

Working places, working people

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Introduction

May I first thank Farsons and the University of Malta for their kind invitation to speak to you today on the subject of industrial heritage. It is both a pleasure and a privilege to be here.

I am not going to speak about the industrial heritage of Malta per se – this is a subject best left to those who know about it in detail – and I can see many of them in the room today.

What I have been tasked to do is to provide some form of context or contexts within which discussion later on can be set. I am therefore going to look at five areas that I think will be helpful in any development of policy and strategy for the industrial heritage in Malta.

I am going to say a little about the development of interest in the industrial past, particularly from a European perspective. Then I am going to explore the value of industrial heritage and the arguments that need to be deployed in any case for support. I want to say a little about the definition of terms and what we have meant to date by the term ‘industrial heritage’ and what we might mean for the future. A further issue that I will touch on is the relationship between sites and buildings, objects and people – and finally, in the light of what has been achieved in different European countries, I will say something about the elements that I consider are needed to help build a coherent strategy for the care, promotion and use of the industrial heritage.

1. Industrial history and heritage - the development of interest

In the UK and elsewhere in Europe from the 1950s onwards, economic and technological change, deindustrialisation and international competition between countries led progressively to a decline in extractive, processing and manufacturing industries and their supply and distribution chains. As the pace of change quickened decade by decade, a vast legacy of redundant industrial sites and monuments, machines and archives resulted. But given the nature of much of this heritage, it quickly became apparent that the surviving evidence base of many aspects of UK and European industrial history was increasingly at risk and in many cases was being destroyed before its preservation or documentation.

In the UK and in other countries in Europe and beyond affected by these changes, specialist and increasingly public concern over the rapid loss of this important aspect of the cultural heritage progressively led to:

- the creation of new preservation and conservation policies and strategies at national, regional and local level.
- the development of new structures for international liaison and networking e.g. The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH), European Route of Industrial Heritage.
- new thinking about how industrial heritage and the historic industrial environment could be appropriately and sustainably developed for cultural/ commercial use.

As a result of these processes, the industrial heritage and the historic industrial environment have seen two main (often linked) approaches to preservation, conservation, development & use:

- Cultural tourism – the development of former industrial sites and monuments as tourist attractions, industrial museums, ecomuseums, heritage centres, art galleries, performance venues etc. (the cultural heritage approach).
- Commercial development and reuse – housing, retail, offices, catering, craft production, holiday accommodation etc. (the commercial approach).

In parallel, given increasing public interest in the industrial heritage, industrial tourism has also developed with visitors interested to see contemporary production processes and techniques.

So where have we now reached after five to six decades of work within the field of industrial heritage and industrial tourism?

Protecting significant industrial heritage assets

At international level, a good example is the progressive extension of World Heritage Site designation to include industrial heritage sites and monuments. Some 8% of inscribed cultural heritage sites on the World Heritage List are industrial by nature - the Zollverein industrial complex in Land Nordrhein-Westfalen is one good example from many. A similar percentage of tentative cultural heritage sites, that is those sites which are currently being considered for inscription by different countries, are industrial by nature. The majority of the inscribed industrial heritage sites are in Europe and the USA. Combining the inscribed sites and the tentative list shows however a much wider distribution of sites than previously, now including for example a number of sites in Africa and South America. This reflects a growing recognition of the value and significance of industrial heritage in all parts of the world.



Figure 1. The Zollverein industrial complex in Land Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

Similarly at national level, most countries in Europe have now included significant industrial heritage assets on their registers of protected sites, through for example such processes as listing and scheduling. Taylor's Foundry in Loughborough is a good example from the UK – a foundry incidentally that over the years has looked after church bells from Malta.



Figure 2. Taylor's Foundry, Loughborough, UK.

Industrial heritage as cultural tourism

Over this period, we have also seen a very extensive range of industrial monuments and sites developed as heritage attractions. They vary widely in scale and type and date, reflecting many different aspects of the industrial heritage – quarries, mills, canals, railways, factories, boatyards etc. They also vary widely in approaches to interpretation, governance, management and funding. There are many models that have been developed to care for and interpret significant heritage assets.

In parallel with individual sites and monuments, whole industrial landscapes have been developed as cultural tourism attractions – Ironbridge Gorge is an excellent example of how a historic built environment has been preserved and presented to public audiences together with monuments such as the iconic Iron Bridge and a range of museums helping to interpret industrial heritage collections.



Figure 3. The Iron Bridge at Ironbridge, Shropshire, UK.

Museums have also played an important role in the preservation and interpretation of industrial heritage material where it has had to be relocated from its original location. A wide range of new museums has been developed in Europe

to house industrial collections. The new Riverside Museum in Glasgow, one of the great industrial cities of Europe, focuses on different aspects of transport and travel – but there are many industrial museums that have been established often in former industrial buildings that tell the story of individual industries or the industrial history of a town or city or region. In some cases, these serve as site museums interpreting former industrial monuments and historic industrial landscapes; in other cases, they are separate from their original location of production and/or use.



Figure 4. The new Riverside Museum under construction, Glasgow, UK.

The reuse of industrial heritage assets

One form of preservation of former industrial buildings and structures is their adaptation for contemporary purposes, for example, offices or residential developments. There are now countless and often very imaginative examples throughout Europe demonstrating the value of retention and reuse. This example in Amsterdam shows what can be achieved through skilful architectural and engineering intervention.



Figure 5. New office developments on a former crane base, Amsterdam, Holland.

In parallel with the retention and reuse of individual buildings, whole industrial landscapes with their buildings and structures have been preserved and redesigned for contemporary needs. Liverpool, one of the great international mercantile cities, provides one good example among many. Many of its former industrial buildings have been converted for residential and office accommodation, as well as for retail, restaurants and recreation purposes.



Figure 6. Former warehouses in Albert Dock, Liverpool, UK.

Industrial tourism

In parallel with developments in the industrial heritage sector, public interest in contemporary industrial processes has increased significantly in recent decades. A large number of important European and international businesses have established tour programmes for their factory and production centres and created brand showcases explaining their work. Volkswagen's brand showcase, Autostadt, is one of the best known and largest examples, but brand showcases come in all shapes and sizes and present and explain a very wide range of contemporary industrial practice. In many cases, brand showcases provide the visitor with an understanding of where the business has come from (heritage), where it is at present (contemporary) and where its future direction lies (future).

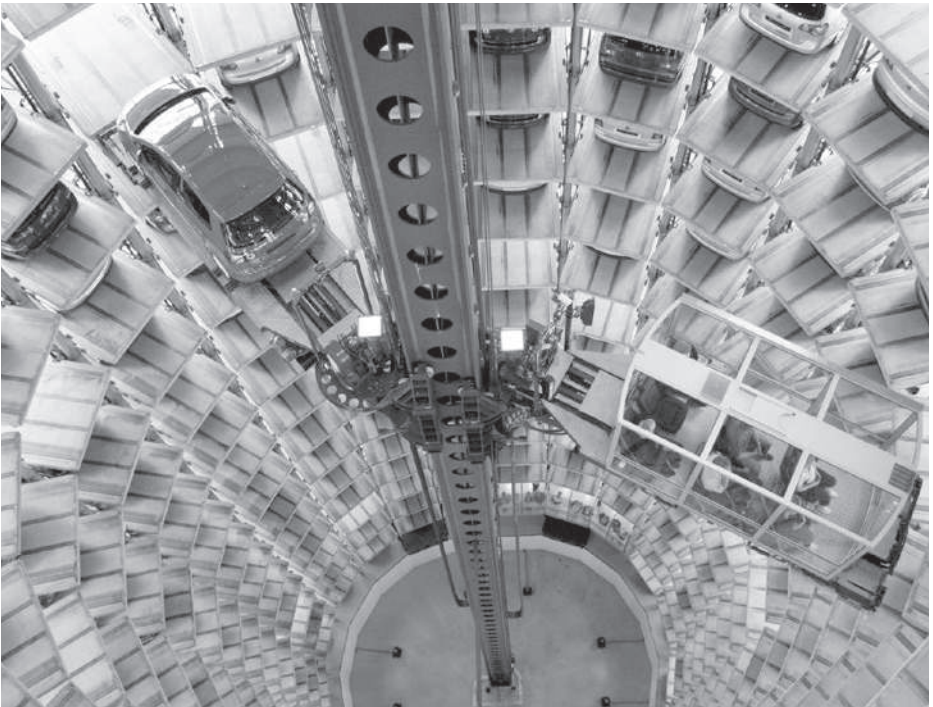


Figure 7. Volkswagen's Autostadt, Wolfsburg, Germany.

New information and communication technologies are transforming the ways in which the world of industry is being presented in physical and virtual dimensions. Digital technologies and new media are helping to explain often highly complex

industrial processes on-site and off-site and on-line. They are particularly valuable in the context of interpretation.

The Warner Brothers film of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl is a fascinating if unusual example of industrial tourism! It combines tremendous creativity and new technologies to raise many questions about the role of industry and the role of the consumer in contemporary life.



Figure 8. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Source - Warner Brothers.

2. Creating value from industrial heritage assets

Let me now turn to issues of creating value from industrial heritage assets.

Making the case-for-support and deciding on the best ways to conserve and/or use industrial heritage assets depend on a wide range of factors including:

- Existing policy contexts and heritage strategies
- The historical/archaeological significance of the assets determined by research
- Their conservation status and opportunities for or restrictions on redevelopment

- Physical and operational relationships with the wider location or destination
- Capital costs of development
- Operational costs and sustainability
- Public interest in and demand for industrial heritage
- Value for money

One way to consider how to value industrial heritage assets, whether collections or buildings and landscapes, is to look at them from three different but linked perspectives:

Intrinsic Values – on this basis, industrial heritage assets are defined as assets that groups of people or communities value, regardless of ownership. This may be for example in terms of their perceived historical, aesthetic, spiritual, social or scientific /technological value.

Instrumental Values – here value is considered in terms of the benefits that can flow from investing in or protecting industrial heritage assets. These benefits may be, for example, economic, social or environmental.

Institutional Values – these are values displayed by organisations looking after industrial heritage assets e.g. trust, accountability, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility. For such organisations the intrinsic value and the instrumental value are likely to be equally important.

While it is relatively easy to consider the instrumental values of heritage assets, it is more difficult to quantify intrinsic values. It is however important to understand how people feel about the industrial heritage: public attitudes towards industrial heritage form an important part of the evidence base in building the case-for-support for their protection and use. A good example of this lies in recent qualitative market research by English Heritage which has been used to evidence its programmes supporting the industrial heritage.

85% of the public agree that it is important to identify significant industrial sites for protection. They think that it is as important to preserve our industrial heritage as other heritage assets e.g. castles and country houses (80%).

They value industrial heritage as a reminder of the nation's history (71%), for its educational value (75%) and because it can provide direct links to families' past (33%).

71% agree that industrial heritage sites should be reused for modern-day purposes while making sure their character is preserved.

44% are interested in helping to protect the industrial heritage in their local area.

(Source: English Heritage 2012)

3. Definitions

In discussing industrial heritage, it is important to define the terms being used. 'Industrial heritage' as a term means different things to different people.

A core focus has been traditionally on buildings, sites, structures and landscapes together with machinery, objects, records, and archives related to extraction, processing, manufacturing and distribution industries from the start of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century when deindustrialisation picks up speed.

But we should remember that the industrial heritage/historic industrial environment will have different time-depths in different countries depending on the history and range of industrial development. Compare for example the timescale of the development of extractive and manufacturing industries in the UK and elsewhere in Europe to the timescale of the development of those industries in China today.

Whatever the definitions we use, it is necessary to realise from the outset that industrial history is an important part of cultural history – people value it for both its intrinsic and instrumental values. It follows that industrial heritage and the historic industrial environment ('what history has left behind') are an important part or subset of the wider cultural heritage and the wider historic cultural environment.

In this regard, it is interesting to examine the extent to which Malta's industrial heritage is currently represented in Malta's National Strategy for the Cultural Heritage, the Cultural Heritage Inventory and MEPA's scheduled sites and how it is reported on through the annual reporting processes.

So what do we mean by 'industry'?

A helpful approach is to look at Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) systems. These vary from country to country depending on the industrial base and its development. As an example, the UK's Standard Industrial Classification was first established in 1948 and has been progressively revised since, broadly decade by decade. It covers a much wider range of working practices than in those industries described above and associated with 'traditional' industrial heritage e.g. service industries. In many cases of course, we have seen the development of wholly new industries in the past half century.

But it is one useful context in which to consider 'traditional' industrial heritage. It enables us to think of historic and contemporary industry more holistically within the spectrum of economic history and heritage. It helps to bring the story of industrial endeavour up to date and to see how change and continuity have shaped

the picture of industry today. Essentially, this approach tells 'The story of Malta at work' through time. Presenting and interpreting 'The story of Malta at work' from this holistic perspective may provide a much stronger case-for-support and investment in the industrial heritage than simply thinking of the industrial heritage in traditional terms.

Major categories in the UK Standard Industrial Classification – those industries in bold are traditionally associated with industrial heritage.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing

Mining and quarrying

Manufacturing

Electricity, gas, steam, air con.

Water, sewerage, waste management and remediation

Construction

Wholesale and retail trade

Transport and storage

Accommodation, food services

Information and communication

Financial and insurance

Real estate

Professional, scientific, technical services

Admin. & support services

Public administration, defence and social security

Education

Human health and social work

Arts, entertainment, recreation

Other service activities

Households as employers

Extraterritorial bodies

4. Sites, objects and people

A key dimension to be considered alongside the sites, objects and records are people and their differing involvement through time with industrial processes and products.

By this I mean people as

- employers and workers in the industries, the supply chains and distribution systems
- investors and shareholders in the industries
- industrial communities supporting the industries
- consumers and users of products produced by the industries at community, family, and individual level

Exploring industrial heritage through the stories of people is a powerful way of connecting with audiences in both the physical and virtual domains. This is where industrial history meets social history. One can for example usefully explore the significance of industrial heritage through connections to working life, community life, family life and personal life.

A major industrial complex like Farsons Brewery or a simple product like a can of Kinnie can thus be seen at many different levels through the different perspectives of people. Telling those stories through those perspectives helps industrial heritage as well as contemporary industrial history 'come alive' for audiences.

A good example is the recognition, by the designer of this definitive and very attractive series of stamps illustrating Maltese industries, of the role of people within those industries. Almost all of the stamps feature working people as a key component of their design.



Figure 9. Examples from the 1981 definitive stamp set depicting industry in Malta (Reproduced by kind permission of MaltaPost plc).

5. The future

In developing a strategic approach to the care, promotion and use of the industrial heritage, the following points need to be borne in mind. Many of these points reflect approaches already being taken to other heritage sectors - as such, it is relatively straightforward to include industrial heritage in Malta's existing systems for the care, promotion and use of the heritage.

They include:

- developing a joined-up approach through partnerships;
- defining the meaning and coverage of the industrial heritage and the historic industrial environment;
- auditing/mapping and documenting what survives/exists for each industry in public and private ownership;
- documenting 'traditional' industrial processes, techniques, and skills and mitigating change/loss e.g. through training and craft apprenticeships;
- integrating research data into national heritage and historic environment databases;
- using that evidence base to develop a policy-led and planned/prioritised approach to caring for and interpreting the industrial heritage in line with other heritage sectors;
- reviewing existing policies/priorities for the care and conservation of the historic industrial environment and industrial heritage assets;
- improving public understanding of the value of industrial heritage and the historic industrial environment through presentation, interpretation and promotion;
- securing capital and operational funds for the appropriate and sustainable preservation, interpretation and use of the industrial heritage and historic industrial environment;
- evaluating progress against policy and plan objectives.

These points can be conveniently summarised in the following diagram.





Figure 10. A strategic approach to industrial heritage

The steps in the diagram can be applied equally to the care, promotion and use of the industrial heritage and represents the key steps in building a coherent strategy for this important sector of the wider cultural heritage.

References

English Heritage, 2012. *People's views on industrial heritage* [online] <<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/industrial-heritage-at-risk/how-are-we-classifying-industrial/peoples-views/>> [Accessed 25 October 2013].