

Chatterton: Acknowledging The Truth

What I want to do with this talk is something which is different to the other talks that I've done or that me and Kate have done. And this is to actually try and acknowledge some of the things that are in a chapter that Kate and I have written and also, we have condensed this down to a small little pamphlet which is again available in paper copies but also is available for free online. And this is called Chatterton: Acknowledging the Truth, which as you've noted is the same title as this talk.

So, if anyone wants to have a little bit extra reading then of course these are available. But primarily the reason why I've been invited to talk here at the Whitaker is because of the connection to the exhibitions that have been going on. Notably by Jamie Holman and also by James Fox, and I've already mentioned there the Rise Up! banner which we've got a tea towel made of.

What I'm going to try and do in the next 40 odd minutes - with Kate - is just give you a little bit of context in terms of the development of the ideas that have gone into this exhibition from an academic point of view, and also to try and tease out some of the ways in which the Loom Song and other works that have been developed over the last few months, are revealing the truth or acknowledging a hidden story about what happened here just over 200 years ago.

So, the story that Jamie Holman has put together - which hopefully you've all had chance to see, but if not, I would certainly encourage you to go and see Jamie's work and James Fox's work. I think what they're trying to do is be part of a of a bigger form of storytelling where we are starting to reveal new insights and new stories, and that hasn't just come from anywhere. This has been something which has been based on quite a lot of years of research that has started to unpick the existing narratives up until about 2021 and then start to offer a different framing. And with Jamie's exemplary work, what we have, I think, is an incredibly powerful representation of what happened on the 26th of April 1826 at Chatterton.

I want to bring out four themes or four aspects in the first part of the talk that connect to what Jamie's exhibition is all about. The first is the story of Betty Upton. I then want to tease out a little bit about the actual research and the stories behind and what that's led to. I then want to take a slight deviation, but as you'll see, it makes perfect sense, towards this notion around artificial intelligence. And I think that one of the really interesting things about Jamie's artwork is that it does draw upon artificial intelligence to bring to life images, and to have a certain sense of kind of movement and visualisation which probably wouldn't have been possible without artificial intelligence. But I want to also explore artificial intelligence in different ways and how it's being used at this present time to also suppress knowledge.

It's a bit of a double-edged sword as we all know. And one of the reasons why I was so pleased that Jamie did deploy the artificial intelligence in his artwork because so often today, and with the focus of the power loom destruction back in 1826, there is a rationale around how people were both sceptical of this new technology but also at times wanted to embrace it. I think AI reflects those sentiments perfectly because there's little doubt that we want to engage with AI but we also are very conscious of its dangers. And as an educationalist, one of the biggest problems that I have in a university now is the problem of AI and how we deal with that in terms of students genuinely engaging with literature rather than simply going on to Google AI mode and putting the question in and getting the AI summary. Which is great you know but it's not really about education is it? It's what AI tells us and that's the problem. We discuss how what AI tells us is not necessarily going to be reflective of the truth, and I think that's certainly the case when it comes to Chatterton.

Then, finally the framing element will bring us back to Chatterton: acknowledging the truth. So, as I've kind of indicated these, are the structure of the talk. I'm also going to try and connect this to James Fox's work in terms of some of the ideas that are expressed particularly in his representation of child deaths. So I'm going to give you a little bit of context about how that started to evolve and the focus that has emerged around the research that Kate and I have done on child deaths in Pennine Lancashire during the Regency period from the late 1790s through to 1837, which is an enormous project most of which still hasn't been published, or even we haven't shared it yet because we're still working our way through with statisticians about what it all means, but that's kind of part of what the project entails.

But the first thing I mentioned was the story of Betty Upton.

Kate Hurst – The Story of Betty Upton

I never imagined being a widow at 28. On the 26th of April 1826, my husband, William Upton, had been buried 20 days. We knew James Waddicar. He lived not far from here, at Alder bottom with his wife and a son about 14 years old. not much younger than my sister Alice. He worked for the Rostrons of Tottington. He was a good man with a family to provide for. They say there were looms being broken all over Lancashire that month.

Crowds of men and boys, even women and girls, walking from one town to the next, breaking the looms apart, tearing the cloth from them. And we could only imagine it until it came to Chatterton. I can't read newspapers, but those who can say it's being called a riot. Those involved, they call them mob. And that day, a Wednesday, soldiers stopped some of the crowd on the road near Mr. Akin's mill.

My sister Alice and our friend Mary Holding were staying in my cottage, helping me to look after my little boy. He turned two years old just before his father was buried. and his grandfather, my father, didn't like to leave three young women by themselves with so much upheaval going on.

And that morning, he came to nail up the front door for safety. Through the upstairs window, I saw a familiar figure, James Waddicar, walking towards my cottage. As he raised his hand to knock at the door, I saw a flash of red across the road and he fell. What is shot? Father came closer to the window. Soldiers were coming to the door, my door. I went downstairs with father, hiding against the wall between the door and the kitchen window. The curtains moved and they thrust something through the window. A rifle. It was soldiers voices that we heard. I see her again. Shoot her. They meant me. They meant to kill me. They had seen me. Another voice demanded that we open the door. Father said it was nailed up, but thinking to appease them, he promised to help them if they forced it with their shoulders.

One took hold of father by his collar, shouting, 'Who are you?' Perhaps they thought he was one of the crowds breaking the looms, hiding in here to evade them. 'I am her father', he told them, meaning me. 'These girls are my daughters. I came here to protect them. I would not have argued with him.' And one soldier seized me, promising to blow my brains out. But what had I done? I pleaded for my life. Would they shoot a widow of three weeks? And could father and Alice care for my little boy? Or would he be left to the mercy of the parish? And yet these soldiers pulled me upstairs, beat me, and if you care to imagine what else they might do to a woman alone, they intended to do that.

I was sure they'd do the same to Alice. But father's voice came to the room a moment before he did. Gentlemen, these are my daughters, and he was fierce enough to frighten them, and thank God they desisted, and that gave me courage. I took hold of the arms of the one who had restrained me. I will not be shot in my own house. I have not stirred from home. I reminded them that I was Mr. Akin's neighbour. I have nothing to do with the mob, and you shall not shed my blood upon my own floor. Now between us, father and I had unsettled them. But then it was our turn to be shocked, a noise under the bed. There was a man hiding beneath it. Who he was, I couldn't say. No one we knew, at least. As they hustled him out the door, I remembered. James Waddicar had been coming to this house when they shot him. Had he escaped? Was he alive?

We found him outside. Blood all over the ground coming from his right thigh. I can't be sure that he could move, but he was living. I don't know why I asked the soldiers to help me get him inside. They only refused and went away without looking back. Father, Mary, and I got him into the house. We put cushions under his head. Alice brought linen to soak up the blood. My little brother ran as fast as he could to Edenfield to find James's wife. And we wondered whether we could find the 10 shillings Mr. Spencer, the surgeon, would ask, to come from Holcomb to attend him. But James was already pale and still losing blood. Too much blood. But he could still speak. Betty, pray for me, he asked. I know thou can pray and I am dying. Look to God and pray yourself, and I will pray with you. I promised. And so, we did for almost an hour. It was all the time James had left to live. His family didn't reach our house in time to hear him say, 'I am a murdered man.'

The next Sunday he was buried at Holcomb church. He was 40 years old. His wife lived on another 12 years. I'm told his son lived to be 33. For the rest of my life, I believe James Awatika was right to say he'd been murdered. And perhaps you think so, too.

That's beautiful. And based on archival work that was done as early as 2022. But as we've been going for the last 4 to 5 years, the research has evolved and expanded in all sorts of different kind of ways, including what we didn't have when we first put that together for the commemorations. We didn't have the actual inquests, and they'd been lost for several years. And the reason they were lost was because they had been kept as we now know, but they've been kept in the wrong place. And the inquests had actually been held by the home secretary because it was such a sensitive issue. What happened at Chatterton is absolutely outrageous. And Kate's there just given Betty's tale. We're going to come back to Betty a little bit later on as we evolve through the story. But the story was so sensitive and so controversial that the home secretary kept hold of them and therefore we found them in the home office records where they weren't supposed to be. They were lost because people were looking for them in wrong place. No one could find them. And the only reason we found them was because the Open University started to work with the National Archives. We started to work together, and this is how Jamie started to become informed and engaged with this part of the story for the exhibition itself.

So, Joseph Cozens put the archive materials together. I'm now going to show you very quickly part of the interactive map. This is now available online. It's available via the Open University website at OpenLearn and via the National Archives website. So, you can get on to this and just very quickly, because I don't want to spend too much time talking about the map when you can see yourselves. I want to explain this is where the archival work has led to. What you can find on the map are all the different legal depositions for the uprising for both Lancashire and Yorkshire. What people sometimes forget is the uprising actually lasted 10 days. It started at Whinnie Hill in Accrington on the 24th of April 1826, but it continued all the way to the 3rd of May at Northwing Mill in Bradford where two young boys - Edward Henry Fearnley and Jonas Bairstow - were shot dead running away from Horsfall's Mill.

The story continues and I'll come back to some other elements of state killings a little bit later, but just to kind of give you this sense of what the research has delivered so far. Joseph and I haven't just kind of looked at the inquest records. Kate and Joseph have been the two key collaborators on the historical side of the research and it gives us a context based upon the home office records. It goes through various different depositions and testimonies, and you can see how one of these were then animated later on, but on the map, you can see where the evidence come from at the National Archives. You then can see all the different mills. You can click onto the icons to see where the looms were destroyed.

It goes across also to Yorkshire. It covers all the different areas, and you can click on to each of the different parts of the map and see where the different sites are and then you can get details of the different legal depositions. So, when we were talking about the new research some of this was made available here, but it comes from several different sources. It comes from a different source than some of the research Kate and I have done separately. But you can see that if you do want to know about all the different stories that were told at the time, you can find short summaries on here.

Here is an example there from Garnets and Horsfall's Mill on the final day of the rising in Yorkshire on the 3rd of May. And you can see at the top there you've got three different stories

there. And if you click along, you can actually see one, two, and three. You can see all the different stories. And that's all the same for the different mills. What we've done is for the first time we've made the accounts and the narratives of the different stories and eyewitness accounts available for people to read. So you can do that at your own leisure. I just wanted to make you aware of the fact that this research is out there.

Plus, there are several other publications already, either out or are coming out. I've mentioned the teaching toolkit, but there's other work including the book that Kate and I are kind of finalising which covers the Lancaster part of the protest which is titled *Rise Up! The Local History News* article with Joseph was published today. So that's just come out this morning and that's something that covers part of map archival work itself.

But this work hasn't just been done in an academic context. I first came across this story back in 2021 and very quickly aligned with Kate who's been collaborating with me very closely on nearly all parts of this work for the last five years. When I came across this, I realised this was something which wasn't just about academic engagement. So, I work for The Open University and as you'll see I'm a criminologist rather than straightforward historian, though I have been trained to historical level at master's level. So I am trained historian, but basically my job title is a criminologist and that might explain partly some of the angles and some of the ways in which we tried to tease out the story which were different to what some earlier historians have done.

I realised immediately it wasn't just enough to have the research. We needed to change opinions. We needed to have the story that was being told in a way that was accessible to ordinary people. And that meant, as it turned out in the long run, getting a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant and lots of research funding from The Open University and elsewhere to try and get this story out there as accurately as possible because the first thing I picked up on was that something had gone very wrong in the storytelling about what happened at Chatterton. And it wasn't necessarily that there aren't any books or articles out there. There are more than a hundred sources which have at least a sentence or a few words on the 1826 rising.

So, we're very conscious that this needed to have something that was beyond purely just an academic engagement and hence the work within museums and the heritage sites and all the different things that you're seeing across Pennine Lancashire or Lancaster today. It was set up to be a way of changing understandings and not just about uncovering knowledge. It's about how we responded to that knowledge. and therefore we've had lots of little pamphlets made, that's all been funded by various different sources but to give you little bite-size accounts - a thousand word account that you can pick up and have a read on the train or if you're waiting in a lobby somewhere you can have a quick read of one of our pamphlets and it'll give you a little bit of insight into what actually we're trying to do.

As you can see in this particular pamphlet I've got hold of, we have testimony of Elizabeth or Betty Upton and also her father John Platt, both of whom were just mentioned by Kate and some of this is of course what Jamie used in the *Loom Song* exhibition piece here. He changed the testimony and obviously the AI element has slightly changed some of the wording so when you're listening to it you don't quite get the exact testimony of Betty Upton. But that testimony will be published in its own right through the National Archives and the Open University 'Witnessing the Rising' book in 2027 and also in the work that I'm doing with Kate. But the story that Kate was telling you is coming from the leaked evidence from the inquest. And I'll explain why the inquest story wasn't as clear as what it should have been back in the day. But certainly, a key part was to get the story out there and to do it via charity.

I suppose the other thing worthwhile reflecting on is why would I as a criminologist with historical training pick up on this given it's 200 years ago. Especially when you consider some examples of my previous books. These works have focused on all sorts of different things but one of the leitmotifs running through them is the visibility of state violence or revealing the invisibility of state violence. And I refer to this as what we call demystification. And I think what happened here 200 years ago is an example of mystification. And my work has been focused, for example on deaths in police custody, deaths in prisons. Here are some early cases because, everybody has a formative case which grabs them into an area. It was the deaths of people like Roger Sylvester and Christopher Alder and Shi Shi Lapite who died in police custody which got me

interested in the notion of state violence, but then also the prison work which I'll come back to a little bit kind of later.

Alongside that, I also had the great privilege to do work with the survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire. And back in 2017, I was making the first ever Open University criminology level one module. And for that, I was given quite a lot of money to make films. And one of the films I made in collaboration with Hamlet Films was on the Grenfell Tower Fire. And we made this film literally only a couple of months after the fire had occurred. And we made it in late 2017, early 2018.

And we interviewed a lot of the families and relatives of those who died. This is the other kind of element which is really important to me in terms of the research that we're doing. which is why I'm so delighted that this evening I've been introduced to a lovely lady who has just told me and Kate that she's a descendant of Richard Lund who is one of the people who died at the Chatterton Massacre and it's the story of families and it's the stories of people who've been harmed and then they had their story covered up which is of real interest to me because what I think is really important, whether it's a Grenfell, whether it's people who die in prison, whether it's people who die in police custody, whether it's historical or it's contemporary, families care about those people. They want them to be remembered in a dignified and respectful way.

And the first thing that struck me about what was happening in Lancashire in terms of the story of 1826 was the absolute lack of respect for the dead in the main and some of the language that was used to talk about ignorant protesters and people who were fatalistic and members of a mob. And whilst people were starving to death and watching their children starve to death, the language that was given was these of irrational criminals. And I thought, that's not fair. That's not right. If that was my descendant, if that was my family, I would be quite outraged and upset because I would want my family to be remembered in a way which was dignified to them.

And I'm sure all of us would for anyone we've lost, we would want them to be remembered in a way which is respectful. And that's the drive behind this research. But the other thing about the Grenell Tower film was it also introduced the notion of social murder which is basically when social conditions are more likely to generate death than life. And that concept is something which also has fed into this research particularly the work with Kate but also the work that James Fox has been doing alongside that.

The other key kind of element that led me down this pathway was I'd also done work on the centenary of the Tulsa race massacre in 2021. I'd been doing some work on that for two or three years before I came across what happened here. And when I was looking into the Tulsa race massacre, a couple of things striking which have obvious relevance to how we're framing and engaging with the debate here. The first thing is state sanctioned violence, and the Ku Klux Klan were basically armed by the local sheriffs and law and force officials, and they went round and they killed a large number of people. Nobody knows how many people even to today died.

So, you can see there that we have at least 39 confirmed deaths. But people believe there are mass graves that contain hundreds of people because it basically was an assault on a very prosperous black community in Tulsa. The reason why this has relevance to us is because until the 1990s, this was known as the Tulsa race riot.

And what happened in the 1990s was that the people of Tulsa and the descendants and the people who were on the ground decided that the word riot was not an appropriate word to describe what happened to their family members and they changed it to the word massacre, which I think is actually appropriate. It also gave me the skills to understand what a massacre was.

When I came across Chatterton, I immediately picked up on the fact it was a massacre because I'd already engaged with massacre studies. I already knew what massacres entailed. I knew the definitional criteria. So it didn't take me very long to go from finding out about the issues of Chatterton to recognising there was a great epistemic injustice or knowledge injustice that was going on with the people in terms of the representation and to note that alternative framing was possible and that these things can change because it changed in Tulsa and it's changed at many other places as well which I could go int, but the language is important because of the way it tells a story.

I've also engaged not just here with this work but I've been engaging with different historical massacres across the country notably the North Sands massacre in Sunderland where I have worked towards the commemorations. It involved soldiers killing sailors, which is why I'm in a seafarer's costume for that particular annual commemoration which took place in Sunderland at North Sands Beach in on the 3rd of August 2025 to commemorate the bicentennial.

I mentioned earlier about the final killings on the on the 3rd of May 1826 on the final day of the rising. We've also commemorated those in Bradford and again we've laid wreaths to commemorate the boys who were killed and in just over two weeks on Sunday we're going to be commemorating the three people who were shot dead - three bystanders who were shot dead - in Shaddongate on the 6th of June 1826.

So this is something that is not a local focus. I'm not someone who's necessarily got an enormous local history awareness of Rosendale. My interest is in covering up state violence and the consequences that has, for people's reputations and the consequences that has, for how people are remembered. And that of course led me to the factors that had created a problem with Chatterton. So, how was it that we have this incredibly significant historical event that was regarded as one of the biggest events of 1826 yet for a long, long time wasn't necessarily forgotten or necessarily placed in the dust bin of history but wasn't remembered for what it actually was.

Chatterton was what we call mystified or that part of the story was told but not all of the story and there are various different texts that some people use which refer to this as a riot, which is couched in the language of the powerful and that's partly why I think the word riot is so problematic because that is the language of the people who perpetrated the killings - that's the language of power - if we reproduce that language we reproduce the narrative of power. If we use alternative language, we reproduce or champion the language from below. We reproduce the ordinary people's language and that can give us a very different set of meanings and insights. So, the language is important but of course what happened at Chatterton was not labelled as a riot.

Now the first thing is that we don't even necessarily know if the riot act was read or not. Because when we went back to the archival work - and this is the benefit of actually going back to the original sources. It's one thing reading secondary sources that can be really helpful and insightful but we've obviously taken a step beyond that. We've decided to go back to the original sources and see what's there and see what was left out of the telling of the story. And one of the things we found was all sorts of massive contradictions within the narrative and the complexity and the chaos of what happened at Chatterton on the 26th of April 1826.

It was not a straightforward form of control of protest. It was chaotic and the soldiers, as Betty has given testimony to, the soldiers acted in incredibly violent ways to people who were just bystanders. That doesn't sound very much like riot control to me. But we also don't know if the Riot Act was read and as I said, there's contestation by an eyewitness who says that the magistrate did not read the Riot Act which has never been told before and I've never seen that said by anyone else. But we went back and we found that and we know that there was even contestation of the language going back to 1826.

Then of course it's sometimes referred to as a fight which is when it refers to an affray. So, when the Riot Act wasn't read in the 1820s they would refer to it as an affray or a fight. But the problem with the word fight is there's nothing in the word fight that implies that six people who were unarmed were shot dead by soldiers. You do not make an immediate connection between the word fight and state killings. What it does, inevitably, like other kind of words that can be used, it starts to obscure and hide the truth. It becomes another word which makes people less interested in what actually happened.

So, changing and challenging some of the narratives becomes really important. One of the other pieces of work that's here is the stone that James Fox made of Mary Simpson. James made six stones which are distributed across different parts of Pennine Lancashire and I'll come back to that towards the end because there's another part of that story which we need to know about with James's work.

But the Mary Simpson stone is here at the Whitaker because I think they wanted to bring the story around women and protesters. So, you had Betty Upton, you have Mary Simpson, and it brings the women bystanders together. And of course, that's a really important thing, I think, for the Whitaker to do.

But Mary Simpson was an innocent bystander, and she was shot dead because she'd come down to see what was going on and she was trying to catch a coach to Manchester. But once the story got out that a woman had been killed that was a concern. When it comes to looking at the legal depositions, when we went back and looked at the actual evidence that people had given back in 1826, we find that the two mill owners of Royton's Mill, which is where actually James Waddicar worked, we find that they tell us a story that Mary Simpson was one of the leaders and that Mary Simpson knew exactly where the power looms were in their factor, in Edenfield.

Let me just give you the quick quote - if you look to the Mary Simpson bit according to the Royston brothers who owned the mill:

'Damn you lads, why don't you go up and break the dressing machines.'

Which indicates they cite in their evidence the 'woman who was killed'. Nobody in authority wants a story where innocent people are being shot dead. So, the negative reputations, the stories that were told about Mary Simpson are really important.

Other things are clear is that they were part of the cover up at the time. There were initially a very small number of witnesses given at the inquest. So, for the first five deaths, they went through and looked at the evidence very quickly. They only called two witnesses for the first five people, including Simpson, who were shot dead. And those two witnesses were not allowed to communicate with each other. So, the process for the first five deaths at Chatterton were really all about just establishing that they'd been part of the crowd. Again, the evidence about Mary Simpson, which proved to be lies. The inquest verdict did come back with accidental death for her. The other four that died, including Richard Lund - your family member- they were referred to as being shot in the mob, and they were recorded as such in the parish records.

What then happened was that you start to go on to the sixth known death, which was the death of James Waddicar. And this is where the real controversy obviously arose because Waddicar, and we still don't know how we spell his name or how we pronounce his name. Some people think it's Waddicar. Some think it's Whatacre. Kate has probably done more work than most in terms of trying to uncover the real surname. And she believes it's Waddicar, but there's all sorts of different things and even the inquest records spell his name in three different ways.

If you look at the original - because obviously we went through the inquest because we can't find his gravestone. So, we originally thought the inquest will tell us how you spell it. No, they're not even consistent. So, nobody even bothered to find out James's surname. Which is kind of shocking. It just shows the lack of interest. Nobody bothered to get his name right. It wasn't even considered as significant to get one of the victim's names correct which I think tells us a lot. But what happened was when Betty and John Platt and others spoke. And there was more than 30 people then gave inquest evidence as time went on because it was only the initial stage where there's restricted numbers that the inquest tells us that there were more people interviewed.

But what happened then was quite remarkable, and you have already heard Betty's crucial evidence. There was an adjournment. And the adjournment was because James Watkins, who was a local magistrate and friend of William Grant JP, felt that the story was coming out and felt this was being way too negative of the soldiers. So, they adjourned the inquest. They stopped it and then Watkins not far Thomas Farrand who had been the coroner up until that point and he'd interviewed or taken the witness statements of Betty and John Platt and so on. He heard them and the evidence that you get up from Betty and John Platt is incredibly critical of what happened at Chatterton.

The soldiers that were reinterviewed because there were certain new claims and you then get a second part of the story which is where everything's about how the soldiers acted in a way

that was absolutely necessary. Suddenly these stories of a more disruptive and disturbing crowd start to come to the forefront.

So, just like we know about stories like Hillsborough where we know that evidence that was given into the deaths of people were interfered with by those above. We also I'm afraid can say that – although it wasn't exactly the same as rewriting - but there was a manipulation by James Watkins of the evidence to the inquest. Now, it turns out that Watkins wasn't entirely successful because the story of Waddicar was still referred to and is understood as a murdered man – and Kate ended the story of Betty Upton with that. But there was a refusal to identify the soldier who killed him. The local constable and an eyewitness were prepared to go into Bury and identify the soldier that shot Waddicar dead. The senior soldiers at the barracks would not allow a lineup unless they'd had higher authority and orders. So, it got stopped and then the soldiers were moved out. So, the unknown soldier could have been found out, and we could have known back in 1826 the name of this person because people could identify him, but it was never done.

But I think the more significant thing, even though Betty's story got out with the press leaks, the press were denied access to the inquests and of course things got out because we know from the newspapers that at least John Platt's evidence was leaked. But the other key element is there were no criminal prosecutions of anyone at Chatterton at the Lancaster Assize in August and September 1826. There was one the following year but not in 1826.

Now if the story is here of soldiers facing a violent crowd who are acting in a disruptive manner that is placing the lives of the soldiers at risk. Surely, they would want to have that evidence out there and they'd want it brought forth and they want those people prosecuted. People were arrested at Chatterton. There were arrests but there were not any criminal prosecutions which is kind of part of the cover up that then takes us on the other theme I wanted to bring out from Jamie Holman's artwork because that evidence is important.

I think when you look at Jamie Holman's and James Fox's work you see this alternative narrative coming through. You see the archival work that's being drawn upon to present that story from the perspective of the people who were there and the eyewitnesses who were outraged and shocked by what happened.

But of course, Jamie Holman also uses artificial intelligence and again I mentioned that at the start about how this is really important that we do engage with things like artificial intelligence because what Jamie's work shows is just exactly how important and how powerful that use of technology can be in terms of storytelling. But we also mustn't forget that artificial intelligence can be used to close down debates.

You may have heard of Elon Musk and his AI bot Grock. Musk has been one of the pioneers of artificial intelligence for many years and he's got his own AI system that thinks that Elon Musk is the most perfect human being and he's almost like godlike and that everybody should listen to what Elon Musk has to say. Whatever Elon Musk believes is important and even within the system of Grock it has a section which says it has to consult with what Elon Musk would have said. But of course it's artificial intelligence and last year they decided to create a new encyclopedia based on Grock and they called it Grokipedia. It's a pretty terrible setup because what it's all about is trying to present a right-wing perspective as if it's truth.

Now, when they introduced this last year, they rolled out 400,000 different entries. And unfortunately, one of them was on me. That's because my work in criminology is quite well known in North America and elsewhere. And I only found out because the Open University were mentioned. The whole point of Grokipedia is to take a left-wing perspective and then to dismiss it with right-wing narrative.

I don't tell people about this because I don't want anyone to click on it because it'll go higher up on online and it is absolute nonsense. You know it's there to counter a different approach and offer a right-wing perspective so that when people are engaging with something they don't just hear the left-wing approach, they hear the right wing at the same time and they've done the same thing with Chatterton.

If you go on to Grokipedia, you will find there's an entrance on Chatterton and this is something we can't change. You can't edit Grokipedia. It's artificial intelligence. It's based on its worldview and it's there and it just says what it says. But according to Grokipedia, this should still be referred to as a riot. And they basically give us several different reasons as to why that's the case. First of all, Grokipedia claims that Chatterton was a riot because they followed a legal process and the Riot Act was read.

Now, before we get into any kind of debates on whether legal process is actually part of a definition of a massacre or not, which of course it isn't because otherwise Peterloo would be the St. Peters Field riot. Reading the Riot Act means nothing. It's got nothing to do with whether something's defined as a massacre or not. But even here, we don't even know if the Riot Act was read because of the contrary evidence at the time. So, we can say that they're coming back with stuff. They argue that the word rising no longer means the same as the past. When you think about the word Rise Up, it is about physical movement, of moving upwards and challenging those above. I think rising means exactly the same today as it did in 1826.

Grokipedia talk about romanticising violence over peaceful means of negotiation that by actually trying to tell the truth about Chatterton, by trying to tell the truth about why the protests took place, we romanticise violence. Now of course the protesters and many people since then would not necessarily consider the destruction of property as a form of violence. Violence is often considered exclusively as interpersonal or against a species, you know, violence against a dog, violence against animals, violence against humans because it's against a sentient being. A sentient being feels that and the violence is part of that embodied experience and so on. A machine doesn't feel and a machine doesn't have the same consequences because a machine can be rebuilt and so on and so forth.

But according to Grokipedia we romanticise violence by simply talking about it as a protest and as a rising and so on and so forth. The latter two points are a little bit ironic in that Grokipedia is an international artificial intelligence platform that's available all across the world. And their next criticism of Chatterton is that it's too localised. So isn't it bizarre when you have an international forum saying that something is localised because by default by putting on the international forum, they internationalise it. Right? So it's another nonsense. But again, it's another attempt to close down the debate.

And then finally, the lack of a memorial would kind of indicate that there's just no public interest in this. I think the fact that you're here today, I think the fact that we do now have a memorial. We have this year unveiled a Chatterton massacre memorial stone. The fact that there was also the Richard Ciank 'In the picture frame' memorial going back in the 1990s, it was destroyed. The fact that there is international interest in this.

There have been international publications on the Chatterton massacre and exploring it. Grokipedia is just throwing stuff out there which isn't necessarily accurate. And then that's not to mention also the various forms of media that have kind of come through.

But where I want to take us now is to James's Fox's work. And I will bring it to a close now because probably I'm over running. I don't know. But I do want to get James in because James is the other work which has been represented here at the Whitaker, and you can see that in terms of his co-created gravestones. You can also see for example that he put James W because we just don't know if it's Waddicar or Whatacre. You can see Richard's there as well, and we've got Mary and James.

But you can also see there's a little red ribbon that's running through the gravestones and is also in the top corner there. Now, this little red ribbon doesn't look like very much at first, but I mentioned a little bit earlier about this notion of social murder and this notion of how when social conditions generate death rather than life. And one of the things that Kate and I have done, in fact, the biggest thing that we've done and are doing is we've been through the parish records of the births and deaths in all across Pennine Lancashire from 1797 to 1837 where they exist because some don't exist.

As part of that project, we decided that for the 12 months following the rising, we were going to make a list of all the names of the people who died and records in the Parish records. Now, we

did that for one reason at first. We did it because we wanted to see if we could find any evidence of somebody dying of their wounds after Chatterton. What we were kind of looking for and what Kate was going through was to see is there an evidence of a name of somebody who then died of their wounds and therefore would be an additional victim of the Chatterton massacre because as you probably know they found several names for the Peterloo massacre only in the couple of years before the bicentennial. Robert Poole's work picked out an extra couple of names just beforehand. So, we knew it was possible to find names.

We did find two names, but it wasn't via this means. We found the deaths of two people who have been prosecuted. James Chambers and Simeon Wright who died in custody, and then another name of someone who died in prison in 1827. And again, one of my interests is deaths in custody, deaths in prisons and so on and so forth. So, we investigated that and we found that they, both Chambers and Wright died on the Hulk ship. They were sentenced to transportation, but they never made it out of the country. They died within or just one of them just over a year after the uprising.

But when we had these names and because Kate had actually also put down as many details as we possibly could into spreadsheets, we start to have a big list of literally thousands and thousands of names of people who died in Pennine Lancashire and we had their ages. We started to look at them in terms of age categories, and we started to look at them in terms of young children. We got the names of somewhere in the region of 1,640 children under the age of five who died following the Chatterton massacre. Now the numbers are not comparable really with the gravestones. You know, when we start talking about very obvious forms of state violence, you see that in things like the Chatterton massacre. But actually, what is possibly more significant, and is more disturbing for us, is the fact that children were dying because they didn't have enough food to eat, because this was the context of the uprising. It was an anti-starvation protest. And one of the ways we can index that and evidence it is by looking at those who died afterward in the numbers. And we're still in the process of going through that and finding the statistical correlations. It's not an obvious thing because sometimes people die about two years after a famine or starvation crisis. It doesn't necessarily hit people immediately. But what we do know that for any ecological system when there's a crisis, whether it's environmental or whether it's human, that it's the young that die first because they've got the least resilience and the least resources. You know that the most likely immediate impact if you have oil spill or you have something happens in environmental area it's not the older fish and the older mammals, and it's the young that die because they can't survive the ecological catastrophe.

What we had here was an economic catastrophe generated by the 1825 panic which led to mass unemployment or underemployment and people with virtually nothing to eat for months and months and months on end. That economic story of course is also missed by calling it a riot. And that was the big story I think for me was to find out that there had been this enormous economic catastrophe which was the real reason why people were in such trouble in 1826. So, James followed this up and we gave James all the names of the children under the age of five. These ribbons, all the names you see on them are the names of children who died. These are names that don't get into the newspapers. These are names that have been forgotten for over 200 years. And thanks to Kate and our work, we've been able to bring these out. When you look at them and you look at the names, what you're looking at is a young child, as James has also got the ages on there as well.

I will conclude on this point because I'm probably way over time. We are going to bring all of James's artwork together in Lancaster in October. At the moment, there's a couple of the gravestones here. There's a couple of the gravestones in the Haworth. They're in Bacup Museum, Helmshaw and they've all been placed with red ribbons which associate the names of the children with as close as proximity to where they died. So we've been very careful. James has been brilliant with that. Kate had all the parish records broken down. When we put the names together and we gave them to James, we gave James the full details of the spreadsheets. Each of the names actually are names of children who died either near Bacup or near Accrington or over towards this side of Pennine Lancashire. We did what we could to try and almost bring the children's names back to their communities because we thought that was the best way we could actually represent them. These children have been so long forgotten that nobody talks about them anymore, but they died because they didn't have enough to eat.

This is the real tragedy of 1826, the social murder, the underscoring devastation on children and others. What we're going to do in Lancaster is bring it together and we're going to be in C Wing of Lancaster Castle prison and we're going to slightly adapt the actual exhibition up there. So, not only are we going to bring all of James's artwork, James Fox's artwork together, we're going to do that in the context of prisons because, as I mentioned earlier, a lot of my work has been on prisons. My second book was on prison chaplain, and I've also done various kinds of work looking at alternatives to prisons, which we're going to put on display in Lancaster.

So, we're going to call that Rise Up! Lock Down! - rising up and locking down. As you know lockdown is a term which is often used about prisons and we've got the kind of contrast there. We've got nine cells in Lancaster Castle C wing which was the female penitentiary that we've been given the opportunity to have an exhibition in. We will have stuff on chaplain and prison officers and alternatives and also something by James Fox. I was invited down to speak at the House of Commons about 3 months ago and James had never had this banner displayed in public and I took it down and we put it behind the MPs - it's all about deaths of children who died in prison / state custody. This is where James and I have got a very fortunate connection as we're both interested in similar things and that has allowed us to display things like this and that piece of artwork will also be displayed at Lancaster Castle in October.

So, I suppose I'm saying please do come to the Whitaker and please do come to all of the kind of artworks that have been represented across Pennine Lancashire but also please do join us in Lancaster if you can in October where we'll be bringing the story together. And of course, we've chosen Lancaster because that's where the prosecutions were. So, it's also part of the story. We couldn't do this in August / September. We had to wait till October for various different reasons to do the castle. But we have actually got this.

So, the story will continue, the commemorations and the attempts to uncover the truth and to tell us the reality of what happened here and elsewhere in the 1820s. In terms of the suffering and the struggle and the courage of the people, because I think to end on this final point when the people engaged in protest here, they knew they were coming up against sabers, bayonets and bullets or potentially were doing that.

They knew that they could die or they could be seriously wounded. They knew what they were facing. They knew that the policy of the government when there was a crisis of starvation was not to open the floodgates and give people welfare. It was to use law and order mechanisms to swamp the area with soldiers. And following the rising, that's exactly what happened here. And this is part of what Joseph's work brings out more broadly because he's a military historian and brings out the fact that many soldiers came here after the uprising and many of them came from Ireland. So they shipped out the people who killed the protesters at Chatterton and they brought in a load of soldiers from Ireland. And as you probably know, Ireland had only been kind of annexed to Britain in 1800/1 and there was a very strong sense of resistance against British rule in Ireland all the way through until well till the troubles of course. But they took soldiers from an area where they knew was a hot bed of protest and conflict and they put them into Lancashire because that's how scared they were. And that's what the story was needed to be closed down. Because if we know that people from here 200 years ago have the courage to stand up for their rights and have the courage to stand up for their children and ultimately to kind of say no, I will face potential death so that my children will have a better life in the future, for the people who did that here, that deserves to be remembered. Thank you very much.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

I think the key thing is the fact that the stories manipulated because at the end of the day yes of course you've got the inquest verdicts and so on and so forth but it's the coroner who is key not the magistrate. The magistrate wouldn't give a summing up because it's the role of the coroner Thomas Farrand.

Okay. So, one of the reasons why we know it wasn't a riot is because of the organisation. So, a riot basically has no organisation. It's spontaneous, isn't it? You know. What we define as an uprising is something different. So, an uprising is something which has large levels of organisation and is focused on a particular thing. So, where a riot is very much dispersed. There's no organisation. It's a spontaneous, disorganised, chaotic form of response. An uprising

is targeted on a particular thing and involves large numbers of people. So, not only was it referred to as an uprising at the time because again there's lots of evidence around that, but also again, and this is something that Kate has been involved with in terms of finding some of this this work. We've also got evidence in the home office records from a spy called Alpha who basically was warning that there was mass organisation going on the weeks before. So, we know that there was moor land late night meetings. We know there was agitation that was being organised from largely around Darwin across the area and we know that it involved thousands of people.

Now whether the claims of 10,000 people on day one are accurate or not, it undoubtedly involved many thousands of people and possibly more than 10,000 people across the full reach of the uprising. Now there is no way that you have 10,000 or 5,000 or what was regarded as what happened at Chatterton - 3,000 people - who just spontaneously come together focused on the destruction of one thing - the power loom - without violence without other forms of property destruction and we know from other accounts that people asked to enter the mills in a peaceful way because they did not want to destroy windows. There are stories of the captains which were the people who were leading the protest telling other protesters off for breaking things. There's an example of where a water pipe is broken and there's a captain telling this protest off. It's all recorded again in the evidence from the time. So, we know that this fits the criteria of an uprising categorically and because a riot simply means the reading of the Riot Act which has no characteristics. It's got what we call no ontological sufficiency. It's not sufficient enough a term to give the essential characteristics of what it is. So riot means nothing pretty much at the time. It means literally that somebody read out the proclamation. Now if somebody came in, if we were sitting here in 1826, somebody walked through that door, they didn't like the fact there was more than 12 of us congregated and they read the proclamation. Then ultimately this is a riot. Yeah, you've got, it's like notice, you've got an hour to disperse and then we'll do whatever we think necessary. And the other irony at Chatterton is there wasn't an hour. Well, we don't even know if the Riot Act was read. Okay, but there certainly was not an hour between when the protests were allegedly named as a riot and then when the shooting took place. So, it wasn't enough time because obviously they were coming down for a specific purpose and they were going in and out in the mills within about 30 to 40 minutes. They were very efficient with the power and destruction. If they'd been waiting an hour the protesters would have gone. It's the timings, they just don't add up otherwise. So we know it kind of wasn't a riot in that sense.

The mill owners were pretty upset, and I think they would have been unpopular in the first instance. When we think about when this happened there's some sense all the mill owners would have been sympathetic to the actual protest and some would have been relatively sympathetic. They could recognise the starvation, they could recognise that people were facing enormous troubles. In fact, I can tell you what the judge said back in 1826 because Judge Parks when he was coming to the sentencing was basically talking about the level of sympathy that should be expressed to these poor people who were starving to death.

But the mill owners came out of it all rather well because they all put in compensation for the power looms that were destroyed. And this is one of the reasons why it was significant for them that the Riot Act was read because the Riot Act had two particular kind of implications.

One was that if soldiers acted in a necessary way and only in a necessary way, which is why there's the whole debate about Waddicar, they actually could open fire and kill people and there would be immunity. But secondly, if any property was destroyed, the property owners could claim compensation later on. And they did - they claimed compensation. And some of them claimed more - at least one mill owner claimed about 150% rate for his property. So, the mill owners - if you read David Whitehead's autobiography, he is incredibly dismissive right, he's one example and I'm not saying all of them would have had exactly the same perspective - the evidence is of course a bit patchy but I think in the end they did receive compensation.

It was being stressed in the newspapers at the time what these mill owners have lost. Look what's been damaged. Look at what they can't use anymore because of this. So, it indicates the lack of sympathy.

When the protest happened, there was genuine recognition of the starvation problem in in this area and elsewhere because there've been this massive economic collapse and it affected not just Lancashire - it affected people all around the country. There were various different relief committees set up including a relief committee in London and this involved kind of people contributing to from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Prince Regent themselves. They contributed money and this relief money was because the local parishes were out of money. There wasn't enough to deal with the mass numbers of people who were facing no work and no food.

But according to at least one report which is from the 1827 Emigration Committee, evidence was given saying that when it came to the compensation that was brought through the courts for the destruction of the power looms, and it fell onto the different hundreds, so you'd have in particular Salford, Leyland and Blackburn. Hundreds which were three main areas where the power destruction had taken place. And according to this evidence, what happened was that the money that was supposed to go to support the families was channelled instead, through the hundreds into the mill owners' pockets.

That's a claim, right, which we may never be able to kind of verify, but it was a claim made in an official document, at an official committee at the behest of the government. So, would that person just make it up? Well, maybe, but you have to give it a certain level of credence at the very least. So, the mill owners, if they'd had that sense of sympathy, would they have taken the money from the mouths of the starving if they were sympathetic?

But thank you so much for coming and really a pleasure to meet you all. Thank you very much.