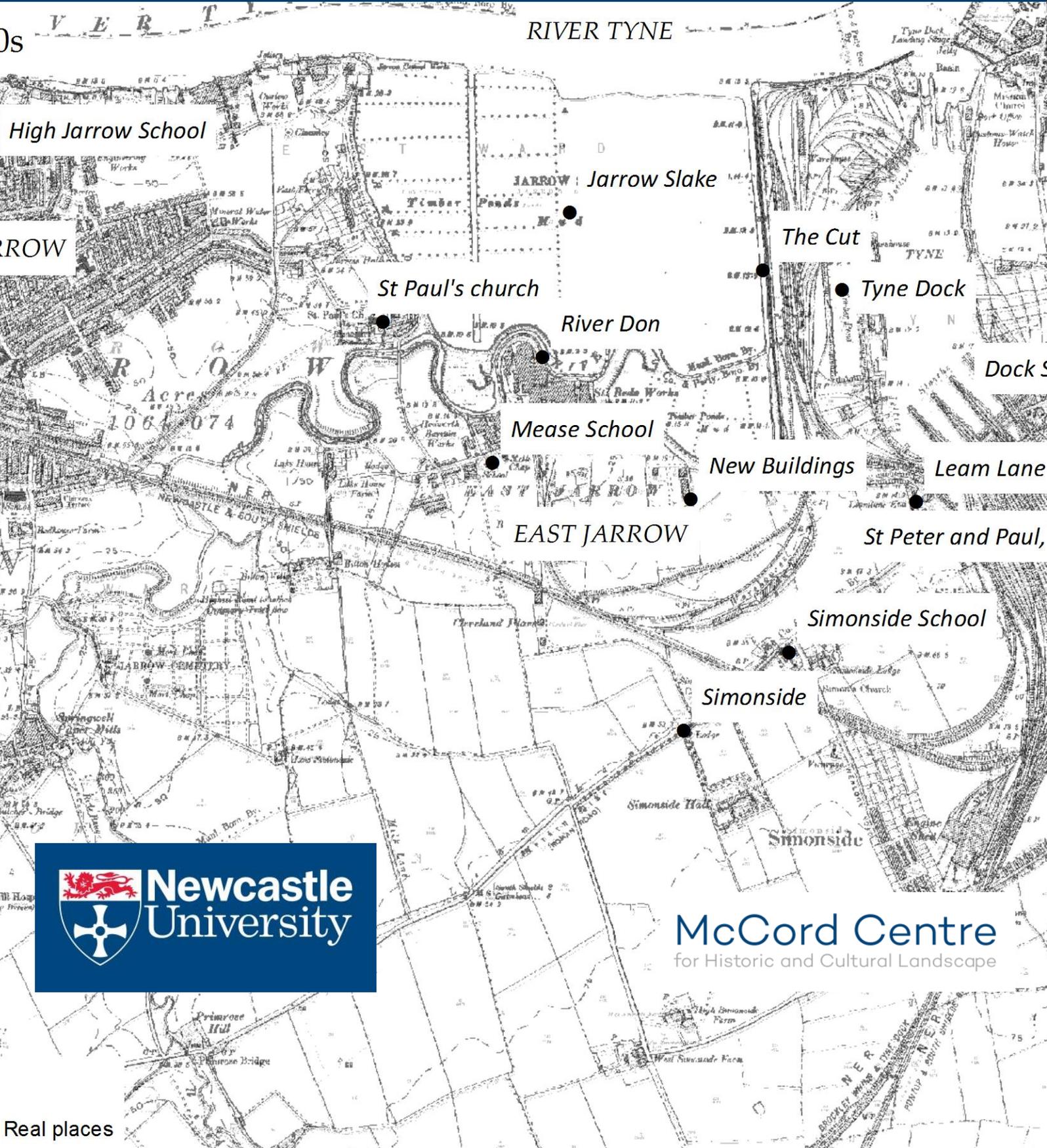


Mapping Catherine Cookson's non-fictional and fictional landscapes around the River Tyne



McCord Centre
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Executive Summary

This project is about the relationship between Catherine Cookson's formative experiences of living in East Jarrow, and inhabiting Jarrow and South Shields between 1906 and 1929, and the use of particular spatial features that enter a selection of her novels. It takes an archaeological approach to do this, examining the *materiality* – the physical and sensuous features – of the places that she would have experienced and encountered everyday, and the way in which these experiences and knowledge enter three books: *Kate Hannigan*, *The Fifteen Streets*, and *The Round Tower*. It also takes a spatial approach, using recent thinking in literature on the significance of spatial dynamics, and the role it plays in understanding fiction. Such an approach allows a greater insight into the process of writing and the characterisation of the author. While it is generally acknowledged that Catherine Cookson created recognisable human characters, this project begins the examination of her spatial framework, following on from Cliff Goodwin's examination of Fellburn, the fictional community that Catherine Cookson created in her later books. The project interweaves archaeology, historical sources, maps, digital resources, autobiography and fiction into a spatial framework using a Geographical Information System (GIS). The conclusions are that the approach outlined by three concepts: imagined geographies, spatial rhetorics and textual space, allow certain 'spatial anchors' to be identified which enrich the reader experience and the communication of the narrative by the author. In so far as it is possible to get into the minds of the person writing a story about a particular time and space, Catherine Cookson's world is revealed. The results suggest that other similar approaches can be used to examine other authors who have a strong spatial thread in their narratives, or landscape designers, who were influenced by their formative experiences.

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Introduction

Many of Catherine Cookson's books are set in the North East, depicting the social, economic and emotional realities of the area, and often during the late-19th and early-20th centuries (cf. Taddeo 2009, 2012); though it is often contested in terms of its historical verisimilitude. But the moralising message in the books to 'reconstruct history as a *narrative* in which women are central and the family is the corner stone' (Ward 1995) is the prominent feature in Catherine Cookson's books. The narratives that she has written, and many others, are good examples of 'imagined geographies', which are the imported compositions derived from real life events and places lived or visited (Reynolds 1998). Her books are also full of 'spatial rhetorics', referring to the role that a particular site, in both its material and metaphorical aspects, has in grounding rhetorical action (Code 1995; Mountford 2001; Marback 2004; Eves 2008). They are also replete of 'textual spaces', spaces that connect the external social space with the internal spatial form of the text (Thacker 1993; 2003).

It is generally accepted that Catherine Cookson was inspired by the intangible aspects of living in East Jarrow. In her own words:

'Like a great sponge I'd taken it all in: the character of the people; the fact that work was their life's blood'; their patience in the face of poverty; their perseverance that gave them the will to hang on; their kindness; their bigotry; ... and the women'.
(Cookson 1999, 16-17)

What is less commented on, but equally apparent, is that Tyneside is itself a character in the book and is largely inspired by her early life, growing up around Jarrow, East Jarrow and South Shields. These are the areas that Catherine Cookson chose to write about most often in her books. However, irrespective of what is thought about the historical veracity of her novels, there is no doubt that Tyneside was a geographical and spatial source of inspiration for her, arguably equal to the people and their emotional entanglements with one another.

What this project examines are the narratives of Catherine Cookson's fictional world with the geographic and spatial realities of the environment or landscape in which she grew up, between 1906, when she was born, and 1929 when she moved to Hastings in the south of England (Dudgeon 1997). The focus for these imagined geographies, as well as rhetorical and textual spaces, is the juxtaposition of two converging forces in the real world, the spatial character and historical materiality of Tyneside. Materiality in this sense is used to define the relations between the physical, material properties of a place with the sensory features that arise from being associated with it, both its form as an object and its meaning as a place experienced and inhabited (e.g. Buchli 2002; 2004; Lucas 2012; Miller 1998; 2005). The blending of emotional action within particular settings, such as the hardship and challenges to inhabiting the streets occupied by the working class, as it is represented in her books, is dependent somewhat on the material traits that are used to set the scene.

In this respect, the key factor that is explored in this project is an examination of the inter-connections between real and imagined places and why these might have been significant for Catherine Cookson and her fiction, and to assess how they enter the narrative. Subsequently, the project examines a selection of other forces that have shaped East Jarrow and South Shields, such as the economic conditions and the population, alongside the physicality of the built environment through its history, housing and industry. In doing so, the project brings together different sources that reveal's emotional, fictional landscapes Catherine Cookson wrote about in her books.

The project also establishes a link between the reconstructed built environment from the historical and social geographies of South Shields, East Jarrow and Jarrow with the fictional one that Cookson wrote about in a selection of her books. In so doing, the project *spatializes* Catherine Cookson's fictional environment and makes associations with the real environment from the streets, houses, industry and people that constituted South Shields, East Jarrow and Jarrow.

Aims and Objectives

There are several aims to the project:

- To spatialize and characterise Catherine Cookson's non-fictional and fictional landscapes, using the frames of imagined geographies, rhetorical spaces and historical materialities.
- To identify the geographic, spatial and material basis and the inspirational setting for many of Catherine Cookson's books in South Shields, East Jarrow and Jarrow, the areas in which Catherine Cookson lived for around 23 years.
- To bring together the different sources of information about the landscape of the late-19th and early-20th century in South Shields and East Jarrow so in order to tell the story of the landscape.

In order to achieve these aims there are several objectives:

- Pull together the different sources of information about the pre-19th, late-19th and early-20th century landscape into a spatial framework held in a Geographical Information System (GIS) and connected attribute database.
- Gather together the named places that provided the fictional contexts in a selection of Catherine Cookson's books, linking these places with real places in the landscape of South Shields, East Jarrow and Jarrow.
- Examine aspects of the historical and social geographies within the same areas.

Sources, Methods and Impact

There are four types of sources for the project:

- Maps
- Historical sources
- Digital sources
- Literature – fiction and non-fiction

Maps

The Ordnance Survey map epochs at a scale of 1:2500, 1:10,560, and 1:10,000, which form the core of the project, are the 1860s, 1890s, 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1980/90s, and modern maps. These are used to examine the degree of historical change between the epochs as well as to spatialize the geographies of Cookson. In addition, other available map sources, such as maps of the Tyne, are used to add specific contextual information associated with the industry and docks along the southern banks of the Tyne.

Historical sources

These are held in the City Library, Northumberland Archives, the Tyne and Wear Archives and at the South Tyneside Local Studies Collection in South Shields, as well as in online depositories, such as Find My Past (2015). Information from these documentary sources, such as newspapers, census records and other sources detailing the population, housing and land-use, are used to spatially represent the social contexts of the people that lived in Tyneside, which comprise the characters in Cookson's books. The information in these sources is used to complement the maps and the digital sources such as the HLC mapping.

Digital sources

The aim of this project is to spatialize and characterise Catherine Cookson's non-fictional and fictional landscapes in a spatial frame by using a Geographical Information System (GIS), and a connected attribute database. The spatial sources available in a digital format include the Tyne and Wear HLC, and Ordnance Survey maps (from Edina 2015). Other digital sources include the Historic Environment Record (from Tyne and Wear's Historic Environment Record 2015).

Literature – fiction and non-fiction

The inspiration for the project is derived from reading and analysing three books: *The Fifteen Streets*, *The Round Tower* and *Kate Hannigan*. What is learnt from the books is that the environment which Catherine Cookson draws on, for the social geography of her narratives and the basis for rhetorical action and textual spaces, can be explored through

other sources, such as maps and historical sources. Furthermore books by Catherine Cookson about her life, such as *Our Kate* (1969), *Catherine Cookson Country* (1986) and the commemorative edition *My Land of the North: Memories of a Northern Childhood* (1999), and by others such as *The Catherine Cookson Companion* by Cliff Goodwin (1999) have been mined for information.

Methods

The methods that underpin this project are associated with understanding the relationship between Catherine Cookson's real and imagined landscapes, using tools such as imagined geographies, rhetorical spaces and historical materialities (as introduced above), and by bringing together the different sources of information into a single spatial framework using GIS.

To do this the project brings together several different sources. The base source is the recently completed Tyne and Wear Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), a project funded by English Heritage, which was carried out by researchers at the School of History, Classics and Archaeology (2015). The HLC provides a means to assess the degree of change and the time-depth of the landscape in which Catherine Cookson lived in the formative period of her life. The HLC is used to provide a landscape context for the social histories of housing and industry in the area. In addition to the HLC, Ordnance Survey maps, dating from c. 1855/1860 to the modern day are used to provide details of place and to locate the fictional places in the real world.

A further element is the Historic Environment Record information which is a database and information source hosted by Newcastle City Council and available online (Tyne and Wear's Historic Environment Record 2015). The information contained in the HER provides a longer historical context to the project for understanding Catherine Cookson's landscape and its historicity. Sites recorded in the Historic Environment Record and which are mentioned in the text are referenced in brackets by the term 'HER', followed by the specific entry number, e.g. (HER no. 1234).

The places identified in a selection of her books (see Appendix), such as *The Fifteen Streets*, provide a representation of Catherine Cookson's thoughts about the housing and industrial areas of late-19th and early-20th century Tyneside in a rhetorical space that is called 'fifteen streets'. *The Round Tower* introduces the fictional community Fellburn. The imagined geography of the fifteen streets and Fellburn are examined in the context of the real places in Catherine Cookson's world by using a holding device for the different sources of information. The holding device for the spatial framework is GIS, where the data are contained in a number of different layers. It is the Historic Ordnance Survey maps, the Historic Environment Record data, and information on the real places, which can be linked

to the imagined places in the selected Catherine Cookson books, which are examined in this project.

To achieve the aims and objectives of this project a number of tasks were set out at the proposal stage. These have subsequently been refined slightly, as follows:

Task 1 Bring the map, documentary and fictional sources together

This task involves bringing different sources together, from the record office archives by transcribing information from the 1911 census about person occupation, housing, and other sources on the industry and land-use in the area and with respect to a selected number of streets.

Task 2 Enhance the HLC and map the social histories

This task examines the HLC data, re-checking to see if the data is mapped at a suitable level for documentary inclusion and, if not, enhanced – and incorporating the social history data collected from the archives in Task 1.

Task 3 Assess Catherine Cookson's books against the HLC and social histories

The next task is to analyse the material that has been gathered in light of Catherine Cookson's books, specifically those that are centred on the 'streets', and the space / land between Jarrow, East Jarrow and South Shields.

By examining a selection of Catherine Cookson's books a record of their settings and geographic content is compared against the OS maps, HER and HLC interpretation that help to underpin the narrative potential. The existing social histories that can be spatially referenced are used in the comparison as well.

Task 4 Write report, and outline future dissemination strategy

This task involves reporting on the project results fulfilling the requirements of the Catherine Cookson Foundation fund.

Impact

The project will help to develop further applications of HLC-derived research, which students will use to enhance their understanding of past landscapes, and which we can use as landscape examples for research-led teaching. For example, the results of this project will be used as a part of the teaching of 19th and 20th century archaeology in which social history and landscape are considered together within a unifying spatial framework.

The *real* world: Catherine Cookson's historic and social geographies

Catherine Cookson wrote stories that were set in several different landscape types, from shipyards and docks, mining communities, agricultural areas and their associated housing such as terraced housing. However, it was the shipyards and docks that had a shaping role in the narrative, because of the difficulties involved in inhabiting these places and the social tensions that were rife in them, especially the late-19th century and the early to mid-20th century. Newcastle University honoured Catherine Cookson because of her ability, through writing, to deal in an intimate and 'real' way 'with the everyday lives and vicissitudes of the people of this Northern area of England' (Cookson 1999, 25). This ability, it is argued, developed not only from her connections with people when growing up but also through the spatial settings in which she lived for around 23 years.

Catherine Cookson's life until her early twenties were the 'streets', which were flecked and inhabited by the remaining late-19th century and early-20th century struggles and hardships associated with the shipyards, docks and urban landscape of South Shields, East Jarrow and Jarrow. Arguably, and acknowledged by Catherine Cookson herself, these experiences shaped her memory, and often formed the basis for the settings and characters in her books. What we know of Catherine Cookson's life is documented in several biographies and interviews, but also in the autobiographical book of her childhood called *My Land of the North* (Cookson 1999).¹

Historic geographies of Catherine Cookson

Catherine Cookson was born June 10th 1906 in 5 Leam Lane, just 100m south-west of Tyne Dock, just a stone's throw away from the Tyne, and Jarrow Slake. The house was part of the small settlement prosaically named Leamlane End, so-called because of its position at the junction of Leam Lane with Jarrow Road. Around 1860-70 (according to the 1st edition OS maps) there were only two or three houses at Leamlane End, which was then almost on the shoreline of Jarrow Slake. In the 19th century, Leam Lane was part of the toll road which connected Gateshead to South Shields (HER no. 2287). In fact Leamlane End probably sat on a much earlier road or causeway bank, known as Wrekendyke, which made up a part of the original Roman coastal communication system that connected the fort at South Shields with the Roman road from Chester-le-Street to the Tyne (HER no. 277). There are no houses on the corner of Leam Lane and Jarrow Road today; instead the site is occupied by a petrol station.

According to the 1911 census (Find My Past 2015), the household at 5 Leam Lane consisted of John McMullen (head of the household, 59, married for 22 years and a dock labourer),

¹ The book *My Land of the North*, published in 1999, was a reprint of an earlier book, published in 1986, called *Catherine Cookson Country*.

Rose Ann McMullen (wife, 53, married for 22 years), John McMullen (son, 21, single, and a dock labourer), Mary E. Fawcett (stepdaughter, 25, single, at home) and Catherine Davies (grandchild, aged 5). In fact the 1911 census records several households around the McMullen's which reveal the kind of early environment that Catherine Cookson would have experienced.

The 1911 census records that at 1 Leam Lane Alexander Lawson (married, aged 47, a fitter's labourer, North East Railway [NER]) lived with Margret Lawson (married, aged 47, confectionary shop owner), Elena Gertrude Lawson (aged 20, assisting in shop), Alexander Lawson (aged 17, waggon shunter, NER), and John Lawson (aged 11). Other households along Leam Lane were similar in numbers and standing. At number 2 lived William Gray (married, aged 43, a railway platelayer), Phyllis Gray (married for 8 years, aged 42), Joseph Watson (stepson, aged 16, newsboy), James Watson (aged 14, surface cleaner above ground), Phyllis Gray (aged 8) and a boarder William Potts (single, aged 34, and a charging labourer); at 3 Leam Lane there was Robert Scott (aged 50, married for 24 years, and a publican), Mary Scott (aged 44 and a publican too), Robert Scott (aged 22 and a seagoing engineer), and Florence May Scott (aged 9); and at 4 Leam Lane there was George Angus (aged 69 and a former boilermaster for NER) and Margret Alice Angus (married for 7 years, aged 47).

The community around 5 Leam Lane appears to have been made up of men engaged in the local industries, such as NER and Tyne Dock, with women who mainly managed the house, and a younger male generation, if working, following in the footsteps of their father. There were a few children of a similar age to Catherine and there would have been play and interaction. The proximity of the pub, which is shown on the OS maps from the end of the 19th century, may have entered her consciousness because the consumption of too much alcohol often had an adverse effect on the characters in her books. This was something she discussed as a problem in her family e.g. her mother (Kate) and stepfather (Goodwin 1999, 16).

In 1912 Catherine Cookson's family moved to 10 William Black Street in East Jarrow. The area was known as 'New Buildings' although when the McMullens moved there the houses had been standing for at least 20 to 30 years (first shown on the 1890s 2nd edition OS map). These houses were still close to Jarrow Slake, which in 1912 remained a muddy inlet off the Tyne and which, in the 1890s was being used as a timber dock and pond (HER no. 501). The New Buildings were also close extensive chemical works along the banks of the River Don. To the west was the Slake Chemical Works (HER no. 2277), part of which was occupied by the Hedworth Barium Works by 1895 (HER no. 2548). On the east side was the Don Alkali Works (HER no. 2279), also known as the Don Factory, which was in existence from as early as 1839. By 1895 (2nd edition OS map) it had expanded and was called the St Bede Works, but by the 1910s, it had been demolished (OS map).

The New Buildings lay between the industrialised and urban area of Jarrow and the industrialised Tyne Dock area (HER no. 2556), which was built from 1855 to 1859 on Jarrow Slake. The area was reclaimed using ballast material from the nearby South Shields ballast hills. The channel between the Tyne Docks and the Jarrow Slake was known as The Gut through which the River Don (coming from Jarrow) flowed.

Against the tightly spaced terraces, the industrial workings of docks, timber ponds and chemical works, as well as collieries (e.g. HER no. 2394 - West Harton, Harton and Whitburn Colliery) there was a pre-industrial history in South Shields, East Jarrow and Jarrow. The areas in which Catherine Cookson lived, both at Leamlane End and William Black Street, were largely reclaimed during the Roman and early medieval period. This was done by constructing a Roman road on a causeway which later became Leam Lane. This act of early reclamation was probably responsible for the formation of the Monkton Burn and the land east from Leam Lane to Boldon Colliery. Furthermore, the parishes of Westhoe and Jarrow lay within the early medieval monastic lands of Wearmouth and Jarrow (Turner *et al.* 2013). St Paul's Jarrow, one of the two monasteries that managed the land, lay about 1 km north-west of the New Buildings, on the north side of the River Don. Jarrow St Paul's was founded in 685 AD and had an Anglo-Saxon monastic precinct (HER no. 994) that reused part of the Roman fort that may have been close by (HER no. 993). The original settlement associated with Jarrow may have built up around the monastery, immediately to the north-east, although in 1860 there remained only Jarrow House, which was built in the early-19th century. However, this earlier history did not enter the consciousness of Catherine Cookson, except in an oblique way.

The social history of Tyneside: key places around the Streets – Jarrow

By all accounts living in the industrialised urban landscape on the southern banks of the Tyne was immensely tough. A common theme in Catherine Cookson's books is the survival and perseverance of the characters, irrespective of the hardships present. This definitely reflected a real situation in the area, which had one of the worst poor and health records in England during the late-19th century and early-20th century. The reading of poor records, medical officer reports, birth and death rates, and accounts of the opposition to the building of better housing in Jarrow during the mid- to late-19th century puts all this into perspective. Whilst Catherine Cookson lived slightly later than this period, born in 1906, her grandparents and the people around her would have experienced the difficulties reported in these records and this was probably conveyed to her. It is hard not to think or to imagine how this would not have affected the characters in her writing. Whether or not her writing was historically accurate is not the question of interest in this project, but what is taken away is that the essence behind her fiction, about the conditions in which people lived, has truth.

The state of housing before improvements in 1829 was very poor indeed, according to Thomas Salmon in his 1856 lecture, *South Shields: its past, present and future* (Salmon 1856). In an account of Jarrow, contemporary with the establishment of the Palmer Shipbuilding and Iron Works in the 1850s, quoted by Ellen Wilkinson in *The town that was murdered* (Wilkinson 1939), the state of housing is described,

‘Houses are wanted so badly that many are taken before they are finished. Houses already erected are crowded with lodgers’ (Wilkinson 1939, 73).

The population of South Shields and Jarrow was rapidly increasing and there was not enough quality housing. The increase in population resulted from the expansion of industries around the shores of the Tyne, which attracted people from rural communities. Such was the deluge of families that the provision for housing was outstripped. This brought community difficulties and problems, particularly for health through overcrowding and lack of adequate sanitation.

Ellen Wilkinson suggested that investment in the building of new housing would have allowed Jarrow to overcome these difficulties, a community that had one of the worst poor and health problems. Even when new housing was constructed, house builders/owners were driven more by the profit motive rather than a desire to improve the conditions of the local community. The increase in population numbers, particularly in the early years of the industrial growth from around 1855 onwards, created an inordinate amount of pressure on housing and other resources. The houses that were built in the lead up to the 1850s, because of the colliery development, and those immediately after, did not sufficiently provide for the burgeoning population that was increasing alongside Palmer’s shipbuilding and iron works, as well as other local industries. When new houses were built for the workforce they were, according to Wilkinson, hastily built, and possibly without a full understanding of the effects of poor sanitation and the dangers to health that a great density of people had. And when added to the already existing colliery houses the impact was not enough to alleviate problems of a rapidly growing population.

Wilkinson’s analysis of the population of Jarrow, verified against the census records, shows considerable growth between the years of 1851 and 1921. In 1851 the population was 3,500; by 1861 it had doubled to 7,000, and over the next ten years to 1871 it increased by another 157%, to 18,000. The rate of growth steadied over the next 20 years, with a population of 25,000 in 1881 and 33,000 in 1891. Following this, the population stabilised, growing by only 2,000, up to 35,000 in 1921 (Wilkinson 1939: 71-2). The effects of this rapid rise in population, and the problems it brought, in the mid-19th century is illustrated by an assessment of the tenement houses, that is property rented from a landlord. In 1851, there were 300 tenement houses, which had risen to 1,005 by 1865 and to 2,062 tenement houses in 1869 (Wilkinson 1939, 72). This shows a total increase of tenement housing provision of around 587% in nearly 20 years, at a time when the population had risen by over 400%. The way the increase in population affected property is also reflected in the

rateable value of all properties in Jarrow (see table 1). Clearly the housing provision grew to match the population increase, but the quality of that housing does not appear to have been of particularly good quality.

Year	Rateable Value	Notes
1851	£4,135	Jarrow and Hebburn
1861	£9,400	Jarrow and Hebburn
1863	£13,988	Jarrow
1871	£47,656	Jarrow
1881	£60,000+	Jarrow

Table 1. Total rateable values for housing in Jarrow (and Hebburn) between 1851 and 1881 (after Shields Daily Gazette and Shipping Telegraph [Friday 13th May, 1881]).

When the colliery in Jarrow closed in 1851, new industries replaced it. The Jarrow Chemical Company was established in 1844 close to Jarrow Slake, and Palmer’s Shipbuilding, which was founded around 1851, was built, drawing on the success of the launch of the collier *John Bowes*. However, whilst industry grew, and the population increased to meet the need for a workforce to serve it, what was lacking was good housing for the workers. Wilkinson’s assessment of this situation is that this fell on the shoulders of Palmer. The competitive nature of Palmer and his policy to succeed in business at all costs meant that there was no ‘regard to the social, or wider economic consequences of such a policy’ (Wilkinson 1939, 70). The consequences of this policy were significant for the local population.

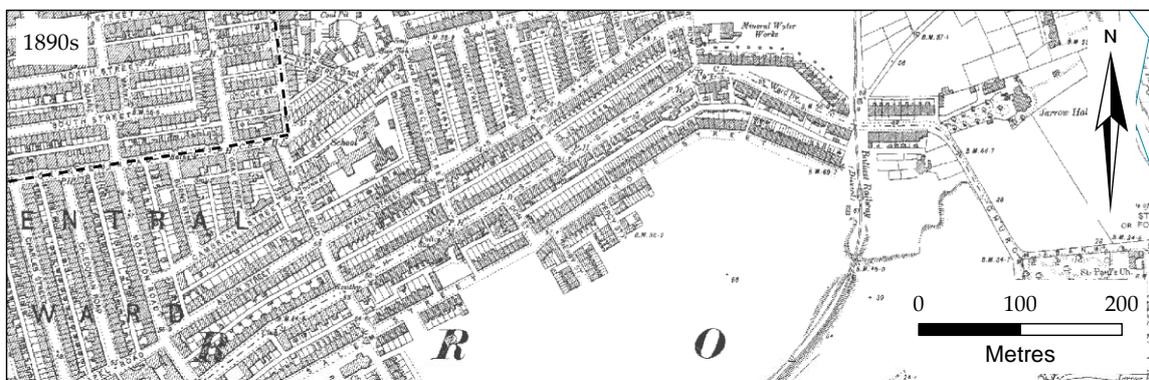
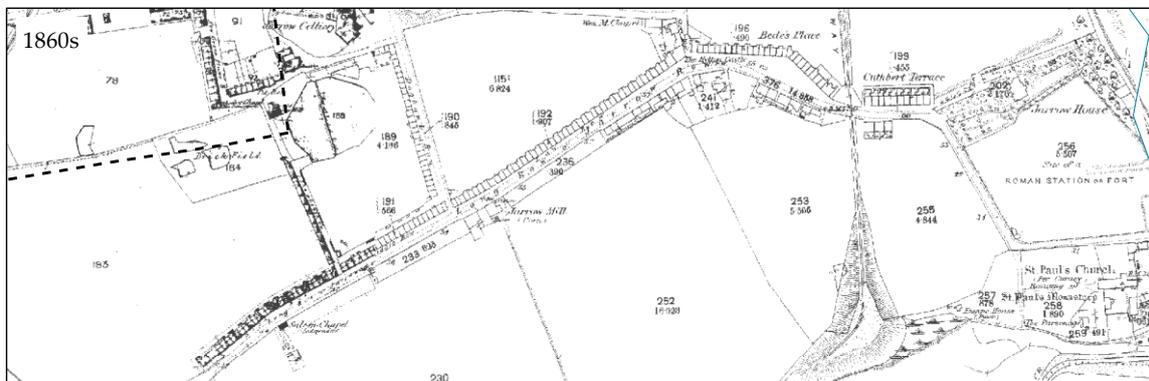


Figure 1. South-east Jarrow – Newcastle Turnpike in 1860s and 1890s and the ‘old’ pit and additional terrace houses (OS maps).

One consequence was disease; Jarrow suffered a number of outbreaks of typhoid fever because of overcrowding and a built environment that did not have an adequate sewage system. Whilst new houses were proposed, owners of existing property obstructed the development of new housing, or tried to reduce the cost of such ventures in order to increase their own profits. The Medical Officer of Health report in 1875 detailed an outbreak of fever. The officer found the situation complicated by the material circumstances, for example the,

‘4 cellars situated behind the block of buildings known as the Barracks in Walter Street, which are quite unfit for human habitation’ (Medical Officer Reports Dec. 1875; quoted in Wilkinson 1939, 75).

In another contemporary account, according to the Newcastle Daily Chronicle on May 13th 1865,

‘the very poorest – composed of Irish – inhabit the old pit houses in the row fronting the old Shields – Newcastle turnpike – and in the street leading down to the ruins of the once famous pit sunk by Sammy Temple’ (quoted in Wilkinson 1939, 73).

Today, at the same place along the old turnpike there are terraced houses that were built c. 1890s, which replaced these earlier houses (see figure 1). The Palmer yards and works were taken over by the National Shipbuilders Security Ltd. in 1933. Palmer’s buildings were demolished in 1935, although the 715 feet dry dock at Hebburn was taken over by Vickers-Armstrong Ltd and continued working as Palmers (Hebburn) Ltd.

An imagined world

Catherine Cookson's real world, the one she grew up in and conducted research on, often grounded the action in her book in real places. The composition and spatial arrangement of the narratives – its textual space – at times varied from the real world, although there were anchor points – spatial anchors – that were revisited again and again. The thread that runs through Catherine Cookson's books is the attention to detail, showing the emotional and social wellbeing of her characters. The three books investigated here are: *Kate Hannigan*, *The Fifteen Streets*, and *The Round Tower*.

Kate Hannigan (published 1950)

The book is set in the same place as *The Fifteen Streets* but later in time at the beginning of the 20th century. The fifteen streets are a slum to escape from, and Kate Hannigan has no chance of survival if she stays. To escape her abusive father, Kate starts a romance with John Herrington, and when she becomes pregnant she is forced to take care of herself. Dr Rodney Prince looks after the residents on the streets and helps Kate give birth. After falling in love with Kate, even though married, Rodney wants to help Kate escape from the streets by being with her. Through the difficulties that subsequently ensue, Rodney returns from World War I to Kate and love conquers all.

Kate Hannigan is the most autobiographical of her books, in the scenes and actions that take place. There are a number of places mentioned in *Kate Hannigan* set within the fifteen streets locality. The domestic setting for the characters in the book is 16 Whitely Street. A number of other streets are also mentioned including Harley Street, King Street, Eldon Street, Slade Street. There is also mention of the chemical works, tram sheds, saw mill, Jarrow Slacks, Bogie Hill, Simonside, Tyne docks, St Bede's church and Borough Road church.

The Fifteen Streets (published 1952)

The book, *The Fifteen Steps* first published in 1952, has a plot which is about a family living in the fifteen street area of East Jarrow, Tyneside. The streets themselves as described in the book are slums, with the residents working hard and trying to fulfil dreams and hopes of something better, either for themselves or their children. The main characters of the book are a single family who come into contact with a variety of different individuals and groups. Aspirations for a better future revolve around one of the children, sister of the protagonist John O'Brian, who is identified by a teacher (Mary Llewellyn) as having the 'potential' to become a teacher. Mary and John fall in love with one another and make plans for the future as John becomes more responsible at work on the docks. The coincidence of the romance and development of better prospects in the future are entangled, until tragedy strikes when the John's sister drowns in a boat accident. Class, improvement and social tensions all intermingle as the relationships between the fifteen street occupants, the family

members, the protagonist John, and teacher Mary fall are woven through the story. The sensitive portrayal of the main characters in the book, set against the realistic hardships of living in the fifteen streets, create a timeless account of people trying to overcome the impossible and reach eventual salvation.

There are a number of places mentioned in the book centred on the fifteen streets. The main action, in the domestic setting and in the interaction between the members of the family, occurs at 10 Fadden Street. Other streets mentioned are Blacket Street, Whitely Street, Ferry Street, King Street, and Dee Street. Named places include Simonside Bank, the Arches, New Buildings, Chemical works and Palmer's shipyard.

The Round Tower (published 1968)

The Round Tower tells the story of the difficult relationship between Vanessa Ratcliffe, the daughter of a wealthy factory owner, and Angus Cotton, who is a working class man. Vanessa Ratcliffe is a 16 year old convent girl who lives in a large house in a good area in the north of England. Angus lives in Ryder's Row, a working class neighbourhood. Vanessa discovers that she is pregnant. She tells Arthur Brett, who had a secret night-time liaison with her. Arthur is so distraught by the news that he commits suicide. Instead of Arthur admitting he is the father of Vanessa's child, Angus is blamed. After Vanessa leaves home, Angus suggests that Vanessa marries him to give the baby a name and to keep her safe, and they move into the house on Ryder's Row. The plot develops over time as Angus becomes more and more successful in his business, and Vanessa asks Angus to drive her to a beautiful spot in the middle of a field to build 'our house, our people, not your people or my people'. Like *The Fifteen Streets*, *The Round Tower* is a story about the resourcefulness of the working class in overcoming the odds against them, about social mobility and the breaking down of class barriers, set against the difficulties and hardship of living in streets such as Ryder's Row and the everyday bigotry and snobbery associated with each class.

There are a number of places mentioned in *The Round Tower*, which is set in the settlement created by Catherine Cookson called Fellburn, the fictional Tyneside setting for several of her later books. This includes 24 Ryder's Row (the domestic setting) as well as Kyle Street, Murphy Street and Wolf Lane. There is also mention of Bower Place, Brampton Hill, Batterby Bay Road and Affleck and Tate's Engineering Works.

An interweaving of imagined and real geographies

Catherine Cookson's first novel, written in 1950, was intimately related to her own life; *Kate Hannigan* is semi-autobiographical,

'I just wanted to put down the background of my mother and my grandmother, from what I felt in the kitchen, from the surroundings of New Buildings' (Goodwin 1999, 27).

It is difficult to work out the spatial frame that Catherine Cookson imagined and used in her books compared to the actual geography focused on the communities of Jarrow, East Jarrow and South Shields. However, it is possible to identify several recurring spatial anchors that locate both her spatial frame and the actual geography on to the same axis. For example, St Bede's church, which is referenced in both *Kate Hannigan* and *The Fifteen Streets*, can be clearly identified as St Paul's church, Jarrow, the place where the Venerable Bede who lived in the 7th and 8th century. The River Don is a recurring feature, as well as the Jarrow Slacks, the timber ponds, and the Gut – a man-made channel which ebbed and flowed with the tide against the western edge of the Tyne Dock



Tyne Dock Arches looking towards Jarrow in the early 1900s

Figure 2. *The Tyne Dock Arches looking towards Jarrow in the early 1900s (Dunn n.d.)*

The New Buildings, the place to which Catherine Cookson moved in 1912, are described in *Kate Hannigan* and *The Fifteen Streets* (although somewhat fictionalised). The Arches were close to Leam Lane, the street in which Catherine Cookson was born in 1906 (figure 2). The Arches carried the railway lines from the NER network to the jetties and staithes of the dock, forming bridges under which the road ran. Catherine would pass under the Arches frequently on her way to her school located in Tyne Dock, east of the sidings. She would have had to walk from New Buildings east along Jarrow Road, through the Arches, and south down Hudson Street and Boldon Lane where the school was located next to the Roman Catholic Church.

In *Kate Hannigan* there are several instances in which the setting is described so well that places can be followed as if on a map,

‘She turned into the main road from which the fifteen streets branched off; walked between the tram sheds and the chemical works, and came to the Jarrow Slacks, with the great timbers, roped together in batches, lying helpless on the mud like skeletons unearthed in a graveyard. She passed the New Buildings opposite, similar in design to the group she had just left, and walked on down the long road connecting East Jarrow and Tyne Dock, past the sawmill, through the four slime-dripping arches, and into the heart of the docks. She passed the dock gates and stood on the pavement, waiting for a tram that would take her into Shields;’ (From *Kate Hannigan*, Cookson 2011, 70-71)

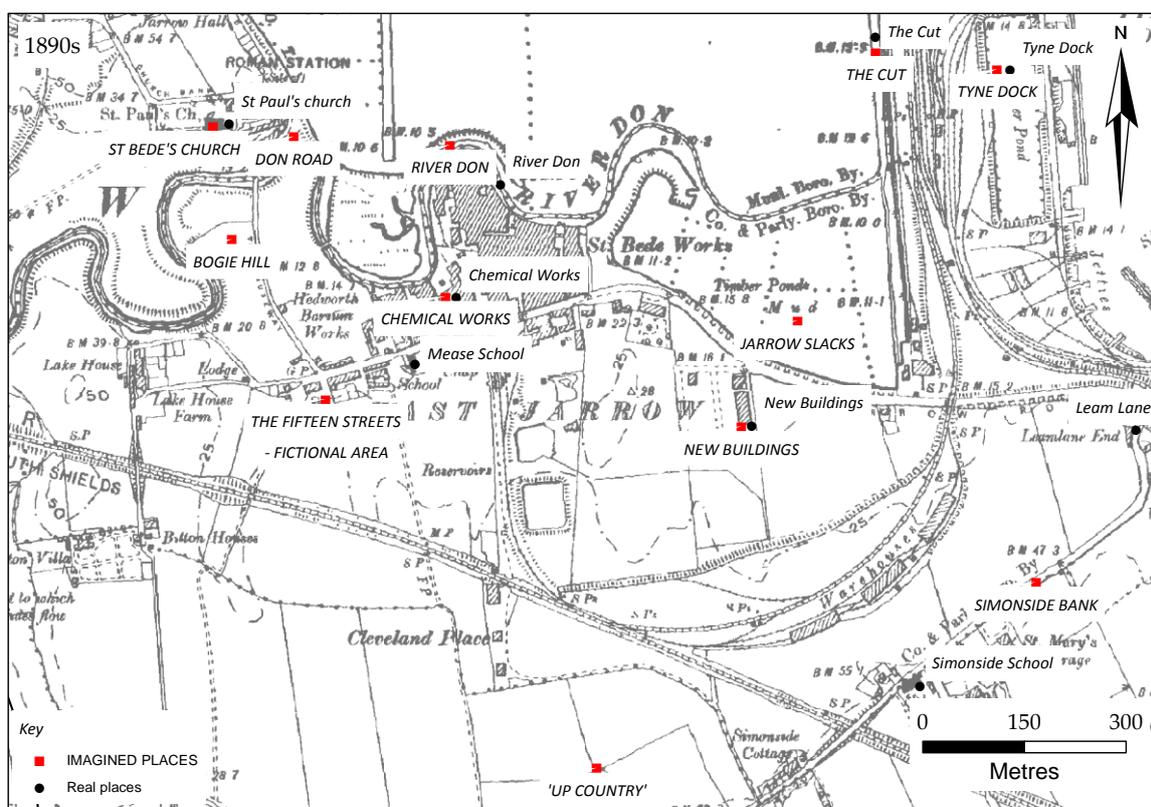


Figure 3. Imagined and real places spatialized, and associated with Catherine Cookson. The fictional area of the fifteen streets as described spatially by Catherine Cookson in *Kate Hannigan* overlaid onto 1890s 1:10,560 OS map.

In attempting to locate fifteen streets from the descriptions in *Kate Hannigan* it is possible to define an approximate area in which the rhetorical action takes place (figure 3),

‘Rodney followed the road of the Don, around by St Bede’s church, then past Bogie Hill, past the fifteen streets and the New Buildings, and along the stretch of the East Jarrow slacks.’ (From *Kate Hannigan*, Cookson 2011, 124)

The inspiration for the geography of the fifteen streets probably came from two places familiar to Catherine Cookson. First, an area in Jarrow, where 'fifteen' streets of terrace housing lay between Palmer's shipyard (to the north) and Grange Road (to the south) and defined by Berkley Street (to the west) and Commercial Road (to the east). Second, an area of South Shields, close to Tyne Dock, defined by Tyne Dock and the railway sidings (to the north and west), by the NER Newcastle to South Shields railway line (to the south and south-east) and by one of Catherine Cookson's schools on Whitehead Street (to the east).



Figure 4. Jarrow (top) and South Shields (bottom), and the two areas (centred) which are suggested to have influenced Catherine Cookson's imagination for the (fifteen) streets setting (using the 1920s 1: 10,560 OS map).

The area as it is described in the two books is located in an area of East Jarrow. The actual area of East Jarrow had residential development but not rows and rows of terrace housing as in the two areas described above. The social geography of the area was probably inspired by Catherine Cookson's own experience of living in New Buildings. There are just a few scenes in *The Fifteen Streets* that describe the setting in this way,

'Poverty is comparative. There were those who did not live in the fifteen streets who considered the people living there to be of one stratum, the lowest stratum; but the people inside this stratum knew that there were three different levels, the upper, the middle, and the lower' (From *The Fifteen Streets*, Cookson 2011, 513).

While there may have been some social ordering within the communities, there were certainly no 'high, middle or low' parts. Furthermore, residential development ranged on either side of the main road through East Jarrow, Swinburne Street/Straker Street, comprised mostly roadside development. The fifteen streets is a fictional construction that emerged from Catherine Cookson's memory from a combination of events and places. The main places in the two books, 10 Fadden Street (in *The Fifteen Streets*) and 16 Whitley Street (in *Kate Hannigan*), were caricatures of the terrace housing in Jarrow and South Shields (figure 4).

In contrast, *The Round Tower* centres on the fictional community of Fellburn, a setting for over 30 of Catherine Cookson's novels. Cliff Goodwin in *The Catherine Cookson Companion* has mapped Fellburn and created an index to places by piecing together the different clues in the books (Goodwin 1999, 179-82, and fold-out map). There are many recognisable 'anchors' in Fellburn, but the relationship between these and the real geography of Tyneside is only hinted at. There are streets, docks, collieries, churches, better-off and worse-off areas, industrial works such as shipyards, scrapyards and engineering works, which are all types of places found in Jarrow and South Shields. Although the Tyne is not mentioned in *The Round Tower* it is a kind of unwritten spatial anchor. According to Goodwin after Catherine Cookson's own words, Fellburn is a combination of the Felling area of Gateshead and Hebburn, west of Jarrow (Goodwin 1999, 179).

As there has been much work done already on describing and mapping the Fellburn community by Goodwin (1999), in the following section, I focus on assessing Jarrow and South Shields. These are two areas that I suggest were the source for Catherine Cookson's fifteen streets. In particular, I am interested in the potential daily routes and journeys that she would have taken through the two areas, as well as East Jarrow, to get to the four schools she attended and the workhouse where she worked from her home in New Buildings.

Life on the streets in the late-19th to early-20th century

‘She turned into the main road from which the fifteen streets branched off; walked between the tram sheds and the chemical works, and came to the Jarrow Slacks, with the great timbers, roped together in batches, lying helpless on the mud like skeletons unearthed in a graveyard. She passed the New Buildings opposite, similar in design to the group she had just left, and walked on down the long road connecting East Jarrow and Tyne Dock, past the sawmill, through the four slime- dripping arches , and into the heart of the docks. She passed the dock gates and stood on the pavement, waiting for a tram that would take her into Shields’ (from *Kate Hannigan*, Cookson 2011, 71-2).

Jarrow

Jarrow in the late-19th century was dominated by Palmer’s shipyard and iron works. But the culmination of Jarrow as an industrial centre, and the hustle and bustle that this brought, was a gradual process, starting in the post medieval period. In the space of 300 years, from the 1600s to 1900s, Jarrow was completely transformed from what was largely a mixed fishing and agricultural settlement on the banks of the Tyne, to a modern (for the early-20th century) industrial complex.

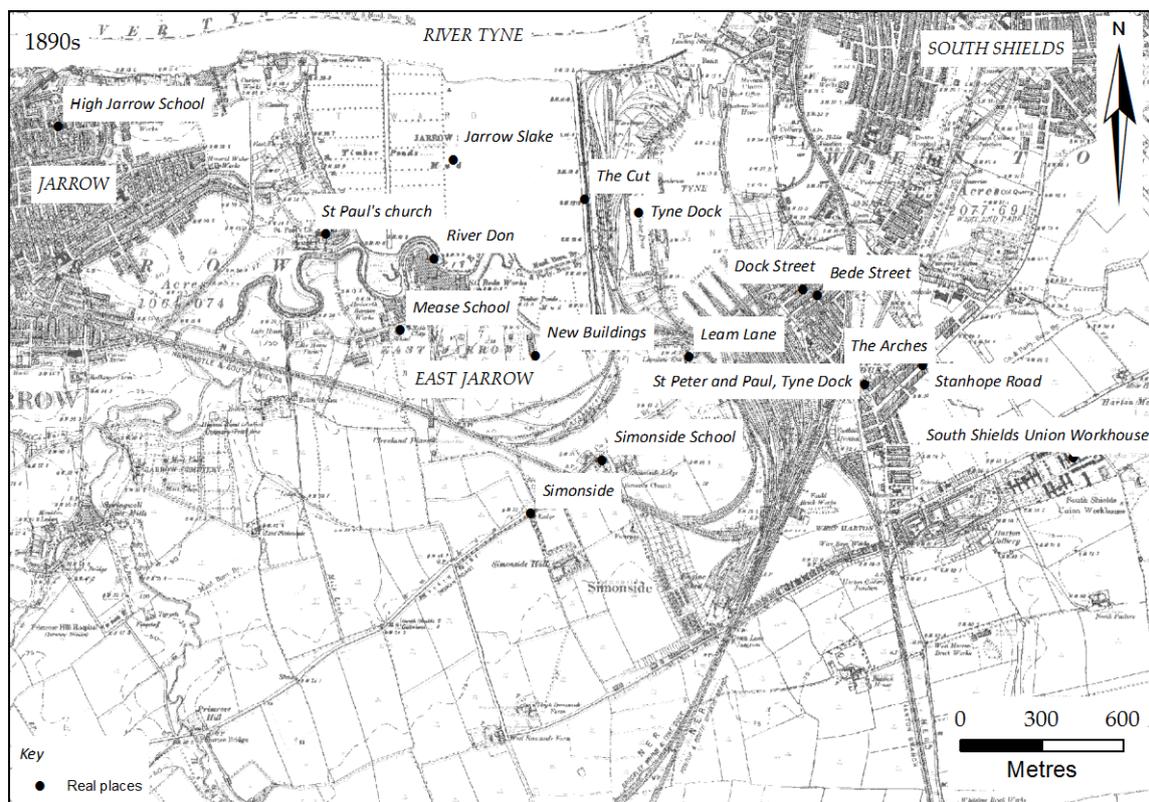


Figure 5. Real places in Catherine Cookson’s world, with the 1890s OS map underneath.

The area of East Jarrow was chosen as a good site for development probably because of the natural harbour and access to water. Jarrow Slake had been a better harbouring place in the early post medieval period than it was in the 19th century. In the 17th century there could be as many as sixty sails at the quay at one time delivering their ballast, and loading up with goods, such as coal. As a consequence of these workings two ballast hills formed on the outer east edge of Jarrow, although lying somewhat beyond the Jarrow area that influenced Catherine Cookson. Several prosecutions were brought for the illegal dumping of ballast in Jarrow Slake in the mid-17th century (Surtees 1820, 66-93), suggesting the practice was common. This resulted in a gradual infilling of the area and its abandonment as a harbour, although it was later used as a timber pond.

The first large scale mining operations came to Jarrow in 1803, with the sinking of the Alfred Pit under the ownership of Simon Temple. Jarrow Hall was constructed for Temple in 1785. A plan of his estate in 1808 shows the house, and the development of a mining village, which employed more than 400 people by 1810. These houses were single storey white-washed cottages, some of the first to be built along the length of the old turnpike road which lay along Church Bank and what later became the High Street. However, the success of the colliery was relatively short-lived; Simon Temple went bankrupt in 1812; the pit eventually closed after an explosion in 1851.

The Jarrow area would have been quite a noisy place with the prolific movement of vehicles, goods and people through the town, and there would have been arresting smells particularly from the chemical works. By 1831 there was a total of just over 600 dwellings in Jarrow, many were cottages associated with the colliery. Between 1823 and c. 1834, the settlement extended along the south side of Church Bank, and by 1834 colliery cottages, including many trade houses, would have extended about a mile along the South Shields turnpike Road (Jarrow and Hebburn Local History Society nd).

By the mid-1800s, Jarrow was developing into an industrial centre. Palmer's shipbuilding and iron works was the major employer in Jarrow during the late-19th century. There was also St Bede Works, earlier known as Don Alkali Works or the Don Factory, which was established by 1839 (HER no. 2279). There was a smithy, two brickfields, Slake Chemical Works, Jarrow Chemical Works, a Timber Dock, a Patent Slip, Jarrow corn mill, a waggonway connecting Jarrow Colliery to Jarrow Staith (HER no. 2260) and Springwell Staithes (HER no. 2253). In the 1860s there was also the Brown Ware Pottery (HER no. 2252) operated by G. Grey & Co. in 1851 and J.B. Hodgson in 1852-3, and which is thought to have ceased production by 1855 (the approximate survey date of the 1st edition OS map), shortly after Palmer's shipyard and iron works were established in Jarrow.

The expanse of industry and settlement at Jarrow continued through the late-19th century. On the 1st edition of the OS map there were Mineral Water Works, Timber Ponds, Jarrow Cement Works, Hedworth Barium Works, occupying part of the site of the earlier Slake Chemical Works. There were also the Mercantile Dry Docks, Jarrow Forge Engineering

Works, another Engineering Works, the Railway Bridge, and the Springwell Staith Branch of Pontop and Jarrow Railway. The 2nd edition of the OS map (dated to 1890s) shows that housing continued to develop and expand. For example on Hope Street, which was behind the earlier 'Low Row' development, labourer's houses were built. As Palmer's shipyard and iron works began dominate the town in the mid- to late-19th century, the fate of the town became increasingly entwined with them.

A partnership between the Palmer brothers, Charles, Mark and George, was formed in the 1850s. They saw an opportunity to speed up the transportation of coal from their own coal interests in the region and transport it themselves to the markets in London by sea. The yard at Hebburn was acquired in 1860 from Charles Mitchell (HER no. 2534). The Palmer works had shipbuilding yards, as well as engine works, iron rolling mills and blast furnaces, and from this enterprise Palmer produced colliers to transport coal from the source to the markets. The first collier they made was the formidable (by all accounts) *John Bowes* which could carry 650 tons of coal. Steamers were also built, such as the *Hudson* which was a 3000 tonnage vessel launched in June 1858. Warships were constructed, including submarines during World War I such as *HMS Terror*, an ironclad vessel of 2000 tons. In 1906 electric overhead trolley cranes on elliptical gantries were installed in the yards. After World War I oil tankers were the main product.

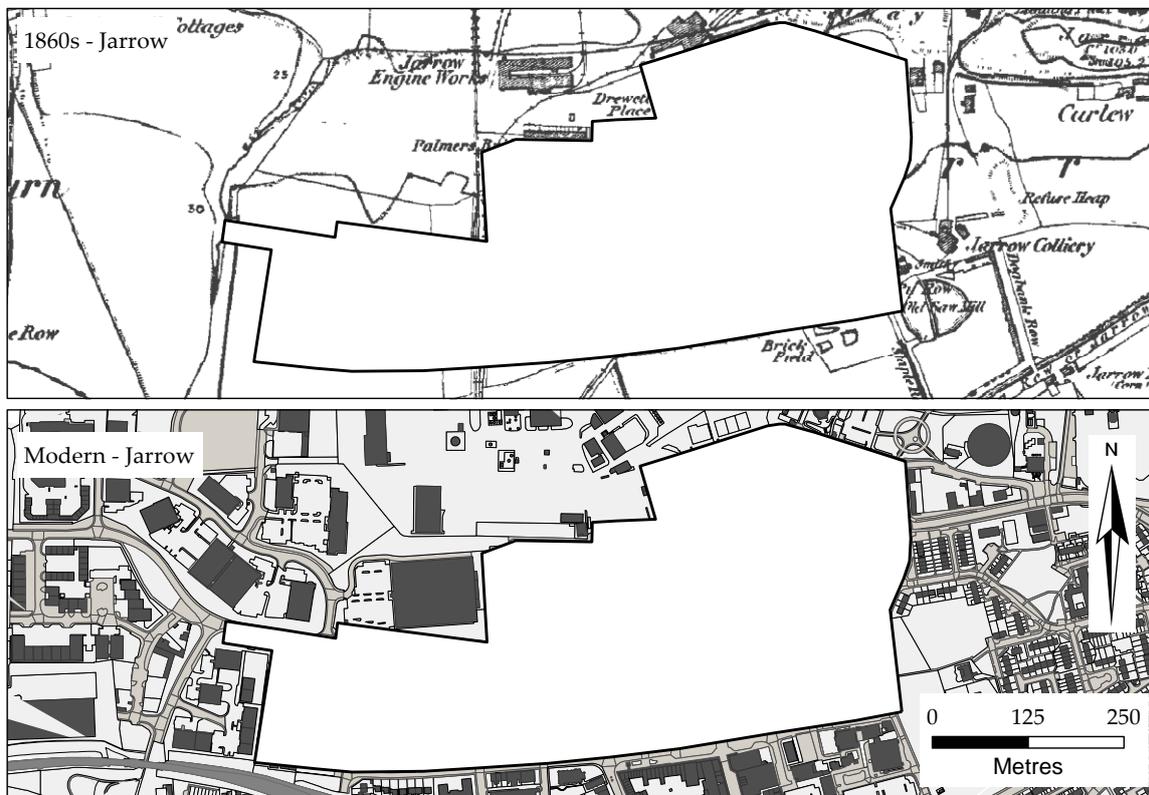


Figure 6. Jarrow in 1860s and in the modern period.

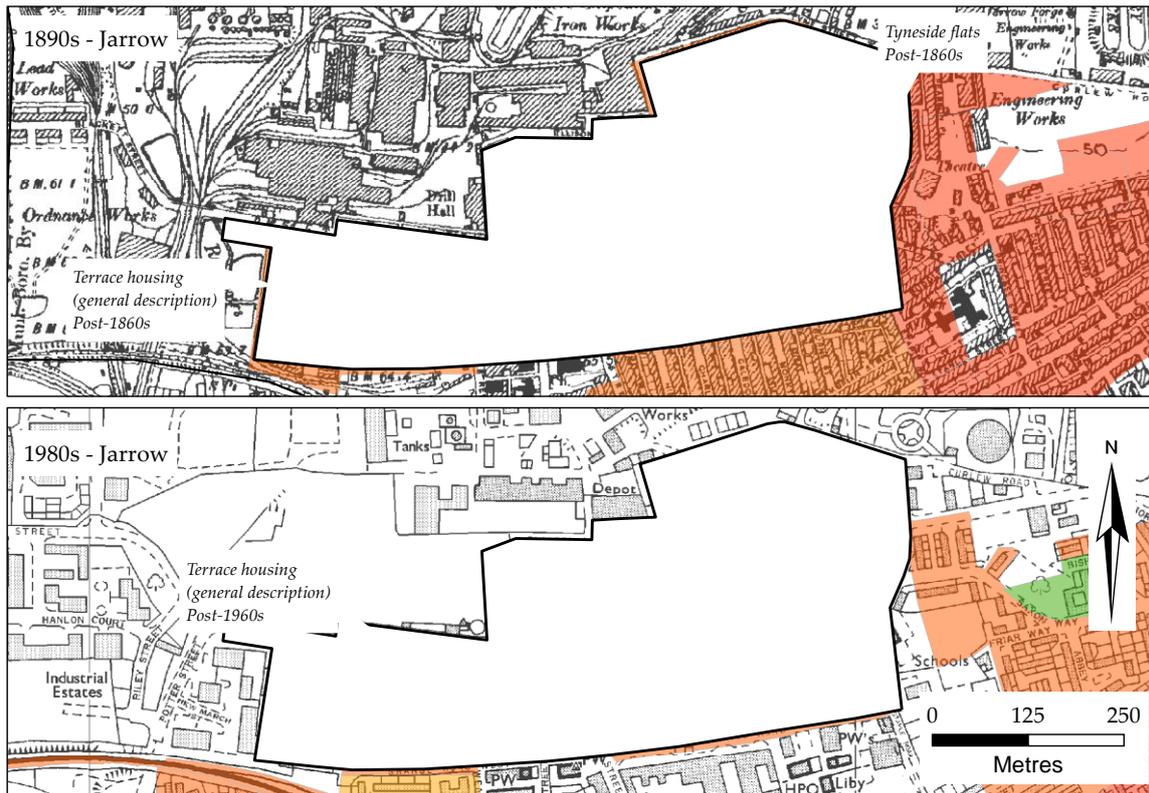


Figure 7. The area of Jarrow considered to have influenced Catherine Cookson's spatial frame and narrative setting; in 1890s and 1980.

More than ninety ships of over 2000 tons each were launched before 1890. Part of Palmer's industrial empire, the Jarrow yard was almost completely self-sufficient. An engine works was set up in 1853, in 1857 Palmer purchased ironstone mines at Port Mulgrave, Whitby, North Yorkshire, and he set up four blast furnaces next to the shipyard. The Bede Metal Co. Ltd. was also set up in 1862 to supply copper to the shipyard. In 1863 *The Engineer* magazine commented that Palmer's, 'was the only works in England where every branch of manufacturing is done on the premises-from the delivery of ore at one end of the yard till it leaves the dock at the other in the form of a finished ship.'

After the war came the depression, with the steelworks being closed for much of the 1920s, eventually closing permanently in 1931, and the shipyard closing altogether in 1933. A statue to Sir Charles Mark Palmer was erected in the 20th century (HER no. 5184), and he is largely considered by history to have 'created the town' (*Shields Daily Gazette* 1881). The Palmer industries and their legacy were so entangled with the market forces of the day that the success evident from the mid-19th to early-20th century was not sustainable. By June 1935, the percentage of unemployed in Jarrow was 73%. With poverty at a new high, parts of Jarrow were subjected to slum clearance during the 1930s, after which the town was transformed again. Catherine Cookson would have had only limited knowledge of Jarrow in this period, having left for Hastings in 1929.

Besides the industrial activities and the employment this would have brought to people living there, there were some considerable challenges to life in Jarrow during the 19th century. The historical sources suggest that their housing provision was inadequate for many of the 6,000 workers that were employed by Palmer and in other Tyne-front activities, or in the other industrial workings that were located around the Tyne, such as the chemical works in East Jarrow during the late-19th century. However, pressure to reform housing came from the medical officers, whose appointment in urban areas had been made compulsory under the Public Health Act of 1872. They suggested that the reason for high mortality rates and the 'fever' was because of a considerable number of shared-room occupancies, and a general high density of people living in conditions that were detrimental to health. Pressure for better conditions culminated in the Public Health Act of 1875, which established administrative machinery to deal with health and sanitation at a local level, and required local authorities to provide water, drainage and sewerage.

Ellen Wilkinson (1939) was quite vocal about the responsibility that Palmer – the great man – had to Jarrow, and the focus that he placed on material wealth at the expense of providing good living conditions for his workforce. The difficulty was that Palmer did not own nor was responsible for the housing, although he had great influence over the workings of the town. Instead, many of the properties were owned by individual landlords who had a vested interest in keeping as many people as possible paying rent in their houses. Even so, Palmer generated the context which made opportunities for others to acquire wealth and he was in an influential position. New housing proposals were made after the 1876 fever when the town council felt it had to do something about the housing conditions. The council were required by the 1875 Public Health Act to draw up a series of bye laws to help build new houses according to specifications in which street widths and attic sizes were defined. However, objections were made to the dimensions of the streets and attic sizes, and the provision of other features such as the types of walls and the outside privies (Wilkinson 1939, 76). Figures 6 and 7 show some of the 'new' and improved housing built after the 1860s, and the changes that occurred, as depicted on the 1860s, 1890s, 1980s and modern OS maps. The HLC (historic landscape characterisation) shows the degree of change, and identifies some of the pivotal points in Jarrow's development that would have influenced the types of stories told by Catherine Cookson. Little survives today from that time, and in many ways Catherine Cookson's blending of actual conditions and experiences with her imagination, are a notable remnant of the town's late-19th to early 20th century history.

South Shields

The streets that were located in the south-western part of South Shields, rather than in the main town, were closely connected to the East Jarrow area where Catherine Cookson was born and lived until 1929. Conditions in these streets were similar to those in Jarrow (described above), and many of the same factors were part of everyday life, such as dense

population, over-crowding in houses and poor health, as well as the hustle and bustle of the through flow of people and goods to and from nearby Tyne Dock.

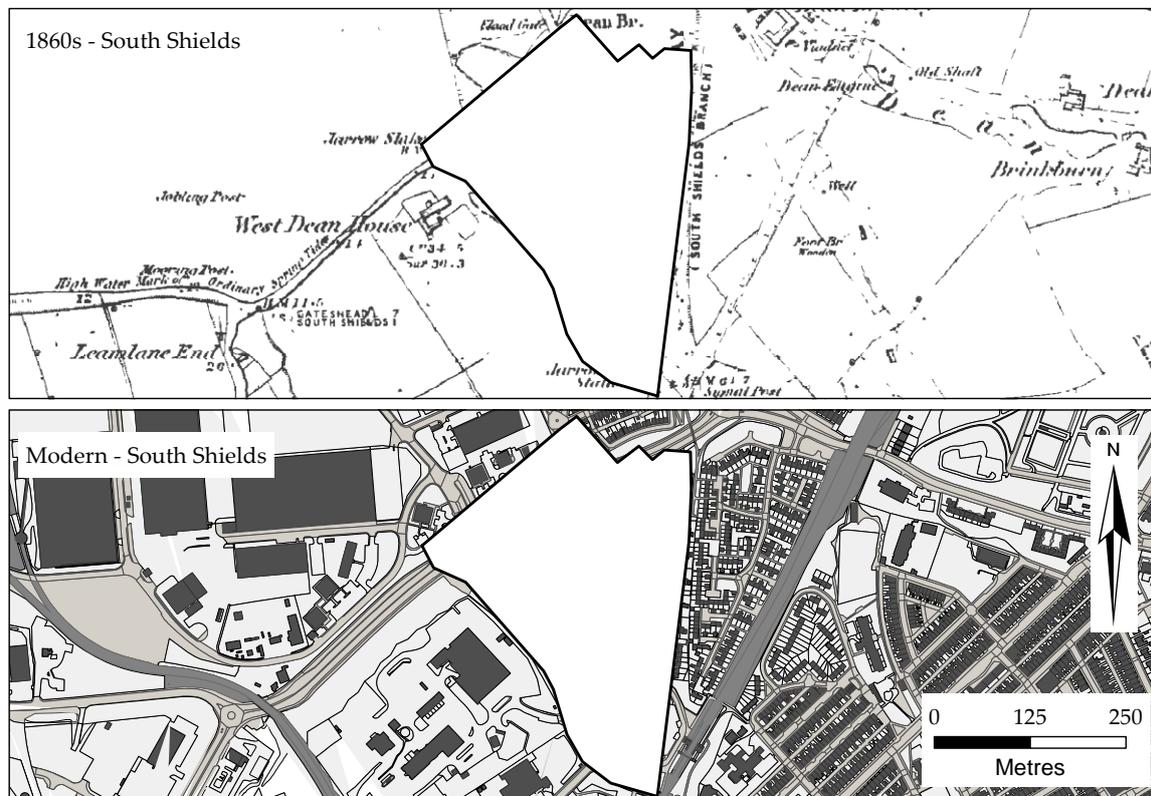


Figure 8. South Shields in 1860s and in the modern period.

Before the 1850s, when Tyne Dock was built, South Shields had a small clustered population, and the area of the town was largely agricultural with a mixed economy through its association with the Tyne and the North Sea. The area of Westoe, which lay south-west of South Shields consisted of a great field, with three lesser fields, and containing in total 484 acres (Salmon 1856, 70). Industry gradually crept in from the 1690s onwards when the first glass factory was established by John Cookson. The first chemical works were founded around 1720, and by 1827 the glass and chemical works were flourishing, alongside carbonate soda manufacture. In 1844 the chemical works, known as Jarrow Chemical Company was established. But the company was not careful in its mixing and application of chemicals, which would have been hazardous to the local population, resulting in a high frequency of legal proceedings. According to Salmon these were, 'both of a public and private nature, by way of indictment for nuisance, or actions for private damage' (Salmon 1856, 21).

In 1856, Thomas Salmon, the first town clerk of South Shields between 1850 and 1871, gave a lecture to the local society called *South Shields: its past, present and future* (Salmon 1856). In the lecture he described a town that had increased in size during the 18th century:

‘... streets were laid out of insufficient width, without regularity, and with no provision of any kind for sewage, footpaths, and pavement – houses were built, in too many instances, according to the interested motives and plans of those who obtained building sites from the Dean and Chapter of Durham, and they were undrained, unventilated, and too frequently without yards or out-offices – no regulating or restraining authority existed on the part of the public, with respect to any such things – and much of our town, and many of our dwellings, came to possess in consequence, that narrow, crowded, and ill ventilated condition, which is unsightly to the eyes, so detrimental to health, and so inconvenient for traffic ...’ (Salmon 1856: 5).

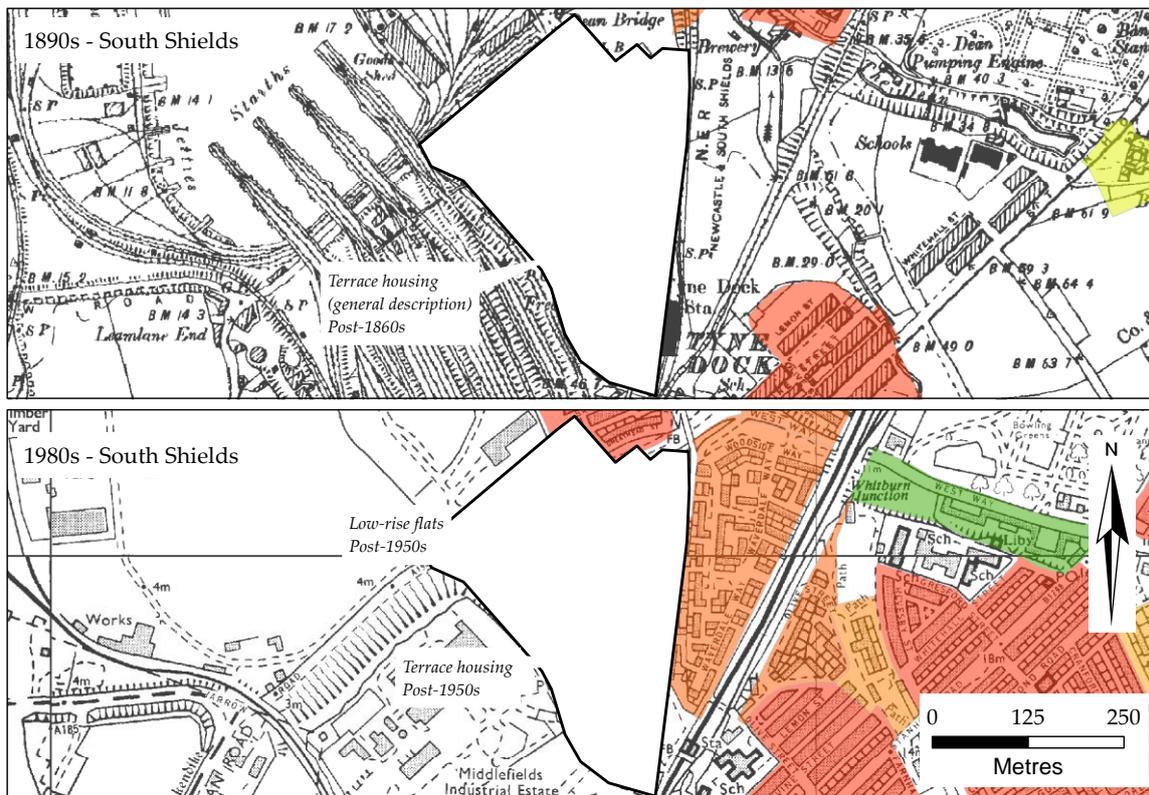


Figure 9. The area of South Shields considered to have influenced Catherine Cookson’s spatial frame and narrative setting; in 1890s and 1980s.

The basis for Salmon’s description of ‘past’ conditions was the late-18th century and early to mid-19th century. After 1768, the population of South Shields started to increase; which exacerbated the housing problem. Various improvements and provisions were proposed, endorsed and made to address the poor conditions. For example, *The Sunderland and South Shields Water Company* formed by Royal Assent in 1852 provided clean water to the streets in 1856. The major development in the area, and one that Catherine Cookson was influenced by, was the building of Tyne Dock, which was a part of the grand ‘Act’ for improvement and regulation of the River Tyne, for navigation and for other purposes, on 15th July 1850. This Act saw the establishment of the so called *Tyne Improvement Fund*.

Writing in 1856, Salmon appears to be full of hope saying that the docks at Jarrow Slake will provide space for 500 vessels.

With Tyne Dock built, the development of the town between 1860 and 1890 (shown on the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps) exploded. In 1860 the only terraced houses were the 'Slake terraces', next to Jarrow Slake in the area of South Shields that I have argued influenced Catherine Cookson's rendering of the 'streets'. In contrast, in the 1890s there was a whole new estate of terraced houses, comprising twelve streets, rather than the fifteen in the books. These new terraces were bounded by Tyne Dock and the railway track and sidings that formed a part of the NER network. Furthermore, we can see that the majority of the men who lived in this area were also people that worked on the adjacent docks and the NER, as reflected in the occupations of the people living in these houses in 1911 (according to the 1911 census).

Conclusions

What I have tried to do in this project is to bring together the idea that the narrative basis for fiction begins with the real and visceral character of the places and the actions that have occurred in them, and which the author herself experienced, whether first-hand or through the memories and stories that were told from the people who were close to her. Few would argue against this, but with Catherine Cookson's books in particular there is great potential to investigate a tangible relationship between the real and imagined, or between the actual and the virtual (Aldred 2015). This is because the settings and the sense of place described in Catherine Cookson's narratives are themselves a 'character' in her books; they direct and assist in the action, have particular emotional traits that are personified by the human characters in the books, and they help to frame the spatial flows in the narrative and storytelling. More explicitly, the fifteen streets, the Tyne, Tyne Dock, the Arches, Simonside, and even Fellburn, and so on, bring into being a particular structural, emotional and spatial envelope in which particular so-called spatial rhetorics, textual space and actions are located.

Starting at the smallest-scale, the domestic setting is a textual space with a specific spatial rhetoric for action, which structures the kinds of engagements that the fictional characters have with one another. The home is often a contentious place in which arguments occur, and in which several characters are drunk. At the same time, the home has the potential to be loving and warm; safe and secure. There is also a tension that exists between the space outside the domestic setting –which is dangerous and mercantile, masculine even – and the space within –which can be hostile but also homely and feminine. This tension is partly reconciled only when the fictional characters encounter one another in liminal places, for example, when Vanessa and Angus met at Batterby Bay Road in *The Round Tower*, or when John met Mary Llewellyn walking to the 'Robin Hood'. Perhaps this is how Catherine Cookson saw her imagined world; one that would certainly have been inspired by her own experiences and geographical knowledge of South Shields. Furthermore, there is a specificity in Catherine Cookson's usage of domestic settings in which actions take place, which are usually described precisely with house numbers, for example 10 Fadden Street.

Like Foucault's *panopticon*, individual places such as streets, are under constant surveillance from other people. However, the street is a place which is transitory, a kind of non-place, through which people, goods, animals and households flow. The action that occurs in them is often described in a linear fashion by Catherine Cookson, and the narrative can on occasions read as if it is a map – such as the journey described from Jarrow to fifteen streets illustrated in figure 3. In this sense, the streets act as a site for rhetorical actions that are highly structured, just as it would have been in the late-19th century. The streets are also used as a narrative device that helps to establish a participatory role, shaping mobility in the text, and getting the story to the next phase.

The question of historical authenticity, whether or not Catherine Cookson has reflected the reality of the social settings in which she situates her books, has not been addressed in this study. As Tom Cookson has remarked, there is a type of realism in her books in which there is pain, but also hope and much love. She was not sentimental in her writing but invoked strong images of the characters she uses, not least the spatial setting. What I have concentrated on in this project is an examination of the material and spatial nature of this realism. What has been found is that there are 'spatial anchors' in her books that help to frame action but which are also real places that can/could be found in Jarrow, East Jarrow, and South Shields. Nevertheless, these 'spatial anchors' serve to direct rhetorical action and the textual spaces of the narrative. As one reads the book, her descriptions allow the reader to visualize places all the more strongly because they can be visited or experienced first-hand or through secondary sources such as photographs and maps. As Taddeo suggests, the community of Fellburn, like fifteen streets to some extent, 'transcends geographical borders' (Taddeo 2009, 168).

The hope of finding a direct correspondence is fraught with problems. This may be because the central emphasis in Cookson's books is not so much about the spatial setting, but to tell stories about the interactions of people and their experiences that draw on her own. The fact that these take place in actual spatial settings adds depth and dimensions to her stories. It is this that gives Catherine Cookson's realism a verisimilitude that has been debated and discussed elsewhere. What the flecks of spatial realism do is to provide a series of contexts that remove or even resolve certain tensions and contradictions between her characters. As a result, the text is replete with both real *and* imagined places, just in the same way that the human characters in fiction are pastiches *as well as* authentic people, and that the emotional plots are pure hyperbole *but also* understated in so much as the outcomes are often singular and predictable. What allows this to occur, as I hope that this project has begun to examine, is the juxtaposition of actual and virtual settings that serve to enrich the story and narrative potential of late-19th to mid-20th century Tyneside, and in doing so give us a glimpse of a *habitus* – what it was to dwell –in industrial Britain.

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Appendix

Place	Book reference	Imagined/Real*
10 Fadden Street	The Fifteen Streets	I
16 Whitley Street	Kate Hannigan	I
132 Batterby Bay Road	The Round Tower	I
24 Ryder's Row	The Round Tower	I
Afflect and Tate	The Round Tower	I
Blacket Stret	The Fifteen Streets	I
Bogie Hill	Kate Hannigan	I
Bog's End	The Round Tower	I
Borough Road church	Kate Hannigan	R
Bower Place	The Round Tower	I
Brampton Hill	The Round Tower	I
Chemical works	The Fifteen Streets, Kate Hannigan	R
Dee Street	The Fifteen Streets	R
Don Road	Kate Hannigan	R
Eldon Street	Kate Hannigan	I
Fellburn	The Round Tower	I
Ferry Street	The Fifteen Streets	R
Harley Street	Kate Hannigan	I
Harton	Kate Hannigan	I
Howden	Kate Hannigan	I
Jarrow Slacks	The Fifteen Streets, Kate Hannigan	R
King Street	The Fifteen Streets, Kate Hannigan	R
Kyle Street	The Round Tower	I
Murphy Street	The Round Tower	I
New Buildings	The Fifteen Streets, Kate Hannigan	R
Palmer's shipyard	The Fifteen Streets	R
Poulter's Wood	The Round Tower	I
River Don	Kate Hannigan	R
Roper's field	The Fifteen Streets	I
Saw mill	Kate Hannigan	R
Simonside	The Fifteen Streets, Kate Hannigan	R
Simonside Bank	The Fifteen Streets	R
Simonside Road	The Fifteen Streets	I
Slack Street	Kate Hannigan	I
St Bede's church	The Fifteen Streets, Kate Hannigan	R
The Arches	The Fifteen Streets, Kate Hannigan	R
The Cut	The Fifteen Streets	R
The Larches	The Round Tower	I
Tram shed	Kate Hannigan	I
Tyne Dock	The Fifteen Streets, Kate Hannigan	R
Whitley Street	The Fifteen Streets	I
Wolf Lane	The Round Tower	I

