

School of History

University of Kent

**Composing Narratives of the German Occupation of the Channel
Islands, 1940-1945: A Study of Islanders' Oral Testimonies**

Richard Guille

Supervisor: Professor Juliette Pattinson

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Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which the German Occupation of the Channel Islands of Guernsey, Jersey and Sark (1940 – 1945) has been remembered by those who experienced it. The Islands were the only part of the British Isles to be occupied by Nazi Germany during the Second World War and, thus, possess a similarly ambiguous wartime history to other occupied western European nations. Islanders were victims in many ways: many endured near starvation, all were required to learn to live with the enemy and were forced to face the morally compromising challenges of resistance and collaboration. However, public memory in the Islands has traditionally aligned with Britain's victorious war memory, generating a positive interpretation which foregrounded ideals of resolve and stoicism whilst silencing divergent narratives, such as victimhood. A dissonance exists between experience and public memory, exacerbated by inhabitants' dual identities as Channel Islanders and British subjects. As proponents of popular memory theory argue, personal accounts of the past often conform to dominant public scripts, a process through which alternative narratives risk being silenced. This study explores the ways in which these dissonances were confronted by those who were children and young adults at the time using oral history. Interviews were conducted between 2013 and 2019 with forty-two occupied and evacuated Islanders, who ranged in age in 1945 from five to twenty-five.

Existing literature on war memory in the Islands has focused on its public manifestations. Oral testimony remains under-utilised and under-theorised as a method for understanding Occupation memory and the individual's place within this. By examining the original interviews in relation to Graham Dawson's concept of composure, part of which posits that personal narratives are 'composed' in line with prevailing cultural constructions, the influences of public and popular memory on Islanders' narratives are ascertained. Islanders have multiple discourses available to them when constructing their narratives, which can conflict owing to the gap between experience and retrospective interpretation. The research engages with and contributes to existing literature on public memory and heritage in the Islands by exploring the ways individuals conform to and diverge from publicly available scripts. More broadly, questions are posed as to the processes by which individuals remember their past when aspects lack validating cultural scripts, or when these conflict with the realities of that past.

The thesis analyses the ranges of perspectives held by the interviewees and the direct influences on their testimonies such as age and familial narratives. It outlines the evolution of popular and public Occupation memory in the Islands, contextualising the public narratives and scripts available for Islanders to draw upon in composing their testimonies. It considers the ways in which British war memory continues to influence the testimonies of the interviewees, particularly focusing upon notions of stoicism and patriotism, as well as instances of humour. Conversely, the thesis delves into areas that have been silenced by their alignment with Britain's war memory, such as the more subtle and less overt occurrence of resistance in the Islands, as well as prominent victim groups such as the forced and slave foreign labourers brought to the Islands by the Nazis. Moreover, the thesis examines the most dissonant aspect of the Islanders' experience to Britain's war: living with a vast German garrison for five years. Whether they wished it or not, Islanders developed a deeper appreciation of the enemy on a human level. However, this aspect of the Occupation has been rendered sensitive by prominent debates surrounding collaboration in the islands. The thesis demonstrates that Islanders can switch between local and national discursive frameworks in narrating their experiences, providing a strategy for composing memories of the Occupation.

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of this would have been possible. I am forever in her debt. Most important are my parents Russell and Helen, who fostered a love of history within me at a young age and have been instrumental in nudging me along over these long years of study. They have blended patience and support when dealing with their stressed absentee son and I will always appreciate their love and sacrifices. I look forward to seeing a lot more of them in the future.

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Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CIOS	Channel Islands Occupation Society
FK 515	<i>Feldkommandantur 515</i>
GEP	<i>Guernsey Evening Press</i>
GFP	<i>Geheime Feldpolizei</i>
GIA	Guernsey Island Archives
GUNS	Guernsey Underground News Service
ID	Infantry Division
IWM	Imperial War Museum
JAS	Jersey Archives Service
JCP	Jersey Communist Party
JDM	Jersey Democratic Movement
JEP	<i>Jersey Evening Post</i>
MOI	Ministry of Information
OT	Organization Todt
PL	Priaulx Library, Guernsey
PMG	Popular Memory Group
SSC	Societe Sercquaise Collection
SOE	Special Operations Executive
TNA	The National Archives, Kew

Transcription Key

Bold Text.	Voice raised above interviewee's normal conversational level.
<i>Italics.</i>	Voice lowered below normal conversational level, whispered words or noticeably softer tone.
<u>Underlined.</u>	Indicates emphasis or stress on a given word.
Hyphen-between-words.	Denotes a rapid transition between words.
-----	Noteworthy pause. Each underscore represents one second. For example, a four second pause is indicated by four underscores.
Punctuation in square brackets.	Punctuation in square brackets indicates emphasis without spoiling the narrative flow. E.g. [!]

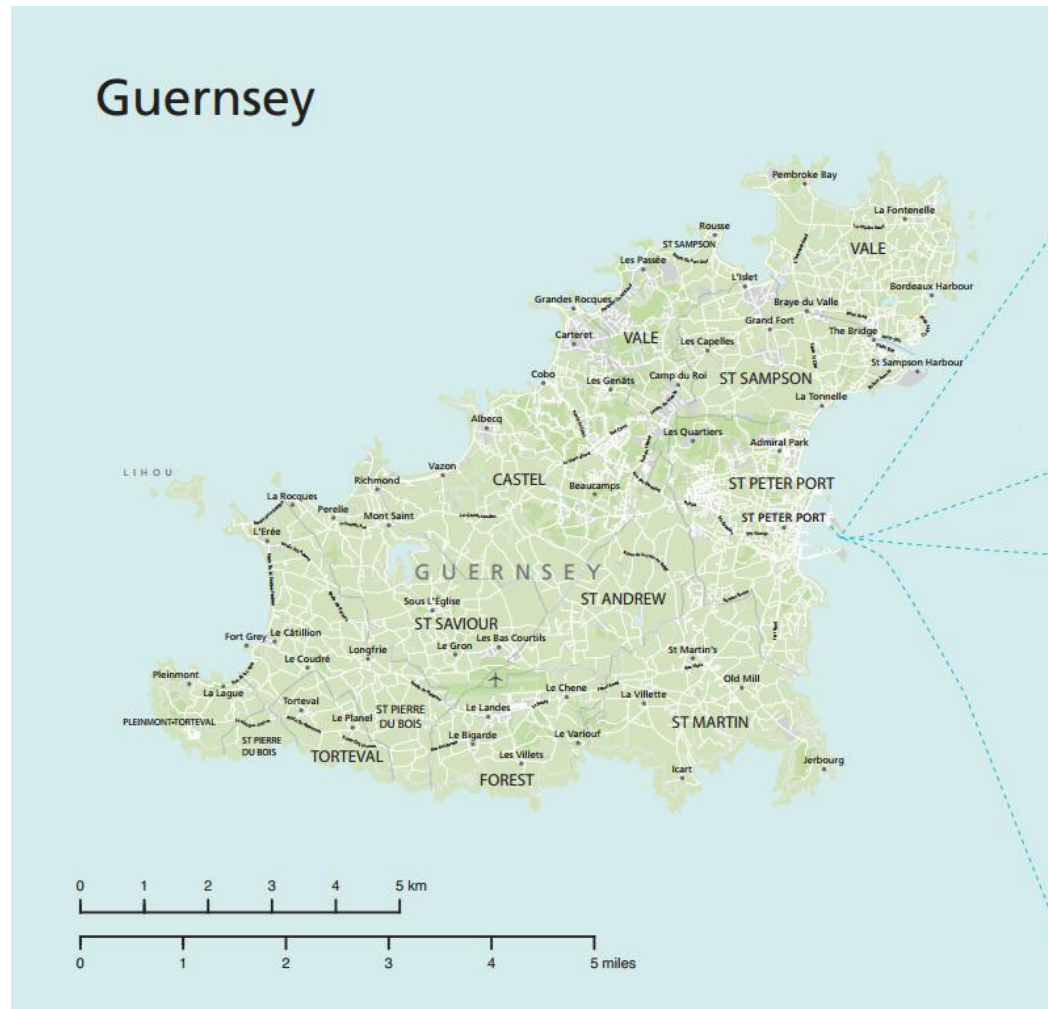
Maps



1. The Channel Islands (inset) in relation to the United Kingdom and France. Base map © maproom.net.



2. Map of Jersey, showing Parishes and conurbations. Base map © maproom.net.



3. Map of Guernsey, showing Parishes and conurbations. Base map © maproom.net.



4. Map of Sark. Base map © maproom.net.

Chronology of Occupation Events¹

1940

- 10 May Nazi Germany invades France.
- 19 June British war cabinet inform Island governments of the decision (taken on 15 June), to demilitarise the Islands in the face of the German advance. The evacuation of women, children and men of military age announced.
- 20 - 23 June Roughly 30, 000 Islanders evacuated by sea from the Islands (6,600 from Jersey, 17,000 from Guernsey and the entire population of Alderney leave). 41,000 remain in Jersey, 25,000 in Guernsey and 470 in Sark (out of a pre-war population of 600).
- On 21 June in Guernsey and 24 June in Jersey, both Island administrations centralise decision making. Guernsey sets up the Controlling Committee, presided over by Ambrose Sherwill, whilst Jersey forms the Superior Council under the control of the Bailiff, Sir Alexander Coutanche.
- 28 June The *Luftwaffe* bomb St Peter Port, Guernsey, and St Helier, Jersey. Forty-four Islanders are killed. The BBC announces the demilitarisation of the Islands later that evening.
- 30 June Germans land at Guernsey airport and the Island surrenders.
- 1 July Ultimatum dropped on Jersey ensuring ‘life and liberty’ of the inhabitants in the case of a peaceful surrender. Jersey occupied.
- 2 July Germans occupy Alderney.
- 3-4 July Germans occupy Sark. First units occupying the Islands are units of the 216 Infantry Division (ID).
- 9 August The German civil affairs unit, *Feldkommandantur 515*, arrive in Jersey, setting up a subsidiary branch (*Nebenstelle*) in Guernsey.
- 4 September Lieutenants Hubert Nicolle and James Symes hide on Guernsey. After their surrender, fourteen Islanders who aided them, including Ambrose Sherwill, are imprisoned in France until December.
- 21 October First Order against the Jews registered in Jersey. Guernsey registers this on 23 October.

¹ The information presented here is sourced from Paul Sanders, *The British Channel Islands under German Occupation, 1940-1945* (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2005); Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975); and Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands Under German Occupation, 1940-1945*, 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico, 2004).

1941

- June The 316 ID replace the 216 ID. The 216 ID is sent to the Eastern Front and all but destroyed in 1942 during heavy fighting.
- 13 June Hitler orders the Islands to be reinforced and fortified.
- July 'V for Victory' signs appear in the Islands in response to a British radio campaign.
- 9 July The Bailiff of Guernsey, Victor Carey, offers a £25 reward for information on people marking 'V' signs.
- August Bread rationing commences, following on from the rationing of virtually all other essential foodstuffs.
- October The Organisation Todt receive orders to labour on the planned fortifications in the Islands, later peaking at 16,000 forced and slave labourers in late 1942.
- 20 October Hitler issues order regarding the fortification of the Islands, in order to stave off an anticipated Allied assault. This sparks an increase of building work and an influx in OT labour, as well as generating the security concerns which engendered the deterioration in Islander-German relations the following year.

1942

- 17 March Execution of Frenchman Francois Scornet by firing squad at St Ouen's Manor in Jersey for trying to escape from France to England.
- March Arrest of Seventeen Guernsey Policemen for stealing from German stores and selling the goods on the black market.
- 21 April Deportation of three single Jewish women, Auguste Spitz, Therese Steiner and Marianne Grunfeld to France. In July the Nazis send them to Auschwitz, where all three perish.
- May Guernsey policemen put on trial and receive severe sentences. Several are sent to continental camps and prisons, where one dies.
- 'Guernsey Underground News Service' begins to produce typed news sheets.
- 13 June The Germans order the confiscation of all wireless sets in the Islands. Thousands are handed in; however, many are retained.
- 13 August Over 1,000 foreign workers arrive in Jersey, making a deep impression on the Islanders who saw them marched from St Helier to the Island's west coast.
- 15 September FK 515 receive orders to deport British born Island residents to internment camps in Germany. This order was made by Hitler in September 1941 in

response to British treatment of German nationals in Persia (Iran), but initially not enacted.

- 16 September 280 deportees leave Jersey.
- 18 September A further 346 deportees leave Jersey.
- 26 September First deportee contingents leave Guernsey. Nine are deported from Sark.
- 28 September Second group of deportees leave Guernsey, with both contingents totalling 825.
- 29 September A final 560 deportees leave Jersey, with the total Islanders deported from this Island standing at 1,186). Deportees initially sent to the transit camp of Dorsten in the Ruhr, and then onto the camps of Laufen (for single men over the age of sixteen), Wurzach (for married couples with children) and Biberach (for all others).
- 3-4 October Intelligence gathering raid 'Operation Basalt' on Sark by the Allied Small Scale Raiding Force. Following assistance from an Islanders, the force come across a German billet and capture several soldiers. In an ensuing scuffle, four Germans were killed and one taken prisoner.
- 27 December German authorities suspect, following the raid on Sark, that 'unreliable elements' remained after the previous deportations, and begin to compile lists for a future deportation on more targeted security grounds.

1943

- 18 January Teaching of German made compulsory in all Island schools. Previously it had been done on a voluntary basis.
- February A further deportation occurs, with 201 Islanders removed to the previously mentioned internment camps. Women and children sent via the French transit camp of Compiègne.
- March-April Eighteen Islanders arrested and tried in relation to the St Saviour's Wireless case. Harsher sentences were issued than usual to this point, and four Islanders eventually taken to the continent. One, Canon Clifford Cohu, dies in September 1944 in Germany.
- May Wehrmacht numbers in the Islands reach 26,800 (13,000 in Guernsey, 10,000 in Jersey and 2,800 in Alderney).
- 23-24 October Sinking of HMS *Charybdis* and HMS *Limbourne* by e-boats off the Islands with the loss of 504 lives.
- November Large numbers of OT workers withdrawn from the Islands to work on fortifications in France.
- 17 November Forty-one bodies wash up on Guernsey and Jersey and are buried with military honours. Thousands of Islanders in Guernsey attend the funeral at the Foulon Cemetery in a display of patriotic solidarity.

1944

- 6 April Following the networks denunciation, members of GUNS are tried and sentenced. Five are imprisoned in France and two die during captivity.
- 6 June D-Day. The Allied landing in Normandy raises Islanders' hopes for a swift liberation.
- 22 June Sentencing of Louisa Gould and Harold Le Druillenec for hiding an escaped Russian labourer, Feodor Burryiy. On 30 June, both were among a final deportation of civilian Island prisoners. Le Druillenec barely survived Bergen Belsen, whilst Gould was murdered in Ravensbrück in February 1945.
- August The fall of St Malo severs the Islands last link with France, condemning the Islanders and their occupiers to starvation conditions as shortages of food and fuel threaten to completely break down Island life and society.
- September Gas supply ceases on Jersey. The German High Command orders a dramatic reduction in Islanders' rations. A substantial campaign of food requisitioning begins, with the Germans deaf to Island complaints. This continues until the end of the war.
- September
November The Germans inform the British government, via the Swiss government, of their preparation to see the Islanders evacuated, or Red Cross relief brought in. Churchill rejects this, hoping to induce the garrison to surrender in the event they could not maintain their legal duty towards the Islanders under their control.
- Medical services at a standstill for lack of supplies.
- 7 November Churchill reverses his position, consenting for Red Cross supplies to be sent to the Islands. The SS *Vega* departs Lisbon on 20 December for the Islands.
- December Gas supply in Guernsey ends.
- 27-30
December The SS *Vega* lands in the Islands, bringing sorely needed Red Cross parcels which saved the Islanders from starvation.

1945

- 13 January Milk-less days introduced.
- 7-11 February The SS *Vega* returns with more supplies.
- 17 February -
12 March Bread supplies run out.
- 20 April Vice Admiral Hüffmeier, a fanatical Nazi who usurped the previous military Kommandant, Oberst Graf Von Schmettow, declares that there will be no

- surrender in the Islands.
- 8 May Victory in Europe Day. Negotiations between the Island garrison and the Allies continue off the Channel Islands coast. Islanders openly tune in to Churchill's victory broadcast.
- 9 May The Germans finally surrender the Islands to Force 135 under the command of Brigadier Snow, who liberate the Islands amidst scenes of wild jubilation.
- 10 May Liberation of Sark.
- 14-15 May The Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, visits the Islands.
- 7 June King George VI and Queen Mary visit the Islands.
- June Evacuees and deportees begin to return from Britain, the latter after repatriation from Germany.

Introduction

If anybody asks me ... ‘Is [the Occupation] something you regret?’ I’d tell them ... it’s something I’m quite proud of ... to have been ... part of something, that, doesn’t happen to everybody you know? ... If I’d had a choice I’d say definitely not. But ... I’m glad that I went through it.¹

In July 2018, eighty-seven-year-old Lynette Renouf reflected upon her childhood in German occupied Guernsey, 1940-1945. Like many Channel Islanders, Renouf demonstrated pride at having survived the Occupation and being a part of the most unprecedented period in the Islands’ history. Nazi rule caused Islanders many hardships, from increasingly parlous shortages of food, an oppressive regime, to the moral quandaries of resistance, fraternisation and collaboration.² Renouf’s family experienced a difficult war. She recalled moments of extreme hunger, the uneasy relationship Islanders had with members of the garrison and long-lasting anger towards those viewed to have collaborated. It was therefore striking that she articulated pride and gratitude. Renouf framed her narrative in positive terms, emphasising her family’s survival and personal prestige at having been there during the Occupation. This reflected a more general trend within the Islands; as the conflict archaeologist Gilly Carr has argued, the Occupation has been a central part of Islander identity ever since their liberation by Allied forces on 9 and 10 May 1945, generating a proud and positive war memory at odds with the shame and humiliation felt in western European nations following their occupation by Nazi Germany.³ From their liberation, the Islands locked into Britain’s emerging public narrative of the war, emphasising values of stoicism, shared sacrifice and victory.⁴

Conversely, some who endured the severe shortages could not easily frame their memories of this in positive terms. Food ran short from the outset of the Occupation, being most severe following the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944, when the Islands were

¹ Lynette Renouf, Interview with Richard Guille, 25 July 2018.

² For general histories of the Occupation, see Paul Sanders, *The British Channel Islands under German Occupation, 1940-1945* (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2005) and Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975). The latter, an official history commissioned by the governments of the Islands, whilst interpretatively outmoded in some respects, notably in relation to resistance, represents a durable factual account of the period.

³ Gilly Carr, ‘Denial of the Darkness, Identity and Nation-Building in Small Islands: A Case Study from the Channel Islands’, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies*, ed. by Phillip Stone (London: Palgrave, 2018), p. 358.

⁴ Paul Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness: UK War Memory and Channel Islands Occupation Memory’, in *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective*, ed. by Jodie Matthews and Daniel Travers (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), p. 25.

cut off from France.⁵ Trevor Bisson, an eleven-year-old Guernsey boy in 1945, related emotionally how his family suffered:

My dad was working ... I said to him 'Dad? You look just like a skeleton! All these ribs!' He said 'yeah we've all lost a bit of weight', he didn't lay it on ... that's _ pretty fearful ... My mother collapsed ... I was so ill I was in bed ... The doctor ... said 'he's starving to death' ... so yeah, one almost, and we lost between three or four inches of height because of the lack of food.⁶

Throughout our interview, Bisson spoke quickly and took control of its direction, rapidly leaping from one subject to the next and telling accomplished set-piece stories. However, when pushed by my questions out of his comfort zone, his responses became less rehearsed. During the above, the pacing of his narrative slowed and his stories became more reflective. Bisson spoke of the misery brought to working class Islanders by the Occupation without seeking to frame this positively. He could not directly articulate how close to death he had come, instead discussing the long-term physical impacts on himself. This alluded to the darkness buried within a victorious war memory, causing him to become unsettled. Whilst Bisson could later engage in the discourses of improvisation, he could generally find few positives from his endurance of the near starvation conditions found in the Islands.

Whilst Islanders remained aligned with Britain, their experience of Nazi occupation hewed more closely to that of western Europe, which prompted bitter feelings of defeat, shame and social dislocation. Nevertheless, in terms of their commemoration, heritage and popular memory of the Occupation, the Islands eschewed continental modes of remembrance in favour of a narrative of survival and victory, summarised by Paul Sanders as the assumption of the role of victors and the rejection of victimhood.⁷ This contained silences surrounding the Occupation's victims, such as deportees, Jews, political prisoners who were incarcerated in continental Nazi prisons and camps, as well as the foreign labourers of the Organisation Todt (OT), the Nazi civilian and military engineering organisation.⁸ The suffering of Islanders was subsumed beneath a discourse of resilience, ingenuity and stoicism, with limited space for tales of death, lingering physical effects and suffering.

Inevitably, the contradictions and omissions of this mode of war memory were called into question. This notably occurred during the 1990s when a range of previously classified documents in Britain and the Islands were released, which sparked a spate of

⁵ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 147-155.

⁶ Trevor Bisson, Interview with Richard Guille, 23 August 2018.

⁷ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 256.

⁸ Gilly Carr, 'Occupation Heritage, Commemoration and Memory in Jersey and Guernsey', *History and Memory*, 24:1 (2012), p. 92.

newspaper coverage and critical histories, as discussed in chapter two.⁹ In response, the Islands' war remembrance is transitioning towards western European models, adding further complexity to the tapestry of discursive frameworks available to those who remember the Occupation.¹⁰ The range of available public narratives, which conflict owing to the Islands' uneasy position between the British and European war experiences, present a complex memory-scape for Islanders. Daniel Travers argued of the British Isles 'the Channel Islands have indisputably the most incongruities with the celebrated British war story.'¹¹ This has implications for the testimonies of Islanders. Their experiences at times could not have been further removed from Britain's war, rendering many aspects of the Occupation dissonant and even subversive within what Sanders has dubbed the 'Churchillian paradigm' of Occupation memory.¹²

Anna Green noted that in the late 1970s, oral historians moved away from the recovery history model (which took the stance that oral history retrieved voices, often of marginalised groups, that spoke for themselves), to focus upon the intersection between individual memory and the 'wider social and cultural context within which remembering takes place.'¹³ British oral historians became 'interested in the processes that go into the construction and telling' of oral accounts.¹⁴ A key driver behind this was the Popular Memory Group (PMG) at the Centre for Contemporary Studies in Birmingham, which contended that 'public representations of the past ... are used as an aid in the constant process of making sense of personal experiences.'¹⁵ The PMG's key contribution was the notion that individual accounts of the past conform to dominant public narratives, which exercise a shaping influence upon personal testimonies.¹⁶ When these ideas are used to consider the ways in which Islanders narrate their memories of the Occupation, a potential tension is brought to the fore: namely, how can individuals, who experienced a distinctly European war yet one that has been popularly remembered in a manner consistent with

⁹ For a study that foregrounds the profound influence which the availability of official documents from a particular period can have upon historiography, see Astrid Eckert, *The Struggle for the Files: The Western Allies and the Return of the German Archives of the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

¹⁰ Daniel Travers, *The Second World War and the 'Other British Isles': Memory and Heritage in the Isle of Man, Orkney, and the Channel Islands* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), chapter 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, introduction.

¹² Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', p. 25.

¹³ Anna Green, 'Individual Remembering and "Collective Memory": Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates', *Oral History*, 32:1 (2004), p. 25.

¹⁴ Penny Summerfield, 'Dis/composing the Subject: Intersubjectivities in Oral History', in *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods*, ed. by Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury and Penny Summerfield (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 92.

¹⁵ Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 8-9.

¹⁶ Popular Memory Group, 'Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method', in *Making Histories: Studies in History Writing and Politics*, ed. by Richard Johnson, Gregor McLennan, Bill Schwarz and David Sutton (London: Hutchinson, 1982).

Britain's war memory, coherently narrate their Occupation experiences in an oral history interview?

The thesis explores this tension by analysing how Islanders narrate their memories of the Occupation in the present and the strategies they adopt. In undertaking this, the thesis examines the occupations of Guernsey, Jersey and Sark. To date, the majority of studies on Channel Islands' Occupation memory have focused on public and popular memory, as well as the presentation of the Islands' pasts in their respective heritage sectors.¹⁷ However, within these studies the remembering individual is considered less. Overfocusing on war memory as an expression of political unity or a device to manage mass-mourning, argued Graham Dawson, T. G. Ashplant and Michael Roper, 'under-conceptualis[es] both the richness and complexity of personal memory, and the extent to which it is constructed through cultural practices of representation operating at the levels of civil society and the state.'¹⁸ As this thesis explores in chapter one, oral history and the Channel Islands have not had a comfortable relationship since the *Guardian* journalist Madeleine Bunting's controversial study, *The Model Occupation* (1995), which drew heavily upon oral sources.

Notions of cultural, public and popular memory are referred to throughout the analysis. Public memory refers to that which is controlled, shaped and enabled by national or local government above all else. Memory in this form can appear hegemonic and built upon consensus; Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson argued 'officially created, high status sites of public memory can disguise the often fraught and contested nature of the creation of such sites.'¹⁹ In terms of popular memory, the thesis mobilises Graham Dawson's definition being the 'cultural significance of the past in the present – produced through the interaction between ... "private memories" of individuals and social groups and the generalised "public" memories issuing from the state.'²⁰ Proponents of this have argued that public memory, when hegemonic and broadly accepted, dominates and shapes the private. Cultural memory, in Noakes and Pattinson's formulation of this within the British context, is 'present in family stories, in popular and material culture and in acts of commemoration ... including both *personal* memories and narratives of war as well as *publicly* produced war memories',

¹⁷ Gilly Carr, *Legacies of Occupation: Heritage, Memory and Archaeology in the Channel Islands* (New York: Springer, 2014); Travers, *Other British Isles*.

¹⁸ T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper (eds.), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 10.

¹⁹ Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, 'Introduction: Keep Calm and Carry On', in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, ed. by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 6. Also see David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country - Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

²⁰ Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 3.

representing an aggregate of individual stories, public interpretations and popular representations, which intersect and evolve over time.²¹

In recent studies, Islanders' oral testimonies lie well down the rankings of preferred Occupation sources and indicators of the Islands' war memories. As chapter one explores, there has been no detailed study of Islanders' oral testimonies which delves into their construction at both the cultural and the subjective level, or that considers the implications of a contested popular memory on the individual's ability to coherently narrate their past. Two scholarly studies which made use of oral interviews have been conducted: a PhD thesis in the discipline of psychology by Corral Smith and an MA Dissertation in History by the Canadian student Kim Madsen.²² Both took a psychoanalytical approach to the management of difficult childhood experiences in later life. Neither took advantage of theoretical developments in oral history relating to subjectivity and both limited their scope to Guernsey and childhood.²³ The thesis fills this lacuna and rebalances our understanding of what oral history in relation to the occupations of Guernsey, Jersey and Sark can tell us about the event and its legacy. It provides a detailed exploration of Islanders' oral testimonies and the ways in which, against a pressurising and contradictory backdrop of discourses, their accounts can be coherently composed and how Islanders interact with the dominant cultural interpretations of the Occupation. The thesis draws upon the oral testimonies of forty-two occupied or evacuated Islanders from Guernsey, Jersey and Sark, and one Wehrmacht serviceman, conducted between 2013 and 2019. This reveals fresh insights into the ways Islanders, particularly those who were young adults and children at the time, experienced and subsequently framed that difficult past, and how they see themselves and the most noteworthy period in their Islands' modern history in the present.

The Channel Islands and the German Occupation

Channel Island identity, and whether they can be construed as having a 'national' identity, is complex. Despite many areas of independence, such as in local governance, and clearly defined local identities, cultures and history, Carr noted that the constitutional linking of the

²¹ Noakes and Pattinson, 'Introduction', p. 3, emphasis in original.

²² Corral A. Smith, 'The Impact of the Evacuation and Occupation Experience, 1940-1945, on the Lives and Relationships of Guernsey Children and Guernsey Society' (PhD thesis, The Open University, 2005); Kim Madsen, 'Guernsey Children and the Second World War' (MA diss., University of British Columbia, 2012). Madsen's research sadly went no further due to her untimely passing in 2014.

²³ Smith later published a short popular history consisting of heavily curated interview transcripts with the interviewer's interventions removed. See Corral A. Smith, *From the Mouths of Babes: The Truth about the Evacuation and Occupation and their effects on the lives of 40 children* (St Helier: Seaflower Books, 2008).

Islands with the UK complicates conceptualising the Islands as possessing a national identity.²⁴ The Channel Islands are an archipelago of British Crown Dependencies lying to the west of the Cherbourg peninsular, sixty miles from England and ten from the French coast. Belonging to the English Crown since 1066, they are not part of the United Kingdom, and acts of Parliament only apply to them in special circumstances.²⁵ As former parts of the Duchy of Normandy, the Islands retained a number of Norman traditions, including French being used for many official purposes, and each Island still retained a Norman patois, in decline at the outbreak of the war and most prevalent in rural areas. In Sark, it was quite common. The Island's laws differed from Britain, stemming from their Norman roots and centuries of local custom and precedent.²⁶ In 1939, approximately 90,000 people were resident in the Islands.²⁷ Whilst the majority of the populations were native Islanders, a substantial minority were retired Britons, attracted to the Island by the warm climate and favourable taxation laws.²⁸ In early May 1945, roughly 66,000 Islanders remained following evacuations and deportations.

Self-governing micro-states, the Islands enjoyed a large degree of independence outside of matters of defence and foreign policy. They consist of the Bailiwick of Jersey and the Bailiwick of Guernsey, the latter including Sark and Alderney. Each Bailiwick's Bailiff is appointed by the Crown and presides over their respective legislatures: the Assembly of the States in Jersey and the States of Deliberation in Guernsey.²⁹ In 1940, Guernsey's Bailiff was the elderly Victor Carey, whilst Jersey was led by the younger Alexander Coutanche. Sark differed from the larger Islands, being a Crown fiefdom with Sark's Seigneur holding the hereditary rights to the Island from the monarch, conferring upon them rights of leadership in return for an annual rent. Until 2008 Sark was the last remaining feudal state in the world. Decisions were taken in a small parliament called Chief Pleas, where the holders of the Islands forty tenements (parcels of land) debated the Island's governance.³⁰ During the

²⁴ Carr, 'Denial of the Darkness', p. 357.

²⁵ For a range of studies of the Channel Islands, their long history and constitutional position, one should consult: Peter Tabb, *A Peculiar Occupation: New Perspectives on Hitler's Channel Islands* (Hersham: Ian Allen, 2005), pp. 15-34; John Uttley, *The Story of the Channel Islands* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966); and The Channel Islands Study Group, *Nos Îles: A Symposium on the Channel Islands* (Teddington: Channel Islands Study Group, 1944). For Sark, see A. H. Ewan and Allan R. de Carteret, *The Fief of Sark* (Guernsey: The Guernsey Press, 1969).

²⁶ Louise Willmot, 'The Channel Islands' in *Resistance in Western Europe, 1940-1945*, ed. by Bob Moore (Oxford: Berg, 2000), pp. 65-66.

²⁷ 50,000 people resided in Jersey, 40,000 in Guernsey, 1,500 in Alderney and 600 in Sark. Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, p. x.

²⁸ Hazel Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands' Occupation: Record, Memory, Myth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), p. 5.

²⁹ Willmot, 'The Channel Islands', p. 66.

³⁰ Michael Beaumont, *The Constitution and Administration of Sark* (Guernsey: 1993), pp. 4-5; Richard Le Tissier, *Mined Where You Walk: The German Occupation of Sark 1940-1945* (St Helier: Seaflower Books, 2008), p. 11.

Occupation, the Seigneur held immense feudal power over Sarkian life. Appointments to public office were made by the Seigneur.³¹ The wartime Seigneur was the formidable Dame of Sark, Sybil Hathaway. Louise Willmot argued ‘these were societies in which traditions of hierarchy and deference ... were incorporated into the structures of government ... with a disproportionate influence for Islanders with wealth and family connections: public life and the major offices were still dominated by a relatively small number of inter-connected families.’³²

Economically, the Islands were dependent upon agriculture, potatoes and cattle in Jersey, vegetables and tomatoes in Guernsey, and tourism. The scenic, unspoilt and rural Islands were a popular destination for British tourists; indeed, in early 1940, the Islands were advertised in Britain as the ideal holiday destination to escape the pressures of the war.³³ Guernsey, measuring twenty-four square miles, consists of wide, flat beaches on its north and western coast, rising in height at the southern end, with its capital, St Peter Port, on the east coast. Jersey, forty-five square miles, slopes down from a rugged northern coastline towards expansive beaches in the south and west of the Island, with St Helier on the south coast. Sark, only 1,000 acres, is girdled by rugged cliffs with a plateau atop the landmass. Then, as today, cars were banned. Sark consists of two connected Islands joined by an isthmus of rock called La Coupée. The larger, ‘Big’ Sark in the north, is home to the village and the majority of houses, whilst the much smaller ‘Little’ Sark contains mostly farmland and a few dwellings. Life on small, sea-bound Islands provided Islanders with a deep-seated resilience. The levels of self-governance manifests in an independent streak and pride in the Island way of life. However, their constitutional links to the English Crown also provided a profound loyalty to Britain.

By pointing to the nature of Islands as ‘self-contained societies’ defined ‘by their natural geographic borders’ and drawing upon Benedict Anderson’s definition of a nation as an ‘imagined political community’, scholars have argued that the Islands can be defined as having an approximation of a national identity.³⁴ To view the Islands as the same would be to oversimplify: each holds different identities, customs and histories, and Daniel Travers recognised a ‘felt sense of difference.’³⁵ During the English Civil War, Guernsey declared for parliament and Jersey for the Crown, leading to enmity between the Islands that lies at the root of today’s good-natured rivalry. Jersey Islanders insultingly referred to those from

³¹ Beaumont, *Constitution and Administration*, p. 7.

³² Willmot, ‘The Channel Islands’, p. 66.

³³ Sonia Hillsdon, *Jersey Occupation Remembered* (Norwich: Jarrold Publishing, 1992), pp. 10-11.

³⁴ Travers and Matthews, ‘Introduction’, in *Islands and Britishness*, ed. by Travers and Matthews, p. 3; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), p. 6; Carr, ‘Denial of the Darkness’, pp. 355-357.

³⁵ Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

Guernsey as ‘donkeys’, whilst the Guernsias shot back the insult ‘crapaud’ (toad), with both terms retaining cultural relevance today, albeit less pejoratively.³⁶ Constitutionally linked to the Bailiwick of Guernsey yet with its own independence, Sark has a stubbornly independent streak to outside interference. Recent efforts by the billionaire brothers David and Frederick Barclay, who own the neighbouring Islet of Brecqhou, to interfere with Sark’s way of life, have heightened Sarkian identity in response to their outsider challenge.³⁷ Local identity, forged by the challenging and anachronistic nature of life, informed the subjectivities adopted by Islanders. However, this thesis is not about Islands and the nature of life upon them, focusing instead upon Channel Islanders as remembering individuals.

Travers has charted Islander identity, asserting that Islanders self-define first by their Island, then as Channel Islanders and finally as British.³⁸ Fresh developments indicate a growing desire to differentiate their heritage from Britain through increasingly open public discussion of more difficult Occupation aspects. This is more advanced in Jersey, with Guernsey lagging behind.³⁹ However, Travers’s progression of identity can be flipped ‘in times of national celebration, mourning, or war.’ Pointing to the continuing use of the tropes and symbols of the ‘Finest Hour Myth’ in liberation day celebrations, Travers noted the continuing relevance of British war memory to Island identity formation.⁴⁰ He concluded: ‘there is a distinct need ... to celebrate a positive moment in what was an unsettling and contentious wartime experience. The use of British iconography ... is key to maintaining a tangible link ... with Britain’s glorious wartime narrative.’⁴¹ Moreover, an awareness must be maintained of the differences between the Islands’ Occupation experiences, which varied considerably, and the diverse features of their respective war memories. These highlight the need to conceptualise the German *Occupations* of the Channel Islands, as well as considering cultural Occupation *memories*. Throughout, the thesis strives to maintain an awareness of this in its analysis, considering how the nature of the Occupation varied between the Islands and how the divergent mnemonic contexts of the post-war Islands have influenced individuals’ memories.

The Islands were occupied between 30 June and 4 July 1940. They were to remain under Nazi control until their liberation by Allied forces on 9-10 May 1945. In June 1940,

³⁶ Ibid., chapter 5.

³⁷ See David Lowenthal’s commentary on these recent developments in Sark in his review of Travers and Matthew’s edited collection: David Lowenthal, review of *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective*, ed. by Jodie Matthews and Daniel Travers, *Geographical Review*, 104:1 (2014), pp. 101-108, here pp. 106-107.

³⁸ Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

³⁹ Gilly Carr, ‘Have You Been Offended?’ Holocaust Memory in the Channel Islands at HMD 70’, *Holocaust Studies*, 22:1 (2016), pp. 44-64; Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

⁴⁰ Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

⁴¹ Ibid., chapter 5.

the Islands were demilitarised by the British and a chaotic evacuation ensued. Between 20 and 23 June, roughly 30,000 Islanders left by sea. The majority, 17,000, evacuated from Guernsey. The leading official in Alderney, Judge French, made his own arrangements to evacuate Alderney's entire population.⁴² Sark's native population, encouraged to stay by Hathaway, remained *en masse*.⁴³ On 28 June, Luftwaffe reconnaissance flights mistook lorries of produce in the Islands' harbours for military vehicles and six Heinkel He.111 raided St Peter Port and St Helier, killing forty-four.⁴⁴ The Germans set up a civilian administration, the *Feldkommandantur* 515 (FK 515) to work with the Island governments. However, as the garrison increased in size, power was gradually taken from FK515 by the Wehrmacht and Kriegsmarine commanders.⁴⁵ In October 1941, Hitler ordered the Islands to be fortified to repulse an Allied invasion. Increasing security concerns from 1942 led to more repressive measures, such as the confiscation of all wireless sets, the deportation of political prisoners to continental prisons and camps and ever harsher sentences for those who fell afoul of the occupier's laws.⁴⁶ In September 1942, 1,186 British born Islanders were deported to internment camps in Germany.⁴⁷ The result was an increase in resistance activities and hostility towards the Germans.⁴⁸ To build the fortifications, 16,000 OT labourers were brought to the Islands.⁴⁹ By 1944, 484,000 cubic metres of reinforced concrete had been used in fortifying the Islands, a twelfth of the entire Atlantic wall.⁵⁰ Their unspoilt landscapes became scarred by bunkers and anti-tank walls, and the headlands covered with thousands of anti-personnel mines. The Islands were occupied by 26,800 soldiers at their peak, one German to every three Islanders.⁵¹

Shortly before the invasion, the governments of Guernsey and Jersey streamlined their executive bodies. Guernsey formed the Controlling Committee, presided over by the Islands' Attorney General, Ambrose Sherwill, whilst Jersey set up the Superior Council,

⁴² Roughly 6,000 evacuated from Jersey. For his detailed account of the evacuations, see Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, pp. 34-57.

⁴³ Sybil Hathaway, *Dame of Sark: An Autobiography* (London: Heinemann, 1961), pp. 114-115.

⁴⁴ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁵ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 175-177.

⁴⁶ Louise Willmot, "Nothing was ever the same again": Public Attitudes in the Occupied Channel Islands, 1942', *Local Historian*, 35:1 (2005), pp. 9-20.

⁴⁷ See Roger Harris, *Islanders Deported: The Complete History of those British Subjects who were Deported from the Channel Islands during the German Occupation of 1940-1945 and imprisoned in Europe* (Ilford: Channel Islands Specialists Society, 1980).

⁴⁸ Willmot, 'Nothing was ever the same again', p. 11.

⁴⁹ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 222.

⁵⁰ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, p. 199.

⁵¹ Paul Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice: The Jersey Islanders who died in German Prisons and Concentration Camps during the Occupation, 1940-45*, 2nd ed. (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2004), p. 128.

under the direction of Coutanche.⁵² Owing to the unique propaganda opportunity capturing the Islands presented, German conduct was initially conciliatory to present the Occupation as a test-run for the planned occupation of Britain. Island courts, government and law enforcement were allowed to continue under German supervision.⁵³ The Island governments adopted a policy of working constructively with FK 515, seeking an occupation grounded in international law and mutual respect. Instructed by the British government to remain and govern in the best interests of the inhabitants, they sought to keep the populations safe through discouraging resistance and trying to hold the Germans to international law.⁵⁴ This policy, summarised by Sherwill as a ‘model occupation’, was tested to the limit by the German presence.⁵⁵ Sanders argued the Island administrations incrementally moved down a ‘slippery slope’ into increasingly compromised acts of collaboration with the enemy. Moreover, the administrations adopted utilitarian doctrines, choosing to not intercede on behalf of groups who threatened the safety of the majority, such as resisters or foreign Jews.⁵⁶

Until 1942, Islanders enjoyed a comparatively freer existence than elsewhere in occupied Europe.⁵⁷ However, as the Occupation progressed, Islanders were confronted with increasing laws and regulations and ever worsening sentences.⁵⁸ The expansion of the garrison lessened the resources available to Islanders, with German requisitioning of food and billets increasing throughout the war.⁵⁹ After D-Day, German requisitions of food increased massively, and Islanders endured starvation conditions until relief from the Red Cross ship the SS *Vega* arrived from December 1945. A ‘culture of survival’, where Islanders bartered, borrowed, queued and improvised, became a major part of daily life.⁶⁰ Education was greatly disrupted, with schools frequently uprooted due to German requisition orders, whilst German lessons were made compulsory from 1943.⁶¹ Undeniably, low-level collaboration occurred in the Islands, although this was a minority activity. Informants told the Germans of illicit activities either out of fear of reprisals, or to settle

⁵² Gilly Carr, Paul Sanders and Louise Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance in the Channel Islands: German Occupation, 1940-1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 15.

⁵³ Louise Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers: Help to Escaped Russian Slave labourers in Occupied Jersey, 1942-1945,’ *Contemporary European History*, 11:2 (2002), p. 214.

⁵⁴ Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

⁵⁵ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 41.

⁵⁶ Paul Sanders, ‘Managing under Duress: Ethical leadership, Social Capital and the Civilian Administration of the British Channel Islands During the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1945’, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 93 (2010), pp. 113-129.

⁵⁷ Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, chapter 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, chapter 5; Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 164-165.

⁶⁰ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 147-172.

⁶¹ For the experience of Guernsey schools as an example, see Guernsey Island Archives (GIA), St Peter Port, C/4, ‘Peter Girard Occupation Memoir’, n.d.

personal grudges. Women entered into sexual relationships with the Germans for status, genuine romantic attachments, or to source food and fuel.⁶² Hundreds of Island men and women worked for the Germans, enticed by the greater wages offered by the occupiers.⁶³ Black-marketeering pitted law-abiding Islanders against those who benefited themselves at the expense of the community. These occurrences have always sat uneasily with Islanders.

Island identity is thrown into sharp relief by the Occupation (always capitalised locally), which, Carr argued, has lain at its heart of identity building since liberation, providing a ‘new range of symbols and events out of which new identities were imagined and constructed.’⁶⁴ The Islands had little option but to lock into Britain’s nascent war narrative in May 1945.⁶⁵ Travers argued their ‘initial war memory was closely related to Britain’s “Finest Hour” myth’, focusing on Islanders ‘behaving with steadfast Britishness in the face of the enemy.’⁶⁶ From this came a period where Occupation memory was sterile. Restored bunkers and museums became ‘sites of pride in endurance’, and focus tended to be directed towards the military history of the Occupation rather than anything controversial.⁶⁷ Islanders’ loyalty to Britain and their emotional attachments to the still belligerent nation led to this alignment with Britain’s cultural memory of the war. This retains significant influence over British life and identity due to its continuing ubiquity; Noakes and Pattinson asserted that ‘few historical events have resonated as fully in modern British culture’ as the war.⁶⁸ Mark Connelly, Angus Calder and Noakes and Pattinson identified that this cultural memory stems from a powerful myth, constructed at the time and reinforced by post-war cultural representations, of a united, equal and morally superior Britain standing alone against Nazism, sharing sacrifices for a common cause, defined by stirring rhetoric of their tenacious Prime Minister, Winston Churchill.⁶⁹ This retains its power due to its fluidity, ‘defying precise definition’ and its being derived from, in Malcolm Smith’s view, culturally determined ‘big facts’ about the war, which are inarguable and immune to the nuance of academic discourse.⁷⁰ Connelly has mapped out these ‘big facts’, arguing that every Briton shares the knowledge that ‘Britain won, the British ... fought for the best reasons ... and that

⁶² Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 169-172.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶⁴ Carr, ‘Denial of the Darkness’, in *Dark Tourism*, ed. by Stone, p. 355. The progression of Island war memory is outlined in chapter two.

⁶⁵ Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, p. 25.

⁶⁶ Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

⁶⁷ Carr, ‘Occupation Heritage’, p. 92. Charles Cruickshank’s official history, commissioned by the Island administrations in 1975, did little to alter the prevailing view in the Islands through its heavy focus on the military aspects of the Occupation. Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*.

⁶⁸ Noakes and Pattinson, ‘Introduction’, p. 2.

⁶⁹ Mark Connelly, *We Can Take It: Britain and the Memory of the Second World War* (Harlow: Pearson Educational Ltd, 2004), p. 1; Noakes and Pattinson, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1-24; Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Pimlico, 1991), p. 3.

⁷⁰ Malcolm Smith, *Britain and 1940* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 2.

the war was won by a collective act of fortitude and self-sacrifice.’⁷¹ Historical myths, Connelly contended, provide people with a sense ‘of who and what they are ... by linking the self to a larger collective.’⁷² This process explains why Islanders have attempted to situate their peripheral experiences within Britain’s hegemonic cultural war memory.

Noakes and Pattinson pointed to the presence of ‘successive narratives conveyed in a range of media’ to explain this resonance, which ensured that generations born after the war ‘acquired a learned historical memory of those years.’⁷³ Geoff Eley contended that owing to the omnipresence of the war in British culture, “‘Remembering” World War II requires no immediate experience of those years.’⁷⁴ The dominance of Britain’s war memory is an important influence on Islanders. Britain is the lead culture in the Islands, and Islanders, as Bunting astutely identified, read British newspapers and listen to British radio, having done so even before the Occupation and watch British television.⁷⁵ They have been as exposed to and consumed the various cultural carriers of Britain’s war memory as the British themselves, possessing a similar learned historical memory. Given Islanders’ loyalty to Britain, it is unsurprising that this cultural memory has become a part of their identity, blending with the experience of the Occupation. However, Sanders commented, ‘in the list of illustrious episodes stretching from the Battle of Britain ... Malta, North Africa, the exploits of Bomber Command ... [and] the Normandy landings ... the Channel Islands’ Occupation was the odd one out.’⁷⁶ The contradictions of the Churchillian paradigm could not be escaped for long.

Concurrent to a more general wave of revisionism of Britain’s role in the Second World War and growing Holocaust consciousness in the UK, the 1990s saw a crisis of memory in the Islands as the divergences between the Occupation and Britain’s imagined war became publicly evident. Infamously, Bunting’s *The Model Occupation* drew attention to administrative collaboration, the fate of the small number of Jews in the Islands, the suffering of OT labourers and a perceived lack of resistance, which prompted a furious response from Islanders.⁷⁷ Such criticisms caused much anger and hurt in the Islands.

⁷¹ Connelly, *We Can Take It*, pp. 6-7.

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁷³ Noakes and Pattinson, ‘Introduction’, p. 2. For a discussion of how post-war films laid out the parameters within which Britons would remember the war, see Juliette Pattinson, ‘A Story that Will Thrill You and Make You Proud: The Cultural Memory of Britain’s Secret War in Occupied France’, in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, ed. by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 135-136.

⁷⁴ Geoff Eley, ‘Finding the People’s War: Film, British Collective Memory and World War Two’, *American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), p. 818.

⁷⁵ Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule, 1940-1945*, 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico, 2004), p. 315.

⁷⁶ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 256.

⁷⁷ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*.

Resultantly, the Islands had to nuance their wartime narratives, incorporating previously taboo subjects into public commemorations. This process is uneven between the two main Islands.⁷⁸ For example, Jersey erected a memorial to its civilian deportees in 1996, whilst Guernsey unveiled a small plaque in 2010.⁷⁹ Conversely, as seen in chapters two and three, the reflex of the Islands to align themselves with Britain's war, reinforced by patriotic liberation day celebrations, remains a factor influencing Islanders' identity stemming from the war.

However, committed efforts are being made to alter this by scholars such as Sanders, Carr and Louise Willmot, who have focused their research on silences within the Churchillian paradigm, such as resistance and victims of Nazi persecution.⁸⁰ Notably, they published a co-authored seminal study, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance in the Channel Islands* (2014), which slew myths surrounding a perceived lack of resistance in the Islands, providing a diligently researched account of the extent of Channel Island resistance.⁸¹ Carr has gone further, adopting a strong activist stance on behalf of the 'disenfranchised' victims of Nazi persecution in an effort to attain greater public recognition for them in Jersey and particularly in Guernsey.⁸² Underpinning this is the belief that the Churchillian paradigm represents an 'inaccurate myth' preventing the Islands from achieving a balanced public relationship with its Occupation past which acknowledges its inherent darkness.⁸³ These developments represent a new paradigm in Island Occupation studies, identified here as one of 'resistance and victimhood'. The extent to which these recent developments have penetrated the sphere of private memory is evaluated in the thesis.

The Channel Islands hold a peripheral position within Britain's war memory; part of it, but marginalised on the very edge of the experience. Their alignment with this rested upon several silences which hid dissonances, such as administrative collaboration, and emphasised areas which chimed with ideals of stoicism, ingenuity and victory. Uncomfortable aspects were, in their morally ambiguous nature, irreconcilable with the mythical interpretation of Britain at war. Islanders find themselves caught in a trap of their own making, for affirmatory experiences from occupied western Europe are closed off to them by their long-standing alignment with Britain's war memory.⁸⁴ Therefore, the Islands exist in a space between the undefeated British and the occupied Europeans. How, then,

⁷⁸ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 273.

⁷⁹ Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

⁸⁰ Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*; Gilly Carr *Victims of Nazi Persecution in the Channel Islands: A Legitimate Heritage?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); and Willmot, 'The Channel Islands', pp. 65-91.

⁸¹ Gilly Carr, Paul Sanders and Louise Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance in the Channel Islands: German Occupation, 1940-1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

⁸² Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, pp. 147-209.

⁸³ Carr, 'Denial of the Darkness', p. 359.

⁸⁴ Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', p. 36.

when British war memory remains a key influence over Occupation memory in the Islands, do Islanders coherently construct their testimonies of the Occupation?

Composing Oral Testimonies

Oral history represents the best methodology for examining these issues. Oral history has undergone several key shifts since its emergence after the Second World War. As oral history became more commonplace left-wing social historians, notably Paul Thompson in the British context, began to identify oral history's potential to recover the experiences of subaltern groups without voice in the documentary record or official history, such as the working classes, women and ethnic minorities.⁸⁵ However, traditional positivist scholars were unsettled by oral history's radical potential and assailed the perceived fallibility of memory, the unrepresentativeness of oral sources and the intervention of the interviewer in the creation of the source.⁸⁶ In response, social historians defended the reliability of long-term memory and developed a careful methodology to correct problems of representativeness and interviewer bias.⁸⁷ Moreover, they astutely reminded positivist scholars, in the words of Trevor Lummis, 'the problems of memory - how fallible it is and how biased retrospective evidence may be ... are actually an epistemological problem of much other historical evidence.'⁸⁸

Concurrent to the linguistic turn, which highlighted the importance of language and cultural discourses in forming individual interpretations of experience, oral historians shifted into the 'interpretive mode'.⁸⁹ This reflected a rejection of the recovery history model by Italian historians such as Passerini in 1979, who believed left-wing approaches promoted a 'facile democratisation' that 'construct[ed] oral history as merely an alternative ghetto, where at last the oppressed may be allowed to speak.'⁹⁰ Passerini suggested oral sources should refer to the sphere of subjectivity, 'that area of symbolic activity which includes

⁸⁵ Alistair Thomson, 'Memory and Remembering in Oral History', in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. by Donald Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 78-79; Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁸⁶ Alistair Thomson, 'Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History', *Oral History Review*, 34:1 (2007), pp. 53-54. Notable criticisms included those of Eric Hobsbawm, who argued that 'most oral history is personal memory which is a remarkably slippery medium for preserving facts', and A.J.P. Taylor, who, in characteristically controversial terms, deemed oral testimonies little more than 'old men drooling over their youth.' Penny Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews', *Cultural and Social History*, 1:1 (2004), p. 65-66.

⁸⁷ Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure', p. 66.

⁸⁸ Trevor Lummis, *Listening to History: The Authenticity of Oral Evidence* (Totowa: Barnes and Noble, 1998), p. 12.

⁸⁹ Michael Roper, 'Oral History', in *The Contemporary History Handbook*, ed. by Brian Brivati, Julia Buxton and Anthony Seldon (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 347.

⁹⁰ Luisa Passerini, 'Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism', *History Workshop*, 8 (1979), p. 84.

cognitive, cultural and psychological aspects.⁹¹ Similarly, Alessandro Portelli contended that ‘oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did.’⁹² Such works foregrounded an acceptance that memory ‘is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings ... reveal[ing of] the narrator’s effort to make sense of the past and to give a form to their lives.’⁹³ The influence of this cultural turn in the humanities, Penny Summerfield argued, gave rise to the notion that dominant discursive constructions of the past ‘contaminate memory’, rewriting it in line with later accounts and interpretations of the historical period which the memory relates.⁹⁴

When, the society, and the culture in which remembering occurs are key: Annette Kuhn posited that ‘if ... memories are one individual’s, their associations extend far beyond the personal. They spread into an extended network of meanings that bring together the personal with the familial, the cultural, the economic, the social and the historical.’⁹⁵ Noakes and Pattinson argued such forces provide ‘the very language with which memories can be articulated.’⁹⁶ Dawson and Bob West outlined how public representations ‘offer forms and general interpretive categories ... [so] ... people can locate their own experiences in terms of wider social patterns. Popular memories ... give a shared form to a multiplicity of individual and particular experiences ... to reconstruct people’s sense of the past.’⁹⁷ Oral historians began to study ‘the discourses, cultural constructs or ideologies that shape consciousness and behaviour’, accepting that ‘people do not simply remember what happened to them, but make sense of the subject matter they recall by interpreting it’ through the prisms of personal identity and dominant cultural interpretations of the past.⁹⁸ The concept of ‘composure’, coined by the popular memory theorist Graham Dawson in 1994 to explain the processes by which individuals construct personal accounts, has become a key tenet of oral history, with

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 85.

⁹² Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 50.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 52. Thomson pointed to the work of neuroscientists and psychologists that have confirmed Portelli’s summation of memory as a dynamic creator of meanings. Thomson, ‘Memory and Remembering’, p. 81.

⁹⁴ Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure’, p. 66.

⁹⁵ Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 4.

⁹⁶ Noakes and Pattinson, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

⁹⁷ Graham Dawson and Bob West, “‘Our Finest Hour’? The Popular Memory of World War Two and the Struggles over National Identity”, in *National Fictions: World War Two in British Film and Television*, ed. by Geoff Hurd (London: BFI Publishing, 1984), pp. 10-11.

⁹⁸ Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure’, pp. 66-67.

Dawson's contribution reinforced and expanded upon through seminal texts by scholars such as Thomson and Summerfield.⁹⁹

Seeking to outline the psychological importance of storytelling and the influence of the culture within which personal accounts are composed, Dawson drew upon the dual-meaning of the verb 'to compose' in devising a subtle model for understanding how narrators make sense of their past lives 'within the social relations' of their worlds.¹⁰⁰ Firstly, Dawson referred to the process of composing a story, whilst secondly, to a narrator's ability to create a coherent story that provides them with psychic comfort. Composure involves 'a striving ... for ... a version of the self that can be lived with in relative psychic comfort - for, that is, subjective composure.'¹⁰¹ Summerfield expanded, 'a necessary part of this process is the establishment ... of an acceptable self.'¹⁰² She built upon the work of sociolinguist Charlotte Linde, who argued that 'in order to exist in the social world with a comfortable sense of being a good, socially proper and stable person, an individual needs to have a coherent, acceptable and constantly revised life story.'¹⁰³ Identifying storytelling as a culturally important activity embedded into everyday life, Dawson contended that this 'lies ... also in those we ourselves tell, or compose.'¹⁰⁴ Memories are composed to create a comfortable sense of one's life, incorporating past and present identities in an effort at attaining a sense of personal equanimity and coherence through the presentation of a stable identity.¹⁰⁵

Storytelling is an important part of the processes by which memories are encoded. Pointing to psychology and neurobiology, Thomson noted that memories that are retained are generally events deemed significant by the person who experienced them, 'necessarily a partial and subjective process.' Through storytelling, memories become neurologically entrenched and incorporated into an individual's autobiographical memory, forming part of a mnemonic tapestry that helps shape who the person believes he or she was and is.¹⁰⁶ Sequentially, the subjectivity of the individual influences what they deem to be significant in their life, which in turn shapes which experiences will be remembered. Thomson argued that 'an experience is much more likely to be remembered if it is perceived to be significant ...

⁹⁹ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*; Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

¹⁰⁰ Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 22-26.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁰² Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, p. 17.

¹⁰³ Charlotte Linde, *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁵ Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁶ Thomson, 'Memory and Remembering', in *Oral History*, p. 84.

and is therefore articulated into a memorialising form, most typically a story.’¹⁰⁷ Summarising the importance of present identity in the composure of accounts, Thomson argued that:

in our storytelling, we identify what we think we have been, who we think are now and what we want to become. The stories that we remember will not be exact representations of our past, but will draw upon aspects of that past and mould them to fit current identities and aspirations ... thus, our identity shapes our remembering.¹⁰⁸

Identities shift over time which necessitates the re-composure of memories, with stories and memories that have moved from being validating to one past identity contradicting the present self, needing to become unspoken and replaced by new stories that support the composure of the present identity.¹⁰⁹ These shifts can occur due to changes in cultural values, or to life changes on the part of the individual.

Composure also refers to the interplay between dominant cultural discourses and the individual’s efforts to compose a narrative that coheres with these, an insight stemming from Dawson’s involvement in the construction of popular memory theory which emphasised the power of cultural discourses in defining and limiting ‘imaginative possibilities.’¹¹⁰ Memories are composed using the public languages of one’s culture when telling a life story.¹¹¹ Dawson drew upon Richard Johnson’s conceptualisation of the ‘cultural circuit’ in exploring how individual recollections of the past influence, and are in turn shaped by, popular culture.¹¹² Personal and local accounts inform the content of films, television dramas and documentaries, plays, radio programmes, novels and histories, each a powerful transmitter of cultural discourses. In this process, private or local accounts are simplified and homogenised as they are filtered through the prism of dominant discursive models and flattened and made generally recognisable for a mass audience.¹¹³ In turn, narrators draw upon these popular accounts in formulating and expressing stories of their own experience, perpetuating the cycle between the popular and private constituents of a culture.¹¹⁴ Ultimately, Dawson proposed that the stories we tell about ourselves and the discourses we mobilise in the telling are the result of a complex process of selection, influenced by the ‘powerful hegemonic constraints of an effectively established culture’, which ensures that ‘some forms are

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁰⁸ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

¹¹⁰ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 25.

¹¹¹ Corinna Peniston-Bird, ‘Oral History and the Sound of Memory’, in *History Beyond the Text: A Student’s Guide to Alternative Sources*, ed. by Sarah Barber and Corinna Peniston-Bird (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 108.

¹¹² Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, pp. 24-25; Richard Johnson, ‘What is Cultural Studies Anyway?’, *Anglistica*, 26 (1983), pp. 26-39.

¹¹³ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 69.

¹¹⁴ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, pp. 23-24.

installed as more appropriate than others.’¹¹⁵ These discourses, stemming from generalised and simplified private and local memories through the cultural circuit, ‘exert, at best, a pressure of conformity upon potential alternative narratives or, at worst, render unspoken and invisible that about which these narratives would speak.’¹¹⁶

Thomson argued that ‘our memories are risky and painful if they do not conform with the public norms or versions of the past. We compose our memories so that they will fit with what is publicly acceptable,’ providing a sense of affirmation and recognition.¹¹⁷ Subjective composure is challenging for individuals whose experiences do not tally with what is ‘publicly acceptable’. However, as Thomson’s research foregrounded, cultural discourses evolve, and narrators whose memories once existed in a ‘risky and painful’ state alternative to a hegemonic cultural interpretation can later find validation. Thomson drew attention to his interviews with an ANZAC veteran Fred Farrell, whose memories of shellshock, fear and grief over the loss of his friends ran so counter to the national ANZAC myth of the hyper-masculine ‘digger’ that he was unable to coherently compose a narrative due to his perceived inadequacies as a soldier. Yet when public narratives shifted around the time of the Vietnam war in the 1980s to acknowledge the horrors of war and the soldier as a victim, Farrell found his experiences publicly validated, and was able to narrate his wartime memories with greater coherence and public affirmation.¹¹⁸ Similarly to how subjective identities can shift over time, the evolution of the cultural circuit also alters which memories of past experiences can be safely articulated with widespread cultural validation. Peniston-Bird argued “‘composure’ is thus a process of becoming that is constantly under revision, never fully achieved and always time specific.”¹¹⁹ Some, whose stories were previously buttressed by dominant frameworks, can find their narratives rendered outmoded or alternative by subsequent cultural shifts.¹²⁰ Thomson summarised that ‘our remembering changes ... as the general public field of representation alters.’¹²¹ With this in mind, the thesis examines recent developments in the Islands’ Occupation memories, evaluating the extent to which these have influenced what Islanders can discuss with coherence.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 23-24.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

¹¹⁷ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 11.

¹¹⁸ Alistair Thomson, ‘Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia,’ *Oral History*, 18:1 (1990), pp. 25-31.

¹¹⁹ Peniston-Bird, ‘Oral History’, p. 108.

¹²⁰ This is demonstrated in Peniston-Bird’s work on how patriotism in Second World War narratives had, by the mid-2000s, become a less culturally validated concept for interviewees to articulate, despite its salience to their wartime experiences. Corinna Peniston-Bird, “‘All in it together’ and ‘Backs to the Wall’: Relating Patriotism and the People’s War in the 21st Century’, *Oral History*, 40:2 (2012), pp. 69-80.

¹²¹ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 9.

A further dimension of composure concerns the audience a narrative is composed in response to. Lynn Abrams contended that ‘the oral history interview is a three-way conversation: the interviewee engages with themselves, with the interviewer and with culture.’¹²² An intersubjective relationship is established between narrator and audience. Summerfield summarised that ‘the social recognition offered by the audience exercises a determining influence upon the way a narrative may be told, and therefore, upon the kind of composure that it makes possible.’¹²³ Interviewees make judgements as to the historian’s identity, their values, what they are seeking from the interview exchange, what information they are most interested in, and what narrative forms and language their interlocuter will understand. Summerfield highlighted the existence of a process of selection in response to an audience, ‘in the hope of eliciting recognition and affirmation.’¹²⁴ As discussed in chapter three, interviewees felt confident that I would be well-versed in the cultural shorthand of that period such as ‘making do’, and could rapidly decode and understand the meaning of such concepts in response to my evident interest in Britain during the Second World War.

Dawson identified that subjective composure is dependent on social recognition, which confirms that the presented version of the self conforms with broader collective realities and resonates with the experiences of others.¹²⁵ He argued that:

The social recognition offered within any specific public will be intimately related to the cultural values that it holds in common, and exercises a determining influence upon the way a narrative may be told ... The narrative resource of a culture - its repertoire of shared and recognisable forms - therefore functions as a currency of recognised identities.¹²⁶

Thomson pointed to the role of ‘particular publics’, such as a wartime platoon, a family or an oral history interviewer, in influencing the composure of a narrative in response to the values and collective meanings of those audiences.¹²⁷ In the context of an oral history interview conducted for a professional research project, respondents strive to ensure that their narratives fulfil the hidden requirement of delivering a public story in an intimate and private setting.¹²⁸ Interviewees’ assumptions that they are ‘delivering their stories into the public domain’ can be indicated, noted Summerfield, by preparations made for the interview, an unnaturally formal manner of speech or anxieties over the relevance of certain memories.¹²⁹ Studies by Valerie Yow, Pattinson and Hilary Young demonstrate how the

¹²² Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, p. 76.

¹²³ Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure’, p. 69.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹²⁵ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 23.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹²⁷ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 9.

¹²⁸ Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives*, p. 22.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23; Peniston-Bird, ‘Oral History’, pp. 115-116.

intersubjective relationship can have a powerful effect upon the composure of narratives, with factors such as age, gender, social class, political affiliations and national or regional identities being important influencers.¹³⁰

Dawson's insights have had a profound influence upon oral historians, buttressed by key texts that developed upon these, being most effectively utilised in studies of soldiering and gendered identities.¹³¹ Summerfield studied the testimonies of women who had worked or served in the British forces during the Second World War, concluding that the women's testimonies were shaped by dominant cultural constructions surrounding femininity, and both wartime and post-war cultural representations, which intersected with their personal experiences in the composure of their narratives. Consequently, her interviewees generally marshalled their memories of the war within the discursive frameworks of 'heroism' or 'stoicism.'¹³² Thomson, who applied the popular memory approach to his study of ANZAC veterans, suggested that the men he interviewed were heavily influenced by contemporary cultural discourses of the ANZAC legend. With his interviewees composing homogenous and flattened testimonies reinforced by 'familiar' anecdotes, Thomson felt at times as if 'I was listening to the script of the film *Gallipoli*.'¹³³ Similarly, Summerfield and Peniston-Bird identified in their 2007 study of the Home Guard the powerful role the successful television series *Dad's Army* (1968-1977), played in shaping the testimonies of the Home Guard veterans they interviewed. Those whose experiences bore similarities to the series relied upon this framework for composure, whereas for others whose time in the Home Guard diverged from this, the series restricted the terms within which they could remember.¹³⁴ The utility of the concept of composure for analysing how personal accounts are constructed, notably in relation to dominant cultural discourses, underscores it as a key interpretive device for this thesis.

However, composure is not always achieved and is 'constantly threatened, undermined, disrupted.'¹³⁵ Oral historians coined the term 'discomposure' to examine the testimonies of those whose experiences cannot be composed owing either to being alternative to hegemonic interpretations or too psychologically damaging to be safely

¹³⁰ Valerie Yow 'Do I like them too Much', in *The Oral History Reader* (2nd ed.), ed. by Rob Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 54-67; Juliette Pattinson, 'The thing that made me hesitate...': Re-examining Gendered Intersubjectivities in Interviews with British Secret War Veterans', *Women's History Review*, 20:2 (2011), pp. 245-263.; Hilary Young, 'Hard Man, New Man: Re/composing Masculinities in Glasgow, C. 1950-2000', *Oral History*, 35:1 (2007), pp. 71-81.

¹³¹ Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, p. 69.

¹³² Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, pp. 16-18.

¹³³ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp. 7-8.

¹³⁴ Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Women and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 232-234.

¹³⁵ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 10.

incorporated into one's sense of self. Defining discomposure as a state of subjective 'disequilibrium', Pattinson argued that this can be revealed through 'irritation, tears, inconsistency and silence.'¹³⁶ Moreover, Summerfield stated that 'a memory or a line of enquiry, or an uncomprehending or unsympathetic response from an audience, may produce discomposure ... manifest in confusion, anger, discomfort and difficulties sustaining a narrative.'¹³⁷ Outcomes of failing to draw upon appropriate public accounts, Summerfield argued, can include the interviewee seeking to justify any deviations, fit their memories into 'alternative frameworks', or 'be able to express their stories only in fragmentary and deflected accounts.'¹³⁸ If one's experiences jar with dominant discourses or an interpretation lies outside of public acceptability and discomposure ensues, what then of Islanders who would recall issues of victimhood, resistance and collaboration in the same narratives that align themselves with the tropes of stoicism and 'making do' prevalent within the Churchillian paradigm? The thesis considers whether, and if so, how, Islanders can make this leap whilst maintaining composure. Do such aspects provide fertile ground for discomposure in the interviews conducted here, as they arguably did more broadly in the 1990s when they were publicly brought to the fore, or can local frameworks provide Islanders with a way to sidestep discomposure due to any experiential distance between Occupation and Britain's war?

There is a tension between notions of collective and individual memory, which revolve around the extent to which individual memory can operate independently of the confines of the collective, or indeed whether the term 'collective memory' contains any tangible meaning.¹³⁹ Some have queried the deterministic implications of the PMG's ideas, arguing that individual agency risks being subsumed within the collective. Green presented a trenchant critique of this, arguing that contemporary oral history interpretive approaches were converging with 'the theoretical direction of cultural theorists writing on collective memory ... Both groups of historians ... minimise ... the value of individual memory.'¹⁴⁰ She proposed that oral historians focus on which discourses individuals draw upon and why, and the individuals' capacity to 'contest and critique cultural scripts and discourses.'¹⁴¹ Similarly, Roper argued that the contributions of the PMG 'emphasise[d] the power of

¹³⁶ Pattinson, 'The Thing That Made Me Hesitate', p. 248.

¹³⁷ Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure', pp. 69-70.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

¹³⁹ Aleida Assmann, 'Transformations Between History and Memory', *Social Research*, 75:1 (2008), pp. 125-133; Jeffrey Olick, 'Collective Memory: The Two Cultures', *Sociological Theory*, 17:3 (1999), pp. 248-333; Lindsey Dodd, *French Children Under the Allied Bombs, 1940-1945: An Oral History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p. 38; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 37.

¹⁴⁰ Anna Green, 'Individual Remembering', p. 42.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

public languages rather than the unconscious in the structuring of personal narratives,' saying little 'about the range of possible personal motivations for remembering.'¹⁴² While such criticisms have been a minority position, they raise important questions as to how individuals select imaginative frameworks and reject others, and whether contestation, refutation and critical engagement is possible.¹⁴³ Cultural discourses and social contexts are key factors influencing how memories are composed. However, Lindsey Dodd emphasised, societies 'are made up of individuals.'¹⁴⁴

The case of the Islands underscores that commemorative and official silences do not always correlate directly with what individuals remember and are prepared to speak of, even if the sharing of dissonant memories can engender psychic discomfort during the interview. Summerfield argued that oral history is 'inherently likely to produce instabilities in the telling of life stories than other, more casual, ways of encouraging reminiscence,' and can contribute to discomposure.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, Thomson claimed, 'public languages ... do not necessarily obliterate experiences that make no public sense ... [U]nstructured and unremembered, these ... may linger in memory and find articulation in another time.'¹⁴⁶ Peniston-Bird suggested that instances of discomposure frequently uncover 'the individual's desire to resist dominant narratives ... stories most likely to challenge public narratives ... [which are] ... revealing of the greatest disjunctures between past and present experiences.'¹⁴⁷ Evasiveness, silence, and anger do not always indicate that a lack of public acceptability have stymied the speaking of certain subjects in the Islands as some have assumed. Bunting felt she had divined a conspiracy of silence on issues such as resistance, using it to argue that Islanders held a sanitised collective memory stemming from Islanders' fears of being judged for not having resisted the enemy enough.¹⁴⁸ Such a formulation missed the mark. Resistance tended to be an individual affair or based on loosely linked networks. Accordingly, general knowledge of resistance activities was lessened in Jersey and Guernsey.¹⁴⁹ Diagnosing the reasons for discomposure in testimonies of the Channel Islands Occupation is far from straightforward, and the thesis is alert to the variety of reasons an individual may struggle for composure when remembering those years.

The thesis examines how Islanders navigate this potential cognitive tension between experience and paradigm when constructing their oral narratives for a project intended to

¹⁴² Michael Roper, 'Re-Remembering the Soldier Hero: Psychic and Social Construction of Memory in Personal Narratives of the Great War,' *History Workshop Journal*, 50 (2000), p. 184.

¹⁴³ Abrams, *Oral History*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁴ Dodd, *French Children Under Allied Bombs*, p. 38.

¹⁴⁵ Penny Summerfield, 'Dis/composing the Subject', p. 93.

¹⁴⁶ Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁷ Peniston-Bird, "'All in it together'", p. 71.

¹⁴⁸ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 4 and pp. 320-321.

¹⁴⁹ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 353.

contribute to public accounts of the Occupation. Do such subjects signify ‘points of conflict and rupture in people’s lives that create confrontations with discourses of power?’¹⁵⁰ Moreover, does this engender discomposure, or are more specific local discourses – grounded in the reality of Occupation – mobilised to circumvent the potential challenges of wholly aligning personal narratives with the former? Certainly, there are examples of discomposure outlined throughout this thesis. However, other Islanders discussed potentially challenging subjects with coherence. This raises questions as to the role of local discourse and identity in the composure of Islanders’ narratives, and whether recent changes in the popular memory of the Occupation in Guernsey and Jersey have had a discernible effect. Some interviewees could switch between hegemonic notions of Britain at war and Island-specific discourses within the same interview, being capable of engaging with these broader constructs through Sherry Ortner’s notion of ‘a critical subjectivity’, where narrators internalise, reflect upon and then react to cultural frameworks.¹⁵¹ The thesis allows us to ascertain which discourses are mobilised by respondents and why this is the case.

Sources and Structure

The thesis faces an inherent paradox in oral history approaches to memory. Thomson argued that whilst long-term recall is fairly reliable, ‘our memories are influenced by the neurological, psychological processes of storytelling, at the time of the event ... to the time of the telling.’¹⁵² To ameliorate this, Thomson proposed a ‘double take’ approach, using oral testimonies ‘to explore both the past (history) and the past in the present (memory).’ The thesis analyses contemporary and oral sources throughout, allowing for deviations between the recorded past and interviewees’ narratives to be identified. A range of primary material has been consulted alongside the oral testimonies, sourced from archives in the Channel Islands and in the UK. Diaries and letters have been analysed to explore attitudes and experiences during the Occupation, contextualising the testimonies. Care has been taken with diaries, for those who did keep them were atypical in that they were prepared to break the occupiers’ laws to testify. Letters composed and sent after Liberation reflect the desire to reconnect after five years of separation, offering a glimpse of how Islanders framed their experiences shortly after the end of their war to those who had experienced the war in Britain. Official papers produced by the Island administrations or the British government provide a similar function of contextualising the Occupation. Moreover, documents produced by the British Home Office and the Security Services during their post-war

¹⁵⁰ Green, ‘Individual Remembering’, pp. 42-43.

¹⁵¹ Sherry Ortner, *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power and the Acting Subject* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 126-127.

¹⁵² Thomson, ‘Memory and Remembering’, pp. 90-91.

investigations into the Islands are used to highlight how the Occupation was initially interpreted by the British, and how this shaped discourse surrounding the Occupation. Memoirs are also analysed throughout in similar terms to the oral testimonies as composed accounts of the period.

Interviews held by the IWM and other archives have been consulted. These offer the methodological benefit of providing perspectives from an earlier time period (mainly between 1989 and 1997), and older age groups. There are methodological issues in using these. The intersubjective relationship is only divivable from what appears on the tape or in the text.¹⁵³ It is impossible to know what conversations took place prior to the recorder being switched on or how willing the interviewee was to contribute. These sources are used in an ancillary capacity to my own interviews, where the intersubjective relationship can be considered and transcription choices my own. Transcripts of interviews from the 1990 documentary *Swastika Over British Soil* have previously been used by scholars such as Sanders and Willmot, although these sources have been misidentified as interviews conducted by Bunting. Whilst they were deposited in the IWM by Bunting, the interviewer's initials (PB) correspond with the documentary maker Peter Batty. The transcripts are from a filmed interview, with respondents asked to repeat and rearticulate memories several times, and breaks for vehicles or to settle nervous interviewees are identified in the transcript. Moreover, the documentary was controversial, reviving 'bitter wartime memories' of collaboration.¹⁵⁴ The interviewer's interest in this was reflected in his questions, which focused on collaboration, a lack of resistance and profiteering. Archived transcripts are challenging, for the 'distance between the original and its representation is even greater', Peniston-Bird argued.¹⁵⁵ In analysing these, the thesis cannot definitively infer aspects such as tone or pacing. However, by examining the linguistic construction of these testimonies, these sources broaden the available range of perspectives.

The thesis is structured thematically to facilitate the identification of contradictions and similarities between experience and public memory within the Islands, and determine the influence of myths, dissonances and public silences upon Islanders' testimonies. Certain aspects have been artificially separated to maintain a clear structure and enhance the chapter analyses. However, each of these broad themes presented their own dissonances between paradigm and lived experience and the analysis provided is clearer for the thematic approach. To mitigate any shortcomings, an awareness of points of crossover has been maintained throughout. Moreover, the thesis seeks out divergences between the Islands,

¹⁵³ Peniston-Bird, 'Oral History', p. 114.

¹⁵⁴ Colin Partridge, 'Editorial' in *Channel Islands Occupation Review*, 18 (1990), p. 11.

¹⁵⁵ Peniston-Bird, 'Oral History', p. 114.

considering how Guernsey, Jersey and Sark's occupations differed and how this influenced Islanders' testimonies. This allows for inter-Island comparisons to be made.

Chapter one outlines the methodological utility of oral history in understanding both experiences and memories of the Occupation. Its chief methodological focus is on the youngest members of the sample, particularly those aged below ten at the end of the war, outlining the contours of childhood memory. Chapter two provides an overview of the evolution of public and popular memory in the Islands since 1945, as well as providing a literature review demonstrating how the historiography has evolved and prompted shifts in local memory. Chapter three explores the influence of British war memory upon Islanders' oral testimonies and the extent to which local manifestations of this retain power as a discursive framework. Carr argued that the Islands' alignment with Britain's war memory lies at the heart of a 'quite inaccurate myth' holding sway today, which retains an implied criticism that Islanders incorrectly 'remember' their history.¹⁵⁶ The chapter problematises this, highlighting areas where patriotism and notions of Britishness reflect lived experience as well as providing an applicable framework within which present recollections of past experiences can be orientated.

To remember an ambiguous experience whilst sufficiently cohering to British war memory, Islanders have had to adapt and develop their own discourses, which can intersect and diverge with the Churchillian paradigm when appropriate. Chapter four considers how Islanders composed their memories of the most dissonant aspect of their experience: the necessity of learning to live with the occupiers. The initial hypothesis was that this should be a challenging subject for Islanders to compose given its proximity to collaboration. Nevertheless, the testimonies, for the most part, demonstrated remarkable coherence, indicative of an adherence to a widely accepted local discourse that emphasised the common humanity between Islanders and soldiers. Conversely, where the subject of collaboration was raised, discomposure was in evidence in some cases, and the potential for controversy in relation to collaboration retains power to engender anger and silence.

Chapter five discusses a subject which discredits the idea of benign German behaviour in the Islands: the suffering of the forced and slave workers of the OT. Yet the foreign OT workers were never fully assimilated into the Islands' victorious Occupation narratives.¹⁵⁷ The chapter explores whether the OT labourer is becoming a more recognised Occupation victim, arguing that the labourers have recently received greater cultural validation, leading some Guernsey interviewees to attach greater importance to memories of

¹⁵⁶ Carr, 'Denial of the Darkness', p. 359.

¹⁵⁷ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 162.

the OT. Chapter six considers Island resistance, which has retained a controversial sheen since the Island administrations stymied direct opposition to German rule in fear of reprisals. Ultimately, the semantic baggage of ‘resistance’ caused some to deny the possibility of resistance, which could engender discomposure. Bringing the thesis full circle, the chapter examines low-level acts of defiance which remain more comfortable to discuss, frequently through a humorous and patriotic frame that aligns Islanders with Britain’s war memory.

The history of three Islands during five years of Nazi occupation is complex. Covering every aspect whilst leaving space to fully explore the oral testimonies was impractical. The thesis’s form was beholden to the interviewees’ stories and commonalities or divergences across their testimonies. The position and role of the Island administrations, particularly in relation to the question of their collaboration, do not feature heavily in this thesis owing to their tangential influence upon the lives and memories of the interviewees. Other areas, such as the 1942-43 deportations, education and the Red Cross ship *SS Vega* are mentioned briefly due to their marginal importance to the overall argument. A further omission is the experiences of Island evacuees, which detracted from the central focus of the thesis and represented something worthy of a separate publication. Similarly, the history of Alderney, site of the only concentration camp on British soil during the war, *SS Sylt*, has been omitted. The experiences of the Island’s ‘inmates’, ranging from eastern and western European labourers and Jews, lie outside the thesis’s parameters.

‘To respect memory’, Passerini argued, ‘means letting it organise the story according to the subject’s order of priorities.’¹⁵⁸ Being guided by the oral testimonies is a strength of the thesis. Whilst interviewing on Sark in 2016, I experienced a similar phenomenon to Robert Gildea in his research for his 2002 study of occupied France, *Marianne in Chains*.¹⁵⁹ Gildea found a question about a local mayor met with bemusement by a French woman who had no memory of the official. Realising that there was no reason why she should recall the distant man, Gildea enquired after her memories, eliciting far richer material.¹⁶⁰ In 2016, I was disappointed that my Sarkian interviewees recalled little of Hathaway, who had featured little in their childhood lives. Yet their memories of managing deprivations and the occupiers grew in significance; this was what had mattered to them, what had been retained and subsequently reinforced through storytelling. These lessons were applied to the 2018-19 interviews, aimed at developing an understanding of what Islanders

¹⁵⁸ Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 8.

¹⁵⁹ Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains: Daily Life in the Heart of France During the German Occupation* (New York: Picador, 2002).

¹⁶⁰ Robert Gildea, ‘The Long March of Oral History: Around 1968 in France’, *Oral History*, 38:1 (2010), p. 68.

shared with me and why, eliciting *their* stories and listening carefully to what they deemed important. It is to an examination of those interviews that we now turn.

Chapter One

‘Opinions that are likely to be highly subjective’: Oral**Testimonies of the German Occupation of the Channel Islands****Introduction: Oral History and the German Occupation of the Channel Islands**

People who are researching the Occupation, and going to look for people who were alive at the time, this is quite now dangerous because most ... will either be my age and, even more gaga than I am, or else they will be children, whose memories are second hand, of what they’ve heard grown-ups talking about ... and opinions that are likely to be highly subjective. And I hope that what I have to say, can be objective.¹

Bob Le Sueur, born in 1925, commenced our interview by cautioning me of the dangers of using oral history in researching Jersey’s Occupation. He pointed to the problems of relying on the testimony of children and, in terms reminiscent of AJP Taylor’s criticism of oral history representing ‘old men drooling about their youth’,² downplayed the utility of young adults of the time due to their advanced age. This was a peculiar start to an oral testimony, casting doubt upon the validity of the exercise and highlighting his own efforts to mitigate these problems, as evinced through his aspiration to be objective. However, by digging deeper into these remarks, a seam of oral history scepticism in relation to Occupation research, with its roots in scholarship of the past twenty-five years, can be identified. Le Sueur is a prominent figure with a strong stake in Occupation memory and has influenced a number of studies of the Occupation through his membership of the Channel Islands Occupation Society (CIOS). Le Sueur falls into the category of Islanders Gilly Carr identified as ‘Guardians of Memory’, those with influence over Occupation memory.³

Le Sueur was a contact of Paul Sanders during the preparation of his 1998 study into Jersey resistance, and held him in high regard.⁴ Sanders demonstrated a cautious approach to oral history and the Islands’ Occupation in 2004:

Oral history is the most important means of obtaining vital complementary information. However, well-informed oral sources are becoming

¹ Bob Le Sueur, Interview with Richard Guille, 14 May 2019.

² Quoted by Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 70.

³ Gilly Carr, ‘Islands of War, Guardians of Memory: The Afterlife of the German Occupation in the British Channel Islands’, in *Heritage and Memory of War: Responses from Small Islands*, ed. by Gilly Carr and Kier Reeves (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 75-91.

⁴ On the phone prior to the interview, Le Sueur told me he believed Sander’s work to be highly accurate, in contrast to other authors.

increasingly scarce ... today Occupation research is highly dependent on the testimonies of those who were youngsters ... [who] ... shared perceptions of events which deviated from those of their parents and ... [whose] ... insight was ... limited.⁵

The similarities between Sanders' views and Le Sueur's statement is striking. Le Sueur reprised the historian's views at the outset of our interview. This was indicative of the way in which historians can, in small societies, influence how the past is viewed.⁶ However, as this chapter attests, childhood Occupation witnesses require a different approach from older members of the generation. Sanders underappreciated the potential value of oral history for recovering subjective experience and revealing the memory of the past in the present at both the individual and public level. For Sanders, oral testimony was only useful if sourced from 'reliable' witnesses to complement the documentary record.

Oral history has not always been eyed with such trepidation in studies of the Islands. Early histories utilised spoken reminiscence, such as Alan Wood and Mary Seaton-Wood's 1955 *Islands in Danger* and Michael Marshall's 1963 *Hitler Invaded Sark*.⁷ Both quoted conversations with Islanders, with space provided for their recollections, which, in the absence of a complete documentary record, was methodologically vital. Charles Cruickshank's 1975 official history also made use of oral testimonies, although he favoured the classified documents to which he was allowed access for his text.⁸ The turning point for oral history in Occupation historiography was Madeleine Bunting's *The Model Occupation* (1995). Oral history interviews formed a key component of her methodology, allowing her to claim that a sanitised collective memory could be circumvented through interviewing Islanders for the 'hidden history' lurking beneath the expression of Churchillian endurance.⁹

Given the controversy Bunting provoked and the anger her conclusions caused in the Islands (see chapter two), it was unsurprising that subsequent scholars would mobilise well-documented criticisms of personal memory as a historical source. Sanders criticised Bunting for a 'dangerously complacent over-reliance on oral sources', whilst Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp

⁵ Paul Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice: The Jersey Islanders who died in German prisons and concentration camps during the Occupation 1940-1945*, 2nd ed. (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2004), p. 179.

⁶ Carr has referred to Sanders as a 'game-changing historian' whose interventions altered public discourse in the Islands, notably in Jersey. Gilly Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution in the Channel Islands: A Legitimate Heritage?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), pp. 152-159.

⁷ Alan Wood and Mary Seaton-Wood, *Islands in Danger: The Fantastic Story of the German Occupation of the Channel Islands 1940-1945* (London: Evans Brothers, 1955); Michael Marshall, *Hitler Invaded Sark* (Guernsey: Guernsey Lithoprint, 1963).

⁸ Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

⁹ Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule, 1940-1945*, 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico, 2004), p. 44 and p. 320. This appeared to be a manifestation of the 'recovery history' oral history approach.

and Alice Evans, eschewed oral testimony on the grounds of its unreliability.¹⁰ Jorgensen-Earp justified her rejection of oral testimony even as an ancillary source ‘to avoid both the vagaries of memory and the emphasis on controversy that seems to follow modern historical analysis of civilians during the war.’¹¹ Similarly, Evans rejected oral testimony in favour of sources written at the time, mobilising Denise Riley’s statement that memory contains ‘the discolourations and encrustations of thirty-years on’ and pointing to the tainting of memories by the polarisation of public debates during the 1990s and early 2000s.¹² Both studies were highly critical of Bunting’s work, and reflected a trend of returning to the documentary record and supposedly inviolable diaries to counter the damage caused by her study. Detailed conceptual engagement with oral testimony has lain outside the scope of many recent Occupation histories. However, the patchy use of oral sources since Bunting’s work and committed adherence to the principles of documentary-based research represents a trend away from the subjective towards the supposedly reliable *terra firma* of the written word.¹³

Resultantly, Occupation oral testimonies have not been the subject of serious and constructive discussion. Bunting’s questionable methods gave historians methodological excuses to side-step an expensive and time-consuming line of enquiry. The unrealised potential for professional oral history interviews during this period represented a missed opportunity. Carr recently revealed her attitude to oral history in an online comments section in an article justifying her interventions on behalf of victims of Nazi persecution in the Islands. Carr stated that ‘Historians do not rely on anecdotes and oral testimony. They rely on archival sources/sources written down at the time ... They listen to ... [oral accounts] ... yes, and sometimes record them as alternative versions of stories.’¹⁴ This is indicative of Carr’s personal hierarchy of sources, in which oral testimony is considered if it sheds ‘useful’ light on gaps in the documentary record, and discarded if it does not. Occupation scholars have tended to view oral testimony through the lens of what they can tell of the past in terms of hard, verifiable fact. Conversely, this research demonstrates that oral sources represent complex, interpretively rich windows into identity and the interplay between past and present. Unwarranted scepticism has seen that oral history in the Islands has, since the

¹⁰ Paul Sanders, *The British Channel Islands under German Occupation, 1940-1945* (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2005), p. 258.

¹¹ Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation: Guernsey, Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2013), p. 15.

¹² Alice Evans, ‘Introduction’ in Violet Carey, *Guernsey Under Occupation: The Second World War Diaries of Violet Carey*, edited by Alice Evans (Chichester: Phillimore, 2009), p. xix and Alice Evans, ‘The Language of Occupation: Guernsey, 1940-1945’ (MA by Research Diss., University of Warwick, 2002), p. 11.

¹³ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. xvi.

¹⁴ Gilly Carr, ‘Why I won’t leave Guernsey History Alone’, Guernsey Press, 9 March 2021, <<https://guernseypress.com/news/features/2021/03/09/why-i-wont-leave-guernsey-history-alone/>> [Accessed 10 March 2021].

2000s, been abandoned to popular authors, notably Duncan Barrett in 2018 and John Nettles in 2012.¹⁵ Outside of Kim Madsen's MA dissertation and Corral Smith's doctoral dissertation in Psychology, both of which tacked more in the direction of child psychology than oral history, scholars have shied away from conducting oral history projects on the Occupation, and none have sought to understand the subjective and cultural construction of these sources.

Sanders and Carr both see oral history as valuable insofar that it adds detail to the documentary record. Louise Willmot's studies of Channel Islands resistance adopted a similar approach, using the IWM's sound archive to fill in the gaps of the then patchy record of resistance, with little conceptual engagement with the quoted testimonies. There is a double standard which exists in Occupation historiography, where oral testimony is considered unreliable yet frequently 'quote mined' from archived interviews, often from transcripts.¹⁶ Undoubtedly, Sanders and Willmot only included 'plausible' accounts but failed to consider the subjective and cultural dimensions of oral testimony. Alessandro Portelli argued that undervaluing oral sources renders them 'mere supports for traditional written sources.'¹⁷ Instead, Portelli suggested that 'the discrepancy between fact and memory ultimately enhances the[ir] value', and that 'the real and significant historical fact' they speak of 'is the memory itself.'¹⁸ Paradigmatic shifts within oral history have not made their mark on the study of the Occupation to this point.

One historiographical trend drawing further historians away from individual memory has been Carr's research. Much of her work has focused upon how the Islands present their Occupation history in the form of memorials, museums and heritage sites. Carr's research is heavily influenced by Jay Winter and Pierre Nora in relation to *Lieux de Memoire* and public sites of memory.¹⁹ The influence of Nora is particularly important here, for a similar trend to memory studies of the Islands and of France is identifiable. Robert Gildea, an English historian of occupied France blended both oral and documentary

¹⁵ See Duncan Barrett, *Hitler's British Isles: The Real Story of the Occupied Channel Islands* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2018); John Nettles, *Jewels and Jackboots: Hitler's British Channel Islands: The German Occupation of the Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (Jersey: Seeker Publishing, 2013).

¹⁶ This was particularly the case in Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*. The transcripts can be sourced from a file deposited by Madeleine Bunting at Imperial War Museum (IWM), London, Docs. 5750, Misc. 189, 'Material Concerning the German Occupation of the Channel Islands, Second World War', 1996.

¹⁷ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991) p. 46.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁹ Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations*, 26 (1989), pp. 7-24; Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

sources.²⁰ Gildea noted that French historians, influenced by the arguments of sociologist Maurice Halbwachs that there is no such thing as individual memory, with individuals remembering within the contexts of family, class and nation, demonstrated a tendency to focus on the way collective memory is constructed.²¹ Nora's substantial study was aimed at charting France's *Lieux de Mémoire* and how they informed 'collective' memories of the past. The result was that French historians 'ha[d] no interest in the oral testimony of the individual, which is deemed partial and partisan, and see themselves as constructing a universal and objective history.'²² Lindsey Dodd, who explored French children's memories of Allied bombing, concurred, stating that France 'has, until quite recently, dismissed oral history.'²³ Nancy Wood argued that an overfocus on collective memory in France created the hegemonic notion of a 'performative, national memory that is qualitatively different to a memory that is merely lived and experienced.'²⁴

Carr has applied Nora's conceptualisation of *Lieux de Mémoire* to the Islands, identifying their sites of memory and counter memory.²⁵ Whilst she has taken this further, identifying the unique ways public memory is managed in small Islands where individuals or groups can exert a great deal of influence, the ordinary remembering Islander with limited involvement in these processes remains subsumed beneath the power of dominant discourses.²⁶ These are created through heritage and supposedly absorbed on a collective level, either maintaining the dominant narrative or fighting it from a marginalised position. Focus is given to the high-profile examples of both categories, with less attention given to the more publicly passive witness. However, given her strong epistemological stance on the question of collective memory, her work often places individuals into reductive categories as 'for' and 'against' dominant narratives. Dan Travers' study of heritage and memory across the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Isles of Orkney, reflects Carr's approach as

²⁰ See Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains: Daily Life in the Heart of France During the German Occupation* (New York: Picador, 2004). H. R. Kedward also represents another English scholar who blended oral and documentary sources to good effect in his study of French resistance. H. R. Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1942-1944* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993). For Halbwachs's work on the concept of collective memory, see Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

²¹ Robert Gildea, 'The Long March of Oral History: Around 1968 in France', *Oral History*, 38:1 (2010), p. 70.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²³ Lindsey Dodd, *French Children Under the Allied Bombs, 1940-1945: An Oral History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p. 33.

²⁴ Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Post-war Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), p. 17.

²⁵ Gilly Carr, 'Occupation Heritage, Commemoration and Memory in Jersey and Guernsey', *History and Memory*, 24:1 (2012), pp. 87-117.

²⁶ Gilly Carr, *Legacies of Occupation: Heritage, Memory and Archaeology in the Channel Islands* (New York: Springer, 2014), p. 8.

another study with limited place for the remembering individual.²⁷ The thesis resists this trend through reinserting the autonomous individual into the debate, allowing for questions to be explored as to how Islanders interact with hegemonic discourses in the creation of their oral accounts. Overly focusing upon the public and popular is fraught with danger. Joanna Bourke cautioned, ‘individuals “remember”, “repress”, “forget” ... not societies.’²⁸ Anna Green noted that the focus of scholars on collective memory led to a minimisation of the value of individual memory, which risked being subsumed under the notion of shared public interpretations of the past.²⁹ Furthermore, the conceptual underpinnings of popular memory theory have been criticised for being overly deterministic by Green and Michael Roper.³⁰ Dominant public narratives rarely tell the entire story – there has always been evidence to suggest that Islanders never ‘forgot’ their local resistance ‘heroes’ before their belated memorialisation.³¹ Yet their absence from the official narrative of Occupation did not generate enough discomfort or displeasure among a majority of Islanders to create the political momentum required for cognitive change until the 1990s in Jersey, and much later in Guernsey.

A positivist condescension, not far removed from that seen amongst British oral history sceptics, is at work here, privileging the written over the spoken.³² Trevor Lummis argued critics of oral history often contrast this to the ‘assumed greater reliability’ of contemporary documents, sources which contain their own ‘biases and distortions’ which are often under-explored.³³ Scholars such as Hazel Knowles-Smith, Jorgensen-Earp and Sanders viewed diaries and official papers as gold-standard sources for understanding the Occupation. However, diarists were prone to their own biases and motivations, generally from literate classes with the linguistic skills to explore their thoughts and feelings, and who were willing to break German laws in keeping a diary, representing an actively dissident minority of Islanders. Diarists often reflected a more patriotic mindset, being correspondingly harsh on those perceived to have collaborated. Julia Tremayne, a middle-

²⁷ Daniel Travers, *The Second World War and the ‘Other British Isles’: Memory and Heritage in the Isle of Man, Orkney, and the Channel Islands* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

²⁸ Joanna Bourke, ‘Introduction: Remembering War’ in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39:4 (2004), p. 483.

²⁹ Anna Green, ‘Individual Remembering and “Collective Memory”: Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates’, *Oral History*, 32:1 (2004), p. 42.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-43; and Michael Roper, ‘Re-Remembering the Soldier Hero: The Psychic and Social Construction of Memory in Personal Narratives of the Great War’, *History Workshop Journal* 50: 3 (2000), p. 184.

³¹ Hazel Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands’ Occupation: Record, Memory, Myth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 248.

³² For details of the positivist criticism of British historians, see Alistair Thomson, ‘Memory and Remembering in Oral History’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. by Donald Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 79.

³³ Trevor Lummis, *Listening to History: The Authenticity of Oral Evidence* (Totowa: Barnes and Noble, 1998), p. 11.

aged Englishwoman resident on Sark, took such a dim view of the locals' behaviour towards the Germans that if one only read her diary in researching Sark's Occupation, the incorrect view that the Sarkees were pro-German and happy to be occupied could be attained.³⁴

The most celebrated Occupation diary was penned by the Guernsey Methodist Minister Reverend Douglas Ord, who detailed the Occupation throughout. A highly educated man, Ord's diary is a rich source of musings on human nature, the character of the occupiers and the meaning of the Occupation and its events. It speaks to the historian as a heavily conceptual, philosophical and considered text. Furthermore, Evans noted, the majority of well-known diaries were written by upper-middle class married woman. These cannot be considered representative of the working classes. Most interviewees came from working class or lower-middle class families. Many left school as soon as they could at the age of fourteen and went out to work. In terms of having a broad vocabulary to situate their experiences in language that draws in the documentary historian, working class Islanders were at an educational disadvantage. Moreover, their parents were generally too caught up in the pressures of trying to survive to find time to write down their thoughts at the time. For example, my great-grandparents, George and Edie Guille, who raised four children under the Germans, left few traces in the documentary record; much of their Occupation histories died with them. The nature of the interviewees and their parents educational and employment backgrounds allowed a degree of recovery history to come forth, obtaining the memories of individuals whose elders left few written traces of their experiences.

Moreover, the record keeping of the Island administrations, struggling to survive an Occupation whilst aware of the compromised nature of working constructively with the Germans, has to be viewed with these factors in mind. Lummis argued, 'documents are produced by institutions for their own purposes and historical study is rarely one of them.'³⁵ This should not be viewed as a manifesto to abandon these sources. However, to avoid oral history over issues of unreliability is to attain a degree of hypocrisy through failing to hold the written to the same critical standards as the spoken. Adding oral history into the equation can only strengthen our understanding of the Occupation as experience and memory, and open fresh lines of enquiry. The chapter conceptualises the fresh testimonies collated for this thesis and provides a deeper understanding of the nature of Occupation oral testimonies. It demonstrates that by applying more current approaches to oral testimonies and their subjective construction, they reveal much about how the event was experienced, and subsequently remembered. This is one of the key contributions of this thesis. Lynn Abrams summarised that 'oral historians now positively recognise the value of subjectivity in the

³⁴ IWM, London, Documents 14691 'Private Papers of Mrs J. Tremayne', 1940-1945.

³⁵ Lummis, *Listening to History*, p. 12.

production of memory stories ... [and] ... that the process of eliciting memories is a dialogic process, drawing upon a ... range of discursive formulations and positions.’³⁶ Oral history does not provide a methodological panacea and must be situated within the spectrum of available sources. It does, however, add vital depth to historical understanding of the event and its legacy. ‘Rather than setting sources up against each other’, Corinna Peniston-Bird argued, ‘more usefully oral and documentary sources can be juxtaposed so that emphases, silences and interpretations can be cross referenced and the different contexts of their creation used as an advantage.’³⁷

The thesis is interested in the subjectivities of Islanders’ oral testimonies which have precluded their study. In 1999, Frank Keiller, a Jersey teenager during the Occupation, called upon the CIOS to look beyond the factual and explore ‘what we experienced at the emotional level ... how did we really feel? What do we feel about it now?’, and ‘the emotional tapestry which lies behind the statistics.’³⁸ Keiller identified that the Occupation had, in many ways, been a subjective experience, heterogeneously viewed by Islanders. There was some irony in Le Sueur’s earlier remarks, for his aspiration to objectivity was a subjective stance. This was traceable from his involvement with the CIOS, an organisation that places much value on the ‘objective’ study of the Islands’ wartime past. It rejected Bunting’s controversial text, which many Islanders felt took an unforgivably subjective view derived from problematic sources. Like all interviewees, Le Sueur shared his past and present opinions, evinced a narrative that had undergone a constant process of subjective revision, and juxtaposed his past and present selves.

As interviews were carried out during the mid-to-late 2010s, the project sourced a high proportion of interviewees who were children and adolescents during the Occupation. Whilst the thesis is not explicitly about Occupation childhood and childhood memory, it takes these into consideration. Through careful methodological work, the thesis demonstrates that these testimonies are rich and multi-layered, revealing of a great deal of information and insight. Similar to Dodd’s study, this thesis is primarily about remembering adults and their present perspectives on their Occupation childhood. Dodd argued ‘memories laid down in childhood now belong to adults ... The experiences ... belong to children.’³⁹ Vera Hajt6, whose study of children who migrated from Hungary to Belgium during the interwar Belgian-Hungarian child-relief project utilised oral history, stated that

³⁶ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 55.

³⁷ Corinna Peniston-Bird, ‘Oral History: The Sound of Memory’ in *History Beyond the Text: A Student’s Guide to Alternative Sources*, ed. by Sarah Barber and Corinna Peniston-Bird (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 107.

³⁸ Jersey Archives Service (JAS), St Helier, L/D/25/L/32 ‘Frank Keiller talk to Channel Island Occupation Society Jersey Branch’, 21 January 1999.

³⁹ Dodd, *French Children*, p. 8.

‘remembering ... childhood experiences ... reveals much about one’s adult life. Childhood memories contribute ... to the conscious effort one makes to create a coherent ... life story.’⁴⁰ Furthermore, the analysis of interviews conducted with older Islanders, either from the IWM Sound Archive or for this project, alongside interviews with younger children, allows for a degree of cross-examination in generational terms.

There is an increasing imperative to understand the testimonies of the surviving members of the Occupation generation as the experience transitions out of living memory. The testimonies of Occupation children remain under-conceptualised. This should be rectified, for guardianship of the directly remembered past is an ever-shifting process as older generations die, and the perspectives and importance of younger eyewitnesses increase with the passage of time. This changeover offers an explanation as to why so many Islanders who had been aged five to ten in 1945 came forward to be interviewed, potentially feeling that their stories have increased in value. Memoirs of Occupation children have become increasingly common in the last twenty years as those individuals have retired. These sources represent an interesting duality. They are a vehicle for telling personal stories of Occupation childhood, however the limits of the childhood experience necessitated the inclusion of the parental experience as context, a process of filling gaps in their own perspectives. Examples of these include Molly Bihet’s *A Child Remembers* (1985), Leo Harris’s *A Boy Remembers* (2000) and Stephen Matthew’s *The Day the Nazis Came* (2016).⁴¹ Harris’s memoir told his family’s Occupation story, incorporating his memories of events into a broader tale of the actions, attitudes and stories of his parents and brother. It is vital to understand the interviewees sourced for this project, their stake in the memory of the Occupation and the factors which directed the ways in which they sifted and sorted their memories of the past. Moreover, their voices, whilst speaking for themselves, also speak of the experiences of parents, grandparents, siblings, and of the influences of the social and cultural contexts within which their remembering has taken place over the past seventy-five years. Their oral testimonies raise the ghosts of the Islands’ recent history and conflicts over its memory, yet also summon spectres from their own pasts, keeping alive the stories of those long lost to history.

⁴⁰ Vera Hajt6, *Milk Sauce and Paprika: Migration, Childhood and Memories of the Interwar Belgian-Hungarian Child Relief Project* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2016), pp. 153-154.

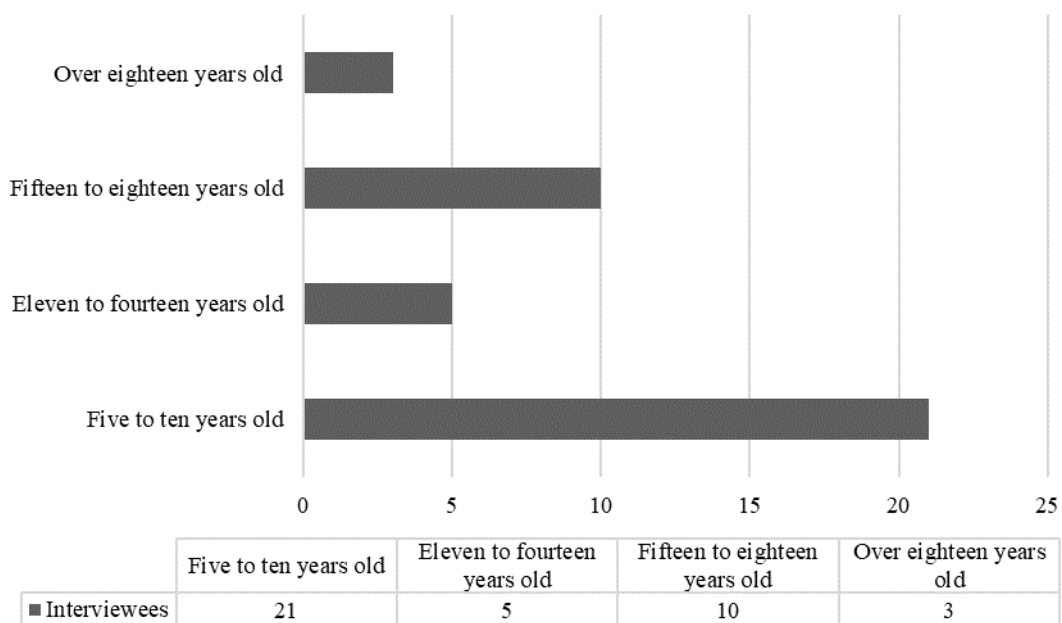
⁴¹ Molly Bihet, *A Child’s War: The German Occupation of Guernsey as Seen Through Young Eyes* (Guernsey: Guernsey Press Co., 1985); Leo Harris, *A Boy Remembers* (Jersey: Channel Islands Publishing, 2000); and Stephen Matthews, *The Day the Nazis Came* (London: John Blake, 2016). The author’s respective ages in 1945 were thirteen, fifteen and seven. Other examples include Nellie Le Feuvre, *A Sark Teenager’s Deportation* (Sark: Nellie Le Feuvre, 2005); and Lyn Renouf Edwards, *Enemy or Friend* (Jersey: Channel Island Publishing, 2009).

Sourcing and Interviewing the Sample

The thesis is drawn from thirty-nine oral history interviews conducted between 2013 and 2019 with forty-one Islanders and one ex-Wehrmacht serviceman. The interviewees ranged from very young children to young adults during the war, with the extreme ends of the age spectrum in 1945 being five and twenty-five (see table one). Due to the size of the sample, not all interviewees' narratives receive the same degree of attention in the text. Some perspectives, such as the evacuated Islanders, are covered far less owing to decisions about the focus and content of the thesis. Interviews were conducted in Guernsey, Jersey, Sark and the UK: thirteen experienced the Occupation in Guernsey and seven evacuees or returnees from and to this Island were interviewed; three were occupied in Jersey; and sixteen occupied in Sark. Interviewees were sourced through advertising and personal connections. Interviewees from Guernsey were sought through a twitter advertisement (see figure one) which went live in early 2018. This caught the attention of family members, friends and relatives, who passed my details to grandparents and parents who contacted me. Moreover, I appeared on BBC Radio Guernsey to promote the project. Interviewees were then sent details of the project, including participant information sheets and consent forms.

All of the Sark interviewees were sourced through personal connections to the Island. My grandparents live on Sark, and I visited the Island with my family most summers until my late teens. Consequentially, I had a stronger footing in the community than on the larger Islands, being known to most of the interviewees. My grandfather, until recently, occupied a prominent position in Sark life as the Island's Seneschal (chief magistrate), and

Table One: Number of Interviewees per age grouping in 1945



had been born during the Occupation in early 1942. He grew up around the men and women I interviewed on Sark between 2013 and 2016. After enquiring as to potential interest, he passed on their contact details to me. This method was remarkably successful: only one potential interviewee dropped out of the project. Having a respected member of the community vouch for me seemed to put Sarkee interviewees at ease and many demonstrated enthusiasm for the project, feeling that Sark often went unnoticed in Occupation histories. This explained why almost all resident Sarkees who had experienced the war participated in the 2016 project.

Guernsey Interviewees Sought for Oral History Project

**Did you experience the German Occupation, evacuation or deportation?
Do you know someone who did?**

This project, led by Richard Guille, a PhD candidate at the University of Kent, seeks to interview Guernsey men and women who lived through the Second World War in order to write an oral history of the German Occupation and give Islanders the chance to tell their stories in their own words.

If you are interested in taking part in this project and recording your memories, please contact Richard for more information:
Address: Flat 1, 14-15 Sun Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2HX
Home Telephone: 01227 918702
Email: rjg40@kent.ac.uk




About the Researcher:

My name is Richard Guille and I am a PhD researcher at the University of Kent, reading history. My research focuses on the personal recollections of the German Occupation of the Channel Islands and is heavily based on oral history interviews. In 2013 I conducted a small research project into the Channel Islands deportations, and in 2016 I produced a Masters dissertation on the memory of the Occupation of Sark, based from my own interviews.

I am passionate about researching the history of the Channel Islands under German Occupation and am keen to interview as many people as possible who experienced the Occupation or grew up in its shadow.

Figure One: *Advertising Poster uploaded to Twitter and mailed to Guernsey heritage sites and tourist organisations for display. A similar poster, with different images and altered information, was used for Jersey.*

The digital recordings were transcribed prior to analysis. However, as Ralph Samuels identified in 1972, ‘the spoken word can very easily be mutilated when it is taken down in writing and transferred to the printed page,’ with nuances, tone and pacing lost.⁴² Through the process of transcription, analysis and source selection, the oral recordings collected by myself have undergone profound changes due to my interventions and editorial decisions. Whilst these issues cannot be adequately mediated without a companion CD or integrated audio files (which still retains the issue of authorial selection), the method of transcription here was designed to try to ameliorate some of these problems (see transcription key). Formatted text, such as bold lettering for a slightly raised voice, underlining emphasised words and phrases, or using underscores to represent each second-long beat of a pause, have been used to clearly indicate tone and pacing, with necessary expansion carried out in the source analysis. Through these efforts, as well as remaining faithful to exact word order and linguistic idiosyncrasies, the textual representations of the spoken sources analysed throughout the thesis pay as much homage as possible to the orality of the interview.

There are quirks to the sample. Despite the poster’s call to interview both those who were occupied and evacuated, few evacuees came forward. Evacuation was the dominant childhood experience in Guernsey: four-fifths of Guernsey’s children evacuated the Island. This is suggestive of the Occupation’s salience to the Island’s war memory, and the peripheral status of the evacuation within this. Moreover, Jersey, the most populous Island, was underrepresented. A similar strategy was deployed in relation to Guernsey in the autumn of 2018. However, this failed to garner the same interest as in Guernsey. As the largest and most accessible Island to the UK researcher in terms of cost and ease of access, Jersey has received the most attention from historians. Local heritage is more professionalised and a degree of ‘Occupation fatigue’ on the behalf witnesses who had likely been interviewed about it several times possibly prevented interviewees from wishing to come forward. Barrett’s popular history, whose research preceded my advertisements by twelve months, may well have been a factor causing this.

The three interviewees from Jersey were sourced through different methods. Bob Le Sueur and Leo Harris were put in touch with me through Barrett. Both are prominent voices in Jersey’s Occupation discourse, with well-constructed and respected stories to tell, which both were happy to do so. The third Jersey interviewee was a spontaneous arrangement. I was speaking to a Jersey archivist who told me her mother had been a teenager during the war and might like to be interviewed. Several texts and a few days later, I interviewed Mary

⁴² Raphael Samuels, ‘The Perils of the Transcript’, *Oral History*, 1:2 (1972), 19-22, p. 19; Peniston-Bird, ‘Oral History’, p. 114.

Blampied. The underrepresentation of Jersey in the sample is less of an issue than it initially appeared. Existing interviews held by the IWM are Jersey-centric and the interview transcripts for the 1990 documentary *Swastika Over British Soil* contained a significant majority of Jersey men and women. These resources have been used to augment the analysis of Jersey, buttressing the five rich and lengthy interviews with Le Sueur, Harris and Blampied. Furthermore, the creation of a good number of interviews with Guernsey Islanders and Sarkes helps redress this balance. Sark was proportionately the most well-represented, with sixteen interviewees representing the memory of the roughly 400 wartime residents.

The representativeness of the sample is not an integral issue. Oral testimonies are subjective sources, telling of the individual's past and their relationship with the culture in which their remembering occurred. Ronald Grele argued that oral historians do not interview people because 'they present some abstract statistical norm, but because they typify historical processes.'⁴³ Dodd contended that 'it is possible to learn a great deal from a small number of stories' considered as case studies indicative of more general trends.⁴⁴ Moreover, the thesis explores the construction of interviewees testimonies, accepting, in Summerfield's words, that 'people do not simply remember what happened to them, but make sense of the subject matter they recall by interpreting it ... [through] ... the language and concepts available to the person remembering.'⁴⁵ The representativity of the sample is not vital to this endeavour.

It is necessary to pay close attention to the wartime location of the interviewees, and consider environmental factors specific to these areas which may have influenced the nature of their experiences. Sanders has suggested that Islanders' perspectives could 'hinge on rather anodyne things, such as where one was born, which internment camp one was sent to ... or what sort of German one met.'⁴⁶ The micro-nature of the Islands and the way in which studying them necessitates the shrinking of the researcher's perspective provides fertile ground to consider the interplay between space, place and experience. Where one was living during the Occupation was important and governed what one saw, felt and experienced. An awareness of this is especially instructive in chapters four and five as the population density of both German soldiers and OT labourers varied. Madeleine Collenette lived on her family's farm on Little Sark. As a result, her testimony focused on what happened in her

⁴³ Ronald Grele, 'Movement without aim: methodological and theoretical problems in oral history' in *The Oral History Reader*, 1st ed., ed. by Rob Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 41.

⁴⁴ Dodd, *French Children*, pp. 40-41.

⁴⁵ Penny Summerfield 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews', *Cultural and Social History*, 1:1 (2004), p. 67.

⁴⁶ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 258.

small corner of Sark. I enquired if she had any knowledge of an event which had happened in the centre of Sark in 1944. Her reply was revealing of her spatially limited perspective: ‘You’d probably get that information more in Big Sark, because they would be in that part, I’m sort of talking from down here more or less.’⁴⁷ Even though the distance from Little Sark to the village is a mere mile and a half, that distance is substantial to the Sarkees, highlighting the need, as a ‘mainlander’, to conceptualise space and location more diligently.

Eleanor Vaudin, a child in L’Ancresse in north Guernsey, caveated her testimony with the statement that ‘there was so much happening and yet during my five years I was limited where I could go.’⁴⁸ Several interviewees noted that distances seemed much further in the 1940s than today. Trevor Bisson, a boy aged between six and eleven during the war, lived in L’Islet, a small village on the west coast of the Island. He described it as ‘the far country before the war.’⁴⁹ Paying attention to geographical location also allows us to consider the relationship between place and memory and how this may impact upon an individual’s sense of self, and subsequently their testimony. ‘Places’, Yi-Fu Tuan argued, ‘are centres of felt value.’⁵⁰ Some interviewees were living extremely near their past homes and in the areas where they had experienced the Occupation. In the case of John Ferbrache, a five-year-old Guernsey boy in 1945, his current home stood almost exactly on the spot where he had lived during the Occupation in the parish of St Andrews. Resultantly, Ferbrache demonstrated vivid recollections of events around the immediate area for one so young at the time, pointing out throughout exactly where things had happened.⁵¹ I also interviewed his elder sister, Georgina Hamelin, eight in 1945. She drove me on a tour of the area her family had lived in during the war. She frequently stopped to point out houses which had been occupied by the Germans or other places where memories she had described had occurred. Not only had she verbally shared her memories, but also physically shown me her personal sites of memory, striving to help me understand her testimony.⁵²

Vaudin possessed a visceral and emotional memory of the Occupation, being moved to tears on a number of occasions. It was also detailed for her young age at the time. One remark hinted at why: ‘Even today ... I think “oh the Germans lived there there-there-there.”’⁵³ The geographical proximity of the interviewees to the sites of their Occupation pasts could augment their ability to recall, as they spent the intervening years surrounded by

⁴⁷ Madeleine Collenette, Interview with Richard Guille, 15 April 2016.

⁴⁸ Eleanor Vaudin, Interview with Richard Guille, 19 April 2018.

⁴⁹ Trevor Bisson, Interview with Richard Guille, 23 August 2018.

⁵⁰ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 4.

⁵¹ John Ferbrache, Interview with Richard Guille, 30 April 2018.

⁵² Georgina Hamelin, Interview with Richard Guille, 3 May 2018.

⁵³ Vaudin, Interview.

physical *aide de mémoire*, locations redolent with past experience and emotional attachments. This was notably acute for the Sarkees on their tiny Island; the sites of their wartime experiences were omnipresent and readily accessed, serving as spatial and mnemonic prompts. Whilst a spatial study of the Channel Islands' Occupation - and how this influences individual memory - represents a future project, the thesis maintains an awareness of the specifics of interviewees' wartime locations, how this may have influenced their memories.

The interviewing techniques used differed slightly between interviews conducted in 2013, 2016 and 2018-19, reflecting my development as an oral historian. In 2013, interviews were conducted in a structured manner, with questions sent in advance as per the design of the undergraduate project I was then working upon. As an inexperienced interviewer, the questions were closely adhered to, with the interviewees often using these to prepare and structure their own responses. In 2016, interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. I prepared lengthy lists of questions before each interview, however rather than rigidly sticking to these and their chronology I negotiated between the interviewees' memories and my own questions, using these to guide the discussion alongside the interviewee's narrative. I also reframed or devised questions in response to what I was being told. For interviews in 2018-19, in response to the lessons of 2016, I took a less structured approach to the interviews, taking a list of topics into the meetings rather than questions and reacting more to the respondent. All three approaches possessed their own merits and drawbacks, all producing interpretatively rich material.

The relationship between the interviewee and interviewer is a crucial factor influencing the narrative that is composed. Abrams summarised that the oral history interview represents a conversation between a researcher and a narrator informed by the intersubjective relationship between the interlocutors; the 'interviewer actively constructed a subjectivity ... and respondents devise appropriate performances in response.'⁵⁴ The interviewer's demeanour, personality, background and deportment, noted Summerfield: 'give clues to the interviewee ... about the interviewer's research frame ... and whether the two hold shared values. The narrator sends out similar signals, such as the preparations made for the interview.'⁵⁵ Amidst this backdrop of negotiated identities, the 'interviewer solicits a narrative from the narrator', Abrams noted, stressing that 'a different interviewer would solicit different words, perhaps even a different story or versions of it.'⁵⁶ Researching modern Scottish masculinities, Hilary Young identified that her identity as a young educated

⁵⁴ Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, pp. 54-58.

⁵⁵ Summerfield, 'Dis/composing the subject', p. 102.

⁵⁶ Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, p. 54.

woman influenced how her older Glaswegian male respondents constructed their historical masculinities; some adopted a more modern outlook to chime with what they expected Young to value, whereas others saw Young as a threat and doubled-down on their traditionalist attitudes.⁵⁷ The recognition of the influence of the interviewer allows ‘acknowledgement of the interviewer’s reactions to, and intrusions into, research [to be] speakable.’⁵⁸ This has enabled, Valerie Yow argued, ‘reflexivity’ to be incorporated into oral history research, allowing oral historians to proceed with as much objectivity towards the subjective as possible.⁵⁹

The intersubjective dynamic in my interviews requires attention, representing a relationship between myself - a straight white male with family links to Sark negotiating his twenties and degree studies - and a range of interviewees from three Islands. The vast majority were welcoming and keen to share their stories of the Occupation with a fresh face, delighted that another historian was taking an interest in the subject. However, there were also interviews where rapport between myself and the respondent failed to develop. Two Sark women did not warm to me, often giving short responses and drying up after roughly thirty-minutes. It was likely that as a twenty-four-year-old lacking self-assurance, I failed to match up to their expectations of how they felt a historian should conduct themselves. However, a gender dynamic cannot be ruled out; both were elderly women, who may have been uncomfortable with a relatively unknown man visiting their home and asking them probing questions about their Occupation memories. There was also an intersubjective disaster. I arrived at Frank Lainé’s house in 2016. On entering, I enquired if he wanted me to take my shoes off. He said there was no need but being overly polite and with one shoe half off, I said without thinking ‘don’t worry, it’s just how I’ve been brought up’ and removed my other shoe. This was unintentionally insulting, implying that my upbringing had been better than his, to which he quietly took umbrage. This momentary clash led to rapport taking longer to develop, and led to a short and difficult to elicit testimony.

I found myself in a similar position to Wendy Ugolini in her study of Italian Scots who experienced the Second World War. Ugolini’s husband, who was Italian-Scottish, conferred an honorary Italian affiliation upon her in the eyes of her interviewees, who despite her explicit explanations at the start of interviews, would often blur the distinction. However, Ugolini found this of benefit: she argued ‘this sense of a shared familial past ... validated me in the eyes of many respondents. It also enabled me to build up a relationship

⁵⁷ Hilary Young, ‘Hard Man, New Man: Re/composing Masculinities in Glasgow, C. 1950-2000’, *Oral History*, 35:1 (2007), pp. 71-81.

⁵⁸ Valerie Yow ‘Do I like them too Much’, in *The Oral History Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. by Rob Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge, 200?), p. 55.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

of trust with those I interviewed.’⁶⁰ I experienced a similar blurring of distinctions, and some interviewees from Guernsey and Jersey frequently identified me as ‘from Sark’, despite me being quite clear as to my looser links to the Islands. In interviews on Guernsey and Jersey, this seemed to put respondents at ease, and mutual conversations about Sark as a place proved a good source of rapport building. This half-way position between outsider and insider appeared to make Guernsey and Jersey interviewees comfortable and share more personal details. Interviewees on Sark, however, may have been more reticent on some points owing to my closer relationship to the community. Misplaced trust could, had I been overly free with the information, led to the rapid circulation of personal details and potentially risky memories around the small Island. In this context, my identity proved a mixed blessing.

The participation of the youngest interviewees, some of whom confessed that they remembered little, was instructive as to the local dominance of the Occupation and the importance ascribed to ‘remembering’ that period. The Twitter and local radio advertising produced a range of ways in which interviewees came into contact. Some, such as Laurence De La Rue and Simon Herivel, both of Guernsey, were self-selecting, coming forward to be interviewed despite their very young age during the Occupation (both were born after the German invasion). De La Rue’s interview reflected this, lasting thirty-minutes before he stated he had exhausted his memories. Herivel’s lasted longer at an hour; he was a more experienced narrator, having previously been interviewed by John Nettles for his documentary *The Channel Islands at War* (2010) and told a small selection of stories in remarkable detail. Both possessed few direct memories, although those they did were vividly retold and rich in colour. Ultimately, their volunteering to participate spoke volumes as to the salience they ascribed to the Occupation and their own limited parts in this as five-year-old boys when the Germans left.

Eleanor Vaudin was put in touch with me through her daughter, who explained that her mother had previously been interviewed by Nettles and would enjoy sharing her story. Her and her sister insisted in sitting in on the interview, causing one of the more unusual interviewing experiences of the project, but which was demonstrative of how their mother’s Occupation past fascinated them. They smiled, laughed and listened with rapt attention, despite having heard the stories before. It is doubtful that Vaudin was inhibited by her daughters’ presence, as she shared little they did not already know, although this cannot be definitively known. However, this dynamic caused my approaches to change: it is challenging to interview an elderly woman upset by questions about her past in the presence

⁶⁰ Wendy Ugolini, *Experiencing war as the ‘enemy other’: Italian Scottish Experience in World War II* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 9.

of her children. I felt less able to delve, seek clarification or exemplification when Vaudin became emotional, for example. Yet what Vaudin shared was validated within that family unit, with speaker and listeners authenticating what was told by appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses. This demonstrated the multigenerational quality of the Occupation, and how the testimonies collated were not merely products of a meeting between interviewer and interviewee, but also of the interventions of descendants endlessly fascinated by parental stories, who place an immense value on sustaining the ‘memory’ of the Occupation.

Islanders have always remembered a ‘short’ Second World War, which only began when the Germans advanced across France in May 1940. Ugolini noted something similar in her oral history of Italian Scottish men and women during the war, who sped to June 1940 when asked about the outbreak of the war, representing ‘knowledge of a different national past rooted in their wartime identities as Italians.’⁶¹ The *Occupation* was the Islands’ war, and all other aspects, from Island servicemen to evacuees, attained a satellite position to that one collectively life-altering event. When this inexorable salience in Island culture is borne in mind, the urge to participate and testify to one’s own small part of that important period for the younger interviewees was largely explained. Carr noted that the Occupation was seen by the generation born between 1943 and 1960 as an ‘exciting’ period on which they had missed out.⁶² To be able to claim direct knowledge of the Occupation provides Islanders in the present a certain authentication and validation, buttressed by participating in oral history projects such as this.

Despite this, the thesis uses pseudonyms for the majority of the interviewees. In an effort to maintain an accurate feel to the pseudonyms, local surnames were chosen. Anonymity was offered to prospective interviews in advance of their confirmation of participation, on an opt-out basis. When I met the interviewees, I enquired as to their preference and explained my rationale. In some cases, where the individual’s story was well known, I explained there was little point in anonymisation, to which they agreed. It would have been challenging to anonymise Phyllis Rang, the only Sark woman to marry a German serviceman who had a book written about her and Werner’s experiences. The same went for Bob Le Sueur and Leo Harris, who have public profiles. Summerfield argued that bestowing anonymity is a problematic methodological aspect, done so to protect interviewees yet denying them their right to a place in history.⁶³ In 1998, Summerfield related how, despite her interviewees mostly wishing to be named, she decided to anonymise her respondents ‘for

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁶² Gilly Carr, ‘The Slowly Healing Scars of Occupation’, *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 3:2 (2010), pp. 255-256.

⁶³ Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 26.

reasons to do with my own part in writing about their pasts.’⁶⁴ She wished to protect them from embarrassment which ‘her mediation between their words and “the public” might cause,’ and shield them from the power imbalance between ‘the historian’s interpretation and reconstruction in ... public ... of intimate aspects of their lives.’⁶⁵ The heavily interpretative and conceptual nature of this research was a significant factor underpinning my decision to anonymise respondents. I was mindful of how my interpretations of their testimonies could cause discomfort when the findings were made public. Ultimately, the decision was underpinned by the Occupation’s capacity for controversy in the present, which could put my respondents in a difficult position.

‘I didn’t know the seriousness of it!’: Childhood Memory and the 1.5 Generation

This section considers the testimonies of interviewees who were children during the Occupation, exploring how childhood memory functions. It examines how they can be conceptualised within a broad notion of an ‘Occupation generation’. ‘One cannot easily claim’, Susan Suleiman argued, ‘that young men or women who underwent the ... war ... while in their twenties ... had a sufficiently “shared experience” to place them in the same generation as children who were under ten-years-old during those years.’⁶⁶ Certainly, Island children aged under fourteen by 1945 led very different lives from the adult generations. Dodd argued that ‘children live in a certain amount of dependence, subordination and ignorance; their experience of war is ... inherently different to that of adults.’⁶⁷ Moreover, children appeared to have been shielded from the harsher aspects of the Occupation, either being fed whilst parents went hungry (see chapter three) or not having anxieties or fears passed on to them. Jennifer Carré, aged twelve when the Germans occupied Sark, related that ‘being only twelve years old ... [the seriousness] ... didn’t dawn on us ... Our parents had the worry rather than us.’⁶⁸ Moreover, Island childhood at the time, with few cars on the roads and strong community bonds protecting children from harm, was a fairly free experience. Despite the presence of the enemy, for many Island children the rhythms of play, exploring and chores continued relatively unabated. Terry De Mouilpied, a seven-year-old Guernsey boy at the end of the war, recalled ‘as ... [a] ... child ... I had a good time. I had the run of a very large property and fields, a farm ... nobody ever thought the Germans would interfere with children ...we didn’t realise all the hardships that the parents were

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 26.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

⁶⁶ Susan Rubin Suleiman, ‘The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust’, *American Imago*, 59:3 (2002), p. 281.

⁶⁷ Dodd, *French Children*, p. 7.

⁶⁸ Jennifer Carré, Interview with Richard Guille, 22 April 2016.

going through, and so, it wasn't such a bad time.'⁶⁹ The differences in perspective and experiences between occupied children and adults should be borne in mind when analysing the testimonies of the former.

The discussion of memory and oral history in the thesis has focused upon the influence of culture upon subjective identity and the composure of narratives. However, to develop a deeper understanding of the testimonies of the youngest members of the sample, the findings from other disciplines, particularly psychology, are instructive.⁷⁰ Memory, according to Thomson, 'works differently at different life stages.'⁷¹ Paul Thompson argued that up to the age of four, children generate little long-term memory.⁷² Below this age, the absence of a sense of self prevents autobiographical memories being formed (as experiences are not filtered through the lens of one's identity during their encoding into memory), and what memories exist from this age are often photographic or 'snapshot' in nature, tied to a strong emotion.⁷³ As people grow older and cognitive processes develop, so does their ability to 'perceive, sift and articulate experience and create long-term memories.'⁷⁴ Psychologists and neuroscientists have identified the existence of 'flashbulb' memories: autobiographical memories with a powerful personal significance and very young children (around the age of four) predominately form memories in this photographic manner. These have been found to be reliable: Dorthe Berntsen and Dorthe Thomsen argued in their study of Norwegian childhood memories of the Nazi occupation that there was a 'correlation between accuracy and the emotional intensity of the event.'⁷⁵ The stronger the emotional connection to the event, the more detail and vividness is retained.⁷⁶

Some interviewees were reflective as to the episodic and emotional nature of their memories: John Ferbrache summarised that 'the memories I do have, have been sort of seared into the memory, because many of them are accompanied by a strong emotional

⁶⁹ Terry and Joan De Mouilpied, Interview with Richard Guille, 17 April 2018.

⁷⁰ Alistair Thomson provided a useful overview of the physiological processes of memory and how these can inform the work of oral historians. Thomson, 'Memory and Remembering', pp. 83-84.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁷² Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, p. 136-137. This is reinforced by a number of psychology studies, including Christine Wells, Catriona Morrison and Martin Conway, 'Adult recollections of childhood memories: What details can be recalled?', *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 67:7 (2014), pp. 1249-1261; Madeline Eacott, 'Memory for the Events of Early Childhood', *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 8:2 (1999), pp. 46-49; and Alan Scoboria, Kendra Nespoli and Chantal Boucher, 'An Anti-Reminiscence Bump for Childhood Memory: Revisiting the Dating of Non-believed Memories', *Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research and Practice*, 2019 pp. 1-15.

⁷³ Eacott, 'Early Childhood', *Psychological Science*, p. 46.

⁷⁴ Thomson, 'Memory and Remembering', p. 82

⁷⁵ Dorthe Berntsen and Dorthe K. Thomsen, 'Personal Memories for Remote Historical Events: Accuracy and Clarity of Flashbulb Memories Related to World War II', *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 134:2 (2005) p. 245.

⁷⁶ Dodd, *French Children*, p. 42.

sense. Liberation Day particularly ... there was such a sense of joy that really registered, very firmly with me.⁷⁷ Whilst the Occupation was a tedious and depressing experience for Islanders, it also contained periods of high drama, emotional intensity and danger. This is significant for understanding which experiences were encoded into memory by Occupation children. Thomson argued that much experience is ‘not recorded in the first place because we ... have no need to register the occurrence.’⁷⁸ The human brain cannot record or retain everything an individual experiences, encoding into long-term memory only that which is important or useful to existing in the world, or which reinforces with one’s identity.⁷⁹ Thomson posited that ‘an experience is much more likely to be remembered if it is perceived to be significant ... and is therefore articulated into a memorialising form, most typically a story.’⁸⁰ The interviewees retained memories of personal or collective events because these struck them at the time as particularly significant, important or useful. From this point, an individual consolidates memory through storytelling.⁸¹ For occupied children, this could sometimes lead to somewhat incongruous memories: James Perrée, a five-year-old Sark boy in 1945, related early on in our interview how one of his strongest memories was witnessing a starving German soldier picking up the family cat and walking off with it.⁸² The emotion of the soldier taking a beloved pet triggered the memory, and subsequent knowledge of how starving soldiers in the winter of 1944 and 1945 were reduced to eating cats and dogs cemented its remarkability, emphasised by his rendition of the memory occurring early in the interview.

Highly emotional and traumatic events could lead to the retention of memories amongst very young interviewees. Jenny Hamon was a very young Sark child, aged five at the end of the war. For the most part, she remembered little of the Occupation. However, Hamon experienced a life-altering event on 10 October 1944 shortly after her fifth birthday, when her cousin was killed near Sark’s Mermaid Tavern by a German anti-personnel mine after she strayed into a minefield. The event rocked Sark’s tight knit community. Hamon suffered shrapnel injuries in the blast, recalling having the metal removed by a German doctor:

I had to have some shrapnel taken out of me. When our cousin was blown up. Her fault. We were sent from my auntie ‘go and call dad for lunch [and] don’t touch anything!’ ... Across the gap, up the top of the Mermaid Road ... she saw ... this shiny thing in there, and she went in and picked it up, and it was a mine, and she got killed ... But what saved her brother and

⁷⁷ John Ferbrache, Interview with Richard Guille, 30 April 2018.

⁷⁸ Thomson, ‘Memory and Remembering’, p. 83.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁸² James Perrée, Interview with Richard Guille, 15 April 2016.

I was that we weren't as quick as her and it was the hedge that saved us, but we did have shrapnel ... It seems as if they were digging it out with a pen knife.⁸³

Here, Hamon shared her memories of the events with more assuredness and detail. Hamon seamlessly moved between her flashbulb memories of what she had experienced (seeing her cousin's body and having the shrapnel removed) and subsequently learned information about the event. The shock of the explosion, the pain of her injuries and the atmosphere of extreme grief that pervaded Hamon's family played a part in cementing her narrative of this event, the only Occupation memory she recalled with any authority. This demonstrates the connection between high levels of emotion at the point of experience and its cementing in memory, particularly for the experiencing child.

It is instructive here to distinguish between memory for facts (semantic memory) and memory for events (episodic memory). The psychologist Madeleine Eacott differentiated the two: episodic memory involves recollection of a personally experienced event; semantic memory is based upon knowledge from other sources.⁸⁴ Interviewees aged under ten at the end of the war could be reliant on post-war discussion of the Occupation that occurred within their families. When this was present, semantic memory passed down by parents augmented the episodic memories of young children at the time, aiding the creation of narrative. The concept of postmemory, as posited by the Holocaust scholar Marianne Hirsch, describes the relationship between children of Holocaust survivors and the events that marked their parents' generation, which were not directly experienced but the effects of which suffused their early lives.⁸⁵ Through this, Hirsch identified 'the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal ... and cultural trauma of those who came before ... remembered' through 'the stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up.'⁸⁶ Carr demonstrated the benefit of applying Hirsch's concepts to second generation Islanders, notably those born after the war who sought to collect and display Occupation artefacts and the descendants of political prisoners whose early years were defined by their parents' trauma.⁸⁷ However, how do we assess those who fall somewhere between experience and postmemory? This refers to interviewees whose memories of Occupation childhood came from below the age of ten, which often took the form of isolated recollections shorn from a coherent chronology.

⁸³ Jenny Hamon and May Hamon, Interview with Richard Guille, 19 April 2016.

⁸⁴ Eacott, 'Early Childhood', p. 47.

⁸⁵ Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: 2012), p. 5.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

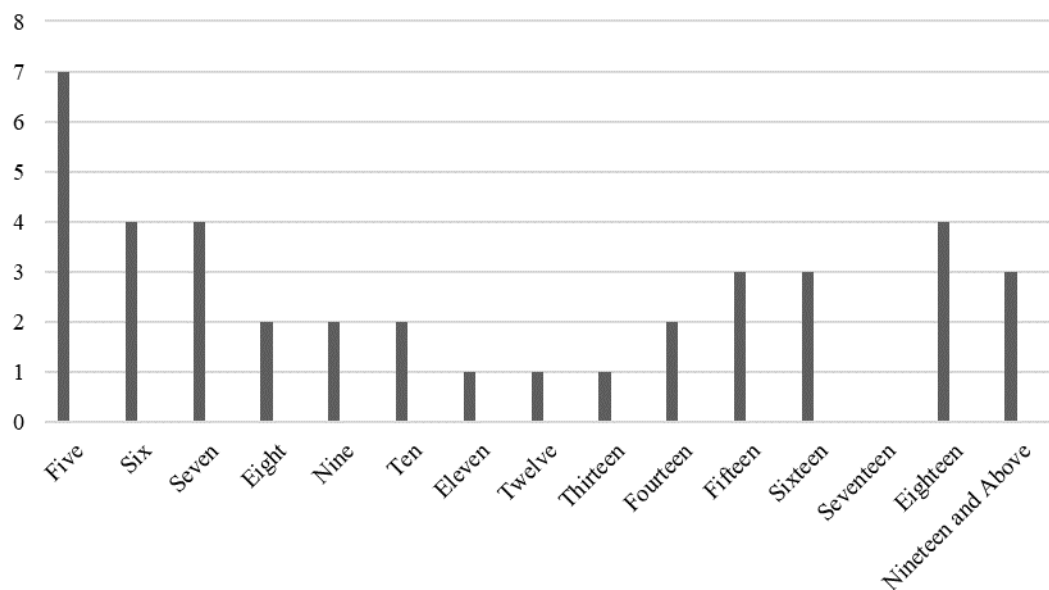
⁸⁷ Carr, "'Illicit Antiquities'?: The Collection of Nazi Militaria in the Channel Islands', *World Archaeology*, (2016), pp. 1-13; and Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, pp. 96-103.

Susan Suleiman coined the concept ‘the 1.5 generation’ in 2002 to situate the experiences of ‘child survivors of the Holocaust, too young to have had an adult understanding of what happened to them, but old enough to have *been there*’. Taking the starting point that a historical generation represents a commonality based on shared or collective experience, derived from the sociologist Karl Mannheim’s work, Suleiman defined this as consisting of ‘generation units’, a ‘set of “age related differences”’ that distinguish between childhood and adulthood, but also to identify the internal boundaries within childhood and between childhood and adolescence.⁸⁸ This concept provides three interpretative categories within which witnesses whose memory of the past is part autobiographical, part episodic and part semantic, can be categorised. Suleiman argued that by incorporating studies that prove childhood amnesia before the age of three, and eleven as the age where a child begins to develop the skills to ‘think hypothetically, to use abstract words appropriately ... and deploy a broader vocabulary’:

We ... [get] ... three discrete groups: children ‘too young to remember’ (infancy to around three years old); children ‘old enough to remember but too young to understand’ (approximately age four to ten); and children ‘old enough to understand but too young to be responsible’ (approximately age eleven to fourteen) ... having to make choices (and to act on those choices).⁸⁹

For interviewees aged between five and ten in 1945, and those aged between eleven and sixteen, greater consideration of their specific perspectives is required. A granular breakdown of interviewee ages in 1945 is provided in table two. For the youngest members

Table Two: Interviewee Ages in 1945



⁸⁸ Suleiman, ‘The 1.5 Generation’, pp. 277-295 and pp. 280-282.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 281-282.

of the sample, aged five in 1945, episodic memories of the war could only be of events which occurred in 1944 at the earliest. Earlier than this they lacked the neurological capacity for remembering. Their memories of Occupation dated from the difficult winter of 1944-1945 where shortages were rife, yet when Liberation was close at hand. For interviewees aged between six and ten, the Occupation was remembered in more detail, yet generally from the shielded and uncomprehending perspective of school-age children, with recollections more prevalent from the later years of the war. The third group, aged between eleven and sixteen here, demonstrated a sharper understanding of events, being able to see through their parents well-intentioned efforts to protect them and conscious of events throughout the entire Occupation. However, the interviewees in this category lacked the responsibilities of adults, all still living in the family home and being dependent upon their parents. Moreover, interviewees aged fourteen, fifteen and sixteen in 1945, whilst often having more adult responsibilities by the end of the war, still need to be understood through the lens of childhood memory. Whilst they ended the Occupation as very young adults, they experienced much of it as school age children.

The memories of this group from the beginning of the Occupation could be from the childhood perspective, whilst those from the final years could come from early adulthood. Paulette Bichard transitioned from an eleven-year-old schoolgirl taking her younger siblings to St Peter Port for an evacuation boat which never came, to a teenage woman who had left school, picked up work and took on the burden of housework in the family home to help her widower father. When narrating episodes from earlier in the Occupation, Bichard adopted the perspective of her re-imagined child-self; later periods came from a more responsible position, notably the extract in chapter four covering the death of her cousin Marlene.⁹⁰ Transitioning from childhood to adulthood is a time of subjective flux which was even more acute during the Occupation, providing narrators who were recalling their teenage years with a range of possible selves to articulate. Young boys in 1945, such as Joe Mière on Jersey, began the war as childish spectators, watching the 28 June 1940 air raid with a boyish sense of excitement for example. As Mière progressed through his teenage years, his growing resistance activities led him into the role of an active participant who opposed the enemy, beat up collaborators, was beaten by German policemen and who spent months in Jersey's Gloucester Street prison.⁹¹ Occupation teenagers were catapulted, rather roughly at times, into adulthood, as seen in the example of Stella Perkins in chapter three.

Narrating childhood memories from the perspective of an adult allows for multiple voices and differing subjective stances to be invoked, as subsequent semantic memories

⁹⁰ Paulette Bichard, Interview with Richard Guille, 26 April 2018.

⁹¹ IWM, Sound 10683 'Interview with Joseph Arthur Mière', 18 April 1989.

inform and influence the interviewees' relationship with their memories of childhood. These memories are composed and integrated into a narrative like any other memory, yet owing to the larger time gap between experience and articulation, have more scope for subjective revision and reinterpretation. Ned Norrick, a linguist who has explored humour in oral history interviews, argued that one strategy for composing memories so as to be humorous to the listener is to adopt a 'dual perspective'. This draws attention to the incongruities between past and present selves, allowing interviewees to safely draw attention to the shortcomings of their childish perspective without invalidating themselves as witnesses.⁹² Ferbrache demonstrated this, where an episodic memory of his Occupation childhood was refracted through his present identity and knowledge. 'I'm afraid my war effort was on the wrong side ... a German lorry had upset its load on the corner, and there were these bright, shiny, brassy coloured things on the road and German soldiers were putting them back into the box and I thought I would help!'⁹³ Ferbrache placed verbal emphasis on the shiny metal objects on the ground, the anchor of the recollection. However, after the war he realised that the shiny things which had caught his attention as a four-year-old had been more sinister than they appeared. 'I ... [later] deduced that they must have been live rounds of ammunition. [Laugh] So to my shame, I got it wrong. I was helping the other side [laugh]!'⁹⁴ Ferbrache juxtaposed his past self, who helped the enemy soldiers collecting the shiny objects, with his adult self, who knew exactly what they had been. This allowed him to generate humour, pointing to how his childish efforts to help had been misguided, owing to his youthful incomprehension at the time.

Others reprised their childish voice through manipulating tone, allowing their testimonies to switch back and forth from the adult narrator to the experiencing child. Jean Rougier, an eleven-year-old school girl when she evacuated to Rochdale, was an accomplished narrator who exemplified this. Discussing the day of her evacuation, she recalled her alarm for the safety of the family pets when she saw animals let loose by their owners roaming the Island. 'I was absolutely horrified and amazed ... suddenly, a little blue budgie came along and flew past us ... we had a cat and a budgie, and I said to my mum "**Aah!** [Childish gasp] **You're not going to let Happy and Lucky out like that are you?**"'⁹⁵ Mimicking her childhood voice allowed Rougier to narrate past emotions in a more evocative manner, drawing attention to her childish fears for her pets. Through this strategy, Rougier echoed her past child in the present, shifting from the narrating adult in a seamless and practised manner. Whilst the testimonies of the wartime children were spoken in the

⁹² Ned Norrick, 'Humour in Oral History Interviews,' *Oral History*, 34:2 (2006), p. 86.

⁹³ Ferbrache, Interview.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Jean Rougier, Interview with Richard Guille, 4 May 2018.

adult voice and refracted through decades of adult subjectivity, the past child is still accessible to the researcher, particularly in the case of interviewees with the story-telling skills to interweave the child and adult subjectivities together in the construction of their testimonies.

Testifying from a childhood perspective could cause some interviewees anxiety over their suitability as sources, whilst others mobilised their youth defensively. Hajtó noted how her interviewees ‘avoided[ed] the responsibility of remembering ‘correctly’ by using the excuse of childhood.’⁹⁶ Some used their youth at the time as a strategy to evade difficult questions or as a hedging device when they felt their opinions too reliant on second-hand information. Annabel Cook, a nine-year-old Sarkee in 1945, frequently foregrounded the limits of her perspective as she viewed them, providing constant reminders that she remembered from a childhood position: ‘as a child then it didn’t register’; ‘that’s only a child’s eye view, you see? I don’t know what adults thought.’⁹⁷ She also used this to limit what she was prepared to say on certain subjects, particularly relations between Sarkees and their occupiers: ‘I’ve heard things since I’ve grown up but that’s irrelevant, that’s hearsay, but I think on the whole we didn’t have a choice. You had to get on with them ... But again, that’s only a child’s view really.’⁹⁸ Cook set limits on what she was prepared to say, explicitly rejecting second-hand information before caveating her opinions with her wartime youth. She appeared uncomfortable discussing how the Sarkees and their occupiers generally co-existed relatively peaceably (see chapter four), seeking to distance herself from making a firm judgement on this by foregrounding her status as a child with limited understanding of events.

During the Occupation, Lynette Renouf’s father had built crystal radio sets to supply to Islanders desperate for news following the German confiscation of wirelesses in June 1942. In order to move the radios to the man who supplied them to Islanders, Renouf’s father sent his young daughter, then aged between twelve and fourteen, to school with the sets in her bag to deliver them en-route. She related that her father had later told her that he felt it had been the worst thing he had ever done. However, to Renouf, then a child, the exercise was not remembered as frightening. I enquired as to whether she had been scared:

No [!] because I didn’t know the seriousness of it! I just knew that I had to give it to this man, and I’d have to not let anybody look in ... I mean at nine, ten-years old you, don’t understand things like that ... And I don’t

⁹⁶ Hajtó, *Milk Sauce and Paprika*, p. 204.

⁹⁷ Annabel Cook, Interview with Richard Guille, 16 April 2016.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

think they [her parents] ever emphasised the real bad things about, war ... Maybe if they had done that, we would have understood more.⁹⁹

Renouf's reply was illuminating as to the different perspectives held by children at the time and how this influenced their memories of the war. She acknowledged the generational divide between children and adults, with the former shielded from the worst effects of the war, and the latter being fully cognisant of the potential consequences of German rule. Moreover, Renouf appeared to misremember her age at the time this likely occurred, referring to her age in 1940 as opposed to that during the period from late 1942 until the end of the war when she would have smuggled the crystal sets. This repositioned her as a pre-adolescent with no comprehension of the risks she was undertaking. Aged between twelve and fourteen, Renouf's capacity to understand would have been more developed, and narrating from that perspective may have required her to take a more critical view of her father's actions than she wished. Ultimately, the inaccuracy over her age spoke volumes of how Renouf viewed herself in the past from the present, as an innocent child caught up in the hardships of Nazi occupation. Whether this misremembrance was intentional is unclear; however, it demonstrated the importance of critically reading the testimonies of Occupation children for their different perspective and the ways in which past youth could be mobilised in narrative construction.

Testimonies of a remembered childhood are not necessarily any more or less reliable than adult narratives for the processes of autobiographical memory, subjective identity and narrative construction are relatively similar for both groups. Some, such as Bruce Demiray and Susan Bluck, have argued that memories encoded during childhood are relatively reliable for memories 'encoded in adulthood, may be more complex, less schematised and more often told and retold ... potentially making them more subject to dynamic reconstruction as influenced by the [then] conceptual self.'¹⁰⁰ Fragmented and episodic memories from childhood, owing to the lesser cognitive ability of children, are sifted, sorted and interpreted less than those formed during adulthood. Moreover, Dodd posited that events experienced from the ages of five to fifteen are 'remembered through a memory system similar to adult autobiographical memory.'¹⁰¹ She concluded that there were few grounds to proceed as if childhood events experienced after the age of five are any less accurate than those from adulthood, for like all memories they are 'fragmented ... and reconstructed into coherent narratives via the process of autobiographical memory.'¹⁰² The thesis embraces the unique perspectives offered by the youngest interviewees, valuing the insights one can gain

⁹⁹ Lynette Renouf, Interview with Richard Guille, 25 July 2018.

¹⁰⁰ Bruce Demiray and Susan Bluck, 'The Relation of the Conceptual Self to recent and distant autobiographical memories', *Memory*, 19:8 (2011), p. 987.

¹⁰¹ Dodd, *French Children*, p. 42.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

from studying the construction of a past five-year-old's testimony the same as that of an eighteen-year-old at the end of the war, both telling of the subjective and cultural processes that inform oral testimonies of the Occupation.

The youngest interviewees spoke of Occupation childhood from the perspective of an adult remembering that past. This is instructive of the world in which these individuals inhabited and how they viewed it at the time and in the present. However, like all autobiographical narratives, the testimonies of the sample were composed, refined, retold and reworked over the course of the interviewees' lives. As noted in the introduction, the cultural memory of both the Occupation, and more generally Britain at war, are potent discursive frameworks which offer templates for the past child to situate their episodic memories within. Given that members of the sample under the age of ten in 1945 generally possessed fewer direct memories, the widespread cultural imaginaries of both frameworks likely played a more pronounced role in shaping the testimonies of these interviewees. This assertion is discussed further in chapter three in relation to British war memory, which, in line with Summerfield and Geoff Eley's research, was particularly prevalent in British culture at the time when many of the interviewees were in their formative years (the 1950s and 1960s), which had a profound shaping function.¹⁰³ Therefore, by seeking out areas where the testimonies aligned with past and present paradigms of memory, an understanding of the role culture played in the composition of such testimonies has been achieved. Moreover, the subjectivities of the interviewees, what parts of the Occupation distressed or embarrassed them or made them proud, what they chose to speak of and what they remained silent about, provides indicators as to how the complex interplay between past experience and present narration plays out in the case of this contested occupation memory.

'I wish I'd asked more questions': Family Stories and their Narrative Function

A vital source of information aiding members of the 1.5 generation in the construction of their testimonies was second-hand information from their parents, alongside their post-war behaviours and whether they spoke about the Occupation to their offspring. 'The family is the site where our personhood is cultivated', argued Catherine Harris and Gill Valentine, 'and the lens through which our pasts, presents and futures are often interpreted. ... Through the family we implicitly absorb values ... [which have] the potential to shape the adults we

¹⁰³ Geoff Eley, 'Finding the People's War: Film, British Collective Memory and World War Two', *American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), pp. 818-819; Penny Summerfield, 'The Generation of Memory: Gender and the Popular Memory of the Second World War in Britain', in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, ed. by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 25-46.

become.’¹⁰⁴ Situated in a space between memory and postmemory, the testimonies of the 1.5 generation represent a blend of their personal memories, the experiences and stories of their parents, as well as more intangible elements such as engrained behaviours that leaked over from the Occupation into the post-war world. To participate in an Occupation oral history as a very young child from the time without reference to familial and social experiences would have been to share disconnected, fragmentary episodes from their pasts, divorced from family and friends and that broader shared community of experience. Unsurprisingly, few adopted this approach. My questions towards the end of the interview were directed towards ascertaining the level of post-war discussion of the Occupation which interviewees had entered into with their parents. This was aimed at testing the notion that, initially, as argued by Carr, the Occupation was shrouded in silence as a war-weary population sought to put the past behind them.¹⁰⁵ This process was patchy: some recalled their parents never spoke of it, others recalled freer discussion within their family units. Exploring family narratives of the Second World War, elicited by a 2009 Mass Observation Directive which asked respondents ‘what does the Second World War mean to you?’, Summerfield noted that the experiences of older family members had a particularly powerful influence on what was shared, what was easy to compose and which subjects engendered discomposure many decades on amongst descendants. Stories which lay outside of the hegemonic cultural memory of Britain at war could cause respondents to become discomposed.¹⁰⁶ Silences can be shared and passed down through the generations, as difficult or embarrassing memories held by adults are withheld.¹⁰⁷

In my 2016 Masters dissertation on Sark’s Occupation, I noted how powerful a mnemonic enabler family stories were. In particular, I identified how they could be used to reinforce one’s ability to testify about the past, augmenting the insertion of episodic childish memories into a broader narrative that moved beyond one’s own narrow experience, and the emotional attachments evidenced through their retelling.¹⁰⁸ In relation to the latter, it provided some interviewees a way to keep their parent’s experiences alive. One participant in the group interview with four Sarkees, Eileen Baker, had been a five-year-old at the end of the war. She remarked early on that she remembered nothing of the Occupation, bar some fleeting memories after Liberation. However, Baker brought with her a letter written by her late mother to the historian Peter Liddle in the 2000s, detailing her Occupation

¹⁰⁴ Catherine Harris and Gill Valentine, ‘Childhood narratives: adult reflections on encounters with difference in everyday spaces’ *Children’s Geographies*, 15:5 (2017), p. 507.

¹⁰⁵ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 213.

¹⁰⁶ Summerfield, ‘The Generation of Memory’, pp. 31-34.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-34.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Guille, ‘The German Occupation of Sark: 1940-1945: Public Discourse and Private Memory’, (MA Dissertation, University of Kent, 2016), pp. 20-29.

experiences.¹⁰⁹ At relevant points during the interview, Baker read out extracts from this, delighted to be able to participate and contribute, through her mother's words, to the discussion. The other three respondents responded positively to her mother's testimony, which often sparked their own recollections, particularly in relation to improvisations:

Eileen Baker: ... she said she spent many hours grinding wheat [in a coffee grinder] to make bread but you know, it was that sort of job [demonstrated how her mother used the grinder], I thought I'd bring that just to show you!

Peter Baker: You'd put a little handful of wheat in the top and then you'd get a little flour out the bottom.

Jeanette Drillot: My mother had a coffee grinder, or an implement like that, and she used to grind oats, and then by the light of a candle and pair of tweezers, she took out all the husks and made a porridge.

EB: Mum even mentions making potato pudding and that sort of thing, terribly inventive.

Alexander Baker: They used to make blancmange from carageen moss.

PB: We used to queue [in Guernsey] used to go to the chemist, and we'd go just to get a packet of carageen moss for jelly, yeah.¹¹⁰

Eileen Baker's decision to participate, almost on behalf of her late mother, whose achievement in surviving the Occupation as a young parent made Baker immensely proud, demonstrated the deep emotional attachment felt by younger interviewees to their parents' Occupation stories. Baker's behaviours in relation to this interview stemmed from her postmemory of an event she did not consciously experience, albeit one which defined her early childhood and her mother. She spoke not of her own experiences, but of her mothers', through her written words. There was no misgiving on Baker's part over participating in this manner, for she clearly viewed herself as a vehicle through which her mother's war could be spoken of and brought to light. It was postmemory in action, allowing Baker to participate and also bring to life, in a public project, the experiences of a young Sark mother under German Occupation.

Carr has argued that there was a general trend towards silence regarding the Occupation years in the Islands until the mid-1960s, at which point the generation born at the end of the war began to preserve its memory through their collecting and displaying of artefacts.¹¹¹ Certainly, some interviewees identified that the war had not been regularly spoken of within their families in the years after its end. Jeannette Drillot, aged seven in

¹⁰⁹ Letter from Harriet Carre to Sir Peter Liddle, kindly shown to me by Eileen Baker.

¹¹⁰ Alexander Baker, Eileen Baker, Peter Baker and Jeanette Drillot, Interview with Richard Guille, 18 April 2016.

¹¹¹ Gilly Carr, 'The uninvited guests who outstayed their welcome: the ghosts of war in the Channel Islands', in *Modern Conflict and the Senses*, ed. by Nicholas Saunders and Paul Cornish (Oxon, 2017), p. 283.

1945, related that ‘many people buried their memories immediately after the war, didn’t want anything to do with the Germans.’¹¹² Hamelin exhibited regret that her parents had not shared much with her, feeling herself to have been partially complicit: ‘*I wish I’d asked more questions.* That was really, I-I, my mother died quite young but my father could still have had, quite a lot of information. They didn’t talk about it ... they preferred to put it behind them I think, really and truly.’¹¹³ Jenny Hamon, a Sark girl aged six in 1945, reflected on whether her parent’s memories had been difficult: ‘I suppose it was for them ... but they never spoke about it so it was very difficult. I mean you never heard of what went on.’¹¹⁴ Her memories of the period were sparse in comparison to other Islanders of a comparable age.¹¹⁵

However, to declare a ubiquitous silence would be incorrect. The Occupation was far from this in Island life, no matter how much Islanders wished to move on from the past. Early researchers, such as the Woods and Marshall, found many locals happy to share their experiences for their respective books. Marshall noted that ‘a wet day in a Sark tavern, or a warm evening in Stock’s Hotel bar, is not complete without a tale or two about “how the Jerries behaved.”’¹¹⁶ Silences abounded, often propagated by official inaction, such as in the cases of Jews and resisters. However, stories were passed down and shared amongst families, which were remembered by the project’s interviewees. Terry De Moulpiéd, a young Guernsey boy, believed that for his parents, ‘there was nothing that they felt that they couldn’t talk about.’¹¹⁷ Interviewees who recalled their parents openly discussing the Occupation after the war generally demonstrated a larger fund of direct memories and stories of the period, which enhanced their ability to testify, in contrast to those who had limited post-war discussion within their families.

Two examples illustrate the role of post-war family discussion as an enabling device in relation to Occupation interviews, and silence as a constrictor of memory. Two men were interviewed in 2016 who were of the same age in 1945, Frank Lainé and James Perrée, both aged five at the end of the war. Lainé experienced the war on Guernsey with his mother, who had recently been abandoned by her husband, whilst Perrée lived with his parents on Sark. Lainé’s interview was one of the shortest and contained the fewest spoken words of any of the transcripts (2,570), with much of the interview punctuated by contemplative silences on his part. Contrastingly, Perrée produced a far richer testimony with few silences,

¹¹² Baker, Baker, Baker and Drillot, Interview.

¹¹³ Georgina Hamelin, Interview with Richard Guille, 3 May 2018.

¹¹⁴ Hamon and Hamon, Interview.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Marshall, *Hitler Invaded Sark*, p. 59.

¹¹⁷ Terry De Moulpiéd and Anne De Moulpiéd, Interview with Richard Guille, 17 April 2016.

with the words spoken reaching 6, 914 despite Perrée being three-months younger than Lainé. Lainé barely attempted to compose a narrative and, arguably, was incapable of doing so owing to the traumatic experiences of his mother. He bluntly stated ‘she had a pretty tough time of it’ after her father had left her with an infant son on Guernsey. His mother was to endure further heartbreak before the end of the war: ‘she met a Spanish prisoner of war. And they had my two sisters, and he was taken away ... towards the end of the war I suppose ... and never heard of since.’¹¹⁸ He related how his mother had barely spoken of the war, and implied that he had likely blanked out any direct memories of the period after the war.¹¹⁹ Towards the end of the interview, by which point it was clear to both parties he had found the experience difficult, he noted ‘I’m not interested in going back there ... it left me without a father, which is not a terribly good start _ _ _ Even though mum did amazing things but _ _ _ So it was bloody rough for them.’¹²⁰ The choppy response and the somewhat defensive declaration of his not wishing to dwell on the war years underscored his lack of composure, inherited from his mother, who he revealed had never spoken about the war.

However, those who had parents who were more willing to share their stories of the Occupation exhibited a more plentiful fund of memories and demonstrated an enhanced ability to discuss the war and situate their own experiences within a broader story. Perrée recalled detailed episodes experienced with his father, which were informed by his father’s later speaking of the events. These are discussed in more detail in chapter four, concerning instances where Perrée’s father was angered by the profiteering of members of Sark’s community, and who put receiving money from the German forces first over helping locals struggling for food. Perrée’s responses on these subjects channelled his father’s anger, with Perrée becoming discomposed when discussing these events, which did not sit well with him. The important point here, however, is that Perrée would have been between four and five when these episodes occurred. His direct memories of them were correspondingly limited, yet he recalled them in detail on an emotional and factual level far beyond his then years. Post-war discussion with his father allowed his childish experiencing of events to be contextualised and refracted through the adult perspective, augmenting his ability to recall them and what they had meant to his father, of whom Perrée was immensely fond of.¹²¹ Despite being younger than Lainé, Perrée was able to narrate his memories of the Occupation in more detail and situate these within a broader family story, augmented by his

¹¹⁸ Frank Lainé, Interview with Richard Guille, 22 April 2016.

¹¹⁹ Other interviewees who felt as if the silence of their parents had hindered their awareness of their family’s stories, and demonstrated a correspondingly smaller fund of personal memories, included Annabel Cook and Laurence De La Rue. Annabel Cook, Interview with Richard Guille, 16 April 2016; De La Rue, Interview.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ James Perrée, Interview with Richard Guille, 15 April 2016.

father's post-war discussion of the Occupation. Other younger interviewees exemplified this trend. Harold Nicolle, a Guernsey nine-year-old in 1945, discussed his memories for almost two hours, and reflected that 'my father talked about it a lot.'¹²² Similarly, Trevor Bisson, also of Guernsey and aged eleven in 1945, recalled that 'of course we [discussed the Occupation] ... so did the parents.'¹²³ Like Nicolle, Bisson held detailed memories of his Occupation childhood, which were likely augmented by his post-war experiences of the Occupation being spoken of relatively freely.

Conclusion

There is far more to be gained from the testimonies of children and young adults of the Occupation generation than existing scholarship suggests. Their memories deserve to be the focus of diligent scholarly research, not merely left to journalists and writers of popular history. If the narratives of the Occupation they present are, as some fear, inaccurate or misleading, then surely that is all the more reason to critically engage with these sources and understand how such myths came to be subjectively incorporated and recycled? To do so is to understand which aspects of the experience historically have been acceptable to speak of, which have not, and to gain a deeper appreciation for the intersection between experience, memory and myth. Regardless of the alternative nature of their perspectives from any conceptualisations of a hegemonic Occupation experience (a world inhabited by adults), they too lived through the years of German control, endured its privations, restrictions of freedom and had to come to terms with issues of resistance and collaboration, even if such issues had not directly affected them at the time. As Nicholas Stargardt argued in his 2006 study of children's lives under the Nazis, 'children were neither just the mute and traumatised witnesses to this war, nor merely its innocent victims. They also lived in the war, played and fell in love during the war; the war invaded their imaginations and the war raged inside them.'¹²⁴ The ways in which the 1.5 generation perceived and experienced the Occupation may have differed from their elders, yet they still form a part of that community of experience, and the Occupation is a defining part of their lives owing to its salience in local identity formation. Whilst current guardians of memory such as Le Sueur speak from a position of authority owing either to their age at the time or the clarity of their memories, this mantle will shift with their passing. The voices that speak of the period from a position of *direct* experience, the individuals who will be rolled out for comment at anniversaries,

¹²² Harold Nicolle, Interview with Richard Guille, 9 November 2018.

¹²³ Trevor Bisson, Interview with Richard Guille, 23 August 2018.

¹²⁴ Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War: Children's Lives under the Nazis* (London: Pimlico, 2006), p. 17.

participate in documentaries or future research, will only do so from younger and younger perspectives.

The subjectivities, past perspectives and present views of this group require understanding, notably in relation to how their memories are composed in line with prevailing cultural constructions of the Occupation, and what forms this process takes. Consequently, it is a loss that so much recent research into Occupation memory has focused on heritage (the past presented for current generations), memorials, museums and commemorations, an endeavour generally divorced from the private sphere of memory. The dominance of Carr's research, buttressed by the scepticism of Sanders in relation to the utility of oral history, has resulted in a focus on the homogenised publicly performative rituals of remembrance, commemoration, memorialisation and heritage, marginalising the subjective individual. The thesis reinserts the remembering individual into the study of Occupation memory in the Islands, and is comfortable with the notion that the testimonies represent, in part, 'opinions that are likely to be highly subjective'; for that is the very material with which autobiographical narratives are made. However, before analysing the oral testimonies, the parameters and evolution of both public and popular Occupation memories of Guernsey, Jersey and Sark require discussion. This is the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter Two

Stasis and Rupture, Victors and Victims: An Overview of**Public and Popular Occupation Memories, 1945 – Present**

A local newspaper reporter, interviewing a woman ... was astonished when she suddenly talked about another woman in her area. 'Her eyes were full of fury ... She called her a slut and a jerrybag, and said she would never look or speak to her.' Both women were in their late seventies.¹

The above, taken from *The Sunday Times*' reaction to the early declassification of British files on the Channel Islands' Occupation in December 1992, indicates the longevity of emotions roused by the subject in the Islands. Nearly fifty years after liberation, a woman was unable to forgive the past trespasses of a fellow Islander, who she believed had entered into sexual relationships with occupying soldiers, labelling her a 'jerrybag', the derogatory term created by Islanders during the Occupation to identify and denigrate women perceived to have slept with the Germans. Despite public memory having been uncontroversial to this point, the fifty-year old grudges remained and bore the emotion of the time. Few aspects of the British Isles during the war have been as contested after the fact than the Channel Islands' Occupation, due to its dissonance to the victorious and morally simplistic core of British war memory. This was fuelled by the significance of the event to those who lived through it in Guernsey, Jersey and Sark. Gilly Carr argued that the Occupation has become a crucial part of Channel Islander identity, 'a defining part of local history and an experience that marked a generation and beyond.'² When that identity is questioned, Islanders respond angrily.

The memory of the Occupation has substantially evolved. A broad guide to the shifts in Occupation memory is presented here to contextualise the testimonies examined in the thesis. This chapter builds upon scholarship which has considered the shifting memory of the war years in the Islands.³ The immediate post-war period saw myths flourish and

¹ James Dalrymple, 'The Haunted Isles', *Sunday Times*, 6 December 1992, p. 11.

² Gilly Carr, *Legacies of Occupation: Heritage, Memory and Archaeology in the Channel Islands* (New York: Springer, 2014), p. 292.

³ For examples see Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*; Hazel Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands' Occupation: Record, Memory, Myth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007); Paul Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness: UK War Memory and Channel Islands Occupation Memory', in *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective* ed. by Jodie Matthews and Daniel Travers (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), pp. 24-39; and Daniel Travers, *The Second World War and the 'Other British Isles': Memory and Heritage in the Isle of Man, Orkney, and the Channel Islands* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

‘forgetting’ abound, whereas the end of the century saw a distinct crisis of memory. Paul Sanders argued in 2012 ‘the Islands have gone from a post-war myth ... [built upon British war memory] ... to a situation where the wartime record of the entire Islands “race” has been considered suspect by large sections of mainland opinion.’⁴ Recently, the Islands transitioned towards a more nuanced Occupation memory, inclusive of previously marginalised victim groups and in line with European frameworks that have notions of martyrdom and victimhood at their heart.⁵ It is useful in experiential terms to conceptualise *Occupations* of the Channel Islands, as opposed to a singular Occupation. Individual Islands possessed different societies, identities and geographies, and the nature of occupation varied. These differences must be borne in mind: each Island had different political pressures and wartime histories underpinning the construction of their public narratives. Since 1995, Carr noted, ‘divergence in commemoration between Jersey and Guernsey became more noticeable.’⁶ It is therefore beneficial to conceptualise public, or popular ‘memories’ of Occupation. Sark likewise developed its war memory in different ways to its larger neighbours, owing to its small size. More scholarly attention has been devoted to the larger Islands. Accordingly, the chapter devotes space to fleshing out the contours of memory within Sark.

Carr presented a broad interpretation of the developments of Occupation heritage within Guernsey and Jersey, arguing that the period from Liberation until the 1960s was one of ‘collective amnesia’, where many put the past behind them.⁷ This was preceded in the late 1940s by a period of ‘mourning and cleansing’ where the material of war was disposed and a commemorative focus upon the Islands’ military dead appeared.⁸ The mid-1970s saw a reprisal of interest in the Occupation as the post-war generation grew interested in the war years and began to rescue ‘Occupation heritage’. Carr dubbed this phase ‘Occupation nostalgia’; the well-meaning interest of those keen to vicariously experience the period led to them ‘invoking ... positive aspects and repressing traumatic aspects.’⁹ This continued until the 1990s, when the ‘anamnesis of victims of Nazism’ occurred.¹⁰ The massive commemorative events in 1995 brought fresh attention to the sufferings of victim groups who had never been a part of the dominant narratives of Occupation: OT labourers, political prisoners, Jews and deportees.¹¹ Much impetus came from the seismic shock which

⁴ Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, p. 25.

⁵ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 271.

⁶ Gilly Carr, ‘Occupation Heritage, Commemoration and Memory in Jersey and Guernsey’, *History and Memory*, 24:1 (2012), p. 108.

⁷ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 213.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

criticisms of their war record in the British press caused the Islands in the 1990s, generating a crisis of memory that led to questioning of dominant Occupation narratives.

Before the thesis examines Islanders' oral testimonies, the landscape against which the interviewees' narratives developed is outlined and the evolution of public and popular memories within the Islands explored. Owing to the substantive literature on the subject, it provides a general summary rather than a definitive view.¹² The chapter defines the period from the end of 1945 to 1992 as one of 'stasis', where Occupation memory in the Islands was relatively stable. Although Carr's research indicated subtle evolutions during this period little realistically changed: Islanders locked into Britain's war narrative and victim groups remained marginalised. Stasis denotes equilibrium and stability; this phase of public memory was widely accepted and reinforced by commemorations. The anger generated by attacks on the Island's wartime records from Madeleine Bunting and others suggests that the 1990s was a period of disequilibrium, as the myths Islanders had lived by for decades were publicly assailed.¹³ This phase is referred to as 'rupture', owing to the speed with which the Islands' war memories were called into question and the deep anger felt by many. Islanders were forced to confront elements of their history which had been silenced in public memory, whether they wished to or not. In these small Islands, conservative, patriotic, proud of their wartime record and easy to destabilise, mass anger was prompted by such attacks, symptomatic of collective discomposure. This period entrenched a dichotomy of 'accusation and defence' identified by Alice Evans, which distorted debates over the period.¹⁴ Islanders went on the defensive during these years; in response to Bunting this bordered on the vitriolic.

However, this period led to a reappraisal of Occupation history and a gradual incorporation of marginalised groups into public narratives. The subject of Occupation memory in the Islands has generated a great deal of scholarly interest since 2000.¹⁵ War memory in the Islands underwent such shifts and proved so dissonant to the memory of European occupations that it merited study in its own right. Much of the drive behind the study of Occupation memory came from the fields of heritage studies and conflict archaeology, notably through Carr. Whilst arguments from these disciplines are considered, the chapter takes a historical view of Occupation memories. We have entered a new and far

¹² For the most comprehensive work, which comes from the perspectives of heritage studies and conflict archaeology, see Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*.

¹³ This phase coincided with what Jay Winter has referred to as the 'Memory Boom' across Europe and America. See Jay Winter, 'The Memory Boom in Contemporary Historical Studies', *Raritan*, 21:1 (2001), pp. 52-56.

¹⁴ Alice Evans, 'Introduction' in Violet Carey, *Guernsey Under Occupation: The Second World War Diaries of Violet Carey*, ed. by Alice Evans (Chichester: Phillimore, 2009), p. xx.

¹⁵ For examples, see Carr, *Legacies of Occupation* and Travers, *Other British Isles*.

more interventionist phase in the historiography of the Occupation, which has championed resistance and victim groups, with a view to seeing these aspects of the experience ‘appropriately’ remembered and incorporated into the narratives of the Islands, as examined in the final section.

The Churchillian Paradigm and Stasis, 1945-1990

The Channel Islands’ alignment with Britain’s nascent war memory occurred quickly after their Liberation, encouraged by the British government’s assessment of events after they re-exerted control over the Islands. In a report circulated to the cabinet following his visit to the Islands between 14 and 15 May 1945, the Home Secretary Herbert Morrison stated that: ‘The Island officials discharged their difficult responsibilities during the occupation in exemplary fashion and had succeeded ... in getting the best possible treatment from the Germans commensurate with the avoidance of any semblance of collaboration.’¹⁶ Sanders argued this ‘view of the Channel Islands Occupation ... imprint[ed] future interpretations well into the 1990s’.¹⁷ He posited that ‘the emerging Island war narrative differentiated itself immediately from its European counterparts ... Instead ... Islanders locked into the “blood, toil and tears” of sublime and unwavering steadfastness.’¹⁸ In his research into Jersey’s Liberation Day celebrations, Travers noted that ‘despite possessing an ... [inherently negative] ... wartime experience’, Jersey’s commemorations indicate the Islands’ need for a positive memory of its wartime role.¹⁹ This interpretation was further enabled by the Islands’ long history of British allegiance and enough evidence of stoical endurance during the Occupation to exist within the confines of Britain’s fledgling war memory.

There were also political motivations. The idea of British citizens collaborating was repellent to many in the British government. Moreover, the Occupation raised awkward questions as to their abandonment of the Islands in June 1940 and their poor handling of that situation. The British establishment remained sensitive on this subject. When Charles Cruickshank submitted extracts of his official history to the Home and Cabinet Offices for approval in 1974 civil service officials took umbrage at his claim that the government’s handling of the situation had been so poor it would have undermined public confidence in

¹⁶ The National Archives (TNA), Kew, PREM 3/87, ‘Report on Home Secretary’s Visit to the Channel Islands’, 24 May 1945, p. 2.

¹⁷ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands under German Occupation, 1940-1945* (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2005), pp. 234-235.

¹⁸ Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, p. 25.

¹⁹ Daniel Travers, ‘Raising the Flag: Public Sculpture, Liberation Day, and Second World War Remembrance in Jersey’, in *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective*, ed. by Jodie Matthews and Daniel Travers (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), p. 228.

victory.²⁰ A handwritten annotation to Cruickshank's original draft noted 'it is easy enough ... to be wise after the event when we are no longer enveloped by the fog of war,' a caveat which was included in Cruickshank's book.²¹ To claim that Islanders had met the challenge admirably shut down such questions.²²

Questions surrounding the lack of armed resistance in the Islands were prevented by arguing that resistance had been "unnecessary" thanks to the Islands' officials' successful governance and the Germans having behaved much better than anywhere else.²³ Initially, the British seemed keen to lionise Island resistance.²⁴ A Ministry of Information film released in 1945 covered a broad spectrum of resistance activities, from retaining banned radios, disseminating news sheets and intercepting letters of denunciation.²⁵ However, local considerations took precedence: for example, the condemnation of resistance by the insular authorities during the Occupation mitigated against local officials building a narrative around those who had resisted or died for their opposition.²⁶ Furthermore, popular opinions of resistance were mixed, with many feeling that such actions had jeopardized the safety of the populations.²⁷ This was the chief reason for political prisoners being absent in Occupation commemoration for over fifty years.²⁸ Both Whitehall and the Islands' administrations emphasised continuity of British law and of the Islands' governments. The Bailiffs had received a final instruction from Whitehall prior to the Occupation ordering them to stay on and govern in the best interests of the population. As Sanders argues, 'contrary to ... many other leaders in occupied Europe who elected to stay and work for the Germans, the Channel Islands' governments could point to the advice of the British government.'²⁹ Accusations that any 'collaboration' had been voluntary were circumvented by this.³⁰ The awarding of Knighthoods to both Bailiffs, Victor Carey in Guernsey and Alexander Coutanche in Jersey, validated their conduct during the Occupation.³¹

²⁰ Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. vii.

²¹ TNA, CAB 103/605 'Draft of Cruickshank preface annotated by Clifton Child (Cabinet Office) and N. F. Carrington (Home Office)', 1974. Cruickshank's final words in 1975 read 'It is easy enough, however, to be wise when the fog of war has dispersed and the catastrophic events are at a comfortable distance.' Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, p. vii.

²² Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', pp. 25-26.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁴ Gilly Carr, Paul Sanders and Louise Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance in the Channel Islands: German Occupation, 1940-1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 319.

²⁵ *The Channel Islands 1940-1945: Channel Islanders Act out Scenes from the German Occupation*, dir. Gerry Bryant, Ministry of Information, Crown Film Unit, 1945.

²⁶ Carr, 'Occupation Heritage' p. 90.

²⁷ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 317-319.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

²⁹ Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', p. 28.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³¹ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 240.

This represented a stark diversion from other European nations emerging from Nazi occupation, which constructed wartime memory around resistance.³² This was itself a simplified interpretation, notably in France where the Gaullist myth of occupation and liberation became firmly entrenched until the 1970s, when Robert Paxton's ground breaking book and Marcel Ophüls' film *The Sorrow and the Pity* exploded this.³³ Henri Rousso argued that with a few sentences on 25 August 1944, 'Charles de Gaulle established the founding myth of the post-Vichy period: "'Paris martyred! But Paris liberated! Liberated by itself, by its own people with the help of the armies of France, with the support and aid of France as a whole, of fighting France...'"³⁴ Rab Bennett outlined the contradictions of this interpretation, which invoked a self-image of 'glorious France, a unified nation ... which heroically resisted from the first hour of the occupation.'³⁵ However, this 'obscured the less than heroic reality ... that the overwhelming majority acquiesced in Vichy's collaborationist policies for most of the occupation.'³⁶ The Gaullist myth was essential in France for helping to heal the nation's divided society – hence the extent of collaboration was downplayed and resistance exaggerated.

The Churchillian paradigm became commonly held for almost fifty years as it 'made short shrift of a focal paradox ... [that] technically the Channel Islands' Occupation was a dissonant note within the British war narrative.'³⁷ Sanders noted the British were not a nation of 'victims, but victors.'³⁸ Resultantly, Islanders adopted the stance of the former category and victim groups were silenced public memory.³⁹ He further argued: 'the Churchillian paradigm proved itself supremely resilient [for] ... it enabled Islanders to close ranks with the victorious British, thus avoiding altogether ... the painful healing process that occupation memory would entail for European nations', manifesting as 'a view of history that left little place for the complexities and contradictions of enemy occupation.'⁴⁰ Carr argued that the 'continuation in positions of power of members of the wartime administration and their descendants ... for many years ... has meant that there was no desire to valorise any narrative ... other than their own.'⁴¹ Despite Islanders' experiences being closer to those of western Europeans than the British, comparisons were closed off by

³² Ibid, p. 26.

³³ See Robert Paxton, *Vichy France 1940-1944: Old Guard and New Order* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972) and Marcel Ophüls, *Le Chagrin et la Pitié*, Paris, Alain Moreau, 1980.

³⁴ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 16.

³⁵ Rab Bennett, *Under the Shadow of the Swastika: The Moral Dilemmas of Resistance and Collaboration in Hitler's Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), p. 25.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 25.

³⁷ Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', p. 29.

³⁸ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 256.

³⁹ Carr, 'Occupation Heritage', p. 92.

⁴⁰ Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', p. 29; Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 235.

⁴¹ Carr, 'Occupation Heritage', p. 89.

alignment with British war memory, and reappraisals could only come through changes to this.⁴² The Islands hold a similarly peripheral position to the wider British narrative as British prisoners of war in the Far East or British citizens of Singapore occupied and imprisoned by the Japanese, marginalised owing to the dissonant nature of their experiences.

Recovering from the traumas of Occupation was challenging for Islanders. Once the joy of liberation had passed there was a period of tension, where the fractured societies sought to process the preceding five years. Women who had had sexual relationships with German soldiers were subjected to humiliating mob justice, similar to what occurred in France in the summer of 1944.⁴³ There were many problems facing Islanders, such as reconstruction and dealing with personal traumas. The return of evacuees caused several tensions within both families and society. Knowles-Smith noted that deportees and evacuees returned to their properties to find them looted or destroyed.⁴⁴ Worsening matters was a lack of understanding between those who had experienced a British war and returned with binary understandings of the Germans, resistance and collaboration and those who had remained, who held more nuanced views. Some were not disposed to try and understand: one Guernseyman who evacuated as a child recalled that in 1945, following his brother's death in the army, he 'was seething with rage' having heard tales of collaboration in the British press.⁴⁵ This generated a fraught atmosphere, leading to anger being directed at the Island elites.⁴⁶ In Guernsey this lacked a political focal point, whereas in Jersey groups such as the Jersey Democratic Movement (JDM), formed during the Occupation to discuss constitutional reform, provided a platform for discontent to be aimed at leaders who, at the time, were popularly considered to have 'feathered their nests' at the expense of ordinary Islanders.⁴⁷ Tempers were further raised when the Bailiffs received Knighthoods. As Carr noted, there were no honours for those who had shown resistance to the occupiers, something which angered those who had engaged in these acts.⁴⁸

Whilst the British government were keen to gloss over the negative aspects of the Occupation and reconstruction, these issues found their way into British newspapers. British

⁴² Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 257.

⁴³ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, p. 322. John Lewis, a Jersey doctor, recorded a detailed account of how one Jersey woman was 'hunted down' in this way in his 1982 memoir. See John Lewis, *A Doctor's Occupation: The Dramatic True Story of Life in Occupied Jersey* (London: Transworld Publishing, 1982), pp. 71-73. For the treatment of women in Liberation France, see Fabrice Vergili, *Shorn Women: Gender and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (London: Berg, 2002), pp. 113-131.

⁴⁴ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 238.

⁴⁵ GIA, SA 02-37 'BBC Radio Guernsey Interview and Phone in with Madeleine Bunting,' 1994.

⁴⁶ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, pp. 238-239.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 239; Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 236-237.

⁴⁸ Gilly Carr, 'Have You Been Offended?' Holocaust Memory in the Channel Islands at HMD 70', *Holocaust Studies*, 22:1 (2016), p. 50.

reporting during this period reflected two elements: firstly, the tensions emanating from the Islands, and secondly the problems British citizens faced in reconciling what had happened there, particularly in relation to collaboration. There was much focus on horizontal collaboration, with the *News of the World* reporting on 30 May 1945 of ‘Island girls who fell for the Germans.’⁴⁹ *The Daily Mail* printed an article on 13 May 1945 which devoted a subsection to one of the more infamous of the British media’s post-Liberation accusations; that ‘about 1,000 babies have been born to German fathers.’⁵⁰ The figure quoted was a wild exaggeration. Barry Turner placed the figure for illegitimate births in Jersey at 184 and in Guernsey at 285.⁵¹ However, the perception which the accusation gave was wholly negative. Other reports asked whether the administrations of Guernsey and Jersey were guilty of ‘over-friendly’ behaviour towards the occupier. The *Daily Worker* reported on the Bailiff of Guernsey Victor Carey’s £25 reward for those who informed on the ‘V’ sign painters.⁵² The question of anti-Jewish policy in the Islands was raised, with the *Daily Worker* declaring that ‘Jersey Rulers Passed Anti-Jewish Laws’ on 13 July 1945.⁵³ The *Daily Herald* printed several reports by their correspondent Charles Bray that drew attention to the failings of the administration and public anger. On 25 July 1945, in an article titled ‘These Britons Have Never Known Democracy,’ Bray called for ‘an immediate ... investigation ... into the behaviour of the Bailiffs and the States throughout the German Occupation ... so that the many wrongs may be righted and that reforms long overdue carried out.’⁵⁴ Strikingly, the tone and content of much of the British reporting in 1945 was mirrored in the 1990s when files in Britain, Guernsey and Jersey were declassified. Questions of collaboration and resistance were not hidden in 1945; however, these were not definitively answered then, paving the way for a future reprise of the debate.

British investigations revealed a wounded society hurling accusations around. People suspected of informing on neighbours were in turn ‘informed’ upon to investigators, often with little to no evidence against them.⁵⁵ A Home Office report on 4 June 1945 commented that investigators ‘received a substantial number of letters, mostly anonymous, about the behaviour of certain members of the population. The majority ... contained very

⁴⁹ Richard Rumbold, ‘Island girls who fell for the Germans’, *News of the World*, 30 May 1945, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Harry Procter, ‘Mr Roche of Jersey: The 40,000 “crystals” expert’, *The Daily Mail*, 13 May 1945, p. 4.

⁵¹ Barry Turner, *Outpost of Occupation: How the Channel Islands Survived Nazi Rule 1940-45* (London: Aurum Press, 2010), pp. 242-243.

⁵² Daily Worker Reporter, ‘£25 Reward to Betray Guernsey “V” Sign Writers’, *Daily Worker*, 20 July 1945, p. 3.

⁵³ No Author Given, ‘Jersey Rulers Passed Anti-Jewish Laws’, *Daily Worker*, p. 4.

⁵⁴ Charles Bray, ‘These Britons Have Never Known Democracy’, *Daily Herald*, 25 July 1945, p. 2.

⁵⁵ TNA, HO 45/22399 (Folio 2) ‘Conduct of the Islanders and Administration during the Occupation’, Theobald Matthews, 9 July 1945 p. 3.

little of substance and were disregarded.⁵⁶ Subsequent reports, such as those produced by MI5 which called for the prosecution of collaborators, were dismissed by the Commanding Officer of British forces in the Islands, Brigadier Snow, as ‘a rehash of tittle-tattle ... which nobody is prepared to come forward and substantiate.’⁵⁷ The internecine denunciation indicated the strength of feeling within the Islands about supposed crimes against the community during the Occupation. The conclusions of the British government at the time did little to denigrate the general wartime record of the Islanders, particularly the officials. However, the process by which this stance was reached was riven with differences of opinion and approach.⁵⁸ As Sanders noted, debriefings conducted by MI19 with escaped Islanders formed the basis for British suspicions and provided ‘the source for much ... enthusiasm for the prosecution of collaborationist crimes.’⁵⁹ Escapees, exhausted by years of Occupation, were not the most reliable sources. Knowles-Smith commented that ‘these people were ... “unusually brave and uncompromising”’ and little account was taken that they may have had limited grasp of the facts.⁶⁰ Sanders suggested they represented a radical minority who took a hard-line on what constituted correct behaviour. They produced polemical reports of a rampant black market, widespread ‘horizontal collaboration’, officials abusing their positions and administrative collaboration.⁶¹ When released, the escapee files fuelled the crisis of memory in the 1990s, as journalists hungry for sensation used these to criticise the Islands.

A divergence was in evidence between British officials and military investigators in the Islands. The prospect of collaboration led to British officers of the Civil Affairs Unit attached to Force 135 being tasked with investigating the events of the Occupation and ‘sifting hearsay and spite from fact’.⁶² The internal divisions within the Islands led the Home Office to consider the necessity for ‘collaboration charges’ to be brought. It appeared at that time that public opinion in the Islands and in Britain could only be assuaged by official intervention being seen to be made in the case of Islanders and their leaders having behaved less than admirably.⁶³ However, the investigations never got off the ground and no charges of collaboration were brought. The Home Office was unwilling to destabilise the Islands

⁵⁶ TNA, HO 45/22399 (Folio 5) ‘J.B. Howard Report’, 4 June 1945, p. 1.

⁵⁷ TNA, HO 45/22399 (Folio 1) ‘Brigadier Snow (Force 135) to Frank Newsam (Home Office), 24 August 1945.

⁵⁸ For a detailed examination of British investigations into collaborationism in the Channel Islands, see Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 231-254.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 233. MI19 was the British Military Intelligence Agency responsible for interrogating prisoners of war and escapees from occupied territories.

⁶⁰ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 169.

⁶¹ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 232.

⁶² Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule, 1940-1945* (London: Pimlico, 2004), p. 276.

⁶³ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 236.

further and no legal framework of what constituted collaboration existed. Legislative constraints such as the constitutional impossibility of enacting retroactive legislation and the sheer lack of evidence on which charges could be brought hampered the investigations.⁶⁴ Theobald Matthews, Britain's Director of Public Prosecutions, concluded: 'there is no *prima facie* case for complaint or criticism ... apart from any case amounting to treason or treachery it should be left to the Islands ... to deal with individual cases of collaboration by financial or social sanctions,' essentially arguing that Whitehall should step aside and not pursue investigations any further.⁶⁵ Matthews recognised the enormity of the Island officials' task and the legislative difficulties which would have ensued should the Home Office have sought to prosecute collaborators. It was a conservative view of events which strove to maintain the position of the two Bailiffs and avoid destabilising the Islands.

Conversely, MI5 approached their investigations in a partisan and radical manner, unaware victory in Europe had seriously curtailed their influence.⁶⁶ Their reports fuelled much of the controversy when their contents were reproduced *verbatim* in British newspapers in the 1990s. The contents of the Security Service reports by Captain Denning and his superior, Major J. R. Stopford, are startling in their divergence from the Home Office. Sanders identified that the escapee debriefings had caught their eye during the war, and the men sent in to the Islands believed that 'many Islanders – including many of their leading men – were collaborators.'⁶⁷ They seemed intent on conducting a top-down purge.⁶⁸ Denning, who led MI5's investigation, arrived with pre-existing conclusions and duly 'found' what he expected, reporting on 17 August 1945 that 'it seems beyond doubt that many ... went out of their way to be friendly, co-operative and helpful to the Germans, and there is no excuse for their behaviour.'⁶⁹ The report drew attention to profiteers, informers, women locally referred to as 'jerrybags' and minor officials who 'appear[ed] to have been very favourably disposed towards the Germans.'⁷⁰ Pursuing members of the Islands' governments, Denning declared that Carey had been 'friendly and co-operative' towards the Germans.⁷¹ He criticised the Dame of Sark, Sybil Hathaway, concluding that 'had Great Britain been defeated people such as Mrs Hathaway and ... [Carey] ... would have qualified

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 226-237.

⁶⁵ TNA, HO 45/22399 (Folio 2), 'Theobald Matthews (Dir. of Public Prosecutions) Report', 9 July 1945, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁶ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 250.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁶⁹ TNA, HO 45/22399 (Folio 7) 'Copy of Captain J. R. Denning's Report on the Channel Islands', August 1945, p. 1. Documents collated by Denning during his investigations in the Islands are held by the IWM. IWM, Docs. 13409 'Private Papers of Captain J. R. Denning', 1943-1945.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

for the title of Quisling.⁷² His findings were endorsed by Stopford, whose own report drew heavily from his junior officer's views.⁷³

Theodore Pantcheff, a young intelligence captain in 1945, was also involved in the investigations, examining possible war crimes in Alderney.⁷⁴ In the late 1980s, he reflected upon why the investigations had not gone further: smears on reputations could not be escaped from within a small Island – one could not move to a different parish and leave stigma behind – and it would have been easy to permanently splinter the fragile societies.⁷⁵ The British government's position was ultimately sensible in this regard. However, Sanders commented, both sides were not entirely incorrect in their assessment of events in the Islands.⁷⁶ The establishment view won out, and the question of Island collaboration was quietly dropped. Their position on this was consistent for many years: correspondence between British officials about which files Cruickshank could access for his official history indicated a desire to avoid controversy. The escapee reports were eyed with trepidation; one official noted 'the way in which the intelligence material was gathered makes no clear distinction between fact and rumour.' The files based on escapee reports were ultimately withheld.⁷⁷

The divided Island societies were never offered the initial catharsis of a post-war inquiry.⁷⁸ Rousso argued the first phase of European occupation memory revolved around pushing ahead with national reconstruction and honouring the heroes and victims of Occupation, which involved legal proceedings against collaborators.⁷⁹ The result in the Islands was that subsequent understanding suffered. Given that war crimes and collaboration trials in continental Europe were partly intended to inform, the public in the Islands and in Britain were shorn from information which would have allowed greater understanding of the Occupation. Moreover, the shortage of files available before 1992 and the loss of what few enquiries were made into Islanders suspected of collaboration resulted in a documentary vacuum filled by speculation and rumour. Sanders highlighted this as being 'at the basis of

⁷² Ibid., p. 3.

⁷³ TNA, KV 4/78 'The I(b) Reports on the Channel Islands', Major J. R. Stopford, 8 August 1945.

⁷⁴ See T.H.X Pantcheff, *Alderney: Fortress Island* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1981), preface.

⁷⁵ IWM, London, Docs 5750a Misc. 189/1 'Transcript of interview with Theodore Pantcheff', n.d.

⁷⁶ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 250.

⁷⁷ TNA, CAB 103/605, 'Ekins-Daukes to Carrington re. Intelligence Service Files', 30 March 1971.

⁷⁸ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 253.

⁷⁹ Henri Rousso, 'History of Memory, Policies of the Past: What For?', in *Conflicted Memories: Europeanising Contemporary Histories*, ed. by Konrad Jarasch, Thomas Lindenberger and Annelie Ramsbrock (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp. 29-31. Also see Pieter Lagrou, 'Victims of Genocide and National Memory: Belgium, France and the Netherlands 1945-1965', *Past and Present*, 154 (1997), pp. 181-222.

the chequered views that ... make the historiography of this occupation a considerably more trying affair than ... many others.’⁸⁰

As tempers cooled, the subject of the Occupation became far less controversial. The Churchillian paradigm resulted in a sanitised memory which dictated public and popular portrayals of the Occupation in the Islands into the 1990s. The Islands followed a Europe-wide pattern identified by Dirk Schumann and Richard Bessel, who argued that the end of the war was marked by ‘silence and a rush to (re)establish “normality.”’⁸¹ Frank Stroobant, a Guernsey deportee, recalled ‘to the great majority ... the events of the past were dead and buried ... Why waste time chasing the shadows of the past?’⁸² The first few decades after Liberation were a period of ‘collective amnesia’ in the Islands of the controversial parts of the Occupation; commemoration centred around uncontroversial groups such as the Islands’ war dead (from the armed forces), liberating soldiers and those killed in the bombing raids of 28 June 1940.⁸³ It was a conscious decision by some to fall silent. Frank Falla was a key member of the Guernsey Underground News Service (GUNS), a clandestine organisation which disseminated illegal BBC news bulletins. Falla and his co-resisters were denounced in 1944, three of whom died. Falla spent two years in prisons in France and Germany and remarked in the foreword to his 1967 memoir that he had been asked why he had not told his story. ‘It has been said that I should have written this book twenty-one years ago. I disagree. For now that my experiences have ... come of age, I can write more dispassionately. The bitterness has almost gone, and I am glad to be alive.’⁸⁴

This silence was, Knowles-Smith argued, ‘a direct result of the intensity of their suffering.’⁸⁵ However, the memory of the Occupation was kept alive by those who had been children during the Occupation or born shortly after, whose early collecting of German militaria and years spent playing in abandoned bunkers resulted in the formation of the CIOS in 1961.⁸⁶ The key person behind this in Guernsey was Richard Heaume whose personal collection was the foundation for the Guernsey Occupation museum.⁸⁷ Furthermore, Carel Toms noted in 1967 that ‘now ... the passion and the debate has largely evaporated ... as documents and photographs have come to light, military historians have

⁸⁰ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 253.

⁸¹ Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann ‘Introduction’, in *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. by Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), p. 1.

⁸² Frank Stroobant, *One Man’s War* (4th Ed.) (Guernsey: Burbridge, 1984), p. 155.

⁸³ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 213; Gilly Carr, ‘The Uninvited Guests Who Outstayed Their Welcome: The Ghosts of War in the Channel Islands’, in *Modern Conflict and the Senses*, ed. by Nicholas Saunders and Paul Cornish (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 283.

⁸⁴ Frank Falla, *The Silent War* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1967), p. 9.

⁸⁵ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. xv.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

had a field day.’⁸⁸ Generally benign studies such as Winston Ramsey’s 1981 pictorial history focused upon the fortifications and minor military events which occurred.⁸⁹ Knowles-Smith identified that this was ‘a ... less troubled period’, characterised by a relaxed approach with ‘the study of military installations ... tak[ing] precedence over ... controversial subjects.’⁹⁰

This sanitised narrative orientated towards ‘concrete and bullets’ became entrenched. German bunkers transitioned from forgotten ‘blots on the landscape’ and dark reminders of the Islands’ Occupation past to sources of interest, restored and renovated by members of the CIOS in both Jersey and Guernsey for the tourist industry.⁹¹ Yet the stories of the foreign labourers who built them under appalling conditions were not part of the narratives of these sites, which tended towards the two tenets of popular Occupation memory in the Islands: the uniforms, weaponry and medals of the enemy and the ingenuity of Islanders in relation to food shortages.⁹² Owing to the repressive nature of the Churchillian paradigm, significant elements of the German Occupation were rendered silent. Carr stated ‘memorials and museum exhibitions were not to feature [such] ... experiences until ... the fiftieth anniversary of Liberation.’⁹³ Drawing on the work of Pierre Nora and Jay Winter in relation to the concept of *Lieux de Mémoire*,⁹⁴ Carr defined Jersey and Guernsey’s ‘sites of memory’ as:

‘Sites of pride in endurance’ ... The German bunkers, ... the mannequins in [German] uniform, just like the museum displays which show off patched and recycled items of ‘make-do-and-mend’ ... are all making the same statement: ‘Look at what we endured! Look at what we survived!’⁹⁵

Carr identified both ‘in’ and ‘out’ groups within the Islands’ war narratives, with the focus being on indigenous Islanders and British residents. OT labourers, Jews and those who did not survive Nazi imprisonment were omitted.⁹⁶ During the stasis period, victim groups did not have their experiences validated by official commemorations or public discourse.

Cruikshank’s official history, funded by the governments of Guernsey, Jersey and Sark, buttressed this collective understanding. With regards the Island administrations, he

⁸⁸ Carel Toms, *Hitler’s Fortress Islands* (Guernsey: Burbridge, 1967), p. 11.

⁸⁹ Winston Ramsey, *The War in the Channel Islands: Then and Now* (London: Battle of Britain Prints, 1981).

⁹⁰ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. xvi.

⁹¹ Carr, ‘Occupation Heritage’, p. 92.

⁹² Gilly Carr, ‘Shining a Light on Dark Tourism: German Bunkers in the British Channel Islands’, *Public Archaeology*, 9:2 (2010), p. 71.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁹⁴ Pierre Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’, *Representations*, 26 (1989), pp. 7-24; Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁹⁵ Carr, ‘Occupation Heritage’, p. 92.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

concluded that ‘it would be very difficult to voice any criticism of their conduct of affairs.’⁹⁷ Cruickshank exhibited a preoccupation with the military history of the Occupation, including detailed sections on British operations that never left the drawing board.⁹⁸ Bunting was critical of this and drew attention to his scant mentioning of OT labourers by contrast.⁹⁹ He briefly touched upon resistance, yet viewed it only through the outmoded prism of what it could or could not have contributed to Allied victory.¹⁰⁰ He argued that ‘the Islands cannot be criticised for not starting a resistance movement. They are rather to be congratulated on their good sense.’¹⁰¹ Cruickshank emphasised that resistance had not been necessary and that those who had resisted had been foolish in doing so owing to the possibility of mass reprisals, a very ‘establishment’ view of the issue. It appeared, at that time at least, that a ‘relatively honourable wartime record ... seemed to be assured.’¹⁰²

Occupation memory in smaller Islands such as Sark are often overlooked and context is required here. Sark was also able to align with British war memory. Barbara Stoney argued Sybil Hathaway, the Island’s de facto Seigneur, had always demonstrated a ‘penchant for making full use of any opportunity to publicise both herself and her island.’¹⁰³ Immediately after liberation, Hathaway took the opportunity to promote her Island’s experience of the war and to set out her position. On 14 May 1945 the *News Chronicle* published an article titled ‘Dame of Sark ruled her Island’s Nazi Garrison’, quoting Hathaway as saying ‘I fought them all the way and they left me my jurisdiction.’¹⁰⁴ Through setting out her side of the story, Hathaway positioned herself as having stood up to the enemy. This was cemented through her 1961 memoir, where she framed herself in almost Churchillian terms and covered off any accusations of collaboration by highlighting Sark’s feudal traditions.¹⁰⁵ As these dictated, visitors were received by the Dame, and German officers often had this hospitality extended. Hathaway articulated her dealings with the Germans in terms of polite discourse between members of high society and emphasised how she used this to glean information and influence.¹⁰⁶ Hathaway gave the impression that she had behaved as any well-bred English woman would have done: with aloof politeness whilst never leaving the enemy under any illusion as to where her loyalties lay. Local memories of the period centred on similar areas to Guernsey and Jersey, such as food shortages and

⁹⁷ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, pp. 357-358.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-104 and pp. 247-278.

⁹⁹ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 321.

¹⁰⁰ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 4. Also see chapter six.

¹⁰¹ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, p. 160.

¹⁰² Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. xiv.

¹⁰³ Barbara Stoney, *Sybil: Dame of Sark* (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1978), p. 105.

¹⁰⁴ No author, ‘Dame of Sark ruled her Island’s Nazi Garrison’, *News Chronicle*, 14 May 1945.

¹⁰⁵ Sybil Hathaway, *Dame of Sark: An Autobiography* (London: Heinemann, 1961), pp. 131-135.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

improvisation, and also upon exciting military events, such as Commando raids in 1942 and 1943 or the landing of an Avro Lancaster on the Island on 23 November 1942. Sark's Occupation Museum, run by Danny Wakely, focuses on the weapons and uniforms of the Germans. Aside from sixty-six deportees and a handful of people arrested and imprisoned, Sark had few victim groups marginalised by a victorious war memory, providing less pressure for changes. Memory in Sark has remained the most consistent out of all the Islands studied.

Whilst the stasis period was characterised by stability, there were tremors identified by Carr, which hinted at the disenfranchisement of certain groups from the dominant occupation narrative. In 1964 the British and West German governments agreed upon a one-million-pound compensation agreement which British victims of Nazi persecution could claim. Falla began work as an unofficial representative on behalf of Islanders who had suffered in prisons and camps, assisting them with their claims.¹⁰⁷ Falla became a focal point for the counter-memory of political prisoners.¹⁰⁸ However, contemporary feelings remained and Falla faced opposition from some in Guernsey who sided with the establishment interpretation of resistance. One wrote into the local newspaper to question why 'an offender, involving the safety ... of others, [should] expect compensation after he or she has suffered imprisonment brought entirely by his or her actions?'¹⁰⁹ By the early 1990s representatives of political prisoners were becoming increasingly vocal as to their treatment during and after the war, and their silencing in official memory.¹¹⁰ As the Islands approached the fiftieth anniversary of Liberation, historiography of Britain and the Second World War critical of the received interpretation of events had become established. From civilian responses to aerial bombardment being less stoic than the 'myth of the Blitz' suggested to spiralling crime rates during the Blitz when the country had allegedly 'pulled together', Britain's war memory was being reassessed.¹¹¹ Furthermore, the increase in Holocaust consciousness during the 1980s and 1990s threatened the stability of memory in the Islands. With the Islands being the only British territory that implemented anti-Semitic legislation during the war, it was inevitable that they would come under scrutiny.¹¹² With so many silences, the focus of the revisionists was inevitably to turn in their direction.

¹⁰⁷ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 324.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 326-327.

¹¹¹ Key revisionist works from this period include Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Pimlico, 1991); Clive Ponting, *1940: Myth and Reality* (London: Sphere Books, 1990); and Harold Smith, *Britain in the Second World War: A Social History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

¹¹² Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', p. 30.

Rupture: Guernsey Responses to Declassified Files and *The Model Occupation*

The Churchillian paradigm had started to be questioned by the early 1990s, with two examples being Solomon Steckoll's conspiracies of a Whitehall cover up in 1982 and Peter King's prescient study in 1991 that devoted three chapters to collaboration.¹¹³ Both hinted at the subject's potential for sensationalisation and scandal. However, the early declassification of official British files relating to the Occupation in December 1992 (originally closed until 2045), followed by the release of files in Island archives in January 1993, opened a Pandora's box. On 2 December 1992, 'revelatory' articles began to appear in British newspapers, drawn from twenty-six files created during investigations in the Islands. Issues of collaboration, black-marketeering, resistance and passivity in the Islands were laid bare in a manner which shocked and angered Islanders. If we extend Carr's metaphor of public Occupation memories being akin to a 'scar',¹¹⁴ these early allegations in the British press represented the first layer of near healed skin being disturbed. The first phase of rupture engendered a 'crisis of memory', defined by Susan Suleiman as 'a moment of choice, and sometimes predicament or conflict, about remembrance of the past.'¹¹⁵ Islanders were forced to confront that which they had long since buried, both publicly and privately, and question existing narratives. This phase had two distinct outcomes. Firstly, public memory was forced to alter. The political pressure generated by increased attention on political prisoners, Jews and labourers, and the Island authorities' attitudes towards these 'out' groups prompted changes to public commemoration. Secondly, this period generated a dichotomy of 'accusation' and 'defence', which lasted well into the 2010s, with much subsequent literature criticising the Islands or coming into being to 'defend' the Islands' wartime records.¹¹⁶ This section is illustrative for this thesis, demonstrating how Islanders have at times been uncomfortable discussing aspects of the Occupation, and find external criticism highly offensive. The response to Bunting in Guernsey was indicative of a widespread sense of discomposure at the time, as the simplifications of the Churchillian myth were exposed.

The result was a generalised reappraisal of their Occupation past, creating a more nuanced public memory. In her comparison of Channel Islands' Occupation memory with the framework of war memory in France laid down by Rousso, Carr argued that this period matched up with their earlier period of revelation and re-evaluation.¹¹⁷ The 1990s bore similarities to the phase between 1971 and 1974 in France dubbed by Rousso as 'the broken

¹¹³ Solomon Steckoll, *The Alderney Death Camp* (London: Harper Collins, 1982). Peter King, *The Channel Islands War, 1940-1945* (London: Robert Hale, 1991).

¹¹⁴ Carr, 'The Slowly Healing Scars of Occupation', *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 3:2 (2010), p. 250.

¹¹⁵ Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Crises of Memory and the Second World War* (London: Harvard University Press, 2006), p.1.

¹¹⁶ Evans, 'Introduction' in Carey, *Guernsey Under Occupation*, ed. Evans, p. xx.

¹¹⁷ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 288.

mirror.’¹¹⁸ Films such as *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1968) and literature which began to reappraise the role of Vichy and collaborationism in opposition to the Gaullist myth resulted in ‘fresh memories, new questions [and] a rekindled fascination with the past.’¹¹⁹ The period between 1992 and the early 2000s shattered many of the founding myths of the Occupation, as questions raised about collaboration, the numbers of Island women who slept with the Germans and the role of the Island administrations in implementing anti-Semitic legislation stemmed from these initial ‘revelations’. This section examines the case study of Guernsey in particular. Guernsey bore the most serious allegations, notably in relation to the Bailiff and Chief of Police’s role in the arrest and deportation of three Jewish women who later died in Auschwitz. Guernsey’s wartime record received an incisive challenge, prompting a fierce reaction.

The more accusatory articles drew heavily from the partisan conclusions of MI5. The stories in December 1992 appeared in print the day after the files were released, with little time for nuance or critical analysis. It mattered not that the ‘revelatory’ evidence resulted in coverage which broadly matched that of the British press in 1945. The political climate of early 1990s Britain, defined by debates around sovereignty and future relations with Europe, fuelled the coverage. With British identity and uniqueness was in question, the Channel Islands seemed the perfect test case for how the British would have behaved had they been occupied by Nazi Germany, a long seductive question for the British.¹²⁰ Criticism of Islanders came from both the right and left wings of the political spectrum. Those on the right sought to cast Islanders as having been ‘un-British’ and failing to meet the standards laid down by Churchill. Left-leaning commentators pointed to the Islands as proof that Britain would have been no different to the rest of Europe, seeking to prick ideas of innate British superiority stemming from the Second World War, which had been fuelled by Margaret Thatcher’s government during the Falklands War (1982).¹²¹

The Daily Mail was a prominent part of the right-wing critique, and on 2 December 1992 emblazoned their coverage with the headline ‘Sleeping with the Enemy’. A subsidiary headline drawing attention to the ‘shame of 435 women who had the Nazi’s babies.’¹²² Tony

¹¹⁸ Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, p. 98.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹²⁰ The popularity of the BBC’s recent adaptation of Len Deighton’s novel *SS-GB* (1978) is indicative of the strong pull on the public imagination of what might have happened had Britain fallen in 1940. See *SS-GB*, dir. Phillip Kadelbach, BBC, 2017 and, for the original source material, Len Deighton, *SS-GB* (London: Harper Collins, 1978). Also see Norman Longmate’s exploration of this question, which combined a study of intended German plans for an occupation of Britain alongside the real-world example of the Islands. Norman Longmate, *If Britain Had Fallen: The Real Nazi Occupation Plans* (London: BBC, 1972).

¹²¹ This phenomenon was reflected upon in Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 2.

¹²² Tony Gallagher, ‘Sleeping with the Enemy’, *The Daily Mail*, 2 December 1992, p. 9.

Gallagher's article drew heavily on the MI5 investigations, quoting charges about both horizontal and more general collaboration.¹²³ *The Guardian's* coverage was penned by Madeleine Bunting. The left-wing critique centred around targeting British self-congratulation and moral pre-eminence derived from the memory of their victorious role in the Second World War. Indeed, this was the central thrust of *The Model Occupation*. Bunting's article was prominently placed on the third page of the paper. The piece was titled 'Files expose Island war collaborators', and Bunting proclaimed 'the first official evidence of allegations repeatedly made by Islanders that the authorities co-operated too closely with the Germans.'¹²⁴ She pointed to a memorandum sent to Churchill which stated that 'it cannot be denied that ... numbers of men and women voluntarily engaged in German work, some of it military in character.'¹²⁵

The release of British files on the Occupation applied pressure on the Islands to reciprocate, which they did on 2 January 1993. By then, British newspapers were aware of the possibility of more scandalous evidence and flocked to the Islands.¹²⁶ Much attention was given to documents which evidenced Carey and the Guernsey Police's role in the identification and arrest of three Jewish refugees from Nazism in the Island, Auguste Spitz, Therese Steiner and Marianne Grunfeld, all of whom were murdered at Auschwitz following their deportation. Bunting penned a forthright article in *The Guardian* titled 'Islanders aided Nazis in hunting down Jews'. She asserted that 'collaboration ... was far more widespread than had been believed', and the 'Island's police force, under Inspector William Sculpher, the Bailiff of Guernsey ... and two presidents of the ... Controlling Committee ... complied promptly with German requests for a register of Jewish residents to be drawn up.'¹²⁷ These individuals, through the release of the files, were implicated in the Holocaust, and Bunting had further evidence to support her overall conclusion that the British would have behaved no differently from their continental neighbours. The *Daily Mail* supported these assertions with the damning headline: 'Britons gave Nazis list of Jews who were fated to die.' The paper drew attention to the knighthood received by Carey in 1945 for his conduct during the Occupation, thereby insinuating a British cover up.¹²⁸ Questions of collaboration and complicity were back in the open, and required a response.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Madeleine Bunting, 'Files Expose Wartime Collaborators', *The Guardian*, 2 December 1992, p. 3.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ No Author, 'Opening the Archives Brings Rush of Interest', *Guernsey Evening Press and Star* (GEP), 6 January 1993, p. 8.

¹²⁷ Madeleine Bunting, 'Islanders Aided Nazis in Hunting Down Jews', *The Guardian*, 6 January 1993, p. 18.

¹²⁸ No Author, 'Britons Gave Nazis List of Jews Who Were Fated to Die', *Daily Mail*, 6 January 1993, p. 8.

This wave of allegations realistically said little new; Angus Calder's *The People's War* (1969) had, twenty-three years earlier, mentioned the fate of political prisoners, Jews, questions of administrative complicity and events on Alderney.¹²⁹ Many of the 'revelations' had also been reported by British newspapers in 1945. Regardless, Islanders quickly went on the defensive. *The Daily Telegraph* reported that Guernsey 'closed ranks against collaboration allegations.'¹³⁰ Leading Guernsey's defence was the then Bailiff Graham Dorey, who chided journalists for 'distort[ing] the whole character of life and the civil administration of Guernsey during the German Occupation' with reports of 'wholesale collaboration, black marketeering and other offences.'¹³¹ Others joined the defence of their wartime record through the letters page of *The Guernsey Evening Press* (GEP). Aspersions were cast on the character of the journalists, with one Islander describing them as 'purveyors of scandal publish[ing] their poison' and 'vultures ... scavenging for ... carrion from the Occupation.'¹³² It is striking that the letter was titled 'We Did Our Bit'. This borrowed from the language of Britain at war, indicating that the writer saw their experiences in British terms, explaining their anger at the charge that Islanders had failed to match up to British standards of wartime conduct.

One regular letter writer, M. De. P. Le Lacheur, was vocal whenever Guernsey's wartime record was questioned during the 1990s. She deemed the press coverage 'quite disgraceful' and defended the 'very brave' officials of the Controlling Committee.¹³³ She contemplated 'what ... would have done in similar circumstances', defensively implying that the experience of the Occupation was beyond the comprehension of those who had not experienced it.¹³⁴ In 1993 Islanders were already responding to the one-sided material appearing in the British press with equally one-sided responses and a refusal to engage with the new information; the claim that those who had not experienced the Occupation could never write accurately about the period became a regularly deployed trump card to denigrate the unwanted views of 'outsiders'. This was a regularly implemented defence against *The Model Occupation*, published on 26 January 1995.

Bunting produced the most controversial study of the Occupation. The response to her arguments and conclusions reached an intensity which the piecemeal allegations in the British press never received. *The Model Occupation* represented the firmest attempt to

¹²⁹ Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945* (Granada Edition), (St Albans: Granada Publishing, 1971), pp. 474-477.

¹³⁰ David Millward, 'Island Closes Ranks Against Collaboration Accusations', *The Daily Telegraph*, 7 January 1993, p. 2.

¹³¹ No Author, "'Reports Distort Island Record' Says Bailiff", *GEP*, 6 January 1993, p.1

¹³² No Author, 'We Did Our Bit', *GEP*, 8 January 1993, p. 4.

¹³³ M. De. P. Le Lacheur, 'Disgraceful', *GEP*, 12 January 1993, p. 4.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

dismantle the ‘sanitised collective memory’ as she perceived it in the Islands, and this attack on the Islands’ collective wartime record resulted in widespread condemnation of the book. Prominent Islanders who had assisted her research were quick to object. In Jersey, CIOS members Michael Ginns, Joe Mière and Bob Le Sueur issued a firm public rebuke. They stated that:

we did not expect unpalatable truths about the Occupation to be suppressed ... But ... if the negative aspects were to be recorded, we had the right to expect the positive ones would be also ... Misrepresentation on such a scale is not merely immoral, it is also contemptible.¹³⁵

Real anger was also felt in Guernsey: Le Lacheur questioned ‘how anybody can have the crass impertinence ... attempt to malign thousands of brave Islanders ... is beyond my comprehension ... [T]he most useful thing that could happen to all those [copies of *The Model Occupation*] would be for them to be set aside in order to start the bonfire on 5 November.’¹³⁶ By describing her as impertinent, Le Lacheur impugned Bunting’s character. Her call for an organised book burning was curious; at a time when Islanders were being accused of collaboration, to call for an action which has, since the Second World War, become firmly linked with National Socialism, was perhaps unwise. The extract suggests that the damage inflicted to the long-held narrative of Occupation in the Islands provoked illogical responses - indeed, many writers to the *GEP* confessed that they had not read the book. This was indicative of a broad sense of subjective disequilibrium.

Bunting’s sensationalist approach possessed in Sanders’ assessment both ‘methodological and epistemological shortcomings.’¹³⁷ However, Bunting’s target was not the Islanders; instead, her focus mirrored that exhibited in her newspaper articles. Building her analysis around the ‘What if Hitler had invaded Britain’¹³⁸ counterfactual question, Bunting strove to contradict notions of British moral pre-eminence stemming from the war. She argued that the ‘Occupation ... throws into question Britain’s most basic assumption about her own role in the war ... Islanders compromised, collaborated and fraternised just as people did throughout occupied Europe.’¹³⁹ Bunting pointed to collaboration, profiteering and fraternisation, foregrounding these in her analysis. She excoriated the Island administrations for failing to serve as the buffer they had alleged to have been by pointing to the deportations of Islanders and Jews.¹⁴⁰ Whilst acknowledging the difficulties facing would-be resisters and detailing instances of non-cooperation and defiance, Bunting’s

¹³⁵ Quoted in Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. xviii.

¹³⁶ M. de P. Le Lacheur, ‘Such Arrant Nonsense!’, *GEP*, 13 February 1995, p. 4.

¹³⁷ Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, in *Islands and Britishness*, ed. by Matthews and Travers, p. 31.

¹³⁸ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 3.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

chapter title – ‘Resistance? What Resistance?’ – mobilised an Albert Speer quote in relation to the ineffectiveness of French resistance, and indicated the belittling framing of much of the book.¹⁴¹ She ended on the damning conclusion that ‘the Channel Islanders’ own behaviour was a contributing factor to the relatively peaceful occupation. The majority of the Islanders were more quiescent than other Europeans.’¹⁴² Sanders argued ‘the Islanders simply stood in as proxies for Britons, who, [Bunting] claimed, would have acted no differently under Nazi Occupation than other Europeans.’¹⁴³ During a BBC Radio Guernsey interview in December 1994 Bunting was keen to stress that she wanted the book to reach a large British audience, desiring ‘that British people ... could begin to understand what the whole thing has been about ... the big problem here is that the British have never really understood what happened in the Islands during the war.’¹⁴⁴ However, Islanders were caught in the crossfire of her assault on jingoistic understandings of Britain’s war.

This line of enquiry was not new. A.J.P. Taylor pointed in 1965 to the Islands as evidence that Britons may not have responded as well as they imaged to Nazi Occupation: ‘maybe England would have been an exception, but the example of the Channel Islands is not encouraging ... It was perhaps fortunate that British patriotism was not put to the supreme test.’¹⁴⁵ Calder posed similar questions in 1969, arguing that ‘there were ... those who resisted, and those who collaborated, and one guesses that the population of Great Britain would have divided in much the same proportions.’¹⁴⁶ Yet few comments in this direction generated as much publicity as *The Model Occupation*, and the distortion of the facts by Bunting to fit her sensationalised conclusions was a significant shortcoming. Britain and the Islands were not one and the same socially, administratively or culturally, and her efforts to use the Occupation as a litmus test for whether Britons would have collaborated placed an impossibly large epistemological load onto the case study. It mattered not whether Bunting’s target was British self-congratulation or the Islands: as Knowles-Smith argued, Islanders felt their ‘honour and integrity were being seriously called into question.’¹⁴⁷

The letters printed in the *GEP* offer an interpretively rich sample of local attitudes towards Bunting’s work. The writers revealed anger and a desire to set the record straight from the vantage point of those who had lived through the Occupation. There are some issues with these sources. Exact ages and social class were, in most cases, unapparent. At

¹⁴¹ It was striking that Paul Sanders chose to title his chapter on the problems of assessing collaboration in the Islands as ‘Collaboration? What Collaboration?’, directly parodying Bunting’s framing of the resistance question. Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 57.

¹⁴² Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 330.

¹⁴³ Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, p. 31.

¹⁴⁴ GIA, SA 02-37 ‘BBC Radio Guernsey Interview and Phone in with Madeleine Bunting,’ 1994.

¹⁴⁵ A.J.P. Taylor, *English History, 1914-1945*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 493.

¹⁴⁶ Calder, *The People’s War*, p. 476.

¹⁴⁷ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. xvii.

times, gender and names were not fully evident from the letters, with some Islanders remaining anonymous, or only identifying by initials or their husband's title. Furthermore, they can be assumed to represent the more militantly vocal proportion of Islanders. Those whose attitude towards *The Model Occupation* was apathetic may have been unlikely to write in, whereas those who were sympathetic towards the book may have been cowed by the critics' vehemence. Yet they offer a substantial sample of local opinion in 1995 and are indicative of a strong and negative response to *The Model Occupation*, revealing of how the book unsettled Islanders. The people quoted lived through the war and had an emotional stake in the way the Occupation was to be remembered.

Notable themes came through indicating the crisis of memory which *The Model Occupation* engendered: reliance on the tropes and ideals of the Churchillian paradigm and responses of a defensive manner. The first underlines the extent to which the Churchillian paradigm had become entrenched in the Islands through the way some clung to such tropes in framing their replies. Miriam Mahy, born in 1914 and a regular writer to the *GEP* whenever criticism of Islanders appeared, framed her retort around ideals of stoicism: '[*The Model Occupation*] means denigrating the inhabitants of a small Island, who for five long years lived under the strain of enemy occupation and whose loyalty to King and Country never wavered.'¹⁴⁸ Stoicism was highlighted by Mahy's use of the term 'never wavered.' This was unsurprising on Mahy's part: her own memoir mobilised these tropes, emphasising her family's stoic endurance of the Occupation.¹⁴⁹

Mrs R. Mauger echoed this, arguing that: 'The whole of Europe was ... conquered but the Channel Islands were the only British territory that would ever be occupied ... but never conquered. Simply by being occupied we could not have done more towards winning the war.'¹⁵⁰ Notions of unwavering resolve were foregrounded by Mauger's statement that the Islands were 'never conquered.' By implicitly arguing that the Islands had tied down an entire German infantry division during the war and cost Nazi Germany a vast amount of resources to fortify them, Mauger suggested that Islanders too had done their bit. Although there was a kernel of truth in this, German strategic errors in relation to the Islands were well beyond the control of Islanders.¹⁵¹ Others were outraged by Bunting's implied argument that Churchill had been ashamed of the Islands for not meeting expected standards of British

¹⁴⁸ Miriam Mahy, 'Dirty Washing in Public', *GEP*, 2 February 1995, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Miriam Mahy, *There is an Occupation* (Guernsey: Guernsey Press Co., 1992). See chapters sixteen and seventeen. The title of the memoir implies a stoical and understated acceptance of the situation.

¹⁵⁰ Mrs Ronald Mauger, 'Resistance Would Mean Dire Punishment', *GEP*, 7 February 1995, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ Arguably, these strategic errors were not even within the control of the Wehrmacht High Command, with Field Marshall Erwin Rommel lamenting Hitler's obsession with the Islands and desperately complaining about the waste of much needed resources for the entire Atlantic wall within the strategically irrelevant Islands. George Forty, *Channel Islands At War: A German Perspective* (Shepperton: Ian Allan, 1999), p. 13.

behaviour. Le Lacheur summarised the prevailing consensus on this, arguing that ‘to try and make us believe that Winston Churchill refused to come to the Islands because “he was ashamed of us because we didn’t fight on the beaches etc.” is the most arrant nonsense I have ever heard.’¹⁵² The effect of Churchill’s oratory on Liberation Day in 1945 had a marked effect in the Islands. Indeed, the words from his 8 May 1945 speech are carved into Guernsey’s Liberation Day monument, and some letter writers in 1994 expressed a desire for a ‘place de Churchill’ to serve as a liberation memorial.¹⁵³ Suggestions that Churchill disapproved of Islanders’ conduct touched a nerve.

Others responded defensively, deploying the bemused statement ‘what could we have done?’ There was truth to this: Islanders did not have the means to mount armed resistance or sabotage campaign and the geography of the Islands rendered this a suicidal prospect.¹⁵⁴ Some took issue with their understanding of Bunting’s commentary on resistance. Len Le Page demanded to know ‘what sort of opposition did she want from us? We, who had no arms against pistols, rifles and sub-machine guns. What did she want us to do? Throw tomatoes and terrorise them that way?’¹⁵⁵ Mauger could barely contain her disbelief at such accusations in exclaiming ‘these small Islands ... should have fought the Germans, and where would the partisans go? Into the bushes of Torteval?’¹⁵⁶ A further rebuttal to Bunting came through questioning her ability to understand the reality of the Occupation because she had not experienced it.¹⁵⁷ The underlying theme was evidenced by a statement made by S.C. Le Page on 21 February 1995, who claimed that ‘the people best qualified to give a true account of the German Occupation are those who experienced it.’¹⁵⁸ G. F. B. de Garis echoed Le Page’s sentiments, stating that ‘no one is able to give a full account of living in these Islands under these conditions ... unless you were living here.’¹⁵⁹ The idea that only Guernsey residents who had endured the war could comment on it was furthered by Bill Gillingham, a prominent member of the ‘Occupation generation’, who made his feelings abundantly clear: ‘Apart from having lived in Guernsey through the Occupation I have also read true accounts of this period written by Guernsey-born people ... I am not prepared to part with £20 to read a story by someone who was probably not even

¹⁵² Le Lacheur, ‘Such Arrant Nonsense!’, *GEP*.

¹⁵³ Daphne Nicolle, ‘Le Place de Churchill’, *GEP*, 22 April 1994.

¹⁵⁴ See chapter six.

¹⁵⁵ Len Le Page, ‘A Fortune Out of Our Misfortune?’, *GEP*, 2 February 1995, p. 4.

¹⁵⁶ Mauger, ‘Resistance Would Mean Dire Punishment’, *GEP*.

¹⁵⁷ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁸ S. C. Le Page, ‘Author Has Much to Learn’, *GEP*, 21 February 1995, p. 4.

¹⁵⁹ G.F.B. de Garis, ‘Hard Times Under the Jackboot’, *GEP*, 13 February 1995, p. 4.

born at this period.¹⁶⁰ This oft-employed defensive trope was illogical, stemming from a desire to close down external criticism and keep the history of the Occupation in local hands.

Islanders have not always had a general problem with outsiders researching their wartime history. Few Islanders complained that Cruickshank was an outsider in 1975. Moreover, when Knowles-Smith published her corrective to Bunting in 2007, *The Guernsey Press* advertised the book positively under the headline ‘Islanders Cleared of Collaboration’, painting Knowles-Smith as the saviour of the Islands’ wartime record.¹⁶¹ There was no chorus of dissenting voices in *The Guernsey Press* accusing Knowles-Smith of being unable to tell the truth of something she had not experienced. The inconsistency of this defence and the shaky epistemological space in which it operated provided further evidence that Islanders were deeply unsettled by the crisis of memory. This, coupled with the personal attacks on the author and a refusal to engage with or even read what she had to say, suggests a period of ‘subjective discomposure’ for many; the chief cognitive lens through which Islanders had traditionally viewed their experiences was destabilised, and Islanders were forced to face up to the reality that the Occupation had proven far more tangled and complex. However, this was not an inherently negative development, for Bunting’s misguided attempt to damage British notions of exceptionalism created space for more objective and nuanced studies of the Occupation.

Criticism continued for several years, and when the last tranche of files was declassified on 19 November 1996, fresh allegations appeared in British newspapers. *The Independent* focused on lists of collaborators, events on Alderney, profiteering and illegitimate children under the stark headline ‘Channel Island people profited from the Nazis.’¹⁶² Julia Pascal, who had written a play on the life of Theresa Steiner, *Theresa* (1995), which highlighted the role of Guernsey’s Controlling Committee in her deportation, wrote with anger following the release of the files. Pascal felt that Carey had been ‘Britain’s Pétain’ and had written ‘obsequiously to the *Feldkommandantur* willingly detailing the number of Jewish residents on the Island.’¹⁶³ She called for Carey to have his Knighthood removed, commenting that ‘at least the French had the decency to try Marshal Pétain.’¹⁶⁴ The decision taken by Guernsey not to allow permission for *Theresa* to be performed there

¹⁶⁰ Bill Gillingham, ‘Not Many Obeyed Orders All the time’, *GEP*, 6 February 1995, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ Chris Morvan, ‘Islanders Cleared of Collaboration’, *GEP*, 10 February 2007, p.1.

¹⁶² John Crossland, ‘Channel Island people profited from the Nazis’, *The Independent*, 20 November 1996, p. 10.

¹⁶³ Julia Pascal, ‘Islands of Shame: Julia Pascal calls for wartime Channel Island leaders who collaborated with the Nazis to be posthumously denounced as traitors and stripped of their titles’, *The Guardian*, 22 November 1996, p. 17.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

on the grounds it was ‘inappropriate’¹⁶⁵ partially explained her hostile views; however, Pascal went further in her criticism than others. Growing awareness of the Island elites’ role in the Holocaust, combined with Britain’s late development in Holocaust memorialisation to other countries occurring around this period,¹⁶⁶ led to questions over why the only part of the British Isles to implement anti-Semitic legislation during the war had never publicly acknowledged this.

Other aftershocks occurred during this period. In 1995, *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War* contained a short entry on the Channel Islands which downplayed resistance and focused on collaboration.¹⁶⁷ The authors argued that ‘collaboration ... was not unusual, and quite a number of women consorted with the garrison.’ Of the Island administrations, they noted that ‘some of the islands’ administrators collaborated with the Germans and helped in the round up and deportation of a number of Jews to concentration camps.’¹⁶⁸ In 2001, a British government publication for schools released for Holocaust Memorial Day summarised the Islands as not having fitted Churchill’s ‘picture of a brave and good nation’ for their complicity in implementing anti-Semitic legislation.¹⁶⁹ As recently as 2020, the Occupation was mobilised by a left of centre commentator seeking to undermine a perceived English superiority complex vis a vis the European Union and Europeans.¹⁷⁰ The most committed assault came from David Fraser, who wrote a polemical history of the fate of the Islands’ Jews in 2000. Citing anti-Semitism as the root cause for the Island administrations participation in enacting anti-Semitic legislation, Fraser claimed that ‘high-ranking government, police and bureaucratic officials ... participated wholeheartedly ... in the persecution of Jewish residents.’¹⁷¹ Subsequent research rendered Fraser’s work one sided and misjudged, failing to take into account the pressures on the officials he condemned. However, it was revealing of the ways in which historians and journalists zeroed in on the Jewish question as a way of assaulting notions that the Holocaust could not have happened in Britain.¹⁷² Fraser claimed that ‘the *frisson* which one experiences when reading correspondence about ... [the Jews] ... in the Channel Islands ... should forever put

¹⁶⁵ Carr, “‘Have You Been Offended?’”, p. 53.

¹⁶⁶ Stefan Berger, ‘Remembering the Second World War in Western Europe, 1945-2005’, in *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, ed. by Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 128-129.

¹⁶⁷ I. C. B. Dear and M. R. D. Foot, *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 202.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

¹⁶⁹ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 252.

¹⁷⁰ Rafael Behr, ‘It is always lost on Brexiteers – but the EU is fundamentally about peace’, *The Guardian*, 18 November 2020, <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/18/1945-europe-brexiteers-nuremberg-trials-brexit-fantasy>> [Accessed 18 November 2020].

¹⁷¹ David Fraser, *The Jews of the Channel Islands and the Rule of Law, 1940-1945: ‘Quite Contrary to the Principles of British Justice’* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2000), pp. 2 and 5.

¹⁷² For example, see Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, p. 32.

to rest any idea that there is a cultural or national immunity from the evils of the Shoah.’¹⁷³ Whilst the criticism slowly began to die away as more balanced histories appeared, the public raising of Occupation taboos could not be undone, leading to distinct changes in public memory.

Developments from 1995 – Present

The result of the period of rupture was that the Islands were forced to look more closely at their wartime history.¹⁷⁴ Travers argued ‘the Islands have had to nuance their familiar and comfortable wartime narrative, publicly commemorating aspects of the Occupation which were traumatic and tangential.’¹⁷⁵ This process has been unevenly paced between the two largest Islands, with Jersey moving faster and further than Guernsey in commemorating ‘every category of victim of Nazism.’¹⁷⁶ Travers commented that ‘memorials dedicated to Occupation victims are now a feature of almost every museum, bunker and cemetery, while at the same time exhibits and displays have been created which reflect ... Jersey’s controversial wartime experience.’¹⁷⁷ As of 2015, no prominent Guernsey official had been prepared to discuss these parts of their Island’s Occupation history.¹⁷⁸ Whilst Jersey first acknowledged its political prisoners and Islanders who died in continental prisons and concentration camps in 1998, Guernsey did not unveil a similar memorial until 2015, and the impetus for this largely came from Carr.¹⁷⁹

This difference in enthusiasm for commemorating previously marginalised aspects stemmed from the characters of prominent Island politicians. For Jersey’s Bailiff in 1995, Sir Peter Bailhache, the cause of remembering victims of Nazism was ‘close to his heart.’¹⁸⁰ Carr noted Bailhache ‘became known as the man to undertake this kind of work’, unveiling a number of memorials.¹⁸¹ Bailhache was not afraid to confront Jersey’s difficult wartime history. He commented in 1998 ‘there is nothing noble about a military Occupation ... Moral ambiguities abounded. Where was the line to be drawn between submission and

¹⁷³ Fraser, *The Jews of the Channel Islands*, p. 6.

¹⁷⁴ For a detailed study of these developments, see Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*; Carr, ‘Occupation Heritage’, pp. 87-117.

¹⁷⁵ Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

¹⁷⁶ Carr, ‘Occupation Heritage’, p. 108.

¹⁷⁷ Travers, ‘Raising the Flag’, p. 232.

¹⁷⁸ Gilly Carr, ‘Islands of War, Guardians of Memory: The Afterlife of the German Occupation in the British Channel Islands’, in *Heritage and Memory of War: Responses from Small Islands*, ed. by Gilly Carr and Kier Reeves (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 75-91.

¹⁷⁹ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 327-328; Carr, “‘Have You Been Offended?’”, p. 47.

¹⁸⁰ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 327-328

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

collaboration, between intransigence and resistance?’¹⁸² Bailhache’s efforts coincided with the campaigning, petitioning and efforts of ‘individuals who have been former members of the victim group in question, or of the immediate post-war generation.’¹⁸³ A strong example of this were Joe Mière’s efforts to have a plaque to former political prisoners incarcerated in Jersey’s Gloucester Street Jail placed where the prison once stood, against official reluctance to fully endorse the memorial.¹⁸⁴ Holocaust Memorial Day now stands as a commemoration to victims of Nazi persecution in Jersey, occupying its own space within the official narrative of the Island’s Occupation history.¹⁸⁵ Carr argued that a series of ‘incremental memory events’ pushed Jersey towards more open acknowledgement of Nazi persecution, from the Bailiff’s desire to represent these groups, the popularity of the 1988 Anne Frank exhibition in Jersey to the research of Freddie Cohen into Jersey’s Jewish community during the war.¹⁸⁶ Travers summarised that Jersey has ‘chosen to champion a negative history which is tangential to the finest hour mythology,’ allowing the Island to distinguish its history and identity from Britain.¹⁸⁷

Conversely the continuing presence in Guernsey politics of Sir De Vic Carey (Bailiff from 1999-2005), Victor Carey’s grandson, has stymied discussion of victims of Nazism owing to his forebear’s contentious conduct during the Occupation.¹⁸⁸ As recently as 2015 when a Guernsey Deputy, Ellis Bebb, suggested publicly that Guernsey should mark its role in the Holocaust, Carey was quick to defend his grandfather, stating that he ‘was not responsible.’¹⁸⁹ Carey’s presence has led to official reticence towards embracing victim groups within public memory in Guernsey. In 2001, both Guernsey and Jersey commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day for the first time with large public services, with Guernsey unveiling a small plaque near the Liberation memorial. However, whilst this anniversary continues to be well attended in Jersey, Guernsey’s annual service is frequently attended only by a handful of people.¹⁹⁰ In 2004, Bunting followed the event, and noted the Guernsey Bailiff’s hesitance to admit culpability: ‘Guernsey is grudging at best ... the stiff

¹⁸² Sir Phillip Bailhache, ‘Foreword’ in Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, p. 8.

¹⁸³ Carr, ‘Occupation Heritage’, p. 108; Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 326-327.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 326-327.

¹⁸⁵ Gilly Carr, ‘Examining the memorialscape of occupation and liberation: a case study from the Channel Islands’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 18:2 (2012), p. 190.

¹⁸⁶ Carr, “‘Have You Been Offended’”, pp. 54-56. See also Freddie Cohen, ‘The Jews in the Islands of Jersey, Guernsey and Sark During the German Occupation 1940-1945’, *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, 6:1 (1997), pp. 27-81.

¹⁸⁷ Travers, ‘Raising the Flag’, p. 228; Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

¹⁸⁸ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 273.

¹⁸⁹ ‘Guernsey’s Holocaust Role Should Be Marked’, BBC News, <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-guernsey-30811115>> [Accessed 20 May 2020] and ‘Guernsey Bailiff “Wasn’t Responsible” for deportation of Jews’, BBC News, <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-guernsey-32660309>> [Accessed 20 May 2020].

¹⁹⁰ Carr, “‘Have You Been Offended?’”, pp. 55-56.

short speech of ... Sir Graham Dorey referred only to the fact that the Jews on Guernsey were foreign-born and their deportation was implemented by the Germans (a factual inaccuracy).¹⁹¹ Moreover, in 2015, following Bebb's efforts to get Guernsey to officially remember their part in the Holocaust, a popular nerve was touched, and Carr noted that this caused a social media storm with some claiming that Bebb was being 'offensive' and slighting 'all those who endured the Occupation.'¹⁹² This demonstrated both the strength of the 'Carey effect' and the popular feeling against those who broke 'Occupation taboos'.¹⁹³ Guernsey continues to lag behind its neighbour in confronting the darker aspects of its past, although external efforts are being made to remedy this.

One arena has proven a more amenable platform to discuss Occupation taboos such as collaboration and resistance. Evans argued that this was through popular culture, particularly fiction.¹⁹⁴ She cited examples such as Tim Binding's *Island Madness* (1999), which depicted the life of German officers and their relations with Guernsey women.¹⁹⁵ This process has continued and in recent years there have been a number of fictional representations on the Occupation which explore themes of collaboration, resistance and the most popular of all Occupation tropes for its scope to explore morality and human nature, forbidden love. Margaret Leroy's 2011 novel *The Collaborator* followed the story of a fictional woman struggling to raise her two children in her husband's absence, tempted by her feelings for a German soldier. Leroy was able to explore the complex choices facing lonely women during the Occupation, without attracting the criticism which efforts based on historical research had in the past.¹⁹⁶ The novel which achieved the greatest popularity was Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows' 2008 *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, which followed a British writer's journey to Guernsey and her discovery of what had happened during the Occupation through her friendship with a group of Islanders belonging to the eponymous club. Borrowing heavily for inspiration from the story of Louisa Gould, a Jersey woman arrested by the Germans in the spring of 1944 for sheltering an escaped Russian OT labourer and deported to Ravensbrück where she was murdered on 13 February 1945, the fictional story delved into a number of Occupation taboos.¹⁹⁷ The

¹⁹¹ Madeleine Bunting, 'Our Part in the Holocaust: One Channel Island at least is owning up to its wartime shame', *The Guardian*, 24 January 2004, p. 35.

¹⁹² Carr, "'Have You Been Offended?'"', pp. 57-58.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁹⁴ Evans, 'Introduction', p. xxi.

¹⁹⁵ Tim Binding, *Island Madness* (London: Picador, 1999).

¹⁹⁶ Margaret Leroy, *The Collaborator* (London: Harlequin, 2011). Whether such portrayals are realistic or representative is another matter. See Gilly Carr, 'The Jew and the "Jerrybag": The Lives of Hedwig Bercu and Dorothea Weber (née Le Brocq)', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 33:3 (2019), p. 374.

¹⁹⁷ Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows, *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008). For information on Louisa Gould and her brother, Harold Le

novel's absent protagonist, Elizabeth McKenna, straddled several categories and summarised the complexity of Occupation morality: she was shown to be vehemently opposed to the German presence, yet fell in love with a young German officer, bearing his child. Her efforts to shelter a labourer situated her as a resister, yet the eventual revelation of her death in a concentration camp rendered her a victim of war.¹⁹⁸ Within one character, Shaffer and Barrows explored how individuals could fall across multiple categories during the war. The popularity of the book in Guernsey, alongside its adaptation into a successful film in 2018, rendered this depiction of Guernsey's Occupation a potentially powerful shaper of popular memory within the Islands.

In 2017, *Another Mother's Son* was released, the first mainstream British film to examine the Occupation. It was based upon the real-life experiences of Gould, her brother Harold Le Druillenec and the Russian national they sheltered, Feodor Burryiy. The subject matter was significant: like his sister, Le Druillenec was arrested and deported, being the only British survivor of Bergen Belsen. The depiction challenged notions of 'victory not victims' in British and occupation memory, and, according to Victoria Walden, deployed a number of tropes common in Holocaust films, from Germans shouting *schneller* to sadistic Nazis in the mould of Amon Goeth as depicted in *Schindler's List* (1998).¹⁹⁹ Themes of persecution and victimhood were prevalent. The scene where Le Druillenec sees his sister for the last time aboard a cattle truck being transported to her death, as well as depictions of barbarous treatment meted out to OT labourers, were harrowing. Furthermore, *Another Mother's Son* demonstrated the splintered nature of Island society, depicting denunciation and horizontal collaboration.²⁰⁰

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society (2018) also contained some notably vivid reconstructions of the treatment of OT labourers. Whilst the 2018 film's grimmer messages were drowned out by the romantic storyline and sentimentalised depiction of 1940s Guernsey, it made a significant effort to portray the nuanced and complex world of German occupation, making the ringing endorsement of the film in Guernsey all the more striking. Both films provided fresh representations of the Occupation, presenting the subject of events dissonant to British war memory to Anglophone audiences and drawing the links between the Islands and the European experience of occupation. However, the

Druillenec, who was also deported and barely survived his ordeal in Bergen-Belsen, see Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, pp. 65-82.

¹⁹⁸ Richard Guille, 'The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society and the 2018 Guernsey Heritage Festival', *Munitions of the Mind Blog*, 8 May 2018 <<https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/munitions-of-the-mind/tag/occupation/>> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

¹⁹⁹ Victoria Walden, 'Another Mother's Son: Remembering the German Occupation of the Channel Islands on screen', *Wiener Holocaust Library Blogs*, <<https://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/Blog?item=276&returnoffset=0>>, [Accessed 25 May 2020].

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

comparative box office performances of the films indicated the reluctance of British audiences to delve too deeply into the darker aspects of the Occupation. The 2018 film, which tonally slotted into the canon of sentimentalised portrayals of past British life made popular by Julian Fellowes' historical drama series *Downton Abbey* (2010-2015), was a financial success and far more so than *Another Mother's Son*. *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* made roughly £23 million in worldwide sales and was picked up by the American streaming service *Netflix* in 2020 as a Netflix original film to be available on the site permanently.²⁰¹ By contrast, the darker and more realistic *Another Mother's Son* failed to make a commercial impact, performing disappointingly at the box office (£639,000) and appearing infrequently on streaming platforms.²⁰² The true story and the bleak past it presented turned off British audiences, who responded more enthusiastically to the romanticised and redemptive adaptation of Shaffer and Barrow's novel. Ultimately, Occupation taboos are now being explored and depicted in popular culture, often with the endorsement of the Islands themselves, providing greater legitimacy to alternative narratives. When the arguments of Dawson, Thompson and notions of a cultural circuit are borne in mind, this has potentially significant implications for personal narratives of the period.

Previously marginalised areas of Occupation history are increasingly part of the public and popular memory of Occupation. However, Carr commented, 'the memory of liberation still plays the key role in the ... commemorative narrative ... victims of Nazism are still largely shut out on Liberation Day.'²⁰³ The siting of memorials sends a clear message, regardless of intention. Liberation memorials in St Helier and St Peter Port are located in 'historically meaningful and visually prominent places', and Liberation Day in both Islands has been 'marked in the landscape in stone.'²⁰⁴ Significant anniversaries are further validated by the involvement of members of the Royal Family. When victims are remembered, as is the case in Jersey where the slave worker memorial is visited by local dignitaries, this occurs on the periphery of the celebrations and attended by fewer people.²⁰⁵ Carr's 2012 examination of Occupation memorials noted that in Guernsey the 'memory' of victims of Nazism has been 'allowed into the memorial space of the dominant narrative, but ... not ... to challenge it in any serious way ... Other memorials are small, marginalised and

²⁰¹ 'Another Mother's Son', boxofficemojo.com, <<https://www.boxofficemojo.com/release/rl2529985537/weekend/>> [Accessed 21 June 2021].

²⁰² 'The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society', boxofficemojo.com, <https://www.boxofficemojo.com/title/tt1289403/?ref=bo_tt_ti> [Accessed 21 June 2021]. Also see

²⁰³ Carr, 'Occupation Heritage', p. 112.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

hidden away.²⁰⁶ This continuing marginalisation has occurred because the central message of Liberation Day is one of victory: the celebrations, Travers argued, have served ‘as a way for the Islands to celebrate their part in the greater British victory, while at the same time bask in British iconography which has a wartime and post-war meaning for Islanders.’²⁰⁷ Islanders’ sense of pride in having survived the hardships and at the moral fortitude shown by the population is at its most apparent on this day.²⁰⁸ Travers concluded that ‘despite changes to Jersey’s landscape of remembrance, British iconography remains an important part of the Island’s heritage.’²⁰⁹ He cited the Union Flag, V-signs, Churchill’s speeches and flypasts of Second World War aircraft as prominent examples of this.²¹⁰ The central focus of Liberation is the civilians, with surviving members of the Occupation generation treated to dances and champagne breakfasts in their honour. Carr argued ‘these people, and the act of their liberation ... have been commemorate[ed] ... more ... than any other group.’²¹¹ In the Islands, the chief memorials were to the survivors and not the civilian dead.



Figure 1: Jersey Liberation Memorial in Liberation Square, St Helier, unveiled 9 May 1995 by HRH the Prince of Wales. Property of the author.

²⁰⁶ Carr, ‘Examining the memorialscape’, p. 190.

²⁰⁷ Travers, *Other British Isles*, chapter 5.

²⁰⁸ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 197.

²⁰⁹ Travers, ‘Raising the Flag’, pp. 228-229.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

²¹¹ Carr, ‘Occupation Heritage’, p. 98.

Liberation Day remains a day of patriotic celebration, removed from more nuanced Occupation narratives.²¹² Between 1994 and 1995, Jersey made an unsuccessful attempt to present nuanced memory in their official commemorations. The proposed memorial to be placed in Liberation Square in St Helier, an important historical site of the day where Brigadier Snow addressed crowds of Islanders, was to feature five Jersey men, women and children releasing doves of peace into the sky, foregrounding ideas of reconciliation, peace and freedom. However, these did not chime with popular understandings and meanings of Liberation held by many Islanders, who responded negatively. Jersey's Liberation Day Committee were forced to rethink the design, and the monument unveiled in 1995 featured five Islanders, arms aloft, unveiling an enormous Union Flag (figure 1).²¹³ Similarly, the initial designs for the fiftieth anniversary monument to Guernsey's Liberation emphasised notions of peace. They prompted a storm of public criticism, especially the more reconciliatory themes proposed by Guernsey's Liberation Day Committee.²¹⁴



Figure 2: Guernsey Liberation Day Memorial in St Peter Port, unveiled on 9 May 1995 by HRH the Prince of Wales. Property of the author.

²¹² Travers, 'Raising the Flag', p. 228.

²¹³ Ibid, pp. 237-239.

²¹⁴ For information on the inception of Guernsey's Liberation memorial and the public debates over its form and meaning, see *GEP* issues between 5 February 1995 and 29 April 1995.

The *GEP* requested alternative designs from Islanders, many of which featured trampled or broken swastikas, military personnel and patriotic symbols, with many designs submitted by ‘Occupation veterans.’²¹⁵ The final memorial unveiled in 1995 commemorated Liberation Day *alone* and the words of Winston Churchill spoken on 8 May 1945, engraved into the stonework (‘our dear Channel Islands are also to be freed today’), signified how the memorial was intended to be viewed (figure 2). The monument was uncontroversial, consisting of a bench doubling as a sundial on 9 May, with the shadow of the obelisk marking important parts of the anniversary in ‘real time’. The obelisk consists of fifty granite slabs (one for each year since Occupation in 1995), with the top five angled to represent the five years of Occupation and the rupture to Island life this engendered. Erected when the Churchillian paradigm was being called into question, Guernsey’s Liberation monument stands as a memorial to the liberation and the popular memory of the stasis period which enabled its form and focus. 1995 was a crucial year in the entrenchment of the Liberation Day message as the central foci of public occupation memory, when ‘this was well and truly established’ in the ‘capital towns’ geography and in the psyche of the Islanders.²¹⁶

Events surrounding the commemoration of Guernsey’s Liberation Day in 2018 demonstrated that Guernsey remains under the spell of British war memory. Capitalising upon interest in Guernsey’s history generated by the release of the 2018 film, the annual heritage festival between 30 March and 10 May focused on the Island’s Occupation history, with emphasis on liberation. It was an attempt to market the Occupation to a tourist audience, representing how Guernsey, in 2018, sought to depict its history. The branding spoke volumes: the cover of the promotional material featured a collage of contemporary documents including letters, newspaper articles and Red Cross messages. However, the clearest text amongst these were the words ‘WE ARE FREE!’ Of most importance was the Guernsey woman, arms held wide open ostensibly in celebration, as the branding’s central feature (figure 3). This was an edited version of the British propaganda poster ‘Women of Britain come into the Factories’, with a different tunic colour and the insertion of a small Guernsey badge on the collar of the woman’s overalls.²¹⁷ This was a direct mobilisation of a prominent visual aspect of British war memory within a popular interpretation of Occupation history. Events held during the festival suggested that the organisers were keen to prioritise the safe ground of food shortages and resilience over more difficult subjects raised by the film – victimhood, slave labour and the compromising nature of the

²¹⁵ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 255.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

²¹⁷ See IWM, ART.IWM PST 3645 ‘Women of Britain Come into the Factories poster’, Phillip Zec, 1941.

Occupation. The short summary contained in the promotional brochure made no mention of starvation, resistance or slave labour, whereas German fortifications and the evacuation received significant attention.²¹⁸ A smattering of talks covered more dissonant subjects, although these were by far in a minority. Popular memory seemed more comfortable on the grounds of improvisation: Guernsey's Botanical Trust notably held a potato peel pie competition.²¹⁹ The combination of the event's branding and a concentration on less controversial aspects indicated a desire to continue presenting a positive liberation message.

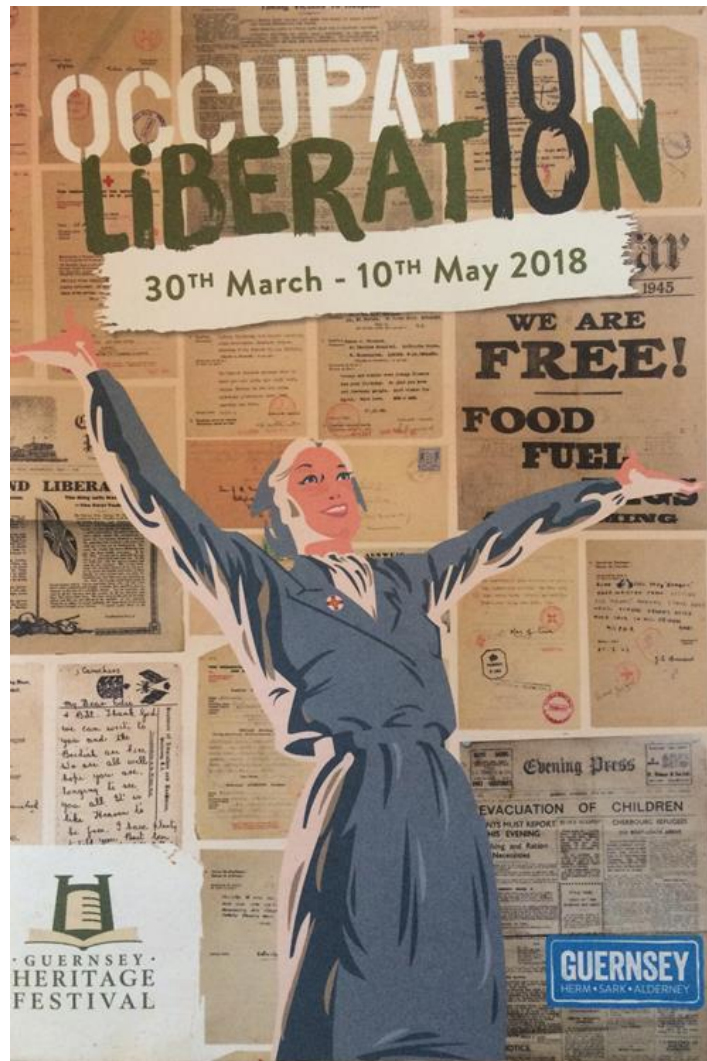


Figure 3: Cover of the 2018 Guernsey Heritage Festival's Occupation and Liberation themed programme of events. Author's Own Copy.

Liberation Day 2020 confirmed the continuing relevance of victory and stoic survival to Islanders. On 9 May 2020, Guernsey and Jersey celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of their liberation under exceptional circumstances. With the Islands under lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the commemorations moved online through the

²¹⁸ Visit Guernsey, *Occupation: Liberation 18 Programme of Events*, 2018.

²¹⁹ Mark Ogier, 'Judges "wild" about winning potato peel pie entry', *GEP*, 28 April 2018.

social media platform Facebook and on dedicated Liberation Day websites. Islanders were encouraged to celebrate Liberation Day through decorating their houses with Union and Island flags and by having garden picnics, borrowing from the United Kingdom's amended VE-Day celebrations.²²⁰ For many, the day was one of Union Flags, Glenn Miller and *We'll Meet Again*.²²¹ The values of resilience and pulling together in a collective effort, features of the Churchillian paradigm in the Islands, were uniquely applicable in May 2020 to the locked-down Islanders. It was unsurprising, therefore, that these ideals were the key focus of Liberation Day speeches. *The Daily Telegraph* published a feature on the Islands' 'lockdown liberation.'²²² They interviewed Bob Le Sueur, who reflected upon the similarities between the Occupation and Jersey in 2020: the Occupation was 'five years of being cooped up with no freedom to express yourself.' The paper noted how Le Sueur viewed the current situation: "'now", he observed wryly, "we are prisoners again."²²³ In 2020, past and present were compared with far more relevance than had been the case for many years, and Occupation memory was mobilised to suit the needs of the crisis, demonstrating its enduring relevance and flexibility to Islanders.

The need to come together as a community during the COVID-19 crisis during Guernsey's liberation celebrations trumped any desire to dwell on the darker lessons of the Occupation; official reticence to explicitly acknowledge victim groups continues. The Bailiff of Guernsey, Sir Richard Collas' speech focused on what Liberation Day meant under normal circumstances, encouraging people to spend the afternoon 'party[ing], rejoice[ing] and celebrat[ing]' in order to achieve as normal a feeling as possible to the anniversary.²²⁴ The closest reference to Guernsey's victims was draped in evasive language, with Collas referring to Islanders who had been internees in Germany and those who 'did not survive the war.'²²⁵ 'Resistance' was a word notable by its absence. During the annual church service, the Rector of St Peter Port referred to the three Jewish women deported from Guernsey, with no mention of the circumstances of how they had been located, arrested and deported.²²⁶

²²⁰ Liberation Day Guernsey Facebook Page, 9 May 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/LiberationGSY/?epa=SEARCH_BOX> [Accessed 9 May 2020].

²²¹ Liberation Day Guernsey Facebook Page, 'Programme of Events', 30 April 2020, <<https://www.facebook.com/LiberationGSY/photos/pcb.3255046687847780/3254830394536076/?type=3&theater>> [Accessed 10 May 2020].

²²² Antonia Windsor, "'We remember life under lockdown – without food": An insight into life in the Channel Islands seventy-five years ago', *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 May 2020, Travel section.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Liberation Day Guernsey Facebook Page, 'A Liberation Day message from The Bailiff of Guernsey, Sir Richard Collas', 9 May 2020, <<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=240406020382500>> [Accessed 9 May 2020].

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Liberation Day Guernsey Facebook Page, 'Liberation Day Service led by the Very Reverend Tim Barker, Dean of Guernsey', 9 May 2020, <<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1302730699934072>> [Accessed 9 May 2020].

Other speeches from religious leaders in Guernsey foregrounded ideals of resilience and resolve. The head of Guernsey's Methodist church Reverend Howard Stringer gave thanks 'for the fortitude and resilience of those who remained here throughout the Occupation,' two words that accurately surmise the values of the Churchillian paradigm.²²⁷ Additionally, the memories of 'Occupation veterans' were front and centre in both Guernsey and Sark, with short recorded testimonies being aired.²²⁸ These focused on two reasonably uncontroversial topics in popular memory: food and evacuation.²²⁹ Deprivations and separation from friends and family chimed with the needs of the present (social distancing and lockdown) and were duly emphasised. 2020 required a simple and positive liberation message, and the public line taken by Guernsey leant heavily upon the Churchillian paradigm. This demonstrated their continuing relevance in the Islands, particularly in Guernsey and how tangential narratives are kept at arm's length from Liberation Day.

Sark's recent public memory requires outlining. The Dame of Sark's narrative and her place at the centre of Sark's wartime history survived the release of British files in the 1990s, even with Dening's firm views on Hathaway's conduct. This was not without controversy. Some writers, critical of Sark's feudal constitution in the 1990s, strove to undermine the standing of her grandson Michael Beaumont, who succeeded her as Seigneur, by attacking Hathaway's wartime record.²³⁰ However, the continuation of Hathaway's descendants as Seigneurs after her death in 1974 maintained her position. When Julia Tremayne's wartime diary was published in 1981, Beaumont provided a foreword that emphasised Hathaway's conduct, stating she had 'the qualities necessary to lead Sark through the trials of occupation with the minimum of hardship.'²³¹ Sark's celebration of Liberation Day has tended towards positive messages of victory and endurance as opposed to solemn remembrance. Photographs of Sark's 1947 Liberation Day depict smiling Islanders taking part in a cavalcade of horse-drawn carriages decorated to represent both Sark and Britain at the Methodist chapel in the north-west of the Island, symbolising the links between Sarkian and British identity.²³² A number of aspects of Liberation Day on Sark have become traditional: a detachment of the Chelsea Pensioners attend, significant

²²⁷ Ibid. My emphasis.

²²⁸ Liberation Day Guernsey Facebook Page, 'Children of the Occupation', 9 May 2020, <<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2623273241110604>> [Accessed 9 May 2020]. Churches of Sark Facebook Page, 'Liberation Service led by Reverend David Stolton', 10 May 2020, <<https://www.facebook.com/sarkchurches/videos/720163575389725/>> [Accessed 10 May 2020].

²²⁹ Liberation Day Guernsey Facebook Page, 'Children of the Occupation', 9 May 2020, <<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2623273241110604>> [Accessed 9 May 2020].

²³⁰ Peter Rivett, *Sark, A Feudal Fraud* (Paignton: Plantesimal Publishing, 2001), pp. 106-107.

²³¹ Michael Beaumont, 'Introduction' in Xan Franks (ed.), *War on Sark: The Secret Letters of Julia Tremayne* (Exeter: Webb and Bower, 1981), p. 9.

²³² Societe Sercquaise Collection (SSC), Miscellaneous World War Two Collection, 'Photographs of Sark's 197 Liberation Day Celebrations', 10 May 1947.

anniversaries are authenticated by a member of the Royal Family and residents alive during the Occupation are front and centre in the commemorations, either as organisers or celebrated eye witnesses.²³³

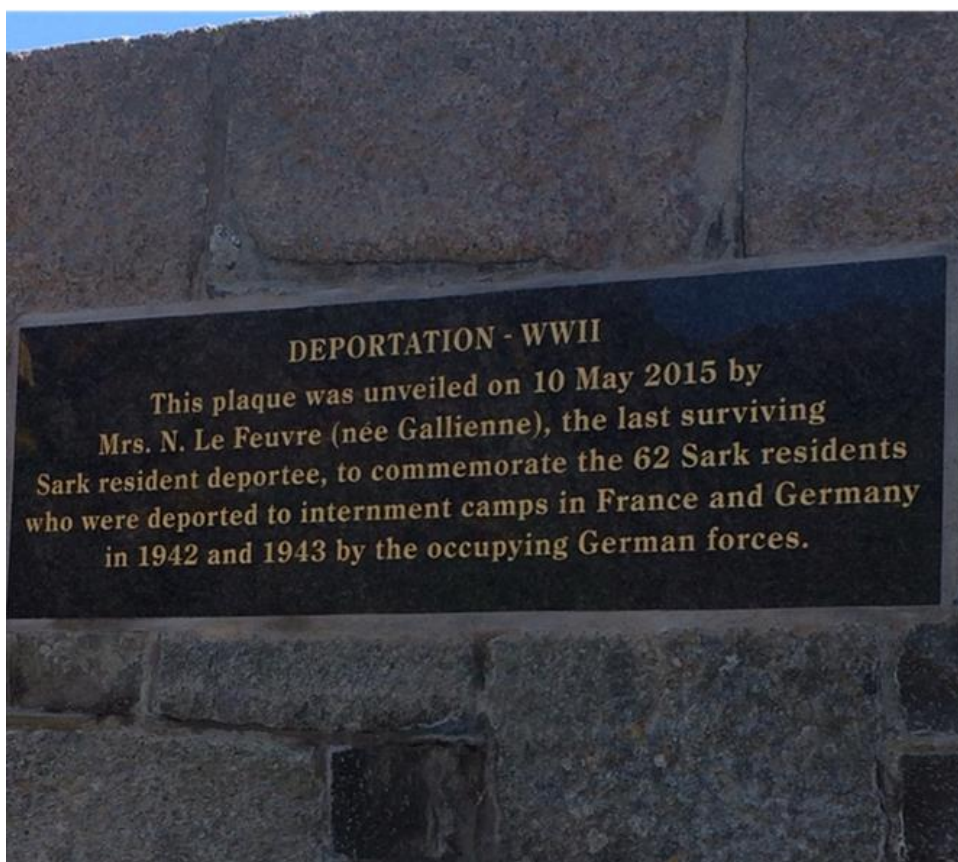


Figure 4: Memorial to Islanders deported from Sark in 1942 and 1943 in Sark's Creux Harbour, unveiled 10 May 2015. Property of the author.

Carr omitted Sark from her 2014 study as the Island lacked a 'grand narrative' or Occupation memorials.²³⁴ Since then, Sark erected three Occupation-related memorials in four years. These reflect the uniqueness of Sark's experience and its less codified war memory, which has only recently found expression barring a small plaque outside the Chief Pleas building, unveiled in 1995 by Prince Charles. In 2015 a small plaque was unveiled above the steps from which sixty-two Sarkees left the island during the deportations of Islanders to internment camps in Germany in September 1942 and February 1943 (figure 4). Unveiled by Sark's last resident deportee, it was striking that Sark remembered, with no dissent, its main victim group. The service which accompanied the unveiling provided many details of the Sark deportees' treatment and the event was full of pathos.²³⁵ However, the

²³³ SSC, Misc. World War Two Collection, 'Liberation Day Pamphlets', 1995 and 2005.

²³⁴ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 12.

²³⁵ Sark celebrates 70th anniversary of Liberation', BBC Channel Islands News Facebook, <<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1139788586046929>> [Accessed 19 May 2020].

commemoration was dressed with the tropes of British war memory and Sark's Liberation traditions, which jarred with the focus on the deportees. The cover of the programme of events showed Union flags and an Avro Lancaster, paying homage to the aircraft which crash landed on Sark in 1942 (figure 5). Chelsea Pensioners and a detachment of Gurkhas attended and the day's proceedings were rounded off with a flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight's C-47. Whilst a group of deported Islanders were remembered, the meta-framing of the event was one of 'celebration', demonstrating the uneasy fit between notions of victory and victimhood.

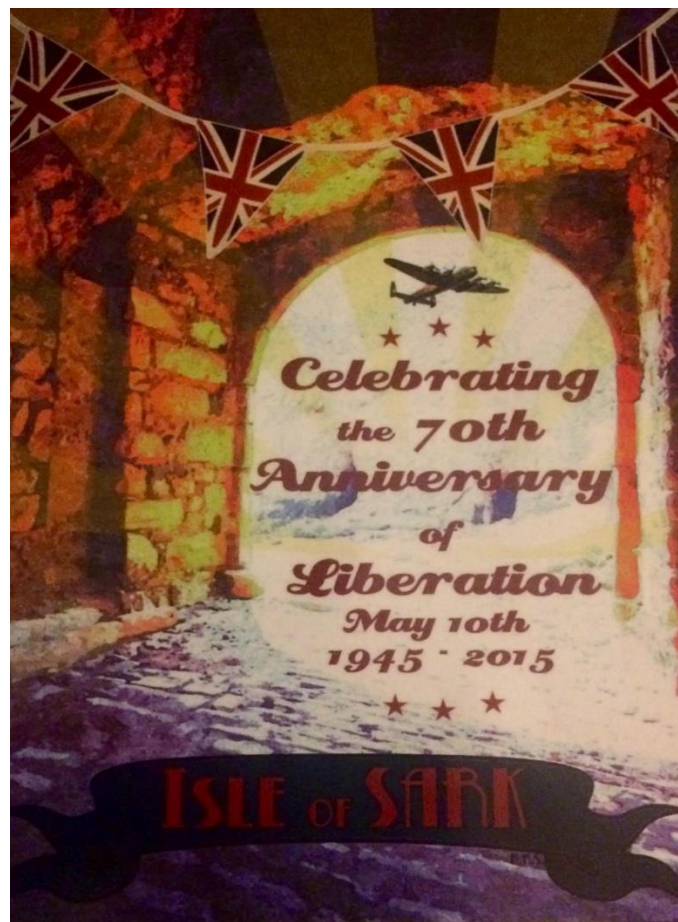


Figure 5: Cover of Sark's 2015 Liberation Day Brochure. Author's own copy.

Two memorials were erected on the Hog's Back headland of Sark in 2017 and 2018, both remembering a very different side of the Occupation. They commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversaries and sites of two Commando raid: Operation Basalt on 3 and 4 October 1942 and Operation Hardtack on 27 December 1943. The former was particularly noteworthy, focusing on the martial prowess of the raiding Allied Commandos.²³⁶ Much of the commemoration centred on the raids' heroic leader, Geoffrey Appleyard, whose wartime

²³⁶ 'Unveiling of commemorative stone marks Commando raid', <https://guernseypress.com/news/2017/10/06/unveiling-of-commemorative-stone-marks-commando-raid/>, [Accessed 22/10/18].

exploits would not have been out of place in a 1950s British war epic. Appleyard was young, athletic and daring, taking part in many clandestine raids before his untimely death in 1944.²³⁷ The unveiling of the memorial by Appleyard's half-brother cemented his place at the core of the narrative (figure 6). Limited space was given to the negative outcomes of the raid for the Sarkees, such as the tightening of restrictions and deportations. A heroic narrative was told and uncomfortable aspects were downplayed. The memorial encouraged reflection upon the martial prowess of the Commandos, sited atop the cliff which they scaled. The memorial to Hardtack consisted of a small plaque sited where the raiders strayed into a German minefield and two Free French soldiers were killed. One is still buried on Sark and a wreath was laid on his grave.²³⁸



Figure 6: Memorial to Operation Basalt (3 and 4 October 1942), unveiled 3 October 2017. Property of the author.

²³⁷ For information on Geoffrey Appleyard consult J. E. Appleyard, *Geoffrey: Being the Story of 'Apple' of the Commandos and Special Air Service Regiment* (London, 1946).

²³⁸ 'Remembering Operation Hardtack' Isle of Sark, <<http://www.sark.co.uk/remembering-operation-hardtack-20175/>> [Accessed 18 May 2020].

These reveal the problematic nature of war remembrance in the Islands: the urge to remain a part of Britain's war memory can clash with more marginal aspects which evidence the uniqueness of their experiences. Notable links with the military side of Britain's conflict (commando raids and the crash-landed Lancaster) seem to have pushed Sark further in this direction and augmented their alignment with British war memory. Whilst commemorating the deportees, the need for the Sarkees to situate their Island's experience of occupation within broader British frameworks remains clear. Moreover, the Island was not fortified to anywhere near the same extent as the larger Islands, meaning that OT labourers were not present and the physical 'scars' of occupation far less visible. Aside from the deportees and a handful of people mistreated during the Occupation, the majority of Sarkees were not victims of Nazism and did not witness the fate of those who were. War memory in Sark retains a simplicity absent in the contested 'occupation-scapes' of Guernsey and Jersey and has yet to adopt the new frameworks of resistance and victimhood into its public memory.

Resistance and Victimhood: A New Paradigm?

There has been a distinct shift in the historiography of the Occupation, which at times has engendered changes in Occupation memory. Some scholars have overcorrected, Knowles-Smith's 2007 rebuttal of Bunting being one example. Her acknowledgements revealed her interactions with a number of prominent Islanders with a keen interest in how the Occupation was viewed, which influenced her views on the subject.²³⁹ Knowles-Smith portrayed herself as a young historian prepared to martyr her career to tell the 'truth' about the Occupation, making much out of how her external examiner, who held similar views to Bunting, had wanted to fail her doctoral thesis.²⁴⁰ Evans noted that Knowles-Smith continued the back and forth debate over the Occupation, presenting a distinctly subjective view.²⁴¹ Perry Biddiscombe was more critical, caustically describing her work as a 'ferocious piece of advocacy-history' which denigrated oral evidence yet took an uncritical approach to the diaries upon which her work was based.²⁴² Knowles-Smith sought to heal the wounds caused by Bunting: 'the Islanders' contemporary views and records ... overwhelmingly support an honourable narrative of Occupation history, with a few blemishes. It is in fact a ... record of which Churchill himself may well have been proud.'²⁴³

²³⁹ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. ix.

²⁴⁰ Morvan, 'Islanders Cleared of Collaboration', *GEP*.

²⁴¹ Evans, 'Introduction', p. xxii.

²⁴² Perry Biddiscombe, review of *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands Occupation: Record, Memory, Myth*, by Hazel Knowles-Smith, *European History Quarterly*, 40:1 (2008), pp. 174-175.

²⁴³ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 254.

Other scholars were at work presenting balanced and nuanced histories, on occasion funded by bodies within the Islands. Sanders' 1998 study of Jersey men and women who died in German prisons and concentration camps was commissioned by the Jersey Heritage Trust.²⁴⁴ This was a substantial step towards rehabilitating resistance in Jersey and 'puncturing' this and other Holocaust taboos in the Island.²⁴⁵ A second study, also commissioned by the same body, covered the history of all the Islands under Occupation in 2005.²⁴⁶ The strength of both works was to take a comparative view of the Islands during the Occupation against other European occupations, whilst noting the differences and how these manifested themselves. On collaboration, Sanders was keen to contextualise this with European administrations, arguing that 'Anglo-centric approach[es] to Channel Islands collaboration fail to realise the delirious heights to which collaboration did rise in other parts of Europe. The Channel Islands by comparison were a haven of sanity.'²⁴⁷ Both studies, sanctioned by a prominent Jersey organisation, presented warts and all histories of the Islands and laid down fresh standards for objective document-based histories of the period.

A range of studies have now been conducted on resistance in the Islands and the fate of those who engaged in these activities, such as Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp's *Discourse and Defiance* (2010) and Carr, Sanders and Willmot's 2014 study *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, by far the most comprehensive effort.²⁴⁸ All claimed to disprove the collaborationist narrative. Carr, Sanders and Willmot argued that the 'neglect ... [of Island resistance] ... left the field open to a tendentious collaborationist narrative', and that Islanders 'had some "margin" for action against the occupiers.'²⁴⁹ However, the spectre of Bunting loomed over these studies, a number of which were motivated by a need to invalidate her conclusions or were subtly shaped by her charges. For example, Jorgensen-Earp assailed Bunting for suggesting Islanders had been more quiescent than other Europeans, pointing to a range of defiant activities and views held within diaries from Guernsey.²⁵⁰ Likewise, Willmot argued that Bunting's views were not conducive to the objective study of resistance, framing her work in opposition.²⁵¹ *Protest, Defiance and*

²⁴⁴ Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, p. 8.

²⁴⁵ Carr, "'Have You Been Offended?'" , pp. 56-57.

²⁴⁶ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

²⁴⁸ Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation: Guernsey, Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2013).

²⁴⁹ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 2.

²⁵⁰ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance*, pp. 7-8.

²⁵¹ Louise Willmot, 'The Channel Islands', in *Resistance in Western Europe, 1940-1945*, ed. by Bob Moore (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p. 83.

Resistance was, in Richard Vinen's view, a riposte to Bunting.²⁵² The definitions arrived at by the authors were broad, encompassing such a wide range of activities as to render the meanings of each of the three terms distinctly unclear owing to overlap between actions.²⁵³ The body of work on Island resistance is substantive, yet the next historiographical step after this wave of post-revisionism should seek out and correct any overcorrections caused by the need to disprove the arguments of *The Model Occupation*.

Furthermore, for reasons that can only be attributed to memory politics and the furious response to Bunting, there have been few studies of collaboration in the Islands based on comparative frameworks, and comments on this tend to be buried within broader histories. This was Vinen's central criticism of *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, arguing that 'if resistance is to be defined widely, then so must collaboration, and in practice the two activities often overlapped.'²⁵⁴ Whilst Sanders tackled these issues in his locally funded 2005 history, his was a relatively isolated effort, written at a time when the excesses of the collaborationist narrative were still hurtful to Islanders.²⁵⁵ In terms of events and themes, little new remains to be said of the nature of resistance, barring the unearthing of any hitherto undiscovered files, or fresh studies which tackle the collaboration end of the spectrum. The collaborationist narrative has been rendered redundant by scholars through the study of resistance. These studies posed the question as to how the Channel Islands could be seen as hives of collaboration when defiance and patriotism were widespread activities? In terms of influencing popular memory, only *Protest, Defiance and Resistance* could claim to have made an effort in this direction, with the book sold at an affordable price in the Islands and framed in its conclusion as 'testimony to all Channel Islanders who committed acts of protest, defiance and resistance,' rendering it a mass-produced textual memorial.²⁵⁶

The study of victims of Nazism has begun to build up momentum recently, completing the second half of the new paradigm identified here as one of resistance and victimhood. The decision to name these recent developments is a response to efforts to alter local memory, with proponents campaigning for official recognition and popular acceptance of victim groups holding strong epistemological stances, striving to convert people to their position. Carr noted in 2014 that Islanders like to control their Occupation heritage: 'they prefer heritage statements that declare "this is what and who we *want* to remember" rather than "this is what and who we *should* remember," and some in the Islands dislike having

²⁵² Richard Vinen, review of *Protest, Defiance and Resistance in the Channel Islands: German Occupation, 1940-1945* by Gilly Carr, Paul Sanders and Louise Willmot, *American Historical Review*, 121:3 (2016), p. 1030.

²⁵³ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 2-3.

²⁵⁴ Vinen, p. 1030.

²⁵⁵ See Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 57-98.

²⁵⁶ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 353.

“alternative, non-mainstream memory and heritage narratives imposed.”²⁵⁷ However, such impositions are becoming increasingly normalised, with changes to Occupation memory and its presentation often coming from external academics or professional heritage bodies. Sanders appeared content to observe that rapprochement with European modes of remembrance was unlikely and leave it there.²⁵⁸ However, Carr, disconcerted that Guernsey still demonstrated reticence towards commemorating local resistance figures and had never publicly discussed their role in the Holocaust, turned her attention to rectifying this.

This has led to far more interventionist efforts to educate and re-orientate public attitudes to previously tangential narratives. The most active interventionist is Carr, and her efforts have seen new memorials erected, public outreach projects such as exhibitions and websites launched, and an unprecedented effort to alter the ways in which Islanders of all ages view their Occupation history. In 2010, Carr was handed the documentation Falla produced during his efforts to secure compensation for Islanders, which she proclaimed the most important resistance archive to come out of the Islands.²⁵⁹ The discovery of this led her to focus her attentions on victims of Nazi persecution in the Islands. In 2018 she curated an exhibition on the subject at the Weiner Holocaust library in London and later in the Islands entitled ‘On British Soil’. Her 2019 study *Victims of Nazi Persecution* drew on Falla’s archive, detailing the suffering of these Islanders in concentration camps and in the post-war period.²⁶⁰ Carr also launched the Frank Falla Archive, an online resource telling the stories behind each of these victims, as well as a popular history on prisons and political prisoners in the Channel Islands.²⁶¹ All of the above strove to educate people about these groups and encourage their stories to be validated and commemorated within the Islands. Owing to her high local profile, Carr has moved into a position as the dominant scholar, with influence over the direction of Occupation memory and its presentation through heritage. Her recent appointment as Guernsey, Alderney and Jersey’s representative to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance suggests that her efforts to shift local perceptions will continue with official validation.²⁶²

²⁵⁷ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 294.

²⁵⁸ Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, p. 35.

²⁵⁹ ‘WWII Prison Camp Archives Discovered in Guernsey’, BBC News, 18 November 2010, <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-guernsey-11779963>>, [Accessed 27 May 2020].

²⁶⁰ Gilly Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution in the Channel Islands: A Legitimate Heritage?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019).

²⁶¹ Frank Falla Archive, <https://www.frankfallaarchive.org/>; Gilly Carr, *Nazi Prisons in the British Isles: Political Prisoners during the German Occupation of Jersey and Guernsey, 1940-1945* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2020).

²⁶² ‘Dr Gilly Carr announced as Channel Island’s representative at the IHRA’, Frank Falla Archive Blog, <<https://www.frankfallaarchive.org/further-information/news/>> [Accessed 19 May 2020].

Two examples demonstrate how Carr has explicitly sought to shape local memory. In 2015, she chose to experiment with whether an outsider in Guernsey could become an ‘initiator of memory’, agreeing to speak publicly about victims of Nazi persecution during Guernsey’s Holocaust Memorial Day service. She explained in 2016:

I wondered whether, if the focus was moved from Jews to locally perceived co-sufferers of the Holocaust, Guernsey’s guard would be down sufficiently for Guernsey’s HMD 70 service to become a game-changing memory event through the public readings of testimonies of suffering in the camps.²⁶³

Carr felt that her efforts had been successful after the Town Church filled to capacity and members of the congregation displayed shock at the testimonies of those who endured concentration camps.²⁶⁴ Likewise, on 4 May 2015 when Guernsey unveiled its resistance memorial (which Carr campaigned for), she was asked to provide a public lecture and persuaded the Bailiff to hold a *Vin d’Honneur* for the families of eight Guernsey men and women who died for acts of resistance. This, she claimed, ‘I had personally requested as part of a move to facilitate the acceptance of resisters into the local understandings of the Holocaust through elite support.’²⁶⁵ In both cases, Carr wrote full page articles for the *GEP* with the intention to posit that education of the young should be the legacy of the 2015 Holocaust Memorial Day, and to cement ‘a new understanding’ of local resistance figures.²⁶⁶ Since 2010, Carr has transitioned into being a ‘source’ and ‘Guardian of Memory’ herself in the history of Occupation memory in the Islands, frequently offering her opinion on local debates over commemoration and how Islanders should remember their history.²⁶⁷ Leaving aside the question of whether such interventions were ethically justifiable (and Carr is frank about her subjectivities in relation to victims of Nazi persecution and the direction she believes war memory in the Islands *should* go), her efforts to alter and modernise Occupation memory, particularly in Guernsey, are having a tangible effect. However, due to the external impetus behind recent changes, Guernsey’s sincerity in this regard remains questionable.

There is increasing impetus and popular acceptance behind the idea that the Islands should view their Occupation history as a part of European occupation history – specifically, the history of the Holocaust and how the Islands link Britain to that history.²⁶⁸ In terms of

²⁶³ Carr, “‘Have You Been Offended’”, p. 57.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

²⁶⁷ For examples of this see Gilly Carr, ‘Why so few at Holocaust Memorial Service’, *GEP*, 31 January 2012, p. 27 and Gilly Carr, ‘Money would be better spent on a memorial to political prisoners’, *GEP*, 27 January 2012, p. 23.

²⁶⁸ Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, pp. 206-208.

considering the history of the Occupation, particularly in relation to resistance, this position has demonstrated its benefits through Carr, Sanders and Willmot's collaborative study in 2014, which would not have been possible without engaging with European frameworks. However, to attempt to force public memory within the Islands to conform to European modes of remembrance is to ignore the very relevant differences identified by Sanders preventing this rapprochement with European occupation memory. He argued the case of the Channel Islands 'drive[s] home ... a Britishness that emerges from the solidity of a particular institutional and constitutional set up: an order capable of withstanding an onslaught as violent as the Nazi Occupation and then surviving, unchallenged, into the post-war period.'²⁶⁹ Factors which made the Occupation unique within the Western European context are important, and continue to fuel the uneven maintenance of the Churchillian paradigm.

Furthermore, whilst it is noteworthy that resistance 'heroes' and victims of Nazism in the Islands are now studied and commemorated, there are statistical problems inherent with overly focusing on minority groups of Islanders. Carr, Sanders and Willmot estimated in 2014 that out of a combined population of roughly 68,000 in 1940, 'around 2% were tried and convicted for offences against the occupying authorities,' which they argued was broadly in line, proportionately, with other national contexts.²⁷⁰ Twenty-nine Islanders from Jersey and Guernsey died in German prisons or camps, whilst Carr estimated that 250 Islanders were deported for offences against the occupier.²⁷¹ Everyday defiance, opposition and continuing patriotism were widespread activities; engaging in more active resistance, being deported to the continent for these and enduring the trauma of that experience were nowhere near as hegemonic. Efforts to commemorate resistance figures, which has retrospectively heroized/martyrized individual Islanders, implicitly runs the risk of marginalising the more everyday experiences of ordinary Islanders and the day-to-day struggles that meant the most to them: food, clothing and fuel, for example. Occupation memory which achieves a balanced view is desirable, yet the championing of selected groups through heritage risks distortion. Rab Bennet noted a consequence of the post-war demonisation of collaborators in Europe was the 'sanctification of resisters – a cult of martyrology, with a debt of honour to preserve the[ir] sacred memory.'²⁷² There are signs that a belated 'cult of martyrology' is beginning to be pushed upon the Islands, for better or for worst.

²⁶⁹ Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', p. 36.

²⁷⁰ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 352.

²⁷¹ Carr, "'Have You Been Offended'", p. 47.

²⁷² Bennett, *Shadow of the Swastika*, p. 25.

Moreover, greater popular awareness of the extent of opposition and resistance to German rule is hardly a grave wound to much of the Churchillian paradigm. The *GEP* headline ran in November 2010 that Islanders had been ‘cleared at last’ from erroneous charges of an un-British passivity.²⁷³ Officially, the subject still ruffles feathers in Guernsey. However, the push back against the erroneous assumption that there was no resistance raises the Islanders up in British estimations; they had behaved as good Britons after all. Vinen suggested if there was a myth of wartime France, ‘then the English ... have done much to create that myth.’²⁷⁴ He cited the prevalence of portrayals of French resistance in post-war English literature, ‘pop[ping] up as a symbol of moral good in novels as diverse as Graham Swift’s *Shuttlecock*, Sebastien Faulks’ *Charlotte Gray* ... and Mary Wesley’s *Not That Sort of Girl*.’²⁷⁵ Tales of French resistance to Nazism allowed British citizens comfort when they pondered the ‘what if?’ of a German occupation of Britain – something which the Islands, until recently, did not provide. Whilst efforts to move the Occupation into a more European and comparative context have, from a scholarly perspective, been successful, the impact upon popular opinion in the Islands remains unclear. The Occupation as an experience may have borne similarities with formerly occupied Western European nations, yet this has never been how Islanders or the British have understood or remembered it. Alignment with British war memory will continue in some shape or form as long as they remain British Crown Dependencies, with patriotism and loyalty to the monarchy remaining important parts of local identity. The examination of recent Liberation Day celebrations confirms this: the continuing use of British commemorative tropes and focus on the values of stoicism and resolve demonstrate that British war memory retains a strong influence in the Islands, particularly in Guernsey and Sark, alongside newer and competing narratives of victimhood and resistance.

Conclusion

There are a range of interpretations in circulation today and continuing sectional battles for space within the Islands’ Occupation narratives. These lack the urgency and pain of the 1990s; however, the juxtaposition between victimhood and victory continues to jar. The revelations have ended, with most documents open for public inspection. Sensationalist views of the Occupations have, largely, been defused, either from scholarly study or through bold commemorative decisions. The collaborationist narrative has been put to rest, replaced by scholarship examining the varied ways in which Islanders opposed, defied and resisted

²⁷³ ‘Cleared at Last’, *GEP*, November 2010.

²⁷⁴ Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French: Life under the Occupation* (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 3.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

their occupiers and the specific insular factors which pushed some in the direction of fraternisation and passivity. Memorials to victim groups are now a part of the Islands' landscapes, yet values of resilience and stoicism continue to be espoused and hold currency. The tropes of British war memory continue to be the greatest takeaway in experiential terms. Any official statements discussing issues of collaboration, complicity and victimhood are drowned out by the sight of Union flags and Spitfires²⁷⁶ roaring above a pageant of victory, resilience and survival. On the day when the Occupation years are most prominent annually, the Union and Island flags side by side indicates that many still see the Occupation as a part of Britain's war. Sanders attested that rapprochement with European occupation memory has not occurred in the Islands, owing to a blend of Euroscepticism and close cultural and economic ties with Britain.²⁷⁷ Whilst there have been some developments away from this (Brexit was equally divisive in the islands), Sanders' statement retains validity on this point.

Amidst the backdrop of the work into Island resistance and other events bringing the marginal into the mainstream, Guernsey's 2018 Heritage Festival directly transplanted the images of Britain at war into its promotional material, representing a bizarre backward step. Likewise, Sark's 2015 Liberation commemoration was fully dressed up with the commemorative tropes of Britain at war. 'Occupation-related traditions', as Carr refers to them, continue relatively unabated.²⁷⁸ More simplistic and supposedly 'outmoded' popular interpretations may see a resurgence within the Liberation narrative, as the voices of the 1.5 generation become more prominent. Members of this are prone to utilising parental narratives and older cultural tropes in the construction of their testimonies, given that grand British myths of the war and their entrenchment occurred during their formative years.

In 2020, Jersey remains ahead of Guernsey in acknowledging the darker aspects of the Occupation, although the latter is moving in this direction. Alternative narratives of victimhood and resistance, therefore, can be expected to have more influence within Jersey than in Guernsey and Sark. Sark has only recently expanded its memorialisation of the Occupation, and early indications demonstrate that the Churchillian paradigm continues to be a vital aspect of their public memory. Liberation Day 2020 is an illuminating example for this thesis for its demonstration of how the early myth of the Occupation – sublime and unwavering resolve – remains relevant to Islanders today as much as the 'myth of the Blitz'

²⁷⁶ For a recent study of the place of the Supermarine Spitfire in Britain's cultural memory of the war, consult Tony Pratley, 'The Supermarine Spitfire: Palimpsest, Performance, and Myth' (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation: University of Kent, 2017).

²⁷⁷ Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', pp. 35-36.

²⁷⁸ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 285.

has for the British during the COVID-19 pandemic, with both seeing a resurgence.²⁷⁹ Whilst museums, memorials and scholarship depict an Occupation history of nuance, balancing suffering and persecution alongside stoicism and resolve, the message of Liberation Day retains a degree of simplicity. It is striking that this has continued to be a positive and celebratory commemorative event. Carr acknowledged official recognition of previously marginalised aspects can still feel like going through the motions.²⁸⁰ Furthermore, the centrality of Liberation Day to Islander identity, identified by Asa Briggs, indicates that this is the day in which the vast majority of Islanders engage with their history.²⁸¹

There is an assumption that changes to master narratives result in alteration to private memories and to a more nuanced collective understanding of the period. However, public representations are only one side of the equation. In the case of the historiography of the Occupation, the personal and the subjective have long been neglected in favour of the public and quantifiable, mirroring Raphael Samuels and Paul Thompson's comments on the tendency of historians to 'misleadingly concentrate' on the well documented public ceremonial sphere of memory, as opposed to considering how myths influence what 'people think and do.'²⁸² Certainly, long-awaited acknowledgement can enable previously suppressed narratives, as has been the case for ex-political prisoners, who have transitioned in popular memory from destabilising delinquents to Occupation heroes. This does not mean, conversely, that previously acceptable and widely held narratives alter in response to such changes in heritage, commemoration or new research disseminated publicly. As Carr reflected in 2018, academics also acting as activists cannot assume that they will be listened to or accepted.²⁸³ Filmic depictions, on the other hand, exert far greater power in this direction, as chapter five examines in relation to Guernsey testimonies of OT labourers.

The interrelationship between the public, popular and private is considered throughout the following chapters. Aspects of the Churchillian paradigm continue to form an important part of the way the Islands remember the war years. However, narratives which clash with these notions – victimhood and resistance – are becoming more prominent, and may yet attain hegemony. The impact of this tension upon the narratives of those who experienced those years requires exploration: do they reflect on themselves and others as stoics, victims, or a blend of the two? From the perspective of oral history and the potential

²⁷⁹ For a forthcoming edited collection exploring this, one should see Joanne Pettitt (ed.), *COVID-19, the Second World War, and the Idea of Britishness* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2021).

²⁸⁰ Carr, 'Occupation Heritage', p. 112.

²⁸¹ Asa Briggs, 'Memory and History: The Case of the Channel Islands', 5th Joan Stevens Memorial Lecture, St Helier, 26 April 1996.

²⁸² Ralph Samuels and Paul Thompson, 'Introduction' in *The Myths We Live By*, ed. by Raphael Samuels and Paul Thompson (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 14.

²⁸³ Carr, "'Have You Been Offended'", p. 61.

for popular or cultural memory influencing the construction of these, there are a range of often conceptually conflicting discourses available to Islanders. The next chapter analyses the ways in which the enduring and prominent cultural memory of Britain at war – and its more specific manifestations in the Islands – continue to shape the narratives of those who were children and young adults at the time.

Chapter Three

‘Surprising what you can make do with’:**Manifestations of British War Memory**

The food situation was ... desperate ... There was absolutely nothing in the shops ... There was the black market if you could afford it, but for ordinary decent people it was always the same: ‘no, I’m sorry, nothing.’ So, we had to make the best of a bad job and struggle through on what vegetables we could get.¹

In 1945, the Ministry of Information (MOI) produced a twenty-minute documentary film on the Occupation shortly after the Islands’ liberation. The MOI was the government department which controlled British propaganda during the war and played a key role in laying down the parameters of how the British would see themselves and the conflict after the war.² The film, which featured Islanders re-enacting their time under Nazi rule, presented a strongly British take on the events of the Occupation, portraying the Islands’ experiences in stoic terms and suggesting they had made ‘the best of a bad job,’ exemplified by the above extract. Describing the deprivations Islanders suffered as a ‘bad job’ was the epitome of understatement regarding the experiences of men, women and children who had spent five years severely short of food, fuel, clothing and medicine. In this regard, Islanders were victims of the war. However, victimhood was not a reconcilable concept within Britain’s victorious war memory.³ Through the careful language selected, the documentary sidestepped this, acknowledging the severity of the shortages whilst implying that Islanders had survived these with stoicism and grit, as all good Britons would have done.

The effect was to link the British and Channel Island experiences, forming part of the process by which the Islands’ public memories aligned with that of Britain.⁴ For British audiences, ideas of what rationing had entailed and the difficulties with black marketeering were recognisable aspects of their war and could generate sympathy and fellow feeling. For

¹ *The Channel Islands 1940-1945: Channel Islanders act out scenes from the German Occupation*, dir. Gerry Bryant, (GB: MOI/CFU, 1945).

² For the ways in which the MOI prepared scripts for the post-war memory of the conflict, see Julie Anderson, ‘The Undefeated: Propaganda, rehabilitation and post-war Britain’ in *Propaganda and Conflict: War, Media and Shaping the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Mark Connelly, Jo Fox, Stefan Goebel and Ulf Schmidt (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), pp. 209-227.

³ Paul Sanders, *The British Channel Islands under German Occupation, 1940-1945* (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2005), p. 235.

⁴ Paul Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness: UK War Memory and Channel Islands Occupation Memory’, in *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective*, ed. by Jodie Matthews and Daniel Travers (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), p. 30.

Islanders, the similarities to the British experience of the war were apparent and the terms in which these were discussed were laid down ready to be adopted into their own lexicon of occupation. References were made to ‘mend and make do’. This drew a link between the propaganda slogan, ‘mend and make do to save buying new’, coined in 1943 to encourage British people to be less wasteful, and the improvisations Islanders made in avoiding starvation.⁵ Over scenes which reflected Islanders’ deprivations, the film’s narration stated that ‘when tea stopped coming in, we made it from bramble leaves ... And as for clothes, it was a case of mending and mending.’⁶ Whilst the content ensured British audiences were aware of how severe conditions in the Islands had been, the reworking of the slogan firmly linked the two experiences through the language of Britain at war.

The documentary record demonstrates that the Occupation was an exceptionally trying period. Sanders summarised it as ‘an unpalatable five years of stagnation.’⁷ Diaries indicate how mentally taxing the Occupation was for Islanders. On 12 April 1942, Albert Bisson, a Guernsey doctor, recorded that: ‘... the monotony of ... [the war] ... is getting people down ... I must confess I get terribly depressed and wonder ... how I shall be able to stand it to the end.’⁸ Bisson was in his sixties and struggled to cope following the evacuation of his wife and adult children. He found it an increasingly dreary experience and referred to how the Islanders’ mental state deteriorated, stating in October 1941 that ‘everyone seems depressed and apathetic, there is no fun and laughter.’⁹ This stuck in Islanders’ memories. Arthur Kent, a Jersey clerk in his twenties during the war, reflected in the late 1980s that the Occupation had been ‘a period of depression ... [and] ... melancholy.’¹⁰ Moreover, the deprivations Islanders endured were significant. The comprehensive study of the Occupation’s effects on the health of the population led by Rosemary Head and George Ellison during the 2000s evidenced how the wartime deprivations affected Islanders at the time and in subsequent years. They contended that the Occupation saw an ‘increase in a range of ailments, a decline in growth amongst children and, in certain sections of the population, higher rates of mortality.’¹¹ They further suggested that malnourishment greatly

⁵ This campaign consisted of films, posters, pamphlets and radio broadcasts which provided practical advice on making food, clothing and other materials go as far as possible. For examples of these materials, see IWM, NPB 13037 ‘MOI Produced Film “Make Do and Mend”’, 1943; and IWM, Art.IWM PST 3161 ““Make-Do and Mend Says Mrs Sew-and-Sew” Poster’, 1943.

⁶ *The Channel Islands 1940-1945*, 1945.

⁷ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 234.

⁸ Priaulx Library (PL), St Peter Port, LF 940.53BIS ‘Transcript of the Diary of Dr Albert Bisson’, 12 April 1942.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 19 October 1941.

¹⁰ IWM, Docs 5750a Misc. 189/1, ‘Transcript of Interview with Arthur Kent’, n.d.

¹¹ Rosemary Head and George Ellison, ‘Conditions in the Channel Islands during the 1940-45 German Occupation and their Impact on the Health of Islanders: A Systematic Review of Published Reports and First-Hand Accounts’, *Internationalis: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the History of Public Health*, 8:1 (2009), p. 72.

impacted the health of Islanders in later life.¹² Sanders argued that conditions in the Channel Islands were remarkably similar to those seen in the Low Countries during the ‘Hunger Winter’ of 1944-45, when the populations of Belgium and the Netherlands suffered extreme shortages and a severe spike in mortality. However, food had run short from 1941 in the Islands, and the health problems and rise in mortality had peaked in 1942. By the winter of 1944-45, the Islanders had adapted and grown accustomed to improvising when it came to consuming enough food.¹³ By comparison, the abrupt drop in calorific intake for the Dutch caused proportionately far more deaths and issues surrounding fertility.¹⁴ This comparison sheds light on the extent of the wartime deprivations in the Islands, which cannot be underestimated. Moreover, the emotional effects of surviving these could be severe.

However, the Churchillian paradigm offered Islanders a safe lens through which to interpret their experiences. Kent’s testimony indicated this process. During the interview, Kent made the following assertion about how he, and through his language a larger collective, remembered the dark years of occupation: ‘we all used to talk about the happenings of the Occupation, but as the years went by it was mostly the humorous things we remembered rather than the grim times, we always remember the funny things.’¹⁵ Kent suggested that that the lighter side of the experience remained prominent in his personal memories of the war, co-existing alongside more challenging recollections. The discursive tropes and conceptual structures of British war memory still influence the construction of Islanders’ oral testimonies. The majority of the project’s interviewees (those of the 1.5 generation and older teenagers), were particularly prone to the cultural constructions of the post-war years, in terms of both British and local ‘memories’ of the war. These provided frameworks to situate their often-fragmented direct recollections, alongside family stories. This chapter examines the influence of British war memory on their narratives. Geoff Eley argued that British war memory and the reasonably consistent values bound up within it have been a prominent part of British culture since the end of the war, notably in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁶ The interviewees, barring one exception, were in their teenage years or twenties during this period which Eley defined as being ‘suffused with the war and its effects.’¹⁷ The memory of Britain’s war has proved remarkably enduring, and continues to hold cultural

¹² Ibid., p. 74.

¹³ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 155.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 154-155.

¹⁵ IWM, ‘Kent Transcript’.

¹⁶ Geoff Eley, ‘Finding the People’s War: Film, British Collective Memory and World War Two’, *American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), pp. 818-819.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 819.

primacy in Britain through a variety of media consumed by wide audiences.¹⁸ Consequently, interviewees' memories of the war are likely to have been shaped by the culturally prominent representations of Britain and Britons at war, buttressed by the cultural representations which have appeared throughout their adult lives. Moreover, the dominance of British war memory and its status as a cultural hegemon in relation to ideas of composure, indicates that Britain's victorious war memory should be a key influence on narrative construction. Gilly Carr argued the over-arching war narratives in Guernsey and Jersey 'dispelled the darkness from the experience of occupation ... and was responsible for an inaccurate war myth which still holds sway.'¹⁹ This chapter explores the continuing relevance of the Churchillian paradigm and the manifestations of this. It examines the ways in which this 'inaccurate' myth was created and how, similar to the 'big facts' of Britain's Blitz myth noted by Angus Calder, it retains enough truth as to be virtually indestructible.²⁰

The influence of the language of Britain at war could be prominent. Mary Blampied was a Jersey girl aged eleven in 1940, living in St Helier. British war memory and the discursive structures dominant within this were important aspects of how Blampied viewed and articulated her experiences. The following exchange encapsulated this. Blampied raised a potentially uncomfortable subject and was forced to manage its memory. This was achieved by moving our conversation onto safer ground through the articulation of stoicism:

Blampied: We did [feel forgotten about]. And even our Bailiff then, big letters in the Evening Post, "running away from your Island like rats.' That was one of the Evening Post, I remember that.

Guille: How did that sort of thing make people feel?

Blampied: Well you just felt that you were left to get on with it ... Of course, us kids we didn't, it's only as we got a bit older that we thought 'oh bloomin' heck!' But er _ surprising how people will make do. I mean we got used to having soup every day [chuckles]. With water. And carrot. And onions. Swede! Parsnips!²¹

Blampied raised the issue of evacuation and how she felt that the Islands had been forgotten during the war. The evacuation period in June 1940 was a challenging time for Islanders: there was widespread panic, the responses of the Island authorities to the crisis was often

¹⁸ Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson 'Introduction: "Keep Calm and Carry On"', in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, ed. by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 2.

¹⁹ Gilly Carr, 'Denial of the Darkness, Identity and Nation-Building in Small Islands: A Case Study from the Channel Islands', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies*, ed. by Phillip Stone (London: Palgrave, 2018), p. 359.

²⁰ Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (2nd Ed.) (London: Pimlico, 1992), p. 120.

²¹ Mary Blampied, Interview with Richard Guille, 21 May 2019.

contradictory and tension existed between those who stayed and the 25,000 who departed.²² In response to my question about how statements made by Jersey officials made people feel, Blampied struggled for coherence before tailing off. When she paused at ‘but er’, Blampied drastically shifted to a subject she felt more comfortable discussing: deprivations and how Islanders survived these. Through applying the term ‘make do’, she aligned the Islands’ experiences with this construct, similar to the 1945 MOI film. Her phrase ‘surprising how people will make do’ suggested that Islanders had gone above and beyond what would usually be expected from people in their circumstances, demonstrating pride at how they had managed the shortages. Her chuckle signified that the recollection amused her and portrayed a blasé attitude to the memory of deprivation. A subject difficult to reconcile with British war memory, Island evacuation, threatened to engender discomposure, and psychic comfort was attained by shifting to a ‘safe’ subject easily subsumable within the British experience: ‘making do’.

This was not an isolated occurrence. Blampied repeatedly presented a stoical interpretation and used the language of ‘making do’ as psychological *terra firma* when more challenging subjects were spoken of. Blampied’s testimony lay at the extreme end of the material covered and in other cases traces of British war memory are more subtle. However, her testimony alludes to the central questions of the chapter: how important are British war memory and the Churchillian paradigm to the identity of Islanders who remember the Occupation? To what extent are these mobilised in the construction of their oral narratives? This chapter posits that British war memory remains an important narrative framework available to Islanders in the composure of their oral testimonies. Equally, the features of local Occupation memory – the variant of this prominent during the stasis period – influence the ways Islanders articulate their memories of the war years in the Islands. Gender as a factor is also considered. This has been the subject of Nicole Watkins recently completed doctoral dissertation. This was built around the notion that the Occupation challenged established gendered constructions, such as martial masculinity and feminine virtue, and remedying this through communal story-telling was a feature of the early post-Occupation years.²³ With this fresh contribution in mind, the chapter has stayed alive to any potential

²² Charles Cruickshank covered the events of the evacuation period in his official history, particularly highlighting the failings of both the British and Island governments in managing the crisis. See Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 15-34. For more general histories of the Channel Islands evacuation and the experiences of the Islander refugees in Britain, see Gillian Mawson, *Guernsey Evacuees: The Forgotten Evacuees of the Second World War* (Stroud: The History Press, 2012) and Brian Ahier Read, *No Cause for Panic: Channel Islands Refugees 1940-45* (St Helier: Seaflower Books, 1995).

²³ The presence of a sorely needed gender study within the historiography of the Occupation represents an intriguing advancement which will open fresh lines of enquiry. Nicolle Watkins, ‘Gender, community and the memory of the Second World War occupation of the Channel Islands’

influence of gendered experience or cultural construction upon the testimonies garnered for this thesis.

Whereas public memory tends towards a relatively consistent message and evolution, private memories prove far more contradictory and challenging to unravel. The tension and disjuncture between varied and complex lived experience and the purer parameters of an officially endorsed memory of an event are laid bare through the qualitative analysis of oral testimonies. The chapter outlines the evolution of the language of stoicism in the Channel Islands, drawing the links between contemporary constructions of Britain at war and the Islanders' own lexicon of Occupation, attained through a mixture of patriotism, lived experience and exposure to British radio broadcasts. It moves on to analyse examples from the interviews conducted for this project where examples of the 'language of stoicism' appeared, alongside stoic jokes which downplayed the extent Islanders suffered. The focus transfers onto more local manifestations, which can be defined by uncontroversial subjects, including the improvisations and ingenuities which arose from the severe deprivations in the Islands, boyhood memories of exciting military events and memories of a victorious Liberation Day. British war memory and the specific local manifestations of this continue to assert tangible influence upon Islander's testimonies, despite recent challenges to this interpretation.

The Language of Stoicism and its Entrenchment in the Channel Islands

The key phrase which this chapter engages with is 'stoicism', the most straightforward concept of Britain at war which Islanders could lock into. The quality of 'stoicism' can be defined as not displaying overt emotion in response to circumstances. It is most applied in the context of responding to negative, dangerous or upsetting experiences without complaint or showing one's true emotions. During the Second World War, the concept became bound up with older notions of British 'phlegm' and the maintenance of a stiff upper lip, particularly important in wartime Britain in relation to morale. Angus Calder noted, "British Phlegm" had its "Finest Hour" in the Blitz ... it had the same kind of use for civilians under bombing as for soldiers under fire: one had to "keep merry and bright."²⁴ This led to the creation of one of the more powerful myths of Britain at war: that the British had remained cheerful in the face of the war's hardships. They had pulled together without grumbling or complaint in the collective effort of attaining victory, through keeping spirits up as the

(Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Essex, 2018). Information sourced from thesis abstract, available at <<https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.743928>> [Accessed 7th April 2020].

²⁴ Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz*, pp. 17-18.

bombs rained down or quietly accepting one's reduced rations as an individual contribution to winning the war. Whilst this was a construction encouraged by the British government to maintain morale, with the reality being far less even, the extent to which ideas of stoic British behaviour under fire have been enshrined into myth and embraced by British people of all ages cannot be understated.²⁵ Islanders could use stoicism to downplay moments of fear or suffering, matching up with the way fear in Britain was considered to be a negative emotion during the war. Lucy Noakes summarised how fear was framed during the war through films like *In Which We Serve* (1943) as a 'shameful and selfish emotion that had to be mastered if one was to do one's duty in wartime.'²⁶ She further pointed to the ways these ideas were built upon in post-war cultural representation.²⁷ Wartime citizenship and social cohesion relied on the suppression of negative emotions, which required stoicism, stiff upper lips and British grit. These qualities were uniquely applicable to the Islands.

Sonya Rose argued the war 'is remembered through films, posters, songs, and fiction as a time when civilians mustered their energies to "do their bit" and to "keep smiling through..."'²⁸ The deep temporal penetration of the cultural imaginaries of the period have been evident in recent years. Phrases such as 'Blitz Spirit' have been called upon and repackaged to summarise responses to crises from the 2005 London bombings to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. In the first instance, for example, the *Daily Mirror* urged its readers to 'adopt the famous Blitz spirit.'²⁹ Noakes and Juliette Pattinson commented that immediately after the bombings, 'references to the Blitz, and "the Blitz spirit" were immediate and omnipresent.'³⁰ In the spring of 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic became more severe, the British media were quick to rework the mythical interpretation of the Blitz.³¹ The *Daily Star* commented on 'pensioners who lived through [the] Blitz ... plead[ing] with younger generations to do their "duty"' under the headline 'The Blitz! Over 70s urge Brits to step up.'³² Likewise, the *Daily Mail* reported Vera Lynn's comments on the crisis under the

²⁵ For a discussion of the way the myth of stoical endurance to aerial bombardment evolved and a critique of British responses to aerial bombardment, see Richard Overy, *The Bombing War: Europe 1939-1945* (London: Penguin, 2014), pp. 173-185.

²⁶ For example, Noakes pointed to the now sadly defunct 'Blitz Experience' in the Imperial War Museum, London, which emphasised the stoicism and cheeriness of working-class Londoners under fire. Lucy Noakes, 'War on the Web: The BBC's 'People's War' Website and Memories of Fear in Wartime in 21st-Century Britain', in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, ed. by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 53.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁸ Sonya Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), p. 1.

²⁹ Noakes and Pattinson, 'Introduction', p. 10.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³¹ See Joanne Pettitt (ed.), *COVID-19, the Second World War, and the Idea of Britishness* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2021).

³² Kate Nelson, 'The Blitz! Puttin' On; Over 70s urge Brits to step up on stay home challenge', *The Daily Star*, 25 March 2020, pp. 4-5.

banner ‘Britain’s WW2 sweetheart ... summons the Blitz Spirit ... to “pull together” [to] “weather the storm of coronavirus”’³³ The week before the UK was locked down on 23 March 2020, the hashtag ‘#blitzspirit’ was notably used on the social media platform Twitter, as an exhortation for people to behave more calmly, to celebrate people pulling together or to attack people for ‘un-British’ behaviour during the crisis.³⁴ Myths of Britain at war saw a distinct reprisal. For British citizens of all ages, the officially constructed narrative of behaviour during the Blitz is the yardstick against which social responses to crises and events are measured.

Stoicism and its concomitant concepts were a more readily accessible narrative framework for Islanders than those surrounding heroism. The dominant experience of German Occupation for many Islanders did not revolve around heroically resisting the Nazis, as per the Gaullist myth in France, but around survival of increasingly severe deprivations.³⁵ The celebration of the resolve of the ordinary Islander dovetailed with the elevation of the ordinary British citizen during the war. Rose noted ‘those who best represented Britain ... were not exceptional individuals but rather were every-day, ordinary people ... doing their bit.’³⁶ V. V. Cortvriend, a patriotic Guernsey woman who published a history with elements of memoir in 1947, indicated how the narrative of stoicism became entrenched. She argued:

the few outstanding incidents which took place here ... were all of ... an [un]inspiring nature. The true and unexaggerated story of our daily lives during the Occupation is ... one of patient endurance ... rather than of spectacular heroism. ... Our sufferings were mental and spiritual more than physical.³⁷

Given the Islands were tied to a still belligerent nation, they did not share any of the national humiliation and defeatism felt by nations such as France. Resistance lacked the urgency of regaining national pride.³⁸ As opposed to traditional notions of heroism, a discourse of stoicism developed, becoming the dominant interpretation of the Occupation.

Alice Evans argued Islanders’ ‘testimonies ... focus on the hardships of the Occupation and portray Islanders as heroically doing their best in an extraordinary and

³³ Alex Ward, ‘Britain’s WW2 sweetheart Dame Vera Lynn, 102, summons the Blitz spirit in rallying cry to “pull together” and “weather the storm of coronavirus”’, *MailOnline*, <<https://advance.lexis.com/document>> [Accessed 4 April 2020].

³⁴ See <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23blitzspirit&src=recent_search_click> [Accessed 30 March 2020].

³⁵ Henri Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 16.

³⁶ Rose, *Which People’s War?*, p. 5.

³⁷ V. V. Cortvriend, *Isolated Island: A History and Personal Reminiscences of the German Occupation of the Island of Guernsey, June 1940 – May 1945* (Guernsey, 1947), p. 70.

³⁸ Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, p. 27.

difficult situation.’³⁹ This has always been one of the most durable and safest memory of the Occupation⁴⁰ Sanders noted ‘that “make do and mend” is such an omnipresent theme in Occupation reminiscences is not ... unwarranted.’⁴¹ He contended that this lay at the core of ‘Islanders’ attachment to the Occupation as a collective experience’, believing that the war years represented their ““finest hour”” due to their survival.⁴² The deprivations offered a tangible link to Britain’s war, where qualities of grit and stoicism came to the fore. Moreover, some felt the shortages led to a general removal of class distinctions in the Islands. Noakes posited the notion of British society pulling together, regardless of class, was the dominant popular memory of the Second World War.⁴³ The Jersey newspaperman and diarist Leslie Sinel commented in the 1980s ‘there was no class in those days, we were all in the same boat.’⁴⁴ By focusing on the positive aspects of community cohesion, the difficult memory of the minority who actively went against this through profiteering or informing was sidestepped. This suggested that Islanders had endured the deprivations stoically as something to be borne in the effort of seeing things through until Allied victory.

This has implications on the composure of Islanders’ oral testimonies. The prevalence of the slogans of Britain during the war, many of which have lived on in the cultural memory of the war, provide a framework for individuals to interpret their own experiences. Manifestations of British war memory can often come through via specific terms derived from these wartime slogans, such as ‘make do’ or the recent ubiquity of ‘keep calm and carry on’.⁴⁵ Pattinson argued that cultural discourses, within which these terms exist, can be conceptualised as ‘narrative hooks’, upon which interviewees ‘hang’ their own narratives to compose their specific experiences within hegemonic ideas.⁴⁶ In the case of the Islands, phrases such as ‘making do’ or ‘doing our bit’ crop up as shorthand, neatly summarising the deeper implications of an event and aligning the memory within broader ideas of wartime Britishness. The slogans in evidence fulfilled the function identified by

³⁹ Alice Evans, ‘Introduction’ in Violet Carey, *Guernsey Under German Occupation: The Second World War Diaries of Violet Carey*, ed. by Alice Evans (Chichester: Phillimore and Co, 2009), p. xvi.

⁴⁰ Hazel Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands’ Occupation: Record, Memory, Myth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 75.

⁴¹ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 148.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 148.

⁴³ Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender, Memory and National Identity* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1998), p. 23.

⁴⁴ IWM, Docs. 5750a Misc. 189/1 ‘Leslie Sinel Interview Transcript’, n.d. Also see IWM, Sound 12706, ‘Interview with Frank Stroobant’, 11 June 1991.

⁴⁵ ‘Keep Calm and Carry On’ was a poster series planned in 1939 that was not circulated during the war due to its inappropriately paternalistic tone for a ‘People’s War’. The poster was rediscovered in 2001 and its slogan went viral, summarising classic British values of stoicism and understatement in the face of adversity, equally applicable to being caught in the rain *sans* umbrella or picking one’s way through bomb craters in 1940 London. See Bex Lewis, *Keep Calm and Carry On: The Truth Behind the Poster* (London: Imperial War Museum, 2017).

⁴⁶ Juliette Pattinson, ‘The thing that made me hesitate...’: Re-examining Gendered Intersubjectivities in Interviews with British Secret War Veterans’, *Women’s History Review*, 20:2 (2011), p. 247.

Pattinson, made possible as each phrase denoted a series of generally understood concepts. British war memory is made up of several such concepts which cover a broad spread of behaviours, ideas or ideals, of which socialised citizens cannot help but be aware. Most Britons know the concepts underpinning Britishness and British behaviour during the war: stoicism, unflappability and fighting on the side of right in the ‘correct and proper’ manner in contrast to the brutal Nazis.

One can narrate memories of the war with confidence that British listeners will understand the conceptualisations underpinning the deployed narrative hook. The temptation to frame the experience within these hegemonic terms is acute, ensuring the understandability of the account. There was an intersubjective dynamic. Concepts such as ‘making do’ rely on a shared cultural understanding to be effective. My personal interest in Britain during the Second World War was clear to the interviewees through initial off the record conversations. Some interviewees became confident that I would understand this cultural shorthand and decode the concepts bound up within these. Whilst the presence of terms such as ‘managed’ and ‘making do’ in the testimonies represent the influence of cultural constructions, my presence in the room and interviewees’ assumed understanding of my own knowledge was also a factor.

Interviewees were proud of how they, their parents and society adapted to conditions. Yet to overtly emphasise the suffering endured risked clashing with the central pillar of the Churchillian paradigm: that Islanders had been victors, not victims. Those who mobilised the language of stoicism downplayed negative emotions and memories, and to accentuate the positive outcomes. Islanders are caught in a conceptual contradiction; the remarkability of their survival depends on acknowledging just how parlous conditions were. Islanders have traditionally had to navigate this nexus in remembering the Occupation shortages, providing another area where discourses conflict. Rather than looking to heroic actions in the construction of their memories of the war, Islanders tend to focus on the quiet everyday heroism of survival. This provided a precedent for occupied children and young adults to deploy stoic terms. Carr summarised how the adult generations discussed their experiences of Occupation in ‘harmless and amusing anecdotes ... of how they outwitted the Germans ... how their bowels and stomachs suffered ... [and] ... the thrill of Liberation when it finally came.’⁴⁷ Resultantly, the Occupation came to be seen as ‘exciting’ rather than ‘terrible or monotonous’. This underpinned the drive of the generation born in the two decades after 1945 to recover the material of Occupation which their parents and

⁴⁷ Gilly Carr, ‘The Slowly Healing Scars of Occupation’, *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 3:2 (2010), pp. 254-255.

grandparents had sought to destroy.⁴⁸ The second-hand stories and attitudes passed down from parents to their children post-war were important factors shaping the interviewees' views.

The ways in which Islanders aligned themselves with the tropes of British war memory requires examination. A drawback of Sanders' research was that the Islands' alignment with British war memory was presented as a *fait accompli*, with little explanation of the role of the ordinary Islander. On an official level, the alignment made sense. However, for dominant memories to attain hegemony, they must be accepted and recognised by a broad segment of those to whom they pertain. Noakes argued public memories 'must be easily understood by the majority of people' and to resonate 'with people's life experience.'⁴⁹ Evidently, a majority of Islanders came to view their experiences as part of Britain's war, despite its clear divergence. This can be explained through the actions of the British government, who after Liberation were concerned about a perceived lack of knowledge in the Islands about Britain's war. The Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, was perturbed by the limited understanding of conditions in Britain and the damage of the bombing.⁵⁰ To remedy this, the government sent films, pamphlets and official booklets to the Islands to educate the population. The propaganda films *Target for Tonight* (1941) and *Desert Victory* (1943) were shown in local cinemas.⁵¹ The MOI noted on 29 June 1945 that by mid-August sixty-five shows were planned for an audience of 20,000 Islanders.⁵² Information also filtered through from Allied soldiers re-occupying the Islands. This provided the Islanders with a deeper awareness of broader events beyond their own narrow experience, leading some to reflect differently on the nature of the Occupation.

Letters sent from Jersey shortly after liberation indicate this trend. They represent the first circle of post-war testimony, as Islanders sought to boil down five years for news hungry relatives. The influence of British propaganda was clear from some correspondence, and suggested Islanders felt those on the mainland had suffered worse hardships, such as the Blitz. Anne Caddick, a Jerseywoman in her sixties, remarked to her family how 'the British soldiers have told us about the Blitz and the rockets and I am sure we have been better off here than you in England.'⁵³ Islanders were not relying solely on their imagination and

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 256; also see Gilly Carr, "'Illicit Antiquities'?" The Collection of Nazi Militaria in the Channel Islands', *World Archaeology*, (2016), pp. 1-13.

⁴⁹ Noakes, *War and the British*, p. 12.

⁵⁰ TNA, PREM 3/87/5, 'Report on Home Secretary's Visit to the Channel Islands, 14 and 15 May 1945', p. 3 and HO 144/22176/890290, 'Correspondence between Herbert Morrison and Brendan Bracken re. Information for Islanders', 16 – 23 May 1945.

⁵¹ TNA, HO 144/22176/890290 'F. H. Dowden to C. G. Markbreiter re. MOI work in the Channel Islands', 29 June 1945.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ JAS, L/C/99/A/1 'Letter from Anne Caddick to Mrs Thompson', 28 June 1945, p. 3.

second-hand information of the Blitz. The *Luftwaffe* raids on St Peter Port and St Helier on 28 June 1940 had given them an uncomfortable glimpse of aerial bombardment, and its violence had terrified Islanders.⁵⁴ For the remainder of 1940, islanders grew accustomed to the ominous sight of hundreds of German aircraft flying to raid southern England. Learning of the scale of German raids over England increased the Islanders' admiration. Bernard Bree, a thirty-six-year-old Jerseyman, described to his in-laws how 'we thought of you many times, and not without great anxiety during the Blitz and rocket bombardment; everybody in this Island feel[s] a tremendous admiration for the people of Britain and especially London.'⁵⁵ Kathleen Le Scelleur recounted how she had made an effort to better understand Britain's war, and provided evidence to suggest that going to the cinema had altered her views: 'We have been going to the pictures quite a bit ... to bring ourselves up to date with the war effort. We had seen "Battle of Britain" and after that we all agree that though we had to go short of food, we always had a bed to lie on ... and no worry about bombs.'⁵⁶

This continued as Islanders moved further into the post-war period. Constance Chapstick, a Jersey hotel manager during the war, reflected how she 'could mention many hardships we endured, but they were small compared with being blitzed.'⁵⁷ The origins of these sentiments could be found during the Occupation. In Jersey, a poem written in 1944 by Winter Le Brocq, 'Indictment', assailed Islanders for complaining about the discomfort of occupation life when Allied servicemen were fighting and dying in France.⁵⁸ By September 1944 the poem reached Guernsey where it was read by Violet Carey, an upper-middle class diarist in her sixties. She recorded 'that "Indictment" is absolutely true. We *are* like that. Instead of being thankful because our sufferings are so negligible compared to the sufferings of our boys ... We have so much to be thankful for.'⁵⁹ To argue that the Islanders felt embarrassed by their own experiences compared to the mainland would stretch the point. However, when the nature of the cultural productions they consumed after Liberation are taken into account, some were compelled to downplay aspects of their experiences. Many letters, rather than reflecting on issues of collaboration or resistance, provided detailed lists of shortages, prices and substitutes, demonstrating the salience of this aspect of life to the Occupation experience.⁶⁰ The introduction of British propaganda provided Islanders with a

⁵⁴ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, p. 67 and pp. 70-71.

⁵⁵ JAS, L/D/250/A1/1/5 'Bernard Bree Letter', 30 May 1945, p. 3.

⁵⁶ JAS, L/D/274/A1/1 'Kathleen Le Scelleur Letter regarding Occupation', 2 July 1945, p. 3.

⁵⁷ JAS, L/D/25/A/11 'Constance Chapstick Memoirs', n.d., pp. 5-6.

⁵⁸ PL, LF940.53, 'Illustrated copy of "Indictment" by Norman le Brocq', June 1944.

⁵⁹ Violet Carey, *Guernsey Under German Occupation: The Second World War Diaries of Violet Carey*, ed. by Alice Evans (Chichester: Phillimore and Co, 2009), p. 176-178.

⁶⁰ See, for example, PL, LF940.53AGA Vol. II 'Account of Caroline Muriel Shelton-Agar'. Letters sent between Agar and her relatives are indicative of this trend to focus on food and shortage as opposed to anything more controversial. Another striking example of this can be found in IWM,

framework within which to interpret and situate their experiences. Importantly, this was a British constructed and imposed framework, as opposed to a western-European view. It further entrenched the terminology of Britain's war into the Islands' collective language.

Patriotism was an important aspect of the Islanders' war. It showed opposition to the German presence through demonstrating continuing loyalty to Britain. This was enabled by the Germans themselves, who allowed Islanders to retain their wireless sets until June 1942 and say prayers for the King in church.⁶¹ For many, there was no question of loyalty to Britain faltering. Francis Connor, a young Jersey Post Office employee stated: 'all our support was ... for the British ... I mean let's face it, we were British through and through.'⁶² Identifying as British sustained many through the Occupation's uncertainties: Louis Mourant recalled in 1990 that 'we knew that they would never win ... we had enough faith ... to know that they would eventually be beaten.'⁶³ Pressed by his interviewer, he expanded: 'we're British aren't we?'⁶⁴ Carr demonstrated how Islanders continued to show their allegiance to Britain during the V-sign campaign of 1941 through painting 'V's or wearing 'V' lapel pins hidden beneath collars. Wearing patriotic colours also served a similar function.⁶⁵ Patriotism continues to be a source of pride. Paulette Bichard, a sixteen-year-old Guernseywoman in 1945, remembered the funeral held at the Islands' Foulon Cemetery on 23/24 October 1943 for naval ratings of HMS *Charybdis*, which was sunk near Guernsey after an engagement with German E-Boats. Almost 5,000 Islanders swamped the cemetery, many to lay wreaths of red, white and blue flowers, being the most significant moment of patriotic display during Guernsey's Occupation. Bichard sought to underscore the importance of this in her narrative with precise and emphatic speech:

It was on the newspaper, that ... if people wanted to go a few people could go. Five thousand of us went. Everybody that could get there went there ... We all took flowers and the Germans had such a shock to see so many people there ... It was something we could do for our people. And we did it. Yeah. In style.⁶⁶

Docs. 09/62/1, 'Private papers of Mr and Mrs R. Foley', 1945. A seven-page letter to relatives after the liberation of Guernsey devoted the first four to the nature of the shortages and how they had mitigated these, *before* discussing the OT labourers and the conduct of the Germans.

⁶¹ Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule*, 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico, 2004), pp. 194-195. For discussion of the confiscation of wireless sets, see chapter five.

⁶² IWM, Docs 5750a Misc. 189/1 'F.W.G. Connor Interview Transcript', n.d.

⁶³ IWM, Sound 11097 'Interview with Louis Clarence Mourant', 21 January 1990.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ See Gilly Carr, Paul Sanders and Louise Willmot (eds.), *Protest, Defiance and Resistance in the Channel Islands: German Occupation 1940-45* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 19-42.

⁶⁶ Paulette Bichard, Interview with Richard Guille, 26 April 2018.

Islanders' enduring patriotism confirmed that the loyalty of the vast majority never wavered, and that they underwent a distinctly European experience whilst very much identifying as British citizens.

The radio listening of the Islanders was also an important unifying factor, with many regularly tuning into the BBC or hearing second-hand news of how the war was progressing. This shaped their understanding of the conflict and how the war was being understood by the British, further explaining the continuing influence of the language of Britain at war. Diary entries reveal that Islanders followed a British war and thought about it in those terms. In the summer of 1940, Winifred Harvey, a middle-class Guernsey diarist in her fifties, followed keenly along to Britain's struggle for survival through the BBC as she witnessed large formations of German aircraft gathering overhead. She recorded 'We just live from one news item to another.' Being able to keep up with the war news led her to comment that 'the wireless is the greatest treasure!'.⁶⁷ Roy Thomas, a Jerseyman, recalled in the late 1980s how:

for the first two years we were allowed to retain our wireless sets ... so we did have contact with Britain and quite apart from the importance of the war news ... we did keep in touch with our people ... all the well-known names, Tommy Handley of course and Garrison Theatre from Bristol ... *Life with the Lyons* and many of the favourite radio programmes we got to ... cheer us up.⁶⁸

Others remembered the lows associated with following Britain's war effort. Frank Keiller, a Jerseyman during the Occupation involved in a number of acts against the Germans, recalled in 1999 how he 'remember[ed] particularly when I heard that HMS Hood had been sunk, my stomach went down into my boots.'⁶⁹ Whilst their ability to participate in Britain's war effort was severely limited, through keeping up with the news Islanders were able to follow Britain's war. Islanders kept score during the Battle of Britain, were perturbed by military setbacks and felt linked to the national effort through their wirelesses.

Moreover, the language of Britain at war was already being mobilised by the Islanders in terms of slogans and phrases which helped them interpret their experiences in

⁶⁷ Winifred Harvey, *The Battle of Newlands: The Wartime Diaries of Winifred Harvey*, edited by Rosemary Booth (Guernsey: The Guernsey Press co., 1995), p. 18. This trend can also be found in the published diaries of the Guernsey woman Ruth Ozanne and the Jersey Deputy Edward Le Quesne, who both followed along to the news and occasionally noted the 'score' of aircraft downed as reported by the BBC in their entries during this period. See Ruth Ozanne, *Life in Occupied Guernsey: The Diaries of Ruth Ozanne 1940-1945*, ed. by William Parker, (Stroud, Amberly Publishing, 2011), pp. 20-27; Edward Le Quesne, *The Occupation of Jersey Day-By-Day: The Personal Diary of Deputy Edward Le Quesne* ed. by Michael Ginns (Jersey: La Haule Books, 1999), pp. 2-15. Le Quesne was notably thrilled by the grossly inflated tally of 185 German machines claimed destroyed by the RAF on 15 September 1940, p. 15.

⁶⁸ IWM, Docs. 5750a Misc. 189/1 'Roy Thomas Interview Transcript', n.d.

⁶⁹ JAS, L/D/25/L/31 'BBC Radio Jersey Interview with Frank Keiller', 1 January 1999.

line with those of the British. Carey demonstrated this process. On 31 December 1944, shortly after the arrival of Red Cross supplies on the SS Vega, which saved the Islands from starvation, and during a period of extreme deprivation, she recorded that ‘everybody laughed and was as bright as anything in Town or when they were together. Nobody grumbled, everybody made the best of our really appalling conditions. The universal motto has been right through the Occupation, ‘we will show the Germans we can take it.’⁷⁰ Two phrases jump out here: ‘made the best’ and ‘we can take it’, both stoic statements prominent in the way the British were encouraged to respond to the hardships of war. Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp noted how ‘the “we can take it” attitude ... served as a barrier against despair and numbed acquiescence to German control.’⁷¹ If the linguistic constructions prevalent in Britain at the time had already filtered into Islanders’ consciousness before the end of the war, it is hardly surprising, given their frequent post-war reinforcement and reiterations, that they continued to serve as a framing device for the articulation of past experience in the present.

Wartime humour formed a focal point around which local and national identities coalesced. The stark contrast between the seriousness of the Occupation and amusing moments exacerbated their humour, such as an individual attempting to stoke a fire unknowingly using broken bellows and bemused at the lack of their efforts’ success, or a terrified horse during an amateur play lengthily evacuating its bowels at the sound of the band, leaving the audience in hysterics.⁷² Such instances would be amusing in any context. During the Occupation they became hilarious due to their enhanced incongruity. Corinna Peniston-Bird and Penny Summerfield argued ‘humour ... plays an important role in the imagined community of a wartime nation,’ with this being the case in wartime Britain.⁷³ Humour served to define the British against the Germans. Wendy Ugolini and Pattinson argued that ‘British national character was also being constructed in opposition to the humourless and militaristic Nazi, with the perceived British characteristics of tolerance, cheerfulness and stoicism being widely celebrated.’⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Carey, *Guernsey Under German Occupation*, ed. by Evans, p. 194.

⁷¹ Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance under Nazi Occupation: Guernsey, Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2013), p. 58.

⁷² See PL, LF940.53AGA, Vol. II, ‘Mss. Account of the German Occupation by Caroline Muriel Shelton-Agar’, 1957 and JAS, L/D/25/L/33 ‘Landick on Occupation Entertainments’, 30 September 1981.

⁷³ Corinna Peniston-Bird and Penny Summerfield, “‘Hey, You’re Dead!’: The Multiple Uses of Humour in Representations of British National Defence in the Second World War”, *Journal of European Studies*, 31 (2001), p. 413. Rose claimed that wartime humour was a defining part of British wartime identity: the British ‘were fighting a war with their sense of humour intact; they were good tempered and modest.’ Rose, *Which People’s War?*, p. 287.

⁷⁴ Wendy Ugolini and Juliette Pattinson, ‘Negotiating Identities in multinational Britain during the Second World War’, in *Fighting for Britain? Negotiating Identities in Britain during the Second World War*, ed. by Juliette Pattinson and Wendy Ugolini (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), p. 9.

Doggerel poetry was popular during the Occupation, most notably in Jersey where the States of Jersey employee Reg Grandin was prolific in writing poems aimed at releasing tensions and binding the group together against the shared trials of deprivations. His humorous works were retrospectively marketed as quintessentially British, published in 1945 under a title that made reference to Vera Lynn's famous words in *We'll Meet Again* (1939): *Smiling Through: A Chuckle A Day Kept Depression At Bay!* (1945). Such poetry often lampooned black marketeers and women perceived to be sleeping with German soldiers, offering a safe outlet for frustrations and bound the many against the few letting the community down. Poems such as 'The Charge of the Fish Brigade', commenting on the regular journey to shops followed with queues and inevitable disappointment, brought people together in their collective battle against the shortages.⁷⁵ Other humour could be darker and hostile in tone. For example, an anonymous poem titled 'Disillusioned' circulated around Jersey after D-Day, juxtaposing the mentality of women who slept with the Germans at the start and end of the Occupation.⁷⁶ Humour also released tension in difficult times and demonstrated that the Islanders retained their 'stiff upper lip'. One elderly Jerseywoman, May Vickers, related how one recently married Jersey couple listed for deportation in September 1942 announced their marriage in the *Jersey Evening Post* (JEP) and included in the notice: 'Honeymoon on the Continent.' Vickers commented that it had been 'very sporting of them.'⁷⁷

Additionally, the Occupation saw a flourishing of amateur dramatics and variety shows. Involvement and attendance were high; Knowles-Smith estimated in Guernsey during 1943, 500 people were involved in staging shows, and the record attendance was 7100 people.⁷⁸ The lengths Islanders went to in creating and attending these shows indicated the social importance of such entertainments.⁷⁹ Bob Le Sueur was involved in some shows and reflected upon how people in Jersey would cycle or walk many miles to see plays being put on. He argued 'there was, a quite deep, psychological need, for people to kid themselves

⁷⁵ PL, LF940.53AGA, Vol. II, 'Newspaper cutting dated 15 May 1941 within Mss. Account of the German Occupation by Caroline Muriel Shelton-Agar', 1957. This poem was inspired by Alfred Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', written in the same style and structure.

⁷⁶ In 1940, the fictional woman crows 'although I'm not a Jerrybag I like my bit of fun, mid-war's alarms I use my charms to cultivate the Hun.' By 1945, her tone had substantially changed: 'Perhaps it's necessary now to have a change of view, I'm sure that people will forget – as people always do ... If ever any British boys come walking through the town, with Allied flags sewn on my skirt, I'll knees up Mother Brown.' JAS, L/D/25/D1/3, 'Newspaper Cutting of the Poem 'Disillusioned' from the Jersey Evening Post', n.d.

⁷⁷ JAS, L/D/25/A/5, 'May Vickers Wartime Letters', 2 October 1942, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 100.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-101. For a detailed popular summary of wartime entertainments in the Channel Islands, see June Money, *Aspects of War: Entertainments and Pastimes. The German Occupation of the Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (Guernsey: June Money, 1993).

that things were normal ... And they must keep up their spirits.’⁸⁰ His final phrase exemplified how the language of Britain at war crept into the testimonies of Islanders. Mark Connelly argued this was a key part of the myth of the Blitz: ‘instead of buckling, the people laughed and joked their way through it, full of wonderful British sangfroid.’⁸¹ Amateur performances provided a link to Britain’s war: in the face of immense hardship inflicted by the enemy, laughter and humour remained as present in the Islands as in London. Islanders felt this linked them with British values during the war. Caroline Shelton-Agar, a middle aged Guernseywoman, reflected in her 1957 memoir that ‘had we not had a sense of humour we could not have lived through ... the Occupation. Many times, we were very depressed ... but nearly always something would strike us as funny ... the English sense of humour ... was a wonderful help all the time.’⁸² Her concluding remarks indicated the importance she ascribed to wartime humour: ‘I thank God ... for the protection we had and also for our SENSE OF HUMOUR!’⁸³

When the ways in which the Islanders kept their morale up and survived the food shortages are considered, the assimilation of British war memory into their narratives was a logical progression. If the British had mended and made do, Islanders had gone above and beyond this. Britain demonstrated that it could ‘take it’ and ‘never gave in’; Islanders could point to their survival of the Occupation with faith in a British victory that had never seriously wavered. Moreover, the Islanders had kept as ‘merry and bright’ as could be expected in the circumstances. The language of Britain at war, first heard over the wireless during the conflict, was clearly reinforced in the Islands through the reintroduction of British mass media, and the production of the 1945 film cemented this process. Evans judged Carey’s diaries as defined by ‘dominant discourses ... [of] survival, humour and honour’, notions dismissed by critics as forming part of a ‘sanitised collective memory.’⁸⁴ Evans argued such ‘discourses reflect the language that Islanders used in order to think about, talk about and cope with a deeply distressing experience.’⁸⁵ She posited that the contemporary ways of thinking about the Occupation persisted through Islanders’ written testimonies, an assertion this chapter supports. In the context of 1945, it would have been harder for the Channel Islands to diverge from Britain’s nascent war narrative than to assimilate. Regardless of how dissonant the Islanders’ experience had been to Britain’s war, their long-standing identification as part of that collective effort endured.

⁸⁰ Bob Le Sueur, Interview with Richard Guille, 14 May 2019.

⁸¹ Mark Connelly, *We Can Take It!: Britain and the Memory of the Second World War* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2004), p. 129.

⁸² PL, LF940.53AGA ‘Account of Caroline Muriel Shelton-Agar’, p. 14.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 15. Capitals are her emphasis.

⁸⁴ Evans, ‘Introduction’, p. xlii.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xlii.

‘We had to make do and mend, didn’t we?’: Making Do, Humour and the Narrative Function of Stoicism

Jennifer Carré was a Sark woman in her late eighties who had lived with her parents and two sisters on a farm in the west of the Island during Sark’s Occupation. I interviewed her in April 2016, during which a reticence to discuss certain subjects became apparent. For example, when asked about her first impressions of the Germans when they arrived:

JC: _ _ Well, just really wondering what was going to happen.

RG: Can you summarise relations between Sarkees and the German soldiers during this early period?

JC: Not really, I don’t think. No, we just sort of awaited developments really.⁸⁶

Whilst this exchange occurred early in the interview, when she may have been feeling less settled with the process, Carré demonstrated a tendency to close down subjects that made her uncomfortable, where often her responses were short. However, other topics prompted more enthusiastic responses. When asked to reflect on how Islanders had improvised during the Occupation, she replied:

JC: Yes, we had to improvise all sorts of things I always remember my Nan was sewing something, and we were very short of cottons ... and ... she pulled a strand of hair out to sew something for us, and we were amused of course, but yes, things like that were in very short supply. It’s surprising what you can make do with ... We never waste anything ... yes, you’re very very careful and we still are to this day. And I always think if there was another war, we could manage. When you’ve had to, it’s amazing what you can deal with.⁸⁷

Carré’s responses were longer and more enthusiastic, indicating how her family’s survival of the Occupation shortages was an important and positive memory to her. The topic of the shortages was one on which she was far more comfortable, in a similar fashion to the example of Blampied. Moreover, Carré mobilised the trope ‘make do’, a direct imposition of the language of Britain at war upon her testimony. ‘Making do’ as a concept is bound up with implications of making the best of a bad job, in a similar manner to the way the slogan was repurposed for the MOI’s 1945 film. Articulating her memories through these concepts aligned her experience with broader cultural understandings of British wartime behaviour, whilst presenting a particular image of the Sarkees stoically managing, improvising and making the best of difficult circumstances.

⁸⁶ Jennifer Carré, Interview with Richard Guille, April 2016.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

The mobilisation of ‘make do’ occurred twice more during Carré’s testimony, both times about ameliorating deprivation. Carré relied upon it as a way of succinctly summarising the responses of the Sarkees to these: ‘clothing was very difficult, and of course we were all growing ... but our parents made clothing for us out of curtains ... We just had to make do.’⁸⁸ In the final instance, her tone was emphatic about the significance of ‘making do’: ‘Oh when you look back and think of all the shortages, things like soap that we didn’t ... well we did have from France, but it was not very good. But, well, we just had to make do!’⁸⁹ Its recurrence indicated the applicability of the concepts bound up with ideas of ‘making do’ to her experience of Occupation. As a teenage girl during the Occupation (aged eighteen in 1945), Carré’s memories revolved around the home. One of three sisters living on a farm, Carré was involved with the maintenance of the household. Moreover, after she left school in 1942 aged 15, she gained employment working for the Dame, transitioning into adulthood. She therefore had a deeper awareness of the severity of the shortages, and a greater knowledge of the achievement of her fellow Islanders in overcoming these. The nature of her experience rendered the ‘make do’ campaign, which targeted women, particularly relevant to her testimony. Carré’s example highlighted the applicability of ‘making do’ to Islanders’ experiences and how the language of Britain at war could be used by interviewees to align their narratives with hegemonic interpretations of the mainland experience. It was unclear whether Carré had heard the term at the time or shortly after the end of the war. However, her reliance on this as a way of explaining how Islanders had coped was indicative of how dearly she held these ideas of ‘heroic endurance’. This evidenced the ways in which the cultural memory of Britain during the war could impinge upon the accounts of Islanders. By utilising the term as a ‘narrative hook’, Carré aligned her testimony with broader ideas of British behaviour during the Occupation. This, when contrasted with her unwillingness to go into detail about the German occupiers, demonstrated a desire on her part to present her experience as a British one, eschewing alternative memories.

Blampied was the most extreme example of relying on the phrase ‘make do’ to compose her narrative using long standing myths of the Occupation. Her attachment to the slogan was so strong that she used the phrase eight times during our two-hour interview, on occasion diverging wildly from a more controversial subject onto the safer ground of improvisation. Her testimony was also littered with other stoic language such as ‘surviving’ and ‘managing’, which fulfilled a similar function to the ‘make do’ trope: presenting a stoic community demonstrating remarkable ingenuity and adaptability. At times, she applied the

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

term inconsistently, for example where she reflected upon how some had contravened German requisitioning orders:

He was the Constable of the Parish not so long ago And the Germans said they were going to take ... [his] ... goat 'cause they wanted the milk. Well he used to get up early ... and milk the goat, by the time they got there ... you got no milk from them! [Laughs] You-know-people used to do things like that ... There was, it was a make do, make do.⁹⁰

This imposition of the term was problematic, with the extract covering one of the many areas of passive defiance often shown towards German orders where food was concerned. Yet the double iteration demonstrated how keen Blampied was to frame all aspects of the food shortages within these terms. It was likely that on an intersubjective level, Blampied relied on me understanding her cultural shorthand, for the slogan was spoken in some instances when her narration began to wander and lose focus. However, like Carré, it was unclear whether the phrase was known to her at the time. Yet at some point in her life, Blampied became aware of this way of articulating how Islanders had managed the shortages, and her repetition of the phrase demonstrated the importance she placed in aligning her narrative with similar notions of British behaviour as Carré.

Carré was not the only Sarkee who deployed the slogan. Another instance of this arose during an interview with four Sarkees Occupation children. When the conversation moved on to deprivations, Jeanette Drillot and Eileen Baker, aged respectively seven and five in 1945, recalled their childhood memories of the effect of the food shortages:

EB: ... We were given an orange, and that was very precious because we'd never seen an orange before. I mean it isn't like today where they're an everyday item.

JD: And a banana! The first banana I saw after the war, I didn't know how to attack it!

EB: I remember we were given a tablet of soap at school, and mine was pink! (Laughs).

JD: All these little precious things, and we had to make do and mend, didn't we?⁹¹

Drillot's mobilisation of the phrase was indicative of the ways in which British war memory could more deeply influence younger members of the sample, whose memories of the period were more sporadic and episodic. We can conclude with reasonable certainty that Drillot, as a seven-year-old at the end of the war, was not familiar with the propaganda slogan during the Occupation. Radio listening was not something children were intimately involved in for

⁹⁰ Blampied, Interview.

⁹¹ Peter Baker, Eileen Baker, Simon Mollet and Jeanette Drillot, Interview with Richard Guille, 18 April 2016.

self-evident security reasons, and young children did not fully understand the severity of the situation. Her age placed her within the generation that reached adulthood at the time when British culture was particularly obsessed with the war.⁹²

Specific local factors shed further light upon the appearance of this slogan within Drillot's testimony. The stories and attitudes passed down by older Occupation generations influenced how younger members of the sample interpreted their memories of the period. A recurring theme, alluded to by Carré, was the distaste of wasting food even decades after the war. This was drummed into young Islanders when post-war appetites grew fussy. Drillot remembered that 'if I didn't eat up all my meal ... a few years after the war, "you'd have been glad of that during the Occupation!"'⁹³ In a similar fashion to the processes identified by Marianne Hirsch in her conceptualisation of 'postmemory',⁹⁴ younger Islanders grew up in an environment shaped by the war, with parents who continued to exhibit its after-effects through their behaviours. In the case of conserving food, this behaviour rubbed off on many who were children during the Occupation. Younger Islanders felt they owed a great deal to their parents for keeping them fed and clothed during such a challenging time. Georgina Hamelin, an eight-year-old Guernsey girl in 1945, reflected positively on her parent's efforts:

My mother did very well ... she made potato flour and made cakes out of it ... she'd use carrageen moss for jellies and things. ... When it came to Christmas there weren't any toys for us were there, Christmas stockings, very little, and I remember my father ... went around the Island looking for people who had, spare bits and pieces and my books were second hand.⁹⁵

Whilst many younger Islanders could not claim to have participated in the 'make do' culture within the occupied Islands, they were aware of their parents' efforts and incorporated these into their narratives. This explains Drillot's assignation of 'mend and make do' to the collective: when she spoke of 'we', she referred to her parents and the entire community which had endured the Occupation, not to her own childhood actions. This demonstrates that the popular memory of 'heroic endurance', so prevalent within the Islands, continues to be relevant, even for the narratives of those who did not necessarily remember the shortages with the same piercing urgency of those who were young adults at the time.

Humour could also function as a way of expressing stoic attitudes towards a difficult past, discussed here through the example of remembering food shortages. Humour, Walter

⁹² Eley, 'Finding the People's War', 106, pp. 818-819.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

⁹⁵ Georgina Hamelin, Interview with Richard Guille, 3 May 2018.

Nash argued, is ‘a specifying characteristic of humanity.’⁹⁶ It is an important part of group socialisation, specific to time and culture: therefore, getting the joke denotes belonging, with wartime being identified by Valerie Holman and Debra Kelly as a key time where being seen to belong is crucial.⁹⁷ Ned Norrick contended that humour has as its necessary precondition the perception of incongruity, of something different or unusual. Humour ‘disrupts normal communication, forcing hearers ... to discard contextually obvious meanings and to look for obscure interpretations ... in order to render the initial incongruity appropriate and get the jokes.’⁹⁸ Whether humour is perceived depends upon its conversational framing. As John Gumperz posited, we frame all interactions with linguistic and non-linguistic signals, what Norrick dubbed ‘contextualisation cues.’⁹⁹ These range from facial expressions, gestures, verbal signs such as emphatics or laughter, all guiding the listener to identify and perceive the incongruity at the heart of the humour. The links between humour, identity and culture are particularly relevant here. Humour forms a part of the identity and cultures of social groups. Raskin maintained that ‘every humour act occurs within a certain culture which belongs to a certain society ... shared by individuals belonging to a certain social group.’¹⁰⁰ Like cultural memory, the parameters of which shift and evolve over, humour too changes.¹⁰¹ Humour is also revealing of subjective identity. Norrick argued ‘the presentation of embarrassing, painful and even life-threatening events in humorous narratives provide compelling everyday evidence of how memories are reconstructed for a particular audience in a particular context.’¹⁰² A humorous narration of difficult memories can often serve as a self-deprecating tool for modest narrators or a balm allowing the composure of more risky recollections. Through exploring this, one can attain a deeper understanding of the event and its longer-term effects on the narrator’s identity.

Considering humour during wartime appears dissonant. Valerie Holman and Debra Kelly highlighted that ‘the sheer gravity of the human tragedy precluded sustained research into the role of humour in wartime.’¹⁰³ Yet humour does not disappear in times of conflict. The Guernseyman Victor Coysh commented in 1955 ‘no such epoch as the Occupation could occur without its amusing side. Dozens of humorous anecdotes ... prove that the

⁹⁶ Walter Nash, *The Language of Humour* (Harlow: Longman, 1985), p.1.

⁹⁷ Valerie Holman and Debra Kelly, ‘Introduction. War in the Twentieth Century: The Functioning of Humour in Cultural Representation’, *Journal of European Studies*, 31 (2001), p. 249.

⁹⁸ For his excellent exploration of humour and oral history interviews, see Ned Norrick, ‘Humour in Oral History Interviews,’ *Oral History*, 34:2 (2006), pp. 85-94.

⁹⁹ John Gumperz, *Discourse Strategies* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982); Norrick, ‘Humour’, p. 88.

¹⁰⁰ Viktor Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humour* (Lancaster: D. Reidel, 1985).

¹⁰¹ Holman and Kelly, ‘Introduction’, p. 248.

¹⁰² Norrick, ‘Humour’, p. 85.

¹⁰³ Holman and Kelly, ‘Introduction’, p. 247.

Guernseyman, even in adversity, did not forget to smile.’¹⁰⁴ Jorgensen-Earp identified that ‘dry humour ... became a primary psychological buffer against despair.’¹⁰⁵ Humour served as a narrative tool that downplayed potentially upsetting memories, presenting a stoical attitude to some of the worst aspects of the experience for children: extreme hunger. In some cases, a remarkable alignment is evident between the framing of the experience on the part of the adult generations at the time, as identified by Carr, and the ways the 1.5 generation articulated their memories of the period. Indeed, many anecdotes were framed as ‘harmless’ and ‘amusing.’ These were rendered starker by other memories which revealed that at the time, the experiences described were anything but harmless. Humour is an important feature of Islander’s testimonies and revealing of the cultural language within which they were constructed.

For the children of the sample, whose firmest memories were of the last two years of the war when the food situation was at its most critical, memories of hunger were prominent and could be hard to compose.¹⁰⁶ Paulette Bichard, a teenager during the Occupation, struggled to suitably find suitable words to describe her hunger in the last autumn of the war. She recalled ‘a gnawing, a gnaw-gnawing sort of pain ... a horrible feeling.’¹⁰⁷ Eleanor Vaudin, a young Guernsey child in 1945, broke down in tears when recalling her hunger and its impact on her parents: ‘We had a pound loaf a week ... I said “oh mum I’m hungry, hungry, hungry,” and when I think mum and dad had hardly any of that bread, it was for me [cries].’¹⁰⁸ The extreme emotions stemmed from her feelings of guilt towards the suffering she felt she had inflicted on her parents, which she understood all the more sharply after her own later experiences of motherhood. Both Bichard and Vaudin exhibited varying degrees of discomposure when articulating these memories, suggesting that some Islanders can struggle to psychologically compose their recollections of near starvation.

However, others could moderate the severity of the deprivations in their testimonies. This could be achieved by brushing aside potentially painful memories with humorous remarks that downplayed the suffering, comments which could be accompanied by laughter or which drew upon an incongruity. The shortages were downplayed by Morrison in 1945. His views on the Islands’ experience were given in a memorandum to the Cabinet on 24 May, where he stated that ‘as far as concerns material damage, the ... Islands have suffered

¹⁰⁴ Victor Coysh, *Swastika Over Guernsey* (Guernsey: The Guernsey Press, 1955), p. 29.

¹⁰⁵ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁶ Other interviewees to share difficult memories of personal and familial suffering because of the deprivations included: Trevor Bisson, Interview with Richard Guille, 23 August 2018; Harold Nicolle, Interview with Richard Guille, 9 November 2018; and Simon Herivel, Interview with Richard Guille, 16 April 2018.

¹⁰⁷ Bichard, Interview.

¹⁰⁸ Eleanor Vaudin, Interview with Richard Guille, 19 April 2018.

nothing that compares with the damage due to enemy air raids in this country, while the health of the population generally does not seem to have been seriously impaired.’¹⁰⁹ These views were later stated publicly in the House of Commons. Knowles-Smith argued these remarks added ‘insult to injury’ as far as the Islanders were concerned.¹¹⁰ Such sentiments did a disservice to the challenges and suffering endured by the Islanders and, consequently, their strength in surviving them. There is evidence to suggest that this was a process that began during the Occupation. An anonymous Jersey poet penned the following stoic verses in 1941:

We’re all quite well, but getting thinner,
Not much for tea, still less for dinner.
Though not exactly on our uppers,
We’ve said Adieu to cold ham suppers.

In peace time those who wished to slim,
Tried diet, massage, baths and gym.
We’ll tell the stout of every nation
The secret’s solved by Occupation.¹¹¹

The poem’s intent was humorous, playing on the notion that the shortages during the war achieved something many people sought in peace time: weight loss. It joked about a serious subject, downplaying its severity, indicated by the line ‘We’re all quite well, but getting thinner.’ It was striking that the author insinuated that occupation and food shortage were synonymous, demonstrating the centrality of this aspect of the Islanders’ war experience. This manner of discussing food shortages appeared in the testimony gathered for this thesis. This suggests that some strove to downplay the severity of those experiences, in the process exhibited a particularly British type of understatement which mobilised tropes of island stoicism in the face of German occupation.

The subject of severe shortages could elicit stoical responses that crossed into making jokes, downplaying the severity of the situation and disarming potentially destabilising memories. This also functioned to ameliorate guilt about childhood behaviour which caused their parents hardship. Annabel Cook, a nine-year-old Sarkee in 1945, responded to a question about food shortages with a light hearted remark: ‘We were all very healthy because we were all skinny! [Laughs] I’m sure we suffered from time to time, there were days we were hungry, but we managed, we survived.’¹¹² The incongruity Cook pointed to with her first remark was similar to that of the poem cited earlier. Cook’s example

¹⁰⁹ TNA, PREM 3/87 ‘Memorandum: Home Secretary’s Visit to the Channel Islands’, 24 May 1945, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, 76.

¹¹¹ IWM, Docs 11109 ‘Private Papers of Miss A. Le M. Lainé’, p. 36.

¹¹² Annabel Cook, Interview with Richard Guille, 16 April 2016.

demonstrated the influence remembering the past from the present can have on the construction of narratives, centring on the notion that the weight loss of many Islanders during the war could be, by today's standards, seen as a positive thing in a society which equates 'skinniness' with good health. At the time this was not a positive trend. However, Cook's joke around this incongruity served to blunt her own potentially distressing memories of the deprivations. Her younger brother, Phillip Le Feuvre, shed light on this: 'I remember _ howling because we didn't have enough food, don't look like it now but at one stage it did get very tight.'¹¹³ Cross examination indicated that the family suffered from the shortages, and a list of Sark households compiled after the war had the family listed as 'in poverty'.¹¹⁴ This rendered Cook's light-hearted comment all the more notable, demonstrating that her remark underplayed the situation. Moreover, her conclusion that Islanders had 'managed' and 'survived' was a stoical assessment, bringing her narrative in line with British myths.

Bichard, who struggled to articulate her memories of the sensation of extreme hunger, saw the funny side of the shortages, notably spitting husks on her porch whilst eating oats in milk. She dubbed this 'their spitting tea' and described the memory as 'laughable now.'¹¹⁵ May Hamon, a Sarkee of a similar age to Cook, quipped that 'there weren't many fat people on Sark in those days!', pointing to a similar incongruity.¹¹⁶ Blampied stated that her health had not suffered during the Occupation, remarking that 'everybody lost weight everybody was lovely and thin! [Laughs].'¹¹⁷ Conversely, a further dimension was added to Cook's narrative framing when another remark during the interview was considered. 'I know how my mother shielded us from being hungry ... We had the food and I've seen my mother not have any.'¹¹⁸ Cook later had two children and therefore a greater awareness in the present of the challenges her parents must have faced in keeping herself and her siblings fed and healthy. This is a notable similarity with Vaudin. The central difference was that if there was any guilt on Cook's part over this, it remained unarticulated during the interview. Moreover, by making a joke and downplaying the significance of the food shortages on Sark, a sense of unease can be interpreted; about how close the Sarkees came to starvation and to the suffering which herself and her siblings caused her parents, all the more acute by her subsequent experiences as a mother. The humour Cook deployed Cook served as cover for potentially destabilising emotions, suggesting that for some

¹¹³ Phillip Le Feuvre, Interview with Richard Guille, March 2013. Even then, Le Feuvre still made a casual joke about his current weight to lighten the comment.

¹¹⁴ SSC, Misc. World War Two Collection, 'List of Sark Households compiled by *The Friends of Sark*', 1945, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ Bichard, Interview.

¹¹⁶ May Hamon and Jenny Hamon, Interview with Richard Guille, 19 April 2016.

¹¹⁷ Mary Blampied, Interview with Richard Guille, 21 May 2019.

¹¹⁸ Cook, Interview.

humour functions as a coping mechanism when narrating difficult past experiences in the present. This was in line with the Churchillian paradigm: Cook could not bring herself to self-identify as a victim, mobilising a particularly British and stoical humour in rejecting that identity.

Humour could indicate discomposure, suggestive of difficulties in reconciling notions of victimhood with British war memory. Lynette Renouf, a Guernsey girl aged between nine and fourteen during the Occupation, recalled how people's health had not seemed to suffer during the Occupation, despite references to her own stark weight loss. She seemed confused by this: 'but we were healthy [!], that's the funny thing about it ... But _ generally, erm, people's health seemed to be good. _ _ So maybe that's the answer! [Soft chuckle]. Eat acorns! [Chuckle].'¹¹⁹ The pauses and chuckling indicated a small flutter of disquiet, for Renouf's experiences of hunger were difficult and had long lasting consequences. She referred to oesophageal reflux, which started after the war and afflicts her today, as a 'relic of the war.'¹²⁰ Her mother had been so hungry during the Occupation that after Liberation she was unable to swallow food for a period, and all of the family endured stomach problems after the war. One of the first anecdotes she shared was of her younger brother's suffering through hunger:

... my mother used to cry, my little brother four five years old rolling around on the floor ... with hunger ... It was, not so much seeing him rolling around but seeing my mother crying, and I can hear her saying '**I'm sorry I've got nothing, nothing to give you**' ... it must've been awful, for, erm, parents.¹²¹

Whilst covering an emotional subject, the extract was delivered in a matter-of-fact tone, with little trace of emotion in her voice aside from the raised volume when recalling her mother's reaction. Renouf's narration indicated forced control over difficult memories of the war, offering an explanation for the joke in the earlier extract. The effort to make a joke out of the situation and her flat delivery of the difficult memory can be interpreted as a desire to manage the pain of her memories and downplay the extent to which she and her family suffered, presenting a stoic image similar to Cook and Hamon.

However, the argument that Renouf aligned her narrative with cultural notions of British stoicism does not necessarily apply here. Her manner of discussing the shortages and the impacts of these upon her family was indicative of an effort to attain psychic composure. The controlled articulation of a difficult memory alongside a subtle humour indicated the process of managing painful memories, making their articulation possible without causing

¹¹⁹ Lynette Renouf, Interview with Richard Guille, 25 July 2018.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

upset. When discussing the health problems suffered by herself and her mother after the war, Renouf possibly felt her account too bleak, for she finished with a self-deprecating joke, interrupting to conclude the discussion:

LR: the doctors in Guernsey they reckoned it's all ... a relic of the war.

RG: Mm, and what was ...

LR: [Cutting across] Apart from that and my knees, I'm hundred per cent!
[Laughs].¹²²

The joke lightened the mood and ended the conversation on this subject. Renouf's memories of deprivations were negative and hints at their emotional nature were present throughout her testimony. In order to articulate these memories, Renouf had to manage them through the occasional injection of humour, which served to release the built-up emotional pressure and allowed her to retain her sense of composure. Her example suggests that not all instances of stoic humour were underpinned by a need to align with dominant cultural ideas of Britain at war, evidencing the process of achieving and maintaining psychic composure, of managing difficult memories and rendering them safe.

The tendency to downplay the severity of the Occupation years can be linked to the ways in which older members of the Occupation generation discussed their experiences of the war, defined by understatement. Sanders felt that this was characteristic of their personalities.¹²³ Projecting a stoic identity relies heavily on underplaying the emotion of an event or downplaying its significance. Some Islanders who had been involved in organised resistance explicitly rejected notions of heroism. Norman Le Brocq, a teenager at the outbreak of war, was a founding member of the Jersey Communist Party (JCP), one of two groups set up in opposition to German rule alongside the JDM. These formed a part of the minority phenomenon, identified by Louise Willmot, of 'organised' resistance.¹²⁴ The actions of men like Le Brocq were undoubtedly brave, particularly in relation to his activities from 1944 involving a German deserter, Paul Mülbach, aimed at inspiring a mutiny amongst Jersey's garrison.¹²⁵ However, when interviewed in the late 1980s, Le Brocq eschewed any personal heroism:

If somebody had asked me ... in 1940 to do the sort of thing I was doing in forty-four and forty-five I would have said no way at all ... Please don't build me up as a hero because I just followed the line of one thing leading

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 174.

¹²⁴ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 153-156. See chapter six for a more detailed discussion of Channel Island resistance.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 158.

to another and getting through it. I was a nervous wreck by liberation day.¹²⁶

Le Brocq sought to depict himself as having been a young man swept up by events as opposed to a heroic figure. Le Sueur exhibited a similar tendency. He was a member of the JDM, a group of young Jerseymen who hoped for and debated constitutional reform after the war, which, as Le Sueur remarked, was a subversive business, predicated on faith that German rule in the Islands would end, and ‘highly illegal.’¹²⁷ Le Sueur became involved with the JCP’s efforts to rescue and shelter escaped OT labourers during the Occupation. He was involved with Louisa Gould through his work as an insurance provider, becoming aware of the Russian labourer she was sheltering, Feodor Burryiy. When it became clear Gould had been denounced, Le Sueur was involved in moving and hiding Burryiy before the Germans searched Gould’s property.¹²⁸ When preparations were being made for the 2017 film *Another Mother’s Son*, the producer mentioned to Le Sueur that she wished to depict him in the film. He replied ‘what part could you possibly write that would have any relevance?’¹²⁹ Le Sueur had also been involved with aiding Mülbach by sourcing him civilian clothes, although he again downplayed this: ‘Later on, and I was, no stories of daring do here please, but I was very much on the periphery of helping Paul Mülbach.’¹³⁰ This indicated a desire not to be built up too far or rendered more remarkable than he felt he had been at the time. These examples partially explain the continuing presence of stoic tropes within the testimonies of the interviewees, for this trend was well established by the time my interviews were conducted.

The differences in the general experiences of the individual Islands under study should be borne in mind here. Whilst the Sarkees suffered under Nazi rule, this was felt less than in the two larger Islands, which held greater strategic value. This explains the greater frequency which stoic narratives appeared in Sarkian testimonies. The Occupations of Jersey and Guernsey were harsher experiences, reflected in the narratives of interviewees who remembered the cruel treatment of OT labourers, the sight of bunkers being built and the consequences of resistance. Contrastingly, Sark had no labourers, few bunkers and a garrison who were generally happy to live and let live. Furthermore, Guernsey and Jersey bore the brunt of the revisionist critique of the 1990s; because of this, their public memories had to change to acknowledge less comfortable areas of the Occupation. Stoic language, jokes or positive reminiscence around food shortages were a feature of interviews conducted in Guernsey and Jersey. However, these narratives were more likely to contain a distinct

¹²⁶ IWM, Docs. 5750a Misc. 189/1 ‘Norman Le Brocq Interview Transcript’, n.d.

¹²⁷ Le Sueur, Interview, 14 May 2019.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

duality, representing the variety of validating public interpretations available to them. Alongside fond memories of less controversial aspects, more challenging subjects to British war memory were also discussed. Leo Harris, a Scottish teenager in Jersey during the Occupation, remembered many aspects of patriotic defiance. Yet his narrative also contained detailed reminiscences on his family's experience of a German search, followed by the arrest of both his father and brother. Within his testimony, both hegemonic and peripheral aspects swirled, providing a challenging narrative to compose.¹³¹ Few Sarkian interviewees had to deal with these subjects, finding it more straightforward to mobilise the language of Britain's war within their testimonies.

Stoic language was a strategy which enabled Islanders to downplay the severity of their Occupation experiences, side-stepping the negative emotions more challenging memories could stir. These link in with popular notions of Britain's war, which depicted Britons cheerily enduring hardships without complaint. Furthermore, a trend of understatement can be found within the Islands after the Occupation, which continues to this day, setting a precedent for younger Islanders. There are several factors explaining the presence of the slogan 'make do and mend' in the testimonies of two Sark women and a Jerseywoman. The gendered intent of the propaganda campaign rendered the slogan far more applicable to the women of the sample. Whilst young teenagers at the time, Carré and Blampied were both engaged in helping their parents with the housework: Carré recalled repairing clothes, whilst Blampied helped her mother collect food from a St Helier soup kitchen. Their gendered wartime activities aligned with the ideals propagated within the slogan. Combined with this is its cultural prominence. Given Drillot's age, which places her firmly in the generational category identified by Eley, it is likely that she became aware of the slogan post-war. Drillot remembered the shortages, yet many details of her testimony came from second-hand knowledge. Her use of 'we' positioned herself as an authority on the matter, aligning her childhood memories with the experiences of older Sarkees. The appearance of the slogan indicated that deploying direct language from Britain at war continues to be an applicable narrative strategy.

'Oh the amount of people who used to have hosepipes on their bikes!': Safe Subjects: Improvisation, Occupation Boyhood and Liberation

The Churchillian paradigm of Occupation memory was, at its heart, a simplification in line with Roland Barthes' conceptualisation of a historical 'myth', promoting acceptable aspects

¹³¹ See chapter six. Leo Harris, Interviews with Richard Guille, 4 January 2019 and 5 January 2019.

of the experience and smoothing over those which rang dissonant to its core messages.¹³² This led to the purified and streamlined interpretation noted by Sanders in 2012. This section explores the local memory of the Occupation prevalent from the end of the war until the mid-1990s, which retains influence to the present. This interpretation focused on aspects which could be easily reconciled within its parameters, such as the victorious moment of Liberation or notions of endurance. Other areas were uncontroversial, such as the obsession amongst those who were young boys at the time or born shortly after the war with the militaria of Occupation.¹³³ This allowed a focus on ‘concrete and bullets’ to flourish in the Islands, generating the sanitised and ‘apolitical’ ‘stasis’ period.¹³⁴ This section examines such ‘safe’ subjects, unlikely to generate discomfort during an interview owing to their validation in local memory. This sheds light on the ways in which the Churchillian paradigm enables the presentation of positive narratives of an ambiguous experience.

Salient memories of improvisation are an uncontroversial subject, around which a great deal of local pride coalesces. The mention of the theme could prompt monologues listing what items Islanders were short of and how people had managed these. Renouf devoted roughly 1,000 spoken words to this subject, describing *ersatz* coffee, men growing tobacco and improvising cigarettes, blancmanges made of carrageen moss, the uses of sugar beet (which could be made into a coffee or syrup) and how Islanders had managed to cook around curfews for gas and electricity.¹³⁵ Other interviewees support this, with many interviewed by the IWM devoting substantial portions of their testimonies to this subject.¹³⁶ Bichard remembered the need to improvise. When asked about this, she provided a great deal of detail, indicating a deep attachment to this aspect of her Occupation life:

... nothing was ever thrown away ... You did something with it ... I can remember carbide lamps that we put on bikes ... because there were no batteries for lamps to put on your bikes ... if you had say a packet of tea leaves and you didn’t have any sugar, you could advertise this ‘will exchange for sugar’ ... or what have you, there was quite a lot of that done.¹³⁷

In most cases, the lengthy discussion of shortages and improvisation was an innocent undertaking, emphasising how important Islanders’ endurance and survival of parlous conditions was to those who remember the period. Others could find space for laughter when remembering the condition of their clothes, which became distinctly shabby. Peter

¹³² Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Granada, 1973), pp. 142-143.

¹³³ Carr, “‘Illicit Antiquities?’”, *World Archaeology*, (2016), pp. 1-13.

¹³⁴ Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, p. 29.

¹³⁵ Renouf, Interview.

¹³⁶ See, for example, IWM, Sound 10105, ‘Interview with Stella Perkins’ 26 November 1987; IWM, Sound 10712, ‘Interview with John David Thompson’, 23 May 1989; IWM, Sound 10879, ‘Interview with Betty Yvonne Costard’, 07 September 1989; IWM, Sound 11097, ‘Mourant, Interview’.

¹³⁷ Bichard, Interview.

Ingrouille, a six-year-old Guernsey boy in 1945, related how: ‘we’d never walk along the roads because ... we didn’t have shoes to go and waste on walking, so we used to be pretty barefoot ... **Just imagine your trousers, patch on patch!** [Laughs].¹³⁸ That some could recall the shortages through laughter, or otherwise positive narration, indicated how uncontroversial memories of the subject could be.

Members of the 1.5 generation, such as Trevor Bisson, aged between six and eleven during the war, felt they had been a part of the culture of improvisation. He recalled helping his parents with the shortage of candles, praising his own inventiveness: ‘there were no candles in the end ... I managed to scrape enough, wax ... [from burnt candles] ... I melted it down, and we had plenty of twine and string ... and I made wicks out of that. And made some candles.’¹³⁹ Detailed reminiscences were reflective of the lived experience of occupation: for all Islanders, particularly those from families with lower incomes, the shortages were severe and improvisation a ubiquitous part of life. However, in some cases the transition from controversial subjects onto the topic of food and improvisation was jarring and raised questions as to what was left unsaid. Two testimonies exhibited the same trait as noted earlier in the case of Carré, one from Guernsey and one from Jersey. The presence of examples from Guernsey, Jersey and Sark which used the subject of deprivations to evade more controversial topics is significant, suggesting that this correlates across all three contexts.

Susan Mauger was evasive on several subjects. Born in 1926, Mauger was a Guernsey teenager based in the parish of St Martins in the south-east of the Island. She had been signed up through Guernsey’s Department of Labour to work for the Germans in a kitchen.¹⁴⁰ Mauger vacillated over her participation in the project and was evasive in response to many of my questions.¹⁴¹ When asked whether she had encountered any labourers during the Occupation, Mauger brusquely responded to the question before changing the subject:

No, not in St Martins, they were mainly in Alderney weren’t they? ... we worked up there that way, had our bikes. And when the tires wore out on your bike they used to put the water hose on ... they used to put those on and fill them up with sand! They were hard to ride though ... they used to make you bounce eh? Oh the amount of people who used to have hosepipes on their bikes.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Peter Ingrouille and Marjorie Ingrouille, Interview with Richard Guille, 28 August 2018.

¹³⁹ Bisson, Interview.

¹⁴⁰ Susan Mauger, Interview with Richard Guille, 18 April 2016.

¹⁴¹ This aspect of her testimony is explored further in the next chapter.

¹⁴² Mauger, Interview.

The extract indicated Mauger's desire not to be drawn onto potentially sensitive subjects. As seen in chapter five, many who interacted with the labourers provided detailed reminiscences. Conversely, Mauger shut down this topic, justifying this by foregrounding how she had rarely left St Martins during the Occupation. She switched to the subject of bicycles, which she explored with far more enthusiasm, demonstrating how her comfort levels during the interview fluctuated in relation to what was being discussed. The use of hosepipes as bicycle tyres during the Occupation was commonplace and was referenced by many interviewees. It is a prominent example of the ingenuities which Islanders take pride in, an oft referenced 'safe' memory. In the late 1980s, the Jerseyman Dixie Landick was asked about near-starvation in late 1944, a subject which rapidly led him onto improvisation:

conditions were very bad indeed ... one however interesting aspect of the Occupation is that ... these things led to a tremendous amount of ingenuity ... You were allowed a bicycle but you ... couldn't have a bicycle tyre so you got a garden hose ... and garden hose became bicycle tyres.¹⁴³

That Mauger went into such detail on this topic within a testimony characterised by short and evasive answers is striking, underscored by the rapid transition from difficult subjects onto safer ground. Food was also a more comfortable subject for Mauger. When I asked her to comment on this, she enthusiastically replied: 'Food? ... I'll tell you about food shortages we had loads of food shortages!'¹⁴⁴ My prompting led her to speak comparatively at length and enthusiastically on this theme, in an interview characterised by evasion.

The cultural dimension of Blampied's narrative was discussed in the previous section. However, a psychological dimension can also be traced, where the subject of deprivation, 'making do' and improvisation came up repeatedly, often after the discussion of more controversial or difficult areas. In some instances, Blampied jarringly moved the conversation away from controversial subjects and towards notions of 'making do'. During our interview the subject of collaboration was raised:

RG: Was there much ill feeling ... when the war ended?

MB: Oh yes ... a lot of girls that went out with the Germans, there was a shemozzle one night ... they were chasing them round ... and a lot of people that they knew that they'd, had the Germans into their house, they put swastikas onto their walls ... Yeah, took a. I mean when you think, you're eleven, you outgrow your clothes. You couldn't buy any. So people used to make do if your coat got too short they'd [laughs] cut a piece put a piece in them [laughs] in between.¹⁴⁵

Blampied was initially willing to discuss the issue of reprisals towards those who had collaborated. However, she could not finalise her thoughts on this, indicated by her

¹⁴³ IWM, Docs. 5750a Misc. 189/1 'Dixie Landick Interview Transcript', n.d.

¹⁴⁴ Mauger, Interview.

¹⁴⁵ Blampied, Interview.

unfinished sentence. Whether she felt that she was straying into territory which should have remained unspoken is unclear. Her shift back onto the subject of ‘making do’ was a striking return to discursively safe ground. Her laughter when remembering her coats being upcycled lightened the tone, and her return to discussing her memories from a younger wartime age, eleven, represented an attempt to downplay her ability to comment on more controversial events. This extract demonstrated that the uncontroversial nature of the memory of deprivations and improvisations in the Islands offered her a safe haven when subjects which unsettled her came up. The testimonies of Mauger and Blampied indicate the existence of a process where some interviewees deflected lines of enquiry which caused them to feel uncomfortable, maintaining a sense of psychic composure through shifting to subjects on which the interviewee felt comfortable. This allowed them a safe outlet when testifying, allowing the more cautious narrator greater scope to attain and maintain psychic equanimity.

The gendered experience of boys also generated a number of uncontroversial topics, such as exciting military events. For young boys, who often had more personal freedom during the Occupation than girls and less domestic responsibility, there was scope to explore their strange world, interact with German soldiers and witness events further from home. Pre-existing notions of the ‘soldier hero’, reinforced after 1945 by the ‘pleasure culture of war’ (where children act out fantasies through playing as soldiers, aided by cultural productions and toys) and the overfocus on the military history of the Occupation, rendered this something which captivated young boys during the Occupation.¹⁴⁶ This led to accounts which depicted the Occupation as an ‘exciting’ period or provided lengthy stories of witnessing the war. In her 2016 study of a 1981 Mass Observation project, Summerfield found that young boys at the time who could not participate in military activity during the war ‘vividly describe[d] their vicarious involvement.’¹⁴⁷ This process was bound up with the gendered discourse of war which young boys born during this period were exposed to through films and comics which presented an image of the hyper-masculine ‘soldier hero’.¹⁴⁸

A fascination with what Carr termed the ‘spoils of war’ stemmed from the Islands’ early alignment with Britain’s war memory: ‘the private collection and display in island occupation museums of guns, uniform ... has the function of showing off the spoils of war,

¹⁴⁶ For research into the notion of the ‘soldier hero’, the pleasure culture of war and the impact of these on British masculine identity throughout the twentieth century, see Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 233-258. The subject of how the pleasure culture of war has played a role in British war memory is also covered in Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, pp. 234-241.

¹⁴⁷ Penny Summerfield, ‘The Generation of Memory: Gender and the Popular Memory of the Second World War in Britain’, in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, ed. by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 31.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31; Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*.

the booty that became the property of the victor.’¹⁴⁹ Carr noted how those who were children at the time or shortly after the war held an attachment to the objects of the enemy. This collecting culture began earlier, with children searching for shrapnel in the same manner as British children during the Blitz. Peter and Marjorie Ingrouille, both Guernsey children under ten at the time, recalled engaging in this activity.¹⁵⁰ From 1945 to the 1960s when older Islanders were sealing bunkers and burying weapons at sea, children, mostly boys, broke in to steal helmets, weapons and other items.¹⁵¹ Gendered testimonies are further validated in popular memory in the Islands through the focus on ‘military installations and weaponry’, which has for years elevated in importance the military history of the Islands’ war.¹⁵²

Two interviewees, Simon Herivel and Le Feuvre, aged five and seven in 1945, reflected this. Their focus on the exciting and the martial stemmed as much from their gendered identities as young boys at the time, interested in soldiers and war, as post-war gender constructions. However, the latter has often reinforced the former. The prevalence of exciting and action-packed tales of British martial prowess in post-war culture, as argued by Mark Connelly, validates the memory of military events.¹⁵³ A similar process to the one identified by Summerfield occurred in the Channel Islands. Herivel discussed at length his recollections of sights of the war on Guernsey, often going into a great deal of detail:

[T]he big guns from the Mirus Battery started shooting on a rock ... But anyway they were shooting on it and, we could see it and as it was landing, we were about half a mile away from there, but as the, the shell it was red, it was going fast and as it hit the rocks, you could see rocks flying all over the place.¹⁵⁴

The detail of the memory indicated how witnessing the artillery resonated with Herivel, who vividly remembered the colour of the shell and the shattering of rocks. Herivel’s fascination with the military activity he witnessed represented an avenue through which he could present his vicarious involvement in the war. The immediacy of his memories of military events indicates that these were what he noticed at the time and paid most attention to as a small boy.

Le Feuvre recalled the freedom he enjoyed in occupied Sark. His memories of the Occupation tended to focus on exciting aspects of the war, and he spoke at length of these:

¹⁴⁹ Carr, ‘Illicit Antiquities’, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Ingrouille and Ingrouille, Interview.

¹⁵¹ Carr, ‘Illicit Antiquities’, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵² Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. xvi.

¹⁵³ Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, pp. 236-237.

¹⁵⁴ Herivel, Interview.

I can remember seeing some torpedo boats or gun boats ... and you could see the shells where the Germans were firing ... we used to see the boat suddenly swerve and the shells used to land where they'd been five seconds beforehand so they were obviously watching the muzzle flashes.¹⁵⁵

D-Day was likewise a strong memory, occurring when his ability to remember events was that much sharper. The aircraft held a particular fascination:

On D-Day they were passing over here ... Spitfires and Hurricanes, they all had the bands on them ... and they had to shoot all the bloody fields they were ... chasing the rabbits, they were hurtling over to France ... I can remember that was exciting that, and these things used to hurtle down so low down over the fields.¹⁵⁶

Memories of the martial side of the Occupation were retained, and the level of detail Le Feuvre went into indicated the strength of such memories. His narration framed these as exciting events. Such memories, combined with the freedom he enjoyed during the Occupation, led him to conclude that 'I don't really remember any bad things.'¹⁵⁷ Clear memories of military events that caught his attention at the time overrode more negative recollections, leading to a positive narrative.

Gender is an important factor explaining the enthusiasm with which young boys during the Occupation related their memories of military events. However, interviewees often possess an idea of what they believe the researcher is interested in, the dramatic and exciting as opposed to the everyday and mundane.¹⁵⁸ My identity as a young male researcher with an interest in the military history of the war was likely a factor influencing what men would share owing to assumptions of my interests. Herivel provided evidence of this. Early in the interview, he paused before half-stating, half-asking: 'you only want to know about the Germans eh?'¹⁵⁹ The statement laid bare his assumptions as to my interest in the subject, which he felt to be the occupiers. Moreover, it suggested that he believed me to be interested in the military aspect of the Occupation above all else. Another factor was the focus on the military history of the Occupation which has been prevalent in the Islands and continues to be through respected groups such as *Festung Guernsey* and the CIOS, providing such memories primacy. The focus on the military aspect of Occupation allowed Islanders a way

¹⁵⁵ Le Feuvre, Interview.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Summerfield noted how interviewees for her 1998 study demonstrated an awareness of the 'hidden requirements' of becoming narrative subjects, checking the relevance of their memories, for example. Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 22-23.

¹⁵⁹ Herivel, Interview.

of avoiding more controversial subjects.¹⁶⁰ This specific local dynamic validates such memories.

However, not all ‘exciting’ memories of Occupation boyhood were resultant of gender and some interviewees demonstrated a deep nostalgia for the reminiscences of their youth. Alexander Baker is a larger-than-life character with a penchant for storytelling. When I met him in 2018, it became clear that he had been a tearaway during the Occupation. He shared several stories of stealing from the Germans in Guernsey, revelling in the memory of walking past German soldiers with bulging bags without being stopped:

It’s bloody marvellous, we never got stopped! ... There’d be the German patrols, ‘guten Abend’, ‘guten Abend’ _ ‘ist ein schön tag [sic]’, ‘ja wunderbar!’ [Laughs]. ... And there’s your two bags on the handlebars! [Laughs] ... You had other poor buggers they couldn’t do nothing ... every time they passed a German patrol, I used to say to him, ‘Bill, you must look fuckin’ suspicious, why do they stop you and they never stop us?!’ [Laughs]. Ha. ‘You’re not supposed to shit yourself in front of them!’ [Laughs wheezily for eight seconds].¹⁶¹

Fear was not referenced in this extract and Baker framed the occurrence with palpable glee. Humour was an important feature of the two interviews which I conducted with him. Baker had fond memories of his wartime youth on Sark and later Guernsey, frequently referring to the ‘good old days’. These were important memories and the Occupation was viewed as an exciting period in his life. He remarked to me, ‘you had to make the best you could out of life, and [chuckles], and learn to pinch [laughs] whatever you could [laughs] pinch!’¹⁶² Looking back upon his life from the perspective of an elderly man, Baker framed his memories of his childhood under Occupation in exciting terms, owing much to personal nostalgia for his youth in occupied Sark and Guernsey.

The ‘safest’ memory of all for those who were occupied were their memories of liberation on 9 May 1945. The release from five years of strain, tension and shortage was joyous for the islanders, who packed the streets of St Helier and St Peter Port to welcome their liberators. Sark’s Liberation on 10 May was equally raucous: a local hotelier, Bertie Falle recalled how ‘all Sark turned out, old and young most at the harbour, and what a cheer we gave the boys, we all went nearly mad, singing shouting and some crying with happiness.’¹⁶³ The anniversary of Liberation Day is the most important public event of the year, celebrating the return of freedom to the Islands. It provided a direct link to Britain’s

¹⁶⁰ Paul Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice: The Jersey Islanders who died in German prisons and concentration camps during the Occupation 1940-1945*, 2nd ed. (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2004), p. 174.

¹⁶¹ Alexander Baker, Interview with Richard Guille, 22 August 2018.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ SSC, Misc. World War Two Collection, ‘Letter from Bertie Falle to Brandon White, Secretary of Friends of Sark Charity’, May 1945.

war.¹⁶⁴ It is also a significant part of Islander identity, with Carr suggesting ‘if one wants to understand what it means to be a Channel Islander ... then ... visit the Islands on Liberation Day.’¹⁶⁵ Witnessing the way Islanders lit up when Liberation was discussed was one of the great pleasures of the research, indicating the depth of emotion of the time. Vaudin responded to my question about Liberation Day with a voice raised in excitement at her memories of being liberated at Pembroke Bay in the north of the Island: ‘[Laughs]. That was **lovely!**’¹⁶⁶ She stated: ‘it was lovely ... to see [the British soldiers] coming across, that was one day I’ll **never** forget you know, and even now, every Liberation I think of Pembroke.’¹⁶⁷ Her joy contrasted to the deeply negative emotions roused by more traumatic aspects of her experience, as seen earlier. Islanders’ memories of the day provided detail to the trend of Liberation Day celebrations proving particularly resilient to change. Liberation Day continues to be an event of patriotic celebration, borrowing many of the commemorative tropes of Britain and the meaning inherent within these.¹⁶⁸

Some testimonies affirmed this, waxing lyrical about the sense of freedom felt by all and the joy of being able to openly express patriotic symbols. Even those who were infants recalled the depth of emotion on the day. John Ferbrache, aged five at Liberation, recalled that: ‘the emotion ... registered firmly with me ... intense joy ... there was such excitement that at last this oppressive regime was at an end.’¹⁶⁹ Whereas on some subjects the younger members of the sample did not feel able to suitably comment, Liberation was one in which all could participate. Ingrouille described it as ‘fantastic ... we suddenly felt freedom. Up to a point we couldn’t ... have [thought] what freedom was like. But the curfews had gone ... **we were allowed to stay out!**’¹⁷⁰ The enthusiasm with which memories of Liberation were articulated was telling of the deep attachment Islanders feel towards the end of the Occupation. The subject could prompt detailed reflection on themes of patriotism and the joy of being able to overtly express this in that moment of victory. Harold Nicolle was a Guernsey boy of nine in 1945 whose memories occasionally hewed towards more difficult territory. His father spent time in prison after being informed upon and Nicolle personally had a number of friendships with young German soldiers. These memories occasionally caused him psychic discomfort. Reflecting on Liberation, conversely, offered him space to reflect on the patriotism of his family and on the positive end to his war:

¹⁶⁴ Daniel Travers, *The Second World War and the ‘Other British Isles’: Memory and Heritage in the Isle of Man, Orkney, and the Channel Islands* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), chapter 5.

¹⁶⁵ Gilly Carr, *Legacies of Occupation: Heritage, Memory and Archaeology in the Channel Islands* (London: Springer, 2014), p. 196.

¹⁶⁶ Vaudin, Interview.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Travers, ‘*Other British Isles*’, chapter 5.

¹⁶⁹ John Ferbrache, Interview with Richard Guille. 30 April 2018.

¹⁷⁰ Ingrouille and Ingrouille, Interview.

When the war finished my father said ‘I want to have a Union Jack ... flying outside my house’ ... We bought this shield ... it was a Union Flag face ... And we walked down the Friquet, past the Germans ... and to walk down the street with impunity ... it was just unbelievable, unbelievable. Proud ... It was just tremendous.¹⁷¹

Walking past the vanquished enemy carrying a union flag inspired pride on the part of Nicolle, allowing him to engage in the discourse of patriotism during the Occupation. Liberation was a positive memory for Nicolle, one which allowed him to conclude his narrative on surer ground than he frequently trod throughout his interview.

Many testimonies supported the notion that Liberation was the culmination of their ‘heroic endurance’, the day when Islanders could demonstrate the futility of German efforts to subjugate them. Liberation was a relief for Renouf and her family, who endured a difficult war on the west coast of Guernsey. Her father’s activities in building and distributing crystal sets, whilst offering the family a sense that they were engaging in opposition to the enemy, was stressful, and there were several near misses.¹⁷² Openly demonstrating their patriotism without fear of persecution through the act of brazen radio listening the day before Liberation was a powerful moment:

Everybody had their radios blasting out even though the Germans were still there! [Laughs]. I-I do remember listening to Winston Churchill, no hiding behind sofas or anything ... We were all listening ... to, Churchill, ‘and our dear Channel Islands, will be liberated today!’¹⁷³

The memory of seeing forbidden radios appearing on windowsills was narrated with glee, underscoring the futile efforts of the Germans to confiscate all wirelesses and enforce the ban. Pride at the radios was prominent in Renouf’s testimony. It allowed to her to engage in the discourse of patriotism and continuing passive defiance to the enemy.

For Hamelin, memories of chocolate and sweets that had not been seen for years and the general sense of jubilant excitement were prominent. Her activities on Liberation Day offered scope to align her narrative with the Islander’s continuing patriotism, even from the perspective of an eight-year-old:

having these, beautiful sweets and chocolate thrown at us ... don’t really quite honestly remember too much other than the excitement ... Coming back from school with my friends ... one of them said ‘ooh, do you think we can sing the national anthem to go home?’ [Chuckles] ... We looked around to see if there were any Germans around [laughs] and sang the national anthem! Haha! We’d obviously been taught it, on the quiet, somewhere! [Laughs].¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Harold Nicolle, Interview with Richard Guille, 9 November 2018.

¹⁷² Renouf, Interview. These aspects of her interview are covered in greater detail in chapter six.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Hamelin, Interview.

Hamelin revelled in the memory of singing the national anthem, laughing frequently throughout her narration. The sense of freedom felt by her childhood self at being able to openly express previously forbidden sentiments in the moment of victory came through in her testimony. Memories of liberation are precious to those who remember 9 May 1945. The intense joy felt by all permeated into the consciousnesses of even the youngest of Islanders and remains evident within their narratives of the day. Significantly the subject of liberation allowed younger Islanders to engage with notions of enduring Island patriotism and within the founding myths of resolute steadfastness in the face of enemy rule. This offers a further explanation for the continuing relevance of aspects of British war memory to Islanders who remember the Occupation.

Memories of liberation and the positives which Islanders felt came out of the deprivations are an important part of the identity of those who lived through the period in Guernsey, Jersey and Sark. Carr has argued that elements of the Occupation experience such as these have tended to be emphasised in public, at the expense of the darker and controversial parts of the Occupation.¹⁷⁵ This section has demonstrated that safe subjects could be used to evade more challenging subjects, with interviewees shifting dramatically from controversial topics onto the surer ground offered by the ways Islanders improvised. Similarly, memories of exciting military events for boys caused some to reflect more positively on their experiences. With the sights of artillery practice and hedgehopping aircraft seared into their memory, more difficult recollections held less space. Finally, memories of Liberation Day provided a link to British war memory and allowed Islanders to emphasise positive aspects of the experience. Even today, despite greater awareness of the worst parts of the Occupation, many who lived through the war reflect on aspects of the period in reasonably positive terms, very much in line with the simplifications of the Churchillian paradigm of Occupation memory and British myths of the Second World War.

Conclusion

In the late 1980s, Stella Perkins was interviewed for the documentary *Swastika Over British Soil*. Her experience of Jersey's Occupation had been remarkable and very much alternative to the dominant Churchillian paradigm. Her mother was a Russian national, leading to the family becoming involved in sheltering escaped OT labourers. When the Germans arrived, Perkins was a schoolgirl around the age of ten. By the end of the war, she was a young adult who had been forced to step into a parental role for her younger siblings when her mother was imprisoned by the Germans. Her family suffered from the food shortages and witnessed

¹⁷⁵ Carr, 'The Slowly Healing Scars', pp. 254-255.

the conditions of the eastern European labourers, hearing their stories of what Nazism truly meant. However, Perkins could reflect positively on her experiences. She related that ‘had we gone away to England I wouldn’t have ended up as the same kind of person ... we had to develop ourselves to keep alive ... [and] ... became resourceful and imaginative.’¹⁷⁶ Despite possessing difficult memories, Perkins could make light of her experiences. When reflecting on her inexperience at running a household, Perkins found space for laughter: ‘they came round with a last distribution of bread ... and I didn’t know what to do with ... [it] ... I was no housewife, so I put them in a drawer and they all went mouldy (laugh).’¹⁷⁷ Remarkably, amidst the joy of Liberation, Perkins felt sadness at the end of a way of life which had become dear to her. She recalled: ‘I had a very mixed feeling inside because I knew that something valuable ... was going. This ... happy camaraderie that you share all your troubles ... and everybody suddenly started becoming very selfish again and that’s the way it remained.’¹⁷⁸ Perkins evidenced how alignment with the Churchillian paradigm was possible on an individual level. Whilst she did not shy away from relating painful memories, her final conclusions about the benefits of occupation, on both a personal and social level, indicated a deep attachment to the event. Her juxtaposition of how people behaved during and after the Occupation, in terms of how selfless they had been and how selfish they had become since, indicated nostalgia for the Occupation years. Regardless of how challenging, frightening and hard the Occupation had been, Perkins was able to conclude that the experience had been personally beneficial.

The Occupation threw up as many positive aspects as negative ones. Whilst some Islanders had collaborated, many more had not and had pulled tighter together as a community. The food shortages had been terrible, yet the ingenuities and improvisations had been remarkable, becoming an untouchable part of local memory. Testimonies such as Perkins’ demonstrate why elements of the Churchillian paradigm myth continue to be cherished. Memories of the positive, or at least uncontroversial, aspects of the Occupation continue to be prominent. Claims that such interpretations are ‘inaccurate’ (as posited by Carr) or ‘sanitised’ miss the mark in terms of understanding historical myth. As opposed to representing ‘a cleverly designed falsification of reality,’ as Carr’s research insinuates, myths represent a dynamic and shifting vehicle through which the past is reworked to suit the needs of the present.¹⁷⁹ Connelly sought not to ‘bust’ the British myth of the Second World War as it was ‘too deeply implanted in the hearts and minds of the British people to

¹⁷⁶ IWM, Docs. 5750a Misc. 189/1 ‘Stella Perkins Interview Transcript’, n.d.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. Also see IWM, Sound 10105, ‘Perkins Interview’. Perkins related a similar anecdote through laughter during this interview, commenting on how flour rations would occasionally contain maggots which in hindsight she should have eaten for the protein.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, p. 1.

do that.¹⁸⁰ Instead, he explored how and why such a myth had been constructed and why it proved so enduring. Arguably, the Churchillian paradigm of Occupation memory in the Islands is ‘deeply implanted’ and cherished by Islanders, exhibiting all the hallmarks of a historical myth as defined by Barthes. It provided an exhausted, strained and hungry population with a positive view of their tribulations, which they had borne in service of Britain’s war effort, even if this had merely been remaining stoic in the face of the might of the occupier and the appalling conditions which they engendered. It allowed the damaged societies an important tool with which to rebuild a positive Island identity in the post-war world.

Moreover, the need to reconcile oneself with the hardships was exacerbated for Islanders by the sense that their tribulations had been part of a sideshow in world events. The Islands never became a key zone of military operations, the fortifications were never used and the occupiers ceded the territory without a shot being fired. People do not like to believe that their sufferings are for nought, and strive to find their own meaning behind such events, or lock into national myths which provide a positive message around which those who suffered can find broader purpose. The population of Britain locked into the myths of the People’s War whilst Islanders discoursed through the ideals of resilience, stoicism and adaptability. James Clapperton demonstrated the importance of positive myths to those who experience extreme hardship through his research into testimonies of survivors of the Siege of Leningrad from 1941-1944, where an estimated 1,500,000 died of extreme cold, starvation and German artillery.¹⁸¹ Clapperton found that survivors remained attached to the idea generated through Soviet propaganda that Leningrad’s wartime community pulled together, maintained discipline and order, evidencing through their testimonies a sense of nostalgia for an imagined ‘sense of closeness arising from co-suffering.’¹⁸² That those who experienced the maelstrom of Leningrad could continue to extol a positive interpretation points to the human need for justification and finding the positives in negative experiences. The beleaguered survivors of Leningrad could reflect on the encouraging aspects of their time under siege in the city, continuing long after the collapse of the Soviet Union to extol this simplistic view. With this extreme example in mind, the long-standing and continuing desire of those who lived through the Occupation to emphasise the positive aspects of their experience and suppress the negative, increasingly makes sense.

This chapter has outlined several ways in which British war memory continues to influence the oral narratives of those who experienced the Occupation. It demonstrates the

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁸¹ James Clapperton, ‘The Siege of Leningrad as Sacred Narrative: Conversations with Survivors’, *Oral History*, 35:1 (2007), p. 52.

¹⁸² Ibid., pp. 49-60.

continuing utility of Britain's war memory as a narrative framework for Islanders across a range of topics. Direct examples of the language of wartime Britain continue to appear in Occupation testimonies alongside notions of stoicism. Moreover, stoic humour served as a notable narrative strategy for Islanders, demonstrating that the manifestations of British war memory in the Islands influences the narratives of the younger wartime generations today. Examples of this downplayed the extent that Islanders suffered from food shortages and presented a more stoical attitude towards the situation than was the case at the time. The central pillars of the mythical interpretation of the Occupation which formed shortly after the end of the war continue to be relevant. Memories of liberation as a day of reunification with Britain and patriotic expression tally with Liberation Day commemorations in the Islands. Likewise, the memory of uncontroversial aspects, such as the improvisations and ingenuities which stemmed from the shortages in the Islands, continue to be comfortable subjects, articulated with deeply felt pride or as a way of evading more challenging recollections. That is not to say that recent and more nuanced local understandings of the period did not impact the testimonies gathered for this thesis. Further discussion problematises the conclusions reached in this chapter, demonstrating how local discourses can entangle with the Churchillian paradigm. However, whilst scholarship, commemorative activity and heritage in the Islands has begun to champion narratives of victimhood, the memories of some who lived through the period have remained resistant to these developments, clinging to themes of stoicism, resilience and ingenuity. Yet aspects of the Occupation, such as relations with the occupier, resistance and the foreign labourers brought to the Islands, fell well outside the scope of the narrative structures of British war memory. The thesis now moves on to consider the most 'alternative' of Islanders' experiences to British understandings of the war: the German soldiers themselves and the question of how to interact and live amongst foreign troops waging war on the Islanders' country.

Chapter Four

'The German soldiers that I knew didn't behave like**that': Composing Memories of the German Occupiers**

In 1941, seven-year-old Margaret Rose was living near Guernsey's airport with her parents, on a lane with three other houses, abandoned by evacuees. German officers were billeted in these and her parents were soon informed that their bathroom would be made available for them. However, the situation did not appear to generate friction. In 2001 Rose stated: 'I ... remember the Germans marching up ... very smartly with their spongebags and their towels over their arms, knocking on the door, mother opening the door. They saluted ... clicked their heels and then she let them in.'¹ Rose recalled the officers were 'nothing but courteous' and brought her sweets and chocolate. She recounted several instances where they showed the family consideration, from assisting her father in hiding his car to avoid it being requisitioned, to saving the family's furniture when they were removed from their house.² The relationship described by Rose was akin to neighbours living in a symbiotic relationship rather than between occupiers and occupied. This allowed Rose to develop a deeper understanding of the nature of the strange men who occupied Guernsey.

For Islanders living in areas populous with the occupiers, close proximity led to scope, desired or not, for inter-personal contact with members of an army waging war on their country. There was a ratio of one German servicemen to every three Islanders across the archipelago. By comparison, following the occupation of the southern zone of France in 1942, there was one German serviceman to every one-hundred civilians.³ On small Islands, such large numbers of troops interspersed among the locals meant they could not be easily avoided. Soldiers were billeted in hotels, abandoned homes and requisitioned houses, in some cases living with Islanders.⁴ A middle-aged Guernsey diarist, Miriam Leale, wrote in

¹ Second World War Experience Centre (SWWEC), Leeds, Tape Recording no. 529, 'Interview with Margaret Rose', 14 March 2001.

² Ibid.

³ With OT labourers added to this number (16,000 at their most numerous), the Islands had to support an extra 42,000 people by May 1943, two-thirds of the civilian population. Paul Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice: The Jersey Islanders who died in German Prisons and Concentration Camps during the Occupation, 1940-45*, 2nd ed. (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2004), p. 128. Had this ratio been extended to Britain, the Germans would have required thirty-million men. Hazel Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands Occupation: Record, Memory, Myth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), p. 26.

⁴ Paul Sanders, 'Managing under Duress: Ethical Leadership, Social Capital and the Civilian Administration of the British Channel Islands During the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1945', *Journal of*

1944 that ‘the civilians are so mixed up with the Germans.’⁵ The Germans became a part of daily life. Leo Harris, a Scottish teenager living near St Helier on Jersey, recalled ‘we were living in the middle of them ... When we went out ... we [saw] ... soldiers cleaning their rifles, sitting on the steps, chatting away.’⁶ This pressurised situation was more acute on the smaller and more heavily occupied Guernsey than on Jersey.⁷ The presence of vast numbers of Germans on British soil provided this Occupation with its quiddity as lived experience and memory for those who lived through it, exemplified through the long-standing focus of private Occupation museums on the uniform, weaponry and sites of the occupier.⁸

The soldiers engendered lasting memories for Occupation children. The extent to which they penetrated the consciousness of the 1.5 generation was evidenced through sensory memories. Harris related to me his memories of the Germans’ scent: ‘I noticed they always had a peculiar smell drifting off them ... if I came into this room and a German soldier had been here ten minutes before, I could tell straight away.’⁹ ‘Senses’, Paula Hamilton argued, ‘can act as a ... trigger to remembering ... [and can] bring the past into the present.’¹⁰ For Georgina Hamelin, an eight-year-old Guernsey girl in 1945, post-war visits to Guernsey’s Occupation museum provided striking reminders of the smells of Occupation: ‘The moment I ... see these uniforms on display, I can smell the Germans. I’ve never lost that ... I can actually smell it still. Yes, it actually hits me, after all these years you wouldn’t think so.’¹¹ That an interviewee of such a young age during the Occupation could still, nearly seventy-five-years on, be transported back to the past by the scent of uniforms on display indicates the depth of emotion the occupiers inspired, and their significant place in Islanders’ memories.

Rose firmly stated that she had no unpleasant memories of the Germans prior to her family’s deportation in September 1942. Many Islanders developed a deeper appreciation of the men behind the *feldgrau* uniforms, compromising their ability to view them as an inhuman enemy. During 1942, Rose came across a large group of OT labourers being

Business Ethics, (2010), p. 120. Paul Sanders, *The British Channel Islands under German Occupation, 1940-1945* (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2005), pp. 163-164. For an account of this process from a Wehrmacht sergeant responsible for billeting, consult GIA, SA/01/04 ‘Interview with Willie Hesse’, n.d.

⁵ PL, LF940.53 LEA, ‘Miriam Leale Diary 1944-1945’, 3 June 1944, p. 27.

⁶ Leo Harris, Interview with Richard Guille, 4 January 2019.

⁷ Sanders noted that more civilian properties were requisitioned for billeting troops in Guernsey than in Jersey and the former was more heavily fortified, owing to its greater tactical importance. Sanders, ‘Managing under Duress’, p. 120.

⁸ Gilly Carr, ‘Occupation Heritage, Commemoration and Memory in Guernsey and Jersey’, *History and Memory*, 24:1 (2012), p. 107.

⁹ Harris, Interview; Leo Harris, *A Boy Remembers* (Jersey: Channel Island Publishing, 2004), p. 21.

¹⁰ Paula Hamilton, ‘Oral History and the Senses’ in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader: Third Edition* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 105.

¹¹ Georgina Hamelin, Interview with Richard Guille, 3 May 2018.

‘herded’ down a lane and beaten by their German overseers.¹² Her interviewer queried whether this had altered her opinion of the occupiers. Rose’s reply exemplified how Islanders differentiated between members of the occupying forces: ‘oh no, because the German soldiers that I knew didn’t behave like that. They didn’t shout “Raus” and hit people.’¹³ Rose’s experiences contradicted British understandings of the cruel Nazi soldier generated by wartime propaganda, which required her to explain to a British interviewer how the Germans she had known had been kind men. Her interviewer indicated personal surprise at this. Having received a firm agreement to the question ‘you haven’t got any unpleasant memories of Germans from 1940[?]’, he followed with ‘even though one of them was ... billeted on your family?’ That Rose held no negative memories of the officers was an unexpected outcome, dissonant to his understanding of the conflict. Views such as Rose’s are far from uncommon in the Islands; however, this can prove challenging for British commentators to understand.

Some demonstrated less composure, aware of accusations of widespread Island collaboration and the stigma attached locally to those perceived to have been overfriendly with the enemy. Owing to often toxic debates over ‘collaboration’, the subject remains delicate. Gilly Carr claimed anything which vaguely touches upon collaboration is a ‘sensitivity’ in the Islands, and therefore taboo.¹⁴ Paulette Bichard, a Guernsey teenager living in Cobo, an area populous with the enemy, defensively explained the unique pressures of living with the enemy: ‘It’s very difficult ... for people like you to understand, because they integrated with us ... you’d go out into your garden, they were in next door’s garden. And they would say ‘good morning’. So what do you do? You say ‘good morning’, don’t you?’¹⁵ Bichard, a working age teenager in 1945 and later involved at a high level in local politics, demonstrated a deeper awareness of the potential shame attached to interacting with the Germans. She grew defensive because of this, seen through her use of rhetorical questions, to give me cause to reflect on what I would have done in similar circumstances, and pointing to the impossible situation in which Islanders found themselves. Her father had served with the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry (RGLI) during the First World War, and had returned with a burning hatred of the Germans. Bichard also deeply resented the German presence. However, she also held memories of the enemy where their humanity shone through and required articulation, indicative of the disorientating space Islanders existed in between 1940 and 1945.

¹² SWWEC, ‘Rose Interview’. Her account of this is analysed in detail in the next chapter.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Gilly Carr, ‘Islands of War, Guardians of Memory: The Afterlife of the German Occupation in the British Channel Islands’, in *Heritage and Memory of War: Responses from Small Islands*, ed. by Gilly Carr and Kier Reeves (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p. 87.

¹⁵ Paulette Bichard, Interview with Richard Guille, 26 April 2018.

Rose and Bichard demonstrated the differences in perspective which can still be found in the Islands. It is imperative to study the tension between the Islanders' experiences of the enemy and British war memory, given its implications for the composure of Occupation testimonies. Memories of the Germans, particularly those which point to a positive appraisal of individuals or the collective, find limited supportive discursive frameworks within Britain's war memory. The lexicon of Occupation could not be borrowed from the British when remembering the occupiers. Instead, the language of collaboration and fraternisation, a distinctly European discourse, has been applied to the Islands by British commentators. This aspect of the experience generated the dissonances preventing full alignment between British and Island war memories. Moving forward, Islanders' views face greater pressure, as Holocaust consciousness increases in Britain and the Islands, and the resistance and victimhood paradigm becomes more established. Despite the soldiers' salience to Occupation life, their presence was an irrefutable divergence between the Islands' and Britain's wars, forcing the Islands to the periphery of Britain's war memory. This chapter explores the nature of Islanders' interactions with the Germans and how they composed their memories of this.¹⁶ The analysis here focuses upon grassroots relations between rank-and-file German soldiers and Islanders, which remains less studied than the nature of administrative dealings with the occupier. For a subject which represents a potential sensitivity and taboo in the Islands, the Germans were one of the most frequently discussed in my interviews. Whilst publicly the subject of the Germans is sensitive, a complex picture is presented by those who shared their memories of them. Why this was the case in the interviews conducted for this thesis, and how memories of this can be composed in light of a continuing adherence to the tropes and structures of British war memory, is this chapter's focus.

Paul Sanders identified that Hitler 'wished the Islanders to be treated with more consideration than the inhabitants of other occupied territories.'¹⁷ Although some Germans were committed Nazis, many were men doing their duty, resenting it and missing home. Hazel Knowles-Smith commented that Islanders found themselves in a 'deeply paradoxical' position 'in which the enemy, all powerful, sometimes cruel and collectively hated ... could

¹⁶ Some themes discussed here develop upon the content of the final chapter of my 2016 Masters Dissertation, which explored Sarkian testimonies of the German occupiers. Richard Guille, 'The German Occupation of Sark: 1940-1945: Public Discourse and Private Memory', (unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Kent, 2016), pp. 42-57. More recently, I touched upon the subject of how Sark's Occupation children remembered the Germans in Richard Guille, 'Final Witnesses: Memories of the German Occupation of Sark, 1940-1945' in Olympia McEwan, *In Living Memory: A Collection of Contemporary Visual Arts, Original Essays, Poetry, and First-hand Memories of those who Survived the War Years* (Guernsey: Blue Ormer, 2020), pp. 10-14.

¹⁷ Paul Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness: UK War Memory and Channel Islands Occupation Memory', in *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective*, ed. by Jodie Matthews and Daniel Travers (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), p. 27.

often be friendly and humane ... operating according to apparently familiar moral codes.’¹⁸ Islanders had to become accustomed to their strange new world to survive. Arthur Kent, a Jersey clerk during the war, recalled ‘one had a funny feeling in the pit of one’s stomach to have actually seen Germans in uniform ... for the first time ... [then] ... one got used to the idea of seeing them about.’¹⁹ Oral testimonies demonstrate how Islanders well-remember the duality of the enemy. The majority of interviewees reflected positively on German conduct and shared memories of individual ‘good’ Germans. Conversely, several presented tales of soldiers who behaved in an unpleasant or frightening manner, or became defensive or evasive on the subject, fearful of external judgement. Islanders were not of one mind in relation to the Germans, although generally, the overall conduct of the garrison was perceived to have been far better than elsewhere, and interviewees demonstrated an ability to differentiate between Germans and Nazis. Madeleine Collenette, a sixteen-year-old farmer on Little Sark, commented ‘we were very lucky; we didn’t have any of the nasty ones like the SS.’²⁰ Nevertheless, this selective appreciation was founded upon a silence, chiefly an apparent failure to link the crimes of German servicemen elsewhere with the men who occupied the Islands.

Positive appraisals of German conduct and relations between occupiers and occupied have historically been viewed negatively by British commentators.²¹ Whilst the work of Sanders remedied the excesses of the rupture period, objectively examining collaboration and fraternisation in the Islands within a European context, past stigma and the scars of hostile debates still have an effect. In terms of composing oral testimonies in interviews with external (particularly English) researchers, the central feature of the Occupation presents a challenge. By British standards, Islanders entered subversive territory in developing a liveable relationship with the enemy, amplified by debates surrounding the perceived lack of resistance to German rule and a dichotomic understanding of collaboration. Sanders argued that in Britain ‘collaboration is still seen as a typically French ... phenomenon. Islanders’ allergy to the word is informed by its hefty use in the British media ... where the only known form of collaboration is “Vichy style” cuddling up to the “New European Order.”’²² Bunting contended ‘those who had been occupied could never

¹⁸ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 117.

¹⁹ IWM, London, Docs. 5750a Misc. 189/1 ‘Arthur Kent Interview Transcript’, n.d.

²⁰ Madeleine Collenette, Interview with Richard Guille, 15 April 2016.

²¹ Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule 1940-1945*, 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico, 2004); David Fraser, *The Jews of the Channel Islands and the Rule of Law, 1940-1945: ‘Quite Contrary to the principles of British justice’* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2000); Peter King, *The Channel Islands War 1940-1945* (London: Robert Hale, 1991).

²² Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 61. There is little reason to suppose that this view has substantially changed in the popular imagination, notably following the manipulation of nationalism and patriotism during the ‘Brexit’ referendum.

view the war in quite the same ... moral absolutes.’²³ The British existed in a world defined by stoically resisting the onslaught of an unquestionably evil enemy; Islanders remembered years of unavoidable fraternisation and compromise. This was made plain by the Jersey deportee and local historian Michael Ginns, who told Bunting ‘In Britain, every German was considered a Nazi ... but we saw the man behind the uniform.’²⁴

The Germans were keen to make a good impression on the Islanders, something which local officials exploited in their dealings with German officials.²⁵ However, Sanders argued, the Islanders held back and German efforts to win Islanders’ ‘hearts and minds’, through propaganda in local newspapers and German lessons for school children, failed.²⁶ Ralph Durand, head librarian at Guernsey’s Priaulx Library who was tasked by Victor Carey in 1940 to record a history of the Occupation, commented that ‘many individual Germans wished to be regarded as friendly ... they ... offered to shake hands with any Guernseyman ... and looked puzzled ... if ... ignored.’²⁷ The result of a diverse lived experience gave Islanders’ memories of the Germans a heterogenous quality. Yet such views have ‘always militated against [the Islands] being fitted into the narrative straightjacket of UK war memory.’²⁸ The co-existence and mingling of German and British citizens presented the greatest tension with the Islands’ retrospective framing of the event as a part of Britain’s war.

It was also one of the greatest points of common ground with the European experience of the war. Phillipe Burrin commented of France: ‘the French ... [lived] ... under the Nazi jackboot. Enemy troops were encamped on their soil, moved about their streets, went in and out of their houses ... [and] ... set the rules for daily life.’²⁹ This assessment rings true for the Islands. More perceptive Islanders were aware of how this rendered their situation inherently dissonant to the British war they so diligently followed. The Guernsey Methodist minister, Reverend Douglas Ord noted in 1945 in a retrospective foreword to his diary: ‘To pass five years in a small Island whose ... population was matched ... by a garrison equal in size, widely distributed among the houses ... of the civilians, ... is experience suis generis. Even the most retiring and insignificant could not avoid almost

²³ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 319.

²⁴ Michael Ginns, quoted in Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 320.

²⁵ TNA, HO 45/22424 ‘Report of the President of the Controlling Committee of the States of Guernsey on the activities of the Committee during the five years of German Occupation’, 23 May 1945.

²⁶ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 165; Sanders, ‘Managing under Duress’, p. 119.

²⁷ Durand was so weakened by malnutrition in 1945 that he passed away shortly after liberation and before his history was published. Ralph Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule* (2nd Ed.), (Guernsey: The Guernsey Society, 2018), p. 245.

²⁸ Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, p. 26.

²⁹ Phillipe Burrin, *France Under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise*, transl. Janet Lloyd (New York: The New Press, 1996), p. 1.

daily contact.’³⁰ For the Islanders, the experience was one of many shades of grey. The Occupation, as the Jerseyman Bob Le Sueur put it, was punctuated by ‘little crises of conscience’ when it came to interacting with the enemy.³¹ Islanders faced the same moral dilemma of Europeans under Nazi Occupation, that by merely existing and carrying on with life, one was indirectly maintaining German rule. Jean Paul Sartre observed of France ‘we could not stir an inch, eat or even breathe without becoming the accomplices of the enemy.’³² However, the Islands’ alignment with Britain prevented identification with the European experience of Occupation.

Approaching research on Sark in 2016, I anticipated the subject of the Germans to be sensitive, likely to cause my interviewees to become discomposed due to the cultural pressures of Britain’s war memory.³³ The 2016 interviews problematised this hypothesis and presented a more subtle picture, upon which this chapter shines greater light.³⁴ The chapter outlines who the occupiers were and the nature of interactions between Islanders and Germans, before exploring the occupier’s place in local memory. Strikingly, some interviewees demonstrated an ability to discuss the occupiers with perfect coherence, drawing attention to moments of shared humanity and examples which demonstrated the folly of war. A distinctive local discourse comes through in the testimonies, by which favourable or neutral comments on Germans - identified by phrases such as ‘ordinary’, ‘just like us’ or ‘didn’t want to be here’ - are permissible and expressible, as opposed to taboo and suppressed. Notably, this was a widely-held stance of the 1.5 generation. The actions of children were less tainted by collaboration, as many interactions were of an innocent nature and children held less understanding at the time of how one should behave towards an enemy soldier. However, accusations of Island collaboration still shape their views: the accused were their leaders and institutions, parents and other relatives. Whilst their stake in this debate was less personal, it was nevertheless present.

Corral Smith noted in her 2005 psychology thesis that some Guernsey based respondents shared what she viewed as unexpectedly fair-minded assessments of the enemy. This disquieted her in relation to collaboration, leading her to present the partisan conclusion that Islanders should refrain from expressing that they formed relationships or even ‘liked

³⁰ PL, PL940.53ORD, ‘Diary of Reverend Douglas Ord, Vol. I’, May 1945, p. 2. The underlined words are Ord’s emphasis.

³¹ Bob Le Sueur, Interview with Richard Guille, 6 January 2019.

³² Jean Paul Sartre, quoted in Rab Bennet, *Under the Shadow of the Swastika: The Moral Dilemmas of Resistance and Collaboration in Hitler’s Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), p. ix.

³³ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 318.

³⁴ Richard Guille, ‘The German occupation of Sark,’ p. 42.

the Germans', or modify their narratives to imply greater coercion.³⁵ Her chapter on this was brief, and the study here presents a more detailed examination, identifying it as something worthy of deeper and objective exploration as opposed to something Islanders ought to be embarrassed by. Smith pointed to some factors explaining the presence of positive memories of German soldiers: shared experiences and symbiotic relationships which provided the basis for empathy to develop on the part of Islanders, the ability to differentiate between 'good' (non-Nazi) and 'bad' Germans (Nazis), and how kind German behaviour towards children led to a loss of fear amongst younger Islanders.³⁶ Children had less to fear of the Germans than older Islanders, although some well-remembered frightening incidents and sensed the dread with which their parents had faced the prospect of the German arrival. Jeanette Drillot, a seven-year-old Sarkee in 1945, recalled her father's fears: 'my father had heard of all the atrocities ... he was fearful ... as to what would happen to my mother and me.'³⁷ Yet many soldiers who occupied the Islands often went out of their way to be kind to children. Drillot noted that 'I don't remember being frightened. My life went on.' The nature of these relationships and their implications upon 1.5 generation testimonies are examined.

Nevertheless, there was a limit to this discourse, and the subject of the occupiers had the power to engender discomposure, due a fear of being misunderstood or judged. Others exemplified a long-standing mistrust of Germans derived from their Occupation experiences. These examples counter-balanced the more conciliatory discourse surrounding the Germans, indicative of the uneven nature of the Occupation experience and the damage external criticism could cause to some interviewees' efforts to attain composure. The chapter poses fresh questions of Islanders' oral testimonies in relation to the Germans, building upon Sanders' research into how Islanders and Germans lived together during the five years of Occupation.³⁸ It explores the conceptual implications which the ability to compose memories of a potentially subversive subject provides. That such a discourse survived the controversies of the 1990s indicated a strong desire to avoid presenting the Germans as a homogenous mass and losing sight of one of the most urgent and pressing lessons of the Occupation. Historically, Islanders have risked more by sharing such views than had they painted their occupiers in a worse light, and that they continue to do so merits attention. This suggests that Islanders can, when the subject moves into territory dissonant to Britain's war memory,

³⁵ Corral Smith, 'The Impact of the Evacuation and Occupation Experience, 1940-1945, on the Lives and Relationships of Guernsey Children and Guernsey Society' (PhD thesis, The Open University, 2005), p. 325.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 284-299.

³⁷ Peter Baker, Eileen Baker, Jeanette Drillot and Simon Mollet, Interview with Richard Guille, 18 April 2016.

³⁸ Of particular note are his chapter on administrative relations, entitled 'Collaboration: What Collaboration?' and his section on fraternisation in another chapter, 'The Struggle for Survival'. Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 57-98 and 155-172 respectively.

switch stance and lock into a locally accepted narrative, one with its roots deeply embedded within the Occupation experience.

Occupiers and Occupied in the Channel Islands

As Islanders awaited the German arrival in June 1940, stories of Nazi brutality circulated, many bearing similarities to First World War British propaganda following the rape of Belgium in 1914.³⁹ Alan Wood and Mary Seaton Wood noted in 1955 how French refugees spread fearful rumours.⁴⁰ P. Le Sauteur, a Jerseyman, recorded in his memoir ‘the possibilities of a Nazi occupation, what were they? Propaganda had painted some horrible pictures, but were they to be believed? ... the wildest rumours passed among the crowd.’⁴¹ The shock of the air raids on St Helier and St Peter Port intensified Islanders’ fears.⁴² Le Sueur recalled the atmosphere in Jersey’s Royal Square the day before the invasion, giving a sense of the tension and fears of the populace:

I was standing behind two women, who said ‘the moment this is over, we must hurry back home, and barricade the doors. Because there’ll be a lot of women raped before nightfall.’ That was what was expected. What was what was being said in the national press ... so that was the state of mind.⁴³

British propaganda had also painted a disquieting picture of the expected enemy, with Islanders expecting men who committed all manner of atrocities against civilians.⁴⁴ Mary Blampied of Jersey recalled a neighbour imploring her mother to evacuate the Island, telling them ‘you don’t know what they’re like.’⁴⁵ Kurt Spangenberg became aware of Islanders pre-conceptions: ‘they said “we have been told that the Germans [have] horns on the forehead and they rape women ...” and all these silly things. Some believed that.’⁴⁶

³⁹ Alan Wood and Mary Seaton Wood, *Islands in Danger: The Fantastic Story of the German Occupation of the Channel Islands 1940-1945* (London: Evans Brothers, 1955), pp. 43-44. Sybil Hathaway, the Dame of Sark, also recalled how tales of Nazi terror were shared with the Sarkees by French refugees who briefly put into the Island’s harbour in June 1945. Sybil Hathaway, *Dame of Sark: An Autobiography* (London: Heineman, 1961), p. 112. For a study of the invasion of Belgium and the atrocities committed there by the German army in 1914, see Alan Kramer, *Dynamics of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 6-30.

⁴⁰ Wood and Wood, *Islands in Danger*, pp. 43-44. John Lewis, the Jersey doctor and memoirist, dwelt upon the, as he viewed it, ‘hysteria’ of Jersey’s women towards the prospect of rape by the Wehrmacht. John Lewis, *A Doctor’s Occupation: The Dramatic True Story of Life in Nazi Occupied Jersey* (London: Transworld Publishers, 1982), pp. 28-30.

⁴¹ P. Le Sauteur, *Jersey Under the Swastika* (London: Streamline, 1960), p. 12

⁴² Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 29-30.

⁴³ Le Sueur, Interview, 6 January 2019.

⁴⁴ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 43.

⁴⁵ Mary Blampied, Interview with Richard Guille, 21 May 2019.

⁴⁶ IWM, Docs 5750b, Misc. 189/2 ‘Kurt Spangenberg Interview Transcript’, n.d.

Fuelling these fears were the Islands' experiences of the First World War, which deeply impacted their societies. 12,460 Islanders served. Jersey men fought as a part of the Royal Irish Rifles, whilst Guernsey men and Sark men joined the RGLI.⁴⁷ The cost was high: 2,298 Island men died during the conflict.⁴⁸ The RGLI suffered heavy casualties during offensive actions in 1917 and 1918.⁴⁹ The loss of life provided grounds for hatred towards the Germans which lasted well into the Occupation. Men who had served had to face being occupied by their former enemies, whilst others who had lost friends and family found old emotional wounds reopened by the German invasion. May Hamon, a ten-year-old Sark girl, recalled how memories of the Great War affected her grandmother: '[she] really didn't cope with the Germans ... she'd lost her brother ... he's on the war memorial. I mean if you'd had something like that happen to you and all these Germans with guns [arrive].'⁵⁰ Islanders' bitter experiences of 1914-1918 provided many with a discomfiting precedent.

However, Islanders' expectations were largely contradicted; instead of the expected Nazi monsters, the occupiers were initially disciplined young men flushed with victory. They did not initially mistreat Islanders, and the numbers of recorded rapes committed by German servicemen during the Occupation were low.⁵¹ The Islanders were so impressed by their discipline and appearance that many believed they had been hand-picked to make a good impression on the British, although Ginns identified this as incorrect.⁵² Dixie Landick, who worked as an interpreter for the States of Jersey and later at the Nuremberg trials,

⁴⁷ For a study of the First World War's impact on Jersey's society, see Ian Ronayne, *Jersey's Great War: An Island and its people 1914-1918* (St Helier: Jersey Heritage, 2014); and Ian Ronayne, *Ours: The Jersey Pals in the First World War* (Stroud: The History Press, 2009). For a military history of the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry, see Edwin Parks, *Diex Aix: God Help Us: The Guernsey men who marched away 1914-1918* (Guernsey: Guernsey Museums and Galleries, 1992).

⁴⁸ Peter Tabb, *A Peculiar Occupation: New Perspectives on Hitler's Channel Islands* (Hersham: Ian Allen, 2005), p. 29. Forty-eight Sark men also joined the RGLI and seventeen were killed. David Moseley, *Guernsey and the Great War: How Guernsey People were involved in the 1914-1918 War* (Guernsey: Guernsey Museums and Galleries, n.d.), p. 36.

⁴⁹ R. R. Norman, *Guernsey men at War: The RGLI in France and Flanders 1917-1919* (Guernsey: Melody Press Printers, 2009), p. 36. During one engagement outside the town of Masnieres near Cambrai on 1 and 2 December 1917, into which the RGLI entered with 1200 officers and men, 120 were killed, 250 wounded and 250 listed as missing. Figures sourced from Moseley, *Guernsey and the Great War*, p. 36. For a first-hand account of the RGLI written shortly after the war from a soldier's perspective, see A. Stanley Blicq, *Norman Ten Hundred: A Record of the 1st (Service) Battalion, Royal Guernsey Light Infantry* (Gloucester: Dodo Press, n.d.).

⁵⁰ Jenny Hamon and May Hamon, Interview with Richard Guille, 19 April 2016.

⁵¹ Only one rape was recorded in Guernsey, for example, although it is highly likely many more went unreported. GIA, BA/57/2/2 'Memorandum of Meeting between Herbert Morrison and Guernsey Officials, 14 May 1945', May 1945, p. 1.

⁵² Michael Ginns, 'Operation Green Arrow and the 216 Infantry Division in the Channel Islands', *CIOR*, 18 (1990), p. 67. The 216 ID had been the nearest available troops for the invasion, and had been quickly bundled into transport aircraft in a hastily arranged departure. A propagandistic report by the first Kommandant of the Channel Islands, Major Lanz, detailing the invasion of the Islands, is revealing of the hurried departure of his men. See IWM, Docs. 5/17/1 JRD4, 'Translation of report by Major Albrecht Lanz 216 ID, first Military Governor of Guernsey under the German Occupation', n.d.

recalled ‘there was ... some feeling of relief ... One had heard of ... the massacre of civilians and ... dreadful things happening. When none of this happened ... the first feeling was ... relief.’⁵³ Le Sueur remarked in his memoir: ‘I was shocked at just how ... normal they were ... They didn’t look at us as though they were about to embark on an orgy of rape and destruction.’⁵⁴ Prior to 1942, the conduct of the Germans in the Islands was generally seen as having been conciliatory and Islanders had little motivation to actively resist the apparently victorious enemy. Following 1942, the relationship worsened as Islanders became increasingly aware of the mailed fist concealed within the velvet glove.⁵⁵

The Islands were initially occupied by the 216 Infantry Division (ID), which had fought across France in May 1940.⁵⁶ The 216 ID were gradually replaced with the 316 ID from May 1941, with the latter having been raised as one of nine intended to garrison occupied Europe.⁵⁷ The 319 ID remained in place until the end of the war.⁵⁸ *Luftwaffe* and *Kriegsmarine* units were also present in the Islands, as was the civilian affairs unit, FK 515. Werner Rang, a twenty-one-year-old Medical NCO of 319 ID, was stationed in Sark and Guernsey, narrowly avoiding a posting to the Russian Front where many of his comrades were to perish. His gratitude at being ‘in the best place during wartime’ was such that he joked ‘Hitler, thank you very much!’⁵⁹ Rang developed positive relationships with Islanders, recognising how challenging friendship could be for the locals. He recalled Islanders ‘looked at you with a strange view, but apart from that ... I got on with them alright.’⁶⁰ The maxim of his father, a First World War veteran, was taken to heart by the young soldier: ‘my father used to say ... “if you occupy another country, please be nice to the people ... They don’t want you to be there ... but if you exercise a pleasant behaviour, you will be accepted.”’⁶¹

Rang’s views were consistent with other soldiers whose relationship with the Islands continued after 1945. In interviews conducted for the 1990 documentary *Swastika Over*

⁵³ IWM, London, Docs. 5750b Misc. 189/1 ‘Dixie Landick Interview Transcript’, n.d. For more detail on Landick’s Occupation experiences, see Matthew Costard, ‘Lennard Aubyn (“Dixie”) Landick 1923-1929’, *CIOR*, 27 (1999), p. 94.

⁵⁴ Bob Le Sueur, *Growing up Fast: An Ordinary Man’s Extraordinary Life in Occupied Jersey* (Jersey: Seeker Publishing, 2020), chapter one.

⁵⁵ See Louise Willmot, “‘Nothing was ever the same again’: Public Attitudes in the Occupied Channel Islands, 1942’, *Local Historian*, 35:1 (2005), pp.

⁵⁶ This division remained in the Islands until December 1941, when it was removed for service on the Eastern Front, being disbanded in 1943 after devastating casualties sustained in brutal fighting near the city of Orel. George Forty, *Channel Islands at War: A German Perspective* (Shepperton: Ian Allan Publishing, 1999), p. 174.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁵⁸ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 174.

⁵⁹ Werner Rang, Interview with Richard Guille, March 2013.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

British Soil, ex-German servicemen frequently shared such sentiments.⁶² Hans Stumpf, who left the Islands for the Eastern Front in 1941, recalled ‘I went from heaven to hell ... I came from a beautifully cared for country ... to the middle of Russia ... The [Islanders] were friendly and nice. Accordingly, we behaved correctly too.’⁶³ Hans Kegelmann was posted to the Islands in 1944 after being wounded in Russia and remarked ‘I felt almost like at home ... The Jersey people were normal, they behaved normally ... There was a perfect impression as if there had been no war.’⁶⁴ The perceived safety of the Islands was such that the occupiers referred to it as ‘Europe’s air raid shelter’.⁶⁵ The Germans found themselves in a unique situation: they could walk the streets without sidearms due to the lack of violent resistance and avoid the dangers of more active war zones, yet also had to overcome feelings of stifling boredom and isolation. Initially, the Germans were confident in their upcoming conquest of England and felt the war was won.⁶⁶ The soldiers bought up the contents of the local shops, sending produce back home where the standard of living had deteriorated.⁶⁷

Up until the end of 1941, soldiers ‘had enough time ... to go for a swim and lie on the beach ... [and] ... could mingle incognito among the local population engaged in similar pursuits.’⁶⁸ From the implementation of the fortification programme, life grew increasingly monotonous. Werner Grosskopf, an officer commanding a bunker on Jersey, recalled ‘life ... was boring ... you were sitting underground in the bunkers and you were surrounded by barbed wire ... The soldiers very seldom got leisure time.’⁶⁹ Sanders noted that ‘military personnel thus employed had little contact with the population, except to barter food.’⁷⁰ Many Germans who sought contact with Islanders did so out of loneliness:⁷¹ one Jersey

⁶² The correlation between the ex-servicemen and this documentary is made clear in editions of the CIOR which discuss individual occupiers, with the participation of several men in the production included in their biographies or ex-soldiers whose contributions are included with the documentary transcripts appearing to be known to the CIOS. For examples see Matthew Costard, ‘Kurt Spangenberg, Obituary’, *CIOR*, 18 (1990), p. 108; and Herr Johannes Kegelmann’ ‘Do They Ever Come Back? Part VI’, *CIOR*, (1995), pp. 93-95. These transcripts are held by the IWM. See IWM, Docs. 5750 Misc. 189 ‘Material Concerning the German Occupation of the Channel Islands, Second World War’, 1996. Sanders utilised some of these in his section on relations between Islanders and the occupiers in his 2005 study. Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 155-172. Bunting, who deposited these files with the IWM, also made use of these sources. Whilst they are useful for gleaned retrospective opinions and views of the Germans in the Islands, drawn from a sample of men who felt comfortable returning to the Islands, they provide limited information in terms of biographies and ages, and some names are incorrect.

⁶³ IWM, Docs 5750b Misc. 189/2 ‘Herr Stumpf Interview Transcript’, n.d.

⁶⁴ IWM, Docs 5750b Misc. 189/2 ‘Hans Kegelmann Interview Transcript’, n.d.

⁶⁵ IWM, Docs 5750b Misc. 189/2 ‘Dr Harmsen Interview Transcript’, n.d.

⁶⁶ In 1940 John Lewis enquired of a German official whether he could contact his wife through the Red Cross. The officer replied ‘“Don’t worry too much. There is little doubt we will be in London in three weeks, and then you’ll be able to see her for yourself.’ Lewis, *A Doctor’s Occupation*, p. 43.

⁶⁷ Forty, *The Channel Islands at War*, p. 64.

⁶⁸ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 166.

⁶⁹ IWM, Docs. 5750b Misc. 189/2 ‘Werner Grosskopf Interview Transcript’, n.d.

⁷⁰ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 166.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

diarist noted in 1943 ‘most Germans [are] so lonely that they would do anything to be invited [in] to have a cup of tea.’⁷² The siege conditions of 1944-45, where the Germans were cut off from their supply lines, exacerbated poor German morale towards the end of the war as the garrison began to starve. Erwin Grubba, who had been sent to Guernsey from the Eastern Front in 1944, recalled how ‘we were cut off ... Rations were down to the bare minimum ... There were quite a few dying.’⁷³ When the 319 ID was removed from the Islands as POWs, their condition could not have been further removed from the smart young men of 1940. Lynette Renouf, a fourteen-year-old from Guernsey in 1945 sympathetically related ‘*ah they looked dreadful ... they were too weak to even carry their backpacks, it was awful.*’⁷⁴

Islanders resented the German presence and abhorred what the soldiers fought for and represented, yet came to see the varied characters of their occupiers. Jerseywoman Mary Deslandes wrote in September 1941: ‘we have grown quite accustomed to having them around. No one hates the poor wretches individually ... [A] better behaved ... body of men it would be impossible to find. What one does hate ... is the system they represent and the conditions which their presence ... imposes.’⁷⁵ In 1945 and with the defeat of Germany imminent, even after deportations, arrests and witnessing foreign labourers being abused, Miriam Leale could still find sympathy for the starving enemy troops. By this time the Germans were even shorter of food than the Islanders, who received Red Cross parcels from December 1944: ‘the poor German boys make us terribly sad ... We can feel to a slight degree what they must be going through.’⁷⁶ Discipline broke down in the final winter of the war. Many soldiers resorted to theft, often accompanied with violence, and were reduced to eating any household pets they could catch.⁷⁷ The miserable condition of the Germans in 1945 went a way towards cementing sympathetic attitudes. Human interactions between Islanders and Germans allowed a deeper glimpse of the other side of the war to be obtained.

⁷² IWM, Docs. 1929 ‘Private Papers of F. G. Woodall’, 21 March 1943.

⁷³ IWM, Sound 10006 ‘Interview with Erwin Grubba’, November 1987. Kegelmann recalled cases of oedema, shrunken stomachs and sight and hearing defects amongst his starving comrades. IWM, ‘Kegelmann Transcript’.

⁷⁴ Lynette Renouf, Interview with Richard Guille, 25 July 2018.

⁷⁵ Mary Deslandes, quoted in Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, p. 142.

⁷⁶ PL, LF940.53 LEA, ‘Leale Diary’, 29 April 1945, p. 86. Another Guernsey diarist, Dorothy Pickard-Higgs, recorded similar sentiments in March 1945, recording ‘it tears one’s heart to see them dragging about with hunched shoulders and arms hanging loose. Dorothy Pickard-Higgs, *Guernsey Diary, 1940-45* (London: Linden Lewis, 1947), p. 58.

⁷⁷ Files held in GIA detail a number of instances of German thefts towards the end of the Occupation and the violence inflicted upon some Islanders. See GIA, CC/4-2 ‘Offences by German Forces’, September 1944 - May 1945. One Guernseyman, F. Browning, recalled being shot by soldiers stealing from his property as he confronted them. IWM, Docs 5750a Misc. 189/1 ‘F. Browning Interview Transcript’, n.d. Some, such as James Perrée, a six-year-old Sark boy in 1945, witnessed Germans stealing beloved pets from their gardens to eat. Glauber recounted skinning and eating a cat that his battery caught on Little Sark. IWM, Docs. 5750b ‘Hans Glauber Interview Transcript,’ n.d.

Such nuanced views and experiences continue to be related by those who remember the Occupation. The perceived ‘good’ behaviour of many of the occupying soldiers made it harder to demonise and negatively generalise the Germans.

Not everyone concurred. Albert Bisson, a Guernsey doctor, railed against those who he felt fraternised for forgetting the German’s ‘true’ nature: ‘although they ... appear ... decent on the surface, it is only a veneer, underneath is the foul brute, supporter of the most pestilent regime on earth.’⁷⁸ Knowles-Smith noted how the cumulative effects of evictions, radio confiscations, deportations and arrests led to frequent remarks in diaries along the lines of ‘how can we help hating them!’⁷⁹ Resentment could linger after the war: the Jersey teenager Richard Weithley acknowledged in his 2001 memoir that ‘even today ... I tend to avoid Germans and when their company is unavoidable, eye them with ... suspicion.’⁸⁰ This demonstrates the complex relations between occupied and occupier and the challenges of knowing how to ‘correctly’ behave towards soldiers waging war on one’s country who were, as one Jerseywoman bitterly commented in 1945, ‘so damned polite to everyone.’⁸¹

That mutual respect, no matter how begrudging in some cases, prevailed is indicated by the treatment of the Germans at Liberation. In part aided by the surrender of Germany on 8 May 1945 and the end of the war, Islanders did not molest the Germans under Allied guard. Spangenberg recalled his departure: ‘when we left ... there were no hostile feelings among the civilians ... Even in ... [our] ... darkest days ... the Jersey people showed sympathy.’⁸² Schmidt, on his removal from Jersey in 1945, noted how some Islanders bid them farewell and ‘winked at us secretly.’⁸³ A minority of Islanders corresponded with German soldiers in their British POW camps, with a large majority of letters sent to imprisoned soldiers by friends and acquaintances, and some were from sweethearts, fiancés or mistresses.⁸⁴ Sanders noted many of those in the acquaintance category had been billeted on Islanders.⁸⁵ It is unclear the extent to which contacts were maintained after the war; however, an initial linking between former occupiers and occupied did occur.

⁷⁸ PL, LF 940.53 BIS, ‘Diary of Dr Albert Ogier Bisson, 1940-1943’, 4 January 1941, p. 25.

⁷⁹ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 121.

⁸⁰ Richard Weithley, *So It Was: One Man’s Story of the German Occupation from Boyhood to Manhood 1940-1945* (Jersey: Starlight Publishing, 2001), p. 52.

⁸¹ JAS, L/C/99/A/1 ‘Anne Caddick Letter regarding the Occupation’, 28 June 1945, p.1

⁸² IWM, ‘Spangenberg Transcript’.

⁸³ IWM, ‘Schmidt Transcript’. Willi Hagedorne, a young naval officer stationed in Guernsey, similarly recalled fair treatment at the surrender and the personal thanks he received from some Islanders for his conduct during the Occupation. IWM, Docs 5750b Misc. 189/2 ‘Willi Hagedorne Interview Transcript’, n.d.

⁸⁴ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 157. Sanders drew this analysis from TNA, HO 144/22176 ‘List of persons German POWs corresponded with since being transported from the Channel Islands’, June 1945.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

Differences between the Islands influenced relations with the occupiers. The situation in the larger Islands was more strained, with a sense of being rightless inhabitants of one's own home discernible.⁸⁶ Guernsey, of most strategic importance, was proportionately the most heavily occupied and fortified.⁸⁷ Whereas FK 515 was based in Jersey, a subsidiary (the *Nebenstelle*) was stationed in Guernsey, as was the military command.⁸⁸ The presence of the latter rendered the position of Guernsey's Controlling Committee more challenging. The *Nebenstelle* consisted of less capable men, judged by Sanders as 'worthless and superfluous.'⁸⁹ The President of the Controlling Committee, Jurat John Leale, explained after the war 'whenever we have claimed the protection ... of the Hague Convention we have been ... [told] ... that military necessity is the overriding consideration ... The Island is regarded as a frontline position and ... the Hague Convention cannot be applied.'⁹⁰ The result was a harsher Occupation regime and Guernsey officials were increasingly forced, either through German pressure or the unforeseen consequences of relenting on some issues, into the territory of collaboration.⁹¹ In Jersey, the direct presence of the leading officials of FK 515, many of whom were aristocrats who viewed the Islands as their personal imperial outpost, gave Jersey's authorities more scope for behind the scenes negotiation.⁹² This gave Jersey's officials an edge over their Guernsey counterparts. Moreover, resistance, repression and the treatment of OT workers problematised relations between occupier and occupied, and provided grounds for resentment to develop in Islanders. Sanders commented that 'after the arrival of the Russian slaves and the deportation[s] ... most people of sane mind realised that ... 'correct relations' was a mere façade.'⁹³ Stella Perkins, a Jersey teenager in 1945, highlighted the contradiction, stating 'although for the most part they behaved themselves quite well ... we had plenty of evidence ... of how brutal they could be.' She cited the case of Francois Scornet, a Frenchman who landed on Jersey and was shot as a spy, and the plight of the Russian slaves.⁹⁴ Likewise, the compression of civilian life by widespread billeting of soldiers in civilian properties and the size of the garrison increased the tension.

⁸⁶ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 156.

⁸⁷ In March 1942 the garrison of Guernsey stood at 15,000 men. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁹⁰ TNA, HO 45/22424, 'Administration of Guernsey during Occupation: Jurat Leale's Report', 23 May 1945, p. 19.

⁹¹ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 89.

⁹² Sanders, 'Managing under Duress', p. 121.

⁹³ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 158.

⁹⁴ IWM, Docs 5750a, Misc. 189/1 'Stella Perkins Interview Transcript', n.d.

Conversely, Sark's small size, self-sustaining agriculture and traditions of politeness to visitors stood the population in good stead during the Occupation.⁹⁵ The first years had been fairly conciliatory, and the Island initially occupied by an NCO and ten men, although this was to swell to 270 by the end of the war.⁹⁶ There had been small flashpoints, such as investigations into the murder of the garrison's doctor in April 1942, August Gabelle, an event which focused suspicion uncomfortably upon the Sarkees.⁹⁷ Hathaway gained permission from the German officers who occupied the Island in July 1940 to liaise directly with the Kommandant of the Islands based in Guernsey. This stymied 'any petty tyranny by local officers.'⁹⁸ The garrison changed every three months, which prevented tension between the soldiers and Islanders developing too far.⁹⁹ Many of the occupiers were delighted at their posting to the unspoilt idyll of Sark: one officer described Sark to Rang as '*das kleine Paradis*.'¹⁰⁰ The Sarkees continued on with their lives and the soldiers generally left the population unmolested. The London-based charity the Friends of Sark commented in a 1944 report that 'German behaviour was on the whole correct ... Instances are quoted of consideration being shown to the Islanders.'¹⁰¹ Michael Marshall's 1963 popular history argued that 'the Germans ... seemed to have shown unusual respect and friendship for the [Sarkees].'¹⁰² Resultantly, Sarkian testimonies tended to be sympathetic in their appraisal of the Germans.

The Islanders were treated more delicately than citizens of other occupied European nations. Sanders concluded 'within the East-West gradient of the Nazi Empire, the Islands ... [found] ... themselves at the extreme point of the benign end.'¹⁰³ This was the view taken

⁹⁵ Hathaway, *Dame of Sark*, p. 114, p. 128.

⁹⁶ TNA, DEFE 2/241, 'Report by Force Commander on the Raid on Sark on 3 October 1942', 1942, p. 2; Societie Sercquaise, Misc. World War Two Collection, 'Occupation incidents compiled by Richard Dewe', n.d.

⁹⁷ The culprit was eventually identified as a fellow soldier. Some Sarkees had their properties roughly searched by GFP agents, such as Gwen Drawmer, a young mother at the time. Gwen Drawmer, *My Memories of the German Occupation of Sark (1940-1945)* (Sark: Gwen Drawmer), pp. 32-37. All the Island's men had to report twice a day to the German headquarters at La Manoir in the centre of the Island whilst the Germans conducted their investigations. La Seigneurie Archive (LSA), Sark, F9.14 'Order for all Sark men to report to InselKommandant of Sark', 1 May 1942.

⁹⁸ Hathaway, *Dame of Sark*, pp. 119-120.

⁹⁹ Hathaway referred in correspondence with Guernsey officials as to how the constantly changing garrison led to repetitious arguments with each new Kommandant. GIA, CC/5-2/1.C 'Hathaway to Louis Guillemette regarding German dynamiting of fish off Sark', 17 February 1942. The final garrison on Sark, commanded by a Hauptmann Magsam, arrived in July 1944 and remained on Sark to the end of the war. Richard Le Tissier, *Mined Where You Walk: The German Occupation of Sark, 1940-1945* (St Helier: Seaflower Books, 2008), p. 108.

¹⁰⁰ This translates as 'a little paradise'. Richard Le Tissier, *Island Destiny: A True Story of Love and War in the Channel Island of Sark* (St Helier: Seaflower Books, 2006), p. 26. Michael Marshall, *Hitler Invaded Sark* (Guernsey: Guernsey Lithoprint, 1963), p. 59.

¹⁰¹ SSC, Misc. World War Two Collection, 'Friends of Sark Report on Sark under German Occupation 1940-1943', 1944.

¹⁰² Le Tissier, *Island Destiny*, p. 43.

¹⁰³ Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', p. 27.

by the British government in May 1945. The Home Secretary Herbert Morrison claimed on 17 May ‘a gratifying absence of the ... cruder atrocities associated with the Nazis ... [Islanders] ... treatment ... seems to have been comparatively favourable.’¹⁰⁴ Sanders argued that the notion of a ‘benign’ or ‘model’ occupation was a key part of the Churchillian paradigm’s its rejection of resistance as a ‘legitimising device’. By pointing to the comparatively better behaviour of the Germans in the Islands than elsewhere, resistance could be framed as ‘unnecessary.’¹⁰⁵ Key to this was the myth of the ‘good Kommandant’, enabled due to the Islands having become a ‘preferred “hang-out” for German aristocracy in uniform.’¹⁰⁶ Post-war, these men were ‘assigned the role of “figures of light”’ buttressing the paradigm of ‘correct relations’ and ‘benign Occupation’ which obscured that conciliatory German behaviour had been a matter of ‘policy, not personality.’¹⁰⁷ This was reinforced through televisual representations such as the 1978-1980 series *Enemy at the Door*, the Kommandant character of which was portrayed as an ex-academic inclined to leniency, and the 2004 series *Island at War* also presented a nuanced depiction of German officers.¹⁰⁸ To focus on the ways in which German rule had been comparatively benevolent, and repressing subjects where it had grown more oppressive was an early shield against charges of collaboration, justifying policies of non-confrontation and correct relations.¹⁰⁹ British and Island politicians preferred to point the finger at a minority of profiteers and women who had entered into sexual relationships with German soldiers.¹¹⁰ A local understanding that the behaviour of the Germans in the Islands had been generally good and that the authorities had

¹⁰⁴ TNA, HO 45/22176, ‘Conditions in the Channel Islands. Statement as to Position’, 17 May 1945.

¹⁰⁵ Sanders, ‘Narratives of Britishness’, p. 26.

¹⁰⁶ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 181.

¹⁰⁷ Notable German figures positioned in these roles included the first Kommandant, Major Albrecht Lanz, his successor in Guernsey Major Bandelow and the German military commander in the Islands, General von Schmettow. *Ibid.*, pp. 181-183.

¹⁰⁸ See *Enemy at the Door*, written by James Hall, ITV, 1978-1980. This series, David Christopher argued, formed part of a 1970s trend where British programmes extolled themes of ‘strength and solidarity in the face of adversity’ as a tonic for the difficulties of the decade. David Christopher, *British Culture: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 120. Also see *Island at War*, written by Stephen Mallatratt, Granada Television, 2003. This series, which explored themes of collaboration and resistance, drew negative UK comment and was cancelled to local relief following concerted complaints from Guernsey campaigners. ‘Island at War Axed’, *GEP*, 26 October 2004.

¹⁰⁹ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 183.

¹¹⁰ This process can be seen during a meeting between Morrison, Guernsey’s Bailiff, Victor Carey, and Jurat John Leale, president of Guernsey’s Controlling Committee. Leale swerved the debate away from the administration and focused on profiteers, whilst the Bailiff pointed to the behaviour of local women. The question of Islanders working for the Germans was presented with far more caveats and defences than either of the other two issues. GIA, BA/57-2/2 ‘Memorandum of meeting with Herbert Morrison, Home Secretary at Royal Court House’, 14 May 1945, pp. 2-3. Morrison’s memorandum to his cabinet colleagues likewise focused upon the same three groups, avoiding raising too many questions about the conduct of the Island authorities. Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 233. For the source see TNA, PREM 3/87 ‘Herbert Morrison’s report on visit to the Channel Islands, 14-15 May 1945’, 24 May 1945.

been able to work constructively with the men of FK 515, provided validation for those who held positive memories of the enemy soldiers.

Reinforcing the notion of good German behaviour was the return of some members of the garrison after the war. As Alon Confino argued, tourism after the war could be a powerful vector of memory.¹¹¹ Stephen Langlois, whose parents had escaped Guernsey shortly after the invasion whilst his mother was pregnant with him, recalled hearing of an example of this from the 1960s. The women who shared the story told of how she received a visitor one day: ‘she said “my mother went and opened the door and there was a middle-aged man standing there with a wife and two small children” ... He said “you looked after me when I was a soldier here ... I’ve brought my wife to meet my Guernsey mother.”’¹¹² Collenette also received German visitors who had served on Sark.¹¹³ Some interviewees, such as Lyn Renouf and Annette de Carteret, recalled their parents corresponding with soldiers after the war.¹¹⁴ Returning servicemen provided scope for reconciliation to develop, and the Jersey branch of the CIOS was active in making contact with Germans returning to the Island. The CIOS’s Channel Islands Occupation Review series ‘Do They Ever Come Back?’ documented returning soldiers’ memories of the Occupation.¹¹⁵ Reconciliation between former enemies has also been a key theme in local memory in the last two decades, spurred by links between deportee associations and the German towns where their camps had been located.¹¹⁶ This did, however occur rather later than in Britain.¹¹⁷ Gisela Rothenhäusler identified that locals near the camps had often shown kindness to the interned Islanders, and sporadic contacts were maintained after the war. These led to more formalised

¹¹¹ See Alon Confino ‘Traveling as a Culture of Remembrance: Traces of National Socialism in West Germany, 1945-1960’, *History & Memory*, 12:2 (2000), pp. 92-121.

¹¹² Stephen Langlois, Interview with Richard Guille, 21 August 2018.

¹¹³ Collenette, Interview.

¹¹⁴ Annette De Carteret, Interview with Richard Guille, 21 April 2016; Lynette Renouf, Interview with Richard Guille, 25 July 2018. This was not confined to ordinary Islanders. Island leaders, such as Ambrose Sherwill, Alexander Coutanche and Sybil Hathaway, kept in contact with members of FK 515 and the military command such as General Graf von Schmettow. Wood and Wood, *Islands in Danger*, p. 305. Also see JAS, A/A/12/1, ‘Correspondence between Alexander Coutanche and Graf von Schmettow’, 1945.

¹¹⁵ Examples of this include Michael Ginns, ‘Do They Ever Come Back? Part III - Herr Siegfried Köhler’, *CIOR*, 19 (1991), pp. 88-92; and Michael Ginns, ‘Do They Ever Come Back? Part VIII - Herr Otto Schmiegler’, *CIOR*, 27 (1999), pp. 34-38.

¹¹⁶ Gisela Rothenhäusler, *Reaching Across the Barbed Wire: French PoWs, Internees from the Channel Islands and Jewish Prisoners from Bergen-Belsen in Schloss Wurzach (1940-1945)* [English Edition] (St Helier: Channel Islands Publishing, 2012), pp. 357-361; Gisela Rothenhäusler and R. Adler, ‘A Tale of Two Towns: Heritage and Memory of Civilian Internment in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, 1942-2012’, in *Prisoners of War: Archaeology, Memory, and Heritage of 19th and 20th Century Mass Internment*, ed. by Harold Mytum and Gilly Carr (New York: Springer Nature, 2013), pp. 223-236.

¹¹⁷ Stefan Goebel identified that the city of Coventry began to advocate reconciliation from the 1950s. See Stefan Goebel, ‘Commemorative Cosmopolis: Transnational Networks of Remembrance in Post-war Coventry’, in *Cities into Battlefields: Metropolitan Scenarios, Experiences and Commemorations of Total War*, ed. by Stefan Goebel and Derek Keene (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 163-183.

visits and later to Jersey and Guernsey twinning with Bad Wurzach and Biberach respectively.¹¹⁸ In 2002, Jersey's Bailiff, Sir Phillip Bailhache, welcomed the mayor of Bad Wurzach to the Islands' liberation celebrations to promote reconciliation.¹¹⁹ The narrative of reconciliation between former enemies is becoming increasingly prominent.

The German soldier featured strongly in local museums, the first of which opened in Jersey in 1946.¹²⁰ Early museums focused upon German uniform, weaponry and the military aspects of the period.¹²¹ Similarly, bunker restorations by the CIOS were aimed at refitting 'them to look as they did during the Occupation ... [these] ... portrayed what might be described as a "nostalgic" view ... where Islanders and occupiers behaved "correctly."' ¹²² Little has changed in the formula of CIOS-organised museums and bunkers over the last seventy-five-years. The exception has been the Jersey War Tunnels under the curatorship of Joe Mière, which included narratives of resistance, with subsequent professionals also introducing themes of persecution into its exhibitions.¹²³ The German perspective is privileged in local heritage, with bunkers restored as they would have been known by the soldiers.¹²⁴ This is broadly accepted by Islanders who, Carr noted, 'are wholly familiar and untroubled by this sight, and would see ... [its] ... removal ... as the "denial of history."' ¹²⁵ The increasing professionalisation of the Islands' heritage sectors and the decline of the tourist industry could lead to the occupiers losing their salience in the local presentation of the Occupation.¹²⁶ However, this process is slow and resisted by the CIOS, who see the local Occupation museum as a tradition.¹²⁷ The only area of Occupation heritage where the Germans are unwelcome is on Liberation Day.¹²⁸ Whereas memories of the occupiers and of interactions with the Germans are a challenging subject within the confines of British war memory, within the Islands' heritage sites the occupiers are a validated subject.

¹¹⁸ Rothenhäusler noted the process between Wurzach and Jersey occurred earlier than in the case of Guernsey and Biberach, with Guernsey's deportee association taking longer to come around to the reconciliation process. Rothenhäusler and Adler, 'A Tale of Two Towns', p. 219.

¹¹⁹ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, pp. 121-122.

¹²⁰ Gilly Carr, 'Occupation Heritage, Commemoration and Memory in Guernsey and Jersey', *History and Memory*, 24:1 (2012), p. 107.

¹²¹ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. xvi.

¹²² Carr, 'Guardians of Memory', p. 85.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹²⁵ Gilly Carr, 'The uninvited guests who outstayed their welcome: The ghosts of war in the Channel Islands', in *Modern Conflict and the Senses*, ed. by Nicholas Saunders and Paul Cornish (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 275.

¹²⁶ Carr, 'Occupation Heritage', p. 113.

¹²⁷ Carr, 'Guardians of Memory', p. 85.

¹²⁸ Carr, 'Occupation Heritage', p. 107.

‘Really, they were ordinary people like we were, weren’t they?’: Nuanced Memories of the Occupiers

On 9 May 1945, Le Sueur travelled into St Helier on a bicycle with hosepipe tyres with friends and the escaped Russian Feodor Burryiy. They cycled down Mount Bingham and along the seafront, past a German tunnel guarded by two young and nervous Germans. As they passed, disaster nearly struck when Le Sueur’s hosepipe tyre snapped with a sound like a revolver shot. He recalled: ‘one of the soldiers came around [mimes swinging a rifle around] in my direction with his rifle, and ... I was thinking __ ‘how absurd! How preposterous, if I was to be shot, at this moment.’ But ... the soldiers saw what it was ... and he grinned.’¹²⁹ Le Sueur recalled how he was struck by the soldier’s youth, the hardships he had likely suffered and the shared moment of humanity. It was striking that Le Sueur could find such sentiments amidst an atmosphere of jubilant and patriotic celebration. Throughout the Occupation he had seen friends and acquaintances arrested and deported, and was under severe strain. He had felt compelled by the brutal treatment of OT labourers at the hands of the Germans to risk his life in sheltering those he could. Few could have blamed him had he harboured resentment towards the occupiers.

Yet when reflecting upon the incident, Le Sueur felt sorry for the German, narrating the rush of his thoughts at the time:

‘My God ... you’re two young recruits ... You have not heard from your families ... you don’t know if your home has been bombed ... You’re about to become a prisoner of war. __ But you have enough in you, to be able to laugh at my misfortune’ ... I almost felt like walking across to him, and shaking his hand __ I didn’t. I rather wish now, that I had. But I thought-‘no I can’t do that ... people won’t understand.’ ... But ... there was this feeling, he’s a human being.¹³⁰

Le Sueur expressed regret at not shaking the young German’s hand, impressed by the inner fortitude of the bewildered young man whose world was disintegrating around him. He went further in his memoir about his lasting guilt at how he left the soldier. He recorded ‘for the rest of my long life it has been a matter of regret ... that I was not able to overcome my fear of other people’s opinions for that one short moment and simply do what I thought was right.’¹³¹ The discussion of this incident in both his oral testimony and 2020 memoir indicated a sense of psychic discomfort at this missed opportunity to do as he had desired, with recalling the event and confessing his compunction providing him catharsis in the present. ‘Fraternisation’ in its least pejorative definition had been inevitable, and for the Islanders, the Nazi monster many had expected in June 1940 had been exposed as a far more

¹²⁹ Le Sueur, Interview, 6 January 2019.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Le Sueur, *Growing up Fast*, chapter 16.

diverse group of individuals. The ways in which this knowledge has continued to be discussed and shared is a key factor allowing Islanders to compose their accounts of friendly interactions with the Germans.

The range of perspectives of the Germans seen in the Islands presented a distinct divergence from British understandings of the enemy. Tom Williams commented that propagandistic ‘enemy images ... require a process of psychological abstraction, relying on a set of beliefs and assumptions that often bear little relation to socio-historical realities or individual experiences.’¹³² Richard Overy argued an unofficial campaign of anti-German hatred appeared in Britain, one which did not distinguish between Germans and Nazis.¹³³ ‘Hitlerism’ was seen as so barbaric, evil and threatening that the Allies were easily able to position themselves as being on the side of right and add a moral imperative to the propagation of the conflict.¹³⁴ Paul Fussell suggested: ‘for the war to be prosecuted at all, the enemy of course has to be severely dehumanised.’¹³⁵ The Germans were portrayed as ‘a perverse type ... [of human being] ... cold ... pedantic, unimaginative and thoroughly sinister ... their instinct for discipline made them especially dangerous.’¹³⁶

Such sentiments formed a part of the propaganda to which the British were exposed. Films such as Alberto Cavalcanti’s *Went the Day Well?* (1943), depicting ordinary English villagers risking their lives to resist a covert German landing in the summer of 1940, entrenched the notion that popular British resistance to German invasion was the only logical course of action against a brutal enemy.¹³⁷ Aaron Goldman noted that whilst anti-German sentiment in Britain never reached the heights seen during 1914-1918, the public and some officials became increasingly more hostile to the German people.¹³⁸ Sir Robert

¹³² Tom Williams, ‘Meeting the Enemy: British-German Encounters in the Occupied Rhineland after the First World War’, *Angles*, 10 (2020), p. 2.

¹³³ Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1995), p. 287.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 287-288. Michael Balfour noted that ‘attacks on the dictatorial character of the Hitler regime were ... a basic element in British ... [propaganda] ... output throughout the war.’ Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War 1939-1945* (London: Routledge, 1979), 163.

¹³⁵ Fussell commented ‘that it was the same people who were shooting hostages and hanging Poles and gassing Jews, on the one hand, and enjoying Beethoven and Schubert, on the other, was a complication too difficult to be faced during wartime.’ On a less extreme level, Islanders had to confront the paradoxical nature of the enemy, juxtaposing their service in the name of a ruthless military machine, resented by all, against their more human traits. Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behaviour in the Second World War* (London: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 116, p. 120.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

¹³⁷ *Went the Day Well?*, dir. Alberto Cavalcanti (Ealing Studios), 1943.

¹³⁸ Aaron Goldman, ‘Germans and Nazis: The Controversy Over “Vansittartism” in Britain during the Second World War’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14 (1979), pp. 156-157. Goldman pointed to Mass Observation surveys which demonstrated an increase throughout the war of people ‘hating’ or holding ‘no sympathy’ towards the German people, from forty-three percent in early 1943 to fifty-four percent in February 1945. He also noted that one third of MO respondents consistently based their responses to the question as to what should be done to Germany after the war around notions of

Vansittart published several anti-German pamphlets which presented Nazism as a realisation of the innate desires of an implacably militaristic people, which spoke for a substantial portion of the British public.¹³⁹ However, Islanders were shorn from British debates over the nature of the enemy. They learnt first-hand that the German garrison was formed from a complex and human body of men, which challenged and made redundant the notion of the barbarous Germans they had feared in June 1940. This occurrence was not unique to the Islands. Robert Gildea argued interactions between Germans and French citizens were, ‘despite the obvious inequality of power between the parties’, ‘multifaceted, subtle and complex.’¹⁴⁰ Burrin maintained that despite widespread efforts to avoid contact with the occupiers, French civilians shared similar moral dilemmas to Islanders when ‘amid that compact, disagreeable greenish mass ... a look turned a German into an individual man.’¹⁴¹ It took an increase of German atrocities in 1942 and 1943 to undo the narrative of the ‘correct’ German of the first year of France’s occupation.¹⁴² Islanders were far from alone in their dilemmas of how to live with the enemy without compromising national loyalty, forming part of a much larger history discursively shut off by their alignment with Britain.

This divergence lay at the heart of British unease at what had occurred in the Islands. Islander’s deviation from British understandings of the war rendered the Islanders’ experiences alternative within that paradigm of memory. As seen in the previous chapter, the language and ideals of Britain at war provided narrative frameworks for some Islanders to emphasise their stoicism, resilience and resourcefulness in the face of the Occupations’ conditions. If personal accounts of the past are filtered through and validated by dominant cultural frameworks, then conciliatory memories of the Germans represent a potentially subversive narrative. Moreover, the previous controversy of debates over the extent of collaboration, which angered Islanders and made them feel unfairly judged, suggests that the

revenge. For examples, consult File Report 1543 (December 1942) and File Report 1831 (1 June 1943). *Germany After The War*. [File Report], December 1942, Mass Observation Online, <http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/FileReport-1543> [Accessed 15 May, 2021]; *Germany After The War*. [File Report], June 1943, Mass Observation Online, <<http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/FileReport-1831>> [Accessed 15 May 2021]. John Ramsden’s research demonstrated how Nazism and the war worsened British perceptions of the Germans, which had begun to recover from the First World War during the 1930s. John Ramsden, *Don’t Mention the War: The British and the Germans since 1890* (London: Abacus, 2007).

¹³⁹ See Sir Robert Vansittart, *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1941). It is important to note this was not an unchallenged view, with strong responses made from left wing politicians and intellectuals. For a counter to Vansittart, see Victor Gollancz, *Shall Our Children Live or Die? A Reply to Vansittart on the German Problem* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1942).

¹⁴⁰ Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains: Daily Life in the Heart of France During the German Occupation* (New York: Picador, 2004), p. 45.

¹⁴¹ Burrin, *France Under the Germans*, pp. 191-198, here p. 197.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

subject of the enemy should have been challenging for Islanders to compose in line with the values, tropes and ideals of British war memory.

British consternation at the thought of Islanders and Nazis co-existing is rendered problematic given prominent examples of ‘fraternisation’ or enemy-contact elsewhere in British history. These provided a reasonable precedent for Islanders to not have judged themselves too harshly for at times stepping into the territory of fraternisation. The Christmas Truce of 1914 is a prominent part of Britain’s cultural memory of the First World War, remembered as a pathos-filled incident where the horrors of war were put aside by British and German soldiers in a display of common humanity.¹⁴³ Whilst this belonged to the military sphere, it provided an acceptable precedent where British and Germans had, even for a few short hours, set aside enmities and found common ground. As the Occupation wore on and conditions grew more parlous, both sides began to face similar pressures. The mutual sufferings manifested in something akin to the ‘live and let live’ system which occurred during the First World War, where the conditions of war became a mutual enemy, leading to temporary cessations of hostilities and an avoidance of making life harder than it needed to be.¹⁴⁴ William’s research into Anglo-German encounters in the Rhineland following the First World War provided evidence of how the barriers erected through propaganda towards the ‘bestial Hun’ could be brought down by close contact. He argued ‘visions of a brutal, arrogant, warmongering “Hun” ... proved difficult to sustain once British soldiers and civilians met individual Germans face-to-face in the occupied Rhineland.’¹⁴⁵ Encounters with a friendly civilian populace ‘tended to break down the negative wartime stereotypes.’¹⁴⁶ The emergence of a sense of common humanity in the Islands and the occurrence of positive relations between occupied and occupier is less jarring than at first glance.

However, these precedents failed to soothe the paradox, argued Bunting, that whilst the British had never surrendered, Islanders had ‘settled down, with few overt signs of resistance, to a hard, dull but relatively peaceful five years of Occupation.’¹⁴⁷ This stemmed from the view that collaboration had been a continental action, and something no self-respecting Briton would have contemplated.¹⁴⁸ The criticisms of the Islands’ records reached

¹⁴³ See Malcolm Brown and Shirley Seaton, *Christmas Truce: The Western Front, December 1914* (London: Pan Books, 2001), particularly pp. 207-216. Mark Connelly explored the Christmas Truce and its memory in a short lecture given for the Think Kent series. This can be accessed at Mark Connelly, ‘The Christmas Truce, 1914: Not so silent nights’, Youtube.com, 9 December 2015, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuH4fQ8Lqkw>> [Accessed 15 May 2021].

¹⁴⁴ For a deeper discussion of this phenomenon during the First World War, see Tony Ashworth, *Trench Warfare: 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

¹⁴⁵ Williams. ‘Meeting the Enemy’, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 316.

¹⁴⁸ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 251.

their zenith in the 1990s. The conduct of the insular authorities, particularly with regards to the implementation of anti-Semitic legislation, was viewed by writers such as Bunting and David Fraser as collaborationist, and the presence of those who worked for the Germans, had sexual relations with them or informed on their fellow Islanders have been the source of critical comment.¹⁴⁹ Bunting's infamous remark that Islanders had been even more passive than their European neighbours under occupation was a prime example.¹⁵⁰ Peter King devoted several chapters of his 1991 history to 'jerrybags', profiteering and Islanders employed by the Germans.¹⁵¹ In the 1990s, amidst the backdrop of a jingoistic popular war memory any synergies between the Islands and acceptable cases of fraternisation, such as the Christmas truce, went unidentified. Right of centre commentators saw the Islanders as having failed as Britons; left of centre commentators saw an opportunity to attack the former's belief that the British would never have collaborated like the French, Dutch or Belgians.

This fell flat when confronted with a complex reality. Fraternisation was not a widespread phenomenon, and anything approaching collaboration in the Islands lacked the ideological underpinnings seen in France and the Netherlands.¹⁵² Sanders argued that fraternisation was a necessary evil in the Islanders' struggle to survive, which 'depended on a modicum of accommodation, a conciliatory conduct, whatever the cost in pride.'¹⁵³ German testimonies recognised that Islanders left them in no doubt as to their status as the enemy. Sanders described the situation as 'a relationship characterised by a majority which kept their distance ... rather [than the] ... unsubstantiated idea that Islanders ... [collectively] ... threw themselves into the arms of the occupier.'¹⁵⁴ Many feared responding to friendly overtures would mean being judged as a collaborator.¹⁵⁵ One soldier remarked 'I would have liked to have made friends, but the locals were quite distant because we were the enemy.'¹⁵⁶ Francis Costard, a Jersey escapee, exemplified this stance: 'scant attention ... was paid to our enemy ... They would ... mak[e] it quite plain they would much prefer to be at home ... but ... [we] ... would ... go about their daily life ignoring all overtures. Many people though, had a sneaking sympathy for them.'¹⁵⁷ Opportunities for the occupiers to befriend Islanders grew scarcer as garrison life grew more restrictive.¹⁵⁸ The soldiers were

¹⁴⁹ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*; Fraser, *The Jews of the Channel Islands*.

¹⁵⁰ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 330-331.

¹⁵¹ Peter King, *The Channel Islands War 1940-1945* (London: Robert Hale, 1991), pp. 50-76.

¹⁵² Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 97.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

¹⁵⁵ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 119.

¹⁵⁶ IWM, Docs, 5750b Misc. 189/2 'Herr Grau Interview Transcript', n.d.

¹⁵⁷ JAS, L/C/170/A/1 'Memoir of Francis Costard', n.d., p. 8.

¹⁵⁸ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 166.

forbidden from fraternising with the locals, which Grosskopf claimed served as a barrier against friendships.¹⁵⁹ However, the scars of hostile debates continue to affect Islanders. External pressure exists in relation to memories of the German soldiers. The often-conciliatory views held by Islanders towards their occupiers have been rendered subversive by external commentators and criticism filtered through the lens of Britain's morally simplistic war memory. That such opinions and perspectives were shared by the interviewees indicated that Islanders could step outside of the parameters of this and compose their accounts through an accepted local discourse which validated nuanced memories of the German soldiers.

Whilst the majority sought to avoid contact with the enemy, this was impossible for several reasons. Sanders argued that 'the Germans had to contain extremes: they could not afford to let the food situation deteriorate ... Symbioses were created ... based on the unholy trinity of billeting, barter and food dependence.'¹⁶⁰ Whilst the Germans generally had the best food and billets, foodstuffs and fuel could be sold to locals to obtain access to the most valuable Occupation commodity - news.¹⁶¹ Before the 1942 wireless confiscation, the Islands were the only place in occupied Europe where people could listen to the BBC, and the soldiers took advantage of this, visiting civilian properties to hear the news.¹⁶² Leslie Sinel, editor of the *JEP*, felt any reticence towards communicating with the enemy was overridden by the food shortages: 'nobody entertained the Germans and got overfriendly ... [However] ... an empty belly has no conscience and when food got short ... you forgot your scruples.'¹⁶³ Working in close contact with the enemy facilitated understanding. The Jersey Deputy Edward Le Quesne worked closely with the Germans as head of the Department of Labour. He recorded in his diary on 21 June 1943:

my daily contact with German soldiers ... convinces me ... that there is no real cause for hatred between us ... Their discipline is harsh but they are polite, well behaved, and ... seem to adore children and when ... alone will openly express their abhorrence of war.¹⁶⁴

Despite many challenging interactions with the Germans, which Le Quesne complained of throughout his diary, through daily interaction he developed a less partisan view of the Germans.

¹⁵⁹ IWM, 'Grosskopf Transcript'.

¹⁶⁰ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 159. One former soldier, Alfred Knipps related how he formed a friendship with a local family, providing them fuel for a tractor in exchange for eggs and butter. Alfred Knipps, 'Do They Ever Come Back? Herr Alfred Knipps', *CIOR*, 25 (1997), pp. 25-28.

¹⁶¹ Lewis, *A Doctor's Occupation*, p. 42; Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 159-160.

¹⁶² Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 160.

¹⁶³ IWM, Sound 10066 'Leslie Sinel Interview', 25 November 1987.

¹⁶⁴ JAS 'Deputy Edward Le Quesne Occupation Diary', 21 June 1943.

The billeting of German troops in civilian properties was the central factor forcing Islanders into contact with the enemy. This was more acute in Guernsey, where ‘statistically almost every Guernsey Islander ... had his own very personal German.’¹⁶⁵ K.M. Bachmann, a Guernsey diarist, recorded walking down a requisitioned street and feeling that ‘the tables seemed to have been turned and we were the foreigners.’¹⁶⁶ The need to billet the rapidly swelling garrison between 1941 and 1943 caused tension, with Islanders removed from their homes at short notice and requisitions becoming ‘euphemis[tic of] outright plunder.’¹⁶⁷ Durand commented upon German behaviour in private homes on Guernsey that some soldiers ‘behaved swinishly’ when drunk, rarely showing contrition for vomiting over or damaging Islanders’ property whilst on binges. However, he judged ‘the majority of Germans, both officers and men, billeted in private houses behaved decently.’¹⁶⁸ Whilst disliking the officer billeted with her, Bachmann conceded that ‘one must own that “Rudolph’s” conduct is correct. So far, he has avoided their nauseating habit of foisting friendship upon us.’¹⁶⁹ When the soldiers billeted near Islanders behaved respectfully, powerful impressions were made. Gladys Skillet, a Guernsey nurse, found herself in this situation. She recalled in a 1992 interview ‘we mentioned that we [did] not have hot water ... so they put a hosepipe from their bathroom to our[s] and let us have water for a bath ... there were the good and the bad you see; they were only young men and sympathetic ... to our cause.’¹⁷⁰ On Sark, Drawmer wrote of an aunt who had several soldiers billeted on her. The soldiers ‘would often volunteer to cook her meal along with theirs ... their behaviour was exemplary ... One soldier ... did everything he could to make her life easier and won her respect and admiration.’¹⁷¹ The close proximity which Islanders found themselves to the enemy provided scope to develop understandings and occasionally form friendships, although the experience could be far from comfortable.

As the Occupation progressed, conceptual differentiations between Nazism, the ‘Germans’ as a collective and individual soldiers became apparent. That it is usually referred to locally as the ‘German Occupation’, not the ‘Nazi Occupation’, is testament to this. A British report of February 1945, drawn from 227 letters sent by Islanders to internees in

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 159.

¹⁶⁶ K. M. Bachmann, *The Prey of An Eagle: A Personal Record of Family Life Written Throughout the German Occupation of Guernsey, 1940-1945* (Guernsey: The Guernsey Press Co., 1972), p. 96.

¹⁶⁷ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 163.

¹⁶⁸ Ralph Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 2nd ed. (Guernsey: The Guernsey Society, 2018), p. 260.

¹⁶⁹ Bachman, *The Prey of An Eagle*, pp. 93-94. Constance Chapstick, the manager of Jersey’s Grouville Hotel, showed similar sentiments when recounting her dealings with forty-five soldiers billeted upon her: ‘Their presence was a constant irritation ... but it is fair to say that they were civil and well-disciplined.’ JAS, L/D/25/A/11 ‘Constance Chapstick Occupation Memoir’, pp. 2-3, n.d.

¹⁷⁰ IWM, Sound 12547 ‘Gladys Eileen Skillet Interview’, 16 April 1992.

¹⁷¹ Drawmer, *My Memories*, p. 39.

Germany in late 1944, commented ‘appreciation of the kindness or correct bearing of the Germans is expressed by a number of writers ... [and] a lack of animosity towards the ordinary German soldier is evinced by some.’ The report pointed to how one Guernsey writer distinguished between ‘the common soldier and the Nazis’.¹⁷² Lower ranks were more likely than their officers to look the other way when Islanders breached German regulations.¹⁷³ The frontline troops of 216 ID were sent east and trained soldiers replaced by men of lesser quality and eventually old men, boys, wounded men and *Hilfswilliger* volunteers from eastern Europe.¹⁷⁴ Germans returning from leave shared apocalyptic stories of Allied bombing raids and drop-offs in morale, notably post-Stalingrad in 1942, were noticed by locals.¹⁷⁵ Durand recounted a conversation between a Guernseyman and a German who had returned home to Hamburg during the first British raid on the city on 24 July 1943. The soldier broke down when relating his frantic search in the rubble of his home for his wife and children, who had fortunately sheltered elsewhere. Upon hearing of the challenges and emotional strain faced by the soldier, Durand commented ‘could anyone ... look on that unfortunate German with hatred as on an enemy or ... as an accomplice of Hitler’s war guilt?’¹⁷⁶ Durand further noted that rumours of suicides were in constant circulation, with a posting to the Eastern Front a commonly cited cause.¹⁷⁷ Occurrences such as these allowed a sneaking sense of sympathy to occur in relation to the rank-and-file soldiers.

In oral testimonies created during the 1980s and 1990s, Islanders were comfortable acknowledging that the German’s general behaviour had been positive without fear of accusations of collaboration. Mière, a Jersey teenager who suffered a brutal interrogation at the hands of the German naval police in 1944 and spent the remainder of the war in Jersey’s Gloucester Street prison, retained an ability to approach the subject of the Germans objectively: ‘The ordinary German soldier was well disciplined on the Island ... not their police, but the ordinary German soldier was ... seen to go out of their way to be polite to you.’¹⁷⁸ Despite his harsh treatment at the hands of the naval police, Mière was comfortable

¹⁷² TNA, PREM 3/87, ‘Report on the Channel Islands’, 15 February 1945, p. 5.

¹⁷³ IWM, ‘Spangenberg Transcript’; Harris, Interview.

¹⁷⁴ Michael Ginns, ‘The 319 Infantry Division in the Channel Islands’, *CIOR*, 19 (1991), pp. 40-68; Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 174.

¹⁷⁵ An elderly Jersey resident, Dr Ambrose Le Charpentier, recorded in 1943 hearing second-hand accounts of soldiers returning from leave of the impact of Allied bombing, which caused him to feel a degree of sympathy for Germany. JAS, L/D/25/A/13/5 ‘Occupation Reminiscences of Dr Ambrose Edward Le Charpentier, personal paperwork and correspondence from the Occupation’, 26 March 1943. Norman Le Brocq, member of Jersey’s Communist Party which resisted the enemy, pointed to how morale plummeted after Stalingrad and recalled hearing of several suicides. IWM, Docs. 5750a, Misc. 189/1 ‘Norman Le Brocq Interview Transcript’, n.d.

¹⁷⁶ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, p. 320.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 263-264. Also see Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 120.

¹⁷⁸ IWM, Sound 10683 ‘Interview with Joseph Mière’, 18 April 1989.

admitting that the general behaviour of the Germans had been well-disciplined and was respectful of the local population. Similarly, Perkins, whose mother sheltered escaped Russian OT labourers, judged the Germans in general as ‘most[ly] ... ok as they weren’t Nazis. Therefore, it was ok for people to be friendly with them - particularly young and old as they should have been doing other things.’¹⁷⁹ Even though much of Perkin’s Occupation was defined by fear of repression, she could differentiate the men responsible for the oppressive regime from the ordinary soldiers whom she judged interacting with to be acceptable. Even amongst those who took a more actively oppositional stance towards the occupying forces, the dissonance between the expected conduct of the ‘Hun’ and their actual behaviour struck Islanders, rendering positive appraisals acceptable.

Other IWM interviewees demonstrated remarkable consistency towards the enemy. Graeme Le Maistre, a twenty-year-old Jersey plumber, related to his interviewer in 1989 that ‘if you ... minded your business, I think they were alright, they bore out their rules, which I suppose you’ve got to have if you occupy a country.’¹⁸⁰ Another Jerseyman, Edward Le Gros, was more emphatic, arguing ‘ah they weren’t bad you know. The Germans ... to be quite candid with you I don’t think they misbehaved themselves.’¹⁸¹ One Jersey schoolboy, struck by the soldiers’ discipline in the early days, remarked ‘well, you had to admire them ... They would behave very professionally.’¹⁸² Such sources implicitly highlight the gap between Islanders’ expectations of the enemy and the reality, which led many to comment upon the discipline and behaviour of the troops. Ginns, heavily involved in the reconciliation process with the Jersey Deportees Association and CIOS, indicated how some forgave German crimes: ‘this was all forty-five-years ago ... You can’t keep hatred going forever ... and we have many good friends who were German servicemen.’¹⁸³ The repetition of these themes demonstrates that such stances were reasonably common within the Islands at this time. These testimonies occurred prior to the controversies of the 1990s and were not subjected to shifts in Occupation memory which have pressurised nuanced views of the occupiers.

That similar sentiments continued to be shared with composure in the interviews conducted for this thesis is striking, and suggests that neutral, positive or understanding comments regarding the soldiers represents a local discourse in the Islands. Hamelin reflected that ‘they were terribly friendly to us children. I don’t remember being frightened of them at all ... they were just human beings as we are, you know? I mean they had a job to

¹⁷⁹ IWM, Sound. 10105 ‘Interview with Stella Perkins’, 26 November 1987.

¹⁸⁰ IWM, Sound. 10877 ‘Interview with Graeme Le Maistre’, 6 September 1989.

¹⁸¹ IWM, Sound. 10714 ‘Interview with Edward Le Gros’, May 1989.

¹⁸² IWM, Sound. 10712 ‘Interview with John Thomson’, 23 May 1989.

¹⁸³ IWM, Sound. 10717 ‘Interview with Michael Ginns’, 25 May 1989.

do, but so many of them were just young men.’¹⁸⁴ Jennifer Carré, aged eighteen at the end of Sark’s Occupation, summarised the Germans as ‘a very nice lot of Germans, they were really well behaved, we just went along with our daily life really, it didn’t interfere too much.’¹⁸⁵ Such comments were expressed with coherence, indicating local acceptability. Some interviewees recalled friendships forming between themselves, their families and German soldiers. Their testimonies were framed to emphasise the kindness of individual soldiers, separating the men in question from stereotypical notions of the Nazi soldier and presenting the interactions as between ordinary people rather than occupiers and occupied. Harold Nicolle, a nine-year-old Guernsey boy in 1945, lived in the central Friquet area of Guernsey, surrounded by large numbers of soldiers billeted in the area. Nicolle acknowledged initial fears: ‘there were some brutal Germans about ... My sister-in-law lived on the High Street, and you daren’t walk on the pavement if the Germans were coming ... [But] we did get used to them ... I can’t say that I really had much fear during the war.’¹⁸⁶ Two soldiers in particular, named ‘Rolf’ and William Kettler, aided his loss of fear. Both helped the family: Rolf provided coal and coke, whilst Kettler assisted around the house and brought food. Nicolle recalled being taken for drives in a lorry by Rolf. Despite frequent interactions with OT workers, who he saw forced to work by OT overseers, the presence of the young soldiers reassured Nicolle during the Occupation: ‘We were with a lot of Germans that appeared to be friendly ... William Kettler painted our lounge for instance, he painted the wall ... in a nice pale blue ... That’s what he did in his spare time, that type of thing. I remember that being done.’¹⁸⁷ Nicolle was comfortable discussing his relationship with the two young soldiers who helped his family, although, as explored in chapter five, later knowledge of Nazi atrocities problematised this.

Jeanette Drillot, aged seven in 1945, recalled how one German soldier befriended her family, providing them with food, bringing gifts for herself and her infant brother. Her memories of this were framed positively, emphasising a sense of shared humanity and rejecting any notion that there had been any intrinsic harm in the friendship. She was keen to communicate this, utilising rhetorical questions to ensure my understanding:

This soldier allotted to our farm became quite friendly ... He didn’t want to fight ... [or] ... leave his family, so what do you do? You’d talk in Pidgin English and Pidgin German don’t you? ... After my brother was born ... he came with a gift for him ... a wooden dachshund that he’d made ... It was so kind and it was such a nice thing!¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Hamelin, Interview.

¹⁸⁵ Jennifer Carré, Interview with Richard Guille, 22 April 2016.

¹⁸⁶ Harold Nicolle, Interview with Richard Guille, 9 November 2018.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Baker, Baker, Drillot and Mollet, Interview.

Drillot's account emphasised the soldier's kindness. Her assessment as to how occupiers and occupied communicated on Sark implied that this was a broader phenomenon, something she found confirmed by other Sarkees. There was no evidence that Drillot was uncomfortable sharing that her parents had become friendly with a soldier. Her rhetorical questions, designed to elicit agreement on my part, sought to ensure that I did not misunderstand and judge the situation unfairly. Her exhortations for me to understand underscored the importance of this aspect of the Occupation to Drillot.

Whilst these examples came from two members of the 1.5 generation, whose perspectives differed from the adult generations, the eldest member of the sample, Le Sueur, demonstrated that even among adults with more to fear of the enemy, the psychological boundaries between occupier and occupied began to come down. Shortly after the invasion, his mother was caught up in a difficult situation on a bus, where a soldier's kindness caused her a crisis of conscience. Le Sueur was quick to set her straight:

She didn't know if it was right to take it, 'cause she felt, that her cousin Harriet ... would not have approved, of her, accepting this seat ... So I said 'well I hope you took it.' 'Well I did, but I felt it was perhaps not right.' And I said '**Harriet would have taken it, the difference is, she'd have taken it because she'd have felt it was her right!** [Laughs] And she wouldn't have thanked the young man.' 'Well he looked a very nice young man really!' [Laughs]. But there was the beginning, of a breaking down, into the very beginnings, of a kind of fraternisation. Can you see it?¹⁸⁹

Le Sueur saw little wrong with responding positively to the kindness of a fellow human, regardless of nationality, and reassured his mother that she had done the correct thing. Notably, Le Sueur volunteered that such interactions fell into the category of fraternisation, although his careful articulation of this sentence implied an element of caution, unsurprising given previous sensationalisation of such interactions.

Le Sueur was content to give the soldiers their due when it came to their more respectful behaviour, demonstrating an ability to overlook the national divide:

I thought 'there are friends in England who would be horrified'. It was a very hot day, there was this young German ... who asked for the way to St Aubin ... and he already had started up a hill. Now a lot of people would have said 'oh yes, you can come up that way'. I didn't ... I just thought 'well, he's just another human being, my sort of age', so ... I told him the right way. But when I told someone afterwards, 'you shouldn't have done that.' _ To hell with that.¹⁹⁰

Le Sueur demonstrated how his ability to treat all Germans as the enemy wavered because of their more human behaviours. Le Sueur claimed he felt uneasy in helping the lost soldier get

¹⁸⁹ Le Sueur, Interview, 6 January 2019.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

his bearings, concerned at how his friends in Britain would have reacted and irked by the judgement he received from a fellow Islander. By the time I met Le Sueur in 2019, his opinion on the rectitude of his action had crystallised, and the unease he felt at the time was recollected, not exhibited. An awareness of the varied conduct of the Germans in the Islands and his belief that this was an important lesson of the Occupation, allowed Le Sueur to discuss Islander-German conduct with equanimity and purpose, imploring researchers to understand the Occupation as Islanders had themselves. As he noted in his memoir, ‘common humanity was emerging from the idiocy of war.’¹⁹¹

That some Germans behaved positively towards Islanders, and the majority kept up good discipline for most of the Occupation, allowed Islanders to differentiate between the soldiers and broader organisations, categorising some positively and others negatively. The capacity to differentiate provided interviewees with a strategy to compose positive and negative memories of the Germans coherently into the same narrative. Leo Harris had a more mixed experience than most. As discussed in chapter six, his family was searched by the GFP who arrested his brother for stealing German weapons. However, other interactions with the Germans prevented Harris from making uniform judgements, recognising the GFP for the fanatical and corrupt organisation they were. He recalled: ‘some of the Germans, were good men. I mean there were many of them who did not want to be there for a start, and many of them would not give away a British person ... if they could avoid it. There were others who ... were Nazis to the core.’¹⁹² Whilst Harris continued to exhibit a strong dislike of the GFP, his and other family member’s experiences of the Germans emphasised that not all the soldiers were unpleasant. These ranged from his brother’s guard in prison, crippled at Stalingrad, who provided magazines, to a First World War veteran sergeant who sensed hatred in Harris’s father’s refusal to shake hands and proffered him his pistol to shoot him. When Harris’s father refused the sidearm, the sergeant exclaimed ‘see I couldn’t shoot you like that and you couldn’t shoot me, now shake hands! ... I’m from a farm in Munich, I don’t want to be wearing this uniform.’¹⁹³ With these varied experiences, Harris could take a balanced view of the enemy, which, given his family’s resistance credentials, he was able to do without fear of judgement. Within his testimony, the positive behaviour of some Germans was just as important as his negative experiences, with both being discussed to accurately reflect the confusing world in which he lived during the Occupation.

The strategy of differentiation allowed Islanders to compose their memories of the soldiers, particularly experiences where the harsher face of the occupier was exposed.

¹⁹¹ Le Sueur, *Growing Up Fast*, chapter two.

¹⁹² Harris, Interview, 4 January 2019.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

Renouf lived in Cobo throughout the Occupation. Consequently, she recalled frequent interactions with Germans of various ranks. Generally, these exchanges were remembered with equanimity, framed as an inevitable part of life for Islanders. However, on one occasion Renouf was starkly reminded that the men who treated her kindly were the enemy. She and her brothers would visit a German mess to scrounge food from the soldiers:

one German would always give me his soup But there was one that came out ... and he said it was for my father, ‘give **Papa** the soup’, ‘that’s fine we’ll give it to, our dad.’ ... And he spat in it ... But that, was the different kind of German. Generally they were _ ok but ... we were scared of them, all the way through. Had no reason to be apart from [some] ... some of them wanted to be friendly ... They wouldn’t have hurt us.¹⁹⁴

The incident was distressing to Renouf, who was forced owing to the shortages to take the soiled food home to her father, who did not hesitate to eat it given his hunger. It was likely the soldier in question anticipated this outcome, and was actively trying to degrade the locals. Still, Renouf was able to regain her composure through her narration, identifying the soldier as an example of a dangerous German amongst other men with whom she had developed trust. By switching from the individual to the general, Renouf refocused this aspect of her testimony onto how many soldiers had not represented, in her view, a real threat to her safety. Whilst acknowledging the existence of men whom Islanders had much to fear, this aspect was ultimately downplayed through the discursive strategy of differentiation.

Similarly, May Hamon, a Sark girl aged ten in 1945, recalled a frightening experience when a group of soldiers arrived to take her father to see the Kommandant. She recalled that one of the men made gestures implying they intended to hang her father, which, despite his safe return, caused her ‘a few nightmares’.¹⁹⁵ However, whilst this event unsettled her, it did not appear to affect Hamon’s general views on the soldiers, which had been influenced by their kindness to children such as herself. She summarised:

they were very nice to children ... because they had children of their own. And this is the sad thing and there’s always two sides, they had children in Germany who we were bombing, so I think they were thinking the same as we were ... I mean really, they were ordinary people like we were.¹⁹⁶

A blend of subsequent knowledge gained from speaking from other Islanders, her treatment as a child on Sark and an awareness of the local discourse allowed Hamon to align her testimony with prevailing interpretations of the German soldiers, which counteracted the frightening experience. She was able to separate the men who had threatened to harm her

¹⁹⁴ Renouf, Interview.

¹⁹⁵ May Hamon and Jenny Hamon, Interview with Richard Guille, 19 April 2016.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

father out from the collective on Sark, whom she coherently judged in conciliatory and sympathetic terms.

As seen earlier, the deterioration of the Germans towards the end of the war could prompt sympathy on the part of some Islanders. The teenage Sarkee Collenette, who helped her mother run a farm on Little Sark, demonstrated that memories of these feelings continue to be articulated in discussing the condition of Sark's occupiers in 1945. The contrast to the men of 1940 was stark for Islanders, and could elicit sympathetic comment. Collenette stated: 'they were starving ... great big strapping men there on guard at the Coupée ... a puff of wind would have blown them over. They were very hungry, they used to eat everything they could find.'¹⁹⁷ German thefts became an extreme nuisance to Islanders, who were desperately short themselves. However, as frustrating as this was for Islanders, some interviewees treated such incidents with a degree of understanding. Peter Baker, a fifteen-year-old Sarkee living in Guernsey in 1945, related how he discovered the family dog one day with a gunshot wound through its leg towards the end of the war. Rather than showing anger at the shooting of the dog, which was subsequently put down by nearby soldiers, Baker offered justification on the German's behalf, admitting that 'they were very short of food.'¹⁹⁸

Collenette and her mother were also on the receiving end of German thefts, in one case losing two geese. After reporting the theft and meeting the soldier in question, brought down by his officer, Collenette was struck by the soldier's emotional reaction: 'Oh [the officer] gave him such a time, it was terrible, he was actually crying ... obviously he was well brought up, and, he was hungry. But we said "no no, don't bring them back."'¹⁹⁹ Collenette's sympathetic reaction at the time, and her emotional articulation in 2016 on behalf of the soldier, suggested that she understood and accepted the pressures which the German was under at the time, which allowed her to absolve him from blame. This came through in her acknowledgement that she and her mother insisted the hungry soldier keep the geese. Rather than bristling at the theft of much needed food, Collenette sympathised with the soldiers' plight, and her opinion of the event remained the same throughout the intervening seventy-five-years.

Collenette's experience of the remorseful thief alluded to another area where sympathy could develop: witnessing dread of the Eastern Front. The sympathy she displayed in this account stemmed from the soldier's panic at the prospect of being sent East. Collenette stated 'they were terrified if they did anything wrong the punishment was they

¹⁹⁷ Collenette, Interview.

¹⁹⁸ Baker, Baker, Drillot and Mollet, Interview.

¹⁹⁹ Collenette, Interview.

were going to Russia.²⁰⁰ A similar incident in 1942 made a deep impression on Rose, for it was the first time she had seen an adult cry:

I came home from school ... and George was sitting on a chair in our kitchen and my mother ... had her arm around his shoulders ... She was patting him and he was crying. I had never seen anybody grown-up cry ... My mother turned to me and said 'George is going to the Russian Front.'²⁰¹

The extreme emotional reaction exhibited by the young officer at his impending transfer to almost certain death on the Russian front, was a powerful memory for Rose. Moreover, the event moved her mother, whom Rose described as correct and formal with the officers, for she allowed psychological barriers towards the enemy to come down and comforted him. In these cases, sympathy could develop. Such insights into the character and personality of the German garrison influenced Rose and Collenette, making universal hatred of the enemy impossible to achieve. Neither appeared uncomfortable relating these sentiments, indicating that on a local level, such views were permissible and expressible.

That Islanders interacted with their occupiers, formed friendships and developed an understanding of the hardships they had faced was unremarkable in the context of western European Occupations, barring the unique spatial compression found in the Islands. It was only in the context of Britain's war that it developed remarkability and was provided a subversive air. However, testimonies which rang dissonant to British understandings of the enemy continue to be spoken by Islanders with limited signs of discomposure. The subject of the occupiers is locally validated in the Islands' heritage sites, and memories of the 'good' members of the garrison were kept alive by the return of former soldiers to the Islands after the war. Moreover, the continuing appearance of sympathetic testimonies of the occupiers, redolent of accounts at the time and interviews conducted in the 1980s, suggests that in many cases, the crisis of memory in the 1990s failed to alter or stymie such perceptions of the occupiers. Likewise, such memories, for many Islanders, reflect their reality of the Occupation, which deteriorated into a mutual struggle for survival alongside the soldiers with whom symbioses had developed. The occurrence of similar phrases and tropes across a range of interviewees were indicative of the shared nature of these perceptions of the Germans, highlighting the existence of a collective local discourse in the Islands. Phrases such as 'ordinary people' and 'didn't want to be here' occurred in several instances, which humanised the soldiers, whilst rendering the interactions as less contentious cases of fraternisation with non-Nazis. Le Sueur argued:

'collaboration' can often be confused with the less serious charge of 'fraternisation'. There is an important difference ... collaboration is

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ SWWEC, 'Rose Interview.'

actively seeking to help the enemy to win the war. Fraternisation is informal contact with other individuals who happen to be wearing a different kind of clothing ... Most of us had a moment in the Occupation when we thought 'not all Germans are bad'.²⁰²

An awareness of this distinction sustains Islanders in their belief in the harmlessness of most everyday interactions with the enemy during the Occupation. This allows manifestations of British war memory to coexist with nuanced accounts of the occupiers in Islanders' testimonies, with limited subjective dissonance.

'Fraternisation yes, we all admit to that, collaboration, no': The Limits of Local Discourse

Not all of the project's interviewees could easily compose their accounts of the occupiers, however. The extent to which this discourse could be accessed as a narrative strategy for attaining composure had limits, and for some discomposure was caused due to local and national stigma. Phyllis Rang possessed remarkable wartime and post-war experiences. Eighteen-years-old when the Germans arrived, she took advantage of German language lessons from early 1942 and excelled. She was asked to work as an interpreter for the German medics who had taken responsibility for the Islanders' care.²⁰³ When narrating this, she appeared proud of her unorthodox war-work. Phyllis became friends with one of the medics, Werner Rang, and whilst their wartime friendship was platonic, Werner became besotted.²⁰⁴ Whilst languishing in a POW camp, Werner corresponded with Phyllis and a romance blossomed, and the couple married in 1948. They settled in Sark and Werner became a cherished member of the community. Aspects of her story fell well outside of the Churchillian paradigm. Yet Phyllis was comfortable discussing her personal friendships with German soldiers.

Nevertheless, Phyllis demonstrated an awareness that such views could be regarded as 'incorrect' against expected standards of British behaviour. She discussed Sark men taking up jobs with the Germans to avoid deportation:

They've been criticised for that and this displeases me ... **Given the choice, what would you have done?** ... I take a dim view of this business of ... accusing ... Islanders ... of being collaborators. In Sark you can't live for five years on an Island with people and not fraternise ... **Fraternisation yes, we all admit to that, collaboration, no ... I defy**

²⁰² Le Sueur, *Growing Up Fast*, chapter two.

²⁰³ Le Tissier, *Mined Where You Walk*, p. 80.

²⁰⁴ Richard Le Tissier, *Island Destiny: A True Story of Love and War in the Channel Island of Sark* (St Helier: Seaflower Books, 2006), pp. 77-78.

anybody to have any idea what it was like, you can't know what you've never experienced.²⁰⁵

Her tone was firm and her voice periodically raised. Despite alluding to the issue without my prompting, she felt compelled to defend the conduct of all Islanders, particularly the Sarkees. Her admittance that Islanders had engaged in acts which could be viewed as fraternisation implied a sense of unease; however, in her mind the Sarkees had realistically had no choice. Rang remained angry at those who had chastised Islanders for inevitable interactions with the enemy. Her frustration manifested through a transition from remembering to telling: 'what could we do? **Shut in here, and you resist ... and you're shot. Well who for goodness sake is going to do that? We were dependent on them ... and they were dependent on us it's as simple as that ... those are the facts!**'²⁰⁶ Her exhortation to listen highlighted how important this point was to her, and she strove to make me understand Sark's situation. She did not view her experiences as anything to be ashamed of and the discomposure she exhibited through growing angry stemmed from her feelings that Islanders have been unfairly judged.

The issue of collaboration was sensitive at the time, and patriotic diarists were not shy of condemning those they felt crossed a line. In early 1941, Bisson recalled dining with 'the most out and out German haters it is possible to meet! We talked a lot about local feelings towards the Germans and how the people are getting more and more friendly towards them, even people who have suffered personally.'²⁰⁷ In April 1941, he reacted negatively to the sight of an elderly woman bringing the officer billeted in her house into church:

it would have been ... touching if he hadn't been wearing the German uniform ... [however], it gave a further idea of the extent of the good feeling shown by some ... and their readiness to collaborate ... forgetting for the time being all the misery and hardship they have caused in this Island.²⁰⁸

An Englishwoman living on Sark, Julia Tremayne, who kept a diary, was patriotic to the point of jingoism, and took a far harsher line towards the occupiers than many of the Sarkees. Incidents which Sarkees later recalled as examples of a shared humanity were seized upon by Tremayne as proof that the Sarkees were turning pro-German. She recorded dismay at Sarkian conduct, commenting on 1 July 1943 of hearing Sark's main beach, Grand

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ PL, LF 940.53 BIS, 'The Diary of Dr Albert Ogier Bisson', 4 January 1941, p. 25.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 12 April 1941, pp. 29-30.

Greve, had been opened to soldiers and locals: ‘lots of the Sarkees go, all those who have turned pro-German. I could count on my fingers the number of all British left.’²⁰⁹

The toxic nature of debates over Channel Island collaboration has at times had a distorting effect on the subject, with the less serious behaviour of ‘fraternisation’ - friendly relations between enemies - often pulled under this umbrella as proof of widespread collaboration. However, contact between Islanders and soldiers was frequently harmless, its occurrence relying on situational symbioses as opposed to ideological alignment on the part of the vast majority. All of the examples considered here fall under the latter category, and interviewees examined earlier attained composure due to their sincere belief that they, or their parents, had done little wrong. Instances where the stigma of collaboration caused defensiveness or discomfort occurred only when the spectre of wartime British values and behaviours loomed, often brought up or alluded to by the interviewees themselves. These examples are indicative of how local feelings could run high in relation to this issue, often failing to take into account the circumstances of the individuals whom they judged. Moreover, it demonstrates that external to critical British comments, local discussion of collaboration has long been controversial.

The partisan nature of society at the time, post-war tension towards Islanders perceived to have ‘collaborated’ and the allegations between 1990 and 2004 has rendered the subject of Islanders’ relations with the Germans sensitive for some. Bichard summarised the impact of accusations upon Islanders’ willingness to talk about ‘collaboration’: ‘that’s why a lot of people here don’t talk about it, because that’s the view ... and it’s not correct, I mean there were some people who collaborated, there’s no doubt about it, there were, but the majority of people did not.’²¹⁰ Some respondents recalled fearing negative judgement from neighbours or peers at the time. Renouf recalled her father’s unease when one German officer began to regularly visit the house.

He’d talk about his family ... nothing more. But my father did ask him eventually ... ‘if you do come and visit, can you come when it’s dark, because ... we don’t want people, saying that we’re collaborating with Germans’, and there certainly was nothing like that ... But my dad was frightened about what people would say.²¹¹

Renouf showed little trace that she felt her parents should have eschewed friendship with the officer, sharing that they later corresponded with the soldier and hosted him on a post-war visit. Renouf demonstrated how fear of being viewed as a ‘collaborator’ checked certain

²⁰⁹ Julia Tremayne, *War on Sark: The Secret Letters of Julia Tremayne*, ed. by Xan Franks (Exeter: Webb and Bower, 1981), pp. 145-146, underline is her emphasis.

²¹⁰ Bichard, Interview.

²¹¹ Renouf, Interview.

behaviours during the Occupation. Renouf's parents were happy to receive food from the soldier and exchange small talk, yet did not wish to be seen entertaining the German for fear of accusation.

Renouf provided a striking example of how Islanders can, still, become angry when the subject of collaboration is discussed, particularly if they were affected by it. When Renouf telephoned me in response to my Twitter advertisement, it became immediately clear that she had strong feelings about one local family, a member of which had publicly gone on record in patriotic terms, whom Renouf felt had collaborated.²¹² She went as far as to completely contest the account of the woman in question. Her version of the activities of this family took up a significant portion of her testimony, and was revealing of how blurred the lines between acceptable relations with the Germans and unacceptable acts of fraternisation of collaboration could be. She argued:

the neighbours would soon call you fraternisers I mean there was some near us, that were, bit too friendly with the Germans ... She made it sound as if her father hated the Germans, and they entertained them ... They were girls of about, sixteen I 'spose, and they had German boyfriends ... and the way she [put it] *made me mad*.²¹³

Renouf's charge sheet included that the family had informed on a local man who had chalked V-signs, and that the father figure had kept much needed foodstuffs back from Islanders, such as her mother, in his shop so as to cater for his German guests. It was notable that she herself identified that her family had potentially toed the line in their friendship with the German officer, yet felt that the neighbours in question had firmly crossed it. Renouf's burning desire to set the record straight in relation to those she felt had collaborated and later sought to alter their history led her to essentially character assassinate the family's father: 'her father was told by the Germans ... when we were liberated ... 'no flags' ... "my dad told them I'm British, I've got flags I'll do what I like' ... *well he never did*. And he certainly wouldn't have done that, he'd have had the swastika, him.'²¹⁴ This extract was revealing of the deep emotions which certain acts could elicit seventy-five-years later. The lengths Renouf went to in order to discredit an account she viewed as fictitious demonstrate that informing and profiteering remain the most controversial of Occupation activities in the minds of those who lived through it, and the desire to name and shame continues on the part of some.

²¹² Some details have been omitted to assure the anonymity of all parties in order to avoid upset. This information was likely shared so that I would set the record straight, which I have no means or intention of doing. The analysis here focuses solely upon Renouf's emotional response to perceived acts of collaboration, in order to protect all parties concerned.

²¹³ Renouf, Interview.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

Revulsion was felt towards women who slept with the Germans. Dr Ambrose Charpentier, an elderly Jerseyman, recorded his disgust at the phenomenon in 1944, writing

the Jersey women are almost the only persons who have been friendly to the Germans, and they have been a great deal too friendly ... One has only to go into the cafes to see the terms on which the young women are with the German soldiers. It is revolting to see how the girls are behaving.²¹⁵

The conduct of the local women who entered into sexual relationships with the enemy was often commented upon, although this condemnation frequently missed the occurrence of unofficial prostitution in the Islands, with starving women trading their bodies for food or other commodities. Sanders noted that the anger generated at Liberation by the notion of Island women having sexual relationships with soldiers, and subsequent sensationalism of the subject, obscured the unpleasant reality behind many such liaisons, although some women did engage in such relationships for status, genuine romantic reasons or self-serving reasons.²¹⁶

Aspects of British discourse in relation to Island collaboration further complicate this, particularly for those who were young women at the time. There is a dual pressure on certain narratives, both locally and also from a perception that outsiders may judge or fail to understand the situation which Islanders found themselves in. Susan Mauger was a Guernsey nineteen-year-old in 1945, who had been seconded to work in a German kitchen to earn more income for her struggling family. However, Mauger was discomposed from our first contact in 2016. After initially agreeing to discuss her experiences, she became hesitant, and would only agree to be interviewed with the presence of a third person in the room.²¹⁷ Moreover, it took repeated assurances that a pseudonym would be provided for her to participate.²¹⁸ Her time working for the Germans was the root cause of her anxieties. The interview was difficult, with Mauger frequently striving to bring it to a close and making jokes at my 'nosiness'. Ten minutes into the interview she asked 'is that all love?' and responded to my statement that I had more questions with a laugh and an insistence that I hurried up.²¹⁹ Five minutes later, she exclaimed 'Christ not finished yet! ... He's nosy, eh?!'²²⁰ Towards the end she began to make jokes: 'what did you do during the war anyway? You weren't born! [Laughs] ... next war ... I'll come ask you the questions! [Laughs].'²²¹ Mauger used humour as a defence mechanism to parry difficult questions and end the

²¹⁵ JAS, L/D/25/A/13/17 'Occupation Reminiscences of Dr Ambrose Charpentier', 1944.

²¹⁶ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 167-172; Lewis, *A Doctor's Occupation*, pp. 69-73.

²¹⁷ This was my grandfather, who had initially put us in contact.

²¹⁸ In accordance with her desire for anonymity, I have omitted biographical information such as location of home and work which could identify her.

²¹⁹ Mauger, Interview.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

interview quickly. She was successful: the interview was only twenty-eight minutes long. Mauger was so discomposed by her fears of judgement that she refused to compose her account.

The line between work which sustained the local population and work which supported the garrison became increasingly blurred. Cruickshank argued ‘the Germans ... reckoned that up to three quarters of the population were working directly or indirectly for them ... Nearly all Islanders were working for the enemy, although few of them realised the fact.’²²² This situation was virtually inevitable on small self-sustaining Islands, and Islanders’ efforts to survive unavoidably made the Germans’ supply position easier to manage.²²³ The numbers of Islanders who did work for the enemy, directly or indirectly, was a central portion of Bunting’s critique of the Islanders.²²⁴ My English identity may have made Mauger wary and she self-raised her war-work as an admission: ‘when they arrived they didn’t do anything, you know? _ _ _ _ _ I worked for them actually _ _ to earn some money, eh?’²²⁵ She provided a quick justification, with the pauses denoting reticence. Moreover, she presented a contradictory statement as to her degree of choice: ‘No. You didn’t have to work for them ... but there was no work come local in the end.’²²⁶ This suggested the difficulty Mauger felt in justifying her past actions to an outsider.

Moreover, Mauger only shared anecdotes of ‘good’ Germans to justify her interactions with the soldiers. The only detailed account of an interaction with a German was a humorous and safe anecdote of a friend who ate chocolates from an officer’s desk, unaware he had set them aside as a present. Mauger’s efforts to humanise the soldiers with whom she interacted, described variously as ‘ordinary people’ and ‘alright.’²²⁷ She mobilised the local discourse to frame her actions as human to human, rather than occupier to occupied. Yet these efforts failed to prevent her discomposure, exhibited through a repetition when asked if she had made friends with the soldiers: ‘some of them were very friendly yeah, yeah, really friendly yeah, they were really nice, yeah.’²²⁸ This was not expanded upon, and her manifest discomfort, led me to move on with my questions. Mauger was unsure how to respond to the question, fearful of being misunderstood. As a teenager

²²² Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, p. 136. Cruickshank argued that the German assessment on this point was ‘undoubtedly true.’

²²³ The local population carrying on with daily life was judged so important to the German’s ability to maintain a garrison on the Islands that it ultimately prevented the native population being deported *en masse* to ease the military’s security concerns. Generaloberst Alfred Jodl was recorded as saying that the Islands would become ‘a barren desert’ without the Islanders’ maintaining the infrastructure of daily life. Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, p. 113.

²²⁴ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 316.

²²⁵ Mauger, Interview.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

working in close proximity with a number of young soldiers, it was likely that Mauger was nervous of being questioned about women who slept with the Germans, and she was keen to emphasise how she had been ‘walking out’ with her later husband during the war. Mauger was unable to compose her memories of the Germans, inhibited by fears of judgement.

The stigma of collaboration did not prevent or inhibit all teenage women from testifying as to their relations with the enemy, nor always cause discomposure. Annette De Carteret was an eighteen-year-old Sarkee in 1945. She and her parents had developed friendships with members of the garrison, particularly during the final eight months of the Occupation when there were no rotations of the soldiers on Sark. De Carteret frequently related details of this to me, explaining the nature of her parent’s work for the Germans and providing several examples of good German behaviour. Her memories were not risky or painful, despite the great extent which the Germans featured in her testimony. De Carteret’s ability to testify was uninhibited. She claimed ‘I can’t remember it being horrible at all ... when you read after the war about the things that happened, we were just blooming lucky.’²²⁹ De Carteret’s father corresponded with one German, identified as ‘Heinie’, after the Occupation. She recalled ‘he was a nice chap ... I can remember him telling me, “we don’t want a war, we should put Mr Churchill and Mr Hitler [together] and let them fight it out!” You see, they’d left their families at home and were just the same.’²³⁰

Underscoring this were her reflections on bittersweet feelings when the Germans were removed as POWs: ‘we said cheerio, best of luck to them, but they were going back to their families.’²³¹ De Carteret’s composure on the subject of the enemy was striking in light of the earlier findings of this section. De Carteret seemed immune to any potential stigma and was comfortable stating that she was friends with the Germans.²³² However, a significant lapse in her composure occurred when we discussed people’s immediate reflections on Sark’s Occupation:

AC: I think we missed them, for a while, like you missed visitors ... I met some very nice ones, but I’ve forgotten their names. One thing I’m sorry I did, but for some unknown reason I thought I ought to get rid, I had a German autograph book, and I burnt it, which was blooming daft. But I did.

RG: Why did you burn it?

²²⁹ Annette De Carteret, Interview with Richard Guille, 21 April 2016.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

AC: Why did I burn it, I don't know why. And I've always regretted it ... there were some lovely things in [there] _ _ I don't know what possessed me.²³³

De Carteret's narration became introspective, probing at her own motivations for the act of burning the book filled out by the soldiers and exhibiting confusion in the present as to why her younger self has committed this act which she labelled 'blooming daft.' In the immediate aftermath of the war, it was likely that she felt the book potentially incriminating, which would have provided adequate motivation. Yet in 2016, she could not understand her past actions. Furthermore, she expressed regret at not having been to meet ex-servicemen visiting Werner Rang after the war: 'I was friends with the Germans but they're all gone now, every summer I say I'm going to go down to Werner's to meet ... [them] ... It'll probably be all too late.'²³⁴ De Carteret implicitly acknowledged that she had once suppressed her memories of the Germans, and felt, towards the end of her life, that she had unfairly forgotten the foreign troops who had been a prominent part of her youth. The discomposure which recalling the autograph book engendered did not come from any sense that her wartime friendships had been shameful. It derived from an inability to understand her past actions from a reflective present perspective. The act of burning the book, either out of fear or patriotic spirit, could not be squared with how well she felt the Germans had treated the Sarkees, and how kind they had been to her family. De Carteret demonstrated the complexities inherent within remembering the occupiers. Whilst the subject of the occupiers and behaviours towards them deemed incorrect could cause some interviewees to become discomposed, others who recounted interactions with the Germans with perfect equanimity counteracted these.

However, some continued to exhibit resentments. This could lead to contradictory narratives, where attitudes towards the enemy rang dissonant to the parameters of the local discourse of German behaviour. Others stepped outside of the language of reconciliation, acknowledging their long-term dislike of the Germans after the war. Blampied explained that she and her parents had avoided the Germans. I asked if her opinions of the occupiers had changed after the war:

It took a ... very long time. 'Cause there was a boat that went down here ... and there was a lot of German tourists on it ... and everybody said 'it doesn't matter it's only Germans' [laughs] ... I've nothing against the Germans now but ... just after the war *'don't talk to me about the Germans.'*²³⁵

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Blampied, Interview.

Blampied's example demonstrated how Islanders could develop a long-standing dislike of the Germans. This was bound up in widespread anger at the Nazi presence and the conditions and repressions imposed by the Occupation. Blampied acknowledged that her dislike of the Germans had been fuelled by her hatred of the enemy at the time, and alluded to the more widespread currency such views had in Jersey beyond herself. Even those who were extremely young during the Occupation, such as five-year-old Herivel, demonstrated a capacity for long-term resentment. During our interview he shared his difficult physiological reactions to the shortages, and an unpleasant case of food poisoning as a result of eating ersatz food. He continued to blame the Germans for this: 'I'll say to this day I'll never trust the Germans because of what I had to do. Yeah, that is the one thing I've got against the Germans.'²³⁶ Some Islanders could not disassociate their wartime sufferings from the presence and actions of the collective.

Conversely, those who acknowledged long-term resentments or negative experiences of the Germans often sought to bring them into line with the prevailing discourse in relation to the occupiers. Blampied recalled sympathy at the bewilderment of a young soldier on Liberation Day, and felt 'when you think of it eh, they were ordinary soldiers the same as ours, but we didn't look at it like that. They were Germans we called 'em square-heads.'²³⁷ Whilst Blampied was able to emphasise her opposition to the Germans, she noted how the soldiers had been 'ordinary men' and alluded to how they would generally ignore Islanders minding their own business, conforming her testimony to prevailing local narratives. Likewise, Herivel qualified his admittance of a long-standing resentment with the following implementation of the conciliatory and differentiating narrative: 'apart from that they didn't treat us bad ... Most of them were quite good, just some of the officers were nasty.'²³⁸ This qualifier pulled his testimony interpretively in line with others seen earlier in this chapter. The clearest example of this process came from Bichard, who experienced both sides of the occupier throughout the war. In one instance, she recalled a German soldier, drawn to the sound of her playing the piano, making a threatening move to draw his bayonet when asked to leave by her father. Bichard was emphatic in discussing her delight at seeing the Germans removed from Guernsey in 1945: 'we were delighted! [Laughs] Good riddance! If we could have kicked them out we would have done!'²³⁹ However, she demonstrated Islanders' well-honed capacity to differentiate by qualifying her ire was aimed at the officers in particular: 'mainly they were alright, they

²³⁶ Herivel, Interview.

²³⁷ Blampied, Interview.

²³⁸ Herivel, Interview.

²³⁹ Bichard, Interview.

didn't bother us, but it was these [officers], they had an arrogance about them and even today I've got this feeling about this arrogance they had.'²⁴⁰

Nevertheless, Bichard's distaste for the officers was challenged by one incident in particular which she framed as a 'rather human story.'²⁴¹ Late in the Occupation, Bichard helped her elder sister care for her children. Her sister had a blond-haired toddler named Marlene, whom the neighbouring German officers were infatuated with due to her appearance and Germanic name. Tragically, Marlene fell sick and passed away. Bichard recalled informing the soldiers, controlling her narration to contain the emotion of the memory and ensure I understood the intended message:

They looked over and said 'is Marlene better?' I said 'no, Marlene is dead.' Well it was as though I'd hit them. He reeled back and he said 'what did you say?' ... Anyway there [came] a knock at the door ... They said 'can we please see Marlene?' ... They came in ... took off their gun belts, left them in the hall ... [and] stood around this cot, weeping ... On the day of the funeral ... they formed a guard of honour, for ... this little girl who had a German name and looked like any of their children would have looked ... Alright so here we go, that was a rather human story.'²⁴²

Bichard strove to coherently narrate an emotional and difficult memory through controlled story-telling. This extract was almost entirely free of 'ums' and 'ers', indicating the precision with which Bichard articulated this memory. Importantly, the focus upon the German officers' emotional response to Marlene's passing, as opposed to her own, which went unarticulated, foregrounded the respect shown by the occupiers towards Bichard's niece, which made a deep impression on the teenage Guernseywoman. Due to incidents like this, Bichard was able to successfully maintain a duality to her narration. I was left in no doubt as to Bichard's indignation at the German presence, yet she was also able to align her testimony with broader ideas that the German garrison had contained a multiplicity of men, some who behaved with arrogance, yet also others who were upset by the death of a local child. Bichard was able, through this portion of her narrative, to humanise the Occupation, and move it beyond binary discussions of resistance and collaboration, reflecting the complexity she sought to convey.

Explaining Islanders' Testimonies and the Local Discourse

The markedly generous view some took of the occupiers has been viewed as a conspiracy of silence, a way of avoiding allegations of collaboration and charges of passivity.²⁴³ The 'good

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 320.

German' view held currency for local officials forced to justify their policies of 'correct relations', 'greater good' ethics, and five years governing under German influence. However, to argue that neutral or even positive statements about the occupiers represent a collective effort to hide 'collaboration' would be to fall into the trappings of a seductive conspiracy theory. Certainly, Islanders' assertions that the soldiers in the Islands were 'different' to those who committed atrocities elsewhere represent a failure to contemplate the more challenging and difficult questions raised by National Socialism in Germany and its power to widely spread complicity amongst its citizens. Yet the noticeable difference between German conduct in the Islands and elsewhere was a key experiential component of the Occupation for Islanders. There may have been an underestimation of the Wehrmacht's capacity for violence and atrocities, unexposed due to the Islands' special status in the Nazi Empire and the committed efforts of local government to avoid reprisals through stymying resistance.²⁴⁴ However, this created the conditions in which the perception that their occupiers had contained men of a different calibre could flourish.

The implications of German brutality elsewhere did not appear to be something that Islanders questioned or speculated upon in any real depth. This is discussed in the next chapter, which examines Islanders' memories of the OT labourers, Islanders' most prominent clue as to the darkness inherent in Nazi occupation. It is important, however, not to overstate facets of this silence; the seeming lack of desire to contemplate this does not represent distortion to avoid accusations of collaboration with Nazis. It would be unfair to expect those who experienced a disorientating experience to approach the subject of their occupiers with such clarity, and an even greater sin to dismiss their perspectives of the Germans as misleading. As Alessandro Portelli cautioned, '[oral] narrative[s] reveal a great deal of the speaker's relationship to their history.'²⁴⁵ That such issues were not contemplated is telling for the oral historian, indicating the importance and cultural currency underpinning what was widely shared. It was an important aspect of life to occupied Islanders that the rank-and-file troops generally behaved well; fundamentally, this was integral to their survival. Moments where common humanity emerged were correspondingly important memories to Islanders. Nazi policy in the Islands may have been increasingly exposed as a harsh and repressive regime, yet the importance of the sense of mutual humanity felt by Islanders is highlighted by a continuing desire to share this narrative at risk of judgement. The testimonies were not presented passively and many made an effort to make me understand their viewpoint, through rhetorical questions designed to elicit agreement, or returning to the theme in way of reinforcing this within their narratives.

²⁴⁴ Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness', p. 26.

²⁴⁵ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 50.

Of the three Islands, Sark's Occupation was the least militarised and pressured, and adherence to the discourse of good German behaviour in the Islands was most uniform in Sarkian testimonies. The small population and garrison allowed more scope for soldiers and Islanders to form friendships. Moreover, the Germans on Sark displayed a real fondness for the Islands children. This particularly came through when four-year-old Nanette Hamon was killed by an S-mine whilst playing in 1944.²⁴⁶ Doris Lanyon, a twelve-year-old schoolgirl at the time of Hamon's death, had come into contact with many Germans in her family's tavern on Sark. She judged them in 2016 as 'nice people [not] horrible people at all' and recalled their response to Hamon's death: 'oh they were very upset ... because they were very compassionate towards children. In fact they were all a nice bunch of people.'²⁴⁷ Lanyon had more contact than most with the soldiers, who frequented the family-run public house alongside locals. Her memories of the soldiers coalesced around their kindness to Sark's children such as herself, and the example set by the older generations on Sark which, whilst more begrudging, was often conciliatory in relation to the Germans. In 2001, Harriet Carré corresponded with the historian Sir Peter Liddle. On the subject of the occupiers, she argued 'we have now had time to reflect, and realise that what we were asked to face ... was soldiers obeying orders.'²⁴⁸

Sark's more peaceful Occupation generated a live and let live dynamic, where Islanders and Germans sought to avoid causing each other trouble. Phillip Perrée argued that 'they behaved reasonably, yes. We treated them like a beehive you know ... you treat them like a bunch of bees if you tantalised them they stung you,' but felt that if one left them alone, the Germans would reciprocate.²⁴⁹ One Sark interviewee, Phillip Le Feuvre, aged six in 1945, recalled playing a childish prank which almost had serious consequences. Finding a length of copper wire, Le Feuvre and some friends stretched it across the road to knock an unsuspecting adult off their bicycle. The victim was a German officer:

He went smack over the bloody top [laughs]. We were bloody lucky he was a good German ... He gave our parents a bit of a chewing up and gave us a bollocking ... but ... they didn't send us to Germany, so we were bloody lucky on that one.²⁵⁰

Le Feuvre was correct in his assessment of the potential consequences of the prank, which must have seemed at first to the German as a planned attack on his person. On seeing the

²⁴⁶ Hamon and Hamon, Interview.

²⁴⁷ Doris Lanyon, Interview with Richard Guille, 19 April 2016.

²⁴⁸ Letter from Harriet Carré to Sir Peter Liddle detailing her wartime experiences. Kindly shown to the author by Eileen Baker in 2016.

²⁴⁹ IWM, Sound 12542, 'Interview with Phillip Perrée', 14 April 1992. Perrée met the German doctor after the war when he was visiting Sark. The ex-soldier laughingly enquired whether Perrée had heard 'any more news?'

²⁵⁰ Phillip Le Feuvre, Interview with Richard Guille, March 2013.

children running for home, the soldier put two and two together and judged it as a childish act. However, had this incident occurred elsewhere in occupied Europe, the soldier may not have acted with such restraint - indeed, his stern words with Le Feuvre's parents likely made this point. It was likely that the soldier, owing to his time on Sark free of the fear of partisan activity, was minded to act with restraint, and did not take the matter further, exemplifying the greater conciliation shown by the Germans on Sark. Ultimately, the greater importance of a small community and local factors in Sark which aided the Islands' more straightforward reconciliation with their occupiers is made plain by two aspects. Firstly, the aid given by the German medics, who administered treatment to the civilians in the absence of a local doctor from 1942, was deeply appreciated by all who received their professional and diligent care.²⁵¹ Secondly, one of those medics, Werner Rang, took up residence on Sark after the war and married a local woman, Phyllis Rang. In Rang, Sark's community possessed a respected and cherished reminder that the garrison had contained good men who had treated the Island with respect. These local factors offer compelling explanations as to the more uniform occurrence of this discourse in Sarkian testimonies than the larger Islands.

It was noteworthy that many who had been children at the time extolled the discourse of generally benign German behaviour in the Islands with composure. This was easier for children to access as their interactions with the Germans were shielded from accusations of collaboration, given their inherently innocent nature. For example, Le Feuvre and Nicolle recalled following the soldiers on the march, mimicking their movements and songs in an innocent display of boyhood interest in soldiers.²⁵² Both viewed the interaction in humorous terms, with Le Feuvre remarking: 'I remember with all my mates ... following the Germans ... singing ... I don't think we'd have been the Hitler Youth club [laugh], I don't think it was as bad as that!'²⁵³ Nicolle focused on how the Germans took umbrage at himself and his brother, chasing them away, which allowed an implicit framing of the act as one of mockery.²⁵⁴ Members of the 1.5 Occupation generations' continue to mobilise the local discourse of German behaviour in the Islands, demonstrating the power of that narrative, its applicability to their own experiences and its intergenerational quality.

²⁵¹ Le Tissier, *Island Destiny*, pp. 33-34.

²⁵² One of the soldier's favoured marching songs was the catchy *Ein Heller und Ein Batzen*, an old drinking song. Several interviewees recalled the tune, including Nicolle, Blampied and Harris. Harris recalled the song as one that had stuck in his mind, and was surprised to learn after the war that its meaning had been far less martial than he had realised at the time. Harris, Interview. A version of the song can be found here: 'Ein Heller und ein Batzen - Heidi Heido', Youtube.com, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SblRmirRTwk>> [Accessed 13 April 2021].

²⁵³ Le Feuvre, Interview.

²⁵⁴ Nicolle, Interview. Nicolle referred to how himself and his brother had inserted sticks into their hats, to mirror the foliage in camouflage netting worn by the soldiers on their helmets. This effort suggests that the act was less mockery than mimicry, although this was not how it was framed by the Guernseyman.

The testimonies of children in relation to the Germans were at times shaped by parental perspectives or the views of older Islanders, which would have shaped their outlooks from a young age. Trevor Bisson, a Guernsey eleven-year-old in 1945, recalled seeing a starving naval rating rummaging through the family's rubbish towards the end of the war. His father approached the man, who begged him for food: 'he said "I felt sorry for the poor bugger ... I couldn't give him [anything], I couldn't even be sorry for a German, **but other side of him was a human being!**" He said "we never lost that [view]" he said "once you've seen a war ... you take a different view of things."²⁵⁵ Bisson's memory was framed through his father's words, which emphasised how Islanders viewed the starving Germans in 1945 with a degree of sympathy and a sense of shared humanity at the mutual tribulations faced by both occupied and occupiers. Others showed surprise that their parents could take such a charitable view of their occupiers, indicating how this influenced their own testimonies. During our interview, Renouf related how her father took an understanding line towards the enemy. 'Even [among] adults ... there was no hatred for them. I never, heard anybody say _ "oh I, never want to see a German again" ... Dad always used to say, "they don't want to be here."²⁵⁶ Renouf's testimony mirrored her father's views. Renouf viewed unpleasant soldiers as separate to the main body of men, allowing her to compose her memories of the occupiers in line with the local discourse of positive German behaviour. Her surprise and difficulty understanding his viewpoint on this subject reflected knowledge gained later as to the tribulations of the Occupation, yet her surprise was not so great as to seek to challenge him. Renouf respected her father's interpretation by incorporating them into her own testimony.

The role of parental opinions of the Germans was important, providing an early framework within which the 1.5 generation could interpret and order their experiences. These broadly matched their own experiences of the enemy. Terry de Mouilpied, a seven-year-old Guernsey boy in 1945, recalled seeing soldiers in his catholic church, and told me 'I would prefer to think that these were ordinary people, in Guernsey, and there were ordinary people, German soldiers, and they probably had a huge amount in common. The soldiers had families at home. The locals were doing their best to look after [their own families].'²⁵⁷ Tellingly, he later asserted that 'they behaved ... as well as anyone could expect. Certainly, my parents never ran them down.'²⁵⁸ When the traces of parental perspectives are borne in mind and considered alongside the testimonies collated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the continuation of the local discourse of the Germans within the 1.5 Occupation generation

²⁵⁵ Trevor Bisson, Interview with Richard Guille, 23 August 2018.

²⁵⁶ Renouf, Interview.

²⁵⁷ Terry de Mouilpied and Joan de Mouilpied, Interview with Richard Guille, 17 April 2018.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

rings increasingly less dissonant, indicating how local narratives sustain Islanders when recalling experiences well outside the parameters of British war memory. The intergenerationality of this discourse offers a strong explanation as to why balanced perspectives of the occupiers remain so widespread in the Islands, despite pressure to conform to more unsettling contemporary cultural understandings of the German soldier during the war, alongside British notions of what constituted appropriate behaviour towards the enemy.

Indicative of the depth that this discourse after the war was its replication in the testimonies of Islanders who evacuated in 1940. Returnees had lived in an atmosphere suffused with British propaganda and developed a clear and patriotic view of the war. The exigencies of living with the enemy were lost upon many evacuees, clashing with their more simplistic notions of who the enemy had been.²⁵⁹ Bunting cited the example of Ginns, who returned from internment in Germany with photographs of his middle-aged German guards. He noted that his evacuated school friends refused to accept the photographs were of real Germans. The boys ‘thought all Germans had square heads and brutal faces.’²⁶⁰ However, as the Occupation attained increasing primacy in Island identity, some who were evacuated as young children demonstrated that the local discourse surrounding the Germans’ heterogeneity had been incorporated into their understanding.²⁶¹ Mark Le Cocq, seven in 1945, came into contact with German POWs: ‘I can remember being given sweets by the Germans ... [my father had] ... fought them in the First World War, but he had no malice ... they were, just ordinary people as far as I was concerned.’²⁶² The use of the term ‘ordinary people’, a concept riven through occupation testimonies, indicates how the language of the occupied could be incorporated into evacuees’ understandings. Georgina Dorey, six at the end of the war, exemplified a similar process. Dorey’s family in Guernsey had been close to a German, and Dorey incorporated their views into her understanding of the Occupation: ‘this may sound strange, but I think if I’d had a piece of bread, I’d have given half to a ... [starving] ... German. I mean, they were like us, they had to go to war or be shot ... they were ordinary people, they weren’t Nazis.’²⁶³ The similarities between the language of occupied and evacuated Islanders indicated that cross-fertilisation occurred between these two groups. It demonstrated the enduring legacy of the occupiers, and how Islanders’ surprise at discovering the heterogeneous nature of their oppressors shaped discourse

²⁵⁹ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 265.

²⁶⁰ Ginns, quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 319-320.

²⁶¹ Other interviewees who fitted this trend but are not quoted here include Jenny Gallienne, Interview with Richard Guille, 24 August 2018; George Duquemin, Interview with Richard Guille, 16 April 2016; and Jean Rougier, Interview with Richard Guille, 4 May 2018.

²⁶² Mark Le Cocq, Interview with Richard Guille, 24 April 2018.

²⁶³ Georgina Dorey, Interview with Richard Guille, 24 April 2016.

surrounding the enemy soldiers. Without the Manichean interventions of the 1990s, this discourse may never have aroused the controversy and notoriety which prevented some from testifying with comfort within its confines.

Conclusion

The discourse of ‘benign’ German behaviour in the Islands resembles a myth, one which cannot, for those who endured the Occupation, be disentangled from the reality of the experience. There was limited evidence that this mode of assessing the occupiers was used to suppress more controversial aspects of the period. Interviewees had interacted with soldiers who had treated themselves and their parents reasonably well, and formed conclusions outside of the binary categorisations of ‘enemy’ and ‘ally’. This local discourse cannot entirely be judged as having exculpation from collaboration at its heart. Certainly, the myth of the ‘good Kommandant’ was a publicly created narrative which sought to downplay British unease at the thought of administrative collaboration. This does not mean that ordinary Islanders, many of whom had distinctly negative views at the time of their leaders’ complicity in German rule, applied this narrative directly to their own accounts. A blending occurred post-war, where the narrative of benign German behaviour was eminently applicable to the lives of ordinary Islanders for somewhat different reasons. Their political leaders had a stake in avoiding censure for collaborative acts, and needed to portray their dealings with the enemy as a constructive undertaking with men whose commitment to Nazism was questionable.²⁶⁴ Conversely, ordinary Islanders were presented with a discourse, sanctioned at the highest level of Island society, within which many could identify their experiences.

Islanders noted instances of kindness shown by the garrison, and could draw favourable comparisons between their treatment and the fate of those in other occupied nations. Spatial compression and inevitable symbioses generated the conditions for Islanders and Germans to form relationships, bringing many face-to-face with men who acted with consideration and kindness. Differentiation and separating the individuals’ conduct from the collective, which committed crimes such as the deportations, arrests, thefts and occasionally violence, allowed generalisations about benign German conduct to survive. The myth contained sufficient conceptual space to include stories of German excesses without destabilising its core components, othering the perpetrators as brutal Nazis and separate to the ‘good’ Germans. Rose’s account provides a vivid example of this process. Here, the distinction between fraternisation and collaboration matters to Islanders. However,

²⁶⁴ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 183.

collaboration and its associated stigma was a different matter, and this aspect of relations with the Germans posed greater challenges to composure.

An equilibrium developed by which the two facets of this discourse co-existed and proved mutually supportive, providing a language within which the disorientating memories of ‘good’, ‘ordinary’ or ‘kind’ Germans could be articulated. The popular manifestation, owing to its broader applicability and intergenerational characteristic, has endured far longer than the notions of the ‘good Kommandant’ and a ‘model occupation’, which have been challenged by scholarly research.²⁶⁵ Positive appraisals of German soldiers in the Islands risk facing greater pressure owing to increasing Holocaust consciousness and the defunct myth of the honourable Wehrmacht, discussed in the next chapter. However, those who experienced the Occupation are unlikely to alter their views owing to the resilience of this discourse and their sincere belief in its truth, which has long sustained them on their journey to the periphery of Britain’s war. The Islanders had seen the German soldiers at their highest point as well-disciplined and impeccably uniformed young men flushed with victory in 1940. They had also seen them as starving and ragged old men and teenagers during the winter and spring of 1944/45. Some had seen young men breaking down at news of their posting to the maelstrom of the Russian Front. However, they had also, to varying degrees, suffered the starvation conditions the presence of the Germans imposed, loathed the most openly Nazi groups such as the men of the GFP, and resented the occupiers’ collective crimes. Many who remember the Occupation hold a piercing understanding of the variability and contradictions of human nature, the ways stereotypes fall short, and the futility of war.

Fair-minded views of the Germans in the Islands were frequently expressed with composure by the interviewees. This reflects the local discourse, derived from the realities of the Occupation and expressed intergenerationally. That the enemy soldiers were a heterogenous group is a truism for those who remember those years, one which many deem vital to express, regardless of the consequences of judgement or stigma. There is little suggestion Islanders are sanitising their narratives when they articulate such sentiments; they hew too closely to reality to support such an assertion. Since the 1990s, Islanders collectively risk much by sharing stories of kindly soldiers and expressing sympathy for their occupiers. That Islanders continue to take this risk, sustained by a powerful local discourse, indicates the importance of this aspect of the Occupation to Islanders. Indeed, the most frequent cause of discomposure was external judgement, which Islanders believe to be unreflective of the complex realities of their experiences. That many remain comfortable integrating their loyalty to Britain and nuanced memories of the German soldiers shows that

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 183-185.

Islanders can align their oral narratives within both discursive frameworks, with limited contradiction or discomposure. Le Sueur was emphatic on this point. Choosing his words precisely, he argued: ‘in many cases and this was not collaboration, but there ... had developed an, awareness, that these were human beings, who were victims, as we all were, of a collective, madness.’²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Le Sueur, Interview, 6 January 2019.

Chapter Five

**‘We could hear them screaming, they were beating them’: The Integration
of the ‘othered’ Organisation Todt Labourer into Islanders’ Testimonies**

The war had ended ... we could play in the gun emplacements and with the anti-aircraft guns ... So we had a fairly good bunker explor[ation], but ... after you’ve seen one bunker, they’re all the same, they’re all dark and dank you know? ... We didn’t really want to know more than that ... we’d seen the slave workers working on them.¹

In 2018, Trevor Bisson, who had been a young schoolboy living near L’Islet on Guernsey’s north west coast, recalled how he and his friends passed their time after the end of the war. Owing to Hitler’s obsession that the British may have sought to retake the Islands and following his fortification order of 20 October 1941, their landscapes were scarred by concrete bunkers built by European forced and slave labourers of the OT.² The area where Bisson lived was heavily fortified during the building programme which lasted until 1943. Emerging from their ordeal, Islanders set to exploring previously forbidden parts of the landscape. Similar to their counterparts in Britain who played games in bombed out buildings in their blitzed cities, Island children played in the abandoned bunkers, using them as visceral stages for their childish war games, as later generations of Island children also did.³ However, the darker elements of the experience hung over Islanders as they moved into a post-Occupation future. Islanders strove to put the past behind them, resulting in what Gilly Carr termed a period of ‘collective amnesia’ of the more challenging parts of the experience.⁴ Bisson’s childhood self did not delve too deeply into what the bunkers represented; their construction through forced and slave labour imbued them with a far darker meaning. Bisson betrayed unease at the dissonance between his childish exploration

¹ Trevor Bisson, Interview with Richard Guille, 23 August 2018.

² Louise Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers: Help to Escaped Russian Slave labourers in Occupied Jersey, 1942-1945,’ *Contemporary European History*, 11:2 (2002), pp. 211-212.

³ Gilly Carr, ‘Shining a Light on Dark Tourism: German Bunkers in the British Channel Islands’, *Public Archaeology*, 9:2 (2010), p. 70. For studies of children exploring and playing in the ruins of British cities after Luftwaffe raids, see Ben Highmore, ‘Playgrounds and Bombsites: Post-war Britain’s Ruined Landscapes’, *Cultural Politics*, 9 (2013), pp. 323–36; and Lucie Glasheen, ‘Bombsites, Adventure Playgrounds and the Reconstruction of London: Playing with Urban Space in Hue and Cry’, *The London Journal*, 44.1 (2019), pp. 54–74.

⁴ Gilly Carr, *Legacies of Occupation: Heritage, Memory and Archaeology in the Channel Islands* (New York: Springer, 2014), p. 213. The foreword to the memoir of Jersey doctor John Lewis, provides an example of this. He explained his desire in 1945 to put out of his mind ‘the most frustrating and miserable five years of my life.’ John Lewis, *A Doctor’s Occupation: The Dramatic True Story of Life in Nazi Occupied Jersey* (London: Transworld Publishers, 1982), p. 8.

of the bunkers and his retrospective knowledge of those who built them. His statement that he and his friends ‘didn’t really want to know more’ about the bunkers was illustrative of how some Islanders initially dealt with the traumatic parts of the Occupation through a conscious repression. Bisson well remembered the labourers. Over seventy years later, the interviewees who were children at the time reflected on their Occupation childhoods – in which they were generally shielded from the harshest aspects – against a public backdrop emphasising the darker realms of the experience.

This chapter examines Islanders’ memories of the OT labourers, the most visible victim group of the Occupation. Their experiences remain marginalised in official commemorations and in many heritage sites. The OT pose problems for individual remembering. Firstly, the labourers were victims of war, with no place in the victorious Churchillian paradigm.⁵ Carr argued this was made simpler for the labourers were foreign and easily ‘othered’. The Islands never claimed their stories or the sites of their suffering and ‘the experiences of OT workers ... were rarely shared by ... Islanders ... Thus, Islanders did not identify with the foreign workers.’⁶ Moreover, the OT also dredged up the spectre of collaboration. Carr commented that a number of Islanders had undertaken work for the OT, attracted by the higher wages than those offered by the States of Guernsey and Jersey.⁷ Whilst the decision to work for the OT was complex, arising from the often desperate need to prioritise one’s family, the link to collaboration was another factor forcing memories of the OT to the margins.⁸

Crucially, this visible group of Nazism’s victims gave Islanders cause to question the sincerity of the kindness shown by many soldiers. The labourers fell into a similar category of victims as the Jews in the Islands, which problematised the notion of a ‘model Occupation.’ The implementation of anti-Semitic legislation in the Islands and the persecution of the small numbers of Jews present there when the Germans arrived likewise gave the lie to the notion that Nazi occupation in the Islands had been substantially different than elsewhere in Europe. For example, the orders sent to the Islands in this regard were the same as those implemented in France, due to the Channel Islands being part of the same administrative regime. The fate of three foreign Jewish women who had claimed asylum in

⁵ Carr, ‘Shining a Light’, p. 79.

⁶ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 162. This can be seen particularly clearly in the works of Durand and other early histories of the Occupation which skimmed over the labourers and their treatment. See Ralph Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 2nd ed. (Guernsey: The Guernsey Society, 2018), pp. 144-146.; Victor Coysh, *Swastika Over Guernsey: An Outline of the German Occupation and Liberation of the Island* (Guernsey: Guernsey Press Co., 1955), p. 13. Ralph Mollet’s 1945 history of Jersey’s Occupation referred to the ‘reign of terror’ caused by the OT workers in Jersey. Ralph Mollet, *Jersey Under the Swastika* (London: Hyperion Press, 1945), p. 63.

⁷ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 165.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

Guernsey prior to the Occupation, identified and arrested with some involvement by the local authorities and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau by the Nazis, particularly fired the imagination and condemnation of British commentators such as Madeleine Bunting and Peter King. Writers such as these sought to dismantle the ‘Model Occupation’ paradigm by pointing to the ways in which German rule had been repressive, and making inferences as to the culpability of local administrations for having sought to work constructively with the enemy. However, the chapter here focuses exclusively upon the OT labourers and Islanders’ memories of them. Whilst the fate of Guernsey’s Jews and anti-Semitic persecution throughout the Islands was discussed at points by the interviewees, many testimonies of this were of a second/third-hand nature, with little grounding in experience. Moreover, the place of Jewish residents in the Islands’ history and memory has been the subject of much study, and the thesis can add little to this discussion. The OT represent a misunderstood and marginalised victim group of the Occupation, and the implications this potentially has on Islanders’ testimonies of them merits consideration. Ultimately, if any group challenged the idea of a benign occupier for a large proportion of occupied Islanders, it was the OT labourers, whose mistreatment and plight was, for Islanders living in certain areas, highly visible. Nevertheless, they were not a silence in the personal testimonies collected for this research from Guernsey, indicative of shifting narratives within the Islands and the emotionally challenging nature of witnessing and recalling their shocking treatment.

Those who sheltered labourers in Jersey were side-lined, although this was partially down to Jersey helpers not seeking credit or recognition.⁹ Willmot has argued the JCP, which were heavily involved with sheltering and assisting labourers, faced hostility from Island politicians after the war owing to their other activity of calling out administrative ‘nest-feathering’ and collaboration.¹⁰ The politics of the Cold War did not help; anti-Communist sentiment in the Islands led those who had sheltered ‘Russian’ labourers to avoid drawing attention to their wartime activities.¹¹ Few who defied German orders on humanitarian grounds were comfortable that they ‘might be regarded as resistance heroes’, insisting their actions had been out of common decency.¹² Complicating this was a general lack of knowledge of the labourers amongst Islanders and their often-limited direct contact. The OT were not dispersed evenly. Most building work was conducted near the coast with the labourers encamped in these areas. The parishes of St Ouen and St Peters on the west coast of Jersey, for example, were situated close to several labour camps, whilst the central

⁹ Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers’, p. 225.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 225-226.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 225; Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 164.

¹² Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers’, p. 225.

parishes of Jersey contained no such camps and few building projects.¹³ Likewise, there were large areas of Guernsey where labourers were rarely seen. The worst abuses meted out occurred as far as possible out of sight of the locals, with few Islanders entering forced labour camps and all forbidden from approaching slave worker camps.¹⁴ Evacuated Islanders heard of them through second-hand stories, creating fertile ground for rumour and myth. Whilst western European labourers brought to the Islands were more numerous than those brought from eastern Europe,¹⁵ the appalling treatment of the ‘Russians’ seared this group into the minds of islanders. The local Occupation historian Michael Ginns summarised the myth of the labourer:

the workforce primarily consisted of thousands of Russian slave workers who were guarded by brutal overseers ... [W]hen they died at work, their bodies were flung into the wet concrete of the fortifications ... This point of view ... has gradually become accepted into local folklore as fact.¹⁶

Carr noted both types of labourers ‘became associated in the minds of Islanders after the Occupation ... most OT workers were perceived of as “Russians”, regardless of their real status.’¹⁷

The labourers lurked, Carr argued, ‘shadowlike in the background of memoirs, diaries and locally published popular accounts of the Occupation.’¹⁸ Few bunkers built by OT labourers and restored by local history groups foreground their experiences, with the labourers giving way to uniformed German mannequins or detailed information boards about weaponry.¹⁹ Where labourers are depicted in museums or on information boards, they are presented through ‘the eyes of the overseers or the occupiers’ as ‘a silent, collective and anonymous mass.’²⁰ Moreover, none of the twenty-two OT camps in the Islands²¹ have become heritage sites, leading Carr to dub these sites ‘non-heritage’, rejected by the Islands in the formulation of their public war memories.²² These sites hold few obvious traces as to their history; the camps were dismantled after the labourers left and anything of use was

¹³ See Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 156 for maps of the location of OT camps in the islands. Five of Jersey’s thirteen camps were near the west coast, with one near the north coast, one in the south at St Brelade’s and three in the south-east corner of the island. Four of Guernsey’s camps were set back from the west and north-west coast, one in the centre of the island and the OT prison at the far north.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹⁵ Sixty percent of the OT labourers were Western European. Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers’, p. 212.

¹⁶ Michael Ginns, *The Organisation Todt and the Fortress Engineers in the Channel Islands*, 2nd ed., (Jersey: Channel Islands Occupation Society, 2006), p. 3.

¹⁷ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 161.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

¹⁹ Carr, ‘Shining a Light’, pp. 71-72.

²⁰ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, pp. 147-151.

²¹ Twelve in Jersey, five in Guernsey and five in Alderney.

²² Gilly Carr, ‘Denial of the Darkness, Identity and Nation-Building in Small Islands: A Case Study from the Channel Islands’, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies*, ed. by Phillip Stone (London: Palgrave, 2018), pp. 367-368.

scavenged by Islanders, with the camps vanishing in the post-war landscape.²³ Carr's recommendations to encourage Jersey to turn one such camp, Lager Wick, into a heritage site in 2015, met with local resistance owing to the site's status as a nature reserve.²⁴

However, foreign workers in the Islands have become less taboo in recent years. Whilst Bunting's study was widely criticised, her chapter on the OT labourers covered the subject in detail, using survivor testimonies and then newly released documents in the Islands, London and in Moscow.²⁵ In Guernsey and Jersey, the late 1990s and early 2000s saw five memorials erected to OT labourers, representing attempts by heritage professionals to 'rectify either a long silence or the perception of OT workers as an anonymous mass.'²⁶ In Jersey, former labourers and those who assisted them are widely acknowledged in public memory. In 1995, former labourers were invited to the fiftieth anniversary Liberation celebrations and Holocaust Memorial Day is well attended.²⁷ A ceremony at the foreign workers memorial at Westmount in St Helier is a key part of Liberation Day and the stories of those who sheltered labourers are increasingly well known.²⁸ By contrast, labourers remain a subaltern group in Guernsey. Humanitarian resistance occurred less and did not provide the same focal point for the memory of resistance to form around as in Jersey. As most of Guernsey's labourers were western European or North African and better treated than their eastern counterparts, fewer felt the need to escape and seek refuge amongst Islanders.²⁹ Unlike in Jersey, where networks existed to aid escaped Russians, humanitarian aid in Guernsey was sporadic, delivered by individuals willing to share food and risk punishment for doing so after aiding labourers was criminalised in November 1942.³⁰ A small plaque unveiled to foreign workers in 1999 exists in a recess in the harbour wall, the furthest from the prominent Liberation Memorial.³¹ Recently, labourers have received greater popular attention through two powerful filmic depictions which emphasised the experience of the 'Russian' slave labourer in the Islands: *Another Mother's Son* (2017) and

²³ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, pp. 156-157.

²⁴ Carr, 'Denial of the Darkness', pp. 372-373.

²⁵ See the chapter 'Les Roches Maudits' in Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule, 1940-1945*, 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico, 2004), pp. 148-190.

²⁶ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 154.

²⁷ For a moving recollection of this event, see Le Sueur's account of Feodor Burryiy's experiences during his visit for the 1995 commemorations. Bob Le Sueur, *Growing up Fast: An Ordinary Man's Extraordinary Life in Occupied Jersey* (Jersey: Seeker Publishing, 2020), chapter twenty.

²⁸ Carr, "'Have You Been Offended?': Holocaust Memory in the Channel Islands at HMD 70', *Holocaust Studies*, 22:1 (2016), pp. 55-56; Carr, 'Occupation Heritage, Commemoration and Memory in Guernsey and Jersey', *History and Memory*, 24:1 (2012), pp. 104-105.

²⁹ Gilly Carr, Paul Sanders and Louise Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance in the Channel Islands: German Occupation 1940-1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 343.

³⁰ Willmot, 'The Goodness of Strangers', p. 215.

³¹ Carr, 'Occupation Heritage', p. 105. This memorial was re-worded in 2001 after former forced workers noted the inclusion of the names of OT overseers and complained. Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 154.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society (2018). The chapter outlines the experiences of the OT workers in the Islands and considers how Islanders viewed them. Moreover, it considers how the labourers impacted upon the ability of Islanders to lock into the conciliatory discourse towards the occupiers analysed in the previous chapter. Whilst Alderney became the site of the worst atrocities propagated against OT labourers and Jewish prisoners of the only concentration camp on British soil, *Lager Sylt*, it has not been included in this thesis on Islanders' recollections of occupation as virtually the entire population were evacuated from the Island.³² The chapter explores the ways in which Guernsey interviewees discussed their interactions with the labourers during the interviews conducted for the project, paying particular attention to whether the 2018 film influenced the narrative space which they allocated to memories of the suffering they witnessed the foreign labourers enduring.

The Organisation Todt in Guernsey and Jersey

On 13 August 1942, the true nature of Nazi rule was made evident as the first group of slave labourers for the *Organization Todt*, a large body of Ukrainians, arrived in St Helier. Whilst earlier drafts of forced labourers from France and Spain had disconcerted Islanders, nothing had prepared them for the sight of the victims of Nazi racial policy in eastern Europe. A member of Jersey's Superior Council, the Deputy for the Department of Labour Edward Le Quesne, recorded in his Occupation diary their arrival and the immediate effect on the locals:

An incident of gross cruelty was witnessed today ... and brought home ... how inhuman the enemy can be ... Some 1100 peasants from the Ukraine arrived in the early morning ... half-starved and ... in the charge of fat bellied O.T. men armed with rubber truncheons and whips. These poor wretches were marched from Town to St Ouen and laggars were whipped and beaten ... Women cried to see the pitiful sight.³³

For those who witnessed the cruel treatment meted out to the labourers, the memories remained powerful for the remainder of their lives. One Jerseyman, Edwin de St Croix, recalled in the late 1980s: 'I can remember them being driven ashore ... it was really quite appalling ... and the people who saw it will remember it forever I'm certain, as they were

³² For a detailed if dated study of Alderney by Theodore Pantcheff, who investigated atrocities in the Island after its liberation, see T. X. H. Pantcheff, *Alderney: Fortress Island* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1981).

³³ JAS, L/C/205/A1/2, 'Diary of Deputy Edward Le Quesne', 13 August 1942. The Jersey diarist and newspaperman Leslie Sinel also provided a similar account of the same event in comparable language. Leslie Sinel, *The German Occupation of Jersey*, 4th ed., (London: Transworld, 1969), p. 83.

like animals.’³⁴ Whilst the worst excesses committed against Islanders occurred on the Continent, away from the eyes of those they left behind, the treatment of the OT labourers hammered home the true brutality of Nazism and its associated racial policies. The labourers were brought to the Islands by the Nazi construction group controlled by the engineer Doctor Fritz Todt, then later Albert Speer, in order to work on the fortifications ordered by Hitler in October 1941. This was intended to turn the islands into ‘impregnable fortresses.’³⁵ Over 9,000 of the labourers were recruited in Western Europe. Several hundred were entitled to pay, brought by construction firms awarded contracts by the OT. However, almost all western Europeans were forced labourers, including German, Dutch and French political prisoners, Spanish Republicans and North African dock workers rounded up by Vichy authorities and handed to the Nazis. The vast majority of such labourers survived the war, even if their treatment was frequently poor.³⁶ Yet few of those in this category had much choice in their involvement with the OT, being forced into filling the labour quotas imposed on occupied western European nations.

A further 6,000 were slave labourers from eastern Europe, including Soviet prisoners of war, older men, teenagers and women seized in the Soviet Union or ‘volunteered’ by their villages to fill German labour quotas.³⁷ Whilst habitually being referred to as ‘Russian’, slave labourers came from a range of nations, including Ukraine, Belorussia, Turkmenistan and Siberia.³⁸ 7,000 of the labourers, mostly western European, were sent to Guernsey, whilst 6,000 labourers were in Jersey.³⁹ While the treatment of the western Europeans was poor, this paled in comparison to the fate of the slaves from the east, who were forced to perform backbreaking work in quarries, tunnels and construction sites for long hours on insufficient rations.⁴⁰ Carr argued that ‘the unremitting hard labour ... starvation rations ... poor living ... conditions, negligent working conditions, overseer violence and lack of medical attention directly contributed to or caused most of the deaths.’⁴¹ The overall total of OT deaths in the Islands is contested and will likely remain unknown, although Willmot has posited that an estimate of roughly 1,000 deaths is apposite.⁴² Most of the labourers had departed the Islands by the time of the D-Day landings of 6 June 1944, leaving behind a few hundred North African, French and Spanish labourers who remained

³⁴ IWM, Docs. 5750a Misc. 189/1, ‘Edwin de St Croix Interview Transcript’, n.d.

³⁵ Carr, ‘Shining a Light’, pp. 64-84.

³⁶ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 153.

³⁷ Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers’, p. 213.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

³⁹ Barry Turner, *Outpost of Occupation: How the Channel Islands Survived Nazi Rule 1940:1945* (London: Aurum Press, 2010, p. 138; Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers’, p. 213; Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 222-223.

⁴⁰ Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers’, pp. 213-214.

⁴¹ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 144.

⁴² Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers’, p. 214.

until liberation.⁴³ Most were repatriated, although a handful of Spaniards and Dutchmen remained after the war, integrating into the communities and keeping the memory of their time with the OT alive in the Islands. Escaped Russians returned to an uncertain fate as former POWs of Nazi Germany in the Soviet Union.⁴⁴

The treatment of the labourers, particularly the eastern Europeans, had a powerful effect on Islanders, with a number of diarists and memoirists recording their shock at the sight.⁴⁵ After the deportation of September 1942, some came to see them as terrifying portents of their future with many believing that they were headed for a similar fate to the labourers.⁴⁶ Bisson reflected: ‘God they were in a hell of a state. And this is where ... [people] ... started to realise ... how ... precarious our position was ... [and] ... you could end up like that.’⁴⁷ German behaviour up to 1942 had generally been respectful, and the condition of the labourers shocked Islanders. Le Quesne noted that tales of atrocities in eastern Europe had previously been dismissed by some as propaganda. When recording an incident where a Russian was placed in a pillory with the branches of two trees around his neck, leaving the man dangling with his toes barely touching the ground, Le Quesne drew attention to the juxtaposition between the relatively peaceable occupation of the early years and this new brutality: ‘Jersey, February 19th 1943 not Russia or Poland but Jersey.’ Le Quesne commented, ‘even those who have sympathised with Jerry can hardly do so after witnessing this or similar scenes.’⁴⁸ Islanders were forced to re-evaluate the nature of their occupiers. One Jersey boy, Maurice Green, recalled an OT overseer savagely beating a labourer with his rifle in 1943. Seeing the terrified children, the German beckoned them over and shared his rations with them, as the labourer lay dying with his head split open.⁴⁹ In cases such as these, the duality of the enemy was rendered unsettlingly clear; polite and respectful to Islanders who they deemed of worthy racial stock, savage to those they viewed as *Untermensch*. Sanders argued, ‘Islanders of all ages witnessed brutalities close up. Children came to see people being dragged behind lorries; in fact, such scenes were described as quite commonplace.’⁵⁰ The appearance of the labourers contributed to the growth in resistance from 1942, and served to move the Occupation closer to those experienced in western Europe.

⁴³ Paul Sanders, *The British Channel Islands under German Occupation, 1940-1945* (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2005), p. 223.

⁴⁴ Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, p. 142.

⁴⁵ The memoir of Francis Costard, a Jersey teenager, retrospectively recorded his shock and anger at witnessing the eastern European labourers. JAS, L/C/170/A/1 ‘Memoir of Francis Costard’, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁶ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 223-224.

⁴⁷ Bisson, Interview.

⁴⁸ JAS, L/C/205/A1/3, ‘Le Quesne Diary’, 20 February 1943.

⁴⁹ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 149.

⁵⁰ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 226.

Owing to their insufficient rations, labourers of all nationalities often broke out of their camps and roamed the Islands at night seeking out food to steal, bringing them into direct conflict for resources with locals.⁵¹ Willmot argued: ‘OT workers were forced to steal in order to survive ... as they marched from their camps to the construction sites ... the sympathies of Islanders were ... strained by cuts in their own rations...’⁵² Some thefts conducted by the desperate men were accompanied by violence. Nan Le Ruez, a young Jersey woman living on a farm in the western Parish of St Peter’s, recorded in her diary on 1 December 1942 the murder of sixty-two-year-old Ernest Le Gresley, stabbed nine times by Russians.⁵³ The incident caused the sympathetic and helpful Le Ruez to behave more warily towards the starving labourers.⁵⁴ Guernsey’s Police viewed the foreign workers as a distinct problem; Albert Lamy, Guernsey’s Chief of Police from 1942, described them ‘as a pest’ for the thefts they caused.⁵⁵ Members of the force felt that the Germans had in many cases shipped work-shy dockside ‘loungers’ and ‘real top class criminals’ from prisons in France.⁵⁶ One Guernseyman felt that ‘they ... released prisoners and murderers and goodness knows what.’⁵⁷

Xenophobia was a factor initially prompting unsympathetic views of the ‘foreigners.’ The Islands were small, bounded societies with low-crime rates, with a long-standing distrust of outsiders. Adele Lainé of Guernsey recorded her initial distaste of the western European labourers, describing them as ‘nothing more than the scum of the Continent ... all of them being unkempt and in rags ... [T]hey are very much more repulsive and undesirable than the Jerrys [sic] themselves.’⁵⁸ Whilst her attitude was to soften, her initial revulsion to the dirty and poorly-clad labourers who arrived in Guernsey indicates how destabilising their arrival was for some Islanders.⁵⁹ Bunting argued that some distanced

⁵¹ Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers’, p. 215.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 215.

⁵³ Nan Le Ruez, *Jersey Occupation Diary: Her Story of the German Occupation, 1940-1945* (Bradford on Avon: Seaflower Books, 2014), pp. 80-81.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-84.

⁵⁵ IWM, Docs. 5750b Misc. 189/2 ‘Policing During the Occupation, 1940-1945 by Albert Lamy,’ n.d., p. 7.

⁵⁶ GIA, SA 01-68, ‘Chief Inspector Le Cocq and ex-Chief Inspector Lamy War Memories: recorded for States of Guernsey Education Council,’ n.d.

⁵⁷ IWM, Docs. 5750a Misc. 189/1 ‘Reg Blanchford Interview Transcript’, n.d.

⁵⁸ IWM, London, Docs. 11109, ‘Private Papers of Miss A. Le M Lainé,’ p. 54. K. M. Bachmann, also of Guernsey, shared a similar initial reaction, describing the labourers in her diary on 22 November 1941 as ‘a most unwholesome species.’ K. M. Bachmann, *The Prey of An Eagle: A Personal Record of Family Life Written Throughout the German Occupation of Guernsey, 1940-1945* (Guernsey: The Guernsey Press Co., 1972), p. 92.

⁵⁹ For example, see Lainé’s entries for August/September 1942, where she was much more reflective as to their plight. IWM, Docs 11109 ‘Lainé’, p. 60-61.

themselves from the plight of the labourers, fearing their potential for spreading disease.⁶⁰ The labourers became scapegoats for unexplained thefts, which had likely been carried out by Germans or Islanders.⁶¹ As one Jerseyman, F.G. Woodall complained bitterly in his diary on 1 December 1942, ‘everything gets blamed on the Russians.’⁶² In his 1945 history of the Occupation, Ralph Durand frequently referred to the labourers as ‘the foreigners’ when relating the difficulties and dangers they caused.⁶³ Conversely, the contemporary and retrospective testimonies of Islanders are sympathetic to their plight and few who witnessed their treatment remained unmoved. A representative example of this view can be found in the correspondence of the Guernsey residents Mr and Mrs R. Foley: ‘the foreign labourers were ragged ... [and] ... filthy ... [T]hey became desperate ... and ... a definite menace to civilians ... [I]t was heart rending to have them call ... for food as ... we had nothing at all to spare.’⁶⁴

‘We didn’t realise the cruelty that was going on’: Narrating the Suffering of OT Labourers

Memories of the labourers were a prominent part of the testimonies garnered for this project, reminiscences with the potential to engender emotional responses many years removed from the event. For children of the time, interactions with the labourers or witnessing their treatment could be traumatic. This section focuses particularly on testimonies of Guernsey children owing to the recent film depicting labourers there, *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*. The lack of agency felt by those who were children at the time and who witnessed the plight of the labourers seemed in some cases to provoke a curious reaction, almost bordering on guilt, which may have been inherited from parents. Many Islanders were visited by labourers begging for food, and there was not always food to spare. Bisson recalled: ‘you give ‘em something, and they’d be back the next day for something. How’d you do that? My father said “well I can’t give them things, A: it’s against the law and ... [B] ... I’ve got a child to look after.”’⁶⁵ Beryl Ozanne, a Guernsey nurse, recorded in her 1994 memoir that ‘meeting a group on their way to slave labour made one feel so inadequate ... [O]ne just had to stand aside while they all filed past ... [under guard] ... And we felt

⁶⁰ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, pp. 150-151. Willmot also noted that some islanders felt revulsion at the condition of the labourers, and held ‘ambivalent’ or ‘hostile’ views towards them. Willmot, ‘The Channel Islands’, p. 80.

⁶¹ Willmot, ‘The Goodness of Strangers’, p. 215.

⁶² IWM, Docs. 1929 ‘Private Papers of F. G. Woodall’, 1 December 1942, p.11.

⁶³ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*.

⁶⁴ IWM, Docs. 16568 ‘Private Papers of Mr and Mrs R. Foley’, n.d., pp. 4-5.

⁶⁵ Bisson, Interview.

sorry for ourselves! No one dared help these poor men.’⁶⁶ Some found their inability to assist the desperate labourers difficult to reconcile. The upsetting nature of their memories of the labourers had long-term effects for some Guernsey children. Lyn Edwards, born in 1933, dedicated a large portion of her memoir to hiding a Polish labourer called Tomasz until the end of the Occupation. For the most part, the memoir was based on her memories of the period. Yet in a postscript, Edwards revealed that Tomasz was fictional:

I was used to seeing the slave workers in Guernsey, starving, filthy and in rags ... As a child I saw these people, and heard stories of their abuse ... It was then ... that the story of Tomasz began. I made up numerous plans of how, one day, I would help one escape ... [T]he fate of these men still haunts me.⁶⁷

The decision to indulge her childhood fantasy in print suggested she felt guilt at being unable to assist the men whose treatment tormented her after the war. As a child, engaging in such a risky undertaking was impossible. Yet the atrocities committed pricked at the lack of agency many Occupation children felt later in life. The memory of the labourers caused Edwards’ upset, and an implicit discomposure can be gleaned from her writing. This fictional part to her wartime story, otherwise a faithful reminiscence, represented an effort to ameliorate her discomposure, allowing her to write about the labourers with coherence. The imagined story added an extra layer to her memoir, revealing of what Renouf wished that she had been able to do, interwoven with the events as she recalled them happening to her.

However, the myths identified by Ginns and Carr continue to circulate. The idea of deceased or dying labourers buried in the concrete of bunkers contains an inherent horror and aided the creation of local folklore surrounding the ghosts of labourers.⁶⁸ Knowles-Smith concluded that whilst isolated examples may have occurred in Jersey, many popular legends were probably untrue.⁶⁹ Moreover, such myths have been problematised from an engineering perspective. Ward Rutherford argued that corpses would have structurally weakened bunkers and been impossible to fit within the dense metal-mesh reinforcement

⁶⁶ Beryl Ozanne, *A Peep Behind the Screens, 1940-1945* (Guernsey, 1994), pp. 59-60. Underlined passage is her emphasis. Molly Bihet, a Guernsey girl of ten in 1942, reflected upon how her father and uncles felt desperately for the labourers and resented how they were forbidden from even talking to them. Molly Bihet, *A Child’s War: The German Occupation of Guernsey as Seen Through Young Eyes* (Guernsey: Guernsey Press, 1985), p. 49.

⁶⁷ Lyn Renouf Edwards, *Enemy or Friend?* (Jersey: Channel Island Publishing, 2009), p. 216.

⁶⁸ Gilly Carr, ‘The Uninvited Guests Who Outstayed their Welcome: The Ghosts of War in the Channel Islands’, in *Modern Conflict and the Senses*, ed. by Nicholas Saunders and Paul Cornish (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 280-282.

⁶⁹ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, pp. 220-221. Le Sueur spent time after liberation liaising with British intelligence and labourers, seeking to substantiate instances of Nazi atrocities. In relation to such rumours, he heard no definitive evidence, with all allegations coming from second, third, or fourth-hand accounts. Le Sueur, *Growing Up Fast*, chapter sixteen.

used in their construction.⁷⁰ Evacuee George Duquemin left Guernsey as a four-year-old. He shared several stories which he had heard from older Islanders with whom he worked in the 1950s and 1960s. Duquemin related a story of a labourer seeking revenge for his mistreatment and attacking an officer, cutting his head off with a spade: '[T]he guard ... shot him ... The one they shot, they just chucked him in the concrete. And apparently that was sort of standard practice ... Now I [heard] that [story] from when I started work.'⁷¹ That this was shared by an evacuated Islander was striking, as was the time Duquemin likely heard it, at least ten years after 1945. The second-hand story had been embroidered, either by himself or those who shared it. The incident was recorded by Durand in 1945, who stated that 'a labourer ... struck on the head with a spade a German ... splitting his skull open. The labourer was shot on the spot.'⁷² There was no mention of the corpse being thrown into wet concrete. This example demonstrated how rumour and myth crept into local memories, circulated and repeated, even by evacuees. Local myths also influenced the testimonies of those with direct memories of the period. Peter Ingrouille, a six-year-old Guernsey boy in 1945, solemnly related how:

we didn't realise, us children, that they were slave labour. We didn't realise the cruelty that was going on. From since the war, ah [!], we know ... how cruel it was ... I think of how these chaps had been treated, terrible ... oh we always had a strong feeling ... that a lot of them were, are in there ... in with the concrete ... they're not nice places.⁷³

Ingrouille alluded that he was not aware at the time of the extent of the mistreatment of OT labourers. His exclamation and iteration of how cruelly some workers had been treated suggested that he felt he should have known. As his knowledge developed as he grew older, less credible stories of Nazi atrocities towards the labourers became less far-fetched.

Memories of the labourers had a visceral quality in the oral testimonies of Occupation children, which often went into a large amount of detail. Whilst acknowledgement of the labourers in older interviews tended to skirt around the details of their mistreatment in the form of generalised remarks, unmoored from specific examples,⁷⁴ the sight of the labourers had a particularly powerful effect on those who were children. Terry de Mouilpied, a young Guernsey boy, recalled how his mother would bandage the damaged feet of labourers who called at the family home for assistance, for example.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Ward Rutherford. 'The Model Occupation: A List of Errors', *Channel Islands Occupation Review*, 25 (1997), p. 68.

⁷¹ George Duquemin, Interview with Richard Guille, 16 April 2016.

⁷² Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, p. 145.

⁷³ Peter Ingrouille, Interview with Richard Guille, 28 August 2018.

⁷⁴ This was likely a reflection of how the worst abuses occurred away from the sight of many islanders. For examples, see IWM, Docs. 5750a, Misc. 189/1 'Interview with Dixie Landick,' n.d.; IWM, Sound 12706 'Interview with Frank Stroobant', 11 June 1991.

⁷⁵ Terry de Mouilpied, Interview with Richard Guille, 17 April 2018.

Molly Bihet, a young child from St Peter Port, wrote as to how her gaze was always drawn to the shoes held on by cords or bound sacking worn by the labourers.⁷⁶ Witnessing the hunger and poor condition of the labourers generated difficult yet important memories which some felt compelled to share, however distressing recalling them may have been. The trauma and loss of innocence in cases led to detailed reflections which acknowledged this. Some exhibited discomposure, reflecting the emotionally challenging nature of memories of distressing experiences.

Margaret Rose was a seven-year-old Guernsey girl at the start of the Occupation, who was deported with her parents in September 1942. During an interview in 2001, she was invited to recall a disturbing encounter with a large group of labourers in 1942:

That wasn't nice. I was coming home from school ... and I saw a whole crowd of foreign workers coming along the road ... I was frightened, I didn't like it. I got off my bike and got against the wall and put the bike in front of me and they all streamed past me ... [T]hey had their feet wrapped up in bloodstained cloths ... [S]ome of them, they had nothing on their feet. A lot of them had, their hair was stuck to their heads with blood ... I could smell them and ... they were barely lifting their feet. They were shuffling ... [T]hey just went on by, and there was blood on the road where their feet had bled ... I was so shaken by this ... And when I got home, my mother must have known by looking at me that something had happened, and I was never able to tell her. All I ever was, I just kept saying 'I saw the foreign workers. I saw the foreign workers', and I never did, never ever said what I had seen. And the smell is indescribable, and one can smell it.⁷⁷

The extract was detailed, precise and multi-sensual, recalling not merely the sight, but also the sound of the shuffling feet and repeatedly the smells of the desecrated men, which she alluded to still being able to vividly remember through her use of the present tense in her narration. Her focus on the smell of the men who passed close to her, trapping her against the wall, suggests that this aspect was as distressing to her as the evidence of beatings and the smears of blood left upon the road. Other sources dwelt on the smell of the labourers as something of note: John Lewis, for example, recorded in his memoir: 'I became aware of an extremely unpleasant smell – a compound of urine and faeces ... I saw a column of men being herded ... by Nazi soldiers.'⁷⁸ This focus on scent demonstrates the extent to which the cruelty towards the labourers, and their poor physical condition and clothing, shocked Islanders. Close contact with large numbers of labourers was an unnatural assault on the senses, all the more traumatic to uncomprehending children raised before the Occupation in safe and peaceful islands. Rose was distressed by the sight at the time, and as can be gleaned through the textual representation of her oral testimony, remained so at the time of

⁷⁶ Bihet, *A Child's War*, p. 49.

⁷⁷ SWWEC, Leeds, Tape Recording no. 529, 'Interview with Margaret Rose', 14 March 2001.

⁷⁸ Lewis, *A Doctor's Occupation*, p. 55.

interview. The detailed and vivid recital of what she had witnessed suggested that the incident remained seared into her mind.

Whilst Rose's testimony demonstrated how fleeting proximity to the labourers could leave an indelible mark, the testimony of Eleanor Vaudin, a seven-year-old when the labourers arrived, highlighted how interactions with labourers which attained a more personal and prolonged nature could be equally as challenging for Islanders to recall. Vaudin remained in Guernsey after her mother changed her mind about evacuating her, although one of her brothers had left for Britain in June 1940. The family lived in the Vale parish in the north of Guernsey, near Pembroke Bay. Nearby was the site of the OT prison in Guernsey, in a house cruelly named 'Paradis'. Atrocities and deaths at this site, where labourers were sent to be punished, often for seeking to avoid work, were frequent.⁷⁹ Gilbert Van Grieken, a young Dutch forced labourer brought to Guernsey in 1941, grimly commented that 'few ... risked a return visit. One of the ... punishments ... was to hang the offender upside down ... then flog him unmercifully.'⁸⁰ Whilst efforts were made to keep Islanders from witnessing the abuse of labourers, locals in the area were aware of what was occurring in the camp. Marie Ozanne, a member of Guernsey's Salvation Army who publicly protested the German ban of the organisation, wrote letters of complaint to the German command in the Islands over their treatment of labourers and Jews. Ozanne was imprisoned after writing to the Kommandant to protest the conditions at Paradis in September 1942. She reported that she was kept awake at night by the screams of the beaten and tortured prisoners.⁸¹

For a period during the Occupation, Vaudin's family became a surrogate home for a teenage French forced labourer, who was fed by her mother and grew attached. When relating this in 2018, Vaudin exhibited distress:

that was the French labourers _ _ _ house, and [thumps table three times] one French boy [thumps table], came, we could hear them screaming, they were beating them, making them really really work hard, and this little French boy, he was fourteen, and he used to call my mum 'mumma'. [Chokes back tears]. ... [H]e used to come every day ... and he said his mum and dad was taken one way and he went the other, and he was brought to Guernsey _ _ And I can still see him. And then one day he wasn't very well but I don't really know what happened. They took him away and mum never saw him again... But I wouldn't be surprised there's a few bodies in that quarry, you know, that they used to whip them and beat them ... He gave mum his money ... that he'd ... [earned] ... to look after because everybody was taking, stealing the money ... you see he

⁷⁹ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, p. 144.

⁸⁰ Gilbert Van Grieken, *Destination Gustav* (Guernsey: Guernsey Press, 1992), p. 34.

⁸¹ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 193. Ozanne passed away in February 1943 due to deteriorating health shortly after her time in prison for her spiritual resistance to the Germans. Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 196-200.

wasn't very well, so I really don't know, like I say, what happened to him.⁸²

Describing the prison at Paradis and her memories of the screams of the beaten and starving men unsettled Vaudin, as seen by her three second pause. The memory was so painful that she needed to ground herself through striking the table at points with the heel of her hand. Reflecting upon the young French boy triggered an explicitly emotional response, notably in relation to his attachment to her mother, the verbalisation of which brought her to barely suppressed tears. As Vaudin continued, her syntax began to slip and her meaning became less clear as she described her mother's relationship with the boy and his later disappearance. It was notable that she could not bring herself to directly articulate her fears that he had subsequently died. Instead, she skirted around definitively stating that he could have perished, focusing on the bodies on the quarry and his illness to point me towards that conclusion, yet going no further than acknowledging she did not know of his fate. The memories of Paradis and the French labourer engendered severe discomposure for Vaudin, who struggled for coherence when relating this.

It is unclear whether Vaudin shared as deep a bond with the French boy as her mother. However, it is likely that much of her discomposure was caused by the emotional traumas the Occupation inflicted upon her parents, particularly her mother. For example, the subject of Vaudin's brother's evacuation and the challenges the family faced in reuniting in 1945 was also one which brought her to tears. Her brother had formed a strong bond with the family with whom he was billeted and was distant from his mother on his return, wanting to return to England.⁸³ From her mother's perspective, his departure at the age of ten deprived her of a son for five years. The surrogate relationship with the young French boy of a similar age, who had found himself separated from his parents and sent to Guernsey, may have gone some way towards filling that void. This was demonstrated by his referring to her as 'mumma', trusting her with his money and her feeding him from the family's already stretched rations and risking serious punishment to administer aid. Given Vaudin's youth at the time, it is likely that some of the detail had been passed down by her mother, along with the emotions the incident roused, indicating in this case that memories of the French boy were shared within the family unit. Regardless of the boy's eventual fate, be that returning to France or later perishing, the loss of a surrogate son would have been hard for Vaudin's mother to take, still struggling to come to terms with separation from her own son. The incident in her family's Occupation experience was riven with emotion, driven by the youth of the boy, his assimilation into their family and his likely fate as a victim of Nazism.

⁸² Eleanor Vaudin, Interview with Richard Guille, 19 April 2018.

⁸³ Ibid.

Vaudin and Rose demonstrated differing degrees of discomposure in narratives of varying experience, one brief yet disturbing, another over a longer time with a potentially distressing end. Both experiences lie outside of the Churchillian paradigm, particularly its civilian manifestations. Mistreatment of prisoners of war or other captives was something which usually belonged in the martial sphere, and the penetration of Nazi atrocities into civilian life of the Islands was unique. For British civilians to be required to give voice to the extreme instances of victimhood they witnessed presented its own challenges. Outside of the Islands and the ghoulish myths surrounding the labourers, there is little narrative scaffolding available to support the articulation of such memories from a British perspective, which in neither extract mention France or events during the Holocaust. For similar reasons British prisoners of the Japanese in the Far East have remained a dissonant part of Britain's war memory.⁸⁴ However, the discomfort and emotion redolent within Rose and Vaudin's accounts stem less from a lack of validating discursive frameworks and are reflective more of the distress and emotional pain caused by the events at the time. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that Islanders well remembered the labourers and discussed the subject in the post-war years, and the reasons for the lack of memorials or preservation of the camps have a more practical and political grounding than Islanders merely wishing to forget. Both accounts contained elements of such a distressing nature to young children that psychic composure was impossible in either case, yet the memories were deemed important enough to share with a researcher, regardless of the emotional pain they pulled with them as the interviewees brought them to the surface.

'I felt worse after the war': The OT Labourers and their Challenge to the Notion of the Benign Occupier

There is one aspect of memories of the labourers which, particularly in light of the previous chapter, requires outlining, that being the question of how regularly witnessed German atrocities affected Islanders' opinions of the occupiers. The previous chapter noted how, generally, Islanders extol a neutral or understanding view of their occupiers, drawing upon experiences of German kindness and using these to differentiate between 'good' and 'bad' Germans. This was very much the case in Rose's testimony, which, as seen in the previous chapter, strove to ensure that the OT overseers who had been responsible for the cruelty she

⁸⁴ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 256. Also see Felicia Yap's work on this silence in Britain's war memory. Felicia Yap, 'Voices and Silences of Memory: Civilian Internees of the Japanese in British Asia during the Second World War', *Journal of British Studies*, 50:4 (2011), pp. 917-940; and 'Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees of the Japanese in British Asia: The Similarities and Contrasts of Experience', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 47:2 (2012), pp. 317-346.

witnessed in 1942, was kept conceptually separate from the respectful and humanised soldiers who were billeted near her family. This allowed her, ultimately, to compose her memories of both of these aspects, pointing to the aberrational nature of her interaction with the violent OT overseers yet also leaving scope to humanise the kind officers who treated her family well. However, for other Islanders, the treatment of the labourers caused a reconfiguration of views towards the Germans, with some struggling to align their memories of the forced workers with those of Germans who treated them kindly, and others developing a deep and long-lasting hatred of the enemy due to seeing their callousness first-hand.

Frank Keiller, a Jersey teenager who spent time in the Island's Gloucester Street prison for crimes against the occupier, cited in his 2000 memoir how the treatment of the Russian slave labourers generated hatred towards the enemy that superseded that caused by their occupation of the Islands and the conditions they brought in their wake as the prime reason to despise the political system they represented. This was a substantive difference between Jersey and Guernsey, however. In Guernsey, as noted, the majority of the labourers were of the forced category from western-Europe, who, whilst mistreated, endured far less than the Russian slaves more prevalent in Jersey. In the latter Island, German atrocities and racial hierarchy towards the Russian slaves were visible and widely known about, provoking a deeper sense of indignation on the part of Jersey Islanders. Keiller wrote:

Most of us hated the Germans with a deep dark loathing ... the main reason for that overwhelming hatred was something I can never forget and can certainly never forgive ... The [Russian] slave labourers ... were living skeletons. Some had bloody bandages. Others were covered with sores. They arrived in rags, many without footwear. ... On the work gangs, which were in plain view of passing civilians, OT guards beat them and left them for dead. Near First Tower, I saw a man hit across the side of the head with a shovel ... Perhaps the most awful thing was the way ordinary-looking German soldiers laughed at them.⁸⁵

Keiller alluded to the long-lasting shock and indignation which witnessing Russian labourers could engender, as indicated by his pledge that he could never forgive the mistreatment. The detail he went into as to their condition and treatment suggested that the memories such visceral and shocking sights imprinted retained a vividness in his mind at the time of writing. Moreover, Keiller noted how the labourers and the approval of the ordinary German soldier as to their treatment, complicated views of the enemy, some of whom, he admitted, had shown him kindness at points, yet also showed a capacity for atrocity in their laughing complicity in the abuses of the Russian slaves. He expanded: '[Hatred] was magnified by revulsion, by disgust and loathing at the obvious approval of seemingly ordinary German

⁸⁵ Frank Keiller, *Prison without Bars: Living in Jersey under the German Occupation 1940-1945* (Bradford on Avon: Seaflower Books, 2000), pp. 66-67.

soldiers for the treatment meted out to slave labourers; by Germans seen to laugh at starved, whipped, beaten, bleeding human skeletons as they shuffled to work.⁸⁶ Whilst Keiller was, after several years, able to move past his hatred of Germans and Germany, the treatment of the labourers and the heartless response of the rank-and-file soldiers to this forced a reappraisal of the enemy. Indeed, Keiller cited the labourers' treatment and the 1942 deportations as integral factors motivating his desire to resist Nazism, which culminated in a failed escape attempt in late 1944. Whilst many felt that, on the whole, the Germans had treated Islanders well, other Islanders were well aware of how brutal the soldiers could be. Instances such as these problematised the notion of benign German behaviour in the Islands, providing, alongside the fate of Jews and local political prisoners, a compelling charge against this construction.

For some, knowledge gained after the war as to Nazi atrocities elsewhere, as well as the treatment of the labourers, fuelled resentments against the Germans and stymied composure. Harold Nicolle, who remembered losing his fear of the Germans and his friendship with two young soldiers in particular, as seen in the previous chapter, struggled to identify the Germans he knew with Nazism's collective crimes, losing coherence whilst contemplating this. His experiences of the OT labourers, some of whom worked with his father, others witnessed at their worksites during trips out in one soldier's lorry, lay at the heart of this disjuncture in his testimony. Evidently emotional at the memories, Nicolle recalled of the labourers:

They used to have hessian wrapped round their feet ... They must have suffered badly. Just brutality-always a guard watching over them you know? I've been to sites so I've seen some of this thing happening myself, and er poor fellows they couldn't do anything-and-as-thin-as-I'm not going to say they were like Belsen but they were very very thin guys drawn face you know? ... I saw this long line of prisoners coming down ... The road was full, there was probably three-four-five [across] ... It came from our house, we were going to church that morning, and my brother and I went up on our bikes, and they were right up to L'Aumone, so were there a thousand men? Over a thousand men? [Exhales]. Dreadful.⁸⁷

The extract, and the emotion it revealed, bore similarities to Rose, for like her, Nicolle was another young Guernsey child who witnessed the cruelty human beings could mete out to others at a young age first-hand. However, unlike Rose, Nicolle focused less upon the impact of the sight upon himself, and the implications of that sight, in terms of the suffering endured by the labourers, and also of the scale of the mistreatment. Implicitly, Nicolle considered what one large column of men forced to labour far from home for Nazi Germany revealed of a broader programme of human rights abuses, of which this labour column was

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 37.

⁸⁷ Harold Nicolle, Interview with Richard Guille, 9 November 2018.

but a tiny part. After Nicolle finished this part of his testimony, I enquired as to whether witnessing the treatment of the OT labourers had altered his attitudes towards the Germans. He responded: 'I felt worse after the war. When I knew what had happened, because I couldn't relate it to the people that I'd been talking to and, friendly to me you know? Couldn't relate it as them being the ones.'⁸⁸ This extract indicated how learning of the Holocaust, which he recalled shocked him when images and films began to circulate in the Islands, unsettled Nicolle, causing him to contemplate the nature of Kettler and 'Rolf' and whether they too had also had the capacity for mass murder. Whereas he had previously discussed his childhood friendship with these men with comfort, the raising of this question caused Nicolle to become discomposed, with his narration becoming increasingly more halting. That he ultimately could not align these two men with the crimes of the collective further added to his discomfort, with the unspoken implication that his family had perhaps erred in allowing tentative friendships to form at the time with these men.

Nicolle's unease at Nazi atrocities led him to admit that 'I vowed that I would never go to Germany and I haven't been yet, and I don't think I'll go ... It's wrong to hold a grudge I suppose but I would never look forward to going to Germany.'⁸⁹ Despite feeling that the pledge made as a young man was perhaps wrong, Nicolle demonstrated the ways in which the strong feelings roused by the Occupation, and the war in general, engendered emotions which even past friendship with some soldiers and the passage of seventy-five-years could not soothe. Part of this disjuncture lay in aligning his difficult memories of the labourer's plight with his childhood friendship with the two young soldiers, whose views towards the OT workers were unclear in his testimony. Nicolle was a rare example of an interviewee contemplating what the labourers indicated as to the nature of the enemy, which countered experiences of soldiers which made Islanders look upon their occupiers with a more sympathetic eye. For the most part, the implications of Nazi atrocities elsewhere and also in the Islands remained relatively unarticulated.

The conduct of German forces elsewhere during the war, which the treatment of the OT labourers provided a vivid example confirming the worst rumours, adds further complexity to Islanders' memories of the enemy. The frequently made assertion that Jersey, Guernsey and Sark were free of 'nasty' types of Germans such as the SS or Gestapo, whilst correct, had at its core an attempt to ensure the listener understood that Islanders felt they had developed an awareness of the 'good German' who treated civilians with respect, as opposed to the sort of German soldier who had committed the atrocities they heard about after the war. Whilst for several decades the Wehrmacht were viewed to have had limited

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

involvement in the Holocaust, with blame for the crimes being mainly assigned to the SS, research in the last thirty years has demonstrated this to be misleading.⁹⁰ In 1995, the Wehrmacht Exhibition toured Germany, created by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, claimed that National Socialism was more firmly entrenched in the Wehrmacht than had previously been believed, and the German army had been active and often willing participants in a 'war of extermination' (*Vernichtungskrieg*).⁹¹ Studies such as Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men*, which explored the role of civilian policemen attached to the Wehrmacht in mass shootings of Jews, humanised perpetrators, posing chilling questions as to the nature of complicity and the brutalisation of 'ordinary', law-abiding citizens in the course of Nazi Germany's war.⁹² Similarly, Sönke Neitzel and Harold Welzer's *Soldaten*, which examined the taped conversations of German POWs in British and American captivity, pointed to the way in which the viciousness of the fighting on the Eastern Front had the effect of brutalising men in all arms of the German forces, developing a callous indifference to human life which extended far beyond the SS and Gestapo.⁹³ Moreover, they argued that soldiers were demonstrating an acceptance and comfort with the notion of inflicting violence against soldiers and civilians as early as the first days of the Polish campaign.⁹⁴

Such developments complicate the picture of the first occupiers, whose good discipline and youth prompted many Islanders to incorrectly speculate that they had been hand-picked for propaganda purposes. Members of the 216 ID were seasoned soldiers acclimated to violence, whose restrained behaviour in the early days owed much to the environmental conditions in the Islands and their belief that the war was as good as won. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann's 2000 edited collection, which explored the genocidal attitudes and practices of the Wehrmacht, viewed violence against civilians throughout Europe as a core aspect of their conduct during the war.⁹⁵ It would be a stretch to assume that all Germans in the Islands during the war had proved immune to that process of

⁹⁰ Ben Shepherd, 'Wehrmacht Security Regiments in the Soviet Partisan War, 1943', *European History Quarterly*, 33:4 (2003), p. 494; Ben Shepherd, 'The Clean Wehrmacht, the War of Extermination, and Beyond', *The Historical Journal*, 52:2 (2009), pp. 455-473. Shepherd's research explores this aspect of the Wehrmacht's war, focusing upon the levels of complicity and enthusiasm for Nazi Germany's 'war of extermination' amongst the lower strata of the German Army. For example, see Ben Shepherd, 'The Continuum of Brutality: Wehrmacht Security Divisions in Central Russia, 1942', *German History*, 21:1 (2005), pp. 49-81.

⁹¹ Shepherd, 'The Clean Wehrmacht', p. 457.

⁹² Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London: Penguin, 2001).

⁹³ Sönke Neitzel and Harold Welzer, *Soldaten: On Fighting, Killing and Dying: The Secret Second World War Tapes of German POWs*, trans. Jefferson Chase (London: Simon and Schuster, 2012).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

⁹⁵ Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (eds), *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II 1941-1944* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2000).

hardening and indifference to life, and ultimately that was never tested owing to the absence of armed resistance. Indeed, the environmental conditions of the Occupation provides the best explanation as to the more benign German behaviour Islanders experienced. Unlike in areas with higher partisan activity, which prompted reprisals, the soldiers in the Islands were not roused to violence by armed resistance. Examples from western Europe, notably France, suggest that had the Germans been so provoked in the Islands, the Wehrmacht could and would have taken physical suppressive measures.⁹⁶

This side of the Wehrmacht during the war was absent from the interviews with German veterans collected in the late 1980s, with men who had committed atrocities likely either to not have participated in such a documentary, or to have avoided acknowledging such aspects of their wartime service outside the Islands. Following 1942, the Islands increasingly became a posting for servicemen wounded on the Eastern Front. Some believed the Germans had been sent to the Islands for a rest after their sufferings in that theatre.⁹⁷ However, the reality was that the confined Island fortresses made ideal postings for disabled men who could still participate in a defensive engagement.⁹⁸ On the balance of probabilities, the Islands likely saw their fair share of war criminals posted to their shores, men brutalised by the intense fighting on the Eastern Front. Such men would not have been easy for the Islanders to identify, for previously engaging in shooting POWs, partisans or civilians, looting and sexual crimes would not have prevented such men from behaving pleasantly towards Islanders during their posting to the less hostile Islands. Neitzel and Welzer found from their study of POW transcripts that soldiers tended to avoid these subjects when speaking amongst themselves. It is therefore unsurprising that the darker side of the war and the worst and most violent parts of the soldiers' pasts remained hidden from Islanders.⁹⁹ The labourers provided Islanders a glimpse into how the Germans waged war, and their callous disregard for those they deemed inferior. Nicolle's discomposure and Keiller's long-standing hatred indicate how the labourers were, both then and after, a factor shaping Islanders' perceptions of the enemy, one which for some made adhering to the local discourse problematic.

⁹⁶ Neitzel and Welzer noted that 'it was an established Wehrmacht doctrine to nip any incipient guerrilla activity in the bud with brute force.' Neitzel and Welzer, *Soldaten*, p. 329. For example, Kramer noted that memories of the 'Francs-Tireurs' during the Franco-Prussian war and paranoia over partisan activity led to the atrocities committed by the German Army in Leuven, Belgium, in August 1914. Alan Kramer, *Dynamics of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 7-8.

⁹⁷ See May Hamon and Olive Hamon, Interview with Richard Guille, 19 April 2016; Madeleine Collenette, Interview with Richard Guille, 15 April 2016.

⁹⁸ Michael Ginns, 'The 319 Infantry Division in the Channel Islands', *Channel Islands Occupation Review*, 19 (1991), pp. 40-68.

⁹⁹ Neitzel and Welzer, *Soldaten*, p. 54.

Anything that draws attention to Nazi brutality in the Islands presents a challenge to the myth of correct relations - could anyone in the Island administrations claim credit and retain moral surety for working constructively with complicit representatives of a nation which made use of slave labour and persecuted and murdered Jews, for example? As will be seen in the next chapter on resistance, the Island administrations were not above, for several decades, suppressing or subversively framing areas of the Occupation which moved their claims of correct relations onto morally shaky ground. On a more general level, memories of the OT labourers also represent a counter to the local discourse of a differentiated garrison which treated the Islanders well. The quite widespread willingness of German soldiers, whether they served with the Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe, Kriegsmarine or SS, to embrace violence and participate in atrocities, be they anti-partisan or anti-Jewish, raises questions about the extent to which the humanity of the soldiers that Islanders interacted with would have endured had they been pushed or ordered to reprisals. In the labourers and the callousness or indifference to their fate shown by the ordinary German soldier noted by Keiller, Islanders had an unsettling answer to those questions. However, if these questions were contemplated at the time or after the war, they remained largely unarticulated in the interviews here. Yet victim groups, particularly OT labourers, Jews and political prisoners who suffered and died in German concentration camps and prisons, now that they are being more widely commemorated and incorporated into the Islands' heritage narratives, place pressure for the unarticulated to be brought into the open. The chapter now moves on to consider how two recent and prominent depictions of the labourers in the Islands influenced Islanders' testimonies, providing an example of how an evolution in the cultural circuit provided a previously marginalised subject with popular validation. The implications of two powerful cinematic depictions of Nazi brutality in the Islands and the impact of this upon its victims, be they forced or slave labour, upon Islanders' testimonies of 'good' Germans, and whether this discourse remains acceptable or is rendered subversive in the future, could potentially be significant in the Islands.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society Film and its influence on Guernsey Testimonies

The first prominent filmic depiction of the plight of OT labourers in the Islands, *Another Mother's Son* (2017), which told the story of Louisa Gould and Harold Le Druillenc, portrayed Russian labourers on Jersey being beaten by their OT overseers, taunted and humiliated through being made to fight over bread thrown onto the ground.¹⁰⁰ In one scene,

¹⁰⁰ *Another Mother's Son*, dir. Christopher Menaul, Bill Kenwright Films, 2017.

Gould walks in on a shirtless Burryiy, whose back was lacerated from an earlier flogging. The film was a powerful representation of atrocities perpetrated against eastern European labourers on British soil. *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* depicted emaciated labourers being herded down a lane and passed food by an Islander. The story's central protagonist, Elizabeth McKenna, is deported to her death in a concentration camp for aiding an escaped Russian. However, the representation was problematic, focusing on the 'Russian' labourers. One character explained how Guernsey was fortified: 'They were slaves, thousands of them, sent by the Reich to labour. Poland, Russia, worked all day and all night ... you wouldn't even treat animals like that.'¹⁰¹ The majority of the labourers in Guernsey were western European, who were in a very different category to the 'Russians'. In this respect, the film was misleading. This had potentially important implications for this project. When I arrived in Guernsey in April 2018 to conduct interviews, the film had just premiered at an event attended by many of those who had been alive during the Occupation.¹⁰²

Visual representations of the past have been shown to have an important function in creating cultural frameworks within which memories are articulated. John Seamon argued, films focusing on the past 'tell us stories about people'; through 'observing the experiences of others, we can imagine our own responses to comparable situations.'¹⁰³ Prominent visual representations have been shown to have a potentially constrictive effect on the process of remembering.¹⁰⁴ Penny Summerfield and Peniston-Bird noted how representations of the Home Guard in the television series *Dad's Army* (1968-1977) created a prism through which personal reminiscences were filtered.¹⁰⁵ Dramatic productions focusing on the Occupation are rare, often poorly received in the Islands and Britain.¹⁰⁶ In terms of the latter, this stems from the majority experience of the Occupation, less tales of daring resistance and more

¹⁰¹ *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, dir. Mike Newell, Studio Canal, 2018.

¹⁰² 'Lily James to Attend Film Premier', Guernsey Gov.GG, 15 March 2018, <<https://gov.gg/article/164300/Lily-James-to-attend-film-premiere-in-Guernsey-to-celebrate-the-release-of-The-Guernsey-Literary-and-Potato-Peel-Pie-Society>> [Accessed 3rd May 2019].

¹⁰³ John Seamon, *Memory and the Movies: What Films Can Teach Us About Memory* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015), p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ See Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 7-8. However, Juliette Pattinson has caveated this, arguing that popular representations may be critically reflected upon and challenged by those with a stake in the depicted subject. Juliette Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines: Gender, Passing and the Special Operations Executive in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 109.

¹⁰⁵ Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Women and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 232-234.

¹⁰⁶ The ITV drama *Enemy at the Door* (2004) was a flop, as noted by Sanders, for its failing to take into account British consumer tastes vis a vis Second World War drama. Islanders also felt it to be inaccurate. Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 255; Peter Tabb, *A Peculiar Occupation: New Perspectives on Hitler's Channel Islands* (Hersham: Ian Allen, 2005), p. 223.

boredom, hunger and suppression.¹⁰⁷ To have their Island the subject of a film was an important event for Guernsey, which was proud to be the subject of a widely consumed cultural production and having their Occupation history told to an international audience (as discussed in chapter two). I was interested in whether this broadly accepted cultural depiction would influence the interviews and felt that the subject of the film would be a fruitful topic to raise towards the end of the interview.¹⁰⁸ In some cases, responses rarely went further than their lamenting the fact that the film had not been shot in Guernsey or excitedly mentioning that they had eaten potato peel pie during the Occupation.¹⁰⁹

However, the prevalence of testimonies of Guernsey's labourers in the interviews indicated that this aspect of the 2018 film's plot had brought the labourers to the forefront of Islanders' thoughts. The film had validated some recollections, with the interviewees acknowledging this. Bichard had recently seen the film, and some of our conversation was dictated by this. Bichard brought this up early in the interview, and she acknowledged that it had 'reminded' her of the Occupation, referencing a scene where an angry German officer demands to see the papers of Islanders out after curfew: 'I remember the arrogance ... I mean I've just been to see that film and it brought home to me the arrogance of the German officers.'¹¹⁰ Initially, Bichard stated that she 'remember[ed]' the arrogance of the Germans in the early years of the Occupation, yet clarified this by saying that the film had 'brought home' this aspect of the experience. The distinction between memory and cultural production blurred. This suggested an evolution in her perspective because of the film. The film thus influenced her testimony, validating her contemporary resentment of the presence of the enemy.

Moreover, Bichard shared a very precise story of an interaction with OT workers who were encamped between her home and her school. She recalled:

They were being kicked, they were being beaten with whips, they had hardly any food at all. They weren't being fed. They didn't even look human. They ... began to look like animals. And they were boys. I will tell you a story. They ... had a camp ... and there was barbed wire ... and guards. This was Christmas time and we had had a carol service at school ... We were a whole group of children coming back ... after this concert and we passed by this slave labour camp and we stopped and we thought we would sing to them. So, can you imagine, this group of children, so we

¹⁰⁷ The Jersey historian Peter Tabb opined that 'an authentic portrayal of the Occupation would probably be about as exciting as the test card.' Tabb, *A Peculiar Occupation*, p. 223.

¹⁰⁸ This decision was made so as not to draw attention to the film's representation during our discussion of their Occupation memories, in order to avoid myself personally validating this as a viable narrative device for the interviewees.

¹⁰⁹ Simon Herivel, Interview with Richard Guille, 16 April 2018. The film was shot in London, Bristol and Devon.

¹¹⁰ Bichard, Interview.

sang ‘silent night, holy night’ and they were coming out of their huts to stand by the barbed wire and we sang it in German as well. And these people that didn’t even look like human beings listened to these children playing, singing, tears running down their faces. Even the guards ... had tears coming down their faces. How awful it must have been for them. But I hope we left them with a good memory, if any of them got back home, they would remember that, we just sang to them ... [I]t must have been wonderful for them to listen, but so sad for them too. So that’s a rather human story.¹¹¹

The framing as a ‘story’ indicated a high degree of composure and suggested that Bichard’s articulation was precise, designed to emphasise the inherent pathos in the memory whilst shielding herself from the negative emotions it roused. Similar to the quote about Marlene and the soldiers seen in the previous chapter, this extract was heavily curated. Bichard’s description of the treatment of the labourers threatened to destabilise her, with the phrases ‘they didn’t even look human’ and ‘they were boys’ delivered in an emotional tone. The framing of the memory from the perspective of ‘we’ as opposed to ‘I’ presented a narrative which Bichard shared from the point of view of someone witnessing the event, rather than as an individual participant, providing the memory with a dramatic quality. This may have been a strategy to manage any negative emotions raised by the memory. The acknowledgement of the suffering of the labourers and the shared emotional reaction of the OT workers and their guards was precise, framed in such a way as to emphasise the emotive nature of the event. Bichard portrayed this as a moment of shared humanity, with the purity of the children’s act of singing juxtaposed against the madness of the war and Nazism.

It is possible that this episodic anecdote represents a frozen narrative, given its careful framing and its separateness from the rest of her testimony. The emotional nature of the memory would offer an explanation for this, with the precise framing providing a way of composing a difficult recollection. However, aspects of the story suggest the influence of the film, or at the least the local merging of all OT labourers into the ‘Russian’. It is unlikely that the labourers whom Bichard came into contact with were slave labourers, although this does not rule out extreme mistreatment. Yet her recent watching of the film may have influenced her categorisation of the labourers in her memory, as Bichard felt strongly about their abuse. Second hand information from her brother, who as a young boy had spent time walking unmolested around areas where the labourers worked, likely filled in the gaps: ‘he saw some terrible things ... [He] could testify to some of the treatment that was handed out.’¹¹² The presence of a highly composed story, replete with contextualisation that emphasised the suffering of the labourers, suggested that the film may have played a role in this memory being attributed such importance and careful framing.

¹¹¹ Bichard, Interview.

¹¹² Ibid.

Ingrouille's testimony was also influenced. As a young boy at the end of the war, his narrative was fragmented. He recalled how the labourers would pass his family's farm in the south of Guernsey, leaving their column to collect food from his father.¹¹³ His memories of this were the most detailed of his testimony. Furthermore, he made a point to mention the film: 'what I was saying, about the food, for the slave labour, you know in the ... Guernsey Pie story, there's a part of that and I've actually seen it, actually seen it.'¹¹⁴ Ingrouille seemed excited to state that he had witnessed something depicted in the film, with this validating that part of his narrative. The need to draw the comparison hinted at anxieties about the veracity of his childhood memories, which in relation to the labourers were already acknowledged to not reflect their reality. There is insufficient evidence to categorically claim that testimonies of the suffering of OT labourers in Guernsey were less prevalent before the 2018 film. However, the number of Guernsey children who shared their memories of the labourers, a supposedly alternative aspect of the Occupation, was striking. The film validated some testimonies, and the number of Guernsey Islanders who shared detailed reminiscences hinted that the subject had been brought to the forefront of their minds. Bichard and Ingrouille pointed to the ways in which the content of the film reinforced their recollections of the period. In Ingrouille's case, any anxieties over his limited childhood perspective and fragmented narrative were assuaged by his assertion that he had experienced something depicted in the film. Bichard's very careful description of carol singing to the labourers, structured to maximise the inherent pathos of the memory, was likely a result of her recently seeing the film.

Conclusion

Carr identified the OT as a silence in Occupation memory within the Islands, and the discussion of the labourers' plight in interviews by Islanders from Guernsey frequently caused interviewees to become upset, as evidenced vividly by Vaudin's testimony of the young French boy. However, the notion that their discomposure stemmed from this perceived silence has been problematised, even though the language of Britain at war did not provide a suitable lexicon for islanders when discussing the treatment of the labourers. Instead, their discomfort when narrating their memories of the OT reflected how distressing witnessing mistreated and starving men had been for children. Surfacing their memories of the labourers may not have been a pleasant experience for some interviewees, yet that they were prepared to go on record and do so is an important factor mitigating against concluding that their discomposure in this case was a result of the OT's marginalised position in local

¹¹³ Ingrouille and Ingrouille, Interview.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

memory. Memories of the labourers have always existed and been shared. They have never been an absolute silence in Occupation literature, even if their depiction has sometimes reflected the ambiguous relationship between OT labourers and Guernsey civilians. The fact the labourers were the most visibly mistreated victim group of the Occupation, combined with the shocking nature of aspects of their treatment to younger Islanders, resulted in vivid memories. Traces of a cultural circuit in relation to the 2018 film are evident, demonstrating the power of cultural depictions of the past in shaping testimonies of the period. Nevertheless, *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* forms a recent part of the trend by which narratives of the Occupation alternative to the Churchillian paradigm are receiving more prominent public attention. Contemporary documents and memoirs indicate that the inability of many Islanders to help the labourers at the time was distressing and appeared to engender guilt. Discussion of the labourers in the testimonies of young Guernsey children frequently engendered discomposure, with some interviewees appearing discomfited and in one case, breaking down into tears.

Yet this was not the result of the labourers being a comparative silence in Occupation memory owing to their status as victims. Instead, it was reflective of the traumatising nature of the treatment meted out to the OT workers witnessed by islanders. Mis-categorisation of the labourers as ‘slaves’ or the repeating of folk tales of bodies being thrown into concrete demonstrate the power of local myths. Repetition of these by those who were children reflect the traumatic nature of such memories; ghoulish tales of atrocities perpetrated against the slave labourers matched up to what they had witnessed, and seemed consonant with their own experiences. Interviewees from Guernsey with memories of the labourers did not shy away from sharing them, regardless of how difficult. Through relating such memories, they demonstrated that they placed a high degree of importance upon remembering a victim group external to themselves during the Occupation. Whilst the OT labourers may remain marginalised in certain aspects of the Islands’ heritagescape, their experiences of the Islands during the war are shared by those who witnessed them, integrating the ‘othered’ labourer and their suffering into personal reminiscences of the occupied Islander.

The thesis has found the sample’s testimonies to frequently reflect older paradigms of memory. This suggests a degree of ossification of some perspectives and a resilience to external changes. In part, as shown in chapter three, this stems from the importance felt by many at their memories and knowledge of the stoicism and ingenuities of their elders. Conversely, this also reflected the realities of the Occupation, defined more by hunger, boredom and repression than resistance and collaboration. However, the prevalence of detailed oral reminiscences of the labourers the interviewees in Guernsey had come into

contact with, and the importance they ascribed to testifying to the OT workers' plight, demonstrates both the shocking nature of such sights for younger islanders at the time yet also a capacity for change. The co-occurrence of my interviews in Guernsey with the release of the 2018 film led to more frequent, and urgent, recollections of the labourers in that island. This exemplifies the uneven evolution of Occupation memory, both private and public, within the Islands. On the one hand, discourse surrounding the Germans, with its roots in the everyday experience for ordinary Islanders, demonstrated resilience as seen in the previous chapter. Likewise, the following chapter explores another area, 'resistance', where discourse still centres around traditional poles. Conversely, the subject of the labourers was discussed more freely and with greater attributed salience, albeit engendering personal discomfort in the process owing to the traumatic nature of the experience for young eyes.

Nevertheless, there still remains a lack of willingness to contemplate how the treatment of the labourers, and other victim groups, particularly Jews in the Islands, rendered the neutral discourse towards the occupier problematic. For the most part, this paradox went unarticulated. Yet in the case of Nicolle, the failure to incorporate his experiences of both the labourers and the two Germans who had been kind to his family, caused discomposure, as the disjuncture between his experience of the enemy and knowledge of the OT and the Holocaust was made plain. Whilst Islanders in Guernsey demonstrated a willingness to share their memories of the labourers, applying the lessons of the former's plight to their own perspectives of the occupiers and contemplating the unsettling reality of what that revealed, appeared to be territory they were not keen to enter. The rehabilitation and incorporation of the OT labourer into Islanders' testimonies raises the question as to how long the discourse of moderate German conduct in the Islands can retain its currency. Indeed, efforts of heritage professionals and academics to promote the stories of victims of Nazism in the Islands are broadly aimed at weakening the grip of the German soldier in the Islands' popular memory and heritage sites, drawing links with Nazi occupation in western-Europe and pointing out that trends of Nazi, SS and Wehrmacht behaviour throughout Europe did not cease to be relevant merely because the occupying soldiers were on British soil. Ultimately, the final section of the chapter indicates that previous silences have begun to be spoken of more openly, demonstrating that strategies for composing memories of the Occupation can, and do, evolve, even if this remains a complex, organic and imperfect process. Demonstrating the latter phenomenon is one subject which can still cause unease in the Islands, despite recent scholarly and commemorative validation. That is the subject of Channel Islands 'resistance', and the discussion of this topic in the project's interviews is the focus of the final chapter.

Chapter Six

‘Anyone who talked about resistance had absolutely no concept’:**The Complex Discourse of Resistance and Defiance in the Islands**

Bob Le Sueur was involved in sheltering escaped Russian labourers during the Occupation, working as part of a network of Islanders at considerable personal risk. He knew Louisa Gould and Harold Le Druillenec and was responsible for arranging Feodor Burryiy’s shelter shortly before the arrest of his helpers. The oldest member of my sample, Le Sueur falls into Gilly Carr’s categorisation of a ‘Guardian of Memory’, representing an articulate and educated witness with a pronounced influence upon the direction of Occupation memory and heritage.¹ Le Sueur was disposed towards opposing Nazism, being a member of the ‘highly illegal’ Jersey Democratic Movement, which discussed post-Occupation constitutional reform in the surety that Nazism would be defeated, and linked to the JCP. Secrecy was Le Sueur’s maxim: ‘you didn’t even tell your closest friend, what that person did not absolutely have to know ... You learned to keep your mouth shut.’² Shortly before the liberation, Le Sueur’s parents were shocked to discover the extent of their son’s ‘subversive’ activities.³ The strain of the secrecy and risk-taking took its toll on him. Upon seeing Spitfires roaring low over St Helier after the liberation and realising that the ordeal of the Occupation was truly over, he publicly broke down in tears. The enormity of the event and ‘the secrecy, tension, falsehoods and oppression’ that he had held within him for five years flooded forth, leaving the characteristically stoic Jerseyman weeping uncontrollably.⁴ Le Sueur’s Occupation story was one of humanitarian and intellectual resistance to the Nazi presence in Jersey, which coalesced with his balanced appraisals of many of the soldiers, as seen in the previous chapter.

However, one of our exchanges highlighted how resistance can remain a sore spot for Islanders and a semantic minefield. With the recent developments in the Islands in relation to remembering resistance, I anticipated it to be a subject discussed more openly,

¹ Gilly Carr, ‘Islands of War, Guardians of Memory: The Afterlife of the German Occupation in the British Channel Islands’, in *Heritage and Memory of War: Responses from Small Islands*, ed. by Gilly Carr and Kier Reeves (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 75-91. For examples of where Le Sueur’s views have proved integral to shaping scholarly research. see Louise Willmot, “‘Nothing was ever the same again’”, *Local Historian*, pp. 9-20 and Gilly Carr, *Legacies of Occupation: Heritage, Memory and Archaeology in the Channel Islands* (New York: Springer, 2014), pp. 160-165.

² Bob Le Sueur, Interview with Richard Guille, 6 January 2019.

³ Bob Le Sueur, *Growing up Fast: An Ordinary Man’s Extraordinary Life in Occupied Jersey* (Jersey: Seeker Publishing, 2020), chapter nineteen.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Epilogue.

expansively and comfortably during the interviews for this project. Conversely, when I began a question for Le Sueur during our first interview, where I planned to acknowledge the unique challenges facing resisters in the Islands and enquire as to the ways people could oppose the Germans within these, Le Sueur cut me off:

RG: ... resistance in, what we would call the traditional sense of the word...

BLS: [interrupting] There wasn't ... There could not possibly have been, where are our forests? Where could we create, landing strips, to receive ammunition? One individual in every three, was a German ... Anyone who talked about resistance, had absolutely no concept.⁵

Le Sueur's response bordered on the defensive, speaking across my question before I had the opportunity to complete it and centred around two rhetorical questions with categorical answers, prior to the rebuttal of the views of anyone who has argued that the Islands should have conducted a *Maquis*-style resistance. It seemed a strange remark for such a prominent Jersey resister to have made, striking given the greater public validation resistance has in this Island. It is likely he misunderstood the focus of my questioning, for Le Sueur's wartime activities and subsequent knowledge of the broad spectrum of resistance which did occur in Jersey made his statement that there was no 'resistance' ring dissonantly. Indeed, during our interviews Le Sueur recounted many instances of opposition to German rule, from his own activities to his presence at demonstrations on Mount Bingham on 29 September 1942, during the deportation of British civilians where a display of patriotism turned fractious, with one German officer knocked out and fourteen young Islanders arrested.⁶

Previous comments on resistance, particularly from journalist Madeleine Bunting, were traumatic for Islanders and had a deep impact. When I telephoned Le Sueur before we met, he grilled me upon my prior reading of the subject. Sensing he was testing my credentials, I listed only scholarly texts and was able to begin to build rapport through presenting myself as a professional researcher, dispelling any notion that I was influenced by sensationalist writing. During the first meeting, Le Sueur explained his dislike of Bunting's text and research methods, specifically in relation to her views on resistance and collaboration.⁷ When my questioning appeared to be heading down a similar line to the one taken by previous critics of the Islands, he leapt to defend Jersey's wartime record, indicating that on an intersubjective level, our wires had become crossed. Had I started the question using terms such as defiance or opposition, his response may well have been

⁵ Le Sueur, Interview.

⁶ Ibid. For an account of the demonstration of 29 September 1942, see Leslie Sinel, *The German Occupation of Jersey: A Diary of Events from June 1940 to June 1945*, 4th ed., (London: Corgi, 1969), p. 93.

⁷ Le Sueur, Interview.

different. This exemplified the baggage ‘resistance’ carries in the Islands and the discomfort some felt at applying the definition to their activities; violent and armed actions against Nazi rule, Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp noted, constitutes ‘resistance in most people’s minds.’⁸ Le Sueur was not necessarily demonstrating discomposure: aside from cutting across my question, his response was delivered calmly and in a matter-of-fact tone. Fundamentally, in his assessment of the possibility of armed resistance in the Islands, he was correct, as will be demonstrated.

Carr has written extensively about the silences in popular and public memory surrounding ‘alternative’ or dissonant elements of the Occupation. She posited ‘Channel Islanders have had a historic inability ... to perceive their dark past.’⁹ Whilst the Churchillian paradigm produced a positive narrative around which the Islands’ post-war identities could be built, this, Carr argued, ‘dispelled the darkness from the experience of occupation.’¹⁰ Paul Sanders noted that the British generally would rather not think too deeply about repression as seen in the Islands, this being a central factor relegating the Islands to an aberrational footnote in British history.¹¹ Enabling these suppressions was the fact that the Occupation had been comparatively peaceful to western European experiences and light-years away from the horrors of Nazi policy in eastern Europe.¹² There was no equivalent to the French *Service du Travaile Obligitaire*, where the Germans demanded certain numbers of Frenchmen to be conscripted for war work, pushing many young Frenchmen to evade the scheme and turn to resistance.¹³

Likewise, aside from air raids and occasional naval engagements, the Islands never became a combat zone, allowing the uneasy equilibrium between occupier and occupied to continue relatively undisturbed by the bloodletting of open battle. The paradoxical nature of the occupier further complicated the urge to resist. No German soldier was killed or seriously injured by an islander.¹⁴ Similarly to western Europe, resistance was a minority

⁸ Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance under Nazi Occupation: Guernsey, Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2013), p. 4.

⁹ Gilly Carr, ‘Denial of the Darkness, Identity and Nation-Building in Small Islands: A Case Study from the Channel Islands’, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies*, ed. by Phillip Stone (London: Palgrave, 2018), p. 356.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

¹¹ Paul Sanders, *The British Channel Islands under German Occupation, 1940-1945* (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2005), p. 255.

¹² Carr, *Legacies of Occupation*, pp. 9-10. Also See Alex Kay, Jeff Rutherford and David Stahel (eds.), *Nazi Policy on the Eastern Front, 1941: Total War, Genocide and Radicalization* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012).

¹³ Louise Willmot, ‘The Channel Islands’ in *Resistance in Western Europe, 1940-1945*, ed. by Bob Moore (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p. 68. For details of the *Service du Travaile Obligitaire*, see Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French: Life under Occupation* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), pp. 247-250.

¹⁴ Gilly Carr, Paul Sanders and Louise Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance in the Channel Islands: German Occupation, 1940-1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 1.

activity. Willmot argued ‘for most ... Islanders, evading the radio ban marked the limit of their defiance.’¹⁵ However, as critical commentators stressed, the Islands’ courts enacted anti-Semitic legislation, local officials condemned those who actively opposed the enemy and no armed resistance occurred. Such aspects were viewed as a stain on Britain’s war record, with Islanders having failed to match up to the standards of British conduct laid down in the nation’s emergent war narrative.¹⁶ Whilst alignment with this allowed Islanders to reflect positively upon a generally negative experience, this caused tension. Notions of victory and heroism could not readily be applied to the suffering, repression and brutality Islanders witnessed and experienced.

Likewise, with resistance having been officially eschewed as a focal point around which to build local war memory by successive generations of Island leaders, narratives aimed at rebuilding insular pride and prioritising the nation’s martyrs akin to those in France, Belgium and Holland were inaccessible and unnecessary to Islanders.¹⁷ With no Nazi atrocities against large numbers of Islanders around which narratives of victimhood could be constructed, such as Oradour Sur Glane¹⁸ in France or Lidice in Czechoslovakia, the minority who had suffered and died for their opposition to the enemy were easily discounted by the early builders of public memory. This was in stark contrast to western Europe in the 1950s, where, Pieter Lagrou identified, those deported into the Nazi concentration camp system became the ‘officially accredited, generally respected *milieu de mémoire*’ of the war.¹⁹ Moreover, many Islanders felt that their most valuable contribution to the successful war effort had been the 10,000 island men who served in the British forces, rather than their opposition to the enemy.²⁰ This led to a widely accepted commemorative

¹⁵ Willmot, “‘Nothing was ever the same again’”, p. 16.

¹⁶ For example, see I. C. B. Dear and M. R. D. Foot, *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 202; Angus Calder, *The People’s War Britain 1939-1945*, Granada Edition (St Albans: Granada Publishing, 1971), pp. 474-477; and Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule*, 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico, 2004), p. 4 and pp. 320-321.

¹⁷ Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 2. Hazel Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands’ Occupation: Record, Memory, Myth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), p. 185.

¹⁸ For a vivid popular history of the SS Das Reich Division and the decimation of Oradour Sur Glane and its population, see Max Hastings, *Das Reich: The March of the 2nd SS Panzer Division Through France, June 1944* (London: Pan Books, 2000).

¹⁹ Pieter Lagrou, ‘The Nationalization of Victimhood: Selective Violence and National Grief in Western Europe, 1940-1960’ in *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. by Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), pp. 243-257 (here p. 255).

²⁰ Proportionately, the Channel Islands were the most well-represented part of the British Isles within the British armed forces during the Second World War. Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 10.

focus on Islanders killed on active duty.²¹ The stories of those who suffered in Nazi camps and prisons on the continent for crimes against the occupying forces were suppressed until Carr's acquisition and publication of the Frank Falla files throughout the 2010s.²²

To publicly discuss resistance risked prompting questions as to why the Island administrations did not do more to protect those who had been caught and prosecuted by the Germans. Carr contended 'to write about resistance is also dangerous, as it highlights the existence of its polar opposite,' collaboration.²³ The Island administrations were keen to preserve good relations with the Germans.²⁴ This saw 'the naughty lads' who 'stepped out of line with the Germans', as Frank Falla put it, thrown largely undefended upon the mercy of the occupier.²⁵ The Hague Convention, to which the Islands' governments had belligerently clung, allowed for the understanding that resisters had broken the convention. This provided a weak excuse for not intervening on the resister's behalf nor bestowing recognition after the war had ended.²⁶ Local beliefs, combined with early flashpoints such as fishing bans following escapes from the Islands or collective punishment following the V-sign campaign of 1941, are filtered through this interpretation of the Islander resister as destabilising influence. Carr recorded opposition in Guernsey to her work in foregrounding local resisters in 2016, being accused by a member of the CIOS of over-estimating her expertise in relation to the society's members and told to 'stop trying to change things.'²⁷ Those who engaged in more active forms of resistance, Carr stated, were commonly painted as 'foolish criminals' a view which endures in some quarters.²⁸

In Guernsey, misgivings and reticence about commemorating local resistance figures remain present, juxtaposed against Jersey where the Island's twenty-one resisters who died for their actions are perceived as heroes of the Occupation.²⁹ This was rendered clear through the case of eighteen Guernsey policemen who formed a resistance group,

²¹ Gilly Carr, 'Occupation Heritage, Commemoration and Memory in Guernsey and Jersey', *History and Memory*, 24:1 (2012), p. 96.

²² Gilly Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution in the Channel Islands: A Legitimate Heritage?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), pp. 147-169.

²³ Carr, 'Guardians of Memory', p. 87.

²⁴ Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*., p. 16.

²⁵ Frank Falla, *The Silent War: The Inside Story of the Channel Islands under the Nazi Jackboot*, 3rd ed. (London: New English Library, 1974), p. 167.

²⁶ Alan Wood and Mary Seaton-Wood, *Islands in Danger: The Fantastic Story of the German Occupation of the Channel Islands 1940-1945* (London: Evans Brothers, 1955), p. 302; Falla, *The Silent War*, p. 160.

²⁷ Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, pp. 164-169.

²⁸ Gilly Carr, 'Ethics and prisoner stories', *The Frank Falla Archive* <<https://www.frankfallaarchive.org/further-information/news/>> [Accessed 6 May 2019].

²⁹ Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, p. 16.

stealing from German stores and distributing it to Islanders.³⁰ When captured they were brutally interrogated, tried before a German court and Guernsey's Royal Court, with nine deported to the continent on the basis of forced confessions. The German authorities, concerned that the men may become symbolic of resistance, sought to discredit them through a 'show trial' in the Royal Court, to which the Guernsey authorities acquiesced.³¹ One perished and all suffered horrendous physical abuse as 'English' prisoners.³² None of the survivors were reinstated to the force due to having committed theft and 'were treated as criminals and denied their pensions.'³³ Efforts to have their name cleared on the grounds that their civilian prosecutors based their case on legally inadmissible forced confessions failed in 1955, and a recent appeal in 2018 to the Privy Council was also unsuccessful, with the Royal Court's conviction continuing to stand.³⁴ Guernsey's political class continue to disown these men, although Carr's recent campaigning in the *Guernsey Press* to expose and correct the 'burning injustice' of their conviction and post-war treatment is exerting public pressure.³⁵

The opposition which Carr faced in 2016 stemmed from her championing of the constables, which ruffled local feathers owing to the nature of their crime (which raised suspicions of black marketeering),³⁶ and position as police officers.³⁷ The CIOS member felt the policemen 'were not heroes' and had 'shamed the island.'³⁸ In 2021, Carr was criticised by a prominent Guernsey politician and told to 'leave Guernsey's history alone.' After the *GEP* published a response from Carr, anonymous posts from Islanders on the newspaper's online page continued to assail her research focus and objectivity in hostile *ad hominin* terms.³⁹ Carr's efforts to publicise a high profile and controversial case from Guernsey's

³⁰ The impetus behind this article was a joint effort by Carr and Sanders to gain publicity for the policemen and their families' continuing efforts to posthumously clear their names. Patrick Clahane, 'The Robin Hood Policemen who stole from the Nazis', BBC News, 29 November, <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-guernsey-54106579>> [Accessed 30 November 2020]; William Bell, *I Beg to Report: Policing in Guernsey during the German Occupation* (Guernsey: The Guernsey Press Co., 1995), pp. 133-163.

³¹ Gilly Carr and Patrick O'Connor, 'A Burning Injustice: The Fate of the Guernsey Policemen', *Guernsey Press*, 16 December 2020, p. 16.

³² Carr covered aspects of the Guernsey policemen's experiences of Nazi prisons in Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, pp. 23-48; Bell reproduced some of their testimonies in detail, which evidenced the barbaric nature of their treatment. Bell, *I Beg to Report*, pp. 366-370.

³³ Clahane, 'The Robin Hood Policemen'.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Carr and O'Connor, 'A Burning Injustice', *Guernsey Press*, pp. 16-17.

³⁶ One of the British investigators sent to the Islands after their Liberation, Captain J. R. Denning, felt that the rumours of black marketeering ruled out any patriotic motive in the case of the Policemen. IWM, Docs. JRD9, 'Report on Guernsey Police', n.d.

³⁷ Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, pp. 164-165.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

³⁹ See article and reader comments, Gilly Carr, 'Why I Won't Leave Guernsey History Alone', *Guernsey Press*, 9 March 2021, <<https://guernseypress.com/news/features/2021/03/09/why-i-wont-leave-guernsey-history-alone/>> [Accessed 10 March 2021].

Occupation history roused significant anger among some individuals and irrational anti-Buntingian-esque rebuttals. In some quarters of Island society, resistance remains a sensitive subject.

There is dual scope for discomposure in testimonies of resistance. Opposition to German rule never manifested into an armed movement, which sat uneasily within Britain's war narrative of never surrendering. The shades of grey found in the Islands contrasted unfavourably to Manichean understandings of European resistance held by the British. Islanders feel marked by British commentators who lamented that they had not gone further, and can become defensive. To discuss resistance invited questions as to why the Islands had not emulated the French, even long after the myth of mass resistance in France had been challenged. Moreover, the suffering of those deported to the continent for their offences was a post-war silence.⁴⁰ Those who resisted the occupiers were neglected in official memory because Islanders who suffered in German prisons and concentration camps presented an example of victimhood that could not be reconciled with the Churchillian paradigm.⁴¹ Resisters were not publicly validated until recently in Guernsey and Jersey, their memories and perspectives silenced and rendered alternative. Some acts were locally well known and celebrated owing to their explicitly patriotic nature, falling close enough to the Churchillian paradigm to be able to lock into this discourse.⁴² Yet acts which were seen to have threatened the community and came under the conceptual heading of 'resistance' have never been accepted in Guernsey, rendering such experiences as alternative and even subversive.⁴³

Conversely, recent research and commemorative developments in Jersey and Guernsey have moved towards the legitimisation of resistance and presented favourable comparisons with occupied western Europe. The extent of acts of protest, defiance and resistance to German rule was, proportionately, at similar levels to those found in western European nations. Carr, Sanders and Willmot's estimate of two percent of the Islands' population being tried and convicted for offences against the occupying authorities compares favourably with the estimated one million French people (three percent) involved with the French Resistance by early 1944.⁴⁴ Sanders expanded:

the Channel Islands have little reason to shy away from comparisons with the rest of Europe ... [such] figures point to a latent predisposition for more

⁴⁰ Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, p. 5.

⁴¹ Paul Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice: The Jersey Islanders who died in German prisons and concentration camps during the Occupation 1940-1945*, 2nd ed. (St Helier: Jersey Heritage Trust, 2004), p. 122.

⁴² Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, p. 6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-10.

⁴⁴ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 348. Based on convictions only, this figure suggests the actual percentage of those involved was higher, when individuals who were not caught or convicted are considered. Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, p. 127.

active forms of resistance in the Channel Islands, on at least the same order of relative scale as in France.⁴⁵

Carr, Sanders and Willmot conceptualised resistance as an umbrella term, under which protest, defiance and other activities outside the scope of armed resistance can also be included, with this greatly expanding what could be termed resistance in the Islands. This was achieved through drawing upon the extensive historiography of resistance in western Europe and applying the arguments of scholars such as Henri Michel, Jacques Semelin and Bob Moore, which broadened definitions of resistance away from that which was armed and organised, and towards a more general understanding of how civil society and its members could oppose enemy occupation.⁴⁶ Jorgensen-Earp summarised her study of resistance in Guernsey as ‘reveal[ing] ... quiet defiance and ... rhetorical insurgence ... it would be a subtle resistance.’⁴⁷ Drawing upon Allan Millward’s 1976 assertion that ‘in the moral and psychological dimension ... resistance assumes its greatest value’, Hazel Knowles-Smith argued that ‘the general lack of armed resistance ... should now cease to have any relevance to the Islanders’ resistance record.’⁴⁸ Defiance was a more attainable way of showing opposition for the majority of Islanders, and memories of this proved easier to compose than more serious forms of resistance in the immediate aftermath of the war. Within the context of occupied western Europe, resistance in the Islands has been shown to compare more than favourably. The chapter explores whether this historiographical trend and its concomitant campaigning for greater recognition of Island resisters has had a discernible influence on the testimonies garnered for this thesis.

The chapter primarily focuses on Guernsey and Jersey, where questions of whether to resist and how to feel about those who did were defining aspects of the Occupation. Sark’s tiny size and proportionately large German garrison meant that violent resistance would have been suicidal.⁴⁹ That is not to say there was no resistance or repression causing friction on Sark. Herbert Lanyon, the Islands’ baker, was the Sarkee agent for the Guernsey Underground network GUNS, supplying him with new sheets to show to Sarkees in the know in his shop. Upon the groups’ discovery Lanyon was interrogated roughly and

⁴⁵ Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, pp. 127-128.

⁴⁶ For their analyses of such texts and their application of this historiography to their study, see the introduction of Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 1-14. Also see Henri Michel, *The Shadow War: Resistance in Europe 1939-45* (London: The History Book Club, 1972); Jacques Semelin, *Unarmed Against Hitler: Civilian Resistance in Europe, 1939-1943* (London: Praeger, 1993); and Bob Moore (ed.), *Resistance in Western Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

⁴⁷ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance*, p. 16.

⁴⁸ Alan Millward, ‘The Economic and Strategic Effectiveness of Resistance’, in *Resistance in Europe 1939-45*, ed. by Stephen Hawes and Ralph White (London: Allen Lane, 1975), p. 202; Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 187.

⁴⁹ 270 German soldiers were removed from the Island as prisoners of war in May 1945. SSC, Misc. World War Two Collection, ‘List of Occupation incidents compiled by Richard Dewe’, n.d.

imprisoned on Guernsey for six months.⁵⁰ An English resident, Frances Pittard, assisted raiding Commandos on 3 October 1942, directing them to German billets and passing on intelligence, for which she was arrested and interned in Germany in 1943.⁵¹

The topic of resistance and its consequences have been the subject of much recent scholarship.⁵² The chapter builds upon these contributions by considering the ways in which Islanders narrate their memories of this previously contentious area of Occupation memory. This still bears the hallmarks of the defensive discourse which sprung up during the 1980s and 1990s. It demonstrates how attitudes towards the subject of resistance amongst members of the Occupation generation remain resilient to change. It then analyses memories of defiance, often recounted by interviewees in a humorous manner. Given the factors stymying armed resistance, low-level defiance was one of the few ways in which Islanders could demonstrate opposition to the enemy. This were more widespread than organised forms of resistance or sporadic instances of sabotage, providing a broader range of witnesses who could comment from a point of first-hand experience. The continuing appearance of testimonies on this theme indicate the importance of defiance to identity in the Islands, proving that the Islanders had, within their limited margins, refused to give in and accept German rule. This chapter highlights the striking difference between the uneasy discussion of resistance and the lighter discourse surrounding defiance, both belonging to the same spectrum of oppositional acts to the occupier, yet conceptually separated in oral testimonies of Islanders. This reveals both the continuance of the Churchillian paradigm and the long-lasting scars of debates over a perceived lack of resistance, scars which can lead to defensiveness.

⁵⁰ SSC, Misc. World War Two Collection, 'Annotated draft article written on Hubert Lanyon for *Channel Island Life*', n.d., p. 4.

⁵¹ TNA, DEFE 2/241, 'Report by Force Commander on the Raid on Sark on 3 October 1942', 1942.

⁵² For comprehensive studies of resistance in the Channel Islands, one should first consult Carr, Sanders and Louise Willmot's seminal and comprehensive 2014 study: Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*. Most recently, Carr studied the experience and legacy of Islanders deported to continental prisons and camps for breaching German laws, providing a detailed exploration of the wartime and post-war experiences of victims of Nazi persecution (many of whom had been resisters), and their place in local memory. Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*. Willmot offered a concise overview of Channel Island resistance in Willmot, 'The Channel Islands', pp. 65-91. Paul Sanders also made strong contributions on the subject in: Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, pp. 122-173 and Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, chapter three. Knowles-Smith presented a varied examination of resistance in the Islands. Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands*, pp. 183-205. Jorgensen-Earp studied rhetorical resistance in Guernsey, drawing her analysis from contemporary diaries to explore the varied ways in which this emerged in the island. Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance under Nazi Occupation*.

Manifestations and Constraints of Resistance in the Channel Islands

Armed resistance did not occur in the Channel Islands, nor did other acts reach the levels of organisation seen elsewhere in Europe.⁵³ However, this did not reflect a mindset prone to passivity or collaboration as some have argued.⁵⁴ Whilst it is now accepted that varied forms of resistance occurred on a scale proportionate to other western European nations, the absence of an armed movement, romanticism of the French *Maquis* and the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in British culture, alongside the historiographical constraints of resistance studies from the 1950s to 1970s, led to the view that there had been no ‘resistance’ in the Islands.⁵⁵ This was buttressed by Charles Cruickshank in 1975, who argued the Islands should be congratulated for their ‘good sense’ in not starting such a movement.⁵⁶ This opened the door to a tendentious collaborationist narrative, based on a false dichotomy that in the absence of armed resistance, collaboration must have been prevalent.⁵⁷ M.R.D. Foot, who drew upon Cruickshank’s history in his seminal study of European resistance, cited the Islands as an ‘embarrassment to the English writer on resistance’ as there had been no organised movement.⁵⁸ The hurt caused by such comments and efforts to correct these have been detailed in chapter two.

Channel Islands’ resistance was unique due to the particular circumstances of the Islands’ societies and political structures, as well as the constraints would-be resisters faced. However, opposition to German rule in the Islands was present, creative and varied, if loosely organised or individualistic.⁵⁹ Large numbers of Islanders engaged in patriotic acts, such as the wearing of red, white and blue or covertly placed V-sign badges.⁶⁰ They attended funerals of Allied servicemen en masse, protested the September 1942 deportations in Jersey through patriotic songs and demonstrations, and defied German orders to hand in their wireless sets. Whilst the latter marked the limit of how far the majority were willing to go, the prevalence of these symbolic and patriotic acts of defiance indicated a population set against the presence of Nazism in their Islands.⁶¹ Activities ranged from intelligence gathering, sabotage and stealing supplies and weapons from the Germans, as well as

⁵³ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 10.

⁵⁴ Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, p. 127.

⁵⁵ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 4-7.

⁵⁶ Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 160.

⁵⁷ Proponents of this rationale, whilst acknowledging the acts and bravery of the minority, were Bunting, *The Model Occupation*; Peter King, *The Channel Islands War: 1940-1945* (London: Robert Hale, 1991); and Norman Longmate, *How We Lived Then: A History of Everyday Life During the Second World War* (London: Arrow, 1971), pp. 512-522.

⁵⁸ M.R.D. Foot, *Resistance: An Analysis of European Resistance to Nazism, 1940-1945* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1976), p. 270.

⁵⁹ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 345.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-41.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

escaping with intelligence or to join British forces after June 1944. Some produced pamphlets aimed at impacting German morale and inciting mutiny amongst the garrison. There were underground news services and humanitarian aid to OT labourers or other fugitives, such as Jews.⁶² Initially, resistance was sporadic and minor, constituting escapes, sabotage or verbal abuse towards the enemy, reflecting the shock the sudden invasion and occupation had engendered.⁶³ It was not until the end of 1941, when the JDM emerged and another Jersey based network of ex-army officers began to carry out espionage and intelligence gathering, that resistance groups began to emerge.⁶⁴

1942 marked a turning point in the Islands. The implementation of the fortification programme and the treatment of the forced and slave labourers, the wireless ban in June and the September deportations, caused relations between occupiers and occupied to deteriorate. Willmot argued these events sparked much of the resistance which was to manifest in the Islands, such as the mass retention of wireless sets, the setting up of underground news services (such as GUNS and the Guernsey Active Secret Press),⁶⁵ and the reformation of the JCP.⁶⁶ The JCP sheltered labourers, produced anti-German and anti-States of Jersey literature and became involved in trying to stir up a German mutiny in the final months of the war alongside German deserters.⁶⁷ The wireless ban led to the creation of a cottage industry manufacturing small crystal sets.⁶⁸ Carr, Sanders and Willmot argued that December 1941 to June 1944 represented a period of ‘organisational development’, where the networks that did exist evolved into more coherent groups. Alongside this, small groups of young adults or teenagers began to plan and execute the theft of weapons and kit from German stores.⁶⁹ From D-Day until May 1945, there was a marked increase in acts of petty sabotage and escapes from Jersey.⁷⁰ During this period, 100 young residents made the fourteen mile crossing to France⁷¹ and a significant minority of young men in Jersey prepared to engage in the expected final battle for the Islands.⁷² Carr, Sanders and Willmot noted that resistance was more organised, active and varied in Jersey, reflective of the

⁶² For a more detailed resume of Channel Islands’ resistance, see Willmot, ‘The Channel Islands’, pp. 65-91.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 67.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 67.

⁶⁵ For a record of the GASP’s activities written by its editor, see L. E. Bertrand, *A Record of the Work of “the Guernsey Active Secret Press” 1940-1945* (Guernsey: The Guernsey Star and Gazette Co., n.d.).

⁶⁶ Willmot, “‘Nothing Was Ever the Same Again’”, pp. 9-20.

⁶⁷ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 113.

⁶⁸ Willmot, ‘The Channel Islands’, p. 79.

⁶⁹ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 342.

⁷⁰ Escapes to France from Guernsey, at the north-west of the archipelago, were more challenging, with prospective escapees needing to sail past the other Islands to reach France, which increased their prospect of being intercepted.

⁷¹ Willmot, ‘The Channel Islands’, p. 68.

⁷² Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 342.

greater extent to which the latter's social structures were ruptured by the evacuation of 17,000 Islanders (including the majority of men of military age), set against the 6,600 from Jersey. Resultantly, 'more subversive forms of purely civilian resistance, such as symbolic resistance and mass protests, but also ... news-sheeting, were so prevalent in Guernsey.'⁷³

However, the constraints were severe in the Islands. Their agricultural economies provided few obvious targets for sabotage, whilst their sea-bound nature rendered evading capture or escaping almost impossible. Combined with the proportionately vast German presence, armed resistance was a suicidal prospect. Le Brocq summarised the challenges facing Islanders: 'you couldn't take to the mountains in Jersey with arms in hand. First we've got no mountains and second we had no arms.'⁷⁴ Sanders argued, the fortification programme and its concomitant increase in pressure, repression, security concerns and garrison size, was a salient factor pushing resistance onto a more psychological level, discouraging outward expressions.⁷⁵ Additionally, when the Germans flexed their muscles, they left the Islanders in no doubt as to what they could achieve when pushed, and were unafraid of threatening reprisals. The V-sign campaign of 1941 prompted a strong response from the Germans.⁷⁶ Carey's infamous '£25 reward' for those who denounced V-sign writers in March 1941 was clarified by Ambrose Sherwill after the war as coming about due to German threats to seize hostages.⁷⁷ Undoubtedly, Cruickshank argued, 'sabotage would have brought ... retaliation.'⁷⁸

The confiscation of all wireless sets in June 1942, as well as the forced conscription of local sentries in areas where sabotage occurred, was enough to focus minds as to the punitive power of the occupier and raised questions as to the moral propriety of resistance.⁷⁹ One Jerseyman, Bernard Baker, recorded in his diary: 'if by [resisting] I bring heavy punishments to bear on 40,000 people ... am I a patriot? Or am I a traitor?'⁸⁰ While FK 515

⁷³ Ibid., p. 343.

⁷⁴ IWM, Docs. 5750a Misc. 189/1 'Norman Le Brocq Interview Transcript', n.d.

⁷⁵ Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, p. 129.

⁷⁶ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 341. Also see Gilly Carr, 'The Archaeology of Occupation and the V-Sign Campaign in the Occupied British Channel Islands', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 14 (2010), pp. 575-592.

⁷⁷ TNA, HO 45/25844 'Victor Carey letter to Sir Donald Somervell, Home Office', 25 June 1945; Paul Sanders, 'Managing under Duress: Ethical leadership, Social Capital and the Civilian Administration of the British Channel Islands During the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1945', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 93 (2010), p. 122. Ambrose Sherwill, who worked closely with Carey as Guernsey's Attorney General, felt the notices were in line with Carey's worried nature during the Occupation, representing well-intentioned misjudgement rather than insidious collaboration. Ambrose Sherwill, *A Fair and Honest Book: The Memoirs of Ambrose Sherwill* (2006: Lulu.com), pp. 186-187

⁷⁸ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, p. 164.

⁷⁹ For information on the conscription and posting of sentries, see JAS, B/A/W50/33 'Wireless Confiscation and V-signs', 1941-1942.

⁸⁰ Bernard Baker, quoted in Sonia Hillsdon, *Jersey: Occupation Remembered* (Norwich: Jarrold Publishing, 1986), p. 112.

assumed responsibility for civilians, occupation policy was often heavily directed by the commanders of the combat troops, who viewed the civilians as an impediment to the running of the fortress and favoured harsher measures.⁸¹ The mass radio confiscation owed much to the desires of the combat commanders, who were concerned that sets could be modified into transmitters and disconcerted by the impact British news was having on the morale of the soldiers.⁸² FK 515 were opposed to such a drastic measure in case it stirred up opposition amongst the then begrudgingly peaceful populace.⁸³

Furthermore, the SOE were never active in the Islands to avoid handing the Germans a propaganda coup had there been reprisals following SOE-sponsored activity. This was the central factor preventing resistance in the Islands organising to the extent seen in Europe.⁸⁴ Early British efforts to intervene had placed the populations in an invidious position, such as the abortive intelligence gathering effort of Lieutenants James Symes and Hubert Nicolle. They landed on Guernsey in September 1940 and were sheltered until their surrender on 21 October with the involvement of Sherwill. This resulted in the arrest and transfer of sixteen Islanders involved in their shelter, including Sherwill, to the Cherche-Midi prison in Paris.⁸⁵ Following the turbulence caused by the V-sign campaign, the Islands were taken off the list for further broadcasts to occupied Europe.⁸⁶ It is one of the bizarre paradoxes of the Occupation that Island resistance was not encouraged by the British, yet the Islands have been judged in mainland opinion for not having done more to resist the enemy.

Comparatively benign German rule to other parts of occupied Europe further stymied the desire to resist. Up to January 1942 two hundred executions were carried out in France for trivial crimes similar to those seen in the Islands, whilst no Islander was executed during the Occupation.⁸⁷ Islanders were aware that German restraint was conditional on the absence of resistance; Willmot argued ‘the threat of the iron fist ... deterred most people from taking action ... [and] ... made a substantial number hostile to any resistance ... Fear of betrayal ... reinforced their reluctance to step out of line.’⁸⁸ Sanders contended that when reprisals became tied to resistance and the willingness of local authorities to follow the

⁸¹ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 175-177.

⁸² Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, pp. 112-113.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁸⁴ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, pp. 100-101

⁸⁵ For Sherwill’s account, see Sherwill, *A Fair and Honest Book*, pp. 49-51 and pp. 143-182.

⁸⁶ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation*, p. 168. Sinel recorded how the Germans viewed the ‘V’s as sabotage, and warned of collective punishment in the form of local confiscation of wireless sets and the recruitment of local sentries. Sinel, *The German Occupation of Jersey*, p. 48.

⁸⁷ Some residents, such as the French artists Suzanne Malherbe and Lucy Schwob, were given death sentences for extensive subversive activities that were subsequently commuted to imprisonment Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, p. 137.

⁸⁸ Willmot, ‘The Channel Islands’, pp. 69-70.

utilitarian doctrine of 'greater good' became widely known, the path to denunciations was opened.⁸⁹

Additionally, Island society had little precedent of dissension to authority.⁹⁰ There were few organisations such as universities, factories, political parties or trade unions which could act as seedbeds for organised resistance.⁹¹ Power was held by a small clique of wealthy and interconnected families, ruling through antiquated legislative mechanisms and institutions.⁹² The governments of Guernsey and Jersey took the stance that resistance would only destabilise their workable relations with FK 515, and took a hard line on those who resisted. For example, after a number of escapes in July and August 1940 followed by a swift tightening of measures by the Germans, Guernsey's Controlling Committee published the following: 'To get away or to attempt to get away is a crime against the local population.'⁹³ Earlier, on 21 June, the Reverend John Leale, who would become the President of the Controlling Committee, went further, stating that 'the man who even contemplates resistance ... is the most dangerous man in the Island, and its most bitter enemy.'⁹⁴ Leo Harris, a Scottish teenager trapped by the German invasion, felt this put those who wished to oppose the Germans in an 'invidious' position, where their patriotism was rendered dangerous and in need of suppression.⁹⁵ With Island society at the time being based on conformity and deference to authority, the advice from local government cut through to Islanders. Moreover, some acts, such as stealing from the Germans or defacing signs, were unlawful before the Occupation.⁹⁶ In part, this allowed the labelling of would-be resisters as 'troublemakers', an epithet which has since become attached to the many rather than the few.⁹⁷

Harsh sentences were a further deterrent. Canon Clifford Cohu, rector of St Saviour's in Jersey, retained a wireless set and after 1942 sought to keep Islanders' spirits up by sharing news publicly or through printed news sheets. Cohu and his associates were arrested in March 1943. Whereas others were incarcerated for one or two months, the Germans made an example of Cohu, sentencing him to eighteen months and deporting him to the continent, where he perished from physical abuse meted out while in the 'work education camp' in Zöschen, near Naumberg.⁹⁸ Others such as Maurice Gould, an attempted

⁸⁹ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands*, p. 129.

⁹⁰ Willmot, 'The Channel Islands', p. 75.

⁹¹ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 345.

⁹² Willmot, 'The Channel Islands', p. 75.

⁹³ IWM, Docs. 13409. JRD.4 'Ambrose Sherwill Public Letter 28 September 1940', n.d.

⁹⁴ IWM, Docs. 13409. JRD.4 'John Leale Speech, June 1940', n.d.

⁹⁵ Leo Harris, Interview with Richard Guille, 4 January 2019.

⁹⁶ Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, p. 9.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10; Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 318-319.

⁹⁸ Sanders, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, pp. 21-27 and 41.

escapee from Jersey, and James Houillebecq, who stole a German firearm, were swept up by the Nazis' *Nacht und Nebel* decree of 7 December 1941, designed to expedite the imprisonment or execution of civilians for acts of resistance. Both died in Nazi concentration camps.⁹⁹ Carr identified 215 men and women deported to prisons or camps on the Continent for crimes against the occupying power. Twenty-one from Jersey and eight from Guernsey died for their opposition to German rule, whilst Carr uncovered a number who survived but spent the remainder of their lives suffering PTSD.¹⁰⁰ Whilst these numbers are small, the human tragedy of repression in the Islands was proportionately substantial.

'You just don't behave like that when the name of the game is survival': The Problematic Memory of Resistance

Defining resistance in the Islands has proved challenging and the subject of much recent debate. Early definitions were insufficient in terms of understanding the Channel Islands' context. Recent research has striven to improve understanding, however the unique manifestations of resistance in the Islands has occasionally muddied efforts to define what had occurred there. Jorgensen-Earp argued that slippery terminology, such as 'passive patriotism' or 'silent resistance', could not cover the broad spectrum of activities present.¹⁰¹ Knowles-Smith listed a variety of divisions of 'offences against the occupying authorities', such as 'defiance', 'latent patriotism', 'spying and underground movements', and 'escapes'.¹⁰² However, such stratification merely offered a list of manifestations to support her rebuttal of the collaborationist narrative. Instead, Jorgensen-Earp posited the definition of 'rhetorical' resistance, reflective of how many acts present in Guernsey 'involved the manipulation of discursive or non-discursive symbols.'¹⁰³ Her research focused on covert acts, arguing that overt examples of continental resistance were sporadic, obscuring 'the size and complexity of a submerged supporting structure of psychological defiance.'¹⁰⁴ This was an early step towards the most prominent development in the field, Carr, Sanders and Willmot's 2014 publication which viewed resistance in its broadest manner yet. Whilst this was an important contribution, the authors noted frequent overlap between the three concepts and shied away from attempting water-tight definitions.¹⁰⁵ Carr later acknowledged that "'resistance" is a slippery and problematic concept that comes with much baggage.'¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 43-53 and p. 63-64. Willmot, 'The Channel Islands', p. 71.

¹⁰⁰ Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, pp. 73-94.

¹⁰¹ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance*, p. 5.

¹⁰² Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, pp. 187-205.

¹⁰³ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance.*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁶ Carr, *Victims of Nazi Persecution*, p. 8.

Such definitional debate demonstrates the ‘semantic minefield’ for Islanders, exacerbated by complex local memory politics surrounding resistance.

Le Sueur outlined in his memoir his unease at self-defining as a ‘resister’: ‘I did not want to describe myself as a *resistant* ... I was not described thus by anyone else, I was not part of any organised band, and only helped on the fringes of one small group engaged in the occasional activity.’¹⁰⁷ The concept of resistance is far from straightforward for Islanders and a degree of semantic bracketing occurs in oral testimonies. ‘Acceptable’ instances of defiance are related with equanimity and often humour, allowing Islanders to coherently narrate these. More dangerous acts that risked reprisals continue to be problematic to speak of. Whilst proponents of the resistance and victimhood paradigm have validated Island resistance, this process has not fully filtered through into the testimonies of some, and members of the 1.5 generation seemingly retain inherited attitudes from their elders. This reflects the limited interactions young children had resistance. For several interviewees, their closest experience of this was hearing the BBC on crystal sets or retained wireless sets, or later being told of their parents’ more subversive activities. Secrecy and young children do not mix, and several recalled how they only became aware of this after the war. Moreover, the minority who engaged in more serious acts kept quiet about it and were not always forthcoming after the war. Correspondingly, general knowledge of resistance suffered. Several did not feel they could discuss the subject with authority, presenting brief or second-hand responses to questions around this theme.

However, some demonstrated strong views and others had been more closely affected by opposition to the Germans. Resistance continues to be discussed in a similar manner to interviews conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with a strong differentiation between ‘resistance’ – conceptualised as armed, organised, and therefore impossible – and other acts, which have semantic categorisations of their own, such as sabotage, escapes, intelligence gathering or humanitarian resistance. Even in the interviews, the mixed feelings held locally by some towards those who took antagonising the Germans ‘too far’ cut through. This demonstrates the endurance of this local discourse, formulated in response to outside challenges and continuing even in light of the resistance and victimhood paradigm. This reflects the fact that active opposition to the enemy was a minority experience in the Islands. Willmot argued ‘the most common attitude ... was one of “passive antagonism” or grumbling conformity; Islanders loathed the German presence, but felt that

¹⁰⁷ Le Sueur, *Growing Up Fast*, chapter twenty.

there was little they could do to oppose it.¹⁰⁸ This section concentrates on how Islanders discussed this complex and sensitive topic during our interviews.

In interviews held by the IWM, some Islanders were defensive about resistance. This reflected the challenges to the Islands' war record in relation to resistance and collaboration, and the difficult position resistance and resisters held within the Islands' Occupation narratives. This defensiveness was borne of exasperation at being criticised for not having attempted the impossible: resisting the Germans by force of arms. This was a frequently mobilised defence against *The Model Occupation*, rebutting Bunting's insinuation that Islanders should have done more to oppose the Germans. It also reflected Cruickshank's 1975 comments regarding the impossibility of resistance and the 'good sense' shown by Islanders for not entertaining serious notions of guerrilla warfare. Interviewees distinguished between 'resistance' and other forms of opposition such as sabotage, chalking V-signs or retaining radios, activities recently pulled under the umbrella concept of resistance.¹⁰⁹ However, many had been involved in opposition to the enemy in some capacity, with the IWM's collection of oral sources leaning heavily towards Islanders with the most exciting stories, therefore skewing this archive.¹¹⁰

In British culture after the war, 'resistance' as a concept was bound up with armed opposition to German rule, and the *Maquis* in France were a frequently cited reference point for Islanders. Rab Bennet argued 'the Nazi occupation of Europe readily lends itself to a kind of "1066 and all that" view of history, in which resisters were "right and romantic" ... [P]opular films and novels helped to perpetuate a highly romanticised view of the resistance.'¹¹¹ Several Islanders pointed to the unique challenges which those who wished to oppose the Germans faced in the Islands in comparison to other nations with a more violent occupation history. The commonly held line was that armed resistance, the sort that would have made the British stir in admiration, had been all but impossible in the Islands. Rather than embarking on foolhardy and suicidal ventures, Islanders could claim to have stoically borne the Occupation whilst exhibiting passive antagonism and defiance towards the enemy. In the case of the Channel Islands, such a stance did a disservice to the levels of opposition

¹⁰⁸ Willmot, 'The Channel Islands', p. 69.

¹⁰⁹ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 2-3.

¹¹⁰ Many of the IWM's Jersey interviewees were based near Havre des Pas just outside St Helier during the Occupation, which appears to have been a hive of Jersey sedition in a coastal area with a large German presence. Leo Harris's testimonies confirm the above average pressure on Islanders in this militarised part of the Island: Harris, Interviews with Richard Guille, 4 and 5 January 2019; Leo Harris, *A Boy Remembers* (Jersey: Channel Island Publishing, 2004). See also Jersey Heritage's recent video on Havre des Pas in their series: 'What's Your Street's Occupation Story?' Jersey Heritage, <<https://www.jerseyheritage.org/athome/listen/occupationstory#pas>> [Accessed 14 November 2020].

¹¹¹ Rab Bennet, *Under the Shadow of the Swastika: The Moral Dilemmas of Resistance and Collaboration in Hitler's Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), p. 24.

to the enemy. It represented the antithesis to the mythical view of resistance widely held in France until the 1970s, an interpretation which overstated the extent of armed movements active against the Germans in an effort to distract from the collaborationist legacy of Petain and Vichy.¹¹²

This is evidenced by three examples from Jersey.¹¹³ Bernard Cochrane was a young Jerseyman, interviewed by the IWM in 1990. His response to the question of resistance was illustrative of the prevalent discourse during this period:

Well yes there was in a way, but it didn't really have much effect on the ... war effort ... different on the continent ... but in an Island like this there's nowhere to go. ... People used to try things ... they would make some signs on walls ... or deface ... German signs ... The Germans just said right, all the young people ... will report at a certain time and ... we then had to do guard duty throughout the night! ... I thought 'well, they're wasting their time, why do they bother? ... we've got our life to lead ... the Germans have got their job to do ... so you must get on with it, nothing really I can do to stop it!' ... What was the point? Really, we weren't, going to achieve much ... but I suppose some tried things on.¹¹⁴

Cochrane highlighted the impossibility of island resistance contributing anything tangible to the Allied war effort, together with his personal misgivings about the actions of others who had sought to oppose the Germans. This reflected the nature of the debate in the Islands at the time of the interview, which still evaluated resistance in terms of its strategic contribution. Cochrane's assertion that 'some tried things on', demonstrated the distinction between 'resistance' – armed and organised – and other acts showing opposition to the Germans, which he believed fell short of the former. He indicated how some viewed resistance in Europe as something impossible to emulate, with the comparison highlighting the pointlessness of such a movement in the Islands. Moreover, Cochrane depicted such acts as at best a waste of energy and at worst destabilising. Graeme Le Maistre, a Jersey tradesman in his twenties, recalled how he had thrown sand in machine gun barrels and painted V-signs after D-Day. However, he commented 'it's only afterwards that you realise how silly it ...[was]... 'cause it didn't do any good to anybody ... We could easily have been shot ... It wasn't as though it was going to end the war.'¹¹⁵ Whilst not explicitly stating there was no resistance, both Cochrane and Le Maistre downplayed its extent and utility, implying how the threat of reprisals had rendered certain acts as foolhardy.

¹¹² Henri Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 16-20.

¹¹³ For other examples, see IWM, Docs. 5750a Misc. 189/1 'Interview Transcripts of Anthony Faramus, Edwin de St Croix, Joe Berry and J. Blampied', n.d.; IWM, Sound 10711 'Interview with Gordon Prigent', 23 May 1989; IWM, Sound 12706 'Interview with Frank Stroobant', 11 June 1991.

¹¹⁴ IWM, Sound 12541, 'Interview with Bernard Cochrane', 13 April 1992.

¹¹⁵ IWM, London, Sound 10877 'Interview with Graeme Le Maistre', 6 September 1989.

Jersey's Bailiff between 1986 and 1991, Sir Peter Crill, fifteen when the Germans invaded, drew a different conclusion. In 1990, Crill contributed to the IWM's collection, approached due to his status as a prominent public figure and former 'resister' - in 1944, he and two friends escaped to France. Nevertheless, when the subject came up, he was defensive over the Islands' record and implicitly denied his escape had been an act of resistance:

I've been asked this a few times ... 'why didn't the Jerseyman rise up like the French?' Well ... the French didn't rise up ... by no means were all the French in the resistance ... The second part is in an island of 45 square miles which has no military significance ... nothing we could have done would have helped the ... Allied cause.¹¹⁶

Crill took an alternate line to Cochrane, defending Jersey's record of resistance by pointing to how the extent of resistance in France had been overstated. Within this, he acknowledged that resistance was futile in attaining strategic outcomes and implied that there had been little resistance in the Island. This was curious given his escape, very much an act of opposition. Moreover, escapees were one of the first groups of Islanders who defied the Germans to be publicly commemorated.¹¹⁷ Naturally, Islanders such as Joe Mière and Le Brocq, whose opposition to the enemy went further than many, provided counterpoints to this general view.¹¹⁸ Mière was keen to discuss the extent of his wartime activities, rough treatment at the hands of the German police and his time in Jersey's Gloucester Street prison for his offences against the Reich.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, in the early 1990s when resistance was becoming a source of external criticism, Islanders' testimonies became defensive.

When I prepared to conduct my interviews, I anticipated that the testimonies would reflect recent efforts to rehabilitate resistance. All interviews were conducted after Carr, Sanders and Willmot's 2014 study, the unveiling of the Guernsey resistance memorial in 2015, and developments in Jersey from the late 1990s. However, the result confounded these expectations, demonstrating the endurance of this defensive discourse. Paulette Bichard, an occupied Guernsey teenager, became markedly defensive when I enquired about opposition to the Germans, answering before I had finished speaking:

Well yeah well what how could you resist? How could you resist them, in what way would you have suggested? I mean, you did what you could ... people did defy the curfew but you had to be very careful, because you were so quickly deported, you know?¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ IWM, London, Sound. 11096 'Interview with Sir Peter Leslie Crill', 29 January 1990.

¹¹⁷ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 326.

¹¹⁸ IWM, Sound 10101 'Interview with Norman Le Brocq', 26 November 1987.

¹¹⁹ IWM, Sound 10683 'Interview with Joseph Mière', 18 April 1989.

¹²⁰ Paulette Bichard, Interview with Richard Guille, 26 April 2018.

Bichard, like Crill, was formerly a prominent public figure in Guernsey, with a greater stake in how Guernsey's war record is understood by outsiders. Later in the interview, she exhibited a distaste for outside commentators who over-focused on collaboration. Her defensiveness indicated a degree of discomposure, evidenced through her use of rhetorical questions, posed to make me consider how Islanders could have resisted, questions which she knew could not be easily answered. This served to shut down enquiries which challenged her view.

Bichard and Le Sueur were not isolated examples. Mary Blampied, a Jersey teenager in 1945, stated that there had 'not really' been any resistance, as 'you were too frightened of them ... [People] wanted to but no they couldn't. They took the hotel just across the road here ... there's a bunker up two doors from me.'¹²¹ Blampied downplayed opposition to the enemy, more explicitly citing general fears at the consequences of being caught, which she saw first-hand. Towards the end of the Occupation, she witnessed a Jerseyman escaping from the local prison being beaten by Germans:

you remember some things you never forget ... they kicked him and kicked him and he was screaming, the men came out of the stores and all they could do was stand and watch. You daren't say a word or do anything ... you always, at the back of your mind you hear these screams.¹²²

Blampied's reference to the German billet and bunker near her present home was delivered to emphasise the extent to which Islanders found themselves surrounded by Germans at close proximity, justifying her remarks as to people's fears of the enemy. Blampied appeared discomposed at the memory of the fear which she believed stymied people's willingness to resist, a fear she well remembered from the incident.

An intergenerational permeability to this discourse was also in evidence. John Ferbrache was five-years-old in 1945. Ferbrache's views on the Occupation were heavily structured through opinions handed down by his parents and his engagement with local history. At one point I enquired as to his opinions on *The Model Occupation*, prompting him to share his thoughts on resistance:

in a small community you could not have open resistance in the way you had it operating on the continent ... [T]here would have been reprisals ... against people we would have known, our families could have been affected, our relatives ... [Y]ou just don't behave like that when the name of the game is survival.¹²³

Ferbrache revealed his father had been conscripted for sentry duty following a minor act of sabotage, commenting that it didn't 'achieve much anyway, a little annoyance ... you can't

¹²¹ Mary Blampied, Interview with Richard Guille, 21 May 2019.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ John Ferbrache, Interview with Richard Guille, 30 April 2018.

blow anything up and have any consequential effect on the war.¹²⁴ Ferbrache repeated the line that resistance had been impossible, contributed little of value and would only have resulted in reprisals. His comments suggested the influence of his father's opinions on the subject. Ferbrache's father would have been aware of how more serious acts of resistance would prompt harsher responses, explaining Ferbrache's focus on the possibility of reprisals and how to have risked these was a fundamentally non-community-minded decision. Combined with his outlining of the factors against resistance in response to Bunting's allegations, Ferbrache demonstrated how contemporary views and the defensive discourse of the 1990s could coalesce in the testimonies.

Ferbrache was more prone to being influenced by parental discussion owing to his young age. It cannot be ruled out that this was also a factor in Bichard and Blampied's testimonies. Blampied's father was also seconded for sentry duty. This is not to suggest that Islanders misremember resistance; the defensive discourse reflects contemporary attitudes towards acts which disturbed the uneasy equilibrium between occupier and occupied. The maintenance of this defensive local discourse, which distinguishes between 'resistance' in the continental sense and other acts, now viewed with more importance, indicates how resistance remains a challenging subject for Islanders to discuss. The history of accusations of passivity and the local and national challenges facing those who discuss resistance in the Islands can engender discomposure, evidenced through aggressive defensiveness when Islanders feel that implicit allegations of collaboration are made. To argue that resistance was impossible remains an important strategy for Islanders in composing their narratives of the subject, reflecting a much older debate and defence of their collective war record. Moreover, engaging in acts of resistance was not an option for teenagers and young children. There was little from their experiences to provide personal grounds to challenge this interpretation, further explaining the continuing presence of this defensive discourse.

The stakes were high for Islanders who did resist and the consequences could be severe. Leo Harris's father and elder brother were keen to oppose the Germans throughout the Occupation from their home in Havre des Pas just outside of St Helier. The family were originally from Edinburgh, having moved to Jersey to run a hotel shortly before the outbreak of the war. Harris's father had served during the First World War, which generated a deep mistrust of the enemy.¹²⁵ By May 1945, Harris was fifteen and his elder brother seventeen, common ages for Jersey teenagers who actively opposed the Germans between 1944 and 1945. Their British identity, father's deep resentment of the German army and their personal

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Like many men of his generation, Harris's father did not freely discuss his service during the First World War. Harris, *A Boy Remembers*, p. 12.

desire to clash with the occupier made the Harris family uniquely active in their opposition to the enemy. Actions taken by his father included dismantling the hotel annex after a German informed them of their desire to billet troops there and retaining a wireless set for the duration of the Occupation. Harris was involved in stealing from bunkers and almost arrested at the Mount Bingham protests. His older brother became embroiled in more serious acts against the Germans, starting with stealing bicycles from bathing Germans and taking supplies, eventually leading to the theft of rifles in early 1945. Harris narrated:

He was older than me and able to do more things ... quite a ring leader. His biggest mistake was in going just too far ... they were a little bit silly and ... told one or two of the other boys in school ... what they had done and eventually when two boys were taken for something ... the mother told the Gestapo ... and they came to the house and that's when they started searching.¹²⁶

During the search, the family endured several hair-raising moments, hurriedly hiding the rifle, pouring German rations down the sink and almost having their main radio discovered. A German Field Police (*Geheime Feldpolizei*) agent thrust a German dressing at Harris to dispose of quickly, and Harris also threw an illegal shotgun into the sea while no one was looking.

His brother returned home, crossing into the family hotel over the red curfew line marking the forbidden area for civilians at night. Harris commented:

he stepped out of his boyhood ... when he crossed that line ... [T]he *Feldgendarmerie* grabbed him, his bike went one way and he went the other ... [T]hat was the beginning of his spell in solitary confinement. But during 1944 he would have been shipped off with the other two ... to France and shot because it was punishable by death to take a German army rifle, but they couldn't get them off the island.¹²⁷

Harris was correct in his assessment of the seriousness of the event and his brother's fortune: the crime was similar to that for which James Houillebecq was deported under the *Nacht und Nebel* decree. His father was imprisoned for possession of another radio found during the search, although due to overcrowding in the prison, his sentence only lasted five days. This incident was emotional for Harris; he remarked 'serious stuff Richard. A long time ago, some of it I still find very emotional telling you ... it brings it all back only too clearly.'¹²⁸ During our first interview, he returned to the subject of the search on several occasions, indicating how distressing an event it was for him. The extracts were revealing of the difficult position Islanders found themselves in when they opposed the enemy, and the fine line trodden by those who made that decision. Harris stopped short of condemning his

¹²⁶ Harris, Interview, 4 January 2019.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

brother's actions; yet he acknowledged that his brother had taken things too far, bringing serious consequences down upon the family. His brother was imprisoned for the remainder of the Occupation. However, coming from a family which practiced low-level resistance throughout the war, Harris demonstrated considerable sympathy for his brother's motives and actions.

Harold Nicolle of Guernsey was also aware of the cost of breaking German rules. His experiences as a young boy coloured his views, leaving him with a negative opinion of some acts. In 1943, his father was informed upon, arrested and imprisoned by the Germans for sheltering a foreign worker, being roughly handled during his month in prison.¹²⁹ This placed a strain on his father. Towards the end of the war, Nicolle's brother stole medical supplies from the Germans and was subsequently caught.

He was a bit of a daring guy ... I'd like to say he was encouraged by a guy two years older than him ... but [he] could have been equally as guilty. ... He brought them home and he put them on a shelf somewhere ... [the Germans] ... came in and saw them and asked my father where he got those from ... [T]hey were taken to high command, my brother had to go up with my father.¹³⁰

Nicolle appeared to have mixed feelings about his brother's actions, blaming him for dragging their father back into trouble. He expanded: 'I'm just trying to think of his age __ __ old enough to know better you know? ... To leave them exposed, without my dad knowing, I mean there was so much going on for my father ... It was tough for them really.'¹³¹ The strain placed upon his family through both his father and brother's activities came through in the subtle traces of discomposure in the interview, both in terms of emotional delivery on occasion and his chiding of his brother for getting his father into trouble.

These familial experiences made Nicolle take a harder line on those who took risks in defying the Germans. Whilst acknowledging a large number of brave acts that occurred in Guernsey, he related conversations after the war when he had entered the workforce which irked him:

I remember a man telling me one day ... 'we were able to pinch a lot of cement off the Germans', and I was working then, when he told me that. I didn't say anything because my boss was there but if he hadn't I'd have said to him 'I wonder how many people suffered,' 'cause the Germans,

¹²⁹ IWM, Docs. JRD9, 'List of British Subjects Tried by German Military Courts in Guernsey', 1945; Harold Nicolle, Interview with Richard Guille, 9 November 2018.

¹³⁰ Nicolle, Interview.

¹³¹ Ibid.

made somebody suffer, if you were, pinching from them ... [T]hey didn't like, that type of thing.¹³²

Citing German reprisals in France, Nicolle pondered the morality of the man's actions, reflecting again that 'they always made somebody suffer' for acts against them. The exchange suggested that he held conflicting views on this, juxtaposing brave acts against those he viewed as unnecessary pin pricks which only served to anger the Germans. Nicolle's feelings towards those he felt risked reprisals are broadly reflective of attitudes still held in Guernsey, although his stemmed directly from the difficulties his family faced. His and Harris's examples indicate how opposition to the occupier was not always the correct action to take, regardless of purity of motive, and could cause much personal suffering to those involved and their friends and families. The negative ramifications of resistance provided some Islanders with a far more nuanced view of this aspect of the Occupation. It was one which acknowledged the bravery of those who actively opposed the enemy, but remained aware of the potentially disastrous consequences of such acts. Resistance has never been a straightforward subject for Islanders, and the testimonies of Nicolle and Harris shed light onto why this is the case.

This section has explored the ways Islanders discuss resistance in oral history interviews, considering how their telling of this aspect of occupation has developed since the late 1980s through to the testimonies of the younger Islanders interviewed for this project. Whilst deeper research upon this theme should be conducted, the analysis here demonstrates the durability of local discourses, evolved in response to outside challenges of passivity. The childhood perspective of the Occupation provided limited scope or motivation to challenge this defensive discourse. Some also held a deeper understanding of the risks and potential cost of resistance: both Harris and Nicolle's testimonies referenced the more dangerous activities of older siblings and presented mixed feelings about their wartime actions. Harris, a long-term Jersey resident and member of a family persistent in their opposition to the enemy, presented a nuanced view, reflective of Jersey's more enthusiastic commemoration of resistance. Conversely, Nicolle indicated the misgivings Guernsey holds towards those who resisted, where the 'destabilising delinquent' view remains prominent. The topic of resistance remains complex, and amongst surviving members of the Occupation generation, reasonably consonant with views common prior to the resistance and victimhood paradigm. Whereas efforts to improve local knowledge of resistance have demonstrated a tangible effect, particularly among second and third generations, the fresh narrative has not been so readily assimilated into the testimonies of those who were there. Instead, a reliance upon the local discourse emphasising the impossibility of resistance continues to be exemplified in

¹³² Ibid.

testimonies of the Occupation. This demonstrates the maintenance of this local discourse, one which does a disservice to the broad spectrum of oppositional activity within the Islands, yet serves to disarm critical notions that Islanders should have behaved more like the French of the Gaullist myth.

‘My staid and proper parents were crying with laughter’: Humorous Memories of Defiance

Armed resistance was impossible in the Islands and organised resistance extremely challenging. In terms of demonstrating opposition to enemy rule the only option for the majority was to engage in low-level defiance and passive antagonism, much of it humorous by nature. Laurence De La Rue, born in 1940, recalled through laughter his father’s low-level defiance towards the Germans:

At one time the Germans were looking for somebody to wash their uniforms, you see so [laughs], ... [my father] ... volunteered you see, ‘cause my mother said ‘why am I doing that?’ he said ‘that’s alright, I’ll do it’, so he got hold of the uniforms ... and he had a big barrel outside you know with the drain ... He used to hang it up [laughs whilst miming dipping clothing briefly into a barrel], you know?¹³³

This extract represents the significance of memories of opposition to German rule for Islanders, particularly for those who were young children at the time. De La Rue was born shortly after the German invasion and had correspondingly few direct memories of the period, falling at the younger end of the 1.5 Occupation generation. These Islanders were old enough to have some memories of the period but had a limited understanding of events at the time. As a result, second hand stories passed down from his parents bore a great deal of importance to De La Rue. They provided him with a deeper understanding of a period he had only just experienced and a framework around which to build his own opinions of the most important event in the history of Guernsey. De La Rue’s father was forced to work for the Germans during the Occupation, driving troops around in a lorry. However, this did not render him a collaborator, for he often did what little he could to demonstrate his opposition to the German presence, through acts such as the above. In the absence of more widely understood and accepted ‘resistance’, stories of acts in the same vein as those of De La Rue’s father were an important source of local pride, indicating the continued opposition to enemy Occupation and proving Islanders, like the British, had remained patriotic and never gave in. The laughter present in De La Rue’s telling of the anecdote was also significant. It indicates that Islanders continue to find aspects of the experience humorous and frame their narratives as such, despite increasing acknowledgement of the human suffering caused by

¹³³ Laurence De La Rue, Interview with Richard Guille, 20 April 2018.

the German presence in Guernsey, Jersey and Sark during the Occupation. Retaining a sense of humour was an important coping strategy for Islanders, linking them with Britain and the exhortations heard over the wireless to maintain morale.

The only course of action realistically available to most were acts of low-level defiance. These offered Islanders a safety-valve for letting off pressure and to maintain a feeling that they were doing their bit. Within the context of the Churchillian paradigm, low-level opposition constituted what can be termed ‘acceptable defiance.’ If active resistance, manifestations of which could have led to reprisals, was rendered taboo in official Occupation memory, ‘acceptable defiance’ was more readily acknowledged. In many cases, the only people put at risk were the individuals themselves. Other defiance which was publicly celebrated tended to be areas where large segments of the population participated, such as illegal radio listening and collecting Allied propaganda pamphlets dropped on the Islands. In the case of the former, Sander’s argued that the numbers engaged in this were extremely high and this was therefore the most widely practised form of opposition.¹³⁴ Le Brocq defined much of the opposition in the early period of Occupation as ‘passive resistance’ and ‘sporadic antagonism.’¹³⁵ Harris described in his memoir how acts such as these kept up the Islanders’ morale: ‘today it does not seem of much consequence, but at that time these useless little act[s] cheered us up no end. We felt that a blow had been struck against the authority of the Third Reich.’¹³⁶

Bunting believed Islanders ‘anxious to demonstrate their defiance and bravado towards the Germans ... and [were] quick to point to resistance activities, however petty, that they may have been involved in.’¹³⁷ Bunting felt she had divined a conspiracy of silence on issues such as resistance. This, she argued, stemmed from Islanders’ fears of being judged for not having resisted the enemy enough.¹³⁸ However, such a formulation missed the mark. Resistance in the Islands tended to be an individual affair or based on loosely linked networks, which those involved kept very quiet about. Therefore, general knowledge of resistance activities was correspondingly affected in Jersey and Guernsey.¹³⁹ Islanders were not anxiously covering themselves against accusations of complicity when relating minor instances of defiance or opposition the Germans. They were, and still are, genuinely proud of the myriad of ways in which they and their parents stood up to the enemy, outwitted them and went out of their way to make their rule difficult.

¹³⁴ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, pp. 87-88.

¹³⁵ IWM, ‘Le Brocq Transcript’.

¹³⁶ Harris, *A Boy Remembers*, p. 83.

¹³⁷ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 191.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4 and pp. 320-321.

¹³⁹ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 353.

Many memories of defiance to the occupiers garnered for this study were akin to Harris's 'useless little acts' in terms of military value. However, their role in maintaining morale cannot be underestimated, nor can their status in local mythmaking. A similar process could be found in other occupied nations. Kathleen Stokker's research into Norwegian resistance found that as Nazi occupation policy grew harsher, defiance towards the occupiers grew through low-level acts of resistance. Stories of these acts led to the circulation of jokes at the expense of the occupiers, which became an important part of Norwegian defiance.¹⁴⁰ Chad Bryant drew comparable conclusions about Czech opposition to Nazi rule. Following the destruction of most Czech resistance groups in the aftermath of the assassination of Reinhardt Heydrich on 27 May 1942, Czech resistance began to centre around low-level defiance and jokes of these, which served to maintain a sense of Czech resistance and reinforce national identity in the absence of an armed movement.¹⁴¹ For several decades after the war in the Islands, low-level acts of defiance such as wearing patriotic symbols, making jokes at the expense of the enemy or outwitting them during searches for wireless sets, illegally sourced food or other contraband, were acceptable memories of opposition towards the Germans. These were far easier to discuss than activities such as aiding escaped slave labourers, stealing German supplies and equipment, acts of sabotage and assaulting German soldiers. As Willmot argued, those who spoke after the war of defiant acts 'did so almost casually and without interpreting it as an act of resistance, often framing them as jokes.'¹⁴²

Islanders were aware of British exhortations to keep up morale through legal and illicit radio listening. Enthusiastically participating and attending shows which aided this aim was therefore a form of participation in the war effort. This was buttressed by the fact that Islanders were able to listen to and engage with the aural aspect of British wartime culture through their radio listening, informing these performances. Knowles-Smith argued many performances were patriotic in nature, adding extra entertainment when German soldiers who spoke little English unknowingly laughed at jokes at their expense.¹⁴³ Gwen Baker, a Sark teenager, was a member of the Sark Amateur Dramatic Society during the Occupation. On one occasion they sang a song lampooning the Nazi leadership, which contained the verse 'Hitler the Army's after you, The Navy and the Air Force too, Hitler we

¹⁴⁰ Kathleen Stokker, *Folklore Fights the Nazis: Humour in Occupied Norway, 1940-1945* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

¹⁴¹ Chad Bryant, 'The Language of Resistance? Czech Jokes and Joke-Telling Under Nazi Occupation, 1943-1945', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41:1 (2006), pp. 133-134.

¹⁴² Willmot, 'The Channel Islands', p. 79.

¹⁴³ Knowles-Smith, *The Changing Face*, p. 100.

know you're barmy, and so's your army.'¹⁴⁴ This was a risky undertaking given the presence of Sark's *Kommandant* in the front row. Fortunately, the officer chose not to take any action. Humour during these shows performed several functions, keeping up morale, making the Islanders feel a part of the national effort, offering an outlet for patriotism and occasionally a pressure release for negative feelings about the Germans. Carr's research into jokes as a symbolic form of resistance highlighted that Islanders used anti-German jokes as a way of lampooning perceived German stupidity, celebrating Allied successes and cryptically expressing attitudes and emotions which could otherwise have got them into trouble with the occupiers.¹⁴⁵ Humour was an uncontroversial expression of opposition, and for many provided a safe outlet for venting frustrations at the German presence.

Participation in these forms of opposition to the enemy was remembered with pride, and humour often poked fun at the impotence of German efforts to bring the local population into line. Lynette Renouf, a Guernsey teenager during the Occupation, held strong memories of German threats of dire punishment for Islanders caught in possession of British propaganda pamphlets: 'Straight away the Germans would say _ "anyone caught with these papers _ are to be shot", so that was the familiar one. Or deported _ We had hundreds in our house! [Laughs]'¹⁴⁶ Through pausing, Renouf raised the tension, before delivering the story's punchline; instead of heeding the dire threats, her family had merrily continued collecting the '*verboten*' pamphlets. Memories of hiding radios were often related in similar terms, even when discussing the acts of others. Blampied demonstrated a keen awareness of local folklore: 'people hid things from them ... Surprising the amount of people that hid, radios and where they hid them, in the chimney take a brick out and in behind [chuckles].'¹⁴⁷ Blampied indicated the importance of everyday, low-level defiance of German orders to local memories of the period and how Islanders continue to see the inherent humour of these actions, in part derived from glee at getting the better of an arrogant and over-confident enemy. Underpinning the link between defiance and humour was an alignment with one of the core tenants of British war memory – despite the lack of action Islanders had scope for, they never gave in to Nazi rule.

Defiance and humour link together. Many of the anecdotes and narratives discussed here involved getting one over on the Germans or hewed closely to pranks which were juvenile in nature and possessed an inherent humour. For example, Bunting cited how one Guernsey family took great pleasure in supplying the enemy soldiers billeted in their home

¹⁴⁴ 'Entertaining the Island', *Sark Life* 31 (2018) p. 30. (Author's name withheld to protect identity of the interviewee).

¹⁴⁵ Carr, Sanders and Willmot, *Protest, Defiance and Resistance*, p. 34.

¹⁴⁶ Lynette Renouf, Interview with Richard Guille, 25 July 2018.

¹⁴⁷ Blampied, Interview.

with red, white and blue tomato paper for their lavatory, a form of symbolic resistance.¹⁴⁸ Tales of low-level defiance which possessed humour circulated around the bush telegraph of the occupied populations. Adele Lainé, a bursar at Guernsey's Ladies College, recorded several such incidents when they amused her. On 14 July 1943, she wrote:

A German soldier went into a shop and ... asked the assistant if he knew the latest news. The assistant said 'yes ... if you come in tomorrow, I will show it to you.' On the morrow the soldier appeared with ... two Gestapo agents ... The soldier asked for the news, and the shop assistant presented him with a copy of the German bulletin on the local paper. For fooling the Germans, the man had a fortnight's free lodging!¹⁴⁹

On 1 March 1944, Lainé noted down a conversation between a barber and an arrogant German officer who insisted he be served first. On the barber pointing out that a gentleman had been waiting longer, the self-important officer retorted that 'if Mr Anthony Eden came in would you ask him to wait?' The barber replied that 'it would not be necessary. He is too much of a gentleman to want to take anybody else's turn.' Lainé recorded that the Islander was fined twenty *Reichsmarks* for insulting the officer and became 'quite a hero in the eyes of his compatriots.'¹⁵⁰ Lainé's diary demonstrates how humorous instances of 'getting one over on the Jerries' circulated around the Islands, even if only through smart remarks.

The Guernsey Methodist Minister Douglas Ord recorded a tale that arrived in Guernsey from Jersey in late 1942, observing that such jokes at the occupier's expense appeared almost weekly. A propaganda film had been screened in Jersey, containing a battle sequence in which the heroic Germans inflicted grievous casualties on Allied troops with next to none in return. When a military funeral was shown as the film's ending, intended to demonstrate the honour bestowed on the fallen German warrior, a Jerseyman shouted from the audience: 'that man died of indigestion!' Ord documented how the Germans desperately searched in vain for the culprit as the audience collapsed into hysterics.¹⁵¹ Humorous instances were also recalled in memoirs. Richard Weithley, a young Jerseyman, remembered how the Germans in 1940 would come into the gramophone store in which he worked and, with barely suppressed glee, request copies of *We're going to hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line*. The owner of the shop would reply that 'the record is presently out of print but would be reprinted when the time was right.'¹⁵² The continued presence of tales of low-level defiance in retrospective accounts further demonstrates their importance to Islanders' morale at the time and self-esteem afterwards.

¹⁴⁸ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 197.

¹⁴⁹ IWM, Docs. 11109 'Private Papers of Miss A. Le M. Lainé', 14 July 1943, p. 77.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1 March 1944, p. 87.

¹⁵¹ PL, L940.53ORD, 'Diary of Reverend Douglas Ord, Vol. III', 24 November 1942, p. 402.

¹⁵² Richard Weithley, *So It Was: One Man's Story of the German Occupation from Boyhood to Manhood* (Jersey: Starlight Publishing, 2001), pp. 11-12.

Efforts to hide illegal radios or other contraband also generated situations wildly incongruous to normal life, providing fertile ground for humour. Frank Falla observed examples ranging from women hiding radios under babies in prams during a search to a man hiding a radio in a little used chimney, only to find it destroyed after his wife unexpectedly lit a fire.¹⁵³ The Jersey doctor John Lewis recorded one incident of a farmer who was in the middle of cleaning an illegally killed pig when news came of an imminent German search. The scare was only averted when his quick-thinking wife placed the carcass in their best bedroom, dressing it to look like a recently deceased relative. Seeing candles, a bible and a silhouetted shrouded figure, the Germans hurriedly ended the search and left after the woman burst into tears.¹⁵⁴ Islanders did not necessarily find these moments amusing at the time; however, such instances were precisely the material that local legends are made of and had great potential for humorous reframing. Falla noted such subterfuges ‘were not funny at the time, but give me a chuckle when I think of them now.’¹⁵⁵

There is evidence to suggest a cultural circuit in Jersey in relation to such tales. Lewis’s 1982 memoir was a well-received retrospective account written by an informed witness. Some of his anecdotes were reproduced second-hand in later memoirs. One incident, where a young stable girl threw manure over a wall and onto a marching column of German troops who had until that moment been singing lustily, was recounted by Harris in his memoir.¹⁵⁶ Throughout our interviews, Harris referenced conversations with other Islanders and recounted their stories of defiance or prominent incidents, demonstrating how such tales continued to circulate around Jersey long after the Germans had left the island.¹⁵⁷ Lewis’s story of the dressed pig carcass in the bed was reproduced by Frank Keiller, a Jersey teenager who spent time in Jersey’s prison and to whom acts of resistance and defiance were important.¹⁵⁸ This recycling demonstrates how certain actions against the enemy struck a chord with the teenagers and young adults of the Occupation generation, who felt compelled to mention such accounts within their own memoirs of the period. The continuing ‘handing down’ of examples of defiant behaviour, often humorous, exemplifies both the significance of such stories during the Occupation and their importance to Islander identity in the present.

Humorous narratives of defiance appeared in the testimony of those who were young adults and children during the war. Some recounted events that were inherently

¹⁵³ Falla, *The Silent War*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁵⁴ John Lewis, *A Doctor’s Occupation: The Dramatic True Story of life in Nazi Occupied Jersey* (London: Transworld Publishing, 1982), p. 129-130.

¹⁵⁵ Falla, *The Silent War*, p. 87.

¹⁵⁶ Lewis, *A Doctor’s Occupation*, p. 52; Harris, *A Boy*, p. 22.

¹⁵⁷ Harris, Interviews, 4 January 2019 and 5 January 2019.

¹⁵⁸ Frank Keiller, *Prison without Bars: Living in Jersey under the German Occupation 1940-1945* (Bradford on Avon: Seaflower Books, 2000), p. 56.

funny, whilst others articulated more serious recollections in humorous ways. However, one of the more noteworthy features of these is the regularity with which the events described were either not witnessed by the narrator or did not involve them. For younger members of the Occupation generation, there appears to be a desire to ameliorate their own inability to have fully engaged in acts of defiance and consequently there seemed to be an urge to incorporate external instances of this into their narratives. Moreover, it served to align their own testimonies with the broader memory of defiance to the Germans in the Islands. However, the previous section suggests that in terms of the relationship between humour and defiance, there is a threshold. Whilst low-level acts of opposition could be framed in a humorous manner, more dangerous instances of resistance caused narrators to become uneasy.

Simon Mollet, a young Sarkee aged seven in 1945, demonstrated this tendency to incorporate the tales of defiance passed down by older family members into the narratives of those who were children. After a number of escapes from Guernsey in 1941, fishing in the Bailiwick was temporarily banned.¹⁵⁹ After its resumption, the German authorities ordered that all boats had to carry an armed soldier. The men who formed Sark's garrison were generally not well acquainted with the sea. The fishermen sensed an opportunity to get one over on their occupiers in a form of defiance which has become a prominent part of Sark's war memory: sailing their boats into rough patches of sea in order to make the guards seasick. Sybil Hathaway recorded this in her memoir, claiming that 'the Sark fishermen amused themselves by deliberately steering the boats into large waves, watching the German guards getting well soaked and often sea-sick, and staying out much longer than necessary for the pleasure of watching them get sicker and sicker.'¹⁶⁰ Phillip Perrée, a young adult during the Occupation, frequently went fishing with German guards. When interviewed by the IWM in 1992, he recalled one 'miserable' soldier and how he decided to teach him a lesson:

I said to my mate 'we're going to fix him' ...it was a bit rough and we went ... and we dropped anchor and once the boat is anchored it is always rougher ... There came a time when he was sick. I said 'move your gun' ... I thought ... 'that's enough of all this damn nuisance.'¹⁶¹

Unbeknownst to Perrée and the queasy German, the gun had become wrapped within the anchor rope: '... in pulling the anchor out the gun went [off]. "**OH! My Jesus! What is the Kommandant going to say?**" I said "I don't know he can't well shoot you with that gun

¹⁵⁹ GIA, CC/5-2, 10 'Hathaway to Leale regarding Sark fishing ban', 31 October 1942.

¹⁶⁰ Sybil Hathaway, *Dame of Sark* (London: Heinemann, 1961), pp. 128-129.

¹⁶¹ IWM, Sound 12542, 'Phillip Perrée Interview with Conrad Wood', 14 April 1992.

anyway!’ [Laughs] I laughed and he tried to laugh but he couldn’t he was worried.’¹⁶² The rifle appeared to prompt misgivings for Perrée, and he weighed anchor, feeling that he was pushing his luck. The inadvertent discharging of the rifle caused the soldier to panic and alarmed the Sarkees. Whilst the humorous framing of the remark downplayed the incident in the present (and Perrée’s joke suggests that he used humour at the time to try and defuse the situation), his narrative underscored the potentially dangerous nature of this form of getting one over on the Germans.

An awareness of this phenomenon was present in many of the interviews I conducted with Sarkees, often recalled through laughter. Madeleine Collenette laughed when I asked if she knew about this: ‘That’s right yes! [Laughs] ... Took him into rough weather and he never wanted to go back with them again!’¹⁶³ This was a prominent part of Sark’s local war memory and falls into the category of acceptable defiance.¹⁶⁴ It possessed an inherent humour, especially when the gap between the brazenness of the fishermen’s actions and the awareness of the soldiers as to what was happening is taken into account. Mollet described his memories of this:

My uncle and grandfather used to fish for a living ... They had to take somebody armed with them. ... When it was rough the old man used to say ‘I’m going to make him sick,’ you know? [Laughs] ... I was only tiny, but I used to go with them and he’d say ‘oh he’s going to be sick today.’¹⁶⁵

The actions of his father and grandfather were incorporated into his own testimony, and his eagerness to stress that he was present indicated his desire to align himself with this act of defiance. The memory amused him, indicated by his laughter. The direct quoting of his father incorporated that perspective into his own narrative, which had at its base the memories of Mollet’s childhood self. By sharing this, Mollet aligned his childhood memories with the experiences and perspectives of older generations, focusing on a safe memory of defiance which, for the Sarkees, remains inherently amusing.

However, the humour found in the incident differed between Mollet and Perrée. In Mollet’s case, the brazenness of the act and its likely post-war retelling led to him finding humour in the incident. In Perrée’s case, the anecdote was found amusing on more levels. Perrée appeared impressed with his own mischievousness and at the joke he shared with the seasick German. Moreover, the serious incident of the German’s rifle accidentally firing

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Madeleine Collenette, Interview with Richard Guille, April 2016.

¹⁶⁴ This act was not confined to Sark. Simon Herivel, a young Guernsey boy, recalled his father smearing his face with mouldering chum before taking his boat out to ensure the German guard vomited. Simon Herivel, Interview with Richard Guille, 16 April 2018.

¹⁶⁵ Peter Baker, Eileen Baker, Jeannette Drillot and Simon Mollet, Group Interview with Richard Guille, 18 April 2016.

highlighted the dangers for all concerned of engaging in defiant activity. The German could have been disciplined for being unable to account for a missing round, whilst Perrée and his friend could have been in a fatal situation had the soldier misread the incident as a physical attack.¹⁶⁶ That all ended well led Perrée to frame an alarming incident in humorous terms after the war. Mollet's childish memories of the practice, on the other hand, did not acknowledge the risks associated with the activity; however, this does not suggest his memories were invalid. They are reflective of how for younger interviewees, direct memories could be reworked in line with subsequent interpretations and retellings, often provided by older generations.

Harris provided several examples of humour and defiance linking together in his memoir. This was striking due to its humorous tone, containing numerous light-hearted portrayals of the low-level defiance which his family engaged in. One example of this comes from his retelling of an event which he did not witness yet detailed in his memoir, based on the story of the event told by his parents. Harris recalled how an overweight German NCO would cycle past the families' hotel every day, lock his bicycle outside and pompously strut to inspect German troops billeted over the road. Harris recorded how his father decided one day to 'get one over' this German:

A few minutes passed and my father appeared walking towards the Wehrmacht property. Without waiting, he just lifted the bicycle onto his shoulder and walked back to the ... [house] ... [My parents] ... both returned to my bedroom like naughty, excited children to await results ... Out came the sergeant ... [who] ... stopped, facing the blank wall. He could not get it into his head that his bicycle had gone ... Meanwhile ... my staid and proper parents were crying with laughter. When I came home from school, they could hardly tell me for laughing.¹⁶⁷

Whilst Harris did not actually witness this incident, the story amused him so much that he included this in his memoir. After the passing of his parents, Harris became the vehicle for their memories of the past, incorporating them into his own narrative of the war and immortalising them in the text of his memoir. This is further evidence for the intergenerational quality of Occupation memory for those who were children at the time. This was one of the 'useless little acts' which Harris felt kept his and his family's morale up, and the story possessed an inherent humour centring around the incongruity of his 'staid and proper' parents engaging in a childish prank. In this case a defiant activity was recounted in a manner which sought to enable the reader to find the event humorous. Furthermore, that Harris was not present for this event indicates the drive for some to include instances of

¹⁶⁶ The fate of the German is unclear, although Perrée noted that he never saw the soldier in question again. IWM, 'Perrée Interview'.

¹⁶⁷ Harris, *A Boy Remembers*, pp. 82-83.

defiance in their narratives, even if they were not directly involved. It was striking that Harris' testimonies contained both amusing and risky memories. As seen earlier, the subject of the *GFP* search was upsetting for Harris. However, composure was attainable through the discussion of less serious acts, which generated humour, cocked a snook at the Germans and held less scope for the family to get into trouble with the occupier.

Conclusion

Public and popular memories of the Occupation in the Islands have historically deviated significantly from the reality of the experience. Resistance has been identified by Carr, Sanders and Willmot as a previously marginalised aspect of the Occupation, memories of which having undergone silencing owing to their 'taboo' nature in the Islands. This chapter has considered whether it remains challenging for Islanders to narrate owing to its status as 'alternative' to the Churchillian paradigm. Moreover, it has explored these questions following recent evolutions in public and popular memory, with increasing memorialisation and representation in heritage of Channel Island resistance and prominent activism by scholars such as Carr. The memoryscape of the two main Islands has undergone substantive shifts in recent years, which poses the question whether they have tangibly influenced the oral testimonies of Islanders, even those who were young adults or children at the time. For the youngest members of the sample, whose narratives were constructed from sporadic memories and familial stories, their testimonies have a greater potential for being influenced by changing discourse around the Occupation.

Despite extensive efforts from scholars and heritage professionals to celebrate and legitimise local resistance figures, resistance remains a sensitive subject, likely to prompt defensive responses emphasising its impossibility, which have been evident since at least the 1980s. The defensiveness exhibited by Le Sueur and Bichard indicated how the crisis of memory in the 1990s has left a permanent mark on Islanders when the subject of resistance is raised. Other sensitivities were also evidenced when the negative outcomes of resistance were discussed. Whilst deeper research upon these themes should be conducted, the chapter's analysis demonstrates the durability of local discourses, evolved in response to outside challenges of passivity. The childhood perspective of the Occupation provided limited scope or motivation to challenge this defensive discourse. Furthermore, the lack of recognition in local memory of those who resisted impinged upon their knowledge of the subject, making some interviewees unwilling to comment from a second or third hand position with authority. Some also held a deeper understanding of the risks and potential cost of resistance: both Harris and Nicolle's testimonies referenced the more dangerous activities of older siblings and presented mixed feelings about their wartime actions. Harris, a long-

term Jersey resident and member of a family persistent in their opposition to the enemy, presented a nuanced view, reflective of Jersey's more enthusiastic commemoration of resistance. Conversely, Nicolle indicated the misgivings Guernsey has towards those who resisted, where the 'destabilising delinquent' view still circulates.

Examples of discomposure were in evidence throughout this chapter, yet did not necessarily result from the 'alternative' nature of the subjects discussed. Whilst the defensiveness Islanders demonstrated in relation to resistance stems from the collective discomposure engendered in the 1990s by hostile comments as to the Islanders' perceived passivity in the face of the Germans' Occupation, the 'no resistance because resistance was impossible' defence remains a central strategy for composing views on the topic, stymying any potentially negative lines of questioning from the outside researcher. Composure and discomposure intertwine and are inextricably bound together in these cases. The weight of Britain's heroic war narrative was a factor fuelling this, centring around 'never giving in' and myths of widespread French resistance which created a negative contrast with more low-key and individualistic forms found in the Islands, which provided fertile ground for discomposure. Unlike defiance, resistance was contentious at the time. Replete with potentially grave consequences, it remains a complex and challenging subject for Islanders caught between recent efforts at celebrating resistance heroes and long-standing misgivings over its legitimacy and wisdom. However, the consequences of opposing the enemy could be traumatic, particularly for children such as Harris and Nicolle, with the former returning to the GFP search of his home and arrest of his father and brother again and again. In these two cases, the unease evident in discussing resistance stemmed from the unsettling nature of events rather than a fear of being judged.

When Islanders discuss 'resistance', particularly in Guernsey, the subject remains too serious and loaded to discuss with comfort, yet when speaking of 'defiance' many could easily attain composure through a combination of validating local and personal pride. This indicates that, amongst those who remember the Occupation, the discourse surrounding resistance remains resilient to change and continues to be filtered through the Churchillian paradigm. This authenticates the discussion of the patriotic and humorous, and stymies the comfortable discussion of a part of the Occupation which, on the one hand, held potentially serious consequences for the Islanders, and on the other, represents an area where they have historically and unfairly been judged for not having gone far enough in showing their opposition to the Germans. It is striking, in light of the findings of chapter four, that neutral or positive comments on German behaviour in the Islands represent a more comfortable subject for Islanders to compose, one validated by a powerful local discourse. The subject of Channel Island resistance, on the other hand, lacks authentication from the point of view of

the British, and has been further stymied by the Islands' uneasy public relationship with this aspect of their Occupation history.

It is telling, therefore, that acts at the less serious end of the spectrum of 'resistance', were frequently discussed with equanimity and often in a joking manner. Through articulating low-level instances of defiance, in a humorous manner or in a way which suggests that the interviewee or memoirist found the memory amusing, younger Islanders align themselves with local tales of acceptable resistance to German rule. For those of the 1.5 generation, tales handed down by their elders (and occasionally witnessed by young eyes) were their closest contact to oppositional acts to the enemy, and allowed them an opportunity to engage within this discourse. These stories link in firmly with British ideas of having never given in to Nazism and into the traditional view of resistance in the Islands as framed within the Churchillian paradigm, which tended to focus on the less overt, and often humorous, forms of defiance to the occupiers. Resultantly, memories of this were composed with greater ease, aided by their inherently humorous nature which provided a link with Britain's wartime humour. This sheds greater light upon the reflex of some to relapse onto the 'resistance was impossible' defence and the semantic baggage attached to the term. Acts such as retaining wireless sets, reading forbidden pamphlets dropped by Allied aircraft, poking fun at the enemy or going out of one's way to inconvenience them - all forms of opposition - are recounted with pride. These instances further highlight the relevance of the Churchillian myth to those who remember the Occupation, and how, even when other parts of their testimonies delve into subjects which run counter to that myth, such as the Germans or the OT labourers, testimonies reflexively return at points to that grander, experientially and mnemonically relevant, discursive framework analysed in chapter three. Alterations to public and popular discourse in the Islands evidently take their time to filter through to the testimonies of Islanders who remember the period. This points to the strength of the Churchillian paradigm in the Islands and its remarkable durability as a device for composing a difficult past.

Conclusion

In relation to the Channel Islands' Occupation, oral sources have long been undervalued, under-theorised and rejected in favour of contemporary documents or public forms of war memory. The thesis has explored the complex discursive landscape within which Islanders must articulate their experiences of the Occupation, and the strategies which they utilised during oral history interviews. In filling this lacuna, the thesis provides a deeper understanding of private Occupation memory and how it interweaves with public and popular memories of the Occupation within the Islands. The study of Islanders' memories, and how these are composed during oral history interviews, opens up fresh and more nuanced insights into how Islanders, both of the 1.5 Occupation generation and those who were young adults at the time, experienced the past and wish to remember it in the present. Their testimonies reveal the continuing relevance of the Churchillian paradigm (the narrative which foregrounded ideals of resolve, stoicism and victory) to Islanders. They demonstrate how the experientially vital fact that the Germans behaved with more restraint than elsewhere continues to authenticate nuanced interpretations of the Germans, despite greater awareness of German crimes in the Islands and in Europe. By seeking out where popular myths in the Islands interweave and blend with individuals' experiences, areas of significant confluence and divergence are telling of what was remembered by Islanders at the time, and what memories can be shared. Through incorporating Sarkian testimonies the thesis presents a more holistic history of the Occupation as previous studies, on the grounds of proportionality, tend to focus exclusively upon the larger Islands of Guernsey and Jersey. Sark, with its limited public commemorations and divergent Occupation experience, even from the other Islands, provided interviewees who were less pressured by dominant local discourses in composing their testimonies, with these reflecting the reality of the Sarkian experience more than any locally constructed narratives.

Occupation memory revolves around two poles. Firstly, the Islands' long allegiance to Britain and their immediate alignment with the mainland's emergent war narrative has led to the Islands adopting the commemorative tropes and discursive frameworks of the latter. Secondly, the Islands' peripheral experiences within that war have produced a pressure to diverge and embrace the uniqueness of the Islands' experiences within the British context. Since the furore of the 1990s in the Islands, the thesis has identified a distinct shift within Occupation historiography towards studying groups of Occupation victims (political prisoners, Jews, deportees and OT labourers) and seeking to render the Churchillian paradigm outmoded. The resistance and victimhood paradigm is characterised by aggressive efforts to mould public and popular memory in the Islands to incorporate previously marginalised groups. These trends have generated the tension between the experience and

memory of the Occupation that conceptually problematises how Islanders can compose their narratives of occupation.

Efforts to invalidate the Churchillian paradigm are likely to struggle as long as those who remember the Occupation remain alive, for this interpretation of the Occupation remains both experientially relevant to Islanders and widely understood and accepted. Like Britain's 'Myth of the Blitz' and the 'People's War', the Churchillian paradigm in the Islands contains enough truth so as to be virtually indestructible: the vast majority of the Islanders survived terrible conditions and the repressive occupying regime, demonstrated remarkable endurance and adaptability, maintained faith in a British victory and did so with a sense of humour. Tropes such as 'make do' which reinforce the ubiquitous experiences of improvising and managing shortages appeared as mnemonic shorthand, aligning Islanders' memories with the broader cultural hegemon of Britain's war. Stoic identities were also projected, frequently in the form of jokes which downplayed the extent to which the Islanders had suffered. 'Safe' subjects, which some indicated a palpable enthusiasm to discuss, such as exciting military events for young boys, patriotism and Liberation Day, provided important links to the Churchillian paradigm for Islanders and memories that could be discussed safely and easily joined to the collective experience. These allowed Islanders to make sense of their often-difficult experiences of near starvation and focus upon the positive outcomes of the Occupation.

This was not denialism or a desire to avoid uncomfortable subjects. Neither is the Churchillian paradigm an insidious myth preventing Islanders from articulating their pasts accurately. The durability of the alignment between the Islands' experiences of the Occupation and Britain's war memory stemmed from its chiming with Islanders' memories, a process which began during the Occupation through Islanders' patriotism and radio listening. Certainly, it represents a framework for Islanders to utilise when composing parts of the narratives; however, it is also one which validates many aspects of their experiences and how they wished to see themselves both at the time and afterwards. Further research could explore the endurance and continuing relevance of the Churchillian paradigm to Islanders across different generations. Moreover, the experiences of Island evacuees in Britain, and the role they played in shaping war remembrance in the Islands, requires examination. The six evacuated interviewees provided rich testimonies of experiences which lay outside of the Occupation story. These were superficially similar to the experience of British children evacuated during Operation Pied Piper in September 1939 for Island children evacuated with schools, yet fundamentally closer to the experience of continental refugees for many other evacuated Islanders. A future study could seek to garner a wider

sample of testimony and explore the complex memory of the evacuation, which both synchronises and diverges from the British experience of evacuation.

Moreover, Islanders continued to achieve composure when the subject becomes less validated by the Churchillian paradigm. The presence of thousands of German soldiers was a defining aspect of the Occupation. Whilst their nuanced and objective recollections of 'good' soldiers, human interactions with the enemy and the kindness shown by soldiers to Island children stray well outside the confines of British war memory, such memories are locally validated and were experientially important to the Islanders' survival. The discourse in the Islands surrounding the 'good' Germans, with its clear delineations between different groups of the occupiers (with fanatical Nazis or domineering officers being viewed negatively), and fraternisation and collaboration, allows Islanders to maintain their composure when moving onto such potentially subversive, and previously judged, ground. Chapter four makes important contributions to our understanding of this aspect of the Occupation. However, the thesis has explored one half of this dynamic in detail, and future work should delve further into the German side of this relationship.

Islanders were not immune to cultural pressures, often relying upon dominant discursive frameworks in composing their narratives. When this was not possible, or where previous judgement from outsiders had occurred and sensationalised a subject, seen in relation to resistance and collaboration, Islanders could become discomposed. Occasionally, this stemmed from the interviewee feeling ashamed of their experiences, or fearing judgement due to their dissonant nature. Others, through their discomposure, evidenced the emotions of the past and the long-term damages wrought by criticisms in the 1990s. Conversely, many more were able to share their memories with equanimity, and even those who became discomposed on some subjects, such as Jennifer Carré and Harold Nicolle, could regain composure on others. Recalling the OT labourers, a visible group of Nazism's victims, could cause emotional responses. Largely, this stemmed from the upsetting nature of the labourers' treatment, but in the case of Nicolle it was the fact that the OT had been brought to the Islands by men like the two young soldiers who befriended himself and his family. This caused him difficulties in our interview as he struggled to identify, and possibly disassociate, the young soldiers from their compatriots who brought mass death to Europe during the war. This drew attention to a silence within Islanders' discussion of the occupiers, namely the nature of German conduct elsewhere in Europe, of which the OT labourers provided a discomfiting glimpse. This threatened their judgement of the soldiers in the Islands as having been of a different nature to the brutes of the Gestapo or SS.

Narratives of the Occupation do shift, particularly in relation to prominent cultural depictions, and this is at its most evident in relation to Islanders' memories of the OT labourers. Previously marginalised, the release of *Another Mother's Son* and *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* presented cinematic depictions of the labourers' plight in Guernsey and Jersey. In response to this, many of my Guernsey interviewees were keen to share their stories of the labourers, in cases working through emotionally charged memories despite the discomfort engendered by the telling. In this case, the resistance and victimhood paradigm has validated the discussion of a foreign and previously othered victim group, reinforced by greater knowledge of the local men and women, notably in Jersey, who aided the labourers in hiding in the Islands following escapes. However, as chapter six attests, resistance still remains a contentious term in the Islands, replete with much semantic baggage that instantly links it to ideas of armed resistance, which did not occur in the Islands. The recent cultural value attached to acts of resistance and memorialising those who died for their opposition to Nazism have yet to fully make their mark on individual memories of the Occupation. Interviewees were more likely to fall back upon the mass defence used to Bunting's charges in 1995, that resistance had been impossible in the small, heavily occupied Islands, and could not have occurred.

Scholars have identified that Island resistance was subtle, multifaceted and secretive, enacted through covert and symbolic acts which lacked the organised or armed element seen in western Europe. However, Islanders who remember the Occupation still struggle to align resistance and defiance, instead pointing to the latter as the only margin for action they held in the absence of their ability to resist through force of arms. Rather than embrace the emergent narratives surrounding Island resistance, Islanders continue to show a preference for discoursing within the confines of patriotic defiance, often humorous in nature, which allowed Islanders to get symbolic revenge on the occupiers in a manner that would not bring about mass reprisals. This focus on patriotic acts, less contentious than more serious resistance which, in light of the Island administrations' efforts to discourage and disown resistance that threatened the community, remains a sore subject. This brings the thesis full circle, back to a manifestation of British war memory which remains easier for Islanders to use in composing their narratives than more recent evolutions in local war memory.

The interviews demonstrate Islanders' capacity to switch between dominant discourses in composing their oral testimonies, aligning with the tropes of British war memory when these are relevant to certain memories, yet relying on local discourses, grounded in the experience of the Occupation, for support when discussing alternative subjects to Britain's war narrative. In this sense, the contradictions of the Occupation in terms of its experience and memory, represent a strength for individual Islanders seeking to

situate their experiences of the Occupation within those of the broader collective, allowing the discussion of subjects like fraternisation and positive German behaviour to occur. Although British war memory may remain a key shaper of individual memory in the Islands, Islanders have, by necessity, been forced to find ways to articulate parts of the Occupation which have never sat easily with their British identity.

It is worth returning to a key part of Island identity: the independent streak and dislike of being told what to do by outsiders that stood Islanders in such good stead for weathering Nazi Occupation. This offers a compelling explanation as to why older paradigms of memory - notably myths surrounding the impossibility of resistance and benign German conduct - continue to be espoused despite challenges and recent changes to public and popular memory that would render these assertions problematic. If any group of people were capable of facing down critics, rejecting or rebelling against hegemonic discourses and pointing to the local specificities of their experience, it is the wartime generation of Channel Islanders. As Carr noted, Islanders prefer their heritage to define who they are, as opposed to who they should be.¹ A similar reflex was very much in evidence in their oral testimonies. Islander's resilience to outside pressure and capacity to switch between broader discourses and identities (both of Britain's war memory and that of the Islands), allowed for composure to be retained when the subject strays from the discursive confines of the Churchillian paradigm.

Of all the interviewees, Phyllis Rang possessed the most divergent wartime experience, working for the Germans as a medical interpreter and forming a friendship with a shy young German medic that would blossom into a post-war marriage. Yet few would have dared label Rang a collaborator whilst she was alive, and her testimony was able to coherently incorporate dissonant aspects alongside areas where she felt that herself, and the other Sarkees, had faced down the crisis whilst behaving appropriately both as Channel Islanders and British subjects. As she told me in an apposite concluding statement: 'It was something we could have done without but ... I've always maintained if anybody had to be occupied, I think that the Islanders were the most suited. We've always been self-sufficient, stoical, independent, and known how to cope.'² This is the war that Islanders wish to remember, of Island communities ravaged by Nazi occupation, becoming compromised at times, suffering at others, yet for the most part managing the situation admirably through their loyalty to Britain and their natural resilience as Islanders.

¹ Gilly Carr, *Legacies of Occupation: Heritage, Memory and Archaeology in the Channel Islands* (New York: Springer, 2014), p. 294.

² Phyllis Rang, Interview with Richard Guille, March 2013.

Appendix
Interview Information

Name¹	Year of birth and age in May 1945	Age at time of interview	Date of interview	Length of Interview	Biographical Information	Education/employment/parent's occupations
<i>Jersey</i>						
Mary Blampied	1929 (16)	90	21/05/2019	01:45:35	Young girl living in St Helier during the Occupation from a working-class background. Left school towards the end of the war and worked in a chemist.	Schoolgirl then shop worker. Father a cooper, mother a housewife.
Leo Harris *	1930 (14)	88	04/01/2019 05/01/2019	02:05:04 02:00:22	A Scottish schoolboy living with his parents and brother in a seafront hotel in the Havre des Pas area of St Helier. His family moved to the Island shortly before the Occupation and decided to remain there. Attended school throughout, remembering the privations and also a boyish fascination with the weapons of war. In late 1944, his brother and father	Schoolboy. Father a hotelier on Jersey, mother ran the household.

¹ The majority of names provided here are pseudonyms. Names followed by an ‘*’ indicate the use of a real name, as consented to by the interviewee. All interviews were conducted at the interviewees’ homes. Eileen Baker, Peter Baker, Jeannette Drillot and Simon Mollet were interviewed as a group of four. Jenny and May Hamon were interviewed as a pair, as were Marjorie and Peter Ingrouille. The majority of the interviewees listed here have been directly cited in the thesis. Those whose testimonies were regrettably omitted from detailed analysis in the thesis are included in this table to provide the reader with a full understanding of the perspectives and experiences from which this thesis was drawn.

were arrested by the Geheime Feldpolizei after his brother stole a rifle from the Germans, spending the remainder of the war in the Gloucester Street prison. Harris, his brother and his father all engaged in varying oppositional acts to the Germans, from hiding their car to retaining a wireless set throughout. Published two memoirs of his family's experiences in the 2000s.

Bob Le Sueur*	1920 (25)	98/99	06/01/2019 02:53:57 14/05/2019 04:35:03	<p>A twenty-year-old Victoria College graduate when the Germans arrived, living just outside of St Helier on the coast road running to the west. In the chaos of the evacuation, Le Sueur rapidly found himself promoted in the absence of his manager to running the Jersey branch of the insurance firm he worked for. During his work, which allowed him to travel around the Island, he became involved in the case of Louisa Gould. Le Sueur was part of a ring finding documents, clothes and shelter for escaped Russian labourers, keeping nine hidden throughout the Occupation. He was also a member of the Jersey Democratic Movement and involved with the Jersey Communist Party. In his later years, Le Sueur has been a prominent 'guardian of memory' in Jersey. He was awarded an MBE in 2013 for his humanitarian work. Published a memoir in 2020 and celebrated his 100th birthday.</p>	<p>Ran the Jersey branch of an insurance company during the Occupation. Self-described as lower-middle class. Father a businessman, mother a housewife.</p>
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Guernsey

Paulette Bichard	1928 (16)	90	26/04/2018	01:25:50	A schoolgirl at the start of the war living in Cobo on the north-west coast. Nearly evacuated with her younger brother and sister, however the boat never came and her father chose to keep them home. Attended compulsory German lessons and was ashamed to be presented with a prize for aptitude from a German soldier. Her father hated the enemy and only allowed a soldier into the house once, on that occasion to provide medical care for Bichard. As she grew older, she adopted more and more responsibilities around the home, eventually helping her sister with her young children. Possessed a harrowing memory of OT labourers encamped nearby.	Schoolgirl, worked as a teaching assistant towards the end of the war. Father worked as a grower, whilst her mother had died shortly before the Occupation
Trevor Bisson	1934 (11)	84	23/08/2018	02:00:12	Guernsey schoolboy during the Occupation, living on the west coast of the Island at L'Islet, which he described as the 'far country.' Was caught up in the 28 June air raid on St Peter Port. Possessed visceral memories of the food shortages, which dramatically affected his parents. Bisson himself almost died from malnutrition, and attributed his short stature to his near-starvation during the Occupation.	Schoolboy. Parents ran a small tomato growing business.
Mark Le Cocq	1938 (7)	80	24/04/2018	00:54:14	Evacuated from Guernsey with his mother and three siblings, leaving his father and elder brother behind. Experienced a difficult first billet where his mother was mistreated. Family unit separated for a	Schoolboy at end of the war. Father worked for the Germans for a part of the war, and by the Liberation was working in the

				period but reunited in Bradford. Returned to the island in 1945, where he was teased about having been an evacuee.	glasshouses growing food for the population. Mother a housewife.
Georgina Dorey	1938 (6) d. 2019.	79	24/04/2016 00:52:03	Family left the island in 1939 for her father's work, which took them to Southampton. The family moved to Bolton in 1941 to be with other relatives. They returned to Guernsey in 1945.	Schoolgirl at the end of the war. Father a skilled maritime engineer, engaged in factory work during the war. Mother worked as a housekeeper.
George Duquemin	1936 (8)	80	16/04/2016 01:48:01	Left Guernsey with his mother, leaving his father behind. Spent the first year of the war near Leeds, before moving to Plymouth to live with his aunt in 1942. Returned in 1945. Experienced segregation at school owing to his status as a returnee.	Schoolboy. Father worked on a farm during the Occupation. His mother picked up various work in England, such as in a NAAFI canteen in Plymouth and a Munitions Factory near Leeds.
John Ferbrache	1940 (4)	78	30/04/2018 01:06:43	Very young boy living in the southern parish of St Andrews. The family lived in an area surrounded by Germans billeted in abandoned houses. An officer was friendly towards him and his sister, photographing Ferbrache wearing his forage cap. Possessed vivid flashbulb memories of the Occupation, and demonstrated its enduring importance to him through his participation in the project.	Guernsey infant. Father a tomato grower and mother from another 'growing' family. Younger brother of Georgina Hamelin.
Jenny Gallienne	1927 (18)	91	24/08/2018 01:00:35	Evacuated with the States Intermediate School for Girls in June 1940. Mother and brother evacuated separately, leaving her father and elder brother behind. Her school settled in Rochdale, where she stayed until finishing school in 1943. Her family	Keen schoolgirl. Worked for the Ministry of Labour and Social Security Offices in Bradford between 1944-45.

had settled in Bradford, where Gallienne moved in 1943. The family returned to Guernsey in 1945. The family experienced tension between the eldest son and his mother, who felt abandoned by her in 1940.

Georgina Hamelin	1937 (8) d. 2021	81	03/05/2018	01:15:56	Guernsey schoolgirl living rurally in St Andrews. Fell ill with appendicitis during the Occupation. The surgery, conducted under difficult conditions, left her with permanent health problems. Recalled her parent's efforts to keep her and her siblings fed, and the lengths to which they went to source their children Christmas presents.	Elder sister of John Ferbrache.
Simon Herivel	1940 (5)	78	16/04/2018	00:58:31	Guernsey infant who started school at the end of the war, living in the parish of St Peter with his parents and seven brothers and sisters. Eight other siblings were evacuated in 1940. Recalled being injured by a German explosive whilst at school towards the end of the war. Shared stories of military events that he witnessed, such as artillery practice and aircraft crashing around the Island.	Young schoolboy at the end of the war. Father a grower and fisherman. Mother a housewife.
Marjorie Ingrouille	-	-	28/08/2018	01:18:46	Guernsey schoolgirl living in the south of Guernsey during the Occupation. Shared detailed memories of the food shortages and schooling during the war. Sat down halfway through the interview with Peter Ingrouille and joined in with the discussion for the remainder of the session.	Schoolgirl. Parents were farmers. Wife of Peter Ingrouille.
Peter Ingrouille	1938 (6)	79	-	-	Guernsey schoolboy living in the parish of St Andrews in the south. Shared detailed	Schoolboy. Parents were farmers.

reminiscences of the final years of the war, and the freedom he and the other children of his area enjoyed in the countryside. His parents put out food in the farmyard for the forced labourers, who would leave their column to enter the farm and eat. Intimated that his family formed cordial relationships with neighbouring soldiers. Related some frightening memories of the enemy, such as being chased by a soldier who took umbrage at his and his brother's behaviour.

Frank Lainé	1939 (5)	76	22/04/2016	00:36:16	Very young Guernsey boy living with his mother on the west coast of the Island. His father left his mother before the Occupation. Later, his mother formed a relationship with a Spanish labourer and had two children. The labourer left the Island later in the Occupation, and was never heard from again. Recalled very little owing to his young age and his mother's silence on the subject.	Guernsey infant. Father left the Island at the start of the war. His mother remained, working as a farm labourer.
Stephen Langlois	1940 (4) d. 2021	77	21/08/2018	01:33:37	Guernsey returnee. His parents escaped from Guernsey on 1 July 1940, when his mother was eight months pregnant with him. His father took up labour work for the Government. The family returned in 1945. Heard many second-hand stories of the Occupation during his prominent public career in the island, developing a keen interest in local history.	Father a tradesman, mother a housewife.
Susan Mauger	1926 (19)	92	18/04/2016	00:28:09	A schoolgirl when the Germans arrived, living with her family in the village of St Martin's in the south-east of Guernsey. Was conscripted for work	Schoolgirl. Later employed by the Germans working in a field kitchen. Father a gardener and

					in a German kitchen, which she took up owing to a lack of options for locally sourced employment. Proved an evasive interviewee who was reluctant to discuss controversial aspects. Provided more enthusiastic recollections on the subject of shortages and resultant ingenuities.	mother a dressmaker.	
Joan Mouilpied	de	1938 (7)	80	17/04/2018	01:31:53	Evacuated as an infant with her mother, who was a German national who had fled Nazi persecution. Her father evacuated after them and was sent to Yorkshire, with the family meeting up in Leeds. Later moved to Lancashire for her father's work. Her parents had no support in England and endured poor billets and little food. On returning to Guernsey, they found that their house had been destroyed by the Germans and a lender wanted his money back. Referred to a number of Occupation stories shared by friends and colleagues.	Schoolgirl by the end of the war.
Terry Mouilpied	de	1938 (7)	80	-	-	Young Guernsey boy living in the Vale parish in the north of Guernsey. Recalled the freedom he felt as a child in wartime Guernsey and how the soldiers would not bother children. His father had a crystal set radio, and was almost caught by the Germans with it in his bicycle basket whilst out cycling. He also recalled his mother administering aid to a labourer's injured feet.	Schoolboy by the end of the war. Father a grower, mother a housewife.
Harold Nicolle		1935 (9)	83	09/11/2018	02:04:04	Guernsey schoolboy living in the Friquet area in the centre of the Island. Recalled initial fears over the arrival of the Germans which he soon shed.	Schoolboy. Father a cobbler from Brittany, mother a housewife.

Spoke of himself and his brother following the marching soldiers copying their singing. Related several positive relationships with German soldiers, who appeared to have been close with the family. Shared difficult memories of the OT labourers and their condition. His father was imprisoned during the Occupation for a short period and treated roughly by a German guard. Recalled the impact of the shortages upon himself, which manifested in dermatological issues. Demonstrated great pride in his memories of Liberation, walking past all the neighbouring Germans carrying a large patriotic symbol with 'impunity.'

Lynette Renouf	1931 (14)	87	25/07/2018 02:34:50	<p>A Guernsey schoolgirl living in the Cobo area during the Occupation. Renouf and her siblings almost evacuated with their school, but were kept behind by her parents after the evacuation boat never turned up. Owing to the area's high German population, Renouf shared several memories of the soldiers, both positive and frightening. Held a grudge against a local family she felt to have collaborated. Her father made illegal crystal radio sets in the family home, and sent Renouf out to deliver them to his seller on her way to school. Renouf recalled the family radio almost being discovered on one occasion, as well as other details of her father's opposition to the Germans. Provided detailed reminiscences about the food shortages and how they affected the family, notably in relation to her and her mother's long-term health</p>	<p>Schoolgirl. Father an engineer employed by the States of Guernsey, mother a housewife.</p>
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problems. Revelled in her memories of her family's patriotic expression at the Island's liberation.

Jean Rougier	1930 (15)	88	04/05/2018	01:24:01	Evacuated with her school in June 1940. Her mother evacuated with another school with Rougier's aunt and nephew. Her father evacuated separately. Her school travelled to Stockport, where they were initially billeted in the Town Hall. The family united in Salisbury for a period, before travelling to Coventry for her parents' war work. Following the heavy raid in November 1940, the family moved to a small village in Lancashire. They finally settled in Stockport, returning to Guernsey in 1945.	Schoolgirl. Father a builder, mother a housewife.
Laurence de la Rue	1940 (5)	78	20/04/2018	00:26:42	Very young Guernsey child at the end of the war. Recalled limited events towards 1945, as well as family stories passed down to him by his father. His participation demonstrated the importance of the Occupation to those of the 1.5 generation.	Guernsey infant. Father conscripted to work for the Germans, driving a lorry ferrying soldiers around the Island. His mother was a housewife.
Stanley Tostevin	1932 (13) d. 2018	84	13/04/2016	01:07:24	Evacuated with the Hautes-Capelles school in June 1940 along with his older brother. He was initially billeted in a small village near Wigan. The school subsequently moved to Oldham for the rest of the war. He was billeted with a local family, forming a close bond with them. Returned to Guernsey in 1945 with the school.	Schoolboy. Parents remained in Guernsey during the war. Father ran a cycle shop and both parents ran a guest house.
Eleanor Vaudin	1935	83	19/04/2018	01:05:52	Young girl living at L'Ancrese in the north of	Guernsey schoolgirl. Father was

(10)

Guernsey during the Occupation. She was almost evacuated in 1940, but her mother decided to keep her home. Her elder brother did evacuate, and his return and feelings of abandonment caused issues for the family in 1945. Recalled vividly the food shortages her family suffered towards the end of the war, and was deeply moved by the suffering of the OT labourers in the nearby camp at Paradis.

employed working in the Islands' glasshouses.

Sark

Alexander Baker	1930 (14)	88	25/04/2018 22/08/2018	01:56:28 02:27:47	Schoolboy living on Sark at the Dos Dane during the Occupation, moving to Guernsey with his mother and siblings in 1943. Had fond memories of wartime Sark and recalled the positive behaviours of the garrison. Worked as a messenger boy in Guernsey towards the end of the war. Related how he and his friends would steal food from the Germans, and revelled in the thrill of evading suspicion.	Sark schoolboy. Father was a fisherman and his mother a housewife.
Eileen Baker	1939 (5)	78	18/04/2016	01:29:51	Possessed few direct memories of the period, being an infant during the Occupation. Shared extracts from her mother's written testimony during the group interview at points which she felt were pertinent.	Child under school age. Father a farmer and gardener, mother a housewife. Wife of Peter Baker.
Peter Baker	1929 (15) d. 2019.	87	-	-	Sark schoolboy. His family moved to Guernsey in the middle of the Occupation for his father's work in St Peter Port.	Schoolboy. Father was the foreman of the Maseline Harbour works on Sark at the time. Husband of Eileen Baker.
Jeanette Drillot	1937 (7)	79	-	-	A young Sark girl living in the south of 'Big Sark'. Possessed several memories of kind soldiers who befriended her parents and brought toys and presents to herself and her younger brother. Spoke at length in the group interview in relation to shortages and the improvisations of her parents in ameliorating these.	Schoolgirl. Father a carpenter by trade, but with a smallholding and various other employment. Mother a housewife.
Simon Mollet	1937 (7)	78	-	-	Young Sark boy living in the east of the Island	Schoolboy. Father a builder,

					with his parents and siblings. Owing to his later career as a fisherman, he recalled many details about the activities of the Sark fishermen, particularly his father and grandfather, who took him out in the boats, which had to carry an armed German guard to prevent escapes. Related memories of kind German soldiers who gave him chocolate and sweets.	mother a housewife.
Gwen Baker	1927 (18)	86	-/03/2013	00:29:55	Sark teenager who lived with her mother and brother in the centre of the Island. Left school near the beginning of the war, and was a keen member of the Sark Amateur Dramatic Society, which put on plays during the Occupation. The family were listed for deportation in February 1943 for no reason other than her mother's employment on the Island was not of benefit to the garrison, and sent to Germany. They experienced the transit camp of Compiègne, which proved traumatic for Baker. They were then sent to Biberach in southern Germany, ending the war in a small camp at Liebenau. The family returned in May 1945.	Schoolgirl. Mother worked as a maid in a local hotel prior to their deportation in February 1943. Father had passed away before the Occupation.
Jennifer Carré	1926 (18) d. 2019.	89	22/04/2016	00:34:53	Sark teenager living on the Island's east coast. Proved a cautious interviewee who was unwilling to expand on difficult subjects, particularly in relation to the Germans. Enthusiastically presented detailed reminiscences of the shortages and how her mother and grandmother improvised to cope with these. Demonstrated pride in how the Islanders had survived this aspect of the Occupation and how this had set her generation	Schoolgirl then worked on the family farm and helped mother with housework. Father a farmer. Mother ran their guesthouse.

apart from those that followed.

Annette Carteret	De	1927 (18) d. 2020.	89	21/04/2016	01:17:35	Sark teenager during the war who left school in the middle of the war, living on the east coast of the Island. She recalled a number of personal friendships with the German soldiers and appeared to show regret that she had not maintained better contact after the war. Possessed strong memories of the deprivations, particularly of clothing and food.	Schoolgirl. Any personal employment unclear. Father was a carter. Mother took in German laundry during the Occupation.
Madeleine Collenette		1928 (16)	87	15/04/2016	01:30:46	Sark schoolgirl until 1943/1944, when she left school and helped her mother run the family farm on Little Sark. Remembered learning German, travelling to school past marching columns of German soldiers and being taken for a car ride by an officer who took pity on the young girl walking into the village. By the end of the war the farm was surrounded by hundreds of soldiers, and she recalled several instances where starving soldiers stole food from the farm. Met several German soldiers after the war who had returned to visit the family who had run the farm.	Schoolgirl. After leaving school at fourteen, she helped her mother run the farm the family owned.
Annabel Cook		1936 (9)	80	16/04/2016	00:48:12	Sark schoolgirl during the Occupation. Recalled events from a child's perspective, and refused to speculate on what the adults may have thought or felt. Possessed strong memories of her mother's efforts to feed her and her siblings throughout the war, notably instances where she put food on the table and left without eating anything.	Schoolgirl. Father a farm labourer, mother a housewife.

Jenny Hamon	1939 (5)	76	19/04/2016	01:07:42	Very young Sark girl during the Occupation. Possessed few direct memories, apart from her cousin, Nanette Hamon, being killed by a German mine in 1944. Hamon was injured in the incident and required medical treatment from the Germans.	Child under school age. Father a carpenter by trade. Parents compelled to work for the Germans in a menial capacity. Sister of May Hamon.
May Hamon	1934 (10)	81	-	-	Schoolgirl at the beginning of the Occupation until its end. Recalled learning German and the shortages the family endured throughout, as well as presenting an older perspective upon Nanette's death.	Schoolgirl. Elder sister of Jenny Hamon
Phillip Feuvre	Le 1938 (6)	75	-/03/2013	00:54:32	A Sark boy living with his parents and three siblings. Recalled the freedom he enjoyed on the Island and how the Germans didn't bother children. Almost got the family in trouble when a childish prank ended up knocking an officer from his bicycle.	Schoolboy. Brother of Annabel Cook.
Phyllis Rang*	1922 (23) d. 2018.	90	-/03/2013	00:45:02	A teenager when the Island was occupied living with her parents and two sisters at La Ville farm on the east coast of Sark. Wished to take German lessons, even though above school age, and was accepted. Demonstrated an aptitude for this and became an interpreter for the German medical workers when they treated locals. Developed a friendship with Werner Rang during the Occupation, which became romantic after the war, the couple marrying in 1948.	Sark woman helping family run their farm. During the Occupation became an interpreter for the Germans.
James Perrée	1940 (5) d. 2018.	76	15/04/2016	00:53:13	A young Sark boy living near the top of the hill to the harbour. Clearly recalled the starvation	Child under school age. Father a farm labourer, mother a

Doris Lanyon	1932 (12) d. 2020.	84	19/04/2016 00:31:08	conditions towards the end of the Occupation and the desperation of the Germans on Sark in the final months of the war. Was one of the last people to see Nanette Hamon before her death in a German minefield.	housekeeper.
				A Sark girl living in the Mermaid Tavern during the Occupation. Attended school on Sark until 1944, when she moved to Guernsey for schooling there, staying with an aunt. Had to undergo surgery in Guernsey and was unwell for a period. Spoke of the Germans who frequented the family tavern, who she remembered in positive terms.	Schoolgirl. Father the island's fishing controller during the Occupation. Parent's ran the Mermaid Tavern on the island, which she went on to inherit, owning and running it for the remainder of her life.

Wehrmacht

Werner Rang*	1920 (25) d. 2018.	93	-/03/2013	00:38:14	Born in Thamsbrück in 1920. Enlisted in the <i>Wehrmacht</i> in 1939, training as a medical orderly. Served in the French campaign of spring 1940. Posted to Guernsey in autumn 1941. Spent the remainder of the war in the Bailiwick, being posted to Sark several times. He was sent to a POW camp in England following the surrender of the German garrison. Married Phyllis Baker in 1948. Unable to return to East Germany, Werner settled in Sark and became a popular member of the community, driving the islands' ambulance for many years.	N/A.
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Asterisk denotes interviewee's actual name. All other names are pseudonyms.

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