

# folk life

## NEWSLETTER

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Trinity College, Dublin

THE SOCIETY FOR FOLK LIFE STUDIES

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016

This year's conference will be held in Dublin, and run from the evening of 8 September until lunchtime on 11 September. Our accommodation will be in Trinity College at the very centre of the city.

The Easter Rising of 1916 in Dublin marked a major point in Irish history and in the development of the Irish Republic. In recent years, increasing attention has also been given to the place of the Battle of the Somme, 1916, in Irish history. These events, and the way in which they are recalled and remembered, are

important both historically and symbolically. To visit Dublin in their centenary year is therefore a very fitting aspect of SFLS activity. While the events of 1916 will be a significant part of our programme, we will also seek to set these in wider historical, social and cultural contexts.

The conference programme is being developed by Linda Ballard and Lillis Ó Laoire and there are still opportunities to propose papers. The themes of 'memorialisation' and 'identity' will be an important aspect of the conference. The programme will include a visit to the National Folklore Collection at University College Dublin, as well as places key to an understanding of the cultural significance of 1916.

If you would like to contribute a paper, please contact the Conference Secretary, Steph Mastoris ([steph\\_mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk](mailto:steph_mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk)).

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## **A free student place at the 2016 conference**

Once again the Society is offering a free place at its annual conference to a student in full-time education. All fees and the cost of bookable meals will be included, but the person attending will have to pay for his or her own travel. To be considered for this opportunity, a person must not have attended the annual conference before. A short review of the conference will be required from the successful applicant.

Applications for this free place should be made to the Conference Secretary, Steph Mastoris ([steph.mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk](mailto:steph.mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk)), by the end of June.

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The Society's  
CONFERENCE 2017  
is to be held in  
South West Scotland.

Details will be posted on the Society's website in due course.

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## **CONFERENCE 2015**

The conference was opened by the President Linda Ballard, she welcomed everyone to the conference in the Black Country.

### **An introduction to the Black Country Living Museum**

A lively and informative presentation by David began the formal proceedings. For clarification he gave a definition of the Black Country, or rather not, as there is no consensus of the area the term encompasses. The name Black Country is credited to Queen Victoria, the story goes that whilst travelling through on a train she insisted the blinds be brought down so she didn't have to look at the area 'where the men, women, children and houses were all black'. Although this story is probably not

true the term Black Country does have its roots in the industry of the area and of course still survives today. David illustrated his point with J.W. Turner's image of Dudley and noted that Turner was depressed by its appearance.

Many notables have commented on or had connections with the area. Dicken's *Old Curiosity Shop* refers to the Black Country '...dismal, noisy with its lurid red sky, throngs of people everywhere and its non-stop working rota'.

James Naismith, the inventor of the steam hammer noted that 'in the area the trees struggle to survive, a price we (the nation) had to pay for industry.'

Dudley can boast it was the birthplace of the first successful steam engine, invented by a Devonian Thomas Newcomen in 1712 and the museum itself can claim to own the only full-sized replica engine.

In 1769 the first canal in the area was opened, a consequence of which was the price of coal being halved. The canal system connecting the Black Country with the wider world was hugely significant. By the 1850s there were 159 miles of canals in the Black Country alone. A mere decade later it had the densest network of canals in the country.

Of course the reason the area was so industrialised was due to its rich natural resources of coal, iron ore, clay and limestone. Indeed it had the richest coal seam in the country, mining having started there in the 13th century.

Another claim to fame is that one of the Dudley foundries did the iron work for the Chrystal Palace in 1851.

The settlements in the area grew organically and consequently were random, assorted areas with small farm steadings, rail workers and metal workers all mixed in together.

Geographical areas within the Black Country tended to specialise in certain trades, so for example Wolverhampton was known for its locks, anchors and tinplate ware, Dudley was associated with fenders and from the mid 19th century sanitary ware.

1860 saw the peak of iron production and by 1872 coal production too had peaked. However the Black Country is nothing if not adaptable. Walsall, once

famous for leather goods was by the 1920s making electrical switchgears.

This adaptability of course meant that certain ways of living were passing into history. It was in the 1950s that the idea of a museum was first muted. If it was going to work it had to be an open air museum. The current site was identified and its 26 acres is today put to excellent use.

David then posed the question 'Is the term Black Country' redundant? The emphatic response was 'no'. The Black Country is literally on the map! The Ordnance Survey actually broke their own rules by using the term Black Country as (as we heard at the outset of this presentation) the area cannot be strictly defined.

**Elaine Edwards**

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## **Conference Papers**

### **Dr Paul Collins Black Country Canals**

The first paper of the 2015 conference was a great scene setter for those of us who were less familiar with the history of the Black Country – the world's first industrial landscape. We learned straight away that the region has abundant mineral wealth; coal, ironstone and limestone among others, but it has no navigable rivers which could be used for transport. Therefore the immediate problem for eighteenth century industrial pioneers was how to get this material, once extracted from the ground, to the markets (principally coal into the nearby metropolis of Birmingham). The answer lay with canals, and in an intense twenty eight year period a vast network was constructed, starting with the Birmingham canal in 1768. The chief engineer responsible was James Brindley, who it is generally believed died of exhaustion, so hard did he work on his canal construction projects.

Unlike other parts of Britain, the canal network in the Black Country was not rendered obsolete by the coming of the railways, and it continued as an active working transport network well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

By the 1960s with the growth of road transport the infrastructure was in decline, until the emergence of the canal restoration movement. Canal enthusiasts



Boats moored near Can Lane Wharf

then began to put pressure on a less-than-enthusiastic British Waterways to unblock tunnels and renovate the network, for pleasure boat use. The speaker's marvellous illustrations – many of which are featured in his publications on this subject – made an important point. The canal landscape which we see in the Black Country today preserves most of the waterways on their original lines, and is a testament both to the engineering ability of their builders in the 1700s, and to the determination and foresight of the preservation enthusiasts in the 1960s.

However it is almost completely devoid of the 'superstructure' which existed when the canals were in operation. Most of the timber coal hoppers and chutes used for loading narrow boats, the transhipment sheds used for unloading cargo, and other such canal side structures have long since gone, leaving only the 'pretty bits' – the locks and lock keeper's cottages. It is important that we try to remember the industrial purpose for which the canals were built, when interpreting this landscape today.

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**Matthew Richardson**

### **Nick Haynes Steam Boat *President* – from working boat to preservation**

Following Paul Collins' survey of Black Country Canals, we moved to the story of one particular, and special, canal boat closely associated with the Black Country Living Museum. Indeed, the museum actually owns the steam narrow boat *President*, a wise and forward-looking acquisition back in 1983 of what has become an iconic survivor, still accessible and active on the canal system.

Nick Haynes is Chairman of the Friends of *President*, one of those relatively small volunteer support groups which invariably seem to punch above their weight when the occasion demands and which act as both catalyst and glue to the on-going challenges of preservation. The group is proud that it 'operates and cares for *President* on behalf of the Black Country Living Museum'.

Nick explained the significance of *President* and the reasons why it has become part of the National Historic Fleet. It is the only surviving example restored back to the 'original' of the 31 steam powered narrow boats in the fleet of the largest canal carrying company then operating on the canals when it was built in 1909. It was No. 195 in a fleet built between 1889 and 1931.

Fellows, Morton & Clayton Ltd (FMC for short) was itself an amalgamation of smaller eponymous companies with a strong Black Country background, whose footprint was huge, especially on one of the core routes for canal goods traffic, between Birmingham and the Midlands with London. The



The Presidents' crew

special role of the steam narrow boat fleet was to operate a regular fly-boat (that is canal-speak for non-stop) service and thus maintain some sort of blue-riband status.

It's the steam-powered bit which these days attracts the greatest public interest, and clearly that of the Friends group members too. *President* is taken to various waterway events around the canal by its volunteer crew, acting not least as a mobile promotion both for the museum and for its own place in canal history, and as an interpretation of traditional ways of life on the canal system. Not surprisingly, the Friends and *President* play a big part in the FMC reunion which takes place at Braunston every two years.

Lots of detail flowed from Nick Haynes's talk. *President* cost FMC £600 when built at its Saltley Dock in Birmingham; it is 70ft long and 7ft wide in true narrow boat style, with a working draft of 3ft 6ins. The hull is a composite with riveted wrought-iron sides and a 3ins elm bottom.

There was a discipline about working life on these fast FMC steamers. The Midlands to London run was achieved in 54 hours working non-stop, the all-male crew of four operating four-hour shifts through day and night. Locks were set ready for their passage.

Much of *President*'s steam working life was spent on this route; she rarely ventured further north. The steam era for these boats was relatively short, *President* being converted to diesel, a 15hp Bolinder engine, in 1925. Cargo carrying continued until the 1950s. Her later career was as part of British Waterways' maintenance fleet, working on the Macclesfield and other canals, which Nick described as the 'drab part' of her story.

Rescue into preservation and restoration to steam power by two experienced canal enthusiasts from 1974 onwards is a chapter in itself. Nick summarised the sourcing of a suitable boiler and other fittings required to give an authentic return to the original 1909 formation.

Maintenance, renewal and health & safety considerations form a big part of the Friends' concerns today; the five-yearly boiler inspection is always a challenge, and often expensive. A replacement engine had to be purchased in 2002, part of a three-year refit costing £50,000.

The 'team' is completed by *Kildare*, which might be described today as a 'support boat', but this rather belies its proper role in canal working tradition. It too is an FMC boat, built in 1913 in West Bromwich (another link with the Museum here), and is an unpowered 'butty' boat, the other boat in the pairing which traditionally worked the canal system. The Museum acquired her in 1991 and restoration by the Friends followed. She now provides their crew accommodation.

To celebrate *President*'s centenary in 2009, the Friends published a history of its first one hundred years, and copies are available from the BCLM bookshop, or visit [www.nb-president.org.uk](http://www.nb-president.org.uk). Our speaker put in a good plug for this fund-raiser and was warmly thanked for his lively, informative and relevant contribution to the conference proceedings.

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David Viner

### Mel Weatherley

#### Real Lives, Real Stories – working lives as a learning resource

Weatherley's role as Head of Learning at the Black Country Living Museum informed this interesting paper, in which she explored mechanisms for interpreting information in the setting of an open-air museum. She explained the intention underlying her work as assisting museum visitors to develop deeper engagement with and understanding of the past, and to provide opportunities for learning new skills. She emphasised the importance of an experiential framework for learning, and highlighted the role of storytelling within this programme. Personal experience narratives, the life stories of real individuals, are central to this form of interpretation as presented at the Black Country Living Museum.

Weatherley first outlined a range of generally applicable issues relating to the narratives and to their application within the programme. While available narratives are factual and are underpinned by various forms of evidence, these may of themselves be fragmentary in nature. While the stories are authentic, they may pose ethical questions in relation to the lived experience of named individuals, so that certain information may be withheld as a matter of policy. However, as an important aspect of the activity of learning, through this programme visitors are encouraged to develop

the capacity to enquire and to interrogate the evidence provided for them, in this way they themselves become narrators as they piece the story together, so that while the full picture of an individual life may not be actively articulated, the evidence is available for those who wish to develop the narrative in the fullest possible form. In addition to being authentic, this style of interpretation needs to be challenging and relevant for visitors, giving them the chance to interact emotionally, intellectually and physically. Costumed interpreters are essential to the delivery of the programme.

Weatherley then outlined a case study the specific narrative of Mary Elizabeth Ward, which is used as part of the interpretative programme. Ward's story was of a life lived by and on canals in the first half of the twentieth century. Hers was a moving and fascinating story, providing excellent examples of exactly the issues addressed by Weatherley and clearly illustrating the challenges (to both interpreters and visitors) of using such narratives for this direct form of interpretation. Ward's story brings visitors face to face with the realities of a life lived in this way, and with its inherent values. While the story was of the actualities of the experiences of a specific individual, it also had a universal quality and revealed a great deal about this way of life. Weatherley's paper thus allowed her hearers to share aspects of the experiences of museum visitors and to engage for themselves both intellectually and emotionally with this form of interpretation.

Concluding her paper, Weatherley broadened her canvas to consider some of the more general challenges of presenting costumed interpretation in an open-air museum, acknowledging questions in relation to the 'sanitisation' (literal and metaphorical) of museum environments and in relation to the challenge of presenting stories of industrial lives in settings in which entire processes cannot be presented. She also tackled the question relating to demonstrations of such processes as spectacle, rather than as interpretation. These issues are familiar to anyone who attempts to engage in activity of this sort, and Weatherley provided several interesting and valuable insights, provoking a considerable amount of discussion among delegates throughout the rest of the conference. This approach to 'living museum' interpretation, engagingly described by Weatherley as a 'work in progress', is one to which she brings great expertise coupled with imagination and commitment.

**Linda May Ballard**

## **Dr John Beckerson From Wakes Week to Heritage Tourism – the Isle of Man steam railways**

Dr. Beckerson treated us to a thoroughly professional presentation delivered with the passion of an enthusiast. Having been brought up on the Isle of Man, his knowledge of its railway system is first hand as he travelled extensively on the railway as a youngster but this knowledge is backed up by detailed research.

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the Isle of Man started to develop as a holiday destination. It was seen to be a step above Blackpool and became a 'playground' for more wealthy people from north-west England, even being known as 'the Naples of the North'. There was a need for improved transport to enable visitors to travel round the island but it was not until 1873 that the first line was built. There was 11 ½ miles of 3ft gauge track. It reached Port Erin in 1874. Subsequently other branch lines were built but it is only the Douglas to Port Erin line that survives. The railway was privately run and was very successful with a peak of activity in the 1890s. The First World War was a difficult time as tourism virtually ceased but the railway was saved by an internment camp being set up on the Island. The camp required supplies and stores to support up to 23,000 prisoners, and the railway was used for this.

In the inter-war years the Isle of Man bus service started providing competition for the railway, but the General Manager Alan Sheard was committed to the railway and used bus revenues to subsidise the service. The start of motor cycle races provided good promotional opportunities – the railway would get visitors to some of the best vantage points.

During the Second World War the Island again became an internment camp. The railway was used to transport materials for building the aerodrome, moving 13,000 tons of goods by 1940. Coal was not in short supply as was diesel fuel so the coal-fired steam engines were used extensively. But after the war the railway was declared obsolete. Government surplus lorries were now widely and cheaply available and the steam engines were elderly; the whole thing was getting rundown and shabby. But the railway was still privately operated and it hung on. In 1959 two diesel railcars were purchased and it continued to operate but by 1966 no trains were running.

There was much debate in the House of Keys and elsewhere as to whether the railway was a purely profit making venture, or a public service. By this time it was being recognized for its heritage value. Eventually in 1979 the Isle of Man Government took over the running of the railway, in recognition of its heritage importance and tourism value. Its popularity increased and in 1993 a peak of 35,000 journeys were made.

Unfortunately, the recession hit the Isle of Man as elsewhere, and funding has become increasingly tight. The railway has broadened its appeal with 'Thomas the Tank Engine' days and 'Santa Specials' as well as adding a dining car for special occasions.

From a successful private commercial railway through a period of decline and near closure, the Isle of Man steam railway is now a nationalised heritage asset giving pleasure to thousands of visitors.

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**Catherine Wilson**

## **Heather Holmes Working into Steam Preservation: Steam Ploughing in Scotland**

In her introduction, Heather Holmes noted that she would be tracing the long journey experienced by the practice of steam ploughing in Scotland. So, what exactly is steam ploughing? Clearly and logically, and with the assistance of well-chosen images, it was explained that this method of ploughing was developed as an aspect of the use of steam in British agriculture from the 1840s onwards. It became a practical method in the mid 1850s, and increasingly used in the 1860s and 1870s, the two decades considered to be the first golden age of steam ploughing. But steam ploughing continued to be used in Scotland to varying extents into the twentieth century, and in a few instances until well after the Second World War.

Because of the technical complexities of developing an effective means to plough and cultivate the land using steam power, a number of systems were developed by the 1860s: one of them became the most widely used, namely the double engine system, in which two engines were placed on opposite endrings of a field and a plough pulled between them. Its developer and maker was John Fowler & Co., Leeds, whose name became synonymous with steam ploughing. With a set of ploughing engines came a range of tackle: a balance plough (up to 7 furrows), cultivator, or harrows, living van and water cart.



Steam ploughing at the Scottish Ploughing Championships, Kinross-shire, October 2014.  
The engine "Mistress" from 1918 is in the background



Steam ploughing in action

Steam ploughing was a specialist method of ploughing and cultivation. It was well-suited to large and medium sized farms that had large and rectangular sized fields. It could also be used to easily work heavy soils, undertake deep ploughing and land reclamation. It was extensively used in certain districts, and on farms of particular sizes, geography and soil types. Even at this time, England and Scotland had their own distinct traditions and uses of steam ploughing.

The last set of steam ploughing engines in Scotland was reported at work in 1951. What would become thereafter of these magnificent machines?

The development of an institutional framework was key to getting ploughing engines into preservation in Scotland. The collecting of traction engines for 'pleasure and preservation' started in 1947 when Ian N. Fraser of Arbroath, purchased his Marshall steam tractor, *Jingling Geordie*. By the late 1950s and early 1960s in Scotland there were a number of traction engines in preservation.

In 1961 a national body, the Scottish Traction Engine Society, was established. It quickly became affiliated with The National Traction Engine Trust (NTET), already 7 years old, and thus located itself within the wider British traction engine preservation movement.

It provided an important forum for the preservation and exhibition of traction engines, including ploughing ones. It would though take until 2014 for a pair of matched ploughing engines to undertake a ploughing demonstration, this as an outcome of an event commemorated by *Old Glory* magazine in May 2012, with an eye-catching headline : 'Master gets his Mistress back after 50 year gap'. It would be seemly to explain here that *Master* and *Mistress* are both preserved ploughing engines !

In October 2014, *Master* and *Mistress* undertook a demonstration of steam ploughing at the Scottish Ploughing Championships in Kinross. This was a significant event, achieving a number of firsts in Scottish ploughing history.

**Dafydd Roberts**



## **Harriet Devlin** **‘Care and Conservation – the challenges of managing the historic built environment’**

Devlin’s impressive experience as a researcher, lecturer, author and practitioner on the subject of historic and listed building conservation, qualifies her uniquely to discuss her subject. Concentrating mainly on care and conservation of listed buildings in England and Northern Ireland, her copiously illustrated talk demonstrated the complex diversity of listings. These encompassed not only grand historic houses, but of course castles and vernacular buildings. More difficult to define, and perhaps less obvious were individually listed parts of structures such as staircases, locks on canals, some of the red K2 phone boxes, a spaghetti junction on the M6, various gardens, a public lavatory and the battlefield at Edge Hill. It seemed poignant, as we heard her speak at the Black Country Living Museum, that industrial sites like the potteries at Stoke on Trent have also been listed as have 18 World Heritage Sites in England. The increasingly huge number of such listings is challenging in the face of a recent 32% decrease in staff involved in handling applications for listed status (although volunteers are also involved). The designation and protection afforded by listed status is divided into Grade 1, Grade 2 & Grade 2\*. 92% of these are made up of Grade 2 listings and surprisingly, listed status doesn’t legally force an owner to look after a structure, but makes unauthorised work a criminal offence.

Many of our conference audience she identified as living in pre 1919 buildings. On a practical level, she encouraged the use of traditional materials such as lime mortar, in such old buildings, to allow them to ‘breathe’ to keep dry, rather than covering them with modern impervious waterproof cement render or paint. Slides of ‘strap pointing’ round early stonework showed damage to stone work where lime mortar would have allowed it to survive. Images of blocked gutters, damp walls and ferns growing out of drains, drove home the importance of frequent simple maintenance to prevent damp. She identified Beech trees as producing such abundant detritus that adjacent gutters needed unblocking four times per year, and Buddleia was shown thriving high up on a National Trust building. Castle Drogo built by Lutyens in the 1920s was shown as a reminder that architects could also be responsible for

poor design and detailing, resulting in a structure that was ‘literally a drain’ with internal water ingress, and inherent maintenance problems. More positively it was explained that money is available for conservation, and £456 million was for example awarded 2013/14.

A passionate custodian for early buildings, she fronts the MA in Conservation of the Historic Environment at Birmingham City University, yet manages to find time to run practical courses on use of lime mortar at weekends. To spread the word, she persuaded a mayor to climb a ladder, complete with mayoral chain, and appear on TV cleaning out historic gutters. Her message to go home and clean out gutters, as well as simple advice about natural ventilation (by opening windows on dry days) and precautionary maintenance to reduce damp indoors is sensible.

Advice about maintenance is available from the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, who have 40 years of experience in building and caring for their own substantial collection of traditional buildings. See also online advice and courses: <http://www.bcu.ac.uk/courses/conservation-of-the-historic-environment-ma-pgdip>

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**Claudia Kimmonth**

## **Steve Burrow** **Valuing Visitors & Caring for the Collections: Case Studies from St Fagans**

The particular ‘collection’ under scrutiny here are the buildings of this open-air museum and their environment. Over 550,000 annual visits make St Fagans one of Wales’ most visited sites, with most expecting a “good day out”. Steve – relatively new to his post and not a historic buildings specialist – is, by his own admission, on a steep learning curve to meet both visitor expectations and legislative requirements for the sector.

Overall, the conundrums facing the museum, as it moves forward at a time of major redevelopment, relate to the authenticity – accessibility continuum which is familiar to most in the heritage sector.

Firstly, the authenticity of the buildings varies according to when they arrived. In Iorwerth Peate’s time, the rural environment of Wales was under

threat. At this stage, the use of original materials was not deemed crucial; rather the appearance of a 'patina of age' to underline the buildings' historic significance was thought desirable – even where it might not have existed. Later buildings demonstrate, in contrast, the use of 'authentic' original materials and processes. The resulting cleanness of line and decoration – such as the new 'medieval' wall paintings in St Teilo's church – can perplex the visitor, for whom the idea of authenticity might not embrace such recreations.

This leads to the more philosophical consideration of who decides what counts as 'authentic'. Only 8% of visitors claim any level of expertise in the heritage on display at St Fagans and the need to provide contextual information to the site is key. Social media means it is now possible to tease out the levels of misinformation visitors bring: *TripAdvisor* comments show that some believe the site shows "a sense of place" – even though such a configuration of buildings would never have existed in Wales! Will the relocation of the Archaeology Department from Cardiff to St Fagans only serve to heighten the confusion?

Steve's search for clues has led him to other heritage sites: first-person narrative guides? Costumed staff? Touch everything on display? The profusion of different approaches does, of course, raise more questions than provide answers.

The final section of Steve's presentation focussed on one area where the authenticity – accessibility conundrum has to be resolved within a specific framework and timeline: the needs of those with disabilities. The Museum Association Code of Ethics and the 2010 Equality Act require "reasonable adjustments" to be made. What can or should these be? And what might they do to the 'authenticity' of the buildings? Consultants, working with disabled individuals - who make up 15% of St Fagans' total visitors – identified rough surfaces, gradients and kerbs as a – literal – stumbling block. Dark interiors, steep stairs, uneven floors – should they be replaced? The answer might lie in not so much changing the buildings as changing the practices of their use. The processes of the inaccessible bakery could be shown to visitors outside the building, for example.

There is much still to be thrashed out. It is hoped that St Fagans, in its size and diversity, can embrace all

visitor needs to provide the 'beauty of the real' in many and varied ways.

**Sarah Blowen**

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## **David McDougall Progress Brick by Brick**

This paper, from a former curator at the Black Country Living Museum, was a fascinating insight into the methods by which the museum was created.

The organisation came into being through the foresight of Dudley Council, who recognised that there was a unique industrial tradition in the Black Country which was in danger of being lost. In the mid 1970s a plot of land was set aside, which at that time contained only a canal arm and the remains of a Lime Kiln, at that time being used to hold toxic sewage slurry. Over the next 39 years the site was cleaned up, and a series of carefully selected buildings from across the region were dismantled and reconstructed here.

The speaker and the director at the time developed their techniques for building reconstruction with each project. Many of the methods which they employed, as the speaker freely admitted, would be frowned upon today. Stone and brick were regularly 'redeployed' sometimes to the detriment of other sites, and a photograph of two lads on a Youth Training Scheme placement, ripping up sets from a street around 1976 raised a smile, for they did not have a 'hi viz' vest or a hard hat between them.

Initially, bricks were not individually numbered, as this was not thought necessary. Indeed, in the case of the furnace chimneys on the site, the standard technique was to first bring the structure down with explosives, as this was faster and it did not damage the bricks! With later projects however each brick in a structure was individually numbered as it came down, leading to a higher degree of integrity in the later reconstruction. The best example of this was perhaps the eighteenth century Bottle and Glass pub, in which the level of reconstruction was so precise that painted signs on the exterior brickwork subsequently reappeared.

Throughout the development of the museum, careful consideration had been given to what were

archetypal industries in the Black Country, and attention was paid to vernacular styles of building construction, local examples of tow paths, and building styles. All of this informed what was finally included and what was not. The speaker was frank and honest in his appraisal of which projects had been successful and which had been less so – notably the Newcomen steam engine house, which had been built with modern bricks of a uniform colour, instead of the variegated type which would have been in use in the late 1700s.

**Matthew Richardson**

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### **Irene de Boo**

#### **Sarehole Mill – an eighteenth century water mill fit for the twenty-first century**

Irene de Boo is another of the members of staff of the Black Country Museum who contributed so much to the programme of the conference. She is currently Curator of Industry and Transport, but was speaking about a project for which she was previously curator/manager, at Sarehole Mill, at Hall Green in Birmingham.

The Mill is now one of only two working water mills left in Birmingham. The building was a mixture of Georgian bricks with late Victorian additions. It was almost lost in the 1960s, but was saved by local campaigners mainly perhaps due to some interesting historic local connections – with Matthew Boulton, whose father had leased the mill in its steel rolling days, and also with JRR Tolkien, who had lived nearby as a child – but also perhaps due to the awakening awareness within Birmingham of the need to preserve some of its industrial past.

Irene sketched in the history of the mill and its development from its early days in the late 18th century as a mill sharpening edge tools, drawing wire and rolling sheet metal, through to its incarnation as a flour mill during the 19th century, doing its part to feed the growing industrial population of the city. She had gathered many original documents to elucidate the story, maps, sketches, paintings and photographs from the later period, finally showing it falling into disuse as a mill, the mill pond silting up and changes to the building as it became a florist, surrounded by greenhouses.

Irene's account of the 1960s restoration undertaken by Birmingham Corporation, using funding of £20,000 raised by the local conservation lobby, demonstrated how much building conservation has changed in the intervening years – she described original features lost, new insertions which were to cause later building problems, and emphasised how future problems were exacerbated by the fact that the work and the decision making behind it were not recorded. The fact that the mill pond was not restored was also to cause problems in the use of the machinery until Tolkien's memories of the place came to the rescue, and money was raised to reinstitute the pond to enable flour production once more. In the later restoration, recording of the work was given priority, and Irene detailed the issues which were raised, concern that the restoration had resulted in a place which was too pretty, maybe not sufficiently industrial, questions of related activities which are popular, though not necessarily related to the building, such as pond dipping. She also discussed the practical aspects of relying on local authority funding – the fact that, as ever, capital funding can be found, but maintenance and running costs are a thorny issue, though efficient use of volunteers is helpful.

This paper was a thoughtful and fascinating case study, raising the issues which seem to be perennial, but also demonstrating that it is possible to find ways to restore and use important, but ordinary buildings within a local authority environment, though the final thoughts were that it is now fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but the uncertainty of future funding still hangs over it.

**Christine Stevens**

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### **Graham Worton**

#### **The Black Country – a global destination based upon its cultural and natural heritage**

**Graham Worton's** perspective on the Black Country's history in the context of a view from deep geological time made for a fascinating and thought-provoking presentation. Ranging from the earliest aeons, when lush, green tropical forests grew in the region, to planning for a sustainable future, by emphasising environmental concerns, it placed the intense industrial exploitation of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in a broad context. This panoptic approach linked the earliest life to the present by virtue of the

fact that those primeval forests laid down the carbon deposits that made the region such a focus for later development, culminating in the industrial revolution that gave the region its sobriquet, 'The Black Country.' During the talk, it became apparent that all of the parts connect to a greater whole, allowing a long view to prevail. This inherent breadth of vision empowers a green philosophy for the future demographic and environmental development of the area to proceed in tandem with a re-greening of the region providing an underlying impulse for geoconservation.

**Lillis O'Laoire**

### **Helen Taylor** **Myths and Legends of the Black Country**

Helen Taylor's paper explored the Myths and Legends of the Black Country, an area industrialised since 1685 and by Victorian times was one of the most heavily industrialised areas in Britain. Heavy industry that mined the area turned the air and buildings black. The Black Country can be defined by the following:

- Coal seam
- Iron working
- Industrial in general
- Language
- NOT Birmingham

The Black Country has its own alphabet and is said to be very close to Chaucer's English with many of the words replaced with the letter O for example opple (apple). Helen explained through audio clips and various examples that the letter H is dropped in the language and there is much pride in their accent which has seen a recent resurgent with Aston University in West Brom researching the language / dialect. Black Country folk are keen to retain their local identity and dialect and distinguish the area from Birmingham!

Unique words:

Bostin	good food
Fizziog	face
Ar	our
Caggy	left handed
Wench	young lady

However, in 2008 it was voted the least attractive accent!

Historically the people of the area lived close to their work and were hard workers especially the women – many of whom worked as chainmakers in small workshops in backyards or in larger premises. Most worked 14 hours a day and even pregnant women carried on working until giving birth.

Most of the workers were exploited by middlemen for example children as young as four or five started work as chain workers with a staggering number of children in the workforce up to the 1920s.

Black Country men were known as blunt and fearless – straight to the point. Nevertheless the people, even in hard times, had the ability to laugh at each other – Black Country humour which was seen later in Buggle Annuals recounting ballads and sporting achievements.

In densely populated areas food had to go a long way with bread being a staple diet. Soups were thickened with barley. Pigs were kept as they were cheap to keep and once killed every part of the animal was used and nothing was discarded. Pigs only needed sties and were fed on leftovers. The area became well known for its bread puddings, faggots & peas and bacon.

Beer became an important drink for the workers with Banks, Marstons and Sadlers ever popular. Beer houses and public houses sprang up everywhere with as many as 21 beer houses and 29 public houses in Wilholsen alone which was a renowned locksmiths area. Tea was also an important drink to the workforce.

Families tended to be large with children given their own jobs within the house and most grew vegetables in their gardens.

The paper given by Helen certainly explored the Black Country's proud tradition in heavy industry which gave it its name and she also delved into why the area remained so fiercely distinctive and different in this part of the West Midlands.

**Dylan Jones**

## **Sarah Blown**

### **Spies, debtors, Jacobites and cross-dressers – French industrial espionage in eighteenth-century Britain**

As usual, Sarah regaled us with inspiring research enveloped in some savoury tales of the human factor in technology transfer. She dedicated this paper to Professor John Harris, one of the Ironbridge Institute founders, noting the connections with issues such as women workers' rights and protest to gain involvement in their work. This was especially pertinent in a story of how workers in the eighteenth century were exploited, literally put where you wanted them, if at times lured with offers of a better life on the other side of the Channel, on the condition they brought their skills and equipment with them to boost French know-how in textile technologies, as John Badger did for the *moiré* process. Badger was emblematic of the skillholders sought out for "export" by the likes of John Law, an international businessman with full allegiance to himself, recruited by no less than the French Controller General of Finances to pilfer at will in English technology of the time, when the French elites were setting up their "manufactures" system on their own estates for more industrialized production.

This is also a signal reminder that the actors at the time were often not quite clear about what was going on, nor may they have had a name for it. Sarah has had the delight, as a researcher, to find what might be the earliest mention in writing of our ubiquitous expression marrying the two words "industrial" and "revolution". Tactics in this "revolution" could well involve transporting stocking frames and looms camouflaged under Wedgewood pottery as a hands-on method of nicking things from your near neighbours. It could also entail some considerable creative thinking, for example, the realization that France was under-supporting fundamental as well as applied research, an observation that recent researchers in the history of technology have formulated more than once for the last century of current history.

Fate – or ambitions and their mediation, or lack of it, through diplomatic relations – was to step in more than once in this period that shaped much in European mentalities. War between Great Britain and France could quite ruin the best-laid plans to create an R&D Institute at the Quinze-Vingts (today

a hospital), because all the "technology" and know-how was shifted to the immediate needs of the naval arms industry. However, there will be many another tale to hear in this paper, for example, how do you discourage spying on workers' skills? Hire an all Welsh-speaking women! Another method is to break down the fabrication process into fragments, so that each worker can no longer perceive or conceive of the whole and is then far less valuable an "article" to suborn for foreign advantage. Hence, Sarah's research strikes at fundamental issues in material culture at – an appropriate expression here – the paradigm shift from possession of a whole to highly reduced, interchangeable competence in a rather dull and dulling part.

To perk us up, she told us a tale or two of her adventures as a researcher, for example, at the CNAM (Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers), close (at the time) to the heartbeat of Foucault's pendulum, absorbed in the attic archives and – it is not only in films that dreams threaten to come true – she was forgotten and locked into the venerable establishment. How she got out, we'll leave for you to discover in her paper (to be published in the Society's journal), even though she gave us a hint, in conference!

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**Cozette Griffin-Kremer**

## **Dafydd Roberts**

### **Banbury – Birthplace of the Railway Preservation Movement**

If you are in Banbury you may be aware of a commemorative plaque at 84 High Street, now occupied by The Men's Room hairdressers. The plaque, erected by The Talylyn Railway Preservation Society and Banbury Civic Society, commemorates the partnership between two exceptional men, Tom Rolt and Bill Trinder, which led to the establishment of the Heritage Railway Movement. Dafydd's illustrated talk examined the fascinating life of Rolt and the partnership between these two men.

Dafyd's talk started in another historic part of Banbury: Tooley's boatyard, the oldest working drydock on the inland waterways system in the United Kingdom, a Scheduled Ancient Monument,

and a feature of central Banbury. It was to this boatyard that L.T.C. Rolt, a former apprentice to the Kerr Stuart locomotive works, Stoke-On-Trent, brought his wooden narrowboat, *Cressy*, for repair and refurbishment in 1936. That boat was to be Rolt's introduction to the canal system, life on the canals and a stimulus for the canal preservation movement as well as his married life (having secretly married Angela Orred in the summer of 1939).

By the Second World War, Rolt, a pacifist, had signed up at the Rolls Royce factory at Crewe, to work on the production line for the spitfire's Merlin engine. He then moved to the Aldbourne foundry, and to Hungerford, all the time living and traveling on *Cressy*. He wrote about his adventures on that boat, and though his first book, "Painted Ship" was rejected by numerous publishers, it was finally published in December 1944 under the title *Narrow Boat*. It was an immediate success and acclaimed by both critics and readers. Two of its readers, Robert Aickman and Charles Hadfield, were to have an important part in Rolt's life. Aickman and his wife stayed with Rolt and his wife on *Cressy*, during which the two men decided to form an organization which was to later become known as the Inland Waterways Association; Aickman was its chairman, Hadfield its Secretary and Rolt its secretary. The organization was to play an important role in supporting and promoting the survival and preservation of the inland waterways. However, over the course of the next few years tensions formed, and in early 1951 Rolt was expelled from that organization.

By this time Rolt's life was changing: his life on *Cressy* came to an end while his wife departed to join Billy Smart's Circus. These changes were to bring further changes to Rolt's life, and to a new chapter in it. Rolt remarried to Sonia Smith, an amateur boat-woman, and they had two sons, Tim and Dick. He continued his writing, in books that were to be highly influential, including his *Railway Adventure*, published in 1953, which formed the basis of the popular Ealing comedy "The Titfield Thunderbolt" (what an inspiring film!). He also wrote on subjects that had not received significant attention, including civil engineering, canals and railways; he also started to write his autobiography.

But a letter to the *Birmingham Post* in 1950 was to be especially important in the direction that Rolt's life was to take. Thereafter, Rolt regularly met Bill Trinder at the small radio and gramophone shop at 84 High Street Banbury. It was here that the two men, along with another friend, Jim Russell, resolved to save the Talylyn Line after they became concerned about its future as a result of nationalization. This led to the formation of the Talylyn Railway Preservation Society, for which Rolt became chairman, and which was to become the World's first preserved railway in 1951 and 1952. Talylyn was to be inspirational and a real success story, inspiring countless heritage railways around the world, many of which are wholly or substantially staffed and run by volunteers, following the model pioneered by Rolt and Trinder.

Dafydd spoke about the unveiling of the plaque on 28 March 2015. This was an important event, marking an important chapter in heritage preservation: from this small shop came the inspiration and the first steps of a movement that can now be said to be global, and enjoyed by many thousands of people, the heritage railway movement. An inspirational story of what can be achieved!

### Heather Holmes

## Excursions

To complement the papers each year the delegates have the opportunity to enjoy a number of excursions. Naturally this year was no exception, although we didn't have to travel too far as so much was on our doorstep.

The Black Country museum itself was a delight to explore and speaking for myself, in particular after hours when the public had gone home and we were left to enjoy the delights of the Bottle and Glass pub and the meeting hall. At one point I stepped into the street to make a phone call and I felt I was in a



Steam Boat President awaits the visit from SFLS members © David Viner



Street view of the Lock Museum and inside with the demonstrator © David Viner



Matthew Adams demonstrates chain making at the workshop of 'Geof. Cherrington, maker of tommied & dollyed chain' at the Black Country Living Museum. © David Viner



The Dudley Canal tunnels boat trip about to get under way © David Viner





'Mustn't grumble' - waiting patiently for something to happen  
(the rolling mill fires taking longer than expected to fire up). copyright David Viner

different world, I could hear the band, *The Empty Can* playing and the delegates singing ... I could quite happily have stayed there, escaping our 24 hour communication of today!

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### **Minutes of the Society's Annual General Meeting Held on Sunday 13 September 2015 at the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley**

**Present:** The President (Linda Ballard) and 20 members

Apologies were received from Seb Littlewood, David Jenkins, Prof. K. Kawashima, John Baldwin & Paul Coghlan.

Minutes of the last AGM:

These had been printed in the Newsletter. They were proposed by Dafydd Roberts (seconded by

Catherine Wilson) & adopted by the meeting as a correct record.

**President's Report:**

Linda reflected upon the sad circumstances of last year's AGM, when the president Eddie Cass was not with us. A few days later Eddie passed away. He was not only a respected colleague but a close personal friend of Linda's and would be greatly missed. Sadly since then Brian Loughbrough had also passed away as had Trefor Owen. Linda called for a minute's silence in memory of these respected members, and this was observed by all present. Linda had written to Sheila Cass, Susan Loughbrough and Trefor's son to express the condolences of the society. She concluded her report by thanking David Eveleigh and his team for all their hard work in the preparation of the conference.

**Treasurer's Report:**

The annual financial report was provided by the Treasurer, Duncan Dornan, who reported that there was no dramatic change to the balance sheet.

Subscriptions are down slightly, also the conference last year seems to have worked out slightly cheaper than expected, largely thanks to the Friends of Muckross House who were very kind and have not charged us for everything. The Journal has also become slightly cheaper costing £17,600 this year so we are somewhat wealthier as a result. We are also slightly subsidising the conference at the moment. A paper report was also circulated.

Accounts were proposed by Christine Stevens and seconded by Lillis Ó Laoire.

#### Editors' Reports:

Journal: Lillis Ó Laoire, editor of *Folk Life*, had already circulated a written report. He added that there was enough material in hand to keep the journal going for two years, and that this was material from a wide range of countries. Cozette retires as reviews editor after this issue and David Eveleigh takes over the role. Lillis placed on record his thanks to Cozette. The other item of note was the fact that Maney's had now been taken over by Taylor & Francis. We are now waiting to find out what this means for us in practice. Lillis had already been informed that Rebecca Willford with whom he had worked in the past would not be continuing as editor, and Lillis asked for his thanks to her for her work on the Journal to be placed on record. He concluded by saying that if anyone would like a list of forthcoming papers for publication, he would be happy to provide this. Linda concluded by expressing the thanks of the Society to Cozette and to David and by conveying special thanks to Lillis for the work which he does.

Newsletter: Elaine reported that the cost of the newsletter was slightly raised, with a 9p increase on last year! The last edition of the newsletter was later than before due to some reviewers missing the deadline of 15 November. She asked if all contributors could please keep to this deadline and also reminded everyone that a crib sheet was available containing details of word length, house styles etc. Linda commented on the importance of the newsletter to the Society and thanked Elaine.

Website Officer's Report: Heather reported that most of the year had been spent in updating the website, and had been very productive. Our Twitter account had been used to promote activities and the conference. Heather had tweeted trailers for the individual papers before the speakers went on. We now have 461 followers, up from 307 last year which is quite good. Ultimately we will have access to back issues of the Journal through the website. Heather has set up a secure area on the website. If any member would like to contribute anything for the website, please let Heather know. Often things can be turned around in 24 hours. Likewise photos for the Flickr account are welcome. Heather's email for those who do not have it is: Heather.Holmes@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Secretary's Report: Matthew reported that he had nothing of note to raise at the AGM.

Membership Secretary's Report: Dylan Jones made his first report in the role of Membership Secretary since taking over the position. He advised the meeting that we have an individual membership total of 170, and gave a breakdown of where the numbers are located. Whilst most are within the British Isles, there is an international spread. He added that if there are any questions about membership, he would be happy to answer these. A question was raised at the meeting regarding the fact that other societies and groups often ask what our membership numbers are. Was it acceptable to make this data public? Certainly individual memberships need to be augmented with institutional one to give a true picture. It was felt that this should be discussed further at the officers' meeting in February. A question also arose regarding invoicing for institutional members, but it was not felt practicable to try to answer this whilst Maney's/Taylor and Francis were in a state of transition.

Conference Secretary's report: Steph reported that David Eveleigh had done a marvellous job in organising the 2015 conference. In particular, the Friday and Saturday sessions had a great deal of integrity with papers linking and supporting each

other with the access to the Black Country Living Museum in the background. It was also important to acknowledge the contribution of Mel Weatherley and John Beckerson as well as the rest of the BCLM team. Steph thanked them on behalf of the Society and reminded attendees about feedback forms. David added it had been a great experience for the BCLM to host the conference. It was now a much more outward looking organisation and to hold the first SFLS conference in the West Midlands was a great accolade. Next year's conference is in Dublin and Lillis and Linda are currently working on themes. 2017 we are in Dumfries and Galloway. For 2018 the suggestion is to go to St Fagans, which should be completed by then. For 2019 Cumbria is a possibility, whilst for 2020 Galway and the west of Ireland has been mooted. Attendees were reminded that Friday's meal was paid for by the museum so if they could please make a donation this would be appreciated. Linda added her thanks to Steph, who exceeds himself every year.

#### Election of Officers

All officers of the Society had agreed to continue to serve, with the exception of the changes noted above. Four members of Council were stepping down, so three or four new members were needed. Several names had been put forward:

Patricia O'Hare  
Toddy Doyle  
Felicity McWilliams  
Christine Stevens

These were nominated by David Viner and seconded by David Eveleigh. In addition, it was proposed that Catherine Wilson should become an Honorary member of the Council. This was unanimously accepted by the meeting. Finally, it was proposed that Paul Coghlan should be co-opted into the officers of the Society, in order to assist with preparations for the conference in Dublin in 2016.

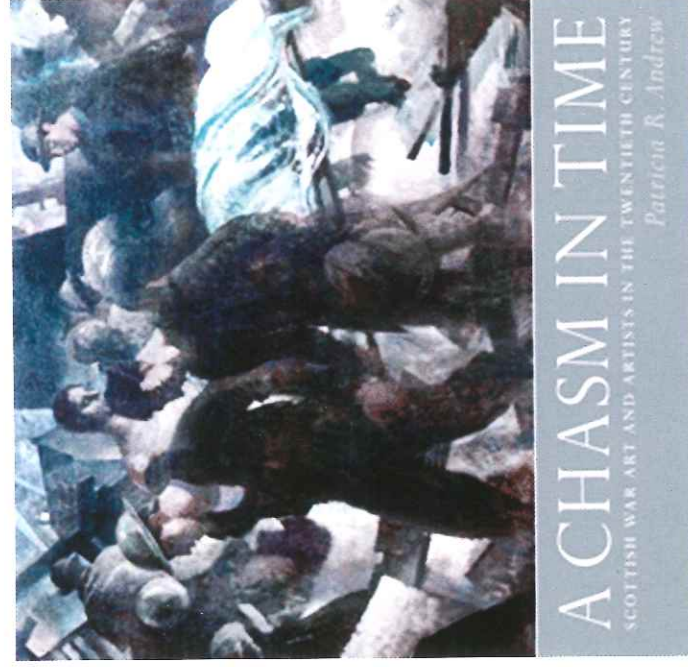
#### Any Other Business

A question was asked regarding the free student place, and it transpired that no one had applied for it this year. Was this because we are not getting the information out to the right places? Elaine has approached the School of Scottish Studies, but there was apparently no interest there. Lillis also had no students this year who were able to take up the place. However, we did have two student delegates last year. Roy Vickery offered to write up a report of the conference for the Folklore Society, and this was unanimously welcomed.

The President closed the meeting.

## Recent Publications

**A Chasm in Time; Scottish War Art  
and Artists in the Twentieth Century**  
Patricia R. Andrew.



Winner of the Saltire

Scottish History Book of the Year Award 2015

This book tellingly and vividly preserves, restores and represents the link between war and the painterly or visual imagination throughout the 20th century. Better still, the book is a work of art in its own right. The writer, publisher, designer, and all those individuals and trusts that have contributed to its production for only £30, deserve the highest possible praise' – *Scottish Review*

## Forthcoming Conferences, Seminars & Meetings

**May 12-15, 2016 CFP: Ballad Sessions at 51st  
International Congress on Medieval Studies,**  
Kalamazoo (USA)

For further information please contact:

Sandra Ballif Straubhaar

4190 Travis Country Circle

Austin TX 78735

Phone: [512-565-7593](tel:512-565-7593)

Fax: [512-471-4025](tel:512-471-4025)

[sstraub@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:sstraub@austin.utexas.edu)

## Conference on Animal Keeping and Traditional Plant Cultivation in Museum Education

at the National Museum of Agriculture and Food  
Industry in Szreniawa (near Poznan)  
**13 - 15 May 2016**

Contact person:

Marianna Czerwińska

Adjunct Curator

Rural and Agricultural Heritage Research  
Department

[litotal.marianna@gmail.com](mailto:litotal.marianna@gmail.com)

tel. +48 6181097 80

## Rural Museums Network Conference & AGM

will be held in Wales on 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> May. It is being  
hosted by the National History Museum,  
St. Fagans.

For further information please see

[www.ruralmuseums.org.uk/](http://www.ruralmuseums.org.uk/)

**Songs of Liberation, Rebellion and Resistance  
Kommission für Volksdichtung/International  
Ballad Commission Annual Conference  
27 June - 1 July, 2016**

Irish World Academy of Music and Dance  
University of Limerick

Please address any queries to [tradsong@ul.ie](mailto:tradsong@ul.ie)

This conference is organised by the TradSong research cluster at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick (see [www.irishworldacademy.ie](http://www.irishworldacademy.ie))

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**Highland Life in the Eighteenth Century**

**Day Seminar, 26th October 2016, at the  
Highland Folk Museum, Inverness-shire.**

Following a highly successful seminar in 2015, which celebrated the museum's 80<sup>th</sup> year, we are delighted to invite you to our next seminar, which explores Highland life in the eighteenth century.

The seminar will be held in the *Am Fasgadh* collections' facility, in amongst the museum's collection, which has recently been acknowledged as a Recognised Collection of National Significance.

Tickets £25, £20 for students, (£5 off before 1<sup>st</sup> August).

Lunch included, as well as a curatorial tour of the collection.

For details phone: 01540 673551, or email: [Jacob.O'Sullivan@highlifehighland.com](mailto:Jacob.O'Sullivan@highlifehighland.com).

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**Prof Ronald Hutton is giving a lecture at the  
Manx Museum 27 January 2017:**

This talk will answer the question of why so many British scholars between 1870 and 1970, including and especially folklore collectors, were obsessed with the idea that the countryside was a timeless place carrying on immemorial practices and belief, and in particular customs which were descended directly from ancient pagan religion.

It will involve digging deep into the Victorian and Edwardian subconscious, to discover the emotions which lay behind this idea, and which still dominated folklore studies into the mid twentieth century. It will also ask how far those emotions are still relevant today.

Details & tickets from Manx National Heritage website.  
[www.gov.im/mnh](http://www.gov.im/mnh)

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**Call for Papers**

**Women's Material Cultures / Women's Material  
Environments**

**16-18 Sept 2016, Leeds Trinity University**

Email: [whn2016@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:whn2016@leedstrinity.ac.uk)

Website: <https://whn2016.wordpress.com/>

Twitter: [@whn2016](https://twitter.com/whn2016) or <https://twitter.com/whn2016>

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**14th AEMI Conference  
European migrant diasporas and cultural  
identities Santiago de Compostela, Galicia (Spain)  
September 28- October 1 2016**

The Association of European Migration Institutions (AEMI) together with its local partner organization Arquivo da Emigración Galega – Consello da Cultura Galega announces a call for papers for the annual AEMI conference which will be held in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia (Spain) from September 28 to October 1 2016.

The theme of the 2016 AEMI conference is European migrant diasporas and cultural identities.

For further information please email  
[aemi2016@consellodacultura.gal](mailto:aemi2016@consellodacultura.gal)

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**Other news**

**Tablet Weavers' International Studies & Techniques**

TWIST is a volunteer organisation that promotes and supports tablet weaving all over the world. Also known as card weaving, tablet weaving requires little equipment, yet it offers weavers the flexibility to produce remarkably complex pieces. TWIST members share inspiration and technical information through their journal, which is published three times each year. Learn more about member benefits see

<http://www.tabletweavers.org/>

The **International Association of Agricultural Museums (AIMA)** was founded in 1966 in Prague and endeavours to educate the public about the significance of agriculture to human society, to explain the many ways that agriculture has evolved through time, and to facilitate dialogue between museums across the globe about agricultural topics and discoveries. AIMA members often highlight broad social activities typical of rural life more generally, such as traditional crafts and games. You can visit the AIMA website at <http://agriculturalmuseums.org/> and contact the secretary, Cozette Griffin-Kremer, for more information: [griffin.kremer@wanadoo.fr](mailto:griffin.kremer@wanadoo.fr)

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**Verona declaration  
September 20th, 2015**

In 2003, UNESCO, through its Convention for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), recognised the central role of “communities, groups and individuals”, in the process of dissemination of the concept and practice of ICH.

For the first time ever, an international legally-binding instrument allowed States to build cultural policies to assert the fundamental right to cultural recognition. UNESCO wrote: “Traditional sports and games are part of our intangible heritage and a symbol of the cultural diversity of our societies”.

For further information please refer to

(<http://www.jugaje.com/en/>) or contact Guy at [falsab.jaouen@wanadoo.fr](mailto:falsab.jaouen@wanadoo.fr)

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**Obituaries**



**Brian Loughbrough (1937-2015)**

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Brian Loughbrough on 13 May 2015. The Society was represented at his funeral by a number of members and a full obituary will appear in a forthcoming volume of *Folk Life*.

Brian had a distinguished career in museums, particularly in Lincolnshire, where he established the Museum of Lincolnshire Life in 1969, and in Nottingham between 1972 and 1992, where he presided over seven museums as part of his role as Director of the city's Arts Department. In his 'retirement' he was the local government adviser to the UK's Museums & Galleries Commission as well as a leading member of a number of local heritage organisations, including acting as a trustee of the Papplewick Pumping Station in Nottinghamshire.

A life-long member of the Society, Brian joined the Council in 1971, acted as Assistant Treasurer in 1974 and 1975, and as Treasurer between 1976 and 1986. He was elected President in 1989 and concluded his term of office by hosting the Society's annual conference at Nottingham in 1992. It is thought that Brian had attended the inaugural meeting of the Society for Folk Life Studies in 1961, and he and his wife Susan were regular attendees of the annual conferences for several decades. At these events Brian was popular for his quiet conviviality and very respected for his eloquent summings-up on the last day of the meetings.

In his passing, the Society has lost a great supporter. He will be greatly missed.

*Steph Mastoris*

## Good News



When SFLS President Linda Ballard was recently licensed for ministry, noted needlewoman and fellow SFLS member made her a magnificent patchwork and applique liturgical stole. The stole reflects the heavens and the earth, and is inspired by Psalm 19, 'The heavens declare the glory of God'. Each star featured is different, to symbolise diversity. The colours of purple and green represent Linda's particular interest in ministry to transgender individuals and their families. Reflecting the earth, Sheila added other symbols to represent love, perfection, the earth itself and Celtic symbolism representing the interconnectedness of all things, and continuity.

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**Please note change of details for David Eveleigh**  
[david.eveleigh@ironbridge.org.uk](mailto:david.eveleigh@ironbridge.org.uk)

David Eveleigh (UK)  
Director of Collections & Learning, Ironbridge,

**Have you, or are you about to change your address?**

If so, please let Dylan know

Email address: [dylan.jones@museumwales.ac.uk](mailto:dylan.jones@museumwales.ac.uk)

Postal: St Fagans: National History Museum, St Fagans,  
Cardiff CF5 6XB

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**Website**

Take a look at your Society's website  
[www.folklifestudies.org.uk](http://www.folklifestudies.org.uk)

The contents of all issues of *Folk Life* are listed as well as core information about the Society, including a membership form along with notices of Society meetings and conferences and the text of the *Newsletter*. The site is also available for members to post relevant information. Please send text as e-mail attachments to the website officer

Heather.Holmes@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

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Contributions/comments should be forwarded to the newsletter editor Elaine Edwards at [e.edwards@nms.ac.uk](mailto:e.edwards@nms.ac.uk)

*Printed & published by the Society for Folk Life Studies, spring 2016. All opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not represent the policies or views of the Society.*