Forthcoming conferences

The SIEF (Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folkore) Congress will be held in Ulster 16th – 20th June 2008. Following considerable investment by the University of Ulster in ethnology and folklore, including a Chair in Ethnology and Folk Life, the invitation to hold its congress at the University was accepted by the SIEF. For further details please refer to their website www.meertens.knaw.nl/sief/

Take a look at your Society's website www.folklifestudies.org.uk

The contents of all issues of *Folk Life* are listed as well as core information about the Society, including a membership form along with notices of Society meetings and conferences and the text of the *Newsletter*. The site is also available for members to post relevant information. Please send text as e-mail attachments to the website officer

Heather.Holmes@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

We are putting together an email database. If would you like your details to be added to this please contact Seb Littlewood, Membership Secretary, at seblittlewood@beamish.org.uk

Contributions/comments should be forwarded to newsletter editor (e.edwards@nms.ac.uk)

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The historic wing of the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea, occupying a dockside warehouse of 1902.

The Annual Conference for 2007: 13TH – 16TH September Swansea

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Between Thursday 13th and Sunday 16th September 2007 the Society will hold its annual conference in Swansea, Wales, based at the new National Waterfront Museum in the city's historic maritime quarter. Accommodation will be in the nearby Swansea Marriott Hotel. It is hoped that the overall cost of the conference will be in the region of £300 in a shared room.

The National Waterfront Museum is the result of a £34m partnership between Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales and the City & County of Swansea. It tells the story of industry and innovation in Wales during the last three centuries from a human perspective and uses much interactive new media to interpret a wide variety of collections.

The themes of the conference will be *Humanising Industrial History* and *International Trade and Local Identity*. Offers of papers and other contributions are very welcome. Please contact the Conference Secretary for further information Steph Mastoris, National Waterfront Museum, Oystermouth Road, Maritime Quarter, Swansea, SA1 3RD (email: steph.mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk).

A booking form is enclosed. Please note a **non refundable** £50 deposit must be received by **31st May** in order to secure a place.

A *free* place at the 2007 conference

If you are a student in full time education and would like to apply for this free place to attend the conference please contact Dr. Eddie Cass for further details. Email: eddie.cass@btinternet.com

Report by Eimear Ballard, student placement in 2006.

In 2006, I was honoured to be selected by the Society for Folk Life Studies as the Student Delegate to the annual conference, which was held in Skipton, in the Yorkshire Dales. Every year, the

Society offers a free conference place to a student in fulltime education, and this covers all accommodation and meals in addition to excursions and full participation in a fascinating meeting. I took advantage of the opportunity to present a paper on my current research topic, Representations of the Redneck in American cinema, although it is not compulsory for student delegates to read a formal paper at the meeting. However, as this topic, on which I am preparing a PhD thesis in the Department of Film and Television Studies at Warwick University, relates to both folklife and to folklore, I was keen to take an opportunity to discuss it with experts in these subjects. I was warmly welcomed to the conference, and enjoyed every aspect of it, so I would certainly encourage other students to take the opportunity to apply to attend future conferences. Thanks very much to the Society for including me in the 2006 meeting.

Eimear Ballard

The 2008 Conference: Killarney, Co. Kerry.

The 2008 conference will be based in Killarney, Co Kerry, and will run from 18th-21st September 2008. Our local hosts will be the Trustees of Muckross House (Killarney) Ltd. (http://www.muckross-house.ie). Muckross has a spectacular setting in Killarney National Park – 25,000 acres close to the most westerly point of Europe - and is one of Ireland's most popular visitor attractions. As well as the Victorian mansion and gardens, Muckross Traditional Farms re-creates life and work on the land as it was in the 1930s. The programme will include an excursion around the world famous Lakes of Killarney (http://homepage.eircom.net/~knp/intro/index.htm) which form a major part of the National Park, talks on local themes, and no doubt plenty of that unique Irish hospitality!

The Annual Conference 2006:

Skipton, North Yorkshire

Reviews of Conference Papers

The opening of the 2006 conference began with delegates and speakers receiving a warm welcome from the President Roy Brigden. After a brief presentation our first speaker, Robert White, was welcomed to the floor to give us an ***'Introduction to the Historic Environment of the Yorkshire Dales National Park'***

As its Senior Conservation Archaeologist, Robert White knows practically every inch of the Dales National Park and its record of human activity. The earliest evidence of this is to be found inside the cave systems that riddle the limestone bedrock and goes back at least 12,000 years. Above ground, 5,000 years of occupation can be traced through a succession of features from ancient rock art to Romano-British field systems, medieval stone walls and Victorian lead works. The National park was designated in 1954 and is tasked with not only conserving the beauty, wildlife and heritage of the area but also with fostering the economic and social well-being of its constituent communities. It

Bergen, where he contributed to the establishment of a discipline with focus on contemporary processes and traditions. From 1991 to 1997 he was director of the Nordic Institute of Folklore in Turku, Finland, a position where he displayed both his administrative and scientific competences. Many of us also remember with gratitude the hospitality of Reimund and his wife Karin during these years in Finland.

His scholarly publications cover several fields: narrative and singing tradition with a focus on the transmission of folk stories and songs; fairy tales, legends and songs, with a focus on text analysis; children's lore in contexts of practice, and religious memories within a context of popular religion.

Reimund Kvideland was also a research administrator. He was the first chairman of NEFA – the Nordic ethnological and folkloristic working group, an important forum for those who wanted to rejuvenate ethnology and folklore since the late 1960s. In 1971 he started *Tradisjon*, a scientific journal of modern Norwegian folklore, where he remained the editor for 25 years. He was elected president (1989-95) of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, and he was president of SIEF from 1987 to 1990. During many years he was a contributor to *Internationale volkskundliche Bibliographie*.

His profile was that of an international researcher and administrator, his contacts all over the world were numerous, and his generosity towards other scholars was well known among his colleagues. I still remember with gratitude the enthusiasm with which he received my first and very, very modest text – a book review – for his journal *Tradisjon*, a prime example of how to encourage younger colleagues. This memory blends with later debates and pleasant talks, as well as with hospitality and merry evenings. Reimund was not only a respected scholar, but also a colleague in the best sense of the word.

Bjarne Rogan, Oslo

Alan Pearsall 1925 – 2006

Known to many members Alan was a keen and hugely knowledgeable historian who frequently gave a members' papers at the Annual Conference.

He was brought up in Leeds, but also had connections with the North Lancashire coast, where he maintained a family house.

Much of Alan's working life, indeed 35 years of it, was spent in the service of the Library at the National Maritime Museum, first as custodian of manuscripts and later as the museum's historian.

He was a kind of maritime history polymath, and there are many scholars who will be grateful for the willing way in which he shared his knowledge and encouraged them when they were young. His curious mind was into everything, but maybe his keenest interest was in the mercantile marine, the ships both sail and steam, the companies that ran them, and the life and times of the sailormen themselves. He drew little distinction between work and other interests. But the other interests included railways. His member's contributions at conferences often included fascinating accounts of local lines long since closed, but which he had travelled in the past, one memorable one being his talk on the Edinburgh-Carlisle Waverley line and some of the locomotive names at the Melrose gathering in 2005.

Alan is acknowledged in literally hundreds of books for his helpful advice and guidance. He was an active member on the council for the Navy Records Society for many years and was their vice-president in the 1980s. Additionally he was a founder member of our Society.

Alan was a man of quiet charm, and his actions were graced by an old-world courtesy and an intelligent sense of fun. Latterly he found it difficult to walk any distance, but this made no difference to his adventurous determination to get around. This interest in life must be one factor in the impressive clarity of his mind into his last years.

Gavin Sprott/E.M. Edwards

in Blackburn. Having acquired a considerable body of both academic knowledge and practice, she then taught dairying at Studley College in the West Midlands.

In 1941, she married Tom Mason, an Addingham farmer, setting up home in Reynard Ing Farm, where she was to live for the next sixty four years. Even with three daughters, Agnes, Ruth and Laura to bring up, Kate still found time to pursue many other activities. On the farm she kept hens, and processed some of the rich milk from their Guernsey cows into cream, butter and cheese (some forming treasured gifts to friends), as well as providing year-long placements for numerous girls before they took up their places in agricultural colleges, and also giving cheesemaking demonstrations. A scholar throughout her life, she generously and constantly returned her knowledge to her community through talks and publications.

In this brief obituary it is impossible to detail Kate's many contributions to local life and studies, but the great respect and affection in which she was held may be judged by her many and varied honorary offices. It was particularly sad that our 2006 Conference took place only a few weeks after her death, and a few miles from her home, for we know how much Kate and our members would have enjoyed her great hospitality, and great expertise.

The Yorkshire Archaeological Society is holding a day school in Addingham on May 5 2007, with lectures and site visits, to celebrate Kate's local history interests in the Craven area with which she was long associated. Please contact Ron Samuel, Tel 01943 601160 for further details.

Peter Brears

Peter Kennedy

Peter Kennedy, who died 10 June 2006 aged 83, was one of Britain's foremost collectors of folk song and dance material in the post-war years. His involvement with the world of folk performance was, perhaps, inevitable given that his father, Douglas Kennedy, succeeded Cecil Sharp as the Director or the English Folk Dance Society (later to become the English Folk Dance and Song Society after a merger with the Folk Song Society); his mother Helen Karpeles was the Secretary of the English Folk Dance Society and his aunt, Maud Karpeles acted as amanuensis to Cecil Sharp for many years, accompanying him to collect in the Appalachians in 1916, 1917 and 1918.

Kennedy joined the staff of EFDSS in 1948, working first in the north-east and later in the West Country. In the early 1950s, he was recruited to help in the compilation of English material for Columbia's World Library of Folk and Primitive Music by Alan Lomax who had settled in London in order to escape the political pressures in America. When the BBC launched its Folk Music and Dialect Scheme in 1952, Kennedy was an early recruit as a fieldworker. The influential 'As I Roved Out', a Sunday morning series which ran from 1953 to 1958, was devised by Kennedy.

In addition to this fieldwork, Kennedy compiled the massive *Folksongs of Britain and Ireland*; he was a freelance record producer and film-maker, he led the Haymakers Village Barn Dance Band and assembled a large and important archive of folk performance material. Some four years ago, Kennedy approached the society to see if we could help establish a home for this archive; it is to be hoped that whatever happens to it, it is retained as a whole in some suitable repository, accessible to the public.

Eddie Cass

Reimund Kvideland in memoriam

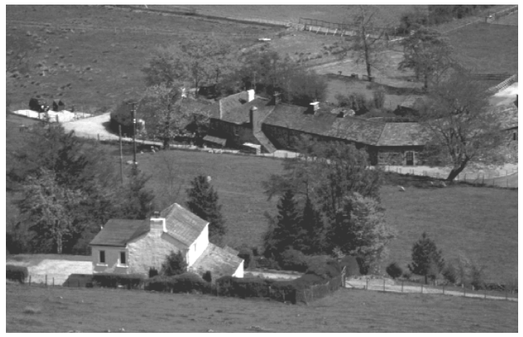
Professor Reimund Kvideland, former President of SIEF, suddenly and unexpectedly died on June 6, 2006, at an age of 71. He had retired from his official positions, but remained active in research, kept contacts with his former institute in Bergen and with international scholars.

Reimund Kvideland (b. in 1935) started his career in 1966 as a lecturer in folklore at the University of

involves recording features of interest and importance, and managing public access in such a way as to harness the leisure potential of the Park whilst protecting vulnerable sites from over-use. Collaboration with other agencies is important. The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for example, is providing financial support for the restoration of field barns, so characteristic of the farming landscape, and the Heritage Lottery Fund has helped to protect a major limekiln and other structures. Volunteers have proved to be vitally important in the task of covering the Dales area on foot and recording the otherwise overlooked detail of landscape features.

Roy Brigden

Professor Ian Whyte: *The Last English Peasant? (The lives of Lake District statesmen farmers as exemplified by Tom Rumney of Mellfell)*



Mellfell

Tom Rumney (1764 – 1835) was a diarist and farmer, amongst other things, and his daily activities were brought vividly to life by the wonderfully illustrated presentation from Prof Whyte. Through this particular individual's account we were given an insight into Cumbrian life during the 18th & 19th centuries where in this 'odd corner of England' the feudal system lingered on for another 150 years after it had passed into history in other English counties.

A distinctive characteristic of Cumbrian life was Customary Tenure. The effects of this were reflected in the social structure of the area. There were few major magnates and most of them were absentees, few middling to large gentry, lots of small owner occupiers, few labourers and few leasehold tenants. Tenure also included the condition of service to fight the Scots should the need arise. Between one and two thirds of lands were held by such tenure. As many of the larger landowners were absentee landlords, custodial tenants ran business on a day-to-day basis. Most of these smaller proprietors were known as yeomen (not statesmen). Not unsurprisingly the majority of these small farms were worked by family labour.

A typical holding of a yeoman farmer was a small number of acres of inby land, 6 – 10 cattle and 30 – 40 sheep, in addition to access to common pasture. During the 18th century cattle were still more important than sheep. Much trade was done with Scots drovers, the Cumbrian farmers buying lean animals from them for fatting and selling on. Other activities included mining, quarrying, domestic textile production, smelting iron and charcoal. In addition there were low rents and low land taxes, far lower than elsewhere in England. Consequently Cumbrian's were doing quite well.

The early 19th century saw the French wars, which for many tenant farmers proved profitable, though some did over stretch themselves and later fell victim to the slump after Waterloo. In particular lease hold tenants suffered. By the 1840s the railways were beginning to have an impact and there was a shift away from part-time agriculture. On the whole improved communication and transport brought about by the railways benefited Cumbrian farmers.

Tom Rumney, independent farmer (at one time known as a Custodial tenant) lived between Penrith and Keswick at Watermillock, a township near Ullswater. He kept a diary from 1805 to 1806. The parish records describe him as Tom Rumney of Mellfell, which shows he was living in a large house. The Rumney's were obviously a significant family as records show they had been in the area from the 15th century.

Tom was the second of three sons and two daughters. Their father died when Tom was 5 years

old. Tom was educated in the local school. As was usual the eldest son took over the estate. At the age of 19 Tom became a clerk with the West India Merchants House in London, a position his uncle had secured for him. The younger son joined the church, a not untypical family pattern to follow.

After working for the West India Company for some time Tom became head of the Counting House on a salary of £175 p.a. The job was very tying and for ten years he could not take enough time off to return to visit his family only being able to take odd days. This must have been very difficult for him as it was his long held dream to return to Cumbria and buy a farm of his own. However, in 1798 his uncle died and left him £1,000 and about the same time his brother drowned in Ullswater Lake.

Due to a lack of money bachelors like Tom Rumney often delayed marriage, although in Tom's case he had had one marriage proposal turned down. In 1806, at the age of 42, he married the daughter of a Custodian tenant, 39 year old Anne Castlehow, who came with a £500 dowry. Sadly it was not an especially happy marriage.

By now Tom was considered to be quite a successful farmer, though his holding did not qualify him to be considered a gentleman. He also had the reputation for being very careful with money! Tom's diary illustrates how much labour was shared with friends and neighbours which of course was mutually beneficial. The lending of servants between farmers was common practice in times of intense labour need. Tom invested a little money and a lot of time in improvements to his farm. He also undertook labouring work himself but did however employ skilled workers too, such as dry stone dykers, demonstrating the blurred social divisions.

The absentee landlord for the area was the Duke of Norfolk and directly below him in the social strata was the Hassells of Dalemain. The social structure was of course made up layer by layer and within Watermillock there was more gradation. Tom Rumney's training and experience of London life provided him with skills such as accounting, so he was a particularly useful member of local society. He became a Trustee of the school, an overseer of highways and a foreman of the Manorial jury.

I thoroughly enjoyed this excellent and engaging presentation and hope I have reflected something of my pleasure in this review.

Elaine Edwards

Alison Armstrong: *Craven Farmhouses from the 16th to 18th Century.*

Alison's illustrated presentation gave a pleasing balance between the 'idea' of Pennine Craven as part of the Yorkshire Dales and the story of its farmhouse architecture. We were given a perspective of Craven by its defining geology: limestone mainly in the northern part, grit stone in the south, glacial clay overlying large areas of Craven, rocky hardness softened by turf and cultivated grassland.

Alison then touched lightly on the long story of farming practice: grass and oat crops allowing sheep production and rearing (and droving) of cattle. The key focus of the presentation being vernacular architecture, often made of good quality monastic stone, re-worked in later farmhouse barn and outbuildings, though I was intrigued by the use of re-cycled cruck beams as curved braces to secure king-posts and the beams in later farm buildings. Limestone and lime mortar would be relatively easily available, quality timber was not. Changes in architecture was often a result of changes in land use and historically changing times such as that of Church ownership to that of the yeoman farmer, along with changes in the use of ancient common land, the effects of enclosure and input of capital on farming methods.

A study of farm building construction is of course a means of accessing the past. I found the use of single line drawings, backed by slide illustrations providing a scale, most helpful. Through this one

The exhibition is accompanied by a lavishly produced catalogue in which both Claudia Kinmonth and Tom Dunne contribute essays. For more information see www.crawfordartgallery.ie.

Roy Brigden

MBE awarded to Miss Anne Dyer, Trustee, Westhope Craft College, Craven Arms, Shropshire in 2006 for her work in education/crafts. Ann is a familiar face at our conferences and many of you will have spent time in engaging conversations with her. Many congratulations to you Ann.

Ratcliffe Prize winner 2006

This year's winner was Dr Anne Lorne Gillies for her work "Songs of Gaelic Scotland".

A highly commended award was also made to Calum Ferguson for his book "Children of the Black House".

Obituaries

It is with sadness that I have to report the passing of the following:

Dr. Bill Mangan

Dr. Bill Mangan was a man of many parts and to him life was a vibrant adventure. He had a hugely successful business practice and was popular with a wide range of society.

His interests included gardening, hill walking and golfing. He was a keen art lover - paintings and sculptures - and had a sharp eye for property development and investment.

History was a high priority in Bill's life. The preservation of artifacts, buildings and the values of period life expressed themselves in his directorship of Muckross House where he was the prime mover in the establishment of Muckross Traditional Farms. As Chairman of the Trustees he saw this project through all its stages. These farms are now an international tourist and cultural attraction of the 1930s era and they stand as a monument to his foresight and perception.

At the time of his death he was monitoring the possibility of restoring the monastery gardens on Innisfallen Island on Killarney's Loch Léin and he was also making plans for a Boating and Fishing Museum. The barge in which Queen Victoria was rowed over Killarney's lakes is among many items to comprise this museum.

He was immensely proud of the practice he had built up in his medical centre; also of the achievements of his family in the fields of architecture, music, medicine and pharmacy. His passing is an horrific loss to his family, to his practice and to the Killarney area in general.

To Patricia, his wife and doctor-partner, his sons James and William, his daughters Catherine and Freda, the members of this society tender their heartfelt sympathies and they fondly remember Bill's participation in several conferences over the years.

May God's peace be about him and around his grieving family.

Paddy MacMonagle

Kate M Mason 1914-2006

On July 24, 2006, a number of members of the Society for Folk Life Studies joined the tightly-packed pews of Addingham Parish Church for a Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Mrs Kate Mason, well known to all who have attended our conferences since their earliest days.

Kate Harbutt, the daughter of a Bradford textile company secretary and his health inspector wife, was born in 1914. As she was growing up, her interest in the countryside was fostered by holidays on the Northumbrian coast and at Nether Hesleden, a typical large sheep farm in Littondale. She later took a degree course in Agricultural Botany and Bacteriology at Leeds University, graduating in 1935, before studying cheesemaking at Auchincruive in Ayrshire, working on a farm in Lancashire, and as a quality control officer at a dairy

This beautifully illustrated and comprehensive catalogue has been edited by Dr. Brendan Rooney and includes essays by Professor Mary Daly ('Two Centuries of Irish Social Life') and Dr. Rooney (''A Very Minor Virtue'?-The Notion of Accuracy in Scenes of Irish Social Life') with additional commentaries provided by Dr. Claudia Kinmonth, William Laffan and Donal Maguire.

Further information can be obtained from:

Press & Communications Office
National Gallery of Ireland
Merrion Sq W & Clare St, Dublin 2
Telephone (01) 663 3598
Email press@ngi.ie
Web www.nationalgallery.ie

News in brief

Study Day on Farm Wagons

March 20th Museum of English Rural Life

David Viner is currently a MERL Research Fellow and is conducting a comparative study of farm wagons, building on the work of J. Geraint Jenkins in the 1950s and taking into account the many regional collections that have been established since. At 4.30pm on March 20th David will be reporting on his research at a seminar entitled 'Relevant Icons?'. Society members are welcome to attend this seminar at MERL (free) and also to come along to a study session on wagons that will precede it beginning at 11.30am. If you are interested please contact Roy Brigden at MERL (r.d.brigden@reading.ac.uk or tel 0118 3788663) by March 1st.

Report on the Study Day held on

Friday 19th May, 2006, Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland

This was a most successful and enjoyable Study Day which the Society can't claim any credit for, except to say that it prompted and encouraged Dr Claudia Kinmonth, one of the organisers, to go ahead with it and both she and another speaker, Linda Ballard are Society members.

The Day was hosted and sponsored by the Crawford Gallery in Cork to coincide with its major exhibition 'Whipping the Herring: Survival & Celebration in Nineteenth Century Irish Art', for which Claudia was a guest curator. Other guest curators were Julian Cambell and Tom Dunne, collaborating with gallery staff Anne Bodeart, Colleen O'Sullivan, Dawn Williams and director Peter Murray, who introduced the day's proceedings. The exhibition has drawn together nearly 80 works from galleries and private collections all over Ireland and elsewhere to explore the way that everyday life at the time, particularly of the poorer members of society, was depicted. In doing so, it examines themes relating to the concept of realism in Irish art and the representation of Irish landscape and national character.

Claudia, whose most recent published work is *Irish Rural Interiors in Art*, examined a number of pictures in the exhibition to interpret the stories they embodied and included the strategic part played by items of material culture. Dr Christiana Payne compared and linked paintings of landscape and everyday life in seventeenth century Holland with nineteenth century Britain and Ireland. Linda Ballard spoke of the culture and depiction of wedding traditions, Dr Caitriona Clear discussed the representation of women and women's work in Irish society, while Mairead Dunlevy presented interior design in middle class Irish homes. The final speaker, Professor Tom Dunne, took as his theme the Dark side of the Irish landscape and the way that landscape painting of the day often managed to avoid depicting the rural poor altogether or did so in a very stylised manner.

could easily trace the developments of the Craven farmhouse, rooted in the 16th century. Farmhouses with barn and dairy attached began in the 18th century all showing a hard practicality with little embellishment. The layout is due to the unremitting hard work i.e. dwelling and workshop together. The farming year was reflected in storage within the barn, the threshing floor and the all important indoor space to over-winter a few cattle, whilst the upper floor was occupied by a hand loom. A traveller would be aware of a feature unique to the Yorkshire Dales – the field barn. They were characterised by being remote, small, (usually) rectangular, stone buildings scattered in a chequer-board of walled fields. Set for convenience on a slope they were labour efficient. The upper floor was the hay store, the lower one housing a few dairy cattle whilst waste products were easily disposed of further down the slope. Milk was carried each day back to the main farm for processing.

There were of course people in this landscape too, perhaps not able easily to read books but readily able to read the weather and the changing seasons. Able too, to organise domestic life in homes heated by Cravens' underlying peat. They were also good judges of livestock, capable of producing quality milk products, ale and home made cloth.

I particularly enjoyed the presentation of farmhouse detail which included the fireplace, cheese press and larder all well illustrated. Also presented were other stone structures associated with farming such as silos, sheep wash folds, hen houses and piggeries often appearing half hidden in the countryside. The presentation was thoroughly engaging and most enlightening and Alison, in showing us inherent beauty, helps raise our awareness of the importance of the farmhouse in Craven.

Peter Edwards

Peter Brears: *Traditional Food in the Dales*

Peter Brears is not only a food historian of note but also a cook of some distinction. There can be few, if indeed any, lectures which have been given to the society's conferences in the past which have started off at coffee time with the members being served such a rich selection of local traditional delicacies, from oatcakes with golden syrup to funeral biscuits; from Yorkshire curd cake to a delightful mincemeat tart which had a mint flavour completely new to me. The whole brought back memories of the dales teas which I recall from my holidays in the area. A splendid introduction to the subject, thank you Peter.

In his lecture, the speaker took up the theme of the conference, uplands landscapes and, using slides, located Craven Dale into the northern geography. He illustrated the role which was played by the underlying limestone in creating the landscape of the area. It was a landscape eminently suitable for the grazing of sheep and the Swaledale sheep in particular. The sheep had been important to the economy of the area for centuries and we were reminded that Skipton's old English meaning was a sheep farm. The other animal important to the local economy was the cow; not just those beasts grazed on the farms of Craven Dale, but the Highland cattle which were driven down the drove roads from Scotland. These were penned in the large open air markets at which the cattle were sold to feed the growing populations of the expanding industrial towns further south in the county. A reminder of this trade can be seen in Giggleswick parish church where a carving of a long horn ox features on the pulpit. Little of this meat was eaten locally as fresh meat but some was preserved using salt carried over from Cheshire by packhorse.

Locally grazed cattle were milked and often in the fields. Brears illustrated this aspect of local agriculture with slides of some of the necessary equipment including the soft ropes essential to prevent the cow kicking over the pail – or the milker. The milk was made into butter and cheeses. Both ewe's cheese and cow's cheese were made in the main cheese making dales of Swaledale and Wensleydale. Most of the local cheeses originally had a higher moisture content then their current equivalent. Rules on the moisture content were set out as a war-time expedient by the Ministry of Food, leading to a decline of the softer cheeses.

Fuel in the dales was peat until the coming of the canals when boat owners who sent limestone down to the industrial towns began looking for a return load. The return load was coal from the mines of the south of the county. The days of peat cutting and drying were over.

The main arable crop was oats. Oatmeal was used to make not only porridge, but a form of pudding similar to that made later from rice. However, the more widely known use was to make oatcakes. So well-known were the oatcakes of Skipton that 'John Leech, of Hard-by-the-Castle Yard, in Skipton-in-Craven, for many years supplied Simpsons and the London Clubs with a weekly supply.' Whilst some kitchens could utilise a small bakestone, others had much longer bakestones which were independently heated from below. An essential skill of a dales person was the throwing of the oatmeal batter to produce a thin, long oatcake with the essential perforations. We were delighted to learn that one enterprising manufacturer in the nineteenth century invented a 'patent oatmeal batter hurling machine.' We were not told whether the resultant oatcake was better or worse than the hand thrown version.

The speaker's survey of traditional food in the dales was a masterly review of the way in which food history throws light on the social and economic conditions of an area. The paper clearly left members wanting more and, perhaps at least some, half-wished they didn't have to catch a train to the Ribblehead viaduct.

Eddie Cass

Excursion to Ribblehead

Ribblehead Viaduct

Our field excursion on Friday afternoon took us, via part of the Settle and Carlisle Railway, to Ribblehead station and its adjacent viaduct. Richard Morris, an enthusiastic and knowledgeable member of the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line, had already explained en route that the railway had been built by the Midland Railway Company as part of its strategy to tap into the lucrative London to Scotland market. It was, effectively, the "last great mainline railway constructed in Britain", started in 1869 and opened in 1876.

Building the line was anything but easy. Its route lay along the spine of upland northern England, climbing to a summit of 1169 feet at Ais Gill, and incorporating a series of monumental civil engineering projects. Ribblehead viaduct was one of these, its 24 arches leading the railway high above a bleak valley floor, its supporting piers anchored to a rock foundation via 25 feet of mud and clay.

Bill Mitchell, who met us at Ribblehead railway station (I refuse to call it a "train station") led us on a fascinating tour of the wider Ribblehead site. What could at first seem to be little more than a series of humps and hummocks soon began to take shape as a massive construction site, where around 2000 men had worked to produce the materials used to construct the viaduct and its approaches. They – mainly men, though there were also some women and children here – lived in a large shanty town of three-roomed barracks, with an overspill into an adjacent cluster of houses at Batty Moss. Kilns, a

pensioners' protest, Fathers4Justice in addition to the street murals of Belfast.

Customised lorry cabs are shown alongside more unconventional items such as customised hard hats, welders' helmets, motorcycle helmets and even a motorcycle hearse. There is an extensive collection of amusing shop signs including one of an osteopath which includes an enormous spine. These 'calling signs' may be contrasted with a collection of prostitutes' cards from London phone boxes. The inherent sadness of the painting 'Closed Visit' in the section on Art from Prisons, contrasts with the henna painted hands of a wedding in the section 'Love and Death'. There are photographs of well dressing, crop circles, cake competitions – and gurning; and much more besides.

The book is not a catalogue but it was produced to accompany an exhibition of the same title. The exhibition has photographs by the score, video clips, objects such as the Skull Crash Helmet by Stuart (Sam) Hughes, a life-size model of the Queensferry Burry Man, sets of the embroidered costumes of Cumberland and Westmorland wrestlers, and an actual Whitby Penny Hedge complete with the seaweed with which it was draped when rescued by Doc Rowe. The exhibition has been touring Britain and Switzerland under the auspices of the Arts Council. The whole has now been acquired by the British Council and it will tour overseas.*

Folk Archive, both the book and the exhibition, remind us that 'popular arts' are wide ranging in their expression of community values and there are many communities represented here. Moreover, we are reminded that when individuals wish to express themselves within a community, or when a small community wishes to express itself within the larger society, considerable ingenuity can be used to ensure that some sense of art is shown in that interface. This applies as much to the person hoping to win a gurning competition as it does to a village decorating its well. We are also reminded that there is much of fascination and beauty to be seen in contemporary Britain. Both the book and the exhibition are highly recommended.

Eddie Cass

* The exhibition will be shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, Serbia, from 24 March to 10 June 2007. Other locations have yet to be fixed.

A Time and a Place: Two centuries of Irish Social Life

Charles Russell (1852-1910)
The O'Connell Centenary Celebrations, 1875
Courtesy, National Gallery of Ireland

The catalogue that accompanies this exhibition (which closed Jan 07) was described as a visual survey of the recreational activities of Irish society over the past two centuries covering themes such as sport, music, dance, theatre and entertainment, as well as religious and civic celebration.

It brought together 83 paintings and watercolours from public and private collections in Ireland and the UK, by some of Ireland's most accomplished figurative painters of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, among them William van der Hagen, James Arthur O'Connor, Lilian Davidson, William Conor, Sean Keating, Mainie Jellett, Harry Kernoff and Jack B. Yeats

Dr. Brendan Rooney, curator of the exhibition and editor of the accompanying catalogue, says that: "none of the recorders of Irish life featured in this exhibition can be said to have approached their subjects with an innocent eye, despite their documented familiarity with the subject, or the authenticity afforded by their physical or implied presence. The variety and testimony that these scenes of social life represent and the relativity of their pictorial language are fascinating subjects in their own right."

of the Meertens Ethnology Lectures. These lectures are presented by ground breaking researchers in the field of ethnology and related disciplines.' During 2005, Bronner was Fulbright Professor of American Studies at the University of Leiden, at which time he presented this new research. Bronner addresses traditions associated with crossing the equator from the late mediaeval/early modern period to the experiences of a 'female ex-sailor' in 2000, in contexts of transformative capacity and in situations exhibiting varying degrees of formality. His discourse opens by exploring a situation relating to the United States Navy during the 1990s, setting this against a prohibition on similar activities imposed by the Dutch East India Company in 1614. Bronner perceptively explores the development, functions, diffusion, symbolism and meanings of a robust tradition persisting in the face of opposition. This study is likely to have a wide appeal, being relevant to those interested in traditional custom, narrative and drama, gender studies, Naval history and the study of maritime history and tradition.

Linda Ballard

Whipping the Herring: Survival and Celebration in Nineteenth Century Irish Art, edited by Peter Murray, Crawford Art Gallery and Gandon Editions, 2006, pp 264, illustrated.

Peter Murray, Julian Campbell, Claudia Kinmonth and Tom Dunne have contributed thought provoking essays to this sumptuous publication, which was originally issued to coincide with the opening of the exhibition *Whipping the Herring* in May 2006. Murray's introductory paper, 'Realism versus Romanticism in Framing National Identity' addresses the wide ranging influences on the artists represented in the exhibition and explores the role of 'painters who portrayed life as they saw it around them' providing an excellent overview and opening the way for essays on 'The Representation of Everyday Life in Irish Painting of the Nineteenth Century: the European Context', (Campbell); 'Rural Life through Artists' Eyes: an Interdisciplinary Approach' (Kinmonth) and 'The Dark Side of the Irish Landscape: depictions of the Rural Poor, 1760-1850' (Dunne). These discourses are followed by a thematic listing of the works, which are presented under the headings 'Festivals and Fairs', 'Social Occasions', 'Famine and Emigration, Rents and Evictions', 'Education and Improvement', 'Funerals and Weddings' and 'Rural Life.' Glorious illustrations of the works of art are accompanied by individual analyses provided by Brendan Rooney, Dawn Williams and by Murray, Campbell, Dunne and Kinmonth. In this way, the book achieves an astonishing amount. It provides both an intellectual context for and lasting access to the paintings and other works, together with individual perceptions and insights of an extraordinary range. A ground breaking work in art history, this book also has myriad relevance for the study of Folklife.

Linda Ballard

Contemporary Popular Art from the UK, **Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane, Folk Archive** Bookworks, London, 2005, 160pp, £12.50 (pbk), ISBN 1 870699 81 5.

Most books on folk art are, in a sense, picture books; after all, art is essentially visual, but there is usually an extensive commentary. However, this is a folk art book with a difference, within 160 pages there is a very brief preface by the compilers, a four page introduction to the archive, a brief reading list and a diary of selected events. The rest is a pictorial survey of what the compilers have termed contemporary popular art.

Some of the art illustrated is 'contemporary' in the sense that it consists of recent photographs but of well established folk events, the Haxey Hood, Padstow May Day celebrations, Ottery St Mary Tar Barrel Rolling, Mari Lwyd. Here we can often see the hand of folk archivist, Doc Rowe. Most of the book, however, is taken up with photographs of more contemporary activities. The section on banners, for example, includes the well known Durham miners' gala, but also photographs of demonstrations by the countryside alliance, a

brick works and a quarry produced the constructional materials, and a narrow gauge railway carried these materials on to the viaduct site. As had been the case at most railway construction sites, many of the labourers were from Ireland.

Our visit took place on a fine, still afternoon. Ribblehead must have been a very different place in midwinter in the early 1870s, as gales, sleet and snow howled in from the west. Worker turnover, at 73% for the duration of the line's construction, indicates that men simply moved away, having had enough of life in these arduous conditions. The children that lived here with their parents must have found life especially difficult, and we were told that several had been buried in local graveyards.

Tea and excellent chocolate cake at the nearby Station Inn was accompanied by entertainment provided by the "Settle Voices", before returning to the station for a look around the museum – again staffed by enthusiastic volunteers – and a train ride back to Skipton.

Dafydd Roberts

Delegates enjoying their trip to the Ribblehead Viaduct

Mike Gill: *Mining in the Dales*

Many parts of upland Britain have had their physical and human landscapes altered by mining. Mike Gill's presentation focussed on what he identified as being the "sub-industrial landscape" of the Yorkshire Dales: an area that is essentially rural, but where lead mining has a history that extends over some 2000 years.

Three fundamental processes, all of them subject to an industrial evolution over that period, characterise the mining of any mineral. These are, firstly, the mining process itself, the physical task of getting ore out of the ground. Secondly, the ore has to be "dressed", whereby rock and vein minerals are separated from the ore in order to make it easier to smelt. Finally, the ore is smelted, by being heated in a furnace and converted into molten metal.

Several phases can be identified in the evolution of these processes, and all have left their imprint on the landscape of the Dales. That of the "meer" system, a form of customary law which operated until the seventeenth century, resulted for example in rows of shallow shafts which are still very visible today. The later introduction of windlass winders above shaft heads resulted in larger, deeper pits. In tandem with this, the technique called "hushing" – whereby water gathered within a temporary dam, and released along pre-dug courses – was used for prospecting, for waste removal and sometimes for ore exposure, resulting in spectacular gashes on upland landscapes.

By the nineteenth century, and largely as the result of innovations introduced by the a mining engineer and entrepreneur called John Taylor, further changes were to be found within the landscape. Round "buddles", used for ore separation, became a common sight, as did smelt mills with extraordinarily long and complex flue structures, used to encourage the precipitation of lead.

Finally, we were reminded that lead was not the only mineral to have been mined in the Dales. Coal mining also has a long history here, with the last colliery surviving until the end of the Second World War.

Dafydd Roberts

John Baldwin: *The Foula Skattald – a multi-purpose resource*

Foula is a small island, 3 ½ x 2 ½ miles in extent, lying 27 miles west of Scalloway on the Shetland Mainland. It was Norse for 600 years and still retains many Norse/Norn words to describe physical features and traditional activities. John Baldwin has made a detailed study of the island and its way of life and treated us to a fascinating account of how this community used all the resources at its disposal to sustain itself and even, at some periods, to enjoy a relatively comfortable lifestyle.

It is a harsh environment, lying on the latitude of southern Greenland, with frequent severe winds from the Atlantic. Most of the island is covered in peat, with a small amount of fertile land in the east. As may be expected, fishing was an important activity, both with nets and lines from the shore, and from small boats. Keeping the boats safe from the winter storms was a major concern leading to the creation of flat areas or 'noosts' where the boats could be hauled a short way up the cliff and tied down. The fish was either air dried, or smoked over the fire. Special drystone structures known as 'skeos' had recesses in the walls which were used for air drying fish and other meats, and for keeping dairy products cool. Foula people were thought to be the best cliff climbers, and seabirds were an important part of the diet. The meat was all eaten locally, but eggs and feathers were sold to produce a modest income.

The peat provided the fuel, and turves and heather the roofing materials for the stone dwellings. The only available timber was driftwood which was carefully harvested.

Other stone features in the landscape are circular enclosures with no entrance known as 'krubs', used for planting out kale seed in autumn to protect the young plants which were then planted in the fields in spring. Oats were also grown in the fertile areas. Sheep, cattle and pigs were also kept, as is confirmed by place-name evidence.

There was a modest population into the 19th century which was in balance with the available resources, but this built up to a peak of 276 people in 1876 which was only sustained by commercial fishing. The population now is less than 30.

John gave us a real insight into this particular 'upland community' and its management.

Catherine Wilson

Student Paper: **Eimear Ballard:** *'Rednecks' and Racism in the New Folklore of Contemporary Horror Cinema.*

In this paper, Eimear Ballad shifted our attention from physical to psychic landscapes, taking up analysis of an often disdained genre – contemporary horror movies revolving around the encounter of town and country with a twist. Set off in the 1970s by the budding genre of gore and the archetypal road movie, *Easy Rider*, this brand of horror movie involves a reworking of folklore themes into a highly contemporary mode of expression. If these films are often panned by critics, they attract an overwhelming response from young people, for example, in massive Internet commentary, and are a key to sociological trends. The crossover and referentiality from one film to another drive an extra-textual narrative relying on Jungian archetypes of evil.

The many folklore elements present in this metamorphosis of road movie into road horror, as well as the frequent gallows humour, are usually overlooked by critics put off by what appears superficially to be a preoccupation with pornography and an ambient amorality. A closer look reveals that vice – premarital sex, drugs – is always punished and virtue rewarded, especially the qualities of sensitivity to a dangerous situation and a capacity to cope with near-unlimited trauma. Many folklore themes are woven into these highly 'modern' tapestries of young people unwittingly or even arrogantly adventuring into the wilderness where they inevitably begin trespassing on the Other's grounds. The American insistence on always being "in control" is taken to task, a reflection of the Bettelheimian thesis that

Eddie Cass also reiterated the President's comments on study days and expressed the hope that members would look out for possible opportunities for joint events with other bodies.

Membership Secretary's Report

Mared reported that total membership stands at 394 which is a decrease of 6 since last year. Over the last year we gained two new institutional members and lost three, mostly due to financial constraints. Although we received four new personal members; four resigned and two sadly passed away.

On the marketing front, the Folk Life postcards were dispatched with the Social History Curators Group's Newsletter last autumn, resulting in two new members to date. 1150 were dispatched with *Folklore* over the summer and a few other societies have been contacted to discuss possible exchanges.

The President thanked Mared both for her report and for the work she had put in as Membership Secretary over the years. He also commented on the obvious fragility of our membership and hoped that we could all try and recruit at least one new member.

Conference Secretary's Report

In giving his last report as Conference Secretary, Dafydd Roberts stressed the importance of the role of the local conference organiser in the planning of what was our major event of the year. It was that person who had to deal with arranging accommodation, planning visits and timetabling meals, lectures and entertainment. Occasionally, there might be some slippages in this timetable and he hoped that members would sympathise with the local arranger who was dealing with our conference in addition to dealing with his usual full time post. Dafydd thanked Andrew MacKay for all the work he and his staff had put into this very successful event.

Dafydd also thanked the meeting for all the support he had had over the years and said how much he had enjoyed his time as Conference Secretary. He then outlined the future conference programme, 2007 was to be in Swansea, 2008 was to be in Killarney, and 2009 was to be in the Isle of Man. Steph Mastoris then outlined the early ideas for the conference in Swansea.

The President thanked Dafydd for all the work he had put in as Conference Secretary.

Election of Officers and Council

The President informed the meeting that with the exception of the Membership Secretary and the Conference Secretary, all officers were willing to be re-appointed. We had had nominations for the new Membership Secretary, Seb Littlewood and a new Conference Secretary, Steph Mastoris. Paul Coghlan proposed the election of the officers en bloc; the motion was seconded by Catherine Wilson.

The Secretary reported that we had received nominations for four members of Council, Pat Dawson, Brian Loughborough, Matthew Richardson and Dafydd Roberts. These nominations were proposed by Paul Coghlan and seconded by David Viner. Both resolutions were accepted by the meeting.

Paddy MacMonagle wished to express the thanks of the meeting for all the work done throughout the year by the officers and council.

Any Other Business

The Secretary reported that he had no notice of any other business appropriate to an Annual General Meeting and the President declared the meeting closed.

Book Reviews/Recent Publications

Crossing the Line: Violence, Play and Drama in Naval Equator Traditions, by Simon J Bronner, Meertens Ethnology Cahier 2, Amsterdam University Press 2006, pp 64, illustrated.

This extended and illustrated essay is the most recent publication in the new series introduced by the Meertens Institute. The series is of 'revised texts

Minutes of the Society's Annual General Meeting, held at 10.00am on Sunday, 17th Sept 2006 at the Rendezvous Hotel, Skipton.

Present

The President, Roy Brigden, and 25 members.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Sarah Blowen, Simon Bronner, Claudia Kinmonth, Michael Larkin, Margaret McKay, Bob Powell, Christine Stevens, Fionualla Carson Williams.

Minutes of the last AGM

These had been printed in the *Newsletter* and further copies were tabled. They were approved by the meeting as a correct record.

Matters Arising

The President, who is also Chair of the Rural Museums Network, reported that the balance of the funds held in the account of RulMAG had been transferred to the Rural Museums Network in accordance with the resolution passed at the 2005 AGM. He also reported that the Rural Museums Network was flourishing and had had a very successful year.

President's Report

Roy Brigden began by paying tribute to three former members who had passed away during the year: Kate Mason, Alan Pearsall and Bill Mangan

The President was pleased to report on what he considered to have been a very satisfactory year for the society. In addition to a very successful conference, the society had also made progress across a wide spectrum of activities including the website, the journal and the newsletter. Roy did, however, stress the importance of seeking to increase the number of members. It was essential to retain a critical mass of members if we were to continue with our core activities.

Treasurer's Report

The annual financial report was presented by the treasurer. Duncan Dornan expressed the view that given the forthcoming rise in subscription, the society was in a reasonably healthy position financially but reiterated the President's comment that we should continue to seek new members. Acceptance of the report was proposed by Paul Coghlan and seconded by Anne Dyer.

Editor's Reports

a) *Folk Life* Editor

Linda Ballard tabled a report which indicated that plans for the next two issues were well in hand. She also expressed her thanks to Cozette Griffin-Kremer who had so readily accepted the role of reviews editor. The President and the Secretary commented on how successful recent issues of the Journal had been.

b) *Newsletter* Editor

Elaine Edwards said that she was planning to bring forward the publishing date of the *Newsletter*. This plan had started with the last issue. Elaine has produced notes for the contributors which gave details of deadlines for copy. She also asked that contributors include black and white photographs wherever possible. There is a possibility that the format may have to change in order to make best use of the new postage rates.

c) *Website* Editor

In the absence of Heather Holmes, the Secretary read out her report. This covered the improvements which had been made in the last year and dealt with how the site would be treated in the future. Heather wished to record her thanks to Eimear Ballard for all the work she had put in over the last months.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported on the developments at the English Folk Dance and Song Society following on from the original approach to us in connection with the possibility of a new archive and teaching unit.

international folklore about violence is being repressed in the U.S. and hence opens the sluice gates to violence, rather than to the effective working through of it necessary for adolescents.

Eimear gave us a general tour, proceeding from the TTCM (The Texas Chainsaw Massacre) series and then concentrated on the sub-genre of the encounter of the heroine – destined to be the "final girl" in her immaculate white vest – with incarnate evil. She alone has the gnawing premonition that her friends are entering the sombre world of 'rednecks' who harbour in their family a special monster, Leatherface, genetically inferior, deformed, typifying those who are "left behind" in the American dream. These people are the losers, the southern poor spawned by the Civil War, cannon fodder in Vietnam and even today the privileged object of Army recruitment among the indigent rural population. They have become the butt of a new racism, since the politically correct has made directly attacking other groups unfeasible. The films play on fears of serial killers, converging with the themes of cannibalistic murder. (One cannot help but think of the blood libel and its long history or *The Silence of the Lambs* and its primally evil psychoanalyst, the scientist gone wrong, at the other end of the spectrum of fear.)

Eimear believes that the redneck genre is cooling off at present, though the classic road movie continues to inspire film creation. This intermittent embrace of folklore themes has a rhythm and life of its own, as we would expect from a popular genre, but is also savantly steered by the Hollywood money machine keenly aware of societal needs. After our rich series of visits and presentations of the upland landscapes, as they are crafted and cared for in relation to our needs today, this paper recalled a realm equally worthy of our attention – the encounter with real or imagined dangers, and that teenagers and the society they live in, like the heroine in the white vest, must find ways to effectively cope and move forward to construct a life aware of, but untrammelled by fear.

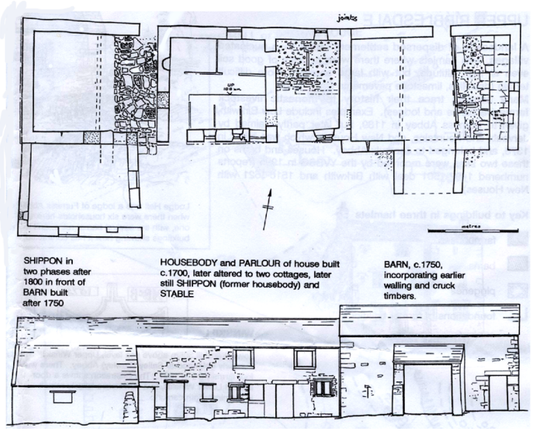
Cozette Griffin-Kremer

Excursion to Lower Winskill Farm, near Settle.

Tom Lord

Our host was Tom Lord whose family has been farming at Lower Winskill for generations. This is a hill farm with 150 acres of grass in the National Park, 300m above sea level. It was formerly part of the Sawley Abbey estate before Dissolution and has been a separate freehold since the 1590s. The area supported a mixed farming system until the mid-17th century, and there was some ploughing here during the Napoleonic Wars, but otherwise milk production, some of it going into butter and cheese, was the principal occupation until about fifty years ago. The farm buildings illustrate an evolution of usage from the eighteenth century and the house was re-built in about 1860, during the High Farming period. They have been measured and studied in detail by Alison Armstrong and members of the North Craven Historical Research Group.

Tom Lord talked in depth of the challenge now facing small hill farms of this type. Until the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2001, he had kept a herd of 20 calving beef cattle together with a flock of 70 sheep. Since then, the outlook has changed dramatically and the system of support has turned increasingly to a concentration on meadow management for its conservation value. The sheep remain but from next year they will be joined by a small herd of highland cattle to assist with the protective use of the pasture. Tom Lord exemplified the role of the farmer as guardian of the historic landscape environment. It is a role that includes showing schools and other groups around the farm, and passing on his knowledge and understanding of



Copyright: A. Pacey & A. C. Armstrong, 2002

its character. His analysis of the dry stone walls that define and encompass the farm, and which are in themselves a record of human endeavour over the centuries, was worth the visit in itself.

Roy Brigden

Members' papers

Gillian Bulmer: *Cider Apple Propagation in Herefordshire*

This presentation began with a brief outline of aspects of the history of apple cultivation in Britain, where the practise has been known at least since Roman times. By the Middle Ages, it had spread as far north as Yorkshire. It also explained that apples need to be 'budded', as apple seed does not 'come true' to the parent plant, and explored early techniques of cross pollination. In the late eighteenth century, there were sufficient varieties of apples to lead to the compilation of the *Herefordshire Pomona,* which records the types then in existence, and which may have helped to encourage a local Vicar to begin producing cider despite the disapproval of some of his flock.

At the turn of the twentieth century, a decline in the apple harvest led to new approaches to apple propagation in the interests of finding varieties that were best suited to cider production. This resulted in the foundation of cider orchards in Herefordshire. Miss Bulmer recalled a childhood memory of 'rows of brown stuff', split apples that had come from the mill. These were left over the summer, allowing the pips of some to germinate. Selected shoots were then budded and eventually grafted to the required variety to produce a new stock of trees. Increasingly, the trend is to find 'early' varieties, some of which are still under trial.

Flavour is the essential quality of a good cider apple type, but tree shape is also important. Some shapes are better suited to harvesting than others, and the question of whether an orchard will be grazed or mown is also relevant. Taller trees are needed if an orchard is grazed, and the trees must also be protected from the animals. At the turn of the twenty first century, it seems cider is still very popular, and the number of small cider orchards in Herefordshire is on the increase.

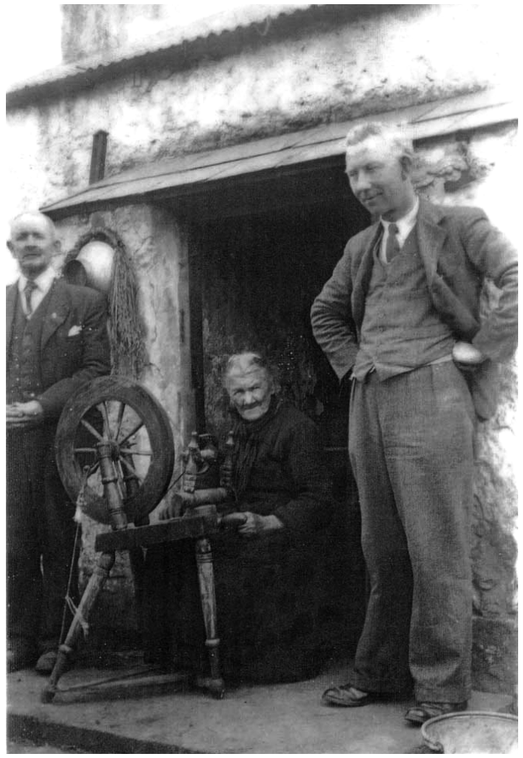
Linda Ballard

Linda Ballard: Dr Francis McPolin and the Folk Traditions of the Hilltown Region of the Mournes

Linda led us on a jaunty gallop through the life and accomplishments of Francis McPolin!

Referred to as 'Old Baldie' by his pupils (many of whom have very generously contributed to her research), he was well-remembered by some and rather less so by others! Born into a local farming family in 1897, he returned as a teacher (later head teacher) to Ballymaghery Boys' School where he had been first a pupil and trainee-teacher. Hilltown was predominantly Catholic, and he was determined that his pupils would be educated in a such a way as to avoid the exploitation he had seen groups of Irish navvies subjected to in England. Committed to teaching, he wrote frequently for the *Northern Teacher* extolling the virtues of teachers motivating pupils, identifying and fostering talents, and continuing studying both for their own benefit and that of their pupils.

McPolin was a boxer and a strict disciplinarian and Linda suggested that his complexity and diffidence



Francis McPolin on the right
Photo courtesy of Hilltown Historical Society. Co.Down

have undermined how he is remembered. For he was very different outwith the classroom – a source of much-valued help and advice within his community, and a significant collector of folklore. As well as his *History of Clonduff Parish* (1936), he was a contributor to the collections of the Irish Folklore Commission; he wrote academic papers on many aspects of folklore and folklife (as well as education and child psychology); in 1960 he donated a 21-page document to the Ulster Folk Museum; and a significantly larger typescript was gifted in 2002 by Sheila St Clair, a long-time friend. Following his death in 1974, his personal notebooks were thought to have been lost, though some have now been traced in private ownership.

As a collector (mainly in the 1940s), he was much influenced by his mother's uncle, John Darby, and by such as Séamus Ó. Duilearga, Séan Ó'Súilleabháin and Michael J. Murphy – and on occasion he also collected from his own pupils! The range is considerable:

- working life (e.g. occupations, cattle & droving, settlements)
- social life (e.g. seasonal customs, marriage & death, historical & religious traditions, outlaws)
- language & dialect (e.g. vocabulary & idioms, proverbs & sayings, place-names, Irish language)
- lore (e.g. fairy lore, ghost stories, tales of the Devil, extended narratives, hares, cures & charms, luck & weather lore).

He was, for instance, particularly interested in fairy lore and the balance between formal religion and popular belief. And even though it had died out in his own area, he recorded every reference he could find to the Irish language. At the same time, he had never spoken of politics or of events in Dublin when attending teacher-training college in 1916, and he did not favour proselytising in Irish.

Methodical and articulate as ever (and was it more realistically 45 minutes compressed into 15 or so to accommodate the greater clan Ballard?!), Linda's paper provided a fascinating insight into what must be the relatively rare instance of an educator and academic who appears to have ventured but little beyond his own community for three-quarters of the 20th century. With trilby and bicycle, he lived almost his whole life in a very traditional house close by Pat Kearney's Big Stone/the Goward Dolmen (where his brother ran the family farm) – but his generosity towards and influence on the likes of E. Estyn Evans and R.H. Buchanan was considerable, as is his legacy.

John Baldwin