

Industrial Heritage Network South West (IHNSW): meeting summary and key points
Museum of Bath at Work; 19 March 2019

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 the regional logos (sites/organisations can use the IHNSW 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 forum, Trello (this is currently on hold due to recent system changes at Trello – the IHSO will be in touch soon with more details).
- Joanna asked everyone to read the IHNs Guidelines (PDF available to download on the IHNs website: <https://industrialheritagenetworks.com/guidelines/>).

The Guidelines clarify 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.
- 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. Museum of Bath at Work host presentation.

- Stuart Burroughs, the Director at the Museum of Bath at Work, talked to us about the museum's establishment and its journey over the last few decades. He also talked about how they have been focusing on interpreting a wider social context of industrial heritage, and not just technology behind the machines.

3. The Underfall Yard Trust presentation.

- Andrew Blayney, Community Learning and Volunteer Manager at the Underfall Yard, delivered a talk about the various challenges the site faced during their HLF project delivery between 2014-2018, transitioning from a funded project to a stand-alone one, and also mentioned success achieved over the years and plans for the future.

4. Trello workshop.

- Joanna demonstrated how to join Trello and create boards, lists and cards. The 'How to' guides were handed out and Joanna reminded everyone she is happy to provide one-to-one support for setting up and going over the use of the online platform.
- Trello is not a social media platform (however it could be your own professional, industrial heritage online outlet) but a secure online forum accessible via personal login only, where members can interact with each other and post relevant information.
- Joanna will be in touch soon with all members to inform them of the future of using Trello as the online platform for communications and information sharing.

5. Who's who and what are they up to interactive group session.

- Members were split into several smaller groups to chat about who they are, what their roles are and give an example of a success or a challenge their organisation achieved or faced.
- Some of the challenges mentioned included succession planning, limited space, lack of funding, negotiating contracts with landlords, health and safety, environmental controls in new museum spaces, practical ways of using social history research and reaching and gaining new visitors.
- Successes included examples of successful Heritage Lottery Funding bids, rebranding a museum allowing it to reach wider audiences and developing sustainability by successfully converting part of a site into holiday let.

6. Site tour.

- After lunch, members were split into two groups for an interesting tour of the museum.

7. Meeting summary and feedback.

- Joanna thanked everyone for coming and participating and handed out feedback forms. She also asked members to think about and help with **2 things**:
 1. **IHNs website**: please send your 100-word blurb and a photo. Please also send your stories – do use this for promotion, sharing information and improving awareness.
 2. Think about **hosting a meeting in the future and delivering talks, workshops or presentations**. Hosting involves providing facilities on the day (lunch does not have to be included), talk/presentation about the site/organisation and a site tour.
Talks, workshops or presentations can be about any topic you think is relevant and members could benefit from. This can be about your work/volunteer place but can also be about a topical issue, or a challenge that you would like to discuss.

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 for your feedback!

Some comments are included below – if there is anything else you would like to suggest or share, as always, do get in touch. This is your network and your opinions are invaluable in ensuring it succeeds. You can shape the network in whatever way you like and believe will be sustainable; the IHSO is there to help with the process.

Comments:

Chance to learn about latest initiatives in the support network, and meet representatives from a wide range of organisations in the sector.

Nice talks, lots of time to talk with others, enjoyed the tour.

Being able to search out people with similar problems/issues to hopefully find a resolution to those issues.

In the future, focusing on specific themes like funding, volunteers etc. and using a few case studies.

Well worthwhile and looking forward to next event.

Thank you!