

Minutes from the forty-seventh meeting of the Cross Party Group on Waterways

Committee Rooms C & D, Welsh Assembly, Cardiff, CF99 1NA

Tuesday 23rd January 2018

6:30pm

AMs in attendance:

Nick Ramsay AM (Welsh Conservative, Monmouth) – Chair

Attendees:

Andrew Stumpf	Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust in Wales - Secretariat
Emily Lewis	Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust in Wales - Secretariat
Nick Worthington	Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust in Wales
David Morgan	Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust in Wales
Ruth Taylor-Davies	Letha Consultancy & The Valleys That Changed the World
Dave Penberthy	Cadw
John Rodger	European Route of Industrial Heritage
Laura Lewis	CITB
Richard Dearing	Natural Resources Wales
Richard Essex	CREW
Stephen Lawrence	Mott MacDonald
Eamon Scullion	South Wales Miners' Museum
Patrick Moss	Moss Naylor Young
Richard Dommett	MBACT
Julie Roberts Joyce	Canal & River Trust – SWS Partnership
Julian Stedman	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Andrew Marvell	Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust
Carys Howell	Canal & River Trust – Bwrdd Glandŵr Cymru
Nigel Annett	Canal & River Trust – Bwrdd Glandŵr Cymru
Cllr. David Mayer	Newport City Council
Simon Bradwick	National Assembly for Wales
Paul Barrett	The Living Taff
Gwyn Lewis	Glamorgan Ramblers
Martin Buckle	Brecon Beacons Park Society
Hannah Cubie	ABC Leisure Group – Goytre Wharf

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm

Item 1: The European Route of Industrial Heritage and the role of industrial heritage in cultural tourism and community regeneration – John Rodger MBE, Board member, European Route of Industrial Heritage

Nick Ramsay AM welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced John Rodger MBE.

John started his presentation on the [European Route of Industrial Heritage](#) (ERIH) – “The most comprehensive network for industrial heritage tourism in Europe” – by talking about the inspiration for the route.

Outlining Europe's shared industrial heritage, from Manchester, the first industrial city, to Lodz, Poland, the rise of conurbations and the spread of the Industrial Revolution over the last 200 years, John then touched on some key figures of the Industrial Revolution with connections to Wales. These included John Hughes, a Welsh industrialist who set up iron works and collieries in 1870 in Hughesovka, in what is now Ukraine; Georges Dufaud, who spent a lot of time at Cyfarthfa ironworks before establishing the Fourchambault ironworks in France; and Sidney Gilchrist Thomas of Blaenavon, who discovered a new way of making iron.

The buildings that remain from this time are monuments to science and innovation. Industrial heritage sites around Europe have been transformed into arts and performance venues, with for example, light installations and art exhibitions at [Völklingen Ironworks](#), Germany.

In Wales, these industrial monuments may be modest but they are set in wonderful landscapes. Since the Industrial Revolution we have seen the 'greening' of South Wales' Valleys. Bringing the landscape into the story and connecting it to these structures is part of the inspiration for ERIH.

For example, maintaining ironworks as a 'cathedral' to industry in the Ruhr region, the International Building Exhibition and the [Emscher Landscape Park](#) and the [Emscher River](#) – formerly one of the most polluted areas in the world. The [Gasometer Oberhausen](#) is a former gas holder that is now an exhibition hall, currently with a spinning globe in it.

Festivals around these industrial landmarks as well, such as the [ExtraSchicht](#) night of industrial culture throughout the Ruhr Metropolis, and [Industriada](#), a celebration of the history of Poland's coal region. Industrial heritage tourism is now a major strand of cultural tourism and no longer a niche market. Can be a catalyst for regeneration.

John then covered the structure of ERIH, which now comprises over 1,400 sites over 45 countries. The main components are

- Anchor Points – 105 of the most historically significant industrial heritage attractions
- Other individual sites, which have less emphasis on visitor experience
- Regional Routes – 14 regional routes comprised of Anchor Points and other sites which together tell an area's industrial history
- European Theme Routes – virtual routes which tell the story of European industrial heritage through 13 different themes, such as 'Housing & Architecture', 'Industry & War', and 'Paper'

John spoke about the Holland route as an example of a regional route, which is designed to make the most of tourism in the greater Amsterdam area, through walking, cycling, driving or travelling by boat. The route involves local providers by including information on accommodation and where to eat, as well as the heritage sites. Regional routes:

- encourage large and small sites to work together: *partners not competitors*
- can involve attractions, accommodations, restaurants, transport operators etc: *the whole visitor experience*
- many sites, one story: *look for the links*
- appeal to the general visitor: *not just for the specialists*
- can stimulate community and economic regeneration: *and increase community/civic pride*

- European profile: *ERIH brand becoming more recognised*

For example, the respected South Wales regional route is comprised of Big Pit and Swansea's National Waterfront Museum as Anchor Points; eight other Key Attractions; and over 70 other places of interest. The route has buy-in from many stakeholders, including community groups, Visit Wales and local authorities – not competing but looking at the bigger picture.

Promoting ERIH - Leaflets are produced in three languages. The [website](#) is the most effective method of promotion, with over 3,000 hits per day. The website includes history of the Industrial Revolution, as well as around 300 [biographies](#) of a wide range of people who influenced European industrial history. Social media is also used.

The ERIH undertakes many activities to publicise its routes, including presenting to the EU in Brussels last year. 2018 is the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

Other projects in the pipeline include twinning sites, developing a network of industrial housing, and facilitating school exchanges. They are also looking to connect cycle routes in different countries with each other and with industrial heritage.

The aims of ERIH

- increase **appreciation** of industrial heritage
- increase **visitor numbers** and economic activity
- foster **community pride** in industrial heritage
- encourage sites to **work together and network**
- strengthen **industrial heritage tourism**
- create a comprehensive **digital resource**
- establish ERIH as a European **brand of quality**

John ended the presentation with a selection of photographs emphasising that there is a place for the past in the present and future.

Presentation available, contact emily.lewis@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Discussion

Q: When was the route established?

A: A long time ago but is being continually updated – website was updated last year with a fantastic upgrade.

Q: How important is the EU to this project?

A: The route survived for eight years without funding, but wouldn't be here without them. It is unusual to be running after an Interreg programme. The route will continue, through memberships and hard work.

Q: What is the role of canals in these routes?

A: As valuable transportation corridors, they have been at the root of industrial progress and networks. These days, volunteers on canals help keep our heritage alive.

Item 2: The Valleys That Changed the World: Interpreting South Wales' industrial past – Ruth Taylor-Davies, Letha Consultancy

Ruth began by echoing John's thoughts that although Wales doesn't have the biggest industrial heritage sites, it has some of the oldest and most influential in the world.

[The Valleys That Changed the World](#) (TVTCTW) network has a broad interpretation of the Valleys, going down to the sea, and including tramroads, railways and canals – anything that played a part in South Wales's industrial past.

TVTCTW currently connects a network of 79 partners. Sites are partners, not competitors, and the network is built on the understanding that strength is gained from this 'critical mass' – people will travel further for a bigger group of attractions. The network also includes local heritage and history forums, who collect the social history which animates sites.

TVTCTW undertakes some marketing, and has a presence on Facebook and Twitter. Partners provide time and support, and share meeting rooms etc.

Ruth spoke about particular projects, including the role TVTCTW played in pulling together a working group that had an instrumental role in bringing the [Man Engine](#) to South Wales – an innovative and exciting project.

The network is almost like a 'heritage dating agency', helping partners connect with each other and with other organisations. Their recent work partnering the Abertridwr Heritage group with the Royal Commission on a digital trail has been a good example, and they have also recently been approached by the Institute of Civil Engineers to help inform their bicentenary celebrations.

The partnership sees a long future and has meetings set up until at least 2020, and there is no shortage of volunteer venues. Currently the project is without funding but they are looking to the next stage. Capitalising on Visit Wales' years of experience and other routes such as the Wales Way. For example, in the past they developed trails such as 'Leginds' related to legends of industry, for the 2017 'Year of Legends', and looking at the pioneers who came to the Valleys during the Industrial Revolution for 2016's 'Year of Adventure.'

Challenges for the route include the need for committed 'driving forces'; sustaining momentum for partners; continuing to develop new resources; suiting funding fashion; and rolling the idea out to other parts of Wales.

The route has an online presence within the Blaenavon Industrial World Heritage Site website. This involves an [interactive map](#) that is searchable by theme or location. They have also produced a free image gallery and marketing toolkit to assist partners with advertising.

Presentation available, contact emily.lewis@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Discussion

Ruth said that she does not work directly for the network, which is more of an informal partnership (Torfaen CBC has been the lead on securing project-based funding), and she emphasised the need for committed people to keep momentum going in between funding.

In discussing how many volunteers were involved, Eamon Scullion from the South Wales Miners' Museum, a VTCTW partner that focuses on the experiences of ex-miners, said they have around 45 a month.

Item 3: “Together we are beautiful!”: A national approach to interpretive planning – David Penberthy, Head of Interpretation, Cadw

The final speaker, Dave Penberthy, began with a song, before introducing some background to the [Pan-Wales Heritage Interpretation Plan](#).

In 2008 Cadw began assessing the way they told the stories of Wales, and from this, the need to work together to tell these stories was really clear. Tourism contributes £8.7 billion to the Welsh Economy (Deloitte 2013), and heritage tourism alone across the UK contributes £1 billion alone to the UK economy (HLF 2016). The economic benefit is a real driver for the government to support and encourage joined-up thinking for this area.

Heritage gives tourism in Wales a key competitive advantage internationally. We have more castles per square mile than anywhere else in the world.

As an artistic and creative nation it is important to foster a creative approach to how we tell our histories. Dave gave examples of how the work of artists, digital projection and sculpture has been used to interpret Welsh history, noting that meeting the increasingly sophisticated expectations of visitors is one of the challenges faced in heritage interpretation.

In an increasingly competitive market there is a need to reach new audiences. For example, the recent [Castell Coch Fairy Trail](#) was incredibly popular and brought people into the castle who would not have gone there otherwise.

Re-connecting heritage with communities is another challenge, as illustrated by this quote from Huw Lewis, formerly a Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage:

“...interpretation needs to be able to look out into the landscape, make connections with other places of similar period or function, and be able to tell the story across these monuments...”

Heritage didn't happen by itself and it is important to help people understand the links between different sites, for example, the connection of canals to mining.

Dave related an experience earlier in his career where the interpretation efforts along the Crumlin Arm only lasted as far as the local authority boundary. This highlights the fact that for the visitor, the journey doesn't end where your responsibility ends, and there is a need to consider continuity and the wider story.

The Pan-Wales Heritage Interpretation Plan is a unique national approach that is leading the way – the ideas have been taken to Sweden and France already.

The story is key for these [interpretation plans](#), which:

- 1) are story-focussed

- 2) are visitor focussed
- 3) recommend the best places to tell the story
- 4) recommend ways to create links between stories and places
- 5) are thematic

They are not restricted by boundaries or ownership, and are not prescriptive.

There are eight thematic areas, some containing several story strands. There is guidance for the geographic areas where each plan is most relevant, with many areas falling into at least two plans.

These stories are publicised in many different ways, including working with bloggers, making soundtracks relevant to sites, as well as more traditional marketing strategies.

Dave finished by emphasising that working together gives more traction for people to come and enjoy Wales' history.

Presentation available, contact emily.lewis@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Discussion

Carys Howell pointed out that the word 'heritage' may not resonate with people, whereas they might say 'this place is part of my history'. Ruth Taylor-Davies said that making history accessible was the reason for their route's bold name.

John Rodger noted that it can take time for communities to take pride in their history – Wales' industrial history was for a time left behind.

The town hall in Merthyr has been renovated and is now a living space – it is important to use these structures for the present and future.

Dave Penberthy mentioned the need for joined up thinking between transport providers and sites – the train connects heritage.

Well-being is a high priority in Wales and it is important to look at the holistic benefits of sites.

Item 4: Update from Andrew Stumpf

Andrew Stumpf updated the group on upcoming events of interest:

1st May 2018 **Cross Party Group on Waterways** theme TBC, 6.30 pm Conference Room C, Tŷ Hywel, Cardiff Bay

Item 5: AOB

No other business was recorded.