

Call for Papers:

John Thelwall: Radical Networks and Cultures of Reform 1780-1820
July 21-23, 2017

For its second international conference, the John Thelwall Society, in collaboration with the University of Derby, invites papers on Thelwall within interlinked regional networks of activism, sociability, dissent and reform in Britain 1780-1820.

Recent years have seen increased interest among scholars and local historians in the “conversable worlds” (Mee) of the Midlands Enlightenment and its groundbreaking intersections of politics and poetry, religion and science, doctors and dissenters, pedagogues and visionaries. As a radical polymath and itinerant lecturer, John Thelwall moved between and spoke to all of them, not only in the Midlands. From Devon to Wales, Norfolk to Scotland, Ireland to France, Roman history to elocution, he planted the liberty tree by other names, giving voice to hope and binding together scattered communities of reform. At a time of war and repression, in the face of nationalist dogma, Thelwall championed egalitarian connections and transnational solidarities that continue to offer a way forward in our own dark times (Poole).

Representative of these regional intellectual centres, Derby, the conference location, lies at the heart of the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site, a cradle of the Industrial Revolution. The home of visionary scientists and artists, revolutionary inventors and industrialists, outspoken Philosophical and Political Societies, and the Pentrich rebellion (whose 200th anniversary the conference also commemorates), it also hosts the Derby Manuscript, the trove of Thelwall poetry whose discovery draws attention to his importance in radical networks, and theirs to an understanding of his career. The conference will celebrate this discovery through a special exhibition of the manuscript. Other highlights include excursions to sites related to the industrial revolution, Thelwall and notable residents of Derby (including Erasmus Darwin and Joseph Wright), and a radical pub night with songs and toasts in the very room where the Derby Political Society delivered its notorious 1792 Revolution Address. And of course, there will be a lively two-day program of talks, panels and keynote lectures.

The JTS invites proposals for papers or sessions on any aspects of, or relationships between, Thelwall, other radical figures like Paine, and/or reform networks in Derby or elsewhere in Britain. Contributions are welcome from all disciplines and ***need not focus expressly on Thelwall***. Topics might include (but are not limited to):

- Erasmus Darwin and the Derby Philosophers
- the Derby MS and/or the relationship of poetry, politics and performance
- the role of women in radical (and/or scientific, philosophical, artistic) networks
- the relationship of religious and political dissent
- Joseph Wright and/or the role of the arts in philosophic/scientific/radical circles

- The Pentrich Rising
- Paine and/in Derby
- Thelwall's lectures: politics, history, elocution
- radicalism and reform: continuities and/or schisms 1780-1820
- Toryism, loyalism, reaction
- education and the dissenting academies

Please send proposals of no more than 300 words to K.Hindmarch@derby.ac.uk no later than **31st January 2017**.