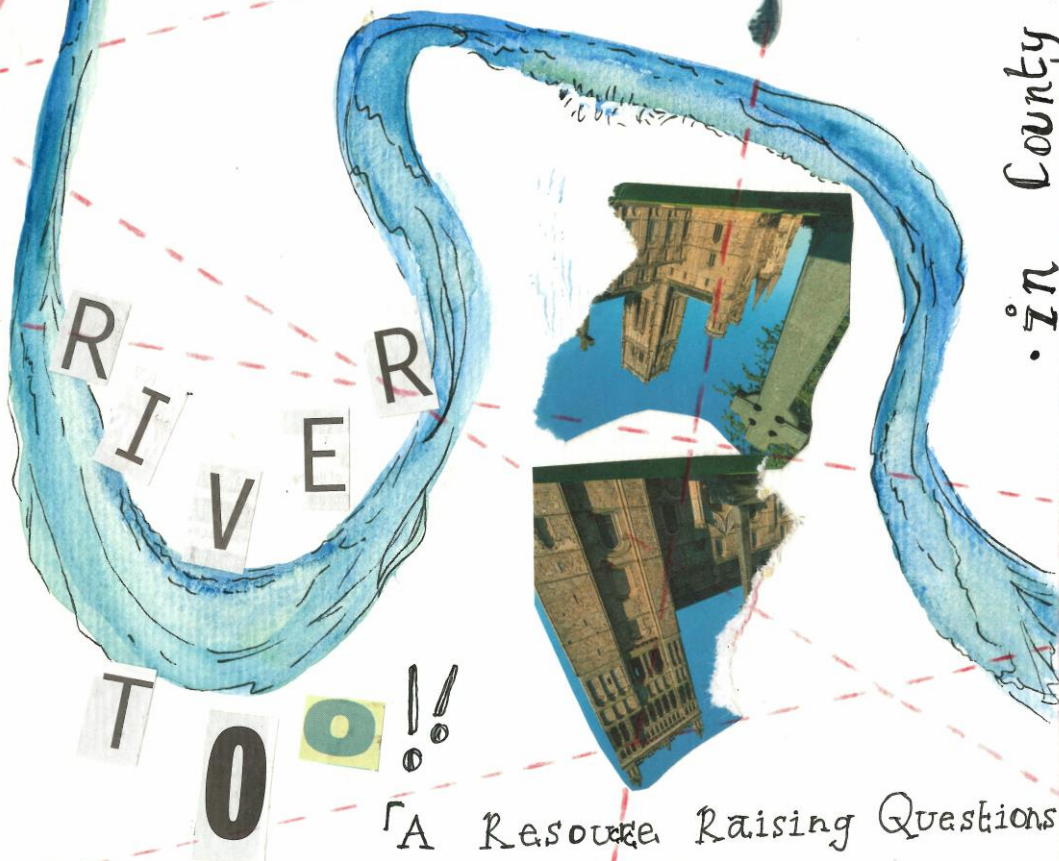




IT'S
OUR



.in County Durham.

A Resource Raising Questions
About Links between
Decolonisation & Decarbonisation

Abstract:

Welcome to the 'It's Our River Too! A Resource Raising Questions about the links between Decolonisation and Decarbonisation', a creative research project funded by Durham University Student Union's Decolonise Durham Campaign, supported by the Sociology Department's Decolonial Working Group.

...
This research aims to build and expand links between decolonisation and decarbonisation in the context of County Durham's history, by gathering literature and primary resources for the use of teaching, learning and further reading. It is also a response to student feedback from the Sociology Department which showed an interest in local case studies. This suggests a dissonance between the university's projection of itself as a 'global' institution, and its failure to position itself within the Northeast. This zine is the creation of a student intern seeking to spark a conversation about links between local environmental pollution and colonialism.

This project focuses on County Durham's history to emphasise the importance of valuing local knowledge, which has historically been disavowed by governments and centralised authorities. Here, local knowledge refers to ways of living in a locality, transmitted generationally and in balance with the surrounding natural ecosystems. This research on County Durham's mining heritage aims to show how outside and imposed structures of capitalist power, such as mine owners and private water companies, have profoundly devastated the local environment and exacerbated economic inequalities. In a university where students from the Northeast are vastly underrepresented (7.8% of graduates, 2014-2019) [1], drawing attention to local histories and engaging the academic community in discussions and critiques of colonialist legacies, must be key to our decolonising project.

The zine has historically been anti-establishment (having emerged from the punk scene in the 1980s and developed through the riot grlll 1990s era), in its DIY making process, critical content and wide accessibility- free via public libraries, and now open access pdf files. This zine has been made to be anti-colonial and anti-capitalist and advocates for academic zines to be used as a remedy for difficult, inaccessible academic writing and high-cost journal subscriptions (Merhar, 2020). bell hooks theorised that education has the potential to be a 'practice of freedom' that disrupts unequal power structures and creates social justice, where educators and students take risks in the classroom. This zine, and others like it, could help to start the decolonising process by critiquing ways in which the neo-liberal university is entangled with colonialism, in a defiantly creative format (Bagelman & Bagelman, 2016).

The ghosts of
Britain

Britain

A

THE

zine:

* The process of ripping, cutting, reconfiguring + sticking: making something bold, better + new out of the old

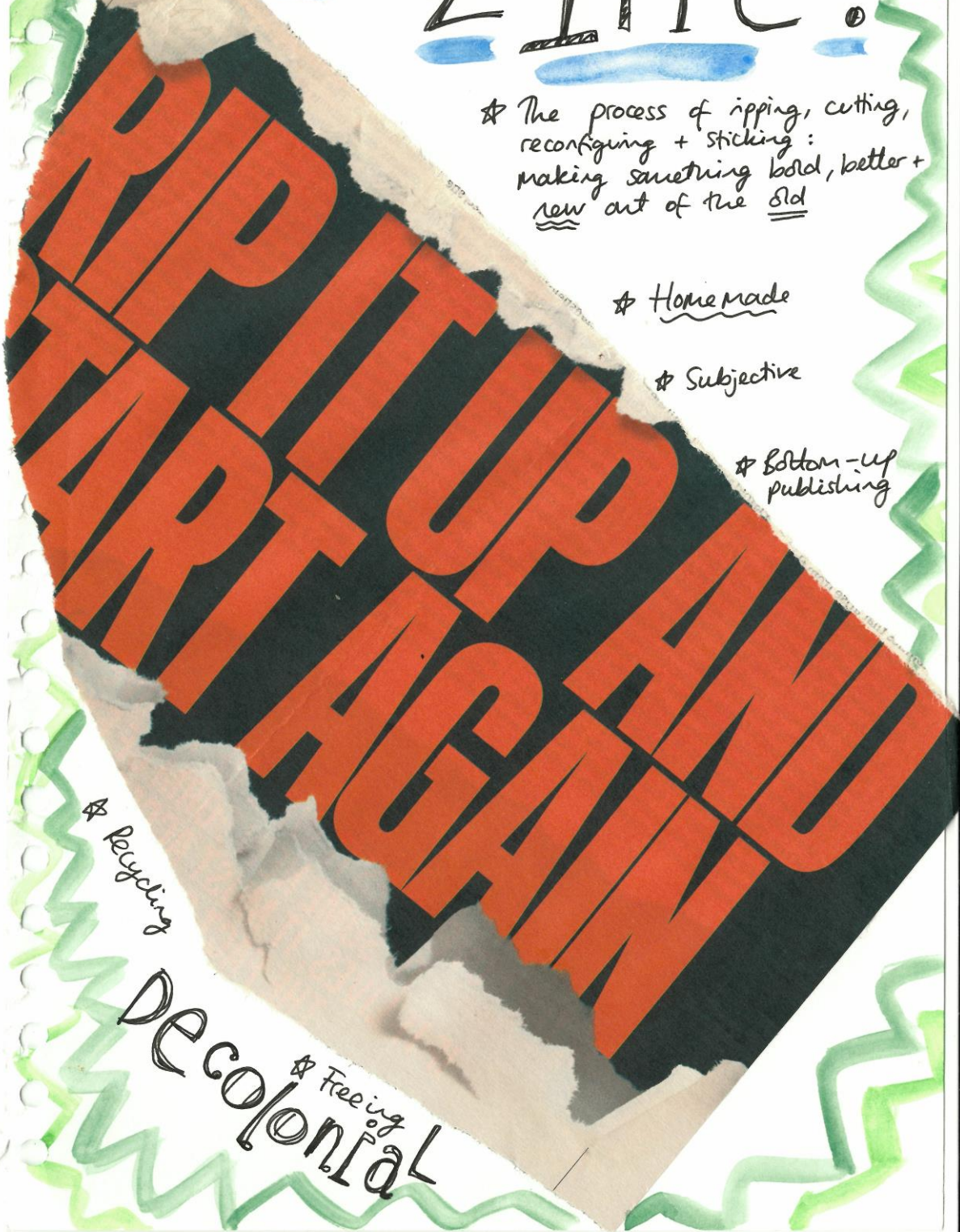
* Home made

* Subjective

* Bottom-up publishing

* Recycling

* Freeing
Decolonial



A decolonial approach involves making clear the colonial foundation of current patterns of inequality, injustice, and discrimination; not only should decolonisation be an institutional critique but should challenge our own assumptions and practice and reflect on how these have been shaped (Walker, 2022). Walter Mignolo theorises that the legacy of historic colonial rule, is a dominant position which works to 'negate, disavow, distort, and deny knowledges, subjectivities, world senses, and life visions' (Mignolo, 2018, p.4). A key way of decolonising is to 'validate the histories and lived experiences' of marginalised people, practices, and places' (Eizadirad, 2019, p.205).

Decarbonisation here refers to the radical process of coal pit closures, first implemented by the Thatcher governments through the 1980s, which irreversibly changed mining areas in the Northeast. This zine explores the position of women during this period of change, specifically the Women's Vigil held in 1993, a campaign which protested pit closures but has often been ignored or misunderstood (Spence, 1998). These women's protest slogan, 'Jobs, Community, Environment', encapsulated the acute tensions in mining communities, between livelihoods and historic pride for the industry, and the environmental cost.

Decolonisation & Decarbonisation:
defining and linking
these concepts???

'It's Our River Too' is scrutiny of the history of industry in County Durham, specifically around and along the River Wear. This is a call to question the historic elitist, capitalist ownership of mines in this area- and nationally- and the catastrophic affect it continues to have on surrounding communities and environments.

Another case study interrogates the links between colonialism, mining, and inequality, is the 3rd Marquess of Londonderry a.k.a. Charles William Stewart Vane, or the man on the horse in Market Square. This man owned a significant proportion of County Durham's collieries- including property at Penshaw, Durham and Rainton, and was responsible for the building of Seaham Harbour, for trade and shipping. Londonderry's inordinate wealth, long absences from the local area, corrupt influence over local politics, as well as his position of ownership and disproportionate power, make him a key nodal of investigation.

The positionality of the Durham University in this context, is also key to unravelling these perpetuated inequalities. This is pertinent, in light of the university's ranking as worst for social inclusion out of 115 institutions in the UK. [2] As a centre of learning, resources and knowledge production in the Northeast, the process of institutional decolonisation needs to start from within.

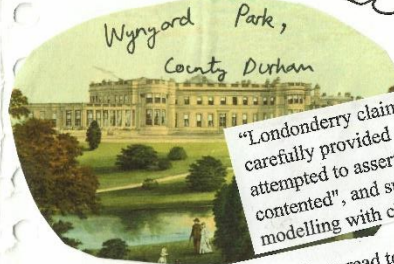
[2] The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, <https://www.palatinete.org.uk/durham-university-worst-for-social-inclusion-in-england-and-wales>.

Lord
Londonderry



My anglo-irish
Aristocratic birthrite
entitles me to the
position of

Under-Secretary for War
and the Colonies from 1807!



Wyngard Park,
County Durham

House of Commons:
Child Labour in mines ???

"Londonderry claimed that in the Durham pits boys were well used and carefully provided for, while the assembled coal-owners of the North-East attempted to assert that young children in mines were "generally cheerful and contented", and suggested that trappers spent their days whittling sticks, modelling with clay, or drawing with chalks."



Londonderry
Mayfair
London

"Lord Londonderry read to the Lords a statement from the Yorkshire coal-owners, in which they claimed boys aged between eight and fourteen were essential "in the thin coal mines", because the underground roadways could not be made sufficiently high for adults "without incurring an outlay so great as to render the working of such mines unprofitable".



Seaham
County Durham
Hall,



Mount Stewart, County Down

The people
of County
Durham

Extraction: the process of removing
something, especially by FORCE.

- Example 1: extraction of profit
from working people
- Example 2: extraction of coal
from the countryside.



HISTORY MATTERS

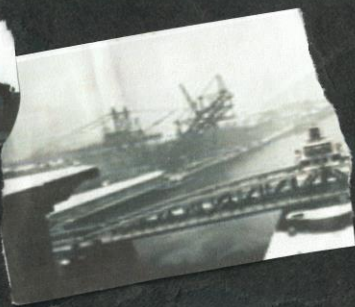
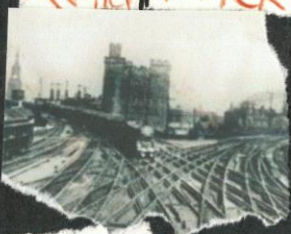


Photo © David Pickersgill

What Does The Future Hold?



WHERE IS THE EMPATHY

Jean Spence's work on the Women's Vane Tempest Vigil, which protested 31 (of 50 remaining) pit closures in County Durham in 1993, argues that women's experiences and political views were misunderstood and misrepresented in the media and by the labour movement. Spence's positionality: *miner's daughter, socialist, feminist.*



The Women's Vigil was portrayed narrowly as 'miner's wives', situating the women's campaign as secondary to that of the NUM, and attempting to pit socialist and feminist causes against each other. Furthermore, the author explores how memories of the 1984-85 miner's strike, where women played a significant role, distorted the 1993 context, where their political motivations were no longer grounded in family hardship: **BEYOND**



Riot and Rebellion

Unification *over* environmental concern

POWER.

'Women's hopes beyond profit-fuelled reality'.

PROTEST.

<WE SHOULD>
"Jobs, community and environment"
<I HAVE AGENCY>



IN POLITICS???

"...sentimentalism has, if anything, become more pervasive. It is ingrained in public art, in museums and in the continuous call for 'authentic' mining voices, especially those involved in the strike, to tell their stories. In this process, the radical politics of the strike, and the subsequent campaign against pit closures are becoming atrophied, their implications for present thinking and radical alternatives neutralised."

Jean Spence and Carol Stephenson, "It has to be a miner's wife!" Representing women in mining activism.

MINING VOICES!

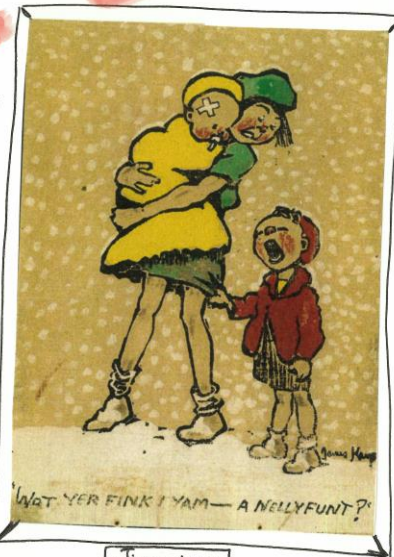
WHO IS LISTENING???
WOMEN



1984, Courtesy Keith Pattison.

WANT

BETTER MINING ARTIST: NOT MINOR ARTIST



Jimmy Kays.

Save the stories that shaped history



SOURCE : <http://wear-river-trust.org.uk/the-river>

Northumbrian Water has been fined £240,000 for polluting a watercourse in a prosecution brought by the Environment Agency.

the past, although only a relatively small amount of industry remains in the east of the catchment. The Wear valley saw lead mining, limestone quarrying and coal mining and the abandoned mines and spoil heaps now contribute heavy metals to the river system. Other pollution pressures that have arisen more recently include sewage treatment works discharges and combined sewer overflows, agricultural runoff and urban runoff.

STILL NOT RESOLVED

DEALING WITH ISSUES

STILL NOT RESOLVED

Phytobenthos (microscopic plants and algae) and macrophytes (larger aquatic plants) form a primary part of the food chain, but they are affected by nutrient enrichment, and are a good indicator of diffuse pollution problems.

Ammonia comes from human sewage and animal manures, and can be toxic to fish and other aquatic life at high concentrations

Durham Cathedral and the River Wear
Durham University is situated in the beautiful and historic city of Durham.

Dissolved oxygen in the water is essential for many aquatic lifeforms, but levels can be reduced as water warms up, when untreated sewage is discharged, or when eutrophication occurs

Phosphate in surface waters, can cause rapid algal growth, depleting the water of oxygen when it dies off (a process known as eutrophication). This

THE RIVERS TRUST

"1999-2001 and pre-1990 sediment samples provide compelling evidence that contamination of the River Wear by lead mining waste continues to pose environmental problem" (p.14)

The River Wear

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ManagementCatchment/3110>

Specific pollutants	High	2015
Arsenic	High	2015
Chlorothalonil	High	2015
Chromium (VI)	High	2015
Copper	High	2015
Diazinon	High	2015
Dimethoate	High	2015
Iron	High	2015
Pendimethalin	High	2015
Triclosan	High	2015
Zinc	High	2015

Use and Abuse of Climate Knowledge: Climate discourse has long been used to justify colonialism, economic expansion at the expense of exploitation, racism, slavery, social divisions (Wood, 2008).

Analysis of lead isotope in archived stream sediments from the River Wear (1986-88) provide evidence of three main sources of anthropogenic lead pollution: lead mining, industrial lead emissions and leaded petrol. Lead derived from the combustion of coal continues to pose an environmental problem, one that can be traced to the tide.

Figure 13. Screenshot of In Our Rivers Trust, map used to track raw and treated sewerage outpourings into rivers across UK.

Possible Environmental Impact of the Closure of Two Collieries in County Durham, BY P.L. Younger (7 October, 1993)

This triggered concern for the environmental impact of pit closures + the women's Vigil

"Vacuum of Responsibility"

therefore NOTHING is done.

Climate knowledge has historically been gatekept by those with disproportionate power and miniscule morality

People in power:

Fixing environmental damage is Disproportionately expensive: Disproportionate burdens, therefore not worth fixing!

HERSTORY

Some concluding THOUGHTS:

* Why shouldn't residents of an area be able to regulate their local environment??

* 'Green washing'?

* Why should we accept corporate indifference to the environment?

* ACCOUNTABILITY

* Linking environmental + social inequality: we are all linked to the earth

* Always QUESTION + CHALLENGE power structures

* Local experiences matter - why doesn't centralised government listen more??



NORTH EAST WOMEN

CHALLENGE, CONFRONT AND EMPOWER



FURTHER READING

Lord Londonderry, mining & colonialism:

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Penny, Nicholas, 'Lord Londonderry and His Canovas', *Studi neoclassici: rivista internazionale*, (2013), pp.175-180.

The International Exhibition of 1862: The Illustrated Catalogue of the Industrial Department Volume 1: British Division 1, (Cambridge University Press, 2014) *N.B. showcasing and framing mining industry as an imperial endeavor*

The Letters of John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 1820-1843, (The Surtees Society, The Boydell Press) *N.B. held in The Bill Bryson Library*

The Women's Vigil & Miner's voices:

Spence, Jean, 'Miner Artist/Minor Artist? Class, Politics, and the Post-industrial Consumption of Mining Art', *Frontiers in Sociology*, 5, (2020).

→ 'Women, Wives and the Campaign Against Pit Closures in County Durham: Understanding the Vane Tempest Vigil', *Feminist Review*, 60, 1998, pp.33-60.

Spence, Jean, & Carol Stephenson, 'It has to be a miner's wife!', *Representing women in mining activism*.

Mining Pollution in the River Wear:

Environmental Agency catchment planning data:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/CB103024077621>

In Our River Trust website- find the River Wear:

<https://theriverstrust.org/key-issues/state-of-our-rivers>

Shepherd, Thomas J., 'Regional lead isotope of polluted river catchment: River Wear, Northern England', *The Science of the total environment*, 2009, 407:17, pp.4882-4893.

Younger, P.L., 'Possible Environmental Impact of the Closure of Two Colliers in County Durham', *Journal of the Institution of Water and Environmental Management*, 1993, 7:5, pp.521-531.

The decolonial potential of zines:

Bagelman, J., & C., Bagelman, 'Crafting Change and Repurposing the Neoliberal University', *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 15(2), (2016), pp.365-392.

Merhar, Amelia, 'Too Long; Didn't Read: The Case for Academic Zines', *The Northern Review*, 49, (2020).