TOPOGRAPHIES OF THE OBSOLETE

ASHMOLEAN PAPERS

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2017

Preface

In *The Natural History of Staffordshire*,[1] Dr Robert Plot, the first keeper of the Ashmolean Museum describes an early account of the county's pre-industrial pottery manufacturing during the late 17th century. Apart from documenting potters practices and processes, Plot details the regions natural clays that were once fundamental to its rise as a world renowned industrial centre for ceramics. Yet in recent decades the factories and communities of labour that developed around these natural resources have been subject to significant transition. Global economics have resulted in much of the regions ceramic industry outsourcing to low-cost overseas production. Today, despite the City of Stoke-on-Trent's ongoing regeneration, the economic fallout and human cost of the decline of traditional industry remain prevalent throughout its six towns.

Plot's pre-industrial mapping of North Staffordshire in the 1680's, has been echoed through *Topographies of the Obsolete*, an artistic research project which surveys the regions post-industrial landscape through a range of multi-media responses, centred primarily around the former Spode factory. Following six on-site residencies, *Topographies* has framed a point in time through which artists have opened different perspectives to the complexities of deindustrialisation, addressed by politicians, economists, historians and ex-employees. It documents both the aftermath of the Spode factory closure and the repurposing of its post-industrial fabric through processes of culture-led regeneration. The project remains a framework, formulating topics and research strands which are treated as questions and approaches that are addressed through artistic practice. By honing in on the particular history and the singularity of this site, *Topographies* questions what is, and how can ceramic and clay be understood as both material and subject in contemporary art practice.

The discourse that emerged out of each residency has developed into a series of interconnected research strands that examine the socio-economic impact of globalisation upon community and place, the contemporary ruin, and the artist as post-industrial archivist/archaeologist. Through these topics numerous questions have emerged surrounding the role of the artist in a non-art space, and how to address a post-industrial site artistically and ethically. On 7th November 2015, a panel of expert voices from the fields of art and design history, anthropology, urban sociology, critical theory and cultural geography, were invited to explore these topics from their own critical perspectives. This publication, the fourth in the series, draws together and extends the proceedings from this symposium at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford. It offers a broad range of interdisciplinary insights into issues surrounding the impact of deindustrialisation upon heritage, communities and landscapes, and urban renewal through art and culture-led strategies.

Norwegian
Artistic Research
Programme

University of Bergen
Faculty of Fine Art,
Music and Design

British
Ceramics
Biennial

[1] Plot, R., The Natural History of Staffordshire, Oxford, 1686.

Tim Strangleman

Former Nelson Pottery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Introduction: Obsolescence and Industrial Culture

Contemporary society is often seen as marked by instability and flux, fast changing and fluid, its contours reforming before we are truly used to what has just passed. The past may have been a foreign country but it was marked, in our imaginations at least, by a sense of permanence and stability. There was perhaps an unchanging quality to the past that now finds favour when compared to our more troubled relationship with the present. But this view of the present and the past is unsettled by recurring obsolescence and a consideration of the obsolete. What lies behind our fears about the present is the uncomfortable truth that the process of change, flux and instability is one that has marked human civilisation since it began. The way we view change, whether we embrace it or reject it, celebrate or mourn it, tells us as much about the present as it does about the past, supposedly being marked.

Writing over a century and a half ago Marx and Engels wrote a profoundly prescient essay which meditated on the nature of change. In their *Communist Manifesto* they coined the phrase 'All that is solid melts into air', capturing the ephemeral nature of what they observed, as they noted:

Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify.[1]

The starkness of their observation rings down the ages, it has a modern, contemporary quality to it that would have troubled those initially reading it in the middle of the nineteenth century, as well as more modern readers in the present. The essential message of the passage is that modernity has ushered in an era of breakneck change which we moderns can do nothing to resist. Our only response is to recognise what it is to be modern and perhaps reluctantly, perhaps willingly, embrace change. Importantly Marx and Engels were forging a link between material and social change. They recognised that as things changed, the material objects that defined modernity or traditional society for that matter, so too did the social relationships that surrounded them.

Marx and his collaborator Engels were keen to point out that human history had not been static before the dawning of modern industrial society. They recognised, drawing from the ideas of Hegel, that society itself was in constant motion over time, that human history was thrust forward by the dialectic clash of ideas, ideologies and material objects fashioned in particular ways. History was littered with the redundancy of human culture and production, the new was born out of the decay of the old. The historians' task was to pick through that redundancy and attempt to make sense of what they discovered as best they could. The historians' craft then is to make sense of that which is past, abandoned and redundant, it is the study of the material and cultural artefacts of the obsolete. Often the focus of study, traditionally at least, has been the remains of elites; the written record of the important and the prestigious. What counts as history is the imprint of those who matter in our past. It is the obsolescence of the elites which has survived, memorialised, cherished and kept. This 'drum and trumpet' view of the past, a history of 'Kings and Queens' and their hangers on has been gradually challenged over the last half century or so. The rise of 'history from below', of 'peoples' history', a view of the past which embraces both new objects of study and new methods with which to probe the past has in its way made traditional nineteenth century ideas of history obsolete.

Writing in his classic book *The Making of the English Working Class*, first published

in 1963, social historian E.P. Thompson made clear his object of study was not the lives of the elites but rather:

I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the obsolete hand-loom weaver, the 'utopian' artisan, and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott, from the enormous condescension of posterity. Their crafts and traditions may have been dying. Their hostility to the new industrialism may have been backward-looking. Their communitarian ideals may have been fantasies. Their insurrectionary conspiracies may have been foolhardy. But they lived through these times of acute social disturbance, and we did not. Their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experience: and, if they were casualties of history, they remain condemned in their own lives, as casualties.[2]

Thompson's mission was to attempt to resurrect the cultural, social and political atmosphere of plebeian life in the lead-up to and during the early stages of industrialisation. He wanted to show that this proto-working class, an industrial proletariat in the making, were not blank slates ready to be written on as the industrialisation process unfolded. By contrast Thompson's plebeians are a wide, varied, diverse group with a pre-existing lively set of norms, values and culture. It was with this world view, or as later Raymond Williams would describe it a 'structure of feeling', that those experiencing industrialisation tried to make sense of the modernity unfolding around them.[3]

Thompson draws our attention to obsolescence very directly in the passage above. He describes the 'obsolete hand-loom weaver' and in doing so makes the link again between the eclipse of technology on the one hand, and the marginalisation of a trade and custom embodied in the workers experiencing change on the other. Thompson's narrative in *The Making of the English Working Class* shows the visceral way in which this form of emergent capitalism was brutally enforced on the nascent working class; from the enclosure movement, restrictive labour laws and the time discipline of the factory. But Thompson also illustrates the myriad tactics of resistance employed by this same group in their response to change. In his later study of William Blake, Thompson describes Blake as 'bearing witness to the beast', a powerful metaphoric description of the rapacious capacity of the new economic system seemingly sweeping all before it.[4]

Part of this re-casting of history and the knowledge it can encompass is a recognition of an industrial past. This is no accident. Over the last four decades or so many industrialised countries like Britain, the United States and those in Western Europe have experienced what has become known as deindustrialisation. This is the systematic stripping out of productive industrial capacity and the shift to an emphasis on the service sector and the tertiary economy. This has been a brutal process of industrial decline and change. Here again there is often a linkage between the technological developments that renders old plant and machinery obsolete and the social relationships and networks beached by the process of change. At times some of the more critical commentators including politicians have sought to blame redundant workers for their own misfortune. In this narrative it was the greed of employees and their unions which financially undermined the plant's future. New investment was not injected into a particular place because of the lack of flexibility or adaptability of the workforce to the march of change. This systematic blaming of the victims of change spills over after closure when former industrial workers are chastised for failing to gain new employment in new industrial, or more likely the service sector employment brought in to depressed areas. Former industrial workers then carry the burden of obsolescence in multiple ways. They have to live with the failure of plant closure on 'their watch'. Their skills and knowledge, often the source of deep-seated pride and identity, are similarly deemed redundant, and even at times as liabilities. Those former identities and embodied practices somehow taint their owners with negative connotations, marking them as outdated and out of

step with the mainstream. One supervisor in an interview with me about older workers dismissed some in her charge as 'Jurassics', they were dinosaurs unable and unwilling to adapt to a new order.[5] Individuals and whole communities are portrayed as irredeemably out of sync with a changed world. Finally, and connected to these other features, workers from former industrialised areas are portrayed as lacking entrepreneurialism, the ability to adapt and change in a fast moving world. It is almost as if the very features prized in an older industrial economy – dependency, commitment and diligence, the basis of the industrial work ethic – are now liabilities, obsolete fetters on change.

However, obsolescence is socially constructed and created by humans just as surely as technology and social relations are. In his recent fascinating book *Obsolescence: An Architectural History* Daniel Abramson examines how the idea of obsolescence appears, evolves, and changes over time as a result of financial imperative, changing technology or simple shifts in fashion. Abramson argues that our modern notions of obsolescence arise out of a nineteenth century need to square the desire to exploit value in investment with the rapid development of new technology and techniques. Here the urban environment of the US city was at the forefront of debates about the philosophy of obsolescence, for it was in the great metropolitan areas such as Chicago and New York, where novel materials such as concrete and reinforced steel, and new technologies such as elevators and escalators allowed developers and architects to reach ever upwards. In decade after decade in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the seemingly impossible dream of ever greater building height was realised, and just as quickly transcended by still taller skyscrapers. But this ability to rapidly build higher and higher hit the issue of what was to happen to those still new buildings which sat on valuable real estate, but which were now architectural pygmies. The answer, Abramson claims, lay in the development of accountancy practice and governmental tax policy which allowed the capital cost of existing buildings to be written down far more quickly than hitherto. Therefore obsolescence is not simply about changing fashion, technology or raw materials but is the combination of these factors with conscious and deliberate decisions aimed at justifying and intensifying redundancy – what economist Joseph Schumpeter memorably described as 'creative destruction'. As Abramson notes early in his study:

Part of architecture's ideological work in capitalist society involves helping people acculturate to capitalism's unsettling demands.[6]

Part of what makes Abramson's book so interesting is the range of ways in which various actors embrace, fight or seek to head-off architectural obsolescence. While accountancy in the early part of the twentieth century was the handmaiden of change, later in the century architects and developers sought to cheat obsolescence by incorporating into their designs measures of future proofing such as buildings with few if any fixed load-bearing walls. These were interiors which could respond to changes in form and function. Of course while noble as this ideal architectural approach undoubtedly was, in the medium and long term it too was undermined by fashion and new technology, in particular the rise of new information technologies which were undreamed of, and thus uncatered for, in the utopian designs of the 1950s and 1960s.

So what then are the topographies of the obsolete? The papers in this collection reflect on ideas of place, skill, region, productivity and material object. They beg a series of questions about this on-going experience of change in modernity and challenge us to confront that experience of change very directly. What I take from this phrase 'topographies of the obsolete' is the notion of varieties of redundancy and abandonment. It conjures up images of places, people and things left behind and made marginal. But as I have argued here these landscapes are the product of human endeavour, whether that be active erasure or passive indifference the obsolete remains with us, it exercises a presence even in its redundancy.

In recent years scholars of deindustrialisation have been on a quest to understand industrial loss and the meanings attached to it. To use a memorable phrase they have moved 'beyond the body count' approach to industrial closure with its close focus on the jobs and the loss of productive capacity.[7] While not down playing the very real suffering caused by such events those seeking a fuller understanding of deindustrialisation look to cultural, social and political manifestations of loss, or perhaps they seek to understand industrial decline as a process rather than a discrete event. This approach speaks to what American literary scholar Sherry Linkon describes as 'the half-life of deindustrialisation'. This evocative phrase attempts to capture the way industry and the culture it spawned continues to exercise an influence and presence in the present. As Linkon puts it:

People and communities are shaped by their histories – by experience, by memory, and by the way the economic and social practices of the past frame the structures, ideas, and values that influence our lives long after those practices have ceased to be productive.[8]

The past, she contends, remains both as a source of pride and pain and it is the tension between these that leads to a selective reworking of the past in the present. As she continues:

Thus, even as the active memory of industrial labor may fade, the landscape, social networks, local institutions, as well as attitudes and cultural practices bear the stamp of history.[9]

Crucially this impact is felt both on those who directly experienced industrial culture, and also those subsequent generations who grew-up, or were born after mass closings. As Linkon says, 'Deindustrialization didn't so much affect them as define them.' Explaining:

Deindustrialization has a half-life, and like radioactive waste, its effects remain long after abandoned factory buildings have been torn down and workers have found new jobs. … We see the half-life of deindustrialization not only in brownfields too polluted for new construction but also in long-term economic struggles, the slow, continuing decline of working-class communities, and internalized uncertainties as individuals try to adapt to economic and social changes. It is not yet clear how long it will take for the influence of deindustrialization to dissipate, but the half-life of deindustrialization clearly extends well into the twenty-first century.[10]

In my work I have tried to explore how we might apply Linkon's ideas, derived from a reading of fictional writing emerging from reflections on industrial change, to the study of the real world. This notion of the half-life is a richly evocative phrase which is made even more useful when explored in conjunction with other metaphoric conceptualisations of industrial loss. So for example two of the authors in this collection Tim Edensor and Alice Mah have used ideas of abandonment, in Mah's case the idea of 'ruination' to think about loss and the meanings attached to it.[11] Similarly Geoff Bright in his study of the legacy of the coal industry in the Yorkshire coalfield communities uses the work of American Sociologist Avery Gordon and her notion of social hauntings.[12] For Bright the value of the phrase comes from its ability to capture the re-emergence, the bubbling up of previous ideas, and attitudes which were believed to only have an existence in the past. Social hauntings allows us to make sense of the re-emergence of structures of feeling associated with the past, the industrial past, the obsolete past.

In her piece here, Maris Gillette says that 'the cities eschew most discussion of deindustrialisation', highlighting a process of industrial editing by those in charge of regeneration. There is a tendency, she suggests, towards nostalgia when it comes to the past. It is the distant past that is remembered, rather than messier,

more recent times. The collapse of industry is an inconvenient truth which is best forgotten, the heyday of industry, when things were good is the memory worth preserving – as if the two were not umbilically connected. Clues as to how we might link these two histories is reported in Jake Kaner's piece where he describes the digital visual archiving of material culture across the years, both in its pomp, and now in its obsolete degradation. Finally, Malcolm Miles argues in his essay for the power of ruins to provoke, to stimulate and disturb. Their essential role is to remind and give pause. Their existence is a visible presence of the complexity of both the past and the present, and that in aiming to obliterate the uncomfortable past we risk cutting ourselves from a greater understanding of that complexity, something, whether we like it or not, we need to confront.

The power of each of these ideas, ruins, ruination, half-life, ghostly hauntings and the others in this collection surely lies in their individual and collective capacity to offer new insights into the process of industrial change. Each of the phrases captures a different aspect of the experience of change and the idea of obsolescence is both enriched by them and in turn enriches them. For what we have in these combined ideas is the understanding of a thing, or a culture, or a place which has been passed over, been bypassed and made marginal. But obsolescence also speaks powerfully to a continuing presence of something made redundant. Just because its use value has disappeared it does not follow that the thing itself disappears straight away. Just as E.P. Thompson was interested in those left behind by industrialisation his argument was that their ideas and culture continued to actively shape the eighteenth and early nineteenth century present as well as the future. So when we talk of an industrial structure of feeling or an industrial culture being made marginal or obsolete we are in part discussing a pre-industrial plebeian culture which survives under the surface of the industrial. Obsolescence from multiple pasts continues to shape our experience of the present and the trajectory of the future.

1   Marx, K., and Engels, F., *The Communist Party Manifesto*, Penguin, London, 1967, p. 83.
2   Thompson, E.P., *The Making of The English Working Class*, Penguin, London, 1963, p.12.
3   Williams, R., *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977.
4   Thompson, E.P., *Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.
5   Strangleman, T., and Roberts, I., 'Looking Through the Window of Opportunity: The Cultural Cleansing of Workplace Identity', *Sociology*, Volume 33, Number 1, 1999, pp. 47–67.
6   Abramson, D., *Obsolescence: An Architectural History*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 2016, p. 7.
7   Cowie, J., and Heathcott, J., (eds.), *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialisation*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2003.
8   Linkon, S., 'The Half-Life of Deindustrialisation: Twenty-First Century Narratives of Work, Place and Identity', unpublished presentation to Deindustrialization and Its Aftermath: Class, Culture and Resistance, Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling / Scottish Oral History Centre, Montreal, Quebec, May 1-4, 2014, p.1.
9   Ibid.
10 Ibid., p. 2.
11 Edensor, T., *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality*, Berg, Oxford, 2005; Mah, A., *Industrial Ruination, Community, and Place: Landscapes and Legacies of Urban Decline*, Toronto University Press, Toronto, 2012.
12 Bright, N. G., 'The Lady is Not Returning!': Educational Precarity and a Social Haunting in the UK Coalfields', *Ethnography and Education*, Volume 11, Number 2, 2016, pp. 142-157; Gordon, A., *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2008.

Flags erected in 2010 to celebrate Stoke-on-Trent's ceramic heritage

Topographies of the Obsolete: Exploring the Site Specific and Associated Histories of Post-Industry

But the greatest Pottery they have in this County, is carryed on at Burslem near Newcastle under Lyme, where for making their severall sorts of Pots, they have as many different sorts of Clay, which they dig round about the Towne, all within half a miles distance, the best being found nearest the coale, and are distinguish't by their colours and uses as followeth:

Bottle clay, of a bright whitish streaked yellow colour
Hard-fire clay of a duller whitish colour, and fuller intersperst with a dark yellow, which they use for their blackwares, being mixt with the Red blending Clay, which is of a dirty red colour
White-clay, so called it seems though of a blewish colour, and used for making yellow-colour'd ware, because yellow is the lightest colour they make any Ware of all which they call throwing clays, because they are of a closer texture, and will work on the wheel

Robert Plot, *The Natural History of Staffordshire*, Oxford, 1686

Pottery making in North Staffordshire pre-dates 1st century Roman occupation, but it wasn't until the mid 1600s that it began to rapidly emerge as a centre of production. The area's unique geological outcrops of clay and long flame coal ideal for firing meant that an abundance of materials essential to making ceramics could be gleaned with relative ease from the land's surface. By the 1720s, as tea drinking became firmly established, the market for potters had significantly widened bringing greater quantities of low price wares into the reach of the less affluent. Demand for objects that imitated expensive Chinese porcelains resulted in significant material innovations and new techniques that started to change the organisation and structure of early factories. Perhaps the most important development was that of a local workforce becoming increasingly skill-specialised through new divisions of labour, a process that was to result in the integration of a population into an industrial economy led by the manufacture of pottery.[1]

By 1800 Stoke-on-Trent paralleled China in terms of its ceramic output.[2] Alongside pioneers of the industrial revolution, such as Josiah Wedgwood and Spode, the Staffordshire potteries in the late 19th century comprised of hundreds of relatively small factories with more than 2,000 kilns firing millions of products a year. By 1938 half of the region's workforce worked in pottery factories with employment in 1948 peaking to an estimated 79,000 people.[3] To this day Stoke-on-Trent continues to be affectionately known as the 'Potteries' - one of the few British cities with a distinctive regional identity and heritage that remains synonymous with a particular industry. However, during the last 3 decades escalating foreign competition has destabilised Stoke-on-Trent's global monopoly, resulting in many businesses 'struggling to adapt to changing market demands or compete in both domestic and export markets'.[4] The imminent rise of cheap ceramic imports from China and other parts of East Asia in the 1990s encouraged many factories to outsource high-volume, low-mid cost production to these developing economies, where energy and direct labour costs were a fraction compared to those in North Staffordshire. This, coupled with company investment in production technology, proved hugely detrimental to what was then a 22,000 strong workforce.[5]

Mathew Rice, co-director of the Emma Bridgewater pottery, describes Stoke-on-Trent as an 'industrial city in a post-industrial age'.[6] The very term 'post-industrial' remains contentious when applied to North Staffordshire, as the region continues to provide one quarter of all ceramics-based jobs in the UK and employs around 7,000 people.[7] In recent years companies have begun to create new jobs and post increased profits[8] but, beyond this increasing optimism, the aftermath of the

city's fluctuations in global fortune remains commonplace. Many sites associated with historic manufacture have closed and been demolished to the extent that the region is in danger of becoming alienated from the very histories that created it. Yet, somewhat belatedly, Stoke-on-Trent has started to recognise the cultural value of its diminished, but still substantial, architectural legacy and the role that heritage can play in its economic revival.

The original Spode factory has recently gained momentum in terms of its contemporary re-purposing and role in the cultural regeneration of Stoke-on-Trent. Spode was once a keystone of the city's industrial heritage, renowned for the perfection of under-glaze blue printing and fine bone china. When it closed in 2008 a unique opportunity was missed to preserve the recent history of a British factory that had continued production for over 230 years on its original site. Following its gutting and vandalism by asset strippers, Spode was acquired by Stoke-on-Trent City Council who granted access to the British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) - a cultural event that celebrates Stoke-on-Trent as a global centre for ceramic excellence - to host its exhibitions and events. In 2012 the BCB invited staff from Bergen Academy of Art and Design (KHiB) to develop a site-specific artistic response to the former factory as a key element of its 2013 exhibition programme. The resultant project, *Topographies of the Obsolete*, extended this invitation to partner universities and institutions in Denmark, Germany and the UK.

Following six on-site residencies, the interdisciplinary core of the project has evolved where more than 50 international artists, historians and theoreticians have worked in response to many of the factory's public and hidden spaces associated with production and retail. Participants encountered a mix of extreme dereliction, with the forces of nature reclaiming the building, alongside more ordered and attended areas, where artefacts and documents connected to the specific areas of production were left more or less intact. Artists employed a broad range of strategies that included mapping the site through various media, object appropriation and performative gesture. Many artistic entry points evolved out of a dialogue with former Spode employees, where individual and collective recollections provided intimate insights which greatly informed and helped to facilitate the reactivation of many spaces.

Methodical Approach

In the side light of rhetoric (..) one stresses that research is a dynamic process, constantly moving around getting to know a topology of the art. (..) 'the research process is also a matter of how the researcher moves between the topoi; this 'how' can be identified as method. Method in research means finding a path that is reliable. (..) In artistic research the paths between the topoi is not a well-worn one. More often it is a question of shaping, reshaping, risking, generating, looping, observing, collecting, adapting, picking, examining, re-examining, digging, excavating, giving up, memorizing, forgetting, repressing, provoking, destroying, destructing, breaking, adjusting, listening, tuning, experimenting, copying, imitating, noticing, playing, sampling, recycling, repeating, again and again and again and again- and testing out different combinations of those actions.[9]

Topographies of the Obsolete draws upon Aslaug Nyrnes' rhetorical method of identifying 'a landscape' and different 'topi' to ensure a multi-perspective approach. This method is suited to the project's diversity and to identifying the 'rhizomic' relationship between the individual and overriding project. In *Topographies*, artists/participants locate themselves in a 'topos' - in an already existing landscape/topic/theme - to open up a certain perspective. They then move around in the landscape finding other 'topoi' providing different perspectives on the same landscape. This mapping of the landscape is the research, and how the artists orientate themselves and find the different routes between these topoi is where the art and creativity occurs.

Before the initial residency at Spode there were no pre-constructed questions to direct this research. It remained fundamental that research questions evolved organically out of the experiences and processes that addressed the site. In this way the project was firmly rooted in the individual's practice, but it was also challenged and supported by its common platform. Reflective dialogue has been central to the sharpening, challenging, contextualisation and theoretical underpinning of shared points of interest.

Artistic Research Strands

Throughout each residency structured improvisation and reflection in and on action played an important role in developing the research foci. Via sustained periods of practice-led research, distinct and interconnected strands of discourse evolved to form the core of the overriding project. By honing in on the particular history, and the singularity of a post-industrial site, *Topographies* has developed a framework for addressing these strands as questions and approaches through artistic practice. These have encompassed the following:

The Socio-Economic/Post-Industrial Landscape as site

Since artists Hilla and Bernd Becher raised awareness around the state of deindustrialisation in Europe and North America, questions surrounding 'What happened to Industry? How does the process of deindustrialisation affect communities and landscapes?' were still being debated by the curators of the 2014 New Industries Festival in Germany.[10] Issues raised throughout this event point to the continuous interest and engagement with the process of deindustrialisation and the post-industrial landscape through artistic discourse to offer a plurality of understanding.

Working with such a 'loaded' post-industrial site such as Spode has given rise to many conflicting issues surrounding the role and responsibility of the artist working in a non-art space. Do artists destroy the archaeology of a site or do they contribute to another layer of production? As many artists came from Norway - one of the richest countries of the world - how can those from a position of privilege understand the devastation encountered by people whose livelihoods had been cut short? With a region in the throes of recovery from economic recession, what can the artist bring to such a place? Is the artist merely an apocalypse tourist cashing in on social misfortune with little long-term effect? These initial questions have come to inform a sub-strand of research 'the role of art and the role of the artist in a non-art space' surrounding the ethical practice of working site-specifically.

The Globalized Landscape of Ceramics

Ceramic production can claim one of the longest histories of global trade, whereby cultural exchange and influence between the east and the west is clearly evident through the migration back and forth of objects, patterns, styles, forms and functions. The import of Chinese porcelain and its subsequent imitation in 18th century Europe spurred a massive wave of artistic and technological advances. Ironically, with the impact of globalisation, production has largely shifted from these ceramic centres in Europe back to China. Working in Stoke-on-Trent, and on the former Spode site, opens up connections into so many layers of this cultural history. *Topographies* has critically engaged with narratives that explore the displacement of skill, collective labour and the transitions and migration of values in society at large, and offers a sharp contrast to the recent wave of Western artists' rampant exploitation of China as a site of low-cost fabrication.

Throughout its industrial history the physical landscape of Stoke-on-Trent has been morphed through both the extraction of its rich mineral wealth and the introduction of the canal system to support the growing infrastructure for trade. The city itself has evolved out of clusters of workers' housing surrounding the factories - houses and factories made of local clay - with a population inextricably

linked to ceramics through knowledge, labour and skill. One of *Topographies* long-term research questions has been to explore 'what is, and how can, ceramic and clay be understood as a material and subject in contemporary art practice'. Through this, a sub-research strand has evolved concerning 'site as a raw material'. Recent shifts towards re-materialisation in contemporary art offer new insights into how to understand and develop reflections around 'raw material'.[11] With specific focus on ceramic production in Europe, Topographies attempts to extend this dialogue through an expanded understanding of what a raw material can be. Apart from exploring the site's 'materiality' (i.e. the raw materials that constitute site and its related landscape), Topographies considers the human impact upon a site - the 'anthropocene' of industry - and how the residues of activities such as manufacture blend into and contribute to a new 'strata' of raw materials.

The Human Topography of Post-Industry

With the recent aftermath of Stoke-on-Trent's deindustrialisation the social, economic, and psychological impact on community and place remain omnipresent. As the Spode factory was such an important part of many people's lives, ex-employees and associates continue to be frequent visitors to the former factory. This was important in bridging the tensions between 'outsider' and 'insider'. Individual and collective recollections provided a first-hand account of the factory's operational infrastructure and its skilled labour. These intimate histories helped to inform responses and raised questions surrounding how human presence, history, and individual and collective memory constitutes 'place'.

Overwhelming remnants and traces of human occupancy - work clothing and personal belongings, tools and associated objects of labour - were frequent points of reference that were often appropriated directly into works. This material posed further questions regarding artistic responsibility - issues that continue to stimulate debates surrounding the ethics of certain gestures posed through this research and how and why this material should be used.

The Topography of Objects/Archives and the Artist/Archaeologist

As a comment to an increased interest for archives and historical material in contemporary art, curator Dieter Roelstraete asks 'Why dig?'.[12] Throughout *Topographies of the Obsolete* participants have reflected upon what to do with the past and questioned how these histories retain a contemporary resonance. Every choice to engage with the remnants of the post-industrial site of Spode has a meaning, a power, a rhetoric, so the 'archival impulse'[13] was one that could not be dismissed. Abandoned materials and artefacts salvaged from the site, and reconfigured through numerous strategies, posed many questions concerning value, taste and object history. Some responses involved improvised modes of assembly where immediate historical/functional reference points were discarded in favour of aesthetic harmonies and conflicts. Alongside this there was a re-contextualisation of the discarded into a range of fictive and narrative based scenarios. Sites of disorder were formally re-ordered as poetic gestures; both physical archives and digital data were appropriated to imbue new meaning. Throughout Topographies questions relating to how artists create, interfere with and expand the understanding of what is an archival practice and material continued to be explored.

The Topography of the Contemporary Ruin

Throughout history the ruin has been an important symbol in the respected traditions of art and culture. As a symbol of 'vanitas' and lost 'golden ages' it was a worthy relic to contemplate. In contemporary art, and particularly in photography, the contemporary ruin has become aestheticised and fetishised to the point of cliché – as 'decadent decay' or 'ruin porn'. Yet the ruin in art, and in contemporary art, has recently re-emerged as a prominent area of artistic discourse. 'Ruin Lust' curated by Brian Dillon[14] attempted to present a historical

and contemporary overview, but also made clear the (diffcult) condition/relation of the white cube/museum/institution to adequately represent site specificity. Through its direct engagement with the post-industrial sites *Topographies* attempts to contribute new innovations to address this situation.

One often associates the ruin to natural/man-made disasters (earthquakes, historic conflict etc.). 'Regeneration', which is suggested as a cure, is often inspired by fears of urban disorder. Contemporary ruins this way can be structures of resistance and social critique. Norwegian author Marit Eikemo has commented 'don't we need the (contemporary) ruins to actually understand the trauma that has happened?'[15] One factor *Topographies* has explored within the contemporary ruin is the sense of shame and denial that local communities and authorities have associated with it. It is not a relic to contemplate but a constant reminder of a failed environment – a blot on the landscape that would be better off if all traces of it were eradicated. North Staffordshire, like many cities that were once pioneers of the Industrial Revolution, has a high volume of vacant buildings, some with major historic significance. However the listing of historic buildings does not necessarily protect them, especially if they are regarded as obstacles in the throes of urban renewal. The costs of renovating and logistics of repurposing such buildings have in many cases resulted in slow ruination, leading to the point of being unfit or unsafe for preservation, and inevitable demolition. This process of transformative decay, and the new materialities that yield from how nature undoes the manmade, remained a key point of departure for many artists and their responses to Spode.

As a physical framework for art and culture, post-industrial ruins around the globe have been transformed into art sanctuaries - as refurbished galleries, museums, art academies, studios and artist-led initiatives. Plans to culturally redevelop the fabric of North Staffordshire's post-industrial landscape are well on their way, but this process is a top-down initiative implemented by local government that often results in sanitised projects unrelated to culture. Since its inception *Topographies* has been very much part of the bottom-up culture-led strategy, initiated by artists in partnership with other organisations with converging interests. It has contributed to the repurposing of the Spode site's unused/decaying industrial buildings in ways that retain a concrete link with their past, thus connecting and engaging its immediate community. By occupying, using and bringing activity to Spode, each participant's very presence has played an important part in its regeneration, offering a critical voice in the narration and understanding of the site.

Summary

Topographies of the Obsolete evaluates whether these strands have the potential for new understanding and knowledge concerning the post-industrial landscape through artistic enquiry. Integral to the project context is an expanded understanding of contemporary art that intersects other expressions and disciplines such as literature, philosophy, museum/archival practice and social/economic sciences. In *The Return of The Real,*[16] Hal Foster suggests that art and theory have become grounded in the materiality of actual bodies and social sites. Through *Topographies* both art and the artist remain in constant negotiation with 'the real' to expose, reinterpret and reactivate the complex social, economic and cultural histories of the post-industrial landscape. *Topographies* questions how ceramic and clay can be understood as both material and subject in contemporary art practice through its associated cultural, historical, economic, sociological, and geological (to name but a few) perspectives. This interdisciplinary approach has contributed to a greater understanding of how to address a post-industrial site both artistically and ethically, and encourages the need for greater ethical scrutiny in ceramics 'post-studio' situation - a discourse that remains relatively unexplored.[17]
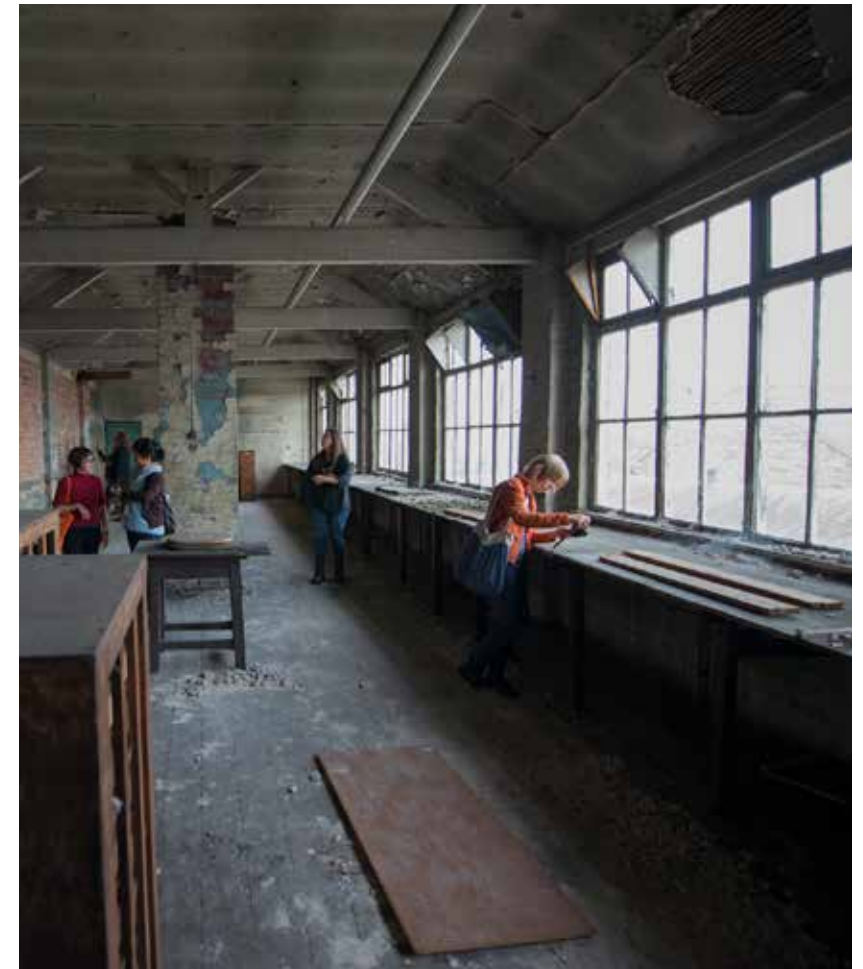
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Maris Gillette

Former Royal Doulton Nile Street Factory, Stoke-on-Trent in the process of demolition 2008

Deindustrialisation and Heritage in Three Crockery Capitals

Jingdezhen (China), Stoke-on-Trent (England) and East Liverpool (United States) are three 'crockery cities' that have claimed to be the 'world capital of ceramics.' Jingdezhen, in Jiangxi Province, was the first, becoming known as the 'porcelain capital' during the 15th century, after the emperor had built a ceramics manufactory to produce porcelain for the court.[1] From the 15th through the 18th century, Jingdezhen produced huge quantities of ceramics for the emperor, Chinese elites and ordinary people, and international consumers in East and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, and Africa. But in the 18th century, Stoke-on-Trent challenged Jingdezhen's dominance. Industrial innovations such as the use of steam engines for clay production and mechanical reproduction for surface decoration led Stoke to claim the 'world capital of ceramics' title.[2] Our third crockery city, East Liverpool, Ohio, called itself the 'Staffordshire of America,' and 'Pottery Capital of the World' at the end of the 19th century. East Liverpool never matched the production of Jingdezhen or Stoke-on-Trent, but the city grew from a single ceramics workshop in 1840 to manufacturing more than half of the United States' ceramics by 1880.[3] All three crockery cities deindustrialised during the 20th century, with the attendant large-scale layoffs, abandoned production sites, and economic decline for the host cities. After deindustrialisation, residents and government officials in Jingdezhen, Stoke, and East Liverpool promoted ceramics heritage.

Here I sketch the cities' intertwined histories of deindustrialisation and their heritage movements. I identify factors that led to industrial decline, and look for similarities and differences in their efforts to promote heritage. I begin with Jingdezhen, where I have conducted ethnographic and historical research since 2003. I then turn to Stoke-on-Trent, where I began research in 2013.[4] My investigations have focused on textual sources, plus observations from two short visits during November 2013 and November 2015. East Liverpool, Ohio, is the final site that I discuss, drawing on archival and secondary sources that I collected between August 2015 and March 2016.

In all three places, government policies shaped ceramics manufacturing, deindustrialisation, and heritage. Although there are some significant differences, particularly between China's porcelain capital and the English and American sites, all three crockery cities experienced the negative consequences of 'free trade' agreements and transnational manufacturing corporations which took ceramics production out of Jingdezhen, Stoke-on-Trent, and East Liverpool. Officials and policies in all three places have promoted the turn to heritage as an economic and social strategy after the loss of manufacturing. Finally, the three crockery cities share amnesia about their modern industrial history, preferring to showcase an undifferentiated past characterised by handicraft and early manufacturing.

Jingdezhen's Deindustrialisation(s)

The name 'Jingdezhen' is synonymous with porcelain in China, and well known in other parts of Asia. While many Europeans and Americans do not know the city's name, they do know its blue-and-white porcelain, which traveled all over the world.[5] Jingdezhen was home to the imperial manufactory and made large quantities of wares for the imperial government during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1911). From the time that the imperial manufactory was established — and I would argue, even before — China's central government devoted copious resources to Jingdezhen's ceramics production.[6] The imperial court wanted high quality porcelain, and did not care how much it cost to get it. Government investment led the city to develop a highly specialized workforce that produced wares of high quality, varied types, and large quantities.

Stoke-on-Trent began to take British custom away from Jingdezhen during the

18th century, after Josiah Spode and others developed Bone China and soft paste bodies in their attemps to imitate Oriental porcelain. During the 19th century, the Chinese government was attacked by the British, the Japanese, and other European nations, for territory, trading and manufacturing rights, and exemption from Chinese taxes. A number of domestic groups, of whom the Taipings are best known, rebelled. The Qing disinvested from Jingdezhen and imposed heavy taxes on its porcelain, which had historically been a big money-maker, to pay for its wars. As the Qing lost ground, officials allowed the sale of British, Japanese, and German ceramics in China at lower prices than Jingdezhen wares.[7]

How ceramics manufacturing was organized in Jingdezhen also played a part in the decline of the porcelain capital. Jingdezhen fell into a 'high-level equilibrium trap,' to borrow Mark Elvin's phrase. Already by the Ming Dynasty, Jingdezhen ceramists had devised an unmechanised, Fordist system of ceramics production: a totally hand crafted process with an advanced division of labour that succeeded in quality, quantity, and variety. While Stoke-on-Trent and other ceramics manufacturers in Europe and Japan were mechanizing during the late 18th and 19th centuries, Jingdezhen's potters resisted any changes to how they worked. The end result was that they were outproduced and outsold in their own home province, as well as elsewhere in China and around the world.

After the Chinese Communist government took over Jingdezhen in April 1949, they prioritised rebuilding its ceramics industry. For most of the next fifty years, officials invested in rebuilding, expanding, and mechanising Jingdezhen's porcelain manufacture. They created a large state-run ceramics industry that made decorative, daily use, architectural, industrial and sanitary porcelain.[8] This industrial expansion occurred as part of China's planned economy. The government determined production and managed distribution. Officials focused on putting out large quantities of high quality wares and providing employment to Jingdezhen citizens. Market demand did not affect operations. At various periods between 1949 and the mid-1990s, government policies stimulated demand for ceramics. For example, during the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s, officials promoted eating in public canteens, and there was an enormous need for ceramic rice bowls and soup spoons — much more, in fact, than Jingdezhen could produce.[9]

Government policies were responsible for Jingdezhen's 20th century industrial expansion, and government policies caused its deindustrialisation. In November 1993, China's leaders decided to privatise the nation's state and collective sector as part of the market reforms that Deng Xiaoping began during the 1980s. In Jingdezhen, this meant getting out of porcelain manufacturing entirely, leaving the state and collective ceramics factories to transform into market enterprises. These factories had been part of the planned economy and were not set up to be profitable. They had huge workforces, large numbers of pensioners, and no experience with sales. When the government told them to privatise, they collapsed. They could not compete with new, small-scale, high-tech ceramics factories in Chaozhou and Foshan, Guangdong, that private entrepreneurs had founded with significant assistance from local officials.[10]

Between 1995 and 1998, Jingdezhen's 10 state-owned porcelain factories, 4 city-owned factories, and hundreds of collective factories went bankrupt and shut down, and 60,000 to 100,000 workers lost their jobs.[11] Across the country, thousands of state and collective factories collapsed (Fig.1). In 1995, the state sector employed 44 million workers in manufacturing. By 2002, this figure had dropped to 15.5 million.[12]

Some of Jingdezhen's laid-off workers turned to private production of art porcelain, serving China's growing middle class consumers. Some found temporary jobs in small private enterprises that made dinnerware, which typically specialised in a single ware type (e.g. rice bowls). Others opened food stalls, ran

motorcycle taxis, or could not find work. Some looked for jobs in tourism and heritage. A local professor of ceramics history informed me that in 2003 tourism surpassed porcelain as Jingdezhen's top industry. Statistics show that the number of tourists visiting the porcelain capital rose from 100,000 in 2000, to 6,690,000 in 2006, to 20 million in 2012. Jingdezhen earned 12.52 billion yuan from tourism in 2012, more than four times as much as the 2.88 billion yuan that the city earned from ceramics.[13]

State-led Heritage

While the government privatised industry, national leaders promoted tourism. They mandated more vacations for Chinese workers, encouraged the construction of tourist facilities, increased transportation services, and provided funding for localities like Jingdezhen.[14] Jingdezhen officials received 300 million yuan to 'preserve the porcelain capital' and boost tourism. They used the money to widen roads, improve flood-water management, and demolish large tracts of the city, including a number of former porcelain factories. The first to be torn down was the Flourish Jingdezhen Porcelain Factory. All facilities were demolished in 2000 and the grounds turned into a fruit and vegetable market. Several other porcelain factories were razed afterwards and redeveloped as housing and retail space. Some former state and collective factories were not sold; instead, portions were rented to private entrepreneurs. One of the most successful was the former large collective Sculpture Factory, where private entrepreneurs rented space to make and sell art porcelain.

At the time the central government started pushing tourism in the late 1990s, Jingdezhen had a Ceramics Museum, the Hutian Ancient Kiln, and the Ancient Kiln Folk Customs Museum.[15] The Ceramics Museum was founded in 1954 as part of the campaign to promote new socialist art.[16] It was turned into a factory during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), but in 2002 returned to the Ministry of Culture. The museum had many pieces from Jingdezhen, but its purview was national and extended to China's earliest pottery. The Hutian Ancient Kiln was an archaeological excavation of a Five Dynasties (907-960) kiln that opened to the public in 1973. Hutian received new landscaping and tourist facilities in the 2000s. The Ancient Kiln Folk Customs Museum was a reconstructed potting workshop that officials built from the remnants of 19th century workshops during the late 1970s. To promote tourism there, officials hosted ceremonial worship of the Ceramic God, kiln-relightings, and concerts by an orchestra of porcelain instruments.[17] They removed a large porcelain sculpture of the young Mao Zedong.

Jingdezhen's imperial manufactory had operated from 1369 until 1910, except when China was at war. In the late 1990s, the central government approved an archaeological excavation of the site. The former imperial kiln opened as a tourist attraction in 2003. Adjacent to the site officials built an 'Old Street' (laojie), a row of retail storefronts constructed in an architectural style reminiscent of elite buildings in 'traditional' China, with an old-fashioned gate at the street's entrance.

To promote tourism, local officials also reinvigorated the annual Ceramics Fair, a trade event that they had begun in 1990. In 2004 they asked Francis Chen, the CEO of a Taiwanese art porcelain company with a factory in Jingdezhen (Franz Porcelain, founded 2002), to host 'porcelain manufacturers from all over the world at a grand, one-of-a-kind celebration to mark the 1000th anniversary of the establishment of Jingdezhen as the porcelain-making city in China.'[18] Guests were given 'a trip back in time to the city in the Jiangxi region where the art of porcelain manufacturing originated,' and the opportunity to exhibit their products at the fair during the millennium celebration. Despite the millennium celebration, in April 2004 China's National Light Industry Association and the China Ceramic Industrial Association took the title of porcelain capital away from Jingdezhen and awarded it to the city of Chaozhou (Guangdong). Chaozhou's market-era porcelain

companies had far surpassed Jingdezhen in ceramic output and sales.[19]

Private Initiatives

While government officials led the heritage movement in Jingdezhen, three private entrepreneurs developed artists' colonies where Chinese and international ceramists could live and create works, while enjoying the opportunity to visit tourist destinations. The first to open, in 1998, was the Sanbao International Ceramic Art Institute. In 1993, ceramic artist Jackson Li purchased three of four residences in a small village near Jingdezhen called Four Family Village (*Si Jia Li*). He redesigned them into an artists' colony that opened five years later. Li got the idea of creating a site for artistic residencies during his MFA studies at Alfred University in New York; at the time, the concept was unknown in China. Jingdezhen officials supported Li's Sanbao International Ceramic Art Institute by paving a road to the colony and halting local development that conflicted with Li's plans. In turn, Li regularly invited government officials to visit Sanbao, and brought his foreign guests to attend city events at officials' behest.

Li told me he intended Sanbao to give visitors a taste of the traditional Chinese scholar's life, by living in a beautiful wooden house simply furnished with traditional chairs, where residents could hear the pounding of stream-powered water hammers crushing porcelain stone, and see the forest, hills, rice fields, village houses, and sheds where farmers processed china stone to sell to urban potters. Li said that he wanted Sanbao to be 'nostalgic', evoking a 'way of life that people have had for 1,000 years.' Visiting artists received clay and the use of workshop facilities and kilns, and Sanbao's staff introduced them to local potters who would facilitate their projects. Visiting ceramic artists quickly adapted to Jingdezhen's tradition of specialised ceramics production by contracting out various parts of the creation of their art to skilled local ceramists. For example, an artist who wanted to paint giant ceramic vessels would not form the vessels herself, but instead contract with a local entrepreneur who would make them for her. This allowed her to make works faster, more cheaply, and of better quality, since she did not have to perfect every stage of production herself. Artists from Australia, Canada, China, Finland, Hong Kong, Korea, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, the United States, and elsewhere lived and worked at the Sanbao International Ceramic Arts Institute.[20]

Li and his staff also took Sanbao's guests to see local sights. For example, in 2003 and 2004, Sanbao residents visited the newly-opened Imperial Kiln, a 15th-century elite's house, the Ancient Kiln Folk Customs Museum, the Hutian Ancient Kiln Site, the Jingdezhen Ceramics Institute exhibition galleries, the former Gaoling mine, the historic town of Yaoli (which included the Cheng lineage house), and the historic remains of a commercial kiln in Raonan. Li organized a concert of Jingdezhen's porcelain orchestra at Sanbao, and a demonstration of traditional handicraft methods. He also took his guests to the Hutian Ancient Reproductions Factory, a small private factory that specialised in making porcelain wares taller than two metres. The Hutian Ancient Reproductions Factory was not set up to be a tourist destination (Fig. 2): it was a working porcelain factory. But since Li regularly referred his artists there, the factory's owners were more than happy to allow groups of visiting artists from Sanbao to walk around. This was typical of Jingdezhen's small-scale porcelain workshops and factories. They did not offer regular tours, but visitors could show up and look around, and they might or might not be asked to leave. Visitors could also find a contact to arrange a tour, in which case the contact would show them around. As of 2010, the Jiayang Porcelain Factory, another producer of antique replicas, was the only local enterprise with a formal showroom, a collection of historic porcelain, and a classroom facility. Jiayang's owner had been a porcelain appraiser before opening his antique replica factory. He used his collection of historic porcelain and shards to teach a course in porcelain appraisal.

Fig. 2. A Group of International Artists at Sanbao Visit the Hutian Ancient Reproductions Factory, 2004

Two other private entrepreneurs opened sites for artistic residencies after Jackson Li. In 2004, the sculptor Liu Yuanchang opened his studio to visiting artists, and in 2005 ceramist Carolyn Cheng opened the (Jingdezhen) Pottery Workshop for residencies. Both Liu Yuanchang's studio and the Pottery Workshop were located in the former large collective Sculpture Factory. As with Sanbao, Liu Yuanchang's and the Pottery Workshop's visitors could make works and have cultural and heritage experiences. For Pottery Workshop guests, students from the nearby Jingdezhen Ceramics Institute served as 'ambassadors for their town and their craft,' showing the foreign artists around.[21] By 2015, more than 20,000 'Jingdezhen drifters' (*Jingpiao*), including 1,200 foreign artists, regularly visited the city to 'soak up the atmosphere,' 'set up their own porcelain brands,' and establish studios.[22] A long list of international artists, including Ai Weiwei, Felicity Aylieff, Ole Lislerud, Wayne Higby, Barbara Diduk, Robin Best, and Vipoo Srivalasa, had hired Jingdezhen potters, mould-makers, glazers, painters, kiln masters, and other porcelain workers to help them create works.[23]

Stoke-on-Trent's Deindustrialisation

North Staffordshire's abundant clay and coal have been used for pottery since the 14th century, but the region's rise to global prominence began during the early 18th century (Fig. 3). Several factors led Stoke-on-Trent to become a ceramics powerhouse. The single most important was undoubtedly the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution began in Britain because it was politically stable and a leading colonial power, which meant both resources to extract and markets for finished goods, and had large coal and iron deposits. There is no question that private individuals played a huge role in creating Britain's Industrial Revolution, and local industries such as Stoke-on-Trent's ceramics manufacturing. However, state policy was also extremely important. Without the government creating and regulating markets, defining and protecting property rights, partnering with private individuals in undertakings such as new modes of transportation, and managing finance, the Industrial Revolution would not have happened as it did.[24]

Fig. 3. Pottery shraff amongst common surface clays exposed during an archaeological dig at the former Spode Factory site, Stoke-on-Trent, 2016

North Staffordshire's rise to global prominence depended on some key developments. Local entrepreneurs added flint to area clays to produce a whiter body in the early 18th century, which allowed the region to compete with Jingdezhen. Mid-century, Josiah Wedgwood began importing white clays from Cornwall, made possible by the canal system, and then the railroads, between 1777 and 1840. Wedgwood and Spode were amongst the first Staffordshire potteries to use steam engines as part of the ceramics production process. Spode was also a pioneer in the perfection of bone china, another method of producing white ceramics to compete with Jingdezhen. During the late 18th and early 19th century, many other new technologies were introduced to the manufacture of pottery, including power-driven potter's wheels, jigger-jolly machines, and mechanical means for surface decoration (lithography and tissue transfer printing from copper plate engravings).[25]

As the Industrial Revolution took hold the number of potteries in North Staffordshire increased dramatically. In 1710, the region had 50 potteries. By 1800 it had more than 150, and by 1900 at least 300 potteries. Between 1800 and 1900, its population increased more than ten-fold, growing from 20,000 in 1800 to 276,000 in 1931. By 1939, more than 70,000 residents – 43 percent of the area's local population – worked in ceramics.[26]

State policies were the socio-economic framework for Stoke-on-Trent's rise as a crockery city, and government policies played a part in the city's de-industrialisation. Unlike Jingdezhen, Stoke's ceramic industry declined slowly. An early blow was the Clean Air Act of 1956. Most of Stoke's pottery owners used

local coal for manufacturing, but with the Clean Air Act, factories had to change to gas and electricity.[27] Many small pottery owners closed their firms because they could not afford gas kilns.[28] The number of bottle kilns fell from 1,000 (1938) to 200 (1964). The city of Stoke began demolishing former potteries and working class areas.[29] The ceramics manufacturing workforce decreased to fewer than 58,000 workers in 1962.[30]

Larger companies pursued economies of scale by buying up the smaller potteries.[31] Royal Doulton was one of the first, acquiring ten companies in 1948. Not long after, Wedgwood began a multi-year policy of acquiring companies. Foreign companies also purchased Stoke pottery factories, facilitated by improvements in transportation and communication, and trade regulations. In 1966, for example, Crown Lynn Potteries of New Zealand purchased Royal Grafton (founded 1876), and the US Carborundum Company, makers of industrial ceramics, purchased Spode. During the 1970s, some companies began outsourcing production to places with cheaper labour, such as Mexico, India, Indonesia, and Thailand, and the potteries lost 20,000 jobs.[32]

De-industrialisation accelerated during the 1980s and 1990s as inexpensive ceramics from Chaozhou and Foshan flooded world markets.[33] Numerous potteries closed, went bankrupt, and were demolished (Fig. 4). By 1990, very few family-owned businesses remained in Stoke, and ceramics employment was down to about 22,000.[34] Today, Wedgwood, Stoke's most famous ceramics company still in existence, produces primarily in Indonesia. The Spode Works, founded by Josiah Spode, closed in 2008. Presently Stoke-on-Trent's ceramic industry employs about 7,000 people.[35]

Fig. 4. Former Royal Doulton Nile Street Factory, Stoke-on-Trent in the process of demolition 2008

Fig. 5. Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent, 2012

Collections, Museums, and Historic Preservation

Stoke-on-Trent's heritage movement began in the private sector, but the local government has played a sustaining role. As an early pioneer of the region's heritage movement, Josiah Wedgwood started collecting samples of his company's wares in the late 18th century. The Wedgwood factory has operated a museum on its premises ever since, except during World War II. In 1975, Wedgwood built a visitor centre, and in 1985 began displaying items from their old factory 'in addition to their ceramics. Wedgwood's museum collection was almost sold to pay off the company's debts in 2009, but a number of non-profit organisations, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and some businesses collaborated to purchase it.[36] In July 2015 Wedgwood opened the 'World of Wedgwood' after a £34 million pound redevelopment. Tourists to Stoke can visit the museum, take a factory tour, and eat in the Tea Room or Dining Hall.

Several museums in the region were founded during the 19th century. The Stoke Athenaeum and Literary and Philosophical Institution, created in 1846, spread knowledge about local manufacturers and included a museum, library, and newsroom.[37] The governments of the six towns that make up Stoke-on-Trent developed collections to inspire ceramics design.[38] After the towns merged into a single administration in 1910, the city government continued to operate these museums (the Hanley Museum and Art Gallery was the only one that stayed open during WWII). In 1956, Stoke's government opened a new museum called the City Museum and Art Gallery, later renamed the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, on the site of the former Bell Pottery Works. The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery has a large collection of Staffordshire ceramics, and some Chinese ceramics, but was never solely devoted to the ceramics industry.

During the 1960s, private individuals and ceramics companies - for whom heritage was a form of public relations work - began to preserve Stoke's industrial heritage *in situ*. In many cases, the city government later stepped in to manage sites that volunteers saved. Volunteers who wanted to restore the Caldon Canal began the first on-site industrial heritage preservation effort in 1963.[39] In 1964,

British ceramics designer Reginald G. Haggar urged the preservation of 'an old factory' for 'future generations to see how pots were made and decorated and fired in the days of Astbury and Whieldon and Wedgwood and Spode.'[40] His plea led to the Gladstone Pottery's purchase by Derek Johnson in 1974, on behalf of a charitable organisation founded to preserve it.[41] The Gladstone Pottery Museum officially opened in April 1975 as a heritage site dedicated to the Victorian pottery industry (Fig. 5). The museum removed the modernisations that had kept the pottery working until 1960. In 2015, reviewers on the travel website Trip Advisor ranked the Gladstone Pottery Museum Stoke's number one tourist attraction, stating that it provided 'a complete picture of working life in the Victorian pottery industry,' preserved 'some of the only bottle kilns left,' and was an 'important memorial to the industrial past.'

In 1976, the British government designated the Jesse Shirley Bone and Flint Mill, a 19th century mill that ground additives to whiten clay, as a 'scheduled ancient monument.'[42] According to the Etruria Industrial Museum website, local volunteers began working to restore the site in 1978. The mill officially opened to the public in 1991. The city operated it as part of the Etruria Industrial Museum for many years, but in 2010 announced plans to sell the mill to cut costs. A group of volunteers purchased the site in 2015, opening it to the public on six 'steaming weekends' per year. Like the Gladstone Pottery Museum, the Jesse Shirley Bone and Flint Mill focused on the Victorian period, aiming to give visitors 'the atmosphere of a manufactory of days gone by.'[43]

In 1985, more than 600 locals protested to prevent the demolition of the Longton Town Hall and Market Hall. Shortly thereafter, volunteers formed the Potteries Heritage Society to preserve historic buildings and encourage community involvement in 'decisions affecting local environments,' particularly as related to development. In 1999, the Potteries Heritage Society created the Potteries Preservation Trust to restore 10 bottle kilns in Stoke. The Staffordshire Environmental Fund provided £50,000 pounds for this effort.[45] Stoke's government began a three-year 'regeneration initiative' in 1992 with the help of the European Regional Development Fund. Officials used £2.8 million pounds 'to rejuvenate a run-down industrial area in the south of the city by creating a new, vibrant, and historically valuable quarter specialising in the ceramics industry.'[46] They converted an old school into a design centre, turned the Victorian Roslyn Works into craft workshop studios, restored portions of the Gladstone Pottery Museum, improved lighting, pavements, and landscaping, and ran a jobs training programme to promote employment in 'building and environmental skills, technical services, and administrative support services.'

In 2008, the Heritage Lottery Grant and a European Regional Development Fund Grant enabled the redevelopment of Enson Works in Longton (Fig. 6). Enson Works was a ceramics factory from 1948 to 1960, when its owner closed the pottery because he could not afford to replace his coal kilns with gas.[47] In 2008, the works became part of a new non-profit promoting low-energy retrofitting (the Centre of Refurbishment Excellence). The redevelopment included a small exhibition space and oral history project described as a 'time-capsule to store and share local people's memories from in and around Longton.'[48] Unlike the Gladstone Pottery Museum or the Etruria Industrial Museum, the Enson Works installation addressed Stoke's 20th century history. An animated video at the site attributed the Works' closure to the Clean Air Act of 1956. My research to date suggests that Enson Works is the primary industrial heritage site that explains any part of Stoke's deindustrialisation.

2012 saw another historic preservation endeavour, when the Prince's Regeneration Trust bought the Middleport Pottery and paid for the buildings' restoration, adding a café, suites for school groups, and a community centre.[49] Middleport opened in 1889 and is said to be 'the oldest continuously working

Fig. 6 Enson Works, Stoke-on-Trent prior to its redevelopment, 2008

china factory in the UK' and 'one of Britain's last working Victorian potteries.'[50] Burgess and Leigh, the company that originally operated Middleport, went bankrupt in 1999, and ceramics sellers Rosemary and William Dorling purchased the factory 'within 11 hours of [its] being obliterated forever,' as Rosemary Dorling told reporters.[51] Denby bought the Middleport Pottery in 2010, but could not fund restoration. The Prince's Regeneration Trust then stepped in to preserve 'a living and breathing part of British industrial history,' as the trust's chief executive Ros Kerslake put it, and stimulate regeneration in the area.

Heritage Festivals

In 1986, Stoke hosted Britain's second National Garden Festival, on a former iron and steel works that had closed eight years earlier, laying off 3,000 employees.[52] Land reclamation began in 1982 and cost £5 million pounds, as the site was highly contaminated. Some local ceramic companies paid for garden exhibits; for example, Twyford's created a cascade garden made from washbasins, bidets, toilets, and fountains. When the festival opened, the city hoped that it would attract 3.5 million visitors. Two million came. The National Garden Festival included a community programme scheme that brought temporary employment to about 1,000 people.

Stoke-on-Trent's most important ceramic heritage festival is the British Ceramics Biennial, a large, recurring festival that links Stoke's industrial history to contemporary ceramic art. Like so many of Stoke's heritage endeavours, the British Ceramics Biennial (BCB), depended on the private and state sectors, with the city providing key funding. From its inception, the BCB not only showcased new craft, design, and visual arts, but also 'reveal[ed] Stoke on Trent to the world.'[53] According to the city council, the first three biennials, in 2009, 2011, and 2013, brought 105,000 visits and £4 million to Stoke. 35,000 visitors, half of whom were from outside the region, attended the first biennial in 2009, and the event generated £2.2 million in economic impact.[54] Venues across the city hosted exhibits and the festival included a prize competition.

The original Spode factory produced ceramics continuously from 1759 until 2008, when owner Derby International Limited closed the plant. In 2010, the city of Stoke-on-Trent purchased the largely abandoned site for £3.75 million,[55] where it gradually became a space for cultural use via the BCB. Its 2011 event included exhibitions of international ceramics, new ceramics research, graduate student art, and a Crafts Council project called 'Firing Up,' intended to reinvigorate the study of ceramics in secondary schools.[56]

In 2013, the British Ceramics Biennial again used the Spode Works as its core location. This time, the biennial included the results of a site-specific artistic research project headed by artists Neil Brownsword and Anne Helen Mydland. Brownsword was born in Stoke-on-Trent and grew up in a landscape scarred by clay quarrying and coal mining. In the 1980s, he found employment as an apprentice at Wedgwood, and subsequently attended Further and Higher Education where he specialised in ceramic art. In his work, Brownsword takes Stoke's ceramics industry as his starting point. Whether creating his own ceramic forms, or putting together conceptual pieces in which he employs the skills of former ceramics workers, he never leaves post-industrial unemployment, redundancy, demolition, and waste far behind.

For the 2013 British Ceramics Biennial, Brownsword and Mydland invited over forty international artists to Stoke-on-Trent to create work. Many took the abandoned Spode Works as creative inspiration.[57] Their installations at the BCB pushed visitors to reflect on the decline of Stoke's ceramics industry (Fig. 7). Responses to the 2013 festival were mixed. While some saw the biennial as 'a symbol for Stoke's regeneration,' others said that it was an event which 'most people in the city don't understand, don't know is happening and will

Fig. 7. Andrew Brown, 5.11.2008, Topographies of the Obsolete: Vociferous Void (exhibition 27.09.2013 – 10.11.2013). 2013 British Ceramics Biennial, former Spode Works, Stoke-on-Trent

never attend.'[58] As in previous years, the 2013 biennial included community engagement efforts to 'rebuild a small part of the ceramics industry,' as the festival organisers described it.[59]

Stoke also hosted some smaller festivals, many of which highlighted the Victorian period in the potteries. These included the Longton Beer Festival at the Gladstone Pottery Museum, which has run annually since 2010; the Heritage Open Days Festival, which in 2015 included Middleport Pottery, Gladstone Pottery Museum, and the Enson Works, among other Victorian sites; and the Stoke-on-Trent Literary Festival at the Emma Bridgewater Factory.[60]

Factory Tours and Heritage Trails

During the 1970s, a number of Stoke's ceramics factories allowed tourists to visit their premises. These included Beswick, Dudson, Moorcroft, Royal Doulton, Spode, and Wedgwood.[61] In 1992, the city government initiated a bus service that visited a total of 25 local 'attractions,' jointly paid for by pottery manufacturers and the local government. Wedgwood was by far the most popular destination.[62] However bus patronage was modest, tourism acutely seasonal, and the service was discontinued after three years. By 1995, Stoke-on-Trent had five ceramics firms that ran museums or visitor centres and had gift shops, and nine that offered factory tours and had gift shops.[63] In 1999, Dudson opened the Dudson Centre, a museum in a bottle kiln.[64]

In 2015, most of Stoke's remaining ceramics factories offered factory tours. The Middleport Pottery factory tour was the most popular on Trip Advisor. One visitor wrote that the factory was 'more like a museum, takes you back to the time when everything was hand made and when quality mattered. Only it is NOT a museum but a working factory.' Another stated, 'this gem of a factory is a must visit, truly wonderful a step back in time in this beautiful old pot bank.' Yet another

declared, 'Middleport Pottery have successful [sic] created a Victorian pottery and it was fascinating to see all the processes involved.' Yet for at least one visitor, the potbank did not only call up the distant past, but also the industry's recent collapse: 'I found it rather moving to hear the voice of the pot stacker inside the bottle kiln; it was the kind of voice I remember from my childhood in Stoke, but so many of those factories are gone or lie in ruin.'

In 2005, Moorcroft Pottery organised with other Stoke potteries to encourage the local government to create a Ceramics Heritage Trail.[65] The trail promoted factory tours and shops, museums, and heritage sites through signage and a website. In 2012, the Urban Network for Innovation in Ceramics, a project financed by the European Regional Development Fund, Norway, Switzerland, and the 28 EU member states, included Stoke on a European tourist route celebrating ceramics heritage.[66]

Heritage Employment
Stoke's government did not specifically count the size of the workforce in the heritage sector, but officials did track tourism employment. 148,833 people were working in Stoke during 2012. Tourism employed the 'equivalent' of 5,770 full time people, or 3.87 percent of total working population.[67] By comparison, the figures for ceramics employment were 7,000, or 4.7 percent of total working population, and six percent of Stoke's working age population, or 9,500 people, claimed unemployment.[68]

While state records indicate that tourism employment equalled 5,770 full time positions, in fact many of these jobs were part-time and/or seasonal. In addition, the figures for tourism included jobs in the hospitality industry; the numbers employed at historic sites, museums, visitor centres, and for festival administration would be significantly smaller. Heritage employed fewer people than ceramics manufacturing in Stoke, and the ceramics workforce was a tenth of the size of the potteries' workforce when the industry was at its height.

The Rise and Fall of East Liverpool's Ceramic Industry
East Liverpool's beginnings as a 'Crockery City' date to the arrival of James Bennett, a potter from Derbyshire, England, in 1839.[69] At that time East Liverpool was a village with fewer than 500 residents. A group of local men offered to supply Bennett with clay at no charge and financing to set up a pottery, so he built a small one-kiln factory that opened in 1840. The following year, Bennett sent for three of his brothers to join him, all of whom were working in Stoke's ceramics industry.[70] After this, many English immigrants came to work in East Liverpool potteries. Factories were mechanising in Stoke and some potters lost their jobs.

Initially, East Liverpool's ceramics companies shipped their wares out on the Ohio River (Fig. 8). The town was connected to the railroad in 1857, and rail quickly became the dominant transportation method. The railroad also allowed potters to import white clay from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Illinois, and Missouri. This was an important factor in East Liverpool's industrial expansion, as the fashion was for white porcelain rather than coloured stoneware clays. East Liverpool grew into a city of 20,000, with 90 percent of wage earners working in the ceramics industry.[71] From 1840 to 1930, East Liverpool's potteries produced more than 50 percent of the US' ceramic output.

Federal government tariffs played an important role in East Liverpool's success.[72] When the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia incited American enthusiasm for porcelain, Stoke's pottery was high demand.[73] In 1870, 43 percent of all pottery sold in the US was made in England. However the United States Potters Association lobbied the US congress to impose tariffs on imported ceramics, and additional fees on shipping containers. These tariffs favoured American pottery
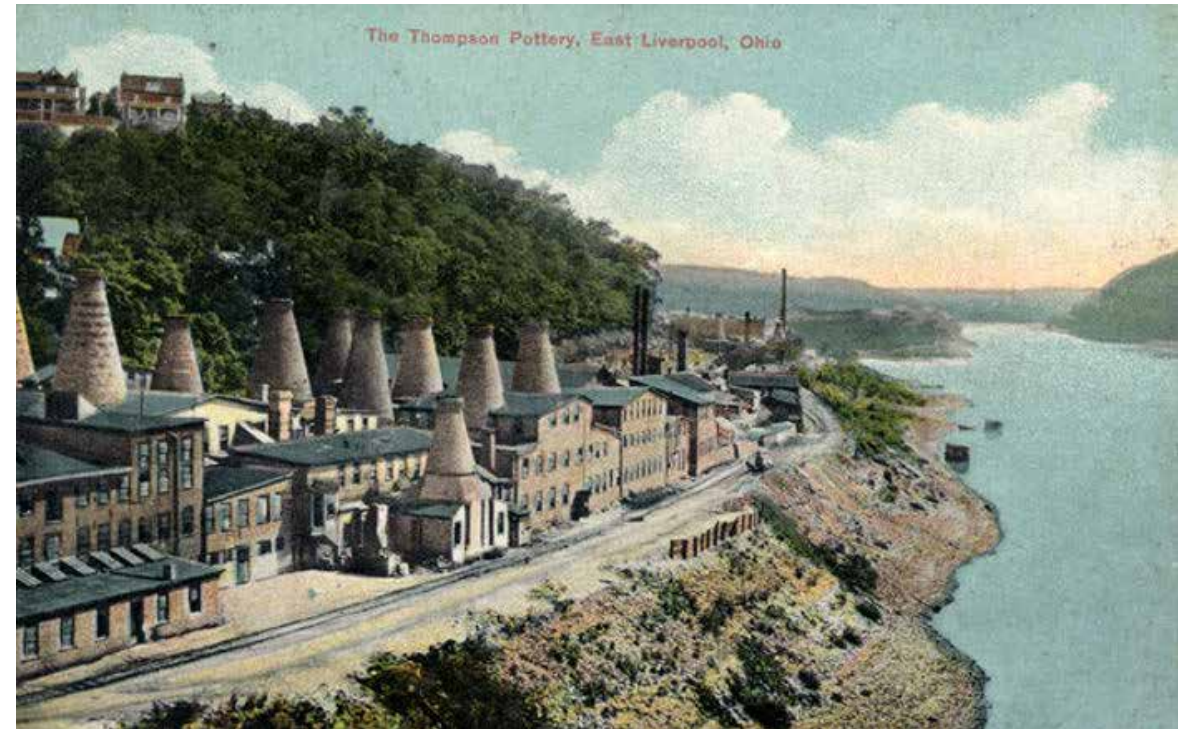

Fig. 8. Postcard of the Thompson Pottery, East Liverpool Ohio, which operated from 1868 to 1938

manufacturers. By 1900, only ten percent of all ceramics sold in the US were from England. East Liverpool Ohio, and its rival Trenton, New Jersey were major beneficiaries.

Some local historians date East Liverpool's decline to the 1920s, citing the Great Depression, 'Asian competition' (which would have been Japanese manufacturers), technological changes, particularly the shift from bottle to tunnel kilns, and the end of trade protectionism. Many plants closed, and some merged to form larger companies.[74] For example, Knowles Taylor and Knowles declared bankruptcy in 1931 and their four plants were torn down in 1935. Burford Brothers Pottery, Vodrey Pottery, and C.C. Thompson Pottery all closed in the 1930s and were demolished. Still, in the late 1930s, East Liverpool had between 7,000 and 8,000 people working in ceramics.[75] Even as late as the 1950s locals described East Liverpool as bustling with ceramics buyers.[76]

By 1965, only five pottery companies, employing 3,075 workers, remained.[77] By 1970, the number of working ceramists had dropped to 1,026. East Liverpool had fallen victim to the same problems as Stoke-on-Trent: large multinational firms seeking economies of scale and outsourcing production to Mexico, Indonesia, and India where labour was cheap. The local press reported in 1974 that all of the city's 300 bottle kilns except one had been destroyed.[78] Several landmarks had been razed too, including the Ceramic Theater, the Chester Bridge, the Central School, and the East Liverpool Pottery.[79] In the words of one resident, the 1970s and 1980s were 'somber decades for East Liverpool' as the city struggled to reinvent itself.[80] By 2015, only two ceramics companies remained in operation: American Mug and Stein (formerly Pioneer Pottery) and Homer Laughlin China, which operated the former Hall China facilities.

Museums and Historic Preservation
Most of East Liverpool's heritage initiatives were partnerships between the government and private individuals and groups. The earliest effort to mark East Liverpool's history as a ceramics capital was in 1967. Bill Vodrey, a descendent of the Vodrey Pottery owners, was president of the Ohio Historical Society's Board of Trustees. He argued that Ohio needed a ceramics museum, and

pushed for the former East Liverpool Post Office as the site.[81] In 1970, the State of Ohio bought the building, and after ten years East Liverpool's Museum of Ceramics opened. The museum had 300 items from 85 potteries, photographs, and information about the town and its people. According to local media, the museum 'depicts the human side of the pottery industry as well as the industry itself.'[82] The Museum of Ceramics received high marks on Trip Advisor in 2015. Visitors said that while 'East Liverpool town offers very little,' the Museum of Ceramics was 'well worth the trip,' 'an incredible treasure trove of Ohio AND ceramic history,' a 'nice way to understand the pottery industry,' and 'very informative.'

Fig. 9. The Goodwin Baggot kiln, East Liverpool Ohio, 2009. This is East Liverpool's oldest pottery structure and last remaining bottle kiln

During the 1970s and 1980s many buildings in East Liverpool were placed on the National Registry of Historic Buildings, although some of these were subsequently demolished (such as the Homer Laughlin house, which was torn down in 2013).[83] Included was the sole remaining bottle kiln, the Goodwin-Baggot kiln (Fig. 9). It was built in 1843, and is East Liverpool's oldest pottery structure. The other sites put on the registry were homes of local elites and civic and commercial buildings constructed at the turn of the 20th century when the city was flourishing. They included the Cassius Clark Thompson House (home of the head of C.C. Thompson Pottery), Richard L Cawood Residence, the Goodwin Knowles House (another pottery owner), Ikirt House, the city's Carnegie Library, the former YMCA, the Mary A Patterson Memorial Building, the Elks Club, City Hall, the Odd Fellows Temple, the Post Office, the Potters National Bank, and the Potters Savings and Loan.[84]

City officials, alumni of the former Central School, and other residents took steps to preserve and reconstruct some of East Liverpool's heritage during the 1990s and 2000s. The East Liverpool Alumni Association, formed 1987, donated money to rebuild the clock tower of the former Central School.[85] City officials installed light posts reminiscent of the 1920s. In 1998, residents founded a museum to celebrate the accomplishments of collegiate football coach Lou Holtz and other accomplished residents of the upper Ohio valley.[86] The Lou Holtz/ Upper Ohio Valley Hall of Fame was located in the former First National Bank building. Another initiative was the renovation and repurposing of the 1900 home of a Hall China pottery executive, which opened as a coffee house in 2010.

Factory Tours
By 1979, visitors to East Liverpool could take factory tours at Hall China and Homer Laughlin China.[87] The Hall China Company was founded in 1903 when the owners of a pre-existing pottery agreed to divide assets. The company adopted raw glazing, the porcelain manufacturing technique used in Jingdezhen, to make high quality white wares. Hall China offered factory tours throughout

most of its existence as an independent company.[88] In 2010, Homer Laughlin China purchased the company and continued to operate its East Liverpool plant. Facilities were open for tours in 2015.

Homer Laughlin China, best known as the maker of Fiestaware, was the East Liverpool area's oldest continuously operating ceramics company. The company began in East Liverpool in 1871. In 1903, Homer Laughlin expanded to Newell, West Virginia, immediately across the Ohio River from the city. For more than two decades, the company operated potteries on both sides of the river. Ohio operations were closed in the 1920s. The Homer Laughlin facilities were open for tours in 2015.[89]

East Liverpool's other functioning pottery in 2015 was American Mug & Stein. The company was on the verge of closure in 2011 when it received an order for 20,000 mugs from Starbucks Coffee.[90] Starbucks created a short video about American Mug & Stein which the company included on its website.[91] The video presents the firm as the heir to East Liverpool's tradition of 'artisanal' ceramics production. The small company did not offer tours.

Festivals and Clubs
East Liverpool hosted its first Pottery Festival in 1968, an annual event sometimes called the Tri-State Pottery Festival.[92] It included a ceramic doorknob-throwing competition, exhibitions of craftsmen at work, amusement rides, tours of pottery plants, garden displays (roses), a festival queen, and a Pottery Olympics in which teams from the potteries competed with each other in a cup toss, plate toss, wareboy race, platter jump and plate smash. Over the years, the festival also included an auction for ceramic collectibles, demonstrations of pottery decorating, a parade, a hamburger eating competition, a beard and moustache competition, carnival attractions, food, free music, a kids' pet show, and a classic car cruise.[93] By the second decade of the 21st century, few festival events were related to ceramics. The ceramic doorknob toss continued, and a new group, Plate Turners of the World Unite, hosted an annual luncheon.[94]

In 2007, the Museum of Ceramics held its first annual Kids Fall Funfest. The festival was for children aged 4 to 14. According to the museum's director, Sarah Webster Vodrey, 'the goal for the festival was to give children a feel for the history of pottery making.'[95] In 2015, volunteers gave demonstrations of plate designing and showed how historical potters wheels were used. The festival also included Claymation movies about the area's history and the 'rich culture of pottery.'

In 2015, a group of 'local ladies' studying pottery at the Museum of Ceramics in East Liverpool began an art festival. The festival showcased Ohio artists and hand-crafted art, not all of which was ceramics. Each vendor donated one piece of art for a 'Chinese auction' to benefit the Museum of Ceramics.[96]

Leon Rubin founded the Plate Turners of the World Unite club in 2011 after he realised that there were many people on Facebook who posted information and pictures about the East Liverpool area potteries, ceramic products, and dinnerware back stamps. The group's membership was mostly people who were originally from the area, or who had family members or spouses who had begun to take an interest in East Liverpool ceramics. The founder told a local newspaper that when the group met, 'People tell stories about themselves, their parents and their grandparents who work or worked in the potteries. Collectors offer tips to novices. It's a fun bunch.'[97]

Heritage Employment
East Liverpool's population has been decreasing for many years. In 2013 the population was about 11,000, with the US Census Bureau estimating a 2.3 percent decline since the 2010 census. East Liverpool's median income was less

than $28,000 USD, significantly lower than the median income for the rest of the state, which was $48,000 USD. About 30 percent of the local population was below the poverty line.[98] As of June 2014, unemployment was 6.2 percent, higher than the rest of the state (the state-wide unemployment figure was 5.9 percent).[99] Six percent of the working population was employed in food services and/or accommodation. Employment figures for American Mug & Stein and Homer Laughlin China indicated that less than one percent of East Liverpool residents worked in ceramics manufacturing, no more than one thousand people. A relatively large employer in the area was the ironically titled Heritage Thermal Services, a hazardous waste incinerator whose construction caused significant local protest. A very small proportion of the East Liverpool population worked at the local museums, historic houses, or industrial heritage sites.

Deindustrialisation and Heritage in Jingdezhen, Stoke-on-Trent, and East Liverpool

When we look at the industrial histories of Jingdezhen, Stoke-on-Trent, and East Liverpool, we see that government policies significantly affected ceramics manufacturing (Fig.10). The state's role is most obvious in the case of Jingdezhen, where the central government directly invested in and managed the industry for most of the town's history as a crockery city. Government policy made Jingdezhen into a massive ceramics producer under the planned economy in the 20th century, and government policy dictated the privatization that transformed Jingdezhen from large-scale mechanized production of a wide range of porcelain to a city that made more antique replicas and art porcelain than dinnerware. While the state's role in Stoke and East Liverpool has been less dramatic than what we see in Jingdezhen, neither location could have become a crockery city without key government policies. In Stoke, the British government's financial and social policies were the scaffolding on which private entrepreneurs like Josiah Wedgwood could develop successful ceramic manufacturing. In East Liverpool, the US' decision to impose protective tariffs on imports made it possible for East Liverpool's producers to surpass the sales of English ceramics. In both cases, the state's neoliberal economic policies and trade agreements played a part in the cities' industrial decline, making imported ceramics cheaper than domestically produced wares, and allowing multinational firms to pursue cheaper labour abroad.

The government also played an important part in the ceramics heritage movements in all three crockery cities. Again, the state's role in Jingdezhen is the most dramatic: most of the former porcelain capital's heritage sites and activities are state-run. Government officials gave key support to the city's private heritage initiatives, too, particularly at the Sanbao International Ceramic Art Institute. However, officials in Stoke-on-Trent and East Liverpool also promoted heritage activities. The British Ceramics Biennial in Stoke-on-Trent could not have occurred without money from the city. The city ran several heritage sites, developed and promoted a ceramics heritage trail (Fig. 11), and garnered EU redevelopment funds to preserve Stoke's ceramic heritage. In East Liverpool, state funding was crucial for the Museum of Ceramics, the state awarded National Historic Registry designations, and officials helped create a period atmosphere by restoring the old clock tower and installing 1920s-style lampposts.

Jingdezhen's heritage movement, like Jingdezhen's late 21st century deindustrialisation, happened very fast. National and local officials used heritage to promote tourism, which they saw as providing employment opportunities and encouraging consumer spending. Ceramics heritage was not created for locals' appreciation or education. Very few residents visited the city's heritage sites and most did not attend the annual Ceramics Festival. Locals said that these things were for 'outsiders.' Officials were relatively unconcerned with *in situ* preservation. During the second half of the twentieth century, and particularly since the 1990s, the city government tore down the truly old portions of the

Fig 11. Middleport Pottery, recently restored by the Princes Regeneration Trust and part of Stoke-on-Trent's Heritage trail destinations

city. Some were replaced with ersatz structures, like Old Street. Jingdezhen's most popular attraction, the Ancient Kiln Folk Customs Museum (Fig. 12), was a reconstruction rather than an original pottery, and located in a new part of the city that never had porcelain workshops. Many of the modern factories built between 1958 and 2000 have been razed.

In content, Jingdezhen's heritage was apolitical and often ahistorical. Sites did not address the city's deindustrialisation or why Jingdezhen was no longer China's porcelain capital. Hand craft technologies, such as stick-spun potters wheels and wood-burning kilns, were key attractions, presented as an old-timey and undated 'imperial China.' No museum in Jingdezhen presented the city's modern industry, preserved its machines, or collected artifacts from the industry's 20th-century development. While portions of the large collective Sculpture Factory were in use for artistic residencies, its history was unknown to most artists who visited, and several parts of the site had been significantly reconstructed. Ceramics heritage contributed to the livelihoods of Jingdezhen's small-scale private entrepreneurs who made art porcelain. Places like the Ancient Kiln Folk Customs Museum and the Ceramics Museum had shops where visitors could buy ceramics, usually antique replicas. Visiting artists provided temporary employment to some local ceramists. However locals could not earn a living solely from assisting visitors. Even *Lao Wei Tang*, the local ceramics firm that worked for Ai Weiwei, relied on antique replicas for the bulk of its earnings, despite the fact that Ai had a long-term relationship with the pottery and made numerous works there.[100]

Stoke-on-Trent's deindustrialisation was much more gradual than Jingdezhen's, and so was its heritage movement. While most of Stoke's heritage efforts involved public-private partnerships, the private sector was the driving force in preserving Stoke's ceramic heritage, beginning with Josiah Wedgwood's museum soon after the Industrial Revolution came to the six towns. Private individuals pushed for historic preservation at a time when Stoke's pottery industry was still large and productive, but technological developments were rendering structures and

Fig. 12. Old-timey Heritage at Jingdezhen's Ancient Kiln Folk Customs Museum: A Foot Trimmer

past manufacturing practices obsolete. Ceramics companies were very involved in promoting heritage in the form of factory tours, visitor centres, and financial support for preservation. A number of local residents actively volunteered with organisations that paid for and operated former industrial sites.

Although many of Stoke's residents strongly identify with the ceramics industry, heritage was oriented toward the Victorian period. Local attractions like the Gladstone Pottery Museum and the Jesse Shirley Bone and Flint Mill focused on the earlier periods of Stoke's mechanisation. Smaller potteries that were in operation, like Middleport, Emma Bridgewater, and Moorcroft, benefited from their association with the Victorian period in tourist visits and ceramics sales.

Unlike Jingdezhen or East Liverpool, the decline of modern industry received at least a little attention in Stoke-on-Trent. The small permanent exhibit at Enson Works was focused on the 20th-century and talked about the decline of one factory. Artist Neil Brownsword has insistently presented Stoke-on-Trent's deindustrialisation and attendant problems through installations such as, *Re-apprenticed* (2015), *National Treasure* (2011), *Poet of Residue* (2008) and *Salvage Series* (2005). His work confronted the decline of the potteries, the obsolescence of potting skills, and the industrial detritus that marks contemporary Stoke in visual, textual, and audio formats. In 2011 his project *The Value of Nothing* (Fig. 13) elicited a response to the ease in which Stoke's recent deindustrialisation remains obscured by the 'spin' of local government and organisations spearheading cultural regeneration. As a poignant reminder to the trauma of those whose livelihoods had been cut short by Spode's closure in 2008, Brownsword reinstalled the factory's production infrastructure and resultant detritus following the company's asset stripping that had been cleared to make way for the British Ceramics Biennial. Brownsword together with many of the artists who participated in the artistic research project Topographies of the Obsolete, later extended their explorations of the sensory, emotional and aesthetic aspects of deindustrialisation and the largely abandoned Spode Works for the British Ceramics Biennial in 2013.

Fig. 13. Neil Brownsword, *The Value of Nothing*, installation, British Ceramics Biennial 2011

Stoke-on-Trent found it difficult to brand itself as a tourist destination. To some British citizens, Stoke brought to mind 'smoky Stoke,' – a city of pollution and industrial waste. The city's long-standing problems with unemployment and dereliction were also renowned. Many tourists also found landlocked Staffordshire less attractive than coastal destinations. Stoke residents, in their turn, claimed that urban regeneration had left the city with a number of blighted areas where demolition had occurred but new build had not taken place, leaving the areas even worse off than before (Figs. 14 and 15).[101]

Fig. 14. Former Royal Doulton site, Burslem where plans to develop 140 houses have been put on hold since 2012

Fig. 15. Signage, former Royal Doulton site, Burslem

While Stoke-on-Trent did not succeed at heritage tourism to the extent that Jingdezhen did, Stoke was much better at branding itself as a tourist destination than was East Liverpool Ohio. Like Stoke, East Liverpool had experienced decades of poor economic health. The local government advertised the city as a 'bedroom community' for Pittsburgh (one hour west) and Cleveland (two hours southeast). Heritage was an insignificant employer, and the city had almost nothing in the way of heritage pottery, although American Mug & Stein was repositioning itself as the heir to the city's former industry. Locals had preserved very little industrial heritage *in situ*: only the Goodwin-Baggott bottle kiln and an adjacent structure that had been part of the works. Preservation focused on the grand buildings and residences that recalled East Liverpool's economic success during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Museum of Ceramics and East Liverpool Historical Society had photographs, illustrations, and archival records that served to document East Liverpool's past as the pottery capital. Efforts to explain deindustrialisation appeared minimal, and in fact one local historian told the media that East Liverpool's industrial decline was 'inexplicable.'[102]

The Pottery Festival, Plate Turners club, new museum, and historic architecture suggested that heritage was primarily oriented to the community. Heritage gave locals a sense of place, pride, and connection. When the Ohio Arts Council conducted research in East Liverpool in 2008 and 2009, residents said that they hoped to do more to build up local pride through heritage and historic preservation.[103]

Ceramic Heritage Challenges and Opportunities
Scholars and journalists have shown that heritage rarely produces large economic benefits, despite the claims of politicians and non-profit organisations (including UNESCO).[104] Heritage is not a panacea for de-industrialisation or unemployment. Neither does heritage always produce a robust sense of place or local identity. As Malcolm Miles puts it in this volume, 'standardised solutions such as new museums and visitor attractions' can be homogenous, infrequently

patronised, and 'assign a town's future to visitors.'

Heritage in the crockery cities tends to be nostalgic and static. The kilns of emperors, houses of elites, and grand civic buildings point to the glorious and undifferentiated past. Sites titillate viewers' imaginations by showcasing handicraft manufacturing and the early technologies of industrialisation, but do little to enrich visitors' romanticised visions of the past. Serious discussions of the benefits and disadvantages of hosting a large ceramic industry, and what happened when that industry failed, were minimal if not entirely absent.

Ceramics heritage can inspire local residents, foster pride and a sense of connection, and motivate people to take part in decisions about urban development. It can educate and entertain, support ceramics sales, and contribute to place-making by revealing distinctive local histories. The technology of modern ceramics industries is equally if not more fascinating than that of the 18th and 19th century industries, and the trajectory of modern ceramics manufacturing is equally if not more dramatic than that of earlier periods. The history of the crockery cities does not fit comfortably into a progress narrative, but this holds great potential for meaningful engagement.

In Jingdezhen, Stoke-on-Trent, and East Liverpool, government policies enabled and set in motion the changes that caused deindustrialisation and its attendant social ills. A deeper understanding of why the potteries disappeared could influence how people vote and what they purchase. Scholars of industrial history and heritage should seize the opportunity to participate in the co-construction of heritage. Rich stories about capitalism, globalisation, decline, and resilience could lead to a much-needed political awakening.

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Terraced properties originally built to house workers from the Middleport Pottery awaiting demolition in 2015 as part of Middleport's delayed regeneration programme

Industrial Ruination and Shared Experiences: Reflections on a Brief Encounter with Stoke-on-Trent

Fig. 1. Abandoned chemical factory, Niagara Falls, New York, April 2006

Around the world, the traces of old industry are embedded in material landscapes, from artistic warehouse conversions to behemoth abandoned factories (Fig. 1), to contaminated fields marked only by fences. Industrial decline is a theme that most people can identify with, as something that they have experienced or witnessed. As an urban sociologist who has focused on lived experiences of deindustrialisation in different national contexts, I have often been invited to reflect on the wider implications of comparative research for particular cases. In 2015 I was invited to participate in collaborative interdisciplinary discussions about the industrial heritage of the ceramic industry in Stoke-on-Trent, as part of the 'Topographies of the Obsolete' project.[1] I was intrigued if a little cautious. Throughout my research on industrial decline and urban regeneration, I have been skeptical about the capacity for the creative arts to transform struggling old industrial cities. However, I felt that this project might be different, and I took up the invitation.

I first visited Stoke-on-Trent on an unusually sunny and crisp autumn day in October 2015, during the British Ceramics Biennial at Spode Works. I was greeted by artist Neil Brownsword, who took me on a guided tour of famous Potteries, culminating in a visit to Spode. During this day trip, I was impressed by the architectural beauty of the distinctive red brick factories, and the sense, in some parts, of stepping back in time. I was also struck by the depth and variety of different perspectives that had already been elicited through the site-specific study of the project, using Stoke as a lens to reflect on broader issues. Collectively, the 'Topographies' project was seeking to address the aesthetics and economics of industrial ruination; the value of craftsmanship; the meanings of industrial work, sites, practices, and heritage; the pain of loss throughout 'post-industrial' change; and the work of recognising and reflecting on the role of the industrial past within the present, not only as history but as an enduring identity. Many of the artists who worked on site-specific reflections at the former Spode ceramics factory engaged with the waste produced through industrial ruination, for example through incorporating dead pigeons on factory floors into artwork. Through 'emic' ceramic art practice rather than through the distancing lens of photography, this approach seemed, on the whole, to be sensitive to local context, akin to the Japanese philosophy and aesthetics of Wabi-Sabi, accepting impermanence and 'imperfect beauty'.[2]

My encounter with Stoke-on-Trent, while brief, stayed with me. It made me reflect more deeply on unique and common themes of industrial ruination, and on the richness and complexity of site-specific research.

Industrial Ruination

Industrial ruins cannot be separated from the communities, histories, and places that surround them. People live in and amongst industrial ruins, relating to them through difficult memories and experiences of job losses, toxic contamination, and marginalisation. In my research, I use the term 'ruination' instead of 'ruins', to describe a process rather than a fixed form. Industrial ruins are never static, except in photographs.[3] They are constantly changing, part of social, economic, and environmental processes of creation and destruction. In time, abandoned industrial sites will be neglected, condemned, demolished, reused, or redeveloped. The idea behind my book was inspired by my experience of driving through the Rust Belt of the United States and Canada – through Detroit, Michigan, Hamilton, Ontario and Buffalo, New York – and seeing vast abandoned factories; old car plants, steelworks, chemical factories. Much of the literature on industrial ruins tends to romanticise these sites as aesthetic and sadly beautiful. But I was interested in exploring a more sociological, critical perspective, beyond 'ruin porn'. I wondered what had happened to produce this scale of abandonment. What were the stories of the people who had worked in the factories, and the communities that surrounded them?

Around the world, industrial ruins have been converted into artists' workspaces, museums, galleries, and shopping centres. The Tate in London and Liverpool, the Kulturbrauerai in Berlin, the Louvre-Lens in France, and the Baltic Arts Centre in Gateshead are examples. However, not every old industrial city can have a Tate. In many old industrial cities, industrial ruins remain derelict and undeveloped, and the 'post-industrial' has yet to take hold. My research examined how industrial ruination relates to an uneven geography of capitalist development,[4] where some places are developed or redeveloped while others are left behind. Methodologically, the research was guided by the sociology of waste, the idea that it is revealing to study what societies discard.[5] Many urban scholars focus on the promise and potential of regeneration, of post-industrial transformation based on growth in the service and knowledge economy.[6] But there are many places that struggle to follow post-industrial models of regeneration, which remain stigmatised and deprived. For thinking about the future of cities, particularly in contexts of economic recession, it is important to think critically about these neglected places. Living with industrial ruination is a raw and painful experience for people who have witnessed the destruction of the lifeblood of their communities, and who continue to suffer from the effects of economic insecurity and toxic pollution.

Abandoned factories and areas of industrial decline can be found around the globe, and there are a number of different places that I could have chosen for my study. In fact, during the course of my research, a number of people offered their own stories of old industrial places - the steel in Sheffield, the tin in Malaysia, the Ruhr area in Germany, and the coal mines in British Columbia. The issue of industrial decline resonates very widely. I decided to focus on examples from 'classic' areas of deindustrialization in the UK and North America: the North of England, and the Rust Belt of North America, but in areas that had not been widely researched. I didn't choose Detroit or Manchester, which are famous examples of old industrial cities. After careful consideration of many different possibilities, I chose Newcastle-upon-Tyne, with its legacy of shipbuilding and its strong sense of identity and collective memory around that history (Fig. 2), and Niagara Falls in Ontario, and New York, which is widely known as a tourist destination but less well known for its chemical factories and devastating history of environmental contamination. To widen the global scope of the project, to contrast with the Anglo-American focus, and to complicate the analysis of an

Fig. 2. Abandoned shipyard, Walker Riverside, UK, September 2005

Fig 3. Semi-abandoned textile factory, Ivanovo, September 2006

uneven geography of capitalism, I chose the third case of Ivanovo, once the biggest textile city in Soviet Russia.

Each of the cities that I selected was associated with a different iconic heavy industry: chemicals in Niagara Falls, shipbuilding in Newcastle, and textiles in Ivanovo. Each case was at a different phase of deindustrialisation. Niagara Falls had endured a deep and prolonged phase of deindustrialisation, a traumatic Rust Belt story that is largely unknown, beneath the façade of tourism. The decline of heavy industries in Niagara Falls was marked by the Love Canal environmental disaster in August 1978, when a toxic chemical dump was discovered buried beneath a residential school in a working class neighbourhood. My research revealed that there are a number of other 'Love Canals' with unknown levels of contamination in Niagara Falls (Fig. 3). The toxic legacies of chemical industries remain an important but neglected issue for deprived communities living adjacent to these sites. By contrast, the Walker Riverside community in Newcastle-upon-Tyne was at a phase of impending regeneration after a protracted process of decline. After years of government and corporate lifelines to Swan Hunter, the 'last shipyard of the Tyne' on Walker Riverside finally closed in 2006. Collective memory and identity based on shipbuilding was evident in the strength of community resistance to City Council-led regeneration, which would demolish people's homes. Finally, Ivanovo was at a phase of partial reversal of deindustrialisation. The textile industry in Ivanovo completely collapsed with the end of the Soviet Union. Post-Soviet Ivanovo became renowned as a grim city filled with industrial and Soviet ruins. In the 1990s and 2000s, textile factories throughout the city gradually re-opened and operated at reduced capacity, primarily on a non-market system of barter deals, a legacy of Soviet times. By doing comparative case study research, I was able to analyse both global and local dynamics across different national, political, and cultural contexts.

Niagara Falls, New York, April 2007

The research involved visiting each of the places and doing case study research, which involved a number of different research methods. I would start in each city by walking or driving around city, the abandoned factories, taking photographs, writing notes, and talking to people about the history of the city. Then I would

start doing interviews with city councillors, with community development activists, with former workers, trade unionists, residents, and anyone else who was connected with the sites and memories of industrial ruination. In the interviews, I asked people questions about their experiences of change in relation to work, family, community, education, and services; their memories, perceptions and experiences of industrial decline and ruination, and their involvement in local politics related to redevelopment and change. I also spent a lot of time in local libraries and archives, collecting documents and photographs, and I also examined local area statistics about employment, population, and indices of deprivation. Gradually I developed an ethnographic approach, where I would spend time with research participants in their homes, community centres, or accompanying them on walks or drives around the abandoned industrial sites and the surrounding residential communities.

There were four key findings that emerged in this comparative study. Firstly, industrial ruination is a lived process. Deindustrialisation and industrial ruins are not simply matters of historic record, but they represent legacies of industrial ruination: enduring and complex lived realities for people occupying the in-between spaces of post-industrial change. Living with industrial ruination relates to inner landscapes of uncertainty and disruption, marked by ambivalent nostalgia and traumatic collective memory. Secondly, the study revealed landscapes of devastation but also of 'home'. Many people who live in landscapes of industrial ruination have strong place attachment to their homes and communities despite living amongst 'devastation', and there are profound differences between stigmatised views of places from the outside, and the perspectives of people who actually live in and with industrial ruination. Thirdly, the research showed the importance of imagination for urban policy and change. Local people's ways of imagining possible futures in their communities offer important alternatives to top-down urban planning strategies. Finally, industrial centres have diverse challenges and strengths, and urban policy requires diverse strategies. Dominant post-industrial model of transformation based on arts-and-property-led regeneration, cannot work for all cities within the context of an uneven geography of capitalist development.

Shipbuilding is not like coal mining, unhealthy or unsafe, when there's both a sadness and a gladness when it goes. With shipbuilding, there is just a sadness, a loss, and there is nothing to replace it ... There is a psyche of the North East which is built on the pride of shipbuilding.
Newcastle-upon-Tyne resident, December 2005

The shift to new economic life in Ivanovo was and is very difficult because it is very difficult to live in a new way and all the factors are combined together, and all the bad features from the past, from socialism, still influence us. And our mentality, the Russian, rather strange mentality, doesn't help us to shift. Moreover our people don't like anything new.
Ivanovo, Russia resident, 2006

We remember the bomb going off; we remember the Love Canal; we remember the plants closing; we remember our parents being out of work; that's what people remember. They remember all the fallout of the plants closing, the fallout from Love Canal.
Niagara Falls, New York resident, 21 March 2007

Shared experiences
Throughout my research on the enduring legacies of industrial ruination and urban decline, I found that each place was unique, and that residents expressed this view in terms of trauma: of collective psychological trauma (irreplaceable loss and its effect on psyche), of pathology ('strange mentality' as a barrier to coping with change), and of the socio-economic impacts of environmental disaster (the 'fallout' of Love Canal).

Ironically, I also found that many residents of post-industrial cities share narratives of 'exceptional' urban identity: of being different, set apart from other places, distinct from dominant urban trajectories, with unique and proud histories of industrial and community strength, while also facing particular challenges. Narratives of exceptionalism are reflections of collective memory and nostalgia, simultaneously mourning and celebrating aspects of local history. These narratives mask less comfortable histories, of the entanglements of industry and empire in the British context, particularly in accounting for collective losses. However, despite their connotations of parochialism, narratives of exceptionalism have been useful for making connections between struggling post-industrial communities, to think about shared experiences and challenges.[7]

Throughout my research, I identified a number of shared and interconnected common features, including:

- Economic deprivation and exclusion
- Toxic legacies of contamination
- Protracted government-regulated decline
- Histories of resistance
- Community solidarity
- Ambivalence and attachment to place
- Value of 'traditional' industrial cultures, work, and skills
- Prolonged effort to sustain or re-build
- Hope for regeneration

I found that all of these themes, which I had traced across other sites, were also evident in Stoke-on-Trent, but with different inflections, intensities, and histories. I could see strong parallels with other places I had researched: of social and economic deprivation, problems with racism and the growth of the far right, and the limits of regeneration projects that focus on physical development and the creative arts, but which fail to address deeper structural issues. Perhaps even more forcefully than other struggling post-industrial cities, Stoke-on-Trent highlighted the limits of the 'post-industrial' dream, as an industrial city limping along in a post-industrial age.

With working, semi-working, regenerated, and abandoned factories scattered throughout the urban landscape, the physical traces of the industrial age still have a strong presence in the city. The process of deindustrialisation has been protracted and painful. Kirk Savage suggests that:

The deindustrialised landscape, like a ruined battlefield that heals over, is ripe for commemoration. As the physical traces of the industrial age – the factories, the immigrant enclaves that served them, the foul air – disappear, the urge to reaffirm or celebrate the industrial past seems to grow stronger.[8]

This begs the question: what happens when the ruined battlefield has festering wounds; when the battle seems lost but there is no definitive end in sight? While artistic reflections on the industrial heritage and identity of Stoke-on-Trent may not offer much to the city in terms of employment, the intimate ties between artisan craft and industry are integral to the identity of the city, and may do some work towards healing and recovery.

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Tim Edensor

Former Morriew Pottery site, Middleport, Stoke-on-Trent, 2016

Maintenance, Ruination and the Urban Landscape of Stoke-on-Trent

As Alan Weisman reveals in his book, *The World Without Us*, without human attempts to consistently maintain the built environment of the city, everything would fall apart very rapidly.[1] By drawing on Manhattan, he imagines what would happen if human life was suddenly wiped out, and concludes that the destruction of the human-made world by non-human agents would commence immediately. The incessant operation of the electricity-driven pumps that keep New York's subways water-free would instantly cease, with the subways filling up with water within two days, subsequently undermining roads and pavements soon after. The lack of heating and road maintenance would cause ice to fracture tarmac, concrete and stone, assisted by numerous plants that would put down roots in the cracks and layers of detritus gathering in a world bereft of street cleaning. Lightning would create widespread fires and exposed steel foundations would rust.

In this essay, I discuss how ruination is a ubiquitous process, traces of which are found everywhere. Yet evidence of the ongoing ruination of the built environment is far more evident in some places than others. In certain locations, incessant effort is expended in order to provide the illusion of fixity and stability, to keep the spectres of dereliction and entropy at bay; in other cities, such endeavour is patchier, less intensive, and consequently, clear signs of ruination burst through the urban fabric at numerous sites. The illusion of the fixity of place is achieved through the enduring presence of the same buildings and fixtures over time. Despite the fact that under conditions in which global capital is increasingly free-floating, all that is solid is always liable to turn to air, many urban settings - at least for most of the time - have a material consistency that shapes the consistent, habitual experience of dwelling in and belonging to place. Yet the vicissitudes of this unsettling, volatile economy are always liable to render other places less materially secure. In such settings, buildings are abandoned, upkeep becomes focused on the most prestigious areas, and infrastructures and buildings start to show signs of disrepair, a situation which can extend into widespread dereliction, notoriously exemplified by the wholesale ruination of vast swathes of the US city of Detroit.

In such instances, Nick Yablon contends that under a speeded up global capitalism, industrial buildings have 'no longer followed a traditional life cycle - ripening gradually from gestation through maturity to old age - but rather the artificial, accelerated, and unpredictable cycles of speculative real estate' have accelerated their obsolescence and abandonment.[2] Other manifestations of this volatile acceleration are the half-finished structures that lie dormant and bereft following the sudden financial crash or economic downturn, suggesting that there are times when ruination is part of an extended present. Irish ghost estates, abandoned California gated communities and regeneration developments that lie across the city of Manchester testify to the hubris that surrounds grand projects and the unexpected, sudden transformation of economic conditions.

Conversely, in other places, industrial structures and sometimes whole sites have been reclaimed and revalued, rescued from the trash heap of history, becoming repurposed as dwellings, offices, retail outlets or heritage attractions, once more becoming subject to multiple practices of repair and maintenance that halt decay and dissolution. Indeed, at some industrial buildings, abandoned but not yet consigned to dereliction, a basic regime of maintenance is instituted with a view to future repurposing, left as temporarily 'devalued capital', but ripe for future accumulation (Fig. 1).

The industrial cities of many British cities, sites that contributed to the huge manufacturing output of what was called 'the workshop of the world', suffered enormously from the restructuring heralded by the advent of Thatcherism and

Fig. 1. Former mill and calcining works, Middleport, Stoke-on-Trent, 2015

the emergence of a hegemonic neo-liberal economics that saw the massive restructuring of the British economy. Across the urban landscapes of the English Midlands and North, central Scotland and the towns of South Wales, abandoned industrial buildings proliferated amidst wastelands and run down streets. Many of these cities were sites at which industrial production suddenly became obsolete, dramatically and rapidly transforming the appearance of urban space. By contrast, the ceramic industry of Stoke-on-Trent has suffered a more gradual decline. Yet this has nevertheless created a massive loss of employment and the demise of large industrial complexes across the city, including the recent closure of Spode, though pottery production clings on in numerous locations throughout the city. It has also produced a proliferation of ruination and dereliction that pervades many areas, and this is accompanied by the widespread signs of distressed and crumbling urban fabric which blights the city's material form (Fig. 2).

In cities that persistently fail to attract significant inward investment or enact substantial regeneration programmes, such disused and obsolete remnants of the past continue to testify to persistently malign economic conditions as well as signifying the demise of once vital industries. Industrial structures that provoke memories thus litter urban space, thwarting attempts to reimagine cities as venues for more contemporary industrial, residential and leisure use.

One way of characterising ruination is to understand it as a process that commences in earnest when maintenance and repair has ceased because decisions have been made that buildings and sites of production possess no current or future value.[3] Certain ruins are no longer subject to ruination, having been identified as valuable historical remnants worthy of preservation, and are placed in a condition of arrested decay. Here, of course, maintenance is essential to sustaining the impression that they are unchanging, contributing to the illusion that the world is 'characterised by perfect order, completeness, immanence and internal homogeneity rather than leaky, partial and heterogeneous entities'.[4] Such sites were once but are no longer subject to ruination, unlike the industrial structures with which I am concerned here.

The unceasing practices of maintenance and repair are largely unheralded endeavours. Those performing such services include various inspectors of many kinds, cleaners, masons and restorers, glaziers, tilers, plumbers, electricians, heating engineers and a host of others. Such folk enact their regular inspections and everyday procedures or are summoned to restore systems that have failed, or attend to broken and dilapidated structures, distressed surfaces and cluttered spaces, all problems that if left alone will threaten the comfort of occupation and ultimately, the building's integrity. An army of urban cleaners enter industrial space during the night or early morning to sweep away the debris and dirt of the day, and garbage workers take away waste that if left unchecked would exercise ruinous agencies.

In drawing attention to this ongoing spatial and material (re)ordering involving the incessant application of complex procedures, the ruination that would accelerate if they were absent is also conjured up. Though utterly essential to urban and industrial safety, efficiency and order, such maintenance work tends to be unheralded, forming part of 'the things and the people who are primarily unseen and banished to the periphery of our social graciousness'[5] Ruination honours such labour in its absence but it also signifies those industrial sites and urban spaces that were once accorded a value that they no longer possess. For upkeep retains the value of a building. A relatively untarnished surface and the absence of signs of decay tends to render such sites far less susceptible to human destruction, whereas distressed surfaces and elements of a building invite the disrespect manifest by vandalism. For the abandonment of sites of production and the cessation of the crucial practices of repair and maintenance blatantly reveal their devaluation, perhaps as production is moved elsewhere or manufacturing

Fig. 3. Former Royal Doulton Nile Street Works, historic façade prior to arson attack and subsequent demolition in 2015

techniques identified as obsolete are bypassed as a factory is dropped from an extensive production network. Here, since production has been devolved to the Portmeirion factory in the city, Spode's huge complex has been detached from the ceramic making network, though it is becoming part of a different network oriented around heritage.

Besides indicating how particular cities and sites of industrial production may come to be assigned as spaces lacking value, where once they were prized as profitable and dynamic, the devolution of the built environment into ruination glaringly reveals how the world in all its aspects is in a state of continual becoming. As J D Dewsbury asks, '(T)he building you walk through / within - what is the speed of flux that is keeping it assembled?'. As he contends, '(It) seems permanent… but it is ephemeral nonetheless: whilst you are there it is falling down, it is just happening very slowly (hopefully)'.[6] Yet though this gradual ongoing material dissolution proceeds, the process that stops buildings decaying into a state where they become indistinguishable from their environment is the relentless, repetitive maintenance that restores the shape and texture of the world. Besides the degeneration of its materiality then, this maintenance and repair are also part of the continuous emergence of the building, as are the numerous ways in which buildings are repurposed, redesigned and restyled, and added to and subtracted from.[7] Rather than thinking of them as fixed structures, it is evident that buildings can only be considered as processes and as dynamic and heterogeneous assemblages composed out of a multitude of materials including wood, bricks, stone, clay, tiles, plaster, glass, plastic, iron and steel, copper, piping and wiring.

Given this mix of different materialities and their various capacities to endure or decay, it is useful to consider buildings - and collections of buildings – as emergent mosaics of various temporalities. Accordingly, when buildings or whole industrial complexes are abandoned, different parts will start to fall apart while others may prove more durable. This is also, of course, dependent upon the actions of humans, who in asset-stripping lead from roofs and plundering other components for recycling may render a building susceptible to the agencies of water and wind, not to mention intrusion by a host of non-humans, including birds, insects and plants (Fig. 3).

Recent writing from what has been termed the new materialism perspective focuses on the vital qualities of matter rather than considering things as invariably discrete objects.[8] Here, objects are temporary entities; they are entangled with the world, and always liable to lose their form. Karen Barad points out that a thing 'is not a fixed essence; rather matter is a substance in its intra-active becoming – not a thing but a doing; a congealing of agency'.[9] Jane Bennett argues that matter possesses 'incipient tendencies' or a propensity to self-arrange that is shaped by the other forces, affects or bodies with which it comes into contact.[10] Within building assemblages, we can follow Manuel DeLanda's distinction between the *properties* of an entity (the qualities it takes with it to another context) and its *capacities* (its potential to affect and be affected by other entities).[11]

These qualities of particular derelict building assemblages and of the materials are especially evident when repeat visits to the same site reveal multiple transformations; some rapid, where formerly solid matter dissolves or fragments, others slower, where certain substances and forms endure for a longer period. Temporality in the speed of decay varies enormously, depending on the properties of the discrete materials out of which a building is composed and the agencies of decay that surround it.

Many of the very solid, brick or stone built factories and warehouses that date from Victorian industrial times resist decay for a prolonged period. The same can be true of particularly durable concrete structures, which if not subject to

demolition, may linger in urban landscapes for decades, gradually changing in form before their complete dissolution. The solidity of such buildings means that any programme of demolition will be expensive to undertake. They come to possess the architectural attribute of 'obduracy-in-obsolescence',[12] lacking adaptability for reuse. In Stoke-on-Trent, the brick-built ceramic factories and bottle kilns, though often of distressed appearance, endure in the landscape at neglected sites where demolition has not occurred or preservation orders have not been signed. By contrast, many more recent, hastily assembled industrial structures lack their durability, and being made of light building materials such as aluminium, sheet metal and breeze blocks, may be just as easily disassembled, leaving few traces of their presence.

Though the impermanence of buildings partly depend on the quality of the materials out of which they are composed, decay is also influenced by its capacities, the ways in which it is affected by the dynamic forces that co-exist in the place at which it is situated. The propensity for a building to crumble into nothingness or tenuously retain its form depends on these surrounding agencies that may render a building susceptible to erasure despite its apparent solid material constituency. Most obvious in a British context, is the powerful agency of the weather, notably the rain that saturates and erodes matter, chemically acts upon porous materials and encourages plant and other non-human growth, and the destructive power of ice and snow, alternately freezing and thawing the water that pools in fissures and thereby cracking solid compositions. This may be supplemented by the air pollution that swirls across many urban centres. This can be contrasted with buildings situated in Mediterranean climates, where even venerable ruins such as those constructed during the Roman empire, last for millennia because of the general dryness and warmth. The built environment in the UK is replete with infrastructure that channels and contains these forces but much of the endless maintenance referred to above is a response to ameliorating their effects on surfaces and structures.

In addition to these agencies, there are a horde of non-human life forms that are always waiting to attack a building's fabric. The rigorous, ongoing operations that limit the extent to which these life forms are able to enter and settle by cleaning, the maintenance of walls and fences, and the application of pesticides and insecticides, disappear when a building is abandoned. Subsequently, the local flora and fauna opportunistically seek ways to live on the material substances and in the evacuated spaces that have been left alone. Pigeons, birds of prey, jackdaws, foxes, rats and mice, millions of insects, and mosses, lichens, grasses, rose bay willow herb and buddleia, silver birch and alder trees colonise industrial buildings and prosper.[13]

And so, despite intensive efforts to keep signs of decay and dereliction at bay, the traces that reveal that things are falling apart or mutating are found everywhere. In certain prosperous and highly regulated cities, levels of maintenance are so insistent that it can be hard to find traces of even the recent past in the urban fabric but close inspection will unearth them. Yet because pervasive maintenance is an impossibility, and especially because most cities neither have the resources nor the disposition to commit to seamless maintenance, the evidence of ruination proliferates. In cities such as Stoke-on-Trent, obscure material fragments, strange remnants, distressed matter, swathes of wasteland and larger constellations of ruin pervade the landscape. Such materialities especially linger in less unheralded urban spaces: back alleys and ginnels, alongside canal and across railway embankments, in terraced and local authority housing areas, as well as in derelict sites and commercial, residential and industrial ruins. While such signs are often conceived as signifiers of anomie, stasis and decadence, they can be interpreted otherwise.[14] For such features solicit a sensual and immediate encounter with the past that is denied in urban settings in which history is obliterated all too quickly as regeneration schemes and hubristic redevelopments construe cities as future-

Fig. 4. Former Spode Works where concrete foundations show the trace outline of a bottle kiln and other earlier structures

oriented. In cities where ruination abounds,

the debris of shipwrecked histories still today raise up the ruins of an unknown, strange city. They burst forth within the modernist, massive, homogeneous city like slips of the tongue from an unknown, perhaps unconscious, language'.[15]

In addition, over-zealous tendencies to assign urban districts as single-purpose spaces do not pertain in more ramshackle settings, in which the meanings of spaces might be obscure and function has not been officially designated. I conclude by identifying some of the forms of ruination that pervade the city of Stoke-on-Trent. As in other urban centres of deindustrialisation and persistent under-investment, the separate sites of ruination in Stoke-on-Trent collectively accumulate to exemplify Kevin Lynch's contention that the city is subject to continuous re-composition through the accumulation of overlapping traces from successive periods, each trace contributing to a 'collage of time'.[16] If we focus on the Spode complex itself (Fig. 4), since its construction was initiated in 1780 and it was the site of continuous production until 2008, this material temporal diversity is immediately apparent. This is manifest in the diverse styles of the ninety or so buildings that cover the site, and the susceptibility of some to crumble and decay because of the quality of their building material and their age. In some places (I will specify), roofs have collapsed and damp has entered, speeding up decay whereas sturdier structures keep ruinous agencies at bay.

Travelling more extensively through the city, a multitude of traces of mundane ruination litter the landscape. Cobbles burst through the asphalt on roads that have not been resurfaced for years, conjuring up a vanished world of horses, carts, and stables. On the sides of bottle kilns, weeds sprout, potentially undermining these venerable artefacts, and a wider variety of plants grow more profusely on wastelands and in the unkempt spaces between buildings. At sites where recently abandoned industrial sites have been cleared of their buildings, concrete ground floor layouts extend, and are supplemented by other fragments of walls, power supply and more obscure functions. At sites that have not been subject to such erasure, small buildings linger for years, as at the site formerly occupied by Hem Heath Colliery. Compounds and aggregates cluster, residues of production are randomly scattered and objects manufactured by humans become colonised by non-human life forms that change their shape and texture. On the sides of buildings, old adverts remain, sometimes illegible and sometimes championing a long vanished enterprise nor product.

Ultimately, of course, things merge into the ancient landscape like everything else has done, human and non-human, forming the substrate of new ruination, complicating the material mix of the terrain on which they rise. This has a particular pertinence to the terrain of Stoke-on-Trent, which is utterly composed out of the shards of pottery and other matter produced by the pottery industry (Fig. 5). Though effacement of material traces has occurred, they cannot entirely be disposed of and they haunt the city in their profusion beneath the surface, saturating everyday experience.

Though they may be conceived as signs of economic decline and stasis, these everyday ruins may be positively construed in that they add to the historical, sensual and aesthetic qualities of the city. These traces of ruination are rarely heralded, signposted and interpreted by heritage professionals, but the absences they signify can be sensed, conjectured about and affectively communicated. They are not the subjects of official or expert accounts. Instead they supplement, and perhaps challenge these narratives in offering a different engagement with the past.

Fig. 5. Shraff unearthed at former Spode factory, Stoke-on-Trent during archaeological excavations in 2016

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Jake Kaner

Mould store, former Spode Factory, Stoke-on-Trent, 2013

Archiving Post-Industrial Heritage

Post-industrial heritage plays a key part in the preservation and dissemination of British material culture.[1] It informs education from school age through to advanced research that creates new products, reflective art practice and historical studies. This text examines how we can preserve the heritage of the post-industrial landscape of North Staffordshire through construction of an Image Management System (IMS)[2] taking the form of a repository of digitised archival material. This will safeguard important archival heritage and make it available for education, artistic and historical research, ensuring that it is accessible for both the specialist and the general public. It will also offer artists and designers an accessible collection of visual and text based information to generate responses and create artefacts. Furthermore, this repository will provide an invaluable resource for cultural commentators and human scientists looking at anthropological behaviours and practices as found in the demographics of industrial history.

With regard to the British ceramics industry, an ideal image management system will record lost and endangered heritage, haptic practices and manufacturing technologies as well as provide examples of 18th, 19th and 20th century industrial practices.[3] The High Wycombe Furniture Archive (HWFA),[4] is explored as a potential model as a successful digital archive for post-industrial heritage. High Wycombe throughout the 19th and 20th centuries was a furniture-making town that grew its production to compete on the world market.[5] At the point of demise of the British furniture industry in the late 1980s valuable archival material was thrown away by the diminishing industry,[6] as it was perceived to be of no value by the companies that produced it. In short, they threw their history into skips, academics[7] pulled it out and kept it, seeing it's potential. This short-sightedness by the companies proved to be a poor decision as they realised later that this rich material had great value, especially with those companies that managed to survive and reinvent themselves[8] as is witnessed in the first two decades of the twenty first century.

High Wycombe Furniture Archive (HWFA)

In November 2009 the High Wycombe Furniture Archive (HWFA) at Bucks New University was made public through its website with 5,727 digital assets being available to browse.[9] The collection comprises a wide range of furniture related material representing furniture companies from this furniture-manufacturing town (Fig. 1). An Arts and Humanities Research Council major award[10] funded the project, where over 16,000 digital assets were created from the primary archival material.[11] Apart from an extensive record of two major furniture brands, Ercol and G-Plan (E.Gomme Ltd.) the collection holds material on trade union activities (1920s to 1980s), which includes discourse on WW2 activities, the utility scheme, labour conditions and collective bargaining as well as factory conditions.

This comprehensive database holds information and drawings on design heritage such as the work of designers Lesley Dandy, Lucian Ercolani, Donald Gomme, Ib Kofod-Larsen, Don Peddle and Vic Wilkins (amongst others). The archive has been cited and images used for many applications, books, PhD theses, television documentary and research into fashion, set design and advertising.[12] The business records illustrate correspondence between retailers and the manufacturers discussing matters such as advertising through film footage and newspaper copy.[13]

Between 2009-2015, the HWFA has been very successful achieving over 7 million views, which equates to an average of approximately 100,000 views per month.[14] To access more digital assets users can register and then log in to the repository free of charge where they will have access to over 10,000 assets.[15] Researchers in the team are currently working on further digitisation of the William Birch Archive that supplied 'art furniture' for Heals, Harrods and Liberty's of London at the early part of the twentieth century.[16] The major British

Fig. 1. Chair maker spokeshaving a windsor bow in the Jack Goodchild workshop, Naphill, Buckinghamshire

manufacturer Stag Furniture Company from Nottingham[17] has donated its archive to the HWFA, which includes some exceptional designs by John and Sylvia Reid.[18] The HWFA is currently working with Nanjing Forestry University[19] in China on generating 3-D computer models of furniture from 1960s Ib Kofod-Larsen design drawings for G-Plan.[20]

Image Management System Models

A successful Image Management System (IMS) requires functions that capture and organise data. This can be achieved through a variety of functions, which are described below and these relate to the Image Management System[21] used by the High Wycombe Furniture Archive. The front end of the IMS is the visible website which connects to the back end database which holds and organises the data (visual and textual assets). The IMS manages both ends and draws down information which is requested by the user and displays this on the website, such as images and/or text. Various access levels allow users to gain graduated amounts of information. Access rights are authorised by the IMS administrator.

An important function of an IMS is to provide the ability to edit the copy content. This covers fields such as page copy, menu copy, browser titles and message templates, in fact, all the copy that may be viewed by users within the various areas of the front end website. This process is typically described as managing content.

The ability for users to create a *slide box* is a desirable tool and this allows the option of downloading images and text, and storing them in the slide box. What is permissible for download needs to be decided carefully at an early stage when building the database. For the HWFA a management user list is employed which specifies what can be downloaded and for what purpose. When users request a download, after they've filled their slide box, they have to complete a form that asks how they are going to use the material. This is where charges can be introduced in order to commercialise the database and its contents. Images may be purchased at a range of resolution sizes with higher resolution being more expensive. The master files with the highest resolutions are kept in the backend database. Digitisation standards are useful in guiding resolution size when analogue material is captured through scanning or photography. The HWFA used a range of resolutions depending on the asset being created, being guided by archivist/digitisation standards.[22]

As part of organising the database it is prudent to create categories and sub categories[23] that will structure the repository and importantly assist the search functions, which includes key search terms/words. These functions are given codes which can be cross referenced when users operate the search tool to look at terms or references which may bring up a number of assets. It is therefore important that the categories follow benchmarked guidance. The archivists entering content when building the database must adhere to strict sets of language that is understood and commonly used by the project team.

An example of the deeper level of category in the HWFA is 'people'. Within 'people' there are four sub-categories; 'people at work,' 'management and other staff,' 'social' and 'education.' How these sub categories are constructed will depend on the information available and the choice of classification so that users can access the repository in a simple and effective way. The number of sub categories per category depends upon the information available and the extent to which these layers will be effective.

Fields or attributes may be organised in two ways, firstly for what is seen and secondly for what lies beneath the surface. In other words what is visible to the user on the website and what is available as metadata, which has technical and analytical uses.[24] Searching is a key function of any website or repository and this important function must be correct if users are to return to the site. The standard approach is to have a simple intuitive route and an advanced route for the more serious searcher. The HWFA has an advanced search that offers features that will allow the user to specify what they are seeking in a precise way. For example a search can be done if the identification number[25] of the asset is known and this will take the user to the asset immediately. In addition to search functions a browsing function, which allows users to search quickly and intuitively, is recommended. Users can search by category such as 'people' and click on searchable text or images and this will take users to the sub category level where they can choose 'people at work.'[26]

This will open the asset and provide the images details. The image can be observed as well as some information about the image. There are two types of information, descriptive and functional. This is visible when viewing through a logged in status, which provides this level of information.[27] The image may be enlarged through a magnification function. This provides a more detailed view of the image and the watermark may be observed. The HWFA uses a watermark to stop unpermitted reuse of images. The administrator has authority to remove watermarks for certain purposes, such as publishing.[28]

Possibilities for the Spode Mould Archive
Returning to the Spode collection, similar issues to those seen in High Wycombe are currently occurring in Stoke and in particular with Spode's collection of extant
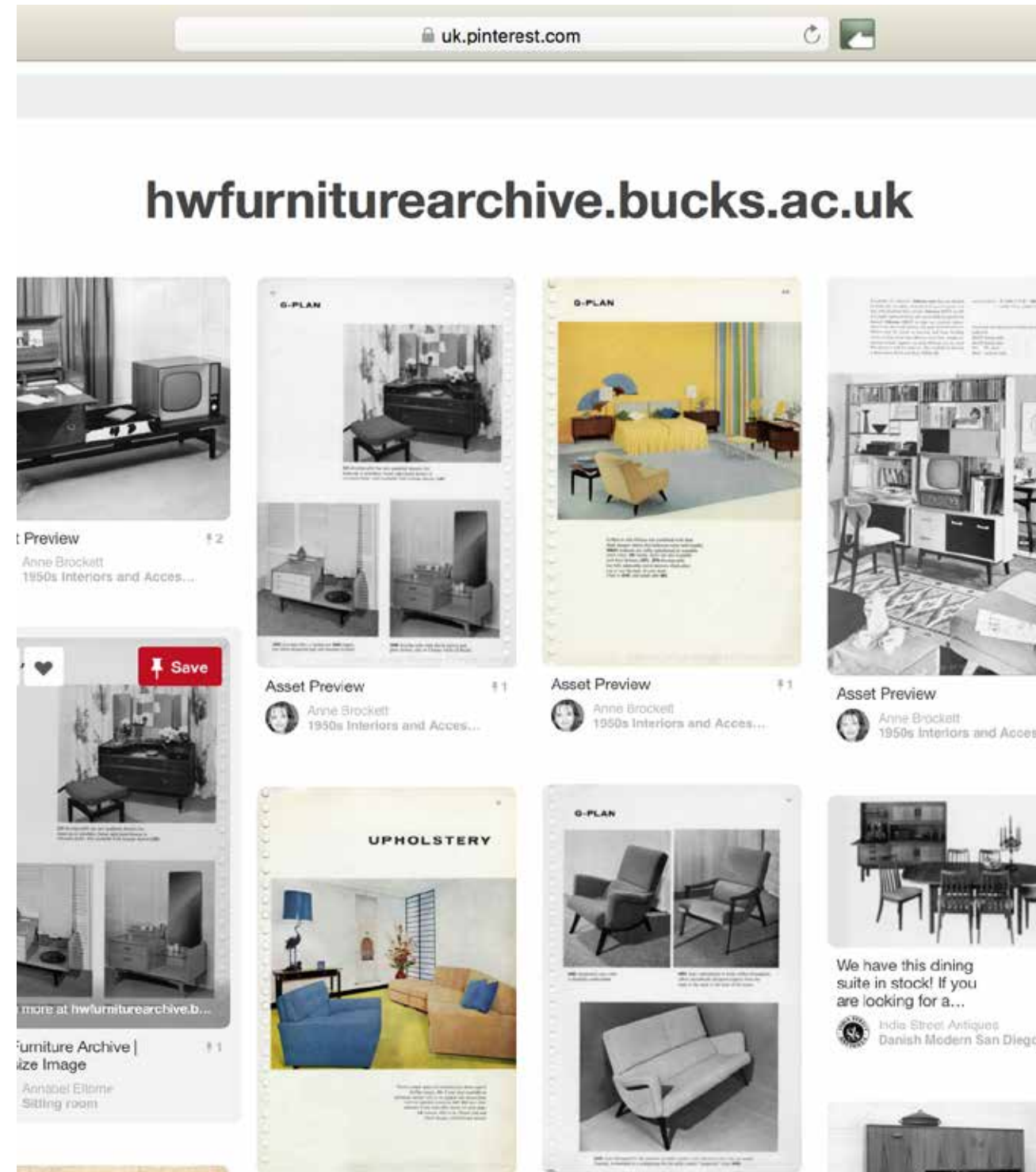

Fig. 2. Web fertilisation of images from High Wycombe Furniture Archive on Pinterest

moulds. This collection has value not only with the Georgian and Victorian artefacts, but also with the twentieth century and especially post-war design, which until now has been to some degree undervalued and ignored. A range of benefits from digitising the HWFA may be applied to a digitised Spode collection as listed here,

• Large number of views per month[29]
• In the top list on Google searches[30]
• Simple maintenance and support system
• Widens dissemination and reach
• Preserves a record of an endangered material
• Can generate income through sales of images (rights)
• Create impact on local, national and global communities
• Provides an educational resource
• Generate interest in archival material previously inaccessible
• Create citations in text, film and exhibitions
• Web fertilisation of images such as 'Pinterest' (Fig. 2)

If digitisation of the Spode collection proceeded what would be the challenges for this digital archive? A critical aspect of building a successful repository is to ensure that the textual data that describes the artefacts is accurate. This requires an agreed set of languages/terms. These terms should be benchmarked and be nationally recognised. Another aspect is to establish who owns copyright of the newly borne digital material. This may depend on where the funding comes from to construct the repository as this may come with conditions around intellectual property rights.

Whilst researching the artefacts to establish reliable information to describe the images, an opportunity to develop lasting relationships with industry personal should be recognised. In the case of the High Wycombe furniture archive key people from the industry were interviewed revealing valuable networks. This helped provide additional information for the repository. During the project stage focus groups were conducted with various stakeholders to find out what users required. This helped set the parameters of the architecture of the image management database. At the project commencement period an advisory group of subject specialists from a variety of organisations, both academic and industrial was convened to guide the project.

Another challenge for the Spode proposal is the sheer volume of material that exists (Fig. 3). It will be expedient to sample but this will require that selection is conducted in an objective manner that will represent what is required by stakeholders now and in the future.[31] Is a scoping study required to set parameters for the selection process or can a working group of experts provide a set of criteria that can be applied in the selection process?

Currently, the Spode moulds are not accessioned and therefore an inventory will have to be constructed followed by visual recording at proposal stage. At project stage in order to capture the precise detail of the moulds digital 3D scanning will be necessary. Three-dimensional scanning has been used effectively to capture accurate surface topology of historic artefacts. Discussions have begun with the University of Brighton who are part of a European consortium named 3DCoform (three dimensional collection formation).[32] The core research is centred on 3D scanning technologies where a surface in 3D is digitally captured *observing how light behaves on the surface of the object*.'[33] This allows for a number of outcomes; such as reconstruction, 3D printing and presenting on screen.

A digitally captured 3D scan will allow investigation through comparison, which is useful for authentication and observing how objects are made revealing identifiers, such as tool marks. This type of interpretation of an object's surface

will guide conservation and curation. This will require significant resources such as training for volunteers, a major funding award and the appropriate technologies provided by specialists. The technology exists and in the University of Brighton they have employed a German conveyor belt system, which allows for 3D laser scanning to be conducted accurately and quickly. This mobile system could be set up at the Spode site. This will require the funding bodies recognition that this is a proposal that needs priority funding.

Beyond the comparison of the HWFA other indigenous British industries have preserved their heritage such as the textiles industry which is illustrated through a number of mills in Lancashire, 'Saltaire' and 'Quarry Bank' both living museums with catalogued collections showing artefacts, industrial processes and the lives of the workforce. The steel industry in Sheffield is represented through a number of museums such as the 'Blade' collection in Sheffield Art Gallery and Museum. The National Glass Centre in Sunderland brings together social and industrial heritage celebrating through exhibitions, collections and activities as well as supporting the modern glass movement and its research.

These centres share a common theme of collaboration between industry, city and university. This seems to be a successful mix that attracts funding and drives the projects forward. It then becomes part of the British historical and cultural landscape impacting on tourism, education and a city's culture. Regionally it improves morale, builds new activities and maintains identity encouraging and driving economic growth.[34]

Problematics

What were the problematics faced by the High Wycombe experience and will these occur in Stoke with the digitisation of the Spode collection? The challenges to setting up and running a long term project at High Wycombe were varied and included finding the right people with the requisite skills in a developing area as well as setting up technology that is continuously superseded by newer technology.

In 2006 finding an archivist with the digital technical skills was challenging. A graduate was employed from a new masters computing course at Glasgow University, who had experience of digital capture for archives. A visual archivist who had previously worked for an American fashion house in their publication department was also employed.[35] Managing the project threw up further challenges such as monitoring and maintaining the funding streams, organising space in a resource competitive institution and keeping track of the work flow under time pressure.

To conclude the comparative model of the HWFA used here has identified a number of solutions and also raised a number of questions that the proposed digitisation project of the Spode Mould collection will have to address. Spode offers many challenges for the preservation and dissemination of the artefact moulds and related archival material. There is considerable time pressure from agencies wishing to regenerate the site and frankly the moulds are perceived as an inconvenience slowing down change. 3D scanning represents part of the solution as this will not only record the moulds but will also allow accurate 3D printing of the moulds and the artefacts they were manufactured to produce. This will preserve history and function as well as create a repository for cultural studies. Professor Neil Brownsword, a practicing artist who has worked as a model and mould maker in the ceramic industry, reflects on the potential of the Spode moulds:

'The moulds at Spode are an under-estimated resource… as they have not been accessioned they throw up a potentially rare glimpse of rarely acknowledged practices within the design process. Prior to mainstream production, prototypes would go

Fig. 3. Mould store, former Spode factory, Stoke-on-Trent

through a sequence of trial phases but then if not selected or deemed unviable/too expensive, would not go further into production. So potentially there remains a whole body of block moulds with unique designs which may have never seen the light of day since their inception/rejection.'[36]

This situation was also found in the High Wycombe furniture archive with the G-Plan collection where the Danish designer Ib Kofod-Larsen had been commissioned to produce drawings of furniture that were not manufactured.[37] During 2014 collaboration with a Chinese University to convert the analogue designs of Kofod-Larsen into three-dimensional models took place.[38]

Finally, a specific cultural benefit of the Spode mould collection is that it represents an opportunity to show the culture of labour that has been rarely acknowledged in the history of artefacts produced by the peoples of these industries.

[1] Junaidy, D., Kaner, J., Ioras, F., Yukari, N., Capturing Characteristics of the Conceptual Ideation Process of Master Craftsperson's to Inform Design Education: A Comparative Study of Rural Craft Practitioners in Indonesia and in the UK. *Journal of Design Research*. Inderscience JDR-85582, Vol 13, Issue 4, 2015, pp. 395-423.

[2] There are a number of providers of image management systems, such as Bright Interactive, http://www.bright-interactive.com/

[3] Examples can be seen of material in the collection of the Spode Museum Trust http://www.spodemuseumtrust.org/spode-collection-8.html

[4] See www.hwfurniturearchive.bucks.ac.uk

[5] Reid, H., *Furniture Makers: History of Trade Unionism in the Furniture Trade*, London, 1986.

[6] GPlan 1992, Bartlett 1998 and Glennister 1989.

[7] Colleagues at Bucks New University, Scott Harper at Ercol 2001, and Hew Reid at G-Plan in 1991.

[8] GPlan produces the vintage range http://www.gplanvintage.co.uk/ and Ercol reintroduced design classics such as the 1950s Windsor range, stacking chair and loveseat models. See http://www. ercol.com/ranges/windsor/

[9] www.hwfurniturearchive.bucks.ac.uk

[10] Grant reference: 119158/1 entitled, *Creation of High Wycombe Electronic Furniture Archive*.

[11] These are held in the image management system at Bucks New University as master files at high resolution.

[12] Such as, Jackson, L., *Ercol: Furniture in the Making*, Richard Dennis Publishers, London and Hyman, 2013; B. & Bragg, S., *The GPlan Revolution: A Celebration of British Popular Furniture of the 1950s and 1960s*, Booth Clibborn Editions, London, 2008.

[13] Kaner, J., in *Design History Society*, Newsletter Spring, 2014.

[14] Report generated December 2016, showing hits since launch in November 5th 2009. http://hwfurniturearchive.bucks.ac.uk/asset-bank/action/viewReport (accessed 16 February 2016)

[15] See, http//:hwfurniturearchive.bucks.ac.uk

[16] The William Birch Archive is part of a larger analogue archive of High Wycombe firms held by the Wycombe Museum and access is available by appointment with the curator. http://www.wycombe. gov.uk/council-services/leisure-and-culture/wycombe-museum.aspx

[17] The STAG Furniture Company was an incorporated company based at Haydn Road, Nottingham. It was closed in 2000 when administrators set up redundancy for the remaining 275 workers. It's main brand names such as 'Stag Minstrel' were sold to Cornwell Parker, the parent company of Parker Knoll. The business records of the STAG Furniture Company are held at Buckinghamshire New University.

[18] The Reeds designed for Stag in the late 1950s and early 1960s which includes successful ranges such as the C Range and the S320 dining chairs.

[19] Nanjing Forestry University has international cooperation with Bucks New University where researchers co-author research on furniture and have worked on projects together through a visiting researcher scheme.

[20] The High Wycombe Furniture Archive holds approximately 396 drawings by Kofod-Larsen the Danish architect/designer who was responsible for the G-Plan Danish range, produced for G-Plan between 1961-1974. Many of his design drawings incorporate amendment sketches and written notes. Very few designs were put into production.

[21] The ability to use e-commerce should be specified in the brief to the IMS provider at an early stage as to add this function post database build is more expensive.

[22] Selection of appropriate resolution for digitising archival material in the UK may be found at JISC. See https://www.jisc.ac.uk

[23] Categories may be referred to as 'fields'.

[24] The ability to conduct analytics can provide useful information that can measure the usage of the website and produce reports.

[25] In the asset bank IMS each digitised asset has a unique 'auto id' number.

[26] Image details page, source: http//:hwfurniturearchive.bucks.ac.uk (accessed 5 November 2015).

[27] User can apply for this access level to be approved by the administrator.

[28] Acknowledgement of the website is important for both dissemination and citation purposes

[29] HWFA has over 100,000 hits per month.

[30] This page illustrates the HWFA as the top view for a number of search terms which lead to the archive being at the top of the Google search page. https://www.google.co.uk/ webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=hw%20furniture%20archive

[31] A selection policy will need to be established.

[32] http//:www.3d-coform.eu/.

[33] See http://www.3d-coform.eu/ (accessed 5 November 2016).

[34] See, Stenvers, B., *Museums in Cities Working Together*, Moscow, 2015. Bapty, I., 'Supporting Industrial Heritage' at *Association of Independent Museums Conference*, Ironbridge, 2014.

[35] Information about the project team may be found at http://hwfurniturearchive.bcuc.ac.uk/asset-bank/action/viewContent?index=3&showTitle=true

[36] Discussions with Professor Neil Brownsword, 2015.

[37] Kaner. J., 'Realising Lost Histories: The Three-dimensional Visualisation of Ib Kofod-Larsen drawings for GPlan,' in, Bechtold, T., and Schertzel, B., *Future Talks 011: Technology and Conservation of Modern Materials in Design*, Design Museum Munich, 2013.

[38] Nanjing Forestry University, Department of Furniture.

Malcolm Miles

KILN VIEW

Fig. 1. *Landed*, Les Johnson, bronze, 2009, London Docklands

Since the 1980s, in response to deindustrialisation in the global North, redundant sites have been assimilated into the immaterial economies which have replaced material production, inserting new arts venues into derelict buildings – Tate Liverpool in a Victorian warehouse and Tate Modern in a modern power station in London – and re-coding inner-city neighbourhoods as cultural quarters. More recently, a new genre of ruin-photography has arisen, especially in Detroit. This suggests that an urban imaginary of redundancy and waste has begun to reshape ideas about cities, normalising a state of dereliction and treating urban wastelands as a backdrop for consumption. In process, the real socio-economic histories of such sites are erased. Image triumphs over substance. For instance, a sculpture in London Docklands, *Landed*, by Les Johnson (Fig.1), is entirely competent as a bronze likeness but reproduces a social hierarchy - the foreman in a top hat stands over workers in cloth caps lifting a cargo – and ignores the history of militant labour organisation for which the docks were known. Upstream, the Millennium Dome sits amid a financial-services zone, one of several new centres which render adjacent neighbourhoods as margins.

Geographer Tim Edensor remarks, 'policies of abandonment epitomise capitalist tendencies towards creative destruction.'[1] Globalisation discounts the pit, shipyard, steelworks and pottery, and their communities, as the new wastelands are haunted by the value system which produced the Welfare State (and is now scripted to become another kind of ruin). Perhaps the recovery of those values should shape policies for regeneration. But there remains an underlying factor: that wastelands exert an enchantment which runs deep in post-Romantic culture and frames dereliction as a postmodern sublime, aestheticising the ruin of industry, making deindustrialisation acceptable.

A Feeling for Ruins

A sense of ruin pervades modernist literature in the inter- and post-war years, from T. S. Eliot to Rose Macaulay, and recurs with Patrick Wright and Iain Sinclair today. The modern attraction to ruins was affected by the slaughter of the 1914-18 war and the bombing of civilian targets in the 1940s; but it began in the Romantic era – in Germany, called *Ruinenlust* – as a reaction to industrialisation. This informs a latent distrust of urban life as marked by crime, pollution and disease for which an idealised rurality becomes a foil, later transposed to the suburban garden, Garden City, and a taste for ruin-landscapes – all of which amounts to the de-politicisation of the wastelands.

For the Romantics, archaic ruins demonstrated power's failure: what had stood for centuries would fall; tyrants' bones would lie forgotten in the desert sands; nature would reclaim the spaces of great cities and empires meant to last a thousand years. This is a political refusal of tyranny, and a cultural refusal of scientific rationalism: wild scenes and mad faces say that political power and scientific predictability are fantasies. Furnaces are depicted in Romantic art as awesome, or visual equivalents of volcanoes glowing red at night, adding to a fear of insurrection after 1789: a coming apocalypse in the expansion of cities and emergence of mass publics.

The first mills and furnaces were built in rural sites beside water but the move of industry to towns drew in families forced off the land by machines, housed in informal settlements in margins such as the land beside railway tracks. Friedrich Engels wrote in 1844 of a, 'chaos of small, one-storied, one-roomed huts, in most of which there was no artificial floor; kitchen, living and sleeping-room all in one.'[2] As a moral response but also seeking social stability, in fear of riots which happened regularly, liberal reformism traded improvements in material conditions for civil cohesion. The improvements, such as sewers, were real but so were the expectations of conformity, sobriety and productivity. Other reforms included the regulation of working hours and provision of better housing. It had been the norm for children to work down the pit, up the chimney, at looms or in the potteries, in bad conditions for long hours and little money, but this was replaced by universal education – schooling as industrialised learning – as adult labour conditions, too, were improved. Progressive regulation, however, became a new form of social ordering. As historian Cristophe Charle writes, 'The systematic introduction of discipline based on an objectively measured schedule (bells, sirens or clocks) … put an end to the hazy boundaries between work and relaxation of earlier, rudimentary organisation.'[3] What had begun as the monastery bell calling the hours of prayer became clocking-on at the factory, controlled by employers playing God. At the same time, housing reform delivered by speculative building was not effective. As a Royal Commission in 1885 noted, 'the evils of overcrowding' spilled into moral life and health as well.[4] Pollution was visible in black buildings and belching chimneys; and urban streets were perceived as zones of prostitution, alcoholism, idleness and the smell of the poor – all to be cleansed along with the opium dens and pickpockets of popular fiction. In reality, the picture was more nuanced. Raymond Williams argues that working-class society organised self-help, as in adult literacy groups, as a means to its emancipation.[5] Meanwhile, early sociologists saw urban life as free from rural ties to land and kin – the idea that city air makes people free – as modern writers celebrated the anonymity of city streets (for men with adequate leisure).[6]

Ambivalence persists in readings of urban life. Garden Festivals in the 1980s in Liverpool (Fig. 2), Gateshead, Ebbw Vale and Stoke-on-Trent traded on an ingrained anti-urbanism and an imaginary based on the suburb and the country house. But this cultivated nature is not the wildness of, say, Thomas Hardy's novels – a rurality already encapsulated in history as he wrote – and is closer to the Garden City movement which arose in the 1900s, too, informing English Town-and-Country planning.[7] Ebenezer Howard's ideal was to lessen

Fig. 2. Liverpool Garden Festival site in 2013, shortly before redevelopment for housing

poverty and improve health, buying agricultural land the rent from which was to be divided between the landlord, repayment of capital, and a social fund for welfare provision. Too much capital was needed, however, and Howard went to company boardrooms and gentlemen's clubs for the balance.[8] The result was Letchworth: 'idealising the traditional English village.'[9]

Howard sought a practical alternative to urbanisation but modern writers dwelt in the mire of dark streets, dimmed ideals and personal failings. Eliot's desolation is metaphorical: the wasteland as a state of psyche. He writes of trying to deal with 'some rude unknown psychic material' and 'dark' experiences;[10] and of suspension between spirituality and materiality. Literary historian Lyndall Gordon writes of Eliot's 'imaginary desert' as drawing from, 'grail romances where a knight customarily traverses a waste land in his quest for grace.'[11] In The Waste Land, Eliot juxtaposes a river sweating oil and tar where barges drift to the Thames of the Elizabethan era when a royal barque sails rather than drifts, like a gilded shell on a brisk swell, sailing to white towers.[12] This is far from the Isle of Dogs, which represents dirt and a world cut loose from its moorings in The Waste Land. Yet Eliot's style echoes the drift, with moments of fracture and sudden shifts of time and place which F. R. Leavis attributes (in 1932) to the 'incessant rapid change' of 'the Machine Age.'[13] He adds, 'The result is breach of continuity and the uprooting of life. This last metaphor has a peculiar aptness, for what we are witnessing is the final uprooting of the immemorial ways of life, of life rooted in the soil.'[14] Again the rural is idealised. For Eliot, in London during the 1910s, this is a traverse of waste and beauty in which beauty denotes spirit. Lewis Freed writes that Eliot was drawn to an, 'unspecified religious consciousness.'[15] But Fredric Jameson notes that although this was thought to be 'subversive and embattled',[16] then it is outmoded now because, 'nobody has that kind of unique private world and style to express any longer.'[17]

Regardless of Eliot's foibles, the wasteland has entered educated sensibility as a motif of modernity. For Eliot, it turns inward; in other cases, the image looks to

aesthetic rebellion as a sign for social non-conformity. In Macaulay's The World My Wilderness, Barbary, the main protagonist whose formative years were spent in the maquis in the French Pyrenees during the Vichy period, is transplanted to London; behaving wildly, she lives in the bombsites:

The maze of little streets threading through the wilderness, the broken walls, the great pits with their dense forests of bracken and bramble, golden ragwort and coltsfoot, fennel and foxglove and vetch, all the wild rambling shrubs that spring from ruin, the vaults and cellars and deep caves, the wrecked guildhalls that had belonged to saddlers, merchant tailors, haberdashers, wax-chandlers, barbers, brewers, coopers, and coachmakers, all the ancient city fraternities, the broken office stairways that spiralled steeply past empty doorways and rubbled closets into the sky, empty shells of churches … their empty window arches where green boughs pushed in, their broken pavement floors …[18]

The sentence runs to more than 22 lines, a litany of past and present in which the pre-industrial – wax-chandlers and coach-makers – meets a post-civilized, re-wilded city. It is reminiscent of Richard Jeffries' After London (1885) in which London is drowned in a vast, putrid swamp while wild charlock hides, 'rotting roots in the fields under a blaze of yellow flower.'[19] The swamp oozes a foul miasma. Skeletal fingers still clutch coins.

Jeffries, from Wiltshire, wrote After London from 'disgust in urban civilisation.'[20] But Macaulay writes from refusal of the social norm. As the maquis resisted the regime, living in the ruins resists society's institutions. Her novel is a form of the German Bildungsroman (a story of a life-journey usually about an outsider's adjustment to society, such as Goethe's Young Werther and Mann's Death in Venice). Barbary is a student at the Slade; she begins to accept her situation when the ruins are encroached on by reconstruction. But the ruins haunt her imagination:

The fireweed, the pink rose-bay, that has seeded itself in the burnt soil and flowed and blossomed everywhere where bombs had been, would take fright at the building and drift back on the winds to the open country where it came, together with the red campion, the yellow charlock, the bramble, the bindweed, the thorn-apple, the thistle, and the vetch. … So men's will to recovery strove against the drifting wilderness to halt and tame it; but the wilderness might slip from their hands … slip darkly away from them, seeking the primeval chaos and old night which had been …[21]

Macaulay wrote The World My Wilderness in her sixties after driving an ambulance during the blitz; she researched it in bombsites which were, for her, reminiscent of The Waste Land. At the end of the novel a character quotes Eliot: 'I think … we are in rats' alley where the dead men lost their bones.'[22] Museum curator Christopher Woodward writes that the bombsites represent an 'inner wildness' and 'Macaulay's nihilism.'[23]

The ruins of the soul – after the death of god – remain awkwardly under the superstructure of society as a perennial attraction.[24] In 1947, a Mass Observation report noted that a third of men and a fifth of women interviewed had spiritual doubts, many pointing to the war as evidence of god's departure from this world.[25] A third of respondents, 'were unable to give any ideas about the purpose of life.'[26] Eliot's uncertainty seems, then, to extend to the mass population although his articulation of desolation, like Macaulay's attraction to ruins, can be read in Freudian terms, too, as a struggle of instinct against conformity. In literature, the outsider dies or conforms; Eliot adopted a form of high Anglicanism, and, in her later The Pleasure of Ruins, Macaulay writes, 'Ruinlust has come full circle … Ruin must be a fantasy … in beauty, wholeness is all.'[27] Yet I wonder if attitudes to urban environments retain a post-Romantic refusal of power; still, attitudes also shift, through a de-politicised attraction

to ruins as aesthetic entities, and, today, a weary acceptance of the waste of deindustrialisation and the so-called flexible economy of neoliberalism. Or, perhaps even if ruins evoke fantasy worlds, a counter-imaginary lurks there.

Junk

The stabilities offered by the liberal social contract – material improvements in exchange for social cohesion – and the literary outsider's compromise with society have been junked by neoliberalism. Improvements are no longer on the table; and almost any artistic departure, like graffiti, is assimilated into the art market. Zygmunt Bauman writes,

Thrown into a vast open sea with no navigation charts and all the marker buoys sunk and barely visible, we have only two choices left: we may rejoice in the breath-taking vistas of new discoveries – or we may tremble out of fear of drowning. One option not really realistic is to claim sanctuary in a safe harbour.[28]

Bauman's navigational metaphor alludes to the encroachment of symbolic economies on urban conditions, as urban spaces become sites of consumption (including consumption of the city itself). Richard Sennett writes of the de-skilling of craft industries, and the corrosion of character which accompanies scenarios with a high degree of risk: 'a kind of extreme risk-taking takes form in which large numbers of young people gamble that they will be one of the chosen few' but, 'the mass of losers have crumbs to divide up among themselves … [as] rewards gravitate to the most powerful … those in a position to grab everything do so.[29] This is precarity, a condition sometimes romanticised as urban nomadism but more accurately a totalitarianism of permanent crisis. For political theorist Isabell Lorey,

domination in post-Fordist societies is no longer legitimated through (social) security, and we instead experience governing through insecurity … the precarious and the immune … stand ever less in a relation of opposition and increasingly take on a graded relationship in terms of a regulated threshold of being (still) governable. … precarization … [is] a process of normalization, which enables governing through insecurity.[30]

And that is where new ruin-scapes appear. Architectural critic Owen Hatherley sees it as a legacy of Thatcherism and Blairite modernisation.[31] But the modern sense of waste is multi-layered: disused industrial sites become semblances of inverse industrialisation in a hybrid landscape of ruins and reclamations where use is replaced by art, work by leisure, invention by conservation. This enforces widening social and wealth divisions. Peter Marcuse remarks that in New York, 'the new architecture of shopping malls, skywalks, and policed pedestrian malls' separates classes so that skywalks enable, 'men and women of business' to 'walk over the heads of the poor and the menial.'[32] Not far from gentrified districts, he continues, is an abandoned city housing, 'the very poor, the excluded, the never employed and permanently unemployed, the homeless and the shelter residents.'[33]

Culturally, deindustrialised landscapes conjure selective pasts which mask questions as to the effects of industrialisation – good (work, solidarity) or bad (pollution, exploitation) – while the term post-industrial masks the cause of this ruined estate: deindustrialisation. Literature, meanwhile, aligns visions of urban life and space to personal trajectories. These may draw attention to injustices, as Iain Sinclair does in his reflections on the construction of the London Olympics site: 'The current experience, in reality, is all fence; the fence is the sum of our knowledge of this privileged mud. Visit here as early as you like and there will be no unsightly tags.'[34] But Patrick Wright reads Sinclair's urban rambles as autobiographical, seeing Sinclair as 'a poet of the Welfare State, the laureate of its morbidity and failure.'[35] Wright, whose own wanderings in London's East

Fig. 3. Duisberg Nord Landscape Park, Germany

End form the basis of his work, continues, 'Sinclair recovers the density of the city through a scavenging poetic … like an inverted parody of future-orientated urban planning.'[36] The question is whether real planning is much different, with its emphasis on re-presented pasts and futures based on little outside consumption.

New German Ruins

In the Ruhr, once a heartland of coal, steel and chemicals, heavily bombed in the 1940s and deindustrialised in the 1990s, the response to decline has been to landscape the ruins as leisure sites. Duisburg Nord (Fig. 3) is the 230-hectare site of the Thyssen steelworks, landscaped by Latz + Parner in the 1990s; it adjoins the even larger Emscher Park which provides a place for dog-walking and jogging, and attracts cultural tourism. Landscaping was seen by planners as part of a re-industrialisation strategy which included solar energy, but imports of Chinese solar panels undercut German prices. Economic revival has been elusive.

The abandoned structures constitute a genre of industrial monuments but what is being commemorated may be unclear. These are ruins: the conserved, lavishly and inventively landscaped ruins of industries which provided work and wages, perhaps solidarity, just as they produced pollution. De-contextualised, the structures enchant their publics as relics of a modernism in which form followed function; but they are now free-standing, equivalents to the value-free, white spaces of modern art museums (Fig.4). Freed from necessity, towers are used for abseiling and diving lessons; yet this is also, or mainly, a new kind of park, and as such aesthetic place. This is affirmed by the images of industrial structures by Berndt and Hilda Becher displayed on the site. There are genuine environmental gains: a canal which was an open sewer now carries clean water; waste water is diverted in a culvert; rainwater is harvested for irrigation; cleaned cooling tanks are surrounded by lilies; dragon flies have reappeared; contaminated soil has been replaced and over a hundred species of plant have re-emerged naturally, supplemented by selective planting. For Annaliese Latz, '[it is] a garden where we work or whose stillness and beauty we enjoy in contemplation.'[37]

Fig. 4. Duisberg Nord Landscape Park, Germany

But critic Deborah Gans argues that this image erases a history of pollution and exploitation: 'Most of the contamination is … the trace of the war between labour and capital.'[38] Citing another difficult history (Germany in the 1930s-40s), she uses the term 'Lebensraun' for the proliferation of structures across the site of Emscher Park (Fig. 5): 'Industry blazed trails of contamination as it moved from south to north, mining, building and discarding.'[39] Similarly, Kirstin Barndt writes from a perspective of museum studies that the site's re-landscaping ignores histories of class and collective identity:

the elevated markers of land art that now dot every other slag heap in the region can serve as indicators, for they inscribe the disappearance of labour into their scopic regime. The new vantage points invite adventurous climbers to rise above the reconstructed landscape and contemplate the view. This privileged and individualised vision is significant in the context of post-Fordist modernisation. The new landscape of affect … symbolically enables visitors to rise above local history.[40]

In the absence of the desired economic revival, city authorities now look to shopping malls for growth.[41]

Barndt identifies another dialectic: the landscaping of Duisburg Nord is reminiscent of the eighteenth-century landscape park with its long vistas combined with places of intimate contact with nature. At Duisburg Nord these are in enclosed gardens in old bunkers. Barndt cites Peter Fritzsche that, 'the eighteenth-century landscape configured both the opposition of art and nature and the ultimate reintegration of art into nature.'[42] The ruins are not frozen in time but reintegrated into a chronology of natural growth intersected by human economics, which has no beginning or end, as if irrefutable. Historian of ideas Todd Samuel Pressner writes, 'the imaginary of ruins is necessary for any theory of modernity' and that destruction and ruination are, 'not simply the endpoint … of the project of modernity, but processes that are present at every stage of

Fig. 5. Duisberg Nord Landscape Park, Germany

modernisation,' offering both emancipation and surveillance.'[43] Edensor suggests another pairing between 'the quest for a seamless order' and a desire for, 'a realm of surprise, contingency and misrule.'[44] And in *A Journey Through Ruins: The Last Days of London*, Patrick Wright juxtaposes the urban and the rural, citing a tradition of rural excursions from East London – picking hops in Kent, walks in Epping Forest – while excursions can now be made within London in sites resembling Macaulay's ruins:

The buddleia of the old bomb-sites has recently been joined by the newer green of the city farm … There is the green of the tree nursery that some brave community project … has tried to establish in the ruins of St Bartholomew's church … and of the saplings the council has planted along many pavements … in an attempt to lift the passing heart. But another, very different hue of green has also been creeping through Hackney … This is a visionary green to be sure, though what it envisions is not the benign deindustrialisation William Morris once imagined for the Thames or that another Victorian, Richard Jeffries, thought might come 'After London', but rather the burgeoning that would surely follow once the corrupting machinery of the state was rolled back.[45]

The green of Garden Festivals typifies such a vision trading not on reform but on simulation, just as the insertion of high culture outlets in deindustrialised zones prioritises display over production and ignores the local cultures which might otherwise shape regeneration.

An Unresolved Future: Stoke-on-Trent after the Potteries
Josiah Wedgwood personified the inventiveness of the emerging entrepreneurial class of the eighteenth century, developing new kinds of earthenware and neoclassical decoration for upper-class markets. In Etruria, which he bought in 1766, the bottle-kilns created a new landscape. Wedgwood carefully preserved samples of the factory's work, and a Wedgwood museum opened in 1906 to display them, moving to New Barlaston in 1952, closing in 2004 as the industry collapsed, and re-opening in 2008. The World of Wedgwood now advertises 'a unique visitor experience celebrating the very best of British industry and design heritage. Experience Wedgwood for the day through shopping, food and visitor tours.'[46] It does not mention pottery, which might sum up part of the problem: standard routes to regeneration cherry-pick sites for standardised solutions such as new museums and visitor attractions. In some cases it works; in others it fails (such as The Public in West Bromwich or the Centre for Popular Music in Sheffield). But it is as if a town's future is assigned to visitors, and the visit to consumption. Left out of the picture but still inhabiting what are now marginal zones are the publics whose everyday lives produce culture (in the anthropological sense) and whose culture, in turn, might inform regeneration.

Vernacular culture has its visible signs in distinctive kinds of building and decoration but, mostly, the common culture of a place is an invisible network of association and meaning. Stoke-on-Trent missed the regeneration which re-coded many deindustrialised sites from the 1980s to the 2007 crash. There was a Garden Festival in 1986 but limited efforts to re-employ the redundant workforces. For Edensor, 'local strategies have been designed to obliterate any trace of industry from the landscape.'[47] He cites the demolition of the Royal Doulton works at Burslem, concluding, 'These unseemly spatial erasures signify attempts to rapidly forget even the recent past' in reinventing Stoke-on-Trent as a post-industrial city for new service industries.[48] Stoke became a city of vacant lots and abandoned buildings.

As to local cultures: the last hole-in-the-wall oatcake shop in Stoke-on-Trent closed in 2012. Geographer David Bell writes of the Introduction to *The Staffordshire Oatcake Recipe Book* by Eleanor Fishman as, 'a practical description but also a statement of local identification.'[49] Another oatcake book, Steve

Dixon's *The Oatcake Cookbook* (1985) uses the device of a story of a local schoolgirl, Tracey, who tries to trace the oatcake's history, told in Potteries dialect. Bell observes that village bakers did not make oatcakes, which were produced by individuals in cottage front rooms; through the twentieth century, production became more specialised, and moved into towns: 'Like cornershops and pubs, oatcake shops punctuate the everyday cultural geography of the Potteries, markers of 'traditional' communities and ways of life (even if … their status as potters-feeders has diminished.)[50] Then, in 2012, BBC news reported: 'For generations, families queued up patiently in Waterloo Street, Hanley to order the pancake-like delicacies.'[51] The site was demolished in the £2.3bn Renewing North Staffordshire programme. Although redevelopment was meant to revive the local housing economy the evidence is that it has produced gentrification: terraced houses in this area are advertised at £30-60,000; a post-modern 3-bed house in the new development of Kiln View is priced at £150,000.[52]

The name Kiln View is content-free, a past repackaged as a void. Geographer Garry Bridge argues that gentrification diminishes the space for grassroots activism, trading on an illusion of an undifferentiated community.[53] In contrast, the policy adopted by the local authority in Stoke to sell houses for £1, attaching a £30,000 renovation package, to local people who will live in them for five years is more likely to generate a community simply because it addresses values rather than sites. As Alice Mah writes, 'The act of imagining the nation, city, or community encompasses questions of identity, belonging, aspiration, memory, equality, and social justice.'[54] On the failure of redevelopment in Walker, Tyneside, Mah comments that the scheme demonstrates, 'how drastically redevelopment policies affect people's lives, often in unintended and undesirable ways' while showing that standardised solutions relying on arts- or property-led development often fail.[55]

In Stoke, bottle kilns remain but are there on sufferance, required to earn their keep as signs in the new economy and presence of the mythicised creative class. If I ask what else might happen here, however, I am caught between a nostalgia for industries which, while once providing work, were polluting; and policies for redevelopment offering little regeneration. Somewhere between these spectres are the ordinary urban places where people hold on despite worsening conditions in sight of the new cultural hubs and elite housing which marginalise them. I suggest that genuine regeneration has three points of departure:

- Making the most of what is there, including histories of material production but also everyday life, rather than looking to supposed cases of success elsewhere to emulate in different conditions, on lower budgets;
- Enabling people to live, and remain in, the locality through localised schemes for housing and small business support, together with schemes to retain graduates in the locality;
- Extricating the values of mutuality and social benefit which have been junked by neoliberalism as it obliterated industry and now dismantles the post-war welfare settlement.

I want to avoid being prescriptive because a fourth, general point would be the democratic self-determination of local culture and social organisation. I am dubious as to high culture's parading as a panacea for urban decline, and about the term regeneration when it seems to be disconnected from specific practical steps towards regeneration, like a new deity to be called on in despair.[56] I want to cite, instead, a non-spectacular, local art project in provincial France before returning to the Potteries.

The organisation Nouveaux Commanditaires mediates between artists and local groups who want to commission art.[57] At Caudry (Nord), Matali Crasset worked with the association of pigeon fanciers – who breed and race pigeons – to design

Fig. 7. Neil Brownsword, *National Treasure*, 2013. Performative installation held at the former Spode site, Topographies of the Obsolete, Vociferous Void (exhibition 27.09.13 - 10.11.13)

Fig. 8. *Anthropocene Diorama,* Margrethe Kolstad Brekke, Topographies of the Obsolete, Vociferous Void (exhibition 27.09.13 - 10.11.13)

a pigeon tower for the local park (Fig. 6). Pigeons had been bred and raced in Caudry since the 1850s but the practice declined after a peak in the 1950s. Enthusiasts wanted to encourage a new generation to take it up but their own design for a tower was refused by the local council. Crasset listened to their needs – for instance, that the interior should have a flow of air – and produced two designs, one in local brick and the other in a modernist style using coloured wood. The association opted for the latter: an orange-clad tower with a domed roof, a form following function but also renewing tradition. The tower is not spectacular, if a slightly unusual building for an everyday purpose in an ordinary provincial town. That is why it matters.

Returning to Stoke-on-Trent, the projects which Topographies of the Obsolete has enabled in the Potteries have adopted a sense of locality grounded in material processes. This refers to a past which has been lost and could generate nostalgia yet the programme aims at new senses of local identity. In *National Treasure*, Neil Brownsword re-presented the craft skills which were practised for generations: china painters Peter and Marie Graves and Anthony Challinor, who worked for Spode and Doulton, demonstrated ceramic decoration in the Spode factory. Separated from viewers by a glass screen, they began to resemble museum exhibits while, using spaces marginal such as the base of a plate, they interrupted any safe perceptions by depicting contemporary dereliction rather than the images of traditional decoration (Fig. 7). Brownsword writes, 'Working within their own time structures for as much or as little as they liked, each artisan would occupy the space intermittently, dissolving the hierarchical relationship between employer and employee.'[58] This removes the spectre of the clock as a symbol of regimentation; focuses on production rather than display; and introduces a critical edge through an intentional mismatch of images of ruin in place of the flowers or classical figures.

In collaboration with the Bergen Academy of Art and Design, young artists from

Scandinavia, Germany and the UK occupied spaces in redundant potteries to produce work of their own in response to the site. Margrethe Kolstad Brekke writes that, arriving at the Spode site in 2012, the artists found signs of its last days of use in 2008: 'piles of documents, cans of sardines, cups of tea, everyday mess on workstations … as intact as the day they were left by the employees who were escorted off the site.'[59] Brekke worked in the mould store, a semi-dark space; using synthetic reactive dyes she created *Anthropocene Diorama* (Fig.8), a work seen only slowly as eyes adjust, to represent the geological period of human presence on Earth. The dyes are made from coal, the fossil fuel which fed nineteenth-century dye technologies and made the soot of industrial towns. Brekke spilled and spread colour around the room, 'in the nervous modus of hypermodernity at accelerating speed,' characterising the Anthropocene as the, 'unintended aesthetics of human practice.'[60] That acceleration is a stage of the 'incessant rapid change' which breeds a sensibility of ruins.

The questions are whether this engenders a more creative imaginary than that of urban redevelopment; and whether aesthetic responses to dereliction, and the ambivalences of the work produced and materials used, open issues of democracy and accountability which are, at root, political. The programme continues: Ceramic City Stories, coordinated by Danny Callaghan, shows the extraordinary history of Stoke's tile production (seen in the basement of the old Minton Library). It's a wonderful story.

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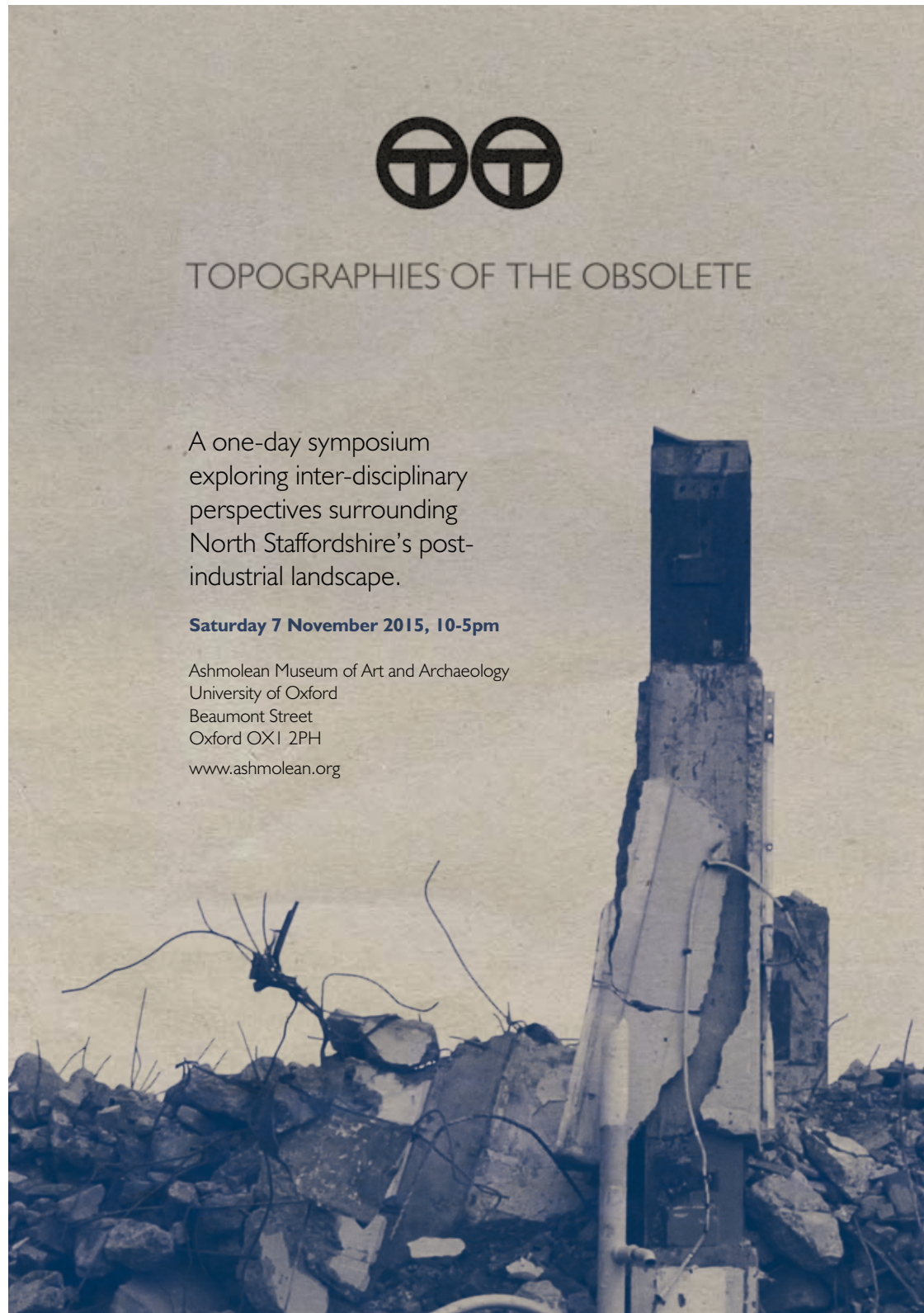
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