

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2



Application: Museum & Heritage Collections Strand 2

Our Organisation and Clydebank Museum

Clydebank Museum was established in 1980 through public partnership with Clydebank District Council. Originally, the museum was managed by volunteers before the District Council found funds to employ a curator. Many of the original community pressure group members continue to work as volunteers at the museum.

West Dunbartonshire Council's Cultural Section was established in 2003, to bring together the Council's arts, heritage and cultural services provision. Clydebank Museum became part of this remit. Currently there are three full-time members of staff, two part-time and two project based.

Full time

Section Head Culture*
Collections Officer*
Museum Supervisor*
Arts Development Officer

Part time

Exhibitions Officer
Clerical Assistant

Project based

Documentation Officer*
Learning Officer*

Clydebank Museum is the only Accredited museum in West Dunbartonshire, which has a population of 93 000, a third of which (31 000) live in poverty. Through its work, the museum promotes social and digital inclusion, caring for the heritage of the people of West Dunbartonshire by promoting its collections and encouraging community ownership of their history. Our Learning Programme reaches out to all sections of the community. During the last year we have programmed activities that have been well attended by primary, secondary schools and colleges, groups with special educational needs, children excluded from mainstream education, pre-5s and the elderly.

Our Track Record

Operating on a revenue budget of £30,500k per year, the museum continuously improves on its target of increasing participation in its services by 5% each year. In 2006 the section was awarded a CoSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) Award for *Advancing Community Wellbeing* with our *Their Past Your Future* Project which promoted community participation in a series of public

* indicates direct museum involvement

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

events around the impact of World War II on the Home Front. The project promoted learning resources, an online website for teachers, public exhibitions, film and concerts. Working with P6-7 pupils, nursing homes and local history groups the project was used nationally as an example of best practise by Museums Galleries Scotland.

West Dunbartonshire Council's Culture Section was the only local authority department within the UK to receive three individual lottery awards through the national *Their Past Your Future* programme. The service has recently been asked by Museums Galleries Scotland to give a presentation on the museum's work to the Minister for Culture at the media launch of TPYF II.

In 2007 the museum won a Museums and Heritage Award in partnership with Glasgow Museums and our Cultural Co-ordinators for working with children excluded from mainstream education.

The Culture Section works jointly with local groups and projects such as Clydebank Local History Society, and Friends of Clydebank Museum to harness local skills and knowledge to provide public events such as lecture series and oral history, promoting effective contributions from the community and maximising best value for public money.

As part of our work we mentor community groups to produce successful cultural funding bids. Recently we have mentored West Dunbartonshire Heritage, Friends of Clydebank Museum, Clydebank Local History Society and local theatre groups enabling the local community to access and draw down external funding to the area to promote heritage and related activities. Our work with West Dunbartonshire Heritage Ltd has been used as an example of Best Practice by the National Lottery Awards for All programme.

Our online Museum (*Museum Without Walls*) launched in 2006 provides online learning and local history resources. The design was fully informed by the local community, including the Disability Forum, which played a valuable role in its development. We are currently working with Clydebank Local History Society to digitise our oral history archive and put this online.

As part of our Volunteer programme we recruit local unemployed people to volunteer at the museum and also back of house in collections care through the Volunteer Centre and Project Scotland, providing them with new skills and knowledge to help them back to work. This work is being promoted nationally as an example of best practise.

The section and Clydebank Museum have been used as examples of Best Practice in the following areas:

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

Museums Galleries Scotland: learning development, collections, partnership work, documentation and volunteer programme

CoSLA: community wellbeing

Museums Association: Effective Collections – loan partnership work with the National Museums of Scotland

Big Lottery/ Museums Galleries Scotland: Their Past Your Future project, including intergenerational work and learning and evaluation.

Museums and Heritage: award for partnership with Glasgow Museums and West Dunbartonshire Council's Cultural Co-ordinators for working with children excluded from mainstream schools

West Dunbartonshire Council: evaluation systems, Service Standards, weblet and online provision.

As a small section and museum we have to work very hard to maximise our budgets to ensure good quality service provision for the people of West Dunbartonshire and beyond. At the inception of the Culture Section the museum had very few public and school visits and was open for only part of the week. Museum stores did not meet the standards for the MLA's Accreditation scheme, little documentation had been carried out, there was no school or learning programme and volunteer numbers were decreasing. Grants and staff commitment have enabled us to carry out the work described over the previous pages. Our visitor numbers have increased from 3,000 in 2002 to 12,000 in 2007 and our online visits currently exceed 90,000 hits per year. Many of these improvements have been made through strategic planning, effective budget management, creative use of resources and joint working, as well as very committed staff.

Grants awarded:

Museums Galleries Scotland (formerly The Scottish Museums Council)

£10,000 for a Documentation Officer for a year.

This project helped us gain Accreditation and increased access, both online and through exhibitions, to our collections.

£17,000 for a Learning Development Officer for a year.

Through this project we have accessed 90% of primary schools, all secondary schools and special needs schools in the area, all residential homes for the elderly and three local colleges. We have established a programme of teacher and pupil consultation, consultation with people who have disabilities, community consultation, holiday programmes and are working with the Excellence in Education and Business Links (EEBL) programme.

£30,000 for small grants.

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

Awards for All

£4,000 archival storage

£8,000 publication of a book of Victorian West Dunbartonshire based around community photographs and digitisation of photographs for our website.

£5,000 heritage trail leaflets, working with West Dunbartonshire Heritage Ltd

Daphne Bullard/Cathy Callow

£800 towards a conservation audit of our textile collections.

HLF

£45,000 for a two year documentation post to catalogue our industrial collections.

The Big Lottery Fund/Museums Galleries Scotland

£48,000 and £50,000 towards Their Past Your Future, for which we won a CoSLA award. Projects were based on intergenerational work around World War II. West Dunbartonshire was heavily bombed and many people lost their lives. The project was extremely relevant to the area.

£18,000 in 2008 for TPYF II to produce online heritage and oral history resources.

Need for the Work

Our museum collections are integral to the work that we do as a section. We have worked very hard to bring us up to Accreditation standard since the inception of the Culture Section in 2003.

Conservation and access are the core principles of our work, as shown by our funding record, we invest considerable time and money to ensure that our collections are cared for, stored and researched in the most effective ways possible. As with any museums service, we face difficulties of under-resourcing and funding, however, we try our best to tackle these issues by using our budgets and time creatively to consistently at least double our revenue to implement service development.

Since the creation of our section, we have created new storage areas, invested in shelving, environmental monitoring, conservation surveys, preventative conservation measures and documentation. We have also increased access to our collections by instituting a programme of temporary exhibitions, creating online services, developing a learning programme for school and informal learners, contributing to teachers' CPD activities, teachers' previews for exhibitions, a formal learning brochure of activities, greater evaluation for exhibitions or activities, a programme for people with Special Educational Needs, outreach talks and activities for the elderly. We have also formed strong partnerships to maximise resources both within the council and with local

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

agencies as well as with regional and national bodies. We also work with Project Scotland to skill people for entry into employment and have established a volunteer training programme.

The museums service has been documenting its collections for four years. In this time we have finished cataloguing our fine art collections and are now concentrating on our social history and industrial collections. The sewing machine collection has been inventoried, labelled and location checked, according to the SPECTRUM standards of the Collections Trust.

At the museum's inception, the Singer Sewing Machine factory at Clydebank donated its technological and archive collections to the museum. These date from the first Singer sewing machine, manufactured in 1850, to sewing machines made in the late 1970's. They also donated examples of the munitions made in World War II. We have had visits from the International Sewing Machine Collectors Society (ISMACS) who advised us that we have many extremely rare and several unique sewing machines and collections of photographs. We enclose a "Clydebank Special" newsletter from the organisation.

The Curator of Technology from the National Museums of Scotland advised us that we had potentially the largest collection of sewing machines and ephemera in Scotland, if not the United Kingdom. We have asked the National Museums and the larger local authorities to verify this and have also checked the National Audit results. We cannot find any other museum with more sewing machines, objects and archives relating to the sewing machine industry.

The Singer factory was built in Kilbowie, in what came to be known as Clydebank. Begun in 1882, it gained full production in 1885 when it claimed to produce 80% of the world's sewing machines. It was also the first Singer factory outside of the United States. In its first years, the factory employed 75% of the available female workforce in the area. The factory was a major employer in the area for nearly one hundred years, during its peak years in the 1960s, the factory employed over 17,000 local people. As well as assembling the sewing machines, the factory also made components, cabinets and cases, produced instruction booklets and generated its own power. It had its own railway station, the first to be named after a local industry.

We feel that the collection of sewing machines, photographs, munitions produced during World War II and archival material is of potential international importance due to the factory's impact on the rest of the world. It is also of fundamental importance to the region. Singer is a "live" issue with many local people still actively interested in the factory and its life. They offer an invaluable resource in terms of oral history and the way the factory ran in the run up to its closure. Unfortunately, they cannot provide us with any technical information about the machines. This is primarily due to the "conveyor belt" nature of the factory and the antiquity of our machines. It is also important that we research the impact the

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

factory and sewing machines had on the local female population as well as that of females in general in terms of empowerment to break away from subsistence living.

This funding bid to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation is a strategic progression from the consolidation of our collections storage, conservation and documentation programmes. Current staff lack the knowledge and expertise to thoroughly investigate and research such as specialised collection to make it more accessible and to fully appreciate how significant the collection is on a local, regional, national and international basis.

We feel that this collection needs a specialist to research and identify the sewing machines and the technical innovations which they represent. In accordance with the Effective Collections scheme, we would also like to evaluate our collections for duplicates and objects that have no real provenance or cultural significance. For this, we intend to use the new Disposal Toolkit, however we feel that we cannot complete this process without specialist research and investigation.

This research would benefit our museums service and collection enormously: it would make accessible a collection of (at least) tremendous local importance and would also open up our collections to the whole museum community for further research. Our results produced from the project will be made available to the wider community, both online and in written format and our collection of sewing machines will be put on our online museum *Museum Without Walls*. As there are few aides to identifying sewing machines, their technical innovations or their impact on the domestic and international scene, this should be a very valuable piece of research and should help many other professionals as well as amateur enthusiasts. Through the use of these diverse ways of dissemination, we hope to reach as many people as possible.

Summary of Work

The primary function of this post will be to provide access to our sewing machine collection and to share this with the wider community. This will be done in a number of ways:

- Research, both paper based and online
- Research trips to other museums possessing large sewing machine collections to learn about their collections and the collection related knowledge of these museums and staff
- Liaison with interest groups to link into and record their knowledge

We would like the project to record methodologies of identification in a usable one-stop guide that we will make available. We also plan to provide a summary of this online for easy accessibility.

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

Our collection of sewing machines, once identified by this post, will also be made available online with contextual information. These will be augmented by our photograph and instruction book collections.

The last strand of this project is the research into the social impact of the sewing machine, both in the UK and in the developing world. The Singer sewing machine was marketed as "The Great Civiliser" in the former colonies of the British Empire. These two avenues of social research may prove to be linked by increased financial stability for families and a move away from poverty, however it would be interesting to compare domestic and foreign experiences. It would also be interesting to explore whether the status of women in households increased because of the introduction of the sewing machine as a labour saving device to enable more free time or the female's increased capacity for earning money.

The technology curator will spend several weeks at the beginning of the project working with the Documentation and Access Officer looking at the sewing machines and related archives. They will also search for any relevant publications to the project and identify possible partners for the project. It is anticipated that several museums, including the National Museums of Scotland, will work with us to share information on specific models of sewing machine, collections and backgrounds to companies that produced them. Research trips to museums will be programmed and we will also invite interest groups such as ISMACS to come and look at our project to add their expertise and to provide other networks of contacts.

Breakdown

Objectives:

- Identification of our sewing machines
- Assessment of duplicates
- Production of notes/photographs for publication

Jan-April 2009

Induction and familiarization with collection

Begin making contacts with other museums with large sewing machine collections

May 2009-May 2010

Collation of information (on a continuous basis)

Identification of sewing machines from the collection

Liaison with Documentation and Access Officer and cataloguing of Singer/sewing machine ephemera

Repeat visits to museums if necessary

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

August 2009

Hosting of a study weekend for the International Sewing Machine Collectors Society (ISMACS)

June-December 2010

Collation of information about the collection for publication

December 2010

Project evaluation and wrapping up.

The Curator for Science and Technology at the National Museums of Scotland will mentor the post for the purposes of research publication.

Management

As a member of the Culture Section the Curator of Science and Technology will be managed by the Senior Officer Museums. The Culture Section sits within the WDC Educational Services Department and forms part of Community and Cultural Services which includes the Libraries and Community Learning and Development Sections.

The Culture Section and Senior Officer Museums has significant experience and a proven track record in successful project management. This success has been acknowledged through the Culture Sections selection to participate nationally in the PSIF (Public Service Improvement Framework) Pilot.

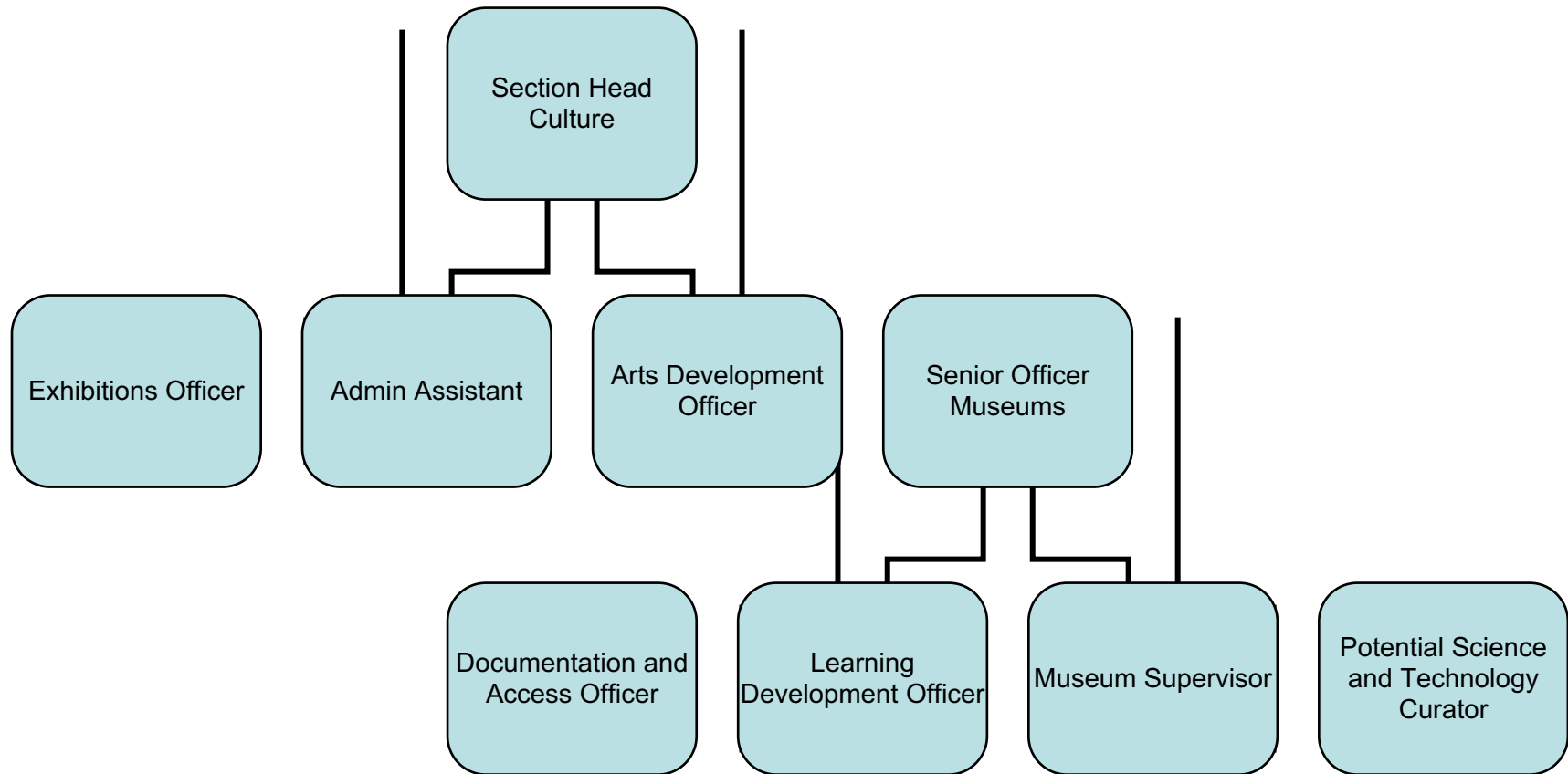
The project will follow SMART guidelines in its approach, timescales and outcomes. In line with policy a Best Value approach will be applied. The post holder will be supported through regular monthly supervision, monthly Team Meetings and 6 monthly PDP. All appropriate training will be provided by WDC. The post holder will participate in regular joint service initiatives enabling maximising of resources and support for the project.

Appendix 1

Culture Section and Museum

Hierarchy (with proposed new post)

**Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand
Stage 2**



Appendix 2

Museum Budget

2008/9

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

Museum Budget D1601

Budget line	Code	Attribute	Allocation
employee costs			21,771
Training	1040	TR005	620
Property Maintenance	2075	RP020	1380
Furniture and fittings	2025		230
hire of vehicles	2200		370
staff travel	2285		170
Other supplies and services	3242	SP040	990
Other Admin Costs	3830		770
books	3015	BP005	250
Printing and stationery	3005		1240
Goods for sale	3225		1490
Advertising	3030		370
Payments to other bodies	4085	PB015	790
		TOTAL	30,441

INCOME

	Funder	Amount
Documentation post	HLF	23,750
map chest	Museums Galleries Scotland	500
	TOTAL	24,250

Appendix 3

Project Costs

**Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand
Stage 2**

Salary

AP4 £22,560 - £24,942

$24942 - 22560 = 2382$

$2382 / 2 = 1191$

$22560 + 1191 = 23751$ (mid point AP4)

$23751 / 100 \times 17 = 4038$ (employers costs)

$23751 + 4038 = 27789$ (per annum)

Total salary costs for project £55,578

We would like to ask Esmee Fairbairn for the total salary cost for the project. (£55,578)

**West Dunbartonshire Council
Culture Section In-kind contribution**

Accommodation	-
Training	£1,500
Utilities	£1000
Photocopying/printing	£1000
Postage	£1,500
ICT and support	£2,500
Fixtures and fittings	£1,500
Travel	£1,200
Insurance	-
Staff time	£5,400 (support, supervision, PDP)
	<hr/>
	£15,600

Total project cost : £71,178

WDC in-kind funding 22% of total project cost

Appendix 4

Selected Extracts from

ISMACS News Clydebank Special

February 2007

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

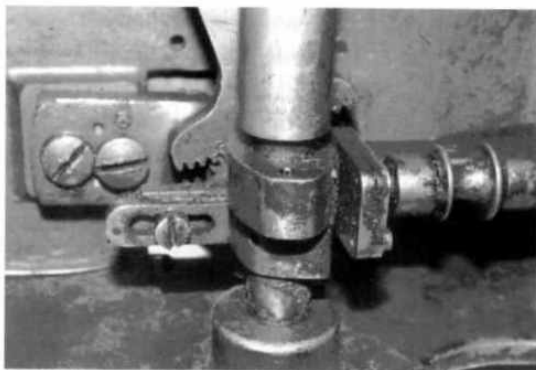


fig 13. Drive to the lower circular needle and feed cams on the Lancashire machine.

The Grover & Baker Company cannot have been oblivious to the success of the English clones. They started exporting machines to England and registering their patents here themselves. A well known London patent agent, Auguste Edouard Loradoux Belford registered a patent in the Grover & Baker name for a free-arm version with both longitudinal and transverse feeds, on April 6th 1854 (number 794) and this was followed by others. William Newton Wilson, then setting out on his sewing machine career, became their English agent and marketed a wide range of Grover & Baker machines including their machines which spawned the 'Lancashire' machine. His display at the 1862 exhibition contained two circular needle manufacturing machines amongst the 17 Grover & Baker machines on show.

The 'Lancashire' machine was a success in its time. Like the early Singer and Thomas models, it remained in use for many years. Bradbury & Co. kept it in their catalogue into the 1880s (figure 12). I doubt whether Charles Tiot Judkins ever manufactured the machines. I suspect he bought them in from others and badged them as his own. However, we shall probably never know.

The two Clydebank machines

The two Clydebank machines are mechanically identical and are effectively clones of the Grover & Baker manufacturing machines of 1852-3. Figure 13 shows the rack and pinion drive to the lower circular needle and the feed cams on

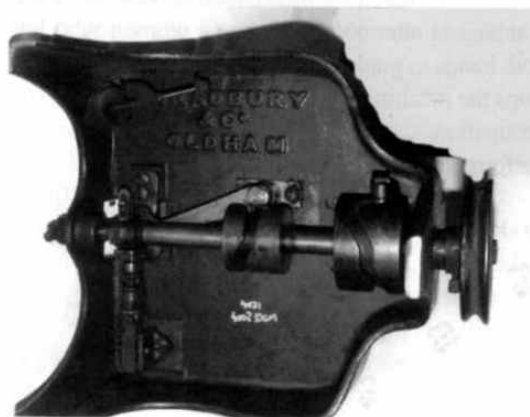


fig 14. Clydebank Museum's Bradbury version of the Lancashire machine view 1.

the Bradbury machine. On both machines, the cams on the single drive shaft are arranged to give two stitches per revolution of the shaft. Both machines are at present seized so that it is not possible to operate them. Neither incorporates the improvements of Holloway or Foxwell or Sugden *et al* but both are well engineered and clearly not single items or blacksmith made.

The Bradbury machine (figures 14, 15 & 16) has 'Bradbury & Co, Oldham' cast in raised letters on the underside and a feint relief of 'Bradbury,



fig 15. Clydebank Museum's Bradbury version of the Lancashire machine. View 2

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2



fig 16. Clydebank Museum's Bradbury version of the Lancashire machine view 3.

Oldham' on the overarm. The use of 'Bradbury & Co.' suggests it was made post 1864. The end of the drive shaft is fitted with a pulley for a round section belt. The machine has no decoration left, if it ever had any. We could find no serial number or batch number.

The second machine is made by **William Carver** of Manchester. An 1863 advertisement (figure 17) for Carver's sewing machines claims he started in 1856 and shows a Thomas clone in addition to the Lancashire machine. Carver exhibited his machines at the London Exhibition of 1862. We have three Manchester addresses for Carver; Ducie Street Mill, 5 Todd Street and Park Street. All are within a stone's throw of each other and of Judkins' business address of 35 Corporation Street (figure 3). The Carver machine at Clydebank has a cast plate riveted to the underside saying 'W. Carver, Maker, Manchester' and 'Carver, Manchester' cast into the overarm (figures 18 & 19). There are the remains of simple decoration on this machine. It carries the number B45, probably a batch number. The back plate of the overarm has a piece broken out, enabling one to see the bell crank drive to the needle bar (figure 20). The drive shaft of this machine is fitted with a flywheel and handle.



fig 17. Advertisement for Carver's sewing machines, 1863.

The Clydebank experience

by Lin Jones

Rod and I arrived a couple of days beforehand and as we were ashamed to admit that we had never visited Scotland before, took the opportunity of seeing many of Glasgow's tourist attractions and raiding the markets! Other 'Clydebankers', Joyce and Philip, Graham Cresswell, Lilian, Heather and Hazel, Herman from Holland, and Martin and Jennifer arrived in time for dinner on Saturday evening at the Hotel. Dinner was interesting, try explaining the national dish of Scotland, haggis, to a Dutchman. Herman was brave enough to try it and declared it very tasty! We were very pleased to have the company of Gill Graham, who is Clydebank's Heritage Officer.



Graham, Maggie, Peggy and Rosie had been able to visit the store previous to our weekend and had had the opportunity to select the machines which a few of us had viewed as a slide show at the Farnham Regional Meeting. They had been transferred to the Council Offices and kept under lock and key, awaiting our visit.

After breakfast on Sunday morning, we attempted a convoy journey from our Hotel on the outskirts of Renfrew and along the M8 through Glasgow, arriving at a uniquely names railway station, which serves a relatively new housing



Tasting the national dish

estate, 'Singer'. After a short photo opportunity we continued a few hundred yards to our venue.

We were warmly welcomed by Gill Graham who, not only made us very comfortable in the former Clydebank Town Hall, now the 'Heritage Museum', but after a taster of 'hidden treasures', treated us to a superb buffet lunch.

After lunch Graham and Martin were able to point out many of the unusual features of the machines on display and lead discussion on the main points, as there are no records. Following our afternoon tea, we were able to handle and photograph the machines and continue our deliberations into their finer points.



The Singer railway station today

Return to Clydebank

By Graham Cresswell

The last time I visited the Singer factory in Clydebank was when I worked in the workshop of the Nottingham office. When I had the chance to return I was not certain how I would feel at seeing the giant companies largest factory site turned into a business park.

On Sunday morning following an excellent get together in the Normandy hotel the previous evening we made our own way to the singer station. Our driver made an excellent job of finding the place without a map. I thought about the thousands of people who would have embarked there each day as they headed to work at the Singer factory and John Brown shipyard where some of Britain's greatest liners were built nearby. After taking some photographs, we headed to the Clydebank museum not knowing what to expect.

A small number of machines were picked out for us to analyse and covet. I can see why the hundreds of machines in the collection are kept in temperature and humidity controlled storage as it would require a very big venue to show them all off. As Singer was a huge part of Clydebank history I hope the authority obtain all the necessary funding to maintain and display this collection for the benefit of future generations.

As I made my way to the airport at the end of the day I had a feeling of sadness that the company I started work with as a 15 year old apprentice sewing machine mechanic is no longer around.

Here's thanking Graham and all the museum staff for their hospitality. I am glad I made the effort to go.



The role of Clydebank Museum

By Gill Graham

I'm Section Head of Culture for West Dunbartonshire Council. My background is not originally museums but arts; however in my post with West Dunbartonshire Council I head a multi disciplined team of which museums is one field. Unfortunately for family reasons our Collections Officer Joe Traynor, can't be here today. I have to admit Joe is far more knowledgeable than I am about the collection, so I hope you will be patient with me. However as you also have a huge knowledge about the sewing machines, it's of mutual benefit your being here today; both to find out more about the sewing machines shown, and perhaps help us with the collection.

I have been involved with the Museum Service for about three years. Like many people I knew there was an extensive collection of sewing machines within Clydebank Museum however I hadn't expected just how many, the current collection houses over 800! As you will be aware many come from the Singer Archive. The collection is held within secure stores and climate controlled for its protection. We have recently digitized and re-documented the collection however little has been done historically to the machines in terms of remedial or restoration work. Examples are regularly exhibited at the museum. At this time we have no intention to restore them, however we do wish to conserve them.

As you will be aware Museums don't tend to have much money. Less and less funding has gone towards Museums in recent years, from local or

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2



The West Dumbartonshire Council team which made our weekend possible.

The visit was arranged by culture department head Gill Graham (right)

central government, and with free public access our only other source of regular income comes from the museums' small shop.

A scheme was launched last week by the Scottish Museums Council which is looking at funding collections of 'National Significance'. We aim to submit a bid to invest in our collection of Singer and other related machines because we believe it to be unique, and of national importance. As a local authority the money available from this type of funding scheme is essential to invest in conserving and documenting, or promoting access to the collection. The scheme is lottery funded and we aim to submit a proposal mid 2007. Whilst we intend to carry out a conservation programme ourselves using existing funds, the support of this scheme would enable our aims to be carried out more quickly.

Whilst we're responsible for the care of the collection, we are also responsible for promoting public access to it. I think it's fair to say a collection of sewing machines (significant though it is) has a limited market in terms of public interest. However if you look at the collection in a broader sense its potential expands. Obviously individuals and specialist groups interested in sewing machines is

one market, however the collection also relates to industrial heritage and the schools curriculum therefore can attract schools pupils. In addition local/social history is a draw, Singer was the major employer locally and most families were employed there in some way. By exploring and promoting different aspects of the collection the potential market of visitors grows.

There are many differing aspects of our sewing machine collection, and in the next year we're looking to add more information to the collection, prioritizing models. In 2007 we're carrying out a conservation programme within our fine art collection. This will be followed in 2008/9 with a conservation programme for our sewing machines. Obviously if we are able to attract additional external funding these timeframes may be shortened.

As I have indicated we have a responsibility to promote access to the public collection. This can be tricky as we are extremely short of space. We can display case upon case of sewing

machines in a Museum and it will not increase visitor figures. We may attract a few keen collectors like you, but unless we set the displays within a social and historic context we will not attract the wider public and the school groups who are so important to small museums.

With this in mind we are currently piloting an 'online museum'. We received lottery money last year for 'Museum Without Walls' this online resource focuses on WWII covering the wars impact on Clydebank. The site includes downloads, teacher's packs, information sheets and images, with local information, national information, timelines, etc. We also have WWII artifacts from the museum collection which have been put on to .mov files this allows anyone unable to physically visit the museum, to see artifacts as a 360 degree image. If this pilot is successful we aim to add the Singer collection online as well. The key items from the collection would be in a .mov file format. Of course this is not the same as the experience of visiting a museum however it does enable a type of access to interested parties where physical access is not possible because of geography, finance or physical disability.

There are plans for a new Clydebank Museum

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

within the next 5 years. This forms part of a much larger plan for the redevelopment of the Clydebank and riverside area. The aim is to redevelop the town hall and surrounding area to include a civic quarter including a town square, museum, small theatre/gallery etc. This means the museum would form part of a multipurpose cultural facility. This would make a huge difference to us as we currently do not have the facilities to show the collection to its full potential, working as we do from four rooms.

We aim to push the Museum Service up the agenda, one of the ways to do that is to link to schools and lifelong learning, and to promote the museum and its collections as a learning tool. Education is a strong force within Government and is often a source of additional funds. By tying the museum collection into the curriculum we can benefit both schools and the museum service.

Questions and comments

Graham F: The word on the digest was very pro the virtual museum idea. How realistic and what sort of time frame do you think?

Gill: Much would depend on the scale. We would certainly aim to have something up within two years; it depends on how it was developed. The pilot WWII on line museum we are doing at the moment has cost us £10,000. We have hit some technical problems and there are things we can and can't do, so this pilot may or may not be as successful as we would hope, but we will learn from it and it will inform future work. It goes on line next month and we think it has great potential.

Lilian: I do a lot of work for the Beamish Open Air Museum on the quilting side and do exhibitions for them twice a year. Because they don't have room for the 366 quilts that they have now, they have managed to get 70 online so that you can pick out any one. That sort of format would be brilliant for this collection,

Gill: Realistically we could put images of machines online now; however I don't think they would be very helpful. I think it would be better leaving it for a year until we get all the information on models and can present the collection and individual machines in a more informative way. It's all very well saying 'here's a model, here's the date', but when we can include additional information for the general public it will be more accessible for all 'visitors' whatever their differing interests. People will visit the site for a number of reasons, after all, Singers did not only touch the lives of those who worked there – 'everybody' had a Singer sewing machine – they were so significant that whether it was a Singer or not, everyone called a sewing machine a 'Singer'.

Martin: Sadly, if you talk to children now, they don't have a Singer sewing machine – it's granny who has one. I remember that one of the old Singer advertising cards said 'it's possible her mother had a Singer sewing machine – it is certain that her children will' But that has gone now, as ready made clothes have killed it.

Graham C: Quilting and Third World clothing makers are the only things keeping the sewing machine trade alive. There is a big upsurge in customizing.



The visitors line up for the inevitable group picture

Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

Two ISMACS members from the USA and Australia who happened to be touring Scotland in October had the opportunity of a lifetime .

Rosie Howells from Australia and Peggy Stuart Smith from the USA had the enviable opportunity of assisting Graham Forsdyke and the curator with the selection of machines to be viewed the following weekend by ISMACS members.

Due to closely packed conditions of the storage room it was necessary to pre select machines and move them to a suitable area for viewing.

Several weeks prior to the visit Gill had sent Graham a disc showing machines in the collection. At the September meeting in Farnham members had the opportunity to discuss various machines and a number of curiosities were chosen for selection and further discussion.

Other machines were chosen for their rarity giving members a once in a lifetime opportunity to view them in the bare metal.



Letters from visitors

How exciting to meet up with Ismacs friends Peggy, Maggie and Graham, within sight of the old Singer factory premises and be able to view the Clydebank Museum store house.

Under tight security we followed Jill into a room, an 'Aladdin's cave' just stacked with machines. The first machine I spied was a Singer #1, followed by a Turtleback – perched on top of another Singer treadle . Oh to be so close to such rare machines.

Clearly the Clydebank museum curators have done a good job of caring for the machines, but as at all museums, storage space is at a premium so the machines they have are stacked on compactor shelving hence without physically moving endless treadles we were unable to easily access many machines.

Never the less we peered through the wire cages and literally 'goggled' at the array of machines. Graham and Maggie helped choose the machines for the meeting on Sunday and the staff were really interested to hear his snippets of information about each machine as it was brought out of the shelving system. The staff have apparently been allocated some additional funding and are keen to arrange a display at the Clydebank Museum nearby, with the emphasis on educating Glasgow children about the rich heritage they have.

I was sorry I could not stay for the meeting on Sunday but since I had to be back at work in Sydney Australia by Monday morning it was time to fly out.

Altogether a wonderful opportunity and I hope many other Ismacs members had the privilege of seeing the machines.

Thank you to Maggie and Graham.
Rosie



Application to the Museum and Heritage Collections Strand Stage 2

Hazel and I enjoyed the trip to Clydebank. We didn't really know what to expect before we came because it was the first time we had been involved with ISMACS other than reading the magazine. It was nice to meet everyone and everyone was very friendly. We thought the visit to the museum was really interesting and we now know much more about vintage machines and the social history behind them, the four to five hours we were there passed very quickly. We've since looked on Herman's website at his wonderful collection.

The only problem I have now is whether to have a brand new Bernina with a stitch regulator for Christmas or go for a pretty little Wilcocks and Gibbs chain stitch machine!

Looking forward to the next issue of the magazine

Heather

I have mixed thoughts on the Clydebank visit. I had travelled expecting to see an "Exhibition" or pay a visit to the much discussed store room. The machines picked out for us to see were in the most part all of a same, the talk was very technical making me feel very much out of it and I felt my collection as such would be looked down upon. Others also said they felt totally out of their depth. I was told of "nicer places" to see machines. I am glad I went though I can now put faces to some of the names on the digest. It hasn't put me off collecting I just now realize that what I have wouldn't be given a second glance by the majority of people on the visit, but as long as I like them that's the main thing isn't it.

Lilian.

A romantic interlude

The trip to Clydebank was the impetus for one happy couple to tie the knot. On the Monday after the meeting Joyce and Phil McGovern made their way to Gretna Green where they made arrangements to be married on Tuesday at 10.00 at the famous Blacksmiths Cottage. We send our congratulations and wish them a happy life together.



Back to School with Singer

by Jennifer Gregory

A typical green-covered school exercise book, with *Name....., School.... and Date...* But the exercise book is not for English or History. Instead, see Figure 1, the cover reads 'Needlework Samples of Machine Sewing' and it is 'Issued by Singer Sewing Machine Co. Ltd. (Educational Dept.)'. 'Made in the huge Singer Factory at Clydebank, Scotland' appears on the back cover. Inside, neatly pinned to brown pages, are seventeen familiar samples of the use of eleven different sewing machine attachments.

Familiar? Open any of the booklets produced by Singer between the 1920s and 1950s: 'A Manual of Family Sewing Machines' or 'Short Cuts to Home Sewing' etc and there are photographs (the same plates in each publication, whether American, British or French) of exactly similar samples. These booklets were supplied free to teachers of home economics and could be purchased for class use for a modest sum (1 shilling each in the UK in 1946).

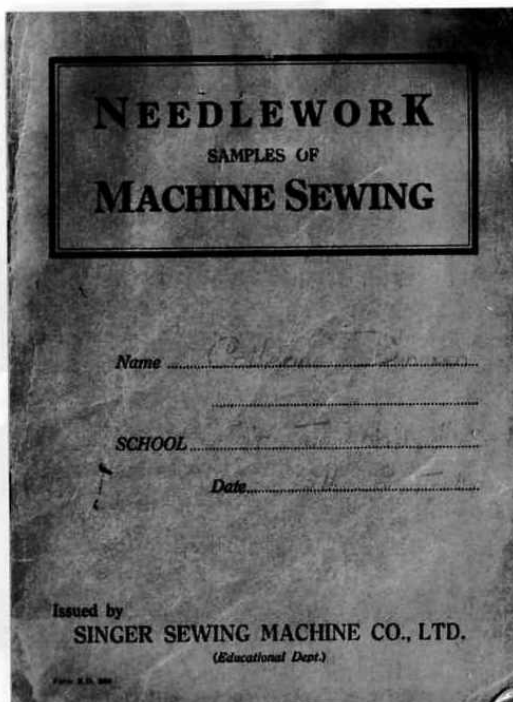


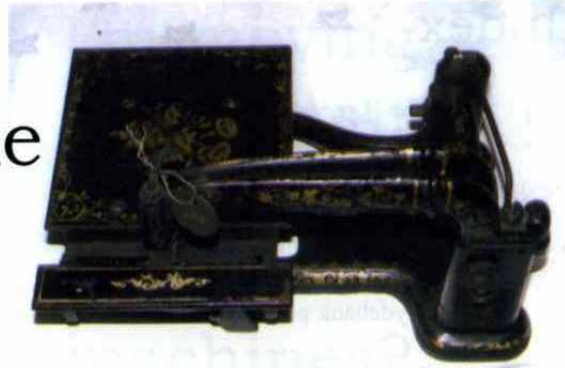
fig 1

'A girl who has been properly trained in the use of a Singer machine is not only able to save herself and her family much money and time, but is equipped to earn her own living...' claims one manual. "The best thing to do is to teach her to operate the make of machine she is almost sure to use after school days are over.' No matter where (pupils) may eventually reside throughout the world, they will there find Singer shops and Singer representatives ready to attend to their sewing machine requirements.'

In order to assist school teachers, arrangements could be made for an instructress to be sent by Singer, to any school, to give lessons in the use of the machines. Alternatively, lessons could be given at Singer shops, to individual teachers or to classes, in the correct handling of the labour saving attachments. 'The Singer is pre-eminently the most serviceable sewing machine; for the finest embroidery, the plainest sewing, or the most elaborate tailoring, it is equally efficient - ruffling, braiding, tucking, binding, quilting, hemming, darning and mending all come alike to it.' Figure 2 shows girls from local council schools learning to sew at the Singer shop in Bristol. Figure 3 is of a sewing class at a London County Council school in Kentish Town.

The samples in the book appear to have been made by Singer, not merely once for producing

A final glimpse at the Clydebank treasures



A super-rare early Wanzer which, although looking very like a Wheeler and Wilson, curved-needle model, is actually a shuttle machine



The machine that most visitors would have loved to take home from Scotland. One of two Turtleback machines in the collection — the other has serious damage. This was Singer's, first attempt at a domestic machine but the feed mechanism was flawed being far too fragile, and very few were sold.

