

folk life

NEWSLETTER

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View of Galway

THE SOCIETY FOR FOLK LIFE STUDIES

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020

POSTPONED

This year's conference was to be held in Galway between 10th September to 13th September.

For obvious reasons (Covid 19 of course) the decision has been made to postpone our annual conference until 2021. So that gives us something to look forward to!

Please note there may be a change of month for this conference at present the suggestion is Thursday, 26th August to Sunday, 29th August 2021

The overall themes of the conference will be music, song, dance, story & related objects.

More information will be available on the Society's website and of course in the next edition of the newsletter.

**A *free* student place at the
2021 conference**

The Society will still be offering a free place at the 2021 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. So you've got plenty of time to spread the word & have a think if you know of any student who might be interested in applying for the place.

The Society's
CONFERENCE 2022
will be held
Biggar, South Lanarkshire

CONFERENCE 2019

The conference was opened by the President Dafydd Roberts where he welcomed everyone to Cumbria.

Eric Robson An Introduction to Cumbria and Carlisle



Our after dinner speaker, Eric Robson

Veteran broadcaster and erstwhile Gardeners' World presenter Eric Robson was the first speaker at our conference. He began with a personal ode to his beloved home county. He vividly evoked the harsh life of the clans—the Robsons among them—who made this country their own. These Border Reiver families' fortified Pele towers litter the wild landscape: castles declaring "Sod Off, in stone", as Robson's friend the writer George MacDonald Fraser put it. What have the Romans done for us? Created these warring clans, contended Robson, by putting their wall through the middle of lands of the Brigantes people who were, till then, perfectly settled and peaceable folk. After the Romans came the Vikings—the finest Viking cross in Britain stands at Gosforth—and the lawlessness of the area continued. Civilisation and pacification was, said Robson, eventually imposed "at the end of the hangman's rope".

Carlisle became a boom town in the 19th Century, owing its Golden Age to the arrival of the railway, with a dozen companies competing for cross-border trade. The railway

boom saw the arrival of yet more newcomers, mainly Irish navvies, and then the First World War saw the construction of an ammunition factory on the Solway Firth: 9 miles long and accommodating 20,000 people, who drank their wages in the bars and pubs of the city. Moral panic prompted Lloyd George to buy up the pubs and the 'Carlisle experiment' of nationalised drinking was born, to continue until 1972. The Home Office considered the experiment a success in its early days, stopping Britain, contended Robson, of having to go down the route of Prohibition. An advisor to the experiment was the minister of the Methodist Central Hall, a certain George Bramwell Evens, far better known to generations of radio listeners as *Romany*, the first natural history broadcaster. Eric Robson ended his engaging talk by returning to the railways. He recalled having interviewed Dr Richard Beeching, he of the infamous axe. When the interview was over, Robson asked whether Beeching regretted the harm caused to rural communities such as those in Cumbria now isolated from the main transport network having lost their railway line and station. Expecting a positive reply, Robson was shocked by Beeching's answer: "I wish I'd shut the lot"...

It was a great pleasure to be in the presence of this fascinating and engaging speaker with his immediately recognisable voice.

Sarah Blowen

Conference Papers Anna Smalley & Andrew Mackay

125 years of Tullie House Museum and its collections

Tullie House was to be our base for the 2019 conference, and we could not have received a better introduction to this forward thinking organisation than that provided by Head of Collections & Engagement Anna Smalley, and director Andrew Mackay. The museum is celebrating its 125th anniversary, and is now a much loved (and award winning) institution in Carlisle. Originally occupied by Isaac Tullie (who is noted as having kept a diary of the English Civil War siege of Carlisle), the house was built over three or four phases. The Victorian part, built in 1873, opened to the public originally as a school of art and a library. Everything the museum does is governed by a 2016 manifesto which shapes the way the organisation works, and which emphasises use of collections to engage with people. Currently 1631 objects are on display, out of a collection of 500,000, but the museum has plans to put more on display, and this is what is driving much of the thinking at present. The collections are deployed across nine galleries, including

Fine and Decorative Arts, Natural Sciences, Social History and the recently developed Roman Frontier gallery focussing on Hadrian's Wall. The Natural Sciences collection is particularly important and the museum has received designated status in this area. The museum interacts with 30,000 people every year, and works closely with schools, families, young people & vulnerable adults. A Youth Panel seeks both to support young people and to encourage their engagement with the museum. Tullie House tries to embed co-curation into all its gallery projects. In the recent Formations gallery volunteers helped curators to select stories and objects, and the museum has worked with the Nigerian community in Carlisle. The next step is to diversify the trustee body, but the museum recognises that this is a difficult process. It can be intimidating for those who have little or no experience of this type of body. People cannot be just parachuted in, in a tokenistic gesture. However, a Community Board also sits below the trustee body, offering advice, and this can act as a pathway to full trustee status for those who wish to take it. The organisation is also rightly proud of the partnerships which it has developed internationally – part of its Pre-Raphaelite collection is currently on tour in Japan, and it has recently developed a partnership with a museum in China, which has resulted in an exchange of cultural and curatorial knowledge. The most obvious product of this collaboration has been the celebration of Chinese new year at Tullie House, an annual community event with a high profile.

Matthew Richardson

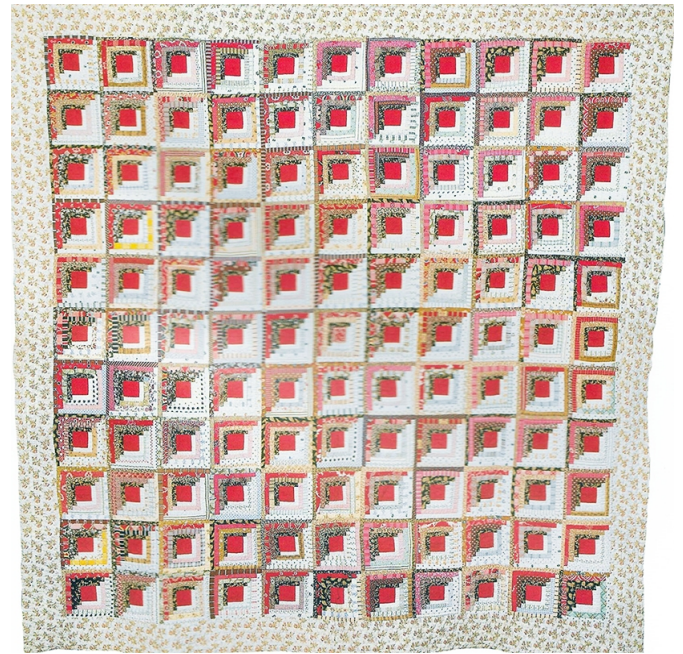
Melanie Gardner Tullie House Quilt Collection

Melanie Gardner showed a real enthusiasm for her subject as she talked to the conference about the building up of the patchwork quilt collection at Tullie House, and the strong tradition of northern England quilting and the place of Cumbrian quilting and patchwork within it. As is the case with many museums, most of the collection consists of 'best' quilts, many of which families have preserved because of the high standard of craftsmanship or for sentimental reasons.

Melanie filled in a lot of the history of quilting in Cumbria and the Carlisle area in particular, the culture of quilting, and the isolated nature of rural life in the area, while describing how the collections at Tullie House had grown over the years.

Although the collection is numerically small in comparison with others in the North, it is of very high quality, and with a wide date range and of quilting and

patchwork styles which make it quite comprehensive and of great interest to craftspeople and quilt historians alike.



Patchwork quilt, log cabin design, made by Ann Rawling in 1883. Acc. No. CALMG 1958.53. © Tullie House Museum.

One of the aspects of the patchwork collection which is of particular local interest is that it includes a great many examples of the products of local textile companies. 18th century Carlisle was a centre for textile production, and in the 19th century for cotton printing, with 3 successful companies establishing their factories there – Ferguson brothers, Peter Dixon, and Stead McAlpin, whose archive is now world famous.

Christine Stevens

Dr Gabrielle Heffernan, Curatorial Manager, Tullie House Museum, and Peter Brears, independent historian and consultant, discussed the Tullie House agricultural hand-tool collection. This paper showed how independent researchers can bring their expertise to museum collections and help to highlight the significance of the collections and provide further information on the objects in them.

Gabrielle outlined the background and history of Tullie House Museum's agricultural hand tool collection which had started to be collected in 1893 in the Museum's "Lost farming Heritage" project, with significant contributions from Henry Simpson Cooper, Rev Charles Dowding and later from Mr J. and Mrs E. A. Milbourn. The collection is a significant one of around 200 objects, mainly hand tools, from Cumbria, illustrative of traditional farming practices in the area. They include a

very wide range of objects such as hoes, spades, forks, scythes, seed drills, branding irons, traps and churns. They are one of the most important collections of tools in Cumbria; other such tools are held at the Museum of Lakeland Life.

What is significant about the collection is that its development can be traced. The provenance of each of the items is known, also where they were used and who used them. The items are from an area where traditional methods persisted longer than other areas but at the same time innovations were also introduced. They were also used in a district where there was a challenging topography and weather patterns and where family farms were predominant. The tools and their use are also embedded in and complimented by the other collections of the Museum, including photographs, objects and ephemera, costumes and textiles and oral history. The collection therefore not only includes objects but objects which have their own personal histories and stories around them.

Peter discussed how he explored the hand tool collections. Until he gained access to the Museum stores to draw the objects (he produced between 20-30 sheets of drawings) he knew virtually nothing about the collection. He considered that the quality of the recording of the objects was exceptional as was the collection as a resource. He considered that the objects told the story of agriculture in rural Cumberland, a relatively backward area, especially from 1800.

Peter used his drawings to show items from the collection and to tell stories around them. These included ploughs and the task of ploughing, a cumbersome process with the lang ten which included a team of horses and oxen and a ploughman, involving ten animals and people in total. Crops were still sown by broadcast methods using baskets into the 1950s. Weeding was undertaken by hand until 1900 though wooden weed nippers were also available. For reaping, no early sickles had survived, though there were examples of later ones and reaping hooks. At harvest time, ropes were made with hand rope twisters. There were a number of bird scarers and a variety of flails, including regional variants, for threshing grain. The hay harvest was cut with scythes, including ones with an 8 foot long handle and a 6 foot blade.

Apart from hand tools to help in growing and processing crops, Peter also described ones for working with and raising animals and manufacturing products made from livestock. These included buckets, sticks, bowls, cow chains as well as the uncommon sheep bells and lug marks for identifying animals. He then described some of the local foods.

The presentation was well illustrated throughout with photographs from the collections as well as Peter's detailed drawings that not only showed the objects

themselves but how they were being used. A really enjoyable and informative presentation.

Heather Holmes

June Hall

Cumbria Vernacular Houses of the 17th century

As Chair of the Cumbria Vernacular Buildings Group [CVBG], June Hall was the most appropriate guide to introduce the conference to the work of this group since its foundation as recently as 2013. How much has been achieved is evident from a glance at its website: www.cvbg.co.uk

Nationally, the group is but one component in a network of predominantly county-based groups linked to the Vernacular Architecture Group [VAG], founded in 1952 with a remit across the British Isles for lesser traditional buildings. In building terms this all finds its place relating to the period before the aesthetically 'polite' designs of professional architects became fashionable at a national level.



Millbeck Hall, near Keswick. NY 257 261

Dated doorhead, 1592, one of the earliest in Cumbria.

The Latin inscription is translated as "Wherefore live to die, to die is life." These words are found elsewhere in Cumbria.

Note the ogee arched lintel.

Credit: CVBG, copyright Mike Turner.

The emphasis throughout is on study, research and especially recording of typical local building traditions for each region, drawing together local expertise and sense of place which goes with 'the study of 'home grown' buildings in Cumbria, made for a particular purpose from materials to hand, using local skills and traditions.' An aim very well put.

The Cumbria Group has a fascinating challenge on its hands, seeking to study a geographically very large county with a diverse geology and therefore range of



Thwaite, (formerly Low Fold House), Troutbeck. NE 408 025, Grade 11 listed.

This farmhouse and its buildings show a remarkable assemblage of features, all in slate. Slate roof, laid in diminishing courses, with swept valleys; crow stepped gables; wrestler slate ridges, and "chimney devils" on top of chimney stacks.

Credit: CVBG, copyright Clive Bowd.



Lamonby Farm, Burgh by Sands. NY 327 591, Grade 11* listed.

Cruck built, thatched clay dabbin. A single storey with attics, cross passage house with attached cottage to the south, and byre and later threshing barn to the north. The house and byre, the original structures, contain five pairs of crucks.

Credit: CVBG, copyright Peter Messenger.

architectural styles. The availability of local materials governed all; hence slate buildings in the central Lakes, red sandstone in north-eastern Cumbria and the west coast, and limestone on the south Lakeland peninsulas. And not least clay dobbins, the name given to traditional buildings using earth and clay instead of stone or brick. Buildings like this were found in other parts of Britain but the Solway Plain is one of the only areas in the country where examples survive in any number.

The group's newsletters show how active it has been in its short existence, especially concentrating on recording projects and now committed to the consequent task of writing-up. June showed examples from around Cumbria, and some are illustrated here. The emphasis throughout has been on working in collaboration with other relevant or like-minded bodies across the north of England of which there are many.

In the short time available June also discussed the impact in Cumbria of Hoskins' 'Great Rebuilding' period of 1580-1750, with examples of the modernisation process at work, and functional evolution in the use of various rooms and spaces, in outbuildings as well as the main dwelling.

The increase in wealth, hence accumulation of more possessions, plus the desire for greater household privacy were defining factors, plus a sense of pride in the work – included were fine examples of carved date stones, a noted Cumbrian characteristic.

When CVBG formed in 2013 its founding patron was Ron Brunskill (1929-2015), a leading light in the development of vernacular building studies in the UK. His summer holidays from school were spent on his grandparents' farm in the Eden Valley of east Cumbria, and his research on this area in particular and the definitive studies he produced on the subject in general remain a source of delight for anyone drawn to Cumbria and its historic buildings.

Further reading

Brunskill, R. W. 1978. *Vernacular Architecture of the Lake Counties: A Field Handbook*. London: Faber and Faber.

Brunskill, R. W. 1985. *Traditional Buildings of Britain: Introduction to Vernacular Architecture*. London: Gollancz Ltd.

Brunskill, R. W. 2002. *Traditional Buildings of Cumbria*. London, Cassell Publishing.

Denyer, S. 1991. *Traditional Buildings and Life in the Lake District*. London: Gollancz and National Trust.

David Viner

Dr. Chris Donaldson

'The Traveller will be liable to disappointment who visits Carlisle'

The title of this engaging and well-illustrated presentation is a quote from a resident, unsurprisingly not of Carlisle but of Keswick. In 1875 Henry Jenkinson jested that visitors to Carlisle might be disappointed. His own disappointment lay in his perception that the city was far too modern. Instead of an interesting historical environment he found 'clean wide streets, with modern buildings of stone and brick & hardly the vestige of an edifice interesting to the historian and the antiquary'.

Henry Irwin Jenkinson's quote appears in the 1875 publication *Practical Guide to Carlisle, Gilsland, Roman Wall and Neighbourhood* (should you wish to read more).

Dr. Donaldson took the audience through two centuries of Carlisle's history from the 1700s to the late 1800s. Inspired by the quote he drew on the collections at our venue, Tullie House, (which Chris pointed out was featured on a map dated 1563 when it was known as White Hall) and the observations of historical visitors to Carlisle in order to consider how this Border City had changed during this period. Famous amongst these visitors are the writers Celia Fiennes (1662-1741) who wrote about Carlisle in *Through England on a Side Saddle in the time of William and Mary*; Daniel Defoe who visited Carlisle some time between 1724 – 1727 when touring the whole country whilst researching for his piece *A tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* and polymath John Ruskin (1819-1900) who sketched the attractive Guild Hall, which can still be seen today if you visit Fisher Street. He also drew Carlisle's Cathedral and Castle. In addition, the artist JM Turner (1775-1851) was also attracted to Carlisle to paint scenes of the city.

Mention Carlisle's history and immediately one thinks of its entwined experiences with that of the Scottish Borders; the Reivers, the changing location of the border, the fortifications resulting from its location (strengthened in the 16th century). But of course, its geographical situation was also key in the coming of the railways (prior to which the journey time to London was approximately two weeks!). The impact of the railway was of course hugely significant for the city. Its arrival brought great prosperity as the commercial opportunities in food production, textiles and heavy industry began to open up.



Cricket Match at Edenside c. 1844

Samuel Bough

Copyright Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery

Chris used a number of images to illustrate the changes and progress made in Carlisle for example Samuel Bough's (1822-1878) *Cricket Match at Edenside* c 1844 and *Baggage Wagons approaching Carlisle* 1849 by the same artist.

Fortunately for the group of historians and antiquarians present we found much to enjoy both in this presentation and the physical environment of Carlisle and consequently I suspect there was no disappointment felt amongst our group!

Elaine M Edwards

Dr. Sue Allan

Echoes of Old Cumbria: The Traditional Music of Cumbria and the Lake District

As its title suggests, this after dinner presentation provided a highly engaging and well-presented overview of the oral music, dance and song of the region. Dr. Sue Allan is a scholar performer long involved in folk performances of all kinds. It was pleasant and surprising to discover that she had been involved in the Folk Festival in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal in the early 70s. Sue's talk ranged over song especially focusing on a song called 'Do ye ken John Peel?' written by Woodcock Graves in 1828. Careful to distinguish her story from the eponymous popular radio DJ, Sue traced the historical figure of John Peel 1777-1854 and the trajectory of the song through print and performance from its original emergence to its increasing local popularity in print by 1840. From then the phenomenon just kept growing so that today the song represents something of an encapsulation of local Cumbrian identity. Folksong collectors including Lucy Broadwood, Mary Wakefield,

Frank Kidson, Cecil Sharp, Vaughan Williams, Percy Grainger and Annie Gilchrist were active in Cumbria as elsewhere and initiatives similar to the Feis culture characteristic of Ireland and Scotland also featured although these were short lived, the Carlisle Music Festival founded in 1906, but was held only once more in 1907. A lively group of 'dialect' song makers also emerged around this time. This group included only one woman, Sue Blamire but used regional linguistic varieties rather self-consciously. They nevertheless made many nice songs. Sue performed songs accompanying herself on the guitar and also played the melodeon and danced some of the local steps. Traditional performance, carried on in the area through the twentieth century though it remained a local phenomenon. Sue pointed out the success of the traditional music revivals in Ireland and Scotland and lamented that a similar trend had not taken hold in Cumbria, an area with close cultural similarities. She attributed this to attitudes that tend to dismiss rural culture in the UK, favouring industrially produced, urban, mass cultural forms over what is considered rustic, unsophisticated, of the past and of strictly no appeal for modern lifestyles.

Prof. Lillis O Laoire

Peter Brears

Traditional food in Cumbria

This lecture provided a fascinating and authoritative overview of the foods traditionally eaten by the main occupational groups in Cumbria up to the 19th century. It concluded with a look at particular foods and methods of cooking.

Predominantly a rural county, Cumbria was traditionally self-sufficient in food, but its occupational groups had different diets that suited their particular circumstances. Key factors were the produce available locally, working conditions and routines, and the level of wages. Peter looked in turn at five groups: Farm workers in both the hard-pressed hill country and the more affluent areas such as the Solway Plain and Eden Vale; iron workers in Furness; coal miners in West Cumberland (around Workington and Whitehaven); lead miners of Alston Moor in the north Pennines; and workers in the main towns of Cumbria (such as Carlisle, Penrith, Kendal and Cockermouth).

In addition to sketching the general conditions of each of these groups of workers, Peter also discussed the size and

layout of their homes, cooking equipment and fuels used to prepare their food. These were explained by meticulously researched and drawn illustrations based on prints, photographs and the artefacts themselves. Oats and milk dominated the staple diets of all the occupational groups and porridge made with water and enriched with a little butter seemed the most popular first and last meal of the day for most workers.

Of the many foods discussed, I was particularly interested to learn about the Char, caught in Windermere and other deep waters of Lakeland. This was not only cooked as other fish but also salted, spiced and potted for export throughout England. From the 1670s potted Char was contained in specially-designed shallow dishes, made of white tin-glazed earthenware that was produced in Liverpool and decorated around the edge with paintings of the fish. It was also fascinating to hear that in 1819 pasties were being eaten by the lead miners a century before being claimed as unique to Cornwall, and that the 'traditional' long Cumberland sausage was created only in the early 20th century.

Peter concluded by suggesting that anyone wishing to know more about this fascinating subject could refer to his recent book, *Traditional Food in Cumbria* (Bookcase, Carlisle, 2017, 412pp, ISBN: 9781 9014 1498 1), which includes around 350 recipes taken from a wide range of historical sources.

Steph Mastoris

Alan Cleaver and Lesley Park, two local historians and authors, gave an illustrated talk on the **corpse roads** of Cumbria. Their paper stemmed from their work to survey and record them and their traditions so that they would be more widely known.

Corpse roads were used in Cumbria from medieval times until the early nineteenth century to transport the dead from remote parishes to the "mother" church for burial. They were an important part of Cumbrian life, not only for communities but also for their individuals. It was on them that the parishioners made their last journey to their place of burial. Their use was tied up with Church rules and burial rights. They have survived into the present time as public footpaths and bridle paths. Some are well known, such as those at Ryedale and Shap, while others are not marked on Ordnance Survey maps.

Evidence for the corpse roads is contained in a number of sources of evidence. These include church records as well as oral traditions and newspapers. There is also the physical evidence of the roads themselves. Some roads

are marked with coffin rests or coffin stones, sometimes with a cross, on which it was thought that prayers were said or hymns were sung.

Cumbria had a strong tradition of folklore. There was a wide range of folklore associated with the corpse roads that had passed from generation to generation. These included lore of ghosts. It was suggested that these were expected but they were not common. Some roads had shared ghosts. Some paths were haunted by ghosts. One belief was that when a corpse passed over land that there would be a public path across that land forever. This tradition was even tested in court in 1899. There was a belief that a corpse should not deviate from the corpse road or disaster would ensue. There are recorded instances of horses refusing to go down the wrong path with a corpse. Other paths had a legendary link with the fairies and were known as fairy paths.

Alan and Lesley considered the practicalities of using the corpse roads. Bodies were not always carried in coffins. They could be carried on horseback or cart in shrouds or winding sheets and would later be put into a coffin for burial.

Also described were the rich range of funeral traditions that have continued to the present day as well as modern traditions. One tradition included telling the bees – that is the bees in a house where there was a death should be told that there had been a death. This ensued that they would continue to produce honey. There were also material traditions. For example, the Brampton death chair, a high backed chair, would be loaned out to people – hundreds of people had been reported to have died when sitting in it. There were also laying out items, including embroidered dresses. Food and drink were an important part of death customs. These included a special Cumberland rum butter at funeral teas at Whitehaven; until the 1950s there were Cumberland funeral biscuits at Barrow in Furness.

Alan and Lesley believed that the tradition of the corpse roads should be preserved. They were an important part of Cumbria's local history and traditional culture. While today they provide pleasant walks, they can bring economic benefits to the communities where they are found through local and cultural tourism. They provide a point of interest to visitors to the area. They can help people tell stories about their local areas. One hotel has recognized the value of them and put a footpath sign up to encourage interest in one.

It was clear from the talk that Alan and Lesley had a special interest in this important part of Cumbria's heritage and identity and recognized its importance not only for the local people but also visitors to the county. They brought the roads to life and demonstrated how intertwined they were with the Cumbrian communities, the landscape, ways of life and beliefs.

Members interested in the Corpse road should consult their publication, *The Corpse Roads of Cumbria*, Chitty Mouse Press, 2018.

Heather Holmes

Steve Matthews

The Carlisle State Management Scheme

The speaker, Steve Matthews, local historian and bookshop proprietor does not think this has been sufficiently researched yet. This was put in place in 1916 to 1973. Fundamentally the government controlled pubs, brewing, distribution and alcohol consumption in Carlisle. Bar staff had to sign the Official Secrets Act as they were technically civil servants.

There had been a strong temperance movement in Carlisle from the C19th, due to new working class jobs such to railwaymen who could be too drunk to drive and maintain trains safely. There were many hard drinking navvies amongst workers from textile and biscuit factories in a town full of terraced houses.

When an important munitions factory was opened in Carlisle during the First World War, the government finally nationalised breweries as part of the Defence of the Realm Act, to maintain social stability in a time of crisis by changing drinking behaviour and preventing drunkenness and riots. It was an experiment. The government weakened the beer, Licensing Acts restricted opening hours and there were fewer pubs. It was rationed and served more slowly as people had to queue for it and could only buy drinks for themselves. They also tried to encourage other social activity such as spectator sports and cinema.

There had been four breweries from the 1890s in Carlisle and pubs were decorated externally with huge adverts. They were busy places for punters, deliveries of barrels by horse drawn carriages and men offloading them. Once the government took them over, they were quieter and were set up more like tea-rooms with tablecloths on neatly laid out tables. The breweries were disinterested as they could not make any profit so it transformed how these austere pubs were run; slops were poured back into barrels, the atmosphere was less noisy and more about conformity.

Many of the workers from 1916 were unmarried women doing war munitions work. Pubs had usually been places for men and it would not have been seen as safe for women who would have been taken advantage of in the unregulated pubs. The government was trying to maintain orderly behaviour, not wanting female workers

to fall pregnant during drunken nights out, so that they were able to carry on with important work. There would be migration of workers due to the war, with many landlords providing digs who would not have wanted to have taken in intoxicated labourers.

The brewing industry had political muscle as they paid tax. They were encouraged to think of disciplining the work force for the war effort, as Prime Minister, David Lloyd George had made a speech that drink was more of a threat than the German U-Boats.

The pubs did not return to private ownership after the war. It was re-considered in 1923 and in 1927 a political review described the effect on people to be “wholesomely intimidated” by the respectable surroundings of the pubs that were freely frequented by both sexes.

Julia Jules

Professor Margaret Bennett

The Life & Legacy of Eric R. Cregeen

We were delighted to welcome on the last day of the conference Professor Margaret Bennett, who is widely respected for her combined and interdisciplinary approach to the study of Gaelic language and culture. Margaret began by explaining that she herself had been inspired by an article published in *Folk Life* in 1965 by Eric Cregeen, a collector and field worker born in Yorkshire but of a Manx family. Cregeen was described by Dr Martin MacGreggor in 2016 as “one of the most significant cultural scholars to have worked in Scotland in the last 50 years.” He is significant because he was so thorough, recording aspects of all walks of life, and using notebooks, sketches, sound recording and film to preserve the information that he uncovered. This remarkable man began his career aged just 13, when during holidays on the Isle of Man he first heard the Manx language, and began keeping a notebook to record the anecdotes told to him by his grandfather. In the 1930s he met William Cubbon, Curator of the Manx Museum, and after a scholarship to study at Cambridge, in 1948 he returned as a volunteer at the museum. This led to a two year post as assistant director to Basil Megaw. During this time he developed the Manx Folklife Survey, working closely with Kevin Danaher of the Irish Folklore Commission. In 1954 he moved to the University of Glasgow’s extra mural department, which sought to bring learning to those working men and women who although possessed of intelligence and an eagerness for

knowledge, had not previously had the opportunity for formal study. Many of those who came to his lectures became his first subjects in Scotland, as he sought to record their memories of almost forgotten ways of life. One 91 year old man, Dugald MacDonald, showed him the drove roads of his youth, but Eric also recorded what the drovers ate, where they slept and a host of other details. On North Uist in 1969 he recorded the local names for plants, which he had realised were unique and in danger of being lost. Cregeen’s early death robbed us of one of the most prolific and thorough field workers in the British Isles, but in 2016 ten volumes of his notebooks covering the Isle of Man and western Scotland came to light, in the hands of his widow. Margaret Bennett’s great service to a new generation of scholars was to make this marvellous resource widely available, by editing and publishing the journals – a remarkable achievement and a fitting testament to this inspirational man.

Matthew Richardson

Ryan Foster

Reconstructing early shieling landscapes and land-use in Cumbria from environmental and place-name evidence

Ryan began with a background to the Norse in Cumbria. From the mid-9th to early-10th centuries, Vikings settled as densely here as in many parts of northern and western Scotland. Most seemingly came via Ireland, Mann or more likely the Hebrides, and their impact survives primarily in dialect and place-names. Whilst influence from the English Danelaw is evident around the coastal lowlands and the Eden valley, the names of most major and vast numbers of minor landscape features within and around the inner Lake District confirm settlement by Norse speakers of seemingly little-settled albeit not unexploited landscapes. The presence of shieling names containing the Old Norse term *setr/sætr* [*Ambleside*, *Swinesett*, *Satterthwaite*] helps reflect a specifically Norse rather than Danish origin for many, maybe most of the settlers. And so does ON *ærgi* [*Sizergh*, *Muserg*, *Hewer*].

Ryan then discussed shielings in the environmental and cultural context of early Scandinavia. In western Norway the soil is generally thin and poor, the climate harsh and wet, arctic winters drop almost to sea-level, and cultivable land is limited to narrow steep-sided valley bottoms and coastal strips. Hence an essentially pastoral economy where cattle were a symbol of status, wealth

and luxury (as in the Celtic west), and numbers overwintered were determined by available fodder (hence the need to keep animals away from infields during the growing season by sending them to more distant grazings). As peasant society became increasingly stratified, surpluses were required not only for everyday food but to provide gift exchange and tributes paid to local magnates. This led to a farm-hierarchy represented by year-round ‘home’ farms supplemented by smaller, commonly seasonal and distant holdings exploiting additional resources. Some shielings hosted early industrial activity (textiles, iron-ore excavation and smelting), but most were associated with pastoral and/or woodland practices where harvesting both timber (fuel and building) and twigs, leaves and bark (supplementary winter fodder) helped establish clearings for additional hay meadows or agri-pastoralism. ‘Home-farm plus shielings’ was essentially a decentralised but integrated farming system where ‘energy’ sourced from non-cultivated land was critically complementary to that produced on the main farm [Fig. 1]; and whilst pre-Norse input-output models would have existed in Cumbria, they were seemingly superseded by that introduced by the incoming Norse.

From late Bronze Age into Viking and later times in western Norway, this combination of harsh environment and the economic and cultural importance of cattle led also to byre-dwellings giving direct access between house, byre and barn. Byres in 18th-century Germany were considered three times more effective at collecting manure than controlled grazing. And byres reduced temperature fluctuation: 7.5% more winter fodder was required for every degree drop in temperature from 10° C to 0° C. As living arrangements evolved towards independent farms, therefore, the segmented longhouse allowed more animals to be overwintered by magnate and tenants alike.

The rest of Ryan’s presentation focussed on two very specific terms for a shieling. All-Norse Cumbrian place-names incorporating anglicised *erg* (*ergh/er*) and *setter* (*sett/side*) were coined by Norse speakers, not by speakers of languages borrowing from Norse. Time has blurred the distinction between ON *setr* (1. seat, residence; 2. mountain pasture, dairy lands) and *sætr* (mountain pasture) to the extent that they are no longer generally distinguishable. But ON *ærgi* (shieling, disjoined secondary or summer ‘farm’ for livestock) is a rare loanword from Old Irish (OIr *áirge*, hill pasture). So what do these Norse shieling names tell us about medieval and later land-use and society in Cumbria? And how does Cumbrian usage compare with that elsewhere in Britain, Ireland and the Norse north-Atlantic islands?

Most revealing, perhaps, is their distinctive distribution, a characteristic that applies also in Iceland (absence of

both!). For Scotland, distribution has *setr/sætr* almost exclusively in Lewis [e.g. *Shader/Siadair*, *Cuishader/Cuidhsiadar*, *Linshader/Lisiadar*] and north-east Skye [*Sulishadder/Sùlaisiadar*, *Elishader/Ealaiseadar*]; overwhelmingly in Shetland [*Setter*, *Huxter*, *Quinister*, *Swinster*]; and commonly in Orkney [*Mossetter*, *Snelsetter*]. On the mainland, it is largely restricted to north and west Caithness [*Seater*, *Syster*, *Sandside*, *Brimside*] and north and south-east Sutherland [*Cunside/Caonasaid*, *Linside/Lionasaid*, but maybe not standard variants]. Conversely, *ærgi* is found mainly in the Uists [*Horisary/Horaiseairidh*, *Dusary/(Loch) Dubhasairidh*] and Barra [*Earsary/Eàrsairidh*, *Skallary/Sgallairidh*]; sporadically in the Inner Hebrides [*Grimisary*]; and periodically along the western seaboard of mainland Scotland [*Blughasary/Blaoghasairigh*, *Smirisary/Smiorsair*]. *Ærgi* is also found occasionally in Shetland [*Benisergi*, *Arisdale/Erisdale*, *Aria*] and in parts of Sutherland and Caithness where Orkneyinga Saga’s *Asgrimsærg* (*Ásgrimsærgin*) survives as modern *Assery*. However, there are few such in the Faroe Islands [*Argir*, *Argisbrekka*, *Ergidalur*], and even fewer in western Norway. [Figs. 2, 3] Where both terms are found in the same general area, however, their distribution is complementary rather than overlapping. So also for Cumbria where *sett(er)/side* appear mainly within mountainous inner Lakeland (albeit a fair scatter around the periphery); *erg* mostly around the fringes of this core. [Figs. 4, 5]

Ryan concluded by exploring reasons for use of the two terms. Earlier scholars tended to see ON *ærgi* as reflecting the more general influence of Norse-Celtic cultural and linguistic contact and broadly synonymous with *setr/sætr*. More recent research sees Norse adoption of OIr *áirge* indicative of more specific environmental and/or cultural factors. Cumbrian *erg* is commonly found on slightly better soil at generally lower altitudes than *sett(er)/side* where locations suggest outfield grazings relocated uphill as deforestation helped realise the agricultural potential of more difficult lower-lying land. Meantime, pollen analysis and mineralisation of lake deposits suggest three phases of woodland clearance in prehistoric to later-medieval times: initial and extensive deforestation ca. 1500-500 BC; thence to AD 400 (when most uplands had been deforested); and by Viking-Age settlers. Furthermore, Cumbrian names in *thwaite* (ON *þveit*, clearing) cluster mainly within lowland woodland and once-marshy valley bottoms where an alder decline is detected in pollen diagrams at this time. They help confirm significant expansion of cultivable land by the incoming Norse.

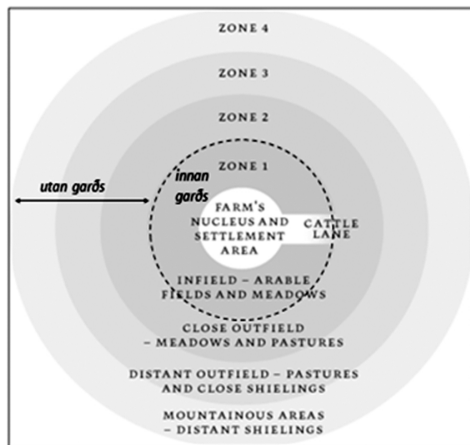
The association in western Norway of *setr/sætr* with grazing, fodder collection, possibly subsistence dairying and sometimes industrial activities helps confirm that the Norse transferred homeland shieling practices and

terminology to appropriate parts of their western colonies including Cumbria. So why OIr *áirge* to ON *ærgi*? Ryan confirmed there are few known references to pre-Viking shielings in Ireland, and only one to an operational butter-making *airge*. Did the Norse find a contrasting cattle-based economy in Celtic society and does *ærgi* reflect their adoption of more intensive dairying on patches of lower ground left uncleared, undrained and uncultivated? And/or does it reflect a dearth of female Norse immigrants even after settlement replaced Viking raiding? Daily living required such basic foodstuffs as milk, butter and cheese, so was dairying (including any enhanced commercial activity) assigned mainly to Gaelic-speaking wives, concubines, servants and/or slaves brought from those Celtic lands where the Norse had earlier settled? Whatever the case, subsequent re-migration northwards by significant numbers of mixed-race Norse-Celtic settlers most likely explains the spread of *ærgi* beyond Cumbria, the Hebrides and Scotland's mainly western mainland coastline to Orkney, Shetland, the Faroes, and yet more rarely to Møre and Trøndelag (Norway).

This was a fascinating, well-illustrated paper. It reaffirmed the value of medieval and earlier material in helping interpret everyday activities and traditions that survived well into the 20th century around parts of the north-east Atlantic. It illustrated the potential of place-names in helping explore and understand traditional lifestyles and historical inter-relationships between man and environment. And it reinforced the importance of historical geography and multi-disciplinary approaches to ethnological study.

[] = added by the writer

John Baldwin



Land use zones on a Norwegian farm (Øye 2009)

Fig. 1 Settlement and land-use zones on a Norwegian farm (Øye 2009): *innan garðs* = infield; *utan garðs* = outfield. Traces of this model can still be reconstructed through place-names and surviving landscape evidence in parts of Shetland, Orkney and the Hebrides.

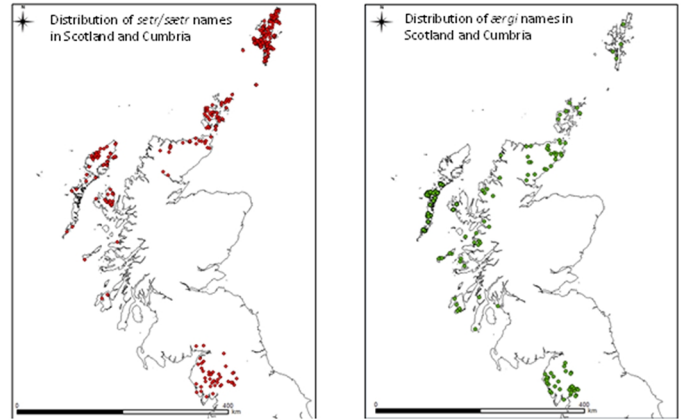


Fig. 2 General distribution of *setr/sætr* names in Scotland and Cumbria

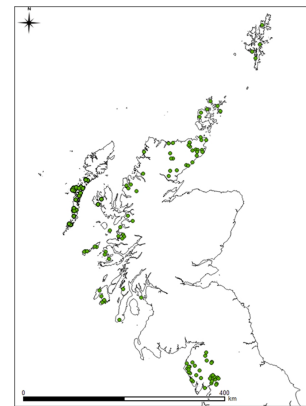


Fig. 3 General distribution of *ærgi* names in Scotland and Cumbria

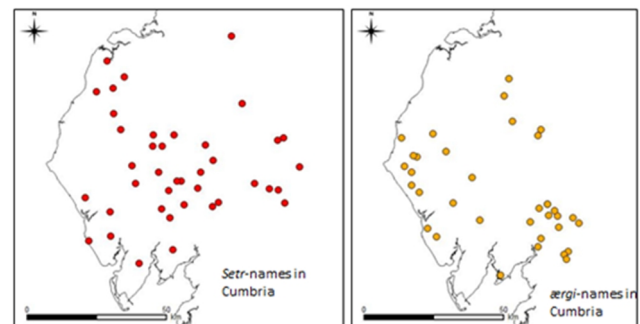


Fig. 4 Distribution of *setr/sætr* names in Cumbria

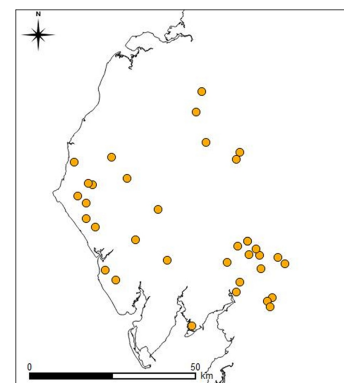


Fig. 5 Distribution of *ærgi* names in Cumbria

Enid Roberts

“Mae gen i dipyn o dy bach twt” – Welsh social housing standards in 2019

Enid is Assistant Director (Communities and Customers) at Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd, a Housing Association set up in 2010 following a large scale voluntary transfer of housing stock from Cyngor Gwynedd, the Local Authority that covers a good part of north-west Wales. She introduced her talk in fine style by singing verses taken from a popular Welsh folk song, referring to a “ty bach twt”, a “tidy little house”, before going on to explain that, as Registered Social Landlord, her employer’s primary purpose is to provide affordable rented homes (a total of 6300) to those in housing need. Any surplus income is put back into the business so that they are able to continue to provide homes and services and achieve their objectives.

Some of the first social housing in Gwynedd was built in Seiriol Road, Bangor, in 1927. Designed by the architect Herbert North, these were inspired by the Arts & Crafts Movement, designed to be cheap to rent and to provide housing for a family, with an average occupancy of six people. Ground and first floor plans were shown, and it was interesting to note that all have been Grade 2 Listed since 1988.

Enid then moved on to show how social housing is now provided in a range of tenant-focussed designs and layouts. Plans for Frondeg, Pwllheli, will provide 12 one bedroom flats, and 16 two bedroom flats, all designated as “Extra Care Lite” social rented accommodation. External features included plenty of car parking space, ramped access, a landscaped communal garden and an outside dining area. Internally, a lounge, lift, kitchen and disability scooter store are provided for shared use by tenants.

This was then compared and contrasted with plans for development on the former Bangor Social Club site. Here, there will be a mix of social rent, intermediate rent and market rent development. All are indistinguishable from each other in terms of their external features and finish, as well as in their enjoyment of site facilities – far removed from a recent social housing development in London, where it was deemed that the children of social rent properties could not use a playground provided for the children of market rent properties. Innovation here included a light-weight steel frame, thin film photovoltaic system (and battery storage), air source heat pumps, triple glazing and high performance SIP roofing and panels. The objective is to reduce heating costs, benefitting tenants who may otherwise be face by fuel poverty.

A readiness to make proactive and imaginative use of digital technology was a recurring theme. The development at Rhos Isa, Cricieth, features “Alexa” control of many functions, including heating. “Alexa” can also switch lights on and off, or advise family or carers if a tenant is making use of the home and its facilities in an unexpected or unusual way.

Enid concluded by noting that her employer will shortly rebrand itself as “Adra” (= “Home”), and is already operating and building well beyond its original footprint in Gwynedd.

Dafydd Roberts

Heather Holmes

Unfinished business: past life regression and the crusade of King Robert the Bruce’s heart to Jerusalem, 1330-2018

Our conference concluded with this engaging member’s paper which took us into the seemingly tangential territory of past-life regression. With her usual light-hearted delivery, Heather encouraged us to “just go with it” and accept the paper as something a “bit different”. But such self-deprecation was not necessary: the talk, full of light and verve, revealed its subject matter as having many parallels with the concerns and currents of the broader field of study today.

Robert the Bruce’s body is buried at Dunfermline Abbey and his heart at Melrose. Or are they? Sources are unreliable and contradictory. Heather’s exploration of past-life regression revealed possible ‘unfinished business’ and a soul not at rest.

The therapeutic process works in a relaxed way, releasing trauma through catharsis as stories unfold. Three regression therapies between February and August 2018 led Heather through past lives and to the location of Rosslyn. Taking the regression process out of the therapy room, a visit to Rosslyn Chapel revealed a sculpted angel holding a heart – more detail to puzzle over and to direct the process. So was Heather channelling one of the barons who accompanied Robert the Bruce?

Synchronicities occurred: when visiting Rosslyn Heather experienced pains “like dying again” and clouds in the shape of birds flew overhead. These positive reinforcements drove the quest on and took Heather to St Bride’s church, Douglas, where the King’s intimate, Sir James Douglas, is buried. Again physical signals - an intense energy– suggested that a right, healing path was being followed.

A second regression fore-grounded the notion of ‘home’ and gave rise to a conversation with Sir James, suggesting that finding a way to provide peace would be significant: “we should not be fighting other people’s battles”.

With a third regression highlighting again “unfinished business”, Heather resolved to visit all 33 Abbeys in Scotland, which she did over 18 days in the summer of 2018. Numerous synchronicities (finding herself behind a lorry with the livery ‘supporting the abbeys of Scotland’) spurred her on and when she arrived at her final abbey, Iona, Heather asked for a sign that the journey was complete. A trio of doves then flew out of Iona’s clock tower, one after another. Heather knew her job was done – more than 689 years after Robert the Bruce’s heart had set out on its journey with Sir James Douglas, it - he – and Heather – were finally at peace.

This quest might appear to have little to do with academic concerns, but in reality it exemplified many very important traits: the ability to research by listening – both to oneself and voices beyond; auto-ethnography of a very profound and self-aware level; a great sensitivity to *Sense of Place*, that driver of so much current thinking but which is so often poorly understood. And above all, Heather has undertaken a project which has had the power to transform, to which many aspire but few achieve.

Sarah Blowen

Excursions

Windermere & Threlkeld

The Saturday afternoon conference excursion is always anticipated with pleasure, being planned to take the conference themes outdoors and study and enjoy interpretation in action. Two sites were selected for the core themes they offered and the rather stark contrast between them in terms of presentation and resources. The weather could not have been better, but a sunny autumn Saturday afternoon in central Lakeland proved to be attractive to plenty of others too, and the coach trip from Carlisle down to Windermere via Keswick and back revealed the challenges of managing visitor flow and congestion.

Windermere Jetty: Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories
This museum opened only in April 2019 but has a longer history on its site on the Bowness shoreline of Lake Windermere. Its predecessor, the Windermere Steamboat Museum, was founded here by local builder and steam enthusiast George Pattinson who had amassed a collection reflecting the use of steam-driven boats on the

lake, for work but mostly for leisure, in a tradition going back to the mid-C19.

Pattinson’s collection was widely recognised for its historic significance and the museum ran from 1977 until 2006, when it succumbed to falling visitor numbers, the physical deterioration of the museum’s buildings and the inability of its managing trust (which was not a registered museum body) to raise the necessary funds for refurbishment and renewal.

A rescue package ensured that the collection itself was not threatened by dispersal (instead it was placed into store), and a rather frustrating decade of campaigning and fund-raising followed to raise £20m to create a new museum with a wider social and local history remit to reflect today’s visitor demands and provide a sustainable project. The museum is now managed by the Lakeland Arts Trust, a major player in the provision of cultural and leisure facilities in Lakeland.

We were able to wander freely in the main galleries housing the vessels (over half of its 40-strong boat collection is now on display) and associated exhibits; and were also given an introduction to the open-access conservation workshop, which in true lottery-funded style seeks to deliver quality conservation work and thereby preserve and hand on traditional boat-building techniques.

We were shown work underway on its current occupant *Penelope II*, built locally in 1930 by Borwicks of Bowness for a local family. It was selected as one of the first vessels to be worked on as it is highly suitable to run as an operating vessel and thereby support the steam launch *Osprey*, which dates from 1902 and is the museum’s flagship vessel at work on the lake. A Conservation Management Plan is produced for each vessel and work only starts when appropriate funding has been secured.

As a welcome footnote soon after our visit, it was pleasing to note that the museum won a major national award for the way it conserves boats in its collection, the National Historic Ships UK Martyn Heighton Award for excellence in maritime conservation.

There is a lot more to say, as ever, including the striking relationship between the new buildings, a cluster of seven timber- and copper-clad structures, and the lakeside; on the challenges of using the newly-available, and extensive, internal spaces to best effect (it’s early days yet); and to get a feel about impact - how such an expensively-funded visitor attraction will fare in the already crowded Lake District tourist market. Sustainability in the longer term is the biggest issue, and one which was well aired in discussion on-site and later.



*A photo, just crying out for a caption competition me thinks!
In the meantime though peering over the top of a
conservation project are (L – R) Gavin Sprott, Duncan
Dornan & David Viner.*

See:

<https://windermerejetty.org/>

Threlkeld Quarry and Mining Museum

The contrast could not have been greater by the time we reached Threlkeld, three miles east of Keswick, handily (if a bit uncomfortably) situated off the major artery of the A66, and offering a splendid visual panorama of Saddleback and the Skiddaw range to the north.

The site itself is a former quarry, a ‘big hole’ much larger in reality than is visible on arrival, and in its post-use state a presentational challenge of some scale, and now a RIGS site of geological significance. The museum offers a range of visitor experiences side by side, as reflected in its title. Threlkeld microgranite quarry was opened in the 1860s but soon taken over to supply railway ballast for the nearby Penrith - Keswick - Cockermouth line (1865-1972). The quarry had a working life until 1937 and again from 1949-82, and ten years later the Lakeland Mine and Quarries Trust acquired a lease with the aim of developing a working museum with vintage machinery. It has been developing that aim ever since.

We were shown around by Diccan Chaplin-Brice, the site’s hands-on curator, given an introduction to the two-foot narrow-gauge railway and its locomotives and then enjoyed a ride up into the quarry proper. On returning, there was plenty of time to visit the museum, exhibited as a Mining Room and a Quarry Room, quite tight spaces but full of artefacts closely related to the site and its activities or to similar extraction elsewhere in Lakeland. Traditional in presentational style, achieved by a dedicated group of volunteers, and in very sharp

contrast to the Windermere galleries of an hour or two before.

There wasn’t time for the ‘underground experience’, a 45-minute tour into the mine level, but enough to see and appreciate the scale and significance of the site’s other main focus as home to the Vintage Excavator Trust. Here the largest collection of vintage excavators in Europe (some eighty in all) is based around that built up by site owner and trust chair Ian Hartland, as well as other collectors. These dominate the proceedings as most are stored in the open and clearly exhibit the challenges of long-term preservation. But many do work and the working weekends are justifiably popular.

Museum aficionados in the group quickly spotted two monsters which stood out for appreciation and discussion, both moved here from other museum homes. The ‘Hooley’ as it is popularly known is the oldest known steam shovel – or ‘navvy’ – in the world, built as no 306 by Ruston Proctor in Lincoln in 1909. It spent its working life at a chalk pit in Bedfordshire, before being abandoned in the 1920s and eventually flooded and left to rot.

Rescued and restored back to life at Rustons in Lincoln, it was placed on loan at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life. Here alas its care regime could not be sustained and its owner Ray Hooley (expert on all things Ruston) ensured its removal to Threlkeld where a £40K Heritage Lottery Fund grant enabled its restoration to working condition once again. It is both a lucky survivor, suitably photogenic and the site’s flagship amongst its excavators.

Also present was another museum refugee, the Ruston Bucyrus 54-RB dragline originally owned by the Staveley Coal & Iron Company in Derbyshire and in retirement a striking exhibit at the now-deceased Snibston Discovery Centre in Leicestershire. Donated by the county council, it has found a new home at Threlkeld. So the wheel of fortune turns.

All this was more than enough to stimulate an appetite and a full afternoon’s excursion was rounded off most enjoyably with dinner in a Keswick restaurant, before the trip back to Carlisle.

See: <https://www.threlkeldquarryandminingmuseum.co.uk/>

David Viner

Minutes of the Society's Annual General Meeting

Held on Friday 13th September 2019 at Tullie House Museum, Carlisle.

Present:

The President (Dafydd Roberts) and 25 members.

Apologies:

Apologies were received from David Jenkins, David Eveleigh, Linda Ballard, Christine Stevens and Claudia Kinmonth

Minutes of last AGM:

These had been printed in the newsletter. They were proposed by Senator Paul Coghlan (seconded by Duncan Dornan) & adopted by the meeting as a correct record.

Matters Arising:

Dafydd stated that issues from his point of view would be covered in the President's report. Steph noted that there was a mistake in the date and that last year's meeting took place on Sat 13 September 2018.

President's Report:

Last year's meeting directed Dafydd to express the sympathy of the Society to several former members for their loss. He had done so and received acknowledgement. He expressed his thanks to all officers for their support and hard work.

Treasurer's Report:

Duncan had circulated a balance sheet. The Society was £500 worse off than last year. Subscriptions were up by £75, and more people are now paying the correct amount. The conference fee as shown on the balance sheet was really just a snapshot as not all monies or bills were in. The editorial fee was continuing to rise. However, our online fee was also continuing to rise.

There were still anomalies in the membership which need ironing out. People had received a reminder about their subs, but not all had responded. Otherwise, things were pretty stable.

A member queried 'Bogus Standing Order' on the balance sheet. It was explained that Natwest had put an unauthorised Standing Order on the account. They had paid it back, but it still had to be shown. The president thanked Duncan.

Editor's Report:

Journal

Lillis acknowledged there had been difficulties recently with people not receiving their journal. It was thought that the problem had now been resolved, but if people had not received an issue they should contact Lillis directly. Issue 56 was particularly badly affected by the problem. Issue 57:1 is now out and most people have had that. Issue 57:2 is complete and in the final stages of editing. There had been an increase in articles about music. Felicity apologised for so few reviews. Her PhD funding has ended and she has to work, so wasn't able to follow up some suggestions.

Lillis has received three papers for 58:1 and ran through the topics. He is well stocked with papers and most of the conference speakers were willing to submit papers. The president thanked Lillis.

Newsletter

Elaine thanked all who had contributed to the Newsletter. To those who are going to contribute, Elaine drew attention to her new email: elaine.m.edwards@virginmedia.com

If anyone has not received their Newsletter, they should let Elaine know directly. The postage costs for the Newsletter have gone down. Persistent non-payers are now not receiving the Newsletter. Elaine particularly requested photos from this conference or adverts for other conferences. Any other news is also welcome.

A question was raised from the floor about what subscriptions were intended to cover? Is it admin and the newsletter? If so it was apparently not doing so. Are the journal and conferences expected to wash their own face? If not, reserves are gradually being eroded (as noted in 2018). The conclusion was that the conference should cover its costs. It was noted that over a five year period the conference will make a profit, even if we have ups and downs along the way. The Journal is now covering its costs, and we can improve on this. Beyond this, membership subs should cover additional stuff beyond the journal.

The question was raised as to whether the Newsletter should go purely on line. Do we want to continue with a hard copy version? Many felt that the printed version is

our calling card – there had been a lot of interest in copies distributed at the conference this year. The option exists to put the Journal online only, and the president stated this was a matter for discussion at the February officers' meeting.

Action: MR to ensure this was an agenda item in Feb 2020

Website Officer's Report:

Heather reported that a technical issue meant the website had to be re-built. As a result we have a new look website now. If anyone has news of conferences, or events, please let Heather know and she will put these on the website. Any photos sent in could go on to our Flickr stream. We have over 100 new followers on Twitter. We use the account purely for announcements rather than for responding to others, so it is a record of our activities. Heather hoped that photos used so far of conferences etc had not caused anyone any embarrassment and were an accurate record of what we do. The question arose as to how we assess our Twitter impact, and Google analytics is a good way of recording this. The president thanked Heather for her work and also for the Membership Pack that she had undertaken to produce – a major task.

Secretary's Report:

MR reported that since last year he had been busy keeping up with paperwork and organising the February officers' meeting. One of his actions from that meeting had been to locate our current contract for publishing the Journal. This had been done and scanned copies circulated to other officers. A question arose as to where we are in relation to GDPR. MR confirmed that he had received no further consent forms. It was suggested that a general announcement be made in the Newsletter that we hold information under the GDPR for the purposes of communicating with Society membership. All those present at the AGM agreed to their data being held for this purpose. The president thanked Matthew.

Membership Secretary's Report:

Dylan had sent a note to the effect that he wished to step down as membership secretary. He had recently started his own business so was unable to carry on. Elaine had offered to take on the role alongside the Newsletter. This received the unanimous agreement of the meeting. It was hoped that she would be able to work closely with the treasurer to home in on missing payments. A lot of work had also been done by Steph to tidy up the membership, so work had been going on behind the scenes. Lillis also added that Taylor and Francis had an officer who

maintained a list of addresses for the Journal. The president expressed his thanks to Dylan for his work in this role in the past.

Conference Secretary's Report:

Steph commented that we had had some amazing papers already and are only half way through the conference. He offered a huge thanks to Andrew Mackay of Tullie House and two key people who had worked with him on organising the conference, Anna Smalley & Katie Mitchell. The programme had been fantastic. Thanks also to John Baldwin who had recommended a speaker. There had been a slight hiccup with info. going out a little late but it was all looking very interesting. Food at conferences is always an issue. Steph asked that in future if all menu choices can be returned promptly to him please. Otherwise it causes delays at the restaurants which are our fault because the chefs have to cook some choices from scratch. Hopefully the conference will break even. Evaluation forms are in packs – please send these back as this is reviewed in February, and we can tweak things as a result. For example the AGM is now held within the main part of the conference rather than at the end. We get a better attendance that way and people are fresher.

Future conferences:

In 2020 we are going to the west or Ireland. Plenty of good hotels in Galway. Parkhouse? Lillis advised that the university has certain arrangements with establishments and can get discounts. Jury's Inn also a possibility, but there was a whole range of accommodation. Themes are music, dance, song & story & related objects. The emphasis will be on the region to which we are going, but there is opportunity for other regions to make a contribution. Claudia Kinmonth confirmed as a speaker, also Christina Corlett on vernacular architecture, plus some of Lillis's former students. Dates are 11-13 September to avoid clashes with major sporting events in Ireland. Next year there will be two different conference fees – for members and non-members.

In 2021 we will be in Gloucestershire, looking at contrasting landscapes, for example the Cotswolds. We will probably be based in Gloucester. David Viner is advising on the venue and added that the city has undergone a renaissance but still has a good combination of old and new.

In 2022 we may be at Biggar and the Borders. If so we would be based at Biggar, South Lanarkshire, half way between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

In 2023 we will be on the Isle of Man (nb dates need to tie in with ferry crossings as far as possible). As the Manx

Museum's new TT gallery should be complete, the themes could be sport in local culture or sport and landscape.

For 2024 North Wales and the new World Heritage site were suggested.

Election of Officers:

All serving officers were willing to stand again and were endorsed by the meeting. Christine Stevens was suggested for Council by Steph Mastoris. This was seconded and approved by the meeting.

AOB

It was noted that the subscriptions were not set at the AGM. Members will be notified in October. Currently annual membership is £25. This is due on 1 October or members can pay Duncan directly at AGM. The question was raised as to the possibility of life membership subscriptions. This was a matter for further discussion.

A question was raised regarding members' papers. These were now to be held on Sunday morning to facilitate the AGM. No one had taken up the free student place this year. Cozette had offered to promote the student place among her contacts. If anyone else knows of a student who might be interested, please pass the details of the conference to them. The only provisos are that they must not have been to the conference before, and we do not pay travel expenses. It is a wasted opportunity if no one takes this up, so we need to find better ways of getting our message out.

John Baldwin proposed a vote of thanks to the committee. Members were reminded that all membership questions should now go to Elaine, and that she will be contacting members in October (please update your address if you move)

Obituaries

Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin 1950-2018



The loss of Professor Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin dealt a heavy blow to the world of Irish Traditional Music. His energy and dynamism informed leading developments in Irish Traditional Music for almost 50 years. Fascinated by all kinds of music, his profound conviction held that musics should be in communication with each other, that there needed to be an ongoing productive conversation between the official forms taught in the academy and less privileged, more popular forms. He was a constant force for supporting traditional music studies, allowing traditional musicians who did not have a formal qualification to study degree level music at UCC for example. As inaugural professor, he founded the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick in 1994, and thus my own association with him began. He supported and dynamized my own efforts to promote traditional song, establishing an annual performance day *Lá na nAmhrán* with funding from Foras na Gaeilge. Attendant to the day of performance, materials were recorded to create a special song archive at Limerick. Micheál's doctoral thesis studied the music of the fiddler Tommy Potts whose innovations to traditional music performance fascinated him. He ranked Potts with Carolan, Moore and Ó Riada as among the great forces for fusion between assorted genres in Irish Music. The Academy he founded continues to flourish under its second incumbent Professor Mel Mercier, with musics of all kinds including Indonesian Gamelan

finding a place there. Central to its mission is the research and performance of Traditional Irish Music. One of the first performances I did with Mícheál was for *Missa Gadelica*, a Gaelic Mass composition. I had found an old Gloria among other sacred songs collected by Séamus Ennis from a woman in my own home area of Donegal and sang it for Mícheál during rehearsals. He immediately incorporated it into the Mass. In 2018, he performed a retrospective concert at the National Concert Hall in June and invited me to perform it and other pieces with Síle Denvir, Iarla Ó Lionáird and a host of other musicians together with the National Symphony Orchestra. It was a splendid occasion for a capacity audience and among his last great public performances. His unceasing energy and enthusiasm carried him through. In November at a memorial event where I was introducing the speakers in the Taibhdhearc in Galway, the news came through that he had died. His funeral was another magnificent performance, held in St. Senan's Catholic Church, Kilrush, at the mouth of the Shannon Estuary, the church overflowing with musicians and others who came to pay their respects. His enormous contribution to music will be celebrated once again in Limerick and Dublin in June. It will be with a sense of acute poignancy that we gather to sing his wonderful music once again.

Lillis Ó Laoire

Good to Know



Professor Lillis Ó Laoire, Pictured with his TG4 Singer of the Year Award

Journal editor Lillis Ó Laoire was promoted to the rank of Professor at the National in July 2019. Known for his

contribution to folklore studies mainly through his ethnography of song in Tory Island, Donegal, he has also co-written a biography of the late great Joe Heaney with Sean Williams. He has also published over 65 papers dealing with various aspects of folklore, folk song and literature. The latter work received the Alan P. Merriam prize for best research work from the Society for Ethnomusicology in 2012. Known for his research approach that combines both performance and academic perspectives, he has supervised 12 Ph.D. theses some in conjunction with others. The past year has been a good one for Lillis in that he also received the award of Traditional Singer of the Year from the Irish Language Television Station, TG4. At the moment, he is working on editing the field diaries of Seán Ó hEochaidh (1913-2002) and with Moira Haslitt and Conor Campbell on *The Oxford Handbook of Irish Song*.

Good to know

One good thing to come from this strange situation we find ourselves in this year is that our President Dr. Dafydd Roberts has kindly agreed to remain in post for another year. This means that those who are able to attend the (postponed) conference in Galway in 2021 will be able to enjoy Dafydd's Presidential Address! Thanks from all of us for agreeing to stay on in this role Mr. President.

Note from the editor. I don't usually include more than one review of our excursions but as Prof. Margaret Bennet kindly submitted her engaging thoughts I decided two perspectives on our jaunts were more than acceptable a) to remind those of us who were there what a great day it was & b) to hopefully speak to those that weren't and act as a little temptation for the next conference.

Observations from a first-time

The Folk Life Conference at Tullie House Museum in Carlisle was my first ever Folklife Conference, and it has been one of the highlights of the year.

Notes from the excursion:

The bus was ready to leave Carlisle at 2:30 and we were welcomed aboard by Steph, who organised the trip. A quick 'head-count' and we were off.



Duncan Dornan engaging with one of the exhibits in the gallery.

The first stop was Windermere Jetty Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories, right by the Lake. The museum has a historical collection of boats, boat gear and equipment relating to the Lakes – it even has Beatrix Potter's boat. There is a working boat-shed, (a custom-made, lavishly equipped workshop) with a staff of approximately six boat conservators. We had a tour from one of them, Shan, a young woman whose passion and skill shone as she explained each stage. She and other members of the team were working on a cabin cruiser, replacing the keel (English oak) and much of the planking; they used copper rivets, wooden pegs, with incredible attention to detail. The caulking used is modern, and of cotton. Varnishing will be hand-applied, seven coats, and will be done over months, sanding down between each coat. The vessel is on a stand, bottom-up, so the work can be done. After that stage is finished, massive equipment (gantries) will turn her over. Then the cabin will be replaced, the engine (diesel) will be installed, and it will be ready to be used for passenger cruises on the lake.

Just outside the workshop, there was an old ferry-boat, with a very wide, shallow keel, with a lot of iron in the construction. It's sitting (or more cradled) atop a special frame which supports the heavy load – the vessel may have been used to transport cattle or farm equipment, such as a tractor, so it had to be robust.

Part 2:

Back on board, and a scenic drive to The Threlkeld Quarry and Mining Museum, near Keswick.

As the bus pulled off the road to park, it was like entering another world: a massive area of years and years of excavation, with ground level now a considerable distance below what it once was. I could see two levels that are now overgrown with brushwood, plants and scrub.

We were all directed to the small railway station, by a narrow railway line, once part of the stone removal system, and now the route for a neat little "tourist train". Behind the little steam-engine are a few covered "carriages" and have a dozen open ones, all made of wood, except of course, for the wheels and axles. I preferred to board an open, four-seated carriage, with wooden seats, bench style, and a little half-door. Once we were all seated and the young driver, (who was wearing a cap that seem to be of the era) checked we were all safely aboard, we were off. The coal-fired steam engine puffed its way up the steep incline then stopped in the heart of the quarry: granite everywhere. Our young, enthusiastic train driver instantly became the guide, as he's equally a devotee of rocks and quarries. He gave us



*Steph Mastoris imitating 'The Fat Controller!' at our visit to the quarry
Photo. Copyright Caroline Oates*

an entertaining spiel on the age of the rocks, the types of granite, the history of this and adjacent quarries. As he stood on an impressive granite "platform", a natural and uncut example of the rock, perfectly placed for his oration and his question-and-answer session, I couldn't but think "what a great place for a rock concert!" We listened spellbound as he pointed out the various generations of vehicles parked in their old age, in various states of decline.

Back on the train we headed to the museum building and we all filed inside. None of the spit and polish people expect in museums, and a good thing too, for there was dust everywhere inside and outside of this old building which is run by enthusiasts determined to keep the history alive. "We're all volunteers."

Our museum guide was over 80. He grew up near the area of the quarry and first visited in 1949, as a boy. He showed us on a photograph the valleys and dales where he went with a horse and cart delivering milk. Just a lad, he'd go running up and down as bidden to deliver the cans. He is a real enthusiast and has quite a lot of energy. There were displays of photographs, rock examples, gem-stones, artefacts, including the blasting equipment used (detonators, fuses, and wire). There were examples of coloured tiles made from the quarry dust, a by-product of the granite industry. Our elderly guide explained to us how they were coloured and compacted with the

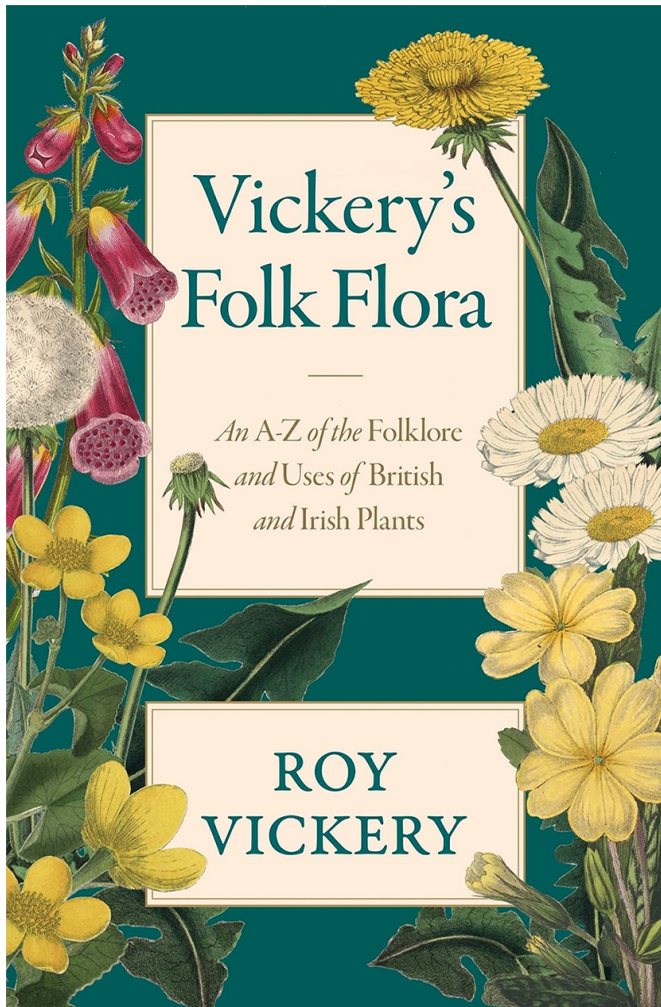
"bonding material" – very durable and suitable for flooring houses, especially halls and porches. These are the very tiles you see in posh Edinburgh hallways and lobbies, public buildings that have stood the wear and tear of generations of feet.

Enthusiasm and energy are the qualifications needed to work in a museum such as this. I would definitely go back as the sense of authenticity is catching.

Our heartiest thanks to Steph for the superb planning and to all who made the gathering so memorable.

Prof. Margaret Ben

Recent publications



Vickery's Folk Flora by our member Roy Vickery was published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in April 2020. This 888 page volume is the culmination of over 40 years work on the folklore and traditional uses of plants in Britain and Ireland, and is based on information received from some 2160 contributors and the study of a wide range of botanical and folklore publications.

The University of Heidelberg is putting the Tools & Tillage project online and it's free to access!

'Sharing expertise about our agricultural past is one of the primary aims of the AIMA. Making Tools & Tillage available online represents a significant step towards realising this goal. With the support and generosity of the University Library Heidelberg, decades of fascinating scholarly work

have now been made freely available to researchers worldwide. The AIMA community hopes that this represents a new phase in the sharing of knowledge and heralds the beginning of many fresh collaborations between the partner organisations involved.' — Dr Ollie Douglas, President of the International Association of Agricultural Museums

For further information please see the AIMA website

<https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/category/announcement/>

Ethnoveterinary Medicine Project

Plants have been used for thousands of years in the British Isles to treat animals, or as feeds to improve their health. This information was passed from one generation to the next and was often not written down. How much of this knowledge remains in the population?

The Ethnoveterinary Medicine Project, established by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, aims to collect the remaining information before it is lost: an important part of the traditional rural culture. However, this knowledge could also be used practically in animal management (livestock, pets), to improve their health and the economy.

As an example, we have been told that:

- Our sheep shearer recommends feeding sheep ivy - which they adore, to reduce the worm burden.
- Lesser birdsfoot trefoil is flash grazed here for the same effect most years by weaned lambs as a break to conventional wormers. Only the one "dose" across a day, so as not to have 'nibbly' sheep rip through the sward, but it seems to work.
- Blackberry leaves are an astringent, and good if small animals that have the scours (diarrhoea) are fed about 1/3 of their diet on them for a couple of days.

- Firstly willow leaves and bark for inflammation in cattle. I recommend the feeding of branches of willow which has salicylic acid in it.
- I have farmed here in the Pennines for 36 years and my father and grandfather before me, so I know my land and the meadow grasses and legumes. We now offer holistic horse boarding and our biodiverse pasture and native hedgerows benefit the horses health. It is interesting to see how they self-medicate. At different times of year different horses will eat hawthorn, hazel, beech, oak, elm (yes we have elm!), ash, willow, gorse, thistle, sow thistle, willow herb, dried nettles, rose hips, dandelions, plantain, and even Ivy and holly, according to their needs.

If you have any information about ethnoveterinary medicines, feed supplements or other information relating to plants/fungi and animal health from the British Isles, please send an email to ethnovet@kew.org. Or alternatively, write to William Milliken, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, RH17 6TN.

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

If so, please let Elaine Edwards, the membership secretary know.

Email address:
elaine.m.edwards@virginmedia.com

NB – Are you paying the correct amount of subs? The annual subscription is £25. For this you receive your peer-reviewed journals, not just one a year but two, this newsletter, access to our website and of course the chance to attend the conference! Value for money? I should say so!

Take a look at **your** Society's website
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

Members' online access to Folk Life

Society for Folklife Studies members have access to the full online issues of Folk Life and Gwerin.

When you subscribed you will have provided our Membership Secretary with an email address. You will need this address to create your account to get access to the online issues of Folk Life and Gwerin.

Go to www.tandfonline.com and register with your email address. Once your account has been verified and you are logged in, you will see the Taylor and Francis Welcome screen. Please click "Your Account" next to your recognised name at the top of the screen.

Online access to the journal is reached via "Account settings" and "view your access". You will then find the journal name in the "Subscription" tab.

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