

## CALL FOR PAPERS

# The Transformation of Urban Britain Since 1945

## A conference organised by the Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester, 9-10 July 2013

Plenary Speakers: John Gold (Oxford Brookes); Frank Mort (Manchester); Guy Ortolano (New York University); Selina Todd (St Hildas, Oxford)

During the second half of the twentieth century the towns and cities of Britain were transformed more extensively than at any period since the industrial revolution. Millions of people were moved from the centre of cities to new urban settlements in what Alison Ravetz called 'the greatest internal migration in British history'; whole manufacturing industries and their associated communities and cultures, which had dominated much of urban Britain north of the Trent for two centuries, were swept away in a matter of decades; and the steady influx of peoples from the old empire and Europe created new community formations and ultimately a multicultural Britain which was also overwhelmingly urban. Britain's towns and cities today are barely recognisable from the drab and damaged places that emerged from the Second World War.

The history of this transformation has only been written in part – significantly the final volume of the Cambridge Urban History of Britain, the most substantial scholarly overview of the subject, stops in 1950. The purpose of this conference is to

bring together for the first time the growing body of expertise and knowledge of urban Britain since 1945 to debate the ways in which that history might be written. We want to bring together not only different types of historian – social, cultural, economic, urban, planning – around this subject but also others who have a direct interest in it: conservationists, policy-makers, journalists and others. One of the purposes of the conference is to create a network of scholars and practitioners on post-war urban Britain.

We are interested in particular in inviting papers and panels on the following themes, which are illustrative and not exhaustive:

- The history of new terminologies of urban description: 'city centre', 'inner city', 'greenfield/brownfield', etc.
- Histories of industrial decline (or renewal) and their impact on urban communities and landscapes.
- The relationship between global political and economic processes (e.g. decolonisation, transnational capital, the European Union) and urban Britain;
- Urban governance in the period, including local-central relations, the role of private developers, municipal corruption, etc.;
- Consumerism, including the history of the shopping precinct and mall, the corner store, the sex trade, etc.
- Urban infrastructures: motorways, electrification, cyber-technologies
- Urban protest movements: anti-roads, squatting, conservation, etc.
- Identity politics: urban space and the creation of 'new' social and sexual identities



Photo courtesy of D. Callow ([myleicestershire.org.uk](http://myleicestershire.org.uk))

Proposals for papers or panels of three speakers plus chair/discussant (max. one page A4) should be sent to Simon Gunn ([sg201@le.ac.uk](mailto:sg201@le.ac.uk)) or Rebecca Madgin ([rmm13@le.ac.uk](mailto:rmm13@le.ac.uk)) by Friday 1 February 2013.