

Sorting the Wheat from the Chaff

The Distributed National Collection : a
scoping & development study of
agricultural heritage collections

for the Museum of English Rural Life of the
University of Reading

by David Viner and Catherine Wilson
in association with Rob Shorland-Ball



January 2004

Cover illustration

Brian Baxter, a volunteer at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life, driving his privately owned and restored Allis Chalmers HD5 of 1945.

[Photo: Catherine Wilson]

Sorting the Wheat from the Chaff

The Distributed National Collection (DNC): a scoping and development study of agricultural heritage collections

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction, Background & Purposes of the Study	2
2.	Developing the Distributed National Collection concept	6
3.	The Questionnaire & Survey	11
4.	Survey results – Part One, Questions 1-4	16
5.	Survey results – Part One, Question 5	19
6.	Survey results – Part Two, the Tractor Survey	26
7.	Establishing a database	27
8.	Summary of <i>Keypoints</i>	29
9.	Compiling the Distributed National Collection of agricultural heritage collections – The Way Forward	32
10.	Consultations, Acknowledgements and References	38
	Disclaimer	41

Appendices

One	: Rural Museums Network consultation	42
Two	: Questionnaire & Survey	43
Three	: Questionnaire & Survey Part One Q1	51
Four	: Questionnaire & Survey Part One Q2	53
Five	: Questionnaire & Survey Part One Q3	54
Six	: Questionnaire & Survey Part One Q4	54
Seven	: Tractor Database	57

1. Introduction, Background & Purposes of the Study

Introduction

This Scoping & Development Study [the Study] is a contribution to a much wider picture of trying to assemble the data and advance the rationale to drive forward the Distributed National Collection initiative as one of the most exciting collections management concepts in recent years.

We believe that the development of a Distributed National Collection should command the support of museum collection owners, managers and curators, and those who support their work as fellow professionals, as well as volunteers and private individuals.

Collections – and the knowledge which goes with them - remain at the heart of museums, and over the past decade there have been a number of important initiatives to better document and understand, as well as care for this most fundamental of museum assets. Whilst this remains by no means a comprehensive achievement with much still to be done across all the Home Countries, initiatives such as Registration, Collections Mapping and other collections care schemes when taken together now create an opportunity to take stock and develop new concepts and initiatives upon this firm foundation.

The Distributed National Collection [DNC in this report] is the leading concept now developing and forms the focus of this Study. In many ways, its time has come and a number of initial parallel studies in different subject areas have advanced the arguments for it and shown how it can work.

Whilst this remains only a Scoping & Development Study which cannot in itself establish a DNC, it is intended to show the way forward to set up a framework for further development of the concept in our particular subject area in museums.

The public benefit of this exercise lies in a better understanding and appreciation of our collections overall, which opens up ways and means to improve our enjoyment of them and access to them. Knowing where the most historically significant and intrinsically important items and records are kept and made accessible can only be of benefit to those who wish to see them as well as to those charged with their long term care and interpretation.

Background & the Brief

In June 2003, the Museum of English Rural Life [MERL] at the University of Reading invited tenders for a scoping & development study for a Distributed National Collection of rural and agricultural material.

With funding from Resource through the Designation Challenge Fund, MERL had recently been setting up a nationwide network of rural life museums, which has now evolved into the Rural Museums Network [RMN]. The idea was applied primarily to England and comprises in the first phase a core membership of the 33 principal museums in this sector around the United Kingdom. MERL also associated the Network with the national collections of the other UK Home Countries (see Appendix One for a breakdown) and has collaborated closely with the Rural Life Museums Action Group [RuLMAG] on the whole enterprise.

One of the purposes of the Rural Museums Network is to make the concept of a Distributed National Collection of rural and agricultural material a reality. This now forms Objective Five of the Network's principal tasks. By identifying the key collections strengths of the member museums and bringing them together, the aim is to build a picture of the national collection.

In commissioning "a piece of work to take the Distributed National Collection to the next stage" the Brief identified further anticipated outcomes viz. that "a Distributed National Collection will focus more attention on the sector, will develop further work to fill gaps and link documentation and collecting procedures, and will emphasise the continuing interdependence of these collections and museums for their mutual benefit."

The Brief specifically required the consultants to:

- "consider each of the museums in the Network and summarise the principal components or categories of their collections that should be singled out for inclusion in the Distributed National Collection.
- provide basic information on database systems used by host museums to document these collections.
- produce a report, setting out the conclusions of this study and outlining the content of the Distributed National Collection. This report should be completed by the end of 2003, and an interim presentation should be made at the London meeting of the Rural Museums Network in early November 2003.
- produce an illustrated summary of the Distributed National Collection for incorporation into the Network's website
www.ruralmuseumsnetwork.org.uk

With all this as our stimulus, in our consultation to the sector via the Questionnaire we expressed the view that

“There are important objects in museum collections all over the UK but we may not know which museum owns what. Or how many similar objects exist in museum collections. Or that some items of both regional and national significance are safely preserved but not widely known. If we can share the knowledge each museum has on a common database - secure but accessible - then we will all have more access to our heritage. We can then make more informed decisions about collecting more or less, and about re-organising our displays and our stores. The common database will allow us to show that there is a Distributed National Collection of wonderful things in museums and indeed in those private collections wishing to show their treasures to visitors. The DNC idea will help to persuade the Government that not only the National Museums but also the many museums in the Regions deserve support.”

This clarion call – which we feel reflected the spirit as well as the specifics of the Background and the Brief - met with implicit and often explicit support from our constituency of consulted museums, a response enhanced and developed still further in the course of the RMN seminar in London on 06 November 2003, where we reported on progress with this Study.

What is the Distributed National Collection?

The DNC concept has been articulated in a number of key reports in the last couple of years, although its development has been advocated since at least the mid 1990s. The Museum of English Rural Life – and no doubt there were others too - promoted it as an idea in various submissions to the *Renaissance in the Regions: a new vision for England's museums* consultation. It is a key component in this report, published by Resource in 2001, where its development is fundamental to building a comprehensive regional network of collections and services.

“The collections held by all museums and galleries are part of the distributed national collection, a hugely significant and important national asset.”

Renaissance, page 89

Preserving the Past for the Future, the collections strategy document from Resource in 2002, is subtitled *Towards a national framework for collections management*, and includes in its work-plan the key aim of mapping and developing the framework for the Distributed National Collection, making especial mention of rural life collections (see page 17 no 4.3, and pages 23-25, Sections E and F).

This seminal report also foresees the value of the DNC approach as part of the drive towards rationalisation of collections:

“A pre-requisite for such co-operation will be a better understanding of the present pattern of collections, which will generate more regional and national collection mapping initiatives. Organisations are likely to come under increased pressure to publish and share information about their collections. This will be stimulated by the public agenda for increased knowledge of, and access to, collections via public networks. Political and funding authorities in turn will put pressure on organisations to avoid unnecessary duplication by sharing information. *The concept of the distributed national collection is therefore likely to become more widely accepted.*” [our italics]
Preserving the Past for the Future page 12 para 3.4

KeyPoint 01: The development of the Distributed National Collection concept is fully anticipated in key publications, specifically the Renaissance in the Regions report and the Preserving the Past for the Future collections strategy document, both published by Resource.

8.01

This Study is part of that continuing strategic development, towards the exciting prospect that collections held in our museums, whether national, regional or local, may be fully appreciated for what they are and what they represent upon the national stage.

Our terms of reference in this Study are confined to agricultural heritage collections and do *not* encompass the wider range of rural life and social history material, which must await a further opportunity. We have focussed upon collections interpreting agricultural processes and practices: (a) because we think a survey of them is achievable as a basis for further work; (b) because we know that the quantity of such material held in our collections is considerable and a cause for concern; and (c) because the issues of duplication are well known and much discussed across the country.

Are there parallels?

Already, good progress has been made with developing the DNC concept in specific collection areas, including Aviation, Historic Ships, Historic Boats (inland waterways) and Vintage Railway Carriages, and these are examined briefly in the next Section. The methodology used for each was noted and the lessons learned, together with the work of the Scottish National Audit, examined for its approach and relevance.

Format of the report

Sections 3 to 7 form the core of this report, on the Questionnaire & Survey and an analysis of the results it produced, followed by a

general assessment of the way forward. Throughout, *KeyPoint* indicators have been used, acting as markers and conclusions and indicating key issues which the Study has identified and which will require more detailed research and examination in any consequent and more detailed assessment.

The Executive Summary is divided into two parts, firstly a summary check-list of the *KeyPoints* – in Section 8 of this report – and similarly a list of *Recommendations* – in Section 9. Appendices provide the background data and information used in or gathered from the Study.

The authors of this report are all consultant specialists in this subject area and have been particularly pleased to be given the opportunity to undertake this Study and to submit its conclusions for consideration now.

In terms of time allocation over the six-month project period between acceptance in July and delivery of a final draft at the end of 2003, an initial project briefing meeting was held in Cirencester on 29 July, after which the consultants met on several occasions, specifically to submit the Interim report to the meeting on 06 November, and subsequently in York on 10 December. Much of the allocated time during September and October was occupied with the preparation, despatch, returns and analysis of the Questionnaire & Survey and thereafter an analysis of the overall data gathered and report preparation. E-mail contact provided the principal link between meetings and although a total of 20 days was earmarked – and approved – in the original project proposal, this allocation has in effect been doubled as the consultants have sought to offer as comprehensive a report as possible. This point is made only and purely for the record.

The Study had an approved fixed-price all-inclusive budget of £4,000 plus a supplementary £1,000 for the development of a computerised database.

2. Developing the Distributed National Collection concept

Collection mapping

Firstly, acknowledgement should be made to the value of the accumulated data which is now accessible for collection studies. Of the databases available at Resource, the *DOMUS* and the *Cornucopia: Discovering UK Collections* databases provide essential data, alongside which the various Collection Mapping initiatives around the UK have been built. These latter, largely the initiatives of Area Museum Councils, provide a firm foundation for more detailed subject-specific

studies, of which this Study is but one. Particular mention should be made of the West Midlands, South West of England and Scottish collection mapping and auditing projects (see References).

Designation

Secondly, the significance of the *Museum Designation Scheme* network in England should be noted here too. Although confined only to England, it nevertheless “formally acknowledged the importance to the nation of [designated collections] and *laid the foundation for the development of a distributed national collection.*” [our italics].

Renaissance, page 10, para 4.4

Of the 60 Designated collections, only three museums specifically including agricultural heritage collections have been so designated: MERL at Reading, Beamish in County Durham, and the Weald & Downland Open Air Museum in West Sussex. By definition, therefore, the holdings in these three museum have achieved their own level of national significance and might therefore claim to form – at least on one level – part of the distributed national collection in their respective fields. All three have been included as consultees in the Questionnaire & Survey of this report, and each has contributed.

Although a major step forward, and supported since 1999 by the Designation Challenge Fund budget, this classification has arguably excluded other important agricultural heritage collections, and – at least in this context - Designation should be seen as only part of the pyramid which will eventually make up the DNC across the UK as a whole.

KeyPoint 02: The inclusion of three English museums specifically including agricultural heritage collections in the Museums Designation Scheme should be seen as only part of the pyramid which will eventually make up the DNC across the UK as a whole.

8.02

Subject networks

Renaissance in the Regions makes very positive statements about the potential for the continuing development of so-called ‘subject networks’, suggesting that “the national museums could broker a series of subject networks ... extending across regional boundaries ... and making a national overview necessary”.

Renaissance, page 107

Existing examples of such development are quoted e.g. maritime museums (see below) and regimental museums. It further suggests that such leadership need not always come from the nationals and that “many aspects of social and industrial history could look to

leadership from the regions. There is a strong case, for example, for networks focusing upon rural history and vernacular architecture (open-air museums).” Furthermore “much can be achieved through such networks, including national assessments of collections, joint research and exhibition projects and the sharing of skills and knowledge.”

Renaissance, page 108

This is exactly the context for the present study, as an initiative of the Museum of English Rural Life as a Designated Museum, with funding through the Designation Challenge Fund. Such potential as the Scoping Study is able to demonstrate should be harnessed as part of the continuing development of the Hub concept evolving from the *Renaissance* report. Already the MERL initiative has achieved the launch and early development the Rural Museums Network, which should be the subject network for this particular museum specialism.

KeyPoint 03: The Rural Museums Network should be the platform for the development of the subject network, including further more detailed studies towards the realisation of a DNC of agricultural heritage collections.

8.03

Unlike the respective (if slightly differing) co-ordinating roles played in their subject areas and networks by *inter alia* the National Maritime Museum, the National Railway Museum and the National Army Museum, it should be noted as a matter of record that this same role in the field of agricultural history England-wide is performed not by the Science Museum – the National Museum of Science & Industry [NMSI] but by the Museum of English Rural Life [MERL], a nationally Designated museum and one long-recognised as holding such an England-wide remit.

For UK-wide co-ordination in our agricultural subject network we might ask therefore what the role of the Science Museum – the National Museum of Science & Industry is or ought to be in such a networking development. Can it offer a leadership role in any part of this scenario? Indeed, is it prepared to do so? Or should the sector accept that there are a series of champions in each of the Home Countries of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland at respectively MERL, the Museum of Welsh Life, the Museum of Scottish Country Life and the Ulster Folk Museum?

We answer this latter question in the affirmative in this Study, because our answer reflects the reality of the situation, not least in respecting and developing the National Museums’ continually evolving roles in each of the Home Countries in interpreting and championing their own cultural identities. We also note that there is a strong argument that in this group it is the English focus which has been the

hardest to resource and to develop, as the other Home Countries have been given arguably greater opportunities. The present Study is part of the wider re-affirmation of the English remit, set - as we have attempted to do - into a UK wide perspective.

KeyPoint 04: The role of the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading as a subject network champion, alongside that of the Museum of Welsh Life, the Museum of Scottish Country Life and the Ulster Folk Museum respectively, is welcomed and endorsed as part of a logical UK-wide pattern of networking.

8.04

It follows that the role of the Science Museum - National Museum of Science & Industry remains to be clarified in a number of key areas, not least its UK-wide function, the exposition of which is beyond the remit of this Study. Where it does impact, in the particular role of its own agricultural heritage collections in terms of national significance, is touched upon later, specifically in the case study of tractors (see Section 5).

KeyPoint 05: The potential role as a subject network champion of the Science Museum - National Museum of Science & Industry, with its existing UK-wide remit, should be the subject of further more detailed discussion, specifically linked to the evolution of the Rural Museums Network in particular and the agricultural heritage sector specifically.

8.05

Other DNC studies

In undertaking this Study, a number of other assessments of the DNC concept and how to realise its potential in other sector-specific areas of museum collections have been examined briefly, in order to assess methodological options in particular. They are here noted in turn.

- National Aviation Heritage Register
Published by the British Aircraft Preservation Council and the result of five year's work in the mid to late 1990s, the Register emerged after a process of consultation and the development of priorities for preservation and a national strategy *Planning for the Future*.
- National Register of Historic Vessels
Sub-titled "Celebrating UK's Historic Fleet", this register was published by the National Historic Ships Committee, which was set up in 1992. A three-year research project based at the University of St. Andrews produced the initial identification for a core collection of historic ships, to develop into the Register which now contains 50 vessels of pre-eminent national importance and 159 of substantial heritage merit or local or regional significance. A number of grant allocations, including several by

the Heritage Lottery Fund, have used this Register as a fundamental source of information and guidance.

- Historic Boat Register

This is an initiative by the Waterways Trust, considering about 700 of the most significant working boats extant on the waterways network and identifying three principal categories: a core collection of c.35 craft, a category of c.100 vessels exhibiting the major regional variations, and a third category of perhaps a maximum of 300 listed craft of some particular significance e.g. for construction method, liveries, propulsion methods etc. An HLF project development grant was being contemplated in 2002.

- Ships for the Nation

The fruits of much of this effort can be seen in the recently published consultation document *Ships for the Nation*, in which DCMS sets out the Government's proposed policy framework for the preservation of historic ships, both large and small. Its proposed National Historic Ships Unit would carry out a number of tasks, all of which feed back into this Study desirable aims to which the agricultural heritage sector might aspire (or further encourage) in its own sector development:

- the publication of a manual of best practice
- promoting research into ship preservation and conservation techniques and making the results widely available
- advice to trusts and owners on fundraising opportunities
- updating and refining the National Register of Historic Vessels, probably including smaller craft
- advising HLF on preservation priorities and grant applications
- launching a national website
- maintaining a register of firms offering conservation skills
- administering a small grants scheme, subject to funding.

- Vintage Carriages Register

This initiative by the Vintage Carriages Trust has been largely achieved by voluntary effort, using the Trust's network of individuals and member organisations. It seeks to achieve a comprehensive overview, with priority assessments reflecting the pedigree of carriages, local and regional significance in the railway network etc.

Each of these are examples of Registers being compiled & maintained -- and refined -- under the DNC banner, and each one makes an interesting case study in itself. There are other, related approaches to the same end, of assessing and then earmarking items of significance within the general thematic assessment of collections, Examples include:

- Railway Heritage Committee

a national advisory body made up of representatives of various interests, which has a set of criteria for assessing significance & preservation needs of railway heritage.

- Access to Mining Heritage

A cross-domain mapping project by which the Coal Authority seeks to build up a national inventory of holdings of archival, library and 3D objects in both professional and voluntary/private special interest collections. One outcome should be an identification of a DNC for coal collections.

- Forbidden Fruit – protecting the heritage of our plants
The distributed National Collection of rare and otherwise significant plants cared for and safeguarded in nurseries, gardens and other protected areas around the UK is now well-established, and is another variation in the DNC model. The world of rare breeds of farm animals is another example – both under the auspices of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust [RBST] and the various zoological organisations.

KeyPoint 06: pertinent (and successful) models of DNC development exist in other sector-specific areas of museum collections, providing useful methodologies. A short research project to achieve an overview, assessment and evaluation of the development of the Distributed National Collection concept to date would be valuable for the sector as a whole.

8.06

3. The Questionnaire & Survey

The Questionnaire was the chosen mechanism to gather information and inform the Survey (referred to as Q&S in this Study). It was sent to the identified 33 museums in the membership of the Rural Museums Network. This list is shown as Appendix One and the Questionnaire in its entirety is shown as Appendix Two.

The Q&S is in two parts, Part One a general assessment followed in Part Two by a case study devoted especially to tractors, which makes a useful link with issues of contemporary collecting, itself another area of concern common to all agricultural heritage collections in the UK. The results from these are analysed in Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the report.

Although primarily focused upon England's agricultural heritage, the list of museums also included the principal collections in all the Home Countries, so that simple comparisons might be drawn and the overall experience of agricultural heritage museums in the UK and the British Isles might be assessed.

Specific mention should be made here of the Science Museum – the National Museum of Science and Industry, which has a large and significant collection of agricultural machinery, largely stored at its site at Wroughton, near Swindon. In one sense it is outside the scope of this study and as a National Museum it must be deemed to have

collections of national importance anyway. We did however feel that it was important to achieve a wide consultation for the Survey, with the Science Museum taking part, particularly as the National Museums in the other Home Countries were also doing so. A copy of the Q&S was accordingly sent to the Head of Collections. Subsequently, information from their database was sent, though not in the format requested in the Questionnaire. We are immensely grateful to Sam Evans for ensuring that this information did reach us. Unfortunately though, time has not permitted a full analysis of this material, nor reconfiguring it to fit the Q&S format. This work remains to be done. Except where specifically stated therefore, the Science Museum's holdings are excluded from the analysis which follows.

KeyPoint 07 : Work remains to be done on the analysis of the Science Museum's holdings, to make it compatible with the Questionnaire format.

8.07

Before compiling the Q&S, we spent a long time considering what format it should take. We needed to gather some basic data about collections, in more detail than previous collections-level mapping exercises, but without attempting a full inventory. Also, in order to begin the process of identifying the most significant areas of each collection, we needed some qualitative as well as quantitative data.

The length of the Q&S was also important. It could not be too long, as this would deter people from completing it, but it needed to be long enough to be meaningful. The next decision was to try to get more information about fewer aspects of the collections, rather than to try to cover everything in this first Scoping Study. This led to the decision to exclude information relating to some of the farming processes e.g. for farm produce, such as for example cheese or butter making, or any aspect of marketing, or anything to do with crafts and so on. These are important aspects of most rural life collections and well worthy of a similar study, but this must await the further development of the DNC process.

The resulting format for Part One of the Q&S recognised the potential scope here for agricultural material in particular and rural life material in general, as well as the consequent risk of overload in this initial study. To be as objective as possible, the focus needed to be on the *farming activity or process*, not just on the artefacts. The Q&S therefore concentrates on the primary activities of cultivation and animal husbandry, the physical processes involved in cultivating the land and producing a useable end product. The classification was refined to include forms of livestock management, sources of motive power and transport. An additional section on related material such as books, documents and photographs was also included, because we

believed there to be substantial holdings in these areas, which may be under appreciated and under used.

This approach respects the essential initial stage of the Survey, seeking to scope the full range of potential for a more detailed survey of agricultural heritage collections, incorporating existing data but also undertaking more detailed surveys amongst key museums.

In arriving at a classification, the systems in use at several museums/locations were noted, particularly MERL and the Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagans, as well as SHIC. What emerged is in fact based largely on the system used by MERL, which is more activity based than other systems.

KeyPoint 08: Part One of the Questionnaire & Survey reflects the initial scoping stage of the Study and concentrates upon specific components from a potentially much wider survey of agricultural heritage collections. The potential exists to create a full database of existing collections amongst key museums.

8.08

The choice of tractors as the subject for a case study forming Part Two was carefully considered. We have already noted the link with contemporary collecting activity, and the contacts which this offers with the large and growing community of private collectors' clubs and associations. Equally significant was the real possibility of a 100% return to achieve the total holdings of tractors in the collections of the identified museums, and thereby be well placed to establish a DNC profile, as well as the ability to address other related issues, such as the potential for conflict between working and non-working use of tractors by museums.

Other specific object categories were considered, particularly ploughs and farm waggons and carts. The former were considered not least because of their iconic role in agricultural preservation, the horse-drawn plough being a central feature of almost any display or presentation of our agricultural heritage. Waggons too have their special place as icons, almost works of art to some observers, and redolent with a nostalgic throwback to another, slower world of rural life (see References for some recent studies).

However, both were rejected, for this Study at least, in favour of tractors - a group of objects which has enabled the Study to address as many as possible of the basic questions related to establishing a framework for a Distributed National Collection of defined groups of objects in collections.

KeyPoint 09: The selection of tractors as the case study object group was intended to address key issues of collection numbers (quantity), collection use (handling and non-handling), contemporary collecting (links with private collectors), etc and thereby allow an assessment of quality (as a framework for a DNC) to be made.

8.09

A total of 33 questionnaires were distributed with only three not returned; this is a response rate of 90.9%. A period of three weeks was allocated for responses followed by a period of contact by telephone to offer support and encouragement. It was recognised that this survey was being undertaken at a busy time of year for most museum staff in this sector, running programmes of late summer/early autumn events and activities etc.

KeyPoint 10: The high response rate of 91% to the Questionnaire & Survey is indicative of the positive support from the Rural Museums Network to the development of the DNC concept, and its value in addressing accumulated collection management issues.

8.10

The three non-respondents each had good reasons for so doing; in two cases, relative inexperience with the collections on the part of recently-arrived members of staff, whilst the third was in effect operating largely as a single-handed volunteer.

Even within the 30 responses, not everyone answered all the questions, so each question is considered separately in the analysis which follows. Several people indicated that they did not feel able to make a judgement on the significance of their collections, from the options given. There is a detectable loss in some key collections of curatorial expertise sufficiently detailed to address the questions asked and the information required for the returns. In other words, the sum total of the skills base – in terms of collection knowledge - held collectively in the staff responsible for these 33 key collections seems to be on the decline.

This is a fundamental issue and a charge which must be substantiated with further work, but we raise it now as one project outcome. Partially this is the result of generational change in which the first-hand and even second hand-knowledge of the use of many of the objects and implements held and processes recorded in the collections is now passing or has now passed, to be replaced by a less directly-connected generation of staff (applicable to volunteer as well as professional staff) without such a background of knowledge. In the

three years of its existence as a support group, the Rural Life Museums Action Group [RuLMAG] has also accumulated considerable anecdotal – and some more substantial – evidence of this same trend.

This lack of experience or expertise of the wider collection implications is a real area of concern in terms of this Study, especially for the management of those collections. A way forward may be to establish a system whereby colleagues could visit to assist with assessments of significance, a suggestion made to us by one collection manager, and an idea which we support.

KeyPoint 11: There is evidence that the skills base, related to derived knowledge of the use, relevance and significance of many of the objects and implements held and processes recorded in the 33 key collections, may be declining, with considerable implications for their future care and interpretation.

8.11

If this trend is evident amongst this group of 33 key collections, then it must be assumed to be just as apparent, and perhaps even more-so, amongst the many other collections also holding agricultural history material. This trend should also be contrasted with the apparently strong support – in terms of numbers and age range – amongst groups of private collectors and specialists, who seem to form a separate community altogether with relatively few overlaps or integration with the principal museum collections now under review. Here the knowledge base remains strong, with some obvious examples of considerable expertise collectively held in some societies, and with the added advantage of course that a proportion of those individuals will also be practitioners i.e. still working directly or indirectly in the agricultural industry today.

As with traction engines and steam preservation, the world of vintage tractor collection, restoration, display and use is a very good example of this reservoir of knowledge, and one which is furthermore widely shared through the several tractor and implement magazines on the market, e.g. *Old Glory* and its recently launched companion *Tractor & Farming Heritage* (Mortons Heritage Media).

KeyPoint 12: The skills base – at least for technical knowledge of implements and motive power sources such as traction engines and tractors – remains high in the private sector, in a network with which the key museums addressed in this Survey seem to have relatively little direct contact.

8.12

It is worth pointing out that these concerns on the skills base in our agricultural heritage collections generally may not be of only recent

significance; a survey of agricultural museums jointly undertaken by the Museum of English Rural Life and the Science Museum some two decades ago in 1984 made many of the same points.

4. Survey results – Part One, Questions 1-4

Our analysis of the responses to Part One are so far of a manual nature, and we have looked at sample areas only. But even this gives some interesting information.

All respondents were asked to provide their MDA code; it might be assumed that this system would be universal, but we found ten museums which either did not have, or did not include such a code. For the database to be easily useable, a unique identifying code is essential.

KeyPoint 13: All museums should be encouraged to supply their MDA code, and to get one if they do not have one. These are provided by mda free of charge, on request.

8.13

Question One asked five questions (a to e) concerning percentages within collections and these are shown in bar-chart format as Appendix Three (a to e), with the following summary assessments:

a) what % of the total agricultural collection is undocumented?

Two of the respondent museums did not answer this question. Of the remainder, 8 recorded no backlogs at all, 10 had less than 5% undocumented, whilst the 9 museums recording significant undocumented collections averaged 17.7% each. Overall, this is an encouraging situation and rather different from the perhaps commonly held perception that there are significant quantities of undocumented material in these collections.

b) what percentage of the total agricultural collection has accession entry only?

Again two museums gave no information. Of the remainder, 16 museums recorded an average of 28% with accession entry only. Three of these recorded percentages of over 75% but these same 3 museums had a similar percentage on a computer database.

c) what percentage of the total agricultural collection has card index entries?

Of the 28 answering this question, 12 gave a nil response. The remaining 16 museums had an average of 79% of their collections on a card index system.

d) what percentage of the total agricultural collection is on a computer database?

Twelve museums recorded over 95% of their collections on a computer database; 6 had between 75% and 95%; 3 had between 50% and 75% and 6 had less than 50%. Only two had no computer database at all. Whilst there is still clearly work to do in some areas, more than half of the collections surveyed had over 75% of records in a form where they can be easily searched and the information potentially made available to users. This result is extremely encouraging. Knowing where the gaps are should also allow future documentation projects to be targeted where they are most needed.

e) what percentage of the total agricultural collection is recorded in photographic record form?

The results here were less encouraging. Only 3 museums had 75% or more recorded in photographic form. 3 more had between 10 and 75%; 14 had less than 10% and 8 had no photographic records at all.

KeyPoint 14: Agricultural collections are better documented than might have been supposed, and an encouraging percentage is recorded on a computer database.

8.14

Question Two asked one of the key questions required in the Brief for this Study, in order to provide basic information on database systems used by museums to document their collections.

Of the 30 responses, 3 did not answer this question but 27 provided details as follows (shown as a pie-chart in Appendix Four):

Modes	=	09
Catalist	=	05
Calm2000	=	02
Adlib	=	02
Multimimsy	=	02
MIS	=	02
OLIB	=	01
Micromusee	=	01
Access	=	01
Open Insight	=	01
[bespoke system]	=	01

Whilst MODES/Catalist are clearly the most widespread systems, together they accounted for only half of those the museums in the sample. This is the main reason why a decision was taken to establish a database for the results of the Q&S in Microsoft Access, rather than any more specific system. It is assumed that all museums will have access to a Microsoft based system.

KeyPoint 15: Eleven different computer documentation systems are in use between the sample museums. A single database on widely available software, such as has been created for this Project, can therefore be of considerable value in allowing museums to share information about their collections.

8.15

Question Three asked *approximately what % of the agricultural collection is on display?* and the results are shown in Appendix Five.

Three museums gave no return to this question. Overall, the sample museums average 40% of their collection on display. This simple figure however, does not give balanced picture of the situation as two museums recorded over 95% on display.

A further breakdown shows that 4 museums had more than 75% of collections on display; 6 had between 50% and 75%; 5 had 25-50%; whilst 12 recorded less than 25% on display. It would be interesting to compare these figures with data from other types of collections to see how agricultural collections compare. Given the nature of the material, the significant percentages not on display suggest an equally significant storage problem!

KeyPoint 16: More than a third of museums recorded less than 25% of their collections on display.

8.16

Question Four explored the degree to which displays had been updated and the opportunity taken to introduce contemporary material. The results are shown in Appendix Six. Four sub-questions were posed: *what percentage of the agricultural material on display has*

a) basic labelling and some supporting information

Two respondents did not answer this question. Of the remainder, 15 recorded that between 75% and 100% of objects on display had basic labelling and some supporting information. More worryingly, 9 museums reported that less than 25% had basic labelling.

b) interpretation to professional standards but most done pre-1990

Six museums recorded that more than 75% of their displays had professional interpretation, albeit done before 1990. However, 13 recorded that less than 25% had such interpretation. There was some

overlap with the responses to Question 4a but the bar charts show where these overlaps are.

c) interpretation to professional standards, post 1990

Three museums reported that 100% of their collection had professional interpretation done after 1990. Three more had more than 75% treated in this way. However, 15 museums reported less than 25% with post-1990 interpretation, and eight of these had none at all. If those museums recording more than 75% are excluded, an analysis shows that the remaining museums have an average of only 9% of their collections with any recent interpretation.

d) continual updates and includes contemporary material

Twelve museums reported some regular updating and including contemporary material. However, only one museum indicated that this applied to around 20% of the collection; the rest were less than 10%. 18 museums had no regular updates or contemporary material at all.

KeyPoint 17: The Survey responses show that the interpretation of agricultural collections in the sample museums is in a parlous state. Many collections have only basic labelling, and few have any significant amount of interpretation done after 1990. Even fewer update their displays regularly or include any contemporary material. Until this situation is addressed, museums will be struggling to retain their existing visitors, never mind about attracting new ones.

8.17

5. Survey results – Part One, Question 5

Question Five used Range Statements to address issues of quantity, location and significance over a selection of farming processes. A range of options were provided for Location (display and storage) and for Significance. See the chart in Appendix Two for the detail.

Farming process was divided into 6 main activities, which were subdivided into a total of 49 different categories. In addition, we asked for information on related information under three headings – books, documents and photographs.

Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire for each of these categories.

Number of items. Range Statements were used for quantity, as it was felt this would be easier to complete than asking for actual numbers, and this is standard practice in other mapping exercises. Those respondents with good computer databases were able to respond with actual numbers, but others used the Range Statement. This means that numerical information must be used with caution. It does not represent actual numbers of objects, but orders of magnitude within each category. The ranges given were:

0 <10 10-20 20-50 50>

This was adequate for all classes of object except the books, documents and photographs, where holdings could well be significantly more than 50 in each category. The numbers given for this category should, therefore, be regarded very much as an underestimate. (See below)

Location (display and storage) The Location options reflect a format already well-established in several Mapping projects, and presented relatively little difficulty to respondents, though in some cases the requirements of the Question were misinterpreted and/or incomplete information was given. 6 respondents did not complete this column at all. Of the ones that did reply, most recorded a variety of storage conditions, as might be expected. 9 museums had at least some material in the lowest category of storage. 9 also recorded material in the highest category. This material was mainly the paper collections. The majority of the object collections were stored in the fair to good categories, though some of this is below Registration standards. There is clearly room for improvement here, though new and improved stores are being developed all the time.

KeyPoint 18: Display and storage conditions vary widely, even within the same collection. Whilst considerable improvement has been made in recent years, some material is still kept at standards below the minimum for Registration.

8.18

Significance The Significance options, however, proved more problematical. Five museums gave no estimate of significance, three of these because they did not feel able to make a judgement. In analysing the results we have amended this particular sequence to show the “don’t feel able to make a judgement” response as item no 1 – where it properly belongs - whereas originally it was item no 6.

The assessments given are from a total of 25 museums. Three museums felt they had material of no known significance (though only a small part of the total). 17 museums had material of local significance, and the same number, though not all the same museums, had items of regional significance. A surprise was the number of museums with a county-wide remit who indicated that

their collections were of only local importance. This may be due to our lack of clarity in the wording of the Questionnaire, and the current widespread association of the term 'regional' with the Government Office regions, rather than with county areas.

Three of the collections are designated and therefore, by definition, have material of national importance. Also included in the Survey were 5 National Museums in the Home Countries, Eire and the Isle of Man. Only six of the other museums in England considered that they had material of national significance. There is clearly more work to do here in order to be confident about identifying a Distributed National Collection from the current information.

For this reason we are unable to directly answer the first bullet point in the requirement of the Brief (see page 3); however a framework to do so has been established in this report.

KeyPoint 19: The Survey has not, so far, provided sufficient robust information on the quality and significance of collections to identify a Distributed National Collection. However, a useful start has been made on which further work can build.

8.19

The Analysis

The Q&S responses contain much useful information on the scope and quantity of agricultural collections within the sample museums. This is a rich source of data which, because of the initial scoping nature of this study, has by no means been fully analysed as yet. As noted below, the general database is only in the initial stages and not fully operational for the analysis of this material. However, in order to demonstrate the usefulness of the data collected, a few categories have been analysed manually and the results are given here. Not all respondents completed all the questions, but the number of responses is given in each case.

Activity 2.1 Ploughing by horse

25 museums indicated that they have horse ploughs in their collection. Some have large collections of around 100 items, while others have less than 10. We cannot be completely precise about numbers, but there is a minimum of 850 horse ploughs between those museums (34 ploughs each!) However, the question did not distinguish between the many different types of horse plough that existed, all of which were important for the process of cultivation. The different types could include: digger, general purpose, turnwrest, reversible, double-furrow, ridging, mole-draining, etc. They could be wooden framed or all metal, made by one of the nationally known makers such as Ransomes, Howards or Hornsbys, or the product of a

small local implement maker. The total number may indicate significant duplication, but it is not possible to be sure without further work. Seven museums indicated that they had material of national significance. Seven museums indicated storage conditions for at least some of the ploughs at above level 3, but 14 had ploughs in categories 1 or 2, which are likely to be below minimum Registration standards.

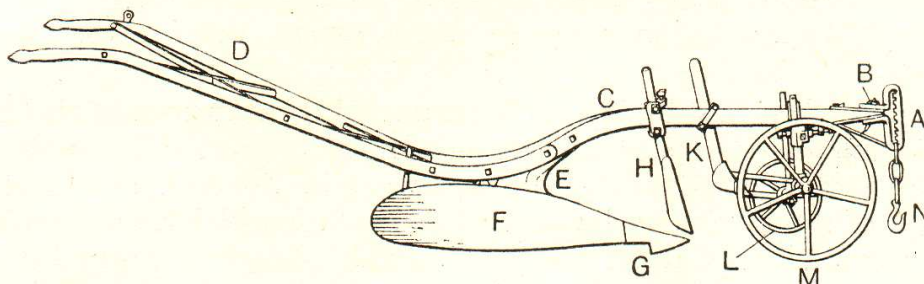


FIG. 17.—SINGLE-FURROW HORSE PLOUGH (LEA TYPE).

A, hake. B, quadrant. C, beam. D, handles. E, frame. F, breast. G, share. H, knife coulter. K, skim coulter. L, land wheel. M, furrow wheel. N, draught chain.

Fream's *Elements of Agriculture* [D.H.Robinson Ph.D Revised & Edited – 13th edn. John Murray, London. 1949]

KeyPoint 20: Horse ploughs are an iconic element of rural life collections. Considerable numbers of them exist in collections but at the moment there is inadequate information to make judgements on issues such as duplication or significance. This Study points the way to further questions that can be asked.

8.20

Activity 2.2 Ploughing by tractor

21 museums had tractor ploughs in their collection, numbering in total a minimum of 138. Again, no further information on type, date, number of furrows, etc. was asked for. Also, no correlation is possible between these and the tractors themselves. Storage conditions for these were similar to the horse ploughs, with some in quite poor conditions.

Activity 9.6 Harvesting - Combine harvesters

Only 9 museums have combine harvesters – 27% of the sample. There are 36 machines in all. This figure does include the Science Museum and the significant collection at The Museum of Scottish Country Life. Two other museums may also have items of national significance. Storage conditions varied from very good to poor.

KeyPoint 21: It would be a relatively quick process to develop an in-depth database for combine harvesters as with the tractors. It is also an area where national importance could be readily determined. This

would assist with decisions on the long-term preservation of these complex machines.

8.21

Activity 17 Animal portraits

Although not a farming activity or process, this heading was included as it is recognised that important material exists in this area which may otherwise be overlooked. It is a topic of perhaps unexpected richness, and almost certainly unexploited potential in terms of interaction with visitors. There are some 500 portraits shared among 19 museums; a few may be important artistically, but they will all be important historically. Two very large and important collections are housed in two of the Designated museums but at least 5 museums have material considered to be of national significance. Given the relative paucity of artefacts to illustrate the major area of livestock management compared to arable farming, these portraits are a valuable resource, and currently an underused asset.

The special exhibition *Love, Labour & Loss: celebrating a rural way of life* was shown at two museums in areas recently much affected by Foot & Mouth Disease: at Tullie House Museum Carlisle from 20 July to 15 September 2002 and Royal Albert Memorial Museum Exeter from 05 October 2002 to 04 January 2003. Its theme was '300 years of British Livestock Farming in Art' and it emphasised very clearly the wealth of material held across the nation in public and private hands.

KeyPoint 22: Animal portraits are an attractive and accessible aspect of some collections. There could be opportunities for a joint exhibition following on from the Love, Labour & Loss exhibition.

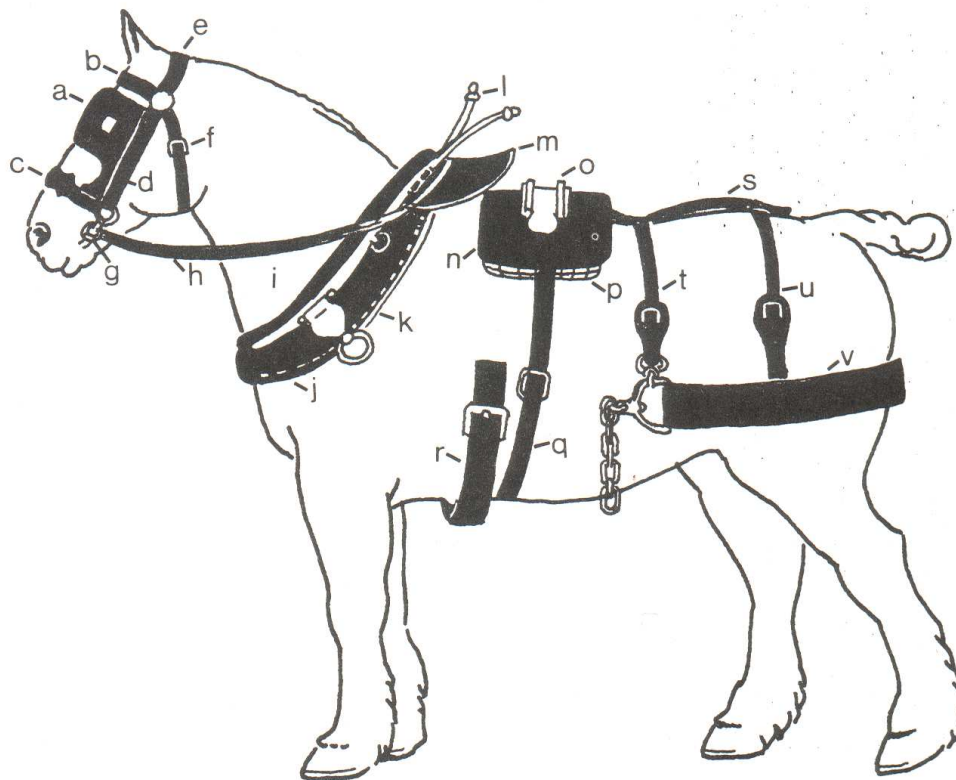
8.22

Activity 20.2 Harness

Twenty-six museums have between them at least 3,000 items of horse harness, including one very substantial collection of horse brasses. This is a very considerable quantity of leather work, with considerable conservation and storage implications. As with horse ploughs, we did not ask how much of this was plough harness, trap harness, riding harness, etc. so further work remains to be done to identify duplication, before any kind of rationalisation. But this is a specialist field and we wonder how many museum staff would be able to identify properly what they hold. We have already noted issues of a perceived declining collection-level knowledge of this kind. Storage conditions for this material are generally reasonable. Only two museums other than the Designated collections assessed their material as of national importance.

The illustration, below, from *The Heavy Horse, its Harness and Harness Decoration* (Terry Keegan, Pelham Books 1974) illustrates the

parts and names of a modern shaft harness and a key to the names which Keegan uses in the text of his book.



Bridle

a blinker
b brow band
c nose band
d cheek-strap
e head-strap
f throat-lash
g bit
h bearing rein

Collar

i forewale
j side-piece
k body (the padding)
l hames
m housen

Saddle

n saddle housing
o bridge
p pad
q girth strap
r belly band

Breechings

s crupper
t loin strap
u hip strap
v breech band

KeyPoint 23: Considerable quantities of harness exist in these collections. Specialist help is almost certainly needed in order to determine where significant collections are held.

8.23

Related material – books, documents, photographs

This item was included to ascertain what supporting material existed to give depth to the object collections. The results show that there are very considerable volumes of two-dimensional material available to curators, for their own study, for exhibition and display purposes, for public study and for promotional purposes. The specialist knowledge needed to curate these collections is another issue to be considered.

Eleven of the responding museums either put no number against their holdings (one or two just put – ‘many’), or put 50>, so the total figures given below are very much a low estimate. The largest collections numerically are held by the Designated collections, but a number of other museums had collections particularly of photographs numbered in hundreds and even thousands.

The figures are:

books – 94,000; documents – 60,000; photographs – 1,080,000

KeyPoint 24 : The volume of books, documents and photographs available to rural life museums offers immense opportunities particularly for interpretation, for sharing information and for research. It is a resource that should be recognised and celebrated.

8.24

Summary

Part One of the Q&S has provided much valuable information, never before gathered, about the object holdings of the selected museums. As well as the material analysed above, the responses do confirm expected regional variations, such as hop related material in the south east, combine harvesters in the major grain growing regions, livestock husbandry in the west. These natural divisions could suggest a way of furthering the DNC concept by identifying which museum, or group of museums has the most significant holdings of particular regional specialities. More information towards this end could be gleaned from a fuller analysis of the Questionnaire responses, to provide a firm basis for further work. It should be recognised however that significant activities such as dairying and cheese-making were excluded from the Questionnaire.

KeyPoint 25: Regional distinctiveness is a key part of the DNC concept.

8.25

The responses also confirm a preponderance of ‘hardware’, of ploughing, threshing and harvesting equipment for example, which is out of proportion to its importance in the farming economy of much of these islands. The reality is that this material survives and can be collected, whilst livestock husbandry leaves far fewer tangible artefacts. It is also the reality that the visiting public is more attracted to animals than to machinery. Museums need to be aware of this dichotomy when determining interpretation strategies.

KeyPoint 26: Museums need to keep an appropriate balance between the object collections and the less tangible parts of the farming story, and be aware of what engages visitors.

6. Survey results – Part Two, the Tractor Survey

We were very encouraged by the responses to this part of the Survey. All except one of the respondents who said there were tractors in the collection, gave the details requested as far as was known. This information has all been entered on to the Tractor Database, which is now fully operational as a relational database in Microsoft Access (Appendix Seven). It can be interrogated in a number of ways to answer questions such as 'how many Fordson tractors are there before 1945?'; 'what are the oldest/youngest tractors?'; 'how many of 'x' make of tractor are there?', and so on.

One of the principal tractor collections is held by the Science Museum – National Museum of Science & Industry at its Wroughton site, which raises for us the issue of how the 'national' significance of the collections held by any of the National Museums comes into play. Does the fact that objects are held by any one National Museum inevitably confer national status of significance, as if by definition? This is a fundamental question to pose and to try to answer when building a Distributed National Collection. It is one that the proposed Collections Working Group will need to address (see Section Nine).

The Survey reveals that there are 125 tractors in the 22 museums which responded to this question; in addition there are 67 in the Science Museum's collection at Wroughton.

The detail from the latter was supplied in considerable detail, but not in the Survey format, so as a result these 67 are not yet on the database. Even so, it is now possible to look critically at the tractors preserved in the leading museums in the UK, and to ask significant questions.

If the Science Museum does have an historically and technologically representative collection amongst its 67, how many more are needed? It may be considered that a further 125 is too many. And yet, tractors replaced the horse as the universal power source on the land throughout the UK during the 20th century. Their significance in people's lives is evidenced by the popularity of the preservation movement, and by the enthusiasm for events where they are on display and demonstrated. The 125 are well spread throughout the UK, in small numbers, with no individual museum having much in the way of duplication.

If the Science Museum has the 'definitive collection' from the technological point of view, perhaps it is nevertheless right that other museums should concentrate on those that are representative of their area and its particular agriculture. Common makes are well represented, and this is fine. There should also be room for the unusual that has particular local associations as well.

The spread of makes amongst our museums is probably what one might expect, with Fords and Fergusons the most represented, and a reasonable date spread from 1916 to 1960. These tractors are not too huge, though clearly beyond the scope of some museums even so. Also, they are relatively easy to care for and maintain, given a suitable local enthusiast.

Tractors were selected for our case study not least because they also provoke questions about contemporary collecting. So, what about the last 40 years? There are only 6 tractors representing the period post 1960, and there are none of the larger machines with enclosed, air-conditioned cabs. Popular tractors today, at least in the east of England, are anything up to 500-horse power. Should anyone be collecting these?

Other questions come up too: does the Science Museum have a continuing policy to represent technological advances? Is anyone collecting at least brochures from local machinery dealers? If one of our surveyed museums were offered a tractor from the 1980s or 90s with a good local provenance, would it be accepted? Do collecting policies address this sort of issue in any detail? Does it matter, as so few people are actually engaged in farming these days anyway that they, and their activities, can no longer be said to represent the rural community?

Whilst it may not be within the remit of the present Study to debate and offer answers to these questions, they can now at least be asked from a point of view of some sound basic data. Taking this study the step further to identify the seminal artefacts of this type could be one of the first tasks of the proposed Collections Working Group.

KeyPoint 27: The tractor database is complete and available as a collections management tool. Given the resources, it could be expanded to include other collections not so far surveyed, and as a pilot study with tractor collections held by societies and private individuals.

8.27

7. Establishing a database

Although our original brief did not include the establishment of a computerised database, it became apparent that we would, for the first time, be bringing together information on a little known aspect of museum collections, and it would seem a waste for this material to exist only in the form of our final Report, and the original questionnaires. We discussed this with Roy Brigden and, encouraged by the quantity and quality of responses from the Questionnaire & Survey, the project team agreed to move to the next step in seeking to establish such a computerised database onto which (a) the Survey information might be added, and thereafter (b) provide a format into which further data, on other elements of agricultural heritage collections, might also be added.

It was recognised in our supplementary Brief that: “the subject is a large one which cannot be fully covered within this project time-scale but the intention is to start building up a database of information on the holdings of rural museums throughout England and the Home Countries which can be shared with those museums, and with a wider audience as appropriate. It is also the intention to extend the database to include material in smaller museums, not part of the original network, and, eventually, private collections as well.

“The database therefore needs to be flexible, durable, and extendable, in order that the initial phase of work can lay a sound foundation for the longer term. The information from the Scoping Study will be at two levels: Part 1 - collections level information broken down into some 30 categories of object/activity; Part 2 - detailed information about one particular class of object, initially tractors. Both parts will contain qualitative as well as quantitative information.

“The database must be capable of relational searches, for example, which museums hold more than 50 veterinary objects that are not on display; how many museums have post-1960s tractors in working order, etc. The database should use a commonly available operating system that is likely to be available to museums on their own PC. It needs to be easy to use, and to maintain. It should be capable of handling numeric information as well as data. The capability to attach photographs would be desirable.”

On that premise, database specialist Stuart Holm was commissioned to set up the pilot database, which was achieved by mid-October and submitted on CD. The full Access-based database is still in draft form, awaiting further resources to enable its completion. However, the Part Two Tractor Database is up and running (see above). A seven-page Database report was also provided, which sets out the progress made and the issues still to be resolved before the database can be used in other than the existing pilot format. Those issues are not further rehearsed here, except to note that for the purposes of this Scoping Study it is sufficient to report that a database has been created

capable of being expanded into a comprehensive summary listing of collection and object level data for agricultural heritage collections and that this development opportunity should not be missed.

KeyPoint 28: A computerised database has been created of the information provided during the research for and production of the Study. This provides a development opportunity for future expansion and the creation of a comprehensive summary listing of collection level data for agricultural heritage collections in the UK.

8.28

8. Summary of Keypoints

- 8.01 *The development of the Distributed National Collection concept is fully anticipated in key publications, specifically the Renaissance in the Regions report and the Preserving the Past for the Future collections strategy document, both published by Re:source*
- 8.02 *The inclusion of three English museums specifically including agricultural heritage collections in the Museums Designation Scheme should be seen as only part of the pyramid which will eventually make up the DNC across the UK as a whole.*
- 8.03 *The Rural Museums Network should be the platform for the development of the subject network, including further more detailed studies towards the realisation of a DNC of agricultural heritage collections.*
- 8.04 *The role of the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading as a subject network champion, alongside that of the Museum of Welsh Life, the Museum of Scottish Country Life and the Ulster Folk Museum respectively, is welcomed and endorsed as part of a logical UK-wide pattern of networking.*
- 8.05 *The potential role as a subject network champion of the Science Museum - National Museum of Science & Industry, with its existing UK-wide remit, should be the subject of further more detailed discussions, specifically linked to the evolution of the Rural Museums Network in particular and the agricultural heritage sector specifically.*
- 8.06 *Pertinent (and successful) models of DNC development exist in other sector-specific areas of museum collections, providing useful methodologies. A short research project to achieve an overview, assessment and evaluation of the development of the Distributed*

National Collection concept to date would be valuable for the sector as a whole.

- 8.07 *Work remains to be done on the analysis of the Science Museum's holdings, to make it compatible with the Questionnaire format.*
- 8.08 *Part One of the Questionnaire & Survey reflects the initial scoping stage of the Study and concentrates upon specific components from a potentially much wider survey of agricultural heritage collections. The potential exists to create a full database of existing collections amongst key museums.*
- 8.09 *The selection of tractors as the case study object group was intended to address key issues of collection numbers (quantity), collection use (handling and non-handling), contemporary collecting (links with private collectors), etc and thereby allow an assessment of quality (as a framework for a DNC) to be made.*
- 8.10 *The high response rate of 91% to the Questionnaire & Survey is indicative of the positive support from the Rural Museums Network to the development of the DNC concept, and its value in addressing accumulated collection management issues.*
- 8.11 *There is evidence that the skills base, related to derived knowledge of the use, relevance and significance of many of the objects and implements held and the processes recorded in the 33 key collections, may be declining, with considerable implications for their future care and interpretation.*
- 8.12 *The skills base – at least for technical knowledge of implements and motive power sources such as traction engines and tractors – remains high in the private sector, in a network with which the key museums addressed in this Survey seem to have relatively little direct contact.*
- 8.13 *All museums should be encouraged to supply their MDA code, and to get one if they do not have one. These are provided by mda free of charge, on request.*
- 8.14 *Agricultural collections are better documented than might have been supposed, and an encouraging percentage is recorded on a computer database.*
- 8.15 *Eleven different computer documentation systems are in use between the sample museums. A single database on widely available software, such as has been created for this Project, can therefore be of considerable value in allowing museums to share information about their collections.*

- 8.16 *More than a third of museums recorded less than 25% of their collections on display*
- 8.17 *The Survey responses show that the interpretation of agricultural collections in the sample museums is in a parlous state. Many collections have only basic labelling, and few have any significant amount of interpretation done after 1990. Even fewer update their displays regularly or include any contemporary material. Until this situation is addressed, museums will be struggling to retain their existing visitors, never mind about attracting new ones.*
- 8.18 *Display and storage conditions vary widely, even within the same collection. Whilst considerable improvement has been made in recent years, some material is still kept at standards below the minimum for Registration.*
- 8.19 *The Survey has not, so far, provided sufficient robust information on the quality and significance of collections to identify a 'Distributed National Collection'. However, a useful start has been made on which further work can build.*
- 8.20 *Horse ploughs are an iconic element of rural life collections. Considerable numbers of them exist in collections but at the moment there is inadequate information to make judgements on issues such as duplication or significance. This Study points the way to further questions that can be asked.*
- 8.21 *It would be a relatively quick process to develop an in depth database for combine harvesters as with the tractors. It is also an area where national importance could be readily determined. This would assist with decisions on the long-term preservation of these complex machines.*
- 8.22 *Animal portraits are an attractive and accessible aspect of some collections. There could be opportunities for a joint exhibition following on from the Love, Labour & Loss exhibition.*
- 8.23 *Considerable quantities of harness exist in these collections. Specialist help is almost certainly needed in order to determine where significant collections are held.*
- 8.24 *The volume of books, documents and photographs available to rural life museums offers immense opportunities particularly for interpretation, for sharing information and for research. It is a resource that should be recognised and celebrated.*

- 8.25 *Regional distinctiveness is a key part of the DNC concept.*
- 8.26 *Museums need to keep an appropriate balance between the object collections and the less tangible parts of the farming story, and be aware of what engages visitors.*
- 8.27 *The tractor database is complete and available as a collections management tool. Given the resources, it could be expanded to include other collections not so far surveyed, and as a pilot study with tractor collections held by societies and private individuals.*
- 8.28 *A computerised database has been created of the information provided during the research for and production of the Study. This provides a development opportunity for future expansion and the creation of a comprehensive summary listing of collection level data for agricultural heritage collections in the UK.*

9. Compiling the Distributed National Collection of agricultural heritage collections – The Way Forward

The current position

This Scoping Study is the first step of a process to identify where significant agricultural heritage material is held and how that material can be brought together as a Distributed National Collection. It has been undertaken against a background of a number of relevant factors. These are summarised here in order to set the scene for the way forward.

1. MGC/Resource has been concerned with rural life museums issues since at least 1998 when an initial meeting of relevant curators was held. This led to the publication of the *Farming, Countryside and Museums Report* in 2000.
2. The Rural Life Museums Action Group [RuLMAG] has provided a forum for discussion and a focus for furthering the recommendations of that Report and others since September 2000.
3. A number of collection-level studies – nationally, regionally and locally - have been undertaken on specific collections, various collection types, and on potential candidates for a distributed national collection. Some of these are listed in the References section.
4. The issues of overlarge collections and out of date displays identified in *Farming, Countryside and Museums* and associated studies and reports are still very relevant issues, as confirmed by the present Study.

5. Other disciplines have made significant progress towards identifying key collections and artefacts to tell a 'national' story.
6. Resource is leading the way, through *Renaissance in the Regions* in demonstrating to Government that local and regional museums are crucial to preserving the nation's heritage and making it accessible to an increasingly diverse audience.
7. Resource is encouraging 'subject networks' to foster co-operation between museums, strengthen the skills base and identify collections of national significance.
8. The Rural Museums Network, funded by Resource and managed by the Museum of English Rural Life, has been welcomed by the sector and provides a useful mechanism for sharing problems, solutions and general information.
9. The 33 museums sampled in this Study are identified as the leading regional institutions with rural life collections, though there are many more museums, both public and private with collections of similar material.
10. This Study, using a representative sample of museums, provides the first detailed body of information about rural life collections in the UK.
11. A real strength is its inclusivity, including all the Home Countries, Eire and the Isle of Man.

The Way Forward

This Scoping Study has made a significant step forward, but it is very much the start of the process. In order for this initiative to make progress a number of short and longer-term goals can be identified.

Short term goals

- 1 Further work should be undertaken to the database to make it fully operational for collecting and analysing collection-level data.
- 2 Having established the database, further analysis of the Questionnaire information should be undertaken to ensure that none of the information provided is lost. Failure to do this could well cause disillusionment among museums and lack of willingness to complete similar surveys in the future.

- 3 The object-level (tractor) database should be re-examined to ensure suitability for other object-level surveys.
- 4 Details of the Science Museum – National Museum of Science & Industry's tractor collection should be added to the existing database to provide a comprehensive starting point for further significance analysis. A modest amount of work on this would enable the first element of the 'distributed national collection' to be identified.
- 5 A second element could be achieved quickly by gathering further data from the 9 museums with combine harvesters.

Longer term goals

- 1 The Rural Museums Network has been welcomed by member museums and progress is being made to widen the Network from the initial 33 to include other museums with rural life collections. There is clearly a demand amongst the constituency for the continuation of this initiative. The authors of this Study see such a continuation, with a funded Co-ordinator, as fundamental to the success of other elements of The Way Forward.
- 2 Provision should be made to build on the database, developing both scope and depth.
- 3 The Questionnaire should be reviewed and modified in the light of experience, for distribution to the wider Network membership, in order to build up a more comprehensive view of collections in the UK.
- 4 Further collections-level information gathering should take place for closely related activities such as the processing of agricultural produce (to include dairying for example) and such things as forestry and woodland crafts.
- 5 Further data-gathering for object level information should focus firstly on those aspects where quick results and significant public benefit could be achieved so that real progress can be demonstrated.

Such data-gathering is important and is a necessary first step but it cannot by itself deliver a 'distributed national collection'. Any individual object or collection identified as of national importance must be the result of informed research and be confirmed by a robust process of peer review. It must be able to stand up to independent scrutiny.

A proposed Collections Working Group

The initial identification of the 'Core Collection' of Historic Ships was the result of a three-year university research project. The impetus for this came initially from the Historic Ships Committee to whom the project reported. A similar long-term research project would be one way of approaching rural life collections. Other DNC studies have used a combination of research, gathering together existing information, the sharing of knowledge and involving the expertise of known specialists.

This perhaps provides a model for the rural life sector. A strong recommendation resulting from this Study is the establishment of a *Collections Working Group*. This should comprise a small number of committed and knowledgeable curators, led by one or more of the Designated collections or National Museums. Members of the Group would be selected primarily for their own collections knowledge and their commitment to the process. The Group would determine priorities and oversee a process by which the DNC could be identified and validated.

A way to achieve this would be to organise a series of seminars or workshops on specific quite narrow activity based topics, following the categories in the Questionnaire as a starting point. Invited to those seminars would be not just museum people with specific knowledge of that topic and collections related to it, but other relevant specialists in the area – practising farmers, knowledgeable collectors or preservationists, agricultural historians or other specialists, including - importantly - volunteers and those in the private sector. This would involve a different group of people for each topic so would not place too high a burden on any individual.

The task of each seminar would be to identify landmark developments and significant storylines in the subject area over the last 200 years; to suggest objects or groups of objects which might illustrate those developments and storylines; and then to identify where those objects are held. Priority would be given to items already in the leading regional museums, but objects in private hands could be identified if none existed in the public sector. A first and straightforward task for this group would be to peer review the identified tractor collections to bring this piece of work to a conclusion.

Similar regionally based seminars could be held to consider topics particularly important to, or distinctive of, an individual region. A pilot for this approach could perhaps be started in East Anglia, where an informal group of curators from the leading museums has already met on a number of occasions, to share information and familiarise themselves with each other's collections.

Over a period, this formula would enable a picture would be built up, not only of significant collections, but of why they were significant and how they could be used to illustrate that particular aspect of the story of British agriculture.

An advantage of this approach is that costs could be kept to a minimum, assuming that Working Group members were able to give their time freely. Costs involved then would be for the provision of a meeting room and refreshments, travelling expenses for the participants plus, crucially, someone to organise the meetings and take minutes of decisions.

The *Collections Working Group* would determine the topics to be covered in the seminars. Suggestions could be sought, and the results discussed, through the Network, thus engaging and benefiting from the knowledge of all interested parties.

The *Collections Working Group* could conduct much of its business electronically, thus again saving time and costs. However, an administrator/organiser would be fundamental to its success.

Summary and Conclusions

This Scoping Study has produced much useful information about rural museums and their agricultural heritage collections. Together with the establishment of the Rural Museums Network, it has enabled a real step forward to be made in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of this community of museums.

The Key Points in Section 8 clearly articulate the findings of this Study and show where further work is needed. These are summarised in the Short and Longer-term Goals above.

The Way Forward, as set out above, indicates what the authors believe to be a viable approach to furthering this initiative. It would build on the work done so far and raise the status of agricultural heritage collections both academically and amongst the many enthusiasts in the preservation movement.

The success of this approach will depend on:

1. The appointment of an identified individual to act as Network Co-ordinator of the Rural Museums Network. This is considered fundamental to the continued viability of the Network and to the maintenance and development of the Collections Database.
2. The willingness of the sector to accept and support the *Collections Working Group* concept.

3. The willingness of one or more of the Designated collections or National Museums to accept their leadership role, as the Museum of English Rural Life has done so admirably thus far, to drive this proposal forward.
4. The availability of support funding to pay for a part-time Secretary to the Working Group, and to cover administrative expenses. This could be, but does not have to be, the same person as the Network Co-ordinator.

Recommendations

So, our Recommendations are:

1. The valuable initiative started in this Study should be continued to achieve the Short-term Goals outlined and then progress into the Longer-term Goals.
2. The role of Network Co-ordinator should continue, to which should be added the role of Database Manager.
3. Further collection-level and object-level data collection should continue, building on the foundation of this Report.
4. Network members should be canvassed to seek their support for and comments on, the *Collections Working Group* proposal, and to identify those willing to contribute their specialist knowledge.
5. A meeting should be arranged with representatives of all the Designated collections and National Museums to agree where the leadership role should lie.
6. Funding sources should be considered for the post of Secretary to the Collections Working Group, and for the necessary administrative expenses.

End Note

This Report and the Recommendations are very much focussed on the collections of our rural life museums and might perhaps be considered to be very inward-looking, and not immediately addressing the needs of museum visitors or the wider public. This results from the nature of the Brief for this Study which sought to establish sound data about collections and collections management.

The authors are however very much aware that this is only a means towards an end which will see our rural life museums better focussed, with better and more relevant displays and better able to share their

treasures with an ever-developing audience. Understanding what we have is fundamental to engaging other people with the stories the objects can tell.

10. Consultations, Acknowledgements and References

The principal consultees were the staff members of the 33 museums in receipt of the Questionnaire & Survey. There were only three non-respondents (in each case for reasons which were well understood) and considerable thanks are due to the many collection managers and curators who took the time to complete and return the questionnaire papers. As already noted, a response rate of 91% was - and remains - an indication of the significance attached to developing the DNC concept.

In addition the positive contributions made at the RMN seminar in London on 06 November was a further indication of interest and support, and all contributors to that seminar are also warmly thanked for contributing their time. Three staff members from Resource attended and made very useful contributions.

At short notice, Stuart Holm undertook the preliminary work to try to establish a database through which the results of the Survey could be analysed, and which could perhaps form a building block for the future; we are extremely grateful to him for his time, interest and input.

As well as organising and chairing the RMN seminar, Roy Brigden, Keeper of the Museum of English Rural Life and Brenda Jones, Project Officer & Network Co-ordinator of the Rural Museums Network acted respectively as client manager and project facilitator for the Study, making useful comments throughout, and both are thanked for their support.

Finally, a personal note from the authors of this report, the drafting of which took place exactly five years since an Agricultural Museums Workshop was convened in London at the invitation of the Museums & Galleries Commission (3rd December 1998). That meeting, and the initiatives which directly or indirectly flowed from it might, with the benefit of hindsight, now be seen to have created fresh stimulus for much of what has been achieved in the agricultural heritage sector of museums in the UK over the past five years. Whilst there have been problems aplenty for this particular museum group (Foot & Mouth Disease had a devastating effect upon rural museum visitor numbers as well as on the farming and rural economy generally), it is to be hoped that one result will be a sharper, more focussed approach to collection management and interpretation.

The work of the late Chris Zeuner, facilitator with Catherine Wilson of the 1998 meeting, and a keen advocate of relevance and focus in the interpretation of our museum collections, is respectfully acknowledged in this brief Study.

References

There is a substantial literature on rural life collections, including specific studies of individual collections (a number of them by authors of this study) but they are not all necessarily repeated here. Similarly, there is also a growing sub-set of studies on rationalisation issues, also relevant to the overall thrust of DNC development. A number of key studies, reports, policy statements and development plans are particularly germane to this Study including:

- Heritage Collections Council *(significance) : a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections*, a publication of the Heritage Collections Council, Commonwealth of Australia, 2001, 72pp.
- NMDC *Too much stuff? : disposal from museums*, a report for the National Museum Directors' Conference, 2003, 22pp.
- Re:source *Renaissance in the Regions: a new vision for England's museums*, October 2001, 160pp.
- Re:source *Preserving the Past for the Future: towards a national framework for collections management*, February 2002, 28pp.
- Scottish Museums Council *Scotland's National Audit*, July 2002, available in printed and CD format.
- Shorland-Ball, Rob *Farming, Countryside and Museums: museums of farming and rural life at the beginning of the 21st century*, a report for the Museums & Galleries Commission 2000, 112pp.
- Shorland-Ball, Rob *Seizing the Opportunities: a way forward for rural life museums*, a discussion paper for Re:source, November 2001, 31pp.
- Shorland-Ball, Rob *Agricultural and Rural Life Collections, Displays and Museums in Wales*, a report for the Council of Museums in Wales, 2001, 58pp + 34pp Annexes.
- South West Museums Council *Mapping Project 1999 and 2000: a survey of museums and collections in the South*

- West of England, 40pp and 60pp, and *Mapping Trends in south west museums*, April 2002, 34pp.
- Viner, David "Fowler waggon collection dispersed in Shropshire" in *Heavy Horse World*, vol.12 no.4, Winter 1998, pp. 64-5.
- Viner, David "Devon waggon collection in safe hands" in *Heavy Horse World*, Autumn 1999, pp. 54-7. (Tiverton Museum of Mid-Devon Life).
- Viner, David *More than Nostalgia – Agricultural Heritage Collections in the South West of England*, a report for the South West Museums Council, 2001, 66pp.
- Viner David "Wagon designation a mark of quality in Sussex" in *Heavy Horse World*, Spring 2001, pp.48-51. (Weald & Downland Open Air Museum).
- West Midlands Area Museum Council *First Principles: a framework for museum development in the West Midlands*, April 1996, 18pp, and *Fast Forward: priorities for museum development in the West Midlands*, 2000 and 2002, 52pp.
- Wilson, Catherine "I've got a brand new combine harvester, but who should have the key? Some thoughts on Rural Life Museums and Agricultural Preservation in Eastern England", in *Folk Life, Journal of Ethnological Studies*, Vol. 41, 2002-3, pp.7-23.
- Yates, Bridget *Rural Renewal: new opportunities for museums in rural England*, Association for Independent Museums, Focus report no 16, 2002, 8pp.

Disclaimer

This report represents the personal views of the authors, working to the specified Brief. Although every effort has been made to represent the position fairly, this assessment cannot claim to be a comprehensive overview but rather a snapshot summary of present circumstances, which may contain omissions. However, the compilers of this report have attempted in the time available to consult as widely as possible, and no responsibility can be accepted for the consequences of omissions or of any additional details not included here.

David Viner, BA, FSA, FMA

Understanding, preserving and presenting the historic environment

8 Tower Street

Cirencester Glos GL7 1EF

Phone and fax 01285 651513

dviner@waitrose.com

Catherine Wilson, OBE, FSA, FMA, FRGS

Penates, 5 Station Road

Reepham

Lincoln, LN3 4DN

Phone and fax 01522 753648

catherine@penates.demon.co.uk

Rob Shorland-Ball, BA, FMA, FRSA

Working for Museums

216 Mount Vale

York, YO24 1DL

robsb@wfmyork.demon.co.uk

January 2004

Sorting the Wheat from the Chaff

The Distributed National Collection (DNC): a scoping and development study of agricultural heritage collections

Appendices

One	Rural Museums Network consultation	42
Two	Questionnaire & Survey	43
Three	Questionnaire & Survey Part One Q1	51
Four	Questionnaire & Survey Part One Q2	53
Five	Questionnaire & Survey Part One Q3	54
Six	Questionnaire & Survey Part One Q4	54
Seven	Tractor Database	57

Appendix One : Rural Museums Network consultation
--

Acton Scott Historic Farm	Shropshire
Aden Country Park, Aberdeenshire	[SCOTLAND]
Beamish Open Air Museum	Co.Durham
Chiltern Open Air Museum	Buckinghamshire
Cogges Manor Farm Museum	Oxfordshire
Cotswold Heritage Centre	Gloucestershire
Creagneash Folk Village	[Isle of Man]
Dales Countryside Museum	North Yorkshire
Farmland Museum & Denny Abbey	Cambridgeshire
Hampshire County Museum Service	Hampshire
Highland Folk Museum	[SCOTLAND]
Irish Agricultural Museum	[EIRE]
Lackham Museum of Agriculture	Wiltshire
Milton Keynes Museum of Industry & Rural Life	Buckinghamshire
Museum of East Anglian Life	Suffolk
Museum of English Rural Life	Berkshire
Museum of Kent Life	Kent
Museum of Lakeland Life & Industry	Cumbria
Museum of Lincolnshire Life	Lincolnshire
Museum of Scottish Country Life	[SCOTLAND]
Museum of Welsh Life	[WALES]
Norfolk Rural Life Museum	Norfolk
Rutland County Museum	Rutland
Ryedale Folk Museum	North Yorkshire
NMSI (Science Museum) London/Wroughton	Wiltshire
Shugborough Estate	Staffordshire
Somerset Rural Life Museum	Somerset
Tiverton Museum	Devon
Ulster Folk Museum	[NORTHERN IRELAND]
Usk Rural Life Museum	[WALES]
Weald and Downland Museum	West Sussex
Worcestershire County Museum, Hartlebury	Worcestershire
Yorkshire Museum of Farming	North Yorkshire

Total number of museums in England	= 25
Other Home Countries	= 08
Total on schedule	= 33

Appendix Two : Questionnaire & Survey

PART ONE [Q1 to Q5]

We are trying to gain an overall idea of the extent of holdings within the selected museums. This is not intended to be a full inventory. Please give as much detail as possible *without* having to do too much work! In the absence of complete documentation we accept that only reasonable guesstimates may be possible in providing some answers. The first four questions ask for general information. Q5 requires a more detailed response about particular aspects of the collections. This is not intended to be comprehensive. We have, for the time being, *excluded* such important aspects as traditional crafts, the marketing and processing of produce, domestic and social activities, in order to make the amount of work manageable. The Range Statements are derived from several recent Collections Mapping projects which are now common practice, and follow a format in which you may already have gathered your own data.

Name of Museum

MDA code

Name of Survey Respondent

Date of return

Q1 *Approximately* what % of the total agricultural collection is:

- a) undocumented%
- b) has accession entry only%
- c) has card index entries%
- d) is on computer database%
- e) recorded in photographic record form%

Q2 Which computer-based documentation system(s) are you using (which software package)?

.....

Q3 *Approximately* what % of the agricultural collection is on display?

.....

- Q4 What % of the agricultural material on display has:
- a) basic labelling and some supporting information %
 - b) interpretation to professional standards but most done pre-1990%
 - c) interpretation to professional standards, post 1990%
 - d) continual updates and includes contemporary material %

Q5 Collection details

Please complete the chart below with reference to the following Range Statements:

Column 4 : Number of items - insert actual number if known or select from following approximations:

0 <10 10-20 20-50 50>

Column 5 : Location (Display *and* Storage) – select from [we accept that there may be more than one number to insert here]

- 1 Located outside, no protection. Dirty & disorganized. No racking/boxing.
- 2 Under open-sided shed. Outside but covered. Inadequate or inappropriate storage system. No labelling.
- 3 Fully undercover, but unheated/uncontrolled building. Some housekeeping. Large overspill. Objects not touching.
- 4 Fully undercover in heated building. Reasonable housekeeping. Appropriate racking/packing.
- 5 Housekeeping regime in place. Well organised stores with some room to expand. Location records.
- 6 Good housekeeping regime. Pest management strategy. Dust prevention. Condition checks. Room for expansion.

Column 6 : Significance – select from the Range Statement numbers below [see note as above]

- 1 Don't feel able to make a judgement.
- 2 No known significance.
- 3 *Local* significance. Of significance for local community life. Records local farming activities.
- 4 *Regional* significance. Activity represented is of regional importance. Documented provenance. Representative range of artifacts
- 5 *National* significance. Of demonstrable quality, uniqueness or rarity. Of group value or with a full range of collections. Represents an important technological change. With fully documented provenance.
- 6 *Designated* collection. Only those museums which have Designated collections. BUT please indicate which areas of the collections are most important, using 2, 3 and 4 above.

Insert a number only in columns 4 to 6, after reference to the appropriate range statement. Add comments in 7.

1.	2. Activity	3. Sub-activity	4. No.of items	5. Location	6. Signifi cance	7. Comments
	Land Drainage					
1.1	Drainage	Hand tools				
1.2		Mechanical				
	Growing					
2.1	Ploughing	By horse				
2.2		By steam				
2.3		By tractor				
3	Cultivating					
4	Harrowing					
5	Manuring					
6	Rolling					
7.1	Seeding	Broadcasting				
7.2		Drilling				
8	Weeding					
	Harvesting					
9.1	Grain crops	Hand tools				
9.2		Reapers/binders				
9.3		Winnowers				
9.4		Threshers				
9.5		Balers				
9.6		Combine harvesters				
10.1	Hay/forage	Reapers				
10.2		Rakes				
10.3		Turners/tedders				
11	Hops					
12	Fruit					
13	Oil crops					
14	Peat					
15	Pulses					
16.1	Roots	Beet (incl sugar)				
16.2		Carrots				
16.3		Potato				

1.	2. Activity	3. Sub-activity	4. No. of items	5. Location	6. Signifi- cance	7. Comments
	Livestock Management					
17	Animal portraits					
18	Bees					
19.1	Cattle	General				
19.2		Milking				
20.1	Horses	Grooming				
20.2		Harness				
21	Pigs					
22	Poultry					
23	Sheep					
24	Veterinary					
25.1	Barn machinery	Chaff cutters				
25.2		Root choppers				
	Motive power source					
26	Animal power	e.g horse gin				
26	Electric	e.g. pump				
27	Internal combustion	e.g. oil engine				
28	Steam	e.g.traction eng.				
29	Water/wind	e.g.windpump				
	Transport (agriculture related only)					
30	Manual	e.g. sack barrows				
31	Horsedrawn	e.g.wagons				
32	Mechanised	e.g.tractor/lorry				
	Related material					
33	Books					
34	Documents					
35	Photographs					

PART TWO [Q6 to Q10]**TRACTORS**

Whilst the overall analysis of collections is based on agricultural tasks or activity, it is recognised that tractors are employed over a range of tasks and as a tool were widely employed on farms throughout most of the 20th century. They are also a class of artefact widely collected, restored and demonstrated by the private enthusiast. The aim of this part of the Questionnaire, therefore, is to arrive at a definitive list of the tractors preserved within the selected museums, whether restored or unrestored, and achieve an assessment of their potential significance. The scoring system used for the assessment forms part of the methodology used in *More than Nostalgia* [South West Museums Council, 2001], copies of which are still available from SWMLAC in Taunton on request.

Q6 Does your collection contain any tractors? YES
NO

<< If NO, please answer Q7 & Q8. If YES, please answer Q9 & Q10 >>

Q7 Given the importance of tractors to agriculture during the 20th century, why are there none in your collections?

- a) none have been offered
- b) museum not suitable for tractors
- c) not of local relevance to this museum
- d) outside collecting policy
- e) perception of the cost of maintenance
- f) other reasons?

Q8 Would you consider collecting tractors in the future? YES
NO

Q9 Total number of tractors in the collection

Q10 Collection details

Please complete the chart below with reference to the Range Statements overleaf, and please assess each tractor separately :

Display

- 1 not on display
- 2 on static display undercover
- 3 on static display outside
- 4 in working order [part of the working' or 'use' collection]

Storage

- 1 Stored externally with no protection
- 2 Stored externally but under cover
- 3 Internally but in overcrowded/poor conditions
- 4 Internally in fair to good conditions

Documentation

- 1 No allocated number, not formally accessioned
- 2 Basic documentation/list only
- 3 Detailed documentation
- 4 Detailed documentation and computerised entry

Condition

- 1 Unrestored, poor condition or incomplete
- 2 Restored externally, not in working order
- 3 Fully restored but with little 'original' remaining
- 4 Fully restored to accepted conservation standards
- 5 In original condition but not working
- 6 In original condition and working order

Provenance

- 1 No known history
- 2 Basic provenance
- 3 Known history of use
- 4 Fully associated with person & place

Manufacture

- 1 Not made or used locally
- 2 Maker outside collection area, but supplied or used locally
- 3 Maker within collection area
- 4 Maker and supplier/user within collection area

Significance

- 1 Common make or type
- 2 Common make or type but used extensively in the region
- 3 Less common make
- 4 Represents an important technical development in agriculture
- 5 Is known to be rare/only survivor of type

TRACTOR SURVEY

[Please photocopy extra sheets as required]

Museum Name & location.....

.....

Recording Date	Tractor Acc.No.	Tractor Acc. No.	Tractor Acc. No.	Tractor Acc. No.
	Make	Make	Make	Make
	Type	Type	Type	Type
	Date	Date	Date	Date
Display Score 1-4				
Storage Score 1-4				
Documentation Score 1-4				
Condition Score 1-6				
Provenance Score 1-4				
Manufacture Score 1-4				
Significance Score 1-5				
TOTAL SCORES				

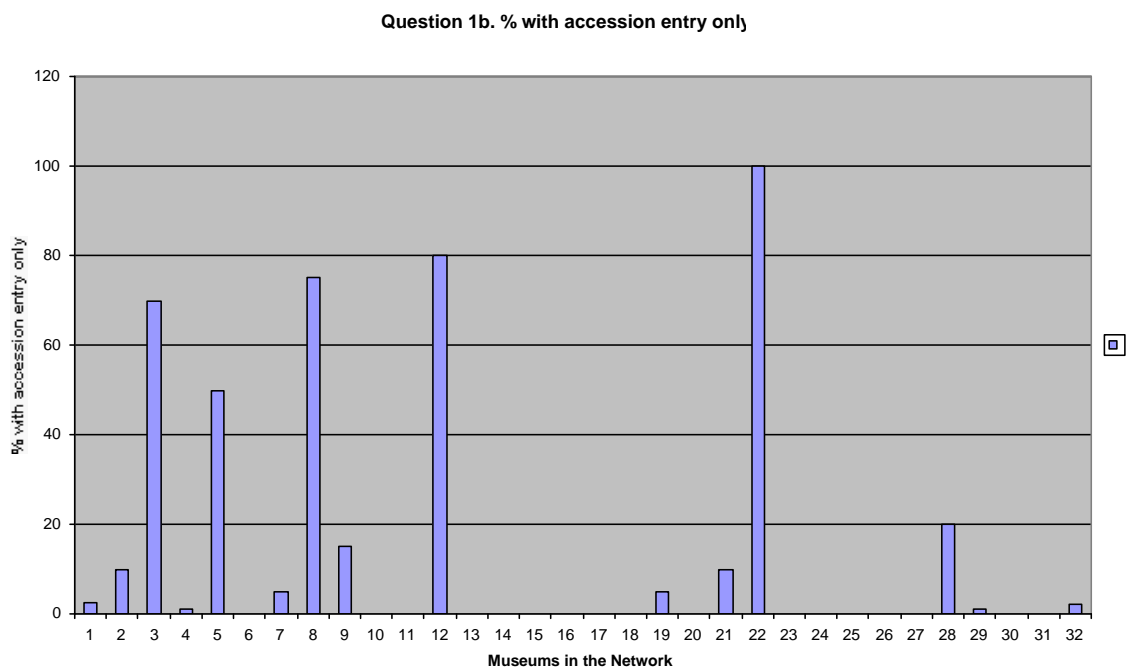
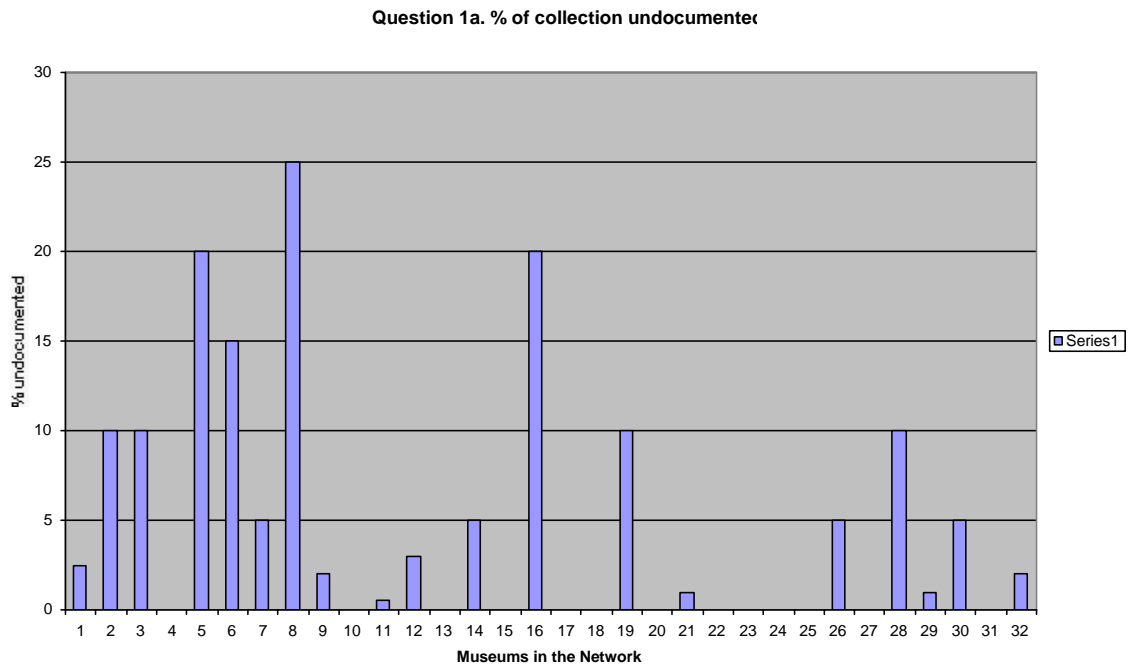
Additional Comments

Please feel free to add any further comments on this sheet with additional information you feel necessary on the importance of any item or items in your collection. We would welcome your views on how you see your collection(s) in terms of a Distributed National Collection concept.

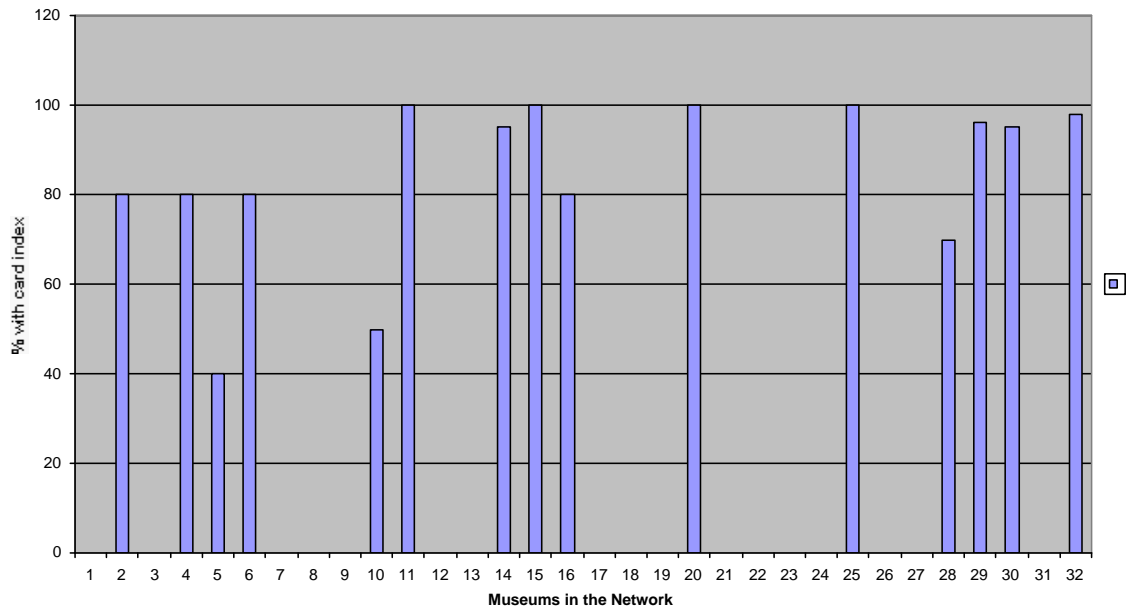
In order to build up as complete a picture as possible of what is now in preservation, we would also be pleased to hear of any significant material you know about in museums not included in this Survey, or in private collections in your local area.

Appendix Three : Survey Part One Question 1 (a to e)

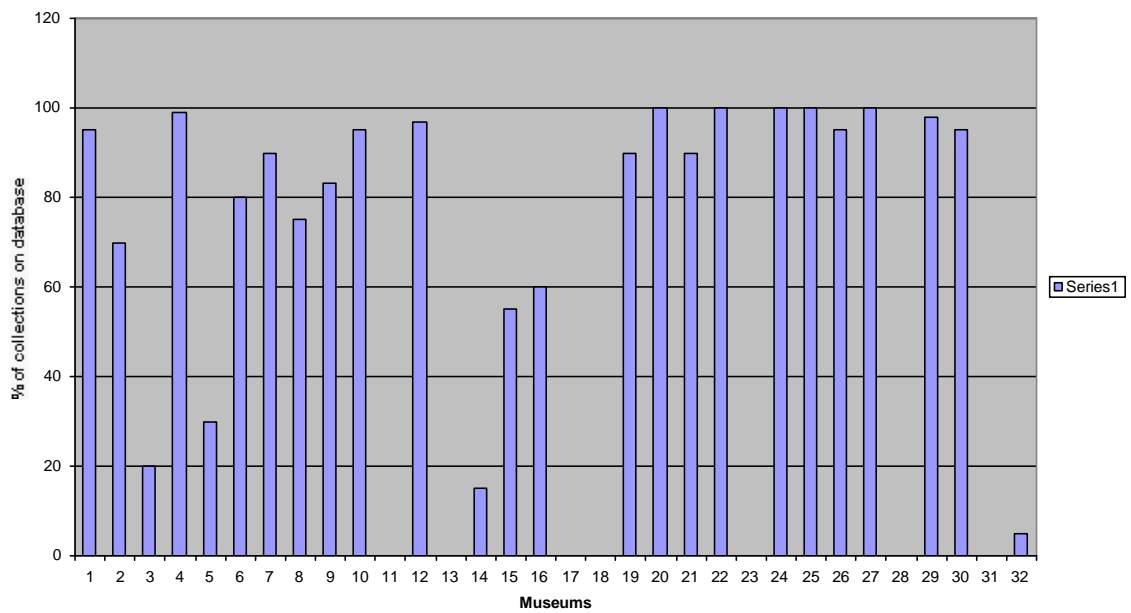
Percentages of the total agricultural collection:



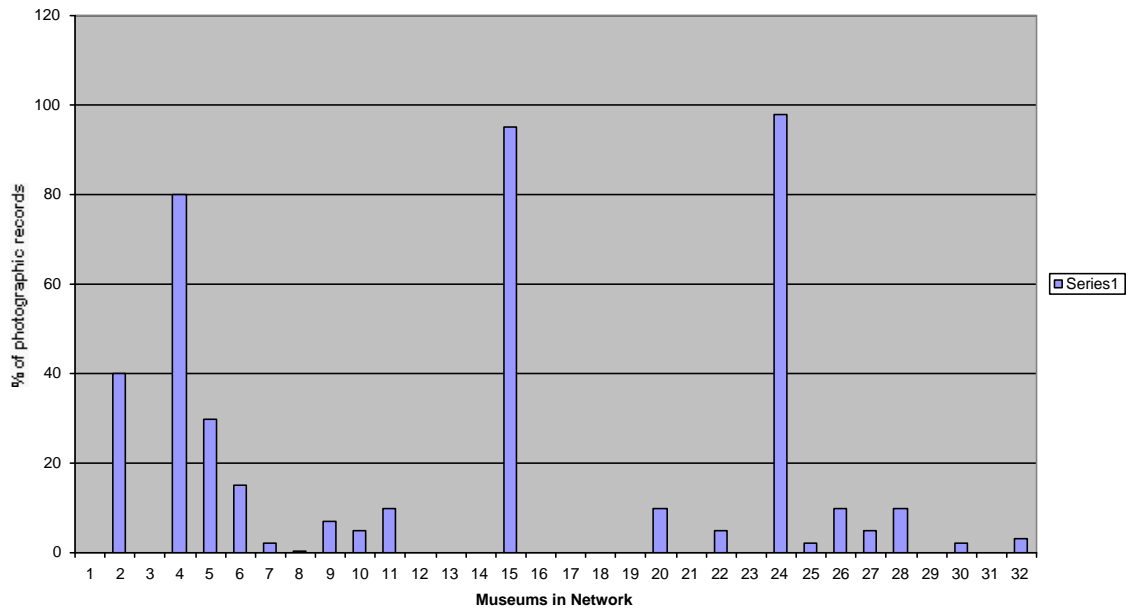
Question 1c. % of collection with card index entries



Question 1 d) % of collection on computer database



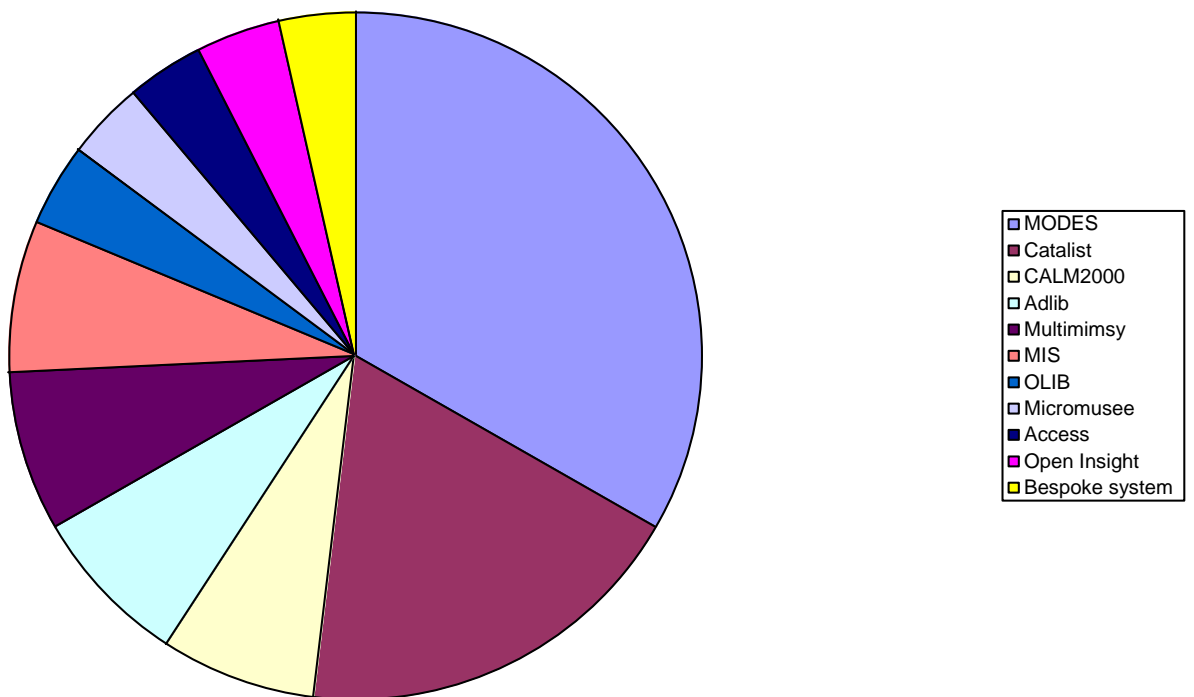
Question 1e. % of photographic records



Appendix Four : Survey Part One Question 2

What computer-based documentation system do you use?

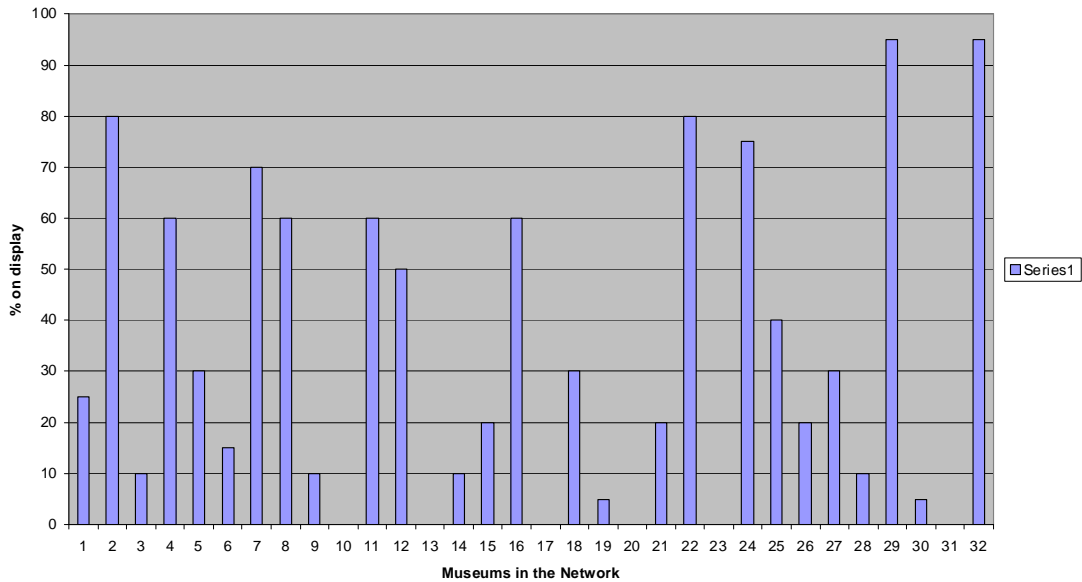
Question 2. Which computer package?



Appendix Five : Survey Part One Question 3

Approx what % of the agricultural collection is on display?

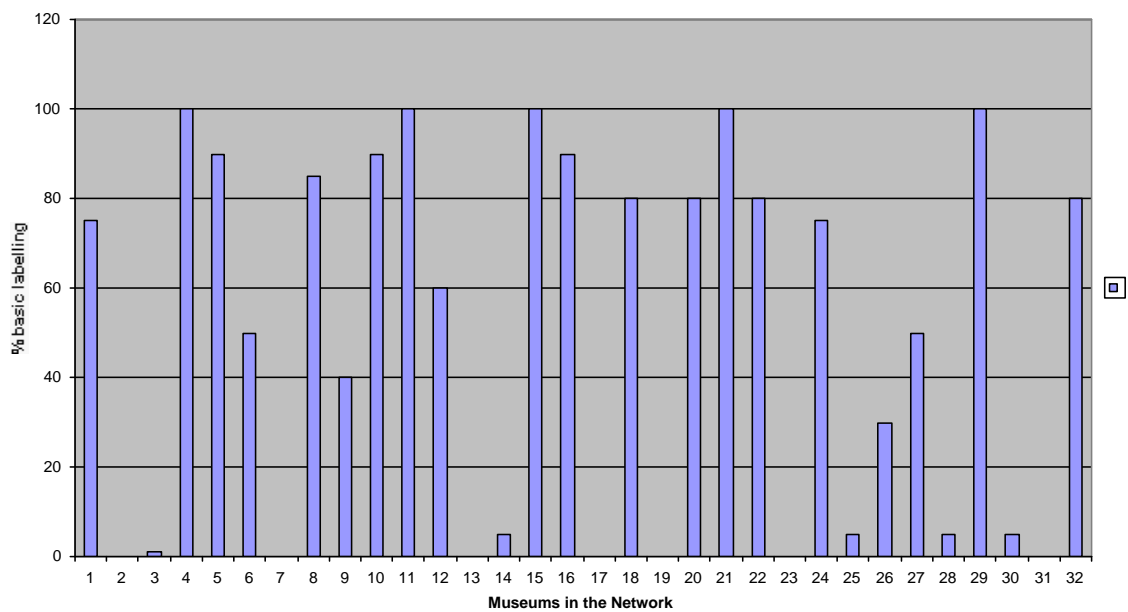
Question 3. % of collections on display



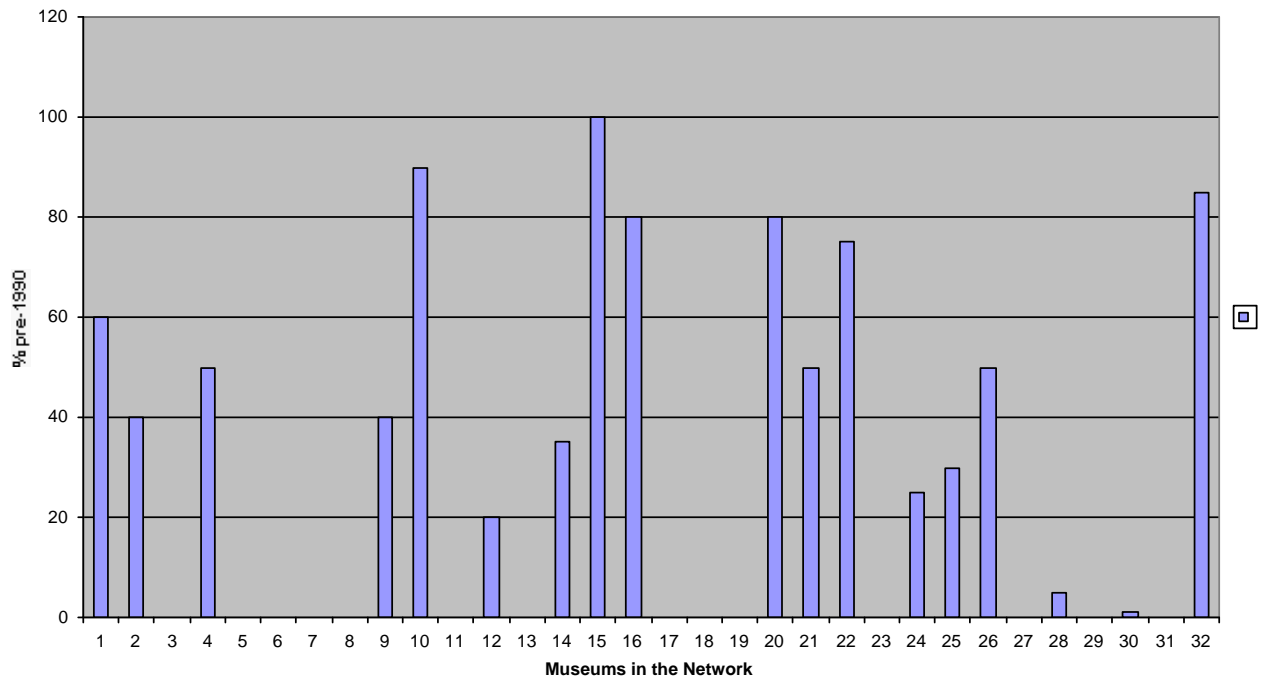
Appendix Six : Survey Part One Question 4a-d

Approx what % of the collection has:

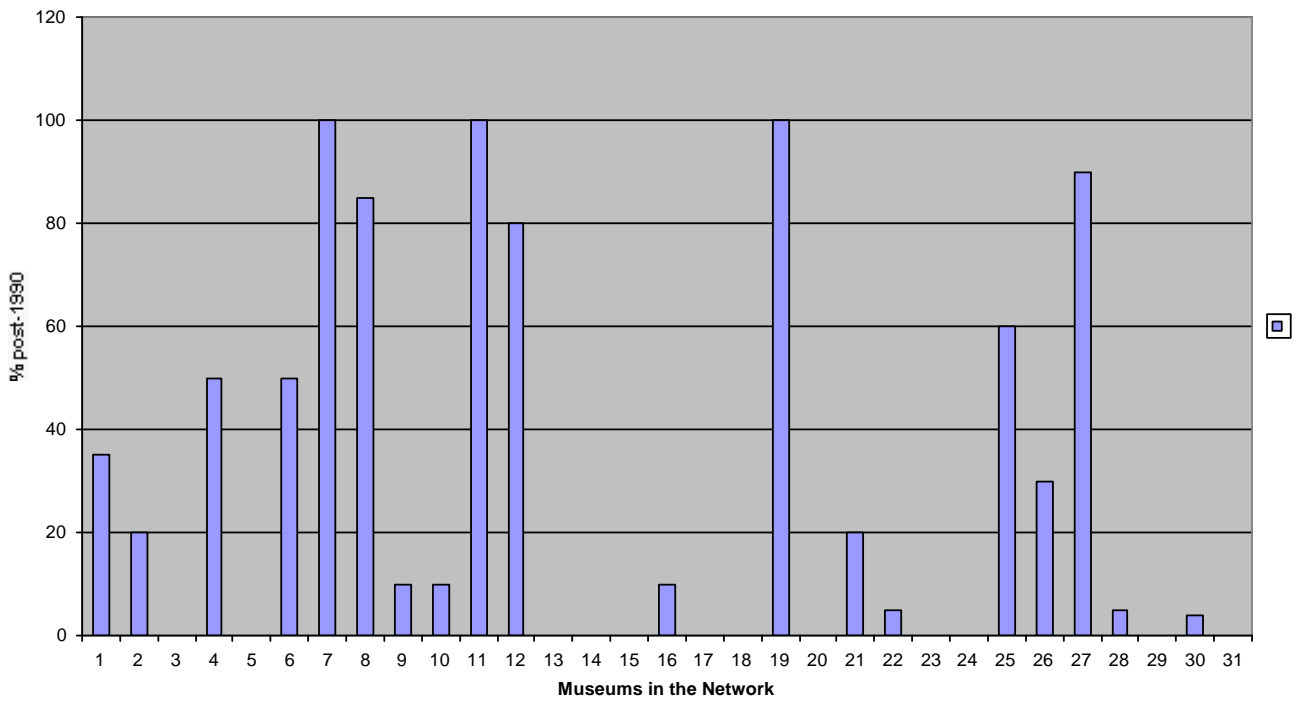
Question 4a. % with basic labelling



Question 4b. Interpretation pre-1990



Question 4c. Interpretation post-1990



Question 4d. Updates & contemporary material

