Book review

Industrial Heritage Re-tooled: the TICCIH Guide to Industrial Heritage Conservation, 2nd edition

James Douet (ed.), Routledge, London, UK, 2015, ISBN 978-1-6295-8203-0, £28.99, 255 pp.

James Douet has collated 32 chapters from an impressive range of academic and industry contributors based across the world. He sets out how the book arose as the result of a charter conference held by the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (Ticcih), an organisation that is a special advisor to the International Council on Monuments and Sites on industrial heritage. As a result of a conference in the steel-milling and tank-manufacturing town of Nizhny Tagil in the Russian Urals, the Nizhny Tagil Charter for Industrial Heritage was signed in 2003. The charter, which is included in full in the book, asserts that the buildings and structures constructed for industrial activities, the processes and tools used within them and the towns and landscapes in which they are located, along with all their other tangible and intangible manifestations, are of fundamental importance to cultural heritage. It then identifies the value of industrial heritage and principles of maintenance and conservation, and although this is all in line with the now well-established principles of conservation, there are some useful new nuances. For example, it is noted that human skills used in obsolete processes should be recorded and transmitted to younger generations. The book is composed of a series of chapters that explore and challenge the ideas in the charter.

The book is helpfully split into themed parts covering values and meanings; understanding evidence; realising potential, which is by far the largest part; sharing and enjoying; teaching and learning; and a final section about Ticcih. It is well illustrated, and the chapters are of essay length, making it accessible to dip into and read a chapter at a single sitting.

In his introductory chapter, Sir Neil Cossons recognises that most interest in heritage grew out of curiosity about the study of the medieval age and earlier. Industrial heritage is a new and challenging arrival, and it can be difficult for post-industrial communities suffering economic decline to have the means to conserve industrial heritage. There is much evidential value in the physical fabric, machinery and landscape; however, the sense of a 'place of work' and its link to the local community and housing is important too. Cossons highlights the relationship between academic study

of a site and the emotional value that a community places on a former industrial place of work. He challenges the reader to ditch comfortable heritage predilections and comfortable traditions and see whole landscapes and communities rather than individual sites and buildings.

Gustav Rossnes's chapter on process recording notes that as a result of deindustrialisation, there is now an increasing heritage category of disused industrial facilities, which needs to be recorded, as only a fraction of these sites can be preserved. As the function of an industrial site is often of great importance, the recording of the production process is essential to complement the building survey and requires interpretive drawings, illustrations and process flow charts that go beyond technical drawings. Interviews with workers and management are also necessary to understand the company's culture and its place in the community.

Barrie Trinder explores how industrial archaeology as a discipline is diminishing at universities and is being replaced by courses that make students 'work ready'. He advocates the study of machines by using them and learning from creating evidenced-based replicas of locomotives and other machines. This hands-on, physical knowledge is a crucial part of understanding alongside other archaeological techniques. Trinder also notes the wide range of types of sites that industrial archaeologists might encounter – their work may involve researching the artefacts, images, structures, sites and landscapes of a fourteenth-century copper smelting, the Dounreay nuclear reactor or school buildings in nineteenth-century Bradford.

Another fascinating chapter, by Masaaki Okada, illuminates the values of landscapes created by the abandonment of industrial facilities. The aesthetics of industrial ruins is compared with ruins in eighteenth-century picturesque gardens. The valuable historic testimony of an industrial site is a combination of its form, function and the passage of time creating a weathered ruin, which can have its own positive aesthetic value.

In conclusion, this interesting book is a thought-provoking read for all those interested and involved in conserving industrial and engineering heritage and wanting to look at conservation from a variety of less common perspectives.

Jackie Heath