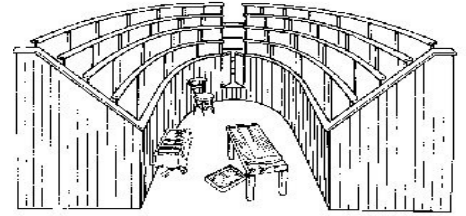


# The Old Operating Theatre, Museum and Herb Garret



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## Report Jan – April 2010

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Old Operating Theatre Museum has enjoyed a productive and successful start to 2010, with activity in almost every area of business from the conservation and protection of the collection and the building to the delivery of our events and education programme and our relationship with other organisations and with the visiting public. Our attendance figures remain excellent and the first quarter just managed to beat 2008 as our best first quarter ever.

The most exciting news for the museum, however, has been that museum was successful in its bid for Accreditation under the Museums, Archives and Libraries scheme. To be given this stamp of approval is very welcome particularly after all the work put in by staff and Trustees.

### **THE MUSEUM AND THE PUBLIC**

*Attendance figures* - Attendances for the first 4 months averaged 2790 per month. The first Quarter figures were 5% up on last year.

*Virtual visitors* – have recovered after a short inexplicable pause in the long term upward trend. They average 30,000 a month. The quarterly figures are 32% up on last year. We have set up a Facebook page for the Museum and have currently 85 fans.

*School groups* – are running at 653 per month. The quarterly figure is 9% down on last year.

*Medical groups* – averaging 80 per month and the quarterly figure is 5% up on last year.

*Non-medical groups* – are averaging 134 a month, and the quarterly figure is 23% up on last year.

*Sales* – average £1371 per month and the quarterly figures 1% down on last year.

*Hire figures* - were £667 per month, This is 132% up on last year.

*Gross Income* - (as recorded on the monthly sheet) was at an average of £16.608 per month, the quarterly figure was 2% down on last year, but April was the highest recorded income in the history of the Museum at £22,507.

### **Events and Hire**

In February, the Museum participated in Wikipedia's 'Britain Loves Wikipedia' event, which encouraged members of the public to visit participating museums and take new images which would be uploaded to the site and would increase and improve the available illustrations for it's articles.

In the early part of the year the museum took part in in the UK Medical Collection Group's 'Medicine at the Movies' project, which gave different audiences the opportunity to visit a participating museum and create an original film inspired by the museum and its collection. Other participating museums included the Hunterian museum, the Thackery Museum, The Edward Jenner Museum and the British Dental Association Museum. Coordinated by Kevin Flude and Juliana Wakefield, and created by film maker Simona Pianteria and a team of adult learners led by the writer Shaun Levin, the Old Operating Theatre Museum's final film, Journey of Blood, was a combination of photography, film and animation. It proved to be a great success at it's premiere at the Thackery Museum in Leeds and can now be seen on YouTube. An edited version of it will shortly be appearing on the musuem's own website.

The web address of the film is <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAk4XOrbH9g>

As a further part of this project, the Old Operating Theatre Museum also hosted an afternoon of film clips featuring the museum itself and its appearances in fictional films, documentaries and news items over the last few decades, digitised into a modern media format from the museum's collection of old VHS tape originals. As a part of this event, the museum also obtained a copy of the 1903 silent film 'The Unterschenkel Amputation from the Wellcome Trust with their permission to screen it. This is a unique piece of footage showing an amputation being performed with 19th century techniques at the start of the 20th century, and it was displayed in the theatre itself.

In March, the Museum took part in Science Week again, welcoming back our guest and collaborator Dr David Leaback, who presented a talk about the development of Scientific surgery and a walk encompassing the Guy's campus, considering it's history and famous alumni.

The Museum has also been delighted to participate in the 350th anniversary celebrations of the Royal Society. In association with the Chelsea Physic Garden and the Royal College of Physicians, the museum has created and hosted a series of events about physician and Royal Society president Hans Sloane, as part of the Royal Society's 'Local Heroes' programme. Julie Mathias developed a series of workshops about 'The Odyssey of Chocolate', which Hans Sloane introduced to England and sold as a medicinal recipe. These presentations, which feature chocolate tasting, will continue into the latter part of the summer and have been proving extremely popular with audiences. Kirsty Chilton gave a new lecture about the enlightened scientific surgery of the early 18th century, centering on Sloane's friend St Thomas' surgeon William Cheselden and his apprentice Samuel Sharpe of Guys'. The presentation afforded the opportunity to talk about the great figures associated with both St Thomas' and the Royal Society in the early 18th century. Kevin Flude also presented a series of walks around Bloomsbury and Chelsea about Hans Sloane's life and some of the places associated with him.

In May, the museum participated in the annual 'Museums at Night' again, offering a repeat performance of the sold out 'Surgery By Gaslight' event, with talks taking place at 6, 7 and 8pm. The event proved to be equally popular this year and had sold out several days in advance, with many people still arriving at the museum on the night hoping to join the talks. The event made over £1000 in a single evening and had a wonderful atmosphere, enjoyable for both the staff and the visitors.

The Museum also participated in Southwark's Silver Festival for senior citizens with a new talk developed by Julie Mathias and Karen Howell called 'Things My Mother Taught Me', about medical remedies before the NHS.

The Easter holidays and half term were exceedingly busy once again, and the museum simply concentrated on delivering it's core programme of Victorian Surgery and offering The Odyssey of Chocolate, with one presentation every day at 2pm.

Also in the first part of the year, the museum hosted visits by several medical societies, including

In January, the Museum played host to a Keats House event called 'A Little Region To Wander In', at which a private audience considered all things Keats, including a look at some of his letters. In February, we were also delighted to welcome KCL Surgical Society and their speaker Professor Harold Ellis back for another visit, and we also hosted an evening talk and visit for the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers.

## **MARKETING & PRESS COVERAGE (Valentina Lari)**

In the past few month the museum has received a lot of press coverage, especially for two of our events: Hans Sloane and the Odyssey of Chocolate (part of the Royal Society's Local Heroes commemoration) and Surgery by Gaslight and Other Medical Tales (part of the Museums at Night project). Most interesting, the museum was featured in some radio interviews and broadcasts that gave us more visibility reaching a different kind of audience that still enjoy radio programmes and rely on the reviews given by local and international radio stations. Radio interviews given by Kevin Flude included Radio London, interviewed by Robert Elms, and a Radio 4 interview with Gerry Anderson. Further, we have featured in several television programmes broadcast in the early part of this year which have attracted attention, particularly The One Show on the BBC.

The Time Out website, whose listings are regularly updated with our events by Valentina Lari, has been a significant source of publicity. The events Time Out chooses to publicise - aside from the museum's regular presence on the listings - are always incredibly popular. Other online events listings sites, such as Culture 24, are also regularly updated. The Guardian, The Independent, the Telegraph and local magazines have also been giving us significant coverage. Articles have also appeared in heritage magazines such as British Heritage, and an interview with Karen Howell in Herstoria magazine featured Karen's choice of objects from the collection.

Locally, the museum's leaflets are being included in a package of tourist information handed out around the London Bridge area by the Southwark Young Pilgrim, a local holiday history project for 14-16 year olds. The Museum has also featured in the Silver festival brochure produced by Southwark Council and in the leaflets for the Hans Sloane project.

School visits have been popular as ever and in terms of our marketing, we are not currently subscribed to any particular magazine or agency. The museum is often operating at capacity, and it has not been necessary to undertake any new advertising for our education programmes; the museum has already started to receive bookings for 2011 and continues to be extremely successful in attracting repeat visits. However, the museum continues to work with Rayburn Tours, who organise tours based on aspects of the GCSE curriculum on behalf of schools and has received several bookings for the Medicine Through Time programme from them this year. The museum has also continued it's successful relationship with the London Pass, which continues to bring us many visitors every month.

The museum is currently involved in few promotions to attract visitors: Atoc 2 for 1 (a promotion connected to National Rail), Take Two and Iphone. An additional promotion has been discussed with an agency which works with airlines and is trying to promote venues to cabin crew members whilst they stop in London.

Valentina Lari has created and finalised a new press pack for the museum. It is in an electronic pdf format, which can easily be either printed or emailed, and is in black and white for easy reproduction. It contains all the information that could be useful in writing a general informative article or a review, and also information about the museum's collections, education programmes and activities.

## **Education Service and Group visits (Julie Mathias)**

The educational provision at the Old Operating Theatre Museum has continued to thrive since January 2010 for all Key Stages 1~ 5. The syllabus designed at providing a candid insight and understanding into the history of medicine and surgery has proved a huge success as much for pupils as the teaching staff in conveying the key aspects required by schools as stipulated by the QCA.

The National Curriculum at these levels comprises of: at level 2 “The Victorians”; at level 3 “Britain 1750~1900”; at levels 4 & 5, the “Medicine through Time” aspect of the History GCSE. To address “The Victorians” module industrialisation, medicine and surgery in Victorian times are explored. The “Britain 1750~1900” module is addressed through an exploration of social change throughout the period.

Further, the rich history of the unique location of the old St Thomas’ Hospital and Southwark is introduced on interactive tours of the area which cover the health, social and working conditions of the poor with special reference to the arrival and eradication of Cholera from Britain. These walking tours have increased significantly in popularity, and more members of staff are now able to deliver them, including Colin Parr (who has led some 30 such walks since December), Gareth Miles and Julie Mathias.

Role-play and learner led discussion are used to investigate the development of surgical procedures between 1750~ 1900 in the Old Operating Theatre, and the presentation for Medicine Through Time has remained at the heart of the museum's education programme. What has become increasingly apparent in the last ten months via visitor feedback is that schools that are covering the GCSE module ‘Medicine Through Time’ are consistently returning to us and regard us as valuable partners in the delivery of the core curriculum in addition to enrichment activities which facilitate learners' wider personal and social development.

Throughout the past year we have also witnessed an increasing number of BA and MA students attending the museum. This includes the history as well as medical departments of Royal Holloway University, University College London, Kings College and Birkbeck University, in addition to international universities and colleges. The range and diversity of educational visitors is testimony to the flexibility and breadth of our provision.

The various family learning workshops that have been running on Saturdays and during school holidays throughout 2010, have been extremely well attended and proved to be a success. The staff's experiences and feedback from these informal workshops have enabled the museum to appreciate the high esteem that our audience has for the unique face to face human interaction that we provide, as opposed to the corporate nature of many contemporary museums education programmes.

Also due to the high number of retired nursing staff that visit the museum, Julie Mathias has recently began a project based upon the oral histories of nurses that worked within the general London hospitals before the advent of the NHS and what were the immediate effects felt of this transformation to the nursing staff. The aim of this project is to provide an important record in this under researched area of the social history of Guys and St Thomas’ which Julie eventually hopes will conclude in a small booklet for the museum.

## **LORD BROCK MEMORIAL TRUST & DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (Kevin Flude)**

*Accounts* – The Accounts for 2008/9 and the Annual return were uploaded to the Charity Commission web site. The accounts 2009/10 are reconciled to (31<sup>st</sup> March 10) and data entered up to present date.

Petty cash accounting is now almost up to date. A draft of the Borough High Street Amenity Foundation accounts for 2009 were prepared.

*Lease* – Negotiations with our landlords the Cathedral Group continue, but we have so far not found a convincing way forward.

*Jubilee Line Compensation* – The museum has been informally offered a settlement which, although short of our claim, at least goes some way to make up for some of the losses created during the work on the Jubilee Line.

*Fire Escape* – Richard Moyle is working on improving the license to the fire escape through the Transport Police building.

*Guy's Courtyard Medical Heritage Centre project* - Progress is being made by the Charity of Guys' and St Thomas' to set up a medical museum or exhibition in the courtyard of Guy's Hospital and the Museum has attended meetings and is awaiting developments.

*ICT* – Our ICT award was doubled to just over £1, 500. We have purchased a laptop and a network server which will soon be installed with the help of a consultant.

*Fund-raising Strategy.* - The Museum is working with Judy Niner of 'Development Partners' to draw up a fund-raising strategy. Within the next few months it should be ready and it's implementation can begin.

*First Aid Assessment Policy Document* – Kevin Flude drafted a new First Aid assessment Policy.

## **BUILDING & MAINTENANCE (Karen Howell)**

There has been an upgrade of the museum's fire prevention procedures:

Following the visit of two fire risk inspectors, a local officer of the Fire Brigade and the Fire Risk Assessor (commissioned independently by Cathedral Group), advice was taken for the upgrade of the museum's fire prevention equipment. Karen Howell contacted the Fire Prevention Service who brought in their agent Lance to assess the fire prevention equipment currently on site. Following this visit, old fire extinguishers were removed and Lance installed a full set of new ones (three foam and two of carbon dioxide). Additional to the purchase of the five new extinguishers, an ongoing contract was also set in place for yearly maintenance of the extinguishers.

To further follow the recommendations of both fire risk assessors, it has been advised that a lit sign should be installed near the entry point to the museum from the church tower to further improve emergency exit signage for the public.

Other outstanding electrical work includes the replacement of the back light fitting to the theatre. This fitting had been removed during the restoration and requires refitting as it covers the stairs to the Old Operating Theatre. To improve the general visibility of the exhibition, it would be advisable to add a small amount of supplementary lighting to the back left of the Herb Garret (Bay 4). An electrician needs to be brought in to achieve these requirements.

Since the removal of the stands for the restoration of the Old Operating Theatre Museum ceiling was completed, the stands at the back of the theatre (having been replaced) are continually loose, with the screws at the base working loose daily. These need stabilising. In the past Yvette Barrett and Karen Howell had bolted the railings through the floor, which resolved the problem, but these bolts were removed during

work undertaken by Linfords. The museum received a generous donation of £200 by a single donor actively requesting or suggesting that some work be undertaken to resolve this issue for the long term.

The new skull sculpture that has been installed by Cathedral Group in the church foyer, the entrance to the museum, has proved to be quite popular with the public. Cathedral Group have plans to develop the appearance of the entrance for the museum by provision of a new 'A' board and hanging sign. Prototypes of the hanging sign as designed to match the skull sculpture by artist Luke have been forward to the staff and the museum looks forward to seeing this in place this year.

Following through on earlier building restoration work, Cathedral Group also arranged to have the walls of the spiral staircase repainted. This was undertaken within two evenings in May after the museum was closed to the public.

Following the very busy fully booked March to April period of the year (pre GCSE exam visitors) stability of the spiral staircase had been of concern. Adjustments have been made, but research and investment in a long-term solution for improved access is necessary.

## **Collection and Conservation (Karen Howell)**

The museum staff had worked hard to achieve improvement to all museum documentation standards and were very happy indeed to have achieved the MLA Accreditation Award Certificate dated 25<sup>th</sup> February.

A full audit of the museum's collection has been underway since July 2009. Assistant curator Kirsty Chilton, with Marion Box and curator Karen Howell have undertaken the collection audit to check, clean and update all objects and their records. The audit manually examines each item of the collection, ensuring that it has a number, recorded location, case label, photographic record and records any possible conservation requirement. This data has then been compared to the museum's computerised Idealist Collection Catalogue. Following the audit, more photography will be undertaken for further collection inclusion into the museum's website online collection (only part of the collection is currently online).

Following the audit, in parallel, a redisplay of cases has also been undertaken to improve the aesthetic display, comprehension and conservation conditions (by upgrading the backcloths and holding materials). As the audit proceeds, the Idealist Database Catalogue of the collection has been checked, to include updated research and documentation, eg. with inclusion of personnel associated to objects (such as eponymously named obstetric instruments). The process also incorporates new items within displays. For example, some of the many excellent nineteenth century instruments as donated by Mr David Nelson in 2007 (kept in store by the roof restoration project) are now included.

The audit was projected to be completed at the end of May, but due to the museum being so very busy with groups for the last two months, it is likely now to require another month to complete.

Via an offer made through the Museums of Health and Medicine website, the museum was very fortunate to have received a large donation of pharmaceutical equipment on Wednesday 10 February 2010. Following contact with Dr Spence who administered and delivered the donation, more than one hundred items were received. These included many green fluted poison rounds, blue syrup rounds and beautiful matching unguent jars and a chemist's powder folding machine. The museum is very grateful to the generosity of this donor who wished to remain anonymous. The donor (whose father was a pharmacist) did in fact visit the museum alongside Dr Spence, delivering by hand (to Karen Howell) another exceptional item; an early nineteenth century wooden surgical instrument case. Although now empty, this very interesting case with a top handle shows the impression of an amputation saw on the red velvet lining within the lid.

Marion Box has cleaned all items of this donation which has yet to be accessioned due to the priority of completion of the audit. All items have been placed in storage to be fully documented and incorporated to further improve the exhibition in the future.

The museum currently holds an HTA licence no: 12336 for the display of a small number of human specimens. Following a request to the HTA, Karen Howell (as the Designated Individual for the licence) had approached Mr William Edwards of the Gordon Museum within Guy's Hospital, to explore whether the museum could become a 'satellite' of the Hospital (the particular specimens are loaned to the museum by St Thomas' and Guy's Hospitals). This slight change in status would mean that the museum could take an umbrella 'satellite' status in terms of its licence for the public display of human material (applicable for the public display of specimens under 100 years old).

Following a meeting with Mr Edwards and Keith Brennan, it was decided that the request be formally made during the HTA assessment of Guy's Hospital licence assessments due in August 2010. The museum is very grateful to Mr Edwards and Mr Brennan for the time they have spent in this consideration.

## **STAFF (Kevin Flude)**

The Museum has been staffed by Karen Howell, Kirsty Chilton, Kevin Flude, Valentina Lari, Julie Mathius and Juliana Wakefield. We continue to receive the much needed support of a very strong volunteer team led by Marion Box, Colin Parr, and Gareth Miles. Occasional help is given by Connie and Hetty Flude and very occasionally we have also received help from the Fairstaff Employment Agency.

## **Training & Staff Development**

Karen Howell and Marion Box attended: Wednesday 19 May, 6-7pm Evening talk - Pharmacy and Slavery: Apothecaries, Medicines & the Slave Trade 1650 to 1833 by Dr Stuart Anderson

Colin Parr attended: Salvage training and the Emergency 1st Aid training in March.

Kevin Flude 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010