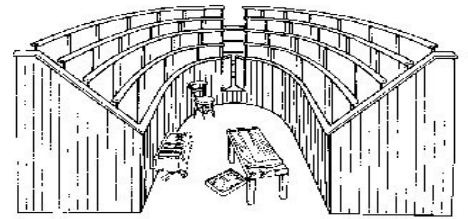


# The Old Operating Theatre, Museum and Herb Garret



## Report for the Year 2009

### INTRODUCTION

Despite the recession the Museum has had its best year ever, just overtaking the figures for 2007 (the last year in which the museum was unaffected by building work). The resilience of the Museum, considering the circumstances, has been remarkable. This may have been helped by a small grant from MLA, London which enabled the printing of a museum leaflet, supported by a banner campaign on Borough Market, but it is mainly a testimony to the hard work of core staff and to the quality of the new members of staff we recruited in 2009.

Now the period of building restoration (which forced the museum to focus on survival) has finally concluded, the Museum has begun to refocus on long term development issues. We have reviewed and improved administration, including the accounting procedures and are reviewing our fund-raising strategy. In terms of the building, we have revised and improved further the Museum's lighting and health and safety. We have submitted our application to the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Accreditation scheme, a process which has involved reviewing various areas of the Museum's operation. We have also developed new events and educational programmes and are working on several interesting grant projects. Our new forward plan has been put in place and if we remain unaffected by the recession, we can look forward to a successful 2010.

### THE MUSEUM AND THE PUBLIC

**Attendance figures** - Attendances for the year were 31, 247, which is just above our previous highest figure in 2007. On average, we welcomed 2604 visitors per month. **Virtual visitors** – were very slightly down on last year. Figures probably represent about 40,000 visits per year, an average 3,300 visits per month. This is the first time virtual visitor figures have been down on previous years, and may reflect a slow down in the rate of growth of use of the internet.

**School groups** - were approximately at the same level as last year, at 6291 for the year, with 524 pupils on average visiting per month. **Medical groups** - were 7% up on 2008 at 982, 82 average per month. **Non-medical groups** - were 21% down on 2008 at 1203, an average of 100 per month.

**Sales** – were 43% up on 2008 at £16456, at an average of £1,357 per month. This represents a spend per visitor of 53p. **Hire figures** - were 1% down on 2008 at £6,041 or £503 per month.

**Gross Income** - (as recorded on the monthly sheet) was at an all time high of £155,104, which is 46% up on 2008, or £12, 925 on average per month. **Expenditure** was also at an all time high at £147,837 28% up on 2008 and at an average of 12.320 per month. **Donations** were 11% up at £1,1818 at an average of £152 per month. **Grants received** in 2009 were £13,440 compared with £3091 in 2008.

## **LORD BROCK MEMORIAL TRUST & DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

*Accounts* – The Accounts for 2007/8 were prepared and signed off by Trustees, while the 2008/9 accounts have been prepared and delivered to our new accountants Elan and Co of Bermondsey. The accounts 2009/10 continue to be reconciled up to date (31<sup>st</sup> Dec 09). Petty cash accounting is still in need of improvement. The new bank account at the Cooperative Bank has been working well.

*Lease* – We were successful in achieving the offer of a grant of £95,000 from the Charitable Foundation of Guy's and St Thomas's to pay for the long term lease. However, negotiations with our landlords, the Cathedral Group continue to be complicated because of the arrangement with the former owners, the Chapter Group, whereby the proceeds of an 'Open Market Rent' for the Museum space would be given to the Chapter Group in addition to the original sale price for the Church, in lieu of an agreed amount for the Museum. However, it is suspected that the valuation arrived at by our consultant Peter Memmott does not match the amount hoped for by the former owners. We are currently looking into ways of taking this forward.

We are awaiting further progress regarding negotiations for extending the license for the Fire Escape through the Transport Police building.

Progress has been made in the Guy's Courtyard Medical Heritage Centre project. Staff have been appointed, and we await developments.

*ICT* – We received a small grant to pay for a consultancy visit to investigate ways of improving the Museum's ITC systems. After the Consultant's report was submitted, we received a small grant of £780 to implement some of the proposals. The small sum does not allow us to explore our ideas for a system to broadcast lectures from the Museum via the internet at the present time, but it is being spent on improving the network.

***POST-DEVELOPMENT GRANTS STRATEGY 2009*** - In the wake of the demise of the primary development objective, the acquisition of the head lease for St Thomas's Church, attention was redirected to the need to develop a grants and fund-raising strategy, and in particular to develop core-funding in compensation for the lack of an operating subsidy, as identified in the 2004 Audience Development Plan. A Sustainability Grant was awarded by the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) to fund a consultant to advise on the development of a fund-raising strategy, to be completed by the spring of 2010.

***THE ERNEST COOK TRUST: EDUCATION GRANT*** A successful application was made to the Ernest Cook Trust for funds to develop the Museum's Education Project. £5,940 was awarded, which represents 12% of the indicative education budget for 2009/10. These funds, and any complementary match-funding, are for the development of the existing education service, including staff costs, as indicated in the 2008 Museum Annual Report.

***GUY'S CHARITY: SECURING THE FUTURE, A CENTURY OF TENURE*** - Following the extensive advocacy of the Chairman, Mr David Firmin, a successful application was made to the New Services and Innovations Committee of the Guy's and St Thomas's Charity for a grant of £95,000 towards the premium of a long-term lease (105 years) for the Museum. The capital costs were based on the recommendation of Fairweathers Chartered Surveyors, with the final negotiation with the landlords remaining subject to independent valuation and the consent of the Charity Commission. The period for completion is 12 months from the start date, 3 August 2009. Other revenue costs, estimated at £7,000, would be met by charitable funds from the Lord Brock Memorial Trust and Borough High Street Amenity Foundation. Invaluable advice was gratefully received from Mr David Jones, Grants and Development Manager GSTC. Mr John Findlay, Deputy Director Clinical Services Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust, kindly sponsored the application on behalf of the Museum.

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

Active marketing of the Museum has helped in surviving the economic crisis and helping make 2009 a fruitful and productive year for the museum. One of our new promotion strategies is to offer reasonable discounts on the entrance fees, or 'two for the price of one' admission, as a participant in larger promotions. With this strategy in mind, the museum takes part in a number of promotion schemes - these include accepting ATOC's 'Two For One' with rail travel vouchers, I-voucher, Take Two, ACE card, and Countdown.

We have been approached by many magazines, tour organisations and tourist guide publishers and promoters, and many of them have included us in their programmes, tours or articles. For example, The Art Fund magazine and 'The Lady' magazine put us among their main attractions. Further, gaining coverage of the museum's events in major publications such as Time Out, Metro and the Evening Standard has proved invaluable. Visitor feedback (including mentioning the publications where they have found us and bringing in articles to show us at the museum) has demonstrated the effectiveness of this coverage. Locally, we are supported by magazines, leaflets and listings and promoted particularly by the Southwark publications.

Valentina Lari is presently in the process of producing a new electronic and paper press pack in order to respond to the press even more quickly with the material which is most usually requested (in particular quality images of the museum to accompany articles).

Most of our publicity is sent by email mailing lists, to members of our own list, our VIP list and our Press List. For the purpose of increasing publicity and extending it to new audiences, Valentina Lari has also added many new cultural internet-based magazines to our list. These include Culture Shot, Time Out Online, Arts Hole, Eventbrite, Movearts and Londonist.com.

The Old Operating Theatre's own website is regularly updated and is still the main source of information to be given as a reference for visitors. Events hosted by the museum but created by outside contributors (such as the art installations of Anne Brodie) have also been publicised on contributors' own websites, attracting their audiences to the museum. We are also active participants in the London Museums of Health and Medicine and receive coverage of the museum and its events through the LMHM's own website.

However, in the museum, our own photocopied events leaflets have always been our traditional way of advertisement, with specific imagery and tag lines that attract both children and adults. Generally, they are very much loved by our regulars and require frequent reproduction to keep up with demand. Volunteers Vic Martin and Gareth Miles have helped the museum constantly, meeting some of the demand for the production of events and information leaflets in house.

## **Events (Kirsty Chilton)**

2009 was a very full year of events at the Old Operating Theatre Museum, with the continuing strong popularity of old events like Victorian Surgery and the addition of many new events as well as many guest speakers adding variety to the programme. We also welcomed many film companies, art projects and performers to the museum, and opened up in the evenings for private presentations and medical presentations.

Film hires during the year included Lion Films and Channel 4 History of Science, in which a presenter portrayed a Tudor apothecary in the garret. We featured in an Australian TV episode of the genealogical investigation programme 'Who Do You Think You Are' featuring celebrity tv cook Maggie Beer. Further we were filmed twice by the BBC; the theatre featured in a dramatic reconstruction operation (complete

with a realistically screaming actor as the patient) for a piece on 19th century surgery on 'Blue Peter', and we were later filmed for 'The One Show', for an episode due to air early this year.

We continued our relationship with poet Philip Wells (The Fire Poet) for two successful evening readings and a book launch. Other literary visitors included Greg Gallant, who gave lunchtime performances of some of the short stories short listed for the 'London; Glamour and Grime' story writing competition, sponsored by the Times Literary Supplement; this was as part of the London Bridge Festival in July. We also hosted a performances of Occurrent Glow production's 'The Poem Reincarnating Theatre', in association with South Bank Poetry. Writing workshop 'The Butcher's Shop' continued their visits throughout the year. Performance artist Jack Catlin, with the company Parlour Chirurgie, presented a series of different stories and scenes.

The Museum also hosted two art installations sponsored by the Wellcome Trust. In January, the museum hosted 'This Fatal Subject' on the subject of death and dying, featuring a video installation by artist Susan Aldworth, and an innovative animatronic wax sculpture developed in the style of Joseph Towne's wax models by sculptor Eleanor Crook. Poet and writer Valerie Laws contributed poems to this event. In December, we welcomed Anne Brodie's exciting installation 'Exploring The Invisible', featuring portraits taken in the light given by bioluminescent bacteria.

The Museum has also welcomed some special guests this year. Robert Hicks, director of Philadelphia's famous Mutter Museum further strengthened the friendly relationship between the Old Operating Theatre Museum and the Mutter Museum with a fascinating evening presentation, 'Exquisite Corpses', about the moral issues involved in displaying human remains. Forensic anthropologist Anastasia Tsaliki gave an evening lecture 'Bones Tell Tales', an overview of the role skeletal remains play in archaeology and forensic science. In June, Colonial Surgeon Richard Kennedy repeated his popular workshops on the differences between London practice and Colonial practice, bringing with him an impressive kit of replica instruments for the public to encounter. Michael Doolan gave a special talk on approaches to the study of witchcraft in October for Halloween. In November, the museum participated in National Pathology week, with an event on autopsies - 'Autopsies; Myths Legends and the Reality' - given by pathologist Maesha Deheragoda.

The Museum continued to present some of its most popular talks, including Victorian Surgery and Speed Surgery, and added Julie Wakefield's new talk and demonstration about herbal medicine to create a weekend programme with surgery every Saturday and herbal medicine every Sunday. These events at 2pm, which regularly draw big crowds, have been advertised in our leaflets and on the website to create a consistent lecture presence at the weekends. Victorian Surgery continues to be the museum's flagship event.

Half Term holidays, especially the October half term, have become especially busy periods and the Old Operating Theatre has been offering packed programmes, with new workshops. 'Calling all Surgical Cubs!', devised by Julie Mathias, is aimed at bringing the surgery to the museum's younger visitors and invited the children to try out the role of a surgical student or apprentice. Also, our hands-on herbs and pill making sessions were again offered especially for the family audience in 'The Apothecary Shop'. 'Sheep Snails and Shellfish' was designed to introduce some of our medical animal exhibits to the younger audience as well. For the important Halloween half term, the museum staff developed some new events with spooky storytelling in the garret for young children with Julie Mathias, and a Witches Kitchen herbal event with Valentina Lari joining the surgery and Kirsty Chilton's talk on the Resurrectionists.

There were some new talks about famous medical figures this year; Karen Howell presented a new talk on James Miranda Barry, Julie Wakefield presented a workshop based around the remedies of Mary Seacole and Kirsty Chilton spoke about Sir Astley Cooper to commemorate his birthday.

In May, the museum took part in Museums at Night, with an extremely successful 'Surgery by Gaslight' evening when we successfully filled the theatre four times in a row with four surgery presentations between 5 and 9pm. The museum intends to take part again in 2010 followed this success which was equally enjoyed by staff and visitors alike.

For the Story Of London event in June, the museum also offered some new talks about the building itself, with 'The Herb Garret – Discovering the Story behind the Name' concentrating on the garret itself and the business of the apothecaries, and 'The Story of St Thomas' Church – survival and change' concentrating on the history of church as well as the hospital use of its roof space. Kevin Flude also contributed a special medical walk, 'The Story of Guys, St Thomas & Medicine in Southwark Guided Walk' to this event. To complement the presentations, the Old Operating Theatre also showed some of the film and video archive material that has been digitised for the museum recently on a screen in the garret.

In 2009, the museum managed to introduce new subjects to its regular programme, building on the subjects the museums presents while keeping it's core, popular programme running consistently throughout the year.

The Museum has also been very active in Outreach in 2009. Events have included a Mary Seacole Public Workshop given by Julie Wakefield for Christine Wildhaber in Burgess Park, Southwark and two Herb Walks in Chumleigh Gardens by Karen Howell. In December, the Herb Garret was the theme of a stall at Octavia Hill Gardens Christmas Fair, Redcross Way. London, which was staffed by Julie Mathias and Karen Howell. In November, Karen Howell presented a Handling and Herb session for the Florence Nightingale Museum with Katie Edwards and in December, Karen Howell also visited the Metropolitan University twice, with lectures and handling sessions. Kirsty Chilton visited the University of the Third Age in Kent on two occasions, to present lectures on the London Resurrectionists and on the history of Southwark.

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

Schools were a regular presence throughout the year and we had even to refuse some groups due to the massive amount of bookings for Victorian Surgery Talks and the Medicine Through Time talks. The introduction of Julie Mathias, a new member of staff particularly skilled in working with the youngest groups, into our educational department, has also brought new talks and events specifically addressed to family and children. The Museum is now able to offer tailored talks and workshops to primary schools and home educational groups. All of them have been extremely enthusiastic about the herbal and medical activities promoted.

During 2009, the Museum continued to provide a successful programme which covered key aspects required by schools for keystages 1 - 5 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: the rich history of the unique location of St Thomas's 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 new public health walks have proven to be an increasing attraction and many school groups are now choosing to visit the museum and go on a walk in addition to their museum lecture. Volunteer Colin Parr has also joined our team of walk guides.

Role-play and learner led discussion are used to investigate the development of surgical procedures between 1750~ 1900 in the Old Operating Theatre. The "Medicine through Time" GCSE module is covered using the exploration of surgery prior to the advent of anaesthesia and antiseptics and the subsequent revolution

in medical practice. A diverse range of unique and specifically designed resources are used to facilitate the curriculum aims of: Understanding Chronological Change; Historical Interpretation; and importantly, Historical Enquiry.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum, the Museum has found that many schools value the Museum for the unique enrichment opportunities it provides. (Enrichment is a key theme of the revised Ofsted inspection criteria.) Working closely with teachers from individual schools has enabled us to offer bespoke programmes to meet the expectations and level of ability of specific groups of learners. The Old Operating Theatre is able to offer a wide range of demand-led educational experiences.

Throughout 2009 increasing numbers of undergraduate students~ especially those studying midwifery and operating department practitioners ~ visited the Old Operating Theatre, as well as visitors from the University of the Third Age, boosting attendance figures for those interested lifelong learning & from Higher Education.

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

The spiral staircase Museum entry and exit point had taken the toll of past building renovations and in 2009, Karen Howell undertook work to stabilise it. The end of the rope support to the entrance and exit had extended and adjustment was made to the rope to lift it and strengthen the start point to the rope drop. Further, because the fixing point (wall loop) had been put under strain, due to builder access to the upper tower areas, it was decided to refix the wall loop to a new slightly area. This has improved the security for the public use of this essential (and complicated) railing area.

The spiral staircase still awaits repainting of the walls as part of the Cathedral Groups building works and it is hoped that this will be undertaken within the next quarter.

Following a full certification of the building, an electrician was employed to replace ineffective lighting. He completely rewired the spiral staircase whose lighting was comparatively substandard and added a key-operated switch which could not be turned off by school children. The lighting system is now in full working order, although additional lighting is required within the Herb Garret. Following restoration of the Old Operating Theatre, a light fitting was removed from the back of the space which has not yet been replaced.

There have been two fire assessment visits to the museum in this period. The first was undertaken in October '09 by a local Fire Officer, and the second in December as part of a fire assessment undertaken on the entire building by Cathedral Group. Although the Fire Officer and Assessor were entirely sympathetic to the concerns of maintaining public access to the museum in difficult circumstances, they did make recommendations.

The first recommendation was that a contract for checking of fire extinguishers should be undertaken. The previous period of restoration of the building had effectively handed over responsibility for the building's fire prevention security to the last building contractor, that being Linfords. This situation had been sorted out with ADK, the museum's contracted security providers, but when they were taken over by ADT, they stopped providing the service. We will now be arranging coverage through the Fire Prevention Service. Another recommendation was that due to low light levels within the museum, alongside our emergency lighting provision, an illuminated Fire Exit sign should be installed pointing to the exit. Funding will have to be found for this project.

There is still an outstanding building restoration issue; a leak from the small skylight in the antechamber, which had been reported to Linfords during the restoration and to Chapter Group. This is a clean dripping leak and museum staff have placed a container under this spot during bad weather for the protection of the floor.

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

With the assistance of curator Karen Howell, conservation student Jo Holt of the conservation department of the Metropolitan University, London had undertaken an analysis of the sawdust removed from beneath the Old Operating Theatre floorboards last year. The sawdust was removed during essential rewiring work undertaken on the church ceiling. This project was presented as part of Jo Holt's conservation degree final thesis and presentation was in June 2009. After this ongoing engagement with the museum, Jo Holt successfully took up a position as a conservator at the Science Museum, London. It is proposed that Jo's final analysis which reviews the architecture below the Theatre floor of 1822, will be published and be placed onto the website to contribute further interesting detail to the ever growing history of the Museum's architecture.

Following building restoration and consequential movement of much of the collection, it was decided by the curator Karen Howell to undertake a full audit of the museum's medical object collection. Alongside the documentation aspect of the audit, and the checking of all computerised data with individual objects, the audit has included a complete status review and cleaning of objects. Although much of the collection has been reviewed and conserved over the long term, this is the first full systematic active conservation by in house staff and volunteers of the collection. With continual help to the curator from staff and particularly assistant curator Kirsty Chilton and from volunteers Marion Box and Jo Holt, the audit will continue in 2010, with the estimated finish date in the summer 2010.

During this period some advances were made on the simple cleaning and preservation of collection items. New products for conservation are in use with successful consequence. Three nineteenth century urethral probes, for example, had been donated and accepted into the collection some years back after rejection by other establishments. The items were in very poor condition but have, over the last year, been 'saved' via the hard labour of the museum staff, particularly Marion Box and Jo Holt.

These objects can now be fully accessioned for use by museum staff as demonstration instruments for surgical talks concerning bladder stone. In view of these achievements it is desired to create a small conservation station point within the museum to simplify the in house conservation cleaning process.

On the 31st October 2009, the museum submitted an application for the museum to be assessed for Accreditation, an update of the Museum Registration process to achieve a national standard award for museums and libraries of the UK. Amongst other paperwork submitted, a second manual copy of the museum collection was completed by the curator (due to other priorities, this had taken two years to achieve). This book (copy) is an essential provision for collection security of over 1,500 items within the collection, provided for in house use (listing each object name, location, status etc). Amongst other documentation, it is hoped that papers such as those updated on documentation procedure, database instruction, light level reports, accession and disposal papers, and the full audit of the collection will contribute towards the success of the Accreditation application.

As listed above, three urethral sounds have been added to the collection (currently unaccessioned) via the continual conservation activity by staff and volunteers. In time it is hoped to box these into an independent boxed 'bladder stone' set for use in surgical demonstrations.

Over 2009, the museum continued to develop continuity and clarity to its medical exhibition by the acquisition of new objects for displays.

For the poison/anaesthesia exhibition the following were acquired:

Predominately nineteenth century chemist shop round bottles for:

Belladonna, Cantharides, Lead, Tincture of Cinchona, Antimony, Three small admiralty green glass poison bottles (Museum object numbers 2009:001, 006, 007, 011, 013, 016, 026(a-c))

Black Draught Bottle (Opium) 039 and the museum's first mandrake bottle 029

For the Herb Garret displays:

Predominately nineteenth century chemist shop round bottles for:

Lemon and Rosemary, Aniseed (Museum object numbers 2009 003-5, 012)

Small shop round for Sperm Oil (2009:047)

Chemist's spoons and corkscrew (2009:017, 018)

Tiny containers for pills: Penny Royal, Parkinson's, Bile Beans, Wills' Wind Pills, 2 x Rhubarb pills, 2 x 'The Tablets' (Museum object no's 030, 031, 037, 048, 054,055, 035,059)

For development of the children's area:

A fine doll of a wounded WW2 soldier was donated by (friend of the museum and artist) Eleanor Crooke

Acquired:

An Allenbury's Rusk Tin, 4 Glass Baby Feeding bottles, Breast shields, (Museum object numbers: 008, 009-010, 015)

and a most interesting and attractive Chocolate Worm Cakes Tin (2009:032)

An original advert image of a WW2 soldier/Tommie using Coal Tar Soap (2009:056)

Original prints were obtained of:

Hogarth's The Consultation of the Physicians (including portrait of bonesetter Sarah Mapp) (2009:042)

2 x Advertisements for Beecham's Pills (2009:043a,b)

Down Brothers St Thomas' Street instrument sales receipt and 1935 Instrument catalogue (060, 061)

The museum has taken on a contract with Rentokil, who it is hoped will keep the museum vermin free. Locked childproof bait boxes have been carefully hidden throughout the building.

Early in 2010, the staff worked very hard indeed to undertake a full wash and clean of the museum (to accessible height etc). All areas were hygienically wet washed and all surfaces scrubbed and polished.

This was seen as an essential follow through of the building conservation, post restoration work, where all areas suffered large amounts of falling dust and detritus. Where all areas had been previously cleaned of dust etc, this update was taken after the environment was seen to have stabilised and included a deep clean of all the areas, including herb containers, and disposal of old herb matter. Where dusty matter was disposed of, new loose herbs will be replenished into the cleaned receptacles.

## **STAFFING (Kevin Flude)**

The staff are Karen Howell, Kirsty Chilton, Kevin Flude, Valentina Lari, Julie Mathius and Julie Wakefield. Stewart Caine has worked on various development projects. We have a very strong volunteer team led by Marion Box, Colin Parr, Vic Martin and Gareth Miles. Occasional help is given by Connie and Hetty Flude. Jo Holt has undertaken voluntary work in conservation, and Melanie Repetski is helping publish one of our exhibition books.

Kevin Flude January 16th 2010