THE COALFIELDS RESEARCH PROGRAMME:

DISCUSSION PAPER NO. 2

DIFFERENT PLACES: REPRESENTATIONS

KATY BENNETT, HUW BEYNON, RAY HUDSON

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DIFFERENT PLACES: REPRESENTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

In many ways this paper is pure fiction. It shows how the four places of Easington, Mansfield, St. Helens and the Cynon Valley are manipulated and moulded into representations that reveal more about the story-teller and targeted audiences than they do about the places themselves. Divided into three sections, each of the four places is made meaningful according to how it is 'realised', 'imagined' and 'lived' with not only differences made apparent, but also similarities as their stories compete against each other to be heard by shared audiences.

Stories are weaved as statistics throw up selected distortions, as places are put on the market and stories are sold, as communities are imagined and symbolically constructed in places that are dying on their feet. What is most evident in this story-telling is that their narrators are trying to find these places, trying to create them and fill their spaces with meanings as such places cope with the devastating effects of post-industrialisation. From listening to the different voices, it is difficult to build up a firm picture of the four places, what they look like now. What they have. What is not fictional and more certain is what they have lost. Common to all four places is the decline and loss of their mining industry.

Whilst 'Realising places' and 'Living places' show this loss, 'Imagining places' shows more about the character of institutions and agencies involved in regeneration than it does about the places themselves. Those formally involved in the work of regeneration are rooted in a system that is about desperation and catching drips of funding and the exploitative parts of globally operating companies at any cost. In many ways, this paper is about the failures of those formally engaged in the regeneration of these former coalfield places.

'Realising places' uses maps and statistics to construct each place against the back drop of pit closures and post-industrialisation, showing changes in population, transforming household structures and much evidence of poverty and deprivation because of high levels of economic inactivity and low wage rates in each of the four places.

'Imagining places' explores the process of image making and how (aspects of) identifiable 'realities' are selected and/or distorted to construct 'unique' places that are either 'needy' to potential funders or 'attractive' to potential inward investors. Through these representations of places, similarities result not because differences between them do not exist but because 'imagining' reveals more about the 'nature' (and faults) of global capital and funding structures than it does about the places themselves. 'Imagining places' is about the representation of desperate places through the images and text of promotional literature and websites, submissions to The Coalfields Task Force, Single Programming Documents and interview transcripts.

The paper ends with 'Living places' which identifies the four places as flowing and differently living according to the individuals experiencing them. It explores different

people's representations of places, embracing contradictions, and attempts to contextualise such different representations.

REALISING PLACES

'Realising places' examines Easington, St. Helens, Mansfield and Rhondda Cynon Taff through their statistical representations. Where possible, the section aims to introduce the 'realities' of the four places through both spatial and temporal comparisons, comparing the places with each other and, if possible, the United Kingdom as a whole, and the mid 1980s with the most recent statistics. 'Realising' places through their statistics, however, is not an easy task when administrative boundaries of places change, as in the case of the Cynon Valley (now Rhondda Cynon Taff), definitions of statistical categories alter, especially when examining issues of unemployment, and comparative statistics are not available for chosen years. Despite these statistical limitations, this section does begin to represent the four places as experiencing population, household and employment changes since the miners' strike of 1984-5 and the pit closure of the 1980s and 1990s. It also starts to demonstrate differences in such experiences across the four places.

Table 1 shows the population (in thousands) in 1998 for Easington, St. Helens, Mansfield and Rhondda Cynon Taff. The population of both Easington and St. Helens has declined over the period 1981-1996 (see Table 2), with Mansfield and Rhondda Cynon Taff demonstrating a population growth of well below that of the UK average. A look at Tables 3 and 4, which provide a comparative break-down of the population by sex and broad age group for 1984 and 1996, shows the 15-29 age group to be most effected by population decline through out-migration.

TABLE 1: Population

	Population (thousands)			Percentage of population aged:			
	Males	Females	Total	Under 5	5-15	16 up to pension age	Pension age or over
UK	28, 856	29,946	58,801	6.4	14.2	61.3	18.1
Easington	47	49	95	6.7	15.2	59.3	18.7
St. Helens	88	91	179	6.1	14.2	62.1	17.6
Mansfield	50	51	101	6.3	14.9	60.6	18.1
Rhondda Cynon Taff	119	122	240	6.1	15.0	60.7	18.2

Regional Trends 1998

TABLE 2: Population change

	Total population percentage change 1981-1996
UK	4.3
Easington	-6.2
St. Helens	-5.7
Mansfield	1.4
Rhondda Cynon Taff	0.7

Regional Trends 1998

The populations of Easington, Mansfield, St. Helens are all composed of households that have decreased in size since 1988 (see Tables 5 and 6), although average household size in 1996 remained a little above the UK average. Despite this, however, lone parents as a percentage of all households in Easington and St. Helens is higher than the national

TABLE 3: Estimated resident population at mid-1996 by sex and broad age group (thousands)

	All ages		Under 1		1-4		5-14		15-29		30-44		45-59		60-64		65-74		75 and over	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Easington	46.6	48.6	0.6	0.6	2.6	2.6	6.9	6.3	8.9	9.0	10.2	10.1	8.4	8.6	2.6	2.8	4.3	4.8	2.1	3.8
St. Helens	88.3	91.2	1.1	1.0	4.6	4.3	11.9	11.2	18.4	17.5	19.2	18.9	17.7	17.5	4.6	4.5	7.3	8.4	3.7	7.7
Mansfield	50.3	51.1	0.6	0.6	2.7	2.5	7.0	6.7	10.2	9.4	11.5	11.2	9.3	9.0	2.3	2.6	4.3	4.8	2.4	4.2
Rhondda Cynon Taff	118.6	121.5	1.4	1.4	6.2	5.8	16.8	16.0	26.0	23.7	25.2	24.4	22.3	21.7	5.7	6.0	9.8	11.8	5.3	10.8

Note: Figures may not add exactly because of rounding
Key population and vital statistics (local and health authority areas) 1996 ONS

TABLE 4: Estimated resident population at mid 1984 by sex and broad age-group (thousands)

	All ages		Under 1		1-4		5-14		15-29		30-44		45-59		60-64		65-74		75 and over	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Easington	47.9	49.7	0.7	0.7	2.6	2.4	6.8	6.3	11.2	11.1	9.1	8.9	8.8	8.9	3.0	3.1	3.7	4.6	2.0	3.7
St. Helens	92.3	96.5	1.2	1.1	5.0	4.7	13.9	13.3	21.7	21.3	19.7	19.3	16.4	16.0	5.1	5.7	6.2	8.4	3.1	6.7
Mansfield	49.0	51.0	0.7	0.7	2.8	2.6	6.8	6.5	11.4	11.6	10.2	9.9	8.5	8.4	3.0	3.1	3.8	4.6	1.8	3.6
Cynon Valley	31.9	34.2	0.5	0.4	1.8	1.6	4.5	4.5	7.2	7.1	6.4	6.2	5.5	5.6	2.0	2.3	2.6	3.7	1.4	2.8

Population and vital statistics (local and health authority summary) 1984 Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

TABLE 5: Households

	All households (thousands)	Average household size	Lone parents as a percentage of all households	One-person households as a percentage of all households	Households receiving Housing Benefit* as a percentage of all households
UK	24,115.3	2.40	-	28.4	20.3
England	20,206.6	2.39	5.6	28.8	19.6
Easington	39.1	2.41	6.3	28.4	31.9
St. Helens	72.8	2.45	6.2	25.7	24.1
Mansfield	41.5	2.42	5.6	25.8	21.8
Cynon Valley	-	-	-	-	-

Regional Trends 1998
Note: * Figs. relating to households receiving Housing Benefit are an average of three quarters - May, August and November 1996.

TABLE 6: Households 1988

	All households (thousands)	Average household size
Easington	37.3	2.54
St. Helens	70.3	2.64
Mansfield	39.3	2.53
Cynon Valley	24.1	2.66

Regional Trends 1990

average, with Mansfield being the same as the national figure. These figures are reinforced by those of Table 8, which show both the percentage of births outside marriage and the percentage of births outside marriage which are jointly registered at the same address. In all four places the percentage of births outside marriage are well above that of England and Wales, with Easington topping 51% and Mansfield the lowest at 44.1%, whilst the percentage of such births jointly registered at the same address are, apart from for Mansfield, below the average for England and Wales. Table 8 also demonstrates the high number of births to women under the age of twenty, which, when worked into percentages, show that Easington's percentage of 17.5% is the highest for all four areas and St. Helen's 14.2% is the lowest. Against a percentage for England and Wales of 10.9%, and compared with figures and the illegitimacy ratio for 1984 provided in Table 7, these are high statistics and contribute to the representation of all four places as experiencing more intense transformations in their household structures than are the two nations as a whole.

A further statistical representation of households show their experience of poverty to be above the national average too. No comparable figure is available for the Cynon Valley, but Easington, Mansfield and St. Helens all have high percentages of their households receiving Housing Benefit in 1996. At almost 32%, Easington's percentage is well above that of 20.3% for the U.K. as a whole, with the percentages for St. Helens and Mansfield being 24.1% and 21.8% respectively.

Causes of household poverty relate to high levels of economic inactivity and low wage rates that now prevail in places like former coalfields. Although Table 9 apparently shows a reduction in claimant counts and the percentages of long-term unemployed for the places of this research since 1990, such decline could be attributed to the changing structures of the benefits system rather than to the experiences of the places themselves. Although only St. Helen's, according to Table 10, has a long-term unemployed percentage figure above that for the U.K., all four places demonstrate a smaller percentage of their work force to be economically active than for the U.K. as a whole, with Easington's percentage of 60.6 being the lowest.

TABLE 7: Live births, still births, total (all) births, deaths, infant and perinatal mortality during 1984

		LIVE BIRTHS										ALL BIRTHS
		Legitimate		Illegitimate								
	Estimated resident population at 30 June 1984	M	F	M	F	Total	Crude Birth Rate	SFR	GFR	TPFR	Illegitimacy ratio	Proportion under 2500 grams
England and Wales	49763600	269655	256698	56384	54081	636818	12.8	100	59.8	1.75	173	7.0
Easington	97600	566	515	129	115	1325	13.6	111	66.3	1.90	184	8.3
St. Helens	188800	944	904	188	193	2229	11.8	94	54.9	1.63	171	6.1
Mansfield	100000	610	544	132	146	1432	14.3	110	66.6	1.91	194	6.1
Cynon Valley	66100	398	345	63	58	864	13.1	113	65.0	1.95	140	7.2

	DEATHS					DEATHS UNDER 1 YEAR					
	M	F	Total	Crude Death Rate	SMR	No.	Rate per 1000 live births	Deaths under 4 weeks	Deaths under 1 week	Still births	Perinatal mortality rate
England and Wales	282357	284524	566881	11.4	100	6037	9.5	3544	2821	3643	10.1
Easington	676	539	1215	12.4	115	13	9.8	8	5	5	7.5
St. Helens	1123	1090	2213	11.7	120	13	5.8	9	7	12	8.5
Mansfield	566	532	1098	11.0	106	11	7.7	6	5	10	10.4
Cynon Valley	440	439	879	13.3	116	8	9.3	5	3	5	9.2

Population and vital statistics (local and health authority area summary) 1984 Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Notes:
Crude Birth Rates have been calculated as total live births per 1000 of the resident population of both sexes and all ages. They reflect differences in the age and sex structure of the local populations and other demographic or socio-economic characteristics, as well as any other differences there may be in the levels of fertility.

GFR General Fertility Rate - calculated as total live births per 1000 women aged 15-44 - make allowances for differences in the relative proportions of women of fertile age within areas to be compared. They do not however allow for differences in the age distributions of women of fertile age or for other differences.

SFR Standardised Fertility Ratios show how fertility in each area compares with the national average after allowing for differences in the age distributions of the populations of women of the childbearing age in the area; no allowance is made for other differences in populations, for example in the proportions married or in social class composition. The SFRs are calculated as the number of births which actually occurred in each area during 1984 (observed births) as a percentage of the number which would have been expected during the year if the female population in the area had experienced the 1984 age specific fertility rates for England and Wales as a whole.

TPFR - The Total Period Fertility Rate for a particular area in 1984 is the average number of live born children per woman that would result in a hypothetical group of women who were subject to the 1984 age-specific fertility rates of that area throughout their reproductive period.

The illegitimacy ratio for each area is calculated as illegitimate live births per 1000 total live births.

The proportion of all births under 2500 grams for each area is calculated as live and stillborn infants with birth weight under 2500 grams per 100 total live and stillbirths.

The crude death rates for local areas are calculated as total deaths per 1000 of the resident populations of both sexes and all ages. They may not be comparable with each other; the populations on which they are based may have widely different age and sex structures and other characteristics.

SMRs - Standardised Mortality Ratios are calculated as the no. of actual deaths in each area in 1984 as a percentage of deaths which would have been expected if the local populations had experienced the sex and age specific mortality rates observed in England and Wales as a whole (standard rates) during that year.

Perinatal mortality rates are calculated as the nos. of infant deaths under one week, plus the nos. of stillbirths per 1000 live and still births.

Stillbirths - The definition of a stillborn child is given in Section 41 of the Births and Registration Act, 1953, as follows: 'A child which has issued forth from its mother after the twenty eighth week of pregnancy and which did not at any time after being completely expelled from the mother breathe or show any signs of life'.

TABLE 8: Live births, stillbirths, total births, deaths, infant and perinatal mortality during 1996: and conception during 1995.

		LIVE BIRTHS							ALL BIRTHS		
	Estimated resident population at 30 June 1996 (thousands)	M	F	Total	Outside marriage	TPFR	All	% jointly registered, same address*	Proportion under 2500 grams#	All ages	Under 20
England and Wales	52010.2	333490	315995	649485	232663	1.73	35.8	58.1	7.3	790265	86170
Easington	95.2	610	592	1202	613	1.90	51.0	55.8	7.2	1369	244
St. Helens	179.5	1144	991	2135	964	1.70	45.2	49.1	7.5	2490	353
Mansfield	101.4	600	626	1226	541	1.80	44.1	58.4	9.2	1471	243
Rhondda Cynon Taff	240.1	1518	1423	2941	1433	1.80	48.7	50.4	7.2	3449	537

	DEATHS				DEATHS UNDER I YEAR					
	M	F	Total	SMR	Number	Rate per 1000 live births	Deaths under 4 weeks	Deaths under 1 week	Stillbirths	Perinatal mortality rate
England and Wales	268682	291453	560135	100	3959	6.1	2645	2066	3539	8.6
Easington	606	602	1208	127	8	6.7	6	2	7	7.4
St. Helens	1676	2052	3728	102	24	8.0	15	13	13	8.6
Mansfield	528	540	1068	105	8	6.5	6	6	4	8.1
Rhondda Cynon Taff	1378	1473	2851	117	24	8.2	11	7	16	7.8

Key population and vital statistics (local and health authority areas) 1996 ONS

Notes:
See above for notes. Following includes amendments to notes for 1984.

* Number of births outside marriage which are registered by both parents who give the same address of usual residence, as a percentage of all births.

Number of live births under 25000 grams as a percentage of all live births for which the birth weight is known.

Stillbirths: The defn. of a stillborn child was changed on the 1 October 1992. The current defn. is: 'A child which has issued forth from its mother after the twenty fourth week of pregnancy and which did not at any time after being completely expelled from the mother breathe or show any signs of life'.

The percentage of births outside marriage is calculated as live births outside marriage per 100 live births. Similarly, the percentage of births outside marriage which are jointly registered at the same address is calculated as live births outside marriage which are registered by both parents, who give the same address of usual residence, per 100 live births outside marriage.

Conceptions are derived by combining registration records of live births and stillbirths, and of legal terminations under the 1967 Abortion Act; pregnancies leading to spontaneous abortions are not included. Since many of the births in 1996 and some of the abortions were the result of conceptions in 1995, the latest data available are for 1995.

TABLE 9: Claimant count January 1990 and 1998

		1990			1998		
	Population (thousands) 1988	Total (thousands)	Of which long term unemployed (%)	Population (thousands) 1996	Total (thousands)	Of which females	Of which long-term unemployed (%)#
UK	-	-	-	58,801	1,479.3	23.2	26.9
Easington	95	3.5	27.6	95	2.6	18.2	22.9
St. Helens	187.6	7.9	42.5	179	9.1	21.4	32.9
Mansfield	100	3.7	27.7	101	3.0	21.0	21.3
Cynon Valley (CV) or Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT)	64.3 (CV)	2.7 (CV)	30.0 (CV)	240 (RCT)	6.3 (RCT)	20.4 (RCT)	23.4 (RCT)

Regional Trends 1998
Note:
Persons who have been claiming for more than 12 months as a percentage of all claimants.

TABLE 10: Claimant count January 1998

		Claimant count January 1998				
	Economically active 1996-7 (%)*	Total (thousands)	Of which females	Of which long-term unemployed (%)#	Income support beneficiaries. Aug. 1996 (%)<	Ranking from Index of Local Deprivation 1998
UK	78.6	1,479.3	23.2	26.9	-	-
England	78.8	1,190.8	23.5	26.8	14	-
Easington	60.6	2.6	18.2	22.9	20	52
St. Helens	73.0	9.1	21.4	32.9	18	45
Mansfield	77.0	3.0	21.0	21.3	14	67
Rhondda Cynon Taff	69.4	6.3	20.4	23.4	-	-

Regional Trends 1998

Notes:

* Based on the population of working age. Data from the Labour Force Survey and relate to the period March 1996 to February 1997.

Persons who have been claiming for more than 12 months as a percentage of all claimants.

< Claimants and their partners aged 16 or over as a percentage of the population aged 16 or over. Data from the Income Support Quarterly Statistical Enquiry.

Table 11 is from the New Earnings Survey and demonstrates rates of pay in County Durham, Merseyside, North Nottinghamshire, and Mid Glamorgan to be well below the average for Great Britain, with rates being the worst in North Nottinghamshire. In North Nottinghamshire and County Durham, 10% of full-time employees on adult rates earned less than £158.6 and £159.7 respectively per week in April 1997. A breakdown of these figures shows women and manual workers to suffer still lower wage rates. In County Durham, 31.6% of full-time female adults earn less than £250 per week, with 10% of them earning less than £139.3 per week (see Table 13). Again in County Durham and North Nottinghamshire, 39.2% and 37.9% of full-time manual male employees earn less than £250 per week (see Table 14). Of all four areas, Merseyside has the highest wage rates, though overall these are still below wage rates for Great Britain as a whole (see

TABLE 11: Full-time employees on adult rates, whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence - April 1997

		Average gross weekly earnings						Distribution of weekly earnings. % earning under:			10% earned:			Average weekly hours	
TEC	No. in sample	Total (£)	Standard error as % of total	Of which: Over-time pay (£)	Of which: Profit related pay (£)	Of which: Other PBR etc prem (£)	Of which: Shift etc prem (£)	£250 (%)	£350 (%)	£450 (%)	less than (£)	more than (£)	Average hourly earnings excl over-time (pence)	Total include over-time (hours)	Over-time (hours)
Great Britain	107662	367.2	0.2	20.2	4.8	11.1	5.6	31.7	58.3	78.0	175.3	590.1	913	40.3	2.3
County Durham	1013	322.7	2.2	18.1	4.4	10.1	8.9	39.9	67.5	86.6	159.7	499.0	803	40.2	2.2
Merseyside	1503	348.2	1.8	21.6	5.6	9.6	6.7	34.5	61.1	81.2	173.4	540.9	856	39.9	2.5
North Notts	644	322.3	2.5	28.0	3.2	11.4	6.0	43.2	68.2	83.1	158.6	530.3	768	42.2	4.0
Mid Glam	490	320.4	2.5	22.8	2.6	8.3	7.4	41.2	68.2	85.5	166.3	510.1	778	40.7	2.6

New Earnings Survey 1997 (ONS)

TABLE 12: Full-time male employees on adult rates, whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence - April 1997

		Average gross weekly earnings						Distribution of weekly earnings. % earning under:			10% earned:			Average weekly hours	
TEC	No. in sample	Total (£)	Standard error as % of total	Of which: Over-time pay (£)	Of which: Profit related pay (£)	Of which: Other PBR etc prem (£)	Of which: Shift etc prem (£)	£250 (%)	£350 (%)	£450 (%)	less than (£)	more than (£)	Average hourly earnings excl over-time (pence)	Total include over-time (hours)	Over-time (hours)
Great Britain	67979	408.7	0.3	27.6	5.4	14.1	6.9	23.1	50.1	71.9	198.6	656.9	982	41.8	3.1
County Durham	655	357.4	2.9	24.2	5.0	13.7	10.9	31.1	60.5	82.4	184.8	552.8	862	41.6	2.9
Merseyside	893	391.6	2.4	31.5	6.0	11.5	8.5	24.3	51.2	74.7	194.3	610.4	920	41.7	3.6
North Notts	415	366.2	3.0	39.0	4.0	13.2	6.9	31.6	58.1	77.1	181.0	589.6	840	44.6	5.6
Mid Glam	299	353.2	3.2	33.8	2.9	9.4	8.3	33.4	61.9	79.9	180.0	585.4	820	42.5	3.7

New Earnings Survey 1997 (ONS)

TABLE 13: Full-time female employees on adult rates, whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence - April 1997

		Average gross weekly earnings						Distribution of weekly earnings. % earning under:			10% earned:			Average weekly hours	
TEC	No. in sample	Total (£)	Standard error as % of total	Of which: Over-time pay (£)	Of which: Profit related pay (£)	Of which: Other PBR etc prem (£)	Of which: Shift etc prem (£)	£250 (%)	£350 (%)	£450 (%)	less than (£)	more than (£)	Average hourly earnings excl over-time (pence)	Total include over-time (hours)	Over-time (hours)
Great Britain	39683	297.2	0.3	7.4	3.6	5.8	3.4	22.5	46.5	72.4	154.5	472.1	788	37.6	0.9
County Durham	358	259.1	2.4	6.9	3.3	3.5	5.2	31.6	55.9	80.4	139.3	418.0	690	37.7	1.0
Merseyside	610	284.6	1.9	7.0	4.9	6.8	4.1	22.3	49.5	75.6	156.7	445.9	759	37.3	0.9
North Notts	229	242.8	2.9	8.2	1.7	8.0	4.4	37.1	64.2	86.5	141.6	386.7	632	38.0	1.0
Mid Glam	191	269.1	3.3	5.5	2.1	6.5	6.0	26.2	53.4	78.0	149.0	419.9	710	37.9	0.7

New Earnings Survey 1997 (ONS)

TABLE 14: Full-time manual male employees on adult rates, whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence - April 1997

		Average gross weekly earnings						Distribution of weekly earnings. % earning under:			10% earned:			Average weekly hours	
TEC	No. in sample	Total (£)	Standard error as % of total	Of which: Over-time pay (£)	Of which: Profit related pay (£)	Of which: Other PBR etc prem (£)	Of which: Shift etc prem (£)	£250 (%)	£350 (%)	£450 (%)	less than (£)	more than (£)	Average hourly earnings excl over-time (pence)	Total include over-time (hours)	Over-time (hours)
Great Britain	30050	314.3	0.2	45.3	4.5	12.3	11.1	33.3	68.6	88.7	182.4	472.8	679	45.1	5.5
County Durham	362	290.2	1.8	33.3	4.7	14.3	15.5	39.2	76.2	93.4	179.4	423.3	652	43.4	4.1
Merseyside	397	319.8	1.9	47.3	3.0	9.7	15.8	31.2	67.3	87.4	181.5	471.9	695	45.0	5.9
North Notts	232	323.0	3.2	58.3	2.4	17.5	10.6	37.9	68.5	83.6	178.3	521.1	670	48.3	8.9
Mid Glam	155	301.3	3.9	47.4	2.2	11.3	13.6	45.2	74.2	87.7	169.0	512.3	645	44.5	5.2

New Earnings Survey 1997 (ONS)

TABLE 15: Full-time manual female employees on adult rates, whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence - April 1997

		Average gross weekly earnings						Distribution of weekly earnings. % earning under:			10% earned:			Average weekly hours	
TEC	No. in sample	Total (£)	Standard error as % of total	Of which: Over-time pay (£)	Of which: Profit related pay (£)	Of which: Other PBR etc prem (£)	Of which: Shift etc prem (£)	£250 (%)	£350 (%)	£450 (%)	less than (£)	more than (£)	Average hourly earnings excl over-time (pence)	Total include over-time (hours)	Over-time (hours)
Great Britain	7015	201.1	0.5	13.4	2.4	7.4	5.9	53.2	79.0	95.4	122.4	300.0	490	40.2	2.0
County Durham	110	205.3	3.7	11.8	5.9	6.7	10.0	47.3	76.4	93.6	122.6	324.7	489	41.0	1.8
Merseyside	80	199.8	4.2	11.3	2.8	5.0	7.6	57.5	75.0	96.3	122.1	304.0	495	39.8	1.7
North Notts	70	184.4	3.6	10.0	0.4	23.0	6.5	62.9	90.0	100.0	124.2	256.2	451	40.3	1.5
Mid Glam	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

New Earnings Survey 1997 (ONS)

Notes for Tables 11-15:

1. Results are given for those areas represented by at least 10 persons in the same sample and where the standard error of average gross weekly earnings is 5.0 per cent or less of the average.
2. Area definitions are based on postcode information. Sample sizes for regions may not sum to the sample size for Great Britain as not all cases have valid postcodes.
3. Profit-related pay relates to earnings from Inland Revenue approved profit sharing cash schemes. All other incentive payments are covered by other payment-by-results (PBR) etc pay.

Table 11). Low wage rates are obviously effected by the type of employment available in places. Tables 16,17 and 18 demonstrate that employment in manufacturing continues to dominate the four places of this research in comparison to the UK as a whole, and that other higher paying broad industry groups are less evident in them, especially finance.

TABLE 16: Employment in manufacturing

	IN EMPLOYMENT 1996-7	
	Total (thousands)*	Manufacturing (%)
UK	26,472	19.1
Durham	260	26.3
Merseyside	537	17.0
Nottinghamshire	441	23.5
Rhondda Cynon Taff	95	30.7

Regional Trends 1998

Note:

*Includes those on government-supported employment and training programmes and unpaid family workers.

TABLE 17: Number of VAT based enterprises in 1996. District within county by broad industry group

	Ag	Prodn	Constrn	Motor trades	Wholesale	Retail	Hotels and catering	T'port	Post and telecom	Finance	Property and business services	Educn	Health	Public admin & other services	Total
Easington	100	120	95	70	65	265	95	70	10	0	65	5	0	105	1070
St. Helens	85	350	370	190	155	525	215	205	10	10	380	10	25	195	2730
Mansfield	25	235	275	130	115	380	120	95	5	5	195	5	20	95	1690
Cynon Valley	35	105	170	45	30	180	120	40	0	0	50	5	5	55	840

Local Authority District Analysis of United Kingdom Businesses 1996 (ONS)

TABLE 18: % of VAT based businesses in 1996. District within county by broad industry group

	Ag	Prodn	Constrn	Motor trades	Wholesale	Retail	Hotels and catering	T'port	Post and telecom	Finance	Property and business services	Educn	Health	Public admin & other services
Easington	9.3	11.2	8.9	6.5	6.1	24.8	8.9	6.5	0.9	0	6.1	0.5	0	9.8
St. Helens	3.1	12.8	13.5	7.0	5.7	19.2	7.9	7.5	0.4	0.4	13.9	0.4	0.9	7.1
Mansfield	1.5	13.9	16.3	7.7	6.8	22.5	7.1	5.6	0.3	0.3	11.5	0.3	1.2	5.6
Cynon Valley	4.2	12.5	20.2	5.4	3.6	21.4	14.3	4.8	0	0	5.9	0.6	0.6	6.5

Local Authority District Analysis of United Kingdom Businesses 1996 (ONS)

IMAGINING PLACES

Fiercely competitive at an international, inter-regional and intra-regional level, images of Easington, the Cynon Valley, St. Helens and Mansfield are manipulated, transformed and promoted by agencies and authorities to attract the greatest amount of inward investment and highest level of funding. Whether to attract inward investment or funding, these places are pumped up to become larger than life as they seek to not only firmly place themselves on the map but to take up more space than any other place on that map. To encourage inward investment, aspects of places are hyped up and silkily, seductively, brashly and loudly delivered to audiences through glossy brochures, CD-Roms and internet sites, with each place vying to be one step glossier, slicker and more innovative than the next. Different images of (sometimes the same aspects of) places are presented when showing their 'needy' faces and attempting to access funding. Delivered to audiences through detailed reports, 'needy' places are worlds apart from their 'attractive' face.

Making NEEDY places

At the time of writing this paper, Siemens has announced the closure of its 'state-of the-art' microchip factory with the loss of 1,100 jobs and Fujitsu has declared that it is closing with the loss of 600 jobs. The media has focused not only on these particular companies, but on others located in the North East: American owned Grove Europe, and its 700 workers that will be 'on the scrap heap unless a buyer is found for the plant', Clarement Garments, 'the next likely victim', Rolls Royce, which is to 'shed' eighty jobs, Barbour, which is to axe 83 (The Observer 16/8/98) and Samsung, which has deferred its planned expansion (FT 2/8/98). Siemen's and Fujitsu's announcement shocked the media into highlighting not only the fragility of other companies located in the North East, but in other regions too:

'The state of the market will, nevertheless, raise fears about the South Korean company LG's planned semi-conductor plant at Newport, in Wales, due to open at the end of this year and already delayed by several months. LG has been looking for another company to become involved in the scheme and is trying to raise money to complete the plant, set to employ 1,700 people' (FT 2/8/98).

The above names of companies are consistently championed by Easington's and the Cynon Valley's representational organisations with the remit of encouraging inward investment. Such companies are built up to be monuments to a region's success with little regard to the fragility of the foundations on which they are built. Recent announcements of planned closures are reminders of the fragility of these places and the media focuses on their neediness as they remind their audiences that foreign investment was targeted by places that were experiencing the collapse of their industries and the closure of their pits, shipbuilding yards and steel works. Needy places requiring desperate measures, no matter what the cost:

'Most companies here are satellites, whatever the industry. If it has to be their own country or England, it's England that goes. If it's a national company and it has to be the North East or London, it's the North East' (Ron Bales, regional secretary of the GMB union (The Observer 16/8/98)).

Snapshots of regions, particularly the North East, provided by recent newspaper articles introduce the required ingredients for making needy places: the legacy of their heavy industrial and mining foundations and past dependencies on single employers, their edginess in the context of global competition and post-industrialisation, and their peripherality, both locationally and in relation to company decision-making and R&D. Not only are these places needy in the sense that they have experienced the demolition of their mining industries and the decline of their heavy industrial bases and the socio-economic problems that these have effected, but their neediness is reinforced by companies that locate within them, encouraged by low wages and financial incentives on offer. The looseness of inward investment makes needy places.

This section examines different imaginings of places through interviews with key actors, RECHAR 2 Documents, Single Programming Documents for Community structural assistance and written submissions to the Coalfields Task Force. Contrasting and contradicting attractive imaginings, documents demonstrate neediness through dry, sensible language in standard fonts, relying on statistics and maps to reinforce statements. Gone are the emblems, images and glossiness of documents aimed at attracting inward investment.

'Grey' literature and key actors focus on two themes in their depiction of neediness: the physical aspects of a place and the people that make a place. In the former, issues focused upon include peripherality in relation to the UK and Europe, inadequate road infrastructure and service provision, low quality housing and derelict land. The latter focuses on unemployment and high economic inactivity rates of a place's population, their serious levels of sickness, low educational attainment and insufficient skills and lack of car ownership. These two central themes are caused by the coalmining and industrial legacy of a place, which make a needy place and in turn effect low success rates of attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and relatively low numbers of SMEs. Even when regions such as the North East and South Wales, within which Easington and the Cynon Valley are respectively located, are heralded as having successfully (in relation to other places) attracted FDI, neediness is reflected through desperate financial incentives offered to potential investors and the offer of wage rates well below national levels. When satellite companies close, stop planned expansion or reduce numbers of employees, needier places are made.

The following explores the physical neediness of places before moving on to the neediness of people that make them.

Physical neediness

Peripherality

All four places are described as peripheral, but key actors and 'grey' literature focus on (sometimes) different characteristics of a place to emphasise such peripherality. Peripherality is discussed in relation to neighbouring places located within the same region, in relation to other places in the UK and Europe, and in relation to R&D centres and Head Offices of companies.

At a local level, places are tied into their regions and effected by their position in relation to neighbouring places. Cynon Valley's neediness is accentuated by its peripheral position in comparison to the relative successes of neighbouring Cardiff and the M4 corridor:

'And we have seen....a lot of inward investment coming into not just Cardiff but on the M4 corridor generally in South Wales - American investment, Japanese, Korean, especially with LG in Newport. And that is in sharp contrast to what has been happening in the valleys....the valleys have failed to attract either any substantial new investment into the area or actually succeeded in creating any indigenous growth...' (MEP (South Wales)).

Neediness caused by the Cynon Valley's failure to attract substantial inward investment is further accentuated by the perception that it is peripheral to centres where social services are concentrated. The Cynon Valley:

'has always played second fiddle to Merthyr which is much better now. And in terms of health services it has always been Merthyr-Cynon health unit....and there has always been a feeling that Merthyr got it all and Cynon didn't....I mean how true that is I wouldn't like to estimate but there is certainly a very strong feeling of that. And now there is a feeling that the Rhondda gets it all and the Cynon doesn't. Cynon has always been the poor relation' (Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC).

Likewise, Mansfield, which is '25 miles from Sheffield, 15 miles from Nottingham....sitting in the middle of nowhere' (MP (Mansfield)), is depicted as being the poor relation to its surrounding cities. Its location is made worse by its poor infrastructure because it does not have 'the infrastructures that you might have in cities for instance....Sheffield's economic regeneration after the steel was bad enough, god it was in a crisis, but it had some advantages that we've not got...in terms of at least you could get around the place for a start' (North Nottinghamshire TEC).

Actors for Easington and St. Helens emphasised the neediness of entire regions within which their respective places were located. Easington:

'is sandwiched between Tyneside, Wearside, Teeside, you know, petrol chemical industries being chopped back massively, shipbuilding industries virtually non-existent, you know the steel works have gone, so everything sort of around it has suffered as well....so there has been no other alternatives, or other opportunities, that have been created, I mean the whole area is deprived. The whole region is deprived' (Durham County Council).

Easington's 'sandwiched' position in relation to all this is not aided by it also being:

'overshadowed for so long by Newcastle and Teeside and Wearside....we've got to really shout and scream and say 'hey, take notice of us' because of the background to the area' (Easington District Council).

Easington's peripherality within such a deprived region is described as only serving to accentuate its neediness. Likewise St.Helens, which, because of its peripheral location within a region that has experienced, in addition to pit closures, the demise of its

dockyard activities and contraction of industries based on imported raw materials has 'had a sort of double hit in a way' (Government Office for the North West).

Whether peripheral to deprived areas, or relatively successful places, key actors and 'grey' literature are keen to emphasise issues of peripherality in their construction of 'needy' places because:

'relative poverty has a more devastating psycho-social impact on physical and mental health, education standards and social cohesion than absolute poverty' (North Nottinghamshire Director of Public Health - Annual Report (1997,19)).

making places all the more needier.

From a national and European perspective, the Cynon Valley, Easington and St. Helens are all described as peripheral in relation to the UK and Europe. The Cynon Valley, as part of Industrial South Wales, is presented as being located 'on the periphery of Europe' (Industrial South Wales Objective 2 Single Programming Document 1997-1999, 3), Easington is 'isolated from both major UK and European markets' (NE England RECHAR 2 Programme 1994-1997, 4) and St.Helens, as part of Merseyside:

'suffers from its position....the whole thrust of trade has moved much more towards Europe and towards the southern ports' (Government Office for North West).

Another aspect of peripherality that key informants and 'grey' literature use in their representation of 'needy' places is the lack of Head Offices and R&D in their places; the peripherality of places in relation to global contexts. The four regions, within which the places are located, have had differing success in attracting inward investment. According to the Coalfields Task Force, which focused on English coalfields, levels of success range from the North East, which has performed 'extremely well, attracting 3 to 4 times the national average number of FDI jobs per capita' (The Coalfields Task Force Report (1998, 15)) to the East Midlands coalfields which 'have achieved a level of FDI per capita which is only half the national level' (The Coalfields Task Force Report (1998, 15)). Regions like the North East, and South Wales, are hyped up as success stories in relation to the number of jobs created through inward investment, but details such as the quality of the jobs, the levels of skills required, potential job satisfaction and wage levels are not lingered over. The neediness of such places is reinforced as they are grounded into a continuing low wage economy, dependent upon ephemeral branches of globally operating companies. A place is needy if it has not attracted inward investment, but is even needier if it has. This is illustrated through the Marketing Mansfield Initiative (Mansfield District Council (1998)), which aims to increase levels of inward investment and redress the balance of low FDI per capita. Such promotional literature shows that the process of attracting inward investment involves demonstrating the 'attractiveness' of a place through statistics that show low wage costs:

'Wage costs are significantly below the national average and are therefore very competitive. The average gross weekly earnings of employees in Mansfield District (across occupations) is £268.50 compared with

£306.80 for Nottinghamshire as a whole and with £351.70 nationally (Source: Mansfield District Council Economic Development, August 1997)' (Marketing Mansfield Initiative, Mansfield District Council (1998, section 3.3)).

The above quote demonstrates the neediness of Mansfield, but the repercussions of promoting Mansfield through such statistics and figures, and the potential attraction of inward investment that this effects, will strengthen and reinforce the place's neediness and peripherality in relation to globally operating companies.

Setting the scene(ry)

In their creation of needy places, actors and 'grey' literature set neediness against a backdrop of derelict and polluted land and the adverse image of places that this causes. Incorporated into this construction of physical neediness are poor housing conditions, which add to the effect of below average living conditions for residents and a poor image for potential investors.

'Grey' literature for all places demonstrates the effects of the mining legacy on the environment and condition of housing:

Easington

'In addition to over 200 hectares of derelict land which need to be reclaimed, the effects of past large scale tipping of colliery waste on the area's beaches are still very much in evidence. These problems are exacerbated by the rundown appearance of many settlements: not only derelict land, but decaying houses, shops and social facilities' (NE England Rechar 2 Programme 1994-1997, 29).

Mansfield

'Housing conditions are often poor and some settlements have experienced a significant deterioration in housing and environmental conditions arising out of a lack of investment. Extensive ownership by private landlords can contribute to this problem as some landlords are unwilling or unable to invest in repairs..... There is ...a continuing legacy of environmental problems. Progress in respect of colliery site reclamation has in many instances been slow, reducing further opportunities for private sector investment in the area. There are significant environmental pollution problems, including serious river pollution, methane poisoning and burning pit tips' (The Forgotten Coalfields, Mansfield District Council and the District of Bolsover, 2).

Cynon Valley

'Significant parts of the region are scarred by its industrial past, and this tends to dominate the image of South Wales within Britain and the European Union. Mining and heavy industry have left a visible legacy of derelict and despoiled land and extensive potential contamination' (Industrial South Wales Objective 2 Single Programming Document 1997-1999, 44).

'There is often a legacy of industrial dereliction in mining areas, which is a particular characteristic of the coal industry and toxic waste production using heavy metal smelting. In particular spoil tips, derelict sites and polluted waterways are viewed as barriers to economic development because they deter investment' (South Wales Coalfield RECHAR 2 Programme 1994-1997, 20).

St. Helens

In St. Helens '10% of the built up area is either vacant or despoiled and over 70% of that despoilation can be attributed to mineral extraction, the majority of which was coal mining. Closure of major collieries at Parkside, Agecroft and Bickershaw/Parsonage since 1988 has added to the problems of dereliction throughout the area' (North West England RECHAR 2 Programme 1994-1997, 5).

'The environmental legacy of the area's coalfield history superimposed on its other industrial situations has produced a catalogue of dereliction, obsolescence, and contamination amongst the worst in the country. For instance, the 1993 National Survey indicated that out of 366 English Districts, ...St. Helens (9th) (was) in the worst 25 in terms of greatest amount of derelict land justifying reclamation' (Government Office for the North West submission to the Coalfields Task Force (1997, no page numbers - paragraph 3)).

Actors for St. Helens emphasise its particular situation in relation to not only coal mining but other even more polluting industries (that were) based in the place, compounding environmental problems so that 'St. Helens is basically a large chemical dump....There are certain parts of the borough that we can't build on until we know what's underneath, well it has been a chemical dump for 300 years so there is a lot of land that is not useable' (Business Link (St. Helens)). Such environmental degradation, and resulting downward pressure on rental values, for all four places does not attract speculative developers, with low rates of return discouraging their investment. For this reason the places have been dependent upon the investments of English Partnerships, but even they are unwilling to invest in the very worst parts of places:

'there are some cases that just cost too much, that we just won't do, obviously we can't do everything on Merseyside and we have turned around on a number of occasions and said it is just too expensive, just won't do it, it's as simple as that' (English Partnerships (North West)).

All of this leads to poor images of places, which compound their existing problems. The media reinforce this and contribute to the construction of neediness in their imagining of places:

'You can bet every time a local TV station came to do a programme on Easington, they would do one of two things or both things. First they take a shot over Easington colliery standing on a site that over looks the village, and do the shot of terraced houses, and horrible houses, and the next one used, going on to the beach, and take the shot of the colliery waste that was being dumped on the beach. It became a cliché. Psychologically it became dreadful for the image of the area' (East Durham Development Agency).

Staging needy places

Accentuating a place's peripherality, isolation and neediness is a poor infrastructure, which limits movements within, and accessibility to, a place. 'Grey' literature for Easington, Mansfield and the Cynon Valley emphasises the 'unsatisfactory' east-west road and rail links, with existing infrastructure reflecting past mining and old, heavy industrial demands and the particular topography of a place. This is best exemplified in the case of the Cynon Valley where it is shown that past dependencies on coal mining meant that the infrastructure had to cater for dispersed, linear settlements located within the topography of a north-south running valley. Whilst it is demonstrated that the Cynon Valley has benefited from the A470, links with other valleys are poor and it is stated that infrastructure needs to be further improved for its population to access the economic growth areas of Cardiff and the M4 corridor. Similarly, 'grey' literature for Mansfield and the East Midlands shows that shifting economic demands 'with the change in emphasis on economic activity favouring the East coast - particularly Harwich and Felixstowe - together with the opening of the Channel Tunnel'(East Midlands Objective

2 Area Single Programming Document 1997-99, 24) means that existing infrastructure, particularly east-west links, needs to be developed to take advantage of opportunities provided by the Single European Market. Although St. Helens, in the North West, is described as being 'well placed for the national motorway network', its internal links are also 'not ideal' and are 'hindered by the diverse settlement pattern, ribbon development, low bridges, canals and railways' (North West Coalfield Communities Campaign-Submission to Coalfields Task Force (1997, 3)).

An inadequate road and rail infrastructure means that not only is accessing or attracting potential employment difficult, but that accessing services is arduous for many sections of communities, particularly those on low incomes and who do not own a car. 'Grey' literature states that isolation and lack of service provision is made worse for dispersed places that were formerly dependent on coal mining and the services and facilities associated with this:

'Much of the programme area is comprised of small settlements which owe their origins to coal mining; and many of their facilities were aligned to the settlement's mine. As the mines have closed these facilities have been lost.....' (North East England RECHAR 2 Programme 1994-1997, 10).

Worst hit by poor infrastructure and service provision have been the isolated, dispersed settlements of Easington, Mansfield and the Cynon Valley, former pit villages in rural settings. Such experiences have been different in St. Helens where:

'one of the features of the North West coalfield is that it is close to major urban centres, and many of those involved in the industry travelled from those areas to work in the pits. When the mines closed, most of those leaving the industry were absorbed back into the urban areas, adding to their existing problems resulting from the rationalisation and decline of other traditional heavy industries such as engineering, textiles, chemicals and glass' (Govt Office for the North West - Submission to the Coalfields Task Force (1997, no page numbering - paragraph 1)).

Peopling needy places

The central issue upon which 'grey' literature focuses in its construction of the people that make needy places is their high level of economic inactivity. Such literature makes a point of not only showing grave levels of unemployment, but the importance of incorporating the high numbers of ex-miners on sickness related benefits that reflect the more genuine extent of a place's neediness.

High levels of economic inactivity are shown by actors and 'grey' literature to have been caused by substantial changes within the regional economy, effecting the neediness of their place. The impact of considerable job losses through pit closures is shown to be further intensified in a place by the loss of jobs in other sectors of the economy. In the 1980s, the North East lost a significant amount of jobs (33% of total employment) in the manufacturing sectors and 'construction, the sector which tends to reflect the economic conditions within an area, declined by 17%.....and between 1991 and 1993, the North East's three largest manufacturing sectors - chemicals, fabricated metals and machinery and equipment not elsewhere specified - experienced further employment decline.' (North East of England Objective 2 Area Single Programming Document 1997-99, 6-7).

Likewise for the Mansfield TTWA, with its clothing and textile industries suffering 'dramatic reductions in their employment levels' (East Midlands Objective 2 Area Single Programming Document 1997-99, 5), and for St. Helens, which between 1981 and 1991 lost 54% of its manufacturing jobs (North West RECHAR 2 Programme1994-1997, 4). Whilst 'grey' literature for all four places shows the loss of manufacturing jobs in regional economies, it also demonstrates that such employment remains above the national average. Despite this, however, for all four places, it is quick to point out that the growth in service industries is well below the national average.

'Grey' literature not only focuses on changing sectoral employment and the impact of this upon economic activity rates, but also structural changes in employment, showing rising figures for those employed in part-time occupations and for women entering the workforce. Such trends are particularly evident in the service sector, the largest growth sector for all four places, and in certain manufacturing sectors. Although female economic activity rates for all four place remain below the national average, reflecting the traditional dominance of male employment in heavy industries, women are now entering the workforce at greater speed than elsewhere. The following extract from the Single Programming Document for Industrial South Wales Objective 2 Area 1997-99 exemplifies this well:

'The economic activity rates demonstrate that in summer 1995 the female economic activity rate for ISW was 68.7% compared to a male rate of 79.9% for the area and a GB female rate of 71.8%. This reflects a traditional dominance of male employment in heavy industries which has left a legacy of low female participation rates. However the trend is towards greater female participation in the ISW area, with an increase of 4.6 percentage points between summer 1992 and summer 1995, as against a GB-wide increase of 0.5 percentage points over the same period, albeit starting from a higher level of participation. Much of the growth in economic activity in ISW in recent years has been accounted for by the increased female participation in the labour force' (Industrial South Wales Objective 2 Area Single Programming Document 1997-99, 17).

Exacerbating the problems caused by part-time employment and high levels of economic inactivity are the types of jobs, and their required skills levels, that dominate all four places. 'Grey' literature emphasises the neediness of a place through highlighting the predominance of low skilled occupations, and resulting low skill levels of the people that live there:

'Although the number of people employed as managers and administrators is thought to have risen considerably over the past few years, the North East has a low proportion in this category compared to GB, 13% compared to 16.2%. This also applies to professional and associate professional categories.....The Region continues to have a higher proportion of its workforce involved in lower skilled jobs when compared to the national situation' (North East England Objective 2 Area Single Programming Document 1997-99, 8)

'...the percentage of workers in ISW who carry out highly skilled work including managerial and professional is lower than both the UK average and the average for the whole of Wales. This to a large extent reflects the former dominance of manufacturing industry in a large part of the ISW area, with over 50% of workers having manual or clerical occupations but just over 30% in skilled employment. There is therefore a limited pool of people with experience in skilled technical or managerial work' (Industrial

South Wales Objective 2 Area Single Programming Document 1997-99, 14).

'Skill shortages are a consistent and continuing problem, although they vary within the eligible area. These shortages impact on the whole area and include engineering (skilled tool makers, welders, electricians, machine and plant operators), craft skills (woodworking, etc.), professional and managerial skills and skilled workers in the transport and communications sectors. There is a mismatch between the needs of employers, particularly SMEs and the skills, perception and expectations of the relevant communities' (North West RECHAR 2 Programme 1994-97, 4)

Low levels of skills which characterise all four places are depicted as a reflection of their coalmining and industrial pasts and the communities that supported these. Formal, academic qualifications were not a prerequisite for employment in the mines:

'The skills and qualifications of the work force in the area reflect its history of coal mining. Almost half the Rechar area's males of working age have manual occupations, just over a quarter of these in skilled employment. Almost one in four females has a manual occupation. Fewer than one in six males and females holds a professional managerial or technical position. There is therefore a limited pool of people with experience in skilled technical or managerial work. Former employees of the coal industry often have skills which are specific to mining and which cannot be transferred' (South Wales Coalfield RECHAR 2 Programme 1994-1997, 15)

All of this has impacted upon below average educational qualifications held by people populating all four needy places:

'Levels of attainment are below average on the coalfield area with St. Helens and Salford scoring particularly badly. In St. Helens for example the proportion of 16 year olds staying on in education was 58% in 1993, 10% below the England and Wales average. The proportion of St. Helens population with post-18 educational qualifications is only 9%' (North West Coalfield Communities Campaign - Submission to the Coalfields Task Force (1997, 7)).

'In Mansfield District only 29.9% of Year 11 students gained 5 GCSE's Grade A-C compared with 36.8% across Nottinghamshire and 44.5% in England. In those schools located in the former mining areas it is often even lower' (The Forgotten Coalfields, the District of Bolsover and Mansfield District Council, 2)

Low levels of skill and qualifications held by the people of a place perpetuate its neediness and attractiveness to companies looking for a low skilled, low paid pool of labour; the people of each of the four places is reinforcing its neediness:

'Locally average pay levels in St Helens are almost 30% below the average for the North-West, which in turn is below the national average' (North West Coalfield Communities Campaign - Submission to the Coalfields Task Force (1997, 7)).

'Even amongst the employed, average gross weekly earnings are low - £268.50 for Mansfield (whole district).....ranking Mansfield as the fifth lowest of the 318 Districts for which data was available' (The Forgotten Coalfields, the District of Bolsover and Mansfield District Council, 2).

Such low paid and low skilled employment and the rising predominance of part-time jobs contribute to problems caused by high levels of economic inactivity, resulting in the depiction of households suffering from large debts:

'There are significant problems of debt amongst households. The enquiry statistics of the local Mansfield CAB, which covers the majority of the target area, reveal that at least 40% of all its enquiries during 1996/97 were debt related' (The Forgotten Coalfields, the District of Bolsover and Mansfield District Council, 2)

Layered onto households' debts are other problems, such as relationship breakdowns, resulting in painful disruptions to households. Many actors and much of the 'grey' literature attributed such problems to structural changes in employment, with high levels of male economic inactivity and increases in female participation in the workforce forcing changes in gender roles within households.

Changes (and problems) caused by transformations in sectors and structures of employment effecting people making needy places are exacerbated by the erosion of services that previously supported them. Not only are needy places constructed as suffering from the erosion of existing services but also from the lack of new ones, such as transport links and crèche facilities, which are imperative if communities are to access jobs, find re-employment and cope with the effects of changes in the local economy. Such a needy backdrop to each of the four places intensifies the neediness of the people that live in them, further exacerbating a place's indigence.

Households of communities experiencing the closure of their dominant industries, erosion of services and facilities, disruption as they cope with relationship breakdowns and low incomes are at higher risk of ill health:

'Research carried out by Nottingham University following the major pit closures in 1992 to 1994, indicated changes in lifestyle which have a negative impact on health. This was particularly in the area of relationship breakdown....Nottinghamshire has the highest number of couples who file for divorce.....The rise in families classified as high risk for child protection issues, the rise in drug misuse, particularly amongst young people and the high proportion of burglary and robbery crime committed by young people are significant manifestations of these changes' (North Nottinghamshire Director of Public Health - Annual Report (1997, 21)).

'Grey' literature emphasises the neediness of people through focusing on issues of ill-health. Not only does it connect such ill health with the legacy of the coalmining industry, but it also demonstrates the effect of pit and other industrial closures and the forced lifestyle changes that these have effected on the people of places:

'The North-West Coalfield has a relatively high mortality rate with a high level of respiratory and associated illnesses. Four out of the five RECHAR authorities have death rates above the national average....The variation in the distribution of illness follows closely the locations of heavy industry in the past. It has also been observed that residents in old mining areas make greater use of health services' (North West Coalfield Communities Campaign - Submission to the Coalfields Task Force (1997, 8)).

'the proportion of the male population of working age who are unable to work because of long term sickness and disability is 9.5%. The national average is only 5.3%. This figure demonstrates the impact that the area's industrial past has had on its population, both directly and indirectly....within England and Wales, Easington has the 3rd highest percentage of residents who are classed as permanently sick and the 4th highest percentage of residents who are chronically ill' (North East England RECHAR 2 Programme 1994-7, 10)

‘The legacy of heavy industry in South Wales includes high levels of ill health and premature death. Of all counties in England and Wales, Mid Glamorgan has the highest percentage (39.2%) of households with one or more people with limiting long-term illness.....The Valley districts have actual mortality rates up to 17% higher than the expected standardised rates based upon their age and gender structure. This tendency towards ill health is exacerbated by the link between poverty and diet leading to decreasing resistance to disease and injury’ (Industrial South Wales Objective 2 Area Single Programming Document 1997-99, 6)

‘Research suggests that high levels of unemployment put unemployed people at a higher risk of ill-health with the loss of a job leading to impaired health. On a local level in the vicinity of the former Parkside Colliery the number of people with long term illness is 36% above the GB average. Deaths from coronary heart disease are almost 40% higher than average’ (North West Coalfield Communities Campaign - Submission to the Coalfields Task Force (1997, 9)).

Imagining ATTRACTIVE places

competitive

The driving force behind making attractive places is ‘the competition’ for inward investment and this was recognised by all key actors. All places referred to inter-regional competitiveness:

> "We are in direct competition with Wales, Scotland, Europe and the former Eastern Europe, in particular” (East Durham Development Agency).

> "I come from Doncaster and South Yorkshire and I think they are a few years behind this area. In fact I would say they are many years behind this area. Wales is very aggressive in its marketing.....Like the Irish and Scottish .....there is a lot of fighting going on for the few International inward investment projects.” (Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC).

Intra-regional competitiveness was mentioned:

> “...so we would try to, sort of, sell it as best we can, but you, you know, you are in competition with the rest of the area..... we're in competition within the sub-region.....”. (Durham County Council).

and actors from the Cynon Valley not only competitively react to enquiries from potential inward investors, but target and poach companies based in other UK regions:

> “all the local authorities within the Valleys areas, i.e. all those local authorities, that are in the former coal mining area, have got together and have a joint marketing campaign, which have used a range of different initiatives, over the years, from direct mail, telesales and, recently, we've done, sort of individual initiatives. We have identified the areas where companies can't expand through lack of labour, or whatever, and we have actually targeted .....companies that, in the UK, that are situated in non-development areas. So we're involved in that.....A typical example of success with regards to that is Flexicare Medical, which are also based in the Cynon Valley, they were brought into the area as a direct result of that particular initiative, they created 200 jobs, I've forgotten how many million £ investments, there is now. There's another one that we had on the back of that one, because Flexicare moved in. We had another medical company move in called Rochelle, from the Cambridgeshire area. They moved in also, so you've got 2 medical companies, move into the area” (Welsh Development Agency).

Place promotion material and interviews with key actors involved in marketing places demonstrate the competition for inward investment as places set themselves up as ‘lean

and hungry' (Marketing Mansfield Initiative, Mansfield District Council (1998, section 1.1)) and adopt tough, bright, 'no-nonsense' language and images to market what makes their place unique and attractive. They all use uniqueness as a selling point but in the construction of this, promotional material and key actors focus on similar issues, all asserting their place transformative visions, the centrality of their location, their high calibre workforce, companies which have located in their place, unbeatable financial incentives, cheap housing, proactive, supportive agencies and quality leisure opportunities. The following section explores these similarities, showing the similar images that are constructed to sell their places before moving on to examine differences.

Similar imaginings

transformed

From the outset, constructed images of all four places aim to demonstrate that they are transformed places, unshackled from the legacy of the coalmining industry and the old industrial sector:

> 'Obviously if you've got an historic problem and people think you can't hack it and you can't make a profit here that goes on unless someone starts to take it and actually correct the image' (St. Helens MBC).

and looking towards a modern, diversified, hi-tech, new future:

> "Read on, and you'll find that Mansfield is not about pits and racing pigeons. You might see the odd cloth cap and a whippet here and there, but if the town has a strong foundation in the past, it also has its eyes on the future. The last mine in Mansfield is a mine of opportunity, and it could yield pure gold." (Marketing Mansfield Initiative, Mansfiled District Council (1998, section 1.1)).

Likewise, Easington is moving away from its 'yesterdays of coal to a present of computer chips and microtechnology' (East Durham Development Agency Property Guide), not constructing 'an image based on where we've come from...cog wheels, pit heads... but one that speaks about where we're going, what we want to be' (Easington District Council).

By looking to the future, new imaginings of place attempt to not only show a fresh face and new visions to both outsiders and inhabitants but to also 'challenge and change negative perceptions' (The Mersey Partnership website) connected with past identities. The Mersey Partnership aims to achieve this through its national advertising campaign, 'Merseyside: A pool of talent', which 'focuses explicitly on local people, implicitly on place'. Its advertisements attempt to humorously confront and transform negative images of Merseyside, tackling 'one of the enduring myths - that of the strike bound worker' (The Mersey Partnership website). Less famously, Mansfield, Easington and the Cynon Valley also actively seek to challenge negative images, as exemplified by a key actor of Mansfield District Council:

> 'we need to improve the perception of Mansfield....and that's one of the purposes of the major Marketing Mansfield Initiative' (Mansfield District Council).

Through transforming perceptions via imagery, actors hope images effect and become reality:

> 'Influential organisations and people involved in change in Mansfield will establish the kind of positive identity we want for the area, what future we want for Mansfield District, and what type of economy and life we want for the people who live here' (Mansfield District Council - Agenda for Change, 14).

....ensuring

> 'that the vision of a better Mansfield District becomes a reality' (Mansfield District Council - Agenda for Change, 5).

Supporting and reinforcing this transforming, forward looking and visionary imagery are the media through which places are promoted. Images of places are layered on to websites where audiences are informed that they have 'made it' to the District of Easington, 'the place to be'; have accessed 'Rhondda Cynon Taff: A vision for business success'; have located 'Invest in North Nottinghamshire'; or are welcomed to 'MerseyWorld - Promoting Liverpool and its regions' where 'St. Helens - The Go-Ahead Borough with a Proud Heritage' can be accessed. Styles of communication vary, ranging from Easington's acidic yellow backdrop and flashing images to scenic images of St. Helens, but the central themes of the messages are the same. Other media through which images of places are constructed include promotional brochures which overflow with loud and bright statements, illustrated by (distorted) maps, bar charts and glimpses of disjointed places through decontextualised (young) people, their workplaces and leisure activities. Most agencies opt for highly glossy and silky promotional brochures that slip through fingers, apart from The Mersey Partnership which, in its decidedly unslippery brochure 'Making things happen', states that 'it's about focused business solutions and not the glossy brochures much beloved by some other regions' (The Mersey Partnership (1997,1)). Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council takes the promotion (and construction) of their place one step further through providing their audience with a CD-ROM because 'we need to project an image which reflects the fact that we are at the leading edge of new technology' (Neil Hanratty, Valleys Innovation Centre Manager (in a report written by Nerys Lloyd Pierce -Virtual development (Corporate Wales (1998, 94)).

centrality

Despite 'the days being gone.....when you drew yourself a map of Britain and you put you in the middle' (St. Helens MBC), the first message that smacks an audience for all four places is their central location. Actors are quick to construct the image that their place is central to the UK, Europe and beyond, focusing on various criteria and distorting maps to construct this centrality in relation to other cities, markets and places. The following extracts and maps demonstrate how each place constructs an image of centrality:

> Easington

'Any firm, no matter how small, can benefit from the huge potential market of 320 million people provided by the Single European Market. But in order to take advantage of this golden opportunity - a population nearly as big as the whole of the USA and Japan put together - one needs good communications. That's why companies located in East Durham have the edge over less fortunate firms in other parts of the country' (East Durham Development Agency - Property Guide).

Mansfield
'This central location is within two hours' drive of over half of England's population, made readily accessible by major rail and road links (M1, A1, A38, A60).....the central location enables straightforward links to anywhere in the country' (Mansfield District Council - Marketing Mansfield Initiative (1998,section 1.1)).

Rhondda Cynon Taff
'Imagine an area right in the centre of South Wales's expanding business centre, fed by excellent road, rail, sea and air services and within two and a half hours driving time from London. As the ideal business location, Rhondda Cynon Taff is easily and quickly reached from all parts of the UK, Europe and beyond' (Rhondda Cynon Taff: A vision for business success (brochure 1998 (no page/section nos.)).

St. Helens
'Liverpool's historic tradition as a world class maritime city has positioned Merseyside at the heart of international business for more than four centuries. Its unrivalled air, road, sea and rail services provide easy, fast links to the rest of the UK. The region provides the cost advantages of a strategic location in the UK and quick and efficient links to all the European markets' (Advertisement - Merseyside: A pool of talent (Available on the The Mersey Partnership website)).

Embedded within central location imagery, is the representation of each place at the hub of local frantic, busy and successful activity. Easington is positioned at 'the epicentre of business activity in north east England - the UK's most dynamic investment arena' (Easington District website). Drawing a neat triangle with (soon to be closed) Siemens and Nissan at the top, (soon to be closed) Fujitsu to the south west and Samsung to the south, the District of Easington is (inaccurately) squeezed into its centre, where it is 'at the heart of all this activity' (Easington District website). Likewise, Mansfield is falsely described, as demonstrated by accompanying map, to be 'advantageously positioned at the centre of the Sheffield/Nottingham/Derby triangle' (Mansfield District Council - Marketing Mansfield Initiative (1998, section 1.3) and Rhondda Cynon Taff is outlined as the 'manufacturing heartland of South Wales' (Corporate Wales (1998, 91)).

'the product'

Once each of the four places has been located or, more appropriately, produced, images of skilled workers, prime sites, the presence of other prestigious companies and 'enviable' surroundings are incorporated into the product. Produced for the consumption of potential inward investors, place images are constructed to tantalise the perceived palates of this particular audience, hence the similarities in the four places being produced. Each place is the product of a fragile relationship between potential investors and the 'realities' of place which suggests that more is to be learnt about the character of global capital than about any such 'realities'. Targeting (a) different audience(s) would

result in the construction and production of fundamentally different imagined places.

Crucial to the product is the workforce and although promotional material for each place emphasises future visions and images of somewhere that 'has moved on from its strong industrial past to meet head on the challenges of today' (Rhondda Cynon Taff: A vision for the future, 1998 (no page/section nos.)), all four places 'use' their heavy industrial and coal mining heritage to construct images of their workforces. This is exemplified in the following extracts:

'Within the district of Easington there is 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.' (Easington District website).

'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' (Mansfield District Council, Marketing Mansfield Initiative (1998,XX)).

Visionary images of the previous section are grounded by the 'gritty' representation of a place's workforce as promotional material emphasises the skilled and hard working character of a place and its familiarity with shift work in tough conditions. Images are further strengthened by statistics that demonstrate the 'drive and determination' (Mansfield District Council, Marketing Mansfield Initiative (1998, section 3.1)) of a place through, for example, relatively few working days lost per year in comparison to other UK regions (Mansfield District Council, Marketing Mansfield Initiative (1998)). Revealing the character of potential investors and reinforcing their competitive image of their place, actors for all four areas also emphasise and show that their wage costs are significantly below the national average.

To increase the attractiveness of the product, places are further represented through their dynamic Economic Development Units which have the 'expertise and professionalism' (Rhondda Cynon Taff: A vision for the future (1998 (no page/section nos.)) to support potential investors and are 'proactive' and 'focused' (Mansield District Council: Agenda for Change) in their delivery of incentives and services.

> 'All these opportunities are backed up by proactive and supportive agencies such as Mansfield District Council who will co-ordinate and provide the advice and help necessary to ensure any venture gets off to the best possible start. The council encourages an optimistic, go-ahead environment, with the local political and business community working together. This is a 'can do' town where the spirit is strong and there is a real will to succeed' (Mansfield District Council, Marketing Mansfield Initiative (1998, section 1.1)).

A key actor for Easington District Council demonstrates in the following quote how their new emblem is designed to transform not only the perception of the authority, but also, through them, to effect the representation of place:

> (Describing emblem of running man)

> '...it's got the 'e' for Easington, it's meant to be warm, friendly, 'hi there, how ya doing', you know we're a bit out of the ordinary.....everyone comes to work to shine, it's brilliant, fantastic, you're part of the team, we're number one collectively as people, 'hi there', glad to please, another champion idea, most excellent...it's like Bill and Ted isn't it, you're welcome, pull it together, free spirits, thanks, making a splash. It's about being brilliant, being 'magic on the pitch'. We've got to be slick and cohesive and if you're not you're dead' (Easington District Council).

At the bottom of each letter page, to explain the emblem, will be the words 'The little fellow in our logo captures the welcoming nature of the people of our district and the positive way in which we serve them' and on the sides of authority vehicles will be the phrase 'magic on the pitch'. This emblem and its accompanying statements serve not only to promote an image of the District Council but also a friendly, vibrant, no-nonsense and modern image of the place; the emblem is 'carrying a torch for the area' (Easington District Council), providing it with a particular image.

An image of cooperativeness, willingness (and desperation) of all four places is further supported by financial incentives offered by Economic Development Units:

> 'Mansfield's Assisted Area Status within the UK, and within the EU, qualifies the area for a variety of financial support measures designed to facilitate new investment and operational competitiveness. Enterprise Zone status at the local Crown Farm Industrial Park also provides an unbeatable cocktail of property development incentives on that site' (Mansfield District Council, Marketing Mansfield Initiative (1998, section 7.1)).

> 'Rhondda Cynon Taff understands that realising a vision sometimes needs a helping hand. The whole of the County Borough has government Assisted Area status, attracting some of the highest levels of grant assistance available in the UK mainland' (Rhondda Cynon Taff: A vision for business success 1998 (no page/section nos.)).

A final glossy image is layered on to the product by providing flashes of modern and hi-tech workplaces and glimpses of leafy countryside or waterside places for the pursuit of leisure activities. Promotional material focuses on low rise, glass fronted buildings located in neat, leafy environments to project a sophisticated, modern image of their places. Rhondda Cynon Taff assertively markets an image of itself through the promotion of one particular property, the Valleys Innovation Centre:

> 'The Valleys Innovation Centre is a flagship development based at Navigation Park, Abercynon. Established in 1997, the £2.8m centre was developed to provide a focus for improving the innovation culture in the Valleys area by supporting the creation and development of new technology firms, and encouraging existing firms to invest in R&D and new technologies' (Corporate Wales (1998, 94)).

Rhondda Cynon Taff's CD-Rom provides a virtual reality tour of the Valleys Innovation Centre, projecting a hi-tech image of the Valleys whilst aiming to attract multi-media and software development companies to realise that image.

In addition to constructing a place with attractive work sites, all promotional literature

allocates substantial space to creating an appealing leisure environment. The striking feature of these images are that they are reliant upon places outside of the place being promoted; all four places use other places to construct an image of their place:

> 'To complete your vision, imagine living and working in an area surrounded by some of the most breathtaking scenery in the country. A region a stone's throw from the mountainous Brecon Beacons as well as beautiful bays and beaches of the south and west Wales coastline' (Rhondda Cynon Taff: A vision for business success (1998, no page/section nos.)).

> 'Only 12 miles away is Liverpool with its many attractions.....only 8 miles away to the north of the town, Wigan.....and a beautiful Victorian seaside resort....Southport, only 16 miles away. One of the nice things about living in this Borough is access to these areas and even further afield' (St. Helens website).

Words are supported by images of windsurfers, walkers and golfers in a disconnected setting to the place being promoted. The actual setting is irrelevant, however, as the gaze is drawn to blue skies, sunsets and leafiness, reflecting an image of healthy well-being.

Different imaginings

Despite promotional material conveying broadly similar messages which identifies potential investors more than it does the places themselves, there are differences in its scope and appearance that effect conveyed representations. Agencies and authorities adopt different styles, emblems and use of language, injecting messages with meanings that impact upon imaginings of place. Behind these differences are the particular agendas of agencies and authorities representing a place and their relationships with one another which effect strategies and agendas and the size of marketing budgets. Whilst all are promoted at different levels, as an authority, as part of a larger region, as a region of the UK through the Invest in Britain Bureau, the local authorities of Easington, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Mansfield each aggressively promote their particular place themselves whereas St. Helens is mainly marketed through Merseyside's campaign:

'we work very closely with The Mersey(side) Partnership who spends the bulk of our promotional money...when I say 'our' - Merseyside's million pound a year...' (St. Helens MBC).

Unlike the other three places, St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council does not spearhead a marketing campaign of its own.

styling place

Of all four place promotion campaigns, Rhondda Cynon Taff's 'A Vision for business success' playfully seduces its audience through its use of language and eye emblem (see Figure 1). Unlike the others, Rhondda Cynon Taff talks to 'you' the audience, asking you to 'picture for yourself', to 'set your sites' and to 'imagine' for yourself whilst 'they' continually maintain eye contact with you and hold you in their gaze. There is no escape. And the playful uses of the eye emblem whilst you 'realise your vision', 'see for yourself'

Figure 1: Cover of Rhondda Cynon Taff CD-ROM – 'A vision for business success'

and explore with 'them' their 'viable viewpoint' provides a sensual experience which aims to engage with 'you'. Supporting such an experience is the packaging of the promotional material. The brochure is dominantly white and super glossy and slips in and out of a white envelope which is shaped so that the haunting gaze of the eye is never lost. The eye emblem and visionary imagery are repeated on Rhondda Cynon Taff's web site, as are images of the iconic Valleys Innovation Centre. The site is layered with images that 'grow' at 'you', starting small and then taking up a significant proportion of the screen to illustrate accompanying text. Unlike the other three places, Rhondda Cynon Taff opts for the sensuous, seductive and sophisticated imagining of place, making apparent its visions of a hi-tech place at the leading edge of multi-media and software development companies. A place that has moved on from its legacy of coalmining.

Figure 2: Opening screen on Easington's website.

In direct contrast, Easington's promotional material is loud and brightly coloured in acidic yellows and oranges and adopts a straight-talking, no-nonsense approach. Similarly, Easington District's website is bold and loud and its first statements are that 'you made it' and that 'this is the place to be' (see Figure 2). The opening screen is followed by two further screens containing only short, bold statements about the place before commencing into more detailed accounts of Easington's location, enterprising people and extra assistance. Appearing on every screen is the head of a figure wearing a cap who informs 'you' that 'you made it' and that 'you' should 'e-mail me'. Short and bold statements are supported by headings and boxes containing 'bubble' lettering with no capital letters, reinforcing a 'down to earth' image of a place that 'means business' and wants to talk, wants to be e-mailed or contacted. Easington's website is about friendliness, straight talking and being heard, aiming to represent the attitude of its people and the place itself.

Like Easington, The Mersey Partnership (The Mersey Partnership - Making Things Happen (1997)) (see Figure 3) uses bright colours to project a particular representation of itself, particularly blue, reflecting its 'pool of talent' imagery. Methods of promoting Merseyside are considerably different to the other three places, which opt for providing a more general image of their place and not specifically targeting particular audiences. Instead, the Mersey Partnership adopts a twofold approach: one that aims to especially confront negative perceptions to promote the region as a whole and another that targets particular investor interest and enquiries. The first uses humour and focuses on its people in its national campaign to address negative perceptions of its workforce and, through them, the place. The second approach loses the humour because 'investors need hard facts' and adopts 'a focused campaign to attract key business growth sectors'(The Mersey Partnership, 1997). These include call centres, automotives and distribution and images of Merseyside are specifically tailored to suit the needs of such business growth sectors. Like the national campaign to confront negative perceptions, the targeted campaigns also focus immediately on the people, its 'natural talent', dehumanising them into a cheap workforce that can be recruited and trained through TECs. The people, themselves, are unimportant in the construction of such images, more important is a workforce capability that can be pummelled into shape as it is handled by various organisations. The Mersey Partnership constructs statements that are 'punchy' and direct, constructing an image of a place that is in control and knows where it is heading.

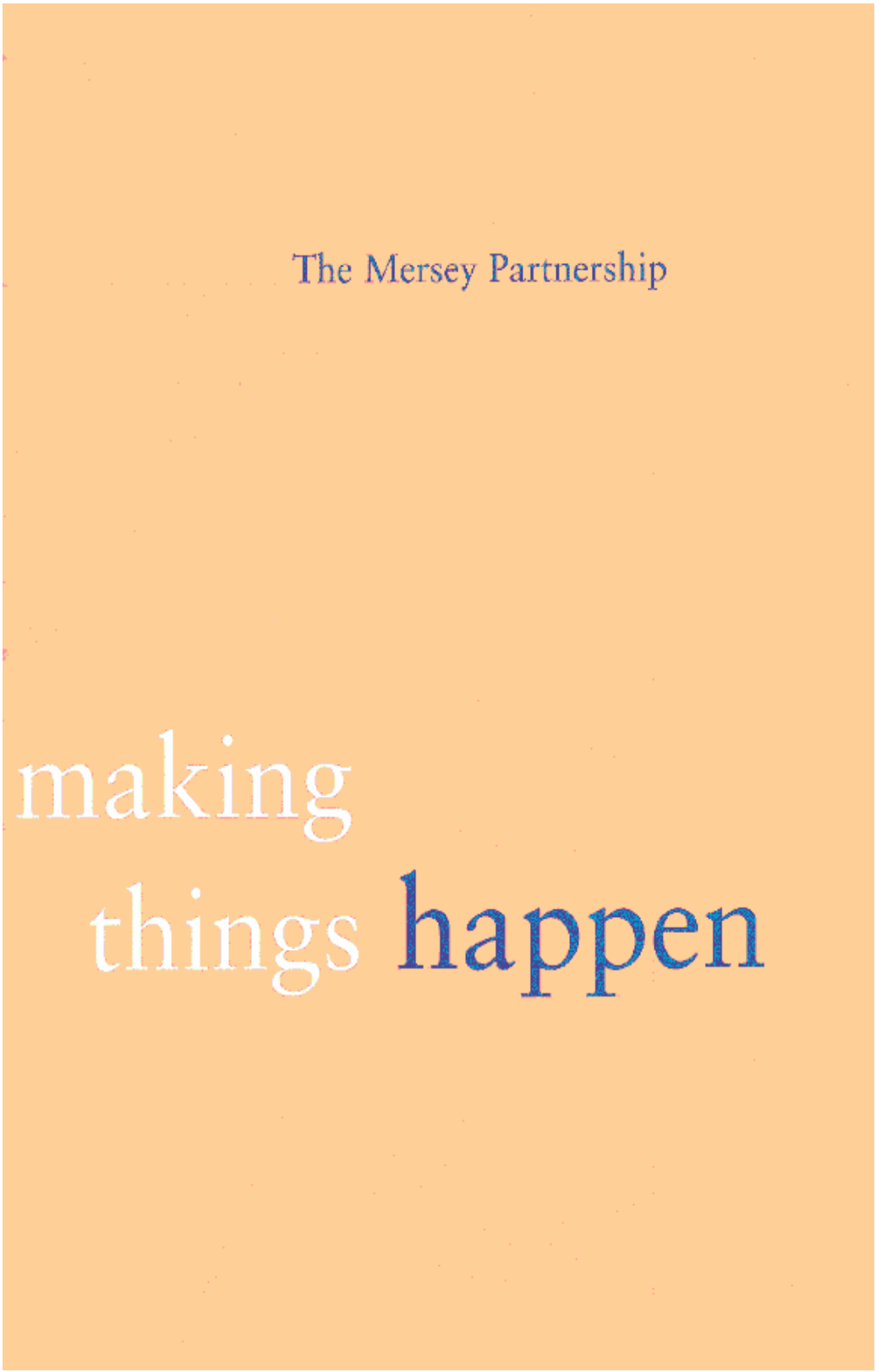

Figure 3: Cover of ‘The Mersey Partnership – Making things happen’ brochure

Unlike the Easington and Rhondda Cynon Taff websites, that of St. Helens is an information guide that does not aggressively market itself through bold statements and emblems. Scenic images, such as the 'picturesque High Street at Newton-le-Willows', suggest a leafy town richly endowed with leisure facilities and not a place that is promoting itself for inward investment. There are segments of the website which focus attention on the council's dedication to education and training and 'The Road to Future Success', but these provide information about progress rather than specifically targeting potential investors:

> 'Already great interest has been shown by would-be-investors. Adding to the rapid economic growth are substantial new developments which include three new hotels, three superstores, the Hotties Science and Arts Centre and significant housing and retail developments. Proof of the growing attraction of St. Helens as the place to do business is illustrated by English Estates, who are developing three large industrial units on the Lea Green Industrial Estate. Proposals are in hand for a 45 acre business park at Ravenhead.' (St. Helens MBC website).

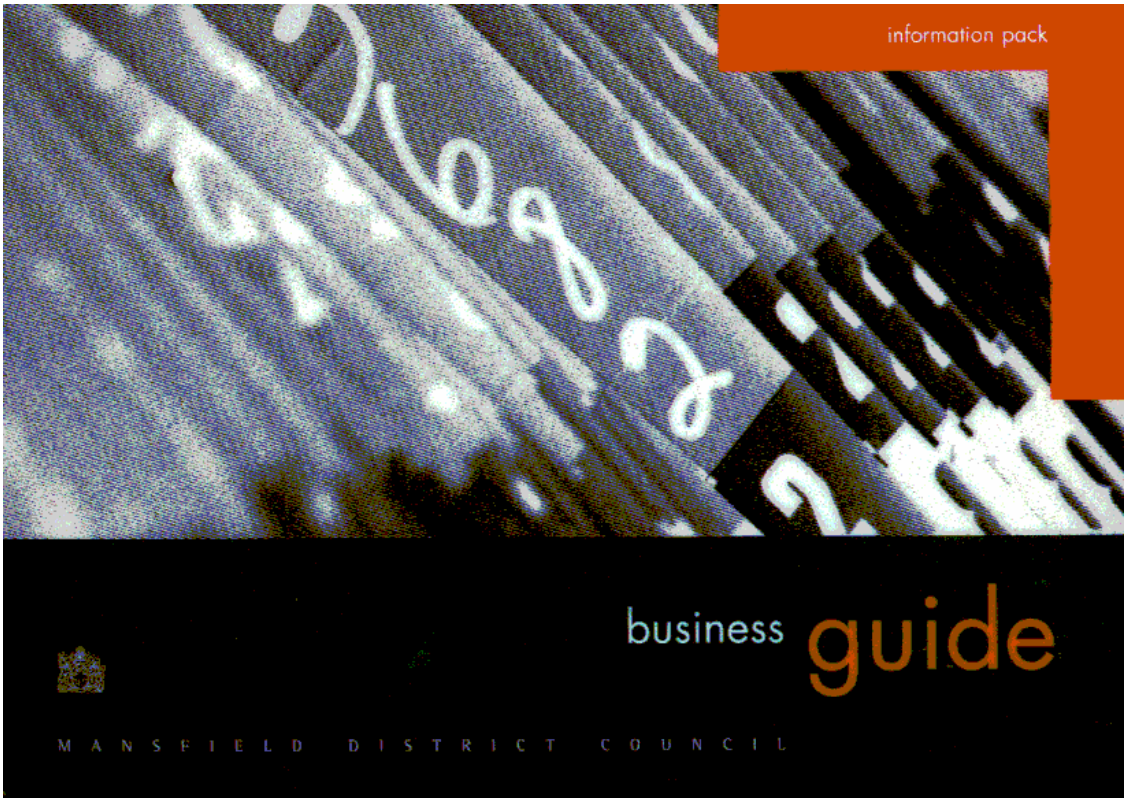

Figure 4: Cover of Mansfield District Council's 'Business guide' brochure.

The Marketing Mansfield Initiative (MMI) (Mansfield District Council (1998)), which is spearheaded by the Economic Development Service of the District Council, aims to raise 'awareness of Mansfield as a premier location among key decision makers who are considering relocation of their businesses' (Mansfield District Council, MMI (1998, section 1.2)). Launched in 1998, the MMI sets out its promotional campaign in a black and white coloured brochure (see Fig. 4) that carries the logo 'think Mansfield - working

for the future'. Unlike Rhondda Cynon Taff and Easington, the MMI does not use an emblem to facilitate the construction of an image for itself and unlike the Mersey Partnership it does not target a specific business sector. Instead, it maps out an image of itself through a chronological guide which introduces its audience to itself and the area before presenting its workforce, communications, investment, land and property, financial assistance, training and education, key contacts and development profiles. This non-gimmicky approach is supported by an up-beat use of language and a range of different images that focus on scenic views of Mansfield, workplaces, and magnified details of images that convey particular messages about the place, for example, hi-techness and the market town aspect of Mansfield.

Mansfield District Council is one of the main partners involved in the 'Invest in North Nottinghamshire' website promotional campaign. Like the websites of Easington and Rhondda Cynon Taff, 'Invest in North Nottinghamshire' provides its audience with a brief overview as to why it is competitively advantaged as a location for new investment, introducing the grants and incentives, business support, local economy and lifestyle that it has to offer as well as the companies already located there. The website plays on its associations with Sherwood Forest, requesting its audience to click on the relevant 'leaf' for further required information but does not use bold emblems or strong key phrases to depict an image of itself. Instead, it provides a source of introductory information, opening with a shot of a woman reading a newspaper, pen in hand, against a back drop of water, leafiness and attractive buildings. Accompanying text introduces North Nottinghamshire as 'THE location for any company seeking to expand in Britain and Europe', where it is and the type of information available on the web site.

LIVING PLACES

The Coalfields Task Force Report (1998) begins with the following paragraph:

'There is nowhere else like the coalfields. Their long history as the engine of the nation's industrialisation meant they developed a cohesion, a reliance on a single industry and an independent existence with few parallels. This was their greatest strength when the mines were producing and now it is their greatest weakness' (The Coalfields Task Force Report (1998, 7)).

The above quote essentially captures *the* 'place' to which actors for all four places allude when describing 'their' particular former coalfield places. In their accounts they describe the extraordinariness of former coalfields and the elements that bind them: the paternalistic nature of the coalmining industry, the isolated locations and the strong communities that these effected. Powerful images are evoked as all four places are tied into *the* 'place' of coalfields through shared experiences of single industry communities, bound together through not only work, but also social and political affairs.

The uniqueness of the place of coalfields is important to this section because it forms a backdrop to which actors regularly refer. Inherent differences, however, emerge from within such accounts, opening the cracks which differentiate one coalfield place from another and problematising the assumed image of the homogeneous coalfields. Not only

do differences between places emerge, but also each place itself shifts and changes according to the actor describing it and 'living' it out.

This section is entitled 'living places' to emphasise the point that each of the four places is a changing 'flow' and not a staid 'thing' and that they 'live' differently according to the individual experiencing them. Affecting such differences are the particular characteristics of the individual describing a place, especially their personal relationship with it and their position in relation to its process of regeneration. Even within an individual's account the place can change as they differently construct it according to the issues being discussed.

This section sits abreast different individuals' representations of a place, a place which itself has been produced through generations and flows of people. It aims to embrace and not hide contradictions that emerge from various individuals' accounts of a place, which vary according to their relationship and extent of contact with it. Some of the quotes taken from representations reveal very different relationships with a place, ranging from those who were born and bred there, and whose descriptions emerge through passionate and deep-rooted connections, to those who have always lived outside of it and are aloof and distant in their portrayals. Far from prioritising one person's representation over another's, all are important to 'Living places', having direct implications for regenerative aspirations, aims and processes.

Shared uniqueness

Like The Coalfields Task Force in the opening paragraph of their report (1998), actors involved in the regeneration of former coalfield places sometimes conceal the cracks that divide one former coalfield place from another to empower *the* 'place' of coalfields. Empowering and vitalising *the* 'place' of former coalfields is necessary for regenerative purposes and requires the construction of a strong, coherent identity; an identity that is reminiscent of the (constructed) communities that comprise(d) them and their shared dependencies on the coalmining industry. The shared uniqueness of *the* 'place' of coalfields is (and was) always a construction with actors having to work hard at concealing the cracks. The Coalfields Task Force bases its name on *the* 'place' that no longer exists, made up of places that its own report shows have little in common, with them variously wining (losing) and losing in their different experiences of regeneration since the closure of their pits. Similar, however, to the actors that attach their place to *the* 'place' of the coalfields, The Coalfields Task Force names itself in such a way to construct an identity for itself and former coalfield places, to empower itself and former coalfield places.

Constructions of a shared uniqueness always require going *back* to a place and defining that place through the community that comprised it. Individuals are portrayed as being bound to a community through their relational ties, locking them into relationships of dependency.

'Now I was brought up in a mining community, I am going back to my grandfather or great grandfather where everyone drank, prayed, socialised brought up a family and died literally within a square mile of

their workplace and the epicentre around it' (Voluntary Care for the Unemployed (Aberdare))

'People have been mining coal in the same sites, where my pit was they had been mining coal there since the 16th century, so geographically the miners have always been where the coal is so everybody who has lived there has always been part of the mining culture and tradition, not for a few decades but hundreds of years and that has to have an effect on the socialisation on the people who live there.....It was strange in the way the army is strange, it was dangerous so it was a bit different from most other industries. That is very well documented, the camaraderie between miners, that's how the trade union movement grew, it grew out of miners working under ground in the South Wales valleys.' (Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (North West)).

'Young people entering the mining industry were very quickly brought into an atmosphere of self-discipline, because when they got underground, you have to have very good discipline. You cannot afford anybody working underground who wasn't disciplined properly. There is a code of conduct.....The mining industry itself formed part of the discipline that's required in society in general, and I'm not talking about discipline in the sense where you brutalise people, anything like that...it's a condition of mind, it's how you condition people's minds, as to which way they should be conducting themselves not only in their work, but in society in general. They weren't only subject to that type of discipline, they were provided with sporting facilities, cricket, football, tennis, bowls, they had the miners' hall for social functions and entertainment and all of these organisations had structured discipline....and all the young people coming through were subject to this influence of how to conduct themselves and the discipline and it all stemmed from the mining industry itself' (NUM (Durham))

'.....it's not as good as it was, because when the miners were all working together, they would go down the pub, go to the Welfare, play football on Sunday. The wives would go down the pub and there was a lot of sporting facilities etc. You'd see each other at the shops' (Nottinghamshire County Council)

'....the particular nature of coalfield communities in terms of being, I mean you can describe them as being tight-knit communities in the past, if you are going to be not negative about it but fairly open about it, they have been fairly inward looking communities. They haven't had the need to look outside themselves. So in many ways well looked after by the coal industry....You know the infrastructure that was there from CISWO is just one example of the structures that they had around them' (North Nottinghamshire Health Authority)

All of the above representations similarly depict the strength and unique culture of places' communities which were reinforced by the coalmining industry and the discipline it demanded. Much of what is stated in each of the above statements could be swapped from place to place and still make sense and be relevant to the particular place being depicted. Most actors for all four places project an image of *the* 'place' of the coalfields, empowering them as they do so. Reasons, however, for doing this differ, with the proponents of the first three above statements talking through rooted, personal experiences, pushing for the regeneration of their places so they can get back to the way they were.

'It's a long way back.....I think there is a long way to go back for coal mining communities and I think that it is going to be a long time before they get back to the kind of wage levels and quality of life that they had in the '80's. There is a way back, and I am hopeful because there are some strong partnerships in this coalfield and there are people in good positions who are committed to improving the situations. So I am optimistic, but it is a long long way back, it really is a long 'un .....We will get back - I hope! It's just a long long way back. One day we'll get there' (Mansfield Unemployed Workers Centre).

The latter two, less personally connected with their places, are exposing the legacy of the

coalmining industry and the hurdles that it presents in the regenerative transformation of such places into new, forward looking places.

At an extreme point, actors less connected with the place they are depicting distance themselves from and problematise the parochial attitude of *the* 'place' of the coalfields to such an extent that 'weird' places are constructed. In these representations, boundaries are tightly drawn around *the* 'place' of the coalfields, separating 'them' from 'us'. More evident in such descriptions are the presence of the interviewers who themselves effect constructions of the place as they are perceived as being one of 'us' and different from 'them'. Not only do representations of living places include the people that live in (and make) a place and the individuals describing (and making) a place, but also the individuals having the place described to them.

'Because you actually get in St. Helens, unlike anywhere else I have worked, you will actually get three or four generations of the same family not only in the same estate, but on the same street. So you do get the extended families very much supporting each other.....That's why St.Helens is unique is that there are people that have lived here you know all their lives and in the same place all their lives'(St. Helens MBC)

'It's about self-sufficiency, sheer parochialism, families living in the villages for years and years, inter-marrying, inter-breeding' (Durham County Council).

Flowing places

Weakening the boundaries that separate those inside them from those on the outside are representations of coalfields as flowing places, with people moving in and out of them, effecting the place. Here, with the exception of St.Helens, the shared uniqueness of the place of coalfields remains, with flows of people not effecting the structures which mould its uniqueness, but certainly contradicting and untying the notion that generations of families remain in one place.

'People moved from pit to pit, so it was different from last time, when Alvaston (??) was closed, you couldn't run a session at Alvaston (??205) welfare because the people that went down the Alvaston (206) pit, were living all over Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. It wasn't Alvaston (??206) that was affected as much by the closure of the pit, as the fact that the coalfield region was affected and that was the same. So you didn't have a whole community's jobs going down in one go. You perhaps saw a bit..... People have been scattered to so many different pits, moved around so. So communities is hard to define and I don't think, as such, that the community spirit is there in every community...' (Mansfield Unemployed Workers Centre)

'We have never actually been able to identify a coal community here, we have always said it's in our Borough, because in fact it was. The pits were, all over the place.....It's not like a village, a former, probably like Easington.....The pits in the town, isn't sort of.... The only one we had like that was Parkside, which was a brand new pit and didn't have any settlement around it at all. Apart from some, nice, middle-class houses.....There was 750 people working at Parkside, at the time, when it closed and again, from the unions we got a list, in fact we got a questionnaire shortly after it closed to see how people had faired in terms of getting other jobs or what they were doing, another 6 months, 12 months afterwards. When we went through the postcodes, only about a third of them were actually residents of St Helens. Most of them had transferred from various pits' (St. Helens MBC).

'Was there much migration? Well it depends on what sort of timescale you are talking about I know Welsh mining families that were moved lock stock and barrel to the northern coalfields. And I also know

Scottish miners who were brought down and drafted and lived for their first 18 months or two years in a caravan near the pit head sites 'til they found homes. And I was also involved in a campaign in the early '50s to stop Italian miners being brought over in their tens of thousands by a Labour government. Were you aware of that? Oh yes. And I actually started training underground in 1952 and I worked alongside Italians who had been drafted to work over here by the Labour government' (Voluntary Care for the Unemployed (Aberdare))

Differences across and within the coalfields

The above section begins to reveal the cracks that separate one coalfield place from another with its spatial and historical context distinguishing it as a unique place. Actors for each of the places, as exemplified by officers for St.Helens Borough Council in the above quote, separate the place that they are representing from *the* 'place' of coalfields, establishing the bounded norm of the coalfields and then detaching their place from it. An officer for Durham County Council similarly distinguishes Easington from the more central English coalfields, emphasising its peripherality and the effects of this on the place.

'...it's not very different from other mining areas in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, although I think they are viewed as more cosmopolitan than Durham. It's traditionally been a rather backwater area, in terms of roads and routes into the area. It's a fascinating place to visit, it's so 30/40 ish. Head scarves and rollers!! It's quite endearing, in some ways it's like a throw back to the past, the flat caps' (Durham County Council).

Furthermore, inherent differences and divisions within places combine to additionally accentuate their distinctiveness. In the context of uniquely different places, such divisions illustrate the resilience of different community groups, with the excluded playing a role in the construction of group and place identity, strengthening the boundaries that serve to exclude them (Sibley (1995)). Actors, however, mostly discuss such internal divisions in the context of regeneration and the problems it presents to their aims and objectives. Set against the particular spatial and historical backgrounds to which they allude, the following extracts from interview transcripts demonstrate the political, social and economic issues that effect lines of division, separating groups and places from one another within each of the four places of this research. It is these lines of divisions and exclusions which makes each place special, cracking up constructions of the homogeneous coalfields. Lines of division and exclusions are particular to each place, making the place itself unique.

Mansfield

'I have been to meetings where the UDM weren't if the NUM were there and viceaversa. There's still people in pubs who don't talk to each other, because 'you're son was not on a strike'. Some of it is so deep seated' (Nottinghamshire County Council).

'.....to go from Shirebrook to Mansfield, you needed a passport but only 4 had ever been applied for! Shirebrook is 7 miles up the road from Mansfield. They are an inward looking community anyway, but you have got to look outside, or you have got to look what's happening elsewhere. A lot of the culture of this area has got to change' (Mansfield Unemployed Workers Centre).

St. Helens

'Although it sounds bizarre, for an area that only measures a few miles across, possibly because they grew

up around certain pits and collieries with certain factory things, you have got very much the community ethos. So Haydock will see itself as Haydock and it has the Haydock brass band, and it has all the things you'd typify for the area, but seen within that community. To go to St. Helens is going out of town.....' (St. Helens MBC).

'The only problem is that there is a cultural problem between Wigan and St. Helens, they can't stand the sight of each other.....the two towns are very, very insular and it is very difficult to get the local councils to accept that we should be working closely even as a business community' (Business Link (St. Helens)).

'You actually get a situation in cement city where neighbouring estates all be them part of the same ward in the borough politically are seen as like another planet. People will not move from one estate to another, it is just not seen as the thing to do. So there are very distinct communities within each part of the borough' (St. Helens MBC).

Cynon Valley

'I mean the mountains are a barrier...I mean wherever you go we're enclosed in mountains and the rivalry is, especially around community groups, because they get to hear how much this group had in the Rhondda or how much this group had in the Cynon and sort of.....instead of sharing information and sharing ownership or whatever, they tend to...they put up a brick wall then ....and then, for want of a better word, complete and utter bitchiness comes into it...' (Wales Co-operative Centre)

Easington

'as far as parochialism is concerned..yeh...that will always prevail here....we're a federation like the starship people in terms of we act like them.....there's the cling-ons on one side and whatever...' (Easington District Council).

'I have experience of trying to organise a single community consultation between one village which is only one mile from another one. The other village won't come to that one, because they wanted to go to their own. They don't recognise anyone from outside their immediate environment, trying to get networks developed is difficult' (Durham County Council).

'What tends to happen in the village was, you had a community association, jealously guarded by a group of warlords in the village. You had the miners welfare, a sort of club guarded by a group of people who were 'die hards'. You had a church hall, guarded by another group and probably the Parish Council hall. In a little village, say 1500 people, you had 4 venues' (Durham County Council).

In addition to differences that apparently emerge through the people themselves of places are the more overt effects of actors working for agencies and organisations influencing the regeneration of such places. All four places were described by different actors as parochial in their outlook and attitudes and yet, as exemplified by individuals representing Business Link in St. Helens, actors themselves constructed boundaries around 'their' places, disconnecting them from other regional places and using the 'threat' of such excluded places to reaffirm separating boundaries. Such parochialism, as previous sections demonstrate ('Imagining attractive/needy places'), is influenced by funding arrangements and national policies.

'We are very ambivalent about Merseyside. One because St Helens is right on the edge of Merseyside anyway and is a very small town and with Liverpool sitting next door to you St Helens doesn't want to lose its identity and is very proud of its identity and doesn't want to get mixed up with Liverpool too much. At the same time Liverpool is obviously the major name everybody has heard of Liverpool and everybody knows where Liverpool is and that doesn't apply to St Helens. So it's ambivalent, it's supping with the devil' (Business Link (St. Helens)).

'There is more competition between Warrington and ourselves because Warrington council when they set up was so go ahead that we lost a lot of businesses to Warrington because of the rate subsidies and all those sorts of things. Now that is ten years ago and we are starting to get them back and the only reason that we can come up with is that because the leases are due for renewal the costs are going through the roof, a lot of the companies that were with us ten years ago are now coming back to us. So that's our main competition' (Business Link (St. Helens)).

Living with changes (dying places?)

Essential to representing 'Living places' is the distinctiveness of coalfield places and, despite the closure of the pits, their continuing association with the coalmining industry and their recognition as (former) coalfield places. Forced dissociations with the mining industry and the forging of new identities and representations mark the death of former coalfield places as they knew and understood themselves. The assumption of new identities and representations is requiring environmental, economic and, most importantly, social and cultural changes which have direct implications for households comprising places. Very often changes in places are discussed through shifts in cultural attitudes and gender roles, as households respond to changes in the economy, and the repercussions of these on individuals and households. This section explores living with changes through such discussions, exploring changing gender roles and the effects of these on patriarchal structures and households making places.

Building upon previous sections and to set the context against which issues of changing gender roles are explored, actors regularly emphasis the 'macho' culture that the mining industry effected:

'the culture here is hard drinking, hard fighting....drunk husbands going home and assaulting wives and nobody would see any wrong because they've been brought up where their father would do the same ...Victorian....There's been a lot of trying to change the culture and training officers to stand above that and provide a much better service' (Nottinghamshire Constabulary (Mansfield/Ashfield Division)).

'Around Liverpool and Knowsley and St. Helens the men and their drinking is part of their lifestyle and it is manly to drink loads. I actually can't see how you make deep inroad into the cultural thing. It is such a deeply entrenched cultural way of living' (North Nottinghamshire Health Authority).

Against these extreme representations of place, changes in the economy and the new types of work opportunities available to individuals are discussed. Actors highlight the issue that for ex-miners familiar with a structured, disciplined and team oriented working environment and the camaraderie that accompanied this, limited and poorly paid work opportunities in new industries are inadequate. For them, many of the jobs available are in industries that predominantly employ females earning 'pit money', and ex-miners are untrained and unfamiliar with such working environments:

'It's the women now who are working not...rather than a lot of the men. We haven't really had jobs come in to take the place of the well paid jobs in coal. We managed to keep Tower colliery going, but only after a strong fight.....The well paid jobs that a lot of people had before have disappeared. What's come back is low paid p/t jobs, but not really for the men' (MP (Cynon Valley)).

Against this context, actors discuss how women in the four places have chosen to enrol on training schemes and have entered into employment which have effected the organisation of households and gender roles.

'...you go into Merton, go to Easington and you see a lot of 45 year old men walking around with carrier bags, that have left the pit. Fifty-five year old men, that have left the pit, and when the collieries closed the decision was made, not their decision but the decision was also made in their own minds that they will never get another job. Now, that's the stark reality of the situation, erm, the jobs that are coming, that have come into the district and a number of them are for women as well, you know, so a lot of men haven't had the opportunities really. And if you talk to some of the people there, women as well, not just the men themselves, and they'll say well, they feel despondent because, you know, they know they're getting the jobs. And their husbands..... I heard some women talking just 2 weeks ago, and they were saying, you know, you haven't experienced what we see with our husbands, you know, guys who worked at the pits, or worked in other industries, you know and they're sitting around and they know they haven't got a lot of money, they know they haven't got any security, they're sitting around, you know, all day long, they feel embarrassed that they're sitting around all day long. They've got their own pride, they try to make the dinner, they're bloody awful cooks! You know, they make a crap job of tidying up! You know, it's those sort of things. They know that they're hopeless at making the dinner. You know, they know the wife makes it much better job. They know, but they are going through the motions, you know. They can pick a hoover up and hoover, but they don't make a good job of it, because that's not where they're from, really, as people. And there's a sort of sense of despair there and worry. 'Cos the wives know that as well, and the wives know, or their partners or whatever. Erm, and it's this sort of, you know, they've lost a lot of their dignity to be honest as people' (Durham County Council).

Then you had the problem, after 12 months, which was a real major problem, that we had a lot of in here, which was, if the partner had, what used to be called 'the pit money' jobs, 'cos that's one reason why wages were so low, the miner, the male, had the well paid job, the wife went and worked in Textiles for what used to be called 'pit money', apparently. Obviously that meant they become the main income earner and if they have a job over 16 hours a week, after they have been unemployed for 12 months, and their partner wouldn't get benefit. There was a lot of men, saying, 'I don't want my wife to work', and they were coming in here and saying to us 'can you phone my wife, and tell her I want her to give her job up!'. We got wives phoning us up and saying 'my husband's coming down to see you today, he's just been turned down for benefit, and he wants me to give my job up, there's no way I'm going to give my job up!' And it was just real suffering, that was caused by it, you know. Real domestic upheaval..... because the wife was working they wouldn't qualify for benefit, so they're feeling... that they were totally dependent on the wife. Well, Mansfield, sorry, attitudes locally are slowly crawling into the 20th century! So, especially on relationships, you can imagine the problems that came from that. (Mansfield Unemployed Workers Centre).

'I have seen men cry when they realise after six months they don't get a penny. Say the wife is working part-time and earning enough to keep him - that's the state see, £47.50 or £75 for two and he can't get a penny and if he wants to go out for a pint he has got to hold his hand out to his wife, you know degrading as he should be the bread winner and I have seen them sit down here and cry over it' (Voluntary Care for the Unemployed (Aberdare))

Emerging from these representations of changing places is the issue that for women, going out to work is an extension of their domestic responsibilities, with their income being necessary for the maintenance of their households and families:

'women in the area are quite positive, will go to work, don't have a macho thing, will turn their hand to anything unlike men who won't do 'women's work'....women do good community work' (Government Office for the North East)

From this perspective, patriarchal structures remain in tact with women merely extending their responsibilities to maintain their households:

'...you know, the women don't like going out. A lot of the women don't like going out to work and have their husbands at home, because they feel for their husbands, they don't just, you know, they don't just see themselves as the worker. They would like their husbands to be working as well, though, or rather work than them, in many respects. That isn't meant to sound a sexist sort of comment. It's meant to sound, you know, it's meant, it's the stark reality. Because the man was always the provider and you know, that culture is still there, you know, within the district' (Durham County Council).

'There is no doubt that the mass unemployment that happened over an 8 year period, affected family life, women's roles, men became depressed, demotivated, almost embarrassed by the fact that they weren't in work, after 100 years in mining, where Grandfathers and Fathers were miners. Women had to take their place, in a way, ascertaining what E. Durham wanted and taking jobs, becoming a bread winner. 'Mother's Pride' in Easington has a largely female work force, and there are a number of industrial firms, who wanted women as cheap labour, earlier on, and women had no choice. Men in Easington became the ones to look after the greyhounds, smoke the Woodbines, and provide the Andy Capp image..... Men being around the house, depressed, wouldn't own up to it and cope with it through drink largely. The women not only supporting children, going to work, but also supporting the men. They were the ones who sort help. Men didn't, they found solace in the pub, accepting it as part of the thing to do in E. Durham. The women had to do all the propping up' (Durham County Council).

And even those actors who place less emphasis upon women entering the workforce for no other reason than out of economic necessity present the patriarchal structures of places as remaining in tact, with them only being assertively challenged by a few. Although gender roles are changing, patriarchal structures remain unaffected.

'You find women go out to work to give herself a life of her own. The bloke will stay at home, taken early retirement with a lump sum in the bank, making a bit of interest - with her money they get by' (Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (Mansfield))

'A lot of work in the North East is assembly work, increasingly open to females too. They are more dextrous. A company called Nastec in Peterlee, a joint venture between NSK and Torrington, assembling steering columns for the motoring industry....they decided to train a lot of females, traditionally it was thought as a male area, but the females have done remarkably well and have risen through to middle management positions' (East Durham Development Agency).

'I think women saw it as an opportunity to reassert themselves, but only the individual ones who were particularly conscious. All of them said, 'oh well, he's depressed, I'm depressed as well!', I don't think there was a women's movement into Durham, I think it was individual women decided if they didn't do something, nobody would' (Durham County Council).

Underlying most representations of places in this section is the importance of patriarchal structures to the fabric of the communities that they support. The firm entrenchment of such structures, however, is also proving to be a significant factor in the breakdown of households and communities, influencing inabilities to confront change and accentuating misery. These inabilities are particularly experienced by men, affecting their social relationships and health.

'the changes that are actually happening in the culture of north Nottinghamshire are quite good but they are then leaving the men's issues behind because they tend to have been addressed less perhaps. There are

quite interesting things around men's health and where men receive advice from. And again we are dealing with a traditionally macho culture, it is difficult for men to take advice or to feel that they have got issues or problems particularly in terms of social relationships. I think that is what is coming through with you know, OK the young male suicides are at the extreme end of that, but in terms of men's relationships, social relationships, again, you know that they work in very different ways, they look for different things in those relationships' (North Nottinghamshire Health Authority).

The above representations are constructed through actors' life experiences and reflect their attitudes in relation to gender roles, which are then layered on to the context of each of the four places with their opinions constructing places living with changes. Unlike discussions around parochial places, there is no clear relationship between an individual's connection with a place and their attitude towards parochialism, opinions on gender roles are more deep seated and extend beyond, although are sometimes effected by, associations with the place itself.

What actors all agree on, however, is that places are not coping with change; they are not living with change. The consequences of a changing economy and the (lack of) opportunities that this is providing is jeopardising households and having dismal effects on places. Whilst a few actors argue that changing places are providing new opportunities for women, most portray the changing roles of women as desperate measures on their part to maintain their households and communities. Indeed, most actors, far from representing places as living with change, show them to be dying with change (and not dying to change).

'just talking to my old friends, they really...they've lost, many of them, any sense of hope, they really just feel that they're going to continue to try to make ends meet for the rest of their days and that's tragic because they were always very vibrant communities, very much into education and learning...that also I think has suffered a blow. Many of my friends say that they can't seem to motivate their children in terms of education now. The kids will very often say 'Well, why? What are the prospects? We can leave school and get a job packing chickens down at the local food processing factory without any qualifications, so there's a real problem there' (MEP (Durham and Blaydon)).

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