**Dinner Introduction**

***The following introduction was provided for ‘Dinner with Fermynwoods Friends’ which provided an informal introduction to the event; responding to the week’s visit in Corby and introducing particular connections between how place and industry inform ways of living; from Aberdeen to Corby.***

**Dear Friends,**

**The food in front of you if you listen will utter stories. This is where my interest in food lies, ubiquitous in nature it embodies all the mess and chaos of the world, as well as its order. When people travel they bring with them recipes from home. This dinner sourced in Corby is traditionally Scottish; Lentil soup, oatcakes, mince, haggis, neaps and tatties, Cranachan and deep fired mars bars to finish. The historic movement of Scots south of the border to Corby for the steel industry means many of you might be familiar with this feast and for others it remains a new introduction.**

**New introductions to place and people, the potential for alliances and friendships are why we’re here tonight. Fermynwoods project ‘From Scotland to Corby’, which David is part of works with communities in the town exploring cultural shifts that take place when people relocate. Within this project the importance of industry and place in shaping it’s people and politics comes to the forefront. I’m from Aberdeen and the city; its history, industry’s and politics certainly informs my own practice.**

The image you might have of Aberdeen is the ‘Oil Capital of Europe’. Colonial in nature it moves in, rips out and leaves. The most recent ‘crisis’ in oil prices (one of many) brings to the forefront the precarious nature of the city talking about itself purely on economic, oil related terms. With thousands of people made redundant and even more working the same job for less money and more hours. Aberdeen is questioning its reliance on the rise and fall of a barrel of oil, imagining alternative futures where culture has a more visible place and the tourism industry is developed.

We can talk about places and industry. Aberdeen with its oil and Corby with its steel. Situated in different times, with specific consequences, lost hope and new opportunities – for living here, and there.

Part of the highlights of this week for me, for us, will be Friday night. When we will go to TJ. Mears exhibition at the Rooftop Gallery, an artist and a committed member of the Corby Woodland Volunteers and then around the social clubs of Corby to see Glasgow based artist Roddy Buchanan’s work.There’s often no better way to get a sense of a place than on a night out, and I wanted to introduce you to a night out in Aberdeen through local writer Shane Strachan’s work. His work is inspired by the North East of Scotland and will often focus on the tensions created by dying industries in a modern world, the loss of identities, of languages and cultures. ‘Aberdeen by Night’ was originally written and performed in 2016 as part of the National Theatre of Scotland’s ‘Granite’ production. The work both parodies and is in dialogue with Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s 1934 essay ‘Aberdeen’ (author of Sunset Song). The performance moves between a Standard Scottish English voice for Grassic Gibbon’s narrator to a contemporary broad Doric voice for the present-day narrator.

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As we are introduced to Corby, I wanted to introduce a little of Aberdeen and the North East in return. This place has been really generous to us so far, and I thought we could in the midst of sharing the common space of a table – return the favour. Enjoy the dinner!