**Museum and Galleries five year strategic plan 2016 – 2020**

1. Mission Statement.
2. Review of five-year plan 2010 - 2015.
3. Context in which the museum sits.
4. Objectives for 2016 – 2020. 5. Resourcing the Objectives.
5. Outcomes.
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1. **Mission Statement**:

“To provide a forum in which Science, Medicine and the Humanities can meet, engage and develop the College’s strategic aims of Public Engagement, celebrating the impact of the heritage and diversity of the City and East End of London on these disciplines. The Museum and Galleries management is committed to maintaining the collection of pathological specimens as a resource for academic activity, including research and teaching undergraduate medical students”.

1. **Review of five year plan 2010 – 2015**

The first five-year plan ran from 2010 to 2015 and had two primary objectives. The first was to stabilise the collection of specimens through a programme of conservation. The second was to explore different options that would secure the future and prevent a return to the neglect experienced over the previous ten to fifteen years. The greatest challenge was to find ways in which sufficient income could be generated to finance the essential continuation of a post within the museum.

From the outset it was clear that conservation of the specimens should be linked to expanding and developing the on-line catalogue (vpathmuseum.smd.qmul.ac.uk) started in 2006. Without a complete catalogue no collection can ever be fully utilised and an on-line version offered the potential to allow greater access. Some rationalisation of the collection would also be necessary, given the considerable duplication resulting from the merger of two large collections. The aim was to make future management of the collection easier.

Conservation was undertaken by the appointment of a technician. Most of the wet specimens required some degree of attention, and a few required a considerable amount. At the same time specimens were photographed for insertion into the on-line catalogue. This proved to be and remains a substantial task.

Regulations on the display of and access to human specimens aged more than 100 years old are less restrictive than those applied to specimens aged below this threshold (Human Tissue Act 2006). The opportunity was taken to consolidate the older specimens onto the main entrance floor of the museum. The rationale for this was to remove some of the access restrictions and encourage greater flexibility in use. It did, however, slow down the rate at which specimens could be conserved and about 25% of the collection remains to be treated.

Finding a way to secure the future of the collection became a key activity from an early stage and initially it was anticipated that a separate application for funds would be pursued to allow a suitable appointment. Circumstances evolved quite quickly to indicate that funds could be generated by holding public seminars and events. Aided by the redistribution of specimens within the museum this was seen as a potential route to securing the museum’s future. After some early trials, a series of evening seminars was developed, which proved extremely popular. After three seasons of seminars and events there have been approximately 15000 visiting members of the public and a further 5000 or so College/Trust users. Data are given in appendix 1. Sufficient income was generated to sustain a post for a further year or so. This led to the creation of a public engagement post in the museum, funded by the College for three years to end of 2018, and creates sufficient stability to allow the setting out of the next five-year plan (2016 – 2021).

In conclusion, the first five years have been about placing the museum and collection in a position that will facilitate a secure future. The essential elements have been established following largely what was set out in the plan, and the next 5 years will focus on building on those achievements.

3. **Context in which the museum sits**:

The context is varied, in part emerging and liable to change.

From its establishment in the mid 1800’s through to about the Second World War the medical school pathology museum was the focal point of a medical student’s learning experience. This was largely due to teaching pathology as a key component in the undergraduate curriculum. The context, therefore, was clear and unequivocal. The years that followed however saw a steady decline in use to the point where the focus now lies in clinical-based pathology alongside a shift from teacher-led to student-led study. This is widespread and many institutions nationally, and indeed around the world, have found their collections increasingly difficult to justify with pressures both from expensive maintenance costs as well as occupying much needed space. Many institutions have turned their museums over to a lecture theatre or teaching laboratory in order to accommodate the ever-increasing number of students. Others have disposed of their collections, offering them *ad hoc* to the new medical schools that emerged post 1992.

To counter this decline in use a few have adopted a different approach. The Anatomy Museum of Leiden University for example has equipped its museum with audio guides. Their students are expected to attend these guided sessions as part of their studies. The university found 100% of its (surveyed) students agreed audio guides were useful for learning. However, 69% of those students also felt that museum visits should be optional rather than compulsory (Yehia, M. et al 2010). These results are not surprising. Web-based delivery of visual material, developments in Information Technology and the pressures on a student’s time all conspire to ensure that unless it is compulsory, and teacher–led, very few students will voluntarily make use of a traditional museum collection (such as that at West Smithfield and Whitechapel). The value of museum collections remains high, and may rise even higher in the future. Doctors leaving medical school in the second decade of the 21st Century will have been taught excellent communication and clinical skills, but will have a reduced knowledge of basic medical sciences (Domizio, P. 2006) .

Since the passing of the 2004 Human Tissue Act the number of museums of human pathology that have applied for and been granted a licence for the public display of human remains has increased. These are mostly in the ‘non-medical school’ sector but it indicates a willingness to open up collections to the public and, perhaps more importantly, an understanding that there is a public appetite for such information. Guys Kings Thomas’s medical school museum, The Gordon Museum, is now holding public events. The University of New South Wales has a public museum of Human Disease <https://medicalsciences.med.unsw.edu.au/community/museum-human-disease/home>

The Wohl museum of Edinburgh (then called the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh) opened its doors to the public back in 1832. They were inundated with curious members of the public, but just as with medical schools visitor numbers declined from the 1950s onwards (Alberti, S. 2011). Albeit for different reasons, the attraction of “pickled specimens” had worn off.

Today, private medical museums are trying to attract visitors with novel methods. The [Mutter museum](http://muttermuseum.org/) of Philadelphia is one, and likewise th[e Menschen Museum of Berlin](http://www.memu.berlin/en/exhibition/menschen-museum/) Perhaps the best known is The Hunterian in London, which only allowed the public to view the specimens from about 2005, and by 2010 was attracting 50 000 visitors a year. All, in some form, demonstrate there a public interest in the subject or, as the Director of Museums and Archives at the Royal College of Surgeons Sam Alberti quotes: “Know thyself”.

It is against this background that we have established an identity in which the public can ‘know thyself’ a little more. Public Engagement presents an ideal opportunity for us to build on and identify a niche in this sector. We cannot compete with the large well-funded institutions such as the Hunterian, but we can establish a unique identity that enables us to stand out from the others.

From our own analysis of audience data, it has been shown visitors are looking to learn greater detail about the specimens than just the pathological condition. In its broadest sense this detail might be classed as the ‘human side’ of the specimen. Indeed, Alberti recognises this and increasingly the human story is being told alongside the pathological specimen. The details arise from exploring cultural, historical and ethical aspects, as well as the pathology. This cross-disciplinary approach has many attractions, not least access to funding but also an opportunity to involve the greater community both within Queen Mary and outside. This unique reflection on City and East London life, along with an audience mostly resident or working in the local area creates a niche context. This is further confirmed by the many positive comments received on social media.

Finally, the museum and galleries each have qualities that permit customised strategic planning. The intimate galleries at Whitechapel are best suited to outreach and small group activities that are student focussed. The close proximity to Centre of the Cell offices in the Garrod Building is an advantage in working with local schools. The museum at Barts on the other hand, is better suited as a venue for public events and specialist exhibitions and conferences, not least because of its open floor space but also through its central location in the City. Indications in 2016 are that The Museum of London is looking to acquire the existing West Smithfield meat market site on Long Lane with an eventual move following refurbishment by 2020. This offers a significant opportunity for our museum to form close working partnerships with this much larger organisation, and looking further ahead an opportunity to develop and enhance our identity as a centre for medical humanities. Though early days it is possible to identify a role that sees ourselves reflecting on aspects of medical humanities that sit alongside the (human remains) exhibitions in the relocated Museum of London.

Confluent with these exciting opportunities is the potential to increase visitor numbers from the Crossrail development. This will, from 2018, bring much faster travel for commuters living east of London in areas such as Shenfield etc to within a very short walk of the museum (Farringdon station). This should mean a greater opportunity to encourage office workers in the St Paul’s/Farringdon district to attend an event, and an exciting opportunity for the University to engage with a new public audience that will find it possible to accommodate an evening event at Barts site and be able to get home in time for an evening meal.

**4. Objectives for 2016 to 2021:**

Overall the objective for the next five years will be to build on the foundations set out so far. Specific objectives include:

1. Conserving, protecting and maintaining the collection of pathological specimens, arranging them in a manner that makes them more accessible for undergraduate teaching.

1. Developing and expanding the number of public events that generate interest and engagement with the public.

1. Developing the museum space as a venue for conferences, seminars, exhibitions and meetings in accordance with the mission statement and in compliance with the Human Tissue Authority regulations.

1. Exploring opportunities to engage with academic staff across the disciplines in research projects that use the museum and galleries as a resource. This would include the emerging Life Sciences Initiative.

1. Continuing to explore opportunities that might emerge from strategic planning exercises.

1. Raising the museum’s profile within the Institution.

1. Evaluating and developing where appropriate closer links with the Trust Archive and the Centre of the Cell.

1. Apply for Arts Council Accreditation.

1. Work towards financial sustainability.

**How will we do this?**

Objective 1: On-going specimen conservation requires investment in time and resources. Balancing the needs of meeting targets for income generation from public events against demands for specimen conservation will be a matter for local management. However, provision of specimens that can contribute to the curriculum remains a priority, especially for the teaching of anatomy. Looking forward we anticipate staff progressing skills and qualifications, and potentially contributing to proposed new curriculum-based activities in pathology.

Objective 2: After three years of trials, experimenting with different topics and collecting audience feedback, a reputation has been established for holding novel events that have created a niche audience. These events have been extremely successful; so much so that other institutions have started to follow similar practice. Whilst mainstream museums (such as the Hunterian) can attract a wide audience due to their size, prestige and infinitely greater financial resources, our museum has attracted a loyal and enthusiastic membership of some 4000+ followers. Many attend regularly and there is strong support for the type of activities that we provide (subscriber count update june 2017 stands at 4450).

Maintaining a novel programme of events across a wide time frame is difficult and time consuming. The recent appointment of a public engagement officer post into the museum significantly advances the opportunities that arise. In the future it is hoped that suggestions and ideas will be forthcoming from different sources within the College and the management will continue to explore ways to encourage this.

Objective 3: The biggest handicap to making greater use of the museum for events during the working day is the inability to control the amount of daylight. The glass roof results in a room that is too bright to comfortably view projection and, in the peak of summer, is too hot. One solution is to provide shading that will reduce the amount of daylight and the amount of radiated heat. The management will work towards this objective in the short term, whilst in the longer term it remains the objective to restore the roof, and include ventilation. Once achieved, the museum becomes more attractive as a venue for day-time conferences and affords greater potential for income generation.

 Objective 4: The physical resource of several thousand human specimens is supported in great part by associated medical records, patient notes and other social and cultural information. This provides a unique insight into life in the City and East End of London from about the mid 1800’s through to the early 1960’s. These records are largely unexplored and at one time were regarded as confidential, but with the passage of time many now fall outside of the regulations and therefore are no longer restricted. With regard to the remainder of documents, a greater understanding of the sensitivities of the material and of the technology that allows anonymisation should enable researchers to explore aspects of City and East End life that until now have gone unnoticed.

The museum is ideally placed to provide a venue for new researchers to present their work to the public with the aim of increasing engagement with scientific and medical research. One suggestion is to provide such presentations in *café scientifique* style. This would involve the researcher discussing their work with small groups of members of the public over a cup of coffee (for example). The Whitechapel galleries provide an opportunity to explore cross-disciplinary collaborations in medicine and the humanities using specialist exhibition material. This is underway and has had some success. The potential to develop this is restricted to specialist groups and outreach activities.

Objective 5: Management strategies and associated committees should allow for development of unforeseen opportunities, so long as these sit in the broad context of the mission statement. One example would be public engagement initiatives that might arise from greater interaction from the Trust and/or patients. As these emerge the management will act to evaluate and pursue as appropriate.

Objective 6: 2014-15 saw the museum’s profile rise considerably within the Institution. However, it still lacks widespread recognition and events are not being advertised automatically across the campuses even though facilities to do so do exist. Greater effort is required to ensure the museum is advertised as much as possible. The communications office has been asked to provide a member of staff to sit on our management committee. Estates, Strategic Planning Office, Events, Conferencing, Catering and room bookings are all aware of the museum and of the potential it offers. We expect to see an increase in use as demand on space increases.

Objective 7: The Trust Archive is a potential partner and has important expertise in all aspects of museum governance. Line management of the deputy archivist falls under the assistant manager’s remit which greatly facilitates this. Centre of the Cell organisers are experienced in public engagement activities and events at Whitechapel. Closer collaboration with their experienced staff (including volunteer ambassadors) will be investigated over 2016-17 to evaluate what opportunities might exist to broaden the scope and appeal of any event or exhibition the museum and galleries might organise.

Objective 8: There are many opportunities available to secure funds for structural (and infrastructural) projects. Most arise from Arts Council England who regularly make grants available for museums. Lack of accreditation is the greatest single barrier to applying and this will become a principal objective from 2016 onwards. Accreditation is a lengthy process requiring extensive documentation. Demonstration of clear governance is fundamental. Consequently determining and setting out governance structures will be a priority over 2016-17 and will require a figurehead able to negotiate and reach agreement between both Trust and College on the merits of accreditation. Outcomes (on governance structures) may not be concluded until 2017 – 18. However, significant advances have already been made in preparing documentation, completion of which is expected by end of 2016/17.

Objective 9: The greatest challenge is to reach financial sustainability. Presently events are priced to cover costs of refreshments, speaker’s expenses, Eventbrite commission and generate as much surplus as possible without resulting in a lower uptake of tickets. Comparing our prices with similar institutions and events suggests we are pricing ourselves correctly. There are opportunities to increase the percentage surplus from ticket sales by abandoning Eventbrite, however we have yet to find a system that works for us. Eventbrite is very easy to use, familiar to all, and we have not experienced any problems in obtaining credits. This does need further work to establish if alternatives do exist.

Use of the museum by societies and special groups within the NHS Trust and QM University results in very little income and of course the inability to host an income-generating event. Our objective is to document these and price them as if they were a commercial activity paying standard hire charges. These charges may not actually be levied, but will be included in the annual return of accounts as “virtual” income.

**5. Resourcing the objectives:**

With no core HEFCE money income is generated from alternative sources. The primary source is through ticket sales at events. The price per ticket for seated events is pitched to recognise a number of factors: the roof leaks, the heating fails, the entrance stairwell is in poor decorative condition and until recently, the seating was of poor quality. Much has been improved however, and in March 2016 substantial repairs to the roof resulted in fewer leaks. Skanska maintenance response to heating malfunctions has improved and back-up heaters have been installed. The seating has been replaced as a result of crowd-funding. The (ticket) price charged per person reflects the many faults of the building, but recognises the unique position we hold and compares well with other venues. Our outgoings against income include Security (minimum of 3 hours’ overtime per evening event) speaker’s fees and travel, refreshments and Eventbrite expenses. With the exception of the latter the outgoings are fixed and therefore predictable. On average 40% of income at a 100 seat event is lost to costs.

Likewise workshops, which are smaller in size but generating about £50 per participant, also result in about 40% loss of income due to expenses. Room hire is invaluable as there are fewer expenses incurred. However, the most frequent user of the space is presently QM or the Trust for which there are no charges. Implementation of Objective 3 therefore becomes quite important.

Internal grants and funding sources: Opportunities exist and arise all the time for small grants that focus on student activities. These are not always useful for the type of activity the museum is engaged in. Public engagement activities do attract funding in their own right and greater use of these funds should be made to support seminars.

External grants and funding sources: The museum’s overall theme of engaging with the public in medical humanities projects makes it attractive to funding bodies such as the Wellcome Trust. Greater use should be made of this potential source of income to subsidise the price of tickets.

Infrastructure repairs are the responsibility of the landlord. None the less as part of the process of improving the museum environment, funds from outside the College will be sought wherever possible to carry out upgrades. There are two immediate projects that we seek funding for: shading so that daylight can be controlled, and the installation of a security system to protect against removal of any specimens. The former might be easier to obtain internally as it improves the environment for exams and general teaching, as well as public activities. The latter might be easier once accreditation is underway.

**6. Outcomes:**

The next five years should see continued growth, building on what has been put in place. Much potential exists from several different sources and interest in the museum continues to grow (both inside the college community and outside). Looking ahead to about 2019 – 20 it is anticipated the museum will be fully accredited, open to the public by appointment, recognised within London as a centre for research in medical-humanities and a collaborator with Museum of London, and within Higher Education as a centre of excellence in public engagement.

Outcomes therefore include:

* continued growth in demand for the museum space for teaching and exams.
* Greater integration with academic activities across the College.
* Greater cooperation with disciplines outside of Medicine.
* Continued improvements in income generation.
* Continued advancements in maintaining the fabric of the building.
* Continued improvements in the internal environment of the museum.
* Greater association with Centre of the Cell.

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Appendix 1:

**An analysis of audience participation in the Pathology Museum**

**2015**

# Introduction

After years of neglect, Barts Pathology Museum is now enjoying something of a renaissance. The drive to find a new role for the 140 year old building and halt the decline in condition of the 5000 or so potted pathological specimens started in 2011 when it was found many of the pots were drying out. Specimens, many as old as the building (and in some cases older) were starting to decay, and any continued lack of action would eventually see a significant loss in the nation’s fourth largest collection of medical school pathology specimens.

After securing funds to carry out essential conservation measures it became apparent that the museum needed to develop a strategy to ensure it had a future that could be sustained. That need was predicated on the premise that unless footfall increased neither the building’s landlord (The NHS Trust) nor the collection’s owner (Queen Mary University) would invest in any future funding arrangements. The museum could not continue as a traditional medical school museum as there was no demand for this type of facility. However, after some small scale trials in 2011 to 2012 a promising opportunity opened up in the shape of public engagement where educational seminars, exhibitions and workshops held in the unique environs of the 1879 grade 2 listed building, surrounded by several thousand human pathological specimens, indicated that there could indeed be a future.

 An award from the College’s Public Engagement office enabled the museum’s management to trial further and more detailed studies into the long term viability of making the museum available to the general public. During the trials data were collected on audience types, audience participation and audience growth. These data have subsequently fed into a longer term strategy that has led to a shaping exercise and a focussing of direction.

# Methodology

We were assisted in an assessment of audience types by colleagues from the Museum of London, who set out for us six likely audience scenarios. These were “Day Tripper” (a fairly obvious description of someone who would look in a magazine, Time Out for example, for somewhere unusual or different, and who is not really visiting for the educational value nor likely to return regularly) “Time-poor Professional” (city employed and wanting service fast, they would only be interested in short bitesized information but may well return), the “London Insider” (claiming ownership of something that few know about, is unique and, above all, special). The fourth category is “Intellectual Tourist” (a person that derives pleasure from one-off visits to venues of a related nature and learning about them) the “Self-Developer” (a non-professional who wants to build up knowledge on a subject for personal satisfaction) and the “Cultural Connoisseur” (seeking and claiming in-depth knowledge on a subject. They may not though go out of their way to visit related venues at different locations).

We randomly selected events to carry out our analysis. We also carried out an email survey. To determine audience type we asked the public to list which of the six categories they most readily identified. Audience participation was also measured to determine what was of interest, how the participant wanted to be informed, what the uptake was in relation to the use of technology and finally feedback comments from social media.

The final category, audience growth, was measured by recording numbers of new visitors, numbers returning more than twice, and finally the total number attending each event.

The trials were conducted across three different situations. The main trial was a programme of evening seminars with speakers on a diverse range of subjects. The emphasis was on subjects that might be classed as unusual or slightly edgy, presented in a relaxed and informal setting supported with a glass of wine and some light nibbles. The idea was to create a social occasion that was also educational.

 Second, a number of week-end workshops were held. These mainly capitalised on the recent growth in interest in Taxidermy, but other art-based subjects have also been covered.

The third area to be tested was to open the museum to the public in the traditional sense; open days were held during school holidays and the public was able to view the specimens at leisure and talk to staff. No restrictions on age were imposed and participants were offered the opportunity to explore a select number of specimens in detail through the use of mobile technology.

Entrance to seated events and workshops were controlled by using the ticket booking web site “Eventbrite”. This service does levy a surcharge on ticket prices and we wondered if this might deter some people. However, this was not measures and so far there have not been any comments on this. To notify the public of future events we sent out advance notifications of seminars and workshop through our extensive e-mail list. We advertised around the college using mail shots and electronic notice-boards. We also used social media to advertise and encourage people to buy tickets. With limited funds, and recent changes in staff in the Press and Communications Office of the college, we have not been able so far to place adverts in printed media such as “Time Out”. However, this may change.

Our capacity for a seated event is 100, whilst that for a workshop is around 25. Free-standing capacity is about 200.

To understand better where best to focus our attention we pooled the data from surveys conducted both on-line (by email) and in person at public events. Distinction was made between those that had attended a previous event and those who were first time visitors.

# Results

At each seminar (and workshop) it was found that roughly 75% of the audience had been to the museum before, and were therefore on the museum’s mailing list. The remaining 25% were first-time attendees. These figures were reversed during the open days with the majority of attendees being first time viewers.

The results indicate that public interest in the museum is considerable and remains constant. Attendance at seated events regularly attains near capacity. Workshops regularly sell-out with a small number placed on a waiting list for cancellations. Based on numbers attending alone it is evident that interest in our activities has not diminished since initial trials in 2011/12.

*Audience type:*

 Initially, most members of the public were attracted by the unique collection and the sense that they were able to access a venue that, until recently, was off-limits. The data collected both analytically and anecdotally indicates a complex audience make up. No one single audience type can be identified. Whilst initially there was a strong indication that we attracted a niche audience, one that might be considered “London Insider”, as more people have accessed the museum, and our mailing list increased, then audience characteristics have become more diverse.

The data generated are given in table 1 below.

Table 1 % attending all events and identifying with a particular audience type. Categories defined by The Museum of London.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Audience type  | % identifying with this description Who had attended previous events  | %identifying with this description who had not been to the museum before  |
| Day Tripper  | 13  | 0  |
| London Insider  | 26  | 15  |
| Time-poor Professional  | 15  | 8  |
| Cultural Connoisseurs  | 15  | 15  |
| Self-Developers  | 15  | 15  |
| Intellectual Tourist  | 7  | 31\* (curiously high)  |

We asked all attendees to tell us (Table 2) how they had heard about the museum and event they were attending:

Table 2: communication of events

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method  | Those who had attended a previous event %  | Those who had not been to the museum before %  |
| Mailing list  | 70  | 4  |
| Social media  | 20  | 8  |
| Time-Out magazine  | 5  | 42  |
| Word of Mouth  | 5  | 31  |
| Some other way  |   | 15  |

Age distribution was measured by asking respondents to say which age bracket they fell under. This data can be found in table 3. We did not measure how many ‘under 20 year olds’ visited but noted this by observation. Although of no direct relevance, curriculum-based activity and hence student numbers of visitors have risen sharply since 2013/14. Student societies are now using the museum as a venue for receptions, and in the two years 2012/13 to 2014/15 approximately 1600 students have visited through receptions held in the museum.

Table 3 age distribution of members of public attending different events

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age bracket  | % Attending evening seminar  | % Attending a weekend workshop  | % Attending an openday  |
| 20-30  | 28  | 42  | 50  |
| 30-40  | 45  | 48  | 23  |
| 40-50  | 22  | 7  | 15  |
| 50-60  | 5  | 3  | 4  |
| 60+  | 0  | 0  | 8  |

When asked what first attracted the visitor to the museum, we received some interesting responses. One attendee mentioned ‘the idea of being able to see what has previously been hidden away’ suggesting that the novelty of the specimens, once kept behind closed doors, is appealing to the public. Another replied saying that they wanted to take advantage of this ‘rare opportunity to visit and appreciate the collection’ while others referenced the ‘macabre element’ of a collection like this. Many came after having seen the museum featured on television programmes and others purely because of ‘intrigue and curiosity’ as to ‘how the human body works and what happens when it goes wrong’. One respondent went as far as to say that ‘the specimens are of more interest than the Huntarian’! These answers suggest that, contrary to popular belief amongst many medical professionals in the Institution, there is a real interest in medical specimens from the public for a number of different reasons, all of which are valid enough to warrant access

*Audience participation:*

All visitors to the open days were asked if they wanted to borrow a tablet PC to be able to scan and read data from some of the specimens. Visitors were also offered log-in details to the QM Events server from their own devices (Smartphones). The majority opted for the latter; presumably encouraged by the novelty of being able to exploit the technology. It was found that visitors did not spend as much time as expected exploring the specimens in this manner.

All participants at seated seminars were invited to question and debate with guest speakers and the average question time ran for approximately 15 to 20 minutes. By offering a glass of wine and some light snacks we aimed to create a social occasion. This was particularly true for the workshops, especially those in taxidermy, and most enjoyed the relaxed and informal nature of the event.

The museum has a great appeal for families and it was noted at our open days rather than being uninterested children from ages 6 to 15 were extremely engaged with the specimens and continuously asked questions about specific diseases. The most common comment was “sick”, wicked” or “look at this one”!

*Audience growth:*

When asked if they had any suggestions or feedback about their overall visit, one respondent specifically requested ‘events for children’ as her son is “nearly 11 and fascinated by everything in [the] museum”. The majority of them also said they would come back to see the 2nd and 3rd floors if and when they eventually open to the public. One visitor said ‘we think the museum is amazing and have told everyone we know about it’. In fact, 96% of our visitors said they would recommend us to friends and family, which is a huge testament to their impression of the museum.

# Conclusions

What we do well:

1. Seated seminars of an educational nature delivered in a relaxed and informal manner creating a social event that is informative and entertaining, where the audience feel they can participate and engage with the speaker, and enjoy a glass of wine and light snacks. The range of topics might vary but the manner of delivery should remain as at present. The length of presentation (about 1 hr) is about right, and the inclusion of refreshments to create a social occasion seems to be of real benefit.
2. Week-end workshops are extremely popular. The taxidermy classes for example do not put pressure on anyone to achieve first class results and most end with a fun afternoon, a stuffed rat and if lucky a prize of a box of chocolates/bottle of wine for their efforts.
3. Special events: concerts, exhibitions, plays and receptions. So many visitors have said that we should entertain wedding receptions in the museum. The large floor area lends itself to exhibitions. Concerts and plays have not figured extensively, but the wide range of services offered by the college (Audio-Visual support, programme design and printing, catering, press and publicity) all offers the opportunity to bring more visitors into the museum.
4. Frequency and timing of events seems to be about right.

What we do not so well:

1. Outreach and schools specials. To expand this is to generate interest and growth not just in the museum, but the college as a whole.
2. Gain “support” from senior academic and clinical academic staff. This is perhaps more relevant to developing our strategy than looking at audiences, but support does need to grow.
3. Advertise effectively around the college: many still do not know of our existence.

After three years of progressive activity the museum has become known as a venue for entertaining educational activities. In three years the mailing list has increased to almost 4000 names. We can conclude that the activities are popular as the drop-out rate from the mailing list is little more than 0.25%. On Social media there are 5100 followers on Twitter. Facebook has over 3000 likes.

In examining audience types and fitting these against our emerging strategy we can reasonably conclude that we should focus on the two areas that we do best at:

1. small audience events (seated to 100) but on a diverse range of topics crossing the disciplines of medicine and the humanities aimed at niche audiences;
2. workshops that are educational.

We can also conclude there is potential to expand our outreach activities with local schools.

# Discussion

The success of the past three years is seen in continued audience support and participation. The college’s agreement to underwrite the museum’s post for the next three years is seen as a vote of confidence in what we are doing and the future of the museum and its management. Focussing on niche audiences and specialising in topics that do not compete with “mainstream” museums has significant benefits. Financially this produces poor returns, but in operating in this manner a balance has been achieved between maintaining a facility that can still offer useful space for curriculum-based activities whilst also bringing the collection into closer contact with the public. This latter point is strategic in its objective: by bringing the public into closer contact with the specimens we open up the dialogue about our existence and create an interest in the college that will filter down to younger visitors who in turn will be the students of the future.

We know from talking to visitors that most should fit the “London Insider” descriptor. These are people who live locally, who want something special, feel they are being offered access to something unique and not mainstream. The museum fits this exactly, whether it is the unusual seminars or the taxidermy workshops. That only a handful of people out of 4000 have asked to be removed from the mailing list can be taken as a good indicator of satisfaction (or laziness!). It is curious that so many (31%) identified themselves as” Intellectual tourists” as this definition is intended to describe those that plan a visit, and go to specific museums and galleries wanting to learn more than the average tourist. The suspicion is that several respondents would like to think of themselves as being both “Intellectual” and local. There is no descriptor to satisfy this claim. It was quite common to find visitors wanting to describe themselves across two or more descriptors and this is not unexpected. What is evident is that we are good at aiming at social groups who do not look for high-end events.

Our strategy, from the outset, was to not compete with established and “upmarket” venues such as The Hunterian or The Royal Society. These have a substantial budget and are well placed to attract a large audience. We do not wish to go down that route. Our strategy has been to focus on niche markets and small audiences. However, the down-side to that is the low financial return. In coming years the college expects the museum’s management to generate enough income to become self-supporting. To concentrate as at present might present difficulties in achieving this.

With time, we will develop and expand our outreach and schools based activities. Finally we plan for the next three years or so to embed our expertise within the Life Sciences Initiative and to bring this to a point where the museum is seen as a focal point in public engagement and activity. We look forward to a time when junior researchers are required to deliver seminars outlining their research to the public and the museum is the venue in which this done. This will generate income and enable the activity to be budgeted in research grant applications.

Finally we look forward to working closely with other local museums, especially the Museum of London, and to eventually resolving the structural issues around the roof.

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