'It's not a lot of boring old gits sitting about remembering the good old days': the heritage and legacy of the 1987 Caterpillar factory occupation in Uddingston, Scotland

Introduction

On 14th January 1987, journalists gathered at the Hospitality Inn in Glasgow city centre to hear an announcement from Caterpillar. The American earthmoving machinery manufacturer operated a large factory in Tannochside, Uddingston, ten miles to Glasgow's east in Lanarkshire. Managers had called a press conference to announce the plant's closure. This was a shock, coming four months after Caterpillar announced £62 million of investment, including £8 million from UK government, and christened Tannochside a 'Plant With A Future', or 'PWAF' in company parlance. Proceedings were interrupted when a large man towards the back of the room announced workers had taken over the factory. On their behalf, he announced that, 'we are now occupying the plant at Uddingston until you have this decision withdrawn.'[1] John Brannan was the convenor of the plant's largest union, the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), which represented the majority of its 1,200 workers. Brannan became a household name in Scotland over the next 103 days as the dispute attracted support and media coverage. The occupation ended with the workforce accepting closure on improved redundancy terms, but only after considerably public acrimony between the stewards leading the Joint Occupation Committee (JOC) and AEU officials who urged an earlier exit.[2]

Almost thirty years to the day after the Hospitality Inn incident, 18th January 2017, Brannan again stood at the head of Caterpillar occupiers. The Caterpillar Workers Legacy Group (CWLG) were guests of honour at a Scottish Parliamentary commemorative debate. Following proceedings in the chamber, Brannan delivered a speech at a reception sponsored by Unite, the AEU's successor. He explained that the CWLG's purpose was not simply to remember the past but to provide an example

[1] Ken Pierce, 'Caterpillar closure 1', *Youtube:* youtu.be/FXP7ncdYRlw 0.10-.020 [accessed 20th February 2019].
[2] Charles Woolfson and John Foster, *Track Record: The Story of the Caterpillar Occupation* (London, 1988) 34-35.

to a younger generation of workers who also faced injustices at the hands of multinationals. Brannan was adamant that 'our 103 days was a wonderful success. Don't let it be seen as anything but a victory. It was a victory for working-class people who refused to do nothing.'[3] MSPs shared the CWLG's conception of the occupation as a resource which could provide guidance in the present. Richard Leonard, who moved the debate, is a Labour Party MSP elected through Central Scotland Regional List, which includes Lanarkshire. Leonard addressed the CWLG directly in his speech:

> I welcome to Parliament some of those working people who believed in themselves and made history in a small corner of Lanarkshire. In so doing, they lit a flame that still burns brightly and inspires and guides many of us three decades later.[4]

Ross Greer, a Green Party MSP who was born several years after the Caterpillar factory closed, also lauded the CWLG's presence. His contribution emphasised the importance of understanding opposition to deindustrialization. The Caterpillar occupation 'symbolised' resistance to workplace closures and lost jobs. It was a critical episode in 'the history of a nation and a class.'[5]

The occupation's status as a labour movement cause célèbre has structured its public memory. Woolfson and Foster published a book-length account of the sit-in the year after it took place.[6] *Track Record* shares Greer's later emphasis on the intersection of Scottish national and working-class consciousness that informed the dispute's reception. More recent scholarship approaches the occupation as the product of long-term developments in Scotland's industrial

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[3] Caterpillar Workers Legacy Group Archive, hosted online, (hereafter CWLGA), Caterpillar videos by author, Parliamentary speeches: Richard Leonard and John Brannan, 18th January 2017: drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B4Ws-rU2e1hkRFJYR25RVkpUdzQ?fbclid=IwAR3Genj_pTcVdN36JyEHFbDkloAJDw8GREk-f0ttFev3ZKi4hzIMxYNIp-U [accessed 20th February 2019].

[4] The Scottish Parliament, Official Report of Meeting of Parliament, Thursday 18 January 2017: parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10735&mode=html#iob_98510. Leonard was elected leader of the Scottish Labour Party ten months after this debate, in November 2017 [accessed 20th February 2019].

[5] Ibid.

[6] Woolfso and Foster, *Track*, passim.

structure. Caterpillar's inward investment was guided by regional policy-making and received considerable public subsidies. From Caterpillar's arrival in 1956, the plant stabilised labour markets by providing alternative employment as jobs were shed in traditional industries during the late 1950s and 1960s.[7] Public financial support further anchored a moral economy view of the factory as the 'possession' of the workers and communities who had sustained the factory for three decades before the closure announcement.[8]

This paper builds on these insights to analyse the CWLG's construction of a 'usable past'.[9] Firstly, it locates the occupation in a 'branch plant' workplace culture. Tannochside trade unionism was strongly characterised by a variety of 'factory consciousness', which promoted the manual workforce's unity under the leadership of shop stewards.[10] Section two analyses the culture of radical labourism at the plant. Trade unionists rejected the primacy of the managerial prerogative in workplace discipline and challenged profit-making as the basis for the plant's operation. The solidarity given to the occupiers during 1987 brought the factory within the orbit of a larger left-wing and labour movement infrastructure. These forces built a nationwide profile for the dispute. Occupiers contrasted Caterpillar's emphasis on profit with their perceptions of social utility, centred on the jobs that the factory sustained and the benefits its products provided for developing countries. These insights point to both path dependent dimensions and the role of agency in framing working-class usable pasts. The occupiers' case, and it representation by the CWLG, were grounded in decades of workplace experience. But it also involved distinctive choices relating to past and present political alignment and perceptions of contemporary relevancy.

Section three examines the occupation's legacy. The Scottish context of intensifying deindustrialization and growing opposition to the Thatcher government's economic policies shaped

[7] Ewan Gibbs and Jim Phillips, 'Who owns a factory?: Caterpillar tractors in Uddingston, 1956–1987', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 39 (2018) 111-137.
[8] Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labour* (New York, 2001) 4.
[9] Bernard Eric Jensen, 'Useable pasts: comparing approaches to popular and public history', in H. Kean and P. Ashton (eds) *People and Their Pasts: Public History Today* (Basingstoke, 2005) 42-57.
[10] Huw Beynon, *Working for Ford* (Harmondsworth, 1984) 114.

the occupation's reception. The CWLG was anticipated in the recording and archiving of events during the occupation and soon after. Discussion of Caterpillar's usable past develops through an appraisal of the CWLG leading members' 'rank-and-filist' perspective, which emphasises the value of workplace action to exercise workers' power and counter employment injustices.[11] Complex forces determine the legacy of class struggles and multinational divestment. Subaltern forces can exercise significant power in determining meaning and legacies, especially where multinationals no longer occupy a presence in the local landscape. But the occupiers were never in complete control of the national political framing of the occupation, which was also determined by the broader political climate and media reporting. The Legacy Group's activities also entailed cooperation with trade unions and other supporters who assisted in the coproduction of the occupation's heritage. Nevertheless, the CWLG consciously articulated an authentic claim to ownership of the occupation and its meaning. These reflected the politics of its shop steward leadership and their perception of the continued important of workplace mobilisation.

The analysis draws on oral testimonies former Caterpillar workers and others involved with the occupation. Most of the testimonies were collected by the author in collaboration with the CWLG during 2016 and 2017. They are supplemented by archival sources held by the University of Glasgow and North Lanarkshire Heritage Centre, as well as the CWLG's own archive. The latter is hosted online and includes material from 1987, including news clips and documentaries in addition to a film produced by the CWLG in 2017, *The Caterpillar Occupation Remembered*. An overview of how the material hosted in this archive has been gathered forms part of the discussion on the CWLG's activities.

Branch Plant Politics

[11] Richard Jenkins, ''What's in a name?' Workplace history and 'rank and filism'', *International Review of Social History* 34 (1989) 63.

Literature on factory closures from the late twentieth century, and later historical writing on deindustrialization, underline the distinction workers have drawn between closures in case of insolvency and restructuring by multi-plant firms.[12] The decision to close factories after several decades prickles the 'aura of permanence, durability and heritage' that their social routines produce.[13] As was visible during the occupation of the Lee Jeans plant, discussed by author 1 in this edition, shock can serve as the stimulant for opposition, especially when tied to a strong sense that factories are profitable concerns. Like Caterpillar, Lee located to West-Central Scotland with extensive government support through regional policy incentives.[14] By 1972, over 80,000 Scottish workers were employed in US-owned plants, and American firms accounted for more than a quarter of all mechanical engineering employment.[15]

Engineering plants were heavily profiled in British political discussion and industrial relations scholarship during the 1960s and 1970s. Shop stewards figured large due to concern over decentralised bargaining's inflationary impact.[16] Beynon's study of the Ford car factory at Halewood on Merseyside details how 'factory consciousness' developed in the plant which was characterised by running battles for control of the line. Shop stewards were generally not affiliated to political parties but shared hostility to trade union officialdom as well as management. Periodic layoffs were significant threats to economic security whilst men worked overtime to pay off hire purchase and mortgages.[17] Janet Burrows remembered that her husband Bob was earning enough working on the track build at Tannochside to support three children and pay a mortgage in a single-income

[12] Richard B. McKenzie, *Fugitive Industry: The Economics and Politics of Deindustrialization* (San Francisco, California, 1984) 111; Cynthia Deitch and Robert Erickson, ''Save Dorothy' : A political response to structural change in the steel industry', in Raymond M Lee (eds) *Redundancy, Layoffs and Plant Closures: Their Character, Causes and Consequences* (London, 1987) 273.
[13] Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, 'Introduction: The meanings of deindustrialization', in Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott (eds) *Beyond the Ruins: The Meaning of Deindustrialization* (Ithica, New York, 2003) 4.
[14] Clive Lee, *Scotland and the United Kingdom: The Economy and the Union in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester, 1995) 276-279.
[15] Scottish Council Research Institute, *US Investment in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1974) 3, 8.
[16] Jim Phillips, 'Business and the limited reconstruction of industrial relations in the UK in the 1970s', *Business History* vol.51 (2009) 801-804.
[17] Beynon, *Working*, 150-157.

household. Weeks before the occupation began, Janet had bought her husband a hi-fi system for Christmas on hire purchase. It seemed a frivolous expense only a few weeks later.[18] The Caterpillar occupation illuminates the status of 'affluent workers in a proletarian nation'. By the closing decades of the twentieth century, unionised manufacturing employment in Scotland was comparatively clean, safe and well paid but precariously reliant upon regional policy and multinational investment.[19] In 1987, the occupiers were fighting to preserve their long fought for status.

Economic geography was central to experiences of insecurity.[20] MacDonald diagnosed 'a problem of expectation' at BMC's heavy vehicles factory in Bathgate. Industrial action was stimulated by Scottish workers earning less than their English counterparts as well as frequent layoffs.[21] The Glasgow Film and Video Workshop documentary, *Caterpillar Workers: Fighting for a Future*, showcased similar arguments. Avril Sharp, a members of the Women's Support Group (WSG), which collectively organised among the male occupiers' wives, suggested that the UK government would not have tolerated the closure of Tannochside's sister Caterpillar plant in Leicestershire.[22] The retention of localised affiliations reinforces Knox and McKinlay's conclusion that 'Americanisation' was always partial or 'bargained' within Scottish subsidiaries. Attempts to exclude unions were largely unsuccessful. Shop stewards emerged as authorities within 'self-contained' varieties of factory organisation.[23] Trade union recognition was won at Tannochside following a long nine-week strike over the winter of 1960 and 1961.[24] Jim McRobbie worked in maintaining lighting at

[18] Janet Burrows, interview with author at Tannochside Miners' Welfare, 20th January 2017.
[19] Catriona Louise MacDonald, 'Affluent workers in a proletarian nation? Work and labour relations at BMC Bathgate, 1961-1986', in Anne Baldwin, Chris Ellis, Stephen Etheridge, Keith Laybourn and Neil Pye (eds) *Class, Culture and Community: New Perspectives in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century British Labour History* (Newcastle, 2012) 73.
[20] Ralph Darlington, 'Workplace union militancy on Merseyside since the 1960s: Extent, nature, causes, and decline', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* vol.19 (2005) 131-134.
[21] MacDonald, 'Affluent', 73-4.
[22] CWLGA, Caterpillar Finished Films, Glasgow Film and Video Workshop, *Caterpillar Workers: Fighting for a Future* (1987): https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00?fbclid=IwAR3Genj_pTcVdN36JyEHFbDkloAJDw8GREk-f0ttFev3ZKi4hzIMxYNIp-U [accessed 20th February 2019].
[23] William Knox and Alan McKinlay, 'American multinationals and British trade unions, c.1945-1974', *Labor History* vol.51 (2) (2010) 212-213
[24] Gibbs and Phillips, 'Who', 121.

the factory remembered his father's participation in the dispute. It established a precedent for the stand taken at the occupation, which other members of Jim's family were also involved in:

> A lot ae us ended up skint. You got the support o the faimily. I had two brother-in-laws work in the place. It was the whole family. Ma father had passed away by that time. But he had took part in the first strike to get union recognition in '60 odd. It was an all-out strike for union recognition.[25]

Following the strike, the union became firmly embedded in the factory's culture, which encouraged resistance to the assembly line regime. John Gillen served as John Brannan's deputy on the factory's AEU committee and then on the JOC. Gillen emphasised that it was 'day-to-day battles' which characterised trade union activism at the factory. He gave the examples of fighting disciplinary cases and disputing the pace of the line as among regular union duties.[26] In contrast to the 'smashing blokes' he worked alongside, John Gillen held some senior staff in derision. He labelled British and American managers alike 'Tannochside Yanks'. Several decades later, John still proudly boasted about his record of winning routine disciplinary cases which were keenly contested by management: 'Try again. You'll have to get up earlier than that. It sounds petty and childish but they were the type of things. What a buzz you got out of that.'[27] Divisions between employees were also reported by other workers. Mick Ward, who worked on the production line making undercarriages for bulldozers, recalled how he heard about the closure:

> I was twenty years old. Found out through ma father. I was backshift so I was still in ma bed and he comes up and says 'look I've got some bad news.' I said, 'What?' 'Caterpillar's shutting.' He wasn't as disappointed because he was due for retirement in a few years so he

[25] Jim McRobbie, interview with author, Viewpark Community Centre, 12th December 2016.
[26] John Gillen, interview with author, University of the West of Scotland Hamilton Campus, 21st February 2017.
[27] Ibid.

was getting a big settlement. We were at loggerheads somewhat as regards the closure announcement.[28]

Mick recalled that during the occupation, skilled-manual and non-manual workers were 'more keen to just thrown in the towel', which was confirmed when white-collar unions abandoned the occupation during February 1987.[29] This had precedent in antagonisms within the workforce, including instances of industrial action. A *Glasgow Herald* editorial on 8th September 1978 described scenes during a wage strike by 1,700 shopfloor workers as 'the unacceptable face of Labour'.[30] The paper reported that violent confrontations between pickets and police led to arrests and injuries. Strikers were 'determined to stop other workers from entering the factory', whilst the company required them to present for work.[31] This experience of an intermediate position anticipated the later wavering of white-collar unions during the occupation. Strikes during the 1970s also underlined the centrality of shop stewards to manual workers' trade union organisation. A five-week wage stoppage by production workers in 1972 ended after stewards recommended accepting a deal and returning to work at a mass meeting.[32]

Picket line tensions in 1978 were defused after John Brannan proposed that pickets permit 'bona-fide trade unionists' not engaged in the dispute to enter the factory.[33] In 2016, John recalled later that previous experience of dealing with 'horses and dugs and the rest' encouraged workers to consider occupation as a safer option in 1987.[34] He specified that 'mass meetings' became a standard practice to deal with major events at the factory. Shop stewards exercised democratic authority through these gatherings. John Brannan further explained in a later interview that union officials were viewed with suspicion along with a cadre of older stewards who had accepted

[28] Mick Ward, interview with author, UWS Hamilton Campus, 5th July 2017.
[29] Ibid; Gibbs and Phillips, 'Who', 132.
[30] 'The thin blue line', *Glasgow Herald* 8th September 1978, 6.
[31] 'More violence as pickets clash at strike-hit plant', *Glasgow Herald* 8th September 1978, 5.
[32] 'Tractor workers go back', *Guardian* 3rd June 1972, 8.
[33] 'Picket line peace proposal', *Glasgow Herald* 9th September 1978, 3.
[34] John Brannan, interview with author, Viewpark Community Centre, Tannochside, 12th December 2016.

promotion to supervisory grades. The company 'wined and dined' these men in the hope of pacifying the workforce.[35]

Pride in a defiant stand has strongly informed the CWLG's perspective, but it was also present in the conflict with union officialdom during the occupation. *Caterpillar Workers* featured Harry McLaughlin, a production worker in his early forties, exclaiming disappointment that the AEU had withdrawn its support from the occupation after Lord Clyde granted an interim interdict against the occupiers late in March 1987. This decision prefigured the end of the occupation by increasing divisions within the workforce, a key weakness faced by occupiers in this period as outlined by author 6 in this collection. Harry viewed the AEU's policy as an offence to the history of trade unionism and cast an unfavourable judgement on the union's fear that their funds would be sequestered: 'There'd be nae unions if we didn't break the law going back years ago. People died for unions. They're afraid of fighting and losing money.'[36] The Thatcher government's legal offensive against unions weighed heavily on union officials, especially the sequestration of National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) funds after a court found the union guilty of sustaining an illegal walkout during the 1984-1985 miners' strike.[37] Their stance still disappointed former occupiers in 2017. Bill McCabe was a shop steward in his twenties during the occupation. Almost thirty years later he relayed a perspective which was similar to Harry McLaughlin's view in 1987:

> We knew when that happened it would be very unlikely that a formal trade union would support us breakin the law. But I was still disappointed because some ae the best reforms have come out of people breakin the law. Because the law's an ass as we know. And if you

[35] John Brannan, interview with author, University of the West of Scotland Hamilton Campus, 21st February 2017.
[36] CWLGA, Caterpillar Finished Films, Glasgow Film and Video Workshop, *Caterpillar Workers: Fighting for a Future* (1987): drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00?fbclid=IwAR3Genj_pTcVdN36JyEHFbDkloAJDw8GREk-f0ttFev3ZKi4hzIMxYNIp-U [accessed 20th February 2019].
[37] J. and R. Winterton*, Coal, Crisis and Conflict: The 1984–85 Miners' Strike in Yorkshire* (Manchester, 1989) 300.

> didnae break the law as a working man where would you be you know? … Ah voted tae break the law. I voted tae continue with the occupation and whatever comes come. Take us to jail. I was happy to do that.[38]

The occupiers presented themselves as authentic representatives of the Scottish trade union movement and derided their employers and the UK government as alien and distant authorities. These motifs have been reprised by the CWLG who maintained that both the daily activities of workplace representation at the plant and the occupiers' collective violation of private property are examples to be followed.

Radical labourism

During the occupation, a left-wing and labour movement infrastructure developed class struggle and Scottish national framings for the dispute which have been pivotal in conferring its legacy. Predominant accounts of 'Labourism' by political scientists emphasise the hegemony of 'moderate' outlooks in the British labour movement, founded on a demarcation between the 'industrial' and 'political'.[39] Elliot summarises a commitment 'to advance the interests of the labouring classes within capitalism', necessarily accepting capital's prerogative.[40] British trade unionism's economistic character has also been inferred by labour historians. Hobsbawm described 1970s industrial activism as preoccupied with narrow interests and characterised by 'doubt, uncertainty and bad temper'.[41] Both McIlroy's analysis of 'factory Communism' and Andrews' assessment of 'militant labourism' highlight the sectional objectives that predominated in the piecemeal campaigns fought within

[38] Bill McCabe, interview with author, Tannochside Miners' Welfare, Tannochside, 20th January 2017.
[39] Ralph Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism: A Study in the Politics of Labour* (London, 1972) 19-21; L. Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (Edinburgh, 1991) 295-6.
[40] Gregory Elliot, *Labourism and the English Genius* (London, 1993) vii.
[41] Eric Hosbawm, *Worlds of Labour: Further Studies in the Histories of Labour* (London, 1984) 281.

British workplaces. They also emphasise the centrality of workplace representatives and suspicion towards trade union officials.[42]

Caterpillar conformed to these trends through daily struggles over pay and conditions and the autonomy of factory organisation. The occupiers are and were wary of politicised labels in presentation of the occupation. In 2016, John Brannan explained the occupation was 'Nothing political, I wasn't that political at that time. I'm still not that political. I've got a degree of fairness. You know, if you're fair with me I'll be fair with you.'[43] These comments mirrored Brannan's rationale for sustaining the occupation on 1st April 1987, after the courts had upheld an interim interdict and the AEU had withdrawn support:

> Our argument and our support has not been about money and has never been about money. Our argument is about jobs. And if the law conflicts with the right to defend your job then I will go back to the law courts and argue we are not in contempt.[44]

The WSG were also antagonistic to being called 'militant', emphasising the justice of fighting for jobs.[45] During the late twentieth century, Scottish industrial workers often presented protests against deindustrialization as 'respectable' actions mounted to preserve community structures from the threat of market forces and British state (in)action. Caterpillar is a pronounced example.[46] There was continuity through the CWLG's elaboration of a useable past which affirmed the authenticity of

[42] James McIlroy, 'Every factory our fortress': Communist Party workplace branches in a time of militancy, 1956-79, Part 2: Testimonies and judgement', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 12 (2001) 68; Geoff Andrews, *Endgames and New Times: The Final Years of British Communism, 1964-1991* (London, 2004) 73-97.
[43] John Brannan, interview.
[44] CWLGA, Caterpillar Finished Films, Reporting Scotland 1st April 1987 in J Airlie Pres Conference,: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00?fbclid=IwAR3Genj_pTcVdN36JyEHFbDkloAJDw8GREk-f0ttFev3ZKi4hzIMxYNIp-U 16.52-17.14 [accessed 20th February 219].
[45] CWLGA, Caterpillar Finished Films, Glasgow Film and Video Workshop, *Caterpillar Workers: Fighting for a Future* (1987): https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00?fbclid=IwAR3Genj_pTcVdN36JyEHFbDkloAJDw8GREk-f0ttFev3ZKi4hzIMxYNIp-U [accessed 20th February 2019].
[46] Ewan Gibbs and Rory Scothorne, 'Accusers of capitalism: masculinity and populism on the Scottish radical left in the late twentieth century', *Social History* (forthcoming).

the struggle to preserve employment. But this was not merely a defensive posture. Instead, the Legacy Group underlined the potency of trade unionism based on collectivising shopfloor concerns.

The occupation was conceived in dialogue with British labour movement experiences during the 1970s and 1980s. Trade unionists developed an activist repertoire which defied the norms of capital accumulation, especially the right of management to dispose of private property. As outlined by author 2 in the first article here, workplace occupations became a more widely used tactic following the 'work-in' at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (UCS) over 1971-2. Other activists devised alternative corporate plans which were drawn up in response to the threats of job losses. Occupations and corporate plans often combined an argument for 'the right to work' with a view that production should be organised to meet socially rather than market-defined needs.[47] The Caterpillar occupiers disputed an American multinational's right to close a Scottish factory. Defying company management to secure factory against closure was justified to preserve jobs, but also through a political appeal to the socially useful nature of its products.

Caterpillar shop stewards were influenced by developments within the wider labour movement. Both the oral testimonies and archival sources indicates a 'shared sense of experience' with other British trade unionists.[48] When Caterpillar stewards responded to the *Glasgow Herald's* questions about the organisation of picket lines during the strike in September 1978, they alleged that management had used 'Grunwick tactics' because a police presence remained after picketers permitted white-collar workers to pass.[49] The long-running struggle for union recognition by principally Indian women workers at Grunwick was prominently supported on the UK left at the time, with activists travelling from Scotland in solidarity.[50] In Tannochside, the dispute was shorthand for aggressive anti-trade unionism which was not confined to West London.

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[47] Michael Gold, 'Worker mobilization in the 1970s: Revisiting work-ins, cooperatives and alternative corporate plans', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 18 (2004) 76, 98.
[48] Diarmaid Kelliher, 'Constructing a culture of solidarity: London and the British coalfields in the long 1970s', *Antipode* 49 (1) (2017) 111-112.
[49] 'Caterpillar used 'Grunwick-style' tactics-stewards', *Glasgow Herald* 13th September 1978, 5.
[50] Jack McGowan, 'Dispute, 'battle', 'siege', 'farce'?-Grunwick 30 years on', *Contemporary British History* 22 (2008) 387-392.

John Gillen was a member of the Trotskyist International Socialists/Socialist Workers' Party during the 1970s. This provided contact with activists across the country, including Linwood car factory on the other side of Glasgow, and John Deason in Manchester. Deason authored an article titled 'Redundancy, closures and the sit-in tactic' during 1974 which reflected on his involvement in factory occupations in Manchester during 1972, and anticipated the SWP's involvement in the 1980 Gardner dispute.[51] Gillen spoke to Deason as an initial threat of closure was intimated before the PWAF award in 1986.[52] John Brannan conversely recalled UCS as the inspiration for contingency planning.[53] Radical labourism was not a sectarian dogma, rather it was a worldview and repertoire of activism that challenged the boundaries of workplace authority and private property. The contested industrial relations of the 1970s and 1980s provided opportunities for socialist stewards and their allies to influence workplace action where barriers between the political and industrial blurred.[54]

The coalfields were another source of mutual solidarity. John Slaven's mother and father both worked at Caterpillar. He recalled there was a strong awareness of connections to the mining industry in Uddingston through the continued presence of Miners' Welfares and men commuting to pits in central Scotland. These connections were important when John fundraised for the miners' strike during 1984 and 1985:

> I remember collecting for the miners and people being quite generous. And I know that they collected in the Caterpillar during the miners' strike. I know it wisnae a one off, they gave regularly in donations, y'know. I'm no saying it was some socialist utopia, but I think there quite a strong sense of trade union identity in the plant. And that mixed with the fact that it

[51] John Deason, 'Redundancy, closures and the sit-in tactic', *International Socialism* 73 (1974) 9-10.
[52] John Gillen, interview.
[53] John Brannan, interview.
[54] Jack Saunders, 'The merits of Brother Worth: The International Socialists and life in a Coventry car factory, c.1968-1975', in Evan Smith and Matthew Worley (eds) *Waiting for the Revolution: The British Far Left from 1956* (Manchester, 2017) 102.

used to be a mining area. When I remember the miners' strike, I grew up remembering it being quite a popular strike.[55]

The circulation of ideas and material assistance is crucial to developing a historical understanding of industrial action and retained connections shape commemorative activities. Tannochside Miners' Welfare was a venue for large union meetings and a source of support during the occupation.[56] It hosted a thirtieth anniversary reunion event on 20th January 2017 during which some of the oral testimonies used in this article were recorded. Coalfield links were not exclusively localised. Fife Trades Council mobilised to support the occupation and portrayed their actions as reciprocal solidarity. An edition of the Council's newssheet reminded its readers that Caterpillar had donated over £14,000 during the miners' strike. Similar forms of solidarity activities were reported, including workplace levies. A support group met weekly and organised a delegation to visit the factory from Fife.[57] These links evolved into physical support on 30th March 1987, when AEU members voted to defy the instructions of the courts and union officials by a narrow margin of 369 to 363. Miners, shipyard workers and engineers from other factories gathered outside to demonstrate their support.[58]

Caterpillar's status as an extraordinary mobilisation that sought and deserved support from across the labour movement and beyond has shaped the occupation's legacy. Harry McLaughlin remembered heading 'a very well organised' committee that negotiated passes for can collectors with sympathetic local authorities.[59] Janet Burrows recalled an enthusiastic response to the occupation: 'Children handing in pocket money. Old aged pensioners that probably couldn't afford it

[55] John Slaven, interview with author, STUC building, Woodlands, Glasgow, 5th June 2014.
[56] James Agnew interview with author, Viewpark Community centre, 12th December 2016.
[57] University of Glasgow Archive, Glasgow (hereafter UGD) 269 ADD/8/3/14 *Trades Council News* 71 (1987).
[58] CWLGA, Caterpillar Finished Films, Reporting Scotland 30th March 1987 in J Airlie Pres Conference: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00 4.02-4.14 [accessed 20th February 2019].
[59] Harry McLaughlin, interview with author, Tannochside Miners' Welfare, 20th January 2017.

but gave in something towards it.'[60] The WSG paralleled developments during the miners' strike in demonstrating the effort required to maintain the occupation over several months.[61] As the occupation wore on, the predominantly-male workers' wives became important spokespeople for the dispute. On 31st March 1987, the *Daily Record* ran a piece contrasting the views of two women whose husbands were employed at Tannochside. Margaret Reid argued the men should 'surrender', whilst Eleanor Moyles said earlier experiences of unemployment convinced her accepting defeat would be 'soul destroying'.[62] The *Occupation Remembered* film produced by the CWLG in 2017 incorporated the WSG perspective through an archived interview with an occupier's spouse stating that the experience has been 'really terrific' despite the deprivations she suffered.[63]

The occupiers' underdog defiance was given sustenance by Caterpillar's status as an American multinational. A long 'retreat' from Scotland by American firms began during the late 1970s.[64] These developments confirmed the fears of critical economists such as John Firn who had analysed the 'branch plant' nature of Scotland's inward investment sector. Without autonomy over investment, research and design or marketing, closures were inevitable as Scottish subsidiaries were dependent on core management.[65] During the early 1980s, Stephen Maxwell, a prominent socialist economist and SNP member, edited a volume on Scotland's relationship with multinationals. In introducing the collection, Maxwell lamented Scotland's status as 'a satellite of multinational employers located elsewhere.'[66] These analyses chimed with anti-Americanism developed around support for nuclear disarmament and opposition to military bases which had grown through the

[60] Janet Burrows, interview.
[61] Jean Spence and Carol Stephenson, '"Side by side with our men?" Women's activism, community, and gender in the 1984-1985 British miners' strike', *International Labour and Working-Class History* 75 (2009) 70-71.
[62] North Lanarkshire Heritage Centre, Motherwell (hereafter NLHC), CWLG Box 1 item 20 'The Caterpillar crisis by two worried wives', *Daily Record* 31st March 1987.
[63] CWGLA, Caterpillar Finished Films, *The Caterpillar Occupation Remembered* (2017): drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00 [accessed 20th February 2019].
[64] Neil Hood and Stephen Young, *Multinationals In Retreat: The Scottish Experience* (Edinburgh, 1982) 1-2.
[65] John Firn, 'External control and regional policy', in Gordon Brown (eds) *The Red Paper on Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1975) 156.
[66] Stephen Maxwell, 'Introduction' in Stephen Maxwell (eds) *Scotland, Multinationals and the Third World* (Edinburgh, 1982) 7.

1960s folk revival.[67] John McGrath's 1973 play, *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*, was a prominent cultural articulation of this left-wing nationalist sentiment. The *Cheviot* mourned successive colonial misappropriations of the Highlands' natural resource endowments, cumulating in the North Sea. McGrath's *Blood Red Roses*-written eight years later-depicts a different form of multinational exploitation in Scotland. It follows the life struggles of Bessie McGuigan, a Communist shop steward who works at a multinational's assembly engineering plant in East Kilbride, under eight miles south-west of Tannochside.[68] The occupation was depicted in these terms. Whilst the factory was occupied, the Rutherglen Drama Group penned 'Caterpillar Talking Blues' which was written from the perspective of an anti-Communist American business executive. The song portrayed Caterpillar's management as grotesque and anti-trade union:

> We offered them money but they wouldn't take it.
> Now c'mon boys, you ain't gonna make it.
> We got the power of international finance,
> Come on boys, you don't have a chance.[69]

Caterpillar Talking Blues was published in the *Workers City* volume of work by poets and artists who objected to the urban regeneration programmes that accompanied Glasgow 1990 European City of Culture. This placed Caterpillar within the emergent folk memory of Scotland's industrial militancy. Similar anti-American utterances were made by occupiers. Early in the occupation, union negotiators met management in Glasgow whilst workers picketed outside. One shouted 'We're dealing with a multinational company. The Yanks. All they're gonna leave us is

[67] Francis McKee, 'Early days of a better nation', *Drouth* 57 (2016-2017) 10.
[68] John McGrath, *Six Pack: Plays for Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1996).
[69] Rurtherglen Drama Group, 'Caterpillar talking blues' in Farquar McClay (eds) *Workers City: The Real Glasgow Stands UP* (Glasgow, 1988) 42.

bombs, not jobs.'[70] The occupation's most dramatic international episode came through 'the Pink Panther'. There were only enough parts in the factory for the occupiers to build one tractor. It was spray-painted pink rather than Caterpillar's signature yellow. After being declined by Bob Geldof's 'Live Aid', the Panther was accepted by War on Want who intended on shipping it to Nicaragua. Caterpillar eventually seized the Panther through the courts, but only after it had been legally impounded in George Square in the centre of Glasgow for several weeks. Laurie Cardine, War on Want's Scottish organiser, explained in 1987 that the Panther was 'a demonstration of the skills and the labour which exist in Scotland' that could help fulfil 'a desperate need for manufactured goods in the third world.'[71]

These words articulate the occupation's radical-labourist sensibilities: the industrial action was a struggle to save jobs in Scotland, but it was also part of an effort to preserve facilities that should be used for global social good. George Galloway, War on Want's General Secretary, juxtaposed the workforce's 'magnificent gift' with Caterpillar 'pursuing a charity and the poor people of Nicaragua who have already suffered enough at American hands.'[72] The Pink Panther provides a powerful metaphor for both the social justice that the occupiers sought and Caterpillar's economic vandalism. In *The Caterpillar Occupation Remembered*, the Panther's manufacture is retold by former occupiers. The film ends by noting that the tractor's eventual fate remains a mystery still to be uncovered.[73] This sense of unfinished business summarises the CWLG's contention of the continued relevance of the occupation in a deindustrialized Scottish economy.

[70] CWGLA, Caterpillar Finished Films, Committee discuss full-time officials meeting management: drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00?fbclid=IwAR3Genj_pTcVdN36JyEHFbDkloAJDw8GREk-f0ttFev3ZKi4hzIMxYNIp-U 2.09-2.15 [accessed 20th February 2019].
[71] CWLGA, Caterpillar Finished Films, Glasgow Film and Video Workshop, *Caterpillar Workers: Fighting for a Future* (1987): drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00?fbclid=IwAR3Genj_pTcVdN36JyEHFbDkloAJDw8GREk-f0ttFev3ZKi4hzIMxYNIp-U [accessed 20th February 2019].
[72] UGD 269 ADD 2/2/5 Part B, Scottish War on Want press release, 7th March 1987.
[73] CWGLA, Caterpillar Finished Films, *The Caterpillar Occupation Remembered* (2017) https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00 [accessed 20th February 2019].

National consciousness powerfully determined the occupation's reception. The dispute was extensively covered on Scottish television news which invested the occupation with a political significance that has carried over to its historical reception. Two years after the occupation, Kendrick claimed that the development of two Scottish television news services from the late 1950s had 'quite literally [brought] about a change in the way people saw Scotland.' These developments reinforced 'the frame of reference which accepts Scotland as the national unit which economic management and national politics are about.'[74] Events at Caterpillar were regularly reported on by both BBC and STV. The clips held by the CWLG and those which have been placed on *YouTube* by a former occupier demonstrate that events in Tannochside were granted a national significance by broadcasters.[75] Shop stewards, especially John Brannan, were regular contributors to reports.

A distinction in genre is apparent between Scottish and UK media coverage of Scottish affairs. Generally, Scottish news feature more depth and opinion, whereas UK-wide reporting is news and information focused.[76] Reporting on the occupation inverted this norm: Scottish news consisted of often brief day-to-day updates, creating a familiarity with events. UK coverage took the form of longer one-off feature-length reports for programmes including BBC 'Newsnight', ITN News and 'Union World', a labour movement magazine programme broadcast on Channel 4. These productions amplified Scottish national dimensions from the outside. Newsnight described the factory's closure as 'yet another blow for Scottish manufacturing industry', but also affirmed that the occupiers 'were seen as local heroes'.[77] In each cases, the power of media to shape narratives of industrial disputes is apparent, which was reinforced by the CWLG's use of news clips.

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[74] Steve Kendrick, 'Scotland, social change and politics', in David McCrone, Stephen Kendrick and Pat Straw (eds) *The Making of Scotland: Nation, Culture and Social Change* (Edinburgh, 1989) 82-83.

[75] An hour of footage from different news reports is held in CLGA 'J Airlie Pres Conference': https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00?fbclid=IwAR3Genj_pTcVdN36JyEHFbDkloAJDw8GREk-f0ttFev3ZKi4hzIMxYNIp-U ; Also see clips held by Ken Pierce on *YouTube*: youtu.be/H74S0XX1hgA [accessed 20th February 2019].

[76] Michael Higgins, 'Substantiating a political public sphere in the Scottish press: A comparative analysis', *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism* 7 (1) (2006) 34.

[77] Newsnight and ITN report on Ken Pierce, 'Caterpillar Closure 4' *YouTube:* youtu.be/H74S0XX1hgA; Union World in Ken Pierce 'Caterpillar Closure 2' *YouTube*: youtu.be/G0VcHydy-6w [accessed 20th February 2019].

National framings were made most explicit when the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), an umbrella federation of all major unions, led a lobby of Parliament on 5th March 1987. Campbell Christie, the STUC General Secretary, told reporters that the lobby's purpose was 'to bring the Caterpillar case to Britain. At the moment the campaign has tended to be based in Scotland.' Workers from Kestrel Marine, Govan Shipbuilders and Rolls Royce joined the lobby that aimed to pressure the Conservative government who were (albeit reluctantly) tolerating closure.[78] The fusion of class and national consciousness which shaped 'the cultural scars' of Scottish deindustrialization were a potent combination during the late 1980s.[79] Narratives of deindustrialization are mediated by ownership patterns and links to globalization and liberalisation. Caterpillar's status as a profitable American multinational was central to the occupiers' case for social justice in 1987. It remained important in commemorations during 2017, which emphasised the asymmetry of power between a small town Lanarkshire workforce and a global conglomerate.

Makin' Tracks and Making Legacies

Labour movement accounts of industrial disputes and workplace closures are often shaped by coalitions of subaltern forces. The Caterpillar occupation's legacy has been defined by former occupiers achieving a 'creation of shared meaning' through working with sympathetic academic researchers, journalists and artists.[80] Caterpillar's divestment was accompanied by the erasure of its Lanarkshire heritage. Caterpillar's website hosts an extensive company history which details that its UK subsidiary opened in 1950 and established its first manufacturing plants outside the United States. However, the Tannochside factory, which was central to these experiences, is completely

[78] Ken Pierce, 'Caterpillar Closure 3' *YouTube:* youtu.be/GoooFRhSlI4 [accessed 20th February 2019].
[79] Andrew Perchard, '"Broken men" and "Thatcher's children": Memory and legacy in Scotland's coalfields', *International Labor and Working-Class History* 84 (2013) 78.
[80] H. Kean and P. Ashton, 'Introduction: people and their pasts and public history today', in H. Kean, and P. Ashton (eds) *People and Their Pasts: Public History Today* (Basingstoke, 2009) 3.

omitted.[81] Footloose industries inhibit heritage activities through the ease with which their footprint can disappear, but an employer's absence can also empowers worker-centred narratives.

The occupiers possessed both the means and the commitment to develop the dominant account of the dispute in collaboration with allies. Labour movement heritage resources are often produced through contemporaneous archiving, which is encouraged by political and intellectual contexts where working-class activism is viewed as historically significant. *Track Record* was the product of Charles Woolfson spending extended time-periods in the occupation, during which he conversed with shop stewards as they debated the dispute's dilemmas.[82] Between the late 1960s and the 1980s, a 'network of democratic, de-centralised co-operative film and video facilities' flowered in concurrence with activist industrial sociology.[83] Another form of embedded reporting was the Glasgow Film and Video Workshop's *Caterpillar Workers* documentary which was narrated by well-known Uddingston personality Elaine C. Smith and released during 1987. The documentary contains interviews with workers and WSG members as the dispute develops. Unlike the television news clips referred to above, there is less exclusive privileging of the leading stewards.[84]

Under occupation, the factory became a public exhibit. Caterpillar had periodically used the site's vast expanse, over one million square feet, for public relations exercises before the closure announcement. One example that lived long in the memory of the workforce was a 'family day' that the company had organised for employees and relatives in September 1986. The event celebrated Tannochsdie being made a PWAF. A commemorative leaflet details a tour of production processes where visitors could learn how tractors were manufactured. Other attractions included a large display of Caterpillar models loaned by an employee, whilst a film about the company's investment

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[81] 'United Kingdom', *Caterpillar*: https://www.caterpillar.com/en/company/global-footprint/eame/united-kingdom.html [accessed 15th January 2020].
[82] John Brannan, interview.
[83] Kate Shaw, *Mining the Meaning: Cultural Representations of the 1984-5 UK Miners' Strike* (Newcastle, 2012) 165.
[84] CWLGA, Caterpillar Finished Films, Glasgow Film and Video Workshop, *Caterpillar Workers: Fighting for a Future* (1987): https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9At318Gw8dbTHR4NzBCTnJFb00?fbclid=IwAR3Genj_pTcVdN36JyEHFbDkloAJDw8GREk-f0ttFev3ZKi4hzIMxYNIp-U [accessed 20th February 2019].

was on 'continuous show' in the factory's auditorium.[85] During the occupation, the norms of the factory were turned on their head. This was graphically displayed when John Brannan's announcement at the Hospitality Inn was met with incomprehension by Caterpillar managers. Ken Robinson, the plant's American manager, and one of his senior Scottish assistants, Nelson Brown, responded with denial. John Brannan recalled only Robinson tried to return, but he was refused entry.[86] During occupations, the workplace's usual rules and barriers break down in other respects. Mick Ward remembered the operation of a mutually beneficial 'skill swap' system:

> I got a shot on one of the big bulldozers for the first time. And some of the office workers, they were driving them. I was in the office looking at their computers, and it was good to see everybody's roles for once you know, it was a great thing. It's a memory. Memories that will live with me all of ma life.[87]

These practices were recorded in the Union World report. It included footage of production workers learning to use computers and a secretary driving a tractor whilst wearing high-heeled shoes.[88] As Mick's comments indicate, challenging the normal ordering of industrial life has shaped the occupation's memory and legacy. Large numbers of delegations visited the factory at the behest of the JOC, including political and cultural figures. Bill McCabe remembered 'meetin famous people' such as Tony Benn, who Bill described as his 'hero'.[89] The occupation's support-gathering routines also included requests for letters. These were stuck on walls of the factory which illuminated the JOC's control. One of the pictures archived by the CWLG shows the plant's makeshift 'Wonderwall',

[85] UGD 269 ADD/8/4/6, Family day 20th September 1986 leaflet.
[86] John Brannan, interview.
[87] Mick Ward, interview.
[88] Ken Pierce, 'Caterpillar Closure 2', *YouTube:* youtu.be/G0VcHydy-6w 5.50-6.57 [accessed 20th February 2019].
[89] Bill McCabe, interview.

which held 1,400 letters.[90] Another archiving practice at the factory was a large board which listed the number of days the occupation had been running for. On the last day it became a focal point for media coverage and pictures.[91] John Gillen also recalled workers video recording television news appearances during the occupation.[92] The occupiers' self-ascription of historical significance to the dispute perhaps indicate the importance of the plant's previous history of trade union organisation, but it was also shaped by societal context. Intensifying deindustrialization and the centrality of male industrial workers to the Scottish historical imagination encouraged both self-archiving, the formation of the CWLG and its positive public reception. By contrast, Clark found that Scottish women involved in factory occupations at clothing and electronics factories during the 1980s remembered the period in terms of male workers' militancy.[93]

The video recordings later provided essential primary sources for the CWLG, especially when its members worked to create the *Caterpillar Occupation Remembered* film in 2017. Television news reports present a fragmentary and limited, but nevertheless vivid, depiction of the occupation. They provide a partial story, emphasising conflict between the JOC and the AEU and other instances that were deemed newsworthy. More mundane, but nevertheless crucial, elements of running the occupation are omitted. The CWLG's efforts to ameliorate partiality have included collecting pictures and oral history narratives. These mediums provide alternative vantages to the instances covered in often brief news reports. CWLG members have also undertaken archival research related to the collection of letters of support the occupation received, some of which are held at the University of Glasgow archives. Conversely, the Legacy Group has also deposited a set of archival sources at the North Lanarkshire Heritage Centre in Motherwell. The collection includes newspaper cuttings and

[90] CWLGA, Album 3, Wonderwall 1400 letters: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IqEQs76PpxHFr7k6HlEC07S81X2zR-Qw [accessed 20th February 2019].
[91] CWLGA, Album 1, 103 days: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1sI82ohuMt0GBQqY_-_oCC1a5uDocMwuO [accessed 20t February 2019].
[92] John Gillen, interview notes.
[93] And Clark, ''Not our jobs to sell': workforce mobilization, deindustrialisation and resistance to plant closure: Scottish female factory occupations, 1981 – 1982' PhD thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2017, 305.

pictures as well as some physical objects including a banner, and a collecting tin covered in stickers.[94] Choosing Motherwell rather than Glasgow indicates the inherent localism in industrial heritage. For the CWLG this meant commemorating the occupation in Lanarkshire.

Kelliher posits that 'archival activism' is a potentially valuable response to the effects of deindustrialization. The CWLG represent an attempt to archive 'from below' by collecting videos, objects, pictures and memories dispersed across individuals and organisations with connection to the occupation.[95] Although formally constituted, the CWLG has also been relatively fluid and informal. It has worked in tandem with academic researchers, performers and playwrights. These activities can be read as establishing a politicised form of cultural 'working-class presence' through engaging civil society within the Lanarkshire area and further afield by rekindling the form of coalition that archived the occupation in 1987. In Griffin's terms, the CWLG have engaged in 'participatory historical research'.[96] This is evidenced by the events it hosted such as the reunion gathering at Tannochside Miners' Welfare in January 2017 and an exhibition at Bellshill Cultural Centre in North Lanarkshire a few months later during April and May.[97]

On both occasions, participants were invited to contribute with their own memories of the occupation. Connections with arts and culture represented continuity with 1987. A benefit single, 'Makin' Tracks', was released through a collaboration that included prominent Scottish bands Hip Sway and Hue and Cry. Pat Kane of Hue and Cry explained that he saw the song as standing alongside 'all the precedents' of recent politicised singles, including the Anti-Apartheid anthem Sun City.[98] On 25th February 2017, two plays written by Lanarkshire playwright Anne Hogg were performed at Motherwell Civic Theatre. Whilst *Butterfly* is concerned with the occupation itself, *Out of the Bad*, consists of a dialogue between a mother and daughter in the present day. It reflects on

[94] NLHC, CWLG Boxes 1 and 2.
[95] Diarmaid Kelliher, 'Historicising geographies of solidarity', *Geography Compass* (2018) DOI: 10.1111/gec3.12399.
[96] Paul Griffin, 'Making usable pasts: Collaboration, labour and activism in the archive', *Area* 50 (2018) 501.
[97] 1987 Caterpillar Workers' Occupation, 'Caterpillar Workers Legacy Project Exhibition' *Facebook:* facebook.com/events/405163783172674 [accessed 20th February 2019].
[98] Ken Pierce, Caterpillar Closure 5, *YouTube:* youtu.be/4tfhZIWu9qQ 0.00-1.43 [accessed 20th February 2019].

the legacy of the occupation in the face of contemporary social hardship. Mirroring the occupation's framing from local crisis to national concern, the plays were performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival later that year.[99]

The CWLG commemorates the occupation as an episode of class struggle and community mobilisation. Memories are contextualised by the loss of bonds which the factory sustained and the death of some of the men and women involved in the occupation. Experiences of disorientation following the factory's closure was a significant feature of the oral testimonies. Mick Ward emotionally recalled his final shift thirty years later:

> I remember my last shift when I got a job with British Steel. I was in tears that night you know. Saying cheerio. Because there was still a few weeks left in production, but I was going to British Steel up in Airdrie. It shut down as well. Everywhere I go shuts down. So saying goodbye, saying your cheerios. 'We'll keep in touch', but you don't. So that was the hardest part you know what I mean? That was the toughest part. And finally resigning yourself to the fact you're beat. You know it's gone. And then driving by and then you see the start of the place slowly getting demolished bit by bit. Things going, and before you know it, it's a shopping centre and a housing scheme. Sad. Sad. Sad, sad. But anyway, got ae get on wi things haven't you? *laughs*[100]

Instances of mourning for lost industrial workplaces have been common in experiences of deindustrialization within both North America and Western Europe.[101] But the specific focus on the occupation differentiates the CWLG from other reminiscence groups and serves to underline that working-class usable pasts vary in consciousness and intent. John Gillen resolutely explained that the

[99] John Gillen, 'Occupation and its legacy – chronology' (2018).
[100] Mick Ward, interview.
[101] Steven High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rustbelt* (Toronto, 2003) 41-44; Jackie Clarke, 'Closing Moulinex: Thoughts on the visibility and invisibility of industrial labour in contemporary France', *Modern and Contemporary France* 19 (4) (2011) 444.

CWLG was defined by a mission to pass on a heritage of struggle to younger generations. His terms clearly state radical labourism's emphasis on workplace organisation and conflict:

> I think it's the name. The significance is in the title. It's not a remembrance group. It's not a lot of boring old gits sitting about remembering the good old days. The very fact it has legacy in its title says everything, and we're punting this idea that it's no been more crucial. Because the lessons we were learning as young men going into factories with experienced trade unionists are gone by and large. And where are they gonna learn this legacy? This entitlement. This right and confidence to say no. Enough's enough. It can be no to small things. It can be no to the major things. That collectively is where their power is.[102]

In John's view, the purpose of the occupation is to pass on an example of union activism to workers. The passing of three decades provided both emotional distance from the factory's closure, and the impetus to develop a legacy as the occupation became part of history and departed from recent memory. There are parallels with the 1984-1985 miners' strike whose thirtieth anniversary was widely marked during 2014. Oldham's graphic art collection, *In Loving Memory of Work*, as the title suggests, commemorates not only that struggle but also the industry's longer history, and the communities built around it. The proceeds from the book support the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign for a public inquiry into policing at Orgreave coking works on 5th June 1984.[103]

Another example of activism enthused by a 1980s industrial struggle is the campaign to overturn the conviction of workers involved in the occupation of the Cammell Laird shipyard on Merseyside during 1984.[104] But the CWLG's lack of this specific focus reinforces its members' sense of the occupation's contemporary relevance and positive appraisals of the dispute's lasting effects.

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[102] John Gillen, interview.
[103] Craig Oldham, *In Loving Memory of Work: A Visual Record of the UK Miners' Strike 1984-1985* (Manchester, 2015)
[104] Stephen Mustchin 'From workplace occupation to mass imprisonment: The 1984 strike at Cammell Laird Shipbuilders', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 31 (2011) 56-61.

In 2017, Tam Anderson recalled that when the occupiers marched back to resume work in April 1987 'I just stayed down the road. I came in later. We'd lost! I didn't wanna march back in.' Nearly thirty years later, Tam more positively reflected that his subsequent involvement in steelworks trade unionism as a steward at Imperial in Ayrshire and as convenor at Clydebridge in Lanarkshire were a result of his earlier experiences at Caterpillar.[105] Tam's reflections are valuable in indicating the important role that working-class heritage initiatives have in reappraising the meanings of defeat and victory as well as implicating the enduring value of trade unionism.

After the occupation ended, a collective identity was forged among the '369 club' of workers who voted to retain the occupation on 30th March 1987.[106] Other occupation supporters also continued to identify with the dispute following the return to work. John Slaven's mother, who worked in payroll at Tannochside, was an active supporter of the occupation even after the white-collar unions departed. She was given a coveted JOC badge that depicted the Pink Panther. John later wore it on his uniform when he was an active trade unionist on the railways.[107] Several former occupiers wore their badges to gatherings such as the Tannochside Miners' Club reunion and the parliamentary debate. The CWLG has given the occupiers' collective memory an outward-facing expression. Its activities have included efforts to obtain a permanent recognition of Caterpillar in a much-changed landscape.

Bob Burrows was a steward and member of the occupation's hardship committee. Since 2003 he has been a Labour councillor in South Lanarkshire. In late 2015, Bob obtained funding for a monument to the occupation which now stands in Tannochside. Since then, five streets on a housing scheme being built atop part of the former Caterpillar site have been named to reflect its history: Caterpillar Lane, Union Way, Occupation Gardens, Track Drive and Panther Avenue.[108] Bob reflected these street names would give the memory of the occupation a permanency in the area: 'That will

[105] Tam Anderson, interview.
[106] Woolfson and Foster, *Tracks*, 254.
[107] John Slaven, interview.
[108] John Gillen, 'Occupation'.

be forever remembered. On this site 100 years from now people will look at these signs and say "Caterpillar", "Occupation", "Panther", they're all important.'[109] These developments confirm the 'class struggle involved in struggle over space', and affirm Massey's understanding of the links between memory and physical landscapes in place-making.[110] The CWLG and its supporters are instilling a form of working-class presence into Tannochside's geography when the remains of the Caterpillar factory are long departed. Notably, the focus remains on the occupation rather than a more generic focus on work and labour. This confirms the centrality of the dispute to the factory's collective memory and the CWLG's aim of using the dispute as a positive example.

John Brannan credited Bob Burrows' work in his speech at Holyrood. Richard Leonard had earlier mentioned Brannan's famous 'bunnet' whilst moving his motion.[111] Brannan was presented with a hat to wear which reprised the appearance he had become associated with during the occupation. In 2017, John claimed he had only been wearing a flat cap towards the start of the occupation because it was cold, but that it was commented on by journalists and convenient for collecting donations.[112] Brannan's memories indicate the role of media reporting in shaping the dispute's framing. The appearance of shopfloor working-class authenticity Brannan radiated in the context of intensifying deindustrialization during 1987 - and recommunicated in 'post-industrial' 2017 - was not solely backward looking. In the Scottish Parliament, John directed his address to 'the workers', specifying precarious service sector employees and NHS staff experiencing labour intensification.

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[109] Bob Burrows, interview with author, Tannochside Miners' Welfare, 20th January 2017.
[110] Alex Zukas, 'Inscribing class struggle in space: unemployed protest in the Ruhr in late Weimar Germany', *Labour History Review* 80 (1) (2015) 32; Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London, 2005) 149.
[111] The Scottish Parliament, Official Report of Meeting of Parliament, Thursday 18 January 2017: http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10735&mode=html#iob_98510 [accessed 20th February 2019]; CWLGA, Caterpillar videos by author, Parliamentary speeches: Richard Leonard and John Brannan, 18th January 2017: drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B4Ws-rU2e1hkRFJYR25RVkpUdzQ?fbclid=IwAR3Genj_pTcVdN36JyEHFbDkloAJDw8GREk-f0ttFev3ZKi4hzIMxYNIp-U [accessed 20th February 2019].
[112] John Brannan, interview.

On 22nd March 2017, a similar message was given by CWLG representatives at an event hosted by the University of the West of Scotland-Oxfam partnership: 'Trade Unionism in Economic and Social Life: Past, Present and Future'. Three former stewards referenced the ongoing relevance of their experiences following closure threats at British car factories making news headlines on the day. They also spoke to the conditions faced by tertiary workers on zero-hour contracts. Bryan Simpson from the Better than Zero campaign, which organises in the hospitality sector, followed the CWLG speakers. Simpson said he was honoured to share a platform with 'heroes' who had described 'where we used to be, where we are the now and where we need to be'.[113] These comments indicate a sense of succession in support for confrontational workplace politics based on leveraging economic power and political pressures to improve workers' conditions.

Conclusion

Factory occupation heritages are malleable. They are often constructed within much altered deindustrialized landscapes, which challenge former workers to explain their contemporary relevance. The Caterpillar factory occupation's thirtieth anniversary during 2017 presented a significant opportunity for the dispute's leaders to shape its historical reception. Legacy Group members innovated a form of 'archiving from below' through gathering materials including television news reports, newspaper cuttings, and physical artefacts. Oral testimonies were also collected at exhibitions and reunion events. These efforts sustained a formal archival submission and facilitated the creation of an online resource that showcases some of the products produced by these efforts, including *The Caterpillar Occupation Remembered* film.

CWLG members have quite consciously articulated the occupation as a useable past that they feel has relevance in the context of ongoing economic globalization and the proliferation of

[113] 'Policy forum: 30 years after the Caterpillar occupation: Trade unions in past, present and future', *University of the West of Scotland*: http://uwsoxfampartnership.org.uk/policy-forum/policy-forum-future-of-work/ [accessed 20th February 2019].

precarious employment. From the CWLG's vantage, the key lessons relate to the power of sustained workplace organisation secured through an activist presence and lay union representation. Multinational divestment creates opportunities and challenges for heritage activism. Caterpillar both left Tannochside and removed it from their public history. Rather than a contested past, the CWLG faced a struggle to ensure the dispute was granted recognition at all, but they were able to exercise control in shaping the dispute's historical narrative. They emphasise the workforce's defence of a valuable economic asset against a duplicitous American multinational. The CWLG members' oral testimonies highlights the centrality of factory organisation and the role of shop stewards as workplace leaders. These outlooks were shaped by the history of industrial relations at Caterpillar. The plant was marked by routine struggles over workplace discipline and the pace of the assembly line. Stewards were at the forefront of these engagements and headed a powerful factory-wide committee that was suspicious of white-collar workers and trade union officialdom. The manual workers' culture of radical labourism was not only informed by experiences in the plant but was stimulated by links to the trade union movement across the UK. Repertoires of activism during the occupation, including can collecting and the WSG's involvement, indicate the strength of these links. Heritage activism is strongly shaped by earlier connections, as exemplified by the role of the Tannochside Miners' Welfare Club and Unite's support for the CWLG.

These links exemplify the co-production which working-class heritage efforts often involve. Recording the dispute in 1987, and its memorialisation in 2017, included collaboration with musicians, filmmakers and academic researchers. Dominant political narratives also determine the reception of industrial disputes. The account of the occupation enunciated in 2017 was heavily shaped by media reporting from 1987. Scottish television news provided frequent updates on the dispute and regularly featured John Brannan as a spokesperson for the workforce. As a result, the occupation was implicated in the wider context of the social damage caused by Scotland's accelerating deindustrialization. The occupiers were situated in terms class, gender and nationhood. This empowered them to act as representatives of a national and not merely a local crisis. These

intersecting dimensions of consciousness were important to shaping the meaning of the occupation and its longer-term historical reception. National and class optics, especially the image provided by the bunnet-wearing Brannan, were important to this collective memory. However, nostalgia was tempered by the CWLG's understanding of the occupation as a contribution to a developing struggle for economic justice centred on the exercise of workplace power.