



Call for Papers:

L.T.C. Rolt: Life, Work, Legacy.

A Conference to mark the 50th Anniversary of Rolt's death.

9-11 May 2024, Ironbridge.

CfP Deadline: 15 December 2023.

200-word abstracts to Ben Anderson: b.anderson@keele.ac.uk

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, in partnership with Keele University, are pleased to announce this call for papers for a major retrospective on the life, work and legacy of L.T.C. (Tom) Rolt (1910-1974).

When heritage was still thought of as the remains of pre-industrial elites, Rolt championed the built environment of industrial change, technology and new social forms. His prodigious writing and practical intervention resulted in the first heritage railway, and the restoration of thousands of miles of waterways. Somehow, he also found the time to write strikingly-modern texts on environmental change, a successful series of ghost-stories, and a go-to text on railway accidents. His was a full life indeed.

Fifty years after his death, this conference seeks to understand Rolt's drive and ambition, examine the full diversity of his written output, and chart the story of at least some of the organisations and initiatives he founded and supported.

Submissions may be on any aspect of Rolt's life, work, writing, or historical context, for example:

- How can we think of Rolt's lesser-known texts within his broader corpus?
- How far were the years living on water formative of his life?
- What role do women play in Rolt's writings?
- What were Rolt's aims when he came to write his autobiographies?
- What did Rolt understand as the purpose of Industrial archaeology, and how is this still relevant in the 21st century?
- Which politics drove Rolt's writing?
- How did Rolt navigate tensions between celebrating industrial technology and understanding mid-twentieth century environmental change?
- How can we best remember Sonia Rolt's contribution to industrial archaeology?
- What did Rolt understand by contemporary terms like 'amenity' or 'landscape'?
- Was Rolt responding to a special period of threat to industrial heritage?
- How did Rolt use biography to change the public understanding of industrial heritage?