



## Iron & Steel: an Industrial Might Study Day

Saturday 18 May 2019

9.00am Arrival, tea and coffee

9.30am **Opening Lecture: Cutting Edge Technology – from Wilkinson to the modern day**  
William K. Whitehead

10.15am **Hammer and clamour, rise and demise: nail-making in Birmingham and the Black Country during the nineteenth century'**  
Guy Sjögren, Doctoral Researcher at the University of Birmingham

On 16 August 1852, The Times newspaper carried a report on the midland nail trade. The Black Country hand-wrought nail trade was said to be in a 'wretched condition', having been 'almost annihilated' by the 'immense power' of Birmingham's machine-cut nail manufacturers. Was this true? What were cut nails? How did the Birmingham trade rise to such a position of dominance? These and other questions will be answered during Guy Sjögren's presentation.

### **Guy Sjögren**

Guy is a doctoral researcher at the Centre for West Midlands History, University of Birmingham, where he is studying the evolution of the little-known Birmingham and district cut-nail trade.

11.00am Break

11.30am **Tour of Museum**

1.00pm Lunch

1.45pm **The Age of Cast Iron**  
David Eveleigh, Former Director of Collections, Learning & Research BCLM

2.30pm **Black Country Manufacturers**  
Helen Taylor, Curator, Domestic & Cultural Life & Karen Davies, Archivist & Librarian

An introduction to the top 5 Black Country Manufacturers, including objects from the Museum collections and a tour of the library.

3.15pm Break

3.30pm

**'Where Furnaces Once Burned' – The end of Iron and Steelmaking in the Black Country**

Paul Barnsley, University of Wolverhampton - Department of History, Politics and War Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences

The Black Country towns of Bilston and Brierley Hill were once dominated by their steelworks. At the time of their closures in 1979 and 1982 respectively both sites had both been in existence for over 150 years and together they employed over 4,500 people.

Through images capturing industrial ruin, regeneration, leisure and ongoing flux, Paul will examine what impact closure and the post-industrial use of these sites has had on successive generations of men and on masculinity in these two towns. He will show that whilst a distinct industrial working class culture that has often been overlooked in historiographies of the Black Country remains it is gradually being erased by the ongoing effects of deindustrialisation.

**Paul Barnsley**

Paul Barnsley has just completed the first year of a part time MPhil/PhD at the University of Wolverhampton. His thesis examines the aftermath of the closure of Bilston and Round Oak steelworks in the Black Country at the end of the 1970's and the ongoing impact on male identity in a deindustrialised community. The oral testimony of three successive generations of men in both communities will provide a detailed picture of changing experiences of work, community and leisure after the closure of the dominant employer that once provided work but also played a central role in the political and social life of the Bilston and Brierley Hill.

4.15pm

Questions and finish