

# SHCG Annual General Meeting

**Title of paper:** Chair's Report  
**Author:** Michelle Lees  
**Date of report:** 13 May 2015

**Purpose of report:** AGM

## Summary/key points

This year has been much like last year. Trustees spent some time thinking more about our seven aspirations. Progress at this level has been tempered with more detailed unpicking around core practices such as membership management, understanding and crucially, appreciating what members bring to SHCG as a Charity.

Financial stability, membership and aspiration are closely linked and whilst the Board understand each of these separately we have been proactive in understanding how these relate critically to each other and securing the long term future of SHCG through that understanding.

Due to the issues and activities above, the Board have been unable to draft a Forward Plan this year (beyond the seven aspirations). However, next year's Board will be able to forge ahead in the confidence that substantial groundwork has taken place over the last two years. Administrative procedures are now firmly in place and writing a Forward Plan for the next 2-5 years is a road map that will work and will not stumble on poor housekeeping.

In my time as Chair it has been my privilege to work with the Trustees and deliver SHCG as a Charity and recognise our potential and new direction. It has also been key (although unglamorous) to help identify and straighten out some of the administration gremlins. In sports terms, we have located knots in the muscle and given them a deep tissue massage to remove them. No magic sponge unfortunately - it's always painful, but I believe that the SHCG muscle is ready for action again.

That said, we have had positive achievements this year. Emma Harper will be outlining the success of our ACE funded *Tools of the Trade* project which was developed with the FirstBASE committee and in response to a new Social History handbook edited by Owain Rhys and Zelda Baveystock, Helen McConnell-Simpson edited this year's journal with a contemporary collecting theme.

I would like to note my thanks to Jenny Brown who is standing down this year. She has nobly acted as Secretary for last 3 years and Seminars Organiser for a previous two year term. Jenny worked hard on the Charity Status documents and has achieved a lot with the SHCG archive, both actual and digital. I personally thank her for her support during my Chairship.

I also thank the other Trustees on the Board for their commitment and support whilst I've been Chair. Chair often learns on the job but we've worked hard over the past two years and I am very proud of what we have achieved, and I know that this will enable SHCG to strengthen and transform social history in museums well into the future.

Michelle Lees  
Chair 2013-2015

# SHCG AGM

**Title of paper: Treasurer's report**

**Author: Jen Kavanagh**

**Date of report: May 15<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**Purpose of report:**

For information (report/briefing)

Discussion

Decision

## Summary/key points

SHCG finances and account documentation is in strong order following advice from an accountant early in the financial year. A new cashbook system is proving a success, with monthly bank reconciliation taking place and reports shared with all of committee.

The old HSBC account was closed during this financial year, with the full balance being transferred to the main Co-Operative account. Due to the shift in entity to a CIO, a new Co-Op account is being opened in June 2015.

## Financial summary for year end 31.03.2015

I am pleased to be able to present the accounts for SHCG for the financial year 2014-15.

<b>Total income 2014/15</b>	<b>Total expenses 2014/15</b>
£21,527.94	£24,995.33

## Receipts

Description	Total income 2014/15
Membership subscriptions	£4585.50
Conference 2014	£7579.00
Miscellaneous and admin <i>NB: this includes a balance transfer from a former HSBC account</i>	£5092.50
Projects – grant income	£3760.00
Seminars	£506.00
Bank interest	£4.94
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£21,527.94</b>

## Payments

Description	Total expenses 2014/15
Conference 2013	£239.00
Conference 2014	£6990.32
Conference 2015	£1030.00
Seminars	£476.22
News	£981.18
Journal	£2674.96
firstBASE	£3333.67
Postage and stationery	£3.72
Committee travel and expenses	£1887.87
Miscellaneous and sundries <i>NB: this includes consultation fees and training expenses for committee members</i>	£1152.85

Tools for the Trade project expenses	£5565.54
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£24,995.33</b>

### **Net Excess -£3467.39**

Cash Balance carried forward 2013-14: £7295.02

Cash Balance carried forward 2014-15: £4560.46

### **Summary of finances for April 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2015**

#### **Membership subscriptions**

Membership subscriptions have fluctuated over the past couple of financial years, from £5,535.00 in 2012-13 to £8402.00 in 2013-14, but down to £4585.50 this financial year.

#### **Conference**

The Social History Curators Group 2014 annual conference was a huge success, both in terms of the quality of papers and the profit made. A profit of £588.68 was made, with the ambition to continue this trend existing for the 2015 conference.

#### **Journal and News**

Two editions of the News and one edition of the Journal were paid for within this financial year. The cost of producing these has reduced on last year, after the successful changes in production throughout the previous financial year.

#### **Projects and Grant Income**

SHCG has been fortunate in maintaining a grant from Arts Council England (ACE) to support the Tools for the Trade project. A final payment from ACE has been made in May 2015, resulting in costs of this project being covered.

#### **Committee Expenses**

Three Committee meetings were held during the year. Costs of Committee travel has been consistent with that spent in the last financial year. Committee tries to take advantage of early booking reductions where possible.

#### **firstBASE**

firstBASE costs for this financial year solely reflect payment made to Surface Impressions Ltd for the work conducted on the website. No other expenses have incurred this financial year.

#### **Miscellaneous and sundries**

Miscellaneous costs relate to an annual subscription cost for SurveyMonkey, which has twice fallen within this financial year (April 2014 and March 2015). Other costs include fundraising training for a committee member, a couple of banking errors which were eventually resolved, and a couple of membership refunds.

**Title of paper:** Secretary's annual report

**Author:** Jenny Brown

**Date of report:** 18 May 2015

### **Committee Meetings**

Committee meetings took place in August 2014 and January and April 2015, in a continued effort to reduce administrative costs. Minutes for all meetings are available at [www.shcg.org.uk](http://www.shcg.org.uk) or can be requested by email from [enquiryshcg@gmail.com](mailto:enquiryshcg@gmail.com)

### **Object Lessons**

The Object Lessons have begun circulating again, with booking received from the Herbert, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and Letchworth Garden City. The plastics and metals boxes are booked up to 1 August and the woods box is booked until 18 December.

### **Charitable Status**

SHCG was entered on the Register of Charities for England and Wales on 24 July 2014 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator on 25 November 2014. An expression of intent to register was submitted with the Charity Commission Northern Ireland on 26 November 2014.

As a Charity registered in England and Wales, SHCG's registered address must be in England or Wales. This will normally be the Chair's address. Other addresses from Scotland and Northern Ireland may be used for correspondence with the Charity Commission.

Our charity details are:

Charity No. 1157994 and SC045254

Registered address: Garth House, The Precinct, ROCHESTER, Kent, ME1 1SX (NB. This may change after AGM).

### **SHCG Archives**

The SHCG Archive has been digitised and discussions are on track to find a archive repository for the paper archive this summer.

### **Enquiries**

We continue to receive many enquiries through this address, including requests for advice on identification which have been shared via the jiscmail list.

### **Acknowledgements**

SHCG would like to thank Garth House, Rochester Cathedral, Barnsley Museum and the Museum of ST Albans for hosting our committee meetings this year. Our thanks also go to the Museum & Art Gallery, Derby for hosting our AGM.

**Title of paper:** Membership Secretary

**Author:** Fiona Byrne

**Date of report:** 15 May 2015

#### SHCG Membership

Print Members	64
Digital	94
Institutional	66

TOTAL: 224

Not much to report since last meeting. All invoices and now invoice reminders have been sent out to members. Quite a few have contacted me to say that their payment is processing or that they wish to still remain members and payment will arrive in due course. These members are marked in amber on the membership spreadsheet.

Some members are still paying the old subscription rate – this list has been emailed to Cat & Jen.

Two spreadsheets will be circulated to committee:

- Membership database with records of **293 members** [*includes all members even those who are not fully paid up*]
- **Current** Membership database with those with payment records for SHCG subscription year 2014-15 of **224 members**

Those members who have not paid since 2013-14 year are not on current membership list but may come back to us and it is handy to have their details on file.

Membership secretary is up to date with all SHCG enquires and with Treasurer's cashbook to date and will continue to update databases until she steps down at AGM this year. Chair Elect and Treasurer are up to date with any general membership queries. A handover of sorts has been conducted through Cat Newley who has put in place a new membership database system and handover should be smooth as the new membership secretary will have up to date lists and the support of the Treasurer and the rest of committee.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their support over the last two years, especially Michelle Lees, Jen Kavanagh, Adam Bell and Cat Newley whom I worked with more closely in my membership secretary role.

**Title of paper:** Seminar  
**Author:** Ciara Canning  
**Date of report:** 16 May 2015

- Due to limited capacity it was possible to run only one seminar during the 2014/15 term.
- The seminar theme of collections identification and rationalisation was selected based on feedback from previous SHCG events and annual conference.
- The seminar was delivered in partnership between SHARE Museums East and SHCG. SHARE's requirement was that the day was offered free of charge and delivered in the East of England region. The SHARE contribution of £300 financed the cost of refreshments and trainer expenses and travel. To keep costs low delegates were asked to bring a packed lunch.
- Peterborough Museum kindly provided the seminar venue free of charge. Glynis Wass also provided a store tour and a short talk about her experiences of rationalising social history collections at Peterborough Museum.
- SHARE provided admin support and bookings were taken via the SHARE website: <http://sharemuseumseast.org.uk/events/>
- The seminar was advertised through the SHARE training calendar, SHCG website, SHCG list, social media channels and disseminated widely through other networks and contacts.
- The seminar entitled "Knowing and Throwing – How to identify and rationalise your social history collections" was held on Monday 27th April.
- There were 29 bookings from individuals based across the UK, ranging from Plymouth to Edinburgh. Delegates represented a range of museum roles including volunteers, curatorial and collections care staff.
- The training was delivered by:
  - Jamie Everitt - Collections Development Manager, Norfolk Museums Service
  - Steph Mastoris - Head of The National Waterfront Museum, Wales
- 57% of delegates completed the online evaluation. 30% of delegates heard about the training through the SHCG list 30% through the SHARE Museums website and 20% via word of mouth.
- The top reasons for attending the training were identified as :
  1. The theme was relevant to my work – 100%
  2. Networking and meeting other professionals – 93%
  3. It was a free event – 60%
- 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the seminar had enabled them to learn more about working with social history collections. 97% also agreed that they had learnt more about processes and tools to guide the collections review process.
- 86% said that they gained confidence to make informed decisions about the collections they work with.
- 93% said they would use the information they learnt and share the knowledge with colleagues in their workplace.

#### **Some participant comments:**

"Jamie's session on 'Throwing' was really excellent as it was packed full of practical, easily digestible tips that have helped to make the rationalisation process seem more manageable."

"Meeting with other Museum professionals who come across some of the same collection issues was particularly useful. The themes discussed gave me confidence to

tackle those issues back at work.”

“The whole day was a valuable, interesting and an extremely enjoyable experience.”

“The information given by Steph and Jamie was invaluable, I have been on many similar courses and the information received today complimented and added to the knowledge I am slowly gathering to enable me to use it within my work setting up our small Rural Social Museum. Meeting many people of similar mind and interest is an integral part of the courses not to mention the experts we get to listen and speak to.”

“The session with the objects in the morning was great. Although most of the hints on the flow diagram are common sense it's a really useful way to remind and question yourself about the basic things like form, function, evidence of wear and use.”

“It was all brilliant - great venue, lovely folk, great days training.”

### **Recommendations:**

- Not all the participants on the course were SHCG members. Of those who responded to the survey 49% were members. Due to the partnership and joint delivery of the training with SHARE, being an SHCG member was not a requirement of attendance. However asking non-members to join should strongly be considered as part of planning future partnership / jointly delivered seminars. All attendees at the seminar received an SHCG membership form and a conference publicity leaflet as part of their delegate pack.

## SHCG AGM June 2015

**Title of paper: Marketing and Fundraising Officer's Report**

**Author: Jude Holland**

**Date of report: 18 May 2015**

**Purpose of report:**

For information (report/briefing)

Discussion

Decision

- £400 advertising revenue was raised this year from Maney publishing, who placed advertisements in the April issues of SHCG News and the journal
- £80 sponsorship was raised from Ashgate publishing through inserts in delegate packs at the Annual Conference and June collections rationalisation Seminar
- The Marketing and Fundraising Officer worked with the Conference Organisers to secure funding for free places for two Yorkshire-based delegates at the annual Conference through Museums Development Yorkshire and the Yorkshire Federation of Museums. SHCG would like to take the opportunity to thank these organisations for their generous support.

**Marketing and Fundraising Priorities for 2015-16:**

- Build relationships with MDOs and Federations across the U.K to raise SHCG's profile, driving membership. Investigate opportunities for collaboration on training and workforce development
- Secure sponsorship for digital seminar (Autumn)
- Investigate advertising potential of website
- Examine ways to boost membership, working with the Membership Secretary



**Title of paper:** Conference Organisers Report

**Author:** Verity Smith and Jemma Conway

**Date of report:** 18 May 2015

The 2015 conference was developed in response to feedback from attendees at the 2014 event in the conference feedback survey. The conference organisers are aware of the financial and time pressures on members which may affect members attending conference.

Northern and central England proved to be popular recommendations and there was a feeling that SHCG conference should return to SHCG's spiritual home in the north of England! Following research into potential venues, the costs, and accessibility by public transport, South Yorkshire was chosen as the destination along with the Silk Mill at Derby as the venue for day one. There has been a last minute change to the venue however and day one will be held at the Joseph Wright Gallery, Derby Museum and Art Gallery. There will still be opportunity for a tour of the Silk Mill as planned in the afternoon on day one.

The cost of hiring the venues for conference at Derby Museum and Art Gallery is £250 and at Millennium Gallery, Sheffield, it is £350.

The conference dates 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June were chosen according to the availability of venues and to avoid clashing with the Yorkshire FED conference, the Oral History Society conference and others. Unfortunately the Association of Independent Museums Conference being held in Bristol conflicts with the dates for SHCG Conference. This may result in some competition for delegates but we recognise that it's not always possible to avoid clashes with other museum conferences and events.

The conference has been publicised as widely as possible without paying for advertisements. It has been listed on the SHCG website and has generated attention on social media, alongside being widely distributed by email, listed as an event on the MA website and Yorkshire FED website.

The theme for this year's conference, "A Toast to the Future! New Ways of Engaging" developed in response to delegate feedback and a growing need for Social History practitioners to respond to the need to provide new, fresh, innovative and exciting ways of engaging with museum collections. The focus is on how innovative methods have been developed to actively engage the public with our collections.

There was an excellent response to the call for papers which went out in December 2014, with over 30 proposals submitted of a very high standard and providing diverse responses in relation to this year's theme. We therefore had a difficult time choosing some papers over others, but we have identified some that could be presented at a future conference which is very encouraging. Papers were selected based on the relevancy to the conference theme, variety in terms of projects and experiences, and to offer some opportunity for participation in practical workshops alongside the traditional format of papers plus Q&A sessions.

The short presentation format of 20 minute papers has been retained with 8 papers being presented across 2 days. We have incorporated time for questions at the end of each session rather than after each individual speaker as has been done in previous years. This is to allow more time for discussion and encourage interactive participation from delegates which we hope the practical workshops on day two will also be a forum in which to do so. In addition, we have incorporated time to explore the respective venues with a tour on each day of conference.

Dr David Fleming, Director of National Museums Liverpool, has been invited to open this year's conference with a Keynote address. We hope this will be a stimulating way to begin this year's conference. Kim Streets, Director of Museums Sheffield, has been invited to provide a Keynote address on day two. We felt that this would be very appropriate for Kim to share her experiences of the changes in social history museums, given that day two of conference will be held at the Millennium Gallery in Sheffield. The longer length of the keynote paper will also

provide an opportunity for deeper analysis and detail as well as opportunity for questions and discussion among delegates.

Once again, SHCG has been able to fund one free place at conference for a member. We are very pleased that the Yorkshire FED and Museums Development Yorkshire are also each able to fund a free delegate place. We have asked all three successful applicants to write a review of conference for SHCG News, and those specifically funded by Yorkshire Fed and MDY will also be asked to contribute to the funder's blogs and newsletters. There were eight applications for the free place this year.

A good number of delegates have booked for conference at the early bird booking rate, the discount continues to be an incentive for delegates. Early bird bookings were open for approximately one month, and we have offered the discount to unsuccessful applicants for the free place who still wish to attend conference. Those who are speaking at this year's event are able to attend the relevant day of conference free of charge and we have covered accommodation expenses for David Fleming.

Following enquiries into the availability of university accommodation both in Sheffield and Derby, and the difficulty in booking the number of rooms required in university-term time, the Conference Organisers did look into the possibility of using budget hotels. Several establishments were contacted but very few could give discounts for group bookings, prices were generally more expensive and not all locations were convenient in relation to venues. On a personal recommendation to one of the Conference Organisers, the possibility of staying at the Wilson Carlile Centre, the home of the national charity 'Church Army' was investigated. It was felt that the WCC could offer the best value for money for the majority of delegates and en-suite rooms with breakfast were reserved at a discounted rate for SHCG due to our charity status. This has proved to be at a very similar cost to university accommodation used for SHCG Conference in previous years.

The Made North gallery, which promotes and showcases northern designers' work, was selected for the optional Thursday evening activity in Sheffield. The owners of Made North also direct Sheffield Design Week which runs 13-21 June and therefore overlaps with SHCG Conference. They are able to provide a drinks reception free of charge and will enable delegates to visit between 7 and 8pm. This event will also be opened up to delegates from Sheffield Design Week. We will be promoting this in the delegate packs and in return the SHCG Conference has a listing in the Sheffield Design Week marketing materials. The gallery is located within easy walking distance of the accommodation, and Silversmiths Restaurant which is booked for the Thursday evening meal at 8.30pm.

There is once again an optional informal trip on the Saturday morning following conference. This year's trip to Experience Barnsley on Saturday 20 June is being facilitated by Audience Development Officer and SHCG Conference Organiser Jemma Conway, free of charge. This will give delegates the opportunity for a behind the scenes tour, including a look around the wider town hall building and a visit to the stores.

We hope that this year's conference is a great success and we look forward to receiving delegates' feedback on the format and content of the conference in this year's follow-up survey.

**Title of paper:** SHCG News Editor report for AGM

**Author:** Adam Bell

**Date of report:** 18 May 2015

SHCG News had, until recently, been issued in June and December each year, however SHCG Trustees decided at their August 2014 meeting to forego publication of the News in December 2014, switching to a new publication schedule of April and October. As such, Issue 74 was published in April 2015, rather than in December 2014.

The digital versions of both SHCG News and the Group's journal, *Social History in Museums*, were e-mailed to members on 17 April and print versions of the publications were posted out to eligible members on 24 April.

At 32 pp., issue 74 was eight pages longer than usual. This was necessitated by a backlog of articles originally scheduled for publication in December 2014.

Highlights of Issue 74 included articles about Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service's *Unlocked: Collections + Creativity* project; an article by Susan Lord about Polari, a bold yet secretive part of gay history; the SHCG Conference 2014 review; and an investigation into the origin and history of Noah's Ark toys.

Following on from the half page ad for ClickNetherfield in issue 73, issue 74 featured a full page ad for Maney Publishing (the ad also appeared in the Journal), helping to bring in much needed revenue. Thanks to the Marketing & Fundraising Officer for facilitating this opportunity.

Richard Chippington had to step down as the News designer following the publication of issue 73. Issue 74 was designed by Rachel Childs.

The submissions deadline for issue 75 (to be issued in October 2015) is 28 August 2015.

**Title of paper:** Journal Editor AGM report

**Author:** Helen McConnell Simpson

**Date of report:** 13/05/2015

Issue 39 of the Journal was published in April 2015. There are seven articles and an exhibition review in this issue, which has a theme of contemporary collecting. I am pleased with the quality of articles included, which I believe is due to proactive efforts to request articles on interesting recent work in the sector, on a particular theme, rather than just calling for open submissions. Trustees have agreed to pursue themed issues for the next two years, probably focusing on the First World War in 2016 and marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 2017.

Trustees have also agreed to investigate instigating a peer review process for articles, in order to further improve the quality and standing of the Journal. This would involve a standing panel of experienced professionals who periodically read, comment and feed back on articles falling within their subject area. Nominations for this pool would be gratefully received.

The cost of producing the Journal this year totalled £2074, slightly over the £2000 budget set. I tried to keep costs down by reducing the number of articles in the Journal, requesting for one article to be shortened, and lowering the number of copies printed. As the vast majority of the costs are due to page length rather than number of copies, we may need to consider how short we are prepared to make the Journal in order to lower costs, while still producing a publication which members consider provides value. Introducing a peer review process would contribute to this, as we could include a smaller number of higher quality articles.

I will also investigate the benefits of outsourcing publication of the Journal, potentially to Maney, who currently publish the journal of the Society for Folk Life Studies, among others.

**Title of paper:** *Tools of the Trade* ACE funded firstBASE project

**Author:** Emma Harper, Project Manager

**Date of report:** 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015

The past year has seen a lot of work on and completion of the ACE funded *Tools of the Trade* project, £83 under budget. Eight films focussing on four films are now complete and have been uploaded to YouTube, SHCG website and now on Collections Link. The final project report has also been submitted to ACE who have been very supportive of the project throughout and consider it, like us, a success.

SHCG employed freelancer Nicky McIntosh to carry out some evaluation of the project, many thanks to all who participated it has been very encouraging with most people rating the films as 'very enjoyable' and said that they were a good way of disseminating this form of knowledge.

SHCG has also been approached by some museums to potentially use the films to support exhibitions and SHCG are currently working on drawing a contract up to facilitate this.

### **Notes/Background**

In May 2013, SHCG was awarded £9,400 by Arts Council England (ACE) to carry out this project.

In September SHCG recruited a Project Co-ordinator, Sarah Hayes whose work on the project is invaluable. In October we advertised for a film maker for the project and Luke Unsworth was been appointed.

The *Tools of the Trade* project seeks to harness the collections understanding around one specific topic within social history collections, and enable those working in museums to learn from each other's expertise and experience. Every social history museum collection contains tools used in local industries, indeed the modern curator is often presented with a set of tools that a member of the public has found in their grandparent's attic or shed and is asked to identify and provide further information about them. However evaluation of SHCG's membership shows that increasingly, museum professionals feel unable to answer the most basic of questions – what those tools are, when they were used/made and how they were used.

It has long been recognised that the now 'due to retire' generation of curators have a great deal of knowledge of their collections that the newer generation do not. *Tools of the Trade* will commission a series of up to 6 films, interviewing specialists/long-standing curators at museums with significant collections about a type of tool with which they are experienced, imparting their knowledge about how to identify them, how to date them, and demonstrating how they were used. In contrast with some of the films available on sites such as YouTube, viewers of these films will be confident that the information held within the resources are of a high, historically accurate, quality.

The impetus for this project has come directly from the SHCG membership in evaluation undertaken over the last 2 years: the need (support with core curatorial skills of identification and dating of objects cited as a key requirement); the subject (help to identify tools in particular mentioned as key need) and the method (recent evaluation of the firstBASE website has indicated that, members would like to have a more 'face to face' experience of watching a specialist explain and demonstrate how to identify and date objects and recommended commissioning films for the site).

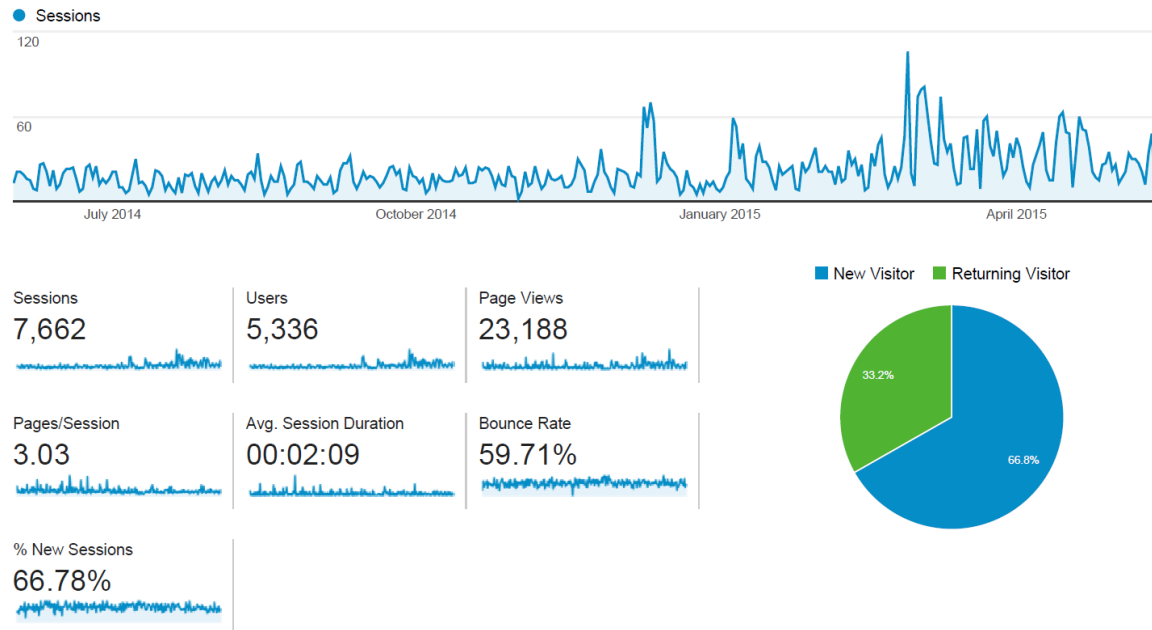
**Title of Paper:** Web Editor Report

**Author:** Catherine Newley

**Date of report:** 18th May 2015

## Website and social media

We now have Google Analytics set up to keep track of our website and how much it is used. The following shows some basic stats for the period June 2014-May 2015:



The main traffic to the website is related to events - we always signpost to information for booking for seminars and conference on our website. But in the last year, there have been other developments too. The Tools of the Trade project came to an end and the finished films are now all available to view on our website (as well as via youtube directly). These have been added to our training section which continues to grow with new content available online for our members.

Our social media presence is growing strongly. On Facebook we've received an extra 50% of likes since this time last year, so that we're now reaching 604 people with our posts. On Twitter, the use of the conference hashtag over the last couple of years and the push for marketing events has increased our followers to 465.

## Email List

The email list has always been marketed as one of the benefits of joining the group and is often even a driving factor for people to sign up. In the last year, work has been progressing on improving the membership records and it became clear there were a number of people who were still using the list without being members. Reminder emails were sent to those who were no longer members explaining that they would no longer have access which resulted in a good flurry of new membership payments.