



Annual General Meeting

15.30, Thursday 27 June 2013 —Ulster Museum, Belfast

Agenda

Meeting started at 15.35

1. Apologies and Attendance

Apologies were received in advance from Briony Hudson, Dorothy Kidd, Jill Holmen, Jenny Broadbent, Laura Briggs, Joe Carr, and Joanne Curtis.

A full list of attendees can be found in Appendix A.

2. Minutes of the 2012 AGM

The minutes of the 2012 AGM were passed as a true record.

Proposed: Robert Excell

Seconded: Steph Mastoris

3. Matters arising from the previous minutes

No matters were arising from the previous meeting that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Result of the Membership Ballot on Constitutional Change

- a. Michael Terwey briefly explained that SHCG needs for a robust governing document to apply to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and explained the original constitution required a ballot to change to the new constitution.
- b. Michael then read out the following confirmation from Electoral Reform Services, who were commissioned to conduct the ballot:
 - i. Number of votes cast: 107
Turnout: 28.5%
Number of votes found to be invalid (Blank): 1
Total number of valid votes to be counted: 106
 - ii. Result

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|---------------------------|
| Number voting YES | 102 | (96.2% of the valid vote) |
| Number voting NO | 4 | (3.8% of the valid vote) |
| TOTAL | 106 | (100% of the valid vote) |
- c. Michael Terwey announced the formal adoption of the new constitution at this AGM. SHCG will now proceed with an application to the Charities Commission for CIO status, from which point the committee will be acting as trustees for SHCG.

5. Election of Committee Members

a. Treasurer

One nomination was received for the post of Treasurer:

Jen Kavanagh

Audience Engagement Manager, Science Museum, London

Proposed by: Michelle Lees

Seconded by: Jenny Brown

Jen Kavanagh is duly elected unopposed to Committee for three years, under the terms of the current constitution, as Treasurer.

b. Ordinary Members x 5

Eight nominations were received and verified by the Secretary in advance of the deadline for five Ordinary Member/Trustee vacancies. The nominations are detailed below and an election was duly held.

Catherine Littlejohns

Curator-Public History, Bristol Museum Service

Proposed by: Jude Holland

Seconded by: Steph Mastoris

Catherine Newley

Curator of Collections, St Albans Museums

Proposed by: Jenny Brown

Seconded by: Emma Harper

Emma Harper

Curator (Move Planning), British Postal Museum & Archive

Proposed by: Michelle Lees

Seconded by: Cat Newley

Fiona Byrne

Curatorial Assistant, National Museums Northern Ireland

Proposed by: Hannah Crowdy

Seconded by: Jude Holland

Leah Mellors

Social History Curatorial Trainee, The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

Proposed by: Ali Wells

Seconded by: Huw Jones

Rachael Lovering

Freelance Museums and Heritage Consultant

Proposed by: Victoria Rogers

Seconded by: Jenny Brown

Steph Gillett

Curator, Facilitator, Organiser, Freelance

Proposed by: Jenny Brown

Seconded by: Michelle Lees

Verity Smith

Freelance Volunteer Group Coordinator, Leeds City Museum

Proposed by: Jude Holland

Seconded by: Michael Terwey

The count was undertaken by Steph Mastoris, National Waterfront Museum and verified by Sarah Maultby, Woodhams- Stone Collections; with results as follows:

| | | |
|-----------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| Catherine Littlejohns | 26 | Elected on count |
| Cat Newley | 24 | Elected on count |
| Emma Harper | 14 | Elected on Chair's casting vote |
| Fiona Byrne | 24 | Elected on count |
| Leah Mellors | 13 | |
| Rachael Lovering | 14 | |
| Steph Gillett | 21 | Elected on count |
| Verity Smith | 9 | |

- c. Michael Terwey thanked everyone for taking part before handing over Chairmanship of the meeting to Michelle Lees, now SHCG Chair.

6. Committee Reports (please see Appendix B)

- a. The committee reports had been collated and circulated before and during the meeting. Michelle Lees asked those present to look carefully at the committee reports and asked for questions and comments.
- b. There were no questions or comments from the meeting.
- c. Michelle Lees asked for a proposer and seconder for the Accounts April 2012 to March 2013:

Proposed by: Michael Terwey

Seconded by: Robert Excell

7. FirstBASE Sub-committee Report (please see Appendix C)

- a. Jenny Brown noted that the FirstBASE sub-committee will need to be officially re-established under the new constitution and Michelle Lees noted this as an item of business for the first committee/trustee meeting of the year.
- b. Michael Terwey asked how things were going with the new FirstBASE website. Victoria Rogers reported that there are 35 active contributors (in addition to the FirstBASE editorial committee). There are some snagging issues and some work left to do and this should be complete in December. Victoria Rogers asked everyone to continue to contribute to FirstBASE.

8. Any Other Business

Michelle Lees thanked the retiring committee members for their contributions and hard work, and they were handed cards.

8. Close of Meeting at 16.08

Appendix A: Attendance

| Name | Organisation | Membership |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Adam Bell | Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums | Individual |
| Alison Hess | Science Museum | Individual |
| Catherine Littlejohns | Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives | Institutional |
| Catherine Newley | Museum of St Albans | Individual |
| Ciara Canning | Colchester & Ipswich Museums | Individual |
| Eleanor Root | Museum of East Anglian Life | Individual |
| Ellie Swinbank | National Mining Museum Scotland | Individual |
| Fiona Byrne | National Museums Northern Ireland | Institutional |
| Fiona Ure | Barrow CRC | Individual |
| Georgina Young | Museum of London Docklands | Individual |
| Hannah Crowdy | National Museums Northern Ireland | Individual |
| Helen McConnell | Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives | Individual |
| Henrietta Lockhart | Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery | Individual |
| Jack Ord | Discovery Museum | Individual |
| James Arnold | Lakeland Arts Trust | Institutional |
| Jenny Brown | Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums | Individual |
| Jenny Noble | CultureNL – Museums & Heritage | Individual |
| Jude Holland | SS Great Britain | Individual |
| Karen Logan | Ulster Folk& Transport Museum | Individual |
| Leah Mellors | Herbert Art Gallery & Museum | Individual |
| Lydia Saul | The Higgins Art Gallery and Museum | Institutional |
| Meg McHugh | Museum of Science & Industry | Individual |
| Michael Terwey | National Media Museum | Individual |
| Michelle Lees | National Media Museum | Individual |
| Robert Excell | London Transport Museum | Individual |
| Sarah Maultby | Woodhams- Stone Collections | Individual |
| Steph Gillett | | Individual |
| Steph Mastoris | National Waterfront Museum | Individual |
| Verity Smith | Piece Hall Project, Halifax | Individual |
| Victoria Rogers | The Cardiff Story Museum | Individual |

Appendix B: Committee Reports

Chair's Report 2012-13

In my report to the 2012 AGM I talked about the need to ensure the group's sustainability through addressing weaknesses in our finances. SHCG had found itself in a position where membership income had remained static, while costs had risen across the board. Our success at raising funds for specific projects, from ACE and from the Esmee Fairbairn foundation, had complicated our accounts and made it harder to understand this long term reduction in the groups reserves. This year we have undertaken a review of our financial reporting and management principles to complement the reforms to the membership rates and structure which we agreed last year (and implemented in April), I feel that we can now be more confident that SHCG can continue to operate in a responsible manner and without any significant reduction in activity or services to members.

The completion of the Firstbase project this year is also a significant moment. The two-year project, funded by £26k from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, has resulted in a much improved site, better designed and much easier to use. SHCG continues to see Firstbase as a key tool for our members and of use to any curators who want high quality information at their fingertips for working with Social History collections. A further successful bid to ACE to produce a series of films showing traditional skills and techniques, which will be added as resources to the site, is hopefully a sign of how valued the site is and how it will continue to grow over the coming years.

Another important moment is the beginning of the end odour transition to charitable status. A postal ballot of the membership to validate the vote of the 2011 AGM will by now have concluded, and with the formal adoption of the new constitution the group can make the final steps towards a new, sound, legal footing. 2014 will see the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Group for Regional Studies in Museums, the forerunner of SHCG, and it is particularly satisfying for the group to be able to look forward to the next 40 years in such a secure position.

And, finally, it's my duty to pay tribute to the hardworking and talented committee members who are, sadly, standing down this year. This year we say goodbye to Laura Briggs after two years and whose work on overhauling our antiquated membership database is to be particularly commended, Jenny Broadbent, who has served three years on the committee and whose term as fundraising officer has seen another very decent haul, in particular at the expense of the Arts Council, and Victoria Rogers whose 8 years on committee seen her take a turn as chair and steward the recent Firstbase project to completion. I will also be standing down after my two years as chair, and six years on the committee, and would like to thank all those colleagues and committee members who have made that time so interesting and fun, who have supported me and endured any of my less than perfect qualities. I hope to remain involved with the group, and wish my successor as Chair, Michelle Lees, every success as she takes SHCG forward.

Michael Terwey
June 2013

Treasurer's Report **For the financial year end 31.3.2013**

I am pleased to be able to present the accounts for SHCG for the last financial year 2012-

2013.

Although the accounts seem to be in a relatively strong position at the end of 31.3.2013 with a positive balance, it should be noted that this is largely due to a grant income for this year. In reality we are seeing high rising costs for core activities and steady reduction in income.

SHCG's assets are held in a Cooperative Bank Community account which was opened in February 2009.

**Receipts and Payments Account
For the Year Ending 31st March 2013
Co-operative Account**

Receipts

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Bank Interest | £31.86 |
| Annual Conference 2012 | £8,611.65 |
| Membership Subs | £5,535.00 |
| Seminars | £194.00 |
| Grants | £12,419.00 |
| Total | £26,791.51 |

Payments

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Committee Expenses | £ 1968.74 |
| Seminar Expenses | £7662.59 |
| Conference Expenses 12 | £7053.01 |
| Conference Expenses 13 | £563.42 |
| Newsletter Expenses | £5242.10 |
| Journal Expenses | £964.00 |
| 1 st Base Expenses | £21,470.60 |
| Website Expenses | £2733.33 |
| Accounts | £240.00 |
| Misc. | £2062.00 |
| Total | £49,959.59 |

Net Excess -£23,168.08

Balance Carried Forward from 2011-12 £28,608.86

Cash Balance Carried Forward 2012-13 **£5440.78**

1 April 2012- 31 March 2013

Membership subscriptions

Membership subscriptions have remained stable over the year. Subscription payments for this year will fall into the 2011-12 accounts as well as 2012-13 accounts.

Seminar Programme

Expenditure listed under seminar expenses relate to seminars organised by SHCG during this financial year through ACE Grant funding.

Conference 2012

The Social History Curators Group 2012 Conference made a profit of £1558.64 which included the cost of two free places and offering a 10% early booking discount. This is a reflection of the popularity of the conference and the hard work of the SHCG Committee and Conference Organisers.

Journal and News

Two editions of the News and one edition of the Journal were paid for within this financial year. The cost of producing the News has increased this year as we are producing both a digital and a print version, as well as extra supply due to the new membership categories. The cost of printing the Journal has reduced due to its change in format. In the next financial year there are likely to be a similar number of issues.

Grant Income

SHCG has been fortunate in obtaining a grant of over £12,000 from the Arts Council (seminar development) and £296 from Culture & Sport (website).

Interest

Interest continued to be paid in the Co-Operative Business Account. Interest has been constant but relatively low over the period of the last financial year.

Committee Expenses

Four Committee meetings were held during the year. Costs of Committee travel has fallen from 2011-12. Committee tries to take advantage of early booking reductions where possible.

Website and firstBASE

Fasthosts continues to host the SHCG website. Costs shown within the accounts include renewal of the Maitalk list and hosting payments as well as development costs to the website. Costs within firstBASE reflect committee expenses as well as firstBASE site development.

Joe Carr
June 2013

Independent Examiner's Report to the Social History Curators Group

We report on the accounts of the group for the year ended 31 March 2013

Respective responsibilities of members and examiner

The members are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The members consider that an audit is not required for this year and that an independent examination is needed.

It is our responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act;
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiners statement

Our examination was carried out in accordance with general accounting policies. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as members concerning any matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no option is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with our examination, no matter has come to our attention

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, that requirements:
 - to keep accounting records; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records

have not been met; or

- 2 to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

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Larking Gowen
Faiers House
Gilray Road
Diss
Norfolk
IP21 4WR

2nd June 2013

Secretary's Report

The Committee would like to thank the staff at these venues for hosting the meetings. The main business of this year's meetings has been monitoring the progress of The Esmee Fairbairn Collections Fund project to renew FirstBASE, managing the seminars funded by Arts Council England, reviewing the proposed CIO constitution and putting it to a full membership ballot as well as closely monitoring our spending. Committee also monitors the progress of conference, seminars, SHCG News, Social History in Museums Journal, special projects and the website. Agendas and minutes of all Committee meetings are available on request to anyone who would like to know more from enquiry@shcg.org.uk, and we have begun the process of adding these to the website (and will continue to try to add older minutes when possible).

The primary task of Secretary was preparing the CIO constitution and administering the membership ballot, as well as preparing to apply to the Charities Commission to become a CIO. If the membership approves the new constitution, this application will proceed over the next year and we hope to be a charity for AGM 2014. Due to continuing financial restraints, the bursary scheme announced at AGM 2011 is still on hold.

I would like to add my thanks to those members of committee who are stepping down this year, and my thanks to members of the SHCG-list for their assistance with various enquiries and their forbearance with so many reminder emails.

Jenny Brown (enquiry@shcg.org.uk)

June 2013

Membership Secretary's Report

Current net membership totals -

| | May 2013 | 2012-2013 |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Personal | 245 | 220 |
| Institutional | 117 | 125 |
| Overseas | 9 | 8 |
| Honorary | 4 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 375 | 357 |

Membership levels fluctuate throughout the year as new people join and others end their membership when their circumstances change or through non-payment of fees, but we have seen a small overall increase in the total number of members this year, especially individual memberships. UK institutional memberships have decreased slightly.

Our 4 honorary members are: The editor of the Museums Journal; Sharon Heal; Suella Postles; Collections Trust and the Newcastle University Library who house the SHCG full run of journals & newsletters.

Following agreement at the 2012 AGM, the new membership categories and fees have now come into effect. One aspect of this allows members to receive SHCG publications digitally, so please make sure you let the membership secretary know if your email address changes. Thank you to those who regularly send notification of changes to their contact details. This helps us to keep the

membership database up to date, reduces our postage costs by emailing where possible, and ensures that any post does reach members at their current address.

Laura Briggs, membership@shcg.org.uk

June 2013

Chair Elect Report (including ACE funded seminars)

Arts Council England funding

What it is? Identifying Mystery Objects workshops

This year SHCG were awarded £8,295 to run three identification workshops across the country using out Whatchamacallits format.

We chose city venues that are near the borders of the UK to enable easier attendance by our Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish colleagues.

65 people attended training in either Liverpool, Newcastle or Bristol.

Themes were Medals & Militaria, Photographs and Trade Tools.

Our objectives of the training were to:

- share the expertise and knowledge of those working in social history;
- to meeting members needs for local affordable training on relevant topics
- to address barriers to training (such as location, cost and subject matter).

These objectives were inspired by the Membership survey carried out in January 2012.

The training day itself was free of charge and open to anyone (member or non member). For the first time we were able to offer travel bursaries to those who wished to claim them. We funded 10 people's travel at a total cost of £730.61.

Due to the Project Support Officer's diligence in securing rooms free of charge we have some surplus left from the funding. We intend to plough that into this year's award for *Tools of the Trade*, 6 films imparting specialist knowledge to be uploaded onto FirstBASE.

Please see Zelda Baveystock's report for further details on the training days and the evaluation.

Michelle Lees

June 2013

'What is it? Identifying Mystery Objects'

Evaluation Report

1. Summary

This report details the results of evaluation conducted of three SHCG 'What is it? Identifying mystery objects' training days funded by Arts Council England and held between January and March 2013. The report has been prepared by Zelda Baveystock, who undertook the organisation

of all three days. Responses were collated from participants after the events using a questionnaire distributed via SurveyMonkey.

Each ‘What is it?’ training day covered a different theme and was held at a different location:

- 18 January: Medals & Militaria at Museum of Liverpool
- 11 February: Photographs at Discovery Museum, Newcastle
- 4 March: Trade Tools at M-Shed, Bristol

The themes were established by drawing on previous SHCG member surveys, and by consulting with regional museum staff in each of the three locations. All three days proved to be popular and were generally highly valued by all who attended.

2. Attendance

All three days were well attended, although fewer people turned up to each event than actually booked. As a free event, it possibly demanded a lesser commitment to attend on the day. The drop-out rate in Liverpool was particularly high due to heavy snow and travel disruption on the day.

The Newcastle event on photographs was the most popular, and had a waiting list of an additional 16 people who would have liked to have attended, mainly from volunteer-run heritage groups in the region, and some local study libraries/ archives. There is a clear demand for further training in this area, although not necessarily from SHCG members.

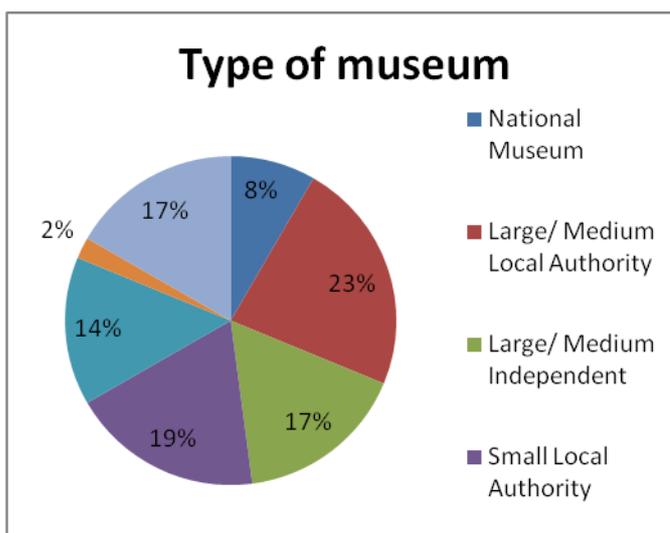
| Event | Booked | Attended | Completed evaluation | Response rate |
|--------------------|--------|----------|----------------------|---------------|
| Medals & Militaria | 26 | 18 | 11 | 61% |
| Photographs | 32 | 27 | 19 | 70% |
| Trade tools | 24 | 20 | 18 | 90% |
| Total | 82 | 65 | 48 | 74% |

3. Audience

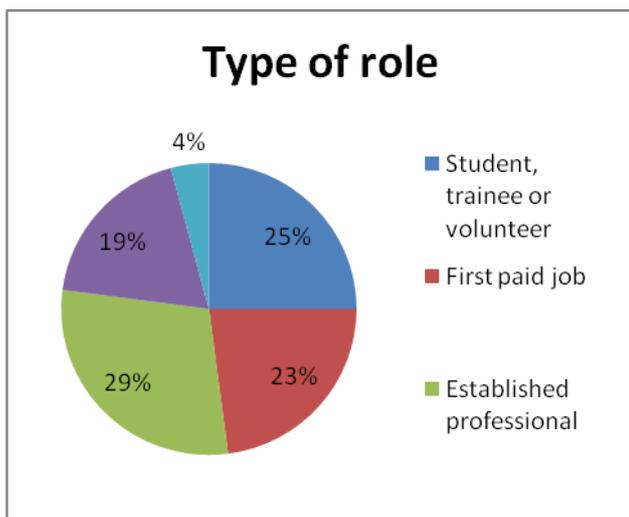
The three days attracted a wide ranging audience, both in terms of types of institutions represented and geographical spread. The travel bursaries undoubtedly assisted in broadening the appeal of the days, with delegates coming from as far afield as Belfast, Exeter and Durham for the Liverpool day. The Bristol day attracted a more strongly South West audience, possibly as the subject matter was decided upon in collaboration with the region’s collections development officer and training development officer, who both promoted the event widely amongst their volunteer museum networks.

The majority of attendees were not SHCG members (64% of respondents on Medals; 61% on Photographs and 61% on Tools). Although SHCG membership was promoted as part of each day, it is recommended that the Membership Secretary follows up with promotional material and information to all of these delegates.

Across the three events, there was a good distribution of attendees from a range of different institution type and job roles. National museums, local authority museums and independent museums were represented in roughly equal measure.



University museums were the least well represented, which is unsurprising given the relative lack of university museums with major social history collections.



A similarly strong mix was obtained in the range of job roles represented. Nearly half (48%) of all respondents described themselves as either established professionals or occupying managerial/ directorial roles, whilst a quarter were students, trainees or volunteers, and just under a quarter (23%) in their first ‘proper’ paid role. This demonstrates that object-based training is perceived to be relevant throughout the curatorial career.

4. Opinions of the training

The majority of respondents to the evaluation rated all three of the ‘What is it? Identifying Mystery Objects’ days very highly. The core aims of increasing the collections’ knowledge and skills of attendees were met, and all days scored very highly on introducing delegates to sources of support and information previously unknown to them. The days encouraged people to think of new ways to interpret their collections based on sound research, thereby promoting excellence in social history museums.

4.1 Detailed evaluation: Medals & Militaria

“The day was structured in such a way that whole experience was of immense value, from the history of medals, who they were awarded to and how they are worn, how to identify and research them, through to how they are displayed and maintained.”

Medals day participant

The Medals & Militaria day was highly rated by all but one participant. This was despite considerable difficulties on the day brought on by bad weather, including the museum closing unexpectedly at 3pm. This resulted in the afternoon sessions becoming more compressed than originally planned, with a handling exercise particularly foreshortened.

90% of respondents felt they had learnt how to identify medals and learnt of new sources of information to assist them with this task. 100% felt that they had increased their knowledge in how to care for collections. The slightly lower scores (80%) on sharing information with colleagues and using it in the workplace may relate to the fact that at least two of the respondents are currently unemployed in the museums’ sector.

| Learning statements | Strongly Agree/ Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Response Count |
|---|-----------------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| I have learnt about how to identify medals | 10 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| I have increased my knowledge in how to care for medal collections | 11 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| I feel I will be able to document medal collections more accurately | 9 | 1 | 1 | 11 |
| I have found new sources of information and support which might help me in the future | 10 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| I have made new contacts with people working in the social history field | 9 | 2 | 0 | 11 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|----|
| I will use the information I have learnt when I return to work | 9 | 1 | 1 | 11 |
| I will share the information I have learnt with colleagues in order to improve work with collections | 8 | 2 | 1 | 11 |
| I feel more able to interpret medals & militaria in exhibitions, events and displays | 8 | 2 | 1 | 11 |

Other positive comments included: *“All the talks were fantastic. The most useful was probably Steve's talk [on conservation] but it was great for Paul's talk to give a grounding and context to the whole day.”*

“The session on responding to family history enquiries was particularly helpful, as we are anticipating a rise in WWI-related enquiries as 2014 approaches.”

Suggestions for improvement:

Most respondents were entirely happy with the day, with very few negative comments recorded. One respondent wanted more technical detail on conservation and cleaning materials to be used, whilst another felt that the conservation aspects were pitched at too high a level for a volunteer-run museum, revealing the difficulties in getting the balance right in conservation matters for non-specialist audiences. One attendee was clearly unhappy with the training overall, and felt that it was too general, insufficiently clear in parts and in need of “more concrete information”. Given the degree of satisfaction of other participants, it is possible that this attendee had come with unrealistic expectations of what can be covered in a one-day event on a broad-ranging subject.

4.2 Detailed evaluation: Photographs

“Hearing from the 2 experts was invaluable - can't beat authoritative, experienced, well-articulated enthusiastic advice!”

Photographs day participant

The photographs day was the most successful of the three days. 100% of respondents felt that the main learning outcomes had been met: they felt more able to identify photographs and had discovered new sources of information, which they aimed to share with their colleagues. However, the networking outcomes were less successful for this event. On the day the participants were noticeably quiet and reluctant to talk to each other outside of the facilitated activities, which is reflected in their less enthusiastic evaluation on this aspect.

| Learning statements | Strongly Agree/ Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Response Count |
|---|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| I have learnt about how to identify photographs | 19 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| I have increased my knowledge in how to care for photograph collections | 17 | 1 | 1 | 19 |
| I feel I will be able to document photograph collections more accurately | 18 | 1 | 0 | 19 |
| I have found new sources of information and support which might help me in the future | 19 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| I have made new contacts with people working in the social history field | 9 | 7 | 3 | 19 |
| I will use the information I have learnt when I | 18 | 1 | 0 | 19 |

return to work

I will share the information I have learnt with colleagues in order to improve work with collections

19 0 0 19

I feel more able to interpret photographs in exhibitions, events and displays

16 3 0 19

Respondents also said they valued: *“Handling the objects and the depth of knowledge from the speakers. It’s not always possible to make contacts like this on your own.”*

“The history of photographs. I could have listened all day. And to see and hold examples.

Fascinating.”

Suggestions for improvement:

There were no substantial suggestions for improving this day. Three respondents felt that the lunch break was too long, although this had been included as a response to earlier SHCG events where people felt they had insufficient time to network and to look at the venue as well. One respondent commented that they would have liked more time on handling activities.

4.3 Detailed evaluation: Trade Tools

“... I miss straightforward identification sessions. I think this is such a useful skill to regularly practice that many of us that have become remote from collections lack.”

Trade Tools day participant(Museum Manager)

The Trade Tools day was run in partnership with the Trades and Tools History Society, who brought extensive personal collections with them to assist with handling and identification sessions. All the respondents agreed that this emphasis on identification through handling was vital, and the most useful part of the day. The variety of tools in collections is so vast that it would not have been possible to cover the subject in detail, but the handling ‘quiz’ built up participants’ confidence in tackling unfamiliar objects from first principles, and resulted in a much lively discussion.

The day was thus evaluated very highly for the main learning outcomes, with 100% of respondents feeling that they had learnt how to identify tools, and had discovered new sources of information. This day also achieved networking aims more successfully, probably due to the high level of facilitated activity in the morning, which also worked well as a general icebreaker. The training was evaluated slightly less strongly for learning about collections care with regards to tools, which is unsurprising given that this element was not explicitly covered in the programme for this day.

| Learning statements | Strongly | | | Response Count |
|--|--------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| | Agree/ Agree | Neutral | Disagree | |
| I have learnt about how to identify tools | 18 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| I have increased my knowledge in how to care for tool collections | 10 | 6 | 2 | 18 |
| I feel I will be able to document tools collections more accurately | 16 | 2 | 0 | 18 |
| I have found new sources of information and support which might help me in the future | 18 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| I have made new contacts with people working in the social history field | 15 | 3 | 0 | 18 |
| I will use the information I have learnt when I return to work | 17 | 1 | 0 | 18 |
| I will share the information I have learnt with colleagues in order to improve work with | 16 | 2 | 0 | 18 |

collections

| | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| I feel more able to interpret tools in exhibitions, events and displays | 16 | 2 | 0 | 18 |
|---|----|---|---|----|

Suggestions for improvement:

There was general agreement that the afternoon sessions were too detailed for most participants. These sessions focussed on a case study of one type of tools' manufacturer and an in-depth exploration of woodworking planes. However, these talks did give people a good indication of the next level of research which can be undertaken on tool collections. The planes workshop could have been more usefully replaced with a session on conservation had the relevant experts been available.

5. Recommendations for future training

"Costume, fine art, domestic applicances [sic] and interiors, old books, glass and ceramics - a similar approach to training how to identify virtually everything would be useful I'm sure."

Attendee at Photographs day

As the above comment suggests, there were a large number of suggestions for future training events, covering all collections types, with no one subject area predominating. In general, levels of confidence in collections' identification skills appear to be at a low ebb amongst many staff, with a feeling that *any* training in collections would be beneficial. A significant number of suggestions were for collection areas not necessarily associated with social history curatorship (e.g. taxidermy, ethnography, numismatics, fine art, swords and weaponry), suggesting that many people have expanding collections responsibilities. More 'traditional' responses included military costume, costume and textiles more generally, jewellery and accessories, plastics, metals, ceramics, glass, furniture, technology, agricultural and domestic items, paper ephemera, packaging, books and archive collections. A number of respondents also requested training in more general museum practice e.g. how to cut budgets, how to provide effective collections care on no money, digitisation standards, oral history and contemporary collecting.

The SHCG Project Coordinator was also contacted by a National Trust property wanting to run a repeat of the Tools day for its own staff, and by the Army Museums Ogilby Trust, who wanted to run the Medals and Militaria day again for its members. This suggests there are other SSN, specialist and heritage audiences which SHCG could be promoting its work to.

6. Legacy

Freelance filmmaker James Lynch was contracted to make short 5 minute films at each of the three events. These will be made available on the SHCG and Collections Trust websites.

7. Recommendations

- Repeat the Photographs day, cross-promoting to libraries, archives and local heritage groups.
- Continue the programme of hands-on training, and cross-promote the events of other SSNs, particularly DATS, Science & Technology, and Rural Museums Group.
- Mail the non-SHCG attendees from all three days with further information on the benefits of membership.

Zelda Baveystock
March 2013

SHCG News Editor Report

Two issues of *SHCG News* have been published in the last 12 months, issues 70 (December 2012) and 71 (June 2013).

With the introduction in April of SHCG's new membership structure, all members will now receive digital copies of the Group's publications; providing an e-mail address was supplied on the membership renewal form (if members opted for 'print' membership a digital copy will be e-mailed in addition to the copy sent by post). The digital version of *SHCG News* issue 71 features for the first time live web links and e-mail addresses, and an interactive contents page.

In an effort to reduce costs associated with print publications, vol. 37 of the Journal and issue 71 of the News were posted out together earlier this month, minimising postage expenses. The Journal and News were also printed by the same company this time and, despite this year's Journal being longer than last year's, negotiations with the printer resulted in a cost reduction of over 20%.

Issue 71 of *SHCG News* featured part two of Elanor Cowland's 'Medical Objects in Social History Collections', an Object Focus piece by Rachel Cornes about 'donkey stones', a Theory & Practice article by Susan Lord about a collaborative project at Bury Art Museum involving Fashion Image Making & Styling students at Salford University, and reports from individuals who attended the What is it? study days.

A complete back catalogue of *SHCG News* (up to and including issue 70) is now available at www.shcg.org.uk/newsletter - thanks to Victoria Rogers for assisting in the digitisation process and Cat Newley for uploading the PDF files.

The next issue, number 72, is due out in December 2013. Submissions should be received by 18 October.

Adam G. Bell
June 2013

Journal Editor's Report 2012/13

Following my appointment as Journal Editor in the summer, I have built on the work already done by Michelle Lees on Issue 37 of the Journal. We have 12 interesting articles this year, including a write-up of the debate and some of the presentations from Conference, and a response to an article published in the last Journal. There is also a strong selection of new papers on collecting, exhibitions and community work. Highlights include the innovative interpretation of manuscripts and architectural objects and an exploration of collecting from and among the LGBTQ community. It promises to be an excellent issue.

We have delayed the publication of the Journal in order to save money by sharing printing and postage costs with the summer edition of the News. We expect both to be delivered to members by the end of June. Next year, we will look into further cost savings, including a shared designer. Next year will also see the introduction of the digital Journal, following changes to membership rates.

I am eager to receive submissions for next year's Journal, on the conference theme of 'Local Stories, Global Identities'. Please see the SHCG website for information on submissions.

Helen McConnell
May 2013

Seminar and Conference Organisers' Report **Conference**

Following feedback from members on potential destinations in the 2012 conference survey, it was decided to hold the Conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland, which would also present members with the opportunity to go on an optional, informal study trip to Derry-Londonderry, the UK Capital of Culture 2013, following the conference.

Research was undertaken to ensure that holding the conference in Northern Ireland would not be more expensive than mainland UK in terms of conference costs and delegate travel costs. Detailed estimates on all aspects of conference organisation and travel costs proved the difference to be negligible.

Travelling to Northern Ireland was highlighted by members as one of the main perceived barriers to attending conference. The Conference Organisers, with help from NMNI-based SHCG member Hannah Crowdy, sent out detailed information on travelling to Northern Ireland in an attempt to break down this barrier.

National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI) agreed to waive the cost of hiring venues—the Ulster Museum and Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. The Conference and Seminar organisers would like to thank NMNI for their support in bringing the conference to Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Museums Council and Northern Ireland Regional Curators Group generously agreed to fund two free day places for two delegates working in local authority Museums in Northern Ireland. It was decided that in addition to this, to try and keep down costs, SHCG would offer one free member place rather than two this year.

The early bird booking fee was retained, as last year's conference survey showed this to be an important factor in justifying the cost of conference to employers.

The Conference Organisers created a marketing strategy targeted at marketing the Conference across the UK and disseminated conference information to contacts and networks: Museum ID, Museums Journal, AIM bulletin, Collections link, SSNs, Museum Studies courses, MDOs, The Diversity Network, regional agencies, and AMA support Groups. Information was also posted on the SHCG Facebook page, twitter page and SHCG website and relevant LinkedIn group pages. Targeted marketing towards attracting delegates from Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland was sent out through the Northern Ireland Regional Curators Group (NIRCG), a listing on the Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC) website, direct emails to NMNI contacts and Irish Museums Association listing. A targeted email marketing campaign in April focused on attracting delegates from cities bidding for 2017 city of culture status, to attend conference and visit Derry-Londonderry. An article was written for SHCG news to encourage delegates to attend the optional, informal study trip to Derry-Londonderry.

The conference theme of 'Local Stories, global identities', examining the interplay between the global and local in museums, was framed to bring together many of the topics members expressed an interest in through the 2012 conference survey: working in partnership with audiences, 'hidden' and 'challenging' histories, living history and new the use of new technologies.

The call for papers, sent out in January, elicited a great response, with many more high-quality proposals received than slots available. Papers were selected based on; relevancy to the conference theme, to give a good geographical representation and to reflect experiences from different sizes and types of museums.

Feedback from the 2012 conference survey helped to shape this year's programme. We have kept the popular short presentation format for the majority of conference, and continue to offer what we hope is a good range of activities in the concurrent sessions. In response to feedback from members, we have built in more time to explore venues into this year's conference programme, and used feedback on last year's debate to slightly simplify this year's motion. National Museum Northern Ireland have generously agreed to fund a group of Irish Musicians playing in the Folk Museum, to compliment Robbie Hannan's paper on Irish Music.

The optional Thursday evening activity of visiting the Titanic's Dock and Pumphouse was chosen to compliment our conference theme, and tie in with Hannah Crowdy and William Blair's tour of the Titanica Exhibition the following day at the Ulster Transport Museum.

We look forward to receiving delegates' feedback on the format and content of the conference in this year's follow-up survey.

Seminar

Following the award of ACE-funding to run the series of free 'What is it?' object lessons seminars this year, it was decided to run one other seminar in addition to this. This will be on Crime and Punishment collections, delivered in conjunction with the Crime and Punishment SSN, and will take place in late September/early October 2013. The venue is to be confirmed but will probably be the Galleries of Justice in Nottingham. The call for papers will go out in late June/early July, following conference.

Jude Holland and Ciara Canning
June 2013

Web Editor's Report

Website and social media

We are continuing to add more content to the website and have been doing a lot of work behind the scenes to improve our archiving and membership database. We get a steady stream of online visitors – this has been boosted in the last half of the year by the new and improved firstBASE which has brought more people to our website.

We have 318 people liking our Facebook page and 90 followers on Twitter. This is a big increase from last year and probably due to increased activity on both these sites.

Email list

There are currently 199 members subscribed to the SHCG list and it continues to be a useful platform for publicising events, as well as requests for information and help with identifications.

Catherine Newley
May 2013

Sponsorship and Development Officer's Report

Object Lessons

I compiled a report about the future of the Object Lessons boxes. The conclusion of the report was that the promotion of Object Lessons has been passive and ad-hoc. I recommended SHCG devotes some committee member time to actively promoting the boxes and developing regional rotation and use. The Object Lessons remit used to fall within the Seminar Organiser role. The Seminar

Organiser role was recently combined with that of Conference Organiser and therefore there is not capacity within this role to actively promote the boxes. Therefore the co-ordination role has been undertaken by the Sponsorship and Development Officer for the past year. A discussion was undertaken at committee to decide where the responsibility of the boxes should fall. The committee decided that we should co-opt an individual to co-ordinate the boxes who would not sit on the main committee. I contacted several individuals who had expressed an interest in assisting SHCG but they were unable to take on this role due to other commitments. If you would be interested in taking on this role then please contact a committee member. All three object lessons boxes are currently at the National Railway Museum and there are no future bookings.

Conference Sponsorship

I contacted various airlines, including Easyjet, Flybe, Jet2 and Aer Lingus, with the aim to get sponsorship for conference travel. Unfortunately despite my best efforts none were able to provide us with discount codes or other sponsorship. The best they could offer was group booking discounts but this was not feasible to co-ordinate given the number of different destinations delegates were coming from. Unfortunately I was not able to put time into attracting other conference sponsors.

Stepping down

I have taken the decision to step down from the committee in July despite only be halfway through my term of office. Since starting my new job, as Museum Manager at the Rochdale Pioneers Museum, I have not been able to devote enough time to my SHCG role. Given the current challenges faced by SHCG, I think it is necessary to have a Sponsor and Development Officer with the time and energy to give to this role. I have enjoyed the last three years I have spent on committee and would like to wish the committee every success in the future.

Jenny Broadbent

June 2013

Appendix C: FirstBASE Sub-Committee Report

This year has seen the biggest change for firstBASE since its original development back in 2001. Following delegates' 'sneak preview' of the new firstBASE prototype at last year's conference, in 2012-13 (thanks to funding from the Museums Association Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund) we have not only launched the all-new version of the website, but have also seen a dramatic increase in its use and in the content held on it.

Following a summer and autumn of scanning additional content ready for uploading onto the site (including SHCG's back catalogue of SHCG News), migrating and checking all 1603 records from the old site to the new, ironing out inconsistencies and other issues with the prototype, writing introductory text, sourcing images and user testing, firstBASE launched on 26 November 2012.

At launch, publicity about firstBASE was sent to SSNs, AMA Support Groups, Museum Development Officers, CPD Mentors, Museum Federations, an array of museum and heritage publications (both print and online), museum/heritage studies university courses, CyMAL, Northern Ireland Museums Council, Museums Galleries Scotland, Collections Trust and AIM for dissemination to their membership. Feedback from this again made clear the need and worth of firstBASE as a support tool for all those working with social and local history collections, for example:

"Just having a look at the site now, and it's really great! Very useful tool."

Gemma Dhami, MDO for Worcestershire

"The project sounds exactly what Curators need! Best of luck with it."

Francesca Aiken, North West England AMA Support Group coordinator

"The site looks great and should be very useful to us and our museums."

Chris Drake, MDO, Surrey, East & West Sussex

Work to publicise the site continues and will remain a priority. In March 2013 Victoria Rogers gave a presentation to the Museums Association Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund Network about firstBASE and the Editorial Committee wrote a letter to the Museums Journal responding to its recent article *The Curators* (March 2013 edition), which was published in the May edition.

Throughout the year, much work has continued behind the scenes by the Editorial Committee. We are inputting the records for an additional 400 resources we have already sourced and are working to also identify new content (thanks to all who replied to our recent appeal for archive film matter showing industries and trades (and therefore objects) 'in action' in their collections). We are also working with various SSNs and specialist museums to commission a series of new resources on the identification of specific objects/collections (as requested by the membership through the evaluation and consultation we have done over the past two years) specifically for the site. In the near future a new section of firstBASE will also be launched – a step by step, 'beginner's guide' to how to identify mystery objects.

Each member of the Editorial Committee also acts as a 'duty manager' for the site, writing a weekly Editor's Choice for the front page, submitting posts to SHCG email group, checking all web links on the site and verifying/amending any resources/comments submitted to the site. All this ensures that firstBASE will never be the static resource it once was.

Last month we heard that we had been successful in securing a grant for £9,400 from Arts Council England's SSN Fund for our *Tools of the Trade – films for firstBASE* project. This project will

commission a series of up to 6 films, interviewing specialists/long-standing curators at museums with significant collections about a type of tool with which they are experienced, imparting knowledge about how to identify them, how to date them, and demonstrating how they were used.

Thanks, as always, are due to the members of the Editorial Committee (Emma Harper, Jill Holmen, Briony Hudson, Steph Mastoris, Cat Newley, Catherine Nisbet, Victoria Rogers, Ellie Swinbank) for their hard work and enthusiasm, to Gemma Sturtridge for her continued advice and guidance, to Jordan Taylor for her work in inputting and scanning content.

Victoria Rogers
firstBASE Project Coordinator
SHCG Committee

Steph Mastoris
General Editor
firstBASE Editorial Committee

June 2013