

Social History Curators Group

*2019 Annual Conference*

The Future of Social History:

Who are we Curating for?

Edinburgh- Venue TBC

Thursday 18th and Friday 19th July 2019

**Call for contributions on the theme of:**

*Representation in museums*

This conference will explore how we represent our audiences and communities in the museum space, and question whether social history collections can do more to improve representation across collections and exhibitions. SHCG is pleased to invite speakers to discuss how we can transform our collections to make them representative and redress imbalances in the museum space. This conference is intended to showcase examples of museum practice as well as providing a place for practical problem solving and discussion of your organisational issues and ideas around the conference theme. SHCG is pleased to receive proposals of activities, round table discussions, presentations, and workshops on the theme of representation in museums.

We look forward to welcoming you in July 2019 to discuss the future of Social History.

**Guidance on Topics for Discussion**

The future of Social History collections is an often debated topic. Following recent headlines regarding representation within museums, contemporary collecting and rationalisation, have our attitudes to these collections changed? Are we working with objects differently?

* How do we better represent the demographic of our museum audiences?
* Are social history collections lagging behind other disciplines in addressing under-representation in the museum space?
* Does our regional identity affect the way we collect and interpret collections?
* How can we collect the present without over-rationalising past collections?
* Is there a fear in your organisation of disposing of too much of the past to make way for collecting the future?
* How can we better engage audiences with contemporary collecting practices?

Social History Curators Group (SHCG) invites you to share your innovative ideas, experiences of trying to do things in new ways, successes, opportunities and failures.

Some example ideas are below:

* Representation and identity
  + How has your organisation addressed an under-representation of a community within the collections?
  + Has your organisation acknowledged inequalities in representation of audiences within the collections and exhibitions? How are you working to address this?
  + How do you engage with audiences your organisation doesn’t currently represent?
  + Has your museum sought to address decolonisation within a Social History collection? If so, what methodology was used?
  + Can social history collections learn from other disciplines in decolonising the museum space?
  + Has your organisation worked with representative groups to support museum staff in making better decisions regarding collecting their histories?
  + Does creating a ‘local’ identity come at the cost of distancing your organisation from other regions?
  + Has Brexit affected your organisational thinking towards identity?
* Contemporary Collecting
  + How do you prioritise and make space to collect the unknown future?
  + How do you engage museum audiences with contemporary collecting? Do you include them in your decision making?
  + Does your organisation have a collecting policy relating to identity of a region or a specific demographic, for example history of disability, LGBTQ\*?
* Rationalisation
  + Has your organisation made use of rationalisation tools provided by organisations such as Museums Association, Collections Trust, and if so were they successful?
  + Has your organisation undertaken a rationalisation project with the aim of redressing a representational imbalance?

**Collection Conundrums- quick fire round**

We are pleased to give the opportunity for 6 delegates to propose a problem or question which you wish to discuss with conference delegates, or share your experience of a project. The presentation should be a 3-minute summary of a collections problem, project overview, or tricky question which will then lead to a facilitated discussion session. This session is aimed at giving delegates practical advice and guidance on how to (or how not to) tackle issues in different areas of museum practice and at different career levels. In order to encourage honest dialogue this proposal can be anonymous; SHCG committee can provide a person to read a statement on behalf of a delegate. Please submit your ideas, which must relate to the theme of representation, using the application form at the end of this document.

**2019 Conference**

This year, SHCG is looking for presentations or interactive workshops that relate to the topics outlined above. The more thought provoking, unusual, practical and insightful the better.

If you have an idea that you think might be appropriate for this conference, please submit it as we’ll read and review every application. Insights into how others are working, their successes, their challenges and best practices are of benefit to many others within the wider museum and cultural community. We welcome contributions which pose difficult questions, or hearing from projects which might not have gone as planned or been considered unsuccessful in their outcomes - SHCG wants to create a space for honest dialogue and problem solving. SHCG are keen to hear from anyone working within social history in museums, not limited to those in curatorial positions.

Contributors are invited to offer perspectives from a local, national, international or global context. Contributions that are presented in a different way, either interactive or through discussion, will be considered. SHCG is keen to accept more contributions that stem from thinking ‘outside the box’ and will allow delegates to reflect on and think about Social History curation and its future.

**Dates for your diary**

● Please complete the submission form below and return it to Lauren Ryall-Waite and Alison Grange (conferenceshcg@gmail.com) by **8th February 2019.**

● All applicants will be notified of the Conference Organisers’ decision by 1st March 2019.

**Terms and conditions**

The decision of the conference panel is final.

● Only ONE person from each presentation or workshop submission will be given a

free day delegate place for the day that they are speaking.

● Speakers for the Quick Fire Round DO NOT qualify for a free place on the day they are speaking.

● Speakers travel costs will be reimbursed at standard fare-rate booked by a deadline specified by the SHCG Trustees, to a maximum of £100. This does not include ‘Collection Conundrums’ speakers. We require any speakers eligible to receive reimbursement to make arrangements which are as cost-effective as possible, for example taking advantage of early booking offers; this allows us to assist more people in attending the conference.

● Please note that SHCG is unable to provide additional fees, subsistence costs or

accommodation for speakers.

The Social History Curators Group is a membership organisation dedicated to improving the status and provision of social history in museums and the standards of collections, research, display and interpretation. It is not solely for curators, but for anyone working with or interested in social history in arts, museums and heritage.

Our annual conference is open to all and aims to facilitate the sharing of skills and

experiences, and provoke debate around a current theme affecting our members through presentations, interactive workshops and tours.

For more information, please visit ww.shcg.org.uk

**2019 SHCG Conference Proposal Form**

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| **NAME** |  | |
| **ORGANISATION** |  | |
| **EMAIL ADDRESS** |  | |
| **PHONE NUMBER** |  | |
| *Please indicate how you would like to participate:* | | |
| Collections Conundrum (3 mins) plus group discussion. If you wish to submit anonymously, please indicate this | |  |
| Case study presentation (20 mins) | |  |
| Interactive workshop (45 mins) | |  |
| Other format idea: please specify | |  |
| Would you be happy to do your presentation in 15 minutes if asked? | |  |
| Please tell us why you believe your paper should be included in the 2018 SHCG conference (100 words max) | | |
|  | | |
| Abstract, clearly indicating which theme or themes your paper will explore, and how it will explore it/them. What do you expect delegates to learn from your session? (300 words max) | | |
|  | | |
| Short biography of proposed speaker/s (100 words max) | | |
|  | | |
| Return to Alison Grange and Lauren Ryall-Waite by sending to [conferenceshcg@gmail.com](mailto:conferenceshcg@gmail.com) by **8th February 2019.** If you have a proposal which you’d like to talk through with us before the submission deadline, do contact either of us individually.  Lauren Alison  [ryallstl@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:ryallstl@roehampton.ac.uk) alison.grange@darlington.gov.uk | | |