

Industrial Heritage Network West Midlands (IHNWM): meeting summary and key points
Coffin Works; 8 April 2019

Theme for the day: *Don't fear it, embrace it! The power of social media to promote and engage.*

Key points covered during the meeting:

1. Update from IHSO (Industrial Heritage Support Officer).

- IHSO is an England wide, one-person project funded by Historic England and managed by Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust.
- IHSO is a facilitator for the Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs) supporting members with the following:
 - Bringing members together
 - Providing help in organising the meetings
 - Providing regional logos (sites/organisations can use the IHNNE logo online, in print or anywhere they think is relevant and can be beneficial; if you don't have a copy of the logo yet please let the IHSO know)
 - Providing access to the IHNs website which can be used for promotion, information sharing and spreading awareness
 - Providing access to the online communications and information platform – this is currently under development as Trello will no longer be used. The IHSO is researching the best option at the moment and is looking for feedback from members and ideas they might have about staying in touch in between meetings.
- Joanna reminded members that:
 - Network meetings are bi-annual
 - Each meeting is to be hosted at a different site/organisation (providing lunch is optional)
 - Agenda is flexible, and members are encouraged to, and should input into it (offering suggestions for themes, talks, presentations, workshops and discussions)
 - Future meetings will be held under a specific theme to focus on issues in more detail and the theme is chosen by the host for the meeting.
- Joanna also talked about the benefits of the IHNs website, asked everyone to send in short blurbs (100 words) and a photo to add to their entry; she also asked to send in various stories with news, information, adverts etc. and subscribe to the IHNs website: <https://industrialheritagenetworks.com/> and the Industrial Heritage Support (IHSO project) website: <https://industrialheritagesupport.com/>
- Lastly, Joanna stressed that meetings should be perceived as 'starters', or 'instigators' for the networking, discussions and support across member sites/organisations to follow throughout the year.

2. Coffin Works host presentation.

- Sarah Hayes, Coffin Works & Museum Manager, talked to us about the site and their approach to using social media for engaging with visitors and volunteers and promoting their activities. Sarah also talked about using social media in general, offered some tips and provided a great introduction for further discussions between members after her talk.

More details about what was covered in Sarah's talk, and in the discussions that followed, are in the blog entry on the IHNs website:

<https://industrialheritagenetworks.com/2019/04/09/dont-fear-it-embrace-it-the-power-of-social-media-to-promote-and-engage-industrial-heritage-network-west-midlands-ihnwm-meeting-at-coffin-works/>

3. Site tour.

- After lunch, members enjoyed a great tour delivered by one of the volunteer guides.

4. Updates from members.

Members were given an open forum to update everyone on what they've been up to, events they might have coming up etc. If there is anything missing below, please let Joanna know - all your events, job vacancies, volunteer roles, exhibitions etc. can be posted via the IHNs website and promoted on social media. All you need to do is send the details with a photo to Joanna.

- **Historic England:** Aimee Henderson, Heritage at Risk Projects Officer, has reminded everyone about the recent restructure at Historic England. The two regions, West Midlands and East Midlands, have now joined to become one Midlands region with the central office still in Birmingham. The same grants will continue to be offered and you can contact Aimee for more information about them: aimee.henderson@historicengland.org.uk
- **Claymills Pumping Station:** the Station has its next Steaming Weekend on Easter weekend (Sunday 21st & Monday 22nd) between 10am and 5pm. Take a look at their website: <http://www.claymills.org.uk/>
- **Etruria Industrial Museum:** the museum has recently had a steaming event and there a major restoration works to the buildings which also started recently. They also have a number of events planned to celebrate the 200 years since James Watt's death. More information is available on the museum's website: <http://www.etruriamuseum.org.uk/>

- **Deb Skinner** (representing a number of organisations): Deb talked about the Northern Ceramics Society which is a membership organisation that exists to provide learning and teaching opportunities, with numerous tailored courses and regular lectures and workshops. More information is available on the Society's website: <https://www.northernceramicsociety.org/> . Deb also mentioned Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Association and their conference next March, take a look on their website for more details: <https://tilesoc.org.uk/tacs/> .
- **Association for Industrial Archaeology:** John Copping, who also represents Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society, mentioned he has recently started looking after the Warwickshire region for the AIA and is keen to develop partnerships across the region.
- **Lichfield Waterworks Trust:** the Trust looks after the Sandfields Pumping Station which has recently been added to the Heritage at Risk register. The Trust is currently in discussions with the developer who owns the site. They are looking to ensure the preservation of the site and the extensive archive located on site.
- **Black Country Living Museum:** the museum has embarked on a large, new capital project (Forging Ahead) which has almost reached the end of the development phase. New visitor centre will be built and a 1950's street will be added to the interpretation going parallel to the 1930's street. It also looks likely that the Midlands Metro will have a new station right next to the museum improving access to it. More information about the project is available here: <https://www.bclm.co.uk/forging-ahead.htm>

5. What's next?

1. **IHNs website:** if you've not done it yet, please send your 100-word blurb and a photo to Joanna. Please also send your news stories, adverts etc. Use the website for promotion, sharing information and improving awareness.
2. **Our next meeting:** we'll be meeting in October (dates TBC) at the Etruria Industrial Museum & Heritage Centre.
3. **Staying in touch:** if you know of any good communications/information sharing systems, or social networks etc. please let Joanna know.

Most importantly, use the network to your benefit – talk to your colleagues, start discussions, act on the project ideas you've had, offer and ask for support.

Thank you!