

FROM THE RITZ TO THE RUBBLE



Tegan Jay



From The Ritz To The Rubble, is a collection of archival documents that divulges the first-hand real-life accounts of true Northern British working-class warriors. It relays the emotionally challenging times that 1980s and 1990s Conservative Britain had on the industrial community. By introducing what it was like to grow up and watch the slow decline of industrial work under the reign of early Thatcherite schemes. The industrial North had a great impact on my family's lives, they showed their resilience against the deindustrialisation of the coal and steel mining industry and continued to live through the pain and loss proving that a community can't and never will be broken. So, come and divulge just how grim it is up North.





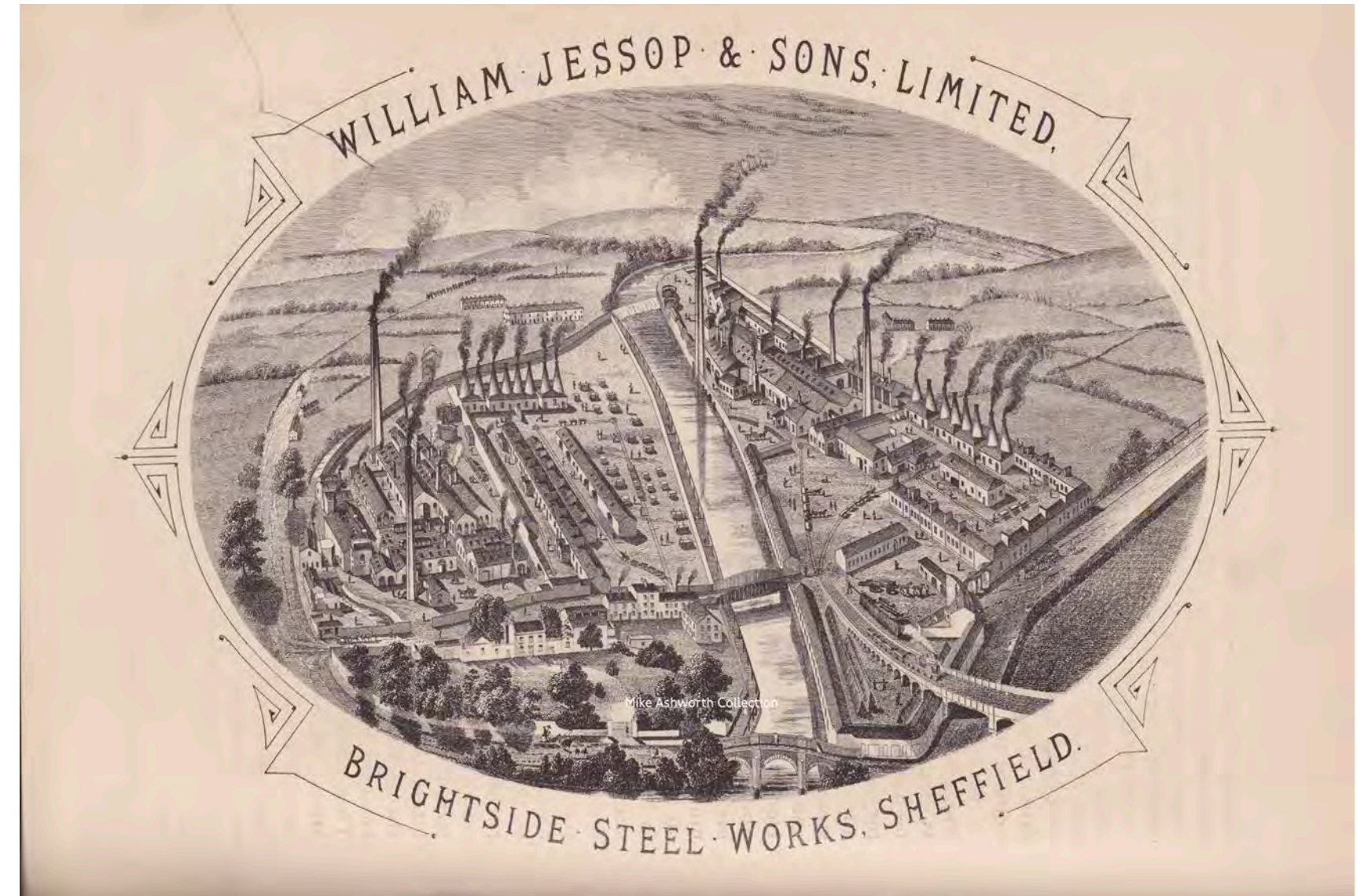
Silverwood Colliery

My Great Uncle spent most of his working career down in the pits of Silverwood Colliery in Thrybergh, he began working there at the young age of 19 in 1974 and left after its closure in 1992 at the age of 39. He finished due to ill health and hasn't worked again since he left, but even now he still cherishes the time and the memories he has from when he worked in the mines. He was also heavily involved with a lot of the flying pickets and strikes within his hometown area of Rotherham and even travelled to Nottingham to help picket against the Nottinghamshire miners who continued to work through strikes. Despite all the hardships he faced during the time he worked, he never once let it change him or the way that he raised and provided for his family.



Sheffield Steelworks

From the young age of 15 in 1959, my Grandad worked within various steelwork industries up until his late retirement in 2006 at the age of 61. He began his working career at William Jessop & Sons, before moving onto Brightside Steelworks and ultimately finally residing at Sheffield's Forgemasters. Spanning a career of just over 4 decades, my Grandad's journey and life was also heavily impacted by the handful of strikes and hardships that he endured during his time working but it didn't affect his values and life morals he still continued to provide and raise a family despite struggles.







My husband started working in
Steel Pactory 1959

We was not together at that point but
my brother was working in the pit with
if you got a job in them days in steel
or mines you was or thought you was
set for life

Only time has changed that due to
closing the mines on all these men
I can remember my brother was some one
who saved or should I say him and his
wife with helped them

Time was hard for them when the
strike for the mines started my brother
was helped a lot by his inlaws but
as you would know they were very
Proud people and he was one of those
would not except charity or help was
his words and he said he would use
his savings and then that was it

lucky he got to last week of
savings when they went back to work
They never showed the problems altho
it must have been hard

He then lived in a Council house with
he has now bought home time ago



②
he worked love it and been with the men
havin a laugh and joke with them.

He's still a mixing man and loves
Company he's a joker but knows how hard
times can effect people.

There's never a time you can go on
there want to say Goodbye that people
passing in cars or walking don't stop
to talk or pop there noses.

Unfortunately he has not had as much
pleasure with his health has got his
problems with leaves him disabled
with walking, back, body troubles all
brought on by working in mines

as I said they thought working
in pits and steel they were set for
life but it was hard work with when
you young your body can take it but
you pay for it later in life the jobs
was a wrecking machine on the body
but there was good times also after
the closure of mines they have been
holidays and parties but I think
he's also seen lots of men he's worked
with and it's a pleasure to have get
together only now age passes and you
hear to much of them or passing.







③
 my husband and I got together in 1984
 times was still tight and he worked
 hard to give us a reasonable living
 wage in them days they had what
 they called peace work which meant
 they had to put so much work down
 on the floor which would work the money
 out they earned

he was one of 3 men which worked
 on the hammer big heavy 15 hundred
 weight to produce part for aerospace
 airplanes and other very important
 places and work to such high measure
 or they went back to heat up and
 start again. Long my husband was
 what they called first hand then they
 was a second hand and a driver
 but he had the pressure to get this
 hard manual work done so all the
 team had a fair wage

he now as a terrible back but
 is always doing what he can due to
 the work he was bent over all the
 time and in unbelievable heat because
 at the furnace's at the side where
 they worked





he plays golf but cannot get out of it the way he want it to be but as I said work in mines and steel if you got you thought you was made but you live to see that play on your body and wear you down

I am very grateful for the job he did we have had a good life taken holidays and many places had days out but he has worked hard for these pleasure and payed the price with his health

he had a friend who worked with him for years who died due to asbestos we never saw but it did have a big meaning on everyone due to the fact it came out he was working with steel which had got on this in packing it was a relief when he had test and was fine but the worst was his best friend lost his life

yes they have had pressures were the work went down to 2/3 day that was hard but you have to adjust to live to it but you move on and try harder.







My childhood.

As Tegan's mum and a 52 year old woman, I started life out with memories as below.

My mum was young when she had me, so growing up I had a lot of interaction with my aunts + uncles. From early memories I was around 5 or 6 years old and used to go + stop at my aunts + uncles on a weekend was an adventure.

One Aunt + uncle both worked on the buses. When I got older we lived in Thorpe Hesley + they were normally on my school run. They were a driver my uncle (Trevor) Clippy Auntie (Julie).

As her job had machine on her side used to charge for tickets. Inevitably I got a free ride into the village or if going to Rotherham when I was younger.

My gran had 6 children and I spent a lot of time with the above and another uncle, who was like a father figure to me.

When I was very young he couldn't leave any cigarettes around as a toddler I used to grab them and chew them (so I'm told)







As I grew up My uncle worked in Silverwood Colliery he was a pit man. My Auntie didn't work. He used to work shifts so on a Friday he would either be home from a day's shift or come in later on from afternoons. I can always remember how odd I used to think he looked if we picked him up from work. Bright orange trousers + T shirt, boots and a black donkey jacket with stripes on the back was worn by all "miners" as they were known.

All the men who were going to cars around us always used to wave or come over to the car from age 5-9 ish roughly I would say over time I used to stay.

They always made me smile when I saw them. I can remember thinking why they all got black eyes. They looked like they were wearing eyeliner with black eyes and dark finger nails.

When we got home first thing he did was up for a shower. Although he was one who had showered at work. He used to say takes a while to get rid of the muck.

He would change + come down, a couple of times. Some of his work friends would call round, he always used to say like a little family of our own in pit always.







look out for each other like having another family. You could sense that I used to rub his neck with cotton wool and I'm assuming. To get rid of the black dust that used to cling to the skin he would always comb through my hair + trim little ends, was a thing we did Under the finger nail had a metal nail file used to get deep muck from under. He used to tell me under ground, he worked on the face digging coal, always spoke of the train that used to take them from the cage down to the face, and if all turned lights out was so dark. Used to torment each other He worked on his knees shoveling coal from the face throwing onto train that used to bring to face.

We used to go to the coast on daytrips my uncle + auntie and my mum + stepdad and kids from both families me + 2 sisters. Uncle had 2 at the time. Mablethorpe was a favourite, Skegness (my mums family my gran had caravans) so we were there regularly. Then my uncle bought a turren + we went to the coast at weekends in the caravan. This went on for a while + then started to hear about strikes, wasn't sure what they were, but everyone in my family was talking about them.







I remember going and it was all everyone talked about. Then my uncle said he was only working couple of days a week, couldn't tell you the time span as I was too young, but he wasn't working and striking. At the time I remember him selling the caravan. He always had a fire real coal and didn't seem to light it as much. Then I got little older and saw all over the news about miners' strikes. And you heard more it became the "news". My mum once took a food parcel for my uncle and I remember he wasn't happy about this. Then was mention of picketing. I didn't know what this was but saw lots of them stood outside the pit and fires in metal bins just laughing + talking. Then they travelled for picketing. Some of his friends went to Orgreave, thankfully that day he didn't go when there was lots of trouble and people talked about it for a long long time. He was out of work for a while then it seemed to calm down and he went to work. Back then it wasn't just miners that struggled my stepdad worked in steelworks and I remember it had a knock on them as well they did short time and the more time strike went on people got worried. It was a topic always talked about. Thankfully both went back to work full time and things went back to normal life as we used to know.







The older I got and realised that it was a tough time and you remember the comradeship of being a large team in that working environment. Maggie Thatcher not been popular with miners or steel workers. People stuck together shared what they had with each other and "made do," they got through it and as a society we have had to deal with but we could learn a lot of lessons from miners + how they came together.









Photography References

(In order of appearance)

Cover: *REX, Shutterstock*, (1984), ‘*Bloody Monday*’ *Riots during the Miners’ Strike*, [Photograph]

P1-3: *Jay, T.*, (2024), *Nan & Daughters*, [Photographs]

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P6-7: *Jay, T.*, (2023), *Silverwood Colliery Modern* [Photographs]

P9: *Anderson, N.*, (1879), *William Jessop & Sons Ltd., Brightside Steelworks, Sheffield*, [Engraved Image]

P10-11: *Jay, T.*, (2023), *Brightside & Forgemasters*, [Photographs]

P12-13: *Jay, T.*, (2024), *Nan & Grandad Reimagined*, [Photographs]

P14: *Unkown*, (1980), *Trade Union Congress, National Steel Strike*, [Photograph]

P15: *Unkown*, (1980), *Margaret Thatcher Protest*, [Photograph]

P16-18: *Jay, T.*, (2024), *Nan & Grandad & Grandad at work*, [Photographs]

P19: *Sheffield Newspapers*, (1986), *Forgemasters Strike*, [Photograph]

P20-21: *Jay, T.*, (2024), *Nan, Grandad, Mum & Nan Holiday*, [Photographs]

P22: *Smith, T.*, (1980), *Steelworkers Taking Industrial Action during the Natioinal Steel Strike of 1980 in Sheffield, South Yorkshire*, [Photograph]

P23: *Smith, T.*, (1980), *Police Arrest a Striking Picket at Hadfield’s Private Steelworks, Sheffield*, [Photograph]

P24-25: *Jay, T.*, (2024), *Nan at my Christening, Nan & Grandad Newquay*, [Photographs]

P26-27: *Silverwood Colliery Friends Facebook Group*, (1984-85), *Rotherham Pickets and Strikes*, [Photographs]

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P31: *Mcphée, D.*, (1984), *Battle of Orgreave; the Miner and the Copper*, [Photograph]

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P38: *Colchester Gazette*, (1984), *Miners Picketing at the Dock Gates at Wivenhoe*, [Photograph]

P39: *The Telegraph*, (2014), *In Pictures: A look back at the Battle of Orgreave in 1984*, [Photograph]

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P42: *Killip, C.*, (1984), *Durham Miners’ Gala 1984* [Photograph], Chris Killip Photography Trust/Magnum Photos, courtesy of Isaac Blease at the Martin Parr Foundation

P43: *Critchlow, M.*, (1980), *Miners’ Gala Image No.30*, [Photograph]

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