

The New Room/John Wesley's Chapel

Collections Manager Job Description

Introduction:

The New Room/John Wesley's Chapel is a Grade 1 listed building that is open throughout the year as a chapel, visitor attraction, and accredited museum. The Trustees also are responsible for Charles Wesley's House, which is Grade II* listed building and houses its own display, both on Charles and his family and (as part of the new development) on hymnology. The New Room's current opening hours are from Monday to Saturday between 10 am and 4 pm but these are under review. Charles Wesley's House is currently only open for pre-booked parties.

In order to function, the New Room requires has a network of volunteers to deliver a number of different roles to support its work.

The New Room is undergoing a major redevelopment of its facilities. This includes a new building that will contain a brand new library and archives room. The former will house an extensive library relating to Methodist history and hymnology. The new building will have a new room for education purposes (schools, tour groups, etc) and it will release space within the original 1748 building for a total redevelopment of the museum.

It is envisaged that the New Room will join the Association for Heritage Interpretation, the South West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries, the Association for Independent Museums and the Association for Specialist Libraries. It is already linked to Methodist Heritage.

At present, we have funding for three years and are, therefore, seeking to appoint a part-time Collections Manager for a fixed term appointment from April 2017. Thereafter, if further funding is not secured, we will have to look for the team of volunteers to undertake the functions of this role. In light of this possibility, the Collections Manager will be responsible for creating a framework of procedures and development of volunteers' skills so that, if the paid position ends after three years, there is a structure in place to enable volunteers to continue the work.

The Role:

We want to appoint a person who will help us with the development of the new facilities, including the expanded museum, the new library and archives and learning spaces. The appointed person will also lead and help ensure those volunteers who assist in these areas receive appropriate training. The role will also include expanding the current visitor offer and investigating future fund-raising opportunities. The proposed new archives room will not only house existing archives. It has been agreed that part of the former archive collection of Wesley College, Bristol, and which is currently with the John Rylands Library in Manchester, will be given on permanent loan to the New Room. The proposed new resources room will not only contain the existing library (one of the finest collections on Methodist history in the country) but parts of the former libraries of the Epworth Rectory, the Wesley College Library, and the Methodist Music Society. The proposed museum, which has been developed in conjunction with a specialist museum consultancy has already led to two people wishing to offer new artefacts and others may follow.

The Collections Manager will report to the Manager of the New Room/John Wesley's Chapel & Charles Wesley's House and they will become part of the staff team which currently includes the Manager, Education Officer and Community Engagement Officer (full-time positions) and Assistant Manager (part-

time position). Whilst each staff member is responsible for their own particular area of delivery, there is a strong team ethos of collaboration and support to ensure delivery across the whole team. Therefore, the Collections Manager will be required to work occasional evenings or weekends and to take on a duty management role for the whole site for one day every two months.

Additional support for the role of Collections Manager is also available currently from four existing volunteer sources;

- i) the current Chair of the Museum Working Group has overseen the last two museum accreditation returns and has well-established links with Bristol Museums Galleries and Archives, including the Development Officer and Collections Officer who is also the New Room Museum Advisor.
- ii) a Museum Working Group – made up of volunteers (some of whom are also New Room trustees) who have a background in the museum sector and/or particular interest in the work of the New Room museum. They meet three times a year and report to the New Room Strategy Committee.
- iii) Library Volunteers – a team of three, including two retired trained librarians, who are currently updating the library catalogue.
- iv) MODES volunteers – a team of three, including two museum trained archivists, who are currently updating the MODES database.

Key tasks and responsibilities:

- 1) To be responsible for the care and maintenance of the collections in the custody of the New Room. This includes:

In the Museum:

- (a) ensuring that the museum's accreditation standards are upheld.
- (b) being responsible for the interpretation and use of collections in line with the New Room's Museum Interpretation Plan. This includes assisting in the setting up of the new museum, managing a programme of displays and temporary exhibitions, researching and writing exhibition scripts in conjunction with the Warden and other relevant volunteers with appropriate expertise, organising loans to and from the museum and helping produce associated printed and published information.
- (c) being responsible for the acquisition of relevant collections for the museum including developing the existing policies on the collection's management and care and on acquisitions and disposals and implementation of the Forward Plan. It also involves investigating the best methods of obtaining and storing a proposed oral history section.
- (d) cataloguing the museum collection to Spectrum standards.
- (e) helping lead the team of volunteers who help staff the museum and assisting with the organisation of guided tours.
- (f) chairing the Museum Working Group.

- (g) taking responsibility for the extension to the museum that is contained within Charles Wesley's House. (i.e. the historic rooms and the museum of hymnology)
- (h) taking active steps to promote and publicise the museum, including the creation and publication of marketing material and updating the Archives and Library section of the New Room website regularly, in order to raise its profile and attract more visitors.
- (i) carrying out consultations with target audiences and ensuring that this feedback informs the development of exhibitions and future plans.

In the Library and Archives:

- (j) ensuring that the contents of the archives and the library are digitally catalogued. This includes upgrading the current card based Library catalogue and working towards bringing it in line with the John Rylands Library cataloguing process and eventually creating an effective database.
 - (k) ensuring that contents of the archives and the library are properly cared for. This includes arranging a rolling rebinding/repair programme for special collection material.
 - (l) chairing the Library Working Group and overseeing any appropriate training of volunteers who help staff the Library.
 - (m) dealing with researchers on pre-booked visits for archives and/or library use.
 - (n) dealing with historical enquiries to the New Room by email, letter and in person.
 - (o) encouraging the use of the library by a wide range of people. This includes working with the Education Officer on activities for family groups (e.g. occasional story telling in the Library) or for certain groups (e.g. leading appropriate sessions for those interested in researching their family tree) and seeing that any entries on the Archives and Library on the New Room website are appropriate.
2. To assist the Community Engagement Officer recruit, supervise and support volunteers who work with the Museum Collection and in the Archives and Library and ensure that training and development needs are identified and met.
 3. To ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place.
 4. To assist the Education Officer in the development and delivery of formal and informal learning programmes (including public talks, educational activities for schools, family activities, and community outreach projects) so as to increase access and engagement with the collections to a wide range of audiences.
 5. To liaise with other Methodist Heritage sites and co-operate in any initiatives and ventures that are supported by the Methodist Heritage Officer and the Methodist Heritage Committee.
 6. To submit a report at each meeting of the Trustees, and, where appropriate, be available to attend if requested.

Person Specification:

Essential:

- degree or professional qualification in museum, library or archive work
- experience of working in a museum or heritage establishment
- experience in ensuring diverse audiences are accessing and engaging with the collection
- experience of research using a range of sources
- ability to use Microsoft Office and MODES database
- knowledge of Spectrum standards
- computer literate with the ability to use the internet for research purposes
- good oral and written communication skills and telephone manner
- good administrative skills combined with being reliable and punctual
- ability to use own initiative and work independently as well as to work as part of a team
- ability to organise, supervise and inspire volunteers
- desire to give the New Room an important role within the local community
- ability to convey a passion for heritage and bring the past alive through the development and use of the collections
- ability to engage and educate people to ensure an enjoyable experience of using the museum, archives and library

Desirable:

- adaptable and able to come up with new solutions as required because the New Room is in an evolving situation
- excellent customer care skills
- knowledge of Health & Safety legislation and safe working practices

Additional information:

- This role description contains the principal accountabilities relating to this post and does not describe in detail all the duties required to carry them out. There will, from time to time, be a variation of duties depending on needs.
- The person appointed must be someone who is in sympathy with the calling of the Methodist Church which is 'to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.'

Terms and Conditions:

Place of work: The New Room/John Wesley's Chapel, 36 The Horsefair, Bristol, BS1 3JE

Reports to: New Room Manager

Hours: The post is 20 hours per week - 2 fixed days and 1 flexible day. From April 2017, the New Room will be open 7 days a week; its provisional hours will be Monday to Saturday from 10.30am to 4pm and Sunday from 1pm to 4pm. It is envisaged that a 'core' pattern of hours for the role will be agreed but significant flexibility is required, including evening and weekend working due to the nature of the post.

Terms of appointment: 3-year fixed term contract

Disclosure: Due to the nature of this post, the appointment will be subject to a satisfactory criminal record check from the Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales. The appointment is also made subject to the satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period.

Starting date: Monday 3rd April 2017

Remuneration: £28,000 per annum (£14,000 pro-rata)

Sick Pay: Entitlement in accordance with the Methodist Church terms and conditions of employment.

Holiday Entitlement: 25 days per annum (12.5 days pro-rata)

Travel expenses: These are paid according to guidelines produced by the New Room Trustees.

Pension: A pension arrangement will be established with the Lay Employees' Pension Scheme of the Methodist Church (or other provider if you wish and we agree) with a contribution of 6% of salary by you and by us.

Health & Safety: The post holder will be subject to the Methodist Council's Health & Safety policy

Equal Opportunities: The post holder will be subject to the Methodist Council's Equal Opportunities policy

Application Process:

There is no formal application form. Please provide;

- 1) Your contact details (name, address, e-mail and telephone)
- 2) An up to date Curriculum Vitae which shows your qualifications and experience for the post
- 3) In no more than 8 A4 pages, please state why you wish to be the Collections Manager and what qualities you think you would bring to the role
- 4) The names (and contact details) of two referees who can offer testimony to your suitability for the post. These should be people who know you in a work and/or personal context and who can testify to your character, talents, and achievements.

Deadline for applications: 12 noon on Friday 17th February 2017

E-mail notification sent to short-listed applicants: Tuesday 21st February 2017

Interviews: Tuesday 28th February 2017

If the interview date poses you with a problem, please state that and the reason why in your letter of application.

Applications should be either e-mailed or posted to the Manager of the New Room.

If you have any queries, please contact the Manager either by e-mail (info@newroombristol.org.uk) or telephone (0117 9264740)

Gary Best - Warden of the New Room

David Worthington – Manager of the New Room