



Exploring the Role of Industrial Archaeology in Academia, Public Discourse, and the Heritage Sector

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In this article, we delve into the realm of industrial archaeology, focusing on its significance within the academic discipline, the public sphere, and the heritage industry. We begin by providing an overview of the development of industrial archaeology, tracing its origins from amateurism to its integration into university archaeology departments. We then examine the reasons behind the transformation of industrial sites into industrial heritage, considering temporal models of change that encompass the commodification of the past and the evolving attitudes towards industrial heritage. Additionally, we explore the public's perception and attitude towards industrial archaeology, raising important questions about the nature of these sites, including the role of time, aesthetics, and the subjective experience of visitors.

Unveiling the Dual Nature of Industrial Archaeology and Heritage

Introduction:

A woman called Marilyn Palmer in 2005 emphasized the multifaceted nature of industrial archaeology, highlighting its role in interpreting material evidence of past human

activity, as well as its preservation movement focused on documenting individual buildings. Palmer observed that the distinction between these two meanings became crucial for the acceptance of industrial archaeology as an academic discipline in the professional and institutionalized climate of the last two decades. However, industrial archaeology still grapples with academic isolation and struggles to define its scope and objectives. In contrast, industrial heritage has emerged as a vibrant and progressive field of research and practice, acknowledging the significant role of Britain as the first industrial nation. This transformation of the industrial environment has led to the designation of World Heritage sites, the interpretation of numerous sites for public engagement, and the restoration of industrial ruins to attract visitors. The increasing focus on the protection and management of industrial heritage has also sparked the publication of specialist literature.

Transformation of Public Perception:

This transformation of industrial heritage raises important questions about public consciousness and the way people engage with industrial remains. Post-war Britain exhibited a deep antipathy towards abandoned industrial sites, neglecting and even dumping rubbish on these locations. However, I argue that this stage of abandonment is transitory, as the public gradually comes to terms with the unsettling past and the implications of industrial decline. The post-abandonment phase is characterized by acceptance and forgetfulness, allowing for the creation of triumphant national narratives.

Thus, symbols of social deprivation and economic decline evolve over time into symbols of regional and national pride.

The Shifting Landscape of Industrial Archaeology:

Industrial remains occupy a unique position on the threshold of history, transitioning from contemporary artifacts to archaeological and heritage objects within our lifetime. In the realm of social archaeologies of industry, recent methods have emerged to uncover the inner workings and intentions behind industrial events. This anthropological approach has enabled the recording of industrial processes as industries close down or adapt their practices. I argue that this approach can also be applied to explore the nature of the relationship between the public and industrial remains, shedding light on the intricate dynamics at play.

Industrial archaeology and heritage encompass a diverse range of perspectives and practices. While industrial archaeology grapples with defining its identity and scope within academia, industrial heritage continues to thrive as a dynamic field of research and practice. The transformation of industrial sites into heritage attractions has not only altered the physical landscape but also influenced the public's perception and interaction with these remnants of the past. By delving into the complexities of this relationship, we gain a deeper understanding of the significance of industrial remains in shaping our collective memory and sense of identity.

EXPLORING THE MEANINGS, BEGINNINGS, AND EARLY ADVANCEMENTS OF INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Industrial archaeology is a discipline that focuses on the examination, documentation, and sometimes conservation of industrial structures. Its primary goal is to understand the historical and technological significance of these structures within the broader social and technological context.

The origins and evolution of British industrial archaeology have recently undergone thorough scrutiny. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, this field was of interest to only a select few individuals, primarily amateur historians. The term "industrial archaeology" is believed to have first appeared in 1896 in an article titled 'Archeologia Industrial Portuguesa os Moinhos' by Da Sousa Viterbo in the Portuguese journal *O Archeologo Portugues*. Subsequently, amateur historian Michael Rix popularized the term within English-speaking circles through his 1955 article 'Industrial Archaeology'. There seems to have been minimal development between these two pivotal dates.

Rix's article had a significant impact, emphasizing the urgent need for preserving the industrial heritage. He highlighted the rapid technological advancements, stating that inventions like the motor car, radio, and aeroplane had quickly become outdated and museum-worthy. This led to the establishment of a research committee on industrial archaeology by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA). Rix's message also resonated with various amateur groups who felt a sense of urgency due to postwar

redevelopment. The demolition of the Doric portico at Euston Station in 1962 sparked public outcry against its destruction, further fueling interest in industrial heritage preservation.

During the early years of industrial archaeology from the 1950s to 1970s, there was a debate on whether to focus on the industrial remnants of Victorian Britain or adopt a broader approach. Raistrick argued in 1972 for a temporal approach, suggesting that industrial archaeology should encompass the entire history of industry across different ages. The decline of manufacturing industries in the 1980s and 1990s led to the acceptance that industrial archaeology primarily covers the period from around AD 1750, known as The Industrial Revolution.

Following the Euston Arch demolition, the Industrial Monuments Survey was established in 1963, initially managed jointly by the CBA and the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. It later came under the University of Bath's care in 1965, evolving into the National Record of Industrial Monuments before being transferred to the National Monuments Record in the 1990s. The Association of Industrial Archaeology was formed in 1973, and a series of annual conferences took place at the University of Bath from 1966 to 1970. In 1976, the Industrial Archaeology Review, a specialist publication, was launched.

THE STUDY OF INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

While Labadi acknowledges industrial archaeology as having evolved into a sub-discipline of archaeology in Europe and

North America, most reviews align with Cranstone's characterization of its challenging and slow integration into academia. The growing importance of industrial archaeology, as outlined earlier, did not easily transition into scholarly research during the 1970s and 1980s. This lack of academic interest can be attributed to perceptions of it being a preservation pursuit led by amateurs, often dismissed as a trivial or recreational field of study. The focus on description and technological aspects seemed to exist without a solid theoretical or methodological framework.

Additionally, the temporal scope of industrial archaeology, which deals with relatively recent historical remnants, contributed to its academic neglect. In comparison to Prehistory, which has significantly shaped archaeological theory, industrial archaeology was sometimes viewed as lacking the depth of traditional archaeological practice. In 1980, Buchanan criticized the notion that only excavation methods should define the field, suggesting instead that industrial archaeology be reimagined as a subset of historical studies or as part of 'physical history'. This redefinition reflects an awareness of the challenges inherent in studying the industrial era within the broader archaeological discipline.

In the 1980s, the approach to industrial archaeology diverged between Britain and North America. While North America embraced a historical archaeology tradition emphasizing a structuralist analysis of 18th- and 19th-century society through the influential works of Deetz, Leone, and Orser, British industrial archaeologists initially pursued a thematic study of monuments before shifting towards a more

technocentric focus in the early 1990s, leading to challenges in data synthesis.

THE PUBLIC AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

Within the realm of heritage preservation, industrial remnants have gained increasing importance and are now a significant focus for the UK's official bodies such as English Heritage, Cadw, and Historic Scotland. A growing number of specialized publications are connecting industrial heritage with revitalization projects, particularly in urban settings. The global significance of industrial heritage is also on the rise. In 1986, the UK government's initial list of potential World Heritage Sites featured only one industrial site - the Ironbridge Gorge Museum. By 1999, the second list included 10 industrial sites out of a total of 25, such as the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape in Wales, the Forth Bridge in Scotland, and the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscapes.

During the latter half of the 20th century, the cultural perception of industrial structures underwent a transformation. These structures evolved from abandoned functional buildings to symbols of an innovative industrial history. Palmer and Neaverson suggest that this shift reflects changing public attitudes towards elements of past cultures within contemporary landscapes. In the mid-20th century, industrial monuments were often viewed as reminders of exploitative labor practices and were frequently demolished during urban development projects. Only in the late 20th century did the international significance and cultural value of Britain's industrial heritage become widely recognized.

Van Der Hoorn poses the question of how once undesirable architectural pieces can suddenly become sought-after tourist attractions or valuable cultural artifacts. She also challenges whether the public plays a passive or active role in reshaping their built environment and crafting new national narratives. The public outcry over the demolition of the Euston Arch, while ultimately unsuccessful, demonstrates the collective power of public opinion to influence local and national policies. As social archaeologies of industry develop, it becomes essential to explore the contemporary social aspects of industrial sites and landscapes, and to contemplate the ongoing process of transforming these spaces.

Origin: INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY



Figure 1.

The Engine Houses of Crowns Mine, Botallack. Possibly one of the most photographed views in Cornwall. Designated World Heritage in 2006 as part of the West Devon and Cornwall Mining Landscape.

Certain experts in industrial archaeology have begun exploring what Collingwood refers to as the 'inner side of the event.' This involves documenting operational industries, especially those on the brink of change. For instance, a photographic survey was conducted at a nuclear power station in Ayrshire before its decommissioning. This active 'process recording,' pioneered by Brian Malaws and adapted by Anna Badcock, injects industrial archaeology with a fresh level of social significance.

This approach, influenced by social and cultural anthropology, could aid in developing methodologies that delve into the 'heritage event,' raising questions about processes, transformations, public perceptions, and interactions that can be examined and potentially answered. Following an artistic initiative at South Wheal Frances Mine in Cornwall, Adam Sharpe emphasized the importance of understanding how sites functioned, changed, and held meaning for past and present communities. It is crucial to explore personal connections and interactions with these sites.

Industrial archaeology is pervasive in the public sphere, offering abundant opportunities for public participation and engagement. However, in "The Familiar Past?: Archaeologies of Later Historical Britain" (1999), Tarlow and West question whether recent remnants are too familiar to evoke archaeological interest. They ponder whether industrial remains, being

relatively recent, fail to capture the imagination as effectively as ancient civilizations. This leads to the notion that industrial archaeology may not resonate as deeply with the public. Some argue that industrial remains symbolize a negative past characterized by economic decline and poor working conditions, hindering regeneration efforts.

Derelict sites are often associated with danger, disorder, and decline, fostering negative perceptions among the public. Despite this, individuals living near such sites may have a unique relationship with them, utilizing them for parking or dumping rubbish as part of their daily routines. The history of South Wheal Frances Mine in Cornwall exemplifies a transformation from neglect to cultural pride, illustrating how industrial sites can evolve into symbols of heritage and identity.

There is a growing interest in the recent past alongside pre-industrial sites, reflecting society's changing perceptions of time and history. Edensor discusses the commodification of recent history and the need to imbue spaces with positive meanings. Spaces deemed non-functional may be repurposed to eliminate signs of unproductivity. Van Der Hoorn's research on Prora and the Berlin Wall sheds light on these complex dynamics.



Figure 2. 20th-century remains at Botallack. The base of the Californian stamps with the headframe of Allen's Shaft in the background. Are these old enough to be considered archaeology?

This process involves the exorcism of 'national history' fragments through looting, recycling, demolition, and commemoration, often manifesting in the creation of mementos. Trinder introduces a progressive model of temporal change in attitudes, shifting public opinion and policies from disgust to amusement at the fading of the familiar, ultimately leading to acceptance. He questions the influence of Romanticism on the collective imagination, particularly contrasting it with the writings of W.H. Hoskins.

Buchanan adds that industrialization needed to evolve through various stages, rendering earlier artifacts obsolete before garnering enough interest to spur preservation efforts. These models propose that a period of neglect serves as a precursor to the restoration and reconnection with heritage, fostering regional

and national identities. As Symonds highlights, heritage serves as a conduit for these identities in the 21st century.



Figure 3.

Danger and delinquency or performance and engagement?

The 'decorated' 20th-century dressing floors at Wheal Kitty, St Agnes.

Regeneration projects offer communities narratives that emphasize the abilities and resilience of past inhabitants. It is crucial to assess how evolving aesthetic preferences influence perceptions and actions within these initiatives. Joseph draws a connection between aesthetics and deviant behavior, noting that neglected areas not only appear bleak but also attract activities like illegal dumping, graffiti, and unauthorized postings that degrade the environment. Aesthetics often play a role in determining recognition and status, especially in heritage conservation or regeneration efforts where there is a tendency to beautify or improve the appearance of sites.

Conservation efforts often adhere to specific paradigms that prioritize order, cleanliness, and aesthetics. Homeowners may feel pressured to

address industrial eyesores to maintain property values. Controversies arise in mining landscapes regarding the cleanup of mine waste and the securing of mine shafts, balancing aesthetic concerns with historical preservation, and public safety.

Focusing excessively on individual sites can hinder a comprehensive understanding of complex landscapes in industrial archaeology. While conservation efforts tend to highlight specific monuments, there is a growing shift towards holistic treatment of entire complexes through characterization methodologies. However, public perception of industrial landscapes may prioritize iconic monuments, overshadowing the broader historical context. Cooper observes a prevalent view of heritage as isolated monuments, such as timber-framed buildings, reflecting a 'Stonehenge effect' where attention is fixated on singular landmarks while neglecting the surrounding historical landscape.



Figure 4.

Dressing floors at Botallack. Non-functional

space, replaced and filled in with graffiti.

When tourists explore Cornwall's World Heritage mining landscapes, they are unlikely to seek out timber-framed buildings. Instead, their focus is likely to gravitate towards visually striking and iconic structures, such as the Cornish engine house, which often serves as a prominent feature on postcards and as the emblem of the World Heritage Site.

The preceding dialogue highlights the challenges posed by industrial ruins as public spaces, given the diverse array of issues and emotions they evoke. Edensor, a Senior Lecturer specializing in Environmental and Geographical Sciences at Manchester Metropolitan University, challenges the notion that industrial ruins are wasted spaces in his 2005 work "Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics, and Materiality." By examining the urban landscapes of central and northern England, as well as central Scotland, he aims to celebrate industrial ruins as spaces for leisure, liberation (from constraints, rebelliousness, and the freedom to move the body in space), and festive revelry.



Figure 5. Mine dumps above the beach at Trevaunance Cove, St Agnes.

As the original functions of dilapidated buildings fade into history, a realm of boundless encounters with the unconventional emerges. Free from the constraints that typically govern highly structured and regulated spaces, ruined environments offer a canvas for unconventional and transformative experiences. Stripped of conventional norms dictating spatial arrangement, prescribed actions, and the conspicuous display of goods, abandoned spaces teem with opportunities for defiance and transcendence.

Edensor's narrative challenges the association between decay and antisocial conduct, instead highlighting the potential of ruined sites as "alternative playgrounds for individuals of all ages." He observes a distinct societal attitude towards dilapidated structures, distinguishing between industrial ruins and non-industrial ruins like castles, follies, or rustic cottages, which often evoke romanticized themes, especially in artistic representations. This

romantic discourse, as noted by Janowitz, gradually blurs the boundaries between the natural and the cultural, fostering a perception that national identity is deeply rooted in history. While ancient ruins seamlessly blend with nature, evoking sentiments of landscape, national pride, and romanticism in a manner reminiscent of Wordsworth's poetic reflections.



Figure 6.

Wheal Coates, St Agnes. A monument and icon which provides a singular place within transitory space.

Industrial ruins remain integral to human culture, akin to the role played by Victorian haunted houses, serving as a contemporary form of Gothic expression. These ruins embody the intricate interplay between romance and horror, alluring individuals with their allure of decay and mortality. Venturing into these spaces is akin to delving into darkness and confronting suppressed fears. They evoke a sense of melancholy, serving as poignant reminders of the perpetual cycle of life and death, echoing

the sentiments expressed by Dutch biologist and writer Midas Dekkers, who posits that human civilization harbors an inherent fascination with decay, disorder, and mortality.

Edensor's exploration of industrial remnants adopts a phenomenological approach, delving into the realms of perception and experience, aiming to capture the sensory essence of traversing through a ruin. His discourse is infused with personal anecdotes, drawing from nostalgic recollections, such as childhood memories. While his narrative refrains from overt political agendas that might suggest these spaces incite anti-establishment sentiments or actions.

While Edensor's notion of industrial play as "anti-tourism" diverges significantly from conventional heritage discourse, he does not seem inclined to entertain the opposing perspective that these sites hold economic, social, or cultural value.

Despite these critiques, the central themes that surface revolve around industrial ruins serving as arenas for various forms of alternative public engagement, encompassing leisure, exploration, acquisition, refuge, creativity, and even illicit activities. However, these themes predominantly operate in a context where unrestricted access to these sites is permitted, a scenario that is likely to shift as more sites are designated as heritage sites. Although the juxtaposition of waste disposal with Edensor's celebratory language is puzzling, he crucially emphasizes the social functions and significance of these sites during periods of neglect. These

spaces may not be devoid of meaning, as individuals may cherish them for their historical or aesthetic value, as well as for the recreational opportunities they offer. They may also appreciate these sites as convenient parking spots or as venues for leisurely strolls with their pets.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In essence, industrial archaeology encompasses a diverse array of approaches spanning conservation, social archaeology, and heritage management, which has, in turn, hindered its recognition as a serious academic discipline. Historically, it has been unfairly stigmatized as a hobbyist pursuit lacking theoretical and methodological rigor, a perception that fails to acknowledge its multifaceted methodologies. This paper aims to shed light on the interdisciplinary nature and potential strengths of industrial archaeology. The emergence of social archaeology within this field has offered a fresh perspective, addressing previous criticisms, albeit drawing heavily from the North American model, which may pose challenges for its integration into British academic institutions.

The discussion delves into themes of singularity and identity, exploring how industrial remains symbolize evolving national attitudes towards history and the environment. The suffixes "-heritage," "-ruins," or "-archaeology" subtly alter meanings but can be used interchangeably. Industrial archaeology is portrayed as simultaneously negative, whimsical, Gothic, contemporary, familiar, aesthetically pleasing, unsightly, space-consuming, and convenient for

parking. Despite these conflicting perceptions and the absence of a singular identity, industrial monuments can gradually acquire an iconic status within the landscape over time. The potential resolution of archaeological dilemmas surrounding these sites through site and landscape management or comprehensive characterization studies remains an intriguing prospect.

Various theoretical models are presented to illustrate the transformation of industrial sites from symbols of decline to icons of industry. The post-war era in Britain reflects a period of neglect and indifference, prompting amateur preservation groups to react. A tension between aesthetics, valorization, and abandonment is evident, with the phase of abandonment metaphorically likened to a burial of above-ground physical remnants. As societal attitudes evolve towards industrial heritage, culminating in the recognition of industrial sites as international heritage destinations, it is essential to scrutinize public perceptions across different contexts comprehensively.

While acknowledging industrial ruins' significance in shaping public life, the debate over whether this influence is truly "alternative" remains open. Exploring the extent to which the public actively engage or passively observe these sites at various stages is crucial. Case studies from the former German Democratic Republic highlight public engagement through actions such as looting, exorcism, and fragmentation of their industrial past. The challenge lies in devising methodologies to understand and navigate these complex dynamics effectively.

I aim to explore methods of data collection to investigate the public's perceptions of these intriguing yet complex industrial spaces. My intention is to showcase Collingwood's concept of the 'inner side of the event' and a social or cultural anthropological approach, which, when combined, can offer valuable insights into these captivating yet challenging industrial environments.

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