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Searching for Jossie: reserve and (sub)surface in the layered landscape of Langsett and Midhope

Abstract

This creative-critical collaboration between the artist David Walker Barker and poet Daniel Eltringham explores the Pennine reservoir landscapes and drowned communities of Langsett and Midhope, ten miles north-west of Sheffield. Their collaborative cabinet artwork *Searching for Jossie* comprises objects found on walks in those landscapes with text-and-image slates that work archival photographs and Eltringham's sequence *R/S Res.* into a textured surface. This hybrid essay delves into these landscapes' geology, ecology and human histories, in a dialogic mixed form placed in conversation with selected slates from *Searching for Jossie*. Walker Barker and Eltringham's *cabinet* is a playful take on the elusive "Jossie cabin" that gives the work its title: a vanished shepherd's hut that stood on the moorland above Langsett Reservoir. As imaginative reconstructions of a scarcely legible landscape marked by loss, artwork, poem and essay interrogate a poetics of reserve and resource, surface and substratum, in this complex, layered landscape.

David Walker Barker (Leeds, Land2)

Dr Daniel Eltringham (Sheffield)

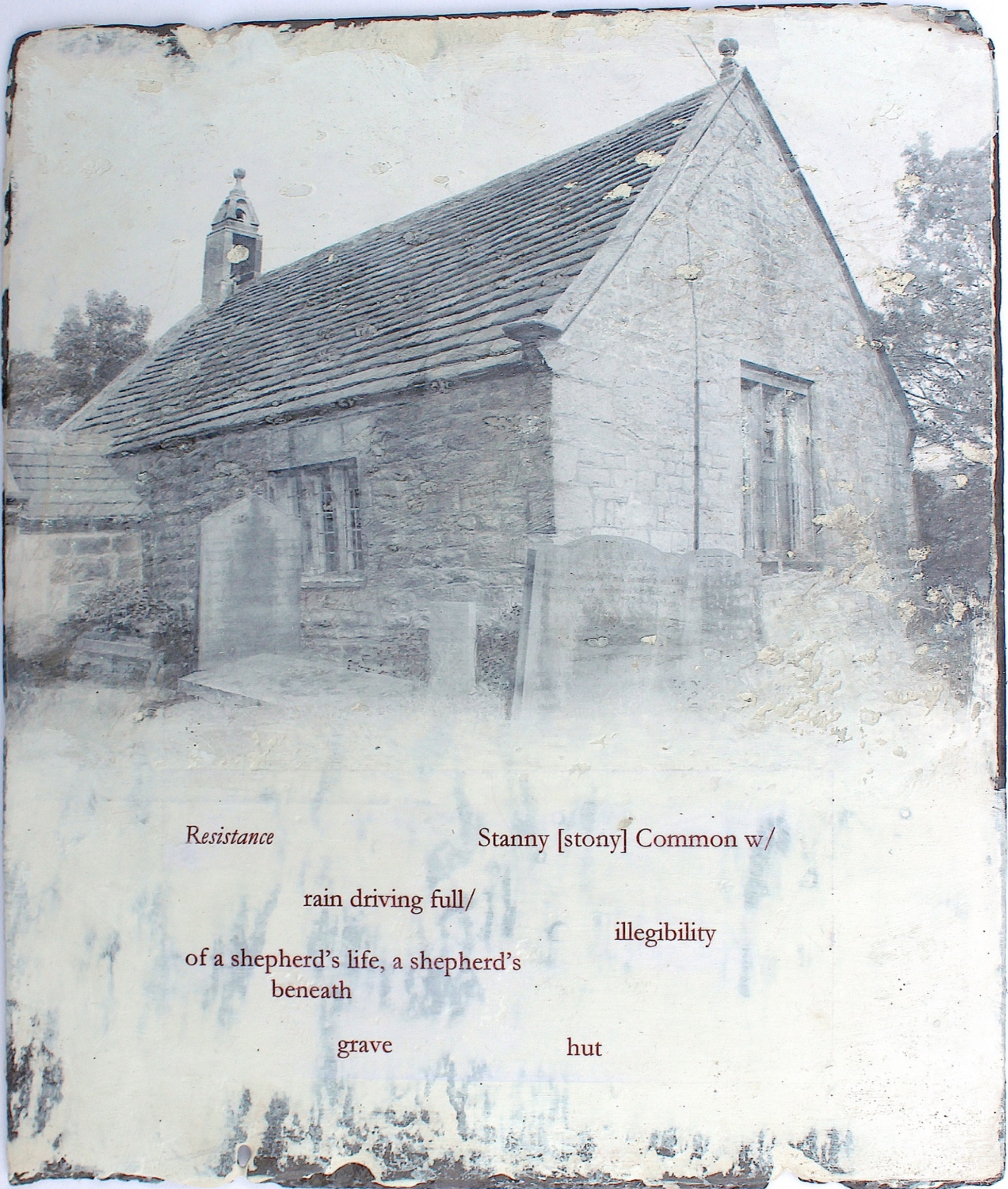

Fig 1. Resistance*: Midhope Chapel.*

Emplaced Writing: Walking Langsett and Midhope

> ‘To be *local* is to be emplaced, to pertain to a particular site, to have spatial form. To “be a local” is to be from a *here*, but to be “local to” is to create a relation to a place’ (Linda Russo 2015).

DE & DWB: Between 1898 and 1919, the moorland communities of Langsett and Midhope, ten miles north-west of Sheffield, were transformed by the construction of several large reservoirs that drowned farmsteads in the valley. A century earlier, the ‘Jossie Cabin’, a shepherd’s hut that stood on Stanny [stony] Common, now just south of Langsett Reservoir, was abandoned following the Midhope Enclosure Act of 1818. Our cabinet artwork, *Searching for Jossie*, the poem *R/S Res.*, and the practices surrounding their composition think through these histories of erasure and loss, reserve and resource in this complex, layered landscape.[i] How does one balance affective loss against municipal need? What happens to the social-ecological dynamics of such a contested landscape? The artwork comprises a cabinet assemblage of text, image and found objects exhibited at *In the Open*, the companion exhibition to ASLE-UKI’s biennial conference, Cross Multi Inter Trans, held at Sheffield Hallam University in September 2017.

Our artistic and ecopoetic practice elaborates what the poet Linda Russo calls ‘emplaced poesis […] poetry as a form of inhabitance’, which balances the claims of a determinate ‘*here*’ against a relational elsewhere (Russo 2015). By holding emplaced locality together with a more light-footed sense of shifting relations to place, Russo’s collective glossary of ‘place-relation ecopoetics’ suggests a grammar that is both ‘local’ and ‘local to’ that place:

> “place-relation” embraces the potential for new constituencies to arise; it acknowledges the evolving nature of correspondences formed within perceived and known shifts in biosphere events. Place may be taken as a geographical “base from which” at the same time as the poem rethinks place as a site of human activities (including making poems) and nonhuman activities, and a history of these, and their possible futures (Russo 2015).

In *Searching for Jossie* and *R/S. Res.*, we took the geography of Langsett and Midhope as a ‘base from which’ to think through the interactions of human activity (including our own

artistic practice) with material histories of that landscape's guises as different kinds of resource—marginal pasture, water storage, mining, grouse shooting—and the ecological and affective consequences of these emplaced shifts, which we as pedestrian outsiders remained in some sense 'local-to'.

Early on in our forays across this landscape, a Conservation Area on the north-eastern boundary of the Peak District National Park, we began considering the form that any artwork that developed out of the collaboration might take. What associations should it have in physical terms with the poetic text and with the place itself? The idea of a cabinet presentation appealed as a playful transformation of the shepherd Jossie's hut, or 'Cabin'. We decided that the cabinet form would be the core around which new artworks would be made and in which objects and images would be presented. Images worked with it as elements of its contents and also as independent units in themselves. Making some of those images on the remnants of roofing tiles made from Ordovician slate extracted from the mountains of North Wales provided a credible ground for the integration of text with a printed and painted surface (Fig. 1 and Figs. 4-7). Those particular images were layered and over-painted, over-printed and over-drawn, abraded and reworked; reworked as the landscape that informed them has been reworked. Image and text combined in unpredictable and uncertain relationships as the reworking brought them in and out of focus until a satisfactory equilibrium was achieved.

By the time the deadline for completion was at hand we had assembled a considerable body of painted, printed and drawn images on slate and small panels, sketchbooks and notebooks that documented developing ideas, as well as a substantial number of artefacts and specimens. From this body of work we selected what we could for inclusion in the cabinet (Fig. 2) and a second vitrine (Fig. 3), composing in the gallery space and affixing some slates to the wall around the cabinet. The final presentation of 'Jossie's Cabinet', its accompanying smaller flat-topped cabinet, and the small paintings on slate were located close to the corner of the gallery and defined by the amount of space allocated to the installation. Given the amount of material that the project had generated, this was a curtailment of potential: over fifty percent had to be left out and the final configuration was reduced to a narrow, vertical format rather than a more expansive and horizontal one. But reduction nonetheless served as an aid to composition, matching our interest in the landscape as a fleeting assemblage of parts and elements; at another time, in another space, the work might be utterly different.

Outside the gallery, another part of the work was the transitory act of walking, and returning to walk, this landscape. Indeed, the artwork is an aggregate, comprising the objects and fragments of things that we discovered as we made our walks across the landscape, intermixed with archival and physical material already in hand that fitted with the changes since the period of Jossie's cabin to the opening of the reservoir at Langsett. Behind our walking practice we have in mind ecopoetic articulations of radical pedestrianism, set out by Jonathan Skinner's entry in Russo's collective place-relation glossary. Walking, Skinner says, is movement through an environment which 'opens space up to time and embeds time in space' (Skinner [Russo ed.] 2015). Concerned as we were by the intersections of time and space as they are knowable to the walker, our understanding of the layered landscape responded to, and worried at, this palimpsestic X that marks the map's spot. At this juncture, the diachronic and the synchronic are sutured imperfectly together by the mobile vantage point of temporary understanding. That contingency is down to walking's in-built limitation as

> The mode of transport scaled to the human body. The non-directed activity that introduces us to our neighbors, with mutual opportunities for eye contact, smell, sound, communication. An extension of writing, on foot and in the air. Beyond the "house" of *oikos*, walking, writing and/or drawing are the beginning of (human) ecology; otherwise, we are just dealing with one another's needs from the outside, with little opportunity for non-coercive exchanges within a commons. (Skinner [Russo ed.] 2015).

Walking reveals through close contact, but it also conceals; what is missed is equally nearly all the whole story. Emplaced writing is extended by walking that is 'local-to' in Russo's meaning; it forms and reforms mobile, contingent relations scaled to fit what the body can apprehend. In doing so, it contains the beginnings of an interspecies ecology characterised by 'non-coercive exchanges within a commons.' Skinner summarises the ecopoetic tradition of pedestrian art-writing as making 'a line, tracing the irreversible, time-bound condition of the human metabolism (cf. Richard Long). Like a transect or (famously) Thoreau's railroad cutting, walking reveals at the same time that it encloses.' (Skinner [Russo ed.] 2015). Yet this mode of linear revelation, as a prosodic metaphor for the tempo of the poetic line, does not best describe our approach to walking Langsett and Midhope. Rather, we engaged in circular, circling returns to the same place(s), different due to variations in season, weather and time of day. Our cross-disciplinary approach moves between experiential, poetic, historical and theoretical registers without signalling these transitions, because our understanding and experience of the landscape is equally patchy. Likewise, the open-margin

grid form of *R/S Res*. can be read in any order and does not encourage a single route through its field. When presented as part of the artwork its structural logic—a gradually unfolding voicelessness—is not fully evident.

The form of this essay therefore reflects our non-linear engagement with the layered landscape: while bound by the excavatory logics of recovery and quest, we at once refuse singular direction. We do not fully know why we were drawn to reconstruct and to piece together, to memorialise and invent, while also to resist the forms and structures of meaning-making. We were not seeking to 'get something out of' the process or arrive somewhere different from our starting point. But such refusal does not fully explain our attraction to 'lost' social-ecological configurations, nor indeed to the social worlds of mining and industry. This then is the most pressing contradiction in play, which we call a poetics of reserve: that the instrumental mindset that drove and drives the extraction of resources should seem both historically aligned with yet opposed to our standpoint today, from the unfolding edge of the crisis to come.

Fig. 2. Main Cabin(et), In the Open*, Sheffield Institute of Arts, 2017.*

Fig. 3. Vitrine, In the Open*, Sheffield Institute of Arts, 2017.*

Layerings

DE: The mixed-media cabinet constitutes a visual and verbal record of our pedestrian and archival excursions into and across this landscape, which sought not only to document our experience, but also its histories and hidden communities, human and nonhuman. But long before the human conception of 'community' can be spoken of in a meaningful way, Langsett and Midhope were formed by river systems, and they are rock at bottom.

DWB: The River Porter or Little Don River rises on the moorland heights of the South Yorkshire–Derbyshire border, on Cloudberry Moor and Wicken Hill, and flows down the Little Don Valley through what was once called 'The Vale of Midhope' on its journey to the Humber Estuary and the North Sea. The river bisects a youthful landscape, a topography shaped by ice sheets and glacial melt waters and by subsequent erosion. Underlying this is the geology of Upper Carboniferous rocks. The sediments that formed them were transported into an ancient Carboniferous sea over 300 million years ago. Strata composed of sandstone, shale, ganister, coal seams and unusually impregnated metalliferous ores dip gently to the north and northeast, forming a characteristic feature of inter-bedded sediments and giving shape to the recurring scarp and dip geomorphology of the area.[ii]

Almost thirty years ago I made notes in a sketchbook referring to processes through time that are evident in this landscape now. A riverside exposure about a hundred yards west of Brook-House Bridge reveals a succession of eroding rock layers:

> A record of process from hundreds of millions of years ago, time bands of sediment and deposition—solidified dynamic patterns—remnants of retrieval and removal now exposed and clearly visible. (Walker Barker 1991-1992).

The Little Don River forms:

> A line of demarcation, edging between liquid and solid […] a stratified flow—one the residue of the other—revealing previous creations and interactions whilst simultaneously removing them. (Walker Barker 1991-1992).

Of the visible remains:

> The edge […] delineates numerous indistinct boundaries […] a constant and fragmented intercession […] the flowing river and streams, gullies and broken walls […] horizon lines […] cross-sectioned hillsides. Beneath this visible layer a greater complexity unfolds. (Walker Barker 1991-1992).

The drawing of a tree signifies the flow of the river:

> Carboniferous sequences—seasonal and climatic changes manifest in layers—a record of rainfall—of deposition—of erosion […] Seabed impressions—worn sandstone fragments and soft edges […] Heather and peat layers—The Little Don rising on the moors feeding the steelworks five miles down the Vale. (Walker Barker 1991-1992).

The continual reworking of the fabric of this landscape is exhibited in the disturbed physical layering of its varied components, the deep time elements of which are substantial, recalling the history of its deposition: for this is basically a sedimentary landscape and not one of intrusion. Those layers represent the dynamics of climatic changes active over millions of years marked out at this particular location by fine laminations of shale and siltstone interspersed with thicker beds of sandstone. In the make-up and chemistry of these consolidated sediments is a record of periods of time far more extensive than the layered human history that overrides the geology. That human history, whilst evident, seems far more fragmented than that beneath; but remnants of it are, like geological traces, recoverable and in part decipherable. Fossil remains recovered from sediments and fragments of artefacts discovered from abandoned habitation sites resurrect the forgotten and the discarded. The notion of layering and its relationship with memory is readily understandable; the objects and

information reclaimed from this landscape have an intimate relationship with the form of the artworks that have grown out of it.

I have had associations with this landscape since childhood—walks with my parents, picking blackberries from the woodland hedgerows and bilberries on the moorland heights—and my wife is from Stocksbridge, born and nurtured under the umbrella of Samuel Fox (1815-1887) and his steelworks. Geology also frames the human narrative of historical interventions that punctuate this landscape: mining for coal, ganister and metal ores, for stone that built the homesteads, the enclosure walls and the reservoir dam.

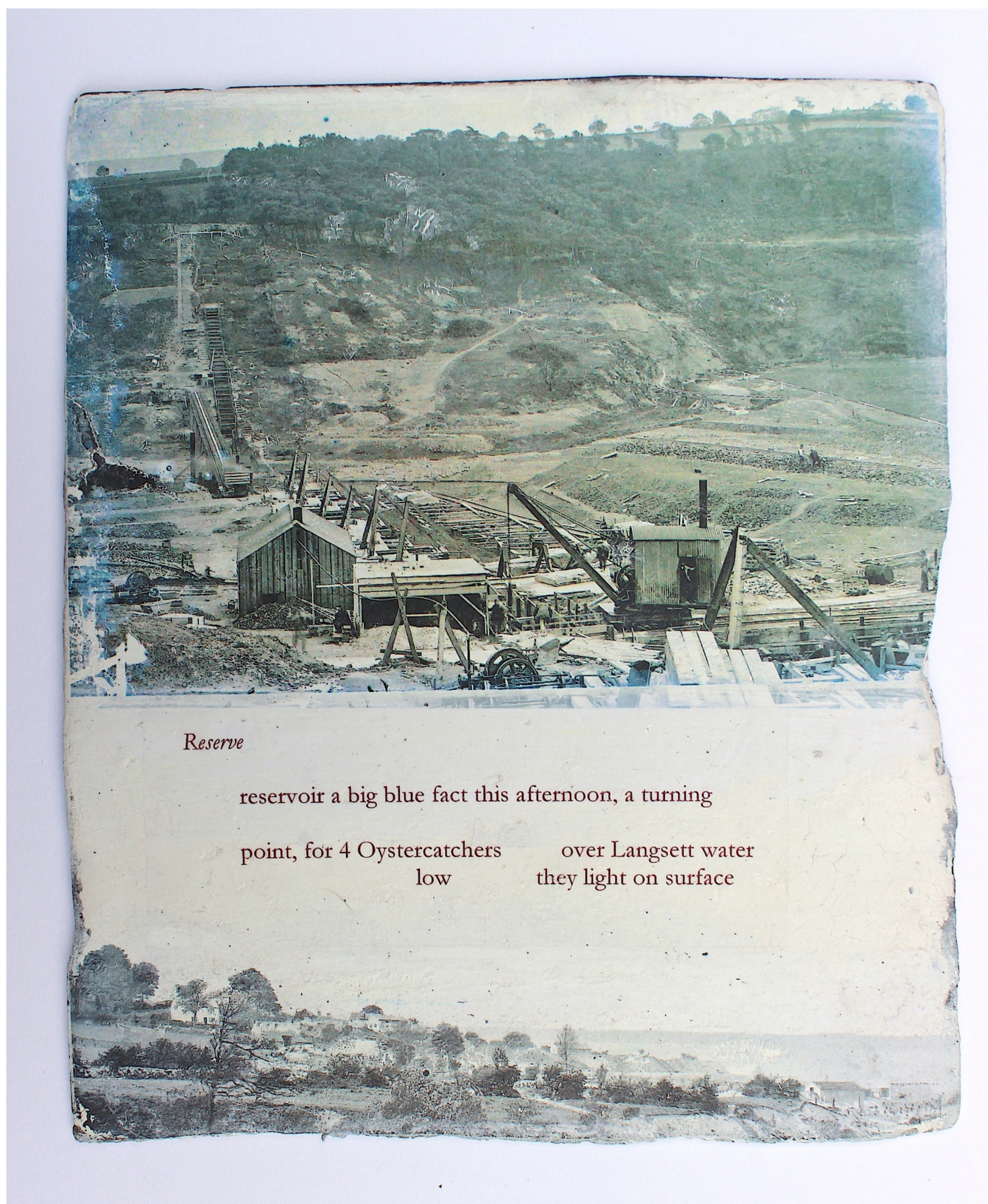

Fig. 4. Reserve*: Langsett Reservoir dam wall under construction.*

Erasures

DE: Our collaboration delved into a layered landscape that had been forcibly overwritten by two reservoirs: Langsett Reservoir (1898-1904, Sheffield Corporation) and Midhope

Reservoir (1919, Barnsley Corporation). The Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, a socialist walking group whose founder G. H. B. Ward (1876-1957) carried out extensive research into the right to walk on open country, were staunchly against so many reservoirs being constructed so quickly, radically transforming the social-ecological character of Dark Peak communities in the matter of a few years. Joseph Kenworthy (1852–1929), a noted local historian, took a more municipalist view, noting that the reservoirs were 'modelled on the principle of utility, simplicity, and repose and will, I trust, maintain the silent character of the surrounding hills' (Kenworthy 1915b, preface page). Kenworthy published these local-history handbooks in the first decades of the twentieth century. They contain a wealth of information and anecdotal reflection about the local area. Kenworthy's narratives, at times, present a discord between a romanticised idea and the reality on the ground (and beneath it), a difference that combines the poetic with the factual.

Between the interstices of this topographical transformation, though, we were also tracing an older erasure: the 'Jossie Cabin', a shepherd's hut that stood on Stanny [stony] Common, due south above Langsett Reservoir. Joshua 'Jossie' Sanderson, an eighteenth-century shepherd, was last heard of in a 1930s note by the rambling activist G. H. B. Ward in the *Sheffield Clarion Rambler's Annual* that he edited, along with a fuzzy picture of the ruined shelter taken by Ward himself. Having first seen the 'Jossie Cabin'—described as 'In Ruins'—on a '6-inch-to-mile Ordnance Survey Map many years ago', Ward begins,

> I have not rested until I could say what story it had to tell of the old days when the moorlands were of material use in the production of national wealth. That it was Jossie's, an old shepherd's, or a keeper's, watching, hut was only the beginning of the search. (Ward 1932-33, 106).

Ward describes the directions for getting to Jossie's ruined hut from Langsett reservoir, past the ruined North America farmstead (106). He reports that 'An honoured gamekeeper who knows every inch of these moors' claimed the 'cabin' was named after a local shepherd, one of the Sandersons of Upper Midhope, whose grave lies at Midhope Chapel (107). Due to the extreme erosion of the stonework and bad weather, on our first visit we mistook his grave, but have since located a tomb for which the dates match exactly. Jossie's hut, however, has proved more elusive. The first time on the moor, the rain was so bad we could see very little, and we were unsure whether we had found the hut or not—in driving rain, one pile of stones looks much like another. The second time, using old Ordnance Survey maps and a compass,

we matched up the photograph with the line of hills on the horizon and almost certainly lunched at the spot where the cabin had been. Five moulting mountain hares hopped around us as we ate, but there was no trace of the shepherd's hut. 'Joshua Sanderson, in the days of common pasture, pastured his sheep on this part of the moor', Ward suggests in the plangent register he often employs, and his cabin was probably built between 1790-1822 (108). It is likely that it fell victim to what Ward calls the 'unusually predatory Midhope Enclosure Act' of 1818 (107).

DWB: I wondered if Jossie had hopes of being remembered, although the landscape now bears no trace of him save for the gravestone that gave us his name and those of his children and his wife. He died on the 5 June 1822, aged 57 years, and he is buried in the graveyard at Midhope Chapel. Who would remember Joshua Sanderson, let alone his lost shepherd's cabin? Who would have known him as an individual or remember his face? His gravestone and the names inscribed upon it record the passing of lives, the passing of an age, and the transformation of the dynamically mutable landscape that enfolds them.

Fig. 5. Shaft*: ceramic fragments.*

(Un)findings

DE: Why did we fix on an unfindable shepherd's hut and the Enclosure Act that curtailed one way of life, and why link that figure with farmsteads inundated to supply municipal drinking water? My research into poetry and enclosure had led me to the figure of the shepherd's hut or Highland sheiling as, in J. H. Prynne's reading of William Collins'

eighteenth-century poem 'Ode to Evening' (1746), a temporary resting place and 'marginally safe haven which connects very closely to the threatened invasion of cold and wet from the wild outside'. The hut is positioned at a 'distance from a settled and socialised habituation' and can be too easily drawn into a poetics of heroic refusal (Prynne 2008, 615). But its material 'conditions of specific livelihood' push back against the poet's reifying impulse:

> Yet this hut is crude and primitive, fit only for herdsmen and only as a temporary refuge, culturally the site of extreme impoverishment. Does Collins know this? Yes he does. Does he abridge the deep latent contradiction here? No, I believe he does not. (Prynne 2008, 629; 631).

Jossie's cabin, or shepherd's hut, seemed to us to reprise these cultural dynamics, and to offer the chance to inhabit and not abridge the latent contradictions of this uncomfortable territory. As an experiment in the experience of place, we sought to fill in fragmentary details of those conditions of specific livelihood, in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscape before the flood. Jossie's cabin was our invisible key to this broader act of imaginative reconstruction. From archival photographs, we know that 'stepping stones' in Midhope and 'the old ford' in Langsett were flooded.[iii] We have a lot of unknowns, losses, overwritings: illegibility working away as a mode of reading. At the same time, the layered landscape throws up its own surprises. There was a working pottery in the area, the Midhope Pottery Group, which was established in 1720 and fed by the Little Don. As with Pennine industry elsewhere, the local river system provided hydropower for the manufacture of domestic items. The Pottery was closed sometime before 1845, perhaps around 1818 when Midhope was enclosed, though there may not be a causal relationship there: the Pottery had been losing out to competition from more sophisticated mass-produced potteries down the Don valley (Kenworthy 1928; Lawrence 1974, 145-147).

At North America Farm we found a piece of Midhope's lead-glazed earthenware pottery, and then more. Through these fragments sticking out of the mud we were able to imaginatively reconstrue a kind of quotidian life here stretching back perhaps to the seventeenth century. We also had some nonhuman assistance in the work of excavating from the land, as most of these ceramic fragments were brought to the surface by fox holes dug out around the ruined farmstead. On our second visit, Swinden Farm and "Brook" or "Brock" House, both also ruined, yielded up their own store of ceramic fragments, the discarded waste products of the previous three or maybe four centuries of inhabitation there. These fragments of objects of

common use seemed to piece together a picture of communal life in this landscape before the reservoirs.

DWB: Over the years of walking this landscape, I had gathered fossils by the roadside and from the local quarries, and collected fragments of glass and pottery from the glasshouse site at Bate Green, one of the earliest coal-fired glass factories in the land (1650-1758). Discovering a pottery waste dump in the river bank near Midhope Stones Bridge revealed the site of the old country pottery started there in 1720 by William Gough, a potter from Staffordshire. Gough later established the Midhope group of potteries working in the Staffordshire earthenware tradition and active in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

And to travel to a more recent time—the building of the dam for Langsett reservoir—I had excavated, by shovel and by JCB, the 'Tin Town' that was constructed to house temporary labourers. In this excavation, I retrieved the cast-offs and remnants discarded by the families of the dam builders and by Langsett's residents.

We revisited these fascinations, investigating a lost province through Jossie and his elusive cabin, and the remains of the landscape he worked. Elsewhere in Britain at this time, Samuel Palmer was fashioning his Shoreham sepia drawings and John Clare was experiencing the loss of a cherished landscape and the ways of life that went with it. All three—Jossie, Palmer and Clare—witnessed the displacement of the open-field system that had been part of the British landscape for centuries. The remnants of these earlier landscapes are barely visible to us now. We searched for them in countryside transformed since Jossie's time: the drowned valley and its lost farmsteads; the remains of North America Farm; the vanished Brook House and the remnants of Swinden Farm, a place I recall being intact and lived-in. Here mother and father stopped for refreshments when we went on moorland walks as a family. The farmer's wife offered tea, sandwiches, cakes and fizzy pop (including Ben Shaw's famous ginger beer and dandelion and burdock) to walkers and hikers and anyone who passed by the door.

We retrieved fragments of pottery from these sites and walked a post-enclosure landscape much changed since the building of the reservoirs in the area and the steelworks in the heart of the valley. Indeed, the folklore of this landscape seems more alluring than its current

reality. Of the legendary lead and silver mines at Bitholmes, at Wigtwizzle and at Ewden, there is not a trace of a portal or shaft, let alone a spoil heap (Kenworthy 1915, 34). No fragment of galena or black jack, no shard of country pottery with the glazed initials 'J S' that might stand for Joshua Sanderson. We were born too late to experience this earlier world yet we were trying to redeem its lost time, grasping at fragments of things and old photographs to do so, traipsing a windswept and drenched moorland tract to find 'Jossie', or at least the footprint of his fabled cabin.

Whilst that footprint was never found, in searching for it a more extensive narrative began to reveal itself, emerging from a landscape that post-dated Jossie's cabin, the remnants of which still existed on Stanny Common in the early part of the twentieth century. The loss of those few remaining stones could have ended the project before it had begun; but the first visit we made to its supposed site marked a journey over the course of the trading routes that once crossed the high points of these Pennine hills, ancient trackways that are still used today for outdoor recreation. And on that journey where the post-glacial peat layer—in some places less than eighteen inches thick—has been completely worn away, we found ourselves walking on the naked geology, the sandstone layers of Upper Carboniferous times. At that peculiar junction, a junction we passed over numerous times, the boundary between a 10,000-year-old layer and a 285-million-year-old layer was clearly evident. There were places where the weathered sandstone showed traces of fossilised plant stems, and scattered sparsely along the track occasional fragments of glass and pottery were visible, mainly of Victorian age but some earlier. Where the trackways passed ruinous habitation sites there was greater evidence of the human occupation of this marginal upland area, and a kind of quasi-archaeological exploration began. It appeared that the journey to find any residue of Jossie's Cabin had opened a larger portal onto a more extensive history. Recovered objects, shards of pottery, photographs taken by ourselves and older archival images relating to the history of the area accumulated as a body of material that not only informed the artwork as it developed, but which became elements of it themselves.

DE: What sort of a palimpsest does a flood leave in its wake? Is it the right way of thinking about these layered overwritings, or do we need something more sensitive, that lets the fragments speak up for themselves, without being mediated by the top layer, our own culture? How can one get to know a landscape in an open-ended way, which does not force connections or predetermine what is found out? Perhaps we did not altogether achieve this,

but in the pedestrian, experiential aspects of our process we were at least able to respond to what the place seemed to be telling us about itself.

Some traces are lost—the cabin, whatever lies beneath the blue sheet of the reservoir—but others unexpectedly come to light, or are brought to light. Accidental finding and surface-level excavation rhymes in analogy with other more directed, purposeful kinds of digging and extraction. We are not far from the Barnsley coal fields, and the historical ecology of fossil-fuel extraction is paramount in any contemporary consideration of the political economy of water and minerals as 'natural' resources. Mining and digging are linear interventions into the stratigraphy of historical time, which also come with specific contexts in which labour and politics determine human lives, and impinge upon nonhuman ones affected by the practices of resource extraction. The effects of fracking on the water table is the recent example nearest to home. And as Andreas Malm argues in *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming*, it was path-dependency, not intrinsic efficiency, which determined the switch from Pennine hydropower to fossil fuels in the Yorkshire and Lancashire mill towns, as the coal-burning phase of technological acceleration kicked in (Malm 2016, 98-120).

Fig. 6. Surface*: Swinden Farm*

Fig. 7. Recline*: Langsett Reservoir site.*

Poetics of Reserve

DE: A reservoir is a kind of reserve, a managed resource: like a plantation, it mimics an organic landscape form, but the conditions of its existence are fundamentally different from the lake or wildwood that they respectively point towards. My poetic praxis and thinking here are influenced by the poet Peter Larkin's thoughts on such 'greened enclosures, manufactured as grids or reserves' (Larkin 1998, 7). Commenting on the reasons for his interest in plantations rather than wildwood (practically non-existent in the United Kingdom), Larkin observes, thinking perhaps of Baudelaire's forest of signs, that unlike the dense weave of the only-organic, plantations 'encourage a swerve from the forest of the avant-garde'. Like reservoirs, they are resources made up of contingent material states, which shape and are

shaped by the 'cares of an encumbered yet conscientious settlement—or rather emplacement, however unsettled may be the chafing and condensing of bounds' (Larkin 1998, 7):

> A plantation is not a garden feature, but a naturalised outdoor resource, perhaps ready to become a constructed confider of sources, a delegate (from primal forest) impoverished enough to refer to the human appetite for shelter. (Larkin 1998, 7).

Larkin's *Enclosures* (1983) takes the New Forest, a Norman deer enclosure or *forêt*, as an older and semi-naturalised version of such a reserve, or 'outdoor resource'. Although framed by the deer park's circumscribed and spatialised power relations between humans, and between ruling-class hunters and their nonhuman prey, like the plantation the deer enclosure houses within its instrumental form '"repertoires" of local cover' made from 'the stickiness of fragments of reserve' (Larkin 1998, 7). The forest was a holding pen for venison that, in the post-Feudal landscape, is contested, in Larkin's *Enclosures*, by the competing claims of leisure, suburbia, timber production. The moorland surrounding Langsett and Midhope is another iteration of the reserve, as it manages grouse for sport hunting. These holding patterns contain the seeds of their own neglectful fragmentation, as resources need tending. They are perpetually poised to return to a relatively more primal mode, in Larkin's sense of planted trees as 'delegate[s]' from primal forest. But even more decidedly 'natural' environments are subject to forms of management and variously more-or-less sustainable modes of taking and returning.

Re-source takes from the 'source' the word contains and re-routes what it takes. One could say it has redistributive potential in the way it embodies a kind of latency, the possibility of holding, keeping and giving back according to need. The reservoir is a store, but it is also part of the broader watershed and water cycle: the hundreds of small reservoirs scattered across the upland Pennine landscape of the Dark Peak are a Lake District of storage, of dam walls, concrete chutes, sluice gates and gothic towers. In Langsett and Midhope, moorland streams and the Little Don feed in and out; the whole assembly is social-ecological and could never be called an 'artificial' landscape only.

Reservoirs also draw at the well of a historical and mythic poetics of flood at the centre of the first recorded literature, the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (c. 2100 BCE). Their diluvian dynamic of inundation covers and conceals, but also preserves. At nearby Ladybower Reservoir, when the levels are low, the remains of Derwent village are visible on the mud and sticking up out

of the water. These relatively recently drowned villages anticipate deluges to come, in a present and future of intensifying climatic disturbance. But these planes of potential were at one stage dropped out of the sky, it must have seemed, a lunar landing that redefined the sparse patterns of settlement in the interests of the cities whose water they supplied. So they intersect with political consensus: today, Yorkshire Water manages the Little Don Reservoir Complex as a public good for recreational use; as an Environmental Study Area with a mix of habitats including woodland, moorland, freshwater, farmland, grassland, and urban areas with gardens; and as a private entity with a responsibility towards shareholders and whose institutional logics are not purely those of need.[iv]

It was not always this way. Indeed, until the mid-eighteenth century, the juridical position on what Malm calls 'the flowing commons' of water and air was that these fluid energy sources were common, meaning they could not be owned or sold (Malm 2016, 98-120). In the 1760s the lawyer William Blackstone had defined water as a 'moveable, wandering thing', which 'must of necessity continue common by the law of nature', and which could only be subject to 'transient', 'usufructory' relations of human use (Blackstone 1770, 18). As Malm argues, these 'flowing commons' were 'incessantly circulating through the landscape, ushered in and held back by the weather cycles, unresponsive to human attempts at production: a power created, wasted and regained by nature itself' (Malm 2016, 118).

Storage and accumulation circumvent this seemingly natural law, within the historical ecology of capitalist resource-exploitation. This instrumentalist attitude, wrote Martin Heidegger in 1954, has enabled raw material to be subject to 'En-framing' [*Ge-stell*] and set aside as a 'standing-reserve' [*Bestand*] for human benefit (Heidegger 1977 [1954], 19-21). Arguing with Malm, Jason Moore suggests we extend this enframing attitude towards resources beyond the fossil revolution of the eighteenth century, back to early-modern colonialism, which he sees as the beginning of a new world-ecological paradigm of resource use. Vulnerable human populations were equated with nonhuman life and matter as forms of equally expendable and interchangeable 'Cheap Nature' (Moore 2015; Patel and Moore 2018). The river Rhine for Heidegger was 'set upon' [*stellen*] by instrumental use into a standing-reserve, in which state it could be commodified and exchanged, just as 'Air is now set upon to yield nitrogen, the earth to yield ore' (Heidegger 1977 [1954], 21). 'The water of life / is all in bottles & ready for invoice', wrote the poet J. H. Prynne in his 1968 collection

Kitchen Poems, with Heidegger's 'The Question Concerning Technology' in mind (Prynne 2015, 15).

Hesitancy about the nature of Heidegger's attachment to these natures of water and land, framed by a poetics of dwelling and the condition of belonging, gives onto reserve as a bureaucratic topography of colonial violence. Who belongs, or to whom does it 'belong'? The reserve in settler discourse is that remainder which has been 'set aside' for first-nation peoples, beyond and increasingly within which (Standing Rock; Trans Mountain), the fossil-regime treats *resource* with the singular, crude, reductive concentration of instrumental relation. Wildlife reserves too.

But then, a reserve can also be a holding-back, a bottling-it-up. Also negatively a not-doing. Refraining from. Leave it in the ground. An ethic for the climate crisis. In *Open Secrets*, Anne-Lise François outlines an expressive theory of reserve as 'a strange mode of patient or benevolent abandonment' (François 2008, xx). In this mode, 'recessive action' leads to 'nonemphatic revelation—revelation without insistence and without rhetorical underscoring' that 'takes itself away as it occurs' (François 2008, xvi). The *collected* nature of the reservoir's poise, its reluctance to act, its eschewal of the river's flow (but not of capital flow) seems to inhere stillness and calm. But its points of ingress and egress allow the level to be monitored and regulated. Nevertheless, reserve can be seen as a mode of respecting the landscape, letting unknowability speak through the text.

In my sequence *R/S Res.*, patterned absences gradually peter out into nothing, rather than imposing a form upon the page-as-field. The grid form I use to structure the conversation between R and S, between *Reserve* and *Surface*, *Resistance* and *Scan*, *Return* and *Suffice*, is the water-logged, dilapidated distant cousin of the avant-garde grid, 'emblematic of the sheer disinterestedness of the work of art', or of the enclosed field-system imposed on the landscape (Kraus 1985, 158). The poet Frances Presley comments that her 'English, enclosed landscape perspective' inflects her 'ironic' employment of North-American poetics of grid and open field, 'at times appearing to impose a rigid order, but at other times seeming to allow movement and free choice.' (Presley 2008, 6). My grid is more like what is left of a field-system that has itself been partially erased, partially neglected and naturalised, and gradually taken back or taken over by the absences that seep through the little that is known.

DWB: Uncertainty remains in a landscape almost devoid of earlier narratives that might make it easier to understand its complexity. There are few remains that reflect more ancient landscapes, few traces of enclosure walls or of the under-earth where working the strata dissected layers of sandstone and shale, lead and zinc, ganister and coal. Points of access to the narratives linking people and the land they worked are barely visible; as are the echoes of those whose life it was to mine the stone, the ore or the coal. Young men no longer follow their fathers to the quarry face or to the mine, nor construct a narrative from geological or excavated time. There seemed to be little sense of a dialogue with that past other than a few remains: the fragments we collected might offer an interface between an earlier nature and ourselves.

(Re)searching

DE & DWB: We did not find what we were looking for, but we do have findings. Searching and re-researching (a search redoubled) yielded a next-to-nothing that was at once something. The landscape served as a resource for our ecopoetic acts of emplaced, relational extraction, but extraction nonetheless. A self-critical nostalgia, but nostalgia nonetheless, served as our prospecting instrument. Physically and intellectually we took things away from the landscape and them pieced together in accordance with formal logics that were local-to, but not local. In a minor way, these interventions added to the emplaced over- and re-writings of Langsett and Midhope.

Of course, any landscape would have a similar but different story to tell: our practice was a mode of attention to ordinary details, known and unknown. Emplaced writing and art-making that is local-to, rather than local, sees place in relation to its outside. In our case, that implied outside was the global 'place' of climatic disturbance, seen within human and geological timeframes but experienced locally. As Russo says, place-relation ecopoetics 'acknowledges the evolving nature of correspondences formed within perceived and known shifts in biosphere events'. For our small experiment, this meant seeing the landscape in relation to the storage economies of water, the extractive practices of the historical fossil economy, and our continuing role and responsibility as historical subjects who, overall, take out more than we put back. Against this, perhaps, we might set the hesitant ethics and poetics of reserve.

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Daniel Eltringham: David Walker Barker passed away in August 2019. During our brief friendship David was endlessly generous to me, always happy to open his studio – in reality a small museum full of prehistoric life, minerals and rocks, glassware, ceramics and other artefacts of deep time – to anyone who showed an interest. He was kind in a gruff Yorkshire way. Our collaboration went over the Pennine landscapes of his childhood, and the work was for him a personal as well as an artistic excavation into the layers of landscape. I think it was his last sustained project. He did not see this article published, but it is dedicated to him, as is this issue of *Green Letters*.

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Endnotes

[i] For the full text of the poem see: Eltringham and Walker Barker, '*R/S. Res*.: Searching for Jossie', *Ecozona: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment* (Spring 2019), 'Towards an Ecopoetics of Randomness and Design' special issue, ed. by Franca Bellarsi.
[ii] See: Mitchell et al., *Geology of the country around Barnsley—Geological Survey of Great Britain* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1947).
[iii] See: Stocksbridge and District Society photographic archive <www.stocksbridgehs.co.uk/society/.>.
[iv] See Yorkshire Water, 'A Multi-Capitals Assessment at Little Don: Final Report' <www.yorkshirewater.com/sites/default/files/Report.pdf> [accessed 17 December 2018].