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MATERIALISING MEMORIES: INVESTIGATING THE REARTICULATION OF PERSONAL NARRATIVES THROUGH THE CRAFTED ARTEFACT

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Charlotte Mary Goldthorpe

THE
ARTEFACTS

Introduction

The Artefacts is the documentation of each individual artefact and can be read and referred to in parallel with the thesis. The referencing within this document is prefixed with a 0. Any other references relate to the thesis document.

This portfolio analyses each artefact through its individual development from start to finish with a focus on different elements such as; the story and narrative, the participant interview, social and historical contexts, analysis of the transcription, use of materials and techniques, the reflective interview and a summary of my own thoughts of each artefact experience.

It demonstrates how collaborative making took place through stories told and how skills were shared, learned and developed through a series of verbal and process-based exchanges with both participants and craftspeople as discussed in the thesis (4.4.8).

The artefacts are presented in the order in which their making took place providing a chronological journey through the processes and techniques used and demonstrates how I developed my studio practice and worked with and alongside participants and craftspeople.

Artefact making - although to an extent chronological - involves certain processes overlapped and intertwined (4.4.7), therefore specific making experiences such as the turning of brass metal frames may appear in one artefact's story but also be referenced in another (*Brass Shoes* and *Watch*).

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Reflection

Toilet Dolly

01.1 – The Narrative

Claire's nana could crochet beautifully and one of her most prominent memories is of her nana sitting crafting in an armchair. She would visit the market with her on a Saturday to buy cheap acrylic yarn, making sure they would always return home before the wrestling started on television. Her nana could crochet a whole jumper or dress in an afternoon whilst Claire played. She recalled how her nana did not bother using a pattern and could size up her customers by eye. Because of this, the size could sometimes be a little off, but the garments were always very well made. She remembers only happy memories from her nana's house; they revolve heavily around sights and smells, including the familiar brands that her nana would use: Duraglit polish, Silverkrin hairspray, Hermesetas and Toblerone. For Claire, each of these brands is entwined with her memories.

She remembers there was always a suitcase in the corner of the kitchen. When anyone was paying a visit to Ireland where her nana's family were from, it went with them, carrying English biscuits and sweets and when it came back, it would be full of potatoes! She has a number of objects that remind her of her nana still, including a toilet dolly her nana had crocheted for her which sits in her bathroom, concealing a damp toilet roll under the skirt.



Figure 01 – *Toilet Dolly*. (2018).



Figure 02 – First crochet attempt. Miniature dishcloth in cotton yarn. (2016).



01.2 – The Interview

Claire's interview was the first to be conducted after the pilot study. She had submitted her story through one of my collection points at a conference I presented at, and wanted to be further involved with the study. The interview took place at the University in a small, empty classroom. I was a little bit nervous and unsure of what to expect from the interview, however, Claire was confident and enjoyed talking about her nana's life and so the conversation flowed easily.

We discussed things such as her nana's love of hairspray – Silverkrin for everyday use and Elnett for special occasions (Claire, Personal Communication, December 16, 2016). She did not understand why she thought of her nana through objects, but recited anecdotes of her nana's dislike of pint glasses, dangly earrings and milk bottles on the dining table. This built a distinctive image of her nana portraying her quirky nature, which gave me a number of areas to think about within the making. I referred back to the written story Claire had submitted at the conference throughout the discussion and asked her to elaborate on certain elements, such as not being able to learn how to crochet from her nana.

Claire discussed the relationship with her nana from the memories of being a young child to growing up and then her nana passing away. She concluded with an anecdote of spitting on a hanky and wiping bird muck off her gravestone, like her nana had done countless times to her when she had dirt on her face. Claire's interview was bookended with humour and covered a vast amount of personal information, however prominent elements stood out through the transcription such as the crocheted items, the suitcase near the door and prominent brands of the time that I could draw upon when making the artefact.

01.3 – Social and Historical Context

Knitting is a well-known and wide-spread domestic and industrial craft, often (or traditionally) associated with women. Giving the gift of a knitted object may be considered old fashioned in our current consumer society, however, the value of the knitted object is not necessarily either monetary or aesthetic, per se, rather, it is in what has been given in its creation: time (and often, affection). Jo Turney has argued that this type of hand-crafted object is “unique (and often a selling point for the professional crafts) as each object bears witness to the imperfection of the maker’s hand, rendering such objects unrepeatable and non-standard” (Turney, 2012, p. 305).

In many cases, mass manufactured items such as clothing are also sewn and made ‘by hand’ however, being made on a production line means there is little connection to the future user. Making a gift is significant because items are “deliberately made with a purpose and/or recipient in mind” in the same way as the artefacts (Turney, 2012, p. 305). It is in this way that Claire’s nana would state “come here to me, you” (Claire, Personal Communication, December 16, 2016) to size her up and begin making her a garment. Turney suggests that the use of knitting and giving finished garments as a gift is a “sign of familial devotion” (2012, p. 307) which binds the maker and the wearer together. The wearing of the finished garment symbolises the emotional connection between the maker and wearer. Claire did not understand the sentimental value her nana wove into these garments as a child; however, it is only now on reflection that she recognises the emotional ties that they provided; “I didn’t really like them at the time but I’d give anything, ANYTHING for one now” (Claire, Personal Communication, December 16, 2016).



Figure 03 – Toilet dolly crocheted using cheap, acrylic yarn. (2017).

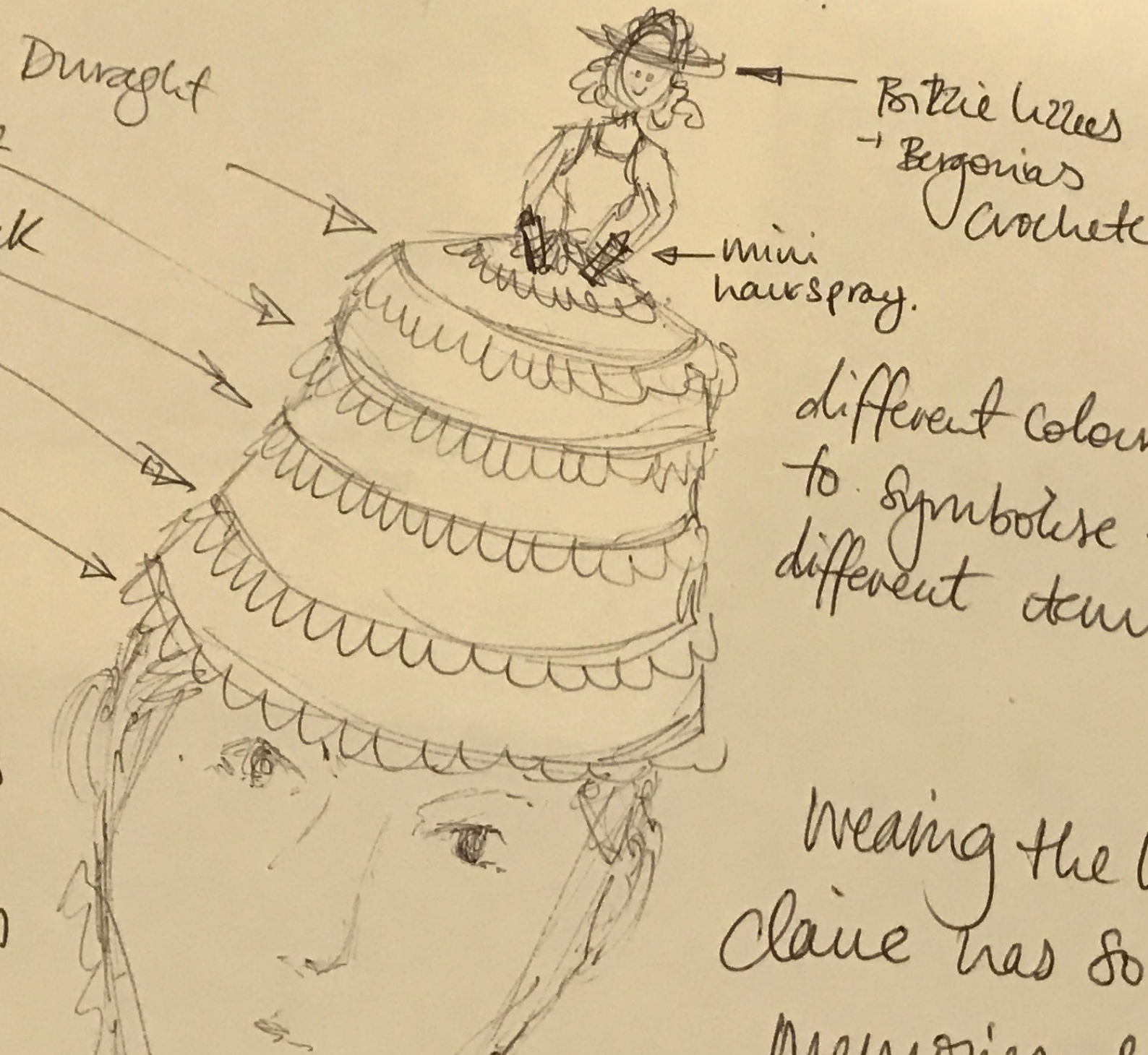


Figure 04 – Toilet dolly crocheted using cheap, acrylic yarn. (2017).

...but you had to drink them out of half pint
in the street, to smoke in the street and to drink

...and out was the crochet; about that you'd

let Dolly hat.
...fact to 'store' memories of lost love)



Duraght

Bobbie Lilies
- Bergonia's
Crochete

mini
hairspray.

different colour
to symbolise
different stories

wearing the
Clare has so

Memories

01.4 – Transcription and Initial Ideas

Claire's interview was the first to be transcribed and I felt that the process of re-listening and typing using my own system would allow the story to become more embedded within my own memory, letting me re-tell it through the making process (3.3.1). This set a precedent for subsequent interviews and how they were to be transcribed, as discussed in (4.3.1). The key elements were noted within the transcription; in particular the brands discussed and the memory objects described, such as the crocheted toilet dolly and the suitcase that sat by the door. Claire's toilet dolly was identified as a starting point for my ideas as it embodied the memory of her nana actively crocheting and is also still admired by Claire at home. The suitcase, was considered as a container of memories that represented Claire's nana's Irish heritage and family ties (fig. 05).

01.5 – Use of Materials and Techniques

One of Claire’s strongest memories was her nana trying to teach her to crochet. She remembered how difficult it was, because she was left-handed and her nana was right-handed. I was lucky enough to work with a woman at the University who was a textile artist specialising in crochet, knit, and embroidery and after a brief discussion about what I was planning to make she offered to teach me the basics of crochet. For our first lesson she gave me a skein of cotton yarn and a crochet hook (size 4). She taught me how to hold the hook, form stitches and then work into them to create my first line of crochet. Within an hour, I had produced a very wonky, miniature dishcloth (fig. 02). At first holding the crochet hook felt unfamiliar and I found it hard to produce an even line of stitches, which made me feel like a failure; however, because the narrative relied so heavily on using crochet, I persevered until the formation of stitches came naturally. I practiced crotchet at every available opportunity, and found that – when making – I thought about different elements of Claire’s narrative which was transfigured through every stitch into a physical object.

Having learned the basics of crochet I began to identify what techniques I would need to learn to create a toilet dolly. I bought a crochet book and learned to read patterns to create three-dimensional pieces and I referred to YouTube when I needed to recap a technique I had learned with my teacher. When it came to make the final toilet dolly, I wanted to source materials prominent within the story in the same way Claire’s nana would have. The yarn had to be cheap as Claire stated that her nana “always bought really cheap, nasty acrylic wool” (Claire, Personal Communication, December 16, 2016) and so I visited Huddersfield Indoor Market and bought seven different colours of “cheap, nasty acrylic wool” to represent the different brands Claire spoke of in the interview. As a maker, I try to buy good quality materials and so would normally choose a more expensive, natural wool yarn, however I went

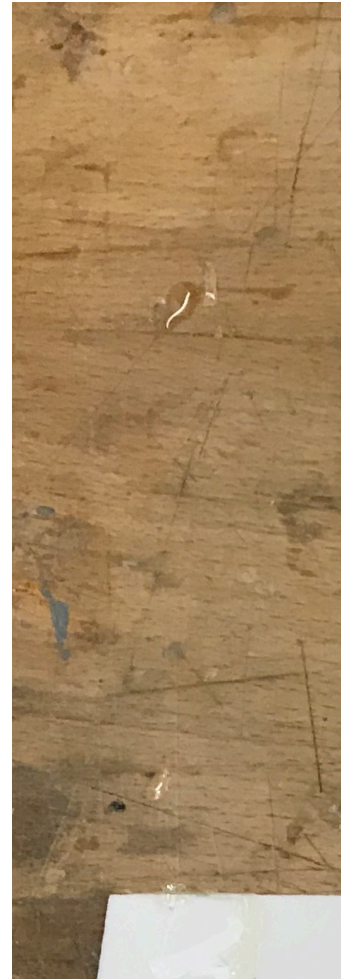




Figure 06 – Release agent samples. (2017).

against my usual habits, as the materials stated within the narrative were a significant element and so it was important that the materials used replicated those within the making process. As a maker I wanted to be immersed within the process by replicating Claire’s nana’s experience and so as the toilet dolly was only part of the process the materials used would not be seen at the final stage, only the negative impression it left in the silicone.

In making the toilet dolly, I used Claire’s nana’s method of working by eye, rather than with a pattern to crochet. As I worked, I replicated her technique and the shape began to grow organically. There were only a few times where I needed to unpick stitches in order to create the desired ‘toilet dolly’ shape. I experimented with crocheting patterns into the shape using the different colours of yarn, which in turn, created the feeling that the narrative was being woven into the artefact through each stitch (fig. 03 & 04). As with many of the repetitive techniques I have used within the making of the artefacts, the rhythm of work played a key part in allowing the narrative to lead my hands through the process of making.

The newly crocheted toilet dolly represented a memory of Claire's nana, however, as a finished piece it lacked my own maker's aesthetic, therefore became an element in the process of subsequently making the finished artefact. To cast the toilet dolly in silicone did follow my own maker's aesthetic, however, it created some challenges, due to the porous and hollow nature of the shape. I experimented with a number of release agents on small samples of crocheted yarn before I worked with the finished crocheted toilet dolly to make sure I could achieve a wool-like finish within the final piece (fig. 06 & 07). In the finished cast, the texture of the wool complimented the smoothness of the doll's plastic features to create a ghostly negative impression in the silicone. Although the wool colours are not visible in the final silicone cast, it was an important part of the process as it allowed me to consider different elements of the narrative that drove the making process. Elements of the detail such as the orange lace stayed within the cast, and are visible through the translucent silicone.

The suitcase was made to the exact size of the silicone cast and used familiar leather work techniques in its production (fig. 08). It represents a protective vessel, like Claire's nana's actual suitcase that went back and forth between Ireland and Manchester carrying its cargo of potatoes and biscuits. Like the cargo that passed between the two islands, the toilet dolly is concealed in the hard-outer shell of the leather suitcase, thus protecting the memories of Claire's nana within it.



Figure 07 – The toilet dolly being cast in silicone. (2017).



Figure 08 – Leather suitcase under construction. (2017).

01.6 – Reflective Interview

My relationship with Claire spanned the whole duration of the study, and her artefact was one of the longest to complete. She was the first ‘real’ interview I conducted after the pilot study and *Toilet Dolly* (fig. 010) was the last piece I finished; thus, I was in constant contact with her for two years. Claire enjoyed being part of the process and we built a good working relationship which meant I was able to gain a number of insights as to how she felt about the finished artefact. She revisited me at the University for a one-to-one reflective interview and attended the private view of the *Making Material Memories* exhibition at the Dean Clough gallery which allowed me to compare and contrast her reaction to that of other participants, but also her own experience of seeing the artefact in isolation as well as in a collection.

As soon as Claire saw the artefact during the one-to-one reflective interview, she felt a connection with it, recognising the representation of her nana’s toilet dolly with the silicone cast. Although it was too big to physically hold, she turned it on the table and engaged with the materials by gently stroking them and focusing on specific details. She related elements of wax left over from casting my toilet dolly to the mould and mildew on her own toilet dolly, which led to her reminisce that she was made from “the cheapest, nastiest acrylic wool” (Claire, Personal Communication, June 5, 2018). It was interesting to hear the repetition of her own words, as if the story was embedded within Claire and she used the same pattern of words each time she recalled it.

The artefact made Claire feel quite emotional. She said it was “such a lovely tribute,” and that it was “really flattering that my story about my nana has inspired you to make this beautiful object” (Claire, Personal Communication, June 5, 2018). I

showed Claire photographs of what the toilet dolly had looked like before it was cast and explained how I had used each colour of yarn to symbolise her nana's favourite brands. She recalled how she had always wanted to learn how to crochet (as discussed in the initial interview), but could not grasp the technique and appreciated that I had persevered due to her nana's story and produced an object that was needed to materialise Claire's memory.

After her visit to the exhibition (fig. 09), Claire emailed me her feelings on seeing her artefact:

Sadness, ... mixed in with pride...that the toilet dolly, such a powerful and haunting piece, had been made in response to stories I had told you about my much-missed Nana and to see a quote about her on the wall also made me feel proud and privileged to have been a part of it - it felt a lovely tribute to her and to other clearly much missed relatives. (Claire, Personal Communication, July 23, 2018)



01.7 – Summary

From this experience, I have continued to build on my crochet skills. I was hospitalised three days after the reflective interview with Claire and requested a ball of wool and crochet hook to continue my learning. I learned new skills from another patient, to further my crochet craft as well as using You Tube to try to learn different techniques. I have continued to experiment with crochet and have learned how to fully read patterns, although like Claire's nana, I don't always use them! It is now a craft I enjoy doing to unwind and I still think of the stories of Claire's nana as I am working the stitches.





Figure 010 – *Toilet Dolly*. (2018).

Rolling Pin

02.1 – The Narrative

Emily is extremely proud of her mother’s achievements – especially what she accomplished in her career as a baker – from starting work at the local bake house as an apprentice in the 1930s, to eventually owning the business. Emily talked vividly about the sights, the smells and the sounds that triggered memories of growing up in the bake house, such as the noises of pie blocking and the clatter of rolling pins hitting the floor. “The bread was done first when the ovens were at their hottest and other things would be baked through the day and cake finishing for the ‘fancies’ was in the afternoon” (Emily, Personal Communication, May 9, 2016).

The object that reminds her most of her mother is her rolling pin; “I found myself using that one more than any other, after she died” (Emily, Personal Communication, May 9, 2016). She spoke of how it felt in her hands as it was such a worn shape and the familiar comfort that it brought when holding it. She valued the old rolling pin even more than her mother’s engagement ring because when she used it, she felt connected due to her actions mimicking those of her mother’s that she remembered from childhood.





Figure 011 – *Rolling Pin*. (2017).

NOTES

12 oz plain flour, 1 tsp Bicarb.
2 tsp ground ginger, 1/2 oz Butter
6 oz soft brown sugar, 4 tbs Syrup
1 egg 2 tbs milk

sift flour, Soda & Ginger. add Butter
rub in well, add sugar. Beat together
syrup, egg & milk in a small bowl
then mix into dry ingredients. into
dough. turn on to floured board &
knead till smooth, roll out with a
gingerbread cutter (1/4 in thick) decorate
and bake at 190°C for about 12-15 mins
makes about

12 - Ginger Bread-men or women

02.2 – The Interview

The interview was conducted in a small room at the University. From the start of the process, Emily wanted to tell her story rather than write it, and so the first time I heard it was as an oral history. We had cups of coffee and discussed my research project and what I was planning to do before we moved on to her story. The conversation flowed easily and once I assumed the interview had finished, I stopped recording, however, the conversation began again and I had to re-start the recording. This taught me to record the entirety of a conversation; even when it is assumed the interview has finished, as a lot of the detail of Emily's story arose within the latter part of the interview and could have potentially been lost.

Emily brought a picture of the rolling pin (fig. 013) and also shared her mother's handwritten recipe book from the bake house with me. She allowed me to look through it and together we discussed each recipe, settling on that of the gingerbread men (and women), which evoked the memory of her mother making them for parties (fig. 012). The way Emily told the story of her mother documented her life before the bakehouse to then becoming an apprentice, and lastly buying the business. It was told as a 'story' from the start to the finish.

02.3 – Social and Historical Context

Psychologist Susan Pollak describes the sensory engagement she has with her own grandmother’s rolling pin and describes how using it is “a tactile ritual that takes (her) back to the warmth of her (grandmother’s) kitchen” (p. 227). The rolling pin is not just a static memory object for Pollak, but a tool that allows her to re-engage with the world of her grandmother and reconnect with their relationship. While baking with her own children, Pollak tells them stories about her grandmother, and the rolling pin becomes a tool that anchors to the past, but also becomes the creator of memories for the future (Pollak, 2007, p. 227).

As curator Grace Cochrane notes, it is an “often-unconscious reason” (1997, p. 57) that objects are familiar, and in this instance, when the rolling pin was used it transported Emily back to her mother and memories in the bake house. Emily talked about recipes from her mother’s handwritten note book, that she still used to bake for her own family, re-enacting her mothers’ processes and creating familiar smells and tastes that resurrected the bake house (fig. 014). In *Swann’s Way*, Marcel Proust described that once he had eaten a crumb of a madeleine it transported him back to a familiar “old grey house upon the street” (Proust, 1930, p. 62). The sight of the madeleine did not bring back the memory but the taste constructed a whole scene from his past. He likened the smell and taste to “souls, ready to remind us, waiting and hoping for their moment” (p. 61).





Figure 013– Emily using her mother’s rolling pin. (2017).

02.4 – Transcription and Initial Ideas

I transcribed Emily's interview into a notebook whilst on a train journey (fig. 17). It allowed me to visualise the narrative in my own handwriting and jot down ideas, and create drawings and illustrations of what came to mind. Ideas formed through this method of transcription included the creation a new rolling pin that could print Emily's mother's handwritten gingerbread recipe onto dough, and experimented by 3D printing a rolling pin that could achieve this (fig. 015). However, by creating a new baking tool it felt more like a recreation of the existing memory object rather than a transfiguration of the narrative into a new memory artefact.

ALMOND CUT	2
" BUNS	7
APRICOT SLICES	23

BUNS, FRENCH	3
" ROCKS	1
" MADEIRA	5
" LUNCH	5
" SHOP ROCKS	6
" RASP	12
" RICE	11
" GINGER	23
BANBURY MEAT	8 - 21
BRANDY SNAP	26
BUTTER TOFFEE	14
BURY SIMNEL	17
BUTTER-CREAM	

Figure 014 - Emily's mothers recipe book. (2017).

02.5 – Use of Materials and Techniques

Emily's rolling pin was both a memory object and a tool that created extra sensory memories. I began by baking the gingerbread from a copy of the handwritten recipe to become connected to the sounds, the smells and the techniques that Emily's mother would have experienced (fig. 019). From this I realised the synergy between the handwritten instructions and the use of the rolling pin to create the gingerbread and so from this it was important to combine both elements within the finished artefact.

In *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, Sarah Pink discusses *If there ever was: a book of extinct and impossible smells* (2008) by Robert Blackson. She notes that “the idea of sharing a scent that was experienced by others or collectives, historically or biographically, can be highly evocative of feelings of empathy and intimacy” (Pink, 2015, p. 180). The method of baking allowed me to travel back in time to Emily's mother's bakehouse and I became embedded within the story myself and experienced the smells and tastes that she would have also experienced. Pink suggests smells such as these “offer us sensory routes into imagining other people's material and emotional emplacement” (Pink, 2015, p. 180) Therefore, for my next meeting with Emily I took some of the gingerbread I had made from her mother's recipe. As she tasted it she exclaimed “the taste instantly takes me back” (Emily, Personal Communication, May 21, 2018), confirming that the smell and the taste were reminiscent of the gingerbread her mother had baked giving Emily a Proustian rush. I used this experience to channel into an artefact that combined the handwritten gingerbread recipe with the tool that helped to create it.

Rolling pins have remained largely unchanged since they were first invented and as Emily states: “It's still doing the same thing that it would have done and it can't be improved on with any kind of technology [...] basically they are a sort of a

stick that's smooth and rolls out pastry" (Emily, Personal Communication, March 22, 2018). To begin with I experimented with a number of techniques such as 3D printing in an attempt to print Emily's mother's recipe onto dough. The reality was I could direct a skilled computer programmer to create a version of a rolling pin but could not produce it myself as I lacked the CAD knowledge, so where I wanted to tweak the design, I could not (fig. 015). When it came to 3D printing the object, it did not have the finish or feel that I wanted and was light and plastic, rather than made from quality materials with a good hand-weight. This disconnected me as the maker from the making process and I lost creative control of what was being produced, which meant the creation of an artefact through these methods lacked the hands-on presence that was required to transfer the narrative. Therefore, I chose to return to hand craft techniques I was au-fait with that allowed me to connect with the materials being used.

Having reconsidered the making process I opted to create a wooden rolling pin using a lathe at the University, which is a tool I have used throughout my craft practice, and silicone casting techniques that pushed the boundaries of my knowledge. The finished *Rolling Pin* appears simple, with its clean lines and use

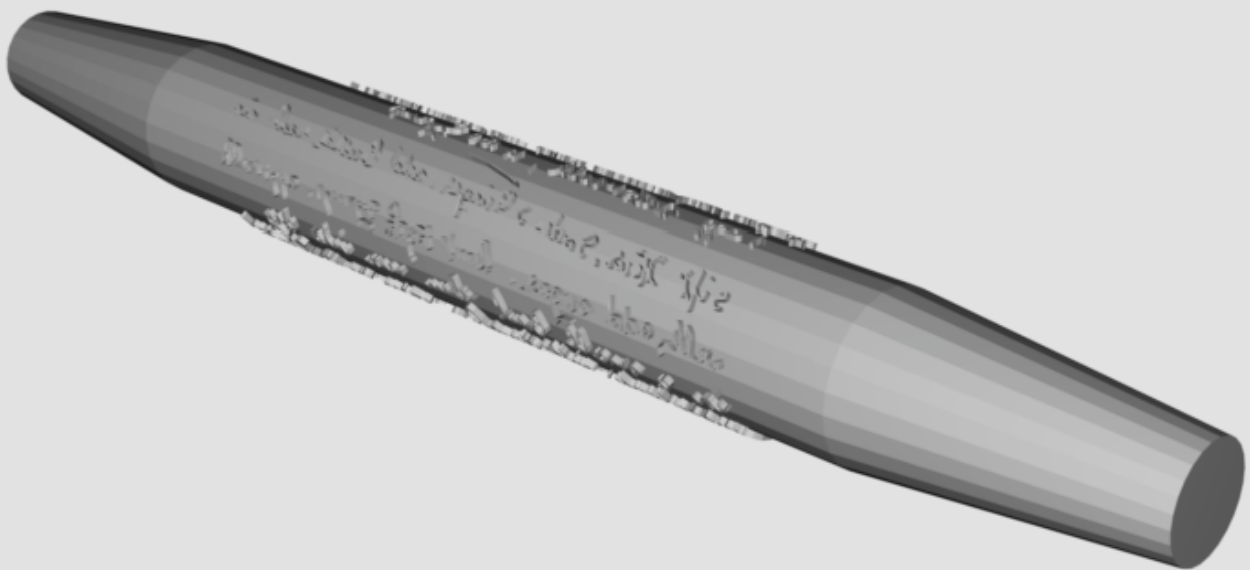


Figure 015 – CAD rolling pin with handwritten text. (2017).



Figure 016 – *Rolling Pin* being turned on the lathe. (2017).

of two materials (beech wood and silicone), however, the processes used to create the artefact involved complex techniques.

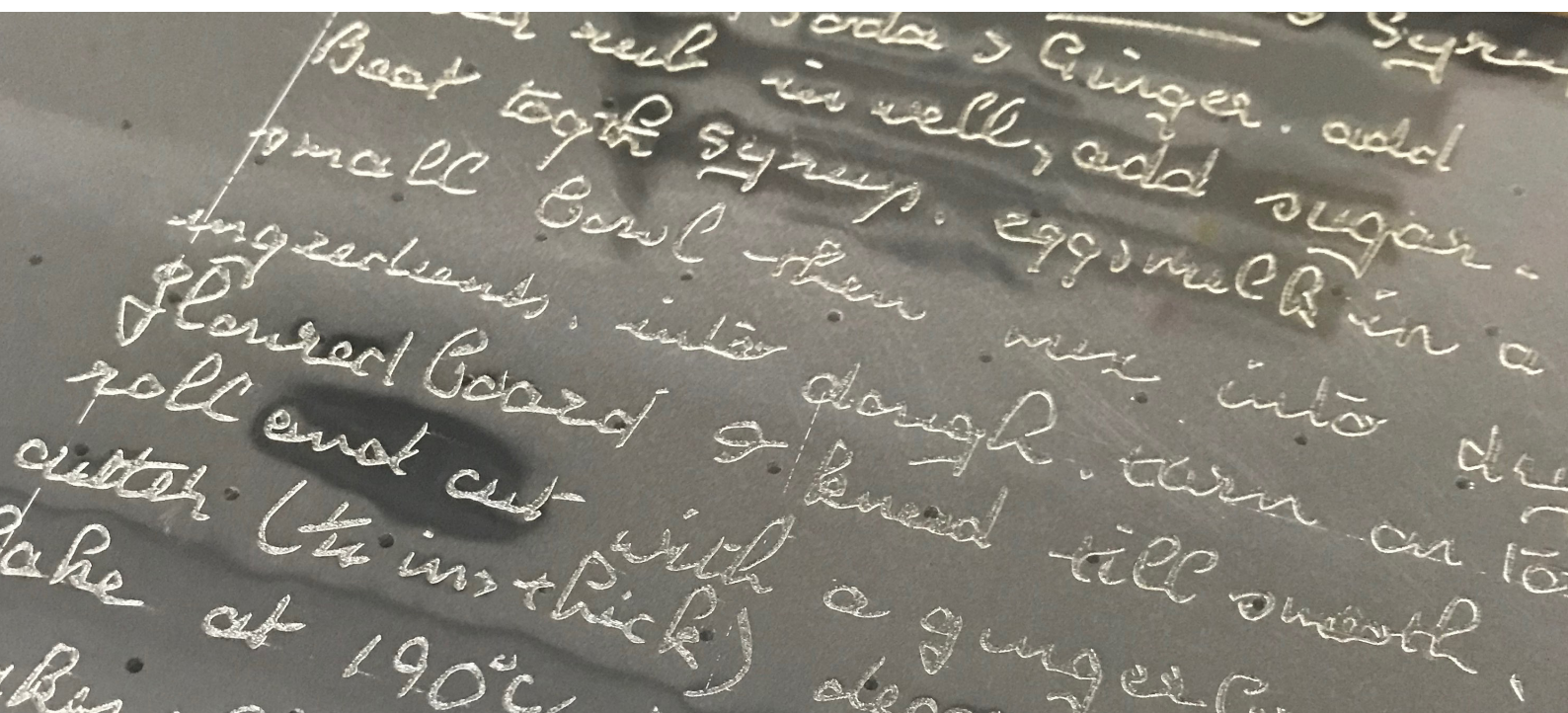
Opting to visit wood merchants rather than source materials on the internet meant I could handle and smell the wood to see if it felt and looked right such as the weight and colour. The process of selecting the wood allowed me to learn from those around me; selecting wood that was fit for purpose and having conversations about how to work the wood and what tools were best to use. These interactions helped create new narratives as part of the making process that would also become embedded within the rolling pin – alongside that of Emily's mothers' story – that would not have been created if I had sourced the wood online.

I had used a lathe previous to this experience, however, to remind myself of how to turn wood I worked alongside a university technician and a skilled woodworker, who reintroduced me to the craft by demonstrating key techniques

and tools I would need to use. He passed knowledge down to me that he had learned from others such as using the sawdust of the wood that had been turned to polish the surface of the spinning *Rolling Pin*. It was techniques such as these which, had I not worked alongside someone and learned from their experience, would not have known about them. We worked in a mirroring fashion and where he showed me a technique I replicated it. This allowed me to use the skills he had demonstrated and I could then develop whilst creating the *Rolling Pin*. The sound and rhythm of the spinning wood was repetitive yet therapeutic and, allowed Emily's story to come naturally to the forefront of my mind and guide the final shape (fig. 016).

It felt necessary to incorporate Emily's mothers handwriting into the artefact as having spent so long reading and then baking the gingerbread it had become familiar and personal to me and the process (fig. 012). The recipe wrapped round the rolling pin as if it were real ingredients and so I used silicone to create a clear sheath that had the imprint of Emily's mother's handwriting inside. Although the finished sheath component had a minimal finished appearance, I had to learn new processes to facilitate the casting, such as UV printed text on acetate that would be picked up by the silicone (fig. 017). This allowed me to work with craftspeople in an apprentice style relationship – reminiscent of the lathe experience – to ensure I gained the knowledge of a particular skill, which could then be applied to my own practice. Pouring silicone is methodical and calming;

Figure 017 – UV printed handwritten gingerbread recipe for casting. (2017).



breathing has to be steadied and patience is required to ensure no air bubbles remain during the curing process. The silicone was left to cure overnight, which seemed symbolic of the bake house, waiting for items to bake and bread to rise. I found that when working alone in a calm environment, thoughts of Emily's story resurfaced which allowed time for me to contemplate the story and the artefact and how they connected. The processing of the wood and the silicone mirrored each other in a way that they both demonstrated the need for slow production methods rather than 3D printing the whole artefact (as first considered). In turn, the making process fitted with the pace of the story.

The simple lines of the wood and the silicone, complimented by the smoothness of both materials and the ghost-like quality of the written recipe made the object feel complete. The rhythm of work is recognisable in this piece through the pouring of the silicone, the turning of the wood and the back and forth of the UV printer, combined with a constant dialogue of storytelling from the craftspeople and experts who were present in its making. *Rolling Pin's* weight and size resembles that of the working rolling pin from which it was conceived, which technically means it could be used as both a tool and a memory object if the silicone sheath is removed (02.7).

As I turned the finished *Rolling Pin* in my hands my movements replicated those of Emily and her mother before her which provided a sense of connection to the story and the original memory object through a newly created artefact.





Figure 018 – UV printed handwritten gingerbread recipe for casting. (2017).

Handwritten text on a large, irregularly shaped piece of parchment or paper, possibly a recipe or list. The text is faint and difficult to decipher but appears to include words like "Cinnamon" and "Sugar".

11st
by soft
4 lbs
d, 11st B
by soft
4 lbs

ginger
11st
by soft
4 lbs
Cinnamon
ginger B
11st B
ginger

ginger
11st
by soft
4 lbs
Cinnamon
ginger B
11st B
ginger

ginger
11st
by soft
4 lbs
Cinnamon
ginger B
11st B
ginger

02.6 – Reflective Interview

Emily was an enthusiastic participant, always sending further information that she found to me throughout the process. Photographs of her mother, newspaper clippings, and her recipe book were all given freely and all had further stories attached to them. I met with her for coffee on a number of occasions throughout the process, which provided valuable discussion around her story and the process of making. I visited her at her home for the reflective interview and her first words were, “this is fabulous”. This was encouraging as she instantly began to reminisce about the shape and how the ends of the original rolling pin had become worn with use. She stated that it did “carry the meaning, the sense of what we talked about originally” (Emily, Personal Communication, March 22, 2018), which reassured me that the artefact was instantly accepted as a continuation of her story. Of the silicone sheath with the embedded handwritten recipe, she concluded the handwriting was “mysterious, almost locked in time”, suggesting that it carried the memory and was “locked in there, it’s part of it” (Emily, Personal Communication, March 22, 2018).

Emily continuously turned *Rolling Pin* in her hands looking at the handwriting reflecting in the light, which mirrored my own actions when I had completed making, and therefore mirrored that of her own mother’s. We were all connected through the narrative, the artefact and the physical act of turning the rolling pin.



02.7 – Summary

My experience of this artefact's production was ultimately rewarding. Emily provided a series of memories that accompanied her story, which did cause initial confusion as to what would be selected to make the finished artefact. It challenged my thinking in terms of what skills I would need to consider, learn and use, but the finished result was better than I expected with a smooth finished wooden rolling pin and seamless silicone cast with readable ghostly words. Learning directly from craftspeople, rather than in isolation, and expanding my skill set and network, gave me confidence to approach further craftspeople to collaborate with on other artefacts.

When I found out Emily had passed away unexpectedly, I felt a great sense of loss. One because I felt that I had made a fantastic friend through the project and enjoyed working alongside her and experiencing the process together, but also because the artefact I created felt lost, like it no longer has an owner. The artefacts have never felt like they were mine even when I had created them, and I had begun to think of their legacy and who their owners were. I had decided that those participants who would like them, should have the



artefacts as they belong with their storytellers, but now the *Rolling Pin* no longer has a storyteller.

After Emily's death, and because of the sensory nature of her story, I decided to bake her mother's gingerbread using the *Rolling Pin* rather than my own rolling pin. The interesting thing was, all the time I was baking, the same stories Emily had told me played in my mind as if I was making it for her again. The actions mimicking her mothers, then hers and now mine. I now feel that I have also become embedded within *Rolling Pin's* story.

Football

03.1 – The Narrative

Harry doted on his father and the memories he has of him now are navigated fondly through an old photograph album. It contains the pictures of Harry's father's life; from his experiences in the Royal Navy, his career on the football field and happy memories with family and friends. He had been a good enough footballer to turn professional, but during the second world war Harry's father was drafted into the Royal Navy as an aircraft fitter to work on the aircraft carriers that serviced the planes. Turning the pages of the album different photographs were revealed, each with a different story connected to it that Harry's father had told him; "the day they walked through the forests of Sri Lanka and a huge lizard fell out of a tree onto him", "the day they arrived in New York and went for a drink in an American bar" (Harry, Personal Communication, May 16, 2017).

When Harry's father returned from the Navy, he re-joined the football team he had played for before the war and Harry used to go and watch him play using "proper" heavy, leather footballs that were "wicked" if you headed them on the laces. He began work as a blacksmith and on an evening he would tell Harry his wartime stories, which, to this day live on through Harry every time he opens the photograph album.



Figure 021 – *Football*. (2018).



Figure 022 – Harry's father and his friends when they swapped uniforms. (1940).

03.2 – The Interview

I met Harry through his wife who was also a participant in my study. Having been present at his wife's interview, Harry decided he also would like to be involved and share his memories of his father. The following week Harry's interview was conducted in the same living room in their home. As I had previously visited, we had already established a friendly relationship and I was welcomed into their home as a friend rather than a stranger.

Harry was softly spoken and talked about things in fitful bursts when something prompted him, so in order to keep the conversation flowing he narrated his lost love story through the use of his father's photograph album; "Oh that was where (laughs) they all swapped uniforms, that's my dad in an RAF uniform" (Harry, Personal Communication, May 16, 2017), (fig. 022). For us both to see the photograph album it required us to sit together, side by side on the sofa with it laid across our knees. It made the conversation less intimidating and built a closeness between us by being in each other's personal space as we turned the pages together. Having only met the previous week, the closeness could have been awkward, however, it felt more like reminiscing and only helped add intimacy and familiarity to the conversation about his father. As we were sat side by side, I wondered whether this was how Harry had experienced the album with his father showing him the photographs and telling the same stories and whether his actions now mirrored those of his father in passing his memories on to me.

There was no introduction to Harry's father, such as his name or age, only his occupation and hobbies, but the experience felt like I was being taught about a special person through studying the photographs and the stories that were linked to each one. Harry selected and discussed his favourite images in the album throughout the interview which signified these were the ones that he felt most connected to. He let me take pictures of the photographs, so I could use these in the finished artefact. The photograph album acted as a security blanket and prompt for our conversation throughout the interview (2.2).



03.3 – Social and Historical Context

Each viewer will have his or her own track through the physical album, those pages lingered over, those skipped over, investing the object with narrative and memory, interwoven with private fantasy, fragmented readings and public history. (Edwards, 1999, p. 230)

The photograph album holds a number of conceptual meanings and photographs provoke both subject matter, memory and memory object (the printed photograph) as discussed later in Chapter 5, Camera. As Edwards notes in *Photographs as Objects of Memory*, (1999), the size, weight and curation are key to the ways in which photograph albums are viewed. Size and weight determine whether the album should be viewed in the hand, on the knee or on a table, which also affects the dynamic between the album and the viewer or viewers (Edwards, 1999, p. 228). How close viewers need to sit affects the retelling of the stories, offering a more or less intimate experience dependent on positioning. Edwards suggests that weight of a photograph album can also be seen as a representation of the visual meanings contained within it (Edwards, 1999, p. 230).

The importance of a single photograph that depicts a specific event such as a wedding or graduation, can have feelings of pride bestowed upon it, therefore it may become iconic. Edwards compares the appearance of the classic photograph album with a leather finish and gilding to that of the traditional family bible (Edwards, 1999, p. 229) which connects with the idea of its appearance and contents as a reliquary of meaning. The feel, look and smell “sometimes of damp, rotting card” (p. 229) is also considered in the viewing experience, as these elements can provide sensory cues to remember the experience alongside the visual appearance and the content of the album.

The connection between ‘father and son’ playing football is a stereotypical ideal: going for a ‘kick about’ or being taken to their football match are key events in a number of children’s lives. In *Fathers and Sons: Generations, Families and Migration*,



Figure 023 – Photographs printed with acetone onto vegetable tanned leather. (2017).



(2016) sociologist, Julia Brannen, interviewed fathers and sons surrounding their memories and life stories. One of her participants 'Ray', discussed the relationship between himself and his father, focusing on how affection within their relationship was built around football rather than elsewhere (Brannen, 2016, pp. 134-165). Within the interviews that Brannen conducted, a significant number of men from different generations relate their family relationships with others to football. It showed that ideals of supporting the same team created a closeness and a shared passion between the generations. Boys playing football with their fathers mainly provided positive memories of fathers being supportive or fun through the experience. Boxer, coach and writer, Robert Kazandjian recalled how his father being present at his teenage football matches provided a space where they could connect. He stated that "when words failed us both, the game bridged the gulf between us" (Kazandjian, 2019).



Figure 024 – Sampling the size and shape of tessellating panels for *Football*. (2017).

Journalist, Hunter Davies, stated from medieval records that the word “leather” was often used as a synonym for the football in context of the game (Davies, 2003, p. 45). When Harry’s father was playing football, he recalled they were made of leather, filled with an inflated bladder and laced up. From the time period in which Harry’s father played football, the balls themselves were sewed in panels; either two or three side by side tessellating together to make a sphere (fig. 024), with one side open that could be laced and tightened once the bladder had been inflated. The use of leather within professional football was used until the 1950s when synthetic materials that maintained the same weight and shape in different weather and valve inflators began to take over.

03.4 – Transcription and Initial Ideas

There had already been some discussion around the idea of creating a football at our first meeting before the interview took place, but with the prominence of the photograph album as a visual tool for telling stories throughout the interview, I felt it was important to somehow include elements of this within the finished artefact.

The initial idea was shaped throughout by the way 12 specific photographs were discussed at the interview as individual tableaux, which provided the opportunity for them to become the 12 sections of a 1940s football (fig. 023). The interview was not chronological but was guided by the choice of photograph Harry wished to discuss; the transcription process helped to relink each story to a specific photograph and strengthen the bond between image and story.



Figure 025 – The image of the football team appearing through the paper. (2017).

03.5 – Use of Materials and Techniques

From visual and testimonial evidence, the construction method of a 1940s football included 12 tessellating panels that were stitched inside out, turned the right way round and finished with lacing to hold a bladder filled with air in place. I worked with a modern 18-piece tessellating football as reference for the size and I used a trial-and-error approach to create the right shaped template to produce a spherical shape. This took several attempts to achieve, but gave me the opportunity to make sure each panel would be wide enough to display an image (fig. 024).

Having experimented with acetone printing during the pilot study (4.4.6), I used the same technique to print selected photographs from the transcription onto veg-tan leather. The patchy quality that was achieved through this technique related to Harry's memories of his father and the stories he had retold, where in parts, details were missing or had begun to fade.

When painting onto the back of each photocopied image with the acetone, faces from the past soaked through and the memory in my mind of Harry recounting the stories gave the photographs context and life. From this process the ink became transient and through my applied pressure imprinted the photograph permanently onto the leather which in turn, symbolised the retelling and passing on of the story and allowed the memory to live on.

The process of printing the football teams' image was an emotional experience as I considered the reality that most of Harry's father's 'football team' were unlikely to still be alive. The faces of the young men appeared like ghosts, through what had been a blank sheet of paper and added a further layer of significance as to how many of them would also have passed on their stories to their own children (fig. 025).





Figure 026 – Stitching the football lacing hole. (2017).



Figures 027 – Construction of the leather *Football*. (2017).

When the leather panels were cut, they were positioned and sewn together according to their narrative such as Harry's father's Naval squadron parallel to his football team which showed the different sides of Harry's father's life. Each scenario showed Harry's father working in a team, both in his social and professional lives, before and during the war. The photograph album captured his life through different action shots, group shots with friends and colleagues and those of him in different places; in front of, and behind the camera. The photographs in the album were those that Harry's father had chosen to document his life and so it was important that I curated them as part of the *Football* construction to tell his life story and highlight his experiences. (figs. 027).



Figures 028 – Construction of the leather *Football*. (2017).

The ball was stitched together, inside-out by hand and sewing machine (fig. 028). My mother, who has sewn for over 50 years suggested strengthening each seam with an extra stitch before turning so it did not rip, which was something I would not have considered. Together we turned the leather through the gap for the laces to become the right way round which allowed us the opportunity to talk about the ideas behind - and within - *Football*, and connecting us through the challenge of making. *Football* was the first piece I completed making it the quickest in production time from start to finish. I became fully engrossed in the story and did not require much support in terms of learning a new skill or components being made, so I managed to work efficiently and at my own pace. The process tested my leather-working skills in terms of pattern making and allowed me to think through the stages of making as they happened to realise the finished outcome.



Figure 029 – Photograph from Harry's fathers photograph album. (2017).

03.6 – Reflective Interview

As with the initial interview, Harry's answers were brief within the reflective interview, but his reaction to the artefact was as I had hoped. With Harry's initial reaction being; "Wow, that is tremendous", (Harry, Personal Communication, February 8, 2018). Harry showed more of his response with his actions and as he turned the *Football* in his hands to look at each individual photograph, he recounted each story in the way he had used the photograph album at our initial meeting. His wife was also present during the reflective interview and asked if they could play with it. Harry suddenly became very protective of *Football* and held it tight against his chest stating, "the trouble is if you do that, won't it start wearing (the pictures)?" (Harry, Personal Communication, February 8, 2018). His desire to protect the ball signified it already had meaning to him. He had connected with *Football* in a tactile manner and had chosen to point out how playing with it would be detrimental to the imagery on the surface. The couple took numerous pictures of *Football* from different sides, making sure they had captured each image depicted. In turn they created an extension of the making material memories process by recapturing the photographs on *Football* this becoming the third iteration of the memory which played with the idea of a verbal memory being made 3D and then captured as a 2D image.

His wife reflected on Harry seeing the artefact;

My husband's face, when he saw the football for the first time, was a picture. The thought that a ball could hold so many facets of his father was amazing. I think my father-in-law's life was one of unfulfilled dreams and the photos of his naval career superimposed on the football somehow seemed to sum up the 'what might have been'. (Georgia, Personal Communication, July, 7, 2018)



03.7 – Summary

Since the reflective interview, Harry and his wife visited both the Dean Clough and the Temporary Contemporary exhibitions in support of my PhD journey. In both exhibitions, Harry beamed at the artefact and he enjoyed looking for his quote on the wall and experiencing the *Football* in the gallery setting. Harry has since begun his own research project and gained more documents from military archives surrounding his father's service in the Royal Navy. Some of the stories we discussed encouraged him to find out more about his family history, and when visiting him in 2019 he showed me the progress he had made in finding records such as where his father had been based and where he had done his Naval training. Like the recapturing of the photographs during the reflective interview Harry's narrative continues to develop, in which *Football* is determined as the new starting point. As well as Harry's reignited enthusiasm for researching his father's history, was the creation of a lasting friendship between myself and the participants, with whom I have been in regular contact since.



Camera

04.1 – The Narrative

Helen's story is over 66 years old and when telling it she remembered all the details as clear as the day they happened. As a university student in the 1950s she and her friends embarked on a college trip to Innsbruck which involved travelling by ship to Dunkirk and then by bus, through the scarred landscape, as a result of the Second World War to Austria. On arrival in Innsbruck, they found their hotel had been overbooked and so Helen and her four friends were transferred to a local village guest house where the trip's courier was also staying. The courier was about the same age as Helen and had recently served as a German soldier on the Russian front, where he had experienced torturous conditions first hand, before finally escaping back to Germany. Helen knew from the moment she saw him as she stepped off the coach that it was love at first sight. They spent as much time together as possible over the six days that they had together, until he had to return to Frankfurt for his next job.

She spoke passionately of all the stolen moments they spent together such as sitting on the mountainside amongst the flowers and secretly spending the night together before he returned home. She had taken her parents' black box camera on the trip and managed to capture two photographs of him standing beside a wooden fence on the mountainside which she still had. When she had returned to England, he kept to his word and wrote to her often, sending a number of gifts such as chocolates, a handkerchief, and a leather coin purse (fig. 032) that bore the crest of Innsbruck. They wrote to each other for a while, but eventually the letters slowed and then stopped as they moved on with their lives in different countries. Helen had thought about the German courier throughout her lifetime and wondered if they could have made the relationship work, although shortly after returning from Innsbruck, she had met her husband with whom she was married for over 50 years.

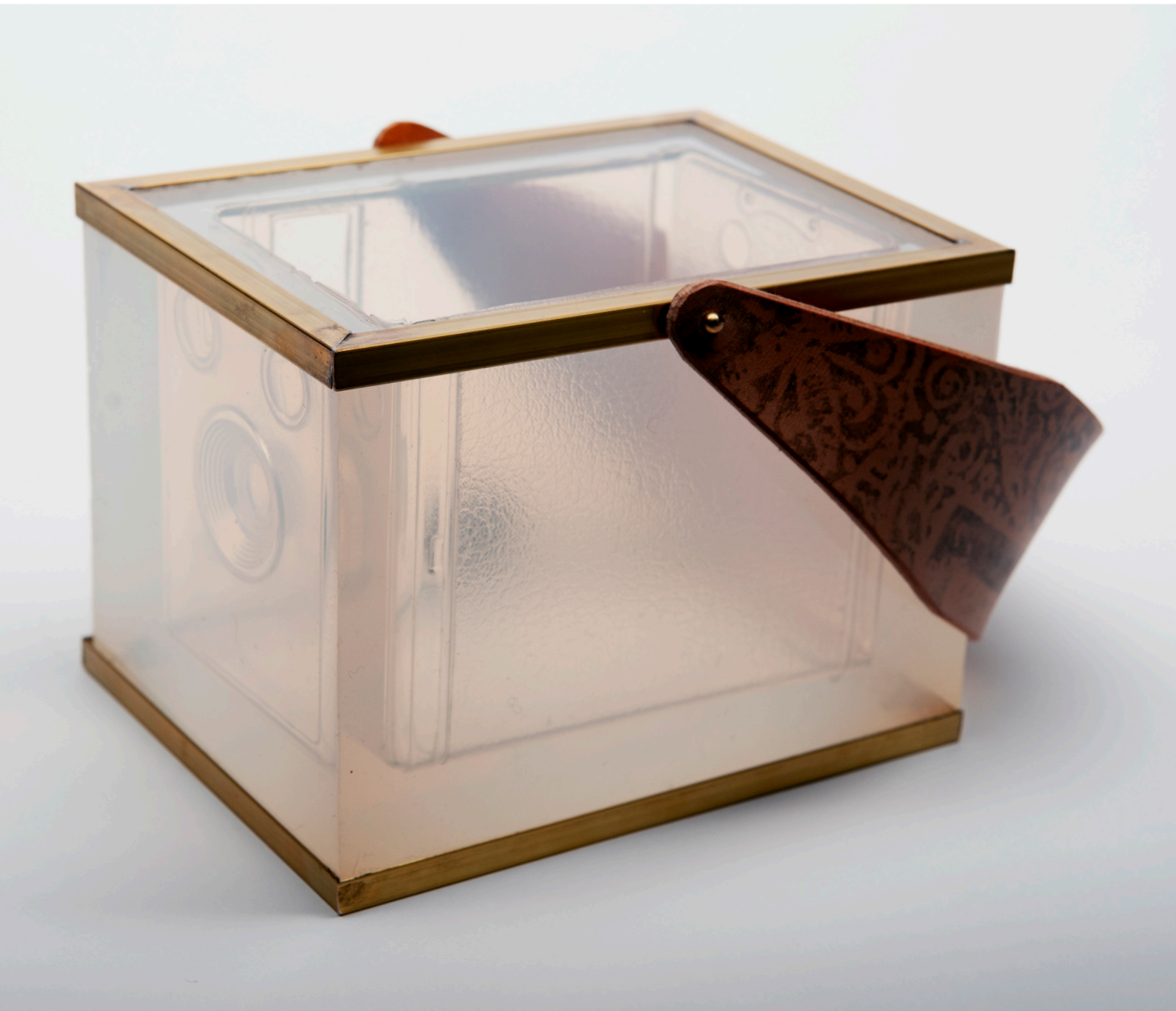


Figure 031 – *Camera*. (2018).

04.2 – The Interview

Helen's interview was rich in history, depth and heartbreak. We first met at a talk I gave where participants were invited to bring an object along and share their own story of a lost love. She had brought the small leather coin purse from the fleeting romance with a German courier she had in 1951. After our introduction she sent to me a very detailed narrative of her story that her daughter had helped her word process. It was the first time her daughter had heard about her mother's romance and so she had found it exciting to be able to finally tell her story. When asked if she would relay the story again for a recorded verbal interview, she was unsure of what more she could offer, however, we arranged to meet at her home the next month to discuss further. Our early correspondence was via letter and so the initial interview had taken longer to organise than the other participants, but the anticipation was heightened because of this and the experience mirrored that of the letters that had been sent back and forth between her and the German courier in the 1950s.

When we met, I was invited in by her daughter who left us in the living room together where we drank copious amounts of tea and talked freely for over two hours. It was a snowy morning in January and we briefly discussed the weather before moving on to the topic of her lost love. The prior insight into Helen's story allowed me to devise questions prior to our interview which enabled me to explore certain aspects of the story further, however, the conversation was so open, the questions came naturally and Helen was happy to answer anything I asked. She had prepared a stack of old black and white photographs in chronological order that sat between us on the sofa as she talked through her own life story, from being a young girl, to attending university. Reaching a small black and white image, Helen exclaimed, "These are the pictures you're most interested in... That's the lost love! He was nice looking, wasn't he?" (Helen, Personal Communication, January 12, 2017). She had two images of the German courier of approximately 4cm square, one that she had taken and the other of them both taken by a friend.

In total four participants chose to bring physical photographs to their interviews which also acted as memory objects, that could be touched and felt, creating a physical and visual experience. Edwards defines photographs as "subjective and sensuous experiences" (1999, p. 223) which was proven as Helen held the small square photograph with both hands, close to her face and described the German courier as 'handsome'. The physical engagement with the tangible photograph demonstrated that Helen was deeply connected to what she was saying. Edwards' idea of photographs being given the status and value of relics and becoming treasured (1999, p. 226) is similar to that of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, who suggests that older generations perceive the photograph as a special item, as they are "rarer and thus more cherished" (1981, p. 67) because they were harder or more expensive to have printed. As



Figure 032 – Helen’s purse bearing the crest of Innsbruck. (2017).

Helen only had two physical images of the German courier, they automatically became more valuable due to their irreplaceable status. Helen’s photographs, by her own admission, were both blurry and unclear as to the detail of the subject, but she connected with each of the images through her memory of looking down the camera, thus transporting her back to the actual moment in time.

Throughout the interview Helen was very active, constantly asking if I would like more tea and sourcing books from the hall bookshelf to show me images of flowers or Austria, to embed me further within her own experience. She discussed details of her relationship with her lost love and contextualised it with the period of time. Even though the experience took place in 1951, the memories of the road trip to Innsbruck were still very clear and throughout the interview Helen recounted where they went, what they ate and what they wore, which only added further depth and insight that I could channel through the making process.

Within the initial written narrative Helen provided, facts may have been more precise, but its format lacked emotion. The oral history had depth and personal feeling through expression that made me engage with Helen’s heartbreak “I never saw him again after I left that room, but I just wished it could have been different, just wished and now today it could all have been so different and I could have gone and seen him” (Helen, Personal Communication, January 12, 2017).

04.3 – Social and Historical Context

With the invention of the Box Brownie by Kodak in 1900 the accessibility of photography for hobbyists became more commonplace (Eastman Kodak Company, 2020). This made photography more portable and allowed for families to take their own photographs which led to a rise in domestic photography, however box cameras used 120mm film, meaning the developed picture would be a small 2” square. Helen’s parent’s saved coupons from the newspapers in the early 1950s for the box camera she took to Innsbruck. Although, Helen described the little box camera as “absolutely primitive” (Helen, Personal Communication, January 12, 2017), it worked and she was the envy of her friends. Having returned home from her trip to Innsbruck she got the film developed straight away so she could see the German courier again through the photographs she had taken. Camera film, although now accessible, was still thought of as a luxury and therefore composition was more considered, as each click of the shutter resulted in a permanent image. Now in the digital age, the majority of people have access to some form of digital camera and images taken are plentiful and perhaps in the most part less considered, infrequently looked at and rarely materialised.

As Edwards states photographs are “both images and physical objects that exist in time and space and thus in social and cultural experience” (Edwards & Hart, 2004, p. 1). For the photographer, the memory of the event is present along with the physical (when printed) outcome. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton’s study investigates individuals’ connections to physical photographs and demonstrated that photographs are used as flashbacks and constant reminders of specific people or events (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p. 68), providing a memory object or medium for recalling past events and relationships.

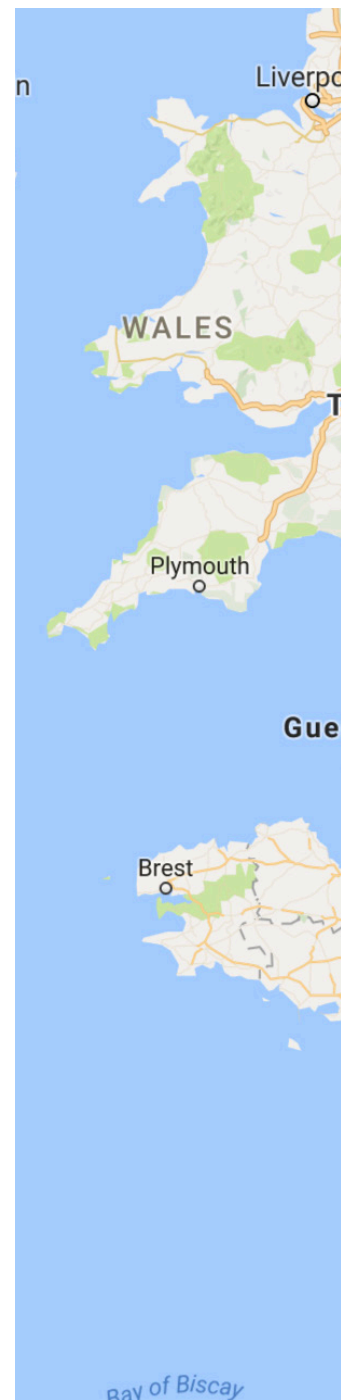
Figure 033 – Kodak Box Brownie before casting took place. (2017).



SIX-20 'BROWNIE' D
MADE BY KODAK

04.4 – Transcription and Initial Ideas

The transcript of Helen's story highlighted a number of different points that could be an interesting starting point for the artefact. Using Google Maps (Google, n.d.) I plotted the route Helen's party had taken to travel to Innsbruck as a way of understanding how long the journey would have taken by coach (fig. 034). Another initial idea was to grow gentians (flowers), so I could experience the smell and look of them myself as these were the flowers she and the German courier sat amongst on the hillside, however my attempts were unsuccessful. As photographs were a prominent part of her story the idea of creating an artefact that acted as a vessel to store a memory seemed fitting, just as the camera had created and stored the film that held the visual interpretation of her memory. This was the first artefact that did not replicate the item that had been established as the memory object - the purse with the crest of Innsbruck (fig. 032), however, from the transcription of the interview more prominent memory objects such as the camera and the photographs came to light.



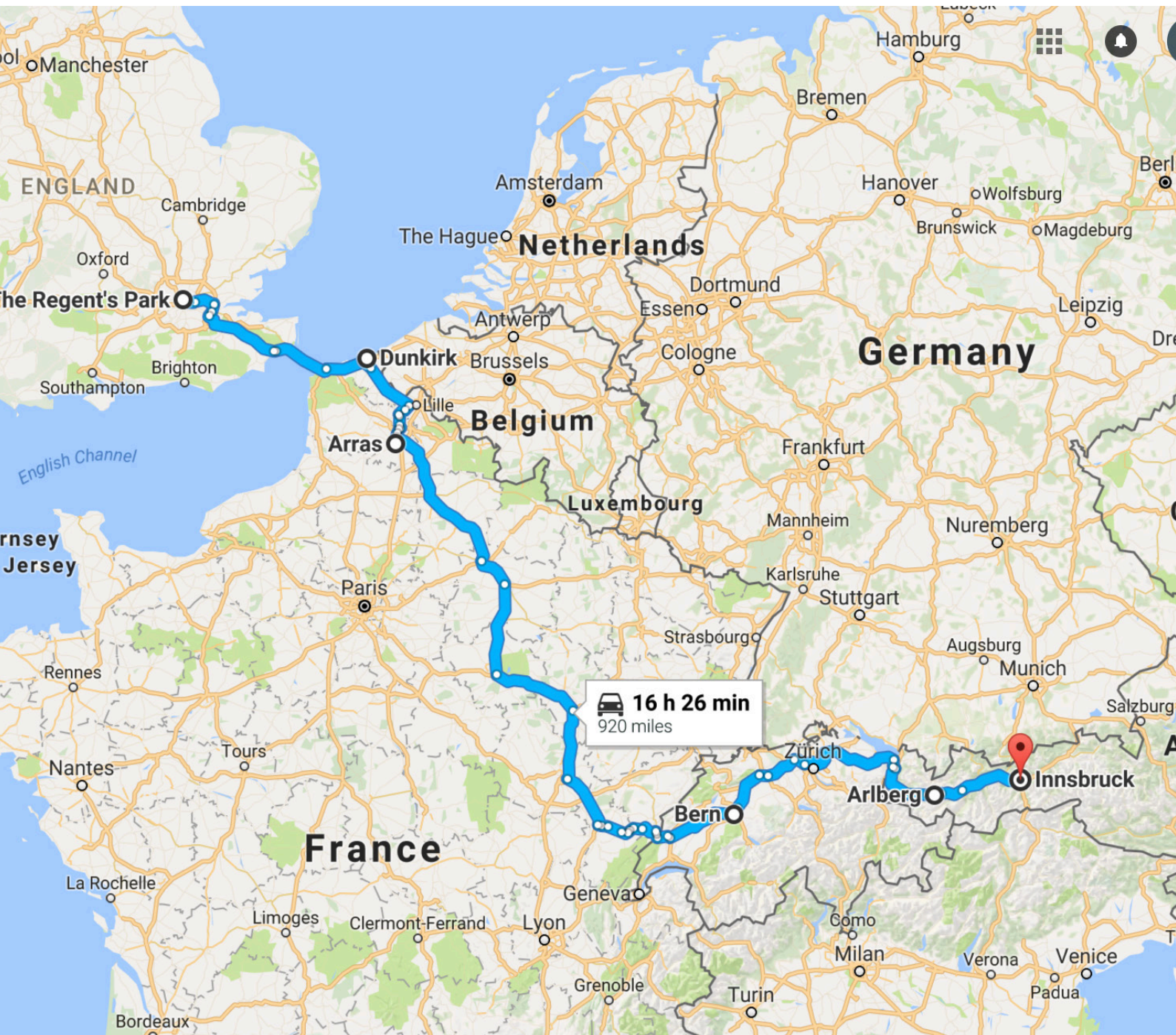


Figure 034 – The route Helen took to Innsbruck plotted in Google Maps. (2017).

04.5 – Use of Materials and Techniques

Sourcing a replica of the simple box camera from a charity shop, I cast it in a square mould with translucent silicone to mirror its box like shape. It took a number of silicone pours to fill the mould and involved patience to make sure air bubbles did not sit under the base of the camera (fig. 035). When the camera was removed from the silicone mould, the mould had the same properties as original camera lens. Parallels could be drawn between the removal of the camera from the silicone and the processing of a photograph. The way in which the photograph is exposed through light as a negative onto the film roll is like the negative space of the camera imprinted into the silicone. The texture of the leather trim and metal camera body was clearly imprinted and identifiable which created a life like absence of the original object.





Figure 036 – Removing the camera from the silicone mould. (2017).



Figure 037 – Acetone printed leather strap. (2017).



Figure 038 – Brass frame making with my dad. (2017).

The camera was destroyed during the making process due to the shape of the mould offering limited flexibility for the removal of the item as a whole. Therefore the camera had to be cut out and bent to extract it (fig. 036). This process was messy and time consuming, however, when the mould had been washed, the finished silicone cast was crisp and defined, and most importantly provided the feel of an empty vessel that I had hoped for. The winding knob could not be removed from the mould and therefore remained in the finished artefact providing a connection between its use of winding on the film and the making of the image. A handle was made from printed leather that featured the pattern from Helen's original memory object, the coin purse (037) and I used the acetone printing technique (as discussed in *Football 03*) to establish the idea of fading memory. In this way I was able to incorporate Helen's memory object from our initial discussion, using the camera idea that had developed through analysis of the transcription.

The silicone mould of the camera was finished with a brass frame (038) to attach the handle. This allowed for the artefact to be picked up, carried, touched or held and affirmed a link to the body. Helen still used the coin purse when going out with an evening bag, and the finished artefact allowed her to carry her memories in a similar way.



Figure 039 – Temporary Contemporary exhibition - *Camera*. (2017).

04.6 – Reflective Interview

Helen had a number of health issues throughout the process of making the artefact, but we continued to write and I continued to visit her at her home even after the study was complete. The reflective interview took place in her bedroom as she had been very poorly and so we chatted for an hour before she began to feel tired. She held the artefact by its handle as I had hoped and turned it side to side with me supporting the weight. Creating a prompt such as a handle allowed Helen to interact easily with the artefact by being able to pick it up, hold it and even look through the view finder. Having asked Helen if she felt it captured her story she replied “I do indeed I think, you know if I could see him now and we could say that you’ve done all this after all these years [...] I doubt he’d be alive now he’d be 91”. (Helen, Personal Communication, 8 February 2018).

Throughout the process, Helen talked about what her life could have been like, or would have been like if she had managed to have a relationship with the German courier and even when considering the finished artefact, she deliberated how he might have felt about it too. She was less articulate than she had been during the initial interview, but still very charming and engaged in the process with me pouring the tea and serving the Victoria sponge cake.



04.7 – Summary

Helen was an exceptional lady and I feel privileged to have been able to be part of her life and been the one who encouraged her to tell her story for the first time. In the beginning she was nervous but the more we got to know each other the more she revelled in the joy and sadness of her story finally being heard. I visited her on a number of occasions, both for the study and for pleasure and got to meet her daughters, who told me that, “Mum didn’t like everyone” but she really enjoyed my company. After the reflective interview Helen’s health improved and she visited the exhibition at Dean Clough with her reading group. Every time we spoke afterwards, she mentioned the artefact and how it was her “favourite” and reminded her of her lost love. We formed a true friendship and I visited for lunch on several occasions where we continued to talk about her experiences as a young woman as we looked through old photographs.

Sadly, in November 2019, Helen died after a stroke. I’d seen her for lunch earlier that month and she had enjoyed reminiscing about her younger days. At her funeral her daughter told the story of the German courier within the eulogy and after the service thanked me for aiding her mother to tell it, otherwise they would have never known about her lost love experience. They had also saved some items that belonged to Helen that they wanted me to have to remind me of her. As our relationship started with Helen remembering her own lost love through an object, I now have objects to remember her. The idea of the memory object has come full circle.

Helen pinpointed places of her journey to Innsbruck in so much detail that, as discussed earlier, we able to plot the route on Google Maps (fig. 034). I feel it would be an honour to follow it, eat Swiss chocolate, buy stockings and stay in the town just as she did. Both *Rolling Pin* and *Camera*, now embody more than just a lost love memory; they also contain the memory of the participants who told the story, making them material memories of more than one person.

Running Shoes

05.1 – The Narrative

“You could say it was a young love but nothing has ever felt the same since and it was all my fault” (Imogen, Personal Communication, May 16, 2017). Imogen felt she had found her soul mate – her ‘right arm’ – when she met her boyfriend through social media, and from then on, they were inseparable. They would cruise around in Imogen’s car together; and at 18 they felt so grown up. They spent the summer holidaying in Tunisia and Christmas together at the house she shared with her mother. As her boyfriend was a year older than her, he chose to take a full-time job as a personal trainer rather than moving away to university to study while she was still at college. They had lived together at Imogen’s mother’s house more-or-less since they had first met, but their relationship changed a year later when she made the decision to move to university to study. She wanted to experience the university lifestyle and make new friends, rather than be tied down and so during the summer, they drifted apart and the relationship ended shortly after she had moved away.

Imogen was given a charm bracelet by him as a gift for her birthday which she has not felt able to wear since. Instead, she has found more comfort in knowing that a pair of his old, dirty Nike running shoes he used to leave in her car for ‘just in case’ were still kept under the passenger seat. Two years after the relationship ended, Imogen came to sell her car and found the running shoes underneath the seat as they had always been. She had known they were there all along and thought one day he might have come back and put them on, like nothing had happened, but he never did.

During her time at university, she did not hear from him again. They lost all contact and he disappeared from the social media platforms through which they had met. When she has visited her home town since, she sometimes thinks she sees him and imagines what she would say if she did. She had hoped she could have used the shoes as an excuse to meet him and return them to their rightful owner. She felt like she had loved and lost, but learned what true love really felt like.

Figure 041 – *Running Shoes*. (2018).



05.2 – The Interview

Imogen submitted her story in October 2016 through one of the lost love collection boxes I left at the University. She was the youngest of the participants and so the organisation of the interview was done mainly through text messaging. I contacted her early in 2017 to see if she would like to be further involved with the study – to which she said yes. We met at the University after Imogen had been for a haircut and she was enthusiastic but a little nervous. The interview opened with her expressing how long ago the relationship was and that he was her first true love. To put this into perspective, the time from the interview in 2017, was two years after their relationship had ended, yet with youth on her side Imogen thought of this as being “so long ago” (Imogen, Personal Communication, May 16, 2017). Interestingly, having interviewed Helen (04.2), about her first love sixty years earlier, it showed that the feelings and emotions surrounding romantic lost love do not deplete with time, but could in fact be heightened and become more embedded within the memory.

Imogen discussed the relationship from start to finish; from how they met to their separation, using a similar chronological format to Helen. Romantic relationship interviews differed from familial ones and focused more on how they met and how they parted as specific events. Familial love stories told tended to have a final ending to the relationship through death, whereas romantic relationship endings were through circumstance, therefore, could lack true finality which could be the cause of prolonged heartache.

Imogen reiterated the depth of her feelings in numerous ways, “one true love”, “I loved him with every inch of me”, “soul mate”, “nothing has felt the same since” (Imogen, Personal Communication, May 16, 2017) which demonstrated that the emotion and feeling was still as deep as those of the older participants in the study or relationships that had lasted over a longer period of time.

The face-to-face interview with Imogen differed from her initial written narrative in



Figure 042 – Trainers sourced to cast in silicone. (2018).

that it set the scene of the relationship rather than focusing on the material objects. The interview helped to clarify a number of points that the written narrative touched on such as what type of running shoes they were, why they had been in her car for so long and how she had since dealt with them . Both the written and verbal narratives were used within the analysis process and complimented each other, by filling gaps in knowledge that each lacked. The written submission proved more powerful than the verbal interview, which could have been due to how millennials are believed to communicate better through the written word (social media, email and text message).



05.3 – Social and Historical Context

Shoes are transitional and can be signifiers of the time and trend. They can be used for different purposes and become imprinted with the wearers identity. The pressure of the foot creates a personal indentation as the shoes mould through wear. They physically change shape and gain a particular personal odour, all connected with the owner of the shoes. Ellen Sampson suggests the shoe becomes “increasingly bodily, abject and individualised with each wear” (Sampson, 2016, p. 25). Similarly, in relation to clothes, Peter Stallybrass states “bodies come and go; the clothes which have received those bodies survive” (Stallybrass, 1993, p. 37) alluding to the imprint of the person on the fabric. As shoes hold the physical imprints of a person, they are also used in different ways to convey the absence of a person. Sampson suggests:

The used and empty shoe represents an absence, much in the way that a fingerprint or still-smoking cigarette in an ashtray might represent an absent finger or mouth. What makes the empty and used shoe so poignant is the absence of a presence. The empty shoe always alludes to its missing binary: the foot. (2016, p. 27)

The idea that the empty shoe alludes to a person creates the notion that it is a common part of personal identity. Shoes are worn for specific purposes such as sport or as a fashion statement and help to create the identity of the person who wears them. Therefore they become part of their persona. The perception that the body is temporary but the clothes still bear the imprint of the person after they have gone appears throughout material culture literature (Stallybrass, 1993, p. 37; Ash, 1996, p. 219; Attfield, 2000, p. 131).



Figure 043 – Shoes of victims of Auschwitz. Yunakov, O. (2013).

Shoes have been used to convey the absence of a person or people in provocative ways such as the exhibiting of large piles of shoes at Auschwitz (fig. 043) or the Imperial War Museum, visually representing loss through genocide on a mass scale. The piles of shoes act as a haunting reminder of the scale of human life that was eradicated, however, I would also argue in some ways individual identity is lost by leaving the viewer overwhelmed and unable to comprehend the individual loss of life.

Many idioms allude to walking in someone else's shoes as a symbol of empathy and understanding of a particular individual. Sampson portrays how worn "shoes become a vessel for our former selves; we become incorporated into their material form" (p. 139). Imogen perceived her ex-boyfriend's shoes as being "old dirty ugly things", noting their visual appearance, however, she personified them by stating "but (they were) him" (Imogen, Personal Communication, October 6, 2016), indicating that they were a vessel that still held the memory of him for her. The idea that shoes can become an empty vessel for their owner gives them the potential to be a poignant reminder of loss – the loss of a loved one. Even though Imogen's relationship had ended she still imagined that "one day he (was) going to come back and put them on like nothing (had) happened" (Imogen, Personal Communication, October 6, 2016), her own Cinderella story, looking for the owner of the shoe. The running shoes act as both a memory object and have the potential to be filled with the right feet again.



Figure 044 – Imprint of the running shoes in silicone. (2018).

05.4 – Transcription and Initial Ideas

Imogen had initially submitted her story of lost love via one of my collection boxes at the University, therefore when I came to transcribe the verbal interview, I was able to cross reference both iterations. The positioning of the running shoes within the car were the significant element of the narrative and so it was a straightforward idea to re-imagine the shoes together as a pair, waiting to be found under the seat. Similar to the image of the glass slipper on a pillow waiting to find Cinderella, the running shoes were the last link to her former relationship. The nature of the running shoes and the context provided by Imogen, meant that I knew this piece would be ‘shoe-size’ or larger in its construction, but with a lack of initial ideas, I reverted to Ingold’s thinking-through-making methodology and allowed the process and materials to lead the creative process and therefore the production of the artefact.

05.5 – Use of Materials and Techniques

Initially I struggled to connect with the narrative so I created enthusiasm for the piece by pushing my own skills of casting by producing a large scale one-part moulded artefact. The running shoes in the narrative were described as old dirty, ugly things so it was necessary to source a similar pair to match the aesthetic and the feel of what had been described. I found a pair matching the brand, size and description on eBay which had their own identity printed into them, but symbolised that of a lost wearer due to the anonymity of the purchase (fig. 042).

I started by building a mould around the running shoes to tailor the size and fit, positioning them slightly apart as they may have been positioned under the car seat. Pouring the silicone into the mould had to be done in stages over three days, giving me a chance to consider the narrative whilst making sure there were no air bubbles as this is such a time-consuming process. I still found it hard to connect to the narrative and became involved more in the technical process. When the final pour of silicone had cured, I had set aside a couple of hours to extract the running shoes and clean the mould, however I underestimated the time it would take and ended up spending a day working on this (fig. 045). Normally objects can be pulled straight from a mould with a little wiggling, however due to the materials used and my inexperience of large volume moulds, the shoes had to be cut out piece by piece. It allowed me to work closely with technicians at the University who had experience in casting and therefore develop my own skills from them, and also reflect on the making process. I attached my own narrative and experience to the piece (fig. 046). I finished, by working with my father to create a brass frame for the top and base of the silicone.

The completed artefact was heavy and cumbersome. The quality of the silicone being rubber, meant that at most the artefact could be poked and prodded for response, but lacked the ability to be picked up and handled easily. The materials were limited to that of the silicone and the brass frames, both lacking warmth in colour and feel. The qualities of the leather, combined with the square sharp-edged shape, meant it did not have the inviting qualities as I was hoping for.



Figure 045 – Extracting the trainers from the silicone. (2018).



05.6 – Reflective Interview

Imogen's first response to *Running Shoes* was confusion. She described it as though she thought there were shoes in jelly or water, that they looked like they were moving. Having sensed her confusion and hoping she could connect more with the artefact if she understood how it was made, I turned the artefact over so I could explain how the original running shoes had been cast into the silicone. Her response to this was "Oh wow". She had presumed the shoes were actually still inside, not just their impression.

She felt inside the mould and the different textures the shoes had left behind and commented that the silicone was dirty which was actually the residue from the fabric of the old trainers. Asking what she thought about this, she made the connection between her lost love's shoes being old and dirty and the mould representing this. She was still confused that the trainers weren't in it and described the voids as white trainers, like the ghost of the original running shoes and that she found it weird. As this was a larger piece it lacked the tactility that some of the other pieces had. She had a small connection to the piece where she associated her lost loves running shoes with it, but there was a lack of connection in terms of how this artefact could represent the narrative.



05.7 – Summary

Imogen's story was an interesting one and the idea of losing love through a relationship ending rather than through death changed the dynamic of the making process. Although Imogen had moved on with her life, the opportunity for her to meet and talk to her lost love is still possible - in the sense that they are both still alive - and therefore the story did not feel like it had ended. This may have resulted in the artefact feeling incomplete, in the way that the story could still evolve.

I did not rely on other crafts people's skills to create it and the narrative felt harder to embed through the processes as it lacked diversity and became more of a technical exercise. The square, rectangular moulded form, unlike the spherically moulded silicone pieces used in artefacts such as *Brass Shoes* or *Rolling Pin*, meant that the actual running shoes that had been cast had a flat appearance due to the lack of a convex surface. This would have emphasised or magnified the running shoes, giving the original shoes a heightened appearance. Unfortunately, the actual size of the running shoes meant it would have been a hard process to cast spherically leading to an artefact twice the size of the existing one and so a rectangle was the most obvious and straightforward shape to create. Issues with creating a rectangular shape meant there were raw edges to the silicone mould and so a solution had to be found to 'finish' them. As brass had been used in a number of the other artefacts, a brass frame was created, however, rather than being a choice made through the morphogenetic process, it felt like an afterthought to finishing the piece. As such when working on *Running Shoes* I still had the same passion when making, however the size, weight and shape of the finished piece made it harder to connect with as it lacked tactility, emotion and warmth.

I enjoyed working with a participant younger than myself as it allowed me to consider my own experiences of young love. The experience allowed me to analyse the different types of relationship and the connection I had with participants through the study.

Medal

06.1 – The Narrative

Georgia was a toddler when her father left the Air Force in 1947 and as an only child, one of her favourite pastimes was visiting the shops with him on a Saturday morning. She was a self-proclaimed “daddy’s girl” (Georgia, Personal Communication, March 2, 2017) and even after she had married, if anything ever went wrong, she would always call on her father.

Georgia’s father was one of five children who came from a well to do family and at 15 he joined the Royal Flying Corps where he had become a pilot, then a squadron leader. His main role was to teach new pilots how to fly. After the Second World War, her father thought the Royal Air Force would probably close down and so took a job as a travelling salesman and sold different medicinal products such as Rosehip syrup and Andrew’s Liver salts. He carried on doing this for over 25 years.

When he died, Georgia found her father’s Air Force Cross amongst his belongings, along with a pair of monogrammed cuff links that had apparently been given to him by King George VI. She had known of these objects but had not seen them for many years as the war was not openly discussed at home. Therefore, many of the stories she had of his wartime years were based on snippets of conversations she had overheard. It was only years later whilst researching that she came across a press clipping that explained the reason he was awarded the Air Force Cross in April 1940; dedication to his job and going above and beyond the call of duty. She recognised the origin of the monogrammed cuff links may not have been accurate, but her husband continues to wear them to attend any “sort of posh do” (Georgia, Personal Communication, March 2, 2017). The story is told joyously - how they were given to her father by the King.



Figure 048 – *Medal*. (2018).



Figure 049 – Georgia's fathers cufflinks given to him by King George VI. (2017).

06.2 – The Interview

I met Georgia at a local women's Probus club talk that I gave in 2016 in which I had invited members to bring along an object that represented someone they loved. The members took it in turns to talk about the objects they had brought along and I was instantly drawn to Georgia's story and the link it had with my own family's RAF history. She agreed at once to be part of the study and we arranged the interview for the following week at her home. On arrival I was made to feel very welcome and we instantly connected on a social level. We sat in the living room and her husband came and joined us whilst Georgia told her story. He remained quiet at the start of the interview, although he occasionally confirmed the points Georgia made with a nod, chuckle or a one-word answer. By the end of the interview, Georgia's husband Harry had fully entered into the conversation, giving his own recollections of Georgia's father. The rapport they had between them only enhanced the content of the interview and some of the joint discussion helped to clarify elements of the story. The conversation had opened up a number of avenues that then allowed Harry to begin discussing his own father, and he subsequently became a participant in the project too.

She discussed her father's life in a chatty and confident manner and spoke animatedly about her relationship with him compared to her relationship with her mother – which could be a bit strained – and this gave more context as to why she thought of herself as a daddy's-girl. Being an only child myself it was interesting to hear her recalling specific outings with her father such as visiting the bank on a Saturday, as I can recall specific days out with my own father as they were a rare occurrence. There were only a few occasions where I asked Georgia to expand on elements of her story. Although I knew about these from memory, I wanted to make sure I had it recorded so it could be used within the transcription process.

During the interview she brought the medal, cufflinks (fig. 049) and other ephemera such as her father's medal acceptance (fig. 051) and encouraged me to touch them and take photographs. By this point I had moved to look at the medal and was positioned on the carpet while Georgia sat in the armchair. The seating positions felt almost hierarchical, like a child being taught as I looked up from the floor (4.3).



06.3 – Social and Historical Context

The Air Force Cross was awarded to service men and women of the RAF and RFC for “gallantry while flying but not on active operations against the enemy” (The National Archives, 2010). The historian, Matthew Richardson explains that different types of medal were issued during the First and the Second World Wars; campaign medals were awarded for “being there” (Richardson, 2009, p. 104) and gallantry medals were awarded for going above and beyond the call of duty. In the First World War, all medals were personalised with name, number and regiment, by the Army Medal Office, which connected each medal to its owner and the event or campaign in which they were involved. Second World War gallantry medals were also personalised with name, number and regiment, however, campaign medals remained unnamed. Therefore as Richardson suggests this could divorce the medal from the individual and his participation and experience in the life changing event (Richardson, 2009, p. 105). Medals become disconnected from their original owners through circumstance such as being sold or through death and as such, without personalisation, they lose their connection to their original owner and their status as a personal memory object.

Medals that were awarded to those who died in battle, although disconnected from their owner, became “tangible symbol(s) of pride” (Richardson, 2009, p. 109). Families had medals and certificates mounted and framed that became the embodiments of lost love. In the early 1980s a resurgence of interest in the First World War took place as veterans – who were by then reaching old age – began to tell their own stories about



Figure 050 – My great grandfathers medals. (2017).

their experiences (Richardson, 2009, p. 113). Richardson argues that the dissemination of personal stories from soldiers revealed the social history of the war, but also increased the value of medals, that had become scarce over the years. Medals with inscriptions became personified and allowed for their history to be traced in terms of who owned them and what they had achieved. A gallantry medal for performing duties above and beyond the call of duty may give the illusion that it is of higher value than that of an impersonalised campaign medal. How a medal is used by others as a memory object to remember a particular individual determines its value.

Curator, Jody Joy's grandfather was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service in the Royal Air Force, but the memories of the medal differ between his grandfather and the rest of Joy's family. The medal went missing – thought stolen by a family member – in the 1950s, and the box in which it was stored became "a symbol of its absence" (Joy, 2002, p. 136). It was later replaced with a replica and although Joy understood that the meaning the medal carried was not the same as the original, it could be used by his grandfather "as a medium [...] to remember 1944 and his life and friends in the RAF" (Joy, 2002, p. 138). The replica became the memory object by which he was able to communicate stories of his time in the Royal Air Force (Joy, 2002, p. 139). Now Joy's grandfather has passed away the medal is considered a preserver of memories. The medal is seen in the same way Georgia recalled her own father's memories with the Air Force Cross.

06.4 – Transcription and Initial Ideas

Georgia's interview did not record her father's life in a chronological order and so the transcription became a jigsaw puzzle to understand the order of his life and experiences. Like *Toilet Dolly*, there were a number of elements and objects that played a part within the shaping of her father's persona; rosehip syrup, Andrew's liver salts, his monogrammed cufflinks given by the King and his Air Force Cross. I was able to research a number of these objects using the internet to understand what they were and may have looked like, but also to integrate them using thinking-through-making. There was an experimentation period before I started creating the final artefact (06.5). This artefact changed from the original visualisation most dramatically.



*Fonable for the Duration
of Hostilities*

R.I.
George VI by the Grace of God, OF GREAT BRITAIN, IRELAND
AND THE BRITISH DOMINIONS BEYOND THE SEAS, KING, DEFENDER OF
THE FAITH, EMPEROR OF INDIA, &c.

To Our Trusty and well beloved

Edward Momphey

Greeting:

WE reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Loyalty, Courage, and good
Conduct, do by these Presents Constitute and Appoint you to be an Officer
in Our Royal Air Force from the First day of *April* 1940.
You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge your Duty as such in the
Rank of *Pilot Officer* or in such higher Rank as We may from time to
time hereafter be pleased to promote or appoint you to, of which a notification
will be made in the London Gazette, and you are at all times to exercise
and well discipline in their Duties both the inferior Officers and Airmen serving
under you and use your best endeavours to keep them in good Order and
Discipline. And We do hereby Command them to Obey you as their superior
Officer and you to observe and follow such Orders and Directions as from time
to time you shall receive from Us, or any your superior Officer, according to the
Rules and Discipline of War, in pursuance of the Trust hereby reposed in you.

GIVEN at Our Court, at Saint James's
the *Twenty-sixth* day of *April* 1940 in the *Fourth* Year of Our Reign

By His Majesty's Command

Ed. Goswami

H. S. Street

Figure 051 – Medal acceptance certificate. (2017).

06.5 – Use of Materials and Techniques

From my experience casting with translucent silicone, I intuitively knew that the medal would achieve a clear and crisp mould due to its solid, angular form. I wanted show the different elements of Georgia's fathers working life and sought to combine an impression of an old glass, rosehip syrup bottle with that of the medal (fig. 051). It was also important that I included the cufflinks in the artefact, with the ability to open and close the finished piece, like the display box they were kept in (fig. 053).

Although I would have liked to have used the real Air Force Cross, I did not want to risk it being damaged and so I bought a replica and framed it in my mind as the real object. This meant I was able to be more forceful with it and manipulated the shape to create a better fit with the bottle for casting. The replica still carried the meaning and symbolised the original medal, but as Joy states, a replica also allows “fresh and immediate new meanings to become layered



on top of the old ones” (Joy, 2002, p. 137). This was true of the newly-crafted artefacts as memory objects. In the process the replica did become damaged and I felt guilty for breaking an Air Force Cross for what it symbolised, rather than its capital value. It only impacted my own manufacture process and cannot be seen or felt in the finished artefact. I experimented by inverting the medal in the silicone and created a translucent replica that, from the outside, looked like a positive absence of the medal (fig. 051). The mould was cast in two parts and each silicone piece was held by a leather frame with brass fastenings. To enable the leather frame to fit tight, I wet moulded the leather and allowed it to dry on the silicone, in a similar way to the leather formed to the neck in *The N-Exlace*. The frame allowed the artefact to be opened and closed to reveal and conceal void left by the Air Force Cross, but also to enable a pair of cufflinks to be stored inside given to me by my own father. Casting a shiny bottle and metal medal with hard surfaces allowed the clarity and detail to be seen when held up to the light, yet also be protected by the leather outer frame. The finished artefact, although a boxy shape, was softened with the use of leather and remained tactile as it was able to be held in one hand.



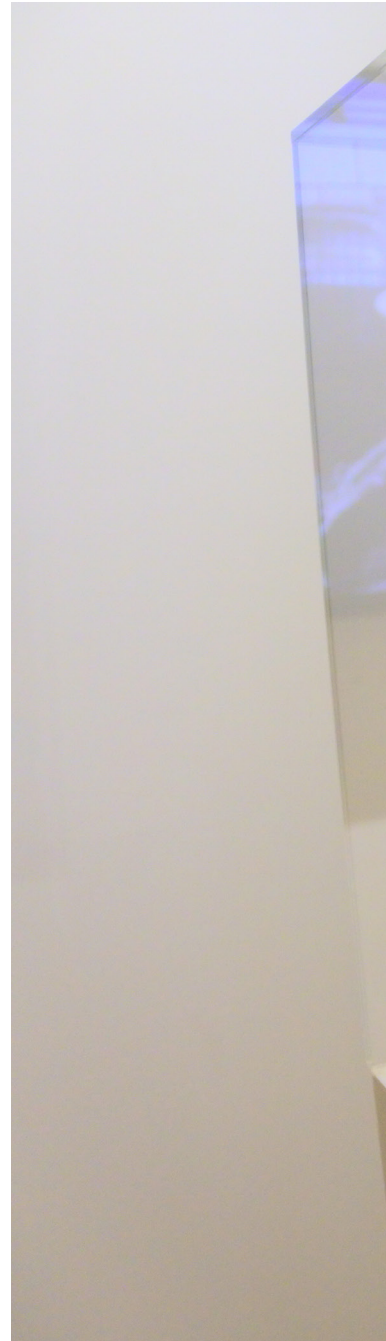
Figure 052 – Casting the medal and rosehip syrup bottle in silicone. (2017).

06.6 – Reflective Interview

Georgia and Harry, were both present at the reflective interviews as they had been in the initial interview process. Georgia's reflective interview lasted just over two minutes, however, in such a short amount of time, her analysis revealed how she felt the artefact represented her father. Having unwrapped the artefact Georgia took it and opened and closed it exclaiming twice "Isn't it super, oh I say, look at that" (Personal Communication, February 8, 2018). She warmed to the artefact the more she talked about it, stroking the leather and holding it up to the light to see the medal. She talked about the craftsmanship of the artefact and was "amazed" at how the bottle looked so real. She commented that she wanted to keep it, followed by how it made her feel "ever so proud" of her father (Personal Communication, February 8, 2018). This shows the artefacts ability to act as a memory object from this brief encounter and signifies an emotional attachment between it and Georgia.

Georgia was keen to partake in other activities as part of my study after the completion of all the artefacts. She attended the opening of the Dean Clough Exhibition in July 2018 with her husband. Having asked her for feedback about what she thought, she emailed me a word-processed document, with headings and flourishes that had been created with care. "Seeing my Dad's medal, moulded in silicone, together with the cufflinks 'from the King' gave me goose bumps and made me feel so proud" (Georgia, Personal Communication, September 1, 2018). This comment cements her connection with the artefact as a memory object.

At her visit to the Temporary Contemporary exhibition the following year, she approached her artefact as if it was an old friend on the plinth. The connection between the individual artefact and participant was still strong, with both participants still wanting to take the artefacts home.



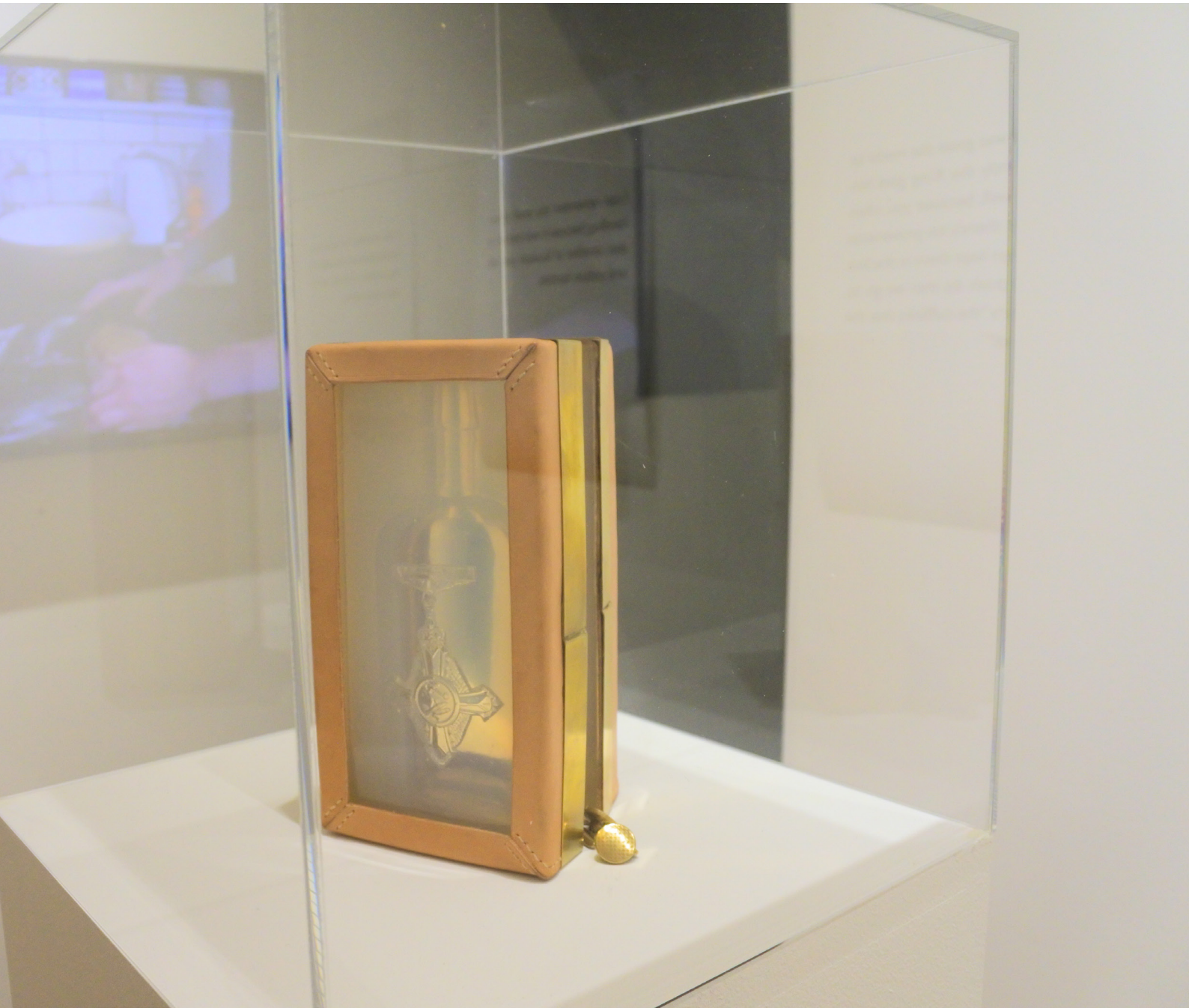


Figure 053 – Medal at Temporary Contemporary. (2019).



06.7 – Summary

As discussed within *Football* (03.7), my relationship with Georgia and Harry is still ongoing. Georgia rings frequently to see how I am and arrange a coffee or lunch. She still attends the Probus club and was made president the year after she had been involved with my study. She arranged for me to return to give a talk about the finished artefacts. We do not discuss her father as much as we used to do, but she does on occasion bring up the artefact and how wonderful she thinks it is.

Brass Shoes

07.1 – The Narrative

Jane was very fond of her 'little' grandma and she of Jane, as her only granddaughter. As Jane was growing up her grandparents used to take her on holiday to the coast each year. They almost always ended up in a silly situation, such as getting lost in a maze or being scared on a ghost train, but most importantly, they always had fun.

The back room at her grandparent's house was covered with brass ornaments she had collected over the years and on a Wednesday each week her grandma would wear her pinny and old clothes to polish the pieces which often took all day. Jane used to day trip regularly with her grandma to Bradford by bus, to visit a market stall that sold a variety of brass ornaments. Together they would choose new items to add to the collection. She had a variety of pieces, from horse brasses and statues of animals, to ashtrays and vessels. Jane remembers a small pair of brass shoes that sat together as a pair on the shelf. Her grandma smoked when she was younger, but claimed she had given up in later life. However, when Jane was older and visited she could sometimes smell a faint hint of cigarette smoke in the air. After her grandma died, Jane could still feel her presence, like she was behind her when boiling the kettle or in her bedroom whilst she slept. Jane chose to keep the two small brass shoes that had sat on her grandma's shelf to remember her by. They are now positioned on Jane's kitchen windowsill catching the sunlight. She prefers to look at these rather than a photograph to remember her grandma.



Figure 055 – *Brass Shoes*. (2018).



Figure 056 – Brass shoes with silicone inside ready to fully cast. (2018).

07.2 – The Interview

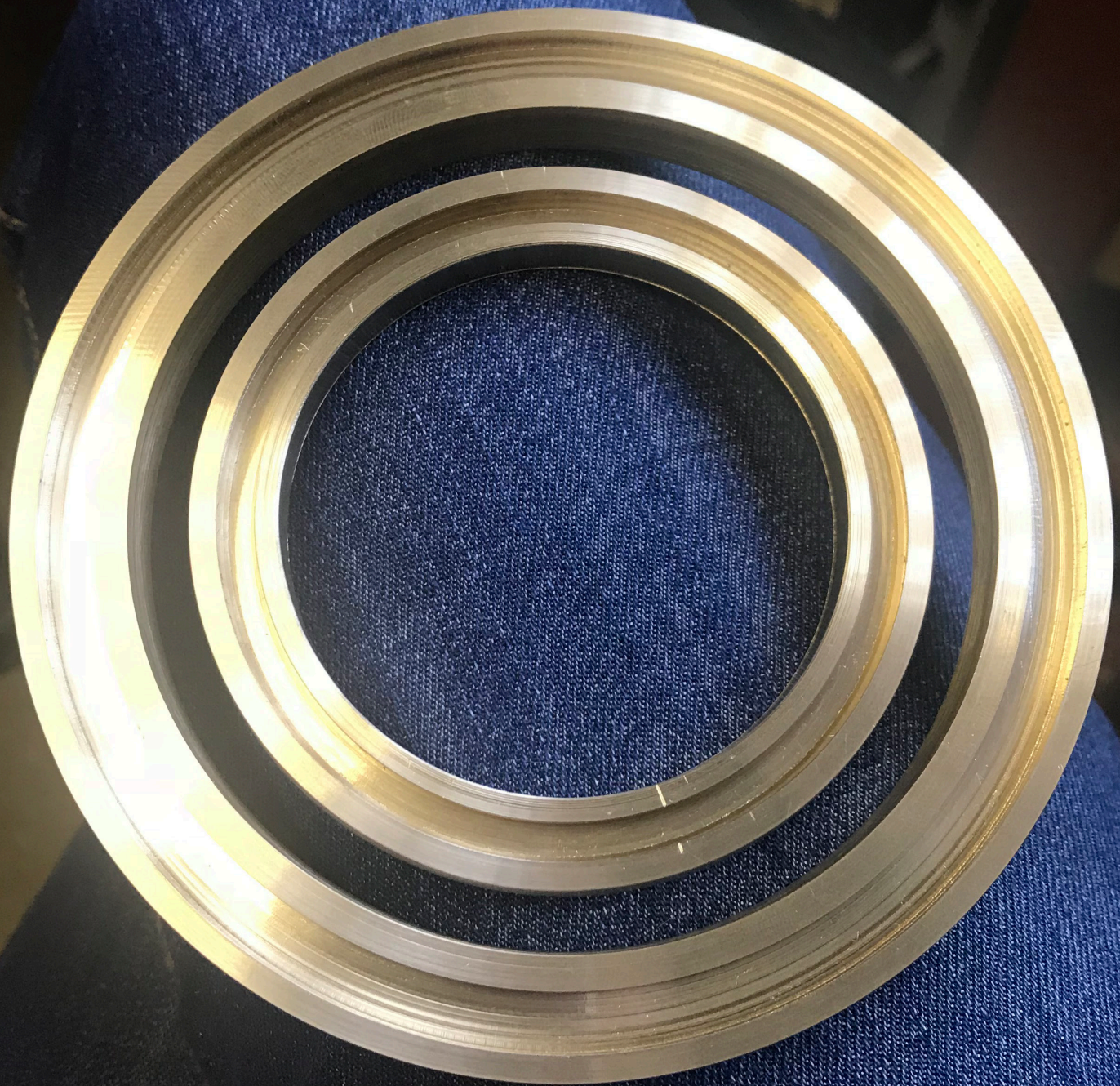
Jane put her written story in one of the lost love boxes that had been left at the University. She had outlined her special relationship with her grandma and was happy to be contacted to discuss further. We emailed and arranged to meet in the University cafe to get a coffee, then moved to a private office room. It was a quiet, neutral space and Jane put the pair of small brass shoes in the middle of the round table as we sat down. It felt like the presence of her grandma was also with us at the interview and we both touched them before we started talking.

She began by describing her “little Grandma” (Jane, Personal Communication, May 16, 2017), her size, her demeanour and the type of life she had led both before and after Jane was born. This was a mixture of her own memory and those that she had collected from other family members. She described holidays, shopping trips and visits to her grandma’s house but also areas of her grandma’s life, such as her being a great pianist. She discovered this after she had died. Towards the end of the interview, after telling the ‘story’ of her grandma, Jane described how she used the brass shoes as a visual prompt rather than a photograph to remember her. She explained that when she had got married her grandma was much older and had “a white stick” which is not how she likes to think of her, so the brass shoes allow her to visualise her in a different way. At the end of the interview Jane stated she wanted to be involved with my study as it would help to keep her grandma’s memory alive, she was excited to be involved and open to my material interpretation of her story.

07.3 – Social and Historical Context

Fred W. Burgess has argued that brass ornaments were a popular collector's item in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Brass was used in middle-class homes of the period, to decorate the centre point of the room such as the fireplace. The type of brass wear depended on the area or district in which a household was situated. For example "in agricultural districts the wagoner, the huntsman, and dogs and hounds were chiefly favoured" (Burgess, 2014, p. 188) as they related to the trade of the occupants. Popular items of the day included miniatures of household objects such as furniture, tables, brass trivets, stools and chairs (Burgess, 2014, p. 188). Being displayed on a focal point such as a fireplace gave brass wear status within the household. Similarly, a century later, Jane described the location her grandma kept her brass shoes: "they were kind of in the fireplace, (it) had a stone missing (creating) a shelf and they were in one of those" (Jane, Personal Communication, May 16, 2017). Further brass collectables came in the form of 'horse brasses', decorative amulets that were fastened to horses' bridles for good luck and protection. These were popular in agricultural homes of the mid 19th century and hung above, predominantly near the fireplace as the focal part of the room (Burgess, 2014, p. 288).

Decorative brass is an almost ubiquitous domestic feature, and I have memories of my own mother polishing the brass with Brasso on a Sunday morning, I often used to help. It gave time for contemplation of the objects and what they may have been used for in a previous life (horse brasses and shell cases rather than ornaments). The more care and attention they received by being buffed, the more they shone. This ties in with many of my own labour and time intensive making processes.



07.4 – Transcription and Initial Ideas

Through the transcription process I identified early on what elements would be used for the artefact; I had visualised the design of this piece in my head from the initial written story and the oral history helped strengthen this. I felt sure of how it would look and feel, having made similar works for *Absence* (2010). Therefore the choice of material and techniques I used were already understood. Jane discussed being a minimal person and did not like clutter so when her grandma died, she chose only to keep the brass shoes, some small pottery pieces and a brass deer as memory objects. As the shoes were smooth, but patterned, the design of the artefact needed to be simplistic, yet representational to capture the materials and the aesthetic of the object. The use of sunlight to enhance the artefact was something from the transcription that felt important to capture as the essence of the narrative.

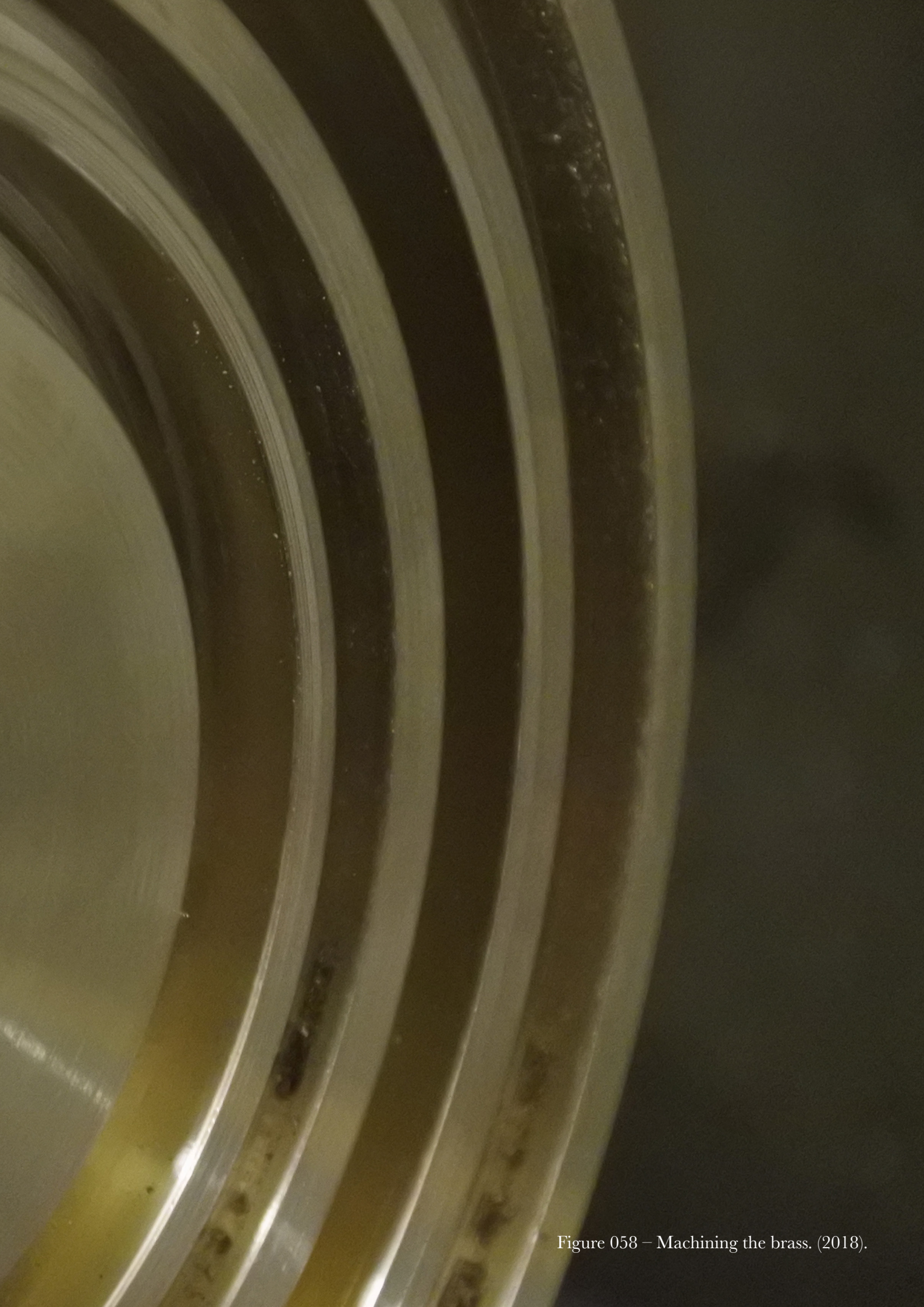


Figure 058 – Machining the brass. (2018).

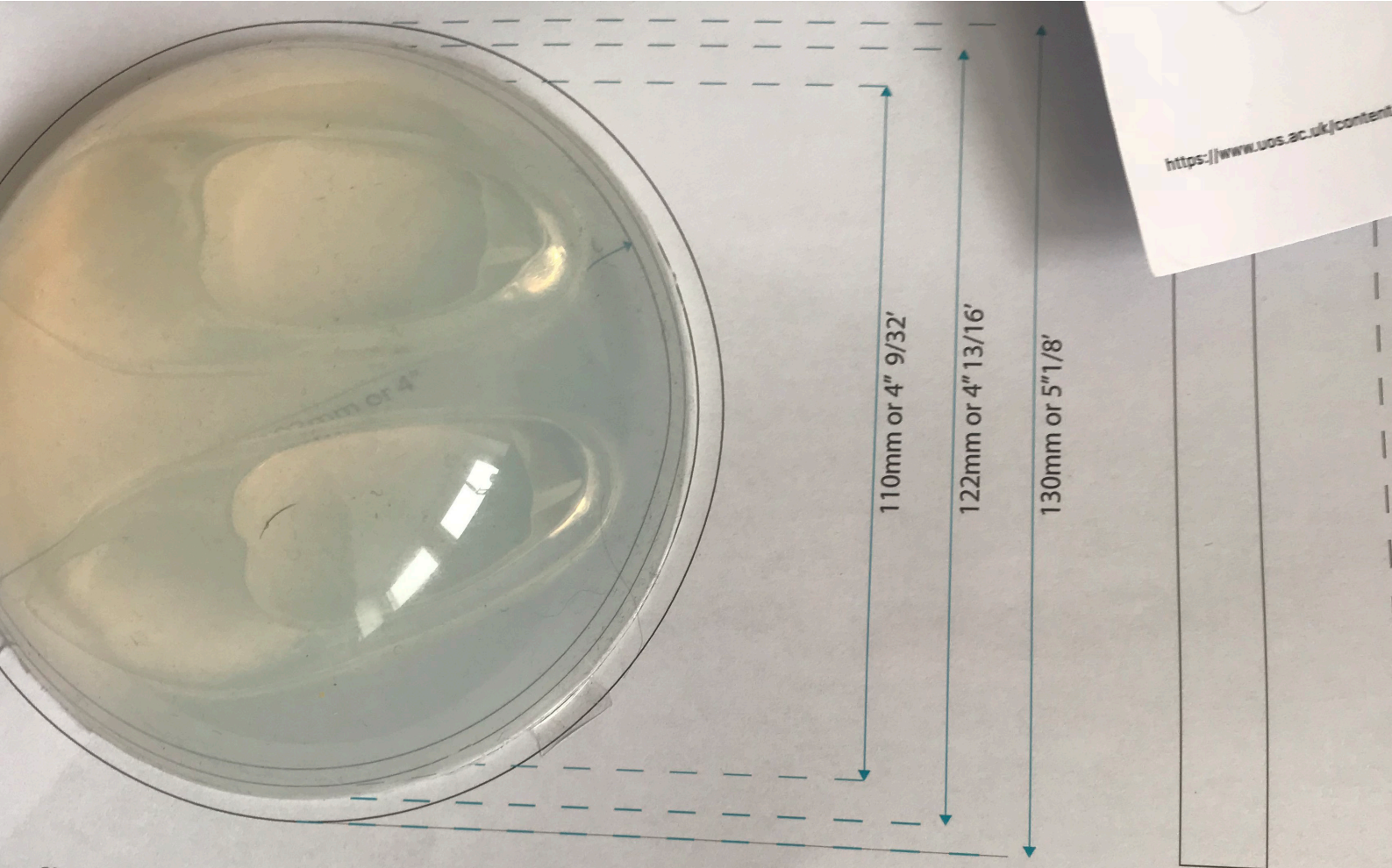
07.5 – Use of Materials and Techniques

The process of casting the brass shoes in silicone (fig. 061), mirrored the process of how the brass shoes would have been cast originally. The cast from a dome shaped mould, created the illusion of a void left by the brass shoes and became magnified and, in some sense, larger than life as if they were filled with memories. When held up to light, the impression that the brass shoes left within the silicone reflected onto the surrounding surfaces and evoked the idea that Jane's grandma, although absent, was still present in Jane's life (fig. 055). The addition of light with the silicone paralleled the way in which the original brass shoes caught and refracted the light on Jane's windowsill.

The domed silicone halves needed to be supported and so a frame was designed that would reflect the brass shoes in the choice of material, but also allow for the silicone to be seen from different angles. The use of brass complimented both the tone of the leather within other artefacts and contrasted with the cool colour of the silicone yet allowed for the connection to be made between the inner cast and its original material form (fig. 057).

I drafted working drawings for both *Brass Shoes* and *Watch* frames using the sizes of the pre-cast silicone to fit it to (fig. 059). Casting without being restrained by a pre-made frame allowed me to identify how much silicone I would need – judged by eye – and naturally flow and settle to an unmeasured yet preferred height within the mould. Due to the characteristics of the silicone used, the amount poured can vary due to its honey like consistency and so an ad-lib approach in pouring is often easier than precise measuring. Creating the frame to fit the silicone accommodated this process rather than constraining the aesthetic of the artefact.





profile symmetrical so should be easier and slightly
er walls.

gements make sense! The most important are the inner size 102mm and the middle 122mm.
amfer can be roughly the right size!

Figure 059 – Drafted working drawings for brass frame. (2018).

The brass frames for *Brass Shoes* and *Watch* were two components I worried about being manufactured as I did not have the skills to produce them myself. I was concerned about losing control of the making process. I had worked with a metal spinning company in London for the *Absence* collection; however, they had since closed down but they also manufactured without me being able to input into the making process. As part of this research my desire to oversee and be involved any way I could with the making of each artefact was imperative. Because of this I found it hard to source a company that understood what I was trying to achieve and also who would manufacture on such a small scale.

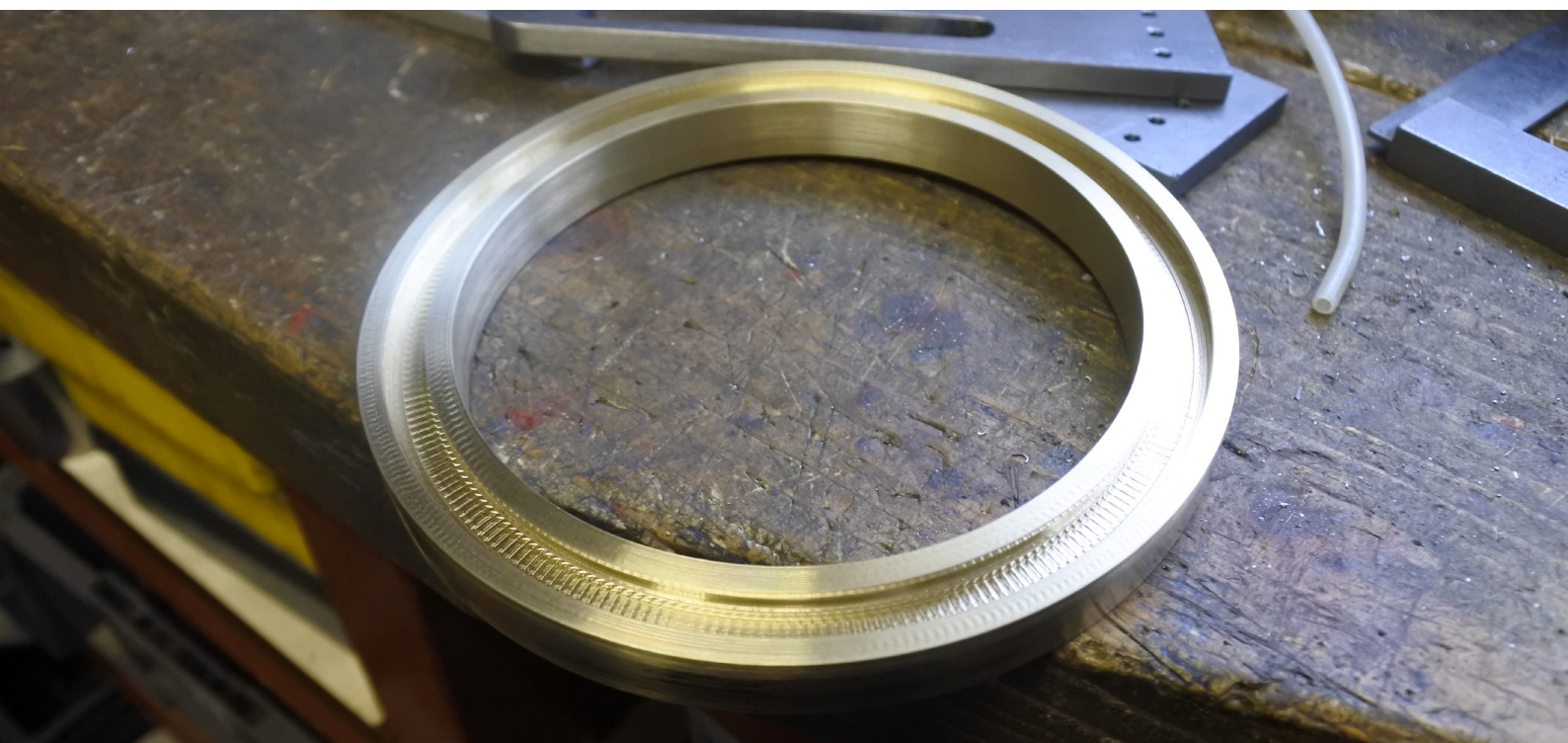
I frequently visited the forge across the road from my house, where myself and the blacksmiths who worked there had begun to develop a craft network and cooperative. Peter, the blacksmith, had recently been working with a retired metal spinner who had been mending a steam engine within the forge and so I was introduced to Roy. I took my plan drawings and silicone casts with me to show Roy who was interested in being involved as it would test his own engineering skills; he did not like to take on boring jobs now he had retired and wanted to challenge himself. From years of working on different jobs he had collected offcuts and spares of metal and happened to have a piece of brass that was the right size to produce the two frames required. In return for the brass and his craftsmanship he asked if I could mend or make him a watch strap that had been left to him by a friend. This was a poignant part of the making process as instead of cash payment, the idea of a skills trade was introduced and allowed me to use my own craft skills to help him in return.

The day Roy set aside to make the frames he invited me to the workshop so I was able to engage with the process and act as a consultant. Roy included me in decisions which deviated from the initial plans I had drawn up, such as if the recess was big enough or the brass lip wide enough to hold the silicone. We discussed the technicalities and where elements could be changed to make the finished frame more aesthetically pleasing

Figure 060 – Completed brass frame with tool markings. (2018).

or secure. This created a rapport that would have been lost through working with a larger manufacturer. This also made me feel a part of the process and stories flowed between us that, along with the memory of Jane's grandma, were also transfigured into the frames. Roy was not happy about the quality of the finish on one of the frames due to a technicality (fig. 060) and his dissatisfaction echoed Sennett's argument that, to a craftsperson, "each imperfection is a failure" (Sennett, 2008, p. 46). I could see the area he was unhappy about, however, for me, this added Roy's identity to the frame and also identified the craftsperson's hand within it. As a maker I understood Roy's frustration, but, as Korn highlights, a craftsperson has "limited control over the respondent's take away" (Korn, 2015, p. 63). Therefore, I liked that this had both happened and the frames are imbued with the making process.

As the frames were made to the exact size of the silicone, the fit was seamless when they were joined together. To join them more silicone was added to the channel in the frame and the domed pre-cast silicone was positioned on top and left to cure. There was only one opportunity to align the silicone dome and achieve a bubble free join and so this became a stressful process. Inevitably there were a couple of air pockets that appeared and still can be seen in the finished artefact (fig. 062). However, referring again to Sennett and Korn's ideas above, they did not give the feeling of failure, but rather the imperfection was telling the story of the process.





07.6 – Reflective Interview

We met in the same office in the University as the initial interview and replicated this first meeting by having a coffee and a chat. I revealed the artefact and her initial reaction was a gasp of excitement and then she commented that it was “gorgeous” and “beautiful” (Jane, Personal Communication, February 12, 2018). She held the artefact throughout the interview and turned it in her hands whilst holding it up to the light to see the ghostly image of the brass shoes captured in the silicone. Her first response was that the brass frame on the outside, was a reflection of the cast of the shoes on the inside; she had made the material connection that I had envisaged within the design process.

We discussed the artefact being hung as Roy had included his own touch of a hook on the top of the frame and she delighted in the knowledge that it was “going to move rather than being a static piece, like it’s dancing” (Jane, Personal Communication, February 12, 2018).

We talked through the manufacturing process of the frames, including my collaboration with Roy. She could see his personal involvement and care in the production the frame, rather than it being produced by a larger company and just “get(ting) it done”. Of the finished frame she commented that “it just really brings (the artefact) to life” (Jane, Personal Communication, February 12, 2018). It was therefore felt that the collaborative element enhanced the finished artefact as it recognised the input of skill and effort within the making process and created a new narrative between craftspeople hoping to achieve a common goal.

To conclude we discussed the aesthetic of the artefact and whether it should have been made to open as some of the other artefacts do. However, Jane responded quickly that she did not want people to be able to “touch the memory that was held inside” (Jane, Personal Communication, February 12, 2018). This response proved that Jane felt that I had managed to capture her memory within the artefact and that it was also protected from others.



07.7 – Summary

Jane and I met again two years after the reflective interview. I have since helped her with her own studies and in this way, we developed our own collaborative relationship. We found we shared commonalities in different areas of our lives. We still exchange messages now. The artefact is one of my favourite pieces from the collection, due to its size and shape being so tactile and simplistic, with a minimal finish. It allowed me to meet and work with Roy who, in such a short space of time I became firm friends and kept in touch with, until February 2019 when he passed away.



Watch

08.1 – The Narrative

Beth's father was a prisoner of war for three years and eventually found himself in a hospital in Auschwitz just before liberation in 1944. When he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's he began to talk more freely about his experiences: "being taken on a death march around Europe so prisoners would not be found by the allies" (Beth, Personal Communication, December 1, 2016). From his experiences he was a keen supporter of Water Aid having been witness to the devastating effects dehydration had on his comrades and the sense of relief when villagers gave the prisoners water whilst on the march. As such Beth continues to support Water Aid in her father's memory.

Beth remembered her own experiences with her father such as visiting the library to find out what words were in Latin such as 'earth worm' and with a nod to his embarrassing but colourful dress sense in the 1970s. When she was older and his Alzheimer's had begun to take hold, she remembered how he would use humour such as witty puns to get over his confusion and to stop his family worrying about his failing mind. One skill that never left him was his ability to do maths; in the early stages of Alzheimer's, whilst creating a floor plan to move house, he proved his ability to convert centimetres to inches in his head without the use of a calculator.

She remembered him through a radio-controlled watch that no longer worked. He had bought it from the 'Chums' catalogue. He always enjoyed taking apart 'tech' to see how it worked and the watch was no exception – he had once taken Beth's mother's hearing aid to bits and could not get it back together – it never quite worked the same, but it reminded her of a time when his mind was starting to fail yet there were still glimmering moments of his charm and inquisitiveness. She now keeps the watch in a drawer for "mis-purchased objects" (Beth, Personal Communication, December 1, 2016) in her bedroom dressing table as she still cannot bear to get rid of it.



Figure 063 – *Watch*. (2018).

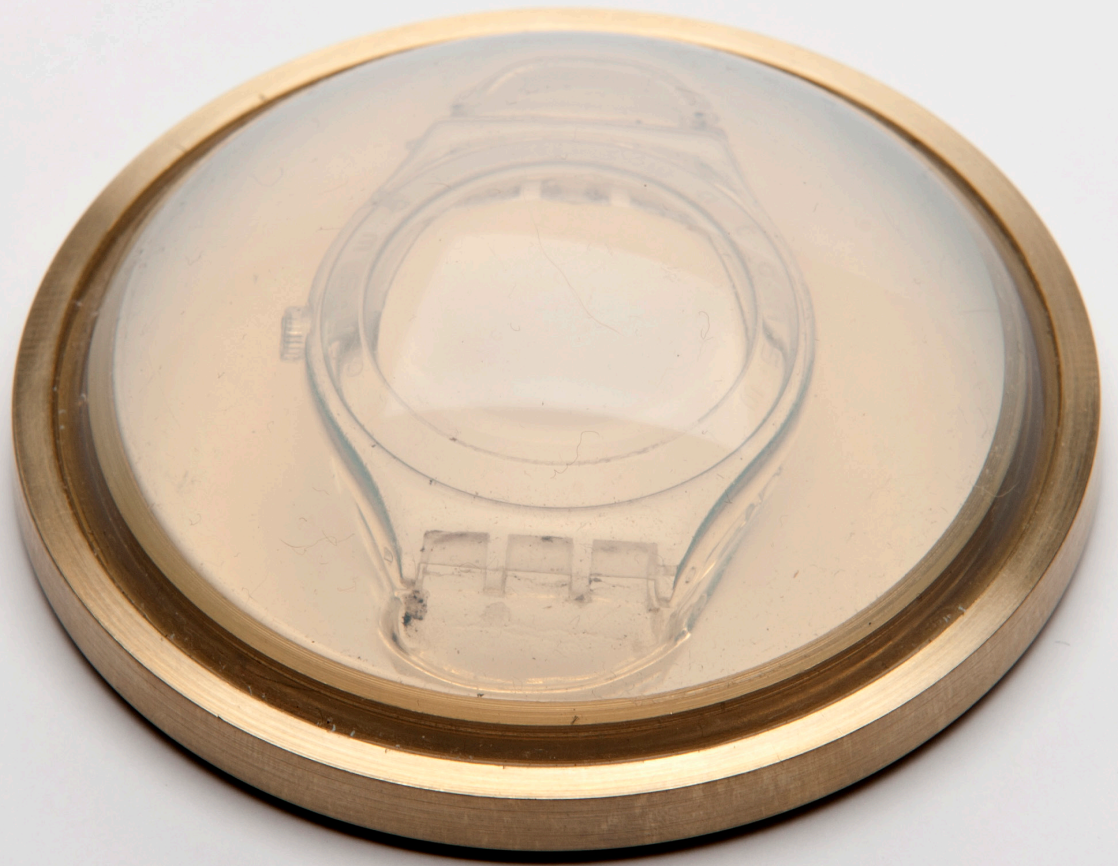


Figure 064 – Cast of the watch in brass frame. (2018).

08.2 – The Interview

Beth submitted her story through a collection box at a conference I presented at. From this initial meeting she said she would be happy to be further involved and invited me to interview her at her place of work. This was the first external interview I conducted and I was most nervous about capturing the story. She led us to a small, empty communal kitchen and I checked the recording equipment and microphone to make sure it all worked before we started. She began the interview by discussing her father's Alzheimer's which was quite brief so I steered the conversation through specific questions into more of a chronological order which provided more structure. Beth talked about her memories of growing up with an older father and the adventures they went on when he retired. Towards the end of the interview we were interrupted by one of Beth's colleagues who came to make a cup of tea. We made small-talk until he left. We then discussed the objects and skills that reminded her of her father.

His 1970s Tricel jumper that Beth had been embarrassed by as a teenager later became an object of comfort and remembrance. In *The Gendered Object*, Ash highlights how garments can become "imbued with the essence of the person" (1996, p. 219) and prompt memories from when the garment was worn; in Beth's case the jumper reminds her of her father carving the Christmas turkey.

The interview showed the varied experiences Beth's father had throughout his life and highlighted a number of his qualities; empathy, humour, and aptitude, rather than physical assets which made for a rich narrative for a material memory.

08.3 – Social and Historical Context

The men's wristwatch became popular during the wars of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Belcher, 2013) where they were used as a military tool for use in specific conditions with significant advantages over the more cumbersome pocket watch. Many watch manufacturers such as Patek Philippe, Cartier, Omega and Rolex became involved in the manufacture of military wristwatches, developing the designs for efficiency of use, with features including "wide white numerals on a black background and a luminescent hour hand" (Belcher, 2013). However, as a masculine accessory, manufacturers wanted to create watches that were stylish as well as efficient. The wristwatch continued to evolve, incorporating different metals and designs and during the Second World War it became standard issue – albeit made by less luxurious brands than those listed above. They were worn by members of all the armed forces, and were important in conflicts in air, on land, and at sea. Through this, it could, therefore, be argued that wristwatches subsequently became objects of sentimental value because of the action they had seen in conflict or through the connections forged with the people who had worn them.

Mechanical wristwatches - powered by a winding mechanism or oscillator to wind up a spring, rather than quartz watches which use a battery to power them - are designed so they can be "maintained, repaired, and reproduced [...] indefinitely" (Baytas, CosKun, Yantac, & Fjeld, 2018, p. 710). This provides the opportunity for the watch-as-heirloom, which is to say, the opportunity for the watch to be worn and experienced in the same way as it was by the original owner. The wristwatch is an embodied object, worn close to the body in the same way clothing or jewellery is (2.2). Electronic watches - which have in some cases gained cult status - do not have the longevity in their working capacity that mechanical watches possess, due to battery failure, damage or mass manufactured sealed components that do not allow for easy repair. Beth's father's watch succumbed to his tinkering through his desire to understand how it worked, therefore failed to work efficiently as a time piece. However, as a memory object it still reminds her of his qualities such as his inquisitiveness at a time when his mind was beginning to fail him.

My own father bought himself a Rolex Submariner for his 50th birthday in 1997 (fig. 065). Rolex was the first watch maker to make the fully waterproof watch and these were



popularised by Ian Fleming in the James Bond books in the early 1950s. Sean Connery was seen wearing a Rolex Submariner in the 1962 film, *Dr No*. As a teenager in the 1960s my father lived in Libya whilst his own father was working in the Royal Air Force. They visited the beach most days after school and my father noticed an RAF Sergeant who swam in the sea everyday whilst wearing a Rolex Submariner watch. He thought, “that’s a good idea, I’ll have one of those one day, if you don’t have to take your watch off to go swimming” (Roger Goldthorpe, Personal Communication, March 20, 2020). It was this childhood experience that kept his interest in the watch for almost 40 years. The Submariner remains a popular style in the luxury watch market; however, my father still thinks of it as a functional watch that he can wear to go swimming. I hope to inherit it one day as its value is in the story it tells about my father, rather than its capital value.

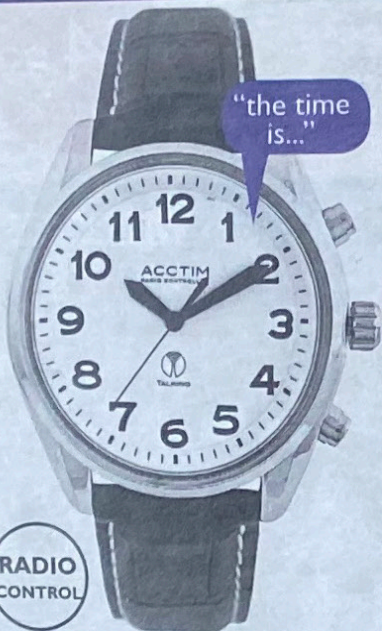
Figure 065 – My dad and his Rolex. (2021).



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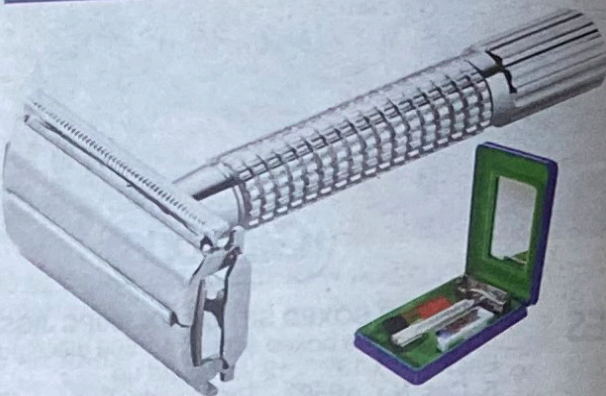


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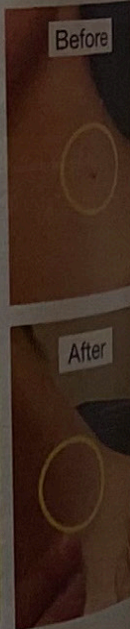
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REMINGTON

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08.4 – Transcription and Initial Ideas

The first thing I did when I left the interview was check that it had been recorded as the story Beth told was so moving and it was my first time using the equipment. Listening back made me relive the experience again. Whilst transcribing the interview, I began to pick out elements I was drawn to during our conversation and highlighted them adding my own interpretation. One idea that came from the transcription was to order the ‘Chums’ catalogue (fig 066) – Beth described it as “full of things that will appeal to a pensioner, like crimplene trousers with elasticated waists” (Beth, Personal Communication, December 1, 2016) – in order to understand what kind of products it offered as a way to relive Beth’s father’s experience of catalogue ordering.

Physical elements of the story such as his radio-controlled, digital watch and the drawer in which the watch was now kept, combined with emotional elements of the story such as Beth’s father’s commitment to Water Aid and his strong mathematics skills, were the driving forces behind the production of the artefact. I had an initial vision of what the piece would look like; a version of a watch within a silicone bubble, but through the making process the idea of the drawer-as-container and protector showed itself by chance and became an integral part of the artefact (08.5).

Figure 066 – My copy of the Chums catalogue. (2016).

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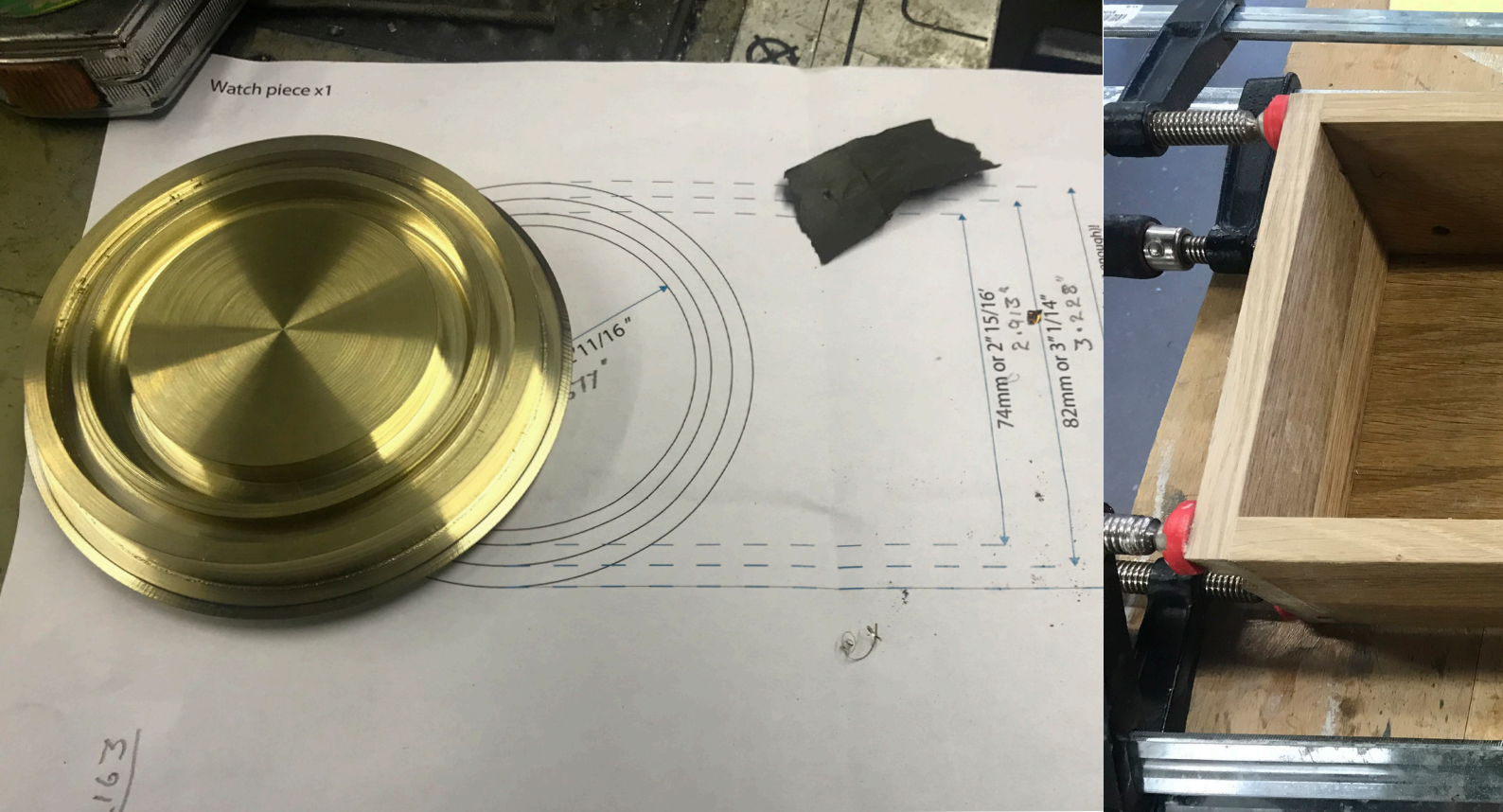


Figure 067 – Roy’s adapted measurements on my working drawings. (2018).

08.5 – Use of Materials and Techniques

The idea and making process for *Watch* was similar to that of *Medal*, where by initial ideas were initially visualised, but the making process led to a different physical outcome. The piece became a mix of collaborative making methods and included the input of three craftsmen. Initially I cast the watch face in a domed sphere of silicone in the same way *Brass Shoes* had been produced to emphasise the shape. Again, I worked alongside Roy to produce a small brass frame that would hold the silicone cast, however, whilst preparing the plans for Roy to follow, a significant experience occurred that tied both the narrative and production together. Beth discussed her father’s skill of converting centimetres to inches in his head when drawing up plans to redecorate his living room. Roy had asked if I could change my plan drawings from centimetres to inches, which I did with the help of a calculator. However, when we next met all my measurements on the drawings had been changed to the exact size in inches, using a pencil (fig. 067) in the same way Beth’s father had done in his head. Roy thought it was funny that I didn’t understand how to measure in inches and visiting him on another occasion, he taught me different methods of using inches such as how to use a micrometre, and read digits in thous (One thousandth of an inch, used mainly in engineering).

People often left wooden objects they no longer needed outside the forge across the road for



Figure 068 & 069 – The adaptation of the drawer and fitting the silicone watch. (2018).

Peter to burn. On this occasion someone had left two wooden drawers that I found whilst visiting him to discuss making a drawer. The drawer I found was too long and tall but the circumstances of its presence being ‘there’ when I needed it meant I could adapt the pre-existing object to become fit for purpose. The drawer already had the history of someone else’s life embedded into the wood and it felt as if it had been passed on, ready to contain its next memory within it.

I resized the drawer by shortening the length and the height to make the watch feel contained but not overpowered. The drawer was glued back together it was sanded and oiled and the brass frame was attached to the base to allow the light to permeate through it (fig. 068 & 069). I wrote all the measurements onto the drawer using a pencil, in the way Beth’s father had converted centimetres to inches when redecorating. I left these marks on the finished wood, rather than erasing them.

Alan, a retired blacksmith who often helped out at the forge wanted to teach me how to make a handle for the drawer which added a further collaborative relationship to the production of the artefact. In her story Beth described her father’s spontaneity which fitted with how this piece was beginning to take shape, working on impulse, rather than implementing a fully planned idea. I had previously watched Alan forge horse shoes, railings and pokers and so

to suddenly gain the opportunity to learn how to forge from a skilled craftsman was exciting (fig. 070 top left).

Alan demonstrated the technique of hammering a hot steel bar into shape which I then replicated using the same piece of steel. We passed the steel back and forth between us, shaping it through hammering, which made the experience feel like a fully collaborative endeavour. Through the repeated hammering it felt as if the narrative was being embedded into the metal with the manipulation of the bar into the shape of a handle.

Throughout the process Alan talked of his own experience of learning to forge and recognised my novice techniques, but gave me confidence by explaining that as my arm got stronger my technique would improve. As the piece took shape, he did not correct any mistakes I made, but guided the piece to keep it on track. Korn (2015) remembers his own experience as a novice woodworker with each step being “conscious deliberation” (p. 51), questioning the materials, tools and techniques throughout the process. I deliberated with the same elements Korn suggested whilst forging; when the steel was hot enough, how to use the bellows, and how to brush off the oxidised muck before hammering. I learned how to lengthen a piece of steel and the rhythm the hammer needed to achieve an even strike on the metal. The handle was fitted into the previous drawer handle holes seamlessly, which completed it (fig. 070).

Alan continually encouraged me throughout the whole process, like a father would his daughter and like Beth’s father had encouraged her. The complete making process took just over an hour, and in that time, I developed skills using a material I would not usually choose to work with. I found the process physically demanding and felt the results of my own input were clumsy and unrefined, which reminded me again of Sennett’s rationale, that striving for perfection creates a “prescription for failure” (2008, p. 46). I did however enjoy the spontaneity of the whole process and how the finished handle embodied the experience within the physical form that was produced. Since the experience of forging, I have not had chance to pick up the hammer again, more due to time constraints rather than not wanting to. My relationship with Alan and Peter has continued to be collaborative and they have both worked with me to make bespoke tools that I used to complete other artefacts and other crafts projects.



Figures 070 – The process of forging the handle. (2018).



Figure 071 – The forge. (2018).

08.6 – Reflective Interview

The location for the reflective interview was my suggestion and sadly not ideal; a café in the late afternoon which, although was quiet, did not allow for the conversation to flow as openly as if we had been in a private space. We sat opposite each other which I normally tried to avoid, however, it was as if meeting an old friend and the conversation flowed easily due to our similar interests. This was my second to last reflective interview and so I felt at ease with the process and Beth did too.

Watch (fig. 072) was less tactile than other artefacts as its shape was cumbersome and on the large side. Beth's initial response was quiet as she looked at the artefact and I was cautious not to begin talking to fill the silence. Thankfully the environment allowed for atmospheric background noise which took away from the void in the conversation. Her first observation was "I do like it. I like the curated sort of special look of it in particular" (Beth, Personal Communication, November 23, 2018) which suggested she had identified elements of her story embedded within the artefact. She held the handle and looked inside at the silicone watch and we began to discuss how it resembled water, something that Beth had described as an unexpected recurrent theme in her father's life that she'd recognised after his death. She felt the *Watch* embodied her father in an elegant way. The artefact encouraged further conversation surrounding her father and more stories about him were revealed; she still had cardboard boxes in her shed with his handwriting on from when she moved house years ago. Having reflected on the artefact Beth felt the incorporation of her father's handwritten measurements, rather than my own, would add further depth, but she liked the sentiment and how much of the story had been considered within the making.



08.7 – Summary

Throughout the process I did not have much contact with Beth although we met in a work based capacity. Making the artefacts from start to finish spanned nearly two years and we spoke over email regarding the progress of making so the connection remained present. Beth's father's story was enthralling, and I connected with her father and his experience through the similarities between him and my grandfather. The size and weight of the artefact, like that of *Running Shoes*, hindered its tactility.

The size and weight of the artefact, like that of *Running Shoes*, hindered its tactility. Again, the box like form, with its harsh edges made for the piece to be easily handled, although in the reflective interview, Beth interacted with it as best she could. Unlike *Running Shoes*, *Watch* combined both spherical moulding techniques that was housed within a boxy exterior, and because of this meant that the attention was drawn away from the outer square drawer to the interior. This meant that although the shape was cumbersome and could have been more defined, there was a delicateness within the artefact that could be focussed upon. Therefore, in the gallery setting *Watch* invited the audience to peer inside the drawer, creating the impression that the inner silicone piece was sacred and could be looked at but not touched. This again highlighted the importance of the memory object as container.

Handbag

09.1 – The Narrative

Karen's mother was a war time 'make do and mender' and collected anything that she could re-use or recycle. If bed sheets became worn out in the middle, she would slice them up and stitch the outside edges together giving them a new lease of life. She had worked as a secretary at a university until war broke out, then became a non-medical orderly for the Voluntary Aid Detachment, however, the chemicals they used were too harsh for her skin and so she joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). For her WAAF training, she upcycled an old folder she had kept from her university job and made colour coded tabs for the sections (fig. 076). Each page was written in neat handwriting using blue and red fountain pen ink and she made sure to fill every page so as not to waste paper.

She was a very resourceful woman, and her make-do-and-mend mentality stayed with her throughout her life. Her post-war housewife skills came in handy. In the 1970s she made Karen a patchwork messenger bag which used squares of different fabrics including Karen's primary school uniform and bits from different party dresses (fig. 074). Karen's friends liked it so much that her mother ended up making a dozen of them for the school fair. In clearing out her house after she had passed away, Karen and her sisters discovered hundreds of toothpaste tube lids in a wash bag that had probably been saved for 'just in case'.

Karen remembers her mother always used to carry a good quality, leather handbag in the style of a Mulberry Bayswater. It smelled of fountain pen ink, perfume and cotton hankies and she would leave it on the hall table where the smell permeated from it. The leather handbag, her patchwork bag and the upcycled WAAF folder all remind Karen of the type of strong independent woman her mother was.



Figure 073 – *Handbag*. (2018).



Figure 074 – Karen’s patchwork bag made by her mother. (2018).



09.2 – The Interview

I had already finished some of the artefacts for this study when Karen approached me with her story. She had heard about my research from working in the same department at the University and whilst on a student trip, she began to tell me about her mother. The interview was, therefore, quite spur-of-the-moment and was recorded on my phone on a long coach journey. Although we had worked together for a number of years, we knew little about each other's personal lives. We sat side by side at the front of the coach and the conversation that was led by Karen flowed naturally, with only a few questions that helped to expand on specific elements of the story. The dynamics and intersubjectivity of this interview were totally different from what I had experienced previously because we knew each other already and because she was excited to tell her story; the public space and coach journey gave a sense of exhilaration and spontaneity to the story-telling.

She narrated the story of her mother's life in the way Emily had in *Rolling Pin*; stating the year her mother was born and details about how her parents had met. She navigated the interview in a chronological order and then the conversation then focussed on different qualities and skills that her mother had, from sewing to flower arranging and her love of upcycling, including discussion around her mother's WAAF folder and her leather handbag. The smells of the leather handbag and fountain pen ink created a sensory experience which embedded the idea of working with these items to create an artefact. A few days later, Karen brought the WAAF folder and a patchwork bag her mother had made into work for me to see (fig. 074 & 076). The tactile experience with the items instantly created an idea of how elements of their form could be used within a new artefact and she allowed me to photograph them to explore this idea further.

09.3 – Social and Historical Context

The handbag has become renowned as the “ultimate accessory” (V&A, 2020), to the extent that the V&A exhibited 300 variations of the bag to explore “function, status and craftsmanship”. This featured bags and their power within celebrity culture, how the bag has been used as a platform for politics, and the importance of design and craftsmanship. Curator of the exhibition, Lucia Savi, argues that the bag being a portable, yet functional accessory gives it a dual nature combining the private with the public (Wightman-Stone, 2019). This is also echoed in sociologists, Christina Buse and Julia Twigg’s 2014 research that “the interior of a handbag is a particularly private space, which cannot be entered without permission” (Buse & Twigg, 2014, p. 16). Therefore, the handbag allows the user to project a version of themselves outwardly through the type of bag they carry but also conceal items that they need in day-to-day life and personal ephemera. Hidden from view they carry links to past experiences and memories such as old tickets, sweet wrappers, and receipts. This also shows how the handbag has an “embodied relationship to the wearer” and becomes “a literal container for the self” (Buse & Twigg, 2014, p. 15). In this way the ability of the handbag to reveal and conceal personal items allows the user to present different versions of the self when needed, so in turn, the handbag becomes a facilitator of identity and a carrier of the self. Of course, the perception of self in fashion and through objects has been explored through a variety of theoretical lenses; from Erving Goffman’s *The Presentation of Self* (1959) to Russell W. Belk’s *Possessions and the Extended Self* (1988), but in the context of the handbag, the different parts of the self (inner thoughts and feelings and outer identity) are represented through the bag. Barbara G. S. Hagerty argues that the choice of handbag allows a woman to “enhance – or decrease – individuality, to make themselves stand out or disappear as desired” (2002, p. 20). Therefore, the handbag can be used to conceal possessions that change the identity of the wearer, but also the use of different handbags can be used to create different impressions of identity.

Like the idea that the bag becomes part of the self, the bag can be likened to a person and vice versa. Steven Connor (2000) and Hagerty (2002) have both likened the handbag to the womb that carries and protects a child as the handbag does its contents. Then the idea of a bag being carried like a child; being held close to the body by a strap a handle or clutched or the placing of a bag on a chair or a table to keep it safe all show how we protect our handbags and they protect our identities. Buse and Twigg argue that the bag can be also be seen as a negative representation for an ageing woman's body by being described as an old bag or bag lady (2014, p. 16). I would argue, however, that there is a beauty in the ageing process of a well-made leather handbag, including the softening and creasing of the outer shell, the change of colour, and spots and marks that represent visual memories of experience in the same way a person would age, meaning the comparison to an old bag should not always be considered a negative connotation.



Leather Bag

09.4 – Transcription and Initial Ideas

The transcription process was interesting as the sound of the bus and the other passengers were present on the recording, which added a layer of atmosphere that had not been present in the other participant interviews. However, some parts of the recording were harder to hear, but it made me re-listen to the recording to make sure the transcription was correct. It became further embedded in my memory. The transcript, like that of *Toilet Dolly* and *Medal*, discussed branded items and a number of other objects that complimented the story telling. Different items were noted such as the Mulberry Bayswater style bag, the WAAF folder with its neat fountain pen handwriting, the patchwork bag made from different items of clothing. I knew from the start that this artefact would predominantly use traditional leather work skills, and in order to fully become immersed in the story I wanted to hand stitch the whole piece.

RAF ORGANISATION

Decentralisation
 Co-operation
 Flexibility
 Unity of direction
 Air Council responsible to King in Parliament.

} Good organisation.

AIR COUNCIL

Secretary of State for Air:	Sir Archibald Sinclair	} CIV.
Perm. Under Secretary of State for Air:	Sir Arthur Slight	
Parliamentary Under Sec. (Commons) of State for Air: (Lords)	Capt. Balfour Lord Sherwood	
Chief of Air Staff	Sir Charles Portal	} SER
Air Member for Personnel:	A.M. Sir Beatrice Suttan	
" " Training:	A.M. Sir Peter Drummond	
" " Supply + Organisation:	A.M. Sir Christopher Courtney	
Vice Chief of Air Staff:		
Financial Adviser:		
Member of M.A.P.:		
Adviser on Scientific Research:		

APPOINTMENTS

Secretary of State appointed by Prime Minister.
 Secretary of State for Air appoints all Council except C of AS.
 Chief of Air Staff appointed by King.

OBJECT

Air Council co-ordinate all the work of R.A.F. and are responsible to King in Parliament.

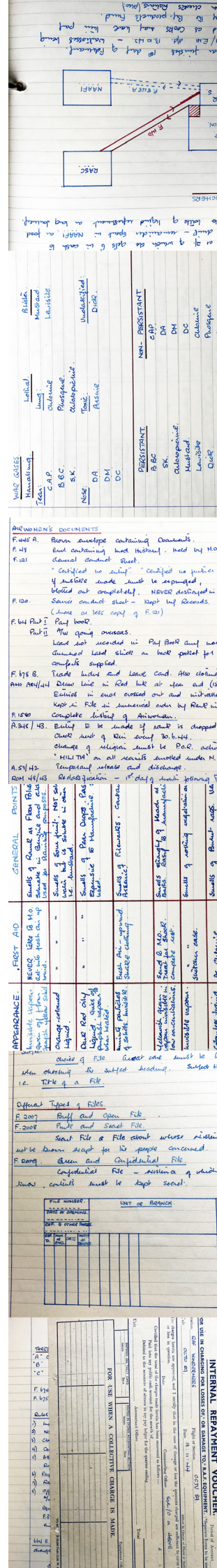
Figure 076 – Karen's mother's WAAF folder. (2018).

09.5 – Use of Materials and Techniques

Using the photographs I had taken of Karen’s mother’s handwriting, from the pages of the WAAF folder, I experimented by creating a patchwork on Photoshop – each square the size of those used to make the patchwork bag – but I did not know what I would use it for at this stage (fig. 077). I created a repeat print of the patchwork by multiplying the image a number of times which eventually created the illusion of a hand written patchwork quilt. I worked with a technician who helped me print the patchwork onto fabric and allowed me to sit and watch the whole printing process.

The printer printing the handwritten words that had firstly been written by fountain pen some 75 years earlier, created an interesting parallel and contrast between the two uses of ink to produce the personal handwriting. I chose to use a portion of the patchwork fabric to line the leather bag. The bag became the container that revealed and concealed the personal handwritten patchwork and symbolised the smell of cotton hankies and fountain pen ink that Karen remembered.

Figure 077 – Patchwork of the WAAF pages made on Photoshop. (2018).



Handwritten notes on the left margin of the top-left page, including 'Handwritten notes on the left margin' and 'Handwritten notes on the left margin'.

NOTE—THE SIGNING OF THIS FORM IS ENTIRELY VOLUNTARY.

Signature of Member: _____

Signature of Chairman: _____

Signature of Secretary: _____

Official Types of Files

F 2007 Buff and Open File
 F 2008 Buff and Seal File
 F 2009 Buff and Seal File

Saw file a file about whose status should not be known except for his people concerned.

Queen and Confidential File
 Confidential file - status of which people whose contents must be kept secret.

BLOOD GROUP H 117 (1974)

Soldier's Service Book.

Instructions to Soldier.

1. You are held personally responsible for the safe custody of this book.

2. You must produce this book on your return to your commanding officer, military authority, etc. on discharge.

3. You must not allow or authorize any other person to have access to this book.

4. You must not alter or tamper with the contents of this book.

5. You must not allow or authorize any other person to have access to this book.

6. Should you lose the book, you will report the matter to your commanding officer immediately.

7. If you are transferred to another unit, you must hand this book over to the commanding officer of the new unit.

8. If you are discharged from the Army Reserve, this book will be returned to you on your return to the Army Reserve.

9. If you are discharged from the Army Reserve, this book will be returned to you on your return to the Army Reserve.

10. If you are discharged from the Army Reserve, this book will be returned to you on your return to the Army Reserve.

ROYAL AIR FORCE
 INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

UNIT OF ISSUANCE

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INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

UNIT OF ISSUANCE

COURTS MARTIAL

Summary of Evidence.

An accused is indicted against an accused - a finding of guilty is a finding of guilty - a finding of guilty is a finding of guilty.

Cost of Inquiry

An accused is indicted against an accused - a finding of guilty is a finding of guilty - a finding of guilty is a finding of guilty.

Addresses for Prisoners of War

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

ROYAL AIR FORCE
 INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

UNIT OF ISSUANCE

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INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

UNIT OF ISSUANCE

Addresses for Prisoners of War

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

Addresses for Prisoners of War

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

ROYAL AIR FORCE
 INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

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INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

UNIT OF ISSUANCE

Addresses for Prisoners of War

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

Addresses for Prisoners of War

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

ROYAL AIR FORCE
 INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

UNIT OF ISSUANCE

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INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

UNIT OF ISSUANCE

Addresses for Prisoners of War

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

Addresses for Prisoners of War

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

ROYAL AIR FORCE
 INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

UNIT OF ISSUANCE

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INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

UNIT OF ISSUANCE

Addresses for Prisoners of War

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

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Addresses for Prisoners of War

Addresses for Prisoners of War and Security Regulations.

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ROYAL AIR FORCE
 INTERNAL REPAIRMENT VOUCHER

FOR USE IN CHANGING OVER COLORED OR ALL EQUIPMENT.

UNIT OF REQUEST

UNIT OF ISSUANCE



Figures 078 – Hand stitching the *Handbag*. (2018).

The lining of the bag challenged my technical making skills and allowed me to work through the process such as how to create a drop in lining that could not be seen on the outside. Having designed bags in the past for different brands it felt as if I was working for a client, but was more emotionally charged due to my connection to the story.

For the main bag construction, I created the pattern and cut each piece from vegetable tanned leather, then used a stitch marker and hammer to create the stitch holes. When using a sewing machine, I tend to not think about the item that is being made as it is quick to create a finished shape, so to hand stitch the bag felt like a rewarding experience as the pieces of leather slowly created a 3D form in front of me. I watched the whole *Back to the Future* trilogy over Easter weekend 2018 whilst stitching. I'd never watched it before and so the bag has both Karen's story and *Back to the Future* woven in to its stitches. On further reflection the film choice was by coincidence but also references themes of memory, time and death! It felt triumphant to complete this piece. The process of hand stitching took over a week to complete but this investment of time allowed me to remember Karen's story through every stitch and fully embed it into the seams as the bag began to form (fig. 078). The left over printed fabric was enough to form a handkerchief and my mother finished the edges for me, again linking to the relationship between Karen and her mother making her things and the cotton hankies she remembered (fig. 079).



Figure 079 – The handkerchief. (2018).

09.6 – Reflective Interview

Karen had retired from the University six months before our reflective interview and so she had asked if I wanted to have lunch at the same time as discussing *Handbag*. We met in the same café as I had met Beth, however, we chose to sit upstairs in a quiet area where we could chat freely. After we finished lunch, I put the dust bag containing the finished artefact onto the table to reveal it. Her first reaction was a sharp intake of breath and she whispered “amazing”, “excellent” and “fabulous” (Karen, Personal Communication, October 17, 2018) as I passed it to her. Karen held the bag firstly by its handles and then by the sides so she could open the top flap. Seeing her mother’s handwriting on the lining produced an evocative response which, like *Rolling Pin* acted as a prompt for Karen to reminisce about her mother further:

I was talking to somebody about the smell of my mother’s handbags the other day, about it being that they smelled of perfume and hankies and fountain pens and ink and leather and lipstick. Seeing her writing in it (the lining) sort of evokes that. Because I suddenly envisage that she used to have her cheque book and it was always beautifully written and she always filled in all the check book stubs meticulously and it reminds me of it all [...] and you’ve made it beautifully, she would approve, she would definitely approve because she was a maker, she definitely was a maker, she’d appreciate all the detail (Karen, Personal Communication, October 17, 2018)

Karen connected her mother to me through our mutual love of craft and felt that we would have liked each other which I felt was a great compliment. Comments like this demonstrated that participants approved of what I had made and that they showed they saw the artefact as a memory object of their lost love and saw me retelling their story through the use of craft.



Instructions to Soldiers
are to be made under the supervision
of a Soldier's Aid and Service of the
Army and Navy.
Soldier's Service Book, Army Book of 1917, and
have had printed matter.

Soldier's Service Book
H. 171

NOTE - THE SIGNING OF THIS FORM IS ENTIRELY
OPTIONAL. THE SIGNER IS NOT
TO BE CONSIDERED
A MEMBER OF THE
ARMY OR NAVY.

NOTE - THE SIGNING OF THIS FORM IS ENTIRELY
OPTIONAL. THE SIGNER IS NOT
TO BE CONSIDERED
A MEMBER OF THE
ARMY OR NAVY.

GROUP H. 171
NOTE - THE SIGNING OF THIS FORM IS ENTIRELY
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OPTIONAL. THE SIGNER IS NOT
TO BE CONSIDERED
A MEMBER OF THE
ARMY OR NAVY.



09.7 – Summary

Handbag was one of the quickest artefacts to be completed. The whole process was spontaneous and I felt connected to the subject matter from the interview as I knew I could use my own leather working skills without the need for specialist equipment. As this artefact resembled that of a working handbag I was asked by a number of people whether I would take commissions for handmade bags, however, to me the finished artefact feels more like a decorative piece – like the other artefacts – rather than a functional bag due to the way in which it has been produced and how I used the narrative to guide the process of making.

Reflection

This portfolio has enabled me to collate and reflect on my research journey through the practice.

As well as forming a record of the practice-led component of my research, it also serves as a reflection for myself and those who participated within the research as a memory of the experience.

Through creating this portfolio I have relived the experience of finding and meeting participants, crafting the artefacts, working collaboratively with craftspeople and discussing and displaying the finished pieces.

I have re-connected with those participants with whom I started the journey to show them the 'finished' result and thought of those who are no longer with us.

This portfolio acts as the final material memory - my own - the experience of my PhD.

-END-



Figure 081 – Studio time - football making. (2018).

Figures

Figure 00 – The Artefacts. (2018).

Figure 01 – *Toilet Dolly*. (2018).

Figure 02 – First crochet attempt. Miniature dishcloth in cotton yarn. (2016).

Figure 03 – Toilet dolly crocheted using cheap, acrylic yarn. (2017).

Figure 04 – Toilet dolly crocheted using cheap, acrylic yarn. (2017).

Figure 05 – Initial ideas. (2017).

Figure 06 – Release agent samples. (2017).

Figure 07 – Toilet dolly being cast in silicone. (2017).

Figure 08 – Leather suitcase under construction. (2017).

Figure 09 – Dean Clough Exhibition. (2018).

Figure 010 – *Toilet Dolly*. (2018).

Figure 011 – *Rolling Pin*. (2017).

Figure 012 – Gingerbread recipe from Emily's mother's recipe book. (2017).

Figure 013 – Emily using her mother's rolling pin. (2017).

Figure 014 – Emily's mothers recipe book. (2017).

Figure 015 – CAD rolling pin with handwritten text. (2017).

Figure 016 – *Rolling Pin* being turned on the lathe. (2017).

Figure 017 – UV printed handwritten gingerbread recipe for casting. (2017).

Figure 018 – UV printed handwritten gingerbread recipe for casting. (2017).

Figure 019 – Baking Emily's mothers gingerbread recipe. (2017).

Figure 020 – *Rolling Pin*. (2017).

Figure 021 – *Football*. (2018).

Figure 022 – Harry’s father and his friends when they swapped uniforms. (1940).

Figure 023 – Photographs printed with acetone onto vegetable tanned leather. (2017).

Figure 024 – Sampling the size and shape of tessellating panels for *Football*. (2017).

Figure 025 – The image of the football team appearing through the paper. (2017).

Figure 026 – Stitching the football lacing hole. (2017).

Figure 027 – Construction of the leather *Football*. (2017).

Figure 028 – Construction of the leather *Football*. (2017).

Figure 029 – Photograph from Harry’s fathers photograph album. (2017).

Figure 030 – *Football*. (2018).

Figure 031 – *Camera*. (2018).

Figure 032 – Helen’s purse bearing the crest of Innsbruck. (2017).

Figure 033 – Kodak Box Brownie before casting took place. (2017).

Figure 034 – The route Helen took to Innsbruck plotted in Google Maps. (2017).

Figure 035 – The camera being cast in silicone. (2017).

Figure 036 – Removing the camera from the silicone mould. (2017).

Figure 037 – Acetone printed leather strap. (2017).

Figure 038 – Brass frame making with my dad. (2017).

Figure 039 – Temporary Contemporary exhibition - *Camera*. (2017).

Figure 040 – *Camera*. (2018).

Figures

Figure 041 – *Running Shoes*. (2018).

Figure 042 – Trainers sourced to cast in silicone. (2018).

Figure 043 – Shoes of victims of Auschwitz. Yunakov, O. (2013).

Figure 044 – Imprint of the running shoes in silicone. (2018).

Figure 045 – Extracting the trainers from the silicone. (2018).

Figure 046 – Silicone of moulded running shoes before cleaning. (2018).

Figure 047 – *Running Shoes*. (2018).

Figure 048 – *Medal*. (2018).

Figure 049 – Georgia's fathers cufflinks given to him by King George VI. (2017).

Figure 050 – My great grandfathers medals. (2017).

Figure 051 – Medal acceptance certificate. (2017).

Figure 052 – Casting the medal and rosehip syrup bottle in silicone. (2017).

Figure 053 – *Medal* at Temporary Contemporary. (2019).

Figure 054 – *Medal*. (2018).

Figure 055 – *Brass Shoes*. (2018).

Figure 056 – Brass shoes with silicone inside ready to fully cast. (2018).

Figure 057 – Machined brass rings. (2018).

Figure 058 – Machining the brass. (2018).

Figure 059 – Drafted working drawings for brass frame. (2018).

Figure 060 – Completed brass frame with tool markings. (2018).

Figure 061 – Silicone with brass shoes embedded. (2018).

Figure 062 – *Brass Shoes* with air bubble. (2018).

Figure 063 – *Watch*. (2018).

Figure 064 – Cast of the watch in brass frame. (2018).

Figure 065 – My dad and his Rolex. (2021).

Figure 066 – My copy of the Chums catalogue. (2016).

Figure 067 – Roy’s adapted measurements on my working drawings. (2018).

Figure 068 – The adaptation of the drawer and fitting the silicone watch. (2018).

Figure 069 – The adaptation of the drawer and fitting the silicone watch. (2018).

Figures 070 – The process of forging the handle. (2018).

Figure 071 – The forge. (2018).

Figure 072 – *Watch*. (2018).

Figure 073 – *Handbag*. (2018).

Figure 074 – Karen’s patchwork bag made by her mother. (2018).

Figure 075 – *Handbag* on display at Dean Clough. (2018).

Figure 076 – Karen’s mother’s WAAF folder. (2018).

Figure 077 – Patchwork of the WAAF pages made on Photoshop. (2018).

Figures 078 – Hand stitching *Handbag*. (2018).

Figure 079 – The handkerchief. (2018).

Figure 080 – *Handbag*. (2018).

Figure 081 – Studio time - football making. (2018).

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