

**A PLACE TO CALL HOME:**

making connections between people, households, neighbourhoods, communities and cities

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between:  
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and cities

Social Futures Institute  
University of Teesside  
19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2004

## CONFERENCE REPORT



REGENERATION  
**EXCHANGE**

COAST&COUNTRY  
HOUSING  
*"providing homes that people choose to live in"*



**Evening Gazette**

University of Teesside  
Middlesbrough  
July 19- 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004

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Ten years ago, the University of Teesside hosted a conference to explore the meaning of home at many different levels. Its connecting theme, and its title **'Ideal Homes?'** reflected our interest in exploring the intersection between the idea of home as it is 'imagined' with the realities of day to day domestic life. Many of the publications that later emerged from its contributors addressed this potential mismatch between ideas and reality - concerning issues as diverse as the experience of the economic migrant to that of the victim of domestic violence.



From an exhibition of paintings by children at Sacred Heart RC Primary School, Middlesbrough

**A Place to Call Home** returned to this agenda, but in a different way. This conference was interested in the connections between home and community, home and family, home and a sense of self identity. We explored the impact upon people of being homeless, or being separated from the place that they properly think as their 'real' home - as in the case of asylum seekers and refugees and economic migrants.

Home is generally defined as a safe and secure environment - but in reality this is not always the case. We considered the experience of those people who do have a home, but that their experience of it is ruined by the behaviour of their immediate

neighbours or the environment within which they live. We also looked at changing attitudes to home and the changing structure of households: considering the experiences of children and young people and the transitions older people make in their home lives.

Our agenda had theoretical and empirical dimensions in the sense that we wanted to explore changing values, attitudes and behaviour in the home and neighbourhood, the community and city. But we also had a strong orientation to policy and practice too. So we looked at the impact of new policies, the benefits that interventions have produced, discussed the shortcomings of policy and practice, and worked out how things can be improved.

## Guest Speakers

The conference was formally opened by Mayor Ray Mallon, elected Mayor of Middlesbrough. Ray welcomed the delegates



Polly Toynbee, photo by Judy Hume

to Middlesbrough and then outlined his vision for the regeneration of the town. In particular, he stressed the importance of raising expectations for the town in order to tackle many of the effects of industrial decline. Issues such as tackling anti-social behaviour, breathing new life into challenged communities and attracting inward economic

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investment were emphasised. The conference then welcomed one of its two distinguished guest speakers: Polly Toynbee, Guardian columnist and broadcaster. Polly delivered her lecture which was entitled '*Home Truths: What the poor need most is more money*'. This lecture was sponsored by the **Evening Gazette's** 'Tees Pride' campaign and was chaired by Gazette editor, Steve Dyson.

The lecture explored the kinds of problems the very poorest paid workers in Britain have in achieving stability and security in their day to day lives. Polly examined how the government should act in order to tackle this problem so that low-paid people can enjoy the kinds of home life others are able to enjoy. She drew upon her experiences which were reported in her recent book 'Hard Work: Life in Low-Pay Britain' when she took the lowest pay jobs in hospitals, schools and other areas of public services to see how ordinary, hard-working people managed to live their lives in poverty. This hard-hitting lecture challenged the government's taxation system which effectively subsidises employers and encourages them to pay low wages - thereby catching many poorer workers in a kind of debt-trap.



From left to right: Fiona Ellis, Tony Chapman, John McCarthy,  
photo by Judy Hume

Our second guest speaker, John McCarthy, writer, broadcaster, film-maker, and former

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Lebanon hostage addressed the conference. His speech, '*There's no Place Like Home*' was sponsored by **Northern Rock Foundation** and was chaired by Fiona Ellis, Director of the Foundation. His lecture considered how many people, often for reasons beyond their control, find that their home lives are unstable or fractured by outside events such as wars, famines and other disasters. By drawing upon his experiences as a hostage in Lebanon and on his life after returning to Britain, John explored how everyone, at some point in their lives find that home can be experienced as insecure and unpredictable. In this moving and yet often humorous speech, John explained the process of recovery from the trauma of being separated from home and family, and in so doing, helped to explain why 'home' is such a central idea in our conception of well-being, security and happiness.

### Debate

The conference featured 33 academic papers, which covered a range of issues which impact on the experience of home and community. These themes included: children and young people, older people, diversity, cultural change, the gendered home, homelessness, community cohesion, together with debates on 'what works?' when making policy interventions in challenged communities.

A key aim of the conference was to explore ways of making connections between people, home and community. This was discussed further in open debates after each stream of papers was complete. The following debates were held: Older People, Friendship and a Sense of Place, Sponsored by **Coast and Country Housing**; Young People and Tackling Social Exclusion, Sponsored by **Middlesbrough Council**; The Role of Art and Culture in Social Regeneration; Sponsored by **Northumbrian Water**; and Children, Home

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and Neighbourhood, Sponsored by the **Stockton Borough Council**.

### Art Events

The conference featured a number of art events, sponsored by *Regeneration Exchange*. At the centre of these events were two specially commissioned exhibitions of photography. The first was an exhibition drawn from an arts programme for Africans in the North East, called KARIBU (Swahili for welcome).



*From the Karibu Exhibition © Alan Vaughan, Studio Arts*

The Karibu project encourages collaboration and dialogue between artists and non-artists and between people from different cultural backgrounds. It is about encouraging ways of thinking which are informed by the perceptions and experiences of Africans. The

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Exhibition featured photographic portraits of asylum seekers and refugees by Alan Vaughan. These were accompanied by text by the individuals and families who were featured in the images.

The second exhibition, 'A Place to Call Home' presented pictures from a competition sponsored by Regeneration Exchange for secondary schools in the Tees Valley. We asked entrants to capture in photographs why the Tees Valley is home to them. Entrants were asked to think about home in the broadest possible sense and we encouraged entrants to produce imaginative, striking or quirky images that had been enhanced by digital technology to increase the artistic quality of the piece or to merge or overlay different images.



*Prize winning photograph from the children of St Michael's RC School, Billingham*

Members of the Social Futures Institute Management Board judged the entries to the competition. The four prize-winning entries to the competition have won a digital camera for their school.

The individual prize winning photographs were won by Sam Shepherd (aged 13) Hummersknott School, Edinburgh Drive, Darlington and Louise Berridge (aged 12) from Ian Ramsey Church of England School, Green Lane, Stockton on Tees. We also

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awarded a prize to St Michael's RC School, Beamish Road, Billingham for two images. One of which symbolised an inclusive community, showing a circle of masks of people from origins around the world, made by the children looking towards each other. The other image pictured all the masks



From Karibu exhibition © Alan Vaughan, Studio Arts

looking outwards and away from each other, showing what community life should not be like.

Finally, we awarded a special prize to the children of Sacred Heart RC Primary School, Ayresome Street, Middlesbrough for a series of paintings. Each of the pictures showed two sides of the same street. One side of the street was beset with problems such as litter, vandalism, car fires and other types of antisocial behaviour. While on the other side, all was neat, clean and peaceful, just as a good neighbourhood should be.

Before John McCarthy's lecture, a new film was premiered. made, by children on Teesside. The film, 'Safe Havens', which included cartoon sequences by Teesside University animation students addressed the issue of asylum from the viewpoint of children. The film was introduced by Rowena Somerville of Tees Valley Arts. Three other films were also screened including: *Short Stories from Home* A film made by Braendam Link, Glasgow hearing the voices of children in poverty in deprived areas. *Home*. An award winning film of dance made by young people in London, Washington DC and Taunton, sponsored by NESTA. The film presented images through dance of the way that home is perceived by young people. We also screened *Diversity in our Town* a film produced by young people, through the Middlesbrough Youth Service, as part of a Community Cohesion funded project.



One of a series of paintings by the children of Sacred Heart RC Primary School, Middlesbrough

The conference also featured the creation of a 'mandala' (produced with herbs, spices, salt, beans, etc.) by the conference delegates and directed by Adrian Moule of Tees Valley Arts, a performance by Diaspora of 'rainbow', and a display of wall hung copper-wire sculptures by members of Karibu.

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## CONFERENCE PAPERS

### CULTURAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL COHESION

*Towards the Regeneration of Beeston Hill and Holbeck*, Leeds: David J. Horner, *Renew Leeds*.  
*City living in Leeds: A Sustainable Urban Future*: Paul Dutton, *Centre for Research in Applied Community Studies, Bradford College*

*Culture and Regeneration: Cultural Quarters in the UK*: John McCarthy, *University of Dundee*  
*Evaluating Cultural Regeneration: The Role of Place*: Andrea Abbas, Jeanne Moore and Susannah Moon, *Social Futures Institute, University of Teesside*

*Neighbourhood Cohesion and Informal Control. Views of Parents about Parents in their Community*.  
Jacqueline Barnes and Graeme Baylis, *Birkbeck College, University of London*

*Great Expectations: 'Reassurance Policing', Nostalgia and the Public's Quest for Order*.  
Stuart Lister, *University of Leeds*

### REDEFINING HOME

*Flooding: A Home Lost or Redefined*: Simon McCarthy, *Department of Sociology, University of Surrey*  
*Home, well-being and quality of life for homeworkers*: Jeanne Moore, *Social Futures Institute, University of Teesside*

*Masculinity, Motherhood and Machines in the Home*: Elizabeth B. Silva, *Department of Sociology, Open University*

### WHAT WORKS?

*Neighbourhood Renewal and the Management of Social Change*: Emma Casey, Tony Chapman, Robert Crow and Paul Keenan, *Social Futures Institute, University of Teesside*

*Managerialism vs Real Evaluation*: Paul Allender, *Coventry University*; Phil Cleaver, *University of Warwick*  
*Learning By Doing – Community-based projects for the community by the community*:

Janet Dixon-Dawson, Robin Haggart and Paul Pye, *Social Futures Institute, University of Teesside*

*Difference and Space: The Management of Conflict on Old Eldon Square*: Peter Rogers, *University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*

### OLDER PEOPLE

*Elder Abuse: You're Never Too Old to Hurt*: John Harrison, *Social Futures Institute, University of Teesside*

*Is This my Home Now?:* Ann Williams, *University of Wales College of Medicine*

*Going Outdoors with Dementia?:* Tim Blackman, Clive Fencott, Brian Hobbs, Anthony Martyr, John Robinson and Paul Van Schaik, *Social Futures Institute, University of Teesside*

*Housing Decisions in Later Life: Policy and Practice*: Mary Leamy, Roger Clough and Vince Miller  
*Social Futures Institute, University of Teesside*

*'Option Recognition': Accommodating Later Life*: Sheila Peace and Caroline Holland, *The Open University* and Leonie Kellaher, *London Metropolitan University*

*Transitions from the Public World of Work to the Private World of Home: Couple Relationships in Post-Retirement Life*: Eileen Fairhurst, *Manchester Metropolitan University*

*Old Folks at Home: A Pilot Study of the Domestic Environments of Older People*: Sue Jackson and Peter Kellett, *University of Newcastle*

*Ring Around Carers: real friendship in a virtual setting*, Jude Habib and Catherine Mitchell, BBC Special Features Unit, and Terry Veitch, Community Network.

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## HOMELESSNESS

**Youth Homelessness in the UK and Greece: Definitions of Home and Homelessness:**

Eleni Skoura, *East Kent Cyrenians*

**Older Irish Migrants Living in London: Identity, Loss and Return:** Gerard Leavey, Associate Director,  
Haringey Teaching Primary Care Trust

**Homelessness: What Helps and What Hurts when Trying to Fit Back into Society:** Megan Ravenhill  
*London Metropolitan University*

**Bringing Order to Chaos? A multi-agency approach to supporting women with chaotic lifestyles**  
Karen Morse and Joanne Gray, *School of Health and Social Care, University of Teesside*

## DIVERSITY

**No Place to Go? Identifying Gaps in Services for South Asian Women Experiencing Sexual and Domestic Violence,** Salma Castle, Carrie Singleton and Eileen Green, *Centre for Social and Policy Research, Social Futures Institute, University of Teesside*

**'Neither Here nor There?' Perceptions and Realities of 'Home' amongst Punjabi Communities in the UK and India:** Deborah Booth and Steve Taylor, *Social Futures Institute, University of Teesside*  
Manjit Singh, *Department of Sociology, Punjab University*

**"Our New Island Home": Placelessness, Statelessness and the Transient Landscapes of an Asylum-Seeker Community in North East England,** Colin Clark, *University of Newcastle*

## YOUNG PEOPLE

**"Our Neighbours are Our Friends": Social Capital and Community Cohesion in Liverpool: A Space for Children and Young People?** Ginny Morrow, *Brunel University*; Mike Jones, *The Children's Society, Liverpool*.

**Out and about. Views of 11 Year Olds about Three Contrasting Communities.** Graeme Baylis and Jacqueline Barnes, *Birkbeck College, University of London*

**Making/Leaving 'Home': Young People's Plans, Revisions, Experiences and Reflections**  
Sheila Henderson, Sheena McGrellis, Rachel Thomson, Sue Sharpe and Janet Holland  
*London South Bank University*

**Growing Up in Poor Neighbourhoods: The Significance of Place in the Extended Transitions of 'Socially Excluded' Young Adults** Robert MacDonald, Tracy Shildrick, Andrea Abbas, Mark Cieslik, Donald Simpson, Mark Simpson, Colin Webster, *Social Futures Institute, University of Teesside*

**Building Connections: Using Heritage Projects to Involve Young People in their Communities**  
Sharon Goddard, *Heritage Lottery Fund*

**The Mill Road Monsters: A Case Study of 'the Community' versus 'the Street Life'** Stephen Moore and Peter Scourfield, *Anglia Polytechnic University*

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our conference sponsors

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