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smoking in a Durham coalfield village*

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## ABSTRACT

### The persistence of memory<sup>1</sup>: history, family and smoking in a Durham coalfield village

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Frances Thirlway

This thesis is an ethnographic account of smoking practices in a former mining village in North East England which I call Sleetburn. My aim was to understand the link between poverty and smoking but my fieldwork led to wider issues of class and stigma as it became clear that smoking took place in the context of wider values. I start by contrasting prevailing values in the village with the middle-class privileging of social and geographical mobility, the denigration of close family ties as atavistic and the importance attached to 'raising aspirations' and discuss how local people negotiated these contradictions. Sleetburn had a long history of mobility but circular 'there and back again' mobilities were misrecognised as stasis. A close network of family and friends provided practical support, extending in space across neighbouring villages and across time in layers of memory which overlaid the visible space. Historically informed expectations of jobs were low; people had ordinary aspirations to happiness and security and reclaimed agency by carving out spaces of autonomy at work. Education provided little reward historically and was therefore 'something to get through'. Imaginable futures depended on what was visible locally; social mobility through education led to geographical mobility and was easily obscured or coloured by emotional loss. In this wider context, smoking carried little stigma but was tied into emotional memories of parental smoking which made it difficult for continuing and indeed ex-smokers to distance themselves definitively from cigarettes, with relapses common even after many years cessation. The two main factors which facilitated smoking cessation were mobility, which created distance from parental memories, and urgent health threats to self or family which remade the once friendly and familiar cigarette as alien and dangerous. Those who continued to smoke were not so much 'hardened smokers' as discouraged quitters in a community where chronic ill-health (often linked to occupational exposures) was a commonplace for smokers and never-smokers alike.

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<sup>1</sup> Salvador Dali (1931) *The persistence of memory*.

The persistence of memory:  
history, family and smoking in a Durham coalfield village

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2015

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an ethnographic account of smoking practices in a former mining village in North East England which I call Sleetburn, looking in particular at the factors which played a part in the decisions of current, former and never-smokers to start or to stop smoking. My aim was to reach an increased understanding of the correlation between poverty and smoking; however my fieldwork led to wider issues of class and stigma as I identified moral values applied to villages such as Sleetburn which included the privileging of social and geographical mobility, the denigration of close family ties as atavistic and a call to 'raise aspirations' along particular lines in employment and education.

### HOW THIS STUDY CAME ABOUT

Following a degree in politics and philosophy, my career in the public and voluntary sectors involved issues of social policy and social inequality. Eventually I moved to a research team looking at health behaviours and became interested in the causal mechanisms between poverty and smoking. I took up a PhD studentship funded by the Wellcome Trust, based jointly in the Centre for Medical Humanities (School of Medicine & Health) and the Medical Anthropology Research Group. My study has therefore been an interdisciplinary one, examining a public health problem from an anthropological viewpoint but incorporating relevant literature from other social sciences.

Tobacco is one of the world's greatest causes of preventable death; worldwide tobacco use causes 5.4 million deaths each year, a figure which is expected to rise to 8 million by 2030<sup>2</sup>. Smoking in many countries including the UK now follows a strong reverse social gradient; put simply, poorer people are more likely to start (but mainly less likely to stop) smoking than richer people (see Chapter 2). As well as saving lives, lowering tobacco exposures could reduce European health inequalities in all-cause mortality between rich and poor by 25% or more (Kulik et al., 2013). My initial research interest was in the smoking social gradient both as an intellectual conundrum which public health and tobacco control initiatives have struggled to resolve (Feldman and Bayer, 2011) and as a moral issue within an engaged or applied anthropology of health (Scheper-Hughes, 1995, Bourgois, 2001, Farmer, 2003, Rylko-Bauer et al., 2006). Few anthropologists of Europe or the UK have studied the link

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.who.int/tobacco/global\\_report/2011/en/](http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/2011/en/) Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2014. The figure refers to people dying prematurely from tobacco-related diseases.

between poverty and smoking, which has largely been left to epidemiology with its tendency to reduce culture to whatever seems irrational in health behaviour (Trostle and Sommerfeld, 1996, DiGiacomo, 1999, Lambert, 2012 p. 354).

I started from the observation that much of public health effort to reduce smoking is predicated on a moral imperative of health (Crawford, 1977, Lupton, 1995) – ethically problematic both in foregrounding individualism against altruism and in applying moral judgements and conferring stigma on the unhealthy ‘other’. As Lupton says, ‘healthiness’ has replaced ‘godliness’ in many modern societies; following Foucault, she argues that public health contributes to the moral regulation of society by focusing on the ethical and moral practices of the self (Lupton, 1995 p. 4). Moreover, the idea of individual health as having moral value tends to be a classed position, with middle-class people more critical about their own and other people’s health behaviours, whereas working-class people regard these as private matters, with good health largely a matter of luck (Pill and Stott, 1982, Calnan and Williams, 1991, Lupton, 1995 p. 140, Frohlich et al., 2010). It would be logical to conclude that an emphasis on smoking cessation as a moral responsibility – health as moral duty – would be less likely to work with poorer than with richer smokers, and would if anything increase the social gradient in smoking.

With the ultimate goal of identifying alternative, effective ways of reducing smoking amongst poorer people, I therefore set out to disentangle the link between smoking and poverty through a study in a particular place - an ambitious aim given the amount of research already done with no clear conclusion being reached (see Chapter 2). As I carried out my fieldwork, the question in the back of my mind was ‘why people smoked’ and I tried out a number of different explanations. I leaned initially towards a political economy approach, seeing smoking in Sleetburn as a way of coping with structural inequalities (Krieger, 2000a) then preferred psychosocial explanations (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012) and later cultural reproduction (Reay, 2009, Reay, 2006). I also expected to hear richly textured explanations or at least to witness complex social interactions which would provide ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973b) of the layers of meaning around smoking in the village. However, smoking remained, in itself, stubbornly thin. Smoking appeared to have little meaning in itself; however as a ‘class marker’, I gradually realised that it was a behaviour symbolically situated on the front line between different sets of classed moral values.

The relevant question became not why people in Sleeburn liked to smoke, but why they continued to do so after the health risks were confirmed and smoking was abandoned by the middle classes. Since this continuing difference in behaviour appeared to relate to a difference in ideas and values – for example, ordinary working-class people in Sleeburn did not generally share the idea of health as a moral imperative (see Chapter 9) - I became curious about the alternative ideas and values current in the village and whether these were part of what has often been described as ‘working-class culture’. At the same time, middle-class values were emerging as an absent presence in Sleeburn underlying many interactions with me in the village, particularly at the start of my fieldwork when (middle) class was probably my most visible identity (see Chapter 3).

Although I didn’t realise it at the time I chose it as my field site, Sleeburn was a particularly good example of a community set up and later abandoned by the processes of capitalism (Hudson, 1989, Massey, 1994) not just because of the history of the coal industry but also because of its own particular trajectory within this (see Chapter 4). Sleeburn has been continuously left behind by people (continuous out-migration since the 1920s) and processes (the departure of jobs and industries). Arguably it has also been left behind by ways of life now more mobile, less insular and more aspirational elsewhere – although this is an interpretation I shall challenge in my thesis. In this sense the village is a good example of the dynamics which Reay suggests cultural analysts of class attempt to uncover and expose, namely the unacknowledged normality of the middle classes and its corollary, the equally unacknowledged pathologisation and diminishing of the working classes (Reay, 2006 p. 289) .

Conflicting ideas of how to live a moral life provided a backdrop to my conversations as people in the village were aware of and responded to a middle-class ‘gaze’ (Foucault, 1995 [1977], Finch, 1993, Skeggs, 1997). As Sayer says, the moral stigma attached to being poor leads to a tension between wanting to reject respectability and to be respectable; the injuries of class relate in part to mixed feelings i.e. aspiring versus rejecting middle-class values and practices, working-class pride versus middle-class aspiration (Sayer, 2002 paragraphs 4.15 to 4.16). Ortner has written in similar terms about how the class structure is replicated within the working class itself, separating out the ‘respectable’ self from the

'rough' other (Ortner, 2006); in other cases respectability may be rejected altogether in favour of other values such as masculinity or hedonism (Willis, 1977).

Whilst these writings rang true in the Sleetburn context, it was the work of a team with many years of research experience in UK coalfields communities which articulated how classed values worked in the particular context of mining villages – a context which conflates working-class with rural stereotypes (see Chapter 2). Amongst a number of papers from this project (Beynon et al., 1999, Beynon et al., 2000, Beynon, 2001, Beynon et al., 2006), one article made explicit particular moral values (referred to as stereotypes) which the authors encountered in relation to these communities and particularly in the various agencies set up to 'regenerate' them, and which I recognised as relevant to Sleetburn and used to structure the first part of my thesis (Strangleman et al., 1999).

The first of the moral values which I took from this text was the idea of mobility – both social and geographical – as a good in itself, even a moral imperative; the new 'flexibility' of the workforce which regeneration agencies sought to promote was contrasted with the 'old', static mining culture, whereby people were unwilling to move or adapt to new work. The second, related value was the privileging of the autonomous, cosmopolitan individual against localism and close family ties (critiqued as 'insularity'); the third was the idea of aspiration, which reprised mobility but also referenced the old idea of the deserving poor (those who make efforts to 'better themselves') and the related claim that the failure to do this is both morally reprehensible and the fault of the individual rather than of structural forces. I aimed both to make these moral values around mobility, insularity and aspiration 'visible' in their operation in Sleetburn and also to 'unsettle' them.

With regard to smoking, I found that it was not only a marker for class, but that mobility - itself a concept operating on the front lines of class - was closely connected with smoking cessation. This was not only because of the obvious point that cessation marks a movement in status from smoker to former smoker, but also because I found that both social and geographical mobility increased the likelihood of giving up (see Chapter 7).

## CLASS AND MORAL WORTH

As I explained in the previous section, the aspect of class which emerged as relevant to my study of smoking in Sleetburn was its moral content in the shape of classed values. In this section I therefore set out a brief summary of the relevant literature. I found the work of sociologist Andrew Sayer particularly helpful (Sayer, 2002, Sayer, 2005a, Sayer, 2005b). Sayer critiques the way social sciences bracket out normative (moral) matters and overlook the normative character of everyday experiences; he focuses on class not so much in terms of inequalities in material resources, but as a source of stigma or status i.e. the moral implications of class and the moral stigma attached to being poor, experienced emotionally as feelings of envy, pride, resentment or anger (Sayer, 2002). It is the literature relating to this affective experience of class which I consider here.

The emotional impact of a failure to achieve upward mobility has been explored most notably in the US where a belief in the individual opportunity to succeed (and a consequent downplaying of structural factors) is an integral part of the 'American dream' (Sennett and Cobb, 1972, Lamont, 2009a). In the UK, notable early studies focussed on the contested field of education (Jackson and Marsden, 1962, Willis, 1977). Conversely, a number of writers with a working-class background articulated the ambivalence and loss which can accompany not just failure but also success in achieving upward mobility. These include the founders of UK cultural studies Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams (Hoggart, 1957, Williams, 1958) but also other autobiographical material such as Dennis Potter's account of growing up in and then moving away from the coal mining Forest of Dean (Potter, 1962).

Influenced by post-structuralism, identity politics and the 'cultural turn', cultural studies from the late 1980s joined the social sciences in moving away from class (Carrier and Kalb, 2015 p. 5, Munt, 2000 pp. 1-13), which remained obscured for some years by academics who classified it as a 'zombie category' (Beck and Willms, 2004) or wrote of the 'death of class' (Pahl, 1989, Giddens, 1991, Pakulski and Waters, 1996). Beck's individualization thesis hypothesized that behaviour was becoming less bound by traditional norms and values and sources of collective identity such as social class or family (Beck, 1992, Beck, 2002).

Nevertheless, there has been a steady flow of literature in the UK regarding the 'hidden injuries' of class, often incorporating autobiographical content and written from a feminist perspective (Steedman, 1987, Skeggs, 1997, Lawler, 1999, Kuhn, 2002, Lucey et al., 2003, Lawler, 2005a, Lawler, 2005b, Skeggs, 2005, Lawler, 2008, Skeggs, 2009, Lawler, 2011, Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012, Tyler, 2013, Mckenzie, 2015). A resurgence of interest in class resulting in part from popular protests against neo-liberalism and austerity has since boosted recent work such as Tyler's account of the scapegoating of welfare recipients as 'national objects' and the transformation of class into a 'revolting subject' (Tyler, 2013 p. 9 and p. 153) and Jones's account of the stigmatization of the working class in Britain first articulated by Beverley Skeggs in 1997 (Skeggs, 1997, Nayak, 2006, Lyle, 2008, Hollingworth and Williams, 2009, Jones, 2011). Mainstream work in sociology (Savage et al., 2013) and social history (Light, 2014, Todd, 2014) has also contributed to this resurgence. In the sociology of education, class never really went away (Ball, 1993, Ball et al., 1995, Green, 2004); Diane Reay has focussed particularly on working-class relationships to education as emotionally charged (Reay and Ball, 1997, Reay, 2000, Reay, 2001, Reay, 2006, Reay, 2009, Reay et al., 2011, Reay, 2012, Reay, 2013).

Another aspect of class and moral worth relevant to my study is the literature of social memory and nostalgia linked to deindustrialization and the consequent loss of individual and community identities centred around shared workplaces (Stewart, 1996, Strangleman et al., 1999, Critcher et al., 2001, Linkon and Russo, 2002, Stephenson and Wray, 2005, Strangleman, 2007, Bennett, 2009, Wray, 2009, Jones, 2010, Portelli, 2010, Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012, Wray and Stephenson, 2012, Wray, 2012). Albeit with a lesser emphasis on the legacies of deindustrialization, anthropologists of Britain have written in a similar context about social memory, belonging and emotion (Edwards, 1998, Degnen, 2005, Degnen, 2007, Degnen, 2009, Edwards, 2009, Edwards, 2012, Degnen, 2013).

With regard to the anthropology of class, the editors of a recent anthology suggest that whilst capitalism and neo-liberalism have been getting a lot of attention in the discipline recently, anthropologists are still 'bewitched by the idea of the death of class' (Carrier and Kalb, 2015): after post-modernism, anthropologists have foresworn grand narrative and thus the sweeping vision of an Eric Wolf or a Karl Polyani (Polyani, 1944, Wolf, 2010 [1982], Mintz, 1985). At a local level, anthropologists have always written about power and social

inequality whether using class, caste (Béteille, 2013) or some other category, but within the context of the anthropology of high-income countries, Carbonella stresses the need to challenge the academic division of labour that allocates the study of the working class to sociology (Carbonella and Kasmir, 2006).

In the US, Ortner writes of the 'extraordinary elusiveness of class', noting how this invisibility is reflected even in study titles (Sennett and Cobb, 1972, Eisler, 1983, Ortner, 1998) and echoing Sayer in characterising class as 'embarrassing' (Ortner, 1998 p. 10). Class and power in other high-income countries are explicit in the work of anthropologists studying Canada (Sider, 1986), the Netherlands (Kalb, 1997), Norway (Gullestad, 1984) and Spain (Narotzky and Smith, 2006) although only Dunk refers directly to class and moral worth, describing contrasting reactions to class stigma amongst working-class men in North Western Ontario (Dunk, 1991 pp. 138-9). Amongst anthropologists of class in Britain (Evans, 2006, Mollona, 2009, Smith, 2012, Tyler, 2012, Koch, 2014), Evans and Smith in particular consider issues of moral worth and stigma, although Evans's decision to be 'purposefully naive about the literature on social class and education' arguably limits the explanatory power of her analysis (Evans, 2006 p. 176, Jones et al., 2007). This decision could be seen as a symptom of wider disciplinary unease in what Clifford describes as the difficult borders between anthropology, cultural studies and qualitative sociology (Clifford, 1997 p. 61) where anthropology risks becoming inward-looking and self-referential (Lamont, 2009b p. 87). My decision to take account of the wider literature has limited the detailed attention I have given to the anthropological literature, but I hope I have shown that on matters of class in Britain, the contributions of other disciplines cannot be ignored.

#### UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

In the context of studies of smoking from any discipline, my study stands out in three ways: first, in considering smoking within the historical and economic context of a specific time and place; secondly, in considering not only current smokers but also former smokers and never smokers; and thirdly, in focussing particularly on trajectories of either quitting or continuing to smoke, particularly in middle-age and later, when smokers are most likely to quit. The research gap which I hope to fill is the lack of naturalistic studies of smoking and particularly quitting practices, situated in a specific place and having regard to individual and

place histories. My methodology has been ethnographic in involving lengthy engagement with people's daily lives i.e. participant observation in specific places rather than a series of interviews with individual smokers without social context, but I have supplemented this with archival research including local government reports for the village going back to the 1890s.

#### CHOOSING A FIELD SITE

I now move on to my choice of field site. I decided to study persistent smoking and its association with poverty in a location in the North East of England because I have had an interest in the health and wellbeing of the area since I moved to Durham City in 1995. The North East of England comprises largely rural Northumberland; the post-industrial urban areas of Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside; County Durham with its eponymous cathedral city; the larger market and railway town of Darlington; a few smaller towns built around mining, iron or steel and hundreds of mining villages. County Durham is the poorest of England's 'Shire' counties and is largely a working-class and white area (Robinson, 2007), having had little historical or current in-migration since the early 1900s because of longstanding economic difficulties (see Chapter 4). The recent history of County Durham has been dominated by the Durham coalfield which was first exploited in the beginning of the nineteenth century, reached a peak in coal production in 1914 but had disappeared one hundred years later with the exception of opencast operations.

Durham City itself is a compact cathedral town of 49,000 inhabitants dominated by the medieval cathedral and the university. Whilst the city is prosperous, most of the dozen or so former pit villages within a five mile radius feature in the top 10% or 20% poorest areas in England and are typically the places where high rates of smoking are found.

I chose the village of Sleetburn as it is reasonably compact and conveniently located three miles from my home; it also appeared to me to have clear 'boundaries' in the sense that there were open fields between Sleetburn and neighbouring villages. It also had two obvious locations for fieldwork, namely the village hall and the working men's club. Although there are variations within it, the ward which includes Sleetburn was ranked at the time of my fieldwork in the top 15% most deprived in England and the proportion of children at local schools who were eligible for free school meals was well above average.

There were also high rates of worklessness often related to chronic health problems<sup>3</sup>. At the time of starting my study I had driven through the village no more than once or twice but I was aware that it was generally a poor area as it had been a funding priority for agencies I worked for at various times. I was also aware of some stigma attached to the village as being 'rough'; this was hard to pin down however as it was generally expressed in head shaking, clucking or an intake of breath when the village was mentioned; I will refer to specific examples in the appropriate chapters.

Sleetburn is located in West Durham, being the area west of the A1 motorway and bounded by Tyneside to the North, Teesside to the South and Cumbria to the East. In terms of topography, West Durham gradually rises from east to west, being fairly flat close to Durham City, giving way to low hills used for crops, grazing and conifer plantations, then further west the moors and dales of the Pennines. Sleetburn is located half-way, in an area which was sparsely populated right up until the latter years of the nineteenth century when the coal seam which runs from west to east Durham began to be exploited. It was in this period that West Durham saw a massive increase in population as mine owners brought in workers and built villages to house them (see Chapter 4). Sleetburn reached its peak size at the same time as the UK coal industry around 1914, but by the 1960s the village population had dwindled from a high of 3,000 down to 2,000 and now stands at around 1,100 people<sup>4</sup>, most of whom are descendants of local mining families and work in routine and manual<sup>5</sup> jobs. Since the collieries in the immediate vicinity closed in 1953 and 1968, the land previously occupied by the pits, the coking works, the original colliery housing and the miners' recreation ground have reverted back to agriculture or woodland.

The village today is made up of around 600 houses which include 235 colliery houses built in terraces around 1900, 275 council-built houses on two large 1930s estates, forty 1970s council-built bungalows for elderly people, twenty 'self-build' private houses from the 1980s and forty-six houses on two recently-built (2007 and 2009) private and mixed-tenure estates. In addition the village has a small primary school, a church and chapel, a general

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<sup>3</sup> NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk) Accessed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2015

<sup>4</sup> Data compiled from secondary sources including local government reports

<sup>5</sup> 'Routine & manual' (R&M) is a Standard Occupational Classification code. The top five R&M occupations for men include HGV drivers, storage handling, sales and retail, van drivers and labourers. The top five R&M occupations for women are sales and retail, carers, cleaners, educational assistants and kitchen and catering assistants.

shop, a post office, a hairdressing salon and a working men's club. The two closest villages are one mile north and two miles east respectively, and two bus services provide a twenty-minute journey into Durham for around £5.00, leaving every twenty minutes at busy times, hourly or half hourly at other times.

#### THESIS OUTLINE

I mentioned earlier that although I set out to research smoking, I found in practice that smoking in Sleetburn appeared to have little meaning in itself; as a 'class marker', however, it functioned as a behaviour symbolically situated on the front line in a clash of moral values. In writing up and deciding on how to order my findings, I therefore felt I had to start by exploring how class values were contested and stigma experienced in Sleetburn before I could move on to smoking as a specific behaviour or set of practices in which such values were expressed. Following my introductory chapters 1 to 3, this thesis is therefore divided into two parts: an ethnography of Sleetburn in chapters 4 to 6 which explores the classed values of mobility, insularity and aspiration, followed by an ethnography of smoking in the village in chapters 7 to 9.

In Chapter 2 I review the literature to explore how smoking in high-income countries has been constructed as residual, irrational behaviour and how smokers have been reified as the 'other' according to a model of lack. I review explanations for the smoking/poverty correlation including the idea of psychological deficiencies, theories about working-class fatalism and smoking to cope with adversity. I argue that in the context of smoking and poverty in the UK, little attention has been paid to specific cultures of place, which have been subsumed into a broad category of poverty, often equated with cultural as well as financial lack. I then consider what studies of smoking and place do exist before looking at ethnography's particular contribution. In a second section, I turn to the idea of the village in general and the mining village in particular, starting with the classic English village and the search by anthropologists for the exotic other in the villages of the Celtic fringe. I argue that mining villages have been viewed dualistically either as communities of solidarity or as static, insular and devoid of aspirations. Finally I consider the contested issue of the mining village as an exemplar of collective values.

In Chapter 3 I set out my methodology, starting with my arrival story and my gradual realization of Sleetburn as an unbounded site and continuing with a description of fieldwork processes and the process of 'coming to know'. I then chart my growing realisation of Sleetburn as comprising many different cultural practices and axes of identity and of my own situated apprehension of the village based on my age, class and gender. I consider the histories told in the village before looking at issues of representation in the relational field. Finally I consider emotional landscapes and how I came to share in these over time.

Following these introductory chapters, Chapters 4 to 6 set out my ethnography of the village of Sleetburn in the context of the stereotypes of mining villages I have described namely lack of mobility, place attachment and lack of aspiration. I start in Chapter 4 with mobility, showing in this chapter that the people of Sleetburn and neighbouring villages have been highly mobile – moving *en masse* into the new mining villages at the end of the nineteenth century, but also moving out in huge numbers in the 1930s and again in the 1960s. I argue that certain kinds of mobility are generally privileged over others: thus, accusations of lack of mobility today can be traced back to stigmatising ideas of the mining village as 'matter out of place'. Cyclical 'there and back again' mobilities are overlooked or misrecognised as stasis or 'failed' mobility.

In Chapter 5 I consider whether local people had a strong attachment to place. I show that Sleetburn had few 'incomers' and that most of these came from similar backgrounds in nearby villages. Most people had a mining family background, similar education and employment pathways and a shared housing experience, all of which created connectedness within the village relating to knowing people and being known. People in Sleetburn had a strong attachment to a network of family and friends which extended in space across neighbouring villages and across time in the shape of layers of memory which overlaid the visible space, supporting my argument that smoking in Sleetburn was tied into a particularly strong emotional link with previous generations.

In Chapter 6 I consider whether people lacked 'aspiration' and what this term meant in the context of experiences of employment and education in the village. I argue that aspiration in the narrow sense of middle class trajectories to advanced education and a professional or managerial job had little meaning in Sleetburn. The triple achievement of the 'house, car,

job' was desirable, but imaginable futures did not include advanced education which held out little historical promise but rather a real likelihood of emotional loss.

The next three chapters 7 to 9 comprise my ethnographic account of smoking practices in Sleetburn. In chapter 7 I consider the historical continuity of smoking in the village and argue that this created an emotional connection to smoking practices. Because Sleetburn had a very strong smoking history, people have grown up with smoking parents and grandparents, starting age has stayed consistent over a period of sixty years and an association between smoking and becoming an adult has been maintained, with younger people patterning themselves on their smoking parents. I then show that despite national initiatives aimed at denormalisation, smoking in the village remained largely free from stigma. It was not normative in the sense of expected or prescribed, but it was unnoticed and largely unnoticeable. I suggest in this and subsequent chapters that a familial history of smoking has made it difficult for people in the village to achieve the distancing or alienation from tobacco necessary for successful cessation.

In Chapter 8 I show how smokers used creative ingenuity to resist public health policy initiatives designed to discourage smoking, such as increased taxation and smoke-free spaces in order to maintain their emotional links to smoking as a practice linking them to previous generations. I then consider those who managed to quit, and how this entailed a break typically associated with social mobility i.e. a break from family; alternatively this 'break' could be associated with the sudden emergence of specific health problems which threatened the family and thereby moved the cigarette out of the family circle in a different way.

In Chapter 9 I show how the will to quit for older, continuing smokers was weakened by their experience of chronic ill health as the norm, their knowledge of the complex aetiology of health problems and the lack of purchase in the village of the idea of the healthy body as a moral imperative. Consonant with my argument around the importance of intergenerational emotional links, those who found it hardest to quit were those with the closest links to previous generations (whether or not these were still alive), especially the daughters of smoking mothers.

Finally, in Chapter 10 I review my original research objectives and point to the areas where my findings contribute to a better understanding of continuing smoking in particular communities, as well as making suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

I explained in Chapter 1 that I would study smoking trajectories in a specific place with relatively high prevalence of both smoking and poverty; in this chapter I set out the academic literature in a first section about continued smoking in high-income countries and how this has been constructed as irrational behaviour, and in a second section about ideas of the village in general and the mining village in particular. In this first, smoking section I review explanations for the poverty/ smoking correlation and argue that in the UK context, little attention has been paid to specific cultures of place which have been subsumed into a broad category of deprivation, often equated with cultural as well as financial lack. I then consider what studies of smoking and place do exist before looking at ethnography's particular contribution.

### CONTINUED SMOKING IN HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES

Several commentators have pointed out that the anthropological contribution to smoking research in western developed countries has been a surprisingly small one. Black suggested this was because tobacco does not have a major symbolic role in 'our' culture (Black, 1984). Singer added that smoking tends to be an individual act rather than communicate a lot of cultural information (Singer, 2004 p. 523). This may possibly have been the case when smoking was more widespread in countries such as the UK and the US than it is now, but I will argue that smoking or indeed not smoking does communicate significant cultural information today. In the UK for instance, continued smoking now communicates information about class position, and I will also argue that smoking in my field site was a practice deeply tied into family and community history.

I begin by setting out how the smoker became residual or residualized in high-income countries where the health risks are known at least in general terms, and where smoking has taken on a particular moral dimension, with smokers being stigmatised in various ways. The bulk of this research has been carried out in disciplines other than anthropology, and I will therefore review work from a variety of fields. I will concentrate on smoking behaviour in high income countries as this is most relevant to my research. Anthropological studies of smoking in low- and middle-income countries and of aspects of tobacco other than smoking

behaviour such as the tobacco industry or tobacco growers and pickers, have been usefully summarised elsewhere (Singer, 2004, Kohrman and Benson, 2011, Singer, 2012).

The great bulk of the research on smoking behaviour has been carried out within the field of public health or epidemiology, often with little explicit theoretical underpinning but using concepts from social psychology, which has enjoyed a privileged disciplinary position within the field of tobacco control (Poland et al., 2006). I will suggest that an implicit framework of this research has constructed smoking as residual, irrational behaviour and reified smokers along particular lines, most notably class in the UK and race in the US. Additional key insights have come from sociology and geography, but I will argue that anthropology's core methodology, ethnography, has most to offer in terms of its attention to cultural practices in specific places and times.

Although concerns about the effect of tobacco on health have been expressed since the early stages of its diffusion into Western Europe, the scale of the public health disaster created by commodified<sup>6</sup> cigarettes did not become apparent until the 1960s, when the health consequences of increasing rates of smoking began to be apparent in increased rates of lung cancer, previously a rare disease (Doll and Hill, 1950). Reports on the association between smoking and lung cancer first appeared in the US and UK in 1950 and since that time smoking has primarily been studied as a public health problem, with the literature largely engaged in mapping and understanding continued smoking and encouraging cessation. Once the health risks were known, smoking prevalence quickly fell in developed countries; when the rate of decrease stalled in the 1990s, the idea of nicotine addiction provided the answer i.e. that smokers could not give up on their own and therefore nicotine addiction should be treated pharmaceutically (Berridge, 2007 pp.241-278). The construction of smoking as addiction came with a number of problems, however; it arguably removed agency from the individual, ignoring the fact that many people did give up and that the vast majority did so without any pharmacological help at all (Chapman and MacKenzie, 2010, West, 2011); moreover addiction carries moral meaning as representing deviant desire and, according to a model of 'lack', fulfilling some psychological deficiency or providing a dysfunctional way of coping (Quintero and Nichter, 1996).

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<sup>6</sup> Consumption of tobacco on a mass scale was commodified by the introduction of bright leaf (flue-cured, inhalable) tobacco and the cigarette machine.

## A MARKER FOR DISADVANTAGE?

Whilst overall smoking prevalence in high-income countries such as the US and UK has gone down very significantly, prevalence amongst poorer people in these same countries has decreased much more slowly so that there is now a clear inverse social gradient in smoking i.e. the poorer you are, the more likely you are to smoke (Marsh and McKay, 1984, Barbeau et al., 2004, Peretti-Watel et al., 2009a, Bacigalupe et al., 2013). UK smoking rates have decreased from a high of 82% for men (1948) and 45% for women (1966)<sup>7</sup> to 21% and 19% respectively (Office of National Statistics, 2011), but 2009 smoking rates in routine and manual jobs were 34% for men and 30% for women compared to 11% for men and 10% for women in higher professional jobs (ASH, 2011). Similarly, in the US, whilst overall prevalence in 2011 was around 19%, the rate was 46% for adults who had not completed high school (Borrelli, 2010). The anti-smoking message, like other universal health promotion messages, has been taken up more enthusiastically by affluent groups (Dahl et al., 2006, Siahpush et al., 2006, Frohlich et al., 2010). Smoking cessation interventions have a disproportionately lower effect on poorer people (Niederdeppe et al., 2008). Smoking-related death rates are two to three times higher among disadvantaged social groups than among the better off (Mackenbach et al., 2008). Deaths from cardiovascular disease, strongly associated with smoking, account for over a third of inequalities in death rates. Similarly, socio-economic status is strongly inversely related to lung cancer incidence (Menvielle et al., 2009).

The model of the psychologically deficient smoker I referred to in the previous section has been dominant since smoking was abandoned by socio-economic and cultural elites in the west. This change paved the way for the assumption that continuing smokers shared a common deficiency – be it psychological or cultural (Pampel, 2006)– and for them to be constructed by public health as the ‘other’. The biomedical model sees health as an absolute good and any behaviour held to have a negative impact on health as irrational; a significant gulf therefore opened up between the assumptions and experiences of middle-class public health professionals and the targets of their smoking cessation interventions (Frohlich et al., 2010).

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<sup>7</sup> The high of 45% for women occurred in 1966 but the prevalence rate amongst women fluctuated between 40% and 45% for the whole of the period from 1956 to 1980, see WALD, N. J. & NICOLAIDES-BOUMAN, A. 1991. *UK smoking statistics*, Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press.

Early twentieth-century anthropologists often alluded to their own sharing and exchanging of tobacco in the field (Kohrman and Benson, 2011), but since smoking has been constructed as unhealthy and thereby irrational, there is an assumption that smoking researchers themselves do not smoke, and only a handful reveal their own smoking status in their writings (DeSantis, 2002, DeSantis, 2003, Dennis, 2006, Reed, 2006, Thompson et al., 2007, Owers and Ballard, 2008) The voices and participation of smokers are notably absent from most tobacco initiatives, including research conferences (Poland et al., 2006, Haines-Saah, 2013).

Critiques of smoking in Victorian times had a strong moral dimension, being closely allied to the temperance movement and the non-conformist tradition which also castigated uncontrolled pleasures such as drinking, opium taking and gambling (Hilton, 2000 p. 63). More recently, as smoking came to be recognised as a public health problem in the 1960s, what has been termed the 'new public health' was also taking hold, concentrating on individuals' own responsibility for their health and on individual health behaviours rather than on previously paramount environmental issues such as clean air and clean water. Smoking, in parallel with other issues such as obesity, gradually acquired the status of a moral issue reflecting the 'new healthism' and the idea of health as an individual responsibility (Crawford, 1977, Lupton, 1995).

Smoking is treated as residual behaviour and remaining smokers are reified in particular ways, although 'we' do not always agree on whether 'they' are most usefully grouped according to topology, poverty, class, race or gender. These cleavages are further explored in my later sections on explanations for continued smoking. The arbitrary nature of this reification of smokers is made particularly apparent in comparisons of the academic literature on smoking behaviour and meanings in different countries, as demonstrated by my later section contrasting race and class in smoking literature in the US and UK.

## UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL GRADIENT IN SMOKING

Whilst the inverse social gradient in smoking is incontrovertible, there are a number of issues arising from its definition and usage which I will set out here. The first is what exactly is being described. The terms poverty, disadvantage and SES (socio-economic status) are frequently used in this context, with SES perhaps the term most commonly used in public health literature<sup>8</sup>. However, whilst socio-economic status is usually measured by education, occupation, employment, income and wealth, these components of SES are not interchangeable and arguably have different kinds of influences on health behaviour (Pampel et al., 2010 p. 351). Having said that, there does appear to be a 'general law' of Western industrialized society that every marker of disadvantage is independently associated with cigarette smoking (Jarvis and Wardle, 2006 p. 242). The difficulty lies in identifying the causal mechanisms.

The second issue relates to the social gradient itself and how it is addressed in public policy. Adapting Vallgård's analysis of the problematization of the social gradient in health (Vallgård, 2008), one approach is to understand continued smoking as a problem belonging to an excluded minority, i.e., as a dichotomy between this minority and the rest of the population, whereas the other approach understands smoking as a gradient affecting the whole population. I argue that what Vallgård characterises as the dichotomy approach is the one generally taken in mainstream public health research into smoking, and that this has the effect of stigmatizing poor smokers by separating them into an underclass. The conflation of continuing smoking with poverty also ignores the fact that there are many non-smokers even amongst the multiply disadvantaged. If smoking prevalence is 75% amongst unemployed unskilled manual workers living in shared rented accommodation without a car (Jarvis and Wardle, 2006), this still leaves 25% of the same group who don't smoke, making the dichotomous approach criticised by Vallgård even less valid.

The third issue is the highlighting of the social gradient rather than other correlations. Smoking rates amongst 'low SES' (but employed) populations are not as high as the 80% smoking rate amongst prisoners, 90% amongst homeless people, or up to 80% rate,

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<sup>8</sup> Eminent US epidemiologist Nancy Krieger prefers the term socio-economic position KRIEGER, N., WILLIAMS, D. R. & MOSS, N. E. 1997. Measuring social class in US public health research: Concepts, methodologies, and guidelines. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 18, 341-378..

depending on the condition, amongst people with various mental health diagnoses from depression to schizophrenia (Borrelli, 2010, ASH, 2013). Given that prisoners and homeless people also have high rates of mental illness, it could be argued that tackling mental health issues would do more for smoking cessation than targeting poor communities. I am not suggesting this approach so much as pointing out that we choose to reify smokers in particular ways; characterising continuing smokers as poor is a policy decision rather than a simple statement of fact. This point becomes particularly obvious when the UK is contrasted with the US, as we will see below.

As previously stated, US rates of smoking for people living on a low income and people without qualifications were comparable with UK rates for similar populations. However, there is a tension in the US between a race-based account of health disparities and a class-based view; the US government is one of the few developed Western nations that does not routinely report health statistics by class (Navarro, 1990, Kawachi et al., 2005) and the discourse of class is largely absent from hegemonic American culture (Ortner, 2006 p. 19). One consequence is that poverty is rarely headlined in US studies of poor smokers. In a search for qualitative studies, I found only three in the US which mentioned poverty or an equivalent term in the title (Dunn et al., 1998, Beech and Scarinci, 2003, Webb, 2008). Instead, studies of poor smokers generally focused on race i.e. study titles referred to African American or Native American (Lacey et al., 1993, Pletsch et al., 2003, Smith et al., 2007, Stillman et al., 2007, Báezconde-Garbanati et al., 2007, Merzel et al., 2008) or Appalachian (equated in US public health literature with white rural poor) smokers (Ahijevych et al., 2003, Cottrell et al., 2007). It was only in the body of the article that their status as 'poor smokers' was revealed. This contrasted with the UK, where many more studies referred to poverty or disadvantage in the study title (Marsh and McKay, 1984, Graham, 1993, Gaunt-Richardson et al., 1998, Amos et al., 1999, Barlow et al., 1999, McKie et al., 1999, Stead et al., 2001, Wiltshire et al., 2001, Bancroft et al., 2003, Copeland, 2003, Wiltshire et al., 2003, Taylor et al., 2005, Farrimond, 2006, Roddy et al., 2006, Robinson and Kirkcaldy, 2007a, Henderson et al., 2011, Stead et al., 2013).

Differences in smoking prevalence can be mapped along a number of different indices; despite a social gradient similar to that of the UK and other European countries, the US has concentrated tobacco control research and interventions on ethnic minority groups rather

than looking at poverty. The observation that race tends to act as a proxy for class in US public health research is not a new one (Kawachi et al., 2005, Krieger and Fee, 1994), nor are critiques from within political epidemiology (Berkman and Kawachi, 2000) which suggest that the US needs to focus more attention on socio-economic disparities in smoking within and across racial, ethnic and gender groups (Barbeau et al., 2004). The point I make here is that the reification of smokers as poor or black or some other characteristic is largely arbitrary and has more to do with the political culture of the different countries involved than with the characteristics of the smokers themselves. Of course, the way in which 'nested social contexts interface and influence one another' in the context of tobacco use (Nichter, 2003 p.139) does pose particular problems for statistical models of smoking behaviour, even with the help of multi-level analysis (Birch et al., 2000, Birch et al., 2005), and I will argue that in-depth ethnographic studies are most likely to do justice to the complexity of the factors involved.

#### TIME AND THE SMOKER<sup>9</sup>

Another issue with smoking as a marker for disadvantage concerns the smoker in relation to time. Whereas smoking prevalence data are snapshots at a particular point in time, individual smokers' trajectories take them from not smoking to smoking and frequently back to not smoking again; there are currently more ex-smokers than smokers in the UK (ONS 2011).

Relatively few studies have looked at individual smokers over their life course for instance by way of life histories (Elliot, 2001, Parry et al., 2001, Parry et al., 2002, Elliot, 2008, Ensminger et al., 2009, Ward et al., 2011) although there has been an increase in longitudinal studies of smoking behaviour, both quantitative (McDermott et al., 2006, McDermott et al., 2007, McDermott et al., 2009, Melchior et al., 2010, Schuck et al., 2013, Pampel et al., 2014) and qualitative (Bottorff et al., 2000, Bottorff et al., 2005a, Bottorff et al., 2005b, Irwin et al., 2005, Bottorff et al., 2006a, Bottorff et al., 2006b, Greaves et al., 2007, Nichter et al., 2007, Goldade et al., 2008, Nichter et al., 2008, Oliffe et al., 2008, Bottorff et al., 2009, Johnson et al., 2009, Bottorff et al., 2010a, Bottorff et al., 2010b, Greaves et al., 2010, Haines et al., 2010, Oliffe et al., 2010, Bottorff et al., 2013).

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<sup>9</sup> This title refers back to Johannes Fabian's seminal work *'Time and the other: how anthropology makes its object'* (2002), Columbia University Press

Like smoking behaviour, socio-economic status can of course change over the life course; individuals may experience social mobility as well as mobility into or out of smoking; categories are static but individuals themselves move between categories over time. I will argue in Chapter 4 that to be static or immobile is commonly constructed as a moral failing: fixing 'poor smokers' in time and place denies individual agency and produces stigma. In conclusion to this section, whilst I have challenged the reification of smokers in particular ways, there is no doubt that every marker of disadvantage is independently associated with cigarette smoking (Jarvis and Wardle, 2006). Smoking is associated not only with low income and education, but also with many other factors such as homelessness, lone parenthood, incarceration, having a mental health condition, living in overcrowded housing and not having access to a car. I now turn to the vexed question of how these associations arise, concentrating on poverty and its association with persistent smoking (not giving up) as this is where most of the research on causality has been done

#### THE FAILURE TO QUIT

To explore the explanations put forward for continuing smoking in high-income countries such as the US and the UK I will draw mainly on the four relatively recent reviews of smoking and poverty produced by public health, sociology and human geography (Jarvis and Wardle, 2006, Pampel et al., 2010, Hiscock et al., 2012, Pearce et al., 2012).

There are two aspects to the social gradient in smoking: the association of poverty with taking up smoking, and also with failing to quit. The correlation with smoking initiation has been attributed to a higher likelihood of parental smoking, a lesser ability to resist peer pressure and a greater degree of peer pressure, lower awareness of smoking-related harm, behavioural problems and poor educational performance, and more access to cigarettes and exposure to advertising (Jarvis and Wardle, 2006, Hiscock et al., 2012). However, although poor people are also more likely to become smokers, the strongest association is with persistent smoking i.e. not giving up (Giskes et al., 2006, Jarvis and Wardle, 2006), and for this reason my own research concentrates on the failure to quit, explanations for which I will review here.

## PHYSICAL ADDICTION

It should first be noted that physical addiction to nicotine is a key factor in continued smoking and that higher levels of addiction have generally been found amongst poorer smokers (Jarvis, 2004, Siahpush et al., 2006) although the reasons for this are unclear. Studies of twins<sup>10</sup> have also shown that genetic factors play a role in tobacco smoking and nicotine dependence (Hall et al., 2002, Agrawal and Lynskey, 2008, Berrettini, 2013) but scientists are still a long way from identifying the specific genes involved, and genetic factors on their own are highly unlikely to account for the social gradient in smoking (Shields et al., 2004, Boardman et al., 2010). In any case, high dependence does not necessarily correlate with a lower chance of successfully quitting (Chaiton et al., 2007) and social scientists argue that the idea of addiction is itself culturally constructed (Quintero and Nichter, 1996, Keane, 2002b, Bell and Keane, 2012).

## PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS

The idea that disadvantaged smokers were less likely to want to give up, perhaps because of a lack of understanding of the risk to their health, has been discredited by findings that they are generally just as likely to attempt to quit as other smokers; the difference is that they are less likely to succeed (Kotz and West, 2009, Reid et al., 2010).

The idea of reduced motivation persists, however, in various studies within the psychology paradigm which suggest that disadvantaged smokers have a deficiency which reduces their ability to give up, whether this is expressed as 'low future orientation' i.e. a tendency to short-term thinking (Vangeli and West, 2008, Guthrie et al., 2009, Pisinger et al., 2011), a 'lack of self-efficacy' i.e. limited belief in one's ability to succeed in any given undertaking (Matthew, 2004, Siahpush et al., 2006, Thompson et al., 2009b), or other characteristics such as a lack of cognitive ability or self-control or an attraction to risk (various studies quoted in Pampel et al., 2010 and Hiscock et al. 2012a). As Pampel points out, most of these studies provide only indirect evidence i.e. correlation rather than causation (Pampel et al., 2010). Moreover, since many of these deficiencies are thought to be remedied by

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<sup>10</sup> The twin study method compares the agreement in the behaviour of (1) monozygotic or identical twins who share the same genetic make-up, and (2) dizygotic or fraternal twins who share on average 50% of their genetic make up. Twins are said to be "concordant" if both engage in the same behaviour (for example, both smoke tobacco). If certain assumptions are met, a higher rate of agreement in monozygotic than dizygotic twins can be attributed to genetic factors (Hall et al., 2002 pp. 119-120).

education, the studies add little or nothing to the known inverse relationship between smoking and educational level. In showing that the least powerful tend to lack self-efficacy – or feel powerless - these studies essentially restate the existence of a social gradient in smoking.

#### SMOKING TO COPE WITH ADVERSITY

Pampel et al. describe the ‘smoking to cope with stress’ paradigm (Pampel et al., 2010), according to which smoking helps to regulate mood (Marsh and McKay, 1984, Graham, 1993, Graham, 1994), but point out that the direction of causation is not proved i.e. whether stress precedes or follows smoking. Similarly, Jarvis and Wardle point out that nicotine is a stimulant, that any calming effect is no more than relief from nicotine withdrawal symptoms, and that quitting leads to lower rather than higher levels of perceived stress (Jarvis and Wardle, 2006). These critiques of the self-medication hypothesis certainly cast doubt on the *reality* of smoking as stress relief, but they do not address the *perception* that smoking provides this. Smokers experience a decrease in discomfort and rise in wellbeing along with each cigarette (Greaves, 1996a), so even if this sensation is simply relief from withdrawal symptoms, the association of cigarettes with relief provides the illusion that cigarettes provide genuine relief from other problems too; and it is this illusion which has not been adequately exposed. The 1970s and 1980s rediscovery of poverty in British social science exposed the reality of acute deprivation amongst poor smokers, but in the context of researchers’ shock, anger and perhaps guilt at the realities of poverty, the typical smoker’s statement that smoking helped them cope and that ‘it’s all we got left’ (Peretti-Watel and Constance, 2009) was never seriously challenged and continues to be reproduced (Marsh and McKay, 1984, Graham, 1993, MacAskill et al., 2002). The idea that smoking has some effectiveness as self-medication has thus been accepted on little or no evidence.

As with John Reid’s comment about smoking being ‘one of the few pleasures left’, the acceptance that smoking ‘works’ as self-medication not only encourages smoking and undermines the resolve to quit, but also weakens public support for cessation initiatives by creating a doubt in the public mind as to whether cessation is even desirable for certain people. The belief that poor people ‘need’ to smoke is not only inherently patronising but is also belied by the fact that many never have smoked, many others have quit, as many want

to quit as rich smokers do, and poor smokers do not experience any more relief from stress than richer smokers or non-smokers do (Lang et al., 2007). It is instructive to compare this analysis with the situation of smokers with severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, who despite having some of the worst physical health of any section of the population and being two to three times more likely to smoke, have until recently been ignored in terms of smoking cessation initiatives, sometimes because of worries about exacerbating their symptoms, but often like poor smokers, because of the perception by others that they 'need' the supposed stress relief derived from smoking (Banham and Gilbody, 2010, Stapleton, 2010, Ratschen et al., 2011, Parker et al., 2012, Allan, 2013). There is an important difference between understanding that smoking cessation is more difficult when people suffer stress because of poverty and childcare responsibilities (Graham, 1993, Graham, 1994), sexual violence (Greaves, 1996a), racism (Landrine and Klonoff, 2000, Bennett et al., 2005) or homophobia (Gruskin et al., 2008), and colluding with the idea - very convenient to the tobacco industry - that smoking provides actual, rather than the illusion of stress relief.

I note here that the literature explaining continued tobacco smoking can also usefully be considered in the context of the literature around other addictions, notably psychotropic and prescription drugs. Such a review goes beyond the scope of my thesis; however it should be noted that one variant of the self-medication hypothesis originating in the sociology of health takes a structural, feminist view of addiction as a response to the condition of women in general and to the experience of emotional pain linked to caring work in particular (Cooperstock, 1978, Cooperstock and Lennard, 1979, Ettorre, 1994, Ettorre et al., 1994, Ettorre, 1999, Keane, 2002a, Keane, 2002b, Keane, 2006, Ettorre, 2007).

#### COLLECTIVE SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS

Having reviewed individualised explanations of residual smoking, I now turn to issues of social context and the idea of continued smoking as relational. Although tobacco control is dominated by a psychology paradigm which concentrates on individual behaviour, it allows a limited role to 'social influences' (Poland et al., 2006). In their review of poverty and smoking from this mainstream public health perspective, Hiscock et al. subsume ideas about normative smoking and social networks under a general heading of 'social support' and its

role in facilitating cessation (Hiscock et al., 2012). Similarly, the review by psychologists Jarvis and Wardle suggests that poor smokers may find it harder to quit because of their greater likelihood of living in a generally smokier environment and having a smoking partner (Jarvis and Wardle, 2006).

#### FAMILY INFLUENCES

The literature on parental influences on smoking concentrates on parental smoking status at the time of smoking initiation by the child (Gilman et al., 2009, Melchior et al., 2010, McAloney et al., 2014). Of the few studies of correlation between parental smoking during childhood and later quitting, one study in a general population sample in the Netherlands found none (Monden et al., 2003) whilst another in Washington State (US) found that children were more likely to quit as young adults if their parents had given up smoking whilst they were eight or nine rather than when they were sixteen or seventeen (Bricker et al., 2005). A Swiss study found that continued smoking during pregnancy was related to the smoking status of the mother of the pregnant woman (Lemola and Grob, 2008).

The study by Monden et al. referred to above found a much greater influence for partners than for parents and there has also been a series of Canadian studies in a large urban setting, looking at mothers' ante- and post-natal smoking cessation and the role of fathers, which found that tobacco use was embedded in couple interactions (Bottorff et al., 2005a, Bottorff et al., 2005b, Irwin et al., 2005, Bottorff et al., 2006a, Bottorff et al., 2006b, Greaves et al., 2007, Bottorff et al., 2009, Bottorff et al., 2010a, Bottorff et al., 2010b, Greaves et al., 2010, Haines et al., 2010). With regard to other family influences, there are a few studies of siblings but these generally relate to their contribution to taking up, not giving up smoking (Avenevoli and Merikangas, 2003, Leonardi-Bee et al., 2011, Schuck et al., 2013). I will consider family influences on continued smoking in Sleetburn in Chapter 9.

## ETHNIC MINORITIES AND INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

I referred earlier to US studies of high smoking prevalence groups focusing on ethnic/racial minority status (or self-identification since race is a social construct (Krieger, 2000b) as a meaningful variable. What this has meant is that, rather than focussing on poverty as the cause of continuing smoking, many studies have focussed on the (racialized) culture of these groups. As a result we have seen, for instance, nuanced studies of the historical and social context of smoking amongst First Nation communities (Daley et al., 2006, Shorty, 2008, Varcoe et al., 2010). In the UK, studies of smoking prevalence in particular ethnic/racial minority groups have been few, despite the fact that rates of smoking are extremely high amongst some of these groups; first-generation immigrant men from Bangladesh and Pakistan for instance (White et al., 2006). As well as studies of national minorities whether ethnic or indigenous, other studies (including from anthropology) have focused on links between high rates of continued smoking and national or regional cultures (Ward et al., 2006, Kohrman, 2007, Padmawati et al., 2009, Lora-Wainwright, 2010), but I do not consider these studies here since my primary interest, as previously stated, is in continued smoking in high income countries.

## SMOKING AND CLASS

Rather than focussing on ethnic minority status, UK studies of continued smoking have concentrated on poverty. High prevalence geographical communities with high smoking rates have been identified as 'poor'. However, rather than being considered in terms of their particular histories and cultural practices, these poor, often white working-class communities have generally been conceptualised in terms of a culture of lack (Lawler, 2005a, Edensor and Millington, 2013) i.e. either an absence of culture, or the controversial idea of a 'culture of poverty' whereby they are trapped in self-perpetuating cycles of dysfunctional behaviours and attitudes (Lewis, 1998 [1963], Lewis, 1966 p. xviii, Bourgois, 2001). Lewis's research tracing the cultural transmission of adaptive patterns which tended to perpetuate poverty has been unfairly represented, demonstrating the dangers of drawing attention to the transmission of culture through intergenerational mechanisms without giving close attention to agency. Such an analysis can all too easily be transmogrified into a deterministic ideology of genetic inequalities or neo-darwinist social history (Clark, 2008, Herrnstein and Murray, 2010). My own findings in subsequent chapters on the importance

of parental influences in continued smoking should not be interpreted as suggesting that intergenerational influences fix particular populations in place as 'lesser', but rather as reclaiming a role for historical influences on individual health behaviours.

The culture of poverty idea also has links with the idea of fatalism, which Lewis included as one of its characteristic traits. Pampel et al. (2010) devote a lengthy section of their review to studies suggesting that poor people have little to gain in terms of longevity from healthy behaviour (Lawlor et al., 2003, Peretti-Watel et al., 2009b), or are fatalistic about their ability to extend their lives (Niederdeppe and Levy, 2007). Fatalism as an aspect of working-class culture has featured and been critiqued in more general literature relating to attitudes to health (Pill and Stott, 1982, Pill and Stott, 1985, Calnan and Williams, 1991, Davison et al., 1992). Interestingly, the idea of fatalism i.e. that we have little control over our lives (and in this context, over our health) is comparable to the psychological concepts considered in an earlier section of this chapter, namely lack of self-efficacy or low future-orientation, and could be described as the social sciences version of this behavioural sciences concept. Fatalism about health is seen as an explanation for a failure to change health behaviours, and the idea of fatalism as linked to disadvantage is still very commonly raised in relation to health screening take-up differentials (Chavez et al., 1997, Miles et al., 2011) and is also ascribed to particular populations – most commonly in the UK to working-class populations (Pill and Stott, 1987) and in the US to residents of Appalachia<sup>11</sup> (Shell and Tudiver, 2004, Vanderpool and Huang, 2010, Royse and Dignan, 2011) or African Americans (Powe, 1996, Powe, 1995). Davison et al. point out that the term fatalism itself strongly suggests ignorance, irrationality, anti-science and even primitivism and suggest it is used in the context of an ideological perspective which assumes that we have individual control over our health (see the 'new public health' referred to earlier) and that any contradictory belief is atavistic and must be corrected through education (Davison et al., 1992). They argue that what has been labelled 'fatalism' is usually part of a complex belief system which recognises various explanations for disease, some but not all of which are in the individual's control. Similarly, more recent critiques seek to locate seemingly fatalistic statements in terms of

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<sup>11</sup> Appalachia also has the dubious distinction of being the place in relation to which the phrase 'culture of poverty' was first used, in a 1962 publication by Michael Harrington – see BOURGOIS, P. 2001. Culture of Poverty. In: SMELSER, N. J. B., P.B. (ed.) *International Encyclopaedia of Social & Behavioral Sciences*. Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd.

their function within a wider context (Keeley et al., 2009, Drew and Schoenberg, 2011). Other critiques suggest that what is described as ‘fatalism’ is often realism and that health promotion initiatives designed to reduce smoking in poor populations may continue to fail unless the general health and life chances of such individuals are first improved (Lawlor et al., 2003)<sup>12</sup>.

Without an explicit commitment to tackling the wider forces which create poverty (and indeed addiction – such as the tobacco industry), the acceptance of smoking as a rational response to a life of poverty, or justified fatalism, can easily seem reductive and patronising, if not tantamount to accepting health inequalities as the natural order of things. This was why former UK Health Secretary John Reid was castigated in 2004 for saying that smoking was one of the few pleasures left for the poor ‘*on sink estates and in working men's clubs*’<sup>13</sup>.

#### WISDOM SITS IN PLACES<sup>14</sup>

Social scientists have called for a move away from the behavioural sciences’ lifestyle model of individual smoking and towards an understanding of smoking as a collective social behaviour (Poland et al., 2006). Anthropologists have made a case for their specialist contribution in this area (Nichter, 2003, Nichter et al., 2004b, Nichter et al., 2009, Goldade et al., 2012) and have linked culture to smoking in low- or middle-income countries (Padmawati et al., 2009, Nichter et al., 2009, Nichter et al., 2004a) but have made few studies of poor smokers in high-income countries (Kohrman and Benson, 2011). Exceptions from the US include studies of low-income women and smoking (Nichter et al., 2007, Goldade et al., 2008, Nichter et al., 2008) and of the impact of Californian smoke-free legislation on bar workers in San Francisco (Moore et al., 2006, Satterlund et al., 2009a, Moore et al., 2009a, Moore et al., 2009b, Satterlund et al., 2009b, Satterlund et al., 2012). In the UK, relevant work includes studies of smoking in family spaces in Liverpool and Scotland (Robinson and Kirkcaldy, 2007a, Robinson and Kirkcaldy, 2007b, Holdsworth and Robinson, 2008, Robinson, 2008, Robinson and Kirkcaldy, 2009, Robinson and Amos, 2010, Robinson et al., 2010, Robinson et al., 2011, Robinson and Holdsworth, 2013) and a study of young

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<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, this parallels Helen Lewis’s heavily cited argument that what is described as ‘fatalism’ in Appalachia is actually a defensive reaction to the encroachments of the coal industry – see LEWIS, H. 1970. Fatalism or the Coal Industry? *Mountain Life and Work*, 46, 4-15.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/jun/09/smoking.politics> accessed on 5th March 2014

<sup>14</sup> BASSO, K. H. 1996. *Wisdom sits in places: Landscape and language among the Western Apache*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press.

smokers in a disadvantaged neighbourhood in North East England (Lewis and Russell, 2013). The strength of these anthropological studies is that they pay attention to the environment and circumstances in which smoking occurs and seek a nuanced understanding of the reasons why smoking might persist in those specific circumstances. This ethnographic approach does not preclude critical engagement with the assumptions of mainstream tobacco control relating to contested concepts such as addiction (Quintero and Nichter, 1996), or with the assimilation by epidemiologists of 'culture' as either a fixed category (Nichter, 2003) or a risk factor i.e. a form of irrational behaviour by the cultural 'other' (DiGiacomo, 1999, Bell et al., 2010a, Bell et al., 2010b, Bell, 2011, Dennis, 2011). Notwithstanding these useful examples, it is surprising that the discipline has not produced more studies in this area, and it is here that my thesis makes a distinctive contribution.

With only a small number of anthropology studies of residual smoking paying close attention to place, I now consider how other disciplines have addressed this issue. A number of public health studies have looked at the impact on smoking of living in specific deprived areas (Wiltshire et al., 2001, Bancroft et al., 2003, Wiltshire et al., 2003). Increasing constraints on where people can smoke have led to a new interest in smoking behaviour from geographers, who have also pointed out that as places in the UK are increasingly segregated by income (Fahmy et al., 2011, Jones, 2011), this also translates into segregation of smokers and non-smokers (Thompson et al., 2007, Thompson et al., 2009a, Moon et al., 2010). Other studies have looked at neighbourhood and area effects on smoking (Ross, 2000, Brown et al., 2006, Miles, 2006), including the likelihood that cigarettes are easier to obtain in poorer neighbourhoods (Gemson et al., 1998) which are also themselves targeted by tobacco companies (Barbeau et al., 2004). In the context of the social gradient in smoking, since individual poverty is not geographically even but concentrated in 'pockets' of deprivation, there is an ongoing debate amongst geographers around the extent to which the effects of *individual* deprivation are exacerbated by the *area effects* of living in a deprived area (Duncan et al., 1999, Stead et al., 2001, Macintyre et al., 2002, Cummins et al., 2007). Geographers have also pointed to the confounding effects of migration – or movement in space over time – when seeking to understand such area effects (Pearce and Dorling, 2010, Pearce et al., 2012). I will argue in Chapters 4 and 8 that ideas around

mobility and stasis are key to stigmatising discourses fixing particular populations in time and place.

#### THE ROLE OF ETHNOGRAPHY

There has been some interest within the tobacco control, public health mainstream in the contribution which qualitative research can make to the study of smoking, (Chapman, 1993, Chamberlain, 1997a, Nichter et al., 2004b, Mathie and Camozzi, 2005). Some attempts have been made to synthesise qualitative research on smoking (Carter et al., 2001), though generally limited either to a particular discipline such as anthropology (Kohrman and Benson, 2011) or nursing (Schultz et al., 2009), or to a particular subfield, including young people (Walsh and Tzelepis, 2007), the stigmatisation of mothers who smoke (Burgess et al., 2009), the uptake of interventions for smoking cessation amongst pregnant women (Baxter et al., 2010), psychological and social factors involved in women's attempts to quit smoking during pregnancy (Ingall and Cropley, 2010) or how women's circumstances and experiences influence their smoking behaviour in pregnancy (Flemming and Graham, 2012).

Whilst accepting the contribution to the study of residual smoking made by qualitative research more generally, I argue that ethnography, with its consideration of cultural practices in specific places over a relatively long time period, as well as its attempt to 'understand another life world using the self – as much of it as possible – as the instrument of knowing' (Ortner, 2006 p. 42) has more to offer than the typical qualitative methodology involving interviews or focus groups. In a review of 537 qualitative studies of adult smoking published between 1990 and 2010, I found a disappointing shortage of insights into the experience of smoking. Study after study replicated the same material relating to stated reasons for smoking and barriers to quit (Thirlway, 2010). It has been argued that issues of social context can be investigated empirically through in depth interviews with smokers (Poland et al., 2006), but I contend that cultural practices around smoking can best be understood through observation and 'living alongside' rather than by seeking verbal explanations for practices which may have complex roots. I will suggest that my research into smoking and non-smoking practices in a particular place and time is unique in using ethnographic methods to look beyond the surface of formal interviews with individuals reified as smokers. Poland et al also suggest that a more reflexive tobacco control practice

should include an openness to being transformed by the experience of engaging with smokers, and whilst I agree with this observation, I believe that this transformation is an integral part of ethnographic practice, as I explain in Chapter 3.

#### MINING VILLAGES AS MATTER OUT OF PLACE

In the first section of this literature review I explored the academic literature about continued smoking in high-income countries and how this has been constructed as irrational behaviour. I reviewed explanations for the correlation of continued smoking with poverty and argued that in high-income countries we have not paid enough attention to specific cultures of place but instead have subsumed place culture into a broad category of poverty. I then considered studies of smoking and place as well as ethnography's particular contribution. As a preliminary to a consideration of one village in particular, I now explore the idea of the village in general and the mining village in particular.

#### THE CLASSIC ENGLISH VILLAGE

There is a certain idea of the English village which is reproduced in tourist literature and which often features in conservative accounts as a key element of 'Englishness' (Scruton, 2001). It involves what John Major referred to as 'long shadows on cricket grounds, warm beer' and 'old maids bicycling to holy communion through the morning mist'.<sup>15</sup> This vision of an ideal English countryside has been critiqued as being region-specific, 'promoting the Cotswolds as Britain's imaginary heart' (Samuel, 1998 p. 161). It has been accused of masking power differentials (Frankenberg, 1957, Williams, 1975, Newby, 1979, Newby, 1980, Newby, 1987, Carey, 2012), stifling innovation (Wiener, 2004 [1981], Wright, 2009 [1985]) and privileging the rural south over the industrial or post-industrial north (Horne, 1969, Samuel, 1998, Russell, 2004). Raymond Williams in particular debunks the English pastoral, referring for instance to the irony of Sidney's 'Arcadia' written in a park apparently created by enclosing a whole village and evicting the tenants (Williams, 1975 p. 33). Clifford notes how Williams exposes the idea of the vanishing rural idyll as a long-standing trope so

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<sup>15</sup>Prime Minister John Major in a speech to the Conservative Group for Europe, 22 April 1993

that for every writer looking back to a happier place, Williams identifies another writer of that earlier period who makes the same complaint (Clifford, 1986 p. 113).

Whilst the village as a bounded and homogeneous community has long been a dominant symbol in anthropology (Rapport, 2000), the villages of southern England have not figured prominently; Elmdon, where Audrey Richards had a cottage and sent numerous students from Cambridge<sup>16</sup> to practice their ethnographic skills is the only exception that is at all well-known (Strathern et al., 1981 p. xii). Alternative locations in the British Isles have included villages in Scotland (Ennew, 1980, Knipe, 1984, Cohen, 1987, Parman, 1990, Macdonald, 1997, Nadel-Klein, 2003), Wales and the Welsh borders (Rees, 1950, Frankenberg, 1957, Emmett, 1964, Davies and Jones, 2003) or Ireland (Arensberg, 1937, Arensberg and Kimball, 1940, Harris, 1972, Fox, 1978, Peace, 2001, Scheper-Hughes, 2001 [1977]) as well as Cumbria (Rapport, 1993). Whilst these villages may not qualify as the 'remote places' described by Ardener (Ardener, 1987), most are located on the Celtic periphery, which Savage referred to as 'the province of anthropologists' (Savage, 2010a p. 138). I suggest that anthropologists tend to view peripheral places as having more identity, being 'thicker' than hegemonic places which are neutral and tidy (Stewart, 1996 pp. 5, 16 and 42, Cameron, 2002 p. 1); the ultimate thin places being the 'non-places' of airports and hotels (Augé, 1992). In thick places the double exposure of past times remains : the emotional landscape, thick with memories and ghosts, overlays the visible space (Carsten, 2007 p. 11, Degnen, 2013). This is a point I will come back to in Chapter 5.

#### THE VILLAGE AS OTHER

Anthropologists may have avoided the classic southern English village because of its association with mainstream culture and therefore its lack, certainly for UK-based anthropologists, of the 'otherness' which arguably defines the anthropological project. As Appadurai put it, 'Though all anthropologists traffic in 'otherness', we may note that it has always been true that some others are more 'other' than others' (Appadurai, 1986 p. 357). The villages of the Celtic fringe could be seen as an obvious 'other' in the context of the anthropology of Britain; the academic self tends to be associated with the metropolitan centre, whatever the regional affiliations of the individual (Löfgren, 1987 p. 91).

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<sup>16</sup> Only fourteen miles away

Of course, 'othering' people or cultures also refers to the morally problematic practice of stressing and critiquing the ways in which they differ from one's own culture or self in order to distinguish or elevate oneself in comparison to them, and anthropological practice has been criticised for taking the centrality and superiority of the anthropologist's own culture as a given (Spivak, 1988, Said, 1994 (1979), Fabian, 2002, Baumann and Gingrich, 2004). In this sense, othering has a similar meaning to stigmatising (Goffman, 1963). As Edmund Leach put it:

We started by emphasizing how different are 'the others' – and made them not only different but remote and inferior. Sentimentally we then took the opposite track and argued that all human beings are alike... but that didn't work either, 'the others' remained obstinately other (Clifford and Marcus, 1986 p. 142).

#### THE VILLAGE IN AND OUT OF TIME

Peripheral places have been perceived to exist on a different time-scale from the centre (Ardener, 1985, Fabian, 2002), representing 'an entity which is prior to the modern conurbation' (Rapport, 1993 p. 38). In Carrier's edited collection which extends Said's idea of orientalism to coin a new 'occidentalism', Nadel-Klein uses this concept to characterise the idea of the village as the embodiment of the West's evolutionary roots, or 'what we used to be' (Said, 1994 (1979), Nadel-Klein, 1995). Villages and the rural are seen as by definition old fashioned, atavistic and fixed in place. There is a sense in which insularity is almost part of the definition of a village; synonyms include parochial and provincial; it is difficult to think of a term for attachment to (small) place which does not convey a sense of backwardness. Nadel-Klein uses the term 'localist' and highlights how localism has become synonymous with marginality (Nadel-Klein, 1991).

A related archetype is that of the village as an occupational community of agricultural workers: Frankenberg called the village he studied Pentrediwaith, meaning 'the village without work' in Welsh, referring to villagers increasingly commuting out of the village for work. Sociologist Bill Williams also looked for a rural ideal-type:

You wanted somewhere that was really isolated, something that was not contaminated by urban life. I wanted the true picture of rural life, so there I was, doing Gosforth, and there were people doing the same in remote Welsh villages, and Jimmy Littlejohn was doing the same in Scotland (Thompson and Williams, 2008 p. 98).

This idea of 'contamination' suggests that 'true' rural life is unchanging i.e. fixed in time and place; the historical reality, according to rural sociologist Newby, is that the village in Britain was never a self-contained community (Newby, 1979). Like Raymond Williams, he notes (p. 155) the thriving genre of 'rural retrospective regret' and (p. 164) the idea of incomers versus 'original' occupational community appearing as early as George Bourne's 1912 'Change in the village' (Bourne, 1912). In fact, Newby points out, the conventional nucleated village is a fairly recent product of the enclosure movement and the agricultural revolution of the eighteenth century (Newby, 1979 p. 156) .

Villages are also always on the point of vanishing. As I mentioned in the previous section, Raymond Williams explored how the lament for a vanishing rural way of life could be traced back to medieval English literature and beyond that to classical, if not prelapsarian times (Williams, 1975). Strathern suggests an explanation for this trope of the vanishing village grounded in the specificity of the way individual mobility in and out of villages takes place:

On the one hand English villages are imagined as centers that remain fixed. They form a focus for long-term attachment, containing folk intermeshed in an intricate web of connections, each place a discrete unit looking outwards. On the other hand, they appear to be vanishing institutions. They vanish either because they are left behind, with people moving out to worlds that have nothing to do with the village, or because they are submerged, invaded by people moving in from elsewhere who turn it into a different kind of place, creating a radical fragmentation between a communal then and an anonymous now (Strathern, 2005 [1991] p. 23).

The disappearing ethnographic object is not confined to the English village; Clifford refers to the vanishing primitive and the end of traditional society as a recurring theme in ethnographic writing (Clifford, 1986 p. 112). Clifford joins Raymond Williams in drawing attention to the opposition of city and country, civilized and primitive, and of nostalgia for the pastoral whereby 'the self, cut loose from viable collective ties... having internalized loss and embarked on a search for authenticity [looks for]... wholeness which by definition becomes a thing of the past (rural, primitive, child-like)' (Clifford, 1986 p. 114). The trope of the vanishing village also links in with other disappearances, not least the constantly threatened disappearance of community – in fact Rapport suggests that social anthropologists have found the equivalent of the rural idyll in the idea of community as being 'something more or less closed, holistic, functionally integrated, and consensual... a traditional order and localness threatened by the homogenising forces of urban change'

(Rapport, 1993 p. 37). Various authors have shown how particular geographical areas have become associated over time with the study of particular anthropological issues (Fardon, 1990, Appadurai, 1986). Edwards suggests that in recent ethnographies of Britain, issues of identity, belonging and local ideas of boundaries have emerged as theoretically significant (Edwards, 2000 p. 26); ideas about community, natives and strangers also have a long pedigree (Frankenberg, 1957, Frankenberg, 1966, Cohen, 1982, Cohen, 1986, Phillips, 1986, Cohen, 1987, Rapport and Amit, 2002, Edwards et al., 2005). To the trope of vanishing community, we might add the related idea of vanishing kinship; for just as Strathern juxtaposes the fixed with the vanishing village, so she replicates this in kinship terms:

Villagers perceive themselves both as the pivot of personal genealogies and as divided into discrete families which can break up and from which they can break away.

There are connections, then, between certain ideas an English person entertains about individuals who are placed or travel between places, and about places which contain individuals who stay or move, and about the nature of kin ties that are at once mutable and immutable. A person can be a totality or a fragment by either remaining fixed or by being mobile (Strathern, 2005 [1991] p. 23).

In terms of mobility and stasis, the village is idealised as containing residents attached to the place by ties of kin, whereas the city is seen as having a more fluid and mobile population (Edwards, 2000 p. 77). Continued connection to a network of close kin is characterised as a sign of backwardness invoked in UK political rhetoric primarily in relation to 'poor whites' in concepts such as 'cycles of deprivation' which characterise kin ties as almost atavistic - ties that bind us unhealthily to the past (Haylett, 2001 p. 363, Lawler, 2008 p. 34). Edwards identifies a similar anthropological prejudice that sees kinship as a suitable subject of study in primitive societies, but less so in the industrialised West and least of all in the white middle class from which most professionals (including academics) are drawn, and where a presumed demise of kinship is seen as most advanced (Edwards, 2000 p. 25).

## THE LIMINAL MINING VILLAGE

Herzfeld has described how particular populations have been viewed by the authorities as 'matter out of place' i.e. liminal (Van Gennep, 1960), neither one thing nor the other and therefore polluting and dangerous (Douglas, 2003 (1966), Herzfeld, 2006 p. 132). Within her characterisation of villages as the 'other', Nadel Klein identified fishing but also mining villages as doubly other, and I suggest this is because they occupy a liminal zone in the first case between earth and sea, and in the second between over- and underground. In this sense, mining has a liminal status almost by definition and miners emerging from the depths are liminality personified. This is apparent in Priestley's account of the Shotton slag heap – 'the hill that had come out of the deep earth' (Priestley, 1997 [1934] p. 283) towering to the sky, blotting out all the landscape at the back of the village and smouldering day and night so that the whole village is smothered in 'ashes and sulphuric fumes' (Priestley, 1997 [1934] p. 283). In a review of anthropological perspectives on mining, Godoy included further studies of the symbolism of the mine (Eliade, 1978, Godoy, 1985, Taussig, 1980, Nash, 1993); later studies have also included environmental concerns, often related to the capacity of mining operations to collapse boundaries between the inner and the outer - polluting water courses with ore residues for instance (Ballard and Banks, 2003, Bridge, 2004).

As well as mining's liminal status, mining villages in the UK have been seen as liminal in terms of English ideas of rural versus industrial. The cramped terraced housing which made up mining villages, heavily polluted with colliery dust, smoke and ash as well as household coal burning, was associated more with industrial townscapes than with idealised notions of the countryside. Priestley described 'villages that are monuments of mean ugliness... the beastliest towns and villages in the country... hardly more than slums that had been scattered along the road' (Priestley, 1997 [1934] p. 271, 272 and 281); Taylor called them a 'fungoid growth' (Taylor, 1966 p. 22). Again, we have the mining village as a liminal space, containing on the one hand proletarians engaged in the most archetypal of industrial work,

on the other, rural denizens of small villages in historically remote or peripheral areas such as County Durham, Northumberland and South Wales<sup>17</sup>.

I now return to the Strangleman et al article to which I referred in Chapter 1 and which will structure the first half of my thesis. Although they do not use the term 'liminal', the authors make a similar point to mine about the ambivalent status of miners in the national imaginary (Strangleman et al., 1999). They describe how British miners have been viewed dualistically in academic literature, sometimes as archetypal, or 'ideal-type' proletarians in the vanguard of the labour movement, linked to strong communities (Benney, 1946, Dennis et al., 1956, Bulmer, 1975, Williamson, 1982, Samuel et al., 1986, Gilbert, 1992, Beynon and Austrin, 1994) and sometimes as narrow and parochial (Taylor, 1966, Taylor, 1969, Hudson, 1994). They note how this representation and re-interpretation continued after large-scale pit closures (Waddington et al., 1991, Warwick, 1992, Critcher et al., 2001, Strangleman, 2001, Barron, 2010) and found the same dualism in their own study. The council and development agency staff and elected representatives they spoke to referred to former miners as skilled, hard-working, energetic and friendly, but also castigated their 'parochial' communities, their reluctance to leave the area and their 'lack of aspiration and therefore expectation' (Strangleman et al., 1999 para. 6.7).

#### COLLECTIVE VALUES IN THE WORKING-CLASS VILLAGE

As we saw in the previous section, the inhabitants of mining villages have sometimes been characterised as industrial proletariat and sometimes as peasantry - but in both interpretations it is a working-class community which is invoked. The question as to whether such communities are homogeneous, and the related question as to whether their values are collective rather than individualistic has been the subject of much academic discussion and I will briefly review the relevant literature here. The dualistic view of mining villages identified by Strangleman certainly assumed the presence of a collectivist rather than individualistic mindset, either seen positively as providing strength and cohesion or more negatively as holding people back. However, although some studies have seen mining villages, with their supposed isolation and occupational homogeneity as the ultimate collectivist communities (Bulmer, 1975, Church et al., 1986 p. 611), other accounts have

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<sup>17</sup> The miners of Yorkshire and Derbyshire were more likely to live in larger towns, but the stereotype of the mining village persists.

suggested a more individualistic interpretation (Harrison, 1979, Savage, 2000, Barron, 2010). Some sociological and historical studies have argued that other categories of identity co-existed with the occupational identity of mining villages (Harrison, 1979, Warwick, 1992, Barron, 2010), that the idea of a community of solidarity (Hoggart, 1957, Williams, 1958) was an expression of nostalgia rather than demonstrable reality (Savage, 2000 p. 32), or indeed that the very term 'community' has become worthless (Macfarlane, 1977, Bourke, 1993).

Both the mining village and its academic and literary representations have been critiqued by feminist scholars, though not always by way of denying collective values or the idea of community. Hall showed that female identities in a pre-war mining community were more diverse than commonly supposed, with some women able to choose a public life of political action rather than being confined to the home (Hall, 2001). Campbell critiqued Orwell's classic account (Orwell, 1937) as glorifying the 'essential masculinity' of mining work, and characterised the mining community as a patriarchal society where the husband ruled the home and the wife was condemned to domestic drudgery (Campbell, 1984 p. 97-115). Following the miners' strike of 1984/5, a number of studies stressed the involvement of miners' wives and explored the changes to traditional gender roles which resulted from this (Measham, 1994, Spence and Stephenson, 2007). However, unlike Campbell's account, these studies were explicitly part of a literature which re-emphasised the mining village as a location of community solidarity and collective values; although women discovered new roles, these were framed in terms of supporting the mining community.

In the context of working-class culture more generally, Steedman (Steedman, 1987) made an impassioned case for the reclaiming of working-class women's individual lives from the stereotype of the mother as pivot of the home (Hoggart, 1957). Her account of a family fractured by exile and exclusion did not so much destroy the idea of working-class community, however, as allow the alternative story of individuals rejecting or being rejected by that community to be heard. More recently, the women of Skeggs's long-term fieldwork in the North West of England (Skeggs, 1997) were full of individuality and far from being 'figures in a landscape' (Hoggart, 1957 p. 27) but Skeggs stressed that their values were collective nevertheless; they experienced their investment in caring for others as key to

responsibility and respectability; 'their selves were full of duty and obligation' (Skeggs, 1997 pp. 163-164).

A recent study of a former steel town in Wales (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012) soon after the closure of the local steelworks is much more directly comparable with the Durham coalfields. Here the authors not only found collective values and practices but concluded that these played a key role in enabling the community to cope with chronic economic instability and insecurity. Women were fully implicated in these values and practices, and indeed were holding things together, combining domestic with paid work as well as providing emotional support for men traumatised by redundancy. This positive, albeit somewhat functionalist view of collective values is shared by Billings and Blee, who argued that collective values in coalmining Appalachia - often critiqued in the US literature as 'familism' and 'traditionalism' - had emerged for particular historical and economic reasons and continued to flourish in the shape of place-based community activism (Billings and Blee, 2000).

#### CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have explored the academic literature about continued smoking in high-income countries and argued that we have not paid enough attention to cultures of place rooted in local histories but instead have subsumed culture into a broad category of poverty. I then reviewed the literature around mining villages, arguing that they occupy a liminal position between the rural and the industrial but that in either case they are constituted as working-class communities. In Chapter 3 I will set out how I conducted my research before starting my ethnography of Sleetburn in Chapter 4.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I set out my journey through Sleetburn beginning with how I decided to study the village and how I eventually reached a partial understanding, albeit situated in terms of my own age, class and gender of a place I had wrongly thought of as 'bounded'. I then set out how the history of the village emerged as important, including how history was understood in the village and how people told life stories. Finally I describe my realisation that the real data in the study were the relationships forged in the village rather than individual interviews and I address the issues around representing these relationships and consider how I came to share some of the village's emotional landscapes.

#### A RESTRICTED VIEW

##### ARRIVAL STORY

It has been argued that arrival stories give the anthropologist authority: 'they were there' (Edwards, 2000 p. 16). In my case, I was nearly not there at all, as I explain in this section. I wanted to look at the experience of smoking in a relatively poor community with high smoking prevalence in County Durham; the process of choosing a field site in the spring of 2011 involved selecting a number of possible villages located within easy reach of home, since with children at school and a partner in work there was no possibility of moving elsewhere. In defiance of anthropological critiques of the bounded fieldsite (Marcus, 1995), I chose Sleetburn because it seemed geographically distinct, separated from nearby communities by clear boundaries of fields and woods – unlike similar villages which had apparently grown together or into Durham City.

This self-imposed restriction to an 'arbitrary location' (Candea, 2007) seemed essential in order to explore place identity in relation to the experience of smoking. From a practical point of view, Sleetburn also had a number of institutions where I could meet people namely a working men's club, a village hall, church, chapel, shops and primary school, whereas many nearby villages have lost some or all of these. In addition, without being aware of any specific issues, I knew from working for funding agencies in the area in the 1990s and 2000s that the village at that time had a reputation as 'rough' which I hoped would give me the opportunity to test how smoking might be linked to living in difficult circumstances and stigmatised places (Thompson et al., 2007). Finally, a member of my

university department lived in Sleetburn and he told me over a departmental cup of coffee that the Working Men's Club there was a friendly place. I drove through the village a couple of times and did some virtual exploring via Google Streetview, but it wasn't until September 2011 that I decided to take the plunge and call into the Working Men's Club one evening to ask the Committee whether I could use the Club as a base for my research.

I set off in the car around six o'clock on an unseasonably warm Friday evening, taking my small dog Ruby along for moral support and to break the ice. Because of the weather, I happened to be wearing a short summer dress, although I had not been particularly aware of this during my day on campus and earlier meetings with supervisors. I soon turned off the main road out of Durham onto the quiet B road to Sleetburn. I passed a farm flanked by fields of sheep and rusting agricultural machinery. I arrived at the entrance to the village; a wide left turning leading up into a council estate then a row of colliery houses; a woman was waiting at the bus stop opposite the village hall. At the junction I turned left past horses in a field and saw the Club, a low, flat-roofed seventies building flanked by bungalows of the same vintage. I turned into the car park feeling extremely self-conscious; the Club seemed very busy, with a dozen or so people – mainly men - drinking and smoking outside the front door, which was propped open with a chair.

I picked Ruby up and walked inside – I could see one room with food laid out on a table so I tried the other room, which was full of men in white shirts and black ties sitting in groups, all of whom turned round to look at me. I walked uncertainly towards the barmaid, who told me I couldn't bring the dog in so I beat a hasty retreat. Various people going in and out stopped to pet Ruby, a tall young man in a high-viz vest told me about his own two terriers but Ruby shrank away uncharacteristically and I felt that even my dog was showing me up. Outside various men offered to look after Ruby while I went back in to make my enquiries without her. I was still flustered and tied her to the chair which was propping the door open. I went in again and asked the barmaid whether the Committee members were there, she said no but they would be along at seven 'for the Tote'. I didn't really know what she meant but I thanked her and went back outside.

The men outside the door were chatty and asked what I was after so I explained about doing some research at the Club. A man who had clearly had a few drinks said leeringly: *'And what does your lad think about that?'* I was nonplussed, unsure whether he meant a son, boyfriend or what. I hesitated and he said *'You know, your young man?'* I said *'I don't have one'*, he said *'Oh, are you a lesbian then?'* Again I froze - he was staring at my legs and he started to say *'I could change your mind...'* I stammered something about having to get home, extricated the dog, got back in the car and drove away.

I did not return that evening to find the committee, nor did I go back to Sleetburn for another four months. I already felt acutely embarrassed about being a nosy middle-class person going into a working-class environment, and being immediately challenged made me unwilling to return. I realised later that I had been extremely unlucky, first in turning up in the middle of a wake (hence the food and the black ties which had confused me – was this what people wore in clubs, I wondered?!) then in getting tangled up with Russell (47) as my first acquaintance in the village. I later got to know him, but even when sober he could be difficult to deal with.

In fact my first visit to the village, uncomfortable as it was, prefigured many of the themes which would become important in my thesis. There was smoking of course but also family and memory represented by the wake itself. There was also an early clue to gendered roles in Russell's query as to what my 'young man' would have to say about my doing research in the Club. My own middle-class embarrassment, together with Russell's enjoyment of it contrasting with other people's efforts to help gave some idea of classed values at work. Even the shortness of my dress, which had gone unremarked during the earlier part of my day on campus, now communicated different signals in the Sleetburn context as not being a respectable length for the time of day, my age or the event at hand (a wake). Finally, the uncomfortable conversation I have described gave me an early warning that I would have to pick the times and places of my research carefully to avoid heavy drinking occasions. This series of miscommunications certainly shattered any illusion I had that I was doing anthropology 'at home' (see next section).

A few months after this initial visit, I heard that the local Labour Party was holding a coffee morning at Sleeburn Village Hall as part of a series of such events held in different venues around Durham. This seemed the ideal opportunity to meet people from the village in an informal atmosphere. Sure enough, many of the most active and influential people in the village were there and all went smoothly: not only was I able to set up my first interviews, but I was invited to visit the Working Men's Club to tell the Committee about my project, at which time they readily agreed that I could attend the Club.

#### THE VILLAGE UNBOUND(ED)

I initially thought of Sleeburn as a bounded site and at first I discounted conversations with people who lived in neighbouring villages as irrelevant or at least tangential to my study. Gradually however, I realised that in Doreen Massey's words, Sleeburn did not have a single identity but multiple ones; it was a process, not a place frozen in time; an open and porous network of social relations, with no timeless truth or authentic occupants (Massey, 1994 pp. 5 and 121). This meant facing up to Geertz's idea that the anthropologist doesn't study a village so much as *in* a village (Geertz, 1973a p. 22). Once I realised this, my fieldwork ceased to be limited to Sleeburn: I talked to people who used to live there and had moved away or who used to work there and then retired. I corresponded with two or three ex- or current village residents through websites where people posted memories of the local area. I spoke to people who visited the village but lived elsewhere.

My experience also challenged the idea of alterity in space i.e. how the ethnographic object is constructed as existing in a separate space to the ethnographer, as Sleeburn 'leaked' not just into neighbouring villages, but the three miles down the road into my own life outside research. The village appeared not just in the shape of Sleeburn friends and acquaintances I bumped into at the dentist's or in the supermarket, but also those living on my street, driving the bus I caught, sharing photos on Facebook, going to school with my children or conveyancing my house. Because I lived so close to my field site and had done so for many years, the field came to me – a young woman from the village moved into a house opposite mine, my solicitor turned out to be the sister of someone I knew in Sleeburn, and when I met the Chair of the Working Men's Club, I realised I had known him for five or six years as the caretaker at my children's school. This could be an unnerving process: a man in the Club read a conference poster I did about the village on the internet; at another conference, the

member of my university anthropology department who lived in the village came to hear my presentation; in both cases I felt wrong-footed. Apprehending Sleetburn as an unbounded site also meant drawing on its links to areas and processes around and beyond it, including the historical operation of local and global coal markets; thus my study was not 'about Sleetburn' but centred on Sleetburn and radiating out to other places.

I soon fell into a pattern of visiting the Club during the day time (most often Friday afternoons) as well as old-time and sequence dance sessions on Thursday and Sunday nights. I then found out that a local charity provided day care sessions for elderly people on Wednesday and Friday mornings in the village hall, and they agreed that I could go. I attended church and chapel services intermittently as well as carrying out interviews usually in people's homes but also in the Club and the village hall, and often through 'interrupted conversations' rather than full life stories. I started to visit the hairdressing salon, both to have my own hair and my children's hair cut and to catch up on village gossip. I hung around the village shop and talked to the owner and any customers who would talk to me. I volunteered at the after-school 'Messy Church' craft sessions at the school once a month and initiated a local history project in the school. I attended one-off events such as the school summer fair, church and chapel fairs, a school trip to a local museum, performances by the village Jazz Band, fundraisers at the Club, the annual Remembrance Day service at the village hall and sadly, the funerals of several people I knew in the village. Altogether I made upwards of 150 visits, all generating copious notes; most of these took place during 2012, when I visited the village two to three times a week, usually staying between three and five hours. I normally used my bicycle for daytime visits; this took about twenty minutes there and ten minutes back, as the journey was largely uphill from Durham. For evening visits I drove, as bicycles were unusual and I was concerned that the young men racing their cars along the quiet roads at night would not see me in time to avoid a collision.

I typically started initial conversations with a general question such as '*so have you always lived round here*' or '*does your family go back a long way in Sleetburn*', inviting in many cases an arrival story going back to parents or grandparents, taking in their occupations before going onto the participant's early years, school, employment, marriage and family. I was also intent on the 'smoking story' so I tended to prompt for that although it often

seemed so trivial compared to their life story that I either felt embarrassed to raise it or forgot about it entirely – certainly at a first meeting.

An example of a good fieldwork day generating eleven close-typed pages of notes was Friday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2012, at which point I had been visiting the village intensively for about six months. I had been in the Club the night before and had made an appointment to visit a woman in her late sixties that morning. At 11am I cycled the three miles from my home to her daughter's house, where she was minding her grandchildren for the school holidays. We had a long conversation and I met the children and the pets. At half past twelve I walked up to the hairdressing salon and popped in to say hello to the owner, as I usually did when I was in the village. I also knew one of the two women having their hair done and we had a brief chat. I then crossed the car park and went into the shop; a woman I knew was in conversation with the shop assistant and another customer, so I joined in the conversation then left with the woman I knew. As we walked, I asked if I could pop round to talk to her some time but she said she had been poorly so we agreed to leave it for the moment. I walked over to the Club and into the bar, where the usual two or three men were in. I asked the steward if I could eat my packed lunch there, which I did whilst writing up my morning conversations. Retired miner Kevin (59) was in his usual seat, he called me over to show me a home-made photo album which he had borrowed from a friend and which documented a nearby mine closure in the 1980s. He agreed I could take it home for a longer look. We got into a discussion about the meaning of the canch or caunch<sup>18</sup>, which had previously been the name of a pub in the area, and he folded up some betting slips to make a three-dimensional model for me.

Russell came in at 2pm and I managed to get him to tell me about his life for twenty minutes, until he became restless so I called it a day and said I hoped we would talk again; he agreed but said that for the next chapter I would have to tell them about *my* life; I suggested I might make that part of the introduction to my book. A few more men had come in by this time; I said to Darren (39) that I would have to ask him some more about his life but he just laughed without giving me an answer. When Lee (40) came to the bar where I was standing alongside Kevin in his corner seat, I said people had told me I should ask him about the village, he laughed and said '*oh no not me*'. I tried again, telling him that he had a

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<sup>18</sup> Part of the roof of an underground roadway

good reputation, people said 'he's a nice lad, talk to him' (which was true), but he laughed and took his drink back to his table without answering. At 3.40pm Peter (85) came in, we teased him for being ten minutes later than usual, he said he'd been for a haircut, I said it looked nice. He said something about being erudite, I said that's a good word, he said '*but some people here are asinine*', I laughed and said I would call on him one day, he said he would show me lots of photos, I thanked him. I left the village at 3.45pm as I knew from experience that the bar tended to get rowdier later in the afternoon and it became harder to have a conversation; I also needed to transcribe my notes before I forgot the details, and I felt too tired to take any more in. This was a typical example of a day in the village spent partly on more formal interviews, partly in impromptu conversations and observations, and partly in efforts to engage with those people who were most reticent in talking about their own lives – typically the younger men.

By the end of my fieldwork, there were around 150<sup>19</sup> people I knew reasonably well, so that we would greet each other around the village or in Durham, and perhaps stop and chat. This number included almost equal numbers of men and women and equal number of current, ex- and never smokers. My tabulation of visits to the village indicated that I held up to twenty conversations with each person on different occasions and visited twenty-five homes in the village, some on numerous occasions.

#### ANTHROPOLOGY AT HOME?

Of course, a list of fieldwork activities is mundane and it is actually the process of coming to know which is the point (Edwards, 2000 p. 13). Because I wanted to explore in what way living in Sleetburn might be connected with a greater likelihood of smoking, I was for a long time much occupied with trying to know the 'essence' of Sleetburn culture or Sleetburn identity. It was only gradually that I came to realise that I inevitably encountered not one but many cultures, including shared (and contested) practices of place-making across nearby villages and beyond, as well as multiple axes of identity and difference including class, gender etc. I struggled to hold my idea of 'the village' together as it increasingly dissolved into fragments (Candea, 2010) or simply into a collection of discrete and infinitely

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<sup>19</sup> Coincidentally, 150 is Robin Dunbar's 'magic number' i.e. the maximum number of people with whom one can, he suggests, maintain stable social relationships DUNBAR, R. 1993. Coevolution of neocortical size, group size and language in humans. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 16, 681-694..

interesting individuals. The post-structuralist idea of the cultural as a site of difference and contestation became all too real.

Rather than being a discrete community where everyone knew everyone else, Sleetburn comprised various different networks which overlapped in various ways. People might live in the same street but have very different circles of friends; there were churchgoers, chapelgoers, daytime and evening Club drinkers, bingo players and dancers, football players, bowls players, residents' association attenders, Banner Group members and Labour Party activists – and many other people involved in none of these things. Some networks had a core membership as well as other more peripheral members. Church and chapel services attracted a small, mainly elderly congregation, but their fundraising events such as summer and Christmas fairs pulled in a larger group of all their friends and relatives, as well as village people who told me emphatically whether they were 'church' or 'chapel' even though they never attended a service outside weddings, christenings and funerals. Sometimes I made quite wrong assumptions about people and their networks; on one occasion at a church fair I noticed a young man with tattoos and dirty work clothing sneaking in; the thought crossed my mind that he was going to cause trouble; in fact he turned out to be a grandson of a keen church member and was not only there to support the fair but also regularly cleaned the church and polished the parquet floor – though his grandmother told me he drew the line at arranging the flowers. My own interest in seeing as much of the village as I could meant I sometimes shocked people by being in the 'wrong' networks or talking to the 'wrong' people; the church and Club facing each other across the same road gave me plenty of scope to confound acquaintances waiting at the bus stop by entering one building rather than the other.

Strathern described auto-anthropology ambiguously as 'anthropology carried out in the social context which produced it' (Jackson, 1987 p. 17). Was I doing anthropology at home? In the literal sense I was only three miles from my house, but I was an outsider on the one hand in not having grown up locally, and on the other in being middle-class, contrasting with the working-class majority in Sleetburn. I was therefore implicated in local class power structures (for instance in the role of Durham University - and my own - in employing women from Sleetburn and similar villages as cleaners and catering staff) and I recognised and probably believed, at the start of my fieldwork, the stereotypes about mobility,

insularity and aspiration ascribed to mining villages – stereotypes which I now call into question in my work. It was difficult to separate my home life from the field; I certainly could not ‘get onto a plane after fieldwork and disappear into the academy’ (Okely, 1987 p. 70). This led to some disjunction: as I became more involved in working-class modes of being, I started to see middle-class practices around me increasingly from the outside. In the end, as an anthropologist sharing a long-term commitment to the same society as the ‘subjects’ of my research, I might perhaps best define myself as a ‘citizen anthropologist’ (Cheater, 1987, Becker et al., 2005).

#### SITUATED BY AGE AND GENDER

However much I sought to meet people in the village of all ages and from all walks of life, I was bound to have a specific experience of the village related to my age, class and gender, both in terms of who I could meet and in what I was allowed to know. Most of those I knew well were over forty and a large proportion over sixty-five, partly because of the networks which were most accessible to me as a woman in her forties. Had I been, like Rapport in Wanet, a young male researcher working and drinking with local men (Rapport, 1993), my experience of the village would have been substantially different, and my findings would have been focused in other areas. In terms of employment, I met many people who had had to stop work in their fifties or early sixties because of chronic ill-health often resulting from occupational exposures (see Chapter 9); a circumstance which was reflected in high rates of worklessness<sup>20</sup> in the village and indeed the area (NOMIS, 2009). I met fewer people who were actively seeking work as these were generally younger and less likely to attend the village hall, church or chapel or to be able to afford to drink in the Club. Available figures suggest that I met a higher proportion of skilled workers (or former workers) than might have been expected from ward-level figures (NOMIS, 2009). This was probably because there were more skilled workers amongst the older men and also because the institutions of the village were largely run by skilled men. It also fitted with my impression that whilst people who had lived through difficult times might be unwilling to talk about them, hardest of all for me to reach were those who were struggling now, who were most likely to be

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<sup>20</sup> The term worklessness includes being unable to find a job but also being too ill to work.

those without formal skills in the job market. I discuss employment in the village in more detail in Chapter 6.

Most of the people I knew avoided mentioning any unpleasant or disreputable events in the village to me. I surmised that the reasons for this included a natural suspicion of me as a researcher; there was also pride in the village and wanting to make a good impression as well as avoiding repeating gossip which could easily come back to bite you in a small community (Cohen, 1987). There was also an awareness of classed values and stigma (see next section) and a wish not to expose me to anything which might shock my sensibilities; I cultivated the amiable but naïve persona of one seeking enlightenment and many older people took me under their wing, which meant that although I did gradually pick up on feuds, fights, drugs, prison sentences and the local grey economy, most people did not tell me about them directly. I also noticed that many people, whilst they might offer me tea and plated biscuits over genteel conversations in their homes, spoke very differently amongst friends in the club, more colloquially and with more swearing.

The younger men in the Club very obviously moderated their language when I was there. This was partly to do with class but also gender roles: nice women were expected neither to hear any serious swearing nor generally to take part in it. A few women did swear and even fight on occasion, but this was unusual in the circles I knew best. Older women in the village were particularly protective and some gave me something of the status of an honorary daughter. One of the Club bar staff disapproved of my talking to Russell and on one occasion warned me that he was *'trying to get into your drawers'*. People had clear views as to whom I should and shouldn't talk to, either in relation to what they thought I should be studying or to protect the village's reputation or indeed my own. In fact I did limit my conversations with the younger men because it was clear that not doing so might cause gossip and/or trouble with their partners if they had them. As a woman with no visible attachments, I was potentially disruptive. Even though women were now allowed in the Club bar, in practice it continued to be largely a male space on the customer side of the bar, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights. The room design reinforced this impression with one door leading off directly into the Gents' toilets whereas the Ladies' toilets were accessed from the lobby area outside. The gendering of space was also apparent in the way many men were clearly uncomfortable using the concert room or the lounge, which had a sign on the door

prohibiting dirty clothing. In the summer of 2012 flood damage meant the carpet was taken up and the bar couldn't be used for a day or two. I was in the lounge one Friday afternoon when scaffolders Russell and Darren came in at three o'clock as usual. They hesitated at the door because they were in stained work clothes and work boots. The bar worker said: *'You'll have to come in, you can't go in the bar'*, they looked uncomfortable but came in: I made a joke about how they had never been in the lounge before.

Gendered expectations of behaviour also limited my interactions: on weekdays, very few women apart from bar staff came into the club but most of the patrons were retired men who soon got used to me even if they didn't want to chat; as Leslie said in August 2012, after I had been coming about six months, *'you're part of the furniture now'*. To the younger men coming in for a drink straight after work, however, I was clearly in the wrong place in terms of gender and class and they didn't quite know how to respond to me. I found clothes made a big difference and I adopted a fieldwork 'uniform' of jeans and a polo shirt which was gender neutral and also (I hoped) subtly identified me as being in work<sup>21</sup> rather than 'on the pull'. However, it was difficult to have a sustained, reasonably serious conversation with the younger men whilst in the Club. In the case of women and older men, I tried to arrange to visit them at home, but it would clearly not have been appropriate to do so with the younger men – despite Russell's frequent invitation to *'go round to my place and party'*. Of course, in other ways my gender gave me access which would have been more difficult for a man; and as feminist researchers have found, I could be complicit and an insider in conversations with other women or with other mothers (Mannay, 2010). When I compared notes about our children with Donna (40) or Sarah (47), any awkwardness around class was forgotten as our worries about our children's emotional wellbeing were the same.

#### CLASS AND STIGMA

Hastrup suggests that the gender of the anthropologist, elsewhere so inconspicuous in relation to other and much more marked differences, becomes a primary element in the local classification of the ethnographer studying at home or in their own culture (Hastrup, 1987 p. 96) . Gullestad's research with working-class mothers in Bergen, on the other hand,

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<sup>21</sup> A logoed polo shirt, supplemented as appropriate by a high-visibility jacket or a tabard, was standard work wear for local jobs such as leisure centre attendant, landscape gardener, scaffolder, cleaner, nursery nurse or school lunch time supervisor.

suggests that class can be just as significant; she notes in particular how she, as a student, did not live up to the women's standards of dress and hairstyle; the intellectual middle-class was seen by her informants as badly-dressed and scruffy (Gullestad, 1984). This is a point I shall return to in Chapter 9.

In my own case, class was 'relational' in that I was 'placed' in various ways as middle-class by people in Sleetburn. The fact that I travelled by bicycle was typical of students and academics, whereas it became clear that nobody in the village would consider using a bicycle after childhood except in cases of extreme poverty or in one or two cases where a man took up cycling as a serious sporting activity rather than a mode of transport. My clothing also gave me away, being either too masculine (walking boots) or too expensive (an Altura cycling jacket). My hair was also an issue, being long but not styled. Like Gullestad, I was generally too scruffy to fit in.

There was no doubt that most people in Sleetburn reacted to me in classed ways. One retired pitman, Peter (85), had a strange, strangulated accent when I first met him in the Club, which was explained when his companions teased him for '*talking posh*' for my benefit. He would also recite a couple of poems and use his stock of foreign phrases whenever I saw him, all no doubt to demonstrate his own cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986, Skeggs, 1997) to someone he identified as likely to appreciate it. This was part of a half-serious, half-joking positioning of himself as at the respectable end of the village, or what some people in Sleetburn called 'a cut above'. We will see in Chapter 6 how this positioning also took place in relation to discussions around education. Peter was confident of his status, but in some cases I made people nervous; one or two people began a pre-arranged interview with an extensive run-down of the academic and professional successes of their children and grandchildren, which I read as a defensive reaction to my academic status. Others were eager to demonstrate either respectability or economic capital, tidying up their house before my visit, showing off their new bathroom or photos from an expensive holiday.

The few professionals in the village placed me as one of their own and assumed a complicity between us whereby 'the village' that I was studying did not include them as objects of study; any visits to them they saw as a 'break' from fieldwork. In one case I was infuriated

by what felt like an assumption of affinity based on class. Outside the village Post Office I bumped into Donald (76), a quiet man whom I was finding hard to get to know. Into this conversation intruded a man whom I recognised slightly as a parent from my children's school, who lived in a converted farmhouse outside the village. He appeared as amazed and delighted as if we had met in a foreign country, and I felt he was representing us as two (middle-class) people marooned in an alien (working-class) desert. Like Judith Okely dealing with university friends visiting her gypsy camp unexpectedly (Okely 1999 p. 24), I was embarrassed to be associated with this ostentatiously middle-class man.

As an outsider essentially petitioning for information I did not feel powerful but there was nevertheless an issue of power in that many if not most people I spoke to were aware of our meeting as a classed encounter and adjusted their self-presentation accordingly. One aspect of this was that, faced with a confident, articulate middle-class woman exerting pressure (I didn't realise I did until someone complained that I was 'a bit of an interrogator'), some people agreed to speak to me only because they lacked the confidence to turn me down. One man agreed to talk but when I went round at the appointed time his wife told me he had '*gone out*', so I talked to her instead – an instance of everyday resistance (Certeau, 1990 [1980], Scott, 1985 p. 251); my direct requests were often met with nervous laughter and a 'sliding away', as we will see further on. I will come back to everyday resistance in Chapter 6 on employment and education and Chapter 8 on resistant smoking practices. I found no overt hostility or anger directed at me as a middle-class outsider asking questions, but then again there were people and situations I avoided; had I spent time with the younger men when they were drinking in the club on Saturday nights (which was also when the occasional fight took place), I am sure I would have had more problems, as other researchers have found in similar locations (Smith, 2012, p. 204).

I was interested in finding out whether people in Sleetburn felt that either they or the village in the general were stigmatised i.e. disqualified from full social acceptance, marked out and subject to stereotyping, discrimination or rejection as a result of a spoiled identity (Goffman, 1963 p. 9, Link and Phelan, 2001 pp. 364-5). I thought at this point that continued smoking might relate to place stigma and form part of a defensive, beleaguered identity (Thompson et al., 2007). Some people in the village did feel it had a bad name – Denise (60) was critical of Sleetburn and told me how as a young woman she used to

pretend she was from a different village because she was embarrassed. In other cases, joking remarks were made which nevertheless showed an awareness of some degree of stigma affecting the village – or at least some defensiveness about its reputation: for instance that it was nice to have *‘degrees, not prison sentences’* in the village; or *‘that nothing good ever came out of Sleetburn – only the road!’*

With regard to class stigma, as I explained in Chapter 1, this was particularly manifest in the defensive ways people spoke about the highly classed issues of mobility (Chapter 4), insularity or being ‘close-knit’ (Chapter 5) and aspirations, particularly in relation to employment and education (Chapter 6). I will consider stigma in more detail in the relevant chapters, but generally it took the form of an awareness of, and defensive reaction to, the fact that people in the village might be accused by others of being static, inter-related or lacking in ambition or achievement.

Another way in which class emerged was representational: class became a problem when it came to writing about Sleetburn. The most basic way in which this was the case was in describing the village. I had chosen Sleetburn partly because the local area rated highly on the England Index of Multiple Deprivation (Durham County Council, 2007) – should I therefore describe Sleetburn as ‘deprived’, thereby essentializing it in terms of deprivation or lack, or use the term ‘working-class’, referring to waged occupation in routine and manual work? Although many people lived modestly and some were in undoubted poverty, ‘deprived’ did not define the village and might offend (see the moral content of class categories in Chapter 1). I therefore went back to my fieldwork notes to see who referred directly to class in the course of our conversations. Of those who did, most did so in the context of social mobility or of making a direct contrast between the middle and working classes, such as when Ronald (87) referred to the working class being *‘slaves’* for the colliery owners. Similarly, a man in his late thirties explained to me that the Grand Order of Buffaloes, of which his late father<sup>22</sup> had been a member, was *‘a working-class Freemasons’*. Comments about social mobility included a teacher in his fifties who talked about going to university *‘from a working-class background’* and a woman who married a miner and said: *‘My mum felt I could have done better; my dad’s parents were disgusted when he married my mum, because her father was “just a miner”: there was a class difference.’* One man said

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<sup>22</sup>This was in fact the man whose wake I had inadvertently interrupted on my first visit to the village.

in relation to the 1960s: *'If you moved out of colliery houses to council houses you became middle-class, you had a bathroom'* and another that when his daughter was at school, she *'made friends with the MP's and doctor's kids - they were in high strata'*. I mentioned the distinction I had picked up between unskilled and skilled workers to one man in his fifties and he said *'yes that is a distinction people make - people are very class-conscious'*. Finally, a woman in her sixties told me this story about her family and class:

*My grandfather was [skilled supervisory], he wore a trilby and used to lift it to ladies, and my gran had someone in to do her washing and clean for her, she was someone you would class as posh.... I can remember there being only one car in the road, it was ours. We were taught to speak proper English, I speak rough now but then it was all "will you please pass the sugar"- my brother used to correct me if I talked rough.*

Many academics have suggested that 'working-class' has become, in wider public policy as well as academic circles, a loaded term increasingly reserved for the dispossessed (Byrne, 2005, Tyler, 2013), with 'white working class' even more stigmatised in recent years (Edwards et al., 2012) and used notably to reify particular people as inhabiting anachronistic space (Lawler, 2012). Others have argued that people have become reluctant to affix class labels to themselves in consequence, with many preferring to call themselves 'ordinary people' (Skeggs, 1997, Savage et al., 2001). I decided to use the term 'working-class' since working-class culture does have historic meanings even if the term has become hollowed-out (Miles and Savage, 1994, Todd, 2014). A full consideration of this contested area (Bradley, 2014, Mills, 2014) is beyond the scope of my thesis, but mining villages have become linked with particular kinds of working-classness which I unpacked in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2; 'working-class' was the term in use for most of the historical period which I consider. If people in Sleeburn today are no longer miners, they are still overwhelmingly from mining families and work in routine and manual jobs, as we will explore in Chapter 6.

#### LOCATING SLEEBURN IN TIME

I had originally chosen life story interviews as one of my methods because I was struck by the ahistorical nature of most studies of smoking; I attended an oral history conference and was very taken with various accounts relevant to my particular study (McIvor and Johnston, 2007, Portelli, 2010). In fact I soon moved away from a reliance on formal interviews but whilst my methodology evolved, my preoccupation with history remained and was reinforced in the field as will be seen below.

## HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

My study privileges the notion of time by taking a historical anthropology approach (Hann, 2009 p. 22, Anderson and Kowal, 2012) looking at Sleetburn over the period within the living memory of the village i.e. broadly since the 1930s, as well as individual life stories and smoking trajectories over time. In practical terms, I supplemented participant observation with documentary research, making extensive notes at Durham Records Office on selected local Unitary District Council minutes from 1882 to 1974 and District Medical Officer reports from 1901 to 1974, consulting old issues of the local newspaper on microfiche and organising a local history project and workbook with Sleetburn Primary School. I also referred to detailed maps of the village from 1861, 1891, 1925, 1951 and 1984, printed out via the Digimap archive. I supplemented these with more recent documentation including house price electronic alerts, police on-line crime reports, newspaper searches, a copy of the most recent electoral register, reports and minutes from Durham County Council, Langdon Parish Council, OFSTED, the local Area Action Partnership, local NHS bodies and the North East Public Health Observatory. I also consulted NOMIS local labour statistics and ACORN consumer classifications. I was also able to follow two local blogs dedicated to memories of the area as well as interacting with several relevant Facebook social media pages.

Other historical material consulted included five local history books about Sleetburn and the surrounding area, only one of which I reference here to maintain the anonymity of the village (Clark, 1987) as well as academic books and doctoral dissertations (Fynes, 1923 [1873], Daysh and Symonds, 1953, Taylor, 1966, Taylor, 1969, Chaplin, 1971, Moore, 1974, Bulmer, 1975, Taylor and Townsend, 1976, Bulmer, 1978, Ryder, 1979, Ryder, 1984, Bulmer, 1985, Emery, 1989, Emery, 1992, McIntyre, 1992, Beynon and Austrin, 1994, Emery, 1998, Beynon et al., 1999, Beynon et al., 2000, Barron, 2010)

## SOCIAL MEMORY

As many anthropologists of Britain have found elsewhere (Strathern et al., 1981 p. xii, Edwards, 2000 p. 35), Sleetburn very quickly assumed or decided what I should study, namely the history of the village, and how I should study it, namely by speaking to people who were recognised repositories of social memory. This gave me an insight into what people understood to be 'history' and there were several aspects to this. The first was the

legitimacy of the source, and I was directed either to the oldest residents, to younger people with a particular interest in local history, or to holders of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in terms of 'knowing about the village'. These included several current and former elected councillors for the area as well as people who held or had retired from positions of responsibility within the Club, the chapel, the church, the Labour Party and other local institutions. These were the people I met and talked to first because they were present at every significant public event and if for some reason I missed one of them, others would soon direct me to him or her – though most often him. In order to have authority, it helped if the speaker had been born in the village though it wasn't essential. Several people, particularly women who had married into the village, insisted that they couldn't tell me anything as they were from a different village and had only lived in Sleetburn for sixty or seventy years. Another aspect was which decades 'count' as history (Edwards, 2000 p. 37). The 1930s and 1940s were included, but anything from the 1950s onwards was not normally considered of interest to me. I was referred most frequently to people over eighty, with younger people reluctant to acknowledge any 'historical' experience. Generally speaking, past events had to be sixty years old or more before they could be classed as 'history' and therefore of interest.

A number of studies have explored how social memory in former mining communities can create a sense of community and belonging, for instance through the nostalgic appropriation of symbols including brass bands and union banners (Stephenson and Wray, 2005, Bennett, 2009, Wray, 2009). Rather than representing nostalgia, however, anthropologists have argued that history in such cases is constantly excavated and 'put to work' to affirm or deny local identity (Edwards, 1998 p. 145); practices of remembering the past are used to navigate contemporary social relations in terms of who belongs where (Degnen, 2005 p. 742). I found similar practices in Sleetburn; networks of social relations were expressed through classifications which included family trees but also the listing of all the old streets, discussion of who lived in each house, where each shop was located and who owned it. Local domestic rituals relating to laundry (the 'poss and tub') or the

preparation of local foods such as panackelty<sup>23</sup> were enumerated and described in detail; books by local historians also listed favourite local childhood games and foods.

Despite such local experiences as strikes, economic depression and severe overcrowding (see Chapter 4), few people foregrounded these when recalling the past either in conversation with me or, as far as I could tell, with each other. This may have been partly because they were remembering their childhoods, when they had been largely unaware of wider political issues, but it also seemed to be the case that most people were more concerned with 'placing' themselves and each other within a network of past and present social relations in the village, as described in the previous paragraph, than within a wider historical, social or political context. When people did recall bad times or difficult conditions they usually had a didactic purpose, most commonly to impress upon me (as an outsider) the realities of coal mining. The only person who spontaneously referred to the village's collective past in terms of social injustice was Ronald (87) but he was unusual in having been a prominent local politician for over fifty years. More common was the tangential reference to hardship, such as when Dorothy (93) complained that her father had refused to let her go on a ramble with the Girl Guides because her only shoes were a pair of plimsolls, which he feared would be worn through if she went.

One final aspect of people's understanding of 'history' was the particular place held in collective memories by the mining experience. History in the village meant mining history, even though the two neighbouring pits closed in 1953 and 1968, more than forty years before my arrival in the village. For men, mining history meant the embodied experience of being down the pit - former miners were invariably anxious to tell me, the 'naive interviewer', just how low the seam was. The small tables in the Working Men's Club were brought into the demonstration, with men holding out their hand well below the table surface to illustrate the space in which they used to crawl. I return to this point in my account of attitudes to work (Chapter 6)..

#### TELLING STORIES

I wanted to understand smoking within the context of people's histories and I expected most of my data to come from life story interviews. I did encounter difficulties in setting

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<sup>23</sup> Poss and tub were used for laundry, panackelty is a slow-cooked casserole of meat and root vegetables.

these up and it was easiest with residents over the age of eighty or so who agreed that their advanced age meant they were now repositories of knowledge about 'the olden days'. They also generally had more time on their hands, being less mobile and almost all widowed. With younger people I had more success with an indirect approach, asking 'what it's like living in the village' and holding conversations over a number of different occasions rather than all in one go.

For many people, telling their life story is above all making sense of it for themselves (Kleinman, 2008) and presenting it for public consumption (Goffman, 1990 [1959]), but whilst I spent a lot of time initially extracting and recording the facts and dates of people's lives, it was only gradually that I began to pay attention to the overall story and particularly what was included and what was left out. As regards smoking, this posed a particular challenge in that this was not generally regarded as an interesting or relevant topic in the village, as I will show in Chapter 7, nor did anyone think it worth mentioning in their biographies unless I asked them about it specifically. In such cases they might become quite animated in recalling family memories relating to smoking, but there were other times where I was embarrassed even to bring it up; after a harrowing tale of family tragedy, to ask '*and did you smoke?*' seemed trivial and insensitive. Some people were reluctant to talk to me at all. In some cases I found out later that they had painful issues in their lives which might include a traumatic bereavement, serious illness or addiction, domestic violence or a criminal conviction. In other cases, people were happy to talk but omitted any mention of painful events so that I only became aware of them through specific questioning, or on a much later date, or through someone else. There was also an issue of saving face; someone might share memories of a bereavement but omit to mention a prison sentence. Such painful events included the personal or family issues mentioned above, but also the personal consequences of local and national political and economic upheavals, including wartime service, strike action and unemployment. As previously mentioned, with the exception of a handful of individuals who wanted to make a specific point, I generally had to probe for these memories if they were even discussed at all.

As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, people who did not want to talk to me tended to slide away from the topic rather than making a direct refusal; Lee's laughing and walking off, described earlier, was a typical example, as was the man who had gone out when I arrived

at the appointed time. Women said they were too busy (and many were), or pleaded ignorance on the grounds that they had only married into the village and knew nothing about it. In other cases, building trust was either a matter of my being around long enough to become a familiar sight, or being seen with people who were well-established in a particular circle. At a funeral during my writing up period, I happened to arrive and sit with an older lady whom I knew well, along with her friend whom I hadn't previously met but who had lived in the village and was well-known there. As a result, I ended up at the subsequent wake in the midst of an intimate group of older people including several who had previously kept themselves aloof from me, and contributing to the conversation about who was related to whom - I felt I had arrived.

I was surprised to encounter no direct hostility in the village; at worst gentle mockery, such as when Russell suddenly rushed over in the Club, sat down opposite me with a pen and scrap of paper, leaned forward intently and said *'Now - tell me all about your life!'*, provoking laughter around the room. It was only much later, when I started doing fieldwork for a different project in other nearby villages and encountered more negative reactions that I started to appreciate the charmed life I led in Sleetburn. One reason was that the village's small size and failure to expand (see Chapter 4) contributed to a climate of friendliness rather than suspicion (see Chapter 5). Another was that I spent a lot of time in the Club and was effectively under the protection of the Committee and the Club steward, who was herself well-regarded and a member of a prominent village family. I also got to know many of the older people in the village and, as a friend of these 'elders', benefited from the respect which they commanded. Meeting people's family also helped; after I met Russell's mother and sister, for example, this put me in a different position in relation to him from when I arrived as a stranger and fair game. I also benefited from female solidarity or sometimes motherly concern as women in the village warned me off from engaging with particular men.

My final point about histories is that the longitudinal aspect of my study also meant that individual stories were constantly changing and developing; a little girl born around the time I started my fieldwork is three years old as I write this, several people I know have sadly died, others have moved in or moved away, relationships have started or ended, people have started or stopped smoking. Any continuous involvement with a particular place

means living with its ghosts as well as those who remain, a point to which I return at the end of this chapter.

#### LOCATING THE SELF

During the course of my fieldwork and writing-up process I started to think about my own positioning in a wider sense, not least in terms of the issues I had identified within the literature of mining villages, namely mobility, insularity and aspiration. This wasn't so much writing the self into the ethnography (Coffey, 1999 pp. 115-134) as applying the same kind of analysis to my own background as I have done to other people. Croteau feels it is important to discuss the relationship between the researcher's personal biography and their subject matter and points out that many social scientists acknowledge the importance of social origins and social positions for everyone but themselves (Croteau, 1995 p. xxii). My background is middle-class: my father was a lawyer and my mother eventually trained as a psychotherapist. Just as Elizabeth Bott felt her Canadian background made her particularly aware of the peculiarities of the English class system (Savage, 2010a p. 176), in my case growing up abroad gave me something of an outsider viewpoint when I moved back to England for the middle-class youth transition of 'going away to uni' (Holdsworth, 2009b). Similarly, Degnen felt that her own lack of long-term connection with a particular place meant she was particularly struck by the way in which remembering was linked to landscape in her field site (Degnen, 2005 p. 738).

My own original place attachment is to the Netherlands but although my father still lives there, my friends have shown typically middle-class mobility and as I had no extended family there in the first place my 'elective belonging' (Savage, 2010b) for the past twenty years has been to the North East of England. However, my localised experience of moving as a trailing wife (Cooke, 2001) to County Durham where graduate jobs were few and experiencing the wage penalty for motherhood (Budig and England, 2001) has made me sceptical of the role played by individual 'aspiration' as opposed to structural factors in conventional career success (see Chapter 6). As for tobacco, I smoked briefly when I was a student and was married to a smoker for many years; one of my grandfathers smoked a pipe and my brother smoked but has since switched to an electronic cigarette. I have lost two close friends to early death from smoking-related lung cancer.

## FROM INTERVIEWS TO RELATIONSHIPS

### LEARNING TO LISTEN

I had originally intended to record all my interviews, but although I did so for the first two or three I found that it made both me and my interlocutor self-conscious and took hours to transcribe, so instead I started making scribbled notes of most conversations, either at the time or immediately afterwards. I then wrote these notes up using Microsoft Word either the same day or the next. I started my analysis by reconfiguring my 150 visits into ninety individual or couple biographies including from one to thirty pages of close type depending on the number of conversations I had with each person, which ranged from one or two to twenty or more. Generally I copied and pasted every conversation into the biographical document, by date and just as I had originally noted it, but I also prepared chronologies or narrative biographies, many of which I shared with the participants. I also made a Microsoft Excel table cross-referencing 150 people against the 150 visits so that I could see at a glance when I met each person and how many times I had seen them and where; again ranging from one meeting to about twenty. Other Excel tables detailed smoking status for 120 people as well as tables of occupations, parental, spouse and sibling smoking status, numbers of siblings, birth locations and places lived. I do not reproduce these here, partly to maintain anonymity but also because although they were part of the process of understanding the village, none of them provide what I would regard as a rounded picture and they are reductive taken on their own. For the same reasons I do not provide a 'dramatis personae' or list of interviewees. The people I knew ranged from formal 'interviewees' happy to speak their whole story into a microphone, to those where we got to know each other over a long period of time, gradually learning more about each other's lives and circumstances.

I originally intended to code all the data using NVivo software in order to extract themes. In the event, the whole idea of coding data by topic (Bernard, 2011 pp. 429-457) and finding themes changed during my research to something more akin to what Coffey calls 'passionate analysis' or an imaginative and creative engagement with the data (Coffey, 1999 pp. 136 and 138). I went through a lengthy process of reworking and reconfiguring information in different ways, thinking about individuals and relationships as well as about explanatory concepts in the literature and the extent to which they were supported by my

ethnographic data. Whether a particular attitude (to smoking, say or to education) was peculiar to one or two people, or whether it illustrated a structure of feeling (Williams, 1977) within the village, was something I pondered whilst re-arranging and re-reading my data in different ways. As for the technical side of coding, I found that the search facility in Microsoft Office worked well in enabling me to search by theme (such as 'school') as well as quickly locate particular fieldwork incidents using a key word.

Whilst I was starting my analysis, I was also reading around various literatures which I had not recognised as relevant in the first year of my PhD, before I started fieldwork - notably classed histories of education and employment. I knew there was some element of stigma attached to Sleetburn and thought smoking might be a response to this. I was also discovering a history of injustice and oppression; I felt angry at this, particularly in relation to high mortality rates from poor housing and sanitation and also to precarious employment. I expected to find that these emotions were uppermost for people who had been on the receiving end but I found that their stories were more complex and involved different ways of presenting the self as having agency. My initial attempts to impose an identity defined by poverty and alienation were resisted (Skeggs, 1997 pp. 31 and 75), and gradually I realised that I needed to understand how individuals made sense of both their own and the village story, or what they perceived their story to be. This process was a slow one, and involved many pieces of writing and presentations at academic conferences which charted the evolution of my thinking. One significant moment was when one of my supervisors commented on a slide presentation I had done, saying that it was noticeable how happy all the people in my photographs looked, and how they seemed to have an emotional connection with the photographer (me). I was presenting on the embodied effects of chronic economic insecurity over generations, but this comment made me realise that this was not actually the story people were telling me. If people did not choose to tell their story in terms of oppression and injustice it was not up to me to disagree, but it took me a long time to listen to what the ethnography was saying rather than what I wanted it to say.

## REPRESENTATION IN THE RELATIONAL FIELD

Ethical consent was obtained for my research through Durham University's School of Medicine, Pharmacy & Health and focussed at that point on collecting a certain number of life stories, obtaining informed consent and maintaining anonymity. However, the relationality of people in the field was not accounted for in that process (Simpson, 2011). Obtaining informed consent seemed straightforward on the few occasions when I met someone with the specific aim of recording their life story, but was not easy at a social event or sitting in the Club surrounded by people chatting, when it was far from clear who might 'own' the general conversation. Getting people to check my transcripts was not really a solution. I often offered a transcript of my notes to people I had spoken to in more formal situations but few took this offer up and those who did seemed reluctant to amend what I had written, even when I had made obvious mistakes. Because I had written it down, my account of what they said had become an authoritative text and they did not feel they could correct it. On one occasion, someone returned the lengthy interview notes unmarked even though I knew some passages made no sense. I urged him once again to amend them, and it was only at this point that he did make a few changes, carefully written out in capital letters and with his signature and a date appended to the end of the document. More recently I was delighted to discover that my notes had acquired an almost poetic meaning for one elderly friend, who sent me the following email in September 2014:

*Hello Frances, hope you well and getting on with your book .  
Last night I was reading the the letter you wrote me about my life.  
It was long and lovely. To read. So thanks for doing it for me. Can't wait till your book  
comes out and I can read it.  
Isn't the site doing well of Sleetburn family and history<sup>24</sup>. I still have loads of photos  
to put on.  
At Xmas I'm treating myself to a printer, I will then print mine out too.  
Best wishes  
Love Glenys.  
Ps you could pop in any time on some mornings I go out most afternoons  
Lol I never in. Loving it. Xx*

*Sent from my iPad*

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<sup>24</sup> A Sleetburn history Facebook page set up at my suggestion

I had written in my original ethics application about how recounting a life story can be positive, even transformative for the speaker as well as the listener, but this message was a welcome confirmation that this is sometimes the case. I also decided to try some form of collective feedback to stimulate dialogue, and prepared a short document which I left in places such as the hairdresser's salon as well as giving it out to everyone I knew. It was a four page document of twenty numbered items about the village in roughly chronological order. Its purpose was to pass on some of the local history I had learned at that point, and stimulate further conversation and memories by asking questions about these events. The hand-out was passed around the village and two factual errors were pointed out to me, but generally it elicited little comment, although one man did later express surprise that I was still around as he had seen the hand-out and had assumed it was my completed PhD.

Representation was less of a problem during fieldwork but the real ethical issues came in the writing process. One particular incident brought the question of relationality home to me. I had a long interview with a friend in his eighties, writing down everything he said including a full account of his life but also all the incidental comments we made to each other about whether we would have chocolate biscuits with our coffee, and chit-chat about other people in the village I had seen or was going to see. I later sent him a print-out of what I had written and he rang me – one of only two or three occasions when anyone ever did ring me, although the number was on the information sheet I distributed – upset that I had written down his (perfectly pleasant) comments about other people. He was concerned that these comments would be reproduced in my work. I reassured him that I would not report his or anyone else's comments about other people, but this demonstrated the delicate path I trod and how easy it would be to hurt someone or create a rift. This was the strongest possible illustration for me of Simpson's statement that the field is relational and not merely spatial (Simpson, 2011).

This worry has coloured all my writing. To give an accurate (albeit partial) account of the village and one which residents would recognise, to capture the kind of lives lived without caricature was hard enough; but to recount individual stories without simplifying or reducing them to archetypes was almost impossible. This was how Borges described this feeling in his short story about a doctoral student returning from fieldwork (Borges, 1969):

He made his way to his professor's office and told him that he knew the secret, but had resolved not to reveal it.

"Are you bound by your oath?" the professor asked.

"That's not the reason," Murdock replied. "I learned something out there that I can't express."

"The English language may not be able to communicate it," the professor suggested.

"That's not it, sir. Now that I possess the secret, I could tell it in a hundred different and even contradictory ways. I don't know how to tell you this, but the secret is beautiful, and science, our science, seems mere frivolity to me now."

After a pause he added: "And anyway, the secret is not as important as the paths that led me to it. Each person has to walk those paths himself."

I struggled with representation i.e. rendering individual stories, and reducing some of the facts of their life to an exemplar felt like a betrayal of each rounded, complex person. I hope the people I know will forgive me for using some of the details of their lives to illustrate the points I am making. I toyed with the idea of using just a few, detailed life stories, anonymised and combined to disclosed identities but retaining their meaning (Gardner, 1991, Kleinman, 2008) or novelising the whole thing (Benson, 2005, Benson, 2014) but neither of these solutions seemed satisfactory even if I had the skill to execute them satisfactorily. I now plan to present my main findings in a poster which I will display in the Club and village hall, as well as writing up a summary of village history on a collaborative website or wiki. However, I write this thesis knowing that some people in the village will read it all, many more will read some of it and everyone else will hear bits and pieces of it, in and out of context; it is therefore likely that what I write will have an effect on the village in unforeseen ways, for better or for worse. Other work about the village - including a 1975 MSc dissertation which was still passed from hand to hand nearly forty years later – has been read by some, repeated to others and reproduced by most. I have attempted to write clearly without unnecessary academic jargon but I will no doubt get complaints from the village that, as in other academic books they have read<sup>25</sup>, there are '*too many names and dates in brackets*'; I only hope that is the extent of any unhappiness about my account (Scheper-Hughes, 2001 [1977] pp. 308-328).

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<sup>25</sup> Several Sleetburn people who were not normally great readers have read books by Durham academics who were either local residents or whom they met through working at the University.

I also have no doubt that everyone who reads it locally will be looking for clues to the identity of all those featured in it and will recognise many, whatever efforts I make to conceal their identities. My approach to confidentiality has been to change all names using tables available on the internet of the most popular names by decade to ensure that names were age-appropriate. I have generally included age and gender as these were relevant factors to many of the experiences described and comments made; however I have usually changed ages and biographical details slightly to hide individual identities. I have included no names in particularly emotive stories to avoid their being matched to the person bearing that pseudonym elsewhere in the text. I have also included accounts from a handful of people from the immediate local area but who do not live in the village so that nobody featured in the text can be identified with certainty as a Sleetburn person, as this would make identification too easy in such a small place. I have identified the general area of the study and have only changed the names of Sleetburn and its immediate neighbours; their real identities will be obvious to anyone local but not to readers further afield. I considered anonymising the cigarette brands I discuss in order to avoid inadvertently providing useful market information to the tobacco industry but I reasoned that their own market research is so sophisticated that I am unlikely to be telling them anything new.

If this thesis retains less ethnographic detail and colour than I would have liked, this is because of my concerns on the one hand about local people recognising others they know, after I promised anonymity, and on the other about reducing people to 'characters' or offending them by reducing their life histories into brief exemplars in my overall argument. It would be ironic if in writing about class and stigma I should be run out of the village for my pains (Scheper-Hughes, 2001 [1977]).

#### EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPES

The methods I envisaged using were set out rather stiffly in my ethics application as participant observation (Bernard, 2011 pp. 256-290) and life story interviews to which I later added some archival research but this rather mechanistic understanding of ethnographic methods gradually became a more instinctive, emotional process of engagement with people in particular spaces, as illustrated by my earlier account of a day's fieldwork. I had envisaged my main methodology being a series of separate interviews but I found myself enmeshed instead in a network of relationships and I experienced the

community carrying on a running commentary on everybody's doings (Gearing, 2006 [1970] p. 121) including my own. This commentary helped my understanding quite as much as people's accounts of their own lives separated out into 'life stories' (Edwards, 2000 p. 16).

Fieldwork involved developing relationships, for instance at the local primary school. I first made contact through volunteering with the Church- and Chapel-run 'Messy Church' craft sessions held at the school. I then approached the school about setting up a local history project to pass on some of the general information I had been given about the village. The class teacher was enthusiastic and together we devised a short workbook on Sleetburn history. The children worked through the exercises in this, researching information on local miners killed in the pit and on First World War soldiers, and comparing maps of the area from the 1860s to today. They set out their own family trees, devised a national and then a local timeline with key dates such as the opening and closing of the local pit, and finally I arranged for them to visit a day care session at the village hall and interview ten people in their eighties or older about life in the village in the 1930s. All this work produced little by way of specific arguments or theories within my writing, but it integrated me further into village life and improved the quality of my understanding of the village as a whole.

Developing relationships led to new insights; I interviewed some people early on in my fieldwork, but as we continued to meet and chat, there were often as many insights in one of their casual remarks as in the pages of life events I had typed up – albeit only meaningful in the context of our longstanding knowledge of each other.

Fieldwork was transformative; it was a longitudinal experience during which I aged (Simpson, 2006 p. 127), became a different 'self' (Coffey, 1999 p. 28) and changed my perceptions of Sleetburn, mining villages and many other things such as working men's clubs and young men with tattooed knuckles. In order to experience this, it was important to be open to an emotional connection to both place and people and I acknowledge here the 'turn to emotion' seen in human geography (Davidson and Bondi, 2007, Davies and Spencer, 2010) although perhaps not yet so much in anthropology (Milton and Svasek, 2010, Trigger et al., 2012). We are warned by ethnographic textbooks not to become totally absorbed in the field and to maintain some critical distance (Coffey, 1999 p. 28) but this sometimes means negative accounts are regarded as more valid than positive ones, as if they were

somehow more objective and less likely to result from emotion. Samuel made this point in a critical review of a book about the North East:

In a year, Mark Hudson made not a single friend or met a kindred spirit... he makes Horden the quintessence of otherness: a tribal reserve inhabited by a race of primitives caught in a time-warp... One great absence from this book is love: nobody is funny, nobody is wise (Samuel, 1998 p. 159).

Samuel also suggested that the power of such representations in general and their emotional content in particular is probably underestimated, arguing for instance that Cronin's romantic account of a mining village (Cronin, 1935) and the 1939 film version which followed probably did as much as the Beveridge Report to secure a Labour Party landslide in 1945 (Samuel, 1998 p. 153). Emotion is always present in the field and I suggest it should also be acknowledged in the text, not least because it will undoubtedly find its way there anyway.

Fieldwork also changed the way I was situated in Durham as I began to share in the emotional landscapes of Sleetburn people (see Chapter 5). I can now correctly locate myself as living in Raby Cross (rather than simply 'Durham'), which also places me more accurately in class terms. I also became linked to Sleetburn through the layers of memory which were shared with me. I can identify the former teacher training college nearby where Nancy worked in the kitchens in the 1940s, the white house down the road where Kevin's mum was in service and the empty plot at the bottom as the Milk Marketing Board where Hilary's dad was a driver. I then pass the laundry where Benjamin worked for a while and Julia got a job through a chapel friend. Moving onto Sleetburn, I can point out where the old Club was; those fir trees - that was Victoria Street where John was born; the empty site - that was the first nursery in the country in 1936; the new houses - that used to be flats, Hazel lived there when the kids were small - and as I pass the field behind the chapel, I can almost 'see' the church that was accidentally burnt down there in the 1940s. Like Degnen in Dodsworth (Degnen, 2005 p. 737), I developed my own emotional connection to local landscapes through hearing stories about them. For me as well as for others in Sleetburn, these emotional landscapes, thick with memories and ghosts, overlaid the visible space. On one occasion I was even historically 'placed', albeit accidentally, in these emotional landscapes; one elderly woman whom I rarely saw always asked if I was *'Muriel's daughter'*; I hadn't given this much thought, but when I attended the annual village memorial service in 2014 I

found Muriel's name was read out and at that moment a woman around my age, build and with similar hair got up to light a candle in her memory – this was Muriel's daughter, my Sleetburn alter ego.

In the next three chapters I turn to an ethnography of Sleetburn and whether it conformed to the three classed stereotypes which I discussed in Chapter 1, namely lack of mobility, lack of interest in the wider world (insularity or place attachment) and lack of aspiration, which I consider in order. I start with mobility, showing in this chapter that the people of Sleetburn and neighbouring villages have been highly mobile – moving *en masse* into the new mining villages at the end of the nineteenth century but also moving out in huge numbers in the 1930s and again in the 1960s. I will suggest that critiques of mining communities as immobile (see Chapter 1) can be traced back to historically rooted ideas of the mining village as ‘matter out of place’. I will then show that some mobilities are in moral terms privileged over others; in particular cyclical ‘there and back again’ mobilities which have been typical in Sleetburn are frequently overlooked or misrecognised as stasis or ‘failed’ mobility.

I first consider how mobility has been theorized in the social sciences with particular reference to conceptual links between geographical and social mobility and with the moral meanings of mobility. In their classic explanation of how ‘structural’ metaphors are deeply embedded in Western conceptual frameworks, Lakoff and Johnson have shown how social positioning is imagined as a spatial hierarchy where those who have more are above, and those who have less are below. ‘Up’ is better than ‘down’, as in ‘going up in the world’, ‘aiming high’, or conversely: ‘hitting rock-bottom’, ‘down on your luck’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 2008). The idea of ‘aspiration’ which I consider in Chapter 6 also fits into this family of spatial metaphor - meaning ‘steadfast longing for a higher goal, earnest desire for something above one’. The reductive and potentially damaging effect of such habits of mind can be understood more easily through specific examples, for instance Woodham’s account of how mobility metaphors used in accounts of New Zealand’s social welfare system insidiously portray beneficiaries and the social welfare system in a negative light (Woodhams, 2012).

Anthropologists Salazar and Smart described how mobility is seen as generating change - usually for the better - and how geographical mobility is linked almost automatically with

social mobility (Salazar and Smart, 2011). Strathern also linked geographical and social mobility, citing 'linguistic conventions which equate staying in one place with a perpetuation of status, and movement – away, out, up, down – with a potential for status change' (Strathern et al., 1981 p. 177). Other scholars have opposed 'sedentarist' (Malkki, 1992) and 'nomadic' metaphysics, with Cresswell in particular arguing that in contemporary social thought, mobility is regarded more positively and associated with progress and freedom whereas immobility is seen as dull if not reactionary (Cresswell, 2006 p. 25). Similarly, Glick-Schiller and Salazar have suggested that those caught up in the 'new mobility studies' have projected movement itself as liberating, valuable and cosmopolitan (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013 p. 186). Despite Cresswell's call for a new politics of mobility (Cresswell, 2010), few scholars have examined moral, classed meanings of mobility in the UK with the exception of Skeggs's allusion to the way immobility connotes failure or defeat (Skeggs, 2004 p. 50), and Holdsworth's study of elite practices of student mobility (Holdsworth, 2009b). The literature also suggests that particular populations have been labelled as immobile – and particularly those people we classify as rural, traditional or indigenous (Cohen and Sirkeci, 2011 p. 67). In England for instance, the historical immobility commonly ascribed to rural populations has been shown to be a myth; rural and poor people in the seventeenth century, for instance, were moving frequently albeit on fairly short and regular circuits (Pooley and Whyte, 1991); I will return to circular mobility in a later section.

There is of course a vast sociological literature measuring social mobility (Goldthorpe et al., 1987, Ganzeboom et al., 1991, Goldthorpe, 2013) which I will not review here except to say that because of a frequent correlation between geographical and social mobility (Savage, 1988), a particular kind of geographical mobility is now often associated with a narrative of social mobility and ultimate middle-class success. A good example of this is the way ideas about mobility have been applied historically to the mining villages of the North East of England. Periods of high unemployment in UK history have coincided with calls for greater geographical mobility of the working classes i.e. to 'move to where the jobs are'. This was particularly apparent in the 1930s, when limited moves to create jobs in depressed areas such as West Durham on the one hand were accompanied on the other hand by policies to move people in an almost wholesale manner from the north to the south of England (Daysh and Symonds, 1953, Ryder, 1979, Emery, 1992). In a later period of high unemployment,

Conservative Minister Norman Tebbit famously alluded to his father 'getting on his bike' to find a job in the depressed 1930s, thus appearing to suggest that workers in depressed post-industrial areas should remedy their own economic situation by becoming more mobile.<sup>26</sup> Other writers have resisted the ascription to unemployed people of stasis as a moral failing, pointing out that the regional distribution of jobs and industries in Britain is far from being a natural product of 'market forces', and that the nature of decisions about the location of industries is contingent and political (Hudson, 1989, Nadel-Klein, 1991, Massey, 1994 pp. 86-114, Gupta and Ferguson, 1997 p. 35). In this analysis, too much movement by capital rather than too little movement by workers is the problem. Other studies have explored how place-based social networks provide strong socio-economic and affective reasons why people do not simply move to places where there may be more chance of work (Green and White, 2007, Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012 p. 130). However, the characterisation of insufficient labour mobility as a moral failing of the working class in general and of former mining communities in particular has continued in many contemporary discourses.

#### ORIGIN STORIES: THE BIRTH OF THE VILLAGE

In this section I explore the reality of historical mobilities in Sleetburn, before moving onto the particular reasons why Sleetburn and places like it have been imagined as static. Of the ten villages within the parish boundary today only one existed in 1861<sup>27</sup>. This represents something of an extreme of mobility: the entire population came from somewhere else. In 1841, the local district had a population of less than 500 people; by 1891, there were 14,000 or twenty-eight times the earlier figure (see figure 1); the UK population only doubled over the same period.

All ten villages were built between 1861 and 1891 around the mine shafts where their occupants were to work. To get an indication of the extent of coalmining in the area, it may be noted that there were at various times another 147 collieries within five miles of Sleetburn Pit<sup>28</sup>. Sleetburn Colliery was sunk in 1856 but coal extraction did not start on any large scale until the 1870s, at which point Sleetburn Village was built. Bank Top Colliery,

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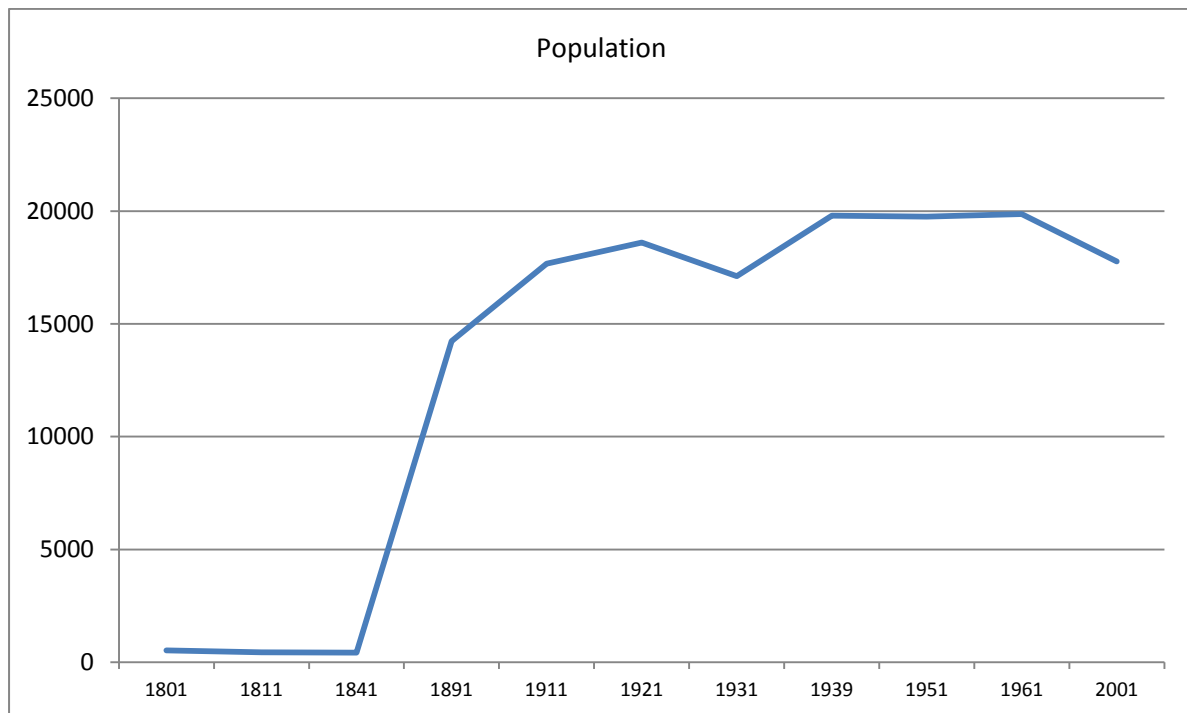
<sup>26</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsvideo/7858570/Norman-Tebbit-my-father-got-on-his-bike-to-look-for-a-job.html> accessed on 24th June 2014

<sup>27</sup> Most of their names are much older than the villages themselves, however, and can usually be found on earlier maps designating a farmhouse, a chapel or an area of moor or woodland.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.dmm.org.uk/colliery/> accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014

which was effectively a different entrance to the same workings, was in operation from 1930 to 1968.

*Figure 1: demographic changes in Langdon Unitary District Council (UDC) 1801-2001 (taken from census figures)*



Most people moved to the new mining villages from within a relatively small radius. A study of the 1871 census data for a neighbouring village showed that 80% of the residents came from County Durham and its neighbours i.e. Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland (now Cumbria) – a distance of one hundred miles at most. The rest came from older established mining areas such as Wales or Lancashire, agricultural depressed areas such as Somerset and East Anglia (Moore, 1974 pp. 64-77) or Cornwall and Ireland (Taylor, 1966). The workforce at Sleetburn Colliery and the population of the village peaked around 1914; after this time there was no major population influx into Sleetburn, although there were two major out-migrations, as I shall explore in later sections.

Because the mining villages were so new, people I met in Sleetburn shared a common origin story whereby their fathers or grandfathers had all moved from elsewhere and taken a job in a West Durham pit sometime after the 1860s, and often much more recently. The grandfather of one Sleetburn resident in his eighties is a typical example of mobility at this

time. Born in 1863, he was initially an agricultural labourer in North Yorkshire and later became a miner. In the four censuses from 1891 to 1921, he appeared in four different places within a fifty-mile radius in the North East of England. He eventually moved to Sleetburn with his married daughter in the 1920s. Despite his eighty years in Sleetburn, his grandson identified himself in our first conversation as a *'sand dancer'*, or native of South Shields<sup>29</sup>. After this initial origin story which brought them to the West Durham pits, most families in Sleetburn could recount a number of smaller migrations around the area - either in search of work or better housing, or consequent on marriage. Peter (85) was born in Sleetburn after his father moved there from a village a mile away. The major migration he identified was that of his grandparents, who came to that village from Wales along with many others – he said there were *'whole streets of Evanses and Owens'*. Peter's grandparents spoke Welsh, and he told me they *'weren't allowed to go to school by the English'* and as a result could not read or write, which may have been an allusion to the Welsh *'not'*<sup>30</sup> and the suppression of the Welsh language in schools, and an interesting example of migration as a *'heroic narrative'* (Chamberlain, 1997b, Chamberlain, 2002) – in this case to escape persecution.

#### DEPARTURES IN THE DEPRESSION YEARS

Earliest memories in Sleetburn went back to the 1920s and 1930s, a time of crisis in the coal industry and the region: because of increased competition from overseas and changes in patterns of demand, the coal industry was too big for its markets after the First World War (Supple, 1987 pp. 3 and 11) and in 1921 colliery owners slashed wages by 50% to compensate for falling international coal prices, leading to lockouts in 1921, 1922 and 1926 and ultimately to the departure of a quarter of the population of the area.

The minute books of Langdon UDC for this period are full of indications of economic distress. In March 1921, the Secretary of the Sleetburn Colliery Allotments wrote to the Council asking for a reduction in the rent *'owing to the majority of the Allotment holders being unemployed'*<sup>31</sup>. In April 1929, as well as pursuing many hundreds of cases of council

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<sup>29</sup> The origins of this nickname are unclear, but some interesting suggestions can be found here: <http://forum.southshields-sanddancers.co.uk/boards/viewtopic.php?f=48&t=24350> Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014

<sup>30</sup> A punishment for children who were overheard speaking Welsh at school, represented by a piece of wood which was hung round their necks

<sup>31</sup> DRO UD/BB/11 p. 166 Note that this was even before the 1921 lockout, which started in April of that year.

house rent arrears, the Council resolved to write off some of these for the following reasons: '13 address unknown, 3 poverty, 1 gone to Australia, 1 deceased'<sup>32</sup>. By January 1930, there were 230 names on the arrears list, of which twenty-two were written off as follows: 'on relief, widowed, poverty: 13, deceased 2, Canada 2, emigrated 1, can't be found 2'.

Several people in Sleetburn either remembered the 1926 Lockout and General Strike or had been told about it by family members: Fred (94) remembered friends sharing food with him; Dorothy (93) remembered the soup kitchen, and her mother crying when Dorothy came home from school because she had nothing to give her. Frances (65)'s mother told her that:

*It was just so bad, we had nothing... the Welfare would give you a pair of shoes but they had cardboard soles, you couldn't wear them in the rain. On Mondays the teacher would inspect soles, and if there was a hole you would get a smack.*

Because of the low coal prices, pits all over West Durham put men on short time or closed for weeks, months or years. At one colliery three miles from Sleetburn, 189 men were not restarted after the 1926 Lockout and the colliery issued eviction notices to the fifty-six of these who lived in colliery houses. Another 843 men and boys were let go in 1930 and the pit was closed down for twelve years (Emery, 1992 p. 14). Sleetburn Colliery closed from 1938 to 1939 as the owners did not consider it economic to work it. Many if not most people moved away, though many came back when the pit re-opened after the outbreak of war. Dorothy and her husband moved to Seghill Colliery thirty miles away. Ernest (85)'s family moved to the Rising Sun Colliery in Wallsend twenty-five miles away. Peter (85)'s father got a job at Vane Tempest Colliery twenty miles away; he was also in the Auxiliary Fire Service; when war started he was taken out of the pit and stationed at Seaham Fire Station. Langdon C Pit stayed open but the men there regularly worked short time. Ronald (87) told me:

*I can remember the crane man coming round shouting "C pit's off on Monday" at Langdon, I heard it when I used to stop at me cousins' on a Friday night, "C pit's down tomorrow"... the coal owners used to work it crafty, they would lay them off three days, give them three days work so people gannin' on the dole could get the dole... they worked it with the government, they were all the same people - the working class were just slaves.*

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<sup>32</sup> DRO UD/BB/15

Ivy (88) lived in Langdon at the time and had similar memories: *'Sometimes the pit closed down, the caller used to come round shouting "B pit's idle t'morn", my mum would say "oh no not again" as it would mean no money that day'*. They had an aunt who lived in the next street; her mum would send her round there to ask if she could spare some bread for the children's breakfast.

During the short-time working and unemployment of the 1920s and 1930s, the parents of the people I spoke to in Sleetburn were able to find work relatively nearby and return to Sleetburn when conditions improved, but many others were forced to move further afield and never came back: between 1931 and 1951, census figures indicate that the village lost nearly 800 people, or a decline of 24%. One person who left was Joyce (89)'s older brother; she told me he went down to Oxford with some friends in the 1930s to work at Morris Motors and he *'used to send a lot of money home'*. Priestley visited the Daimler factory in Coventry in 1933 and commented on how many men had moved there from elsewhere (Priestley, 1997 [1934] p. 74). In a study of 1960s colliery transfers, Taylor came across many families in Yorkshire mining areas who had originally moved from Durham in the 1930s (Taylor, 1966 p. 225), and most of the workers interviewed by Goldthorpe in Luton in the early 1960s had their roots in Ireland, Scotland and the North East of England (Goldthorpe, 1969, Savage, 2010a). Altogether, 88,000 people migrated from West Durham between 1921 and 1939 - a quarter of the entire 1921 population (Daysh and Symonds, 1953). Even the official history of the British coal industry stated that *'Mass migration to the Midlands and South East in the interwar years is not entirely consistent with the miners' reputation for geographic and occupational immobility'*, adding that this huge loss was *'a difficult change which must moderate any view of inherently stable mining communities'* (Supple, 1987 pp. 489-490).

#### TRANSFERS 'DOWN SOUTH'

There was generally very little alternative local employment for men in County Durham whilst the pits were still open, not least because the pit owners and later the government actively discouraged other employers from locating themselves there. Public policy from the later 1940s to early 1960s deliberately sought to prevent alternative male-employing manufacturing from locating in the region to protect the labour forces of existing industries,

especially coal mining, even though it had been recognised from the late 1940s (unpublished) Pepler-Macfarlane report that it was only a question of time – and not long at that – before labour demand in these industries declined. In effect the ‘national interest’ in economic recovery overrode the regional interest in economic diversification (Hudson, 1989 p. 130). After a brief wartime and reconstruction period of high demand, coal went into recession again. Between 1951 and 1964, forty-four pits closed in West Durham (Emery, 1992 p. 140). Coal seams in West Durham were more accessible than in East Durham, running relatively close to the surface, and produced high-grade coking coal, so they were depleted earlier than the East Durham coastal pits. The closure of Sleetburn Colliery in 1953 and that of Bank Top Colliery in 1968 emerged as landmarks in the life histories of older men in the village. Most Sleetburn men transferred to Bank Top or to another local colliery, but these soon closed as well: of the twenty-three collieries within five miles of Sleetburn which were still open in 1953, all but four closed by the end of the 1960s and these last four closed in the 1970s and 1980s.

Many Sleetburn men took advantage of the Inter-Colliery Transfer Scheme, which dates formally from 1962 but effectively operated a few years before that; the NCB and Ministry of Labour started publicising the better opportunities and security of the long-life pits in the Midlands and South Yorkshire; 10,000 men moved into the Yorkshire coalfields between 1954 and 1957 (Taylor, 1966 p. 67). This was very different from the chaotic departures of the 1930s; the coal industry was now nationalised and actively recruiting for pits in the Midlands and Yorkshire. Winifred (83)’s father transferred from Sleetburn to Bank Top, but her husband went to a pit in the Stoke-on-Trent area as early as 1954. She told me:

*Seven or eight of them went down, they lived in lodgings, some of them came back because they didn't like it but he stayed down there as there was no work up here... then he got a house down there, the Coal Board sent for the furniture, me and the kids went down on the bus that the Coal Board provided for the families going down. When we got there he was there already, as was the furniture. It was a new estate.*

Winifred’s family was one of the earliest moves but by the 1960s the transfers were highly organised, with miners and their families invited on tours of the area before making their decision. New housing estates were built for the transferring families either by the Coal Industry Housing Association or by local authorities with a subsidy from the NCB (Ashworth

and Pegg, 1986 pp. 261-2) and people often went down in groups from the same village, as this comment illustrates:

*As a family we moved, lock stock and barrel to a village in Nottinghamshire just after my fifth birthday (1961). I was so homesick, but as a family with six children my dad had to go where there was work, since they had been told the colliery would close, it was a huge move but when we got there most of the village was already there<sup>33</sup>.*

Under the scheme, 6,000 men moved in the first three years, and by the end of March 1971 nearly 15,000 men had taken new jobs under this scheme together with the Long Distance Re-Entrant Scheme 1964 which was designed to get ex-miners back into the industry (Ashworth and Pegg, 1986). Many Sleetburn miners and their families transferred to Kippax, near Leeds; some still retained their membership of Sleetburn Club at the time of my fieldwork forty years later, and several coaches of former Durham miners came up from Kippax to the Durham Miners' Gala<sup>34</sup> every year. In July 2012 I set up a small display about Sleetburn in one of the tents at the Gala and stood alongside it, chatting to anyone who took an interest – essentially past and present residents of the village, including brothers Geoffrey (69) and Stephen (65). Geoffrey lived in Sleetburn still but his brother Stephen lived in Kippax. He told me he transferred there when a nearby pit closed in 1968, he worked in the pit in Kippax until 1970, then in London; he moved back to Sleetburn 1984, then went back to Kippax. He told me there were many ex-pitmen from Sleetburn, Deer Park and the West Durham area down there – or rather their families as many had died. A special estate had been built for them, though he didn't live there himself. He said if I went to Kippax Central Club I would meet some of them.

I met Roy (76) unloading shopping from his car one day and he agreed I could call round one day and talk to him and his wife about the village. Although he was never a miner, Roy also mentioned the Kippax connection:

*When Bank Top closed, that was the end of the pit community in the village. People were diverted into factories in Lowland Moor and Mayfield and a lot went to Yorkshire in the early 1960s...The plumbing company I worked for asked me to move to Leeds, which I did in 1977. When we got to Yorkshire we realised there were people we knew in Kippax. We started to go out and discovered we knew people from*

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<sup>33</sup> Comment on <http://www.francisfrith.com/>

<sup>34</sup> The Durham Big Meeting, or Miners' Gala, is an annual event in July when colliery banners are marched into Durham accompanied by brass bands and Labour Party politicians and trade union leaders make speeches.

*the village, they had all been sent to the same area, there was one particular estate of houses where they were... Quite a few went down to Nottingham as well, a place called Alfreton<sup>35</sup>. A good friend of ours went there, then he emigrated to Australia in the mid-1960s on the £10 deal, it took weeks to get there and they had to rough it at first. We went out to see him in 1994 - we keep in touch.*

Biddulph in Staffordshire was another common destination. Over coffee and cake at their kitchen table, retired Sleetburn GP Dr Roberts (73) and his wife Daphne told me about their time in the village since 1963. Daphne explained:

*A lot of miners moved away, miners were very mobile, moving from pit to pit, or going by bus to the pits on the coast, or moving to Wales, Mid Lancashire, Staffordshire... A lot from Bank Top went to Biddulph in Staffordshire to work in the Victoria Pit. My sister married a GP in Biddulph, so when a family arrived from Sleetburn, her husband was able to amaze them by saying "You're from Sleetburn, so your GP was Dr Roberts?" Sometimes people stayed down there ten to fifteen years then came back.*

Although the population of West Durham has been singled out for criticism for being insufficiently mobile, we have seen that Sleetburn and villages like it were founded on occupational mobility and suffered major losses of population to migration in the 1920/30s and 1950/60s.

#### MATTER OUT OF PLACE

I now turn to the reasons why West Durham mining villages were *seen* as immobile. I will argue that one reason behind the idea of such villages as fixed in place related to a fundamental and widespread dislike of the existence of these villages in the first place, a dislike culminating in Durham County Council's unprecedented decision to demolish more than a hundred villages. As I demonstrated in my literature review of mining villages in Chapter 2, mining has a liminal status almost by definition since the mine links the surface with what lies below, and mining villages were also liminal in terms of the English idea of rural versus industrial spaces. Referring to the North East of England in particular, Priestley described 'villages that are monuments of mean ugliness... the beastliest towns and villages in the country' (Priestley, 1997 [1934] pp. 327 and 329), Taylor called them a 'fungoid growth' (Taylor, 1966 p. 22) and Durham County Council suggested they were:

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<sup>35</sup> Alfreton is only 17 miles from Nottingham but is actually in Derbyshire.

Not villages in a meaningful sense of the term, but long, straight terraces of mean industrial housing strung along highways or packed close together in grid-iron blocks, like patches of Manchester slum set down on open moors and hillside<sup>36</sup>.

#### MEAN INDUSTRIAL HOUSING

The appearance of this 'mean industrial housing' had nothing to do with its inhabitants and everything to do with the colliery owners rapidly throwing up whole villages to attract workers to these previously sparsely populated areas. Except for a few Quaker colliery owners such as the Pease family, most colliery owners built as cheaply as possible, which meant terraces tightly packed together, very close to the pit and comprising one room with a roof space reached with a ladder, sometimes back to back with another house. If they were not back to back, these houses might also have a lean-to scullery area, or even two downstairs rooms and a roof space also divided into two. Streets were not made up, nor was drainage provided to the houses, some of which had a tap, whilst others were served by a communal water supply. An outdoor earth toilet was often shared with several other families.

As a result of the provision of these tiny houses, overcrowding from the 1900s to the 1940s was generally worse in County Durham and Northumberland than anywhere else in England apart from London. The lack of sanitation and the overcrowding contributed to high mortality rates from diseases such as tuberculosis and cholera. In 1919 the number of persons living more than two to a room in England and Wales was 9% but in selected mining districts it was anything between 17% and 44% (Church et al., 1986 p. 608). In 1919 Sankey Commission<sup>37</sup> members described colliery houses as 'a reproach to our civilization. No judicial language is sufficiently strong or sufficiently severe to apply to their condemnation' (Supple, 1987 p. 457). In July 1919, representatives of Durham County Council and of the local sanitary authorities met colliery owners and made the following requests: repair and renovation of defective houses, abolish back-to-backs, enlarge most dwellings, provide yards, pave and channel streets, abolish the ash-privy system, provide proper larders and baths, as well as pithead baths. The report of the meeting concludes: 'No definite

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<sup>36</sup> D. Senior (undated) *Growth Points for Durham* (pamphlet produced for Durham County Council quoted in Pattison 2004 p. 312.

<sup>37</sup> Set up in 1919 to report on miners' wages, hours and nationalisation

undertaking was given by the owners' (Report of Durham County Director of Public Health 1919 p. 40). Around the same time, Langdon UDC was considering reports such as this one:

Reported that at No. 1 Heworth Street Sleetburn, four persons were occupying one room: father, mother and two children and that this was the only accommodation that they had for cooking sleeping living and washing purposes. Resolved that the clerk be instructed to write to [the colliery owners] asking if anything could be done to relieve this overcrowding (Langdon UDC Minutes March 1920 UD/BB/10).

Married miners could hope to be allocated a house although not always immediately, but single miners were expected to lodge with families, and families to accommodate them whatever the degree of overcrowding. In West Durham once the colliery owners had hurriedly erected a few rows of housing for their workers, they rarely built more after about 1900, which led to a shortage of colliery houses right up until the 1950s. This tied housing also meant eviction during strikes; mass evictions were made across the North East in 1831/2 and 1844, as well as more limited evictions including some at other collieries within three miles of Sleetburn in 1863 and 1883<sup>38</sup> (Church et al., 1986 p. 280). Since there was little or no other housing available, evictees often ended up camping outside for longer or shorter periods of time. Dorothy told me of one eviction she witnessed in the 1930s where the woman had just had a baby and the bailiffs put the bed out on the street with her in it. She also told me how, as well as moving between different pits, miners also frequently swapped colliery houses: her own husband arranged to swop houses on numerous occasions; in thirteen years the couple lived in five different houses in Sleetburn; in one instance Dorothy went into hospital from one house and came home to another – selected by her husband because it was closer to his father's house where he could '*help out with the pigs*'.

#### DURHAM'S MURDERED VILLAGES<sup>39</sup>

The poor quality of colliery housing combined with the mass unemployment of the 1920s and 1930s to create the conditions for what was loosely known in Sleetburn and around Durham as the 'Category D policy' i.e. the decision by Durham County Council to demolish some 121 mining villages, thus formalising the idea of mining villages as matter out of place.

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<sup>38</sup> The evictions following the 1863 'Rocking Strike' are described in fictionalised form in local author Frederick Grice's 1966 children's book, '*The Bonny Pit Laddie*' (Puffin Books, London).

<sup>39</sup> This title is taken from J. Barr, Durham's Murdered Villages. *New Society* (3 April 1969) 523-5, itself a reference to Ellen Wilkinson's 1939 *The town that was murdered: The life-story of Jarrow*. London, Victor Gollancz.

Although unique in British planning and indeed political history, this policy has received limited academic attention. Pattison has set out how, although not formally agreed until 1951, the policy was rooted in the depression years when the Times described mining villages as 'places without a future' (20, 21 and 22 March 1934), the Ministry of Labour argued that any encouragement to live in the area would 'offer an undoubted attraction to that small section of the population which has no desire to work' and the Commissioner for Special Areas set out to reduce housing accommodation in these villages (Ryder, 1979 pp. 50-51, Pattison, 2004).

An influential study put forward a typology of mining villages as going through stages of youth and maturity before reaching old age, with pits worked out and population leaving, describing some of the villages in South West Durham as 'quite derelict' and putting forward the 'transference of their population' as the only way forward (Smailes, 1938 p. 220). Daysh & Simmonds' study of the 'problem of West Durham' was more nuanced, arguing that if migration was one solution, then job creation was certainly another (Daysh and Symonds, 1953). Smailes's typology continued to be influential however, and was explicitly adopted in Taylor's study of inter-colliery transfers from west Durham in the 1960s (Taylor, 1966, Taylor, 1969). Taylor also classified migrants and non-migrants into different types according to motivation and tended to attribute greater moral value to migrants, whom he described as having 'aspirations which cannot be fulfilled in the West Durham village', a phenomenon which he saw, typically for the 1960s, as part of a wider transformation of the working class (Taylor, 1966 pp. 199-200). In 1951 Durham County Council published a Development Plan using the category classification A, B, C or D. In Category D villages, 'no future development would be permitted and, wherever possible, property would be acquired and demolished and the population would be relocated to new housing'. Interestingly, this categorisation of villages closely paralleled the Coal Board's categorisation of pits: the 1950 Plan for Coal placed collieries in three investment categories: A for long-life collieries, B for an expected life of five to ten years and C unlikely to be viable for more than five years, and in practice likely to be closed in the near future (Ashworth and Pegg, 1986 p. 259).

The D village policy officially ended in June 1977 after many years of protest across the affected villages including Sleetburn (Hudson, 1989 p. 301, Pattison, 2004). Few of the 121 villages were in fact demolished completely, but many ended up truncated, lopsided and

run-down through piecemeal demolition and lack of investment. Arguably, the policy was simply an extreme form of the common preference of local authorities in rural areas for concentrating public amenities in a few villages only (Newby, 1980 p. 188); the reason why planners were able to go further in this case was because the poor quality of the colliery housing also provided the justification for wholesale demolition under slum-clearance legislation. Echoing my argument in Chapter 2 about the importance of ideas as to what a village should be, Pattison suggests that 'the aesthetic labelling of homes as "slums" was central to much of the debate' (p. 322); as he says, 'all plans during this period contained rather biased descriptions of the unacceptability of both built and natural environment in the mining districts' (p. 325). He then describes how there was no change of heart; it was increased car ownership and changes in patterns of travel to work which came to the rescue: 'the fact that many villages were located in potentially desirable green and pleasant locations for commuting radically changed the locational value of many settlements' (p. 327).

#### THE MOUSE THAT ROARED<sup>40</sup>

Sleetburn was graded Category D by county planners who argued that it was badly sited with poor standards of property, very few social facilities and doubtful employment prospects and should be allowed to contract and become more compact (Clark, 1987). However, the village is a good example of Pattison's argument that the Category D policy foundered on the failure to realise the attachment to place which people had (Pattison, 2004): although the village lost a large amount of its population in the 1960s as the tenants of slum-cleared colliery housing were moved to council estates in nearby Langdon and Shire Moor, families resisted official policy by continuing to make their lives in Sleetburn, and when the village's Category D status was revoked in 1971 largely thanks to the efforts of local councillor Ronald (87), new bungalows were quickly built along with a new school and new Club, which at that time had long queues outside on Friday and Saturday nights.

Other examples of resistance to official discourse include the persistence of local place names. The village originally had a local name which was also the name of the farmhouse

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<sup>40</sup> Wibberley L. (1955) *The Mouse That Roared*, a satirical novel about a small fictional country which declares war on the United States and wins by accident.

demolished to make way for the pit workings. However the name of the colliery and with it the village was changed by the colliery owner as early as 1889, possibly to avoid confusion with a similarly-named colliery in Northumberland<sup>41</sup> (Clark, 1987). Despite this, the older name has persisted and is still in regular use by local people, including in the names of local businesses. In the 1980s, a group of local young men had a gang going by the old village name. Now in their forties, they showed me their home-made gang tattoos, inclining their heads and pulling down their collars to bare the backs of their necks - although they declined to be photographed. The gang acronym also appeared in more recent graffiti around the village. I heard other local names such as 'Dummies corner'<sup>42</sup> for a bend in the road to Lowland Moor, which I was told was named for two deaf brothers who lived there in the 1930s, and 'the Caunch' for the area of Lowland Moor which is home to what was formerly the Caunch, later the Station pub.

Although Sleetburn refused to die, the demolition of parts of the village and the lack of new building or other investment for twenty years had lasting effects. In terms of mobility in the village, the ban on new housing had a mixed effect; on the one hand, the limited choice of housing meant some people moved elsewhere; on the other, the lack of new housing also meant few incomers (see Chapter 5). Far from opposing change to the village, Sleetburn people themselves were enthusiastic supporters of new development. This attitude was in fact characteristic of many of the local villages; as Ronald (87) explained to me one afternoon, more housing was needed to increase the population and safeguard remaining local services such as the school, shop and club. A councillor for a larger neighbouring village told me the secret to its success: *'Every seven to ten years we have built a little estate'*, he said. In Sleetburn and other former Category D villages, the lack of investment created stigma. As one man told me: *'You meet someone, you say, where you from? They say: Lowland Park. You say: Lowland Park where the new estate is, fantastic! They say: where you from? You say: Sleetburn - they don't know what to say...'*

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<sup>41</sup> The new name first appears, without comment, in the Langdon UDC minutes UD/BB/1 p. 410 May 1889.

<sup>42</sup> October 1971 council minute UD/BC/98: 'Request for street lighting between Dummy's Corner and Moorside Farm'.

## THERE AND BACK AGAIN

*I cycle to the village past the sheep in the fields, past Moorside Farm, first appearing in seventeenth century records. The village is still and quiet; as I cycle along the colliery row, the only movement is Stephen slowly walking up the steps to his house. I reach the village hall; a taxi is stopped outside: Fred and Joyce are being helped out by the day care workers. I take the turning for the Club and lock up the bike outside the Club, use my key fob to click open the door and turn left into the bar. Kevin is at his usual seat, Mark will probably join him when he comes off shift. Peter will be in at three for a pint and whisky chaser. Russell and Darren will be in for a pint after work and one of them will carry Peter's next pint over. Heather is on the bar as usual.*

The paragraph above, describing a typical visit to the village, shows how it could seem static and unchanging. In this final section of the chapter I will explore circular 'there and back again' mobilities and argue that these have been largely overlooked or interpreted as stasis. Finally I will revisit the above account at the end of the chapter, showing how misleading a superficial account of a place can be.

## GOING INTO SERVICE

Until the gradual advent of pithead baths, and of Council housing with indoor plumbing and hot water from the 1920s onwards, mining work in County Durham was heavily dependent on the labour of pit wives in the home, particularly for heating water for bathing and washing pit clothing. As a result, the Government and the mining industry actively discouraged employers who might have provided jobs for women from coming to the area (Hudson, 1981) and pre-war County Durham had one of the lowest rates of female employment outside the home<sup>43</sup>. These low overall rates resulted from a pattern of early marriages and miners' wives not working outside the home; women aged fourteen to eighteen had no choice but to find a job, which meant most had to go into service (or 'go to place'); in fact a very high proportion of women worked as domestic servants in Britain right up until the Second World War (Todd, 2005 ).

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<sup>43</sup> The 1921 census showed 14% of women in Durham engaged in paid employment, as against 26% of women nationally. The 1931 census for Langdon District showed only 605 economically active women compared to 5,700 men. Of these women, the majority (53%) worked in personal service.

The story told by Dorothy (93) was typical. On one occasion I visited her at home in her bungalow at the top of Sleetburn, but generally we would chat at the village hall lunch club on a Wednesday or a Friday. Dorothy left her home in Deer Park aged fourteen to go down to Leeds as a domestic worker in a nursing home. She came back to Durham when she was sixteen because her older sister was getting married and persuaded Dorothy to take over her job as a live-in maid in a private household in Durham City. What Dorothy remembered above all was cleaning the steps: she told me there *were 'steps up to the front door, steps up to the back door and steps between rooms'*. Dorothy lit the kitchen fire in the morning, made the porridge, cooked all the meals and did all the cleaning. When she was told by the doctor that she needed some time off with 'housemaid's knee'<sup>44</sup>, her employer sacked her. Luckily, Dorothy then found a job with a woman who ran a school in her large house on the same street. Here she lived in a little room on the top floor and did all the cooking and cleaning for the dozen or so pupils. She had one day off a week when she visited her family. Sometimes she took the youngest boarder with her, who was five years old and whose parents were away in '*British West Africa*'; he loved to see her six younger siblings. Dorothy stayed at this house<sup>45</sup> until she got married aged eighteen. After that she did '*a bit cleaning*'<sup>46</sup> for affluent households in Durham City but her husband was not supportive; he told her when they got married that he was the one who brought home the pay packet. She also said the cost of the bus fares to Durham '*made it hardly worthwhile*'. Many other local women went away to work either in service or nursing. Like Dorothy but a little earlier, Kevin (59)'s grandmother was in service in a private household in Durham around 1915 – a house I passed every day on my way to Sleetburn. Mark (59)'s mother went down to work at a hospital in Leicestershire as a '*domestic*' (cleaner) in the 1930s and Winifred (83) went to Sheffield Hospital in 1943.

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<sup>44</sup> prepatellar bursitis, an occupational injury caused by lengthy periods of kneeling

<sup>45</sup> The house later became the 'pre-preparatory' private infant school attended by Tony Blair between 1958 and 1961. In the 1970s it was let out to students including a current member of the Anthropology Department at Durham University, and was known by them as 'the hovel'. Later still, it was purchased and restored by another academic, an authority on Irish immigration to the North East who later became godfather to my youngest son. Through this contact I was able to arrange for Dorothy to visit the house in 2013 - seventy-four years after she was in service there.

<sup>46</sup> The preposition is often left out in local speech: *a bit (of) chat, a bit (of) cleaning, he belongs (to) Durham*.

## THE ARMED FORCES

Military service was another form of ‘there and back again’ mobility: Sleetburn men and women served in conflicts including Iraq, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland as well as the two World Wars. In the first seven months of the First World War, 40% of British miners aged nineteen to thirty-eight enlisted (Supple, 1987 p. 48); the Sleetburn War Memorial listed ninety-one men from the village. Doris (101) still lived alone in a neighbouring village to Sleetburn and regularly attended day care in Sleetburn Village Hall. One afternoon I asked her about the Great War; she remembered the telegraph boy coming to the door with the telegram that said her father had been killed. Doris was very young, and her main recollection was her mother being so upset that: ‘*We only had Oxo for lunch, and no pudding*’. During the Second World War, coal miners were a protected occupation as coalmining was essential to the war effort, but several joined up anyway and eighteen men from Sleetburn are listed on the village War Memorial. One of the miners who volunteered was Frances’s (65) father:

*He was in a protected occupation as a miner but he told lies and said he was in a different job, to volunteer. He was only small, my dad, so I think maybe he had something to prove. He got emphysema from the war, he was in it for the full six years, in the Army, he was at Dunkirk, he came back on a small fishing boat... It was very hard for my mum – because my dad enlisted, she stopped getting free coal from the coal board, she had our Edwin and was six weeks pregnant with our Bruce when he left.*

Nigel (59)’s father was wounded twice in Burma; Mavis (75)’s father served in Egypt and Italy as a driver in supplies. Ronald (87) was a datal boy<sup>47</sup> at Sleetburn Colliery when he volunteered for the navy in 1942; he was an ‘ack-ack’ (anti-aircraft) gunner on the HMS Emerald cruiser in the Fifth Squadron under Mountbatten. Fred (94) was serving his apprenticeship as a stonemason when he was called up in 1939. He served with the Durham Light Infantry but was captured in June 1940 and held for five years before enduring the ‘death march’ through Poland and Germany from November 1944 to April 1945.

Meanwhile, Fred’s fiancée had also been called up:

*She went to the ammunition factory in West Bromwich which used to be the Hercules Cycle Factory, she was there three years and had to live in lodgings, she was doing*

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<sup>47</sup> Datal: paid by the day. Young miners generally started as datal boys before progressing to putters, who load the coal into wagons, then hewers who cut or dig out the coal.

*twelve-hour shifts, nights one week and days the next... it made her ill, she got anaemic as well.*

Ivy (88) was called up in 1943 and went to the NAAFI near Goole in Yorkshire, 'looking after Canadian soldiers who were stationed there, they were lovely'. She was there about two years, working in the canteen. She told me: 'There were two girls there who belonged Yorkshire, sometimes one would take me to her house on Sundays, the other one loaned me a bike to get there; I went there for Sunday dinner'. Joyce (89) was also called up in 1943 and worked for the Bristol Aircraft Company as a progress chaser. Closer to home, many local women worked at the Aycliffe Royal Ordnance Factory ROF 59 (1941-1945), fifteen miles from Sleetburn. This huge factory employed around 17,000 workers, most of them women. The work was highly dangerous as the women filled bullets and bombs, and there were many serious, sometimes fatal explosions (Hyams, 2013). Former 'Aycliffe Angel' Joan (89) told me how the powder they put in the bombs stained their skin yellow. Most women went because they had to, but Frances knew of one woman in Sleetburn with a different story to tell:

*She lived to ninety - she went to work in a munitions factory during the war, her husband had said no, she went to the police and said she wanted to work in a munitions factory and he wouldn't let her - he got into trouble for that. She was getting loads more money than he did down the pit - after the war she carried on working.*

After the war, many Sleetburn men and women continued to join all three services; Colin (75) did nine years in the pits and twenty-two years in the Army; he had intended to join the local regiment, the Durham Light Infantry (DLI), but he told the recruiting officer he wanted to drive, so he went to the transport corps<sup>48</sup>. Nicholas (57) joined the Scotch Guards when he left school and did tours of duty in various places including Northern Ireland, where he was wounded. Albert (82) was in the Navy for fourteen years, then thirteen years in the Reserves. Gordon (64) was in the RAF as was Cheryl (52), who joined when she was seventeen and 'had been all over' before leaving and training to become an Anglican vicar. The man whose wake was being held when I first visited the village had been in the Parachute Regiment. At the Club I met a man in his forties who had been stationed in

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<sup>48</sup> Royal Corps of Transport, formerly the Royal Army Service Corps

Germany and also served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a young woman from the village was serving in Kenya at the time of my fieldwork.

#### DAILY MOBILITIES

As the previous paragraphs suggest, Sleeburn has long been networked into a far wider area than the stereotype of the isolated mining village would suggest. This is an important point because as we saw in an earlier section, there was a strong assumption in much of the social policy and academic literature of the 1930s to the 1970s if not beyond that mining villages were fated to disappear if the associated collieries closed; an assumption which fed policies such as Category D. Pattison suggested that the Category D policy failed partly as the result of changing patterns of travel to work (Pattison, 2004), but travel to work distances in such villages have long been greater than has been supposed even without car ownership, which continues to be relatively low in these villages. As Holdsworth has pointed out, too much emphasis can be given to long-distance mobility, privileging this over other patterns of movement (Holdsworth, 2013 p. 82) and this has also contributed to ideas of the mining village as static. In this section I will show that it was never the case that those living in mining villages all worked within the village itself; many people in Sleeburn over the past eighty years have travelled quite long distances daily either in order to go to work or in the course of their work.

We have seen that women always worked away from the village, either living in as domestic servants or commuting every day into Durham City. In the 1940s, Ivy worked at Woolworths and Constance served in a teashop in Durham and relied on buses; Nancy (82) had a kitchen job and told me how she got into trouble with her parents in 1947 when she accepted a lift home on a motorbike because she was *'fed up with waiting for the bus'*. As for the miners, when Sleeburn Colliery closed in 1953, many older miners were transferred to collieries or took up factory jobs five to ten miles away and commuted daily, whilst the younger ones commuted to the longer life coastal pits twenty miles away, or moved south as we saw earlier in this chapter. There were also always people travelling for a living, from Peter (85) delivering the farm milk in 1941 and later driving the *'tankies'* or tank engines on the colliery railway lines, to Donald (76) walking a five-mile radius collecting grocery orders for the Friday deliveries. Dorothy (93)'s grandparents kept a pub, and from 1909 when she was

fifteen, Dorothy's mother would take the dray<sup>49</sup> out with the big dray horses and deliver beer and spirits to the pubs and big private houses right across Weardale. Many men in the village worked as bus or train drivers, coal hauliers, long-distance wagon<sup>50</sup> drivers or drove a taxi or an ice-cream van. Far from being confined to the 'bounded' village, people in Sleetburn have been working and moving over a much wider area for at least a hundred years.

#### WORKING AWAY AND COMING BACK

We saw in earlier sections that many people have left the village to find work including waves of migration in the depression years and the mass transfers of North East miners to more southerly pits in the 1950s and 1960s. These later transfers have been the subject of two unpublished theses (Taylor, 1966, Evans, 1996) which found that many did return, some fairly quickly and others many years later. We saw earlier that Winifred's husband transferred to a colliery in Stoke in 1954, but he decided to come back to Sleetburn in 1966 although she would have been happy to stay in Stoke.

In later periods, people continued to leave Sleetburn to find work but also continued to return. Roy (76)'s job with a plumbing firm took him to Leeds in 1977 and he and his wife Mavis did not return to the area until 2001 when Roy retired. Roy said: *'Me, I could have settled anywhere'* but Mavis had told him: *'I will go with you anywhere providing you bring me back to my roots, to Sleetburn'*. Roy added: *'We came back to our old church and our old watering hole - the Club - and to people we know. It's amazing how people are so pleased to see you come back'*. I met Mark (59) in the Club and commented on his accent; he explained that he had moved down to Leicester in 1964 aged eleven, after his father was made redundant from a local colliery brickworks:

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<sup>49</sup> a truck or cart without sides, for delivering beer barrels or other heavy loads

<sup>50</sup> lorry

*My dad got a chance of a job with a house through a friend he knew in Leicester; me and our Cyril didn't want to go, our mum didn't want to go either but we were there until he retired. They always said they would come back though, and they did. It was two different lifestyles – people go to work up here but there's no rush about it, everyone is more laid back, down in Leicester everything was rush rush rush, it gets worse further south as well. It's getting the same up here, but it's worse down there. Also, down there they didn't take too kindly to outsiders, which is the same as here though it's okay once you're in- but when I came back, they welcomed me back with open arms, even though I wasn't born in Sleetburn - I was a local lad come back.*

Russell (47) worked as a scaffolder in London for a few years in the early 1990s, but also up in Aberdeen, doing offshore work on oil rigs. When he was in London he would come back to his family on a Friday and go back to London on the Sunday night. During my fieldwork, several men in the area had taken up temporary construction jobs in London leading up to the 2012 Olympic Games, and many of Mark's colleagues at the local bus company were going down to London for temporary Olympic driving jobs, although the drivers at least would be returning to their local work afterwards.

#### CLASSED MOBILITIES

The following paragraph takes us back to the scene I described at the beginning of this section (headed 'There and back again'), but this time including additional details (from real events and life stories) which demonstrate how apparent stasis could conceal high levels of current and historic mobility. At first glance, a Sleetburn resident might seem fixed in place, and readily agree that she was Sleetburn '*born and bred*'; it was only much later in our acquaintance that her twenty or thirty years elsewhere might be mentioned.

*Stephen has just returned from dropping his brother off at the railway station, he has been up from Kippax for the Miners Gala and stayed a few days. Stephen comes from a large family, but all his siblings moved away for work. Fred is thinking about his feet, which are uncomfortable in the heat. Five years in POW camps followed by the forced march to Berlin mean he can't stand for too long. Joyce was called up to work in an aircraft factory in Bristol and met her first husband down there, although she came back a few years later. Kevin married into Sleetburn from Deer Park; he worked in the last mine open in County Durham, after that he travelled all over the UK for a garage door company. Mark moved down to Leicester with his family when he was eleven. Later his parents retired back here and he moved back up to care for them until they died. Peter's Welsh-speaking grandparents came*

*to Sleetburn for work. Russell has just heard from his daughter in London; Adam has driven back from Chester where he is working on a civil engineering project. During the week he lives in a Portakabin but he's back every weekend to see his little boy. Heather's father was a Bevin boy who came to Sleetburn Colliery from Scotland and married a local girl.*

We have seen in this chapter how the people of Sleetburn and neighbouring villages have been highly mobile and I have suggested that they have been construed as lacking mobility by historically rooted ideas of the mining village as 'matter out of place'. I have also argued that the idea of the mining village as static has been promoted by the fact that cyclical 'there and back again' mobilities have been largely overlooked or construed as 'failed' mobilities. In the village scene I described earlier, there is an appearance of stasis partly because all the people mentioned were born within a five-mile radius; what was not immediately apparent was their movement away and back again over time.

Developing this argument further, I suggest that only particular, classed mobilities are accepted as legitimate in current discourses of mobility. I will show in Chapter 6 relating to aspiration that working-class trajectories are less likely to involve departure from home, and when they do involve departure, are also more likely to involve an eventual return to a previous location which has been described as 'failed mobility' (Clark, 2012). Holdsworth has described the classed idea of going away to university, or how the middle-class young person makes the transition to adulthood through a physical and normally definitive break, or departure from home, and has suggested that working-class transitions do not involve this break (Holdsworth, 2009b). Better-paid jobs also make mobility more financially worthwhile, whilst working-class jobs are tied to a local labour market (Savage, 1988). For those who do break away, this involves an affective loss, which is captured in some of the allusions made to the yearning for home made by the returners I have referred to in this chapter; whereas in middle-class thinking, return equals failure.

In Chapter 5 I go on to look at place attachment in Sleetburn in order to understand the common Sleetburn pattern of cyclical or return mobility demonstrated in this chapter, before turning in Chapter 6 to an examination of education and employment in Sleetburn and their relationship to an alleged dearth of aspiration in mining villages.

## CHAPTER 5: A RICH EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE

I now consider how local connections worked in Sleetburn. I will show that Sleetburn had few 'incomers' and that most of these came from similar backgrounds in nearby villages. Local people generally had a mining family background, similar education and employment pathways and a shared housing experience, all of which created connectedness. People in the village relied extensively on family networks for help with housing, employment, childcare and elderly care and many had a strong attachment not so much to place as to this network of connections in time and space. At the same time, local people were aware that the idea of a 'close-knit' community was a double-edged one and that the village was seen by some as insular and limiting.

### NATIVES AND STRANGERS

Much has been written about the role of the 'incomers' to a village (Frankenberg, 1957, Strathern et al., 1981, Phillips, 1986, Strathern, 1992, Rapport, 1993) contrasted with the 'native' or authentic village population and there is sometimes an assumption that this opposition between those coming in and those 'born and bred' in the village is a universal one, or at least that it is against this model that other ideas such as 'elective belonging' must assert themselves (Savage et al., 2005). I argue however that the idea of the incomer is under-theorized in terms of power. The native/incomer dichotomy tends to emerge as an organising category in people's minds where particular power relations are at work; specifically, where incomers are seen as competing for scarce resources and perhaps also taking over village institutions. In other cases, the issue is not so much of incomers taking over as of their imputed failure to contribute to village resources – for instance by failing to support village institutions such as local shops.

Incomers are only defined as such insofar as they are distinguishable from the existing population. There are many ways of being distinguishable including most obviously race or ethnicity but also socio-economic status which is the one most relevant here and will form the subject of this discussion. Problems typically arise where there is a disparity in resources between incomers and the established village residents: incomers with more resources make an area more expensive (gentrification, or in rural areas counter-urbanisation (Fielding, 1982) whereas those with fewer resources move it downmarket (ghettoization).

Because these scarce resources are typically housing, much recent scholarly work has been done in the field of housing studies and the following section is broadly informed by that discipline (Fitzpatrick and Stephens, 2008, Clapham et al., 2012) as well as regional studies from human geography (Hudson, 1981, Beynon et al., 2000, Hudson, 2010, Hudson, 2011).

#### INCOMERS AND HOUSING

The word 'incomer' was never used in Sleetburn, but many people said '*it's all strangers now*'. Although there was some movement into the village as we will see below, I will suggest that this feeling had less to do with objective numbers than with the trope 'things aren't what they used to be' whereby the loss of community, like the loss of the rural (see Chapter 2) is restated in every generation irrespective of the objective reality. This feeling also tended to be age-related; older people lost the local connections which they had developed with fellow workers or other local parents and were less likely to make new ones. As time seemed to speed up with increasing years, an earlier period of mutual friendship between families stretched into a remembered golden age. There was also a cohort-specific element whereby village men no longer worked together in the pit as they did up until the 1950s, nor did village women work together in the factories as many did until the 1980s and 1990s, so new arrivals were less likely to be integrated via a shared workplace.

There were few incomers to Sleetburn overall during the historical period I am considering since the village shrank considerably in size from the 1920s onwards. As I explained in Chapter 4, the long-term economic decline and loss of population in the county was a factor as was Sleetburn's Category D status and the associated thirty-year ban on new housing and investment. In more recent years, the flight of the urban middle classes to the countryside since the 1960s (Newby, 1980 p. 22) largely bypassed Durham villages such as Sleetburn although the more picturesque dales further south and west have been affected. The first reason for this is lack of demand from would-be gentrifiers since the area has only a small number of graduate jobs and a small professional and managerial middle class compared to other areas of England<sup>51</sup>. Additionally as we saw in Chapter 4, most local villages were thrown up in a hurry by colliery owners and have few conventionally attractive features such as the village greens and ancient stone buildings linked to the 'ideal' village I described in Chapter 2. Most Sleetburn housing stock at the time of my fieldwork comprised terraces

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<sup>51</sup> <http://www.censusprofiler.org/> accessed on 28 May 2014

of two- or three- bedroom colliery houses with small gardens, along with two 1930s council estates of more spacious two- to four-bedroom houses with larger gardens, plus some mixed-tenure modern starter homes. All these types of housing were available throughout the county and there was therefore little reason for anyone without family connections to move to the village given the poor transport links and limited facilities. This is not to say that Sleetburn was entirely a working-class community in 2012 any more than it had ever been; class was visibly reproduced in those few large houses in and around the village which belonged fairly continuously to the middle classes, whether colliery owners, doctors and prosperous farmers in the 1930s or senior managers and university professors in the 2010s. Race was not a complicating factor in Sleetburn as it was an area of out- rather than in-migration since the 1920s for the reasons set out in Chapter 4; the population of County Durham is 98% white<sup>52</sup>. An idea of the homogeneity of the Sleetburn population can be gained from the fact that the local electoral register for 2012 showed only three Asian names; there were eight non-British European Union nationals listed (three of whom had Polish names) and no other foreign nationals at all out of 991 electors.

#### DISRUPTIVE STRANGERS

Moving onto the idea of ghettoization, when people in Sleetburn complained about strangers in anything other than general terms, it was generally this concept they were referring to and it related to two different phenomena. The first involved residents of the two council estates complaining about how the Council<sup>53</sup> *'put anyone in these days'*. This was a reference to a change from a housing allocation system in which local councillors had a say to one which was managed centrally and where, once the applicant's housing need was accepted, allocations were done on a 'first come first served' basis as properties became vacant. Council house allocations are often a controversial area with a wide perception that particular minorities are given unfair preference (Garner, 2011) but this was not the issue here. It was rather the case that most people eligible for council housing who wanted to live in Sleetburn had family connections; those people rehoused in the village who did not have those connections were often families with complex needs coming from

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.nepho.org.uk/topics/Black%20and%20ethnic%20minorities> accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015

<sup>53</sup> In Durham as in most of the UK, Former council housing was managed by an 'arm's length' provider but the term 'council housing' continued to be used and is retained here COLE, I. & POWELL, R. 2010. The future of Arms Length Management Organisations: the uncertain fate of a social housing Hybrid. *People, Place & Policy Online*, 4, 50-61..

further afield and who also moved on quickly, but had a disruptive impact in the meantime. The other area of significant population churn<sup>54</sup> was the small private rented sector concentrated in five terraces. These colliery houses were sold off by the NCB in the 1970s and if the sitting tenants (usually retired miners) or the local authority did not want to buy them, many were sold off in batches then, or bought up individually later. Low prices made them attractive to absentee speculative landlords who often failed to maintain properties or vet tenants properly. This problematic private-rented housing sector in former mining villages was flagged up some years ago (Beynon et al., 1999 p. 5) and although it was not as big a problem in Sleetburn as in many other County Durham villages, it made a significant contribution to anti-social behaviour in the area as well as lowering house prices noticeably on affected streets. During the time I was carrying out fieldwork there were a number of incidents with tenants of these properties involving the police, and at least one owner-occupier moved elsewhere and rented out his house as a direct result of the night-time disturbances on these terraces.

I referred in Chapter 3 to some of the reasons why my account of the village could only be a partial one, including the difficulties in meeting those people who did not attend events at village venues. These people included private tenants, whom I only heard about from the police incidents above which were either mentioned to me or reported in the local paper, and families who had moved to council properties from outside the area, whom I only knew about in general terms because some had children at the primary school. Of the 120 people I knew best, all but two were either council tenants or owner occupiers; the two exceptions shared a private let but later moved to a council flat. In summary, disruptive mobility into the village did not include gentrification but the cohesion of some areas of colliery and council housing had been disrupted. However, changes in the type of resident in Sleetburn overall were extremely limited compared to most places, and this historical continuity contributed to a shared culture which I will consider further on in this chapter.

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<sup>54</sup> The high turnover in the private rented sector is illustrated by the fact that a quarter to a third of the houses on some colliery terraces had nobody listed on the electoral register; this was not the case for other housing, although names were sometimes out of date or listed twice, for two successive properties they occupied.

## MARRYING INTO SLEETBURN

Another factor contributing to the creation of a shared culture was that one obvious category of incomers i.e. marriage or life partners generally came from surrounding pit villages and had similar backgrounds and lifestyles. Some marriage partners did come from further afield: Walter (80) came down from Scotland to work at the pit and married a local girl; Alison (56) left Northern Ireland and took up a job in Durham; she met her Sleetburn husband through her daughters' involvement in the village Jazz Band. Others met their partners whilst working away: Mark (59)'s mother met his father when she went down to work at Stamford Hospital in the 1930s as a 'domestic'. He came up to Corner Colliery to stay with his future wife's parents and fell in love with the area; they later moved to Sleetburn. Service in the armed forces provided further opportunities: Janice (65)'s mother was sent down to West Bromwich to do her war service, and subsequently met and married a man there, a gunner on a destroyer. Janice told me:

*They got married in 1946 but my mother didn't like it there so they came back. She was very private but she did tell us this – you know how we whitened steps<sup>55</sup>, well down there they thought she was 'touched' when she did that, they didn't do that down there.*

Denise (60)'s uncle met a Polish woman in Germany and brought her back to the village, but: *'She was not well received as people in the village thought of her as a German, a Nazi'*. Polish and Estonian refugees worked at Sleetburn Colliery during and after the war; one of these worked at Sleetburn pit, married a local woman and brought up a family in the village, where he still lived at the time of my fieldwork. Another man had come down from Scotland as a Bevin Boy<sup>56</sup> and settled in Sleetburn. Peter (85) often tried out the German phrases on me which he had learned from the prisoners of war who worked alongside him on a local farm - his favourite word was *'Arbeitspause'*<sup>57</sup>. Of the three men he knew well, two returned to Germany but one married a local girl and was still living in Durham in 2012. More recently, social media created new opportunities to meet: Alexander (21) met his Sleetburn partner Benjamin on the internet and came up to join him from Stoke in 2009.

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<sup>55</sup> This refers to the North East (and North West) practice of 'donkey-stoning' the front doorstep i.e. rubbing it with a white or coloured scouring block to give it a decorative finish.

<sup>56</sup> The 'Bevin Boy' scheme(1943-1948) involved sending every tenth conscript to the coal mines because of labour shortages

<sup>57</sup> Tea break

Despite these instances, people marrying into Sleetburn did on the whole come from nearby villages and the life stories they told me were similar. After the initial influx of population, families soon spread out through marriage into neighbouring villages, creating family networks across the whole West Durham area and sometimes beyond. Unsurprisingly, the greatest number of marriages involved partners from a cluster of adjoining villages namely Sleetburn itself, Langdon, Deer Park and Shiremoor, and this appeared to have been continuously the case for as long as anyone could remember, which was generally going back to the 1930s. Roy and Mavis (82) were both from Sleetburn and had known each other from childhood; whereas Ronald and Gladys, also both from the village, first met when they were eighteen. Dorothy married into Sleetburn from Deer Park in 1946 as did Kevin in 1976; Ivy married in from Langdon in 1945, Frances in 1967 and Dawn in 1988. Older couples met at dances or at the cinema, younger ones at the ice rink in Durham City or at the secondary school which served several local villages. Couples generally started their married life in either partner's home village rather than moving to a new location. Older generations were generally patrilocal: a wife from a different village would move to the location of her husband's pit, which was also usually the home of his parents and extended family. More recently, with most people commuting from the villages for work, couples were still likely to settle close to one or other set of parents, generally on the female partner's side, or to move back there once they had children, particularly if they worked in low-paid jobs and needed family help with childcare.

#### SHARED CULTURAL PRACTICES

Most people in Sleetburn had a lot in common, including a shared arrival story going back in most cases to the nineteenth century, a mining family background, similar education and employment pathways which I will consider in Chapter 6 and a shared housing experience, all of which created a degree of connectedness within the village which related to knowing people and being known.

In terms of a shared housing experience, we saw in Chapter 4 how Sleetburn and similar villages suffered from chronic overcrowding, and very poor quality housing from their inception in the late nineteenth century. In this context, the advent of council housing had a transformative effect. The local council started building public housing in 1919 and it is hard to overestimate the impact this had on people's lives. The improved housing and associated

drainage and sewerage works led to major improvements in health, and the move to council-built housing featured prominently in local life stories. Local authorities in county Durham were exceptionally active as house builders between the wars: council housing grew, as a proportion of the total stock in County Durham, from 1/400<sup>th</sup> in 1919 to about one sixth in 1939 compared with less than a tenth in the rest of England and Wales (Ryder, 1979). Langdon UDC started building estates in three areas including Sleetburn as soon as the legislation was passed in 1919<sup>58</sup> (Langdon Urban District Council book 10 p. 247). These first houses were built to the generous space standards of the 1918 Tudor Walters report, and are still standing in all three areas and still popular today. For those people who moved from a colliery house into a Council house, this was invariably a huge landmark in their lives. Edward (82), who moved to a new council house in Deer Park in 1937 at the age of seven told me he felt it was a *'castle – having a toilet and bathroom and that. The colliery house we had before had no bathroom, and you had to cross the road to use the toilet'*. Mark (59) moved to a council estate in a nearby village in 1959 when he was six. He described his reaction as: *'Over the moon... the garden, and hot and cold water – not having the tin bath in the kitchen, bath time used to be "get in, get out", then my kid brother would get in'*.

Council housing in the UK declined in popularity from the 1950s onwards, when building standards fell and large estates were built far from jobs and leisure facilities, as well as system-built and high-rise housing (Hanley, 2007 p. 81). However, this residualization did not happen in West Durham, where local authorities had a strong commitment to public housing, which was generally well built and continued to be popular; there were also no large council estates (10,000+ people) in County Durham, as there were on the edges of large cities such as Manchester and Glasgow, nor any high-rise housing. Following 'right to buy' legislation in 1980, some Sleetburn tenants bought their council house, but at the time of my fieldwork, housing in the village was not strongly differentiated, certainly in terms of which houses were owner occupied and which were rented from the Council. There was little external evidence to indicate which houses on the council estates were rented and which privately owned. Few gardens were obviously 'landscaped', nor did former council houses sprout porches, conservatories and ornate gateposts of the kind that mark out former council houses in some areas. I was told that at one time the houses which had been

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<sup>58</sup> 1919 Housing, Town Planning etc. Act (commonly known as the Addison Act)

bought by tenants were more likely to have new windows, but since the council's window renewal programme, this was no longer the case. There was no apparent pressure to 'keep up with the neighbours' in terms of exterior housing features and gardens, and the only exception to the generally utilitarian look was the self-build houses from the 1980s, which had a more suburban feel with garden gnomes and other decorative features. I attended a few meetings of the Sleetburn Residents' Association, which had previously been the Sleetburn (Council) Tenants' Association, but had been renamed and appeared to combine home owners and council tenants very amicably. I rarely heard home ownership referred to as an aspiration. One of the few mentions was when Janice (65), in the context of a conversation about the difficulty of finding jobs nowadays, said: *'I still class us as very fortunate, we don't actually own anything, we don't own our home, but we've kept it right, and the two boys have done better'* – by which she meant that her sons owned their own homes. Several other people who had been in reasonably continuous employment all their lives and would probably have been in a position to buy their council house, had not done so. Fred (94), a retired bus driver, told me how a Council officer had urged him to buy his house, but he had replied that he *'wasn't a mug'*; he would be liable for all the repairs if he did that.

Another aspect of shared culture in the village was the importance of the intergenerational family and the absence of a generation gap. As we will see in the next section, younger grandparents were closely involved in the care of grandchildren, and the 'older' elderly generally received a high level of support from relatives, particularly daughters living close by. In my experience in the village, even those older people without children never complained about 'young people' or 'the younger generation'. Jennifer (70) was sorry about the loss of her view to new housing, but despite having no children herself, she told me she didn't really mind as *'the young people need somewhere to live'*. Related to this was the rather surprising fact that apart from anti-social behaviour in the private-rented housing sector, nobody seemed to worry about crime – and this despite my spending a large part of my time with older people, who are generally expected to be more fearful. In fact, several people in their eighties and nineties told me that their front door was never locked and that I should just let myself in if they failed to answer the door. One couple who had moved back to the village after years away told me they hesitated at first before putting garden

ornaments out but soon realised they were safe, and another woman in her sixties told me she never locked her doors. Commonalities of background and experience, family connections and the small size of the village meant that for the people I knew at least, it appeared to be a safe place where they knew people and were known. I experienced this feeling myself in a small way: as I explained in chapter 3, I was no longer nervous around Russell once I knew him better, particularly after I had met his mother and sisters. Similarly, I ceased to feel nervous around the young men in hoodies messing around outside the village shop; the fact that I probably knew their mothers or grandmothers made them seem far less threatening.

#### THE LIMITS OF SHARED CULTURE

As Ravetz points out, in stressing the cosy and harmonious side of working-class culture it is easy to forget issues such as violence, intra-class divisions or the scapegoating of minorities (Ravetz, 2001 p. 162). In Sleetburn there was always the division between the respectable self and the rough 'other' (Ravetz, 2001 pp. 164-165 and pp. 169-170); for some people this meant identifying specific individuals or families as a problem, whilst for most it was simply a matter of their chosen group; because of my research I got to know more than a hundred people, but most people in Sleetburn (as elsewhere) socialised with a much smaller number. I referred in chapter 3 to the different networks in the village and how people in the same street might have different circles of friends; even in the Club there were separate groups: the dancers would come in smartly dressed holding their dancing shoes in a drawstring cloth bag and turn right into the concert room, whilst the young male drinkers and the older domino players came in casual clothes and turned left into the public bar. The two groups mingled only briefly at the door, or whilst having a cigarette outside as we will see in Chapter 8.

Apart from different networks and interests, people in the village also had varying political views as was illustrated by an incident during the local history project which I developed with Sleetburn Primary School. The children had learned about the 1926 Miners' Lockout as an example of local resistance and were primed to interview elderly members of the lunch club about it. I watched as a group of three children approached Fred (94) with their clipboards. I returned a little later and found the children looking bemused: Fred was lecturing them on the irresponsibility of the miners '*bringing the country to its knees*'.

Another example concerned the 1984/5 Miners' Strike. I assumed the strike had been strongly supported but the reality was more complicated. Few Sleetburn men were employed in mining by 1984, and the financial accounts of the Miners' Support Group (McIntyre, 1992) suggested weekly food parcels were going to no more than fifteen to twenty families in the Sleetburn area. Frances (65), whose husband was a miner and NUM shop steward at the time, told me:

*We had food parcels every week, people collected for the parcels in the village, some people wouldn't accept the parcels but we did as I reckoned people wouldn't be giving if they didn't support the strike.*

Ambivalence in the village was described by Yvonne (69), whose husband had been a miner but worked for the Council at the time of the strike: *'Every so often someone came round collecting and making parcels up, though people didn't always give - I know that for a fact but I couldn't believe that people would refuse to give.'* Patrick (65), who was never a miner but whose brothers were, saw the food parcels as a delicate issue:

*The local Labour party wanted to be seen to be helping miners on strike, they came around collecting. I was arguing for it to be more low-key, discreet; my brothers were off work and they were embarrassed about receiving help.*

Moving from politics to crime, at least one Sleetburn man was in prison at the time of my fieldwork and two that I knew of had done time. A newspaper search revealed six reported cases of crime by Sleetburn men between 2008 and 2014 – four assaults, a burglary and one case of cannabis production. One of the men involved had 109, and another 27 previous offences. I witnessed one minor fight in the Club and heard about another as well as a case of domestic violence and several cases of noise nuisance. Crime rates in County Durham at the time of my fieldwork were generally lower than for comparable areas<sup>59</sup>; in Sleetburn, for the year up to February 2015, fifty crimes were reported which included 21 anti-social behaviour (e.g. public disturbance, noise nuisance causing neighbours to complain, graffiti), 10 violence and sexual offences, 7 criminal damage and arson, 2 burglary, 5 other theft, 2 drugs, 2 public order and 1 vehicle crime<sup>60</sup>. There did seem to be a lingering stigma affecting how Sleetburn was viewed locally, relating to a period in the 1980s and 1990s when crime in

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<sup>59</sup> <http://www.police.uk/> - accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015. Full web address not given to preserve place anonymity.

<sup>60</sup> During the same period, police recorded 137 crimes in my own neighbourhood, 121 in Strathern's Elmdon (figures are for the area of Clavering) and 63 in Frankenberg's Glyn Ceiriog.

the UK was generally much higher<sup>61</sup> and several people mentioned how there used to be much more local fighting between 'gangs' of young men from different villages. As I mentioned in chapter 4, two or three respectable citizens in their forties pulled down the back of their shirt collars sheepishly to show me their home-made gang tattoos. One man who moved to the village in the 1970s told me:

*This place was painted as a no-go area, always trouble over here... I would say, I've been here for years, never been any trouble – people always pull the place down, I don't know why... people talking, oh don't go to Sleetburn, mind, you'll never come out alive. Sleetburn – when you shake hands count your fingers, mind.*

As regards drugs, unsurprisingly I came across few direct accounts of drug use although one man did describe how he had been involved in solvent abuse for many years and another would mutter darkly about cocaine use in the Club toilets. I was therefore shocked by a 2007 review in a national newspaper of a book of interviews with and photographs of friends and acquaintances of an 'ex-drug dealer, ex-gangster and ex-armed robber' from a village close to Sleetburn. These were, according to the Guardian, the personal stories of those 'left behind' and their 'battles with drug and alcohol addiction, poverty and violence'. The article described 'scrappy, poor places... sad villages full of drug-ridden families'. As this example shows, there were certainly aspects of the local area which were hidden from me. At the same time, the article did not represent the lives of most local people, many of whom were incensed and complained to the newspaper at the time.

As with many small places, some people experienced village closeness as stifling and either moved elsewhere or at least told me they would like to do so; several older women said they would have moved away but were constrained by their husband's choice. As we saw in Chapter 4, large numbers of people left the village from the 1920s onwards, and although many later came back, others did not. Taylor's research into the transfer of miners from West Durham village to pits further south in the 1960s showed that the people most likely to move away, unsurprisingly, were those who had moved before and those who had fewer family links in their village, particularly links to maternal family (Taylor, 1966). The people I heard about or met who were most likely to move away from Sleetburn were those with additional years of further and particularly higher education – a link between geographical

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/aug/31/tough-case-mystery-britains-falling-crime-rate>  
Accessed on 27th April 2015

and social mobility to which I shall return in Chapter 6. Having said this, there were also some who left because of a bad experience, such as one man I met who had moved away years before after his children '*got mixed up with drug dealers*' in the village.

#### NETWORKS OF FAMILY AND NEIGHBOURLY SUPPORT

In the following section I consider how family networks functioned in the village. I found that people in Sleetburn were reliant on a highly localised network of support from family and friends in order to obtain housing and employment and to organise the care of children and elderly people. The suggestion that they lacked aspiration and were unwilling to move therefore misses the point: what has been characterised by some commentators as an atavistic attachment to family and place was a considered decision not to move away from these essential networks.

#### FAMILY HELP WITH HOUSING

As we saw in Chapter 4, few colliery owners built any additional housing after about 1900 and there was chronic overcrowding until local authorities started to build public housing in the 1920s. The loss of a quarter of the population to migration in the 1930s decreased housing pressure but by the 1940s slum clearance meant those in need had to wait several years. This situation continued until the 1960s when a further loss of population to southern pits again reduced housing waiting times. In other villages nearby the district council's huge building programme of the 1960s also helped though not in Sleetburn because of its category D status.

Pressure on housing meant that the practice of parents or grandparents sharing their accommodation with newly-married couples was common right up until the 1960s. Depending on the housing situation at the time, these stays ranged from a few months to several years and often the couple's first child was born in the grandparental home. In 1936 Winifred (93) and her husband only lived with his parents for six months before getting a colliery house, whereas I met five couples who married in the 1940s and had to live in the parental home for several years after marriage because of the length of waiting lists. In contrast, other couples who married in the 1960s i.e. after the main period of inter-colliery transfers and the major Council house building programme in the area only had to live with their parents for a few months. In a study of West Durham families transferring to collieries

in other regions, Taylor examined the NCB figures for all the villages in the area and found that the greatest loss of population from any one village was sixty families; the five villages he studied each lost between 25 and 58 families (Taylor, 1966 pp. 28 and 74). Given its size in relation to Taylor's five villages, Sleetburn probably lost between 20 and 40 families to the inter-colliery transfers, freeing up the same number of houses and Taylor found that local waiting lists for colliery and council houses went down at that time from several years to a matter of a few weeks or months (Taylor, 1966 p. 261). Throughout the period I studied, both men and women who remained single tended to live with their parents until the death of the latter. For those who were Council tenants, the tenancy was often assigned to them after their parents died so many people in the village were living in the house they were born in, whether this was a colliery or council house which they or their parents had purchased or a council house for which the tenancy was re-assigned to them. Divorced, widowed or separated adults who had no dependent children at home often moved back in with their parents also.

#### FINDING A JOB

Many contemporary and historical studies have noted the importance of local networks and personal contacts in getting jobs, especially at the bottom end of the labour market (Critcher et al., 2001 p. 100, McDowell, 2003 p. 86, MacDonald, 2011). It was apparent from Sleetburn life stories that relatives and friends were crucial to finding work throughout the period I studied.

Looking first at mining work, in the earliest accounts sons followed fathers not least because sending sons down the pit was usually a condition of tenancy for colliery houses before coal nationalisation in 1947. Countless men in the village told me how at the age of fourteen (later fifteen), they *'finished school on the Friday and started down the pit on the Monday'*; others first came to Sleetburn because a friend or relative obtained a colliery job for them or told them one was available. In the 1930s when Sleetburn Colliery closed for a year, Ernest (85)'s father and Dorothy (93)'s husband both relied on friends and relatives for the jobs they found elsewhere. Denise (60)'s family first came to Sleetburn in the 1940s when her father got a job at Sleetburn Colliery through his uncle and moved from another village fifteen miles away. Eileen (86)'s husband and his two brothers moved ten miles for jobs at Sleetburn also obtained through an uncle, and Josephine (67)'s family moved from a village

six miles away in 1953 after the brother of a friend found her father a job. After Deer Park Colliery closed in 1984, Kevin (59) worked at Lark Drift, the last working mine in County Durham. The job wasn't advertised but he knew the owner:

*I said to him I hear you're getting the drift away, it was just starting up, I was the first person working there. Got a JCB in, dug down to where the drift was, put in a bigger machine, got it all out.*

Employment outside mining was also obtained through family and friends: Dorothy took over her sister's job as a domestic maid in Durham (1934); Fred got a job as a delivery driver in Willington through a former colleague on the buses (1949); Mark's father got an engineering job in Leicester through a friend (1964); Albert got a bakery job through a neighbour and Trevor a painting apprenticeship through his father (both 1968); Leslie got a tailoring apprenticeship in Durham through his mother (1975); Mark got a filing job in the Job Centre because he had got to know the staff (1990); Russell worked for a scaffolding firm in London through being friendly with the boss's son (1994); and Julia got a job at Raby Cross Laundry through someone she knew at chapel (1999). At the time of my fieldwork, getting a job through a friend or relative was still the norm, as Benjamin (23) explained:

*I got one kitchen job through a friend. I had an interview at the new donut shop in Durham but I didn't get it, I was hopeful because I worked with one of the managers, when I was at Macdonalds. Then I went to the Premier Inn and asked, as the Manager was married to my cousin, but I got nowhere with that either.*

Ross (22) had done a two-year painting and decorating course at college but couldn't get a job; however one of his friends had just found work at a recycling facility in Sunderland so he was hoping he might get something there too. One afternoon in June 2012, I saw Luke (18) having a pint in the Club, he was covered in concrete dust and told me shyly that he had been laid off the previous week from working on a building site; now he was helping someone build extensions. Luke had written a word on his hand; it was the name of the village where he was going to see a friend who had a scaffolding job and might be able to find him something. At the bar, Kevin told me that Luke, the son of an ex-workmate of his, was working in the grey economy as '*there aren't any proper jobs going*'. Those people who had found stable, secure jobs often passed these down through the family; several generations of local men did caretaking jobs at local schools for instance, and mothers often recommended daughters for cleaning jobs at Durham University.

## SHARING CHILDCARE

Grandparent help in caring for children before and after school was common, and an important reason for adult children choosing to live near their parents. Here as elsewhere in the UK, unpaid grandparent care was the only way that many parents in low-paid work could go out to work as paid childcare was unaffordable on their wages (Gray, 2005, Ward et al., 2007, Fergusson et al., 2008). Peter (85)'s late wife relied on her mother for help. He told me:

*She was very clever, she was always top in all the subjects... she always worked, first in the Co-op office in Sleetburn, then after we got married in 1946 she went to Luke's, a big baking company like Greggs today, waiting tables in the cafe on Silver Street, and after that she did all sorts. Her mother, who lived in Sleetburn, looked after the children while she was working.*

Yvonne (69) had help from her mother and her mother-in-law: *'After the baby was nine months (1966), I had good babysitters so I went to [the factory] as they had part-time; my mum minded the baby one week and his mum the next week'*. Janice (65) told me: *'I used to get shopping in for my sister-in-law as she worked at the shirt factory. I looked after her two children as well'*. At the time of my fieldwork, Janice and her husband had four grandchildren living in nearby villages; they picked them up from school and gave them their tea three times a week, *'plus babysitting whenever'*. Hazel's (66) grandson came round to her house at a quarter to seven every morning when his mother caught the bus to her catering job in Durham. Sally (58) was too busy to talk to me in April 2012: her daughter was expecting a baby in July and she wanted to *'get everything done'* before that; she would be looking after the baby as her daughter was going back to work. If they did not live close to their parents already, lone mothers frequently moved closer: Pamela (88) and her young daughters moved in with her parents in 1947 when her husband was away in the Forces and Phyllis lived with her mum in 1958 while her husband was in the Navy. Another woman bought a house with her partner in the 1990s but they later had to sell it when the relationship broke down, and she moved to a council house three doors away from her parents. I visited one woman in her sixties during the school holidays; she had taken time off from her job to mind her grandchildren while her daughter was at work. We had a cup of tea and she told me:

*Me and Robin bought this house and gave it to Laura - the first lad she lived with, they split up so we bought her this house. Then she was with the bairns' father, he didn't work, he was in the house, she is with someone else now. The bairns' dad, we told her to get rid of him, he would go drinking and be away for three or four days.*

Her story reflected a pattern in the area whereby many younger couples were unstable because high rates of male worklessness created relationship tensions and resulted in some male partners becoming unreliable and transient (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012 pp. 167-169), making grandparent support even more crucial for young mothers, who were almost invariably the main carers for their children.

#### ELDERLY CARE

In most cases care of elderly people was heavily gendered and involved daughters supporting elderly parents although sometimes sons provided the support, usually where there were no daughters or if a son was single and lived locally. Sometimes care was shared between a number of children, but more frequently one daughter provided most of the care, particularly if she was single, separated or widowed. There were many people in the village whose daughters visited them every day, shopped, cleaned and cooked for them. It was also usually women who supported other close relatives with illness or disability. Winifred had no daughters but one of her children or grandchildren checked on her every day. She told me: *'all the great-grandchildren come to tea every Sunday, except the ones who live in Norwich - they come up about once a month'*. Ronald was also well looked-after; I often bumped into his eldest daughter when I visited him, he told me she came on a Monday or a Tuesday and did all his shopping, then would pop in later in the week. She also drove him down to another relative in the village every Sunday for tea as well as to other family occasions, local funerals and Labour Party events. Joyce's (89) daughter lived thirty miles away but Joyce told me she still came over once a fortnight and *'hoovers right through'*, as well as arranging monthly grocery deliveries for her mother. Sons typically carried out gardening tasks and small repairs. In July 2012 there was heavy rain causing widespread flooding and other damage in the village; Dorothy (94)'s council house bungalow ceiling fell in and the rain was pouring all over the television so she rang the Council, but as they were busy she then tried her son who came over and fixed the roof for her.

There was also a pattern in the village whereby an older person, if they did not have relatives obviously to hand, was 'adopted' by someone nearby as their responsibility. Rather than indiscriminate neighbourliness, this was the selective extension to an unrelated individual of a level of care characteristic of family relationships, typically because of long-standing proximity or a shared occupational history. Fred (94)'s neighbour on one side cut his lawn and the one on the other side offered him hot meals. Joyce (89) had a friend whose husband would drive her every Monday to get her pension and then to the supermarket. Whilst we were in the Club one afternoon, Peter (85), who had cataracts, mentioned a device he had which goes on the teapot and sounds an alarm when it's full. It had stopped working, he thought it needed new batteries but he couldn't see what size. Darren (39), who lived next door to Peter when he was a child, offered to pop in and change the batteries for him. Mavis (76) told me that: *'people look out for you, it's a very close community'*. When her father died, Mavis had no worries about her mother even though Mavis was living away in Yorkshire at the time: *'People with allotments at the top of the village would leave vegetables on her doorstep, or piles of twigs to light the fire'*. Kevin (58) worked at Deer Park Colliery with Edward (82) for the last fifteen years that it was open. At the time of my fieldwork, Kevin regularly drove to Deer Park to visit Edward, and when Edward had a stroke in 2012, Kevin took him to hospital and visited every day. Mark (58) 'looked out' for his elderly neighbour and walked his dog for him. When the neighbour died in 2013, Mark took in the dog.

#### THE INTERGENERATIONAL FAMILY

In terms of what kind of family was important, it was clear from the examples in previous sections that the most salient relationships were between parents and children and between siblings, not least because these endured where romantic relationships might break up. Apart from the help with childcare already mentioned, there were also many instances in the village of the care of children on a more long-term basis by a grandmother or aunt. In some cases this was done where their mother had died, an arrangement also noted by Strathern in Elmdon (Strathern et al., 1981 p. 132). Eileen (86) was nine when her mother died and her mother's sister took in her baby sister, who was only two weeks old. Later, Eileen's daughter-in-law also died, and Eileen looked after her two young grandchildren until her son married again. Paul (66) lived with his grandmother for two

years after his mother died when he was two. When Julia (54)'s younger sister died at the age of twenty-five, Julia looked after her young nephew and niece most weekends. Graham (45) was ten when his mother died in 1982, and went to live with his mother's younger sister and her husband. In other cases, children whose parents were alive lived with relatives either on a temporary basis or on a permanent one, similar to the traditional local arrangement described by Sid Chaplin whereby a grandchild was adopted by grandparents (Chaplin, 1971). Julia (54) was sent to live with her aunt and uncle in South Wales for a few months when she was twelve. Yvonne (69) lived with her grandmother for part of her childhood, as did Benjamin (23). At the time of my fieldwork, Hazel (66) had a sixteen-year-old grandson living with her; he had been with her since he was eight, she said *'he just likes it'*. Elaine (65) had recently taken in a nephew in his twenties who was having paranoid delusions but who said *'I feel safe at Aunty Elaine's'*. When I visited Nicholas (56) one morning, the phone rang at 10am. Nicholas picked it up and said: *'ok, would you like a coffee to go with that...in a minute'*. He explained that the telephone had an intercom function: *'it's the grandbairn upstairs wanting his breakfast'*.<sup>62</sup>

In accounts of the depression years when elderly parents were unlikely to be better off than their children, it was help from siblings (i.e. the aunts and uncles of the speakers) which stood out. Dorothy (93)'s father *'wouldn't go to the Parish for money, he was too proud. His brother, who was a police officer in Newcastle, used to come every weekend and give him money to keep the family. There was a soup kitchen in the [Deer Park] Chapel, but I wouldn't go as I hated soup'*, she told me. During the 1930s when many pitmen were on short time, Ivy (88)'s mum would send her round to her aunt's in the next street *'to ask if she could spare some bread for the children's breakfast'*. Ronald (87)'s family would walk from Sleetburn to Langdon, his uncle Tom *'would give us tea and a sack of coal for my father to carry home; my mother would carry a basket of small 'nuts' of coal to light the fire with.'*

Apart from providing practical support, it was also noticeable that families shared leisure pursuits across the generations. One group of four regular Club domino players included both Helen (66) and her aunt Phyllis (74). Helen's nephew Russell (47) was also regularly in

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<sup>62</sup> At the time of writing, this pattern of intergenerational childcare was threatened by rigid definitions of housing need: one couple in Langdon was forced to move from a four-bedroomed Council house by the 'bedroom tax', jeopardising the arrangements whereby two or three grandchildren generally lived with them on an informal basis.

the Club; one Friday lunch time when his scaffolding job had been rained off, he started a game of Crash (Thirteen Card Brag<sup>63</sup>) with one of his sisters and a cousin, one of Helen's sons. Russell asked if I wanted to play, but I explained that I hadn't even mastered dominoes yet; the game reminded me of poker and as they were playing for (small) cash stakes I felt out of my depth. Many women in the village also went on day trips and coach holidays with their adult daughters without male partners or husbands.

Historically, many people in Sleetburn had large numbers of cousins because of the large size of mining families (Godoy, 1985 p. 205, Church et al., 1986 p. 611). By the time of my fieldwork most couples in the village had no more than two or three children, but there were still older people from families of ten or more and this was reflected in the high prevalence of their surnames in the village and the large numbers of cousins in younger generations. The Sleetburn electoral register included two surnames each shared by ten or more households, which corresponded to specific large sibling groups from the 1920s to the 1940s and their descendants. There were another five surnames each shared by six and eight households, again sibling groups and their descendants. I met various members of these families, but also the remaining members of some equally large families which had, in contrast, left little obvious trace in the village as most of their members moved away or had no male children to continue the name.

#### THE LIMITS OF FAMILY

Of course, not all families provided each other with the practical support I have described, and even relatively close family connections were not always kept up but might be ignored or denied. Family ties by marriage were most likely to be ignored, particularly if the connecting blood relative had died or if the couple had separated. Winifred (83) told me she disapproved of her late husband's family and had nothing to do with them. Heather (53) often encountered her daughter's former partner during the course of her work at the Club but did her best to ignore him. I also came across both long- and short-term 'fallings-out' between close relatives living in Sleetburn such as father and son, or niece and aunt.

Regarding the care of elderly people, many adult children had moved away and even if their children did live close by, not all elderly people received support or if they did, this was

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<sup>63</sup> A game played in the North of England and Wales – see <http://www.pagat.com/partition/crash.html> accessed 23rd May 2014.

frequently from one child only. Although some older people were 'adopted' by neighbours as I mentioned earlier, others could easily be forgotten by friends and neighbours if not by their children, particularly if they were not mobile; when I mentioned in conversation Dorothy (93) and Eileen (86) – both living in the village since the 1940s - to various long-standing village residents, it took them a while to place them; they had either assumed they had moved away or died, or simply never thought about them anymore. Ivy (88) had lived in the same house for forty years but no longer knew any of her neighbours since many people had moved on and she had not got to know new residents.

In the main, however, family ties appeared to be close, and this was also a finding of the coalfields study to which I have previously referred. In an article drawing on interviews with former miners in East Durham, the author drew the following conclusion:

Finally, networks have been discussed in relation to family, kin and generation. Again, such networks have been important in the past in patterning social relationships. But, as was seen above, in the wake of closure these types of networks become **increasingly vital** in sustaining and maximizing an extended, collective family wage. The effect of closure seems to have been the increasing reliance on family members for things like childcare. And the ability to rely on such support now is directly linked to historical patterns of family life that have grown up in coalfield regions. Put simply, the family structures, buttressed by residential patterns of coal communities, grew up because of the needs of the industry but are now useful in responding to the needs of the new economy that workers find themselves in. (Strangleman, 2001 p. 265).

#### CLOSENESS AS STIGMA

Although the finding in the paragraph above applies just as strongly to Sleetburn, the same author also wrote, as we saw in Chapter 1, about the privileging by local regeneration agencies of the autonomous, cosmopolitan individual against localism and close family ties (critiqued as 'insularity'). Sleetburn was not immune - several people who knew the village but were not from it including a youth worker, a teacher and a probation officer described the village as 'close-knit' in a negative way, equating this with limited horizons and hostility to strangers; other people who had chosen to move away did the same. Bell has explored the trope of 'rural horror' in US films which links rural isolation with cultural myths of inbreeding, insularity, backwardness and sexual perversion (Bell, 1997 p. 96); people in the village could be sensitive about the stigma of interrelatedness considered as excessive or transgressive. On one occasion during my fieldwork a fight broke out in the Club between

two women over the suggestion by one (not originally from the village) that the inhabitants were 'inbred'. Less dramatically, those who had married in complained about everyone being related (so that gossip travelled fast) and people in the Club joked about it with me in conversation in a way which acknowledged but deliberately made light of any attached stigma. Thus whilst close family connections were regarded as the norm in the area, local people also displayed some awareness that other value systems might regard this as old-fashioned or backward.

#### EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPES

I have shown in previous sections that local people generally had a similar background and experience, and relied heavily on family networks for practical help. However, it should be stressed that family did not map onto village as kinship ties extended across a number of different villages in the area. Even if they started off in Sleetburn, most families that had lived in the area for more than a generation were now spread across Langdon and Shiremoor as well, if only for practical reasons relating to employment but more especially to housing. As we saw in Chapter 4, there was both more Council and more private housing in these other areas, as well as care homes and supported or sheltered housing. All this translated into attachment to a dense network of kinship and friendship ties extending across a number of local villages and creating a rich emotional landscape as well as a practical resource for employment, housing and practical support.

An important feature of this emotional landscape is that it existed not just across space but also across time, incorporating the past as well as the present. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, some scholars have suggested that there are places where the double exposure of past times remains; where the emotional landscape, thick with memories and ghosts, overlays the visible space (Degnen, 2005, Carsten, 2007 p. 11). The example given by Stewart was of her fieldwork in the remote villages of Appalachia, where the 'side of the road' was imbued with layers of memory (Stewart, 1996 pp. 13-40). It was exactly in this way that the past existed in Sleetburn and the surrounding area. Apparently empty spaces contained a rich past; the space opposite the Club was where the Sleetburn Tavern stood until it was demolished in the 1990s, with many remembered events and characters retold to me. Another space was where the village nursery was built in the 1930s with money from the Special Areas Commission, and where many people remembered sending their children or

going themselves before it was demolished in the 1990s. Ronald (87) would look out of the window towards the main road down through the village, and tell me how it used to be *'black with people'* on a Sunday afternoon.

There were countless more examples in the stories of older people, but younger people also inherited some of these memories. I gave Benjamin (23) a lift back from the Club one Sunday night, I was asking about the location of the old Sleetburn pit. He told me had a very vivid dream - or maybe it really happened, he said – in which his old head teacher had taken him out of school and shown him where, under a bridge nearby, if you did a certain sequence of steps you could find a golden key, and you could wish yourself back to whatever year you wanted in Sleetburn. He had done this and found himself walking along the old streets that were pulled down, the pit was still open, the shops were still open. He spoke to his grandmother later, she said 'how do you know all those details, nobody ever told you', and they were from his dream, all very accurate. Then in the dream his teacher said you had to do a different sequence of steps every time, in a certain order, and he was going to tell Benjamin what the order was - but then he woke up.

I was told many times how the whole of the older part of the village close to the pit and the river had been entirely demolished and returned to pasture and scrubland, with the exception of a terrace gable end which now stood in its own grounds as a detached house. Further up into the village, the road down to the chapel which had once been only one of several colliery rows was now the only one remaining, and a conifer plantation grew where three streets of housing had once stood.

These emotional landscapes existed across space and time but the streets or the buildings being recalled were not important in themselves; rather they served as 'hook' on which to hang memories of specific people; thus the old nursery building was significant not because it was one of the first of its kind but because it was *'where Aunty Ella was the cook'*. This was very apparent on the Sleetburn Family & Local History Facebook page which was set up in September 2014 and gained 260 members in a couple of weeks. The oldest photos posted, going back to around 1910, elicited least interest because they were least likely to feature anyone who was still remembered. Photos of buildings were of interest to the extent that people could recall who lived there or events relating to them; long exchanges of comments

related to 'placing' individuals in the correct family relationships. These layers of memory which imbued particular places should not be mistaken for nostalgia, but were rather a kind of shared 'place making' whereby family and friends from both past and present were 'held together' in a shared network of memories which mapped onto the local area and integrated local people both living and dead (Schama, 1995, Tilley, 2012). As I explained in Chapter 3, I started to share many of these emotional landscapes so that like Benjamin in his dream, I 'saw' the layers of memory as I passed through the physical landscape.

These layers of memory were also very different from aesthetic considerations, since far from leading to any kind of desire to preserve particular views or the fabric of old buildings for instance, they often went hand in hand with a positive enthusiasm for development. This appeared to be because the memory layers were superimposed on the physical space, irrespective of the present condition of that space. A university colleague who was also a long-standing resident of a neighbouring village had realised that whilst he saw fly-tipping in a particular location nearby as spoiling the rural landscape, other people thought of that same location as industrial wasteland - because that was its history, it was the end of the old railway - and therefore tipping was not so incongruous. As Ronald (87) said, talking about how people complained about fly-tipping at the top of the village: *'the thing to do with a grot spot is to build on it'*.

Such layers of memory are not unique to Sleetburn and have been described elsewhere notably by Stewart in Appalachia and Degnen in another UK coal mining village (Stewart, 1996, Degnen, 2005); we can probably all relate to them to some extent. However, the point I am making about Sleetburn (and by extension, other places like it) is that it has, for the reasons set out in Chapter 4, changed less than many other places, thus making the emotional connections that much stronger. There has been little new development and of those people who have left, many have also returned. In contrast, if I went back to my own home town, few if any of my friends or acquaintances remain, there are many new buildings and my extended family was never there in the first place.

In conclusion, I have shown in this chapter that many people in Sleetburn had a strong attachment to a network of family and friends which extended in space across neighbouring villages and across time in the shape of layers of memory; I will return to this point in

Chapter 7, relating it to my argument that smoking in Sleetburn was tied into a strong emotional link with previous generations. At the same time, local people were aware of outsider critiques of village 'insularity'.

## CHAPTER 6: ASPIRATIONS FILTERED THROUGH EXPERIENCE

In the two previous chapters I have shown how people in Sleetburn were regarded as mobile in the wrong way and how their attachment to emotional landscapes of family networks over time and space was seen as atavistic. In this chapter I consider whether people lacked 'aspiration' and what this term meant in the context of experiences of employment and education in the village. I argue that aspiration in the narrow sense of middle-class trajectories to advanced education and a professional or managerial job had little meaning in Sleetburn. The triple achievement of the 'house, car, job' was desirable, but imaginable futures did not include advanced education which held out little historical promise but rather a real likelihood of emotional loss.

### EMPLOYMENT

In this first half of the chapter I consider paid work in Sleetburn, which was fraught with uncertainty rather than offering a stable 'career'. People had ordinary aspirations, hoping for emotional happiness as well as the material security of a house, a car and a job. Historically informed expectations of work were low but workers attempted to reclaim agency by carving out spaces of autonomy within their work or subverting the system.

### ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

Metaphors of movement come to the fore once more as aspiration (upwards) is most relevant to those people with access to a career i.e. a series of progressions or 'expectation of prospective incremental reward' which was itself a nineteenth-century creation (Miles and Savage, 2004 p. 79) and represents a middle-class experience of work. As has been shown by studies of working-class communities in Wales (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012 p. 137) and Teesside (MacDonald, 2011), ordinary working-class employment histories typically involve a succession of jobs with varying terms and conditions punctuated by redundancies and spells of unemployment – 'churn' rather than steady progress over time to a more secure labour market position (Shildrick et al., 2012).

Local circumstances discussed in Chapter 4, notably the depressed 1920s and 1930s, the pit closures and transfers of the 1950s and 1960s and the decline and disappearance of heavy industry in the 1980s compelled many people in Sleetburn to a high degree of movement from one job to another, or between work and no work, as well as a high degree of

adaptability rather than a fixed work identity. We saw in Chapter 4 how many miners transferred to pits further south in the 1960s. Others found different work locally: Ernest (85) and his brother took factory jobs, Charles (82) did twenty years in the pits then another thirty years maintenance at Durham University; many of the university porters were former pitmen. Yvonne (70)'s late husband Richard considered a transfer south but in the end took a job in a factory; after that closed he worked on the building sites then got a job as a porter. Donald (76) worked at Bank Top Colliery until it closed then at a factory, then night shifts at a supermarket. Outside the mining industry, Wayne (46) did factory work, drove a taxi and later an ice-cream van, worked as a kitchen porter and a school caretaker. Benjamin (23) did two paper rounds, worked at MacDonalDs and at a laundry then got a job in a restaurant kitchen for eight months but was laid off without notice; he then had a brief retail placement but hadn't been able to find any work since.

As we will see in a later section, although the factories which operated in the area from the 1960s (or in some cases earlier) until the 1990s provided continuity for some, employment trajectories for women were also fraught with uncertainty. Always a mine of information, Yvonne (70) gave me her detailed work history over a cup of tea in her kitchen. After leaving school in 1957 she worked in a shoe shop then in a clothing factory in Durham City. She then went to Coates Viyella<sup>64</sup> in Mayfield, then did five years in the local laundry until she was made redundant. She moved to a small family-run business above a shop in Durham City, making up pairs of jeans with eleven other women. After a year there she returned to Coates Viyella and stayed there twenty-two years. Julia (55) left school in 1974 and worked in a baker's then a toy shop, then looked after some children in London for six months. After that she worked in a local shirt factory for thirteen years. She was made redundant and moved to a different factory, but was later made redundant from there as well, and from another factory two years later. She got a job at the Black & Decker factory seven miles away through an agency, then she went to the Raby Cross laundry through someone she knew at Chapel who was a relative of the manager and stayed there a year and a half. After that she went to a local plastics factory and had been there three years when we spoke.

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<sup>64</sup> Its predecessor companies were Robert Hirst & Thackeray in the 1930s, then Robert Hirst, then Meretina

Rowntree famously described the 'life cycle of poverty', a parabolic trajectory whereby the manual labourer starts in poverty as a child, reaches comparative prosperity in adulthood and falls back into poverty as he loses his strength in old age (Rowntree, 1901 p. 137). A similar parabola was common in the mining industry before nationalisation; the datal boy hoped to progress to putter then to hewer but was demoted to a less well-paid job in old age or after injury - typically a surface job sorting the coal from the stones. This happened to Mavis's (76) father and also Ivy's (88), who lost an eye and his hearing in a mine explosion. Despite the post-war welfare state and pension provision, many people in Sleetburn continued to work into their seventies for reduced pay although it wasn't clear whether this was always for financial reasons as some spoke of being 'bored'. One man in his sixties came out of retirement to take a shelf-stacking job in a supermarket; another had a career in the Armed Forces but his last job was as a park attendant, another was working as a caretaker at the age of seventy. Many local women carried on doing cleaning jobs into their seventies, sometimes working through ill-health including cancer or COPD or both.

#### ORDINARY ASPIRATIONS

Few people spoke directly to me about ambitions and aspirations, but ideas about what one might aspire to or what constituted 'doing well' did emerge in conversation. I asked Russell (47) what he wanted his fourteen-year-old daughter to do when she grew up; he replied '*owt that she wants, that makes her happy*'. He then told me that his elder daughter (26) had a baby and his son (18) had a building job: clearly these were the sorts of things one might hope for. Russell was typical of many local people in framing hopes for his children in terms of emotional security and happiness (Brown, 2011) defined as a family and a degree of financial security rather than educational achievement or a professional career. Family material security was often expressed as '*getting the house, car, job*'. Ronald (87) told me proudly that his children all had '*a house, a car and a job*'. Victoria (25) described her achievements as '*being a teaching assistant, and now being married and having a house*', contrasting this with her friends at school.

Having a job was important, but expectations of work were not high. A stable job with reasonable pay was all that could be hoped for – beyond this, jobs were not regarded as providing self-fulfilment but as largely interchangeable, necessary evils (Willis, 1977 p. 100).

When I asked Ian (70) to tell me about his job at Hugh Mackay<sup>65</sup> he said he didn't like to talk about it; I asked, didn't he enjoy it? He said *'well it was just a job'*. Similarly I asked Edward (82) whether he would have preferred to do something other than be a miner, his answer was *'I took what came you know'*. Yvonne, Wayne and Janice all worked at Coates Viyella<sup>66</sup>, I asked whether they enjoyed it, Yvonne said rather sharply: *'I don't think anyone enjoys factory work'*. She worked there *'until it closed because there was a fire, hurray!'* Benjamin (23) felt that people's expectations in the village were limited: *'A job's a job, you take it, it doesn't matter whether you like it.'* As we also saw in Chapter 5 in relation to the 1984/5 miners' strike, pride in work was often linked in to pride in maintaining independence and being beholden to no-one, including the state, for instance in terms of benefits or compensation not claimed despite entitlement. Frances (65) said that her daughter: *'has always worked - she's never had any money off the state'*. Jennifer (70) told me she worked in the factories from the age of fifteen to sixty: *'People said I was stupid as you could get money without working, benefits, but I wanted to work'*. Rodney (64)'s father was a pitman and retired on ill health grounds in 1967. I asked whether he got compensation from the NCB: *'No he was too proud, he said he wanted nothing to do with it... when he died it was the first thing the hospital asked when doing the death certificate, would we be applying for compensation, we said no.'*

#### SKILLED WORK AND AUTONOMY

Professional aspirations were largely irrelevant to the village inasmuch as the key distinction within men's occupations in the villages was between skilled and unskilled workers. Trades identified as 'skilled', sometimes referred to as the aristocracy of labour (Hobsbawm, 1964) generally command better pay but crucially also provide a degree of autonomy not enjoyed by unskilled labourers, who work under direction. This distinction can be found equally clearly in Tressell's account of a house painter in Hastings (Tressell 1914) and in Thiel's ethnography of the London building trade one hundred years later (Thiel 2012).

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<sup>65</sup> Hugh Mackay Carpets opened in 1903 and went into administration in 2005

Much store was set by learning a trade and being 'time-served' i.e. having completed an apprenticeship, especially but not exclusively amongst older generations<sup>67</sup>. When Mark (58) was telling me his life story, one of his friends told me in an aside that Mark had not had the chance to complete his apprenticeship and was therefore not time-served. From his tone, the friend obviously saw this as a great misfortune in Mark's life. Kenneth (60) was one of three brothers all in skilled trades; he told me his mother '*was very keen that we get a trade, she was the boss... she was very clever*'. Hazel (65) was very proud that one of her grandsons had recently obtained a bricklaying apprenticeship. Others told me about various young men who had been too impatient to complete their (low-paid) apprenticeship, and had thus sacrificed the chance to become a skilled tradesman in exchange for a higher wage in the short-term. The range of trades in the village was limited to mining-related trades<sup>68</sup> for the older men and construction<sup>69</sup> for the younger, with the lack of any kind of automotive or mechanical engineering trades illustrating the absence of this type of industry in the area. Those who had a trade always specified this; if not, they referred to working '*down the pit*' or '*on the sites*'. Russell referred to his late father who worked on the sites as '*jack of all trades, master of none*'. Russell himself was a scaffolder, a trade which has been trying to obtain recognition as skilled for some years<sup>70</sup>. Darren (39), also a scaffolder, was thinking about retraining as a plasterer, a skilled trade which was better paid, less dangerous and had the benefit of indoor working.

Skilled versus unskilled functioned to some extent as a social marker; both historically and more recently, skilled men in the village were more likely than unskilled to hold positions of authority and prestige in the village, more likely to have children who went onto professional or managerial jobs and less likely to smoke. I was told of one woman who claimed that it was the skilled workers who transferred to pits in the south in the 1960s: '*the best families went*', she said. Apparently she claimed that the church had lost much more of their congregation than the chapel because the latter was '*where the unskilled workers*

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<sup>67</sup> Apprenticeships went into sharp decline in the 1980s, and more recent apprenticeship schemes have been criticised by some as low-level workplace training – see for instance <http://careers.theguardian.com/careers-blog/rise-in-apprenticeships-under-coalition>, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014

<sup>68</sup> pit mechanics/fitters, electricians, shaftsmen, joiners, blacksmiths etc

<sup>69</sup> bricklayers, hod carriers, plumbers, electricians, joiners (equivalent to carpenters in the south of England), cabinet makers, glaziers, stonemasons, roofers, painters and decorators etc.

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.cmaw.ca/news/newsletter/cmaw-introduce-scaffolding-certification> accessed on 25th March 2015

went'. Edward (82), who worked in a local colliery as a blacksmith and fitter from 1944 to when it closed in 1984, put together a photo album commemorating the pit closure. Significantly, he included individual portraits of the skilled men at the pit photographed at their place of work: the last fitter, the last blacksmith, the last onsetter, the last shaftsman, the last joiner etc. Michael (79) started as a joiner and then trained as a teacher, becoming head teacher of the local primary school. Paul (68), an electrical engineer and later a warehouse manager, was a local councillor and school governor. Other primary school governors included bricklayer Kenneth and joiners Timothy and Roger. Roy, a plumber and later a manager, was also a Church Warden.

I have shown in this section how the autonomy of skilled work was highly valued; in the following sections I will explore other ways in which workers attempted to increase their control by creating spaces of autonomy or occasionally by using the 'weapons of the weak' (Scott, 1985, Fleming and Sewell, 2002) or everyday forms of resistance.

#### MINERS AND ASPIRATIONS

As an occupational category in the UK, miners have historically shown very little social mobility i.e. there was a high degree of correlation between father and son occupations. In a large-scale study of marriage certificates and autobiographies spanning the years from 1839 to 1914, Miles found that miners showed 'formidable (social) immobility' (Miles, 1999 p. 73). The obvious reason for this relates to the industry itself: as Bulmer has said, the 'ideal type' mining community had little social or geographical mobility<sup>71</sup> because the fixity of the coal seam created a single-industry community (Bulmer, 1975). Despite Bulmer's explanation, the fact of low social mobility in mining has sometimes been interpreted as a fault in the miners themselves – for instance by the employers and development agencies who saw miners as set in their ways and unwilling to do other work (Strangleman et al., 1999 paragraph 6.7).

For those men whose life histories spanned the years when the pits were still open, there was no doubt that getting away from pit work and into something better was a common aspiration and was frequently mentioned to me. However, this dream foundered on the reality which was that few if any other jobs were available in the local area. Many miners

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<sup>71</sup> assuming the coal seam was actually worked; we have seen in Chapter 4 how temporary and permanent pit closures created a high degree of geographical mobility

tried to discourage their sons from following them, and I met several men who described being taken underground at a young age by their fathers specifically in order to put them off. Ian (70) told me he wanted to be a pitman but his dad wouldn't let him: *'My dad said - taking swear words out – 'there's enough of us down that black hole when I'm there''*. I asked Ronald (87) whether he chose to be a miner. He told me:

*When I was at school, there was a feller called Mr Proudfoot from the Employment Exchange, he went round all the schools to tell people what jobs there were. He was looking for lads to go down to Leicester to work in the shoe factories. We said 'We're going down to Leicester, we're not going down no bloody pit'. Then the week before he was due to go, Manny Smithson said ' I changed my mind, I'm not going to leave my mother to go into lodgings down in Leicester'. I finished school on Friday and on Monday I ended up down the pit. Quite a few did go down to Leicester but they all came back, they were just bairns. It was your father's ambition though: 'none of my lads are going down the pit'.*

Ronald explained how he tried to keep his own sons out of the pit but could not: *'The lads went in at fifteen. Our Samuel went down, then our Royston; our Julian went to train to be a farm manager, it was a good job but the wage wasn't much, he ended up down the pit.'*

Miner's wife Dorothy (87) told me how her son became a pitman in 1956: *'Adrian finished school on the Friday and him and another lad went to Bank Top and got a job starting on the Monday; my husband was very disappointed, he thought Adrian would do something different'.*

Some men did leave the collieries, but it was not easy to find other work. Barry (72) worked seven years at Bank Top but decided to leave when he saw a friend killed in a mining accident. He went down to London to find work, then came back and worked on the local building sites. Douglas (70) worked at another pit in the area until he was twenty-three when a face collapsed and several of his friends were badly injured. He left but again, it took him some time to find another job. Post-war, what local jobs there were did not generally pay as well as mining, which was why it took a serious accident for many to decide to leave. Of course, work outside the pits had other attractions apart from relative safety: Alfred (75) worked at Bank Top until it closed in 1968, when he moved to the building sites: *'I had never known life could be so good - I used to take my shirt off and just enjoy the sunshine'*, he said.

Much has been written about the solidarity and collective values of miners, founded partly on shared danger and the need to work together but there is another key characteristic of

underground work which stems directly from its physical characteristics i.e. working in cramped conditions down long narrow passages far underground - namely a large degree of workplace autonomy. The fact that miners were literally 'hidden from view' (particularly in the low, old-fashioned workings of West Durham) protected them from construction workers' experience of the site foreman creeping silently around to surprise - and fire - any man not deemed to be pulling his weight (Tressell, 1955 [1914]), or what Foucault later described as the disciplinary gaze or 'panopticon' of management surveillance (Foucault, 1995 [1977] pp. 195-230). The downside of this is arguably that the physical difficulties of surveillance of the conduct of labour have resulted historically in greater surveillance of its product i.e. piecework and the weighing of tubs to determine pay; the 1863 Brancepeth 'rocking strike' and the importance of the checkweighman in ensuring that the management did not cheat the workers are directly related to this surveillance<sup>72</sup>.

Some men explicitly contrasted the independence and comradeship of the pit with other jobs such as factory or call centre work. Gordon (60) moved from a local pit to a factory when the pit closed, *'but it wasn't friendly, nobody spoke to us so after ten months I heard Sacriston were taking men on so I went there, the first day at the lockers it was all hello, which pit were you at'*. Another man contrasted his own past colliery employment with that of *'the young ones'*, working in call centres *'where you have to sign out to use the toilet'*. In terms of aspirations, however, the importance of autonomy meant that progression to supervisory positions such as shotfirers, overmen and deputies was not necessarily sought after, nor did these supervisory positions always command respect from the men. I asked Edward (82) whether his father being a deputy made the family 'a cut above'; but he said no, *'some deputies were as thick as planks'*. He added however that his father *'had a canny headpiece on - he was Secretary of the Deputies Union and Treasurer at the Club'*.

Colin (75) was another obstreperous miner: he spent nine years at the Littletown Pit until it was flooded and closed at which point he joined the army. He laughed as he told me that he *'never made it beyond sergeant because I was arrested for fighting three times'*. Ronald's son started work as a painter and decorator but his quick temper led to his walking out and going down the pit instead:

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<sup>72</sup> <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/12th-december-1863/13/the-coal-strike> accessed on 25th March 2015

*It was our Julian where I got him a job as an apprentice painter, I bought him white overalls and brushes. They were building Council houses at Shiremoor, he rattled in one afternoon, I said what's wrong, he said he'd packed in the job. He had been up on the scaffolding painting the fronts when this little lad Alec the foreman painter came along, a little man with a little moustache, and was getting nasty with some of the lads, saying they weren't fast enough, Julian answered back, Alec said 'you only got the job because your father is a Councillor' so Julian emptied the bucket of yellow paint on his head and quit the job.*

It was not surprising that the autonomy and collective solidarity of pit work led to aspirations to representative positions rather than supervisory and managerial ones: many men in the pits made their names as full-time union representatives, councillors or MPs. These included local men such as Ronald (87), a councillor and local fixer for more than fifty years, as well as Robin (1947-2009), who dropped out of grammar school because he felt out of place in his second-hand uniform but later became a full-time shop steward for the NUM. Such men followed in the footsteps of miners who became County Durham Members of Parliament such as John Wilson (1837-1915), Jack Lawson (1881-1965) and James Dixon Murray (1887-1965), or County Councillors such as Peter Lee (1864-1935), who gave his name to a North East new town. As for aspirations to professional employment, these were dependent on educational qualifications and will be considered in the education section of this chapter.

#### FACTORY WORK AND WOMEN'S AUTONOMY

Massey has shown how manufacturing companies in the south east, faced with the loss of their workforce to service industries, relocated to peripheral, often rural areas of 'green' female labour with little union organisation and low wage expectations in the 1960s and 1970s (Massey, 1994 pp. 81-82). Although some factories were designed to provide jobs for ex-miners, low rates of employment for married women opened the door for female labour to be drawn into the labour market; of the net increase in manufacturing employment from 1965 to 1970 in County Durham, about half was for women (Hudson, 1981 pp. 18 and 21).

As far as employment in Sleetburn was concerned, this process started immediately after the war, with a number of clothing factories already operating in the Lowland Moor and Mayfield area at that time and employing local women such as Shirley (80) as early as 1946, as well as others further afield such as the Smart & Brown luminaire factory in Spennymoor, where Jennifer (70) and other local women worked at various times. When the local pits

closed in the 1960s, further factories were set up on new trading estates in the area, with grants and incentives available. The minute books of Langdon Council for this period are full of meetings with prospective tenants for industrial units, as well as requests made and granted for housing to be provided for key personnel relocating. As usual, Ronald's (87) detailed recollection of events was confirmed by the records I examined:

*We didn't get the factories the Government was promising, they only came while there were grants then they moved. They were supposed to be for when the colliery closed: the Lowburn Industrial Estate was set up on the site of Lowburn Colliery. Douglas Jay was President of the Board of Trade at the time<sup>73</sup> and cut the first sod for the new industrial estate. Then Boney Colliery was taken out, and the Lowburn Estate was extended with the Mayfield Estate.*

Skilled work was identified with male work, and much factory work was classed as unskilled and therefore women's work in order to keep costs down. In the clothing factories, women did the machining whilst men generally did the cutting which was classed as a skilled job (Zandy, 2001 p. 150). Despite these inequities, post-war factory work created spaces of autonomy for women in Sleetburn by way of greatly increased opportunities for paid employment and therefore financial independence. Jennifer (70) worked in the factories all her life and told me many stories of the camaraderie there, but also of the benefits of economic independence which included in her case the freedom to stay single for much longer than would have been the case for her mother and grandmother; Jennifer broke off one engagement, and eventually married at the age of thirty-three, very much on her own terms. Some of the stories Jennifer told me reminded me of accounts of mill girls in the North West of England; working-class women who were able to obtain a measure of financial independence much earlier than was the case in the North East (Russell, 2004 p. 38). Jennifer described the exuberance of going out with co-workers after she started work in 1957:

*We never used to get the bus – ten or twelve of us used to walk there for a night out, or sometimes we took the bus there and then walked back, we carried our shoes in a bag – we would go on different nights to different clubs that had events on, in Shiremoor, Langdon... on the way back we would pull up the turnip plants in the fields and throw them around.*

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<sup>73</sup> 1964 to 1967

In later years, the older girls in the factory looked after the younger ones when they all went to Spain: Jennifer told me she gave condoms to her group of six *'to make sure they were safe'*. This contrasted with Dorothy (87) who was married at eighteen and never went dancing or even to the Club as her husband did not approve; although as we saw in Chapter 4 in the case of the woman who went to the police because her husband would not let her work in a munitions factory, some women of the same or even earlier generations rebelled successfully against such strictures (James, 1995, Hall, 2001). Jennifer told me other ways in which workers subverted authority and reclaimed agency:

*Me and my team also made underwear on the side for people we knew, buying the webbing and then we'd have one cutter-outer, one person to put the elastic in... we did it in our lunch hour, and everybody on the colliery terraces got their underwear from me for ten pence – trunks and vests – it paid for me to go to the hop in Langdon on a Thursday.*

#### RECOVERING AGENCY THROUGH EMOTIONAL LABOUR

Few local factory jobs were still available at the time of my fieldwork and most women in the village worked in service jobs classed as unskilled – cleaning, catering, bar and care work. These jobs received little recognition; Elaine (65), who had worked as a home carer, told me how the son of one old lady complained because the home carer (who was travelling all day between clients) had used the toilet at her house<sup>74</sup>. Although there was also resentment – one young woman spoke of meals at the university college where she worked as *'feeding time at the zoo'* – the older women I spoke to often described putting in more effort than they were paid for, thus creating and claiming value for work regarded as requiring low skill. Women invested their emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) willingly in caring jobs, developing long-term relationships with the people they cared for and often taking on roles as friend and confidante as well as doing additional unpaid work for clients. Frances (65) told me:

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<sup>74</sup> A story reminiscent of the segregated toilets episode in Kathryn Stockett's account of black domestic workers in Jim Crow America *'The Help'* (2009) Penguin Books, London.

*I was a damn good carer. I love reading about hard times, looking after old people is like reading Catherine Cookson; sometimes you were closer to them than their own families. Some of them I saw three times a week, some used to cry if I went away on holiday... I used to paint and wallpaper their houses in my spare time, come over and do little jobs for them.<sup>75</sup>*

Similarly, women doing private cleaning work often took on an unofficial role of home help as clients aged, running errands and checking up on them as they became more frail, and women who cleaned in university colleges became the confidantes of some of the students. Heather (53) remembered talking one student into getting up after she found him still in bed on the morning of his exams, too scared to go. Even institutional cleaning jobs provided opportunities for creative engagement; I bumped into Dawn (45) one day as she was on her way to her cleaning job at a local school; she was walking from the bus stop and I was cycling past. We stopped for a chat; I made a joke about the tightly wrapped plastic bag she was hugging to her chest, asking if it was alcohol to get her through the day. She explained that it was a cleaning product she had bought for the boys' toilets, which were clean but still didn't smell very nice so she had brought something in to fix this. The cleaners were only supposed to use officially approved products, so she was smuggling this one in. By subverting the official list of permitted products, Dawn retained some control over the way she worked, as well as pride in doing it well. Rita (75) similarly did more work than she was paid for; one lunch time I attended the funeral of a popular local man, and later his wake at the Club. Rita was on the bar; although she often did paid shifts there, she told me rather crossly that she was helping out that day as a favour; the Club couldn't afford to put extra staff on, and Rita didn't want mourners to be kept waiting for their drinks.

Such instances of extra effort and the exercise of individual agency in service jobs were not confined to women, but in practice, women were more likely to be doing this type of work. Men working as school caretakers or college porters also often worked longer hours than they were supposed to or carried out additional tasks; college porter Lewis (57) told me how he would make a pot of tea for groups of students returning to college in the early hours after a night out; school caretaker Wayne (46) worked such long hours at the school that he had been told he must start taking proper lunch breaks and going home earlier.

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<sup>75</sup> At the time of writing, it was not clear whether such an approach continued to be possible in the light of increased surveillance, electronic monitoring of tasks, zero-hour contracts and maximum fifteen minute care visits.

## CONTRASTING SOCIAL MOBILITIES

As we saw in previous paragraphs, work in Sleetburn was fraught with uncertainty; people had low expectations of work but attempted to reclaim agency by carving out spaces of autonomy. Turning to the minority of Sleetburn people who did manage to improve their economic circumstances significantly, they can be divided into two groups. The first group was those who did this through education, and as we will see in the next section, the experience was often an ambivalent one both for them and in terms of how their family and the village felt about them - echoing the ambivalence of working-class authors I referred to in Chapter 1; thus the experience of social mobility could also be one of loss. The other group was those men, usually skilled craftsmen, who became self-employed and managed to build up their own business, typically in construction. People in this group were less likely to acquire different values or attitudes, less likely to move away and instead far more likely to build a large house in the village; in this sense, their success was less problematic than that of the first group, although of course such businesses could also be precarious. Increasing numbers of women were also becoming self-employed, including a taxi business and a wedding car service, but at the time of my fieldwork none of them had yet achieved such conspicuous success.

## EDUCATION

In this second section I consider local aspirations in the context of historical and contemporary experiences of education in Sleetburn. Two key themes emerge: the first was the primacy of work whereby education had provided little (visible) reward historically and was therefore 'something to be got through' (Reay, 2001 p. 335, quoting Phil Cohen) before real life began; the second was the idea of imaginable futures, which depended on what was visible locally i.e. what friends and relatives had done. What social mobility there was through education took people out of the village, so that those particular trajectories were obscured although teaching was one possible, 'visible' and therefore accessible career for ordinary people. A few people from Sleetburn did go to university but this tended to be an unexpected accident rather than the effortless assumption of middle-class habitus (Bourdieu, 1990 [1980]).

The idea of 'raising aspirations' as a way of improving the attainment of poorer compared to richer children has been a key target of UK education policy for many years (Allen and Hollingworth, 2013) even though a recent report found little evidence that interventions with this goal were effective or even that raising aspirations led to improved attainment; it was just as likely that the causation worked the other way i.e. increased attainment led to improved aspirations (Cummings et al., 2012). Moreover, there is little discussion in the literature of why some aspirations are better than others; instead, there is a preoccupation with educational and occupational goals as against other aspirations (Kintrea et al., 2011) such as self-fulfilment, caring or leadership roles in the family or community (for honourable exceptions, see for instance Allen and Hollingworth, 2013, Ingram, 2011, Ingram, 2009, Bright, 2011, Brown, 2011). Reay has described the unremitting focus within education policy on social mobility and raising aspirations as an ideological whip with which to beat the white working classes (Reay, 2012).

I explained in Chapter 1 how the idea of aspiration was applied to places like Sleetburn, referencing the old dichotomy of the deserving - those who make efforts to 'better themselves' - versus the undeserving poor, and the related claim that the failure to do this is both morally reprehensible and the fault of the individual rather than of structural forces. As with the idea of insularity, I heard the idea of 'low aspirations' applied to Sleetburn by outsiders, especially teachers, as well as by local people who had succeeded educationally. As to the majority who left school early and worked in manual and routine jobs, their reaction to conversations around education was sometimes defensive but very often it was not; instead, people deployed an entirely different repertoire of values in terms of what constituted success i.e. what aspirations should be. People in Sleetburn did not generally talk much about educational matters such as local schools and their relative merits or how their children were doing in school; the instances I quote later in the chapter generally stem from direct questions I asked. People did talk about their children but parental aspirations for their success and happiness were rarely formulated in terms of educational qualifications. Of course, as I stated in Chapter 3, most of my time was spent with older people and this chapter is therefore largely about their perspectives; however for the most part they were very involved in their grandchildren's lives, so the way older people talked

about their own educational choices and those of their children and grandchildren formed the context and background for the education of younger generations.

### **THE PRIMACY OF WORK**

Around the age of fourteen, many young people in Sleetburn began to associate formal academic schooling with childhood and hanker for more adult roles in the world of work. Despite the best efforts of Sleetburn Primary to demonstrate a wide range of career options, family experience meant that by the time children were in secondary school, their job aspirations often replicated the gendered pattern of their parents' jobs - largely manual work for men and caring, paid or unpaid, for women. This resonates with findings by other studies that academic values are not consistent with some elements of working-class values, including masculinity or even simply adulthood (Willis, 1977, Corrigan, 1979, Reay, 2001, Walkerdine et al., 2001). Other studies have highlighted how educational values in the UK reproduce specific middle-class values: educational success may therefore demand a rejection of working-class values as a condition of success (Reay, 2001).

Most people in Sleetburn left school at the minimum leaving age which was fourteen for the oldest generations, rising to fifteen from 1947 and sixteen from 1972. This meant parents and grandparents who themselves left school in their mid-teens were sympathetic to young people's impatience with formal school and desire to find a job. Edward (82) told me he was at school until he was fourteen, when he *'got sick of it'*. I asked about the eleven plus exam, but he said he wasn't interested. Russell (47) told me: *'kids just don't want to be at school'*. I asked him at what age he thought that happened, he said *'maybe fourteen, they get sick of it'*. Yvonne (70) told me how this happened with both her grandsons:

*Luke was always a handful, he never went to school since he was thirteen, our Craig was the same. His mum and me - it was at the time when they were talking about sending parents to prison if children didn't go to school - we were scared, she would say 'make sure you get him to go', but he wouldn't.*

Yvonne and I also had a misunderstanding which summed up our different, classed attitudes to education and the meaning of success. She was telling me that her granddaughter Tania had loved school, but that when she went to Sixth Form College, *'it was like a butterfly came out'*. I assumed that Yvonne meant that Tania was able to spread her intellectual wings, but no: *'She had beautiful clothes, she wanted to go out in Durham, she didn't want to study any*

*more. She did a year at the college then got a job... she had probably learned all she needed'*. Yvonne was delighted that Tania blossomed socially, whereas a middle-class parent might have preferred her to concentrate on her studies and finish the sixth form. In Sleetburn, the experience of school failure of many parents and grandparents often resulted in aspirations for their children which did not include academic success (Reay and Ball, 1997). Some people did feel they had missed out on academic and professional possibilities; like Russell, Darren (39) worked in the building trade but he told me he had been expected to get B grades at GCSE, but that he was *'a bit wayward'* in his last year at school and didn't do well. I asked him why, what happened; we were in the Club with Russell and Adam at the time, and Adam broke in, saying *'Sleetburn happened!'* They all laughed, but I asked what he meant; he said: *'well, nothing good ever came out of Sleetburn'*. Someone else chipped in: *'Only the road!'* This self-deprecating humour was typical of young men in the Club who used it to deflect the stigma they knew was attached to the village as well as to themselves as young working-class men.

Another aspect of the primacy of work was the way college (post-16 education) was considered as secondary to work. Whilst teenage alienation from school was regarded as natural, college was an acceptable option but only really in conjunction with work, harking back to the experiences of older people who attended college on a day release basis to support their apprenticeship or other work-based learning. Benjamin (23) told me: *'People go to college because they can't find a job, to fill in time'*. Young people who were at college were also expected by their families to work part-time, and this strong work ethic sometimes appeared to clash with the study needs of young students. Amy (18) was doing a childcare course at college but also did bar work in the evenings and weekends; I suggested to her mother that this might make it hard for her to study, but she pointed out that she had done her own college course as part of her hairdressing apprenticeship, in a way that suggested that college work could only be an adjunct to the real world of paid employment. Similarly, Samantha (23) was doing a degree course at a local college but had also worked weekends in a local shop since she was sixteen. Both were living at home and there was a clear expectation both from themselves and their parents that they should be earning. This is consistent with studies that show that a much higher proportion of working-class students

also take on paid employment during the course of their studies; for financial reasons of course, but I would suggest also for cultural ones (Reay et al., 2001).

#### SECONDARY SCHOOL: A DIVISIVE LEGACY

Sleetburn Primary School held a symbolic position typical of rural primary schools in that long-standing local residents had familial ties and an emotional commitment to place which translated into support for the local school (Walker and Clark, 2010) which was centrally located and integrated into village life. The school was a family affair, with the school cook, three lunch time supervisors and one of the teaching assistants all living in the village. Some staff were related to some of the children, many of whom were also related to each other, with many cousins in the school as well as the usual sibling groups. The village jazz band's annual festival took place in the school and volunteers from the village church and chapel came in every week to run an after-school craft club based around biblical themes.

At secondary level, only two schools were really relevant to Sleetburn and both had a continuous presence in local memories which tended to gloss over major changes in their organisation and intake consequent upon wider educational reforms. The first, which I call Murray School, was a small school with a consistently poor academic reputation (though some strength in vocational subjects), located in a village just over a mile away and serving several villages including Sleetburn in a radius of up to three miles or so. Whether as a secondary modern or later as a comprehensive, Murray was where most Sleetburn people went to school; many also told me that was where they met their husband or wife. The second school, which I call Lawson, was a much larger school on the fringes of Durham City, three miles from Sleetburn.

Lawson was the name of the old grammar school and as such associated with the divisive historical legacy of the selective system (Jackson and Marsden, 1962). Not many people from Sleetburn passed the grammar school entrance examination before it was abolished locally in 1979 and of those who did, many were now absent from the village, having been taken elsewhere by their academic success, as has been mentioned already and will be again later in this chapter. Lawson amalgamated with three secondary moderns in Durham City and two nearby villages in 1979, but this new composite retained the grammar school name and location, giving the impression of continuity with its selective past. As Yvonne (70)

said: *'We still call it the Lawson Grammar school; [though] nowadays anyone can go, if you put in for it'*. The school also retained its reputation for academic excellence, at least partly as a result of its colonisation by the middle classes facilitated by its location in an upmarket area in Durham City and the 'chicken and egg' process whereby middle-class parents (including myself) ensured they lived in its catchment area (Ball et al., 1995). The Lawson's good results were well-known locally but there was also a degree of uneasiness with its ethos and culture. Kevin (58) who met his wife at Murray and later sent his children there, told me: *'Some people want their kids to go to the Lawson because it's...'* and pushed the underside of his nose upwards with his finger, suggesting the school was 'stuck up'. Benjamin (23) told me that when his Murray school bus used to drive past Lawson kids, *'we would chuck things out the windows at them'*. I asked him why, he said because they felt Lawson was *'snobby'*. When Jennifer (70) showed me her 1991 wedding photos, I noticed a boy in a school blazer; I asked about him, she told he was her brother's son, it was the blazer for *'some posh school, Lawson'* she thought.

Murray was the default choice of school and was within the historical comfort zone of people in Sleetburn. Although they were aware of Lawson's superior results, the school was outside that same comfort zone and historical experience had taught people in the village that they had little reason to expect the school to transform their or their children's chances in life, even if they were convinced that education had the power to do this in the first place (Reay and Ball, 1997, Reay, 2001). Few people in Sleetburn had *'passed for the Lawson'*. Of those who had, many dropped out before sixth form. Of those who did attend the Lawson Sixth Form and go onto university, none still lived in the village as far as I could tell (some examples of those who left are given later in this chapter).

## IMAGINABLE FUTURES

### THE ACCIDENT OF UNIVERSITY

What was imaginable depended on what was visible in Sleetburn; going to university was not generally imaginable whereas teaching was, as we will see in this section. The idea of going to university as a matter of unexpected accident rather than entitlement was most strikingly articulated by teacher Maxwell (49). After leaving school at sixteen and working in clerical jobs, he opened a shop in a nearby town where customers included staff from the local further education college. One of them mentioned an access course they ran, so he did that and went onto Durham University for teacher training. He told me he felt very angry when he started the course and realised: *'It was fine, I could do it; I had always thought it wasn't for the likes of me'*. The historic and continuing role of teaching as the professional career most visible and accessible to working-class people was very evident in the village. In general conversation, any sort of academic interest was expressed in terms of an interest in teaching because this was an imaginable career. Hazel (66) told me her eldest son Owen (47) *'did well at school and wanted to go into teaching'*, though he wasn't able to fulfil this ambition because of family commitments. Ian (70) told me he would have liked to be an archaeologist - but other people in the Club expressed his cleverness to me by saying *'he should have been a teacher'*. Altogether I came across eight people, sons and daughters of mining families in and around the village who became teachers or teaching assistants – by far the largest group in terms of social mobility from the village into any profession. These ranged from the oldest generation (Michael aged 79, originally a joiner) to the youngest (Simon, aged 33). It was noticeable, however, how few continued to live in the village where they were born; a point linking geographical and social mobility to which I shall return.

Although teaching was by far the most common route out of routine and manual and into professional work, a few people from mining families also trained as social or youth workers, which were also visible and therefore imaginable careers. Yvonne's younger sister (60) was highly unusual in becoming a lawyer, though again through a somewhat accidental route: she worked for an estate agent, moved into conveyancing and eventually trained as a solicitor. Like Maxwell, many of those who went to university were mature students who had not realised until later in life that university might be, as he put it, *'for the likes of*

them'. In some cases, their academic potential was realised by an employer, as was the case for Patrick and Janice's son Glenn (44):

*Glenn left school and went to County Hall, then somebody realised his potential, they gave him day release for exams, he applied to Newcastle, they kept him on the books at County Hall for all the holidays and his place was guaranteed. He got a First then went onto do a Masters in Civil Engineering.*

Like Glenn, local university applicants from working-class backgrounds commuted every day from the family home rather than 'going away to uni' (Holdsworth, 2009a, Holdsworth, 2009b). Going to university was also a matter of going somewhere where one felt comfortable; inspired by a particular teacher at school, Samantha (23) was doing an undergraduate degree at the local college of further education and told me she would also do her PhD there; despite the proximity of Durham and three other universities, these were not 'imaginable' institutions.

#### SOCIAL MOBILITY AND ABSENCE

Samantha told me she planned to '*do a PhD, become a professor and buy a big house away from the village*'. It was interesting that she should mention moving away, as what was also striking about university graduates from the village was that none still lived there<sup>76</sup>; I either met them elsewhere or heard about them from relatives who were always proud, but sometimes also felt slighted. Social mobility was invisible in the village because its association with geographical mobility meant that people who had gone into higher education and professional or managerial jobs had moved away. Examples included Roy's brother who had trained as a teacher and then a university lecturer at Lancaster University, and had not been to the village '*for years*'; Simon (32), a teacher, and Rebecca (27), a housing officer who told me she had 'mixed feelings' about the village. These people followed a more middle-class pattern of mobility, meeting partners during their studies or through their subsequent employment and often moving to a different part of the UK in pursuit of a career. If they still lived in the Durham area, they were less likely to live in their home village and more likely to move to a more upmarket estate elsewhere. I only met one Sleetburn person who went to university and still lived in the village and she was clearly uncomfortable; she told me how she used to say she was from the next village along as it

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<sup>76</sup> There were graduates in the village but they came from elsewhere, usually because of the cheap housing and relative proximity to Durham City rather than because of any local connections – see Chapter 5.

*'sounded better'* than Sleetburn, and I was struck by how her house was covered with signs saying '24 hour CCTV' and how nervous she was about being burgled. The only other person from the village I knew of who went to university and still lived in the village, Kevin's (59) daughter, moved from her parents' house to a new job in Manchester in 2014.

The discourse of aspiration takes for granted that managerial or professional roles are more enjoyable and personally rewarding than routine and manual jobs; whilst some people would have liked these opportunities, others were sceptical of their worth, and aware that there was a price to pay either in separation from their family and often their local area, or loss of identity and autonomy arguably greater than in some less well-paid jobs. Some people explicitly favoured commitment to their family over career advancement: Albert (83) *'wanted to wear a peaked cap and a tie rather than a sailor's collar, I wanted to be put on the petty officer's course'* - but later decided to leave the Navy because he was concerned that his children didn't recognise him. Similarly, in the 1980s, Ivy's husband (then 55) had the chance of transferring to a pit job elsewhere, but his wife convinced him to take a much less well-paid, but safer security job in Durham City. Certainly the parents of those who had done well and moved away often expressed disappointment about their geographical distance. There is often a sharp educational gradient in contact and proximity: with higher education comes a loss of contact with extended family (Kalmijn, 2006). Writers from working-class backgrounds such as Richard Hoggart or Dennis Potter have described their own social mobility as an ambivalent process of loss as well as advance (Hoggart, 1957, Potter, 1962) ; and for working-class women also, there are losses as well as gains in educational success and upward mobility, which have been expressed as psychosocial distance and hybridity (Barker, 1972, Lucey et al., 2003, Mannay, 2013).

I have shown in this chapter how paid work in Sleetburn was fraught with uncertainty rather than offering a stable 'career'. People had ordinary aspirations, hoping for emotional happiness as well as the material security of a house, a car and a job. Historically informed expectations of work were low and aspirations to professional and managerial work largely irrelevant but workers attempted to reclaim agency by carving out spaces of autonomy within their work or occasionally by subverting the system. As we saw in Chapter 5, family and friends networks were important in obtaining employment but whereas middle-class networks make extensive use of educational capital (Bourdieu, 1986), education has not

worked this way for people in the village. The selective education system was experienced as divisive and most people in the village found themselves on the losing side. More recently, although the local primary school retained strong support, family experiences did not support the view that non-vocational secondary schooling beyond sixteen provided a useful basis for future employment opportunities. Success stories of relative affluence in Sleetburn either came from those who embraced middle-class educational values but who also moved away and were not visible in the village, or those (men) who had been able to access formal skills as craftsmen and achieve success without having to remove themselves from the local area and culture.

## CHAPTER 7: SMOKING: THE ABSENCE OF STIGMA

### FAMILY SMOKING MEMORIES

In chapters 4 to 6 of this thesis I showed how classed moral values around mobility, insularity and aspiration operated in Sleeburn; specifically how mobility was seen by outside agencies as a good in itself whilst forms of village mobility were denied or misrecognised; how close family ties were emotionally and practically important but constructed by others as atavistic; and how local people were seen as lacking because they had ordinary aspirations to happiness and security within the constraints of imaginable futures. In chapters 7 to 9 I turn to continued smoking in Sleeburn and argue that the way smoking operated and the fact that it persisted locally can only be understood in relation to the operation of the wider values discussed in earlier chapters.

In this chapter I consider the historical continuity of smoking in Sleeburn and argue that this combined with the strong intergenerational ties discussed in chapter 5 to create a particularly strong emotional connection to smoking practices. People of all ages have grown up with smoking parents and grandparents, starting age has stayed consistent over a period of sixty years and an association between smoking and becoming an adult has been maintained, with younger people patterning themselves on their smoking parents. I then show that despite national initiatives aimed at denormalisation, smoking was not controversial in the village. It was not normative in the sense of expected or prescribed but it was unnoticed and unnoticeable, either in terms of who smoked or who didn't, and largely free from stigma. I suggest in this and subsequent chapters that strong family ties and a long history of family smoking have made it difficult for people in the village and indeed the local area to achieve the distancing or alienation from tobacco necessary for successful cessation.

### HISTORICAL SMOKING PATTERNS

Smoking on a large scale did not take off in the UK until 1883 when Wills of Bristol began producing cigarettes with the new Bonsack cigarette machine, allowing the company drastically to reduce the price of previously hand-rolled cigarettes. Until this time, working-class men smoked clay pipes and middle-class men Meerschaum pipes or sometimes cigars. Male smoking increased during and after the First World War; cigarette smoking among

women started around 1920 and became particularly popular during the Second World War. By 1948, the first year for which percentage smoking rates are available, 82% of men in the UK smoked as did 41% of women (Wald and Nicolaidis-Bouman, 1991 pp. 27 to 29).

In Sleetburn, the life stories I heard confirmed that as one might expect from these figures, most men in the village smoked cigarettes<sup>77</sup> in the 1930s and 1940s, although a few never-smokers were also mentioned. With regard to women, it was clear that far fewer smoked but there were different views and experiences within the village as to just how few. Ronald (87) said *'most of the women smoked'* in the 1940s; his own mother *'didn't smoke or drink, she was an invalid'*, but his mother-in-law and wife did, whereas neither Roy (76)'s mother nor his wife nor her mother smoked, and he told me: *'women didn't so much'*.

Amongst women in the village born after 1920, smoking was certainly widespread by the late 1930s. Ivy (88) started working at Woolworths in 1939 when she was fifteen; she said *'we all smoked then'*. During the war, she and her colleagues would take it in turn to be on fire watch, sitting and smoking through the night - when they could get the cigarettes. Peter (85) remembered his future wife smoking her father's Woodbines in 1940 when she was twelve.

Female smoking played an important role in Ronald's life: *'I got my wife for fifty Senior Service'* he liked to say. When he came home on leave in 1945 – not yet a smoker himself - *'everyone was choking for a smoke. All the lads used to bring tabs home from the Forces'*. Ronald went to the pub in the village, everyone was begging for cigarettes and he handed them round the bar. A neighbour in the women's box (*'a little room where the women sat and gossiped'*) smelled the smoke and said *'what's all this smoking'*. Ronald gave her a tin of fifty cigarettes and married her daughter (also a smoker) the following year.

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<sup>77</sup> Other tobacco use is covered further on

## MEMORABLE BRANDS

When I asked older people about their smoking histories it was accounts of their earliest years which were described, including references to their parents' smoking habits and obsolete brands which were recalled even sixty or eighty years later<sup>78</sup>. Given the high historical prevalence of smoking in Sleetburn, smoking was tied into their childhood memories and I will suggest in Chapter 9 that people whose parents, particularly their mothers smoked when they were children found it hardest to quit.

In this section I set the scene by illustrating how strong brand memories were. Once I raised the issue of smoking, older people enjoyed discussing with each other and explaining to me the positioning of long-gone cigarette brands, comparing cost, taste and the type of person who might consume each one. Everyone remembered not just their own brands, but also those of their parents and often grandparents, as well as sensorial details such as the colours and designs of the different packs. Everyone also remembered how they started smoking and how much a pack of cigarettes cost when they first started - even if it was seventy years before.

The following account is from a conversation I had in 2012 with two neighbours in their mid-seventies. I asked what the packs looked like, Roy wondered was it the Players that had the navy man, the sailor in the middle? Valerie said wasn't that Capstan (she never smoked). They both agreed that Senior Service were white, Capstan was gold/orange according to Valerie, blue according to Roy. Players were white and gold. I was surprised that Valerie remembered, she said it was because her dad smoked Senior Service. I asked what her mum smoked, she thought a bit and said she thought she smoked his. Roy said that price made a big difference. When he first bought cigarettes they cost half a crown, that's two and six, or twelve and a half pence per pack. They commented on how they cost £6 now, but Roy pointed out that at that time his weekly wage was £11, so possibly the cost compared to wages hadn't changed as much as one might think. Embassy had a blue or a red stripe, I asked which ones he smoked, he said the blue, Embassy Regals - you got the coupons to get gifts.

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<sup>78</sup> This strong emotional memory for cigarette brands can also be found on internet forums e.g. [http://www.shJoyce\(89\)ldforum.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-103671.html](http://www.shJoyce(89)ldforum.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-103671.html) Accessed 4 September 2014.

The oldest accounts I heard going back to the 1930s and 1940s generally referred to Woodbines (launched 1888), Capstan Full Strength (1894) and Senior Service (1925). Malcolm (69) said *'most working men smoked Capstan or Woodbines'*, and Ronald (87) recalled that Woodbines were the cheapest in the 1940s at 2d per pack, whereas Capstan cost 3d. His father smoked Capstan; because he had served in the Navy, Ronald himself smoked Senior Service, the Navy brand. Roy (76) agreed that Woodbines were more downmarket, saying *'you only smoked Woodbines when you couldn't afford anything else, the others tasted better'*. Most women smokers disliked Woodbines: Hazel (66) found them *'too strong'*, Jennifer (70) said she *'never could stand Woodbines'*. A handful of female Woodbine smokers were mentioned, however; Yvonne (69) remembered her mother-in-law in the 1960s smoking Woodbines continuously whilst doing household tasks, and Ronald (87) said his late wife *'would smoke anything'* – but mostly Woodbines. Yvonne told me she herself loved Woodbines, but *'they were a killer, you could feel them in the back of your neck'*. She had smoked Players No. 6 instead, but she loved the Woodbines packet design - *'I still have one somewhere'*, she said. Later she emailed me a photo of an old pack she had kept. Capstan Full Strength had the highest tar and nicotine content of any cigarette on the market (Wald and Nicolaides-Bouman, 1991 p. 203). The accounts I heard suggested they were smoked exclusively by men, and to be a Capstan Full Strength smoker was something of a feat - Leslie (53) said he would smoke anything, *'only I found Capstan Full Strength too much'*. Rodney (64) said he couldn't smoke Capstan as they made him cough. However, Heather (53) told me her father smoked Capstan until *'a few weeks before he died'* at the age of eighty-two. Several women in the village had smoked Senior Service, but many chose brands aimed at women such as Craven A, Du Maurier, Park Drive and various Player's brands including Weights, No. 6 and Bachelors.

Consistently with findings elsewhere (Siegel et al., 1996, Cummings et al., 1997, Pollay, 2000), smoking trajectories involved little brand-switching although a sixty-year relationship with a single brand such as that enjoyed by Heather's father (above), was unusual; I only knew one other smoker (this one female) with a sixty-year single brand history. The typical Sleetburn smoker born in the 1930s or 1940s started with an unfiltered brand, changed to a filter and lower tar brand in the 1960s (partly because these were marketed as safer but also because plain and high-tar cigarettes became harder to get and more expensive) then

changed to an economy brand in the 2000s (see Chapter 8 on the rise of economy brands). The dominant brands in the village in the 1960s and 1970s were Embassy Regal<sup>79</sup> and Lambert & Butler, and men and women in the village generally smoked the same brands. Brands smoked were always British, most frequently from Imperial Tobacco; leading (but expensive) American brands such as Marlboro and Camel were never mentioned – except on one occasion, when Nicholas (57) told me his mother had asked him to get her a pack of Camels as she had happy memories of getting them from American GIs. Winifred (83)'s late husband had a typical Sleetburn smoking career: over seventy years he smoked only three brands: he started with Woodbines, switched to Regal, and finally Lambert & Butler. Roy (76) said *'you started to smoke one particular brand and stuck to it'*. Although fifty years younger, Benjamin (23) said the same thing: *'I didn't try all the brands, I just smoked what my friends smoked.'* Over a period of forty years, Roy (76) smoked Woodbines when that was all he could afford, then Senior Service, then Embassy Regal *'when everyone went over to filter cigarettes'*. Over fifty years, Hazel (66) smoked Senior Service, then Embassy Regal. Mark (59) smoked Benson & Hedges for twenty years, switched to Lambert & Butler on the day his father died *'because the shop didn't have any Benson & Hedges'*, and smoked those for another twenty years (and continuing). Over a fifty year period, Malcolm (69) initially smoked Benson & Hedges; later switching to Superkings because they were *'better value'*. The 100mm size cigarettes such as Superkings were mainly smoked by women, as were menthol-flavoured cigarettes. Switching to cheaper brands for financial reasons was a recent phenomenon which I will explore in more detail in Chapter 8. Many smokers described choosing or switching to a particular brand because it was *'mild'* or *'light'*, confirming previous findings that smokers persisted in believing these were less dangerous (Borland et al., 2008).

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<sup>79</sup> Embassy Regal and Embassy were sister products made by Imperial Tobacco, Embassy Regal was more popular in the North and Embassy in the south of England. Lambert & Butler was the top-selling brand in the UK at the time of writing in 2013 and had been for some years.

#### CASE STUDY: EMBASSY REGAL

Embassy Regal featured prominently in many accounts as it had its heyday in the north of England from the 1970s to the 1990s so was highly likely to be the brand that older people had smoked, or if they were slightly younger, that their parents had smoked. One of the reasons it was popular was because it was a coupon cigarette from its 1962 re-launch until 2000; smokers could save up the coupons from the packs and use them to pay for gifts from a catalogue. I was involved in several animated 'remember when' conversations involving Embassy coupons bound up with memories of family and community life. Roy (76) smoked Embassy Regal in the 1960s and 1970s; his wife, a never-smoker, told me:

*Everyone collected coupons at that time, you got a catalogue with all the things you could get, and when you were getting near to the total you needed for a particular item, you might go next door and borrow the few you needed, and return them later.*

Dorothy (93) used her husband's coupons to order a framed print of the popular nineteenth-century painting 'And when did you last see your father'<sup>80</sup> and some towels. An on-line search also revealed that Embassy coupons featured in on-line forums, again in the context of family memories. Posts on a Belfast forum in April 2010<sup>81</sup> included:

*Got my first microwave with Embassy Regal cigarette coupons, I had the world and their wives saving them up for me*

*My father smoked for most of his life, I can remember him saving the coupons for a new electric kettle*

*I remember my Mum smoking Embassy and getting loads of gifts with the coupons, I still have Nescafe coffee set she got in the 80s.*

The affective link between cigarettes and family memories in wider working-class culture is further illustrated by on-line comments relating to Pontins Holiday Camps, a budget holiday provider founded in 1946 which divided guests into competitive 'houses' named after tobacco brands including Embassy, Capstan, Castella, Bristol and Benson & Hedges.<sup>82</sup> One discussion was initiated in 2009 by the following post:

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<sup>80</sup> By William Frederick Yeames, painted in 1878

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.belfastforum.co.uk/index.php?topic=29660.0> accessed 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014

<sup>82</sup> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MiddletonTowersHeyshamLancashire/message/1284> accessed 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014

*When I went to Pontins in the 70s as a child I was allocated a dining spot and house, you could either be in Embassy Regal house or Benson & Hedges house, this is no joke. You sat in the area designated with the ciggy signs at each end of the mass dining hall. As kids we would hang around the arcade and question other kids as to their cigarette house preference, quotes of "you Benson and Hedges b\*stards" would go around and a few fights and attacks would take place all in the name of our respective cigarette house. This hate was propagated by blue coats (holiday camp staff). At the swimming pool events we would be asked our cigarette house by the blue coats, only to be booed or clapped by Benson and Hedges people. I clearly remember kids chanting down the mic "Embassy Embassy Embassy" and goading on other people from opposite houses. Kinda mad when I think about this.<sup>83</sup>*

Another post said in 2012: *'I remember going to Pontins at Prestatyn in the 70s. The chalets were on two levels, the ground floor being Embassy and the top floor being Castella. Happy days.'*<sup>83</sup> The Embassy Regal brand also made use of a cartoon character, a bald smoker called Reg in a series of humorous advertisements which the Advertising Standards Authority asked the company to discontinue in 1993 after a study found that 90% of teenagers surveyed in the North of England had seen the ads compared with fewer than 50% of adults<sup>84</sup>. The Embassy Regal catalogue coupons, cartoon advertisements and holiday camp experiences demonstrate how particular cigarette brands were, until very recently, closely bound up with working-class family life.

#### A LONG TOBACCO HISTORY

Whilst pipe smoking, chewing tobacco and snuff had all but disappeared from Sleetburn by the time of my fieldwork, they were often evoked by older people. Many people remembered their fathers or grandfathers smoking a pipe and some even mentioned clay pipes, which became rapidly obsolete when more durable Meerschaums<sup>85</sup> and briars<sup>86</sup> became cheaper in the early twentieth century. Sylvia (78) remembered her father, an agricultural worker in Cambridgeshire smoking a clay pipe. Dorothy (93) remembered two old women in Sleetburn going to the nearby woods every day to smoke their clay pipes discreetly, whilst Joyce (89) on her way to school regularly saw an old woman smoking a clay pipe in her doorway. As a child in an Oxfordshire village, Janet (76) asked men smoking clay pipes to let her have a turn, but was told *'oh no, the doctor (her father) wouldn't like it.'*

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<sup>83</sup> <http://www.hotukdeals.com/misc/what-pontins-cigarette-house-was-you-459339> accessed 4th September 2014

<sup>84</sup> [http://www.ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH\\_741.pdf](http://www.ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH_741.pdf) accessed 4th September 2014

<sup>85</sup> Magnesium silicate

<sup>86</sup> Mediterranean tree heath

Norman (70), who grew up in Darlington, remembered old women smoking a clay pipe by the fire in the 1940s.

At the time of my fieldwork there were still half a dozen pipe smokers in the village, and the village shop kept pipe tobacco in stock for them. Nicholas (57) was taught to smoke a pipe by his grandfather when he was a child. This was clearly an important memory, and he explained to me how his grandfather had showed him how to fill the pipe and how to light it by drawing on it. Nicholas was a committed pipe-smoker and identified with pipe-smoking culture, telling me about various winners of the national 'Pipe Smoker of the Year' award and how the site of a former clay pipe factory had been excavated in the local area. Whilst I only met one man who had been a daily cigar smoker, the cigar did still play a role in special family occasions. Nicholas the pipe smoker also liked *'these big, Churchill cigars'*, but only occasionally: when I spoke to him in July 2012, he hadn't had one since Christmas. Peter (85)'s grandmother used to *'give all the male members of the family over fourteen a cigar for Christmas'*.

Whilst chewing tobacco has never been much used in the UK population generally<sup>87</sup>, coal miners have a history of using smokeless tobacco products<sup>88</sup>, particularly chewing tobacco, which was thought to keep the mouth moist and get the saliva going in the dusty conditions underground. This was reflected in family memories, with many people telling me their late husbands, fathers or grandfathers always *'chewed a screw'*. Ronald (87) told me he was sick the first time he tried it and Barry (72) explained that he had already been a miner and a smoker for a couple of years when, aged seventeen: *'I thought I was a big man<sup>89</sup>, I had a chew, I thought you had to swallow it, I went pink, white, green then threw it up!'* Few miners chewed away from the pit, but Mark (59)'s grandfather was an exception; although he never smoked, he chewed at home as well as at work, spitting saliva into the fire or outdoors.

A few people in the village mentioned snuff, either as an 'extra' enjoyed by smokers, an aid to quitting or a long-term replacement for cigarettes. Marie (51)'s father, a miner born in 1929, *'always had a box of snuff'*. Edward (82) and Kevin (59) worked together at Deer Park

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<sup>87</sup> Compared to the US for instance

<sup>88</sup> Smoking underground was forbidden because of gas and the risk of an explosion.

<sup>89</sup> The idea of tobacco use as a marker for adulthood is considered in a later section.

Colliery and took snuff in the early 1970s, they said *'you could get all flavours, it would knock your head off'*. Yvonne (69)'s late husband took snuff after he gave up smoking in 1979 aged forty-one, she said: *'the Club used to get it in just for him, it made a mess'*. Yvonne (69) herself gave up smoking in 1976 but told me that on one occasion around ten years later, she suddenly had a tobacco craving so she had some of her husband's snuff.

#### SHARED STARTING STORIES

In the light of the huge changes in the prevalence and acceptability of smoking in the UK over the past sixty years, it was striking how little these changes appeared to have affected Sleetburn smoking practices. People in the village told similar stories about starting to smoke whether they were in their twenties or their eighties.

#### STARTING AGE

In terms of the age at which people in Sleetburn started smoking regularly there was little or no difference between generations. Most smokers started between the ages of twelve and fourteen. Starting to smoke was sometimes associated with youth transitions, notably into work, although this was less apparent in younger generations who remained in school until sixteen but generally started smoking earlier. National figures show that for the past fifty years, the percentage of male smokers who started smoking under the age of sixteen has stayed constant at 40-43%; for female smokers the figure was originally much lower but is now close to the male figure at 37% (Wald and Nicolaidis-Bouman, 1991 p. 99, Office of National Statistics, 2011). In routine and manual households, the percentage of smokers who started before the age of sixteen is even higher, at 48% for men and 43% for women. This is despite the existence of a prohibition since 1908 on selling cigarettes to children under sixteen<sup>90</sup>. The age at which smokers in professional and management occupations start to smoke has been consistently later than the average (Office of National Statistics, 2011), probably because transitions into work happen later in these groups; education is continued for longer and the transition to middle-class adulthood traditionally happens when children go away to university (Holdsworth, 2009b).

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<sup>90</sup> The minimum age for buying tobacco was raised to 18 in 2007.

Most people in Sleetburn started smoking either at secondary school or on starting work. Brian (80) started smoking when he was thirteen, he said *'all the other lads were doing it'*. Roy (76) also started at twelve or thirteen and said it was mainly boys who smoked then, *'as a challenge - if you don't smoke you're a cissy'*. Hazel (66) started smoking on a trip to the ice rink in Durham, a great meeting place for young people at the time: *'my friend started us, she said 'oh go on try it''*. Tracey (47) said her sister got her started when she was eleven or twelve, they would get some shandies and cigarettes, her sister said *'go on you do it'* even though she didn't smoke herself. Russell (47) started at age twelve because his friends did. Benjamin (23) felt there was a lot of peer pressure to start smoking when he was at school, his friends would say *'just try it, you don't have to smoke if you don't want to'*; he and his two younger sisters all started when they were about thirteen. Samantha (23) explained that when she was fourteen: *'There were the swots who didn't drink or smoke and the Goths and Emos who smoked dope. The popular kids, the charvers – we all smoked [tobacco].'*

As suggested by other studies (Wiltshire et al., 2005), starting work was an important time to take up smoking, although the social norms around tobacco could vary: when boys started at the colliery, they might start chewing tobacco instead of smoking – Ronald (87) started chewing tobacco when he went underground as a datal boy<sup>91</sup> in 1939 at the age of fourteen; he didn't start smoking until he was twenty-one. Ernest (85) started work aged fourteen and chewed tobacco, though he also stole cigarettes from his father and older sisters. Edward (82) started work in 1944 but he was working above ground, apprenticed to be a colliery blacksmith, so he started smoking not chewing - he said *'at bank<sup>92</sup> we smoked all the time'*. Charles (82) started work aged fourteen in 1945, he never smoked but was anxious to explain this departure from the norm to me - he was a keen footballer, and in fact he later got the chance to join a professional team. He explained why he still used to carry cigarettes during the war:

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<sup>91</sup> Low-paid piece worker

<sup>92</sup> On the surface

*Because of the black-out you walked to work in the pitch dark, beggars would come up to you, a beggar asked me for a sandwich once, I was scared so although I didn't smoke, I started walking with a lit cigarette held high in the air to make myself look taller.*

This idea that a cigarette end glowing in the dark at a lofty height should represent self-confident manhood speaks volumes about the symbolic meanings of smoking.

Starting work was also a key time for women to start smoking; Ivy (88) started when she was fifteen and working at Woolworths; her older sister went into nursing at the same age and started then. Others took a while to be persuaded: Jennifer (70) started smoking when she was eighteen and had already been working for three years; she said she didn't smoke at first because *'I had a lot to do with hospital in my younger life'* (she was seriously ill as a child), but *'then I got in with a crowd, I was working, I had a bit of money, I went along with it.'*

For those who didn't start at school or when they started work, smoking was generally part of initiation into some other social group, usually at a young age: Albert (82) worked for a couple of years as a clerk but didn't start smoking until he was sixteen and joined the Navy. He was issued with a squat tin of pipe tobacco and a taller, thinner tin of cigarette tobacco, or 'tickler' as they called it. He smoked it as *he 'didn't want to be the odd man out'* but after a year or two he gave up; he had been in the jungle in Ceylon<sup>93</sup> for a few days and realised *he 'hadn't missed the tobacco at all'*. Alexander (21) didn't smoke at school, but when he was seventeen all his flatmates smoked, they made one room non-smoking but one night *'I was drunk and I thought, oh I'll try it - and that was it'*.

The Second World War is often considered a watershed moment for women's smoking and it has been suggested that women's participation in the war effort and going out to work in munitions factories was associated with starting to smoke (Chollat-Traquet, 1992). I had therefore expected war service to coincide with smoking initiation for women in Sleetburn, but of the four women I met who were called up for munitions work<sup>94</sup>, two were already smokers and two non-smokers and their smoking status did not change. Ivy (88) and her

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<sup>93</sup> Sri Lanka

<sup>94</sup> In practice only unmarried women between twenty and thirty appear to have been called up in County Durham during World War II, although married women could also be called up according to local discretion.

older sister were the two smokers; they did war service with the NAAFI and in nursing respectively and they were both already smoking when they started. As for the men, Fred (94) was called up, captured in 1940 when he was twenty-two and remained a POW for five years. He received 150 cigarettes a week from the Red Cross but never took up smoking; instead he swapped cigarettes for food. Ronald (87) volunteered for the Navy in 1942 when he was seventeen but he didn't start smoking until after he was demobilized four years later. He told me how he started:

*When I could get cigarettes for nowt<sup>95</sup> I didn't smoke, but when I got married I started, I was on twenty to thirty a day. I went to the Club, and it was a pint in one hand, a tab in the other, everyone was handing them round. Men would go to the Club in a group and everyone would get everyone else a pint, so you could have five pints lined up - it's not like that now.*

Peter (85) also described the pressure to smoke in pubs and clubs; he never smoked but his late wife did, and he told me that when people passed cigarettes around, his wife used to tell him off for *'being soft and not smoking'*.

One or two people started smoking in their twenties, though generally still as part of an important transition: Malcolm (69) went away to teacher training college and started smoking there; he told me he chose the Benson & Hedges gold-coloured pack because it *'looked posh'*. Although he was the son of a miner, Malcolm became upwardly-mobile by passing the exam for the grammar school and then going into teaching. His smoking trajectory was also a middle-class one i.e. he started to smoke in his early twenties rather than under the age of sixteen (ONS 2012). Unlike many local people who became socially but also geographically mobile (see Chapter 5), Malcolm came back after a few years and spent the remainder of his teaching career in his local area; his embeddedness in the local community may explain why, although he gave up at one point, he later reverted to smoking. I will return in Chapter 8 to the link between geographical and upward social mobility and quitting smoking.

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<sup>95</sup> Meaning when he was in the Navy during the War

## OBTAINING CIGARETTES

Despite greater recent societal concern about under-age smoking, there was no evidence of any change in the village over time in the ease with which cigarettes could be obtained by under-age smokers. Generally people spoke of stealing them from their parents, being given them by friends, buying them with friends or getting older children to buy them. Similar contemporary findings have been made in England, Scotland and New Zealand (Robinson and Amos, 2010, Donaghy et al., 2013, Lewis and Russell, 2013, Marsh et al., 2013).

Diana (89) told me how she was given her first cigarette by a friend: *'I had a smoke off my friend Hilda, but I didn't take to it'*, she told me. Roy (76) said *'older kids bought the cigarettes for us, the shopkeeper Mr Gardner wouldn't sell them to us kids'*. Some shops evidently did sell to children, as Hazel (66) said she and her friends would buy a pack of five and share them; Yvonne (69) did the same when she was thirteen, and when cigarettes were no longer available in fives, around 1960, *'the shopkeeper would split a packet of ten, and give them to us in a sweet packet. I hated that, I always wanted the Woodbine box – I've still got one somewhere'*, she said. Nigel (59) pinched his mum's Park Drive; *'my dad smoked Woodbines but they made me cough'*. Leslie (53) stole his dad's cigarettes out of the packet. More recently, young people also obtained tobacco from tab houses<sup>96</sup>.

## PARENTAL INFLUENCES ON STARTING TO SMOKE

I will argue in Chapter 9 that strong memories of maternal smoking made it hard for women in particular to quit; in this section I look at the experiences of people in Sleetburn starting or not starting to smoke in the context of their parents' smoking status. There is considerable literature on the role of parental role models in smoking uptake, and it is generally agreed that children are more likely to smoke if parents smoke (Kandel and Wu, 1995, Gilman et al., 2009, Loureiro et al., 2010, Melchior et al., 2010, Leonardi-Bee et al., 2011, McAloney et al., 2014). As would be expected, people in the village were more likely to take up smoking if their parents smoked and the most obvious protective factor against taking up smoking appeared to be having non-smoking parents. In this section I set aside the considerable number of smokers with smoking parents in Sleetburn and look first at never-

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<sup>96</sup> A tab house is a domestic property used to distribute illicit tobacco.

smokers generally, then at atypical scenarios i.e. smoking children of never-smoking parents and vice versa.

Even when UK smoking was at its height, there has always been a significant proportion of people who never smoked; the experiences of never-smokers have rarely been studied however (Ward et al., 2011). Never-smoking identity is the least likely to change after early adulthood, since taking up smoking after that time is unusual (ONS 2011). In Sleetburn, Dorothy (93) was unusual for her generation in saying that her parents were *'bitter against smoking'*, and she never smoked herself, nor did Joyce (89), whose parents never smoked either – though she later corrected herself to say her father did occasionally, though this was clearly unusual at least in front of her, as when he did, *'he didn't look like my dad'*; this was a telling comment about how smoking or not smoking is constructed by the child as an important part of parental identity. Other never-smokers I met had one never-smoking parent, most commonly their mother, probably because fewer women smoked in earlier generations. It was difficult to say from the accounts I heard whether a non-smoking mother had more impact on their child's smoking status than a non-smoking father. Certainly a number of people recollected a specific intervention from a non-smoking parent which stopped them (Chassin et al., 2002), and this was most commonly although not always from a mother. Hilary (60)'s mother found her trying to smoke at the age of seven and took her to see her sleeping sibling in her cot, saying *'what would your baby sister think'*; she never tried it again. Emma (27)'s father caught her smoking when she was seventeen and said he would make her smoke a packet of twenty if he caught her again, so she stopped. When Joan (89) tried it her mother said *'look at your fingers'*, referring to the nicotine stains. These successful interventions were also interesting in that they created an association between smoking and specific emotions, namely shame and disgust, a theme to which I will return in Chapter 9 in relation to whether would-be quitters are able to create emotional distance from smoking.

Where one parent smoked but not the other there was some evidence of children following gendered models (Gilman et al., 2009). Nicola (44) smoked but her husband did not – their two daughters smoked but their son never did. Peter (85) didn't smoke but his wife was a heavy smoker – their two sons never smoked but their two daughters did. There was some suggestion in the instances I encountered that daughters were more likely to follow smoking

mothers than sons were their smoking fathers, a point to which I will return in Chapter 9 in relation to women and quitting. Altogether I met very few never-smoking daughters of smoking mothers of any generation.

I only came across two instances of the children of two never-smoking parents starting to smoke: Yvonne (69) started smoking when she was thirteen even though neither of her parents smoked, nor did her siblings. However she was very close to her smoking grandmother. Yvonne was never a heavy smoker, and gave up aged thirty-three. Benjamin (23) and his two sisters all started smoking aged thirteen even though their parents didn't smoke; their parents blamed peer pressure at school, as did Benjamin (23), but he also lived with his heavy-smoking grandmother for part of his childhood. I also met few never-smoking children of two smoking parents and most of these were men, which together with other evidence (see Chapter 9) pointed towards women finding it harder to break away from a smoking habit patterned on their mother's. Donald (76) never smoked even though his parents did; his sister smoked from the aged of twelve even though both had respiratory problems as children. Heather (53) told me her husband and his two brothers never smoked even though both their parents did, but I didn't get the chance to talk to them directly.

It was usually parental rather than other family smoking which was remembered most clearly by older people; nostalgia was attached to childhood memories and therefore primarily to parental, not spousal smoking. As for adult children, older people often didn't know or remember whether their children living outside the household smoked or not, let alone what brand they smoked. Where partners were concerned, I found that people did generally remember the cigarette brands of current as well as former or deceased partners, but the smoking behaviour of partners appeared to have less impact than that of parents. Nobody mentioned starting to smoke because their partner smoked, nor was their quitting related to their partner's smoking status, as we will see in Chapter 9. Other than non-smoking parents, other protective factors against taking up smoking in Sleetburn included a strong interest in sport. Childhood health problems, particularly respiratory problems such as asthma appeared to be protective for some people or at least this is how they explained the fact that they did not take up smoking; but others did start to smoke despite childhood ill-health.

I have argued in this section that the historical continuity of smoking in Sleetburn created an emotional connection to smoking practices. People in the village had strong memories of parental smoking, starting age stayed consistent over a period of sixty years and an association between smoking and becoming an adult was maintained, with younger people patterning themselves on parents.

#### THE ABSENCE OF STIGMA

In this section I show that despite national initiatives aimed at the denormalisation of smoking (Bell et al., 2010b), smoking in the village was not a stigmatised practice. Smoking was not normative in the sense of expected or prescribed but it was unnoticed and unnoticeable, either in terms of who smoked or who didn't. I suggest in this and subsequent chapters that a familial history of smoking has made it difficult for people in the village to achieve the distancing or alienation from tobacco necessary for successful cessation.

#### CONTEMPORARY SMOKING PATTERNS

The prevalence of smoking amongst men in the UK fell from 82% in 1948 to 22% in 2011. Amongst women it stayed between 36% and 45% from 1948 to 1975 then decreased steadily, reaching 17% in 2011. However, an inverse social gradient in smoking developed over the same period, with prevalence in higher professional and managerial households down to 12% by 2011, whilst in routine households it was still as high as 31% (ASH, 2015)

I asked people in the village what they thought the local smoking rate was. Ex-smoker Frances (65) thought smoking prevalence in the village *'could be fifty per cent'*. Young people in particular are known to overestimate the prevalence of smoking among their peers (Nichter et al., 1997), and smoker Luke (18)'s estimate that eighty per cent of his friends smoked seemed high. In July 2012, a woman in the village shop poured scorn on the headline story in the local paper, which stated that smoking prevalence in the North East was down to twenty-one per cent<sup>97</sup>: *'Young people aren't giving up'*, she said, *'it must just be old people... they didn't ask people here if they'd given up, they didn't ask thirteen-year-old Josh outside - he's not given up!'*

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<sup>97</sup> Northern Echo 28 July 2012: 'How the region is stubbing it out'

In fact these three people were probably all more or less correct in their estimates; amongst 120 people in the village aged from eighteen upwards, I found an overall smoking rate of 34% but there was a strong inverse age gradient: 27% in those aged sixty-five or more versus 49% in those aged eighteen to sixty-four. In terms of Luke's estimate, Samantha's comment in an earlier section about the separation at school between the non-smoking swots, the dope-smoking Goths and the tobacco-smoking charvers demonstrated how young people often congregated in groups demarcated by, amongst other things, smoking status so that smokers were likely to socialise together. A rate of eighty per cent smoking in the 'sub-group' of Luke's friends was therefore not unlikely. Finally, the comment about the age gradient in quitting was also accurate, with most people quitting in their forties and fifties (Office of National Statistics, 2011).

In terms of smoking visibility in the village, this was not as great as I had expected partly because the age group most likely to smoke (young people) was largely absent from my main study sites. Those people who were easiest to meet initially were those most involved in local organisations such as the village hall association, the residents' association, the local Labour party branch, the chapel and the church, and they were generally older people and either former or never-smokers. There were few surviving smokers at the elderly day care sessions; those attending (mostly in their eighties and nineties) had either never smoked, or given up before they were fifty. Almost all were widowed, and it was striking how for both men and women, in all cases their late spouse had been a smoker. Even the Club was not the smoking stronghold I thought it might be – like many such institutions, it was not as popular as it once had been (Cherrington, 2012 Chapter 9) and attracted a mainly older clientele. Only a handful of people used the Club in the afternoons and on weekday evenings, which together with the age profile meant the number of smokers was low. The only times when I saw large number of smokers at the Club were at a couple of big fundraising evenings when the age profile shifted dramatically to the under forties, with a consequent large increase in smoking rates. The other village occasion involving very high smoking rates was the village jazz band festival in 2014 which brought together four different North East jazz bands. This was very much a family occasion and the age profile was young, with band members either children or young adults, and there was heavy

smoking amongst the teenage band members and their parents who were generally in their thirties and forties.

As for other organised venues, there were few work places in the village so none of the gaggles of smokers seen outside workplaces all over the UK; the one exception was the school, which did on occasion have a couple of cleaners or lunch supervisors standing outside having a cigarette. Chapel and church attenders were generally non-smokers, with only one smoker out of sixteen people I knew in this context. This was partly related to an older age profile but also to the social gradient in smoking inasmuch as church and chapel attenders were more likely to be skilled workers or professionals, or if not, they were at the 'respectable' end of the village (see Chapter 9 on respectability); the Methodists for instance generally did not drink alcohol.

The village shop itself was another way of gauging smoking prevalence in the village, and all day a steady stream of people came in, buying a handful of items including more often than not a *'pack of ten JPS Blue'*<sup>98</sup>. On sunny days I might also see the odd smoker standing on their kitchen doorstep having a cigarette. As one would expect, there appeared to be high rates of smoking amongst young people, both young men whom I glimpsed around the village or in the Club and young women, whom I saw for instance at village jazz band events or accompanying the Sleetburn Colliery banner at the Durham Gala. I was told that young people, including young mothers would go round to each other's houses and smoke together, but although I met two or three people in this category I found it difficult to get to know them, probably in part because of the age difference, and I had no opportunity to verify this.

Before I started my fieldwork, I expected to collect far more data than I did about the fine details of smoking practices and performances and to be able to make pertinent observations about smoker identities, symbolism, the meaning of gifting cigarettes or the conveying of different messages through ways of smoking (Greaves, 1996b, Dennis, 2006, Stromberg and Nichter, 2007, Trotta Borges and Simoes-Barbosa, 2008, Haines et al., 2009, Scheffels, 2009, Haines et al., 2010, Dennis, 2011). This did not happen, however, and I took this as a significant absence although it was hard to determine exactly what it meant.

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<sup>98</sup> John Player Special Blue was one of the cheapest economy brands available at the time of my main fieldwork in 2012.

Certainly there were few really busy nights at the Club with large numbers of smokers; and certainly also, I spent most time with older smokers who were perhaps less involved in 'identity work' (Denscombe, 2001, Rugkasa et al., 2001) than young people just starting to smoke. With these older smokers, smoking seemed not fun but functional – there was little sign of playfulness, enjoyment or excitement about smoking, never mind glamour or sophistication. This links to the point I will make in Chapter 9 about Sleetburn smokers being discouraged quitters rather than hardened smokers – older smokers seemed resigned rather than happy to smoke. One aspect of this may have been the knowledge by some that continuing to smoke was exacerbating existing health problems; it also seemed that the high cost of tobacco had rather taken the fun out of it: it was only in Ronald's stories from the 1940s and 1950s that cigarettes were passed around and shared; now, everyone had switched to a brand that tasted less good than their favourite and they carefully husbanded their tobacco resources, gently rotating a half-finished cigarette against the brick wall of the Club to preserve the second half for later (see Chapter 8). Possibly the village teenagers were still finding smoking enjoyable, social and reciprocal on nights out together, which I did not witness; but even young smokers such as Benjamin (23) referred to smoking as an expensive compulsion rather than carefree fun.

#### SMOKING WITHOUT STIGMA

Studies have reported the stigma felt by continuing smokers (Farrimond and Joffe, 2006, Scheffels and Schou, 2007, Thompson et al., 2009a, Bell et al., 2010a, Dennis, 2011) and their elaborate constructions of identity and self-justification, although there is some evidence that lower-income smokers perceive or suffer less stigma (Hammond et al., 2006, Stubera et al., 2008). In this context stigma refers to the negative ways in which smoking and smokers are portrayed, drawing on Goffman's analysis of stigma as a mark of shame, as well as the negative emotions this leads to i.e. a smoking identity 'spoilt' by guilt or embarrassment (Goffman, 1963, Graham, 2012, Rooke et al., 2013).

I expected to find considerable awareness in Sleetburn of smoking as a stigmatised identity in the form of either guilt or embarrassment about smoking or alternatively, defensiveness and perhaps defiance about being a smoker. In fact there were at most a few signs of the 'considerate smoker' (Poland, 2000) in relation to private spaces and some ambivalence

about female smoking, as we shall see further on. I also expected to find another aspect of smoking stigma i.e. disgust or disapproval of smoking expressed by never- or ex-smokers. In fact with a few exceptions, both former and never-smokers in Sleetburn were remarkably tolerant or rather indifferent to other people smoking, and there was little sign of social pressure to quit (Baha and Le Faou, 2010) or intolerance of public smoking - both aspects of the denormalisation of smoking (Bell et al., 2010a, Ritchie et al., 2010). I asked Benjamin (23) if he ever got any abuse for smoking, he looked surprised and said no, *'except sometimes people shout 'smoky Joe'... my aunty has a go, she doesn't smoke; my mum used to make me go right down the street, hoping it would put me off'*. Donna (40), who never smoked herself, was exasperated that her son smoked despite his asthma and delighted when he later stopped. These instances were typical of the village in that whilst non-smoking family members might express private concern about a smoker, there was no public condemnation or even unspoken signals of disapproval from non-smokers such as *'fake coughing, nose holding, frantic hand waving'* (Bell et al., 2010a). I will return in Chapter 9 to the working- class idea of health as a private matter.

In the course of countless conversations about smoking, the effects of second-hand smoke were rarely mentioned. Never-smoker Mavis (75) told me: *'Us non-smokers were delighted when the ban came along, we used to hang our coats on the line to get rid of the smell after going out'*. Ex-smoker Nigel (59) complained that his wife continued to smoke indoors, which made his clothes smell. On another occasion I was in the Club talking to two bar staff and a member about what the Club used to be like before the smoking ban. Never-smoker Amanda (47) said: *'The smoke used to be thick, the fan didn't do much to help... when I got home all my clothes including my underwear would stink'*. Mark (59) said the reason was that *'the Club Committee never used to change the air conditioning filters so the fan was never on'*, and Heather (53) who had asthma and never smoked, added that her lung function test score had improved enormously since the smoking ban was implemented in the Club: *'I could barely reach 200, now I can get up to 300'*. I was struck by the matter-of-fact way in which she said this, showing no concern or resentment in relation to the earlier (and probably continuing) damage to her lung function from second-hand smoke. I will return to the issue of ill health as unremarkable in Chapter 9.

This lack of social pressure on smokers to quit or not to smoke in public also meant there was little defensiveness on the part of smokers, and certainly no sign of the ‘beleaguered smoker’ described elsewhere (Louka et al., 2006, Bell et al., 2010a). Although many if not most older smokers did, once I got to know them, express the desire to quit and describe previous attempts to do so, this was an individualised statement and I never heard smokers together discuss quitting or express shame or ambivalence about the habit. More interestingly perhaps, they also seemed largely oblivious to wider social pressures; I never heard anybody complain about or even refer to negative portrayals of smokers, negative messages from health professionals or practices such as higher insurance premiums for smokers. Nobody made defensive comments about such practices or complained about attacks on smokers’ civil rights or individual liberties in the way high-profile middle-class continuing smokers such as David Hockney or the late Christopher Hitchens often have<sup>99</sup>. There was resistance to health messages, but as I found in Chapter 3, it took the more covert form of ‘sliding away’ from the issue rather than loud denunciation (but see below for resistance to the raising of the minimum age for buying tobacco).

One of the things I found most striking was that there was little or no sign amongst ex-smokers of the distaste for their former habit described in some studies, whereby tobacco becomes disgusting or abject (Thompson et al., 2009a, Bell, 2011). Probably largely as a result of this, smokers in the village had difficulty in moving permanently into a new, non-smoking identity, and many had stop/start trajectories. Others had managed to stay quit for many years but described themselves as always on the brink of starting again. There were also a number of people who described themselves as having quit smoking, but did still have an occasional cigarette. Many people described a stop-start history involving giving up smoking for several years before taking it up again for a few more years, then giving it up again – or not. Roy (76) stopped smoking for a year when he was 38 but then smoked for another ten years before giving up, apparently definitively, aged 59. Graham (72) gave up for four years aged 57 and started again at 61; he still smoked when I knew him. Malcolm (69) gave up for two years when he was 65 but was smoking again at the time of my fieldwork. Nicholas (57) stopped for four years but was smoking again. Frances (65) started

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<sup>99</sup> See for instance <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2007/may/15/art.smoking> and <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/nov/14/christopher-hitchens-cancer-interview> accessed on 25th March 2015.

smoking when she was fourteen but gave up ten years later when she was pregnant. She started smoking again ten years after that and smoked for three years. She then stopped for twenty years, took it up again for two years then stopped again. I will come back to stop/start smoking careers in Chapter 9.

Smoking by teenagers from fourteen upwards was not criticised except by never-smoking parents; instead, it was generally accepted, not least because of collective histories of parents and grandparents also starting to smoke at an early age. In the course of lengthy conversations in which I took part, it was extremely rare for parents or grandparents to express disappointment, anger or sorrow that children smoked. The role which respected elders in a community can sometimes have in giving out anti-smoking messages (Nichter, 2003) was not given out in Sleetburn. In a couple of older cases, children were positively encouraged to smoke: when she was about twelve, Pamela (77) used to get a couple of draws off her mother when she was smoking: *'That's what got me started'*, she said. Nicholas (57), as a child, would help to start his grandfather's pipe by drawing on it. In 2014 a woman in the village posted a picture on Facebook of her eight-year-old granddaughter pretending to smoke one of her cigarettes; all the comments on the photo were amused rather than disapproving. The few stories of parental disapproval I heard came from never-rather than current or former smokers. There was a dispute in the village youth club not long before I came to the village, which involved whether young people attending the club were allowed to smoke. The youth worker felt that smoking breaks for fifteen-year-olds were unacceptable, but she was overruled by other adults involved with the club and eventually left. The change from sixteen to eighteen as the minimum age to buy tobacco was considered unreasonable by many in the village. Mark (59) was happy to buy cigarettes for a seventeen-year-old he knew: *'He's old enough to have a house and a bairn, but they won't let him buy his own tabs'* he said. This comment was particularly interesting as it equated three things as markers of adulthood - obtaining independent housing, becoming a parent and being a smoker.

The fact that underage smoking was not stigmatised in the village also meant that public health efforts to position 'tab houses' as a threat because they sold cigarettes to children were ineffective; in fact one young man first started buying illicit tobacco as a teenager at the suggestion of his non-smoking parents: *'I was fourteen or fifteen, they found out I was*

*smoking and paying for it with my dinner money, I didn't eat during the day, they said 'why don't you try the lass' (who was selling illicit tobacco locally)...I got my dad to go the first time', he said. Buying illicit tobacco was not seen as unethical (Wiltshire et al., 2001, Stead et al., 2013), whereas when the same young man got some casual work in a restaurant and was urged by a friend not to mention this to the Job Centre, his mother told him he should 'do the right thing' and declare his earnings. There was no stigma attached to the use of differences in national tax regimes to save money or to make money by selling on to others, which was seen rather as commendable entrepreneurship. During one visit to the Club, I was being rather slow as members patiently explained to me how everyone used to bring back as much tobacco as they could from abroad and sell it on, but how new customs rules had made this much more difficult. I asked Darren (39), who was going to Tenerife whether he would be bringing cigarettes back; Adam (27) replied 'you can only bring 200 back and 10 pouches of tobacco, because Tenerife counts as outside the EU, whereas you can bring as many as you like back from Spain, as long as you can prove they are for your own consumption'. I asked how you do that, Adam started telling a story about how somebody they knew had a big argument with a customs officer, but the officer was new so he managed to get away with it. Adam got out his packet of Amber Leaf and said 'these are £7.50 a pack in the shop, there's only a £2 difference with Spain so it's not worth it'. I said surely that's worth it, he said 'yes worth it for yourself, yes, but not to sell'. I will come back to illicit tobacco in Chapter 8. On another Club evening in 2012 I asked a man who had just come back from a holiday in Spain about the price of cigarettes there. He said Spanish cigarettes were only a little cheaper than in England, but there was a big difference in price for the (then popular in the Durham area) 'Flossy'-brand Spanish plimsolls<sup>100</sup> - he knew someone who 'had brought back hundreds of pairs' to sell on. A few weeks later I happened to see a young man with a car boot full of Flossies in their distinctive lime-green boxes, making a delivery to someone in the village.*

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<sup>100</sup> <http://www.flossy-style.com/>

Apart from some ambivalence about female smoking, which I consider in the next section, the aspect of smoking which did carry some stigma was the idea of addiction; as we will see in Chapter 9, people contrasted their own 'light' smoking with the 'heavy' smoking of others. This seemed to be linked to the importance of being 'in control'; younger smokers liked to claim that they could stop when they liked and would do so when it suited them, and whereas older smokers had found out how difficult this was, they did not like to talk about being addicted. As for those people who had quit, they liked to put this down to will power and describe it as a one-off event (*'I just stopped'*), whereas it would usually emerge in later conversation that they had tried and failed to quit smoking many times before their (final?) quit. One unexpected consequence of the stigma around addiction specifically was that many people in the village felt that if they continued to be 'addicted' to nicotine, even in some safer format such as nicotine replacement therapy or electronic cigarettes, this was *'just as bad'* – morally - as addiction to tobacco and therefore not worth pursuing as an alternative.

#### WOMEN AND ACCEPTABLE SMOKING

Male and female smoking rates have converged nationally and also appeared broadly similar in Sleetburn. However, older women in particular managed their smoking identity carefully in order to reconcile smoking and femininity. Being no more than a 'light smoker' was important to the maintenance of femininity and no woman described herself as a heavy smoker whatever her actual intake<sup>101</sup>. Nationally, the vast majority of smokers describe themselves as smoking less than twenty a day, or what the ONS calls 'light to moderate'. The average number of self-reported cigarettes per day for men has gone down since the 1970s from eighteen to thirteen for men and from fourteen to twelve for women (Office of National Statistics, 2011). In other words, self-reported intake is converging to twelve or thirteen cigarettes per day for both genders. In Sleetburn, although there was probably little to choose between the sexes in terms of cigarette intake, it was women who *described* themselves as light smokers. One woman in her eighties told me several times that she only smoked *'four or five a day'*. Later, another female smoker sought me out specifically in order

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<sup>101</sup> One or two female former smokers described themselves as having *been* heavy smokers, but this was an identity from which they had moved away, and which could therefore be safely acknowledged.

to tell me this was *'a pack of lies'*; the extent of the first woman's smoking habits was clearly no casual matter but an important element of her presentation of self (Goffman, 1990 [1959]), and also one where she could be 'caught out'. There were other instances of women claiming to smoke less than they actually did or even not to smoke at all. Valerie (76) told me she had never smoked but her husband later told me he knew she did before they were married and also when she was at work in the factories. Michelle (44) told me that her partner believed that she only smoked when she was on a night out with her friends whereas in fact she smoked regularly through the working day. She claimed that her children had never seen her smoke, as did Leigh Anne (35). These denials were another form of the 'sliding away' resistance I previously mentioned, or a way of deflecting criticism.

There was some suggestion that ambivalence towards female smoking was connected to smoking being 'dirty' and therefore potentially incompatible with historical gender roles giving women responsibility for hygiene and cleanliness in the home. Yvonne (69)'s late mother-in-law *'had a cigarette stuck in the corner of her mouth until it was just ash, then she would throw it out* (at this point Yvonne spat imaginary flakes of tobacco off her lip), *she did everything with it, she would be making the dinners, the puddings...'* Whilst this was said with affection, there was also some implied criticism in the description of the tobacco in close proximity to the food, criticism which ties in with Joan's mother's remark to her daughter, referred to earlier, about smokers having stained fingers. Tobacco residue (ash and nicotine or tar stains) was 'matter out of place' (Douglas, 2003 (1966)) or a manifestation of the 'abject' (Kristeva and Roudiez, 1982) in the context of the association of femininity with cleanliness (see Chapter 8). Other aspects of smoking which women managed carefully included type of tobacco used - messy rolling tobacco was seen as unfeminine; and smoking spaces - women were more likely to confine their smoking to a specific space, typically the kitchen with its wipe-down surfaces. Some people referred to women smoking outdoors in public as problematic; one older man complained that smoke-free legislation had made smoking more visible in the street, and particularly women smoking in the street, which he said was never acceptable in the past.

In this chapter I have explored the historical continuity of smoking in Sleetburn and argued that, taken with the importance of family which I set out in Chapter 5, this created a strong emotional connection to smoking practices, with younger people patterning themselves on their smoking parents. I have also shown that smoking in the village was a practice largely free from stigma. In Chapter 8 I will show how smokers reclaimed agency by finding ways around initiatives designed to discourage smoking, before going onto consider those people who did quit and showing how this involved making a decisive break in the familial tie to cigarettes. This was a difficult process, and I will explore in more detail in Chapter 9 how a familial history of smoking has made it difficult for people in the village to achieve the distancing or alienation from tobacco necessary for successful cessation.

## CHAPTER 8: RESISTING OR QUITTING

In this Chapter I will show how smokers exercised creative ingenuity in finding ways around higher prices, reclaiming agency and expressing covert resistance to higher taxation designed to discourage consumption by moving to cheaper alternatives such as economy cigarettes, rolling tobacco or illicit tobacco. I argue that an important reason for this resistance was the strength of family links to smoking and a consequent reluctance or inability to break these. I will then consider those people who *did* manage to break away from smoking in the village and show how quitting was linked to a breaking of the familial tie to cigarettes either through social and geographical mobility which created distance from familiar (familial) patterns, or through a specific event which made the previously familiar (familial) cigarette alien and threatening to self or family.

### THE MOVE TO ECONOMY BRANDS

Cigarettes in the UK increased steadily in price in the 1980s and then more steeply from the 1990s, partly because of increases in the taxation of tobacco but also because the manufacturers' pre-tax prices were much higher in the UK than in many other European countries for the same product (Gilmore, 2012, Gilmore et al., 2013). Tobacco companies developed cheaper 'economy' brands in the 2000s, keeping the price low by passing on tax increases disproportionately to their premium brand customers. In 2004, five out of the top ten best-selling UK cigarettes were economy brands but by 2011 the figure was seven out of ten<sup>102</sup>. By 2013, economy price products accounted for around one third of the UK cigarette market.<sup>103</sup>

At the time of my fieldwork, despite previously smoking the same brand for twenty years or more, all but one or two of the older smokers I met had switched to one of the economy brands, or to rolling or illicit tobacco. Brian (80) switched to Berkeley, which was repositioned as an economy cigarette in 2011<sup>104</sup>, Phyllis (74) switched to JPS, Malcolm (69) switched from Benson & Hedges to Superkings and Sally (58) switched from Lambert &

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<sup>102</sup> ASH figures 2004 and 2011

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.imperial-tobacco.co.uk/index.asp?page=23>, also see for instance <https://www.nfrnline.com/News/New-Economy-additions-from-Imperial->, <http://www.talkingretail.com/products/product-news/imperial-tobacco-to-launch-economy-jps-cigarettes-as-credit-crunch-hit-smokers> and <http://www.scottishgrocer.co.uk/2013/06/the-age-of-value/>, all accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2013

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.talkingretail.com/products/product-news/jti-reduces-price-on-berkeley-cigarettes>

Butler to JPS. As for younger smokers such as Benjamin (23), they had generally started on cheaper brands in the first place. All the brands stocked by the shop were economy ones<sup>105</sup>, with the exception of Lambert & Butler and two premium brands stocked for two specific customers (Regal and Craven A). No other current brands were mentioned or seen during fieldwork, either being smoked or as discards around the area. At the time of my fieldwork, JPS Blue was the cheapest brand and the one that I saw most people buy and most people smoke, as well as being, along with Lambert & Butler, the most common discarded packet when I cycled to and from Sleetburn. Later on when I was writing up my thesis, Carlton took over the 'cheapest brand' position and I saw the Carlton packet more frequently.

Many smokers switched to cheaper tobacco for their everyday smoking but bought their preferred, more expensive brand for special occasions. Hazel (66) smoked '*Regal... or whatever's cheapest*'. Adam (27) smoked Amber Leaf rolling tobacco at work and Lambert & Butler cigarettes at the weekend. Michelle (44) smoked smuggled 'The Turner' rolling tobacco during the day, but would buy a pack of ten Lambert & Butler for a '*night out with the girls*', and smoke them whilst walking between the different pubs they visited. Phyllis (74) smoked JPS in the Club but when I dropped in on her at home she was rolling cigarettes using Amber Leaf tobacco. Benjamin (23) smoked JPS when he had just collected his Job Seeker's Allowance and switched to cheaper rolling tobacco when his money ran out.

#### HAND-ROLLED CIGARETTES

Tobacco price increases have led to an unprecedented rise in the popularity of rolling tobacco in the UK. The proportion of male smokers who smoked mainly hand-rolled cigarettes stayed stable around 20% from 1956 to 1996 but rose to a historic high of 40% in 2011 (Wald and Nicolaidis-Bouman, 1991 p. 27, Office of National Statistics, 2011). While there was a price advantage to rolling your own cigarettes, the other reason for the large increase in hand-rolled cigarette use was that most smuggled tobacco came into the UK as rolling tobacco. Customs & Excise estimated in 2011 that they had managed to reduce the illicit cigarette market from 21% to 11% of all manufactured cigarettes smoked in the UK since 2000, and from 61% to 49% for rolling tobacco over the same period – but this still meant almost half the rolling tobacco smoked in the UK was illicit (HM Revenue & Customs,

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<sup>105</sup> Berkeley, JPS, Mayfair, Richmond, Sterling, Windsor, Superkings

2011, Joossens and Raw, 2012, McNeill et al., 2012). It was difficult to tell how much of the rolling tobacco smoked in the village was legal. The village shop stocked Golden Virginia and Amber Leaf and I saw people smoking both these brands, but others smoked 'The Turner', which was not normally sold in the UK at that time, often with health warnings in Spanish or Dutch. In some cases this was brought back legally from a holiday abroad, whilst in others it had been purchased from a supplier of illicit rolling tobacco in a nearby village i.e. probably manufactured legally and purchased on the continent, then smuggled into the UK with no UK duty paid.<sup>106</sup>

Women's use of rolling tobacco was historically negligible: only 2% of women in the UK smoked mainly hand-rolled cigarettes from the 1950s right through to the 1990s. However there was a dramatic increase in the 2000s and by 2011 this figure had risen to 26% of women smokers. I only heard of one woman in Sleetburn smoking hand-rolled cigarettes before the 2000s; Donald (76)'s late sister started on Blaze Weights cigarettes when she was about twelve but in her later years smoked Golden Virginia rolling tobacco. One of the village shop staff told me it was only men who smoked hand-rolled, plus *'a few old women with no money'*, and another woman said disparagingly: *'people who smoke rollies always pull really hard on them as they roll them so thin'*. Tobacco companies both encouraged and responded to the rise of women's use of rolling tobacco with market changes including a proliferation of rolling machines, pre-made tubes, packets of filter tips for insertion into the cigarette, flavoured filter tips and cigarette papers and neater packaging (for instance the Amber leaf '3 in 1' pack, which looks like a cigarette packet of twenty but instead contains filters, papers and a mini-pouch of tobacco) replacing the masculine tobacco pouch. In 2012, the prominent display of smoking accessories in discount shop Poundland's Durham City branch included packs of Gizeh Silver Tip tubes, to 'make cigarettes that appear like pre-manufactured cigarettes whilst using the tobacco of your choice. This machine pushes the tobacco neatly into the pre-manufactured tubes'.<sup>107</sup> The tubes seemed designed to counter the stigma of hand-rolled tobacco by making 'rollies' look like manufactured cigarettes.

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<sup>106</sup> <http://a-smokersworld.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/the-turner-blue-labelcontender-for-drum.htm>, <http://www.topix.com/forum/business/tobacco/TBBS5TKT103MJUIJ4> and <http://www.thebackyshop.co.uk/products/the-turner-blue-label-special-blend-25g-hand-rolling-tobacco#> accessed 19 June 2013

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.thebackyshop.co.uk/products/gizeh-silver-tip-cigarette-tubing-machine-recommended>

Such changes made it difficult to tell at a glance whether people in Sleetburn were smoking a ready-made or a hand-rolled cigarette, unless what they were holding was an old-fashioned, skinny and filterless rollie, or if the brand name of a ready-made cigarette was visible on the cigarette paper, close to the filter. Since the process of constructing the cigarettes was fiddly and messy, many people made them in advance before going out - Barry (72) told me he made them in batches of five, Phyllis (74) made up ten or more and kept them in a special box. Several people, particularly women, kept their cigarettes in a special cover, sometimes to hide the fact that they were rollies but in other cases to cover up the unpleasant warning photos of diseased organs on the manufactured packs.

#### ILLCIT TOBACCO

The four main types of illicit tobacco in the UK are genuine UK brands on which duty is not paid, genuine non-UK brands on which duty is not paid, brands produced mainly or solely for the illicit market ('illicit whites') and counterfeit versions of genuine brands (Joossens and Raw, 2012). In 2000, most large cigarette seizures consisted of genuine UK brands, but by 2012-13 most large seizures were of illicit whites (National Audit Office, 2013 p. 12). This was partly because it became more difficult for travellers to bring back and sell on large quantities of tobacco; in 2011, HM Revenue & Customs 'reduced the minimum indicative levels for tobacco and cigarettes brought into the UK from the European Union (EU), to align them with levels applied elsewhere in Europe and help prevent abuse of cross-border shopping provisions' (National Audit Office, 2013 p. 29). In practice, this meant that HMRC was likely to question anyone travelling back from abroad with more than eight hundred cigarettes (or equivalent tobacco), even though the maximum allowed was still technically 3,200 cigarettes.

Spain was a popular holiday destination in the village, and historically people had used their tobacco allowance to the full, including buying for friends. Hazel (66) said that *'if someone is going to Spain I might ask them to bring some back'*; Louise (47) remembered flying back with 3,200 cigarettes: *'You could hardly carry them, 3,200 cigarettes each! The big risk was being mugged in the airport car park at home'*, she said. She added that people weren't doing it as much, but quite a few still went to Spain: *'They just go on the Monday and maybe*

*come back on the Thursday', she said. Benjamin (23) said 'it used to be that in the Club people coming back off holiday would have a sleeve of tabs, you would do a deal with them. Now it's not worth it, people just order from non-smokers before they go away.'* I asked Russell (47) whether he bought his Lambert & Butler cigarettes from a shop, or were they cheap ones from abroad. He gave me a conspiratorial smile and said *'The cheap ones, people you know - if they are going, you ask them'*.

Moving from tourist tobacco allowances to illicit tobacco, the main local source I was aware of was an individual in a nearby village, though he only sold loose tobacco (largely 'The Turner'). I spoke to several smokers who paid £7.50 or £8<sup>108</sup> for a 50g pouch of Turner rolling tobacco and got through one or one and a half pouches a week, thereby spending £8 to £12 a week rather than the £28 a week it would cost to smoke twelve JPS Blue per day (or £16 to £18 for a 50g pouch of legal rolling tobacco). There had previously been another supplier in the area, but I was told she had been raided and fined a few times and had given up. Benjamin (23) told me that when he was at school *'there was Palace<sup>109</sup>, JPS Black, Regal – you could get them cheap from people's houses.'*

I met two people who smoked illicit whites - Marie (51) got hers<sup>110</sup> from a tab house in another village further away, I wasn't able to find out where the other person's supply came from<sup>111</sup>. People were generally aware of the particular dangers of illicit tobacco: Marie knew they were *'made of rubbish'* and thought they tasted horrible, but she said she couldn't afford to smoke the legal ones. Benjamin (23) said *'the taste varies, but yes, you can taste they have lots of rubbish in them'*. Luke (18) bought his Golden Virginia *'from the shop, otherwise you get fake stuff, you can tell it's fake just by smelling it, it's rubbish off the floors'*. Rodney (64) knew people who smoked rollies and when he asked where they got the tobacco, they might say they *'got it from the pub'*, but he *'had seen stuff on TV about how you don't know what's in them, and the fake ones are made to look as if they are just smuggled Spanish ones'*.

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<sup>108</sup> The Belgian price printed on the seal was 3.80 Euros

<sup>109</sup> A brand made for the illicit market

<sup>110</sup> JIM Superkings, 821 Italian Blend, depending on what was available – both with warning in English, but not available in the UK, or Belarus brand фэст

<sup>111</sup> Marble cigarettes, produced illegally in China

## MANAGING INTAKE

The other way in which people in Sleetburn adjusted to higher tobacco prices was by managing their intake i.e. how often they bought cigarettes and how many they smoked a day. Some people referred to this as 'cutting down' but it was by no means clear that people were getting less nicotine, tar etc. into their system; studies have shown that smokers are adept at adjusting their smoking habits to optimise nicotine intake, for instance by inhaling more deeply or through the common practice of wetting the air holes on the edge of the filter (Russell, 1987, Scherer, 1999) .

The village shop did a roaring trade in tobacco; almost every person I saw in the shop over two years bought a pack of either ten or twenty cigarettes. There was no price advantage in bulk buying or in buying tobacco from supermarkets, and many smokers preferred to regulate their intake by buying tobacco when they needed it rather than stocking up, apart from holiday purchases abroad, or illicit purchases which often involve minimum quantities because smaller sales aren't worth the risk. Many smokers could not in any case afford to buy a whole 'sleeve' (twenty packs) in one go. Two former smokers mentioned that they used to bulk buy cigarettes, but they had both given up at least twenty years before when prices were much lower. Louise (47) said she used to get two hundred at the supermarket once a week and then extras if she needed them. Nigel (59) said he and his wife would buy two hundred each when they went shopping on a Friday night, but his would *be 'gone by Sunday night'*.

Most people described their smoking habit in terms of the pack sizes available (Farrell et al., 2011) i.e. ten a day or twenty a day. The smallest pack size allowed in the UK was ten cigarettes<sup>112</sup>; there was a small price advantage to buying a pack of twenty rather than ten – for instance each JPS Blue cigarette in a pack of twenty cost 31p rather than 32p, but people bought the pack size consonant with their individual daily intake; except that they might buy a pack of ten if that was all they could afford at the time. Sally (58) only ever kept one pack in the house because if she had large numbers of cigarettes with her, on holiday for example, she would *'smoke non-stop'*. She explained that at home she always smoked a

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<sup>112</sup> At the time of writing, the sale of packs of fewer than twenty cigarettes was due to be banned across the EU from 2016.

pack of twenty per day, but kept the last two for the morning so she would have those to smoke before she went to the shop for her next pack.

There was some evidence in the village that the number of cigarettes per smoker per day converged over time: occasional, irregular smokers had ceased to bother, and those who used to smoke enormous amounts had been prevented from doing so by cost and smoke-free legislation and had cut down<sup>113</sup>. Overall there appeared to be two groups of ex-smokers: those who self-described as heavy smokers who had found quitting very hard, and those who claimed they had always been light or irregular smokers and that they found it quite easy to quit. Looking first at irregular smokers, the stories I heard suggested there used to be more of these 'occasional' smokers, particularly women<sup>114</sup>. This made sense at a time when smoking was ubiquitous, concerns about health were less, cigarettes were cheaper and often passed around and there was less awareness of their addictive properties. Typically the occasional smokers or those who were said to smoke five cigarettes a week or less were the mothers of the people I spoke to, and were sometimes mocked for not being 'real' smokers. Kevin (59) for instance said that his mother occasionally had a cigarette, but that *'She didn't even know how to inhale and we would all laugh at her'*. These people who were not considered 'proper' smokers also included younger people such as Hazel (66)'s son; she told me: *'He started smoking at his twenty-first birthday party, somebody gave him one, he used to hate the smell - but he stopped ten years ago; he never smoked properly anyway'*. She laughed as she said this, and made a gesture with her mouth to indicate that her son didn't really inhale.

Some of those who had given up smoking years before described themselves as having been occasional or social smokers. Harold (95) smoked from the ages of fourteen to twenty four; he gave up during the war *'because cigarettes were hard to get'*. Albert (82) only smoked for a couple of years while he was in the Navy and never really took to it. Ronald (87) only smoked in the Club in the evenings, and Kevin (59) never had a cigarette first thing; he said sometimes he would have ten or twenty in one day, then none at all for a week; he claimed he had found it quite easy to give up and had had no cravings. I didn't meet anyone who *still*

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<sup>113</sup> As previously mentioned, the national average in 2011 was twelve for women and thirteen for men.

<sup>114</sup> Although there may also have been some *current* 'secret' smokers, unbeknown to me.

smoked or had recently stopped who claimed to be or to have been quite such an irregular smoker.

At the other end of the spectrum were those people who chain-smoked, or smoked everywhere and all the time. I met no current smokers in this category - probably because cost and smoke-free legislation have made this level of smoking quite difficult to achieve - and only one former smoker, Leslie (53), who said that before he gave up nearly twenty years earlier, he smoked fifty a day and would *'smoke anything - except Capstan Full Strength'*. Perhaps unsurprisingly, all the other very heavy smokers I heard about were dead: several women mentioned late husbands who *'lit each cigarette off the last'*, or smoked sixty a day, or in one case seventy: Eileen (86) told me hers *'used to have a packet of twenty when he went out at 5am; by 9am they would be gone and he would get more - it was because he worked alone, driving all day'*. Nicholas (57)'s late father *'smoked 120 cigarettes a day, seven days a week, the only time the cigarette went out was when he was eating or sleeping'*. I referred earlier to Yvonne's late mother-in-law smoking continuously through household tasks including cooking.

Of course, it is impossible to say how much nicotine, tar etc. was being ingested by heavy smokers in earlier generations; the fact that tobacco was so much cheaper meant that tobacco resources did not have to be managed as carefully as today, as seen for instance in the once common practice of handing cigarettes round - very rare nowadays. Whereas modern cigarettes have been designed to be self-extinguishing if not 'drawn' upon fairly frequently, older models could be and often were left to smoulder in an ashtray for some time, and as I mentioned earlier, there can be great variation in inhaling practices; Kim (44) told me about an elderly professional woman she cleaned for: *'She smokes Silk Cut and she doesn't even inhale - they're really expensive, I don't know why she bothers!'*, she said.

Another way of managing uptake was 'nipping out' a cigarette - extinguishing it halfway through by pinching the end or rotating it gently against a hard surface such as a wall - and keeping the rest for later. There have always been times when a smoker might only want or have time for half a cigarette, and discarded long stubs or half cigarettes used to be a common sight. Higher prices have given smokers a strong incentive to save the stub for later, especially since the smoking ban means they hurry their smoking to avoid standing in

the weather and missing out on indoor socialising. This was one reason for the increased popularity of superking-size cigarettes, more easily divided into two smokes;<sup>115</sup> as one of the village shop staff told me: *'people like them because you can go outside for a tab and then nip them and have the rest later'*. Imperial Tobacco capitalised on demand for a quick smoke in 2012 by launching the L&B Profile: *'thinner in diameter, targeted at the busy smoker, who desires a cigarette which provides the same nicotine level as a standard size cigarette but in a smaller package, making the cigarette quicker to smoke'*<sup>116</sup>. As one on-line reviewer said: *'with smoking bans, they would be good to take to the pub as you won't be outside for a long time'*;<sup>117</sup> nipping out a cigarette was certainly common practice outside Sleetburn Club.

In Chapter 7 and in previous sections of this chapter, I showed the continuities around smoking in the village over more than sixty years: smoking continued to be part of a shared family history, starting ages and starting stories remained the same, denormalisation of smoking had little effect and price increases led to resistance through creative adaptation rather than cessation. In the following section I show how the ban on smoking in public places led to further adaptations by smokers as well as the creation of new smoking practices.

#### WORKING AROUND SMOKE-FREE SPACES

Restrictions on smoking in workplaces and public spaces including public transport, cinemas, restaurants and pubs have been gradually increasing in the UK since the 1980s but it was not until 2007 that comprehensive legislation banning smoking in all workplaces and public spaces was implemented. In this section I show that in earlier periods the extent of workplace smoking varied according to workplace and gender, so the 2007 ban was not quite such a radical break as might be supposed. People in the village were used to accommodating themselves to a variety of workplace constraints, with a mixed history of smoking bans and levels of workplace exposure to tobacco smoke; miners working underground could not smoke and men on the building sites worked outside, limiting their

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<sup>115</sup> Superkings is the brand name for the first 100mm-length cigarettes ('regular' is 70mm and 'kingsize' 84mm), which were targeted at working-class women – see <http://www.tobaccoonline.co.uk/Cigarettes/Superkings/>. Superkings is now also used as a generic name for extra-long cigarettes.

<sup>116</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lambert\\_%26\\_Butler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lambert_%26_Butler) accessed 8<sup>th</sup> July 2012

<sup>117</sup> <http://jimscigreview.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/lambert-butler-profile-uk.html> accessed 8th July 2013.

exposure. Women working in the home and later in munitions factories had low exposure to environmental tobacco smoke but this increased significantly in the post-war factory workplace.

Most of the older men had been miners, and the risk of trapped gas igniting and exploding meant that smoking was always banned underground<sup>118</sup>. Since all smoking materials had to be left 'at bank' (above ground), Edward (82) told me that before colliery baths and lockers were installed at Deer Park Colliery, underground workers would hide their cigarettes behind fence posts to get at when they came out. Local writer Sid Chaplin remembered *'the token cabin, where the men picked up the little discs which verified each tub to them and left their pipes and tabs... sometimes we'd shout to a man going in, 'Leave us your tab, Mister', and would scramble down to pick it up, damp-ended, from the rolley wall'* (Chaplin, 1950). During World War II, women and some of the older men worked in munitions factories, where smoking was naturally banned.

Despite the fire risk, the garment factories which employed many people from the village after the war were slower to ban smoking. Yvonne (69) explained how smoking policy evolved in the factory she worked in on and off from 1960 to 1999:

*I remember smoking at the factory, I think in the '60s it was just in the foyer where we clocked in and out and in the toilets. From 1969 until 1976 people could smoke at their workstations, I wasn't there at that time but how things weren't burnt I'll never know. When I went back in 1976 there was a smoke room what had been the manager's office on the factory floor, it was so tiny and about fifteen or twenty people stood in there. This was the time piecework was in force and the six minutes an hour we got rest was in with the rate. So us non-smokers sometimes never got a rest until break times. In the '80s a smoke room was put where the clocking machines were, also coffee machines were put in that area. Smokers went down every half hour, shouted for all their friends to have coffee, chat and a smoke, that was good years until 1986, then the coffee machines were moved to the canteen, a section in the canteen for smokers.*

Never-smoker Marion (75) described a similar evolution of smoking rules, this time in a white-collar workplace: she worked at the Pricing Bureau in Durham (now the Prescriptions Pricing Authority) until the 1980s. She said people were allowed to smoke in the canteen, *'it was disgusting when you were eating'*. Later there was a smoking room instead: *'it used to*

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<sup>118</sup> Although as previously mentioned, many did chew tobacco

*smell horrible*'. This was one of the rare expressions I heard of disgust around smoking, and perhaps significantly, was made by a clerical rather than routine and manual worker.

Smoking was particularly heavy when work was slow, or on night shifts, a finding also made in a Finnish study of manual workers (Katainen 2012 p. 142). There was so much smoking in the plastics factory where Hazel (66) worked that she gave up smoking for a year around 1999: *'I was on night shifts, I just got sick of it, the machines were very slow, you could smoke everywhere, you made yourself sick, and drinking coffee from the machine... everybody on the night shift smoked except one person'*. In the 1970s Rodney worked as an ambulance driver on the night shift, he said: *'One of the supervisors was a chain smoker, lighting one cigarette from the last'*.

Workplace smoking bans have been shown to reduce smoking prevalence (Fichtenberg and Glantz, 2002), but locally people told me that where smoking breaks away from work stations were the norm, there was sometimes pressure to join in: Denise (60), who started working at a cafe in Durham when she was sixteen, said the older women there used to go for a smoking break, *'they told me to come too otherwise they wouldn't have a break either, so I started smoking'*. Smoking to get a break has been described in nursing (Sarna et al., 2009), construction and warehousing (Katainen, 2012) and in the US military (Conway, 1998), which for generations used the phrase 'smoke 'em if you got 'em' as the signal to take a break<sup>119</sup>. Mark (59) was not allowed to smoke whilst driving a bus, but he found it hard to avoid smoking outside the bus company offices during his breaks: *'The lads at work have breaks at certain times, they all stand downstairs and have coffee and cigarettes so I join in'*, he said. These bus drivers were highly visible in Durham City at the time of my fieldwork, smoking on the pavement outside the bus company office, which was squeezed into an upstairs office with a street entrance between a bakery and a greengrocer's.

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<sup>119</sup> <http://www.usmedicine.com/psychiatry/smoking-cessation-efforts-battling-entrenched-tobacco-culture-in-military-.html#.UdrDDUtwUk> January 2012, accessed 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

## NEW SMOKING PRACTICES

The most controversial aspect of the 2007 smoke-free legislation was the proposed ban on smoking in pubs and clubs, and the parliamentary bill at one point included an exemption for pubs that did not serve food and private members' clubs such as working men's clubs, although this was later removed. In this section I will show that at the time of my fieldwork in 2012, smokers in the village Club had adapted to smoking outside and had developed new habits, notably shared smoking breaks.

I was surprised by how little mention of the smoking ban there was in Sleetburn, still less open rebellion against it. The only person I met who criticized smoke-free legislation was Club barmaid, Lesley (60); although she had never smoked herself; she felt it was unfair that there was nowhere people could smoke any more. A CAB worker visiting the village early in 2012 told me that another working men's club in the area was allowing indoor smoking, but it closed later in the year so I was unable to verify this. Edward (82) and Roy (76) had both given up many years before; they didn't criticise the ban as such but they did say that had they still been smoking, they '*would as soon pack it in as have to stand outside*'. Of course, those who did object to smoking outside may simply have stopped attending the Club before I first came to the village; I asked Benjamin (23) whether people were upset at the time of the ban. His response is nuanced in terms of the complexity of reactions involved:

*Yes, they were angered, but they got used to it quickly. A few people, especially the older people, used to forget and light up. On the evening before the ban, everyone was lighting up and saying 'this will be the last time'. Some people did give up going, there was one old lady, I used to bring her, she would come outside for a tab in the freezing cold, she said 'I'm going to stop coming!' In fact she died before that... A lot of people did stop coming. You can get drink cheaper in Tesco as well. The smoking ban did affect a lot of clubs, but people are used to it now.*

A number of studies have explored changes in the way inside and outside spaces were used by bar and club patrons after smoke-free legislation (Hilton et al., 2007, Eadie et al., 2008, Hilton et al., 2008, Heim et al., 2009, Eadie et al., 2010) including concerns about the safety of standing outside and leaving drinks unattended (Moore et al., 2009a). At the Sleetburn Club, smoke-free legislation created new cultural practices around when and with whom people smoked. During the day, when socialising at the Club was less ritualised and more individual, with people popping in for a quick drink at 2 or 3pm after finishing work on a

building site or serving school dinners, smokers went outside individually every twenty minutes or so. In the evenings, people went outside in friendship or family groups, waiting for each other if necessary. I was talking to Benjamin (23) in the Club one evening but he seemed fidgety – he eventually admitted that he was waiting to go out for a cigarette with a friend who had been on her mobile phone for some time. She told me later: *'Benjamin's a bad smoker, he'll go out with you for a cigarette, and five minutes later he'll go out with someone else for another one'* – he agreed this was true.

On another evening I watched four friends playing dominoes. One was a former smoker; of the other three, two went outside together and the third went out separately, I gathered there had been some kind of falling out which didn't stop them playing, but was signalled by the separate smoking breaks. Another way in which the management of smoking breaks could signal disapproval was demonstrated one evening when a packed Club was enjoying a fundraising show involving three drag queens doing various dance and costume routines and lip-synching to various songs; however one of the three was rather wooden and lacked the charisma of the other two. As the evening went on, a pattern developed whereby as soon as this particular performer came on for a solo number, all the smokers took this as the opportunity to get up and go outside. Another interesting result of smoke-free rules was the creation of a liminal space around the Club door where two worlds collided – the concert room with its smartly-dressed couples attending the old-time and sequence dancing two nights a week, and the bar which attracted mostly younger men on weekend evenings. There were smokers in both groups who stood outside together (although fewer from the concert room than the bar), but Hilary (60), who was always beautifully turned out for the dancing, described arriving or leaving *as 'running the gauntlet'* of bar customers standing outside making comments. In July 2012 I experienced a similar incident myself. I was wearing a dress and flat gold sandals for the dancing; as I walked round to the Club door, Clive and Russell were outside which made me nervous, I said hello, Russell pointed at my legs and made a shrieking sound: *'Eee she's got gold shoes on!'*, he said, he seemed drunk. I said *'cut it out Russell'* and walked quickly past him and into the concert room.

The presence of smokers outside could be intimidating to people passing by; a church youth organiser from another village arranged for parents to pick up their children in the Club car park at night after an evening outing; when reporting back on the event to the 'Messy

Church' committee of which I was a member, she said that she had been nervous about the people coming out of the Club but it had been fine. Nobody seemed concerned about spiked drinks, not least because people mostly knew everyone or sat in friendship groups, though this could also isolate non-smokers indoors: Jennifer (70)'s group of six or seven friends were all smokers and took their smoking breaks together, leaving her, a former smoker, marooned at an empty table every time they went outside. Similarly, Brian (80)'s wife was left sitting alone every time he went for a cigarette. They did not seem to mind, however, probably because they knew everyone and did not feel awkward; in fact I often took over a temporarily empty seat to have a chat with whoever was left. Occasionally I tried 'tab hanging' (Mckenzie, 2015 p. 48) on the conversations outside but this was regarded as odd without a cigarette and I became discouraged. I did not have the opportunity of observing how younger people going into Durham for a night out managed smoking breaks i.e. somewhere where they did not know everyone; however Michelle (44) told me that she and her friends generally moved from venue to venue on a 'pub crawl', and she therefore smoked a cigarette between each pub and the next, thus avoiding the problem of breaking up the group or having to leave drinks unattended whilst having a smoke.

It seemed clear that people in Sleetburn had adapted their behaviour and created new cultural practices around outside smoking, and I found little or no evidence that smoke-free spaces had led more people to quit, although some may have stopped visiting the Club; on the plus side, however, it was clear that the smoke-free legislation had hugely diminished the exposure of staff and customers in the Club to environmental smoke and that both smokers and non-smokers appreciated this, if only in terms of no longer having to put up with smelly clothes and smarting eyes. As smoker Benjamin (23) said:

*On Saturday and Sunday nights you got the smoke in your eyes when you were doing the bingo...my mum cleaned at the Club, she would come home smelling of stale beer and stale smoke, it wasn't nice. I couldn't imagine lighting up inside now.*

## SMOKING IN PRIVATE SPACES

Since public places became smoke-free in 2007, much of the emphasis of tobacco control has moved to creating smoke-free norms in homes and cars, both to diminish non-smokers' (and particularly children's) exposure to environmental smoke, and as part of efforts to encourage smokers to cut down and ultimately quit. There were initially concerns that smoke-free legislation would displace smoking into these private spaces but this has not been borne out by the evidence; in fact studies suggest that exposure to environmental smoke in the home decreased and more smokers made their homes smoke-free (Sims et al., 2012, Mons et al., 2013). In this section I will suggest that few smokers in the village kept their home smoke-free, and although they had rules or habits concerning where they smoked, these were often long-standing and were as much to do with protecting soft furnishings as with health concerns.

Most of the people I spoke to were older and had no young children living at home, although many did look after grandchildren in their homes for long periods. Where both partners smoked, there were generally no restrictions on indoor smoking, although Benjamin (23) told me he and his partner only smoked in the kitchen of their flat. Where only one partner smoked, it was a matter for family negotiation (Robinson et al., 2011) although non-smokers often had little say: Dorothy (93) never smoked, but her late husband *'never stopped smoking... he would sit in that chair there, he never had a cigarette out of his mouth, and when he had to go into a home, the ceilings were black, we had to repaint them'*, she said. Similarly, Heather (53)'s father told me that he smoked until a few weeks before he died at the age of eighty-two, despite his wife not smoking: *'he said it was his house, and if people didn't like it they needn't come in'*. Nigel (59) gave up smoking but his wife refused to stop smoking in the house. In other cases the non-smoking partner was able to enforce an indoor ban: Kevin (59)'s father smoked: *'Forty a day. Outdoors, he didn't smoke in the house... my mum wouldn't let him, she had asthma all her life.'* Malcolm (69), whose wife gave up smoking, said he goes *'outside, out of the way'*, and Brian (80) told me he hasn't smoked in the house or the car for the past ten years.

Women living alone were more likely than lone men to restrict their smoking to one room, generally the kitchen though sometimes also the bathroom, and this was often framed in terms of protecting visiting (grand)children as well as choosing a space with wipe-down hard

surfaces rather than soft furnishings which would absorb the smell. Winifred (83) only smoked in the kitchen; Michelle (44) only smoked outside, but she said her mother had always smoked in the kitchen. Sally (58) told me she only smoked in the kitchen, and not if she was baking: *'I don't agree with smoking'*, she told me. Smoking in the kitchen often involved the ritual of having a cup of tea or coffee with a cigarette. Ronald (87) said his wife always had her cigarette with a cup of tea. Winifred (83) said: *'I just have one if I am on my own with nothing to do, I have a cigarette and a cup of coffee. When my neighbour comes over we like to have a cigarette together in the kitchen'*. People were concerned to protect babies and toddlers (Phillips et al., 2007), but less worried about the effect of second-hand smoke on older children and adults (Robinson and Kirkcaldy, 2009). Michelle (44)'s stepson and his partner had a new baby and would take turns going outside, with one having the first half of the cigarette, and the other having the second half, whereas many people continued to smoke in the house when older grandchildren were present.

Generally I came across few cases where continuing smokers had completely eliminated indoor smoking from their home; there were a couple, but both in very specific circumstances. I was in the Club one afternoon and I asked whether many people drank at home instead of going to the Club, or otherwise where might they go? Kevin (59) answered *'Nathan's nightclub!'* and laughed. He later explained:

*There's a lad with a disability, he has his own house on the estate, all the young lads are round there, teens and twenties, until late into the night. In fact last year they did up his house for him, they said 'since we spend all our time here'... but then he banned them from smoking in the house because it was new decorated!*

Mark (59) stopped smoking indoors in 2013 after he took in the dog of an elderly neighbour who had died: *'I don't smoke in the house because the dog doesn't like it, I have to sit on the step and smoke'* he said. As a result, Mark had cut down his smoking significantly, as well as losing weight through walking the dog. Whilst this might seem an unusual health promotion method, one study found that many pet owners would be motivated to quit smoking by information about the health risks to their pets (Milberger et al 2009). I did see one instance of denormalisation having a direct effect on personal smoking habits and there may have been more of which I was unaware: Mark had also stopped smoking in his car *'because I can't smoke while I'm driving the bus at work, so I don't smoke while driving my own car either'*.

## BREAKING AWAY FROM SMOKING

I showed in previous sections how tobacco price increases led to creative adaptations rather than cessation and smoke-free legislation created new cultural practices around shared outdoor smoking in public spaces but had little impact on smoking in the home. Despite these continuities, people in the village did manage to quit; in the remainder of this chapter I turn to the factors which influenced quitting, before considering in the next chapter those who continued to smoke. I will suggest that the two main factors which moved people in Sleetburn away from smoking were social and geographical mobility which created distance from family ties; and immediate threats to the self or the family which made the previously familiar cigarette alien and threatening. This relates to my argument that the emotional content of memories of parental smoking was a major barrier to quitting.

## MOBILITY AND SMOKING CESSATION

It was very striking that upward social mobility was closely correlated with geographical mobility away from the village and with giving up smoking. People born into mining families (or those engaged in other manual and routine occupations) who later moved into professional and management occupations also moved out of the village and gave up smoking. In other words, the inverse social gradient in smoking was marked and operated at the level of families and individuals over time.

Miner's son Roy (76) was first a plumber then a manager; he gave up smoking and moved away from the village, although he and his wife came back on retirement. Factory worker Hazel (65) and her late husband, a construction worker, had one son who went to grammar school then got an office job, moved away from the village and gave up smoking, whereas their other children all worked in construction or catering, continued to live in the village and all smoked. Care worker Frances (65) and her late husband, a miner, had two children living in the village and smoking: one a postman and the other worked in a shop. Their third child was a social worker, had moved away from the village and didn't smoke. There were countless other examples. Although geographic mobility was correlated with social mobility, not least because of the greater range of housing options elsewhere for those with a bit more money, it was (upward) social rather than geographical mobility that was closely linked with giving up smoking. As we saw in Chapter 4, many people moved between

Sleetburn and other villages in the area either for housing, jobs or on marriage i.e. moving to either the husband's or more often the wife's home village, but there was no evidence that moving between villages whilst remaining in the same occupational bracket led to smoking cessation. There was a lot of movement between similar communities in the area, with at least half the couples I knew in the village comprising one partner from another village, most commonly Langdon or Deer Park, but this did not appear to influence smoking status. Similarly, those miners who transferred from Sleetburn to other collieries in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire in the 1960s and 1970s did not change their habits (including smoking), but reproduced their community elsewhere as another 'little Sleetburn', often housed together on a specially built estate. This was the case for instance with Winifred and her husband, who had moved away and come back, and also Lance, who was originally from Sleetburn but had moved down to Kippax and stayed there.

The correlation between upward social mobility and smoking cessation is not surprising as it is effectively a way of restating the inverse social gradient in smoking; I was struck however by the extent to which this gradient operated at the level of individuals over time. The same individual might be in a lower social category and a smoker at one time point, and then move to a higher social category and become an ex-smoker at another time point; prevalence studies do not capture longitudinal findings at this individual level. Just as people from the village who moved out of manual and routine occupations gave up smoking, it hardly needs to be mentioned that very few of the small number of people in professional and management occupations who moved to the village from elsewhere or their children smoked – I was only aware of one person who did, and he later gave up – and many were in fact second-generation never-smokers as might be expected from smoking statistics relating to the development of the social gradient over time.

A finding that upward social mobility was the only way people in Sleetburn gave up smoking would be depressing since it would suggest that individuals in manual/routine occupations could never give up smoking unless they all achieved upward mobility; fortunately this was not the case, and I met many people in manual and routine occupations who had always lived in the village and yet had successfully given up (as well as those who had never smoked in the first place). In other words, upward social mobility was a sufficient but not a necessary condition for giving up smoking. I now move on to people who gave up for

reasons unconnected with social mobility, suggesting however that these reasons also involved a break with familial, emotional ties to smoking.

#### SPECIFIC HEALTH PROBLEMS

Other than mobility, the other factor which created distance from cigarettes was a serious health problem, which is often a trigger to quit (McCaul et al., 2006, Breitling et al., 2009, Tsai et al., 2012, Gallus et al., 2013). Poorer people are more likely than richer to quit because of immediate health problems, rather than concern about future health (Vangeli and West, 2008, Pisinger et al., 2011). What people described in the village was essentially that something happened to change their perception of cigarettes from familiar and indeed familial to alien, abject and posing an immediate threat either to the smoker's health or to the smoker's family. This was not a gradual process, but a sudden epiphany. This is consistent with the finding that people who make 'snap' decisions to quit are more likely to succeed than those who plan (Larabie, 2005, West and Sohal, 2006, Murray et al., 2009). In terms of age at quitting, this ranged from seventeen to seventy but most people I spoke to quit in their forties and fifties.

I was outside the Club one fine summer's day chatting to Mark while he had a cigarette, when an old man rode up on a mobility scooter. A border collie sat on the running board but jumped down to greet Mark. This was the first time I met Anthony (78). I could barely hear his raspy whisper, and I later asked Mark about his voice:

*It's his medications, not the smoking, though he keeps telling me I should give up 'or you'll end up like me'... he stopped seven or eight years ago, from smoking eighty rollies a day...because of his chest, he was rushed into hospital, the doctors said he had to stop. His wife stopped at the same time.*

Several other people told me how they had given up because of a health problem – Rita had a heart attack when she was 54, Nigel was diagnosed with diabetes at 49, Ernest stopped at 42 because of asthma and a bad chest from mining and Ian stopped after a health scare in his sixties (he thought he was having a heart attack). In some cases direct medical advice was mentioned: Ernest told me: *'I had always had asthma, the doctor told me to pack it in so I did'* and Donna said her son (18) *'didn't smoke any more, he was when he was sixteen*

though he wouldn't admit it, but he saw the doctor about his asthma, they asked if he smoked, he said no, the doctor said 'you're lying, I can smell it on you', so he gave up'. In other cases, no medical advice was mentioned but the smoker gave up because of a specific health problem – for instance Yvonne (69) said: 'I was thirteen when I started, I stopped when I was thirty-three, I always had a cough, I just thought, I'm not going to have this cough any more.' Ronald (87) quit smoking in his fifties because of his chest:

*I was coughing until I threw up, so I packed up... I was in the Club one night sitting coughing away, I said here, there's your tabs, I'm smoking no more, it's making me ill. People say to me they can't stop, I say if you took ill you would. That was it.*

Whilst a specific health problem was often a trigger to quit, it was also striking how many people in the village failed to quit *despite* very serious health problems. This group will be considered in a later section on continuing smokers. In some cases, a specific shocking event other than a personal health problem brought the health consequences of smoking into focus and led to cessation: Leslie (54) had always suffered from asthma but continued to be a heavy smoker until he stopped on the day his father died. Rodney (64) worked as an ambulance driver when he was in his late twenties; he was told to stop by a patient with advanced lung cancer, who told him 'don't end up like me'. Rodney was shocked by the patient's emaciated appearance and he and his wife stopped smoking at once. There were also instances of people quitting to protect their family; not in general terms, but again because of a specific event, or as the result of an epiphany. I met Nicholas (57) at the village hall and later called in at his house one day to hear his life story. He told me how his father had given up smoking:

*He smoked 120 cigarettes a day seven days a week, the only time the cigarette went out was when he was eating or sleeping. My mother had an angina attack, my father took early retirement to look after her... the doctor said he should give up for her, so he picked up his packet of twenty, threw it in the fire and said 'that's it'.*

I got to know Colin (75) at the old-time and sequence dancing, which he attended every week with his partner. One evening we were involved in a general conversation about smoking cessation triggered by Andrew (60) using an electronic cigarette. I then went to the bar to get a drink; Colin left his partner to come over and join me, suddenly serious, and said:

*I tell you what it was, I gave up for my wife, she had three heart attacks and two strokes... I smoked roll-ups and she smoked cigarettes, I got to the end of my tobacco, there were five cigarettes left in the pack, I said to her 'two each and we'll fight over the last one' - she had the last one of course...I've never looked at a cigarette again - but she died within six months.*

In other cases, the danger was less clear-cut but smoking suddenly became alien, even threatening to loved ones. Ivy (88) gave up when she was fifty-nine. We were having a cup of tea at her house and she explained:

*The way it happened was we used to stay with my niece for Christmas, I went to bed one night and my husband said I'll just have a smoke, when he came up I said have you put it out, he said yes, I said are you sure, he went out to the bin to make sure, it was out, but I was so worried with it not being my house that I stopped smoking at that minute, I don't know what it was.*

Ivy had told me that her niece, to whom she was very close, and her niece's family didn't smoke, and it seemed that being a smoker in their company suddenly ceased to 'feel right'. Janet (76) came to the village hall lunch club every week. She told me she used to smoke Players Weights, thirty a day at least, then explained how she came to give up:

*It was after my first grandson was born, he is twenty-eight now... I can remember the exact scene, my son was in the army, they had come back from Germany to my house... my grandson was a few weeks old, he was lying in the cradle, I looked at this beautiful baby and thought "I'm not going to smoke over Scott".*

#### HOW PEOPLE HAVE QUIT

We saw in the previous section that people in Sleetburn often quit smoking because their perception of cigarettes changed from something familiar, and indeed familial, to something alien or abject which posed an immediate threat either to the smoker's health or to the smoker's family. I now turn from why people quit to how they did it.

A number of studies have highlighted the lack of research into decisions to quit smoking, (Chapman, 1993) and the need for more anthropological research into the collective and interactive aspects of culture as they relate to quitting smoking (Goldade et al., 2012).

Chapman and Mackenzie have pointed out that unassisted quitting i.e. without recourse to behavioural or pharmacological interventions has been researched much less frequently

than quitting with the help of health professionals or pharmacology, despite being by far the most common way to quit (Milne, 2005, Chapman and MacKenzie, 2010). Certainly the main method mentioned by successful quitters in Sleetburn was willpower, particularly by men, who tended to be contemptuous of smoking cessation aids. Having said this, identifying how someone quit was not always straightforward; just as everyone had a starting story, so everyone also had a quitting story which tended to simplify what was often a long-drawn out, stop/start process over several years. Reginald (75) told me the exact date and time of his last cigarette ten years before, and that he had *'just decided to stop'*. However, when I asked about previous attempts to quit, he admitted he had made several – but it was only the last, successful attempt which was part of his *'quitting story'*. For former smokers in their seventies or eighties who quit in their forties or fifties, today's pharmacology was not available and they tended to refer to willpower, but more recent quitters used such a wide range of over-the-counter cessation aids at different times that it was not always evident which if any of these had finally done the trick. Older men in particular tended to tell a straightforward story of deciding to quit and just doing so. Roy (76) gave up in the 1980s, he told me: *'There is only one way, you just decide to stop, I just threw the packet of cigarettes on the dashboard and it stayed there until it fell to pieces'*. Some people contrasted the way men and women gave up: Michelle (44) said *'men can just stop'*, and Yvonne (69) was impressed with her husband's self-control when they both gave up in the 1970s:

*When I gave up, every day I was over the moon because I hadn't been to the shop and bought any, but him, when he gave up he had a packet in his top pocket for weeks, once he took the wrapper off, one time he undid the top, but he never had one.*

The fact that many people quit without professional help does not mean they did not use particular strategies, most commonly avoiding other smokers and replacing cigarettes with food. Several people mentioned the need to get away from other smokers, at least for the first few weeks or months. Rodney (64) was trying to give up smoking when he worked as an ambulance driver in 1976. When he and his colleagues were waiting to be called out, he had to avoid the smokers: *'I would do anything to get out of the way, I would go out and clean the ambulances, clean the car, anything'*. Reginald (75) tried many times to quit, but he did

not succeed until he retired and was able to get away from all the other smokers at the trade union office where he worked. Surprisingly, not many quitters mentioned household smoking as an issue when they were trying to quit, even though most of the successful quitters I met had stopped smoking whilst their spouse carried on. Only Nigel (59), as we saw in the previous chapter, was annoyed that his wife continued to smoke indoors, but he expressed this in terms of her smoking making his clothes smell rather than putting temptation in his way:

*I smoked from when I was nine to forty-nine... when I was diagnosed with diabetes I stopped straight away, but my wife still smokes even though she has been operated on for cancer twice, she smoked all the way through... she won't smoke outside so my clothes stink of smoke.*

Some former smokers did mention pressure from friends and family to continue smoking; as we saw in the previous chapter, relapse after smoking cessation was common in Sleetburn, even after many years, and friends and relatives were frequently implicated. Kevin (59) went back to smoking after twelve years because of pressure from fellow miners. Hazel (66) gave up for nearly a year, but on New Year's Eve a colleague urged her to have a cigarette and she succumbed to the temptation. Nicholas (57) had stopped for four years when his smoking mother 'forgot' he had given up and bought him a new pipe and tobacco for Christmas. Kim (44) tried to stop on many occasions, but as soon as she went round to her mother's house (a smoker) 'or even if I think about her', she would want a cigarette.

Eating or chewing was the most common strategy to replace cigarettes - Terence (75) ate Spangles sweets to quit in the 1960s and Leslie (53) put on three stone while quitting in the 1990s. Rodney (64) and his wife gave up smoking in the 1970s:

*We got some mouthwash that made the taste of cigarettes vile, but essentially we went cold turkey. Rodney became very aggressive at work and put on weight, I put on three stone in three months eating meals between meals, I went from nine to twelve stone, but then I lost it again in three months. We both got every ailment going for about a year, and then we were okay again.*

Even in the 2000s when nicotine replacement therapy treatment (NRT) became available, many smokers did not use these products but substituted snacks or sweets for smoking: Albert (82)'s late wife ate yoghurts and Nigel (59) chewed sugar-free gum. Snuff was used as

an alternative source of nicotine by Edward (82) in the 1980s. Yvonne's late husband also took up snuff:

*Ten years after I gave up smoking, we went somewhere and I suddenly really wanted a cigarette, I said to him, I'll have some of your snuff... he took snuff, it was in a little tin, I didn't know anyone else that snuffed, the Club used to sell it, I think it was just for him. It used to go all over (she made the gesture of brushing dust off the table).*

I met few people who had quit using pharmacological aids, although this was partly a function of the older age profile of the people I knew, which meant that many had quit thirty years ago or more. Tracey (47) was the only person who mentioned attending a smoking cessation clinic; she obtained nicotine lozenges (she had also tried Champix i.e. varenicline but *'didn't get on with it'*). Gail (59) managed to quit using a nicotine inhaler which she bought over the counter and used for more than a year. Hazel (65) told me about her late husband's efforts: *'He tried the patches, they didn't help at all. He tried the plastic thing [nicotine inhaler], it gave him headaches'*. Those people who were trying to quit but had not managed to do so at the time of writing included Benjamin (23), who had *'tried patches, gum, e-cigs, everything except spray'* and Kim (44) who was desperate to quit and had *'tried everything'* – Champix made her feel sick; it had the same effect on Samantha (23). Nicola (44) found Champix made her hallucinate. Gerald (60) had tried nicotine patches and electronic cigarettes but told me he got nicotine poisoning which suggests he ingested too much by taking nicotine in several different ways. There was also some evidence of long-term NRT use by some ex-smokers - one man was mentioned who had been using nicotine gum for twenty years - as well as continuing smokers using NRT for temporary abstinence, for instance during long flights abroad (Beard et al., 2012). Electronic cigarettes i.e. devices which deliver nicotine along with water vapour and flavourings were also used; I chatted one night at the Club to bus driver Andrew (60), who was using electronic cigarettes; he told me:

*The bus company are undecided about whether to let drivers use them, on the one hand they say people shouldn't be holding anything at the wheel – I can see their point, but I said that's less distracting than being desperate for a tab.*

On several occasions riding on buses in the area, I saw drivers get out at a bus stop for a quick unscheduled smoking break; Andrew explained that this was a disciplinary offence but common practice locally. A few months later I saw Andrew in town and noticed he was

smoking tobacco again. Fellow bus driver Mark (59) told me '*a few of the lads at work*' used electronic cigarettes. Construction worker Adam (28) was the only person I knew who gave up smoking successfully during the period of my fieldwork: by mid-2014 he had been on the electronic cigarettes for eighteen months; he also smoked the odd tobacco cigarette, but said he preferred the electronic ones. Kim (44) had been using an electronic cigarette but had reverted to smoking when she broke it, although she planned to get a new one and try again.

We have seen in this chapter how smokers exercised creative ingenuity in finding ways around higher prices, reclaiming agency and expressing covert resistance to higher taxation designed to discourage consumption by moving to cheaper alternatives such as economy cigarettes, rolling tobacco or illicit tobacco. This resistance resulted in part from the emotional content of childhood memories of parental smoking which I described in Chapter 7. Nevertheless, some people were able to achieve distance from cigarettes and quit smoking, either through social and geographical mobility which created distance from familial and familiar patterns, or through a specific, epiphanic event which made the previously familiar and familial cigarette alien and threatening to self or family.

## CHAPTER 9: CONTINUING TO SMOKE

In Chapters 7 and 8 I showed that although Sleetburn had a strong smoking history, some people did manage to stop smoking. In this chapter I will show that most continuing older smokers were discouraged quitters. Their will to quit was weakened by the complex aetiology of health problems and the experience of chronic ill health as the norm, but crucially, their ability to quit was also negatively correlated with parental and particularly maternal smoking during their childhood. This supports my argument that close family ties, although playing a crucial role in many practical ways in Sleetburn, also made it very hard for the children of smokers to quit.

### WILLINGNESS TO QUIT

The idea that as smoking prevalence has gone down, those who continue to smoke are more likely to be ‘hardened’ smokers, with higher levels of dependency, unable and perhaps also unwilling to quit, has been widely debated but no clear conclusion has been reached, not least because there is no agreed definition of the hardened smoker (Jarvis et al., 2003, Docherty and McNeill, 2012). Dependence or addiction to nicotine, ability and willingness to quit are all related concepts and measure much the same thing, albeit along a continuum rather than through discrete categories.

As we saw in Chapter 7, smoking in Sleetburn was public, unproblematic behaviour, contrasting with the findings of some studies of middle-class, stigmatised ‘secret’ smoking (Thompson et al., 2009a). Conversely, I found that wanting or attempting to quit was often a more private matter and this seemed to be because it involved issues of personal vulnerability, particularly illness, as well as real or potential failure. The fact that I met most smokers in the Club at night made it difficult to discuss these deeply personal matters because it was firstly a public place, and secondly somewhere they went to relax – but neither were they always willing for me to go round to their house. The way that Colin came over to the bar to tell me privately about quitting smoking for his dying wife (Chapter 8) illustrates the problem. The idea of quitting smoking as being a matter of willpower appeared to be particularly important to men: those who had managed to quit were generally less likely than women to admit that there had been previous occasions when they failed, and those who continued to smoke were less likely to admit that they had tried and

failed, or indeed that they even wanted to quit –an admission of failure implied weakness and seemed to be a potential threat to their self-esteem whereas taking a bravado attitude was a way of saving face. Concern about one’s health could appear unmasculine, as could the idea of weakness in failing to give up smoking, or in needing help to do so (Lupton, 1995, Nayak, 2003, Nichter et al., 2009, O'Brien et al., 2009).

The fact that quitting – unlike continuing to smoke - was a private matter made it difficult for me to get people to tell me about it. Some of the older women in the village in particular had strong views about what was none of my business. The practice of *'keeping meself to meself'* was to some an important aspect of respectability, perhaps particularly for those who either were or felt themselves to be in danger of being tainted by association – perhaps through family ties - with the more disreputable members of the small village community. One older man had been talking quite happily about his employment history, but when I explained that I would write down what he said, he was reluctant as *'my wife likes these things to be private'*. As I explained in my methodology (Chapter 3), many people would slide away from questions or requests to meet, or become unavailable even after arrangements were made. Despite these methodological difficulties, what I eventually found in terms of willingness to quit amongst older smokers I knew (i.e. over forty) was not so much hardened smokers as discouraged quitters; as I got to know particular individuals over time, it often became clear that they wanted to quit and in many cases had managed to do so for a time. The next few sections review some of the defensive arguments deployed in relation to the failure to quit.

#### THE DENIAL OF RISK

People in Sleetburn did not deny the health effects of smoking, although as is often the case, they were most aware of the link between smoking and lung/oral cancer rather than with other conditions. In the course of telling their life story, several people mentioned the death of their spouse, often at a relatively young age and from cancer, and would often add that the deceased was a heavy smoker, or even in one or two cases, that the smoking killed him or her. One former smoker in her sixties told me about her late husband’s family:

*There was Robin, Maurice, Howard, Richard, Cynthia and Kay. Their parents both smoked, Robin did, Kay was a heavyish smoker, Howard smoked all the time, Richard stopped years ago, Maurice stopped when he was diagnosed. Robin died of lung cancer at 61, Maurice died at 41 of mouth cancer, then five months later Richard died of bowel cancer, five months later Howard died, he had kidney failure but he will have had lung cancer as well as he smoked heavily, ten months later Kay died of cancer – their dad had cancer as well, it must have run in the family. There's one sister left, Cynthia, she stopped years ago.*

This account was distressing in describing the decimation of one family by diseases almost certainly linked to smoking. The speaker also made this link as well as referring to cancer '*running in the family*' which may also have been accurate in terms of genetic susceptibility (Christiani, 2006, Sugimura et al., 2010). In contrast, the speaker's mother-in-law, also a great smoker, lived to the age of eighty-seven.

Few people made rhetorical use of what has been called the 'Uncle Norman' (Davison et al., 1991) or defiant ancestor 'who smoked two packs of cigarettes a day, ate nothing but lard and bread, never went to the doctor and lived to the age of 93' (Balshem, 1991). Certainly such people did exist in the village and several were mentioned during the course of family histories, although not specifically to make a point. Arguably Brian (80) and Winifred (83) were themselves examples, each having smoked for over sixty years. Both were defensive about their smoking but took different approaches, with Brian claiming an absence of health problems i.e. no risk to himself, whilst Winifred, who had poor health, characterised herself as a light smoker i.e. she minimised the risk. Both also presented themselves as considerate smokers (Poland, 2000), with Winifred only smoking in her kitchen with a smoking friend, and Brian pointing out that he had not smoked in the house or the car for the past ten years.

A couple of smokers sought to de-emphasize the link between cancer and lung cancer by alluding to relatives who had died of lung cancer '*despite never smoking*'. Only one person denied that smoking was dangerous to health, pipe-smoker Nicholas (57) who told me: '*pipe-smoking isn't bad for you because you don't inhale, you see old men of seventy and eighty smoking but they smoke pipes not cigarettes*'. Although pipe-smoking carries an increased risk of oral cancer, Nicholas was correct in that the huge increase in lung cancer in the twentieth century is linked to the deeper inhaling characteristic of cigarette smoking, although pipe-smoking does also carry a heightened risk (Henley et al., 2004).

Conditions other than cancer commonly mentioned in family histories such as heart disease and diabetes were not linked in people's minds with smoking either as a causal or contributory factor, and as seen in the previous chapter, there was little recognition of the dangers of environmental smoke except in relation to very young children. People routinely smoked round older children and adults, including those with serious illnesses. Walter (80) had prostate cancer and diabetes. As we sat in the village hairdressing salon, his wife told me: *'Yes, I smoke, Walter doesn't mind... he used to smoke but he gave up before the operation - mind you he had a little relapse after, but he's given up again now.'*

#### THE DANGERS OF QUITTING

Several people in the village mentioned that giving up smoking after many years, or giving up too suddenly could 'shock' the body and cause increased ill-health or even death. A conversation I had one evening in September 2012 illustrates this point. I arrived at the Club and went into the concert room; Phyllis was at her usual table with a bottle of lager. I sat down next to her and asked where she'd been, I hadn't seen her for ages, I had been worried. She said she had been ill, she was hanging out the washing and the washing line prop fell down, she did her back bending over and had to stay in bed for three weeks, then her emphysema started playing up, she had to call an ambulance, they put her on oxygen in the hospital and kept her in for twenty-four hours, then she wasn't well enough to come out; she'd been away three months, last night was the first time she came to the Club. I said *'and you still smoking!'*, she said *'well I'm seventy-four, I've been smoking sixty-two years, not much point giving up now'*, I said *'well even if you give up at sixty or seventy you can get an extra five or ten years'*, she said she knew somebody who had given up smoking in old age and had then died within a month, the doctor said it was the shock to her system, that her body couldn't cope. Two other current smokers told me cautionary tales about the dangers of giving up smoking, but their stories were more emotive, involving close family. The first came from a man in his fifties whom I visited in his home:

*My dad was crippled with a bad heart and pain, all through giving up smoking. He was a big smoker, but say he woke up with 'flu, it would be gone by dinner time. When my mum had the angina attack he took early retirement to look after her, the doctor said he should give up smoking for her, so he picked up his packet of twenty and threw it in the fire and said that's it. A week later he had a massive heart attack. The doctor said I know this is going to sound funny but his heart is as strong as a bull, he stopped too quickly, he should have took it slowly. After that he had pains in his hands and feet, he couldn't walk from here to the front gate without stopping for a breath.*

The second story came from another man in his fifties whom I chatted to regularly in the Club. I had known him eighteen months and long since written down his life story when he first told me about his father's death, another instance of the point I made earlier about the some things being private :

*My dad stopped smoking six months before his eighty-sixth birthday, he was told to stop because he had a chest infection, he did stop but it killed him... he used to get up in the morning and have a cigarette outside before breakfast, he would cough and get it all off his chest; they thought it had built up and that's what killed him.*

Lay theories about *cessation* causing cancer can be found on the internet<sup>120</sup> and are easily understandable in terms of the time lag between smoking and serious health effects, so that serious illness appears to be the result of the cessation immediately preceding it, rather than the forty years smoking before that. However, the stories I heard added a powerful emotional element to this cognitive fallacy; the image of the ill and diminished parental figure was temporally linked with smoking cessation, whereas the distant memory of the young and healthy parent was associated with smoking – small wonder then it was smoking cessation, not smoking which was feared.

#### COMPLEX DISEASE CAUSATION

Any simple association between smoking and respiratory disease in the village was complicated by the fact that so many men in Sleetburn also suffered from occupational exposure to coal and stone dust, leading to conditions such as pneumoconiosis, silicosis, emphysema, COPD and chronic bronchitis (McIvor and Johnston, 2007). Studies have found that a small proportion of lung cancers may be due to exposures at work or atmospheric pollution, and risk is also elevated in underground miners whose bronchial mucosa was

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<sup>120</sup> See for instance <http://www.smokersnews.com/quit-smoking/254/quitting-smoking-can-be-dangerous/> accessed on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2014

exposed to radon gas and its decay products (Giles and Boyle, 2010 p. 479). Many people mentioned relatives who had or should have received compensation from the NCB for industrial injury, most commonly lung damage. Kevin (59) was a miner for nearly thirty years, finishing in 1999 at the last coal mine in County Durham:

*Coal mining's done the lot to me, I got COPD, I got vibration white finger<sup>121</sup> I got osteo-arthritis in the knees, lower back problems, all off coalmining. (Me: Did you get any compensation?) Yeah, took some getting, had to fight the government for it... Year gone January, got the Department of Work and Pensions to our house, got me knee complaint, doctor told us straight away, only here for one thing, to stop you from getting money, but they couldn't do that, they won't operate on me knees because they're too far gone, just got to live with it... that's me mining career. (Me: So when did you develop the COPD ?) Oh.... in the 70s, about 74, 75. (Me: You were quite young then?) Yes. I got bronchitis, your lungs are just covered in coal dust. When you go for compensation though, they say, did you smoke, well I didn't smoke very much at all, but they say that's the problem, it's not the coal dust it's the smoking.*

Rodney (64)'s father was a pitman for thirty-four years until he retired on health grounds:

*He had an accident back in the 1950s, he was trapped, he damaged his back and broke his leg. He had a bad chest as well, he had a lung condition. He was too proud to go for compensation, he wanted nothing to do with it. He was on oxygen, the bottles were supplied by the doctor but he bought the apparatus, an early type of nebuliser himself. When he died it was the first thing the hospital asked when doing the death certificate, would we be having a post-mortem and applying for compensation, we said no. It was the same thing when my brother died of lung cancer last year.*

I sat with Ernest (85) at the elderly lunch club while he told me the complex aetiology of his chest problems:

*I started work at Sleetburn Pit in 1941, that one was a good pit like, then I went to Redpath Drift, me and my brother both left because it was a wet pit, the water was coming in from the top... I moved to factory work even though it was half the wages, going on my pushbike all the way to Spennymoor. Then my brother got a motorbike and I went with him. I finished work in 1976 because of my bad chest. I got some compensation, I went to the Miners' Hall for a medical. I did smoke but I finished (smoking) in 1969, I always had asthma so the doctor told me to pack it in.*

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<sup>121</sup> secondary Raynaud's disease caused by the use of vibrating tools and affecting the blood supply to extremities, commonly fingers and toes

## ILL-HEALTH AS UNREMARKABLE

The reality which people described was that life was in any case precarious and that individuals had little control over their own health. This has sometimes been described as ‘working-class fatalism’ (see Chapter 2), but I would characterise it rather as a realistic appraisal of the various causal factors behind illness in a particular environment (Pill and Stott, 1985, Keeley et al., 2009). Health in the village was indeed extremely poor whilst the reasons for this, inasmuch as they could be ascertained, were largely or wholly outside individuals’ control. This is similar to Balshem’s study of a working-class community in the city of Philadelphia where she found the community situated the assumptions of cancer control in a wider context of power and social class (Balshem, 1991). Macdonald and Shildrick in Middlesbrough have referred to ‘experiences of ill-health being conveyed as unremarkable and to be ‘taken-for-granted’ when they often struck interviewers as distressing or out-of-the-ordinary’ (MacDonald and Shildrick, 2013 p. 149). Janice (65)’s account of her father’s life was a typical one and gives an idea of the range of occupational and other factors contributing to ill health in the village:

*He was born in 1923, in the war he was a sailor on a destroyer, a gunner. He met my mum, she was down there doing her war service, they came back and he worked as a hod carrier. He did a small stint at the tankie, the engine that hauled the coals, you had to pull a handle to let the coals down. He was out of work for a while in the 1950s, I remember him coming home and swearing, he had tried to rejoin the Navy but he was too old, he said ‘they won’t say that when they want me to go and fight’... once they started building the council houses, there was more building work around; he worked on the original Tyne Tunnel. He finished on ill health in his late fifties, he was off a lot. He developed Meniere’s disease, that’s to do with balance, from toppling off a ladder, he was offered an operation for it but he wouldn’t go. He also had COPD, he was a heavy smoker. He had a nebuliser and oxygen at home. Eventually he died of an aneurysm at 73, he fell out of bed.*

The village suffered from a historical burden of accident and disease linked to occupation and living conditions (mining accidents, occupational exposure to coal and stone dust leading to respiratory problems, as well as tuberculosis and other disease linked to overcrowding and lack of sanitation). There was also a continuing high burden of mortality and morbidity including cancer, diabetes, COPD, emphysema and heart disease, to which smoking was a contributory factor, but with many other possible aetiological factors such as childhood malnutrition and occupational exposures. As Blaxter has shown, differences in

health between rich and poor persist even allowing for differences in health behaviours such as diet, exercise and smoking (Blaxter, 2004).

Shorter life expectancies were not just evident in terms of people dying in their seventies rather than their eighties, but also in higher levels of mortality at much younger ages which I found distressing even though I should not have found them surprising: the latest available UK data showed that both men and women from routine or manual backgrounds were twice as likely to die between the ages of 25 to 64 as those from managerial or professional backgrounds, most frequently from cancers and circulatory diseases including heart disease.<sup>122</sup> Early deaths translate into early bereavements, which have shocked other contemporary researchers in working-class communities: MacDonald and Shildrick described what they characterised as an abnormally high rate of bereavement amongst the young people they interviewed in Middlesbrough (MacDonald and Shildrick, 2013). Like them, I came across many people who had lost a parent at a young age; there were people in the village who had lost their mother when they were under ten years old in 2011, 2003, 1997 and 1996 as well as many older examples. One woman now fifty lost her mother to tuberculosis when she was two, then her father to a mining accident when she was eighteen. Amongst earlier generations I expected to meet a proportion of people who had lost a father to a mining accident, but although there were countless mining injuries, in terms of deaths I was struck more by the many accounts of mothers who died young (and not in childbirth). Many older people had lost a parent, a sibling or a child at an early age. Dorothy (93) lost one brother who drowned aged eighteen whilst serving in the armed forces, and another who fell off a roof whilst working on a building site. One woman in her seventies had suffered the following bereavements: her mother died aged fifty-two, her husband aged forty-four and a niece aged thirty-two. Four other people I knew had lost children who were in their early fifties. Great care was taken in the village to remember those who had died. For two consecutive years I attended the village's Memorial Service, a chapel event which attracted a large congregation. At this simple event, along with a few prayer and hymns, the names of those people who had died that year as well as the names of others whom their relatives had asked to be remembered, were read out whilst a relative or friend came forward and lit a candle before hanging a paper leaf, with a message

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<sup>122</sup> <http://www.poverty.org.uk/60/index.shtml> accessed 7th September 2014

or prayer, on a memorial tree. This event was additional to the annual Remembrance Day service in the village hall. There was also a small memorial garden alongside the chapel, with beds of roses planted in memory of particular individuals, a bench for quiet reflection, and rows of brass plaques on a white-washed wall, listing the dead.

In addition to this experience of high mortality, there was also high morbidity: in the older generations, former pitmen were debilitated by mining-related problems, not just respiratory but also arthritic knees, white finger, deafness, tinnitus and eye problems. Several older men retired in their late forties or fifties because of respiratory problems caused by coal dust. More recent generations also suffered serious ill-health and frequently retired early on health grounds with chronic conditions including serious back pain from lifting injuries (kitchen and care work, removals, construction, glaziers and fitters) or knee problems from frequent kneeling in confined spaces (plumbers, joiners, electricians). Whilst some health problems related to occupational exposures, there were also many relatively young people living with serious chronic conditions with no obvious aetiology, as well as a high proportion of pupils at Sleetburn Primary who had learning difficulties or disabilities<sup>123</sup>. In a study in post-industrial Wales, researchers were similarly 'struck by the numbers of accidents, and chronic illnesses and disabilities' (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012 p. 168). I knew three younger women with serious chronic arthritis including Natalie (33), who was in constant pain and had two hip replacements and an electrical pain-control implant in her back, Donna (40) who had several bones in her foot removed, and Dawn (46) who had to use a wheelchair until she was given a hip replacement.

Similarly to what researchers found in a Teesside study (MacDonald and Shildrick, 2013), health problems were conveyed as unremarkable and people often did not bother to seek medical advice on chronic conditions. Mark (59) told me arthritis ran in the family: his mum had it, his sister and brothers had it and he knew he had it in his hands, knees and ankles; but he had never bothered to go to the doctor. During frequent conversations with Kevin (59) over more than a year, we discussed his wife's persistent cough and her refusal to go to the doctor about it. Eventually she did go and was diagnosed with COPD. One factor in the reluctance to seek medical advice was the experience of those miners who had to fight for

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<sup>123</sup> OFSTED report 2009

compensation from the NCB and successor bodies for health problems and encountered company doctors in the context of the great reluctance of the authorities to accept liability. As regards exposure to coal and stone dust in particular, it took a long time to get recognition of the causal link between this and various respiratory problems notably pneumoconiosis, silicosis, emphysema, COPD and chronic bronchitis. As we saw earlier, it was also the experience of miners in Sleetburn that the authorities were all too willing to blame smoking in order to avoid liability for industrial disease (McIvor and Johnston, 2007 p. 313).

‘Late presenting’ or the failure to consult a doctor soon enough is often put forward as one explanation for greater mortality amongst working-class people from conditions such as cancer (Dixon et al., 2007), but although I certainly found a reluctance to seek medical advice, this was partly explained by poor experience of doctors as well as instances of what was believed to be, and may well have been serious medical negligence, albeit linked to late presenting and communication difficulties on both sides. The following case histories illustrate ill health as a commonplace in the village, as well as poor experiences of medical care. One woman in her seventies suffered curvature of the spine following childhood tuberculosis. She subsequently lost two husbands to cancer then heart failure, and had also suffered from cancer herself. She told me how her beloved younger brother, a haulier, died of heart failure in his thirties:

*He parked the waggon up outside Shiremoor Surgery, he told them he didn't feel well but they didn't believe him and sent him home, and he died... the same happened with my husband, he was a big strong man and they didn't believe he was ill.*

Another woman in her sixties told me how her husband died of a brain tumour in his early forties:

*He started getting headaches, he was put off by the doctor, he was a big strong man, he begged for CAT scans, I went through hell with him, he was like Jekyll and Hyde – if it had been now they'd have saved him.*

Both women used the same wording ‘a big strong man’; it was not clear to me whether this phrase referred to their own shock at someone in the prime of life being struck down, or whether they were expressing misgivings about the medical profession’s ability to engage successfully with working-class masculinity. A third woman in her sixties told me about her

husband, a heavy smoker who had also suffered from high blood pressure and died three years before we met:

*In the last three weeks before he died, he wasn't eating, he had stopped taking his blood pressure tablets because he blamed them for his headaches, he didn't like doctors, he wouldn't go because he thought they would find something else that was wrong. Then on Easter Sunday he looked terrible, on the night I said 'Neil, you are going to the doctor's', of course we weren't going to be able to get an appointment until Tuesday, he wasn't breathing very well, I thought it was a chest infection, I told him I'm going to phone the out of hours, he didn't want to go...then he said 'I'm only saying about me blood pressure tablets', I said no tell them about the breathing... [After he saw the doctor] he came out with a prescription for blood pressure tablets... [eventually they found a pharmacy in Gateshead that was open]... the girl serving said 'has he had them before', I said 'I don't know', he was on four [different drugs]. He took the tablet... we came back home, I was in the sitting room with the grandchildren, Neil was in the kitchen...he took the second tablet, after five minutes I heard him catch his breath, he sort of sighed, I said 'are you alright', I heard him shouting 'I think you'd better phone the ambulance, I can't breathe'. I dialled 999, I was panicking on the phone, telling them to hurry up... then my grandson said 'Nana he's falling over', I said 'Liam hold on to him', the ambulance came, it was a cardiac arrest, they resuscitated him, he was in intensive care for a week and then he died... Neil had said 'it's just since I took that tablet', the hospital asked what it was, I couldn't remember, normally the ambulance take medications along with them but they hadn't. I brought the medication in, the doctor said he shouldn't have been given that with a bad chest. Another doctor said the same thing, and that I should write it down that he had been given that, I can't remember what it was called... I never followed it through though.*

I have quoted this extract at length because it illustrates the complex causes of what may have been a preventable death: distrust and avoidance of doctors, confusion about drugs, lack of communication about patient history between health professionals themselves and between patients and professionals and difficulties with transport and access to care services – and all this whilst relatives juggled other family responsibilities. Whether particular health professionals were at fault or not in this case, the health service taken as a whole plainly did not provide the care this patient needed.

## THE HEALTHY BODY

The experience of ill-health as unremarkable and the complex aetiology of health problems explored in previous sections meant that people did not feel they could control their own health or illness (see my discussion of 'fatalism' at page 35). Equally, they did not feel responsible for the production of a healthy, non-smoking body, in contrast to the 'new healthism' I described in Chapter 2 (page 25).

It was important to respectability in Sleetburn that the body, particularly the female body should be clean and well-groomed, with carefully washed and blow-dried hair and smart clothes. General observation made this clear as well as a number of comments such as the woman in her seventies who told me she had always '*kept herself nice, not scruffy*'. An older woman said that there was a time when some of the local families '*didn't look after themselves as well as they should*', referring to personal hygiene, and I was told I would be able to identify a particular village man who was not well-thought of '*by the smell*'. As some other researchers have found, I was marked out as a university researcher partly by my scruffy, unfeminine clothes and unstyled hair (Gullestad, 1984). Whilst the well-groomed body was important, the healthy body in contrast had no moral content, which links in with the experience of ill-health as unremarkable and disease causation as complex and beyond individual control, which I described in earlier sections. I was struck by how rarely anyone in the village – bearing in mind that I spent a lot of time with women in their forties or older – mentioned issues relating to weight or diet or exercise for instance, either with reference to themselves or anyone else. One man I knew well told me his doctor said he was 'clinically obese' – '*That means I'm a fat bastard*' he said, and laughed. Lupton has pointed out how middle-class people pass judgment more frequently on themselves and others with regard to health behaviours, whereas less privileged individuals tend to view health and behaviours as private matters that are generally a function of luck (Lupton, 1995 pp. 140-141).

Excessive alcohol intake was considered a moral issue locally because of its consequences in terms of violence and disorder rather than because of its effects on the drinker's health. A strong tradition of Methodism in the area meant there was a history of temperance and some older residents were teetotal; Methodism has always frowned on drinking and gambling because of their social consequences, but not on smoking which has no obvious connection to violence or improvidence. One woman in her eighties told me how her late

husband, a prominent Methodist, had declined to give up smoking when she did, saying: *'Well I don't drink, I don't gamble'*; within the Methodist tradition, smoking was not immoral in the way it has since been constructed to be by the new public health (see Chapter 2). Ex-smoker Louise (47) was incensed that the minimum age for buying tobacco had risen to eighteen, as she felt there were better grounds further to restrict alcohol: *'They left alcohol at eighteen, they should have made that twenty-one and left the tabs at sixteen. Smoking you just hurt yourself, alcohol hurts everyone around you'*, she said.

#### ABILITY TO QUIT

I have considered willingness to quit smoking and how in Sleetburn the will to quit was weakened by the denial of risk, the belief that quitting could be dangerous, the complex aetiology of health problems and experience of chronic ill health as the norm, and the absence of a conception of health as a moral imperative. I now turn to other factors which impacted on smoking cessation. I will suggest that the ability to quit was negatively correlated with parental and particularly maternal smoking, especially for daughters.

#### DEPENDENCE

Tobacco companies long resisted the idea that nicotine was addictive as it weakened their argument that smoking was a matter of individual choice and quitting a matter of willpower (Quintero and Nichter, 1996, White et al., 2013). Nicotine has now been proved to be an addictive substance; however there has been some debate as to whether the idea of smoking as essentially a physical addiction removes agency from the smoker (West, 2011, Bell and Keane, 2012). There is also evidence to suggest that a high degree of dependence does not necessarily correlate with a lower chance of successful quitting (Chaiton et al., 2007). In this section I consider how people in Sleetburn understood nicotine dependence or addiction.

A common measure of nicotine dependence is the Fagerstrom test which asks six questions about tobacco use (Heatherton et al., 1991). Two of these were routinely used by people in the village to describe whether someone was a light or heavy smoker, which was also the term loosely used to characterise the degree of addiction. These two questions were the number of cigarettes smoked per day, and how soon after waking the person smoked, which they characterised as *'before or after breakfast'*; heavier (more dependent) smokers

had their first cigarette before breakfast, or as Hazel (66) said of her late husband, *'he could be lighting his first cigarette coming down the stairs'*. Similarly, Benjamin (23) said he had to have *'a cup of tea and a cigarette'* before he could speak to anyone. I witnessed this when I called at his flat one morning; he and his partner had overslept, and retired to the kitchen for a cigarette before starting our interview.

In many cases those who had given up contrasted their own (former) light smoking with a partner or friend's continued heavy smoking. This could suggest that it was indeed the less dependent smokers who gave up and that the 'hardening' hypothesis was correct. On the other hand, there could be a degree of misremembering, or wanting to self-present as a light smoker. Ronald (87) gave up smoking in the 1970s (or according to his daughter, the early eighties):

*I smoked in the house, but not much... I never had one first thing in the morning like my wife did, with me it was more on a night, just a habit. She would have a cup of tea and a tab, she smoked twenty a day, easy.*

Similarly, Roy A (76), who gave up in 1986, contrasted his own light smoking with a friend's:

*The only time I really enjoyed a cigarette was when I worked in an office and I would come in and have a cup of tea and my first cigarette of the day. I never smoked on waking, and on Sundays I never smoked until I got to the Club at lunch time. I used to smoke ten a day at most; my friend Victor smoked twenty to forty a day.*

Ivy (88) told a similar story about quitting in 1983:

*I never had a craving after I stopped. I smoked maybe ten a day, whereas my husband would be on twenty a day. I never had a cigarette first thing in the morning whereas he did, I never had one until after breakfast. I had one after every meal, and if I had a break with a coffee, in the morning or the afternoon, I would have one then.*

There was another group who described themselves as very nicotine-dependent but still managed to quit, though typically the story they told was of a much greater struggle:

Yvonne (70)'s husband smoked eighty a day, he managed to give up in 1979 but only by taking up snuff instead. Rodney (64) and his wife gave up in their twenties in 1977, they said they were both *'first thing in the morning'* smokers and found it very hard; they put on a lot of weight and their marriage suffered because of their irritability. Nigel (59) gave up in 2007: *'I had terrible cravings. I didn't use any giving-up services, I just chewed sugar-free gum for about a year... I'm very strong-minded'*, he told me. Leslie (53) gave up in 1994:

*I used to be on fifty a day, I smoked Royals or Regal, anything I could get my hands on really. I stopped when my father developed cancer and emphysema and died.... I still miss the cigarettes, I used to have one as soon as I woke up. I tried giving up lots of times before...It was before they had the patches; I went up to eighteen stone, eating chocolate; I'm down to fifteen now but that's still a lot more than I was.*

Janet (76) was unusual in having been a smoker with a high intake but whose dependence appeared to be less high. She told me she was a 'heavy smoker, thirty a day at least', but she never had one first thing in the morning:

*I never used to smoke in the bedroom or upstairs, I would have a cigarette with a coffee after getting the children off to school, that would be my first one of the day. I never longed for one after I gave up in 1984.*

Many continuing smokers positioned themselves as less dependent by pointing out that there were circumstances where they could go without a cigarette for some time. Samantha (23) told me:

*I can have a whole day at home without cigarettes, but I need them at work because of the stress. When I was studying I used to take the laptop outside to smoke... I like to have one in the morning with a cup of tea, I will even have it in bed, but after that I am not bothered, though I like one last thing at night - I can do without all the ones in between though.*

As we saw in Chapter 7, many people historically worked in places where they could not smoke except during smoking breaks or even at all such as on mining shifts, and they got used to this. Others could smoke all the time and often did so out of boredom, a theme which often comes up in studies of settings where the smoker has little control of their environment, such as in the armed forces or in psychiatric facilities (McKie et al., 2003, Amos et al., 2006, Okuyemi et al., 2006, Ker and Owens, 2008, Haddock et al., 2009). Many smokers explained how their smoking conformed to specific rituals, so that particular places and people were associated with smoking whereas in other circumstances they could go without a cigarette for long periods. Elaine (65) told me she had a cigarette first thing in the morning, but generally she only smoked 'when I'm bored at home... though I could go up to bed at seven and read, and never come down for a smoke'. Kim (44) smoked at very regular intervals through the working day, but could spend a couple of days with her (non-smoking) partner without having a cigarette. Mark (59) told me that if he has one first thing then he smokes a lot through the day, but if he can hold off having that first one, he can go without for ages. Winifred (83) said:

*I just have one if I am on my own with nothing to do, but I never take them with me if I go out or go away, and I don't miss them.*

#### SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEMS AND NOT QUITTING

Whilst we have seen that specific health problems were often triggers to quit, it was also very striking how many people in the village failed to quit despite such problems. However, I would not characterise such people as unwilling to quit so much as resigned to their inability to do so. There was also some suggestion from my experience of the village that women were particularly likely to continue smoking despite serious ill-health. There has been some debate as to whether women find it harder to quit than men; a recent authoritative review quoted clinical psychology studies which found that women had greater difficulty quitting, and suggested this related to biological and psychosocial aspects of addiction and dependence (Amos et al., 2012). A further review with contributions from the same authors suggested that disadvantaged women were even less likely to quit than disadvantaged men (Hiscock et al., 2012).

Winifred (83) told me that her late husband *'was supposed to stop for his heart condition, but he was always sneaking out for a cigarette'* before he died at the age of 78. Dorothy (93)'s husband also carried on smoking, despite being ill for a long time before he died at the age of 82. However, most of the people I met or heard of who did not give up despite serious ill-health were women: examples previously mentioned included one man's mother who continued to smoke after an angina attack in her fifties even though her husband gave up smoking for her sake. At the time of writing she was in her eighties and apparently continued to attempt to smoke, although she was confused and staff in the nursing home to which she had recently moved told her that *'only the electronic cigarettes are allowed now'* and gave her those instead, which she didn't like. One woman in her eighties continued to smoke despite angina, arthritis and cellulitis. Another in her sixties was diagnosed with kidney cancer during the time of my fieldwork, and although she gave up smoking around the time of her surgery, she was soon smoking again. Two other women in their sixties smoked despite COPD in one case and bowel cancer in the other. As previously mentioned, Phyllis (74) continued to smoke despite emphysema, telling me it was too late and that the

damage was already done – a rationalisation common amongst older smokers (Kerr et al., 2006, Wilson et al., 2011).

#### PARENTAL INFLUENCES

I now turn to parental smoking during the smoker's childhood and its impact on ability or willingness to quit. I found in Sleetburn that those older adults who appeared to be or to have been particularly close to their smoking parents found it difficult to give up – particularly the smoking daughters of smoking mothers. This is a subtle argument relating to very specific circumstances and I did not expect to find it reflected in the literature around parental influences on smoking which mostly consists of large-scale quantitative studies. As we saw in Chapters 2 and 7, most of the literature concentrates on parental smoking status at the time of smoking initiation by the child (Gilman et al., 2009, Melchior et al., 2010, McAloney et al., 2014). Of those few studies looking at parental smoking in early childhood, one found no correlation between parental smoking during childhood and later quitting by the child (Monden et al., 2003) whilst another found that young adults were more likely to quit if their parents had given up smoking whilst they were under ten rather than older teenagers (Bricker et al., 2005).

I also mentioned previously that Monden et al. found a much greater influence for partners than for parents as did a series of Canadian studies (Bottorff et al, various dates); in contrast to these studies, it was striking how rarely in Sleetburn people alluded to the role of their partner in either supporting or thwarting their attempts to quit. This contrast may have been a function of (older) age and (later) life stage; alternatively, I suggest it related to the greater importance of intergenerational ties in Sleetburn than in the large urban community which was the subject of the Canadian studies, or indeed the general population sample used by Monden et al. in the Netherlands. In Sleetburn, hardly anyone even mentioned their partner in connection with their own cessation, nor did anyone blame their partner for making it difficult for them to quit. I only knew of two couples who gave up smoking together, whereas there were many couples where either the husband or wife had given up years before although their spouse carried on smoking.

Daughters of smoking mothers who continued to smoke included Elaine (65), the eldest of many siblings and the *'family social worker'* as her father put it, who continued to smoke despite COPD. Hazel (66) was the only child of a mother who smoked; she remembered how her mother would smoke Park Drive cigarettes in the evenings after work. I mentioned Kim (44) earlier; she said she only had to think of her mother to crave a cigarette. There were also daughters of smoking mothers who *had* managed to quit, but found it a huge struggle and were still at risk of relapse. Rita (75) was one of these, as she told me at a summer event in the village hall in August 2013:

*My parents smoked, I found it hard to quit, I did it twenty-one years ago after I had a heart attack - but when I was in hospital I told my daughter to take my cigarettes away as I knew that if I had them, I would go out for a cigarette. I haven't had a one since - it's like alcoholics, if I had one I would be back on them. If I had six months to live I would go back on them. My father smoked a pipe, my mother smoked Embassy Regal, was it Regal? The ones with the red stripe anyway - she didn't stop even when she had hardened arteries.*

In connection with stop/start smoking trajectories, I previously mentioned Denise (60) and her husband, who gave up together but found it very hard going. Gail (52) was also the daughter of a smoking mother, she managed to give up smoking but she had to use an NRT inhaler for more than a year to cope with the cravings. Her husband had been pressing her to give up because of a bad cough and she was in fact later diagnosed with COPD. Louise (52) had given up, possibly because she had been diagnosed with a chronic heart condition. She also told me that her mother smoked heavily and died aged sixty-eight, *'but the hospital staff couldn't believe she was so young - she looked much older'*.

As these stories illustrate, there wasn't a straightforward correlation between continuing to smoke and being the daughter of a smoking mother since many people in that category did manage to give up; it was more that they found it particularly hard, and if they did give up, tended to do so only after a serious health scare of the kind I described in Chapter 8. The link with maternal smoking was an emotional connection: those women who had broken away from close family links and were living different kinds of lives from their mothers – for instance through social mobility, as referred to in Chapter 8 - appeared to find it easier to give up, whereas those adult daughters who were in some sense treading in their mother's footsteps seemed to find it hardest to distance themselves from smoking. It may be relevant that men who had quit smoking were far more likely than women to describe the process as

a sudden, almost violent break. Some of the expressions they used were: *'I just stopped... threw the pack in the fire... threw down the pack... never had another one'*. Certainly some people thought it was easier for men to make a decisive break; I mentioned in Chapter 8 how Kim (44) told me that *'Men can just stop'*. I was less aware of an emotional link to parents through smoking amongst men who continued to smoke, but this may well be a function of the most common gender roles; those men who remained unmarried and were particularly close to their smoking parents, such as Mark or Leslie, did also seem to find it particularly hard to quit.

In a few cases it was connections other than parents who provided a strong emotional link with smoking. It was grandparents for Nicholas (57), who was taught to smoke a pipe by his grandfather, and possibly Benjamin (23) whose parents didn't smoke but who lived with his (smoking) grandmother for some time as a child. Jeanette (60), another heavy smoker, was unusual in having a strong emotional attachment to smoking relating to work colleagues rather than family. Her parents didn't smoke and she first started smoking because it was the only way to get a work break. Her place of work was very male-dominated and she said all the men hated her at first. When eventually she was accepted, this was demonstrated through the men offering her cigarettes. As a result, smoking for Jeanette continued to be associated with this relational breakthrough.

I have argued in this chapter that most continuing smokers in Sleetburn were discouraged quitters rather than hardened smokers. Their will to quit was weakened by the denial of risk, the belief that quitting could be dangerous, the complex aetiology of health problems and the experience of chronic ill health as the norm. I then argued that the ability to quit was negatively correlated with parental and particularly maternal smoking, especially for those – normally daughters - who were or had been close to their mother. I do not equate continuing smokers with the children of smoking mothers, but I suggest that giving up smoking is harder for those people with close emotional ties to smoking mothers or other close relatives who smoked; I argue that it was more difficult for smokers to distance themselves from smoking if the smoker's memories of their mother related to her as a smoker.

The existence of these memories also meant that many ex-smokers in Sleetburn later went back to smoking – the re-imagining of the cigarette as abject and stigmatised was never completed. This also accounts for the lack of stigma around smoking in Sleetburn; the stereotype of the vehemently anti-smoking ‘reformed’ smoker was nowhere to be seen.

## CHAPTER 10: CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this final, brief chapter I will review my original research objectives and point to some of the areas where my findings have contributed to a better understanding of continuing smoking in particular communities, as well as making suggestions for further research.

As stated in Chapter 1, my initial research interest was in the smoking social gradient both as an intellectual conundrum which public health and tobacco control initiatives have struggled to resolve, and as a moral issue within an engaged or applied anthropology of health. I therefore set out to disentangle the link between smoking and poverty through a study in a particular place. However, as my fieldwork progressed I found that, beyond its role as a link to previous generations, to which I shall return, smoking appeared to have little meaning in itself. Instead, smoking was symbolically situated on the front line between different sets of classed moral values. The relevant question was not why people in Sleeburn liked to smoke but why they continued to do so after the health risks were confirmed, and this was not really anything to do with tobacco or its properties; in fact, continued smoking took place in the wider context of the moral values prevailing in the village. As Reay has suggested (Reay, 2012), I therefore set out to expose an unacknowledged 'battle for Sleeburn' between would-be normative middle-class values and those other, working-class values which they attempted to pathologise.

I observed the middle-class privileging of social and geographical mobility, the denigration of close family ties as atavistic and the importance attached to 'raising aspirations', contrasted these with prevailing values in the village and observed how local people negotiated these contradictions. I found (Chapter 4) that Sleeburn had a long history of mobility but that circular 'there and back again' mobilities were misrecognised as stasis. A close network of family and friends provided practical support (Chapter 5), extending in space across neighbouring villages and across time in layers of memory which overlaid the visible space. Intergenerational links were particularly strong. Historically informed expectations of jobs were low but people had ordinary aspirations to happiness and security and reclaimed agency by carving out spaces of autonomy at work (Chapter 6). Education had provided little reward historically and was therefore 'something to get through'. Imaginable futures depended on what was visible locally; social mobility through education led to geographical mobility and was easily obscured or coloured by emotional loss.

All this gave me a better understanding of smoking in the village. I found that it carried little stigma but was tied into emotional memories of parental smoking which made it difficult for continuing and indeed ex-smokers to distance themselves definitively from cigarettes, with relapses common even after many years cessation (Chapter 7). I observed that the two main factors which facilitated smoking cessation were social mobility, which created distance from parental memories, and urgent health threats to self or family which remade the once friendly and familiar cigarette as alien and dangerous. I realised that those people who continued to smoke were not so much 'hardened smokers' as discouraged quitters, and that in Sleetburn, chronic ill-health (often linked to occupational exposures) was a commonplace for smokers and never-smokers alike (Chapters 8 and 9).

I now consider how my findings have contributed to a better understanding of continued smoking. One key finding related to the importance of continued emotional ties between adult children and their parents. It was only because I spent time exploring these emotional landscapes that I was able to go beyond a simple statement that the children of smoking parents are more likely to smoke, and explore in more detail *how* smoking links to family made it hard for would-be quitters to reject cigarettes i.e. that this was an issue in Sleetburn precisely because intergenerational ties were stronger than in many places, for historical and practical reasons (Chapter 5). This was why geographical or social mobility, by weakening these ties, was often a sufficient, although not a necessary condition for giving up. I referred to other ways in which the cigarette changed from being a friend to becoming a threat, typically in an epiphanic moment where the reality of death and disease suddenly became apparent. Unfortunately, this epiphany could not easily be predicted or replicated since it generally related to the sudden death or serious illness of a relative or serious illness of the smoker herself.

My consideration of values within Sleetburn unrelated to smoking was a crucial part of my journey towards a greater understanding of never, former and current smoking in the village. Specifically, the particular power of parental smoking only made sense in the context of the network of family and friends which I have described as extending in space across neighbouring villages and across time in the layers of memories which overlaid the visible space – it is in this sense that my thesis relates to 'the persistence of memory'.

In order to understand the wider context, I looked beyond smoking behaviours to values relating to mobility, insularity and aspiration in Sleetburn and in the UK more widely, informed by literature not just from anthropology and public health but also from cultural studies, urban sociology, the sociology of education, human geography and social history. Of course, the drawback of casting my net so wide was that I was only able to touch briefly on many key concepts which would reward a more detailed analysis. As I explained in Chapter 1, I could hope only to 'unsettle' ideas about mobility, insularity and aspiration which continue to have such a significant role in reifying and stigmatising particular populations. Many of my findings warrant further research: in the context of mobility studies, the importance of circular mobilities and their misrepresentation as stasis or failed mobility; in the context of stigma, the joint operation of class and rural stigma in historical and contemporary conceptualisations of coalfield communities, and the ideas of liminality and 'matter out of place' applied to class analysis.

My study was also innovative in looking at smoking over the life course and following current, former and never-smokers for a period of around two years; I draw attention here to the importance of the time dimension, arguing for a longitudinal approach rather than the typical public health 'snapshot': much can be learned by examining smoking trajectories over time. In fact the time dimension is one way in which my research distinguishes itself from geographical approaches which, like anthropology, pay special attention to place. I had envisaged finding that Sleetburn was a 'smoking island' (Thompson et al., 2007) where an isolated population enjoyed normative smoking, cut off from an increasingly mainstreamed, non-smoking culture. I had not reckoned on the importance in the field not so much of geography but of history; if smoking was normative in Sleetburn, it was normative in time rather than space. Smokers were linked, not to other smokers in place who created a smoking norm, but to other smokers in time, and specifically to smoking parents and grandparents.

Moving beyond Sleetburn, I return now to my original research question exploring the nature of the link between poverty and smoking. Having reviewed the many possible explanations put forward to explain the link (Chapter 2), am I now in a position to choose between them or indeed formulate an alternative? My study was of a specific place, and I am not claiming that what I found there applies elsewhere; however some aspects of what I

found may be relevant in other places. First of all, continued smoking by a particular group is likely to relate to the wider values of that group; in Sleetburn, these values included the importance of intergenerational connections, which made quitting difficult for emotional reasons, and this may well apply in other close-knit communities with a long smoking history, both in the UK and elsewhere. In Australia and New Zealand, high rates of smoking in native and indigenous populations often living in close-knit communities have been explained either with reference to smoking to relieve the stress of poverty or injustice or to some vague 'cultural' factor. Emotional factors related to intergenerational closeness combined with high smoking rates in older generations might provide additional insights (Johnston and Thomas, 2008, Wood et al., 2008, Bond et al., 2012, Gilberthorpe and Hilson, 2014).

Of course, the link between poverty and smoking is not only present in close-knit communities; as we saw in Chapter 2, rates of smoking are high in other categories such as homeless people and people with poor mental health. Some of the other factors I found in Sleetburn may be relevant here, namely the idea of ill-health as unremarkable and life as precarious, and the relatively low priority given to the idea of the 'healthy body' as against other values (see Chapter 9). I do not claim to have demonstrated the nature of the link between smoking and poverty in all circumstances; rather, I suggest that both the values of the particular populations involved, and the unspoken and 'taken for granted' values of agencies and academics engaging with such populations and setting the terms of the debate need to be rendered 'visible' before particular health behaviours can be understood.

I now move onto a brief consideration of some practical policy implications of my research. I have highlighted a number of smoking practices in Sleetburn which go against common public health assumptions and which might usefully inform future public health initiatives and improve their effectiveness. With reference to the emotional connection to smoking parents, public health practitioners might increase their efforts to get pregnant women and young parents to quit to avoid perpetuating this cycle; however this would be missing my essential point, which is relational; the pregnant woman in my analysis smokes because her mother did during her own childhood, and quitting might represent a betrayal or at the very least a critique of her mother and therefore a rift in the relationship. It is true that a 'break' with close family is one way of giving up smoking, but hardly one to recommend given the

importance of family networks in providing practical support in places such as Sleetburn, as demonstrated in Chapter 5. I suggest rather that smoking cessation in communities such as Sleetburn should be less focussed on the individual and work instead with the intergenerational family, in challenging the everyday place of smoking and breaking the familial link with smoking (Froelicher et al., 2010, Malone et al., 2013).

The fact that smoking starting age in communities such as Sleetburn has stayed consistent for so long and that children appear to have no more difficulty in obtaining cigarettes now than they did sixty years ago (Chapter 7) suggests that efforts might be directed more productively at cessation by parents and grandparents, since there is little evidence that concentrating on young people has been effective; As long as starting to smoke is linked with responsible adulthood through the medium of parental role models, young people will continue to find ways to take up the habit too.

The creative ways in which people in Sleetburn have adapted to smoke-free public spaces (Chapter 8) suggest that extending these population-level policies still further, for instance by creating smoke-free cars and smoke-free parks, is unlikely to lead to significant denormalisation of smoking in these communities, although such policies may still be helpful in reducing exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), particularly for children. Second-hand smoke was in fact the one area where there was little awareness of harm in Sleetburn, and where better information and demonstrations of ETS levels in the home might be effective in reducing exposures.

Smokers in Sleetburn were highly sensitive to price, but rather than quitting as prices became higher, they exercised considerable ingenuity in getting round higher tobacco prices, supported by the tobacco industry's efforts to retain poorer customers by devising cheaper brands and making rolling tobacco more attractive to women (Chapter 8). The ban on packs of fewer cigarettes (ten) is likely to discourage smoking, but some kind of minimum tobacco pricing might be another way forward. Such a policy was proposed by British American Tobacco in Australia<sup>124</sup> but rejected in favour of an aggressive tax policy; however high taxation of tobacco does not prevent the industry from pushing 'loss-leader' cheap cigarettes in poorer communities (Chapter 8). Continuing efforts to combat illicit tobacco

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<sup>124</sup> [http://tobaccotactics.org/index.php/Price\\_and\\_Tax](http://tobaccotactics.org/index.php/Price_and_Tax) Accessed on 5th May 2015

are also needed but are unlikely to be entirely successful while there are wide differences in tobacco pricing, tax and enforcement regimes between countries.

Local smokers' stop/start trajectories (Chapter 7) suggest that smoking cessation needs to be regarded as a lifelong process rather than a standard treatment of a few weeks, with alternative nicotine delivery devices available for longer periods and clearly identified as being healthier than smoking. At the same time, the message from smoking cessation services that stopping 'cold turkey' is not effective is a discouraging one and is not supported by the evidence (Chapter 8). My findings relating to smoking cessation and masculinity may also have wider applicability i.e. the idea of cessation (rather than smoking) as a private matter, fraught with the danger of stigma in terms of (admitting) addiction and possibly failing to quit, and the related idea that concern for health and care of the body were not regarded as appropriately 'masculine' traits (Chapter 9). Strategies aimed at smoking cessation as a tool to improve sporting or competitive ability might be more successful with men than a focus on avoiding disease; the Glasgow initiative 'Football Fans in Training', which used football clubs as settings for weight management, might be an appropriate model here (Hunt et al., 2014). In conclusion, I suggest that my thesis makes a significant contribution both in identifying new approaches for tobacco control and in building on anthropological and other studies in deconstructing the frequently uncritical and under-theorized assumptions of public health.

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