

WEST MIDLANDS INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE NETWORK MEETING		Friday 4th December 2020, 13:00-14:30 Zoom
SESSION 1 A brief introduction and update from Shane and Mike		
Introduction by Shane Gould, Head of Industrial Heritage Strategy, Historic England	<p>Shane is the Head of Industrial Heritage Strategy within Historic England, which funds the Industrial Heritage Support Officer post.</p> <p>This Network is one of 7 that are up and running across the country in the following regions: London, North East, North West, Cornwall & Devon, South West, South East and West Midlands. Three other Networks are also planned in Yorkshire, East of England and East Midlands.</p> <p>Any suggestions for speakers and locations for future Network meetings should be sent to Mike (Action = ALL).</p>	
Dr Mike Nevell, Industrial Heritage Support Officer for England	<p>The Industrial Heritage Support Officer was established in 2012 to provide support and advice to the 600 Industrial Heritage preserved/protected sites that are open to the public.</p> <p>Mike started his role in March this year and managed to visit a few sites before the lockdown started.</p> <p>There are four social media channels for industrial heritage support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website https://industrialheritagesupport.com/ (for stories) • Website https://industrialheritagenetworks.com/ (for stories) • Facebook https://www.facebook.com/IHSOEngland/ (for news) • Twitter @IHSOEngland (for immediate support) <p>Mike is also developing a private communication platform for the Networks to use on Facebook.</p> <p>Of the 600 industrial heritage sites that are open to the public, there are approximately 65 in the West Midlands.</p> <p>Mike agreed to circulate his presentation and copies of the meeting notes (Action = Mike Nevell)</p>	
Challenges	<p>In 2020 the Industrial Heritage sector has faced 2 major challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change (flooding) – industrial buildings needing maintenance and changes made to adapt to climate/environmental issues such as erosion and degradation • Covid-19 pandemic – many industrial heritage sites rely on visitors and volunteers to survive. The two periods of lockdown have seen annual visitor numbers reduce by at least <u>at least</u> 50% and increased vandalism found when the sites reopened. <p>When sites could reopen in the summer, some have confirmed that they have decided to stay closed. Many of the small volunteer sites are struggling to stay open. The long-term effect of the pandemic on the volunteer is not yet known, there's a concern there might be less volunteers in the future.</p> <p>Some sites were able to access grants and funding from the Cultural Recovery Fund. In the West Midlands, By October 2020 9 sites received a total of £7.9 million of funding, distributed via either the Arts Council or Historic England.</p>	
West Midlands	Charlotte <u>Edwards</u> gave a quick introduction to West Midlands Museum Development. Funded by ACE, the organisation provides sector support for	

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Museum Development	accredited museums and those working towards accreditation. They share information from across the sector and their website contains information on different resource sources (www.mdwm.org.uk). People can also sign up to their mailing list to be sent up to date information.	
SESSION 2 The attendees each introduced themselves and the organisations they represented. They described the challenges they have faced this year		
Nigel Bowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They had 600 attendees at their heritage open days.• It has proven difficult to make the site Covid-ssafe so they have remained closed for now.• The increased use of MS Teams and Zoom has led to better communication and helped to keep the volunteers together.	
Helen Johnson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The impact of volunteers in Staffordshire is worrying• Many sites/organisations have been unable to access their collections and there have been small-scale problems (such as blocked drains)• While closed to the public, some museums and trusts have been carrying out construction work	
Bernard Lovatt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Since March, a small number of volunteers have been looking after the site• Financially the site is okay as the Council pays the utility bills and they have no advertising or employee costs (it is run completely by volunteers).• While closed, they have carried out maintenance work such as installing new toilet facilities. They have been given a £34K grant from Historic England to install a better IT system.	
Susan Hetherington	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are run by a skeleton staff with skilled knowledgeable volunteers.• Everyone was furloughed during the first lockdown.• They had a very successful summer when they reopened, with lots of families visiting.• There is a need to train younger volunteers to run the machinery.• Some of the volunteers are more cautious to return after the second lockdown.	
John Copping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The pandemic has shown there is a willingness for volunteers, especially with retired individuals – this just needs to be harnessed for industrial heritage.	
Marianne Blaauboer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The visitor centre was closed in March but no-one was furloughed as work continued towards opening the mill floor.• They have held regular training meetings for the volunteers, which have been recorded so there's a library of knowledge.• The total volunteer hours increased this year, with people working on online projects such as transcribing soldier's registry.• Many students signed up to help and by offering online volunteer opportunities meant people could sign up from around the country.	
Richard Benjamin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talks for local groups etc have all moved to zoom which removed geographical restrictions – such giving talks to groups in USA and the Netherlands. The talks are offered free but donations are welcome.• The group sizes are often larger too and they are looking into expanding	

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	the zoom account to cope with groups of over 100 attendees.	
Sebastian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor numbers are down 50%, but there has been a large increase in families visiting. The volunteers have been keen to return but restoration work has had to be postponed as there is less funding available. Currently most available grants are for Covid support but funding for development and future projects are harder to find. 	
Rebecca Loughhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After reopening in July, the site had a good summer with an increase of families visiting. The site is currently closed again but is hoping to reopen in January. Businesses on site have been allowed access. The volunteer response has been good, with continued maintenance and regular Teams calls and recorded messages for the volunteers 	
Joanna Turska	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trust's welcome stations across the West Midlands were closed in March. Instead, they have been looking how to engage visitors outside. There's been a 400% growth in people using canals since lockdown – with more people valuing green spaces. They are looking at engagement through partnerships with local attractions 	
Jonathan Lloyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The situation is similar for sites across Europe as well as the rest of the UK Going forward ERIH coordination will be split with a contact in each home nation: England – Mike Nevell, Scotland – Mark Watson at Historic Environment Scotland, Wales – John Roger at ERIH (temporarily) and Northern Ireland – TBC. 	
Liz Chard-Cooper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors numbers were up when the museum reopened – 10% were expected but received 35%, with many more families than previously. Catering and shop facilities have had to change. Lots of very keen volunteers 	
Wayne Cocroft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sits on the Steering Group of the Military Aviation Heritage Networks. Initially delayed due to Covid, but two meetings have now been held and the website has been launched https://www.mahn.org.uk/ The networks will include civil aviation so will cross over with this network. 	

ATTENDEES:	
Richard Benjamin	Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings
Marianne Blaauboer Marianne Blauuboer	Friends of Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings
Nigel Bowers	Chatterley Whitfield Colliery
Liz Chard-Cooper	Coventry Transport Museum
Wayne Cocroft	Historic England (Military Aviation Heritage Network)
John Copping	Association of Industrial Archaeology & SPAB volunteer

Commented [mn1]: Not sure of the surname spelling

Diana Evans	Historic England
Shane Gould	Historic England
Susan Hetherington	Museum of Carpets
Helen Johnson	Staffordshire County Council (and West Midlands Museum Development)
Jonathan Lloyd	European Route of Industrial Heritage
Rebecca Loughhead	Middleport Pottery Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust
Bernard Lovatt	Etruria Industrial Museum
Mike Nevell	Industrial Heritage Support Officer
Mike Rogers	National Archives (Transport & Schools – Midlands)
Deb Skinner Last	Northern Ceramics Society
Joanna Turska	Canal and Rivers Trust
Marcus Ward	Historic England
Sebastian Sebastian	The Transport Museum Wythall

Commented [mn2]: Don't know his second name