

The Leicester Graduate Network

Museum Studies *connect*



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Re-connect 2015

Following the successful Re-connect event last year, the School is pleased to be able to announce details of *Re-connect 2015*. The event is for all members of Museum Studies Connect and will take place on Wednesday 1 July 2015, 3pm - 8pm at the School of Museum Studies and the King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester. MS Connect members will be welcomed by members of staff to hear news of exciting new developments within the School. This will be followed by a private opening and curatorial presentation at the new King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester city centre and informal socialising into the evening. The event is free of charge, light refreshments will be provided, and anyone who books a place before June can also be in the running for free overnight accommodation.

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to re-connect with members of staff and your fellow graduates whilst developing your professional networks. To book your place, go to: www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museum-studies-connect

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Behind the Scenes at the 21st century museum

The School of Museum Studies is delighted to have launched the world's first MOOC in Museum Studies. The MOOC (or 'Massive Open Online Course'), entitled 'Behind the Scenes at the 21st Century Museum' has been developed in partnership with National Museums Liverpool (NML) and offers an insight into the world-leading research and teaching at the School as well as cutting edge case-studies of innovative practice from NML.

The course is delivered entirely online and utilises a range of multimedia assets such as videos, slide shows and audio presentations as well as written articles. It covers themes such as exhibition design and architecture in the 21st Century Museum, engaging visitors and audiences, museums and emotions and the contribution of museums to social justice, human rights and health and wellbeing initiatives.

Dr Suzanne MacLeod, Director and Head of the School of Museum Studies comments; 'The MOOC is a new departure for the school but something that we were very keen to do. The ways in which people want to learn are changing and we wanted to understand more about that.'

Director of National Museums Liverpool, Dr David Fleming added 'It gets our message out there about our commitment to running a modern museum service for diverse audiences and it reaches a whole new audience worldwide.'

Thousands of people from around the world have already signed up to undertake the course which begins on June 1st, is free, lasts six weeks and requires a minimum of two hours study per week.

For more information and to watch the trailer, visit: www.futurelearn.com/courses/museum

World leading research recognised (again)

The results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) – an assessment of research quality across universities over the past 6 years – has again confirmed the University of Leicester as home to the highest ranking museum studies research in the UK.

All eligible staff in the School of Museum Studies are research active and were submitted to the assessment exercise which found that 85% of their publications since 2008 were internationally excellent or world leading in terms of their originality, rigour and significance. In addition, the School was awarded the highest possible scoring for its research impact – a new measure introduced into the Research Excellence Framework for the first time to assess the reach and significance of university research beyond the academy.

Suzanne MacLeod, Head of School commented, 'We aim to conduct the highest quality research that can inform and enrich museum thinking and practice internationally and shape the teaching in the School. We are therefore thrilled with the announcement which has confirmed the quality and value of our collaborative approach to research as a way to positively impact museum and gallery practice and policy, audiences and society at large'.

Exploring Museum Censorship

The School's Academic Director Janet Marstine, has recently begun a three-year collaboration with partner Oscar Ho at the Chinese University Hong Kong on a British Academy funded project, 'One Country? Two Systems: Negotiating censorship/self-censorship in Hong Kong and Guangdong exhibition spaces'. The project creates an intra-regional research network to illuminate the dynamic between censorship/self-censorship in Hong Kong and Mainland China exhibition spaces and introduces an ethics framework that fosters strategic thinking and collaborative approaches to these pressures. It develops comparative understandings of how censorship and self-censorship operate and are negotiated. It also builds capacity through training in ethics discourse and action by considering mechanisms for advocacy, guidance and decision-making.

New directions for Barbara Lloyd

2015 is a significant year in the history of the School as one of its longest serving members of staff - School Manager, Barbara Lloyd - retires. Barbara will be best known to members of Museum Studies Connect as the person who manages the campus-based Masters work placement programme, the *Museum & Gallery Experience*. Joining the School twenty years ago in 1995, Barbara was seeking a change from her high pressured financial services background and took on an initial one year part-time contract helping with the School's administration, whilst Sue Pearce was Head of School. When Eileen Hooper-Greenhill took over as Head another opportunity presented itself and Barbara found herself with Personal Assistant duties on a more permanent basis and her career within the School began to grow. Over an extended period of time she has been able to develop her role by volunteering to take on different areas of work as the School has grown and evolved under the Headships of Simon Knell, Richard Sandell and the current Head, Suzanne MacLeod. 'I've loved working with all of the Heads', Barbara commented. 'They have each, in their own way, been amazing... they've all brought different strengths to the role'.

Whilst Barbara has made hugely valuable contributions to many aspects of the School's work, it is the management of campus based work placements that remains her favourite task. 'It's from both perspectives really... the students because they absolutely love it, and the museums and galleries because they love our students... it's just lovely!' There's

no doubt that Barbara's charisma and individuality has played a vital part in helping to foster links with so many museums and galleries, a list that she estimates currently stands at around 250 institutions, but that might amount to double that over the years.

With so many fond memories of the School, it's hard for Barbara to identify just a few highlights but being part of the team that won a Times Higher Leadership and Management Award, presented at a black tie dinner at the Grosvenor Hotel is one, together with attending the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, an outcome of her association with the Royal

Collection Trust. '2006 a World Forum' stands out as a memorable conference, particularly for the 'most beautiful acknowledgment I received from Simon [Knell]' in the resulting publication, for her organisation and management of the event.

And as for the future? Barbara is certainly planning an active retirement that will take in life drawing, sculpture and pottery, show jump judging, in addition to acting and stage management and a move towards directing for Harborough Theatre, West Highland walking, gardening, and more. And of course Barbara will miss the colleagues and students she has worked with over the years, all of whom will most definitely not agree with her tongue in cheek final words, in true Barbara style, 'To be frank, it's about time I went'.





Graduate profile – Owain Rhys (MA Museum Studies by Distance Learning – 2007)

I had been working at St Fagans: National History Museum as the Celtic Village Learning Interpreter for four years when an opportunity to be Curator of Contemporary Life came up in 2007. It was a new post, and although my degree was in archaeology I felt that I could apply many of the theories to the relatively new field of contemporary collecting. I was lucky enough to get the job, on condition that I studied for an MA in Museum Studies at Leicester University through distance learning. Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales were very supportive, and agreed to significantly contribute towards the cost.

I remember the excitement when the first box arrived, brim-full of books and course notes. The first module was Museum Communities and Contexts, and I devoured it, reading everything. I have to admit that I wasn't able to invest as much in all of the six modules due to work pressure, but I diligently worked my way through them, concentrating on specific issues which were either of personal or professional interest. The breadth and depth of the information provided was staggering, and I'm indebted to Leicester for giving me that knowledge foundation. Indeed, the folders and books provided take pride of place on my shelf, and I regularly refer to them on a day-to-day basis.

I decided to write my dissertation on contemporary collecting, but in doing the research, I was surprised and frustrated to discover that there wasn't a publication or a source recording the theory and history, bringing all the evidence together in one place. Nevertheless, I managed to source many individual papers, articles and projects, mostly (but not exclusively) from the sixties onwards, discussing different aspects of contemporary collecting. Some of these were published in American academic journals such as Museum News and The Journal of American Popular Culture, which I was only able to track down in Leicester University's library during a visit there.

One of the biggest things I learnt during this time was that contemporary collecting is about people, not objects. My outlook and practices slowly evolved, and although colleagues and myself did work with community groups from the beginning, the way we worked became more sustainable and pro-active. We worked with, amongst others, fans of pop music, Welsh Italians, graffiti artists, animators, LGBT groups, refugees and asylum seekers. Whereas in the beginning we'd engage for the duration of the project only, by the end we were building links for permanent engagement.

When I graduated, I was surprised to be approached by Graeme Farnell of publishers MuseumsEtc who offered to publish my dissertation. It eventually came out as 'Contemporary Collecting: Theory and Practice' in 2011. Aware that I was in no way an expert on the matter, I was wary of the reaction, but reasoned that the work I'd done did gather a lot of the theory and history of contemporary collecting in one place, and would be a useful starting place for others interested in the topic. I went on to edit 'Collecting the Contemporary: A Handbook for Social History Museums' with the help and support of my long-suffering and patient co-editor, Zelda Baveystock.

During this time Amgueddfa Cymru was going through a restructure, and once again I applied for a new post – Community Engagement and Participation Manager. Once again, I was lucky enough to be successful, partly because of the grounding in museological theory and practice provided by Leicester University. My current post is responsible for embedding community engagement and participation throughout Amgueddfa Cymru, working with a range of community partners, making sure that their voice is heard by colleagues and visitors alike. It's a very rewarding role, one which I'm very lucky to have.



Korean Alumni Association of Leicester Museum Studies

The Korean Alumni Association of Leicester Museum Studies (KAALMS) was founded in 2014 building upon small gatherings that have occurred since 2004 when the ICOM's 20th General Conference was held in Seoul, South Korea. The first Korean student at the School of Museum Studies was Jong-hyuk Kim (MA, 1989/1990), who served for many years in Cultural Heritage Administration in Korea. We know that since then, the School has had many Korean graduates.

The mission of KAALMS is to connect (Korean) alumni to the school and each other, to provide valued services to its members, to support the School of Museum Studies, and to contribute to the Korean museum arena.

In order to do so, KAALMS is focusing on:

- compiling an alumni directory;
- organising formal meetings (twice a year) and other events;
- running a NAVER blog in Korean (<http://cafe.naver.com/leicester>) and a Twitter page in English (<https://twitter.com/kaalms>);
- assisting the School of Museum Studies in relation to personal visits to South Korea (so far we have welcomed Geoffrey Lewis, Simon Knell, Viv Golding and Jocelyn Dodd from the School and look forward to welcoming many more);
- providing professional networking services.

The Association has several hard working committee members who help with organisation: Koni C. Kim (President), Jong-hyuk Kim (Advisor), Seung-tae Kim (Director General), Hye-jin Cho (Director), Hyub-joo Lee (Secretary).

If you would like to find out more about KAALMS or join the Association please contact them on Twitter at:

<https://twitter.com/kaalms>



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