

Unofficial **Histories**

Saturday 15 June - Sunday 16 June 2013
Manchester, UK

Conference Abstracts

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Session 1 – Activist Histories Today

- **Adam Gutteridge: John Ruskin, Radical History, and Community Activism: Putting the Nineteenth Century to Work in the Twenty-First**

When we undertake history-against-the-grain, or any kind of project involving the participatory and public past, what are our metrics of success? What are the broad progressive aims of unofficial, alternative, and radically-inflected community-based narratives about the past, and how do we measure their attainment? Are we winning? How can we tell? This paper will attempt to elucidate these issues through the prism of the Victorian campaigner and thinker John Ruskin, exploring the ways in which nineteenth century radical ideas about the ameliorative and emancipatory potential of knowledge creation and circulation might have impact upon contemporary modes of thought and action. It will examine and critique some of his ideas about the potential of knowledge to work against entrenched power structures, to resist them, and to build new communities. Ruskin always sought to build structures of value and meaning that transcended capitalist profiteering and emphasised knowledge-networks embedded in the local, the specific, and the true, and access to heritage played an important role in this; is there anything radical historians and heritage practitioners can learn from Ruskin's models and ideals in the contemporary landscape of late capitalism? The paper will consider the specific case of the Ruskin In Sheffield project, run by The Guild of St George, which seeks to re-examine the legacy of Ruskin's interventions in Sheffield in the 1870s (when he embarked upon what would today be understood as programmes of museological outreach and access-widening), and use that as a catalyst for pushing forward new community-led projects focussing on the potential of heritage (as well as art and nature) to inspire and radically improve the present.

- **David Rosenberg: History from Below: an international activist community**

Last October a group of “historical activists” from several countries in Europe met in Barcelona for two days to share what we do in our own cities to reinterpret the past, convey knowledge of buried histories in our localities, and compare the methods that we currently use to link past and present struggles against injustice and oppression. We use different tools – such as guided tours, erecting plaques, publishing blogs and literature, street art and new technology – but we found we had very much in common in our approach to history. We are all committed to giving prominence to ordinary people's struggles, to look at the history behind the history, to convert and subvert spaces that we occupy to imagine the past in ways that challenge official narratives. We also recognised that we each carry out our work on DIY principles and that we were linked by a common desire to internationalise our work. We came out of the meeting with a draft working statement, which we will share in our presentation, and a commitment to meet again a year on from the Barcelona meeting to take forward our joint project. Our presentation at the conference, which will be backed up by images conveying the way that we go about our work, will elaborate the understanding we gained about ourselves as historical activists in different contexts. It will discuss the project that we are developing collectively, and suggest the means through which other historical activists in different cities can participate together with us in this collective project. We hope it will also provoke broader discussion on the conversation we have started about the potential roles and arenas for historical activists.

- **Greta Williams Schultz & Jess Bradley: Disabled People's Emancipation Through Time and Space: Breaking The Binary.**

Within the current austerity agenda, disabled people face increasing hostility in the press and in the public sphere as essential welfare services are being threatened. Even with spectacular events such as the Paralympics apparently "improving disabled peoples PR", disabled people today face a multitude of different oppressions. Has this always been the case? This presentation will explore the unofficial histories of disabled people through time and space. We will cover Ancient Greece, Medieval England, the two World Wars, and contemporary society. The presentation will address several themes; the notion of community care versus independent living, of ability versus disability. Whilst these concepts are traditionally viewed as being binaries, we argue that by examining contemporary disability activism and Marxist theory, these concepts are more complex and could potentially become obsolete. We examine whether abandoning such labels would be beneficial to the disabled community. Another central theme is the binary between oral history and written history within the context of disability history. Disabled people within history are often unseen, their voices unheard. We discuss the difficulties of attributing value to different types of source material when so often history is "written" by non-disabled people. We argue that given the lack of conventional historical sources from disabled people themselves, a more interdisciplinary approach to disability history is necessary. We briefly assess the advantages and disadvantages of an interdisciplinary approach. Can methodologies such as anthropology fill in the gaps in the historical record? Can contemporary literature be considered as suitable source material when considering factual evidence? This presentation will explore the notions of community care versus independence, and ability versus disability. Ultimately it will conclude that these concepts are not binaries, and that by examining socialist theory and current disability activism we may be able to abandon such concepts completely. It is also necessary to question if abandoning such labels will be beneficial to the current disabled community. The presentation will seek to be as interactive as possible, combining expertise in the subject matter with active participation and contribution from the conference floor.

Session 2a- (Re)Claiming Histories

- **Jeanette Atkinson: The idea of tomorrow, yesterday – producing, transmitting and consuming Steampunk in a museum context**

In creating their alternate history, and so their identities, Steampunks are seeking to embody the essence of the Victorian age, to recreate aspects of it and reinvent or reimagine others. In their world, steam, mechanical technology and computers feature large. Medical procedures produce cybernetic humans, with clockwork eyes and brass skeletons. Steampunk combines Victorian mechanical engineering with twenty-first century computer technology and it also supersedes them, producing something that is greater than the combination of the two. This paper considers how the essence of Steampunk – their ideas and values – is transmitted to, and then consumed within, a museum context. This process transforms the intended meaning of Steampunk material culture and shapes the extent to which the community's voice has a place in the museum. Correspondingly, in this negotiation and translation, the museum also faces a challenge to its traditional authoritative voice and sanctioned history. Research for this paper draws on interviews with Steampunks and staff in museums in the UK that have either held Steampunk exhibitions, or worked with Steampunk communities. Research examines the motivations for engagement for both the museums and the Steampunk communities, considers the influences on production, assesses how the original ideas for the exhibitions evolved during collaboration with the communities and determines how the meanings and values inherent in Steampunk translated into a museum environment. Steampunks create, appropriate, manipulate and re-write history, both of the past and for a potential future. In engaging with Steampunk communities, museums are providing a forum for their created identities and constructed realities. In doing so, they are transmitting and translating an unofficial – Steampunked – history for consumption not only by themselves and Steampunks, but also a wider audience, and so engaging in a negotiation of what history really is.

- **Catherine Baker: After building a new Jerusalem, where next? The London 2012 Olympic opening ceremony and British public history**

This paper discusses the public mode of representing the British national past as a mosaic of individual life stories. Since the 1990s, this mode of representation has become increasingly familiar through televised public history projects (the BBC's People's Century (1995) and WW2: People's War (2003–06)), bestselling works of history (David Kynaston's Tales of a New Jerusalem series (2007–)) and, at its most spectacular, through public events (the London 2012 Olympic opening ceremony directed by Danny Boyle and scripted by Frank Cottrell Boyce). While these projects have had different objectives, creators and scales, their imaginary of the British nation is similar: a nation made up of millions of personal life stories with varying trajectories, rather than fitting within one homogenous 'island story'. The mode of 'mosaic history' offers a means of imagining the nation which necessarily consists of multiple narratives, accommodating experiences that are diverse and on an individual level perhaps even contradictory. Its democratic nature and its potential to serve as a basis for reinforcing or re-forging civic solidarity have been widely celebrated. At a time when proposed revisions to the history curriculum in England risk sacrificing complexity for triumphalism, 'mosaic history' may indeed help to meet a demand for alternative and more inclusive ways of imagining the national past. However, the risk also exists that this mode of representation may be co-opted to neoliberal ends as proof that the British nation has arrived at an apogee of progress, or commercialised into a self-congratulatory cliché. The paper thus concludes by asking whether and how those who identify with or participate in this ongoing work of re-imagining could guard against those possibilities.

• James Riordan: Tory Radicalism, 1660-c.1980: Unofficial History?

Of all the interesting displays at the People's History Museum in Manchester perhaps the most significant, and indicative, of our 'unofficial history' is the veritable family tree of British radicalism. From the English revolution, to the Luddites and the protesters at Peterloo, to the birth of industrial unionism to the rise of the Labour party and its famous victory in 1945 we have our own unofficial, native, radical tradition. There is however an unofficial history within this unofficial history, that of popular toryism and loyalism more generally and in this paper I wish to explore this tradition and its rather neglected status with the corpus of 'unofficial history'. After providing a working definition of tory radicalism, we will explore some of the reasons why popular toryism has been something of a Cinderella topic in the history of popular politics both for the pioneers of social history in Britain and conservative historians of high politics. It was the case that paternalism and deference could be tools for working people to critique the rise of industrialisation and the impact this had upon pre-existing social relations generally. We will then focus on a broad history of populist toryism, arguing that a rich amalgam of ideas provided a sophisticated critique of political oligarchy and rapid economic change. This organicist view of society can be traced through the eighteenth century oppositional movements, through Disraelian Tory Democracy to the 'One Nation' tories of the twentieth century and their extra-parliamentary supporters. This vibrant, dominant popular toryism was destroyed by the rise of Thatcherism in the Conservative party and its new radical commitment to Neoliberalism and the free market, to the detriment of pre-existing consensual social relations through its dismantling of working class culture, a culture that we have seen contained an important tory contingent.

Session 2b- Performing the Past

- **Peter Yeandle: Victorian pantomime and the politics of popular imperialism**

Pantomime was the most popular form of mass entertainment in Victorian Britain. Indeed, so popular was the Christmas pantomime that moneys taken would often fund the theatre for the rest of the year. Some of the characteristics of 'modern' pantomime emerged over the course of the nineteenth century: cross dressing, slapstick, celebrity culture, political satire and an emphasis on fun. It should be no surprise that its content reflected dominant ideologies of race, gender and class. Loved by workers and royalty alike, the study of pantomime enables a investigation of the formation of public opinion. Victorian pantomime was replete with topical allusions and commentaries on current affairs. Whether critiquing or celebrating local taxation policies or imperial foreign policy, it can be argued that pantomime was so popular precisely because it was political: no topic was beyond the bounds of satire. Research into periodical reviews makes possible an analysis of both content and reception. Pantomime was big business: hence the success of the performance depended on the extent to which the audience 'got' the joke. Reviewers would not shy away from judging the 'pitch' of the pantomime's content. For this paper, I intend to address the recent debate about the extent of popular enthusiasm for the British Empire. Pantomimes, set in colonial landscapes and narrating stories of the exotic, both poked fun at – but in doing so, normalised – racial differences. Colonial subjects and animals were imported from India and Africa to feature as part of the spectacle. Standard fairy tales were rewritten to retell imperial events. Moreover, pantomimes both celebrated and questioned foreign policy. As such, the study of content and reception provides an interesting method for the (speculative) measurement of popular perceptions of British imperialism.

- **James Underwood: 'Northern Soul?' Appropriating the histories of popular cultural forms in Jim Cartwright's Road**

This paper will take as its starting point Stuart Hall's analysis of 'the Popular' as a process which is perpetually subjected to appropriation and re-inscription. This is particularly relevant to Jim Cartwright's treatment of popular cultural forms in his 1986 play, *Road*, set in a working-class Lancashire town. The play is infused with popular forms such as music-hall, pop, rock and roll, and disco. These forms operate at different levels of the play, whether as themes, dramatic devices, or as its soundtrack. In doing so, they assume the role of unofficial, non-elite versions of social history. This paper will demonstrate the ways in which Cartwright appropriates these forms in order to strongly imply a history of their decline, from subversive and radical potential, to 'tacky', commercial acceptability. This mirrors the historical decline of the type of northern community which *Road* represents. The paper will go on to argue that the histories of soul and punk are posited against this narrative of decline; soul, for instance, is inseparable from the history of Black Power and emancipation, and thus becomes a means of authentically articulating the social and psychological torment of northern life under Thatcher. In turn, these positive appropriations are used by the northern community represented by this play as a challenge to the politically and culturally hegemonic and dominant South. In this way, the paper fits in with the conference themes of regional history, music, drama, and their emancipatory goals.

- **Kylo-Patrick R. Hart: Mediating Mary Pickford: New Womanhood and Historically Noteworthy Representational Patterns in the Early Twentieth Century**

The era of new womanhood in U.S. society provided increased opportunities for female emancipation, encouraging women of various demographic backgrounds to pursue a growing number and range of activities outside of the home. In the silent-film era, movie fan magazines were widely credited with promoting the ideal of new womanhood in relation to the growing power and prominence of female Hollywood stars. But was this consistently the case? This presentation will argue that it was not, focusing specifically on the mediated construction of the silent-film star Mary Pickford in the pages of the fan magazine Photoplay. With her petite frame and trademark curls, Pickford was 24 years old when she played a 12-year-old in 1917's *A Little Princess*, and she is fondly remembered by many as representing the feminine ideal of that era. Nevertheless, she was simultaneously a very successful businesswoman who achieved complete control of her moviemaking career by the age of 25. In this presentation, I will demonstrate how media coverage of Pickford's career in Photoplay supported the actress' career successes as a "new woman" up until the point that she became the most powerful woman in Hollywood by co-founding United Artists with three men (Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith) as well as how, for a lengthy period thereafter, the publication's coverage patterns of her career changed substantially, no longer explicitly acknowledging her accomplishments as a savvy movie mogul. Furthermore, I will explore the feminist implications of these noteworthy representational patterns with regard to the symbolic promotion and containment of new womanhood during the silent era.

Session 2c- Historical Legacies

- **Richard Ryan : Deconstructing an 'official history': The Spanish Civil War beyond the myths of Francoism**

Between 1936 and 1939 Spain experienced a brutal civil war, one that ended in the defeat of its still young democracy and the establishment of a dictatorship that was, over the next decades, to embark on a process of self-legitimation in which history itself became a weapon. Despite an explosion of historical scholarship after the end of the dictatorship, many of the Manichean myths paraded by the regime as historical fact have persisted, their legitimacy appearing to have outlived the dictatorship they underpinned. Nowhere is this more evident than with the place of Catholicism and the Church in the war and after. The beatification and canonization of over one thousand 'martyrs' - extrajudicially murdered in Republican territory during the war - during the conservative pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI have ensured this distorted image of the Church as a hapless victim, saved by a crusade fought 'for God and for Spain' has survived well into the twenty first century.

- **Laura De Becker: Unofficial ethnicities: History in Rwanda's official memorials and museums**

In 1994, an estimated 1.000.000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were annihilated in less than a hundred days in the small, Central-African country that is Rwanda. Official historical narratives played a significant role in the lead-up to this conflict, as extremist readings of history claimed that the ethnic identities of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa had existed 'since time immemorial' and were biological, racial and unchanging, rather than political, social and fluid. From colonial time onwards, we can track the changes in rhetoric that were installed to create a clear division between Hutu and Tutsi, in order to construct them as complete opposites of each other. After the genocidal events, the existence of ethnicity was abolished. The newly-elected Government of National Unity reinterpreted Rwandan history as one where ethnicity was created by the colonial forces, rather than it being an indigenous or local category of identification. This has, yet again, placed official history at the forefront of political policy. The 'new Rwanda' is based around this official interpretation of history, reinforced by laws that prohibit people from discussing their 'former' ethnic identity, on account of them being 'divisionist.' However, people's memories of the genocide are – naturally – determined by which side of the ethnic division they found themselves on at the time. This creates a tense situation where official history propagates a culture of 'Banyarwandanness,' while people's memories are rather connected to their identification as Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. In my paper, I propose to discuss this tension through an analysis of the 'official' genocide memorials that were installed by the Rwandan state after 1994, which promote a particular interpretation of history. Rwandans themselves, however, have responded to these memorials in varying ways, which indicate the existence and persistence of memories that diverge from the official narrative. I argue that this tension is highly counter-productive in the reconciliation project that is so imperative in this post-conflict society.

- **Lisa McQuillan: 'Turning conflict into content: what can theatre practice teach museums and archives in Northern Ireland?'**

I will talk about the difficulties facing museums and archives when faced with competing and conflicting histories which may contradict the official history mediated by the state, its institutions and the media. I have researched the emergence of community archives in Northern Ireland and examined how they differ in their content, practice and outcomes from the public record office and traditional archive. I worked with the Sailortown community group, in Belfast, and looked at their efforts to foster community identity and engage with social issues through identification with their shared past; how they embodied an unofficial version of history and the problems this caused them in their interaction with funding bodies and heritage partners; and how this is a wider problem in a divided society like Northern Ireland, but also how it relates to archives and heritage institutions anywhere. I will further this discussion by looking at theatre practice and discussing what it might teach museums and archives. I will talk specifically about an outreach project run by Tinderbox theatre company in Belfast, addressing unofficial histories through a verbatim theatre project 'Turning The Page', which illuminates an imaginative approach to engaging with complex, contested and unofficial histories which is currently lacking in mainstream heritage institutions.

Session 3a- Archives for Action

- **Jill Kirby: Observing the 1980s – creating an open educational resource**

This paper will explore the themes of the conference by examining the recent creation of the JISC-funded 'Observing the 1980s' online open educational resource. The resource brings together voices from the Mass Observation Project (MOP) and the British Library Sound Archive oral history collection with a range of contemporary documents (ephemera). The materials are made available online, freely to anyone under a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA licence. They are offered both as raw research data and a constructed undergraduate teaching module and under the terms of the licence can be used by anyone for any non-commercial purpose, and amended and repurposed as they wish. Creating such a collection raised many issues. Although the starting point for the teaching module was an existing course, what we found in the archives raised questions about what subjects and themes should be represented. It also highlighted considerable ethical and practical issues about selections of material, copyright permissions, and usability. Underpinning it all were our assumptions, beliefs and expectations about how the resource would be used, which clearly affected both its production and dissemination. Fundamental to our motivation was a desire to make the resources as open ended as possible in order to avoid closing down some voices or experiences in favour of our own themes and interests. The project also exposed the competing and corresponding motivations of the different stakeholders and the varying interpretations and understandings of 'open educational resource'. Not least it required careful consideration of the impact of the project on the authors and interviewees whose words constitute this 'history'. The very nature of creating an educational resource requires the categorisation and packaging of materials into themes and particular forms of research practice, which do not necessarily correspond with how the authors or interviewees understand their contributions. By considering some of these issues and examining a few examples from the experience of creating the Observing the 1980s resource, this paper will illustrate and explore one particular approach to creating history from an educational and research perspective.

- **Louise Purbrick: Physical Resistance: an unofficial history of anti-fascism**

The author of *Physical Resistance: A Hundred Years of Anti-Fascism* (Zero Books, 2013), Dave Hann, was an anti-fascist activist and a plasterer by trade. When he died in 2009, he left manuscript of a hundred thousand words and a trunk full of anti-fascist publications, spanning the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, accumulated in the course of his research for *Physical Resistance*. In this paper, I reflect on the process of completing his book for publication, which was no routine task of editing but of accepting an inheritance in material and immaterial from, inheriting a person's writing and what that writing represented. Dave Hann's book offers an inclusive history of anti-fascism that redefines political practice according to the act of participation rather than the adherence to precisely defined ideological standpoints and offers an alternative interpretation of political action, which includes physical resistance as part of an everyday pattern of opposition. Hann pieced together this history through the experiences of activists themselves. He collected oral histories that are augmented by diligent research often using out of print local and left-wing histories only available through second hand markets, many having been de-accessioned from municipal and university libraries to make way for digital resources. *Physical Resistance*, quite literally, retrieves lives and actions unceremoniously deleted from official records. *Physical Resistance* as an oral history reflects a dialogue between activists rather than the engagement of an informant by a historian. In its writing, there is no hierarchy between author and historical subject. It has already been acknowledged by Hilda Kean as an 'unofficial history' (<http://hildakean.com/?p=1588>). My paper concludes by considering how such histories present different ways of understanding the present meanings of the past.

• Anne Plumb: Going, Going, Gone: Grassroots Archives.

In this presentation, I will explore two archives. The first is that of Ken Lumb (1941-2009), a disabled activist. This contains items relating to activism in Rochdale, a Greater Manchester Borough, to the Rochdale Housing and Disability Group and the Rochdale Mobility and Access Group in particular. Also material relating to the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation UPIAS whose Social Interpretation of Disability lies behind the 'Social Model of Disability' and developments in the 80s - Coalitions such as the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People and Lambeth Accord, including the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, as well as Centres for Independent/Integrated Living (CILs) Material related to the GMCDP was not kept at home but Ken retained copies of 'Coalition' to add to an earlier 4 year run of 'Scope' produced at a Rochdale day centre in the mid 70s (not your usual daycentre production). The second archive is my own Ear to the Ground: (Mental Health) Survivor and Ally Voices, organisation and action, covering a slightly longer period.. This contains leaflets, pamphlets, flyers, press cuttings, newsletters, publications. I was a member of a survivor network, Survivors Speak Out and DATA, a distress awareness training collective. Currently, I am a member of a Survivor History Group SHG ,closely connected to the website of Andrew Roberts www.studymore.org.uk . Other members also have archives. These archives raise issues for historians writing about either disability or mental health activism and history – do these 'second-hand histories' tally with our own experience and recollections? Are activist archives sought out? Are they accessible, physically and in this digital age? What about the confidential internal circulars of the UPIAS? What happens when the activists' lives come to a close? Where might they be conserved? should they be bought together in a single repository or kept in the localities out of which they grew? What happens when organisations are forced to restructure and indeed to close? Who cares about the minutiae of executive meetings?

Session 3b- Evidence of the Everyday

- **Hilda Kean: Laurance, Mariana and Hilda: an exploration in reading unpublished diaries from 1937 – 1950 of a London advertising businessman and his horse.**

Imaginative historians including Carolyn Steedman, Judy Greenway and Melanie Tebbutt have explored the subjective engagement between researcher and archival material. I want to take this further by discussing specific aspects of engagement when analysing the diary form. The unpublished diaries of advertising London businessman Laurance Holman are in Camden archives. They include specific details of food prices, leisure activities, overdraft and contracts and daily rides on his horse Mariana either in Hyde or Regent's Park or through the streets to view bomb damage. No other details initially existed of the man. Thus the diary became both a key source for 'factual' details of the man's life and of his reflections on his own daily experience, particularly during the war years and in difficult circumstances of keeping his business running. All historians are necessarily selective in choosing particular topics or approaches. However, I want to suggest that a sense of closeness between researcher and subject is facilitated not only by perceived common circumstances such as age or geographical location, but also by the shared genre of the diary form. My initial reaction to this man changed. This was partly due to recognition of the distinctive accounts of his relationship with his horse – he took up riding after a divorce in the 1930s. It was also through acknowledgement that his diary writing (and his both peevish and somewhat neurotic recordings of costs, times and weekly reflections) performed apparently similar functions to my own diary recordings in the recent past. Rather than ignore one's own experience – as some conventional historians might argue – by acknowledging its impact on research different insights into the processes of history - making might be gained.

- **Rosemary Shirley: Pylons and Birds Eye: Golden Jubilee Scrapbooks from the WI**

This paper centres on a set of scrapbooks created by the rural women's organisation the Women's Institute. They were made in 1965 by WI's all over the country to celebrate the organisation's golden jubilee, and were intended to provide a snap shot of village life at that moment in time. Now held in county archives or by the institutes themselves, the books reveal something of the complexity in how modernity has been felt in rural places, evidencing dramatic yet uneven changes in the landscape, in consumption and in the home. Part of the importance of these documents is that they articulate rural everyday life from a female perspective. The scrapbooks communicate how the world was represented to the rural women of the WI at this time, through media and consumer products and how they chose to represent their world to future generations. The scrapbooks are visually fascinating objects and in addition to the historical content of these documents this paper will discuss the idea of making or crafting as a way of accessing and recording alternative or unofficial histories.

- **Alison Twells: Border Territories: history, fiction and memoir**

In 2009, I inherited a suitcase of seventy-one pocket diaries and dozens of letters from my great aunt, Norah Hodgkinson (1925-2009). The diaries begin in 1938, when Norah as a twelve year old school girl, and continue until the night she died. They document her life through decades of change for women, and touch upon some of the big subjects of the twentieth century: WW2, the scholarship generation, modernity, consumerism, sexual revolution. Although I am a professional historian based in a university, I knew when I received the diaries that I didn't want to just put them for academic articles. Neither did I want to produce a traditional biography. But it took me a part-time MA in Writing to discover what I did want to do. This paper explores the border territories between history, fiction and memoir. My interests are in the dilemmas involved in writing history for academic and wider, non-academic audiences; the question of how we (academics) came to be writing for an ever smaller group of specialists; the contributions that other disciplines - life writing, heritage studies - can make to our historical writing; and the significance of social class in shaping choice of genre and what we dismiss as 'nostalgia'.

Sessions 3c- Visiting the Past

- **David Callaghan: Diversity at the core of heritage: Reimagining a city's history at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery**

Heritage organisations and museums, especially in urban centres have increasingly recognised the need for their presentations to reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of their geographic communities. Following over a decade of significant investment however, especially from the Heritage Lottery Fund, concerns have been raised from various quarters regarding the lack of permanence of heritage interpretations which contradict a traditional national narrative of Anglo-Saxon England, only recently diversified by other ethnic groups. Many are projects with a specific shelf life, such as for Black History Month, or require an event to justify, such as the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade. This paper will explore how ethnic and cultural diversity has become a 'banal fact' of contemporary England, but remains peripheral to English heritage beyond the aforementioned allocations. This paper will consider how presenting ethnic diversity as a core element of English heritage beyond discussions of the transatlantic slave trade and post war Commonwealth migration is an important way of allowing the historical ethnic and cultural heterogeneity of England to become equally 'banal'. Whilst providing an introduction to such episodes of multiculturalism within heritage in the Midlands, the focus of this paper will be upon how this has been done specifically within Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery's new Birmingham: its People, its history exhibition which makes the historical importance of migration a central facet. The importance of this exhibition is that unlike most demonstrations of long-standing historical ethnic and cultural diversity in England, it is a permanent addition to Birmingham's history.

- **Kathleen McIlvenna: Taking the Tower: A struggle between visitor and state over possession of the Victorian Tower of London**

Since its construction, the Tower of London has played a role in the production and consumption of English history. This has been facilitated through its varied functions including a royal residence, state prison, mint, store house, and tourist attraction. In this paper I would like to look at the Tower as a visitor attraction in the nineteenth century and the histories created through the changing displays contrasted to the 'unofficial histories' seen through visitor accounts. England's kings have been displayed in armour and with horses in a procession, sometimes called the Line of Kings, since the 17th century. By looking at how the display of this collection of objects changed at the Tower during the nineteenth century we can see the changing aims and perceptions the establishment wanted to promote. Unsurprisingly images of monarchy and state have been central to this, but during this time academia and educating the public also became important. However, the history created by the Tower's visitors does not always parallel the view promoted by the establishment. The more the Tower opened up to visitors the more the establishment lost control over the symbolism of the Tower and its history. Consequently this symbol of monarchical and state power and heritage became a tool of public protest, free speech and leisure. In increasing its role as a visitor attraction the Tower established its historic place in the national consciousness but also provided an image to be manipulated by a varied public for their own means.

- **Anna Scott: The Pilgrims' Progress: heritage tourism and pick and mix history.**

The history of the 'Pilgrim Fathers', as they are predominantly known in the UK, can be traced across the country and on into the Netherlands before their departure for America nearly 400 years ago. In one area around north Nottinghamshire this history has become officially adopted following its informal emergence over the last few decades thanks largely to the enthusiasm of local historians. Political interest in the saga grew so that unofficial histories of the Pilgrims were officially adopted. This was apparently for reasons of tourism and economic benefit and to enhance the perceived character of a rural area with no other significant character-driven narrative to recommend it, except for the legendary and mythical narrative of Robin Hood, centred on nearby Sherwood Forest, to provide what might be termed a unique selling point for the area. The official version highlights the main sites on a heritage trail with links to people from the story, with a recent revamp of interpretation at sites. The development of this story has come however from a perceived need to create a tangible history for the audience of visiting Americans who in the past have asserted their own unofficial histories through memorialisation with plaques and monuments. Some locals have said this is not 'our' history but 'theirs', while others have sought to forge stronger links on the civic level with a perceptibly educated and interested niche audience with their own internal hierarchies and genealogical motivations. The extent of the official/authorised and multiple unofficial histories have become intertwined as the English and American versions of the history and the myths contrast, with one apparently following the other in a time-lagged catch-up which neglects the broader aspects of the history. This case study, part of my PhD research, looks at the cross-cultural nuances of this single narrative and seeks to understand how it has been used on both the official and unofficial levels.

Session 4a- Unofficial Historians

- **Barbara Martin: Dissident Historians of the post-Stalin Era in the Soviet Union (1956-1985)**

In the Soviet Union, in the post-Stalin era, despite a certain degree of liberalization following Khrushchev's destalinization campaign, official historiography remained tightly controlled by the state. The recent past in particular was full of "blank spots" that no official historian was in a position to fill, including such crucial themes as the crimes of the Stalin era, which were of great relevance to millions of recently rehabilitated victims. Dissident historians, not affiliated with any official institutions, and without any access to archives, therefore took the lead in exploring the dark pages of the Soviet past, taking upon themselves a freely-endorsed role of researchers of the Soviet past. In their research, the use of testimonies - of former political prisoners in particular - was crucial, and constituted a precious replacement for archival documents. Despite facing potential repression from the regime, they published their works in the West, escaping censorship. Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* (1973) certainly represents the best-known of such independent oral histories. I would like to look at two less well-known, but nonetheless emblematic figures: Roy Medvedev and Anton Antonov-Ovseenko, both of whom published anti-Stalinist historical writings in the West. I wish to examine their methods of research, the limitations they faced, and their links to the broader Soviet public for whom, and in the name of whom they were writing. Which factors explain the rise of such a phenomenon as dissident historiography? What was the specificity of the position of dissident historians, in comparison with that of Soviet official historians, on the one hand, and Western Sovietologists, on the other? To what extent was this historiography politically oriented, and inscribed in the broader dissident movement seeking emancipation from the yoke of the Brezhnev-era post-totalitarian state?

- **Daryl Leeworthy: The Workers' Historian: John E. Morgan, A Village Workers' Council, and the miners' sense of history in the South Wales Valleys**

A Village Workers' Council by John E. Morgan was written in the aftermath of nationalisation of the coal industry in the late-1940s and published, in Pontypridd, in 1950. With the aim of showing 'the rise to power of the Lodge in all its phases, [and] how greatly it influenced the life of the community', it is perhaps the most ambitious history text written by a working miner from the South Wales Coalfield. The book relates the key events, institutions and people, as Morgan saw them, in the life of Ynysybwl. Thus, the transition from Liberal-voting to Labour-voting politics is seen not through the high politics of personalities but through the grassroots work of setting up a branch and handing out leaflets and organising speakers, such as Ben Tillett and Beatrice Webb, to come and speak. We find, also, Morgan's reflections on the work achieved by trades unions in the wider community – the park in which tired mothers could rest for a little while – and the workmen's hall with its library and cinema. This paper makes use of the recently recovered personal archive of John E. Morgan alongside the minute books of the Lady Windsor Lodge (Ynysybwl) and the Humphrey Jennings film *A Diary for Timothy* to examine Morgan's role as a historian of the coalfield community in which he lived and worked. Dwelling on the themes presented (and those left out) the paper argues that, in its fusion of institutional and social history, the book remains a model of people's history that has retained its relevance and influence over sixty years later.

- **Huib Sanders: Two tendencies and one Institution: Structural-versus Emancipatory Social History and the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in the 1970s.**

The 1970s saw a remarkable increase in popularity of the discipline of Social History in the Netherlands. The growing student population was strongly politicized. Before the 1970s interest in Social History was dominated by Labour History. Persons involved were organized in the Sociaal-historische Studiekring (Social-Historical Study Circle), an organization changing its name to Nederlandse Vereniging tot beoefening van de Sociale Geschiedenis (Dutch Union for the practice of Social History) in 1967. Within these forums a debate emerged on the course of the discipline. One group, inspired by the example of French structural Social History wanted to transform the discipline accordingly. The other group, inspired by the work of E.P Thompson wanted to stay closer to Labour History. This group positioned their activities in the struggle of the radical student and labour movement. The intellectual leaders of the two currents were both thoroughly committed historians. Theo van Tijn, professor at Utrecht University, opted for the structural approach to Social History, while being a Trotskyist of influence. Ger Harmsen, professor at Groningen University, came from Communist backgrounds and although he left the party in conflict, never distanced himself completely from communism. This paper looks at the two groups and their connections within the IISH, the leading institution with regard to Labour History in the Netherlands and Western Europe. The most visible result of the different visions were the creation of two journals: the Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis (Journal of Social History) under the auspices of the IISH, which leaned to the structural Social History side and the Jaarboek voor de Geschiedenis van Socialisme en Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland (Yearbook for the history of Socialism and Labour Movement in the Netherlands) which represented the opposing view on Social History.

Session 4b- History at Home

- **Ian Waites: 'A paradise, what an idea!' Defending the English Council Estate.**

This paper highlights my research on the Middlefield Lane council estate in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, which was completed in 1965. The estate was the product of post-World War Two local and central government policy to provide new housing for working-class families, and of progressive, modernist, ideas in architecture and planning. 'Progress', however, has not been kind to council estates like Middlefield, which has been subject to a process of planned neglect, driven by disinvestment and decreasing support for the social democratic ideals of the welfare state. Strident critiques of the design and planning of the council estate from both media and academic sources have also underpinned a routinely negative view of these places to the point where they are routinely and stereotypically viewed as outdated, rundown and almost worthless. In contrast, this paper will celebrate the council estate. Through the examination of a number of overlooked physical details of the Middlefield Lane estate as it was originally planned and developed, the paper will call into question some of the criticisms that have been made of estates like this. By mixing architectural history, social history and, in particular, first-hand memories of the estate, the paper will show that it was a carefully planned environment with a rich and meaningful history and meaning of its own. In the final analysis, it will be argued that the estate was a model of the progressive optimism of the post-war decades, and that the deeper study of these estates can counteract the prevailing view that they are emblematic of a social democratic experiment that was, and still is, set up to fail.

- **HollyGale Millette: 'Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do': Reform vs. Self-sufficiency? - A Linear Community at a Cross-roads.**

There are more boats and 'live-aboard' boaters on the inland waterways of Great Britain than there were in the late nineteenth century. The history of these peoples began in commerce at the height of the industrial revolution and became a way of life for many by the turn of the century. The everyday history of boaters, and their representative history in the public realm, experienced seismic shifts throughout the twentieth century, but most recently competitive and corresponding desires, primarily concerned with funding imperatives, and external to their own lived history have manipulated their past and contested their future. This paper considers the community history of a marginal people who have, for over 150 years, suffered a falsity of perception and paucity of representation within both the public sphere and the consciousness of history. Outside of their own micro-communities and in the public and regulatory realm, boaters are marginalised and contained by taxonomy groupings (vagrant, traveller, gypsy, pirate, etc.) that are not their truths, rather the truths of false and lazy perspective. They are a people who pride themselves on belonging to a 3,000-mile linear village and theirs is a various and vacillating unofficial history that forms the very rhetoric through which they communicate and celebrate their communal identity. Using independent film, visual narrative, song, and academic discussion I would like reflect on a people whose community is at a crossroads of history making and knowledge. My argument is their past histories are democratic and emancipatory but their future histories are being imposed as dissident and resistant, and that it is the imposition – not the histories themselves – that is the provocateur in this argument.

- **Kerry Massheder: Excavating memories: Collaborations between oral history and archaeology to better understand the 'housing experience' of workers of the Lower English Buildings**

This paper forms part of a wider PhD project exploring whether there can be an informative research relationship between oral history and archaeology. Its focus is on the working-class housing experience in England from the Industrial Revolution Period onwards. Oral history as a discipline applied within archaeological investigation is growing in popularity and in application in the UK as a form of 'community archaeology'. Experience with a number of projects suggests that there is potential for combining oral history testimony with physical archaeological evidence to enhance our understanding of community and place. However, establishing what evidence of the 'housing experience' survives in an archaeological context and what survives in memory is a crucial aspect to the success of a combined investigative approach. In addition, the value of oral history evidence continues to be debated by professional archaeologists and historians, while members of the public often need to be convinced that their memories are an important source. Understanding and accepting the values and limitations of memory and establishing an integrated methodology for the collection of evidence is another aspect crucial to its success. This paper develops these themes using the Oral History Project that was part of the 'Public Archaeology Programme' of the M74 road completion excavations in Glasgow with particular reference to the Lower English Buildings site.

Session 4c- Made in Manchester

- **Helen Pleasance: A Map of Manchester from Peterloo to Primark: how to live with the history of the Industrial Revolution in the 21st Century**

How do you get from Peterloo to Primark? To anyone who knows Manchester, the answer to the above question is, geographically, very simple: you take a short walk down Mosley St. from St Peter's Square at one end to Piccadilly at the other. Historically and culturally, though, the journey is somewhat more circuitous. And it is history and culture that are the crux of this question for me, and make it a starting point for understanding Manchester's fragmented cultural present through fragments of its past. Peterloo, at the far end of this historical journey is now perceived as a critical event in the founding of modern democracy, while Primark can be understood as an exemplary site of present-day, global, consumer capitalism. How can the journey from one cultural moment to the other be made? Taking in, amongst other places, the Portico Library, The Radisson Blu Edwardian Hotel, John Bright's textile warehouse, the Manchester Home for Lost Dogs and the lunatic asylum lurking beneath Piccadilly Gardens, along the way, the paper offers some possible routes and explores how fiction might provide an adequate mode of transport for such a journey. Drawing on the official and the unofficial; historical documents, archive materials, voices from the past and present, and folk heroes such as Jabez Clegg and Mario Balotelli, the paper offers some multiple overlapping stories that seek to represent how Manchester's lived present is haunted by its complex, cultural histories.

- **Neil Dymond-Green: Invisible Histories: Song and stories from Salford's lost workplaces**

Salford, Manchester's 'invisible' twin city, was an industrial powerhouse for much of the 20th century, employing thousands of local people. Yet today these industries have vanished, leaving behind only memories. 'Invisible Histories' is the Working Class Movement Library's HLF-funded project capturing the stories and experiences of people who worked in three Salford workplaces: Agecroft Colliery, Ward & Goldstone engineering factory and Richard Haworth's cotton mill. We have many questions, including: What was it like to work in these places? What impact did the workplaces and their closures have on individuals, their families and their communities? These memories have been captured by our trained volunteer interviewers, all with connections to Salford, who have heard fascinating stories of everyday life and working conditions. As part of the presentation, volunteers will tell how the project has engaged and moved them. But collecting these memories isn't enough. We want to find ways of make these Invisible Histories visible and keep these stories alive. An innovative way of doing this will be through working with students from a Salford high school. They will listen to and interpret people's stories and compose music and song to accompany them in a new version of the pioneering 1950s BBC Radio Ballads www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/radioballads/original/ created by Salford folk singer and political activist Ewan MacColl. We will present an exclusive preliminary version of our own Radio Ballad, which we believe will help people engage with these memories in a new and meaningful way.

- **Matthew Steele, Jack Hale & Angela Connelly: *A Manchester Definition of 'Toastrack'***

We offer the colloquial definition, as follows: A building on the Hollings Campus, Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). It has become known locally as "the Toastrack" and the adjoining structure, "the Poached Egg". The 'official' name of the building was the Domestic and Trades College. Attributed to the City Architect of the Manchester Corporation, Leonard Cecil Howitt, the building opened in 1960 and taught courses including cookery, needlework and fashion design. Grade II listed by English Heritage, April 1998, Pevsner described the building as a "whacking big piece of pop architecture which will no doubt, when it is old enough, find it's devotees" (Pevsner 1969, p324) In the final year of MMU's tenure of the building, Manchester Modernist Society are 'creatives-in-residence' at the Toastrack hoping to inspire collaborations and explorations of the building. This paper presents the results of an archival intervention aimed at discovering who Howitt was, what he built, and what remains, to uncover his influence and legacy in shaping the City of Manchester. However, buildings are the work of many hands. Challenging traditional art and architectural histories that privilege the "heroic" architect, we demonstrate the problematic issue of attribution for building design in the historical record. Drawing on oral histories and visual evidence, we show how one City Architects Department operated as a design collective. In doing so, we also reflect on the immediate availability of visual, aural, and documentary sources and the challenges in writing and displaying history as an equally co-operative enterprise that can involve architects, academics, activists and other contributors.