The Society for Folk Life Studies

**Annual Conference**

**Biggar, South Lanarkshire, Scotland**

* 1. **September 2022**

*\* Power to the People \**

The conference venue is **Biggar & Upper Clydesdale Museum,**

156 High Street. Biggar, ML12 6DH

The conference accommodation is at:

The Kirk Style Hotel 72 High Street, Biggar ML12 6BJ

([The Kirkstyle Hotel, Biggar | Homepage](https://www.kirkstylehotel.com/))

and

The Elphinstone Hotel

145 High Street, Biggar, ML12 6DL

[www.elphinstonehotel.co.uk](http://www.elphinstonehotel.co.uk)

**PROGRAMME**

[Draft at :15-08-2022]

*Please note:*

The **Annual General Meeting** of the Society for Folk Life Studies

will now take place on-line on **Thursday 29 September at 18.00hrs** (UK time).

Papers and joining details will be circulated after the conference.

**THURSDAY 8 September**

*17:00 - 18:30 Registration at* The Elphinstone Hotel

*18:30 – 20:00 Dinner at* The Crown *(tbc)*

20:00-20.30 **Lecture 1**

David S Forsyth (formerly National Museums Scotland)

***The power of the object***

[Summary to be circulated]

**FRIDAY, 9 September**

*09.30 Assemble at Biggar Museum, 156 High Street, Biggar*

09.35-09.40Steph Mastoris(President, Society for Folk Life Studies)

***Welcome to the 2022 annual conference***

09.45-10.00 Elaine Edwards (Biggar & Upper Clydesdale Museum)

***Welcome to Biggar***

10.00-10.45 **Lecture 2**.

Janice Kirkpatrick (Designer and activist)

***Powering Ahead: the continuing story of the Clydesdale horse***

[Summary to be circulated]

*10.45-11.15 Coffee*

11.15-12.00 **Lecture 3**

John Burnett (formerly Nation Museums Scotland)

***Celebrating the Work, Celebrating the People: public utilities in South Lanarkshire***

[Summary to be circulated]

12.00-12:45 **Lecture 4**

Stefan Sagrott, (Historic Environments Scotland)

***Gas!*** (working title)

[Summary to be circulated]

*13:00 – 14:00 Lunch at* **The Coffee Spot***, Biggar*

14.15-1700 **Excursion 1**

Biggar Museum and environs

*18.30 – 20.00 Dinner at the* Elphinstone Hotel*, Biggar*

20:00 Claudia Kinmonth (Independent researcher and consultant curator)

***Joining in Butter to fill a Firkin: Identifying the hand tools of Irish butter making using the Dash Churn, up to c.1900.***

Always interested in researching previously neglected areas, Claudia's most recent research, sheds light on techniques of Irish butter making before 1880. The Irish have been raising cattle and making butter from their milk and cream for about four thousand years. But until now, no-one had researched the techniques used by women on small, primitive farms, making butter using simple ‘dash churns’. This paper attempts a typology of the varied range of small hand tools and implements, which may potentially act as a touchstone for museum collections.These tools were made and repaired by coopers and turners. While reading manuscripts from The Irish Folklore Commision, the curious ways women collaborated to maximise profit from their butter was discovered, and will be discussed and illustrated. Called 'Joining in Butter' this enhances an appreciation of the importance of Irish Farm women, so often overlooked in rural history.

Since the pandemic, Claudia's field-studies have been curtailed, but her recent book has resulted in new material popping up on social media, from museums and via her disparate new research At the end of the talk some newly discovered objects will be shown, if time permits.

**SATURDAY, 10 September**

*09.30 Assemble at Biggar Museum*

09:45 – 10:30 **Lecture 5**

Neil Johnson-Symington (Glasgow Museums)

***The Albion Motor Company***

[Summary to be circulated]

10.30 - 11.15  **Lecture 6**

Heather Holmes (Independent researcher)

***Power and innovation: Lanarkshire agricultural implement and machines makers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries***

Lanarkshire had a number of noted implement and machine makers. They include James Wilkie of Uddingston, James Gray & Co., Uddingston, Charles Weir of Strathaven, and William Dickie of East Kilbride. This paper examines the importance the implement and machine makers in Lanarkshire – and especially the areas outwith Glasgow itself – as innovators and leaders in the making of these manufactures. It looks at the character of the makers, what was innovative about their manufactures, what they were making and the implements and machines that they were renowned at making. The period of focus is from the late eighteenth century onwards, with an emphasis on the mid nineteenth century to early twentieth century.

*11:15 – 11:45 Coffee*

11.45 - 12.30 **Lecture 6**

David Eveleigh (Independent researcher and consultant curator)

***Old ways, old things – When connoisseurship discovered ‘Ordinary Folk’***

*(Folk life collecting etc., Part 2)*

This paper examines the rise in interest in the recording and collecting of traditional folk life material from the mid-nineteenth century. It looks at how intellectuals, aesthetes, artists and writers –people like John Ruskin, William Morris and Gertrude Jekyll - who were conscious they were educated and upper class - came to find something important and special – and therefore, worth promoting and preserving in the traditional rural and household lives of ordinary ‘folk’, both ‘the way’s (intangible) and the’ old things’ (the tangible).

***Excursion 2***

*12.30* Travel to Leadhills Mining Museum

*Lunch on arrival followed by tour of the mine, museum & historic library*

*18.00 Return to Biggar*

*19.00-20.30 Dinner* *at the* **Barony Restaurant**, *Biggar*

20:30 **Entertainment** at the Elphinstone Hotel

*The Mighty Joes*

**Sunday, 11 September**

*09.45 Assemble at Biggar Museum*

10.00-10.45 **Lecture 7**

Steph Mastoris (Amgueddfa Cymru-Museum Wales)

***Fifty-two things a year on Facebook: Interpreting material culture through social media***

Despite its reputation for promoting angry people’s opinions, fake news, and endless images of food and pets, social media is increasingly being used to interpret museum collections and other material culture. This presentation will discuss a variety of these initiatives before reviewing Steph’s own modest contributions on Facebook over the past five years.

10.45-11.30 **Lecture 8**

Jim Ness (Clydesdale Mills Society)

***The Lost Mills of South Lanarkshire***

[Summary to be circulated]

11.30-11.40 *Concluding remarks and thanks*

11.45 **Buffet Lunch** at Biggar Museum

*End of conference*