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'The Churchillian Paradigm and the "Other British Isles": An Examination of Second World War Remembrance in Man, Orkney, and Jersey'

Daniel Travers

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2012

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Abstract

This dissertation studies Second World War ‘sites of memory’ in the islands of Jersey, Orkney and the Isle of Man, to determine if each island celebrates the war’s events as Britain does, or if they have charted their own mnemonic course. It builds on the work of Angus Calder, Malcolm Smith, and Mark Connelly, who have explored how popular conception of the Second World War in Britain has been structured around a certain set of commemorative motifs, most of which centre on Winston Churchill and the events of 1940. The British war narrative is now commonly referred to as the ‘Churchillian paradigm’ or ‘finest-hour myth’, and continues to be the driving force in commemoration and memorialization on the British mainland. The three islands in this study are culturally and historically distinct from Britain, and each has strong notions of its own ‘island identity’. Each also possesses a tangential and divisive domestic experience of war, one which is often minimized in the iconography of the Churchillian paradigm. Jersey was occupied by Nazi Germany from 1940 to 1945, Orkney was home to several thousand Italian POWs who built important infrastructure in the island, and the Isle of Man was home to 14,000 German, Finnish, Japanese, and Italian internees in what one critic has called ‘a bespattered page’ in the nation’s history. By examining ‘sites of memory’— museums, heritage sites, commemorations, celebrations, philately, and use of public space—this dissertation shows that each island simultaneously accepts and rejects elements of the finest-hour myth in their collective memory. Each island displays its unique (though often quite negative) heritage in order to differentiate itself from Britain, while at the same time allowing them, at certain events, to participate in celebration of Britain’s ‘greatest victory’. In this way, islands’ use ‘Britishness’ pragmatically, by basking in traditionally ‘British’ commemorative tropes, while at the same time deepening their own cultural and historical sovereignty.

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Introduction

For the last sixty-five years, the United Kingdom has commemorated and celebrated the Second World War as ‘Britain’s finest hour’. Since the events themselves occurred, the war has been seen as a time when the British public pulled together to overcome great challenges, and defeat a seemingly insuperable foe. As a result, the anniversaries of Second World War events have traditionally been well celebrated: Dunkirk, D-Day, VE Day and VJ Day are now marked with commemorative services, re-enactments, dedications, and celebrations. At each significant anniversary, anthems are sung, Union flags are dusted off and draped, and the television flashes images of Britain’s people at war—armed forces and civilians—defiantly smiling through. Despite this imagery, however, it is now well understood that much of this commemoration and celebration is based on a series of myths that were ‘necessarily’ constructed during the war to keep morale high, and cemented in the post-war period. They have now become part of the fabric of Britain’s national identity. Second World War mythology has a special place within the hearts and minds of the British people, it influences museums and historical sites, informs living history, and fosters positive media portrayals. Many elements of the ‘finest-hour’ myth find place in contemporary society, popular culture, and tradition. The Spitfire, Vera Lynn, ‘Dunkirk spirit’ and ‘make do and mend’ constitute just a fraction of such tropes, which are perennially evoked to create a sense of Britishness, linking contemporary events with the narrative of Britain’s greatest victory and the sense of unity which it espouses. One need not look further than the Royal Wedding in May 2011 to find it: The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, which consisted of a Spitfire, Hurricane, and Lancaster bomber made a fly-past over

Buckingham Palace during the ceremony.¹ Second World War mythology has such power that its historic sites have been likened to 'shrines', and interest in World War Two has been equated with a kind of religious fervor.² Though the differences between fact and myth go largely unnoticed by the public, they have been subject to significant attention by academics, beginning with Angus Calder's *The People's War* in 1969 and most recently Malcolm Smith's *Britain and 1940* and Mark Connelly's *We Can Take It!*.³ Though some scholars have tried to 'bust' the myths, most now seek to understand them, seeing the legend and imagery as important to contemporary British identity. Lucy Noakes has stressed the *need* for British society to celebrate a 'glorious' history, one of a unified nation battling against a common foe, showing that the dominant images of the war are ones which emphasize national unity and shared values.⁴ While this may be true, there are consequences to maintaining such a memory.

Preserving the symbolic nature of World War II has meant marginalizing negative and tangential aspects of the war that did not or do not fit. Internment, POW labour, occupation and so on diverge from the victorious national narrative. The internment of Italians and anti-Italian riots, for example, is significantly less remembered and less important than the evacuee story, and the occupation of the Channel Islands is given much less attention than the Blitz or the Battle of Britain, all of which occurred in 1940. Of critical importance to the British war narrative is Sir Winston Churchill, as the image of Churchill as the 'saviour of his country' during the war is one which helps to reinforce much of the contemporary imagery of the period in general, with 1940 being the pivotal year.⁵ This was significantly helped along by Churchill's own memoirs which were

¹ 'Royal Wedding: WWII aircraft flypast highlight of military involvement', *The Telegraph* (1 April 2011) <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/royal-wedding/8421535/Royal-Wedding-WWII-aircraft-flypast-highlight-of-military-involvement.html>> [Accessed 6 Apr 2011].

² Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume 1: Past and Present* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 153.

³ Angus Calder, *The People's War* (New York: Random House, 1969); Malcolm Smith, *Britain and 1940: History, Myth, and Popular Memory* (London: Routledge, 2000); Mark Connelly, *We Can Take It!, Britain and the Memory of the Second World War* (London: Longman, 2004).

⁴ Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender and National Identity, 1939-1991* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), pp. 3-11.

⁵ In addition to listing his parentage, titles, offices and postings throughout his life, A.J.P. Taylor's first reference to Churchill in *English History 1914-45* also bestows him the honour of 'saviour of his country'. See: A. J. P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), p. 4.

published after the war, and were taken largely as fact by a British public hungry for insight into the inner workings of Whitehall during the war years. As a result, the current image of Churchill was solidified, and as John Ramsden has shown, much of Churchill's aggrandizement was achieved by 1955.⁶ Churchill's wartime image has now formed the backbone of Second World War mythology, so much so that it has been referred to by some academics as the 'Churchillian paradigm'.⁷ Though in recent years, attempts have been made to incorporate lesser known aspects of the war into popular commemoration and museum special exhibits, the image of Churchill has proved to be virtually incorruptible. Even contemporary media portrayals have an intransigent need to glorify the image of the man. The film *The King's Speech*, released in 2010, provides a specific example. Despite being a staunch opponent of the abdication of Edward VIII in 1936, Churchill is written into the script sympathetic to the wishes of the movie's protagonist. Though factually inaccurate, such liberties ensure that Churchill's reputation is kept intact and public anger at seeing their national hero on the wrong side is assuaged. As Ramsden has shown, criticism of Churchill is as difficult now as it was after his death, the man's public appeal transcends national boundaries and lives on in the imagination of all 'English speaking peoples'.⁸

Most literary treatments of the Churchillian paradigm, or of individual myths and iconography in Britain surrounding the Second World War, have tended to view the United Kingdom and the British Isles as one and the same, delineating a hegemony of this type of commemoration within it. But what of other places in the British Isles which do not share the domestic history of Britain, and parts of the British Isles which have their own sense of cultural, legal and historical sovereignty?

Before continuing, it is important to explain the terminology I will use in this dissertation, in particular the use of 'British Isles'. Definitions of this sort are something which have plagued British historians for decades, and are now further complicated by

⁶ John Ramsden, *Man of the Century: Winston Churchill and his Legend since 1945* (London: Harper Collins, 2003), p. 80.

⁷ Paul Sanders, *The British Channel Islands Under German Occupation 1940-1945* (Jersey: Société Jersiaise/Jersey Heritage Trust, 2005), p. 256.

⁸ Ramsden, *Man of the Century*, p. xiv.

the questions surrounding devolution and national and sub-national identity. From here forward, when referring to 'the British Isles' I refer to the nations of England, Scotland,

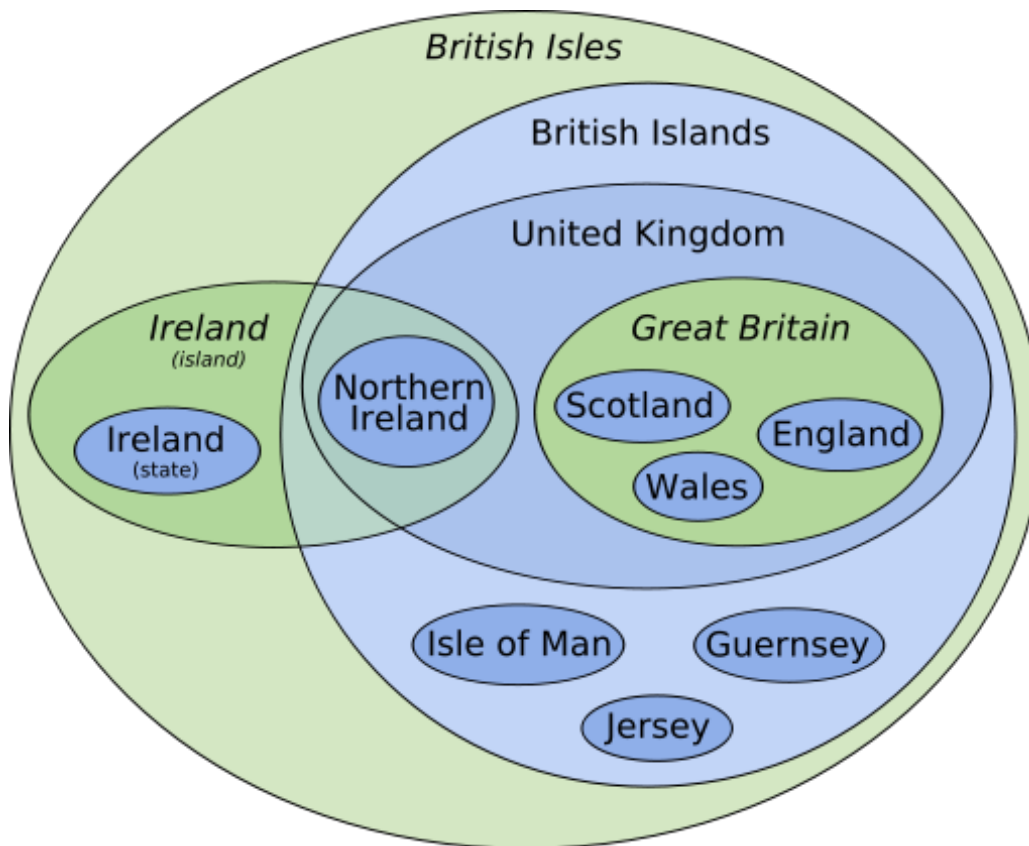


Figure 1: The traditional model for terminology regarding the British Isles. For the purposes of this dissertation, the British Isles shall exclude Eire. Made available under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

Northern Ireland, Wales, and all of the semi-autonomous islands (of varying degrees) which make up the British 'archipelago'—from the Isles of Scilly to Shetland.

Traditionally, the 'British Isles' has included Eire (so named 1937-49), yet in this dissertation, Eire will be excluded; my reasons will be explained later in this introduction.

By 'Britain' I refer to mainland Britain—the countries of England, Scotland and Wales, against which the identity of the islands in this study are defined, and 'Britons' the people who inhabit these countries. As Keith Robbins has pointed out, there exists no state known as 'Great Britain', only the 'United Kingdom', which includes Northern Ireland, but excludes the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, as they are not now nor have they ever been a part. The term 'other British Isles', therefore, refers to these

other island 'nations', caught in the legal no-man's-land between the United Kingdom and the British Isles—clearly part of a geographical British 'archipelago' but with a unique legal and cultural sovereignty. Though it may be 'loading the interpretive dice'⁹ to refer to such places as *British Isles* in the first place, I have chosen this particular terminology in part due to the changing nature in which places within the British Isles have been addressed in recent years.

Academic studies of the current 'British Isles' are now much more than studies of the four nations of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. In 1989, Hugh Kearney's deliberately titled book *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations* reflected the lack of a well defined Island Studies discipline. When discussing the 'British Isles', Kearney identified eight dominant cultures in the islands, which were then combined with a number of other 'distinct subcultures'. By 2006, however, Kearney had to admit that the changing populace of Britain now meant that this model no longer held weight.¹⁰ Norman Davies also derided academic studies which focused on one nation's contribution, arguing that histories which deal 'merely with England' are now outdated. In his introduction to *The Isles*, Davies argues that 'the conventional framework of the history of the Isles is in urgent need of revision'.¹¹ Davies' treatment has helped to foster an understanding of a larger British Isles, and perhaps of a 'global British Isles', one which was no longer confined to the geography of one island.¹² It is now well understood that Britain and Britishness can no longer be limited to England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. There are now so many subcultures in the British Isles, including those which make up the many islands of Britain that anthropologists and historians alike now tend to see the British Isles as an archipelago in the North Sea. It has been described as a multi-national group containing distinct languages, dialects, cultures, and identities. This has sparked interest in what David W. Moore has called 'the other British

⁹ If I may use a phrase which Keith Robbins used. See: Keith Robbins, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (London: Longman, 1998), p. 5.

¹⁰ Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations Second Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 10.

¹¹ Norman Davies, *The Isles: A History* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999), p. xxxii.

¹² Davies, *The Isles*, p. 868.

Isles', smaller islands in this confederation which until recently had been seen as a somewhat inconsequential part of the British historical narrative, including that of the Second World War. These 'micro-states' or 'micro-societies' are now becoming the focus of their own brand of academia, as scholars seek to understand their unique culture and identity in relation to that of their larger neighbour.¹³ This dissertation combines this new approach on the 'British Isles' and Britishness with scholarship on British identity, memory, and iconography of the Second World War. It examines the islands of Jersey, Orkney, and Man, to determine whether or not these 'micro-societies' within the British Isles, but not part of 'Britain', commemorate the events of the Second World War in a similar fashion, or whether or not they chart their own mnemonic course.

A note must also be made here as to why this dissertation focuses on islands rather than simply British or English regional identities. It may be tempting to ask about the inclusion of a regional identity such as Yorkshire or Cornwall, or even the examination of national or sub-national identities such as Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland. A number of broad historical works have been written about places within the British Isles that have a strong regional identity, such as Frank Musgrove's *The North of England* which effectively charted the history of seven northern counties from Roman times until the twentieth century.¹⁴ The concept of 'Northernness' has also been probed in a variety of more recent works including Neville Kirk's collection *Northern Identities*, Russell's *Looking North: The North in the National Imagination*, and Green and Pollard's

¹³ There is little agreement on what defines a nation as a micro-state, though most scholars tend to favour a determination based upon both size and population. For more on 'microsocieties' and what makes up a 'microstate' see Edward Dommen 'What is a Microstate?', in Edward Dommen and Philippe Hein, eds., *States, Microstates and Islands* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 1-15; James Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1979); and Randall Baker, 'Scale and Administrative Performance: The Governance of Small States and Microstates', in Randall Baker ed., *Public Administration in Small States and Island States* (Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian, 1992), p. 5-25.

¹⁴ The seven counties he chooses are Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland and Westmorland, Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire, though he notes that Cheshire could be 'problematic'. Frank Musgrove, *The North of England: A History from Roman Times to the Present* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 2, 7.

Regional Identities in North East England.¹⁵ Similarly, Philip Payton's work on the history of Cornwall has explored Cornish history and identity.¹⁶ These works are similar in many ways to recent histories of the islands which have been published in the last fifteen years, and which provided the basis for my early research.¹⁷

The importance of the island in this study, however, cannot be overstated. Each island's finite boundaries and historically independent 'upbringings' are akin more to a national identity than to a regional one. The people of Yorkshire, for example, though possessing a strong regional identity, do not have the geographical separation or the historical independence that makes the islands in this study special. It is the importance of an overlaying 'national' identity rather than a regional identity which is important, as an island's identity and culture it is often times defined by its distinctiveness from Britain, an aspect which is critical to this study.

Conversely, Scotland and Wales, though possessing a strong national identity have a wartime history which is, for the most part, integrated into the wider British experience. Both Glasgow and Cardiff have something akin to a 'Blitz experience' during the war, and very little has been written on nation-specific war memories, at least in comparison with a British memory of the war. A few books have covered Scotland's domestic history, such as Derek Young's *Scottish Voices from the Second World War*, and Seona Robertson and Les Wilson's *Scotland's War*, both of which gathered reminiscences from Scots who lived through the Second World War.¹⁸ There are also a number which detail the participation of the 51st Highland Division at Dunkirk and elsewhere.¹⁹ Trevor Royle's 2011 publication *A Time of Tyrants* specifically addresses

¹⁵ Neville Kirk ed., *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Dave Russell, *Looking North: the North in the National Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); A. Green and A. J. Pollard, eds, *Regional Identities in North-East England, 1300-2000* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007).

¹⁶ See for example: Philip Payton, *Cornwall: A History* (Cornwall: Fowey, 2004 [1996]).

¹⁷ For example, W. P. L. Thompson, *The New History of Orkney* (Edinburgh: Mercat, 2001) and John Belchem ed., *A New History of the Isle of Man Vol V. 1830-1999* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).

¹⁸ Derek Young, *Scottish Voices from the Second World War* (Stroud: Tempus, 2006); Seona Robertson and Les Wilson, *Scotland's War* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1995).

¹⁹ Saul David's *Churchill's Sacrifice* and Patrick Delaforce's *Monty's Highlanders* are the most recent works, although there are a number of regimental histories dating back to the post-war and war eras. Delaforce

Scotland in the Second World War, with some illuminating work done on Scotland's home front and its 'moral conscience'.²⁰ There are no works, however, which deal specifically with Scotland's *memory* of the Second World War. Wendy Ugolini's book *Experiencing War as the Enemy Other* (published in 2011) was the first to probe war memory in Scotland, but focuses on the Italian-Scottish community rather than Scottish national memory. Ugolini's research shows that specific ethnic groups within Britain can and do have different collective memories to that of the Churchillian paradigm. The Italian-Scottish remembrance which the book concerns itself with, however, is set in contrast with the traditional 'British', not Scottish narrative.²¹ Catriona MacDonald has argued that historians are 'yet to be convinced that there is a Scottish story worth telling, or they are at a loss as to where they would find it... "the war" is simply a story that we share with our southern neighbours that appears all too familiar and there is little more to say?'²²

For the Second World War in Wales, John O' Sullivan's *When Wales Went To War* and Stuart Broomfield's *Wales At War* have joined a growing number of works which have explored the war's domestic impact on Wales published since 2000,²³ and complement more specific histories such as Dennis Morgan's *Cardiff: A City at War*, and Reg Jones's *Anglesey and Gwynedd, the War Years*.²⁴ At the time of writing, however, there exists no full length monograph specifically on the memory of the war in Wales. Though there is a national consciousness in Wales, war remembrance, as in Scotland,

also has a chapter on the 51st in his 2004 work *Monty's Northern Legions*. See: Saul David, *Churchill's Sacrifice of The Highland Division, France 1940* (London: Brassey's, 1994); Patrick Delaforce, *Monty's Highlanders: The 51st (Highland) Division at War 1939-1945* (Brighton: Tom Donovan, 1998); and Patrick Delaforce, *Monty's Northern Legions: 50th Northumbrian and 15th Scottish Divisions at War 1939-1945* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004), pp. 109-204.

²⁰ Trevor Royle, *A Time of Tyrants: Scotland and the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011).

²¹ Wendy Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other': Italian Scottish Experience in World War II* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 3.

²² Catriona M. M. MacDonald, "'Wersh the Wine O' Victorie": Writing Scotland's Second World War', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 24, 2 (2004), pp. 104-112; 105.

²³ John O' Sullivan, *When Wales Went To War 1939-45* (Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2004); and Stuart Broomfield, *Wales At War: The Experience of the Second World War in Wales* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2009).

²⁴ Dennis Morgan, *Cardiff: A City at War* (Cardiff: Dennis Morgan, 1998); Reg Chamber Jones, *Anglesey and Gwynedd, The War Years, 1939-45* (Wrexham: Bridge, 2008).

tends toward the Churchillian paradigm. This may well be because, as Angela Gaffney has argued, Welsh identity has survived by 'anchoring itself in variant forms of Britishness'.²⁵ When a fallen soldier is memorialized in Wales, he or she is commemorated as a British rather than Welsh citizen, reflecting the sense of Britishness that was felt during the war.²⁶ There is, as Matthew Cragoe and Chris Williams have argued, an 'absence of a clear Welsh dimension to the conflict',²⁷ and a need for more to be written specifically on Scotland and Wales and the Second World War. Ugolini and Gaffney's research, combined with new initiatives such as the *Remembering Scotland at War* project,²⁸ suggest more interest in creating a distinct national memory of the war exists, but for the moment both countries still view their participation in the war through a British lens. Though there is clearly a need for more scholarship on this subject, the selection of each island in this study is based upon the criteria of having both a 'national' identity (something which will be discussed later in this chapter) and a distinct domestic wartime experience and way of viewing the war, something that cannot be said about Scotland or Wales.

Eire has been excluded from this dissertation for the reason that it, as a nation, did not fight. Though some Irishmen volunteered to serve in the British forces, official Irish policy was one of cautious negotiation between the government of Éamon de Valera and British and German interests. 'The Emergency' as it was known, was less the island's 'finest-hour' and more a period of enforced restraint for the Irish.²⁹ Consequently, though possessing a distinct identity and unique domestic history during the years 1939-1945, Ireland has no 'war' memory *per se* and cannot be genuinely compared with Britain and the Churchillian paradigm. Ireland's decision to change its

²⁵ Gwyn A. Williams, 'When Was Wales?', cited in Angela Gaffney, "'The Second Armageddon': Remembering the Second World War in Wales', in Matthew Cragoe and Chris Williams, eds, *Wales and War: Society, Politics and Religion in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 195.

²⁶ Gaffney, 'The Second Armageddon', pp. 184-203.

²⁷ Matthew Cragoe and Chris Williams, 'Introduction', in Cragoe and Williams, eds, *Wales and War*, p. 5.

²⁸ Remembering Scotland at War <<http://www.rememberingscotlandatwar.org.uk>> [Accessed 11 Nov 2011].

²⁹ Brian Girvin, *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland 1939-45* (Oxford: Macmillan, 2006).

name to *Eire* shortly before the war also stresses their deliberate and conscious attempts to separate and distance themselves from Britain during that period.

This leaves Northern Ireland, which has a strong national identity, fought during the war, an island context, and an identity defined at least in part by its distinctiveness from Britain. A number of books including Brian Barton's *The Blitz: Belfast in the War Years* and Stephen Douds' *Belfast Blitz: The People's Story* have been written about the subject.³⁰ Ian Wood has dedicated a chapter to Northern Ireland in the War in his 2010 work *Britain, Ireland and the Second World War*,³¹ and both Brian Girvin and Tony Gray have explored Northern Ireland's role in the war, at least in the context of 'Irish history', over the last few years.³² Meanwhile John W. Blake's 1956 work *Northern Ireland in the Second World War*, with its comprehensive 569 pages covering everything from population trends during the war to Irish regiments in North Africa continues to be the official 'war diary' of Northern Ireland. Though Northern Ireland covers some of the criteria used in establishing which places to examine in this dissertation, it has been eliminated for a number of reasons. First, like Scotland and Wales, Northern Ireland possesses far more elements of the 'finest-hour' mythology in its domestic history than any of the islands do. Belfast has a 'blitz' narrative, with the 15 and 16 April 1941 seeing some of the heaviest bombing that the British Isles had experienced.³³ Secondly, Northern Ireland does not fit well with any of the other places which are the focus of this dissertation, both in terms of population and in geography. With almost two million people, the province vastly dwarfs the demographics of Man, Orkney, and the Channel Islands put together, and would qualify perhaps as a 'small state', but certainly not a 'micro-society'.³⁴ Northern Ireland's land border with the Republic of Ireland also

³⁰ Brian Barton, *The Blitz: Belfast in the War Years* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1989); and Stephen Douds, *Belfast Blitz: The People's Story* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 2011).

³¹ Ian S. Wood, *Britain, Ireland and the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 171-192.

³² Girvin, *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland 1939-45*; Tony Gray, *The Lost Years: The Emergency in Ireland 1939-45* (London: Little Brown, 1997).

³³ Barton, *The Blitz*, pp. 101-131.

³⁴ For more on the difference between small states and micro-states see: Robert Steinmetz and Anders Wivel, 'Introduction', in Robert Steinmetz and Anders Wivel, eds, *Small States in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 3-14; and Dommen 'What is a Microstate?', p. 1-15.

detracts from the insularity which each of the other societies possess. Though places which share a land border have, on occasion, been included in island studies,³⁵ a distinction must be made between 'true' islands and geographic and political ones. This also leads to one of the more important reasons why Northern Ireland has been excluded from this dissertation; because of its continuing questions about national identity, and the politically partisan authorities at work within such discussions. As R. F. Foster has shown, Northern Ireland is often ignored in debates about identity and devolution because its own national identity has been changed and defined so much by conflict over the last thirty years, though not towards the goals that either of the belligerent sides had in mind when the conflict began.³⁶ As Jean Seaton noted, Northern Ireland has become 'an inconvenient and complicating reality that many of the protagonists of devolution prefer to ignore',³⁷ and Keith Robbins has called Britain's relationship with Ireland 'enduringly problematic'.³⁸ To look at the acceptance of British commemorative tropes in a region as politically and ideologically divided as Northern Ireland would put the other islands in this study at a great disadvantage. Though a comprehensive study of the memory of the War in Northern Ireland could and should be attempted, it will have to be left for future consideration.

Lastly, the question must be answered: why Jersey and not the Channel Islands in general? When research started on this project, it was understood to include all of the Channel Islands, rather than just its largest and most populous. This, however, presented problems with the simple scale of the information available from the Channel

³⁵ A chapter on Gibraltar, for example, was included in the edited collection *Islands and Britishness: A Global perspective*. The author argues that Gibraltar is fundamentally divided from Spain along political and ideological lines, something which, due to the nature of the Northern Irish conflict, cannot be said about Ulster and Eire. See Chris Grocott, 'British Identity and Constitutional Reform in Gibraltar', in Jodie Matthews and Daniel Travers, eds, *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), pp. 149-161.

³⁶ See: R.F. Foster, *Luck and the Irish: A Brief History of Change from 1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 1-11.

³⁷ Jean Seaton, 'The BBC and Metabolizing Britishness: Critical Patriotism' in Andrew Gamble and Tony Wright, eds., *Britishness: Perspectives on the British Question* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 72-85; 73-74.

³⁸ Robbins, *Great Britain*, p. 5.

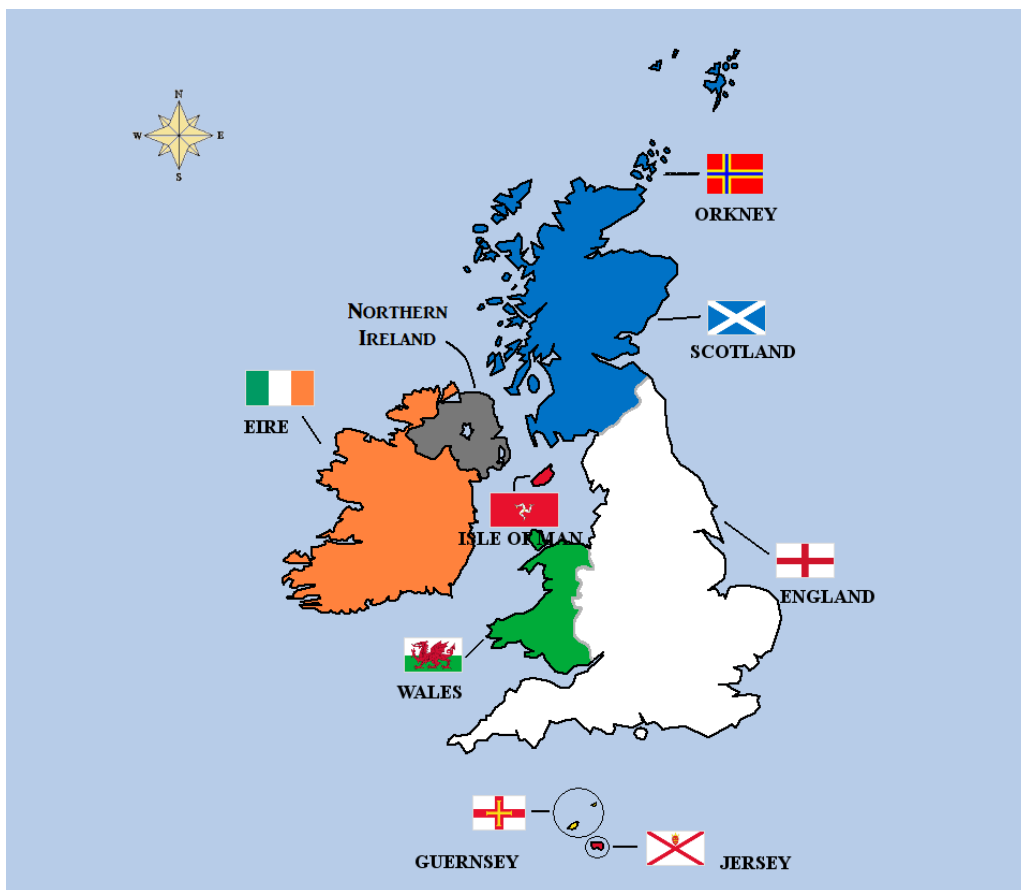
Islands and the differences between each island. While Jersey is now much more open about its occupation past, other islands are less keen to publically air their divisive history. Gillian Carr has written about 'the politics of forgetting' in Alderney, arguing that the island's small resident population has been unwilling to face the reality of the island's past. They also do not celebrate Liberation Day in Alderney, preferring to mark 'Homecoming Day' on 15 December — the day when many islanders returned after the occupation — as their day of national remembrance.³⁹ Carr has also shown that Guernsey, as of 2010, has not erected a memorial to evacuees or political prisoners, which have now been part of Jersey's memorialization for several years.⁴⁰ A memorial for sixteen deportees who died has only just been constructed.⁴¹ Though participating in the discussion around occupation which reached its peak in the 1990s, Guernsey's residents have been significantly slower to memorialize some of the more negative aspects of their wartime experience. As a result, throughout this dissertation and largely in chapter four, Guernsey will provide a comparison for the island of Jersey, which has developed its occupation heritage, in part, as a response to the lack of acknowledgement in the rest of the Channel Islands. The reluctance of other Channel Islands to fully explore their occupation past has also affected the availability of sources. I was denied access to records contained within one of the government buildings in Guernsey, while similar records were freely available at the Jersey Archives. All of this added up to the conclusion that focusing on the island with the most development in terms of heritage and occupation remembrance would be preferable to navigating the nuances of each Channel Island. It is for this reason that this dissertation focuses on 'Jersey' in conjunction with the other islands rather than the more inclusive, yet problematic 'Channel Islands'.

³⁹ Gillian Carr, 'The Politics of Forgetting on the Island of Alderney', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 22, 2 (2008), pp. 89-112.

⁴⁰ Gillian Carr, 'The Archaeology of Occupation: a Case Study from the Channel Islands', *Antiquity* 84, 323 (2010), pp. 161-174.

⁴¹ 'World War Two Guernsey Island deportees plaque unveiled', BBC News, (23 April 2010) <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/guernsey/8639550.stm>>[Accessed 25 Apr 2010].

In the end, the islands in this study were chosen because they share certain commonalities. First, each island is of similar size with similar demographics. All are less than 400 square miles in area, with the Isle of Man, at 33 miles long and 13 miles wide being the single largest island. Each also has a population of tens of thousands rather than hundreds of thousands—Jersey having around 90,000, Man 70,000 and Orkney about 20,000 inhabitants.⁴² Though pan-island studies of islands with dissimilar demographics can be made, the relatively similar size, population, and development of each island allows for fruitful comparisons with each other without too much qualification.⁴³ These islands are also not limited to one region of the British Isles, but instead reflect peoples from north, south and central places within the archipelago.



⁴² David W. Moore, *The Other British Isles: A History of Shetland, Orkney, the Hebrides, Isle of Man, Anglesey, Scilly, Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands* (North Carolina: McFarland & Co, 2005), p. 30, p. 93, p. 211.

⁴³ For comparison of British islands globally see Matthews and Travers, eds, *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective*.

Figure 2: Location of the islands in this dissertation in the British archipelago. Obtained under free licence and modified by Daniel Travers.

Each island, partly as a result of their offshore status, has an early history different from Britain. Each shares a Norse ancestry; as part of a vast Norse naval empire in the case of Orkney and Man, and as part of the Norman empire in the case of Jersey. This is a feature which serves to deepen the islands' own heritage and enhance each islands' distinctiveness.

Secondly, each island has a Second World War history which contains divisive elements, elements which are tangential to the British wartime narrative, and ones that are rarely mentioned or commemorated on the British mainland. The Isle of Man, from early 1940 to 1945 was home to 14,000 internees of Finnish, German, Italian, and Japanese origin.⁴⁴ Many of these had lived in Britain for decades but were caught between the British Government's fear of 'enemy aliens' and their nation of origin on their passports. Many Manx residents were thrown out of their homes to make way for these internees, despite being British subjects, and were treated quite badly by the Home Office during the war years. The story of internment stands in opposition to the glorious British war narrative by being what Conservative MP Victor Cazalet called at the time a 'bespattered page' in the nation's history.⁴⁵

Orkney's celebration of the achievements of Italian Prisoners of War, brought to the islands to build infrastructure in 1942, also defies British war remembrance. The enemy POW contribution to the British war effort is one which is afforded little space in common mythology. POW camps, including many in Britain, were very quickly torn down by the authorities, leaving little evidence of POW experience. Britons themselves are credited with all of the war work, the 'make do and mend' attitude and the 'dig for victory' initiatives. Though the memory of POWs exists in Britain, it usually consists of individual experiences with POWs in rural areas, or of the cases of British POWs interned in Burma or those featured in epic films such as *The Bridge on the River Kwai*

⁴⁴ Connery Chappell, *Island of Barbed Wire: The Remarkable Story of World War Two Internment on the Isle of Man* (London: Hale, 2005), p. 81.

⁴⁵ Calder, *The People's War*, p. 132.

(1957) and *The Great Escape* (1963). The involvement of prisoners in Orkney's domestic war experience does not make the island unique, but the fact that they left a tangible legacy of their stay in the form of the Churchill Barriers and the Italian Chapel, things which now form a significant part of the islands' modern transportation and cultural landscape, make the islands worthy of investigation.

The island of Jersey, as part of the Channel Islands, has indisputably the most incongruities with the British war story. Occupied by the Nazis in mid 1940, the islands had little to do with the events which are most well commemorated in Britain. The occupation proved immensely divisive for the islanders and often pitted them against one another, forcing them to make tough moral choices. In Jersey's story, British subjects were evacuated, deported, executed, restricted, and imprisoned; a far cry from the nation of victors which the Churchillian paradigm privileges. The search for and deportation of Jews in the Channel Islands and the degree to which islanders assisted this process is one which has been referred to by one writer as 'our [Britain's] part in the holocaust'.⁴⁶

Each of these war experiences separate the islands distinctly from those most celebrated in Britain, and provides the impetus for this study. This does not mean to say that there are no elements of the story commemorated in Britain to which the islands can lay claim. The Manx 15th Light AA regiment served with distinction in many theatres of war, Orcadians saw their island transformed into an important naval and air base in late 1939 and early 1940, and Jersey's citizens were forced to 'make do and mend' much like their mainland counterparts during the war. Though elements of the narrative most commonly celebrated in Britain can be found in the islands, the primary experience of war was distinctly different to that which currently resides in Britain's collective remembrance.

The third reason for choosing these particular islands is that each possesses distinct conceptions of an island identity. Each of the islands: Jersey, Orkney, and Man,

⁴⁶'Our part in the Holocaust', *The Guardian*, (24 Jan 2004)

<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/jan/24/germany.race>> [Accessed 20 Jan 2011].

might be viewed as having something akin to a 'national identity' because they are self-contained societies that define themselves, at least in part, by their natural geographic borders. An island's water boundaries create a feeling of finitude in much the same way that a nation's borders encapsulate it. Islanders often feel a certain loyalty to the island that they inhabit, which tends to take precedence over feelings of unity with the mainland—however near or far that is. Many Orcadians, for example, consider themselves Orcadian first, then Scots or British.⁴⁷ David Miller posits that such an identity connects people to a geographical place, in contrast to other identities (such as religious ones), which have no terrestrial boundaries.⁴⁸ As Bahcheli et al. have argued, places such as these often seek recognition as a 'nation' when they have pre-determined and defined boundaries, some form of recognition (either at a colonial or sub-state level), and some form of cultural/ethnic self identity.⁴⁹

But defining a nation solely by its people's consciousness, as Eric Hobsbawm has shown, can be tricky, as it relies on the understanding that all that is needed to become a nation is the will to be one.⁵⁰ Instead, each island has objective things in common which allow it to assert its own cultural sovereignty.⁵¹ This is essential to this dissertation, because it allows for a comprehensive examination of each island's national narrative and collective remembrance. Benedict Anderson's definition of a nation as an 'imagined political community', with the members of each nation possessing an image of community despite having no direct contact, can directly be applied to each island.⁵² Within these islands, much like other microstates and micro-

⁴⁷ Liv Kjølsvik Schei and Gunnie Moberg, *The Orkney Story* (New York: Hippocrene, 1985), p. 10.

⁴⁸ David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), pp. 28-30.

⁴⁹ Tozun Bahcheli, Barry Bartmann, and Henry Srebrnick, 'Introduction', in Tozun Bahcheli, Barry Bartmann and Henry Srebrnick, eds, *De Facto States: The Quest for Sovereignty* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1-11; 2.

⁵⁰ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, and Reality* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 8.

⁵¹ Alan Cranston said that sovereignty is 'worshipped like a god and as little understood'. Alan Cranston, *The Sovereignty Revolution*, Kim Cranston ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004). Here I use the term 'cultural sovereignty' to refer to what makes each island *culturally* different from Britain and Europe, other islands, or indeed other microstates.

⁵² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006—first published 1983), p. 6.

societies, direct contact with other members is likely to be more frequent because of their smaller populations. Members of the island's professions, of certain trades, and of certain specific interest groups may be well aware of one another's existence more than in larger countries or regions, but this is not to say that a builder in Ramsay and a fisherman in Port Erin, or a waitress in Douglas and a teacher in Peel consider themselves any less Manx for not knowing one another.

Each island's identity is not merely the sum of its cultural and political influences, but is also a separate entity. A distinct 'island identity' informs the decisions made with regard to its own heritage. This dissertation will show where homegrown war commemorations end and British imports begin. The distinct sense of identity critical for this study can be fortified by having, in the case of the Isle of Man and Jersey, a distinct legal status separate from the UK, but it is not imperative. What is important is that the peoples in this study see themselves as island societies with a distinct history, heritage, and culture. As Monserrat Guiberneau has argued, a national identity can be found among individuals belonging to 'nations without states', based upon the *belief* of belonging and the sharing of characteristics which makes the 'nation' distinct.⁵³ It is this sense of connectedness which is central to understanding island identities as analogous to a national identity, and is central to examining them as separate from Britain. Each of the island's inhabitants in this study have strong notions of their own society's sovereignty. This is important to determine when and where islanders celebrate their 'Britishness' and when they choose to differentiate or even reject it. Having a distinct sense of identity means that the islands must, from time to time, assert their own distinctiveness or risk absorption into a larger 'British' whole. But as Linda Colley asserts, 'identities are not like hats, human beings can and do put on several at a time'.⁵⁴ This is true within island societies, and many islanders identify with both the island of their residence (or birth) and Britain. As Brockliss and Eastwood have argued, Britons themselves possess a 'composite identity', created not by suppressing other identities

⁵³ Monserrat Guiberneau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), p. 11.

⁵⁴ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 2003 [1992]), p. 6.

but by forging a whole new 'British' lived identity.⁵⁵ As this dissertation shows, island identities are as complex as those on the mainland, with various social and cultural elements contributing to them.

Island identities, like national identities, are not created overnight; they are the result of gradual political and cultural processes. For islands, these processes often entail centuries of socio-political negotiation between themselves and their larger neighbours. The dynamic of interference and engagement with the larger nation often continues to define the modern identity of the island itself. This is the case in either a direct way (through colonialism or political rule), or by the smaller island using the other to distinguish its own cultural sovereignty. The identities of the islands in this study, therefore, are defined at least in part by their association with Britain both culturally and historically. This includes not only the period of the Second World War, but over centuries of time. If David Lowenthal's assertion is right, that expressions of collective memory are related to identity, and that identity and memory are intertwined, it means that each island's sites of memory must contain elements of the British historical narrative. What each island chooses to absorb and the framework in which this British identity is placed is a large part of the following pages.

Though this dissertation is about islands and Britishness, it is not intended to delve into the mountains of discourse surrounding what it means to be 'British' that have been published over the last thirty years. Rather, it will use the case studies of each island to show how Britishness can affect the culture, society, and memory of micro-societies which are inextricably linked to Britain. It is not necessary to define Britishness in order to understand its effects on the culture and life of on the people who live in the British Isles. Arthur Aughey has said that defining 'Englishness' is not a 'precondition for saying something intelligible about contemporary England'.⁵⁶ Bernard Crick has argued something similar about Britishness.⁵⁷ This is a very lucky thing, as

⁵⁵ L. W. B. Brockliss and David Eastwood,, eds, *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c.1750-c.1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 1-4.

⁵⁶ Arthur Aughey, *The Politics of Englishness* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 6.

⁵⁷ Bernard Crick, 'Do We Really Need Britannia?' in Andrew Gamble and Tony Wright,, eds, *Britishness: Perspectives on the British Question* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

scholars, despite much effort, have struggled to come up with a definitive answer. The problem lies in the complexities and the ambiguities in what it means to be 'British'. There are so many different factors in constructing a 'British national identity' that it is almost impossible to do so. Language, place, origin, religion, and gender to name but a few, invariably impact the hierarchy in which a Briton understands his or her own identity. Second generation UK-born immigrants add another layer to the complexities of what it means to be 'British' in contemporary Britain. As Gamble and Wright have argued, the creation of a European government body has challenged the traditional sovereignty of European nations.⁵⁸ Clive Aslet has lamented harmonization with Europe as a slippery slope destroying Britishness, using the replacement of the navy blue stiff passport with the small red European one as a metaphor for 'national shrinkage'.⁵⁹ Some have said that the British state, now devoid of its *raison d'être*, should be done away with as a relic of Empire,⁶⁰ and Vron Ware has argued that 'globalization undermines the very idea of national borders'.⁶¹ Times of crisis and football seem to be the catalyst for discussions about what it means to be 'English' or 'British'. It is no coincidence that several authors of Englishness and Britishness cite England's attendance in the World Cup as inspiration for their books creation.⁶² As Jean Seaton has argued, the debate about Britishness 'tends to come up when people are uncertain about it'.⁶³

Though the debates on what it means to be British have changed over the last hundred years, as Christina Julios has said, 'the indefinable essence of our national identity continues to elude us; just as it did our ancestors'.⁶⁴ Whatever Britishness is, it is both informed by and has an impact on popular remembrance both at an

⁵⁸ Andrew Gamble and Tony Wright, 'Introduction: The British Question' in Gamble and Wright,, eds, *Britishness: Perspectives on the British Question*, pp. 1-9; 5.

⁵⁹ Clive Aslet, *Anyone for England?: A Search for British Identity* (London: Little Brown and Co, 1997), p. 4.

⁶⁰ Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000* (London: MacMillan, 2002), p. 727.

⁶¹ Vron Ware, *Who Cares About Britishness?: A Global View of the National Identity Debate* (London: Arcadia, 2007), p. 3.

⁶² See Aughey, *The Politics of Englishness*, p. vii.

⁶³ Jean Seaton, 'The BBC and Metabolizing Britishness: Critical Patriotism' in Gamble and Wright,, eds, *Britishness: Perspectives on the British Question*, p. 72.

⁶⁴ Christina Julios, *Contemporary British Identity: English Language, Migrants and Public Discourse* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 12-13; 21.

international and domestic level. That being said, a general sense of what is currently understood about Britishness is integral to making statements about it in the following pages. Paul Ward's non-theoretical description that 'Britishness is what people mean when they identify themselves individually and collectively as "being British"' ⁶⁵ is perhaps all that is needed. 'Britishness,' it seems, is something which is dynamic, it can be transplanted or absorbed into the daily life of a society, it can be used pragmatically, and perhaps most importantly, it can be rejected. As Ward has argued, Britishness is 'a flexible identity', one which is 'resilient' and 'persistent'. ⁶⁶ The following pages show that examining the elements of commemoration and heritage on each island can reveal just what aspects of Britishness each location wishes to keep and what it wishes to get away from. Each location in this study is capable of both simultaneously accepting and rejecting elements of it, in particular those of the 'finest-hour' iconography, in order to further its own sense of achievement, uniqueness, and heritage. To examine the Churchillian paradigm is also to study the complex relationships between each island and Britain, and how Britishness has manifested itself on each island.

In 1992 David Lowenthal wrote, 'because islands are generally small, remote and historically diverse, good comparative materials on them are hard to come by.'⁶⁷ Since the 1990s, the emerging field of Island Studies has helped to make up some of this missing ground. This dissertation, it is hoped, will continue to bridge that gap by constructing a comparative between each island and its relationship with Britain and Britishness. It is not, however, designed to schematize various features of islands, but rather to interrogate whether a shared cultural history with one nation in particular can be seen to nuance that identity. The appeal of islands is almost a cliché. For one thing, their boundedness means that they are 'able to be held in the mind's eye and imagined

⁶⁵ Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 3.

⁶⁶ Ward, *Britishness Since 1870*, p. 5, 9.

⁶⁷ David Lowenthal, 'Small Tropical Islands: A General Overview', in Helen M. Hintjens and Malyn D. D. Newitt, eds, *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands: The Importance of Being Small* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1992), pp. 18-29; 19.

as places of possibility and promise'.⁶⁸ Pete Hay has commented on this strange feature of island studies: islands can be both 'characterised by vulnerability or resilience'. They can be 'victims of change, economically dependent, and at the mercy of unscrupulous neo-colonial manipulation' or, 'uniquely resourceful in the face of such threats'.⁶⁹ Small nations have multiple 'factors of vulnerability', stemming from their size. They may be fought over by rival territories, they may be desired for strategic resources, or exploited for political gain. They may be havens for political prisoners or other undesirables, or they may be subject to internal turmoil, the result of which may have a large effect on international stability.⁷⁰ Perhaps the key paradox to highlight here is that despite the fact that the defining feature of the island is its state of being completely surrounded by water, none of the islands are culturally cut off—instead, they have a rich association with cultures which they have historically encountered, and foster both positive and negative associations with them.

It has been noted that islands incite even more scholarly interest as a result of particular historico-political contingencies, such as the Falklands conflict in 1982 which saw the British media and Conservative political establishment highlighting the affinities of 'island races'.⁷¹ Britain's association with islands across the globe is much older than that, of course. As Christian Depraetere points out, by the beginning of the last century most islands were part of colonial empires, with Britain "'ruling the waves" through its truly global islands network'.⁷² Though the network that made up the British Empire no longer exists, it cannot be said that it is no longer relevant to it. Much scholarly attention has been paid since the 1970s to the identities of colonialism and its returns. Barry Bartmann has argued that islands (using the case of Nevis and St. Kitts) are as susceptible to the influence of a power thousands of miles away across the sea just as

⁶⁸ Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith, eds, *Islands in History and Representation* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 2.

⁶⁹ Pete Hay, 'A Phenomenology of Islands', *Journal of Island Studies* 1, 1 (2006), p. 21.

⁷⁰ Sheila Harden ed., *Small is Dangerous: Micro States in a Macro World* (London: Frances Pinter, 1985), p. 1-13.

⁷¹ Klauss Dodds, 'God Save the Falklands: Postcolonial Geographies of the Falklands/Malvinas' in Edmond and Smith, eds, *Islands in History and Representation*, p. 178.

⁷² Christian Depraetere, 'The Challenge of Nissology: A Global Outlook on the World Archipelago, Part I: Scene Setting the World Archipelago', *Island Studies Journal* 3, 1 (2008), p. 13.

much as one a few miles away: British interests have a sweeping temporal and geographic reach.⁷³ As such, Britishness continues to play a role in conceptualising the identity of islands both in the British Isles and in the former British Empire.

Islands are more insular, their communities are closer, and those responsible for the direction of new heritage projects in the islands are generally well known to each other. Invariably this small group of people are the guardians as well as the creators of heritage within their island(s). As Randall Baker has shown, islands, like all small nations have 'only a small pool of skilled persons' to perform public service roles'.⁷⁴ It is this small group of people who are responsible for restoration of buildings and planning commemorations and celebrations of historical events. Islands are the epitome of 'local heritage', places where, as Llorenç Prats has said, 'worlds in which everything and everyone is familiar and interconnected, leaving little room for anonymity'.⁷⁵

Prats shows that construction and direction of heritage in such situations is subject to a number of different factors and agents. These can be government affiliated organisations, local (be they individual or collective) cultural agents, the general population, tourism needs, and sometimes 'experts in heritage management'. Heritage 'experts' are, for the most part, the ones which draw up projects and then assign them to different groups to execute, but can also have a more 'comprehensive' role in the creation and maintenance of heritage. They tend to be museum curators, heritage directors, and government officials who have a permanent hand in the way heritage is presented on their island. 'Local cultural agents', however, tend to be amateur enthusiasts, members of heritage societies, people who form special interest groups, and the survivors of the conflict themselves, who are often turned to for their opinion on memorialisation. These are people from the local population with an interest in island heritage who are capable of influencing heritage projects, with multiple reasons

⁷³ Barry Bartmann, 'Island War and Security' in Godfrey Baldacchino ed., *A World of Islands: An Island Studies Reader* (Prince Edward Island, Canada: Institute of Island Studies, 2007), p. 309.

⁷⁴ Baker, 'Scale and Administrative Performance', p. 15.

⁷⁵ Llorenç Prats, 'Heritage According to Scale', in Marta Anico and Elsa Peralta, *Heritage and Identity: Engagement and Demission in the Contemporary World* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 76-91; 82.

for their involvement. It is these people whom I have called ‘heritage creators’, their projects ‘creations’.

Prats’ theories need to be put into an island context. In all of the islands which are the focus of this dissertation, ‘heritage experts’ are often at the forefront of heritage planning and heritage direction. In most cases they work for one of the ‘official’ heritage bodies, in this case Manx National Heritage, Orkney Museums and Heritage, or Jersey Heritage. Such experts can sometimes be from the islands themselves, but more often than not are hired specifically by the heritage organisation to work in the island due to their creativity and special skills in heritage management. Heritage directors, curators, and managers often have little to no connection with the island before they begin work in it, but become an integral part of heritage once they start.

On the other hand, ‘cultural agents’ are primarily local enthusiasts of variant backgrounds. They are largely amateurs who collect, preserve, and display heritage—either due to their own interest in history generally, or because they have an involvement in the history of the island due to ancestral or family connections, economic interest, or simply because it happens to be the place in which they reside. Such people are often volunteers, combining both a hobby (perhaps collecting militaria) and a willingness to contribute to a greater understanding of a particular aspect of history. Each of the islands has such people, a group of individuals who feel the need to have a hand in the creation of island heritage, yet possess no ‘official’ role in the major organisations. The Manx Aviation Preservation Society, the Orkney Defence Interest Network, and the Channel Islands Occupation Society are made up primarily of these individuals. Such organisations are not limited to islands of course. Local heritage organisations are actively involved with preservation efforts across Britain and indeed the world. Many of these societies operate in a remarkably similar way, open to any interested parties for a small annual membership fee, run entirely by volunteers, and with a simple constitution. Two towns well known to the author: Barrie, Canada and Huddersfield, England (my hometown and the location of my university) have remarkably similar organisations: the Barrie Historical Association and the Huddersfield

Local History Society. Both organisations – 3000 miles apart – have a website, hold monthly meetings and lectures, have an open membership policy for a small fee, and concern themselves with preservation and education of the town's history.⁷⁶ Such organisations exist and operate in a similar manner throughout the Western world. A simple internet search using the term 'history society' and the names of random towns lands a harvest of societies: The Ararat and District Historical Society (Australia),⁷⁷ The Bangor History Society (Michigan, USA),⁷⁸ The Cynon Valley History Society (Wales),⁷⁹ The Dunfermline Heritage Community Project (Scotland),⁸⁰ and the Epsom & Eden District Historical Society (New Zealand).⁸¹ The list could certainly go on.

Though local heritage projects are clearly not unique to islands, what makes them special is their 'island' remit. Understandings of a unique culture and a 'national identity' which accompany islands magnify the importance of such societies. Though these organisations are made up of amateurs, much like their worldwide counterparts, their contribution to heritage direction is not to be taken lightly. Rather than being a conglomeration of enthusiasts concerned with their locality, cultural agents on islands can have a significant part to play in the construction of an island's national identity. In fact momentum for many large changes in heritage direction, as well as restoration and preservation projects in the islands has come from such groups, and in some cases they have even organised the funds.

Though a distinct entity, veterans of conflict can also be agents of heritage. The Royal British Legion, for example, has had a massive impact on remembrance across the United Kingdom, and veterans have often provided the energy for religious services, marches and memorials around the country on special anniversaries. Veterans (or 'survivors' in the Channel Islands) are also turned to for their opinion on heritage

⁷⁶ 'Barrie Historical Association', <<http://www.barriehistorical.com/>> [Accessed 27 Feb 2012]; 'Huddersfield Local History Society', <<http://huddersfieldhistory.wordpress.com/>> [Accessed 27 Feb 2012].

⁷⁷ 'Ararat and District Historical Society', <<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~langimor/membership.htm>> [Accessed 22 Feb 2012].

⁷⁸ 'Bangor History Society', <<http://www.bangormihistory.com/>> [Accessed 22 Feb 2012].

⁷⁹ 'Cynon Valley History Society', <<http://www.cynonvalleyhistorysociety.org/>> [Accessed 22 Feb 2012].

⁸⁰ 'Dunfermline Heritage Community Project', <<http://www.dunfermlineheritage.org/>> [Accessed 22 Feb 2012].

⁸¹ 'Epsom & Eden District Historical Society', <<http://www.epsom-eden.org.nz/>> [Accessed 22 Feb 2012].

direction, as their remembrance is considered the most 'authentic'. They have, of late, been the subject of a massive campaign to preserve an authentic voice of the past through oral interviews, in the understanding that the loss of these individuals means the loss of their particular experience and memories. Veterans have also been known to object to heritage direction when it offends this memory, as was exemplified by the scrapping of a D-Day 'jamboree' planned for the 1994 D-Day commemorations in London.⁸²

These different types of people fulfill the role as heritage creators in island heritage. They form a social class, a group of island residents who have a professional role in heritage projects, or an unofficial or amateur interest in the history of the island. That is not to say that the entire population is not involved, as we shall see in chapter four, a passive island populace can often become publicly vocal when the island's heritage takes a direction the public does not like, or one which goes against what is considered to be tradition. As Prats has shown, within local heritage 'indifference is certainly not common',⁸³ and the public can be influenced by a myriad of factors. Positive reactions to projects can stem from things as simple as the economic benefits to them from tourism, negative reactions from the lack of support of politicians involved in the project. The vast majority of each island's residents also have an interest in how their island is understood, either from home or abroad. Residents of each of the islands invariably want to see some aspects of their islandness (be it Manxness, Orcadianness, or Jerseyness) preserved, and the official heritage organisations are often the ones with the resources to do this. Islanders are also well aware of the opinion of outsiders to their island. This is particularly the case in the Channel Islands, as negative press in British newspapers has often caused consternation and anger in the islands.

Though each of the islands in this study has an island based (and government funded) heritage body, it is the combination of both public and private individuals which determines how events are publically remembered on each island. The following pages

⁸² 'Britain Changes D-Day Jamboree to Remembrance', *The Free-Lance Star*, Frederickburg, Virginia (14 May, 1994), p. C3.

⁸³ Prats, 'Heritage According to Scale', p. 84.

will examine how memory has been constructed on each island, and how this has manifested itself in the islands national cultural and heritage identity.

This dissertation will rely not on physical memory which can be influenced by many things: social standing, education, beliefs, culture, and distance from the events to name a few,⁸⁴ but instead will rely on societal memory. Societal memory of the war can manifest itself in a variety of forms, both tangible and intangible. As Raphael Samuel has said 'the sense of the past, at any given point of time, is quite as much a matter of history as what happened in it.'⁸⁵ In *Theatres of Memory*, Samuel made the case that memory is 'historically conditioned', that it changes according to the influences of the present. How a society remembers historical events manifests itself in its displays of identify and heritage. What a society chooses to construct, whether publically or privately, in order to remember past events is what Pierre Nora spoke of as '*Lieux de memoire*' and Samuel has called 'sites of memory'.⁸⁶ It is entirely possible, therefore, to deconstruct a nation's 'sites of memory' in order to determine what a society chooses to remember, or perhaps more importantly, forget. This study examines similar sites of memory on the islands in order to determine how each collectively remembers the events of the Second World War. Some of these sites differ greatly.

Jay Winter illustrated that the nature of warfare during the Great War created a need for public places to grieve, and community cenotaphs provided 'sites of mourning' for those who had lost a loved one.⁸⁷ These structures today play a pivotal role in how the First World War is remembered. Combined with 11 November, these sites provide a specific place and time within which the war's events may be commemorated. The Second World War, on the other hand, has until very recently been memorialized not with memorials and granite slabs, but in a way that can be, perhaps unwittingly,

⁸⁴ For a psychological account read Paul Fussell's landmark work on the immediate emotional impact of the Second World War. Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁸⁵ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume I*, p. 15.

⁸⁶ Pierre Nora 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de memoire (1984)' in Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt, eds, *Histoires: French Constructions of the Past* Arthur Goldhammer et al trans. (New York: New Press, 1995), pp. 631-43.

⁸⁷ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 1995).

experienced and interacted with by the ordinary Briton. Far from commemorating the 'cult of the fallen', the Second World War has been remembered with 'living memorials'; things, places, and events that fulfill a useful purpose while at the same time embodying collective remembrance.⁸⁸ These are the Second World War's 'sites of memory', including public places, veterans' organisations, living history museums, heritage sites, parks, sculptures, and philately, but also commemorative items and events: VE/D-Day celebrations, annual commemorations, plays, and cultural festivals.⁸⁹ The content and character of these sites is important to gauge what aspects of the wartime experience are displayed, which are considered essential, and which have simply been forgotten. In addition to this, it will shed light on which aspects of contemporary British commemoration have been imported, and where they share a similar place in the historical landscape of each island. This will allow for a more complex understanding of memories of the Second World War across the British Isles. It will show that 'the other British Isles' are capable of picking and choosing from elements of the Churchill paradigm and appropriating British symbolism in order that they may carve a niche for *their* stories in the glorious British war narrative, while at the same time highlighting their own unique experiences in a differential heritage, one which deepens the islands' autonomy and ensures the survival of the islands' own distinct identity.

The following dissertation is a work of five chapters. Chapter one describes in detail the Churchillian paradigm. It examines what has been called the 'British collective memory' of the war, how it formed, and how it has manifested itself in the nation's 'sites of memory'—museums, commemorations, heritage sites and so on. It will also highlight some of the academic contributions which have sought to either unravel, dispel, or explain the underlying myths which make up the British national narrative, beginning with Angus Calder's *The People's War* in 1969. Though recent initiatives have

⁸⁸ A longer description of why memorialisation of the Second World War differs from that of the First is in chapter one of this dissertation. See also: John R. Gillis, 'Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship', in John R. Gillis ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton, 1994), p. 13.

⁸⁹ For more on heritage forms see: Peter Howard, *Heritage; Management, Interpretation, Identity* (New York: Continuum, 2003), pp. 5-9.

been enacted to commemorate and celebrate lesser known aspects of the war such as the 'War to Windrush' exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London,⁹⁰ the chapter shows that for the most part, the imagery the Churchillian paradigm reflects still provides the basis for most contemporary Second World War commemorations in Britain. Though there are certain memorials, special events, exhibitions and commemorations which focus on lesser known experiences of war, the traditional British iconography of the Second World War has been the driving force in contemporary commemorations for decades. Lastly, it will describe how the domestic histories of each island in this study differ from the accepted 'British' version of events and how their stories are tangential to contemporary remembrance on the mainland. This provides a detailed basis for comparison between the islands selected and elements of the 'finest-hour' mythology.

The following three chapters will then look at each island in turn, beginning with the Isle of Man, then Orkney, then Jersey. They are in no particular order. Each of the islands and their 'sites of memory' are examined individually, gauging the strength of Churchillian imagery in their heritage and commemoration, and looking at how collective remembrance differs from that in Britain. How and why it is the same or different will then be put into perspective. This is critical to understanding each island's relationship with Britain, how it accepts/rejects Britishness, and how the island chooses to view itself within the context of the British Isles or on an international level. Chapter two of this dissertation looks at commemorations and heritage sites on the Isle of Man since 1985. Looking at both Manx National Heritage sites and privately organised museums and events, this chapter argues that the Isle of Man chooses not to shy away from its involvement in a negative aspect of the Second World War experience. Rather, Manx National Heritage showcases the island's involvement in internment to differentiate its 'national' heritage and provide an alternative to resident and visitor alike. Having a distinctive aspect of the war experience serves to deepen the Isle of Man's own heritage and differentiate it from Britain. Though elements of the

⁹⁰ 'From War to Windrush—extended due to popular demand', Imperial War Museum <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.5290>> [Accessed 9 Aug 2011].

Churchillian paradigm are alive and well on the island, kept by re-enactment societies, private interest groups and veteran associations, Manx National Heritage chooses to showcase this element as one of the many stories Mann and Manxmen have been a part of over the millennia. This allows the islanders to celebrate their part in the greater British victory, while at the same time poses their own unique history and heritage.

The legacy of Orkney's involvement with the *HMS Royal Oak* disaster and its Italian POWs are the subjects of chapter three. Brought to build infrastructure in the islands, the Italians left an unmistakable mark on Orkney's physical and mnemonic landscape. Many of the islands inhabitants still possess *objets d'art* given to them by the Italian POWs, and the museums and heritage centres all carry POW 'trench art'. Orcadians give pride of place to their association with Italian POWs in a way that no other place in the British Isles does. The Churchill Barriers and the Italian Chapel, an ornate Roman Catholic chapel built by the prisoners, provide the impetus for this positive remembrance. The Italian connection has now been allowed to permeate even the most fundamental of Orkney's cultural displays. This stands in direct contrast with traditional 'British' remembrance which tends to minimize the POW contribution to the war effort in favour of highlighting British workmanship and resolve. Orcadians also take pride in the positive connections created by themselves and the Italians. This contrasts with the experience Italians had during the race riots of 1940 in London and Edinburgh, and with experiences such as the *SS Arandora Star* and the *HMT Dunera*. Orcadians highlight their involvement with this aspect of the war experience in order to project themselves as more than just a northern Scottish county. Their association and involvement with outsiders provides an escape from homogenization into British or Scottish culture. Much like their long-term association with Norway, the Italian connection forged during the Second World War has now become a way to differentiate themselves from Britain and reinforce their own 'national' identity.

Chapter four concerns itself with occupation remembrance in Jersey. For decades, Channel Island remembrance was forced into close association with the Churchillian paradigm—the notion that islanders behaved with steadfast Britishness in

the face of the Nazi enemy. By the 1990s, however, hard hitting questions had started to be asked, forcing Jersey's occupation survivors and younger citizens alike to look introspectively at the islands commemoration and celebration of the Second World War. The mid 1990s saw an explosion of literature on the topic of occupation, which ultimately impacted the direction of heritage in the island. Though a number of tributes to some of the more negative aspects of occupation have been erected since 1990—to deportations, slave workers, and Jewish victims—changes to some aspects of the traditional remembrance are still fiercely challenged. Liberation Day, for example, has been used as a device to seamlessly connect the island's Second World War experience to glorious British victory, despite Jersey having little part in it. It has traditionally been a day for islanders to bask in 'British' commemorative tropes while re-affirming allegiance to the crown in a festival of celebration. Any attempts to make this day more forward looking or abstract have come at the cost of considerable controversy. Despite now championing (in comparison to other Channel Islands) the most tangential wartime history within the British Isles, Jersey's citizenry still need a tangible connection to the British War story, and the liberation celebrations provide this.

Lastly, this dissertation examines the differences between each island's commemoration and Britain, as well as their similarities. Highlighting the contribution that British commemorative tropes and finest-hour mythology has made to commemoration and celebration in the islands; it also shows where each island has attempted to assert its distinctiveness over its wartime story. Collective memory in each island is informed both by a need for uniqueness, but also a need to be part of the glorious British war narrative. It will also allow us to better understand Britishness, how it is appropriated, absorbed, transported and utilized by the islands which make up some of the British archipelago.

The ultimate goal of this dissertation is twofold. The first is to examine the Churchillian paradigm in places other than the British mainland in order to incorporate 'the other British Isles' into the academic discussion about a British remembrance of war, and to shed light on how islands within the British Isles have both accepted and rejected

the myth. It shows which traditional British commemorative tropes have been included in island representations of the war, as well as lesser known aspects of the war which the island chooses to highlight as part of its domestic experience. This dissertation will add depth to studies already undertaken which seek to explain the influence of the Churchillian imagery in British culture, politics and identity. It shows alternate presentations of war memory which exist outside of those examined by the likes of Connelly, Smith, and so many others over the last fifty years.⁹¹

The second goal of this work is to use the framework of the Churchillian paradigm to gauge the 'Britishness' of 'the other British Isles'. This builds on the work of scholars such as Paul Ward, Andrew Gamble and Tony Wright, and Richard Weight, who have probed the question of what it means to be 'British' both historically and in contemporary society.⁹² Should the islands have cast off their independent stories to follow the Churchillian paradigm then they could be considered to be entirely British. If they reject the British myth in favour of their own stories then they can be considered entirely independent. The truth obviously lies somewhere in between. Each island chooses to both simultaneously accept and reject Britishness when it suits them, favouring Britishness or their own island identity when it is in their best interest to do so. Islands choose to buy into certain positive elements of the British myth while at the same time highlighting their own distinct history and identity, even if this sometimes proves painful or controversial. Though possessing a sense of Britishness, this oftentimes co-exists with a sense of home, of pride in island status, and a strong 'island identity'. The islands in this study support their unique historical perspective and experience as a way to strengthen their own individualism and cultural sovereignty, while at the same time incorporating their own stories into the British national narrative—celebrating victories and basking in traditional British commemorative tropes.

⁹¹ The historiography of the Churchillian paradigm is dealt with in chapter one of this dissertation.

⁹² Ward, *Britishness since 1870*; Tony Wright and Andrew Gamble, *Britishness: Perspectives on the British Question*; Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain*.

Chapter 1

Memory, Myth, Heritage

1) Collective remembrance and the Churchillian paradigm

No other event takes such pride of place within Britain's memory than the Second World War, its culture of remembrance is central to the nation's identity.¹ Interest in the war has resulted in the creation of mountains of books, films, television shows, BBC documentaries, museums, heritage sites, festivals and plays. Wartime heritage is now consumed by the general public at a rate that it has been likened by Raphael Samuel to a 'religious fervor', with World War Two sites and museums 'shrines' to Britain's war memory.² Such contemporary commemorations of the war in Britain, however, are based on a myth. This myth, created by the events as they unfolded during the war, has lived on in popular remembrance for now close to seventy years. Though the myth has many nuances, the general pattern is as follows: at the outbreak of war, Britain was caught unprepared and unready for war. Caught without a leader and under threat, Britain found its saviour in the defiant and charismatic Winston Churchill. Shortly thereafter, Britain faced a major catastrophe at Dunkirk, until a fleet of little ships saved the stranded soldiers from certain destruction and preserved Britain's honour. The

¹ I feel a footnote is needed here in order to exclude other contenders: The Battle of Hastings, The Spanish Armada, The Battle of Trafalgar, and Waterloo are certainly important – but being further back in history they do not carry the same sort of emotional response or connection with living persons which the memory of the Second World War evokes. A close contender is the First World War, and as the 100th anniversaries are begun to be celebrated across the British Isles this will no doubt become more obvious. As the generation that fought it passes into history, however, this too is now becoming a memory maintained by the 'postmilitary generation' (see page 50).

² Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume I*, p. 153.

nation then necessarily fought alone, without allies through the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, causing its population to pull together to survive. Britain then went on to suffer defeat after defeat in battle until El Alamein, the turning point of the war, when Montgomery won a great victory over Rommel and the Afrika Korps. With new allies, 'Monty' led the British back to France on D-Day, eventually winning the war in Europe. With the defeat of the Third Reich, Britain sealed her glorious victory, confident in the fact that it was the only nation to have been in the war from the beginning to end.³ This version of events is now firmly entrenched as Britain's collective memory of the war, informing and affecting every contemporary commemoration and celebration of the war's events. Despite the diversity of stories which form the experience of war for people of the British Isles, this particular interpretation has prevailed—constructed over the last half-century by national consensus and public opinion. The 'Churchillian paradigm', so named because central to it is Churchill's lionization, has now become integral to British national identity. The war is characterized as the 'People's War' with perhaps a sense of sport, emphasizing the work of ordinary heroes doing extraordinary things. It is seen as Britain's 'finest-hour', a victory snatched from the jaws of defeat in a fight against all odds.

The use of these words and this imagery contributes to a healthy sense of pride in Britain's achievements during the war; regardless of whether they were defeats (Dunkirk's little ships) or victories (the Battle of Britain). Winston Churchill has taken on a heroic role as the man that saved the nation from certain defeat. His image is contrasted with those of the appeasers, Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax, as the charismatic leader who was able to rally the British people in their most difficult hour. Churchill's leadership and the events of 1940 in particular have become part of a national narrative which enforces conceptions of unity and self sacrifice, of a nation defiant.

³ For a more complete explanation of the Churchillian Myth see: Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, pp. 1-2.

A further series of 'sub-myths' which help to define the 'British' experience of war, are contained within the larger narrative.⁴ This wartime experience is one which is romanticized, with conceptions of unity, of a nation drawn together, of people huddled together in Aldgate tube station passing blankets and cups of tea, of the 'dig for victory' and 'make do and mend' attitude, and of the Spitfire pilot taking to the skies to defend his country. It is this imagery which is called upon for remembrance of the Second World War in Britain. It provides a comfortable understanding of the nation's wartime role, and an easy narrative to cling to when taking both an introspective and retrospective look at the British state itself. So entrenched is this version of events within public consciousness that it has proved very difficult to diverge from.

So too is the image of Churchill which accompanies it. Over the last sixty-five years his image has been a pivotal part of the British national narrative, and like the myth, it has continued to be reinforced by literature, popular culture, and commemoration. The aggrandizement of Winston Churchill is such a fundamental aspect of the Churchillian paradigm; his oratory, his defiance, and his leadership, is the backbone of the 'finest-hour' mythology. It provides a powerful image and face with which collective remembrance of the Second World War can be attached. Despite Churchill's long career, it is the image of him with a bowtie, hat, and grin, usually giving a V-sign or characterized as a bulldog which has been most steadily reproduced. His wartime image, the most famous six years of his career, is now one of the most powerful symbols of commemoration, appearing on pamphlets and programmes connected with World War Two events, as well as statues, busts, Toby mugs, ashtrays, plates, and other kinds of collectibles.⁵ This image, as John Ramsden has shown, has survived historians' deliberate iconoclasm, and possesses the ability to transcend political and class affiliations, and permeate national consciousness.⁶

⁴ Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, p. 3.

⁵ Ronald Smith has studied such memorabilia extensively. See Ronald Smith, *Churchill: Images of Greatness* (London: Kevin Francis, 1988).

⁶ Ramsden, *Man of the Century*, pp. 527-540.

For several decades, Britain has celebrated and commemorated the Second World War using this image and this set of well established symbols. In 2010, VE Day commemorations in London alone were attended by over two thousand veterans, and were led by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall.⁷ *HMS Belfast*, on display since 1971, was most recently restored to *Admiralty Disruptive Camouflage Type 25* reminiscent of her wartime years, despite serving well into the 1960s.⁸ And Second World War galleries and their associated exhibitions form the greater share of the space at the Imperial War Museum in London. Interest in the Second World War has led to the creation of 'theme museums', 'war experiences', and living history sites all designed to give tangible remembrance to the wartime era. It is something which many of the British people long to read about, revisit, and celebrate. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, when in 2006 the (then) Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, called for a specific date for 'a national day' for Britain, two of the top three submissions polled from the British public were VE Day and D-Day. Only the anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta (15 June, 1215) did better. Winston Churchill's birthday, on 30 November, also made eighth spot, a testament to how Churchill's image can be seen to espouse the values of Britishness.⁹ A similar poll also conducted by the BBC surveyed 'the 100 greatest Britons of all time', the criteria being that the person must have been born in the British Isles (including Ireland this time). Polling close to half a million votes, Winston Churchill easily took first place.¹⁰ Such a widespread understanding has been used to further political aims, and popular conception surrounding the war actively shapes British politics. In the 1980s, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher called upon a return to 'Churchillian values' to see Britain through a time of crisis. Following the invasion of the Falkland Islands by Argentina and their recapture in 1982, Thatcher used the miner's strike of 1984-85 to find an 'enemy within', in comparison with the external

⁷ 'VE Day 65th anniversary: Prince leads tributes', BBC News (8 May 2011) < http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/8665112.stm > [Accessed 12 May 2011].

⁸ For more on this process and the restoration see: John Wingate, *In Trust for the Nation: HMS Belfast 1939-1972* (London: Imperial War Museum, 2004).

⁹ Chris Rojek, *Brit-Myth: Who do the British Think They Are?* (London: Reaktion, 2007), pp. 44-45.

¹⁰ Rojek, *Brit-Myth*, pp. 89-90.

enemy—the Argentine Military Junta.¹¹ The memory of World War Two battles and what they mean to Britons, combined with the finest-hour imagery of Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft is currently being used by the British National Party,¹² a party which ironically espouses all of the political ideals which Britain fought against during the war.

As early as 1945, the events of 1940 had been romanticized within the minds of the British public, with Mass-Observation reports showing that people claimed they were happier and more unified five years earlier. During the war the British leadership deliberately constructed the war as a struggle for freedom, and Churchill's speeches and broadcasts, referred to 'the spirit of the British nation',¹³ emphasising a partnership between elites and the people. Churchill challenged the reputation of the Conservatives, distancing himself from the appeasement of Chamberlain, and positioning himself as leader of the nation rather than his political party. Such a position, however, was a tenuous one, as he was forced to rely on Labour Party support. Though a Conservative, support of his own party was far from certain, with the majority of Conservative backbenchers supporting Chamberlain in the House of Commons vote in May 1940.

The consequence of Labour support was a further distancing of the new coalition government from the appeasers of the late 1930s, criticising the policies of the former cabinet and creating their own patriotic agenda. Labour sought to combine an external patriotism which looked to safeguard the nation from Adolf Hitler, with an inward patriotism which was concerned with the condition of the people.¹⁴ During the war, both concepts added considerable strength to the notion of a People's War. During wartime this concept was used to promote unity more generally, while Labour's version of patriotism emphasised a democratic and working-class version of national identity, appealing to the needs of the people by calling for social change. Labour

¹¹ Simon Featherstone, *Englishness: Twentieth Century Popular Culture and the Forming of English Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 54-55.

¹² The words 'Dunkirk', 'Battle of Britain', and 'D-Day', combined with a picture of a Spitfire appeared on a British National Party campaign leaflet in May 2010.

¹³ Quoted in John Baxendale, "'You and I - All of Us Ordinary People': Renegotiating Britishness in Wartime', in Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, eds, *Millions Like Us? British Culture in the Second World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p. 295-322; 309.

¹⁴ See Paul Ward, 'Preparing for the People's War: The Left and Patriotism in the 1930s', *Labour History Review* 67 (2002), pp. 171-85.

politicians served in the coalition government while they prepared for the election, eventually sweeping to victory in 1945.

The immediate post-war years seem to have crystallized the view of a 'People's War', emphasising the role of ordinary Britons with 1940 being the 'high point of national consciousness',¹⁵ while the nationalisation projects of the immediate post-war period and the rise of the welfare state helped to continue Labour's version of an inward-looking patriotism. In 1951, however, Labour lost the general election despite winning more of the popular vote than the Conservatives. This signified not only a return of Winston Churchill to government, but also the return of the outward-looking patriotic narrative. The publication of Churchill's *The Second World War* in six volumes between 1948 and 1953 also helped to cement Churchill's image, as well as reinforce popular conceptions of the war already being solidified within public mind.

Popular culture and media also played a large part in the construction of the British wartime narrative. In the 1950s British culture saw a return to traditional versions of patriotism, reasserting the contribution made by elites and individuals. Films such as *The Dambusters* (1955), *The Colditz Story* (1955) and *Reach for the Sky* (1956) reiterated the Churchillian message that the many owed so much to 'the few'. These were adventure films about officers, pilots and scientists fighting a war of individual heroism rather than collective endurance and effort.¹⁶ The 'people' were still engaged in the war but only in supporting roles, and as such were not entitled to share in the fruits of a hard-won victory. Aldgate and Richards have shown that British cinema has had a direct hand in the creation of national identity through films like *The Longest Day* (1962), *The Great Escape* (1963), and *The Battle of Britain* (1969).¹⁷ As 'media represented heritage', cinematographic examples of culture have a large effect on popular memory, allowing this form of heritage to become one of the most important propagators of the

¹⁵ Smith, *Britain and 1940*, p. 5.

¹⁶ See for example John Ramsden, 'Refocusing "the People's War": British War films of the 1950s', *Journal of Contemporary History* 33 (1998), pp. 35-63.

¹⁷ Antony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, *Britain Can Take It!: British Cinema in the Second World War* (New York: Blackwell, 1986); Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity, From Dickens to Dad's Army* (Manchester: St. Martins, 1997).

war myth.¹⁸ The small-screen too contributed to a structured version of the war, by projecting recycled army footage in documentaries, and repeating episodes of old war-based comedies like *Dad's Army* (1968-77), *It Ain't Half Hot Mum* (1974-81), and wartime period settings in television dramas. All of these have contributed in some way to a perpetuation of the Churchillian imagery, and popular culture has both drawn from and reinforced contemporary conceptions of the war. Though many of these media portrayals were inspired by actual conditions (Mark Connelly has described in detail the parts of *Dad's Army* which reflected the woeful inadequacies and un-preparedness of the Local Defence Volunteers),¹⁹ they invariably reflect the 'British' themes of unity, sacrifice, and fighting against all odds.

Commemorative events themselves have also been inspired by and helped to reinforce popular conception. In the wake of what Jay Winter has called 'the second memory boom' in the 1960s, which centred on the Second World War and the Holocaust,²⁰ performative commemoration has become a large-scale tradition. The last twenty five years in particular have seen a massive upsurge in commemorative events, with five and ten year anniversaries of events like the Battle of Britain, Dunkirk, D-Day and VE Day becoming well organised and attended events. Popular enthusiasm for such forms of remembrance has been assisted by what Hewitt has called a 'war-obsessed press', which has, since the 1980s been responsible for reminding the British people of every upcoming anniversary.²¹ Though very little was done after the war to commemorate such events, the last three decades have seen a new interest in commemoration. The 1980s, I argue, saw the genesis of modern forms of commemoration of the Second World War, when dates of remembrance such as VE Day and D-Day became more than just part of a religious service in the local church. Instead they became big events, designed not only to commemorate the anniversary, but also

¹⁸ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume I*, pp. 8-13.

¹⁹ Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, pp. 81-85.

²⁰ Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War and Historical Memory in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2006).

²¹ Nick Hewitt, 'A Sceptical Generation? War Memorials and the Collective Memory of the Second World War in Britain 1945-2000', in Dominik Geppert ed., *The Postwar Challenge: Cultural, Social, and Political Change in Western Europe, 1945-58* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 81-97; 91-97.

to celebrate Britain's involvement in the Second World War in its entirety. While anniversaries in the 1950s, 60s and 70s passed by 'almost unnoticed',²² Hewitt notes an 'explosion of commemorative journalism' in the late 80s and early 90s. The fiftieth anniversary of D-Day in 1994 and the fiftieth anniversary of VE Day in 1995 were arguably the high water mark for such celebrations, with multiple TV specials, commemorative stamps, souvenir mugs, hats and ties all commissioned for the event. Hundreds of veterans turned out to be part of the celebrations in London, in what Martin Evans called 'a sustained and popular expression of remembrance [which] has no precedent in British history.'²³ Similar commemorations, though not necessarily on such a grand scale, have been occurring since 1995 all over Britain. The 2005 celebrations in London, for example, featured an appearance by Dame Vera Lynn, one of the most enduring symbols of the Second World War. 'Dance bands' were featured in Manchester, 'street parties' in Liverpool, air raid sirens in Yorkshire, and D-Day re-enactments were held in Northamptonshire.²⁴ Second World War anniversaries are now commemorated on a yearly basis, with the main 5 year and 10 year marks being particularly well attended events. Organised on both a national and local scale, it is difficult to go anywhere in Britain on 8 May without seeing some commemoration of the end of the war, and of Britain's role within it. For the participants and observers of these commemorations and celebrations each year, the imagery of the Second World War is unwittingly consumed, reinforcing the constructed image of the war within their minds for at least another year. Moreover, they expect to see Spitfires, sing Vera Lynn songs, and hear Churchill's speeches at a World War Two themed event. Such commemorative tropes are so well entrenched in collective remembrance that events are designed around them, the success of the event depending on the elements of it 'having purchase' with people's remembrance.

²² Hewitt, 'A Sceptical Generation?', p. 93.

²³ Martin Evans and Kenneth Lunn, eds, *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), p. 12.

²⁴ 'Dance bands, street parties, Spitfires and veterans' parades', *The Guardian*, (9 May 2005) <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/may/09/secondworldwar.world>> [Accessed 14 Nov 2009].

Such commemorative tropes are all derived from very real events during the war. So what, then, is so mythical about the myth? Since the late 1960s a number of scholars have done their best to tackle the many sub-myths which underlie the Churchillian paradigm. As early as 1969, Angus Calder's *The People's War* challenged the view of the home front during the war by looking into labour disputes and class divisions both during and after the war.²⁵ Showing that the level of homogeneity between classes that was believed to have existed during the war was in fact minimal, Calder argued that the Second World War did not eliminate class grievances and 'sweep society onto a new course' at all, but instead it was 'to hasten its progress along the old grooves.'²⁶ Henry Pelling also suggested there was much less support for the war effort in Britain than has been made out, and that what existed grew weaker the closer to victory the nation came.²⁷ In 1990, Kenneth Morgan went so far as to argue that the war, far from eradicating social differences, actually helped to strengthen them.²⁸

Conceptions about the action at Dunkirk have also been challenged. In the 1980s Nicholas Harman worked to show the retreat from France as a defeat rather than a victory—as a military collapse, a rout, a disorderly mob fleeing for their lives across the English Channel. The concept of 'Dunkirk spirit', he argues was constructed 'necessarily' to preserve British morale in one of the darkest periods of the war, and maintained into the post-war.²⁹ Since Calder, Harman, and Pelling, dozens of writers, both academic and populist have written about the gap between popular memory of the war and the events themselves. This has often been associated with a large degree of sensationalism and within the framework of exposing 'lies' and 'secrecy'.³⁰ Most controversial and sensational of the 'mythbusters', civil servant turned writer Clive Ponting placed

²⁵ Calder, *The People's War*, pp. 163-225.

²⁶ Calder, *The People's War*, p. 17.

²⁷ Henry Pelling, *Britain and the Second World War* (London: Penguin, 1970). See also: Arthur Marwick, *A History of the Modern British Isles 1914-1999* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), and *Britain in the Century of Total War: War, Peace, and Social Change 1900-1967* (Boston: Little Brown, 1968).

²⁸ Kenneth O. Morgan, *The People's Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

²⁹ Nicholas Harman, *Dunkirk: The Necessary Myth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), pp. 10-11, 235-249.

³⁰ One need only go as far as Stuart Hylton's *Their Darkest Hour*, a book which purports to tell 'the hidden history' of the war: Stuart Hylton, *Their Darkest Hour: The Hidden History of the Home Front 1939-45* (Stroud: Sutton, 2001).

considerable importance on debunking the myth of the ‘finest-hour’—both the personalities and politics of the era—and demanded that Britain ‘face up to reality’. The work was written, according to him, to expose ‘scandalous truths’ about the real nature of 1940.³¹ Railing against established conception, Ponting particularly condemned those who have constructed or perpetuated falsehoods about the true nature of the war since the events themselves.³²

Churchill’s image too has had its detractors. Robert Rhodes James’s *Churchill: a Study in Failure* examined a number of Churchill’s lesser achievements, but despite its provocative title only ended up reinforcing Churchill’s image of a survivor in the face of adversity.³³ The diaries of Lord Moran, Churchill’s personal physician, released shortly after Churchill’s death cast a shadow on the physical and mental state of the man. Moran’s reasons for releasing the diaries were perhaps more financially and less historically motivated.³⁴ Left-wing culture in the post-war was certainly averse to Churchill even if popular culture may have favoured a right-wing view of him. From the 1960s onwards the myth of Churchill’s wartime achievements was being undermined by Michael Foot and John Campbell while writing about Aneurian Bevan.³⁵ Richard Lamb’s 1991 work *Churchill as War Leader: Right or Wrong?* focused on some of the more controversial aspects of Churchill’s leadership, his unpopularity at the beginning of the war, and the ‘undeclared war’ with France after the sinking of the French fleet. But, like Rhodes James he comes to the conclusion that ‘without him Britain would have succumbed in 1940’, and that he was a great leader, ‘despite many blunders and hasty, impetuous decisions’.³⁶ Even Clive Ponting took on the image with *Churchill*, a 1994

³¹ Clive Ponting, *1940: Myth and Reality* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1990), pp. 1-7.

³² Ponting, *1940: Myth and Reality*, p. 1.

³³ Robert Rhodes James, *Churchill: a Study in Failure 1900-1939* (Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing, 1970).

³⁴ Ramsden, *Man of the Century*, pp. 532-534.

³⁵ Michael Foot, *Aneurin Bevan: A Biography* (London, Macgibbon & Kee, 1962); John Campbell, *Aneurin Bevan and the Mirage of British Socialism* (New York: Norton, 1987).

³⁶ Richard Lamb, *Churchill as War Leader: Right or Wrong?* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991), pp. 53-74, 339, 348.

revisionist work which looked more at his private and social life than it did his political successes or failures.³⁷

There are, however, a great many more books which have contributed to the solidification of the Churchill image rather than its destruction, not least those by Churchill himself. As Ramsden has argued, Churchill 'acted as his own spin doctor after 1945',³⁸ publishing his memoirs, carefully choosing the content of his post-war speeches, and even planning his own state funeral. Churchill's admirers have also helped to suppress criticism. Martin Gilbert's series of treatises on Churchill and William Manchester's volumes *The Last Lion* all ensured that an 'official' version of the war featuring Churchill had dominance.³⁹ Despite the fact that, as Lawrence Malkin put it, Churchill 'had faults as memorable as his triumphs',⁴⁰ his image has endured, in much the manner that he would have wanted.

Though the central values remain the same, the mythbusters, it seems, have their facts right. Incidents such as the Bethnal tube disaster, where 173 people were crushed to death in a very disunified attempt to get to the safety of an air raid shelter, tend to undermine the whole 'community spirit' which the Churchillian paradigm privileges. Events such as this cannot be ignored. But while there is a gap between fact and legend, understanding the legend and how it is maintained in contemporary British Society allows for a better understanding of Britain's national identity and the values which it chooses to enshrine. That is not to say that popular conception of events such as Dunkirk are based on complete falsehoods. As Lucy Noakes has shown, the simple fact that there is a dominant popular conception of the war indicates that there is truth behind the myth. Popular memory is created when public discourse and private memory intersect, therefore the images that are exposed to the public about the war cannot be

³⁷ Clive Ponting, *Churchill* (London: Sinclair Stephenson, 1994).

³⁸ Ramsden, *Man of the Century*, p. xviii.

³⁹ Most famous perhaps are: Martin Gilbert, *Churchill* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967) and William Manchester, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill Alone 1932-1940* (Boston: Little Brown, 1988).

⁴⁰ Lawrence Malkin, as quoted in Ramsden, *Man of the Century*, p. 527.

alien from their own remembrance.⁴¹ In 1969, Calder argued that 'if a mythical version of the war still holds sway...every person who lived through those years knows that those parts of the myth which concern his or her own activities are false.'⁴² But in order for such memories to exist, they must 'have purchase' with people's personal experiences. Thus, there must be truth behind the popular memory of the war.⁴³ While Harman's work on Dunkirk stresses the difference in popular memory between the actual events and the events which have been memorialized and celebrated, he too emphasized the truth present within, saying 'as with all good working myths, parts of the traditional Dunkirk story are true. The truth of other parts is poetic rather than literal'.⁴⁴ Sonya Rose has argued that just because Britons 'could not articulate a unitary national identity' does not necessarily mean that they did not pull together to defeat the enemy. Despite divisions between societies, regions and classes, the efforts made during the war were not dependent on a single 'core identity'.⁴⁵ The current academic trend is now to favour the interpretation of the Churchillian myth as a well adhered to explanation of the war's events, rather than outright fiction. Malcolm Smith's *Britain in 1940*, Mark Connelly's *We Can Take It!*, and Angus Calder's *The Myth of the Blitz* all try to explain the hold that Second World War imagery has over public imagination, in spite of years of scholarship which has concluded otherwise. Smith has posited that popular culture has had significant agency in controlling 'big facts' of the war like Dunkirk, the Blitz, and Churchill, whereas historians have maintained control over only 'small facts'.⁴⁶ Connelly explores how the British national narrative has been handed down and shared, despite historians' 'careful iconoclasm'.⁴⁷ And Calder explored why the date 1940, and in particular the Blitz have surpassed all others in public imagination.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Noakes, *War and the British*, p. 12.

⁴² Calder, *The People's War*, p. 15.

⁴³ Noakes, *War and the British*, p. 25.

⁴⁴ Harman, *Dunkirk: The Necessary Myth*, p. 10.

⁴⁵ Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 290.

⁴⁶ Smith, *Britain and 1940*, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁷ Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, p. 10.

⁴⁸ Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Random House, 2008 [1991]), pp. 1-15.

As David Lowenthal has argued, the memory of the past is not a solid object, it can be forgotten, revised, and made to conform. Things can be added to it and things can be deleted from it.⁴⁹ In fact 'a sense of the past', according to Raphael Samuel, 'is quite as much a matter of history as what happened in it.'⁵⁰ The fact that historians are at odds with popular conception of the war is quite commonplace. Pierre Nora has posited that memory 'remains in permanent evolution', it 'only accommodates those facts which suit it' whereas history 'is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete'.⁵¹ Henry Rousso argued that 'memory is subject to repression, whereas nothing lies in principle outside the historian's territory'.⁵² Though the events that occurred inform contemporary memory, it is prosthetic memory, a creation of the intersection between memory, history and popular culture. This creation of a historicised consciousness is present in the construction of VE Day and D-Day traditions in the UK. It is an artificial memory, constructed out of real events but has conditioned according to the values of the present. From a pragmatic, rather than theoretical standpoint, the existence of the myth ensures that D-Day, VE Day, and VJ Day dates are celebrated every year. It ensures that flags are waved, anthems are sung, and popular cultural icons like Vera Lynn are brought onto the stage for a remembrance of the days gone by; a celebration of what was surely Britain's 'finest hour'. The Churchillian myth is so widely held, so well rehearsed, and so well celebrated that it actively shapes remembrance, both public and private. It no longer matters which aspects of the myth can be pigeonholed into 'true' and 'untrue'. It has become national mythology, as integral to British society as Arthurian Legend or the tales of Robin Hood have been.⁵³ Such common mythology is integral to the nation as a social group, and a 'common

⁴⁹ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 200-209.

⁵⁰ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume I*, p. 15.

⁵¹ Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire (1984)', in Revel and Hunt, eds, *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*, p. 633.

⁵² Henry Rousso, 'The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France Since 1944 (1987)', in Revel and Hunt, eds, *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*, pp. 644-649.

⁵³ See: Rodney Castledon, *King Arthur: The Truth Behind the Legend* (London: Routledge, 2000); Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

sense of the past' is important to collective identity.⁵⁴ 'Being British' now involves a sense of ownership of this myth, as a national narrative, and a way of reflecting present British cultural values. There is an inherent *need* for British society to celebrate a 'glorious' history, and the Churchillian paradigm emphasizes national unity and shared experience.⁵⁵

This is not to say that the Churchillian myth is something which is unchanging, as Mark Connelly has shown, it has been and remains in constant evolution, much like Britain itself.⁵⁶ Britain's changing demography is partly responsible for this; as veterans grow old and leave the custody of Britain's heritage in the hands of a younger generation, this new group of people must memorialize events which they did not experience. The apparent lack of enthusiasm among young Britons for celebrating their national identity means that the continued maintenance of this heritage and commemoration is less than certain.⁵⁷ In contemporary society veterans of World War II are often turned to for their guidance in completing heritage projects, with their take on the war considered to be the most 'authentic'. They are rarely the heritage experts themselves, instead taking on the role of 'cultural agent' in Prats' definition. Instead it falls to their sons, daughters, and grandchildren, too young to have survived the war, to provide the momentum to memorialise. This older generation, Martin Shaw has argued, is being replaced by a modern 'postmilitary society',⁵⁸ which have not experienced war. Heritage sites and museums which pertain to conflict still have meaning, but present to them a 'surrogate experience' of something which they do not know.⁵⁹ Since the publication of Shaw's chapter (in 1997) there have been new developments abroad which have seen a military commitment from Britain, namely the ongoing conflicts in

⁵⁴ Smith, *Britain and 1940*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Noakes, *War and the British*, pp. 3-11.

⁵⁶ Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, p. 11.

⁵⁷ For more see: Steve Fenton, 'Indifference Towards National Identity: What Young Adults Think About Being English and British', *Nations and Nationalism* 13, 2 (2007), pp. 321-339.

⁵⁸ Martin Shaw, 'Past Wars and Present Conflicts: From the Second World War to the Gulf', in Evans and Lunn, *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, p. 191-205.

⁵⁹ Andrew Whitmarsh, "'We Will Remember Them': Memory and Commemoration in War Museums', *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies* Issue 7 (November 2001) <<http://www.jcms-journal.com/article/view/21/21>> [Accessed 12 Nov 2011], pp. 11-12.

Iraq and Afghanistan, which together have claimed over 500 British lives. Unlike the Second World War however, where everyone was affected, first hand experiences of war now reside with a fractional minority of the total population of Britain. This has had and will inevitably keep having an effect on the way in which commemoration of the Second World War occurs.⁶⁰

The growing number of immigrants who have entered the UK has also fostered an interest in the contribution of south Asians, West Indians and other ethnic groups during the war. Such groups were at one point considered part of Britain's international connections, having their experience during war incorporated in heritage sites and museums as 'contributions of the British Empire'. The Churchillian paradigm constructed the 'British people' as politically, socially and ethnically homogenous, not just during the war but by implication also across the decades since. David Cesarani has accurately described the relationship between the myth of the war and Britain's developing ethnic diversity:

The resonances of war in British national identity continue to divide the population along racial lines. Thousands of West Indians and Indians served in the British armed forces in 1939-45, but this fact hardly registers in public memory of the war.... The war is taken to evoke the British at their best, the qualities of Churchill's 'island race'.... It helps construct a sense of nation and nationality that excludes the bulk of post-1945 immigrants.⁶¹

Such groups are now being re-examined by scholars such as Marika Sherwood, Ben Bousquet, Colin Douglas, and Stephen Bourne.⁶² It is hoped that a greater awareness of multi-ethnic Britons during this period will contribute to a sense of ownership of war heritage among those who were formerly disenfranchised.

⁶⁰ As of February 21st there have been 398 British deaths in Afghanistan and 179 in Iraq: 'UK Military Deaths in Afghanistan', BBC News, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10629358>> [Accessed 21 Feb 2012]; 'British Military Deaths in Iraq', BBC News, < <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10637526>> [Accessed 21 Feb 2012].

⁶¹ David Cesarani, 'The changing character of citizenship and nationality in Britain,' in David Cesarani and Mary Fulbrook (eds), *Citizenship, Nationality and Migration in Europe* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 69.

⁶² Marika Sherwood, *Many Struggles: West Indian Workers and Service Personnel in Britain 1939-1945* (London: Karia, 1985); Ben Bousquet and Colin Douglas, *West Indian Women At War: British Racism in World War II* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991); Stephen Bourne, *Mother Country: Britain's Black Community on the Home Front 1939-45* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2010).

The Churchillian paradigm holds tremendous weight over the imagination of the British population, but Britain is not alone in possessing a structured version of events which surround the period 1939-45. Most of Europe's nations have engaged in discourse surrounding memory politics with regard to their past. And all, though many have struggled with their post war image, have or have had distinct narratives surrounding particular mythological elements of their war experience. Henry Rousso has written about the 'Vichy syndrome', or how the trauma of occupation revealed itself in post-war political and social life in France. During the aftermath of what he calls a 'civil war', the experience of the few, just like in Britain, became the narrative of the nation. From the late 1950s up until 1971, the true impact of the Vichy era was supplanted by what Rousso calls 'resistancialism'—directly tying the French national narrative to the small numbers of Free French and partisans who openly resisted both the Vichy government and the Germans.⁶³ Pierre Nora spoke of the nation's obsession with *patrimoine* and with the 'singular destiny' that dominates French collective memory of the Vichy period.⁶⁴

Dutch post-war identity was constructed around the belief that the people of the Netherlands had resisted Nazism and protected Jews. This collective remembrance was constructed out of a handful of individual stories of heroism, not dissimilar to the French narrative. In recent years however, this view has been heavily challenged.⁶⁵

The Germans too have a defined way of remembering the events of the war, which has undergone changes since 1945. Gilad Margalit has argued that much of German post war construction of remembrance has been based around the discussion of German guilt over their association with Nazi war crimes, and with that of the suffering by the common German.⁶⁶ As Dan Diner has argued, the Holocaust was a

⁶³ Rousso, 'The Vichy Syndrome', p. 647.

⁶⁴ Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), p. 6.

⁶⁵ See: Frank Bovenkerk, 'The Other Side of the Anne Frank Story: The Dutch Role in the Persecution of the Jews in World War Two', *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 34, 3 (1999), pp. 237-258; Ido De Haan, 'The Construction of a National Trauma: The Memory of the Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands', *The Netherlands' Journal of Social Sciences* 34, 1 (1998), pp. 196-217.

⁶⁶ Gilad Margalit, *Guilt, Suffering and Memory: Germany Remembers its Dead of World War II* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 5, pp. 11-42.

profound 'identity-forming foundational event' for the nation, one which was critical to German 'self awareness'.⁶⁷ By contrast, Michael Prince's 2010 work has shown a German cultural identity largely constructed out of the perception that they were as much the casualties of war as any other belligerent nation, and that the wartime sufferings of Germans have remained at the centre of German collective consciousness.⁶⁸ The notion of 'Germans as victims' is a subject which has also been explored recently by Bill Niven and other scholars.⁶⁹

Even smaller nations have invariably had to come to terms with their part in the world's largest conflict. The Swiss, for example, despite having remained neutral during the war, have had to part with their narrative of a nation above reproach. This is in the wake of new facts about the financial and material gains the country exploited from Holocaust victims. Italy's collective memory characterized the late war events as being the true struggle, one when Italians bravely fought against fascism to found the new republic. This is a view of history which had 'little in common with the wartime experiences of the men and women in many parts of the country'.⁷⁰ Memory of the war in Poland has been investigated by Piotr Madajczyk, who has shown that war memories were heavily politicized while the nation was under defacto control of the Soviet Union, and has been in a 'phase of transition' ever since.⁷¹ Scholarship on the war memories of Belgium and Luxembourg, Austria, Hungary, Armenia, Sweden, Romania, Ireland and others can all be found in different compilations published in the last two decades.⁷²

⁶⁷ Dan Diner, 'On Guilt Discourse and Other Narratives: Epistemological Observations Regarding the Holocaust', *History and Memory* 9, 1-2 (1997), pp. 301-320.

⁶⁸ Michael K. Prince, *War and German Memory: Excavating the Significance of the Second World War* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009).

⁶⁹ Bill Niven ed., *Germans as victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁷⁰ Gabriella Gribaudi, 'Bombing and Land War in Italy: Military Strategy, Reactions, and Collective Memory' in Jörg Echternkamp and Stefan Martens, eds, *Experience and Memory: The Second World War in Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2010), pp. 116-134; 116.

⁷¹ Piotr Madajczyk, 'Experience and Memory: The Second World War in Poland', in Echternkamp and Martens, *Experience and Memory*, pp. 71-85.

⁷² For a start see: Conny Mithander, John Sundholm and Maria Holmgren Troy, eds, *Collective Traumas: Memories of War and Conflict in 20th Century Europe* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2007); Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu, eds, *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke

Though much has been written on Europe's memory of World War II, and of the other larger belligerents such as Canada and the United States,⁷³ very little has been written on war memories within islands or microstates. Though there are war histories of such islands (Malta, for example, has been written on frequently),⁷⁴ little has been written on their war memory in the same way that European nations have. Such topics have failed to attract the same group of historians who have probed the larger states' mnemonic landscape. There are only a few exceptions to this. An emerging scholarship has developed which has probed the memory of the war in Pacific Islands such as the Saipan and Guam. Falgout, Poyer, and Carucci's *Memories of War* and Keith Camacho's *Culture's of Commemoration* have both contributed greatly to understanding the effects of the Second World War on micro-societies, albeit those half-way around the world.⁷⁵ Guam, for example, also celebrates 'Liberation Day', and has a Liberation Day committee similar to the Channel Islands, though the liberation they celebrate is from Japanese rather than German occupation.⁷⁶ Save for the multitude of books and articles on the memory of World War II in the Channel Islands, very little has been written on this topic with regard to 'British' islands. In fact, my 2008 article (with Stephen Heathorn) on memorialisation in the Isle of Man was, as far as I know, the first to address such a topic on that particular island. This shows that such topics are fertile ground for academics.

University Press, 2007); in addition to the already cited Jörg Echternkamp and Stefan Martens, eds., *Experience and Memory: The Second World War in Europe*.

⁷³ For United States war memory see: Mark A. Stoler, 'The Second World War in US History and Memory', *Diplomatic History* 5, 3 (2001), pp. 383-392.

⁷⁴ The most recent publications being Douglas Austin's work with Churchill and the island. See: Douglas Austin, *Churchill and Malta: A Special Relationship* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2006); and *Churchill and Malta's War, 1939-1943* (Stroud: Amberley, 2010).

⁷⁵ Suzanne Falgout, Lin Poyer, and Laurence M. Carucchi, *Memories of War: Micronesians in the Pacific War* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008); Keith L Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration: The Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011).

⁷⁶ Jane L. Dickhudt, 'Saipan's Liberation Day', *New Pacific Magazine* 5 (5), p. 32; James West Turner and Suzanne Falgout, 'Time Traces: Cultural Memory and World War II in Pohnpei', *The Contemporary Pacific* 14 (2002), pp. 101-131; Vincente Diaz 'Deliberating "Liberation Day": Identity, History, Memory, and War in Guam', in T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, eds, *Perilous Memories: The Asia Pacific War(s)* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 155-180.

As we have seen, most nations have constructed a memory of the war which defines their experience within it. This can vary greatly from narratives of resistance, to victory or suffering. In order to achieve this common mythology, aspects of the war which might prove detrimental to the national narrative are often deliberately ignored. Rousso spoke of the need for the collaborationist regime of Phillipe Pétain and the Vichy regime to be seen as an anomalous aspect of the French war narrative of resistance and defiance.⁷⁷ In Britain, the prevalence of war imagery prescribed by the Churchillian myth has, by and large, overwhelmed and excluded other aspects of Britain's war, often minimizing more divisive and tangential aspects of the British wartime experience. This has been referred to as 'a structuring of forgetfulness'.⁷⁸ Negative history is often concealed, either literally or figuratively, because forgetting negative aspects of the war is as important for perception as remembering those which are glorious. Aspects of the war which make commemoration of the war difficult are, as a consequence, quietly removed. Lucy Noakes exemplifies this with the controversy over the bombing of Dresden in 1945, but it could be applied to aspects of the domestic British war experience: occupation, internment, prisoners of war, all of which were experienced by the islands in this dissertation, and all of which will be discussed later in this chapter. The sense of heroism, glory and unity that was created out of the events of 1940 must filter some of the more distasteful aspects of the war in order to maintain its own existence. This in turn impacts what elements of the myth manifest themselves in Britain's 'sites of memory'.

II) Manifestations of the myth - sites of memory

The following chapters of this dissertation will focus, in addition to commemorations and celebrations, on how the Churchillian paradigm has been represented/constructed within museums and heritage sites. The perpetuation of a largely consistent national mythology over the last seventy years has ensured that a

⁷⁷Rousso, 'The Vichy Syndrome', p. 647.

⁷⁸Rousso, 'The Vichy Syndrome', p. 646.

heritage legacy has been created which encapsulates it. Like an image made tangible by being caught through a camera lens, the Churchillian myth now manifests itself in British national heritage. Transitioning from the minds of the British populace, it occupies a more palpable place in the public sphere.

Before the opening of the Museum of Scotland's Twentieth Century Gallery, museum staff asked the public to choose items which in their minds, made a major impact on Scotland during the last one hundred years. Throughout 1997 the museum attempted to gather responses from across Scotland, and from a cross section of Scottish society by gender, age and location. The result was a unique museum exhibit, allowing the public at large to become heritage creator. The rather random collection of items which resulted however, such as old records, T-shirts and consumer goods, failed to conjure up particularly 'Scottish' sentiments. Though the items had personal meaning to many Scots, they would not have been out of place in any museum in Britain, or even perhaps the Western world. As one curator noted, the objects, 'would not necessarily give many clues as to a [Scottish] national identity'.⁷⁹ This is a special example of course, as the vast majority of museums are created without such public input. Instead they are the constructions of professional curators who wish to tell a particular story, who selectively choose one item over another based on a meaning which conforms to a particular paradigm, usually informed by history or by popular demand. Heritage sites are a creative endeavour, made out of items and stories which a very select number of people get to choose from. It is this version of events, this vision of the past, which the museum visitor eventually gets to see. Heritage is a constructed interpretation based upon historical works.⁸⁰ That being said, the heritage manager—be they museum curator, event co-coordinator, private or public official— have pressures placed on them that historians lack, which limits the creative range within which they can work. Heritage managers must create heritage that serves collective memory and lives up to public

⁷⁹ Rose Watban, 'Public Perception of History: The Twentieth Century Gallery', in J.M. Fladmark ed., *Heritage and Museums: Shaping National Identity* (Dorset: Donhead, 2000), pp. 53-60.

⁸⁰ J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (New York: John Wiley, 1996), pp. 5-6, 20.

expectation. As Stuart Hannabus has said, heritage is at best ‘an uneasy mix between scholarship and marketing hype’.⁸¹ Rather than preserving objective record, such sites of memory reconstruct a version of the past in today’s context.⁸² Heritage must be changed according to the influences of the present and, like memory, become ‘stamped with the ruling passions of its time.’⁸³ It is not as important to have heritage represent every aspect of the past as it occurred, it is more important for heritage to reflect a sense of national belonging. Heritage has to appeal to people on both a personal and societal basis, to reinforce a sense of ownership and to bring about conceptions of a nation and national identity. Collective heritage relies on this kind of ‘group ownership’.⁸⁴ Lyn Spillman has argued that physical representations of history are as much about the creation, expression, and representation of solidarity as they are about education or entertainment.⁸⁵ Britain’s collective memory of the war, the glorification of events like Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain, the conception of unity felt during the Blitz, have overcome the protests of historians—Calder, Harman, Ponting—in order to reinforce popular conception. Britain’s collective memory of the war, the glorification of events like Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain, the conception of unity felt during the Blitz, have now become important to Britain, a common mythology which imparts a sense of nationhood and community. It is much less important for heritage to represent the past as it is for heritage to reflect a sense of national belonging. For heritage to have value it must appeal to people on both a personal and societal basis,⁸⁶ for heritage to work it must make people feel ‘rooted’ and secure.⁸⁷ As a result, factual accuracies frequently take second place to a sense of belonging, a sense of community. David Lowenthal has written:

⁸¹ Stuart Hannabus, ‘How Real is Our Past?: Authenticity in Heritage Interpretation’, in Fladmark, *Heritage and Museums*, pp. 351-365.

⁸² Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Lewis A. Coser trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁸³ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume I*, pp. vii-x.

⁸⁴ David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), pp. x, 3, 57-64.

⁸⁵ L. Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁸⁶ Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*. p. ix.

⁸⁷ Howard, *Heritage*, pp. 147-151.

At its best, heritage fabrication is both creative art and act of faith. By means of it we tell ourselves who we are, where we came from, and to what we belong. Ancestral loyalties rest on fraud as well as truth and foment peril along with pride. We cannot escape dependency on this motley and peccable heritage. But we can learn to face its fictions and forgive its flaws as integral to its strengths.⁸⁸

As Jenni Calder has argued, 'museums today have a much keener awareness of their public'.⁸⁹ Pragmatically this means that to attract visitors, a museum or heritage site must be prepared to display items which are expected of them. Factual liberties taken by heritage sites and commemorations in Britain often mirror the selectivity of the Churchillian myth. Museums, in keeping with the myth, celebrate those aspects of the past which are integral to a sense of national unity and downplay those which are destructive to it.⁹⁰ This filter is necessary in order to continue reinforcing a sense of ownership with the past, and to galvanize conceptions of a nation and national identity. As Marie-Hélène Joly has argued, World War II museums are 'confronted with the added difficulty of having to take on board the views of the veterans...oral testimonies must take their place alongside scientific historical research'.⁹¹ This can often complicate matters, as the memory of veterans is often seen as fact. A desire for a certain remembrance which conforms to people's expectations, as well as the personal remembrances of the war generation, is the norm. This is compounded when a museum is, or is seen to be, a museum of 'national' scope. The Imperial War Museum (IWM), for example, is such a museum. Funded by the UK government, the IWM serves as *Britain's* war museum (despite having an 'imperial' remit), with sub-museums located across England. As Noakes has shown, the IWM was consciously chosen as a 'national museum', tasked with the mandate of 'creating a sense of inclusion and membership of the nation

⁸⁸ Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, pp. xiii.

⁸⁹ Jenni Calder, 'From Artefacts to Audience: Strategy for Display and Interpretation', in Fladmark ed., *Heritage and Museums*, pp. 41-52; 41.

⁹⁰ Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, pp. 156-162.

⁹¹ Marie-Hélène Joly, 'War Museums in France', in Sarah Blowen, Marion Demossier, and Jeannie Picard, eds, *Recollections of France: Memories, Identities and Heritage in Contemporary France* (New York: Berghahn, 2000), pp. 33-51; 50.

among its members'.⁹² National museums are particularly well suited to incorporating and reflecting dominant ideologies. Rhiannon Mason has argued that 'national museums...play an important role in articulating, challenging and responding to people's public perceptions of a nation's histories, identities, cultures and politics.'⁹³ National museum services exist throughout Britain: Scotland has National Museums Scotland, Wales has Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales, and Northern Ireland has National Museums Northern Ireland. It is interesting to note that England does not have a 'national' museums service. Though there are a number of well known museums funded by the UK government, most have a 'British' remit or are dedicated to regional rather than national identities.⁹⁴ Just as Mason shows that Welsh museums are capable of espousing 'Welshness' and Welsh values,⁹⁵ this work will show that through the objects, artifacts, and exhibits, official heritage bodies within the islands are capable of espousing their own island identities.

Museums in the UK, for the most part, reflect the Churchillian paradigm. Through selection of artifacts, storyboards, information, and exhibits, museum curators construct the Churchillian myth within the vast majority of Britain's museums. As museums are of cultural transmission, education, and knowledge, it ensures that the myth of 'the People's War' is self reinforcing. As Davison has said, museums 'must anticipate the expectations of diverse client groups', museum curators are 'not free, like a shopkeeper, to keep changing the window displays at will, throwing out the new fashions as this year's come in.'⁹⁶

⁹² Lucy Noakes, 'Making Histories: Experiencing the Blitz in London's Museums in the 1990s', in Evans and Lunn, *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, p. 89-104.

⁹³ Rhiannon Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities: Wales and Its National Museums* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 1.

⁹⁴ Those that defy these two categories are usually aimed at a specific facet of English life. Mason uses the examples of the Museum of the Black Country Living Museum, the Museum of English Rural Life, The North of England Open Air Museum, and the National Coal Mining Museum for England. See Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities*, p. 4.

⁹⁵ Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities*.

⁹⁶ Graeme Davison, *National Museums in a Global Age: Observations Abroad and Reflections At Home* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2000), p. 16. For more see: Randolph Stearn, 'A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museums Studies', *American Historical Review* 100 (2005), pp. 68-98.

Though reception of message from conventional museums is dependent on the individual, all museums have the *capacity* to reflect the interests of a nation and convey a specific message about the past.⁹⁷ In many cases, this is done by omitting aspects which are in direct opposition to it, aspects which undermine the importance of the narrative. Over the last sixty years, museum exhibits, living history sites, and special exhibitions in the UK have been created in response to popular conception to reflect the dominant image of the war which exists in public consciousness. Museums such as the Imperial War Museum, with its carefully preserved war relics, can be considered conduits of Britain's beliefs and values.⁹⁸ As Andrew Whitmarsh has argued:

Myths are notably present at the IWM. The IWM's flyer for its Spitfire Summer exhibition, marking the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, provides an example. Described as a 'commemorative exhibition' about 'Britain's "finest-hour"' (a phrase from wartime propaganda), its very title alludes to one of the mythic icons of the war, the Spitfire. The flyer is illustrated with famous images such as propaganda posters of Sir Winston Churchill and members of the RAF and WAAF, a London bus in a bomb crater, and Tower Bridge with smoke billowing in the background. Surmounting the images is an extract from Churchill's famous 'We shall fight them on the beaches' speech.⁹⁹

The opening of the Cabinet War Rooms in Whitehall, in conjunction with a museum dedicated to Winston Churchill is a confirmation of the importance of Churchill's image within the British imagination. The creation of an IWM branch at Duxford, one of the principal airfields of the Battle of Britain displaying material culture from that 'Spitfire summer' provides another example. The IWM North in Salford gives a fire-fighting trailer pump used in the Manchester Blitz pride of place in its 'big object' collection. No space on the IWM North's 'Timeline of Conflict' is given to the many

⁹⁷ For more on the factors involved in reception of 'message' within museums and heritage sites see: Nick Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case: The Past, the Heritage, and the Public in Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 1991), pp. 16-18.

⁹⁸ For more on this see: Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum', *Art History*, 3, 4, (1980), pp. 448-469.

⁹⁹ Andrew Whitmarsh, "'We Will Remember Them': Memory and Commemoration in War Museums,' *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, 7 (2011). Available at: <<http://www.jcms-journal.com/article/view/21/21>> [Accessed 11 Nov 2011].

thousands of British citizens who were forcibly interned during the war, or thousands more POWs who worked the land in Britain to feed the British people.

Living history sites and theme museums are particularly susceptible to transmission of popular mythology, because the agency of the curator is more difficult to see than conventional museums.¹⁰⁰ Within living history, a picture of the past is deliberately constructed and then passed off as being 'how it *really* happened'.¹⁰¹ Steven Conn has written that museums no longer need objects to be successful. Some museums still use the objects as a device with which to tell a story, others prefer to let objects become secondary to transmission of message, using other didactic devices, such as interactive boards and audio-visual presentations.¹⁰²

Many museums in the twenty-first century have shifted from emphasis on growth, care, and study of its collections to an outward focus on service, education and cultural transmission.¹⁰³ The 'Blitz Experience', a living history display in London's Imperial War Museum provides poignant example. The 'Experience' invites visitors to sit in a simulated air-raid shelter during a bombing raid on London, then survey the rubble and damage after the fact. As Lucy Noakes has shown, the exhibit suggests and encourages a sense of shared experience, while negative aspects of the war are conspicuously absent. The voice-over, which went through several scripts before one was finally decided upon, privileges the idea of community spirit, unity, and good-humoured cockneys singing while the bombs fall. While many thousands died in real bombing raids, in the 'Blitz Experience', only one marginal character is reported to have *possibly* died.¹⁰⁴ The realities of war, the death and destruction representative of a true experience of 1940 are all essentially removed. This is all done in favour of giving precedence to the popular notions of Britain during the war. This image of the war is particularly powerful because it allows for much less interpretation on the part of the

¹⁰⁰ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume I*, p. 197.

¹⁰¹ Noakes, *War and the British*, pp. 35-36.

¹⁰² Steven Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p. 20.

¹⁰³ See Stephen Weil, 'From Being About Something to Being For Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum', *Daedalus* 128, 3 (1999), p. 229-258.

¹⁰⁴ Noakes, *War and the British*, pp. 36-45.

visitor, depriving them of more involvement in the transmission of message. In the 'Blitz Experience', there are no labels or signs which can be identified as having an inherent bias or nationalist 'spin'. Instead, it is a carefully constructed to give one 'reality' of the Second World War.

'Theme museums', which feature constructed displays and dioramas, also feature elements popular to common perception. At Eden Camp, a history theme museum built out of an old Prisoner of War camp in North Yorkshire, visitors can smell the smoke from a bombed out building during the Blitz, walk down a typical British 'street at war', and walk inside a mock up German U-boat with excerpts from the film *Das Boot* played on loudspeaker. The image of the home front, of a British family sitting around a radio set listening to news on the outbreak of war is deliberately contrasted with the militarism of Germany, of soldiers in beer halls and children giving fascist salutes. Evidence of reception can be seen in the dozens of letters sent to Eden Camp from primary school students which adorn the walls of one of the museum's huts. These letters, covered in hand drawn Union flags and swastikas, describe the feelings of reality, of experiencing the war for themselves. One primary school student described the U-boat experience by saying 'it felt like you were on a real boat'.¹⁰⁵ Visitors to Eden Camp can also help themselves to 'Churchill's pie', a 'homeguard pasty' or the 'torpedo sausage in a bun' in the museum's restaurant. Though the camp once housed German Prisoners of War, only one of the thirty-two huts gives information about POWs, and this covers both Axis POWs in England as well as Allied POWs in Europe and the Far East. In this museum the POW story must take a back seat to the imagery of 'the People's War'. As Stuart Hannabus has shown, this type of heritage is about what the provider expects the visitor to know and want to know, as well as what the visitor is interested in seeing. This results in what he has called 'paying to see stereotypes', carefully crafted images of people and societies which conform to the mental image a visitor has and

¹⁰⁵ Letter from a student at Long Toft Primary School, Doncaster, posted on the wall of hut 'Mess 3', Eden Camp, 11 May 2011.

wants to see.¹⁰⁶ The Churchillian paradigm has a particular hold on public imagination in Britain, and museums generally choose to exhibit things which visitors expect.

As mentioned earlier, the commemoration and memorialisation of the Second World War in Britain differs greatly from that of other wars. Jay Winter has written extensively on memorials of the Great War and the need for public places to grieve. Community memorials, he argues, provided 'sites of mourning' for those who had lost a loved one.¹⁰⁷ Since the early 1920s, these structures have played an important role in how the First World War is remembered, and continue to do so in modern society. Combined with Remembrance Day activities organised on 11 November, granite cenotaphs provide a specific place and time within which the Great War's dead may be commemorated, the minutes silence serving as a 'concentrated appeal to memory' by literally breaking with the passage of time.¹⁰⁸

The Second World War was, until recently, memorialized differently. Nick Hewitt has shown how, by the end of the war, Britons favoured a 'utilitarian' approach to commemoration over a 'symbolic' one. In November 1944, Mass-Observation surveys showed that public opinion was heavily in favour of memorials which would benefit the living, rather than First World War style cenotaphs.¹⁰⁹ Though interviewees featured in the Mass-Observation Bulletins varied as to their suggestions for how to memorialize the war, they were overwhelmingly in agreement that memorials similar to those erected after the Great War were not the answer. One respondent commented 'they should not take the form of stone monstrosities on every street corner and village green and not one penny would I willingly contribute to any scheme to erect such'. Another was quoted as saying 'whatever shape memorials take it should not take the form of useless monuments'.¹¹⁰ Many of the suggestions given by respondents were quite novel, ranging from free houses for those who had lost a son during the war, to scholarships

¹⁰⁶ Hannabus, 'How Real is Our Past?', pp. 351-365.

¹⁰⁷ Winter, *Sites of Memory Sites of Mourning*, pp. 1-14.

¹⁰⁸ Nora, 'Between Memory and History', p. 639.

¹⁰⁹ Nick Hewitt, 'A Sceptical Generation?', p. 82, 85.

¹¹⁰ Mass Observation Bulletin P.B.6 (Lechworth, Herts, November 1944), both quotations found in Hewitt, 'A Sceptical Generation?', p. 82.

and funds set aside to help veterans' organisations. Sadly, most of these projects were not realized after the war. As Angela Gaffney has shown, despite people's opposition to First World War-style memorials, adding the names of Second World War fallen to pre-existing memorials tended to be the easiest and cheapest option.¹¹¹ The National Land Fund, set up by then Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Dalton in 1946 garnered £50 million for the appropriation of property to memorialize the dead of World War II. Its aim was to accomplish what had been suggested in Mass-Observation reports, to develop public spaces and promote access to the countryside. Much like the other ideas, the funds were never utilized in the manner in which the Labour government intended, and in 1957, the fund was reduced to £10 million.¹¹² Despite these setbacks the Second World War escaped, at least initially, memorialisation in the same style as the First World War. In addition to the institutions created out of the post war welfare state, such as hospitals, parks humanitarian organisations and veterans groups, the war has been memorialized with things, places and events which embody collective remembrance. Heritage sites, commemorative events, celebrations, plays, and cultural festivals all served as sites of memory.

Over the last ten years, however, there has been an upsurge in interest in commemorating the Second World War in a way that the war generation specifically prohibited. This has led to the erection of hundreds of plaques, monuments, obelisks, and 'stone monstrosities' that were deliberately rejected in 1944-45. Many of these new memorials have the backing of survivors or veterans groups, presumably the same people who opposed them sixty-five years earlier. The presence of new memorials such as the Civilian Memorial Park at Hermitage Wharf in Wapping, the memorial to Civilian Workers in Coventry Cathedral built in 1999, and the Bomb Disposal memorial at Eden Camp erected in 2001, all reflect what Angela Gaffney has called groups 'belatedly seeking recognition for their efforts'.¹¹³ The Bethnal Green Tube station, where 173

¹¹¹ Gaffney, 'The Second Armageddon', pp. 194-195.

¹¹² In fact the fund never really spent more than the interest which its capital accumulated, see: P.W. Rickwood, 'The National Land Fund, 1946-80: The Failure of a Policy Initiative', *Leisure Studies* 6 (1987), pp. 15-23.

¹¹³ Gaffney, 'The Second Armageddon', p. 196.

were crushed to death in 1943 has also been the focus of attention over the last few years. For years a small plaque on the station's entrance has memorialized the dead, but recently a group led by Alf Morris, a survivor of the disaster at the age of 13, has campaigned to have a permanent memorial to the dead erected at the site. The memorial, now given full planning permission from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, is a proposed upturned staircase above the entrance to the station and 173 lights, one for each of the victims. The proposed memorial has attracted some media attention, being featured on *BBC News* and on *The One Show* in March 2010. In both 2010 and 2011, a modest memorial service on the anniversary of the tragedy has been held at St John's in Bethnal Green, a church near the station. The 'stairway to heaven' memorial (clearly they were going for a recognisable title) is now waiting for funds to be raised before construction goes ahead.¹¹⁴

The Italian-Scottish community's experience during the war has recently emerged as a new trend in memorialisation. Wendy Ugolini has shown a rise in need for memorialisation of the 800 internees and crew killed on the *SS Arandora Star* when it was sunk by a U-boat in July 1940 (incidentally the same U-boat and Captain which sank the *Royal Oak* in 1939). In 2005, Colonsay islanders unveiled a granite tablet to victims of the sinking, while in 2008 Liverpool unveiled a memorial plaque at Pier Head, where the ship sailed from. In July 2009 and 2010, memorials were commissioned to the loss in Middlesbrough and in Cardiff respectively. After sixty some years of silence on the issue, Ugolini argues, it now seems like multiple regions are competing for ownership of the tragedy.¹¹⁵

Nick Hewitt has argued that the recent rush to commemorate the events of the Second World War, as well as organisations and people fought it, stems from a new desire to memorialize, one which did not exist in 1945. The opposition to creating symbolic memorials in the immediate post-war period has led to what Hewitt has called

¹¹⁴ 'Introduction', Stairway to Heaven Memorial

<<http://www.stairwaytoheavenmemorial.org/index.html>> [Accessed 11 Aug 2011].

¹¹⁵ Wendy Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other': Italian Scottish Experience in World War II* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 228-30.

‘the myth of an “Uncommemorated Generation”’, based on the apparent lack of tangible memorials to the Second World War. Current proponents of new plaques, sculptures, and monuments seem to have either changed their minds, or forgotten the wishes of the war generation, one which categorically rejected the creation of ‘stone memorials’, in favour of those which were functional and utilitarian.¹¹⁶ In many cases there is a feeling of moral obligation to memorialise—with the argument that the lack of a tangible memorial is ‘forgetting’ the efforts and accomplishments of those who fought, worked, or suffered. In the case of negative history—for example the *Arandora Star* or the Channel Islands occupation—it can be seen as not ‘owning up’ to the part which Britain (or the island) played in the tragedy. This has created a culture where memorials are expected, and opposition to them is considered politically incorrect.¹¹⁷ This can exert significant pressure on heritage experts whose job it is to ensure that their museums and heritage sites espouse national values. As Jennifer Jordan has shown, campaigns to change the direction of heritage, be it to create a shrine, raise a plaque, or erect a monument inevitably reach ‘a point of no return’, where not to support it becomes politically difficult.¹¹⁸ This is what Sharon Macdonald called ‘memory intervention’, when forgetting in the public sphere is challenged with renewed efforts to remember.¹¹⁹ ‘Heritage interventions’ are occurring more and more frequently as groups demand that their heritage interests are met, and local cultural agents, as well as the public at large are beginning to play a large factor in heritage direction. ‘Interventionists’ often come from outside governmental organisations, but can garner

¹¹⁶ Hewitt, ‘A Sceptical Generation?’, 96.

¹¹⁷ A recent example of this in Britain is the proposed controversy over the building of a memorial to Bomber Command in Green Park, London. Mirroring the 1992 controversy over the erection of a statue to Sir Arthur ‘bomber’ Harris, the memorial provoked considerable hostility from Britons and Germans. In 2010 the Mayor of Dresden flew to London to protest the memorial, but the project is still going ahead. ‘Mayor of Dresden to ask Boris Johnson: “Please, don’t build memorial to Bomber Command crews”’ Mail Online (7 Sep 2010), <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1309480/Dresden-mayor-ask-Boris-Johnson-Dont-build-Bomber-Command-crews-memorial.html>> [Accessed 15 Feb 2012]; For the proposed memorial itself see: ‘RAF Bomber Command memorial Fund’ <<http://www.rafbombercommand.com/memorialfund/>> [Accessed 15 Feb 2012].

¹¹⁸ Jennifer Jordan, *Structures of Memory* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 12.

¹¹⁹ Sharon Macdonald, ‘Unsettling Memories: Intervention and Controversy over Difficult Public Heritage’, in Marta Anico and Elsa Peralta, eds, *Heritage and Identity: Engagement and Demission in the Contemporary World* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 93-104; 94.

support as a controversy develops, to the point that it gets incorporated into the 'official' history that follows. The current emergence of new memorials stems from a new feeling of moral obligation to memorialize, one which did not exist in 1945, and one which is difficult to get away from. As Nancy Wood has argued, to be against the 'retrieval of neglected memories' is to be 'out of step' with the public's reverence towards commemorative activity.¹²⁰

Taking a sharp turn away from the pragmatic and forward-looking wishes of the post-war British (or indeed European) people, the norm is now to look retrospectively at the war. As a result, a new interest in creating tangible memorials to World War II has become commonplace. There has also been a number of museum exhibits and special exhibitions created in recent years which have explored lesser known war experiences and events. This reflects what Steven Hoelscher has referred to as 'heritage inflation'; the growth of multiple, sometimes competing narratives.¹²¹ Identity politics allows for groups to seek public recognition and create new narratives, but as Macdonald has argued, 'new memories do not necessarily just jostle alongside existing ones, like new products on a supermarket shelf, but may expose previous silences, raising questions about their motives or the power dynamics of which they were part.'¹²²

In 2008, the Imperial War Museum held a special exhibition called 'From War to Windrush' which focused on the contribution of West Indians in Britain during the war. The exhibition was developed in conjunction with the Equiano Society and Windrush Foundation, and input from historians Colin Douglas and Stephen Bourne. The exhibition explored, among other things, the discrimination which Black servicemen and women endured during the war, and how despite this, many West Indian soldiers and civilian war workers returned to settle in Britain after 1945. The exhibition included the story of Cy Grant, a navigator in the RAF who was shot down over Holland, an MBE belonging to Sam King, who returned on the MV Empire Windrush after serving in the RAF and later

¹²⁰ Wood, *Vectors of Memory*, p. 1.

¹²¹ Steven Hoelscher, 'Heritage' in Sharon Macdonald ed., *Companion to Museum Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 198-218; 201.

¹²² Macdonald, 'Unsettling Memories', pp. 93-104.

became the first Black mayor of Southwark, and Sam Martinez's passport, one of 800 men from Belize who worked as foresters in Scotland during the war.¹²³ A year later, the IWM's 'Outbreak 1939' exhibition in 2009 also included the stories of jazz singer Adelaide Hall and a Black Air-Raid warden in St. Marylebone. Outside the IWM, the 2008 'Keep Smiling through—Black Londoners on the home front 1939-1945' exhibit at the nearby Cuming Museum was spearheaded by research from historian Stephen Bourne.¹²⁴ The history of minorities in Britain during the war is beginning to get some recognition. Such examples of minority representation within British heritage represent, according to Bourne, 'a small flare into the night sky', in an aspect of the war that is grossly underrepresented.¹²⁵

A recent addition to memorialisation of the Second World War in Britain emerged from developments internationally. The UK government was a signatory to the statement of commitment negotiated in Stockholm by 44 countries in 2000 to 'recognise that the Holocaust shook the foundations of modern civilisation' and agreed that 'the Holocaust must have a permanent place in our nation's collective memory.'¹²⁶ As a result, Holocaust Memorial Day was established to 'preserve the memory' of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. These examples do not necessarily contribute to a weakening of the myth within British popular imagination, but they do show that alternate episodes and experiences from the war are, in the twenty-first century, beginning to be memorialized and celebrated alongside the primary narrative.

New narratives and forms of commemoration, however, have a long way to come before they begin to encroach on the territory, or gain the kind of recognition that Churchillian imagery obscures. Despite recent developments, the iconography of 'the People's War' still heavily influences Second World War sites in Britain. These new narratives do not give the 'People's War' the central place in the war story, but they could not displace the Churchillian paradigm from its dominance in memories of the war,

¹²³ 'From War to Windrush exhibition—extended due to popular demand', Imperial War Museum <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.5290>> [Accessed 9 Aug 2011].

¹²⁴ Bourne, *Mother Country*, pp. 9-13.

¹²⁵ Bourne, *Mother Country*, p. 13.

¹²⁶ Holocaust Memorial Day, <<http://hmd.org.uk/about/timeline>> [Accessed 11 Nov 2011].

because at its most simple the war and Churchill have become synonymous. The Churchillian myth has been deliberately preserved, available to be consumed by the British public, and called upon to exude values of unity and shared experience. The continued maintenance of such events is often justified by the fact that the absence of such commemorations would be missed. As Paul Connerton has shown, the continued performance of commemoration, in this case of events such as D-Day and VE Day, has ensured that such societal memory is transformed from an aspect of Britain's landscape of remembrance, to part of Britain's national identity.¹²⁷

Collective memory of the war is now reinforced by the institutions which were created out of it. In the case of commemorative events, despite dwindling numbers of those old enough to have experienced the event being commemorated, the continuation of heritage displays like VE Day celebrations has now become an invented tradition, deliberately preserved to maintain the same familiar set of imagery, despite the original meaning having changed. Since national heritage often presumes dominance over regional heritage, the Imperial War Museum can be seen as 'Britain's' war museum, and the London VE Day celebrations can be seen to involve all of the United Kingdom (or perhaps even the British Isles?). As a result, many other stories have taken a back seat to Churchillian narrative, as maintaining the common mythology of the war as something unifying is more important and perhaps more exciting than regional narratives. But what of those areas of the British Isles with their own strong sense of 'national' identity, ones which define themselves and their heritage by being distinct from the mainland? The societies of the Isle of Man, Orkney, and Jersey all have distinct notions of their own historical, legal, and cultural sovereignty, while at the same time possess an experience of war which is tangential to the narrative of 'the People's War'.

III) Experiences of war on the islands

¹²⁷ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 3-4.

It seems reasonable to expect that the islands in this study have constructed a narrative completely different to that which exists in Britain, due to the fact that each island's domestic experience of war had very little in common with that celebrated in Britain. The following chapters will show what elements of the Churchillian paradigm the Isle of Man, Orkney, and Jersey have decided to accept and which ones to reject. Before this, however, it is necessary to explain where the war histories of each island specifically depart from the 'finest-hour' myth.

In the Isle of Man, for example, 1940 served not as the moment of glory for Britain, but rather signaled a massive change in fortunes for the Manx. As the situation in Europe reached crisis levels in late spring, the British government took radical steps aimed at insuring the British war effort against fifth columnists. In a broad sweep, German, Italian, Japanese and even Finnish civilians living in the British Isles were quickly apprehended, categorized, and interned.¹²⁸ The Isle of Man was selected by the British government as a site to house as many as 14,000 enemy aliens, and to accommodate them all 'camps' were created from commandeered hotels and private residences along the Manx coastline. Within a few weeks the island was converted to make it ready to accept male internees at eleven camps in the island's larger towns, while at Port St. Mary and Port Erin, two towns at the southern tip of the island, large bails of barbed wire were placed around the perimeter of the towns, and they became a detention centre for female internees. The 'little Manx nation' was, for a short time at least, an island prison.¹²⁹

Reaction from the Manx to this transformation varied. Coverage of the initial arrival of internees by local newspapers was surprisingly minimal. The Manx had for decades relied on revenue generated from tourism as 'the playground of Northern England',¹³⁰ and war disrupted this commerce. Internees were an opportunity to reverse

¹²⁸ For more see: Peter and Leni Gillman, *Collar the Lot: How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees* (London: Quartet, 1980).

¹²⁹ Chappell, *Island of Barbed Wire*, pp. 81.

¹³⁰ See: John Belchem, 'The Playground of Northern England: The Isle of Man, Manxness, and the Northern Working Class', in Neville Kirk ed., *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

lack of profits surely to be incurred during the wartime period, and government funded 'guests' were considered by some a 'merciful release' from an ominous tourist season.¹³¹ For householders and hotel owners on the Manx coast uprooted to provide shelter to the internees, the experience was one of considerable distress. Furniture was often requested as part of the government order to vacate, and was in most cases lost, destroyed, or used as firewood before the end of the war. Many more found their properties in a great state of disrepair when they were returned. The resentment created however, was often not with the internees themselves, but with the British government, who, it was considered, had done them a great injustice. One Manxman recalled how his father often complained that 'they can't do a thing like that to [us] Britishers'.¹³²

The experience of internment was just as polarized on the other side of the barbed wire. The use of the Isle of Man as a holiday locale was not lost on those interned, and some of the 'guests' were reported as 'bronzed and healthy' after release.¹³³ There was also a large degree of artistic expression fostered in the camps, and the island seemed to trap a wide array of skilled musicians, artists, and intellectuals, all of whom managed to avoid idleness by putting their talents to good use.¹³⁴ Many more however, struggled with their experience of captivity, fighting loneliness and depression. A small number of internees attempted suicide by leaving the gas taps turned on or by other methods.¹³⁵ Jewish refugees were, on occasion, subjected to incredible inhumanity by other German captives, as there was no separation based upon differences in ideology. On a number of occasions, Jewish female internees were forced to share a bed with politically active Nazis, who bullied them mercilessly, making

¹³¹ *Isle of Man Examiner*, (17 May 1940), p 4.

¹³² H. Cannell, 'Hardships Caused by the Internment Camps in the Isle of Man during the 1939-45 War', Typescript account (1996) Manx Archive Ref MNH 9555, pp. 1-2.

¹³³ Iris Dove, 'Enemies in our Midst: An Account of the Impact of 'Enemy Aliens' on the Isle of Man During World War Two' (Jan 2005) Manx Library Document MS 11407, p. 4.

¹³⁴ Richard Dove, "'Wer sie nicht erlebt hat, der begreift sie nie", The Internment Camp Revue What a Life!' in Richard Dove ed., *'Totally Un-English?' Britain's Internment of 'Enemy Aliens' in the Two World Wars* (Amsterdam: Rotopi, 2005), pp. 121-137.

¹³⁵ Joanna Gray, 'Women's Experiences in the Isle of Man During World War Two', Bedford, DeMontford University MA Dissertation (19 May 1997) Manx Archive Ref MNH 9850, pp. 11-12.

comments like 'Hitler will be here in July'.¹³⁶ There were a number of disturbances at the camps, but no full scale riots, and on one occasion a Finnish internee was murdered by another internee at Mooragh Camp, Ramsey.¹³⁷ Although the Manx had only limited direct contact with internees (especially the men) they were well informed when these events took place and often expressed disgust over such incidents.¹³⁸ Some Manx also resented the fact 'that enemy' had come to their shores, and viewed the guests as overly pampered (largely because they were given free food), but for the most part, intrusion of the internees into Manx life was at least tolerated, even if *positive* contact was rare.¹³⁹ For the vast majority of the Manx populace, internment and its repercussions was their experience of war. As a Manx resident, it was impossible to avoid being affected by the presence of internees (sometimes literally) on their doorstep.

That is not to say, however, that the Manx story is one *solely* of internment, as the Manx made a considerable military contribution to the war effort. The Isle of Man connects itself to the Churchillian myth by its association with action at Dunkirk: it is often boasted that one in every fourteen British soldiers plucked from the beaches at Dunkirk was rescued by a Manx boat.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company had a number of its vessels commandeered for war use by the British government in the early months of the war.¹⁴¹ The Manx also volunteered to fight in greater numbers per capita than any county in the British Isles,¹⁴² and a Manx Regiment: the 15th Light Anti-Aircraft comprised almost entirely of Manx servicemen, served with distinction in just

¹³⁶ Charmian Brinson, "Loyal to the Reich': National Socialists and Others in the Rushen Women's Internment Camp', in Dove ed., *Totally Un-English?*, pp. 101-119.

¹³⁷ Chappell, *Island of Barbed Wire*, pp. 128, 151-153.

¹³⁸ Chappell, *Island of Barbed Wire*, pp. 126-129.

¹³⁹ Dove, *Enemies in our Midst*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁰ Connery Chappell, *Island Lifeline* (Prescot, Merseyside: T Stephen and Sons, 1980), pp. 104-122.

¹⁴¹ The Manx Steam Packet ship 'King Orry III' participated in the evacuation and was sunk in May 1940. The 'Mona's Isle' which also saw action, was the first transport ship to depart for Dunkirk as part of *Operation Dynamo*, and the first ship to complete the round trip to Dunkirk and back. For more see: Chappell, *Island Lifeline*, pp. 104-110.

¹⁴² Curwen Clague, *Ack Ack: A History of the 15th (Isle of Man) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment* (Douglas, The Old Comrades Association, 1981), p. 10.

about every theatre of war.¹⁴³ The island itself was home to airfields at Ronaldsway, Jurby, and Andreas, all used in the training of allied airmen. While it now serves as the island's civil airport, Ronaldsway's wartime role was as a ground defence gunnery school and a Royal Naval air station.¹⁴⁴ But there was no 'blitz experience' on the Isle of Man. Although bombs did occasionally make landfall, they were never directed at the island itself, the vast majority coming from German bombers attempting to escape allied fighter aircraft. No civilian casualties were ever incurred by falling bombs, though there was at least one accident in which a civilian was killed by falling aircraft debris. The Manx Museum proudly acknowledged this lack of action years after the war by putting on display the carcass of a frog, supposedly caught in the wrong place at the wrong time, as the sole casualty of the Luftwaffe.¹⁴⁵ Danger from above in the Isle of Man was limited, and certainly no comparison to what was experienced in Britain. Some islanders and internees reported with alarm seeing the sky glow red at night with the fires from Liverpool and Belfast, while they themselves lived in relative safety.¹⁴⁶ For the Isle of Man, the home front was a safe place, a place that did not suffer the nightly raids of German bombers. But it has the odious distinction of being wholly wrapped up with a divisive and negative aspect of Britain's wartime experience, an aspect of war which was controversial, even at the time. While participating in elements celebrated in the 'finest-hour' myth, most notably the participation of Manx boats at Dunkirk, the Isle of Man has a particularly unique domestic experience of war. Internment finds no place in Britain's traditional narrative and commemorative tradition, nor does it fit neatly with the Churchillian concept of a nation unified under Hitler's bombs.

By contrast, Orkney can lay claim to far more elements of the celebrated aspects of the British story. When open conflict on the Western front was limited, the naval base at Scapa Flow was the site of intense warfare. The 'phoney war', as it was called, was not so phoney for Orcadians, and it has been said that 'the Battle of Orkney was

¹⁴³ Clague, *Ack Ack*, pp. 39-159.

¹⁴⁴ Gordon N. Kniveton, *Manx Aviation in War and Peace* (Douglas: Manx Experience, 1985), pp. 34-35, 51-72.

¹⁴⁵ Kniveton, *Manx Aviation in War and Peace*, pp. 37-39, 57-58.

¹⁴⁶ Chappell, *Island of Barbed Wire*, p. 81.

fought and won long before the Battle of Britain began'.¹⁴⁷ Orkney holds the distinction of firing the first shots of the war from its battery at Stromness,¹⁴⁸ having the first bomb to make landfall on the British Isles at Lyness, and claiming the first German plane of the war to Anti-Aircraft fire, shot down by Orcadian gunners in October 1939.¹⁴⁹ An Orcadian also holds the unfortunate distinction of being the first British civilian killed by bombing; James Isbister, a resident of Loch Stenness, suffered fatal shrapnel wounds after a bomb landed near his house in March 1940.¹⁵⁰ Though being beyond the support range for most German fighter aircraft, German bombers frequently attacked ships in harbour at Scapa Flow, and Orkney was bombed routinely in the lead up to and shortly after the invasion of Norway in 1940. Lessons were learned from this experience of war from the air, it has been argued, that were later applied to the defence of the South during the Battle of Britain.¹⁵¹ Though lacking the devastation, urban context, death toll, and the deliberate attempt to injure civilians on the part of the Germans to make this a 'Blitz' story, Orkney was repeatedly assaulted from the air. A total of 228 bombs made landfall in Orkney during the war, the vast majority of these within the first year, killing three civilians and seriously injuring sixteen others. Several houses were also damaged by bombs, and the town of Stromness had at one point been strafed up and down its main street.¹⁵²

Orkney proved vulnerable from the sea as well as the air. On the 14 October, Gunther Prien, Commander of the German U-boat U47, was able to sneak through Kirk Sound on Scapa Flow's Eastern approaches and fire a salvo of torpedoes at the *HMS Royal Oak*, a large but somewhat antiquated capital ship in anchor at the Flow.¹⁵³ The result was the loss of 834 lives¹⁵⁴ and what has been called a 'national disaster'.¹⁵⁵ It

¹⁴⁷ David J. Smith, *Action Stations 7: Military Airfields of Scotland, the North East, and Northern Ireland* (Northamptonshire: Patrick Stephens, 1989), pp. 4.

¹⁴⁸ Jeff Dorman, *Orkney Coastal Batteries 1914-1956* (Kirkwall: Twin Six Production, 1996), p. 28.

¹⁴⁹ Gregor Lamb, *Sky over Scapa: 1939-45* (Kirkwall: Byrgisey, 1991), p. 30.

¹⁵⁰ Schei and Moberg, *The Orkney Story*, p. 91.

¹⁵¹ Lamb, *Sky over Scapa*, p. 37.

¹⁵² W. S. Hewison, *This Great Harbour: Scapa Flow* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2005 [1985]), pp. 320-21.

¹⁵³ James Miller, *Scapa: Britain's Famous Wartime Naval Base* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000), pp. 83-95.

¹⁵⁴ 833 is the official number recorded by the War office, although research conducted by the Royal British Legion Orkney Branch suggests that there may have been 834 lives lost. One man, it has been argued, is

was a tragedy compounded by the fact that many of the crew were boys aged between 15 and 18 years old, an issue which would later cause the Admiralty to revise its naval policy, disallowing youths from active service.¹⁵⁶ The cause of the disaster was attributed to the lack of adequate preparation of Scapa Flow's defenses in the early months of the war, but as Stephen Roskill has argued, the Admiralty's shocking neglect of the Flow during the inter-war years contributed more to the disaster than any action or inaction by the officers on the spot.¹⁵⁷

While the rest of Britain experienced a relatively quiet early war—the British Expeditionary Force patiently awaiting the invasion of France—Orkney saw significant action. Though wholly incomparable with what many British (or indeed United Kingdom) cities experienced after August 1940, being bombed was a part of life for Orcadians in the early months of war, and many were concerned by the constant air raids. The result was that Orkney gained fearsome notoriety in late 1939 and early 1940, a fact that the Admiralty was keenly aware of, and the Navy found it immensely difficult to recruit labour from the mainland to work in the islands. The naval base needed infrastructure quickly, and large sums of money were offered to non-Orcadian labourers (mostly Irishmen hired from Liverpool and Glasgow) to provide a temporary workforce. Many of these workers proved unsatisfactory, and considerable concern was raised when anti-British propaganda was found in one of the accommodation huts.¹⁵⁸ A solution to the labour shortage was found by employing prisoners of war, mostly Italians captured in the desert campaigns of 1940 and 1941, on essential building projects in Orkney.¹⁵⁹ Most famous of these projects were the large 'Churchill Barriers,' lengthy causeways stretching across Orkney's South-Eastern islands, closing the entrance of Scapa Flow to any further attack by U-boat from the east. The causeways had been ordered shortly

neglected from this tally. As of 2011, the memorial obelisk at the garden of remembrance in Orkney makes reference to '834 men'.

¹⁵⁵ David Turner, *Last Dawn: The Royal Oak Tragedy at Scapa Flow* (Argyll: Argyll, 2009—first published under the title *The Ultimate Sacrifice*—[2004]), p. 7.

¹⁵⁶ Turner, *Last Dawn*, pp. 96-99.

¹⁵⁷ S.W. Roskill, 'The War at Sea 1939-1945', as cited in Hewison, *This Great Harbour*, p. 238.

¹⁵⁸ Hewison, *This Great Harbour*, pp. 241, 269-70.

¹⁵⁹ Alastair and Anne Cormack, *Bolsters, Blocks, Barriers: The Story of the Building of the Churchill Barriers in Orkney* (Kirkwall: Orkney View, 1992), pp. 5-11.

after the *Royal Oak* sinking by Churchill himself (hence the name) to prevent another such attack, although the concept of closing the Eastern approaches was not his.¹⁶⁰ The Italians caused considerable difficulty for the engineers at first: some protested at being forced to do war work, a task prohibited by the Geneva Convention,¹⁶¹ others were put off by the accommodation provided for them or found their 'Mediterranean temperament' unsuitable to Orkney's climate.¹⁶² By the end of their internment, however, many Italian labourers had taken 'considerable pride' in their achievements on Lamb Holm.¹⁶³ The Italian Chapel, constructed by Domenico Chiocchetti as a place of worship for the captives, stands to this day a testament of Italian gasconade. Though Orkney's use of POW labour was small in comparison with rural mainland Britain, where interned combatants provided a significant part of the agricultural labour force,¹⁶⁴ Orkney's POWs left a lasting legacy etched into the very landscape of the islands. The Italian Chapel serves now as a cultural meeting place, whereas the Churchill Barriers provide a much needed transport link between the southernmost islands and the Orkney mainland.

Orkney, much like the Isle of Man, has a dichotomy within its war experience. While possessing elements of the Churchillian paradigm, namely the heroics of the armed forces, participation in large naval encounters, and some similarities with cities on the mainland being bombed, Orkney also has a past in which negative aspects of the British experience are impossible to marginalize. The *Royal Oak* tragedy also acts as the catalyst for the inclusion of a divisive aspect of the wartime experience to make an inclusion in the Orkney story. While many thousands of Prisoners of War came to Britain,

¹⁶⁰ Sir William Halcrow had first proposed such measures after a visit to Orkney in 1915, however it was decided that such an undertaking was unnecessary at such a 'late' stage in the war, and the sinking of block ships was decided upon as the most cost effective method to protect against attack from submarine. See: Hewison, *This Great Harbour*, p. 269.

¹⁶¹ James McDonald, *Churchill's Prisoners: The Italians in Orkney 1942-1944* (Kirkwall: Orkney Wireless Museum, 1992), pp. 7-9.

¹⁶² Hewison, *This Great Harbour*, pp. 270-74.

¹⁶³ Cormack, *Bolsters, Blocks, Barriers*, p. 11.

¹⁶⁴ For more on POW labour usage in England and Scotland see: J. Anthony Hellen, 'Temporary Settlement and Transient Populations the Legacy of Britain's Prisoner of War Camps 1940-1948', *Erdkunde* 53 (1999), pp. 191-217.

worked, and were repatriated, little remains as testament to their impact on the region. This is not the case in Orkney, as tangible legacy exists from those kept as prisoners.

The Channel Islands have a particularly digressive wartime history, being the only British territory to be occupied by the Germans during the war. Less than twenty miles from mainland France, Jersey residents well understood that their sovereignty was intrinsically linked with their neighbour, and that occupation was all the more likely with each yard of French territory conquered. Despite their formal responsibility to defend the islands, the new British Government led by Churchill abandoned the Channel Islands in early summer 1940,¹⁶⁵ under the assumption that the islands possessed no strategic value.¹⁶⁶ The islands were demilitarized and a significant part of the population evacuated to England.¹⁶⁷ Although some Channel Islands, particularly Alderney, were heavily depopulated by these evacuations, most Jersey residents remained.¹⁶⁸ The British government commenced procedures for notifying the Germans of the island's disarmament, but not in time, and Luftwaffe bombs struck the harbour of St. Helier on 28 June, killing eleven people—eight more deaths than Orkney suffered during the whole war. Their target was the lorry loads of produce destined for England, which were mistaken for ammunition by German reconnaissance. This single act against unarmed civilians engendered a 'festering resentment' of the Germans by many Jersiaise, a sentiment which lasted long after the war had ended.¹⁶⁹

Contrary to Churchillian myth, life under occupation proved to be a decidedly disunifying experience for the islanders. After July 1940 when the island was officially occupied, residents found themselves trapped and largely cut off from communications

¹⁶⁵ One author has argued the islands were quite unceremoniously 'ditched' in 1940, a word which, she argues, summed up the feelings of the Jersey population at the time. See Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), pp. 27.

¹⁶⁶ Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, new edition (London: 2004 [1975]), pp. 7, 15.

¹⁶⁷ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁸ For more on this see: T.X.H. Pancheff, *Alderney Fortress Island: The Germans in Alderney 1940-1945* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1981), pp. 1-6.

¹⁶⁹ Frank Keiller, *Prison Without Bars: Living in Jersey Under the German occupation 1940-1945* (Wiltshire: Seafower, 2000), p. 30.

with families and friends in Britain.¹⁷⁰ Despite having an industry based largely on agriculture, the influx of several thousand occupying forces took its toll on the resources already diminished by the evacuation, and after Allied forces liberated France and the island was cut off from supply, both the German garrison and the islanders faced severe deprivations in food during the winter of 1944-45. This situation became quite desperate, and the shortages were relieved only by the arrival of a Red Cross ship, the Vega, in December 1944.¹⁷¹ Aggravating this situation was the constraints placed on the islanders by their occupiers, from the banning of gatherings of more than two people, to restrictions on personal possessions and property. Radio sets in particular, while permitted during the first few months of occupation, later became a cause of great consternation for the Germans, and a number of people fell afoul of German rules by possessing them. In all, it has been argued that up to six per cent of the island's population was imprisoned at some point during the occupation because of breaches of Nazi regulations.¹⁷² As on the continent, Jews were actively sought by the occupying forces, and several were sent to concentration camps.¹⁷³ Many more non-Jewish inhabitants were deported to prison camps in Germany simply for being English nationals; a directive set down by Hitler after the British internment of German civilians in Iran.¹⁷⁴ Caught in a 'culture of survival', some islanders assisted the German forces, both voluntarily and involuntarily, and young women occasionally participated in intimate relationships with the occupiers, or what Paul Sanders has termed 'horizontal collaboration' with the enemy.¹⁷⁵ Neighbourly resentments, old and new, were magnified by the presence of an enemy force on their doorstep, and letters to German authorities now on display at the Jersey War Tunnels testify to the level some islanders were willing to go to settle a score.¹⁷⁶ Public officials too found themselves caught

¹⁷⁰ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, pp. 34-57, 139-149.

¹⁷¹ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, pp. 301-308.

¹⁷² Peter Tabb, *A Peculiar Occupation: New Perspectives on Hitler's Channel Islands* (Surrey: Ian Allen, 2005), p. 205.

¹⁷³ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands Under German Occupation*, p. 28.

¹⁷⁴ Asa Briggs, *The Channel Islands Occupation and Liberation* (London: Batsford, 1995), pp. 55-56.

¹⁷⁵ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands Under German Occupation*, pp. 170-172, p. 235.

¹⁷⁶ 'Whispers and Lies' section, Jersey War Tunnels, 17 Apr 2009.

between their duty to the Crown and its subjects, and what was expected of them by the Germans. Often times this culminated in a moral dilemma over how best to ensure the greater good. The example of Frederick Page, caught with three radio sets by Jersey Police while being investigated for a separate crime, is often used to illustrate the conflict between rule of law and disobedience which such officials faced. Page was eventually handed over, charged with owning the radio sets, and subsequently died in a German prison.¹⁷⁷ British authorities feared defying the Germans and often justified such actions by taking the utilitarian position that maintaining 'snippets of sovereignty' was preferable to outright German rule.¹⁷⁸ Such happenings, in many ways, are an example of a kind of 'history that hurts', an event where commemoration with traditional Second World War imagery would be inappropriate.¹⁷⁹

Jersey also has involvement with one of the darker aspects of the war itself. As part of Hitler's Atlantic Wall, Jersey was very rapidly fortified after occupation. Hundreds of concrete bunkers, dugouts, and gun emplacements were constructed to defend against possible invasion by the Western Allies. For the most part, labour found to perform these construction projects was provided by the German Organisation Todt (OT), which used forced labour from the continent. It is impossible to know the exact make-up at any given time, but many thousands of Spaniards, Russians, and other nationals were put to work on the fortifications. The forced labourers were treated very cruelly, and often lived in the most appalling conditions. Very few islanders had any contact with these workers, but it is nonetheless part of the story of war in Jersey, and one which has impacted remembrance in the island.

Although there were a number of small acts of resistance which brought islanders briefly together, the experience of occupation, by its nature, was divisive. Liberation provided both an end to the hostilities and an opportunity for a display of unanimity that was missing during the occupation years. On 9 May 1945 Captain

¹⁷⁷ David Fraser, *The Jews of the Channel Islands and the Rule of Law, 1940-1945: Quite contrary to the Principles of British Justice* (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2000), p. 3.

¹⁷⁸ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands Under German Occupation*, p. 63.

¹⁷⁹ F. Baker, 'The History that Hurts: Excavating 1933-1945', *Archaeological review from Cambridge* 7, 1 (1987), pp. 93-109.

Surgeon Dr. Ron McDonald of Force 135, the task force sent to liberate the island, stepped onto the St. Helier harbour and ceremoniously hung a Union flag out of one of the windows of the old harbour office, to the jubilation of a gathered crowd.¹⁸⁰ The area in front of the old harbour office was named 'Liberation Square' in 1990 in commemoration of this act. Liberation provides one of the few positive moments in what was otherwise a negative experience of war for the Islanders. As Paul Sanders has argued, the story of the Channel Islands contradicts the Churchillian paradigm by the very fact that Britain was not a nation of victims but of victors.¹⁸¹ The experience of war in Jersey bears little similarity to the most celebrated aspects of the British myth. How can the island celebrate Dunkirk, for example, knowing that its fate rested with French sovereignty?

Each of these experiences stand in opposition to the rigidly constructed Churchillian paradigm and the imagery which it encompasses. The 'People's War' needs to be re-examined in light of the new narratives which have emerged in Britain, and in light of the new understandings of regional (and in this case island) difference. Devolution has seen Scotland given its own Parliament, and Northern Ireland and Wales have been granted their own assemblies. The Isle of Man has sought varying degrees of independence from the EU and the UK, and the Channel Islands have had independence on the agenda since the year 2000.¹⁸² Hugh Kearney's version of the British Isles as 'eight cultures' must now be further deconstructed and replaced with a more nuanced view. The Isle of Man, Orkney and the Channel Islands have a diversity in identity and culture, such diversity is in opposition with the message that 'we were all in it together', and regional differences have, over the last fifteen years, begun to assert themselves. The Churchillian paradigm, which has constructed the 'people' as politically, socially and ethnically homogenous, not just in the 1940s but by implication also across the decades since, is now being used in order to show difference. While participating in deliberately structured island versions of VE Day and D-Day events, invariably using imagery

¹⁸⁰ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, pp. 315-323.

¹⁸¹ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands Under German Occupation*, p. 256.

¹⁸² 'Independence on the Agenda?', *Jersey Evening Post*, 18 Dec 2004, p. 1.

borrowed from Britain, they carve a niche for their stories within the larger glorious British narrative. At other times, by rejecting the British war narrative in favour of their unique war stories, places that wish to avoid being absorbed into 'a British identity' can display their own unique history and heritage. In this way, each island uses Britishness as a way to define their own 'islandness', as we shall see in the following three chapters.

Chapter 2

The Isle of Man

The 'Little Manx Nation' is a semi-autonomous crown dependency which lies not on the periphery but in the centre of the British Isles, a few miles off the West Coast of England in the Irish Sea. Part of the Norse empire from the eighth century until the thirteenth, the islands were for a short time under the control of Scotland, before passing under English control in the fourteenth century, when the 'King of Mann' was replaced by a succession of Feudal Lords. Even as late as the fifteenth century, the island was enjoying 'a good deal of independence',¹ legislating insular matters from Tynwald, a centuries old parliament. It was not until 1765, when the 10th Earl Stanley sold the island to George III, that the Manx came within reach of legislation from the mainland, and paved the way for the 'crown dependency' status which the island currently has.² Having been, for all intents and purposes, an independent nation until as late as the eighteenth century, the Isle of Man has immensely strong notions of cultural and historical ownership, and contemporary scholars still debate the legal nuances of the island's relationship with Britain and Westminster.³ The island also has a story of the war wrapped up with an un-glorifiable series of events. Internment does not form part of the foundation war myth in Britain, nor does it feature traditionally in the commemoration of Britain's finest hour. Internment does not fit into the concept of a nation unified; it was an inherently disunifying experience both for those interned and among those who dealt with the effects of internment. As early as 1940 the issue was controversial. During one debate in the House of Commons, a young conservative MP, Major Victor Cazalet called the British policy of internment 'a bespattered page of our

¹ Kearney, *The British Isles*, p. 153.

² Moore, *The Other British Isles*, pp. 110-111.

³ Such issues will be discussed fully in the next subchapter.

history', calling for it to be 'cleaned up and re-written',⁴ and a Gallup poll taken throughout Britain in July showed that the population was split as to how to deal with 'enemy aliens'.⁵ Years later Francois Lafitte, a harsh critic of the government's internment policy at the time remarked that the 'only blessing of internment was that it unintentionally created the Amadeus Quartet'.⁶

The inherently divisive nature of the island's experience of the Second World War, combined with strong notions of what it is to be 'Manx', means that commemorations and celebrations of the war's events are different from those of their British neighbours. Though the island did have a military role in the war—the island was home to several air bases, mostly used for training, as well as a Manx regiment which served overseas—the primary story of the Isle of Man's war was one of internment. This chapter examines both commemorative events of the war organised by veterans' groups, heritage societies, the Manx Art Council and private enthusiasts, as well as the Isle of Man's 'official' heritage body, Manx National Heritage (MNH). It shows that although the 'finest-hour' mythology is alive and well on the island, there is a need within Manx National Heritage to choose a path which portrays Manx history as independent from the mainland. Internment is something which MNH uses in order to delimit their own identity and provide an alternate narrative to the British myth, one which privileges the Isle of Man's unique history and heritage. In this way, the island can bask in the commemorative tropes of Britain's glorious victory, while at the same time reinforcing their own identity by exhibiting, to both tourists and residents, something 'truly Manx'.

I) Manx culture

⁴ Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 22 August 1940, vol 364, cc1475-586; 1538.

⁵ The poll showed that forty three percent of Britons wanted to see all aliens interned as opposed to forty eight percent who wished to see 'friendly' and 'harmless' ones spared. See: Calder, *The People's War*, p. 132.

⁶ Francois Lafitte, *The Internment of Aliens* (London: Penguin, 1988), p. vii.

Officially a British protectorate, the Manx have a large degree of legal sovereignty, and the relationship between the Isle of Man and the United Kingdom is far from clear cut. Although the Isle of Man is part of the British Isles, it is not, nor has it ever been part of the United Kingdom, despite being surrounded by it.⁷ The 'Little Manx nation' lays claim to the oldest parliament in the world in continuing existence at Tynwald, now an enduring symbol of Manx self-rule. Stemming from Norse roots, 'Tynwald Court' is made up of the Legislative Council (the upper house) and the House of Keys (the lower house). Along with certain 'non-executives' like the Lieutenant-Governor, it legislates all insular matters of the island. Though Westminster possesses the power to overrule Tynwald (according to the Royal Commission on the Constitution of the Isle of Man) it seldom has, and primarily concerns itself with matters of Manx involvement in international relations.⁸ There has also been some debate as to the real legal power Westminster has over the island. Legal scholar Sybil Sharpe has argued that although it has been assumed that Westminster has the ability to legislate for the Isle of Man, there is a case to say that it cannot make decisions for Tynwald even by express extension. Since the loyalty of the Isle of Man is directly to the *person* of the Queen, the Prime Minister is legally incapable of exercising rights which belong solely to the Crown. There is, she says, no legal justification for any form of direct rule from Westminster.⁹ Historically, the Manx government has passed legislation in contradiction to Westminster to allow for such things as the opening of a casino on the island, or for shutting down roads during the annual TT motorcycle races.¹⁰ The Isle of Man has also, on occasion, ignored or declared 'no effect' to legislation from Westminster when it affects the matters of the island negatively.¹¹ One significant example was the

⁷ For more see: Sybil Sharpe, 'The Isle of Man in the British Isles but not Ruled by Britain: A Modern Peculiarity from Ancient Ordinances', Academic Paper, De Montfort University 2001, Manx Archive, MS 10515, pp. 2-3.

⁸ Royal Commission on the Constitution of the Isle of Man: Joint Evidence of the Home Office and Tynwald (Douglas, Island Development Co, 1970), Manx Archive, MNH D151/48.

⁹ Sharpe, 'The Isle of Man in the British Isles but not Ruled by Britain', p. 9.

¹⁰ David G. Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics: The Constitutional and Political Development of the Isle of Man in the Twentieth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University press, 2001), p. 72.

¹¹ Sybil Sharpe, 'Autonomy Wrongly Denied: The British Government and the Isle of Man', Academic Paper, De Montfort University 2002, Manx Archive, MS 10670, p. 5.

overturning of conscription in the island on 31 March 1942, when Tynwald (correctly) claimed that the Manx had already sent more young men per capita than any other region of the British Isles.¹² The 'Gay debate' of the late 1980s and early 1990s is another, when the island defied, for several years, a warning that Manx homosexuality laws were in breach of the European Court of Human Rights.¹³

The large degree of legal autonomy is something which underscores Manx difference, but the island also asserts its independence in other ways. The Manx civil service, for one, derives its authority from Tynwald court. The Isle of Man has its own post office and currency, the 'Manx Pound'. The Manx also have their own national anthem, national flag, and national coat of arms. Tynwald provides funds for National Heritage sites, a Department of Community, Culture and Leisure, and a Department of Trade and Industry.

On 1 May 2007, a joint declaration was made by the Isle of Man and the British government on the international identity of the Isle of Man. Worked out over the course of 2006, this agreement indicated a willingness on the part of the British government to recognize that the Isle of Man 'has an international identity which is different from that of the UK'. It ensures that the Manx are consulted on international issues affecting them, though the British government remains responsible for international affairs. Despite local autonomy and increasing international recognition, however, David Kermode notes that 'territorial proximity, political history, cultural affinity, social links and economic integration [have nonetheless] combined to persuade Manx decision makers to choose a dependent political relationship with the United Kingdom'.¹⁴ Since the 1980s, Manx policy makers have become increasingly aware of the influence of outside legislative bodies on insular matters. The 'international dimension', in particular the

¹² Tynwald Court Hansard 'Debate on Conscription', (Mar 31st 1942) Nat Serv (no 2), pp. 236-237.

¹³ It was not until November 1991, with UK public opinion decidedly against them and the worry that legislation imposed upon them by Westminster might be much more liberal, were private sexual acts among homosexuals decriminalized. Corporal punishment, or 'birching', as well as capital punishment, was also kept on the books much longer than in the UK—well into the 1990s. See: Alistair Ramsay, 'Tynwald Transformed 1980-1996', in Belchem ed., *A New History of the Isle of Man Vol V.*, pp. 185-206; 199-200.

¹⁴ Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, p. 1.

island's relationship with Europe, now has a significant influence on the island's policy directives.¹⁵

Given the closeness of the historical relationship between Man and Britain, the Manx have sought ways of distinctively marking their national identity through culture. The Manx have their own language, Manx Gaelic, and though the last native speaker died in the 1960s, there is currently a revival of the language among the island's intelligentsia. The language is also taught (at a very basic level) in primary schools. Annual events such as Tynwald Day and Manx National Week, along with island based cultural events like *Yn Chruinnaght* the annual Gaelic festival, help the island to assert its cultural uniqueness. 'Manxness' is often considered both a national and ethnic expression—'true Manxies' being those who can trace their ancestry back several generations (usually with a well accepted Manx name such as Kermode or Cubbon). The phrase 'comeovers' is generally used for the increasing numbers of immigrants from the UK.¹⁶ Traditionally, the UK has provided something against which the Isle of Man can define its own identity. The mainland provides the 'other' in understanding Manxness. This sense of difference is pivotal to Manx cultural sovereignty, and means that efforts are taken to ensure that the island maintains its uniqueness.

In the Isle of Man, Manx National Heritage (MNH) is the official heritage agency of the island, a government funded organisation which since 1951 has been responsible for most of the island's major heritage attractions. Deriving its funding entirely from Manx sources, including an operating budget from the Manx government, business partnerships, and charitable funds, Manx National Heritage takes custody of thirteen of the island's museum sites, including the Manx Museum, the Manx National Art Gallery and the House of Mannannan. It also counts a number of monuments and 'heritage assets' under its protection. Not a government department in its own right, MNH operates under the remit of an Act of Tynwald, and policy decisions are made by a group of trustees derived from the island's political, academic and business

¹⁵ Ramsay, 'Tynwald Transformed', pp. 185, 199-206.

¹⁶ See: Cheryl Cheek, Sue Nichol, and Sarah Grainger, 'Manx Identity and the Comeovers', in Matthews and Travers, eds, *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective*.

communities.¹⁷ There are, as a rule, three government representatives on the trustee committee; one from the House of Keys, one from the Legislative Council, and the Speaker of the House of Keys, in addition to representatives of local government authorities. Employees of Manx National Heritage are classed as civil servants, appointed by the Manx Civil Service Commission but who report directly to the Director and the trustees. The Director is appointed by the Manx civil service, and as of 2009 Edmund Southworth has occupied the position. A 'heritage expert' appointed for his skills in heritage management rather than familiarity or interest in Manx history, Southworth served for several decades with Central Lancashire Development Corporation and the Lancashire Museum Service, and took up the post with an eye to create 'cultural and economic benefits for the community'.¹⁸ Policy directives and financial expenditures are published as part of the Government's national policy each year in the 'Isle of Man Government Policy Review' with revenue and capital expenditure approved in the yearly Manx national budget.¹⁹ Headquartered in the Manx Museum, Douglas, Manx National Heritage oversees what is known as 'The Story of Mann', a way of linking together its large heritage assets in an easily consumable way, and provides what it calls the 'main public presentation of the work of Manx National Heritage'.²⁰ The large proportion of heritage attractions for which MNH is responsible heavily overshadows non-affiliated historic sites, to the point that it dominates the island's heritage landscape. This means that the director and trustees exercise a large amount of control over the direction which almost all of the Isle of Man's heritage sites take.

Also associated with the Manx government is the Isle of Man Arts Council, which promotes art, film, and theatre in the Isle of Man. An organisation comprised of 10

¹⁷ 'Manx National Heritage Service Delivery Plan 2011-2012', Isle of Man Government publication (2011), pp. 2-4.

¹⁸ 'New Director of Manx National Heritage', Isle of Man Government <<http://www.gov.im/lib/news/mnh/newdirectorofman.xml>> [Accessed 11 Sep 2011].

¹⁹ 'How Do We Work?', Manx National Heritage—Isle of Man Government <<http://www.gov.im/mnh/heritage/about/howwework.xml#top>> [Accessed 11 Sep 2011].

²⁰ 'The Story of Mann', Manx National Heritage—Isle of Man Government <<http://www.gov.im/mnh/heritage/story/storyofmann.xml>> [Accessed 12 Aug 2011].

members, it forms part of the Department of Community, Culture and Leisure. Originally all appointed by Tynwald, the procedure for naming members has changed recently. Positions on the council are now advertised in local newspapers, and the Minister of the Department of Community Culture and Leisure makes the selection of new members from these public applications. Current members of the Council are a mix of Manx and non-Manx island residents from a variety of backgrounds, including the finance and education sectors, all with an interest in Manx culture and art. At least four of the current members are accomplished musicians.²¹ The Isle of Man Arts council is responsible for promoting art ‘in all forms’²² on the Isle of Man, and has been responsible for a number of heritage displays, including the ‘Wire and Wool festival’ which will be examined in detail in this chapter.

The Manx Heritage Foundation, founded by Tynwald in 1982 also operates to ‘support and protect Manx culture’. The organisation operates through the ‘Manx Heritage Foundation Fund’, but is able to accept charitable donations. Of the organisation’s membership, two of the members must be members of Tynwald, one must be a representative from the Isle of Man Arts Council and another from Manx National Heritage—selected by those bodies. Added to that are three members of the public, positions which are advertised and applied to by interested residents, which are then nominated by the Council of Ministers and approved by Tynwald. These individuals have recently been Manx-born, although as of 2011 an election is currently pending. The Foundation also employs an administrator, a Manx Language Coordinator, a Music Development Officer, a Manx Music Specialist and an honorary Treasurer which are appointed by the members and are salaried.²³

There are only a few other organisations on the island, and those that exist have a specific or local heritage interest. These include a number of independent heritage

²¹ Personal correspondence with Breesha Maddrell, Isle of Man Arts Council, 7 Dec 2011.

²² ‘Isle of Man Arts Council’, Isle of Man Arts Council - Isle of Man Government <<http://www.gov.im/artscouncil/>> [Accessed 13 Aug 2011].

²³ Personal correspondence with Charles Guard, MHF Administrator, 28 Nov 2011. See also: ‘Our Mission’ and ‘Members’, Manx Heritage Foundation <<http://www.manxheritage.org/foundation/index.html>> [Accessed 11 Aug 2011].

trusts including Ballaugh and Sulby Heritage, Peel Heritage, Castletown Heritage, Michael Heritage, Onchan Heritage and Ramsey Heritage, all of which concern themselves with town, rather than island-wide heritage projects. These are led primarily by committees derived from the town's commissioners, and with the purpose of preserving, developing and conserving the town's buildings and amenities. In the case of Peel Heritage, membership is open to anyone for a £5 donation.²⁴ Most of these heritage organisations are run by local residents, ensuring a voice on heritage at the smallest community level, but meet together with Manx National Heritage to discuss mutual interests. There are also privately run museums on the island: the Manx Aviation and Military Museum, the Jurby Transport Museum, Milntown House, the Leece Museum and the minuscule Manx Transport Museum in Peel.

There are also organisations which have a strong connection with the military on the island. These include veterans' organisations, such as the Royal British Legion and the Joint Ex Service agency, as well as the Manx Aviation Preservation Society. These organisations consist mostly of volunteers unconnected with the governmental bodies yet still have had a hand in organizing events for significant anniversaries, including D-Day and VE Day commemorations. Such groups, consisting of island residents with either a personal connection to the war, or an interest in the military heritage of the island, make up only a small portion of those who have are responsible for the creation of heritage in the island, and represent only a tiny fraction of the funding. The result is that culture and heritage in the island is heavily influenced by the Manx government, Manx National Heritage trustees and paid civil servants. This professionalization of heritage has resulted in hegemony over the island's cultural and historical assets, a small number of people control the development of the Isle of Man's heritage and determine what to display and what to dismiss. This has resulted in deliberate policy directives which are designed to 'preserve' the island's own distinctiveness, over and above that of its historical connections with Britain.

²⁴ See: 'Index', Peel Heritage Trust <<http://www.peelheritagetrust.net/index.htm>> [Accessed 28 Nov 2011].

II) Commemoration of the Second World War on the Isle of Man

This need for cultural independence, combined with the island's divergent experience of the Second World War means that commemorations and celebrations of the war's events are likely to be different from that of their British neighbours. The Imperial War Museum's *Blitz Experience* does not apply to them, as there were no 'blitz' stories on the Isle of Man, and although Manxmen served in the armed forces abroad, the Isle of Man's domestic history is very different. The island offered up its home front by allowing itself to succumb to the friendly invasion of allied airmen, and the much less friendly invasion of internees. As those who lived through the experience of the war have aged and died, the means and manner by which the Manx wartime experience has come to be remembered and ritualized offers an example of how common commemorative practices can help construct different national identities, and the differences on which such identities rely. The following sections will look at forms of performative commemoration on the island from the time when significant anniversaries became well celebrated—namely the mid 1980s onwards—it will then examine how heritage sites have been constructed to privilege a Manx-centric narrative, and the motivation(s) behind such projects.

Upsurge of interest in Second World War commemoration in the Isle of Man has mirrored that within Britain. Much as on the mainland, in the aftermath of what Jay Winter has called the 'second memory boom',²⁵ commemorations designed to celebrate the anniversaries of Second World War events found their origins in the 1980s, became large events in the 1990s, and have been maintained as well commemorated events into the new millennium. Commemorations in the Isle of Man peaked in 1994 and 1995 for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day and VE Day, and throughout this period, the island showed a willingness to commemorate significant anniversaries in a typically 'British' way. On the Isle of Man (and to a certain extent elsewhere in the British Isles), much of the early commemorations lacked a sophistication and official

²⁵ Winter, *Remembering War*, p 18.

sanction that characterized later commemorations. Early initiative tended to stem from island 'cultural agents', interested individuals and organisations which created a popular response to the upsurge of commemoration occurring in Britain. As a result, much of the early performative commemorations were inspired by the same iconography, and from the 1980s onwards commemorations heaved with 'finest-hour' iconography. Early events to commemorate the island's role in the Second World War were, therefore, intertwined with those occurring on the mainland and collectively celebrate alongside Britain. For the fortieth anniversary of D-Day in 1984, for example, several hundred people marched down the Port Erin promenade along with veterans and cadets. At night a 'forties night' supper and dance was held.²⁶ The connection between the Isle of Man and D-Day is strong, given more capital by the fact that Manx ferries were directly involved in the landings. This was made even more important by the selection of a Manxman to hold the British Legion standard at the D-Day commemorations in Normandy, in the presence of the Queen and the French President. The Isle of Man also commemorated VE Day in 1985 with a celebration which featured a number of now well established traditions. These included a parade on Douglas promenade, a 1940s photography exhibition at Villa Marina, and (another) 'forties' themed night at the Palace Lido featuring Herb Miller and his Orchestra. In line with the commemorations in Britain, five hundred Union flags were provided for the party goers.²⁷ Most of the events occurred in the island's capital, Douglas, but not to be outdone, the town of Peel, on the island's western shore organised similar events, including a charity dance at the Creg Mailin Hotel. Short an orchestra, the event organisers had to make do with a large collection of Glen Miller records.²⁸

By 1989, the island had accumulated experience memorializing the events of the Second World War by drawing from the popular iconography present within British remembrance. The popularity of such events led to perhaps one of the best examples of

²⁶ 'Celebrating D-Day', *Isle of Man Times* (12 Jun 1984), p.1.

²⁷ 'Celebrating the Anniversary', *Isle of Man Times* (30 Apr 1985), p.10; 'Oh what a night', *Isle of Man Times* (14 May 1985), p. 5.

²⁸ 'Peel's VE Day', *Isle of Man Times* (3 May 1985), p.10.

purely tourism-motivated commemoration ever to occur in the British Isles. Given the success of D-Day and VE Day events half a decade earlier, several organisations joined forces to plan a 'forties themed event' which would raise money for charity and benefit the tourism-related enterprises on the island. Organised to coincide with the fiftieth birthday of one of the island's most wealthy businessmen, Trevor Baines, the Rushen Round Table, a charitable organisation, combined with the Palace Group of hotels and the Manx Department of Tourism to put together a 'nostalgic' forties weekend over the course of 5-6 August. A celebration of the entire 1940s period, the events were designed as a charity fundraiser, while at the same time paying tribute to 'the brave men and women who participated [in the war]'.²⁹ The weekend was much less refined than contemporary commemorative events, and was designed with a celebratory and tourism boosting role in mind. The event was part carnival, part re-enactment, with Jazz bands, forties-themed balls at one of the local event halls, stalls, and fireworks displays. Islanders and tourists were encouraged to don period costume and were issued tickets to events in the form of ration cards. A large military contribution, including reenactments from the Lincolnshire Preservation Society, whose 75 members donned battle dress and struck camp on Douglas promenade for the weekend, supplied the 'war effort'. This also included a military convoy from Peel to Douglas harbour, and a mock 'invasion' of Douglas beach. A 'Monty' look-alike commanded the British elements of this fictional battle, and the beaches were roped off in preparation for the large amount of blank ammunition which was to be fired.³⁰ Many local businesses contributed to the weekend, advertising their shops and services in the local paper with forties style advertisements. Several of the commercial participants were going concerns which had been around since the 1940s or earlier and used real newspaper adverts from the period. Newspapers were also studded with articles which might have appeared in the newspapers of the time, including applications for accommodation and information

²⁹ 'Back to the Forties Extravaganza', Forties Weekend special insert, *Manx Independent* (5-6 Aug 1989), pp. 1-6.

³⁰ Spectators cheered the British successes and booed the Germans, giving the re-enactment a pantomime style atmosphere.

about the arrival of internees.

The combination of 'forties' commemoration and a birthday party style atmosphere meant that the Isle of Man forties weekend had a spirit of fun. Divisive aspects of the war, including much of the internment narrative, were minimized in order to contribute to the enjoyment of the event by visitors and generate tourist revenue. This was an economically motivated event, rather than a genuine performance of identity and remembrance, but it used the same imagery nonetheless. For the 'forties weekend' to be successful it had to appeal to the collective remembrances of both islanders and tourists who would benefit the island financially. The inclusion of military figures and events was done largely because, as the organisers stated, 'half the decade was consumed by the war'.³¹ Ration cards, Monty, fireworks, and invasion reenactments were all universally British commemorative tropes. As large scale commemorations of the Second World War were beginning to take place in Britain, this event necessitated the use of British commemorative icons in order to accomplish its goals. The event needed to appeal to potential tourists to the island who would attend, it needed to have purchase with their collective remembrance. That being said, the willing participation of islanders in this form of commemoration was not solely economically motivated. The event not only achieved its goal of financial compensation for the island's charities and tourism based industries, the support of so many people, organisations, and businesses as is evidenced by contributions to the islands newspapers means that British iconography was already well established in the island at the time.

Re-creating the war with British iconography became a tradition that continued well into the 1990s, and deliberate efforts were made to link anniversary commemorations between the island and London. Celebrations which coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of VE Day were the largest that the United Kingdom has ever seen for any Second World War event. Led by a massive celebration in London designed to mark the end of the war, including a ceremony in Hyde Park (with the Prime Minister in attendance) and with a service of remembrance in St. Paul's Cathedral, places across

³¹ 'Back to the Forties Extravaganza', Forties Weekend special insert, *Manx Independent* (5-6 Aug 1989), p. 1.

the British Isles observed some form of commemoration within their own communities. On the Isle of Man, 8 May 1995 was commemorated with a 'weekend of celebration', organised in conjunction with the 'national' celebrations in Britain.³² Once again the role of the military and British commemorative icons took pride of place. From Ramsay to Port Erin, Union flags were gathered, dusted off and waved, street parties occurred in most Manx towns, the biggest being in Castletown, with over 250 people in attendance. In Douglas there was an aviation show in which the star attraction was a Spitfire. Much like the remembrance service in St. Paul's Cathedral, the Isle of Man held its own 'national commemoration service' in St. German's Cathedral in Peel, which was attended by the Lieutenant Governor, representatives of the House of Keys, and members of the British Legion and other veterans' groups. The Isle of Man Post Office commissioned commemorative stamps to remember the event featuring scenes from VE Day celebrations in London and scenes from VE Day on the island, complete with crossed Union and Manx flags.³³ Isle of Man £2 and £5 coins were also struck bearing Winston Churchill's face and his familiar V for victory salute.³⁴ In the evening, the lighting of a 'national' bonfire to coincide with the one being lit by the Queen in Hyde Park was designed to link the island with the festivities occurring in Britain, and reinforce the wider British connections.

Despite the deliberate association with festivities in Britain through the use of typically British tropes, the 1995 organisers this time made a significant attempt to incorporate Manx elements into the event programme, highlighting Manx achievements. For the service of remembrance in St. German's Cathedral, for example, part of the ceremony was delivered by Reverend Kenneth Britton, who read in Manx Gaelic. Outside the former Peveril internment camp in Peel, barbed wire (this time of a plastic variety to prevent injury) was once again erected, to give visitors a taste of the internment experience. One photograph from the event shows children smiling from behind the wire, a caption that read 'Young people... see for themselves what it was like

³² 'Oh what a lovely day', *Manx Independent* (12 May 1995), p. 29.

³³ 50th VE/VJ Day 1995 Stamps, Date of Issue 8/5/95, Manx Archive, MNH: B102.

³⁴ 'Isle of Man's new £2 and £5 coins', Advertisement, *Manx Examiner* (9 May 1995), p. 6.

[in Peel] during the war'.³⁵ In Port Erin a controlled access point, reminiscent of the one which graced the entrance of the town while it was occupied by female internees was temporarily constructed, proving to be 'a big hit' with the islanders.³⁶ This was, perhaps for the first time, a direct acknowledgement of the Manx domestic wartime history in a festival designed to celebrate the war itself. Though shown from the viewpoint of an internee rather than from a Manxman suffering the incursion of internment camps in their daily lives, and heavily overshadowed by other events, this uniquely Manx aspect found a place in the island's reconstruction of the war. While making a conscious effort to link the festivities occurring with those in Britain, the need for island specific heritage was acknowledged in the physical representations of internment which formed a small part of the 1995 commemorations. This coincides with an awareness of the need for Manx-centric narratives to be commemorated alongside the island's contribution to the wider war, a trend that continued into the twenty-first century.

The year 2005, which coincided with the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, is a particularly good year for gauging the island's remembrance. In this year, there were two specific events both with the same mandate: designed to commemorate the Isle of Man's role in World War Two, but with very different outcomes. Both are examples of performative commemoration which involved islanders and were created by island based organisations, one sought to incorporate the Manx experience into what had become a traditional commemoration of war, the other was designed to concentrate on the island's domestic war history.

In 2005, during an effort to co-ordinate commemorations of the war, the British government set aside 10 July—the midpoint between VE Day and VJ Day—as the date to celebrate the end of the war in its entirety. The Isle of Man participated in this wider celebration by holding a large military tattoo at Tynwald Hill on 16 July. The event was organised by local veterans' groups and other interested amateur parties, 'cultural agents' who saw the need for a Manx commemoration which coincided with the British

³⁵ 'Oh what a lovely day', *Manx Independent* (12 May 1995), p. 28.

³⁶ 'Island remembers end of war in Europe in weekend of celebration and commemoration', *Isle of Man Examiner* (9 May 1995), p.6.

one. The decision to celebrate 'Victory Day' on the Isle of Man with a military ceremony was made by a group founded as 'the 60th Committee'; mostly comprised of members from the Joint Ex-Service Association, Royal British Legion, the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association, and the Veterans agency.³⁷ The day was planned in conjunction with two concerts earlier that year, one of which was entitled 'From Dunkirk to V.E. Day', a garden party for veterans at Villa Marina, and a 'Victory Parade' (also accompanied by pipes and drums) down Douglas Promenade followed by a service of recollection and thanksgiving.³⁸

The Tattoo was the centerpiece of the VE and VJ Day events that year, and one which was specifically mandated to contain Manx elements and focus on the Manx contribution to the war effort. The heavy involvement of veterans in the creation and planning of the event however, meant that the Tattoo situated the Isle of Man in the wider contribution to the war rather than in the Manx domestic experience. As a result, the event borrowed heavily from British 'finest-hour' iconography. There were a number of Manx elements: the Isle of Man Constabulary brought police dogs in to perform an obstacle course and jump through hoops of fire, and the 'Purple Helmets', an island renowned motorcycle display team took to the field to perform stunts, celebrating the Isle of Man's motorcycle heritage. But despite these minor acknowledgements, the event was a decidedly British celebration of World War II. It opened with a military fanfare, standard bearers from the various Legion associations marched onto the parade ground to the tune of 'The British Legion March'. The Union flag took pride of place at the front of the pack, in front of the Manx flag. The organisers also featured films that were shown on a big screen erected on one corner of the square. These provided an interval and a backdrop for the events which took place on the parade ground. Even these films, it seems, were subject to influence from British popular conception. One of the films, entitled 'Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain', flashed images of fighter pilots while a real RAF Spitfire conducted a flypast, dipping its wings as

³⁷ *Isle of Man Tattoo Programme of Events* (Isle of Man, 2005), p. 5.

³⁸ 'The 60th Committee programme of events', Manx Archive, MNH: B114/72.

a salute.³⁹ It may have been more appropriate to have an Avro Anson perform the fly-past, since it would have been the plane most seen over Manx skies during the war, but the Spitfire was chosen because of its wider symbolic nature. This was not lost on the audience beneath, as Connelly has shown, that particular plane represents an inherently 'composite and communal' memory, as the idea of the 'Spitfire summer' has taken on almost as much significance as the war itself.⁴⁰ The flypast was followed with a display by the 103rd Regiment of Artillery (from Lancashire), who encouraged the crowd into doing a 'Mexican wave' while competing against each other to be the first to assemble and fire a 105mm light gun.⁴¹ Though archival footage of internees was included as part of the films shown on the screens, it was sandwiched with two other pieces of footage on Burma and the Far East, and victory over Germany.

The latter part of the evening's events included a variety of brass bands, a selection of songs which have become characteristic of Second World War victory celebrations, 'Lili Marlene', 'White Cliffs of Dover', and 'We'll Meet Again', with the crowd bursting into song. The evening ended with a minute's silence, with the Master of Ceremonies for the event, Ian Cannell CBE, appealing to the crowd to acknowledge the achievement of the men and women who served during the Second World War 'in the usual way'.⁴² Before leaving the parade square, the band played a hymn and both the British and Manx national anthems, with 'God Save the Queen' preceding 'O Land of Our Birth', as the sky opened up with fireworks.

The Tattoo of 2005 is perhaps the best example of how Manx commemorations can be structured to reflect a common British identity. An event designed specifically to commemorate the Manx involvement in the war was, in essence, a display of 'Britishness' and an affirmation of the cultural and historical connections the island has with Britain and the British armed forces. This remembrance bears the hallmarks of a typical 'British' celebration, including much of the commemorative tropes used within

³⁹ *Isle of Man Tattoo Programme of Events* (Isle of Man, 2005), pp. 10-12.

⁴⁰ Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, pp. 119-120.

⁴¹ *Isle of Man Tattoo Programme of Events* (Isle of Man, 2005), p. 10.

⁴² *The Isle of Man Tattoo*. DVD (Isle of Man, 2005).

British 'finest-hour' mythology; fireworks, Vera Lynn songs and Spitfires, all symbolic of the status that World War Two has over British popular memory. With the notable exception of the 'Purple Helmets', the Tattoo could have been transplanted to any county in Britain, and in every case, 'British' was favoured over 'Manx', the Union flag flew with pride of place, and 'God Save the Queen' came before the Manx national anthem. Though Manx and incomers had a hand in the development of the commemoration, the involvement of veterans in the planning and execution of the Tattoo had perhaps the most impact. The Tattoo became a manifestation of their experiences and their remembrance, serving to celebrate the role the island played in the war rather than the role the war played in the island. The Tattoo, much like the 1995 commemorations, the commissioning of stamps with images of Churchill, the giving away of Union flags during street parties, all serve as devices with which the Isle of Man can affirm its role within the British glorious victory. It is a time for the island to celebrate their contribution to the wider war.

This kind of remembrance can be directly contrasted with another event which took place on the island a month later. The 'Wire and Wool' festival, a promenade play which was organised in Port Erin in August of the same year, embraced the island's domestic role during the war. Organised with the assistance of the Isle of Man Arts Council, the event featured a recreation of internment while using agents from the local community. With a cast of 120, all volunteers from the island or from those with a family connection with internment, the play was a detailed interpretation of the experience of internment on the Isle of Man from a variety of perspectives.⁴³ Island residents of all ages were involved in the project, some dressing up in costume to portray internees, others becoming 'the islanders' watching the events unfold as in 1940. Stories from both the internees and local Manx residents who witnessed the events were meticulously compiled by the play's writer and director Peggy Riley, and wherever possible, internees themselves or the children of internees were included in the demonstration. Although the play took only a few hours, it represented several years of

⁴³ Interview with Dawn Maddrell, Director, Isle of Man Arts Council, conducted by the author, 15 May 2006.

internment on the island. The assembled audience was encouraged to become part of the story of internment, meeting the internees at the train station and continuing with them during their billeting. Through carefully crafted dialogue, they were able to share with them their concerns and fears.

The ambiguity of internment is well represented in the script. Many of the actors representing internees complain about the lack of food and the treatment by locals at the places they were first interned. Others express concern for their family and other loved ones who were taken away from them. The injustice of internment also provides a central theme. 'I'd come on the Kindertransport' says one cast member, 'I was a Jew in Germany. Now I was a German in England. You couldn't win'.⁴⁴ As imaginary months pass, the internees try to carve an occupation for themselves while in captivity. One internee discusses her trouble with the Service Exchange, set up to keep women employed during internment. The system is set up for women to trade their skills for barter. Almost all of the women receive 'knitting' as their trade, a less than satisfactory occupation for some. Many welcome the change of pace saying 'I was determined to find a way for us to work together—and make something of ourselves.'⁴⁵

The more sinister side of the internees is reflected in the character of Wanda Wehrman, an ardent Nazi follower. Wehrman tries to instill National Socialism from within the ranks of women. Encouraging Nazi salutes, she publicly praises Adolf Hitler and the German race. 'He made us strong again' she says, 'you too want to be strong!' Wehrman and the pro-Nazi women agitate the audience with swastika armbands and chanting. Some of the women hold up knitted strips of all different colours. One internee steps forward and says 'Communists, Jews, Austrians, Germans, we had nothing in common except our hatred for the Nazis—and knitting!'⁴⁶ Upon arrival at the site of the Eagle Hotel where many of the women were to be billeted, the internees are organised into groups. The Eagle Hotel, it is said, will take one hundred internees. A

⁴⁴ Peggy Reily, 'Wire and Wool: Life in the Women's Internment Camp', Script provided courtesy of Dawn Maddrell, Isle of Man Art Council, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Reily, 'Wire and Wool', p. 38.

⁴⁶ Reily, 'Wire and Wool', p. 23.

struggle ensues between two women, one pro-Nazi and one Jewish, they are pulled apart by their guard.

An air raid sounds, local children join in making the noise, seemingly unperturbed. One of the internees describes the event: 'We had air raids every time there was one in Liverpool. And Liverpool was bombed to bits....Most people say when they get up for an air raid they put the kettle on and have biscuits or something. We had nothing.'⁴⁷

In a small nod to British commemorative tradition, the theatrical production ended on the beach at Port Erin, with a lighting of a bonfire to mark the end of the war. Each actor who played an internee took a small lantern and placed it in front of their real life counterpart. Women playing the roles of Manx residents handed their lanterns to the families of those who gave up their homes for the internees. One actor delivered the final line; 'It's sixty years since the camps closed. Sixty years since we were children and lived this story.' 'Now,' he says, 'it's your story'.⁴⁸ Like the Tattoo, the crowd observed the 'usual' two minutes silence before a brass band began a dance on the beach, ending the events for the day.

'Wire and Wool' was a community reconstruction of its domestic heritage, one which was led by an official government agency, namely the Isle of Man Arts Council, but was ultimately made possible by the involvement of the islanders themselves. 'Wire and Wool' presented the story of internment on the Isle of Man in both positive and negative lights. Portraying the divisive nature of internment for both Manx residents and the internees, it stressed the loneliness and boredom of the women held there and the efforts they made to combat this. It did not stress unity, instead it characterized the experience on the Isle of Man during the Second World War as dependant on individual, not shared, experience. Accepting the divisiveness caused by the arrival of internees on the Isle of Man, embracing a darker side of the Second World War is out of line with the traditional 'finest-hour' celebrations in which Britain participates. The performance is also unusual in the sense that it presents a critical version of history, suggesting that the

⁴⁷ Reily, 'Wire and Wool', p. 43.

⁴⁸ Reily, 'Wire and Wool', p. 53.

event was aimed at local rather than tourist interests. As Gable and Handler have shown through a case study of Colonial Williamsburg, tourists prefer a comforting rather than critical history when consuming heritage.⁴⁹ It may, however, be much more complicated than that. Though local volunteers participated in the event, it was officially produced under the auspices of the Isle of Man Arts Council, a division of the Isle of Man Government. Local cultural agents, and indeed members of the general public provided the cast of characters, but it was heritage experts, individuals like Peggy Reily, a writer and community artist from Kent who was commissioned by the Isle of Man Arts Council to write the script, and Dawn Maddrell, Arts Development Officer, a civil service post, who headed the project. The Tattoo, on the other hand, was organised by unofficial government agencies. The 60th Committee was comprised not of civil servants, but of veterans' organisations and families of veterans who had an interest in seeing the celebration of 'Victory Day' on the island. Brass bands, re-enactments, Vera Lynn songs, and fireworks all exude a certain sense of connectedness with the British war narrative, with both Manx and non-Manx veterans of the war choosing to celebrate the war in an inclusive 'British' rather than truly 'Manx' way.

This suggests that there are multiple agents at work in actively creating displays of identity and performative commemoration in the island. Creating something critical and island-specific, the Isle of Man Arts Council invested in an event which promoted the unique domestic Manx story. This was supported by island residents who had an interest in the internment story and by internees and their families who returned to the Isle of Man to participate in the play. Though privileging internment, the event was not completely removed from what has, since the 1980s, become the traditional way to celebrate the war. With the inclusion of a bonfire, party, and minutes silence, it contained elements which people have come to expect from World War II remembrance. The Tattoo, in a similar fashion, contained both elements, though in this case the Manx elements took a backseat to the inclusivity of British commemorative

⁴⁹ Eric Gable and Richard Handler, 'Deep Dirt: Messing Up the Past at Colonial Williamsburg', in Uzi Baram and Yorke Rowan, eds, *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 2004), pp. 167-181.

tropes. The veterans' groups at work in organizing this version of performative commemoration were careful to include elements of the Isle of Man's war, but they did so by incorporating them into the larger narrative of Britain's victory.

Performative commemoration in the island has, since large-scale commemorations began in the 1980s, used similar imagery and events to those of their British neighbours. Cultural agents in the island, be they veterans' organisations, unofficial heritage agencies, or economically motivated parties, have constructed a commemorative culture which mirrors that of Britain and includes the island's war history as part of Britain's victory, carving for themselves a place within the Churchillian paradigm. The role of internment in the islands history, however, has been championed by the islands official heritage bodies, with events such as 'Wire and Wool' providing an alternate narrative to that which has traditionally been commemorated. There are now two different narratives promoted in the island, the island's role in events like Dunkirk and D-Day—the traditional narrative—with the emergence of an internment narrative, promoted by official agencies, and one which highlights the Isle of Man's uniqueness. The willing participation of islanders in both narratives, the popularity of internment 'experiences' like 'Wire and Wool' and the barbed wire encampments erected in 1995 with tattoos and military re-enactments, suggests that the general public actively consume both narratives, and that they can coexist as different elements of the 'Manx' experience of war.

III) Material representations of the war

An investigation into how heritage is created in the island shows that such divisions, between officially sanctioned heritage through Manx National Heritage, and 'cultural agents' who have a vested interest in seeing commemoration of the Isle of Man's role in the wider war, are not uncommon.

Officially opened in 1922, the Manx Museum has been responsible for the preservation of Manx antiquities and natural history for almost a century. Greatly

expanded in the late 1980s, the museum now houses a number of galleries, a lecture theatre, and the national art gallery, as well as providing a headquarters for Manx National Heritage. It is also here where the *Story of Mann*, the main presentation of the work of Manx National Heritage begins. The story starts within the museum with a showcase of Manx antiquity, beginning with the geology which created it right through to its golden age as the seat of Norse power in the Irish Sea. Chronologically constructed, the later part of the museum exhibition, which covers the modern period, is contained within two social history galleries.⁵⁰ It is within these galleries that the story of holidaymakers on the Isle of Man and the island's role in the Second World War is laid out. Visitors are encouraged to sit in a deck chair on a mock beach and watch a film about the Isle of Man as a tourist destination. When visitors walk around the corner however they are presented with a different picture. Visitors must walk past a series of newspaper clippings announcing the beginning of hostilities with Germany, arriving at the centerpiece of the exhibition—a bedroom display. On one side of this display the sign reads 'Summer 1939', on the other 'Summer 1940'. A crack passes through the ceiling, bed and floor to separate the two sides visually and, it is assumed, chronologically. On the 1939 side there is a suitcase, a camera, and a number of feminine objects. On the 1940 side there is a sparse wardrobe, a man's cap, and a set of blue striped pajamas. The décor is much less inviting than that of the previous year. The display shows the contrast between times of holidaymakers and times of war on the Isle of Man. The far wall of the display is complete with quotations, drawings, publications, and information about the internees who were confined in camps on the Isle of Man. There is also a collection of objects created by the internees, such as small woodworking projects, pieces of art carved from bones, and ships in bottles. Ascending up from the Folk Life gallery in the basement, the women's side of internment is reflected. The stairwell is covered in large photographs depicting the arrival of women internees to the

⁵⁰ Manx Museum Visitors guide handout (Manx National Heritage: Isle of Man, 2005).

island, accompanied by information, knitting, and objects made by the women during their internment.⁵¹



Figure 3: The internment display at the Manx Museum. The use of the island for tourism is contrasted with the internment period. Photo © Daniel Travers.

The island's military role in the Second World War is not reflected in the social history galleries. Such aspects of the island's contribution to the war are minimized in the Manx Museum in order to favour a history which privileges the unique story of internment. The use of the island as a training base for allied airmen and the contribution of the 15th Manx Regiment are given very little space. Any mention of the Second World War as a military endeavour is limited to a small section in the Folk Life gallery about a meter square, where it occupies a space next to similar sections entitled 'The First World War' and 'The Manx Fusiliers'. There, almost hidden from the viewing public, the words 'The People's War' are present underneath its heading. None of the other displays has any subtitle. There are no displays of weaponry, nothing said about

⁵¹ This was a temporary display designed to coincide with the 'Wire and Wool' event in 2005. It has since been replaced, though the objects still remain in the possession of MNH.

the many airfields that were utilized during the war. The entire history of the 15th Manx Artillery regiment is limited to a paragraph on a wall in the basement of the Manx museum, often barely noticed by visitors. The uniquely Manx story of internment however, is neatly packaged and made accessible for consumption by resident and visitor alike. Contrary to Britain, which gives pride of place to the glorious celebration of its military role in the sheer number and size of museums dedicated to war themes, Manx National Heritage celebrates its own sense of place by stressing its part in a darker side of the Second World War.

This need to privilege the role of internment in the Story of Mann is also reflected in the artwork contained in the Manx National Art Collection. Here, the story of internment forms the majority of the selections among the paintings in *The Art of War* section. The gallery itself introduces the section as a 'long established tradition', 'ranging from Castle Rushen and Peel Castle to the civilian internment camps of two world wars'.⁵² The displays, however, are less about combat and more about the island's domestic experience, constituting virtually all of the display in the National Collection meant to reflect the war. Any works of art which depict pre-twentieth century warfare on the Isle of Man are eclipsed by the overwhelming amount of art depicting internment and internees. Most striking is a painting by Hugo Dachinger created while interned at Ramsey in 1940, in which he painted on top of a newspaper featuring news of the war. A portrait of two children, one blonde and one brown haired, peer through a barbed wire fence.⁵³ Dachinger and other artists' paintings feature prominently within the war section, under such headings as 'Life at Palace Camp'⁵⁴ and 'Mooragh Camp, Ramsey'⁵⁵ All of the paintings and drawings depict similar things; men standing chatting and smoking, grey unrecognizable figures, and barbed wire. Seven out of the twelve paintings in the 'war' section (at the time of the author's research) depict internment,

⁵² Banner at 'Art of War' section—Manx Museum, Douglas, May 2005.

⁵³ The newspaper was a Manchester Guardian dated 5 October 1940. Hugo Dachinger, 'Painting' (Watercolour), Manx Museum, IOMMM:2002-0141.

⁵⁴ Imre Goth, 'Life at Palace Camp, Douglas 1942' (Drawing), Manx Museum, IOMMM: 1994-0021/4.

⁵⁵ Hugo Dachinger, 'Mooragh Camp, Ramsey' (Watercolour), Manx Museum, IOMMM: 2002-0143 and 2002-0144.

flanked by an oil painting of a fleet of First World War battleships and a portrait of Dr Robert Marshall, Chief Medical Officer of the first internment camp on the Isle of Man during the First World War (also painted by an internee).⁵⁶ This is perhaps due to the fact that internment art numerically outweighs other war art from the period – internees had very little to do during their internment than create such works. Militarily, the Isle of Man played a very minor role in the conflict, though for a small nation they did arguably more than their fair share. The prevalence of internment within the war art in the Manx Museum suggests not only that it is understood as the Manx memory of the war, but that it forms part of Manx national identity. This is heralded by the entrance to the gallery, which says ‘these artworks all share something in common—an artist’s desire to try and capture a sense of Manxness and Manx identity’.⁵⁷ Having internment art in a gallery which purports to ‘capture a sense of Manxness’ shows that internment is an essential part of the Manx national narrative. Much like the paintings of ships and castles which define the Manx experience in the early modern period, the twentieth century is defined, at least within these galleries, by this, the experience of internment. Manxness, therefore, relies on a sense of ownership of the internment story, in a similar way that the finest-hour mythology imparts a sense of Britishness. Internment is part of ‘their story’, their heritage and war narrative.

⁵⁶ Fritz Von Kampz, ‘Dr. Robert Marshall’ (Portrait), Manx Museum, IOMMM: 1999-0073.

⁵⁷ Banner at the entrance to the art gallery—Manx Museum, Douglas, May 2005.



Figure 4: Children behind barbed wire as painted by Hugo Dachinger. It now hangs in the Manx National Art Gallery. Photo © Daniel Travers.

The island's role in the wider war, however, cannot be ignored. Instead, it is presented as one of the many events that the island has had a hand in over its long history. At the House of Manannan in Peel, the visitor is treated to a journey through the history of the Isle of Man, beginning with the age of the Celts and their roundhouse culture. Visitors are ushered from one room to another through the chronological history of the island as 'wax' figures and videos tell the story of the island's past. This pseudo-living history museum is laid out to retell the island's history, based thematically as well as chronologically. As Stuart Hannabus has shown, this type of 'storying approach' allows heritage interpreters a 'vehicle for explanation', a way to chronologically exhibit the society's values and achievements in an easily consumable way.⁵⁸ One of the features of the House of Manannan is a representation of Manannan Mac Lir himself, the great mythological sea god and patron protector of the island,⁵⁹ whose costume changes as the visitor moves through the history of the island, and

⁵⁸ Hannabus, 'How Real is Our Past?', p. 360.

⁵⁹ Charles MacQuarrie, *The Biography of the Irish God of the Sea from the Voyage of Bran (700 AD) to Finnegans Wake (1939): The Waves of Manannán* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004).

particularly its maritime heritage. A large display is dedicated to the kipper industry and to the Steam Packet Company, as well as a number of Manx ships and boats of distinction. There is very little to suggest that the island was involved in the Second World War, with one exception. In the Naval Encounters gallery, Manannan invites the visitor to hear the stories of the island's naval history. As Manannan speaks, a light shines slowly on the wax figures of Peter Heywood, famous for his role in the mutiny on the *Bounty*, and John Quilliam, who fought at Trafalgar. 'This small nation has had its place in the most dramatic naval encounters', Manannan says, while slowly, the light shines on the figure of an old man in a chair. Captain Harry Kinley sits and describes to the visitor his achievements on the Steam Packet ship *Viking*, a boat which ferried troops from the Cherbourg and LeHavre harbours during the time of Dunkirk. 'The most moving moment was tying up in St. Peter Port, Guernsey,' the voiceover says, 'and finding 1800 children waiting on the Quay, ready to be evacuated to Britain. You cry a lot of tears in war'. The figure of Manannan describes these events as 'Captain Kinley's finest-hour'.⁶⁰

Kinley's inclusion to the House of Manannan, like the waxwork itself, is out of place. Kinley's waxwork figure sits on a stage surrounded by characters of the Isle's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century history, his contemporary attire seemingly incongruous with the canvas and rigging of a Napoleonic-era ship. While limited exhibition space may partially explain this exhibiting choice, this is the only physical representation of the Manx involvement at Dunkirk, clearly a story too important to ignore, but insufficiently significant to dedicate an entire section. Visitors are treated to Kinley's part of the war within a context of one of the many stories that the Manx have to tell. His story, much like the 'wire and wool' event, privileges the experience of the individual, while at the same time delimits the Isle of Man's larger involvement in the war. This is a constant theme within the Isle of Man's commemorative identity. The Manx Museum recognizes the Manx role within the Second World War with a tribute tucked away in the basement, acknowledging the Manx involvement in the greater

⁶⁰ House of Manannan Exhibit: 'Naval Encounters', House of Manannan, Peel, May 2005.

whole, and emphasizing the island's role within it. In this way, the war forms one of the many events Manxmen have had a hand in.

This is also reflected in the Isle of Man's philately. On no less than seven occasions the Isle of Man has issued stamps featuring an image of a Spitfire aircraft, and on four occasions the Manx Post Office has issued stamps with Churchill.⁶¹ Perhaps the best example of combining Manx elements into British narratives was the 'Isle of Man at War' series, which featured Churchill on the same stamp as Alan Watterson, second officer on the Tynwald, a ship which made five trips to Dunkirk and back. It also featured Manx heroes such as John Quilliam alongside Lord Nelson, John Dunne alongside Robert Baden Powell, and George Kneale beside Lord Kitchener.⁶² This deliberate connection allows the Isle of Man to find a place for itself within the British narrative, while at the same time maintaining 'their story' in it. It allows homegrown heroes to be part of the larger picture, while at the same time taking on the role of the 'common hero'. The Manx post office, therefore, sees no contradiction in issuing stamps to commemorate the Battle of Britain in the same year that they issued stamps featuring artwork from internment camps. They did both in 2010.⁶³ As for the House of Manannan, Captain Kinley's testimony has been packaged alongside the stories of other notable Manx Naval personnel at infamous junctures in history. By doing this it sets up the Manx as a driving force behind some of Britain's wartime achievements. What is important about the display in the House of Manannan is that his story represents 'Kinley's finest-hour' not 'Britain's finest-hour'. In this way, Manx National Heritage maintains its role as enforcer of cultural distinctiveness, while at the same time it nurtures the relationship between itself and Britain. It finds a place for the Isle of Man in important historical moments for the British Isles as a whole.

⁶¹ 'Isle of Man Stamps and Coins - Archive - Britain at War Miniature Sheet', Isle of Man Post Office <<http://www.iompost.com/stamps/Issue.aspx?productid=815&categoryid=195>> [Accessed 12 Aug 2011].

⁶² Stanley Gibbons, *Collect Channel Islands & Isle of Man Stamps Stamp Catalogue*, 26th Combined Edition (Ringwood: Hants, Stanley Gibbons, 2010), p. 181.

⁶³ 'Isle of Man Stamps and Coins - Stamp issues', Isle of Man Post Office <<http://www.gov.im/post/stamps/stampissues.xml>> [Accessed 12 Aug 2011].

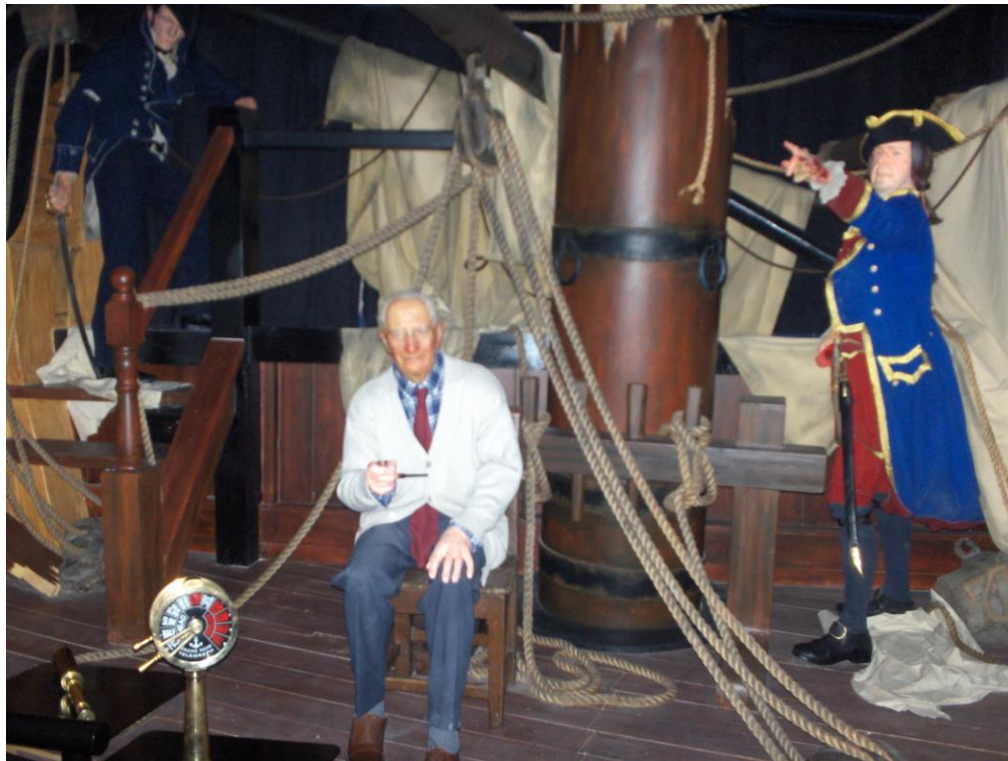


Figure 5: The 'Naval Encounters' exhibit at the House of Mannannan, Peel. Captain Kinley sits in the foreground telling the story of his 'finest-hour'. Photo © Daniel Travers.

Much like in performative commemorations over the last decade, official government heritage bodies have remained committed to seeing a Manx-centric narrative take precedence over the Churchillian paradigm. There are, however, people and organisations on the island which do display aspects of the island's external role during the war, creating an alternative to the exhibits chosen by Manx National Heritage.

The Manx Aviation Preservation Society, for example, in operation as an organisation since 1995 and consisting of about forty-five members, prides itself on the preservation and conservation of the island's aviation and military heritage. The society publishes a monthly newsletter entitled 'Station Flight' while running a small museum, the Manx Aviation and Military Museum, underneath the drone of jet engines near Ronaldsway airport, in what was once the aerial photography building. In this museum, a part-time staff of volunteers have collected and maintained various fragments of

downed planes, uniforms, militaria, and weaponry, and though it was originally designed to focus solely on the aerial history of the island, it now extends to include the military history of the world wars. The society was largely set up by veterans of the Second World War who, according to one member, ‘felt a strong need’ to present this particular aspect of the island’s history. All of the members are either current or former residents of the island, though many of them, according to the organisation’s secretary, are not Manx.⁶⁴ Advertised as being an illustration of ‘Manx aviation in war and peace...and the Isle of Man and its people at war’,⁶⁵ the museum supports itself through shop sales, dances, lectures, and charitable donations. Although there is an admission fee of £1, it is very rarely enforced.

The museum’s displays resemble a great many tributes to the war dotted around the British Isles. Its cabinets and displays are filled with helmets, medals, uniforms, and bits of aircraft—presumably from many of the ill-fated planes lost in the Manx fog. The museum also gives pride of place to various aircraft models, constructed to give the visitor an idea of the kind of planes which would have flown to and from the island during the war years. It is also the only museum which gives a comprehensive guide to the 15th Artillery Manx Regiment. Filling a small corrugated iron shelter, the objects collected by the regiment as they served with distinction across Europe and the Mediterranean are displayed. The Manx Aviation Preservation Society is not affiliated in any way with Manx National Heritage, and therefore it cannot be said that it has received official sanction save for the granting of an IOM registered charity number. In contrast to the ‘official’ heritage produced by the Manx Museum, the display at Ronaldsway presents and displays items from the Second World War which are not connected with internment, the other side of the island’s double narrative.

Much like the Tattoo the museum is the product of local cultural agents, though many would be considered ‘comeovers’. Expressing the need for variance from official heritage, their interest stems from their own experience as veterans and their

⁶⁴ Interview with Ivor Ramsden, secretary of the Manx Aviation Preservation Society, by the author, 21 May 2006.

⁶⁵ Manx Aviation Preservation Society pamphlet (Isle of Man, 2005).

connections with the Isle of Man through living there. This ensures that the traditional inclusive British commemoration remains alive on the island, maintaining an unofficial form of remembrance which is more closely linked with that of Britain, rather than favouring Manx-specific history.

There are other private museums that do the same thing. The Leece Museum, which operates in Peel courthouse, is located midway between the House of Mannanan and Peel Castle, two of MNH's larger heritage sites. The museum was founded in 1984 by T.E. Leece, a former Town Commissioner, and Frank Quayle who served as the museum's curator for its first 15 years. Today it is run by several volunteers and one full time member, Roy Baker, who was hired for his 'extensive knowledge of Peel and the Isle of Man' rather than any professional expertise in heritage management.⁶⁶ The museum exhibits a collection of objects, photographs and documents specifically of Peel provenance, some which pertain to military involvement of the island, including a Royal Navy uniform worn by Manxman Billy Quane.⁶⁷

The most recent museum to see a need to include the wider war in its exhibits is the newly opened Jurby Transport Museum. The museum, which is staffed entirely by volunteers, was opened in early 2010 and is based in unit 230, a World War II hangar at the former Jurby airfield. Attracting 22,000 visitors up to the end of November 2011, the museum exhibits artifacts which pertain to the transport heritage of the island. It was founded by amateur transport enthusiasts, including a retired police officer, an airport fire-fighter, and a garage manager, all of whom are Manx born or have lived in the island for many years and share a common interest in the preservation of the island's history. Speaking of the motivation behind the museum, one of the founders, Richard Davis has said, 'we could see that a number of historic items were in need to[sic] "saving" and decided to do something about it as it was obvious that nobody else was likely to do it'.⁶⁸ The museum has no direct connection but enjoys a 'mutually beneficial

⁶⁶ Personal Correspondence with Roy Baker, Leece Museum, Isle of Man, 6 Dec 2011.

⁶⁷ 'New exhibits', The Leece Museum, Peel <<http://www.peelonline.net/leece/new.htm>> [Accessed 7 Dec 2011].

⁶⁸ Personal correspondence with Richard Davis, Jurby Transport Museum founder, 4 Dec 2011.

relationship' with Manx National Heritage, making vehicles and staff available at events run by government agencies and local authorities at no cost, working, in their words 'to support the island's economy and the tourism and leisure industry in any way we can'.⁶⁹ The 'Spitfire first flight anniversary', a special exhibition which commemorated the 75th Anniversary of the first flight of the Spitfire in Britain on 5 March 1936 was held at the Jurby Transport Museum, and consisted of a large display of Spitfire parts and memorabilia. Peter Oakden, one of the museum founders was the event organiser, together with Andy Saunders from the Manx Aviation and Military Museum.⁷⁰ The Transport Trust is currently in discussion to construct a 'Jurby Airfield Museum' out of a guardhouse near the old Jurby airfield. This is intended to house displays and exhibits dedicated to the island's aviation heritage, and particularly Jurby's role as an RAF base during World War II.⁷¹

Though there are people and groups on the island which have chosen to display differing narratives, the Manx Government, through Manx National Heritage, places overwhelming emphasis on the island's own stories, either in contrast to or as part of the British national narrative. There is, perhaps, good reason for this. John Belchem has shown that since the late nineteenth century, a concerted effort has been made to stress the uniqueness of the Isle of Man from the United Kingdom. Going back as far as the first arrival of tourists to the island, 'gentlemanly antiquarians' have attempted to preserve and protect Manx uniqueness, both politically and culturally.⁷² In the latter half of the twentieth century this was extended to Manx Heritage sites. As Susan Lewis, a sociocultural anthropologist who specializes in the Isle of Man, has argued, Manx National Heritage sites have taken it upon themselves to exude a sense of Manx distinctiveness. This is done deliberately in order to differentiate the Isle of Man from

⁶⁹ 'Jurby Transport Museum Mission Statement', November 2011, generously provided by Richard Davis, Jurby Transport Museum Chairman, 29 Nov 2011.

⁷⁰ 'Spitfire First Flight Anniversary', Jersey Transport Museum (2011), <http://jtmjom.piwigo.com/index?/category/5-Spitfire_first_flight_anniversary> [Accessed 12 Nov 2011].

⁷¹ 'Jurby Transport Museum Mission Statement', p.2.

⁷² John Belchem, 'Little Manx Nation: Antiquarianism, Ethnic Identity, and Home Rule Politics in the Isle of Man, 1880-1918', *Journal of British Studies* 39, 2 (Apr, 2000), pp. 217-240

Britain.⁷³ This deepening of the island's history can be considered a continuation of the Manx 'antiquarianism' which was begun in the nineteenth century, and subject to the same motivations; the survival of a distinctly Manx culture. The arrival of thousands of tourists mainly from Lancashire and Yorkshire in the nineteenth century created a situation where the island's permanent residents 'constructed the necessary traditions to safeguard Manx cultural distinctiveness'.⁷⁴

Such concerns are just as valid in the new millennium as they were in 1900. The import of what has been called 'comeover culture' provides a very real threat to the survival of Manx culture in an age of increasing globalization. As a result, conscious decisions have been made on behalf of the Manx government, and implemented through Manx National Heritage and the various government-affiliated cultural organisations. The virtual hegemony that government-based heritage organisations have in the island, has allowed the internment narrative to take the forefront in how the island chooses to ostentate its heritage to residents and visitors alike. In 1999, the Isle of Man government reviewed its policies regarding Manx National Heritage, and the role that it played in Manx society. It came to the conclusion that:

At a time of changes in the resident and visiting population structure; the work of Manx National Heritage in securing the roots of Manx identity promotes internal stability and pride as well as a basis for international and economic promotion. The international prestige and image of the Island will be considerably increased in the future by a continuation of the quality controlled presentation of the islands unique cultural and natural assets.⁷⁵

The privileging of a story which is uniquely Manx reinforces a Manx identity. The attempts to 'quality control' and present uniqueness have led to Manx National Heritage favouring an approach to history which emphasizes its differences and not its similarities with Britain. Manx National Heritage has been selective in the historical events and themes it has chosen to highlight and celebrate. Internment has thus been

⁷³ Susan Lewis, 'Roots of/Roots to Practice and Performance of Identity in the Isle of Man', PhD Thesis, University of St. Andrews (2004), p. 16.

⁷⁴ Belchem, 'The Little Manx Nation', p. 217.

⁷⁵ Hon D. J. Gelling 'General Review and Govt. Plans and Programmes', IOM Govt. Policy Review 1 (19 Oct 1999).

displayed, somewhat to the occlusion of the 'finest-hour' narrative and Manx military accomplishments such as the 15th Light AA battery or the training of allied airmen. Internment is embraced as part of Manx heritage and is projected as part of the collective remembrance of Manx identity in the same way that the images of the 'People's War' and 1940 are embraced and encouraged in Britain. In this way, the Isle of Man government has prioritized its history, granting a special place for that which makes it distinctive from the rest of the British Isles.

How the Second World War is remembered on the Isle of Man is as complicated as the relationship between itself and the United Kingdom. In an effort to showcase the Isle of Man's uniqueness and distinctiveness, Manx National Heritage favours that which makes the Manx different from the rest of the British Isles, packaged for 'neat presentation and consumption.'⁷⁶ Within the island's museums, the concept of Britain's 'finest-hour' exists only as a small part of a constructed past which privileges Manx stories and history over a greater 'British' sense of being. For that reason, the Manx are not afraid to embrace what may be classified as 'bespattered history'. While proud of the close ties between themselves and Britain, it is a marriage of tradition rather than of duress. The geographic location of the Isle of Man only a few miles from the coast of England has meant that its destiny is often and inevitably intertwined with its larger neighbour. While the fate of the Isle of Man was inextricably linked with that of the United Kingdom during the war, the Isle of Man now actively imports Britishness in the form of finest-hour iconography in order to reinforce tradition, reaffirm their historical and cultural connections with Britain, and delimit Manx involvement in Britain's glorious victory. The Manx, much like the British, ensure that VE Day and D-Day events are well celebrated, contributing to a sense of unity and commonality with the UK, while at the same time allowing themselves to bask in British commemorative tropes. Simultaneously, the island rejects Britishness by favouring its own domestic heritage within national heritage sites. As Susan Lewis has argued, Britain has provided and continues to provide a mirror with which the Manx look at themselves. The culture of

⁷⁶ Lewis, 'Roots of/Roots to...', p. 51.

the United Kingdom has played a large role in forming Manx identity, as it allows the Manx something against which to define their own culture and values.⁷⁷ In most cases this manifests itself as an expression of difference. There is a desire to express 'cultural variation' from Britain built on the need to believe that the Isle of Man is unique from the rest of the British Isles.⁷⁸ Despite fears of a decline in Manx culture as a result of its relationship with England, the incorporation of more 'British' forms of celebration has actually added to the distinctiveness of the island itself. Since the Isle of Man has always welcomed comeovers, it has also absorbed and nurtured certain aspects of 'foreign' culture as its own. The co-existence of cultures which manifest themselves on the Isle of Man is displayed in the diverse way in which expressions of 'identity performance' have been carried out. As Lewis puts it,

The Manx are not, and perhaps have never been, a clearly defined ethnic group, although they express unequivocally the Island's Celtic heritage. Rather 'Manxness' could be said to lie in an idea, a set of values, a way of relating to a place and to each other. Defined thus, 'Manx identity' is and always has been shared with incomers.⁷⁹

Although Manx National Heritage explicitly desires to showcase the aspects of its history which make it unique, there are people and organisations which are willing to participate in the Churchillian paradigm, and the 'finest-hour' narrative is alive and well on the Isle of Man. But more so than in Britain, it forms only one part of several. By no means has it been sanctioned as the 'official' history of the Isle of Man, for Manx National Heritage has decided to offer a more unique view of the war from a social perspective. Instead, as in the case of Captain Kinley's immortalization, it has been packaged as just one of the many events the Manx have had a hand in. But the survival of alternative ways to remember the war on the Isle of Man has allowed for the embracing of a divisive and inglorious experience. The experience of internment has been remembered and celebrated because it represents something uniquely Manx. Unlike the various aerial, naval, and moral victories on which the British pride

⁷⁷ Lewis, 'Roots of/Roots to...', p. 16.

⁷⁸ Lewis, 'Roots of/Roots to...', pp. 46-49.

⁷⁹ Lewis, 'Roots of/Roots to...', p. 13.

themselves, internment is an experience that the Manx feel was their own. No other part of the British Isles sacrificed in the same way for this particular aspect of the war.

Chapter 3

Orkney

The Orkney Islands lie just a few miles north of the Scottish mainland, across the Pentland Firth from John O’Groats. Though officially a county of Scotland, Orkney has a unique sense of identity and culture, dating back to the time when the islands formed a significant outpost in a vast Norse naval empire. Today, Orcadians are proud of their Norse roots, ancient Norn language, and distinctiveness from Scotland and Britain. Orcadians pride themselves on being different, and use historical connections with many other nations in order to distinguish their own heritage and in order to see themselves as part of an international community, rather than just a region of Scotland.¹ Because of the presence of a British naval base at Scapa Flow, Orkney was heavily militarized during the War, and Orkney’s defensive role in the Second World War is a large part of Orkney’s domestic war experience. While the rest of the British Isles were engaged in the ‘phoney war’, Orkney gained a reputation for numerous attacks from the Luftwaffe aimed at the ships in harbour at the Flow, while at the same time being used by the Royal Navy for operations in the fjords of Norway. As a result, there are hundreds of derelict wartime buildings which litter the landscape, such as turrets, blockhouses, barracks, hangars, and sheds. Most of these have been in a serious state of disrepair since the late 1950s, only now finding heritage groups to champion their restoration. Orkney’s involvement in two more tangential aspects to the British narrative have taken forefront within Orkney’s wartime commemoration, namely the sinking of the *HMS*

¹ Daniel Travers, ‘The Italian Job: Orcadian Identity and the Legacy of its Prisoners of War’, in Jodi A. Campbell, Elizabeth Ewan, and Heather Parker, eds, *The Shaping Of Scottish Identities: Family, Nation, and the World Beyond* (Guelph: Guelph Centre for Scottish Studies, 2011), pp. 251-263.

Royal Oak in October 1939, and their association with Italian POWs after 1942. The two are not unconnected, as it was the sinking of the *Royal Oak* by a German U-boat which prompted the arrival of POW labour to build infrastructure in the island, preventing another such attack. The Italian Chapel, an ornate Roman Catholic chapel saved from scrap after the war is now, unlike the many bunkers, lovingly maintained by local Orkney craftsmen. While Orcadians enthusiastically participate in VE Day and VJ Day commemorations which occur on the mainland, it gives pride of place to the involvement of POWs in its wartime history, something which no other region in the British Isles does.² Orkney uses its role in traditional British commemorations to connect itself to the greater British whole, allowing itself to participate in the glorious British narrative using traditional 'British' commemorative iconography. The *HMS Royal Oak* and the Italian POW stories are, for Orcadians, much more important and form a larger portion of the commemorative culture of Orkney. This is because they are something which Orcadians can claim as uniquely their own. Orcadians annually commemorate the *Royal Oak* tragedy, while diligently taking care of the Italian Chapel. These provide the concrete symbols of Orkney's collective remembrance. The islands use the VE and VJ day commemorative tropes as a celebration of Britain's achievements during the Second World War, while at the same time exhibiting their own unique story in the form of their POW and *Royal Oak* history. In this way they exert their cultural sovereignty. Possession of the wreck of the *Royal Oak* has meant that this now informs part of their commemorative experience, it has been appropriated as part of 'Orkney's War', worthy of constant remembrance. By maintaining a story which they can call their own, they exert their cultural sovereignty. These divisive aspects are part of the landscape of remembrance in Orkney, because Orcadians choose to maintain their associations with it, in essence to remember where the rest of Britain has chosen to forget. In this way Orkney carves a niche for itself, not as a county in Scotland, but as a sovereign entity with far reaching international connections.

² As mentioned, even Eden Camp in Yorkshire, despite being entirely housed in a WWII era POW camp, gives surprisingly little space to such themes.

An aside is necessary here to explain why this dissertation focuses on Orkney, rather than Shetland, or perhaps Orkney *and* Shetland which a number of scholars have attempted with varying degrees of success. Shetland's relationship with Britain is an interesting one, and has been probed recently by Silke Reeploeg and Linda Riddell.³ Riddell has shown how a British identity can superimpose a Shetlander identity during times of national commemoration or mourning, as was the case shortly after the First World War.⁴ Shetland's relationship with Britain and Britishness is certainly worthy of future study, but for the purposes of this dissertation it has been excluded. Like Jersey and Guernsey, Orcadians and Shetlanders are quick to differentiate themselves from one another, though being very close in terms of geography, culture, and history. In addition to this, Shetland's Second World War collective memory is largely wrapped up in the activities of the 'Shetland Bus' boats – a small fleet of ships which was responsible for transporting agents and supplies into Norway, and transferring refugees out. The heroic narrative of clandestine activities against a superior foe, of sacrifice at sea, and a 'fleet of little ships' has more similarities to the British (Dunkirk) narrative than to Orkney's naval disaster and POW incursion. Numerous works have been written on the subject, both in English and Norwegian.⁵ It is a well celebrated and defining characteristic of Shetland's war, which makes an inclusive Orkney/Shetland national identity with regard to the war problematic.

I) The Norwegian Scots

³ Silke Reeploeg, 'The Uttermost Part of the Earth: Islands on the Edge...and in the Centre of the North Atlantic' in Jodie Matthews and Daniel Travers, eds, *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), pp. 207-217; Linda Riddell, 'Shetland's Viking Identity: A Casualty of the First World War?' in Matthews and Travers, *Islands and Britishness*, pp. 134-148.

⁴ Riddell, 'Shetland's Viking Identity', p. 146.

⁵ See: David Howarth, *The Shetland Bus: A WWII Epic of Escape, Survival and Adventure* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1951); James W. Irvine, *The Waves are Free: Shetland/Norway Links, 1940 to 1945* (Lerwick: Shetland Publishing, 1988); Kaare Iversen, *Shetland Bus Man* (Edinburgh: Pentland Press, 2000).

Orkney is perhaps one of the last places in Scotland where a regional identity takes precedent over Scottish national unity. It is a place where, as Schei and Moberg have observed, 'People are Orcadian first, then Scots or British...'⁶ Hugh Kearney, in his survey of the 'four' nations of Britain, designated the islands, along with Shetland, a distinct 'subculture' within the British Isles, arguing that involvement with Norse naval empires has meant that Orcadian communities have remained 'ethnically distinctive'.⁷ Though the Orcadian way of life has changed dramatically over the centuries, a change created by periods of economic growth and political development, Orkney has managed to maintain an identity related to but distinctly separate from that of mainland Britain.⁸ This unique sense of identity, according to Lang, constitutes both an ethnic *and* 'national' expression.⁹ It is 'ethnic' in the sense that many Orcadians still trace their ancestry back to Norse roots,¹⁰ and 'national' because it provides a way for Orcadians to differentiate themselves from Britain and Scotland.

Though officially one of the thirty-two council areas of Scotland, the Orkney Islands Council, which administers the islands, has considerably more influence over insular matters than other counties in the UK, and all of its elected members sit as independents.¹¹ Orkney returns an MP to Westminster and an MSP to Holyrood but British party politics are, in general, not well received. Orcadian unity tends to take precedence over 'national' issues, and in the mid 1980s, a small Orcadian independence movement gained ground and even fielded a candidate in the 1987 general election gaining 14.5 percent of the vote. Orcadians were also lukewarm towards devolution in 1997 at 57 percent, compared with 74 percent in the rest of Scotland.

⁶ Schei and Moberg, *The Orkney Story*, p. 10.

⁷ Kearney, *The British Isles*, p. 10.

⁸ For more see: Diana Forsythe, 'Urban-rural migration, Change and Conflict in an Orkney island Community', North Sea Oil Panel Occasional paper 14 (London : Social Science Research Council, 1982), p. 86.

⁹ Michael A. Lange, *The Norwegian Scots: An Anthropological Interpretation of Viking-Scottish Identity in the Orkney Islands* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 2007), p. 160.

¹⁰ One anthropologist argues that Orcadians were an 'extreme relic' of their Norwegian past, and that DNA wise, Orcadians have retained similar genetic traits over the last few centuries. See Derek F. Roberts, 'Genetic Affinities' in R. J. Berry and H.N. Firth, eds, *The People of Orkney* (Kirkwall: Orkney, 1986), pp. 89-106.

¹¹ Moore, *The Other British Isles*, p. 54.

Often called ‘the Norwegian Scots’, Orkney’s Viking roots have become a central theme in Orcadian heritage and are recalled in both an active and passive way throughout the year.¹² Orcadians like to see themselves as simpler, more straightforward and more tolerant than people in the rest of Britain. They consider themselves distinct from Scotland and Scandinavia, and often use their deep history to justify these claims.¹³ Norn, an ancient Norse dialect once spoken in Orkney, has seen a revival in the islands for ceremonial occasions, though the last native speakers were thought to have died in the nineteenth century. Orkney folklore also informs a distinct Orcadian culture, and, as Ernest Marwick has written, has survived more fully than the language in which it was originally spoken.¹⁴ The Orkneyinga Saga, a historical narrative about the history of the Orkney Isles during the Viking period to about 1200 CE, ensures that this period in Orkney is considered a golden age, fostering an awareness of the islands’ separateness and identity.¹⁵ Many of Orkney’s historic sites have Norse affiliation. Perhaps most famous is Maeshowe, a UNESCO World Heritage site, which is a Neolithic cairn inscribed on the inside with Norse runes. Several sites pertaining to the Orkneyinga Saga are also identifiable in Orkney, including the site at Bu, Orphir, where the Orkneyinga Saga Centre now stands. The islands also have an unusual (at least for other counties in the British Isles) tradition of celebrating Norwegian holidays such as Constitution Day with a celebration or parade in Orkney’s capital, Kirkwall.¹⁶ The Crown Prince of Norway is a regular visitor to the islands, and when the St. Magnus Centre, a hundred-year-old church hall needed re-building, it was a Hordaland County Council in Norway which provided the funds for the library.¹⁷ This Norwegian council was twinned with the Orkney Islands Council in 2005, and an Orkney-Norway Friendship Association is active on the islands. The current Orkney flag, chosen by a competition in April 2007 is reminiscent of Norway’s flag with its red background and blue cross, while also being

¹² For more see: Thompson, *The New History of Orkney*, pp. 34-189.

¹³ Lange, *The Norwegian Scots*, pp. 187, 214-217.

¹⁴ Ernest Marwick, *The Folklore of Orkney and Shetland* (Birlinn: Edinburgh, 2000).

¹⁵ Schei and Moberg, *The Orkney Story*, p. 132.

¹⁶ ‘Isles fly the flags for Norway’s big day’, *The Orcadian* (26 May 1995), p. 18.

¹⁷ Brian Flett, ‘Crown Prince opens “place of welcome and healing”’, *The Orcadian* (19 Apr 2001), pp. 18-19.

symbolic of the ancient connections with the nation. It now flies over Orkney's public buildings as a new and noticeable visual reminder of Orkney's Scandinavian past.¹⁸ Though Scottish culture is alive and well in Orkney, Norse identity provides an escape from the homogenization of the islands into the greater Scottish whole. As part of the vast Norse naval empire which stretched across the North Atlantic, the islands grew up separately from mainland Scotland, and for this reason have a distinct history which sometimes stands in opposition to their Scottish neighbours. Since much of Scotland's identity was formed in the Middle Ages; indeed Broun, Lynch, and Finlay have argued that the period was '...the crucible in which Scottish identity was formed',¹⁹ Orkney must then be considered an anathema. Though Scottish influence in the islands dates to the eleventh century, sole rule by Scotland did not occur until the late fifteenth century. As a result Orkney's relationship with Scotland has been, at times, quite antagonistic.²⁰

Orkney uses its historical connections with other nations to distinguish itself from Britain and Scotland. While historical association with Scandinavia is a large part of this, it is by no means the only factor. While looking east to Norway, Orkney also looks west to Canada. Orkney's Canadian connections have become prominent in the last decade or so. The islands are historically linked with Canada through association with the Hudson's Bay Company, where it is argued that up to 90 percent of recruits to the organisation came from Orkney. In 1999 a 'homecoming' event led to a treaty of friendship between Orkney and the Province of Manitoba, a treaty which was renewed in 2005. This heritage has been a driving force in a number of economic and cultural activities between the islands and the Canadian North-West.²¹ Since 2007, a large totem pole, perhaps the only one of its kind in the United Kingdom, has looked out to sea from the mainland near St. Mary's, created by the community in partnership with Canadian First Nations carvers. It now stands as a testament to the involvement of Orcadians in

¹⁸ For more on 'banal' examples of identity see: Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

¹⁹ Broun, Lynch, and Finlay, 'Scottish Identity and the Historian' in Broun, Lynch, Finlay, eds, *Image and Identity: The Remaking of Scotland Through the Ages* (Glasgow: Bell and Bain, 1998), p. 1.

²⁰ Thompson, *The New History of Orkney*, pp. 189-352.

²¹ Great work has been done on this by Paul Basu, who probed the Orkney homecoming phenomenon and the Orkney diaspora in Canada: see Paul Basu, 'My Own Island Home: The Orkney Homecoming', *Journal of Material Culture* 9, 1 (2004), pp. 27-42.

North American history. In recent years, Orkney's connections with Russia have also become more prominent. Though not having the same ancestral associations as with Norway or Canada, Orkney maintains strong ties with Russia through its historical association with the Arctic Convoys during World War Two. Orkney provided both the air and naval protection for the convoys ferrying materials to Murmansk and Archangelsk, and recent initiatives to bring together delegates from both nations for commemorative events has led to a new friendship between Orkney and the former Soviet Union. A monument to this historic event, and the contemporary association between Orkney and the Ugra community in Russia, now stands near the former Lyness Naval base on Hoy.

Maintaining a sense of difference, therefore, is a key feature of what makes Orcadians and Orcadian culture distinct. A sense of duty accompanies the creation of heritage which ensures that sites of memory have unique elements. Orkney prefers its distinct heritage, a heritage which has seen the islands interact with the world not as a county in northern Scotland, but as a part of several nations' historical narratives. Involvement with outsiders now serves as a constant reminder of Orkney's modern connections with the world. Orcadians embrace the involvement of other cultures in their heritage, and islanders proudly display the objects and mementos left behind by visitors to the islands over many centuries in order to distinguish their own culture and identity as separate from Scotland or Britain.

II) Commemorating World War II

There are a number of groups in Orkney which have a hand in creating performative heritage displays. Orkney Museums and Heritage, the Orkney Islands Council's official heritage body is one of these. As part of the Education and Leisure Services offered by the Council, it is responsible for heritage and arts development in Orkney. This includes collaborating with other groups to put on heritage displays and events in the islands. Orkney Museums is part of the local authority and as such it is run

through the governance procedures of the Council. All those who are employed in the museums are appointed through open recruitment and under the Council's equalities policy. The staff consists primarily of people who have been born in Orkney though there a number who have moved to the islands either specifically because of such work opportunities or work opportunities have followed. As a result, the 'heritage experts' directly working within the service are about sixty percent Orkney born, forty percent 'comeover'. Depending on the nature of their work, the staff in the service may have come through working in museums for a number of years (for example Tom Muir, the exhibitions officer—who is Orcadian—started in the museum over 20 years ago as a museum assistant), or as guides at Historic Scotland sites, or are professionally trained (like the curators). Orkney Museums and Heritage Service Manager Clare Gee, though having worked in Orkney before, was hired due to her management experience.²²

There are also over fifty different 'heritage clubs' and heritage organisations in the island. Most of these are local heritage trusts which pertain to town culture and development. Every parish has such an organisation, which has, in the past, organised local events and collaborated with Orkney Islands Council (sometimes receiving special grant funding) to put on cultural and heritage displays. One such organisation is the Westray Heritage Trust. Concerned with the heritage of Papa Westray, a tiny island in the far north of the Orkney archipelago which has a population of 574, the trust is managed by twelve directors, all local volunteers and all living in Westray. These directors have multiple different backgrounds, representing a cross section of the island community, ranging in age and occupation. Its primary objective, as stated in its Memorandum of Association, is 'to promote the advancement of the education of the public in the history, geography, culture, environment and other features of life in the island of Westray'.²³

²² Personal correspondence with Clare Gee, Orkney Museums and Heritage Service Manager, 2 Dec 2011.

²³ 'About the Trust', Westray Heritage Trust

<http://www.westrayheritage.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=54> [Accessed 12 Sep 2011].

Veterans groups are largely responsible for the islands' war commemorations, especially the Royal British Legion and the Burma Star Association. The Burma Star Association helps to organise the annual VJ Day commemorations, which are particularly well attended due to the large number of Orkney veterans who served in the Far East. The Legion has two branches in the islands, in Kirkwall and Stromness, as well as an affiliation with the local Royal Naval Association. The Kirkwall branch, located just a few steps away from the Orkney Library, in the centre of the town, has been the driving force behind D-Day, VE Day and other anniversary commemorations. Though being the 'British' Legion, most of its active members are Orcadian, some are survivors of the Second World War, but increasingly they are individuals who served in the forces after 1945 or families of World War II veterans with a desire to continue the work. Commemorations surrounding the *HMS Royal Oak* were for several decades organised by Charlie Millar, an Orcadian-born resident, veteran of the Suez Crisis, and Chairman of the Royal British Legion Kirkwall Branch. Though having no previous connection with the sinking, Millar's work with the *Royal Oak* stemmed from the fact that the ship had gone down in Orkney waters, 'which made her part of the place he loved'. The contribution to heritage made by local cultural agents such as Mr. Millar does not go unnoticed in the islands. For his efforts he was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1991 and Orkney 'Citizen of the Year' in 2005, presented to 'an ambassador for Orkney'.²⁴ Since his death his daughter, Agnes McBarron, also an Orkney resident has taken up the role of liaison for these ceremonies and escorting visitors to the wreck site.²⁵

The Legion is a distinct presence in Orkney and many islanders who are not veterans nonetheless have a connection with the organisation, including many local people with an interest in Orkney's military history. In the past, organisations which have an interest in the *Royal Oak* or in the islands' war heritage have turned to the legion for assistance. The Legion also operates a war memorial database compiled by

²⁴ 'Charles Still Louttit Millar B.E.M : Obituary', This is Announcements (5 Nov 2008) <<http://www.thisisannouncements.co.uk/5861252>> [Accessed 2 Sep 2011].

²⁵ 'Royal Oak 68th Anniversary Memorials 2007', HMS Royal Oak <<http://www.hmsroyaloak.co.uk/68th.html>> [Accessed 12 Oct 2011].

local oil terminal worker Brian Budge, but with the assistance of thirteen different individuals, all but one from Orkney.²⁶ The *Royal Oak* has a separate commemorative website which is maintained by wreck diver Peter Rowlands from Plymouth, but the materials for the site, including the photographs of anniversary commemorations are provided by Agnes McBarron and Orkney photographer Craig Taylor.²⁷

The prominence and strength of such veterans groups within the community means that Orkney participates heavily in the traditionally British celebrations which occur surrounding the VE Day and VJ Day events, and has a history of organizing parallel celebrations designed to coincide with those of Britain. In many cases, Orkney Islands Council assists in this endeavour, usually by granting the use of sites under their protection, such as the Scapa Flow Visitors Centre and St. Magnus Cathedral, the latter being both the literal and figurative centre of the Kirkwall community for centuries. Though little was done during the 1970s and 1980s, save for a remembrance service in St. Magnus Cathedral, a need to incorporate the islands' remembrance service with the 1995 VE and VJ commemorations in London saw Orkney 'join the nation' in grand celebrations.²⁸ Many of the standard commemorative tropes that were seen in Britain were also present in Orkney. For VE Day, a veterans' dinner and dance was held alongside a 1940s themed street party, complete with people in 1940s military and civilian costume. Memorial trees were planted in Scapa by the Boys' Brigade children in remembrance of the event, while military relics, including a Bren gun carrier and a War-era searchlight, were brought to Kirkwall from the Scapa Flow Visitor's Centre for public display.²⁹ A Spitfire aircraft, this time in miniature form, was presented to the Scapa Flow visitors centre by the Orkney Radio Model Flying Club. The aircraft the model was based upon actually saw action in Orkney during the latter part of the war, thus adding an Orkney dimension to an otherwise British icon.³⁰ As the Queen lit the memorial

²⁶ 'Introduction to Orkney War Memorials' Royal British Legion Kirkwall Branch—Orkney Isles <<http://www.rbis-kirkwall.org.uk/memorials.html>> [Accessed 22 Nov 2011].

²⁷ See: <<http://www.hmsroyaloak.co.uk/>>

²⁸ 'Orkney joins nation in VE Day tribute', *The Orcadian* (11 May 1995), pp. 19-22.

²⁹ 'VE Day celebration includes wartime display in Kirkwall', *The Orcadian* (4 May 1995), p. 20.

³⁰ 'Wartime Spitfire in model format', *The Orcadian* (11 May 1995), p. 19.

bonfire in London, Orkney's bonfire was lit in Pickaquooy, deliberately connecting the island's memorialisation with that occurring in the British capital (and elsewhere in the British Isles). Due to the strong membership of the Burma Star Association in the islands, VJ Day was commemorated with an even bigger celebration than the VE Day commemorations, complete with a whole week of celebrations stretching from the 15 to 20 August 1995 and featuring not only a march and memorial service, but also a 'disco for the younger generation' at the Legion.³¹ As in London, Union flags were provided by veterans' groups to children lining the streets of Kirkwall. A parade took place from the Legion to the war memorial and then onward to a service of thanksgiving in St. Magnus Cathedral. At both events, two minutes silence was observed, and veterans and ex-service members were invited to speak and lay wreaths. The strength and involvement of Orkney's veterans' groups and the fact that they seem to incorporate not only veterans themselves, but also local Orcadians who have an interest in Orkney's wartime heritage, ensures that the islands connections with Britain and the Churchillian paradigm is well maintained. The commemorations in 1995 used similar events, and were deliberately designed to work in conjunction with memorialisation in Britain.

This form of commemoration was reprised for the 2005 events a decade later. Celebrated twice (both on the 8 May VE date and on the mid-July date chosen by the British government), each featured a parade through the streets of Kirkwall to St. Magnus Cathedral. Veterans' groups were in attendance to lay wreaths and participate in a memorial service, the Legion put on a 1940s themed dinner and dance complete with tea and a special 'VE Day 60th anniversary cake', and the Scapa Flow Visitors centre in Lyness was home to a special exhibition and beer tent. Though the weather for VE Day was blisteringly cold and windy, Orcadians relished participating in the atmosphere and iconography that had become familiar to them over the past decade.³²

The VE and VJ day commemorations a decade apart embodied the mood of celebration and festival ambiance that celebrations occurring in London also possessed.

³¹ 'Now Orkney will mark VJ Day', *The Orcadian* (18 May 1995), p 18.

³² 'Orkney puts out flags to celebrate VE Day', *The Orcadian* (4 May 1995), p. 1.

The VE Day commemorations were, as *The Orcadian* put it, ‘by no means a sombre event’.³³ Orcadians celebrated their direct involvement in winning the war, and the brave Orcadians who fought both on and off the island for the sake of Britain. Such dates, and the involvement of veterans’ groups within them, serve as a way for Orcadians to link their war effort with the glorious British victory. In order to do so, Orcadians have been happy to appropriate common British commemorative tropes in order to participate in a UK-wide celebration of achievement.

Where possible, however, the island claims ownership of elements of the war in order to incorporate them into ‘Orkney’s War’, the domestic experience of conflict for the island. The aggrandizement of Churchill, for example, also exists in Orkney, but with an Orcadian twist. Many of the newspaper articles, pamphlets, and advertisements celebrating the VE Day and VJ Day events used excerpts from Churchill’s now very familiar speeches. Churchill memorabilia can be seen in Orkney’s museums, including a commemorative Toby mug held at the Fossil and Heritage Center in Burray. The lionization of Churchill in the islands can be considered part import culture, part domestic heritage. Orcadians are proud of their association with Churchill, and note that he was a regular visitor to the islands both as First Lord of the Admiralty and as Prime Minister.³⁴ This gives Orkney credence to claim his image as part of their domestic wartime story, though the image of him which is most frequently referenced is also the one most commonly used in Britain. Orkney is also constantly reminded of the involvement of Churchill in their history by the causeways now named after him.

The sinking of the *HMS Royal Oak* has also become something which Orcadians have absorbed into their war experience, largely due to the fact that the wreck still lies within Orkney waters. It has become something immensely important for the islanders, and both literally and figuratively part of the Orkney landscape. Since 1945, commemorations for Britain’s naval dead, including the *HMS Royal Oak* have typically occurred at the Portsmouth Naval Memorial on Southsea Common. The Second World War memorial there contains the names of 833 (of the 834) men who lost their lives in

³³ ‘We’re giving up a day, they gave their lives’, *The Orcadian* (12 May 2005), p. 25.

³⁴ ‘Churchill was a regular visitor to the islands’, *The Orcadian* (12 May 2005), p. 18.

the *Royal Oak* disaster and for years provided the meeting place for survivors to commemorate the tragedy. Though *Royal Oak* dead were included in the many Remembrance Day services held in St. Magnus cathedral in Kirkwall, large-scale commemoration of the event on the anniversary of the sinking was limited to Portsmouth. Strangely enough, though a large service was held in Kirkwall for the ninth anniversary of the disaster in 1948, a ceremony which saw the commissioning of a permanent memorial to the disaster in St. Magnus Cathedral,³⁵ there is no newspaper record of any service held at the site in 1964, the 25th anniversary, nor in 1984 for the 45th. By 1989, however, Orkney had taken on the role of commemorating the event, instead of Portsmouth, and it has now become a yearly event.³⁶ Since 1989, a memorial service for those who lost their lives has occurred every year in Orkney. This memorialisation mirrors heritage trends in Britain, with a conspicuous lack of interest in performative commemoration in the 1960s and 1970s and a resurgence in the 1980s and 1990s, with particular emphasis on five and ten year anniversaries. The 70th anniversary was attended by the Princess Royal, the first time a member of the Royal Family has attended such an event, who laid wreaths and unveiled a plaque at the Royal British Legion in Kirkwall.³⁷ On most occasions, survivors themselves travel from England to attend the commemorations, though the youngest as of 2009 was in his late eighties. A service in St. Magnus Cathedral is held on the closest Sunday to the anniversary of the disaster, and a wreath laying ceremony occurs at the site each year, usually from the deck of the *HMS Orkney*, on the morning of 14 October.

The *Royal Oak* has now found a place in Orkney's landscape of remembrance. It has been appropriated as part of Orkney's heritage. At the end of Old Scapa Road, in Scapa Bay, less than four kilometres from the wreck site, a memorial garden to the victims of the *Royal Oak* was created. Today, a modest wooden hut acts as a shrine for those who leave wreaths, poppies, crosses, and even notes to family members who were lost in the disaster. Inside, pinned to the bulletin board is a notice about the *Royal*

³⁵ 'Ninth anniversary of Royal Oak Disaster', *The Orcadian* (14 Oct 1948), p. 5.

³⁶ 'Remembering the HMS Royal Oak...50 years on', *The Orcadian* (19 Oct 1989), p. 1, 12-13.

³⁷ 'Royal tribute to Royal Oak remembrance', *Orkney Today* (15 Oct 2009), p. 1.

Oak commemorations planned for that year. A picture of the ship is flanked by two flags, the Union flag on the left, and the Orkney flag on the right. St Magnus Cathedral still plays host to a permanent memorial to the ship's crew, complete with two naval ensigns and the ship's bell, recovered by divers in 1982. A page in the book of remembrance is turned every day by the Cathedral's staff.

Orcadians, it seems, have now assumed the role of official commemorators of the *Royal Oak* tragedy. No longer are the services held in Portsmouth, annual events are organised for 14 October, and are conducted aboard a ship in Scapa Flow. The *Royal Oak* has become part of the Orkney landscape. There is now a Royal Oak Road, a Royal Oak Naval Hall in Longhope, and a Royal Oak Guesthouse in Kirkwall. The site of the wreck itself can often be seen a few metres beneath the surface on a clear day, and a green buoy sits on the sea in Scapa to mark the spot. The most recent chapter in the *Royal Oak* story is the creation of a granite obelisk, erected by survivors, friends and family of the *Royal Oak* association for 14 October 2011, and unveiled by Agnes McBarron in the garden of remembrance near the wreck site.³⁸

The sinking of the *Royal Oak* is a unique part of Orkney's heritage which Orcadians can, with some justification, claim as their own. Since being proudly 'saved from scrap' by Orcadian residents in the 1950s,³⁹ Orkney's museums now contain photographs, ship statistics, and mementos taken from the ship. The brass name plate of the ship, pillaged by illegal divers in the 1970s and recovered by the Royal Navy in 1994, is now on display at the Scapa Flow Visitors Centre. Fragments of the torpedo which sunk the ship are also there. For the 60th anniversary of the sinking in 1999, the Royal Navy philatelic society launched a limited edition commemorative cover postmarked at the Kirkwall post office. Signed by survivors and by families of the victims, the one hundred covers which went on sale were snapped up in minutes by Orkney residents.⁴⁰

³⁸ 'Royal Oak 72nd Anniversary Memorial Services 2011' HMS Royal Oak <<http://www.hmsroyaloak.co.uk/72nd.html>> [Accessed 22 Nov 2011].

³⁹ 'Orkney protests saved the Royal Oak from scrap', *The Orcadian* (24 Jan 2008), p. 20.

⁴⁰ 'Cover marks Royal Oak 60th anniversary', *The Orcadian* (14 Oct 1999), p. 10; and 'Royal Oak remembered', *The Orcadian* (21 Oct 2009), p. 1.

The Orcadian public has a vested interest in the history and commemoration of the *Royal Oak*. It is something which now forms part of Orkney's domestic wartime experience and its reputation. Publications about the *Royal Oak* have, on occasion, stirred discontent within the Orkney public. A recent example is David Turner's book *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, published in 2004, which created widespread disapproval by alleging that Orcadians were prevented from rescuing survivors on the night of 14 October, and that an enemy spy stationed in Orkney had been responsible for guiding the U-boat through Scapa's eastern approaches.⁴¹ Lately, current issues surrounding the wreck site, including the safety of armaments sunk within, the leaking of oil from the wreck, and illegal diving operations, hit Orkney's local headlines on a monthly basis, and help to ensure that the *Royal Oak* remains in the minds of the local people throughout the year. As one *Royal Oak* survivor stated: 'Orcadians think more about the *Royal Oak* because it is part of *their* history...it's always there!'⁴²

This might help to explain the respect which surrounds the captain of the U-47, Günther Prien. Despite being responsible for the largest loss of British life in the early war, Prien is something of a hero in Orkney, a figure akin to Rommel in the British national narrative.⁴³ In a section given to information about the *Royal Oak*, the Scapa Flow Visitors Centre affords an entire board to discussion of the commander, his later victories, and his fate. The board is complete with pictures of the commander and his crew.⁴⁴ In 1963, Commander Prien's two daughters were invited to Orkney and taken to the wreck site and the Churchill Barriers, commenting to the local newspaper that 'It is depressing to think that where father performed such a great deed so many people had to die'.⁴⁵ The *Orcadian Book of the Twentieth Century*, a compendium of 100 years of Orcadian history compiled by a former editor of *The Orcadian*, considered this visit important enough to make it the first article of 1963.⁴⁶ A genuine respect for the Prien's

⁴¹ 'Oak book stirs up hornet's nest', *Orkney Today* (6 Apr 2006), p. 1, 3.

⁴² Interview with Herbert E. Pocock, HMS *Royal Oak* survivor, by the author, 11 Oct 2009.

⁴³ Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, pp. 215-216.

⁴⁴ 'The fate of U47 and commander Prien', board—Scapa Flow Visitors Centre, 16 Oct 2009.

⁴⁵ 'Commander Prien's two daughters visit Scapa Flow', *The Orcadian* (25 Jul 1963), p. 4.

⁴⁶ Howard Hazell, *The Orcadian Book of the Twentieth Century* (Kirkwall: Orcadian Ltd, 2000), p. 242.

bravery and achievements on the night of 14 October 1939, informs a general respect for the man across the islands. 'Commander Prien' or 'Kapitanleutnant Prien' has been featured in the island's special exhibitions including the 'Orkney's War' exhibition at the Orkney museum in 2010.⁴⁷ Prien's positive image in Orkney is an offshoot of the appropriation of the *Royal Oak* story. The disaster is to Orkney what internment is to the Isle of Man, and Dunkirk to Britain. It is negative history made a part of the fabric of identity by appropriating his heroism into the Orkney story. Though he fought for the wrong side, he has taken on the role of the 'good German' known for his 'chivalrous warfare' and the fact that he had a direct role in creating the most celebrated events in Orkney's wartime experience. Similar to how Rommel is intrinsically linked with Montgomery and the victory at El Alamein, an aspect of the war so celebrated in British history,⁴⁸ Prien is intimately connected with the *Royal Oak* story which is so loved by Orcadians. As a result, he is seen not as the perpetrator of the worst disaster of the early war but as one of the creators of the island's history.

The *HMS Royal Oak* and the story of its demise in Orcadian waters now espouses feelings of Orcadianness, while at the same time creating a sense of shared history with the rest of the UK and the Royal Navy. Though only two of the 834 men who died on the ship were from Orkney, it is the physical possession of the wreck and constant memorialisation that engrained it on the collective memory of Orcadians. As Charlie Millar argued, it has now become part of the island which they love, the tragedy has now become a part of their identity.

III) War relics and tangible sites of memory

The Orkney landscape is littered with historical remnants. The age and depth of Orkney's heritage, especially its Norse and Neolithic, tends to overshadow more modern elements of its historical past. As Michael Lange has argued, 1468, the end of the Viking

⁴⁷ *Their Darkest Hour Exhibition* text, Orkney Museum, Summer 2010. Provided courtesy of Tom Muir, Orkney Museum's exhibition officer.

⁴⁸ Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, p. 216.

era in Orkney, is the 'date in the past after which events become less important'.⁴⁹ As a result, Orkney's pre-modern history is heavily favoured over its more modern sites, including those which pertain to the Second World War, and often times these sites are left to crumble.

Elements of the older heritage often form part of the more recent historical past in order to create something which can be considered more 'Orkadian'. Aspects of Neolithic and Norse culture are sometimes added to historical monuments and commemorations of more modern events in order to give them Orkney provenance. The monument erected to the Russian Convoys provides an example. Officially unveiled in August 2009, the Arctic Convoys memorial is situated near the old Lyness naval base on Hoy. Funded by both the Orkney Islands Council and Russian authorities from the Ugra Duma, the monument was crafted from 11-foot high standing stones shaped into the bow of a ship. A significant nod to Orkney's ancient past, the monument is reminiscent of the Neolithic stones that dot the Orkney landscape.⁵⁰ Norwegian curators from Hordaland were invited over in 2001 to share notes on preservation and display of their common heritage, but also took the time to visit some of Orkney's more modern sites, including the Italian Chapel.⁵¹ Orkney's commemorations sometimes contain a few words or a prayer in Norn, despite no native speaker of Norn being alive during either of the world wars, and even a modern heritage group, the *Orkney Defence Interest Network* cannot escape 'norsification'. The fact that 'Odin' is a powerful Norse God is more than just a coincidence.

⁴⁹ Lange, *The Norwegian Scots*, pp. 190, 202-206.

⁵⁰ 'Memorial unveiled in honour of the Arctic Convoys', *The Orcadian* (27 Aug 2009), p. 6-7.

⁵¹ 'Northern museums to collaborate on study', *The Orcadian* (11 Oct 2001), p. 26.



Figure 6: The Arctic Convoys Memorial at Lyness. Made to look like Neolithic stones in the shape of a ship's bow, Orkney's newer and older heritage is combined. Photo © Daniel Travers.

Orkney's Norse and neolithic heritage sites are considered sites of Scottish national significance, and as such, they are assumed by the Government of Scotland and are 'staffed properties'. The UNESCO sites which make up part of the 'The Heart of Neolithic Orkney': Maeshowe and Skara Brae, combined with the Standing Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar, and other nearby sites are all managed by Historic Scotland, which it categorises as 'Historic Island sites'.⁵² Historic Scotland also manages Noltland Castle in Papa Westray and the Hackness Martello Tower and Battery, a nineteenth-century fortification on Hoy, as well as a number of other sites. This leaves very little of the islands' pre-modern heritage in the hands of Orkney Islands Council. The Arts, Museums and Heritage Service of Orkney Islands Council is responsible for just four museums in the islands, including the Orkney Museum, Corrigall Farm Museum, Kirbuster Museum, and Scapa Flow Visitor Centre and Museum in Hoy. It also manages St Magnus Cathedral, the Rousay Heritage Centre and other sites interpreted by panels.

⁵² 'Around the Scottish Islands in 80 Monuments' - Historic Scotland
<<http://scottishislands.posterous.com/>> [Accessed 22 Nov 2011].

The Council's heritage service provides what it calls 'umbrella support' for other independent heritage sites in the islands, offering grant aid, training, and curatorial advice to local museums and visitor centres, as well as collaborating with heritage displays, and special exhibitions.⁵³ The Orkney Wireless museum in Kirkwall and the Fossil and Heritage centre in Burray are such examples. Both represent private collections which have been put on display, and have now become tourist destinations and heritage attractions. The Orkney Wireless Museum developed from a lifetime of collecting on behalf of Orkney resident Jim MacDonald of St. Margaret's Hope. A radio-operator in Orkney during the Second World War, MacDonald worked for the War Office as a civilian at the Lyness Naval base and at RAF Netherbutton. Carried on after his death by his family members, in 1994, the Museum was admitted as a member of the Museums and Galleries Commission of Great Britain with the mandate of 'collecting, preserving and displaying the radio and electronic heritage of Scapa Flow and the Orkney Isles'. In 1997, the museum was moved to its central location in Kirkwall where it remains today, dependant on donations and run entirely by volunteers from the local community.⁵⁴ It is now maintained and staffed by professionals from all over the island who donate the time to ensure the museum's survival.

The Fossil and Heritage Centre in Orkney was similarly created. Derived from a large collection of historical artifacts and fossils obtained from Leslie, Eoin, and Ernest Firth's private collection, the museum has been in operation since 1993. Located in a small building on the island of Burray, midway between two Churchill Barriers, the museum exhibits 'objects used by Orcadians in daily life throughout the 20th century, including during the World Wars'.⁵⁵ Created by and maintained by Orcadians, the Centre is a Limited Company which has a board of trustees. There is no direct connection between the Fossil Centre and Orkney Islands Council, though the Council

⁵³ 'Arts, Museums, and Heritage', Orkney Islands Council <http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/S/Arts_Museums_and_Heritage.htm> [Accessed 12 Aug 2011].

⁵⁴ 'About us', Orkney Wireless Museum <<http://www.orkneywirelessmuseum.org.uk/about.htm>> [Accessed 12 Aug 2011].

⁵⁵ 'Home' and 'Heritage', Orkney Fossils and Heritage Centre <<http://orkneyfossilcentre.co.uk>> [Accessed 13 Aug 2011].

has offered grant funding for specific activities in the past. Most of those who work at the Centre come from the local community and are volunteers.⁵⁶ Both the Fossil Centre and Orkney Wireless Museum are run by a very small number of staff and survive largely on charitable donations. Some of the local heritage organisations also have some form of museum or heritage centre within their locality. These can be as small as the Westray Heritage Centre or as large as the Stromness museum. All of these museums are independent of the Council, though are often awarded annual revenue funding from the Council through the Culture Fund.

Like other insular places, Orkney's heritage is in the hands of a select group of people, both volunteers and professionals, who form the majority of the island's heritage creators. Though they are not always Orcadian born, they all share an interest in preserving Orkney's heritage, and allowing it to be consumed by visitors and tourists. These individuals are usually members of more than one of these groups and form a tight network of enthusiasts. Invariably, one individual who is a part of this network was able to name and provide details of dozens of other individuals who are involved in similar projects all across the islands.

Orkney's Second World War sites bear no resemblance to its Norse or Neolithic sites largely because they are in a serious state of disrepair. After the withdrawal of the Royal Navy in 1957, most of the naval buildings were left abandoned and unmaintained. Only a handful of the buildings now serve a more modern purpose, the vast majority are crumbling badly. Nowhere is this more prevalent than on the island of Hoy, where the former Lyness naval base stood. The area is now a ghost-town of abandoned buildings, vehicles, and poorly maintained roads. The last few years however, have seen a massive movement to classify and restore Orkney's wartime sites. This is in part due to the destruction of Orkney's famous 'Black Building', the RAF Fighter Sector North headquarters, which was the subject of significant controversy. One of the only buildings of its kind in the British Isles, it was left derelict in the post-war period, sold to a private owner who stripped and gutted it in the 1990s, and then was finally

⁵⁶ Personal correspondence with Barrie Hamill, Treasurer of the Fossil and Heritage Centre, 3 Sep 2011.

demolished by Orkney Islands Council in November 2009 in spite of a small protest to save it. The destruction of the Black Building has prompted action on behalf of the Orkney public to save the islands' more modern sites, and local cultural agents have banded together in order to stop what they see as a loss of heritage.



Figure 7: Part of the old Lyness Naval Base on Hoy. Orkney's wartime sites crumble while its Norse and Neolithic are well preserved. Photo ©Daniel Travers.

In November 2008, the *Orkney Defence Interest Network*, or ODIN, headed by local administrator Anne Billing met for the first time. Its mission was to record, categorize, and preserve Orkney's wartime heritage.⁵⁷ Created from the community in response to the 'insufficient preservation' of Orkney's historic sites, the group now leads surveys to historic buildings, researches and provides materials and information about Orkney's defence heritage, and records Orkney's oral histories primarily from those remaining who experienced life during the Second World War.⁵⁸ The Executive Committee consists of Orkney residents who have an interest in the preservation of wartime heritage, some have professional roles in archaeology, but there is also a

⁵⁷ 'ODIN group's first meeting', *The Orcadian* (27 Nov 2008), p. 34.

⁵⁸ Interview with Anne Billing, president of Orkney Defence Interest Network, by the author, 15 Oct 2009.

retired GP and a construction worker on the panel.⁵⁹ All are involved as volunteers with more than one heritage organisation.

ODIN's long term aim is to have Orkney's defence heritage become a more important part of Orkney; attracting tourists, and making wartime heritage 'as valued as the more ancient remains and culture strands of Orkney's past'.⁶⁰ The idea of an Orkney-based group active in preserving, recording and promoting Orkney's defence heritage came from Julie Gibson, Orkney's County Archaeologist, in response to the destruction of the Black Building and the relative neglect of the islands' more recent history. Bringing together 'individuals and organisations who are interested in Orkney's defence heritage', ODIN is

...concerned [that] Orkney's defence heritage is in the heads of an ageing group of folk, not fully appreciated, nor understood, so that sites are being destroyed by development etc without real regard to their heritage value, both local and national, being destroyed by coastal erosion and climate attack and under threat because the importance of wartime memorabilia and memories isn't always fully appreciated. Orkney's defence heritage attracts many visitors to Orkney and that heritage needs to be well preserved, presented and made accessible physically and interpretatively. It is of national significance and has the power to draw increasing numbers of visitors to Orkney.⁶¹

Similarly, in October 2008, the Aviation Research Group Orkney and Shetland (A.R.G.O.S.) was formed focusing on the documentation of Orkney's aviation heritage and crash sites, and with the long term goal of opening an aviation museum on the island.⁶² A.R.G.O.S. was formed by four Orkney residents: Dave Earl, Ben Wade, Emily Turton and Kevin Heath after doing research into aircraft losses in Scapa Flow. None of the founders are Orcadian-born but there are Orcadians in the group, two of note are William Shearer, local shop owner, and Magnus Ritch, a local historian. The organisation

⁵⁹ 'Contacts', Orkney Defence Interest Network

<http://www.odin.uk.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=86> [Accessed 12 Sep 2011].

⁶⁰ *ODIN News newsletter*, Summer 2009.

⁶¹ 'About ODIN', Orkney Defence Interest Network

<http://www.odin.uk.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=54> [Accessed 12 Sep 2011].

⁶² 'Planes that were lost... but not forgotten', *Living Orkney*, Issue 58 (Sep 2010), p. 34-38.

runs a website, and interested people help with hunting for lost aircraft, with the aim of helping to 'spread the word on [Orkney's] more recent history'. Though primarily concerned with the aerial history of Orkney, A.R.G.O.S. works closely with ODIN to achieve these preservation goals.⁶³

Lastly, in August 2009, Orkney Islands Council's own initiative, the *Scapa Flow Landscape Project*, championed many similar aims, and the goal of promoting 'understanding and appreciation of the wartime heritage of the Scapa Flow area'. This project is now developing a trail of wartime sites as well as doing restoration work to Ness Battery, a coastal defence battery near Stromness, and one of the more salvageable sites in the islands.⁶⁴ Some of the artifacts from the Black Building, as well as those saved from wreck sites located by A.R.G.O.S., are hoped to be put on display in the Twatt Airbase Control Tower should it ever be restored.⁶⁵ It is the aim of organisations such as A.R.G.O.S. and ODIN to encourage tourist visits to the newer aspects of Orkney's diverse history, and to generate the same excitement in them as exists with the islands' ancient heritage. Preserving wartime sites is also seen as an important step to encouraging a younger generation to take an interest in the modern and military history of Orkney, and to participate in the commemoration of wartime events. It is also hoped that by creating a string of wartime sites which can be opened for visitors, it will increase the tourist revenues for the islands.

It may be years before Orkney's Second World War heritage catches up with its more ancient past. At the moment, Orkney's wartime heritage is confined to the collection and display of wartime objects. Orkney Island Council provides funds and manages a number of these collections. The Scapa Flow Visitors Centre, created out of the former naval oil pumping station in Lyness, now houses an eclectic variety of

⁶³ Personal correspondence with David Earl, Aviation Research Group Orkney and Shetland founder, 2 March 2011.

⁶⁴ 'Scapa Flow Heritage Project in place,' *Orkney Today* (23 Aug 2009), p. 2. For more information see: <www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/SCAPAFLOW/members.asp>

⁶⁵ Personal correspondence with Kevin Heath, Aviation Research Group Orkney and Shetland founder, (1 Mar 2010). More information can be found on their website: <www.crashsiteorkney.com>. The humour of the name 'Twatt', a profanity in the British Isles, was not lost on the airmen and naval personnel stationed there, as is evidenced from their writings and caricatures now held in the Orkney library. Those unwilling to risk obscenity refer to the base as HMS Tern.

wartime objects, photographs, models, and information about Orkney during war. By far the largest collection on the island, the centre has objects from both the First and Second World Wars loosely categorized, and positioned around the old pumping house heavy equipment. One of the oil storage tanks is now home to some of the larger objects in the collection, such as boats, anti-aircraft guns and vehicles. The Orkney Museum, the Orkney Wireless Museum, and the Fossil and Heritage Centre all possess items from both wars on display and accessible for viewing by the general public. In the case of the Fossil and Heritage Centre, many of these items are simply placed on a shelf complete with laminated placards briefly describing the object. Wartime heritage in Orkney is still currently under development. Though the interest has perhaps always existed, initiatives to categorize and preserve such sites are just now gaining momentum. Though there are a number of museums on the islands, all of which display objects and information about Orkney and its history, there are no fully restored examples of Orkney's military sites.

Just one building dating from the Second World War has escaped the neglect that the other sites have been subject to over the last six decades. The Italian Chapel, an ornate Roman Catholic chapel constructed from nissen huts and spare concrete by Italian Prisoners of War brought to Orkney in 1942-1943, has been lovingly preserved and maintained. A fine example of Italian culture thousands of miles removed from Italy, the Italian Chapel defies the wind and rain of Lamb Holm, one of the smaller islands in Orkney, and seems completely out of place next to the large concrete causeways, the Churchill barriers, which the POWs were brought to build. Many Orcadian cultural objects and celebrations now carry with them Italian elements. The islands' festivals and religious services include some song or dedication to an Italian theme, and the islands have a treaty of friendship with Moena, a village in Northern Italy. The Italian chapel now stands as a testament to friendship between Orkney and Italy. Yet of the 19,000 inhabitants on the islands, very few if any consider themselves Italian. There is no Italian community on the island, nor has the island been subject to the same post-war mass-migration as some other places in Britain. Interest in preserving Orkney's Second World

War sites is just beginning to peak, whereas the Italian POW connection has been well maintained and nurtured by the Orkney community.

IV) The legacy of Orkney's Italian prisoners of war

The Italian Chapel, saved from destruction in 1945, has been entirely maintained by the Orcadian residents themselves over the last sixty-five years. Initially re-touched and re-painted in 1960 by the original artist Domenico Chiocchetti, the chapel has since needed constant work to keep it in its original condition—all of which has been undertaken by Orkney craftsmen.⁶⁶ Regular visits to the Italian Chapel by the Italian POWs themselves and their families have been a feature of the chapel since the 1960s, and local newspapers report on the return of one of them almost every year. The Chapel also serves as an important tourist attraction, attracting over 92,000 visitors every year.⁶⁷ The Chapel is owned by Orkney Islands Council, but it is a group of amateur enthusiasts, the Italian Chapel Preservation Committee, who ensure the building is maintained and accessible for visitors. The secretary, John Muir, a retiree from Holm, is well known to most Orcadians for his charitable work and for taking it upon himself to walk down and open the Italian Chapel early every morning.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Philip Paris, *Orkney's Italian Chapel: The True Story of an Icon* (Edinburgh: Black and White, 2010), pp. 200-201.

⁶⁷ Interview with John Muir, Chapel Preservation committee, by the author, 2 Jul 2010.

⁶⁸ Like Charlie Millar, Muir was also nominated for Orkney Citizen of the year for his efforts in making Orkney's heritage available to the general public.



Figure 8: The Italian Chapel on Lamb Holm. © Gregory Kingsley. Photo licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

The Italian Chapel has become a cultural and spiritual building for the people of Orkney. Many local weddings are held there, and religious services have been conducted inside on a regular basis. Father Bamber, Catholic priest in Orkney and also chair of the Chapel Preservation committee from 1963 to 1987, first held monthly Mass in the chapel each summer. This is a tradition continued by Bamber's successors, and a Mass on the first Sunday of each month is still held between April to September, as well as one on the Sunday closest to the anniversary of the sinking of the *HMS Royal Oak* in October.⁶⁹ The Churchill Barriers constructed by the POWs serve today as causeways that provide a road link from the southern-most islands of Orkney to the mainland. The opening of the barriers so close to VE Day on 12 May 1945 has meant that commemorations of the end of the war have also been connected with the POW story. This is unusual in the sense that it combines a typically 'British' commemorative occasion, with a unique display of Orcadian identity. The POW experience does not typically factor into VE Day celebrations on the mainland, as it highlights the work of non-Britons in the winning of

⁶⁹ Paris, *Orkney's Italian Chapel*, p. 197.

the war. This tends to contradict the 'dig for victory' and 'make do and mend' wartime work ethic which the Churchillian paradigm privileges. In Orkney however, it is seen as an essential part of their war experience, and one that can and should be connected with what has now become a celebration of Britain's role in the war. As a result, the 1995 VE Day commemorations in Orkney saw representatives from Balfour Beatty and the Admiralty together with a delegation of over thirty ex-POWs, local dignitaries, and members of the Orkney community participate in a celebration of the opening of the barriers. The event included a tour, reception, and an ecumenical service with the theme of 'causeways connecting communities'.⁷⁰ To coincide with this, the Tankerness House Museum in Kirkwall opened a special exhibition on Italian Prisoners of War entitled 'Building the Barriers'.⁷¹ In 2002, to mark the anniversary of the arrival of the POWs, Stromness Museum also held a special exhibition on the Italian POWs focusing on their arrival, camp life, and finally their return to Orkney after the war.⁷² Walking tours or coach tours of the barriers and the Chapel are regularly enjoyed by resident and visitor alike, and often coincide with significant anniversaries such as the sinking of the *Royal Oak*.⁷³ Associating this permanent symbol with the larger picture of the Second World War in Orkney has been encouraged by at least one local newspaper pundit, the significance of the construction project to modern day Orkney being a 'sentiment to celebrate' on VE Day.⁷⁴ As of 2003, the idea of constructing tidal power stations on the Churchill Barriers has been given considerable support. If the project goes ahead it will provide power for Orkney homes and industry, and also create a tangible link between Orkney's past and Orkney's future.⁷⁵ One of the concrete blocks, used in the

⁷⁰ 'Italians return for ceremony to mark barriers anniversary', *The Orcadian* (11 May 1995), p. 21.

⁷¹ 'Building the Barriers –Tankerness House Museum', advertisement, *The Orcadian* (4 May 1995), p. 21.

⁷² 'Orkney Tribute to POWs who became part of the family', *The Scotsman* (1 Apr 2002) <<http://news.scotsman.com/inverness/Orkney-tribute-to-Italian-PoWs.2314848.jp>> [Accessed 12 Jun 2011].

⁷³ A number of people have been responsible for these tours over the years—one large tour of over 100 people was conducted by Geoffrey Stell for the sixtieth anniversary in 2005. Recently Anne Bignall has taken the reigns, conducting photographic excursions. See '60 years on: The Churchill barriers re-visited Excursion Guide', May 2005, Orkney Archive Reference: D1/959/1; and 'What's on in nature, archaeology and heritage', Orkney Community Environment Awareness Network, October/November 2009.

⁷⁴ 'Blether by Bumpkin', *The Orcadian* (16 Dec 2004), p. 18.

⁷⁵ 'Models to test Barrier Scheme', *The Orcadian* (4 Dec 2003), p. 20.

construction of the barriers, now marks the entrance to the first barrier at Holm Sound. On it a plaque makes reference to the barriers being constructed 'with the aid of Italian Prisoners of War'.⁷⁶

Many Orcadian residents still possess *objet d'art* given to them by the Italians during their captivity. Such objects of war, generally called trench art (a catch-all term that includes POW art and refugee art)⁷⁷ were common for those interned, and such items proved a way to alleviate boredom as well as provide items which they could sell and trade to other prisoners, as well as their captors. Museums across the islands display a number of small items either made by the Italians, or pertaining to the Italians. Ornate ashtrays, cigarette cases, coat hangers, and vanity boxes can be found at the Orkney Museum, the Orkney Wireless Museum, and the Fossil and Heritage Centre. Some of these items were recognized as their own by a group of eight ex-POWs who returned to Orkney in 1992.⁷⁸

Italian influence has been allowed to permeate even the most fundamental aspects of Orcadian culture. The St. Magnus festival, a decades-old music festival held in Orkney every year, often sees concerts performed in the chapel, and in 2000, a musical tribute entitled 'Domenico' took place there, attended by former POWs.⁷⁹ In 2002, the anniversary of the arrival of POWs in Orkney, a play entitled 'Barriers', written by Alan Plater and with music by Sir Peter Maxwell Davis, was performed as part of the festival at the Orkney Arts theatre. The play focused on the interactions between the Italian POWs and the Orkney community, and involved both a British brass band and an Italian accordion and wind band.⁸⁰ Highland Park Whisky, now owned by the Edrington group of distilleries but an Orkney distiller for over two centuries, commissioned a special edition bottle of 'Capella' whisky, complete with a painting of the Italian Chapel painted by Chiochetti, for the 60th anniversary of the departure of the POWs in 2004.

⁷⁶ Plaque at the entrance to the Churchill barriers, Orkney, 19 Oct 2009.

⁷⁷ Nicholas J. Saunders, *Trench Art: Materialities and Memories of War* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), p. 1.

⁷⁸ 'Captive memories at the chapel', *The Orcadian* (11 June 1992), p. 2-3.

⁷⁹ "Chapel premier for 'Domenico'", *The Orcadian* (20 Jul 2000), p. 5.

⁸⁰ 'No barriers in the way of pure brilliance at festival launch', *The Orcadian* (27 Jun 2002), p. 23.

Orkney also has strong contemporary associations with the *commune* (municipality) of Moena in Italy, the hometown of Domenico Chiocchetti. This created a very real link between Orkney and its wartime heritage, and one which was heavily supported by the island community. Almost like Italian communities in Britain, which often have very strong links with areas of origin within Italy, even going as far as having relationships with specific villages, Orkney's relationship with Moena is distinctive. Local choirs have on occasion led a cultural exchange with the Italian village, and on one occasion the Moena Choir *Canticum Novum*, with Chiocchetti's daughter as a member, performed in Orkney.⁸¹ A 'Treaty of Friendship' between Orkney and Moena was signed in Italy on 27 June 1996. It was ratified by the Moena Town Council on 23 July 1996 and by Orkney Islands Council on 15 October 1996. The practice of 'twinning' not only provides 'mutual awareness and dialogue' between communities,⁸² but as Yon Hsu has shown, twinning can be both a symbolic act and also a commercially advantageous endeavour.⁸³ Orkney enjoys a larger than average proportion of Italian visitors in response to possession of the Italian Chapel and the strong links the island has with Italy.

The creation of the chapel, and its maintenance over the last seventy years, has had a large impact on how Italians are remembered not only in Orkney, but throughout Britain. Wendy Ugolini has shown that 'romanticised nostalgia' about Italian POWs, certainly in contrast to their German counterparts, exists today in British popular culture and media. Despite the original outcry about having the enemy at work on the British mainland, even at the time Italian POWs, as Norman Longmate once said, 'were not merely tolerated but [were] positively popular'.⁸⁴ As a result, they are often seen as harmless soldier-artists or craftsmen rather than a real threat to the British way of life.⁸⁵

⁸¹ 'Moena link will be strengthened by choir visit', *The Orcadian* (7 Mar 2002), p. 5.

⁸² 'Twinning for Tomorrow's World - A Practical Handbook', Brussels: CEMR Council of European Municipalities and Regions (2007), p. 1. Available at: http://admin5.geniebuilder.com/users/ccre/bases/T_599_46_3524.pdf [Accessed 6 Nov 2011].

⁸³ Yon Hsu, 'The Municipal Making of Transnational Networks: A Case Study of Montreal's Twinning With Shanghai', in Pierre-Yves Sauntier and Shane Ewen, eds, *Another Global City: Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), p. 135-152.

⁸⁴ Norman Longmate, *How We Lived Then: A History of Everyday Life During the Second World War* (London, Hutchinson, 1971).

⁸⁵ Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'*, p. 238.

This form of remembrance is due, in part, to the legacy that the Italians left in Orkney. As Anne Marie Fortier has argued, they have been remembered as the men ‘who built lovely chapels’.⁸⁶ It is their architectural accomplishments rather than their fighting skill which has been remembered.

Possession of the Italian Chapel, the most recognisable symbol of this type of remembrance, has meant that the Italian connection in Orkney goes beyond a simple romanticisation. The possession and care for the Italian Chapel, as well as the deliberate and ongoing attempts to forge and maintain contemporary connections with Italy, is unique for a non-Italian community in the British Isles. Orkney’s desire to give pride of place to its Italian war heritage, above more traditional themes, is unusual. Orcadians defy the Churchillian paradigm by highlighting this aspect of their war story, a more tangential narrative, above others. Though a ‘Prisoner of War’ story forms a part of the Churchill paradigm, it is exclusively that of British POWs in captivity rather than enemy combatants interned on British soil. Episodes such as those which occurred at Stalag Luft III have inspired films like *The Wooden Horse* (1950) and *The Colditz Story* (1955), which privilege the narrative of Britons using their ingenuity and resolve. Films focusing on Axis Prisoners of War, including *The One that Got Away* (1955) and *The MacKenzie Break* (1970) have similar themes, rather than directing their attention to the contribution of Axis POWs to the allied war effort. Sophie Jackson has argued that the POW story has become ‘almost ignored in the annals of Second World War history’,⁸⁷ and has lamented how most information about the camps is now ‘based on archeological work—ironic since the camps existed a mere 60 years ago’. The positive experience POWs had in Orkney can also be contrasted with what Wendy Ugolini has called the ‘communal myth’ shared by Italian-Scots after the war. It focuses on, and highlights the contributions of Italians to the war effort, rather than focusing on their role as victims of racial mistreatment.⁸⁸ Since 1945, the story of Italians in Britain, both

⁸⁶ Anne Marie Fortier, *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p. 91-92.

⁸⁷ Sophie Jackson, *Churchill’s Unexpected Guests: Prisoners of War in Britain in World War II* (Stroud: Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2011), p. 172.

⁸⁸ See Wendy Ugolini, ‘Memory, War and the Italians in Edinburgh: The Role of Communal Myth’, *National Identities* 8, 4 (2008), pp. 421-436, and ‘Communal Myth and Silenced Memories: the Unremembered

as civilians and soldiers has remained an embarrassing footnote to the greater war myth. The Churchillian paradigm has tended to marginalize the story of enemy aliens, much like the story of internment, in order to favour conceptions of unity.⁸⁹ Though the British government saw little to fear in the Italians, both in their ideology and in their (lack of) military ability, civilians did not always take the same view.⁹⁰ The beatings, humiliation, and destruction of personal property which occurred in England and Scotland after the declaration of war by Mussolini in 1940 was, as Terri Colpi has shown, 'no less than devastating' for the Italian community.⁹¹ It is this experience which has manifested itself within the collective memory of the Scottish-Italian community, perhaps in part because some of the worst violence in the United Kingdom was directed against Italian-Scots in Edinburgh.⁹² The British government's handling of Italians in Britain during the war, both as POWs and as civilian internees is a dark aspect of the British war experience.⁹³ The 'collar the lot' attitude of the government toward British nationals and the *HMT Dunera* and *Arandora Star* experiences, where many internees and POWs died, have come to represent the 'Italian story' in Scotland, a deeply negative aspect of the war.⁹⁴ Little was made of such incidents after the war by the government, and these experiences were very quickly buried under the weight of positive collective remembrance. Race riots and the mistreatment of POWs defy the notions of 'British

Experience of Italians in Scotland During the Second World War', in William Kidd and Brian Murdoch, eds, *Memory and Memorials: The Commemorative Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 151-166.

⁸⁹ For more on this see Connelly, *We Can Take It!*; and Smith, *Britain and 1940*.

⁹⁰ Bob Moore, 'British Perceptions of Italian Prisoners of War, 1940-1947', in Bob Moore and Barbara Hatelly-Borad, eds, *Prisoners of War, Prisoners of Peace: Captivity, Homecoming and Memory in World War II* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), pp. 25-40.

⁹¹ Terri Colpi, *The Italian Factor: The Italian Community in Britain* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1991), p. 99.

⁹² Wendy Ugolini, 'The Internal Enemy 'Other': Recovering the World War Two Narratives of Italian Scottish Women', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 24, 2 (2004), pp. 137-158; 149.

⁹³ See: Dove ed., *Totally Un-English?*.

⁹⁴ The *HMT Dunera* from Liverpool to Australia was particularly well known for the cruelty British guards could inflict on their Italian captives. The *Arandora Star* was a ship bound for Canada full of Italian internees and German POWs which was sunk in July 1940 with the loss of over 700 lives. It was a tragedy for the Italian community in Britain, very few of whom were not personally affected by the loss. Ironically, Gunther Prien of the U-47 was responsible for the sinking—the same U-boat and captain responsible for the Royal Oak disaster in Scapa Flow. It could be said that Prien inadvertently created both the best and worst experience for Italians in Britain during the war. For more on the *Arandora Star*'s effects see: Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, pp. 115 -123.

decency and fairness', an aspect which is central to how Britain as a whole chooses to understand its wartime heritage.⁹⁵

The use of POW labour in Orkney was small in comparison with mainland Britain, where interned combatants provided a significant part of the agricultural work force, Orkney's commemoration of the Italian experience, however, is strong.⁹⁶ Elsewhere in the United Kingdom, little lasting legacy of the POW story exists. Though chapels built by Italian Prisoners of War were common in Britain, all except two were destroyed at war's end. Of these, Orkney's chapel is by far the most well preserved, used and displayed.⁹⁷ The Italian Chapel is now a 'monumental 3D expression' of trench art, emphasizing, as Nick Saunders has argued, such art form's association with landscape and collective memory.⁹⁸ While the rest of Britain saw the Italians come and go, the British national narrative has minimized the massive impact prisoner-labourers had on the wartime economy. They have become forgotten contributors to the war effort. Orcadians, on the other hand, nurture their association with the Italian POWs to the point that it has become both an important part of the Island's wartime narrative and heritage, and of their own sense of Orcadianness.

It is tempting to see Orkney in the context of an Italian community in Britain, much like current day Bedford or Peterborough. But there is a key difference. Of the 1500 or so Italian POWs interned in Orkney, not one of them stayed after the war. In this sense, the Italian connection in Orkney is unlike anywhere else in Britain. Orkney has no ethnic Italian community which provides the driving force for memorializing this aspect of the war. It is the Orcadians themselves who have provided the momentum for such initiatives. Several decades after their departure, the Italian prisoners' experience

⁹⁵ For more on public perception of the Italians in Britain see Lucio Sponza, 'Italian Immigrants in Britain: Perceptions and Self Perceptions', in Kathy Burrell and Panikos Panayi, eds, *Histories and Memories: Migrants and their History in Britain* (London: Tauris, 2006), pp. 57-74; and Tony Kushner, *We Europeans?: Mass-observation, 'Race' and British Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004).

⁹⁶ For more on POW labour usage in England and Scotland see Hellen, 'Temporary Settlement and Transient Populations the legacy of Britain's Prisoner of War camps 1940', pp. 191-217.

⁹⁷ There is another very small chapel in Henllan, West Wales, which was not destroyed after the war. Abandoned until the 1970s, the Henllan chapel is not nearly as well known or well visited as the one on Lamb Holm. See Paris, *Orkney's Italian Chapel*, pp. 220-221.

⁹⁸ Saunders, *Trench Art*, pp. 41-42, 196-197.

of war has now established a place within the very landscape of Orkney, and in the island's material and commemorative culture. The Italian story has become part of who Orcadians are; the Churchill barriers providing a tangible link between Orkney's past and future. The Italian Chapel, constructed in traditional Italian style, has been carefully maintained by Orcadians over the decades to preserve the memory of this aspect of their historical experience.

For Orcadians, the Italian connection is an emotional one, and one which for the moment still resides in living memory. The deliberate maintenance of the Italian Chapel has served both to reflect and to reinforce this connection, and now stands as an icon, a physical reminder of the associations and friendships made between Italians and the local populace during their brief time in the islands. The inclusion of an Italian connection within Orkney's physical and mnemonic landscape also serves as yet another way to differentiate themselves from traditional 'British' or 'Scottish' identity, adding a significant dimension to our understanding of Orcadianness.

Orcadians enthusiastically participate in VE Day and VJ Day commemorations which occur on the mainland, basking in the glorious British narrative and in traditional 'British' commemorative tropes. Like other places in the British Isles, Orkney uses its role in these events to connect itself to the greater British whole, the lighting of a bonfire making a deliberate connection to the wider war. However, for Orcadians, the *HMS Royal Oak* and the Italian POW stories are more important, and form a much larger portion of the 'heritage culture' of Orkney largely because they are something which Orcadians can claim as uniquely their own. Pragmatically, Orkney simultaneously accepts and rejects Britishness in its cultural and commemorative identity. The islands use the VE and VJ day commemorative tropes as a celebration of Britain's achievements during the Second World War, of which Orkney can claim a large part. At the same time, by displaying their own unique story in the form of their POW and *Royal Oak* history, they exert their cultural sovereignty. Possession of the wreck of the *Royal Oak* has meant that this now forms part of their commemorative experience. It has been appropriated as part of Orkney's war, worthy of constant remembrance despite the

hideous nature of the events which created it. Similarly, the Italian Chapel has become a signifier of Orkney's difference. The islands choose to make the POW experience something in which they show enormous pride, emotional attachment, and a willingness to remember where the rest of Britain has chosen to forget. Perhaps spurred on by the sheer beauty of the Italian Chapel and what it represents, the POW story has been championed in Orkney. This is something which the Orcadians highlight to assert their distinctiveness from the rest of the British Isles. Orcadians feel a need to maintain these connections with Italy into the modern day, as just one of the many international contributions to its culture the island has seen since the arrival of the Vikings over a millennia ago. Much like its Norse and Canadian heritage, Orkney's Italian connection has been integrated into the islands' contemporary commemorations and culture. Involvement with outsiders now exists as a legacy in Orkney's 'sites of memory', and serves as a constant reminder of Orkney's historical connections with the world. The Italian Chapel has become much more than the sum of its parts; of spare concrete and materials salvaged from blockships. It now serves as both a reminder of the friendships created during a difficult time in the islands' past, while at the same time serving to deepen Orkney's own heritage; making it distinct from their Scottish or British neighbours. The pride the islanders feel over their association with this aspect of the war experience is unique in the British Isles. Heritage in the islands reflects this. Commemorations and memorials are not simply the work of heritage experts looking to increase tourist revenue, the inclusion of the POW story into the island's heritage is the product of real people engaged in the construction of their own identity. Orkney strengthens its cultural sovereignty by defying British, Scottish, and even 'Italian-Scottish' heritage and maintaining strong links with its POW past. The *HMS Royal Oak* disaster and Orkney's POW story serve as devices with which Orcadians can show off their own identity, culture, and values. While connections with Britain, and perhaps more accurately, the communal myth of the Second World War, is important, it is this sense of difference which is integral to the maintenance of a distinct culture, identity, and way of life for the Orcadians. The wreck of the *HMS Royal Oak* and the Italian

Chapel are the tangible remains of culture absorbed, appropriated not as symbols of war, but of Orcadianness.

Chapter 4

Jersey

The British Channel Islands, of which Jersey is the largest island, fell to the German Armed Forces in mid 1940. Being the only British territory to fall into German hands during the war, the Channel Islands have a particularly distinct wartime heritage. In the post-war, the Channel Islands constructed a narrative which was distinct from, but closely related to, Britain's Churchillian paradigm. The narrative focused on islanders behaving with steadfast Britishness in the face of the enemy. This narrative, which heavily favoured events such as the islands' liberation while minimizing some of the more divisive stories, existed for several decades. In fact it was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that historical interest in occupation peaked—both in the islands and on the British mainland, and Channel Islanders were forced to look introspectively at their society and wartime history. This was helped along by the opening of archival sources about the occupation, and by the publication of certain works which, though causing sensation on the islands, helped to create discussion about the nature of occupation. As a result, the Channel Islands have slowly begun to part with their comfortable narrative, publically commemorating aspects of the occupation which were particularly traumatic and tangential. Though this has been the case in all of the Channel Islands, it is Jersey where it has had the most impact. As Gillian Carr has argued, Jersey has experienced a 'rapid increase in memorialisation' in the last decade.¹ This, it seems, is due to a feeling of moral necessity on the part of the islanders, a sense which has been created out of a new understanding of the island's war history. There is now a desire to

¹ Carr, 'The Archaeology of Occupation', pp. 169.

memorialise, in a tangible way, aspects of the Second World War which have until recently had no place in the public sphere except in the minds of those who survived it. This coincides with a new trend in Britain, one which seeks to overturn the myth of the 'uncommemorated generation' by erecting permanent memorials to people and groups which have until now not been recognised in this way. As a result, since the celebration of the end of the war in 1995, a transition has occurred in Jersey's commemorations, memorials, and museums, in order to include these stories. This has resulted in the development of a number of events, memorials, and plaques—'sites of memory' which break with the traditional British wartime narrative by highlighting some of the more tangential aspects of the island's war. Jersey's new heritage direction has the added benefit of allowing the island to break with the traditional Churchillian paradigm helping to distinguish it from Britain and from its Channel Island neighbours, while efforts have also been made, by the island's 'heritage experts' to use the island's occupation past for something more forward looking; promoting reconciliation, education, and defeating intolerance.

Though it has fully incorporated the negative (and tragic) elements of its war experience into its memorialisation, some subjects remain controversial. Liberation Day, a date which commemorates liberation from German occupation, has traditionally served as a way for the island to connect its wartime experience to the British traditional wartime narrative. Recent proposals to change the nature of the celebrations from celebration of the act of liberation to a more forward looking stance of growth, reconciliation, and peace have, at best, met with a lukewarm response. At worst, they have been heavily criticized for not commemorating the true meaning of Liberation Day. Jersey's Liberation Day points to the need for the continuance of tradition and a day for the positive remembrance of Jersey's role in the Second World War. The following chapter shows how Jersey's complex mnemonic landscape appropriates traditionally 'British' commemorative tropes for its own celebrations and commemorations, while at the same time championing the role of its unique and sometimes negative history in its wartime experience.

I) A 'peculiarity of the Crown'

The British Channel Islands consist of a group of British Island Protectorates off the Normandy coast, only tens of miles from the French mainland. Of the four main islands, the Bailiwick of Jersey is the largest, both in terms of land area and its population of around 90,000 inhabitants.² Far closer to French soil than English, the islands were described by the novelist Victor Hugo as *Morceaux de France tombés dans la mer et ramassés par l'Angleterre* (pieces of France which fell into the sea and were picked up by England).³ Though having a long association with the British Crown which dates back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Channel Islands are neither part of the United Kingdom nor the European Union. As a British dependent, Jersey's Bailiff and Deputy Bailiff are appointed by the Crown, while local officials and senators are elected from each of the twelve parishes on the Island.⁴ The States Assembly legislates on most insular matters, and the island has its own Education and Home Affairs Department, as well as a Health, Social Security and Housing committee. Jersey prints its own currency (in Pounds Sterling) and has its own regional philately, its own flag, and its own coat of arms.

Jersey's citizens consider themselves 'Jersey' first and foremost, above their notions of Britishness or Europeanness. When considering the classification for Channel Islanders in the British Nationality Act 1948, Westminster was aware of the sensitivities of the island's population, and ensured that Jersey's citizens were considered 'citizens of the United Kingdom, Islands and Colonies' to dissuade any objections to the use of 'UK' or 'Colonies',⁵ although later versions have referred to Jersey (with Guernsey and the Isle of Man) simply as 'the Islands'.⁶ Jersey is proud of its individuality, and the ability to shape its own laws with comparatively little interference from Westminster, a privilege

² Moore, *The Other British Isles*, p. 211.

³ Victor Hugo, *Les Travailliers de la Mer* (Librairie du Victor Hugo illustré, 1886).

⁴ F. de L. Bois, *A Constitutional History of Jersey* (Jersey: Bigwoods, 1970), Section 3/2 (i-ii).

⁵ Bois, *A Constitutional History of Jersey*, Section 4/5.

⁶ See British Nationality Act 1981(c61) Section F143 (b) and Interpretation Act 1978 (c30) Section F12.

which the island has enjoyed since as early as the seventeenth century.⁷ The Jersey Museum, for example, has a section dedicated to the island's special relationship, a section entitled 'A Peculiar of the Crown', which features such exhibits as a Jersey passport, the Bailiff's robe and hat, Jersey's flag, and a Jersey police uniform.⁸ Since 2000, complete independence from Britain has been a topic of discussion amongst the island's legal and political circles, with an increasing sense that the United Kingdom does not make the island's welfare a priority. In the wake of growing tax reform throughout the European Union, Jersey's special relationship has driven a wedge between itself and Britain, with some prominent Jersiaise, including the former bailiff, arguing that islanders are increasingly being treated as 'not quite British'.⁹ As a result, though Jersey's connections with the Crown remain strong, there is an increased feeling of alienation from Britain, at least within legal and political spheres, which has helped to create a mounting sense that devolution is on the horizon. For the time being, however, the Jersey flag is still flown next to the Union flag from the tops of government buildings, shops, and restaurants. Both flags are painted on walls and bridges, on bus tickets and pamphlets, and serve as a routine reminder of Jersey's connections with Britain, as well as its own cultural and legal sovereignty. Jersey's distinct identity manifests itself in the island's daily life as a kind of banal nationalism, related to but separate from their British, Channel Island, and continental neighbours.¹⁰

Jersey is quick to distance itself from other Channel Islands when it comes to island identity. This is particularly true with Guernsey, their neighbours to the east. Though they have 'grown up' together, sharing the same history, a similar culture, language, and laws, there is a 'felt' sense of difference in the islands. Though Jersey and Guernsey were both occupied during the war, along with Alderney and Sark, sharing this common heritage has not meant that the Channel Islands have remembered or

⁷ Jersey was not included in the English Bill of Rights in 1689, for this reason acts of parliament must refer to Jersey specifically. See Moore, *The Other British Isles*, p. 228.

⁸ Exhibit at the Jersey Museum, 21 Apr 2009.

⁹ 'Ministers must prepare for Jersey independence', *Jersey Evening Post*, (21 Jan 2010) <<http://www.thisisjersey.com/latest/2010/01/21/ministers-must-prepare-for-jersey-independence/>> [Accessed 12 Sep 2011].

¹⁰ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, pp. 39-51.

commemorated the period as a group. Instead, each island has chosen to construct their own remembrance around occupation. Asa Briggs put it best when he said ‘...the sense of difference between islands was as strong during the war, when all suffered occupation, as it was before and after it.’¹¹ There has always been a substantial rivalry between the two islands, one which often manifests itself in contemporary politics, culture, and sporting events. This rivalry began, it has been argued, during the English Civil War, when Jersey remained loyal to the Crown whereas Guernsey sided with Parliament. Though centuries away from that conflict, the desire to be different has led to very real problems in the Channel Islands with one government agency arguing that lack of co-operation between the islands has impacted the economies of both.¹² Jersey islanders jokingly call the people of Guernsey ‘ânes’ (donkeys), and Guernsey retorts with the term ‘crapauds’ (toads) for Jersey.¹³ Both terms have now been somewhat embraced within popular culture, and even in some ways the official culture of the islands.

Occupation heritage has also been constructed differently. While Jersey is now much more open about its past, Guernsey has been somewhat slower to address the issue. This has led sensationalist writers such as Madeleine Bunting to contend that the island’s remembrance of the wartime period is ‘grudging at best’.¹⁴ Though this is an unfair assessment (as Carr has argued, the lack of tangible memorials does not necessarily mean that the island does not remember elsewhere—such as in their remembrance services), as of 2010, Guernsey has not erected a memorial to evacuees or political prisoners, things which have now been part of Jersey’s memorialisation for several years.¹⁵ Though being a large part of the discussion around occupation which reached its peak in the 1990s, Guernsey’s residents have been quieter on the subject.

¹¹ Asa Briggs, ‘Memory and History: The case of the Channel Islands’, Fifth Joan Stevens memorial lecture, 26 Apr 1996 (Societe Jersiaise publication, 1997), p. 11.

¹² ‘Islands “waste money” on rivalry’, BBC News (4 Feb 2005)
<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4235761.stm>> [Accessed 22 Nov 2011].

¹³ Moore, *The Other British Isles*, p. 211.

¹⁴ ‘Our part in the Holocaust’, *The Guardian* (24 Jan 2004)
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/jan/24/germany.race>> [Accessed 20 Jan 2011].

¹⁵ Carr, ‘The Archaeology of Occupation’, pp. 169-170.

British imagery is also not as prominent in the island, perhaps owing to their republican past. Rather than a sculpture with a large Union flag, Guernsey's 1995 liberation monument was an obelisk which marked the events of the day with its shadow.¹⁶ Though, like Jersey, the Prince of Wales unveiled the memorial, it was the Guernsey cross, not the Union flag which served to cover the monument before its unveiling.¹⁷ In short, there are so many subtle differences between Guernsey and Jersey, in both their occupation heritage and remembrance and in their association with Britain and Britishness that it could be the subject of its own dissertation. As a result, the rest of this chapter will focus on Jersey's remembrance rather than the Channel Islands in general, with the hope that conclusions made about memorialisation in the island will make for more fruitful (and more interesting) comparisons with Man and Orkney rather than a neighbour ten miles away.

Having been occupied by the Nazis in mid-1940, the celebration of unity that features so prominently in the British wartime narrative cannot be applied to Jersey, as the occupation was, by its very nature, divisive for the islanders. The domestic history of the Channel Islands bares no resemblance to events that are most celebrated on the mainland, the people of Jersey were under occupation for the Battle of Britain, D-Day, and even VE Day. Jersey's war history is instead primarily wrapped up in victimization, deportation, and restriction, an aspect of the island's wartime experience which was not fully explored nor discussed until very recently. In the months and years directly after the war, the British government examined the possibility of pursuing certain residents who had collaborated with the enemy and charging them under the Treason Act, but it was determined by the Home Office too difficult to provide evidence against those who had committed offences, and that there were not sufficient grounds for criminal prosecution. Some islanders accused the island authorities and the British government of a 'conspiracy of silence and non-action' over the issue of collaboration.¹⁸ The issue was formally closed, but this and many other unsavoury and divisive aspects of the

¹⁶ 'Lib Day president jumps for joy', *Guernsey Evening Press* (30 September 1994), p. 1.

¹⁷ 'Liberation 50 years of Freedom souvenir programme', *Guernsey Evening Press* (1995), p. 19.

¹⁸ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, p. 341.

German occupation remained and continue to exist in the consciousness of those who survived the war. It was the concept of a 'model' occupation, however, an occupation narrative which saw islanders behaving with steadfast Britishness in the face of very difficult circumstances, which endured. Like most European nations, the Channel Islands constructed a single war narrative, immediately differentiating themselves from the occupation narratives which were actively being constructed in Europe, and instead tied their story into the heroic British narrative. In this way islanders found a culturally appropriate version of events which could be remembered, one which is reflected in the historical works on the occupation which emerged shortly after the war.¹⁹

Overshadowing other (private) memories of the occupation, the Channel Islands official memory focused on the ability to 'weather the storm', individual acts of heroism, liberation, and the continuity of connections with Britain. As Sanders argues, Channel Islanders had little place to fit their memory of the war other than within the 'straightjacket of UK war memory'.²⁰ This allowed the islands, as well as the British to 'to save face and paper' over the humiliation of occupation and the five years of separation which resulted.²¹ The effect of occupation made the need for positive reinforcement of Jersey's wartime history ever more important. The story of liberation served as a focal point for this identity, by allowing them to concentrate on a particular positive moment in the island's history, and providing a day of national remembrance for what had become the islands' official war narrative.

It was not until the burgeoning of Holocaust studies in Europe in the 1980s, and the releasing of public records in the early 1990s, that this narrative was questioned. The availability of new information created an academic interest in occupation narratives, and a number of historians delved into archives to retrieve stories which had

¹⁹ See Ralph Mollet, *Jersey Under the Swastika* (London: Hyperion, 1945); R.C.F. Maugham, *Jersey Under the Jackboot* (London: WH Allen, 1946); Alan and Mary Woods, *Islands in Danger* (New York: McMillan, 1955).

²⁰ Sanders, *The British Channel Islands Under German Occupation*, p. 256.

²¹ Paul Sanders, 'Narratives of Britishness: UK War Memory and Channel Islands Occupation Memory' in Jodie Matthews and Daniel Travers, eds, *Islands and Britishness: A Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), p. 24-39; 26.

been otherwise forgotten.²² A growing awareness of Britain's constructed memory also helped to cast light on the Channel Islands, with mythbusting scholars like Clive Ponting singling out the experience as the obvious exception to the rule.²³ The result of this attention was that a very uncomfortable spotlight was turned upon the Channel Islands. Questions about islanders' behaviour during the war, as well as their current lack of memorialisation of some of the more negative aspects became commonplace. One of the most notable works on this subject was Madeleine Bunting's *The Model Occupation*. The book created sensation in the islands largely because it relied on direct testimony from Channel Islanders and painted the occupation in a particularly critical light. A year later Tom Keel's work *From Auschwitz to Alderney and Beyond* raised counterfactual arguments about the use of the Channel Islands for Nazi extermination projects, while David Fraser's 2000 work *The Jews of the Channel Islands and the Rule of Law* painted a scathing view of the islands' wartime administration.²⁴ Though later historical texts did much to present a balanced view, by the mid to late 1990s the more controversial aspects of occupation had become well understood.

In Jersey, the openness of discourse surrounding such issues created sensitivity about how the island and islanders were viewed. With many occupation survivors still alive in the early 1990s, portraits of the occupation, especially those which were considered unfair or inaccurate created an elevated sense of guardedness among the island's population, both on a personal and community level. The early to mid 1990s saw a cautious openness about occupation events, combined with a need to protect the island's image. As a result, commemorative efforts which were attempted in the early 1990s, ones which occurred in conjunction with the wave of performative commemoration in Britain in the same period, had a close eye to the status quo. One of the best examples is the debate around the erection of a public sculpture to the

²² Hazel R. Knowles Smith, *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands Occupation: Record, Memory and Myth* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. xvii- xx.

²³ Ponting, 1940: *Myth and Reality*, p. 122-123.

²⁴ Tom Freeman Keel, *From Auschwitz to Alderney and Beyond* (Malvern Wells: Images Publishing, 1996); David Fraser, *The Jews in the Channel Islands*.

occupation, which will be discussed later in this chapter, the other is the Occupation Tapestry.

The Occupation Tapestry is now housed in the Maritime Museum on St. Helier's North Quay, and consists of twelve panels, from 'the outbreak of war' to 'liberation', each created by one of Jersey's twelve parishes. Originally unveiled during the 1995 Liberation Day commemorations, the tapestry was created from 1991 to 1993, during a time of change in Jersey's occupation historiography. In many ways it reflects the traditional narrative, one strongly linked to the Churchillian paradigm, which the island forced its war remembrance into for over fifty years. Completed largely by local artists but also organised as a community project with residents and tourists alike encouraged to 'add a stitch', the Tapestry was designed and planned to be both a work of art and a way of enshrining the Jersey war story. One of the first initiatives begun by the Occupation and Liberation Committee after its founding, the project was specifically mandated to 'set the Jersey experience firmly within the wider context of World War II, as well as bringing home to a generation too young to remember, the privations and heroisms of those years'.²⁵ Work began on the tapestry in 1990 even before a suitable place had been created to display it.

The design of the tapestry was open to suggestions from the Jersey populace, and provided part of the 45th anniversary of liberation celebrations in 1990. A number of ideas were recorded by the Occupation Committee, and the vast majority of them were organised into categories and included as part of the final piece. Though the hardships of occupation are well represented, the tapestry minimizes many of the elements which have now become important features of Jersey's current war remembrance. Restrictions, resistance, hardships, the black market and escape attempts are depicted, as well as some of the lighter sides of occupation—including the (largely apocryphal) story of one resident hiding a live pig in her bed to prevent it being taken by the Germans. There are also elements of the more negative events, such as deportation, but largely the tapestry panels concern themselves with some of the more mundane parts

²⁵ Occupation and Liberation Committee files, 'Press release O & L Committee', Jersey Archive, C/C/L/C4/3/99.

of the occupation: 'transport', 'everyday needs', 'school and work', and 'government'. The tapestry reflects many of the Churchillian values familiar to 'finest-hour' mythology: the 'spiv' as a necessary evil to procure goods, of Jersey being part of the D-Day (St. John Parish's panel entitled 'Bypassed' relates to the island as it was on D-Day and shortly after) and VE Day stories, and the 'us against the Germans' defiance suggesting a unified Jersey populace against the invader. The privations of the islanders are reminiscent of the 'make do and mend' attitude which is so pivotal to the British war myth, and much of the true nastiness of the occupation is marginalized. Only the panel 'Sent Overseas'(St. Mary Parish) deals with the deportations and provides a glimpse of the divisions occupation caused, with a picture of Canon Clifford Cohu, behind barbed wire, and the description of him being 'betrayed and arrested in 1943'.²⁶



Figure 9: Part of the Occupation Tapestry in Jersey. Islanders pass messages to one another, while a V for victory has been painted over a German sign - a famous resistance incident. Photo ©Daniel Travers.

The Tapestry was an important work for Jersey's heritage and tourism, but one which was a product of its time. Utilizing much of the imagery of the Churchillian paradigm, it very cautiously explores some of the more difficult aspects of occupation.

²⁶ The Occupation Tapestry, 'Sent Overseas', Occupation Tapestry Gallery, St. Helier, Jersey, 12 Apr 2009.

With an eye to ‘privations and heroisms’, the tapestry showcased the hardships of occupation, but did not challenge the traditional ideals so central to the maintenance of Jersey’s constructed narrative. Many of the moral dilemmas faced by Jersey citizens are not represented, nor are the occasional incidents of disunity seen in the island. One of the suggestions to the design committee in fact was suggestion 12: ‘houses of those Islanders suspected of collaborating with the Germans daubed with tar swastikas during the night, October 1944’.²⁷ This particular event, however, did not make it into the final design. The Tapestry does suggest, however, a victimization of the Jersey people which is not seen in British iconography—the woman sitting crying as her loved ones are deported, Jersey’s citizens behind barbed wire, relying on the Red Cross for survival, and of Jersey in the Nazi sights at the outbreak of war. In this sense the Tapestry shifts from the Churchillian paradigm slightly, with a willingness to explore the island’s difficult past. The Tapestry is immensely important to understanding how Jersey’s heritage has changed, because it is the only significant tangible memorial created while the island’s narrative, and widespread collective remembrance, was still almost entirely linked with that of Britain. Created in the early 1990s, the tapestry reflects the values and understanding of the occupation period which had been common up until that point. The tapestry now stands as a tangible memorial to the island’s traditional narrative, one which at the time had prevalence, but now stands beside other narratives.

By the time that the tapestry was unveiled in 1995, considerable movement had already happened in Jersey’s mnemonic landscape. As a result of the increase of knowledge about the occupation and a growing sense of awareness of its more negative aspects, an (arguably ongoing) overhaul of Jersey’s landscape of remembrance took place, one which affected what Jersey chooses to memorialize. The island’s museums, streets, walls, and public spaces, as well as its commemorative events and services have all rapidly changed in the last two decades in response to the new academic historiography. An awareness of the need for other narratives has coincided with the new sense of urgency which has taken place within the population of the British Isles to

²⁷ Occupation and Liberation Committee files, ‘Suggested events to be included in the tapestry’, Jersey Archive, C/C/L/C4/3/49.

commemorate the 'uncommemorated generation', providing tangible memorialisation with plaques and monuments. The combination of these two separate factors has meant the creation of a massive number of new sites of memory to occupation. As Gillian Carr has argued, Jersey has seen a significant increase in the memorialisation of World War II over the last ten years,²⁸ though I would argue that this process was well under way by the mid 1990s. This change in direction away from the Churchillian paradigm and the focus on Jersey's more controversial war experience has created a large amount of discourse, and has often pitted the island's heritage experts, cultural agents, and public at odds with one another.

II) Jersey's heritage direction

There are a large number of people and organisations which have a hand in the creation of heritage in Jersey. This has meant that very few initiatives can be attempted without a broad discussion on its implications and the future of Jersey's heritage. In the wake of new and greater understanding about the nature of occupation, it has led to controversy as to what is considered an appropriate remembrance of Jersey's wartime experience and how best to physically represent it.

One of the major players in this debate is the Jersey Heritage Trust, an independent organisation, but supported by an annual grant from the States of Jersey. The organisation is responsible for the upkeep of much of the island's heritage sites, as well as the Jersey Museum and the Occupation Tapestry Gallery. Founded in 1981, Jersey Heritage is partnered with a number of organisations which give it more scope, and act as caretakers for property not directly owned by it. One of these partners is the Société Jersiaise, an organisation founded well over a century ago for the study of Jersey's archaeology, history, natural history, language and environment.²⁹ The Société possesses most of Jersey's pre-historic sites, as well as a large library and archive near

²⁸ Carr, 'The Archaeology of Occupation', pp. 169.

²⁹ 'Welcome to the Société Jersiaise', Société Jersiaise <<http://www.societe-jersiaise.org/>> [Accessed 11 Aug 2011].

the Jersey Museum. The National Trust for Jersey also falls under the care of Jersey Heritage, with over 130 sites to its name including large parcels of land, farms, and some 'military buildings'.³⁰ This means that Jersey Heritage has control over a significant portion of Jersey's mnemonic direction, and what it may display in each of its historic sites. Much like other island based heritage management organisations, Jersey heritage is controlled by a director and by a board of trustees. The trustees are a mixture of mostly Jersiaise from various different professional backgrounds, including prominent Jersey businessmen, political figures, and even a retired veterinary surgeon, making the trustees a very middle-class mix.³¹ Jersey Heritage's senior management are a mix of Jersiaise and non-Jersiaise heritage experts, its director, Jonathan Carter, is Jersey born and raised, with an MA in Museum Studies from Leicester University. In total, Jersey Heritage is run by 194 volunteers and 143 staff members (including those already mentioned), making it a particularly large organisation indeed.³²

The mandate of Jersey Heritage is fivefold, and focuses on guardianship, learning, visitors, community, and sustainability.³³ This means that second only to actual preservation of the island's historic sites is the transmission of the importance of such sites to the Jersey populace, including its younger generation. This is followed very closely by the desire to display this heritage to tourists. The need for involvement of the community in the work of Jersey Heritage became ever more important after 2009, when financial hardship struck the organisation. A massive restructuring which occurred in late 2010 and early 2011 saw Jon Carter appeal to the people of Jersey for support.³⁴ Like other island 'nations', Jersey's official heritage body has a particularly strong hand in the creation of heritage, but not the only one. The Bailiff of Jersey and the States themselves also have the ability to exercise prerogatives on the island's heritage issues.

³⁰ 'About us', Jersey Heritage < <http://www.jerseyheritage.org/about-us> > [Accessed 19 Jul 2011]; see also: 'The Value of Heritage', Jersey Heritage report (November 2009), p. 12.

³¹ 'Jersey Heritage Review 2010/2011', Jersey Heritage publication (2011), p. 4. Available at: <<http://www.jerseyheritage.org/media/audio/Jersey%20Heritage%20Annual%20Review%202010%20and%202011.pdf>>

³² 'Jersey Heritage Review', p. 16, 22.

³³ 'The Value of Heritage', p. 3.

³⁴ 'Jersey Heritage wants Islanders support', BBC News (22 March 2011) <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-jersey-12821316>> [Accessed 2 Sep 2011].

Special committees such as the 'Liberation Anniversary Committee' (which was responsible for 1985 Liberation Day events) and the 'Occupation and Liberation Committee' (1990 and 1995) can and have been created by Act of the States,³⁵ and the Bailiff himself has often offered words of direction, especially within Liberation Day speeches. Lastly, the Jersey Public Sculpture Trust, responsible for promoting public sculpture in the island, has a say in the use of public space in Jersey, and it was largely the efforts of the Trust in co-operation with the National Trust for Jersey which led to the creation of the 2005 Liberation Day sculpture and associated events.³⁶

The co-operation between these governmental and public organisations has left Jersey's new heritage initiatives in the hands of a small number of heritage creators with well understood ideas about how to best steer memorialization. This has, on occasion, put them in conflict with other organisations and sometimes the public at large. The Occupation and Liberation Committee, for example, courted considerable controversy over its planned memorialization of liberation in 1995. The Bailiff too has seen his fair share of controversy, as he has recently attempted to position commemorations of the Second World War as more forward looking events.

One of the other factors to consider with respect to Jersey's Second World War heritage is the role of the 'occupation survivor'. Until very recently there have been large numbers of survivors on the island who have actively shaped Second World War commemorative events. This has ensured that new initiatives that diverge from the traditional remembrance the island had been commemorating for decades have been subject to intense scrutiny. This can, perhaps, be best exemplified in the argument over Liberation Day and the sculptures designed to memorialize the anniversary which will be discussed later in this chapter. Occupation survivors, though there are fewer than ever left on the island and most of them were very young when the events occurred, are often turned to for their opinions on occupation heritage. Performing the same role that veterans do in Britain, they often have the power to intervene when Jersey's heritage takes a turn which they do not like.

³⁵ Occupation and Liberation Committee files, Jersey Archive, C/C/L/.

³⁶ *The Freedom Tree*, Jersey Public Sculpture Trust publication, May 2005, p. 2-3.

There are also a number of private citizens who have fought for greater control over certain heritage sites. Since 1971, the Channel Islands Occupation Society (CIOS) has been responsible for restoring many of former German bunkers on the island, especially the larger and more prominent ones, like those at Noirmont Point. The Channel Islands Occupation Society, a group which has since 1977, been involved with an ambitious restoration programme of German bunkers throughout the Channel Islands describes itself as 'a non-political, voluntary organisation, dedicated to the preservation and recordal of all aspects of the German Occupation of Jersey during the Second World War'.³⁷ The idea for the society came one day to Michael Ginns MBE, a Jersey resident and a former deportee, while sitting in his bathtub. Since then, the Society has restored eight fortifications, which have proved a big draw for tourists. Membership in the Occupation Society is open to anyone for £15 per adult, but consists mostly of island residents from a variety of backgrounds, including a number of skilled builders and craftsmen who have proved helpful in the reconstruction process. The society's projects are maintained by members, who volunteer their time to open the bunkers for visitors and meet together to discuss new objectives.³⁸

There are also military installations which are now private museums. This is the case throughout the Channel Islands, where some are professionally organised tourist attractions, like the Jersey War Tunnels, but others have been spawned by the desire to exhibit personal collections of artifacts dating from the period. Damien Horn, a Jersey-born private collector, is one such individual. Horn now runs the 'Channel Islands Military Museum', a small collection of wartime artifacts the vast majority of which date from the occupation.³⁹ Held entirely in a small bunker on St. Ouens Bay, the bunker is owned by the landowner, but the collection and the running of the museum is left to the proprietor.

³⁷ 'Intro1', Channel Islands Occupation Society (Jersey) <<http://www.ciosjersey.org.uk/Intro1.htm>> [Accessed 22 Nov 2011].

³⁸ Interview with Michael Ginns, founder of Channel Islands Occupation Society, by the author, 14 Apr 2009.

³⁹ Interview with Damien Horn, owner of the Channel Islands Military Museum, by the author, 20 Apr 2009. See also a blurb about Horn's background on his website at: <<http://www.festungjerseymilitaria.com/biography.html>>

Jersey residents with collections, and organisations and companies which own the bunkers or have access to them, have the final say in how the bunkers are eventually displayed. This gives private owners the ability to provide, if they wish, a different experience of occupation than that of the island's official heritage bodies. This is a common practice within the Channel Islands, based largely upon ownership issues which emerged in the immediate post-war period. One of the contributing factors to the availability of bunkers was the series of legal battles fought in the 1950s over the remnants of war. In 1961, a legal precedent was set allowing owners of the land on which the bunker was built to use the bunkers as they saw fit.⁴⁰ Channel Islanders who found themselves in possession of a German bunker have used, and often still use, these sites for a variety of purposes. Many have been used as storage space, while others have been converted into sheds, wine cellars, and offices. One internet blogger has recently found fame by writing about the joys of having a newly discovered German bunker in his garden.⁴¹ Jersey is well ahead of Guernsey in the use of such bunkers, with the largest number of fully restored sites in the islands, and with the larger installations, such as the Jersey War Tunnels in great shape. Guernsey's war sites are in desperate need of care, with the German Military Underground Hospital, similar in size and purpose to the Jersey War Tunnels, literally rotting away due to damp.

Both official and unofficial heritage agencies in Jersey are well aware of the benefits of possession of such sites. The Jersey War Tunnels, for example, turn a significant profit, attracting one in three of all visitors to the island.⁴² Tourists come to the island each year to see what is perhaps the best restored example of Hitler's Atlantic Wall. The presence of German Bunkers on 'British' territory is more than a curiosity for visiting Britons; it allows them to see something outside of their common remembrance, a tangible break with the Churchillian narrative which they are used to at home. The presence of bunkers encourages tourists who are seeking to provide complexity to their

⁴⁰ Tabb, *A Peculiar Occupation*, pp. 218-219.

⁴¹ See: <<http://gardenbunker.blogspot.com/>>

⁴² In 2010 this was a total of 685, 200 visitors to Jersey, according to Jersey Tourism's annual report. "Jersey Tourism: A Year in Review 2010", Jersey Tourism Publication, available at: <http://jersey.com/business/Annual%20Reports/2010_Annual_Report.pdf> [Accessed 17 Feb 2012].

own war memories and myths. David Lloyd has shown that battlefield tourism in the wake of the First World War was due largely to the 'pervasive presence of the war' in people's 'fabric of life'.⁴³ Lloyd refers to such tourism as 'pilgrimages' largely to emphasize the connection between war and the sacred and the innate spiritualism within such sites.⁴⁴ But it may also go beyond that. Lennon and Foley have stressed the appeal of such sites as part of a 'dark tourism', one in which death and disaster, particularly if it is recent, are a particular draw for tourists. Death, in essence, has become a 'commodity for consumption in a global communications market'.⁴⁵ There is more than a simple curiosity with such sites. Dark tourism is now something which is recognized and commodified. Indeed, it has proved very profitable in some cases. Richard Sharpley has shown that visitors have, for centuries, been attracted to places of suffering and violence, dark tourism, he argues 'has existed in practice, though not in name, for as long as people have travelled,' but only recently has the phenomenon produced scholarly attention.⁴⁶ Bunkers in the Channel Islands are concrete (literally) examples of dark tourism, places where individuals from the United Kingdom can come and see something which is not only exotic, breaking with traditional Churchillian imagery which they get at home, but also something which appeals to their morbid curiosity.⁴⁷

The popularity of sites about occupation is well understood by both Jersey Heritage and private museums. Tourists are attracted to Jersey for a number of reasons, but occupation history is now emerging as a big selling point. As Jonathan Carter, Director of Jersey Heritage opined, 'it seems if you want to make a successful [historic]

⁴³ David W. Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain. Australia and Canada, 1919-1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), p. 2.

⁴⁴ Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁵ John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (New York: Continuum, 2000), p. 5.

⁴⁶ Richard Sharpley, 'Shedding Light on Dark Tourism: An Introduction', in Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone, eds, *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism* (Bristol: Channel View, 2009), p. 3-22; 4-5.

⁴⁷ For more on this see: Gillian Carr, 'Shining a Light on Dark Tourism: German bunkers in the British Channel Islands', *Public Archaeology* 9, 2 (2010), pp. 65-86; and Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone, 'Representing the Macabre: Interpretation, Kitschification and Authenticity', in Sharpley and Stone, eds, *The Darker Side of Travel*, pp. 109-128; 117.

site in Jersey, do one on occupation'.⁴⁸ Jersey Tourism exploited this aspect of the island's heritage by featuring the slogan 'Where there is something to keep everyone occupied' in 1998.⁴⁹ Jersey Heritage now markets some of these sites as holiday homes, like the six-storey Radio Tower at La Corbiere,⁵⁰ giving tourists the unique experience of living in a converted fortification. Even today adverts for the Jersey War Tunnels contrast the visitor's expectations with the realities of the occupation. One large banner in the airport reads 'Unspoiled beaches?' while showing pictures of bunkers, barbed wire, and tank traps buried in the sand.⁵¹

The history of the occupation, therefore, is more than just of interest for island residents, it has become something marketable. Heritage is a commodity that can be offered, and an interpretation of the past can be shaped and tailored to meet tourist expectations. As Baram and Rowan have argued, 'heritage marketing insists on, even requires, a focus on the unique'.⁵² The possession of a tangential heritage, therefore, can have a positive effect on an island's economic welfare.

The restoration of bunkers to their original form, many argue, is also a way of maintaining interest in the subject of occupation and history, as well as promoting tourism. But others see it as an affront to those who built the concrete casemates in the first place. In 1998 an article appeared in the *Guardian* entitled 'Showing off the sites of shame,' which criticized the obsession with militaria in the Channel Islands.⁵³ Law Professor David Fraser spoke out against the restoration of such sites, saying that such 'memorials' do not address the Jewish atrocities which occurred on the island.⁵⁴ Debate about what to do when such sites become available continues. The bunker debates

⁴⁸ Interview with Jonathan Carter, director of Jersey Heritage, by the author, 21 Apr 2009.

⁴⁹ Fraser, *The Jews in the Channel Islands*, pp. 145-146.

⁵⁰ 'Stay in a German bunker on Jersey', *The Times* (29 Mar 2007)

<<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/travel/destinations/europe/article1582076.ece>> [Accessed 12 Jul 2010].

⁵¹ As observed by the author at Jersey airport, 11 Apr 2009.

⁵² Yorke Rowan and Uzi Baram, 'Archaeology after Nationalism: Globalization and the Consumption of the Past' in Uzi Baram and Yorke Rowan, eds, *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 2004), pp. 3-23.

⁵³ Fraser, *The Jews in the Channel Islands*, p. 145.

⁵⁴ Fraser, *The Jews in the Channel Islands*, p. 146.

illustrate that islanders have a vested interest in the landscape of remembrance. The CIOs tends to favour restoration, while others favour a more modern and practical use, others still prefer to make the bunkers memorials to those who toiled and died building them, the slave workers of the Organisation Todt. When a new bunker becomes available, there is inevitably a massive interest in what to do with it.⁵⁵ As Carr has argued, ‘there is no consensus to satisfy the multiple groups who have an interest in the future use of these monuments’.⁵⁶

As recognition and discussion of Jersey’s negative history has increased, it has resulted in the erection of a significant number of plaques and memorials which lend voice to those who suffered under occupation. Most are in the island’s capital, St. Helier, but Jersey’s heritage sites have also been through a modernization during this same period. Many older sites have been revamped, whilst at the same time new sites and plaques have been commissioned inside them. Plaques and monuments dedicated to occupation victims are now a feature of virtually every museum, bunker, and graveyard, while at the same time exhibits and displays have been created which reflect the increasing recognition being given to Jersey’s controversial wartime experience. Most memorials or plaques are erected on significant anniversaries of certain events, but many are created at the request of individuals or family members of those who were affected. Recently, certain community groups have also campaigned for recognition of certain elements of the occupation experience, especially if there are those among the group who themselves suffered.

Many islanders now feel a new moral obligation to memorialize negative history in the wake of a growth in memorialisation in the UK and of a changing historiography on the Channel Islands war. This is mirroring a trend which is occurring in Britain, as people rush to commemorate using tangible symbols—plaques, tablets, and monuments, in response to the myth of the ‘uncommemorated generation’. As Britons

⁵⁵ Note that the Channel Islands are not alone in having many different perspectives on what to do with their bunkers. The debate over what to do with the buildings constructed by the National Socialists in Nuremberg in many ways mirrors the bunker debate, with city councilmen, leftist activists, and local historians all having a say. See: Macdonald, ‘Unsettling Memories’, pp. 96-99.

⁵⁶ Carr, ‘The Archaeology of Occupation’, p. 167.

rush to commemorate tragedies like the *Arandora Star* incident,⁵⁷ multiple groups in Jersey are also competing for ownership of the occupation story. The island has tried to find an appropriate way of remembering some of the more terrible incidents in its wartime history. Jersey's citizens who labour to ensure that such sites are constructed are forcing a change in the island's landscape of remembrance. Carr has shown that there are multiple groups at work in this process, saying

The impetus to erect a memorial can come from many sources. Sometimes they are put up at the cost and request of individuals or groups, often children of those who were affected, and who are, in effect, raising a memorial to their parents; at other times, a community or interest group who themselves suffered might campaign for the erection of a plaque. Sometimes they are erected on the occasion of large anniversaries, which can act to remind people how much time has elapsed since the event itself. Often it can simply be to do with the passing of a necessary amount of time before people can come to terms with or face a past that was excessively traumatic; a time to forget is often eventually replaced by a time to remember and to record.⁵⁸

Public campaigns for recognition have gained support from the island's heritage experts as well as politicians by using the language of redress and moral obligation to recognise. The 'degree of suffering' can dictate in which order occupation events are memorialized.⁵⁹ Public attention, both in the island and in the United Kingdom, has placed significant emphasis on the lack of sites of remembrance of negative events in the Channel Islands War, with Madelene Bunting as late as 2004 arguing that some Channel Islands have not been 'owning up to [their] wartime shame'.⁶⁰ As a result, it has become a moral issue for the islanders to recognise negative events in their domestic history. The controversial nature of occupation and the sensitivities within the island populace of their image in Britain (and increasingly, around the world) has created a culture where memorials to the tragedies of occupation are expected, and opposition to them is considered politically incorrect. This is common in nations where

⁵⁷ Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'*, p. 230.

⁵⁸ Carr, 'The Archaeology of Occupation', p. 169-170.

⁵⁹ Carr, 'The Archaeology of Occupation', p. 170.

⁶⁰ 'Our part in the Holocaust', *The Guardian* (24 Jan 2004)

<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/jan/24/germany.race>> [Accessed 20 Jan 2011].

there is a divisive history being memorialised, and Jennifer Jordan has shown that such campaigns inevitably reach ‘a point of no return’, where not to support it becomes politically difficult.⁶¹ The case of the Channel Islands is a clear case of ‘memory intervention’—when forgetting in the public sphere is challenged with renewed efforts to remember (particularly with uncomfortable histories).⁶² Such ‘heritage interventions’ are occurring more and more frequently as groups demand that their heritage interests are met, and the public are beginning to play a large factor in heritage direction. Sharon Macdonald has shown that ‘interventionists’ often come from outside governmental organisations, but can garner support as a controversy develops, to the point that it gets incorporated into the ‘official’ history that follows.

As a result, there has been a wave of retrospective memorialisation since the mid-1990s. In 1995 a tablet dedicated to citizens killed while attempting to escape was placed in the Tapestry Gallery alongside a portrait of Canon Clifford John Cohu, who died in a German concentration camp after being caught with a radio set hidden in his church steeple. 1996 saw the erection of a memorial outside the Maritime Museum in St. Helier to deportees who never returned. Holocaust Memorial Day, celebrated by both the EU and the UK on 27 January each year has also been held as a ‘national’ event in Jersey since 2001, with a service outside the Maritime Museum each year. The day is set aside to remember Jersey’s victims, as well as victims of other nations who died in the islands, an important part of Jersey’s new landscape of occupation remembrance, and a way to continue forward looking events related to the experience of war in the Channel Islands. The ‘Occupation Memorial’ a website created out of a partnership with Jersey Heritage, the Société Jersiaise, and the *Jersey Evening Post*, now provides valuable information and resources about deportees, slave workers, Jews, and military deaths for *all* of the Channel Islands. It also provides information about victims, where to find memorials, and memorial events. The site was put together with the help of a number of different groups and people, including Jon Carter, Michael Ginns, Freddie

⁶¹ Jennifer Jordan, *Structures of Memory* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 12.

⁶² Macdonald, ‘Unsettling Memories’, p. 94.

Cohen, Doug Ford and the former Bailiff Sir Philip Bailhache,⁶³ some of the most prominent heritage experts and cultural agents on the island. The website also has a forward looking mandate, with a section about contemporary racism, genocide, and anti-Semitism, highlighting the 2003 vandalism of a Jersey synagogue by the neo-Nazi group Combat 18.⁶⁴

Most buildings produced by the Organisation Todt now acknowledge the slave workers' contribution, or have a plaque, memorial or sculpture to slave workers within them. In 2000 a small German bunker at La Hougue Bie, a site under management of Jersey Heritage, was turned into a slave worker memorial. Originally a museum to occupation, the bunker's militaria was stripped and the site now houses pictures and testimony of those who worked as slave workers as well as those who tried to assist them. With heart-wrenching testimonials and information, the exhibit is a powerful reminder of the atrocities which Hitler unleashed on the populations of Europe. Peculiarly out of place in the grounds of a Neolithic burial site, the bunker is convenient, in that it was already owned by Jersey Heritage and was on the well established tourist circuit. A sculpture by Maurice Blik, a child survivor of Belsen, now sits on top of the bunker. The removal of a military occupation museum and its replacement with a monument to victims of the occupation could not be more redolent of the shift occurring within Jersey Heritage in the late 1990s. The Jersey War Tunnels, perhaps the largest site built by slave workers in the Channel Islands, unveiled a large sculpture entitled 'Silence' in 2007, as well as a plaque remembering slave workers on the wall in an unfinished tunnel within the museum. The sculpture was created by Canadian Paul De Moncheaux, most famous for creating 'Song', the memorial to Winston Churchill commissioned by the BBC in 2004. Costing £50,000, 'Silence' was intended to remember the suffering of slave workers in Jersey, but also to 'act as a lesson for contemporary society to combat oppression in every guise.'⁶⁵ Though memorials to slave workers have

⁶³ 'Credits', Occupation Memorial, <<http://www.thisisjersey.co.uk/hmd/html/credits.html>> [Accessed 11 Nov 2011]

⁶⁴ 'Desecration of a Jersey Synagogue', Occupation Memorial <<http://www.thisisjersey.co.uk/hmd/pageviewer2.pl?Autoincrement=000028>> [Accessed 11 Mar 2011].

⁶⁵ Jersey War Tunnels News release, 5 Feb 2007, provided courtesy of Chris Addy.

been around for decades, a new interest in slave workers has taken root in Jersey. In the Occupation tapestry gallery, space has been found for a medal presented by Russia to 'a Jersey resident' in recognition of islanders who helped slave workers. A number of plaques dedicated to slave workers have appeared in the last twenty years: quotations from and about slave workers are now marked in stone on the street in front of the St. Helier Parish Hall, and new panels have been added to the Westmount Memorial in the Westmount Road Crematorium that represent different nationalities of slave workers brought to the island. Belgium, Belarus, and Poland now have a place on the memorial, as well as a small plaque to 'Jews who suffered during the occupation'.⁶⁶ Services are held here every year, and often include a representative from the Russian Embassy.

Jersey has now positioned itself as the champion of negative heritage within the Channel Islands. This allows for three distinctly positive things to happen. First, it provides differentiation from the British narrative, highlighting Jersey's wartime experience above all else. In this way, the island asserts its distinctiveness from the United Kingdom and the 'straightjacket' of the Churchillian Paradigm. This in turn provides an escape for 'dark' tourists wishing to view the exotic—an area of the British Isles which was subject to occupation, and the unusual landscape of remembrance which accompanies it. Second, it differentiates it from its Channel Island neighbours, allowing them to argue, with conviction, that they have not shied away from their negative past, nor begrudgingly complied out of moral necessity. Lastly, it also allows the island to act as champions against intolerance, to ensure that visitors to the island are aware of the dangers of racism and anti-Semitism. The latter is made all the more poignant after the neo-Nazi attack of 2003. Jersey fully acknowledges the negative aspects of their war experience as something which was part of the victimization of the island, its plaques and memorials are important in ensuring that the consequences of anti-Semitism and intolerance are well understood. Visitors to the island will invariably see some part of this aspect of the Channel Islands wartime experience.

⁶⁶ Westmount Cemetery memorial, 29 Apr 2009.

While the narrative of the island's occupation and victimization is a distinct break with the 'finest-hour' myth which exists in Britain, one major tenet of the British war myth still holds considerable power, and Jersey for the most part still maintains its conceptions of an island suffering together under the German administration. While being little known and certainly marginalized aspects of the Second World War, the slave worker story, the treatment of Jews, and English deportees sent to Bad Wurzach are still about what the enemy did to the island and to humanity, rather than what islanders did to one another. Very little is said or shown about the social disjuncture which occurred within the community during wartime. These are perhaps the most difficult yet to come to terms with.

Jersey only has one site which offers a glimpse at some of the fractures which occupation, by its very nature, was able to provoke. The privately-owned and run Jersey War Tunnels (also known as the German Underground Hospital, or by the German designation Ho8) is one of the most visited tourist spots on the island today, with about a third of tourists to Jersey visiting the site.⁶⁷ Acquired by a real estate company in the early 1960s, the museum has gone through a number of renovations since, taking its final shape in 2001. The museum showcases items from the occupation, as well as reproductions, photographs and information, and interactive displays designed to capture numerous themes from the occupation years. Visitors are given a reproduction Jersey identity card containing the name and photograph of an actual occupation survivor or victim, and sent down the tunnels along a chronological path. This is a technique used in other museums which have negative history as their primary focus. The US Holocaust Museum and the Beit Hashoah Museum of Tolerance, as well as Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition employ this method in order to allow the visitor to empathise with the victims of such events.⁶⁸

Each gallery is organised along this path, beginning with Jersey in peacetime and ending with Liberation. The museum addresses many of the themes familiar to occupation for decades: there is a large section dedicated to resistance, wherein a

⁶⁷ Interview with Chris Addy, War Tunnels curator, by the author, 17 Apr 2009.

⁶⁸ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (London: Yale, 1993), p. 4.

visitor can assemble a makeshift wireless set. There are details about escapees and deportees, the Vega and so on. There is also a small garden of remembrance, complete with statistics about casualties, and plaques dedicated to islanders who perished during the occupation. Where the Jersey War Tunnels differs from other sites, however, is in its ability to challenge the visitor to think critically about occupation. Dealing with issues which other sites do not, the museums' exhibits ask how each visitor would have behaved under similar circumstances.

In the gallery entitled 'to leave or to stay', a visitor is confronted with a large board at the entrance which asks the question 'What are you going to do?' The reasons for leaving are represented by a photograph of Winston Churchill, while the reasons for staying are represented by the Bailiff of Jersey, Alexander Coutanche, who argued for islanders to remain calm. The stories of those who stayed are contrasted with the stories of those who chose to leave before occupation. Photographs of hundreds of people queued up on 19 June 1940 waiting to leave are hung across from photographs of those who chose to stay. About 50 per cent of the Jersey populace, it says, was evacuated from the island.

Further down the corridor is the 'First Contact' section, which explores the first interactions between the Germans and the local people. The visitor is quite literally greeted by German soldiers, in mannequin form, dressed in German uniform, their heads television screens. Some have outstretched hands, inviting you to shake them. All have earnest looks on their (television screen) faces and speak to you in English. At the base of each soldier is a question—'Would YOU say hello to a German in the street?', 'Would YOU let a German buy you an ice cream?', 'Would YOU invite a German soldier to your home?' Reasons why are also given: 'Could you ignore him?', 'He has children of his own and misses them', 'He speaks perfect English and shares your love of music'. The actors portraying the Germans are very friendly and sincere, and it makes it difficult for the visitor to maintain pre-conceived notions of the interactions between occupied and occupiers. The display humanizes the invader and forces the visitor to answer tough questions about how they would have behaved, gaining a better understanding of the

moral dilemma Jersey men and women faced.



Figure 10: German figures try to shake your hand at the Jersey War Tunnels. Photo ©Daniel Travers.

The War Tunnels museum also addresses the contentious issue of collaboration. In the 'Whispers and Lies' section, visitors are asked 'who could you trust?'⁶⁹ Standing in front of a window in dim light, the visitor hears an island woman and a German man speaking softly in English. Pictures of Jersey women with their German boyfriends hang on the walls, alongside those who chose to work for the Germans for extra rations or for extra pay. Most chilling of the artifacts in this section are letters from Jersey citizens to the Germans detailing the illegal activities of their neighbours. One, signed only 'A Stranger', informs the Germans of a wireless set hidden in the walls of his neighbour's house. Another complains about a neighbour's large amount of coal and extra rations, when others have to do without. It is addressed only to 'The Gestapo'.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ From text at the entrance to the 'Whispers and Lies' section, Jersey War Tunnels, 17 Apr 2009.

⁷⁰ The letters on display are reproductions, the originals being kept in the archive at the War Tunnels. Though now at the JWT, these same letters were once on display at Richard Mayne's German Occupation Museum in St. Peters. George Forty, *The Channel Islands at War: A German Perspective* (Surrey: Ian Allen, 1999), p. 235.

Even the theme of liberation is discussed with an eye toward differing viewpoints. In the Liberation gallery, the red, white and blue Union flag is projected high upon the ceiling giving the gallery a bright glow, while pictures of jubilant Islanders, also tinted in red, white and blue stand in large columns in the middle of the floor. A large Union flag folded inside one of the structures, provides the title and the entrance for the gallery. Among the red white and blue, however, are black and white handwritten notes which give a glimpse at the other side of liberation. Those who had fraternized with the enemy knew that they were in trouble: 'Jerrybags kept a low profile, but could not escape as their day of reckoning had come', one says, while another addresses what evacuees came back to after their escape to England: 'We came back and our house was stripped of furniture. Even the lino in the kitchen had gone'.

Lastly, the War Tunnels 'Towards Tomorrow' exhibit, the last thing to be seen upon exiting the tunnels, is an attempt to broach the ideals of a new forward looking and pragmatic view of occupation. Moving from words like 'occupation', 'suffering' and 'loss', the exhibit changes to brighter words: 'reconciliation', 'freedom', 'peace'. People on television screens speak about their loss, of injustice, and of hope for the future. Some of this is quite hard hitting and political. One statement says 'We have a politics which claims to be eradicating terrorism by fighting and ironically it is producing more terrorists'.⁷¹ The very last item on the wall is a mirror, complete with the words 'see yourself in others'.

Though the Jersey War Tunnels includes much of what has become accepted as part of Jersey's war narrative, it does not privilege unity above all else. Walking through the museum gives the visitor a distinct impression of the difficult moral choices islanders were forced to make. It defies conventional mythology and the British War narrative by highlighting examples of disunity within the war experience. The War Tunnels provide visitors with a balanced, but unique perspective on the Channel Islands War, in a site which has a major importance on the landscape of remembrance. As a heritage

⁷¹ Cyd Le Bail: Statement from 'Towards Tomorrow', copy of text provided courtesy of Chris Addy.

‘attraction’, the efforts taken by the War Tunnels provide that extra step towards a further break with British war mythology, a step which other sites are reluctant to do.

One of the reasons for this is that the organisation which runs the War Tunnels is somewhat removed from the organisations and groups which have stirred controversy surrounding such issues. The War Tunnels are first and foremost a private enterprise, and have been owned by Daisy Hill Real Estate since 1961, a company which provides them with their annual budget. An outside company, ‘Event Communications’ has been responsible for the researching and fabrication of all of the current displays in the museum, with the exception of the ‘Towards Tomorrow’ exhibit. Rather than a board of trustees, the War Tunnels have a management board and a managing director which determine the operation of the museum. The museum is run as a ‘heritage attraction’ but with an ear to the trends occurring in the heritage and historiography of the Channel Islands. This gives the War Tunnels the opportunity to present divisive, not just negative heritage, without discussion among the traditional heritage organisations. Though the organisation’s heritage experts are cognizant of the island’s sensitivities, Chris Addy, the current curator, has said, ‘we have a lot more freedom than if we were tied into one of the more official organisations’.⁷² The War Tunnels therefore have the freedom to explore multiple aspects of the occupation including those which are still difficult. In fact, it is in their best interest to do so. By presenting more than one diversion from the Churchillian paradigm, the War Tunnels strengthen their sense of the ‘exotic’ and increase their appeal to tourists. Jersey’s tangential war history is one of the great appeals of the museum, and one which they are more than willing to display if it increases visitor numbers. There is still reluctance perhaps, within Jersey Heritage, to present an occupation picture which focuses on divided islanders. Though it is comfortable with commemorating ‘negative history’, a ‘divisive history’ it seems, is a bit tougher to display. The success of the War Tunnels is that they capture that sense of disunity which is in direct contrast to the Churchillian paradigm, providing yet another aspect of Jersey’s war experience which breaks with ‘finest-hour’ mythology.

⁷² Interview with Chris Addy, War Tunnels curator, by the author, 17 Apr 2009.

III) Liberation Day

Despite massive changes in Jersey's heritage direction in response to academic trends, and the growing awareness within both the island's population and in Britain of the nature of war in the Channel Islands, there are elements of the island's commemoration which it is considered inappropriate to change. The story of liberation is one example. For the last sixty-five years, liberation has traditionally provided Jersey's link with Britain's wartime narrative, in essence becoming a meta-narrative in order to justify Jersey's war as part of the British, rather than European, war story. It has allowed islanders to delimit their role in the Second World War while at the same time celebrate a positive moment in the islands otherwise negative war history. The act of liberation itself on 9 May 1945, and the scenes of celebration that accompanied the arrival of British troops came to symbolize the revered conceptions of unity and heroism that are the essence of the Churchillian myth, as brave British soldiers returned to Jersey and the island's population took to the streets waving Union flags in a unified display of patriotism to the motherland.

Having a narrative which was intertwined with that of the Churchillian paradigm ensured that the story of liberation became a dominant theme in the Channel Islands' war commemorations. The need for a moment that could be celebrated alongside Britain, as Jersey's 'finest hour', resulted in this particular aspect of the war being given much more emphasis. As Lennon and Foley have argued, 'it is the liberation which has dominated the interpretation of occupation more than any other aspect, and represents how the collective memory focuses on positive aspects'.⁷³ For years, liberation provided a way to celebrate the island's part in Britain's achievement, while at the same time minimizing aspects which were divisive and controversial. As Carr has argued, the

⁷³ Lennon and Foley, *Dark Tourism*, p. 69.

‘potential shame’ associated with the realities of occupation may have contributed a concentration on liberation, rather than other themes.⁷⁴

Long-term association with the Churchillian paradigm, however, has meant that commemorations and celebrations surrounding liberation have appropriated traditional British commemorative tropes. They are now an integral part of Liberation Day remembrance and celebrations. For this reason, 9 May has traditionally been celebrated as ‘Jersey’s day of joy’.⁷⁵ Since the late 1940s, Liberation Day has been enshrined as a ‘national’ holiday for the island’s residents, and although very little was done to celebrate Liberation Day directly after the war, the rise of commemoration of D-Day and VE Day events in Britain coincided with a new interest in creating Liberation Day events. As in Britain, the 1980s provided the genesis of modern commemorations, and the 1985 liberation celebrations ‘kick started’ the commemoration of Liberation Day in the Channel Islands as a large event.⁷⁶ Over the last twenty-five years Liberation Day has become a grand celebration, involving two or three days of events. The convenience of 9 May is that it has, in the past, been easily connected with VE Day celebrations on the mainland, commemorating Britain’s glorious victory over Nazi tyranny. As a result, typical British imagery, including the Union flag, V signs, Vera Lynn, and Churchill and his infamous speeches have now become standard tropes for the commemoration of Jersey’s Liberation Day.

The 1995 Liberation Day celebrations, for example, so heaved with British commemorative tropes that they were lampooned in a *Daily Express* cartoon featuring a prostrate Prince Charles in front of a memorial that read ‘50th anniversary of the Channel Isles liberation’ and the caption ‘He’s ok but I don’t think His Highness can take much more Vera Lynn!’⁷⁷ Despite the changing historiography which was occurring at the time, there was an overwhelming feeling that the island’s Liberation Day

⁷⁴ Carr, ‘The Archaeology of Occupation’, pp. 169-170.

⁷⁵ ‘Jersey’s Day of Joy’ *Jersey Evening Post* (10 May 2005), 1.

⁷⁶ Interview with Michael Ginns, founder of CIOS, by the author, 14 Apr 2009.

⁷⁷ *Daily Express* cartoon (10 May 1995), p. 17.

commemorations needed to be as grand, if not grander, than those in Britain to commemorate VE Day.

Liberation 1995, therefore, encapsulated an entire week of events. In addition to the Royal visit, Liberation Day 1995 copied many of the activities from the celebrations in London, including services of thanksgiving, a military fanfare, and a reception for the British Legion War veterans. A flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight completed the theme.⁷⁸ Churchill's famous image, with bow tie and hat, graced the cover of the 1995 programme of events,⁷⁹ Jersey Post commissioned stamps with Churchill's image and an excerpt from his speech on 8 May 1945 ('and our dear Channel Islands are also to be freed today...').⁸⁰ 'And our dear Channel Islands' was also the title of a stage play performed at Fort Regent.⁸¹ The V sign graced pamphlets, signs, and programmes, and was adopted by the *Jersey Evening Post* for the articles related to the 1995 commemorations.⁸² At the same time the population took to the streets wearing Union flag shirts, hats, and ties, waving union flags, and watched red white and blue fireworks, and the Red Arrows releasing red, white, and blue smoke across St. Aubin's Bay.⁸³

These are the familiar icons on which Liberation Day has traditionally relied. Borrowed from the mainland, they now form a massive part of the island's festival of liberation and the performance of their 'national day'. That is not to say that this is a false identity, entirely imported from Britain. Rather, the close association between the island's constructed war narrative and that of Britain has helped to nurture pre-existing conceptions about such images and appropriate them into Jersey's own heritage and identity. The most well recognised British symbols were not alien to Jersey during the

⁷⁸ 'Liberation Souvenir Insert', *Jersey Evening Post* (10 May 1995), p. xxx.

⁷⁹ Occupation and Liberation committee files, '45th Anniversary programme of events for May 1990', Jersey Archive, C/C/L/B1/5/3.

⁸⁰ Stanley Gibbons, *Collect Channel Islands and Isle of Man Stamps, 26th Edition* (Ringwood, Hants: Stanley Gibbons, 2010), p. 276, 307; see also: Norbert Fred Sauermilch, 'The German Occupation of the Channel Islands as Mirrored in its Postage Stamps: 1940—1945 and Post-War', *Channel Islands Occupation Review* 33 (May 2005), pp. 121-150; 148.

⁸¹ 'Replaying the memories', special insert, *Jersey Evening Post* (10 May 1995), pp. x-xi.

⁸² 'Liberation Logo: Your Chance to Vote,' *Jersey Evening Post* (15 Mar 2005), p. 8.

⁸³ 'Liberation Souvenir Insert', *Jersey Evening Post* (10 May 1995), p. xxx.

war, but in fact served to remind islanders of their connections with Britain and provide symbols of defiance and resistance.

The V sign is one of the best examples of this. Jersey's association with the V sign began as early as summer 1941, when islanders began a campaign of painting the symbol on walls and buildings in Jersey. Despite the threat of severe penalties, and although the campaign was discouraged by the local authorities, thousands of V signs were painted, cut out, drawn, and found their way into the public domain.⁸⁴ Though there was very little active resistance on the island, the V sign campaign proved very useful in frustrating the occupiers and providing islanders with a necessary boost in morale. Carr has argued that the symbol was 'so popular and important to islanders that it has retained its currency to the present day'.⁸⁵

Churchill's image and oratory, which is an important part of Jersey's landscape of remembrance, also has poignant meaning for islanders. Despite being ultimately responsible for the demilitarization that allowed for the occupation of the islands, the image of Churchill as the islands' saviour, as one who would persevere to restore the Channel Islands to their former status, is the one which endured. Churchill's speeches were listened to covertly by many islanders, again at the risk of strong penalties, and now form part of the 'resistance story' of the Channel Islands. In addition to being used during Liberation Day celebrations, Winston Churchill souvenirs can still be bought in Jersey shops. Churchill's speeches feature in the Jersey War Tunnels, both in the museum itself and on a large metal shape outside the entranceway, and in the cafeteria, a Churchill cutout complete with giant Union flag and hand raised in V for victory salute is available for taking photographs.

It is interesting to explore why Churchill is seen in such a positive light. Winston Churchill, though reluctantly, gave the order that the Channel Islands be demilitarized and effectively abandoned the islands to their fate in order to avoid bloodshed over their inevitable loss. One occupation survivor has argued that the islands were

⁸⁴ Gillian Carr, 'The Archaeology of Occupation and the V-sign Campaign in the Occupied British Channel Islands', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 14, 4 (2010), pp. 575–592.

⁸⁵ Carr, 'The Archaeology of Occupation and the V sign Campaign', p. 577.

effectively ‘ditched’ by Churchill in 1940.⁸⁶ Few relief efforts were organised by the British during the war, and when asked about the fate of the Channel Islands after D-Day had liberated France, Churchill said (ostensibly about the occupiers rather than the occupied) ‘Let ‘em starve’! One might expect therefore that the image of Churchill would be dissimilar to that of Britain, but the reality is much different. Churchill’s image, one of the strongest symbols of the British national narrative survives in Jersey—appropriated as a symbol of freedom and liberation. With the island under German rule, the ‘Britishness’ Churchill represented was internalized during the war and came to symbolize victory, perseverance and liberation. Jersey’s need to negotiate a place for themselves within the Churchillian paradigm after the war ensured that as Churchill’s image was solidified, it became an essential part of the liberation narrative.

Historical incidents have also enhanced the meaning of older British symbols such as the Union flag. The removal of the flag and its replacement with the swastika proved to be one of the most potent reminders to the islanders that they were now part of the German Reich. The Union flag was banned from the streets by the Germans, but resurfaced in a small number of resistance acts. There is a well known story of an old man with an apple cart that has worked its way into public memory, helped somewhat by the republishing of the story in the *Jersey Evening Post* in 1995. The story involves an old Jersey retailer who placed little Union flags around his cart one morning in St. Helier. When a German officer told him to take them down, he refused, forcing the German officer to commandeer the apple cart and destroy the little flags. The defiant old man was lucky to escape serious punishment by the furious Germans, and the Union flag cemented its place as a symbol of resistance for the islanders.⁸⁷ Another story was featured five days later about islanders who came out in a grand display of patriotism for the Whit Monday final of the Occupation Cup, a football match played by two Jersey teams, St. Clement and Corinthians, on 29 May 1944. Corinthians wore red and white, St. Clement wore blue and white, and despite the ban on meetings of people more than two, five thousand elated Jersey men and women turned out for the match wearing red,

⁸⁶ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 11.

⁸⁷ ‘A Quiet Little Man Upsets the Apple Cart’, *Jersey Evening Post* (23 Feb 1995), p. 21.

white, and blue. The football match developed into what one post-war Jersey Sports editor called 'an expression of loyalty to the motherland'.⁸⁸ By displaying the colours which symbolized pre-war Jersey, the participants were able to offer a cheeky display of resistance.

The return of the Union flag, and what it represented, was eagerly anticipated. Aware of their impending liberation, in the week before 9 May, many shops started selling Union flags, and they were carried openly by islanders, without opposition from the occupiers. So eager were the islanders to display the symbol that the bailiff of Jersey had to let it be known that no flags were to be raised until after the Prime Minister's speech on 8 May.⁸⁹ The return of the flag on 9 May, along with the liberating force, signalled not only the end of the German occupation, but the re-establishment of connections with the Crown and of Jersey's sovereignty that had for five years been denied. The loss of the flag symbolised defeat for the islanders, the return of the flag saw the restoration of Jersey's pre-war identity and heritage. Islanders had suffered *and survived* the occupation, and the return of the flag symbolised this accomplishment. The flag was not formally raised on the island until 10 May, when the Union flag was hoisted over Royal Square,⁹⁰ but the explosion of flag waving which occurred on 9 May, including the famous incidents at the harbour office and the Pomme D'Or, highlighted the significance of the occurrence, and the flag's role as the centrepiece of liberation.

During the war, these symbols represented hope, freedom, and resistance. In the post-war period they became part of Jersey's landscape of remembrance. The island's close association with Britain's Churchillian paradigm has served to crystallise and cement this iconography into collective consciousness. The British war remembrance which was constructed parallel to that of Jersey has found common ground in many of the same images. The similarity of commemoration, as well as the closeness in date between Liberation Day (9 May) and VE Day (8 May) has meant that celebrations of the end of the war in both places have become inextricably linked. This is

⁸⁸ 'The day patriotism won the Occupation Cup', *Jersey Evening Post* (28 May 1994), p. 13.

⁸⁹ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, p. 318–319.

⁹⁰ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, p. 322.

also why Jersey has, in the past, chosen VE Day to reaffirm its allegiance to the Crown with a special sitting of the States Assembly.⁹¹

As a result, though images such as the Union flag and V signs have wartime meaning for the islanders, their perpetuation on Liberation Day is as much about historical and contemporary associations with Britain and the British wartime narrative as it is about celebrating Jersey's own unique war experience. They now perform a joint role: to serve as a reminder of a positive event during the dark years of Jersey's occupation by the Germans, while at the same time creating a direct link between Jersey's wartime experience and Britain's commemoration. The perennial inclusion of British tropes which have very little to do with the domestic experience of the island (a Lancaster bomber for example)⁹² suggests an additional appropriation of some of the elements of the 'finest-hour' mythology which exists in Britain, and the utilization of VE Day icons in Liberation Day commemorations.

Islanders now see such commemorative tropes not as 'British symbolism', but as part of their very own Liberation Day iconography. The perennial use of this kind of symbolism has established it as part of Liberation Day tradition. Consequently, liberation and Liberation Day are expected to conform to the island's understandings of the day, and when they do not it can create considerable controversy. Despite the massive changes in Jersey's occupation heritage which have occurred since the early 1990s, Liberation Day remains a sticking point with many islanders, and attempts to change the meaning of the day from one of celebration to the forward-looking values of peace, freedom, or reconciliation, for example, have often not been welcomed.

In response to the changing academic historiography, heritage experts in the island, namely the States appointed Occupation and Liberation Committee, sought an appropriate way to permanently commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of liberation in 1995. They envisaged a memorial which was 'sensitively constructed', true to Jersey's

⁹¹ 'States Renew Island's Allegiance to the Crown', *Jersey Evening Post, Liberation Souvenir* (10 May 1995), p. vii.

⁹² 'Sky High Jinks', *Jersey Evening Post, Liberation Souvenir* (10 May 1995), p. xxx.

heritage, and one that would satisfy both the expectations of resident and visitor alike.⁹³ The Jersey Public Sculpture Trust inherited the duty of commissioning a public sculpture for Liberation Square, the spot where the Union flag had been raised in 1945 and the place where most of the Liberation Day celebrations would occur. The 'monument to liberation' they proposed was expected to mark the half-century of peace the islanders had seen, as well as to commemorate the Liberation Day celebrations. A competition was held, a sculptor was chosen, and a small maquette was made of the future sculpture, which was based upon both the artist's interpretation of the significance of the day, and the overtones of peace and freedom, which members of the Occupation and Liberation Committee had specifically requested.⁹⁴ The sculpture was to feature life size models of Jersey islanders on the day of liberation releasing doves into the air. As details of the proposed sculpture reached the Jersey public, however, the newspapers and the Jersey Sculpture Trust were inundated with letters written by opponents to the design, and plans for a monument to peace were abandoned under public pressure. The discourse which occurred in mid-1993 surrounding the rejection of the old design and the adoption of a new sculpture which more appropriately captured the 'spirit' of liberation pitched much of the Jersey public against the organisers of the celebration. By late August 1993, over 200 people had signed a petition protesting to States Members about the design, and demanding public input. A number of Jersey residents, led by occupation survivors, criticized the Occupation and Liberation Committee; the failure of the statue, they argued, was that it did 'not directly celebrate the liberation of the island and ignores the essential truth of the events at the liberation site'.⁹⁵ The Jersey Sculpture Trust was also berated by Jersey residents, expressing their disappointment with the proposed design, that the statue lacked a 'spirit of joy'⁹⁶ and needed to have

⁹³ Occupation and Liberation Committee Files, 'Proposal: The Jersey festival of Liberation', Jersey Archive, C/C/L/C17/5/40-50.

⁹⁴ Occupation and Liberation Committee Files, 'Notes on briefs to potential artists', Jersey Archive, C/C/L/C4/1/12.

⁹⁵ '200 sign letter of protest over Liberation Sculpture', *Jersey Evening Post* (18 Aug 1993), p. 1.

⁹⁶ Jersey Sculpture Trust General Correspondence, 'Letter to JST undated, 1993', Jersey Archive, L/E/01/B/1/46-52.

‘some concept of the joyous scene enacted in Liberation Square in May 1945’.⁹⁷ The statement made in the existing design, it was said, was far too glum to capture the feeling of Liberation Day itself.

The States of Jersey eventually took the decision-making ability out of the hands of the Occupation and Liberation Committee, instead forcing the sculpture design to be put to a vote. The understanding at the States meeting was, that despite the occupation committee’s insistence that the releasing of doves was an act which could be considered joyful, the feeling of ‘overwhelming joy’, according to one member ‘...did not come over in the statue at all’.⁹⁸ The doves were rejected, and after a short period of uncertainty, Philip Jackson, the sculptor, was asked to review his artwork and make the necessary changes. His decision was to adorn the sculpture with a giant Union flag, taller in height than the figures below, as if it were being unfurled on the day of liberation. Although the sculpture bore the basic elements of the old design, it had a significantly different message. Instead of doves of peace, the Union flag, it was argued, was a much more suitable icon for liberation remembrance.

The addition of the flag appeased the public, and when the Prince of Wales unveiled the sculpture in Liberation Square on Liberation Day 1995, it was met by widespread approval. As Edwin Heathcote has said, ‘a memorial will tell us more about its builders than about those to whom it is dedicated’.⁹⁹ It stands today as a testament to the feelings which existed on 9 May 1995 as much as it does 9 May 1945.

⁹⁷ Jersey Sculpture Trust General Correspondence, ‘Letter to JST 1st July 1993’, Jersey Archive, L/E/01/B/1/46-47.

⁹⁸ ‘Sculpture finds few supporters’, *Jersey Evening Post* (24 Aug 1993), p. 2.

⁹⁹ Edwin Heathcote, *Monument Builders: Modern Architecture and Death* (Chichester: Academy Editions, 1999), p. 19.



Figure 11: The 'Monument to Liberation' in Liberation Square, St. Helier, which was unveiled in 1995. Photo © Daniel Travers.

The presence of a large sculpture complete with a Union flag was more in line with people's expectations of the day, evoking the 'spirit of liberation' while serving as a 'focus for sentiment about society'.¹⁰⁰ Appealing to liberation tradition, it retained the connections with Britishness and the British narrative that the Jersey public, in particular the occupation survivors, wished to see. The commemorations reflected a historiography, which though changing, had incorporated the story of the Channel Islands within the British war myth. In essence, heritage creators, in this case the Occupation and Liberation Committee were, by public opinion, prevented from incorporating forward looking values into Jersey's traditional celebration of war remembrance by a popular heritage intervention. Islanders resisted 'turning the page' of history, and requested a sculpture which remained true to their conceptions of the

¹⁰⁰ R. Firth, *Symbols Public and Private* (London: George Allen, 1973), p. 356.

liberation narrative and their idea of what Liberation Day was all about. Though historiography had begun to change the island's mnemonic landscape, it was not ready to abandon the traditional model of Liberation Day. The need to maintain liberation tradition was strong.

A decade later, Jersey's official heritage experts were ready to try again. Between 1995 and 2005, the massive increase in the commemoration and memorialisation of negative events meant that islanders had proved themselves ready for symbols and commemorations which were tangential to the symbolism of the Churchillian paradigm. To coincide with this changing remembrance, the Occupation and Liberation Committee, together with the Bailiff attempted to restructure the meaning of Liberation Day, infusing the commemorations with distinctly forward looking themes. The commemorations for Liberation Day after 2000, therefore, would still borrow heavily from traditional 'British' commemorative ideals, but with a twist. Each would now also be accompanied by the themes of thanksgiving, freedom, and also reconciliation. In 2000, the bailiff, Sir Philip Bailhache, outlined this plan, appealing to the islanders to 'breathe new life into the celebrations'.¹⁰¹ As a result, there were many things attempted which helped position Liberation Day as a unique event, reflecting the need for the island to use its occupation history for the benefit of current and future generations. In 2002, the invitation to Liberation Day ceremonies of the mayor of Bad Wurzach, the German city to where many islanders were deported, was an attempt to approach the new theme of reconciliation.¹⁰² For the 2005 celebrations, the religious service in Royal Square was re-instated, and thanksgiving services took place within several of the parish churches along with a memorial service to slave workers who died on the Island.¹⁰³ Terry Waite, a survivor of captivity in Beirut, gave an address at the service in Royal Square on the 8 May in order to '...help Islanders who were not alive during the 1940s to better understand what was being celebrated and

¹⁰¹ 'A Fanfare for Freedom', *Jersey Evening Post* (7 Apr 2000), p. 8.

¹⁰² 'Reconciliation', *Jersey Evening Post* (10 May 2002), p. 1.

¹⁰³ '60th Anniversary Liberation of Jersey souvenir booklet', p.4.

commemorated'.¹⁰⁴ Particular emphasis was also placed on the education of children as to what Liberation Day signifies to the island,¹⁰⁵ and many parish and school events were organised in order to promote the meaning for children, including a children's party on Liberation Day itself, and perhaps most significantly, an exchange programme between Jersey and Bad Wurzach.¹⁰⁶

This period also coincided with a growing sense of the island's independence. Policy decisions on behalf of Westminster, especially with regard to the island's financial status created a wedge between the island and Britain, and beginning in the early 2000s, senior Jersey lawyers increasingly called for investigating the possibilities of going alone. The argument for independence seemed to stem from the understanding that the United Kingdom, when pushed, would side with Europe rather than the island dependency, to the detriment of the island's economy. The result was a somewhat confused sense of island loyalty. While senior politicians and lawyers were considering the possibility of independence,¹⁰⁷ Jersey Heritage Trust, at the same time, were actively planning and unveiling a monument in St. Helier to celebrate 800 years of association with the British Crown.¹⁰⁸ In 2005, a committee was formed by the Jersey States Greffe to examine the feasibility of the island's independence from Britain, its final report was that the island 'is equipped to face the challenges of independence' but did not specifically recommend the action.¹⁰⁹ Since then, calls for Jersey's independence have become stronger, with Sir Philip Bailhache (now in the role of former Bailiff) arguing that the Channel Islands are increasingly being treated as 'not quite British', and saying that the island must prepare for a further breakdown in relations with Britain.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ 'Liberation service role for Beiruit hostage', *Jersey Evening Post* (3 May 2005), p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ 'A Fanfare for Freedom', *Jersey Evening Post* (7 Apr 2000), p.8.

¹⁰⁶ '60th Anniversary Liberation of Jersey souvenir booklet', *Savoir-faire publications*, Jersey (2005), p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ 'Independence on the Agenda?', *Jersey Evening Post* (18 Dec 2004), p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ 'Jubilee Needle plan for Waterfront', *Jersey Evening Post* (6 Dec 2003), p. 1; and 'Unveiling of a slightly damaged monument', *Jersey Evening Post* (10 Dec 2004), p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ States of Jersey Second Interim Report, Constitution Review Group, Presented to Council of Ministers, 27th June 2008. Section 7—99.

¹¹⁰ 'Ministers must prepare for Jersey independence', *Jersey Evening Post* (21 Jan 2010) <
<http://www.thisisjersey.com/latest/2010/01/21/ministers-must-prepare-for-jersey-independence/>>
[Accessed 12 Sep 2011].

For all the talk of independence and new direction, the 2005 celebrations, the next significant anniversary of liberation, were very similar to those in 1995. Organised on a parish level and on a grand scale in St. Helier, the celebrations still borrowed the traditional elements which have come to be understood as liberation tradition. As in 1995, the 2005 events included a military cavalcade, a reception for the British Legion, and, most importantly perhaps, a royal visit: the Queen and Prince Philip visited the island for Liberation Day in 2005. The celebrations, for the most part, retained the same structure and format throughout the day's events. The re-enactment of the landing of liberation forces and the hanging of the Union flag outside the old harbour office was led by Captain Surgeon Ron McDonald, who despite his age volunteered to repeat his famous act again for this occasion, at the approximate time he had done so in 1945 (and 1995).¹¹¹ The day was punctuated by a mass of red white and blue flags, galas, plays, and an impressive sound and light show intended to depict the occupation.¹¹² In the evening, searchlights near Elizabeth Castle shone into the air to form a large V for victory in the sky. This V was repeated every night for a week after 9 May.¹¹³ Despite the addition of more forward looking elements, the celebrations retained their 'British' flair.

For the sixtieth anniversary of Liberation, the Jersey Public Sculpture Trust again decided to commemorate the date with a piece of public art, this time a stylized bronze oak tree, which was to stand on the waterfront overlooking St. Helier marina. Richard Perry, a sculptor from Nottingham, was chosen by the Trust to create the sculpture.¹¹⁴ The tree was intended to symbolize, as was attempted in 1995, the themes of peace and freedom. In anticipation of the public's reaction when news of the proposed sculpture was first released, the chairman of the Sculpture Trust, Hugh Clarke, said '...the one thing you can be sure of is that not everyone is going to like it'.¹¹⁵ Clarke's predictions quickly became a reality, when within days the *Jersey Evening Post* once again teemed

¹¹¹ 'Back to fly the flag', *Jersey Evening Post* (10 May 2005), p. 7.

¹¹² 'Liberation Programme of events', pp. 20-21; and '60th Anniversary Liberation of Jersey souvenir booklet', p. 4.

¹¹³ 'Historic celebration of Liberation Day', *Jersey Evening Post* (10 May 2005), p. 2.

¹¹⁴ *The Freedom Tree*, p. 6.

¹¹⁵ '18ft bronze oak for waterfront', *Jersey Evening Post* (18 Nov 2004), p. 3.

with letters from opponents to the design. Letters to the newspaper were savage in their treatment of the Sculpture Trust and of the sculpture itself, one Islander referring to the tree as a 'sick joke' and a 'disgraceful waste of money'.¹¹⁶ Proposals for the tree occurred at a time when the States of Jersey were considering spending cuts, further angering the public with what they considered to be an unnecessary expenditure. The majority of opponents to the design saw little of liberation in the tree itself, and many of those who wrote in made reference to the Union flag adorned sculpture in Liberation Square as being the *true* monument to Liberation Day. These accompanied a feeling that the monument to liberation erected in 1995 was all the island needed to remind people of the significance of the day. Regardless of the criticism this time, the bronze oak was approved, and was erected on Jersey's waterfront in time to be unveiled by the Queen on 9 May 2005. But despite the efforts of the Sculpture Trust, the tree largely failed in provoking positive public reaction. A journalist from the *Jersey Evening Post* conducted interviews with observers a month after the sculpture was 'planted' on the waterfront. What he found was that the sculpture was not what the vast majority of people expected of a Liberation Day monument. One respondent summed up the oak by saying: 'We have already seen the monument in the Liberation Square and I think that is much more meaningful'.¹¹⁷ Some occupation survivors still refer to the sculpture as 'a bit of brass'.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ 'Let's move on', *Jersey Evening Post* (20 Nov 2004), p. 11.

¹¹⁷ 'Does it grow on you?', *Jersey Evening Post* (8 June 2005), p. 9.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Emily Snell, occupation survivor, by the author, 20 Apr 2009.



Figure 12: 'The Freedom Tree', erected in St. Helier in 2005. Photo © Daniel Travers.

The debates surrounding Liberation Day in Jersey highlight the importance of identifiable symbols in Jersey's collective remembrance. The understanding of the Liberation Square monument, with its giant unfurled flag as an appropriate representation of the liberation image and the oak tree as an inherently inappropriate representation, illustrates how entrenched British commemorative tropes are in Jersey's Liberation Day events. In the minds of a public reluctant to change the meaning of their national day, heritage experts on the island were, according to them, 'altering history'.¹¹⁹ Had the sculpture been commissioned as a monument to peace and growth

¹¹⁹ This same debate has raged elsewhere. A notable example is the controversy over the US National Air and Space Museum's plans to exhibit the Enola Gay from both Japanese and American perspectives, and focusing on the destruction nuclear arms can cause. American veterans groups accused the museum of 'hijacking' history through 'politically correct curating', whereas historians criticized the museum of 'patriotically correct' history when the exhibit was toned down. See: Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds, *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996).

for an event removed from Liberation Day it might have met with more success. Once again abandoning the traditional symbols of Liberation Day, the Sculpture Trust's abstract form of remembrance alienated much of the Jersey public because it did not evoke the kind of emotion that had come to be expected of Jersey's conventional liberation narrative. Despite the new forward looking celebrations prescribed by the Bailiff, and the transition which has occurred in Jersey heritage since the late 1990s, Liberation Day remains for many something which is inherently connected with a mood of 'celebration' and commemorated with British iconography. This is an example of where a forward-looking heritage direction has gone against the wishes of the community. Plaques and memorials to occupation, for all their value, are still innately retrospective rather than forward looking. The freedom tree represented something which threatened to 'turn the page of history', for which the islanders were not ready.¹²⁰ Since the 1990s Jersey's recognition of its difficult history is now much more common, but this does not mean that it has come at the cost of the traditional wartime narrative. Instead, islanders are able to simultaneously commemorate the negative aspects of the war, while at the same time maintaining Liberation Day as an occasion to celebrate their wider role in 'the People's War'.

Having been tied into a narrative which emphasized heroism, sacrifice, and liberation for close to seventy years, the imagery that has inevitably accompanied it has proved difficult to diverge from. Constructed from the wider British narrative of 'the People's War', post-war commemorative culture reflected the 'appropriate' remembrance which was maintained as part of their island heritage. As a result, many islanders still have set notions of what occupation and liberation is about. Despite massive changes in the landscape of Jersey's remembrance, there is a distinct need within Jersey's populace to celebrate a positive moment in the island's unsettling and contentious wartime experience. The explosion of British iconography which occurs on 9 May each year is key to maintaining a tangible link with Britain and with Britain's glorious wartime narrative, while at the same time highlighting distinct examples of

¹²⁰ Wood, *Vectors of Memory*, p. 1.

island unity and identity in the island's own history. Use of British iconography for events connected with the 'spirit' of liberation has become central to this aspect of the war experience. Although the theme of the day might be influenced by the Liberation Committee, the Bailiff, or even the Sculpture Trust, the basic elements of Liberation Day remain the same, crystallized by tradition and a society which is not willing to give up the celebratory link with Britain's 'People's War' narrative.

In the aftermath of more open dialogue about the nature of occupation, Jersey has come to terms with the negative nature of their war experience. They now champion the negative experiences of slave workers, evacuees, and deportees in the Channel Islands with the caveat that it will increase understanding of the consequences of intolerance, as well as contribute to their own sense of identity and uniqueness. This desire to showcase such realities is a significant break with the Churchillian paradigm. But despite being an island of victims rather than victors, highlighting the 'hardships and privations' does not capture the tough moral choices which faced those who remained in the island after June 1940. There is still a sense of unity and sacrifice which underlines the experience of war in Jersey and manifests itself in the vast majority of Jersey's historic sites. In essence, Jersey picks and chooses from the Churchillian imagery—using aspects of the 'finest hour' imagery, Union flags, Churchill, and V for Victory, combined with a sense of shared sacrifice, while at the same time deliberately highlighting the island's distinctiveness and difference in wartime experience.

Conclusion

Most literary treatments of the Churchillian paradigm, including those of Connolly and Smith, or of individual myths and iconography in Britain surrounding the Second World War like those of Harman and Calder, have taken the concept of 'Britain' and the 'British Isles' as one and the same. Constructing a framework around the terms 'British' and 'Britons' – inclusive of the national and sub-national identities which exist in the British Isles – has been helpful in the past to provoke discussion of a 'British' remembrance of war. Henry Pelling's *Britain and the Second World War* was concerned with 'Britain and the Second World War', as was Lucy Noakes *War and the British*, Mark Connolly's *We Can Take It!*, and Malcolm Smith's *Britain and 1940*. Such works have provided a jumping off point for academics because they have identified a distinct collective remembrance, method of commemoration, and set of imagery which has become part of what has been considered a 'British national identity'.

Recent developments in how we view the British Isles and Britishness, however, has created the need for a devolved assessment of how people identify themselves as 'British', in conjunction with other identities. This can be then be compared with how individuals with both an island identity and a sense of Britishness participate and engage in collective remembrance and memorialisation of World War II. Academics who continue to discuss a general, rather than nuanced, 'British' memory of the war run the risk of doing what Norman Davies criticized when he spoke of histories which deal 'merely with England'.¹ The recent interest in the British Isles as an archipelago, complete with multiple regional, sub-national, cultural, and ethnic identities has created the need for a broader discussion of what Britishness means and how it is used. Using

¹ Davies, *The Isles: A History*, p. xxxii.

the traditional language of 'British war memory' as a starting point, as this dissertation has, will help to open up discussion about how people who identify themselves as 'British', at least in part, remember the events of the Second World War. This dissertation has helped to bridge a gap by looking at elements of the British Isles and the British people which until recently have been seen as a somewhat inconsequential part of the historical narrative. It has shown that local, regional and national identities can diverge from the Churchillian paradigm, offering different narratives of experience. The traditional British war narrative suggests unity and uniformity yet there were many different experiences of war, many of which were tangential to the 'national narrative', that need to be included in discussions of the way in which 'Britain' remembers the war.

Each island in this study was chosen for two reasons: because it had a war experience which departed from the Churchillian paradigm, and because it has a strong island identity which makes it distinct from mainland Britain. The similarities between the islands, however, go far beyond that. In all three islands, similar individuals are at work actively creating and shaping culture and heritage. These can be heritage experts, working on behalf of one of the official heritage bodies, specifically mandated to preserve and display the island's own culture and identity. Each island has a heritage department, linked in one way or another to the island government. In all cases this heritage body chooses, at least in part, to privilege island-focused history over a typically British kind. In many cases this is directly mandated by the organisation's policy plan, and it is underlined by the need to protect the island's sovereignty of culture, history and heritage. This ensures that each island is constantly seeking a way to differentiate its history from Britain, and is looking for uniqueness which will serve to deepen its own sense of identity. They may also be driven by commercial or tourism profits, and the possession of a unique heritage encourages outsiders looking for something exotic to their own remembrance. As Baram and Rowan have argued, heritage marketing depends on a sense of uniqueness.² This, in part, helps to explain why each island chooses to differentiate its own heritage from Britain. Internment,

² Rowan and Baram, 'Archaeology after Nationalism', p. 20.

prisoners of war, and occupation all provide the 'other' necessary to create a unique heritage. The Isle of Man, Orkney, and Jersey have all appropriated tangential aspects of the war experience of the British Isles in order to present to visitor and tourist alike, something which contrasts the Churchillian paradigm, and serves their own interests.

These heritage bodies invariably have a wide scope, and sometimes a significant dominance over the heritage of the island. But there are in each case examples of people and organisations which choose to display things which break with the direction dictated by the larger heritage bodies. Cultural agents, amateur enthusiasts, veterans, or families of veterans often see a need to offer a different narrative to the one which has become the official island story. These groups are similar to local heritage organisations scattered across Britain. Made up of a cross-section of island society – from the island's elite to working class enthusiasts, they promote the heritage of a particular locality, but often attempt to incorporate a more holistic narrative. When Manx National Heritage minimizes the involvement of the military aspect of the Second World War in its heritage, organisations such as the Manx Aviation Preservation Society or the Jersey Transport Trust are set up to ensure that something is done. When Orkney Islands' Council allows the destruction of the Black Building, Orcadians rally to defend the islands' remaining military sites. And when the Jersey Sculpture Trust plans to erect a sculpture which is alien to popular remembrance, occupation survivors petition for one which represents the traditional liberation narrative.

The general public can also have a say in the way the island is viewed from abroad. Channel Islanders are still sensitive to their wartime reputation, both on and off the island. Publications alleging an Orcadian spy's involvement in the sinking of the *Royal Oak* created controversy in Orkney, especially when the facts were unsubstantiated. Heritage experts have a hard job to do. Each has a need to defend the islands' culture and identity from 'comeover culture' which could absorb it. This is done by highlighting the differences in their domestic history from that of other places, especially Britain, or by carving a niche for their own heroes within the British narrative. On each island it is the personal connections, the story of the individual, which are given

preference to the British notion of shared sacrifice. In the Isle of Man this is represented in the stamps which show famous Manxmen beside their British counterparts. In Jersey it is the story of the heroes of occupation, painting V signs or hiding slave workers, or those who brought the flag back to the island after five years of occupation.

Desire to create heritage in the island invariably mirrors that of Britain. Not to be outdone, each island has organised commemorations and celebrations which are directly proportionate to those occurring in London at the same time. The 1980s provided the genesis of this commemoration, the 1990s saw a peak, especially around VE Day and Liberation Day in 1995, and such celebrations have been maintained on significant anniversaries ever since. The massive wave of retrospective memorialisation with plaques, tablets, and sculptures which has occurred in the islands in response to the myth of the 'uncommemorated generation' in the UK, has also created a fertile territory within which the collective war memory of each island can be explored.

Each of the island's official heritage bodies seek to turn a negative experience into a positive one by using it to highlight their own unique heritage. This reinforces a sense of island difference, which is integral to their notions of cultural sovereignty. This may also have the added benefit of encouraging tourists to the island to see something removed from their own remembrance, and perhaps involve themselves in a type of 'dark tourism'. Manx National Heritage has turned its controversial role in internment into something commodifiable, readily available to be consumed by both residents and tourists. Far from burying its role in this 'bespattered page' of history, the official heritage organisation has dedicated a massive portion of their flagship museum to this aspect of their history, at the marginalization of the military role the island had during the Second World War. This was a deliberate and calculated move, displaying the island's unique historical perspective and deepening the island's own cultural and mnemonic sovereignty. Internment has, for the Manx, become something which is their own, a niche for the island within a crowded British historical narrative which focuses on victory and shared sacrifice. Internment is, perhaps correctly, a story which the Manx can claim as their own.

Orkney has also appropriated certain tangential aspects of their wartime experience, which they now accept as part of what makes them distinctive from Britain. Though Orkney Islands Council is, like MNH, mandated to preserve and display Orkney's unique assets, in Orkney's case, their association with the *Royal Oak* and the Italian POWS stems from possession of tangible relics of the war experience. Possession of the *Royal Oak* wreck and the Italian Chapel have provided the impetus for continued commemoration. They have been appropriated as part of Orkney's War, part of the landscape of remembrance in Orkney. Both the *Royal Oak* commemorations and the Italian Chapel are maintained by Orkney's cultural agents, rather than official heritage bodies; individuals who have no direct connection with the events themselves but have a desire to display and preserve these symbols of Orcadianness. Orkney's Italian connection is now used to broaden the islands' international associations. The Orcadian public readily accepts Italian culture, and it is commemorated, celebrated, and displayed. The *Royal Oak* disaster and Orkney's POW story serve as devices with which Orcadians can show off their own identity, culture, and values. Escaping being merely part of Scotland, they can argue that they are instead part of an international community.

Jersey has taken giant steps to find its own wartime story and commemorate and memorialize it on the island. Having been linked with the Churchillian paradigm for close to fifty years, the island has now charted its own mnemonic course. The massive changes in the island's war narrative and commemoration which were brought on by a more candid discussion of the nature of occupation in the mid 1990s has meant that Jersey now takes pride in ownership of a tangential aspect of the war experience. The story of a nation of victims not victors contradicts the Churchillian paradigm, but it does not necessarily overturn it. The values of shared sacrifice that represent a large part of the 'finest-hour' mythology are part of Jersey's remembrance—maintained in stories of deprivation and resistance in the island.

While choosing to highlight their unique stories, each island also appropriates British commemorative tropes for use in a unified display of Britishness at certain times of the year. Well established symbols such as Spitfires, Vera Lynn, and V signs are

combined with military parades, street parties and have come to represent celebrations to mark the end of the war in the island. VE Day (or in the case of Jersey Liberation Day celebrations) provide a key opportunity to reaffirm their Britishness. They have facilitated an appropriation of British commemorative tropes for their own use. Despite sometimes negative associations with Winston Churchill, each island maintains an image of him similar to that in Britain. This recalls the same imagery as is used on the mainland—V signs, bowtie, hat and cigar, and speeches. Though Churchill's actions created, on occasion, serious forced ramifications in the islands—one Jersey respondent argued that the islands were 'ditched' by Churchill during the war, many Manx resented him for the loss of their homes and businesses in order to take in internees—the modern attitude to the man is always positive, reflecting the wartime and post-war positioning which created this unwavering symbol of Britishness. For each of the islands perhaps, the image of Churchill is a composite identity, forged from their own associations with the man, and popular conception in Britain.

On the Isle of Man, the focus on internment has not come at the full scale rejection of British 'finest-hour' mythology. Instead, Manx involvement in the glorious aspects of the war has been carefully inserted into the Churchillian paradigm. Captain Kinley's finest-hour in the House of Mannannan, and philately which poses famous Manxmen next to their British counterparts are just some of the ways in which the Manx have inserted their stories into the larger picture. Manx veterans' organisations also participate fondly in celebrations of D-Day and VE Day much like the rest of Britain, singing Vera Lynn songs, waving Union flags, and cheering over Spitfire flypasts. This aspect of commemoration is now championed by amateur enthusiasts such as the Manx Aviation Preservation Society, and various veteran's groups and heritage organisations which organise what is generally expected from Second World War commemorations.

This is similar to the remembrance which exists in Orkney. Though intensely proud of their individuality, Orcadians are readily able to set this aside to commemorate VE Day, VJ Day, and D-Day anniversaries in a very 'British' way. Spearheaded by veteran's organisations such as the British Legion, there is a need for inclusion in the

larger British story which is now accepted as part of the landscape of remembrance which exists in the island. Orcadians willingly celebrate using the well established iconography from the mainland, while at the same time highlighting the experiences of Orcadians who fought overseas.

Jersey's war remembrance has also had to negotiate between the need for connections with the British glorious narrative and the need to maintain a unique heritage. For many islanders, the traditional narrative of liberation still provides the definitive war memory. Liberation Day on 9 May provides an outlet for positive collective remembrance, relying heavily on British commemorative tropes. With VE Day and Liberation Day being so close on the calendar, it has been easy to connect the island's story with the British national narrative, and it has now become invented tradition. British symbolism now holds such an important place within liberation mythology that attempts to reposition the meaning of the 'national celebration' have been met with fierce criticism. Islanders relish participation in the glorious British war story and celebrate the wider values which Britishness espouses.

This has led to each island being able to pick and choose from elements of the Churchillian paradigm in order to further their own sense of sacrifice, pride, and uniqueness. Each island therefore, simultaneously accepts and rejects elements of Britishness, often at the same event. This is a type of 'Buffet Britishness', actively choosing elements borrowed from the mainland which promote the island's values, identity, and self importance. Islanders readily invoke their sense of Britishness in order to participate in what is essentially a commemoration of the Churchillian paradigm, a celebration of all of the gloriousness of Britain's finest-hour.

At the beginning of this dissertation I proposed the following measure of each island's relationship with Britain: 'should the islands have cast off their independent stories to follow the Churchillian paradigm then they could be considered to be entirely British. If they reject the British myth in favour of their own stories then they can be considered entirely independent.' The reality is that they can be both, sometimes at the same time. Island identity is influenced by constant interaction –politically, culturally,

economically, and historically with Britain. Knowledge about the relationship between Britain, Britishness and 'the other British Isles' is increasing, thanks to efforts on the part of 'island scholars' around the world. But there is a difference between the islands that form the British archipelago and those thousands of miles around the world. Though Britishness has far-reaching consequences, the proximity of the islands in this study means that the islands must maintain a continued relationship. The proximate nature of islands like Jersey, Man and Orkney makes it harder to deny the agency which Britain has in the islands' identity. Rather than simply having a 'cultural heritage', each island has an increased shared history, and an identity which has to be, in part, defined by their similarities and differences with Britain.

Each island can, however, choose to simultaneously accept and reject specific aspects of Britishness. The long-term historical and cultural association which each island has had with Britain is used pragmatically, 'Britishness,' it seems, is something which is dynamic, it can be transplanted, it can be absorbed into the daily life of a society, and it can be used to further an island's need for involvement in a greater British story. Islands in the British Isles make a conscious decision about when and where to favour Britishness or their own island identity when it is in their best interest to do so. Islands choose to buy into certain positive elements of the British myth while at the same time highlighting their own distinct history and identity, even if this sometimes proves painful or controversial. Though possessing a sense of Britishness, this oftentimes co-exists with a sense of home, of pride in island status, and a strong 'island identity'. The islands in this study support their unique historical perspective and experience as a way to strengthen their own individualism and cultural sovereignty, while at the same time they incorporate their own stories into the British national narrative—celebrating victories and basking in traditional British commemorative iconography.

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