

<b>NORTH EAST INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE NETWORK MEETING</b>	<b>Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 12:30-14:30</b> <b>Zoom</b>
<b>SESSION 1</b> A brief introduction and update from Shane and Mike	
<b>Introduction by Shane Gould, Head of Industrial Heritage Strategy, Historic England</b>	<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 &amp; Devon, South West, South East, and West Midlands. Three other Networks are also planned in Yorkshire, East of England, and East Midlands.</p> <p>The Networks were established to provide regional support and the exchange of key skills. Over the next 12 months, face to face meetings with site visits will be introduced alongside the continuation of online meetings. This blended approach will help ensure no-one is unknowingly excluded from the meetings.</p> <p><b>Any suggestions for speakers at future Network meetings should be sent to Mike and Shane (Action = ALL).</b></p>
<b>Dr Mike Nevell, Industrial Heritage Support Officer for England</b>	<p>The Industrial Heritage Support Officer was established in 2012 to provide support and advice to the 610 Industrial Heritage preserved/protected sites that are open to the public.</p> <p>Mike started his role in March in 2020 and the post has been renewed until at least September 2021.</p> <p>There are three social media channels for industrial heritage support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website <a href="https://industrialheritagesupport.com/">https://industrialheritagesupport.com/</a> (for stories)</li> <li>• Facebook <a href="https://www.facebook.com/IHSOEngland/">https://www.facebook.com/IHSOEngland/</a> (for news)</li> <li>• Twitter @IHSOEngland (for immediate support)</li> </ul> <p>Of the 610 industrial heritage sites that are open to the public, 45 are based in the North East region. Mike and Shane will be reviewing the list later this year to see which sites have remained open after the pandemic.</p> <p><b>The powerpoint presentation and minutes of this meeting will be emailed to IHN North east members (Action = Mike Nevell).</b></p>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>In 2020 the Industrial Heritage sector has faced 2 major challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change (especially flooding) – industrial buildings needing maintenance and changes made to adapt to climate/environmental issues such as erosion and degradation.</li> <li>• Covid-19 pandemic – many industrial heritage sites rely on visitors and volunteers to survive. The three periods of lockdown have seen annual visitor numbers reduce by 70% and increased vandalism found when some sites reopened.</li> </ul> <p>It's currently unclear how many sites will have closed permanently as a result of the lockdowns and loss of visitor income. The long-term effect of the pandemic on volunteers is not yet known: there's a concern there might be less volunteers in the future.</p> <p>Some sites have struggled to reopen as it's difficult to introduce a safe one-way system. Some sites are too small to have one-way visitor systems so have had to remain closed.</p>

<b>SESSION 2</b>	
The attendees each introduced themselves and the organisations they represented. They described the challenges they have faced this year	
<b>Leona White-Hannant, Darlington Railway Museum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site isn't reliant on volunteers for front-of-house duties. Instead, most of the volunteers help with cataloguing and digitalisation activities.</li> <li>• During lockdown no volunteers have been allowed on site.</li> <li>• Some of the museum staff have been seconded to work in pandemic testing centres.</li> <li>• Hoping that the volunteers will return to the museum in the summer.</li> </ul>
<b>John Clayson, volunteer at Discovery Museum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used to be a curator at the Discovery Museum but is now a volunteer at the site.</li> <li>• For volunteers that are office-based like David, their ability to return could be restricted due to social distancing measures – where office space is limited it may need to be prioritised for staff before volunteers.</li> </ul>
<b>Gemma Ashby, Discovery Museum &amp; Captain Cook Birthplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Museum has struggled to have volunteers on site due to the pandemic.</li> <li>• During the lockdowns, only staff have been allowed on site to carry out vital checks.</li> <li>• The site is hoping to reopen in May, with volunteers back in June.</li> <li>• At the Stephenson Railway, the volunteers have kept things going and are currently on site. However, discussions were held with each volunteer and their age considered to ensure it was safe for them to return.</li> </ul>
<b>Louise Harrison, Dorman Museum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The sites don't currently have many volunteers.</li> <li>• They have decided to reopen in July, rather than reopen sooner using the one-way system that was introduced after the first lockdown.</li> </ul>
<b>David Mennear, Land of Iron</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme will finish next year after a 4 year project.</li> <li>• Some conservation work could be carried out between lockdowns, but no exhibitions could be held.</li> <li>• The volunteers have been kept engaged in the project through online meetings, which have help to keep a sense of community while they couldn't meet face to face.</li> <li>• The volunteers donate their time to the National Park as a whole, so the legacy of the project should continue after it finishes.</li> <li>• The different tiers of lockdowns influenced who was able to be on site – staff and volunteers living within the same tier as the site were able to visit, whereas those in other higher tiers were restricted and had to stay at home.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Comments</b>	
<p>A range of solutions have been employed to keep volunteers engaged at sites during the lockdowns including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not having volunteers working indoors at sites. At Ironbridge, the volunteers are not allowed to work inside the archives &amp; library building but they can work in outdoor roles.</li> <li>• Online training and research: some site get volunteers together via facebook etc to carry out research using digital archives.</li> </ul> <p>It would be useful to capture all the innovative methods introduced by different sites and share them nationally.</p>	

<b>ATTENDEES:</b>	
Gemma Ashby	The Discovery Museum
John Clayson	Volunteer at the Discovery Museum
Louise Harrison	The Dorman Museum & Captain Cook Birthplace Museum
David Mennear	Land of Iron Landscape Partnership Scheme
Leona White-Hannant	Darlington Railway Museum