



Group 1 Answer to STICK Conference Discussion Session

Q1. What work are you aware of to preserve knowledge about industrial collections in Scotland?

Answer: Other than the knowledge transfer projects discussed today (Monument Fellowship Scheme, Internships, etc) the main projects the group were aware of were oral history projects. The group discussed the need to include an attempt to capture technical knowledge when taking an oral history as well as personal experience.

Q2. What are the best ways of transferring knowledge and skills relating to historic working practices?

Answer: The main discussion focused on how to identify the people with the knowledge you are looking for. Suggestions to address this problem included a directory of specialists. Comments were also made on how technology has deskilled today's workforce. One suggestion on how knowledge can be transferred was that an overlap rather than a gap was needed between retiring people and the replacement member of staff. There should be provision for the replacement staff member to shadow retiring staff and record the knowledge and skills they are learning from the exiting member of staff. It was also commented on that differentiating between correct and erroneous information was not always easy.

Q3. Which skills are most in danger of disappearing?

Answer: Practical skills and community based skills. Communities which were established on industrial activities such as fishing villages, mining towns etc where the main occupations in these villages are no longer the occupations that were prevalent when the settlement began are in most danger of disappearing.

Q4. How can we make historic collections more relevant to modern students of, e.g. engineering?

Answer: It was questioned whether collections are actually relevant to today's students. Comments were also made on the need for such students to be exposed to the outside world rather than all studies being undertaken in the class room i.e. a year long placement with an engineering company as part of the degree. History of engineering classes should be part of an engineering degree where collections could be used in teaching. Aberdeen Maritime Museum and Robert Gordon University have a close connection between the museum and the students and are involved assisting students with project work. This connection is perhaps easily made in a city like Aberdeen where the oil industry is a major employer and a significant contributor to the city's history and where the local universities have courses dedicated to working in this field and can make use of such a resource. It was also commented on that gathering knowledge of today's engineering processes is essential as they will become tomorrow's history of engineering.

Q5. How should the forthcoming National Strategy for Scotland's Museums be framed to benefit transport and industrial collections?

Not answered.