

WELLCOME TRUST PROGRAMME AWARD

**DISABILITY AND INDUSTRIAL
SOCIETY: A COMPARATIVE
CULTURAL HISTORY OF BRITISH
COALFIELDS, 1780-1948**

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

1 October 2012 – 30 September 2013

1. Introduction

Disability and Industrial Society: A Comparative Cultural History of British Coalfields, 1780-1948 is funded over five years by a Wellcome Trust Programme Award of £972,501. In the application for the project, we promised to provide the Advisory Board with an Annual Report. As the project moves into its third year, we present the Second Annual Report for the period 1 October 2012 to 30 September 2013.

2. Staffing

On 1 October 2012, two research fellows and one PhD student joined the project team in Swansea:

- Dr Daniel Blackie is working on the period 1780-1880 under the mentorship of Dr David Turner in the Department of History and Classics , College of Arts and Humanities;
- Dr Mike Mantin is working on the period 1880-1948 under the mentorship of Professor Anne Borsay in the Department of Inter-professional Studies, College of Human and Health Sciences; and
- Alexandra Rees is working on a thesis examining disability in coalfield literature under the supervision of Dr Kirsti Bohata, Department of English, College of Arts and Humanities.

Dan, Mike and Alex are all funded for three years and are working alongside the three research associates appointed for three years from 1 October 2011:

- Dr Ben Curtis for the South Wales Coalfield under the mentorship of Dr Steve Thompson at Aberystwyth University;
- Dr Angie Turner for the Scottish Coalfield under the mentorship of Professor Arthur McIvor; and
- Dr Victoria Brown for the North East Coalfield under the mentorship of Dr Vicky Long of Glasgow Caledonian University.

At the beginning of the project, Victoria was located at Northumbria University and jointly mentored by Professor Don MacRaild at Northumbria and Dr Long. Following Professor MacRaild's move to the University of Ulster early in 2013, it was agreed to transfer

Victoria's contract to Glasgow Caledonian University. We are grateful to both universities for their co-operation in achieving this outcome.

3. Training

The project is using a CAQDAS [Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analyses Software] package called NVivo to manage the primary sources being collected. Training and consultation is being delivered by Dr Paul Nash in Swansea University's Centre for Innovative Ageing. The South Wales Team attended a course at the beginning of the project and this was repeated in December 2011 during the Full Team meeting in Swansea.

The course was also undertaken by the research fellows and the PhD student in October 2012 and there was a follow-up session in March 2013. Other members of the South Wales project team also attended these sessions.

The following training courses have also been taken at Swansea University:

Dan Blackie

Diversity in the Workplace, July 2013.

Mike Mantin

An Introduction to Quantitative Data, November 2012.

Writing Grant Proposals, November 2012.

Public Engagement, September 2013.

Alex Rees

Departmental courses: Graduate Centre Induction Event, October 2012.

Research Interviews, Part 1, October 2012.

Personal Planning Roadmap, Part 1, November 2012.

Postdoctoral Funding for Arts and Humanities Students, April 2013.

University courses: What ISS Can Do For You, October 2012.

 Endnote, October 2012.

 Getting Published, December 2012.

Alex was also chosen for a Heritage Skills Programme Knowledge Exchange Placement at Big Pit, with visits to the South Wales Miners' Museum and the Collections Centre at Nantgarw. This took place between 28 January and 1 February 2013 and was organized by the University's Research Institute for `Arts and Humanities.

4. Work Programmes

The task of producing a comparative cultural history of the British coal industry is a big intellectual challenge. Our research question – How important was industrialization in shaping conceptions and experiences of disability? – requires us to address at least four key themes:

- The effects of economic development and technological change;
- The role of medical and welfare services;
- The influence of politics, trade unionism and social relations; and
- The implications of these historical factors for the literary genre of coalfield narrative.

To tackle these themes effectively, we expanded the milestones listed in the original application to include start as well as finish dates, and developed systematic work programmes for the research associates and the research fellows to cover academic outputs and public engagement as well as source collection.

The main task of the research fellows during their first year was to locate and process national primary sources. Therefore, after a month of individual reading designed to fill key gaps in their historiographical knowledge, they began to consult legislation, Hansard, national newspapers and periodicals, contemporary books and articles, and material at the National Archives including records relating to the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organization, friendly societies, the Home Office, the National Coal Board, the poor law and the Privy Council. This work is now complete.

The main task of the research associates during their second year was to locate and process primary sources in their respective coalfields relating to companies and coal owners associations, friendly societies and co-operative societies, disability and charity organizations, religious and women's organizations and newspapers. This work is now complete.

The PhD student has made excellent progress in scoping the literature of the three coalfields for texts which feature disability. Her work is supervised according to the University's policy for research degrees.

The same approach to work programmes will be adopted in subsequent years.

5. Website and Publicity

The operation of the project website was part of the research fellows' job description. Therefore, after their appointment, work began on design and development, with the assistance of Waters Creative in Swansea and Simon Proffitt of Green Land Design who produced the logo and banner which have become our hallmark. We are grateful to them for their help.

The website was launched early in 2013 and continues to grow (www.dis-ind-soc.org.uk). As well as showcasing the activities of the project, it is becoming a resource for the relationship between disability and industrialization, and indeed for disability history as a whole. The website has Twitter and Facebook pages which are updated regularly. Between 22 May (when the Analytics page was set up) and 30 September 2013, there were 505 unique visitors.

A publicity flyer in English and in Welsh and business cards have also been produced during the course of the year.

A poster for the literature PhD was designed and work began on one for the project as a whole.

6. Conferences, seminars and workshops

Team members have been active in presenting at conferences, seminars and workshops – internationally, nationally and regionally.

International

- a) European Association for the History of Medicine and Health, ‘Risk and Disease in Medicine and Health’, Lisbon, September 2013.

Panel session: ‘Disability and Risk in the British Coal Mining Industry, c.1800-1947’ -
Chair, Anne Borsay

Victoria Long and Victoria Brown, ‘Mutual Interest or Distrust? Managing the Risk of Injury in the Nineteenth-Century Coalfields of North-East England’.

Angela Turner and Arthur McIvor, ‘Shattered Bodies: Risk, Disability and Compensation in the Scottish Coalfields, 1897-1930’.

Ben Curtis, ‘The South Wales Miners’ Federation and the Perception and Representation of Risk and Danger in the Coal Industry, 1898-1947’.

- b) Social Science History Association, Annual Conference, Vancouver, Canada, November 2012.

Angela Turner and Arthur McIvor, ‘The Body, Gender and Disability in the Scottish Coalfields, c.1820-1870’.

- c) Centre Historique Minier, ‘International Colloquium: Machines and Men – The Emergence and Implementation of Technical Innovations in Coal Mines’, Lewarde, France, November 2012.

Ben Curtis, ‘Industrial Injury and Mining Technology in the South Wales Coalfield, c.1880-1947’.

- d) Nordic Network for Disability Research Conference, Turku, Finland, May 2013.

Daniel Blackie, ‘Disability and Poor Relief in the British Coalmining Industry, 1780-1880’.

- e) ‘VariAbilities: A History and Representation of the Body and Its Diversity’, Emory University, Atlanta, July 2013.

Victoria Brown, 'Rendered Incapable of Use: Competing Definitions of Disability amongst Coal Miners in the North East of England, 1862-1936'.

- f) 'Interdisciplinary Conference on Miners and Silica', Sciences Po University, Paris, France, September 2013.

Arthur McIvor, 'Miners, Silica and Disability: The Bi-National Interplay between South Africa and the United Kingdom, c.1900-1940'.

National

- a) Medical Humanities Research Network, 'Workshop on Dependency', Glasgow University, February 2013.

Vicky Long, 'Rethinking Narratives of Disability and Industrialization in British Coalfields, c.1780-1948'.

- b) British Society for Science and Literature, Annual Conference, Cardiff University, April 2013.

Alexandra Rees, "'The Rest of His Body Was Imperfect": Representations of Disability in the Coalfields Literature of South Wales'.

- c) 'Accidents and Emergencies: Risk, Welfare and Safety in Europe and North America, c.1750-2000', Oxford Brookes University, September 2013.

Mike Mantin, 'Emergency and Welfare: Coalmining, Disability and the Poor Law, 1880-1926'.

- d) Centre for Culture and Disability Studies, International Conference on Disability, Culture and Education, 'Avoidance And/In the Academy', Liverpool Hope University, September 2013.

Alexandra Rees, 'The Disability Paradox: Presence and Absence in British Coalfields, Literature, 1900-1948'.

Regional

- a) Halloween Postgraduate English Student Event, Swansea University, October 2012.

Alexandra Rees (with Georgia Burdett), 'The Diversity of Disability: Two Studies on the Cultural Evolution of Impairment in Welsh Writing in English'.

- b) History of Medicine Sources Workshop: Research and Teaching Potential, Cardiff University, November 2012.

Anne Borsay, 'Disability in South Wales and Beyond'.

- c) Postgraduate Symposium, Cardiff University, June 2013.

Alexandra Rees, 'From "Jack-y-Bandy" to "Charlie the Cripple": Disability and Identity in South Wales Coalfield Literature, 1900-1948'.

- d) British Science Festival, 'How Your Ancestors Died', Newcastle City Library, September 2013.

Victoria Brown, 'Nineteenth-Century Coalmining-Related Deaths in the North East'.

Daniel Blackie and Mike Mantin have had their paper proposals accepted for the next meeting of the European Social Science History Association in Vienna in April 2014. Proposals have also been submitted to the conferences of the American Association for the History of Medicine, the Society for the Social History of Medicine, the Social History Society and the European Association for Urban History.

7. Publications

Three articles were scheduled for submission in 2012/13.

"'A Plentiful Crop of Cripples Made By All This Progress': Disability, Artificial Limbs and Working-Class Mutualism in the South Wales Coalfield, 1890-1948', by Ben Curtis and Steven Thompson, has been accepted for publication by *Social History of Medicine*. The referees were extremely positive, only very minor amendments were recommended, and the editors are keen for the article to appear as soon as possible.

'Disabled by medico-industrial politics? Miners' Nystagmus, c.1913-1939', by Victoria Long and Victoria Brown, will be submitted to *History Workshop Journal* by the end of 2013.

‘Damaged Bodies: Gender, Disability and Coalmining in Scotland, 1830-1870’, by Arthur McIvor and Angela Turner, will be submitted to *Scottish Historical Review* by the end of November 2013.

A shorter version of this paper, ‘Damaged Bodies: Gender in the Scottish Coalfields in the Mid-Nineteenth Century’, was due to appear in *Santé et travail á la mine, XIXe-XXe siècles*, in Judith Rainhorn, ed. (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, September 2013).

‘“Bottom Dog Men”: Compensation and Disability in the Scottish Coalfields, 1898-1939’, by Arthur McIvor and Angela Turner, will be submitted to *Disability and Society* early in 2014.

In addition, Ben Curtis has a forthcoming book chapter and a forthcoming article associated with the project, both of which are based on conferences.

‘Accident de travail et technologie d’extraction dans le bassin minier du Sud du pays de Galles, 1880-1947 [Industrial injury and mining technology in the south Wales coalfield, c.1880-1947]’, in *Des Machines et des Hommes: émergence et mise en oeuvre des innovations techniques dans les mines de charbon / Machines and Men: The emergence and implementation of technical innovations in coal mines* (Lewarde: Centre Historique Minier, forthcoming 2013).

‘The South Wales Miners’ Federation and the Perception and Representation of Risk and Danger in the Coal Industry, 1898–1947’, *Morgannwg: The Journal of Glamorgan History*, vol. 57 (forthcoming 2014).

Ben also wrote a public engagement piece to publicize the South Wales Roadshow in March 2013: ‘The Price of Coal’, *Your Family History*, March 2013, 66-67.

Team members also have a number commissioned chapters and draft articles in progress.

Edited Roadshow presentations given by members of the South Wales team will appear in *Llafur: Journal of Welsh People’s History*, vol. 11, no. 2 (forthcoming 2013).

8. Grant Applications

The Work Programme for 2012/13 included eight weeks in August and September for the research associates to work on grant applications in collaboration with their mentors with a

view to securing funding when their contracts end on 30 September 2014. Three research proposals have emerged from this process and are at varying stages of development.

- Ben Curtis and Steve Thompson have identified ‘Disability and the Labour Movement in Twentieth-Century Britain’ as their theme, focusing on coal, steel and the railways. They are planning to submit a preliminary application to the Leverhulme Trust.
- Victoria Brown and Vicky Long are drafting an Investigator Award for the Wellcome Trust looking at ‘Maddening Work: Understanding Work-Related Mental Disorder in Britain, 1885-1985’.
- Angela Turner and Arthur McIvor wish to undertake ‘An Oral History of Disability in the Coalfields of Post-War Britain, 1945-1984’. They will apply for a small grant from the British Academy to pump prime a larger application to the AHRC.

9. Public Engagement

The public engagement activities of the project are overseen by a Panel comprising the South Wales team plus four members of the Advisory Board: Steph Mastoris (National Waterfront Museum), Elwyn Williams (National Library of Wales), Elisabeth Bennett (Richard Burton Archives, Swansea University) and Sian Williams (South Wales Miners’ Library, Swansea University). We are grateful for their valuable contributions.

Roadshows

The Panel met on four occasions in 2012/13: October, January, March and June. During the first six months of the year, most of its energy was spent on planning the **Roadshow**, which took place on Saturday 23 March 2013 at the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea. This was a great success. The programme consisted of short talks and performances, a panel discussion and stalls, and BSL translation was provided. Visitor numbers were up: in the previous five Saturdays, the average number of visits was 973 but on 23 March it was 1, 213. Though the response rate for feedback forms was poor, audiences were responsive and enthusiastic. For further information, please see the Roadshow Report circulated with papers for the Advisory Board and Steph Mastoris’ blog on the project website (www.dis-ind-soc.org.uk/en/blog.htm).

Plans are now underway for Roadshows in the north east and in Scotland. The North East Roadshow will be held at Woodhorn Museum in June 2014 to coincide with the popular annual Miners' Picnic. The Scottish Roadshow will be held at the National Mining Museum just outside Edinburgh also in June 2014.

Professional Workshops

After the Roadshow, the South Wales Public Engagement Panel turned its attention to the project's second public engagement event: the **Professional Workshop**, which will be held on Wednesday 2 April at the National Waterfront Museum. The main target audiences are health and social care professionals and students, together with interested archivists and librarians.

In the North East, the Professional Workshop is being organized in collaboration with staff and students at Northumbria University. In Scotland, it will take the form of a Witness Seminar, with the Scottish NUM President, a CISWO representative and a disabled ex-miner on the panel and an audience of 15 invited practitioners, historians and disability studies experts.

The Scottish team has established an Advisory Board for the Roadshow and the Professional Workshop, which includes National Mining Museum staff; representatives of CISWO, RCAHMS and STUC; disability studies academics from Glasgow University; and local musicians. Two meetings have been convened at National Mining Museum Scotland.

Public Lectures

The second Public Lecture was hosted by Northumbria University on 9 May 2013. The speaker was Professor Peter Kirby of Glasgow Caledonian University, whose title was 'The Body and the Industrial Workplace, 1780-1850'. The lecture attracted an audience of over 40 people. It was interpreted in sign language and recorded as a podcast.

The third Public Lecture will take place at Strathclyde University in Glasgow on 21 May 2014. The speaker will be Dr Julie Anderson of the University of Kent. Her title will be 'Marks on Men: Disability, Medical Research and Coalminers, 1920-1948'.

Disabled People's Panel

The Disabled People's Panel proved more difficult to set up than we had envisaged and attendance deteriorated during the second year. Nonetheless, members offered invaluable feedback on specific issues, in particular the website. Therefore, we have decided to disband formal meetings of the Panel and seek the advice on an *ad hoc* basis.

10. Programme Management

Throughout the year, mentors met regularly with their research associates and research fellows, and the PhD student received regular supervision. A South Wales Team meeting was also held each month, at which monthly reports from the research associates, research fellows and PhD student were received and discussed, along with scoping reports at the beginning of each new research phase.

In addition, two Full Team meetings were convened in December 2012 in Swansea to coincide with the second Advisory Board and in May 2013 in Newcastle to coincide with the second Public Lecture.

11. Advisory Board

We are grateful to all members of the Advisory Board for their inputs. The minutes of the second Board in December 2012 were considered by the South Wales Team and the Public Engagement Panel at their meetings in January 2013.

The Advisory Board made many valuable suggestions for public engagement and for influencing public policy. Project members are now looking to engage more directly with policy makers and the team would welcome suggestions from the Advisory Board on how to develop this aspect of the work.

12. Conclusion

The project had a very successful first two years and remains on track to deliver its objectives. We are grateful to the other team members and to Advisory Board for their enthusiastic support, and look forward to another good year in 2013/14.

Anne Borsay, Principal Investigator and Co-Director

David Turner, Co-Investigator and Co-Director

28 November 2013