This is the accepted manuscript published as

Byrne, J. (2016). Hull, fishing and the life and death of Trawlertown: Living the spaces of a trawling port-city. In Port Towns and Urban Cultures: International Histories of the Waterfront, c.1700-2000 (243-263).

Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-48316-4

HULL, FISHING AND THE LIFE AND DEATH OF TRAWLERTOWN

Living the spaces of a trawling port-city.

In the late 1960s the port-city of Hull could boast a long association with fish. From the 1880s, the city's distant-water fishery had grown rapidly with the advent of the steam trawler and had thrived by transporting cheap nutrition to the industrial centres of northern England. In the early decades of the twentieth century Hull secured its position as the 'friers' port', supplying Icelandic cod to the fish and chip trade.[1] By the Second World War the dependency of Hull's fishery upon the waters of the north Atlantic had become deep-rooted, as the city took its place amongst the leading fishing ports of the world.

Within Hull, trawling had developed operational and business structures that were highly localised. The fishery maintained a strong situated presence in the west Hull district of Hessle Road: an urban quarter running parallel with the Humber bank, adjacent to the fish dock. For over a century there had evolved an interdependency between the dock and its surrounding district. In 1957, urban sociologist GW Horobin observed a neighbourhood where the whole population was '"geared" to the rhythm of fishing' and where shops were reported to vary their prices in accordance with the state of the market for fish.[2] It is this neighbourhood that is portrayed here as Trawlertown; a fishing heartland, where the comings and goings of the fleet, the celebrations, losses and the daily shore-side grind took place amidst the bricks and concrete of terraced streets running down to the dock. Concentrated here were the families of fishermen, dockworkers and fish processors who shared and understood the centrality of the Fish Dock within their lives.

In the 1970s, rising oil prices, declining fish stocks and most crucially, alterations to international maritime territories, were to disrupt the assumed certainty of time-served practices, sending Hull's distant-water fishery into crisis. In 1976, Britain was defeated in the last of three sea-borne conflicts known as the 'Cod Wars', which were fought with Iceland over access to fishing grounds. Hull's fishery suffered an ensuing decade of struggle and decline, which spread beyond the dockside into the adjacent neighbourhood, bringing an end

to the economic, social and spatial connectivity that had defined life in Hull's fishing district for decades.

Conceptualising the Port-City District

In focusing on the life and demise of the shore-side spaces of Hull's distant-water fishery, a phenomenological stance is adopted in this chapter to explore the dynamic relationship of maritime activities and their cultural landscapes. Those studying maritime communities have engaged a range of approaches to portray the port-city. Port historians such as Sarah Palmer[3] and David Hilling[4] have conceptualised a port-city relationship based upon multiple social, economic and spatial linkages. Economic engagements such as distribution, employment and supply, are shown to acquire clear spatial expression.[5] At the same time, the port-city is revealed as responding to the distinct social needs of seafaring, enabling those engaged at sea or in maritime occupations on land to reside in a neighbourhood that understood and shared their experience.[6] In more recent years attention has been directed to the cultural dimensions of such associations, with topics diverse as cinema going[7] and the supernatural[8] under scrutiny as indicators and mediators of the bond between port and city. Furthermore, in an era subsequent to the decline and remodelling of many waterfront districts, memory too has been deployed as a means to articulate and capture aspects of the port-city dynamic.[9]

This chapter builds upon such cultural approaches, engaging memory to offer an articulation of the port-city as a network of meaningful lived spaces. Human geographers studying the connection between people and their environments, have noted the significance of everyday engagements, social contact and the habitual movement of bodies in the constitution of place relationships.[10] In this sense, place is deeply rooted in the human experience. Indeed, some assert that 'lived place' lies at the heart of feelings of belonging.[11] More recently, non-representational geographers too have offered an understanding of place based upon embodied encounters and the experience of being 'slap bang in the middle' of a world shaped by practice, smell, sound, and sensation.[12]

Such factors are encompassed within Tim Ingold's concept of the taskscape. In 1993, social anthropologist Ingold conceived the taskscape as a means of imagining place as the located ensemble of collective tasks, sensations, sounds and encounters performed in the process of communal living.[13] The taskscape is a network of what Ingold refers to as the activities of dwelling: the everyday tasks that we undertake as part of our everyday lives. Activities are ongoing and performed within the passage of time. To become a taskscape activities must be collective and take place as part of a shared and ongoing lifeworld. Importantly, Ingold firmly relates these everyday temporal processes to the creation of landscape. The form of our surroundings thus stems from our collective interactions within place, meaning that the landscape itself can be understood as the taskscape in palpable form. The taskscape offers a theoretical perspective on how the situated movement, process and connectivity of ongoing everyday life, over time, can physically mould the landscape and imbue it with collective meaning.

With this phenomenological, sensual, yet simultaneously physical rendering of place, Ingold provides an adaptable model for an exploration of the port-city. This chapter draws on oral history testimony conducted into Hull's fishing industry in the wake of the 1976 Cod War, to explore the lived experience and embodied geographies of the life and demise of a trawling port-city. By presenting Hull's fishery as a taskscape, or Trawlertown, this paper portrays Hull's fishing district as a visible, recognised and lived entity, embedded within the flows of the wider city. It then considers the aftermath when fishing activities cease and the lived spaces of a maritime community are consigned to the past.

Distant-Water Trawling: An Extreme Occupation

In 1962, sociologist Jeremy Tunstall published his detailed contemporary study of Hull's fishermen.[14] Tunstall portrays distant-water trawling as an extreme occupation. Arctic fishing was dangerous, carried out in freezing and hostile seas. Work was hard and conditions were harsh. Work related accident and death rates were amongst the highest in the country.[15] Men were casually employed with little job security and pay was tied to voyage profits, meaning incomes could boom or bust.

In Hull, the practices of trawling revolved around the 21-day trip. This was the time needed for the traditional side-trawler to steam to the fishing grounds of Iceland, Faroes and northern Norway and return with a catch still fresh enough for market. The longstanding dominance of the 21-day trip permeated not only life at sea, but also the life of the dockside and surrounding district. As trawlers entered port, ancillary and secondary workers sprang into action to unload, process and dispatch fish and to prepare the ships to return to sea. Vessels always returned to Hull and the regular rhythms of the seagoing sector had over time forged a distinct culture within the portside community. In the late 1960s, ships were in dock only 60 to 72 hours and life for the fisherman at home assumed a frenzied character. Whilst many spent time with family, local memory is rife with tales of epic celebration, drinking and spending, as some trawlermen earned themselves the reputation of the 'three-day millionaires'.[16] From the early 1960s, the established pattern of life was destined to change, as the growth of a new and technologically advanced fleet of stern trawlers, which could freeze the catch at sea, brought the promise of modernization, increased prosperity and novel ways of fishing. However, the older fleet of side-trawlers working into the 1970s was sizable and for many, trawling adhered to traditional rhythms.

Prior to 1976, Hull's distant-water fishery operated within localised structures. Tunstall wrote, 'Fishermen see themselves in a curious way as working in Hull.'[17] Although fishing 2000 miles from the city, vessels, landing and processing facilities were Hull owned, Hull staffed and Hull based. In 1955, 92 per cent of the seagoing workforce lived within 4 miles of the fish dock.[18] 57 per cent of fishermen and 72 per cent of fish landing crew (known as bobbers) lived within a one-mile radius of the dock. Thus many sailed, worked and lived with other men from within a narrow locale.[19] Although the emerging freezer fleet was starting to create new demographics, in the 1970s the Hull tradition remained strong.[20]

The concentration of shore-side activity - the casual employment, fluctuating pay, the short time ashore and the three-day millionaires - created an environment reminiscent of a latter-day sailortown. On Hessle Road until the 1970s, the fishermen's pubs, clubs, pawnshops and chandlers, loan systems, even the fishermen's outfitters and tailors draw easy comparison to Hugill's[21] popular depiction or to certain elements of the sailortown districts examined in the academic work of Daunton,[22] Hilling[23] or Palmer.[24] Yet here the similarity ends. For Hull's

fishermen were returning not just to port, but to their home community where many of them had been born; to wives and girlfriends; to family, children and shore-dwelling friends. They were returning to Trawlertown; a taskscape of collective activity that was distinct, yet at the same time part of the wider city and which had been created in response to the rhythms of the North Atlantic trawl. [25]

Although the position of Hessle Road at the heart of the fishing community is widely reported in oral testimony, the precise limits of Trawlertown are less consistently defined. This may be unsurprising, for here it is suggested that the creation of Trawlertown stemmed less from its physical infrastructure, than from the situated lived experience of its inhabitants. A visit to Trawlertown was a phenomenological encounter with the port-city. The fishing district had an economic and material expression, with fish dock and smoke house immediately recognisable as the fabric of a trawling port. But the essence of *Trawlertown* lay in the collective encounters of those who lived and worked in the shore-side spaces of an extreme seafaring occupation. Trawlertown was a 'lifeworld' that was walked, smelt, heard, felt and touched. It was lived space, embodied place and although it could be observed from the outside, it could only be fully understood from within.

Welcome to Trawlertown

Oral history offers the ideal vehicle for a visit to Trawlertown. If Trawlertown is a phenomenological encounter, then narrators are able to invoke its existence because they lived it and lived in it. Respondents recalled an exceptional neighbourhood where a lifeworld bound to the fishery could co-exist with other expressions of community.[26] Trawlertown cannot be divorced from the broader composition of Hessle Road, just as Hessle Road cannot be ascribed exclusively to fishing. Lives and lifeworlds were intertwined. But with a nuanced ear and a keen eye, it is possible to detect Trawlertown from amidst the bustle of a working-class district.

During Horobin's research in the 1950s, Hessle Road was widely reported as 'a world in itself.'[27] My own respondents similarly conjure a sense of distinctness and separation. Alan

H, working for the White Fish Authority on St Andrew's Fish Dock, introduces Trawlertown by distinguishing the trawling community from others:

> … it was a tough life and it required a certain lifestyle and character to do it. … the families had to accept that the man of the household would be away for three weeks and life had to carry on when he was not there. And when he came home, life would change for about three days and then maybe peace would reign for another three weeks until he came back again. So it was a lifestyle that I think a lot of other communities could not adapt to. It was something you lived with, grew up with and accepted.[28]

Interviewees recall Hessle Road in the 1960s as "something very special,"[29] "a wonderful, wonderful road,"[30] "a breed of their own."[31] With equal clarity they assign the cause of this distinct and separate sense of place. For Hessle Road fishmonger Billy, it could only have come from the fishing industry:

> The atmosphere of Hessle Road was from nowhere else. There's nowhere else like it... Absolutely. It could only be that *[fishing]*. Yeah, it could only be that.[32] *(Billy)*

Fish processor Ivy is similarly absolute:

Ivy	... that's what Hessle Road was built for. For the fishing industry. Nothing else.
Jo (Researcher)	And could you see that when you were living down there?
Ivy:	Oh yes. I din't know nothing else apart from fishing. I didn't even know there was a Metal Box *[a local factory]* til I left school, because that was Gypsyville and I never left from Hessle Road til I was 15. I didn't even know there was a town *[city centre]*.[33]

The narratives of Ivy, Billy and others like them express first-hand the dominance of Hull's deep-sea fishery over Hessle Road. The taskscape is never far away within these reflections. Trawlertown comes into being with their reports of the continual day and night motions of dockworkers, merchants and processors; with the trains and fish vans, with the sound of a ship's hooter. Fisherman Jim, for example, narrates the sound of 'hundreds' of fish bobbers walking to work in the very early hours in iron shod clogs 'like horses hooves.'[34] Alan J, director with a major trawling firm, recalls the perpetual threading of people to and from the Fish Dock:

> You had to walk all the way down West Dock Avenue, under the tunnel, under the railway lines and onto the dock. And I mean there were always masses of people. You never walked down West Dock Avenue on your own (laughing)... there was always people backwards and forwards all the time.[35]

Many concur that a visitor to the area would have recognised its connection with fish. There were the filleting factories and distinctive lines of slender chimneys belonging to the kipper houses. There were the women wearing the 'wellies' and the 'turban' headscarves of the fish processor.[36] And there was the odour. "We did have our own fish smell" admits fisherman Ken.[37] This was not the seaside smell of a fresh landing, but the heavy, dull tang of fishmeal, cod drying farm and smoke house.

If the area moved to the rhythm of trawling, then it was the comings and goings of the fleet that set the tempo. Hessle Road historian Alec Gill has revealed how Hessle Road shops included outfitters 'open to suit all tides' and shops offering credit until dad came home from sea with his wages.[38] Narrators give fishermen centre-stage when describing the visible and distinct character of Trawlertown. There were the suits that adhered to latest and sometimes exuberant fashions and which could make a gathering of fishermen instantly identifiable:

> ... they had their own sort of tailoring style... double breasted suits, which were tightly fitted round the hips, the bell bottom trousers. In outrageous colours as well some of them..."[39] *(Philip, shore-based radar engineer)*

There was the bustle of fishermen's wives retrieving suits that had been pawned to enhance the family budget, prior to their husband's homecoming[40] or carrying work gear to the washhouse.[41] There was an observable generosity and easy spending.[42] There was the frenetic movement between home, dock, pub, the homes of friends and relations, the tailor, the bank, the barber, as three weeks of living was compressed into three days. There was the perpetual darting of taxis, for fishermen did not waste time walking: '...it was a taxi', says Ivy, 'even though it was only next street.'[43]

Fused with the collective encounters of the fishing taskscape were the specific spaces that they had simultaneously created. Ken's narrative demonstrates how certain physical places took on meaning within Trawlertown, via the interactions of the fishermen who went there:

> *[Places]* are connected with fishing via the fishermen themselves... there was your own tailors that made your suits for you... We had our special shoe shops, they all knew the fishermen more or less by names. We had our own barber that would give you a dram o' rum while you were sat in his barber's chair. You'd all be sat talking while you're waiting for your haircut – about how much you'd made and how much you landed – and so all the way along the length of Hessle Road, there was stories of the fishermen.[44]

In such places, fishermen could come together and reconnect back to land. And at the heart of the process were the pubs. Alan H recalls that the pubs of Hessle Road were: '... constantly alive with people coming and going and ships coming in and coming out.'[45] Narrators are consistent in naming the pubs favoured by fishermen. Margaret was a barmaid at Dee Street Club. She conveys the regular flow of new arrivals, many of whom she knew by name:

> Right, rack 'em up again, Margaret, from the back of the room. All right. Same round? Same round… Then there'd be another crew come in an'all. I'd think, Jesus. I'd be one end o' there, to there. All day long, but I loved it.[46]

Pubs were more than just places to drink, says Jim, they were places to meet your friends.[47] Tunstall observed how certain clubs on Hessle Road were regarded by fishermen as their 'exclusive preserve'.[48] Relatives would know which Hessle Road pubs to frequent in order to meet with a newly landed crew.[49] Whilst some harboured the hope of a generous round, many others came to welcome and catch up. For with only three days ashore, pubs were not only places of leisure, they were important arenas to maintain relationships.

Fish Dock

At the end of West Dock Avenue stood St Andrew's Fish Dock: the very hub of Trawlertown. Here, in the transitional space between land and sea, the actions, encounters and fabric of Hull's fishery taskscape were generated at their most intense. The Fish Dock was an other-world, a geographic entity that was seldom seen by those without a reason for a visit. To the inhabitants of Trawlertown, however, this world was known first-hand, through their daily work, through its ships, stores and offices, through the emotive flows of arrivals and departures.

Alan J remembers his first encounter with the dock in 1960:

> ... although I'd lived in Hull all my life, I'd never been on the Fish Dock before... when I went down there, it just amazed me, because there were just hundreds and hundreds of people, doing all sorts of things… it was just something I hadn't been able to envisage and when I saw it, y' know, I thought – this is huge.[50]

Alan's job with a trawling firm pulled him into the heart of the fishery taskscape, into its endless stream of work and people. Respondents frequently spring to life when asked to describe the dock in its heyday. They draw upon common terms to convey animation and movement; 'very busy',[51] 'hustle and bustle all the time',[52] 'a beehive',[53] 'like ants'.[54] There is a clear eagerness to convey the spectacle that distinguished the dock from an average workspace.

When describing the Fish Dock, witnesses powerfully evoke a blend of activity, sounds, sights, smells and feelings. Jim describes an efficient disarray:

> It was dangerous walking… You'd have clogs, because there was water and fish slime and ice… you would have the bobbers landing the fish and at the same time they were bringing up the fish room boards… there would be shore-riggers splicing wires, there'd be electricians… The cod liver oil boat would be alongside, pumping out… organised chaos, everybody knew what they were doing.[55]

Others recall the sounds, the smells and the routines. X *[anonymous],* a shore-side radar engineer, remembers:

> ... the smells, y' know, obviously the smell of fish and fishmeal and the rope smells and net smells...[56]

Michael, a fisherman, relays an aural memory:

> When you're on dock, you'd hear people riveting all day – bang, bang, bang, bang, bang.[57]

Whilst Alan H brings together the soundscape that progressed throughout a typical day:

> … the daily activity could be best summed up by the different noises coming from the dock… in the earliest hours of the morning the bobbers would clatter down to the dock in their clogs… there would be noises coming from the dock, of clashes of boards from the ships being thrown onto the quayside and aluminium kits *[fish containers]* being bounced and people yelling and shouting and the squeal of winches and such like. Then you'd have the *[fish]* auction itself with all its noise and then the frenzy of the fish coming off the dock in trucks and trailers… Peace reigned in the afternoon."[58]

Such vibrant descriptions capture the raw frenzy of daily practices. Sense of place is vividly conveyed and the role of embodied and sensual experience in the creation and subsequent recollection of place is revealed.

For fishermen and their families, St Andrew's Fish Dock assumed significance as a place of arrivals and departures. Margaret remembers meeting her brother and other friends as they arrived into port: "It was lovely," she says, "It made you feel real warm. And glad to see 'em come back."[59] For the crews, the dock was the gateway into Trawlertown and the subsequent point of separation. It was their first and last contact with land and could assume a territorial significance, as Ken's testimony demonstrates:

> A dock is a dock, you know, and it's just a place where you take your ship. But St Andrew's Dock wasn't just a dock, it was *the* dock... it's ours...[60]

It is from such a mix of affective encounters and shared activity that the fishing taskscape of Trawlertown sprang into being on Hessle Road amongst street, shop and factory, amongst dock and district. On Hessle Road, other work communities lived side by side with Trawlertown; it was part of their neighbourhood, although they themselves may rarely engage with it. There were also those who breezed in and out of Trawlertown, as they laboured in its workforce, perhaps drinking in its pubs before returning home to other quarters. Amongst these were fishermen like Doug and Victor who lived to the east of the city, but who express Trawlertown as their own; a place that understood and supported their lifestyle.[61] But for many Trawlertown was their primary world. They lived and worked within its midst, unequivocally absorbed within its sounds, smells, sensations and networks. If it is through such interactions that connection to place is cemented, then we might expect the distinct and intense encounters of Trawlertown and its located systems of occupational support to produce significant place attachments.

Disruption

By the 1970s the bonds between industry and district were beginning to loosen. The disruptive technology of the freezer trawler, whilst improving working conditions, was diluting the collective experience of the 21-day trip. With the ability to freeze fish on board, freezer-trawlermen remained at sea for 8 to 10 weeks and subsequently enjoyed longer shore leave, reducing the advantages of living close to the fish dock. On shore, from the late 1950s, Hessle Road was undergoing radical housing clearances as part of the city's post-war programme to produce more modern, spacious housing. As the city sought to eliminate sub-standard living conditions, the densely packed terraces to the south of Hessle Road, close to the Fish Dock, were targeted. In this area the homes of many fishermen and Fish Dock workers were concentrated. The inhabitants, often reluctantly, moved to new estates. Many of these stood on the outskirts of the city, away from the environment and activity of the Fish Dock and from the people and systems that had supported a way of life. The in-laws of Ron, a fisherman, were forced to move to the north side of Hessle Road when their home close to the Fish Dock was demolished. Although this was not a great distance, they hated the move. Ron explains why:

> They'd lived there a long time and my father-in-law was a fisherman and his father was a fisherman and her father was a fisherman and they were right in the hub of the fishing community… So they lost friends and the days of standing on your doorstep and talking to your neighbour, as they used to do in the terraced houses... It just became a different way, a different community. [62]

In the mid 1970s came another major change. The ageing fabric of St Andrew's Fish Dock and the growing fleet of large freezer trawlers prompted the development of new port facilities. In 1975 the trawling fleet left St Andrew's, their home for over 90 years, relocating to the adjacent William Wright and Albert Dock, which had been refurbished as a modern base for the trawling fleet of the future. The William Wright and Albert Dock offered features that greatly improved shore-side working conditions. However, the relocation changed the dockside atmosphere. Larger facilities such as the ice and fishmeal factories had remained on the St Andrew's estate. The result was a dilution of the focused activity and shared spaces that had defined the very heart of Trawlertown. Thomas, a fisherman, explains:

> ... there was no atmosphere *[on William Wright and Albert Dock].* Not like there was... y' see, everything happened on *[St Andrew's]* Fish Dock. Everything. Your trawlers were landed on Fish Dock, you signed on on Fish Dock, you signed off. Everything happened on Fish Dock. So to move it to another dock... it was all wrong. Completely wrong, you know what I mean.[63]

Such change was set to alter the dynamic of Hull's fishing district. Given time, the people and their activity would have generated a different taskscape, creating a new and modern freezer-Trawlertown. But in 1975 came disruption to British distant-water trawling with the final Cod War. Iceland, concerned by overfishing, extended its exclusion zone for foreign trawlers to 200-miles. In 1976, Britain's distant-water fleet was ejected from its habitual fishing grounds at Iceland, closely followed by similar losses at Norway, Faroe and the Barents Sea. In Hull, gradual change was thus overtaken by sudden catastrophic events, which limited opportunities for adaptation. When the plan to re-locate to Albert Dock had been conceived there were on average 4.25 large trawlers landing a total of approximately 597t of fish per day. [64] By 1983 the industry was struggling to maintain one daily landing and direct employment in the city's fishery had plunged by almost half from 8,600 jobs in 1976 to 4,495 just seven years later.[65] In Hull, the fish merchant and processing industry survived, albeit in contracted form, by landing and importing foreign caught fish, some of which travelled into the port by road. They survived, because, as fish merchant Chris observes 'there's always somebody, somewhere wanting to send fish'.[66] The price of these changes however, was the fracture of the localised structures that had previously characterised the industry.

The sea going catching sector, however, was sent into crisis. Left with an efficient fish-hungry fleet, owners tried to diversify within a fishing arena that had become political, territorial and global.[67] British deep-sea trawling firms grappled with newly emerging quotas, uncertain European policy and competition from expanding global fishing fleets. Most ventures ultimately failed and where tenacious Hull trawling firms enjoyed a measure of success, their business became increasingly international, with ships, operations and men scattered across the world. The special ties between industry and place were broken for good.

The Death of Trawlertown

As Hull's distant-water fishing industry was transformed through the 1970s, the residents of Trawlertown were hit by a tidal wave of change affecting their homes, streets and workplace. This culminated with the contraction and loss of the fishery itself; the very bedrock of Trawlertown and the creator of the lifeworlds it embraced. After 1976, as the surviving fishing firms became international, ships and operations increasingly diverged from the city. Where they touched, they left a lighter footprint on its economy and culture. If it was the trawling fleet that had moulded the rhythm and form of Trawlertown, then the demise of that fleet brought it to an end. For as Ingold writes 'the taskscape exists only so long as people are actually engaged in the activities of dwelling'[68] and as Sarah Palmer observes 'no sailortown could ultimately survive the decline of the port which had given it life'.[69]

Respondents capture the demise of Trawlertown in their descriptions of Hessle Road and the Fish Dock in the late 1970s and 1980s. Some report the demise of ancillary and secondary businesses located in the vicinity. Many others describe the escalating decay of the old St Andrew's Fish Dock. This site, rather than the struggles of the newly established William Wright and Albert Dock, came to symbolise the end and Doug recalls the beginning of disintegration:

> As I drove past the Lord Line building at the back of it, it looked absolutely derelict, because the windows were smashed. Kids'd obviously used it for a bit of entertainment on a night-time.[70]

Lily, working for the White Fish Authority, describes with emotion her return to St Andrew's Dock after 1981:

> Oh, it just looked derelict. It was awful… It was just so sad to see it... when I was always used to *[there]* being so many people about and so many things happening.[71]

The sight of a place once characterised by so much life, now reduced to silence and dereliction, was a spectacle that some chose to avoid. Michael explains his own perspective:

> I went down there once. I didn't want to know any more, it just looked horrible. No, as soon as fishing finished, I didn't want to know any more, cos it was depressing.[72]

Beyond the Fish Dock, Hessle Road was also hit by this catastrophic wave of disruption. With Trawlertown in its midst, the district not only supported fishing, it depended upon it. Ron, describing change on Hessle Road, reflects upon its causes:

> Once you haven't got the money there for people, y' know... when we used to come home when I was a deckhand… you came home and for two days it was enjoying yourself, doing things, spending money and keeping the businesses of the city going.[73]

Less work within the fishery meant less spending within local shops and pubs. Earlier, Jim had reported pubs as spaces central to the encounters of Trawlertown. He now observes how well-known local spots, began to disappear:

> *[Pubs]* were meeting places of your friends, your relations, everything. They were starting to go – one by one. The clubs the same. It was the shops and I think for a lot of people, the Clothing House, when that closed it was like somebody ringing a bell. That's how it went, over a period of years.[74]

Alongside these meaningful sites of the fishing district, people were also vanishing. Hessle Road had always teemed with life. However, the movement of inhabitants out to new estates and the decreasing numbers coming to work in the depleted fishery, meant a much reduced footfall in the district. The familiarity of well-known faces was also lost. Doug recalled that a visit to Hessle Road shops in the heyday of Trawlertown would be a lengthy and sociable experience, as he stopped to chat with people that he knew. Speaking of Hessle Road in the 1970s, Doug observes:

> ...the thing that you notice*[d]* is that, when you're walking down Hessle Road, there's not so many people that you knew – not necessarily to talk to, *[but to]* look and say oh, that's so-and-so is that, just across the road there. And course that was because a lot of them had moved out to Bransholm *[new estate]* and those sort o' places."[75]

With the industry in rapid contraction and the catching sector in terminal decline, Hull's fishing taskscape was dissolving. The fishery that had dominated the function and culture of Hessle Road for over a century would henceforth influence just a small part of it. In this chapter Trawlertown has been conveyed with an 'insiders' sense of place, people and activity,

of sound, smell, sensation and motion. Michael poignantly brings all these elements together in his description of Hull's fishing district in demise:

> All the people on Hessle Road, as the fishing was going, then they slowly disappeared and there was different people all together on Hessle Road... I would say 1978 it was going down the tubes... there's all the fish houses gone and all the people who supplied kits and boxes to the market, y' know, there's thousands every day, all that'd gone, so you didn't see the transport on the roads anymore… And then it *[was]* fish lorries and all that'd gone... So it was like half of Hull had gone to sleep and just left. I suppose like California in the gold strike, when it'd gone and you just had towns with all the doors swinging empty and all that. And that's like Hessle Road was. All the factories closed down, cos they didn't need fitters for the trawlers any more. That was it. It was horrible.[76]

Michael continues:

> And Hessle Road, all the shops boarded up and everything... And before, all the pubs used to be full at 11 o'clock in the morning and there was taxis darting all over the town. But all that'd gone see, all the atmosphere.[77]

This was the end of Trawlertown. The movement stopped and the taskscape ceased to be. As the fishery assumed a lower profile, that definable layer of geographical, occupational and cultural relationships gradually dissolved back into the undulations of the wider city. Much of Trawlertown had existed in the consciousness and interactions of its inhabitants. Once these were gone it ceased to exist. In Trawlertown, the Star and Garter, known to locals as Rayner's, was widely recognised as the fishermen's pub. After the trawl, it is just a pub; the fisherman's pub only in memory.

However, it must be remembered that amidst the lived encounters of Ingold's concept, the taskscape does find physical expression. 'A landscape' asserts Inglis 'is the most solid appearance in which a history can declare itself'.[78] Ingold builds on this, reflecting that, "Thanks to their solidity, features in the landscape remain available for inspection long after the movement that gave rise to them has ceased".[79] As the activities of the past give way to new encounters, physical residues are left behind, to be remoulded into the taskscapes of the present. This is where the journey to heritage begins. After the death of Trawlertown comes the birth of the geographies of memory and the struggles for representation and commemoration.[80] Although the distinct interactions of Hull's fishery have gone and their expression in the landscape is eroded, solid traces endure. These are the relics of the

taskscape and they retain the invested memories, meanings and attachments of those who were part of their creation and passing. In the landscapes of the present they are valued and struggled over as sites of memory; as legacy and a tangible expression of other lives.

Conclusion

This chapter has taken a journey through the changing shore-side spaces of Hull's North Atlantic trawl fishery in the latter half of the twentieth century. By engaging oral history, the chapter offers an expression of the port-city relationship that moves beyond social, economic or spatial definitions. Drawing upon geographers' notions of lived space and embodied place and aided by Ingold's conceptualisation of a taskscape, the port-city has been encountered as a phenomenological, sensory and emotional liaison. Trawlertown was born and nurtured by the rhythms of an extreme occupation. Amidst the physical spaces of Hessle Road, it articulates as the sounds of bobbers' clog irons, the smell of rope and fishmeal, the warmth of an arrival and the everyday performances of those who experienced it from within. As the fishery faced a rapid change of fortune, the disruption to these established practices caused the loss or dilution of the shared encounters of the fishing district. Such dislocation brought Hull's fishing taskscape to an end. But whilst Trawlertown cannot be discerned in narratives from the 1980s and beyond, it has an afterlife in the physical traces that remain and in the memories that are assigned to them.

There is a post-script to the story of Trawlertown. Some respondents are still drawn to Hessle Road. Over the years, they have returned to live there, or to shop or have a drink in familiar places. It is tempting to explain such returns as the continued pull of Trawlertown; the remnant rhythms of an extreme maritime occupation. Returning to Hessle Road is a performance of place attachment - a demonstration of affinity to a neighbourhood that moulded lives. The death of Trawlertown resulted from the divorce of a maritime community from the industry that gave it birth. When it existed, the intensity of its encounters forged strong situated bonds. In demise and for some, those same factors forge a strong desire to return and to remember.

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