

A Good Send Off: Local, regional & national variations in how the British dispose of their dead. CDAS Conference. Bath Royal Literary & Scientific Institute, 19th June 2010.

Email cdas@bath.ac.uk for further information.

Rural History Conference, University of Sussex 13 – 16 September 2010. Please refer to website www.ruralhistory2010.org for further information.

The National Electronic and Video Archive of the Crafts (NEVAC) has changed its name to 'Recording the Crafts'. The new web address is www.uwe.ac.uk/recordingthecrafts

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

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

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West Dean House, Chichester

The Annual Conference for 2010 Sussex, England 16th - 19th September

The Society's annual conference in 2010 will be held in West Sussex in the south of England and take place between Thursday and Sunday the 16th - 19th September.

The conference will be based at West Dean House, near Chichester, home of the Edward James Foundation and its famous college (a study centre for conservation, arts, crafts, writing, gardening and music). Nearby is the Weald & Downland Open Air

Museum, with its collection of nearly 50 historic buildings dating from the 13th to the 19th century, and an extensive programme of live interpretation and demonstrations of traditional skills.

The conference will explore a number of themes relating to vernacular culture and rural society, including interpreting agriculture and rural skills for contemporary audiences, the representation of recent agriculture in museum collections, and rural change in general.

If you would like to offer a paper at this conference, please contact Conference Secretary, Steph Mastoris (steph.mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk).

The cost of attending this conference will be £390 for those sharing accommodation and £490 for those requiring single accommodation.

A booking form is enclosed. Please note that a **non-refundable deposit of £100** is required by the **28th May** and the remaining conference fee is requested by **13th August**.

The 2011 Conference: September 8th – 11th

The Society's annual conference in 2011 will be held in the North East of England and take place between Thursday 8th and Sunday 11th September. (Please note that at time of going to press all details are still to be confirmed.)

The broad theme will be textiles.

Further details will be available by mid 2011. Please contact the Conference Secretary, Steph Mastoris (steph.mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk) if you would like to contribute a paper at this conference.

Conference 2009 Introductory words – Isle of Man

Welcome to those who have just joined us, and a second welcome to those who were here last night to hear Andrew Foxon's excellent preview to the Isle of Man and to the conference.

Marshal Cubbon did the honours when the first Society conference was held here on Man in 1969, and it was my privilege to have been here for the last conference held here in the Manx Museum when we were welcomed by long time member and former Director Stephen Harrison, who, together with the staff and trustees of Manx National Heritage, gave us a very good time indeed – as testament to which, here we are again.

The papers to which we now look forward are as varied as ever, as wide ranging in viewpoint as they

are in geographical spread, a testament to the hard work of our local secretary, Matthew Richardson and to our inimitable conference secretary, Steph Mastoris.

The last time we as a Society looked at tourism and heritage, it was at the Lake District conference in the 1980s - the period when, according to many commentators, the 'Heritage' was invented as an industry – indeed this point is made by the recently departed and much missed Geraint Jenkins in his book **Getting Yesterday Right** – originally published in 1992, and only just republished this year, much to his delight.

The concern then was that authenticity was being lost in the rash of heritage products being sold to the public – principally tourists – in order to attract visitors and make money in order to survive. One of the worries then was that, in the rush to collect together displays, their context was ignored or lost, and with that their meaning and their connection to the community from whence they came. It is fitting perhaps that we are looking again at this subject – in a different way, and in a different time, and with the benefit of all the work which has been done in the intervening period. I also came across a copy of transactions for the Museums Professionals Group from their 1987 conference on 'Tourism - Museum Dream or Nightmare' - containing, among others, comments from one Catherine Wilson, - it was interesting when rereading these papers to see how ideas expressed at that time have helped to change attitudes in the museum world and how much more visitor – and indeed community centred we now are.

Communities have also changed and society itself is a very different country. However, if the results of the conference in Skansen a few years ago are anything to go by - when much hand wringing was done about the future of open air museums – it seems that not only the 'heritage' practitioners, but also the academics, and even the futurologist, came to the same conclusion, that people do have a hunger for the real and the authentic, and open air museums were one place where this could be

proximity of fast-expanding Witney, and has a great deal in its favour. Manor Farm is a remarkable survival of period farm buildings, including some fine 18th century barns, all in local Cotswold stone.

Parts of the farmhouse and site date back to the 12th century, and a wander around the farmyard and house has always been a trip down memory lane, strongly evocative of the Victorian farm it is interpreted to be.

A new future now beckons, as the county council has been seeking other partners to develop the site and take on management responsibility. A new Cogges Trust will take up the reins from April 2010 and faces a big challenge.

After some years of uncertainty over Cogges' future, and no little criticism that its 'offer' to visitors needed renewal, the new trustees start with a formidable list of obligations, even though the council retains ownership of both historic buildings and the collections, with maintenance responsibility for both.

A 'refreshed and revitalised' Cogges is promised, albeit starting life with only a £160,000 pa subsidy for each of its first two years from the council, the final strand of the authority's diminishing under-writing support announced (to some consternation) a few years ago.

It remains to be seen how much of the farming and countryside theme will be retained, or even expanded, within the context of the wider archaeological and historical significance of Cogges. Certainly, there has been a hiatus. Horses, once a feature alongside the cows, chickens and Gloucester Old Spot pigs around the Manor Farm yard, have been gone for a year or two now, since the departure of *Hilda* the Clydesdale and *Mollie* the cob.

So too the annual threshing sessions in the farmyard, mostly powered by a fine single cylinder Ruston, Proctor & Co Ltd engine of 1907 from a

local owner and long-time museum supporter. Time will tell whether the new ways of working at Cogges will substantially change the core activity of interpreting the farm as a period piece, by taking – and indeed being able to afford - a completely new approach.

Further information: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

David Viner

The Ulster Folklife Society, Postscript

In the last *Newsletter*—Number 24 February 2009, page 17—I gave a synopsis of the Ulster Folklife Society (1952-2008) and its plans for the future. These were that it would team up with the Friends of Cultra, a group formed in 1989 to support the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. It has now been decided not to go ahead with this as the aims of the two were not the same. *All good things*, as we know, *come to an end* and the Society has run its race well. The dedication of its office bearers should be warmly congratulated and recorded.

As mentioned, the journal *Ulster Folklife* will continue under the editorship of Robbie Hannan, Curator of Musicology at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

Fionnuala Carson Williams

Forthcoming conferences/Meetings

The sixth West Country Scythe Competition & South Somerset Green Fair will be held at Thorney Lakes, Muchelney Langport, Somerset on **13th June 2010**. See their website for further details. www.thescytheshop.co.uk/festival.html

During his varied life he was the High Sheriff of Dyfed and Ceredigion county councillor (2002-03), a trustee of the Cadgwan Building Preservation Trust and an active campaigner to bring Cardigan Castle into public ownership which was achieved in 2003.

Dr. Jenkins is survived by his wife Nancy and two sons. A third son predeceased him.

A fuller obituary will be published in Folk Life

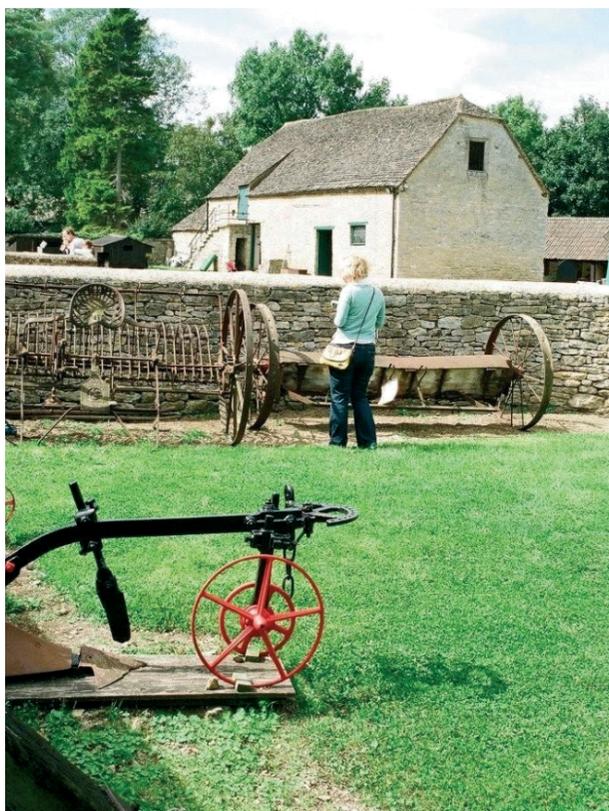
Steph Mastoris/Elaine Edwards

Announcements



Long standing member & former membership secretary Mared McAleavey and her husband Martin with their twins Mali Haf and Thomas Wyn born August 2009.

New trust formed to run Cogges museum at Witney



Enjoying the displays. In the background, the originally 17th century barn was converted to stables in the 18th century and remains in its very simple form. Photograph by David Viner

Another chapter unfolds in the long saga of the future of Manor Farm Museum at Witney, with the formation of a new Cogges Trust to take over responsibility from Oxfordshire county council,

The museum has celebrated thirty years of interpreting farming and the countryside in Oxfordshire since it first opened for its initial short season back in 1978. In that time its visitor numbers held up well, certainly in comparison with many of its colleague museums and competitor attractions, and even in difficult times between 2003 and last year it still averaged around 27,000 each season. This compares to an all-time high of 69,000 in its first full season in 1979 – heady days indeed!

The site at Cogges, really only a small hamlet, is widely regarded as a special place despite the close

experienced. Of course, discussion then went on to examine what did we mean by authentic – which is a whole different ball game.

One of the things which will be really interesting during the coming papers is to see how the selling of heritage has existed for centuries, how it was viewed in the past, how it has changed, and in addition how places with an amazingly rich and varied history, such as the isle of Man, are able to use their material culture and their folklore to continue to attract the heritage hungry visitor.

Christine Stevens, President

Reviews of the Conference Papers



Cregneash

Yvonne Cresswell

Manx Tourism and Folk Culture: How to Promote a Tourist Resort through its Folk Life and Customs.

What an appropriate entrée to the day and, indeed, to the Isle of Man! On home ground, Yvonne Cresswell is one of the Manx Museum's two Curators of Social History. A member of the Museum for many years, Yvonne has studied folk life and custom in depth and is well able to

distinguish how certain features have been exposed, and often altered, in a bid for tourists. Her lecture was the first of Friday's and certainly whetted our appetite for getting out to explore the island for ourselves in our fieldtrips.

Tourism in the 18th century was part of the education of the élite. For several decades young gentlemen travelled on Grand Tours, the journeying through 'exotic wildernesses' between cities being part of the experience. When war closed the Continent to travellers from Britain they began to seek out their own accessible 'wildernesses'. Writers and artists promoted and romanticised several closer to home and the Isle of Man made its way into the travel guides as a suitable destination. It was described as a microcosm of Britain or even of 'all Europe' and, moreover, getting there included crossing the sea as one had to do to get to the Continent. Apart from the scenery, accessed from the port on horseback or by gig or carriage, an activity which became known in the 20th century as the 'Holywood Hello,' that is, passing the grand houses was popular in the 1820s.

Later, when tourism became more populist, transport throughout the island was improved with steam and electric railways in the second part of the 19th century. A close eye was kept on rival resorts such as Blackpool and embellishments and improvements were added every season with an emphasis on the whole package, not only scenery and access to it but the sites traditionally associated with saints, druids, Themselves (fairies) and Manx monarchs.

Most early 20th century tourist promotion, however, concerned the people themselves, memorably described by one traveller as 'quaint and aboriginal'. They appeared in a multitude of postcards especially for the tourist market, and were frequently posed—spinners, haymakers and fishers. Today, folk life and custom is still employed in tourism and directed to the same sites, but things are presented in a more subtle way: Rushen Abbey jam

is still sold 200 years on, for instance, but gone is the outdoor dancing there, and the labels at saints' graves.

Yvonne's lecture was really appropriately illustrated and so well executed. There is a great skill in a successful power point presentation and Yvonne certainly has this in no small measure. Not only were the illustrations thoroughly apt and well arranged, often with paintings juxtaposed with photographs, they and the text were thoroughly in tandem.

The point was clearly made that the aspects used to sell the island to tourists in the early 19th century was not that different from the 21st century. An excellent, thoroughly enjoyable and memorable paper.

Fionnuala Carson Williams

Catriona Mackie 'Selling the Scottish Highlands'

Although I may live in the Highlands, I will confess to being somewhat blinkered by my own personal interests to the exclusion of elements of the history and culture that surrounds me. With that in mind, I looked forward to hearing Catriona's presentation with a view to being informed about another of my adopted homelands. I was not disappointed.

Initially Catriona began with an overview of the influences that created Highland travel and tourism; culminating in the later 1800s with a desire to travel to the Highlands greatly assisted by the improvements in road, rail and sea travel. This latter element is perhaps the more obvious influence but Catriona went on to demonstrate how after Culloden, the Highlands became a place of intrigue; with such as the writings of 'Ossian' adding to the attraction. In effect, the Highlands created the opportunity for a 'Grand Tour' on the doorstep

without having to leave the British Isles. We were initially introduced to records of Boswell and Johnson who undertook their tour in 1773; followed soon after by the Reverend Gilpin who in 1789 published his 'Observations on the Highlands'.

The tourist momentum and interest continued to grow abetted by Walter Scott having portrayed Loch Katrine in his poem the 'Lady of the Lake' (1810). And, as the early 1800s progressed there was some interest in the Outer Hebrides and features such as Fingals Cave with steam boats assisting passage. Scott himself made a tour in 1814 of lighthouses with Robert Stevenson.

By the early 1850s Queen Victoria strengthened her connection with Scotland with the purchase of Balmoral in Deeside with the obvious knock on effects of raising the popularity of the Highlands. This in turn then gave a boost to the tour companies such as Thomas Cook founded in the 1840s and after that the publication of guide books. Another major effect was the development of sporting tourism; notably stalking and the popularity of images like Landseer's 'Monarch of the Glen' (1851).

Another, perhaps less obvious, effect that Catriona referred to was a fascination with people as 'The Noble Savage' with some observers still believing that some Highlanders and Islanders still lived an ancient way of life. From the mid 1800s some treated places like St. Kilda as a living open air museum, with tourists wandering into houses to examine the people.

However, going back before that, some areas like Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra it seems were less popular as they did not fit the popular image that had been generated. Martin Martin in 1703 wrote his 'A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland' but that was about it. Scott did land at Rodel on Harris but 'said little for it'. Guide books even omitted the Outer Hebrides. Catriona then proceeded to give a detailed description of the interest, or sometimes lack of interest, as the 1800s

A separate A3 folded site map is also available, in the museum's same striking green format, priced at 30p (another bargain). Its location numbering follows the same sequence as the Guide. The visitor has a choice and needs one or the other in hand to make the most of what is on offer.

At the Highland Folk Museum, free admission offers the same opportunity/challenge to provide something similar, and an attractively re-designed and updated Visitor Guide was published in 2009. It too presents individual buildings and attractions each to a page, also on an A5 format; a centre-page map shows the museum's four main 'zones,' the Aultlarie farm site, 'Clabha', the open air section, 'Baile Gean' (the township), plus the pinewood.

Gaelic sub-titles are used for each property, and as with St Fagans both original construction date and that of re-erection in the museum are shown. A welcome addition is the grid reference of the original site.

With an eye on longevity of this edition, the Guide includes not only the most recent re-erection (the Daluaine summerhouse from Badenoch) but three more buildings to be erected between 2009-2011, as the transition from the museum's Kingussie site to Newtonmore continues.

Both Visitor Guides provide enough detail to satisfy the enquiring minds of most visitors. The Highland Folk Museum Guide in particular is backed up by a good website with further supporting information as well as references to other publications, not least Isabel Grant's seminal *Highland Folk Ways* (1961, Birlinn edition 2007, ISBN 9781874744429).

To this should be added the museum founder's own account of setting up the Highland Folk Museum: *The Making of Am Fasgadh* by Isabel Grant (NMS 2007: ISBN 978-1-905267-20-0). Both are available by post from the shop page on its website at www.highlandfolk.com

St Fagans: National History Museum Visitor Guide (ISBN 0-7200-0468-3, 76 pages, £2.00)

Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore: Visitor Guide (2009, ISBN 0-9549600-1-7, 44 pages, £2.50)

David Viner

Vintage Tractor & Countryside Heritage Magazine was re-launched in April 2010.

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Obituaries

J. Geraint Jenkins, 1929-2009

In August 2009 it was with great sadness that the news of Geraint Jenkins' death was received by members of the Society, many of whom had been fortunate to work with this larger than life character.

Dr. Jenkins was a founder member of the Society and the editor of *Folk Life* for many years. He was also the author of over 50 publications.

Dr Jenkins took up his first museum post at Leicester in 1952, and moved soon afterwards to the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading. Later he joined Iorwerth Peate as an assistant keeper at the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagan's. In 1978 Dr Jenkins was appointed curator of the newly-opened Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum in Cardiff's dockland. He returned to St Fagan's as curator in 1987, retiring five years later.

Any Other Business

Cozette reported that in 2011 the A.F.M.A. was publishing a new guide to world heritage and she would be pleased to receive items for potential inclusion. Roy Brigden was going to submit an article.

Elaine asked if the student placement had been taken up this year – it had not. The comment was made that we need to garner more local publicity for whatever venue the conference finds itself in. Matthew reported that the only area in which 2009's conference had failed was in generating publicity – yet this was something which had been discussed internally at MNH prior to the event. A suggestion was made that future conferences might include a free public lecture one evening, which would be promoted in the local press.

It was noted that the 50th anniversary of the Society in 2011 was a significant achievement, and was this something that we could mark? The total publication record of the Society was very significant indeed. Perhaps there was scope for some sort of reflective piece on what has been the achievement of the Society – a reflective article perhaps? Perhaps Linda could co-ordinate this?

David Viner reported on developments at Cogges Manor Farm, in the domain of Oxfordshire County Council. There is a new approach being mooted for this museum. Oxfordshire CC faced with declining budgets has set up a Cogges Trust to run the venue. This takes over on 1 April 2010. The council would retain ownership of the collections and of the buildings, but the day to day management would be taken out of its hands. DV reported that would be an interesting development to watch as these Social Enterprise Trusts might be the future of a number of other UK museums. The chair of the new trust at Cogges will be Julia Holbury, who is known to DV. He also reported that the future of Nottingham Industrial Museum is in question. It is being run down by the local authority, and it is a matter of concern that the disposals section in Museums Journal almost always contains items from Social

History or Industrial History collections. The big question is will these Social Enterprise Trusts arrest the decline?

Book Reviews/Recent Publications

Are museum guide-books a dying art?



As funding tightens, IT options proliferate and web-based alternatives to the traditional print form continue to increase (and improve), perhaps there is less and less call for a general traditional-style handbook to museum galleries?

An exception to any such trend must remain the open air museum handbook, to my mind still an essential guide to actually getting around a site, providing descriptions of each individual building or setting. A clear clue to the economics of hard times is its replacement by little more than a simple site map, inevitably much reduced in detailed interpretation. Not every museum is going this way.

My evolving model over the years has always been the Visitor Guide to St Fagans, in these days of free museum admission the first paid-for challenge to the arriving visitor. Its green cover, very handleable A5 format, clean presentation and obvious depth of information (it runs to 76 pages), mark it out as value for money and a detailed souvenir all in one. Cover price is £2, a bargain for nearly sixty building/attraction entries.

progressed. The impression is that although Island tourism may not have been as popular as on the mainland, numerous studies or observation about the land, people and culture were published. For example, photographic records of St. Kilda by Captain F.W.L. Mitchell, or by antiquarian J.J.A. Worsaae from Denmark who undertook a study of Lewis. These, however, were studies and even under a period of great change by the 1883 writings of Constance Gordon-Cumming that coincided with the 'Crofters War', a period of land reform agitation that included establishing security of tenure, did not promote tourism and reflected that she found nothing romantic in Uist and she never made it to Lewis. Soon after 'Our Journey to the Hebrides' (1889) was serialized, later published, by American travel writers Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell in 'Harpers Magazine' but their realistic views including images of poverty were also not appreciated by romantic readers.

In conclusion, Catriona reflected on several issues that apart from the romantic imagery that encouraged tourism, and still does, there was a mixture of attitudes and agendas that had different influences on 'selling' the area. These, as implied, ranged from antiquarian interests aligned to a rich material culture; issues such as agricultural development and emigration promoted for the improvement of people perceived to be ignorant and as the Pennells reflected, realism.

As I began, and with apologies to Catriona if I have got any of the facts incorrect, I looked forward to this presentation and as said, I was not disappointed.

Bob Powell

Steph Mastoris reminded us of the location of the 2006 conference with his paper, *Keeping Gower special: changing tourist perceptions of the Gower Peninsular*. Steph began by describing the current popularity and special status of this small tongue of

land to the west of Swansea. In 1956 it was designated the first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the UK and achieved Heritage Coast status in 1973. Today a large amount of its land is owned by a number of conservation bodies and the peninsular is seen by the Welsh Assembly Government as the key location within its tourism and economic development strategies for south-west Wales.

This natural beauty of Gower's landscape is matched by a very distinctive cultural history dating back to at least the English conquest of south Wales in the early twelfth century, where Anglophone colonisation was centred on the good arable lands of the western part of the Peninsular, leaving the poorer-quality lands to the east to the indigenous Welsh population. As a result Gower developed into the modern period as a "little England", similar to south Pembrokeshire, and very remote and difficult to access by visitors until the late nineteenth century.

In many respects Gower's reputation as a tourist destination followed a pattern found elsewhere in the UK. The peninsular was considered a minor excursion in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by Romantic travellers in search of picturesque landscapes; then a much more attractive location for the worthy scientific and antiquarian tourists of the mid-19th century because of its early geology and important paleolithic archaeology. By the 1880s Gower was being seen as a welcome escape from the noise and dirt of the heavily-industrialised towns of south Wales, and by the late 1940s, what had started as a genteel holiday destination was witnessing mass tourism of a more commercialised sort.

The reaction to this by the more culturally-minded of Gower and Swansea society was to found one of the earliest local amenity societies in the UK to campaign for more restrictive planning controls and the preservation of the area's distinctiveness. From 1948 the Gower Society has been extremely active

both in campaigning and promoting the area and in its early years a key theme in this was the folk-life of the Peninsular. The epitome of this celebration of vernacular culture may be seen in the “discovery” of the folk singer Phil Tanner (1862-1950) of Llangennydd, and his promotion in the Society’s publication as a focus for all that was worth preserving in Gower. Significantly, such concern for Gower’s folk life has all but disappeared in the last two decades and today the Gower Society’s work is focussed more on nature conservation and promoting a sustainable economic future for the area.

Linda Ballard & Mark Kennedy Marketing Northern Ireland: Perception, culture and context

Mark & Linda’s papers took us from the early marketing of Northern Ireland to present day perceptions. Mark began this historical tour by introducing us to some early marketing techniques used during the nineteenth century.

What was later to become Northern Ireland was included on the itinerary of the upper-classes who were largely attracted by the hunting, shooting, fishing and music. On their return home a number of them published their diaries, so generating more publicity for the delights of Northern Ireland.

The late eighteenth century saw tourist books and maps published which provided detailed routes from one town to another. Along the way stately homes were pointed out as those travelling would likely know the residents. Such travel guides proved very popular.

All forms of available transport were taken advantage of, canals enabling the traveller to cross Ireland in one day and the 4-wheeled jaunting carts transporting people and luggage in the South of Ireland. Later railways provided feeder routes from the steamers.

As the railways grew in popularity and accessibility they made good profits very quickly. This money was ploughed back into the company as evidenced by the elegant stations that appeared and later, grand station hotels and steamships.

By the late nineteenth century a cycling craze was sweeping the country, though due to the relatively high cost of the cycles this was largely restricted to the middle classes. Cycles proved popular not least because they were hugely liberating for women who could go out together or even alone. Marketing techniques included posters and timetables using traditional landscapes, seascapes and ruined castles. Many of these posters (which have become collectors items in their own right) followed fashion, so poster-paint colours might feature, along with Art Deco style.

Very soon familiar names like Thomas Cook began developing excursion trains. By 1900 railways dominated the transport industry and so became a ‘lynch-pin’ between the train and boat travel. In addition railway companies helped to build golf courses such as that at Portrush. Hoteliers took advantage of the huge popularity of the railways and so worked with them, one even commissioned his own train so that guests staying in his hotel were treated to special day trips in his train.

After partition (1921) advertising posters depicted only Northern Ireland with the South nowhere to be seen. Of course the south was now viewed as a competitor.

Mark concluded his wonderfully illustrated ‘guided tour’ in the late 1930s which saw the railway companies developing the Ro-Ro (roll-on roll-off) services which opened up the tourist market still further by including the motorist.

Linda brought the presentation up to date as she spoke about tourism in the 20th and 21st century in Northern Ireland which by now was trying to open itself up again. She drew our attention to the Rope

The question was raised as to whether Maney’s leaflets are just advertising the journal, or are they recruitment leaflets? The point was made in return that producing our own recruitment leaflets was simply not cost effective as we do not get the return in extra members. Perhaps the answer was a downloadable leaflet as a PDF attached to the website. A discussion then followed as to ways to promote the Society, publicising events through the website etc. This however was felt to be increasing Heather’s workload. Sarah Blowen had a couple of years ago made a valuable suggestion of targeting university departments with relevant courses. Ultimately more senior members of the Society should try to encourage younger members of staff with whom they work to join, and also to come to the conference if possible.

Conference Secretary’s report

Steph Mastoris reported that so far there had been no adverse comments at all about the conference. Feedback sheets were in packs and he asked for these to be completed. Steph thanked the Trustees and staff of Manx National Heritage for making everyone feel so welcome.

Looking ahead the next conference is at Weald & Downland Museum in 2010. Steph reported that papers had started to trickle in for this. The theme was at the moment mainly agricultural but perhaps something could be included on seaside vernacular. The conference would be based at West Dean, the home of Edward James. Steph also expressed concern that at the moment there was no local secretary. This was vitally important as the Isle of Man conference had shown as it would have been impossible to organise without someone ‘on the ground’. We perhaps need to approach John Williams-Davies or Richard Harris.

For 2011 the Society was now considering returning to the north of England. York had been suggested. We had not been there for 30 years. We have an active member in York in Rob Shorland-Ball. We would not need to be tied to the University. The Quilters Guild have facilities, they are keen to encourage more people to be involved and this would help to build a textiles strand into the conference. Another possible theme was historic interiors, and it might be worth talking to York Castle museum.

For Manchester 2012 Eddie reported that many of the potential venues and hotels were within easy walking distance across the city. Eddie has already approached a number of local historians to give papers and Quarry Bank Mill could provide an interesting excursion.

Scotland was still mooted for 2013, with the focus on the Highlands. The possibility was raised of basing the conference in the northern Isles – a precedent existed as we had been to Jersey. This would require a local representative and John Baldwin suggested himself or possibly someone from UHI. If the conference was based in the Highlands the Highland Folk Museum might be a venue.

Suggestions for a venue for 2014 included Derry, for which there was much enthusiasm from Irish members, there was also a Department of Folklore at McGill so there would be interest there. The Welsh Marches was also suggested as a future venue.

The Society thanked Steph for all his hard work in organising the conferences each year. Matthew in particular thanked him for his help and guidance in organising the 2009 event and for taking much pressure off his shoulders by handling bookings.

Election of Officers

All of the Officers were happy to continue to serve and were endorsed by the meeting en bloc.

Three members of council were due to retire and thus unable to stand for re-election. The President thanked those members for their contribution. Nominations had been received for new members of the Council:

Dylan Jones
John Williams-Davies
Cozette Griffin-Kremer
Liam Campbell

The acceptance of these appointments was proposed by John Baldwin, seconded by Catherine Wilson. Accepted by the meeting.

Presidents Report

The President began her address by explaining that her only duty thus far as President had been to attend the January officers meeting. However it had been a difficult year for her both personally and professionally as all members were aware, and she thanked members of the society for the messages of support which she had received.

Treasurer's Report:

The annual financial report was provided by the Treasurer, Duncan Dornan, who reported that the Society was in a good position financially. The balance currently stands at £12,040 so we are about £5000 better off than at the same point last year. The Killarney conference was the most profitable in the history of the Society. Roughly speaking the income of the Society excluding the conference was about £4000, and its annual expenditure excluding conference was about £1600. The Treasurers report was proposed as correct by Eddie Cass, seconded by David Viner. The report was accepted by the meeting.

Editors' Reports

Linda Ballard, editor of Folk Life, reported that the new arrangements with Maney's were working very successfully. Maney's are doing a good job for us, doing a superb job of circulating leaflets, and they had also taken on a lot of the costs of producing Folk Life. Next year we move to two numbers a year. It cannot always be guaranteed that articles will appear in the order in which they are received, this is because of the process of peer review, also the number of pages in an article and size of photographs are factors in the layout of each issue. Space has also been set aside in the next issue for an obituary for Geraint Jenkins.

In terms of content, we are in a strong position, with a lot of material waiting in the wings. The editor paid tribute to the work of Cozette Griffin-Kremer who does a fantastic job with the reviews, and to the work of everyone who is involved in the production of the journal. Maney's have agreed that they will meet with the officers of the society once a year. Last year Linda & Eddie Cass alone met them in London but it has now been agreed that Maney's will attend the early part of the January Officers Meeting.

Authors now receive PDF versions of the journal rather than hard copy. Due to the provision of online access, Maney's can monitor the hits and see which areas are most popular.

Elaine Edwards, editor of the newsletter, now reported that it was around 20 pages in extent and in full colour. We are now able to do this at more or less the same cost as it was previously produced in black & white. All of those which Elaine had brought with her to the Isle of Man had gone, with requests for more. The early spring dispatch date depends entirely on early submission of articles, particularly reviews of conference papers, which was why the 15 November deadline for submission was so critical. Just one late review holds up the entire Newsletter. As always, Elaine was open to any suggestions or new ideas for the Newsletter.

Website Officer's Report

Heather Holmes was not present but had sent in a written report which was read out by the President. The point was raised that the subscription for the website was now due but it would probably be a straightforward renewal. There is presently no link on the website to Maney's for institutional renewal. Linda Ballard agreed to liaise with Heather about this. The President agreed to relay the thanks of the Society to Heather for her work with the website.

Secretary's Report

Matthew Richardson reported that his duties as Secretary has been slightly neglected due to the volume of work which had come about as a result of organising the 2009 conference, but that he hoped to be more efficient in the role in the future. That said, no major items of Society business had come his way in the year in which he had been Secretary. The President thanked him for his work.

Membership Secretary's Report

Seb Littlewood sent his apologies, he was at an agricultural event in County Durham. He reported however that there were now 184 paid up members, but Seb now only deals with individual subscriptions. Institutional members are now dealt with by Maney's.

Bridge which suggested that 'folk life was being adapted for tourism' and discussed 'economics v. authenticity' in tourism.

'Signature' projects too are being worked on such as the 'walled city of Londonderry' and the 'Titanic' (In spite of there being almost nothing left of the 'Titanic' shipyard) But one could question whether money should be made out of this sort of thing e.g. WWI Battlefield tours.

Tourism of course is nothing new. Pilgrimage tourism has been around for centuries. It is perhaps perceptions that have changed. The Smithsonian Folk Life Festival is a good example of differing perceptions, seen by some as an economic opportunity, yet by others as an educational tool. It is of course both.

Linda concluded by mentioning the 'Peace line tours'. These are tours of murals painted around the peace talks & legislation of 1998 and 2002 moving away from the times of conflict.

But no matter which side of the border you're from or the religious or political divide come 17th March 'everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's day!' though Linda added 'seemingly inclusive!' Discuss...

Elaine M Edwards

Dafydd Roberts

"A Narrow Swathe of English eccentricity" : the reopening of the Talyllyn and Ffestiniog Railways

Ask anyone today what to look out for on a holiday to Wales and you will surely be told to visit and enjoy a trip on one of the great little trains of Wales. North Wales is blessed with a variety of heritage railways based on the former slate quarry industry connecting the quarries to ports allowing their produce to be delivered to customers. The best

known are the Talyllyn, Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland railways. The Welsh Highland is a recent development but the Talyllyn and Ffestiniog railways have been running as preserved working railways now for more than half a century.

Dafydd Roberts' research has been primarily new work into the preservation societies rather than the history of the original slate railways which has been exhaustively covered elsewhere. He discussed the international significance of these preservation societies, their history and the transition from an industrial concern to a heritage one.

The movement of slates by rail finished in 1946 when the quarries switched to road transport. This left the industrial railways without a *raison d'être*.

The Talyllyn railway became the first railway in the world to be rescued and preserved. The rescue was remarkable in that the work was carried out by volunteers. Perhaps more remarkable was that the railway was not rescued by locals but by outsiders, mainly from South East England.

Tom Rolt, an author who had done much to foster interest in the preservation of the British canal system, became the General Manager of the Talyllyn Railway. An English Nationalist, he believed in devolving power to the regions. Rolt was aware that he was in the midst of a Welsh speaking area and did his best to be sensitive to the local culture. He felt that there was a danger in allowing visitors' money to outweigh local needs. Initially the local people were not all in support of the railway, which was cast in the role of an alien occupying power. Rolt developed a principle of employing local people to operate and maintain the trains in the hope that this would help show the employment and wealth creation opportunities that the 'new' railway might bring over time. The initial group of 'Englishmen playing trains' has evolved over the intervening decades to become an integral part of local society and something of which Welsh people should be enormously proud.

Daffyd is to be congratulated on his pioneering research work in this area.

Mark Kennedy

Katie King
One of our Badgers is missing ... and other unlikely tales from the Manx Tourist Industry.

Katie described her paper as ‘A jovial look at the fun and frolics to be had on a seaside holiday on the Isle of Man.’ Whilst the paper was always entertaining, well illustrated and often with humorous asides, it was far more than the abstract would suggest.

It was the appointment of Sir Henry Loch as Lieutenant-Governor in 1863 which was to lead to a period of unprecedented growth and the great expansion of the Manx tourist industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Katie explained, Loch initiated the widening of the promenade at Douglas Bay using land reclaimed from the sea. This widening was followed by the building of hotels and boarding houses along the promenade, thus creating the architectural pattern which is a familiar part of Douglas. It was also under Loch’s guidance that the harbour at Douglas was deepened to allow access to larger vessels. When he left the island in 1882, Loch was thanked for, among other achievements, the ‘development of Douglas as a major tourist resort.’ From a period when visitors could be numbered in tens of thousands, Loch’s efforts lead to a growth of numbers to a peak of 634,000 in 1913. Most of these new visitors were from the wakes week holiday makers of the Lancashire cotton towns and the west coast of Scotland. Although there were gaps during the war years, visitor numbers remained at over 500,000 until the coming of the package holiday trade in the late 1950’s. Most of these visitors were of the respectable working class but that did not stop complaints. Where previously Mona had offered

domestic repose for the gentlemanly bon viveur, it now had to control the public saturnalian excesses of the working-class holiday-maker, lewd behaviour which, critics averred, placed summertime Douglas on par with ‘guilty Sodom’. Here, Belchem is quoting from Rev. Thomas Rippon’s sermon, *The Morals of Douglas* of 1894 which was first published as a pamphlet and later reprinted in the *Daily Mail*. Its only effect, Katie told us was to increase visitor numbers!

The visitors spent much time on the beaches and we were shown shots of crowded beaches which were a feature of many of the wakes seaside towns. Katie also told us that mixed bathing was not allowed in the early years until Port Jack decided to change the custom. One can imagine Rev. Rippon’s views. In order to provide alternatives to the beaches, there was the sea lion cage at Groudle Glen where visitors could watch the sea lions being fed. At Glen Helen, a zoo was established but a zoo whose animals were native species, it was this zoo which provided Katie with the title for her paper when she read a cutting which recorded the loss of one of the animals. Given that most of the visitors arrived as foot passengers on the ferries, it was the growth of the charabanc trade and the rail links which was to allow visitors to Douglas to enjoy such day trips to other parts of the island.

However, we were told, it was the evening entertainment which was to be the most contentious. A large proportion of the holiday makers were young, single folk who looked forward to spending their evenings dancing. The Palace & Derby Castle Company catered for this market with considerable success. By the 1920s, the company was able to boast that it could entertain the equivalent of the whole population of Douglas in its halls and theatres. Some of the dance floors were sufficiently sophisticated to have phones on the tables and Katie quoted from a diary of 1932 which records that an unknown young lady spent some time flirting on the phone with a certain Mr Johnson. She was clearly successful as the diary goes on to report ‘awful catastrophe in the cloakroom, my knicker elastic

Excursions



Looking across the Sound towards the Calf of Man.

This year’s conference schedule was packed with lots of excursions on various forms of transport.

After a morning spent in the 'classroom' listening to some first rate papers, by Friday afternoon we were itching to get a first hand look at some of the places mentioned in Yvonne Cresswell's paper. Lunchtime saw us set out on a coach tour of the Island, taking in some crab sandwiches at Niarbyl before heading over to the Laxey Wheel, the largest working waterwheel in Europe. Our guide Frank Cowin had given us a marvellous commentary and it was great to finally see this industrial marvel.

Steam train at Ballasalla station



Afterwards we took the recently restored Laxey Mines railway down to the old Laxey washing floors, and a cup of tea at Brown's cafe, before catching the last tram of the day from Laxey back to Douglas - the Isle of Man's Victorian electric railway is a treat for transport enthusiasts, but there was more in store!

After lunch on the Saturday (which was had in the marvellous surroundings of the Sound visitor centre, with its 180 degree window offering a fantastic view of the Calf of Man, the Islet to the south of the Isle of Man), we took in a lighting visit to Cregneash. The visit was too short to really do justice to such a site, but time was against us and before long it was back on the coach to rendezvous with the Island's steam railway at Ballasalla. After a brief tour of Manx National Heritage's large object store at Balthane, we caught the steam train heading north. We rattled along in original Victorian carriages for about half an hour before finally arriving back in Douglas.

Matthew Richardson

Minutes of the Society’s Annual General Meeting
Held at 9.45am on Sunday 20 September 2009 at the Claremont Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man.

Present: The President (Christine Stevens) and 20 members

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Cynthia Boyd, Heather Holmes, Paddy MacMonagle, David Jenkins, Liam Campbell, John Burnett, Seb Littlewood and Sarah Blowen.

Minutes of the last AGM

These had been printed in the Newsletter. It was proposed by Paul Coghlan that they be adopted by the meeting as a correct record. Seconded by Duncan Dornan. The minutes were duly adopted.

Sheila Cass Marge's Quilt



Sheila Cass's interesting lecture introduced the Society to Marjorie ('Marge') McCormick, quilter and 'tourist extraordinaire'. Until recently Marge, a Canadian, regularly attended meetings of the Quilters' Guild of the British Isles, where her small kindnesses made her a memorable delegate and ensured she had many friends. She and Sheila first met in 2001, and it turned out that Marge's antecedents hailed from Bolton, which is also home to another friend (Gillian Seal) who looked after Marge when she visited to trace her genealogy. Patchwork and quilting provide apt symbols for the way the network of friends developed and deepened.

In 2005, Marge attended the Quilters' Guild meeting in Llandudno, where her gift to each delegate was fabric to make a quilt block. Several people made up the blocks and the resulting quilt was raffled to raise money for the Guild's Heritage Fund. This helped to develop the Quilt Museum, which is now established in St Anthony's Hall in York. By this time, Marge was visiting England twice a year to attend events relating to quilting, but an unfortunate accident and resulting injury while in Leamington Spa meant that when she returned in 2008 she announced that this would be her last visit. On this occasion, her gift was a pattern for a 'Country Sampler' quilt to be made up of a variety of blocks and finished with a wide, appliquéd border. (A word or two of explanation may be useful at this stage for those who are less than familiar with quilting techniques. As Sheila

demonstrated, patchwork is the skill of piecing fabric together, quilting refers to decorative stitching that helps keep layers of fabric and filling together, while appliquéd relates to an applied design such as a flower head made from one or more pieces of fabric and sewn to the quilt ground).

Shortly afterwards, Gill suggested to members of Bolton Quilting Group that they might like to make 'Marge's Quilt.' Thirty members decided to do so, and Sheila brought three beautiful examples which were shown to the meeting with the assistance of a willing helper. Sheila also kindly allowed a closer look once her presentation was finished, so that the detail of the work could be fully appreciated. While each quilt was made using the same design concept, each was very different, demonstrating the individual approach of each quilter. While motifs such as chickens or hearts featured in blocks on each of the quilts, the difference in treatment was evident and the capacity for infinite variation on a theme was very clear.

Sheila's own beautiful and meticulously made version of the quilt gave an insight into her personal creative approach. For example, her variant of the pattern features superb quilting including decorative 'feather' shapes worked at the centre point on each border. Sheila explained, however, that she does not like to plan her work in great detail at the outset, as her ideas change while she creates each piece. The decorative quilting in this instance is an example, developing as a response to the work in progress rather than part of an original plan.

The paper provided a valuable insight into contemporary attitudes to a traditional craft skill and to the associated social and cultural issues. It also showed how a quilt pattern in a 'traditional' style inspired rather than restricted or imposed limitations on the resulting quilt. Showing the actual quilts also brought conference delegates into direct contact with material culture and facilitated appreciation of all facets of the subject.

Linda-May Ballard

gave way completely but Mr Johnson didn't seem to notice'. The Rev. Rippon, however didn't approve of the dance halls 'Douglas's dancing saloons are nothing more than a public mart for prostitution' he announced in his sermon, how he knew isn't recorded.

For this reviewer who spent two of his teenage holidays on the island in the mid nineteen-fifties, this was a very enlightening return to what was still an important destination for the wakes week holiday makers of Lancashire. The Isle of Man provided everything that the holiday maker could want, from romantic scenery to the day-time Ivy Benson and her all girls band at the Villa Marina and the evening entertainment at the dance halls. Katie's paper was a splendid reprise of these holidays.

Eddie Cass

Barry Edwards Vintage Transport of the Isle of Man

The conference programme included no less than three trips to savour at close quarters the historical significance of the preserved (and still very much in use) transport systems on the island. Vintage transport is one of Man's major draws for visitors, and delegates mingled with no shortage of late-season travellers in the September sunshine, firstly on the Manx Electric Railway back to Douglas from Laxey, and later by the Isle of Man Steam Railway from Ballasalla back into town. 'North by Electric' and 'South by Steam' is the marketing slogan.

A further option was the short run on the Laxey Mines Railway, the oldest surviving system and now restored as an integral part of the visitor experience at the Laxey Wheel monument. Whilst there, was I also the only one looking longingly at the Snaefell Mountain Railway tramcar at its Laxey terminus and pondering a trip up the mountain too?

All this 'visitor experience' was neatly and comprehensively put into context for us by Barry Edwards' presentation which covered all the principal services on the island, his talk offered with all the statistical information which transport activists and historians regard as *de rigueur*. As a leading member of the Manx Transport Museum project, and an author on the island's tramways, railways and indeed its particular airline history, Barry's knowledge was obvious.

He showed us how the systems developed, projects for a steam railway dating from the early 1860s. The line from Douglas to Peel, the island's two principal conurbations, opened in 1873, followed a year later by the route southwards to Castletown and Port Erin. This latter still runs, complete with original locomotives and carriages. To recreate the closed Peel route may be only a pipedream but would be an obvious 'green' link within the island's network.

Over a period of three decades from the 1860s, a number of other projects were developed, including the Douglas horse-drawn tramway opened in 1876 along the esplanade, which runs to this day in the hands of Douglas Corporation (albeit alas just beyond the end of its season when we visited).

The Electric Railway opened in 1893, completed to its northern terminus at Ramsey in 1899. Between times the mountain railway opened to immediate success in 1895. Other routes were described and the story brought up to date, including the fight-back against decline and potential closure and the promotional benefit of a string of centenaries, encouraging modern management and marketing approaches to make the best of the recent financial investment which our visits had allowed us to see and enjoy.

David Viner

Wendy Thirkettle
The history and heritage of the Isle of Man as a film location

This fascinating paper, accompanied by both film and archive photo illustrations, was at the heart of the conference theme dealing with heritage and tourism. Wendy clearly showed how the potentially many levels of interpretation are attentively utilized by the Manx Film industry, which offers film-makers financial support, an experienced workforce, studio and sets and, above all, a great variety of landscapes. This particular point of how the industry attempts to create a sense of “being there”, an “authenticity” that is the product of meticulous construction, was especially brought home to us by the fact that Cregneash, Niarbyl, the Laxey Wheel and other highpoints of conference visits are enshrined in fiction films, at times meant to represent quite “other” locations, from Ireland to the Caribbean. The history of documentary films concerning the island includes those on the renowned Isle of Man TT (Tourist Trophy) motorcycle races (check out www.iomtt.com/).

The island’s assets as a film location were recognized early on by the colourful novelist Hall Caine, who deftly inserted himself into the novel + play + screenplay loop and Man was deeply involved in propaganda films as early as WWI. Today, all the film arts are encouraged by school programmes, the Young Film-maker competition and a Film Festival. “Freedom to flourish” funding has penetrated all island life and a reciprocal involvement of the community recalls that folk life scenes were staged for films even in the late 1920s, such as a wedding charivari - a most intriguing connection between the Society’s interests and cinema industry demands for the “local”. There is a fine survey of films shot since the mid-1990s online for the curious (www.isleofmanfilm.com/) with much information about technical details. Indeed, Wendy emphasized the careful archive work that surrounds and follows up on film-making and the deep commitment of Manx National Heritage to integrating the promotion of the film industry with

local understanding of heritage. Incidentally, this presentation dovetailed remarkably with Brian Loughbrough’s comments about the “sublime landscape” and how we have often unwittingly “educated” ourselves to see the land, or Steph Mastoris’ reminder that the rural landscape has become a “foil” to the industrial one in our perceptions of “heritage”.

Cozette Griffin-Kremer

Members’ papers

David Viner
‘A Tangled Network of Country Prejudices’

This presentation, an overview of both past and work to date on the documentation of primarily British farm vehicles but especially carts was introduced by the title, a quote from George Sturt who in 1923 published the seminal ‘The Wheelwright’s Shop’. In essence, the statement can be interpreted as reflecting the diverse local distinctiveness and traditions relating to one of the most significant artefacts of rural material culture.

In his presentation, David acknowledged that the resource, the pool of knowledge about farm vehicles was collective rather than held by any one individual and that the studies that had been done stretched back forty years or more. And yet, the resource is more than non-material for there is a substantial resource in the surviving material culture for which the question persists as to what we need to do, acknowledging space and resources issues, to ensure the survival of elements that reflect both the diversity and the related traditions. One of David’s expressed aims was to ensure that more people do care.

David spoke about his work towards a National Register of Traditional Farm Wagons and Carts, the basis of a Distributed National Collection. This work had been advanced by listing collections held

within museum collections and extended to some private collections. An issue with the latter was that vehicles were often subject to restoration, use and distribution to other areas often through sales and often before they had been otherwise documented.

As implied though, other issues were raised by the associated non-material knowledge and in particular by the documentation of the survival, usage and application of terminology relating to such as construction, styles and operation. This of course has local, regional and national implications and David referred to the work of the late James Arnold who did much to add to the records. To try and illustrate the complexity of this, if I was to give one example from personal experience, what I learned in the Cambridgeshire Fenland village of Benwick to call a ‘tumbriel’, a heavy traditional form of cart and predecessor to a version of the introduced ‘Scotch Cart’, was called five miles away ‘as the crow flies’ a ‘Chatteris Cart’ because it was associated locally there with the town of the same name. However, perhaps confusingly, in essence both are the same thing.

This great overall national diversity David went on to demonstrate. First, through the medium of information made available such as photographic often nostalgic post cards with a given or able to be confirmed provenance (See the photograph included where the provenance was confirmed after high resolution scanning by the name on the side of the cart). Secondly, such as ‘long’, ‘platform’ and ‘stiff’ carts illustrated not only by his own researches but also informed by examples from other records such as 1950s notebooks compiled by T.A. Brew on the Isle of Man and unpublished details made by James Arnold.

I found David’s presentation of great interest but then again I am somewhat biased. This is a huge subject and in David’s own words representing ‘increasingly a rare breed’ for which I would support the contention that the study of and that an objective, rational approach to preservation

deserves more resources applied while there is the opportunity. Repeating and stating the obvious, as with many of the other areas of rural and folk history that we are interested in, the opportunities for access to first-hand user knowledge are diminishing fast and we need to embrace them now.

If I have a final comment to make, I am delighted that David in addition to all his other work has in effect taken on the mantle of ‘Cart & Wagon’ documenter and historian; following from the likes of James Arnold. And if I may I would like to commend readers to David’s ‘Shire Album’ ‘Wagons & Carts’ published in 2008.

Bob Powell



To illustrate one of the cart varieties presented by David Viner, this is a ‘Hermaphrodite Cart’ based on a ‘Scotch Cart’ photographed in the early 1900s. It belonged to Charles Clarke (born 1872), farmer, of West Willoughby, Grantham, Lincolnshire.

(Photograph: Bob Powell Collection)