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THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES

How investigating the power dynamics and veracity within
photographic archives can establish a collaborative practice that
readdresses the past.

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**A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield for the Degree
of Master of Arts by Research**

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Abstract

In 2013, my Father Michael Brian Weldon passed away following a long struggle with alcohol addiction. Out of the little remaining material items that we possessed of my Father following his death, it was his archive of photographs that we saved which emotionally captivated me the most. This photographic archive had laid dormant and untouched since my Father had left it within the loft of the family home. This extensive collection of photographic material offered to me, not only physical photographic evidence of my Father's life and history, but it also represented a reflection of his cognitive processes. Obtaining access to this archive appeared to offer a way into his memory and psyche. Through the visual material of his own creation, I sought to uncover aspects of my Father and the origins or causes of his addiction. These discoveries would become the catalyst for the formation of photographic responses and new contemplative narratives that sought to readdress my feelings of grief following his passing.

This thesis documents the investigation into the archive of my Father, navigating the tensions surrounding the capacity of photographs and photographic archives to reveal and influence our perception the past. Through analysing the archive's relationship to power and the ambiguity of the photograph, this text explores how photographs are appropriated by those with the authority to interpret and determine their meanings. Establishing this not only encourages us to reflect upon the broader persuasive power of photographic archives, but it asserts my claim over the content of my Father's archive to create new photographic narratives that engages with personal memory.

Through conducting this research, the text also reveals and highlights that the archive's construction specifically frames what we can return to interpret. This discloses a mutually responsive power dynamic. The influence of this indicates that working with photographic archives is inherently collaborative rather than purely appropriative or responsive. Recognising this allows for a transformation of photographic practice when engaging with archives and offers an alternative means in which to readdress the past.

Key words: collaboration in photography, photographic archives, photographic veracity, Leeds

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Introduction

But though a loved one who is pictured in a photograph may now be absent or even dead, the photograph is not solely a *memento mori* - a reminder of death (and a reminder that you, the viewer, too will die). It is also a reminder of life, of existence. (Gallun, 2020, p. 91)

In the summer of 2017, four years after the passing of my Father, Michael Brian Weldon, a considerable amount of personal loss and grief emerged that demanded to be addressed. Out of the little remaining material items that we retained of my Father's following his death, it was an archive of photographs that we saved that captivated me the most. Whilst the other material items that we retained – a wallet, old clothes and shoes – served as reminders to his existence, this archive of photographs provided an opportunity to once again visually, and rather emotionally, resurrect his image. This photographic archive had laid dormant and untouched since my Father had left it within the loft of the family home. It consisted of 126 rolls of 35mm film within a ring bound folder, over 800 individually printed 3 ½ x 5 ½ inch darkroom photographs contained within 8 separate boxes and finally, 21 boxes of colour positive slides amounting to 800 individual frames. This extensive collection of photographic material offered to me, not only physical photographic evidence of my Father's life and history, but it also represented a reflection of his cognitive processes. Approaching this material now in a moment of grieving, I hoped would uncover aspects of my Father and provide answers to the origins or causes of the alcohol addiction that took his life.

In the preceding years before his death, growing up with him within the family home had often been an emotionally exhausting and testing experience. Whilst I have many countless happy memories of my Father, his addiction to alcohol nonetheless created a constant tension and trepidation within our family which amounted to a protracted period of personal distress. My Father's addiction was hidden to most, maintaining a facade of functionality to relatives, friends and work colleagues for many years. Eventually his alcohol dependence led to his dismissal from his employer. From this point, he quickly became wholly consumed and controlled by his addiction. His persistent consumption led him to

become progressively less functional, erratic and unpredictable to the point where he left the family home. My contact with him after he left us was infrequent, yet when we did come together, it would typically revolve around meeting in the many public houses within Leeds city centre. Whilst it appeared unhelpful to meet him in a place that encouraged his addiction, during those meetings my relationship with my Father grew in a way that was unexpected. In those rare encounters I began to enjoy his company as a friend as well as my Father. We often discussed our shared enthusiasm for photography, and in rare instances I would listen to stories about his life before our family. Just as I became accustomed to these conversations during our meetings, his addiction took his life. Consequently, approaching his archive in 2017 was also rooted in a desire to continue these conversations and learn more about my Father. The discoveries revealed through my administration of the archival content would in turn become the catalyst for affective photographic responses.

Accordingly, the following research examines the tensions surrounding the capacity of photographs and photographic archives to reveal and influence our perception the past. By analysing the archive's relationship to power and the ambiguity of the photograph, this text explores how photographs can be appropriated by those with the authority to interpret and determine their meanings. Establishing this not only encourages us to reflect upon the persuasive power of photographic archives, but it asserts my claim over the content of my Father's archive to create the new photographic responses and new contemplative narratives.

Nevertheless, as will be presented in the following chapters, my extensive research into both the image content and broader materiality of the archive reveals an unanticipated, complex and significant, mutually responsive power dynamic. The influence of this not only initiated an engaging dialogue with the photographic traces left by my Father, but it also became a crucial factor in transforming my photographic practice from responsive and appropriative, to collaborative. Taking this into account, investigating, reflecting and working with this photographic archive has allowed me to suggest and re-examine unrealised characteristics of my Father. Significantly, this research has played a prominent role in my ability to readdress the often-painful memories I have of my Father, providing me the chance to be at peace with my feelings of grief since his passing.

Concepts of Power & Veracity within Photographic Archives

The following chapter explores photography's assumed veracity and the relationship and prevailing tensions regarding concepts of power within the context of photographic archives. I will assert that archives are not objective spaces of evidential information, but dynamic constructs which those with the authority to interpret have utilised in conjunction with the ambiguous status of the photograph, to create new subjective meanings.

Establishing this reveals that claiming and administering my Father's archive permits my own interpretation and artistic engagement of the archive. Whilst this chapter supports my claiming and control of the inherited photographic material of his archive, I will also acknowledge and examine how the choices of what has been recorded within archives operate a form of power of their own that can affect how subsequent interpretations are made.

Claiming the Archive

When I first approached my Father's archive of photographs in the summer of 2017, I had returned in with the hope of finding and assembling some kind of biographical account regarding his path into alcoholism. Photographs being so optically brilliant in visualising a past before my own, suggested that I could uncover some sort of neutral or objective factual narrative about his life. I was particularly certain of my endeavour, especially because there was such a vast amount of photographic material available in which to explore. However, even at the beginning of studying the archive, the vast number of photographs soon began to feel overwhelming. Some of the photographs would appear to confirm my assumptions about him, yet others would challenge them. Furthermore, each photograph even when appearing similar in content or composition, offered a plethora of different readings to be interpreted. Moreover, even focusing on one photograph over a period of time appeared to be a bewildering experience, and my interpretations of the photographs seemed to be in a state of flux. My readings would alter and change as I made an abundance of mental associations, connections and connotations concerning the photographs themselves and the depictions which they presented. Although extraordinary in their ability to present me with a brilliant visual representation of my Father and his life,

there seemed to be an endless amount of dissimilar and contradictory versions and interpretations of him. Accordingly, rather than demonstrating specific truths about my Father and explaining anything definitive about him through the photographs, the archive resisted his definition and as such he appeared more elusive, intangible and distant than he had been before approaching his archive. Despite this discouraging set back, this was an essential part of the process. What I recognised was that in every reading which occurred, there was only one person who was actively involved in interpreting the archive's content during these encounters. As the sole holder of my Father's private archive, the construction of my readings and interpretations were exclusively my own. Consequently, whilst this photographic archive could imply previously unrecognised aspects of my Father, I could also specifically claim and choose how to contextualise those photographs in order to address aspects of his addiction. Under these circumstances, the ability to control and define the content before me appeared to be a commanding position to be in.

In a Jacques Derrida's seminal 1994 lecture titled *The Concept of the Archive: A Freudian Impression*, Derrida delivered a thoroughly in-depth perspective into the construction of archives that has provided a significant contextual background in which to explore and claim my Father's archive. The transcribed book, *Archive Fever* (1998), remains a broad and profound insight into Derrida's contemplation of the similarities between archives and archiving, memory, and Freudian psychoanalysis. Derrida argued that just like the psychoanalyst, the historian or archivist attempts and aims to recover moments of beginnings or origins, in a way that we may be able to find some evidence of those beginnings, and of the truth. Through combining and paralleling Deconstruction methods and Freudian psychoanalytical theory, he redefined and transformed how we approach archives, uncovering what archives hide, and what is hidden. Fundamentally, Derrida specifically claims in *Archive Fever* that archives are a source and a location of power. He introduces his text locating the etymology of the word *archive*, expressing it indicates a historical relationship with authority as its foundation can be found in the Greek *Arkhé*, meaning commandment *and* commencement. Tracing and deconstructing the root of *Arkhé* further, Derrida rationalises that the meaning of the word *archive* as we know it today has its source in the Greek *arkheion*, which referred to a physical, private residence of the *archons*, or authoritative agents, where official documents were stored. These people

represented the law, and therefore were the individuals who held the power to govern, control and authorize access to reserved information. Thus, the word *archive* indicates a starting point, presumed at a fixed or confined location that involves an inclusion *and* exclusion, between who has access and who does not, between who has the right to enter and to interpret, and who does not. What Derrida uncovers here is that it is specifically the ability to access and interpret the information and create meaning which is the source of that power. This analysis reflects my own experience of entering and consuming my Father's archive. By inheriting the archive, I had gained access to a physical collection of information which in this case comprised predominantly of photographic material. Most importantly, what can be deduced is that my *inclusion* into my Father's archive, through its transfer of ownership and my access, reveals that I can claim the power and authority to govern the information within. By controlling the archived contents, I can considerably influence how the photographs within are interpreted and received by those who are *excluded* from the archival source. Nevertheless, whilst I may hold a powerful position as administrator of the archive to significantly influence their reception, the interpretation and meaning of those photographs still remains outside of my ultimate control.

However, despite the ostensible power that access to my Father's archive granted, Derrida's text also suggests that there are limitations to what can be ultimately deduced from this inheritance. As stated previously, I had approached the archive in an attempt to get closer to the memory of the man who had created the archive. I was searching for some 'truth' about my Father, and some accurate narrative account regarding his path into alcoholism through the archived contents. Yet, looking at the archive actually reveals that it is actually reflective of successive selections that is insufficient in producing an unimpaired record of my Father's thought processes and memory. Regardless of the archive's size, this illustrates that there are also boundaries to the information which could be ascertained. Derrida explores this by explicitly querying where the archive begins. He establishes that the whole human process from thought, to manifestation, to memorialising and archiving is a series of continual choices. The results of which are found accumulated within an archive. Derrida compares this to Freud's concept of the self-destructive nature of the death drive (or Thanatos), which opposes and counters Eros, stating that "it devours even before producing it on the outside" (Derrida, 1996, p. 10). What results is ultimately the paradox of archiving,

revealing that even from its inception, the 'act' of archiving is ultimately self-destructive, *anarchivic* or *archiviolithic*. The archive does not have the capacity of the human mind, of human memory, or have the ability to recall experience. All acts of archiving indicate a transition or translation from human mind and memory, to the stored external archive that ultimately leads to this loss. Loss consequently implies an absence and the essential inadequacy of archiving, revealing there is always an unknown precisely because it only displays what has been chosen to be recorded. Whilst this appeared in the first instance to be a detrimental restriction to finding truths about my Father, what this actually afforded me was the ability to significantly liberate my practice from being a simple retranslation of the photographs within the archive and primarily become a subjective interpretation of the archives content. This greatly expanded the potential of the archive now that it was within my possession.

Derrida expands further on this point by explaining that it is precisely the fear of loss and inadequacy of comprehensive memorising through archives which induces a feverous reaction of archival construction. This he describes as the *archive fever*. Our collection of documents, texts, objects, photographs is located in this fear or threat of loss, of forgetting. Without the possibility of loss, the drive could not exist, neither one can exist without the other. We desire to accumulate memory, to archive, to remember what is useful and enlightening or what can be painful or distressing. This indicates that although there is a loss, what is selected to be remembered is by design characteristically representative of the perspectives of those who constructed the archive. Individuals, groups, culture, history and even gender of whoever constructs an archive, mould them into one form or another. Subsequently, an archive is a collection of the marks, documents, photographs or artworks organised and stored in the act of archiving that represents explicit subjective choices. What has been stored within the archive is a fragmentary and incomplete reflection of my Father's reality. Yet, the choices made in its assembly and structure are a significant reflection of his own subjective choices of what he considered important to remember. This fundamentally frames what I could respond to. Consequently, although my interpretation of the fragments within the archive is by definition subjective, this also revealed another substantial power dynamic that had to be acknowledged.

Despite having the power to interpret the archive, what has been left to actually interpret by *him* is representative of an obscure, yet enduring power of its own. The photographs, from inception, creation and to repository within the archive specifically determines what I am able to interpret, implying that the archive actively has a role in moulding how I understand his recorded identity. This suggests that whilst I have the authority to determine interpretations of the archive, there are actually two powers at play which are mutually responsive. The collected content of archive primarily and clearly frames, alters and influences what I can engage with, yet I am able to choose what and how I respond to the contents. As such my Father's choices in what to photograph and remember fundamentally has a role in influencing my responses. This situates my engagement with his archive akin to a collaboration because of the archive's position within my practice.

Ernst van Alphen in *Staging the Archive* (2015) recognises these considerations, but also develops and expands this concept to include archival formation and organisation, arguing that it is "far from a neutral guardian" (van Alphen, 2015, p. 14) which further highlights the role and power archives have over those who access them. He affirms that rather than the archive being a collection of unbiased information, archives are in fact "active agents" (van Alphen, 2015, p. 14) that operate a shaping influence. To illustrate his point, he references the writing of Jeffrey Wallen's *Narrative Tensions: The Archive and the Eyewitness* (2009) which offers a compelling, yet extreme example of how the organisation of archives can shape social and personal identity. Wallen's case study of the Stasi archives in the former East Germany reveals that the methods in which the totalitarian state surveyed and fabricated the identities of dissenters actively generated the behaviours within those that it recorded upon their knowledge of their existence. Consequently, the identities which they ultimately exhibited had been actually created by the archival creation and organisation, and not only by the information collected within it. Although my Father's archival presence is much more subtle in its controlling influence, it does characterise how the formation and presence of a large archive containing that which he found important to remember becomes an influential and transformative factor in how I subsequently understand his identity. Therefore, what the presence of the archive informed me was that there must have been some aspect of his character which stimulated an intense desire to remember and reflect upon experiences and aspects of his life.

This is precisely what Derrida is referring to when he locates and defines *archive fever* as a fear or threat of loss and of forgetting. Archiving is a desperate attempt at remembering and fully experiencing truthful accounts of the past. Derrida explicitly therefore deems that *archive fever* also fundamentally points towards a future, of a drive to continually return to readdress the past. By returning, we hope to find new information, new meanings and create alternative interpretations. As such, engaging with archives concerns contemporary engagement, even though the articles documented within concern and point towards the past. Although archiving ultimately reveals a failure to accurately remember, recognising a desire to remember through the methods we conceive and on account of our accumulation, specifically indicates an intention to return and reinterpret the stored information at a future date. Derrida's analysis is significant because it also legitimizes and permits my return to and reinterpretation of my Father's archive as a result of its transfer of ownership. By engaging with the archive, I can release the potential of the archive to ascribe new interpretations and find contemporary meanings to its contents. Moreover, *archive fever* also describes continual archival creation and accumulation, of documenting, and of archival reactions and responses. This implies that the process does not only involve the interpretation of the archive, but actively promotes the creation and documentation of new responses and memories that are of a result of that archival engagement. These too can themselves be archived and possibly returned to at some point in the future which is reflective of a continuous desire to address our *archive fever*.

Entering the Archive

What Derrida's text indicated was that my search for a complete biographical account of my Father and his path into alcoholism through his archive would be inconclusive because of its subjective, fragmentary construction. Despite this however, the archive provided the capacity and opportunity to achieve my own subjective possibilities and outcomes rather than producing a transcription or reproduction of his archive. As a result, I was driven by my own *archive fever* to see everything that he had considered important to remember because it still represented an opportunity to re-experience and respond to him. Furthermore, seeing the archive in its entirety would provide the prospect to experience

new information and form new interpretations that challenged my subjective assumptions regarding his identity. Lastly, presenting the archive in its entirety would also emphasise that any subsequent use of his images was a subjective selection and reinterpretation by myself as an artist.

Consequently, I constructed a method to digitally record and archive each separate photographic document which totalled over 5,500 images shared between a large negative file, 8 photographic print boxes and 20 photographic slide boxes (Figure 1 – 3). Although there appeared to have been some attempt at organising the archive for the purposes of locating negatives for darkroom printing (the first 54 films in the negatives file have been numbered), as a whole the archive was largely unorganised. Accordingly, one of the first steps in entering the archive involved organising the bewildering mass of images into something that could be visually absorbed. This involved chronologically finishing off the numbering of the films within the negative file and numbering both the print and slide boxes sequentially as I had received them without any pre-existing order. As such, my authority over the archive from the very beginning left its own marks and influence upon how the archive was received that I considered another collaborative aspect.

I had chosen to record and organise the archive digitally because it would provide a much quicker way of accessing and returning to the archive for specific images rather than physically searching through page after page, or box after box of individual photographs (Figure 5). The methods in which I were to document the various photographic mediums would require a simple means in which I could find and return to individual photographs easily and quickly. The resulting procedure that was employed involved firstly digitally scanning the entire negative file (Figure 4) to produce contact sheets. This was quite a challenge, as not only were some of the negative strips cut for use in a photographic enlarger, but the different exposures of individual frames required at times specific editing so that the entire contact sheet could be observed as one at a later stage.

The second task I conducted involved filming a series of videos (Figure 6 & 7) of my own hands holding and passing through each photographic print from the 8 boxes. These films last approximately 12 minutes each and record my own first viewing of the photographic

prints exactly in the same order that they had been left in those boxes by my Father. Each photograph is taken from the box and placed for a few seconds in isolation on a white tabletop. Finally, the colour positive slides were organised similar to the photographic prints. The slides were loaded into a slide projector and filmed exactly as they were designed to have been viewed, projected in a darkened room onto a white background. Each slide projection is held in isolation for a number of seconds before the slide projector loads the next automatically (Figure 8). Each one of these videos lasts around 5 to 6 minutes.

Photographic Veracity & Interpreting the Photograph

Whilst the selective process of the archives construction was a subjective endeavour, the actual contents of my Father's archive were *photographs*. Accordingly, despite being limited with what documents I could respond to, I assumed that there was a possibility to find something truthful about my Father by appealing to the objectivity of the photograph. Since photography's inception, the photograph has been invested with the status of a truthful archival record. There has been a belief that the photograph possesses within its article, some element and confirmation of factual evidence, relating to its direct depiction of something that was in front of the camera, a referential link to the real. This realism has come to define the medium, singling it out from the previous, historical methods of image making. Mechanically reproducible ad infinitum, from either cellulose or digital file, the photograph positions itself as a genuine, archival document. Consequently, it has found its place within countless archives from the public to private, institutional to the personal because of this assumed connection to an objective truth. Okwui Enwezor states that because of photography's unique optical clarity, we appear to experience and logically deduce something unambiguous through looking at photographs, without authentically experiencing the original, direct sensory information, affirming that "the camera is literally an archiving machine, every photograph, every film is *a priori* an archival object" (Enwezor, 2007).

The unequivocal nature of the photograph has long been argued for and is clearly evident within the first commercially published book to include photographic prints, William Henry

Fox Talbot's *Pencil of Nature* (1844). The calotypes in the book range from illustrations of Parisian boulevards to haystacks, from Abbeys and to fruit. Accompanying these are numerous meditations about the potential uses and applications of this new scientific process of illustration. In one of the calotypes titled *Articles of China* in Part 1 of the series, four rows of finely crafted china are arranged neatly before the camera. In the accompanying notes to this photograph, Talbot ruminates that "should a thief afterwards purloin the treasures – if the mute testimony of the picture were to be produced against him in court – it would certainly be evidence of a novel kind" (Talbot, 1844, p. 19). What Talbot suggests here is that his new illustrative invention could directly produce a *visual* document of ownership which had not and indeed has not, been stated of any other illustration, drawing or painted portrayal. Talbot perceived that the photograph carried a special power of persuasion, arguing that the photograph is a genuine document which could sustain a truth or *mute testimony* precisely because of relationship to the real.

My Father presents an interesting understanding and clear appreciation of the documentary qualities the photograph can possess in transmitting a truth in an early photograph from within his negative file. Located within the 7th film within the file, there is a photograph which is very similar to Talbot's *Articles of China*. The photograph shows my Father in a bedroom presenting a very exhilarated face, sitting upon a chair (Figure 9). His arms are outstretched in an embracing manner above an assortment of magazines, bottles of alcohol and vinyl records in their sleeves. Referring to the film data sheet that references this film, frame number 7 is titled 'Lorraine in a Bun'. Visually, the content of the frame does not match up with the documented notes. However, looking again down the listed frames, the only inscription which could match the content would be the note made at frame 25. This is titled 'My Possessions'. By connecting the photograph to the assumed correct note, what can be concluded from this is that he was undoubtedly using a photograph to communicate a truth about his ownership of these objects. Additionally, positioning himself within the frame clearly points towards a direct association with the objects that strengthens his claim of ownership. This photograph strongly suggests that he was aware of the photographs referential link to the real, suggesting that he held confidence in the photograph's ability to document factual information. This is a significant discovery, because by placing his trust in photography to be a mechanism of the truth, to accurately and faithfully record, there is an

assumption that he would be able to return to the photograph in search or claim past truths. Consequently, this supports the argument that by creating and storing photographs within his archive, he was attempting to remember and store some element of truth regarding his past and his experiences. Therefore, by returning to his archive there was an opportunity to locate and revive some aspect of truth about my Father and his past through his photographs.

Against this background, although I would be subjectively reading the photographs, my interpretations and claims could be established from an element of the truth. Returning to the photograph, I re-examined it again in an attempt to discern additional factual information. Considering that the photograph was titled 'My Possessions', I could reasonably deduce that his ownership of these objects meant something significant or important to him because he had chosen to purchase or retain them. Furthermore, the fact that he had chosen to photograph them appears to be an ostentatious display of that ownership that he wished to either remember or share about his youth. The majority of the objects in the foreground of the image are of vinyl records, and alongside his wearing of headphones, this photograph could indicate that music was an important part of his personality at that time. Additionally, resting on the drawers towards the background of the image is a framed photograph of his first wife that appears to support the fact that this photograph contains significant emotional aspects of his life. However, what stood out and attracted my attention dramatically about this image, was the presence of the bottles of alcohol. If this was a photograph of what he owned and what he considered important to him, it poignantly occurred to me that alcohol and drinking even at a young age was a central feature of his life. Arriving at this conclusion triggered an emotional response that appeared to enlighten aspects of his identity and support a claim that the alcoholism that led to his death started at a young age. This photograph seemed to draw an ominous line from this moment in the past, through his life and my memories of him, to his ultimate passing.

In reality however, although these interpretations were initiated by the photograph's referential connection to the real, their deduced meanings were entirely subjective and reflective of the power I held over the archive to interpret what the photograph meant.

Ultimately, the 'truth' and understanding of what the image referenced was fundamentally situated from my own unique personal perspective and relationship with my Father. This is one of the central concepts that Roland Barthes discusses in Part II of his deeply personal book *Camera Lucida* (2000) which scrutinizes his own emotional response to a photograph of his mother as a young girl. The photograph, which is well known as the *Winter Garden Photograph*, powerfully and emotionally affects Barthes, stating that it allows him to rediscover his Mother and presents him with "the truth of the face I had loved" (Barthes, 2000, p. 67). Most significantly, Barthes chooses not to present this photograph within the book, stating:

I cannot reproduce the Winter Garden Photograph. It exists only for me. For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of the 'ordinary' (Barthes, 2000, p. 73)

Barthes is claiming here that the 'truth' and meaning of *Winter Garden Photograph* could only have been produced by him. Therefore, this photograph of his Mother can only emotionally affect and touch him because of his direct and close relationship with his Mother. For us this 'truth' could not have been located and is his reason for not revealing the photograph. It may stir our *studium*, an interest to read and study the coded cultural elements of the photograph. However, there would be no *punctum*, no element that would stand out and personally or emotionally prick us which would fundamentally alter the reading of the image. As such, the 'truth' that I interpreted from the photograph of my Father with his possessions is wholly personal to me. The photograph takes upon a new meaning that is distinct from others, and indeed those of my Father's intended ones. This denies the idea of a neutral observer and reveals that there cannot be a core or essential 'truth' within a photograph. Although the image of my Father with his possessions referenced within the confines the frame indeed must have had their source within the real, Barthes determines that the elemental "noeme of Photography is simple, banal; no depth: 'that has been'" (Barthes, 2000, p. 115). The photograph only presents us with a description of what was in front of the lens, revealing that the interpretation, meaning or 'truth' of what the photograph displays essentially originates from outside its frame and within the viewer.

Correspondingly because photographs are tightly bound to the purely descriptive, historically many photographers have used methods of subtle manipulation to accurately document, describe and increase their communicative effect. Paradoxically, such endeavours have actually subverted the objectivity of the photograph to communicate a truth. Joan Fontcuberta's essay *Documentary Fictions* (2014) describes how even at the genesis of photography, Louis Daguerre introduces ambiguity into the photographic document. The Daguerreotypes taken in 1838 of the *Boulevard du Temple* in Paris (that were subsequently used to demonstrate his process) included actors within the scene so that the slow reaction times of the early chemicals could be overcome. The early process that Daguerre had invented meant that the technology could only 'see' that which remained motionless. Without the actors, one of Paris's busiest streets would be totally empty of people and appear lifeless. This would be in stark contrast to what the people of Paris would be accustomed to, and therefore contradict the reality which it was intended to display. Fontcuberta explains that "it is only by cheating that we can achieve a certain truth" (Fontcuberta, 2014, p. 108) suggesting that it is only through creating something 'false' that we can come close to creating something which we perceive to be real and true. Ultimately, this example introduces uncertainty, and illustrates that we must also question the 'that has been' of what was in front of the camera.

We cannot therefore argue that photographs can be true recordings of facts because there will always be the intervention of the photographer to consider. However, this still does not declare that photographs are entirely fictional, without any connection or relationship to the real world. There remains an enduring referential link to *something* that was in front of the camera. Throughout the history of philosophy, there has been a tension between fiction masquerading as the truth, and therefore theoretically always misleading. Yet on the other hand, all fictions conceived must have their basis in reality, consequently comprising some measure of truth. This tension reveals that documenting and communicating something which is considered true will always contain some measure of both fact and fiction. All photographs consequently rest on a sliding scale between pure fiction, and pure fact, at no time reaching one end of the scale or the other; neither fact nor fiction, reality nor fantasy.

A photograph entitled 'Maddens' (Figure 10) from my Father's archive poignantly illustrates the points raised by Fontcuberta. Taken in January 1977, the photograph frames the shop front of Madden and Sons funeral directors in Leeds. The shop front is as gloomy and bleak as you might expect from a funeral director. Initially, I was attracted to this photograph because of its macabre nature in relation to my Father's passing. Vaguely in the reflection of the shop window, my Father's ghostly form stands looking through the lens of his SLR camera taking the photograph. The photograph appeared to me to be a prophetic image of his future and relationship with alcohol, and painfully reminded me of his enduring absence. Scanning the image full resolution and looking closer at the reflection, I realised that the subject he was recording is the demolition of the Leeds Quarry Hill flats. This affected me to reconsider my initial, subjective reading and meaning of the image. The flats completed in 1938, were initially viewed as a triumph of social housing and internationally renowned. However, it was not long before the experimental building techniques tested on this housing scheme caused problems and resulted in costly maintenance. As a result, the site was designated for gradual demolition in 1973, less than 40 years after its inception (Ellis, 2017). The way the demolition has been photographed, utilising a reflection rather than a direct view of the buildings subtly interrupts the principle that the camera captures a direct referential truth of what was in front of the lens. This introduces doubt into the scene captured, as it points towards the intervention of my Father as the photographer to construct and influence the resulting image made. Significantly however, photographing the scene in this way not only expresses my Father's perspective, but it attaches human emotion and mourning to a lifeless building that is made out of bricks and mortar. We do not actually identify that the buildings have 'died', but it enriches and echoes many contemporary sentiments of the time that the flats had been popular, and the community would be missed (Hutchinson, 2019). Photographing the demolition in the reflection of a funeral director's window helps transmit a heightened degree of truth about the emotional facts of the time. As such, the 'Maddens' photograph transmits a story, describes a narrative and expresses an emotion, demonstrating that the photograph can both be a document and an aesthetic communicative image, both "registration and writing" (Fontcuberta, 2014, p. 110). Accordingly, whilst still appearing to be tightly shackled to the descriptive, photographs are engaged with the fictional and imaginative specifically as a means to illustrate and document factual and often elusive nuances. Fontcuberta positions such

artistic license as *artistic fictions*, which are opposed to both pure truth and pure fiction, which allows us to believe, consider, engage and invest our imagination within the scene presented as a method to communicate.

The Archived Photograph & Power

To engage with the creative and imaginative elements of my Father's photographs, there must be an understanding that what the photograph describes can represent an idea and go beyond what is exhibited. Yet by recognising this, we must question how photographs establish their meaning. Framing much of his work towards providing a critique of the structures and systems of advanced capitalism, American photographer and theorist Allan Sekula discussed extensively on the way photographs are made and how they are experienced. His writing has been key in understanding the relationships between photography and archives, providing an illuminating background for my engagement and use of my Father's archive.

In his essay *On the Invention of Photographic Meaning* (1982), he asserts that photographs do not possess a core or essential truth. Instead, he argues that the meaning of photographs is profoundly shaped by the culture and context in which it is received. Sekula states that in the case of western capitalist society, photography is used to express a particular point of view, represent an interest or to impress and persuade. Accordingly, photographs are transmitted with a level of authority. As a result, photographic discourse is laden with predefined, demarcated denotation that has a specific cultural definition essential to creating meaning. Photographs are a "token of exchange" (Sekula, 1982, p. 85), rhetorical messages intended to be interpreted. However, we must first be told that a photograph can be read and that a message can be understood from viewing these objects. Our photographic literacy, the ability to understand shapes and forms represented on a two-dimensional paper object, is learnt through linguistic methods which indicates that the boundaries to their meaning are defined by their specific culture. Accordingly, photographic discourse is a communication of signs that are conversed not only by the impressions seen, but by the implied meanings they represent. In this respect, the communication within photographic discourse is therefore predetermined and fundamentally formed by the

culture and context in which it exists. Photographic discourse, shaped and defined by the culture that consumes it, be that political or cultural, exposes the fact that photographic meaning cannot be universal but is defined and supported by the context in which the photograph is placed. This demonstrates that there is no independent, singular language within photography, suggesting that photographic meaning is ambiguous, fluid and changeable depending on the context which is viewed.

As a result, those with control of photographs from archives have utilised and adapted images into new contexts, transforming their meaning to represent particular interests. Sekula's essay *The Body and the Archive* (1986) extensively explores this relationship, affirming that photographic archives have been, and indeed are, fundamentally tied to concepts of power that has permeated through society. He argues that those with the authority to interpret and contextualise archives have the means to shape how photographs are received, and therefore what they mean. To demonstrate this, Sekula explores the historically evident state administrative work of Alphonse Bertillion and Sir Francis Galton, who utilised their control of photographs within archives in the 19th Century to categorize citizens into specific types and socio-economic classes. The ability to contextualize and create the meaning of the photographs within those archives allowed them to control how those people were received and understood (in this case as either criminals, undesirables or social outcasts). This is reflective of the then current and dominant hierarchies of power. These examples may appear far removed from my Father's archive, as its construction and apparent use does not indicate any connection to official or dominant structures of power. Significantly however, it is the transfer of ownership of the archive into my administration that is reflective of the relationship to power that Sekula discusses. Having the authority over how the photographs are contextualised can significantly transform how my Father is received and therefore understood that is characteristic of how archives are tied to concepts of power. Sekula's essay *Reading an Archive* (2003) portrays this process eloquently, describing archives as the "clearing house of meaning" (Sekula, 2003, p. 445). In a transfer of ownership, the once specific, original meanings, connotations and associations of archives can become released from their shackles. In the hands of a new owner therefore, new interpretations, applications and functions can be initiated.

As stated previously in this chapter, whilst possessing the overall power to subjectively interpret the archive, what had been left to interpret and how within the archive was representative of an enduring contextualising power of its own. Consequently, working through the archive and viewing the photographic contents was a mutually influential experience. As a result, as I slowly considered the archive, first during the process of digitisation, and then eventually as a whole, how I contextualised the archive and regarded my Father fundamentally changed. I had first approached the archive in a moment of grieving and as a search for answers regarding his path into alcoholism. From this perspective, whilst still digitising the archive, my attention was specifically drawn to the many photographs which included alcohol in some way shape or form within the frame. There were numerous photographs of the inside and outside of public houses, pub culture and still life photographs of alcohol bottles (Figure 12). Furthermore, I noticed an interesting idiosyncrasy within these types of photographs. There were frequent self-portraits of himself in the process of enjoying a drink, either within public houses, in derelict factories or in the countryside (Figure 13). These self-portraits mostly do not include anyone else within the frame, suggesting an introverted nature or seclusion, isolation, or even loneliness. These photographs seemed to support my assumptions that his alcoholism could be pinpointed to an early period of his life, that it had been predestined, or fated.

However, by going through this process I realised that I had begun to disregard many other photographs from the archive. My emotional predisposition had considerably framed how I perceived the archive which I eventually found to be restrictive to exploring my Father. Once I had digitised the entire archive of photographic negatives, slides and prints, I decided to return to the beginning and attempt to examine the archive holistically. Beginning at the earliest dated material, which was the negative file, I began to look at the content of these photographs. What I found in these negatives appeared to contradict my assumptions that my Father was introverted, lonely or frequently inebriated. In many instances, the photographs that make up these early photographs from the archive could be positioned within the tradition of family photography as they focus heavily on members of his close family and his friends.

Richard Chalfen's *Snapshot Versions of Life* (2008) provides a comprehensive insight into this type of photography, concluding that family photography is dominated by showing happy occasions and the family unit in a state of happiness. These photographs perpetuate a narrative of “conspicuous success, personal progress, and general happiness” (Chalfen, 2008, p. 99) and focus on documenting birthdays, proms and formals, weddings, holidays away, birthdays and Christmas meals that amounts to a habitual documentation of rituals. As a result of these consistent and limiting themes, family photography frequently appears repetitive. David Halle’s investigation in *Inside Culture, Art and Class in the American Home* (1993) deduces that the repetition is a clear primary aspiration to illustrate the family as a close-knit entity, suggesting that the practice of family photography is the desire to display stable happiness and represent the “closeness of the nuclear family” (Halle, 1993, p. 111). Conversely, seldom are there photographs of unhappy times; divorce, the passing of a loved one or a family pet for example. Customarily eliminated are scenes of the everyday and the ordinary. Family photography is unlikely to include photographs of people doing the dishes, or putting out the washing, getting ready for work or using a telephone. Such images of the everyday appear to contrast heavily with the content of the majority of family photography, to an extent that they are likely to appear erroneous inclusions (Chalfen, 2008). Lastly, the manner in which family snapshots are taken and produced is frequently and typically of a modest quality. The images in a family photographic collection will often portray scenes that are captured with little evidence of technical knowledge. The images often display uneven framing, under or over exposed scenes, harsh on-camera flash (with corresponding subject red-eye) and the all-common inclusion of the photographer’s thumb.

Returning to the beginning of the negative file provided an abundance of photographs captured in this well-defined style and offered evidence that there may have been a desire to create this common and recognisable family narrative (Figure 14). There existed photographs such as his younger brother outside the family home smiling, but with eyes closed. A dimly lit, poorly exposed image of my Father’s parents hosting a party. My Father’s grandparents standing together smiling outside of their home. A photograph of the family opening Christmas presents on Christmas day, excluding one half of my Grandfather from the frame. A close friend’s wedding on a bright day. My Father’s first wife’s family outside a pub, lined up and smiling before the camera. A new addition to the family (my uncle), with

bright flash overexposing a quarter of the scene. A family photograph outside in the garden with a large negative space present on the right-hand side. My Father's parents, smiling before the camera, lit by front facing flash. All of these photographs appeared to indicate that my Father conformed to these conventions of vernacular photography, which contextualised my early re-examination into his archive.

Sekula's writing in *The Body and the Archive* (1986) additionally provides an illuminating reflection on the practice of vernacular photography, significantly linking its conventions to a concealed form of social control. Sekula explains how photographic representation has developed within parallel systems of use, serving dual albeit obscured functions within society. The introduction and means to create cheap portraits in the 19th Century opened up photography to the masses, providing illustrative representations of loved ones at a time of mass migration, social mobility, social upheaval and relatively high rate of mortality. As a result, there has been a broad abundance of photographic consumption across social spectrums. Yet as generous as this democratisation appeared, those higher up in society recognised the potential in utilising photography as a force to innately improve social cohesion and control. A populous well accustomed to practicing photography and literate in the medium would additionally acknowledge and consume popular images of exemplary individuals. These in turn would act as an 'ideal type' for the masses. Meanwhile, photographs produced by the police and authorities of the state depicting a subclass of convicted offenders, would similarly produce the same effect with the additional benefit of inducting the public into assisting the state. In this sense, photography "welded the honorific and repressive functions together" (Sekula, 1986 p. 10) that has helped re-enforce class structures. As a result, citizens subliminally place themselves within a scale between the underbelly of society and the upper classes. Sekula calls this the *shadow archive*, a wider cultural archive in which members of society recognised their social or political status, whilst endeavouring to attain society's paradigm of the 'ideal type' which is embodied within the practice vernacular photography. On the other hand, the *shadow archive* operates to socially ostracise and control those who fail to comply, or who sit outside of the accepted social conventions.

Significantly as I progressed further into the archive, his practice clearly and progressively diverted away from the conventions of family photography. Entwined between the photographs of new-borns, family Christmases and weddings were photographs of adults alone, and photographs of people conducting everyday activities such as drinking tea at work or attempting to push start a car. There were photographs of people watching air shows, children playing in pub beer gardens, and my grandmother playing bingo. (Figure 15) This focus on using the camera for something else other than a ritual documentation of the family becomes more predominant as his time utilising the camera progresses. There is an obvious impulse to capturing everyday casual observations. Furthermore, reviewing the videos of the photographic prints that he had made from the negative file, there totals 84 hand printed darkroom prints of many varied self-portraits (Figures 16 – 17), and many more within the negative file that have not been printed. Some of these portraits are particularly abstract, such as double exposure frames and one of his own broken toe (Figure 18). It was only by digitising and viewing the full archive that I was able to arrive at a comprehensive evaluation of what the focus of my Father's photographic gaze was predominantly concerned with. As a result, contextualising the archive within the confines of family photography appeared limiting. My Father was clearly engaging with photography in more multifaceted way that rejects or ignores the influence of the *shadow archive*. Consequently, I began to focus on these types of photographs.

A defining moment in contextualising the archive as a whole occurred when I came across a *second* photograph of the Madden and Sons funeral directors in Leeds (Figure 11). This photograph was also titled '*Maddens*' in the negative file data sheet, but this one was taken a few months later and dated April 1977. These two photographs were composed almost identically, with my Father standing in front of the shop front, filling the frame with the funeral director's window. Scanning this photograph to full resolution and again looking further into the reflection, I was once again confronted with the ghostly apparition of my Father that pointed towards his future fate and passing. This time, seeking add to my subjective readings in relation to my personal relationship with my Father, I began to concentrate more on the subject matter of the photograph. Whilst I had already recognised that this photograph did indeed capture the demolition of Quarry Hill flats in Leeds that was able to narrate and communicate a story about its demise, I had at the time considered it an

exception and an unplanned photograph that deviated from the majority. My contextualization of the wider archive had diverted my attention away from scrutinising such images further. Happening upon this second photograph fundamentally changed how I considered my Father's approach to photography. By returning to photograph this same scene three months later, he is able to document the progression of the demolition. This photograph provides evidence of a specific intent to return to this scene and to record a passing of time. These photographs taken by my Father seemed to emulate the work of Charles Marville, who as Locke (2019) depicts had been employed in the early 1860's to document the old winding medieval streets and buildings of Paris before their approaching destruction during the city-wide modernisation plan. Whilst Marville's employer was perhaps more inclined to detail the contrast between the old to the envisaged new, both examples provide a clear illustration of the photograph's function as a document of what has come to pass and a document of time. Photographs such as the Madden images presented evidence that my Father desired to communicate some form of sign or message regarding the rise and fall of this iconic complex of buildings using photography. Although I could not be sure if these photographs, displaying an apparent appreciation of Photography's relationship to time point towards a definitive understanding of this relationship, from my own perspective as a viewer of his archive this marked a substantial moment. Encountering these photographs alongside the photographs of the everyday, completely recontextualised how I viewed the archive. Thereafter I began to consider an aesthetic engagement with the archive, regarding my Father as someone who endeavoured to manifest an authored artistic expression with his photographs.

In this context, I began to regard my Father's self-portrait photographs from this new perspective. One of the portraits in particular appeared to stand out. This untitled photograph (Figure 19) presents my Father alone, smoking a cigarette and sat topless in the 'Weldon Family Chair' (an heirloom that is still in our family) in a fairly featureless bedroom. This photograph appeared to be totally removed from the conventions of family photography. It neither presents smiling faces or signs of personal progress. In the photograph, his gaze is fixed in an almost rebellious or defiant way that is directed straight towards the camera's lens as he takes a smoke on the cigarette. The gaze entices us to stare straight back towards him as he enjoys the hedonistic sensation of smoke filling his lungs

and nicotine running into his veins. The lack of clothing upon his top half appears to ignore any need to be seen as a 'desirable' member of society. Instead, it suggests that by baring all, he wished to express or remember himself exactly and truthfully as he was in that moment. My interpretation of this rebellious nature in this photograph indicates a personal abandonment of the accepted conventions of how someone of his class should practice photography. Yet what is more, rather than simply being a passive rejection, this performance appears to be an active endeavour to break away from the social constraints imposed upon him by his class, and by the influence of the wider *shadow archive*.

As stated, it has been only by digitising and viewing the whole archive that I was able to arrive at such conclusions. A major focus of my Father's practice of photography appears to have been engaged in reflecting on, expressing, exploring and engaging with aspects of self as typified through the many direct and abstract self-portraits within the archive. Yet, the archive also documents the environment and culture that surrounds and must have moulded his perspective on the world. Despite the fact that I will never truly know the specific reasons and motivations behind the creation of his archive, there is considerable evidence here that my Father had aspiration to engage with photography as an artist, with his own original voice. As a result, this directs me towards pursuing an artistic engagement of my Father's archive that elevates and contextualises him as a 'hidden artist'. This allows me to celebrate his photographs for their unseen aesthetic qualities and utilise them for my own subjective motives and photographic responses.

Dialogue & Collaboration within the Photographic Archive

Continuing the concept discussed in the previous chapter, that my engagement with my Father's archive involves a complex and mutually responsive power dynamic, this subsequent text documents the evolving dialogue which occurred through investigating the material evidence of the archive. Through an expanded dialogue with the archive's materiality alongside the image content, my understanding of the archive claims that my Father endeavoured to break away from the influence and control of Sekula's notion of the *shadow archive* to form his own authored expression which was not fully realised. This text embraces the concept that my interpretation of the archive is deeply subjective. Yet, it further asserts that those re-interpretations are also inherently informed and affected by the physical composition of the archive in conjunction with photograph's relationship to the truth. Contextualising my Father as a 'hidden artist' not only allows for an explorative celebration of my Father's individual vision, but it permits my own aesthetic responses to the contents to create new narratives. Whilst the use of photographs from the archive may be considered a purely appropriative act, I will argue that responding to, and reinterpreting the archival contents left by my Father is intrinsically collaborative and produces a form of co-authorship.

Considerations of Materiality

One of the defining aspects of my Father's archive is that it exists as a series of physical, tangible artefacts. My Father had been well known in our family as someone who was not an accumulator of material objects, and therefore approaching this archive inevitably held a certain amount of significance. These *photographic* objects must have had a degree of importance for my Father to have retained and conserved them for many years. I had been well accustomed to the easily accessible, large collection of physical family albums that resided within the communal spaces of the family home. These photographs documented our life as a family, and were sporadically explored by myself, or by other members of the family either individually or as a group. The personal archive of my Father's however was quite different. Although I had been aware of its existence, the images within were not something that my Father had chosen to discuss or share, apart from the occasional

photograph. They did not rest in a space within the family home that could be easily accessed, nor could they be accidentally stumbled upon. Instead, they rested concealed and out of reach within the loft, slowly gathering a fine dust whilst they rested on their shelves during the intervening years. Indeed, even gaining entry to the loft was in itself a difficult task, as the step ladders did not reach the top of the small entry hole. This meant that entry was only possible if you were strong enough to hoist yourself up with your arms, and exit meant perilously dangling your legs down to the top of the step ladder, forever conscious not to knock them over. This collection of photographs was clearly separate from the reach of daily family business, which appeared, even at the early stages, to suggest a differentiation between the customs of practiced family photography. Approaching this uninterpreted 'unknown' and deeply private archive had been a daunting experience. Yet, the collection had radiated a seductive latent potential that demanded exploration precisely because it had been hidden and was physically difficult to access.

It is often the case that the image content of photographs is what initially attracts us to the medium. Furthermore, it is those visual impressions which most regularly motivate the consumption of images through creation, purchase or collection. Indeed, as stated in the previous chapter, my first step in entering my Father's archive was to digitise its entirety so that the *visual* content could be absorbed and analysed. Focusing on this content, I had concluded that there was a strong indication that my Father held an aspiration to engage with photography as an artist, expressing his own particular authored vision. However, in my rush to explore my Father's vision, I had inadvertently disregarded the physical experience of finding the archive in its tangible form. What can be stated, is that *photographs* and other physical photographic articles, are fundamentally three-dimensional objects that importantly provide and support context. The materiality of the archive, sitting there upon the shelves gathering dust in the darkness of my parents' loft, not only provided a unique experience in physically approaching it, but it provided a particular context and method of visual communication.

In *Photographs Objects Histories* (2004), Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart specifically focus on the materiality of photographs, arguing that photographs must be considered both images and physical objects if we are to holistically interpret photographs. Edwards and

Hart call attention to the fact that typically when we look at photographs, we consume them in “one visual act” (Edwards & Hart, 2004, p. 2), frequently disregarding and relegating the materiality of the object to a mere container of an image. Yet, as physical, tactile, objects, photographs inherently bear the traces of an abundance of subjective authored choices in their production, presentation and archival storage that can be just as illuminating to creating meaning as the photograph’s image content. Intimately and mutually entwined, photographs act as both images and objects that complete one another. Edwards and Hart comment on the materiality of the medium accordingly:

...photographs exist materially in the world, as chemical deposits on paper, as images mounted on a multitude of different sized, shaped, coloured, and decorated cards, as subject to additions to their surface or as drawing their meanings from presentation forms such as frames and albums.

(Edwards and Hart, 2004, p. 1)

As a consequence, the differing methods in materiality have a direct impact when engaging with the archive. This provides a sensuous experience to locate the author, in this case, my Father. Whilst image content remains absolutely integral to photography, the material aspects of the archive held the potential for further information and evidence about my Father’s clandestine photographic practice. Accordingly, the material nature of the archive was an important consideration because how he had formed and stored the archive appeared reflective of Ernst van Alphen’s concept of the archive being an *active agent* in shaping meaning. This evidence ascertained could significantly influence, contribute and enrich to how I engage with the archive.

Thus, whilst the digitisation of visual content of the archive had appeared to be a direct, neutral translation and practical means to access the visual content, in practice this approach had managed to suppress significant aspects of the archive. Digitising the archive, rather than duplicating or reproducing the archive in digital form, had fundamentally altered how my engagement with the archive was conducted. This ‘digital archive’, despite being an efficient and invaluable means to access the visual content of the physical archive, actually existed as a separate entity that I had created. Rather than directly interacting with the

physical archive itself, I had been in fact engaging with a newly created digital translation of the archive that had lost context and additional points of engagement. *Photographic Materiality in the Age of Digital Reproduction* (2004) by Joanna Sassoon explores digitisation within institutional environments, questioning what is altered and lost when digitising original, physical photographic archives. Sassoon states that by digitising photographs:

... what were once three-dimensional physical objects become one-dimensional and intangible digital surrogates, with the tactility and materiality of the original object being reduced to both an ephemeral and an ethereal state.
(Sassoon, 2004, p. 200)

Whilst many institutions are driven to digitising their collections so that delicate or sensitive material is accessible to a wide audience, Sassoon expresses that it is predominantly only the image content that is made available. As a result, despite the apparent democratic access that this permits to previously restricted items, the administration over such archives is in reality representative of their institutional control. Whilst image content is made available, the original materiality and important context is suppressed. This control is further realised in the way institutions decide which photographs are chosen, how they are altered or aesthetically adjusted through digitisation, and in what order they are presented. Those not chosen for these new collections Sassoon argues “effectively disappear” (Sassoon, 2004, p. 205). This translation and re-organisation becomes a re-contextualisation of the original archives as the institutions provide their own meaning to the photographs. This process alters and transforms the original meanings of the archive to conform to the motivations and biases of the collector which is representative of Sekula’s concept of the “clearing house of meaning”. As a result of this transformative process, Sassoon suggests that the “fidelity and authenticity of digital images are open to question” (Sassoon, 2004, p. 200) and argues that digitisation is “limiting understandings of photographs to their being an aesthetic medium rather than a document of evidence” (Sassoon, 2004, p. 201).

My digitisation of my Father’s archive had not taken place within an established institution intended for wider public access. Yet, what my initial intervention and focus on the digitised image content during my early stages of research shows is that I had restricted my own

access to a primary source of information that had inadvertently filtered out the many material qualities of the archive. This evidence was something that I could significantly utilise to inform my engagement with the archive. Furthermore, in my effort to visually consume the content, I had imposed an order onto his archive that did not originally exist. Both the print and the photographic slide boxes had no original sequential order imposed upon them, and the negative folder, although ordered to a point, required additional ordering. By organising and numbering these items in my process of claiming the archive, I consequently made my own marks with my intervention that transformed the archive. That being said, I did seek to maintain the original order of the photographic content before documentation to preserve some original arrangement left by my Father. Digitising the archive in its entirety and considering all images equally provided additional means of archival preservation. Most importantly however, the methods by which I conducted the digitisation did assist as a significant reminder to the original, physical archive that served as important reference when using the interpreted digital version. Each film from the negative file which was digitised is a contact sheet rather than individually scanned images. This means that the film strips are visualised and references the medium which the images are contained within, with minimum (albeit standardising) aesthetic enhancement. The series of videos which document both the photographic prints and the photographic slides, attempts to mimic how one would interact with this physical medium. The former captures footage of the prints physically passing through my hands, whilst the latter records a physical slide show. Both of these videos are accompanied with high quality WAV audio (Figure 6) which endeavours to promote a similar sensory experience and place the viewer into this physical interaction with the original archive. Consequently, although I had initially overlooked and suppressed the materiality of my Father's archive, realising its importance meant that the separate digital archive could function as an important reference, whilst the original physical archive remained the primary focus of the engagement. In this way, I could both regard and make initial encounters with the aesthetic qualities of the photographs, and also return to access the original material qualities and aesthetic vision of the archive as an important site of research as a document of evidence of its creation.

Focusing therefore on the materiality of the archive, Edwards and Hart identify three key interrelated elements which were subsequently employed to engage with the archive. The

first consideration refers to the physical properties concerning the construction or *plasticity* of the photograph. This may refer to the choices in chemicals or inks used, the surfaces used to imprint the image upon, and the resulting variations in tone and texture. The second element concerns the means in which a photograph has been *presented* or found within, such as if they have been collected within a box, mounted and framed, glued into albums or sent as postcards. Edwards and Hart specify that the technical methods of production, the physical materials used, and the setting in which a photograph is presented is rarely coincidental or accidental. These will often suggest affective decisions, intention and personal significances. Finally, the last element is the evidence of *physical use and time* that mark and signify a range of social uses. Whether passed around between family and friends, or stored and affixed within archival presentation cabinets, photographic objects are uniquely tied to the social and cultural practices that continually leave the evidence of interactions. Existing within the world since their construction, any marks, imprints or impressions upon the photographs surface from the archive which are not clearly a part of the original printing of the photograph, point towards how his archive served a personal as well as a social purpose. These may appear as marks of decay, signalling that these photographs may have been discarded and long forgotten, or there may be signs indicating that they have been suddenly recycled and redeployed once again within new contexts.

Evidence of the Author within the Materiality

Using the ideas highlighted by Edwards and Hart and investigating the material evidence of the archive, I propose that these elements further indicate a conceivable, unfulfilled aspiration of my Father to pursue photography within an artistic discourse. What I began to find through this dialogue with the archive fundamentally altered how I had previously regarded him and drastically differed from my initial intentions of approaching the archive to find historical photographic confirmation of my Father's fall into alcohol addiction. This appeared to be representative of the enduring power of the archival composition and assembly in influencing my responses. Alongside the visual content of the photographs that appeared to reject Allan Sekula's notion of the *shadow archive* (Figures 10, 11, 19), the research conducted here into the material evidence appeared to provide further support for my evolving perceptions regarding my Father as a private and surreptitious 'hidden artist'.

The first category of the archive that I re-approached was the folder of photographic negatives (Figure 1). This folder constituted the largest portion of the archive, and therefore represented a significant site of material exploration. The folder is a large, grey ring bound folder, that has not been specifically designed to hold photographic negatives. As a result, the negative sleeves protrude roughly 4cm away from the edges of the folder and have been badly worn over the years (Figure 20). Whilst the poor choice of archival container for the negatives suggests a functional and less professional means of storage, the fact that he has retained a folder of negatives (as well as the prints) indicates and characterises Derrida's *archive fever*; a fear of losing or forgetting aspects of the past. The negatives represent the original exposure, and therefore a primary source of information which can be returned to, to readdress and create new reinterpreted images. Having the ability to control the visual output of those images specifically points towards the ability to create numerous individual and authored forms of communication. In addition, opening up the folder reveals more than just the negatives within their sleeves, as the first pages within the folder consist of 6 double sided, yellowing film data sheets (Figure 21 & 22). The pages have space in which to enter the date, film number and frame content. These data sheets indicate and further support my Father's possible intentions to return to the archive at a later date to produce alternative iterations of the same photographs. The amount of information entered into these data sheets suggests an irregular amount of commitment to this documentation. Instead, he opts to describe the general contents of the film such as the location, and then draw a curved arrow line down through the space to indicate its common content (Figure 23). In spite of this, there are some instances (15% of the total) in which he *does* fill in a large part of the films content, with nearly every frame detailed. Nevertheless, even when many frames have been documented, each line has space for no more than 3 to 4 words in length. Some of these entries happen to be surprisingly lyrical and poetic, conjuring up captivating scenes despite their short length. There are entries such as 'Me Running Through Mist', 'Sun Worshipping' and 'Americanisation', that appear as flashes of some form of vision, concept, or intension to their creation and later development. Interestingly however, despite there being 126 films within the folder, there are only enough of these data sheets to chronicle up to the 54th roll of film (dated May 1977). After this film roll, there is no further documentation of this kind, either indicating a changing means of

photographic production, intention or reasons to return. Whilst I cannot be certain of the reason, my subjective interpretation of this as the owner of the archive suggests that it may have been a degree of acceptance of the fact that he would not attain the recognition for his photographs that he wished.

Moving past the film data sheets leads to the photographic negatives. As stated, the entire folder contains 126 films within the negative sleeves. Despite the rippling and the worn edges, the inside of the pages are of good condition apart from a slight yellowing. There is certainly no evidence of major harm to the archive, such as mould that suggests they have been considered important enough to be retained in good order. The only other marks to these sheets are the numbers that correspond to the film data pages, and an enlargement of the data sheet binder holes (Figure 24). These have been enlarged to quite an extent in some case, with some of the holes having been torn and subsequently repaired with masking tape. Furthermore, there are frequent small tears at the site in which the films are inserted and removed from their sleeves (Figure 25). This indicates that this was not merely a matter of retention, but this folder was in frequent active use within his home darkroom (Figure 26). All of these films have been taken on 35mm film, evidently with the use of a 35mm camera either that be an SLR or rangefinder camera. Monochrome negative film represents the majority of the type of film used (95 films / ~75%), with a smaller amount (31 films / ~25%) having been taken with colour negative film. This is an interesting discovery, as the choice my Father took in deciding which film to use for his photograph's further points towards an authored and creative photographic aspiration.

Although colour positive films such as Kodachrome and Agfacolor, and colour negative films such as Kodacolor had been introduced in the late 1930's and early 1940's respectively, it was only after the Second World War that colour photography began to grow in popularity. Prior to their introduction, monochrome photography had dominated the medium at all levels of use from amateurs to professionals. For this reason, the medium had become defined through the use of monochrome film. Most of the celebrated photographs of the early and middle 20th Century, such as Alfred Stieglitz, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Ansel Adams, Bill Brandt and Edward Weston all used monochrome. However, by the beginning of the 1950's, colour photography began to become more widespread, particularly within

commercial and advertising, in part because the film provided appealing and vivid colours for prints. Positive film also proved popular and was extensively used by amateurs. However, because of its limited exposure latitude it proved difficult to use for those without the correct knowledge. Colour negative film on the other hand, whilst having more subdued colours was easier to use because of its extended exposure latitude. As such, colour negative film provided a more reliable and fool-proof medium for amateurs who would be capable of producing a high yield of acceptable colour photographs. Accordingly, by the 1960's it was colour negative film, rather than colour positive film that became "the popular medium for amateur colour reflection prints" (Hunt, 1965, p. 482). Nevertheless, even though colour film was accessible to many people in the mid 1960's, it remained expensive compared to black and white film until the beginning of the 1970's. Fisher (2019) traces this change in financial accessibility and use within the amateur market through researching Gratispool, one of the UK's leading photographic film processing companies of the time. He states that upon colour negative photography's general introduction in the 1950's, the cost for a roll of 35mm film and its development was approximately 13 times more expensive than monochrome. Although the cost began to drop by the beginning of the 1960's, even in 1965 the majority of film sold (67%) into the amateur market was black & white. However, by the beginning of the 1970's there was a sharp reduction in the cost of colour negative film and consequently by 1972, sales of black and white film dropped to representing only 24% of the market. Further still, by the end of the decade, this had reduced even further, shrinking to representing only 8% of the film market, despite colour film remaining approximately 1.5 times the cost of monochrome. What these sales figures tell us is that within a relatively short of time in the 1970's, the vast majority of amateur photographers chose to use colour (negative) film to capture their images on. Conversely and significantly however, within an artistic discourse at the same time, monochrome remained the dominant medium for photography. Due to colour photography's widespread use within commercial, advertising and amateur settings, the medium was not deemed 'serious' photography. Accordingly, well-known British social and documentary photographers creating work in 1970's England, such as Martin Parr's early photographs, Don McCullin and Chris Killip, all opted to continue to use monochrome film. Colour photography continued to be widely disregarded within the arts until William Eggleston's controversial solo show of purely colour photographs at New York's MoMA in 1976. The exhibition and accompanying

book were ground-breaking at the time, ultimately altering perspectives on colour photography, as Eggleston is now regarded as one of the greatest modern photographers (Matturri, 2012). Eggleston's work marked a substantial shift within photography and eventually "brought colour photography into the mainstream" (Kernan, 2001). Yet this was a slow process, and at the time the exhibition was met rather unfavourably, as "nearly all the major critics were scornful" (Child, 2011) and were dismissive of Eggleston's exhibition, and as Schjeldahl (2018, November 17) writes, many believed it "trampled the traditional association of art photography with black-and-white film". Further still, even at the time of Eggleston's exhibition, many of his close American contemporaries such as, Lee Friedlander, Diane Arbus and Garry Winogrand were still predominantly using monochrome film during the decades of the 1960's and 1970's. Thus, the reactions towards colour photograph were a real reflection of the assumptions many photographers held at the time in the 1970's.

Considering the negative folder, what is observable is that the first ten films are taken using colour film. The majority of the visual content of these colour films (see Figures 27 & 28 for illustrative examples) strongly conforms to the style and practice of family photography, as highlighted by Richard Chalfen and David Halle in the previous chapter. This suggests that during this phase of his practice he followed, complied and conformed to the social conventions of how someone of his class should practice photography, not only in photographic style but in terms of materials used. In this regard, the evidence provided here implies that he was also endeavouring to attain society's paradigm of the 'ideal type' which is typically embodied within the practice of vernacular photography and reflective of the *shadow archive*. Yet significantly, after this tenth film, the rest that follow have been taken in monochrome. Much later on in the negative file toward the back of the folder, there is a return to colour film – yet as stated, the majority (75%) of the photographs are taken in monochrome. In view of the fact that he switched to use monochrome film at a time when it was colour photography that was being predominately used by amateurs to take photographs and 'serious' photographers predominantly using monochrome, it could be stated that there is strong evidence to suggest that my Father desired to engage with photography with a greater, critical degree with this specific medium.

My Father's use of photographic colour positive film appears to demonstrate a separation of his practice between colour and monochrome. Held within 21 boxes there are approximately 800, mainly Kodachrome, colour positive slides (Figure 3). Kodachrome being a slide film, requires a certain amount of technical ability to achieve good results because of its low light sensitivity and limited exposure latitude compared to colour negative film. These photographs show that he possessed the technical ability to use this film to a high standard to create pleasant pictorial photographs (Figure 29). However, the overwhelming visual content of the photographs taken with this film appears to document holidays or social occasions (Figure 30) rarely indicating attempts at an authored artistic expression apart from the occasional, yet impressive exceptions (Figure 31). Furthermore, taking into account the archive as a whole reveals that monochrome film represents 68% of the entire archive and thus it could be deduced that this was his preferred medium of choice. Taking this aspect of the archive into consideration ultimately directed my focus of attention towards predominantly considering the monochrome photographs. The visual content of these photographs not only presented evidence of a break away from the constraints of the *shadow archive*, but also a greater amount of material in which to do so.

Correspondingly, the focus of my attention turned to the 8 photographic print boxes (Figure 2). These contained the photographs printed from the black and white negatives from within the negatives folder. These have been printed within his home darkroom (Figure 26) rather than at a commercial or high street printer. This strongly supports the supposition that he sought full authored control over the visual and aesthetic outcome of his photographs. This distances his practice away from that of the amateur or recreational photographer. The prints are held and presented within 8 relatively compact cardboard boxes, which are the Ilford and Kodak paper boxes that contained the original unexposed monochrome darkroom paper. These boxes appear, like the negative file, as a functional rather than a specific archival container. Counting their now exposed contents totals to around 90 – 110 3 ½ x 5 ½ inch photographs in each box. In total therefore, there are approximately 800 printed photographs from his negative file in total. This equates to about 20% of the negative file which has been printed if each photograph is not a duplicate. The choice of paper purchased for use within his home darkroom appears fairly fixed, as for 6 out of the 8 boxes are Grade 3 paper, whilst the last two are Multigrade. This indicates an

artistic preference towards a medium-high contrast finish, possibly to create deeper blacks and more impactful or striking, rather than subtlety toned, photographs.

The photographs within the box have been very well preserved for their 40 plus years of age. The vast majority of white borders of the photographs are bright white, indicating they have been correctly fixed for the right amount of time, pointing towards a sound technical knowledge of the printing process. However, this may also indicate that the photographs within have not been out of the box and exposed to sunlight for viewing very much since their creation. Furthermore, there is a significant lack of fingerprint marks, scratches, or soft rounded edges that supports a claim that once they had been printed, they were seldom taken out for viewing either personally, but also socially. These photographs appear to have been rarely shared with anyone else, either within the family or within a circle of friends. As a result, these objects appear to have been intimate, personal artifacts rather than family or communal objects. Noticing the absence of marks of physical use was a significant, emotional moment in how I perceived my Father's archive. The fact that these photographs appear to have not been displayed or shared with many people suggests that he was reserved about his photographic expressions, likely only sharing his exploits with others who shared his esoteric pursuits. As I passed through his archive, I felt it exceptionally unfortunate that my Father had perhaps thought that he was unable to share his expressions. This evidence once again emphasised the influence and impact of the *shadow archive* upon my Father's practice of photography. There is a possibility that, due to his working-class upbringing in 1960's and 1970's northern England, my Father may not have felt it possible that someone from his socio-economic background could become a photographer. The materials and tools chosen to create an individual expression with the photographs, the storage, and the organisational structure of the archive between both the negative file and the photographic prints, all suggest an aspiration to engage with photography. Yet, because of the organisational structure of the archive and functional nature of the materials used in storage are not specifically archival, it implies that there were both time and financial restraints on this being realised. As such, his socio-economic status may not have quite fit with those aspirations. Consequently, he may ultimately have kept his enthusiasm for the subject personal, intimate and withdrawn from those who would not acknowledge him as a photographer. This may explain the lack of physical traces.

Whilst the photographs within the archive speak for themselves with regards to his artistic abilities, acknowledging these qualities within the archive ultimately gave me greater impetus to work with and utilise the photographs from his archive.

Collaboration & Co-Authorship.

As illustrated, the material traces within the archive alongside the image content, produced highly influential and emotionally powerful suggestions of an artistic desire. The dialogue which took place by looking at the archive's evidence radically influenced how I perceived my Father. Rather than confirming my personal narrative I had constructed around his alcoholism, the traces of my Father within the archive suggested alternative narratives about him that could be explored and constructed which had not and could not have been previously realised. Yet the fact remained that those interpretations remained fundamentally representative of my control over the archive and demonstrative of Sekula's *clearing house of meaning*. The archive, lying dormant for all those years, had been a site of unknown that I had brought meaning to through my claiming of and engagement with the archival contents. As indicated by Joanna Sassoon, that engagement, and the methods used resulted in fundamental changes to the original, physical archive. By entering and creating a digital translation of the archive to access the visual contents, whilst intended to preserve the integrity of the original archive's character and form, unavoidably marked a transformation. By separating the collected archival material into their corresponding photographic medium, numbering and creating a contemporary order, digitizing the visual contents, and even simply by handling the archive, I undoubtedly and consequently left my own physical marks of intervention upon it. Whilst the original untouched archive was undoubtedly of my Father's authorship, my authority over the archive to intervene, select, reproduce and create a new context for its contents after many years, appeared to establish a form of dual authorship.

In *Photography and Collaboration* (2017), Daniel Palmer presents the idea that photography is "inherently dialogical and thus always potentially collaborative" (Palmer, 2017, p. 1).

Historically, photography has often been considered an insular practice and one in which individual photographers produce individual works that often focuses on the moment of

conception. There is a misconception that the vast majority of photographers are the sole creators of their work and in control of everything from idea to capture, editing to printing and the subsequent final presentation. Yet in reality each stage in the process towards creating or presenting a photograph can, and often does, involve other individuals and outside influences. Palmer outlines that although famous photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson and Gerry Winogrand are well admired for their vision and their physical capture of iconic images of the 20th Century, both worked with others to produce their vision. Cartier-Bresson famously selected trusted darkroom printers to print his negatives, whilst Winogrand often left selection and printing to editors and curators (Palmer, 2017). Furthermore, when considered alongside the plethora of other professional individuals from laboratory technicians, exhibition curators, photography book designers and publishers there is the realisation that photography is far from an insular, but rather a “social and communitive activity” (Palmer, 2017, p. 15) that shows that “most photography is collaboratively authored as some level” (Palmer, 2017, p. 15).

Significantly, Palmer asserts that the use and recontextualisation of existing photographs, whose original authors are either absent or unknown, can be considered “a collaborative rather than simply appropriative act” (Palmer, 2017, p. 138). This recontextualisation can often appear to significantly suppress the original author’s voice and replace it with that of the collectors. However, the fact remains that the residual material and visual evidence of the original author “continue to exist as absent presences, and therefore as unconscious collaborators” (Palmer, 2017, p. 143). As indicated previously, the ability for the source material from the archive to significantly alter how I perceive my Father is indicative of the dialogue and collaborative aspect in action. Consequently, although selecting, reproducing and revealing previously unseen photographs from the archive appears to be representative of my absolute authority over the archive to create meaning, it can be argued that there is a creative exchange between two parties over time despite my Father not being present.

Of all the areas of intervention into the archive material, digitally reproducing full resolution versions of individual photographs for screen or print appeared to be particularly expressive of a creative exchange. Focusing once again on one of the numerous self-portraits from the negative file, I was drawn to two negatives from the file which displayed my Father leaning

against an interior wall with his arms crossed and facing towards the camera (Figure 32). Whilst the first (top) exposure intrigued me, the second exposure absorbed me. His intense gaze into the camera lens towards me as an observer and as a son profoundly captured my attention. For me, he seemed to be trying to communicate something with his gaze that I could not quite immediately decipher. It appeared to me that he was compelling me to work with this negative further and to reveal or unlock something hidden which was once again reflective of the influential power of the archive itself. Consequently, I proceeded to digitally scan this negative to the highest resolution. This not only radically transformed the photograph from a physical image with analogue tones to one interpreted into a non-physical photograph presented through digital code, but it also marked the boundary of my Father's authorship and that of my own. Additionally, scanning the negative necessitated a degree of editing that, whilst can be kept to a minimum, ultimately indicates my own aesthetic interpretation of the original negative. Consequently, because the digitisation process inherently signals my intervention, it would be unavailing to attempt to create a genuine reproduction of my Father's vision for this photograph. Rather than resisting this fact, it appeared productive to instead work with the source material liberally, and instead collaborate with what has been left within the archive to produce my own aesthetic interpretations, narratives and vision (Figure 33). Poignantly, upon considering the archive prints once again through my video documentation, I encountered the same photograph printed by my Father that I had not been previously consciously aware of (Figure 34). Whereas I had reproduced this photograph with much darker mid tones that gave the photograph a rather sombre atmosphere, to my surprise my Father had printed his darkroom print much lighter, producing a completely different aesthetic impression. The difference between the photographs illustrates that whilst an image can retain its referential link to the real, the way the image is interpreted, altered and re-presented can have a drastic effect on the claims of photography's veracity. However, collaborative intervention and adjustment of the 'original' version created by my Father appeared to be a subtle instance of Fontcuberta's concept that it is only through creating something 'false' that we can come close to creating something which we perceive to be real and true. Whilst I was not the original creator of the negative, my dark and solemn iteration of the negative engaged with my own personal relationship with my Father, that was reflective of my own personal 'truth' and narrative.

What was interesting in both cases, was that we had equally responded to the same source negative to create our own aesthetic iterations which has each occurred over a period of time. Although my Father may have only waited as long as it had taken to develop the film, there was still an interval of time between visualisation and capture, and final photograph. In my own version of the negative, that interval of time had taken over 40 years and as a reflection and translation of my own relationship to him as a son and against the background of his passing. In *Taking and Making* (2002), Geoffrey Batchen asks “when is a photograph made?” (Batchen, 2002, p. 83). Whilst one of the most distinct characteristics of photography is its ability to freeze, capture and present distinct occurrences of time, this also provides the illusion that it is at the moment of capture which defines its origin. In reality, it can be argued that there are many different stages in which a photograph’s ‘origin’ could be located. It could also be argued that a photograph has its origin at the point of visualisation within the mind of the photographer even prior to its capture. Equally, it could also be reasoned that a photograph is made at the point of selection from a plethora of exposures, thus investing this particular exposure with personal significance. Lastly it could also be stated that a photograph is not made until it reaches the public gaze, thereby enacting some form of residual, cultural influence. Crucially, Batchen emphasises the fact that photographs are not unique objects like as paintings or sculptures and instead are objects which are capable of having countless physical iterations that specifically reflect historical intentions and meanings. No photograph has a “stable moment of origin” (Batchen, 2002, p. 106), instead photographs are “constantly being made and remade within the twists and turns of their own unruly passage through space and time” (Batchen, 2002, p. 106). As such, although my use of the negative (Figure 32) appears to be purely an appropriation and re-presentation of an original, in fact the process of intervention necessitates a subjective translation that is separate and distinct. Interpreting the negative in the present responds to the marks, form, space, shape and composition left within, re-translating it into a unique version that begins its own historical trajectory, yet it ties both myself and my Father’s histories together. Correspondingly this confirms that my use of the negative to create my own iteration of the scene depicted, rather than an appropriation of an ‘original’, places it into the category of collaboration. Both my Father’s darkroom prints and my own digitally scanned and edited version of the negative, although intimately

connected by working from the same recorded marks, are distinct translations that reinterpret a thought process and photographic event. In this regard, although I am separated by an ever-increasing passing of time, there remains the opportunity for dialogue and collaboration through his archive of photographs that can also be the source of my own contemporary photographic responses.

Responding to the Archive

Over the two years of working on this project and as the research in preceding chapters has documented, the archive which I found stored within the loft of my parents' home has significantly transformed my understanding of my Father. I had confidently approached the large archive with the objective of finding answers, locating origins and discovering a truth regarding my Father and his path into alcoholism through the medium of the photograph. Arriving at the archive within this context and as the owner and administrator of the information within, the fluid and ambiguous nature of the photograph permitted me to interpret and contextualise the photographs to confirm my subjective assumptions regarding his past (Figures 12 – 13). Yet, it was precisely my ability to access to the entirety of this extensive archive and the traces specifically left by my Father which also presented an innumerable amount of alternative narratives that I was able to reflect upon, revealing the potent power of the archive to influence. It is for that reason that my methodology for working with the archive has been to be open and responsive to the influencing power of the marks left by my Father through the extensive research into the photographic visual content and the materiality of the wider archive. Whilst I acknowledge that the narrative I reconstruct from the archival photographs is reflective of my own subjective interpretation, the positioning of my Father through this research as a “hidden artist”, stifled by the influence of the *shadow archive* could not have been realised without the *active agent* of the archive itself.

This is significant, as researching and being open to the influence of the archive has allowed me to comprehend that my Father was infinitely more complex than I ever could have realised. Whilst this appears rather paradoxical, as Derrida states that the act of archiving is ultimately self-destructive and reveals that there will always be an unknown, the archive has allowed me to create possible alternative histories, narratives and characteristics that represent him more than the alcoholic that I personally knew towards the end of his life. Whilst the photograph has its source from within the real, its ambiguity means that it is the perfect medium in which to potentially address my often conflicting and painful memories of my Father. Photography allows me to bring the past to the present and construct a new subjective narrative. This new narrative, created through a careful selection and

collaboration with the photographs from his archive, aims to celebrate him as an aspiring photographer that was not realised during his lifetime. These selections allow me to reconstruct a version of my Father through the archive – yet I acknowledge that it cannot resurrect him complete. There will always be an unknown. I will never know definitively through the archive the reasons for the unfortunate choices that lead to his alcoholism. Instead, the work produced aims to offer, imply and suggest potential reasons to the viewer for its cause that reflects my own search for him through the archive. Ultimately, reconstructing this subjective version of my Father provides a feeling of connection and closeness to him that subsequently permits and initiates my own photographic responses, allowing me to come to terms with his passing.

Selecting Photographs from the Archive

Whilst all of the photographs selected from the archival material aim to celebrate the work of my Father as a photographer, as stated they also aim to work as a tool in which to progress a narrative of discovery and close connection through collaboration. Each of the selections from the archive aim to work as a prompt, suggestion, or metaphor for the exploration of my Father through both the physical archive and within the visual content of the photographs. A selection of 87 photographs were selected from the archive that offered the potential in which to create the narrative outlined above. These were selected intuitively, however all produced an emotional connection or response. Some were selected for their aesthetic, historical or documentary interest that reveal my Father's particular photographic abilities, whilst others concentrated on my Father's idiosyncratic self-portraits and the exceptionally ambiguous photographs scattered within his archive. Each photograph selected from the archive was subsequently digitally enlarged and remade liberally according to my own subjective re-translation in the present. The resulting final images were the culmination of the collaboration and creative exchange with the source material left within the archive between myself and my Father that was once again reflective of my own personal narrative.

The Shadow Archive

As one of the narratives running through the work aims to reference Sekula's notion of the *shadow archive* upon my Father, selecting images from the archive that connect the historical industrial economic geography of Leeds to my Father's working-class background aim to place the viewer at a particular time and location. Photographs such as the one that depicts the tallest of the Italianate chimney stacks of the Tower Works factory (Figure 35) are a distinctive landmark on the Leeds skyline even today, positioning the viewer within the city. The image is assumed to have been taken during the construction of Royal Mail House in 1974/5 on Wellington Street, Leeds which my Father is known to have worked on. The photograph's frame is crowded with factory rooftops and chimneys. It has been reproduced especially dark, so dark that the railway tracks in the foreground are only just visible. The scene produces a grim and murky atmosphere to the city that is evocative of Bill Brandt's images taken in the North of England during the late 1930's, such as *Halifax* (Brandt, 1937) and *Factory, Sheffield* (Brandt, 1937). It is a place that appears oppressive and difficult to escape, a city in which class systems are reinforced by those who hold the political and economic power. Absent, and in contrast to Bill Brandt's photographs referenced above, the chimneys of these factories are without their billowing smoke. The factories do not appear to be in operation, which is suggestive of the economic hardship of the mid 1970's and alludes to the reduction in opportunities within the traditional industries of engineering and textiles at the time. Another photograph taken by my Father as a younger man, captured some 10 years earlier, documents what appears to be the aftermath of a demolition (Figure 36). The scene is taken at a point called Mill Hill, very close to Leeds City Square. Devoid of people and slightly askew, this photograph juxtaposes the 19th Century Mill Hill Chapel and the destruction of old warehouse buildings next to the more recent grey concrete office blocks. For an unknown reason to the right of the frame, a blazing bonfire burns fiercely which, together with the slightly uneven horizon, produces a sense of unease and instability about the scene. Once again, this photograph evokes the many social and political transformations that my Father lived through during the 1960's and 1970's. Whilst it suggests opportunities for some in new industries within the office blocks, it also feels prophetic of the near-future collapse of many northern working-class communities who were essentially 'put on the bonfire' and left behind through a process of rapid de-

industrialisation. The void within the foreground appears to indicate to me the absence of opportunities within the very heart of the city for my Father as a young man at the time the photograph was taken. Photographs such as these aim to produce a feeling of improbability, of the hopes and dreams of my Father having been repressed and persuade the viewer to consider the impossibility of someone from his class ever attaining an education within photography.

Although my Father never attained access to any formal education within photography, the evidence within the archive as shown in previous chapters indicates that this did not prevent my Father from striving and attempting to engage with the medium. Through his continued commitment to photographing something other than what someone of his social class ought to photograph unveils a resistance and rejection of the constraints of the *shadow archive*. This act of resistance, although powerful, was covert. This defiance, covering a wide range of photographic genres such as social documentary and still life (Figures 37 & 38) has been concealed within the archive. Thus, my public disclosure of select images from the archive not only celebrates his artistic achievements, but aims to reconsider and secure his photographic legacy alongside that of other then-contemporary photographers of the 1960's and 70's. This has been achieved by selecting photographs which demonstrate his own documentation of Leeds. Whilst the quality of the photographs is self-evident, there has been a conscious, but subtle effort in my selections to construct a comparability and an equivalence with the renowned Leeds-based photographer Peter Mitchell. Originally from Manchester and following a formal art education at the Hornsey College of Art in north London, Mitchell moved to Leeds in 1972 (Jobey, 2017) and began photographing the city's dereliction and reconstruction whilst working as a truck driver. Comparing the two photographers, what is apparent is that there are numerous photographs within Mitchell's work that has also been photographed by my Father, each reflecting their own personal perspective and character. For example, both photographed the 3rd White Cloth Hall in Leeds. My Father's version is captured nearly three years later than Mitchell's in January 1977. His is reproduced in black and white taken on 35mm film (Figure 39) whereas Mitchell's (Mitchell, 1974) is photographed in full vivid colour (Figure 40) with a medium format camera. Mitchell has rightly received much praise and success with his impressive rich-colour photographic endeavours. He achieved his first solo show within two years of

moving to Leeds in 1974 at Leeds City Art Gallery and had been invited to have his second solo show at the Impressions Gallery in York in 1978. He has since had numerous books of his created of his work. Mitchell succeeded in gaining an education in photography at a London art school that will have allowed him to significantly explore and improve his practice. My Father on the other hand did not have the same opportunity. Despite the two often photographing the exact same buildings and locations, my Father had no such prospect to improve his skills and create valuable connections within an established institution. Furthermore, whilst my Father took his photographs on 35mm film, Mitchell had access to much more expensive and better-quality cameras that allowed the use of larger films, permitting superior depictions of the same scenes. As a result, whilst Mitchell was allowed to pursue the life of a Photographer to great success, my Father's practice was never able to flourish or to be legitimised despite its uniquely distinctive and exceptional qualities. Consequently, whilst there has been a resistance to overemphasizing the connection, there were three images selected in particular that sought to highlight the relationship between the two photographer's similar documentation of Leeds. The first photograph (Figure 41), taken in January 1977 from film 43 and titled under the common group title of 'Alleyways near Roxby' (located off of Kirkgate, Leeds), depicts one of the many side streets, ginnals and alleyways that Leeds is especially well known for. It is one of the principle reasons for the demonym of *Loiner*, a name given to the citizens of Leeds which describes this maze-like feature of 18th and 19th Century ginnals or *loins* which people gathered in to gossip and drink in shadowy public inns. There are many photographs within his archive which document the *loins* (Figure 42). These are often highly redolent of Eugene Atget's documentation of old Paris. Observing the photograph (Figure 41), the dead end and high structure of the murky *loin* feels oppressive and imposing, producing an impression that escaping the maze of alleyways is an impossible task. Within the context of the work, the image works as a metaphor for my Father's difficulty in escaping the confines of city and the restrictions of his class. Yet simultaneously, this image also subtly points towards my Father's particular documentation of Leeds and his equivalence to Mitchell as same scene (Figure 43), has been photographed by Mitchell using his medium format camera on colour film (Mitchell, 2020).

The second images selected are the two ‘Maddens’ photographs (Figures 44 & 45) in which my Father photographed himself within the window of the Maddens Funeral Directors. The selection of these photographs is again multi-layered. As stated within Chapter 1, observing this image produced and indeed maintains a powerful emotional reaction. It appears for me to be a prophetic image of his future and relationship with alcohol and painfully reminded me of his enduring absence. Yet, studying this photograph was also a defining moment in contextualising the archive and him as a photographer seeking to express his own artistic vision – whether as a means to document the demolition of the Quarry Hill Flats (the subject of Mitchell’s 1990 book *Memento Mori*), or as an idiosyncratic means of capturing his self-portrait. Significantly, in Peter Mitchell’s *Early Sunday Morning* (2020) photobook, Mitchell has once again also happened to capture the same funeral directors (Figure 46), albeit in Mitchell’s typical focus on architectural form, straight lines and square frame (Mitchell, 2020). Both my Father and Mitchell continuously seem to orbit one another, each pursuing their own unique and distinctive vision – whilst one found success and notoriety in his lifetime, my Father’s path took a different, much more tragic course. Whether my Father and Mitchell ever met is unlikely, yet through using these photographs as subtle references I hope to momentarily bring the two together and create a level of recognition to his practice as a photographer.

An Exploration of the Self

In addition to raising this comparison and establishing my Father as an accomplished artist with an equal photographic ability to that of contemporaries, this juxtaposition also personally emphasises and underlines where my Father’s vision and expression diverges. Mitchell appears to physically detach himself from his documentation of Leeds’ transformation, preferring to focus on physical form and the layers of the city’s urban and social history. In contrast, my Father intentionally opts to include his own reflection within the window of the funeral directors – not once, but twice – across the two photographs. As already described within the first chapter of this text, this photograph had already been a defining moment in how I contextualised his archive. It had been the catalyst for recognising my Father’s rejection of the *shadow archive* and an acknowledgement that he strived to engage with photography as an artist. Yet, by returning to the Maddens photographs once

again and comparing them to Mitchell's similar depiction suggested that there had also been a deliberate attempt by my Father to establish his own physical connection to the events documented. Consequently, rather than this photograph being strictly a well-crafted aesthetic impression of the demolition of the Quarry Hill Flats estate, this photograph – just like the more recognisable self-portraits – emphasised an apparent intention to practice photography as an exploration of the self. This photograph allowed me to identify and concentrate on this curious characteristic to my Father's practice, initiating a detailed consideration into how he chose to document himself. Consequently, selecting images from the archive that appeared to demonstrate the use of photography in a process of self-analysis became a major focus of the project, and allows his practice to take its own unique trajectory.

Considering the many self-portrait photographs of my Father was a profoundly emotional and poignant adventure through the archive. Often, these vivid, unique and often eccentric photographs became places which appeared to revive an authentic element of my Father's being *because* of their autobiographic nature. His apparent use of photography to explore himself and his place in the world appeared to explain something profound about his character. These became sites in which I would feel deeply connected to him, offering an ostensible opportunity to contemplate my Father's psyche and reasons for his addiction. However as discovered through my research, photographs are unable to transmit any definitive facts about my Father's character. Instead, viewing these photographs within the context of my personal relationship to him held up a mirror to my own subjective experience of him. Rather than locating undeniable truths, the ambiguity of photography ultimately denied the formulation of a complete narrative – yet the archive remained an intoxicating assembly of suggestions and mystery. Consequently, by selecting and utilising particular self-portraits, I aim to reproduce this process of contemplation that suggests and implies aspects of my Father's character yet denies a complete picture. One such photograph selected from the archive is the self-portrait of my Father leaning against the wall next to a door (Figure 33). As detailed previously, happening upon this photograph I was struck by how his firm and direct look into the lens appeared to be an attempt at trying to communicate *something*. Contemplating this photograph once again, I read a deep desire for connection within his look as he stands there isolated in the room. Whether this was the

case or not will remain a mystery. Yet, the fact that he decides to engage his look so firmly into the camera suggests that he was using photography as a private means to disclose or record something deeply personal about himself. Those eyes and the mystery of that communication now catches my attention here in the present, and I am unable to look away from his gaze. That being said, whilst the intense gaze into the camera lens appears to form a connection that is almost confident and assertive, his body language and positioning appears to suggest the opposite. It is almost as if he is conflicted about photographing himself. Positioning himself into a corner with his back against the wall, he appears to be apprehensive, anxious or fearful of capturing his impression. He folds his arms tightly and leans in a tense position against the wall that suggests he is reluctant, introverted and unable to fully disclose himself. This aspect of revealing yet concealing or obscuring himself appears to be a common thread throughout his self-portraits. In the self-portrait of himself sat in a chair (Figure 19) his decision to photograph himself with his top half unclothed suggests not only a certain amount of conceited bodily self-confidence, but also implies an honest attempt at revealing himself for the camera. Yet, his positioning and performance for the camera, choosing to conceal his face with his hand as he smokes a cigarette also appears to be a brazen refusal to fully reveal aspects of his character. In another photograph, he captures himself fully, his arms and legs outstretched as he appears to balance off of a stool (Figure 47). The performance in this photograph reminded me of his comical nature, implying a free spirited and playfulness about his character that I knew well, yet has almost been forgotten and suppressed by my distressing memories of his alcoholism. Such imaginative and expressive performances highly suggest that my Father also used photography as a form of private escapism and as a means to forget the possible monotony of the everyday. Nevertheless, his choice to turn his back on the camera – this time completely concealing his face – creates a disconnection that once again resists a full disclosure of his self. When we do see his face clearly in one of these sometimes extremely comical self-portrait performances, for example the photograph of my Father with shaving foam on his eyebrows and chin (Figure 48), his actual facial expression appears serious and rather solemn in contrast to how preposterous he looks. Looking into his eyes suggests to me that he was in reality a rather private and elusive person even to those who knew him. Ultimately, this photograph reminds me of the phrase ‘tears of a clown’. Whilst he may have outwardly wanted to appear comical to others, deep down he may have secretly felt

disconnected, vulnerable and lonely – emotions that could be suggested as contributing factors to his alcoholism.

Photographic Escapism

While my Father's self-portraits suggest a longing for escapism from everyday life or a sense of loneliness, working through the archive there is a strong indication that he may have also found relief from those feelings in a social life that revolved around the pub culture of the time. These photographs of which there are many, strongly support the idea that alcohol consumption was particularly ingrained within the wider culture of the 1970's and 1980's. When I first approached the archive, I had taken these photographs in particular as proof that my Father's alcoholism could be specifically traced and located to these moments within this culture of drinking. Whilst I could potentially argue this position through these photographs, once again I would never be able to definitively know the answer to this mystery as to why or where his addiction could be identified. It was the mystery and flashes of connection itself which were in reality maintaining my engagement with the archive. What appeared more interesting to me was to select images from the archive which were taken during these social events that involved drinking but also examine them for how he had taken them. Regarding these types of photographs within this context allowed me to locate images which appear to reflect aspects of his character and psyche that was not dissimilar to his self-portraits. In one such photograph, my Father photographs four men pointing directly and rather excitedly out of the frame of the photograph (Figure 49). Whilst we do not know what is happening outside of the photographs frame, his choice to focus in on the men's reactions to whatever was occurring rather than the event which is causing such a rousing reaction points towards my Father's role as the detached observer. This photograph neither situates him as a participant of the events, or as an outsider. Instead, he appears prefer to fade into the background and even into obscurity. As such, even though he is located at the very centre of a social interaction, this photograph suggests that he is separate or apart from others. In another photograph, his concealed detachment is apparently recognised, as just as he is about to capture a photograph a hand swiftly appears to cover the vast majority of the frame (Figure 50). Whether this person is rejecting being photographed or simply placing their hand in front of the lens in jest is unclear. However, it

may have been the case that my Father's persistent photographing appeared strange or even irritating to others, suggesting that his pursuit of the medium was misunderstood and disregarded as eccentric. For me, this photograph confirms both my Father's photographic aspiration and his unique character that was different from others. For even when he was out socialising with others, he may have aspired for more than evenings and weekends spent drinking – it was his means of escape. One other photograph seems to suggest a similar conclusion. In this rather satirical Martin Parr-esque scene, my Father photographs the exterior of a pub called the Grey Goose (Figure 51). Within the centre of the frame, a small child has been left outside in a pushchair to fend for themselves whilst it is assumed their parents are inside. In my opinion, this photograph practically manifests itself as another self-portrait. Just like the child, my Father is isolated away from the social interactions of the pub. Yet unlike the child, his separation has been by choice. For me, this photograph brings together his two means of escapism, photography and drinking. Whilst he may have desired a connection with others, he also seems to find solace in his own company, pursuing what he appears to most enjoy. Looking at this photograph brings both great comfort and great sadness. Whereas I find consolation that he was able to feel contented in his escapism, I also painfully recognise within this photograph the reality that one of those forms of escapism eventually took over and in the end cost him his life.

Making Photographs

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the two years of exploration and engagement with the archive has significantly transformed my understanding of my Father. Consequently, how I have pursued my own concurrent photographic strategies in response has therefore also adapted and transformed over time. This has been realised through a number of interwoven strategies. That being said, the overarching theme of my strategies towards making photographs has consistently sought to respond to the potential the archive has had as a site of discovery, dialogue or connection to my Father that aims to readdress aspects of personal memory and emotions following his passing. As will be examined below, many photographic responses focused primarily on the circumstances of his death and the feelings of loss that the archive's existence re-enforced. Yet, whilst this undertone remained throughout, my subsequent deeper appreciation of the contents of the

archive as a private reflection of my Father's psyche and unrealised photographic aspiration eventually stimulated the creation of individual photographic responses. These are illustrative of the *active agent* of the archive, yet they also illustrate my effort to foster a collaborative dialogue with my Father through its contents. Such responses ultimately aim to replicate my efforts to find, understand and re-examine my relationship to my Father through these fleeting moments of connection; yet they also represent a poignant collaboration between Father and son that did not occur whilst he was alive. Accordingly, the following text documents my evolving photographic strategies which occurred as my research and understanding of my Father's archive progressed that in tandem enabled the final selection of images from the archive as discussed above.

Searching for my Father within the Archive & the Land

As documented within the first chapter, as the administrator of the archive I had the power to determine the meaning of the content of the archive. However, the large quantity and variety of photographic material within meant that the archive appeared to resist a uniform definition that made the process of how to contextualise the archive a challenging endeavour. Consequently, determining how exactly to begin forming a response to my Father's photographic archive proved a complicated issue that was only resolved through conducting research into the archive and simultaneously creating reflective photographic responses. One of the photographs from the archive that stood out to me in the early phases of my research into the archive was a darkroom printed photograph of my Father jumping into a body of water (Figure 52). At the time of viewing the photograph, seeing him in a moment of exhilarated flight about to enter the water seemed to resonate on a number of levels. On the one hand, seeing him captured in the brief moment before he is consumed by the water below seemed to be prophetic of my Father's eventual fall into alcoholism. Yet more poignantly, whilst I could not be certain if the water he was about to enter was a canal, lake, river or ocean, the photograph appeared to be an analogy to having laid my Father's ashes to rest in the waters at the source of the River Aire in North Yorkshire. This relationship and connection to his final resting place in the river had a profound and significant impact on how I started to form a response to the archive. Discovering this photograph ultimately enticed and initiated a long period of traveling to and walking along

the banks of the River Aire. Conducting these walks and creating photographs in a geographic area that my Father was strongly associated with responded to many personal and meaningful concepts that were being considered. Walking through this landscape in a place in which his last physical traces were to be found allowed me to feel close to him once more, whereas the water of the river also seemed to offer many emotional connotations that could be explored photographically. These appeared particularly relevant, as water has often been symbolic with notions of life, purification, the passing of time and of renewal. Yet, though these facets played an important part in drawing me to this geographic area, my predominant overarching photographic strategy whilst traversing this often-unfamiliar landscape was to use the journey to parallel the physical search for my Father through his archive. As a result, whilst the river provided a dominant background feature, my photographic responses were focused upon reflecting this search, and documenting the journey as I travelled through the landscape that became a form of personal pilgrimage. This allowed me to be less restricted by a single geographic feature and opened my practice up to respond intuitively to scenes, events or occurrences which appeared along the walks that metaphorically reflected the difficulties and emotional experiences of working with the archive in my search for my Father. Interestingly upon reflection, this approach to image making during this phase of my practice strongly resembled that of my Father's methods when he was capturing everyday casual observations (Figure 15). Rather than knowing what we were going to find, both of us allowed ourselves to be photographically receptive to situations that unfolded and scenes which we found ourselves in. Retrospectively, our comparable ways of working are now rather poignant, as it marks a point in which the work of two photographers began to come together which was significantly developed and built upon later on as my practice developed.

A notable example which typifies this photographic strategy of responding to occurrences and scenes which arose is a photograph which captures a flock of geese as they flew low over the landscape as they began their migration (Figure 53). The day had been particularly dull and overcast, and to capture this fleeting moment I was forced to quickly reduce my shutter speed and pan my camera to follow the birds as they flew over the river. The resulting photograph manages to record this striking but exceedingly brief moment that appeared to be allegoric of my own experience of my fleeting moments of connection with

my Father through the archive. Furthermore, whilst the scene which unfolded has been recorded as a photograph, the image captured has been distorted by the panning action. Although it is clear what is occurring, the motion blur in the image renders the birds rather imprecisely which appeared to echo the ambiguous nature of the photographs from the archive. Whereas this experience was rather momentary and fleeting, other occurrences such as a photograph taken of an elderly man stood on the opposite side of the riverbank developed at a much slower pace (Figure 54). From my own perspective, the creation of this photograph was as important as the image itself. Noticing each other's presence, we attempted to talk to one another; yet the fast-flowing water over the boulders and stones which divided us hindered our conversation. Whilst the man managed to understand my requests at a photograph, the obstructed and difficult conversation at the time of capture felt particularly poignant in regard to my then ongoing difficulty in ascertaining answers towards my Father's demise into alcoholism through the archive. Once I had the film developed and I studied the photograph, the moment became even more meaningful. Looking at the scene strongly reminded me of the Greek myth of the River Styx. In this context, the man on the other side of the river became a transient manifestation of my Father in the afterlife. Once again, this photograph paralleled my research into the archive, as the images within equally created the impression that I had managed to resurrect my Father's form once again.

Whilst this photograph, and the photograph of the low flying Geese visualise and represent temporary moments of connection to my Father, other slower paced and quieter images focus on smaller allegorical details along the journey that resonated in relation to the ongoing search for my Father in the archive and the landscape. Walking along the river frequently displayed evidence of flooding and erosion, of past events that had left their traces. Such details in the landscape, for example that of a felled and twisted tree (Figure 55), not only seemed comparable to the evidence and traces of my Father's life within the photographic archive, but the fracture of the tree also seemed to equally denote the illusion that photographs manage split time and bring moments from the past into the present for us to once again readdress. The tantalising possibility that the archive could reveal events from the past and disclose the mystery to my Father's alcoholism accurately characterised Derrida's *archive fever*. Yet, as my engagement and research into the archive advanced,

I came to realise that the ambiguous nature of those photographs meant that the information that could be ascertained from them was far from absolute. Reflecting on this whilst continuing these walks generated photographs such as a close-up image of a dirty and obscure newsstand (Figure 56). Filling the frame with a detailed section of the stand served as a metaphor for being engrossed in the archive's potential to reveal untold stories, yet on the other hand finding those stories vague, unclear and ambiguous. Exploring this tension between the archive's alluring potential to reveal, whilst simultaneously appearing to conceal, became a significant consideration that began to transform my photographic responses. Whilst the river remained a prevailing feature of the final work, as my engagement with the archive advanced, this development was carried forward into a broader photographic strategy that moved my practice away from being purely focused upon the geographic area of the river.

Conversations & Photographs with my Mother

As discussed above, because the photographs in the archive appeared to conceal as much as they revealed, searching and locating any definitive truths regarding my Father and the origins to his addiction proved challenging. To address this, I began to focus on my Mother as a source of additional information regarding the content of my Father's photographic archive. Although this was the initial purpose for approaching my Mother, our conversations quickly turned into a means for us both to discuss, not only our shared memory of when my Father was still alive, but also the repercussions that his life and passing had on both of us. Rather than aiming to specifically discover more about the photographic content of the archive, this engagement with one another eventually instigated its own avenue of photographic responses that focused on the reverberations of my Father's passing on my Mother. Although my Mother is now retired, at the time of initiating these discussions she was still working as a carer for a range of elderly and disabled clients over a wide area in north Leeds. The job was not only extremely demanding physically but also mentally, as she often had to deal with clients who had a range of mental illnesses. After my Father passed away, my Mother became extremely worried about being able to support herself financially. As a result, she began a long period of working most days of the week, sometimes starting at 6am and working up until 11pm at night. Although she never blamed my Father directly

during our early conversations, she often insinuated that she would not have had to work as hard as she did if my Father was still alive. Consequently, one of my early photographic responses focused on my Mother's then-present difficult working conditions which was dominating her life, photographing her sat on her bed in her work uniform in-between shifts (Figure 57). Photographing my Mother on her bed was an important emotional element to this photograph, as I would often go see her between her shifts and find her exhausted in her bed. Yet in my view, the more poignant aspect of this photograph is her red lipstick. Her continued application of make-up despite the exhaustion her job caused, and the grief of my Father's passing speaks of her determination to maintain her appearance and dignity despite the anguish she was going through. This image was created because I had requested her to pose for the photograph, and at the beginning she was rather reluctant to being photographed. Yet as trust built up between us in these sessions, my Mother became more understanding of my documentation of her and became an active participant in the wider project. This relationship not only meant that I could test and explore a wide range photographic response over the course of the project, but my Mother also instigated some of the photographs made. One of the images that she asked me to create was the documentation of her arm following an assault by one of her clients (Figure 58). Whilst this image documents of the specific attack, the wider relevance of being 'bruised' by the wider course of events in her life strongly resonated with not only myself but also my Mother.

Above all, as our conversations continued during the creation of these photographs with my Mother, our extended and often intimate exchanges allowed us to revive and uncover aspects of my Father through our shared experiences. These ranged from many happy memories of my Father, of going camping together as a family or of humorous instances, to more serious and sombre discussions of his last days with us within the family home. Sometimes, our memories about him appeared to vary and diverge, making it difficult for us to properly remember him complete. At other times, the timeline of events appeared to have been distorted and obscured over the course of time, meaning the true course of incidents was sometimes ambiguous. Additionally, time and time again, we appeared to shift from happy to sad memories, sometimes within the same sentence, often leaving us feeling conflicted about our recollections. On the one hand, we both felt truly happy that we had shared many good memories with my Father; yet those memories were so intertwined

with less happy recollections that it was hard to separate the two. The similarities between discussing and reviving our shared memory appeared to strongly resemble my own experience of looking through his photographic archive. Whilst I was able to vividly and emotionally revive an impression of his form, the ambiguous nature of the photograph meant that there were fundamental and rather 'bittersweet' limitations to his reanimation. Recognising this similarity enabled me to bring aspects of my research with the archive into my photographic responses of my Mother. In particular, I created a series of photographs that captured my Mother with the Kumquat fruit (Figures 59 & 60). These photographs were inspired by a poem by the Leeds poet Tony Harrison titled *A Kumquat for John Keats*. The poem is a contemporary response to the John Keats poem *Ode to Melancholy*, which explores the idea that melancholy and delight are inextricably intertwined. Harrison poses the idea that the Kumquat fruit, which has both a sweet skin and a bitter pulp, is better metaphor for the sweet and sour contrasts of life than the comparisons that Keats suggests, and wonders whether he would have used it within his poem if he had known about it. Using the symbolism of the Kumquat to denote the bittersweet and contrasting experiences of life, these photographs aimed to invoke my own contrasting memories towards my Father. Furthermore, once again, this photograph also points towards the emotional experience of working with the archive. Although the archive had the capacity to vividly revive his image once more, the more I observed the photographs the more they seemed to withhold about him, and the more they served as a painful reminder that he was no longer here. Involving my Mother in this particular photographic response and others was crucially important, as these images were a cumulation and manifestation of our intimate conversations. Our engagement together ultimately continued throughout the course of my practice, becoming a significant part of a wider developing final strategy. This was realised both directly through photographic responses or indirectly through intimate discussions in relation to our memories and the archive.

Collaborative Practice with my Father, the Artist

Between the 14th and 21st June 2019, I had the opportunity for the first time to display some of the photographs from the above-described photographic strategies alongside images mediated from my Father's archive. This was displayed as a Post-Graduate exhibition titled

Photography and Lived Experience (Figures 61 & 62) at the Queensgate Market in Huddersfield. This was not only a practical means to demonstrate and test out my then-current photographic responses to an audience, but it also provided a crucial platform in which I could reflect and closely examine the in-progress work. My predominant exploration of the archive up until this point in my research had been driven by the desire to identify moments in which I could discover the origins of his alcoholism and to 'find' my Father through his photographic archive. As a result, the photographs chosen for this exhibition from the aforementioned approaches attempted to speak of the difficulties in my search for this elusive man that oscillated between the archive, the river, my mother and personal memory.

However an unexpected, yet pivotal consequence of curating this exhibition was that it allowed for a radical reorientation of how I contextualised and considered not only my Father, but the images within his photographic archive. Through my continual research into the archival contents, I had already begun to recognise my Father's gradual transition away from the conventions of family photography and his palpable rejection of the shadow archive. Whereas my later research into the material traces of the archive enabled me to comprehend his sadly unrealised photographic ambitions and ability on a much deeper level, it was this exhibition which initiated the significant transition. Viewing the reproduced, rescaled, and edited photographs curated in this new context upon the walls of this public exhibition, as opposed to privately on a much more intimate scale, changed how I saw the photographs he had taken. The exhibition allowed both the aesthetic qualities and his unique vision displayed in his photographs to really come forth in such a way, that from my perspective, my Father for the first time emerged as an artist. Whereas the archive still held a captivating possibility for me to uncover answers to my Father's path into alcoholism, the photographs I had included in the exhibition impressively demonstrated his unique and expressive engagement with photography. This shifted my attention instead towards recognising the aesthetic qualities of his work and his discernible aspiration to engage artistically with photography. Significantly from this point onwards, I began to bring my attention closer towards his deliberate experimental approaches as an artist instead. Arriving at this new position enabled me to return to the archive and acknowledge material

from the archive that I had previously overlooked, which led to a much greater appreciation of the variety and quality of my Father's photographic expressions.

In addition to this change of focus, the exhibition also allowed me to identify a crucial dynamic at play upon the walls of the gallery. What I recognised was that by bringing my Father's photographs together with my own within the space ultimately created a relationship, or connection between them. Whereas beforehand I had viewed my own photographic responses from the archive in isolation, separated from the photographs taken by my Father, it was in this instance that I was able to observe the images as a spectator of the *combined* work. Whilst the photographs chosen for the exhibit by themselves were able to imply, denote, or point towards my area of exploration, viewing the work juxtaposed in sequence together for the first time enabled the photographs to 'talk to' each other. Within cinema, this effect is described as the 'Kuleshov Effect', but its effects can also be found within assembled photographic sequences. The effect was first demonstrated by the Russian filmmaker Lev Kuleshov, who edited a short film together which presented an expressionless male actor looking into the camera that alternated between three scenes, one of a bowl of soup, one of a girl in a coffin, and a final scene of a woman laying upon a lounge. When film was shown to an audience, they believed that the expression of the actor changed depending on what he was looking at. In the sequence in which he looks at the bowl of soup, the audience thought that he was hungry. When he looks at the girl in the coffin, the audience believed the actor felt grief. Finally, in the scenes where he appears to look at the woman on the lounge, the audience believed that they observed a sense desire within the actor's expression. However, despite the audience believing that the actor had subtly changed his expression following each scene, it was in fact the same expressionless recording shown in each three sequential scenes. This demonstrates that viewers derive more meaning from two images in sequence than from a single image in isolation. An audience will mentally construct a connection and relationship between two scenes or images when they are adjacently or sequentially placed together. Edited in specific ways, the effect helps build a narrative, and can construct feelings of tension, joy, sadness, or comedy for an audience. As such, whilst my aim of assembling selected, singular images created by myself and my Father sought to narrate an effort in locating him through his archive, I had not been wholly conscious that their arrangement

would alter their singular meanings. Whereas the awareness of this effect would become specifically useful for subsequent image sequences in the final work, at this point I was wholly captivated and inspired by the potential that these small ‘conversations’ the photographs appeared to foster when placed together. The dialogue that seemed to emerge between my own work and my Father’s in the exhibition ultimately changed the direction of my photographic practice. Instead of administering the photographic material from the archive as documentary evidence of my Father’s lived experience in which I could claim a particular narrative, my emphasis transformed towards establishing and developing a particular variation of collaboration as I re-engaged with the experimental and expressive material from the archive.

Even though my Father was no longer present, I had already identified that my reproduction and aesthetic interpretation of the archival material developed a form of co-authorship, indicating a collaborative possibility *in absentia*. However, my work as a result of the exhibition transformed and evolved to particularly focus on the idea and potential of collaboration as I reconsidered my Father as an artist. Importantly however, my method of photographic collaboration which eventually emerged differed from other, more conventional collaborative projects. These projects primarily evolved to counter the perceived uneven power relations within documentary photography. Returning to *Photography and Collaboration* (2017), Palmer states that ‘documentary photography’ as a genre emerged in the late 19th Century, producing early documentarians such as Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine and the later photographers of the Farm Security Administration era. These social reform photographers were particularly concerned with highlighting the plight of the exploited lower classes or oppressed peoples using photography (Palmer, 2017). Yet over the course of the 20th Century many began to question their approaches, recognising the often “exploitative power relationship” (Palmer, 2017, p. 78) photographers had over the subjects they aimed to represent. In *Picturing Culture* (2000), Jay Ruby explores the questions of voice, authority and authorship within documentary practices, and highlights that those concerned with producing representations of actuality “stopped hiding behind the idea that images are merely recordings” (Ruby, 2000, pg. 202). Those who had previously been represented by others, now challenged the right of those in positions of authority to do so. As such, many began to rethink approaches of representation,

culminating in projects that sought to include the subject in the creation of the work in an increasingly co-operative or collaborative fashion. This it was hoped, would provide space for their subject's own voice and go some way to negate issues of photographic representation. Photographers such as Wendy Ewald documents communities by teaching children and adults all over the world how to take photographs. Whilst Ewald influences the work through its instigation and her instructions, the subjects involved are free to form their own subjective photographic responses that blurs the boundary between author and subject. The photographs range from the banal, to the profoundly moving and complex representations of their intimate life experiences that otherwise would not be seen and documented. On the other hand, it is the photographs themselves in Jim Goldberg's *Raised by Wolves* (1995) that become the space for collaboration. The book documents the urban poverty found within Los Angeles and San Francisco, featuring photographic portraits of troubled and outcasted youths. Goldberg's approach was to give the photographs he had taken back to his subjects so that they could etch and write their own stories upon their own portraits. This not only provides a platform for them to tell their stories on their terms, but it also serves as a reminder of the subject's humanity. In contrast, my photographic practice shifted towards a collaborative photographic practice as I began to understand and acknowledge the importance of my Father as a co-artist within the work. Before the exhibition, I had utilised the archive as a resource to reflect on, which determined what and where I created my own images. Instead, I instigated a method of approach that responded to photographs that expressed his individual artistic vision as a fellow artist, greatly adopting the Kuleshov effect in order to build a conversation and create a collaboration between two photographic artists. As a result, my own collaborative approach subsequently became more performative, seeking instead to play with the visuals of my Father's photographs and use them as inspirations for my own photographic responses. Whilst I retained aspects of my previous photographic strategies relating to ideas of memories of my Father, this avenue of engagement suggested a greater connection to him through becoming more interpretative towards him as an artist and building on this photographic dialogue. Furthermore, in a similar vein to a conventional collaborative approach, this not only provided a platform for my Father's photographic vision, but also it allowed the work of two photographers to come together in equivalence, within a single body of work. Through the exhibition, my analysis of the archive's relationship to power, and my recognition of

photographic ambiguity, my approach would now be less focused on finding answers to my own preconceptions about my Father's alcoholism. It would instead become centred around sharing a platform with him so that his artistic identity could be celebrated together with my own. In retrospect, the photographic conversation initiated here between Father and Son allowed me to readdress the past in a way that brought a sense of healing and reconciliation.

Whilst I had recognised this potential to engage and respond to my Father's archive in a collaborative approach, I was initially uncertain as how to progress. Eventually, this new direction was only realised through my continued practice of photographing my Mother. In May of 2019, a visually impaired client of hers had tripped and fallen down a set of stairs. During her training, my Mother had been instructed to be in front the client as they descended a set of stairs so that in the event of a fall, the carer would be able to catch the individual in their care. In this case, my Mother was unable to stop the clients fall and my Mother was subsequently injured in the accident. She suffered a fractured pelvis and collarbone, leaving her unable to work. When she returned home after a lengthy stay in hospital, I wanted to document her recovery within the context of the long hours she had been forced to pursue within the role after my Father had passed away. This led me to photograph her in her arm sling sat upon the Weldon family chair, an item which had been passed down as an heirloom on my Father's side (Figure 63). Capturing her in this process of recovery for me not only epitomised the repercussions of my Father's passing on my Mother but placing her within the chair that represented my Father's side of the family signified her present role as a Father and Mother to myself and my Sister. However, on viewing the finished photograph, I instantly realised that I had captured my Mother on the same chair as the one my Father sits upon in one of his self-portraits (Figure 19). Accidentally or unconsciously, I had directly responded to a particular photograph from the archive that also amalgamated the photographic strategy of photographing my Mother. This particular photographic response had a significant influence on realising my concluding overall photographic approach of the project. On the one hand, by responding to photographs from the archive in this manner allowed me to directly connect moments from the past to the present. Yet it also enabled me to artistically interpret and collaborate with my Father's archival photographs in a manner that would allow me to expand my previous

strategies that involved my Mother, memory and the River. This approach also became much more personally performative. The first photograph produced which followed this framework focused on the recreation of one of my Father's self-portraits with myself standing in for my Father (Figure 64). Whilst the photograph serves to point towards the physical similarities between Father and Son, the main motivation behind the making of this image was to reflect my memory of a repeatedly heard, wrongly asserted assumption that alcoholism is 'in the blood' and runs within families. Such remarks had had a significant emotional impact upon myself following his passing, leading to a real fear that I was destined to also manifest aspects of my Father's alcoholism. In retrospect however, this performative photograph also speaks of my wishes to understand my Father's psyche and his idiosyncratic exploration of self through imitating his body language by 'being in his shoes'.

As my research into the archive progressed further, I began to focus on my Father's photographic documentation of Leeds. Of particular interest to me was his many photographs of the side streets or *loins* within the city centre which, as indicated, had also been documented by Peter Mitchell. This recurrence captivated me, yet I was initially unconscious as to why. Over a period of time however, I came to comprehend my fascination. When my Father left our family home, I remember suddenly crossing paths with him in Leeds city centre. I recall feeling very strange meeting him this way whilst he was estranged from us. I had been in a rush, and we did not spend long talking. In the end we parted ways, agreeing to meet for a drink in one of the pubs within the *loins* that we use to frequent together after he had left. Tragically, this was one of the last times I saw him, and we never did meet for the drink in the end. Months after he passed, I was walking the same street and was certain I saw him, far in front of me. I rushed forward to try see him, yet he ended up being totally lost in the Saturday crowds. I am now aware that it is often the case that in a process of mourning, those that are lost to us are often 'seen' in crowds or within the faces of others. I believe that this event had occurred as part of a greater feeling of guilt for not spending longer talking to him on that day. Whilst this was an emotional upsetting experience, connecting his photographs of the *loins* from the archive together with this story became the inspiration for the construction of another performative set of photographs that show a trail of wet footprints passing through the *loins* (Figures 65 & 66).

Using my own feet to create the footprints with water, the images sought to connect his final resting place of the River Aire to this encounter and create the impression that my Father's ghostly form wandered from the river to the *loins*. These images evoke a similar experience of searching for the traces of my Father through the landscape and the archive. That being said, whilst my previous strategies along the River often relied on unfolding chance encounters that reference the real, creating this entirely 'false' scene reflects Fontcuberta's view that "it is only by cheating that we can achieve a certain truth" (Fontcuberta, 2014, p. 108). By creating this scene and using my own footprints to build an impression of my Father unshackles the photograph from the real and uses imagination as a method of communication. This allowed me to artistically respond to the photographs from the archive in a collaborative manner that communicated my very real experiences.

Whereas the footprint photographs work with an authentic memory, having discerned my Father's artistic ambitions within the archive I wanted to imagine, create and photograph a memory that was never able to happen. Whilst he was alive, we sadly never photographed together. Accordingly, I wanted to create a visual memory or moment in which I had been able to photograph side by side that would emotionally allow me to 'be' with him once more. Focusing in on one of his self-portraits in which he is posing before the camera about to light a cigarette (Figure 67), I began imagining what I would have photographed whilst he was creating his image. I became interested in the concept of capturing small details outside of the frame of these photographs which pointed towards his process of image making. Therefore, in response to this photograph, I created an image which displayed a collection of burnt out matches that could have possibly been outside of the frame (Figure 68). These imagine my 'documentation' of my Father, the artist at work, and create a fictional scenario in which we were able to collaborate artistically together. Importantly, I created the impression of my Father's shadow within the frame that aims to recreate him within the process of capturing his own impression. Whereas he captures himself directly in his photograph, capturing his shadow aims to point towards my difficulty of being able to resurrect him complete. He painfully only appears as a trace, a mark, a part – never a whole, despite the feeling of closeness through the photographic process.

Conclusions and the Narrative of Discovery

At the beginning of my research into my Father's archive, I had approached the material with the aim of finding something definitive about my Father through his photographs. This in turn I hoped, would help me understand his path into alcoholism and allow me to come to terms with his tragic passing. Through my investigation into the ideas surrounding photographic veracity, I arrived at the realisation, as described by Sekula, that photographs do not possess a core 'truth'. Instead, the meanings we deduce from photographs are fundamentally framed by the context in which they are received. As Barthes stated, the photograph can only point towards that which 'has been' and as such, my interpretation of those images which I explored within the archive were profoundly shaped by my personal experiences and relationship to him as his son. Whilst this initially set me back at the beginning of the project as I searched for a 'truth' concerning his alcoholism, this awareness in fact liberated my practice as I began to see the potential of this photographic archive. Rather than a translation, my authority over the archive has allowed me to interpret the contents and utilise the fluid and persuasive power of the photograph to construct a new narrative. However, as my research has also emphasised, although I have the overall power to interpret and create those narratives through my ownership of the archive, the choices and selections in the creation of the content operate a significant power of their own. As a result, they have performed a critical role in my evolving interpretations that has transformed my practice. Accordingly, two powers have operated their influence on the realisation of this project, resulting in the work becoming inherently and increasingly collaborative following the discovery of my Father as a 'hidden artist'.

Thus, in the creation of the final work I sought to take the viewer on an analogous voyage of discovery. This journey reflects my own evolving journey through the archive and my final claiming of my Father as the artist. Yet, this narrative is also a reflection of Sekula's notion of the *clearing house of meaning*, demonstrating the commencement of archival material taking on new meanings and associations. To establish this overarching narrative, I eventually completed a series of images which document the 'opening up' of the archive. Of these, towards the end of the project, I took the entirety of the archive back to the site at which it was found. Placing the archive back upon the shelves, I photographed the collected

material assembled there amongst the other items which had similarly been left within the loft to slowly collect dust (Figure 69). Recreating the view which had appeared before me at the beginning of the project establishes not only the sensation of discovery, but also speaks of the potential of the archival contents to take on new significance and purpose. My opening of this physical archive activated the contents and instigated a journey which shifted, changed and expanded my understanding of my Father through the tactile photographic traces of his making. It was specifically through utilising the views of Edwards and Hart regarding the materiality of photographs that I was able to uncover an additional wealth of information regarding my Father's conceivable artistic ambitions. Accordingly, the photograph taken within the loft (Figure 69) also specifically refers to the physical presence of the archive as a source of persuasive contextualising information. This wider materiality of the archive is continuously referenced throughout the work. It is gestured toward through exhibiting the particular ways in which the image content is designed to be viewed, or by retaining and displaying the archive's supporting features. One of the final photographs created for the project focused in on the water damaged and rippled edges of the negative file sheets (Figure 70). Concentrating closely on the waves of the archive not only indicates the deterioration of the archive through its use over time, but it also attests to my changing interpretations of the content as a result of van Alphen's notion of the *active agent*. Furthermore, the oscillation of the pages rather strikingly and poignantly implies a continual return and of new discoveries. In this regard, this photograph and the photographs of the archive physicality also suitably encompasses Derrida's concept of *archive fever*.

To communicate the narrative of unveiling of my Father as an artist and to emphasise the collaborative nature of the work, the project has been brought together in book form. Whilst I was able to realise that by bringing my Father's photographs together with my own in an exhibition enabled the photographs to 'talk to' each other, sequencing selected photographs within a book creates a clearer, linear narrative. This allows me to clearly direct the viewer through my subjective process of discovery and revelation. This is undertaken visually through my mediation and distillation of the aforementioned photographic strategies. That being said, because I was unable to discern anything definitive about my Father's alcoholism through the ambiguous nature of the photograph, the edited narrative

also aims to conceal. This leads the viewer to keep turning the pages and seeking more information that is analogous to my own practices with the archive. This is primarily achieved through utilising the self-portraits of my Father where he appears to obscure aspects of his character, yet it is also found within my own ambiguous photographs that aim to ask more questions than they answer. Nonetheless, each of these photographs submits to my claim that my Father was an artist, who sought to break away from the *shadow archive*, that I have through this project been able to publicly reveal. Most importantly, creating the book allows the work of two photographers to come together in a single body of work. Whereas I had set out to find my Father's path into alcoholism, the final work has transformed into moving and emotional collaboration with my Father, the artist.

Figures



Figure 1: Negative File.



Figure 2: Darkroom Prints & Boxes.



Figure 3: Colour Slides.

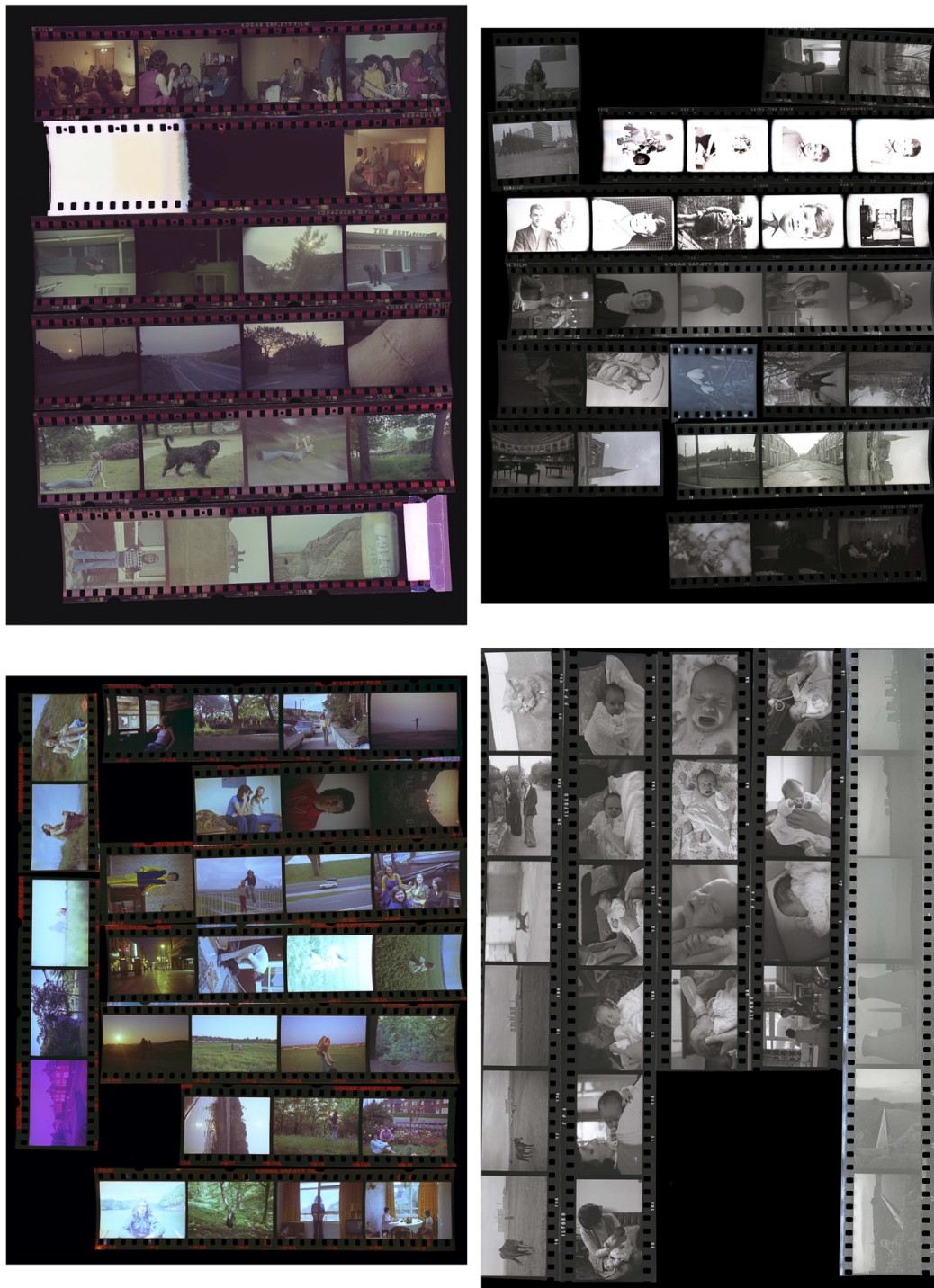


Figure 4: Negative File Contact Sheets.
(Clockwise - Contacts 2, 12, 9, 21)



Figure 5: Organising slide film.



Figure 6: Capturing audio of photographic prints.



Figure 7: Photographic prints videos stills.

Available at <https://www.simonweldon.co.uk/archive-prints>

Page Password: ARCHIVE19



Figure 8: Slide film projection videos stills.

Available at <https://www.simonweldon.co.uk/archive-slides>

Page Password: ARCHIVE19



Figure 9: "MY POSSESSIONS".



Figure 10: 'Maddens', January 1977.



Figure 11: 'Maddens', April 1977.

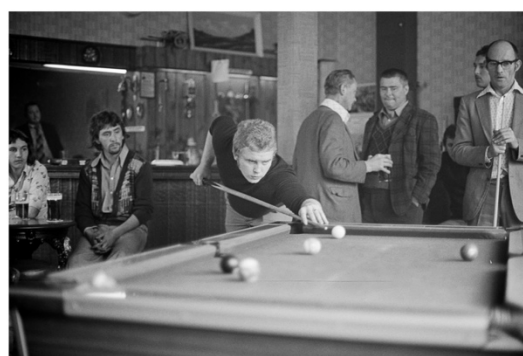


Figure 12.

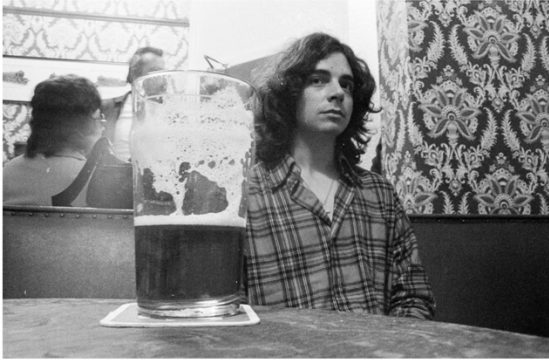


Figure 13.



Figure 14.



Figure 15.



Figure 16.



Figure 17.



Figure 18.



Figure 19.

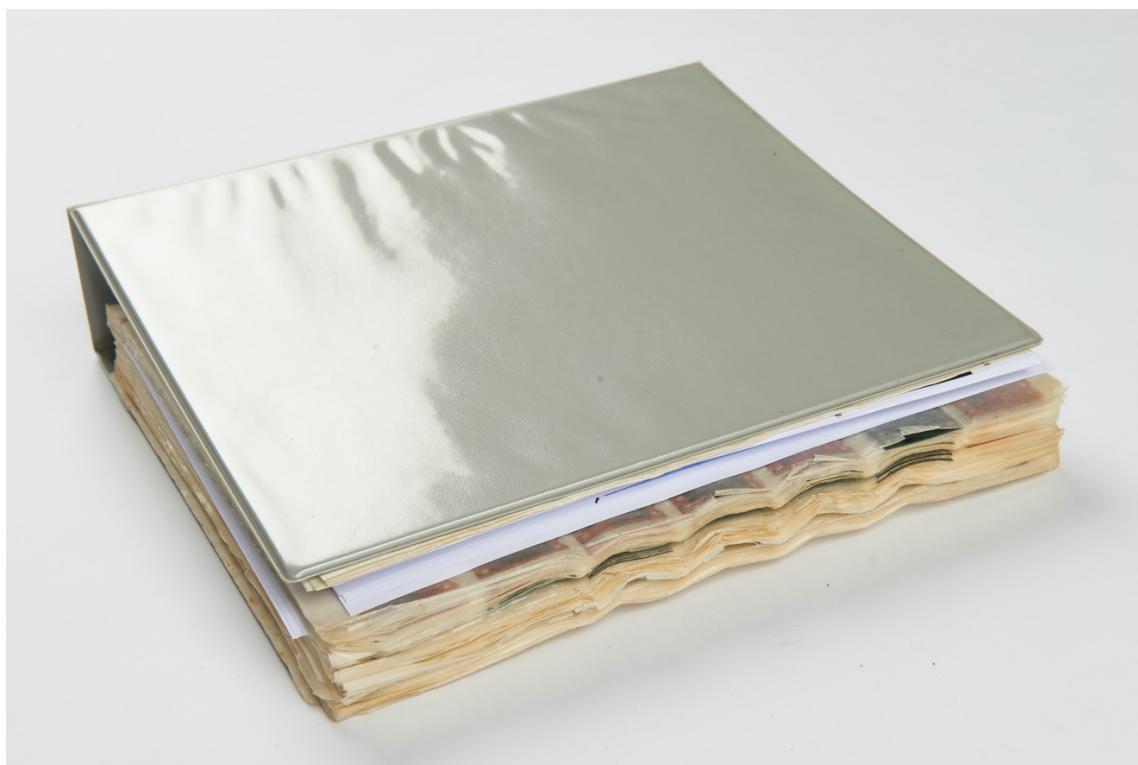


Figure 20: Negative sleeves extending beyond the folder edge.

early Oct 76. Film Nr. 31		Oct 76 Nr. 32		Oct 76 Nr. 33		Nov 76 Nr. 34		Nov 76 Nr. 35		Nov-Dec 76 Nr. 36	
Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT
1	Chris in colour	1	→ Junction	1	Roundhay	1	James	1	Temple	1	Kids at
2		2	2 old women at	2	or	2	↓	2	Neuman	2	James
3		3	Whitelocks	3	Sat	3	↓	3	↓	3	↓
4		4	— " —	4	↓	4	↓	4	↓	4	↓
5	The	5	— " —	5	↓	5	↓	5	↓	5	↓
6	Day	6	— " —	6	↓	6	Down	6	↓	6	Old Women
7	Out	7	— " —	7	↓	7	Me + James	7	Me stored	7	Snowstorm
8	at	8	— " —	8	↓	8	City Sq	8	Chris	8	↓
9	Castleford	9	— " —	9	↓	9	Endy Moor	9	↓	9	↓
10	↓	10	Sunday	10	↓	10	↓	10	↓	10	↓
11	↓	11	Afternoon	11	↓	11	↓	11	Junction	11	↓
12	↓	12	in	12	↓	12	York Rd	12	— " —	12	↓
13	↓	13	town	13	↓	13	Bentley Rd.	13	Record Deck	13	↓
14	↓	14	— " —	14	↓	14	↓	14	Sam (Real)	14	↓
15	↓	15	— " —	15	↓	15	↓	15	— " —	15	Lorraine
16	↓	16	Jim went down	16	↓	16	↓	16	Me	16	Maid Jeff + Jo
17	↓	17	Scamp	17	An Alt	17	Men Only (over	17	Sam (Real)	17	↓
18	↓	18	Jeff with glass	18	Lorraine	18	Alley	18	↓	18	↓
19	↓	19	Kids pushing	19	Killingbeck	19	↓	19	↓	19	Mum at
20	↓	20	car	20	Camy	20	↓	20	↓	20	Club etc
21	↓	21	— " —	21	— " —	21	↓	21	↓	21	↓
22	↓	22	Rebecca	22	— " —	22	↓	22	↓	22	↓
23	↓	23	in	23	Me at Table	23	↓	23	↓	23	↓
24	↓	24	York	24	Potato Pickers	24	↓	24	Best	24	↓
25	↓	25	↓	25	Chris on	25	↓	25	↓	25	↓
26	↓	26	↓	26	settee	26	↓	26	↓	26	↓
27	↓	27	↓	27	Mum with Gran	27	↓	27	↓	27	↓
28	↓	28	↓	28	Waterloo Rd	28	↓	28	↓	28	Sally Rd
29	↓	29	Chase Board	29	Sturton	29	↓	29	C. Aston	29	Lion's Crotch
30	↓	30	Me in bay ↑	30	↓	30	Frank in Palace	30	Stone Feet	30	Shawn
31	↓	31	Puppy heard	31	↓	31	Whitelocks	31	Christians	31	— " —
32	Our	32	Me + Sam	32	↓	32	Man in	32	Man in P. House	32	Bartys Wife
33	Kid	33	Roundhay	33	↓	33	Shop	33	↓	33	Rog
34	being	34	↓	34	↓	34	Sam in Ave	34	↓	34	Our Church
35	bathed	35	↓	35	↓	35	Sam at Rt	35	His Wife	35	Birds on Top
36	+	36	↓	36	↓	36	↓	36	Sam in Alley	36	— " —
37	dread	37	↓	37	James Simon	37	↓	37	↓	37	Tree
38	↓	38	↓	38	↓	38	↓	38	Pump Grass	38	Sewing M/C
39	↓	39	↓	39	↓	39	↓	39	Me in Mirror	39	Our dresses
40	↓	40	↓	40	↓	40	↓	40	T. Gervaise	40	Attie Steps
41	↓	41	↓	41	↓	41	↓	41	B. Megann	41	My Chair
42	↓	42	↓	42	↓	42	↓	42	F. Tomlinson	42	↓
43	↓	43	↓	43	↓	43	↓	43	↓	43	↓

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Figure 23.



Figure 24 (L) / Figure 25 (R).



Figure 26: Photographic Darkroom.



Figure 27: Contact sheets 1 & 5.



Figure 28: Contact sheets 6 & 10.

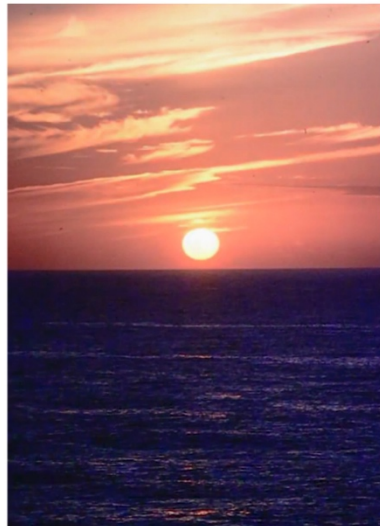
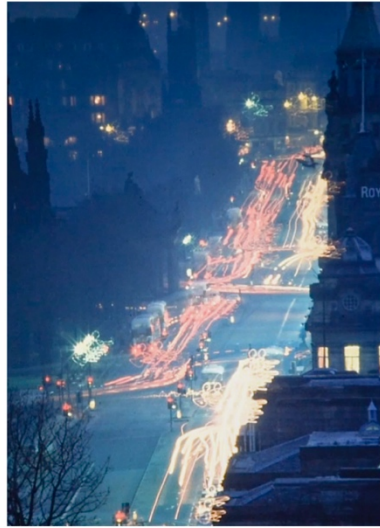
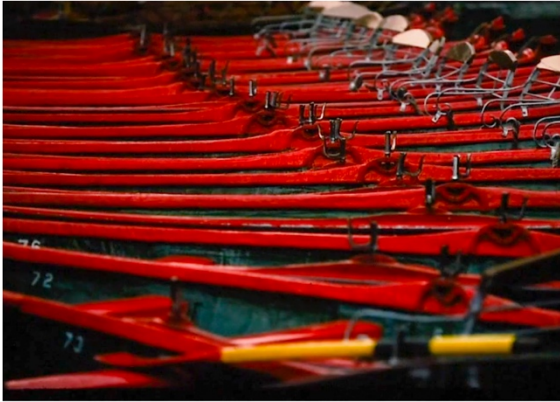


Figure 29.



Figure 30.



Figure 31.



Figure 32.

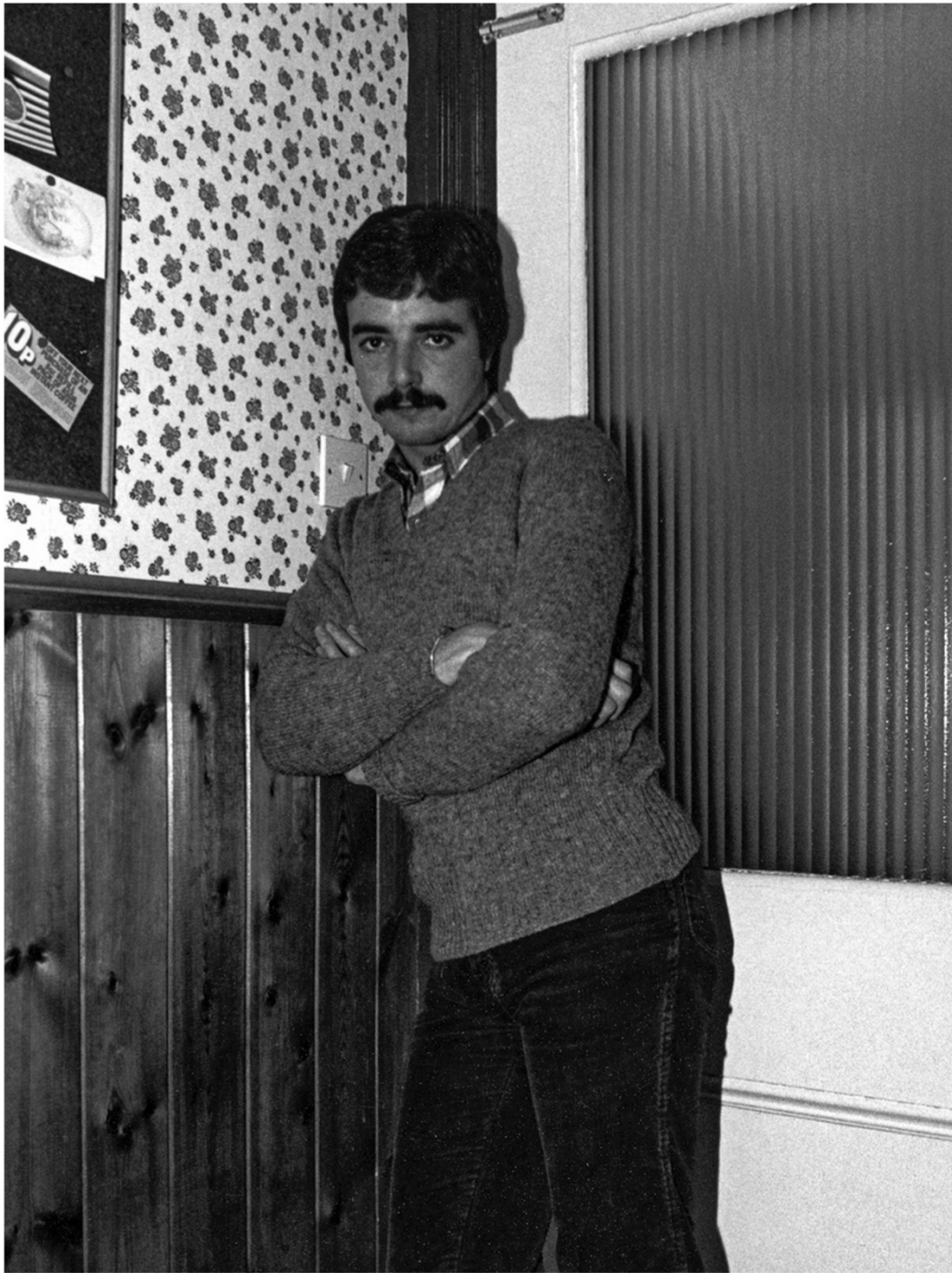


Figure 33.



Figure 34.



Figure 35: Tower Works, Leeds.



Figure 36.



Figure 37.



Figure 38.

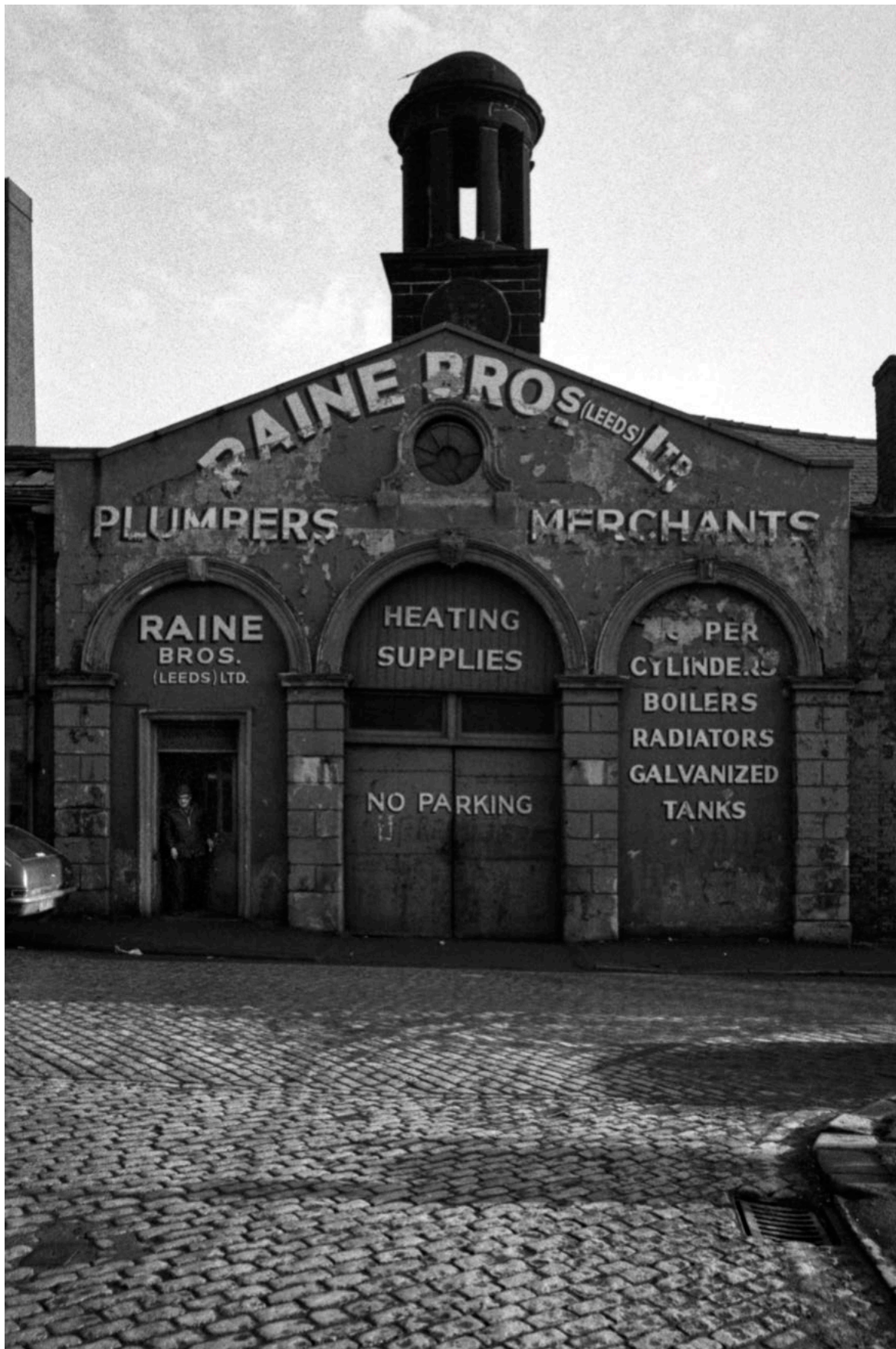


Figure 39: 3rd White Cloth Hall, Leeds.

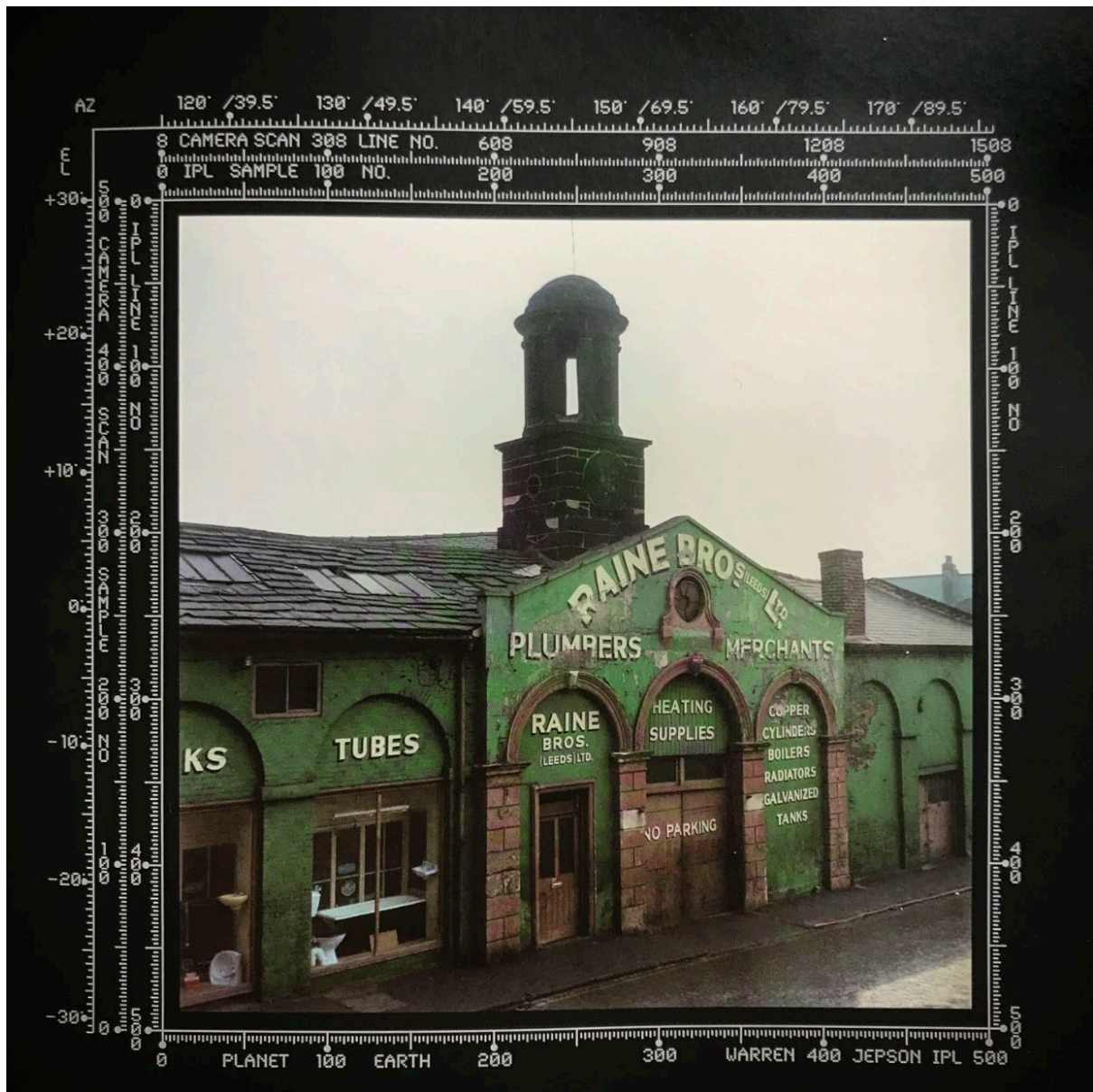


Figure 40: Plumbers, Leeds. (Mitchell, 1974).

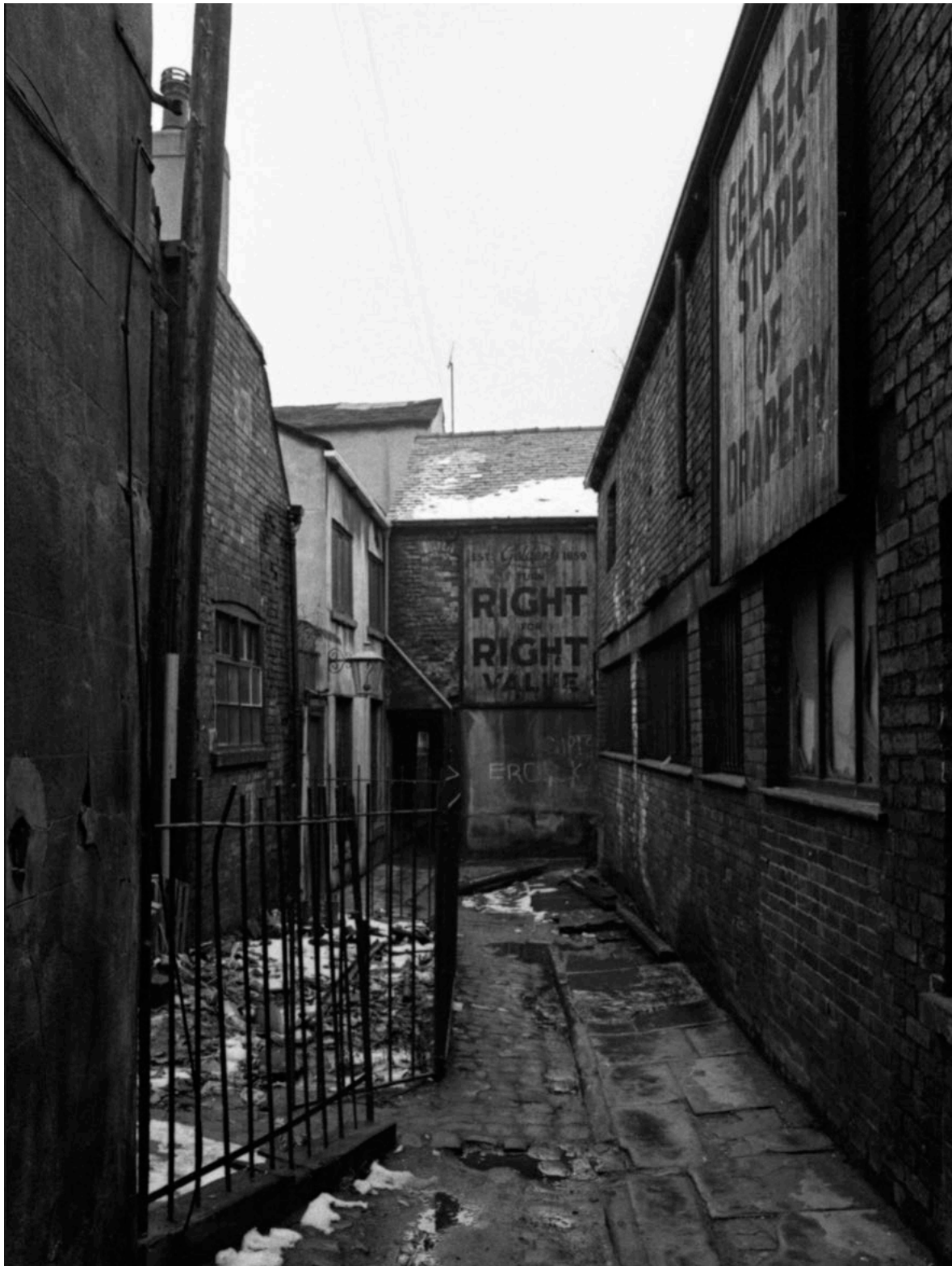


Figure 41: Alleyway near Roxby, January 1977.



Figure 42: Loins, Various Dates.



Figure 43: Peter Mitchell / @strangelyfamiliar.co.uk Instagram



Figure 44: 'Maddens', January 1977.



Figure 45: 'Maddens', April 1977.



Figure 46: Quarry Hill (Mitchell, 1972 - 1975).



Figure 47.



Figure 48.



Figure 49.



Figure 50.



Figure 51.



Figure 52.



Figure 53.



Figure 54.



Figure 55.



Figure 56.



Figure 57.



Figure 58.



Figure 59.



Figure 60.



Figure 61.



Figure 62.



Figure 63.



Figure 64.



Figure 65.



Figure 66.

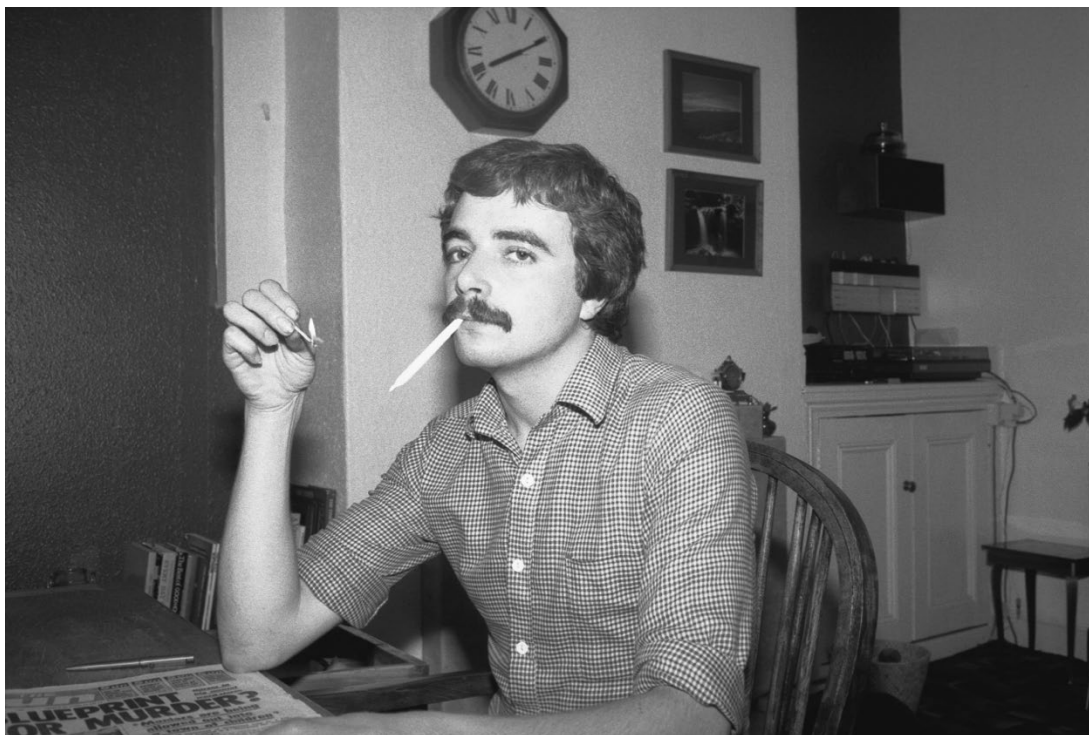


Figure 67.



Figure 68.



Figure 69.



Figure 70.

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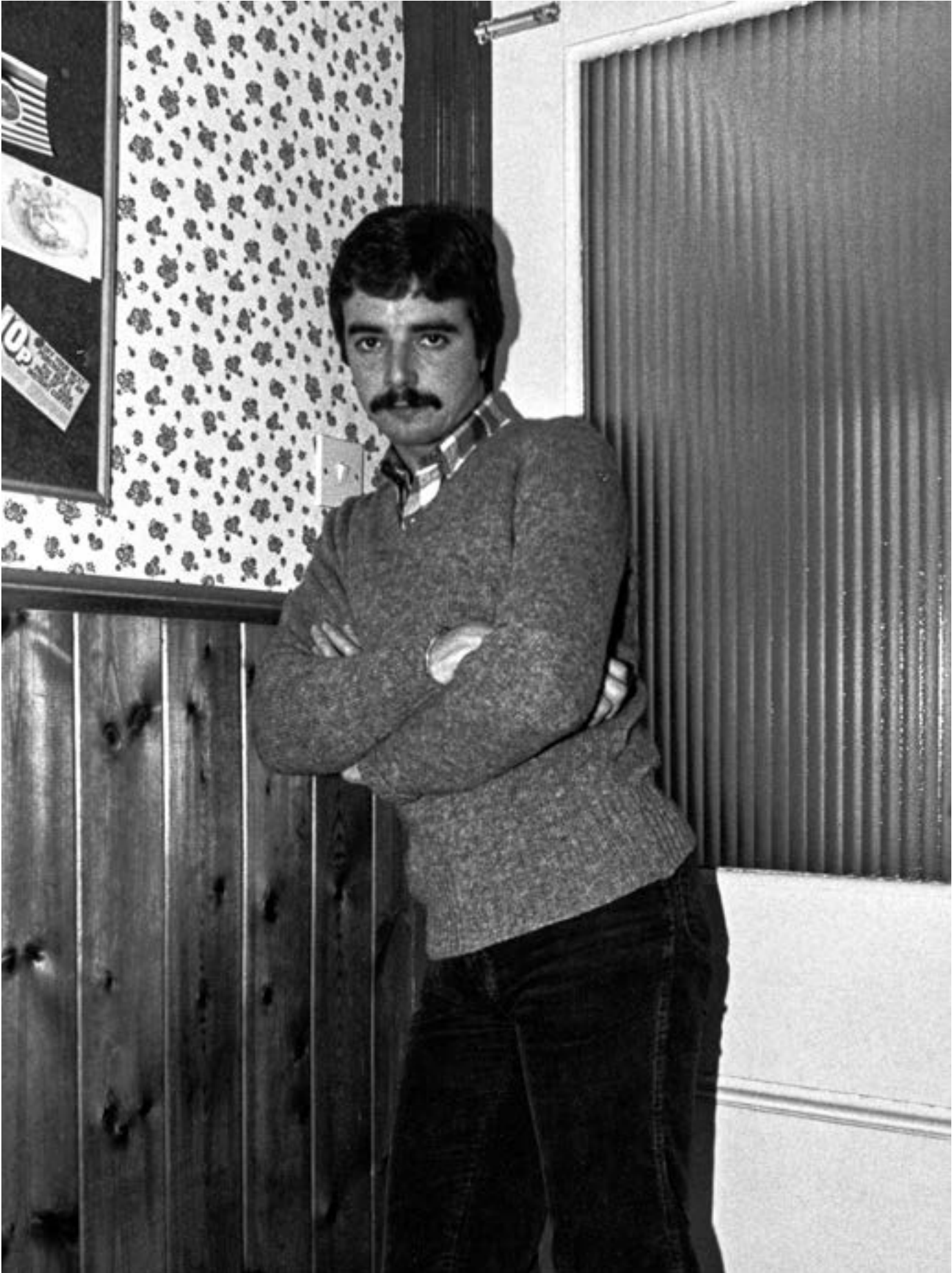
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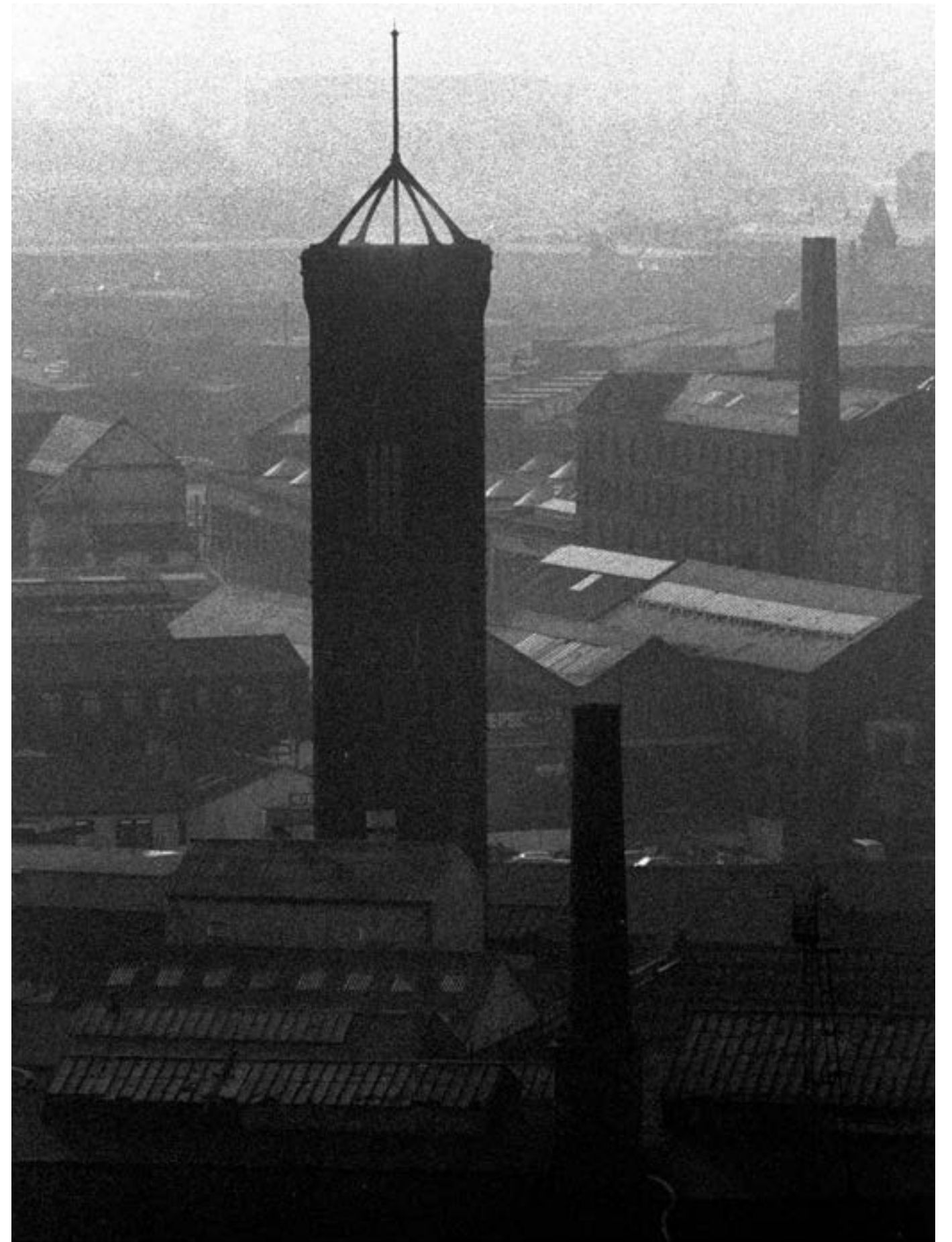
Jan 77		Feb 77		Feb 77		Feb 77		Feb 77		Mar 77	
Film Nr. 43		Nr. 44		Nr. 45		Nr. 46		Nr. 47		Nr. 48	
Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT
1	Ken + Pat	1	Haworth	1	Scarborough	1	Swanton	1	Hidden	1	Buxton
2	— 11 —	2		2	— 11 —	2	↓	2	Bridge	2	
3	Behind	3		3	Train	3	↓	3		3	
4	Cabage in Snow	4		4	House on Bg	4	P. G. G. Dining	4		4	
5	University	5		5	Sheffield	5	Wine Club	5		5	
6	— 11 —	6		6	— 11 —	6		6		6	
7	Swanton?	7		7	Scarborough	7		7		7	
8	Girls 5	8		8		8		8		8	
9	Home	9		9		9		9		9	
10	Sewing	10		10		10	Month Comm	10		10	
11	At Work	11		11		11	Comm. Fund	11		11	
12	Girls in Vindict	12		12		12	Text Chart	12		12	
13	University	13	Montage of	13		13	Edmondson	13		13	
14	— 11 —	14	Home Bg	14		14		14		14	
15	— 11 —	15	Wine	15		15		15		15	
16	Alleys Near	16	Alleys	16		16		16		16	
17	Reaching	17	Wine	17		17		17		17	
18	↓	18		18	Love in Chair	18		18		18	
19		19		19	Sheffield	19		19		19	
20		20		20	Reaching	20		20		20	
21	Dear on funds	21		21		21		21		21	
22	Summer Pictures	22		22		22		22		22	
23	↓	23		23		23		23		23	
24		24	Scarborough	24		24		24	Swanton?	24	
25		25		25		25		25	Club 5	25	Stone
26		26		26		26		26	Chair in	26	College
27		27		27		27		27	Swanton	27	+
28		28		28		28		28	playing	28	Town
29		29		29		29		29	↓	29	
30	Madden	30		30		30		30	Stone Building	30	
31	Old	31		31		31		31	↓	31	
32	Architecture	32		32		32		32		32	
33	in Leeds	33		33		33		33		33	
34	↓	34		34	Dimensions	34		34	Reaching Station	34	
35		35		35	Swanton	35		35	Stone	35	
36		36		36		36		36	Station	36	
37		37		37		37		37	Buxton	37	
38		38		38		38		38		38	
39		39		39		39		39		39	
40	Vindict	40		40		40		40		40	
41	— 11 —	41		41		41		41		41	
42	Real Day	42		42		42		42		42	
43		43		43		43		43		43	

Loiner

MICHAEL WELDON / SIMON WELDON













Jan 77		Feb 77		Feb 77		Feb 77		Feb 77		Mar 77	
Film Nr. 43		Nr. 44		Nr. 45		Nr. 46		Nr. 47		Nr. 48	
Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT	Nr.	TEXT
1	Len + Pat	1	Haworth	1	Scarborough	1	Function	1	Ubbidon Bridge	1	Buxton
2	— " —	2		2	— " —	2	↓	2		2	
3	Behind	3		3	Train	3		3		3	
4	Coburg in Snow	4		4	Loose in Egg	4	P. Givote Drawing	4		4	
5	University	5		5	Sheffield	5	Mums Club	5		5	
6	— " —	6		6	— " —	6		6		6	
7	Function	7		7	Scarborough	7		7		7	
8	Girls	8		8		8		8		8	
9	Lorraine	9		9		9		9		9	
10	Seuring	10		10		10	Me with Cream	10		10	
11	At Work	11		11		11	Canned Food	11		11	
12	Girl in Headset	12	↓	12		12	Teat Chart	12		12	
13	University	13	Montages of	13		13	Todmorden	13		13	
14	— " —	14	Lorraine Egg	14		14		14		14	
15	— " —	15	Wine	15		15		15		15	
16	Alleys Near	16	Alleys	16		16		16		16	
17	Rocky	17	York	17		17		17		17	
18		18		18	Loose in Chair	18		18		18	
19		19		19	Sheffield	19		19		19	
20		20		20	Day trip	20		20		20	
21	Dear on ponds	21		21		21		21		21	
22	Snow Pictures	22		22		22		22		22	
23		23		23		23		23		23	
24		24	Scarborough	24		24		24	Banneto Club	24	
25		25		25		25		25		25	Stone
26		26		26		26		26	Chris in	26	College
27		27		27		27		27	box +	27	+ Town
28		28		28		28		28	playing	28	
29		29		29		29		29	↓	29	
30	Maddens	30		30		30		30		30	
31	Old	31		31		31		31	Stone Revels	31	
32	Architecture	32		32		32		32	↓	32	
33	in Leeds	33		33		33		33		33	
34		34		34	Dimensions	34		34	Railway Station	34	
35		35		35	Function	35		35	Stone	35	
36		36		36		36		36	Station	36	
37		37		37		37		37	Buxton	37	
38		38		38		38		38		38	
39		39		39		39		39		39	
40	Viaduct	40		40		40		40		40	
41	— " —	41		41		41		41		41	
42	Riel Day	42		42		42		42		42	
43		43		43		43		43		43	

Mar 77 Film Nr. 49	Mar. April 77 Nr. 50	COLOUR. Nr. 51	Colour Nr. 52	April 77 Nr. 53	MAY 77. Nr. 54
Nr. TEXT	Nr. TEXT	Nr. TEXT	Nr. TEXT	Nr. TEXT	Nr. TEXT
1 Stone Coll	1 Me	1 Our kids	1 Sandras Wedd	1 Chas & Benas	1 Halifax
2 + village	2 Round	2 Christening	2 Mum Dad + Chas	2	2
3	3 Pictures at	3	3 Our House	3 T.N. Bowls Hut	3
4	4 Stone TTC	4	4	4 Sky 2+am	4
5	5	5	5	5 Bench CV	5
6	6	6 Photos of	6 Annette	6 T.N. Park	6
7	7	7 our	7 Me	7 Rpt in W. glass	7
8	8	8 House	8 Bedroom	8	8
9	9 Our class	9	9 Mum + Dad	9 Chas	9 Chas + Mum
10	10 M62	10	10 Me + Post	10	10
11	11 City Sq. from	11	11 Leaf	11	11
12	12 Ryder + Barclay	12	12 Eucalyptus	12	12 Chas
13	13 Lungs	13	13 2	13 Frank	13
14	14 Our Butcher	14	14 Test Prints	14 Plans garden	14
15	15 Sun in Ship	15	15 B.S. Eucal	15 Orange & s	15
16	16 Man at Regent	16	16 Kids	16 Tomato	16
17	17 + Girlfriend	17	17 in	17 S. Annetts House	17
18	18 Riggers on Top	18	18 PARK	18	18
19 Buxton	19 My Dad +	19 Joan at	19 Temple	19	19
20	20 Corried	20 Rurham	20 Newsum	20	20
21	21 + Me	21 Our	21 Mushrooms	21	21
22	22 Man in Ship	22 Sandras	22 P Fox	22	22 Favorite
23	23 Guildford	23 Wedding	24 Fox + Frank	23 Lupus	23
24	24 Christine	24	25 Rat Ruc	24 CV. Daffodil	24 Holbeck Horse
25	25 Lorraine	25	26 Fred	25 Victoria	25
26	26	26	27 Kito	26 S. H. House	26 Holbeck
27	27 Mum	27	28 MLO	27 Lorraine	27
28	28 Sunset Town	28	29	28	28
29	29 Me + Rifle	29	30 SCAMPS	29	29
30	30 Leaf Skeleton	30	31 Parents	30 Madden	30
31	31 Me on Tree	31	32 DOUBLE EXP	31 Lorraine	31
32	32 Me + FF	32	33	32 Halifax	32
33 Stockport	33 Temple News	33	34 QUARRY HILL	33	33
34 Stafford	34	34	35 M.O. Virginia	34	34
35	35	35	36	35	35 Vent near
36	36 Lorraine	36	37 Me in S. Gear	36	36 MLO
37	37	37	38 Exotic Prints	37	37 Nurse on Bike
38	38	38	39	38	38 East St
39	39	39	40 Cats	39	39
40	40	40	41	40	40 Log
41 Gals in	41	41	42	41	41
42 Wayfarer	42	42	43	42	42 Coding Banks
43	43	43		43	43





MADE IN ENGLAND
VIEW FROM THIS SIDE

























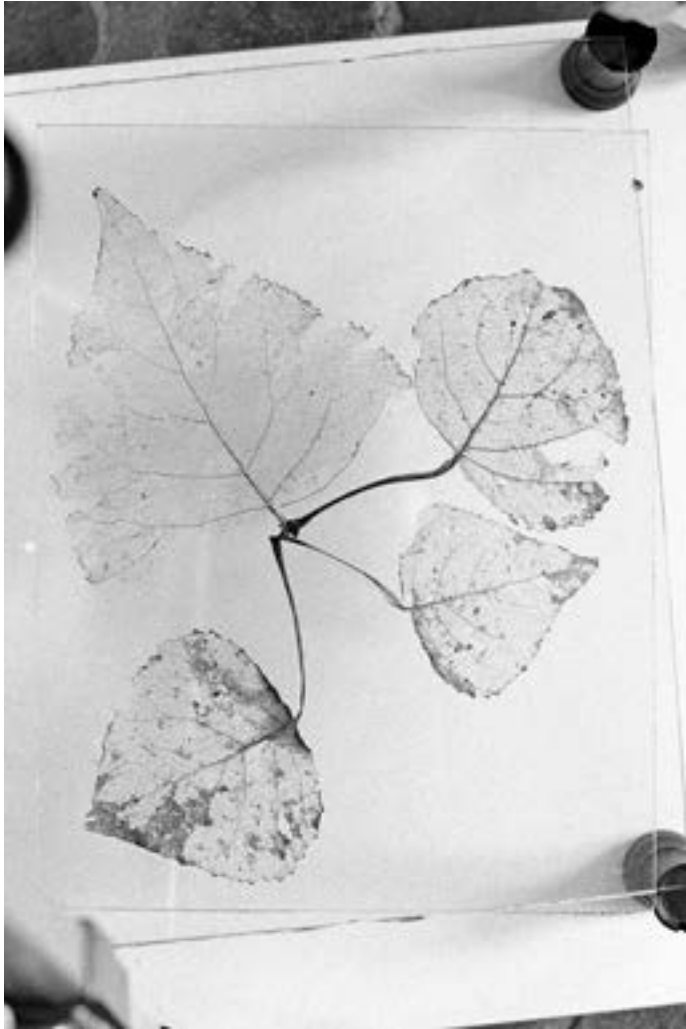
























To Dad,

I have been thinking about how to start this letter for longer than I can remember. For the past few hours at least, I have been watching waves of falling hailstones on my window and listening to the howling wind from the safety of my own home.

These past few years have been so difficult. I think we all tried to overlook certain memories we have of you during those last few years that you were still with us. I spent a long time forgetting what I wanted to remember and remembering a lot of what I wanted to forget. It has been exhausting for all of us in our own ways, and the whole testing experience has made me feel much older than I would like.

I hope this will reach you somehow, because I wanted to let you know that I have been going through your photographs recently - I hope you don't mind. It's been good to see you this way. Your photographs don't show the creases of your face anymore, or how you ended up in the end. But I have found something more here - you were a great photographer Dad.

I know you didn't want to leave. Standing on our doorstep that day, I think you knew that you wouldn't make it back. You just didn't have a choice. Yet as I go through these photographs now, I don't think you ever really went away. I think you had always left these for me, I just needed to find them.

Your son, Simon.



I would like to especially thank Liam Devlin, Stella Baraklianou, Richard Higginbottom, Jamie Collier and Nicki-Joe Baxter for all their continued support, advice and enthusiasm in helping me realise this project.

Most of all, I must thank my Mother for all her determination and strength, my Sister for always looking out for me and my partner Megan McGoldrick for always believing in me.

Finally, I want to thank my Father. Your passion for photography and your encouragement of me when I was young gave me a life that you never had. This work is for both of us. You were a great Father and friend.

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