

Cultural Documents of Foot and Mouth (FMD)



Photographer John Darwell

International Conference and Exhibition: Manchester Town Hall, 14 - 16 March 2006

Documenting the social, health and cultural impact of FMD

The conference and exhibition proposes to bring together and review some of the main scientific, veterinary, media, rural community, and artistic records produced in connection with the 2001 FMD epidemic, and to use these to attempt to inform a wider public understanding about the health, economic and environmental impact and social consequences of the outbreak. This includes documentary work produced by leading photographers, film makers, writers and artists in response to FMD, commissioned by the Arts Council England. It will also acknowledge the important role played by the health, academic, veterinary, scientific and other professions in documenting the outbreak, and to ensure that their research work, records and findings are more widely accessible.

Learning from FMD; enhancing society's capacity to respond to future epidemics

It is hoped that the cultural perspective of the conference will help to underline the positive outcomes and lessons to be learned from this event, as well as informing a more constructive public debate about what happened, five years on. Following new public concerns about an Avian Flu epidemic, Bovine TB, SARS, the conference will also provide an opportunity to discuss ways of tackling the possible social, economic and cultural impact of future animal epidemics. Vets, scientists, health officials, and artists will also discuss the role and potential contribution of the cultural sector and related arts documentary work as part of a future national response to a human or animal epidemics, or natural disaster.

Animal welfare and rural health issues; bearing witness - towards community healing

In addition to the animal welfare issues involved, the conference will address some of the related health, social and psychological problems associated with FMD, in both urban and rural communities. In the latter context, the conference project is also aimed at achieving some kind of an emotional and psychological closure for the rural communities involved, by providing them with the opportunity to have their voices heard and, should they wish to, to recount their individual experiences in a supportive and sympathetic environment.

The Collective Memory; preserving the community records and sharing knowledge with others

The conference will also look at the possibility of assembling a national archive, museum and/or a public study centre capable of classifying displaying, and disseminating all the disparate information and public records connected with the 2001 FMD outbreak. This is proposed as a new type of cultural interface or arts initiative, combining scientific, archive, academic research, arts and public information roles, that would also be capable of guiding a more humane, less costly and more publicly acceptable response to any future animal epidemic.

Promoting public understanding; exhibitions, education & public programmes

A major exhibition based on a selection of the main FMD art and photographic work about the 2001 FMD epidemic, including supporting publications, educational materials, a dedicated website and DVD documentary film anthology, is also proposed to tour nationally and internationally.

Cultural Documents of Foot and Mouth (FMD)

Conference and exhibition Manchester Town Hall, 14 - 16 March 2006.

Imaging Pandemics: A review of the social, health, veterinary, cultural and scientific records of the 2001 FMD outbreak in Britain.

Conference programme

Tuesday 14th March, 2006 In the Public Interest?

Reviewing the records of the 2001 Foot and Mouth outbreak; understanding the social, environmental and cultural impact of FMD

10 am – 1.00 pm Conference registration and exhibitions open at Manchester Town Hall

12.30 pm Official opening of the 'Cultural Documents of FMD' exhibition at the Holden Gallery, Manchester Metropolitan University.

2 pm: **Introduction and an overview of the 2001 FMD outbreak.** Presentation by David Black, veterinary surgeon Paragon Veterinary Group, Cumbria, and Chris Chapman film maker and photographer Devon, Chair Professor Sheila Crispin Visiting Professorial Fellow, The School of Veterinary Science, University of Bristol. 4.00pm Panel discussion: *In the Public Interest*; documenting, archiving and communicating the experiences of FMD five years on.

7.30 pm Evening Public forum: **Documenting a Rural Crisis: re-thinking rural documentary and landscape photography after FMD**

Shaping media and public perceptions of the 2001 FMD outbreak: How photographers, artists, and the media recorded and documented the 2001 FMD outbreak; articulating the ethical and animal welfare issues involved and informing and widening the public debate about FMD and pandemics.

Wednesday, 15th March Learning from the past?

Pandemics and society; Rural Health perspectives, and voicing the community experiences of FMD.

10 am: **Bearing witness:** the iconography and documentary records of animal epidemics; acknowledging community and individual experiences of FMD. Presentations and first hand accounts by some of those directly involved in documenting and dealing with the 2001 FMD outbreak; presentation by farming and rural leaders, rural businesses, vets, artists and medical practitioners.

(Parallel sessions)

Session 1 (Great Hall)

Presentation by photographers, poets and artists: Dr Daro Montag (University of Plymouth), Clive Landen photographer, (Newport School of Photography), James Crowden poet/writer (Devon), and Alan Birch artist (Manchester)

Session 2 (Lord Mayor's parlour)

Presentations by scientists, artists and film makers: Mary Marshall, EU-funded FMD & CSF Coordination Action, Marcus Vergette (Devon), Dr Roger Breeze, Centaur Science Group, Washington DC.

2 pm: **Documenting FMD and its impact on rural communities and Rural Health:**

Animal epidemics and their psychological trauma and emotional impact on communities.

Session 1 (Great Hall) 'The health and social consequences of the 2001 UK Foot and Mouth Epidemic'. Dr Maggie Mort, Director Institute of Health Research, University of Lancaster. Nick May film maker artist (Cumbria), other speakers to be confirmed.

Session 2 (Lord Mayor's parlour) The work of film makers, radio/broadcasters and new media in documenting the impact of FMD on rural and farming communities: Nic Millington (Rural Media Company, Hereford), Roger Drury (Forest of Dean Community Radio), and Dr Michael Meredith.

7.30 pm. **Keynote presentation and Evening public forum** (Town Hall)

IF WE GIVE THEM THE TOOLS, THEY CAN FINISH THE JOB:

A manifesto for global livestock epidemic disease eradication in our lifetimes.

Dr Roger Breeze, Centaur Science Group, Washington DC. Former USDA advisor on FMD and an expert on Agro-Terrorism, Dr Breeze is currently Chief Scientist to the Defense Department's Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).

"Why exactly does society tolerate the deleterious effects of FMD, classical swine fever, Rinderpest and other major plagues of the world's livestock? It is not for lack of technology to eliminate them. The most important outcome of the 2001 FMD outbreak would be for members of the public who are not farmers to take up the cause of eliminating these diseases that are so important to pastoral and small farmers all over the world and among the root causes of poverty in societies that depend upon livestock in ways not appreciated in the developed world."

Thursday 16th March Could it ever happen again?

Metaphors and misunderstandings; the role of the animal sciences, academic and cultural sectors in interpreting and responding to pandemics.

It is argued that.. "the slaughter policy adopted by the British government in response to the 2001 outbreak of FMD was framed in terms of a cluster of metaphors that ultimately trapped the government inside a single policy solution to the detriment of searching for other possible solutions. FMD itself carried no health risks for humans, but the 'solutions' adopted to deal with FMD did." (Conceptualising Foot and Mouth Disease: The Socio-Cultural Role of Metaphors, Frames and Narratives Brigitte Nerlich/Craig A. Hamilton/Victoria Rowe)

10 am: **Poetry, Politics and Pandemics**; researching the social and cultural impact of FMD. The outcomes of academic research projects about FMD; the role of epidemiologists and the ethical dimensions of the outbreak. (Parallel sessions)

Session 1 (Great Hall) Presentations by sociologists, philosophers, and poets; Dr Brigitte Nerlich and Dr Sam Hillyard (University of Nottingham, Institute for the Study of Genetics, Biorisks & Society), Dr Nick Wright, 'The Ethics of Disease Control' (University of British Columbia), Dr Martin Doering 'An Outbreak of Poetry' (GKSS, Institute for Coastal Research). <http://www.metaphorik.de/02/nerlich.htm>

Session 2 (Lord Mayor's Parlour) A review of FMD and the UK FMD control measures, with a view to learning how we might address other possible epidemics, including avian flu. The emphasis thus being on the retrospective review - but with a view towards future control, in general. Dr Peter Nettleton (Moreun Institute): '*Foot-and-mouth disease and avian 'flu': different viruses, different diseases*'; Prof David Campbell (University of Durham): '*Foot-and-mouth disease and avian 'flu' as regulatory problems*'; Michael Thrusfield (University of Edinburgh): '*The control of the 2001 foot-and-mouth disease epidemic*'.

Conference plenary:

2 pm **Animal Epidemics and Society; preparing for Avian Flu**

Society's preparedness, or lack of preparation for future pandemics. What can we learn from the FMD experience and current epidemiological research that might help us deal with new pandemics such as Avian Flu. Scientists, economists, academics, media and health experts in dialogue with civic leaders about the proposed preventative measures and potential social, health and economic impact of Avian Flu pandemic in Britain. <www.birdfluimmunisation.co.uk>.

5.00pm Conference close

Exhibitions and public programmes; presenting the Cultural Documents of FMD. Using the experience and records of FMD in devising new cultural strategies by which to document and tackle future pandemics. Exhibitions by artists, film makers and photographers who have been documenting the social, economic and environmental impact of FMD since 2001: *Dark Days*, by photographer John Darwell (Cumbria); *Till the Cows Come Home*, by Cumbrian photographer Nick May; '*Silence at Ramscliffe*' by Chris Chapman, Devon, Alex Moore '*Childs Play - Documenting FMD in Cumbria*', and Clive Landen, '*The Abyss*' FMD in Gloucestershire and Wales. Holden Gallery, Manchester Metropolitan University 6th to 30th March 2006. Other exhibitions and DVD presentations will also be on display at the Town Hall, 14 - 16 March.

A cultural centre for the study of pandemics and society - a proposed national FMD study centre, museum and archive. Proposals for a national FMD museum, and an archive and study centre devoted to study of pandemics, society and culture. A national repository and archive for the rural community records, scientific, documentary art works about the 2001 FMD outbreak. The Vache Folle, Cité des Sciences Museum Paris conference and exhibition about BSE will also be discussed at the conference as a possible museological precedent: <http://www.cite-sciences.fr/francais/ala_cite/affiche/vache_folle/droit_fs.htm>

The exhibitions, conference and educational programmes are **free** and open to the general public.

To book a place for the conference and research seminars please contact:

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