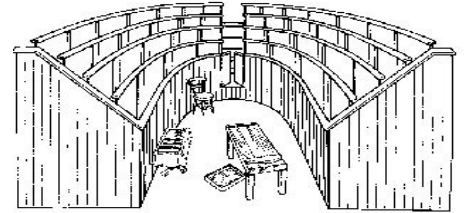


The Old Operating Theatre, Museum and Herb Garret



Report

23 November 2010

INTRODUCTION

The Old Operating Theatre Museum is maintaining a good performance despite the current economic climate. We have been able, in most areas, to sustain the figures from last year which was our best year to date. Our events programme has been extensive and successful and we have benefited from engagement in several grant projects, including 'Local Heroes' in conjunction with the Chelsea Physic Garden, Royal College of Physicians and the Royal Society; an MLA grant to help up upgrade our ICT; a Fund-Raising initiative and a grant to enable us to review our Volunteer provision. Financially, the Museum is performing better than it ever has and we hope that we can use some of this money to sort out problems that are long-standing – in particular poor office facilities and other problems in the work space. The staff base is stable and, with a team of 3 dedicated volunteers to Museum is doing very well. However, we do still have much room for improvement in particular in forward planning and coordination. We have still not managed to finalise the new lease or the extended fire escape license.

THE MUSEUM AND THE PUBLIC

Attendance figures - Attendances for the first 10 months averaged 2650 per month. The first three quarters figures were just up (less than 1%) on last year.

Virtual visitors – average 28,000 a month. The first 3 quarters of the year the figures are 19% up on last year. We have set up a Facebook page for the Museum and have currently 124 fans, almost 50 percent up on 6 months ago.

School groups – are doing very well, running at 600 per month. The first three quarters' figures are 12% up on last year.

Medical groups – averaging 55 per month and the first three quarters' figures are 29% down on last year.

Non-medical groups – are averaging 115 a month, and the first three quarters' figures are 5% down on last year.

Sales – average £1275 per month and the first three quarters' figures are 11% down on last year.

Hire figures - were £327 per month, the first three quarters' figures are 1% up on last year.

Gross Income - (as recorded on the monthly sheet) was at an average of £14.086 per month, the first three quarters' figures are 1% up on last year.

Events and Hire (Kirsty Chilton)

In the second half of the year, the museum has continued a strong programme of events mixing public favourites with new talks in order to keep expanding the museum's repertoire. The Museum's collaboration with the Chelsea Physic Garden for the Royal Society's local heroes project continued into the late summer, with The Odyssey of Chocolate Workshops, as devised by Julie Mathias. Julie Mathias and Juliana Wakefield also took these workshops out of the museum, delivering a day of workshops on the chocolate theme for the Royal College of Physicians celebrations of Hans Sloane. Kirsty Chilton also reprised her Enlightenment Surgery lecture for the Royal College of Physicians, adding a power-point image of slides to the lecture. Museum director Kevin Flude gave a guided walk featuring some of the locations important in Sloane's life. The museum also hosted the Chelsea Physic Garden's reception, concluding the art courses which they had offered on the Hans Sloane theme.

Throughout the summer holidays, the museum offered a regular programme which featured a lecture or presentation every day. Kirsty Chilton experimented with the format of 'The Gore Tour', varying it between theatre lectures and smaller tours with object handling. Karen Howell delivered her popular summer tour 'From Garden to Garret', continuing the museum's successful relationship with the herb garden of St George Church. Julie Mathias devised and hosted several still life drawing workshops in the garret and continued to offer lectures and role plays for the museum's younger visitors, and Valentina Lari offered talks for the older audience about the relationship between witchcraft, folklore and herbalism, continuing the museum's development of the herb garret.

Karen Howell took the Herb Garret Grinding Stall to the event at the Octavia Hill/Red Cross Gardens, a community event run by the Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST). Further, in November Julie Mathias and Karen Howell again took the Herb Garret Grinding Stall to the Mental Health Day event at Waterloo Gardens, also run by BOST.

In the October half term, Kirsty Chilton offered a variation on Victorian Surgery called The Pressure of the Knife, attempting to examine Georgian and Victorian surgery from the perspective of everyone involved in the stressful business. Valentina Lari continued her work on herbalism by giving a newly researched talk about the Mandrake. Julie Mathias also created a new talk about Syphilis, as the museum continues to broaden its range of subject matter. Kirsty Chilton concluded the half term week by speaking about the continually popular topic of body snatching. Juliana Wakefield also performed two workshops of a practical nature, teaching our visitors how Medicines were made from plants.

Kirsty Chilton also lectured at the Royal College of Surgeons, as the assistant Curator of the Old Operating Theatre Museum, speaking about resurrectionist Joseph Naples as part of the Royal College's series on unsung Heroes of Surgery.

The Museum has also been delighted to host some exciting guest speakers who have delivered their talks to packed houses in the second half of the year. Forensic Anthropologist Anastasia Tsaliki gave a fascinating talk in August about the medical realities behind Europe's vampire and werewolf mythology. Then in November, Consultant Histopathologist to Peterborough District Hospital Suzy Lishman performed a virtual Autopsy in the theatre in a sold out event for National Pathology week. The Museum also welcomed William Edwards, the curator of the Gordon Museum at Guys, for a presentation called Dealing with the Dead, considering the ethical treatment and duty of care involved in having custody of human remains.

The Museum was visited by Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators after hours and also served as the host venue for a presentation by Healthcare Performance, for whom Karen Howell also gave a history talk described by our guests as "fascinating and passionate".

The museum has not been quite as consistently busy with hires in the second half of the year, but finishes extremely strongly, with involvement in three different film projects. Windfall Films, making a documentary about the life of a modern sufferer of Proteus Syndrome (the condition from which the 'Elephant Man' Joseph Merrick is believed to have suffered) filmed in the theatre. The museum was also involved in an ITN Productions documentary about aspects of life in London history; filming took place in the theatre and garret, but Kirsty Chilton also met with the film crew on location to film a segment about Resurrectionists in Abney Park Cemetery. Finally, in the last week of November, the museum is being hired by Gogglebox, filming over two nights on the subject of illusions and magic

MARKETING & PRESS COVERAGE (Valentina Lari)

In last half of the year the museum has received an excellent response not just from schools and universities but also from TV companies and private business groups. We always have a very good feedback via personal email and letters and the past few events have been extremely successful. Members of the public express their wish for more events/lectures and specifically require to be added to our mailing list.

We also experienced a visit from the Ghost Club on Halloween Eve, which went very well; this old and well respected society will give us their report regarding any paranormal activities that took place in our museum- all will be handled very sensibly, without any silly and superficial advertisement.

In marketing this year, we had an increase of visitors and bookings thanks to established promotional strategies, such as those that offer a reasonable discount on the admission price or a 'two for the price of one' admission: ATOC, I-voucher, Take Two - who also filmed a promotional video - ACE card, and Countdown.

The most popular and remunerative agreement remains the association with The London Pass.

We have been approached by many magazines, tour organisations, tourist guide publishers, and promoters and most of them have included us in their programmes, tours or articles. We are currently in almost every guidebook on the city of London. We will be included in the prestigious DK 'London Guide for Families' in 2011.

We are further constantly approached by artists and theatre directors wishing to use the space. Unfortunately, their requests are often connected to unreasonable and irrelevant projects, and most of the time is not possible to have live events as they interfere significantly with the operation of the museum. Interference with the appearance of the theatre, or obstruction to access to the theatre is also an issue. The events do not generate revenue, and loss of money due to evening hire and rehearsal time is a constant occurrence.

In general, to keep the members of the public and our supporters informed and interested in our events and exhibitions, emails are sent to all our mailing lists. Previews and special events are usually promoted to VIP members and to The Friends of the Museum. At the same time- depending on the event- a press release is sent to specific newspapers and magazines in our Press List. For the purpose of extending the range of our coverage in the press, Valentina Lari has also added many cultural new web magazines to our list (culture shot, Time Out online, arts hole, eventbrite, movearts, londonist.com etc...).

Our website is regularly updated and is still the main source of information to be given as a reference.

Locally, we are highly supported by magazines, leaflets and listings promoted by Southwark council. They regularly enquire about our shows and talks and their promotions are of high quality. More specifically, our Autumn events were listed on London SE1 paper and electronic bulletin, and the Kiss Hoarder exhibition listed with images on the October 'What's On' booklet. Wikifun recently added us as one of their main attractions. Some magazines specifically published for air crew and cabin staff in the aviation industry advertise the museum as one of the attractions not to be missed when landing in London!

Private events (book launches, performances, exhibitions) are usually advertised by the museum; however, sometimes artists and producers have their own promotion strategy and their informative material is distributed outside our premises, which is a useful opportunity to try to attract a different kind of audience, who always respond extremely positively to their first experience with the museum. Many times, the guests at private viewings come back with their families and friends to visit the museum or to attend another event.

Some specific events have been widely advertised in national and local magazines such as Time Out, Evening Standard, London Lite, Metro. Etc. The Museum's special events are usually listed in Time Out and all the online magazines that deal with the tourism industry (londontown.com, whatsonwhen.com, visitlondon.com etc...)

Museum evening hires have increased and generally all the events have run smoothly and successfully, including the ones where food and drinks were served. We usually advise our hiring customers to book a specific caterer, Ailsa Connel, who is very experienced in working with the

Old Operating Theatre Museum and understands the rules and limitations that the museum has in place with regard to food and drink in our heritage spaces.

Our leaflets have always been a good 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 the museum believes in their efficacy as a promotion investment. For the future, the Museum is considering new software options for the computer and investigating alternatives to the old photocopier in order to ease the production of the leaflets themselves.

The museum shop is running well; it constantly sells souvenirs and receives many compliments from its visitors for its content, especially the range of interesting and unusual books we stock, and its 'treasure trove' look. Valentina Lari is presently supervising the use of Paypal for the "Shop on Line"; the online store needs refreshment, but it seems a useful future source of income.

In past years much effort has been put into creating a connection or partnership with other museums and organizations such as the Wellcome Collection, Royal Pharmaceutical Society etc. Valentina Lari will be continuing with this approach in order to increase our visibility through the distribution of our leaflets and publicity for our events, and the possibilities of interesting collaborations and cultural exchanges.

Education Service and Group visits (Julie Mathias)

In the past six months the museum has received an excellent response from schools and universities who have visited us as part of the educational provision we provide at various levels. What has become of interest is that most of this feedback is delivered to us via personal email and letters, which suggests that teaching staff and visitors have made a concerted effort to thank us on personally, rather than just the standard or required method of completing Educational Evaluation forms.

The syllabus which we offer is designed at conveying the key aspects required by schools, as stipulated by the QCA(see below). However, we also aim to provide pupils and teachers alike with an understanding of the various approaches necessary in order to study at length the faculty of medicine in history.

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. Role-play and learner led discussion are used to investigate the development of surgical procedures between 1750~ 1900 in the Old Operating Theatre.

It is very apparent that schools 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 the learner's wider personal and social development.

Throughout the past year we have also witnessed an increasing number of overseas universities booking our lectures. This includes the history as well as medical departments of The Loyola

University Chicago, The Ludwigshafon medical college Germany, The Michigan State College of Nursing. The Prins Maurits school The Netherlands, etc. The range and diversity of educational visitors is testimony to the flexibility and breadth of our provision.

Whilst continuing to keep our educational standards high, we are also working on a new museum guide book which we hope to be ready by the end of the year. This new booklet aims to give an up to date, fresh outlook on the history of St Thomas' hospital. Also, in the near future we intend to draw up a new teachers pack for primary schools, in addition to the Apothecary Pack and the GCSE-level 'Our Blood' pack.

LORD BROCK MEMORIAL TRUST & DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (Kevin Flude)

Accounts – The Accounts for 2009/10 have been prepared and delivered to the Accountants.

Lease – David Firmin and Kevin Flude had a meeting with our landlords the Cathedral Group to see if a way forward on the lease could be found.

Jubilee Line Compensation – The museum has, at last, received a final settlement of our claim and received a cheque for just over £21,500 pounds

Fire Escape – Richard Moyle continues to work on improving the license to the fire escape through the Transport Police building. Kevin Flude has pressed for a speedy conclusion.

Guy's Courtyard Medical Heritage Centre project – We are awaiting further news of developments.

ICT – The ICT award has enabled the purchase of a Server and software, a laptop. With the aid of Michael Rose, we have established a professional network allowing access to all data from all computers in the Museum. We also purchased a new computer as the old one had become very slow. So far this has proved very time consuming but it has eventually provided a quicker and more effective system. We also purchased a new printer. The museum's old phones will be replaced and also the photocopier, if this proves a practical option.

Fund-raising Strategy. - The final piece of work by Judy Niner of 'Development Partners' has been finished; with the new ICT in place and following the completion of the accounts, Kevin Flude will be developing this.

Volunteer Policy – The museum received a grant (personified in the form of a consultant – Lynne Gillett from MLA, London) to review our Volunteer policies. She made various suggestions and drafted new policies. We have final decisions to make but we will then implement the new policy and bring the news of the development to the next Trustees Meeting.

BUILDING & MAINTENANCE (Karen Howell)

Fire risk assessors have 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 in 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, there is general agreement that 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.

Some progress has been made on the re-stabilising of the stand rails. Screws have been replaced where missing, following through on the ceiling restoration work, and the sash window (at the garret desk/garret reception) which had become slightly misaligned post-restoration work has been permanently fixed.

Advice was sought from Oxley Conservation in regard to the staircase, fire escapes and access issues. We are awaiting a response from Cathedral Group as to how to proceed. Work previously undertaken on the staircase was approved, and it was considered that a heritage trained carpenter who is experienced in working in this type of environment could be brought in.

Due to local building works, there was a power cut to the whole of the St Thomas Street where the museum had to be closed for a morning. Power was returned as usual for the afternoon. The museum's sign was also wrecked by a lorry mounting the curb outside the museum. The sign is currently being remade and replaced by the representatives for Sellar Properties Group.

We have experienced difficulties with the museum's toilet blocking. It is very important that hand towel detritus does not block the cistern; two sets of engineers have been engaged to sort this year. The best option is, if actually possible, would be to have an electric hand dryer installed. As above, again this would be an additional job for the electrician.

Collection and Displays (Karen Howell)

The collection on display has been fully audited. Each object's number, recorded location, case label, and conservation requirement has been assessed and documented, by curatorial staff, Kirsty Chilton, Marion Box and Karen Howell, and all data has then been checked within the museum's computerised Idealist Collection Catalogue.

All backing cloths have been replaced and presentation of the collection improved. Following the audit, the accessioning of the 'Spitz' collection, donated in March 2010, has been processed. All items have been allocated a number postfixed 'S' (as with other large donations, to maintain group identity). Several beautiful blue glass syrup shop rounds and green glass poison rounds have been accessioned completely and incorporated into displays. More photography will be undertaken to update collection presentation and to upload to be displayed within the museum's website online collection (only part of the collection is currently online).

On the 4th August 2010, the museum was very fortunate to receive the generous donation of an original painting from Mrs Emmanuel, the wife of Guy's Surgeon Mr Emanuel. The artist was St Thomas' Hospital surgeon Mr Solomon and is an illustration he undertook as a young man within the dissection theatre at St Thomas' Hospital in 1838. The painting had been handed down from surgeon to surgeon over the centuries arriving at Mr Emmanuel. The painting is believed possibly show surgeon John Flint South. This is yet unproven but indicated by a letter within the donation dated Nov 21st 1939 to Mr Emmanuel that was sent by F. G Parsons, historian, author of the History of St Thomas' Hospital (Two volumes). 1932.

The museum was fortunate that Dr Brennan, a conservator for the Tate Art Gallery, London has offered assistance in observation to present the correct light levels for conservation of the painting. The museum is very proud to show this unusual painting of an image of surgeons working within the dissecting theatre of old St Thomas Hospital. It has been hung just outside the Old Operating Theatre itself, in the Antechamber, and has greatly enhanced the exhibition.

The museum would very much like to have a picture of a modern operating theatre of Guy's and/or St Thomas' Hospital to update its displays. Our 'new' theatre image of a Guy's Theatre is dated to the 1980s.

The wash stand previously shown within the museum has been placed in isolation and will be taken for conservation.

The museum has acquired a set of mahogany apothecary drawer fronts, all with glass handles and labels. The aim is to incorporate these into a rebuild of interactive displays within the Herb Garret.

The museum set up an ongoing contract with Rentokil to formalise the museum's building conservation against pests. Consultant Neil has an ongoing site checking programme and has given preventative conservation care and advice where necessary.

The museum had in the past followed guidelines and achieved a Human Tissue Authority (HTA) licence in regard to the the museum's small display of human pathology. Due to the small size of collection and following much communication with the HTA and advice from Mr William Edwards, curator of the Gordon Museum within Guy's Hospital, an application was formally submitted to the Human Tissue Authority to become a 'satellite' of Guy's Hospital, a lower status of licence. Following through on this application, the Human Tissue Authority representatives visited the museum within their general assessment at Guy's Hospital in October 2010. The application at this point was formally re-assessed by the HTA and it was seen that as the specimens within the collection were accepted to be over 100 years old, a licence would, from this point, not be required.

The museum is very grateful to Mr Edwards and Mr Brennan for all of the time they have spent in the consideration of this matter and for the ongoing help and advice that Mr Edwards and his team have given to date in regard to the conservation of this material.

As a community stakeholder of the St George's Garden, since circa 1997, when the herbs of the Herb Garret were planted in the garden, Karen Howell, who conducts tours of the garden during summer months, has maintained with the Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST) via gardeners Hej and Peter (amongst others). Within the recent improvement of the garden, excavations of tombstones, replanting etc., the museum has been asked to re-contribute the herb lists as used by the old Guy's And St Thomas' Hospital so that the modern garden aligns to historical usage.

Dr Ruth Richardson has generously donated limited copies of her newly published booklet 'Organ Music' for sale in the museum shop to raise funds for the museum.

STAFF (Kevin Flude)

The Museum has been staffed by Karen Howell, Kirsty Chilton, Kevin Flude, Valentina Lari, Julie Mathias 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 by Iris Wier, and very occasionally we have also received help from the Fairstaff Employment Agency.

Training & Staff Development (Kevin Flude)

Karen Howell, Julie Mathias and Juliana Wakefield attended a medical history seminar in Edinburgh. Colin Parr has been representing the Museum at various Volunteer forums.

Forward Plans

Various items not mentioned above that need consideration in the near future.

Accounts – To be ratified at the meeting on 4th January 2010.

Staff pay – To be raised in January by rate of inflation? *Staff Pensions* – it is believed that government policy is to make a pension mandatory in the future.. Contracts to be reviewed with help of HR consultant (to check their wording, but without anticipation of any great change in content). Payment by Standing order to be resumed.

Museum office spaces – These need improving urgently

Museum 'weeding' – the Museum is has quite a bit of clutter – it is necessary to take away everything that is not essential. We also need to find a storage space off site – currently this is Kevin Flude's cellar but this may not be available in the longer term.

Museum Entrance Fees – these need revision as of 1st Jan and we suggest inflation plus a little.

Museum Forward Plan – this needs reviewing and revising.

Cultural Heritage Resources Contract – also needs its annual review

Planning meeting – A pre Trustees planning meeting should have taken place in advance of the meeting.

Electrics in the Museum need checking and more work done; Plumbing needs sorting out.

Emergency procedures need review and tightening up.

Kevin Flude 21st November 2010