# PRISM Fund Annual Report 2013/14

Cover Images (L-R):
One of the ships from the Conserving Historic Vessels project. Photo: National Historic Ships.
NSR Carriage No.61 alongside its sister carriage. Photo: NSR Rolling Stock Restoration Trust.
Specimen from the Mathews and Towndrow herbarium. Photo: Museums Worcestershire.

# Introduction

The PRISM Fund (for the PReservation of Industrial and Scientific Material) supports the acquisition and conservation of heritage objects from the fields of science, technology, industry and medicine. It was established in 1973 in response to the growing public concern that technological change was resulting in the loss of much of Britain's industrial heritage. Since 1973 PRISM has helped hundreds of non-national museums and preservation groups in England and Wales acquire or conserve thousands of objects of industrial or scientific importance.

The Fund aims to support the variety of organisations entrusted with the care of our industrial and scientific heritage, forging links and encouraging best practice.

The Fund was managed by the National Museum of Science & Industry (NMSI) on behalf of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) until 31 March 2003, before being managed solely by MLA. Management of the Fund transferred to Arts Council England in October 2011 at the request of the government. Arts Council continues to take expert advice from the staff of the NMSI as well as from other national museums.

There has been no significant change to the scope of the Fund since its inception except for its extension to include conservation projects in the early 1990s.

# Summary of PRISM Fund grants awarded

There were 19 grants awarded during 2013/14 worth £228,445. Comparable figures for 2012/13 were 22 grants worth £191,115. The average size of a grant was £12,023 which is up on last year's average of £8,687.

This year 19 institutions across England and Wales, from fully Accredited museums to small preservation societies, have benefited from PRISM funding. As well as bringing important objects into public collections, the PRISM fund is contributing to their ongoing care. Conservation grants represent 63 per cent of the number of this year's awards (73 per cent in 2012/13), accounting for 62 per cent of the total expenditure (73 per cent in 2012/13).

All of the objects funded by PRISM through 2013/14 have a unique or important place within Britain's rich past, and help to connect the public with the country's scientific, industrial or technological heritage.

# Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the many curators at national museums and other professionals who have provided expert assessments of the applications. Without their contribution of time and expertise the PRISM Fund would not be possible.

Paula Brikci
June 2015

## Table 1 Summary of PRISM Fund awards by category

| | 2013/14 | | 2012/13 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PRISM Category** | **Number** | **Amount (£)** | **Number** | **Amount (£)** |
| Agriculture | 0 | 0 | 2 | £6,320 |
| Archives | 2 | £40,000 | 1 | £6,520 |
| Aviation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Buildings | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Engineering | 0 | 0 | 1 | £1,480 |
| Geology | 0 | 0 | 1 | £10,000 |
| Horology | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Industry | 3 | £36,795 | 1 | £20,000 |
| Medicine | 1 | £20,000 | 1 | £17,580 |
| Miscellaneous | 0 | 0 | 1 | £8,750 |
| Natural History | 2 | £9,950 | 4 | £25,053 |
| Photography | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rail | 6 | £56,619 | 6 | £52,673 |
| Road Transport | 3 | £36,081 | 2 | £18,239 |
| Scientific Instruments | 1 | £9,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Water | 1 | £20,000 | 2 | £24,500 |
| TOTAL | 19 | £228,445 | 22 | £191,115 |

## Table 2 Summary of PRISM Fund awards by type

| | 2013/14 | | 2011/12 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PRISM Grant Type** | **Number** | **Amount (£)** | **Number** | **Amount (£)** |
| Acquisition | 7 | £86,650 | 6 | £51,395 |
| Conservation | 12 | £141,795 | 16 | £139,720 |
| TOTAL | 19 | £228,445 | 22 | £191,115 |

# Details of PRISM Grants Awarded

## £20,000 to the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, for the acquisition of William Fox Talbot's personal archive.

The Personal Archive of WHF Talbot is a large and unique collection of materials in a range of media that casts crucial light on the life and work of this extraordinary scientist and inventor. It includes photographs, artefacts, scientific instruments, scientific books and a wealth of documentary manuscript material such as correspondence, family diaries, notebooks and albums.

Talbot was a driving force in the nation's scientific revolution. His invention of negative/positive photography laid the foundation for all subsequent photography up to the digital age. The Archive provides insight into his many roles, interests and researches, revealing the impact of his many talents on his photographic endeavours.

Portrait of William Fox Talbot's daughter, Salt print from a calotype negative, 17 Aug 1843.
Photo: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

The crane being moved for conservation work.
Photo: The Bluebell Trust.

## £463 to the Bluebell Trust for the conservation of the Ransomes and Rapier 45 ton lift breakdown crane.

This crane was built in 1943 at a time when heavy lift, long reach breakdown cranes of this type were the largest available on the national network. Keeping railway lines open was top priority in war time, clearing derailments, bomb damage, and accident debris. This crane also worked to install and remove bridge beams, and constructed and serviced cross-channel coastal batteries at St Margaret's near Dover.

The crane was returned to service in June 1985 for 7 years, dealing with a minor derailment and some civil engineering work. This PRISM grant will help to enable it to return to full working order on the Bluebell Railway.

## £7,200 to the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery for the purchase of conservation grade housing for the moth collection.

The Lepidoptera collection held at Stoke-on-Trent Museums is part of the only Designated invertebrate collection in the West Midlands, and houses in the region of 18,000 mainly British moth specimens, including a significant collection of specimens from Staffordshire. The data associated with these specimens is crucial in plotting the distribution of Lepidoptera nationally, enabling greater understanding of the variables affecting biodiversity distributions. The collection is also helpful for students of taxonomy to accurately identify species.

Some of the rehoused moth collection.
Photo: Potteries Museum and Art Gallery.

Neatly packed item from the collection.
Photo: Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust.

## £3,455 to Ironbridge Gorge Museum for conservation of the Lewis Collection.

The Lewis Collection is made up of 233 objects dating from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century, collected by Dr Lewis in the 1970s and 80s. It represents a highly significant record of early railway infrastructure and permanent way objects. The majority of the objects in the collection are rail chairs and lengths of rail that relate to early railways laid at quarries and mine workings throughout England and Wales. Further research into this collection will be able to provide a taxonomy of the development of early industrial lines. In addition to this, many of the objects carry with them makers' marks and names which provide vital information relating to the industrial networks that supported the growth of the early railways.

## £7,341 to Bancroft Mill Engine Trust for rebuilding and conserving the mill steam engine.

This project saw the rebuild and conservation of a rescued mill steam engine. This 1901 Smith Bros. & Eastwood engine was from a former textile mill in Bradley. It is a tandem compound mill engine, typical of the local area. Returned to full working order, it will enable visitors to Bancroft Mill to better understand the textile heritage of the local area, alongside other mill steam engines and within an original engine house.

The rescued mill steam engine.
Photo: Bancroft Mill Engine Trust.

The Delamarche armillary sphere.
Photo: Herschel Museum of Astronomy.

## £9,000 to the Herschel Museum of Astronomy for the acquisition of an armillary sphere by Delamarche.

William Herschel transformed our understanding of the solar system and expanded the known size of the universe. His discovery of Uranus in 1781 brought him instant fame and acclaim from the scientific community. This rare armillary sphere by Delamarche, c.1810 with Uranus and Herschel's name on it, is an example of a typical working model of the type used by Herschel. It will, alongside a selection of other objects relevant to Herschel's work, form part of the re-display of the music room/study to give greater emphasis to his astronomical achievements.

## £2,750 to Museums Worcestershire for rehousing the Mathews and Towndrow herbarium.

The earliest specimens in the Mathews and Towndrow collection date back to the 1820s, representing the first county botanical records. Contained within the collection there are a number of species now extinct in the county and some which are extinct in Britain, making it a significant collection.

This project enabled the rehousing of this collection into modern and appropriate storage, facilitating its preservation and enabling access and research into 200 years of continuous botanical records in Worcestershire.

A specimen from the Mathews and Towndrow herbarium.
Photo: Museums Worcestershire.

The lewis bolt from the mid 19th Century. It was used to lift blocks of stone quarried in or under Combe Down.
Photo: Combe Down Heritage Society.

## £9,454 to Combe Down Heritage Society for conservation grade housing for the industrial history collections.

This large archive of material relating to the industrial and social history of the village, includes printed and hand-written material, objects, maps, books, photographs, digital, video and audio records. It constitutes a unique collection of material recording, amongst other things, the large-scale quarrying in, under and around the village which contributed to the building of Georgian Bath and many other buildings of historical importance. The collection records many of the developments which resulted from the scale of this enterprise: new technology in cranes; rail movement; and the use of canals to transport the stone.

## £17,995 to the NSR Rolling Stock Restoration Trust for the restoration of NSR Carriage No.61.

Carriage No.61 is a 3rd class vehicle which in its prime worked on the Loop Line servicing the Potteries towns and along to Market Drayton. It conveyed workmen on their way to work, and shoppers attending the market, and formed part of a fundamental day-to-day existence for everyone in the area in Victorian times. There are few artefacts which remain from the NSR and so the historical significance of remaining items is high. Now complete, the vehicle runs alongside its already restored sister carriage to form part of the 'Knotty Heritage Train' for the enjoyment and education of the public.

NSR Carriage No.61
Photo: NSR Rolling Stock Restoration Trust.

The restored waggons.
Photo: Moseley Railway Trust.

## £13,706 to the Moseley Railway Trust for the restoration of First World War tramway rolling stock.

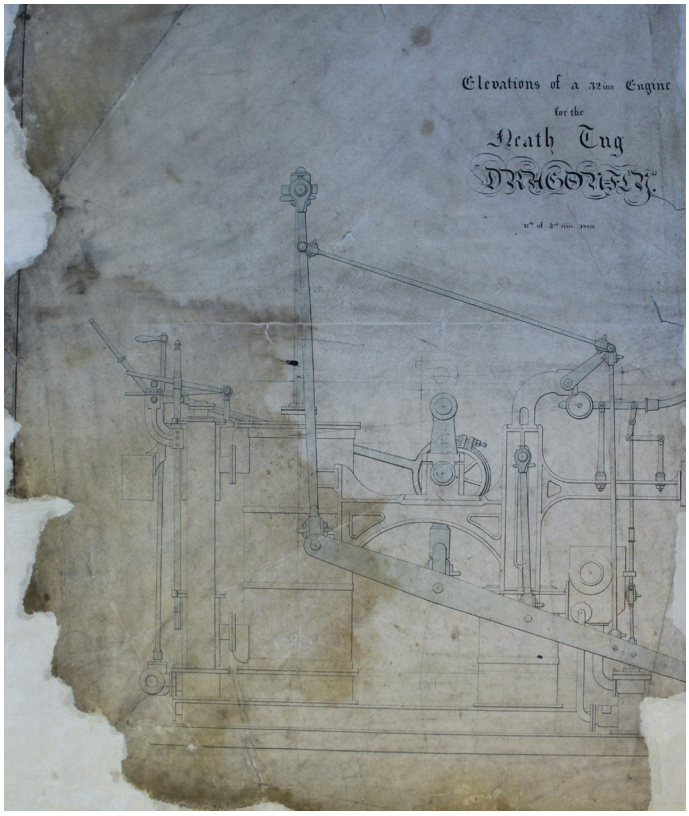
V Skip wagons like these were supplied to the British Army in France during the First World War and used to assist with trench construction; canal, road and town reconstruction; and rail repair. After the war they were rapidly absorbed into civilian use serving quarries, mines and waterworks both in France and the UK. They acted as catalyst for many post-war industrial railways and a UK manufacturing industry which specifically produced them. These two vehicles are, as far as is known, the last two such vehicles surviving in the UK. Following their restoration and rebuild, these completed wagons took a starring role in a First World War centenary event in September 2014.

## £20,000 to West Glamorgan Archive Service for the acquisition of the Neath Abbey Ironworks Collection.

The foundry at Neath Abbey was built in 1792 by the Cornish Quaker firm of Fox & Co. It continued in business until 1885, producing a variety of products, including railway locomotives, ship engines, gas work machinery and pumping and winding engines for mines, which were produced for clients from around the world.

This Collection, which has been held on deposit in West Glamorgan Archives in Swansea for several decades, consists of about 8,000 engineering drawings from which the commissioned machinery was made.

The collection is an invaluable resource to anyone interested in the techniques of manufacture and mining and the mechanics of transport and industry.




Elevation of a 32ins engine for the Neath tug 'Dragonfly', dated 17 March 1840.
Photo: West Glamorgan Archive Service

The Bristol train describer.
Photo: Bristol City Museum, Art Gallery & Archives.

## £1,000 to Bristol City Museum, Art Gallery & Archives for the acquisition of a signal box train describer.

Train describers were one of a range of instruments used in railway signal boxes to control the movement of trains. Their particular role was to alert the signalman of the destination of the next train to pass his box and to allow him to transmit this information to the next box in the line.

This particular instrument, dating from 1930, is one of many that were used in the boxes around Bristol. Its particular interest lies in the number and variety of names on it, showing the range of destinations that the traffic around Bristol could reach.

The presentation model of MG EX135.
Photo: British Motor Industry Heritage Trust.

## £11,250 to the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust for the acquisition of a sterling silver presentation model of MG EX135.

This trophy model of MG EX135 was presented to 'Goldie' Gardner by Lord Nuffield in 1938 to commemorate his record breaking success. EX135 had broken the record for cars with engines up to 1100cc – breaking 150mph and going faster than the holders for all the records for cars as large as 3000cc, despite its smaller engine. The car ran until 1952, competing for and breaking a variety of records. Once retired, the car was retained by MG and is now one of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust's principal exhibits. This trophy is now on display in the Museum alongside the full-size record car.

## £20,000 to the Royal College of Physicians for the acquisition of de Ketham's Fasciculus Medicinae.

This is a very early edition (Venice, 1500) of the first printed book to contain practical medical illustrations that approach a realistic representation of the human body.

It contains ten large full-page woodcut illustrations, including a urine consultation, a vein man, a pregnant woman, and a visit to the plague patient. These illustrations are some of the finest to have appeared in any printed book at this point in history, and ae also the first detailed medical illustrations to have been printed. Only six copies of this book were in publically-accessible collections in the UK, and none of these collections were part of a medical institution. This acquisition had significant importance to the field of medical history.

Woodcut illustration of a urine inspection.
Photo: The Royal College of Physicians.

The trolleybus during renovation, on hoists to enable the overhauled traction motor to be refitted.
Photo: The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft.

## £19,431 to the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft for the conservation of the Wellington Trolleybus No.82.

Wellington Trolleybus No.82 is one of the last few trolleybuses made in Great Britain and is therefore illustrative of final British trolleybus technology and design. Amongst the obvious attributes are the two-door entrance/exit and one-man operation. This vehicle is representative of the, once very strong, British export trade in commercial vehicles for customers all over the world, helping to demonstrate the quality of British engineering and technology, and its flexibility to meet local needs.

## £20,000 to Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums for moving and stabilising the Bigges Main Wooden Waggonway.

These very substantial remains of a section of wooden waggonway were discovered in July 2013 during archaeological investigation and recording at the former Neptune Shipyard, Newcastle upon Tyne. The remains are on the well-recorded alignment of the Bigges Main Waggonway, constructed in 1785. In the early 1800s this Way was delivering 60,000 chaldron waggons of coal each year to ships on the River Tyne. These remains represent one of the earliest sections of railway to have been discovered which was constructed to a gauge which ultimately became the ‘standard gauge’.

The waggonway during excavation.
Photo: Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

The Elswick Hopper Motorcycle on display at CHAMP.
Photo: CHAMP.

## £5,400 to CHAMP for the acquisition of a 1914 Elswick Hopper motorcycle.

From the 1880s until the late twentieth century, Elswick Hopper of Barton upon Humber produced some of the most sought after cycles and motorcycles for distribution all over the world. This Elwick Hopper motorcycle is significant in its production, condition and period. It is rare to find a motorcycle of this type which has survived in such excellent original condition. Manufactured in 1914 it has just celebrated its centenary. This motorcycle helps illustrate the growth of a town through the growth of a local industry, and the impact of Elswick Hopper is still remembered by local people today.

## £20,000 to National Historic Ships for the Conserving Historic Vessels Partnership project.

The five partner vessels involved in this project (Reaper, Excelsior, Reminder, Jolie Brise and Leader) are all significant examples of gaff, lug or sprit rigs and, as such, have been chosen based on their ability to demonstrate different handling characteristics according to type and function. Four of the five vessels are listed in the National Historic Fleet which identifies vessels of pre-eminent national significance. The fifth is on the National Register of Historic Vessels having been identified as having significant UK associations. These vessels will be used by the partners to undertake a skills mapping exercise, whilst vital conservation work is completed on them. This will develop exemplar approaches to the conservation and handling of the vessels.

The vessel ‘Reminder’.
Photo: National Historic Ships.

Detail of the waterwheel.
Photo: Lancashire Museums.

## £20,000 to Lancashire Museums for conserving the Higher Mill waterwheel.

This waterwheel is part of the Designated Textile Industry Collections of Lancashire Museums Service, and is an integral part of Higher Mill, which is a scheduled Ancient Monument.

The wheel constitutes part of the third generation of water power at the Mill which was built in 1789. From 1849 it powered a wool fulling mill, so its significance lies in its survival as an original power source for the Mill and in its continued ability to power the fulling stocks. It is of national importance as a rare example of a complete watermill and lodge with an original waterwheel operating the machinery.