

Civic Spirits? Ghost lore and Civic Narratives in Nineteenth-century Portsmouth

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ABSTRACT: Arguing for a more historicized approach to hauntological theorizing this article explores the insights to be gained from urban ghost lore. Focussing on nineteenth-century Portsmouth, it uses ghost lore to penetrate the town's dominant narrative as the home of the Royal Navy. Through examining the ways in which ghosts variously informed a sense of community, tacitly subverting civic narratives whilst also resonating with key features of 'official' memory, this article argues for the existence of interpretative struggles over urban spaces, places, and identities. In doing so it seeks to highlight the potential value to historians of a developing 'spectral turn'.

Key Words: ghosts, urbanization, folklore, hauntology, civic culture

Portsmouth's nineteenth-century civic culture was founded on the idea that the town was both home and handmaiden to the Royal Navy. Simply put, 'The history of Portsmouth is the history of its development as a naval port'.¹ This familiar interpretation, located within larger national and imperial histories, has remained the dominant lens through which historians have engaged with this Hampshire town. This article deliberately seeks to explore alternative, co-existing ways in which the town was read and understood by its nineteenth-century inhabitants. Through an investigation of Portsmouth's ghost lore it peers beneath the veneer of the 'official' town to suggest the existence of interpretative struggles for spaces, places, and communal identities.

While attempting to enhance our understanding of the complexity of nineteenth-century urban identities this article also aims to present a more historicized approach to what has become known as hauntology, a term coined by Jacques Derrida. In focussing on ghosts as

historical entities it seeks to harness hauntology's theoretical approaches to the grounded practices of historians working within specific cultural and localised contexts. Starting with a brief examination of what is almost inevitably being termed a 'spectral turn', the article's central focus is on the function of ghosts and ghost stories in forging communal bonds, collective memories, and urban spatial understandings.² By considering how 'spectro-geographies' could both subvert and resonate with more 'official' interpretations of the town it seeks to demonstrate how ghost lore can complicate our appreciation of contemporaries' perceptions and understanding of their local urban environment, shedding light on their ambiguous relationship with developing civic cultures in this period.³

The 'Spectral Turn'

Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* employed the spectral as a deconstructionist methodological tool by which to consider the disjointed nature of time, being, society, mourning, and Marxism. In such contexts the figurative ghost and a more ambient sense of haunting both come to serve as 'a powerful critical presence'.⁴ Hauntological approaches are attuned to the multiple spectral presences in modern urban society, from the operation of the economy (most obviously depicted by Adam Smith's notion of an 'invisible hand') and the law, through ideas of state, nation, and empire, and on to a host of other power/knowledge discourses that are both nebulous and real, impossible to touch yet undeniably present. Hauntology places an emphasis on the haunting, spectral qualities of experience, communication, agency, and understanding.⁵ The appeal of ghostly tropes reside in their inherent ability to confound boundaries, making them ready agents of (post-)postmodern theorizing which remains highly suspicious of rigid, dichotomous assumptions. In their past-but-present, dead-but-'alive'

nature ghosts are rich liminal signifiers and as such hauntology seems ripe with analytical and interpretative possibilities for historians.

However, as a theoretical approach, hauntology has shown itself to have conceptual blind spots. Its (over-)emphasis on the temporal dimension and the failure to engage with the historicized spatial aspects of hauntings has already drawn critical fire. Roger Luckhurst has called for a focus on the generative loci of specific hauntings at specific locations to offset ‘the generalised structure of haunting’ to be found in Derrida and his respondents.⁶ This article offers a response to that call. In doing so it adopts the view that while Derrida provided a useful analytical starting point his abstract, universalised notion of the spectral needs to be reconfigured to the historians’ concerns for the specificity of both time and place; hauntology’s potential insights need to be focussed in spatially and historically located ways.

Derrida’s promotion of the spectral as an analytical tool may have contributed to and has certainly coincided with an increasing interest in ghosts among historians. Recent works would suggest this derives from individual research needs rather than reflecting any conscious participation in a ‘spectral turn’.⁷ Unlike the cultural theorists’ tendency to present ghosts as ahistorical abstractions historians have been naturally inclined to engage with ghosts as localised historical entities. Yet the historically contextualised approach is not without its own methodological issues. Clive Barnett and David Matless have argued that a narrow focus on the context of specific ghosts offers an illusory sense of confinement, both in terms of framing device and explanation. This containment encourages a sense of fixed meaning, thereby enabling us to falsely believe we can obtain a firm understanding of something that is inherently unfixed, unstable and prone to ambiguity.⁸ Therefore this article attempts to navigate between the excesses of abstract generalisation on the one hand and the enclosed interpretive understanding of specific ghosts on the other. In doing so it seeks to ally the historian’s practices to the urban cultural theorist’s appreciation of cities as locales

that inspire a sense of haunting and phantasmal otherness (other people, lives, times, and places), feelings that frequently render the urban a site of subjective emotional experience rather than rational comprehension.⁹

Despite their seemingly random appearances ghosts are functional entities, and as with any cultural product that function changes over time and in different contexts. In the early modern period ghosts and ghost stories had possessed explicitly social functions, to right wrongs, expose guilt or injustice, and restore the moral order.¹⁰ By the nineteenth century these functions were losing their potency and communal validation, and Victorian commentators were inclined to promote the apparent purposelessness of modern ghosts.¹¹ This was aided by contemporary apparition theorists who sought to explain (away) ‘ghosts’ as ocular misperceptions, neurological glitches, or the products of disordered minds, interpretations which built upon an early modern tradition of pathologising ghostly manifestations.¹²

This article advances the view that nineteenth-century ghosts served more implicit communal functions than their early modern variants. There were still particular concerns which could ‘invite their appearance,’ most notably property disputes.¹³ By being jarring anachronisms that fused past and present, here but absent, ghosts possessed inherently subversive qualities that problematized accepted ‘norms’. In the context of this article ghosts will be used to consider the palimpsestic nature of spatial discourses and to suggest both the divergent and convergent spatial narratives which existed within nineteenth-century Portsmouth. Derrida’s invocation to speak with spectres rather than just of them may have been an innovation (and invitation) to theorists in the mid-1990s but such approaches had been long embedded in local urban communities’ relationships with their ghosts.¹⁴

Portsmouth, the Royal Navy, and Civic Culture

Portsmouth's nineteenth and early-twentieth century local historians repeatedly retold the recent history of the town as the modernization of the Royal Navy, the development of the Royal Dockyard which serviced it, and the consequent urbanisation that followed.

Accompanying this was the gradual cleansing of the town, in terms of both public health and immoral behaviours. Essentially, theirs was a well-rehearsed narrative of how nineteenth-century Portsmouth became 'modern'.¹⁵ This may have been intended to foster a sense of inclusive civic unity but in doing so it necessarily excluded and occluded other narratives too. Whilst highlighting the neat contours of Portsmouth's modernization these historians generally shied away from the uneven relationship between the Royal Navy, the town's civic authorities, and its local communities.

More recent historians have identified 'tensions between the city and the navy' although 'such matters were not for public hearing'. The imbalanced relationship was encapsulated in the view that 'Portsmouth needed the navy and was proud to serve, for the navy had made the town what it was.'¹⁶ This perception arose from, and was sterilized through evocative militaristic, nationalistic, and imperialistic rhetoric. In reality labour relations within the dockyard could be tense, especially since the Admiralty actively discouraged trade unionism by highlighting national and strategic needs over local labour interests. Despite many working-class families having relatives who had either been or were in active naval service not all 'dockies' were blindly loyal to their employer.¹⁷ From the Admiralty's perspective the town could be seen as parasitic upon, or, in its role as purveyor of vices for servicemen ashore, as an active threat to the health of the Navy.¹⁸ Yet its reliance upon the dockyard to build and service its ships meant the relationship between the Navy and Portsmouth's local communities was more often symbiotic than rigidly hierarchical.¹⁹

The Navy's influence on locals was physical, economic, and psychological. Its need for fortifications and gated access to certain areas such as the dockyard determined how locals could move about the town. The constant presence of sailors and marines was unavoidable. At the same time the dominance and self-sufficiency of the dockyard as an industrial enterprise ensured that Portsmouth's economy was governed less by market forces and more by the strategic requirements of its powerful patron and the variable demands of war or peace.²⁰ The naval presence informed Portsmouthians' identity and mythologized self-image, enabling them to view themselves as 'more heroic and sea-going than the average [Englishman], even if they spent most of their lives in a solicitor's office.'²¹ These ideas were consciously fostered through Portsmouth's evolving civic architecture which physically imprinted a naval and imperial symbolism upon the town.²² This civic culture came to maturity in the second half of the nineteenth century with the reclamation and levelling of Southsea Common, the construction of the esplanade and Clarence Pier, the creation of the People's (later Victoria) Park, and the building of Portsmouth's neoclassical town hall in 1890. Statues and relics commemorating the Napoleonic and Crimean Wars were placed in public spaces as a way of reinforcing the 'official' memory of the town's naval heritage.²³ These architectural processes of monumentalizing and memorializing helped define what Simon Gunn has termed 'the "official city"'. Peaking in the period between 1880 and 1914 such developments made cultural and spatial assertions as to how the town should be interpreted and understood by locals. The military and naval associations also found more pervasive but mundane expression in the town's numerous pubs and streets which referenced famous admirals, generals, and battles.²⁴

Beyond the passive indoctrination that was engendered by simply moving through these spaces there was also emphasis on a more conspicuous, performative component to Portsmouth's civic culture. From the 1850s, and developing as the century drew to an end,

the launching of naval ships was attended by thousands of civilian onlookers who were permitted into the dockyard for the occasion. By the time the dreadnaughts were launched in the Edwardian period this had become a well-known and well-rehearsed civic ritual. Fleet reviews also attracted large civilian crowds along Clarence Pier, their numbers bolstered from the 1890s by the willingness of civic authorities and local employers to permit school children and workers to attend. More selectively, the civic elite held banquets in the Guildhall to celebrate the town's naval associations.²⁵ Whilst attempting to encourage a symbolic homogeneity around a shared civic identity these rituals clearly served as an expression of the civic elite's ability to act as the voice of the town and to facilitate at least a ceremonial connection between its military and civilian spheres.²⁶ Yet as will be demonstrated below, 'official' civic orderings of parts of the town did not necessarily equate to how locals understood or attached themselves to particular urban locations. Whilst not necessarily amounting to an explicit opposition to civic homogenisation, Portsmouth's ghost lore emphasises a persistent identification with localities away from these projects and rituals of civic modernisation.

Ghost lore and Communal Bonds

Portsmouth's rich ghost lore can be situated in the broader context of maritime 'superstitions'. Sailors have been described as 'perhaps the most superstitious order of workmen in the world', and whilst vibrant ghost beliefs were obviously not unique to port towns, Portsmouth had an abnormally large maritime population.²⁷ It seems more than coincidental that in 1911 D.H. Moutray Read could claim 'you will find as many ghosts in hustling Portsmouth as in the remotest [Hampshire] village'.²⁸ Maritime 'superstitions' were ingrained in the mentality of sailors and their families who remained ashore for they served to

assuage anxieties relating to the hazards of naval warfare and life at sea. Many of these beliefs were linked to the prevention of drowning but others concerned hauntings and phantasmal returns. In the 1850s HMS *Asp* had such a reputation for being haunted ‘that it was difficult to persuade any crew to sail in it’.²⁹ Ghost stories were passed on orally from generation to generation of seafarers, via the ships upon which they served and in the port town communities in which they dwelt. Although this mentality may not have directly translated into a propensity for urban hauntings in Portsmouth it seems improbable that such highly developed instincts were left aboard ship during shore leave. The shooting of three volleys of gunfire during burials at sea was believed to ‘scare away evil spirits’ and there are indirect suggestions that such beliefs persisted ashore too. In Portsmouth in 1822 a Dr Hallett openly advertised his various services in the *Hampshire Telegraph*, amongst which was the provision of cures for evil spirits.³⁰

Sailors retained strong links to their land-based families, both real and imagined, a bond that was frequently etched in tattoos on their skin.³¹ Their families reciprocated such ideas, imagining themselves bound over great distances to their absent men. Numerous commentators recognized the hardship faced by the wives and children of naval servicemen who often struggled to make ends meet and the loss of a husband and father at sea could plunge families into abject poverty.³² Unsurprisingly, Portsmouth’s inhabitants tended to have a mental fixation with ‘the perils and privations’ of seafaring, something that was only relieved by ‘the riotous rejoicings’ that accompanied sailors return to shore.³³ Writing about presentiments F.J. Proctor claimed ‘many a mother in Old Portsmouth had had a feeling of impending danger, or that on a particular day a loved one far from home had been lost at sea.’³⁴ These emotional and sympathetic bonds between mariners and their families help explain why the return of the drowned sailor’s spirit to shore was a familiar trope of maritime folklore. Nor was it unknown for this to operate in reverse, with the ghost of a recently

deceased relative appearing before a sailor whilst far away at sea.³⁵ As such there existed a marked cultural propensity within nautical communities (including those left ashore) towards thinking with ghosts. This becomes more understandable when we consider who Portsmouth's ghosts tended to be. Unlike the headless aristocrats associated with country estates most were recognisably plebeian. Given the town's maritime culture there were obviously sailors but they were accompanied by, amongst others, a beadle, an actor, a theatre manager, and a barmaid.³⁶ There were other, more amorphous grey figures but none possessed the ostentatious trappings of wealth (such as a coach and horses) that may have prevented local working-class communities from seeing themselves in, and identifying with these 'ordinary' ghosts.

Ghost stories were reliant upon oral culture for their circulation but their purpose could be altered by the different contexts in which they were told and received. David Hopkin has clearly illustrated how telling ghost stories aboard ship served to bind crews together, provided a narrative vehicle for practical and moral lessons, and acted as a form of cultural currency and cheap entertainment.³⁷ Sasha Handley has suggested that telling ghost stories also served as a cultural link to home whilst sailors were at sea since many maritime tales were based on 'legends that sailors brought with them from home'. Developing trade links meant mariners also participated in a trans-Atlantic exchange of ghost stories which were then circulated back to land-based communities upon their return. Tellingly, Handley notes that '[m]any ghost stories from these years were set in and around coastal ports', and frequently involved sailors as protagonists.³⁸

The homosociability of tavern culture had traditionally been sustained by recounting tall tales, supernatural experiences, and ballads, and early nineteenth-century Portsmouth's inns were no exception. W.H. Saunders suggested that once alcohol had lowered inhibitions customers were liable to exchange accounts of ill-fated vessels, phantom ships, prophecies,

and sea monsters.³⁹ The focus of these particular topics suggest it was mariners who were more likely to be the narrators of such tales. In attempting to reconnect with land-based communities after a period of absence, ghost stories provided a shared vocabulary through which the exotic strangeness and dangers of life at sea could be transmitted. Through tales told in taverns or around the household hearth, townsfolk would have been familiar with the narrative conventions and popular meanings associated with such stories. Yet these entertainments were frequently reciprocal in nature and while Portsmouth's taverns served as a popular site for importing tales from overseas they also facilitated the renewed telling of more local, land-based accounts that sailors could subsequently take on their voyages. Local urban ghost stories tended to dramatize the prosaic concerns of plebeian life, be it unfaithful or abusive partners, cruel employers, or greedy landlords.⁴⁰ Regardless of whether or not audiences believed the accounts, the exchange of such tales created an oral community which encompassed Portsmouth's seafarers and land dwellers alike, thereby informing the hybrid urban-maritime cultures found in port towns.

Local Memory and Urban Comprehension

Portsmouth's ghost lore was embroiled in the nature of the town's nineteenth-century urban expansion. From Old Portsmouth, the dockyard, and the naval base in the south-western corner of Portsea Island, the process of urbanization incorporated Portsea and Landport which had gradually developed outside the old town's walls, and continued through the century to swallow the nearby villages of Fratton, Kingston, Copnor, and Milton. Father Dolling, a clergyman resident in Landport, provided a neat if overly-simplistic summary of four distinct areas that were being consolidated in this period; Old Portsmouth was 'thronged with soldiers', Portsea with sailors, and Landport and Kingston were occupied by dockyard

workers. Added to these notably plebeian communities was the development of Southsea, a suburb for retired military officers and Portsmouth's wealthier inhabitants that grew into a Victorian seaside resort. Dolling added that 'This quadruple town ... has been a very difficult mass out of which to create a really united city'.⁴¹ Urban ghost lore's emphasis on place helped inform the localised fractures. In doing so it tacitly ran counter to the emerging civic cultural rhetoric that sought to imagine and appeal to the town as a collective entity. For example, in Kingston local legend told of how the ghosts of murderers hanged near its gaol 'flocked to satanic revels on Velder Heath', a space that was also built upon over the course of the nineteenth century. The path that linked Kingston churchyard, the gaol, and Velder Heath was known to locals as 'Deadman's Lane' despite it being developed and renamed St Mary's Road in 1830.⁴²

A notion of demarcated communities within a larger urban conurbation had long existed in Old Portsmouth. 'The Point' stood at the mouth of the harbour and unlike the rest of Old Portsmouth had not been fortified in 1800. Without the restricting gates and walls that controlled the movement of other Portsmouthians, the Point's inns had developed a deserved reputation as places of hard drinking, brawling, and, if F.J. Proctor is to be believed, 'nightly scene of Bacchanalian orgies and tumults'.⁴³ 'Pointers' had a local reputation for being coarse, tough people and their ghosts served as a reminder of their locality's boisterous past. The Quebec Tavern had been a popular meeting place for 'sailors, fishermen, stage coach drivers and smugglers' and there was a rich local tradition of its surviving buildings being haunted. William Gates recorded that 'strange noises' were heard which 'suggest that the spirits of some of the old roysterers [sic] revisit the scene'.⁴⁴ This hints at the way in which ghost tales served as mnemonic aids, enabling locals to retain memory of their (past) spatial identity even as it was incorporated into the growing town. The specificity of place was important to the tale's veracity whilst telling and retelling the ghostly narrative reinforced

local bonds to particular sites, marking them out as significant reference points in one's mental map of the locality.⁴⁵ Local ghost stories may have helped temper the sense of change that accompanied urban modernisation for they offered a reassuring stability. Ghosts and their stories were largely impervious to the town's physical transformations and frequently persisted long after the material environment had altered.⁴⁶ As Tim Edensor has noted, while ghosts can frighten they can also provide lingering, even comforting association with things that have supposedly gone. At the same time ghosts evoke 'a sense of lessening' which can facilitate a gradual letting go of the past as much as a desperate clinging to it.⁴⁷

In this context it is useful to note Sasha Handley claim that the role of ghost stories in retaining memories of a remembered home became more significant as urban migration increased. I would suggest that such tales not only fostered links to one's place of origin but also assisted in incorporating new arrivals into a locality, enabling them to be drawn into loose but no less real 'narrated communities'.⁴⁸ Portsmouth's nineteenth-century ghost accounts helped transform mere 'space' into a more culturally and historically significant sense of 'place', forming the bedrock of local communal identity for migrant and settled individuals alike. Ghosts were sustained by the oral culture of these local communities but in return they 'testified to the strength of that community as a source of authority and a powerful repository of knowledge'.⁴⁹ Ivy Cranage was a key local figure within this context. Born in Portsmouth in 1874, she became a repository for the town's ghost lore. Locals would call at Cranage's home near the Guildhall to inform her of their experiences of seeing dead relatives, 'furniture moving, ghostly lights, spectral perfumes', and, in one case, a 'phantom dog which was said to haunt a house down by the docks'. Such was her renown that in later life she would be invited to Christmas parties where 'she would [regale] the company with tales of Portsmouth's other inhabitants.'⁵⁰

Although rare, urban ghost hunts made explicit what local ghost narratives were constantly doing beneath the surface, namely making communal claims upon the locality whilst injecting a disruptive element into the ordered, mundane city. Rumours of ghost sightings actively drew inhabitants out into the streets, leading to an impromptu public assertion and reclamation of communal spaces by locals. In September 1854 *The Portsmouth Guardian* reported how for two consecutive nights rumours of a ghost had left ‘the neighbourhood of the Jewish Synagogue ... well-nigh impassable’ for several hours. Unusually for an urban ghost, this was not the standard anthropomorphic figure in white. With either an excess of imagination from locals or a mocking exaggeration of hearsay by the press, the ghost was described as being ‘like a gigantic Cochin China cock, with boots and spurs, and fifty tremendous horns, others maintain that it has glaring eyes, 37 in number, and formidable hoofs ... and fire and brimstone issuing from its mouth.’ Needless to say, such a bizarre entity ‘created quite a sensation in the district.’⁵¹ Turning out into the streets to catch sight of such an apparition was a form of collective entertainment that reiterated a boisterous and persistent plebeian street culture. While civic authorities may have gradually tamed popular culture as the century progressed, accounts of ghost hunts serve to illustrate how unusual circumstances could briefly cause that street culture to reassert itself in ways that were difficult to predict, manage or control. These implications hint at the more subversive qualities of local ghost lore, suggesting that locals were not passively civilised by the persuasive presence of the town’s developing civic culture.

Civic Memory: Subversion and Resonance

Isaac Land has recently argued that the mid-nineteenth century witnessed ‘the final assimilation of the common seaman into the pantheon of British heroes’, thereby enabling

officialdom to embrace the reconstructed sailor as the heroic, dutiful 'Jack Tar'.⁵² Local ghost lore tacitly undermined this particular aspect of Portsmouth's civic rhetoric for it generally eschewed the mythologizing of sailors as national and imperial heroes. Knowing and living with the reality of such men locals were less willing to pander to such fanciful distortions. This was evident in accounts of the ghost of the Old Blue Inn in Broad Street, Old Portsmouth. Locals told of how an early-nineteenth-century guest had begrudgingly slept in a double room in the coaching inn on the proviso that the other bed would remain unoccupied. When he awoke during the night he was annoyed to find another occupant in the room. His displeasure swiftly turned to fright when his companion was revealed to be the ghost of a sailor wearing dated clothing, his head bound with a bloodied handkerchief. Accounts suggested that the unfortunate sailor had died after having his head split open in a drunken brawl with some marines.⁵³ This story did not necessarily criticize the rowdiness of sailors on shore leave so much as tacitly rejected official attempts to portray them as heroic figures.

The Portsmouth Ghost, a local street ballad from around 1820, promoted an equally unflattering message about the unreliability and unfaithfulness of mariners. As the ballad states in its opening, 'The truth of this is known full well, as thousands in [Portsmouth] can tell'. The ballad tells of a young Portsmouth maiden who becomes pregnant and is then abandoned by a Captain of the Guard after he sets sail. In her desperation the young woman sells her soul to the Devil so that she can exact revenge upon the man who has stolen her honour. She brutally cuts the child from her womb and kills herself. The woman's vengeful spirit then appears before sailors on the ship that is carrying the captain. Having exposed the man's guilt to the frightened crew she grabs her ex-lover and drags him into the sea. Despite the local setting this was a familiar and long-established narrative derived from the role ghosts had played in early modern courtship ballads and murder pamphlets.⁵⁴

As a form of popular memorialisation ghost stories which evoked the messy human wreckage of drunken brawls and abandoned lovers served as reminders of a less refined past, exposing the town's sordid underbelly that a civic culture attempted to eclipse through its emphasis on order, architectural grandeur and modernization. Ghost stories were devices which collapsed that safe, historical distance for in each telling revenants of that brutal past returned to the present. These accounts did not merely connect past and present but consciously articulated a localised expression of the past *in* the present. A correspondent to the *Portsmouth Evening News* in 1946 provided an extreme example of this. As a little girl she had been left understandably shaken by the appearance of a 'ghostly figure in old-fashioned sailor's clothes' who had emerged from the closet in her bedroom in a house in Broad Street, Old Portsmouth. The house had formerly been an inn and her father later informed her that 'an old "Pointer" had told him of a murder which had taken place in that room, "back in the wicked old days." A sailor had hidden in a cupboard and strangled a young woman sleeping in the bed'.⁵⁵ Accounts such as this tacitly but repeatedly undermined the civic gentrification that Portsmouth's elite attempted to enact upon the rumbustious nature of a military-industrial town.

Localized ghost stories also became ways of constructing discursive spaces that possessed the potential to subvert more official spatial orderings. As Terry Gunnell has argued in a rather different context, regardless of their veracity, local 'legends have always involved an alteration of the environment in the minds of the listeners'.⁵⁶ Telling ghost stories left little or no trace upon the historical record but they wrought a subtle transformation in people's understanding of and engagement with their local environment. These subversive capacities drew ghosts into local power relations, informing contestations over how spaces, places, and the people who (had) frequented them should be perceived and remembered. Local ghosts could be read as implicitly counter-hegemonic agents of the 'unofficial' city, entities that

could not be easily erased or incorporated by more official civic narratives. Ghosts were seemingly made for resistance for they possessed an elusive yet obdurate guerrilla-style existence, being insubstantial, potentially present but not necessarily actualized.⁵⁷ Their ability to move freely and contest the solidity of change was perhaps one of their most empowering aspects for in doing so they disrupted an ‘habitualized sense ... of materiality, space and bodies’.⁵⁸ As entities out of joint with both space and time they were inherently insubordinate. In walking their own routes, regardless of the physical obstacles that may manifest around them, they were paragons of Michel de Certeau’s rebellious pedestrians, remaking the urban environment to their own rambling configurations rather than abiding to ‘official’ spatial ordering.⁵⁹ Concurrent with Portsmouth’s later nineteenth-century official memorializing, ghost stories represented a misaligned localized narrative memorializing, often of more mundane locales.

In this regard it is important to note where Portsmouth’s ghosts materialized. Most surviving accounts were generally located outside the areas that were being transformed by the civic elite’s conspicuous moves towards modernization. Old Portsmouth appears to have had the greatest concentration of ghosts, being the traditional heart of the developing urban conurbation and the part most steeped in history, naval or otherwise. Illustrative of a common domestic focus, in May 1800 the house of Mr Rood, a wine merchant resident in the High Street, was briefly plagued by an outbreak of apparent poltergeist activity. One of his servant girls was suspected of being ‘the cause of this supernatural event’ for she often appeared to be ‘combating with Spectres or Demons’. She had previously been discharged from service to a local cobbler after his house had been shaken by such ‘tremendous noises’ that it was thought the building was ‘being wrenched ... from [its] foundations’; shortly after the events in his house Rood similarly dismissed her from his employment.⁶⁰ Later nineteenth-century accounts told of a woman in grey who haunted a house near the King’s Bastion while ‘much-

whiskered sailors' had been seen to walk the ramparts. In East Street the figure of a 'tall, thin man' was said to disappear when people addressed him.⁶¹ Old Portsmouth continued to be a locus for ghostly appearances and activities into the early twentieth century. Around 1920 the occupants of a house in St Thomas Street appeared to have taken a remarkably blasé attitude towards a host of spectral phenomena. A relative later recorded that 'the smashing of unseen glass, bells ringing and doors coming unlocked without cause, [and] heavy invisible bodies crashing from the top of the main staircase to the bottom were trivial everyday happenings'. More disturbing was the ghostly woman who stared in through an upstairs window and the ghostly presence that caused people to move aside on the staircase.⁶²

As the above suggests, most of Portsmouth's ghosts were intimately woven into peoples' lives and the town's material fabric through their haunting of houses, inns, and particular streets. It is notable that as 'new' ghosts emerged in the later nineteenth century, evolving as newer parts of the town acquired the weight of their own local histories, they tended to be linked to commercial rather than civic or military locations. In 1856 Henry Rutley reopened Landport Hall as the Theatre Royal on Commercial Road. The hall had supposedly been built on an old racquet court that had been used for dramatic entertainments, although these were eventually stopped after the actors claimed 'there was a ghostly addition to their company at the close of each performance.'⁶³ Memories of these former hauntings served to stain the site for the new theatre soon gained a reputation for being haunted too. Rutley had been in the habit of patting his workers on the back to praise their efforts. He died in 1874 but after the theatre was rebuilt and reopened as the New Theatre Royal in 1884 numerous cleaners told of having felt someone pat them on their backs. Somewhat grimmer was the ghost who haunted one of the dressing rooms, believed to be an actor who had cut his throat in that room in the 1880s.⁶⁴ Next door to the theatre was the White Swan pub which was also haunted from the 1880s by the ghost of a barmaid who had been murdered there by her sailor husband.⁶⁵

Therefore while the civic elite fostered associations with the Royal Navy and imperial grandeur in the late-nineteenth century, Portsmouth's ghost lore emphasized institutions of entertainment and frivolity rather than work, warfare, or civic identity. This suggests a growing emphasis on the town as a town, not just as an appendage to the dockyard or the Navy.⁶⁶ Importantly later ghosts were not usually sailors and servicemen but civilians. These developments raise doubts as to how effectively Portsmouth's naval and imperial civic rhetoric captured the minds of its inhabitants. While loyalty to locality and town were not mutually exclusive, local ghost lore serves as a reminder that the areas marked by an official civic culture were not necessarily those that had greatest significance to locals. The historical meanings that ghosts granted to these localities need not represent direct resistance to civic culture but it may have made an encompassing civic identity seem comparatively remote and superficial. The fragmentary nature of the evidence that historians have to work with when engaging with local ethnographic ghost lore means it would be unwise to push this assertion too far. However, it is worth noting that such a view resonates with recent historiography that has questioned the linear transmission of civic and imperial cultures 'down' into local communities and the extent to which those cultures were genuinely internalized by them.⁶⁷

Whilst the above has suggested muted struggles over local space and memory, it would be misguided to conclude that disgruntled communities simply employed ghost lore as a counter-hegemonic resource by which to resist the imposition of a 'top down' civic culture that honoured militarism and imperialism. Early modern historians have made convincing arguments for the ways in which the telling of ghost stories served as 'weapons of the weak', a means by which the oppressed could articulate protest or influence, but there are a number of reasons why Portsmouth's nineteenth-century tales cannot be interpreted in such an unambiguous manner.⁶⁸ Firstly, civic developments and ghost stories rarely competed for interpretations of the same spaces, at least in this period. Opposition was tacit and, for the

most part, incidental. Secondly, in its emergent form civic culture was arguably too abstract a target for conscious opposition, its coherence beyond the evolution of individual projects probably more evident to historians in retrospect than to the lived experience of nineteenth-century Portsmouthians. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the story that the ‘official city’ wanted to present was frequently constructed from the same cloth as that which informed local ghost lore. Ghost tales would suggest that when civic elites made reference to the Royal Navy, sailors, the Napoleonic Wars, and, more generally, the age of sail, they were drawing upon powerful tropes that were already well-embedded and widely shared in the collective memories, imagination, and narratives of the town’s population.⁶⁹ Despite their different formulations and purposes local ghost stories and civic rhetoric evoked a naval town built from broadly shared experiences and mental impressions, suggesting that locals were not necessarily resistant to the general themes of the town’s civic narrative.

Despite these parallels and overlaps Portsmouth’s civic authorities do not appear to have used local ghost stories for their own ends. In the second half of the eighteenth century Anglican and Methodist clergymen had been willing to appropriate popular ghost stories as part of their denominational conflicts and research by Brad Beaven indicates that late-nineteenth-century civic authorities were not above appropriating other popular cultural forms either.⁷⁰ Yet the stigma of popular ‘superstitious’ beliefs amongst the educated elite ensured local ghosts could not be incorporated into their civic narrative; the very notion of a progressive, modern civic culture was anathema to such ‘backward’ ideas. At best there remained a tacit alignment between aspects of local and official memory, the most notable example in this context being the ghost of James Aitkens, or ‘Jack the Painter’. In an attempt to sabotage the Navy’s ability to fight in the American War of Independence Aitkens tried destroying the dockyard by setting fire to the rope house in 1776. Following his execution in 1777 his corpse was taken to Blockhouse Point at the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour and

left to hang in chains. The body was not removed until the 1820s, by which time Blockhouse Point had become locally known as ‘Painter’s Point’ and had ‘gained an unenviable reputation as the haunt of ghosts and devils’. Over the years Jack’s ghost was seen by numerous people, including ‘respectable mariners, whose testimony was ... [beyond] doubt.’ It walked at night ‘up and down the narrow tongue of land ... with its hands clasped behind its neck, and its head bent forward as if in pain’. Into the 1870s elderly locals claimed to recall childhood memories of seeing Aitkens’ blackened corpse swaying in the breeze.⁷¹ Jack’s treasonous act had clearly been imprinted into local memory over the course of a century and locals’ interpretation of his ghostly appearances firmly aligned with official views of the man as a wicked traitor.

Ghosts like Jack the Painter’s tied locals to the haunting presence of naval tradition in the town, one that increasingly looked back with nostalgia to the age of sail as the mid-nineteenth-century dockyard was expanded to enable the production of steam-powered, iron-clad vessels.⁷² While this nostalgic instinct were neither wholly plebeian nor elite, it seemed to taint local ghost stories in the second half of the century. Generally, the boisterous ghostly revellers and brawlers from the Point in the earlier part of the century faded to be replaced by phantasmal sailors who were content to merely promenade along the King’s Bastion, a part of Old Portsmouth that was ‘particularly favoured by ghostly visitants’.⁷³ Portsmouth’s ghosts may not have become civic citizens but they were certainly on their way to becoming more respectable. Indicative of this, once the town had secured a more modern, civic self-image early-twentieth-century county histories and town guides were even willing to incorporate an element of local ghost lore to illustrate the ‘salty’ nature of Portsmouth’s naval heritage.⁷⁴

Conclusions

This study has attempted to steer between two extremes. Whilst drawing upon hauntology's intriguing notions of modern spectrality the emphasis on localised hauntings has provided specificities which offset its tendency towards universalized abstraction of the spectral. At the same time, the focus on Portsmouth's oral web of ghost lore has sought to counter the overly-determinist meanings encouraged by studies of individual manifestations, enabling us to appreciate ghosts' collective significance beyond seemingly isolated and singular figures. This particular study has emphasised ghost lore's insights into Portsmouth's nineteenth-century spatial relations, especially with regard to official civic cultures and local communal identities. Civic rhetoric and ghostly rumour offered differing but not mutually exclusive spatial narratives for most of the town's nineteenth-century ghost accounts were situated outside the areas of civic modernisation. Ghost stories may have informed local identities which tacitly resisted civic incorporation but they frequently drew upon the same naval and urban-maritime experiences to which civic culture appealed. At a local level people could associate with multiple narratives. Rather than the passive absorption of a particular civic message from 'above', Portsmouth's ghost stories provided imaginative spaces that enabled locals to exercise an element of choice in how they understood their town.

Despite the spectral turn's potential insights into concealed histories and affective geographies, it is the very richness of ghosts as cultural signifiers which make them problematic methodological tools. As Steve Pile has noted, the problem with ghosts is 'getting them to say anything coherent' for they are inclined to 'condense many meanings, on to which can be displaced many feelings.'⁷⁵ The use of specific, historically located ghosts do not offer an easy solution to this as they were prone to reinvention by subsequent generations, thereby exponentially multiplying their meanings and rendering any interpretation largely conditional upon one's selected timeframe and investigatory purpose. Cultural geographers

have encountered similar issues. By way of response Julian Holloway and James Kneale have attempted to argue for the merits of the ‘undecidability and hesitancy’ which arises from spectral geographies being ‘always caught between explanatory criteria’.⁷⁶ While this position may require further articulation to make it fully convincing few would deny that, regardless of discipline, no scholar can demand solidity or fixity from the spectral. In this particular case that ambiguity has served to unsettle our perspective, disturbing more official histories through the intrusion of the supernatural. In doing so ghost lore helps to reveal the muted, concealed, but no less vital narratives that are to be found when we deem to look beyond the inherited, hegemonic stories through which we have come to imagine particular historical towns.

Endnotes

1. L. Collison-Morley, *Companion into Hampshire* (Bourne End, Bucks, 1973), p. 102.
2. See Maria del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (eds.), *Popular Ghosts* (New York, 2010), p. xvii.
3. For more on spectro-geographies see the themed edition of *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 15 (2008), pp. 291-378.
4. Andrew Smith, *The Ghost Story, 1840-1920 - A Cultural History* (Manchester, 2010), p. 4. See also Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London, 1994), Colin Davis, *Haunted Subjects: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead* (Basingstoke, 2007), Peter Buse and Andrew Stott (eds), *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*

(Basingstoke, 1999), and Michael Sprinker (ed.), *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacque Derrida's Spectre of Marx* (London, 1999).

5. For recent 'hauntological' works see Pilar Blanco and Peeren, *Popular Ghosts*, Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis, 2008), Sladja Blazan (ed), *Ghosts, Stories, Histories: Ghost Stories and Alternative Histories* (Newcastle, 2007), Steve Pile, *Real Cities – Modernity, Space and the Phantasmagorias of City Life* (London, 2005), and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination* (Madison, Wisconsin, 2004).

6. Roger Luckhurst, 'The Contemporary London Gothic and the Limits of the "Spectral Turn"', *Textual Practice*, vol.16 (2002), pp. 527-546, 528.

7. See Karl Bell, *Magical Imagination: Magic and Modernity in Urban England 1780-1914* (Cambridge, 2012), Terry Gunnell, 'Landscape and Legend in the Nordic Countries', *Cultural and Social History*, vol.6 (2009), pp. 305-22, Sasha Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World* (London, 2007), Owen Davies, *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (Basingstoke, 2007), and David Hopkin, 'Storytelling, fairytales and autobiography: some observations on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French soldiers' and sailors' memoirs', *Social History*, vol.29 (2004), pp. 186-198.

8. See Clive Barnett, 'Deconstructing Context: Exposing Derrida', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24 (1999), pp. 277-294, and David Matless, 'A Geography of Ghosts: The Spectral Landscape of Mary Butts', *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 15 (2008), pp. 335-357, 338.

9. See Pile, *Real Cities*, pp. 2-3, and 131-164.

10. See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1997), pp. 595-606.

11. See for example 'The Garstang Ghost', *Illustrated Police News*, 17th September 1881, p. 4.
12. For more on this see Shane McCorristine, *Spectres of the Self: Thinking about Ghosts and Ghost-Seeing in England, 1750-1920* (Cambridge, 2010), Srdjan Smajic, *Ghost-Seers, Detectives, and Spiritualists: Theories of Vision in Victorian Literature and Science* (Cambridge, 2010), and Andrew Lang, 'Protest of a Psycho-Folklorist', *Folklore*, vol. 6 (1895), pp. 236-48. For the tradition of psychological interpretations of ghosts see Davies, *The Haunted*, pp. 133-52, and Handley, *Visions*, especially pp. 126-32.
13. See Matless, 'A Geography of Ghosts', 337 and 349.
14. See Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p. xix.
15. See Henry Slight, *The History of Portsmouth* (Portsmouth, 1838) and William G. Gates, *Portsmouth in the Past* (Portsmouth, 1926). For a summary of Portsmouth's nineteenth-century expansion see Barry Stapleton, 'The Admiralty Connection: Port Development and Demographic Change in Portsmouth, 1650-1900' in Richard Lawton and Robert Lee (eds), *Population and Society in Western European Port-Cities c.1650-1939* (Liverpool, 2002), pp. 212-251.
16. K. Lunn and R. Thomas, 'Naval Imperialism in Portsmouth, 1905 to 1914', *Southern History*, vol.10 (1988), pp. 145-46.
17. See the chapters by Morriss and MacDougall in Ann Day and Kenneth Lunn (eds.), *History of Work and Labour Relations in the Royal Dockyards* (London, 1999), and Lunn and Thomas, 'Naval Imperialism', pp. 150-55.
18. See Robert Lawson, 'The Operation of the Contagious Diseases Act among the Troops in the United Kingdom, and Men of the Royal Navy on the Home Station, from their

introduction in 1864 to their ultimate repeal in 1884', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, vol.54 (1891), pp. 31-69, and David Mclean, *Public Health and Politics in the Age of Reform: Cholera, the State and the Royal Navy in Victorian Britain* (London, 2006).

19. The town's mayor and military governor had 'frequently failed to see eye to eye' and these tensions occasionally persisted beyond the abolition of the governorship in 1834. See Collison-Morley, *Companion into Hampshire*, p. 107, and Brad Beaven, 'The Provincial Press, Civic Ceremony and the Citizen-Soldier during the Boer War, 1899-1902: A Study of Local Patriotism', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol.37 (June 2009), pp. 207-228, 221.

20. For an indication of how this impacted on the development of the town's middle classes see John Field, 'Wealth, styles of life and social tone amongst Portsmouth's middle class, 1800-1875', in R.J. Morris (ed.), *Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth-century Towns* (Leicester, 1986), pp. 67-106.

21. *Ibid*, p. 69.

22. Beaven, 'The Provincial Press', p. 208.

23. Gates, *Portsmouth in the Past*, pp. 65-66.

24. See Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class* (Manchester, 2007), p. 50 and 178. For military associations with Portsmouth street names see *Portsmouth: National Union of Teachers Conference Souvenir* (London, 1937), p. 21.

25. See Lunn and Thomas, 'Naval Imperialism', p. 142, and Beaven, 'The Provincial Press', p. 220.

26. A more plebeian sense of civic identity and pride was formed through loyalty to local football teams rather than more 'official' civic cultures. See Mike Savage and Andrew Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working Class, 1840-1940* (London, 1994), pp. 62-68.

27. Raymond Lamont Brown, *Phantoms, Legends, Customs and Superstitions of the Sea* (London, 1972), p. 155. See also Wendy Boase, *The Folklore of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (London, 1976), pp. 159-160, Angelo Rappoport, *Superstitions of Sailors* (London, 1928), and W.H. Saunders, *Tales of Old Portsmouth*, Portsmouth Central Library (hereafter PCL) ref. Sau 942.2792, p. 27. 'Superstition' is a highly problematic word as it is variously used as a pejorative term or as a generalised description for a range of loosely associated beliefs and practices. For more on these issues see S.A. Smith's introduction to 'The Religion of Fools? Superstition Past and Present', *Past and Present*, vol.199, supplement 3 (2008), pp.7-55.

28. D.H. Moutray Read, 'Hampshire Folklore,' *Folklore*, vol.22 (1911), p. 315.

29. Boase, *Folklore of Hampshire*, pp. 162-63. See also A.B. Campell, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Navy* (Aldershot, 1956), p. 158, and William P. Mack and Royal W. Connell, *Naval Ceremonies, Customs, and Traditions* (Annapolis, MD, 1980), pp. 284-85.

30. See 'Great News to all that are Afflicted', *Hampshire Telegraph*, 21st January 1822, and Campell, *Customs and Traditions*, p. 38.

31. See Margaret Baker, *The Folklore of the Sea* (Newton Abbot, 1979), pp. 67-68.

32. See Robert R. Dolling, *Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum* (London, 1903), pp. 108-9.

33. National Union of Teachers, *Portsmouth and Its Story* (London, 1926), p. 85.

34. F.J. Proctor, *Reminiscences of Old Portsmouth* (Portsmouth, 1931), p. 5.

35. See Brown, *Phantoms*, pp. 99-120, and Handley, *Visions*, pp. 190-191.
36. For a summary see Ian Fox, *The Haunted Places of Hampshire* (Southampton, 1993), pp. 130-34. For an example of a headless aristocratic ghost in Hampshire see Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson, *The Lore of the Land* (London, 2006), pp. 300-301.
37. See Hopkin, 'Storytelling', p. 187 and 193. See also Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 183-85.
38. Handley, *Visions*, p. 188. See also pp. 189-191.
39. See Saunders, *Tales of Old Portsmouth*, p. 43. For the oral circulation of stories in tavern culture see Handley, *Visions*, p. 13 and 71, Patricia Fumerton, 'Not Home: Alehouses, Ballads, and the Vagrant Husband in Early Modern England', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol.32 (2002), pp. 493-518, Mark Hailwood, *Alehouses and Sociability in Seventeenth-century England* (forthcoming), and Barry Reay, *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1988), pp. 202-4. See also 'Old Balls's Ghost', *Essex Standard*, 28th December 1889. Beyond the masculine domains of the tavern and ship, women were more commonly associated with the oral circulation of supernatural stories. See Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf (eds.), *The Spoken Word – Oral Culture in Britain, 1500-1850* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 31-32, and Samuel Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical, vol.1 - Early Days*, (London, 1893), p. 73.
40. Handley, *Visions*, p. 68. See also pp. 66-67.
41. Dolling, *Ten Years*, p. 10.
42. Anon, *Parish of Milton, Portsmouth: A Short History 1844-1944* (Portsmouth, 1944), p.3.

43. Proctor, *Reminiscences*, p. 202.

44. See William G. Gates, *The Portsmouth that has Passed* (Horndean, 1987), p. 249.

Ghostly noises and strange occurrences reportedly continued at Quebec House into the twentieth century. See Fox, *Haunted Places*, pp. 128-30. For strong localized spatial identities in other parts of Portsmouth see Dolling, *Ten Years*, pp. 9-10.

45. See Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA, 1988), p. 122.

46. For more on this see Bell, *Magical Imagination*, pp. 227-59.

47. See Tim Edensor, 'Mundane Hauntings: Commuting through the phantasmagoric working-class spaces of Manchester, England', *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 15 (2008), p.314 and also 293. See also Michael Bell, 'The Ghosts of Place', *Theory and Society*, vol. 26 (1997), pp. 813-836.

48. Handley, *Visions*, p. 188. For narrative communities see Ruth Finnegan, *Tales of the City: A Study of Narrative and Urban Life* (Cambridge, 1998) and Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman (eds.), *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences* (Albany, 1997), pp. 173-76.

49. Handley, *Visions*, p. 93. See also Fox and Woolf (eds.), *The Spoken Word*, p. 272.

50. 'Portsmouth – most haunted in Hampshire?', *Hampshire*, September 1976, p. 8.

51. 'Ghost in Portsmouth,' *Bradford Observer*, Thursday 21st September 1854, p. 3. See also Davies, *The Haunted*, pp. 90-94.

52. See Isaac Land, *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor, 1750-1850* (Basingstoke, 2009) p. 9. See also Mary Conley, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack: Representing Naval Manhood in the British Empire, 1870-1918* (Manchester, 2009).

53. The Old Blue Inn burnt down in 1870. Despite being rebuilt accounts of the ghost appear to have ceased after this date. See W.G. Gates, *Free Mart Fair – Sketches of Old Portsmouth* (Portsmouth, 1897), p. 29, and Donald Parr, *Ghosts of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight: Web of Fear* (Derby, 1996), pp. 73-75.
54. ‘The Portsmouth Ghost’, PCL ref. LP.784.6. For a variation linked to Gosport on the other side of Portsmouth Harbour see *Nancy’s Ghost* (Newcastle, 1774), and also Sasha Handley, ‘Ghosts, Gossip and Gender in Eighteenth-century Canterbury’ in Blazan (ed), *Ghosts, Stories, Histories*, pp. 14-15. For ghost ballads’ blending of oral and literate cultures see Handley, *Visions*, pp. 49-79.
55. *Portsmouth Evening News*, 28th December 1946.
56. Gunnell, ‘Legends and Landscape’, p. 307. See also Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 114-115.
57. See Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p. 107.
58. Julian Holloway and James Kneale ‘Locating Haunting: A Ghost-hunter’s Guide’, *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 15 (2008), pp. 297-312, 303.
59. See Tonkiss, *Space*, pp. 126-29.
60. *Hants Newspaper Cuttings*, vol.2, PCL ref. 942.27, p. 1.
61. See *Portsmouth Evening News*, 24th December 1946, D.H. Moutray Read, *Highways and Byways in Hampshire* (London, 1908), p. 351, and J.P. Chilcott-Monk, *Ghosts of South Hampshire and Beyond* (Southampton, 1980), p. 31.
62. *Portsmouth Evening News*, 24th December 1946.

63. Gates, *Portsmouth that has Passed*, p. 342. This appears to have been a popular narrative trope surrounding local theatres. It was later claimed that the High Street Theatre in Old Portsmouth had similarly been shut down ‘because living players often had to share the stage with dead ones’. See *Portsmouth Evening News*, 24th December 1946.

64. See *Hampshire*, September 1976, p. 8, *The News*, 24th December 2005, p. 16, and Fox, *Haunted Places*, pp. 131-34.

65. See Fox, *ibid*, p. 131.

66. These civic pretensions had been evident as early as 1829 when the mayor laid the foundation stone for the Portsmouth and Portsea Literary and Philosophical Society. See Gates, *Portsmouth that has Passed*, p. 417.

67. See for example Steve Attridge, *Nationalism, Imperialism and Identity in Late Victorian Culture: Civil and Military Worlds* (Palgrave, 2003), and Beaven, ‘The Provincial Press’.

68. See Handley, ‘Ghosts, Gossip and Gender’, pp. 12-18, Laura Gowing, ‘The Haunting of Susan Lay: Servants and Mistresses in Seventeenth-century England’, *Gender and History*, vol.14, 2 (2002), pp. 183-201, and also James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New York, 1985).

69. The impact of the Napoleonic Wars on both local and official memory appears to have been particularly powerful and long-lasting. For the haunting presence of the war’s old decommissioned ships which had been moored and left to rot in the upper part of Portsmouth harbour see Besant, *By Celia’s Arbour*, p. 164.

70. See Handley, *Visions*, pp. 140-176, and Beaven, ‘The Provincial Press’, p. 219.

71. Moutray Read, *Highways and Byways*, p. 347, and Besant, *By Celia's Arbour*, p. 165 and 166. See also Jessica Warner, *John the Painter – The First Modern Terrorist* (London, 2004).

72. For more on sailors and collective nostalgia in the period of industrialisation see Land, *War*, pp. 131-58. For the dockyard's development see R.C. Riley, *The Evolution of the Docks and Industrial Buildings in Portsmouth Royal Dockyard: 1698-1914*, *The Portsmouth Papers*, no. 44 (Portsmouth, 1985).

73. Moutray Read, *Highways and Byways*, p. 351.

74. See for example *ibid*, p. 347 and 351. For the way in which ghosts can both disturb and support sanitised narratives of the past see Jo Frances Maddern, 'Spectres of Migration and the Ghosts of Ellis Island', *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 15 (2008), pp. 359-81.

75. Pile, *Real Cities*, p. 162 and 163.

76. Holloway and Kneale, 'Locating Haunting', p. 308.