



Social housing and working class heritage

AD281 case studies

We've chosen a selection of examples to illustrate aspects of the course and to illuminate in more detail certain themes that come across from the course, and I was very closely involved with the Carpenters' videos as the main contact on this set of videos, and they focus on the issue of working class heritage, and they illustrate various models that have been put forward to justify the listing of places as heritage in contemporary western societies. Carpenters in a sense could be any place, Carpenters stands out in a sense because of its very ordinariness and what we really wanted to do was kind of explore how people's lived sense of heritage was conveyed in these very ordinary, very everyday sort of places, these places that would not conventionally find their way on to a heritage list because they're not great architecture but which, nonetheless, people have this very intimate sense of attachment to.

The V&A films focus on the one of the most widely known types of heritage which is the museum, something that I think most people would be familiar with, and the films illustrate how decisions are made within museums about the display and interpretation of their collections, and how they've responded to criticisms about the way in which museums exclude particular members in society and particular ideas, and I think that's something which is very interesting, is to look at how the heritage industry has responded to criticism from outside about the way that it might be seen to exclude different members within society.

The National Museum of Scotland audio in a way further illustrates some of the particular issues around the management of heritage within museums, but it does this by looking in detail at a museum which was explicitly created at the time of Scottish Devolution and it's for this reason it's concerned explicitly with issues of Scottish nationalism, and that's very interesting to us in terms of the connection between heritage and nationalism, which is one of the major themes of critical heritage studies, and I think it has the sense of throwing into relief a lot of these issues around how you present a national past through the context of a museum, because of its peculiar historical circumstances of its creation at the time of Scottish Devolution.

The Notting Hill Carnival films illustrate the study of intangible forms of heritage and they also convey to us the ways in which multicultural heritage is managed within a plural society in the UK, and intangible heritage is something which is seen as increasingly important to acknowledge that there are forms of heritage which don't have any material manifestation, and this issue of how the State manages multiculturalism and its heritage is also a kind of key area in critical heritage studies, so they're two ideas that we really wanted to look at closely in those videos.

The Lake District audios are important because they reveal what happens behind the scenes in the process of developing a world heritage nomination, and world heritage is a kind of key issue for global heritage studies and a world heritage connection is one of its key documents so sort of see the process by which local stakeholders engage with the issues around world heritage, and to get an idea of the very different ideas around heritage which different stakeholders in that area hold was something which we thought would be really interesting for people to think about the many perspectives on heritage that come through.

The archaeologist considers changing approaches to archaeological heritage conservation in Britain and it allows us to put some of the debates around the heritage, and the shift in approaches to heritage, in a broader context within the discipline of archaeology which is one of the major professional disciplines that feed into heritage practice in the UK and other western societies today.

We've also recorded an audio piece which looks at the issues surrounding human remains held in UK museums, and this derives from a broader interest in heritage studies in issues of repatriation of source communities asking for objects of their heritage which are held in museums back. So, for example, indigenous people have been involved in a process of campaigning for the return of skeletal remains from British museums, and what we wanted to look at was the way in which people in Britain felt about their ancestors that we're holding in museums, and the treatment of the dead within museum displays in the UK, and this focuses on the case study of Lindow man, and the sort of debates between members in the community and members of the pagan community over the appropriate display and interpretation of Lindow man's remains.