

Rethinking James Watt (1736-1819): Innovation, Culture and Legacy

Friday 30 August to Sunday 1 September 2019

University of Birmingham Arts Building, University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT

Conference Website: www.jameswatt2019.org

Conference booking details:

<https://shop.bham.ac.uk/conferences-and-events/college-of-arts-law/school-of-history-cultures/rethinking-james-watt-17361819-innovation-culture-and-legacy>

Travel:

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/contact/directions/index.aspx>

University Station (frequent trains from and to New Street Station) is on the edge of the Edgbaston campus and only a five to ten minute walk to the Arts Building where the conference is held. Parking is free at the University on Friday evenings and all day on Saturday and Sunday. The Arts Building is R16 in the Red Zone of the Edgbaston campus. Scroll down the web link and click on the PDF of the Edgbaston campus map.

Accommodation:

Attendees who need to book accommodation will find a variety of venues with different prices close to the University of Birmingham or in Birmingham itself:

1. University Edgbaston campus accommodation includes Edgbaston Park Hotel and Conference Centre and Lucas House Hotel:
<https://conferences.bham.ac.uk/accommodation/hotels-on-campus/>
2. Bed and breakfast accommodation is also available at Woodbroke Quaker Study Centre: <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/> and Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), <https://www.bmsworldmission.org/get-involved/learn/birmingham/> which are close to the University.
3. For additional accommodation venues in Birmingham see:
<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/events/accommodation.aspx>

Friday 30 August

16.30 – 17.00	Registration and drinks reception
17.00 – 17.15	Introduction Malcolm Dick
17.15 – 17.40	'Reimagining Watt's world', Kathleen Bell
17.40 – 18.30	Keynote 1 and book launch 'The Life and Legend of James Watt: Collaboration, Natural Philosophy, and the Improvement of the Steam Engine', David Philip Miller Paperbacks of the book will be available for sale at a reduced rate
18.30 – 20.00	Drinks and buffet dinner

Saturday 31 August

9.00 – 9.30	Registration and refreshments
9.30 – 9.40	Introduction Malcolm Dick
9.40 – 10.20	Keynote 2 'Thinking outside the box': James Watt, a mechanic who became an engineer', Peter Jones
10.20 – 10.30	Comfort break
10.30 – 11.45	Session A: Representations of Watt 'James Watt in print - a survey', Martin Killeen 'From machine to man to myth and back again: representation of James Watt and the Boulton & Watt beam engine at the National Museum of Scotland', Kate Bowell 'Does size matter? James Eckford Lauder and his monumental memorialisation of Watt', Helen Smailes
11.45 – 12.05	Refreshments break
12.05 – 13.20	Session B: Watt and the Steam Engine 'The first working Watt steam engine in the world – servant to a water wheel', George Demidowicz 'Innovation: whisky, copper & sugar', William Whitehead 'James Watt and the Crank Company', John Townley
13.20 – 14.10	Lunch
14.10 – 15.25	Session C: Contextualising the Steam Engine 'James Watt in context: steam engine building 1776-1800', John Kanefsky 'The steam engine and the sugar isles: the use of James Watt's steam engine in the sugar plantations of the British West Indies

	(1783-1820)', Alastair Learmont 'The dark side of steam: boiler explosions in the nineteenth-century West Midlands', Sarah Jordan
15.25 – 15.45	Refreshments break
15.45 – 17.00	Session D: Beyond Steam: Watt the Innovator 'James Watt: the inveterate inventor', Jim Andrews 'Diverse perspectives on James Watt's letter-copier process', Roger Farnham 'Interrupted experiments in optics - James Watt and the extemporised camera obscura, Rose Teanby
17.00 – 17.20	Refreshments break
17.20 – 18.35	Session E: Legacies 'The Watt Institution: James Watt's legacy in Greenock', Lorraine Murray 'Innovations in steam power in Greenock in the 1920s: the Orchard Sugar Refining Company Limited and steam ploughing', Heather Holmes 'Evidence, provenance and a 'tin ear': the case for James Watt's musical instruments', Nina Baker
18.35 – 18.50	Break and drinks reception
18.50 – 19.30	Keynote 3 'James Watt & Co: industrializing gas technology, Leslie Tomory
19.30 – 21.00	Buffet dinner

Sunday 1 September

9.00 – 9.30	Registration and refreshments
9.30 – 9.40	Introduction Malcolm Dick
9.40 – 10.20	Keynote 4 "Of material service to him": Margaret Miller Watt and Ann McGregor Watt, wives of James Watt', Kate Croft
10.20 – 10.30	Refreshments Break
10.30 – 11.45	Session F: Watt and His Family 'Ill health and some remedies in the papers of James Watt and family', Fiona Tait 'Gregory Watt in primary material: a preliminary investigation', Harry Wilkins 'The personal documents of James Watt', Eleanor Beestin

11.45 – 12.05	Refreshments break
12.05 – 13.20	<p>Session G: Sons and Associates</p> <p>‘Gregory Watt and Humphrey Davy’s early chemistry’, Frank James</p> <p>‘Clever, but eccentric friends: James Watt junior. and Thomas Cooper during the Age of Revolutions’, Sami Pinarbasi</p> <p>‘James Watt junior, Richard Bridgens & Aston Hall’, Chris Rice</p>
13.20 – 14.10	Lunch
14.10 – 15.25	<p>Session H: Apprentices and Engineers</p> <p>“Idle & saucy”: apprentice boys at Soho Foundry’, Caitlin Russell</p> <p>‘Hidden histories: Boulton & Watt’s skilled engineers’, Christopher Olive</p> <p>‘Genius from below: James Watt through William Playfair’s eyes’, Jean-François Dunyach</p>
15.25 – 15.45	Refreshments break
15.45 – 17.00	<p>Session I: Reassessments</p> <p>‘The aunt with the kettle’, Frances Green</p> <p>‘James Watt’s patent for the separate condenser: revisionism revisited’, Alessandro Nuvolari’</p> <p>‘Curatorial Cultures: H W Dickinson, James Watt and the history of technology, 1919-1930’, Ben Russell</p>
17.00 – 17.10	Break
17.10 – 17.50	<p>Keynote 5</p> <p>‘From apples to watts: power and its meaning in the twenty-first century’, Stuart Hillmansen</p>
17.50 – 18.00	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>Malcolm Dick</p>