Manufactures, archaeology and bygones: making a sense of place in civic museums, 1850-1914

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the foundation of a large number of civic museums, whose place in the reshaping of the city centre has been well documented. They were important new buildings, designed to remake civic space and to make a statement about the nature of the urban milieu from which they emerged; they provoked a good deal of interest in their architectural competitions and finished buildings. [1]  What has been considered less fully is the ways in which the insides of these buildings, particularly their collections and displays, constructed a sense of place for their visitors. This is just as significant as the architecture of the building: although museum buildings were generally located in spaces where their presence contributed substantially to the 'public face' of the town, the numbers who actually went inside these civic museums in the late nineteenth century were such that the sense of place emerging from objects on display would have reached a large number of people; and equally, the numbers of people contributing to the museum through donation was also substantial, though this was a self-selecting and select group much smaller than visitors.[2] Thus museums were a space where local people could both produce and consume the material evidence and narratives of the particular qualities of their own place.

Civic museums, I suggest, therefore provide important evidence for understanding how the local was produced and understood in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The local has been identified as a category whose significance persisted and even increased during this period; national and even imperial identities were understood as based on strong local identities.[3] The national was increasingly conceived as a quality which emerged from the particular to the general; while a sense of local place could connect communities to the nation. The relationship between the local and the national was not necessarily always harmonious, with the smaller as a microcosm or breeding ground of the larger; the local was not reducible or totally assimilable to the national.[4] The strength of local identities was their apparent tangibility and emergence from identifiable places, practices and things; they offered an emotionally satisfying sense of rootedness which as Dellheim has shown might be invoked to understand the experience of change in multiple ways.[5] This article seeks to explore museums' particular contribution to the sense of place in the period, asking how they structured perceptions of locality, and what 'matrix of significances' they produced.[6] It argues that the local emerges from civic museums as a complex and occasionally contradictory blend of four elements: as formed by and producing particular manufacturing industries; as reflecting the 'natural' and historical nature of local government; as constituted by a relationship with a distant past that both contrasted

with and shaped the present; and as rooted in the everyday practices of life in the past. These elements have all been noted in studies of the local and local history which have looked at texts, images and other knowledge practices, although the elements have not always emerged together.[7] However, I argue additionally that museums are especially revealing because they increasingly experienced a particularly marked tension between the necessity of promoting their town as important, significant and progressive, and the emerging imperative to provide an emotionally satisfying, historically rooted sense of place. Convery, Corsane and Davies propose two ways of understanding the term 'sense of place': firstly, 'genius loci ... the character, or local distinctiveness, of a specific place', and secondly, 'the ways in which people experience, use and understand place'. I suggest that museum displays could link the two together, constructing and explicating a local, distinctive character for their locality.[8] Museums, in semiotic terms, could bridge the indexical and the iconic; they gathered material evidence of the locality and used it to form emblems of place.[9] The town or locality became its industries, its worthies and traditions, its ancient past; its essence could be found in everyday life in the past. Yet these iconic productions of the real nature of the locality could also resolve back into the 'hard facts' of apparently systematic and representative collecting of objects. The historicized place became comprehensible but tangible.

The Local in Victorian texts, images, rituals and practices

The idea of the local, urban sense of place developed through a number of texts, images and practices in the nineteenth century, and studies of these have helped to expand our understanding of the category of local. A persistent interpretation of perceptions of urban localities has been that they were initially of pride, followed by a reaction of disgust.[10] Thus in the first part of the century towns were seen as a most sophisticated and civilised form of settlement, but in the face of growing social and environmental problems, it is suggested that town dwellers increasingly looked to the countryside as the ideal or fundamental, and as actually more real than the illusory, transient or trespassing town.[11] This is allied with an assertion that local distinctiveness itself became attenuated at the end of the nineteenth century, as national homogeneity spread.[12] While this analysis is persuasive, there are two aspects which complicate the chronology and direction of understandings of the urban as local during the period: firstly the contribution of a sense of history to such understandings, and secondly, the relationship between the idea of locality and the idea of the town; were towns distinct areas separate from the rural surroundings, or did their locality encompass both urban and rural?

The significance of the first issue, of the historicising of the urban environment, has been acknowledged in studies of local history writing, architecture and ceremony.[13] From at least the seventeenth century antiquaries were attracted to and developed local histories, initially rural and then also urban.[14] There are signs, however, that the constraints and opportunities of the developing nineteenth-century urban environment began to produce distinct approaches to local history, both through the associational practices of the town, as the 'Lit and Phils', literary and philosophical societies formed;[15] and because of the infrastructure developments of the nineteenth century. As railways, sewage and water systems were built, the historic nature of the urban environment was highlighted.[16] Town histories remained an extremely popular form of publication in the first half of the nineteenth century; and in the second half of the century a sense of the urban past was incorporated into the built environment in diverse and accumulating ways, often specifically to boost the legitimacy of new and growing local governments. A well-known example is Ford Madox Brown's murals depicting scenes from Manchester's history in Manchester Town Hall; and we could add to this the blue plaque scheme in London, started by the Society of Arts in 1866 but significantly taken over by the London County Council in 1901.[17] Such schemes spread to provincial towns and cities such as Nottingham, where plaques were being installed from 1902.[18] Meanwhile, in Colchester Cannadine suggests that 'the Town Hall was made a secular shrine to civic antiquity', as statues of eminent worthies from the town's history decorated the exterior of the new civic building constructed between 1898 and 1902 (though it is hard to see how Boudicca could have counted as a Colchester worthy when her main contribution to the town was to destroy it).[19] Town histories, in all their forms, tended to complicate but not replace the idea of urban identity as modern, mechanical and progressive; while celebrating the inventiveness, industry and entrepreneurialism of townspeople, they might also stress the ancient roots, traditions and handcrafts of the place. Such evocations of the urban past were designed to fulfil a variety of different briefs, from the intensely civic rivalry with other urban areas highlighted by Stobart, to campaigns to preserve the historic fabric of a place.[20] Arguably, though, they all particularly highlighted the specific and unique qualities of each place.

On the other hand, the question of how far the local was specifically urban or rural, or neither, was much less explicitly discussed and, equally, is only implicit in the historiography. Extensive work on both 'high art' and more mundane visual representations of urban locations seems to suggest that common elements in the representation of landscapes and cityscapes persisted. While Layton-Jones suggests a more exclusive focus on the industrial in views of the mid-century town, her work demonstrates that factories were increasingly depicted as distinct from the town rather than as an element of it; thus

towns were not always represented as distinct from the rural by virtue of their industrial production.[21] Much local history as well, I suggest, ranged across towns and their hinterland, constructing a locality which was not characterised by the nature of its settlements, though a major town or city would occupy a privileged position within it. The very act of taking a historical view of the Victorian town brought with it questions about the nature of the urban and rural as it revealed radically shifting boundaries – what was urban in the nineteenth century might well have been rural in the sixteenth, and local historians could not ignore this, especially when boundaries were continuing to expand rapidly.[22] Equally, the development of local archaeology in the nineteenth century often took place within the framework of a county archaeological society, which would typically be based in a major town, but would range widely across the county in field trips and outings, and in membership.[23].

Thus these two issues demonstrate that the images and identities of towns were never wholly distinct from those of the surrounding countryside, and that this was particularly highlighted when historicised ideas of the urban locality were produced. It was not that towns were a beacon of modernity and progress in the early part of the century, and an obstacle to civilization in the last part, while the rural was correspondingly increasingly seen as the place where humanity had come from and should return to; rather these two concepts were intertwined throughout the period. Towns did not have formal links with their hinterlands but urban boundaries were rapidly shifting through the period, and social and cultural links were strong. Moreover, the strong sense of competition among towns which has been widely noted over the century provided incentives for towns to seek allies who could not be rivals, in the rural areas which made up their locality; while many places were united by a dislike for and sense of competition with London.[24] Moreover, whether or not towns were actually becoming more homogeneous, they were certainly still imagining themselves as distinct and unique all the way through to 1914 and no doubt beyond.[25]

Museums of or for the town?

A useful starting point is Rhiannon Mason's distinction between museums of and for the nation – we could ask similarly how far civic museums were of or for the city.[26] Did they represent the city's ability to collect, or did they acquire local material and provide a chronological narrative of the urban place? Should they, in fact, be universal or local in content? Initially, civic museums were generally very clear that their role was to collect for the town, in a way that ranged across times and places, in order to represent the entire world to the local people. The aim therefore was to bring what was agreed to be important in terms of knowledge to the locality. Such museums were inspired by ideas of universal, even

indivisible knowledge, and by an underlying assumption that knowledge was finite and that there were certain things that every educated person should know.[27] They thought of themselves as being smaller versions of the British Museum, offering its knowledge of the world to those who could not travel to London. Thus museums such as that in Ipswich aimed to offer an overview of the natural world, featuring all major types of animals, plants, and geology; Ipswich acquired a group of gorillas shot by the famous explorer Paul du Chaillu, who had provided the first confirmed viewing of gorillas by a modern European in the late 1850s.[28] Civic museums also focused on the history of 'great civilisations', following the British Museum in incorporating material from Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia into this category which had hitherto been reserved for Ancient Greece and Rome.[29] Local worthies wrote at length that this was a more appropriate model than one which focused on the locality, making clear that local knowledge was inconsequential and second-rate. As the Reverend Hume said in 1859, 'It is obvious, therefore, that whatever limitation of character may be possessed by the museum of any less important town, that of Liverpool should be of the most **general** kind'.[30] The Annual Report of Liverpool Museums in 1872 stated that its aim was 'to aid the cause of intellectual and educational advancement by providing for public use the best works in every department of literature, science and art'.[31] As late as 1890-1894, the Harris Museum in Preston spent a very large amount of money on acquiring replicas of Greek, Roman and Renaissance statuary from the South Kensington Museum.[32]

However, right from the start there were a number of forces acting on civic museums which would push them away from the universal and towards the local. One of the most important constituencies of these museums were the local scientific and historical societies, who in many ways saw the museums as there to service the needs of their members, and had often supplied the founding collections of the museums.[33] Such members might well feel that the local museum needed to hold a reference collection specifically of local material, so that when they went collecting in the locality, they could use the museum to help them identify specimens.[34] Moreover, curators' chief preoccupation was the need to increase their collections on a very limited budget, and local material offered obvious possibilities here.[35]

Additionally, though, a more intellectual case for local museums representing the locality was also made; and this case might come from the curators themselves, who as they moved towards a more explicit acquisition policy, tended increasingly to declare an intention to collect the local, and to become a museum of the locality. In 1901, the Liverpool Daily Post carried a discussion on the future directions of the museum, in which Professor Herdman FRS opined that 'It is quite unnecessary for the …important

[provincial] museums of the country to waste time, space, opportunity and money by attempting to duplicate such a general or universal collection.' Instead, he advocated that museums such as Liverpool's should focus on collecting and representing an area within a 10-50 mile radius of their building.[36]

T. H. Huxley, whose position as one of the most public proponents of science and science education meant his ideas were widely reported, also put forward a strong opinion on this: 'I have no hesitation whatever in expressing the opinion that …a local museum should be exactly what its name implies, viz., 'local', illustrating local geology, local botany, local zoology and local archaeology'.[37] His close associate, and Director of the British Museum (Natural History) William Flower thought that any attempt to form a systematic or universal collection should be restricted to national museums, while local museums should have local antiquities, illustrations of local manners and customs, and local natural history up to the boundaries of the county.[38] By the end of the nineteenth century, as Edwards suggests, there was a widespread agreement that local museums and libraries should concentrate on documenting, classifying and archiving evidence of the locality, especially the past of the locality.[39] However, it is worth remembering that even where civic museums espoused this view, they might still collect wherever and whatever they could; Tom Sheppard, curator of Hull Municipal Museum for forty years, generally had a very local focus, opening new museums relating to the locality such as the Wilberforce House Museum in 1906, but nevertheless acquired a substantial number of Japanese objects from the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition of 1910 when these were for sale very cheaply.[40] Moreover, while the idea of representing the local certainly became more prominent within museums, it in no way displaced the idea of representing the world in local museums, rather sitting alongside it. In this way, arguably, the kind of hierarchy based on perceptions of prestige and importance implied by Hume above could be maintained. Liverpool Museums give a pre-eminent example of this; at the same time as local collections were being developed (see below), it was described as being the 'handmaid of the university' whose professors were keen to fill it with Cypriot and other Mediterranean archaeology.[41] This was, then, a tension which was not resolved, and a strong sense remained that 'importance' and 'localness' were mutually opposed categories, partly because of the division which emerged in the nascent curatorial profession between the national museums in London, and the civic museums; when the Museums Association was formed in the 1890s, its council had to write specifically to the Trustees of the British Museum and to the Science and Art Department to ask if their museums' staff could be allowed to attend.[42]

Local and national museums might, additionally, clash over whether local objects should be retained in the locality or be carried off to London, and this was an important issue in convincing civic museums to focus more clearly on the local. The sense that predatory national museums were removing all of the valuable local heritage provided a sense of jeopardy which led town museums to present themselves as 'saving' such material. In 1902, at the re-opening of the Hull Museum, its curator Tom Sheppard said 'within recent years many specimens of altogether exceptional interest have been forwarded to London', and he tried hard, though unsuccessfully, to have material in the British Museum sent back to Hull.[43]

As I explore below, local material began to accumulate in museums in a number of ways and for a variety of purposes; however, in most cases local material did not occupy a specific named place in museums. Rather, it was fitted in wherever there was space. Often this was in the entrance; the entrance hall at Ipswich Museum after its new building was opened in 1881 contained 'local antiquities, wood carvings and a young Brown Bear'.[44] At the Harris Museum in Preston local historical material was combined with the natural history displays.[45] In Sheffield, local material was quite clearly marginalized. The local collection, consisting of 'coins, tokens, medals and "byegones"… maps and views of Old Sheffield', were described as forming the main displays at the High Hazels branch museum, which was situated in Darnall, a working-class suburb in the east of Sheffield.[46]

While it is therefore broadly accurate to suggest that civic museums came to focus more on the local during the second half of the nineteenth century, then, this was not a simple process. Rather, various factors pushed and pulled museums towards the local, while others encouraged them to continue seeing themselves as part of a universal tradition of knowledge. In the remaining sections of the article I examine how particular facets of the local were mediated through museums in order to understand this process further.

Manufacturing the Local

One of the most important ways in which urban places were distinguished by museums was in the identification of particular industries with particular towns, and the corresponding use of the museum to offer instruction and practical help to that industry. It was widely felt that if the museum was filled with examples of the particular product characteristic of that locality, as well as maybe some examples of raw materials used, and processes or machinery involved, this would benefit local manufactures, somehow.[47] The significance of this idea is that it consolidated the association of particular industries

with particular towns. This happened on a local scale, with one of the important drivers being companies donating objects to the museum. One example which shows the conflation of trade, manufacture and locality is the donation to Liverpool Museums in 1911 of tiles, plates and other material 'illustrating modern methods of tile manufacture' by Pilkington's Tile and Pottery Works in Lancashire. [48]

One area where nearly all museums seem to have been making more investment in the idea of local manufacturing in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was ceramics. For example, in 1888 Ipswich Museum appealed for donations of Lowestoft china, and in the next few years quite a number of such items were given.[49] This is the most obviously pro-active approach, but 'Warrington pottery' was given to Warrington Museum, and Sunderland lustre ware was purchased by Sunderland museum.[50] This was partly driven by concern for education of worker and consumer, but also by a growing appreciation of the products of local English potteries, which had not hitherto been collected by national museums such as the South Kensington Museum (SKM).[51] Although ceramics were industrially manufactured, museums showed considerable interest in them whether or not they were still in existence and whether or not there were any ceramics workers in the vicinity to learn directly from displays of such objects. In Liverpool, where there were brief mentions of local pottery in Annual Reports from 1882, the museum came to focus on Herculaneum ware, from a works which ceased production in 1841.[52] Warrington and Ipswich also tended to collect eighteenth-century local ceramics. In this way, local ceramics was reconceptualised as part of local history rather than as either industrial design or the more connoisseurly decorative arts; in Liverpool, for example, museum lectures covered local potteries' production as part of a local history series.[53]

However, the most important force pushing civic museums towards the representation of 'their' trades and manufactures in the nineteenth century was the SKM, and in particular its Circulating Collection. The SKM, as the centrepiece of Henry Cole's wide-ranging plan to make design reform and aesthetic education a truly popular phenomenon, sought to roll its philosophy out to the provinces by providing similar objects to those displayed in Kensington.[54] However, close examination of the functioning of the Circulating Collection indicates that it hovered between providing specific instruction relevant to the trades of a town, and general design training; it also shows considerable difference between national and local museums over what local museums should contain. The museum's circulating collection was initially formed in 1855, conceived of as a service to Schools of Art rather than museums or galleries. One of the terms of the original Circulating Collection loans was that they be open to the public at least

part of the time, though recipients were instructed to charge an entrance fee. A return of visitors to exhibitions of South Kensington objects at various venues, not municipal museums, in 1873-4 is quite impressive: 150,207 to an exhibition in Bradford to raise money for the School of Art and Mechanics' Institute; 115,831 to an exhibition under the auspices of the Bath and West of England Society. Between 1875 and 1879 it was estimated that over 5 million people visited loan exhibitions, of which there had been 124.[55] At this point, though, there was a single collection which circulated round the country – it is obvious that it was not particularly attuned to the particular industries of particular towns, but rather supplied the same objects to all. In 1874 the museum asserted that objects were 'selected carefully for each town', but this was still not always obvious.

From 1885 the Circulating Collection was relaunched to serve provincial museums.[56] However, both the increasingly confident civic museums, and the SKM, expressed different views about the purpose and meaning of loans to particular towns. For some local museums, the SKM was imposing too narrow and local a set of concerns on them. When the SKM asserted that local museums themselves should concentrate on their own local industries, along with local archaeology, museums often disagreed. Elijah Howarth, the curator at Sheffield, said that the Circulating Department should make loans to regional museums which were 'for the purpose of cultivating taste and inculcating knowledge' in a universal way.[57]

On the other hand, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) asserted similar ideals to the SKM about the utility of objects illustrative of a particular industrial process to a particular town. This was partly because of the curatorship at Birmingham of Whitworth Wallis, son of a Keeper at the SKM.[58] Yet there were still problems: BMAG suggested that the SKM was not supplying them with objects with sufficient local relevance. Whitworth Wallis complained about the absence of any metalwork in the loan received, which omission he felt was 'a serious matter for our students and artisans'.[59] Other people and museums also thought the SKM was not actually fulfilling its brief of helping local industries; the MP for Birmingham, George Dixon, asserted that objects were 'sent out because they were no use at South Kensington rather than because they were useful where they were sent'. Similarly, the Town Clerk at Bradford wrote to the SKM in 1880 that 'nearly all the manufactures of the country ... are worked in the provinces and not in London', suggesting that the object lessons emanating from the SKM were less well informed than the localities themselves.

Additionally, and significantly, South Kensington was not at all convinced of the worth or motivations of local museums; it argued that municipalities were reluctant to fund their own museums properly

because they knew they could 'rely on circulation as one means of stocking their museums'.[60] And  by 1900 there was no agreement about why the Circulating Department was circulating objects; it was allegedly 'educational', but for whom, and in what way, was disputed. One member of the museum's staff even suggested that 'the advantages derived by the public from casual visits to museums are very uncertain', and it was suggested that the museum should go back to supplying just art schools, not public museums.[61] The tension between the national institution and the local ones was quite explicit here; local museums resented being judged and told what to do by national museums, while still hoping to access the resources represented by those national institutions. The issues at stake were firstly, whether civic museums should be local or general, and secondly, who was best placed to understand the nature of the locality, the central institution or the local institution. While civic museums themselves differed in their thinking about whether they should display local or general material, the SKM had no doubt that they should be local in all senses of the word; yet this was also the reason why the SKM saw these museums as inferior. The SKM's attempt to impose a certain local identity on towns was strongly resented by the towns themselves who asserted that only they understood the precise nature of their manufactures.

Museums were therefore part of a tendency to base an urban identity upon its characteristic industries; not only were towns generally thought to be industrious, their particular industries were an index of the places themselves. Not only did industries come to form an important part of the iconography and symbolism embedded in civic architecture, the 'story' of the town narrated by museums was of a place constituted by its manufactures, manufacturers, inventors and self-improving artisans.[62]

The Civic as the Local

Local history in museums was, as might be expected, used to further the task of creating historical legitimacy for local government, so prominent in civic architecture and ritual. In some cases, the earliest local historical material acquired by museums was related to the history of the council. In Liverpool, material was removed from the town hall and municipal offices specifically to be displayed as local history in the museum; this included silver gilt and copper maces from the 8th Earl of Derby, the flag of the 2nd Regiment of Liverpool Volunteers from 1802, and a brass plate giving a table of customs dues in Liverpool in 1674.[63] Portraits of recent but also older local worthies, usually councillors, were presented to museums in prodigious quantities, and displayed in areas such as entrance halls. Museums, along with other civic institutions, began to use anniversaries of town foundations and charters as important occasions for displaying local historical objects in order to create a historical narrative of the

permanence and historical legitimacy of local governments; such displays usually predated the construction of permanent local historical displays, and were important precursors for them. A notable example is an exhibition mounted to mark the 700th anniversary of the foundation of Liverpool. In the Preface to the Catalogue of this exhibition, it was written:

> The deeds of our ancestors shed but reflected lustre on us, and so we value things they may have left us as tangible links between past and present. Thus antiquities are translated into ancestors of things.[64]

The exhibition was very wide-ranging, but focused on, once more, characteristic economic products of Liverpool such as Herculaneum ware and shipping , explicitly civic material such as charters and official plate, and surprisingly ephemeral material such as 'quaint notices and printed matter' consisting of race cards, season tickets for baths, and lost property notices. There was also an unelaborated section on 'personal relics', which points to the increasing willingness of museums to create local heroes in their exhibits – Bristol claimed Coleridge (with hair and letters on display) and Birmingham Museum put a lot of effort into mythologizing Matthew Boulton and James Watt.[65] One of the most interesting aspects of the exhibition was the Newspapers and Maps section – 'intended to shew the development of our city to that greatness which justifies the celebrations of today'.[66] However, the allegedly deliberate omission of any material on the slave trade, as John Belchem notes, caused controversy.[67] Did the suppression of Liverpool's slaving history buttress the city's claims to 'greatness', or did it, as a local newspaper suggested, betray instead 'parochial' views? [68] A continuing unease with the emphasis on the local becomes clear here; while feting the local could be a way of asserting the city's place in the nation and the world, it might reveal the lack of importance and limited outlook of the civic leaders. The importance of such anniversaries for establishing a civic genealogy for towns is shown by the fact that Liverpool also staged a pageant in the same year, which formed a much more coherent narrative of local history than the museum did, and one which managed to reconcile admission of Liverpool failures with an even more grandiose vision of the civic entity. It started with Ancient Britons, Norsemen and Saxons, to represent 'before' Liverpool, passed through a slave trade car and the old mail coach, to reach the Grand Car of Liverpool featuring the Goddess of Liverpool, and indeed 'Liverpool in Apotheosis'.[69]

Civic history, therefore, although potentially bringing a charge of parochialism, was a usefully elastic concept. It incorporated both the idea of progress, and a sense of nostalgia for 'picturesque days and romance'; corporations were both guaranteed by their illustrious history and forces for progress. The way civic dignitaries described these anniversary events illustrates this. Of the pageant, it was said that

the ambition of every true citizen must surely be to leave the dignity and worth of the City

higher than he found it, and to aid him in this a knowledge of the past is essential... We

shall see how our City – learning wisdom from her mistakes, fortitude from her trials,

courage from her disasters – has moved ever onwards and upwards.[70]

Meanwhile, in the museum, the donation of local historical material was encouraged on the grounds

that 'no better way can be found of inspiring civic pride and patriotism in our future citizens than by

showing them, as children, the living history of the city'.[71]

On a different anniversary, national rather than local, Victoria's Golden Jubilee of 1887, Manchester

staged its Manchester Royal Jubilee Exhibition. This was, of course, not directly a civic event, but the

municipality and the committee of the Exhibition appeared inseparably at times; at the opening of the

event the mayor was first to speak to welcome the Prince of Wales to the Exhibition.[72] The Exhibition

was framed as 'regionally specific', and contained a well-known exhibit on local history, the 'Old

Manchester and Salford' reconstruction outside the main pavilion. Kidd points out that this complex of

shops, streets and other reconstructed historic buildings emerged from the local societies, especially

antiquarian ones, of Manchester, with leading figures on the committee, and the architect Alfred

Darbyshire, all members of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society.[73] However, it has also been

asserted both that the actual buildings drew heavily on previous reconstructions of 'Old London', and

therefore drew on a rather generic view of local history, and that it was an 'expression of civic pride',

not just of antiquarian enthusiasm. [74] Crinson argues, moreover, that it was necessary for such displays

of local history to be ephemeral exhibitions, rather than permanent museum installations, because such

permanence would suggest a civic identity mired in the past and stagnating, rather than modern and

dynamic.[75] This suggests that there was some sense of polarization between different types of identity:

modern, industrial, and progressive versus old-fashioned, backward and inertial. The challenge in

representing civic history was to bring past, present and future together without suggesting either that

the past contained anything which diminished the greatness of the town or city, or that the place was so

mired in the past that it could not look forward.

Links to the Deep Past

Local archaeology became a substantial element within civic museums by the beginning of the twentieth

century. What is of particular interest is the extent to which the display of archaeology blurred the

boundaries of the urban, and tended to reimagine places as localities encompassing poorly defined

urban and rural areas. Unlike representations of the civic past which focused on the depth of historical pedigree of the town itself, archaeological displays drew attention to the length of settlement in the broader area, without highlighting civic continuity. They were used by towns both with and without a lengthy civic history.

While archaeological artefacts had been coming into museums for as long as there had been museums, more systematic excavation was a useful source of objects for entrepreneurial local curators; and a shift from natural historical backgrounds to backgrounds in the human sciences for curators of general civic museums started to emerge.[76] Most archaeology, with some exceptions discussed below, was undertaken in rural areas, especially barrow opening. All of this material was enthusiastically appropriated by civic museums. Sheffield Museum acquired the products of Thomas Bateman's digs in rural Derbyshire in 1876 while Tom Sheppard persuaded, after some time, the Corporation of Hull to buy John Mortimer's entire museum in 1913.[77] The Mortimer Museum consisted of the finds from barrow openings conducted in rural East Yorkshire between 1863 and 1896 by Mortimer, a corn merchant, who set up his own museum in Driffield to display the finds.[78] Meanwhile, Montagu Browne, the (taxidermist) curator of Leicester Museum, undertook barrow opening along with bagging natural history specimens in the environs of Leicester in order to augment his museum.[79] It was, of course, also common for the entire rural hinterland to supply natural historical objects to the urban centre.[80] Thus towns were constructed as the knowing centre which investigated the passive rural; they were places to which the countryside had to be brought to be understood. This simultaneously reinforced the urban nature of towns, long associated with knowledge and learning, and suggested that the surrounding countryside was in fact a subordinate part of the urban.

Some excavations did take place within towns and cities, of course, and these might be closely linked with museums. In Preston, the construction of the Ribble Docks provided the Harris Museum with a number of archaeological and palaeontological objects for display (these were donated by the Ribble Dock Company).[81] In Ipswich, the amateur archaeologist Nina Layard undertook a number of digs, of prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon material. The finds from these dig had 'shared ownership' status; they both 'belonged' to the town council (which had in some cases paid the wages of the unemployed men who did the digging, and who owned the land which was dug on) and to Nina Layard. They were displayed in Ipswich Museum, but under Layard's control; in a separate room, arranged by her, in cases to which only she had the key. The curator had to seek permission before even entering the room. The reason for this was that Layard wanted to use the material for lecturing and presenting to leading national societies

such as the Society of Antiquaries; she also used the material to develop her relationship with individual leading scholars such as Sir John Evans. The museum committee of Ipswich Corporation were happy to support her in this over Frank Woolnough, the museum curator, and it must be assumed that this was because they felt the town, and maybe particularly its government, could only benefit from having its profile raised in national circles in this way. Because of the limited nature of remains of the deeper past, it had more potential to distinguish localities and provide them with a unique dimension to their history.

The way in which local archaeology could actually produce new museum understandings of local history can be seen at Warrington Museum. The Roman site at Wilderspool had started to become known at the end of the eighteenth century but was increasingly excavated in the second half of the nineteenth century. Notably, in 1850 Wilderspool was still outside Warrington itself, although by this point settlement had moved across the River Mersey and would shortly encroach on the area of Roman settlement.[82] Thus, the very process of urban enlargement which rendered the town and locality hard to understand because of its instability and encroachment on the rural, also provided material to construct a stable historically-based identity for that town. Thus the cutting of the Bridgewater Canal in the 1780s and of the Old Quay Canal in 1801-3 produced evidence of Roman settlement. More systematic excavations were carried out by Thomas May between 1885 and 1905, and revealed evidence of Roman occupation, industry and even a temple.[83] Large quantities of excavated material found their way to Warrington Museum, donated by May, but also by a surprisingly wide range of other donors.[84] Subtantial quantities of material came directly or indirectly from Dr Kendrick, a local medical man who had undertaken some excavation in the years before May. Kendrick was omnivorously interested in the locality, its natural history, its history and its archaeology, and had been involved in the creation of the museum.[85]

There are two points which emerge here about the relationship between archaeology and local displays in the museum. Firstly, the incursion of the new material led to a new category for museum objects. By 1880 Warrington Museum classified its acquisitions in classes which included seals and coins, paintings, ethnography, and antiquities, as well as a number of natural history categories. As acquisitions grew these categories were refined so that antiquities was split into local and non-local antiquities. By the early twentieth century classification appears to have been very fragmented and overlapping, with categorization by material overlapping significantly with the ethnographic and emerging archaeological groups, which were also being subdivided by period (for example, 'Roman'); the most significant new class appeared to be one simply called 'Wilderspool'.[86] While the local was important to museums,

therefore, it did not fit easily into existing museum schemes of knowledge. The local, especially local history from the relatively distant past, demanded to be treated sui generis, and thus became a feature that stood out from existing provision at civic museums. However, and this is the second point, this created opportunities for new narratives. At Warrington, evidence of extensive pottery working in Roman Wilderspool emerged at the same time as ideas about local manufacturing, discussed above, were also prominent. Although the contents and appearance of displays are not known, the presence of local Roman pottery in close proximity to increasing quantities of pottery identified as being from local manufactories must at least have suggested some sense of continuity.

The deep or archaeological past, then, offered fewer problems about the relationship between past, present and future than other local pasts did, and simultaneously offered localities a way of distinguishing themselves from other places without appearing too backward-looking.

The Everyday Past

A new historical category of the local appeared more distinctly in museums at the beginning of the twentieth century, though there are clear links to the approaches already described; this might be described as a social history approach. At Liverpool Museum, objects from the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire were on loan from at least 1902, although the catalogue of this material was lost and much work had to be done just to identify objects.[87] The association between the museum and the Historical Society came about through the agency of Robert Gladstone junior, a grand-nephew of William Ewart Gladstone, who as a gentleman of means 'devoted his life to voluntary public activities and to study'. He was a member of the Society (later a president) as well as a member of the museum sub-committee, and it is clear that local history was his preferred field; he later published a history of Liverpool.[88]

It was presumably his influence, as well as the increasing quantities of civic, trade and archaeological material from the locality, that led to the founding of the Old Liverpool Room in 1906. This was among the earliest galleries in municipal museums to explicitly focus on local history, and its name marks a clear departure from earlier arrangements which saw local history as a part of local natural history and put all local material in any corner that was spare; indeed, the Old Liverpool Room was separate from local antiquities, so even archaeological and historical material were now distinct. The Old Liverpool Room was billed as containing 'a complete collection of historical relics and reminders of Liverpool's past'; although what is initially mentioned in the guide is querns, mortars, handmills, Liverpool Delft

ware and sketches and engravings which seems less than complete.[89] There are no extant pictures of the Old Liverpool Room itself, so we have to rely on information about donations and policies, and descriptions of displays, but the combination of name and contents, and use of the words 'relics' and 'reminders' suggests a rather romantic conception of what Liverpool was like in the past, which relied heavily on images such as views, and printed material. The Old Liverpool Room collected in much the same vein as the anniversary exhibition had done, with prints, busts, relics, civic material and ephemera all much in evidence. So they were given some matches 'as used by the 4th Earl of Sefton', commemorative medals, posters and admissions tallies for pleasure gardens and theatres, and prints and watercolours of Liverpool in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[90] The ephemerality and 'relic' quality of much of this material suggest that it was valued for its ability to give a sense of authentic historical experience, rather than to systematically outline Liverpool's growth.[91]

Belchem suggests that local historical interest in the inter-war years was motivated by a sense of decline; history signified 'good times that were now slipping away'; there were, he argues, clear differences in function in the local history of the Edwardian and the inter-war periods.[92] Yet a change in emphasis from progressive to nostalgic is not, in fact, that clear to see, because there was as much which could be categorised as nostalgia in the pre-1914 Old Liverpool Room; equally there was continuity in local history leadership in the person of Robert Gladstone before and after the First World War. In many ways to define these two periods as respectively forwards looking and backwards looking is to misunderstand the relationship which local history such as could be found in the Old Liverpool Room had with the past. As both Dellheim and Edwards suggest, the past was more like a dynamic part of the present than something to retreat to, or something to move away from.[93] For men such as Gladstone, the past was immanent in the streets of modern Liverpool, and could be re-animated with documents, images and objects.[94] However, there are some indications that this understanding of local history was not very widely shared before 1914. From 1911 the Old Liverpool Room became a more important focus for the museum which actively tried to expand it, but there are signs that the development of this focus was not without problems. In the year of its opening the Museum Committee said that they 'would be grateful to the owners of any objects of interest for the gift or loan of them', and in 1911 it was resolved to form a separate sub-committee to try and form a bigger, more systematic collection to represent the history of Liverpool.[95]

While rooms devoted solely to local history were not in evidence at other museums, a shift in collecting patterns was, with museums tending to accrue material such as cockspurs, spectacles and shoe buckles

from the locality.[96] Social historical material, of 'everyday life' in the past, was nearly always local; that is, it was conceived of as coming from a particular place and as providing understanding of that place rather than of broader concepts or universal truths. It also often highlighted the regional differences in vernacular material of all sorts. In this it came very close to the growing material devoted to folklore. The Folklore Society 's campaign for a museum for England was modified to aim instead for a 'catalogue raisonné' of folklore objects in regional English museums, conceptualising Englishness as inhering in its local details; on 'distribution and variation'.[97]

Such a vision of the materiality of everyday life in the past as offering a window onto the essential nature of place was developing in a number of ways outside civic museums at this time; indeed, it seems that this idea was conceived in villages and small market towns and moved from there to civic museums. Bridget Yates suggests that an interest in the specifics of the local did not emerge until the 1920s but in a small number of cases we have evidence that collecting began before the First World War and even before 1900, even if the subsequent museum did not emerge until later.[98] Gertrude Jekyll's interest in local history led her to publish a book, *Old West Surrey*, in 1904; and she also formed a collection of social history material from the locality, which she donated to Surrey Archaeological Society for their museum in 1907. The collection, which included mouse traps, cooking pots, a spinning wheel and reaping hooks, was designed to support her assertion that 'local wisdom' was the same as 'truest patriotism'. The local embodied 'that precious quality of character' which was perceptible in the 'history of the place', in the face of homogenising commercial forces.[99] Moreover, this character derived from local history was under grave threat and already largely swept away; preservation was an act of rescue. She suggested that 'common things of daily use, articles of furniture and ordinary household gear, that I remember in every cottage and farmhouse, have passed into the dealers' hands, and are now sold as curiosities and antiquities', thus confirming that the interest in such article began outside museums, and was only later transferred into them.[100] Meanwhile, in rural North Yorkshire, John Kirk collected 'bygones' from 1898; the collection became a museum in Pickering at some point in the 1920s and later formed the Castle Museum in York. There are a number of indications that Kirk saw it as an intensely local collection; he certainly wanted it to stay in North Yorkshire. However, while much of his collecting was local, picking up unwanted things as he went on his rounds as a country doctor, he also advertised in *Exchange and Mart* for objects, and acquired items from as far away as Dundee and Bath.[101] Thus, although there was an intense interest in the texture of local life in the past, 'local' could be an elastic category which had the capacity to be quite generic at times.

While the growth of 'everyday' local history did represent some significant changes, then, these were not simply from a progressive view of history to a nostalgic one; rather, they were changes towards an experiential sense of local history as present in the here and now, and towards a sense that the national character was to be found in the details and variations in ordinary things. This was also 'rescue' museology; a local past which was disappearing needed to be saved to preserve the sense of place and locality which an encroaching modernity would destroy in a homogenising wave. As it was commandeered by civic museums, any nostalgic elements were further stripped out, and the sense of rescue was much more muted in something like the Old Liverpool Room than it was in Gertrude Jekyll's collection. While the proponents of 'bygone' collecting outside civic museums had various relationships with modernity – Kirk was an enthusiastic motor car racer – civic museums themselves could not afford to suggest that modernity was as destructive and regressive as Jekyll argued.[102] Rather, the texture of everyday life in the past was enlisted to develop a sense of collective memory and local roots which gave continuity and depth to local identity; but was imagined as a normal part of a modern urban society.

Conclusion

Civic museums are undoubtedly a significant location to see attitudes to local history and the locality as a source of identity and 'rootedness' developing. The local was a category which was concrete, tangible and material, so museums to contain the actual things from the local past were indispensable; and almost by default, museums filled up with local material when more general material had to be actively sought out. However, they also reveal the existence of a number of issues which made the local very problematic. How could the nature of the locality be the focus of a museum without the museum itself becoming parochial and second (or third) rate? Were municipal museums to have their local content dictated to them by national museums? How could a place claim national and even global significance if those claims rested solely on local events and people? Was a region urban or rural and if it was both, what was the respective importance of the two? Museums' construction of the local reveals a number of different answers to these questions, all of which have relevance for wider understandings of the local. And most of these answers exploited local *history* to answer the questions in a way which benefited regions. Thus, history seemed to show that areas had strong associations with particular trades and industries, and rather than accept industrial material supplied by national museums, localities argued that they understood their own manufacturing character better than any outsider could. Distant history provided unique archaeological material which could mark a place out from

others, and also allow it to make a unique contribution to understanding such ancient times. Civic history demonstrated both the continuity, and the continuously progressive nature, of local government, and showed how national virtues emanated from the locality. In many ways, though, the construction of an everyday local history even repudiated some of the questions, suggesting that the local past, while supplying the character and variety which made up the nation, actually offered a more compelling historical experience than anything the national level could offer, and therefore rendered the question of significance and prestige irrelevant. Thus museum local history mirrored the concerns found in town histories, local historical societies, civic architecture and ritual, and illustrations of towns. What made museum representations of the local particularly important are two things. Firstly, museums were able to hold multiple interpretations of place simultaneously; they were open to donations from archaeologists, antiquaries, companies, councillors and even those who happened to have some old things of their grandparents still around the place. They thus provided a very wide range of local things for audiences to construe and recombine in myriad ways, laying the ground work for senses of local belonging which might never have been intended. And secondly, they offered a way to combine an intellectual and an emotional understanding of place, where each guarantees the other. While displays moved towards a more emotive and experiential mode, the fact of being displayed in museums still dominated by glass case displays, systematic and sequential exhibits, meant that one could apparently both find out what the local was like, and what the local felt like. And all the signs are that by 1914 the local was exercising a powerful hold on the nation's imagination.

---

[1] Kate Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums*, 1850-1914, Aldershot: Ashgate 2005; Kate Hill, '"Thoroughly embued with the spirit of ancient Greece": symbolism and space in Victorian civic culture', in Alan Kidd and David Nicholls, eds., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1999, 99-111; Robert Snape, 'Objects of utility: cultural responses to industrial collections in municipal museums 1845-1914', *Museum and Society* 8: 1, 2010, 18-36; Jon Stobart, 'Building an urban identity: cultural space and civic boosterism in a 'new' industrial town, Burslem, 1761-1911', *Social History* 29: 4, 2004, 485-498

[2] Hill, *Culture and Class*, pp. 86, 126.

[3] Charles Dellheim, *The Face of the Past: The Preservation of the Medieval Inheritance in Victorian England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982, p. 70; Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination, 1885-1918*, Durham and London: Duke University Press 2012, p. 10; R. C. Richardson, 'Introduction', in Richardson, ed., *The Changing Face of English Local History*, Aldershot: Ashgate 2000, p. 3.

[4] Edwards, *Camera as Historian*, p. 12.

[5] Dellheim, *Face of the Past*, pp. 55-9.

[6] Edwards, *Camera as Historian*, p. 142.

[7] There is a growing historiography on the local and the urban which is examined in more detail below. On Victorian town histories and local history see Vickery and Alan J. Kidd, 'Between antiquary and academic: local history in the nineteenth century' in R. C. Richardson, ed., *The Changing Face of English Local History*, Aldershot:

Ashgate 2000, 94-109; on visual representations see Caroline Arscott, 'The representation of the city in the visual arts', in Martin Daunton, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. 3: 1840-1950*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000, 811-831, and Stana Nenadic, 'English towns in the creative imagination', in Philip Waller, ed., *The English Urban Landscape*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000, 316-41; and on rituals and practices see David Cannadine, 'The transformation of civic ritual in modern Britain: the Colchester Oyster Feast', *Past and Present* 94: 1, 1982, 107-130.

[8] Ian Convery, Gerard Corsane and Peter Davies, 'Introduction', in Convery, Corsane and Davies, eds., *Making Sense of Place, Multidisciplinary Prespectives*, Woodbridge: Boydell 2012, p. 2.

[9] Edwards, *Camera as Historian*, p. 133; this property of museums has been noted in other contexts by Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study*, Leicester: Leicester University Press 1992, p. 28 and Simon Knell, *The Culture of English Geology, 1815-1851: A Science Revealed Through Its Collecting*, Aldershot: Ashgate 2000.

[10] For a particularly morally freighted example of this argument see Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 2004; see also Caroline Arscott, 'The representation of the city in the visual arts', in Martin Daunton, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. 3: 1840-1950*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000, 811-831 (813).

[11] Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought,1820-1940*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1985, pp. 39, 49-55; Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1990 [1963], pp. 17, 52, 75. This is not to dismiss the tradition of pastoral idealisation or the negative views of towns which were certainly present throughout the nineteenth century, but rather to suggest that many of the middle-class inhabitants of towns expressed pride and optimism about their locality.

[12] Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 43.

[13] This is disapprovingly noted by Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 50-51.

[14] Richardson, 'Introduction', pp. 2-3.

[15] Both Kidd and Dellheim attribute much of the development of local historical and archaeological investigation to the growing numbers of societies both county (but usually based in a town) and urban. Kidd, 'Between antiquary and academic'; Dellheim, *The Face of the Past*, chapter 2.

[16] Dellheim, *The Face of the Past*, p. 33; Thomas Wright, ed., *The Archaeological Album: or Museum of National Antiquities*, London: Chapman and Hall 1845, p. 129: 'the necessity of making a sewer, or of sinking a deep foundation, has from time to time given us an accidental glimpse of the remains of this city of the past'.

[17] Dellheim, *The Face of the Past*, pp. 163-72.

[18] Stuart Burch, 'The Holbrook Bequest for commemorative plaques: tradition, narrative and 'local patriotism' in Victorian Nottingham', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* 105, 2001, 155-170 (165).

[19] David Cannadine, 'The transformation of civic ritual in modern Britain: the Colchester Oyster Feast', *Past and Present* 94: 1, 1982, 107-130 (118).

[20] Stobart, 'Building an urban identity'; Dellheim, *The Face of the Past*, chapter 3.

[21] Katy Layton-Jones, 'The synthesis of town and trade: visualizing provincial urban identity, 1800-1858', *Urban History* 35, 2008, 72-95.

[22] Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 30.

[23] Kidd, 'Between antiquary and academic', shows societies were split between those whose names referenced the cities of Liverpool and Manchester, and those whose title included the county names of Lancashire and Cheshire. However, 'although each was based in a single city, ... they were self-consciously regional in scope' (p. 99). Dellheim, *The Face of the Past*, 45-58. Kent Archaeological Society met mainly in Maidstone in the 1850s: 'Inaugural meeting of the Kent Archaeological Society', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 1, 1858, xxxv.

[24] Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 43.

[25] Dellheim, *The Face of the Past*, p. 58.

[26] Rhiannon Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities: Wales and its National Museums*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press 2007, p.85.

[27] The dominance of this ideal of indivisible and finite knowledge in eighteenth-century museums, such as the British Museum and the Ashmolean, is discussed in Arthur Macgregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2007, pp.

126-7, and John Mack, '"Ethnography" in the Enlightenment', in Anderson, Caygill, MacGregor and Syson, eds., *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century*, London: British Museum Press 2003, p. 117.

[28] R. A. D. Markham, *A Rhino in the High Street: Ipswich Museum – The Early Years*, Ipswich: Ipswich Borough Council 1990, p. 58.

[29] Stephanie Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2006.

[30] Rev. A. Hume, *Character of the Liverpool Town Museum, with Suggestions for its Interior Arrangement*, Liverpool: Reprinted from the *Daily Post* 1859,

[31] *Twentieth Annual Report of the Committee of the Free Public Library and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool*, Liverpool 1872.

[32] Minutes of the Free Public Library Committee of the Borough of Preston, 12 September 1890, 16 October 1891, 15 February 1894.

[33] Hill, *Culture and Class*, pp. 44, 53, 56.

[34] W. A. Herdman, 'An ideal natural history museum', *Proceedings of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool* 41, 1886-7, p. 78.

[35] Complaints of underfunding are numerous in the Annual Reports of Liverpool Museums; see for example 35th Annual Report of the Committee of the Free Public Library and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool, 1888. The concerns of the Museums Association in its early years, particularly to promote exchanges of duplicate specimens and loans of material from national museums, also speak to this issue: Geoffrey Lewis, *For Instruction and Recreation: A Centenary History of the Museums Association*, London: Quiller Press 1989, pp. 9-10.

[36] *Liverpool Daily Post*, 12 January 1901, cutting in Minutes of the Museum Sub-Committee, Liverpool Museums Archive (MM), 28 January 1901.

[37] Quoted in H. O Forbes, *Report of the Director of Museums relative to the Rearrangement of, and the cases for, the Collections in the Free Public Museums*, Liverpool 1901, p. 15.

[38] W. H. Flower, *Essays on Museums, and Other Subjects Connected With Natural History*, London: Macmillan 1898, pp. 20-1, 56.

[39] Edwards, *Camera as Historian*, p. 139.

[40] Hill, *Culture and Class*, p. 76; Tim Schadla-Hall, *Tom Sheppard, Hull's Great Collector*, Beverley: Highgate Publications 1989.

[41] *55th Annual Report of the Free Public Libraries and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool*, Liverpool 1907.

[42] Lewis, *For Instruction and Recreation*, p. 11.

[43] Schadla-Hall, *Tom Sheppard*, p. 5

[44] Markham, *Rhino in the High Street*, p. 40.

[45] Sydney Pavière, *Harris Museum and Art Gallery: Summary Guide*, Preston 1932.

[46] J. W. Baggaley, 'Some notable museums VI: Weston Park Museum and Mappin Art Gallery', *North-Western Naturalist* 8, 1933, 90-95, 95.

[47] This was, in many ways, the premise of the Parliamentary deliberations which led to the creation of municipal museums in the first place; see the *Reports from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures*, 1835 and 1835, and Janet Minihan, *The Nationalisation of Culture: The Development of State Subsidies to the Arts in Great Britain*, London: Hamish Hamilton 1977.

[48] Minutes of the Museums Sub-Committee, Liverpool, 10 February 1911.

[49] Ipswich Corporation Museum Minute Book May 1888, February 1889, May 1889, August 1889.

[50] Warrington Museum Receiving Book, 18 May 1889; Sunderland Borough Museum Stock Book, 6 October 1910.

[51] Lady Charlotte Schreiber's ceramics collection, donated to the South Kensington Museum on the death of her husband in 1884, consisted mainly of English examples. Eatwell suggests Schreiber, along with a small number of other female collectors, drove a new interest in English ceramics, which were still described by a writer on ceramic collecting in 1875 as an 'absurd taste'. Ann Eatwell, 'Private pleasure, public beneficence: Lady Charlotte Schreiber and ceramic collecting', in Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Women in the Victorian Art World*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1995, p. 131.

[52] In 1913 the museum noted it was particularly aiming to purchase Herculaneum ware: Minutes of the Museums Sub-Committee, 12 September 1913. See also 16th Annual Report of the Committee of the Free Public Libraries and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool, 1868, 29th Annual Report of the Committee of the Free Public Libraries and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool, 1882, and 62nd Annual Report of the Committee of the Free Public Libraries and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool, 1914.

[53] 48th Annual Report of the Committee of the Free Public Libraries and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool, 1900.

[54] On Henry Cole and the SKM in general, see Anthony Burton, *Vision and Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, London: V&A Publications 1999, and Bonython and Burton, *The Great Exhibitor: The Life and Work of Henry Cole*, London: V&A Publications, 2003. Some coverage of the Circulating Collection is given in Minihan, *Nationalisation of Culture*, p. 114.

[55] Victoria & Albert Museum Archive (hereafter V & A A), Circulating Collection file ED84/119: memo, no author given 'Memorandum on letters from Mr Dixon and Mr Aitken', n.d.; no author given '1875-1879', nd; letter from Bradford town clerk, 14 June 1880.

[56] V & A A, Circulating Collection file ED84/105, memo by J Bailey 'Memorandum upon the Circulation Department of the Victoria & Albert Museum', 1913.

[57] V & A A, Circulating Collection file ED84/105, E. Howarth, 'Notes and suggestions in relation to circulation', nd.

[58] 'Obituary, Sir Whitworth Wallis', *The Times*, 17 January 1927

[59] V & A A, Circulating Collection file ED84/105, letter from Whitworth Wallis to Secretary of Board of Education, 26 June 1914.

[60] V & A A, Circulating Collection file ED84/105, memo by F. V. Burridge, 'Memorandum on the Circulation Department', 1919.

[61] V & A A, Circulating Collection file ED84/105, memo by J. Bailey, 'Memorandum and notes upon the Circulation Division of the Victoria and Albert Museum', 1909, p. 38.

[62] Jon Stobart gives some particularly good examples of specific industries becoming town icons in 'Building an urban identity: cultural space and civic boosterism in a 'new' industrial town, Burslem, 1761-1911', *Social History* 29: 4, 2004, 485-498.

[63] Minutes of the Museums Sub-Committee, Liverpool, 27 November 1912.

[64] *Catalogue of the Historical Exhibition Held at the Walker Art Gallery 15 July-10 August 1907 in Connection with the Celebration of the 700th Anniversary of the Foundation of Liverpool*, Liverpool: Lee and Nightingale 1907, npn.

[65] *Report of the Museum Committee, 1902-3*, Bristol Museum 1903.; Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Inventory vol. 1, 1885-1905, entries 2613-85, 2626-85, 2628-85, 2631-85, 136-90, 7-95, among others.

[66] *Catalogue of the Historical Exhibition*.

[67] John Belchem, *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2000, p. 19.

[68] Belchem, *Merseypride*, p. 19.

[69] Blechem, *Merseypride*, pp. 20-2; *700th Anniversary of the Foundation of Liverpool. Programme of the Pageant in Wavertree Park and Grounds*, Liverpool: Gilbert G. Walmsley, 1907.

[70] Quoted in Belchem, *Merseypride*, p. 21.

[71] 60th Annual Report of the Committee of the Free Public Libraries and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool, 1912.

[72] *The London Gazette*, 6 May 1887.

[73] Kidd, 'Between antiquary and academic', p. 96.

[74] Mark Crinson, 'Manchester and the "hypocritical plan": architecture, shopping and identity in the industrial city', in Christoph Ehland, ed., *Thinking Northern: Textures of Identity in the North of England*, Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi 2007, pp. 205-6.

[75] Crinson, 'Manchester', p. 206.

[76] For example, Dr Henry O. Forbes who became Director of Liverpool Museums in 1894 was an anthropologist. Hill, *Culture and Class*, p. 63.

[77] The movement from rural to urban is most marked with Bateman's collection which had been on display in Bateman's Derbyshire house; see McCombe, 'Anglo-Saxon artifacts'. For the transfer of the Mortimer collection to Hull, see Tim Schadla-Hall, *Tom Sheppard, Hull's Great Collector*, Beverley: Highgate Publications 1989

[78] Melanie Giles, 'Collecting the past, constructing identity: the antiquarian John Mortimer and the Driffield Museum of Antiquities and Geological Specimens', *Antiquaries Journal* 86, 2006, 279-316.

[79] Leicester Museum Acquisition Book records the various objects donated by the Curator, Montagu Browne, during his employment there between 1880 and 1907. See also Cynthia Brown, *Cherished Possessions: A History of New Walk Museum and Leicester City Museums Service*, Leicester: Leicester City Council 2002.

[80] Again Leicester supplies a good example – the Chairman of the museum issued a call in 1882 for local 'sporting friends' to consider donating birds which they shot in the vicinity to the museum. Hill, *Culture and Class* p. 83.

[81] Hill, *Culture and Class*, p. 111.

[82] Mike Shaw and Jo Clark, *Cheshire Historic Towns Survey, Warrington Archaeological Assessment*, Chester: Cheshire County Council/English Heritage 2003.

[83] Thomas May, *Warrington's Roman Remains*, Warrington: Mackie, 1904.

[84] See for example Warrington Museum Receiving Book 17 August 1906, 14 March 1908, 1 August 1910.

[85] 'Obituary, Dr James Kendrick', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 38, 1877, p. 337.

[86] Classes as recorded in Warrington Museum Receiving Book between 1880 and 1914.

[87] 50th Annual Report of the Committee of the Free Public Libraries and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool, 1902; Minutes of the Museum Sub-Committee, 9 July 1913..

[88] 'Obituary, Mr Robert Gladstone', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 92, 1940, 215-218.

[89] *A General Guide to the Collections Contained in the Free Public Museums (William Brown Street) Liverpool*, Liverpool 1906, p. 17..

[90] 62nd Annual Report of the Committee of the Free Public Libraries and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool, 1914.

[91] See my argument in Kate Hill, 'Collecting authenticity: domestic, familial and everyday "old things" in English museums, 1850-1939', *Museum History Journal* 4: 2, 2011, 203-222.

[92] Belchem, *Merseypride*, p. 25.

[93] Dellheim, *Face of the Past*, p. 181-2; Edwards, *Camera as Historian*, p. 22. See also Frances Larson, 'The curious and the glorious: science and the British past at the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum', *Museum History Journal* 4: 2, 2011, 181-202.

[94] Again, both Dellheim and Edwards suggest that this local history was intensely material: Dellheim, *Face of the Past*, p. 55-6; Edwards, *Camera as Historian*, p. 142.

[95] 59th Annual Report of the Committee of the Free Public Libraries and Museums of the Borough of Liverpool, 1911; Minutes of the Museum Sub-Committee, 21 April 1911.

[96] Warrington Museum Receiving Book, 3 October 1881; 29 July 1907; 30 July 1913.

[97] Oliver A. Douglas, 'Folkore, survivals and the neo-archaic: the materialist character of late nineteenth-century homeland ethnography', *Museum History Journal* 4: 2, 2011, p. 238-9.

[98] Bridget Yates, 'Volunteer-run museums in market towns and villages', *Rural History Today* 16, 2009, p. 2.

[99] Gertrude Jekyll, *Old West Surrey*, London: Longman Green and Co. 1904, pp. 286-7.

[100] Jekyll, *Old West Surrey*, p. vii.

[101] Gaynor Kavanagh, *History Curatorship*, Leicester: Leicester University Press 1990, p. 29; 'Dr John Kirk, founder of York Castle Museum', York Castle Museum, nd, online, available at http://www.yorkcastlemuseum.org.uk/Page/ViewCollection.aspx?CollectionId=27, accessed 31 July 2011.

[102] Modern furniture was, according to Jekyll, 'debased and deteriorated...wretched stuff', produced by 'trade competition'. Jekyll, *Old Surrey*, p. 44.