that appeared in 1937, one writer for the *Geographical Magazine* placed these various parts of the heritage together. 'The North East', he wrote, 'combines glorious English scenery and historical romance [the traditional heritage] with the labour and sweat that went to build England's fame and prosperity.'[32] Never before had 'labour and sweat' been linked in such a direct way to more traditional elements of the national heritage.

While the documentary film movement contributed to an extensive reworking of the national heritage, so too did the work of Mass Observation. Like F.R. Leavis, Charles Madge, one of the founders of the organisation, complained about the 'homogeneity of modern society', largely a result, he believed, of the role played by the tabloid press and the radio in contemporary society.[33] But Madge argued that taste had not been wholly corrupted and Mass Observation set out to study working-class culture in detail, suggesting that even where the products of the American entertainment industry had permeated working-class life praiseworthy native traditions had not been eradicated. The 'organic community' that Leavis believed had been destroyed by standardisation and homogenisation was, according to Mass Observation, alive and flourishing in working-class districts of the nation. In fact, Mass Observation pointed to the existence of a new kind of organic community, what became known in the 1950s as the 'traditional working-class community'. Such communities were no longer painted with the brush of rural nostalgia, as they had been in the writings of George Sturt, and following him Leavis. Rather, they were characterised as vital and living components of the national culture. Working-class communities, revolving around the shared experiences of work and leisure, seemed to Mass Observation to be able to absorb American jazz and Hollywood films without buckling under the pressure.[34]

The work of the documentary film movement, along with that of Mass Observation, may have served to expand the boundaries of the national culture, making available a new repertoire of images of working-class culture that had never before been central to the self-definition of the nation. And yet work on the left, like that of more conservative writers in the 1930s, can also be characterised by its nostalgia. A number of social observers in the 1930s were exiles from metropolitan, bourgeois culture: before studying Bolton for Mass Observation, for example, Tom Harrison had fled to the Western Pacific and spent two years studying cannibals; likewise, George Orwell had returned from Burma and loathed the cant and hypocrisy of much of British middle-class society. Without a secure cultural identity of their own, and full of despair about the effects of the American leisure industry on British society, they romanticised working-class experience. Sometimes they even sought to identify with that experience, discovering in towns like Bolton an 'authentic' community that could increasingly be used as an ideological weapon in the battle against disquieting social change.[35] In other words, growing interest in working-class culture in the 1930s was in large part a result of the intellectual preoccupations of a displaced intelligentsia – as it would be again to a displaced generation of scholarship boys in the 1950s and 1960s. The result was the creation of a series of representations of working-class culture which, sadly enough, usually emphasised the masculine attributes of that culture, especially as women were invariably positioned in it as the medium through which American values 'contaminated' British life.[36] Meanwhile, most workers in the 1930s were content to watch Hollywood films and listen to American jazz, largely unaware of the ways in which their own culture was increasingly being rendered – through the old terminology of the 'organic community' – compatible with, and even central to, new discourses of national identity.

In the nineteenth century workers sometimes collected shells, fossils and other curiosities, placing them in mechanics' institutes. Those collections often found their way into the nation's more formal museums. Today in Britain the heritage industry has become obsessed not with the artifacts workers once collected, but with the artifacts of working-class life, attempting to re-create and display past forms of working-class culture itself. This process has a long history: it dates back before Cole's exhibition of labour history in 1937, and has probably born the most fruit in the years since World War II. And yet the 1930s stands as perhaps one of the most crucial turning points in the history of the national preoccupation with inventing, defining, codifying and displaying working-class cultures in Britain. But one question about this process remains to be asked: to what extent is the current interest in articulating working-class culture as part of the national heritage also a result of the same kind of discomfort with contemporary cultural life so that fuelled the work of intellectuals in the 1930s? Documentary realism in the 1930s juxtaposed a radically simplified and noble conception of a virtuous working-class, with its sturdy common sense, against a mass-produced, commercial popular culture. And yet this obsession remained a rather romantic and self-indulgent undertaking. Nostalgia for an organic community – no matter how such communities were defined – characterised the work of most of those engaged in reworking the national heritage between the wars. Perhaps it still does today. If so, then the contemporary heritage industry can only be understood by placing it in a historical perspective that allows one to decipher continuities in the politics and practices of nostalgia. If the heritage industry plays on the same aspirations and assumptions that drove an earlier generation of individuals to articulate working-class culture as part of the national heritage, then those aspirations and assumptions need to be deciphered. This essay has merely attempted to comment on some of the landmarks in the history of discursive ruptures in the national identity. The question of motivation, related to the workings of nostalgia, still needs to be addressed.

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HOW WE USED TO LIVE, 1954 – 1970:
A TRAVELLING EXHIBITION

Mark Suggitt

Museums and television have quite a lot in common. Both are in the education and entertainment business. TV produces and presents a view of history that is far closer in spirit to exhibitions than to books. Both are trying to reach a wide audience, an audience that has little time to take things in. Both rely on communicating through a visual medium backed up by forms of language. The subjects covered by exhibitions can make good television and likewise a television programme can inspire a museum exhibition. This brief paper outlines the production of such an exhibition.

How We Used to Live is the name of a schools' programme produced by Yorkshire Television. It is a series that has been running for a number of years and has covered different periods from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The format that has developed is to look at the events through the eyes of a family. This dramatised approach has been most effective in communicating to the audience of 8 to 13 year olds. Its educational potential is backed up by work books produced by the YTV Education Department, who also liaise with schools to enable teachers to gain maximum benefit from it. The programmes are also available in video form. In addition to this YTV has joined forces with the Yorkshire & Humberside Museums Council to produce a travelling exhibition that accompanies the series. This has formed part of the YHMC Travelling Exhibitions Programme. Upto 1987 three had been produced for the periods 1837-1901, 1926-1953 and 1902-1926. In each case YTV had generously provided half of the production costs and the design and production of a poster.

In 1987 the period under review was 1953 to 1970 and the two bodies had agreed to produce another exhibition. It was decided that the exhibition would look at the enormous changes of the period through the microcosm of the family and the home. This was both sensible and practical for an exhibition that would have to travel to a number of different venues. It also made good academic sense as the 'family' and 'the home' became key targets for the media and the manufacturer during this period.

With the appointment of Barbara Woroncow as Director of YHMC this project was handed over to me on my appointment as Assistant Director (Curatorial) in August 1987; a rather nice welcome present for an ex Keeper of Social History!

Further meetings with YTV helped to produce an exhibition outline. These would reflect areas that were covered in the programme;

A Reconstructed Room.

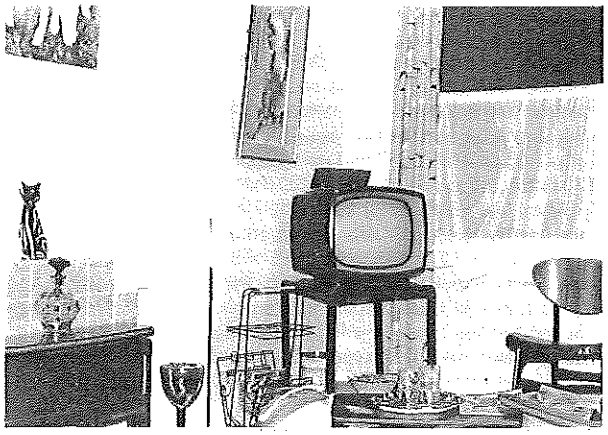
Cases: 1) Toys 2) The Media 3) Holidays 4) Youth Culture 5) Design 6) Clothes 7) 1980s nostalgia for the '50s and '60s.

Open Displays:
Consumer Durables.

Graphic Panels:
1) Transport 2) Immigration 3) Shopping
4) Youth Culture 5) Key Political Events 6) Housing

This basic outline was to remain virtually unchanged throughout the design process. The subjects to be covered on the graphic panels were ones that would be difficult to illustrate with objects in an exhibition of this size. Hull Museums' bubble car *was* tempting but had to be rejected!

The next step was to collect material for these themses. This exhibition was 'idea' led not 'object' led and revealed some interesting gaps in Social History collecting within Yorkshire and Humberside. Major collections in nearby Leeds and York were surveyed and provided much useful material. Calderdale museums provided both objects and photographs. Kirklees Museums provided excellent photographs for the section on immigration taken from their 'Welcome to the Motherland' exhibition.



A domestic interior of 1965, 'hopefully believable, not typical', recreated in the How We Used to Live *exhibition.*

Gaps appeared when trying to locate 1950s and 1960s everyday ceramics, textiles, light fittings, ornaments and furniture. The bulk of those had to be purchased for the room set. This led to happy hours at car boot sales and junk shops. We also purchased contemporary material that would be used.

Clothes were another problem. Women's clothes for the period presented no real problem. Museums had plenty, although most were either rather staid day wear or glamorous evening dresses. Apart from the standard suit, men's clothes for the period were very poorly represented. I was reminded of John Higgs question of 1963 – 'How many museums have in fact taken steps to secure a teddy boy suit for their collections?' Answer: Very few indeed. In the end we relied on a private collection of 60s clothes, collected by one person with a far sharper eye than most 'costume and textile' departments. Once the material started to arrive the brief was begun and design and construction took place. The design and technical work were done in-house at YHMC but costed to the overall budget of £24,000. This sum had to include all labour costs and materials. Fortunately we were able to use existing cases which could be stripped down and modified. The exhibition opened on schedule at Dewsbury Museum on Friday 22 July 1988.

So, what does it say? We felt that the first thing such an exhibition (any exhibition for that matter) needed as a clear introduction; what are we trying to say?

The first label reads

> This exhibition is about the recent past. It looks at years which saw huge changes in British society. We have concentrated on changes in the home, as every member of the family became a target for the products of industry and the media.
>
> The 1950s and 1960s cannot be seen in isolation, they overlap with each other and with earlier and later periods. Our own times are linked to them and the way we feel about them is still evolving ...
>
> *The 1960s was the decade when England truly emerged from its post war depression and became a country of joyful and envied achievement.*
>
> **The Times, 1980.**
>
> *We are reaping today what was sown in the 60s ... fashionable theories and permissive claptrap set the scene for a society in which the old virtues of discipline and restraint were denigrated.*
>
> **Margaret Thatcher in the Daily Mail, 1982.**

This sets the scene. The visitor can now enter the exhibition and find out what went on, what changed and what didn't. The exhibition does not try and endorse either view but examines each area separately. Some aspects are praised, others are criticised, the visitor can either agree or disagree: consumer choice.

Now let us examine the displays in more detail. But before doing so, drag out that old scratched copy of Motown Chartbusters to add real period atmosphere. The exhibition came with a soundtrack of carefully selected tapes which could be played by the attendants. Rumour has it that the Hull attendants brought their own in! So, with Marvin Gaye in the background let us proceed...

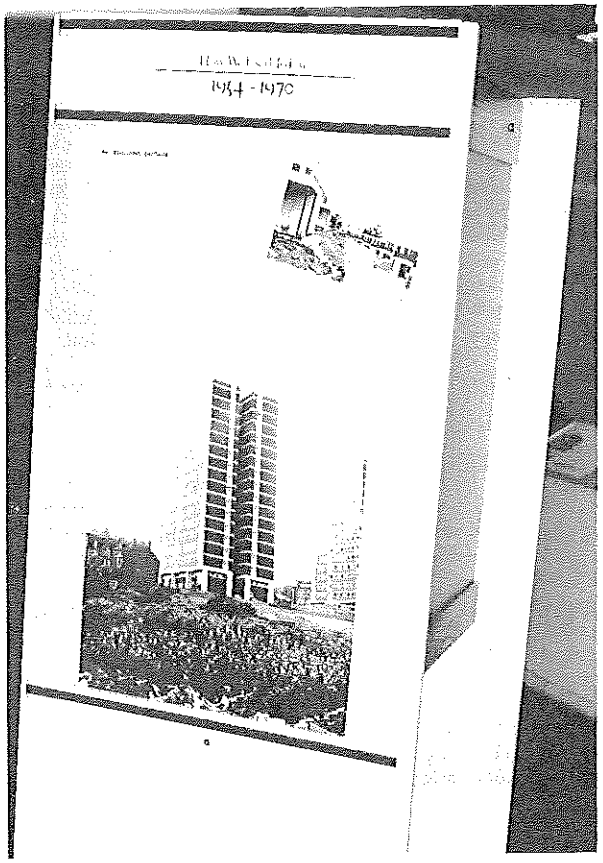
Reconstructed room sets were not a new feature of the *How We Used to Live* exhibitions. The 1902 - 1926 show had featured a highly effective 'split' room illustrating class difference during World War One. The 1926 - 1953 show had an early version of the increasingly popular '1930s room'. It was felt that this exhibition should follow in this tradition, not just because the others had had one but because it would work well and help illustrate a number of points. These were; the type of housing available, the growth of owner occupation, the rise of D.I.Y. market and some stylistic trends of the period. It was a chance to show that changes had taken place within a relatively short space of time and that the room set that represented the home was linked to them. Apart from the immediate interpretation for the room, the rest of the exhibition helped interpret it and place it in context. It would not end up, like too many museum 'rooms', lost in space, floating in the void of the greater museum. In short, it would avoid the pitfall of placing objects in context but then becoming out of context with the world that created and used them.

We chose to reproduce a living from around 1965. This date was chosen to allow the inclusion of newer products that were becoming more available and affordable from the late 1950s, it was also just over half way through the period. So far, so good, but what type of room? We knew what we didn't want, and that was to fall into the usual traps.

The first is to try and present 'a typical room' of the period, but there is really no such thing as typical. Would it be typical of the wealthy? the working class? the single person? the young? the old? Far better to select one group. The second trap was to consider the period through modern eyes as one of 'Populuxe Kitsch' and present it as an expression of overblown consumer indulgence, every object being a 'classic' from the period. We had to remember that few people can ever afford to furnish their homes all in one go, most of us live in homes that have objects of varying ages, our visual diaries of consumption.

So, we looked for inspiration. *Ideal Home* and *Design* magazine presented too narrow a view, as they do today. So did catalogues; aspirations rather than actuality. If the time-scale allowed, it would have made sense to undertake a small scale oral history project to gather information. Unfortunately it did not, so we took opinions and information from Area Council staff, who proved to be a useful cross section as many had set up homes during this period. Jean Platt (the Director's P.A.) provided a run of Women's magazines for the period. These proved to be an invaluable resource. One article gave us a start. A 1956 *Woman's Weekly* ran a feature on a couple whose terrace house had been 'done up' on a limited budget with the advice of their home editor. We decided to invent our own couple to create a front room for 1965. They would have bought a small terrace house and begun to modernize it. They would have

The panel illustrating the sources for the recreated 1965 room in the How We Used to Live *exhibition.*



A panel from the How We Used to Live *exhibition, used for subjects that were difficult to interpret with objects.*

been around 25 years old and both are working. He earned £21 a week in a factory and she earned £10 a week as a supermarket cashier.

Looking around the room the visitor can see that the 1930s fireplace (replacing the earlier Registered Grate) remains but a gas fire now provides the heating. The panelled door has been covered in hardboard to give a more modern appearance. The room also has a range of electrical appliances such as a TV, Radiogram and Vacuum Cleaner. Not all are the same age. Hopefully the room projects a lived-in feel, with magazines, cigarette packets and glasses left on tables. The vacuum cleaner has been left out, perhaps the occupier has just gone to the front door. Hopefully it is not typical but believable.

The exhibition also included three larger display stands, one for clothes and the others for consumer durables.

The stand for clothes presented a problem. We could not attempt to show every change in fashion so decided to go for the period around 1965/1966 when Britain was acclaimed as leading the field in cheap, accessible fashion. We were also keen to show that alongside all the Colour Supplement hype many people continued to dress pretty much as they always had done. The result was an older woman surrounded by two teenagers. She is wearing a tailored suit. The young man a slim fit roll neck shirt, a PVC fronted jerkin and check trousers. The young woman a black mini dress and a PVC hat. She carries a raincoat by the 'Twiggy' label.

The increasing consumerism (and attendant advertising) is represented by a Jackson electric cooker, a Hotpoint twin-tub washing machine, a Frigidaire refrigerator and a Flavel Imp gas cooker. All of these were well documented museum objects which allowed us to say a little about their use. The twin tub was used by its owner and also her daughters when they had left home to get married. They eventually were able to afford their own machines. We were also able to reproduce some of the adverts of the period behind them. The change in style of advertising needed little interpretation!

'Guns for the boys, dolls for the girls': a case from the How We Used to Live *exhibition.*

The cases looked at various themes. The toy case 'Playing Around' examined the continuing sexual stereotyping and the fact that in comics and annuals Britain was still fighting World War Two and schooldays still reflected the Public School.

'Media Matters' looked at the 'fall' of radio and cinema and rise of TV. 'Designs on You' examined the changing fashions in style and the growth of that fusion of products and attitude which produces 'lifestyles'. 'Holiday Fun' looked at the institution of the British Holiday and its move from showers and sandcastles to sun and sangria. 'Teen Dreams' displayed a selection of teen objects, illustrating the fact that teenage rebellion soon became a marketable commodity.

The final case, 'Back to the Future' looked at the way in which the 1950s and 1960s have been re-invented by today's media and advertising. This is illustrated by a pair of Levi 501s and attendant advertising, a Sharp QT ZIZE radio, sunglasses and advertisements for products as diverse as Brylcream and British Rail. The uncertain 1980s have produced an image of the 1950s and 1960s which might not be entirely truthful but can be marketed very successfully through stylish updates designed to appeal to an 80s sensibility. Pre-packaged energy, fun and hop; just right for a decade short on optimism.

This case is the link back to the introduction. How we view this period is still evolving. It was one of the aims of this exhibition to show that the 1950s and 1960s were not portrayed through rose tinted glasses as periods of *'Dixon of Dock Green'* cosiness nor 'Swinging London' sexiness. There were enormous changes that took place and unlike the fads and fashions they are still with us today; motorways, consumer spending, housing problems, racism and immigration to name but a few. This link with the present is important for an exhibition about a recent period. It cannot be compartmentalised into neat decades, just as the elements within the exhibition overlap and collide. Such is the stuff of history and even within the artificial confines of a museum exhibition we can try and express that blend of change, conflict and continuity.

A READING LIST ON THE FIFTIES AND SIXTIES IN BRITAIN

Mark Suggitt

Ali, Tariq, *Street Fighting Years,* London (1988).
Bayley, Stephen, *In Good Shape*, London (1979).
Booker, Christopher, *The Neophiliacs*, London (1969).
Barnes, Richard, *Mods*, London (1979).
Bradford Heritage Recording Unit, *Destination Bradford* Bradford (1987).
Caute, David, *Sixty Eight: The Year of the Barricades*, London (1988).
Cohn, Nik, *Today there are no gentleman*, London (1971).
Cohn, Nik, *Ball The Wall*, London (1989).
Dodgson, Elyse, *Motherland – West Indian Women to Britain in the 1950s*, London (1984).
Everett, Peter, *You'll Never Be 16 Again – An illustrated history of the British Teenager*, London (1986).
Forty, Adrian, *Objects of Desire*, London (1986).
Fryer, Peter, *Staying Power – The History of Black People in Britain*, London (1984).
Fraser, Ronald, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt*, London (1988).
Greer, Germaine, *The Female Eunuch*, London (1970).
Green, Benny, *Yesterday – A Photographic Album of Daily Life in Britain 1953 – 1970*, London (1982).
Green, Jonathan, *All Dressed Up – An Oral History of the 1960s*, London (1988).
Hillier, B. & Banham M. (eds), *A Tonic To The Nation – the Festival of Britain 1951*, London (1976).
Hebdige, Dick, *Subculture*, London (1979).
Hebdige, Dick, *Hiding In The Light*, London (1988).
Hoggart, Richard, *The Uses of Literacy*, London (1957).
Horn, Richard, *Fifties Style, Then & Now*, London (1985).
Jackson, Brian, *Working Class Community*, London (1968).
Kelsall, Freda, *How We Used To Live 1954 – 1970*, London (1987).
Levin, Bernard, *The Pendulum Years, Britain in the 60s*, London (1967).
Lewis, Peter, *The Fifties*, London (1978).
Marcus, Greil, *Lipstick Traces – a Secret history of the Twentieth Century*, London (1989).
Masters, Brian, *The Swinging Sixties*, London (1985).
McRobbie, Angela, *Zoot Suits and Second Hand Dresses – an Anthology of Fashion and Music*, London (1989).
Melly, George, *Revolt into Style: The Pop Arts In Britain*, London (1970).
Myers, Kathy, *Understains*, London (1986).
Nelson, Elizabeth, *The British Counter Culture. 1966-1973* (a study of the underground press), London (1989).
Neville, Richard, *Playpower*, London (1970).
Packard, Vance, *The Hidden Persuaders*, London (1957).
Penquin Specials: *Britain in the Sixties.* Titles include:
Stanley Alderson, *Housing*
Raymond Williams, *Communications*
John Vaizey, *Education for Tomorrow*
Ronald Fletcher, *The Family and Marriage*
Phillips, Barty, *Conran and the Habitat Story*, London (1984).
Sudjic, Deyan, *Cult Heroes*, London (1989).
Victoria & Albert Museum, *British Art & Design 1900 – 1960* London (1983).
Whitworth Art Gallery, *1966 and all that. Design and the Consumer in Britain 1960 – 1969*, London (1986).
Wheen, Francis, *The Sixties*, London (1984).
Wheen, Francis, *Television*, London (1985).

ACID DROPS TO ACID HOUSE: IN SEARCH OF A POST-WAR PERSPECTIVE

Ian Lawley

T.S. Eliot once defined British popular in terms of 'a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dartboard, Wensleydale Cheese'. Perhaps today we should substitute Red Nose Day, Rottweilers, video nasties, computer games, car boot sales and Chicken McNuggets. The main point, of course, is that popular culture is a reflection of the society that creates it. It determines to a great extent what it feels like to live in a particular society at a particular time, what it is like to participate in a particular way of life. Unlike so-called 'high culture', which seeks to legitimise itself through its claims to continuity and tradition, popular culture reinvents itself in response to social and economic disruption. It reflects change and, above all, it consists in activity. Popular culture is not a product but a dynamic process through which people attempt to comprehend and order their lives. It is the culture of everyday life, with all the contradictions which that entails. It is not something that is created by, or happens to, other people. It is something that is central to our lives. We create it, we participate in it, we use and consume aspects of popular culture. In turn, it helps to shape and give meaning to our lives. In the process we may create objects, material culture, even works of art; but these artefacts do not constitute culture in themselves.

Popular culture is a nebulous term at the best of times. It signifies different things to different people. Some emergent popular cultural forms are immediately taken up by the media, scrutinised, and subjected to instant analysis and classification. Other, less colourful, yet perhaps more significant, popular cultural trends are overlooked or marginalised. It may also be more correct to speak of 'popular cultures', or to take the term to signify a collection of continually changing groups or sub-cultures engaged in a diversity of activities which only sometimes converge into commonality. If we look for a monolithic or homogeneous popular culture, we will be disappointed. Unsurprisingly, popular culture is riddled with contradictions and is subject to a variety of different interpretations. There are, however, common reference points, such as consumerism, the use of leisure time, relationships with the media, and a common social and economic context.

An enormous amount of literature has been generated in the post-war period encompassing sociology, semiotics, structuralism, pop anthropology and those 'instant histories' propagated by a succession of self-appointed cultural pundits. This paper is an attempt both to assimilate some of that literature and to place recent popular cultural trends within a specific historical location. It is also, inevitably, informed by my own responses as a participant in at least some aspects of post-war popular culture.

Since the end of the Second World War there have been enormous social changes in Britain. The immediate post-war period saw the introduction of the National Health Service, National Insurance and the implementation of the 1944 Education Act which provided free secondary schooling for all children. Living standards altered slowly at first, while rationing and import restrictions remained in force. Most working people lived their lives without detergents or synthetic fibres; home ownership, central heating and labour saving devices such as washing machines were restricted to the better off. Mobility in work or leisure was severely limited for the majority of families. Leisure patterns reflected those of the pre-war period - football, the cinema, the pub, the dance-hall and betting remained the most popular working class leisure activities.

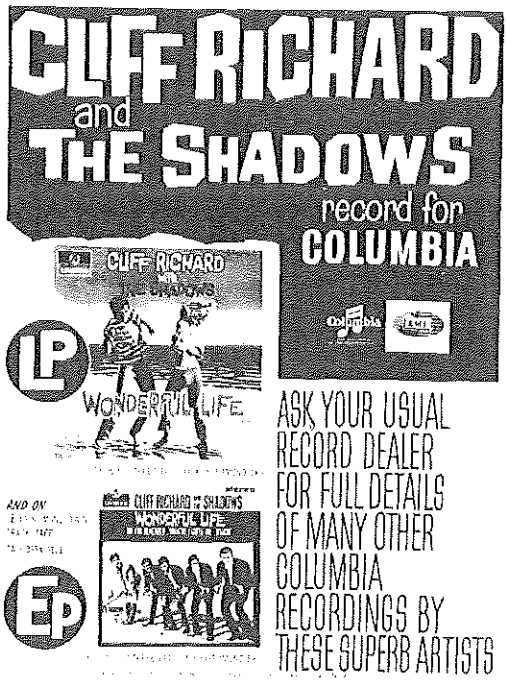
The late 1950s and early 1960s saw a dramatic increase in living standards for many families. The sense of change was almost tangible, as people began to be able to acquire 'consumer durables', such as washing machines, televisions, fridges and vacuum cleaners. As Christopher Booker recalled,

> With so many bright new packages on the shelves, so many new gadgets to be bought, so much magic in the dreary air of industrial Britain, there was a feeling of modernity and adventure that would never be won so easily again. For never again would so many English families be buying their first car, installing their first refrigerator, taking their first continental holiday. Never again could such ubiquitous novelty be found as in that dawn of the age of affluence.[1]

As workers obtained higher wages for themselves, so they created new markets for new products, which industry (despite any contradictions between the traditional 'work ethic' and the emerging 'consumer ethic' was happy to provide. By the end of the 1960s families were increasingly housed in new council estates or buying their own homes (more accurately, paying off a mortgage). Car ownership had also become a realistic aspiration for many families. The basis for this enormous change in patterns of consumption was credit. Writing in 1969, Christopher Booker reckoned that 'between 1956 and 1959 the country's hire purchase debt rose faster, and by a greater amount overall, than at any time before or since'. Between 1958 and 1976 the collective national debt multiplied fivefold. At the same time, real disposable income increased significantly; it doubled between 1951 and 1971.[2] Much of this increased income was spent on family needs and activities, especially those based on the home. This also brought significant cultural change, such as the rise of television viewing and the decline of cinema attendances, and the growth of 'do-it-yourself'. The spread of car ownership also provided impetus for the development of new forms of family based leisure activity.

The post-war period has also seen significant changes in employment patterns. The decline of Britain's heavy industries has been accompanied by the growth of new types of white collar and service sector employment. At the same time, there is a clear relationship between employment growth areas, such as the leisure industry, and cultural change. Between 1960 and 1980 the proportion of all employment accounted for by the leisure industry rose from 2.2% to 5.9%. By the mid-1980s 'leisure' accounted for over 25% of all consumer spending. The development of such new forms of employment has led some commentators to talk of 'the death of the working class'. This implies that manual or 'blue collar' employment is the essential characteristic of a working class. Yet, as Clarke and Critcher argue in *The Devil Makes Work*, the essential feature is 'its exclusion from the ownership of capital and thus its subordination to the control of capital, in and out of work'.[3] All the evidence suggests that, however material conditions may have changed, the structural divisions in British society remain unaltered. The proliferation of non-manual occupations signifies a transformation of the nature of the working class rather than the creation of a 'new middle class'. Class differentials remain a crucial social determinant. Access to leisure opportunities is still largely determined by factors such as class, sex and race. Although people may have adapted to changed circumstances, the underlying conflict is reflected in the subtle opposition between popular and elite cultures.

Fundamental to post-war British popular culture has been the expansion of consumer spending. Indeed, it can be argued that consuming has now become the central cultural experience in our Society.[4] Towns have become centres of consumption rather than production. Most now boast a post-modernist shopping mall replete with glass lifts and ornamental pools. At the same time, a proliferation of out-of-town retail and leisure centres has mushroomed, usually on reclaimed industrial wasteland. The apotheosis of these shoppers' theme parks is the Gateshead Metro Centre, a temple to consumerism and hedonism, consecrated by the developer John Hall, Mrs. Thatcher's Vicar in the North East. The Metro Centre can be seen as the embodiment of some of our central myths - the myth of opportunity ('local boy made good'), the myth of free enterprise, the myth of economic growth, and the myth of consumer choice. Freedom of choice is one of the central strands of consumer marketing and advertising, another dominant aspect of our public culture, providing us with a rich and complex iconography. (Indeed, it could be argued that the graphic artists employed by advertising agencies to persuade us that Product A magically outshines Product B are our equivalent of those skilful by anonymous artists who provided medieval churchgoers with dazzling images to worship.) Yet, as Simon Frith points out, 'consumption is an ideological act. Consumption, market choice, is also an issue of aesthetic choice, cultural judgement. Even the most 'mindless' consumer invests in an argument'.[6] As we consume, others are excluded, left out of the cornucopia of free enterprise. Our own choice as consumers is also



Cliff Richard & The Shadows: the apotheosis of clean cut, white-boy pop.

limited and shaped by a variety of determinants: economic constraints (what we can afford); social constraints (the time available to consume); cultural constraints (what is deemed 'acceptable'). As consumers, we do not constitute a homogeneous mass, but a diversity of different groups with different needs. As producers (and advertising agencies) have become more sophisticated, they have created a range of markets, providing the appearance of choice, yet actually reflecting deeper social structures. As Clarke and Critcher point out in *The Devil Makes Work*:

> The leisure public appears as differently oriented groups of 'tastes' - opera goers, football fans, *Sun* readers, *Crossroads* watchers, first-class train or air passengers. Because of the 'free-market' ideology these differences appear as choices. In reality they depend on very different processes - the very real divisions of class, gender, race and age, which structure choice.[7]

Against this pessimistic analysis, it should be remembered that, in personal terms, consumer spending can be both enjoyable and liberating. The availability of cheap, mass produced goods represented a positive improvement in the quality of life for the majority of people. In *Saturday night or Sunday morning*, Mulgan and Worpole argue that 'growth of cheap fashion clothes, makeup and even small amounts of additional spending power gave many working-class girls in particular a real sense of self-confidence and independence'.[8] Making consumer choices, however, constrained by external forces, plays an important part in our lives.

Central to consumer culture, and indeed to contemporary popular culture as a whole, is the moving image. Raymond Williams once remarked that modern society differs from its predecessors in that, for the first time in history, people spend more time watching fictional representations of life than they do preparing food. As 'culture technology' (television, video, digital recording techniques, satellite and cable broadcasting) becomes ever more diffuse, so popular cultural forms such as film, television and advertisements have become as complex and self-referential as 'high art'. The moving image has become both the principal mode of entertainment and the principal means of transmitting information, opinions and attitudes. Children become adept at reading the highly sophisticated visual language of television and video images long before they master the written word. This has led some analysts to complain that we have become a 'remote control culture', reduced to passivity by the daily bombardment of television images and received opinion. However, taken as a whole, television programmes do not present a monolithic or coherent view of the world. Many may share a common viewpoint, certain themes may receive undue emphasis, certain topics may be excluded, but viewers react critically to what they see on their screens. Different groups of people respond in different ways. According to Taylor and Mullan's study of audience responses to television programmes, *Uninvited Guests*,

> Sometimes it is watched with great intensity and emotional involvement (quite enough to produce tears of sorrow or joy); at other moments, with an irreverent concern (in which actors and plot readily become mere laughing matters). In both cases, it is likely to be a subject for conversation and comment among those present. . . and choice is likely to be continually exercised.

Television culture is an international phenomenon and many of the programmes on our screens are American made. Indeed, American popular culture has had an enormous impact in shaping contemporary British attitudes. Its vitality and egalitarianism acted as a serum against the toxin of British puritanism and conservatism. In the immediate post-war period, argue Mulgan and Worpole,

> American detective novels, films, dance band music and early rock 'n' roll possessed an energy and populist radicalism that Agatha Christie murders, Gainsborough Studio costume films, Ealing comedies and the BBC Light Orchestra clearly didn't.[9]

Significantly, 'Americanisation' became the most vehement term of abhorrence in the lexicon both of cultural conservatives such as Evelyn Waugh and leftist commentators such as Richard Hoggart. Where Waugh saw the influence of American popular culture on English life as symptomatic of decline and fall, Hoggart saw it as an instrument by which a healthy, 'authentic' and 'vigorous' working class community was being seduced by a 'shiny barbarism' into a 'candy floss world'. With horror, Hoggart described the 'juke-box boys . . . with drape suits, picture ties and an American slouch' who congregated in 'harshly lit milk bars'.

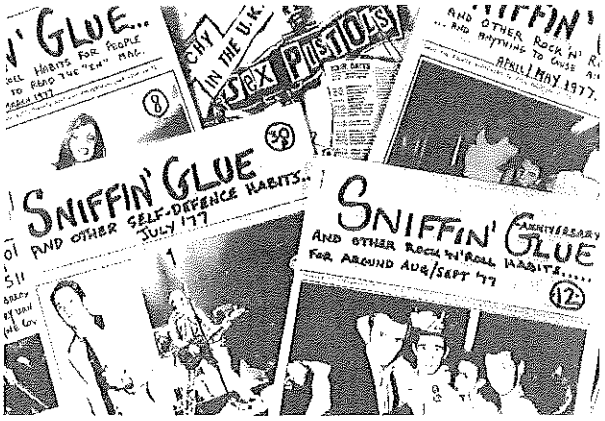
> Many of the customers, - their clothes, their hair-styles, their facial expressions all indicate - are living to a large extent in a myth-world compounded of a few simple elements which they take to be those of American life.[10]

Anti-Americanism also found vivid expression in the popular press. An article in *The Picture Post* (1953) identified a terrifying new breed of 'machine-minders and comic-strip readers' who 'prefer Victor Mature to God because they can understand Victor - and he relieves the monotony of their lives; as far as they know, God doesn't.'

The economic power of America's cultural industries was more than a match for such criticism. By 1973, 50% of the world's screen time was taken up with American films, 20% of television programmes watched in Western Europe were American made and 25% of British manufacturing output American controlled. American films, advertising images, packaging, clothing, music and even foodstuffs have all been absorbed into our popular culture. As the Australian commentator Craig McGregor puts it,

> Our dreams have been Americanised whether we like it or not, and American Dreams give shape to quite contrary urges, articulate the promise (as well as the lie) of abundance.[12]

MacDonalds can serve as a symbol of this process - the promise is belied by the substance. MacDonalds not only has a corporate image, its own 'management science', and its own language ('pre-condimentation' for example), but its own mythology. Ronald MacDonald is now as much a part of our national consciousness as he is in the USA where a survey taken in the mid-1970s found that children had a recall of Ronald second only to Father Christmas.[13] And, as East-West relations improve, many Muscovites may be



Do-it-yourself disposability: Sniffin' Glue *fanzine, 1977.*

surprised to discover that Ronald MacDonald has colonised areas of their dreams, too.

American images and commodities have also been a rich source of nourishment for British youth-culture. The term 'teenager' itself was a American import, and the invention of the teenager was inextricably bound up with the creation of a distinct 'youth market', new commodities and leisure facilities designed to soak up the surplus cash of working class youth. Relatively high wages (between 1945 and 1950 the average real wage of teenagers increased at twice the adult rate) and more liberal parental attitudes enabled the creation of a market in which the key elements (music, dance, hairstyles and fashion) were not new, but the scale and visibility had changed. New technology and mass marketing led to the mass production of cheaper records and clothes, while entrepreneurs opened dance-halls and juke-box cafes. And if the new consumer-based youth culture was 'pernicious, unwholesome, hybrid, Americanised', therein lay much of its appeal. The cultural establishment tried to hold out against the influence of all things American. The BBC, for instance, actively resisted American popular music. In 1956, the year of Heartbreak Hotel, not one rock 'n' roll record was featured in the BBC's annual review of popular songs. Even music papers like the *Melody Maker* railed against the influence of American commercial pop music.

> Viewed as a social phenomenon, the current craze for rock 'n' roll material is one of the most terrifying things to have happened to popular music . . . The Rock-and-Roll technique, instrumentally and vocally, is the antithesis of all that jazz has been striving for over the years - in other words, good taste and musical integrity.[14]

All the worst fears were confirmed when *Blackboard Jungle* was shown at a South London cinema and Britain witnessed its first homegrown Rock 'n' Roll riot.

Rock 'n' roll also provided Britain with its first youth sub-culture, the Teddy Boys. With their emphasis on style and collective identity and their leisure orientation, they set the pattern for subsequent sub-cultures. Clothes assumed a crucial importance. The Edwardian style suits, with their Savile Row connotations, were an attempt to buy status and might cost up to a month's wages.[15] Subsequent working class sub-cultures adopted similarly flamboyant codes of dress. According to some commentators this represents a stylised form of resistance to the conditions and conventions of working class life.[16] The 'typical' mod, for instance, was likely to be a semi-skilled manual worker or low paid office worker, who had left school at 15. The cult of conspicuous consumption, of flash clothes and amphetamines, provided a means of compensating for relatively low status in the employment stakes. According to Dick Hebdidge,

> Every mod was existing in a ghost world of gangsterism, luxurious clubs, and beautiful women, even if reality only amounted to a draughty Parka anorak, a beaten-up Vespa, and fish and chips out of a greasy bag.[17]

The essence of mod lay in the way it inverted conventions such as short hair, neatness and smartness, to create a style that was unsettling to parents and employers. As Dave Laing puts it, mods 'looked alright, but there was something in the way they moved which adults couldn't make out'.[18] Their cult of conspicuous consumption was also subversive, presenting 'a grotesque parody of the aspirations of their parents'.

If some aspects of youth sub-cultures can be seen as a means of resisting the conventions of working class life, other aspects reflect the parent culture. It was no coincidence that Teddy Boys were at the centre of the 1958 'race' riots, for instance. Similarly, skinhead style can be seen as a reassertion of the collective solidarity which one gave cohesion to working class communities. Investing jeans, boots, braces and closely cropped hair with symbolic significance, skinhead style stresses a collective, 'hard' masculinity. On the face of it 'skins' are aggressively defiant of society, yet their brand of patriotism, racism and territorialism reflects conservative values. According to John Clarke, skinhead culture represents both continuity (in terms of content) and discontinuity (in form) between the parent culture and sub-culture.[19] As Dick Hebdidge has noted, the defiance expressed through joining a sub-cultural group 'is also a confirmation of the fact of powerlessness, a celebration of impotence'.

> Sub-cultures are both a play for attention, and a refusal, once attention has been granted, to be read according to the Book . . . When disaffected adolescents from the inner city resort to symbolic and actual violence, they are playing with the only power at their disposal, the power to discomfit. The power, that is, to pose - to pose a threat.[20]

Although defiance of authority in youth cultures is largely symbolic, it is usually this that forms the basis of media coverage. All post-war youth cultures have been reviled in the press in terms that have become wearily familiar. A 'Family Doctor', writing in a newspaper in the 1950s, set the tone for future complainants:

> Teddy boys . . . are all of unsound mind in the sense that they are all suffering from a form of psychosis. Apart from the birch or the rope, depending on the gravity of their crimes, what they need is rehabilitation in a psychopathic institution ... Because they have not the mental stamina to be individualists, they had to huddle together in gangs.[21]

The emergence of any new sub-culture is invariably accompanied by an outbreak of moral panic. A definition of this process is provided by Stan Cohen:

> A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians, and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible.[22]

Teen iconography and the fickle face of fortune: Jackie *and* Smash Hits, *1980s.*

Cohen gives a detailed description of how the moral panic surrounding the mods and rockers seaside clashes of the mid-1960s was created and sustained. But the same process can be seen in the media's treatment of more recent phenomema such as Punk and Acid House. Through a curious combination of hysteria and fascination, the media seeks simultaneously to isolate cults as outlandishly anti-social and yet incorporate them within the mainstream. While a paper's news pages may carry lurid accounts of drug arrests at an Acid House rave, the fashion pages will celebrate the associated clothing styles.[23] Youth cultures are further domesticated through their relationship with the industries that service and exploit them. Punk styles were not only available on market stalls and through mail order within months of their first appearance, but were soon also appropriated by the haute couture houses.

While youth sub-cultures probably appeal to sociologists and style pundits precisely because of their exotic nature, their visibility, they encompass only a small percentage of young people. Those that have attracted academic attention and media coverage have tended to consist mainly of disaffected, white, working class males, while other numerically more significant groups, such as Northern Soul devotees, have been generally ignored. The level of commitment of individual members of a particular group will vary enormously. Some will regard their identification with the sub-culture as crucial to their self-image. Others may adopt the style or the music of a particular sub-culture for only as long as it is fashionable and exciting. And, although sub-cultures may attempt to define themselves in opposition to Society, they do not exist independently of society. They must be understood in relation both to their parent culture and to the larger public culture. A skinhead may choose to look different to his parents or the boy next door, but he is still a member of the same family and the same peer group. He is affected by exactly the same conditions and experiences that affect the life of the community as a whole. Despite appearances to the contrary, he will continue to have more in common than not with his more conventional peers. As the same time, there are subtle differences between different youth styles reflecting the internal differentiations of working class life. Growing up poses different problems for different people; it does not provide identical experiences for everyone.

Crucially, sub-cultural activities are identified primarily with leisure time, particularly the consumption of the products of youth oriented merchandising. For many young people, identification with a sub-cultural group is, unsurprisingly, transient, forming a link between leaving school and 'settling down'. Many others may adopt the associated styles and commodities 'off the peg' without actually participating in the sub-culture.[24] Middle class cults, such as the hippy movement, ostensibly posed more of a threat to society, in their rejection of the 'work ethic' and the pursuit of hedonism. Hippies regarded themselves as constituting a 'counter culture', an 'alternative society'. Yet they proved just as vulnerable to consumer capitalism as any working class sub-culture. And for all the talk of liberation, hippy culture was inherently sexist with its emphasis on the 'natural' woman.[25] Devoid of any real political content, hippy radicalism posed no real threat to anyone.

Few sociological accounts of youth sub-cultures pay much attention to teenage girls. This is partly a reflection of the general reluctance of sociologists and cultural commentators to investigate women's culture at all - while there have been numerous studies relating to football, for instance, little attention has been given to the ways in which women find happiness and contentment in popular cultural activities. It also reflects the aggressively masculinist bias of most sub-cultures, in which, according to Dick Hebdidge, girls 'have traditionally been either silenced or made over in the image of the boys as replicas, as accessories'.[26]

Paul Willis' description of Midlands bikers could apply to any one of a number of sub-cultural groups:

> The masculine style and bravado was at its most chauvinist in relation to women. The culture was overwhelmingly dominated by men, both quantitatively and symbolically . . . the approach to women was generally tough, and spiced with a heavy-handed, suggestive humour.[27]

At the same time, teenage girls have until recently tended both to earn less and be subject to greater parental control than their brothers. Pressures to conform, in areas such as dress, make-up, 'steady relationships', have also been strong. Angela McRobbie paints a bleak picture of life for the adolescent working class girl:

> She is taught to consider any boyfriends more important than girlfriends and to abandon the youth club or the disco for the honour of spending her evenings watching television in her boyfriend's house, so saving money for an engagement ring. Most significantly, she is forced to relinquish youth for the premature middle age induced by childbirth and housework. It's not as much that girls do too much too young; rather they have the opportunity of doing too little too late.[28]

This pessimistic and polemical account neglects to mention that girls also manage to have fun. They find ways to resist the pressures to conform. They do create their own culture (or 'negotiate their own space', as sociologists will have it). If that culture is often based around the home, school, discos, it is no less vibrant for that. Teenage girls also provide by far the largest market for youth oriented consumer goods. Records, tapes, videos, magazines, posters, clothes and make-up, are all central to the 'culture of the bedroom'.[29] And if that market tends to propagate stereotypical values, it must be remembered that teenage girls are critical consumers, choosing and adapting styles and commodities for their own ends. They are not apathetic, passive and one dimensional fashion victims, but active and complex human beings like anyone else. The use magazines like *Jackie*, Soaps like *Neighbours* and chart music to help make sense of their everyday lives, relating fictional situations and song lyrics to their own experience. Perhaps, because they are so successful at this, perhaps because their culture is so obvious and so diffuse, perhaps because their activities are not perceived as a threat or a 'social problem', their experiences have been marginalised or ignored by academics and cultural pundits.

There are also significant numbers of people in our society that are unable to participate in what we understand as popular cultural activities. The ascendancy of 'enterprise culture' ideology during the 1980s has resulted in deepening social divisions. The Lawson tax cuts, which were used to engineer the 1986-87 pre-election spending boom, disproportionately benefitted the already better paid. With the majority seeming secure in employment, with new hatchback cars, seemingly limitless consumer credit and rising property prices, the minority became increasingly marginalised, disenfranchised. Low paid workers, the long-term unemployment, ethnic minorities, single-parent families, the sick and disabled, people caring for a dependant relative, the mentally ill, the homeless, runaway teenagers, must all look on from the sidelines as the better off spend as if there will be no tomorrow. Yet their numbers have been growing by the day. In 1988, 700,000 people tried to register as homeless, yet local councils were spending only a third as much on new housing as they had in 1979. Fewer than 25,000 council houses were built in 1988: in 1977 the figure has been 140,000. Among the poorest families, many living in bed and breakfast accommodation, are single-parent families. By 1987 they accounted for 14% of all families, with dependant children. Nine out of ten of these families were headed by women. Among the poor the incidence of illness is higher and life expectancy lower; yet free market ideology seems to act on the hearts of our political guardians like the sliver of ice with which the Snow Queen froze the boy Kay's heart. Indifference to the poverty and squalor in which the most disadvantaged are forced to live seems to be the order of the day. Worse, the concept of the 'undeserving poor' has been disinterred along with those other Victorian values which underpin the prevailing ideology. According to one writer in *The Times*, the poor are 'inadequate' and 'need to be taught the values of thrift'.

> Affecting vignettes of life among the Hackney poor do not of themselves make a case for increased social security payments. They might, instead, suggest that the women of poor families need help and guidance on household management.[30]

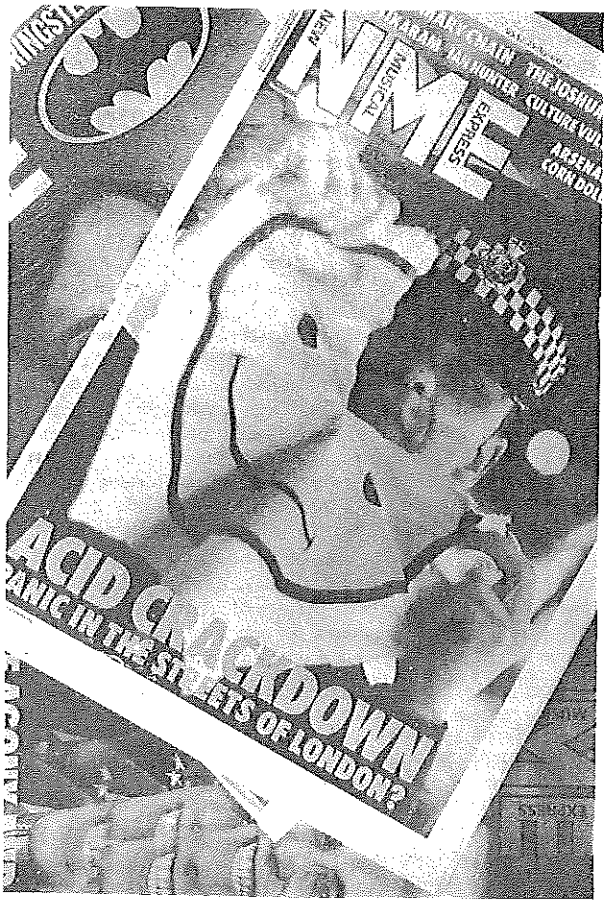
It is hardly surprising that, during the 1980s, interest, and confidence in, the political decision making process has declined. The British Social Attitudes Survey of 1986 reported that 70% of those questioned felt that their MPs were out of touch with their

constituents. Membership of political parties has fallen dramatically during the post-war period, and, increasingly, marketing strategies now dominate politics. Political parties are packaged and marketed in just the same way as consumer goods and services. Professional politicians attempt to harness the leisure culture to their own particular bandwagons. Witness the choice of Jeffrey Archer as Tory Party Chairman, Neil Kinnock's appearance in a Tracey Ullman video, or the selection of entertainers and 'sports personalities' as parliamentary candidates.

Significantly, it is popular culture itself that has provided some of the decade's most positive political developments. Band Aid, Live Aid, Sport Aid, Comic Relief and the concerts for Amnesty International and the Anti-Apartheid Movement, have demonstrated that it is possible to fuse popular culture and politics, that effective collective intervention is possible outside the formal political arena. Initiatives such as these demonstrate the radical potential of popular culture, the need of people to become more than the mere sum of their consumer wants. Locally, people are responding to changes which threaten to affect their lives by taking communal action. In Stoke-on-Trent, the people of the Hawes Street area in Tunstall united to defeat redevelopment proposals that would have destroyed their homes. The residents of Berry Hill are fighting British Coal's plans to begin open cast mining on a site which overlooks their homes and is adjacent to their children's comprehensive school.[31] In the Green Movement too, the personal and the public converge, social anxieties merge with global eco-politics.

Despite its contradictory urges and superficialities, popular culture represents optimism, energy and dynamism. Craig McGregor's moving description of teenage skateboarders could apply to many other areas of popular culture:

> I was struck by the intensity, the sheer human dedication of it all. It was pervaded by a sense of celebration like a modern version of a pagan ritual of life-renewal. South London kids, these, skating in a concrete bowl gouged out of dirt on a vacant lot surrounded by tenements (urban renewal?); not T.S. Eliot's old woman gathering papers, but a pride of young people bent on heroism, achievement, fulfilment. In a different social system, perhaps, all that human potential might go into politics, or at least into some channel of communication which allowed society to benefit from and respond to such inputs. Instead, it's channeled, apolitically, into sport.[32]



Moral panic, 1980s style.

The creative potential of 'ordinary' men, women and children is immense. Perhaps, through a commitment to working with the people in our local communities and representing their lives in our museums, we can help to create an active and participatory culture. Together, we should aim to redefine the public culture and create a truly popular culture that admits everyone.

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3. *ibid*, p.197.
4. Between 1980 and 1989 there was a 76% rise in retail sales. During the same period there has also been an enormous expansion in the provision of leisure services and off-the-peg 'experiences' from wine bars to theme parks.
5. These 'myths', investing activities and events with a commonly perceived meaning, are identified by Donald Horne in *The Public Culture* (Pluto, 1986). Horne argues that such myths, in making a pretence of commonality, are an instrument of orthopraxy (common practice as opposed to common belief). Above all, they are used to reinforce the notion that the special interest of the dominant group within society are the interests of all.
6. Simon Frith, introduction to Craig McGregor, *Pop Goes the Culture*, Pluto, 1984 (p.2).
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11. 'The Best and Worst of Britain' in *The Picture Post*, 19th December, 1953.
12. Craig McGregor, *ibid*. p.7.
13. 'Big Mac is on the March'. Article by Mick Brown in *Street Life*, vol 1, No. 4, 13-26th December 1975.
14. Quoted in Deck Hebdidge, *Hiding in the Light*, Comedia, 1988, p.55.
15. According to a *Picture Post* Survey of Teds at the Tottenham Mecca Ballroom in 1954, a Teddy Boy's wages might vary from £4.17.6 to £12 a week. A made-to-measure drape suit might cost between £17 and £20.
16. c.f. S. Hall and T. Jefferson, in *Resistance Through Rituals*, Hutchinson, 1976.
17. Dick Hebdidge, 'The Meaning of Mod' in S. Hall, et al (eds) *Resistance Through Rituals*, Hutchinson, 1976.
18. Dave Laing, *The Sound of Our Time*, Sheen and Ward, 1969.
19. John Clarke, 'The Skinheads and the Magical Recovery of Working Class Community' in S. Hall et al (eds), *ibid*.

20. Dick Hebdidge, *Hiding in the Light*, p.35, p.18.

21. Quoted in M. Brake, *The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Sub-cultures*, Routledge, 1980.

22. S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, MacGibbon and Kee, 1972.

23. An article in *New Statesman and Society* ('The Fall of the Acid Reign', A. Melechi and S. Redhead, 23rd December, 1988) charts the creation of this recent moral panic. The offensive against Acid House began in late October, 1988, reaching some sort of peak with the *Sun's* headline on 24th November that year - 'Acid Fiends Spike Page Three Girls Drink'.

24. The historicism of the 1980s, evident in so many other areas of life, was also visible in youth culture. The decade was characterised by revivalism of just about very possible youth style.

25. Paul Willis noted in his conversations with (male) hippies that a recurrent theme was the seduction of a 'straight' girl as a symbolic violation of the conventional world. As far as commodification is concerned, the last word must go to Jefferson Starship's Paul Kantner who stated that the group agreed to advertise Levi's because 'jeans symbolised the counterculture'.

26. Dick Hebdidge, *Hiding in the Light*, p.27.

27. Paul Willis, *Profane Culture*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978 p.27.

28. Angela MacRobbie, *Settling Accounts with Sub-cultures: A Feminist Cultique*, in S. Hall et al (eds), *op. cit.*

29. Throughout the 1980s, for instance, *Smash Hits* (with a predominantly female teenage readership) has consistently outsold the traditional music papers (*N.M.E., Melody Maker* and *Sounds*) put together. Significantly, the older music papers ignore chart music almost entirely, provide only tokenistic coverage of black music, and concentrate instead on predominantly white, male forms of pop music, such as indie, rock and heavy metal.

30. Review of Paul Harrison's book *Inside the Inner City* by David Walker, *The Times*, 25th August 1983.

31. The Hawes Street Residents' Association and the Berryhill Action Committee are two of the groups participating in 'Telling Tales', an exhibition put together by groups and individuals living in The Potteries examining ways in which we make and use history.

32. Craig McGregor, *op. cit.* p.77.

SPORT: GOOD CLEAN FUN ?

Finbarr Whooley

Popular culture has traditionally received a very uneven treatment in museums. The reasons for this are many but perhaps the most important ones stem from an elitist notion that popular culture is not a proper topic for museums; the availability of good secondary research for curators; and the availability of relevant and interesting artefacts.

The first point represents a major hurdle. Are modern, lively, multi-faceted social phenomena worthy of museum attention? I think that the answer to that must be a resounding 'yes'.

The availability of secondary sources – the second factor which affects the treatment of popular culture in museums – is of particular concern to the social history curator. Most curators in medium and small museums are not employed as experts in a specific limited field (as they quite rightly are in the Nationals). These curators must rely on their own training, their background knowledge and their research abilities when planning exhibitions. It is no coincidence therefore that most social history displays in museums follow quite closely the concerns of academic historians working in the field – look at your standard nineteenth century gallery and the issues dealt with, sanitation, health, law and order; all issues of the historiography of the past 30 years.

The availability of relevant artefacts undoubtedly causes some areas to be better served than others within museum display. Museum stores are well stocked with corn dollies, truncheons and Second World War memorabilia which make it much easier for particular aspects of popular culture to be treated (especially within a historical context).

Sport fits very uncomfortably into all three categories. Firstly and perhaps most importantly sport is something which is ephemeral, it is the quintessential 'splendid irrelevancy', – all pervasive, complete ly modern and yet very conscious of its own history.

As a serious topic for academic study sport is only beginning to find itself. It was the sociologists who first saw the immense potential for sports studies and latterly the social historians have begun to do some fine studies into sport and society. And how does sport fare for objects? Everyone knows the images that a sport exhibition conjures up, the club history – pictures of teams, faded stars, cases of medals and a few tatty items of costume.

At the initial planning stages of the *Sporting Bodies* exhibition at the Livesey Museum we knew exactly what we didn't want and it was the display which I have just described. With hindsight it is clear that the planning took five distinct stages, most of which were instinctive and all can be used as a short checklist for use in future exhibitions.

Knowing what we didn't want was the first stage of the planning process; knowing our clientele was the second. Our clientele is made up largely of children and family groups. We normally have two school groups in the museum per day during school term. On vacations and weekends our visitors are parents and children. Our other significant visitors are older people and pensioner groups.

The third stage in the planning process came when we looked at the first two constraints and used them to decide the criteria which the exhibition had to fulfill in order to satisfy us and our audience. In order to stimulate the children, Livesey exhibitions need to be re-laxed and interactive. This formula has been successful at the Livesey since its inception in 1974, with the *Robots* exhibition in 1986–1987, and the *Light* exhibition in 1987–1988 representing perhaps the culmination of the process to date. Parents are often willing to just share their children's excitement but they and older people appear to like substance and history (history because for most grown-ups, museums tell the history of things with some form of narrative). Undoubtedly all our users like good objects which for kids are things that they can relate to, and for adults probably the very same.

The fourth stage of the planning process involved researching the topic. This proved to be a lot more difficult than we had at first imagined. Since so little work is widely available on the development of sporting history we decided that the exhibition must in some way 'tell the story' and thus we opted for a socio-historical narrative approach to the topic. The narrative concentrated on pre industrial versus post industrial sporting development. Like most social history topics it largely came down to the redefining of sport by the Victorians and how that has conditioned our perceptions of sport ever since. As regards the development of sport in the twentieth century it was decided to concentrate on specific themes, sport and sexual stereotyping, changing sporting technology, specialisation in sport and the growth of the 'Sport for All' movement.

The research problems put us in a Catch 22 situation regarding the fifth stage in the development of the exhibition – the choice of relevant objects. The Livesey has no permanent collection and depends on loans for its exhibitions. Until we could ascertain the correct emphasis that the narrative would take we were unsure of the artefacts that would work well in the display. Having eventually decided upon our approach we chose objects that worked on several levels. On the purely aesthetic level we borrowed two beautiful suits of armour from the Tower of London. We were also lucky to get from the London Transport Museum access to their poster collection. We displayed some objects that operated primarily on an evocative level. The primary example here was the National Portrait Gallery's collection of 'Sporting Thirties' photographs. This collection proved very popular with older visitors. In this category I would also include the mounted animals from the Horniman which we displayed alongside the hunting paraphanalia (creating at first a scene of rural idyll and then shattering it!) We included some unusual objects in the display; for example the lawn mower from M.E.R.L. which we used to talk about the growth of suburban middle class sports like lawn tennis. Some of the objects were essentially symbolic in content, especially the Trade Union material – a watch and a certificate commemorating the winning of the shorter working week and thus largely influential in the development of football into Britain's national sport. Finally there were fun objects such as toys, comics (which we also used to advantage when talking about stereotyping), memorabilia from collectors and a display that depicted the horrors of becoming a couch potato. We included a small children's play area with a sport theme and tried to keep some form of movement within the overall exhibition through the use of a continuous slide projection onto the back wall of the gallery.

The approach adopted in the Livesey exhibition was only one of a number that could have been taken to the subject of sport in society. Indeed several of the areas touched upon – sporting technology, sport and empire, women and sport – could be extended into displays of their own. In many ways we attempted to tell the most traditional story; we felt that we had to do that because such a story is not well known. People do not know about the development of sport like they know about the Industrial Revolution. Thus we considered the approach that we adopted to be a valid one.

One of the advantages of being a small museum is that those of us who plan and assemble an exhibition (in this case Sue Silberberg, Janet Vitmayer and myself) are the ones who subsequently work the exhibition with the school groups that visit the gallery. Since *Sporting Bodies* was more static than other recent Livesey exhibitions we knew that a lively education programme had to be offered. Formal educational work included a slide talk and quiz sheets. Relating the ideas discussed in the talks back to the objects on display proved very important and as the exhibition continued we tried to spend a lot of time in the galleries to do this.

Undoubtedly our education programme would have been much poorer without the work of the museum's two attendants, Mr. Bent and Mr. Hatch. The attendant staff assisted children with quiz sheets and painting, they explained particular aspects of the display and generally created a friendly atmosphere within the galleries. The gross under-utilisation of attendant staff that often occurs in the larger museums is a luxury which, thankfully, a museum of our size cannot afford. The result is a much happier working environment and a public institution that is very user-friendly.

The exhibition did not have enough movement to sufficiently hold the interest of the local children who visited the museum on Saturday. Thus we began to plan simple six-things-to-find-in-the-museum quiz sheets and encouraged kids to do some painting in the galleries. The first sheets were produced by the curatorial staff and then the attendant staff took over and continued to produce quiz sheets until the end of the exhibition.

My visit to Springburn Museum during the 1989 A.S.W. has caused me to reflect on whether or not the Livesey actually is a community museum. In a geographical sense the pensioners' groups that regularly use our facilities are not of a single community – although as South Londoners of a particular age group they constitute a community of their own. However our Saturday visitors do prove that we cater for one particular geographical community – the children and young adults of North Peckham. We take our responsibility to this group quite seriously and as a result the final panels in the *Sporting Bodies* exhibition were devoted to sports that people in the area can cheaply participate in. In an area with few facilities available to local children this information function is considered very necessary by the museum staff.

Returning to our initial theoretical perspective we can see that *Sporting Bodies* did not suffer greatly from any professional problems concerning its validity as a suitable exhibition topic. However it did suffer greatly from a lack of general secondary work and an under exposure of the work that does exist – it is interesting that Penny Wilkinson's research experience for the *That's Entertainment* exhibition is so similar to mine in that respect. This problem with the sources determined that we perhaps picked more objects which 'told the story' than excited many of our audience. In so doing we probably didn't sufficiently reconcile our clientele's interests with the overall 'look' of the exhibition. However as one of the first such exhibitions I feel that we weren't wholly unsuccessful either.

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SEX, VIOLENCE AND SOAP: THE MEDIA – IMPACTS AND INFLUENCES

Richard Paterson

The title of this paper is on initial reflection strange indeed; what on earth can soap opera have to do with sex and violence? Is this a new academic initiative, or throw back, to defend the New Right campaign, aided and abetted by the popular press, to bring the already tame TV companies even further into line with a new authoritarian regulatory zeal for the 90s?

Hidden beneath the ostensible title is another: What do we know, and how can we talk about, the impact of soap operas in different societies? How do we read beyond the illegible – beyond their obvious existence in markets as vehicles to sell audiences to advertisers. How do we engage with public understandings?

Soap operas were for many years critically dismissed in media analysis in the UK and USA as almost beneath contempt. They were not to be considered as aesthetic objects, after all they have no author, no centre, no conclusion and are aimed at the lowest common denominator tastes, and women at home. When they were considered it was to review their effect on their audiences – and they were variously seen as modes of social control, as reinforcing the familial ideologies, and eventually as contributing to the limited world-view of their devotees. These negative views have been contested by *inter alia* Hobson and Buckingham.[1] More recently American research has undertaken content-analysis of Soaps to show, wholly predictably and not very interestingly, that the Soap world now is one beset by mental disease, frequent mortality, alcoholism and so on.[2] However, here, we immediately meet one caveat: the culturally specific nature of the soap opera. Something to which we will have cause to return. Later work has taken the textual strategies of the soap opera much more seriously and has begun to work with the grain of audience research and audience reaction.

What seems to be commonly accepted today is the central importance of understanding the popularity and impact of the soap opera form. Whether it be broadcast executive, government minister, academic researcher, tabloid newspaper or Mrs Whitehouse, the Soap is good for comment – and it is mainly the impact of this never ending form that exercises such comments.

A few quick facts:

- in the USA since 1930 more than 100,000 hours of Soap has been broadcast on radio or TV.
- in Britain the top-rated programmes are Soaps
- in Brazil one telenovela gained an 84% share of the audience
- in Zimbabwe, India, Nigeria, it is the homegrown serial that gets the best rating; whether it is weekly or daily.

The dominant thematics are the contemporary everydayness (some would claim particularly the validation and celebration of women's concerns) and more often than not centred on community and family. The relationships are social, romantic and reflecting on kin ties and, in the case of America (again cultural specificity is important), the fictive narratives are concerned with aspects of American lives that have usually been marginalised on TV: parentage, family, the emotional consequences of romance, conflicting role expectations for women. *Morality* is central to the narrative drive and underpins the aesthetic pleasures of a narrative form which favours complexity, repetition and speech over simplicity, final clauses and closure and action.

Gender representations, then, include women of power, and this power is displayed in the private domain. I shall have more to say about the problematic relationship of soap opera to citizenship later in this paper.

Of course the origin of the soap opera in the USA was the desire of the advertisers to address the housewife, the housebound female, in the home. The first soap opera, on radio, in 1930 soon showed the soap manufacturers, and in particular Procter and Gamble, the way to cheaply, and repeatedly, talk to the daytime audience through its sponsored Soaps – a form which translated to TV in the 1950s and has provided a stable profit base for risky prime time ventures for the three networks in subsequent years (one-sixth of all network profits derive from daytime segments).[3]

But the profound changes in the American Soap communities in the last 60 years are significant. Soaps are no longer the homilies to family living – the positive social function foreseen by W. Lloyd Warner and William Henry of strengthening and stabilising the family by reinforcing listeners' view of the outside world as evil and unfulfilling and demonstrating that a woman's proper place is in the home. Now it is a world of multiple marriages, pregnancy, amnesia, temporary blindness, which do not affect the basic community, but in which death by murder is frequent and the most common medical condition is mental illness. An amoral work into which the moralists peer with dread.

What of British soap opera? First, of course, it should be noted that the day-part into which they are placed is different – British Soaps are shown in prime time, with the exception of the imports in afternoon slots. The amoral world is tempered by a realism of remembered communities which allows a difference in narrative space and narrative drive – the community centre *mise en scène* which underpins the character exchanges, acts of violence, mental transgressions, social problems and equal gender representation are however still part of the world; so that for instance Mary Whitehouse could complain of *EastEnders* in 1985: 'The show should be X-rated. This kind of thing is just not on. It is an adult-only soap opera. I shudder to think of the embarrassing questions parents face from their children after Sunday afternoon viewings.'[4] And this was before the fact of actor decisions necessitated, as it often does in long running serials, the twisting and turning of the narrative to accommodate change.

The soap is above all an industrial product – assured audiences, fully utilised studios, particular market segments – all ensure a long-life and a keen interest in success, although there have, of course, been significant failures (for instance Granada's *Albion Market*). It has a hybrid, high cost relative in *Dallas* and *Dynasty* – the success stories of early 80s American TV – but their narrative operations, though related, should not be confused with the non-stop serial.

Industrial cultural products can have beneficial purposes. In Nigeria, copying some early Mexican telenovelas, the soap opera has been developed as a popular mode of education (and this aspect still informs some British soap operas) – particularly for agricultrual innovation – while in Brazil and Mexico and other Latin American countries the telenovela has a different format (in that closure is always inscribed), but a similar industrial consideration, with political ramifications alongside the obvious commercial ones. In India there has been yet another development with religious and political overtures. Many, but not all countries (notable exceptions until recently were most European countries except the U.K. and Ireland) have adopted the format to their own cultural specificity; with high moral purpose often inscribed as a centrepoint. A recent consideration has been exportability, particularly in Brazil, Mexico and Australia.[5]

Soap operas bring together the advice show, the household hints show (key to a modernising society), the dramatic and the comic. Who watches and why and with what effects has then, hardly surprisingly, been a keen subject for social science. Of course this ties in with a series of political pressures which fear the influence of the media on the minds of the citizen and see TV as an alternative centre of power; usually manifest in outrage and blame when violence is perpetrated.

But soap operas have an existence outside these concerns about such content as sex, violence, taste, decency and morality. They exist for their audiences as part of their everyday life – at work, with neighbours, at college, at school, the proverbial bar talk. But to gain this acceptance into everyday life is itself more than just a matter of putting the fodder before the masses and expecting success. The key question, and the difficult one to answer, is that of the *ingredients* of *success*. The symbolism of soap opera and the particular explanations for success have to be accounted for.

Market research was conducted after the early episodes of *East Enders*. It 'revealed that viewers felt the characters had potential, but found the programme rather dreary and depressing . . . that conflicts within families were rather too close to home and therefore upsetting to watch'. Within 18 months the programme was, in Jonathan Powell words, 'at fever pitch . . . in the heart of the culture with the barriers between TV screens and people's hearts and emotions broken down'. Michael Grade attributed the success to the relationship of Den and Angie – 'the spark that set off the fire' – character with weaknesses, and a hint of villainy. For Powell it had been Michelle's baby – the human story.[6]

Identification becomes then a critical factor in establishing the 'cult' – thereafter the snowball effect makes the programme necessary viewing. The culture in process; processing and remaking the narrative enigmas against a gradually established constancy of familiar narrative space has been the hallmark of success. *Coronation Street* matured; *EastEnders* is now a maturing serial, without the intensity of identification; although the critical feeling remains even as the serial changes.

Neighbours – stripped across a week – targeted at a younger audience – gripped the nation last year. The modes of identification included Australian good humour, but in a most revealing way. The personae of the Kylie Minogue and Jason Donovan characters, stars both of the series and as pop stars, carried the programme to new heights of popularity.

Identification was clear in the diaries written for the *One day in the Life of Television* project. Thus an Oxfordshire teacher 'Everyone watches, young and old alike. Everyone is portrayed . . . Willingly or not, happily or not, these people are part of a community, which makes up its differences and where no one is lonely'. Or contrast with a Scottish housewife: 'Best time of the day, at least on the box . . . I'm a *Neighbours* fan. I'm not ashamed to say I'm hooked. I know it's a lot of nonsense, but it's good clean entertainment and it doesn't make you feel depressed like *EastEnders*'. Others try to explain why there is the phenomenon: 'They can't wait to find out who's fighting with who, who's going out with who, and . . . who's sleeping with who. That's what they really want to know. Or do they...?' And this passion spread across the range of ages – including university students, housewives, accountants. So, 'Poor mum has been known to sit through it three times a day: once 'live' at lunch time; once 'live' at tea time with me (Daughter) and once, on the video, when Dad comes home, if he has missed it at lunch time'. One writer summarised *Neighbours* success: 'I suppose what we are beguiled by is its prevailing 'niceness', in the nicest possible way'.[7]

Coming out of this project an exhibit has been developed for the Museum of the Moving Image on London's South bank. It takes as its centrepiece a teenager's bedroom decorated with Kylie and Jason posters, and the group of children are watching the 1 November 1988 episode of *Neighbours*. This programme, along with a 15 year old episode of *Fawlty Towers*, were clearly the most written about and popular programmes of that day.

Audiences for soap operas are large and diverse and there has to be an element to appeal to a wide range of viewers. This is facilitated of course by multiple characters and allowing a less than clear moral or ideological position – but this is not an unconstrained and simple pluralism of views. The narrative rhythm of community, as outlined previously, maintains a continuity – the wandering viewpoint of the reader can test their 'morality' against that of the characters across a range of dramatic incidents. Thus a partial list for *EastEnders* includes: teenage pregnancy, attempted suicide, violent protection racket, cot death, mental breakdown, fatal road accident, suspected murder, muggings, murder, disappearances, drug addition, marital bust-ups, rape etc.

But the agression will emanate from outside in the main (or outside the community – so the middle class is always 'other') – moral deviance is acceptable, petty crime is contained. For Mary Whitehouse this working through of psychological and emotional violence, the verbal brutality and deceit, are a fundamental assault on family life. We come full circle from a view of Soap (in America) reinforcing the familial, to one in which it undermines this domain. Using not dissimilar arguments.

In David Buckingham's book he reports how children watch *East Enders* to be shocked and for scandalous revelations in the narrative; of girls talking about sexual implications, boys of violence.[8] So what is the evidence? What is known of audience behaviour as a result of TV content is limited. The range of theories brought to bear on the subject has moved from a view of TV soaps as fulfilling psychological and social needs of viewers (particularly the uneducated), to a notion of personal influence, to more recent developments such as the uses and gratifications model, the cultivation paradigm (*pace* Gerbner), agenda setting, the active viewer, and an impoverished practical notion of consumer.

Underlying all debate is a continuing belief in the impact of television on the young and unstable mind; a paternalism and a variously defended regulatory framework which acknowledges the inability of citizens to choose for themselves. Despite all the rhetoric of choice, and the desire for the operation of a free market in television, there is a deeply ingrained fear of freedom for the masses. Why else would the government create a Broadcasting Standards Council? It errs on the side of caution, impelled by the unproven post-Hungerford questions, dedicated without hard evidence to a belief in television's power as an alternative source of power.

Television clearly is important. But is it as a public forum for debate tied closely to an idea of a citizen's rights, the social contract of information, education and entertainment? Here access to 'the news' of the nation (tying us together in a consensual unity) is as important as *Neighbours* (as a window on a world of continuing narrative pleasure). Or is it as something to be sanitized for fear of what Gerbner has called the 'mean–world syndrome', in which people's fear of the outside world are cultivated by TV watching. Already producers work within stringent, and ever changing guidelines on areas as diverse as language, violence, right to privacy. But the redefinition of the social purposes of broadcasting remains under assault from the consumerist lobby. Viewers *do* complain – particularly about bad language (followed by regional accents and duration) – but that is hardly surprising in a society undergoing profound change at all levels.

Ethical questions are central to this debate; an argument for green TV that doesn't pollute maybe should sustain questions of the morality of television, but without underestimating or ignoring the richness of the resources offered by TV forms to invest the lives of viewers with pleasures and principles. TV does have impact and influence, and Soap 'gets to the heart of the culture' as much, if not more than most (as Jonathan Powell would have it). I remain to be convinced of the amorality or negative effect.

References

1. Dorothy Hobson, *Crossroads: the Drama of a Soap Opera* (London:Methuen 1982), and David Buckingham *Public Secrets: Eastenders and Its Audience* (London:BFI 1987).

2. Robert Allen *Speaking of Soap Operas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985) p.36.

3. *ibid.* p.50.

4. Buckingham, *op cit*, p.133.

5. cf. A. Mattelart, et al., *International Image Markets* (London: Comedia 1984).

6. Buckingham, *op cit*, chapter 1.

7. Sean Day-Lewis (ed), *One Day in the Life of Television* (London:Grafton 1989), p.133.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT: POPULAR CULTURE IN HULL

Penny Wilkinson

In May 1989 Hull Museums opened a new temporary exhibition on popular culture entitled *That's Entertainment!*. This paper looks at the problems and solutions involved in presenting an exhibition on this theme, and in particular the problem of the lack of 3-dimensional material.

The exhibition is one of a series of annual temporary exhibitions at the Old Grammar School, Hull's new social history museum. The policy at the Old Grammar School is to present lively, accessible exhibitions on themes in social history. The target audience is the ordinary general public of all ages, particularly people who do not usually visit museums, and exhibitions, therefore, have to have broad general appeal.

The first exhibition at the Old Grammar School, on the theme of education, incorporated large cartoon graphics, music, playground chants, and interactive exhibits to create a cheerful, lively, gallery environment. When choosing the theme for the next exhibition it was considered important to select something lighthearted as a contrast to the relatively serious subject of education; popular culture was felt to be a suitable choice.

At this point it is necessary to explain how social history exhibitions are conceived in Hull. Our intention is to present exhibitions on themes in social history and the starting point for these is not the collections but the historical ideas. Social history collections contain a varied assortment of objects reflecting more the changing tastes and interests of previous curators than the ordinary life of the population. Because of their irrational and unrepresentative nature they cannot be the source of our ideas for an exhibition. We begin as historians researching the subject matter and determining ideas. Once this academic work has been carried out we can turn to the collections to consider how objects can be used, not just displayed, to explore and develop the historical ideas. This does not mean that objects are peripheral to the social history curator. When working on *That's Entertainment!* in the early stages I was referring back constantly to the collection, considering what objects we had and how they could be incorporated. Lack of objects, however, was not a reason to exclude subjects, like the cinema for example, which I felt were important. As curators our purpose is to display collections and they must be central to exhibitions, but interpretation must not be limited by the objects.

With these ideas in mind the planning of *That's Entertainment!* proceeded. An immediate problem that was raised was the scope of the subject matter. Popular entertainment can be divided into two areas, public and private entertainment, and within these areas are a myriad of subjects far too great to include in any temporary exhibition. The possibility of a narrative exhibition tracing the chronological development of popular entertainment was therefore dismissed as so much would have had to be omitted to fit into the space available. Instead just six subjects were chosen which are important both in the history of entertainment and in the history of Hull.

The exhibition looks at the history of popular entertainment in Hull from about 1750 to the present day by focusing on Travelling shows (fairs and circuses) theatre and music hall, cinema, pop music, the seaside and the museum. Each subject is presented in a self-contained section which both traces the history of the subject and examines the factors which have affected popular entertainment such as technological invention, the expansion of working class leisure time and purchasing power, and the growth of urban populations. The exhibition is not linear and visitors are encouraged to wander through the gallery rather than to follow a fixed route.

Having fixed the parameters of the exhibition I then could look in greater detail at the content. The biggest problem we had in presenting this exhibition was the lack of 3-dimensional objects for display. The majority of the relevant collections consisted of theatre bills and circus and fair posters which, despite their obvious significance and research value, would not alone create an interesting visual display. It was necessary to look firstly for more 3-dimensional material, and secondly to devise ways of displaying the 2-dimensional material in an exciting way.

This was achieved in the section on theatre and music halls by the use of reconstruction. A feature of the gallery, a raised platform at one end, was used to create a stage. A proscenium arch based on a Pollocks Toy Theatre model was erected, and the stage area was peopled with cut-out figures of famous characters from the history of the theatre such as Dan Leno and Sarah Bernhardt. These were produced photographically and enlarged to about two-thirds human size in keeping with the scale of the reconstruction. The illusion also included a 'backstage' area where the theatre bills were displayed in a random arrangement similar to bill posting. In this way we were able to display items in an interesting colourful environment rather than in a formal arrangement.

We were faced with a similar problem in the section looking at fairs and circuses, although the collection did include a fairground stall and three marionettes as well as the inevitable posters. The facade of the stall was used to create a frame within which the posters were shown but the section also includes a menagerie, a fortune teller and an Egyptian sideshow. The idea for the menagerie came from a story I researched, undoubtedly untrue, about the owner of a menagerie being eaten by his lion at Hull Fair. I felt that the inclusion of some large animals would create visual diversity and would also be a popular exhibit. I found it difficult to borrow a lion but included instead a tiger, a leopard, a bear, a seal, and two parakeets, all on loan from Leeds City Museum. They are displayed in cages based on a drawing of a Victorian travelling menagerie and help to illustrate menageries advertised on posters also in this section.

The Egyptian side show consists of a set of replicas of the contents of the tomb of Tutankhamun made for the British Empire Exhibition 1924 by William Aumonier who had connections with Hull. They are displayed in a cellar area underneath the stage area and help to build up the fairground feel of this section of the exhibition, as does the fortune teller's tent, which is a complete fabrication by our designers, although fortune tellers remain a major attraction at Hull Fair. The animals and the Egyptian replicas are not part of the material culture of popular entertainment but they were used here to represent aspects of entertainment.

The section looking at museums as entertainment similarly includes nothing which is directly relevant to the history of entertainment. It has a legitimate place in the exhibition as it considers the role of museums as sober educational entertainment promoted by the philanthropic middle classes as an alternative to other more frivolous and less salubrious alternatives. It was also, though, an opportunity to put on show a large amount of material from the archaeology, natural history, maritime, and ethnography collections which again added 3-dimensional material to the exhibition. The objects were displayed in serried ranks as they might have been in the original museum in Hull on Albion Street.

The cinema was included in the exhibition despite the fact that initially we had almost nothing to display. An exhibition on popular entertainment *had* to consider the cinema, which in my view is one of the most powerful and popular forms of entertainment in the twentieth century. The history of the cinema has, however, left very little in the way of material culture. A trip to the cinema might result in a programme, half a ticket and an ice-cream wrapper and only the programme is likely to end up in the museum. The architecture of cinemas is often stunning but is difficult to convey in a small gallery, but in any case going to the cinema is about watching films and so this section centres on a video showing clips from well-known British films. The video is located in a darkened area which suggests the atmosphere of a cinema interior whilst at the same time creating good viewing conditions and which help to contain the sound. We will always include sound and movement in exhibitions where possible. We want to present information in as many ways as possible and video is one alternative to text and graphics.

The video was not the only feature in this section. To supplement our collections we carried out a collecting drive. This involved appealing to the local population through the press and media for objects and photographs to loan or donate, and also approaching

specific individuals and companies. The local cinema responded by donating usherette material (a torch and ticket string) refreshment advertising and a queue sign. A local resident brought in a Mickey Mouse Club membership card and also agreed to be interviewed about her memories of cinema-going as a child in the 1930s. Other items loaned or donated included a juke-box, a pinball machine, four gold discs from Hull pop group 'The Housemartins', and in response to a specific appeal on Radio Humberside, a Teddy Boy's suit.

The purpose of the collecting drive is not just to bring in material for the exhibition but also to involve people in the preparation of the displays. It also puts us in touch with people who could help us research the exhibition. A problem we encountered was a lack of information. Most sources provided information on the history of institutions, dates for openings and closures of theatres and cinemas, for example, but little on the actual experience of going out. For this information we were reliant on people's personal experience, and therefore interviewed a range of people about their memories of visiting the seaside, being a Teddy Boy, and working at Hull Fair to choose a few examples. The material from the interviews was included in the exhibition on a tape for visitors to listen to on headphones, and was also used in the publication produced to accompany the exhibition. The use of oral history therefore provided us with a unique source of information on the history of popular entertainment.

The exhibition took just over one year to prepare. A draft outline was produced in May 1988, a full outline brief in August 1988, and the complete exhibition brief was produced in November 1988. Oral history interviews were carried out over the Christmas period and the publication was written in January and February 1989. Preparation of the video was drawn out over a seven month period from November 1988 to May 1989. The exhibition was designed in-house by our team of one 3-dimensional and two 2-dimensional designers. The cost of the exhibition, exclusive of staff time, was approximately £8,000: publicity and the publication cost an additional £3,000. To date (December 1989) the exhibition has attracted 70,000 visitors and the Old Grammar School is the most popular museum in the service. We feel that we are therefore achieving our objective of presenting exhibitions with broad popular appeal.

By the use of ingenious design, alternative research sources like oral history, varied methods of presenting information, like video, project-orientated collecting and extensive poaching from non-social history collections we were able to overcome to a great extent the problems I have discussed: some nagging doubts however remain. The amount of information we were able to include was very limited. It was necessary to research as thoroughly as possible the areas we covered in order to understand the subjects but the final text was condensed to such a degree that ideas became generalised and simplified. Exhibitions cannot be comprehensive though and in the end my aim in this exhibition was to point out a few reasons why entertainment has changed whilst at the same time creating an enjoyable experience for the visitor.

THE FINAL CUT: SUMMARISING A WEEKEND OF POPULAR CULTURE

David Stockdale

Reading the Illegible is certainly an apt title as half a year later I try to decipher the notes for my concluding remarks at the Glasgow Annual Study Weekend. I can only claim the benefit of hindsight for any additions I have made since.[1] All deficiencies of understanding that remain are the fault of Mark Suggitt for asking me to sum up in the first place.

This conclusion was not meant to be an itemised precis of the papers we heard in the previous two days - more of a few personal thoughts on what I found both provocative and relevant. We had been given a lot to think about and I dwelt on two main areas - the theory of popular culture, and the practice of interpreting popular culture in museum exhibitions.

On the theory side we were presented with many definitions of popular culture. 'Culture' on its own is hard enough to define and I got three definitions written down. The first is culture as *product* (real objects) - this is perhaps the definition which traditionally museums are happiest with. The second is culture as *consumption* (eg pop music, fashion). These are products which people consume in various and individual ways; at the same time this model of culture suggests that culture is in part modelled from outside - records, clothes, books, films are all manufactured for us (the consumers) in forms which the producers decide on.[2] Thirdly there is culture as *way of life* (who you do). We are really talking here about group patterns of behaviour.

Does 'popular' culture exist, or is it just a convenient and lazy shorthand? We were told what popular culture isn't - it isn't the culture of the elite. David Russell gave us a tour of different attempts to pin down what is meant by 'popular'. One approach was to equate 'popular' with 'of the people' or 'of the majority'. This doesn't actually get us very far - 'the people' is as loose a term as 'popular' - and we do not always want to know about 'the majority' in a society. Nor can we be sure that these represent uniform homogeneous groupings. In another explanation David described a model of society which was made up of oppositional and impinging cultures. This is a very useful description which accepts the multi-cultural nature of society and allows for both conflict and cross-fertilisation between the different cultures.[3] However it seems to me that if we go with this definition we have moved away from the concept of popular culture altogether. Surely we have to go back to the identities of class, gender, race and peer-group, and their various combinations, to find the groups whose patterns of behaviour, whose culture, we want to examine? Isn't this what was hiding under the liberal disguise of popular culture all along?

On the practical side we face the question of how we display and interpret cultural patterns in our museums. Of course this is nothing new - there is plenty of existing practice in displaying the cultures of the nineteenth century bourgeoisie and the twentieth century trade unionised classes. The challenge becomes how to represent group cultures that have been under-represented so far in museums? We could do worse than look at the earlier three definitions of culture as our starting-points. With culture as product we are looking at 'the best of' approach, - promoting or including the cultural achievements of a particular group in our displays. This could be dismissed as an aesthetic approach; yet the function of the museum in conferring implied approval, status and value on achievement cannot be denied - how we choose to use that function, conservatively or radically, is another matter. In the case of culture as consumption we can look how a group interacts with something that it is given to do; a product such as entertainment, or an activity such as work. If we consider culture as group behaviour patterns then we should be dealing with activities that are generated from within the group. These activities might encompass a group's self-identity; their religious observance or their history in a particular geographic area.

Chris Waters in his extremely stimulating contribution explored the concept of the representation of culture as a constant battlefield.

He illuminated this process with the example of the transformation of British working-class life in the 1930s. This was a period when the working classes were embracing such novel diversions as the wireless and the cinema. Bourgeois intellectuals on the left were suspicious of what they saw as the Americanisation of mass culture, and held up an idealised myth of urban working-class culture in its place. The government and the BBC annexed this myth for potent use in the war-effort: northern English voices were heard on BBC radio for the first time, and there was a northern English radio serial, *The Armstrongs*. Similarly the British film industry were producing Blitz movies, such as *Millions Like Us*, which stressed the ordinary citizen's role on the home front; while Hollywood suggested the war was in defence of the twee property-owning *Mrs Minniver*. Arguably this self-conscious fêting of working-class identity has been an important strain in Britain's self-image ever since. This invention of one version of the British working-class tradition is a reminder of how cultural representation can be subverted to serve the aims of elites. Therefore when we as curators decide to portray a group's culture we must be clear *why* we are representing it - what are our aims? - and *who* that representation is for - is it for the group itself or other groups?

During this weekend we saw excellent examples of exhibitions which treat with wide cultural patterns - recreation at Hull, and sport at the Livesey - and we have visited museums which shine by virtue of knowing what their interpretative aims are and who exactly they are trying to serve; viz the People's Palace and Springburn Museum. Other thoughts come out of this. It is not easy for a museum display, on its own, to get across the fun of a cultural activity such as entertainment. Where displays are reinforced with two-way interaction between staff and visitors, as in (unfashionable?) educational museums aimed at children, a greatly more tailored and relevant message can be communicated. Thirdly, the aim of using cultural representation in a radical way raises the issue of the involvement of groups and sections of the public in the choice and execution of our displays.

For my final comment I would like to go back to the theme of cultural appropriation and quote from a poem by Liz Lochhead called 'The Carnival Horses'[4]. Suitably, it is about the market in restored carnival horses in the USA:

> Later when he's
> skewered in a loft
> somewhere in NoHo
> silhouetted with his flung hooves and tassel-tail
> re-gilded against prettily exposed brick
> he'll make each
> new owner who paid through the nose for him imagine
> he feels the long slide down the sticky pole,
> that he could ride again
> the perfect carousel at the fair he never
> ever went to
> on his favourite chosen beast
> he never even for a dime possessed.

The Sunday morning finished off with a lively debate on the involvement of the public in exhibition work. Was such involvement tantamount to handing over control of our work, or was it an essential part of contemporary curatorship?[5] This question had barely been aired when the Conference ran out of time. Let's hope that the discussion will be renewed at Hull in 1990.

Notes

1. I have also benefitted from reading Gillian Greaves' article 'Reading the Illegible' in *SHCG News*, 21. (Autumn 1989).

2. A sophisticated series of analyses on how and why mass-produced objects take the form they do can be found in Adrian Forty's brilliant book *Objects of Desire: Design and Society 1750-1980*. (Thames & Hudson, 1986).

3. David Russell also included in his paper the useful idea of 'areas of exchange' between the ideologies and cultures of dominant and subordinate groups in society. This would seem to have particular relevance to the study of political group culture, for instance.

4. Liz Lochhead (1984) *Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems*, (Polygon [Edinburgh University Press], Edinburgh), p.26.

5. For an examination of how people can be involved in the exhibition process see Veronica Hartwich's review of the People's Story, 'History presented with a sense of reality', in this Journal, and Helen Clark & Herbert Coutts, 'Telling the Story', *Museums Journal*. (November 1989).

A MUSEUM THAT SAVES LIVES: THE HOME OFFICE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM AND ITS PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

Gareth Griffiths

In 1978 the doors closed on a unique museum in Britain that was established to 'promote the safety, health and welfare of industrial workers'. The Home Office Industrial Museum was opened on 3 December 1927, becoming the Safety, Health and Welfare Museum in 1946, on Horseferry Road, Westminster. As early as 1910 the concept of a museum which would demonstrate the latest techniques of safety and welfare was approved by the Treasury, based upon similar museums in Milan, Berlin, Munich, Amsterdam, Paris and Lausanne which had been in existence since the beginning of the century under the name of 'Workmen's Welfare Museums'. The new museum, which incorporated the latest safety features in its design, was completed by 1914 when the First World War delayed its opening. Influential in creating a movement for the creation of the museum was the *Daily News*' 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' held in the Queen's Hall, London in 1906. Among the key organisers for the exhibition were Mary MacArthur of the Women's Trade Union League and Margaret Macdonald of the Women's Industrial Council who were closely involved with Women's Factory Inspectorate.

When opened, the museum had a floor space of around 10,000 sq.ft. in which the approved techniques for protecting the industrial worker against accidents were demonstrated together with examples of conditions to promote the health and welfare of the workforce. The museum was run by an inspector from the Engineering section of the Factory Inspectorate, with an emphasis placed upon working exhibits. The safety features included within the building design were the latest examples of modern lighting, heating and ventilation as well as such new features as non-slip treads and a vacuum cleaning plant. It was intended that the museum would be used by Trade Unions, Manufacturing Associations, Medical and Technical Colleges as well as the designers of factories, machinery and power plant and the makers of guards for machinery and other protective appliances. The Factory Inspectorate also used the museum as a training centre where the principles of industrial safety were taught; within the museum there was a cinema and a lecture theatre. To make an impression upon the terrible level of industrial injuries was the awesome task of the museum; the scale of this task is indicated by the following comparison:

The 1st World War 1914-18:

British Wounded 1,693,262

British Industry 1919-24:

Industrial Injuries 2,385,766 (killed 20,263)

The Museum was divided into three sections: the first covered the latest techniques for safeguarding workers using power machinery in industries ranging from shipbuilding and the textile industry to woodworking and the chemical industry. The second area covered labour saving devices, rescue apparatus, industrial diseases as well as welfare – canteens, recreation, first aid and protective clothing. The final area reviewed examples of ventilation, lighting, heating as well as noise insulation and the clothing to be worn by workers in dangerous or dirty occupations. The museum displayed both good and bad practices, showing equipment that had caused injuries – a grim exhibit was a torn mass of rags, just recognisable as being the clothes of a man who was dragged into machinery when his clothing was caught in an unprotected revolving shaft.

The Home Office Industrial Museum, Horseferry Road, 1927 (Crown copyright).

Brewing: cleaning storage vats, c.1918. A photograph from the archive of the Home Office Industrial Museum (Crown copyright).

Of great interest is the photographic collection and film archive held by the museum; many of the photographs were taken by factory inspectors recording a wide range of working conditions. At the core of the archive was an important collection of photographs taken during the First World War recording the contribution of women to the war effort. The creation of this archive is inextricably linked to the development of a Women's Factory Inspectorate and the movement in the late nineteenth century to collate information on the domestic and working conditions of the working classes as a tool to influence legislation.

The Women's Factory Inspectorate

Since 1833 male factory inspectors had enforced the factory laws. In 1842 the law forbidding the employment of women underground in mines was passed, followed by the Ten Hours Act which limited the workday of women and children in the textile industry. The Ten Hours Act was extended in 1867 to cover all factories employing more than fifty people. Many organisations concerned with women's welfare and rights feared that the protective legislation would result in unemployment for women; which in many industries it did. Initially, the Women's Provident and Protective League (later to become the Women's Trade Union League) opposed the protective legislation arguing it would severely restrict job opportunities for women. Following the 1847 Act however, the League decided that if the protective legislation was to be of any use to women then women had to do the inspecting of factories. Following a long campaign, the first 'Lady Factory Inspector' May Abraham was appointed in 1893 together with Mary Muirhead Paterson. May Abraham had been secretary to Emilia Dilke the leader of the Womens Trade Union League. The success of these appointments was such that a year later two more inspectors were appointed: Lucy Deane and Adelaide Anderson.

The work of the factory inspectorate was by no means limited to the inspection and correction of conditions in the industrial workplace; of equal importance was the collection of data to support the amendment of existing rules and assist the passage of new legislation. It is clear that the women inspectors supported the view that the collection of statistics was an essential part of the approach to improving the conditions of working women; this philosophy is echoed by the founding resolution of the Women's Industrial Council which had close links with the members of the factory inspectorate:

> In the opinion of this conference it is desirable that a central council shall be established to organise special and systematic inquiry into the conditions of working women, to provide accurate information concerning those interests, and to promote such action as may seem conducive to their improvement.

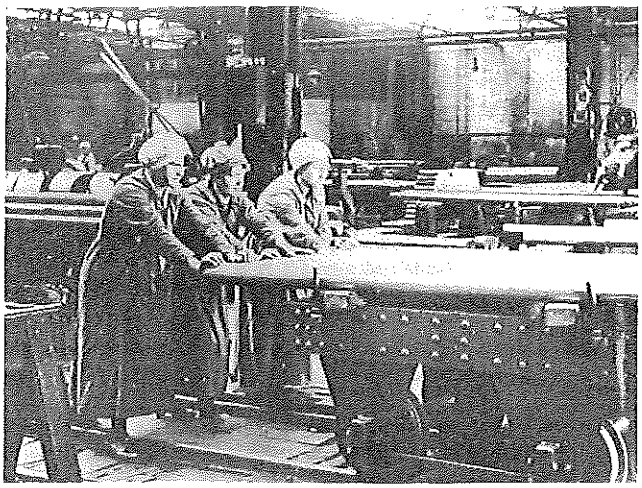
To achieve this end the Council would:

> investigate the actual facts of women's work, and collect and publish trustworthy information about the conditions of their employment.

This interest in social issues and the difficulties involved in making sense of them, dates to the 1840s. The passion for quantification derived from methodically classified facts – on the surface, the most rational and ordered means of social investigation – is exemplified in the growth of statistics as a science: the Board of Trade set up a statistical office in 1832, the British Association founded a statistical section in 1833, and in the same year Manchester and London both founded statistical societies.

Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London*, the first volume of which was published in 1889, opened an era of statistical social research, which grew out of Booth's desire to 'create a large statistical framework which is built to receive accumulations of facts out of which is at last evolved the theory and the law and the basis of more intelligent action'. The Women's Factory Inspectorate had close links with this movement for social investigation. May Abraham worked on the Royal Commission of Labour 1891-94 with Clara Collet who previously had worked with Charles Booth as an investigator into the conditions of women's work in the East End. Beatrice Potter (Webb) worked closely with Booth in the early stages of his survey and was a friend of Abraham as were Gertrude Tuckwell, Margaret Llewellyn–Davies and Ben Tillet. Seebohm Rowntree, who carried out his own survey in York following Booth's London survey, worked closely with the Women's Factory Inspectorate during the First World War on women's welfare in industry. A further link between the late nineteenth century social survey movement and the Women's Factory Inspectorate is provided by Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith who later became the director of the committee that undertook the *New Survey of London Life and Labour* in 1928 and was a contemporary of Rowntree. Llewellyn Smith was a member of Booth's team of investigators and later

Aeroplane manufacture: doping the wings, c.1918. A photograph from the archive of the Home Office Industrial Museum (Crown copyright).



Tinplate making, c.1918. A photograph from the archive of the Home Office Industrial Museum (Crown copyright).

joined the Board of Trade and then the Ministry of Labour where he worked closely with the Women's Factory Inspectorate during the First World War analysing the degree to which women were replacing men in industry.

A chronological listing of the main Social Surveys in Great Britain between 1880 and 1935 is given as an appendix to this paper.

The First World War

The immediate effect of the outbreak of war was a drastic increase in unemployment, and many of the industries worst hit were those which, in peacetime, employed large numbers of women. In dressmaking, only 34% of women workers were working full-time, in boots and shoes a mere 13% of women workers were in full-time employment. To mitigate this position a Central Committee on Women's Employment under Mary Macarthur was established to organise relief work. The Central Committee was advised by the chief lady inspector of factories, Adelaide Anderson and the local committees supported by the district inspectors. Soon however, there was a shortage of skilled labour as the war created a demand in industries which traditionally employed men. 'Substitution', the extensive use of women in place of men in industry, began in the summer of 1915 on a limited scale, and with the introduction of conscription for men in January 1916 women increasingly replaced men throughout industry. During the war the number of women employed in industry increased by over a million, with approximately 700,000 replacing men. For example, in July 1914, 212,000 women were employed in metal and engineering industries, by July 1917, 819,000 were employed.

As the demand to meet production quotas grew so it became unpatriotic to talk about limiting hours of work or be too demanding about safety. The Home Office permitted the relaxation of the Factory Acts. Shift work, long hours, Sunday work and shorter mealtimes all became the norm. Sylvia Pankhurst took up the matter of the long hours and poor conditions worked under:

> Sometimes a woman wrote to me, broken down in health by overwork, complaining of long walks over sodden, impromptu tracks, ankledeep in mud, to newly-erected factories; of night shifts spent without even the possibility of getting a drink of water; of workers obliged to take their meals amidst the dust and fumes of the workshop. *(The Home Front (1932), p.278)*

Concern about the conditions led the Ministry of Munitions to establish a commission to 'consider and advise on questions of industrial fatigue, hours of labour, and other matters affecting the personal health and physical efficiency of workers in munition factories and workshops'. Working with Seebohm Rowntree on the commission the women inspectors supplied Rowntree with 1,396 surveys of conditions in factories which employed nearly 200,000 women. The results were classified 'according to the degree of

urgency for his attention'; 31% of the factories were rated as acceptable, the rest lacking adequate mealrooms, washing facilities, rest rooms, first-aid service and 'suitable supervision' were rated as second class (49%) and 20% were rated as third class.

The Women's Work Committee

In March 1917 the decision to create a National War Museum was announced and a committee formed with Sir Martin Conway as Director General to oversee the collection of material and the acquisition of a site for the museum. Conway outlined the purpose of the museum as being:

> When peace returns and men are back at home, the years will pass and memory of the great days and adventures through which they lived grow dim. It's the purpose of the Museum to be a place which they can visit with their comrades, their friends, or their children, and there remember the past and behold again the great guns and other weapons with which they fought, the uniforms they wore, pictures or models of the ships and trenches and dug-outs in which weary hours were spent, or positions which they carried and ground every yard of it memorable to them.

The collection of material was delegated to four sub-committees which covered the three services and the fourth, 'The Women's Work Sub-Committee', covered the contribution of women to the war effort, both at home and at the front. The Women's Work Sub-Committee was chaired by Lady Norman and included Lady Haig and Lady Askwith with Conway's daughter Agnes as secretary. In the first months of its work the Women's Work Sub-Committee confined itself to collecting material from secondary sources such as newspapers etc. Contracts were agreed between the sub-committee and the leading press agencies for copies of photographs of women. Initially, the aims of the sub-committee were limited to collecting portraits of all women who had been either decorated, died in the service of their country or had performed outstanding deeds of valour. Most of this material was collected through the newspapers.

Towards the end of 1917 a significant shift in the approach of the committee occurred. The appalling losses at Passchendale forced the proposals for the Museum to be reviewed by a committee under Lord Crawford, one of whose members - the President of the Board of Education, H.A.L. Fisher - urged that the Museum be more selective not exhaustive. At this period the Women's Work Sub-Committee was strengthened by the addition of two new members: Frances Durham, Chief Woman Inspector of Employment at the Board of Trade who later became Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Labour, and Adelaide Anderson now the Chief Lady Inspector of Factories at the Home Office. These two women quickly began to organise the committee into adopting a more vigorous approach to recording women's contribution to the war effort. Working with Professor Chapman of the Board of Trade Statistical Department, Frances Durham submitted a scheme to collect the statistics of the employment of women. By the beginning of 1918 this statistical evidence was used by Durham and Anderson to tabulate the level of substitution of men by women in nineteen industries. From this statistical base grew the desire to create a photographic record of the 'significant' areas of substitution. By March 1918 the sub-committee was able to report that:

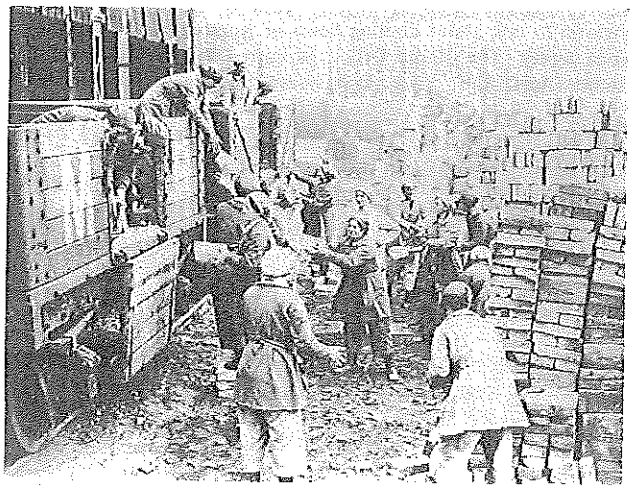
> In cooperation with the Chief Lady Inspector of Factories the Women's Work Sub-Committee is at work on the formation of a series of photographs for record purposes which shall show the most important processes in which women have acted as a substitute for men in the factories since the war.

On the 20th August 1918 two photographers from the Department of Information were seconded to the Women's Work Sub-Committee; H. Nicholls and G.P. Lewis.

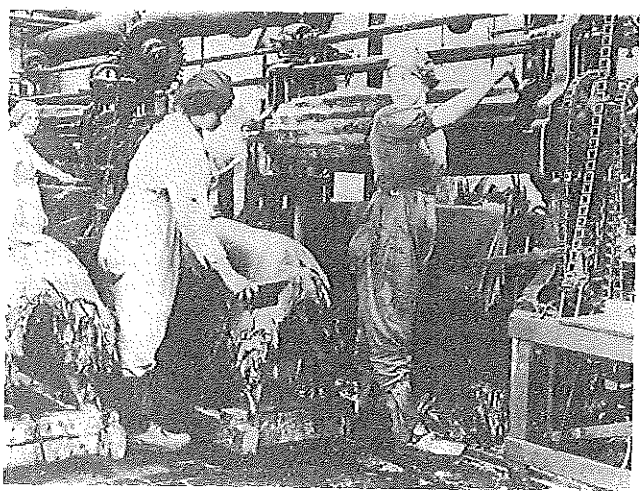
Horace Nicholls had been employed by the Department of Information as their official photographer on the home front since 1917. The photographs taken by Nicholls were not intended for use by the British Press, instead they formed a part of the Department of Information's propaganda campaign abroad – which was at this period largely directed towards America. Nicholls had made his name as a photojournalist during the Boer War and on his return had specialised in photographing the Edwardian Season. Of Lewis unfortunately very little is known as he appears and then disappears almost without trace – he was unquestionably a very fine photographer.

As soon as the two men were seconded to them in August, Durham and Anderson quickly organised the recording of women's work, drawing upon the statistical archive they had built up.

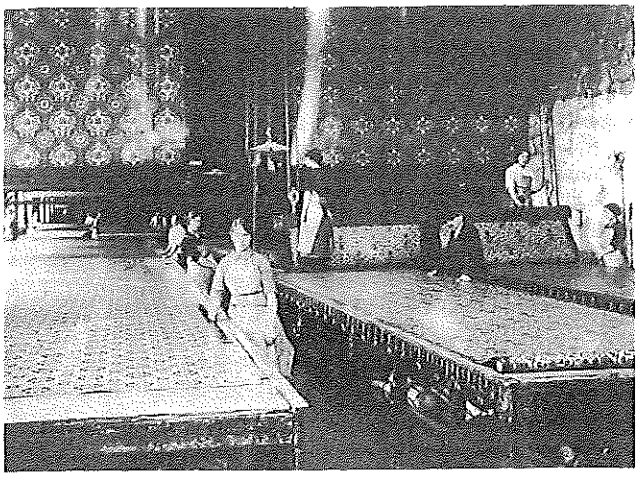
Nicholls worked principally around London while Lewis covered the industries outside the capital. Lewis's visits to a factory were organised through the Women's Factory Inspectorate; he was always accompanied by the local inspector who clearly briefed him on the processes to be photographed. Particular attention was paid to producing a record of all aspects of working in a factory and many photographs were clearly taken to illustrate points of health and safety. Lewis in particular managed to produce some strikingly 'natural' photographs which record very effectively the dirty and heavy work undertaken by the women. The range of industries covered by this ambitious project in a short period is astonishing; in one trip lasting a fortnight Lewis recorded women's work involving Chemicals, Flour, Rubber, Asbestos, Glucose, India Rubber, Aluminium, Paint, Dye and Munitions. In less than four months Lewis took over 1,300 photographs. By October 1918 enough material had been produced to enable the Women's Work Sub-Committee to hold an exhibition of Women's Work at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. The success of the exhibition which attracted eighty-two thousand visitors in a short period, reflected the extent to which domestic press censorship meant that the nation knew as little about what was happening in the trenches as they did about the work being carried out by women in the shipyards and engineering shops.



Brickmaking, c.1918. A photograph from the archive of the Home Office Industrial Museum (Crown copyright).



Tanning: striking out, c.1918. A photograph from the archive of the Home Office Industrial Museum (Crown copyright).



Linoleum manufacture: the examing tables, c.1918. A photograph from the archive of the Home Office Industrial Museum (Crown copyright).

At the end of 1918 Lewis left the project and the committee reviewed their progress in producing a record of the contribution of women to the war effort. An obvious gap was the work of women in France, which with the cessation of hostilities the committee was eager to record. Although Horace Nicholls was still working for the sub-committee it is interesting that they appointed a woman, Olive Edis, to carry out the work. A recognised studio portraitist before the War, Olive Edis was at work for the sub-committee by March 1919 photographing the women working for the Red Cross, Y.W.C.A. and the Voluntary Aid Detachment. Edis brought a new depth to the project record: She was photographing something new, not only to her in terms of photographic practice, but also to the women who were her subjects. Their excitement and energy emerges clearly in the many portraits which Edis produced. Her war workers have a grace and presence which speaks of their confidence as skilled and informed women. The central theme of her work is a documentary of busy accomplished women.

The post-war world did not bring the bright future that women workers and women inspectors had hoped for. Women workers faced disappointment and unemployment as the new avenues that had seemed to open up during the war shut down. Women inspectors struggled with hard questions about the place of women in the work force of a peace time economy; in the first two weeks after the armistice 113,000 women were discharged. Adelaide Anderson observed that 'too little thought seems to have been given, by those discharging women, to what might be done in the way of adaptation of work for them or improvisation of training to prevent their unemployment'. By 1920 Anderson's Annual Report made grim reading, not only had women been shut out of 'mess' industries, but males had replaced females in some industries that had once been considered the province of women. Even in laundries, methods were changed to create jobs for disabled soldiers, and many of the skilled jobs women had done were eliminated. The frustrations of women who were removed from their wartime jobs were summarised by a factory inspector as being:

> During the war, women's powers and capacities were called into fully play and no one denies that there was a response beyond all exception. Today there is little call to a strenuous and sustained effort, entailing full use of powers and faculties. Instead, interesting work is taken out of their hands, and they are being forced back into the routine of their hitherto normal occupations.

On the completion of Olive Edis' work in France the Women's War Work Sub-Committee was disbanded. The archive was divided between the new photographic department of the Imperial War Museum and the Home Office's Factory Department. The Home Office's collection passed to the new Home Office Industrial Museum in 1927.

Within the establishment of the Home Office Industrial Museum there are a number of important strands which relate to the development of social history museums and the movement to document contemporary issues. The creation of the museum was part of a broader movement which looked towards using museums and exhibitions as being part of the means by which specific contemporary concerns could be addressed, and if possible, resolved. The photographic archive grew out of the attempts to produce a contemporary record of the First World War and the contribution of women to it. The photographic project, although lasting for only a short period, was certainly unique at that period in its approach which was based upon detailed research of the field and the identification of areas of priority. The extent to which the photographers were briefed and the later analysis of the record being produced was also unknown at this period.

Acknowledgements

At present (December 1989) the photographic archive is in the process of being moved. Please contact the author for further information.

I am very grateful to Gaynor Kavanagh for sharing with me her knowledge of the background to the creation of the Imperial War Museum and for suggesting a number of sources. For further information, see her 'Museum as Memorial: The Origins of the Imperial War Museum', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.23 (1988), pp. 77-97.

This research could also not have taken place without the support of the staff of the Photographic Department of the Imperial War Museum and I am particularly grateful to Jane Carmichael for help and advice.

APPENDIX

Social Surveys in Great Britain: 1880-1935
General Social Surveys arranged chronologically

Booth, Charles. 'Conditions and Occupations of the People of East London and Hackney, 1887', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* (June 1887), pp.277-331.
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Sherwell, Arthur. *Life in West London: A study and a Contrast* (London, 1897).

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Howarth, E.G. and Wilson, M. *West Ham: A Study in Social and Industrial Problems* (London, 1907).

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Reeves, M.S. *Round About a Pound a Week* (London) (London, 1913).

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Anon. 'Life in a Highland Glen'. *Sociological Review*, Vol.XIX, No. 2 (1927), pp.120-9.

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Farquharson, A. 'Survey of Social Conditions and Problems in Margate', *Sociological Review*. Vol. XXI. Nos. 1 and 2. (1929).

Smith, H.L. *The New Survey of London Life and Labour* (London, 1930).

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Ford, P. *Work and Health in a Modern Port: An Economic Survey of Southampton* (London, 1934).

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Young, T. *Becontree and Dagenham: A Report made for the Pilgrim Trust* (1934).

SEARCHING FOR STANDARDS: THE YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE INDUSTRIAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS SURVEY

Janet Kenyon

In March 1989 I joined the Yorkshire & Humberside Museums Council. I took up a two year post with the lengthy title of 'Research Assistant, Industrial and Social History Collections'. The post's brief is to look into the increasing problems of storing and collecting industrial and social history material in the region. At the end of the two years I will be producing a report of findings and recommendations. The report's aim is to provide the region with information which can be used as a basis for policy making and planning effective use of resources in collecting and collection management.

My post has been created as a result of previous work carried out by the Industrial and Social History Collections Working Party. The Working Party was the result of the work of YHMC Joint Advisory Panel which reports to YHMC Board. In May 1986 they began to look at the storage and collecting within Yorkshire and Humberside. The problems they encountered were common to many museums, regardless of size or type. They included:

- Lack of funding, due to the unglamorous, behind the scenes nature of storage.
- Stores in unsuitable places such as cellars, attics and other areas not required for display or office space.
- Uncontrolled, indiscriminate and unplanned collecting in the past. This has helped produced a solid core for many collections, but also resulted in the duplication and collection of objects which are irrelevant to the museum, or poor examples of their type.
- Overcrowding in stores. In some cases this is leading to desirable acquisitions being turned down, due to lack of space.

The Working Party were aware of the need to plan ahead to avoid past mistakes, and make effective use of available resources. This is of particular interest to the Area Council who offer advice on all aspects of collections management as well as placing high priority on grant aiding storage. The need to encourage more formalised co-operation between museums and plan on a more regional basis was also important. Too often co-operation between museums is dependent solely on the personalities and whims of individual curators. Looking at the experience other professions especially within Local Government, it is evident that if museums do not solve their own problems, less palatable solutions may be imposed from above. We can no longer sit in ivory towers and think that life will pass us by.

Bearing these factors in mind, the Working Party sent out a questionnaire to all museums in the region with relevant collections. It asked for basic information on storage, environmental control, existing collections, present collecting and staffing levels. They hoped that this would provide some initial indication of the situation in the region, and areas which need further investigation.

The questionnaire produced an 80% response rate, with some inconsistency in replies. However, the basic message was that half the stores are totally full, a quarter 90% full and the rest 70% full. Stores for large objects are full in all cases. In some medium and small items stores space is only available as a result of overcrowding and incorrect storage. Only a third of the museums replying to the questionnaire have a written collecting policy. Not all of these have been formally ratified. Only 14 out of 46 who replied have paid, full time staff in the subject areas covered by the questionnaire.

The Working Party felt that these responses justified further research into the problem. They recommended the creation of a two year post to do this. This would allow time to investigate the problems in greater depth.

The Research Assistant post was set up with financial backing from the Office of Arts & Libraries and the Museums & Galleries Commission. This gives some indication of the interest shown in the survey. Planning and collection management policies based on well researched, accurate information are increasingly seen as the way forward. Both the OAL and the MGC see the findings of the report being beneficial to other regions and other disciplines.

The ground work carried out by the Working Party gave me a useful indication of the areas to investigate. I also liaise with the Assistant Director (Curatorial) and a Steering Group of six museum professionals from varying disciplines and areas of the region. Regular group meetings provide a useful place for discussion, ensuring that the project is heading in the right direction and producing information relevant to its objectives.

As previously stated, the overall brief of my post is to investigate the problems of collecting and storing industrial and social history material in the Yorkshire and Humberside region. Within this I am looking at:

- The size and scope of existing collections
- Current collecting activities
- Subject areas of neglect and duplication
- Storage provision - especially environmental control
- Staffing levels
- Collection management

I will also be taking into account the presence of two national museums within the region (the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television and the National Railway Museum). It is important to consider what effect, if any, they have on collecting and other museum activities in the region.

My first few weeks in post were spent settling in and doing the necessary background reading. A number of similar projects have been carried out throughout the country. These are not all confined to the fields of industrial and social history. Reports and surveys on conservation and in other disciplines such as biology and archaeology also proved relevant in their objectives and survey methods used. I also spent this time contacting people who had been involved in such surveys. In every case they were extremely helpful, and I am most grateful for their advice.

Prior to my arrival, the Steering Group had chosen twenty museums to be surveyed in detail. These had been chosen as they held industrial and social history collections of significant size and content. All other museums in the region with relevant collections will also be surveyed, but in a less detailed, more impressionistic way. Background reading and discussion with colleagues and the Steering Group helped me to decide how best to approach this task. Personal visits to each museum seemed by far the most effective way to collect information. It is intended that I visit all the region's industrial and social history museums. To help with systematic and consistent recording of information at each site I have compiled a series of survey forms. These combine the Working Party questionnaire and questions which provided relevant replies from an Area Council archaeology survey. This will show any changes since the first questionnaire was sent out, as well as providing additional information.

I complete all the forms myself through a combination of observation, and interview and liaison with staff. In this way I can go into greater depth than possible in a postal questionnaire. Inconsistency and ambiguity can also be avoided. I use the Social History and Industrial Classification (SHIC) when listing the subject areas covered by collections in detailed surveys. It is used in an object based rather than contextual way and provides a simple, ready made and consistent way of recording information.

To help consistency when evaluating care of collections, I use a Collection Care Guide. This has been compiled by myself, the Assistant Director and the Steering Group. It simply sets out the areas of physical collection care to be observed; environment, light, cleanliness, general storage and individual storage. Within each area of gradings are given from A to E. Good intent is also taken into account when using this system. Museums aware of problems and actively attempting to improve the situation are given a plus with the grade awarded in the relevant section. Great interest in this sort of guideline has been shown in most of the museums which I have surveyed so far.

Collections which have traditionally attracted less interest or require special care are highlighted in the survey. These cover areas such as photography, oral history, ephemera and textiles. Each category is given a letter code so that this information can easily be retrieved.

In view of the large amounts of information which I am collecting, a computer is essential. It provides by far the quickest, easiest and most versatile way of recording, retrieving and analysing information.

The methodology I have mentioned was initially tested in a pilot scheme at two very different sites; a large city museum service and a small independent volunteer run museum. Only a handful of minor adjustments were necessary. The methodology has been used at all subsequent sites and appears to work well.

It is not possible as yet to give any indication of the survey's findings. Up to now I have largely been involved in actual surveying rather than analysing the information. However, one general impression so far, is the lack of any existing standards or guidelines to help when approaching collection management problems. It does seem very much to be a question of each to his/her own. Amongst its other objectives this survey should try and provide information to help remedy this.

ANTI-SUFFRAGISM AND POPULAR CULTURE

Felicity Premru

This article deals with one of the negative elements in British society during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, namely the opposition to votes for women, and gives a brief indication of surviving evidence of anti-suffragism in popular culture.

In spite of the fact that Britain remained a strong bastion of resistance to women's suffrage for more than half a century, the ultimate success of the suffragists and tone of subsequent histories often serve to make the suffrage cause look like a relatively popular and inevitable one – impeded largely by obstructive parliamentarians. Because of the nature of the movement there was far less produced or preserved than by the suffragists. Consequently, though recent literature is now redressing the balance, the opposition movement has been largely ignored and probably under-estimated. Yet anti-suffrage ideology, which was intimately linked to contemporary notions of race, nation, motherhood, Empire and to some extent eugenics, attracted a surprising range of political and class sympathy. The struggle for women's suffrage provoked widespread hostility and an active opposition.[1] Backed by select interpretations of biology and psychology, anti-suffrage arguments rested fundamentally on the 'separate sphere' ideology which divided public and private life, advocating distinct but complementary roles for men and women as ordained by God or nature, and based on social Darwinism and the 'physical force' argument which justified the racial and sexual domination of the white male at home and abroad. Anti-suffragists insisted that, but for a few sexually embittered 'surplus' women, the majority of women did not want the vote, and complained that hysterical suffragists, were starting a sex-war which would harm everyone. They urged working-class women to realise that the vote would do little to improve their situation, and to women in general not to antagonise male voters and risk a 'regime of redoubled coercion and suppression'.[2] They

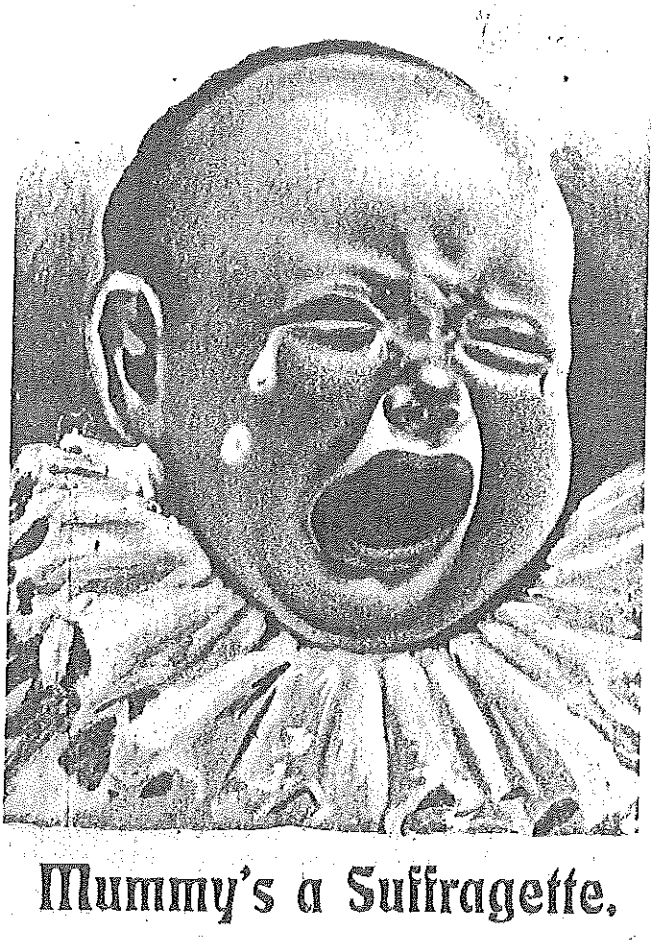


Plate 1: 'Mummy's a Suffragette', Bamforth and Co. (Holmfirth Postcard Museum).

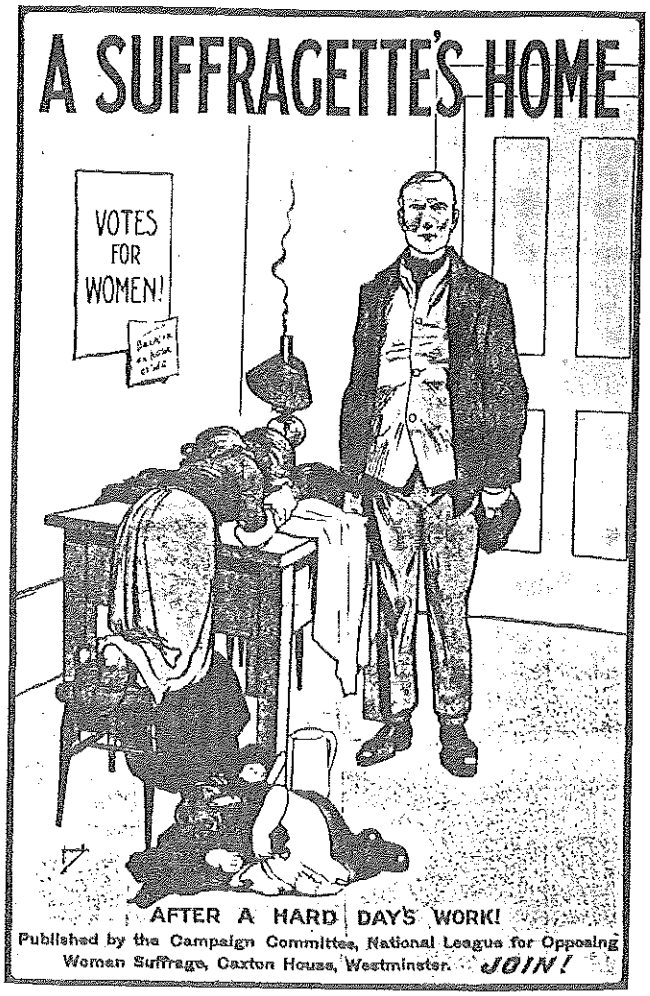


Plate 2: 'A Suffragette's Home', postcard by John Hassall (Museum of London).

appealed to the conservatism of the working man who risked losing what little status he had by allowing women to compete. They warned that the enfranchisement of women would threaten family life, lead to racial decadence, effeminize society, and at a time when many working people were sold the idea of Empire, ultimately imperil Britain's world position.[3]

Such arguments were reiterated by the Anti-Suffrage League, the formal opposition body which was convened in 1908 in response to the militant Women's Social and Political Union and to the general revival of the suffrage issue. Initially it was called the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League, but in 1910 it merged with the Men's Committee to become the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage. From its inception the movement was a paradox – women were entering the public arena to insist that their sex stay out of it. Financed through aristocratic and business connections (including several notable brewers), suffragists saw it as a sorry gathering of women acting as a mouthpiece for a male-sponsored and male-dominated cause. In fact the organisation was far more complex and included a surprising number of women reformers who encouraged women's limited participation in local government and social issues in addition to domestic life.[4] Its main publication was the tedious *Anti-Suffrage Review*, which lasted, like the organisation, until 1918. Its content depended largely on suffrage activity, and the Leagues' propaganda was ironically imitative of suffragist initiatives. Although they clearly held some sway through their formidable parliamentary and press network, it is doubtful whether the League were effective as counter-propagandists, or did much more than preach to the converted. More interesting perhaps is the contemporary informal propaganda and the re-inforcement of anti-suffrage ideas in popular culture.

Although not necessarily equatable, anti-feminism, misogny and anti-suffragism (often disguised in sentimental scenarios) were endemic in a society which engendered fear and hatred as a form of social control. With varying degrees of subtlety these attitudes found all manner of expression from philosophy to the picture postcard.

Amongst cultural establishment figures, anti-suffragists included Rudyard Kipling, Henry Newbolt and Edward Elgar. Contemporary fiction, such as the popular novels of Mrs. Humphry Ward (a founding member of both the League and the Settlement Movement), and less overtly some of Conan Doyle's work, rejected women's emancipation and promoted the Edwardian ideal of the 'womanly woman'. Even the purportedly progressive novels of D.H. Lawrence, portrayed women suffragists as unfulfilled and 'unnatural'.[5] Anti-suffragism was well represented in the arts and academia, but the League often referred to the popular opposition to votes for women. In 1910, Hilaire Belloc argued against a suffrage bill on the grounds that:

> ...the great weight of popular opinion is utterly against this proposal. Members must know it. In the songs of the populace, in their caricatures, in their jokes, in their whole attitude towards the movement, the populace dislike it.[6]

There is limited material to support or refute his claim, but post-cards and printed ephemera – at the height of popularity in the Edwardian era – provide one source. Good examples of anti-suffragist leaflets, posters and postcards have survived in the John Johnson collection at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, as well as the Museum of London and the Fawcett Library. Other cards are to be found at the Holmfirth Postcard Museum and the People's Palace in Glasgow. These collections also include some very virulent misogynist material which suggests that the 'sex war' had been waged for some time and was not, as anti-suffragists asserted, a phenomenon started by the suffragettes. The Patrician League was not averse to exploiting 'the rich vein of popular misogyny whose vulgarity it otherwise disdained': there was plenty of material to adapt for anti-suffrage purposes.[7] One subject which seemed to supply an endless theme for pictoral parody, was the imagined domestic disruption resulting from the political activities of the

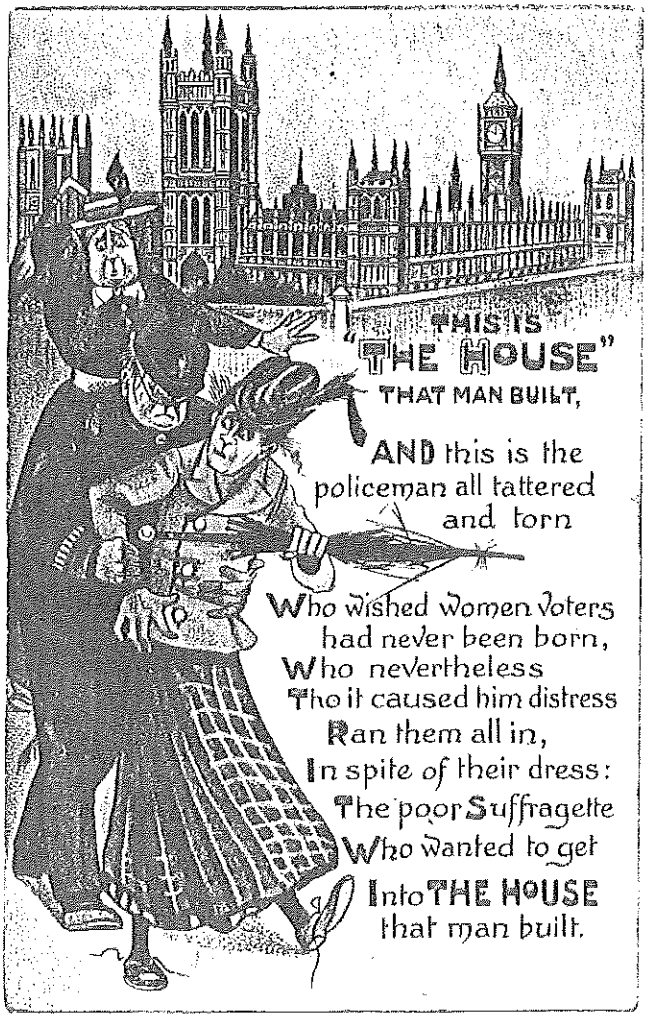


Plate 3: 'This is the Policeman . . .', postcard (John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library).

Plate 4: 'These are a Few of the Ladies of Fame . . .', postcard (John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library).

all-too 'modern' woman of the house. It was used in cards such as *Her Night Out At The Club*, which pictures a formidable female returning in the early hours of the morning from a debate on 'The Duties of a Wife'. She finds her exhausted husband asleep in bed recovering from the rigours of role reversal, one hand resting on the baby's cradle and the other clutching its bottle.[8] Other cards on the subject of the neglected family were first levelled at feminists and suffragists, and later at the suffragettes; one of these simply shows a tear-stained baby screaming 'Mummy's a Suffragette!' (Plate 1). John Hassall, a popular artist working for the postcard firm Davidson Bros. (and later to feature in the production of First World War posters), took up this theme for the League, most famously picturing the family breakdown in *A Suffragette's Home* (Plate 2). One variation on the theme of the hen-pecked husband swipes at the lack of femininity of a fierce suffragist. She is in the act of *Taking It Out On Hubby*, ranting 'I tell you we *will* have votes you big massive brute!, at the submissive little man and cowering cat.[9] In another series, different scenes at Westminster, were accompanied with comic variations on the nursery rhyme, 'This is the House that Jack built', which rail against the fitness of women to participate in the parliamentary process (Plates 3 and 4).

Women's Freedom League member, Maud Arncliffe-Sennett collected seaside postcards and placed them with her collection of newspaper cuttings, letters and suffrage ephemera. Aghast at the comic stereo-typing of women – 'sex-starved' spinsters and scrawny women who solicit male attention, and lewd jokes about illicit liaisons while 'the wife' is absent – she writes that the subjects of these cards 'Must be a woman, must be old and must be ugly, and there you have it! Real solid British Humour catered for.'[10] Many anti-suffragist cards like *Girls I didn't Marry. The Suffragette* portrayed suffragists as 'the shrieking sisterhood' – viragos or oddities who couldn't attract men. Others reflect the sexual aggression apparent during scuffles between hostile crowds, police and suffragist, or snidely suggest, that what these women really

craved was sex. Cartoons of policemen indecently assaulting indignant (and less than indignant) militants were commonplace. One image reflects the hostile anti-suffragist jibe that undesirable suffragettes secretly enjoyed such physical contact. A large middle-aged woman, waves her 'Votes for Women' flag and grins gleefully as she is carried off by an officer, calling 'Slow march, constable, I'm having the time of my life!'[11] Rather more subtle are the cards featuring white geese which appear to parody the elegant white attire of the processions of suffragists in 1907. The *Great Suffrage Demonstration* in which, 'Miss Hissy Addresses a Meeting of the Goose's Social and Political Union', repeats the idea of misguided, women without men, with the pun, 'Every Proper Goose Should Have Her Own Propagander' (Plate 5) Later in the campaign the increasing number of attacks on property, the window-smashing campaign and the subsequent imprisonment of suffragettes sparked off new themes. One example shows a deranged convict dreaming of past activities with an 'old coke hammer', declaring triumphantly that, 'In her present abode there are none to smash, SO SHE CAN'T DO IT NOW!' (Plate 6).

As well as the usual 'types' – angular harridans and pretty innocents – female suffragists are portrayed as a separate species – ludicrously large and overpowering, or minute and helpless in comparison to the men. They are pictured as contrary children, a variety of dumb animals and more vocal creatures. Puppies and kittens brandish hammers – the symbol of the militant – to make themselves heard (Plates 7 & 8). Some cards drew on an older mass of hostile material. Amongst a host of unpleasant images are nags and gossips controlled by torturous implements such as the jaw-clamp or branks. These suggest vicious ways to obtain 'Peace At Last', by severing or nailing down the offending tongues of women (Plate 9). The nagging tongue 'on the loose' was also the theme of a number of anti-suffrage cards and the age-old fear of dominant women wearing the trousers is repeated time and time again.

Whilst much of this material was anti-feminist or merely anti-woman, there was also an element of class hostility aimed at interfering middle-class reformers who were criticized for being out of touch with the reality of working-class life, or dismissed as puritans intent on spoiling mens' fun. In the music hall, songs and jokes provided social commentary not only on the plight of the poor – housing conditions, rent-evasion and moonlight flits – but also dealt with class and position. Sex and morality, gender and role-reversal, were, as in the sea-side postcard, recurrent themes, and called for the popular double-entendre. Although they have not lasted like the better-known music hall acts, parodies of the mainly middle-class women's rights campaigns, and more particularly of the suffragettes, seem to have added to the entertainment. Some of these were gentle jibes, knocking the authorities and their reaction to the reformers as much as the women themselves. One ran

> Oh! What a Happy Land is England
> Where Suffragettes have had a nasty jar!
> All their efforts, Sad to say,
> Ended in a Hollow-way!
> Oh! What a happy lot they are![12]

The Museum of London has copies of two songs, courtesy of the British Music Hall Society, which ridicule the antics of the militants. *Put me on an island* regrets that some girls have 'got into a fighting mood of late' and asks to be saved from 'the woman of today', with the refrain running

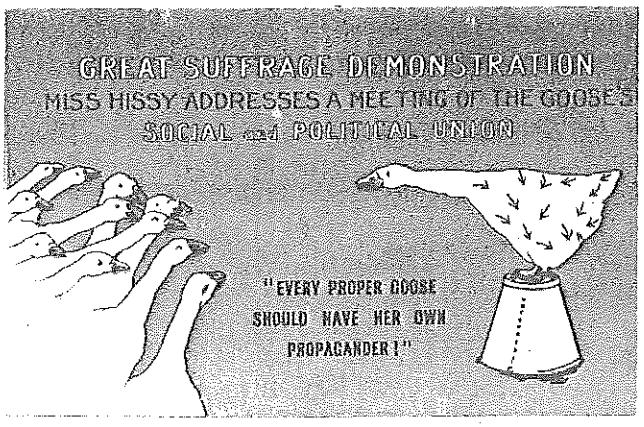


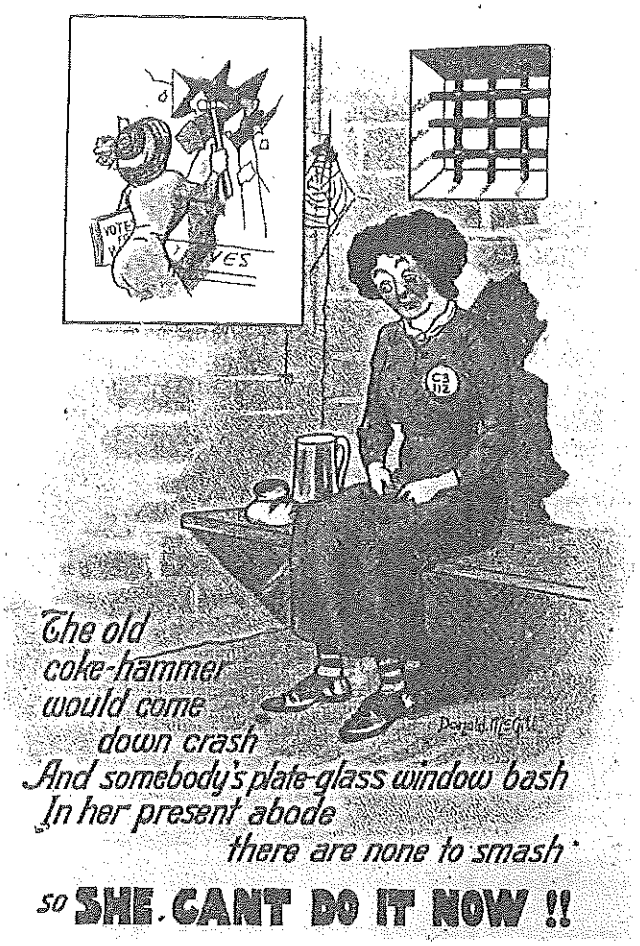
Plate 5: 'Every Proper Goose . . .', postcard (John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library).

> Put me on an island where the girls are few,
> Put me amongst the most ferocious lions in the zoo,
> You can put me on a treadmill and I'll never, never fret,
> But for pity's sake don't put me near a suff-ra-gette![13]

In a similar vein the relevant verse in *P.C. 49*, laughs at the undignified tussles between women and police, which took place during incidents such as 'Black Friday' when a six-hour street battle followed suffragette attempts to 'rush' the Houses of Parliament on the 18th November, 1910. It concludes by taking a swipe at the contemporary controversy over Maude Allen's Salome dance and the attempted censure by the Decency League.

> One night they held a meeting to advance the Suffragette:
> The Sergeant said 'We need a lot of men they can't upset'.
> He looked around the station, then he shouted, you can bet,
> For P.C. 49.
>
> But how those women mauled me when they caught me by the throat,
> They tore the clothes right off my back, to try and get the vote,
> For all they left me wearing was the collar of my coat,
> With 'P.C. 49'.

Plate 6: 'She Can't Do It Now!', postcard (John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library).



P.C. 49! Anyone can have this little job of mine.

They ripped my clothes to ribbons, so for
help I had to call:
The Sergeant looked at me and said, as I stood
by the wall,
'I thought it was Maude Allen, but it wasn't
her at all,
It's P.C. 49'.[14]

Non-militant suffragists and suffragettes evoked a common contempt – there was little distinction made between militant and traditional campaigners. As the suffragettes hit the headlines they were even incorporated into popular recreation and street games. When interviewing an agricultural labourer's son for *The Edwardians* Paul Thompson found that the atmosphere at election-time provided fun for some Edwardian children.

> We used to have a rough band. We'd go out in the street with old tin cans knocking and making a aitch of a noise... We used to sing,
>
> *Mrs Pankhurst*
> *She's the first*
> *And Mrs Lily with a nine-pound hammer in her hand*
> *Breaking windows down the Strand*
> *If you catch her*
> *Lay her on a stretcher*
> *Knock her on the Robert E. Lee.*
>
> Hit her on the bottom that means I suppose. She tied herself to railings didn't she?'[15]

Suffragette notoriety seems to have created a popular market for novelty toys, dolls and games. Following the police raid on WSPU

Plate 7: 'Votes for Women', postcard (People's Palace Museum, Glasgow).

Plate 8: 'It Can't Be Did', postcard (People's Palace Museum, Glasgow).

headquarters, the Flashograph Company produced an optical toy in the midst of national speculation about the 'disappearing' Christabel Pankhurst.[16] Others, less than flattering, illustrate the degree of contempt which the militants were frequently regarded. The provenance of these items is uncertain – they were probably commercially or home-produced rather than brought out by organised anti-suffragists. Examples include 'Miss Flora Copper' a bespectacled suffragette doll which forms part of the Lovett Collection at the Welsh Folk Museum. Waving a *Votes for Women* flag it bears a resemblance to the nineteenth-century caricatures of Lydia Becker, leader of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Society from 1869 until her death in 1890 (Plate 10). Other surviving toys include a small, deranged looking 'Jill-in-the-Box' which jumps out of her hiding place to make her demand. It is now at the People's Palace in Glasgow (Plate 11)

Suffrage meetings and street campaigns provided scope for audience participation and the biographies of suffrage campaigners give numerous examples of crowd hostility and heckling by both adults and children. Some of this was ostensibly good-humoured. In the nineteenth-century, *Punch* had mocked famously that, 'Women who want women's rights, Want mostly, women's charms'. (an anti-feminist charge which persists in the popular press in the late twentieth-century).[17] In 1912, Viscountess Rhondda's first attempt at open-air speaking was greeted with laughter when someone in the crowd held up a 'Blokes for Women!' placard.[18] Meetings were frequently sabotaged, and campaigners were subjected to both verbal and physical abuse. Emmeline Pankhurst described several close escapes, another WSPU member, Hannah Mitchell, describes the jeers, taunts and even violent out-bursts during her tours of northern market towns.[19] On some occasions the police helped to protect them, but 'at times their sex-prejudice overrode their sense of justice', and in Middleton gangs of menacing, jostling, youths

were 'encouraged by the inactivity of the police, who just stood around, some of them openly grinning, and to whom we appealed in vain'.[20] On Black Friday, however, women protesters were subjected to violent attack and sexual abuse, not only by angry crowds, but also by the police themselves. George Dangerfield described the extraordinary events in Parliament Square where,

> Bannerettes were torn and trampled; women were struck with fists and knees, knocked down, dragged up, hurled from hand to hand, and sent reeling back, bruised and bleeding, into the arms of the crowd. They were no longer demonstrators; they were monsters, their presence was unendurable. They were pummelled and they were pinched, their thumbs were forced back, their arms twisted, their breasts gripped, their faces rubbed against the pailings: and this went on for nearly six hours.[21]

Other scandalous scenes took place at Llanystymdwy and at Wrexham in 1912, where suffragettes interrupting Lloyd George on his home ground were 'beaten and stripped almost naked'.[22] Such hostility was not restricted to any one group. For example, several religious organisations were pro-suffrage though many were adamantly opposed. As far as the unions were concerned, while Liddington and Norris have uncovered evidence of thriving pro-suffrage activity amongst women trade-unionists in Lancashire, exclusively male trade-unions – such as the dockers led by Mann and Tillett – displayed both anti-feminist and anti-semitic predjudices, excused by the fear of the undercutting of wages by female and immigrant labour.[23] The Labour Party led by anti-suffragist Ramsay MacDonald, failed to adopt women's suffrage at its Party Conference until 1912, and leaders of the far left, including H.H. Hyndman, and Belfort Bax, the author of *The Fraud of Feminism* and *The Legal Subjection of Men* excused their anti-feminism by labelling the suffrage campaign a 'bourgeoise diversion' from the true class struggle.[24] Hence Mitchell reports that,

> At an indoor meeting at Ashton, a group of youths, many wearing Christian endeavour badges wrecked our meeting, assisted by several members of the Social Democratic Federation, who for some reason were violently opposed to us. Sometimes it seemed as if the whole world was against us.[25]

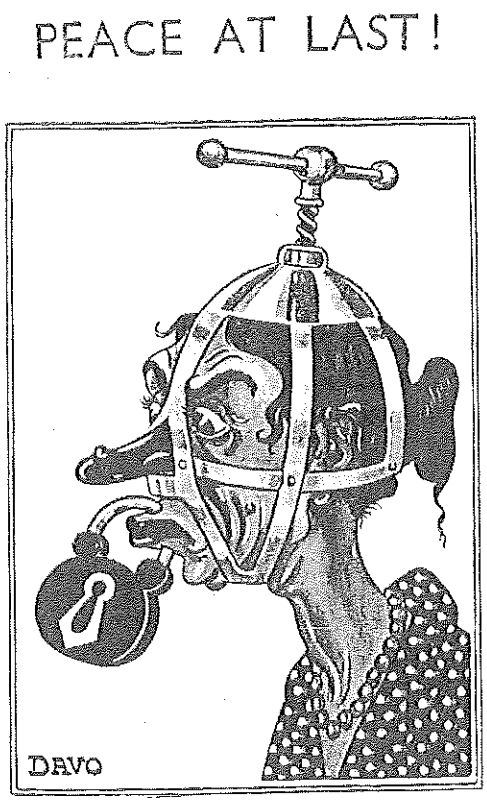


Plate 9: 'Peace at Last!', postcard by Davo (People's Palace Museum, Glasgow).

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1. See Brian Harrison, *Separate Spheres. The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain.* (1978).

2. Mrs Lynn Linton, quoted in Susan Kingsley Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain 1860-1914.* (Princeton 1987), p. 72.

3. The WNASL manifesto and report of the inaugral meeting was printed in *The Times* 22nd July 1908.

Plate 10: 'Miss Flora Copper', suffragette doll (Lovett Collection, Welsh Folk Museum, Cardiff).

4. Female anti-suffragists included Violet Markham who later defected to the other side, and the housing reformer Octavia Hill. Beatrice Webb had also initially opposed votes for women. See Harrison, *op. cit.*, and Linda Walker Riley's D. Litt thesis (Oxford, 1977), 'The Opposition to Women's Suffrage 1867-1918' for parliamentary proceedings, the conduct of the League, and dissent in the movement.

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7. Lisa Tickner, 'The Hysteric, the Militant and the Womanly Woman: Images of Feminity in the Edwardian Suffrage Campaign' in *Feminist Arts News* vol. 2, no. 5 (1987).

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10. Maud Arncliffe Sennett Collection, vol. 4. p. 76.

11. *Slow March Constable*, Museum of London.

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21. George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935), p. 136.

22. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement* (1931), p. 392.

23. Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us* (1978).

24. Harrison, *op. cit*. pp. 41, 146.

25. Mitchell, *op. cit*. p. 156.

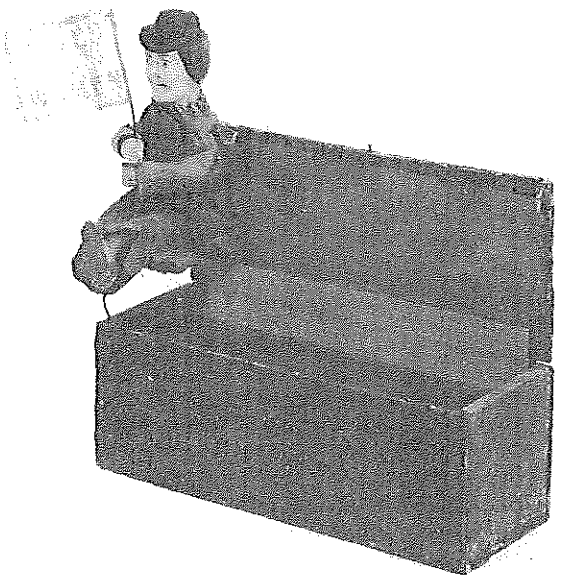

Plate 11: Suffragette 'Jill-in-the-Box' (People's Palace Museum, Glasgow).

ANTI-SUFFRAGISM: SOURCES AND READING LIST

Felicity Premru

The first, and still the main published work on the anti-suffrage movement, is Brian Harrison's *Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain* (1978). In a pioneering study, as useful for the questions it highlights, as it answers, he begins to explore the nature and strength of anti-suffragism and the work of the Anti-Suffrage League. As an organisational history it provides useful insights and illustrations, though some of his analysis is open to question. While attempting to survey the 'social, economic, intellectual, and even physiological dimensions' of the opposition he becomes immersed in anti-suffragist biological arguments. In doing so he inadvertently lends credibility to some of their claims, causing one critic to declare the book 'a monument to unconscious sexism'. The author also refers to the wide-spread conservatism in British society and describes incidents of the overt hostility of working-class crowds to the suffragists, but as he mainly concentrates on the formal opposition, he does not fully discuss the nature of this reaction.

Recently there have been two very different works which cast a more feminist light on the anti-suffrage phenomenon. In Susan Kingsley Kent's *Sex and Suffrage in Britain 1860-1914* (Princeton, 1987), the author argues that the women's suffrage movement, as part of a wider feminist struggle, was more radical than a simple demand for political enfranchisement and she analyses the issues concerning women's self-determination and sexuality during this period. She suggests that sexual issues are fundamental to an explanation of both the risks taken by many women during the struggle for the vote, and the strength of the hostile opposition. *The Spectacle of Women* (1988) looks at the 'agitation by symbol' and visual impact of the suffragists' campaign. In this colourful work, Lisa Tickner also examines the imagery of anti-suffragism and the ensuing propaganda war. Both of these texts add useful dimensions to a discussion of anti-suffragism.

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HOUSING AND THE COMMUNITY: APPROACHES TO INTERPRETATION AT THE PEOPLE'S STORY, EDINBURGH

Susan Jeffrey

The People's Story Museum is Edinburgh's new Social History Museum, about the life and work of ordinary people in Edinburgh from the late eighteenth century until the present day. As the capital of Scotland, Edinburgh is more often celebrated for its royal connections, its castle and palace and its international arts festival than for its working class heritage. *The People's Story* will help to redress the balance and give the people of Edinburgh access to their own history. The impetus for the foundation of the museum came from a 1984 District Council Labour election manifesto which promised a museum of Labour and Trade Union history. This metamorphosised into a more wide ranging social history museum. In dealing with the history of the whole city we are representing not just one community but several. There is diversity of experience from the old city centre tenement flats through peripheral housing schemes to high rise blocks. Edinburgh's population includes an ethnic minority element, predominantly Asian and Chinese. Employment has been found in the rubber works, printing, baking and retailing trades, to name but a few.

One of the most exciting elements of *The People's Story* project has been the involvement of local people. A project called 'Memories and Things' was set up by the Council and the W.E.A. to work with reminiscence groups. The weekly discussions of the two 'People's Story Reminiscence Groups' were to provide valuable information for the museum and to keep curators right on many facts. Members of the groups came from two different areas of Edinburgh – one an inner city tenement area and the other a post war peripheral housing scheme – so they had amongst them a varied experience of the city. The reminiscence groups' sessions were all taped and transcribed and individual interviews were done for each topic in the museum. For the earlier periods, where it was impossible to get quotes of working class Edinburghers, contemporary written accounts were incorporated into curators' texts.

While many of the topics included in the museum deal with areas specific to one group of people, such as a certain trade or political movement, housing is a concept which everyone can identify with. Shelter is a basic human necessity. While there may be a few individuals who choose to live on the streets, most of us either live in or want to live in houses (the word 'house' is taken to include flat in Scotland). Housing is dealt with in three chronological sections in the museum.

From the eighteenth century until the present day housing in Edinburgh has changed considerably. At the beginning of the period the town was concentrated on the ridge that runs from the castle to Holyrood, known today as the Royal Mile. For defensive purposes it was safer to contain the town on the ridge and building was restricted on the North side by the Nor' Loch. This, combined with the fact that a feu duty or tax was payable on land area rather than number of habitations, necessitated building upwards. Most of Edinburgh's housing was in tenements or lands, tall flats, sometimes 13 stories high, with common external stairs. Before the draining of the Nor' Loch in 1763, people of all classes were crowded together in the tenement Old Town. While it would be wrong to say that there was no class division, there was certainly a greater social mix in Edinburgh at this time than in other British cities. Rich and poor often lived on different floors of the same building, with the rich favouring the middle floors because they were not too near the smelly streets, nor as difficult of access as the top floors. Edward Topham, a contemporary commentator, observed in 1774 that 'The High Street in Edinburgh is inhabited by a greater number of persons than any other street in Europe' and the following year added that 'No people in the world undergo greater hardships, or live in a worse degree of wretchedness and poverty than the lower classes here.'

The first gallery which the museum visitor enters has been designed to recreate an eighteenth century close (that is, an alleyway between tenement buildings). Walls are clad in fibreglass stonework. The sounds of the eighteenth century street ring through the gallery with horses hooves and street vendors cries, and a smell of horse manure

adds to the atmosphere! Visual images are the main method used to explain eighteenth century housing. An illustrator has worked from contemporary drawings and surviving eighteenth century buildings to create a picture which shows the type of housing and also the people who lived on different floors. Unfortunately there are practically no contemporary domestic interior illustrations. We have been aware throughout of not isolating the images of houses from images of the people who lived in them. A rotating roll of film produces an effect like a slide show in one corner of the gallery and this shows images of Edinburgh housing combined with contemporary engravings and paintings of working people.

Nineteenth century working class housing in Edinburgh was a major problem. Highland and Irish immigration combined with population increases put pressure on existing housing stock. The rich built the elegant Georgian New Town for themselves. The tenement flats which had previously provided a gracious living space for the gentry of Edinburgh were subdivided to provide single room accommodation for hundreds of families. In 1866 the Lord Provost, William Chambers described conditions. 'Think of 248 persons living in one common stair, without so much as a sink or water-closet – all the refuse to be carried down the stair, and all the water to be carried not only up, but from public wells at some distance'. In an attempt to deal with such problems a series of City improvement Acts were instigated. Their solution of knocking down slum dwellings was only partly successful. No new housing was provided for the displaced inhabitants, who merely swelled the overcrowding in other areas.

As early as 1826 working men gathered together to build houses for themselves in Causewayside in the Southside of the city. This example was followed with the building of cottage style artisan dwellings, some of which were co-operative ventures and others middle class philanthropy. Such housing could only help the better off sections of the working classes. The census of 1861 noted that a third of the population of Edinburgh, 13,209 families or 66,000 people, lived in houses of one room. Four large photographs are used to graphically depict good and bad nineteenth century housing.

The nineteenth century housing set is based on some of the housing conditions recorded by philanthropist George Bell, an nineteenth century Edinburgh doctor, who wrote a pamphlet about his forays into the closes and wynds of Edinburgh. 'Jessie Thomson', widowed by a cholera epidemic of the 1850s, lives in a garret with her four children and her illegitimate babe in arms. The only objects in the set are the rags which make up the children's bed and the jug out of which Jessie drinks whisky. The set caption details some of her problems. Should she let her children go to Dr Guthrie's Industrial school where they would learn a trade but would have to live in? Will she get Poor Relief as her baby is illegitimate? Where will their next meal come from? She is so malnourished that her breast is dry. Will the spirit seller continue to give her credit? Comparisons can be drawn between the condition of Jessie and the condition of the single mother trying to survive in a bed and breakfast, with money from the DSS in Thatcher's Britain.

It is possible to enter Edinburgh by rail or road today and be unaware of the fact that Edinburgh housing in the 1980s is more than pleasant and suburban. Visitors to the city see the quaint Old Town and the elegant Georgian New Town and it is not obvious that 25 percent of Edinburgh's housing stock is council-owned. While the eighteenth century aristocracy moved itself away from the squalid old town, the twentieth century bourgeoisie razed the squalid tenements to the ground and relocated their working class inhabitants in schemes on the outskirts of the city.

Stella Stewart, born in 1919, recalls typical conditions in the one- and two-roomed tenement houses.

> When I was a child in Brown Street we had no water in the house. We had to go to the tap that was in the hallway outside in the stair. There was a sort of sink. I don't know what it looked like because it was pitch dark and you could never see it because there was no natural light and no gas light. We used basins to carry the water. My mother heated water on a fire on a range. We had a gas mantle above the fire but it was the only gas we had in the house.

It was not uncommon for families of ten children to be brought up in a room and kitchen.

Attitudes to the change in housing provision varied. To some 'It was paradise for my sister and myself to share a bedroom just for our two selves. We thought this was heaven.' (Joan Croal, born 1930). Others, despite the better conditions, missed the community spirit of the town.

> For the first time we had a toilet in the house never mind a bathroom...We appreciated going in (to the house) Ma mother did probably at the time, but she got so fed up at being so far away from the town that she wanted to go back again.

Two panels tell the story of twentieth century working class housing in Edinburgh. As in any large city the housing types vary from traditional tenement flat through wartime pre-fabricated, originally built as temporary housing, and sprawling housing scheme to high rise flats. The big development in working class housing this century has been council housing. With recent government legislation allowing the sale of council houses and the lack of funding for further developments, renting a house from the council may soon cease to be an option. In Edinburgh in 1988 10,125 council houses out of a total stock of 47,137 had already been sold. 12,423 households were still on the council waiting list. A map is used to illustrate the distribution of council housing, with photos of the different types of housing. It is not forgotten that there are also 7,000 homeless people in the city.

One of the most popular sets in the museum is the 1940s council house kitchen set – those who can remember the period enjoy looking at familiar items and others can make comparisons with modern domestic facilities. This set also represents the wartime in the city. It is situated in the museum beside a totally different type of accommodation, namely a single cubicle in Grove House, an artisan lodging house which was built to provide temporary accommodation for itinerant and homeless workmen. In this area there is also a wash house set which demonstrates the washing facilities provided by the council for those who weren't lucky enough to have the double sinks and hot water provided in council houses.

Two 1930s schemes were in the process of being rehabilitated in the 1980s so we managed to locate a house with original kitchen fittings, in Craigmillar, in the south of the city. We photographed the interior partly for our archives and also as a useful reference for the set. As with many other objects in the museum much of what is in the kitchen set came through public appeals in the local newspaper and also from our reminiscence groups.

The characters in the set are a mother and child and are based on a woman in the reminiscence group. She provided us with pictures of herself as a child, on which we based the child figure, and gave us considerable assistance in arranging the set. I consulted many people while the set was being constructed, including my mother who was eight when the war started, some of the older members of the museum staff and also local people from Craigmillar. When re-creating something as 'familiar' as a kitchen the curator should be careful not to make inaccurate assumptions about what it used to be like but should research it just like any other subject![1]

As well as the museum displays a continually running video of four Edinburgh people tells the People's story. A play called 'Changed Days' was written by a local playwright, based on the museum oral archive, about the changes experienced by the working people of Edinburgh this century. Handling collections with museum objects, for use by reminiscence groups, have been created.[2] These are all relevant to the sections on housing in the museum.

The ordinary people of Edinburgh make up many different communities – in class, in colour, in workplace and of course in locality. Housing does influence that sense of community. Inhabitants of the tenement property of the old town remember a sense of community which many felt was lost with the building of new estates. Yet today, in those same estates there is a similar community spirit manifesting itself in local organisations dealing with issues from housing to the arts (not to mention museums!).

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A view of Walsall Leather Centre. The centenary of this former factory building will be celebrated next year.

'SADDLERY FOR ALL NATIONS': THE WORK OF THE WALSALL LEATHER CENTRE

Michael Glasson

The West Midlands are famed for their long established tradition of metal working, and in the Nineteenth century the Black Country region was frequently described as the 'Workshop of Britain'. The landscape resulting from centuries of mining, forging, smelting and casting is one of the most heavily industrialised in Britain. Although no longer 'black by day and red by night', the Black Country conurbation remains above all a centre of highly skilled metalworking. It comes as something of a surprise therefore to find that Walsall, a Borough of some 260,000 people on the edge of the district, is the main centre of Britain's saddlery and leathergoods trade. It would be hard to imagine a greater contrast with the popular image of the rural saddler working in some remote village.

Mention English leatherworking and most people will think of Northampton or perhaps Leicester. Yet Walsall had dominated the production of British saddlery since the 1850s, and its lorinery trade (saddler's ironmongery) was renowned in the sixteenth century. In the nineteenth century Walsall saddlers and harness makers exported throughout the British Empire, and to the monarchs of Europe, including the German, Austrian and Russian Imperial families. From the Crimean War onwards Walsall played a vital role in supplying the British army with everything from stirrups and bits to mule harnesses, military belts and officers' shaving mirrors. During the first two years of World War I a single Walsall firm supplied over 10,000 saddles to the British army, giving an idea of the scale of the industry by this date.

As the saddlery and harness trade declined in the present century, manufacturers diversified into producing 'light' leathergoods such as wallets, purses, handbags, belts and gloves. This flexibility saved the industry and since the 1960s there has been a major revival of the saddlery trade. With over sixty saddlery firms and some fifty light leathergoods firms in the town the Walsall leather industry remains an important local employer and a major exporter to the United States, Japan and Europe.

The development of a leather museum in Walsall was fortuitous. Walsall M.B.C. had acquired two partly derelict Victorian leather factories near the town centre in the 1960s, apparently with the intention of demolishing them for road widening. In the 'heritage conscious' 1980s it was decided to restore the buildings and relocate the Borough's long-established Leathergoods Training Centre here. The move was seen as a way of providing improved accomodation for the training centre, which is one of only two such institutions in Britain. However, it was clear that only half of the buildings would be required, and it was decided to develop a museum in the remaining half.

The decision to develop a museum of the Walsall leather industry was an ambitious one at this date. The Borough's holdings of relevant material in 1985 were hardly comprehensive, and the removal of the privately owned Museum of Leathercraft from Walsall to Northampton in 1976 was not an encouraging precedent. It was clear from the beginning that the museum would need to be based around a number of themes which could be developed by collecting in the future, rather than by drawing on the strengths of an existing collection, as had been the case at Northampton. Haley Sharpe Associates were engaged to design the new museum, and the centre was formally opened in June 1988.

From the beginning, it was decided that the paramount objective of the museum should be to make the history of Walsall's leather trades more accessible. Their story is not well known even locally, partly perhaps because of the notorious secrecy of the leather industry. The first aim of the museum has been to uncover this story, placing particular emphasis on the social history of the industry. Only a handful of local firms have preserved their records and much of our work has therefore been directed towards recording the story of the trades within living memory, especially through oral history and collecting survival ephemeral and undervalued evidence such as photographs of works outings and union membership cards.

As the museum has developed it has become clear that one of the least well documented periods was the immediate past, and the contemporary industry. The museum has attempted to build up a representative collection of current Walsall products, covering the spectrum from luxury items for Harrods, Ralph Lauren and Paul Smith to basics for high street department stores and everything from filofaxes to leather washers and gaskets. The museum has also actively collected current trade catalogues, promotional material and press cuttings. During 1990 we intend to add to this through more detailed photographic documentation of the industry, and by tape recording people working in the industry now, to provide a more balanced record.

Collecting material of this kind is of course only of limited use if it is not made accessible. The Museum's seven galleries enable us to show most of the historic collection and the 'Made in Walsall' gallery (due to open this year) will utilise video and audio players to bring the story of the Walsall trades right up to date. The 'Trade Display' gallery regularly features contemporary Walsall products, and all material in the museum library is open to the public by appointment. Lists of the library's holdings have been produced to help potential users. Through the publications programme we are hoping to provide brief introductory pamphlets which will stimulate interest in the subject. The first, 'Walsall Leather Industry Today' was published in 1989, and others based on oral history work are planned for 1990.

The second major theme of the Leather Centre is to raise local awareness of leatherworking traditions outside the immediate area. This is especially important in a town such as Walsall where there are large ethnic minority communities whose lives are not represented by a traditional local history approach. To date, the museum has arranged a number of exhibitions looking at aspects of leatherworking which have provided a strong contrast with Walsall's own traditions. This has included a touring exhibition of contemporary 'designer' leatherwork, and displays of African and South American saddlery, and of leatherwork by a group of physically disabled students from Scotland.

In the long run it is intended to develop a small permanent collection of leather artefacts from other cultures for comparative purposes. Such material can also prove very stimulating to students looking for inspiration for their own designs. The Victorian concept of the museum as a giant pattern library for designers still has some value in the 1990s!

One of the most exciting developments in 1989 was the museum's 'Designer in Residence' scheme. Although the Leather Centre is first and foremost a social history museum, the issue of design is of major importance to the future of the local leather industry. The scheme was part funded by West Midlands Arts and ran for three months involving a designer of leather jewellery and accessories demonstrating her innovative and colourful leather-working techniques to visitors to the museum. The museum benefitted greatly from the related publicity which demonstrated that leatherworking could be fun and exciting. Several one day workshops such as mask making and shadow puppets have likewise proved popular, especially with children. Through these we have been able to involve visitors in designing and working with leather, exploring its natural qualities and learning something of its use in other cultures. These themes have been developed in the museum's library where the policy has been to reflect the use of leather around the world.

These are early days for the Leather Centre, but the museum's policy of attempting to erode the artificial divide between 'social history' on the one hand and 'applied art' or 'craft' on the other seems to be working. The issues involved in these two areas are often closely related, and by exploring areas such as contemporary design the museum has acquired an immediate relevance for both local educational organisations and local industry. Although the centre has no pretensions to become a 'national' museum it is hoped that our work will be of more than purely local interest, and through the development of the library in particular, we hope to be able to supply advice and information to other non-specialist museums elsewhere whose collection may include leatherwork.

The Leather Centre is at 56-57 Wismore, Walsall, West Midlands, WS2 8EQ (Tel: 0922-721153). Nine short booklists of items in the library, dealing with most aspects of leatherwork, are available free from the centre (please send s.a.e.).

The opening of the Museum's exciting new 'Made in Walsall' gallery by Councillor Mrs. Hadley, February, 1990.

THE MUSEUM OF TRANSPORT, GLASGOW

Felicity Premru

Transport museums have traditionally been guilty of at least one major sin – a tendency towards a display of vehicles which does not relate to the people who used or produced them. Enthusiasts are able to pursue their particular interest, while lay-people are invited to admire the vehicles for their nostalgia or novelty value; social (and political) history is conspicuous by its absence.

Glasgow's Museum of Transport has an impressive collection of well preserved vehicles – vehicles in the widest use of the term – from public transport to perambulators. It includes fine examples of the former Scottish locomotive and car industries and of the late lamented British motor-bike industry. The museum has recently relocated from cramped quarters in the old Glasgow Corporation Tramways works to the refurbished Kelvin Hall where it shares a building, and catering facilities, with an indoor Sports and Recreation complex. The cafe overlooks the galleries and it would be interesting to know if this arrangement helps attract a wider audience. While the main space is occupied by the larger exhibits, a mezzanine level provides additional room for the lighter vehicles such as the ship models, bicycles, a rickshaw and a drunks' barrow used by Govan constabulary. New features include a station platform which gives a better view of the 1913 *Glen Douglas* locomotive and the popular 'Kelvin Street', a period reconstruction of a fictitious and rather salubrious (post depression?) suburb with its subway and cinema. A thirties-style showroom allows close inspection of some more recent cars, and raised walkways circumvent the problem of public viewing versus the preservation of Glasgow Corporation's elegant trams.

However, the museum has clearly missed an opportunity to place the vehicles in context; despite the scope offered by the move to the new premises, the objects are, on the whole, lined up and presented as entities of intrinsic value. Their importance in Scottish industrial/social history, the impact of cheap travel and the effect of post industrialism on entire communities is lost. In the car showroom, labels give engine and production specifications which do not reveal the relative cost and affordability of private transport, and there is no accompanying information about, for example, the social and environmental effect of mass car ownership. Few references are made to the owners/drivers, other than that the 1963 Volvo Sports was the 'favoured transport of TV's The Saint'! A more imaginative display of fewer motor-bikes might have been enhanced by a light-hearted look at British/American 'bike-culture' in the twentieth-century.

More seriously, a traditional display of ship models fails to describe the importance of the rise and decline of Clydeside shipbuilding; and although locomotives from many of the Glasgow builders are on site, the story of the workforce of the former locomotive-building capital of the Empire, and of the decline of the industries which spawned whole communities (now suffering severe unemployment), must be found elsewhere, in temporary exhibitions at the excellent Springburn Museum.

The new museum at Kelvin Hall has ultimately failed to depart from the conventional set-up of the transport museum; its overall effect, in keeping with Glasgow's status as 1990 European City of Culture, is to present a shiny, upbeat image of the city which glosses over its past and present struggles.

THE PEOPLE'S STORY, EDINBURGH: HISTORY PRESENTED WITH A SENSE OF REALITY

Veronica Hartwich

A visit to Edinburgh's new museum *The People's Story* is a must for any museum curator working in the field of social history. It is five years since the Labour Administration of Edinburgh District Council took the distinctive step of deciding to establish a museum of labour and trade union history. The term 'labour history' has been interpreted broadly as a history of the lives of ordinary people, a concept which should be familiar to all of us by now. The 'trade union history' aspect is strongly emphasised but has also been treated broadly through an examination of the part trade unions played in political and economic development and of their importance to the majority of working people. Trade union artefacts, banners, emblems, etc., are presented as part of Edinburgh life rather than as details in the history of individual unions.

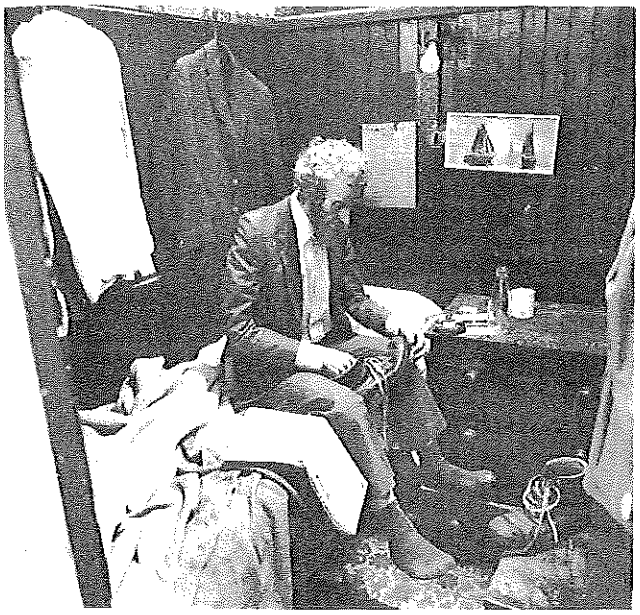
The idea of the exhibition itself was well developed before a building was found to house it and the Council's eventual choice, the sixteenth century Canongate Tollbooth, was not an easy location to deal with. Although a building of historic interest in its own right, its origins fall well without the period covered by the museum, and its small size puts restrictions on the exhibition content.

This limited location has, however, been put to use with thoroughness and imagination. Essentials, such as a new lift have been fitted in but maximum space has been allocated to displays. Even the high ceiling of the first floor main hall, which might have been viewed as so much wasted space, has been used to hang a selection from the City Museum's collection of trade union banners. They draw the eye, catch the attention as they were meant to on parade, yet do not detract from the fine timbered roof above.

At the ground floor foyer the Museum begins with a small shop and reception and a brief history of the Tollbooth itself. On one wall is a collage of photographs and scattered amonst them are questions about the lives of Edinburgh folk – where did they come from? When did they get the vote? These questions are answered, not directly but through information provided in the displays. The visitor is being encouraged to start thinking about the people's story before they actually start looking at any of the exhibits or labels. On the whole, this Museum is an 'educational' experience, detailed and highly informative. Many of the display techniques used – the initial questions, the taped conversation, speeches and music, the quotations extracted from documents or oral history interviews, the pictorial statistics and charts – are all characteristic of recognised good teaching methods. Had there been more space available, we might have also seen 'play' learning in the form of drama or demonstration with visitor participation.

Beside the entrance to the ground floor displays one comes across the first of the Museum's 'population', an ordinary Edinburgh family come to see the City's latest attraction. It will be interesting to see if they cause confusion like the famous Madame Tussaud's policeman. Facing them, looking back out of the exhibition corridor is a similar mid-eighteenth century family. The two men have the same trade – both are 'scaffies', i.e. scavenger or council cleansing worker and both women are employed in low paid part-time or home-based work. These two families form a challenge to the visitor to recognise that the people of the past were real and had existences of their own.

The displays are not in themselves technically innovative or unusual. Formal cases of objects are used but the set-piece period interior dominates (some enclosed, some open and accessible). What marks the displays as different is that the focus of the set-pieces is not the environment (the material evidence) but the person or persons portrayed within it. The people come first, not the objects, to the extent that some are presented free on open display without a setting. All are identified and a short story is given about each, providing information about their lives or their present circumstances. Museums presenting history have moved from the simple academic classification of material objects, through stages of growing confidence in the interpretation of lifestyles, customs and



The People's Story Museum: Tam Docherty in his booth at the Artizans' Lodging House, Grove Street, 1978 (Edinburgh City Museums).

techniques. But essentially interpretation even in a period set-piece, has concentrated on the material, on the environment, the clothing, the work process, but not on the existence of the individuals who lived in that environment, wore those clothes or did that work. Museum curators conscientiously gather such information, but as history of the object rather than as the context within which the object functioned. Here it is the other way round – the bookbinder's tools are elements of the working environment of a man who became a bookbinder; the 1920s evening dress is the latest purchase of a young woman off to enjoy herself at a musical.

The research base for this approach to display is oral history. Some experimental work using oral history resources has already been tried out with success on a small scale, at the Scottish Mining Museum, for example, or, with different intent, in Springburn Museum's 'Springburn Mothers'. Here, in *The People's Story* is a major and prestigeous development which has been produced on a foundation of oral research. Instead of being turned into a publication, an adjunct to the exhibitions, this rich resource has been turned into the displays themselves. As well as providing the personalities, it has been tapped for quotations for the text panels. Another radical step is that the displays were set up with the assistance of the people who were taking part in the history projects. Details were checked against their experience for accuracy and their comments and suggestions were taken on board. The technique has been developed sufficiently well for the earlier periods, out of reach of direct oral testimony, to be handled in the same way, using archival resources.

The actual displays do have a chronological framework, starting with the eighteenth century on the ground floor and reaching the 1980s by the second floor, but it is not rigidly applied and is simply treated as another tool to be used in telling the people's story. Each floor also presents a general theme, an aspect of the broader story. So, on the ground floor, the visitor is presented with the 'old order' of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a world of privilege and hierarchy. Power-holding and political change are difficult concepts to handle in an exhibition so it is a pleasure to seem them successfully presented in a way which is easy to understand and entertaining to view. The period figures and tableaux, based on real people, work well by presenting the social structure of the time from an individual point of view. The bellman and town guardsmen are shown as much more than olde worlde curiosities or worthies in funny clothes but as strong characters with an important part to play in the running of a civic authority. Likewise the pomp and ceremony of the Cordiner Trade's St. Crispin parade is used to introduce the economic and social control held by the old mercantile and craft guilds. These St. Crispin objects had been exhibited for years in Huntly House Museum ('across the road from the Canongate Tollbooth'), in a display which was dull and very basic in interpretation. Here they are shown in a manner which identifies them as objects with a purpose, to be worn or to be used.

The contrast between the two displays, one with a clearly stated political viewpoint and the other seemingly 'neutral' without comments, raises questions about the approach of museums to their material and whether a truly neutral display is possible. As well as presenting the circumstances of privilege and showing how the law was used to maintain control in the hands of a minority, this first part of *the People's Story* touches on the attempts of the populace to break through that control and introduces the theme of franchise extension, central to nineteenth century radical politics, neatly and effectively linking it to the exhibits on the second floor.

Upstairs the displays begin with a section on radical politics and the organisation of labour, with a fine display of political banners and plaques as its centrepiece. But the greater part of the hall is given over to the theme of work – work environments, work methods, obtaining work, work conditions. The displays cover a nice variety of types of work from museum old favourites such as brewing and coopering to the less usual hotel and public transport work. More than a dozen different types of work have been represented, over half by set-piece displays, so the amount of space allocated to each is small. Each display is compact, well designed and informative. Wherever possible new acquisitions were actively made for the museum but good use has also been made of what looks recognisably like typical social history collection material. The once fashionable middle-class drawing room interior has been presented from a different point of view, that of the house maid employed to keep it clean.

On the second floor are two rather small rooms, the first dealing with the home, health and welfare and the other with social organisations and recreation. Packed into the first are a public washhouse, a wartime council tenement kitchen, a spartan loding-house cubicle and, tucked appropriately into a corner up a small stairway leading out of the room, the attic dwelling of a nineteenth century pauper and her children. *The People's Story* idea has been taken seriously to mean covering a wide range of the enormous variety of lifestyles to be found in a city like Edinburgh and here the presentation of domesticity has been taken beyond the cosy well-furnished kitchen to provide a view of the lives of those who do not have typical homes. The displays are realistic and sympathetic and the simplicity of labelling seems to have avoided the risk of a condescending or vulgar treatment.

The second part of the displays on this floor show some problems with lack of space. The theme of health and welfare is picked up with a display case and panels on friendly societies and temperance, leading on to what may well be one of the museum's most popular exhibits. This, a two part set of 1930s tea-room and public bar is accompanied by a tape of the conversations of the two husbands and wives. By the simplest of methods, the visitor is entertained and provided with a great deal of information about women's and men's recreational choices and loyalties, family relationships and drink and temperence. The remainder of the room is largely given over to general leisure pursuits, sport, music, dance, cinema and to a small display on faith and festivals. Both subjects have enormous potential, even within the defined objectives of the museum. In comparison with the sharp focus of the rest of the museum, the cased displays here seem to scratch at too broad a picture. A 1970s Punk (appropriately blocking the view of a display panel) and a 1980s cinema queue with text panels on youth culture do not quite redress the balance.

Last but not least, the uppermost floor, a small area, has been used as a viewing room for the accompanying video. This presents a good selection of interviews of people talking about working life and social conditions, interspersed with footage from archival film. Oddly, the recreational aspect seems, as in the displays, to have been squashed in.

It is interesting that a museum which has been set up with the collaboration of the local community it is intended to represent, has developed with such a strongly educational and informative character. Although the museum is visually pleasing, with strong displays, and is entertaining in its use of story and music, it demands

some effort on the part of the visitor to take in a sizeable total of text and label and requires a willingness on their part to take an interest in complex aspects of history. There is then a divergence here from current thought which emphasises the leisure and entertainment element of museums. Those working in the social history field have long been perfectly aware that good interpretation may be educational but need not be narrow, scholastic or boring. A local community when given the opportunity to have its own museum will typically wish to see a full and detailed exposition of its own history. This is a base on which to build and develop good interpretation, as in *The People's Story*, not something to be pushed aside in favour of sideshow spectacle for the fly-by-day tourist.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

BREARS, Peter. *NORTH COUNTRY FOLK ART.* John Donald (Edinburgh), 1989. ISBN 0 85976 214 9. £18.00

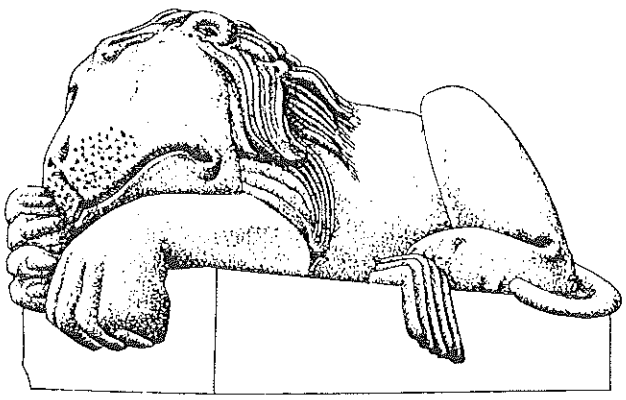
'Rather surprisingly, this is the first book to be published on English regional folk art, and so it must serve as a general introduction to the whole subject'. The opening lines of this pioneering work say it all. What follows is a journey through the commonest types of north country folk art, illuminated by contemporary commentaries, scholarly research and anecdotes but above all else, illustrated by the author's acquaintance with hundreds of examples in museum and private collections. And at the end of it Mr. Brears has not only met his stated objective but managed also to produce a very readable book.

What is folk art? 'In essence, folk art is the practical creative element in the lives of ordinary working people. It has little or no connection with the academic art nurtured in country houses and art galleries, but, along with the dialect, foodways and folk music, it forms an essential component in the life of all traditional communities'. So now you know. The range of folk art described in this book is quite breathtaking: carved human heads ('the Old Man's Face'), carved wooden knitting sheaths, stay busks and boxes; splintwork; crooks; walking sticks; scarecrows; duck decoys; brassware; pottery and glassware; decorated floors; quilting; garlands: all these and many more are represented.

In each case the author describes the end product, and the technique of production. He brings together documented references and examples and attempts to set them in the social context of the north since the sixteenth century. More ambitiously, in many cases he suggests that many examples of north country folk art have a far longer ancestry and belong to a cultural inheritance extending far beyond these shores. Traditional woodcarving, for example, is part of a European tradition while carved 'Celtic' heads may indeed have their origins in pre-Christian Celtic Europe.

North Country Folk Art is full of fascinating details. This reviewer found the chapter on 'signs and symbols' particularly revealing, opening up a lost world for those who know what to look for. Symbols have existed for centuries, the meaning of which would have been instantly understood but have subsequently been almost lost during the process of industrialisation. Anchors, birds, boots, eggs, hands, hearts, roses, sheep and snakes all had special meanings which Brears explains and puts into their pre-industrial social context.

Very little of the subject matter has an existing literature of any significance. Some topics, such as country potteries, rushbearing and quilting are relatively well covered, but most aspects of regional folk art have been neglected by modern social historians. Brears' contribution has been to identify the myriad types of folk art and document them from his extensive personal knowledge of museum and literary sources in the north. While this is his great achievement, it also appears to be a weakness of the book. It sometimes seems to be anecdotal or selective rather than scientific or comprehensive. But in bringing together all this information Mr. Brears will undoubtedly allow the 'discovery' of far more examples of folk art and its documentation in museum collections and archives. A



A lion, carved by Samual Swift of Cawthorne. An illustration by Peter Brears from his book on folk art, reviewed here.

great deal of traditional folk art which has hitherto lain hidden or at least unrecognized will now be revealed. He has thus laid the foundations for further studies which will test his hypotheses and create a fuller literature for this neglected subject.

An outstanding feature of the book is its illustrations. The author has produced over five hundred individual drawings of folk art objects, which will add immeasurably to its value as an identification tool for museum curators. All the main types are illustrated including maiden's garlands (decorated spilt-wood crowns carried before the corpse of deceased virgins), a model dog made from strips of cigarette packets, model Yorkshire ranges made in brass, frog mugs and the wonderful ponderous lion carved by Samuel Swift of Cawthorne (fig. 47).

Folk art has been neglected by museums in the past, for reasons which the author explains (pp 1-2), and although the number of folk and local museums has increased dramatically in recent years, there are still problems. 'The total lack of any overall policy means that they frequently waste time, money and effort in duplicating each other's collections etc., and there are no means of drawing together and utilising their considerable attributes to promote social history as a whole. Even more worrying is the lack of appropriate training facilities for those who are to take care of these museums, since no university offers a degree course in English material culture, and the Museums Association cancelled its curatorial courses in regional ethnology in 1978. As a result, many of today's curators have little knowledge of traditional English life, thus being unable to give the public the service they deserve, or to advance the study of this subject'. (pp 2-3). This excellent book will go a long way to (hopefully) remedying this situation by providing an inspirational and essential reference work for social history curators.

Stuart Davies

BREARS, Peter & DAVIES, Stuart,
TREASURES FOR THE PEOPLE: THE STORY OF MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES IN YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE,
Yorkshire and Humberside Museums Council,
1989, ISBN: 0 9512 207 13, £8.50

There is a general view that the results of Museums Year have been like the curate's egg – never mind about the bad parts, Peter Brears and Stuart Davies in conjunction with the Yorkshire and Humberside Museums Council are responsible for a volume which must be one of the best parts. *Treasures for the People* is exactly what its title says; the authors have produced a succinct and readable volume which encompasses not only the history of the museums of Yorkshire and Humberside, but also the philosophy, people and trends behind their development.

The first four chapters are roughly chronological. The first looks at the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the story of the Musaeum Thoresbyanum reminding the reader of the importance of Ralph Thoresby's collections, whilst the tantalising glimpses of the Kirkleatham Museum serve to underline that Yorkshire was in the forefront of the early museum movement. The second chapter on Commercial Museums (late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries) underlines the fact that the modern independent museum movement is merely the revival of something which goes back at least 150 years. The chapter 'Temples of the Muses' deals with the subject dear to the heart of Peter Brears – the development of museums under the aegis of the Literary and Philosophical societies which developed in Yorkshire in the nineteenth century. Throughout the volume the authors deliberately deal with curators and individuals involved with the development of museums and it is possible not only to see the quality of the work of early curators, but also the high standards of academic research and publication.

Following on from the work of the literary and philosophical societies is a chapter dealing with civic museums and the eventual use of the Libraries and Museums Acts to establish museums in many towns and cities of the region. This emphasises the point that so powerful had been the museum movement in the earlier part of the nineteenth century that many of the larger cities and towns had no need to implement such powers because of the quality of the existing 'Lit and Phil' museums; the museum idea was already well established in Yorkshire and Humberside.

The theme of identifying the role of the individuals in development of museums is picked up in a chapter on 'Art and Industrialists'. This section looks at the benefactors of Art Galleries, particularly the role of Lord Masham in developing Cartwright Hall, the activities of John Newton Mappin and the Mappin family in Sheffield, and the efforts of Thomas Robinson Ferrens in Hull. The tradition of the development of art galleries through individual benefactors continues well into the twentieth century – with the Graves Art Gallery at Sheffield financed as late as 1934, and extensions to the Mappin in 1937 (also by Graves). I personally regret that the authors have not delved more deeply into the nature of men like Mappin and Graves, or indeed Ferens, and their reasons for such benefactions, but I suppose a lack of space must be one reason.

One of the strengths of the volume is the way it deals with particular types of museum. The chapters dealing with historic and country houses, folk museums and industrial museums look at the varying approaches to some of the fine historic buildings which have been taken over by or given to local authorities in the last 70 or so years; Bolling was given to the City of Bradford, as was Shibden, whilst Temple Newsam was purchased by Leeds Corporation. The struggle to not only save but also restore Oakwell Hall provides a mini-case study of the problem of maintaining older buildings and underlines the vital role which museums have played in this area. The authors suggest that local cultural identity played a major role in the development of folk museums and thus bring together a fascinating array of data about that early development; not only is the success of Kirk in York underlined, but so is the work of Thomas Sheppard, Joan Ingleby and Mary Hartley, Raymond Hayes and other diverse figures in this movement. Mr John Lister from Crippiegate, Halifax, reerected a timber framed building from Halifax Town centre as early as 1876 – as the authors point out this was 20 years earlier than Hazelius's opening of Skansen; and the story of Joseph Henry Dixon's 'Wuthering Heights' collection at Oatlands, Harrogate is tragic. Not only are success stories such as the Rydedale Folk Museum dealt with but even the failed folk park at Heslington Hall, near York, is illustrated.

Not surprisingly museums of industry figure largely in the development of Yorkshire and Humberside museums and a history of a desire to maintain the industrial past in museums is dealt with skillfully. The recent developments at Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield, the Yorkshire Mining Museum as well as Hull Museums collections of fisheries and transport (and inevitably the National Railway Museum) are included alongside the development of whiting and putty mills!

The recent re-appearance of the independent museum is not ignored. Apart from the early references to independent museums with the region, a chapter dealing with such diverse institutions as regimental museums, local history museums, personality museums and university museums deals with virtually everything within the county.

The volume is rounded off by an overview on the making of modern museums; here again the authors illustrate the people who made the museums; Elijah Howarth (who still sounds stuffy to me), Thomas Sheppard (who wasn't stuffy), William Bunting Crump, and others. Finally there is a quick survey of nearly all the museums that the authors haven't already mentioned.

A vital piece of museum history then, well illustrated, clearly printed, and well documented – Peter Brears' line drawings are much in evidence, and the photographs are well chosen (particularly the queue outside the Castle Museum c.1940!). I wish it had been longer – and that there had been more examination of the individuals responsible for funding and running the museums, and I should have liked a more detailed sociopolitical analysis. That said, this is a good read and worth every penny of a very modest price.

Tim Schadla-Hall

BROOKS, Chris (ed), ***MORTAL REMAINS: THE HISTORY AND PRESENT STATE OF THE VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN CEMETARY,*** **Wheaton/Victorian Society, 1989,**
ISBN 0 08 037098 5, £14.95

Between a hastily eaten breakfast and the first paper on the second

day of the Glasgow A.S.W., several friends joined me in a rather (too) hasty exploration of the city's Necropolis. The severe classical monuments which loom over Glasgow's eastern skylines set a fittingly sombre tone to a day in which we would also witness the grim formalities of the Orange March. On closer examination, many of the tombs were badly decayed and our ascent to the great set piece of John Knox's memorial hampered by poorly maintained paths. Apart from a short pamphlet outlining the history of this cemetery, there was nothing to interpret what must be one of the most fascinating features of nineteenth century Glasgow. Such a situation is by no means unique, and in fact the leaflet on the Glasgow Necropolis is one of only a few such guides currently available on the major cemeteries of this country. The Victorian Society is therefore to be heartily congratulated for producing *Mortal Remains*. Compiled by the Society and several members of cemetery preservation groups, the book is an interesting blend of history and advice on practical conservation for Victorian and Edwardian cemeteries in England. As such, it is the first major attempt to deal with this subject and highlights the problems of neglect and redundancy now facing many nineteenth century cemeteries.

The book is almost equally divided into two sections, dealing with the past and the present. The first discusses the development of cemetery provision in England from the 1820s until the First World War. It describes in some detail the ways in which the great Victorian cemeteries were created. First by commercial ventures for the middle classes keen on knowing their remains would receive decent burial - free from over-crowded plots or body snatchers - and be allowed enough space to erect suitably sizeable memorials. Then, by the 1850s, the Burial Acts fostered municipal cemeteries out of a desire to improve the public health of the nation by regulating inhumation. This section is supported by the gazetteer at the end of the book which describes the history of over 80 cemeteries. It is not an exhaustive list, but the selection shows the wide variety and quality of cemeteries in England. Here and throughout the whole book, excellent photographs show the treasures of monumental statury that still survive in these places, although often badly mutilated by neglect and vandalism.

The second section picks up this theme by offering much practical advice on the conservation of Victorian cemeteries today. Their decay and neglect exemplify some of the current lack of concern for elaborate commemoration of the dead, which seems not to be tempered by the vast amount of historical and artistic information to be found in cemeteries. A number of case studies are given which explore various ways in which now redundant cemeteries have been restored, conserved and more sympathetically managed. Many of these have been difficult projects indeed and in none has there been total success. However the lessons learnt are re-iterated in the fourth part of the book, which provides much practical information on the care of monuments, buildings and the horticulture of old cemeteries.

By highlighting the influence on cemeteries of governmental social policy, ideas on landscape design and monumental architecture, *Mortal Remains* will open the eyes of many people to the themes which brought public cemeteries into being, and make them such interesting places to visit. Together with the practical advice on conserving the ecology and fabric of cemeteries, the book will not only aid those who have to interpret this very neglected aspect of local topography and social history, but also be of practical use to those who have to care for other types of historic building or landscape.

Steph Mastoris

EDENSOR, Tim & KELLY, Mij, *MOVING WORLDS*, Polygon, 1988, ISBN: 0 7486 6011 9, £7.95

Moving Worlds is a book which 'gives the lie to all these glib generalisations about immigrants . . . through the experiences, personalities and words of its contributors'. It is part of a new series 'Living Memory' published by Polygon which presents oral history in a variety of forms. The book contains twenty accounts of the experiences of immigrants who had to move to Edinburgh during the twentieth century, mainly for political or economic reasons.

Edinburgh is not generally regarded as a multicultural city – it is only with the last year that the District Council appointed a race relations officer. However immigrants have continually flocked to the city, from the highlanders and Irish in earlier centuries to the Vietnames Boat People of the 1970s. 1.6% of Edinburgh's population is Asian, Chinese, New Commonwealth and Pakistani. This doesn't take account of the Italians, the Ukrainians, the Poles or the Palestinians. As the editors of the book point out, there is much cultural diversity within the city.

The accounts are presented as narratives, and are based on interviews carried out by the editors and others. As social historians we are familiar with the practice of using oral history as part of our research and as a means of making vivid the objects displayed in our museums. The editors suggest oral history as a means of rescuing the individual from the stereotype. Many of our preconceptions about immigrant sections of British society are based on the often sensationalist cover by the media, which pinpoints problems such as race riots. The book succeeds in presenting a balanced picture of life for immigrant sections of the community. Sunil Chatterjee, born in Bihar, says 'What do you want to know from us? Do you want to hear the negative side of life or the positive side? You'll find both, but I think that depends on the person' (p. 154).

There are limitations in using people's recollections – memories can be quite subjective. The editors are aware of such problems and regard them as interesting in themselves. Often the subjectivity reflects the interviewee trying to make sense of, and coming to terms with their own history. The accounts actually whetted my appetite for find out more about the history of the international conflicts and economic booms and slumps which necessitated emigration. Useful footnotes explain some of the international political situations, but it would be useful to have a little more supporting information. Having carried out many oral history interviews myself, I would be interested in knowing how the transcripts were edited to produce the continuous prose of the accounts.

One of the main themes which does run through the accounts is the varying degrees of racism experienced by the contributors. Lal Khatri, now in his eighties, had problems in trying to enlist during World War II and later lost his job in Duncan's Chocolate factory due to colour prejudice. Sunil Chatterjee married a Scottish girl whose parents would not speak to the couple for 5 years after the marriage. Such racism was all the more surprising to people coming from colonial countries under imperialist British rule where the attitude was the Britain was the 'mother country'. Unfortunately racism in Scotland appears to be on the increase.

Bringing up children is particularly challenging in today's Britain and immigrants are faced with the dilemma of trying to maintain their cultural identity or allowing their children to following British customs. Shaheen Unis, born in Pakistan describes her sons. 'They want to be Scottish, that's what they're proud to be. I don't mind because I don't want to clash with them. If you saw my sons you'd be surprised because they've both had their hair coloured and their ears pierced' (p. 127).

As well as covering a wide range of countries, the book presents the accounts of both women and men. For some women living in Scotland has given them wider opportunities than they might have had. Shaheen Unis runs her own business. 'There is no religion that says the woman is lower than the man ... Pakistani and Indian men want their wives to be dependant so they prevent them from learning ... if I went back to Pakistan, as a woman I would have to sit in the house and ... just enjoy the company of my friends ... I would find it very hard because I like having a business and being powerful' (p. 126 & 127).

Moving Worlds is informative and thought provoking. Though casting a Scottish light upon the subject of immigration, the experiences of the contributors are of wide appeal. This is a book for anyone interested in the history of city communities, immigration or oral history.

Susan Jeffrey

GARD, Robin (ed), *THE OBSERVANT TRAVELLER: DIARIES OF TRAVEL IN ENGLAND, WALES, AND SCOTLAND IN THE COUNTY RECORD OFFICES OF ENGLAND AND WALES*, Association of County Archivists/ H.M.S.O., 1989, ISBN 0 11 701208 4, £11.95

It is a platitude to say that our county record offices - like museums - have many 'treasures' of social history amongst their collections which only a few local users know about. One of the best (or worst) of examples of this are unpublished travel diaries containing first hand accounts of people, events and places far from the record offices in which these manuscripts now repose. This book makes a useful start at rectifying this problem. It is based upon a survey carried out in the mid 1980s which aimed to identify every diary of travel in the U.K. now in the 49 county record offices in England and Wales. The resulting catalogue of 608 entries is printed at the end of this volume, along with indexes for the diarists and the places named in the texts. These will be most useful for anyone searching for new contemporary accounts of their locality.

The majority of the book is taken up with very brief extracts from the diaries themselves, arranged under either subjects associated with travelling, or popular destinations. A few miscellaneous topics are included such as descriptions of early industrial activity and the 'peasantry' encountered along the way. All these sections are well illustrated with topographical prints and drawings. However, I found the extracts from the diaries too short to be anything more than tantalising to the serious researcher. Perhaps there was little more in some accounts which was worthy of inclusion, but I doubt if this is true for all the diaries.

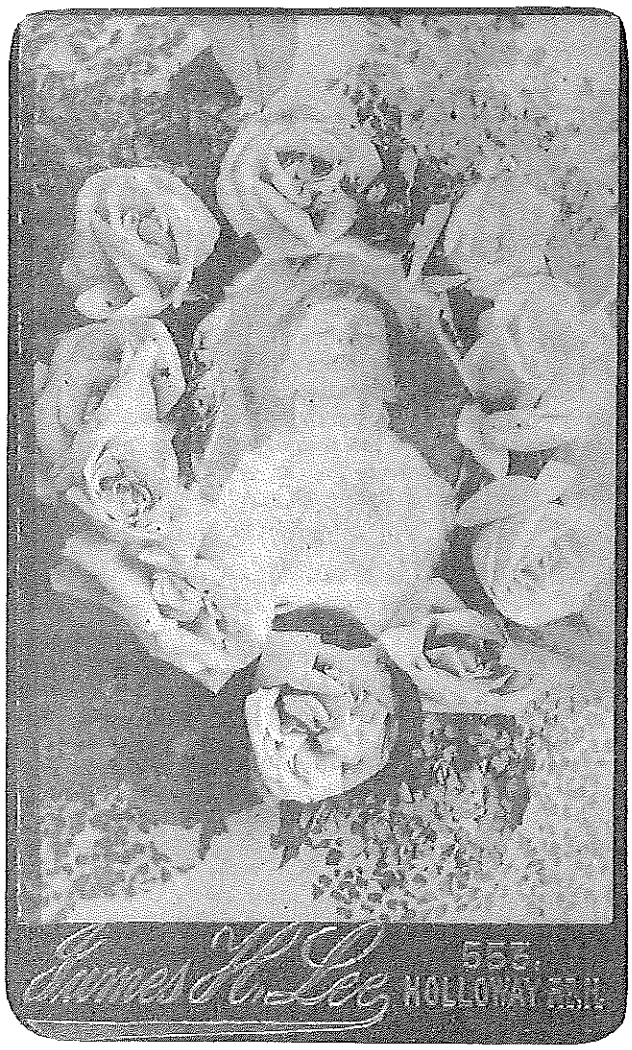
Nevertheless I found the book very stimulating and thought provoking; not just about the places and topics mentioned, but also the history of travel and its commemoration. Does the ease of modern travel around this country breed contempt in us for recording it? So it would seem from this anthology. Only 190 diaries located by the survey date from after 1850 and very few of these go beyond the early twentieth century. The technology and economics of travel certainly have affected attitudes, by making the exploration of Britain much less of an adventure. In many ways this can be summed up by a fascinating account included here for a journey of 207 miles from Frampton (Glos.) to Craike (Yorks.) in 1812. The trip took 32 hours, cost nearly £24 and required stops at 15 inns along the way. No wonder there was time and the inclination to record the characters, scenes and adventures along the way!

Steph Mastoris

HOULBROOKE, Ralph (ed). *DEATH, RITUAL AND BEREAVEMENT*. Routledge/Social History Society, 1989 ISBN: 0 415 01165 5, £35

Death and the associated rituals of bereavement have always been difficult subjects to study. Although the last words, the funerals and tombs of the great and good are often well recorded, now and in the past, any thorough study of death has been hampered by a reluctance to pry into people's lives at such a sad time. And yet, for the social historian, the rituals of death and the funeral are important subjects, not least for the large amount of artefacts they generate. Our group should seriously consider organising a seminar on death and burial custom. The time is certainly ripe for this, since a number of important and useful publications on the subject have appeared recently (for instance Ruth Richardson's *Death Dissection and the Destitute* - now in paperback - reviewed in *SHCG Journal* 16). The publication reviewed here is further evidence of the 'popularity' of death as an area of historical study.

Death, Ritual and Bereavement is a collection of 11 papers given at a conference on this subject held in 1987 by the Social History Society. They cover the period from the 1500s to the 1930s, although the lion's share is given to the nineteenth century. Two themes permeate the papers: the attitudes towards death itself and the rituals of bereavement. At the core of the first theme is the concern with the 'good death' and the art of dying well (for God and those left behind) and several papers examine the influence of this concern upon mourning practices, the eighteenth century doctors' ability to relieve pain for the dying, accounts of juvenile death in children's literature, and even the attitude of Victorian



Memorial carte de visite of a dead child (private collection).

unbelievers. The papers on funeral rituals deal with the growth of the undertaking profession and the elaborate Victorian funeral; the fight to make cremation legal between 1874 and 1885; and working class funeral customs in Lancashire between 1880 and 1940.

This book is one which can be easily dipped into as an authoritative start to most aspects of the social history of death. The bibliography and the extra references in the footnotes provide a very comprehensive guide to primary and secondary literature on death, burial and bereavement. However, it seems a shame that none of the contributors take their studies up to the present day, so that no-one really tackles the big question of why attitudes and practices have changed so radically in the last 50 years. That said, all the contributors work hard to explain the interrelationship between ideas and the practices and artefacts created in response. Perhaps the best example is that of the Victorian movement for sanitary reform, which saw the safe disposal of human remains as an essential element in its campaign for clean water and air in the industrial town. This nineteenth century obsession for hygiene helped promote the profession of undertaker, the cremation movement and the great joint stock and municipal cemeteries (perhaps it is still with us in the decline of home-based funerals and the dominance of cremation as a means of disposal).

My only real complaint is with the price: £35 seems a lot for a book with no plates and only 250 pages. Order it from your library now.

Steph Mastoris

LEWIS, Christopher. *PARTICULAR PLACES: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LOCAL HISTORY*. The British Library, 1989. ISBN 0 7123 0175 5, £8.95

Particular Places was written to accompany the exhibition 'Particular Places: English Local History and the Victoria County History' which opened in April 1989 in the British Library Galleries.

Both the book and the exhibition mark the publication of the 200th volume of the Victoria County History Series.

The book provides a broad overview of English local history, its sources and approaches. Chapters discuss the history of the family, the parish, the town and the region, as well as the relationship between national and local history. In addition a section of the book is given over to the development of the Victoria County History itself. The final section details ways to start researching one's own family, house, school or village. The emphasis is very much on 'doing it', but also on why it should be done.

The book takes a very individual view of English local history which is both its strength and its weakness. In a book of only 80 pages Christopher Lewis has set himself a mammoth task. The chapters on the family, parish, town and region do not merely catalogue the primary sources available but also discuss their specific advantages and problems for the local historian to employ them critically. *Particular Places* concentrates on the importance of local history in its various spheres and lists the questions the researcher should be asking. Whether it be urban or family history, the book's central point is to stress that a single vital question rather than a collection of facts is the true starting point of local history studies. Previously a set of indexed facts about a town or a family tree may have satisfied researchers; now the quality of the questions they ask and the light shed by their research on wider topics and on people's lives in the past are the standards by which their work is judged.

As well as showing the way local history links the particular to national history and how each level can be used to illuminate wider topics the book discusses the work of the Victoria County History. For many English historians and medieval archaeologists the Victoria County History (or VCH) is the first port of call when researching a local topic. For the social history curator who may never have used the VCH it is as well to explain that it is a concise summary of available documentary sources, organised county by county. From its genesis in 1899 when it concentrated on genealogy, heraldry and antiquities the VCH has been innovative in its approach to local history. From the start it brought a standardised approach to research in each county, relying on original rather than derived sources and ensuring that these were fully referenced. Since then the early parish histories of manor and church have been updated with the critical study of the economic and social history of a locality and its landscape as well as studies on education, population, settlement development and industry.

Christopher Lewis is Assistant Editor of the VCH, and this determines the standpoint of his book. He covers many of the primary sources available to the local historian and places them in the contexts in which they were written; he presents a selection of the work of well known local historians (with copious references to the doyen of them all, W.G. Hoskins), and holds forth in various chapters on the raison d'etre and relevance of local history. In 80 pages a whistle-stop tour is all that is possible and to many local historians it will be no more than a reiteration of concepts and techniques they have already encountered. Hopefully this speedy summary will make sufficient sense to novices who have not read the basic textbooks to encourage them to delve deeper. The quoted works and suggestions for further reading would, if followed up, lead straight into solid methodologies for research.

This book stands both as a refresher for ex-researchers and as an introduction for curators and volunteers who are unfamiliar with original documents. It emphasises the importance of not just collecting names, dates and facts for their own sake but of asking the right questions. It aims to make local history more accessible to more people by persuading them to practice history for themselves.

The objective of this book is to act as an appetiser for those who are interested in the history of a particular place but have never before been involved in any systematic historical research. Although the main market is therefore the prospective amateur local historian some social history curators may find it useful. A comment heard a few years ago by this reviewer was that the nearest many curators got to research was to take the appropriate Shire Album off the shelf! A book like *Particular Places*, while not providing all the answers, should at least give curators the incentive to seek out the VCH and documents in their local Record Office. If census returns and parish registers fill you with the dread of the unknown this book is for you.

Yvonne Hayhurst

MILLETT, Freda. ***GOING UP TOWN: SHOPPING IN OLDHAM.*** **Oldham Leisure Services, 1988, ISBN 0 902809 18 0, 60pp.**

There is a noticeable gap in the market for studies of twentieth century shopping which include the concerns of ordinary shopworkers and customers. Company histories and economic analyses of retailing make up the mass of available literature on the subject. Freda Millett's book therefore is a welcome addition to the small number of locally focussed narratives which along with biographies enliven our understanding of consumerism.

Going Up Town is arranged partly by geography – explaining how the modern shopping areas of Oldham developed and took on their distinctive features – and partly by trade. In this last respect it is heartening to see so much space devoted to the traders in the market stalls and arcades which lay at the heart of the town. The different atmospheres of the Tommyfield, Oldham's open market, and the regimented Victoria Market Hall are well evoked in prose and verbal extracts. In bringing the story of Oldham's indoor market up to the present Freda Millett reminds us of the importance of market trading and the survival of local retailers in a century dominated by fixed shops and the growth of national chains.

The author treats memorably with the place of Saturday afternoon shopping in the weekly routine of working women before the Second World War. With the washing and stoning of the house's face complete the afternoon was clear for a trip 'up town'. She also gives a resume of the history of Oldham's two co-operative societies.

The narrative is generously illustrated, though some of the photographs lack captions. More annoying is the anonymity of most of the verbal testimony, which leaves the reader to guess the witness's background. In a book as slim as *Going Up Town* it would be churlish to expect a discussion of how Oldham's shopping history fitted into the national context, or even how it compared with Manchester or Preston. Even so the pace of the text is fairly hectic – giving the impression that the author was strapped for space – and some sections, such as the piece on butchers, seem to finish just as they are engaging the reader's interest.

This book succeeds in recapturing the Oldham dimension of patterns of shopping and shopwork which are 'increasingly removed from today's experience'. For that reason and for its many illustrations it should enjoy the healthy local sales it deserves.

David Stockdale

WARD, Sadie. ***WAR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE 1939-45.*** **Cameron Books/David & Charles, 1988. ISBN 0 7153 9295 6. £12.95.**

Over the next five and a half years we can expect continual bombardments from the press, broadcasters, publishers and advertisers as each Second World War 50th anniversary approaches. Extremely heavy media barrages are anticipated for the anniversaries of Dunkirk, El Alamein and D-Day. The survivors of these campaigns will carry the images of war forever; but for many millions of British people their Real War was at home, with the shortages and air-raids and blackouts. For civilians and soldiers alike the war was a time of restrictions and changes, of frustration, fear and boredom. The reality of war will, I suspect, be the focus of displays in most museums with a local history content at some point in the next few years. Even if you work in one of the big cities your display is likely to touch on the Real War in the countryside, such as the experiences of evacuees.

Anyone faced with organising a Second-World-War-Hereabouts exhibition might find *War in the Countryside 1939-45* useful. The author includes all the necessary subjects: evacuees and refugees, air-raid precautions and rationing (which affected not only food, clothing and petrol supplies but also animal feeds and binder twine), and the farm labour of troops, prisoners of war,

conscientious objectors, the Home Guard and the Women's Land Army. The coverage is broad rather than deep, providing a helpful overview. Sadie Ward is a lecturer in Agricultural Economics and Management so it is not surprising that the sections I found most interesting were those relating directly to farming. She describes the parlous state of pre-war British agriculture, examines the roles of horses, machinery and 'land girls', and notes the massive switch to cereal production along with the use of pesticides which caused the demise of the traditional mixed farm and permanently altered the rural landscape.

Sadie Ward corresponded with some men and women with first hand experience but the book consists largely of extracts from wartime issues of *Farmers Weekly, Farmer & Stockbreeder, Country Life* and *The Field*. Apparently these are virtually untapped sources and the articles, letters and adverts make interesting reading. The material is primarily English with some reference to Scotland and Wales; we learn for instance that the first civilian to be killed in an air-raid was a labourer from Orkney. The author could have analysed the content and role of the farming press in wartime. However she is trying to evoke an era, and the test for this type of book is whether it makes us, the readers, feel the anxiety, the frustration, the humour, the bravery and the sorrow of the period. All these aspects are there, potentially, in the chosen extracts, and I think that the reason I felt unmoved was the style in which press prose was generally written. The effect is one of detachment, as if the war had to do with other people, strangers, somewhere else, and not people we might possibly know. War publications are prone to this sort of treatment, and the use of oral history could have helped to personalise the story.

This book is quite densely illustrated, mainly with photographs from the University of Reading's English Rural Life collections. Most of the pictures have the stiff-upper-lip or smiling-through appearance of official propaganda, while the captions generally fail to identify where they were taken, which adds to the abstraction of the narrative. The text and quotations have the same typeface and spacing which results in a seamless road but makes it difficult to distinquish easily between the author and her press cuttings. It is also hard to find specific topics since there are no subheadings and no index.

Sadie Ward is good at including the negative as well as noble aspects of the war: discrimination against the Women's Land Army, racketeering and the black market, social distinctions, the eviction of farmers leading to suicides. The overall image however is of people managing and succeeding, epitomised by two anecdotes from *Farmers Weekly* in which crash-landing Luftwaffe pilots and screaming sirens cannot deter ancient cowmen – these cows must be milked whatever.

Margaret Brooks

WEERASINGHE, Lali (editor). ***DIRECTORY OF RECORDED SOUND RESOURCES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.*** **The British Library, 1989. ISBN 0 7123 0502 5. £30.00.**

This is the sort of volume that serious students of any subject eagerly look forward to receiving. It describes itself as 'the key to a wealth of sound recordings dispersed throughout the United Kingdom' and does indeed refer to recordings held in 489 different collections, both personal and institutional.

The entries are arranged in alphabetical order within counties. The opening times (of institutions) are given, details of access, and a brief (but useful) summary of the collection itself. The subject coverage within this section is under the headings of oral history, spoken literature, accent/dialect, languages, spoken word, music, wildlife, transport, machinery and miscellaneous. This gives some indication of how this volume does truly cover all areas of recorded sound and not just oral history, (though this is the single most important category). In addition there is information about finding aids (e.g. computer access), publications and non-sound resources (e.g. photographs and library facilities).

This Directory is a masterpiece of collection summary and will undoubtedly prove of value to serious students of recorded sound. It is interesting to compare it with the far less comprehensive *Directory of British Oral History Collections*, published in 1981. This had 231 entries in it, of which 50 related to museums. This volume includes references to 62 museums, though there are probably many omissions because of the method of compilation. Whatever happened, for example, to Beamish's collection? In compensation for this, however, it should be said that the volume is excellently indexed and is very easy to use.

Its main weakness is its method of production. In 1984 the British Library National Sound Archive launched a nationwide questionnaire survey attempting to locate collections of all sizes and types. The results were entered onto a database called the *National Register for Collections of Recorded Sound*, from which information has been selected for this Directory. The unfortunate time-lapse between when the data was collected and its publication means that most of the museums whose collections are known to this reviewer are now inadequately represented, and no doubt many new additions are not there at all.

Stuart Davies

WEIR, Christopher. ***WOMEN'S HISTORY IN THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES OFFICE. 1550-1950.*** **Nottinghamshire County Council, Leisure Services, 1989, ISBN: 9009423 09 2, £5.00.**

This publication from the Nottinghamshire Archives Office is a welcome response to the increased public interest in women's history at the local level. Divided into two parts, it summarises the types of surviving records, official, commercial and personal, that document aspects of women's lives in Nottinghamshire.

The first half, covering 1550 until 1836, outlines the main sources, with appropriate caveats about cross-checking for accuracy on details and emphasising that the focus is mainly on the literate upper and middle classes, especially where private correspondence and diaries are concerned. Other women tend to feature at one remove (at the very least), in legal documents, court records, trade accounts, religious papers and Poor Law administration.

Part II follows through Victoria's reign until 1950. The greater volume of material for this period increases in depth, in range and in usefulness. Starting with the introduction of nation-wide census returns, the economic importance of women becomes clearer. Company records of firms like the Raleigh Cycle Company trace the roles played there by women both in peace time and war, while accounts of framework knitting and lace tell of long days and poor pay for very young girls. Women organised themselves into a variety of interest groups, from female friendly societies to the Women's Institutes and sports clubs. Like all record offices, Nottinghamshire's too has its own records of the local campaigns for Women's Suffrage.

Weir has not set out to give a full catalogue listing of every item of relevance in the Nottinghamshire Archives, rather he has set himself the less ambitious but more practical task of introducing local sources, discussing the general legal and social background while pointing out the historical limitations and short-comings. The well-chosen illustrations show original documents, transcripts, printed ephemera and historic photographs. The private papers of women of national significance, such as Dame Laura Knight and Lady Mary Wortley-Montague, are here but Weir highlights many other areas for fruitful research, and an attractive prospect is presented.

Weir does rather assume that the reader is already familiar with the workings of a record office, but with staff as committed as this to women's history, there is a real sense that help would be forthcoming to the new user. The concise bibliography could usefully include Dierdre Beddoe's *Discovering Women's History – a practical manual* (Pandora Press, London, 1983).

Museums do get a mention too. In the final section, other local resource centres are listed, with the social history collections of Brewhouse Yard getting an honourable mention. As a country-wide publication, it seems a pity that this section is not fuller, but it may reflect the fact that museums are operated by the district councils rather than the county. As the recently formed Nottinghamshire Women's History Group may have been a spur to getting this publication off the ground, maybe they can turn their attentions to museum staff for a parallel book.

Jane Legget

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