# Supervisor Reports

## Academic Supervisor Report:

**Annie Tindley**

Overall project: Abbie has demonstrated exceptional organisation around the core research of the project and thought carefully about a diverse range of methods to deliver that work to a diverse range of audiences. She has been ambitious in terms of the scope of the underpinning research, with a fairly broad theme – although one which acts as a very effective hook for audiences – and applying that comparatively across place and period. Audiences are able to engage deeply with that research via her digital presence and repository, which also provides an effective on-going programming for the project and event series, as well as opportunity for new, digital-only audiences.

Taxidermy and Tipples event: this was overall, very well run, with minute and extremely effective attention to detail. She coped extremely well with some long gaps in communication with the key partner and some last minute changes, demonstrating flexibility and an awareness of the constraints and pressures non-academic partners work under. She put in huge amounts of effort to generate an excellent turnout for the event at very short notice, and worked hard to generate a good ‘energy’ in the room, making it comfortable, interactive, stimulating. Two small reflective points:

1. For future events, it is worth thinking about how to greet attendees as they come in – not just for registration purposes, but so there is a clear welcome or signage and they know where to go or sit.

2. Hybridity: budget constraints meant that professional support for the online live stream was not possible. Overall, it was a success and online attendees were able to engage in the Q&A and hopefully get a sense of the event overall (even if not taking part in the wine tasting). Post COVID there is certainly a much greater expectation around online / hybrid events, but it might be worth considering for the future whether if there are budget constraints, it is too much to try and do both.

Overall, Abbie has worked extremely hard across a wide range of project and event outputs and has been rewarded with a very successful event and a rich digital resource.

## External Supervisor Report:

**Ruth Sheldon**

As an external supervisor of Abbie Blackwell I must point out first and foremost how engaged and dedicated she was to producing the Hedonistic Histories event at the Great North Museum. Hedonistic Histories is clearly a subject that has a great deal of importance and interest for Abbie, we were very happy to support her in producing her event at the Great North Museum.

As the Public Engagement Officer at the Great North Museum my role is heavily focused on attracting new audiences stated in our Audience Development Plan 2021/22, specifically the 18-30 audience and those in our targeted ‘Culture Segments’ (from Morris Hargreaves McIntyre), these are audiences which fall outside of our core, repeat visit audience members who tend to visit frequently with young children. They are an audience that would be interested in visiting the museum after hours for a bespoke museum experience. Something a bit different to our everyday standard offer. The audience for Hedonistic Histories was attended by a wide age range but many appeared to be in the 18-30 category and on speaking with a number of people it seemed for many, this was their first visit to the museum. Hedonistic Histories was successful in bridging two targets of our key audience development plan, new visitors and visitors in the 18-30 age bracket.

Hedonistic Histories was incredibly well attended, considerably better than other events we have hosted during the daytime for similar age categories. As a comparison, some daytime sessions we ran recently had between 5 and 12 people booked on and Abbie managed to secure 50 bookings for her event, the nature and content of these events was a little different, but the target audience was similar. This is a great testimony to the effort Abbie put into promotion and publicity of the event, especially given the short planning timescale (resulting from plan changes) and last-minute changes which needed to be addressed in the days before the event took place. It is difficult to capture the 18-30 audience during an evening event but even more challenging to capture this audience at a daytime event, our daytime events are well attended by people with young families and children but less so by younger adults visiting independently so Abbie should be very proud of her achievements

In the planning of Hedonistic Histories Abbie came up against a number of other challenges too, which is completely to be expected with event planning. These challenges included a change in the design of the event from an evening to day time event, a reduction in the expected funding support, loss of advertising support and items ordered online not being as expected. Abbie overcame all of these challenges calmly and professionally and always managed to find a suitable solution. She was flexible and able to adapt to a day time event, she adapted the running order of the programme perfectly to fit the lower budget and when the tablecloths arrived, which had been ordered online, were far less luxurious than expected she adapted by creatively layering these with some fabrics that we already had onsite at the museum. Any challenges were professionally managed by Abbie and most importantly, the audience were unaware of any challenges that had occurred behind the scenes, the finished product was smooth running and proficiently executed.

Throughout the event process Abbie has been confident, competent and open minded, she has been eager to learn and taken advice well. She has demonstrated great interest in planning events and her attitude towards the event as a whole, from pre to post production has been positive and uplifting. She thrives under the timescale pressures of event planning and works exceptionally hard to meet her high expectations, which is evident when experiencing the finished ‘product’ of Hedonistic Histories. The finished event was an informative, enjoyable, fun and unique experience which has great potential for development both at the Great North Museum as well as potential to develop the idea nationally. We have already invited Abbie back to join us at the ‘Being Human’ Festival launch event in November 2022, to share some key aspects of the Hedonistic Histories brand and we hope to develop further events with her at the museum going into 2023 and beyond. Abbie should feel very proud of her achievements and I have no doubt the future series of the Hedonistic Histories events will also be a great success and credit to her as a creative practitioner.