

Call for Papers

Date : December 9, 2009

Museum Ethnographers' Group Conference 2010

'Making Things'

Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading

From technological interpretations through to gallery-based artistic interventions, museum ethnographers have long grappled with issues of creativity and with the physical techniques and social forces that underpin the making of our material worlds. However, in recent years other topics—collecting processes, disciplinary histories, and questions of 'materiality'—have come to the fore, often at the expense of pragmatic and material-centred relationships between people and things. This conference seeks to re-engage with the practical elements of the profession.

As museum ethnographers we facilitate the passage of material culture from its physical construction amongst source communities through to its careful management in the applied contexts of everyday museum practice. Echoing this, we seek papers that explore the broad theme of 'making things'. These might relate to manufacturing processes, field-collecting methods, conservation techniques, exhibition design, creative intervention, educational resource production, or even the means by which institutions themselves have come into being.

It is hoped that the resultant conference will include several sessions comprising traditional papers as well as at least one session involving practical activities, interactive opportunities, and less formal experiences. As such, the organisers are very keen to hear from potential speakers who wish to deliver hands-on displays or who are keen to incorporate the actual 'making of things' into their contribution. For example, these might include demonstrations of conservation approaches, artistic performances, or exhibitions of manufacturing techniques. There may also be scope for demonstrations—internal or external—in the breaks between sessions.

Papers will be 20 minutes in length with an additional 10 minutes for questions. There will also be a work-in-progress session comprising shorter presentations of 10 minutes in length. Conference contributions may be considered for publication in the *Journal of Museum Ethnography* published annually by the Museum Ethnographers' Group.

For further information or to propose and discuss papers, sessions, demonstrations, or performances please contact:

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The closing date for submissions and abstracts is Friday 15 January 2010.