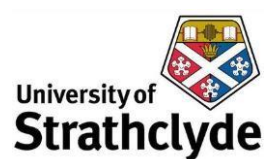# Giants of the Clyde: Memory and Post-industrial Archaeology on Clydeside

Finnieston crane, 1979 ©Historic Environment Scotland

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis seeks to explore the material culture of one remaining and one removed giant crane along the River Clyde. It approaches the cranes as individual sites of both remembering and forgetting. The many giant cantilever cranes that have stood along the River Clyde in Glasgow can be seen as totems of both the excellence of Clyde engineering and the dynamism of industrial Scotland. For the people and communities living and working around the river, the cranes symbolise the pride of being part of industrial Scotland, often being beacons of cultural identity locally and helping to define and reinforce community identity. Around 50 giant cranes were built, with ten left, four of which are in Scotland. This project considers Scotland's remaining and removed giant cranes through the memories and interactions of the people and communities that have existed around them.

This thesis does not intend to make a case for their preservation, though aims to highlight the various ways in which these fragments of industrial archaeology have been perceived, reused and re-animated in a way that that can seek to inform the conservation processes of these structures, and of post-industrial archaeological sites in general.

This thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining history and archaeology to explore the connections people have with industrial fragments. The thesis combines new oral history testimony, documentary source analysis and material culture studies to account for the post-industrial phases of these cranes. This thesis asserts that the cranes have, over time, transitioned from working objects to cultural artefacts, and that in studying them, a better understanding of the relationship that people have with deindustrialisation and post-industrialism on Clydeside can be found. The original contribution to knowledge comes via

considering, for the first time, the post-industrial archaeology on Clydeside, and the wider materiality of industrial change, in a global context, adding to the emergent field of deindustrialisation studies.

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Introduction

> Come here, look. See that cran there? That's one of the few remaining heavy lifters on the Clyde. They knock them down. To make way for shopping centres, leisure complexes. It's as if they're ashamed of the past. Have you ever seen a cran demolished? They put explosives in the uprights, about half way up and when it blows…one minute they're standing there majestic, contemptuous. The next they fall on their knees, arms outstretched in supplication. Praying, they seem to hang there for a second, and then they fall, crashing their faces into the ground. Hardly any dust or rubble. So gracefully. So beautiful and dreadful in their destruction. That's what we're good at now, demolition.
> - Frank Miller, 2001

Deindustrialisation, defined herein as the planned reduction of industrial activity in a region or economy, is a truly global phenomenon that has provoked focused study across multiple academic disciplines in recent times. Though initially understood as a primarily economic process, deindustrialisation studies has grown to acknowledge the deeper social and cultural implications of this shift. The study of the resultant 'post-industrial' condition has received considerable attention in recent years, with memory work an integral part of this. Works such as *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialisation (2003)* by Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, *Corporate Wasteland* (2007) by Steven High and David Lewis, and *Heritage, Labour and the Working Classes* (2011) edited by Smith et al have sought to assess the complicated relationship memory has with both the individualised and collective negotiation of industrial change.[1] Additionally, collections like Hilary Orange's *Reanimating Industrial Spaces* have explicitly focused on how these changes impact on connections people have with the physical industrial leftovers.[2]

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[1] Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialisation* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003); Steven High and David Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland: The Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialisation* (New York: ILR Press, 2007); Laurajane Smith, Paul Shackel and Gary Campbell, *Heritage, Labour and the Working Classes* (Oxford, Routledge, 2011).

[2] Hilary Orange, ed., *Reanimating Industrial Spaces: Conducting Memory Work in Post-industrial Societies*, (California: Left Coast Press, 2015).

The epigraph that marks the beginning of this thesis comes from Frank Miller's play, *Work-in.* The play, first performed at the Citizen's Theatre in Glasgow evocatively captures the feelings of nostalgia towards the industrial working identities that became imprinted on the material in Scotland; taking centuries to build up, but only around thirty years to pick apart.[3] The wholesale shift in the Scottish economy is perceived in the scholarship to have resulted in a 'cultural scar', one that brought a way of life to an end whilst reducing much of the built industrial apparatus to rubble.[4] This thesis makes a substantial contribution to the body of work on memory and deindustrialisation, adding a new perspective from Clydeside, Scotland. It considers the connections and relationships that people and communities have with the two of the last of the cranes along the River Clyde; interrogating how the cranes evolved over time, becoming monuments to the lived experiences of work and the associated sense of belonging work fosters. This thesis demonstrates how the cranes have transformed from working objects to cultural artefacts, broaching the broader implications of this shift and what this means for constructions and perceptions of place, community and identity.

Around 50 giant cantilever cranes were built in Scotland in the early twentieth-century; transformative technology that took heavy industry to new levels in localities along the River Clyde, solidifying the transformation of what were once pastoral landscapes.[5] The

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[3] *Work In*, written and directed by Frank Miller, first performed at the Citizen's Theatre, Glasgow, 2001, quoted in Martin Bellamy, *The Shipbuilders: An Anthology of Scottish Shipyard Life* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), 206.

[4] Andrew Perchard, "'Broken Men' and 'Thatcher's Children': Memory and Legacy in Scotland's Coalfields." *International Labor and Working-Class History* 84 (2013): 78–98.

[5] Though this type of crane has been given many names over time, this thesis will refer to them as giant cantilever cranes. Accurately identifying the precise number of cranes of this type is made difficult by the lack of remaining archival material. Plans and drawings that do exist may only be 'tenders', with little evidence that the crane was ever actually built. Secondly, often cranes of this kind were built to replace old ones, with the change often leaving little trail in the archival material.

cranes are established monuments of the Anthropocene; tools of a developing civilization that can be considered in much the same way as other archaeological artefacts.[6] Only four giant cranes remain on the river Clyde; functionally obsolete—in terms of their original purpose—in continuously redeveloping urban topographies. Despite several key studies on the social and cultural effects of deindustrialisation and resulting industrial ruination from historians, geographers and archaeologists, little work has been done to explore the Clydeside experience. As some of the last and most iconic industrial structures along the Clyde, this thesis interrogates giant cantilever cranes to explore various themes of deindustrialisation—from ruination and abandonment, to regeneration and rebirth—whilst also capturing the ways in which people interact with industrial leftovers, in the post-industrial environment. By placing emphasis on the post-industrial phase of these structures, this work contributes to the emergent strand of scholarship that represents a 'social archaeology of industry' as developed by, Palmer, Orange and others.[7] Today, images of these structures crop up in unusual places; in street art, as the backdrop to national news reports, as a centerpiece to the opening ceremony of Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, and even appearing on Scottish currency.[8] Yet these images are not symbolic of the economic hardship and social deprivation often associated with industrial work, or the fragmented processes of deindustrialisation that left the West of Scotland with the lowest health profile in Europe. Rather, through this widespread visual iconography the cranes have been reborn as triumphalist totems of industrialism and the source of both local and

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[6] The anthropocene is the name for the relatively new and contested theory that this period's vast impact on the earth's ecosystems marks a new geological epoch, deserving of its own title.

[7] Marilyn Palmer and Hilary Orange, 'The archaeology of industry: people and places', *Post-Medieval Archaeology,* 50 (2) (016), 73-91.

[8] In March 2015, the Clydesdale bank brought new plastic £5 notes into circulation. The notes depicted Sir William Arrol, and the Clydebank crane, see 'Clydesdale Bank brings in plastic £5 note', *BBC News*, March 23, 2015, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-32000610

national pride.[9] The extent to which the cranes are monuments to working identities in Scotland is unclear, though their prominence makes them some of the most high profile fragments of archaeology in public life in the West of Scotland. It is remarkable, then, that little has been written about them and their wider material culture. This work will begin to address this gap in scholarship.

Scotland's giant cranes

In Scotland and elsewhere, cranes became the established artefact of shipbuilding and, as Bellamy points out, were 'embedded within the heart of Clydeside industry's cultural identity'.[10] In light of this, there are a number of industrial buildings or structures that could be used as potential case studies for a thesis of this nature. To narrow the scope, this work largely focuses on one particular type of crane, the giant cantilever crane. At the time of writing, there are four cranes of this type left in Scotland. In order of construction (earliest first) they are;

- Clydebank **–** Completed in 1907, built by Sir William Arrol and Co Ltd (in collaboration with Stothert and Pitt) for John Brown's shipyard, Clydebank, West Dunbartonshire.[11]

- Greenock **–** Completed in 1917, built by Sir William Arrol and Co Ltd. Greenock, Inverclyde.[12]

- Whiteinch **–** Completed in 1920, built by Sir William Arrol and Co Ltd.[13]

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[9] David Walsh, Martin Taulbut, and Phil Hanlon, 'The aftershock of deindustrialization—trends in mortality in Scotland and other parts of post-industrial Europe', *European Journal of Public Health*, 20:1, (2010), 58–64.
[10] Martin Bellamy, 'Shipbuilding and cultural identity on Clydeside', *Journal for Maritime Research*, 8:1, (2006), 1-33.
[11] https://canmore.org.uk/site/43082/clydebank-kilbowie-john-browns-shipyard
[12] https://canmore.org.uk/site/68372/greenock-james-watt-dock-giantcantilever-crane
[13] https://canmore.org.uk/site/68404/glasgow-north-british-diesel-engine-works-cantilever-crane

- Finnieston - Completed in 1931 by Cowan's Sheldon and Co. of Carlisle, with Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Co.[14]
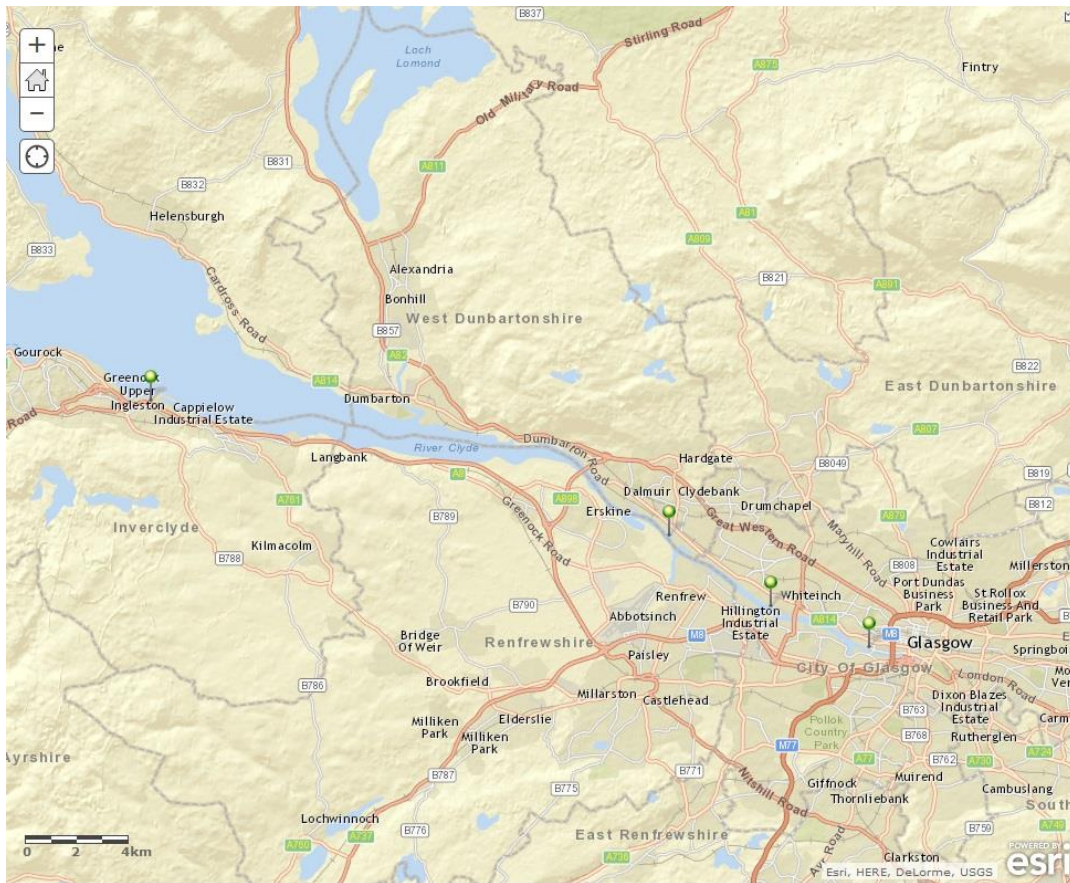
Figure 1 – Map of remaining giant cantilever cranes. ©ArcGIS

This thesis uses two of these structures in Scotland as focal points to explore the connections people have with industrial change, though it will also draw on material relating to other cranes, such as Govan's removed giant crane, and associated berth cranes.[15] All of these structures are linked by their newfound obsolescence, and their differing settings and uses since.

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[14] https://canmore.org.uk/site/44033/glasgow-stobcross-quay-finnieston-cantilever-crane
[15] https://canmore.org.uk/site/333983/glasgow-govan-road-fairfield-ship-yard-and-engine-works-cranes

Lost giants

In order to demonstrate the vulnerability and scarcity of these structures, it is necessary to briefly summarise the wider context of the demise of these cranes in other locations. In 1992, two Arrol-built giant cranes (100 tons and 250 tons) at Rosyth Naval Dockyard were dismantled. The cranes had dominated the skyline since their construction in 1918 yet, as minute books from the 1970s and 1980s show, they had become technologically outdated, used with decreasing frequency as the years passed.[16] The dismantling of the cranes was controversial, with industrial heritage experts concerned that the cranes were unique examples of Victorian engineering technology and could be preserved. In response to these concerns, Scotland's governmental heritage bodies of the time—Historic Scotland and The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland—gave the remaining cranes statutory protection via the listing process. On 14th April 1989, the five cranes were given A-listed status, seen to be structures of 'national or international importance', a prestigious accolade afforded to only around 8% of listed buildings or structures.[17] Though an important indicator of the evolution in perceptions of industrial heritage in Scotland, and the implied social or cultural value in giving industrial detritus a designation of this kind, the listing process could only ever offer an artificial protection from future challenges of redevelopment. In spite of its listed status, the Fairfield crane in Govan

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[16] MW11/502-504 https://canmore.org.uk/site/79567/rosyth-hm-dockyard
[17] http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings/listing.htm
For individual listing entries and background information on these cranes see the Historic Environment Scotland listings portal:

        Clydebank crane - http://portal.historic-scotland.gov.uk/designation/LB22993
        Finnieston/Stobcross crane - http://portal.historic-scotland.gov.uk/designation/LB33285
        Whiteinch crane - http://portal.historic-scotland.gov.uk/designation/LB32281,
        Greenock crane - http://portal.historic-scotland.gov.uk/designation/LB34175

was demolished in 2007, the context of which will be explored in Chapter 3. The four

remaining cranes will undoubtedly face future preservation challenges.

Outwith Scotland, an Arrol-built giant crane at Barrow-in-Furness, England, was dismantled

in 2010.[18] In response to the dismantling of the crane, the *North West Evening Mail* featured

an article on the crane's demise with statements from local residents. Local artist John

Duffin eloquently expressed his feelings of loss at the passing of the structure:

> It is such a shame because it is such an iconic image. I have painted it several times.
> I have also stood and sketched it on many occasions. It is the last big shipyard crane
> that is left. I suppose being non-sentimental about it they are utilitarian objects and
> they are there to do a job. I suppose if they are not doing a job they have to move.
> Cranes like that speak of another age of Barrow, at a time when the ships were
> rolling out. There is something monumental about them, almost a piece of
> sculpture. My job was to help people see the poetry in them.[19]

Shipyard worker Azza Samms similarly evoked feelings of loss, linking the removal of the

cranes to the often perilously unstable nature of industry in the area:

> Historically, cranes are a symbol of shipyards. We had a whole lot of cranes on the
> berths in Walney Channel which we lost and I think that was a sad occasion. When
> people of the town see cranes they see the shipyard and the place where they get
> their livelihoods, so yes, I think it will be a bit of blow when they see that crane
> going down. [20]

In both testimonies, albeit from markedly different perspectives, both Duffin and Samms

emphasise the symbolic nature of the cranes and their intrinsic connection to work and

working lives. Samms in particular introduces the idea that the cranes are symbols of the

fragility of work, an idea that this thesis will further throughout. These quotes render

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[18] 'In Pictures: End of a Barrow-in-Furness Icon', *BBC News*, Friday 21 January, 2011,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/cumbria/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_9369000/9369182.stm
[19] 'Farewell to an iconic crane', *North West Evening Mail*, 19 July, 2010,
http://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/barrow/Farewell-to-iconic-crane-51c3869e-bf3c-4e49-8f97-d3b88875ac60-ds.
[20] Ibid.

explicit how these structures are inherently linked to the wider processes of deindustrialisation and post-industrialism experienced across the United Kingdom.

However, these feelings of loss are not unique to the United Kingdom. In 2013, an Arrol designed crane at Garden Island Naval Dockyard Sydney, Australia, was dismantled. In response, various heritage bodies, such as the National Trust of Australia expressed a desire for it to be retained as a tourist attraction.[21] The crane had become a symbol of the dramatic change in the area in a relatively short space of time. As historian P R Stephenson argues:

> Like the Harbour Bridge, it is reminder that Australia has moved strongly and boldly beyond the pastoral and agricultural phases into the Age of Steel. That gigantic crane – its girders etched against background of new ferro-concrete apartment buildings reaching in cubes for the sky at Potts Point is a symbol of modernity, ugly to the eye of the nature lover, beautiful to the eye of an engineer.[22]

Additionally, in 2006 a trust was set up to protect and preserve the cantilever crane on the Isle of Wight.[23] These introductory examples of the layered values and meanings ascribed to these structures points to connections that this thesis will explore in a Clydeside context. Furthermore, it is clear that these structures have met the end of their working lives, and the remaining cranes of this kind face considerable conservation challenges in the future.

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[22] Percy Reginald Stephenson, *The History and Description of Sydney Harbour*, (Adelaide: Rigby Ltd, 1980), 180.
[23] 'The Cowes Hammerhead Trust', http://www.coweshammerheadcrane.org.uk/

Figure 2 - The newly built 250 ton giant cantilever crane in Rosyth, whilst being tested. 05/07/1917. ©Historic

Environment Scotland

Industrial heritage in Scotland

Industrial heritage is a major component both of the historic environment and the culture

sector more widely. Its significance is such that it impacts across society, not merely in

Scotland but also much further afield in the UK and overseas. Indeed, for a country of such

modest size, Scotland's scientists, engineers and industrialists have had a major impact on

the world.[24] As McIvor points out, industrial heritage museums have become 'nostalgia

spaces', where the complex dichotomy of work as 'hard graft, craftsmanship, community

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[24] *An Industrial Heritage Strategy for Scotland*, Historic Environment Scotland, 2015
http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/IH_Strategy_2nd_draft.pdfhttp://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/IH_Strategy_2nd_draft.pdf

and camaraderie of work and life' intertwines with the darker side of work as bringing great trauma, pain and suffering.[25]

Archaeological research into industrialisation can explore wider social, cultural, and economic questions by taking a new look at the remains of industry – considering these not just in terms of technologies, technical processes and work flows, but as places which defined people and which were entangled in social and environmental relationships. And archaeological research can extend analysis of these questions by linking the workplace with other aspects of the material environment of the industrial age. Such work can more fully explore the planned settlements associated with specific industries and urban and rural housing of the workforce more generally. It can range across the infrastructure, the chapels, burial grounds, schools, libraries, curling ponds and bowling greens which were part-and-parcel of industrial life. Taking these diverse material elements together can lead to powerful holistic analyses of the physical and social environments of industrial communities.

Methodology

This thesis brings together documentary source analysis, oral history testimony and a critical engagement with material culture studies to explore the post-industrial phases of these cranes, as a lens for understanding ongoing relationships with industrial change. In part, this study responds to the call from Penrose to 'animate the stage, not just with the machine but

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[25] Arthur McIvor, 'Industrial Heritage and the Oral Legacy of Disaster: Narratives of Asbestos Disease Victims from Clydeside, Scotland', in *Displaced Heritage: Responses to Disaster, Trauma, and Loss*, eds. Ian Convery, Gerard Corsane, and Peter Davis (Boydell Press, Suffolk) 2014, 243-250.

with the real voices of those whose lives are still embedded and imprinted in the material'.[26]

Additionally, it adds to emergent works like *Reanimating Industrial Spaces*, which engage

more extensively with the social relationships people have with former sites of industry,

often through memory practices.[27]

Archaeological Perspectives

Though dealing with the recent historical past, this thesis makes use of crucial concepts and

frameworks from archaeology that should be defined. Primarily, this thesis deals with

industrial archaeology as a specific field, though the lines of thought have been merged with

other strands, such as contemporary archaeology and historical archaeology. Historical

archaeology is a sub-discipline of archaeology that has often been periodised as being

concerned with the study of the past 500 years but—as both Johnson, and Renfrew and

Bahn suggest—can more appropriately be defined as being the archaeology of societies that

have written records.[28] Historical archaeology allows the adaptation of traditional practices

from history to place an emphasis on the built environment and connections therein.

Contemporary archaeology is a relatively new strand of archaeological practice which

focuses on the recent past, whilst applying archaeological methods and ideas in

contemporary settings. Quite simply, in an influential work by Victor Buchli and Gavin Lucas,

it has been described as the archaeology of the 'contemporary past'.[29] Contemporary

archaeology relies on its multi- and inter-disciplinary nature, and broad range of methods of

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[26] Sefren Penrose, 'Recording Transition in Post-industrial England: A Future Perfect View of Oxford's Motopolis', *Archaeologies,* 6:1, (2010), 177.
[27] Orange, R*eanimating Industrial Spaces*
[28] Matthew Johnson, *Archaeological Theory: An Introduction,* (London: Wiley, 2019), 193;
Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology: The Key Concepts,* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2016), 137.
[29] Victor Buchli and Gavin Lucas, *An Archaeology of the Contemporary Past*, (London: Routledge, 2002).

investigation and exploration. In large part, contemporary archaeology has grown in association with the Contemporary and Historical Archaeology in Theory (CHAT) conference group. Contemporary archaeology is a highly emergent strand of work, which can be described as:

> Archaeology's specific contribution to understanding the present and recent past. It is concerned both with archaeologies of the contemporary world, defined temporally as belonging to the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as well as with reflections on the socio-political implications of doing archaeology in the contemporary world.[30]

This thesis approaches the cranes as physical artefacts which in studying, can provide insights into human lives.

Oral History

As a means for studying the layers of meaning and value attached to industrial leftovers, it was deemed that an oral history methodology would be used within this study. The use of oral interviews within the academic study of the 'modern' past has developed rapidly in recent decades. This section will firstly seek to define what oral history is and what it can offer to a study of this kind. Similarly this section will outline and then address some of the perceived limitations of oral history work overall. Lynn Abrams provides a useful definition that can act as a starting point for discussion:

> Oral history is a catch-all term applied to two things. It refers to the process of conducting and recording interviews with people in order to elicit information from them about the past. But an oral history is also the product of that interview, the narrative account of past events. It is then both a research methodology (a means of conducting an investigation) and the result of the research process; in other words, it is both the act of recording and the record that is produced.[31]

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[30] *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology*, https://journals.equinoxpub.com/index.php/JCA
[31] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, (London: Routledge, 2010), 2.

As well as the above quote from *Oral History Theory*, there is now a significant body of theoretical literature on oral history as a distinct sub-field in its own right.[32] Fundamentally, oral history pre-supposes that there is a value and importance in seeking out witnesses to history, and that by gathering and listening to people's memories, we can create what Thompson referred to as 'the voice of the past'.[33] By seeking out the memories of people whose stories might otherwise go untold, oral history can often be seen to be a 'people's history' or a history 'from below'. Bartie and McIvor have shown that in the study of Scottish history, oral history has fundamentally upset existing historical understandings, allowing historians to 'challenge and question the stereotypes and dominant narratives that have pervaded Scottish historiography.'[34] Oral history has emerged as a vital tool in allowing historians to understand the ongoing relationship the West of Scotland has with deindustrialisation, as evidenced by recent doctoral research from Clark and Gibbs, as well as work by McIvor, Perchard, and Phillips.[35] Oral history has frequently been used as a methodological tool in archaeology which, as Jones demonstrates, is not a new phenomenon.[36] One recent fusion of historical archaeology, industrial heritage and oral history in Scottish context is in *The Birth of Industrial Glasgow: The Archaeology of the M74* by Mike Nevell, where oral histories were gathered (by David Walker) to compliment

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[32] For example, see: Rob Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader*, (London: Routledge, 2015); Anna Sheftel and Stacy Zembrzycki (eds.), *Oral History off the Record: Toward an Ethnography of Practice,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, (New York: Altamira Press, 2005).

[33] Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[34] Angela Bartie and Arthur McIvor, 'Oral History in Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review,* 92. 2013, 121.

[35] Andy Clark, '"Not Our Jobs to Sell" – Workforce Mobilization, Deindustrialisation and Resistance to Plant Closure: Scottish Female Factory Occupations, 1981 – 1982' (PhD diss., University of Strathclyde, 2017); Ewan Gibbs, *Coal Country: The Meaning and Memory of Deindustrialization in Postwar Scotland*, University of London Press, (London: University of London Press, 2021); Perchard, *Broken Men;* Jim Phillips, 'Deindustrialization and the Moral Economy of the Scottish coalfields, 1947 to 1991', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 84, (2013), 99-115.

[36] Sian Jones and Lynette Russell, 'Archaeology, memory and oral tradition: An introduction', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology,* 16:2, (2012), 267-283.

excavations in relation to forgotten sites of Glasgow's industrial past.[37] Crucially, this publication gives little prominence to the oral history that was gathered, instead privileging data derived from the extensive excavations that took place, and relegating the oral history to one brief section. This study hopes to counteract that treatment by interspersing the research chapter with both new and previously collected testimony.

For some, oral history methods remain contentious so it is important to summarise and respond to these criticisms. Hobsbawm famously argued that the inconsistences in the human memory, as well as the scope for interviewee-hyperbole, limits the value of oral history testimony in the academic pursuit of knowledge. He states that 'most oral history today is personal memory which is a remarkably slippery medium for preserving facts'.[38] Yet since then there has been a proliferation in oral history as a methodology, in a way that is linked intrinsically to a rise in 'memory' studies more generally. Alessandro Portelli provided a succinct rebuttal to traditionalist concerns about the value of oral history, arguing that 'what is really important is that memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meaning'.[39] Most commonly, the value in studying personal memory, is seen to be is about the interviewees perception of what is true, and how this is expressed, rather than merely an exercise in obtaining 'facts'. It is important to stress the relationship between respondents 'private' and 'public' memory, which over time become intertwined through wider societal understandings and perceptions. Though this is arguably central in many oral history projects, it is particularly prescient here given the wide extent to which

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[37] Michael Nevell, *The Birth of Industrial Glasgow: The Archaeology of the M74*, (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2016).
[38] Eric Hobsbawm, *On History*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), 20.
[39] Alessandro Portelli, 'What makes oral history different', in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Rob Perks, and A. Thomson (London: Routledge, 2015), 69.

industrial decline narratives have played out in film, television, song, art and other cultural media. The significance of this memory 'boom' is shown in Orser's overview of twenty-first century historical archaeology, which identifies memory work as one of the four key areas in current research.[40] The memory work he identifies is linked fundamentally to notions of 'heritage', and how this is applied through heritage institutions in relation to both localised and national narratives. Much work, he argues, has focused on the role of memory in constructing and sustaining heritage as well as the role of heritage institutions in mediating public and especially national forms of memory. It has been shown that many of the most venerated places are those associated with elite members of society. Historical archaeology has been used to both reveal and critique how dominant forms of memory are constructed and legitimated.

While oral history methods are increasingly accepted in the academic pursuit of reconstructing and interpreting the past, their application still requires some justification when utilised in research projects. This section will outline the development of oral history as a historical method, before considering some of the theoretical implications of using living people as a historical source, and treating memory as an object of study. Given that the cranes this thesis examines have not been in working order since the early 1980s, it was acknowledged from the outset of the project that this would not be a working account of these structures. Rather, it draws upon a more holistic and diverse range of interviewees, such as local residents, in the case study exploring Govan. Additionally, this thesis is

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[40] Charles Orser, 'Twenty-first Century Historical Archaeology', *Journal of Archaeological Research,* 18, (2010), 131.

enriched by its incorporation of oral history interviews conducted for other projects, such as the British Library's Artists Lives project, with regard to George Wyllie.[41]

Recordings of new and original interviews have been transcribed and stored as part of the Scottish Oral History Centre's (SOHC) archive, with the University of Strathclyde, providing a valuable resource for future research. All respondents were informed beforehand of the purpose of the research study and two documents were sent to their homes in advance of the visit and interview. The first was an 'informed consent statement' that outlined how the interview would be recorded, what the aims of the research were, what the rights of the respondent were, and how the transcript of any interview was to be processed before being deposited with the SOHC. The second document was a 'copyright clearance form' issued by the SOHC.

Canmore records

Beyond the thesis itself, this research has generated a substantial collaborative contribution to the Canmore records. Canmore is a searchable database which contains more than 320,000 records and 1.3 million catalogue entries for archaeological sites, buildings, industry and maritime heritage across Scotland. It is compiled and managed by Historic Environment Scotland, the public body that care for and promote Scotland's historic environment. Canmore contains information and collections from all its survey and recording work, as well as from a wide range of other organisations, communities and individuals who are helping to enhance this national resource. At the inception of this research project, the Canmore

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[41] *Artists Lives,* The British Library, 2003.

records for the giant cranes were basic, providing a 'summary record' that contained

standard information regarding tonnage, completion date, and associated works. Working

in collaboration with staff from Historic Environment Scotland's *Discovering the Clyde*

project, the material contained within this thesis has allowed for these records to be fully

updated.[42] Crucially, the records now take a more holistic approach of the changing states

of health of these structures, including their post-industrial phases.

Thesis Summary

Chapter one places deindustrialisation on Clydeside within a global context, considering how

desindustrialisation processes in the region have been analysed and understood in academic

scholarship and also in cultural media, including photography, film and literature. In this

chapter, it looks to the wider cultural discourses, or 'public' memory of deindustrialisation,

establishing a foundational framework which informs the chapters which follow that centre

'private memory' through oral history testimony. Chapter two explores the implications of

the removal of cranes at Govan's Fairfield shipyard, which took place between 2007 and

2014, combining archival photography with new oral history testimony. In doing so, it

juxtaposes the intangible landscapes of memory and industrial culture with tangible and

drastically altered physical landscape of an area that experienced a sharp industrial decline.

Chapter three studies the Finnieston crane, which has been the site of post-industrial artistic

rebirth. The chapter analyses the artistic interventions of George Wyllie, who used the crane

as the site for high-profile public art in the 1980s. The chapter demonstrates the value of

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[42] *Discovering the Clyde* was a five year project managed by Historic Environment Scotland. The project aimed to improve understanding of human interaction with the river Clyde through both research and community engagement. More information about the project can be found here - http://discoveringtheclyde.org.uk/.

exploring creative practice as a medium of response, and potentially even as force of

resistance, to industrial change on Clydeside.

Chapter One

Deindustrialisation on Clydeside in a Global Context

This chapter will provide a background summary to industrialism and deindustrialisation on Clydeside, establishing an underpinning framework which informs the chapters that follow. This chapter will demonstrate how deindustrialisation processes in the region have been interrogated and discussed in academic study, whilst also showing how these processes have been portrayed culturally, through photography, film and literature and other forms. Through acknowledgement of the wider cultural discourses, or 'public' memory of these events, this chapter serves as a crucial foundation for the oral history testimony that comes later within this thesis, which explores 'private memory'. This bringing together of 'public' and 'private' memory will generate a more holistic understanding of memory and how it is formed, as well as providing insight into the wider relationship between both these strands. This chapter, and those which follow, will demonstrate that a strong 'cultural circuit' had a definitive impact on popular understandings of deindustrialisation and its impacts on Clydeside. Additionally, this chapter will survey the existing literature that this study will build upon. It will explore how both industrialism and deindustrialisation have shaped working identities over time, whilst also exploring the use of oral history testimony to map these interrelated processes, amid an understanding of the dominant social theories of work and identity in the twentieth century. To place the cranes in this context, there will be a brief overview of how a framework for the study of the built apparatus of industrialism was established through the emergence of industrial archaeology, and its later evolution into a more holistic and multidisciplinary 'social' archaeology concerned with exploring the 'human' side of industrial ruin, often through memory practices.

The Economics of Decline: The Scottish Context

Understanding deindustrialisation is fundamentally important to understanding the development of modern Scotland. The study of deindustrialisation in Scottish contexts has grown, bringing debate from historians, economists and health professionals alike. Deindustrialisation studies in Scotland have taken a similar track to those in the United States of America and Canada, that is, a first wave of scholarship that identifies the economic trends and processes, and a second wave that seeks to understand the wider lived experiences of this period of change. The fall of heavy industry on Clydeside has been largely well accounted for by a number of academics.[1] The basic trends of deindustrialisation are well established; Paterson, Bechhofer and Crone identity four key economic trends that define this period, and largely form a consensus with wider academic thought; a shift in the basis in the production away from heavy manufacturing, the emergence of the new technological service sector, changing patterns of work and lastly the withdrawal of the state from providing jobs directly.[2] Knox has pithily summarised this shift as a move 'from ships to chips', meaning microchips.[3]

After establishing facts and key trends, the emphasis shifts toward trying to explain and account for the wider effects and alterations that deindustrialisation provoked. More recently, as Gibbs' points outs; 'deindustrialisation had profound effects in altering social and cultural structures, as well as shaping the emergence of a more pronounced sense of

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[1] For good introductory accounts see; Thomas Martin Devine, *The Scottish Nation: 1700-2000* (London: Allen Lane, 1999). Richard Finlay, *Modern Scotland: 1914-2000*, (London: Profile Publishing, 2004); Ewan Cameron, *Impaled upon the Thistle: Scotland since 1880*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); William W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-present,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1999) 254.

[2] Lindsay Paterson, Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone, *Living in Scotland: Social and Economic Change since 1980*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 3.

[3] Knox, *Industrial Nation,* 254.

Scottish-ness in demands for greater political autonomy through devolution and independence'.[4] A concise account of the extent of the decline of industry in Glasgow in economic terms is given by MacInnes who traces Glasgow from 'the workshop of the world' and 'second city of empire' to the end of the twentieth century.[5] He states that Glasgow represents the 'extreme form of a shift which has itself proceeded farther and faster in Great Britain than elsewhere in the world'.[6] In other histories of twentieth-century Scotland the focus on deindustrialisation is on identifying and analysing the economic processes at hand. In his account of twentieth-century Scotland, Harvie remarks that the lived experience in Scotland under the governments of Thatcher (1979-1990) was one of almost 'instant post-industrialisation'.[7] Peden modifies this by stressing the processes of deindustrialisation were in action, and in common discussion, both before and long after Thatcher's era.[8]

Deindustrialisation and health

One key theme explored by the literature in relation to deindustrialisation is its long legacy with regard to Scotland's low health profile. Mantaay explored health inequalities in post-industrial cities, using Glasgow as an example.[9] She studied the 'spatial correspondence' between areas of poor health and high deprivation levels, and the proximity to derelict land as a consequence of past-industrial uses. This point has been further evidenced by recent work emerging from a large scale project completed by the Glasgow Centre for Population

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[4] Ewan Gibbs, 'Deindustrialisation and Industrial Communities: The Lanarkshire Coalfields c.1947-1983', (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2016), 10.

[5] John MacInnes, 'The De-industrialisation of Glasgow', *Scottish Affairs*, 1, (1995), 73-95.

[6] Ibid, 73.

[7] Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 164.

[8] George Peden, 'A New Scotland? The Economy', in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History* eds Thomas M. Devine and Jenny Wormald, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 657.

[9] Juliana Mantaay, 'The collapse of place: derelict land, deprivation, and health inequality in Glasgow, Scotland', in *Cities and the Environment*, 1:6, (2013).

and Health, NHS Health Scotland, the University of the West of Scotland and University College London. The cross-disciplinary project sought to account for the Scotland's 'excess mortality'; that is, the higher mortality over and above that explained by the country's socio-economic profile.[10] When compared with near neighbours England and Wales, and accounting for differences in poverty and deprivation, approximately 5,000 more people die every year in Scotland than could reasonably be expected. The report provides a detailed critical analysis of the historical reasons for the West of Scotland's divergently low health profile. Crucially, it is an account that goes beyond the Thatcher years, stressing the Scottish Office's recognition of the severe challenges faced by Glasgow in the post-war period, in particular in terms of the deep-rooted health, housing and economic problems referred to above.

The New Town programme selectively 'redeployed' large swathes of the population in Glasgow; shifting people away from the areas around the riverside to greenfield sites and newly created industrial estates outwith Glasgow. This was part of a broader plan to stimulate wider economic growth and prosperity growth and development, as set out by Clyde Valley Regional Plan of 1946. Despite a growing governmental awareness of the hugely detrimental effect on communities along the river in and around Glasgow, the policy continued. In a 1971 report tellingly entitled, 'The Glasgow Crisis', it is noted that:

> Glasgow is in a socially… [and] economically dangerous position. The position is becoming worse because, although the rate of population reduction… is acceptable, the manner of it is destined within a decade or so to produce a seriously unbalanced population with a very high proportion of the old, the very poor and the almost unemployable… the above factors amount to a very powerful

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[10] David Walsh, Gerard McCartney, Chic Collins, Martin Taulbut, and David Batty, 'History, politics and vulnerability: explaining excess mortality in Scotland and Glasgow', *Public Health*, 151, (2017), 1-12.

case for drastic action to reverse present trends within the city. [But] there is an immediate question as to how much room exists for manoeuvre.[11]

It was commitment to these policies, despite the clearly understood serious consequences for those living along in industrial communities in and around Glasgow, that exacerbated poverty and resultant ill-health in Glasgow. These policies therefore ultimately 'increased the vulnerability of the city's population' to Thatcherism.[12] Another key finding was that proportionally levels of deindustrialisation—as measured by the drop in levels of industrial employment in Glasgow—were 'remarkably similar' to those experienced in other cities in the UK, such as Manchester and Liverpool. A previous report by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health and NHS Health Scotland demonstrated that the Glasgow experience of deindustrialisation in terms of job losses alone was not dissimilar to that experienced in other regions in Europe; such as the Ruhr area in Germany, or Katowice in Poland.[13]

Cultural scars

As stated, these accounts are largely focused on deindustrialisation as an economic process, with little comment on the wider societal or cultural impacts, or how the relationship that this has with lived experience and notions of community identity. It is important therefore to go beyond merely the statistics of deindustrialisation or 'beyond the body count', as Cowie and Heathcott put it.[14] With the background to post-war industrial decline on Clydeside well established, historians have turned toward understanding the transition from

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[11] David Walsh, Gerard McCartney, Chic Collins, Martin Taulbut, and David Batty, *History, politics and vulnerability: explaining excess mortality in Scotland and Glasgow*, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, NHS Health Scotland, University of the West of Scotland, University College London, (2016), 42. Available at https://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5988/Excess_mortality_final_report_with_appendices.pdf - accessed 13/11/16

[12] Ibid.

[13] David Walsh, Martin Taulbut, and Phil Hanlon, 'The aftershock of deindustrialization—trends in mortality in Scotland and other parts of post-industrial Europe', *European Journal of Public Health*, 20:1, (2010), 58–64.

[14] Cowie and Heathcott, *Beyond the Ruins,* 6.

the deindustrialising city to the post-industrial city, and the memories, meanings and sentiments involved in the lived experiences of this shift. The bulk of this literature draws widely on the experiences the North American rust belt and High's assertion that deindustrialisation was a 'cultural practice'.[15] Historians in Scotland have agreed that deindustrialisation, as Finlay remarks, 'had a profound cultural impact which should not be underestimated'.[16] Yet the extent of this remains dramatically understudied, with a few notable exceptions. There is agreement amongst historians that Scottish society was profoundly altered in the post-war years, and that deindustrialisation unsettled established social or cultural norms. Devine states that Scotland 'had been transformed to an extent unknown since the epoch of the Industrial Revolution'.[17] He argues that 'Scotland's modern collective psyche was invested in the great traditional staples of shipbuilding, heavy engineering and coal mining', and when these collapsed a 'crisis of national identity' followed.[18] Perchard explored the Scottish context by extensively interviewing former miners about the impact of industrial decline, concluding that there were 'profound psychological scars'.[19] Perchard writes of scars and the popular conceptions of Margaret Thatcher being the key catalyst in provoking industrial change, though this needs to be tempered with an understanding of longer term trends. As Maver points out, 'well before the Thatcher era, the service sector had been rising in Glasgow, from 48 per cent of the workforce in 1961 to 68 per cent in 1981'.[20] A longer view account of industrial change can be found in Foster's chapter in *The New Penguin History of Scotland*, which focuses on 1914-

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[15] S. High, Beyond Aesthetics: Visibility and Invisibility in the Aftermath of Deindustrialization, pp. 140-153 in *International Labor and Working-Class History,* Volume 84, 2013.

[16] Finlay, *Modern Scotland,* 261.

[17] Devine, *The Scottish Nation,* 643.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Perchard, *Broken Men,* 78.

[20] Irene Maver, *Glasgow*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 219.

1979.[21] Foster suggests that the New Town phenomenon of the post-war years was responsible for steering people away from traditional heavy industry in Glasgow, leading to depopulation and decline long before Thatcherism had taken root in Scotland. [22] Employment in heavy industry, including coal mining, was already in sharp decline from the 1950s, prior to Thatcher taking office in 1979. That said, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed an acceleration in the pace and intensity of deindustrialisation.

Deindustrialisation and Oral History

The value of oral history in approaching the lived experiences of deindustrialisation has been demonstrated by several PhD theses on the subject. Gibbs' thesis uses interviews as the basis for discussion on the nature of industrial change in the Lanarkshire Coalfields, exploring aspects of community, gender and class.[23] Meanwhile Clark has used oral history interviews as a tool for studying the widespread workplace closures by incorporating the narratives of women workers that took resistive action.[24] Taken together, both works show the 'emergent' nature of studies of this type, as well as the need to capture memories of this transition now, before they are lost forever. McIvor has also extensively studied the impact that deindustrialisation processes have had on health and the body.[25] This thesis adds to this body of work, providing an account that gives a fuller understanding of the

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[21] John Foster, 'The Twentieth Century, 1914-1979', in *The New Penguin History of Scotland: From Earliest Times to the Present Day,* eds. Rab Houston and William W. Knox, (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 417-493.
[22] Ibid, p.457.
[23] Gibbs, 'Deindustrialisation and Industrial Communities', 2016.
[24] Clark*, 'Not Our Jobs to Sell', 2017.
[25] Arthur McIvor, 'Deindustrialization embodied: work, health and disability in the United Kingdom since c1950', in *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places,* eds. Steven High, Lachlan Mackinnon, and Andrew Perchard*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 25-45.

connections that people and communities have with the archaeology of deindustrialisation, through memory studies.

The Photographic Record

Beyond academic research and scholarly discussion, deindustrialisation on Clydeside has also been recorded through various photographic projects. John Hume began extensively photographing the changes to the built environment across the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and his photographic collection—which amounts to around 40,000 images—is available online through Historic Environment Scotland.[26] The bulk of the material relating to Clydeside is in a base level survey of the buildings associated with industrial work, though there are many images that capture changes in housing and other buildings. Given the scale of social change, a more 'people – focused' approach emerged alongside this work, with one example being the work of Nick Hedges. Hedges was employed between 1968 and 1972 by Shelter, the newly founded housing charity, to catalogue the developing housing crisis across the UK. Notably, Hedges headed to Glasgow which was fast developing a reputation for having some of the worst slum housing in Britain. The resultant collection of images shows the scale of material deprivation in Glasgow, and its human cost. Interestingly, in Hedges' images of Glasgow, cranes feature heavily in the background.[27] In the photographs, the cranes become the backdrop to everyday life in Govan, as shown below where they occupy a prominent place in the landscape while children play. The cranes tower over the

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[26] John Hume Collection, *Historic Environment Scotland*, Available at
https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1176446 - accessed 04/04/2016.
[27] N. Hedges, 'Make life worth living' collection, 1988-1972, Shelter. Available at
http://www.nickhedgesphotography.co.uk/photo-gallery/slum-housing-and-poverty - accessed 09/07/2017.

children, casting a shadow that is symbolically representative of how local fortunes are caught up with industrial work.

Figure 3 –This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons. The images of Nick Hedges, Govan, Glasgow. Shelter. See footnote 27.

Another photographer drawn to Glasgow, and more specifically again Govan, was Raymond Depardon. Depardon arrived in Glasgow in 1980, shortly after receiving the Pulitzer Prize for his work in Chad. He was commissioned by the *Sunday Times* with the initial intention of providing photographs for part of a feature on unlikely European tourist destinations, though he was quickly drawn to another side of the city. Like Hedges, Depardon was drawn to the shocking levels of poverty and deprivation in areas like Govan and Maryhill. His images, shown below, show people amongst the wreckage of slum housing, rooted within the wider context of industrial job losses and rapid depopulation.[28]

Figure 4 –This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons. The photography of Raymond Depardon, 1980. See footnote 28.

Depardon was similarly drawn towards the monumentality of cranes, frequently incorporating them into the background of his images. Amid the drastic changes taking place to the urban environment, with images routinely focusing on rubble, dereliction and wasteland, the cranes become a key constant; monuments to lived experiences of transition in the local areas.

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[28] Raymond Depardon, *Glasgow* (Paris: Abrams, 2016). More information about Depardon's work in Glasgow can be found at https://www.magnumphotos.com/arts-culture/society-arts-culture/william-boyd-raymond-depardon-1980s-glasgow/

Figure 5 – This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons. The photography of Raymond Depardon, 1980. See footnote 28.

More recently, photographer Chris Leslie has documented Glasgow's changing urban environment using both photography and film.[29] The photographs are from 2006 onward, though their focus espouses a clear understanding of the ongoing changes in and around Glasgow, resultant of a complex network of factors related to jobs, housing, and overall wellbeing.

On Film

Clydeside experiences of deindustrialisation have also been evocatively played out on film. One example of this comes from the haunting *Clydefilm* produced by Cranhill Arts in 1984.[30] The film was shot by members of a local community group and captures the lived reality of Glasgow at the time; juxtaposing famous Glasgow folk songs over scenes of demolition and industrial wasteland, with cranes silhouetted against the sunset. Similar in focus, the British Broadcasting Corporation made a series about Glasgow, which was broadcast in 1982. Tellingly, the episodes are broken down into four episodes named 'Blight', 'Work', 'The Scheme' and 'The Bond'. Again, these films show Glasgow as a city with numerous problems. A more recent film about industrial decline in Scotland is *The Red Dust*, from 2014.[31] The film focuses on the environmental implications of the former site of the Ravenscraig Steelworks in North Lanarkshire. Based on interviews of former workers and their families, it traces the impact of deindustrialisation processes by focusing on the legacy of ill-health that the work at the site inflicted. These examples can be said to constitute a

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[29] Chris Leslie. Work available at http://www.chrisleslie.com/
[30] *Clydefilm*, Cranhil Arts, (1984). Available at - http://movingimage.nls.uk/film/3789
[31] IIona Kacieja, *The Red Dust*, 2013.

form of 'public memory', which influence understandings and perceptions of the post-industrial landscape, both locally and beyond.

Approaching Scotland's industrial ruins

In 1974, John Hume published the results of a ten-year survey project that produced an inventory of Glasgow's remaining sites of industrial archaeology.[32] When the project began, even before the core processes of deindustrialisation had been enacted, it had become apparent to Hume that 'most industrial buildings were no longer occupied by the firms for whom they had been built, and that the rate of demolition was likely to rise'.[33] This prophecy that came to fruition on a scale that was previously unimaginable. Hume created a gazetteer of sites, backed up with an enormous photographic record.[34] In his introduction he observes, 'it seems to me that the most vital task of the industrial archaeologist, particularly in urban areas, is to record extant buildings, machinery and structures before the scrap-man, the incendiary and the bulldozer come'.[35] Over 40 years have passed since Hume's assessment, and the role of the industrial archaeologist has since been largely redefined, as the 'scrap-man, the incendiary and the bulldozer' have been and gone. In an article from 2014 on the future of industrial archaeology, Hilary Orange defined a potential refocus, writing:

> I am a post-industrial archaeologist. I study the materiality of closure and transition: the afterlives or 'reanimation' of industrial sites, including the continuing

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[32] To qualify, sites had to be within the city boundary as it was in 1964, built prior to 1914, yet still with substantial physical remains.

[33] John Hume, *The Industrial Archaeology of Glasgow*, (Glasgow: Blackie and Son Limited, 1974), xviii.

[34] The photographic record, combined with other documentary records collected by Hume now forms the 'John Hume Collection', 35,708 items archived by The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments. 26,417 items have been digitised and are available to view online - https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1176446?GROUPCATEGORY=5 – Accessed 03/12/2015.

[35] Hume, *Industrial Archaeology of Glasgow*, xviii.

dynamics of industrial landscape, their future potential reuse and ongoing relationship with local communities.[36]

This shows the potential for the neglected study of this transition in Scottish contexts, allowing this thesis to explore the layers of meaning that shipyard workers and local people have applied to these cranes, in a variety of social and cultural contexts.

Given the scale of deindustrialisation in Scotland, and its profound impacts on the built environment, there is an abundance of sites for the post-industrial archaeologist to study. Arguably, it was the demolition of the Ravenscraig steelworks in Motherwell in 1996 that became the most prominent visual allegory of Scotland's recent history of industrial closure. Nicknamed 'Steelopolis' as a result of its vast scale, Ravenscraig had once employed 12,000 people. At the time of its demolition, it been closed for 4 years. Ravenscraig had a distinct skyline, dominated by three cooling towers and an attached gas holder. Its destruction drew a large crowd and considerable media attention that provides an invaluable source into the connections between memory, deindustrialisation and industrial archaeology.

The aforementioned *The Red Dust* opens with the demolition of the iconic cooling towers. One person interviewed in the film stated; 'I came down here and watched them blowing they towers away, I watched it, and I never seen as many crying in my life.'[37] Tommy Brennan, a well-known convenor of shop stewards who had worked at Ravenscraig for over 30 years, was interviewed in various papers. In an article in 2001 that reflected back on the processes of closure in the area, Brennan remarks on the visual connotations of the site:

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[36] Hilary Orange, 'Changing technology, practice and values: What is the future of industrial archaeology?', *Patrimonio: Arquelogia Industrial,* 6, (2014), 64-69.

[37] Interviewee in Ilona Kacieja, *The Red Dust*, 2013.

For two and a half years, nothing was done to the plant because British Steel was trying to sell it on bloc to south-east Asia. It was like a scar giving you a constant reminder of what had been. When it finally came to the day of demolition, we were all gathered in the car park and a reporter said to me: 'Tom, this must be a sad day for you,' and I said: 'No, it's not; I'm quite happy to see them come down because it means we can start doing something with the site. They're no longer any good to us.[38]

Brennan's sense of closure at the removal of site that he spent decades trying to save shows the complexity of the relationships between the physical sites of work and the more ephemeral connections and association's people have with them.

In 1997, the Goliath crane at Inverclyde shipyard, Port Glasgow, was blown up as part of owners Clydeport's plans to develop the site.[39] As part of the process, the crane was winched toward the front of the shipyard site. A 200-metre exclusion zone was created, with traffic on the nearby A8 being halted and shipping on the River Clyde ceasing for an hour. The event drew a large crowd, spread out behind the enforced exclusion zone in nearby streets, rooftops and other local vantage points. *The Herald* newspaper described the structure as 'one of the best-known landmarks in the West of Scotland', billing its destruction as being 'expected to be one of the most spectacular controlled explosions ever in Scotland'.[40] The unexpected spectacularisation of demolition, and the desire for people to watch as visual events, demonstrates the importance of these structures to local people.

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[38] Stephen Moss, 'Life after steel', *The Guardian*, February 15, 2001.
[39] Footage of this event can be found on online; see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8rXHs29QTw
[40] 'Explosive end for giant crane Greenock landmark to be blown up to make way for new development', *The Herald,* 9th June 1997.
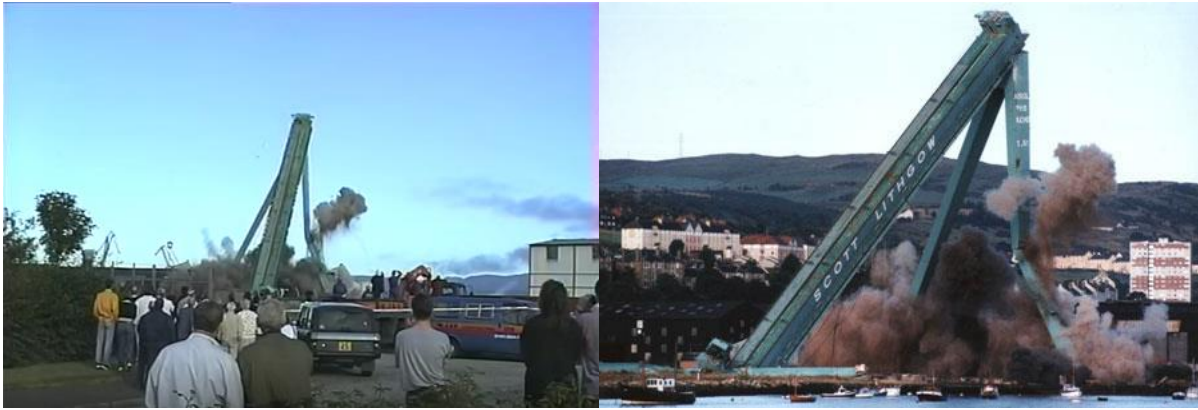
Figure 6 - People watching the demise of the Scott Lithgow 'Goliath' crane. spectacularisation © Scran

Andy Clark makes reference to the demolition of the crane as being crucial to his formative experiences of industrial change as a child, and of his father's sadness:

> When I was seven years old, the large crane at Scott Lithgow Shipyard was to be blown up, clearing the area for proposed regeneration. I nagged my father for days to take me to see it which he promised me he would, however, on the day of the demolition he told me that he was unwell and he would not be going along. Around ten years later, as I was beginning my undergraduate degree and taking an interest in deindustrialisation, he told me he lied that day, as he could not bring himself to witness the demolition of such an important symbol of the industry.[41]

Despite differences in opinion on the both the efficacy of episodic state intervention and the savvy of the managerial classes in responding to global changes, the wider pattern of decline of Scottish, and ultimately British shipbuilding, is well understood. Though emerging from WWII with high employment and full order books to replace what had been lost, a patchwork of both intrinsic and emergent issues—from new competition abroad to a decline in the need for passenger liners as the rise of international air travel grew—led to work drying up.[42] Between 1947 and 1990, the UK had gone from producing 57% of global

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[41] Steven High, Lachlan Mackinnon, Andrew Perchard (eds), *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places,* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 15.

[42] Edward Lorenz, *Economic Decline in Britain: The Shipbuilding Industry, 1890-1970*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

tonnage to a mere 1%, whilst both the steel and coal industries suffered a similar collapse.[43]

The cost in terms of this downfall in production on Glasgow employment is presented in the

table below.

**Table 1: Table of Industry Share of Employment in Glasgow and wider Scotland between
1961 -1991[44]**

	Glasgow	Scotland
1951	50.2%	42.2%
1971	38.7%	35.2%
1991	19.2%	20.9%

As Philips points out, workers expectations throughout this period were based firmly within

the context of notions of 'moral economy', the term initially used by the historian E. P.

Thompson to describe food economy in eighteenth century Britain.[45] 'Moral economy' can

broadly be defined as the assertion that the ways in which an economy develops cannot be

separated from the values and moral judgements that went into forming it. In short,

workers have a right to work and the economic benefits that came with it. The state

intervention in shipbuilding throughout the 1960s—such as with the highly controversial

collectivization of Clyde shipyards to form Upper Clyde Shipbuilders—is a clear example of

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[43] Cameron, *Impaled upon the Thistle,* 240.
[44] MacInnes, 'The De-industrialisation of Glasgow'.
[45] Jim Phillips, 'The moral economy of deindustrialization in post 1945 Scotland', pp. 313-330 in *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places,* eds. Steven High, Lachlan Mackinnon, and Andrew Perchard,* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 313-330.

this, with attempts being made to preserve jobs on the understanding that the shipyards were in areas of considerable job sensitivity.

Deindustrialisation studies in non-Scottish contexts

According to the historian Christopher H. Johnson, the term 'deindustrialisation' has its origins in the Second World War, with the Nazis deliberately reducing the industrial capabilities of occupied territories, a process that was later discussed by the Allies as a potential punitive measure against Germany.[46] However state policies of planned reductions in industrial capacity have existed and been enacted as long as industry itself has existed, though the nature and transformation of notions of 'industry' over time requires comment. Within the academic study of history, the term 'industrial' is most commonly used to describe the machines, equipment and resultant processes associated with the industrial revolution, or Anthropocene.[47] Though this thesis will use the above definition of this industry, it is important to note that archaeologists have been keen to stress a more rounded approach to industrial life that is not merely the concern of what could be realistically called 'modern'. Wickham-Jones uses the examples of earlier forms of industrial enterprise in Scotland; from the pre-historic flint quarries at Den of Boddam to later—though still pre-industrial revolution—sites like the slate quarry at Ballachulish, which although smaller in scale from the industry that this thesis will explore, would have impacted on local communities in many of the same ways.[48]

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[46] Christopher H. Johnson, *The Life and Death of Industrial Languedoc, 1700-1920: The Politics of Deindustrialisation*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 7.

[48] Caroline R. Wickham-Jones. *The Landscape of Scotland: A Hidden History*, (Gloucester: Tempus Publishing, 2001), 117.

Though industry and its decline is not new, and indeed often cyclical, the study of its decline is rapidly developing, owing much to the sheer breadth and scale of deindustrialisation in advanced capitalist Western countries throughout the 1970s and 1980s. A wholesale economic shift played out, with large-scale declines in traditional industries—such as coal mining, steel and shipbuilding—in favour of a rise in service economies with expansive and deregulated financial services, amidst market forces towards cheaper, deskilled or precarious forms of labour. Deindustrialisation was a complex and multi-phenomenal process, leaving a physical trace, inherent in closed factories and newfound industrial wastelands, in new abandonment horizons. It also left a human trace, though harder to identify. In Scotland, relatively little academic work has been done to explore the human experiences of this shift, and where it left people.

The historiography of late twentieth-century deindustrialisation has its roots in Canada and the United States of America, with the creation of a broad methodological framework, later used to study the experiences in the UK. Steven High's reflections on the emergence and development of deindustrialisation detail 'three waves of scholarship', all of which require considerable examination.[49] However, in his review of the literature, High was concerned largely with the historiography of the responses towards and effects of deindustrialisation, rather than archaeological approaches to the study of the physical landscape of industrial ruin. As this thesis takes a more focused approach towards how the processes of deindustrialisation became associated with a specific type of monument, this literature review will add to High's 'three waves' by exploring the emergence and development of

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[49] Steven High, '"The Wounds of Class": A Historiographical Reflection on the Study of Deindustrialization, 1973–2013', *History Compass*, (2013), 994-1007.

industrial archaeology as a separate and distinct sub-discipline. It will finally argue that

these waves of scholarship latterly became intertwined, leading to broader movement of

'ruination' studies, now one of the most diverse, interdisciplinary, mixed methodology

subjects within the humanities.

Firstly, according to High there was a highly politicized initial reaction to the emerging

situation of plant closings and job losses, as activists and scholars sought to understand

what was happening, what it meant, and whether or not it could be stopped. With the

situation ever developing, it is unsurprising that the resultant written record—from activists

and academics—though multifaceted and coherent, lacks any form of consensus. High

states that the 'deindustrialization thesis emerged in Canada during the early 1970s as part

of a wider anti-imperialist critique of United States dominated of the country's economy'.[50]

For many Canadians, deindustrialisation was the result of a symbiotic relationship that had

gone wrong, with the changes in market practices in the US acting like an economic drain,

pulling Canadian jobs in to the nation's detriment.[51]

But this was contradicted by academics like Anastaskis and Bluestone and Harrison, who

proved that deindustrialisation was having similar, and arguably more widespread, effects

within the US too[52]. First published in 1982, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant*

Closings, Community Abandonment and the Dismantling of Basic Industry by Bluestone and

Harrison brought the political and economic issues, and indeed the term

"deindustrialisation" itself, into academic parlance. They defined the term as 'the

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[50] Ibid, 995.
[51] Robert Laxer, *(Canada) Ltd: The Political Economy of Dependency*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973).
[52] Dimitry Anastakis, 'Industrial Sunrise? The Chrysler Bailout, the State, and the Re-industrialization of the Canadian Automotive Sector, 1975-1986', *Urban History Review*, 35, (2007), 37-50.

widespread systematic disinvestment in the nation's basic productive capacity' and—as

political economists—they employed a methodology that drew upon exhaustive newly-

compiled data sets on unemployment, job losses/creation, inflation rates; creating a

polemic that was a direct reaction to the worst economic crisis in the US since the Great

Depression.[53]

The book explored fundamental theoretical debates on the, often geographical, politics of

job losses, as well as the symbiotic relationship between capital and community. They found

that 'the average person did not have to read *Business Weekly* to know that America was in

trouble. Since the early 1970s every day had brought yet another sign of how bad things

were becoming'.[54] Within this quote lies the implicit assertion that as well as

deindustrialisation being a process of a state sponsored shift in working practices, it was

inevitably about human processes too: 'When a worker is forced out of a high productivity

job into a low productivity job, all of society suffers. Real productivity goes down when the

experienced, skilled autoworker in Flint, Michigan, ends up buffing cars in the local

carwash.'[55] More explicitly, their data proved there was a direct correlation, or 'ripple

effect' between plant closings and societal issues such as crime, as well as provoking spikes

in depression and suicide. In short, Bluestone and Harrison concluded that:

> [A] loss of a work network removes an important source of support. As a result,
> psychosomatic illnesses, anxiety, worry, tension, impaired interpersonal relations,
> and in increased sense of powerlessness. As self-esteem decreases, problems of
> alcoholism, child and spouse abuse, and aggression, increase. Unfortunately, these
> tragic consequences are often overlooked when the costs and benefits of capital
> mobility are evaluated.[56]

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[53] Barry Bluestone and Bennet Harrison. *The Deindustrialisation of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment and the Dismantling of Basic Industry*, (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 6.
[54] Ibid, 3.
[55] Ibid, 11.
[56] Ibid, 66.

However as economists, the aim of their study was not mapping the anthropological side of the developing situation, but interrogating a political, social and economic problem, ultimately suggesting a solution. Their answer was that a radical shift in strategic thinking was needed, and ultimately only a 'democratic socialist reindustrialization' that would discourage pursuits of private profit and encourage 'economic growth on terms consistent with the needs and aspirations of the great majority of ordinary people' could solve the unfolding catastrophe.[57] Their work must also be understood in the context of its origins; as a research project designed and funded by a loose band of trade unions and community organisations that shared the belief that capital movement was toxic for most Americans, and had to be reversed. One key consistency of argument in this early literature was that this was not happening arbitrarily; it was a state policy enacted by corporate managers. However it remained unclear who in particular was suffering, be it workers, trade unionists, specific industries or entire communities.

In *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit,* Thomas Sugrue provided a powerful revisionist account of life in post-war America, outlining the often highly racialised impacts;

> Persistent racial discrimination magnified the effects of deindustrialisation on blacks. Data from the 1960 census make clear the disparate impact of automation and labour market constriction on African American workers. Across the city [Detroit], 15.9 percent of blacks, but only 5.8 percent of whites were out of work.[58]

Parallel to these studies, an archaeological framework for the survey and recording of the large swathes of abandoned industrial buildings was beginning to take root. Proponents of this type of reactive approach were largely focused upon the detailed recording, and

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[57] Ibid, 262.
[58] Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 144.

ultimately preservation, of sites of industrial process. Though originally used in a Portuguese

archaeology journal in 1896, the first English language use of the phrase 'industrial

archaeology' appears in an essay from 1955 by Michael Rix in an article in *The Amateur

Historian*.[59] In his essay, Rix proposed that the rapidity of change that was being lived

through required urgent action and academics needed to focus their energies on surveying

what was left, and ultimately protecting it.[60] As Michinton summarised 'industrial

archaeology is primarily concerned with identifying, listing and recording', a functionalist

definition built on a dual understanding of both the history and development of science and

technology, but also how this knowledge was invested in the working processes of the

time.[61]

This idea was further developed by The Council for British Archaeology, who by 1959 had

established a specialised Industrial Archaeology Research Committee that began by setting

and promoting a standardised framework for site recording. As the Glasgow experience of

deindustrialisation began to take root, individuals with the foresight to recognise the scale

of change had published an expansive site-by-site inventory of industrial Glasgow along a

grid reference system.[62] This functional and practical application of survey methods helped

academics amass a wealth of data, while establishing the idea of 'value' in previously

unacknowledged areas, with conservation and preservation as a direct corollary. This

attribution of notions of value is particularly remarkable when considering Orange's

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[59] Sophia Labadi, 'Industrial Archaeology as Historical Archaeology and Cultural Anthropology', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 12, (2001), 77-85.
[60] Michael Rix, 'Industrial Archaeology', *The Amateur Historian*, 2, (1967), 225-229.
[61] Walter Minchinton, 'World Industrial Archaeology: A Survey', *Industrial Archaeology*, 15:2, (1983), 125-136.

[62] Hume. *Industrial Archaeology of Glasgow*

assessment that the majority of 'post-war Britain held a deep antipathy for its abandoned industrial sites, with the dumping of rubbish typifying an attitude of distain and neglect'.[63]

High dates the second wave of scholarship from around the 1990s onward, when the processes of deindustrialisation had largely been completed (despite the warnings of 'first wave') and academics turned their focus to the cultural meaning inherent in this economic shift. In *Beyond the Ruins: The Meaning of Deindustrialization,* Cowie and Heathcott shifted the academic focus by developing a more holistic approach, one that sought to bring academics from various backgrounds together to explore the cultural meanings of this period of economic decline. Though still concerned exclusively with the North American experience, this anthology of case studies showcased the breadth of human experience, rooted in different temporal spaces, with enduring and intertwined contexts and impacts. As a result, the study of deindustrialisation was now firmly underpinned by the acceptance that it was a 'cultural process'.[64] Later, in *Corporate Wasteland: The Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialisation*, High and Lewis felt necessary to 'return' to the ruins that Cowie and Heathcott had wanted to move 'beyond', in a more focused study that sought to explore post-industrial landscapes via the notional public memory inherent in the physical remains of industry.[65] High, a historian, and Lewis, a photographer, used a dynamic mixed methodology that juxtaposed the vivid life-story-based oral testimony with the contrasting photographs of abandoned space. This study fits with similar work by academics such as Kathryn Marie Dudley, who used interviews to study the 'cultural drama' that played out in

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[63] Hilary Orange, 'Industrial archaeology: Its place within the academic discipline, the public realm and the heritage industry', *Industrial Archaeology Review,* 30:2, 2008, 83.
[64] High and Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland*, 9.
[65] Ibid.

Wisconsin, and Alesandro Portelli who used oral history to map the experience of coal mining communities in Kentucky.[66] Deindustrialisation is therefore established as a topic that could not necessarily be studied though traditional historic methods—such as archival based research—but required fully immersive, often highly personal, studies that gathered data through various mediums.

Informative chronological accounts of the trajectory of industrial archaeology can be found in Hunter, Labadi and Orange, with the authors sharing the thesis that industrial archaeology in the 1980s and 1990s became more widely embraced by the academic community, largely due to a shift in theoretical approach.[67] For Palmer, industrial archaeology had a fissure running through it, with industrial sites and 'industrial archaeology' as a term being the focus of two distinct sub-groups essentially studying different things entirely.[68] As an aside to the emergent pragmatic approach towards the itemising and preservation of industrial remains of the 1960s and 1970s, Palmer believed a new 'face' of the study had come to prominence that, like any other forms of the archaeology, took a more holistic approach to the study of past human lives through material remains. This approach sought to put humans more centrally in the frame than was perceived to have been the case previously when exploring industrial sites. For academics such as Hudson, the core value in industrial remains, and crucially what was lacking in the

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[66] Kathryn Marie Dudley, *The End of the Line: Lost Jobs, New Lives in Postindustrial America*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994); Alessandro Portelli, *They say in Harlan County: An Oral History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[67] John Hunter and Ian Ralston (eds), *The Archaeology of Britain: An Introduction from the earliest Times to the Twenty-First Century*, (New York: Routledge, 2009); Labadi, 'Industrial Archaeology as Historical Archaeology and Cultural Anthropology'; Orange, 'Industrial archaeology', 1.

[68] Marilyn Palmer, 'Constructing a Framework for Interference', in *Industrial Archaeology: Future Directions,* eds. Eleanor Casella and James Symonds, (New York: Springer, 2005). 59-75.

established industrial archaeology discourse, was how they explicitly related to human lives.[69] In short, simply recording and inventorising the built industrial environment was not enough, 'industrial archaeology should have a human face'.[70] Quickened by the radical pace of industrial decline in the 1980s and 1990s, the 'social' aspect in the study of the decline has seen a renaissance, attracting interest across disciplines, arguably to the point of deserving of its own title – industrial landscape, or more specifically ruination studies.

The third wave identified by High focuses on the most recent forms of scholarship that seek to map the socio-economic effects of deindustrialisation and how they have come to manifest within the post-industrial age. Though High focuses on primarily working-class connections, the use of the broader lens of 'identity' allows the proliferation of deindustrialisation and ruination studies, across various subjects, to come to light. Even removed from the academic sphere, industrial sites have gained a large amount of interests from artists, journalists, photographers and urban explorers, alike. Ruined industrial sites are now spaces where creative practices play out, holding a new place in the collective memory. Most recently, Penrose called on the various disciplines to 'animate the stage, not just with machines but with the real voices of those whose lives are still embedded and imprinted in the material'.[71] The broad diaspora of study that answered this call is multifarious, ranging from explorations of sound art as industrial artefact within 'peripheral'

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[69] Kenneth Hudson, *Industrial Archaeology: An Introduction*, (London: Baker, 1963).
[70] Minchinton, 'World Industrial Archaeology: A Survey', 126.
[71] Penrose, 'Recording Transition in Post-industrial England', 177.

or 'neglected' space, to archaeometalurgical studies of Ugandan iron production using

unstructured, informal worker interviews.[72]

Urban exploration, defined as a form of 'recreational trespass', also burgeoned amongst

derelict industrial spaces, heavily impacting understandings of spatial engagement.[73] In his

doctoral thesis from 2012, Bradley Garrett linked urban exploration to twentieth-century

social theory, most notably Foucault's assertions on spatial freedom, as well as Satre's

notions off personal existentialism.[74] Geographers Edensor and, later, Abey have

understood these forms of contemporaneous spatial engagement as reactions against

societal pressures, such as increased commercialisation and securitisation respectively.[75]

Though this newfound popularity in industrial ruination has been criticised, most notably by

High who perceives urban exploration as a spectator sport played by white, middle class,

males who take pleasure in 'feelings of melancholy and loss', an example of the 'hipster

commodification of misery' at the expense of any socio-political context to where these

spaces have been abandoned.[76] This has been countered by Garrett who denounced these

'outside observers' for not understanding the practices, arguing that the level of

photographic and often high-technology recording methods of many explorers created a

valuable historic record that should be absolved of academic snobbishness.[77]

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[72] Jeffrey Benjamin, 'Listening to Industrial Silence: Sound as Artefact', in Orange (ed), *Reanimating Industrial Spaces*, 108-12; Louise Illes, 'Iron Production in Uganda: Memories of Near Forgotten Industry' in Orange (ed), *Reanimating Industrial Spaces,* 158-175.
[73] Bradley Garrett, 'Place Hacking: Tales of Urban Exploration', (PhD diss., University College London, 2012), xix.
[74] Ibid, 6.
[75] Tim Edensor, 'Staging Tourism Tourists as Performers'*, Annals of Tourism Research, 27,* (1999), 322-344; Peter Adey, 'Facing Airport Security: Affect, Biopolitics and the Pre-emptive Securitisation of the Mobile Body', *Environment and Planning: Society and Space,* 27:2, (2009), 274-295.
[76] High and Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland*, 9.
[77] Garrett, *Place Hacking,* 19.

Differences aside, the academic community has largely come to agree that these processes had a detrimental effect on cultural notions of working class identity, and this is reflected in mapped connections between people and place. For Portelli, deindustrialisation was a 'deeper defeat…on the cultural plane', which High adds 'sapped the spirit of working men and women as well as their remaining political and social institutions'.[78] Similarly pessimistic conclusions are drawn in the literature of experiences in the UK, with identified 'advanced marginality', which has worked to 'undermine traditional collective identities'.[79] Yet these ideas are not universal. For example, David Bryne found that the 'culture of industrialism' and a wider 'proletarian class consciousness' survives in the North East of England, despite the firm post-industrial positioning of the region.[80] Additionally, Hilary Orange points to the transient nature of this newly developed 'post-abandonment' age, where the negative reality is often overcome by nostalgic 'acceptance and forgetfulness' as 'symbols of social deprivation and economic decline become over time symbols of regional and national pride'.[81] The relatively mixed opinions on remembering and forgetting the industrial reflects the issues that scholars face in untangling these temporal challenging experiences that are often as much 'present' as they are 'past'.

Exploring Post-industrial Landscapes

The proliferation of ruination studies owes much to a widespread acceptance in academia that in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, Western European and North American capitalism underwent a seismic transformation that drastically altered working patterns, leaving an

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[78] Portelli, *They Say in Harlan County.*
[79] High, 'The Wounds of Class' 1001.
[80] David Bryne, 'Industrial Culture in a post-industrial World: The case of the North East of England', *City*, 6:3, (2002), 279-289.
[81] Orange, 'Industrial archaeology', 83.

indelible imprint on people and communities. It was quickly identified that deindustrialisation was leaving a trail of human experience that required analysis not just from political economists but from historians (Bluestone and Harrison, Cowie and Heathcott, High et al, Clarke), archaeologists (Rix, Orange), geographers (Edensor, DeSilvey) sociologists (Mah, Paton) and anthropologists (Labadi), too.[82] At the risk of creating imagined boundaries between disciplines which are working amid such fluidity, breaking down studies of industrial landscape on a 'subject by subject' basis allows a fuller understanding of the variety of theoretical approaches that have been employed to chart this period of change.

Despite this willingness to explore the cultural and social effects of deindustrialisation in North American contexts, relatively little academic work has been done to employ similar models and methodologies in approaching industrial ruination in Glasgow, Clydeside and Scotland more broadly. Given the enormity of scale in industrial processes along the River Clyde, this would seem remarkable. However drawing on a sociological approach towards relationships people have with industry affords various comparisons with Glasgow.

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[82] Bluestone and Harrison, *The Deindustrialisation of America;* High and D. Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland: The Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialisation;* Cowie and Heathcott. *Beyond the Ruins;* High, Mackinnon, and Perchard (eds), *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*; Jackie Clarke, 'Closing time: deindustrialization and nostalgia in contemporary France', *History Workshop Journal,* 79:1, (2015), 107-125; Rix, 'Industrial Archaeology'; Tim Edensor, *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics, Materiality*, (Oxford: Berg,2005); Caitlin DeSilvey, *Curated Decay: Heritage beyond Saving*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2017)*;* Alice Mah, *Industrial Ruination, Community and Place: Landscapes and Legacies of Urban Decline*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press; 2012); Kirsteen Paton, *Gentrification: A Working-Class Perspective,* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014); Labadi, 'Industrial Archaeology as Historical Archaeology and Cultural Anthropology'.

Making use of a similar methodological approach to High, Mah breaks down her study as

being 'concerned with the relationship between industrial ruin, community, and place,

specifically, the landscapes (socio-economic and cultural geographies) and legacies (the long

term socio-economic and physiological implications) for people and place of the interrelated

processes of industrial ruination and urban decline'.[83] With international case studies in

Newcastle (England), Niagara Falls (US and Canada) and Ivanovo (Russia), Mah's

ethnographic study revealed the vast implications of urban policy, and the profound

socioeconomic consequences it enacted on people. Using the testimony derived from semi-

structured interviews, Mah was able to tease apart previously identified 'key themes' that

connected peoples' lived experiences from overarching structural issues, like high toxicity

levels and state-planned regeneration to the personal remnants of industrialism such as

attachment to place and 'ambivalent nostalgia'.[84] One case study focused on an area to the

East of Newcastle named Walker, a residential riverside suburb that had suffered rapid

depopulation after the collapse of shipbuilding in the area. The lived experiences in Walker

have many similarities to areas along the Clyde, so Mah's conclusions make an interesting

starting point for new studies in and around Glasgow. Though similar to High's

proclamations that deindustrialisation was a complex 'cultural practice' in the United States

that went beyond mere economics, Mah established that industrial ruination across the

globe is a 'lived process' that was 'enduring and complex' for 'people occupying the in-

between spaces of post-industrial change'. Also, in employing international case studies, she

highlighted that although there are regional experiential similarities, the patterns of

ruination, and notably its effects are multifaceted, complex, localised and unique. Lastly,

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[83] Mah, *Industrial Ruination, Community and Place*, 3.
[84] Ibid, 21.

'diverse stories and perspectives from local people have significant implications for how we might tackle issues of industrial ruination and post-industrial transformation'.[85]

Other case studies

Though this study focuses on cranes as structures where the contestations and reverberations of deindustrialisation play out, there are many other sites on Clydeside that make for useful comparisons while also demonstrating wider industrial heritage narratives. One such site is the Govan Graving Docks, on the south side of the River Clyde. Built in phases between 1869 and 1898, the site is a Grade-A listed, described by Historic Environment Scotland as 'an outstanding graving dock complex without parallel in Scotland'.[86] It is noted that 'the complex is of architectural/historic interest in an international context, of major significance in terms of the history of the world shipbuilding.'[87] The site was operated by the Clyde Navigation Trust (now Clydeport) before being taken over in 1967 by Alexander Stephen and Sons, as a ship-repair yard. Alexander Stephen and Sons closed the site in 1976 and it has since laid derelict, with numerous structures, buildings and cranes that occupied the site gradually removed. Since becoming derelict, the site has been heavily vandalised and graffitied, with over-grown weeds and litter. The site is currently comprised of three large dry docks and one wet dock, as well as the remains of a pump-house near the edge of the river. The remaining pump house structure has been set on fire numerous times, with the roof now missing. The site has become heavily contested in recent years, with graffiti on the site reflecting the sites post-

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[85] Mah, *Industrial Ruination, Community and Place*, 202.
[86] *Historic Environment Scotland* listing, http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB33336
[87] Ibid.

industrial positioning; 'the men gain and left ahint a legacy of fame honest wark an bonnie boats that gied the Clyde its name'.
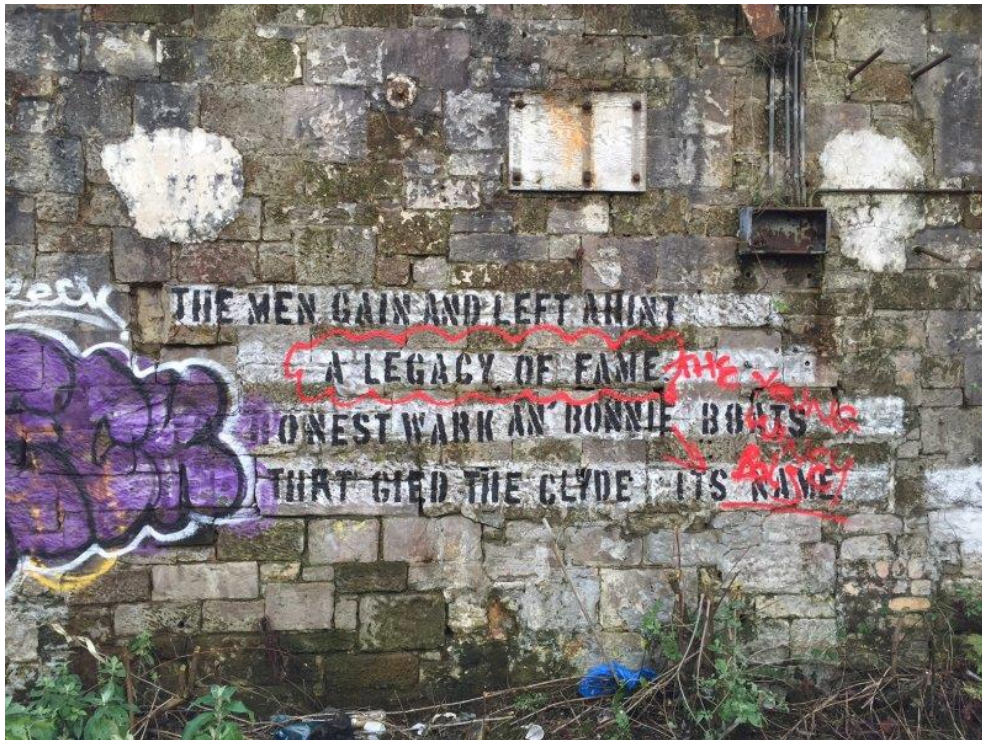
Figure 7 – Graffiti at Govan Graving Docks, 2017 ©Author

Another contested industrial heritage site is the B-listed Provan Gasworks, built between 1900 and 1904.[88] Historic Environment Scotland describes the site as having 'the largest ever built gasholders in Scotland and are now a rare survival of their building type.' Integral to the site are two large 150ft gasholders, which stand beside a busy motorway. The listing notes the visual implications for landscape, stating that the gasholders are 'of striking scale… a regional landmark'. The entry concludes that 'Provan Gasworks is a highly significant industrial site for the production of gas in Scotland and the surviving historic buildings are an important reminder of an industrial process that is now largely redundant.' The listing status has proven controversial however, with site owners SGN appealing to the Scottish

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[88] Provan gasworks, https://canmore.org.uk/site/45018/glasgow-provan-road-provan-gasworks

Government to have it revoked.[89] SGN believed that the listed status would have an economic impact on future potential uses for the site.[90] These sites demonstrate the wider context here, how contestations about the use and reuse of buildings show the ongoing meanings of deindustrialisation and the associations with class and community.

Summary

As Hayden remarked, 'landscapes are storehouses of meaning' and the work done by High, Mah, Orange and others across multi-disciplines show how this meaning can be found.[91] Though exploring the Clyde's cranes in keeping with what Raphael Samuel termed 'theatres of memory' presents several issues.[92] Firstly, the scope and breadth of their popular re-imagination presents an assumptive dislocation from 'local' and 'national' perceptions about these structures. The visual iconography of these cranes is now so omnipresent that they have become the established monument to lived experiences of work in Scotland, nationally; but how has this come to be, and how does this marry with local connections? The emergence of ruination studies and its relationship with working identities, as shown by Paton and Savage, highlight the need for more studies of the lived processes in other areas such as Glasgow that experienced similar processes; as well as the efficacy, but more so importance, of interviewing local people and using theories of memory to map these processes. Only by using oral history to capture and interpret lived experiences can the specifics of the numerous Clydeside experiences be identified, contrasted and placed in a wider context.

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[89] 'Row over protected gas works', *The Herald,* 10 March, 2019,
[90] Ibid.
[91] Delores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban landscapes as Public History,* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 9
[92] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, (New York: Verso Books, 1996)*.*

This project, unlike most traditional historical research projects, is not assessing a period now distant but charting a time which is still being lived through; a period of change as the last of those that remember the cranes interact with them for the final time as physical objects. As Bryne and Doyle argue, often we are 'not dealing with the fixed time of "afterwards" but rather with the actual lived experience of change, with a process of becoming something else'.[93] Alice Mah makes a similar point in *Industrial Ruination, Community and Place* when she notes that 'landscapes of industrial ruination constantly shift through cycles of decay, reuse and demolition and development'.[94]

This thesis asserts that understanding the passing, or transient, connections people have with post-industrial archaeology on Clydeside is essential towards building a more holistic account of deindustrialisation, and post-industrial belonging overall. This project was born out of the realisation that this marks a crucial end point between the material and the immaterial. And as the removed Fairfield crane shows, the cranes face future preservation challenges and may not be around for much longer; hastening the need to provide an oral history-focused social archaeology of these structures now.

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[93] David Bryne and Aidan Doyle, 'The visual and the verbal: The interaction of images and discussion in exploring cultural change', in *Picturing the social landscape: Visual methods and the sociological imagination*, (eds) Caroline Knowles and Paul Sweetman (London: Routledge, 2004), 166-177.
[94] Mah, *Industrial Ruination, Community and Place,* 129.

Chapter Two

Narrating the Fragments: No longer in the shadow of the Fairfield crane, Govan

This chapter will focus on providing a historical archaeology of cranes, and a skyline recently picked apart. Between 2007 and 2014, the area of Govan in Glasgow had its last remaining cranes dismantled, one of which had been standing for close to a century. By using oral testimony, it becomes possible to juxtapose the tangible and drastically altered physical landscape of Govan with the intangible landscapes of memory and wider industrial culture. In doing this, a form of redress is possible that goes far beyond approaching the physical landscape as something uncontrollable, un-relatable and largely separated from human consciousness, the cranes being tools and therefore sole property of the shipyard. This redress makes it possible to explore the layers of meaning that shipyard workers and local people applied to these structures, in a variety of social and cultural contexts. This holistic approach reflects a shift in academic thinking whereby the previously vague concept of 'landscape' can now be more clearly defined. The Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention defines 'landscape' as, 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'.[1] In placing human agency (and perception) centrally in the frame, the study of an intangible landscape becomes all the more possible. 'Intangible' aspects of heritage have only relatively recently gained common parlance, with a UNESCO meeting from 2003 defining intangible heritage as;

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[1] 'European Landscape Convention', *Council of Europe*, CETS176 - http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=176&CM=8&CL=ENG.

the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals, recognise as part of their cultural heritage.[2]

Crucially, this widened dialogue has policy implications. A European Science Foundation publication from 2010 states that 'a long-term view in both directions – past and future – is vital to policy. Taking accounts of time and depth in landscape produces better decisions and actions'.[3] This chapter will build on these newly developed interpretations of intangible landscapes to provide a brief historical account of the Fairfield crane, a 200 ton Giant cantilever crane, as well as the yard's other cranes, and the circumstances that saw them all removed. It will collate the cranes' material culture such as song, poetry, art, archival photographs, as well as previously unseen photographs acquired from shipyard occupiers BAE Systems as 'fragments', which new oral history testimony can help to more fully narrate. By piecing together the cranes' material culture in this way, their transition from working object to cultural artefact can be accounted for and documented for the first time. The aim of this chapter is therefore to critically analyse the taphonomic processes associated with post-industrial life in Govan, assessing the complicated relationship between changes in both the physical landscape and cultural landscape.

The material and the immaterial

> I was born in the shadow of the Fairfield crane
> And the blast of a freighter's horn
> Was the very first sound that reached my ears
> On the morning that I was born
> As I lay and listened to the shipyard noise
> Coming out of the big unknown

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[2] Glossary, *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, Available at
https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVETipedia+Glossary/lang=en/filt=all/id=723
[3] European Science Foundation, 'Landscape in a changing world: Bridging divides, integrating disciplines, serving society'. *Science Policy Briefing*, October 2010.

I was sung to sleep by a mother tongue
That was to be my own
-    The Shipyard Apprentice, as sung by Ray Fisher.[4]

The origins of the Fairfield crane

The Fairfield crane was erected at a time when Govan was still an independent burgh, yet to be swallowed up by the ever-growing Glasgow. Its prominence in the skyline was testament to the extraordinarily rapid transition as demonstrated by the ordnance survey map of 1858 (Figure 8), which shows Fairfield as mansion amidst lavish gardens, with little nearby trace of industry, aside from Morris Pollok's silk factory.
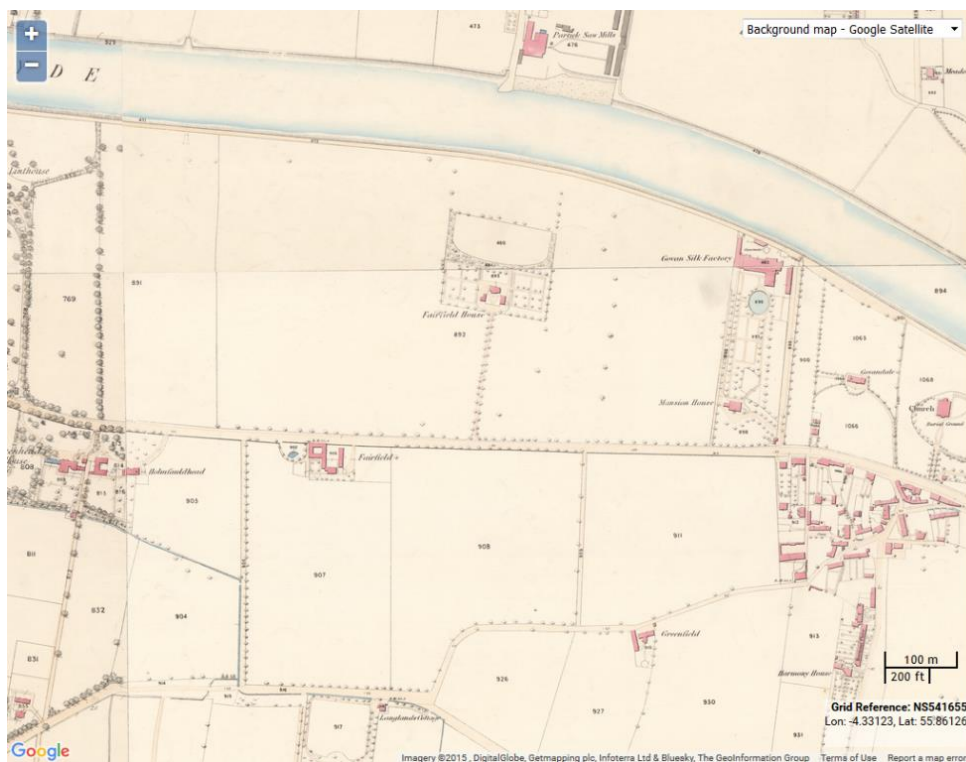

Figure 8 – First edition Ordnance Survey 1:10, 56, 1857-1858.

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[4] The song's lyrics have been adapted by various performers over the years, to reflect changes in circumstance and feeling. The song was originally written by Archie Fisher and Norman Buchan, music by Bobby Campbell. Available online at http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/100599/1 - accessed 05/06/2015

A survey by the Glasgow Boundaries Commission in 1864 established the population to be around 9,500.[5] In the same year, marine engineer John Elder purchased the land at Fairfield and quickly set in motion plans for a fully integrated shipyard. Instead of the customary practice of built ships being taken to other premises (and often other companies) to be fitted with engines and boilers, Elder was to do this all in one site. Govan—along with neighbouring burghs like Kelvinhaugh, Partick and Whiteinch—was attracting a wealth of industrial activity associated with more favourable tax rates, a result of being just outside the Glasgow City boundary.[6] Elder died aged 45 in 1869, and the business was named John Elder and Co. in tribute. In 1878, naval architect William Pearce took control of the company, renaming it the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd. The company quickly established itself as the largest shipbuilding company on the Clyde, dominating the prestigious Blue Riband award for producing the ships that could cross the Atlantic in record time. In the early-twentieth century, the company began to fall behind major competitor John Brown and Co., Clydebank, losing out on the Cunard contracts for the Lusitania and Aquitania over a long-standing dispute between the two companies in relation to the earlier construction of the Campania. John Brown and Co. had erected the first giant cantilever crane in 1907, and so Fairfield were keen to keep up with their business rivals. Like the crane at John Brown's, the Fairfield crane was built and designed by Sir William Arrol and Co. Ltd., the world-leading structural steel design firm, operating from Dunn Street in Glasgow's East End, with a craneworks at nearby Rigby Street. Though with Arrol's lacking the requisite technical specialism in hoisting machinery, specifically the electrical

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[5] Glasgow Boundaries Commission, 1888. *Report of the Glasgow Boundaries Commissioners*, Volume 1: report, with Appendix, London, 88.

[6] Chris Dalglish and Stephen Driscoll, *Historic Govan: Archaeology and development*, (Edinburgh: Historic Scotland. 2009)

components therein, the company collaborated with Stothert and Pitt, an English firm who specialised in cranemaking.[7] The crane was erected on the tip of the east side of the yard's fitting out basin, tested and completed in 1911. It was a replacement for the superfluous sheer-legs lifting device, a three-legged hoist that, though tall, was not nearly as imposing as the new crane. The crane quickly became a monument of the dramatic change endured in Govan, as shown in the postcard below (Figure 9) which proudly proclaims it to be the 'largest crane in the world', standing at 170ft tall and said to be capable of lifting 250 tons.[8] Yet it is important to avoid a form what Cowie and Heathcott termed 'smokestack nostalgia' by overplaying the crane's role, as well its place in in the formation of identities, from the outset.[9]

Figure 9 - Postcard featuring the Fairfield Crane, c1911, next to the now outdated and soon to be removed sheer-legs system close by. ©Glasgow Museums

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[7] Accompanying notes to archival item, MS/744/7/6 'Sir William Arrol and Co, *Heavy Fitting-out Cranes, Folder of General Arrangement Drawings*, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 1988.

[8] Archival documents show that this tonnage was an exaggeration, with the crane being designed to lift 200 tons. See The Fairfield crane, General arrangement drawing, in MS/744/7/6 '*Sir William Arrol and Co, Heavy Fitting-out Cranes'*, Folder of General Arrangement Drawings, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 1988.

[9] Cowie and Heathcott, *Beyond the Ruins*, 14.

Though the crane was an important symbol for demonstrating both the company's expertise and its continued investment in modern, developing technology, it would be wrong to necessarily assume it was viewed with a special fondness, or pride, from those working within the yard. This period of rapid industrial development was characterised by innovation and expansion, with a continual search for new techniques and systems, or ways of revising that which was now old. The crane was just another example of this; merely the application of routine engineering practices, though now on a grander scale than before and, importantly, powered by electricity. The crane allowed for maximum efficiency in the yard, and towered over even the vast ships onto which it loaded boilers, engines, and gun batteries. The image below (Figure 10), taken in 1990, shows the crane operator's seat and controls (main hoist, auxiliary hoist, slewing control, whip hoist, main rack), which would have remained largely unchanged since its construction.

Figure 10 - The operator's seat and controls, Fairfield crane, 1990. ©Historic Environment Scotland

As Brotchie's famous saying goes, 'shipbuilding made Govan and Govan made shipbuilding', a truism for the scope to which shipbuilding and its cultural by-products became inseparable from the area itself.[10] This is exemplified by the photograph (Figure 11) of Govan children, who appear smartly dressed to be photographed in Elder Park, named after Fairfield's founder, with the world's largest and most powerful crane as a background.

Figure 11 - Elder Park, Govan, c1915. ©Glasgow Museums

In his 1905 *History of Govan*, Brotchie described the area as a 'sleepy hollow', a nostalgic lament for what was once a rural village. The reality was different however, with data from the 1901 census placing Govan's population at 82,174.[11] As Dalglish and Driscoll point out, its relatively small size and status as Scotland's seventh most populated town made it 'one of the most congested communities in Scotland'.[12] The sheer scale of Govan's industry was captured by Muirhead Bone, the first official war artist of World War One. In two of his

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[10] Theodore Charles Ferdinand Brotchie, *The history of Govan: Glasgow*, (Glasgow: The Old Govan Club, 1905), 34.
[11] Ibid, 94.
[12] Ibid.

works, the crane became representative of the strengths of an industry that was key to the

successful running of the British war machine. C E Montague's introduction to the published

drawings states that there is,

> the happiest correspondence between Mr Bone's art, with its splendidly generalled
> armies of dutiful details, and an industry like shipbuilding in which a puissant unity
> of result is produced by the orderly joint action of multitudes of ant-like workers,
> every one of them indispensable while everyone is indescribably dwarfed by the
> hugeness of that which he helps to produce.[13]

Bellamy has written that 'Bone's view of the shipyard was extremely powerful and engaging

and his imagery contributed greatly to the public perception of the yards as places of awe

and wonderment.[14] As well as awe and wonderment, it was this sense of the 'collectiveness'

of the area's achievements that made it possible for the crane to become a monument to

identities, both locally and nationally, at a time when the rate of local employment

connections with the industry were close to their peak.
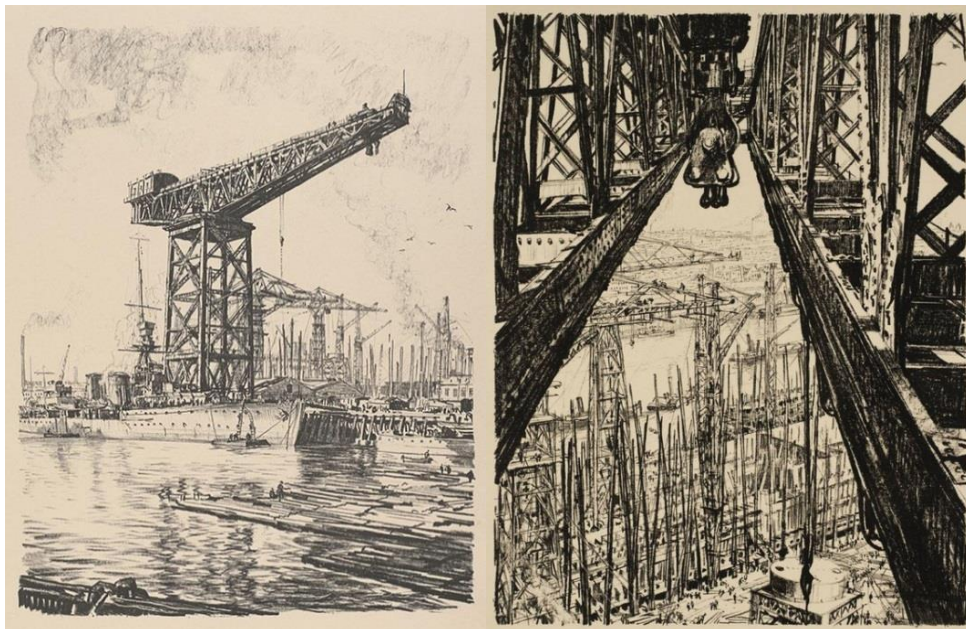

Figure 12 - Fairfield Shipyard by Muirhead Bone, in *The Western Front* (1917)

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[13] Charles Edward Montague, *Muirhead Bone, The Western Front*, (London. 1917).
[14] Bellamy, 'Shipbuilding and cultural identity on Clydeside'.

The beginning of the end

In 1988, the yard was taken over by Kvaerner Govan Ltd., a subsidiary group formed when Norwegian company Kvaerner took over Govan Shipbuilders. Kvaerner specialised in the construction of liquefied natural gas carriers and quickly set in motion plans for £30 million worth of yard adaptations to meet their requirements. This included the construction of a large Tank Assembly Shop that would allow for ships to be built in large blocks, and then assembled off site. This fundamentally changed the nature of ship construction on the site, a dramatic break from century-old work practices. The Fairfield crane was now redundant, with Kvaerner successfully obtaining permission for its removal from Glasgow City Council's Development and Regeneration services and Historic Scotland, the then executive agency of the Scottish Government for managing the historic environment. Despite a shared appreciation of the crane's historic value, neither organisation wanted to be seen as standing in the way of a modernisation programme that would secure long term viability, and ultimately jobs, in the yard. This was reported in *The Glasgow Herald* on the 14th of February 1990, along with the news that one condition of the planning permission was a need for the 'crane's historic details' to be recorded via video.[15]

Gordon Campbell served an apprenticeship as a draughtsman at Sir William Arrol's in the 1960s. After completing his training, he left the company to pursue more lucrative engineering work elsewhere, though later found himself back involved with cranes through work at a large insurance company. His new role involved providing structural assessments of large cranes, prompted by the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act that required cranes

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[15] 'Tall Story on Video', *The Glasgow Herald*, 14th February 1990, 3.

to be annually passed fit for use. Gordon was one of several industrial heritage enthusiasts

who felt compelled to explore plans to save the crane;

> We did look at a scheme whereby they were going to create a maritime museum at the Govan Dry Docks and part of the scheme would have involved dismantling the Fairfield crane and re-erecting it at the Dry Docks to make it a feature of the maritime museum. Which would have been very nice, would have been great to take Glen lee [a Clydebuilt ship from 1896] and put her in there as well, and have the whole thing covered over, with a sort of glass dome or something, that would have been fabulous. But to move the crane, going back about 25 years, so it would have been round about 1990, or even earlier, it would have cost, then, one and a half million to move it, and it would never have worked after that. It would never have been commissioned, but anyway, it could have been done, it could have been moved, the money wasn't there for it.[16]

Though the costs proved a barrier to preservation, Kvaerner's development plans were

scaled back after a failure to win several key contracts and the crane remained in place, still

redundant but with no operational demands for its removal.

In July 1999, Kvaerner announced plans to withdraw from Govan, giving notice of

redundancy to around 250 employees.[17] After long and protracted talks, Kvaerner reached

an agreement for Clydeport to take ownership of the site, leasing it to BAE Systems, saving

the yard and its associated jobs.[18] Much like Kvaerner, BAE had no real need for the Fairfield

crane and its continued existence owed much to the general uncertainty of what orders

would materialise over the coming years, and how the yard could be used. In 2001, though

with no set plans, BAE sought to extend the planning permission for the cranes removal

should they ever deem it necessary. In an email to Glasgow City Council's Design and

Regeneration Services, Historic Scotland were keen to stress the need for a wider plan,

stating that 'it is important to note that renewal should not simply be thought as automatic

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[16] Gordon Campbell, interviewed by Martin Conlon, 11 August 2015.
[17] 'Kvaerner begins lay-offs', *BBC News*, 5th January 1999,
[18] 'Deal reached on shipyard future', *BBC News*, 14 December, 1999.

as an insurance policy, and that consent for demolition should only relate to a functional requirement of the yard.'[19] Historic Scotland were therefore keen to see a holistic 'conservation plan' style approach that would lay out the company's future plans for the yard and its direct impact on the sites historic assets. The vagaries of the international shipbuilding economy meant that no such plan was forthcoming, though BAE pressed on, successfully obtaining the necessary planning permission to remove the crane at any given time.

In 2003, BAE sought permission to also demolish the site's historic former engine works, originally constructed by John Elder and finished in 1874.[20] The Scottish Civic Trust, a charity that monitors Scotland's built heritage, responded to the application with a wide ranging letter that expressed support for the yard and wider Scottish shipbuilding but expressed grave concern about how the sites historic assets were being considered.[21] A previous letter to the *The Herald* in 1999 had been more scornful, taking aim at the site owners Clydeport, site occupiers BAE Systems, Historic Scotland and Glasgow City Council.[22] In it, Brian Newman expressed concern about the Fairfield crane, 'historically one of the most significant industrial structures in Europe', and wanted assurances that 'Scotland will not be needlessly asset-stripped of the only substantially original Glasgow-built and located link with the apogee of Clyde shipbuilding left in the world?'[23] The site's historic assets had been caught up in a complicated planning process that favoured short-termism rather than any

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[19] Email correspondence between Historic Scotland and Glasgow City Council (Design and Regeneration Services)

[20] BAE Systems Marine, 'proposed demolition of the former engine works at 1048 Govan Road, *Glasgow: Application for Listed Building Consent*, Revision A, April 2003.

[21] 'Demolition of Govan Shipbuilder's Store (Fairfield Engine Works), The Scottish Civic Trust, 03/01269/DC, 12/06/03

[22] Letters, *The Herald*, 29 December, 1999.

[23] Ibid.

long-term consideration of social or cultural value. Noticeably, the process was structurally

incapable of undertaking any wide-ranging community reaction or response, with little way

of gauging what the Fairfield crane meant to people, if anything. Plans to demolish the

crane were postponed for several years but by 2007, BAE were close to securing a £4 billion

contract to build two large aircraft carriers. The company had invested hundreds of

thousands of pounds in mobile cranes that could be set up anywhere, more flexible and

capable of lifting up to 300 tonnes. BAE management believed that the crane's positioning

within the yard would leave them unable to move the composite parts of the aircraft

carriers from out with the large tank assembly shop, hastening the need to remove it. In

keeping with the original requirement from Historic Scotland that the cranes dismantling be

recorded via film and photography, BAE systems photographers took a wealth of images and

created a time-lapse video of the crane's demise. Figures 13, 14 and 15 show the inside of

the driver's cabin on the day that demolition work began.

Figure 13 – The inside of the Fairfield crane's driver's cabin, 12TH August 2007.

Figure 14 – The inside of the Fairfield crane's driver's cabin, with graffiti reading 'JIM RAE WAS HERE MARCH 07', and 'PURE FUCKED BY THE WAY' underneath. 12TH August 2007.

Figure 15 – The inside of the Fairfield crane's driver's cabin, with the graffiti 'TONY IS A NAZI FUCK PIG', 12TH August 2007.

The images show the last day of this unique workspace, run-down and graffitied, equipped with a television and Irn-Bru bottles. Ex-Fairfield employee Stephen Farmer remarked on the life of a Fairfield crane driver;

That was their nest up there, it was their private space, you know. They are sitting there doing the crossword and looking down or up the river, depending on which way he's turned the crane. Quite a lazy life except they had to climb up there and climb back down.[24]

Farmer's job involved him spending time up the Fairfield crane, servicing and maintaining it. He recalls the Fairfield crane as a unique place of work where routine, mundane, and often dangerous work was carried out at a great height. He remembers one incident where he narrowly avoided a fatal injury;

I was up there fixing limit switches, now the crane has got hand rails all the way on the outside, but of course in the centre section is open because the bogey has to go along the jib, and I have gone to fix the wee box there, and its got a wee limit switch that tells me how far etc, and I am walking along there with my rucksack on, my satchel of tools, and I fell and slipped on fell my arse! Its greasy, it was horribly greasy on the top of this thing, so aye, bang – there but for fortune, you could have been right down the…that was a, need a cup of tea after that one. I kept complaining to them, I says 'the only bit he greases is the stationary bits, if any rotating bit of machinery got any grease on it, it's by accident![25]

Testimony of this nature is of importance not only as it provides rich commentary on the nature of working lives at a peculiar place in time, but because it documents the crane as a working object, rather than a cultural artefact. The removal of the Fairfield crane was a complex and delicate operation, taking an external contractor several weeks and involving the yards new mobile cranes. Due to the crane's design, and its delicate reliance on counter-weights connecting the cantilever and the tower, both ends of the cantilever had to be precariously picked apart simultaneously from each end. The process was complete within three weeks.

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[24] Stephen Farmer, interviewed by Martin Conlon, 3 October 2015.
[25] Ibid.

Figure 16 – Construction workers dismantling the Fairfield crane, 27th October 2007.

In 2013, news broke in *The Herald* that the yard's remaining 80-ton berth cranes would be pulled down, leaving the yard with no cranes at all.[26] The paper reported that 'fears are growing for the long-term future of 1500 workers at BAE Systems in Govan after it emerged the Glasgow shipyard's cranes are weeks away from being pulled down'.[27] The changes to the yard's skyline came at a delicate time, with BAE pondering its future at Fairfield as well as its other site at Scotstoun across the river, with the impending independence referendum in Scotland bringing much speculation future industrial development in Scotland, whether as part of the UK or as an independent country. The speculation surrounding the cranes and jobs, prompted the then Deputy First Minister and MSP for Govan, Nicola Sturgeon to comment;

> BAE has to come clean. The workforce has been through the mill too many times before. It would be outrageous if Govan doesn't have a future…There is a duty on

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[26] 'Fears over Govan yard', *The Herald,* 2 November 2013.
[27] Ibid.

the company to make clear its intentions. I would hope the decision to take down the cranes would be put on hold until a decision on the future of the yards is made. I don't want to see Govan shipyard close.[28]

Professor John Hume—Chair of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, and Chair of Govan Conservation Advisory Group—wrote to the Scottish Government in the hope of saving the cranes. The result was a hastily arranged hearing at the Scottish Office that allowed for Hume, along with the shipbuilding historian Ian Johnston and Pat Cassidy, Managing Director of Govan Workspace, a social enterprise charity, to urge the Scottish Government to halt the removal of Govan's last cranes. BAE was represented at the meeting by their Head of Facilities Management and staff from their Public Relations department. BAE stated that the cranes were now a hindrance to the future development of the yard, stressing their own need to adapt and evolve their business to keep up with the latest technologies. While BAE expressed an awareness of the yard's heritage and keenness to respect the cranes' symbolism, they argued they could not allow the yard to become a museum to shipbuilding past, at the expense of allowing the site to become a shipyard of the future. For the Scottish Office, BAE's case was a strong one, especially given the historic sensitivity of industrial jobs to the region, at a time when BAE was still weighing up its long-term future in Scotland.

The meeting at the Scottish Office along with the newspaper article and the comments of the Deputy First Minister confirm the notion that the area's cranes had become the physical embodiment of work; monuments to human toil. The cranes and shipbuilding had become inseparable to the point that, for many, the removal of the cranes

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[28] Ibid.

automatically meant the removal of shipbuilding work. In reality however, this was

misguided. The departure of the cranes was evidence of the shipyard being prepared

for future use by BAE. There is little likelihood that if the company had made the

decision to leave, that they would waste time and money having the cranes removed.

Alec Taylor bears quoting at length;

> I was brought up between Anderson and Govan, so I lived in Govan. Ended up working in the shipyards and I started in Fairfields as I know it, which is now Govan, I started in there in 1973, still a romantic attachment to the Clydebuilt, Clyde ships. But basically that's all disappeared years ago. At one time there was a hundred-thousand people employed in the shipyards in Glasgow, and I am going back a long, long time ago, but even to the 60s there were five-thousand in Fairfields, five-thousand in Browns, adding them all up and there was thousands and thousands of men. That's no the case anymore, there is only two yards left in the Upper Clyde, Yarrow's and Fairfield which is now BAE Systems' Scotstoun yard and Govan yard. They are dismantling the cranes at Fairfield and they are saying it's because they are no longer, eh, "fit for use", and to be truthful they haven't used them for a few years because they have no been building any boats on the slipways. From what I hear, they've bought two big huge mobile cranes, technology has moved on. If they don't need the cranes, they're turning into an eyesore, they're rusting away.[29]

Despite his self-professed 'romantic attachment', Taylor's testimony reveals a willingness to

accept the loosening of the importance of industrialism, the shipyard's position, and of

obsolescence of the cranes. Removing the cranes showed they were intent on making use of

the space, building a modern shipyard onsite. For BAE, keeping old fashioned and obsolete

berth cranes would have symbolised an old shipyard, with old systems.

Cranes as symbols of work

The issue of sustained employment aside, the removal of the cranes was seen as

hugely symbolic, an almost ritualistic passing that pricked the consciousness of notions

of cultural heritage, and the wider meaning of industrialism in the collective

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[29] Alec Taylor, in 'The Last of the Govan Cranes' by Chris Leslie, 2015.

Glaswegian memory. The Govan skyline can be seen to function as the physical

embodiment of work, but also as a psychogeographic locater of belonging. Farmer

expands upon this;

> The cranes were everybody's idea of Glasgow and the Clyde, eh Kenneth McGeller singing *The Song of the Clyde*, you know, "the hammers' ding dong is the song of the Clyde", up and down the river, and the welding arcs and the burners, sparks come cascading out the side of the ship, that was all beautiful stuff, beautiful theatre when you sailed down the river.[30]

In discussing the theatrical element, Farmer's evocation though romantic description

seeks to stress the hyper-visual culture of shipbuilding of which cranes were an

important part. Farmer adds;

> The place was a myriad of cranes, so the River Clyde without cranes is a bit alien, so it is a great loss to the skyline, and of the skyline of Govan because you would see them, it doesn't matter if you were in the North of the River, from the South, you'd see the cranes towering over the yards.[31]

Another maintenance worker was Billy Dunn, who reflected on the unique working

environment in the sky:

> God it takes me back I must admit – I always remember the smell as well, either they were cooking – but it was hot oil cause there was a lot of grease on the ropes and that. Aye, they would have a wee kettle and wee hot stove, he [the driver] wisnae gonna come down, he would maybe come down at lunch time cause he had 45 minutes, but he is no going to come down for a cup of tea. . . . They used to have heaters in the cabin and they weren't very good, so they would smuggle an open bar fire up and we would disconnect it and take it away and the next day another one would appear![32]

Testimony of this nature is of importance, not only as it provides rich commentary on the nature of working lives at a distinct place in time, but it documents the cranes as working objects, rather than cultural artefacts that they became for many.

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Stephen Farmer, interviewed by Martin Conlon, 3 October, 2015.
[32] Billy Dunn, interviewed by Martin Conlon, 19 February 2016.

In confronting this new 'alien' existence, many people with connections to the cranes were going through a period of mourning, at a point of dramatic lived change. The cranes' departure provoked a sense of absence that many had to negotiate. 'That was shocking to see, that was', Farmer added. A *Herald* article from 1st November 2013 contained a quote from a yard employee, whose name was not given as a means of protecting their identity at work. Despite the paper stating the source fully acknowledged that the cranes had no working future they commented;

> Their removal is hugely symbolic. Why remove them now when there is no need to do so?' Why emasculate the shipyard? These iconic structures are part of the Glasgow skyline. These are berth cranes – the last on the Clyde actually used to build ships.[33]

In this light, the removal of the cranes was an act of cultural vandalism designed to weaken the established connection between the shipyard the wider community in Govan. It is important to acknowledge too that this quote frames this as an 'emasculation', demonstrating that the cranes often functioned as a visual metaphor for the hyper-masculine world of shipbuilding, and in turn, constructions of strictly male working-class identity. The cranes had a permanence to them that meant they often went unnoticed, their visual directness forming part of the rhythm of everyday life in the area. For life-long Govan resident Colin Quigley, 'you walked out your close and that was the one of the first things you could see, it pointed the way hame!'[34] Another Govan resident Bill Pritchard remarked;

> I could see it [the Fairfield crane], it was right across from my backyard, and it was always there, and wasn't until two months later to me it was pointed out to me that it was gone. I never even knew it was away. Yet, it was just part of the background. My wife says "you don't take the rubbish out enough to notice!"[35]

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[33] 'Fears over Govan yard', *The Herald,* 2 November 2013.
[34] Colin Quigley, interviewed by Martin Conlon, 3 November 2015.
[35] Bill Pritchard, interviewed by Martin Conlon, 3 November 2015.

James McDonald began to develop an interest in industrial photography, prompted by the changing skyline;

> Living in Govan, you tend not to notice the cranes because you think they will always be there. Like most things, you take them for granted. It wasn't until I found out they were going to be demolished and that the river skyline was about to change that I decided to photograph them.[36]

The contemporaneous desire to try and capture the lived change, has been explored by Strangleman who described it as a 'mourning process', where people 'reflect back' on industrialism and where it left them.[37] For McDonald, this takes the form of a 'reawakening' whereby he feels he took the crane's symbolism and its importance in shaping his memories 'for granted', only realising this when it was to be removed. Life-long Govan resident Jean Melvin remarked on a failure to tap into heritage potentialities: 'I don't know why they took them away; they could have been a tourist attraction.'[38]

The significance of the passing of the area's last cranes was picked up by *The One Show,* a topical week-night television programme broadcast live on BBC One. Glasgow poet Donny O'Rourke was commissioned to write a poem that marked the crane's passing, with the poem being recited by local residents as part of a short segment, interspersed with historical and contemporary footage of the structures;

<div align="center">

To me they're like a zoo!
A playground to wander through!
A Meccano dream come true!
Govan's weans, grew up with cranes

Where Sir Alex learned to lead
The Big Yin picked up comic speed
And Rab C bandaged his sore heid

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[36] James McDonald, written correspondence.
[37] Tim Strangleman, '"Smokestack Nostalgia", "Ruin Porn", or Working Class-Obituary: The Role of Meaning and Deindustrial Representation'*, International Labour and Working Class History*, 84, (2013), 28.
[38] Jean Melville, interviewed by Martin Conlon, 3 November 2015.

Memory lanes, lined with cranes

They won us two world wars
Now thanks to business either ors
Like the bones of dinosaurs
Extinct remains; no more cranes

With each heavy load they bore
They could make our spirits soar
But they'll raise morale no more
Commerce gains; we lose our cranes

With a panoramic view
Of what skilled workers used to do
There's a crane museum too
'Titan' explains, our debt to cranes

George Wyllie inspired awe
In every Clydesider who saw
His locomotive made of straw
The last of all the trains, dangling from cranes.

In the setting sun the Clyde's still red
Jimmy Reid's ideas aren't dead
Rent strikes Mary Barbour led
Hope sustains, outlasts the cranes

As the junkyard giants stoop
And their mighty shoulders droop
The latest loss love can't recoup
Partick retains, the cherished image of its cranes

The last time I lay my eyes on
Our city's steel horizon
That the sun will never rise on-
Til' the river drains; We'll mourn the cranes

When there's a huge hole in the sky
About a hundred meters high
We'll ask the silent river why
Glasgow maintains, only memorials to cranes[39]

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[39] Donny O' Rourke, 'The Cranes', The One Show, BBC One, 15 November 2013.

For a topic of this nature to be broadcast on primetime television, across the UK despite the considerable number of colloquial references in the poem and accompanying televised segment, is evidence of the broad appeal of the subject matter, and its wide resonance with communities beyond the West of Scotland. Throughout the poem, the demolition of the cranes is framed as significant physical, cultural and psychological loss. The poem makes reference to the work of George Wyllie, which will be discussed in detail in chapter three.

Towards the future

As well as provoking discussion of the area's past, the removal of Govan's cranes also forced a consideration of both the present and the future. Vastly reduced from its population peak of 89,725 in 1911, Govan today has approximately 26,000 residents.[40] Many of the large tenement blocks have been gradually replaced by 'medium and low rise' housing schemes.[41] As of 2016, the area had higher than average rates of unemployment of around 4.5%, the second highest in Glasgow.[42] Though the cranes are absent, traces of their evocation can still be found, such as in the name of a local pub (Figure 17), demonstrating the continuing resonance of wider industrial culture in the area's perception of itself.

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[40] For recent figures see https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2223&p=0

[41] Frank Worsdall, *The Glasgow Tenement: A Way of life: a social, historical and architectural study*, (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1989), 223.

[42] Govan Area Partnership Profile, 2016. Available at https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewSelectedDocument.asp?c=P62AFQDNT1Z3DN0GUT

Figure 17 – Tall Cranes pub, Govan. 09/11/15. ©Author

When pondering the area's future, Farmer took a considered and long term reflection,

pointing out the area's continued resilience;

> I don't know what the answer is for Govan, it has to get some industry to lift it,
> there is no heavy industry left in Britain let alone Govan. Although Govan has been
> there a long time, when the Vikings left I don't think that was the end of Govan,
> we've carried on through the days of wooden ships, steel ships![43]

Pat Cassidy is the Managing Director of Govan Workspace, a social enterprise charity that

has been involved in a variety of social housing and community employment projects in

recent years. In 2009, Govan Workspace took ownership of the shipyard's historic A-listed

offices, which had been direct since 2001. After obtaining over five-million pounds in grants,

the shipyard offices were successfully renovated and reopened in 2015 as a heritage centre

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[43] Stephen Farmer, in *The Last of the Govan Cranes* by Chris Leslie, 2015.

and community space. Though ultimately unsuccessful, Govan Workspace made several

attempts to halt the cranes' demise. Speaking after the cranes had been removed, Pat said;

> Glasgow of course has been a world centre of shipbuilding and of the Glasgow
> yards, Fairfield was really the jewel in the crown. You hear all the time that
> shipbuilding is part of Glasgow's past, why should be care about it? Shipbuilding is
> part of Glasgow now. Name another industry where until recently, there were 4000
> people working between here and Scotstoun. It's all very well to say there was an
> awful lot more than that, there was ten thousand in Govan alone, but that applies
> to every industry in the world. Shipbuilding is still a very significant industry here,
> it's really been quite sad to see the cranes go. It no longer looks like a shipyard to
> some extent, because the cranes were the iconic symbol of what was beneath
> them, and without wanting to romanticise too much, they were a symbol of
> Govan's maritime heritage. They were a symbol of Glasgow's heritage, it's sad that
> that there wasn't a possibility of at least retaining one as a reminder of that
> fantastic past.[44]

Cassidy's comments reflect his feeling that the 'post-industrial' framing Govan is frequently

given is problematic, and it is his view that though industrial employment numbers are

dramatically reduced, industry is still fundamentally important to the area's future. In his

desire to retain one 'as a reminder of that fantastic past', the perceived link between the

physical structure and its position in stimulating the processes of industrial remembering,

suggests their loss was therefore a loss to Govan's collective memory.

Conclusions

This chapter has collated the material culture relating to the historic skyline of Govan that

was pulled apart between 2007 and 2014. It adds to the evolving body of literature that

seeks to move beyond simply recording industrial apparatus, and instead assess its wider

historic value within the context of the connections that people have with the physical

remnants of industrialism. Similarly, it has sought to further develop understandings of how

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[44] Pat Cassidy, in *The Last of the Govan Cranes* by Chris Leslie, 2015.

spatial attachments are continuing to be dislocated by the long-term impacts of deindustrialisation. The case study of Govan shows that over time, working objects can become cultural artefacts, with a resonance and meaning beyond their original purpose. Delores Hayden argued 'landscapes are storehouses of meaning', and this is particularly true of Govan, where the cranes became both visual reminders of the lived experiences of work, and the fragility of work, as evidenced by the fears that their removal had a direct correlation with the future of the jobs within the yard.[45]

The cranes gave an impression of permanence, and their demise sparked the consciousness of notions of cultural heritage, and the wider meaning of industrialism in the collective Glaswegian memory. The case study of Govan also identifies the inherent problems in applying the term 'post-industrial' within certain spatial geographies in Scotland. Despite the unprecedented decline of industry in the second-half of the twentieth century, as measured quantitatively through reductions in employment figures and production levels, the remaining fragments of industry reveal a positional liminality that continues to evoke feelings of nostalgia, attachment, and vulnerability that suggest the legacy of deindustrialisation has still not settled. By using oral history testimony, the intangible cultural or social landscape can be contrasted with the drastically evolving physical landscape, providing unique insights into place connection in urban settings.

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[45] Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 9.

Chapter Three

The Finnieston Crane: Artistic practice and the negotiation of industrial change

The previous chapter sought to understand the layers of meaning and value ascribed to

cranes as industrial heritage sites that have been removed. This chapter switches the

emphasis to explore the connections that people and communities have had with a crane

that, though no longer operational, continues to exist in situ and has been creatively

reimagined and reused since its working decline. As assessed in the literature review

chapter, the study of regional transitions between the deindustrialising to post-industrial

states has received considerable attention in recent years. Several key themes emerge from

these texts, such as the impact and meaning of job losses and the role of the heritage

'industry' overall. One aspect of industrial change that remains underdeveloped is its

association with the wider cultural landscape. For example, what is the extent and role of

cultural landscapes—as comprised of museums, literature, art, music, and popular culture—

in shaping or responding to industrial heritage discourses in regions experiencing industrial

change?[1] These forms of cultural expression can often be dismissed as merely simplistic

forms of nostalgia rooted in an irrational yearning for a past time. As Smith suggests, this

fails to understand that nostalgic recollections can involve critical and mindful memory work

that recognises and engages emotionally with lived change.[2] How can cultural agents

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[1] Some of these questions have been provoked in response to Arthur McIvor, 'Where is "Red Clydeside"? Industrial heritage, working-class culture and memory in the Glasgow region', *Industrial Heritage Making in Britain, the West and Post-Socialist Countries,* eds. Stefan Berger, (New York: Berghahn, 2019), 44-67.
[2] Smith, Shackel, Campbell. *Heritage, Labour and the Working Classes*, 3.

provoke, or reflect, memories of industrial change and importantly, and how can they creatively make use of disused industrial heritage sites?

This chapter will explore these questions using the Finnieston crane that stands in the centre of Glasgow which, as Maver points out, 'represents continuity' on a site that has been drastically altered.[3] The docks the crane once served have been filled in, with three large conference and concert venues, as well hotels and restaurants now occupying the site. With its positioning in the heart of modern Glasgow, the crane has become a visual focal point for the notions of romanticism and attachment towards Clydeside industry. As Newman suggests, 'because of its powerful image and its central location in Glasgow, it has now achieved symbolic importance locally as a great as any building or monument in that city, and a popular recognition greater than any crane in history.'[4] Today, imagery of the Finnieston crane is omnipresent; in street art, as the backdrop to national news reports, as well as a centrepiece to the opening ceremony of Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

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[3] Maver, *Glasgow*, 219.
[4] Brian Newman, 'The Genesis of the Cantilever Structure in Fitting-out Cranes', (PhD diss., Newcastle University, 2003), 9.

Figure 18 - The Finnieston crane and redeveloped dockland in 2013, ©Historic Environment Scotland

The crane's rapid transition from working object to inactive monument to its former self encapsulates the cataclysmic changes taken place in Glasgow within living memory. Despite the crane's prominence in visual culture, it is privately owned by Clydeport, a subsidiary company of Peel Ports Ltd, with its future remaining unclear. In 2007, talks were held between Clydeport, Glasgow City Council and Historic Scotland with a view towards turning the crane into a novelty restaurant.[5] Similarly, there have been several other attempts to make the Finnieston crane a more 'official' or 'museum-ified' monument to Glasgow's industrial heritage. These plans have never materialised, though the crane is still used frequently for corporate events and charity abseiling. The structure occupies a liminal zone, a relic of the past but a monument firmly positioned within both the physical and intangible

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[5] 'Crane diner plan is good enough to eat', *The Evening Times*, 26 February, 2007.

cultural heritage of the new modern Glasgow. As it stands, the crane has been shorn of its

associations with work, in keeping with the processes of change that have seen large

swathes of urban redevelopment along the River, as outlined by Paton's study of the

sociology of redevelopment along the river.[6] As previously identified in the literature

review, scholarly work on deindustrialisation has traditionally positioned deindustrialisation

processes as fundamentally economic, often at the expense of a wider discussion on cultural

or social impacts, or responses.[7] By shifting the emphasis towards a more holistic approach

that incorporates wider meaning, value and human relationships a more nuanced account

of the transition to the post-industrial can be achieved. As argued by Jefferson Cowie and

Joseph Heathcott;

> The time is right to widen the scope of the discussion beyond prototypical plant
> shutdowns, and the immediate politics of employment policy, the tales of
> victimization, or the swell of industrial nostalgia. Rather, our goal is to rethink the
> chronology, memory, spatial relations, culture and politics of what we have come
> to call deindustrialisation.[8]

The study of these forms of 'spatial relations' and memory are sparse in Scottish contexts,

though there are notable exceptions. Perchard has explored the legacy of coalfield closures

in Scotland, whilst both Basu and Jones have used oral testimony to explore spatial histories

of memory in the Highlands.[9]

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[6] Paton, *Gentrification: A Working-Class Perspective.*
[7] For general accounts of deindustrialisation in Scotland see,
Finlay, *Modern Scotland.*; Cameron, *Impaled Upon the Thistle*, 236-262; Devine, *The Scottish Nation.*; Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes.*; For a more a Glasgow-specific study see MacInnes, *Deindustrialisation of Glasgow,* 73-95.
[8] Cowie and Heathcott, *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings*, 1.
[9] Perchard, 'Broken Men', 78-98.
Paul Basu, 'Macpherson Country: genealogical identities, spatial histories and the Scottish diasporic clanscape', *Cultural Geographies*, 12, (2005), 123-150.; Sian Jones, '"Thrown like chaff in the Wind"; Excavation, Memory and the Negotiation of Loss in the Scottish Highlands', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Volume 16:2, (2012), 346-366.

This chapter seeks to extend this dialogue further by situating deindustrialisation as cultural processes; of both continuity and change—using the Finnieston crane as a lens through which to explore the transition from industrial Glasgow to a 'New Glasgow'. Secondly, turning toward the question of the role of the cultural landscape; this chapter will suggest that industrial ritualism is not confined to processes of demolition, but can be evoked using creative and artistic practice at sites which lay otherwise dormant. It is argued that these forms of creative practice can offer forms of reconciliation, as well as opportunities for people to understand or negotiate the wide-ranging meaning for communities affected by deindustrialisation processes. To put this into practice, this chapter will establish the historical context of the Finnieston crane as a working object, evaluating its role in the formation of local identity in Springburn, North Glasgow, whilst drawing from oral testimony from of one of the last Finnieston crane drivers, William Sloan. It will then turn to the post-working life of this structure, using the work of the artist George Wyllie that sought to creatively repurpose the crane as site for social commentary on industrial decline via two high profile art-installations (*The Straw Locomotive* 1987, *The Paper Boat*, 1989). This approach further develops the notion of the 'cultural circuit' as pioneered and developed by oral historians Thomson, and later Summerfield, that chart the relationship between life histories and their broader cultural setting.[10] Lastly, this chapter will show the importance of adopting a more holistic 'social archaeology of industry' approach towards industrial sites as pioneered by Gwyn, Palmer and Orange, accounting for the social or cultural 'value'

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[10] Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Penny Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews', pp.65-93, in *Cultural and Social History*, Volume 1, (2004).

therein.[11] This chapter concludes that industrial archaeology as art allows both the artist and wider community to negotiate and make sense of lived changes.

The working life of the Finnieston crane

> During the course of a busy office life, the disturbing thought had frequently occurred to me, that time was slipping away in a daily round which, though no doubt useful enough as a contribution to the welfare of the community at large, and to myself and a family as a means of livelihood, was nevertheless somewhat uneventful, and lacking in the qualities necessary to give it any special distinction as a man's life work.[12]

A creeping perception of a life unfulfilled growing stronger, James Cowan began using his lunch-breaks to explore the hidden histories of Glasgow that he felt were being commonly overlooked. Cowan adopted the pseudonym 'Peter Prowler', writing short antiquarian-style reflections on sites of interest in Glasgow. His writing was quickly picked up by the Literary Editor of the *Glasgow Evening Citizen* newspaper, who granted Prowler a regular column throughout the 1930s, later serialised a book entitled *From Glasgow's Treasure Chest* (1951)*.* Writing in September 1935, the author gives a detailed depiction of a visit to 'one of the most arresting objects to the eye of anyone passing down the Clyde' its 'height of about 175 feet, and the impressive strength of its form, make it one of the most conspicuous objects on the riverside', the Finnieston crane. After successfully obtaining permission from the Clyde Navigation Trustees, Prowler ventured to the top of the crane. He describes his visit in some detail;

> I made my way out near to the extreme point of the 152 feet jib (possibly the longest of its kind in the world) and looking back, experienced the full thrill of being moved to and fro along the load. A noticeable peculiarity of each lateral movement

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[11] Hilary Orange, 'Cornish Mining Landscapes: Public Perceptions of Industrial Archaeology', (PhD diss., University College London, 2012); David Gwyn, 'An Amorphous Farrago? The Contribution of Industrial Archaeology', in *Crossing Paths or Sharing Tracks?: Future Direction in the Archaeological Study of post-1550 Britain and Ireland*, eds. Audrey Horning and Marilyn Palmer, (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2009), 19-39.

[12] James Cowan. *From Glasgow's Treasure Chest: A Miscellany of History, Personalities and Places*, (Glasgow: Craig and Wilson, 1951), 3.

was that it was not continuous, but took place in gentle jerks of a few inches at a time. The object of this is to prevent the load at the end of the cables from acquiring a swinging motion, which would soon render the accurate place of any load a matter of great difficulty and danger. As it was, I saw the heavy machinery in this instance placed in a few minutes into a space where there was hardly an inch to spare on one side or the other, all the directions during this delicate operation being conveyed to the craneman by signs, and blasts on a whistle, according to whether the movement was to be up or down, left or right. The control cabin window is set on a slope to suit the view below. A complete revolution of the huge boom covers over 1,000 feet at the top; and this can done in 3 ½ minutes.[13]

Prowler's account gives a unique account of the workings of this structure, as well as the skill and delicacy of movement as co-ordinated by both the driver and the craneman working below. Prowler's writing reflects a fascination with the monumentality of the Finnieston crane that has endured to the present day. However, it would have been unforeseeable for Prowler that the crane would be obsolete a mere 30 years later.

To assess the rapidity of change experienced by this structure, it is important to fully lay out its origins, as well as its working life. In March 1928, a proposal by Glasgow Corporation for a new bridge over the Clyde, between Finnieston Quay and Mavisbank Quay, meant that the Clyde Navigation Trust's 130 ton Finnieston crane had to be removed. This 'original' Finnieston crane stood on the South bank of the river. As part of this compromise, a new crane was ordered by the Clyde Navigation Trust in 1926, costing £52,351, of which Glasgow Corporation paid 85%.[14] Though the contract was awarded to Cowans, Sheldon and Co. of Carlisle, the firm sub-contracted work to Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Co for the tower, and Sir William Arrol and Co. for the foundations.[15] The crane, equipped with a passenger

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[13] Ibid, 210.

[14] Summary Record for *'Stobcross Quay, Stobcross Crane, Otherwise known as the Finnieston crane'*, 14/04/1989, Historic Environment Scotland. http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB33285 - accessed 20/04/216

[15] Ibid*.*

lift, became fully operational in 1932. It serviced the Queen's Dock, originally known as

Stobcross Dock, which had been officially opened by Queen Victoria in 1877. It provided two

basins, a hydraulic swing bridge, coaling cranes and brick transit sheds (See figure 19). The

crane was used to lift heavy items such as tanks, cargo and steam locomotives for export to

service the still vast imperial economy.

Figure 19 - The Finnieston crane (centre of the picture), Queen's Dock, Glasgow, 1951. ©Historic Environment

Scotland

The Locomotives of Springburn

The crane quickly became synonymous with Glasgow's booming locomotive industry, with

steam engines from the North British Locomotive Company making the journey from

Springburn, a district in the North of Glasgow, to the River's edge. The industrial

development of Springburn was deeply rooted in the rapid expansion of the locomotive

industry. Four major works were separated by only a few miles; the Cowlairs Works (North

British Railway) was set up in 1841, the St Rollox Works (Caledonian Railway) followed in up

in 1856, Hyde Park Works (Neilson and Company) were set up in 1861 and the Atlas Works

(Sharp Stewart and Company) were set up in 1888. In 1903, both the Hyde Park Works and

the Atlas works had merged to form the North British Locomotive Company, employing

around 8,000 across 60 acres of works.[16] In the 1950s, Springburn was the epicentre of

European locomotive production, with around 25% of the global market share. In 1953, the

North British Locomotive Company estimated that it had produced around 28,000

locomotives, 90% of which had been exported.[17] The procession of locomotives through the

streets was a ritualistic affair that galvanised the local community. As Mackenzie suggests;

> The entire community in Springburn was caught up in the production in some way
> or another and the shipment of the engines was a highly visible affair. During the
> history of these firms almost 30,000 locomotives were hauled out of the works
> through the street of the city, by teams of Clydesdale horses, traction engines and
> later by heavy diesel tractors, often before admiring crowds, to the 175 ton heavy
> lift crane at Stobcross Quay.[18]

Ronald Wright grew up in Springburn, and fondly recalled being part of the crowds that

would watch locomotives being hauled through the streets;

> I suppose being born and bred in Springburn set the pattern for me. Having a
> Grandfather working in the North British Loco who took me to watch the railway
> engines leaving the works in Vulcan Street, loaded onto bogies on the tramlines
> and taken to Stobcross Quay. They were then lifted by you know what onto ships
> heading for India and many other far distant countries.[19]

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[16] *A history of the North British Locomotive Co. Ltd.: Sharp, Stewart & Co. Ltd., Neilson, Reid & Company, Dubs & Company.* (Glasgow: North British Locomotive Co., 1953), p28.

[17] Ibid*.*

[18] John M. Mackenzie, '"The Second City of Empire': Glasgow – imperial municipality', in *Imperial cities: Landscape, Display and Identity, eds* Felix Driver and David Gilbert*,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 237.

[19] Ronald Wright, interviewed by Martin Conlon, 4 April 2016.

Wright's firm position of the locomotives as being part of a vast imperial economy shows an inclination to view Springburn as being the very centre of the world in terms of locomotive construction. Wright had several job offers upon leaving school at 16, though unlike many of his peers, did not opt in to the railway industry, and instead chose an apprenticeship with cranemaker Sir William Arrol and Co Ltd. Reflecting on the oral history interview process, he remarked;

> It has made me think more and more about the past, what might have been had technology not overtaken 'the old ways', and how fortunate we were being able to pick and choose employment.

Grounded in his sense of privilege at finding work so easily is the implicit suggestion that this is a luxury not afforded to generations that came later, with a sharp decline afflicting the area. Like many large industrial firms, the North British Locomotive Company struggled in the decades following World War Two. Despite employing close to 5,000 people throughout the 1950s, increased market competition combined with a difficulty in adapting to emergent technologies, led to the company's liquidation in 1962. Similarly, Cowlair's works closed in 1966. The Finnieston crane became obsolete, with the decline in River traffic from the 1950s resulting in the closure of the dock in 1969. The docks were filled in with the rubble created from the demolition of St Enoch Railway Station as part of plans to regenerate the waterfront with the Scottish Exhibition Centre, serviced by a new motorway that carved its way along the riverside, cutting off Springburn from the city Centre. The collapse of industry in Springburn has had a detrimental effect on health and well-being in the area. Today, life expectancy in Springburn is lower than the Glasgow average, with a higher than average

proportion of people claiming Employment and Support Allowance.[20] Similarly, the area has

a higher than average likelihood of people living within a 500m of derelict or vacant land.[21]

The belief that the area has declined is firmly engrained in the minds of many local

residents, as evidenced by testimony from *Springburn Remembers*, an oral history project

carried out by Springburn Museum in 1987. Local resident Isabella Miller remarked, 'at one

time, we had about five picture houses, we had the Kinema, the Oxford, the Princes, the

Royal Cinema and the Wellfield Cinema, they were all in Springburn and there's not one

now'.[22] Similarly, Mary Sorbie, who moved away from the area said 'the last time I was back,

I was lost. I didn't know where I was in Springburn'.[23] People's perceptions of the narrative

arc of Springburn's recent history could perhaps have been reinforced by the various

negative news stories about the area. For example, in an article in the *Evening Times*

newspaper entitled 'A Community Destroyed', the area's rise and fall is summarised as

follows;

> Thirty years ago, the northern Glasgow suburb of Springburn was a thriving,
> bustling community. Within its boundaries were two major British Railways
> workshops – Cowlairs and St Rollox – and the Hyde Park and Atlas works of the
> privately owned North British Locomotive Company and Eastfield locomotive shed.
> For the inhabitants of the district the day was ruled by the works horn; their milk
> came in bottles with the railway locomotive emblem, they shopped at Cowlairs Co-
> op, founded by North British Railway workers in fact, almost every aspect of their
> lives had its origins with not of the railway employers. It was not a company town
> but it was a community, in every sense of the word. It was an honest, self-reliant,
> working-class district, one of many in the West of Scotland. And like so many other
> places, Springburn was destroyed.[24]

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[20] 'Understanding Glasgow', *The Glasgow Indicators Project*, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, http://www.understandingglasgow.com/assets/0002/1283/Springburn.pdf

[21] Ibid.

[22] *Springburn Remembers: Springburn History Project*, Springburn Museum, (Glasgow: 1987),6.

[23] Ibid.

[24] 'A Community Destroyed', *Evening Times*, April 20th 1991, 12.

William Sloan spent his working life driving cranes at various docks along the River, a career

that resulted in eventually becoming one of drivers of the Finnieston crane. He recalled the

delicacy and skill with which he would place North British Locomotive steam engines onto

waiting ships, with the help of another craneman below;

> The funny thing was, if a person shouted up to me I couldn't hear them, if they
> spoke normally I could hear them. Now, I don't know what phenomenon that is,
> but that was the truth. Eh, there were no walky-talkies in they days, you know. It
> was hand signals, you went wae hand signals.[25]

Sloan firmly positions himself within the wider story of decline, with the recollection of his

last lift still vividly engrained in his memory;

> I was about one of the last to put a train in the hold, I don't know if it was going to
> Karachi, or where it was going but the foremen on that was a fella called Mick Hoy
> who is a brilliant lad... Anyway, eh, to load this 120 ton engine into the hold of the
> ship, as I'm holding this with my right foot, because you're holding it on the gear
> with your right foot, cause it would just slide slightly, and Mike – he wanted this
> engine in 3ft and the way the dockers were pushing it they could only get 2ft, so
> Mick decided if he pulled back and started to swing it, "1 2 3 – standby" and I am
> saying "what the hell, you cannae, I cannae hold! I've got 120 ton at my feet" It
> would go through the bottom of the boat, you know! And Mick says "Willie, stand
> by!" and he landed it right on the button, he landed it. How he did it, I don't know,
> but the boat went![26]

With his occupation gone forever, Sloan fondly recalls the unique quirks of his daily routine,

including the hazards of the crane's lift;

> [It] broke down quite frequently while you were in it and there weren't such as
> thing as mobile phones in they days and when you get stuck in that you just, well,
> normally you were stuck when there dockers about so you could shout down and
> they could hear ye, and you hid to send for an engineer. Now that was Finnieston,
> the engineer was at Meadowside so he had to come from Meadowside to here, so
> you're stuck in a lift and then there were sometimes when you were working away
> and somebody wouldn't shut the gate at the bottom so the lift couldn't come up or
> down and you hid to climb down the stairs, which was usually full a starlings
> droppings so it was very slippery. When I was a training instructor I used to go up
> and climb all over it, on my own, to inspect it, to see if it was getting maintained,
> see if there was always a permanent grease on it, just to see if nothing was, there

[25] William Sloan, interviewed by David Walker, *Quay Voices Project*, University of Strathclyde, 2009.
[26] Ibid.

was nothing wrong with the brass, but eh – no it was very colourful job, you know.[27]

Figure 20 – A North British Locomotive for Malayan Railways is loaded onto a ship at Finnieston Quay, 1962. ©SCRAN, HES

From his unique position in the sky, Sloan watched as Clydeside industry contracted around

him;

> …in the Glasgow docks when I first went there, between crane drivers and capsinmen there must have been at least 300 men employed in the Glasgow docks, and as I says, at the finish up there were 4 crane drivers and 2 foremen.[28]

Sloan firmly links the obsolescence of the crane with the political situation in Scotland at the

time, remarking that the demise of the docks happened once 'Mrs Thatcher got her claws

intae it and started punishing Scotland…'[29] This testimony neatly highlights the toxic legacy

of Thatcherism that has become broadly accepted in the development of a collective or

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

'accepted' story of modern Scotland.[30] However the strength of this anti-Thatcher

sentiment is shown when it is noted that she was elected 1979, and the docks, as previously

stated, closed in 1969. Though Thatcherism exacerbated the processes of deindustrialisation

in a way that become commonly engrained in popular memory, the demise of various forms

of Scottish industry were already in motion. In addition to referencing the wider political

climate, Sloan also places the demise of the crane in context of fundamental changes to the

global cargo trade. As he points out, the advent of containerisation reduced the need for

smaller docks and quays, with cargo firms beginning to favour large bulk carrier ship that

could transport thousands of sealed steel containers, at a fixed price.

> Containerisation was a death knell, no doubt about it, I mean if you can put your goods onto a secure box that nobody can touch from the factory to the buyer it is ideal. Containerisation was a fixed price, it was a fixed price to discharge it and a fixed price to load it, didn't matter what was in it, that's immaterial if it's a 10ft or a 20 footer it was a fixed price. So that saved money for the exporter and importer, whatever it was. So aye, containerisation was a great thing to happen but it killed the docks, but where did the containers go to? The containers didn't go to Scotland, the containers went to Liverpool and London, they went there. If you see their containers, I mean compared to Greenock, Greenock's just a laugh compared to what they've got.
> Cause at that particular time, Liverpool had geared for it. We hadn't geared for it, I mean, if you can remember that Greenock was doing ore, they were doing ore at that particular time and then they done the containers.[31]

These larger ships required greater water depth and turning space not afforded by the

quays and docks of the Upper Clyde, which began to rapidly close. A new container handling

terminal was opened at Greenock in 1969.[32]

[30] Perchard, 'Broken Men'.
[31] William Sloan, interviewed by David Walker, Quay Voices Project, 2009.
[32] John Riddell, *The Clyde: The Making of a River*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Limited, 1979), 347.

Towards a post-industrial: the creative rebirth of a river

This chapter will now turn towards the post-working life of this structure, and its artistic

reuse. Despite the dislocation cause deindustrialisation processes, and a wider political

context, Glasgow in the 1980s and 1990s is perceived to have gone through a cultural

renaissance, with an increased proliferation of creative and artistic practice. As Craig

observes;

> Many felt that 1979, and the failure of the Devolution Referendum represented
> such a disaster; that the energetic culture of the 1960s and 1970s would wither into
> the silence of a political wasteland in which Scotland would be no more than a
> barely distinguishable province of the United Kingdom.
>
> Instead, the 1980s proved to be one of the most productive creative decades in
> Scotland this century - as though the energy that had failed to be harnessed by the
> politicians flowed into other channels. In literature, in thought in history, creative
> and scholarly work went hand in hand to redraw the map of Scotland's past and
> realign the perspectives of it future.[33]

In 1983 Glasgow Corporation began the hugely successful 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign

to rebrand the city. The campaign aimed to alleviate the city's reputation for crime, poverty

and ill-health that sharp industrial decline had worsened. The corollary to this was an

investment in culture, such as the inauguration of Mayfest, billed as the most ambitious

public and visual arts festival in Britain, incorporating theatre, dance, music and

contemporary art. Similarly, Glasgow hosted the 1988 Glasgow Garden Festival, with over

4.3 million visitors descending on the derelict Princes Dock, which had been transformed as

part of the event. Glasgow's cultural rebirth culminated in the city being awarded the title of

European City of Culture in 1990, though this renaissance was not accepted uncritically.

Damer suggested the emergent Glasgow was a 'worker's city whose rulers resolutely

pretend that it is something else' whilst Spring commented on the 'myth of the new

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[33] Carol Craig, in I Spring, series preface, *Phantom Village: The Myth of a New Glasgow*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990).

Glasgow'; a city with 'its sooty-face scrubbed clean, like a recalcitrant schoolboy forced to visit a wedding or a funeral'.[34] One key strand to the resultant discussions about identity and culture in modern Glasgow was the politics of the city's relationship with work and its loss. In a poem reflecting on the Glasgow Garden Festival, Liz Lochhead espoused the idea that there was an absence of reconciliation with regards to deindustrialisation and its impacts;

Well, jolly japes
Like cutting hedges into fancy shapes
And trying to make some kinna Eighth Wonder
Oot o' plantin' oot the coat o' arms in floribunda
Are making Scotland just a theme park
A dream park,
A Disneyland where work disnae exist.[35]

George Wyllie and the Finnieston crane

The sentiment that Glasgow was glossing over its own past could be said to have created a counter-culture that proactively sought to confront the rapidity of lived change. One of the most evocative and high profile creative responses to deindustrialisation along the River Clyde came with the work of the artist George Wyllie. Wyllie was born in Glasgow in 1921, serving in the Royal Navy and later working as a Customs and Excise Officer at the docks, before becoming a full time artist in his fifties. Wyllie died in 2012 with his work critically acclaimed, and his profile established as one of Scotland's most celebrated visual artists. His work frequently sought to address the loss of industrial work along the River Clyde, often using the obsolescent Finnieston crane as a site for artistic expression and inspiration. The crane became Wyllie's prop on with four installations; *The Straw Locomotive* (1987), *The*

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[34] Sean Damer, *Glasgow: Going for a Song*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990) 210.
[35] Liz Lochhead, 'The Garden Festival', in Maver, *Glasgow*, 283.

Paper Boat (1989), *The Dear Green Helicopter* (1990) and *Glasgow Speug* (1995). In an

interview in 2002, Wyllie reflected on how the crane had been a source of inspiration from

an early age;

> I liked cranes and I was nearly a crane builder. I took the drawings I'd done of these model aeroplanes I was making and it impressed the guy in the drawing office so much, that I was doing this on my own, free of night school, cause I'd learnt technical drawing in Alan Glen's, and he was very impressed by that and they gave me a job to be in the crane department at Arrol. Sir William Arrol was a very big international structural engineer, built stuff in Australia, all over the world and I got the job and I got back home and I told my father and he said 'you're not gonna take that job!' and he phoned up the guy and cancelled the…my achievement.[36]

Wyllie's father forbade him from accepting the role on account of his fears for the future of

the industry work at places like Arrol's. Wyllie added, 'he had been hurt by the slump. All his

brothers had been put out of work in the slump, and they didn't want me to go into a job and

be vulnerable if a slump could happen again'.[37] He found work as a Customs and Excise officer,

monitoring cargo coming in and out of Glasgow's docks and quays. In his fifties, Wyllie turned

to visual art full-time, as a creative outlet for his many interests, but also his desire to pass on

his unique social commentary.

> I think I always wanted to be something to do with construction, building, and eh, yeah and latterly when I found sculpture, I found it had best of all worlds there, I could build, I could think, I could write, I could do anything…and, so eventually it was all, sort of was, useable![38]

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[36] Interview with George Wyllie, 2004. *National Life Stories Collection: Artists Lives*, British Library, Shelfmark, C466/185
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

The Straw Locomotive and the Paper Boat

In the mid-1980s, Wyllie began sketching plans for arguably his most ambitious project ever (see figure 21). The *Straw Locomotive* involved creating a life-sized locomotive made from straw, which was to be suspended from the now obsolescent crane.[39]

Figure 21 – George Wyllie's sketch of the Straw Locomotive, 1986. ©University of Strathclyde

He successfully won funding for the idea as part of a competition organised by Television South West and South West Arts to fund nine temporary public art installations across the UK. The installation formed a key part Mayfest, which had grown in size and scale since its launch in 1983. *The Glasgow Herald* broke news of his funding success in February 1987, outlining his plans whilst also finding time to remind readers what the crane was once used for;

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[39] Email correspondence.

Glasgow artist George Wyllie is to suspend a locomotive constructed from hundreds of bales of straw, simultaneously, a memorial to the city's industrial past – the crane was used to load steam engines on to ships - and a lament for its non-industrial future.

Before it is hoisted high, the two-thirds life-size engine will be paraded through the city streets from the locomotive museum in Springburn for the edification of the populace.[40]

Over eight weeks, at a large storehouse in Greenock, Wyllie worked with welders from the Greenock Welding and Fabrication Company to make the locomotive's steel frame.[41] The piece was given structural support from a dense network of wired mesh, before being stuffed with straw. The finished locomotive was 40ft long, 7ft wide and around 13ft tall, and once stuffed with 2 ½ tonnes of straw weighed approximately 6 tonnes (see figure 5).[42] The project was to cost £6,000, including materials, transport, and fee to the Clyde Port Authority.[43]

Figure 22 – The Straw Locomotive under construction, 1987. ©University of Strathclyde

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[40] 'Bales of straw will symbolise a city's past', *The Glasgow Herald*, 12 February 1987, 5.
[41] Louise Wyllie, and Jan Patience, *Arrivals and Sailings*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn Books, 2016), 134.
[42] T-WYL/7/6/1, University of Strathclyde, Special Collections, The George Wyllie Collection, Project Files, The Straw Locomotive (1987)
[43] T-WYL/7/6/1, University of Strathclyde, Special Collections, The George Wyllie Collection, Project Files, The Straw Locomotive (1987)

The locomotive began its journey from outside Springburn museum at 11am on the morning of 4th May 1987, with Wyllie in the locomotives driver's cabin and two open-topped buses with ex-North British Locomotive workers and local residents following. The procession made its way down Springburn Road, through Sighthill towards George Square, before coming to a stop at the crane. After lying dormant for close to 20 years, the Finnieston crane came alive again, with the locomotive being hoisted into position above the River in front of a large crowd (see figure 6). Wyllie reflected on his installation in a column in *The Glasgow Herald*, in September 1987;

> After letting it hang from the big crane for eight weeks, I felt that the Straw Locomotive had let me down by not giving me an answer. I had expected it to tell me that the demise of locomotive building was due to say, labour troubles, management problems, or more probably, simply that no-one wanted steam locomotives any more – although other workshops have managed to adapt to diesel and electricity.[44]

Figure 23 – The Straw Locomotive being hoisted into position, ©University of Strathclyde

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[44] 'Iron Men, Straw Days', *The Glasgow Herald*, 1 September 1987, 4.

It had originally been Wyllie's intention to set the locomotive alight in a 'ceremonial burning' as it hung from the crane, to be extinguished in the waiting river below.[45] As owners of the crane, the Clyde Port Authority 'expressed some reservations on this final aspect in particular, basically on points of danger, contamination and projecting possibly the wrong "political image"'.[46] Though originally scheduled to be taken down on 12th June, the Clyde Port Authority agreed to extend its stay one week, allowing for Wyllie's hope that its conclusion would not be overshadowed by an upcoming General Election. Lurking deep within the straw, Wyllie had hidden a steel question mark, to be revealed upon its burning – a provocation aimed at metaphorically asking questions about the wider processes of deindustrialisation and where it left communities along the River Clyde. Though even as the deadline for the locomotive to come down approached, the precise nature of its fate, and whether the question mark would be revealed at all, was still unclear. In a letter to the Institute for Contemporary Art dated 1st June, Wyllie stated;

> I am torn between the sight of it going up in flames and exposing the flaming question mark, and its escape from the pyre by regal barge to the garden festival to be born again in a livery of forget-me-nots as an optimistic omen for Clydeside.[47]

With no firm offers from either the Glasgow Garden Festival or Glasgow's Museum service, the locomotive's fate was sealed. On June 22nd, it was unhooked from the crane before making its way back to Springburn, coming to a stop at the site of the old North British Locomotive Company's assembly shop, now a derelict patch of concrete.

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[45] T-WYL/7/6/1, University of Strathclyde, Special Collections, The George Wyllie Collection, Project Files, The Straw Locomotive (1987).
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

Figure 24 – A poster for the burning of the Straw Locomotive, ©University of Strathclyde.

Whilst suspended, the locomotive had attracted nesting birds which had to be carefully removed. As a piper played a lament, George and several helpers set it ablaze, the smouldering question mark finally revealing itself once the straw had burned away.

Figure 25 – The Straw Locomotive burns, 22nd June 1987. ©University of Strathclyde

Alex Harvey was a 15 year old college student when he became involved with George Wyllie, acting as assistant on the day the locomotive was loaded onto the crane, and later when it was taken down and moved along to Springburn;

> George had me help on the day it went up onto the crane and then later when it was taken down and went to Springburn: George and I set fire to it there as the final part of its journey. I wasn't involved in the making; I was at college by that time and building a folio for art school.[48]

Harvey would listen whilst Wyllie worked through the meaning of the installation;

> I did spend lots of time in the evenings or weekends with George and Daphne [his wife] at their home and we talked about his ideas and art. George spoke to me about the symbolism of creating an effigy, something that embodied the talents of all the workers on the Clyde who had been made redundant, a temporary monument to the ingenuity and invention that is our heritage... all those skills... sacrificed or latent...?[49]

The burning of the installation provided an opportunity for local people and ex-workers to share their memories of the crane as well as their connections with Sprinburn's dead industry. As the effigy for industrialism burned behind them, Wyllie interviewed ex-employees of N.B Loco in footage that would later be used in a film about his work;

> *George Wyllie*: how many locomotives do you think went up on that crane?
>
> *Willie Dewar*: Well we had overall about 18,000 to all parts of the world.
>
> *George Wyllie*: Martha McMillan, you were a tracer in the North British…and why d'ya think they stopped building the steam locomotives in Springburn?
>
> *Martha McMillan*: Well, my impression was that it came on so quickly, they didn't realise the quickness of the change over and they were still thinking of steam when deisel was actually on our doorstep.[50]

In foregrounding the voices and memories of local people, it was hoped that a form of reconciliation would be possible, where residents and workers could attempt to make sense

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[48] Email correspondence.
[49] Ibid.
[50] *The Why?sman – In Pursuit of the Question Mark,* by Murray Grigor, 1990.

of the dramatic period of lived change. In 1989, Wyllie returned to the site of the crane with another large scale piece of public art. The success of the Straw Locomotive's strengthened Wyllie's desire to assess the consequences of the passing of Clydeside's industrial heritage which was now unarguably the core theme of his work. Wyllie's new idea was to create a boat made from paper, a wry comment on the now ethereal nature of industry along the River. Wyllie successfully won £30,000 worth of funding from the Gulbenkian Foundation, a sum that reflected the growing popular appeal of his ideas as well as the considerable profile he had developed.[51] On 6th May 1987, the Finnieston crane lifted the Paper Boat before delicately placing it on the water, in front of a large crowd.

Figure 26 – Wyllie at the launching ceremony of the Paper Boat, May 7th 1987, ©SCRAN

As part of the ships launch, a short sermon was delivered by Reverend Norman Orr, the Industrial Chaplain for the Clyde;

> I've been asked to do a rather unusual task for a minister of the gospel, bow your heads in prayer, let us pray;
>
> All mighty and eternal God

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[51] Wyllie and Patience, *Arrivals and Sailings*, 135.

We are gathered here in thanksgiving for the men of the Clyde
Who by their industry endeavour and skill
Sustained this nation in peace and in war
And even as we are met in thanksgiving
We are met in also sorrow
For the loss of so many shipyards
For those whose parsimony and greed have all but robbed us of these men's skills
And of all our industry, and for all these reasons
We ask you to bless this paper boat
That she may be for all who sail in her, and all who see her,
A symbol of these sentiments.[52]

The launching ceremony included a naming ceremony with the writer Naomi Atchison, with Wyllie performing a self composed song accompanied by the Da Capo Choir from Greenock.[53] The song is cheerful and uplifting in style, with Wyllie describing it as a 'corny wee tune, a paddle-steamer song'. Initially, the song contains simple nostalgic reflections on lost shipbuilding;

We're not all that proud of a Paper Boat
A Paper Boat, Paper Boat
You'd think that there never had been afloat
A ship like the the good old QE[54]

Latterly, its verses reveal Wyllie's willingness to place the art within its wider political setting. When combined with Reverend Orr's remarks about the 'parsimony and greed' that 'robbed us of these men's skills', the song espouses the idea that the processes of industrial change have been politically motivated and managed.

We're all at sea in a Paper Boat
A Paper Boat, Paper Boat
The Rule of Britannia is very remote
from what it used to be
So now that we're building a Paper Boat
A Paper Boat Paper Boat
don't-be-surprised-at-the-way-we-vote[55]

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[52] *The Why?sman – In Pursuit of the Question Mark*, Murray Grigor, 1990.
[53] Wyllie and Patience, *Arrivals and Sailings*, 138.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

Reflections on industrial heritage as art

Both the *Straw Locomotive* and the *Paper Boat* became focal points for the discussion of wider industrial culture, and both the continuity and change encountered by industrial communities overall. Scottish Nationalist Party politician William Wolfe wrote to Wyllie in October 1987;

> For me it epitomises the cataclysmic changes which had taken place in Scotland in the last forty years. I shall never forget *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald* on the day they announced the closure of the N. B Loco. Because on the same front pages the news included the closure of the Scottish shale oil industry. What a day for Scotland.[56]

It had been Wyllie's intention to provoke this reaction, though a key strand to his work was the determination to move beyond traditional, often romanticised or nostalgic reflections on industrial work, offering a forum to discuss the wider meaning and impact of this period of change. Additionally, Wyllie recognised that his artistic practice could not reverse industrial decline. Importantly however, he believed that art could keep alive a creative potential that he felt was being lost, essentially minimising deindustrialisation's effects, whilst ultimately allowing greater forms of reconciliation and understanding. Speaking in *The Whys?man: In Pursuit of the Question Mark* a film about his work, Wyllie remarked;

> I'm not nostalgic about shipbuilding, but I am nostalgic about the skills and spirit that went into it – sometimes transcending the tough conditions in the shipyards. Where is this energy now?[57]

In 2002, Wyllie reflected on his life and career in a series of long interviews as part of the British Library's *Artist's Lives* project. He expressed regret that his desire to keep what he perceived to be the Clyde's 'real energy' had not been continued;

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[56] Ibid, 134.
[57] *The Why?sman – In Pursuit of the Question Mark*, Murray Grigor, 1990.

> God knows what's happened to Glasgow now, energy… you get abseiling up there, you get fashion things, you get police cars, you never get anything to do with the real energy of the place hanging on that crane, and I did that![58]

His comments reflect his view that the site is now incoherent and commercialised, bereft of its creative or artistic energy that he feels responsible for keeping alive. He goes on to suggest that that commercially driven nature of the redeveloped riverside has suppressed creative engagement and distanced communities with the archaeology of the river. In reflecting back on the Straw Locomotive and Paper Boat, he stated;

> Clydeport helped me with it, and Greenock Welding of course, predominately that was the set up. Clydeport were good at that time, because there was residual staff from seafaring who run it as a shipping organisation, since then the corporate guys have taken over, and they are into property development, and the differences in attitudes between corporate people, selling…ramming sites and buildings down people's throats as opposed to guys that've sailed ships is immense, that's a big loss to the country, the energy of the sea coming through organisations like ports…organisations… and we've lost that in Glasgow now, we've got a bunch of hoodlums selling sites and… a good example would be a little…a girl asked me to give her advice on how to hang a heart up on the crane for some festival of love or something like that an I told her how to do it, and she went to Clydeport and they were gonna charge her £2000 for doing it, I never paid a penny to Clydeport, all the events I've done! Never paid a penny to them, nor did they ask for a penny. They entered it with good will, and I've hung one…two…three…four…at least 4 things on that crane. I hung my *Paper Boat*, I hung the *Straw Locomotive*, I hung my big bird I made…the *Glasgow Spreug*, I hung a helicopter, the *Dear Green Helicopter*, I did that, probably done something else I can't think of it, but I did four…and not a penny did they charge, because they were seaman and they had goodwill, not the corporate guys, they are so greedy for making money!...ye buggers, pardon me, edit that out, put a wee bleep in there if you want…ah don't put a bleeb in there cause I really mean it (laughs).[59]

Wyllie's remark suggest he had lost faith in the ability for the crane to work as a site of artistic practice, amid the forces of wider gentrification that have stripped the crane, and the river as a whole, of its industrial history.

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[58] Interview with George Wyllie, 2004. *National Life Stories Collection: Artists Lives*, British Library, Shelfmark, C466/185

[59] Interview with George Wyllie, 2004. *National Life Stories Collection: Artists Lives*, British Library, Shelfmark, C466/185

Glasgow, the river, its an artery, its like the main artery for this part of Scotland, its like the same as you get an artery running down your arm. And that artery is being ill-treated at the moment, its been ill-treated by commercial people who don't respect it, they don't regard it as an earth force. It is an earth force, undoutably, it cant be anything else![60]

People wrote a lot of articles about it, its easier to get straw now in Glasgow than to get a locomotive, and the eternal aspect of nature of straw is more than the eternal march of man's efforts to use nature, so there was that philosophical dimension. I tried to reinstate that in the river but I havent managed yet it.[61]

Wyllie's remarks show that he was evoking a higher order, 'critical' nostalgia' that hoped to counter or halt the forces of change experienced along the river.

Conclusions

The Finnieston crane has become the established monument to working identities in Scotland and it is a site that has come to represent continuity, but also change, experienced in Glasgow within a relatively short space of time. This chapter has shown the value of looking creatively, and more holistically at how people engage with and interpret industrial archaeology within the post-industrial phase. There is a lack of academic work on creative practice as a medium as a response, and potentially even as force of resistance, to industrial change. The artistic interventions of Wyllie came at a unique point in time, amidst the end of the industry and the emergence of the post-industrial. His artistic interventions were good humoured, though ultimately politicised instances of social commentary that sought to highlight the loss of industry and associated skills. Importantly, Wyllie felt that artistic endeavour, and creative engagement with the river could go some way in maintaining the River Clyde's 'energy', in spite of the rampant commercialism and regeneration that the area has experienced. Similarly, this chapter shows that the passing of time can offer vital

[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.

perspectives on the ongoing meaning of industrial change. This chapter has demonstrated

the value of looking creatively, and more holistically at how people engage with and

interpret industrial archaeology within the post-industrial phase.

Conclusions

In an essay from 1903, the Austrian art-historian Alois Reigl, began by defining a monument to be 'in its oldest and most original sense…a human creation, erected for a specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events alive in the minds of future generations'.[1] Monuments, therefore, were originally 'deliberate' and it was this intentionality that defined them. Though, he continues, 'the erection and maintenance of such deliberate monuments, which can be traced back to the earliest documented periods of human culture, have all but come to halt today'. Reigl proposed that it was 'unintentional' creations that formed the 'modern cult of monuments'; through a complicated network of interrelated factors such as age, visual directness amidst a perceived development of a mass-society shaped by mood and feelings over rationality, constructions over time acquire a cultural value of a kind entirely unintended by their creators. This can be a useful lens for looking at the shift on Clydeside as cranes went from ubiquitous working objects, to scarce and threatened cultural landmarks.

This thesis has explored the material culture of one remaining and one removed giant crane along the River Clyde, combining new oral history testimony, documentary source analysis and material culture studies to account for the post-industrial phases of these cranes. In doing so, it has approached these structures at a time when their obsolescence afforded an opportunity to explore how redundant industrial archaeology can be the source of reflection on past relationships with industry, and deindustrialisation processes in Scotland.

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[1] Alois Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development', in *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, eds Nicholas Stanley, Kirby Talley, and Alessandra *Vaccaro*, (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 69-83.

As Chapter one made clear, deindustrialisation studies in Scotland is a vibrant and emerging field, focusing on worker redundancy, resistance, gender, and class. This thesis has aimed to add to this body of work by examining the relationship between memory, deindustrialisation and the built environment. In doing so, it is hoped that Scotland's experiences of deindustrialisation can contribute to the now international field of deindustrialisation studies.

The case study of the dismantling of the cranes in Govan has shown how spatial attachments are made, and it is their un-making that shows communities are still dislocated by the long-term impacts of deindustrialisation. Similarly, this reflects what Sherry Lee Linkon has referred to as 'the half life' of deindustrialisation.[2] The picking apart of Govan's historic skyline became a visual metaphor for the vulnerabilities associated with the lived experiences of work in the area. The removal of the cranes heightened worries about the future of jobs on site. In moving to dismantle the cranes, which had become landmarks, the consciousness of notions of cultural and community heritage was sparked. This case study also demonstrated the liminality of Govan's relationship with industry, with a collective identity, as evidenced by the interviews in Chapter Three, of Govan as a post-industrial place, despite it still having an operational shipyard. This highlights the complexities of the lived experience along the River Clyde.

This thesis does not intend to make a case for their preservation, though rather highlights the various ways in which these fragments of industrial archaeology have been perceived,

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[2] Sherry Lee Linkon, *The Half-Life of Deindustrialization: Working-Class Writing about Economic Restructuring*, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2018).

reused and re-animated in a way that that can seek to inform the conservation processes of these structures, and of post-industrial archaeological sites in Scotland in general.

The case study of the Finnieston crane demonstrates that the crane has become an established monument to working identities in Glasgow, and this transformation from working object to cultural artefact has taken place within a very short space of time, within living memory for some. The case study also demonstrated the importance of studying both creative responses to deindustrialisation, and the way in which both creative and artistic practice can re-use and reanimate post-industrial sites. George Wyllie's artistic interventions provoked prescient questions on lost work and skills, whilst forcing a period of reflection on the nature of industrial culture and its passing.

Overall, this thesis can therefore be said to have added an additional layer to our understanding of industrial Glasgow. Works like John Hume's classic *Industrial Archaeology*, and Nevell's *The Birth of Industrial Glasgow* have used a traditional approach to provide a platform on which to build. By using oral history testimony, the intangible cultural or social landscape can be contrasted with the drastically evolving physical landscape, offering an additional layer of understanding of how people along the River Clyde have been, and continue to be, impacted by deindustrialisation processes.

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