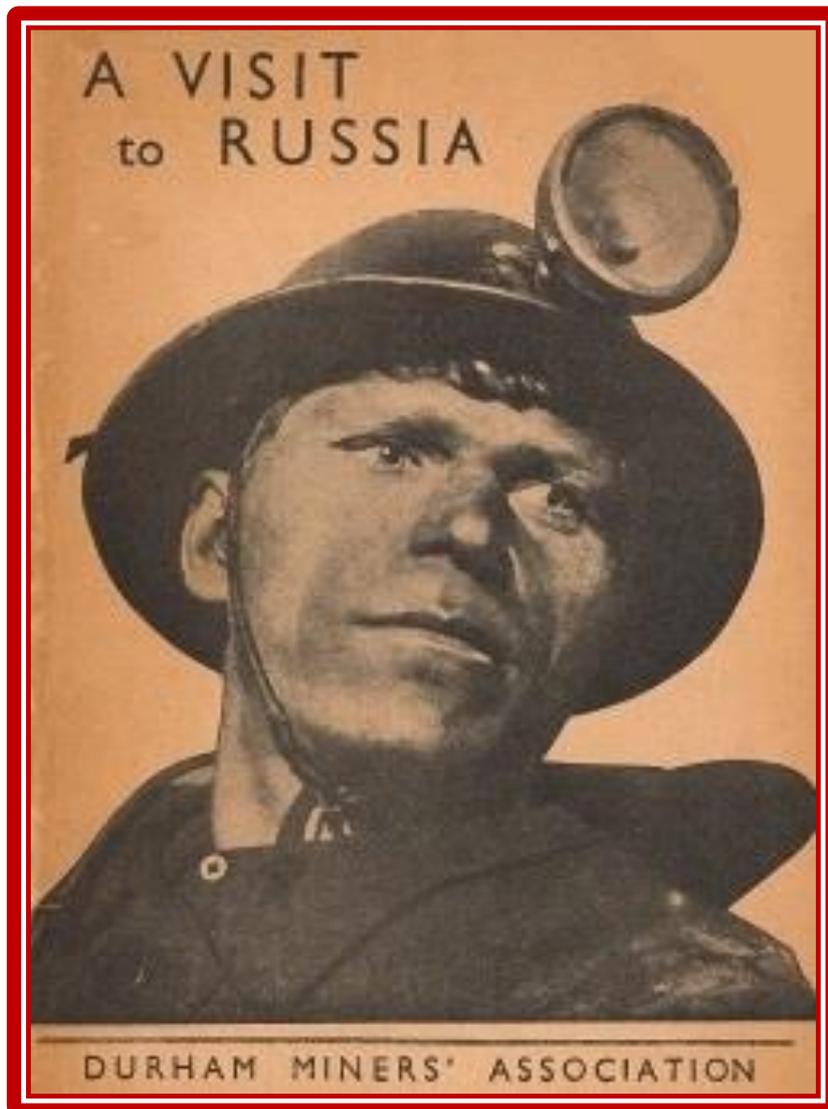


MAY DAY RALLY

Monday, 6 May 2019, 12.30-6.30pm



Programme of activities exploring historic links between mining communities in Britain and Russia, Ukraine & the USSR.



OWRI



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

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Monday, 6 May 2019, 12.30-6.30pm

Redhills, Miners' Hall, Flass Street, Durham, DH1 4BD

In collaboration with the Durham Miners' Association and the City of Durham Labour Party, Durham University's School of Modern Languages and Cultures (Open World Research Initiative; Cross-Language Dynamics: Reshaping Community project) is contributing to May Day celebrations with a programme of activities exploring historic cultural links between mining communities in Britain and Russia, Ukraine & the USSR.



Redhills, Miners' Hall

Exhibition

From Wales to Ukraine: The Hughesovka Story

The exhibition, curated by Victoria Donovan and Stefan Caddick, explores a little-known historical episode that links the mining communities of the South Wales Valleys with the pitmen of the Ukrainian steppe.

In 1868, a Welsh mining industrialist, John Hughes, together with a team of around a hundred Welsh miners set up a metallurgical plant and railway works in the coal and iron-ore rich territories of Donbas, in what was then southern Russia.

Over the next decade, the migrant workforce built eight blast furnaces, collieries, mines, brickworks and rail lines. The diasporan community established social and cultural institutions – a church, a school, and a hospital – but also more whimsical imitations of British life such as tearooms, tennis courts and amateur dramatics clubs. Over time the migrants assimilated Russian traditions and culture: they learned to read and write the language (particularly second and third generation migrants, some of whom were fluent in Welsh, English, and Russian), they celebrated Orthodox holidays, gave their children Russian names, and entered into romantic affairs and even marriage with Russian men and women. The new town bore the name of its Welsh founder – Hughesovka (or luzovka, as it was pronounced in Russian).

The curators will introduce visitors to the exhibition display (Committee Room) in two 15-minute talks, scheduled around 1.10pm and 2.10pm respectively.



Bullock train hauling a boiler near Hughesovka
Photograph by Percy Cartwright (c.1910)



General view of Hughesovka
Postcard by E. Krechmer (c. 1905)

Images provided courtesy of the Glamorgan Archives.

Victoria Donovan is Lecturer in Russian and Director of the Centre for Russian, Soviet, Central and East European Studies (CRSCEES) at the University of St Andrews. She was a BBC/AHRC New Generation Thinker in 2016-2017 and a British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award holder in 2019.

Stefhan Caddick is an artist based in South Wales who works across a range of forms including archive film, installation and performance. Much of his work is socially engaged. Stefan has shown his work extensively across the UK and internationally. Recent projects include Noctule for Green Man festival and Ebbwferic, a research project funded by the Arts Council of Wales (see <http://stefhancaddick.co.uk>).

Talk

Kath Connolly, 'A Durham Miner's Wife Visits the USSR in 1926'

Kath Connolly is a member of Education 4 Action: a group of enthusiastic volunteers with a shared mining heritage, who work with schools and the local community to develop education programmes in the historic Durham Miners' Hall.

Kath will talk about Annie Errington, a Sacriston miner's wife and Labour activist, who was elected to represent the Durham mining community on a nineteen-strong delegation of the Miners Federation of Great Britain to the Soviet Union during the 1926 Lockout, to raise awareness of the desperate plight that mining families experienced during the months-long action, to thank the Soviets for their support, to seek further help, and to discover what life was like in post-revolutionary Russia. Kath's talk is scheduled for around 1.30pm.



Annie Errington (2nd row right), with other members of the MFGB delegation, travelling through Russia by train.

Film

Dziga Vertov, *Enthusiasm: Symphony of the Donbass* (1931)

With musical score by Simon Gore (2016)

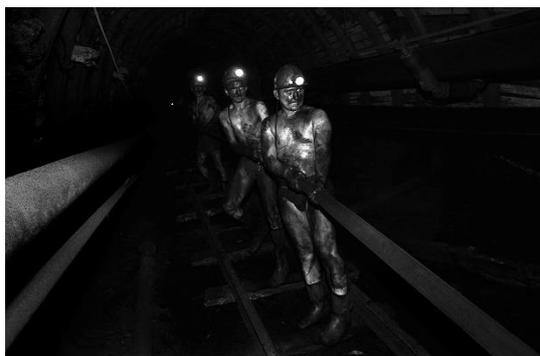
The Committee Room exhibition display also includes the screening of the 1931 film *Enthusiasm: Symphony of the Donbass*, one of the Soviet Union's first sound films, directed by Dziga Vertov, the renowned pioneer of Soviet avant-garde documentary filmmaking. The film, produced in celebration of Stalin's First Five-Year Plan (1928-32), has been described as the director's love letter to the heavily industrialised landscapes of eastern Ukraine. The Donbass region, which is particularly rich in coal and a major mining area since the nineteenth century, was one of the focal sites of accelerated industrialisation in the early-Soviet period, hence Vertov's choice of location and his emphasis on the imagery of coal and mining.

The film's original musical score, which incorporated the sounds of industrial machinery and labour, had received praise for its experimental originality. However, in November 2016, the Welsh musician **Simon Gore** was commissioned to write, record and perform a re-scoring of the film as part of a public engagement festival in the South Wales Valleys, commemorating historic labour migration from Wales to Ukraine. At the present exhibition, Vertov's *Enthusiasm* will be screened with this new soundtrack by Gore.

Photography

Aleksandr Chekmenev, 'Donbass. 1994-2015'

In juxtaposition with Vertov's celebration of the industrial enthusiasm of the Soviet 1930s, displayed will also be the powerful black and white portraits of the mining communities of *post-Soviet* Donbass.



Aleksandr Chekmenev was born in 1969 in the city of Luhansk in eastern Ukraine. Since the late 1990s he has been working as a freelance photojournalist and his work has been published in prestigious outlets, such as the *New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *Time Lightbox*, *New Yorker PhotoBooth*, *MSNBC*, *Quartz*, *The Guardian*, *Vice Magazine* and *Libération*. His photography offers a uniquely intimate insider view of post-industrial transitions experienced by the coal-mining region in which he grew up.

Language Taster

МИР, ТРУД, МАЙ: World, Labour, May

An introduction to the Russian language in honour of the International Workers' Day.



Proletarians of all countries unite!

In a hands-on session of up to 30 minutes, **Polina Kliuchnikova** from Durham University's School of Modern Languages and Cultures will introduce participants to the Russian alphabet and teach them to decode Russian script, enabling them to start reading Russian words and phrases. Basing this introduction on slogans used in traditional celebrations of the International Workers' Day in Soviet and post-Soviet contexts, the session aims to give participants a taste for the Russian language.

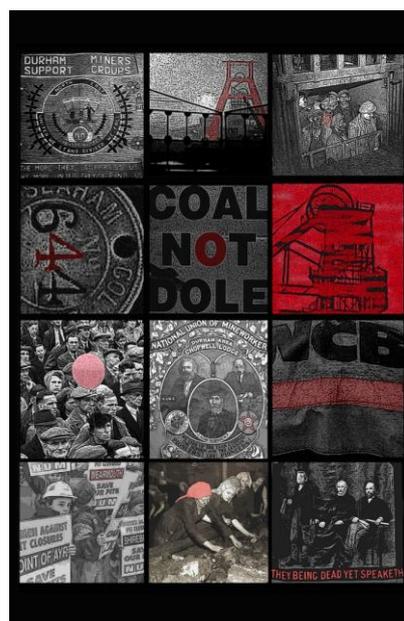
The activities are aimed at those curious about the language and are designed for complete beginners (no prior linguistic, cultural or historical knowledge is required). Two such sessions are offered (room on 1st floor) during the day (@ 2pm and 2.30pm).

Poetry

Paul Summers, *arise!* & Andy Croft, *The Sailors of Ulm*

Paul Summers is a widely published Northumbrian poet who has recently returned to the North East of England after a five-year stint in Central Queensland. He was a founding co-editor of the 'leftfield' UK magazines *Billy Liar* and *Liar Republic*, and has also written for TV, film, radio, theatre and collaborated many times with artists and musicians on mixed-media projects and public art. His latest collection is *straya*, published by Smokestack Books in April 2017. Other collections include: *arise!*, *primitive cartography*, *union (new & selected poems)*, *Three Men on the Metro* (with Andy Croft & WN Herbert), *big bella's dirty cafe*, *cunawabi* and *the last bus*.

At 1.15pm, Paul will read from *arise!*, a book-length poem commissioned for last year's Big Meeting, as well as some of his older work about growing up in the coalfields of south-east Northumberland.



Andy Croft has written and edited many books, including *Out of the Old Earth*, *Red Letter Days*, *Comrade Heart*, *A Weapon in the Struggle*, *Red Sky at Night* (with Adrian Mitchell) and *After the Party*. His books of poetry include *Ghost Writer, 1948* (with Martin Rowson), *Three Men on the Metro* (with WN Herbert and Paul Summers), *A Modern Don Juan* (with NS Thompson et al.), *Letters to Randall Swingler* and *The Sailors of Ulm*. He curates the T-junction international poetry festival in Middlesbrough, runs the Ripon Poetry Festival and edits Smokestack Books.

At 2pm, Andy will read from his forthcoming collection of poetry, *The Sailors of Ulm*, putting out to sea with a faithful crew of broken comrades. But the wind has turned, the good ship Progress is heading towards the rocks and the rats are cheering on the quayside.

Panel

Remembering Harry Heslop

In 1926, the former South Shields coal-miner and trade union activist Harold Heslop (1898-1983) became, overnight, a Soviet writer. The manuscript of his first novel, on the theme of mining in the English north, having been rejected by a British publishing house, was accepted in the USSR and published in Russian translation under the title *Pod vlast'iu uglia* ('Under the Sway of Coal'). Heslop's next two novels were similarly embraced by the Soviet literary establishment, translated and published as part of the Soviet project of developing a body of international literature that served the cause of the revolution.

In the autumn of 1930, Heslop travelled to the USSR as one of two members of the British delegation attending the conference of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers (IURW), which assembled in Kharkov in eastern Ukraine in what was becoming one of the USSR's major industrial centres. After the conference, which included the celebration of the anniversary of the October Revolution and a trip to Dneprostroi (at that point a giant industrial construction site, the epitome of early-Soviet industrialisation, where Heslop experienced 'admiration next to awe'), he went to Moscow, where, on the suggestion of the Soviet authorities, he attended the notorious Industrial Party Trial (Nov-Dec 1930) – one of the early Stalinist show trials, at which a number of Soviet scientists and economists were convicted of plotting against the government.



Harold Heslop, at the Kharkov IURW conference (6-15 Nov 1930)

Drawing by L.A. Zil'bershtein, published in the Kharkov newspaper *Communist* (18 Nov 1930)

The panel – introduced and chaired by Professor **Alastair Renfrew**, Head of English at Durham University – includes two talks: by Elena Ostrovskaya, Associate Professor at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, and by Andy Croft, poet and writer. It will take place in the Committee Room, starting at c. 4.45pm and finishing by 6.00pm.

Elena Ostrovskaya, 'Harold Heslop and the USSR: A Romance in Letters'

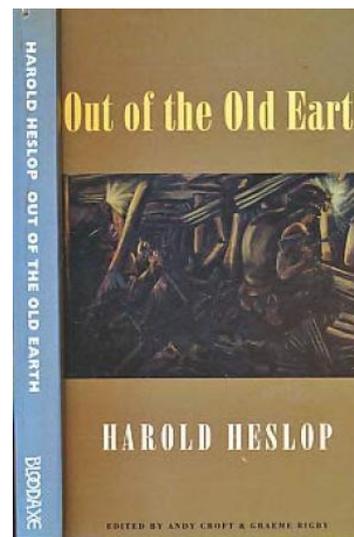
Based on her extensive research of Heslop's correspondence with different people and institutions in the USSR, as well as his autobiography *Out of the Old Earth*, Elena will talk about Heslop's relationship with the USSR and the Soviet people, and his visit to the country in 1930.

Andy Croft, 'Harry Heslop: A Major Miner Writer'

Andy will talk about meeting with Harry Heslop and editing Heslop's autobiography *Out of The Old Earth*. He will also discuss Heslop's novels in the context of other working-class writers from the 1920s and 1930s, especially those from the coalfields.



Garol'd Khezlop, *Pod vlast'iu uglia* (1926)
[Harold Heslop, *Under the Sway of Coal*]



Harold Heslop, *Out of the Old Earth* (1994)
ed. by Andy Croft & Graeme Rigby

For further information contact the organiser at:

andy.byford@durham.ac.uk

For further details on the project of which this event is a part visit:

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/owri/>



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CITY OF DURHAM LABOUR PARTY & DURHAM MINERS ASSOCIATION

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Monday 6th May 12:30 - 6.30pm

Miners Hall, Flass Street, Durham DH1 4BD

TUC

Changing the world
of work for good



Guest Speakers include:

**Laura Pidcock MP, Beth Farhat TUC, Stephen Guy
Judith Kirton-Darling MEP & Sean Hoyle RMT**

May Day Rally for Family, Trade Unionists, Labour Party members
Screening of Women's Banner Film 'With Whole Heart Cometh Hope'
Explore the Grounds and Historic Miners Hall

Food, Bar, Entertainment
Everyone Welcome



Durham University, School of Modern Languages & Cultures

Exhibition and talks exploring historic links between
mining communities in Britain and Russia.

Poetry readings: Paul Summers, arise! & Andy Croft, The Sailors of Ulm

'From Wales to Ukraine: The Hughesovka Story' exhibition

Harold Heslop Memorial: panel discussion

