

## **'Mining a productive seam? The coal industry, community and sociology'**

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### **Abstract**

Recently there have been calls for sociology in Britain to reflect on its longstanding historical attention and focus, something which has been neglected of late. At the same time there is growing interest in the historiography of British sociology and critical reflection on how its early post-war assumptions went on to structure later research, writing and scholarship. Developing both of these insights this article looks at British sociology's longstanding relationship with the coal industry, its work and especially its communities. From *Coal is our Life* (1956) through to *Coal was our Life* (2000) the sector has been an important site of sociological attention. It was an early focus of post-war community studies, becoming home to a residual traditional working class. Later still it was an arena of conflict on the front line of Thatcher's Britain, before becoming a site on which to study loss and deindustrialisation. This article asks what sociology learnt from the deep coal mining industry and what it might still explore in the future around questions of regeneration and the 'half-life' of deindustrialisation.

### **Introduction**

In 1956 *Coal is our Life*, a landmark in British sociological research, was first published. Based on research by Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter into the pit village of 'Ashton' in Yorkshire the book mixed anthropological and sociological approaches, techniques and questions. In their conclusion the authors' noted:

'...while we are convinced that in many respects Ashton is typical of mining communities and of the industrial working class generally, research is necessary to establish the varieties of industrial community-life in Britain, and the sources of these variations'.<sup>1</sup>

The book was an important landmark in a number of ways. It emerged nearly a decade after the nationalisation of the coal industry at a time when coal was still of central importance to the British economy and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) was a dominant voice in

the trades union and wider labour movement. It was also a period when coal as a fuel was being challenged by oil, with important implications for the industry's long term structure.<sup>2</sup> The volume also reflected the importance of the working class in wider post-war society, witnessed by the fact that the book was reviewed nationally in *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Spectator* and *The Observer*.<sup>3</sup> In academic terms *Coal is our Life* was significant in a number of ways. It marked an emerging self-confidence in the social sciences generally, and a nascent British sociology in particular. It was part of a growing body of research into working class communities in the wake of the Second World War. *Coal is our Life* can be read as part of a maturing sociology which was establishing its field and measure of expertise as it went. Through its pages we see how community, work and social life emerge as deeply rooted in each other, and that academic disciplines that sought to adequately capture the complexity of such communities needed to combine these insights in their methods and approaches. This growing independence was in part a distancing process from the discipline of history. A number of the key figures in post-war British sociology were products of historical training, most notably from Cambridge, but in the process of establishing the discipline of sociology there was a desire to emphasise distinct competence as part of occupational closure.<sup>4</sup> Contemporary working class community and patterns of social and economic life and socialisation were the ideal place to start such a process.<sup>5</sup>

*Coal is our Life* was also notable in terms of its legacy in how it has shaped, and continues to influence British sociology. The timing of publication, and its subsequent popularisation on the cusp of the huge expansion of the social sciences, and especially sociology, in the late 1950s and into the 1960s, meant that it became something of a foundational text for those interested in community studies, working life and occupational identity.<sup>6</sup>

This article examines the sociological relationship with the coal industry and its communities. Through tracing this relationship we can see how the discipline both matures and also fragments as it seeks to interpret social change. Coal communities, which were framed as ideal typical examples of working class occupational settlements, continued to be of interest as they begin to decline, and later lose the industrial base that defined them. In doing so the article attempts to understand how sociology has changed as a discipline, but also how it might reengage more fully with social history in understanding working class culture and life. The article has three main points. Firstly, it tracks, albeit selectively, the

relationship between sociology and one industry from its post-war highpoint to its decline and obliteration. Second, it explores how the discipline evolves over this same period and illustrates how coal plays an important part in that process. Finally, the article traces the relationship between sociology and its disciplinary others, most notably social history, in conceptualising coalfield change. In the sections that follow I examine how sociologists engaged with the coal industry through its communities and through contemporary debates about affluence. It then focuses on how these communities were viewed through neo-Weberian lenses, especially by way of ideal types. The next section considers the sociological response to the 1984-5 miner's strike before finally examining the post-closure experience and how the coalfields become a kind of 'post-industrial laboratory'.

### **Coal, Sociology and Affluence**

If *Coal is our Life* marked the importance of mining in the quest to understand community sociologically in the 1950s the industry remained significant during the 1960s and 1970s, for quite different reasons. Norman Dennis and his colleagues were part of what has been labelled the second wave of community studies after the end of the war. Dennis and his colleagues produced an account that sought to understand how and why coalfield communities looked as they did. They were not, as many earlier studies had done, seeking to portray the community they found as deviant, or pathologize those they found there. Rather they read the community through the workplace, as well as home and wider social structures. They were not idealising these structures, or the settlements they shaped. Instead they took for granted that these communities had to be understood in their own terms. Other studies such as *Family and Kinship in East London* simultaneously found value in working class community, but this research was underpinned by a sense of loss; the discovery of value in a period of transition.<sup>7</sup> While this is not so evident in *Coal is our Life* itself the coalfield communities themselves played an important role in defining and measuring change later on.

During the 1950s there was much discussion about the effect of affluence on working class life during the era of the long boom. Rising living standards, increasing pay rates and virtually full employment were combining to create what became known as the affluent society. Left of centre politicians were deeply concerned that the traditional core working

class voters were having their collective heads turned by consumerism, and that, to use classic Marxian language, they were subject to embourgeoisement.<sup>8</sup> Crudely this was the aping of middle class life styles, values and consumption patterns. Labour politician and progressive thinkers feared that after three successive election defeats – October 1951, 1955 and 1959 - their party could no longer hold power again.<sup>9</sup> It was against this backdrop that David Lockwood wrote his seminal essay ‘Sources in variation in working-class images of society’ in 1966. This essay effectively laid out a neo-Weberian framework for testing the embourgeoisement hypothesis. Importantly here established industrial workers and their communities were taken as examples of what Lockwood labelled ‘traditional proletarians’. As he notes:

‘Although in terms of social imagery and political outlook the proletarian and deferential traditionalists are far removed from one another, they nevertheless do have some characteristics in common. They are first of all traditionalists in the sense that both types are to be found in industries and communities which, to an ever-increasing extent, are backwaters of national industrial and urban development. The sorts of industries which employ deferential and proletarian workers are declining relatively to more modern industries’ (Lockwood, 1975, p.20).<sup>10</sup>

The important thing to note here is that coal miners and their communities were being set up as ideal typical exemplars of working class traditionalists, whilst simultaneously seen to being made marginal with the modernisation of the economy and industry. Coal miners then perform an important role in framing a hitherto strong working class as a foil to a new breed of ‘affluent workers’. Traditional workers were defined by strong settled occupational communities, high degrees of occupational identity and deeply committed to trade unionism. Affluent workers, by contrast, were likely to be employed in newer industries, live in more mixed communities and enjoy a more instrumental orientation towards economic life.

These were ideal typifications, and were not intended to stand as actual representations. They were a neo-Weberian heuristic device designed to allow comparisons and contrasts to be drawn. They do nonetheless provide a fascinating insight into how coal communities and coal miners were considered. As sociologist of community Graham Crow put it:

‘Traditional pit villages came closer than any other social arrangement to the ideal type of community in which there is a shared place, shared interests and shared identities [...], even though the precise nature of this sharing could vary considerably between regions and over time’<sup>11</sup>

Crow went on to note that it was precisely this atypicality that the mining communities displayed that made them useful as a comparison, against which to judge others. These ways of seeing mining communities were developed further in the wake of the publication of the *Affluent Worker* books in the late 1960s with a number of sociological studies examining the eclipse of traditional working class settlement.<sup>12</sup> This trend coincided with the pattern of closures instigated by the Government and the National Coal Board during the 1960s which deliberately targeted the most marginal, small scale and least productive pits for closure. As Taylor has suggested the beginnings of this decline were apparent as early as 1957 with the fall in the demand for coal as a result of the fuel substitution and diversification policies put in place between 1951 and 1955.<sup>13</sup>

Another important strand of sociological writing on mining came in the form of a more explicit focus on work organisation in and around collieries in the post-war period. Here coal mining was used as a probe in conceptualising the relationship between new technology and established work groups, in particular, studies illustrated the pivotal role occupational structure played in shaping workplace attitudes, behaviour, norms and values. As Richard Brown pointed out much of the writing in this period was marked by so called ‘systems thinking’, inspired by North American Parsonian structural functionalist sociology, which conceived of social settings, like workplaces, as having system like qualities. As was the case with community studies it was the relatively closed nature of coal mines as workplaces that attracted industrial sociologists to colliery settings.<sup>14</sup>

### **From ideal types to complex communities**

This desire and tendency to typologise coal mining communities was challenged during the 1970s and 1980s as a number of studies examined in greater detail individual coalfield settlements, or drew comparison between different areas. These studies stressed both internal differentiation and historical specificity. Much of this sociological work was historical, or was carried out by social historians. A good sociological example came in the

form of the 1982 volume *Class, Culture and Community* by Bill Williamson. This book married a biographical study with detailed analysis of community change in the Northumberland mining village of Throckley. Williamson showed how capitalism profoundly shaped the economic life of the village and those who inhabited it, while also emphasising the individual and collective agency of the miners and their families. Williamson, too, challenged the notion of stasis in the classic colliery settlement, illustrating instead how social change unfolded over time as a reaction both to macro events as well as smaller scale shifts in the community itself. *Class, Culture and Community* was a piece of historical sociology as the period it reviewed was a working life from the late nineteenth century through to the 1940s. Williamson's grandfather's pit was closed in the early 1950s just after he had retired, and illustrates the real poverty such workers endured as well as the way pit closures occurred throughout the period of nationalisation from 1947.<sup>15</sup>

Over a decade later Beynon and Austrin published their *Masters and Servants* which was a deeply historical sociological account of the Durham coalfield and its labour movement.<sup>16</sup> *Masters and Servants* was important because of the way it stressed difference across a single coalfield, while also examining how early development of the industry in the area had had a profound effect on later social structures in Durham. In particular the authors argued that the aristocratic ownership patterns and the autocratic paternalistic management styles evident in the coalfield had helped to shape a singular trade union structure which still had consequences in the second half of the twentieth century. *Masters and Servants* again sought out the complexity of coalfield community and the variety of identities which emerged over time. Notably the authors recognised that rather than being easily read-off, coalfield identity was the product of a whole host of different pressures, customs and traditions, including religion, the nature of the employment relationship, geographic location, geology as well as gender relations. *Masters and Servants* was originally envisaged as the first of two volumes, the second which would have dealt with the period after the second world war, failed to materialise. Although strangely neglected by sociologists *Masters and Servants* is a book which comfortably mixes social history and sociological theory in its pages. It frames its narratives and analysis in terms that social historians such as E.P. Thompson would recognise while simultaneously drawing on sociologists such as Alvin Gouldner and Michael Burawoy. The book is also quite unusual, at least for a piece written

by sociologists, in how it blends an impressive range of detailed archival institutional history with material and popular culture. It provides a model of a bridge between sociology and history ahead of its time.

These sociological developments echoed those in social and economic history where perceived homogeneity within and between mining communities was challenged. Royden Harrison's edited collection *Independent Collier* of 1978 illustrated the huge variation between individual coalfields as far apart as Scotland, the Forest of Dean and Yorkshire. These differences included variations in the fundamental employment relationship, trade union experience, settlement patterns, housing tenues and a whole host of other features. Harrison's aim was to disrupt the lazy historical and sociological trope of the miner as the homogenised 'archetypal proletarian'. As he put it in his introduction:

'...it was ordained that the coal miners as the archetypal proletarians and the folk heroes of their class were going to conquer. There is a long standing tradition in which the miner or collier is seen as the original and quintessential proletarian'<sup>17</sup>

Rather what he and his fellow contributors argued for was a more complex range of economic identities, ones which didn't sit well with contemporary binaries between labour aristocracy on the one hand, and plebeians on the other. Harrison's *Independent Collier* imagined himself distinct from common labourers, while not quite able to command the status of a skilled craftsman. The important thing to note is the actual reality of lived experience and the way the historiography of the industry aims to undermine simple readings of imagined industrial homogeneity.

This same point was made in a number of articles straddling history and sociology. Peter Ackers, for example, wrote 'For over a century the miners have assumed a central place in national class conflict and political controversy', and continues:

'Today, they [the miners] only inhabit our world as ghosts from a rapidly receding past, so that the near-death of the industry has freed the historian from the uncomfortable but compelling commitment to the day to day battle of the living'.<sup>18</sup>

Ackers, while a little premature in announcing the death of the industry, attacked what he described as 'romantic historicism', which he believed had led to the '...constitution of a

stereotypical coalminer, an ideal-type figure, who in reality, existed barely anywhere', describing this as 'an offence to historical sensibility'.<sup>19</sup> Both Ackers and Harrison's interventions are attempts to draw historical lessons which guard against simplistic readings of industrial militancy or working class identity. In their pleas for attention to detail they offer a more complex, perhaps unsettling picture of working class life and politics. What is perhaps more revealing is the fact that nearly two decades had elapsed between these two warnings, showing the enduring seduction of such simplistic renderings.

In previous writing I have drawn attention to the way the historiography of the mining industry in the UK has been subject both to stereotyping as well as methodologically ideal typing.<sup>20</sup> While these are very different things there is a tendency at times for these to bleed into each other, and therefore sociologists who may self-consciously be deploying ideal-typification are later accused, unfairly, of being ahistorical. Ackers for example concludes that 'The typical miner can exist only outside space and time, and therefore not at all'.<sup>21</sup>

In a slightly different register David Gilbert in his essay 'Imagined Communities and Mining Communities', published in *Labour History Review*, noted the way miners were often regarded as 'archetypal communitarians'. However, unlike Ackers, Gilbert saw a danger in that these stereotypes would become sedimented in the wake of closure of the industry. As he wrote:

'What seems to be taking place at the very time that actual mining settlements are disappearing from the actual landscape of Britain is that their place in the political and cultural landscape is becoming fixed'.<sup>22</sup>

There is then a tension in scholarship surrounding the miners, their industry and communities. This is encapsulated in the continual desire on the part of commentators, politicians, and at certain moments academics, to homogenise the experience of the mining industry, to squeeze out difference in an appeal to identifiable tropes. By contrast historians and some sociologists attempt to explore the empirical reality of huge differences within and between coalfields. The earlier use of mining communities as ideal types of traditional settlements, or as isolated workplaces was perfectly legitimate. The issue, or problem, comes when later sociologists take such methodological simplifications to be reflective of real life. I will pick up on this tension later on in the article. For now we turn to the 1984-5



Miners' Strike and consider how this event acts as a bridge between coal mining as an active industry and its subsequent loss and deindustrialisation.

### **The Miners' Strike**

The 1984-5 miners' strike was a watershed moment in many ways. It was of course fundamental for the industry and industrial relations in the UK. But it was also a crucial marker in how mining and mining communities were discussed in political, journalistic and academic discourses. The dispute itself attracted huge amounts of attention from academics both at the time and subsequently. But further, the decline of the industry from this point begins a period of far greater scrutiny and interest in the process of industrial and social loss and the attempts to arrest it.<sup>23</sup>

In his review of the literature which emerged from the strike political historian David Howell, writing in the sociological journal *Work, Employment and Society*, noted '... the legacies of the coal dispute demand understanding of that exceptional event and yet threaten to inhibit adequate analysis'.<sup>24</sup> Howell recognised perceptively just how difficult it was to gain access to the 'truth' of the strike and the events that surrounded it precisely because the mining industry and its labour were so deeply embedded in a complex web of ideological understandings. Howell acknowledged that historical and sociological writing on the industry, particularly the history of trade unionism, had created the miner as a talismanic figure. As he put it:

'One starting point must be an awareness that the historiography of the labour movement and especially perhaps of the miners has been distorted by stereotypes. There is the focus on formal organisation, the celebration of solidarity as essentially unproblematic, the idealisation of muscular combativity, an underlying optimism founded on a simple teleology that could be summarised as the Forward March of Labour'.<sup>25</sup>

Howell's main conclusion was that in the immediate aftermath of the strike - many of the pieces he was reviewing were published during the dispute - fairly crude stereotypes and biased narratives about the conflict were being laid down that needed to be challenged. However, a credible riposte would not come from an unreconstructed left-leaning account

trading in 'simplistic political stereotyping', but rather would emerge from what Howell described as the 'construction of a rigorous, critical, creative historiography'.<sup>26</sup>

Howell argued that one of the main positive features emerging from the accounts of the dispute had been the attention paid to the experience of the strike, a kind of 'history from below' which bubbled-up from a number of sources during and after it ended in 1985. Probably the best examples of this type of contemporaneous peoples' history was *The Enemy Within* edited by Raphael Samuel, Barbara Bloomfield and Guy Boanas, which was part of the long standing History Workshop Series. Their hastily assembled volume which was published a year after the end of the dispute, collected together a wide range of voices from those intimately involved in the conflict, stitching together, or juxtaposing disparate recollections from the front line.<sup>27</sup> This was a typical approach by Samuel and owed a debt, whether conscious or not, to the method of Mass Observation pioneers for the 1930s. The book emerged out of a History Workshop held at Ruskin College, Oxford in the February of 1985, and as Samuel wrote in his Preface to the collection, the meaning of the strike would he said:

'not be determined by the terms of the settlement – if there is a settlement – or even by the events of the past year but by the way in which it is assimilated in popular memory, by ... *retrospective* understanding both in the pit villages themselves and in the country at large'.<sup>28</sup>

Samuel went on to suggest that his book did not set out to be a history of the strike, but was 'a reminder of some of the voices it ought to give a hearing to'. Again echoing the work of Mass Observation pioneer Humphrey Jennings, Samuel emphasised the value to the collection:

'Its focus is on individual experience and imaginative perceptions rather than on the nature of collective acts. It is about the moments rather than movements. Its principal strengths are the first-hand quality of its testimonies – letters, diaries, addresses made in the thick of the struggle, testimonies collected at the time, for the most part. They have the immediacy of what is loosely termed 'oral' history, but they do not suffer from the displacements which memory and retrospection imposes'.<sup>29</sup>

In other words Samuel and his colleagues valued what Jennings referred to as 'imaginative history'. This is where it is the rendering of events by the actor that is important, the historian's task is to capture, collect and curate these 'images'. The collection of these images gave subsequent generations access not so much to the 'facts' of history, but the experience of that history as it unfolds in real time.<sup>30</sup>

A slightly different variation on this theme was Huw Beynon's edited collection *Digging Deeper*, written contemporaneously with the strikes by a number of academics trying to make sense of the dispute and the issues underlying it.<sup>31</sup> Both *Digging Deeper* and *The Enemy Within* represent a trend towards academic as activist, going beyond collating and analysing, towards more interventionist strategies on the one hand, or the simple attempt to bear critical witness on the other. At times these approaches were not mutually exclusive. For example the Glasgow Media Group turned their attention to the Miners' Strike in their analysis of the press coverage of the period. This showed the systematic distortion of events by the established media and government.<sup>32</sup>

In the wake of the strike a number of studies were undertaken that tried to record and analyse mining communities and the impact of the dispute. Jonathan and Ruth Winterton's (1989) *Coal, Crisis and Conflict*, for instance, focused fairly directly on the strike in the Yorkshire coalfield and the organisation and day-to-day maintenance of the dispute at a local level. Attention was paid to the role of the support groups within and outside the coalfields, as well as the drift back to work. Andrew Richards' (1996) *Miners on Strike* was an historical and comparative account of the strikes in the first half of the 1970s and the 1984-5 dispute, using notions of class and solidarity to understand the different outcomes of the respective events.<sup>33</sup>

There are several things to observe here about these publications. As already noted there was a shift away from an institutional labour history approach, which looked at the formal industrial relations in structural terms, towards an account of history being made and recorded in the field. This stress on experience helped to shape a focus on issues of community, of gender and other forms of identity. In many ways this was a welcome return to a type of sociology which took as its starting point the idea that work occurred in social contexts, both inside and outside the immediate work environment. But what we can also

see simultaneously occurring here is the recognition of profound shifts in the economy and the growing spectre of deindustrialisation.

One of the criticisms made of sociology's treatment of work historically was the increasing tendency in the 1950s and 1960s to focus more narrowly on the workplace and the practice of work itself, rather than the communities and extrinsic factor surrounding economic life. This was manifest in the label of 'industrial sociology', which reflected, unfairly at times, a focus on blue-collar manual factory labour at the expense of other types of worker and work.<sup>34</sup> During the 1970s and 1980s there was a gradual but sustained call to shift this self-imposed focus and to broaden out to consider the complete range of work and those that did it. Most notably there was recognition of non-paid and especially domestic labour. This move was also informed by the stark fact that the subject matter of industrial sociology was rapidly being eroded by job loss, the decline in traditional sectors like coal and later widespread deindustrialisation. The Miners' strike of 1984-5 then acts as a catalyst for a return back to focusing on work in context. But in addition this process frames the coalfields as one of the main areas of study of those interested in the process of deindustrialisation and industrial restructuring of the late 1970s and 1980s.

### **Coalfield communities as the post-industrial laboratory**

The years after the 1984-5 strike continued to see a variety of articles and books published in part or wholly about the coal industry. However, after the dispute had ended in 1985 a great deal of attention was paid to the coalfields as places of industrial loss. In 1984 sociologists Ray Pahl wrote in his book *Divisions of Labour* of the Isle of Sheppey in Kent as a kind of 'post-industrial laboratory' pointing out that many of the features of deindustrialisation nationally were present in microcosm on the island.<sup>35</sup> It was precisely Sheppey's geographic isolation that made it a good place to study economic and social change. In many ways the coalfields, again because of their geographic isolation, proved to be a fertile location for wider studies of industrial change. Since the mid to late 1970s there had been a growing interest in deindustrialisation in the UK.<sup>36</sup> This reflected the collapse of many of the traditional staple industries, like coal, which stimulated much discussion in political and historical circles as to the reasons for the decline.

In the USA there was considerable and sustained interest in deindustrialisation during the 1980s, especially in the wake of the publication by Bluestone and Harrison's 1982 book *The Deindustrialisation of America*.<sup>37</sup> The novelty of Bluestone and Harrison's approach lay in the way they studied the economic, political and social effects of industrial decline, seeking to understand economic decisions as hedged around by a complex web of factors, both domestic and international. They identified important trends in North American disinvestment domestically, and the paralleled investment in developing nations as at the heart of deindustrialisation. They called for moral and ethical questions to be answered by US corporations over these actions. Understandably much of the attention paid to industrial decline centred on what was rapidly becoming known as the 'Rust Belt', a corridor of disinvestment from the Northeast states – New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania through to the Mid-West – Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan.

In the UK, by contrast, interest in deindustrialisation was more sporadic, and this is where the coalfields are of interest. Unlike many deindustrial towns and regions the coalfields represent possibly the greatest concentration of singular employment. While in many sectors certain products dominate a particular locality, there tended to be other employers surrounding these in so called industrial districts. While it is often unacknowledged there has probably been more academic attention to the ongoing problems of former coalmining communities than any other industry. The coalfields, even in their terminal decline remain in the vanguard of this academic interest. It is again their geographic isolation coupled with large concentration of employment that marks out the coalfields, they are often seen as representing urban problems in rural settings.

Coalfield communities also have attracted attention in their decline precisely because they have historically been the object of study previously, therefore representing convenient places to carry out historical and comparative research. As Graham Crow argued:

'The conditions that made the solidarity of mining communities such a powerful force have been subject to increasingly rapid erosion in recent decades, but the culture continues to show resilience.'<sup>38</sup>

It is also the case that certain coalfield areas, even particular pits, tend to accrete more than their fair share of attention. Sociologically two places stand out in this regard, Featherstone

in West Yorkshire and Easington in the North East. Featherstone was the original site for Dennis and his colleagues' study *Coal is our Life* discussed above, and has been returned to a number of times down the years in books such as *Coal, Capital and Culture* by Warwick and Littlejohn and Royce Turner's *Coal was our Life*.<sup>39</sup> Warwick and Littlejohn's book examined the strike period and its immediate aftermath, but had some prescient things to say in the final chapter about the likely fate of the coalfields after closure. In particular they trace the economic and cultural legacies of the coal industry, and show how these shaped the experience of loss and were likely to continue to unravel later on. Warwick and Littlejohn emphasised the toxic mix of social problems facing former mining communities, including large numbers of semi and unskilled men being dumped on the labour market in a short period, low educational attainment, poor transport and communication opportunities as well as embedded health issues. All of these factors were being compounded by the coalfield areas being situated in wider economically depressed regions, and where resources for economic transformation were likely to be stretched. As the authors say:

'The mining communities which we have discussed are being restructured by such forces, largely out of the control of the people who live there. The certainty of employment in a local industry, always subject to the constraints of the market for coal, the geological conditions and the organisation of production, has now virtually disappeared. What may have been a dream, or a nightmare, for boys in these localities [coal employment] is now no more than a fading shadow'.<sup>40</sup>

*Coal, Capital and Culture* drew out the historical specificity of coalfield areas like West Yorkshire in understanding both the problems being faced concurrently around closure as well as projecting the likely trajectory of the long term effects of decline. Using Bourdieu's notion of different types of capital, Warwick and Littlejohn struck a depressing note as to the fate of the communities they study:

'The local cultural capital which has been created in the four communities is likely to be eroded within a generation as the reality of coal mining as employment as that basis for social and political organisation disappears. The disadvantage which this will reinforce ought to be the subject of much more scrutiny than it is receiving.'<sup>41</sup>

For these writers then, working in a sociological tradition, an important link is made between the longstanding industrial heritage of an area and the way this shapes both the present and future possibilities available. The focus on cultural and social capital is noteworthy as it gives insights as to how sociologists conceptualise the ability of communities, families and individuals to exercise agency. While some of the forms of capital developed in working class coal regions was transferable, Warwick and Littlejohn stressed that much of that capacity was as redundant in the wake of closure as the actual plant and machinery of the mines being lost.

Royce Turner's *Coal was our Life* was an even more focused and deliberate attempt to revisit the 'Ashton' of *Coal is our Life*. Turner's book was a brutal and angry account of Featherstone in the wake of closure. He relentlessly related the multiply problems facing the inhabitants of the town while stressing how all but the most affluent of residents were trapped by poverty and lack of economic opportunity. Turner's final chapter was unrelenting in its bleakness, relating a series of dark vignettes of life for young and old at the margins. Towards the end of chapter his anger breaks through:

'You walk around, and you want to help them. You want an economic, and a social, and a cultural, revolution. You want to remember them, as they were, full of pride and hope for the future. You want them strong, and confident, knowing that their day is still to come, but it will come, as they used to believe. But you know it isn't. And you know that you can't really do anything about it'.<sup>42</sup>

Turner too drew on the notions of social and cultural capital. He deliberately made the link between Warwick and Littlejohn's use of the concept in their book and with the way the authors of *Coal is our Life* drew on similar ideas, although not of course using that same terminology. At the end the epilogue for *Coal was our Life* Turner notes the way social capital was effectively destroyed by the loss of the coal industry. While he noted the efforts to retrain workers in coalfield communities he says: 'But rebuilding social capital, rebuilding the spirit, may take a lot longer. And it may well be too late'.<sup>43</sup>

### **Coal, Culture and Heritage**

In a continuation of many of the themes in the previous section we now turn attention to the way sociologists and others have explored the coalfields through ideas of memory, culture and heritage. Contextualising this move we could see it as part of the so called 'cultural turn' in sociology, cultural studies and the wider humanities and social sciences.<sup>44</sup> This was a deliberate shift in focus from issues of production to those of consumption, identity and meaning. This was met by suspicion on the part of some work sociologists who saw this trend as a diversion but, especially with the passage of time much of the focus, new approaches and methodological innovations have been welcomed in further unravelling the social story of coal. It is also noteworthy that unpicking the cultural from the economic is difficult if not impossible as we will see.

One of the most obvious places to begin to look at this shift is in the attempts to regenerate the coalfield areas through culture and tourism. A number of former coalfield regions created museums and more ambitious heritage sites aimed both at capturing and memorialising the coal industry as well as stimulating tourism and job creation, directly or indirectly. The most important sociological intervention here was by Bella Dicks and her writing on the Rhondda Heritage Park in the South Wales Valleys.<sup>45</sup> In *Heritage, Community and Place* Dicks peels back the layers of meaning and interest around the transition from productive mine to place of heritage, examining the contested nature of both the present and the past. Who gets to remember, or to define what is included in the area's story of its past relationship with coal, and how sanitized and safe does that narrative have to be for more general consumption? Dicks' writing shows beautifully how sophisticated sociological enquiry deploying novel and innovative methods can uncover new ways of conceptualising economic, cultural and social life that we think we already know much about. Interestingly Dicks did not emerge from perhaps what could be considered a more usual trajectory in studying the coal industry.<sup>46</sup> This freed her up from a more traditional and conservative stance. By contrast *Heritage, Community and Place* located economic life within a broader framework drawing on museum and audience studies.

This issue of remembrance and the contestation over memory is a theme that haunts the coalfields and the writing on them. In my own research on four different coalfield locations in the late 1990s I illustrated how the legacy of the coalfields was being managed and manipulated very directly by those charged with regeneration. In their public



pronouncements various redevelopment bodies would laud the character, work ethic and adaptability of coal miners and their communities. A flavour of this can be seen in the following quotes from various economic development sites of the period. In Easington the workforce was described as:

‘...a large pool of skilled and semi-skilled labour. Historically a strong work ethic runs through the people of this former mining community. They are proud and hard-working, energetic and friendly. In short Easington people are great people to work with’.<sup>47</sup>

Likewise the County Durham Website also noted ‘...a loyal and adaptable workforce and good labour relations’.<sup>48</sup> While in the East Midlands the Mansfield business guide, produced by the District Council to attract potential inward investors, stated:

‘The spirit of this north Nottinghamshire town comes naturally from its people; gritty and tenacious, renowned for their guts and their appetite for hard work. It is their drive and ability to adapt by learning new skills which have put them in a position to reap the rewards of the 90s and beyond’.<sup>49</sup>

There was a paradoxical tendency in this sort of place promotion in that in stressing uniqueness local authorities all claimed near identical attributes for their respective locations. By contrast in reflective moments in interviews those same individuals communities would be lambasted as ‘conservative’, ‘slow to change’ and lacking ‘entrepreneurialism’. Again here is a flavour of the responses from an interview carried out in the North West of England:

‘...there hasn't been a great block of enterprise culture, now whether that is changing and the reason that we have said there hasn't been a great, sort of, enterprise culture. ...traditionally there has been a reliance on, you know, four major companies, in the Borough and everybody worked for Pilkingtons, aunties, uncles, nephews, nieces and whole families, again, we saw that with SmithKline Beecham, whole generations in there...’.<sup>50</sup>

And another respondent in Mansfield noted:

‘...in an area like Mansfield, particularly, you'd find this sort of very introspective world, that was totally self-sustaining...So you've got a lot of culture, in-looking culture, that you start with, which doesn't break down very readily, it doesn't break down’.<sup>51</sup>

There was then, certainly in the late 1990s, a series of paradoxes and contestations over the legacy of coal and its impact on culture which my colleagues and I were recording. There was certainly a sense that coalfield community culture was deeply embedded in these localities and was being transmitted intergenerationally, even in the wake of closure.<sup>52</sup>

Another aspect of the desire to understand coalfield culture can be seen in David Byrne and Aidan Doyle’s chapter ‘The Visual and the Verbal’, which reported on their attempt to uncover responses to coalfield change. Using visual images of the destruction of pithead gear in the Durham coalfield the pair carried out focus groups with local residents. They aimed at capturing the ‘actual lived experience of change’. Their research occurred against the background of a rapidly changing urban environment where physical evidence of the industry was rapidly being removed as part of the attempts to clean up the sites ready for redevelopment. As they note:

‘The programme of ‘elimination’ of mining progressed very rapidly. In mining parts of South Tyneside, an area which until the 1970s had four large modern collieries and where coal mining had been the largest single source of employment for men, there is actually more visible evidence of the Roman occupation, which ended in the fourth century AD and has no historical connection to any contemporary experience, than of an industry which at its peak in the 1920s directly employed more than 12,000 men as miners’.<sup>53</sup>

Like other sociologists mentioned earlier Byrne and Doyle drew heavily on Bourdieu’s ideas, this time not in terms of forms of social and cultural capital, but rather the French theorist’s ideas of ‘habitus’. This is the notion that actors inhabit a set of culturally and socially mediated structures upon which they react and act. Like Dicks, Byrne and Doyle’s work is important both methodologically and in the way they frame what is of interest about coal. Byrne and Doyle explored the meanings attached to a coal mining past and how this was shifting post-coal between different generations.

Another aspect of this interest in culture post- closure has been the attention paid to the formal cultural structure of pit villages. Mellor and Stephenson's 2005 article on the Durham Miners' Gala is a good example of this trend.<sup>54</sup> Here the focus remains on culture but shifts to the linkage with a more formal past which stresses political organisation. This attention could be seen as a wider cultural response to closure in which the cultural life of the coalfields was celebrated and highlighted. Numerous books have been published within different coalfields which record union banners, musical tradition or artistic portrayal.<sup>55</sup> Cinematically too the coalfields have received a great deal of attention in films such as *Brassed Off* (1996), *Billy Elliot* (2000) and most recently *Pride* (2014). Each in their different way reflects on coalfield culture, both creative and restrictive, and perhaps awaits full sociological attention.<sup>56</sup>

### **Coal and the Half-life of Deindustrialisation**

One of the major themes uniting the post-coal industry literature has been that of trajectory and legacy. As we saw previously a number of writers have attempted to project the fate of the areas they study in to an uncertain future. On the whole the prognosis of various researchers has been fairly bleak, recognising that coalfield areas face a unique blend of social, cultural and economic problems and are therefore not attractive places to invest. Often the jobs attracted to former colliery villages are the type of employment that Guy Standing has recently labelled 'precarious', marked by low pay, insecure employment often dominated by zero hours contracts and employed by agency workforces.<sup>57</sup> The complexity of precarity within the context of the coalfield has been noted by others before, but in his recent article Geoff Bright illustrates how labour market precarity, educational precarity and social insecurity intertwine to harden the already deeply entrenched structures of disadvantage in coalfield communities. As he says of the young people he studied:

'If anything, though, their lives were even more precarious, and not only in educational terms. They were experiencing education and training provision funded from sources that were ever more precarious. The programmes themselves were being delivered by staff on increasingly precarious contracts and were aimed at preparing the students for more precarious roles in a more precarious labour

market. Their family situations were more precarious too, as public sector work disappeared in austerity cuts and disability benefits were reduced'.<sup>58</sup>

This is a toxic mix of social and economic challenges that any community would struggle with, but is magnified in the coal communities by a whole host of structural disadvantage sedimented across generations. These challenges were, as we have seen, predicted by earlier sociological interventions by the likes of Warwick and Littlejohn as well as Turner.

Most of the accounts of closure fully recognised that the coalfields would suffer ongoing challenges across decades rather than months or years. This stance replicates much of the debate within the wider study of deindustrialisation. In their important collection on deindustrialisation, *Beyond the Ruins*, US historians Cowie and Heathcott sought to go beyond the 'body count' approach to industrial loss, and in their words, 'move the terms of the discussion "beyond the ruins"'.<sup>59</sup> While they made clear their purpose was not to dismiss the important testimonies from workers caught in the midst of plant shutdowns, they instead argued that:

'... the time is right to widen the scope of the discussion beyond prototypical plant shutdowns, 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 "deindustrialization"'.<sup>60</sup>

What Cowie and Heathcott identified was the need to place industrial change in an historical perspective, recognising that deindustrialisation was a long term revealing process rather than a discrete event. More recently still this idea of the unfolding chronology of deindustrialisation has been explored by Linkon in her work on the literature and creative writing that has emerged in the wake of deindustrialisation. Linkon has coined the evocative phrase the 'half-life of deindustrialisation', a term that neatly captures the open ended nature of industrial loss coupled with an ongoing presence of a decaying set of structures. As Linkon puts it:

'People and communities are shaped by their histories – by experience, by memory, and by the way the economic and social practices of the past frame the structures,

ideas, and values that influence our lives long after those practices have ceased to be productive<sup>61</sup>

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

Thus, even as the active memory of industrial labor may fade, the landscape, social networks, local institutions, as well as attitudes and cultural practices bear the stamp of history'.<sup>62</sup>

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

'Deindustrialization has a half-life, and like radioactive waste, its effects remain long after abandoned factory buildings have been torn down and workers have found new jobs. ... We see the half-life of deindustrialization not only in brownfields too polluted for new construction but also in long-term economic struggles, the slow, continuing decline of working-class communities, and internalized uncertainties as individuals try to adapt to economic and social changes. It is not yet clear how long it will take for the influence of deindustrialization to dissipate, but the half-life of deindustrialization clearly extends well into the twenty-first century'.<sup>63</sup>

As I have argued elsewhere, Linkon's work, though developed in the context of literary criticism, represents an extremely powerful explanatory tool for understanding 'real world' deindustrialisation for disciplines such as sociology as well as history. The idea of the half-life captures both the decay and legacy of previous industrial structures of life, forms that are passed on long after the industries that spawned them have ceased to be. The term obviously fits well in any interrogation of the on-going life of the coalfields and their communities.<sup>64</sup>

A good example of where the half-life idea would fit is in the recent work by Geoff Bright and his on-going research into the Yorkshire coalfield communities. Bright's work focuses on the legacy of coal on the sons and daughters, and now grandsons and granddaughters in

these localities, a generation that has never known coal as a viable industry. In various papers Bright explores how an oppositional political and social culture is discernible just below the surface, but erupts from time to time. Bright tried to understand this oppositional culture displayed by school children in former mining communities toward their teachers and education in general. Deploying these same ideas in exploring the closure of one of the last coal mines in the area Bright turns his attention to the celebrations to mark the death of former Prime Minister Margret Thatcher, an event marked by an unexpected, vivid carnivalesque set of events. Bright talks of ‘a kind of “ghosted” affective atmosphere’ present in the school he studied, as well as the wider community (Bright 2016, p.144). Bright has made use of American sociologist Avery Gordon’s idea of ‘social haunting’ to make sense of what he discovered. He is attracted to Gordon’s work because it encapsulates the absent presence of the coal industry and its structures of feeling which continue, long after their death, to be felt and shape everyday experience. In other related work Bright and colleagues have created what they term ‘ghost labs’ aimed at capturing this aspect of social haunting in the coalfields. Using multimedia techniques and approaches memories, ideas, reflections and affective engagement is captured in new and interesting ways.<sup>65</sup>

Before concluding it is worth reflecting on the huge and growing volume of more popular material produced, often from within coalfield communities themselves, reflecting on the period before closure, and especially the 1984/5 strike. Often such publications draw on the idea of memory and commemoration, they are designed to mark and celebrate the industry as well as reinforce heroic tropes. There are two quite different readings open to the critical scholar. The first might see this avalanche of cultural production about mining as ‘smokestack nostalgia’, symptomatic of coalfield communities stuck in their past, unable to ‘just get over it’. A second interpretation, more sympathetic than the first might interpret this outpouring, as Walkadine and Jimenez have, as evidence of collective trauma, a loss not yet come to terms with.<sup>66</sup> The eliciting and repeating of memory may then be therapeutic, a search for value and meaning in the context of change and flux. Such a publish boom speaks to both the idea of a ghostly haunting and as yet more evidence of the half-life of deindustrialisation.<sup>67</sup>

## **Discussion**

It is clear then that sociology and the modern mining industry have had an interesting and close relationship since the 1950s through to the present day. In both cases it is possible to see how the academic focus of research and writing reflect trends both in the mining industry as well as the wider, increasingly global economy. Equally we can witness how the coalfields have been made-up, constructed or seen through the lenses of academic fashion. In the initial period of the mid-1950s the coalfields were deployed as examples of traditional proletarian settlement. Their relative geographic and social isolation made them important and useful places to study 'pure' cultures, and to establish a 'scientific' sociological account distinct from other disciplines, most notably history. Coalfield communities, most obviously the 'Ashton' of *Coal is our Life* served this purpose well. What Dennis and his colleagues were doing was creating ideal types which were at once historically products while simultaneously strangely ahistorical. This trajectory and model informs part of the conversation in the expansionist period of sociology in the 1960s where writers and researchers worked with, and reacted to, studies such as *Coal is our Life*. The Affluent Worker studies then used the kinds of worker and occupational community found in 'Ashton' as a kind of negative other to the newly emerging workers found in newer lighter industries. The coalfields and their communities were present in the 1960s and 1970s but largely as communities in decline, and as marginal reminders of early modern industrial workers.

This picture begins to change in the 1970s and through into the 1980s when industrial disputes and deindustrialisation start to attract greater interest. No longer did industrial sociologists worry about the challenges of affluence; now the problem was how did people try to save their jobs and communities, or cope with their loss. This trend reconfigures an interest in class, work and community and is most clearly realised in the commentary on the Miners' Strike of 1984-5. Sociologists were engaged during and immediately afterwards in making sense of micro social interaction as well as the macro structural changes underway. Methodologically this shift is interesting, reflecting as it does an activist disposition alongside recognition of the need to access subjective understanding. In the process questions of affect, identity, subjectivity and culture emerge as important.

Alongside these moves we can detect a far greater willingness and self-confidence in sociologists to place their research in historical context. This emerges as part of a more

general openness to interdisciplinary scholarship as well as the basic recognition that the issues confronting the coalfields could only be understood with regard to their historical trajectories, reaching back, in some instances several centuries. The Miner's Strike of 1984-5 then marks a watershed in the study of coal communities. The mass closure in the wake of the dispute forced those interested in economic life away from considering coal settlements as *occupational* communities; the process of change effectively decentres work as the main locus of interest. Instead attention begins to be paid to the *legacy* of industry and work. In a strange way this absence of work contributes new insights into work culture itself, as job loss throws into relief previously taken for granted assumptions about work and economic life. This is manifest in the numerous interview based research projects with former miners, but also emerges through the study of the legacy of mining in industrial heritage. Therefore, somewhat paradoxically, in its death and closure the mining industry continues to reveal much about employment cultures and attachment to work.

It was clear from the early post Miners' Strike research undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s that the decline of industry was going to present regions and communities with a huge range of challenges, and this has proved to be the case. Sociologists projecting out from their own research saw that the closure of industry had left a toxic mix of environmental, social, economic, health, educational and cultural issues which would not be easy or quick to fix, and this has proved to be depressingly accurate. What these studies hinted at was the need to revisit the coalfields to chart, record and bear witness to the ongoing struggle to cope with this legacy. More broadly the coalfields are perhaps the 'best' example we have of deindustrial communities, more akin to mono-industrial settlements in the USA than the rest of the UK.

Recently deindustrial scholars have drawn fruitfully on Linkon's notion of the half-life of deindustrialisation, the recognition that industrial collapse is an extended process measured in decades rather than a discrete event measured in months or perhaps a couple of years. Writers using an impressive array of innovative methods and approaches have tried to understand the complex enduring legacy of closure. They seek to record the enduring presence of coal in the everyday lives of residents. The concept of 'half-life' fits well with other allusions to legacy and decay such as 'social hauntings', 'trauma' or 'ruination'. Each of the metaphoric phrases attempts to capture the process of loss, degradation and erosion of



social and cultural structure. Equally they also are the recognition of the resilience of these same industrial structures of feeling which continue to inform contemporary agency. These evocative phrases have at their heart a profoundly historical sensibility both in terms of the weight of the past and an unfolding future. In 1984 Ray Pahl wrote that the Isle of Sheppey provided him with a 'post-industrial laboratory' in which to study industrial and social changes. It seems to me that the coalfields have, and will continue, to provide a larger canvas on which to study these processes as they continue to unfold. As such sociologists will, regrettably perhaps, continue to mine a productive seam.

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<sup>1</sup> Dennis, N., Henriques, F. and Slaughter, C. (1956) *Coal is our Life: An Analysis of a Yorkshire Mining Community*, London, Tavistock, pp.249-250.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Taylor, A. (2003) *The NUM and British Politics: Volume 1: 1944-1968*, Aldershot, Ashgate.

<sup>3</sup> See back cover of *Coal is our Life* 1969.

<sup>4</sup> Sociology in Britain develops relatively late although has its roots in Victorian and Edwardian academia. See Scott, J. and Bromley, R. (2013) *Envisioning Sociology: Victor Branford, Patrick Geddes, and the Quest for Social Reconstruction*, New York, SUNY Press; Rewick, C. (2012) *British Sociology's Lost Biological roots: A History of Futures Past*, Basingstoke, Palgrave. For the development of modern post war sociology see Savage, M. (2010) *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940*, Oxford, Oxford University Press. Finally in their book about Norbert Elias Goodwin and O'Connor give some wonderful colour to the attempt by Elias and his colleagues at Leicester to ensure British sociology followed what they took to be the correct path. Goodwin, J. and O'Connor, H. (2015) *Norbert Elias's Lost Research: revisiting the Young Worker Project*, Aldershot, Ashgate.

<sup>5</sup> In his fascinating account of the development of British sociology Savage describes how community studies in the UK developed in the shadow of US sociologists Helen and Robert Lynd and their study of Muncie, Indiana, which they anonymised as 'Middletown'. The Lynds were deliberately trying to find 'average America' and Savage suggests that the struggle to find the equivalent of Middletown on this side of the Atlantic was a compelling quest. Savage makes the point that until the 1950s social science in the UK when interested in community had tended to focus on delinquency. Savage, M. (2010) *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940*, Oxford, Oxford University Press. See also Roberts, I. (1999) 'A historical construction of the working class', in Beynon, H. and Glavanis, P. *Patterns of Social Inequality: essays for Richard Brown*, Harlow, Pearson.

<sup>6</sup> See for example the prominent place *Coal is Our Life* is given in Frankenberg, R. (1965) *Communities in Britain: Social Life in Town and Country*, London, Pelican. This book effectively sets *Coal is Our Life* as one of the foundational studies of British sociology. Interestingly *Coal is our Life* was republished in 1969 in the wake of Frankenberg's volume. Later Graham Crow devotes a whole chapter to the centrality of mining community literature, and especially the impact of *Coal is our Life*, in his volume on community, Crow, G. (2002) *Social solidarities: Theories, identities and social change*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Here Roberts (1999) 'A historical construction' is particularly useful.

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<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the best manifestation of this worry can be found in the still widely cited book by Hoggart, R. (1957) *The uses of literacy: Aspects of working-class life with special reference to publications and entertainments*. London: Chatto and Windus. This is at once a celebration of working class culture and a lament for its passing, swamped by material culture.

<sup>9</sup> This is encapsulated in Abrams, M. and Rose, R. (1960) *Must Labour Lose?*, London, Penguin.

<sup>10</sup> Lockwood, D. (1975) 'Sources in variation in working-class images of society', in Bulmer, M. (ed.) *Working-class images of society*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

<sup>11</sup> Crow, G. (2002) *Social solidarities*, p.71.

<sup>12</sup> Goldthorpe, J.H., D. Lockwood, F. Bechhofer and J. Platt. (1969) *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. See also Devine, F. (1992) *Affluent Workers Revisited: Privatism and the Working Class*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. See also Savage, M. (2010) *Identities and Social Change in Britain*.

<sup>13</sup> Taylor, A. (2003) *The NUM and British Politics*, chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> See Brown, R.K. (1992) *Understanding Industrial Organisations: Theoretical Perspectives in Industrial Sociology*, London, Routledge. For examples of systems thinking attention to British mining see Trist, E.L. and Bamford, K.W. (1951) 'Some social and psychological consequences of the longwall method of coal getting', *Human Relations*, 4,1, 3-38; Scott, W.H., Mumford, E., McGivering, I.C. and Kirkby, J.M. (1963) *Coal and Conflict. A study of industrial relations at collieries*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press.

<sup>15</sup> Williamson, B. (1982) *Class, Culture and Community: A Biographical study of social change in mining*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

<sup>16</sup> Beynon, H. and Austrin, T. (1994) *Masters and Servants: Class and Patronage in the Making of a Labour Organisation*, London, Rivers Oram.

<sup>17</sup> Harrison, R. (ed.) (1979) *Independent Collier: The Coal Miner as Archetypal Proletarian Reconsidered*, Brighton, Harvester, p.2.

<sup>18</sup> Ackers, P. (1996) Life after Death: Mining History without a Coal Industry. *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 1, 159-170, p.159-160.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p.162.

<sup>20</sup> See Strangleman, T., Hollywood, E, Beynon, H. Bennett, K. & Hudson, R. (1999) Heritage Work: Re-representing the Work Ethic in the Coalfields. *Sociological Research Online*, <<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/-1995/1/strangleman.html>>.

<sup>21</sup> Ackers, P. (1996) Life after Death, p.167.

<sup>22</sup> Gilbert, D. (1995) 'Imagined Communities and Mining Communities', *Labour History Review*, 60, 2, pp.47-55, p.49.

<sup>23</sup> Two important volumes predate the 1984/5 strike that place contemporary industrial relations into historical context and make for interesting reading on paths not taken by those in charge of the industry. See Allen, V.L. (1981) *The Militancy of British Miners*, Shipley, The Moor Press; Hall, T. (1981) *King Coal: Miners, Coal and Britain's Industrial Future*, London, Pelican.

<sup>24</sup> Howell, D. (1987) Goodbye To All That?: A review of literature on the 1984/5 miners' strike. *Work, Employment and Society* 1, 3, 388-404, p.389.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p.402.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p.403.

<sup>27</sup> It is problematic however when one reflects that this history from below is, completely understandably, the history of those on strike and their families, rather than those on the other side of the picket lines either as strike breakers and their families, or the ordinary officers in the police frontline.

<sup>28</sup> Samuel, R. et. al. (eds.) (1986) *The Enemy Within: Pit villages and the miners' strike of 1984-5*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, p.ix. It is worth emphasising that Samuel was particularly exercised by one book Adeney and Lloyd's (1986) *The Miners' Strike 1884-5*, London, Routledge, which though sympathetic to the miners placed the blame for the dispute firmly at the feet of Arthur Scargill. Samuel's editorial preface openly worried that this version of the strike was becoming fast frozen as the explanation of defeat, and indeed the cause of the strike in the first place.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel, et. al. (eds.) (1986) *The Enemy Within*, p.xvii.

<sup>30</sup> This is not to suggest that Samuel did not exercise a strong editorial hand in his selection and rendering of his material.

<sup>31</sup> Beynon, H. (ed.) (1985) *Digging Deeper: Issues in the Miner's Strike*, London, Verso.

<sup>32</sup> Philo, G. (1990) *Seeing and Believing: The Influence of Television*, London, Routledge. It is possible to make the argument that such was the distortion by those in power during the strike, evidenced by the release of

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government documents of the period under the Thirty Year Rule, that academics saw it as necessary to 'take sides. Huw Beynon was from South Wales and during the strike was a Reader in Sociology at the University of Durham.

<sup>33</sup> Richards, A. (1996) *Miners On Strike: Class Solidarity and Division in Britain*, Oxford, Berg.

<sup>34</sup> See Salaman, G. (1986) *Working*. London: Tavistock; Gallie, D. (ed.) (1988) *Employment in Britain*. Oxford: Blackwell; Pahl, R. E. (1984) *Divisions of Labour*. Oxford: Blackwell. Each of these volumes makes the point that our understandings of work need urgently to be broadened out, to pay more attention to domestic labour, unpaid labour and work outside the traditional industries.

<sup>35</sup> Pahl (1984) *Divisions of Labour*. For more on Pahl and his reflections on deindustrialisation see Strangleman, T. (2017) 'Portrait of a deindustrialising island', in Crow, G. and Ellis, J. (eds.) *Revisiting Divisions of labour: The impacts and legacies of a modern sociological classic*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

<sup>36</sup> See Gershuny, J. *After Industrial Society?: The Emerging Self-service Economy* (London: Macmillan, 1978); F. Blackaby (ed.) *De-Industrialisation* (London: Heinemann, 1978); S. Bazen, and T. Thirlwall, *Deindustrialization* (London: Heinemann, 1989).

<sup>37</sup> Bluestone, B. and Harrison, B. *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closing, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

<sup>38</sup> Crow, G. (2002) *Social solidarities*, p.82.

<sup>39</sup> Warwick, D. and Littlejohn, G. (1992) *Coal, Capital and Culture: A sociological analysis of mining communities in West Yorkshire*. Routledge, London; Turner, R. (2000) *Coal Was Our Life*, Sheffield Hallam University Press, Sheffield.

<sup>40</sup> Warwick and Littlejohn (1992) *Coal, Capital and Culture*, p.206.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Turner, R. (2000) *Coal Was Our Life*, p.270-1.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p.280.

<sup>44</sup> Chaney, D. (1994) *The Cultural Turn: Scene-setting Essays on Contemporary Cultural History*, London, Routledge.

<sup>45</sup> Dicks, B. (2000) *Heritage, Place and Community*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press.

<sup>46</sup> By this I mean she was not a labour historian or sociologist of work.

<sup>47</sup> Easington District Council *placetobe* 1992 p.2.

<sup>48</sup> County Durham Website 1998.

<sup>49</sup> Mansfield District Council business guide 1998 1.1.

<sup>50</sup> St. Helens Economic Development unit interview 1998 p.23.

<sup>51</sup> Mansfield 2010 interview 1998 p.10.

<sup>52</sup> Strangleman, T., Hollywood, E., Beynon, H., Bennett, K., and Hudson, R. (1999) 'Heritage Work: Re-Representing the Work Ethic in the Coalfields', *Sociological Research Online*, 4, 3.

<sup>53</sup> Byrne, D. and Doyle, A. 'The Visual and the Verbal', in Knowles, C. and Sweetman, P. (eds.), *Picturing the Social Landscape: Visual Methods and the Sociological Imagination* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.166.

<sup>54</sup> Mellor, M. and Stephenson, C. (2005) 'The Durham Miners' Gala and the spirit of community'. *Community Development Journal*, 40 (3). pp. 343-351.

<sup>55</sup> See for example Edwards, H. (1997) *Follow the Banner: An illustrated catalogue of the Northumberland Miners' Banners*, Manchester, Carcanet Press; Bellamy, D. (1997) *Images of the South Wales Mines*, Stroud, Alan Sutton; Emery, N. (1998) *Banners of the Durham Coalfield*, Stroud, Alan Sutton.

<sup>56</sup> See also the 2 DVD collection issued by the British Film Institute *Portrait of a Miner*, London: BFI, 2009.

<sup>57</sup> Standing, G. (2011) *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, London, Bloomsbury.

<sup>58</sup> Bright, N. G. (2016) "'The Lady is not Returning!': Educational precarity and a Social Haunting in the UK Coalfields', *Ethnography and Education*, 11, 2, 142-157, P.146.

<sup>59</sup> Cowie, J. and Heathcott, J. (eds.) *Beyond the Ruins: the Meanings of Deindustrialisation*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003, p.1.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p1-2.

<sup>61</sup> Linkon, S. 'The Half-Life of Deindustrialisation: Twenty-First Century Narratives of Work, Place and Identity', unpublished presentation to Deindustrialization and Its Aftermath: Class, Culture and Resistance, Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling / Scottish Oral History Centre May 1-4 (2014), , Montreal, Quebec, p.1.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p.2.

<sup>64</sup> Strangleman, T. (2016). Deindustrialisation and the Historical Sociological Imagination: Making Sense of Work and Industrial Change. *Sociology*, 51, 2, 466-482.

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<sup>65</sup> See <http://workingwithsocialhaunting.tumblr.com/>

<sup>66</sup> Walkerdine, V. and Jimenez, L. 2012. *Gender, Work and Community after De-Industrialisation: A Psychosocial Approach to Affect*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.

<sup>67</sup> This is such a large, disparate body of writing it is impossible to do full justice to it, however here are just some of the titles to which the reader could be directed: Oldham, C. (2016) *In Loving Memory of Work: A Visual Record of the UK Miners' Strike 1984-1985*, Unified Theory of Everything, Manchester; Symcox, J. (2011) *The 1984/85 Miners Strike in Nottinghamshire: 'If Spirit Alone Won Battles': The Diary of John Lowe*, Wharncliffe Books, Barnsley; Trounce, B. (2015) *From a Rock to a Hard Place: Memories of the 1984/85 Miners' Strike*, The History Press, Stroud; Shaw, K. (2012) *Mining the Meaning: Cultural Representations of the 1984-5 UK Miners' Strike*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle; Allsop, D. Stephenson, C. and Wray, D. (eds.) (2017) *Justice Denied: Friends, Foes and the Miners' Strike*, London, The Merlin Press Ltd.