Picturing Work in an Industrial Landscape: Visualising Labour, Place and Space

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Abstract

This paper explores the notion of the visual landscape of work. Coming from a sociological perspective it attempts to view work, its meanings and the identities that surround it, through the lens of landscape. It takes on recent challenges to work sociology made by economic/labour geographers who argue that sociological understanding of employment are insufficiently spatial - space if used as a concept at all is reduced to the notion of a boundary containing economic processes rather than something that is constructed and in turn constructs work. Using material from ongoing research into the former Guinness Brewery at Park Royal in West London, and in particular a range of archival and contemporary visual sources, this paper illustrates the ways in which spatial ideas underpin complex sociological notions of work practice and culture. It will examine the way space is implicated in the location, construction, labour, and closing of this once famous brewery and how visual material helps to unlock theoretical and methodological understandings of work and industry.

Keywords: *Labour Geography; Visual Sociology; Sociology of Work; Representation of Work, Place and Space*

Introduction

1.1 The sociology of work is experiencing a renaissance after a period when it has both been marginal to a wider sociological project and perhaps where as a sub-discipline it acted to marginalize itself. Its revival can be seen in a number of ways. The credit crunch and the subsequent economic recession have led to a greater focus by critical commentators on the economy and on the nature and meaning of work. Within the discipline, certainly in the UK, there is a desire for what Pettinger (2005) and her colleagues have labelled 'a new sociology of work'. More recently Halford and Strangleman have sought to flesh out what this new sub-disciplinary sociology might look like, asking what is new about it and what distinguishes it from that which came before? Likewise in Strangleman and Warren's (2008) *Work and Society* there is a clear attempt to seek out new approaches, themes and methods whilst being attentive to the classical and post-classical sociological heritage in understanding work. This is not convenient fudge, a bolting on of new themes on to old. Rather it is seeking to recognise what was valuable as well as that which was problematic in the past. Equally, this new approach acknowledges that what we look at and the ways we look when we seek to understand work is important, that often in the past aspects of work, or whole areas of economic life, have been neglected because of particular academic frameworks have privileged particular ways of seeing. Halford and Strangleman in their essay at the beginning of their 2009 Special Issue of *Sociology* tread the tightrope between arguing for an open, interdisciplinary work sociology, while simultaneously seeking to ensure that the discipline nurtures and values its own approaches and methods. What is envisaged as important is a self-confident sociology of work that can engage fully in inter and cross-disciplinary research and writing.

1.2 Two areas where this new sociological understanding of work might be enacted are through 'space' and the 'visual'. This article is a reflection on how we might both *envisage* and *do* a new sociology of work, how we can draw on new ideas, ones that utilise concepts outside the sociological and how in turn these may be made sense of within existing and traditional conceptualisations of work. It is based on the author's longstanding research into the former Guinness Brewery at Park Royal in West London, which closed in 2005 after seven decades of production. A central focus of this project has been to understand this site of production in part through multiple visual sources; photographs and other representations created over the life of the brewery for a wide variety of purposes both internal and external. The project explores how these images have both reflected and structured how we have understood the Guinness Brewery as a site of work and a landscape of labour. This article poses a series of questions about what the visual adds to our understanding of industrial change. What new insights do the inclusion of visual material offer a sociological account of work? This paper also uses the concept of landscapes, seeking to think through visual ideas in space. It begins by drawing on contemporary debates, both about the visual and work as well as space and work before describing in more detail the project and its methods. The main body of the piece uses different ideas about landscape and the visual in exploring work at Park Royal over its life, but especially towards its closure and demolition. The claim being made here is that through the visual analysis of Park Royal we can tell a wider story about work and the organisation in the twentieth century.

The Visual and Work

2.1 There is a longstanding tradition of understanding of work through the visual. In the nineteenth century photography and sociology emerge almost as contemporaries – both are products of the modern and technologies for understanding the modern (see Chaplin 1994). From its beginnings photographs captured work and working life, both accidentally as part of a street scene, or when the camera is more deliberately trained on the subjects of economic life. There was an expanded use of work photography from the late nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. Early social documentarists such as Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine use photography to expose poor working conditions or labour exploitation (see Trachtenberg 1989; Raeburn 2006). Riis, for example, uses his photography to expose the sweated trades populated by newly arrived immigrant labour in New York City (Yochelson 2001). Hine, slightly later, turned his attention in particular to the exploitative use of child labour, capturing children at work in a wide variety of industrial settings (Freedman 1994). Both men used their photography to attempt to change the way their audience understood work and the labour involved in maintaining industrial society. Their point was to mobilise in their audience a desire to reform work, or as Hine put it, 'I wanted to show things that had to be corrected' (Hine quoted in Langer 1998, 20). Both Riis and Hine's images record and help shape how we know the social world. They offer the audience an insight into labour conditions as well inviting an emotional link between viewer and viewed. What the early pioneers of photography recognised was the power of the photographic image to excite engagement which is arguably more difficult to achieve solely by the written word.

2.2 During the twentieth century the scope of photography in relation to work widens, especially when corporations start to use the technology in their businesses. Here, images shifted from largely being historical documentation of plant, buildings, machinery or workers to becoming a reflexive part of business promotion and labour management. Early pioneers such as Ford and General Electric realised

the power of the image to create and project corporate identity on newly emerging markets. Importantly as Nye (1985) and Marchand (1998) both note companies were increasingly aware of the power of photography in shaping attitudes and assumptions in a variety of audiences – both internal and external towards their organisations.

2.3 Photography also had a part to play in the emerging management science of the early twentieth century. As Brown (2005) points out in her fascinating account of the relationship between photography and corporate culture, American companies deployed photography as part of a rational science of business, using time lapse photography to understand and redesign work tasks and processes, or in the dubious process of producing typologies of workers using images as a basis for recruitment or exclusion from the organisation. Therefore, the camera can be seen as a rationalising technology where the image takes on a utilitarian role over any artistic purpose or intent. The picture becomes the way we record work in order to imagine how we might change it.

2.4 Coterminous with these corporate developments in photography work, images were being produced as part of Roosevelt's New Deal to illustrate social problems and to justify large-scale government intervention to solve them. Again the role of the image is far from simple with pictures taken both to record as well as evoke sympathy for the plight of those suffering the effects of the Great Depression. The photographs selected for public use are the product of careful framing, cropping and editing in order to illustrate and create a group who were deemed worthy of public assistance. Interestingly, some of the most important photographers involved in the New Deal era later become leading figures in post war corporate photography in the USA (Hurley 1972; Raeburn 2006).

2.5 If there has been a longstanding association between photography and work there has also been a longstanding sociological, or more broadly social science, interest in the two, albeit a fragmented and disconnected one. As Harper points out visual sociology is present in the *American Journal of Sociology* historically, with thirty-one articles using photographs as evidence and illustration between 1896 and 1916, although it ends abruptly in the second decade of the twentieth. As he says, 'It is fair to say that from the 1920s to the 1960s there was no visual sociology' (Harper 1988, 58).

2.6 Anthropologists equally have long used images as part of their research practice (see Banks 1998), but what lay behind this neglect of the visual within mainstream sociology? In many ways this would be a very fruitful area for further research, both for the historiography of sociology as well as for visual methods, although it is recognised writers in the field have attempted to understand the absence (See Chaplin 1994; Fyfe and Law 1988; Stasz 1979; Strangleman 2004; Wagner 1979). One possible explanation is that on both sides of the Atlantic the visual gets marginalised as part of a general process of rationalisation and formalisation of the social sciences and especially sociology. As part of this trend there is a move towards methods that would produce 'hard' measurable facts. Equally, there is also an attempt to exclude forms of understanding that relied on a social connection between researcher and researched. There was, in other words, a suspicion of the very aspect that the likes of Riis and Hine had seen as valuable – the power to provoke an emotional response in the viewer. A harder vision of sociology, and one that was subject to greater institutionalisation and professionalization after WWII, saw its future as one tied to objective measurement and the exclusion of empathy, sympathy or emotions more generally (see Halsey 2004; Savage 2010).

2.7 It is possible to argue that a visual sociology of work really begins to emerge during the 1980s, as part of a more general interest on the part of sociologists in the visual. Douglas Harper is clearly one of the most important figures in both aspects of this revival and over a series of books and articles has used the theme of work to develop visual sociological understandings of the economic sphere. This can be seen in his focus on the detailed act of work itself, through to wider understandings of industrial change and the place of labour (Harper 1982, 1986, 1988).

2.8 In the UK an early sociological pioneer in the consideration of work and the visual was Huw Beynon. Known most famously for his ethnography of a car plant, *Working for Ford* (1973), he is less well remembered for his book with photographer Nick Hedges, *Born to Work* (Hedges and Beynon 1982). After the passage of three decades *Born to Work* is both dated and remarkably fresh. The book acts as a time capsule revealing in its pages a lost world of work, exploring in its images the life world of labour in light manufacturing in the English West Midlands. This was the same terrain on which Paul Willis' (1977) 'lads' began their working life in *Learning to Labour*, and the same industrial space that was decimated during the 1980s (Dolby *et al* 2004). Crucially the book is a combination of words and pictures: the one exemplifying the other. The images used here are not simple eye-wipes, introduced to break up text. Nor is the text there to act as an extended caption for the photographs themselves. Perhaps one of the most notable things about *Born to Work* is that it seems to have had so little influence on industrial or work sociology, something even more inexplicable given Beynon's central place in that sub-discipline.

2.9 Two other illustrations of work sociology that may help us to understand the absence of the visual can be seen in Ray Pahl's (1984) *Divisions of Labour*, which includes 10 photographic plates of Sheppey in Kent and eight images of various forms of labour. The point to make is that the Sheppey images are really illustrative, or even decorative rather than being integrated fully into the text. A second instance of the use or rather absence of the visual can be seen in Ruth Cavandish/Miriam Glucksmann's (1982) *Women on the Line*. In the original version of the book Glucksmann did not include any of the photographic material that she had taken because of the overriding need to anonymise all aspects of the study. It was only when the book was republished recently that she was able to draw on the visual material (Glucksmann 2009). Absence, then, can be explained in a number of ways: as simple neglect, as sociology lacking a language of the visual, as the result of ethical or legal issues. All of these possible explanations have themselves to be placed in a wider professional context, one subject to occupational closure where images are seen as irrelevant or marginal to the discipline (see Strangleman 2004, 2008)^[1].

2.10 During the 1990s visual sociology more broadly began to really become established within the UK, the US and elsewhere. Visual methods and approaches were increasingly adopted and the range of teaching material and academic journals associated with the field has proliferated greatly. Within the sociology of work this adoption has been slower, albeit with some obvious exceptions (see Strangleman 2004, 2008 for a review). In the USA there has been an expansion in the exploration of work issues through visual sources and approaches, undertaken by both sociologists such as Harper and others (Bamberger and Davidson 1998). This widening out of sociology in terms of methods, material and approaches also illustrates a greater reflexivity about the subject and practice of sociology, which in turn leads to greater reflection on what counts as evidence and knowledge about the social world. There is a growing recognition that a greater variety of probes are required to do justice to the complexity of the social, ones that will allow access to emotional and subjective aspects of life. The visual can also be an important element in engaging those individuals and communities who are researched, allowing them to reflect and intervene in the research process and its findings (see Bamberger and Davidson 1998; Harper 1986 for illustrations of this). This is a trend that has also seen non-sociologists address the social aspects of work through the visual (see for example Brown 2005; Marchand 1998; Nye 1985; Sekula 1983).

2.11 Finally, there is a fascinating phenomenon that has emerged over the last decade or so examining abandoned buildings. Although often large format 'coffee table' publications containing fine art portrayals of industrial ruins, they often include reflections of the meaning of images of deindustrialisation and, as part of that, what the abandonment of former places of production tell us about work itself (see for example Marchand and Meffre 2011; Moore 2010). One of the most original contributions to contemporary understandings of the visual and places of work can be found in Tim Edensor's (2005) *Industrial Ruins*. A social geographer by training, Edensor develops an important framework for making intelligible the detritus from an industrial age, abandoned material culture. His book is about work centrally, but labour here and the meaning and identities invested in it, are understood in their absent presence.

Spaces and Places of Work

3.1 Over the last decade or so there has been a tremendous upswing in what Herod (1997) has labelled 'labour geography'. This represents, according to Castree (2007, 853), an 'emergent body of largely left-critical research ... that focused squarely on employment issues'. While this resurgent interest in work and related themes is welcome, this development poses some questions for the sociology of work. In a number of recent pieces reflecting on labour geography there is a common attempt to carve out what distinguishes this sub-field both from economic geography and what is described as 'employment studies' (Castree 2007; Herod *et al.* 2007; Ward 2007). What is seen as being distinct, naturally enough,

is the focus on, and privileging of, the spatial aspects of work. The criticism made implicitly of sociology is that when spatial ideas and concepts are invoked they are superficial, simplified and unreflective. So, space becomes a container, a boundary marker within which economic practices occur. The spatial, it is argued by geographers, is being used as a context, a simple variable. By contrast geography sees space in an altogether more sophisticated manner as constitutive of everyday life, as socially constructive and socially constructed. Labour geographers argue that their contribution is therefore to understand how labour is both constructed and constituted through space, as well as how in turn labour constructs and constitutes space.

3.2 There are a number of issues with this line of argument. Firstly, there seems to be confusion amongst some labour geographers about their target of criticism, while many would recognise the term 'employment studies' it is far from clear what that label actually refers to. Secondly, these contributions, while welcome in terms of emphasising the importance of engaging a spatial imagination, none the less ignore work being done by sociologists in and around the sociology of work. One could, for example, point to the work of Susan Halford (Halford 2005, 2008; Halford and Knowles 2005; Halford and Leonard 2006) that explores work and organisation through ideas of place and space. Equally Alan Felstead (2005) and his colleagues predate the interventions from labour geographers by two years with their *Changing Places of Work*. Mark Harvey (2002) and his colleagues writing on commodity chains invokes spatial concepts, as does Miriam Glucksmann's (1995, 2000) longstanding research using her concept of the Total Social Organisation of Labour, or TSOl. In each of these contemporary pieces of sociological writing we can see a sophisticated use of spatial ideas and concepts. In each of these cases space and place are not invoked simply as containers or boundary makers. Rather, there is a real attempt to understand how the *social* is implicated in the *spatial* and visa-versa^[2].

3.3 A third point of departure with the criticisms made of sociology by labour geographers is their lack of recognition of older sociological understandings of work. Perhaps this is a function of the label attached to the object of criticism – employment studies – but it also shows seemingly little comprehension of post-classical sociology's study of work, with an avowedly Marxist approach by labour geographers being seen as the only 'radical' way to view economic life. It could be argued that sociology has considered spatial ideas and concepts when looking at work rather more than is acknowledged by its critics. The point to make here is that, to be sure, the spatial is not given a special status, but it is taken as a vital part of understanding how work is shaped in time and space – how labour is realised, how resistance is possible, the embedded traditions, cultures and identities that emerge and are reproduced across time. This argument can be illustrated in countless ways but will be illustrated here with some examples where different aspects of the spatial are invoked.

3.4 One of the most obvious areas where place and space are considered is in the studies of working class community, which are often occupational communities. One of the most widely cited early examples would be Norman Dennis' and his colleagues' *Coal is Our Life* of 1956. This classic study of a mining community examines work and non-work life, and goes beyond ideas of place as simply a boundary marker. Indeed, it could be argued that place is important in this and later studies as often sociologists were looking at geographic isolation and relative homogeneity produced by spatial patterns of industrial development and settlement. During the 1960s there was a sustained interest in occupational communities within the sociology of work and, importantly the sociology of class. It needs to be recognised that class and work are often researched and written about by the same people in the same studies during this period and on into the 1970s (Savage 2000; Strangleman 2005). In dialogue with the *Affluent Worker* studies of Goldthorpe and Lockwood (1968), there grew up a set of literature which examined questions of class identification and this drew heavily on proletarian, especially traditional working class, communities shaped by work in specific places. For example, Graeme Salaman did his doctoral work, later publish as *Community and Occupation* (1974), on a comparative study of the occupational communities of railway workers and architects. Place as an organising idea went beyond boundaries or containers but was used in various ways to explain recruitment patterns and differing patterns of socialisation and education. He used notions of spatial networks and the way class and education could be invoked to understand the ways these worked. Around the same time Allcorn and Marsh (1975) asked the question 'Occupational Communities - communities of what?', again exploring complex social forms in place. Slightly later Ray Pahl's (1984) *Divisions of Labour* would also be an important example of a sociologist drawing on spatial ideas. The book pioneered a type of sociology that attempted to understand the entire context in which work took place. Geography, for Pahl, is no mere box but integral to the study and a detailed analysis of how work was organised – both paid and unpaid – and where it happened. Pahl was interested in the interaction of the different orders and dimensions of space and place – for example the household, the estate, a community, locality, town, an occupational community and in the context of a fairly isolated island in the south-east of England. Pahl recognised the importance of the spatial but also the role of the historical and the social in making up work.

3.5 A further clear example of the way sociologists of work often use spatial concepts is in ethnographic study. Here, sociologists will often talk about the way workers inhabit space in everyday work patterns. Ian Roberts' (1993) neglected account of the shipyard work in Sunderland is an excellent illustration of the way workers can use space to resist control and to enact resistance. Roberts argues that the sheer size of the fabrication yards on the River Wear meant that workers could roam the workplace and were difficult to control on a minute-by-minute basis. The ability of workers to inhabit and control space recurs in many accounts going back to Goodrich's (1975) *The Frontier of Control* that contains a number of illustrations where workers deny managers and supervisors access to work, or to the act of work when being performed. There are many other examples of the spatial being used within work or industrial sociology up to the present day. The point being made here is not that sociology of work has nothing to learn from geography, but rather that there needs to be a greater recognition of the long legacy of space and place being invoked within the sub-discipline and the variety of ways in which this occurs.

3.6 In this article I will use the notion of different landscapes of labour and these draw on both the geographical notion of the importance of the spatial as well as sociological ones. The aim here is to explore what more we might know about these landscapes of labour alongside visual material. The research presented here from the Guinness Brewery at Park Royal acts as an exemplar of the way we might do this. Visual material can be understood here, as acting 'simply' as an historical record, of what was there, how work was organised and carried out. But it can also show the way work was represented and valued by the company. The visual then allows us to see the context in which work is made by space and in turn how space creates work. Furthermore, we can also think about how the visual is implicated in both work and space, helping to structure our knowledge and understandings of the economy and the social. The idea of landscapes is being used here in a variety of ways. It is being used to conceptualise a place, in this case a brewery in west London. It is also being deployed to think about regimes of accumulation (Harvey 1989) e.g. welfare capitalism, neo-liberal capitalism, spaces of deindustrialisation etc. Furthermore, and obviously connected to the previous points, landscape is understood to comprise a discrete space where labour is enacted, is shaped and in turn where labour shapes an organisation and by implication its landscape. The paper explores how the visual allows us to see these landscapes.

Methods and Project

4.1 This article is based on a project, 'Guinness Was Good for Us', which aimed to record in words and images the final six months of production at the Park Royal Brewery in West London. Access to the site had been achieved for another project^[3]. The author suggested that the Brewery manager might like to fund a project that combined oral history techniques with photography to produce a record of the plant's demise. The inspiration for this approach came from various sources, including Bill Bamberger and Cathy Davidson's (1998) *Closing: Life and death of an American factory*, and Douglas Harper's (2001) *Changing Works*. In *Closing* photographer Bill Bamberger recorded the last six months of a traditional furniture factory in North Carolina and combined these images with oral histories organised by sociologist Cathy Davidson. Harper's *Changing Works* uses contemporary and archival images to stimulate rich oral accounts of rural change in a form of photo elicitation. This current project deployed a number of different methods.

4.2 Firstly, the project was a collaboration with photographer David McCairley, who took several thousand images leading up to closure. The Diageo Archive in Scotland was visited and it yielded a huge collection of photographs of the Park Royal site stretching back to the early 1930s. These included images of the buildings and production processes as well as hundreds of pictures of workers employed on different tasks at the brewery. Secondly, the project made use of a range of interview techniques including oral histories, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. Interviews with twenty-five workers were carried out, and these ranged from production workers to some outsourced staff and plant management.

Interviews lasted up to two hours, and the interview schedule aimed at building a life/work history of the respondent. During some of the interviews respondents were shown photographs that had been produced as part of the study, as well as a selection of archive material. This photo-elicitation approach produced a wonderfully rich and varied amount of material about working life in the organisation. These images were used as prompts to stimulate discussion of various aspects of working life at Park Royal (see Harper 1986). On several occasions workers would produce their own personal photographs to illustrate aspects of their own trade, section or career. Finally, the project included both participant and non-participant observation. The author was invited to take part in the daily quality taste testing at the brewery and was given access to all parts of the plant. The real strength of such a combination of techniques was the access it afforded to the informal and often hidden parts of work culture and meaning. During 2009 the author gained a British Academy grant, which allowed a far longer period in the Diageo archives in Scotland and Dublin, Republic of Ireland, and these visits involved the study of a range of visual and non-visual material. The grant also allowed the author to carry out more interviews with people involved in Park Royal. This paper makes use of the photographic material produced by David McCairley, the author, and a member of Diageo staff. The paper makes use of this material to think through ideas of how the visual helps us apprehend work and in particular how the concept of landscapes of labour adds further to work sociology. The range of visual material is important here. Photographs are used as historical record, as prompt to memory, as ways of understanding corporate image making. Further they allow us to understand how work was done, how it was valued and portrayed. The photographs produced as part of the project were deliberately framed to show how workers inhabited space and to explore issues of work meaning and culture in the early twenty-first century^[4].

Landscapes of Labour and their Visualisation

5.1 If work is both constituted *through* space and is constitutive *of* space then we need to have an understanding of an industrial landscape pre-labour, before its industrial development. Park Royal was named after its association as the Royal Agricultural Show Ground dating from the early twentieth century. Laid out and planted as parkland this terrain was later abandoned after a few years when the annual event failed to make money. Until the arrival of the Guinness Company in the early 1930s it had various uses. During the 1920s West London began to attract serious amounts of industrial development and light industry, and many of these adopted modern architectural styles. As J. B. Priestly (1934, 10) noted in his *English Journey*:

After the familiar muddle of West London, the Great West Road looked very odd. Being new, it did not look English. We might have suddenly rolled into California.

5.2 It is important to realise the reasons for the location of the Brewery in England in the first place. What lay behind this move was a complex story of diplomatic intrigue and Irish nationalist politics. In 1929 Eamon de Valera and his Fianna Fáil Party had been elected in what was then the Irish Free State, a contested political space created out of a compromise between the British Government and senior Irish politicians (Foster 1988; Lyons 1973). The election of de Valera meant that agreements made under the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921 would be reneged upon. In particular de Valera and his colleagues sought to place import tariffs on British goods. The British threatened to do the same and warned the Guinness Company of the retaliation. This move set in train the events that would see the opening of the Guinness Brewery at Park Royal in 1936 (Guinness 1997; Wilson 1998). The British market was a crucial one for Guinness since Britain represented the largest single export outlet for the brand of stout. The Company already produced four-fifths of the total beer drunk in Ireland, so their potential to expand further at home was limited (Wilson 1998, 200). The Company's search for a suitable site briefly settled on Manchester before the focus of attention turned towards London, which in itself was the largest market for the stout on the mainland. The acquisition and construction of the site was kept secret, as the company did not want to alert the Irish government of its plans nor inflate land prices in the local Park Royal area. In a cloak-and-dagger operation Company directors set about identifying a suitable site within twenty-five miles of Charing Cross, the assumed centre of the Capital. The directors later reflected on the needs for the site:

We laid down for ourselves all sorts of ideals and objectives, minimum transport facilities, a site that would lend itself to publicity, reasonable amenities, plentiful water supply, room for expansion ... (*Guinness Time* Spring 1957, 4).

5.3 Eventually they settled on the then semi-rural location of Park Royal, the former Royal Agricultural Society showground, as a later commentator described it:

... [former] home of the Queen's Park Rangers and when we came the abode of gipsies, ponies and still a few rabbits (*Guinness Time* Spring 1957, 5).

5.4 Guinness purchased a large part of the available land in the area on which they constructed the brewery buildings on a substantial plot, while simultaneously creating a much larger area as a business park. Such was the secrecy surrounding the project that few people outside the Guinness Company board in Dublin knew of the development. Even the architect did not know the intended purpose of the building until later. In order to conceal their true design the Company engaged in a great deal of subterfuge and went to the lengths of creating stories about the ultimate use of the site, including creating rumours that it was a bicycle factory or that it was to manufacture munitions, developing a process for obtaining explosive compounds from potatoes. The Company employed one of the premier architects of the day, Giles Gilbert Scott, who could count Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral and Cambridge University Library among his many achievements, to work on the design of the building alongside consulting engineers Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners. The building was a dignified and restrained piece of design and echoed Scott's other industrial work at Bankside and Battersea power stations in London. As a later staff magazine noted:

The Board decided that it would wish to have a building that would outlive the taste of the moment, something that would not attempt to hitch on to the latest mode or to set a new pattern, that would not try to seem anything else than a large and efficient factory; built firmly and solidly to last a century or two as the company itself had already lasted (Hugh Beaver on the architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in *Guinness Time*, 13/ 2/ 1960 p. 8).

The main buildings were finished in 1936, and brewing began the same year with the site supplying the Company's draft stout to pubs and clubs all over the UK mainland.

5.5 So, even before the opening of the Brewery, it was a site of labour for a wide variety of building trades, architects and consultant engineers. It was a landscape of construction and planning labour of various kinds. Equally though it is also a terrain created out of a particular mix of Anglo-Irish politics, of economics and industrial decision-making. Further still the physical structures and environments created by Guinness' decision to locate in this part of London form part of a wider industrialisation of West London; an expansion of light industry in the midst of the interwar depression in older traditional industries, particularly heavy manufacturing in the North and Midlands. Within the site itself the Guinness Company chose to employ arguably the most important industrial architect of his day in Giles Gilbert Scott and in the process reject current fashion for ultra modernism, but instead embrace Scott's stylistic blend of tradition and modernist sensibility. As the Beaver quote above illustrates, the Company had a particular vision for the new industrial space they were developing in many ways a marriage of tradition and modernity made in concrete, brick and steel.

5.6 This was a landscape which had evolved out of the lessons learnt at the Company's original Dublin Brewery at St. James' Gate, a large sprawling site hemmed in by the River Liffey and various building that had developed around the eighteenth century complex; Park Royal was going to be different. The Company's London site was a rationally planned and designed space where production could flow through the plant on one site: raw material arriving by rail and road, being processed in to beer before leaving the brewery for distribution around the country. Importantly for our later understanding of landscapes of labour the work that went on within the plant was almost exclusively carried out by workers employed by the Guinness Company itself. The only exception to this rule were the photographers taking pictures of the site and the transport drivers who themselves were later incorporated into the Company^[5]. Thus, Guinness employed all the staff involved in brewing and processing its beer, but also employed a vast army of men and women on tasks as diverse as cooking, cleaning, washing, builders, scaffolders, engineers, painters, security guards, groundsmen, agricultural labourers. The site had its own industrial fire brigade and ambulance service, its own laboratories, six different canteens, a power station and

laundry. This was all on a large site that was extensively landscaped; the company was proud of the fact that it planted 1300 trees and 3000 shrubs around its modern manufactory. Guinness at Park Royal therefore, especially during the 1950s and 1960s represents an interesting case study of a modern industrial place of work, a progressive landscape of labour.

5.7 The extensive corporate archive photography captures a modern workspace laid out in a self-consciously rural setting. Guinness was known as a highly paternalistic firm with many family members working in the Brewery or for the wider Company. We could, therefore, see this place of work as an almost ideal-typical modern industrial concern. The nature of the work and the way in which it is structured, organised and managed is the product of a particular set of decisions and historical factors. These structures are in turn inhabited by the workers, their supervisors and managers, who carve out meaning, create their own cultures and norms and values. It is one of the key arguments of this article that the photography the Guinness Company engaged in not only reflected but also helped structure a landscape of labour. Through the archive photography we see the way Guinness employees inhabit and use the spaces of Park Royal and in turn how this place of work is created and recreated beyond merely acting as a boundary. This construction of place, work and organisation was achieved by photography for both external and internal consumption. Many of the images were taken for the internal staff publication *Guinness Time*. With a run of nearly three decades *Guinness Time* made copious use of images and each number included a photo essay on an aspect of work at the brewery. [Insert photo of brewery near here]^[6]

Visualising Work in a Neo-Liberal Landscape

6.1 If the archive pictures of Park Royal taken in the 1950s through to the 1970s show a welfare capitalistic landscape, then the images taken by David McCairley during 2004 and 2005 in the lead up to closure show an altogether different corporate space, and this is registered in a number of ways. What is immediately apparent is the depopulation of this landscape. At its height the Brewery employed several thousand people and even allowing for shift work there would be hundreds of workers present there at any one time. In the contemporary images this is no longer the case, reflecting the changing absolute size of the workforce as well as its composition. The original project tried to capture each shift at work, to create a 'family portrait' of life at the plant. In this image we see a team photograph with all the members of a particular shift.

6.2 What you see here are virtually all the Guinness production staff that would have been on duty at any one time. However, even this group of fifteen staff is slightly exaggerated in that normally a team would cover for rest days, sickness and holidays. So, the team on duty would normally consist of not fifteen but possibly twelve or fewer staff members. These teams worked a complex shift pattern of a series of twelve-hour days, wherein the working week was compressed into fewer days. It meant longer hours when at the Brewery but more time off in between. This shift pattern facilitated commuting across greater distances, historically the workforce had been drawn from a much more local area and the Guinness Company had built housing on the outskirts of the site itself. Unlike three decades previously when Park Royal afforded an incredible range of sport and leisure clubs outside work time, Guinness staff towards the end of the Brewery's life spent little or no time onsite outside working hours. We could see this as a separation of public and private spheres with the former mixing of work and leisure replaced by a rationalisation of function on the site. Thus a site, which had previously included many spaces of leisure, was now almost entirely a space of work. It is important to see the sheer scale of the reduction in a workforce; these photos become graphic illustrations of industrial change within a working life. The production workforce was almost exclusively composed of male older employees. This reflected the lack of recruitment to the site from the 1990s where successive corporate reorganisations meant staff had to reapply for their posts on a number of occasions. What we see here are the survivors of a much larger group of employees. Part of the original purpose of the project was to record 'family portraits' of each of the teams.

6.3 There were, however, other workers on site directly or indirectly involved with the production of Guinness. Alongside the core Guinness staff there were dozens of contract staff employed by firms who had won tenders for outsourced work. This included many ancillary services that during previous eras would have been undertaken by Guinness employees.

6.4 This image of cleaners at the Brewery is a good illustration of the changing nature of work. In the past, cleaning work had been carried out by male and female Guinness staff and featured regularly in images in the archive. By 2005 it was outsourced, and in this case was being done by Portuguese migrant labour. This point may be illustrated further by the context surrounding the image. When access was negotiated for the project the site manager had been extremely cooperative allowing us to range across the entire brewery site. When we asked to interview and photograph cleaning workers he queried why we wanted record them, as 'they weren't Guinness workers'. He allowed us access when we explained that we were seeking to represent all the tasks that went on in the plant. The point to make here is what counts as work, certainly core work, shifts. So, certain work is made visible and that of other people is either made invisible or obscured, its presence is decentred under the new capitalism. To draw on the ideas of the flexible firm debate we can think in terms of core and periphery of both the workplace and workforce (Harvey 1989). Outsourcing renders certain labour peripheral in a variety of ways. This point reminds us that photography itself is a deliberate act of focus, editing and cropping. What is shown is a decision, as is what is ignored or left out (see Rosenblum 1978). The terms 'core' and 'periphery' conjure up spatial ideas. The images play with this idea by showing the peripheral groups at the heart of the brewery, of the productive process. These workers' uniforms mark them off as not being in the core, not at the centre of things, of not being vital to the interests of the corporation.

6.5 This process can be seen in other images taken as part of the project, such as the labour of canteen workers whose work had been tendered out to a catering firm not long before the closure was announced. This image shows a woman who enjoyed a twenty-nine year career at Guinness before seeing her job outsourced. Other parts of the production and distribution process were subject to change. Logistics and distribution, even within the site, were now undertaken by outsourced labour.

6.6 Again what counts as core (important) and peripheral (less vital) is rendered visible here, historically the movement of the beer through the brewery estate and beyond its gates was undertaken by Guinness workers, their names and portraits recorded in the company magazine *Guinness Time*. Now an arbitrary line is drawn in the workplace based on management theory; the architecture of the organisation restructured. This neo-liberal landscape of labour can be seen as being much as it was in the past; the brewery still created the same product. And yet, its landscape of labour regulation constructs labour regimes very differently from the past and these images, including this one of security work, reflect this.

6.7 The ways in which workers inhabit and use the space of the Brewery had shifted considerably over the years. The spaces and places of work, their interaction with other workers and the occasions that afforded opportunity for social interaction were very different than in the past (Strangleman 2010). The quality of McCairley's work is obviously different from much of that in the Guinness archive (see Strangleman 2010). For a start the contemporary images are in colour. They attempt to show moment and capture the character of the workers. Those images from the 1940s and 1950s owe their aesthetic lineage to documentary techniques and sensibilities. Photographers of this period often portray work as dignified and noble, but this aesthetic is now, perhaps unfairly, seen as naive and patronising.

Landscapes of Loss

7.1 The Guinness Brewery at Park Royal was finally closed in the summer of 2005 with the loss of all the remaining jobs on site. Some of the Guinness workers effectively retired, others took redundancy and sought alternative work outside the brewing industry, whilst some transferred to other parts of the Diageo parent company. In the lead up to, and especially in the wake of, closure the Park Royal site became a landscape of loss in various ways, and this is again captured in David McCairley's photography. It is witnessed in the gradual abandonment of parts of the site, the sorting out of material and records in preparation for these to be shipped out or archived. It can be seen in the way workers identified mementoes of the Company and their working life before closure. It was also seen in the way workers who had been employed for sometimes forty-years would rescue material of various types from skips, their embedded knowledge of the Company allowing them to play the role of amateur industrial archaeologists.

7.2 In many ways the project that I was working on was attempting to map and record what was going to be lost. This was in terms of the sociability within the plant before closure and its physical space and environment. McCairley's images capture this landscape of loss and gradual abandonment well. As well as photographing those parts of the Brewery in use, he also sought out those parts and spaces where production had long since ceased.

7.3 Another aspect of this idea of a landscape of loss can be seen in the time between closure and the ultimate demolition of the Brewery. Firstly, the Brewery was subject to a campaign by the Twentieth Century Society to list and ultimately save the buildings. A row erupted between the Society and Diageo over the real value of the building and the site. The heritage group claimed that the site represented a fine example of Gilbert Scott's design, while Diageo emphasised the limited role the architect played in the original design. After closure the site at Park Royal became a favourite haunt of the urban explorer movement, groups of people who gain access to abandoned buildings in order to explore, record and photograph them. In some ways this represents an organisational landscape being rediscovered as a place of leisure.

7.4 The Guinness Brewery becomes a site of lost work, of lost industry and lost architecture: another example of the deindustrialisation of London and the wider country. In this sense we could read this landscape as an example of the way that work is being created and reshaped in the early twenty-first century. We can see the way that economic and political forces shape, as they always have, where work is carried out, and where it is not.

7.5 The space of work at Park Royal is marked by a sense of loss and a nostalgia for a lost way of being and doing work. This lament for a lost landscape of work could be interpreted as an example of what Jeff Cowie (Cowie and Heathcott 2003) has labelled 'Smokestack Nostalgia'. As such, these images could be seen as a wider visual rendering of an industrial past for contemporary consumption. The last decade or more has witnessed a huge growth in 'coffee table' books of images of ruined industrial buildings, or abandoned former spaces of work (see for example Marchand and Meffre 2011; Moore 2010). Like the pejorative sense of Cowie's comment invoking nostalgia, Paul Clemens (2011, 34) refers to this development as 'Ruin Porn'. There is a sense in which to look at images of abandonment is to engage in a kind of post-industrial voyeurism, a discovery of beauty amongst the ruins. I think there is another way to consider these issues through such images and this is in the way they invoke and provoke a series of questions about work – its meaning, value and the identities it spawns – about the meaning of being an industrial nation and what it means to lose this type of employment. Such images give us pause, the ability to examine our past, present and future and to ask questions of each temporal space.

7.6 The most vivid sense in which this site represents a landscape of loss is in its destruction, which

occurred from late 2005 onward. The author took some pictures of this process but a Diageo employee and keen photographer recorded in great detail the whole process of demolition from beginning to end. Whilst illustrating a landscape of loss, these images also show a landscape of labour; the specialist demolition firms who deconstruct complex industrial building built '... to last a hundred years or so'. The images show their skill in being able to pull apart brick, concrete and steel in an ordered way, whereby most of the material can be salvaged for reuse elsewhere.

Conclusion

8.1 This article began by looking at the idea of a new sociology of work and thinking about what that might mean and how it might be enacted. It also examined some of the debates emerging from the relatively new field of labour geography which offered a critique, implicitly at least, of the sociology of work that discussions of work and employment either ignored the spatial altogether or used space in simplistic ways. I have tried to show the ways in which sociologists can think about work using both spatial ideas, most especially the notion of landscape and do so through visual material and methods. So what does all this add up to? What do these ideas do in the telling of a story about work? It is important that sociologists do think of space as being constitutive of work and that work in turn makes space in a particular way rather than special factors being reduced to boundaries and boxes. As was mentioned earlier whilst this criticism may be partially true there is an older tradition within strands of sociology, and the sociology of work which have invoked the spatial in more sophisticated ways than is allowed for in the writings of new labour geography. More recently, many sociologists in the field of work have invoked spatial ideas to understand work.

8.2 The second theme was about visual techniques and how they enable an understanding of work and by extension thinking about ideas of space. There are a number of ways in which the visual help us understand work. Using images enables us to show work and organisations at specific historical periods, they show us graphically how organisational space is laid out and inhabited. They also evoke time and place of work and are valuable as historical records of now disappeared social practice. This can be seen in the actuality of what the 'show', and in the aesthetic language of the period in which they are taken. Images allow us to illustrate various types of terrains of labour; Greenfield sites, sites of construction, places of paternal labour and welfare capitalism, neo-liberal workplaces through to spaces of loss and nostalgia. In each case the visual enables more than would be possible merely with words. Images of work facilitate reflection on the place of employment and how labour is embedded in it, or in the case of the neo-liberal landscape how work is dis-embedded and reconfigured in space. If the earlier images show us an integrated company where work and leisure were co-present then the images from the first decade of the twenty-first century beg many questions about the changing nature of economic life. Thus the image allows another intellectual 'cut' into the business of understanding landscapes. The importance of combining text and image is that together they can evoke and provoke a greater understanding of work.

Other Sources

Guinness Time (Company staff magazine for Park Royal)

Notes

¹It is not the argument here that images do not occur within work sociology, especially monographs. Rather, that in the main they are illustrative as opposed to an integral part of the analysis. There are of course exceptions such as Berger and Mohr's (1975) *A Seventh Man*. This is not to say that illustration is not a valuable end in itself and may add greatly to the illumination of the subject. Raphaël Samuel's *Theatres of Memory* (1994) has an important section of essays on the role of visual evidence which is useful here. Readers might also find Miller's (1992) *Illustration* illuminating. Finally Peter Burke (2001) provides an extensive discussion of the complexity of images as historical evidence.

²It is worth noting that many sociologists of work have strong roots in geography e.g. Ray Pahl and Susan Halford to name but two. In addition there have been long standing collaborations between geographers and sociologists within the area of economic life e.g. Ray Hudson and Huw Beynon.

³This was a project about the labour market experience of older male workers; Guinness was a good place to do this as it had many workers who were over 50 years of age. 'Guinness was good for us' was initially funded by Diageo, the company which owns the Guinness brand.

⁴For this article a selection of images have been drawn from contemporary images taken specifically for this project. I would have liked to have used archive images however for copyright reasons this has proved difficult. The selection is based on the themes of the paper. Other images could have been used and would have provided similar and differing themes. The contemporary images, especially those by David McCairley, were an attempt to capture the routine labour of the brewery. We wanted to record and show all aspects of the brewery and the work that went on their in its closing months.

⁵It is not possible for copyright reasons to use Guinness Company photography here. Example of the organisations images can be seen in Strangleman (2010).

⁶All photographs are the copyright of David McCairley, except the two images of the demolition of Park Royal Brewery. The copyright for these images are held by Tim Strangleman.

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