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Rust, Regeneration and Romance - registration now available

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International Conference Announcement and Call for Papers

Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage

University of Birmingham & The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

Rust, Regeneration and Romance: Iron and Steel Landscapes and Cultures

10-14 July 2013, Ironbridge, UK

For centuries iron and steel have been the fundamental building blocks of modernity. These metals and the technologies, societies and cultures surrounding them have revolutionised the lives of billions of people. From the earliest functional usage of iron in domestic life, to decorative cast iron, from weapons to knives and forks and from the use of high tensile steels in buildings around the world to the stainless steels of space exploration, the transformative power of iron and steel is undeniable. This capacity to *transform* extends to the landscapes and cultures which have themselves been transformed through the mining, production, processing and consumption of iron and steel. As China and India race to modernise their economies with imported iron and steel, many cities across Europe and North America are still struggling with the decline in production and manufacture. In many parts of Europe former centres of iron and steel production have undergone regeneration and now form part of the tourism economy. Rust has gained currency as part of industrial heritage. Still, in many parts of the developing world, ideas of heritage lie very much in the future, as communities continue to work in the mining of iron ore and the production and fabrication of steel.

This conference seeks to engage academics and practitioners in an open multi-disciplinary analysis of iron and steel landscapes and cultures, from the ancient to the modern. It looks toward the legacies of both production and consumption and how these metals have influenced all aspects of social life. We wish to explore the relationships that communities, regions, nations share with iron and steel through its functional use, creative and artistic use and its symbolic use. Indicative questions the conference will address are: How are economies and societies transformed by the extraction and processing of iron? How does the environmental impact and legacy of iron and steel sites shape social and political life? How do governments and communities deal with both the expansion and decline of the iron and steel industries? What are the forms and formats of regeneration for iron and steel landscapes and communities? To what extent are global communities connected through iron and steel, economically and culturally? How have the landscapes and cultures of iron and steel found expression through various art forms? How are these landscapes managed and understood?

The conference will act as a forum for exchange between the sciences, social sciences and the humanities. The conference will draw from anthropology, archaeology, art history, architecture, engineering, ethnology, heritage studies, history, geography, landscape studies, linguistics, metallurgy, museum studies, sociology, tourism studies etc. The conference will take place at the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.

- **Registration is now available (http://shop.bham.ac.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?compid=1&catid=58&modid=2&prodid=655&deptid=30&prodvarid=0)**
- **Further information is available on the conference website (http://ironandsteel2013.wordpress.com/)**

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