

Appendix 5: Guide to writing object labels

Object labels should provide factual and contextual information about objects displayed in an exhibition. Every object in an exhibition should be described on a label.

A label can refer to one object or a group. If you describe more than one object on a label, you should ensure the objects referred to are grouped together.

It is important not to overwhelm visitors with too much information on a label and to present the information in a clear format that is easy to read. Labels should:

- Detail the type of object, its name and approximate date
- Be no longer than 50 words
- Be printed in a sans serif font, for example Arial or Tahoma, no less than 14pt in size
- Be printed in colours and on a background recommended in the RNIB guidelines for Good Design. The guidelines are available from www.rnib.co.uk
- Follow the same format throughout the exhibition

The following format was used to produce the object labels for the *Action Women* exhibition during its initial tour. Use them as a reference when developing your labels:

Object label format:

1. Object simple description

e.g. Programme for Hungerford Women's Institute meetings

2. Object date

e.g. 1933

3. Contextual information (no more than 50 words, ideally 30 or less)

Include information about the function the object had/has, the circumstances of its production and then its place within the history of the organisation as appropriate.

e.g. Women's Institutes meet once a month. A programme for each meeting is planned in advance and distributed to members. It will usually include a demonstration or talk by a guest speaker. This programme was planned by members of Hungerford WI for their meetings in 1933.

4. Owner/Source

e.g. Berkshire Federation of Women's Institutes

When printed, the labels for the *Action Women* exhibition on its initial tour looked like this:

Programmes for WI meetings in Wales

1925, 1945, 1962, 1998

Each WI plans a programme for its monthly meeting to reflect members' interests and the educational objectives of the organisation. After the formal business, there is a talk or demonstration by a member or guest, time to socialise and possibly a competition.

Lent by Gwent Federation of Women's Institutes, Barbara Williams and Ann Webster

St. Anne's WI teacup

1920s

Llanover WI tablecloth

1925

WI cup, saucer and plate

950s

WI promotional leaflet

1970s

WIs bring women from a community together. At every meeting members take it in turns to provide refreshments; over a cup of tea or coffee there is an opportunity to talk. During the organisation's early years many ceramic companies sold personalised teacups to WIs for use during meetings.

Lent by The Women's Library, Gwent Federation of Women's Institutes and Shirenewton WI

If you have raised funds to cover design and printing costs, you may choose to have your labels printed commercially. Alternatively, using the format and design suggestions above, you could format and print your own labels in a word processing programme.

When printed it is advisable to mount your labels on cardboard or foam board to stop them curling or falling over when on display. For a clean finish use spray mount to attach your labels to the support.