



AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE TROUBLES

The Dark Heritage of Long Kesh / Maze prison



LAURA McATACKNEY

OXFORD

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Laura McAtackney

Belfast, January 2013

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Comm(s)	Prisoner communications
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
ICCT	International Centre for Conflict Transformation
INLA	Irish National Liberation Army
OIRA	Official Irish Republican Army
MCP	Maze Consultation Panel
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
TNA	The National Archives (UK)
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UDP	Ulster Democratic Party
UFF	Ulster Freedom Fighters
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
1998 Agreement	Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (1998)

List of Oral Testimonies

All names have been randomly anonymized and abbreviated.

BE (ex-PIRA prisoner, Compounds & Cellular). Oral testimony conducted in the interviewee's home, West Belfast, March 2007.

CM (ex-PIRA prisoner. Cellular). Oral testimony conducted on site, January 2006 and in office premises, West Belfast, July 2006.

FR (ex-Governor of Long Kesh/Maze. Compounds and Cellular). Oral testimony conducted in interviewee's home, Co. Antrim, 2007.

GD (ex-UVF prisoner. Compounds). Oral testimony conducted at community centre, Shankill Road, Belfast, July and August 2011.

HX (ex-OIRA prisoner. Compounds). Oral testimony conducted in interviewee's home, South Belfast, March 2007.

LM (female visitor to the Compounds). Oral testimony conducted in interviewee's home, September 2007.

PK (ex-PIRA prisoner. Compounds and Cellular). Oral testimony conducted on site, January 2006.

SU (ex-UVF prisoner. Compounds). Oral Testimony conducted at community centre, Shankill Road, West Belfast, July 2011.

TJ (ex-PIRA prisoner, Cellular). Oral Testimony conducted on site, 2006, and in office premises, West Belfast, July 2006.

Introduction

The recent internecine conflict in Northern Ireland, colloquially known as ‘the Troubles’, began in the late 1960s and continued until transitioning to an ongoing peace process on the signing and ratifying of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (hereafter the ‘1998 Agreement’) in 1998. A low-level war, it was one of the longest-running conflicts in post-Second World War Western Europe. During this period over 3,600 people were killed (McKittrick et al. 1999) and over 40,000 were injured; it is estimated that almost half of the population knew someone who could be placed in either category (Fitzduff and O’Hagan 2000). Over 25,000 people (overwhelmingly men) were imprisoned due to paramilitary-related offences. This is an extraordinary number in comparison to the pre-Troubles prison population of less than 700 (Purbrick 2004: 91). The societal turmoil that such an extended period of civil unrest created is difficult to overestimate, but it has been suggested that it caused ‘nothing less than the political fracturing of Northern Ireland’ (Fraser 2000: 47). Central to any understanding of the still-unravelling impacts of this extended period of conflict is one of its central creations: the prison of Long Kesh/Maze.

Long Kesh/Maze is widely considered one of the iconic sites of the Troubles. Its biography as a place of paramilitary imprisonment mirrors—and is implicated in—the course and longevity of the low-level war. It was first utilized as an internment camp from 1971, as a direct result of the implementation of the controversial policy of internment of paramilitary suspects without trial, and was eventually closed almost bereft of prisoners, released as a condition of the 1998 Agreement, in 2000. It had a dialectic relationship with the conflict, with countless events within or beyond its perimeter walls creating, raising, or diffusing existing tensions and adding fresh impetuses to

either violence or political initiatives. Many of the turning points of the conflict originated in, and centred on, Long Kesh/Maze. This includes the heated debates about the constitutional legalities of internment, disputes regarding the ‘political’ status of prisoners and nature of their crimes (and indeed the conflict), the legality of Diplock court convictions, the hunger strikes of 1980–1, the prison escape of 1983, and the brokering of peace agreements in the late 1990s. Long Kesh/Maze not only facilitated the continuation of the conflict, but it also enabled the faltering, protracted moves towards the eventual cessation of violence. It enabled self-labelled (and, for a time, officially recognized) political prisoners to discuss and develop often radical ideas for alternative societal and national relationships, producing policy documents and political positions. It facilitated the creation of political parties, including Sinn Féin, currently the largest nationalist party in Northern Ireland. It allowed ongoing interaction and understanding to develop between various representatives of the ‘two communities’ who were living side-by-side within its walls, in many cases for the first time, setting the accepted sectarian geographies of Northern Irish society on their head.

In the decade since the signing of the 1998 Agreement, Long Kesh/Maze has been treated with extreme caution and an ambivalence by both the general public and elected representatives, who seem unclear what to do with such a politically-loaded site. During this time it has drifted in and out of public consciousness as, alternatively, a place of great significance—even a sacred site to dead hunger strikers (as discussed in Chapter Five)—to a site of infamy, disgust, and seemingly irreconcilably different perspectives. This lack of direction and insight into how to deal with such a site in the post-conflict context is not restricted to Long Kesh/Maze. The entire security infrastructure, which has been a prominent feature of the Northern Irish landscape since the conflict began in the late 1960s, has been increasingly disposed of with little regard or concern for the proper recording or even preservation of the material remains of what was essentially a shared, traumatic history. Although this has been read by some as a ‘move to normalization’ (Irish News 2005) and it has been largely welcomed by the local political parties and media, some commentators have noted that the unquestioned disposal of material remains disregards a subtle and important change in perception and status of some ‘iconic’ security infrastructure in this new context. As Liam Clarke has noted, ‘some of Ulster’s vanishing fortresses are now regarded with something

approaching nostalgia.’ (Clarke 2005: 2) The mass disposal of sites so intrinsically linked to the conflict, without any significant or public engagement, follows a discernible trajectory of post-Troubles political culture that steers towards an official forgetting of the past rather than attempting to uncover and engage with painful truths and accepting responsibilities.

From the mid 2000s, Long Kesh/Maze became the focus of increasingly divergent opinions regarding the future of the site. Swift attempts to eradicate the physical remains of the Troubles—often coupled with the dubious justification that demolition signalled a material progress towards a peaceful, post-conflict state—provoked discomfiture in some and relief in others. The equation of dismantling security infrastructure with the removal of longstanding barriers of distrust, distaste, or mutual disinterest within a historically divided society is deeply problematic. The creation of material voids, known as ‘regeneration zones’, in place of defunct Army bases, police stations, and check-points tells of the politically negotiated cessation of violent conflict, but it does not necessarily indicate any movement towards peace, reconciliation or reconnections within the broader population. Indeed, it has been noted by some commentators that whilst the 1998 Agreement facilitated a peaceful settlement after decades of conflict between the main protagonists—both constitutional and paramilitary—it did so by deliberately avoiding contentious points of principle. Cillian McGrattan identifies the major unresolved issues of post-conflict Northern Ireland as: ‘how the North should be administered, how and indeed whether past injustices should be dealt with, how victims’ needs can be met and how the past should be remembered and explained’ (2009: 164). That such seminal issues were untouched—and remain unresolved—has ensured that whilst society maintains an uneasy peace, there has been little movement towards true ‘normalization’. These themes of uncomfortable transitions from conflict to peace are materialized at Long Kesh/Maze and add to its significance as more than the remnants of an obsolete prison.

The physical remains of conflict in contemporary Northern Ireland materially contradict the largely unsubstantiated claims of a swift transition to peace and normalization. At the level of lived social experience one only needs to examine the increasing numbers of ‘peace walls’ (semi-permanent barriers placed between antagonistic communities found in working-class, urban areas). They are the only

security infrastructure that has been developed and added to in the post-1998 Agreement context (for further information see McAtackney 2011). The walls demonstrate a reality that society at a grass-roots level is not blindly following the rhetoric of political leadership towards forgetting the past and moving forward together. Whilst it is obviously problematic to link the clearing of physical remnants of conflict from our visual landscapes with the goal of the (re)creation of a 'normal' peaceful society, Long Kesh/Maze secures a special place in this unravelling of how physical remains of the Troubles are to be treated in the post-conflict context. The high profile the prison maintained during much of the conflict, and its intimate link to a number of major turning points and pivotal issues, mean that how this site is utilized—or not—at this time is indicative of how society is dealing, or otherwise, with its difficult recent past. These key questions of the role of meaning and memory linked to remnants of the past in transitional societies remain unresolved fifteen years on from the first tentative moves towards peace. Exploring the material engagements and changes at Long Kesh/Maze—over the course of its entire life cycle including the period since closure—may help to answer some of these questions.

In post-conflict contexts, prisons are some of the most difficult security infrastructure for the state and the public to deal with. Neil Jarman has suggested that as society moves from conflict to peace the ability of prisons to symbolize both the power and vulnerability of the state, and those incarcerated within them, means that there are often opposing desires for their future usage (2002: 290). This is particularly true in the context of Northern Ireland, given the levels of power and prominence that some previous combatants have reached since their release from prison. This is often contrasted with the comparatively forgotten miseries of the collateral damage of the conflict: the victims (however they are defined) and their families. Such power differentials have resulted in a creeping discomfiture from large sections of society—particularly within the Loyalist community—as to the perceived 'winners' and 'losers' of the numerous Northern Ireland peace agreements. As this situation has unfolded, Long Kesh/Maze has remained a restricted, high-security mystery as far as the general public is concerned. Despite various consultations on the future of the site, which resulted in at least three proposals for its future being made public, most of the physical infrastructure of the prison has been demolished in recent years. As at July 2011 only a small section of the prison—the former

administrative area, one H-Block, one Nissen hut, the prison hospital, and one of the prison chapels—remains standing. Visitors to the 270-acre site currently find what is effectively a ‘brown-field’ site, facilitated reversions to wilderness, and even remnants of the foundations of previous cell blocks and Nissen huts have been mechanically extracted from the ground.

Before any of this demolition occurred a high-profile public debate had been conducted as to how such a controversial site could co-exist with a post-conflict state. This provoked a number of opposing views for the potential future use of the site, whilst for some, creeping demolition by stealth may have appeared to be the only way forward. Whilst I do not wish to be an advocate of either wholesale destruction or wholesale retention of what is undeniably a dark heritage site, I do suggest that wider knowledge and understanding of the Long Kesh/Maze prison and its place in the conflict was, and is, necessary. This prison represents a particular microcosm of Northern Irish society during an important but turbulent period of its recent past. The site is intimately connected to the course of the Troubles and as a place of confinement of significant numbers of both Loyalist and Republican prisoners it is fundamentally a shared site. The longevity and impact of the conflict on wider society is still being felt, explored, and worked through and the site has a significant role to play in negotiating a way through difficult narratives of the recent past and adding nuance to understandings of events that have already been accepted the prison. Long Kesh/Maze impacted not only on those imprisoned within it, the security forces who manned it, and the victims whose perpetrators were held within it, but also the entirety of Northern Irish society, which was affected by the repercussions of events that occurred, mirrored or transformed within the prison.

Delving into a remnant of a problematical recent past is always a difficult task. Archaeological studies of contemporary sites necessarily involve the archaeologist dealing with an overwhelming surplus of physical remains that need to be uncovered, deciphered, recorded, incorporated, analysed, and interpreted. However, there is also an imperative to include an assessment of the impact of living memories of these places, the testimonies of those connected to the site and the politics of remembrance (or forgetfulness), as evolving feelings, sensitivities, and emotions greatly enrich the stories uncovered. They do not simply add to the narratives that the material remnants provide but they can support, contradict, counterbalance, interact with

and ultimately enrich each other. An exploration of an archaeological site of living memory necessitates the interaction of the tangible with the intangible, the spoken with the unspoken, and the concrete with the ephemeral. In such archaeologies the person of the researcher—as the arbiter of choice as to the innumerable narratives that will inform such a study—must become a fundamental element in their own research. Alessandro Portelli has asserted that the oral testimonies that are central to contemporary studies are essentially joint enterprises that encompass a two-way relationship between interviewer and interviewee and thereby implicate the student in their own research (1998: 39). Indeed, he suggests that the interviewer is not only the ‘stage director’ but that ‘the impartiality traditionally claimed by historians is replaced by the partiality of the narrator’ (1998: 40–1). This two-way process stresses the necessity to be reflexive about personal reactions to the study of the recent past through the present and to interrogate a variety of sources with tact and integrity.

By adding the material dimensions of the site to the numerous written and oral narratives that are already available, a wider and more nuanced understanding of what Long Kesh/Maze was, is and may become continues to emerge. Exploration of the physical remains of the prison will not answer all questions regarding the significances and longstanding repercussions of the conflict, but they can be used to bring a material reality and physical integrity to attempts at remembering and reconciling its past and present role in a post-conflict state. Long Kesh/Maze is a situated and dispersed physical remnant of the past that can move beyond, complement, contradict, and even discount often stale and repetitive oral histories of former prisoners whose memories currently dominate understandings of the site. Whilst oral narratives are important for providing insights into hopes, fears, intentions, and unforeseen and unmarked activities of life within the prison, they often highlight positive, one-sided and self-serving narratives of camaraderie, educational enlightenments, and the inevitability of progress towards political resolution. Material engagement with Long Kesh/Maze can reveal physical evidence of how the daily lives of those living and working on the site interacted with it at different times, locations, and manifestations; how it affected them, how they were constrained and enabled; how the authorities and prisoners interacted and the relationship between the inmates, built environment, regime, and wider society. Ultimately, it can add complexity and a material reality to an increasingly

self-serving mythologizing of the recent past. It is the express ambition of this volume to use the archaeology of Long Kesh/Maze to reveal these layered perspectives. They are often overlooked or uncomfortable, yet are central to a more complete understanding of the prison, and the conflict, at a particularly crucial juncture in the post-conflict crossroads.

Whilst exploration of the prison can only ever be partial, this volume approaches engagement with the site through the multi-scalar approach of different forms of material remains. Each chapter will explicitly engage with a specific material form that aims to examine its particular attributes and its shortcomings as a source in this context. Using detailed case studies, the chapters will consider what precisely these physical forms can tell us about the site from their connection to particular times and places at Long Kesh/Maze. In this respect, the study aims to curtail the subjectivities that may overwhelm research based solely, or fundamentally, on oral testimony and official documentation. The integrity of the physical remains will be used to counterbalance the tendencies to prioritize and place high value on personal opinion in studies of what is a very problematic and emotionally loaded recent past. Whilst archaeological remains must always contend with the issue of partiality, of being a mere fragment of the full material forms of the past (see Introduction, Fortenberry and McAtackney 2011), they add the solidity of the material to our explorations of recent realities. In the case of Long Kesh/Maze they allow us to explore the lived experiences and boundedness of those who interacted with the prison—physically as prisoners, prison officers, or visitors but also as a mediated *imaginary* as it was promoted, replicated, and understood externally.

This research centres on Long Kesh/Maze as a place that will not only be studied through a material-based, multi-scalar approach; the study will move from considering it as a site—a bounded, physical entity—to include its various interconnections and relationships at many levels with the society within which it is located. The aim of this study is to demonstrate that although the archaeological remains are situated on the Long Kesh/Maze site, the boundaries of this seminal landscape do not stop at the perimeter watchtowers, wires, and walls. Such a prominent site impacted on those who resided within it but it also had enormous impacts on the lives of every person who lived in Northern Ireland and who experienced the turmoil of the Troubles. This will be reflected in the approaches of this study.

To illuminate the context of Long Kesh/Maze is an important initial element of this volume. The development of the site and its integral position within the evolution of the recent conflict in Northern Ireland are at times complex and need to be understood before archaeological methodologies or theoretical approaches to researching and dissecting the site are explored. The opening chapters will seek to contextualize the role and significance of Long Kesh/Maze in Northern Ireland through the course of its biography as a place of incarceration and internment. A biography of the site, which details the known developmental elements of the prison, from its naming, choice of location and evolution as a site, will provide a factual account on the prison's physical erection and evolution. Whilst this conventional understanding of the site acts as a backdrop to the more detailed archaeological engagements, the following chapters will ultimately demonstrate how restricted this understanding is. A detailed examination of different material analyses of Long Kesh/Maze adds complexity to the existing and accepted narratives of the site. Whilst the interactions of those most associated with the prison—the prisoners—are central to this study and thereby reveal many different perspectives in the examination of place, there are other perspectives. Those of the prison officers, contractors, administrators, and visitors also need to be included. In keeping with the material focus of this study, such oral contributions will be woven into the general narrative of the volume rather than confined to a single chapter so they may inform, enunciate, or even conflict with material indicators. The remaining chapters will question the bounded nature of the presentation of Long Kesh/Maze and will explore the wider landscapes of the site and how it is implicated in social, cultural, and political narratives that are located beyond the physical confines of a discrete place.

This volume has a dual purpose: to understand the experiences and significances of the specific prison site and to consider wider implications for the study of contemporary society through material remains. This study of Long Kesh/Maze will be conducted on two levels: as a site that was intimately experienced on a day-to-day basis by its inhabitants, and through consideration of its wider significance, in the past, the present and potentially in the future. The volume will highlight the reality that there can be no definitive story of how the site was experienced; instead the selection of specific material forms that are studied will have a direct impact on what is uncovered.

Each chapter will reveal various intimate, communal, and societal levels of interaction and involvement in the site whilst simultaneously indicating the potentialities, possibilities, and difficulties with using each material form. Through this volume the story of Long Kesh/Maze will move from being an official account of place that is fact-driven, extraordinary, and event-focused to a multi-perspective, people-centric exploration of the mundane and everyday lived experience of a seminal but secretive place.

‘The lights of Long Kesh’: situating Long Kesh/Maze within the Northern Irish Troubles

In the most concise terms, the Northern Ireland Troubles began in the late 1960s and ended with the 1998 Agreement. However, there is no general consensus regarding the one event or actions of groups or individuals that precipitated this longstanding low-level war. Thomas Hennessy has stated that one of the major problems in writing a book on the origins of the Troubles is deciding when the conflict began, because even the main protagonists do not agree about whom and what were instrumental (2005: ix). Christopher Hewitt has asserted that the general consensus was that violence was a response by the Catholic population to endemic discrimination by the Unionist government and their Protestant constituents, whereas Protestants have viewed the violence as being associated with the predominantly Catholic civil rights campaigns and as a by-product of historical aggressive nationalism (1991: 17). The differences of standpoint and intermixing of religion with politics—with both terms often being used interchangeably—highlight the complexities of perception and identity in Northern Ireland and their close relationship to the conflict.

Identity in Northern Ireland is often considered dualistically and is presented as diametrically opposed in positioning and perspective, as well as central to everyday experience (Muldoon 2004: 462). In simplistic terms it is associated with the ‘two communities’ thesis (a useful critique of which can be found in Vaughan-Williams 2006), which views identity in Northern Ireland as divided along religious/political divisions into two ideologically opposed camps or communities that can be defined in broad and interconnected terms:

Catholic/Nationalist/Republican versus Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist. Whilst the religious labels require no further definition, the most basic understanding of the political labels is that they relate to varying degrees of aspiration to different national identities. Nationalists and Republicans both seek a united Ireland, with the former advocating political consensus in achieving such a goal, whilst the latter have advocated the use of violence and physical force, which has increasingly channelled into mainstream politics, particularly after the 1998 Agreement. In a similar vein, 'Unionist' and 'Loyalist' denote those with enduring connections to British sovereignty, with Loyalists prepared to maintain this relationship, and engage with those who aim to disrupt it, through use of violence. Similarly to Republicans, due to longstanding if at times precarious, Loyalist cease-fires the active engagement in organized sectarian violence has been officially abandoned. The evolution of these terms since the 1998 Agreement means that they are more commonly used to denote the intensity of relationships to national identities that often have a class connotation and basis. Therefore, it is more common to hear working-class Protestants being referred to as 'Loyalists' and working-class Catholics being noted as 'Republican', with their middle-class co-religionists being labelled as 'Unionist' and 'Nationalist'. The prisoners at Long Kesh/Maze are defined as 'Loyalist' and 'Republican' and they come from communities that are either defined in these terms or their more centrist manifestations, as noted above. The use of these terms is complicated by the interplay and compounding of politics and religion as identifiers with underlying class distinctions—as well as contradictions and complexities associated with these simplistic dichotomies—making any definitive deciphering of causations and continuations of the conflict difficult, if not impossible, unless presented from multiple perspectives.

What is clear is that events that occurred throughout the province in 1968 and 1969—sectarian murder, rioting, vandalism, arson, intimidation of minorities within the localized and extended environment—created a tense and increasingly polarized society characterized by fear, isolation, and escalating instability. One result of this political and social fracturing was the mass incarceration of those—largely men—aligned to newly created or reformulated paramilitary organizations that divided along identified political/religious lines. The most prominent of the newly created containers for this swiftly expanding prison population—from 1971—was Long Kesh/Maze. The site held men drawn from the memberships of a diversity of longstanding

and short-lived paramilitary groups that were often interrelated, splinter, or antagonistically opposing, including: Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), Official Irish Republican Army (OIRA), and Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) (all Republican), and Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), and Ulster Defence Association (UDA) (all Loyalist). Whilst other smaller groups also co-existed, and all the above fluctuated in members, legality, and activity throughout the conflict, the violence associated with the Troubles was characterized by covert, communal paramilitary actions centring on secret organizations.

Locating the definitive starting point of the Troubles is difficult and so too is unreservedly accepting the end date of 1998. For although the paramilitary organizations were, and remain, largely inactive since this time—if one ignores the marginalized activities of a small number of, particularly Republican, dissidents—many continue to exist and this of itself indicates a distrust of the permanent nature of the peace process and lack of will to completely detach from the past. At a societal level, the segregation of working-class areas that accelerated during the course of the Troubles is still an ongoing feature of post-conflict Northern Ireland (see Boal 2002). Indeed, one could question to what extent low-level conflict and the control of local, Troubles-related hierarchies has been eradicated by the official cessations of violence and stuttering restoration of local political governance. Commentators such as Mark Amstutz view the long-standing and intractable nature of the conflict in Northern Ireland as limiting the ability to achieve a wide-ranging political forgiveness. He suggests that the aim of the peace process can only ever be to reduce, not eradicate, hatred and distrust in order to arrive at a mutually acceptable political settlement (2005: 166).

Irrespective of the lack of consensus regarding the significance of individual events or specific start and end dates, it can be agreed that the conflict was extensive. The violence persisted over numerous decades and the duration of such a lengthy civil conflict saw the creation, extension, break-up, coalescence, and collaboration of a number of paramilitary organizations that facilitated violent, mass conflict on a societal level. These organizations effectively demanded that young men, in particular, actively 'defended' their communities from the 'other side'. Psychological studies of the impact of the conflict on the young have found that direct experience of the Troubles is usually much more marked if the young person is male, primarily because violence 'is seen as generally consistent and, in

many ways, essential to the experience of being young and male' (Muldoon 2004: 462). (Although, it should be noted that female Republican paramilitary activity was ongoing throughout the conflict. Statistics relating to the incarceration of female political prisoners at Armagh Gaol reveal that the inmate population rose from two in 1971 to more than 100 between 1972 and 1976 (Murray 1998: 10)). It is unclear how many men and women were officially or tangentially involved in paramilitary organizations during the conflict, but the level of sustained if fluctuating activity throughout the period indicates a widespread acceptance and compliance, if not active participation, at a societal level. The numbers imprisoned at Long Kesh/Maze prison can only ever be a small proportion of the vast number of people affected by or implicated in the conflict in some way.

For a population as small and traditionally law-abiding as Northern Ireland had been, these numbers are substantial. Louise Purbrick estimates that over the course of the Troubles 25,000 people were imprisoned for paramilitary-associated activities, with 10,000 of those spending at least part of their sentence in Long Kesh/Maze (2004: 91). This was a dramatic increase from the previous prison population, which had been 727 immediately before the initial outbreak of the Troubles in 1968 (Feldman 1991: 148). The effect of this increase on the individual, families and wider society was devastating and no one can doubt that the repercussions of this aspect of the conflict were widespread and felt throughout society. Although the primary purpose of this volume is concerned with the experiences and understandings of those who were imprisoned, detained, or interned due to the conflict, there is a need to consider the wider picture. The impact of mass imprisonment of mainly young, working-class men on a small and interconnected society such as Northern Ireland had a deep and adverse effect on those left behind. Women, the elderly and children in many areas were effectively abandoned to continue with 'normal' life on the outside whilst they carried the burden of interacting with, providing for, and visiting their family members who were prisoners held in numerous jails throughout the province. Households left without integral male figures as a result of imprisonment, exile, injury, or death were usually those that were also disproportionately affected by deprivation, alienation, and marginalization (Muldoon 2004: 465).

One of the most stark statistics relating to the impact of the Troubles estimates a death toll of over 3,600 people. These deaths were as a direct result of the conflict, and they occurred predominantly

in Northern Ireland (although there were also fatalities in the Republic of Ireland, the UK, and Europe) (McKittrick et al 1999). While this number has been quoted to the point of complacency, consideration of the impact of the violence on the victims and their families has receded to the point of a silent acceptance, rather than any active consideration or audible articulation. As society moves through transition into a new phase, the post-conflict context, it is the politicized former combatants who now have the most prominent voice, not the victims or their families. Long Kesh/Maze was the largest holding centre in Northern Ireland and some of its inmates were perpetrators of some of the most violent and callous acts associated with the Troubles. Whilst victims and their families are not overtly addressed in this study, it will attempt to explore the realities of the experience of political imprisonment through multiple sources that do not privilege or emphasize sanitized, sympathetic, or partisan narratives. By exploring the imprisonment experience as interconnected with wider society, this study attempts to retain the context of the violent conflict as a simultaneously ongoing reality outside. Long Kesh/Maze cannot be viewed as a decontextualized site of academic interest. It is a place that is intimately connected with conflict and death. Ultimately it played a pivotal role in facilitating a positive change of perspectives, ideologies, and understandings and created a context in which two seemingly irreconcilable viewpoints could move towards achieving parity of esteem. Remarkable as this achievement may be, if achieved it does not change, diminish, or eliminate the pain and anguish that the victims, their families, and friends suffered. This study does not accept political violence as an inevitable step in the political evolution of Northern Ireland. Rather, it argues that in order to understand the extent and impact of the Troubles on Northern Irish society, one needs to examine Long Kesh/Maze, the largest and most notorious prison of the Troubles. This study focuses on Long Kesh/Maze as an integral part of the violent, sectarian conflict that afflicted Northern Ireland for decades not as an academically interesting curiosity but following Louise Purbrick, 'The architecture of the Maze contains a history of the conflict' (2004: 92).

DEFINING LONG KESH/MAZE

Before exploring the wider context of the site, one must first understand the role of terminology, categorization and naming conventions,

and their relationship with the prison site before contextualizing Long Kesh/Maze within its immediate setting and societal context. Northern Ireland place names have a function beyond the mere identification of location; they can also reflect contestations of meaning and/or significance and can be interpreted as signifiers of religious, political and cultural affiliations of those who use them. As such they can be highly loaded. Place names can be negotiated symbols of power, as the choice of terminology effectively proclaims a state of affairs exists that is dependent on the compliance and the sympathies of the group addressed (Buckley 1998: 16). In this context 'Long Kesh/Maze' has a torturous history as a naming convention for the prison site. Both names are derived from traditional townland names within the immediate area in which the prison is located. The preference for which name is used—or the order or sequence of names—is often a signifier of preference or adherence to chronology, status of imprisonment, or acceptance of a particular narratives, official or unofficial. Naming conventions do not follow a simple sectarian binary choice; rather they can relate to social, political and relational issues. At Long Kesh/Maze the origins of the naming conventions reflect a mixture of perspectives on the claimed political status of prisoners as well as being associated with two different material manifestations of prison structures and their associated regimes on the same site.

The name 'Long Kesh' derives from the first official name of the site—'Long Kesh Internment Camp'—which opened in 1971 and comprised Compounds of Nissen huts used to house internees at the site. Derivations of this name include Long Kesh, the Kesh, the Lazy K, *Ceis Fada* (the literal Gaelic translation meaning 'long bog'), the Cages (prisoner terminology), and the Compounds (official prison terminology). The internment camp was officially renamed on the addition of non-internee prisoners in 1972 to 'HMP Maze', although this name is conventionally held to refer to the H-Blocks built on the prison site from 1975 and housing prisoners from 1976. This new prison manifestation, of eight replicated one-storey H-Blocks, was built over three phases across the site from 1975–8. Its naming conventions include the Maze, the Blocks (prisoner terminology), and Maze Cellular (official prison terminology). Often former prisoners would discuss both manifestations of the site together as 'the camp' (including McKeown 2001) but as the two sites were fundamentally administered and interacted with as separate entities this is not a commonly used term. This complicated history of naming has inevitably resulted in

political connotations attached to nomenclature but this will not always be explicit, intentional, or necessarily understood by all parties.

The name 'Long Kesh' is used by Republican prisoners, their communities and supporters and also by Loyalist prisoners. Most former prisoners who were jailed for their involvement in the conflict consider their imprisonment as a product of the sectarian conflict in society and therefore political in nature. They tend to use the original, internment camp name—Long Kesh—thereby linking to prisoner status prior to governmental moves to criminalize prisoners given this special status. Long Kesh Internment Camp was created due to the introduction of mass internment and by association, connotations extended to the perceived political nature of imprisonment without trial, extended to the introduction of Diplock courts to secure conviction (often based solely on 'forced' confessions) and the initial governmental acceptance of the 'political' nature of the prison population. The name change, new buildings and more conventional regime at the H-Blocks of the 'Maze' were part of a more general government policy of 'criminalizing' prisoners (Stevenson 1996: 38). This was attempted through a loose collection of policies aiming to localize the significance of those involved in the conflict and extract the British dimension known as 'Ulsterization' (McEvoy 2001: 228–32).

The name of the prison reflects a number of different realities—including the controversial circumstances of its creation and the ongoing contestation of the status of Troubles-related imprisonment. Such historically situated relationships defy definitive sectarian division and instead reflect social divisions between the communities of former prisoners (who tend to be working class in origin) and those removed from the prison context (predominantly middle class). The naming of the prison has been an ongoing political issue for former prisoners since the change of name in the early 1970s and the sensitivities of the name remain current. This can be seen in the change of the term 'Maze' to 'Maze/Long Kesh' in recent government proposals for the future of the site (MCP 2005 and Masterplan 2006).

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF LONG KESH/MAZE

The prison was first utilized as a government site during the Second World War, when it was used by a number of military and air force

bodies, including the American Air Force for personnel en route to Europe. It ceased to be fully functional before the end of the war in 1943, as Allied attention moved to the East rather than Europe, and the military infrastructure was neither reused nor completely disposed of from this period. Despite a short operational period, the material remains and infrastructure—such as hangars, Nissen huts, and runways—continued to remain *in situ* and informed its later use as a internment camp in 1971. In particular the runways—which had been reutilized intermittently in the 1950s and 1960s for 'leisure activities' such as motorcar racing—were used as foundations for Nissen huts, which were grouped together within metal fencing and replicated to create an internment camp of self-contained Compounds.

Long Kesh Internment Camp was opened as, what was perceived to be, a temporary necessity after the introduction of internment in August 1971. 342 male members of the Nationalist community were lifted and held without trial on the first night of implementation of 'Operation Demetrius'. However, as the prison population continued to grow without the provision of sufficient institutional infrastructure throughout the province, prisoners started to be transferred from either HMP Belfast (commonly known as 'Crumlin Road Gaol', north of Belfast city centre), a separate male wing of the women's prison at Armagh or the prison ship *HMS Maidstone* moored in Belfast Lough. Both Crumlin Road Gaol and the *HMS Maidstone* had problems with overcrowding and outdated conditions and these were exacerbated through the numbers introduced due to internment. The government chose to expand the use of Compounds at Long Kesh and the site developed as numbers, differentiated prisoner status categories, and the official recognition of different paramilitary organizations dictated. At its largest extent the prison contained 21 separate, functioning Compounds. Long Kesh/Maze was considered initially as a temporary solution to a short-term overcrowding issue—it was assumed the mass removal of suspected paramilitaries from the streets would quickly end the sectarian violence—therefore the camp simply replicated existing patterns of occupation as dictated by numbers. There was little overt consideration of how this form of imprisonment would impact on those held and the ability to control them in the long term.

Compounds contained Nissen huts utilized for accommodation, with half of one hut being used for recreational facilities and a smaller, separate hut for ablutions. Each hut initially slept up to 40

men, in bunk beds lining the hut walls in a single open-plan room. Internal divisions were later added to sleep up to 80 men (Purbrick 2004: 95). Although there were a small number of idiosyncrasies, including slightly larger and smaller Compounds and different uses of communal space, they fundamentally followed the same structure until the numbers decreased substantially on the opening of the H-Blocks; many Compounds were then abandoned with some housing only educational facilities (GD 2011). Each Compound functioned on an individual basis depending on the paramilitary organization, the strength of the leaders, the hierarchies inside and the preferences of the individual body of prisoners. Discipline was important to many paramilitary groups and was often heavily enforced due to the ex-British Army backgrounds of many Loyalist and Republican prisoners. The UVF Compounds of ex-Army Gusty Spence, in particular, having a reputation for strictness in the early days of imprisonment (GD 2011).

Former prisoners have described relationships within the extended camp as functioning on a 'strict no-conflict policy' between Compounds (SU 2011) as an attempt to maintain solidarity against the prison authorities. This included a conscious decision that 'No matter what happened outside . . . it stayed outside. It didn't come inside' (GD 2011). Everyday prisoner interactions between Compounds were ongoing due to this ethos and the need to physically smuggle communications and contraband to other Compounds necessitating co-operation (McEvoy 1996: 121). The Compounds had an extended process of abandonment, for not all the Nissen huts fell into disuse at the same time. Although the H-Blocks were built and operational from 1976, any prisoner remanded or sentenced prior to the date of implementation—1 March 1976—had the right to complete their sentence in the Compounds unless they voluntarily transferred or were convicted of further offences whilst imprisoned. In a government report in 1981 it was reported that 300 prisoners remained in the Compounds, with a residual core of 150 expected to be retained indefinitely (NIO/12/182A, PRONI, 1979–81). In 1988 the site was finally closed and the last prisoners were released or transferred to their own wing of an H-Block.

Probably the most recognisable element of the Long Kesh/Maze prison site is the H-Blocks, which were built after the Gardiner Report (1975) recommended the replacement of the existing Compound structures with a purpose-built prison. Such a change in form was

deemed necessary to implement the removal of special category status and to allow the criminalization of the self-identifying 'political' prisoner population, whilst simultaneously accepting that the conflict was not going to dissipate overnight. A new prison also placated international observers who were demanding more humane incarceration conditions. For the prisoners to be categorized and treated as criminals, there was a need to replace the relative freedom of the Compounds with accommodation that allowed the prison authorities complete and effective control of the site. This would include the replacement of the POW-style camp with a more conventional cellular prison form that allowed 24-hour surveillance and the ability to isolate and control elements of the prison population. After the extensive rioting and burning of the Compounds in October 1974, the government were presented with an opportunity to implement a new prison structure. The H-Block prison buildings were considered a suitable answer to the discipline problems and control issues connected with the Compounds.

In total eight self-contained H-Blocks were built between 1975 and 1978 in three phases, with an internal wall placed between phases two and three. The H-Blocks were swiftly constructed by British Army personnel using prefabricated structures and this enabled the prison to be constructed to twice the normal size in a fraction of the usual time (Purbrick 2004: 99). This accelerated erection of a new prison was not without considerable expense, with a government report disclosing the associated costs at £1m per H-Block (NIO/12/160A PRONI 1979–81). Despite this financial outlay they were not state-of-the-art constructions. As Brian Graham states the H-Blocks were 'architecturally brutal and hastily erected using cheap low-grade materials' (Graham and McDowell 2007: 362). These concrete one-storey structures housed prisoners on four radiating wings that were perpendicular to a central, connecting corridor in between, which was used for administrative purposes. They were intended to integrate Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries, disregarding status or affiliation, rather than facilitating the segregation that existed in the Compounds.

Many of the major conflicts between the prisoners and the authorities occurred within the confines of the H-Blocks and this has resulted in its enhanced presence in the discussions of prison experience by many former inmates. The first PIRA prisoner to be moved to Maze Cellular on sentencing in September 1976 initiated active contestation of the categorization of criminal status. Kieran Nugent remains

an important figure in the litany of Republican heroes that are connected to Long Kesh/Maze. This is due to his role as a figurehead in the initial stages of protest that have come to dominate representations of the first half-decade of the H-Blocks. The protests included 'blanket' protests of prisoners who refused prison uniforms and were given only prison blankets to wear, escalating to the 'dirty' protests, when prisoners were effectively confined in their cells and smeared their excrement on the walls of those cells. The final escalation of these protests took the form of two hunger strikes, in 1980 and 1981, the latter of which resulted in the death of ten Republican prisoners. The hunger strikes finally ended in early November 1981 and from this time prisoner relationships with the authorities changed. Republicans slowly adopted a new, less antagonistic and more media-friendly policy of breaking the system from within (see McKeown 2001); a more aggressive stance from Loyalists developed and there was a move from policies of criminalization to 'pragmatic' managerialism within the prison regime (McEvoy 2001: 250–314). Due to small-scale protests, active negotiation of rights and conditions between inmates and the authorities and changed personnel and policies at an administrative level, prisoners eventually gained many of the conditions, if not the label, of special category status long before the prison closed in 2000.

As a direct result of the 1998 Agreement the prison that had held the majority of the paramilitary prisoners during the Troubles, Long Kesh/Maze, ceased to operate on 29 September 2000. Most of the prisoners were released and a small number of residual non-paramilitary prisoners were transferred to HMP Maghaberry. The closure of the site did not dramatically alter its prominence in the social, cultural, and political life of Northern Ireland; rather it changed the form of its importance. It was no longer a site of contested prisoner status and barometer for the nature of the conflict, but a material remnant of the troubled recent past which needed to be dealt with. The site was transferred to the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) from the UK government in May 2002 as part of a regeneration initiative. Despite the site no longer functioning as a prison, and access being tightly controlled, many physical interactions with it still continued to occur. Whilst material survival of the site is incomplete, following the work of Bjørnar Olsen and Þóra Pétursdóttir and their 'Ruin Memories' project, there is a need to include these narratives of 'things' and

their 'fluid state of material becoming' as they continue to 'be'. It will be argued in Chapter Seven that we cannot as archaeologists attempt to bridge the void between 'use' and final 'retrieval'; we need to include the continuing evolution as a site through closure to regeneration.

LONG KESH/MAZE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Due to the entangled nature of the site and the variety of events that either centred on it or were impacted by it, one must overtly consider the nature and impact of external relations on the prison and its inhabitants. Whilst this study is primarily interested in what the material remains of Long Kesh/Maze can tell us about its existence and meaning to the people who were most intimately connected to it, this overview will consider the overarching relationship between the prison and wider society during the course of the Troubles. This is a crucial consideration as any study that too closely fetishizes the materials of Long Kesh/Maze without broadening to the wider social context is in danger of excluding narratives that directly link to the society that created it and continued to shape it during the conflict. The relationship between Long Kesh/Maze and wider society can take a number of different forms and scales—from intimate, personal relationships to mediation by international news corporations—and as such a number of themes will be considered. These include: continued relationships with paramilitary organizations and wider communities, the geographical nature of internal and external relations, the role of the media, the impact of specific events and personalities, changes in prisoner and prison officer personnel, and the increased visibility of the prison on the world stage.

It has been noted through many of the former prisoner narratives on experiences of imprisonment during the Troubles that the relationship between the prisoner and the external paramilitary organizations frequently continued after imprisonment. These enduring relations ensured that whilst the prisoners were removed from wider society they maintained their link to paramilitary hierarchies and as such were subject to their policies and discipline. Whilst the nature of these relationships changed at different times for the various paramilitary bodies housed at Long Kesh/Maze, it is apparent from both Loyalist and Republican sources that these relationships often

ensured ongoing interest in the external conflict and how it should be pursued (including McKeown 2001 and GD 2011). In Laurence McKeown's volume on Republican experiences of Long Kesh/Maze he, and other informants, discuss the relationship with the external Republican Movement and how it changed over the course of imprisonment. In particular, two occasions are highlighted when there were major disagreements between the prisoners and the wider Republican Movement on the way forward: the 1975 cease-fire, which was strongly opposed by Gerry Adams and his supporters in the Com-pounds, and Sinn Féin's move away from military campaigns to political negotiations from the mid 1980s, which led to a number of prisoners resigning membership (2001: 234). As McKeown has stated prisoner involvement in external Republican policy increased from the late 1980s: 'The prisoners also became much more active in respect to their wider republican struggle on the outside, engaging in debate . . . and demanding an active role in decision making' (2001: 225).

This link to external bodies was increasingly significant in deciding the course of prisoner protests and relationships with prison officers across paramilitary divides. McKeown argues that a major factor in the eventual relaxing of the prison regime of the post-hunger-strike 1980s was the murder of high-profile prison figures outside of their work environment. In particular, he noted the assassinations of two high-profile prison officers, including a governor of Long Kesh/Maze, in the 1980s as seminal in 'consciously orchestrated psychological conditioning of the guards' that specifically targeted the rank-and-file guard as the weak link in the 'the guard-prisoner interface' (2001: 228). Likewise, Loyalist prisoners, who often came from the same communities as the prison officers, increasingly targeted prison personnel for attacks within the H-Blocks and externally by their paramilitary organizations (McEvoy 2001: 198–9). The relationship with the authorities evidently changed over time. The relaxation of the H-Blocks regime was viewed by the prisoners as a reaction to attacks on personnel and resultant changes in external government policy. Leo Green specifically highlighted the changes in policy of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) as relating to new personnel being open to 'ideas for change', the impact of economic pressures and the need to rationalize the prison system and, most importantly, that they did not want another 'big prison protest' (2001: 174). Pat Thompson more bluntly states that many decisions made from the 1980s reflected a move from the domination of political

considerations to 'Finance was going to dictate the situation' (2001: 177). Whilst former prisoners' analysis of the motivation behind regime changes can be debated, moves by the prison authorities and political leaders away from attempting to defeat paramilitaries through prisons was evident after the end of the 1981 hunger strike (McEvoy 2001: 263–6).

Prisoner relationships with their families, friends and communities were also maintained during imprisonment and often shaped critical aspects of the prisoner experiences. Community support has been emphasized frequently within Republican circles as being important in maintaining morale and, on a more practical level, maintaining supplies and communications. This is particularly apparent when one considers the heightened deprivations of the initial H-Block protests, which meant that publicizing the prisoner perspectives was maintained via external visitors acting as conduits removing and circulating smuggled written communications. They also played a major role in smuggling contraband into the prison, often through the most unlikely sources. One ex-Loyalist prisoner noted: 'And there was a wee woman, SM's granny, she was the best smuggler. She smuggled in everything, she smuggled in goldfish and everything' (SN 2011). Interviews with ex-Loyalist prisoners have emphasized that whilst their close families were unremittingly supportive of their imprisoned relatives, their wider communities were often less willing to actively and communally support their imprisonment. As EK noted: 'we had no support from among the politicians' (2011). On specific occasions the families of prisoners had more immediate impacts on the prisoners' experiences, most poignantly relating to their decisions as to whether dying hunger strikers should be fed on lapsing into a coma. McKeown noted that their choice, in increasing numbers, to feed their dying relatives ensured that 'eventually a situation developed where continuing with the [1981] hunger strike was untenable' (2001: 79). Undoubtedly, these ongoing relationships with external support networks were important in facilitating and directing many of the experiences of the prison and how they were communicated externally.

Another important aspect that impacted on prisoner experiences of Long Kesh/Maze that is often overlooked relates to the role of geographical divides and loyalties. The geographical nature of paramilitary organization outside the prison, which was based on small, localized units, had an obvious impact on internal relationships when imprisoned. Due to the increasingly cellular nature of paramilitary

organizations during the Troubles, combatants were often arranged on a geographical basis in small units, and this had an obvious impact on internal relationships when imprisoned. In particular, Republicans noted the divides between rural/urban prisoners and with West Belfast being a particularly strong and vocal category within the prison hierarchies. Sean Murray commented on the increasingly disgruntled South Derry contingent within the H-Blocks, which felt excluded from decision-making by the predominance of Belfast and Derry City prisoners within staff ranks. He links these geographical divides to tensions that resulted in a number of resignations and transferrals to the newly opened Maghaberry prison in the mid to late 1980s (2001: 164). Jim Scullion, whilst discussing the divisive character of a particular Compound's OC, stated that he 'didn't suit city men and particularly the Falls Road men, the 33rd county.' (2001: 38).

The impact of specific external events and the interests and interventions of high-profile persons also had an impact on prisoner experiences and understandings of their imprisonment. It was evident in both former prisoner oral testimonies and government records that religious figures at the time were increasingly concerned about the role of government policy towards prisons and their impacts on wider society during the Troubles. The heightened feelings regarding the hunger strikes and their repercussions throughout Northern Ireland resulted in interventions from the Roman Catholic Primate of Ireland, Cardinal Tomás Ó'Fiaich (McKeown 2001: 72), Archbishop Basil Hume (NIO/12/197A PRONI 1981) and Pope John Paul II (NIO/12/160A PRONI 1979–81). Likewise, it is clear that external Troubles-related incidents also impacted on prisoner relationships. Brendan Hughes linked the extreme reaction that he suffered at the hands of a British soldier, after the burning of the Compounds in October 1974, as relating to external actions of the IRA. In particular, he considered the IRA bombing campaign on the British mainland as hardening the British soldiers' attitudes to Republican prisoners: 'Guildford had just happened at the time and they were running around mad' (2001: 35). Whilst some former prisoners would state external events did not impact on inter-prisoner relations (GD and SU 2011), many former prisoners noted the existence of tensions due to external activities with the Ulster Workers' Council strikes in 1974, the 1982 Falklands War, and the impact of the Canary Wharf bomb in the late 1990s sealing the end of an IRA cease-fire being particularly noted (McKeown 2001).

There were also a number of external actions that more directly impacted on the organization and policies of the prison. Ex-Republican prisoners highlight a significant number of IRA leaders being imprisoned in the mid 1980s as injecting new impetus and direction into protest campaigns and heightening their profile amongst the external movement. Likewise, Loyalist prisoners were increasingly radicalized by the influx of younger and more militant members of the various paramilitary organizations in the early to mid 1980s who were 'direct and confrontational' in their behaviour towards prison staff (McKeown 2001: 193). Furthermore, the influx of new prisoners from the closing of the Compounds in 1988 and of Crumlin Road Gaol in 1994 had a major effect on both those already residing at the H-Blocks and those who were newly moved. A number of Republican prisoners transferred to the H-Blocks at this time recount their emotions at being housed in 'the place where the battle was being fought as we were growing up' (Arthurs 2001: 202) and how this unified the imprisoned Republican Movement. As Sean Lynch noted: 'The closure of the Crumlin Road as a remand centre meant that for the first time in the history of the struggle all Republican POWs in the six counties, with the exception of the women held in Maghaberry, were together in the one prison' (2001: 201).

Such sentiments leave no doubt as to the ongoing significance of incarceration at Long Kesh/Maze, not only to the international observer but in the prisoners' own perspectives of their experiences and roles whilst imprisoned. The increasing media interest in the site relating to the ongoing contestation of the different prisoner groups as to their status and conditions of imprisonment, as well as changes in internal dynamics, ensured that the prisoners played a critical role negotiating the end of the wider, societal conflict. Whilst McKeown notes that prisoner conceptions of themselves and their roles changed throughout the experience of imprisonment at Long Kesh/Maze: 'Prisoners-of-war' began to see themselves not as a 'casualties of war' but as 'political activists', as 'agents of changes' (2001: 25)—they were increasingly accepted by the government as central to brokering peace. This is most evident in the less than covert government interactions with the prisoner hierarchies in negotiating cease-fires, including the highly publicized visit of Secretary of State Mo Mowlam to Loyalist prisoners in the mid 1990s. Furthermore H-Block OCs were given special permission to receive external political delegations and to temporarily leave the jail in order to negotiate the conditions

of the peace process (McKeown 2001: 208). Throughout the life of the site, and in various forms and means, external relationships and connections beyond the prison perimeter walls had a major impact on the experiences, conceptions and understandings of imprisonment throughout the prisoner bodies. Whilst Long Kesh/Maze was deeply impacted by external interactions and input, this chapter will conclude by conversely considering how the prison has impacted on wider Northern Irish society.

THE INFLUENCE OF LONG KESH/MAZE ON NORTHERN IRISH SOCIETY

Due to its connection with the Troubles, and the public and media interest in the events that occurred within it, Long Kesh/Maze maintained a high public profile throughout the conflict. As a holding centre for Republican and Loyalist prisoners—as well as a smaller number of conventional prisoners—it can be interpreted as inadvertently being a shared site, cutting across the sectarian divide by the very nature of its prison populations. Whilst there were at least 10,000 men from both communities held within the prison, numerically there were a substantially larger number of Republican prisoners from Catholic backgrounds ('the vast majority' according to a report by Cardinal Ó'Fiaich [NIO/12/160A 1979–81 PRONI]). The sheer size of the prison and number and status of prisoners held within it made it a central catalyst in the development of the conflict, and its controversial nature continues to spark debate as to how it functioned and interacted with myriad aspects of society during the conflict. Whilst the Troubles shaped the creation and initial development of the prison, Long Kesh/Maze has likewise been an agent of change and has simultaneously had a major impact on political, social, economic, and cultural aspects of life in Northern Ireland.

Politics

The concentration of so many politically motivated prisoners from the same paramilitary organizations within Long Kesh/Maze provided an impetus for the politicization of what had been largely

military organizations. This process was most noticeable within the Republican movement, which became overtly involved in organized politics with the promotion and subsequent election of Bobby Sands as MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone whilst he was on hunger strike in 1981. This show of mass popular support was an obvious impetus to reconfiguring from purely military operations to more political interests. These changes have allowed the political wing of the Provisional IRA, Sinn Féin, to move from opportunist excursions into politics to abandoning violence as a means of achieving their continuing aim of an all-island sovereign Republic of Ireland. This transition has not been without bitter recriminations from internal opposition regarding a perceived 'surrender' before the achievement of the ultimate goal of a united Ireland. Nor external opponents suspicious and perturbed by the Republicans' seemingly easy slide into politics without overtly acknowledging responsibilities for atrocities in the recent past.

Sinn Féin's electoral support stood at a 26.9 per cent share of the vote in the Assembly elections in 2007 (<http://www.ark.ac.uk/elections/fall1.htm>) and since this time they have continued to be the largest Nationalist party in Northern Ireland. Whilst many former inhabitants of Long Kesh/Maze are now important figures in Sinn Féin, their military wing, the Provisional IRA, was officially 'stood down' in August 2005. Sinn Féin's transition into mainstream Nationalist politics has been particularly adept when it is considered that they have managed to woo many of the more conservative, mainstream voters of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) whilst largely maintaining their connection to their core constituents of former prisoners. Whilst the then leader of the SDLP, John Hume, jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 with the UUP's leader David Trimble due to his involvement in the peace process, his party has been detrimentally affected through a loss of traditional rural strongholds to Sinn Féin. In comparison, Sinn Féin has negotiated maintaining an ongoing relationship with its traditional, working-class, urban supporters while gaining the respectability necessary to be viewed as electable by more middle-class voters. Sinn Féin's loyalty to former prisoners can be seen in its insistence in the inclusion of the early release of paramilitary prisoners as a highly contentious concession within the 1998 Agreement (Fraser 2000: 80). However, the involvement of Sinn Féin in the regeneration of the Long Kesh/Maze site indicates its ability to be flexible in moving from initial promotion of full retention to

compromising on only maintaining those areas central to Republican identity, such as the prison hospital (this will be discussed further in Chapter Seven).

Loyalist paramilitary organizations also are politically represented and they have long been engaged with theorizing political resolutions to the conflict, with treatises by the UVF ('Shared Responsibility' [1974]) and UDA ('Common Sense' [1987]) making early incursions into an examination of a political resolution to conflict. Both papers were the direct result of the discussions and experiences that evolved out of ongoing and extended periods of imprisonment. The UVF's political wing, the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), has been the most electorally successful party formed by Loyalist paramilitaries but despite having a central role in brokering the 1998 Agreement—and selling it successfully to their sceptical working-class electorate—they have been marginalized due to the rising popularity of the more respectable Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The PUP was most successful when led by the highly popular former prisoner—and Long Kesh/Maze long-term resident—David Ervine, prior to his unexpected death in 2007. The political wing of the UDA, the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP), despite being a signatory of the 1998 Agreement had limited electoral success and was replaced by the Ulster Political Research Group, which is currently represented on Belfast City Council. Ex-Loyalist paramilitaries have emphasized how important imprisonment was in allowing important, political discussions to take place as they 'took it out of society' and allowed them to 'say things to them that you couldn't say out here' (SU 2011). Hitherto, this has not translated to mainstream electoral success.

Economics

Whilst human impacts should always remain central to any 'costing' of conflict, economics occupies a marginal place in the understanding of prisons despite financial pressures often being silently critical in directing their course. The cost of paramilitary violence on the economy of the province is difficult to quantify and as such has not often been attempted (see Muckley 2010). International explorations of ethnic conflict highlight the disruption caused by the acts of combatants, especially on the sectors of tourism, foreign direct investment, savings and consumption, investment, stock markets, foreign trade, and the

urban economy (Frey et al. 2004: 6). However, it is necessary also to consider how the policies of counter-terrorism can have negative impacts on the perceptions and realities of the economy (Frey et al. 2004: 2). Contemporary government files reveal that ministers and civil servants during the conflict were frequently preoccupied with economic factors and these often were at the root of decision-making processes. For example, prison policy regarding the re-use of derelict government-owned sites from the Second World War as makeshift, temporary prisons were the result of hopeful projections that the conflict was a short-term blip. Such decisions were often influenced by economics and expediency rather than sound political analysis. This is easier to understand when estimates for the cost of 'spectacular' events such as the 1981 hunger strikes indicate that the first three months alone directly cost the government an extra £11 million beyond existing budgets (NIO/12/197A PRONI 1981).

In the post-conflict context, the economic costs and benefits of peace are frequently presented as reasons for the peace process to continue, with the promotion of tourism and international investment factors consistently highlighted. Dr Cal Muckley estimates that the incremental costs of one contemporary terrorism-related fatality would be 'equivalent to £3.69 million pounds sterling in 2009 prices' to the economy (Muckley, 2010: 9). The aim of such analysis is to utilize empirical data to allow the current Northern Ireland Executive to objectively compare the costs of confronting ongoing paramilitary activities with the projected financial repercussions of allowing unchecked terrorist activities on the economy (2010: 1). However, an alternative view would caution against using long-term civil conflicts as an excuse for an underperforming economy—such as evidenced by Northern Ireland—and instead explore how the economy would have developed without this factor (Frey et al. 2004: 17). It is undoubted that the decline in traditional industries, such as ship building, (which was not uniquely a Northern Irish experience) has had an immense impact on the employment routes and possibilities for working-class Protestants in particular, and is not simply related to the conflict.

Specific to this investigation, the context and development of Long Kesh/Maze needs to account for the economic realities of maintaining a large, non-complying prison population in assessing different policy choices and the reactions of the various government bodies. The changes between a regime of containment evidenced by the Com-pounds to one of confrontation on the creation of the H-Blocks

before reverting again to containment from the mid 1980s onwards could be viewed as an economic as well as political or strategic decision. A policy of prison rationalization did appear to impact on the degree of confrontation by staff at locations such as Long Kesh/Maze, and this was not lost on the inhabitants at the time (McKeown 2001). Ultimately, the tackling of civil conflict—including containing and controlling combatants within the prison infrastructure for long-term prison sentences—is costly and should not be down-played.

Society

Muldoon has prefaced her journal edition on the 'Children of the Troubles' by enumerating three broad reasons for exploring the more insidious but less spectacular impacts of the Troubles on wider society. She highlights the need to understand conflict in human terms, to explore and understand the needs of those who are victims of violence in order to help them and lastly, it is only through dissecting societies that have suffered longstanding ethnic conflict that we can try to prevent its continuation (2004: 453). Conflict impacts on society in many ways; the sheer numbers imprisoned, most often men from working-class urban communities, and the increasing segregation of the general populace in general, and working-class communities in particular, remain longstanding repercussions of the conflict. The extensive rioting that marked the start of the Troubles—it is estimated that in mid August 1969 alone 1,505 Catholic families and 315 Protestant families were forced to move from their homes due to fear or direct intimidation (Fraser 2000: 47)—sparked this process of accelerated segregation that has continued unabated and relatively unchecked. It is also important to accept that the violence of ethnic conflict does not only impact the active combatants, but women and children—particularly those who live in the most affected areas—are as often the victims of bombings and shootings as those who are the perpetrators (Muldoon, 2004: 454).

Divisions created by ethnic violence run deep through society. Peter Shirlow and Brendan Murtagh have shown that in 2001, 71 per cent of the Northern Ireland population lived in religiously segregated areas, with this figure rising to 98 per cent in public housing estates, a trend that has continued to increase rather than

to decrease (2006: 60). Visually, the urban landscapes of Northern Ireland were transformed during the conflict with the proliferation of military infrastructure in perceived hostile and interface areas. Heavily defended watch-towers, police stations, Army barracks, peace walls, and other security-related structures were introduced. The physical transformation of large areas into effective war zones had a huge social impact on the people who lived in their shadows. One cannot under-estimate the impact that living in such environments has had. These heavily militarized zones not only forced the surrounding populace to live in physically intimidating areas, increasingly rundown and derelict, but also created sectarian geographies that highlight the danger of the 'other' through blocked roads, insular cul-de-sac housing developments and lack of access across the cities.

Long Kesh/Maze is a particularly prominent example of this militarization of society, a heavily fortified and intimidating presence that was an anomaly in a green-belt area that sat prominently on the edge of the M1 motorway. Its use of two different prison manifestations to contain suspected and convicted paramilitary prisoners facilitated the maintenance of paramilitary organizations as well as degrees of institutionalization of many of those who resided within its walls. However, the human impact of the prison landscape not only impacted on those held as prisoners but also on their families and friendship groups who continued to have contact with them during their time at Long Kesh/Maze. As Sinn Féin president and former inmate of Long Kesh/Maze, Gerry Adams states in the foreword to his autobiography:

Almost twenty years have passed since Long Kesh was opened and through the years it has been a constant element in the lives of all the members of my family. On any one of the many days since then at least one of us has been in there . . . Our female family members . . . have spent almost twenty years visiting prisons. Yet for all that, ours is a perfectly normal family, and we are by no means unique. (Adams 1990: 11–12)

Culture

A large number of cultural artefacts—prison art—were made by prisoners for use both inside and outside of the prison including wood carvings, leather work, painted handkerchiefs, and paintings, and were widely circulated in society, held by families and friends and

sold as commodities to raise funds for paramilitary bodies. Many of these items had Celtic, paramilitary, or personal representations, and countless contraband items were passed or smuggled out. Whilst only a small number show real artistic and creative skill—indeed, Mike Moloney underlines their unique selling point as ‘prison issue’ creation and ‘as being symbols of the continuation of the struggle within the cages’ (2009: 6)—they reveal a materialization of very specific identities within the prison that were used to maintain group cohesion, underline sectarian divisions and pass time. The Celtic designs of Republican artefacts were countered by the more overtly militaristic, even imperial, designs of the Loyalists. *Cu Chulainn* was one of the few shared symbolic heroes—‘The Hound of Ulster’ from the ancient Irish mythology was appropriated by both sets of prisoners. These artefacts are still displayed in many of the homes of relatives and friends of those who were detained in the Long Kesh/Maze and since the advent of the peace process have transitioned to display in community museums (a phenomenon that will be discussed further in Chapter Seven).

Beyond the household environment, a number of more prominent cultural developments occurred as a direct result of the events at Long Kesh/Maze, particularly relating to the hunger strikes of 1980–1. The adoption of the wall mural tradition in Nationalist, working-class areas has been a focus of academic comment and analysis (including Jarman 1993 and 1998a and Rolston 1992 and 1995). Long a Loyalist tradition, originally used to decorate streets that Orange Order marches paraded down during the annual Twelfth of July celebrations, Nationalists adopted this means of materializing public, mass support for the hunger strikes in 1981. Although the hunger strikes ended in initial defeat for the prisoners, the mural was not abandoned. The medium retained its use as a way of articulating ‘community’ opinion and dissent on contemporary political and social issues as well as declaring support for paramilitaries and reinforcing ‘Irish’ cultural identity. By comparison, this period has seen a relative stagnation of Loyalist mural subjects, with themes being more traditional in subject and conservative in treatment, but there have been a number of innovations including overt representations of paramilitary organizations (Jarman 1998a: 124). The formalization of mural creation and its control by paramilitary bodies during the Troubles allowed these painted landscapes to make territorial claims both internally and externally, retain their prominence in the urban

environment and comment on the role and treatment of their imprisoned and murdered comrades. Bobby Sands, the first hunger striker to die, is still a popular figure for Republican murals, especially on the occasion of important anniversaries (which will be discussed in Chapter Six).

Media

Analysis of newspapers is an effective means of uncovering how the media in Northern Ireland and Great Britain perceived and presented major incidences emanating from Long Kesh/Maze. Neville Douglas has asserted that the media was more interested in burning buses than building bridges (1998: 171), and they emphasized spectacular events they often misinterpreted or excluded the wider context of clashes and changing attitudes to the site and those incarcerated. Liz Curtis has highlighted what she perceived as flaws in the British media's treatment of the Irish conflict, claiming that they did not contextualize 'the Troubles' for the British public nor report incidents in an unbiased way, due to a number of factors (1984). This includes their desire to avoid accusations of 'helping the terrorists' (53), to show support for the Army and administration (69), to maintain popularity by reinforcing existing public perceptions (93) and the desire of many national newspapers to follow government policy (136). In-depth studies of the coverage of major events at Long Kesh/Maze, including the burning of the internment camp by Republican prisoners in October 1974, reveal a strong Northern Irish/British divide in the number of articles and column inches devoted to the Northern Irish conflict and to the prison protests in particular. It is to be expected that the Northern Irish newspapers show a more active, and nuanced, interest in the ongoing issues at the prison site. However, it was surprising to find little coverage of such an important event in the quality British press. These findings underline the need to contextualize and question specific media representations of the site as a wider cultural phenomenon relating to the knowledge and interest in the site rather than utilizing this source for simply extracting fact or opinion.

Including the role and input of the media is central in understanding the actions of some stakeholders of Long Kesh/Maze. Increasingly sophisticated attempts to achieve local, national, and international

support were viewed as imperative by both the prisoners and the government in competing over positive public reception to events that occurred within the prison and in counteracting negative propaganda from the other side. As Long Kesh/Maze became an ever more visible battleground between the authorities and the paramilitaries, it was increasingly used by the media as shorthand for the situation in the wider Northern Irish society and this further enhanced the importance of the site. The apex of media interest in the prison, the 1981 hunger strikes, saw at least 23 nations send camera crews and over 400 reporters attended Bobby Sands's funeral on 5 May 1981 (Curtis 1984: 203). By this stage all protagonists realized the potential impact that media interpretations of the conflict and events that occurred at the site could have. Increasingly perceptive and formulated means of presenting information to the media by both the government and prisoner bodies will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

CONCLUSIONS

Long Kesh/Maze cannot be studied as an isolated prison without exploring its convoluted development and its wider, societal context. The Troubles were a long-term civil conflict that had a contested beginning, was marked by periodic lurches from violent attacks, mass murder, and political crises to hope for cease-fires that did not hold until the late 1990s. Without the benefit of hindsight, understanding the conflict is almost impossible, but the role of the paramilitary combatants was central to its continuation, its escalation, and its eventual cessation. One particularly archaeological approach to understanding the ebbs, flows, and material realities of this conflict involves examining how the active combatants adapted to imprisonment and how this changed over time. Whilst the Troubles were marked by paramilitary violence and frequent atrocities that created a traumatized and victimized society, they were also marked by the mass, long-term incarceration of combatants from all religious and political affiliations on one site. Long Kesh/Maze was the pivotal prison site of the Troubles and as such is the ideal location to investigate the material realities of imprisonment.

This chapter has set out a concise factual biography of Long Kesh/Maze as a complex and layered site with a functional period that

almost exactly mirrored the conflict itself. The reciprocal relationship the site has had with wider society can be seen in a significant number of Troubles-related narratives running through its biography. These include the controversies surrounding imprisonment based on internment, Diplock courts, and forced confessions; the relationships between the prisoners and the regime that imprisoned them; the impact of the capture and imprisonment of influential combatants from the conflict; the ability of prisoners to overtly defy their surroundings using protests, hunger strikes, and mass escapes; and the eventual transformation and facilitation of the peace process. The narratives that emanate from Long Kesh/Maze are central themes of the Troubles. The importance of positioning the prison within its wider societal context means that these interconnections between people, place and society can be unravelled. Long Kesh/Maze cannot be understood as a stand-alone site. It must be explored as a cultural and social phenomenon and in that way its continued relationships with society remain central.

Dissecting Long Kesh/Maze—archaeological and multi-scalar approaches

An archaeological study of Long Kesh/Maze must, by its very nature, take an overtly material approach to the site's significance. It is conceived as a place with its own material reality, networked and interconnected both internally and externally. Such a material focus moves beyond understandings based solely on public perceptions, government policies, prisoners' anecdotes or media representations. These all encompass specific perspectives on what is a complicated place, conceiving it as, alternatively, an inaccessible, institutional fortress, illegal internment centre and more recently 'icon of the Troubles'. A material approach to Long Kesh/Maze allows us not only to explore the site as a central place in the recent conflict and the prolonged peace process but also as a place with broader physical and conceptual landscapes with lived, everyday experiences and human interactions that are mundane and unexceptional as well as dramatic and spectacular. On a conceptual level contemporary archaeology is particularly appropriate to this type of study as it is overtly political in engaging with 'relations of power and contemporary interventions in the production of the past' (Harrison and Schofield 2010: 143). To root this study in contemporary archaeological methods and theories seems especially appropriate at this point in time, given the increasing confidence of the sub-discipline within archaeology, the recent assertions of the importance of studying the contemporary through this medium, and the centrality 'of and in the present' in assembling our investigations as archaeologists (see Harrison 2011).

Exploring Long Kesh/Maze using contemporary archaeological approaches allows our understandings to move beyond traditional accounts of this highly mythologized site, existing mainly in the

documents of civil servants, statements of politicians, narratives of former prisoners, and murals of paramilitary organizations, by highlighting its material reality. Contemporary archaeology is of relatively recent vintage. The first prominent edited volume, on ‘archaeologies of the contemporary past’ was published by Victor Buchli and Gavin Lucas in 2001 and has been described by Harrison and Schofield as ‘a new central agenda for archaeology’ (2010: 33). Its conceptually important introduction, concentrating on themes such as ‘production and consumption’, ‘remembering and forgetting’, and ‘disappearance and disclosure’ are still central to the sub-discipline. Contemporary archaeology methodologies centring on such themes provide possibilities of understanding this site by grappling with the complexities of its physical reality, and in a wider landscape setting placing it in the context of its transition from the Troubles to a still unfolding post-conflict state. Harrison and Schofield, in their recent volume on archaeological approaches to the ‘contemporary past’, highlight the contribution that the discipline can bring particularly in understanding western, post-industrial societies that have a tendency ‘for the present to become almost immediately historicized’ and focus on ‘lived experience; about human life’ (2010: 4). They assert that archaeology is continually evolving to ‘become more methodological in its meaning than one that defines a particular period of interest.’ (2010: 5) and as such the subject needs neither to be ancient nor excavated to be studied archaeologically. Indeed, the benefit of examining a site of the contemporary past through archaeological methodologies is not just in using materials to extract how the past continues to interject in the present, but also in how the methodologies engage ‘actively and creatively with the recovery of lost memory and the therapeutic process of reconciliation’ (2010: 9). Therefore, a recently closed, controversial and highly contested site such as Long Kesh/Maze is an ideal location to conduct contemporary archaeology and to explore its closely related transitions from functional site to potential place of dark heritage.

Whilst the partial structural remains of the prison remain *in situ*, the boundaries of this iconic landscape do not stop at the perimeter watch-towers and walls. This study is not merely concerned with the recording of buildings and material traces of the prison site but also focuses on the materiality of the site in its broader sense: of the interactions and enmeshing, both anticipated and unforeseen, between people, artefacts, and the wider landscape within which they are set. This approach aims to reveal the political, cultural, and social

contexts and networks of a highly infiltrated and interconnected physical entity as a direct result of exploring the actualities and contradictions of material realities and experiences of Long Kesh/Maze. The prison cannot be explored in isolation. The interactions of people, place and things, the embodiment of experience and the negotiated state of relationships are fundamental elements of this study. Furthermore, Long Kesh/Maze has always existed at the level of the imaginary as well as the physical. Such a prominent site has impacted on the lives of many who have lived in Northern Ireland who have experienced the turmoil of the Troubles, who were victims of the conflict and yet who never physically accessed the site. This continuing heightened and highly political reality of Long Kesh/Maze will be reflected in the approaches of this study and in the inclusion of the broader landscape setting and identification within a wider societal context.

Of course, archaeological and material-based approaches do encounter difficulties in such a contemporary study. As Long Kesh/Maze was utilized as a prison in living memory there is an overwhelming volume of extant physical remains—including artefacts, standing buildings, security infrastructure, landscaping features, representations, documents, and photography. The volume of material dictates that not only does the study have to be selective in its choice of material culture to be investigated but one also has to understand and articulate how these choices impact on the questions and subsequent answers that are retrieved. It is my contention that this exploration of Long Kesh/Maze will highlight the need for contemporary archaeologists to overtly engage with this process of selection and be especially reflexive about the decisions they make on the form of materials interrogated, as these choices directly impact on how we understand the contemporary society we study. One of the central themes of this study is to reflexively consider how the type and form of material remains impact upon the narratives that emerge from such contested places. However, a welcome repercussion of these multiple sources is the potential to access myriad narratives connected to place rather than create a singular, definitive account of how the site 'was'.

It should be emphasized that the wealth of information relating to such a site does not necessarily make this study any more accessible than investigations of older, more traditional archaeological sites. As Harrison and Schofield have highlighted, 'Archaeological sites of the

contemporary past are places that in some ways we know all about, but in others can seem almost as mysterious and “distant” as sites of prehistory or the medieval period’ (2010: 5). The potential for contradictory information to be revealed by the different sources ensures that there are no simple readings. Long Kesh/Maze is a place that was central to the ebbs and flows of the Troubles before being placed in an uneasy limbo in the post-conflict context. Issues of mythology, propaganda, and government and paramilitary agendas that, to some extent, remain current and have continued to complicated understandings of its lived experience and continued significance abound. The political resonance of this complicated site reveals the contested understandings and even contradictions of its experience and whilst it continues to have material form, these lack any *terminus ad quem*. Although closed as a prison in September 2000 it remains a living site. Ongoing negotiations regarding its future continue and agreement is difficult to reach due to the very different viewpoints of the many stakeholders, who include former prisoners, ex-prison officers, government ministers, politicians, civil servants, administrators, contractors, the media, victims, academia, and the general public. Indeed, the aims of this study developed throughout the course of the research, as the site continued in its evolution, proving to be a highly mutable entity rather than a stable relic from the past. Long Kesh/Maze continues to be implicated in the play of politics of the past and future, and particularly in the politics of representation, memory, and ownership in the present.

A methodology based on analysing different forms of evidence connected to the site using a multi-scalar approach, that is beginning with the most contained scale of analysis—documents—and progressing through artefacts, standing buildings, and landscapes to the largest scale—its conception as a place of dark heritage—is a deliberate choice. This approach aims to uncover hidden narratives and multi-perspectives of how the site was understood and experienced by placing the material form at the centre and interrogating the prejudices and partialities of individual sources. This methodology will provide the greatest potential to reconstruct a multi-layered and even contradictory understanding of Long Kesh/Maze but it will also reveal the benefits and deficiencies of each form as a material source. By overtly engaging with how the choice of material culture impacts on our creation of knowledge the importance of selection in contemporary archaeology will be emphasized. Deliberately

refraining from the prioritization of the usual sources—oral testimonies and documents—allows materials as diverse as smuggled cigarette papers used for prisoner communications, prison issue artefacts, and the material culture of community commemoration to reveal multiple understandings of Long Kesh/Maze. By accepting the fluidity, reflexivity, political and situated nature of archaeological interpretation of contemporary sites this study is concerned with revealing experience and understanding of the prison without creating a totalizing, all-encompassing account.

The two scales of analysis that flow throughout this study and are not confined to an individual chapter are the uses of oral testimonies and photography. They are not contained within a dedicated chapter precisely because of the wide range of information they provide and the interconnections that they make with other material forms that is unique to the study of sites of lived memory. The use of on-site oral testimonies from contested sites, as Schofield and Anderton have revealed in their study of Greenham Common, provide the memory of social interactions and human agency that may no longer be in existence due to the disappearance of temporary physical forms of protest (2000: 244). Connerton views oral histories as important in retrieving the history and culture of subordinate groups as they 'seek to give voice to what would otherwise remain voiceless even if not traceless, by reconstituting the life histories of individuals' (1989: 18). Although oral testimonies are being used in this study to explore memories of place, particularly whilst interacting with the site, Connerton's use of oral testimony may overemphasize this form of evidence and does not consider sufficiently other materials in the study of the subordinate. Oral histories have been criticized as being subjective and non-factual sources of information but in this study it is specifically these qualities that are important. Subjectivity reveals personal and individual experiences and perspectives of place that subvert dominant narratives and are often lost in attempts by the researcher to be objective. Indeed, the range of information that oral testimonies provides includes not only telling us 'what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did' (Portelli 1998: 36). A mixture of semi-structured on-site and off-site oral testimonies were used throughout this study, as circumstance and access dictated. Whilst each recording differed—despite an initial attempt to conduct all oral testimonies on-site—the guiding principle of these testimonies was to represent

those connected to the site 'in their own words' (following McKeown 2001: 236). The oral testimonies included have been collected from Republican PIRA former prisoners, an OIRA former prisoner, UVF former prisoners, a prison governor, and a female visitor to the site.

Photographic interactions are also significant in that they provide an ongoing recording of the site and its changes and deteriorations during the course of its life and throughout the years of this research project. In the long term, these visual records of the site have enabled a specific type of understanding of its material realities that will assist those who consult this volume in years to come. Alongside recording the site, the more ephemeral remains of confiscated artefacts and artefacts held in homes and in community museums have been included, along with wall murals depicting the prison, and collections of prison communications. Indeed, one could suggest that the recording of many of the less obvious documentary, artefactual, and building remains of this site may be the only documentation that eventually exists of some of the material remains. This personal collection of images of the site has been supplemented by those collected by other researchers and by historical images that continue to be held in the Northern Ireland Prison Service Museum and the private collections of people who were intimately connected to the site (many of which were taken in secret and smuggled out). Therefore, photographs cover the entire life of the site and they illuminate how the site has developed, how it was (or had been) perceived and how it had been and continues to be interacted with.

A traditional archaeology of Long Kesh/Maze would probably follow the methodology of conducting appropriate test excavations, a site-based landscape survey, building surveys of the standing remains, and recording of the artefacts that remain *in situ* in order to attempt to understand how the site functioned and how this evolved over time. Such an approach has not been rigidly followed in this case for a number of reasons. Due to the volume of material remains, contemporary archaeology needs to move beyond an emphasis on traditional methodologies that do not take into account the particularities of the research and physical remains under investigation. When exploring the overwhelming range of material remains of the recent past there is a need to ask—what are we studying and why? In the case of this study of Long Kesh/Maze there was a strong case for allowing the research questions to develop as the political context of the site

changed rather than undertaking detailed recording of the minutiae of vast quantities of *in situ* remains. In this respect, I have followed Rodney Harrison's questioning of the reliance on excavation and use of excavation tropes in contemporary archaeology. His criticisms have focused on archaeology's 'obsession with stratigraphic depth' and he has suggested replacing such tropes with assemblage and 'an emphasis on the present and its surfaces' (2011: 153). A methodology based on dealing with various assemblages as they continue to exist has allowed this uniquely inaccessible site to be explored with a view to gaining a more diverse and multi-layered story of contested place that necessarily begins in the present. Following anthropologist Jeremy MacClancy's choice to focus 'on a particular issue, item or concept, I have followed my topic wherever it led me' (2007: 23), the methodology of this study has allowed the research emphases to evolve with serendipitous entanglements of the prison and its contemporary context being allowed to highlight wider significances and realities. Whilst the comprehensive cataloguing of all material remains is a laudable endeavour in creating a valuable, long-lasting archive, such an approach will not necessarily uncover the hidden narratives of the experiences of the site and may confuse, hinder or even subvert such objectives.

Of course, there are limitations in conducting such a politically sensitive and living project. The initial lack of Loyalist participation, largely as a result of preconceptions about the project, a lack of contacts in the Loyalist former prisoner 'community' as well as a pronounced reticence amongst Loyalist ex-prisoners to discuss time spent in prison (contrasting sharply with Republican former prisoners) was a notable issue. Republicans wear imprisonment as 'a badge of honour' (McKeown, 2001: xiii); in contrast there is no longstanding tradition of political imprisonment within the Loyalist community (SU 2011). As one UVF former prisoner stated, 'this was the first conflict that Loyalists had gone outside the law' (SU 2011) and for this transgression they were often shunned by their wider communities for acting against 'Loyalist' moral codes. Loyalist ex-prisoner participation developed after some initial email contact in the summer of 2011. This resulted in two taped interviews conducted with UVF former prisoners and a number of artefacts and photographs were examined and photographed. Although this lack of input during the earlier stages of the project was regrettable, Loyalist viewpoints were accessed at an early stage through consultation documents, journals, and magazines produced by their representative bodies. Analysis of these

papers, and of many confiscated artefacts and murals, has ensured that their perspective has been addressed and incorporated. It has been argued that the higher profile, numbers and greater involvement of Republican prisoners in prison protests ensures that they will remain at the centre of any investigation of the site (Feldman 1991: 148), but it is important that Loyalist experiences are included. Whilst Republicans had a much publicized long-term, non-compliance campaign against the prison regime, both more overt and premeditated in comparison to Loyalist activity, there is a uniquely Loyalist conception and experience of protest and compliance that has been largely ignored.

The majority of the academic and popular studies of Long Kesh/Maze view the prison as a microcosm of the Northern Irish conflict. The site is presented mirroring the circumstances of wider society because it contained individuals and witnessed events that have had a highly publicized impact on the course of the Troubles. Most studies focus on prominent individuals and events, especially the 1981 Hunger Strikes, which have been covered by journalistic works such as David Beresford's *Ten Men Dead* (1994) and Liam Clarke's *Broadening the battlefield: the H-Blocks and the rise of Sinn Féin* (1987). Or they attempt to sketch the characteristics of those who take part in paramilitary activities, such as Kevin Toolis's *Rebel hearts: Journeys within the IRA's soul* (2000). There are also a number of popular biographies of well-known figures who spent substantial periods in Long Kesh/Maze, including *The Billy Boy: The Life and Death of LVF Leader Billy Wright* (Anderson 2004). However, these people and event-focused approaches often ignore the material peculiarities and experiences of imprisonment and overemphasize the uniqueness of the prisoners without exploring their relationships with their material environment. In contrast, the photographic work of Donovan Wylie, who spent almost 100 days repetitively photographing the prison, 'to understand the psychology of the architecture and its ability to disorient and diminish' (2004) downplays the human aspects of the site. Wylie's approach is in keeping with many architectural and art-historical approaches to studying historical prisons. In contrast to both these approaches, this study aims to marry both the material dimensions and human experiences of Long Kesh/Maze as a contained, physical entity and imaginary construction that focuses on both the personal narratives and the prison's material dimensions.

A number of first-hand accounts of life within the prison exist, including Gerry Adams's biography *Cage Eleven* (1990), which includes some limited discussion on how the inmates interacted with their surroundings. Campbell, McKeown, and O'Hagan compiled an edited collection of Republican prisoners' experiences of the H-Block protests, *Nor Meekly Serve My Time: the H Block Struggle (1976–1981)*, which is useful in presenting former prisoners' thoughts but has a very specific perspective and agenda (1994). Likewise, Laurence McKeown's chronological exploration of Republican experiences *Out of Time: Irish Republican Prisoners Long Kesh 1972–2000* (2001), which developed from his Queen's University of Belfast PhD dissertation 'Unrepentant Fenian Bastards: the social construction of an Irish republican prisoner community' (1998), records prisoner narratives in a more extended and considered study. His book is particularly interesting as McKeown had been a Republican prisoner from 1977–92, including active participation in the protests of the late 1970s and early 1980s. He survived 70 days on hunger strike in 1981. Each of these volumes is an intimate exploration of memories of Long Kesh/Maze, but they often ignore the complexities of the interactions of people and things within the wider context of the prison and its landscape. They tend to have an ideological underpinning that promotes Republican understandings and heightens positive aspects of communality and human resilience.

This study of Long Kesh/Maze is deeply embedded in theoretical approaches to the study of institutions, concepts of domination and resistance, agency, materiality, landscapes, heritage, and the politics of place. By utilizing these theoretical standpoints this study aims to move beyond traditional views of institutions as places solely of domination and resistance to emphasizing the difference and individuality of experience that defies such dualisms. The past, present, and future of the site will be fully explored whilst attempting to understand how the interactions of the three create a fuller picture of place. This study will emphasize the mundane and everyday lived experiences to move beyond grand narratives and instead take a Deetzian interest in the overlooked and seemingly inconsequential (Deetz [1977] 1996). It will hopefully have wider implications, adding to emerging contemporary archaeologies that focus on revealing the complexities of human experiences, interactions, and understandings that emanate from a range of material sources.

The starting point with any archaeological investigation of a prison must begin with an understanding that no matter how unique Long Kesh/Maze and its inmates may wish to be considered, this study is fundamentally concerned with exploring an institution. As such Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the modern prison* (1991), is probably the most influential work on the development of penal institutions and their connection with modernity and the increasing institutionalization of citizens by their governments. Despite its ubiquity in examinations of prisons or institutions, there are notable problems with its use due to the particularities of this study. The most glaring deficiency in Foucault's work is that it does not sufficiently address the agency of the incarcerated. The emphasis is clearly focused on how the incarcerated are controlled, and does not fully address how the inmates subvert, negotiate and interact with their environment. Fundamentally, the free will of the individual or communal prisoner body is downplayed. This emphasis is replicated in many subsequent conventional examinations of prisons, particularly those that examine prisons from an architectural or aesthetic perspective. This includes Norman Johnston's *Forms of Constraint* (2000) and the English Heritage publication, *English Prisons: An Architectural History* (Brodie, Croom, and Davies 2002), which take architectural approaches with little consideration of how these places functioned in practice. Kieran McEvoy's important studies on Northern Irish prisons (2001 and 2006) take a more nuanced approach by focusing on the peculiar experiences of political prisoners, and in particular their ability to resist the regime that attempts to contain them. However, his works do not sufficiently explore the complications and intricacies of everyday negotiation in the penal context, instead focusing on generalizations and specific clashes. In contrast, this study will focus on exploring the relationships between the individual, the group, and their material and immaterial surroundings as a means of 'repopulating' the structures and highlighting the mundane realities of imprisonment.

Historical archaeologies of institutions are an established sub-discipline with a number of innovative practitioners, who are influential on this study. Of particular note, is the work of Eleanor Casella at the Ross Female Factory, Tasmania (2000, 2001a, and 2001b) and more general synthesizing of historical archaeological approaches to understanding imprisonment (2007). Her studies of historic imprisonment

emphasize the subtleties of interactions by concentrating on the experiences of the female prisoner through understanding human relationships, material remains—especially the use of contraband—and the negotiations of facets of identity at the site. Casella repopulates the prison and ensures that the experiences of the individual, rather than inanimate objects, are central to the investigation. There is a growing body of work, particularly from the United States, that has attempted to move beyond the dominant narrative of prisons as solely places of punishment and control. Anthropologist Lorna Rhodes has discussed the need to maintain the difficult position as a researcher who is not complicit with the system but who is also an outsider who can never truly ‘participate’ in the role of the prisoner (2001: 76). Useful as this positional distinction between neutral observer and figure of authority is, her aim in doing so is to contribute to the understanding of the ‘brutal facts of domination as played out’ (Rhodes 2001: 77) and this upholds the idea that the prisoner is powerless and without the agency to resist. A more nuanced approach is located in the recent work of Lu Ann DeCunzo (2006 [with Julia Erinstein], 2006, and 2001), which proposes that the role of archaeology is to illuminate how ‘material culture is used to accomplish and thwart institutional goals’ (2006: 167). DeCunzo’s dual emphasis on both the impact of institutional choices relating to material culture and the prisoners’ ability and desire to negotiate this material has been highly influential on this study. Her research emphasizes institutions as ‘places that embody and challenge the boundaries of socially, philosophically, scientifically, or legally acceptable actions, minds and bodies’ and as such allows us to uncover prison as a place to challenge and subvert authority (DeCunzo 2006: 167). She highlights the examination of institutions as necessary to ‘negotiate an emotion-laden terrain with compassion, outrage and openness’ (DeCunzo 2006: 185), which is especially relevant to Long Kesh/Maze.

Pioneering works in the field of historical archaeology have revealed how meaningful insights can be inferred from what were previously dismissed as meagre and mass-produced artefact assemblages and the unremarkable architecture of institutions. James Deetz *In Small Things Forgotten: an archaeology of early American life* ([1997]1996) highlights the importance of ‘unconsidered trifles’ in piecing together the lives of the disenfranchised. Deetz eloquently demonstrates that even for periods abundant with documentary evidence it is often difficult to move beyond the master narratives of the elites to the often unrecorded stories of the lowly. A concentration

on the less spectacular and more representative assemblages can help us to reveal those narratives. His emphasis on the mundane is mirrored by Henry Glassie (1996), whose examination of middle Virginia housing has been hugely influential in using archaeological methods to study vernacular buildings of a less spectacular nature and more recent antiquity. These groundbreaking American historical archaeologies reveal that mundane artefacts do not necessarily result in mundane interpretations and have led the way in presenting unrecorded, personal and individual interpretations of experiences of place.

Recent influential works in historical archaeology include Mary Beaudry (1999, 1984; Beaudry and Mrozowski 2001; Beaudry et al. 1991) and Mrozowski et al. (1996), who have examined discarded remnants of the urban working classes in inauspicious industrial areas such as Lowell and the Wilkinson Backlot site, Boston. Their examinations of the low-standard, and often mass-produced assemblages from these sites give fresh, innovative and interesting insights into the unremarkable lives of the long forgotten of society. These studies have obvious implications for the study of Long Kesh/Maze in that everyday and unremarkable material culture overwhelmingly populates prisons and whilst it superficially seems unpromising, it can reveal unforeseen insights into the lives of those who leave few material traces. Studies of contemporary material culture must also include the work of Victor Buchli and Gavin Lucas, who famously conducted an archaeologically-based critique of social services in their groundbreaking study of an abandoned council house (2001c: 158–69); the often-quoted work of William Rathje and his garbology project at the University of Arizona, Tucson, (including Rathje and Murphy, 2001), and Cornelius Holtorf's recent examination of archaeology and popular culture (Holtorf, 2005). Despite the controversies that such studies inevitably provoked at the time, they did act to question the boundaries of not only what archaeology could be used for, but its potential role in utilizing the recent and more mundane aspects of society that are frequently overlooked in other studies.

Of particular influence to the approaches in this volume is Victor Buchli's *An Archaeology of Socialism* (1999), which focuses on a housing complex in Moscow as it evolved in form and function from the early Soviet period to present day. Although the geographical contexts differ, there are a number of striking

similarities between Buchli's study and a late twentieth-century prison site in Northern Ireland. Most important is the focus of both studies being on standing buildings of the contemporary past that were highly institutionalized but which evolved in meaning during their functional life. Furthermore, both studies concentrate on how the people who were housed within these buildings negotiated the system and the material constraints. Buchli's use of documentary evidence, oral histories and an intricate examination of changes to the plans and arrangements of individual living arrangements revealed personal stories of how the inhabitants of Narmofkin Housing Complex negotiated the building and their material possessions through time and regime change. Similar approaches have been utilized in this study of Long Kesh/Maze in order to comprehend how the site was negotiated at different times against the background of a highly volatile and changeable political climate. Whilst Buchli's work can be criticized for not focusing enough on the embodied experiences of place and concentrating on archaeological surveys of the complex, the volume proves insightful in examining a contemporary structure through an object biography approach.

The work of archaeologist Martin Hall (2006 and 2000, and with Stephen Silliman 2006), focuses on the material cultures of both the elite and the lowly in an attempt to move beyond the grand narratives of history. His work primarily concentrates on South Africa, the evolution of District 6 in Cape Town and the role of heritage in the creation of a post-Apartheid state being of special interest. His monograph, *Archaeology & the Modern World: colonial transcripts in South Africa and the Chesapeake* (2000), draws comparisons between the contemporaneous lives of the societies of the Chesapeake and the Cape of Good Hope, and has been invaluable to this study. This multi-sited comparative approach marries documentary and archaeological evidence not by prioritizing one over the other or ensuring that only complementary evidence is presented but by locating the realities of colonial experiences through the contradictions inherent in the different sources of evidence. This approach is particularly relevant to gaining an understanding of Long Kesh/Maze as a site of multiple realities that are presented through many different forms of evidence, brought together in an archaeologically nuanced, post-colonial model. Hall highlights the often contradictory impulses behind the actions of those implicated in unequal relationships within society. By using archaeological and documentary evidence he shows,

particularly in his dominant case study at the Cape of Good Hope, that the representation of a powerful, controlling male hierarchy was fundamentally a sham and that fear of the loss of control was the prime impetus behind draconian legal measures (2000). Hall convincingly argues that the sidelining and exclusion of non-whites, colonial 'others', and women from official narratives reveals their troubling presence rather than their lack of importance. This approach offers a conceptual framework on which to build an exploration of prisoner relationships in the context of political imprisonment and is particularly utilized in Chapter Three.

Documents in archaeological approaches are important not only for the facts and figures that they contain but as Richard Evans has stated, 'the gaps in a document—what it does *not* mention—are often just as interesting as what it contains' (2000: 79). Ann Laura Stoler emphasizes the importance of considering not only the construction of documents but also of archives 'as cultural artifacts of fact production, of taxonomies in the making, and of disparate notions of what made up colonial authority' (2002: 91). This emphasis on the creation of narratives, 'absent presences' and 'present absences', overtly theorized for contemporary archaeologists by Buchli and Lucas (2001b, 3–19), is a central theme in understanding Long Kesh/Maze. The contradictions inherent in combining evidence of both presence and absence allow interpretations to reveal the often hidden layers that lie beneath the veneer of society. It is through archaeological investigation of the Long Kesh/Maze site that these already visible contradictions will become more apparent and different realities of life in the prison can be extracted. The influence of the work of Homi Bhabha (2004) and James C. Scott (1985) further extrapolate these contradictions. In particular, Bhabha's use of the concept of the 'third space', which he discusses in post-colonial terms as 'at the edge . . . there is a tension of meaning and being' and from such tensions strategies of subversion emerge (2004: 62). James C. Scott's *Weapons of the Weak* (1985) explores the use of small subversions by those who appear superficially weak. His interpretation of an unnamed agrarian society in Asia is particularly helpful in attempting to identify archaeological traces (or the absence thereof) of such discrete but intentional subversions.

In the prison environment unexpected interactions and relationships between people and things are significant, as prisoners are typically surrounded by the same, mundane artefacts chosen by the prison authorities specifically because of their functional and

apparently unalterable states. Of course, in reality, many seemingly meaningless objects were used to subvert the will of the authorities in multiple and unforeseen ways: to alleviate prisoner discomfort, enable leisure, destroy or injure, or to aggravate and disturb the operations of individual prison officers or the authorities. Lu Ann DeCunzo has examined the innumerable unintended uses of material culture within an institutional context in her nuanced studies of the Magdalen Society of Philadelphia (2001, and with Julia Ernstein 2006). In contrast to interpretations of institutions that emphasize relationships based on domination and resistance, she uncovered an official pragmatism and evolving ethos that not only reflected wider issues in society but also the realities of how the women used these institutions in often unintended ways (2001). A central focus of this study is to use the theories of agency, materiality, and embodied experience to add complexity to the study of the interactions between people, places and things. The concept of materiality, in particular, focuses on the idea that people and things are not separate entities, they are constantly interacting and impacting on each other. Lynn Meskell defines it as an enmeshing that combines 'persons, objects, deities and all manner of immaterial things together in ways that cannot easily be disentangled or separated taxonomically' (2006, 3). People do not always use artefacts as inanimate objects; these objects can have, in certain circumstances, an agency of their own. Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency: an anthropological theory* asserts that the meanings attributed by people to things are relational and context-specific (1998). This study particularly emphasizes the contextual circumstances in which the object has agency to directly impact on the person and is perceived as having meanings that are atypical or unrelated to its form.

The experiences and understandings of place are key to this study due to the highly unusual circumstances surrounding imprisonment at Long Kesh/Maze. It is widely considered to have been a unique institution within the British penal system that held a very specific, politicized and non-complying prison population. Therefore, one needs to consider the experience of people who lived in such an infamous place and either quietly served their time or attempted to subvert the architectural and design intentions of the prison. Archaeologies that emphasize difference of experiences, such as those conducted by John Schofield and Mike Anderton at Greenham Common RAF base (2000), incorporate excluded narratives, including those

revealed in the ephemeral remains of protest, into the stories of place. The role of different perspectives, memory, and understanding of Long Kesh/Maze is highlighted in a file held at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) relating to the death of Bobby Sands. Contained with the file are a number of hand-written statements by prison orderlies and nurses presenting their interpretations of the final moments of hunger striker Raymond McCreech's life (NIO/12/197A 1981 PRONI). The reports of men who had simultaneously witnessed the same event held many commonalities but memories of exact conversations and the roles and emphasis of specific, central individuals differed significantly, to the extent that there could be no consensus as to whether the prisoner had tried to end his hunger strike prior to death. The perspectives as well as experiences of how people inhabit place—including, but not limited to, the prisoners and the prison officers—highlight the variations of standpoint of those conforming, defying, or simply attempting to function in an alien environment.

Landscape approaches constitute an entire chapter and are important despite remaining relatively untapped and considerably under-theorized in the area of contemporary archaeology. Landscape studies in North America have traditionally focused on gardens that had belonged to well-known historical figures (Yamin and Metheny 1997: xiv), with the exception of the ideologically focused studies of the 'Archaeology in Annapolis' group. Their use of landscape archaeology to reveal the politics of the recent past and the present have been very effective in exposing dominant narratives of society through urban landscape design (see Leone 2005). In Britain, the post-processual emphasis on the interpretative nature of landscape study has been most notably utilized in the phenomenological approaches of Chris Tilley (1994). While focused primarily on prehistoric landscapes, such work emphasizes the contemporary nature of archaeological interpretation, and the importance of studying how the landscape was physically experienced, rather than simply seeing landscape as inert, a descriptive or methodological tool. Long Kesh/Maze has a number of landscape contexts that will be explored in this volume: as a bounded entity, in its geographical context and as an imagined landscape. As emphasized by Neil Jarman's examination of how the landscape of Belfast was affected by the Troubles (1993), landscape is conceived as potent, implicated in the creation of identity and in political relations and affected by the past, the present, and the

potential of the future. Long Kesh/Maze's continuing political context ensures its prominence in the wider landscapes of Northern Ireland, especially visible through the medium of wall murals. The prison will be explored as a poignant example of how material, site and landscape are mutable, political, living entities that allows no simplistic, static snapshot. Following Barbara Bender, 'landscapes, like time, never stand still' (2002: 103).

Utilizing the concept of 'landscape' advocates a necessarily interdisciplinary approach to understanding Long Kesh/Maze that resonates throughout the study. In Human Geography there are a number of landscape studies that focus on ideas of place and landscape in the context of the Troubles. *Senses of Place: Senses of Time* (Ashworth and Graham, 2005) has situated many of its case studies within a Northern Irish context, including examinations of collective memory, mapping meanings in cultural landscapes, identity and war, conflict commemoration in the Unionist community, and the constitution of place identity in Northern Ireland. This current rich vein of geographically grounded work includes explorations of politics, meaning, and the heritage potential of Long Kesh/Maze (Graham and McDowell 2007). Other non-archaeological influences include Bryonie Reid's exploration of the significance of place and identity in Northern Ireland. Her work highlights dual identities 'centred on absolute ownership and mutual exclusion' (2004, 103) and suggests that an explanation for Loyalist lack of engagement with the prison results from Republicans effectively 'claiming' Long Kesh/Maze in their public associations with the events connected to the prison. In this respect the interdisciplinarity of landscape studies adds an acceptance of the significance of landscapes as mutable, evocative and frequently contested.

Whilst dealing with the past and present, the post-functional life of the site is also a central consideration. At least three government proposals have been created to date that not only proposed fundamental physical changes to the site but have overtly addressed the intention to transform the meaning of place (MCP 2005 and Masterplanning Consortium 2006). The proposals have aimed to carve the site into a number of discrete areas, the smallest of which will contain representative remnants of the prison site. Such a transformation in physical landscape, material remains, and relationships fundamentally impacts on how the site is interacted with, experienced and remembered, and therefore proposals for the site are central to

the study of the prison's past and present, as well as future. Chapter Seven will focus on the post-functional experiences and changes to the site that have resulted in its continued closure, substantial demolition, and ongoing transition to a place of dark heritage. Indeed, the increasing awareness and engagement of tourists with such sites has resulted in a growing field of researchers, especially in the field of tourism studies, who have analysed the creation, characteristics, attraction and evolution of dark heritage. Whilst John Lennon and Malcolm Foley were the first to use the term 'dark heritage' (2000), considerable engagement with the terminology has followed and will be considered in Chapter Seven. Despite government interactions and demolitions at the site there is little public engagement with its heritage potential; rather its potential political role as a centre for 'conflict transformation' has been highlighted. However, as Brian Graham and Sara McDowell have argued, 'Prisons, sites of conscience, sites of pain and atrocity and sites of symbolic value are well-established concepts in heritage lists.' (2007: 363). Whilst Long Kesh/Maze is not unique in this transition, its increasing acceptance as a place of dark heritage, the extensive political interventions in the material integrity of the site and ongoing acquisition and manipulation of the memories and understandings of place could irredeemably change the relationship of the public with the site in the future.

Long Kesh/Maze is a complicated site due to the longevity of its existence, the contentious nature of its function, the various events that occurred within it and shaped its development, and its continued meaning in the immediate post-Troubles context. Any thorough approach to its study must be broadly interdisciplinary, considered in its selection of sources to interrogate and must simultaneously engage with the past, present and potential futures of the site. Whilst this study can only aim to begin the process of dissecting its evolving importance, it is ideally placed to scrutinize the significance of Long Kesh/Maze as a functional prison in the context of its continuing transition to an as yet unfinalized physical entity. The materiality of Long Kesh/Maze allows this study to highlight the possibilities and limitations of each form of material in revealing or sidelining meanings, understandings and utilizations by uncovering experiences of the site from the most intimate and personal to the most collective and public. This study is materially focused and it engages with a range of theoretical frameworks in an effort to locate the site in a wider reference matrix, which will underpin the study.

Ultimately, using an overtly archaeological methodology, it will provide a wide-ranging understanding of Long Kesh/Maze as a material entity. It will dissect the prison as a container and shaper of prisoner experiences, battleground between paramilitaries and the authorities, a discrete and interconnected place, and a site of negotiated realities that, by its very nature, has multiple complicated and evolving meanings.

Documents

Conventional studies of prisons—primarily contained within criminology, prison history, and architectural histories—are traditionally rooted in the locating, deciphering, interpreting, and presenting of documentary evidence (see Johnston 2000, McEvoy 2001 and 2006, and Morris and Rothman 1998). Our understandings of how prisons work are guided and constrained by government records and official documents created by the regimes who police and administer them. Although many of these studies are historical in nature and the buildings, and any alternative documentary evidence, may no longer be in existence, there remain a number of difficulties associated with utilizing government documents as the principal source for constructing biographies of such complicated and multi-layered places. The most obvious deficiency involves superficial readings of potentially one-sided and self-conscious documents that provide inaccurate pictures of the prison regimes and how they were experienced in practice (Johnston 2000: 3). The introduction of oral testimonies, in more contemporary contexts, is frequently done to provide a deliberately alternative or oppositional narrative to that presented in the government records rather than to add layers of nuance. Therefore the addition of alternative forms of material culture—artefacts, standing buildings, and landscapes—can offer hidden and hitherto unconsidered perspectives on the role, life, and experiences of these institutions.

Documents retain a privileged and central place in the writing of history and historical archaeology; for the perceptions that they present as well as acting as a means of uncovering objective truths of prison life (Evans 2000: 71). Despite fears of creating inaccurate and skewed portraits of prison systems and conditions, it is wrong to treat official documentary evidence as irrelevant even if the site is still *in*

situ and readily accessible to traditional archaeological investigation. One must, instead, work with the biases inherent in such sources and consider governmental archives as situated and constructed with a specific viewpoint rather than neutral documents to extract facts from. Ann Laura Stoler calls this process the ‘move from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject’ (2002: 93). Stoler contends, in her study of colonial archives, that exploring documents within official archives with the express aim of revealing the mechanisms and assumptions of governance allows us to interpret and understand ‘archives not as sites of knowledge retrieval but of knowledge production, as monuments of states as well as sites of state ethnography’ (2002: 90). This chapter will interpret documents following Stoler’s contention that the government archives discussed reflect both imagined and situated realities that ‘fashioned histories as they concealed, revealed, and reproduced the power of the state’ (2002: 97).

When using documentary evidence the archaeologist must treat the papers and files not as a wholly separate source from other forms of archaeological remains but as an archaeological resource, a potential source of revealing contradictions between ‘things and words’ (Hall 1999: 193). Questions of materiality, context, relationships, significance, preservation, location, and survival should be foremost considerations, and are as revealing and appropriate vectors of interpretation as non-textual materialization of the site. Of course, the uses of documentary evidence in historical archaeology have been a frequent subject of discussion since the formulation of the sub-discipline (see Hume 1969; Deetz 1996; Funari, Jones and Hall 1999; Tarlow and West 1999; and Tilley 1989). Traditionally, historical archaeology fulfilled a ‘handmaiden of history’ role, i.e. it was only used to fill in gaps left by historical sources; an extreme reaction to this was for historical archaeologists to completely ignore available documentary evidence and extract all information from other material sources. But documents have now become an unquestioned and accepted central form of evidence. Yet the relationship between text and artefact has been the subject of deeper consideration and it continues to be problematized.

There is a tendency in historical archaeology towards a more sophisticated theorization of exploring documents in relationship to other artefacts. In particular, the work of Martin Hall on the historic Atlantic proposes a link between documentary and other material forms of evidence as ‘a multi-stranded rope that links together a

complex network of sources and connects the present with the past' (2000: 9). He asserts that whereas documentary and other forms of material culture are often used as mutually exclusive sources, usually with one deemed of primary importance and the other used to supplement, one should exploit rather than ignore the discrepancies between them. Indeed, whilst attempting to uncover experiences of those who were sidelined by the public, androcentric transcripts of dominance in the historical Atlantic, Hall looked to the contradictions, ambiguities, flaws and inconsistencies in the archaeological and documentary evidence to illuminate their stories (2000: 32). For, as he argues, one cannot take the literature of the past at face value as the dominant narrative intends that the subaltern voices will be made invisible; therefore one must examine the subtle contestations found between archaeological evidence and documentation (2000: 102–3). Such post-colonial approaches, which are influenced by Homi Bhabha's 'third space' or zone of ambivalence and anxiety (2004) and are linked to Stoler's ideas of reading 'along the archival grain' (2010) to uncover unintentional insights, have an obvious relevance for analysis of political prison sites. In particular, the unequal power relations examined in post-colonial studies can help unravel the ties that bind prisoner and gaoler. This is especially the case when the fundamental right to imprison is actively contested. An exploration of the government visions and policies 'engraved in consequential excess on paper and chiselled "in stone"' (2010: 2) can allow these contradictions to emerge. The excesses, imaginations and political manoeuvring of civil servants and their political masters have the potential to reveal the mindset and inner conflicts alongside the non-textual material culture that a traditional archaeology of the prison would not be able to uncover alone.

There are a broad selection of documents linked to Long Kesh/Maze prison site that may be incorporated into such a study: official government files, newspaper reports, prisoner communications (whether legitimate or contraband), records from official visitors including the Red Cross and national/international political and religious figures, and prisoners' letters. This chapter will concentrate on two of the key sources—the official records contained in government files that are now open to the public and unofficial records contained in two collections of prisoner communications (comms), one collated and held by the Falls community centre and the other located in a government file held by the Northern Ireland Office

(NIO) (now at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland [PRONI]). They shall be referred to as the 'Falls Collection' and the 'NIO Collection'. These documents can only hint at the diversity and depth of the information once located in the communications, policies and miscellanea of those who implemented the regime and in the prisoners' communications with internal and external audiences. They represent an attempt to uncover confirmations and contradictions between their very different perspectives on the site. The constraints of time and space dictate that only these sources can be included in an effort to fully implement the methodologies suggested by Evans: to consider the context of the archive and to allow new readings of historical documents by detaching them from the discourse in which they belonged and juxtapose them with qualitatively different sources (2000: 71).

Records relating to Long Kesh/Maze generated by the Northern Ireland government are primarily held at PRONI, Belfast. Material from the central UK government is held at The National Archives (hereafter TNA), Kew, with the exception that some files from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) that was based in Belfast have also being forwarded to TNA. Government records from this time are usually presented as a collection of loose pages placed sequentially with the oldest documents at the back making up a paper file. Whilst this system ensured that incoming documents could be placed at the appropriate location within the file the use of loose pages meant that papers could be misfiled or substantially 'edited'. The files that are available to the public may or may not be the full complement of papers that originally constituted the file when open and in use.

Prisoner communications (comms) are less frequently studied as a documentary source. By their very nature they are often dispersed, difficult to locate and are almost absent from penalogical studies. However, they will be utilized to uncover more immediate—often forgotten—experiences of the site. Comms were messages that were either legitimately passed or smuggled from the prisoners within or beyond the prison to relatives, friends and contacts. They were written on many forms of available paper, including toilet paper and cigarette papers, and using any form of writing utensil, including metal toothpaste tubes. As such they are a fragile and inherently ephemeral documentary source (see Figure 3.1). The two collections of comms under consideration—one held by a former prisoner over 30 years after they were written and smuggled from the jail and the other confiscated from prisoners and copied before being

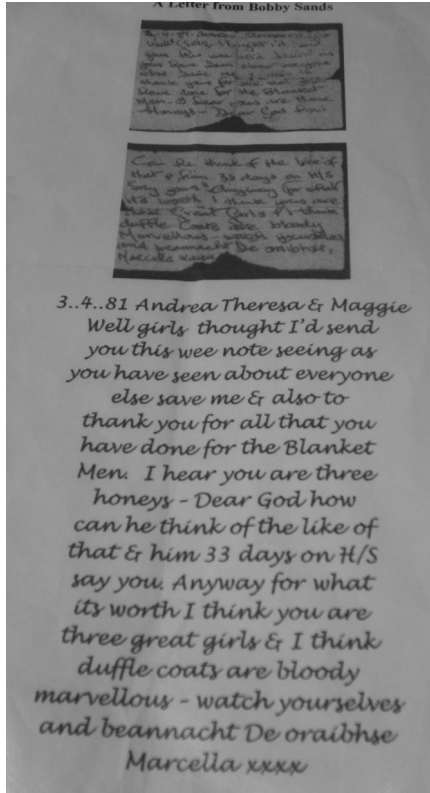


Figure 3.1 Example of a typical prisoner comm. (with transcription underneath).

placed into a contemporaneous government file—will provide contrasting and comparative context and content that will be discussed later in the chapter.

Using documentary evidence produced by both those who administered the prison and by those who resided within it, each informed by very different agendas, experiences and perspectives, will move this study beyond a narrative of official stories of Long Kesh/Maze and uncover often contradictory perspectives between documentary sources. By examining the context of survival, classification and the full range of content—from the main text to the ‘biting critique reserved for marginalia’ (Stoler 2002: 102)—the documents will be examined, interrogated and interpreted in the round. Far from being two-dimensional leaves of paper, their broadest understandings will be

incorporated into this archaeological examination of the document not just as text but simultaneously as artefact. By concentrating on these two forms of documentary evidence analysis will aim to uncover hidden transcripts, provide multiple perspectives, and highlight those perspectives that may not be included in more traditional studies.

GOVERNMENT FILES

Government records can reveal the origins, impetus and development of prison sites—from the perspective of those who initiated the project—through plans, reports, and correspondence. It might therefore seem a bonus that Long Kesh/Maze had two governments who were actively involved in the construction, development, and daily running of the prison site: the Northern Ireland government, in its different incarnations (1921–73) and under direct rule (1973–2000), with the overarching direction from the UK government. These government organizations have their own aims, policies, and indeed paper files, and those that are available to public inspection reflect the often-conflicting aims and purposes of the various responsible and interested departments within the two government systems. This dual governance structure means that there are double the numbers of files to consult. In addition there are a range of state bodies involved that would not usually feature in a traditional prison study, such was the range of stakeholders involved in the operation of Long Kesh/Maze. The existing correspondence and files that are open to the public hold important information about the relationships, coordination, competition, and, indeed, tensions between the individual departments and administrations involved. These records undermine, by frequent and candid admissions of failure and inadequacy, what Martin Hall calls the ‘public performances of power’ of the respective governments (2000: 40). They reveal the inherent contradiction between the statement of power that is the prison building and the often tenuous control the authorities had on the prisoner body behind the scenes. They are central in enabling a reconstruction of government positions and the development of policies.

The 30-year rule, which has historically applied to most categories of government files, ensures that, at the time of writing, public consultation is not possible beyond 1982. Files relating to prisoner experiences of the Compounds, and the plans for the construction and early experiences of the H-Blocks, are readily accessible. Of those files created, only a fraction have been retained in their entirety. Until the introduction of retention and destruction schedules in 2004, it was the policy of PRONI that government files were reviewed by archivists after closure at five and 20 year intervals, and if selected for preservation were stored as closed to the public until 30 years after the original closure of the file. Even after the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act (2004), files were only opened before the traditional 30-year closure if specifically requested, accessed, and permitted by the originating department. This body of files only includes those that are submitted for reviewing, therefore those that are still considered open, 'Top Secret' or otherwise too sensitive for archival review are retained by the department, often without any formal knowledge of their existence. Although PRONI usually retains any files relating to the Troubles, there is still a possibility that many files have been retained as 'Open', have been lost, substantially 'edited', or destroyed in the intervening period.

Therefore, files available for consultation may not be a substantial part or representative sample of the original archive that belonged to the government departments that administered the site. If one considers the archaeological context of how and why these files have been maintained and have made the journey from originating department into a national archive (and it should be understood that—in the case of PRONI—around five to ten per cent of government files provided to the archivist for reviewing are eventually preserved) then these files represent what has been determined to be most significant or interesting to the archivist or, conversely, they could be files considered least contentious by the originating body. Indeed, any files that hold information considered controversial or compromising 'national security', remain closed, kept from the reviewing process or—if open to the public—subject to substantial blanking. In contrast, the perspective of government departments and archivists at TNA is somewhat different. Here the Troubles are not a central concern and staff are certainly not preoccupied with the same priorities. However, it is striking that many of the files held by each of these archives are categorized as 'Sensitive', 'Secret', or 'Top Secret', thus

indicating a heightened sensitivity at the time of creation. One must exercise care in interpreting such categorizations, as Stoler has highlighted; they are not necessarily an indication of significant content but rather can indicate a magnitude of problems, lack of government consensus on solutions or 'promises of confidences shared' (2002: 108). It should be remembered that the government files that now reside in the archive reflect decisions made in hindsight, away from the relatively heightened atmospheres of the time when they were opened and utilized as active in the governance and administration of the site.

With these constraints in mind it is unlikely that these files contain any personalized, explosive, or candid views or information. However, there is still significant insight that can be gleaned from such apparently unpromising material. The sheer number of file references reveals the number of governmental departments involved in the administration of the prison. From Northern Ireland: the Department for Home Affairs, Central Secretariat, the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), the Department for Information Services, the Cabinet files, and from Great Britain: Northern Ireland Office (GB), Ministry of Defence, Prime Minister's Office, Home Office, Central Office of Information, and the War Office. The wide array of government departments concerned with the prison's administration indicates not only the significance of the site but hints at the pitfalls implicit in running an organization with so many stakeholders. Some themes that emerged by using evidence from these files include interactions and experiences of the site, degrees of convergence and strife between the multiplicity of government departments and agencies involved and approaches adopted in exploiting the propaganda potential of Long Kesh/Maze. These themes are prominent in the files and they provide compelling evidence of conflict, intention, and reaction that would remain invisible in traditional archaeological investigations of the prison.

The manner in which prisoners were able to interact, negotiate, and subvert the site are revealed in broadly two ways by the files held at PRONI and TNA: there are candid admissions of the prisoners' unconventional degree of control within the prison or, more commonly, there are the hinting inferences about power relations at the site. Files consulted at TNA are often considerably more open about the prisoners' ability to negotiate the site than those held at PRONI. This is evident in the number of notes that are explicit in enumerating the

innate problems of the Compound system and are frank about the difficulties encountered in trying to infiltrate the prisoner body and impact on their daily activities. One letter bluntly discusses the prisoners' considerable ability to gain and stockpile weaponry and escape materials:

The lack of discipline and control have enabled the inmates to accumulate considerable quantities of weapons and escape materials; and some of the facilities provided for them could also be used in an escape. Their present bunk beds, dismantled, could make excellent ladders; their mattresses could be used to surmount barbed wire barriers; and sections of their Nissen huts could make useful shields. The inmates have a considerable number of tools provided for 'recreational' activities, and they have enough time and facilities to plan and to prepare for elaborate escape routes. (CJ4/708 TNA 1973)

Another letter indicates the unique problems the prison site presents at any attempt at infiltrating the prisoner body to enable officers to gain information on their activities: 'Very little information is obtained from the inmates, chiefly because of fear of possible reprisal, but also because conditions at the Maze make contact with individual detainees and prisoners difficult.' (CJ4/724, TNA, 1973)

The lack of real knowledge of prisoner activities, and indeed acceptance of the control that the paramilitary groups had within the prison, is revealed in many letters held within the files. A letter from a Welfare Officer to the external authorities notes changes within the prisoners' organization:

The new regime appeared to be much more liberal than the old one and if a detainee now wanted to apply for parole, approach the welfare staff or make efforts to be released, he would be allowed to do so—ie the decision would be left up to the individual rather than opposed by the camp leader. This may lead to more applications for parole and more detainees coming forward for reviews. It also, perhaps, argues some slight breakdown in morale in the Maze. (CJ4/708, TNA, 1974)

Such statements inadvertently reveal that the lack of available information about prisoner activity has resulted in a situation where meaning is inferred from changes in their engagement with the regime. It demonstrates that substantial evidence in assessing the prisoners' morale is absent as a result of the lack of engagement between staff and prisoners. This is apparent in many communications, which often demonstrate prison officers' desire to have as little contact with

prisoners as possible. Correspondence indicates that the prison officers preferred the Army to conduct searches of Compounds as a way of further limiting this contact (NIO10/11/4, PRONI, 1974).

Some files held at PRONI express similar sentiments but they are often conveyed in more ambiguous ways:

Since this new cell block accommodation [the H-Blocks] provided opportunities for restoring a degree of normal prison discipline by dividing prisoners into controllable groups of 25, it could best be used for special category prisoners—preferably those in the younger age groups. (NIO14/6, PRONI, 1974)

This statement acknowledges that the current prison conditions are not, in fact, normal without adding any details, either because these irregularities are fundamentally common knowledge or the issue is considered taboo. Indeed, the preponderance of files and discussions relating to the difficulties of winning propaganda victories with the ‘minority community’ (CAB/4/1535, PRONI, 1970), i.e. Catholics, suggests the Northern Irish administrators, as those most directly involved with the implementation of government policy and with some understanding of societal tension, are more concerned with the relationship between the prison inmates and wider society than with more generic security concerns expressed in TNA files. It is noticeable that although TNA files do provide some detail about problems and difficulties with the site, they do not dwell on its wider significance and impact on society at large. In stark contrast nuanced statements regarding the symbolic importance of Long Kesh/Maze and its connections with Northern Irish society are found in a number of files held at PRONI, including the identification of a link between a rising prison population and unfolding anarchy:

The Northern Ireland prisoner rate per 100,000 of the population, which before the ‘troubles’ was somewhat less than that in Great Britain, is now about 2.5 times the rate in Great Britain and a further rise in the prison population to anything like a figure of 5,600 would almost certainly be preceded by a complete breakdown in law and order. (NIO14/6, PRONI, 1973)

The weight given to public opinion in decision-making regarding Long Kesh/Maze is apparent in the correspondence within the Northern Ireland government when tackling potentially divisive issues, e.g. dealing with internees or prosecuting attempted escapees. As well as

demonstrating a desire to prevent a backlash against any decision or initiative relating to the prison these discussions often centre on the imagined reactions of the Northern Irish public as much as the mechanisms of implementing the policy: 'It may be helpful to let you know that Mr Allan's advice is that the Catholic community would be upset if the escapees are prosecuted. The Loyalists, on the other hand, have not shown a great deal of interest in this matter and are unlikely to protest if no prosecutions are brought.' (NIO12/18, PRONI, 1975) As noted by Stoler, such emphasis on the imagined repercussions of policy decisions contradicts a supposed 'supremacy of reason' and instead references an 'emotional economy' of governance that concentrates on what is imagined, feared, witnessed, and overheard (2002: 101).

Both sets of files emphasize the difficulties inherent in governing such a prison due to the unorthodox nature of both the form of imprisonment and the nature of the prison populations. Although the governments would not publicly admit after special category status had been removed that any category of paramilitary prisoners were 'political' prisoners, the administrators show no such reticence:

Detainees are, whether the Army approve or not, treated differently from convicted prisoners in many respects, eg parole and visits. They were never required to work or wear prison uniform, even before the creation of special category. In the present circumstances they are in a sense political prisoners on the basis that the length of their detention depends not on the order of a court but on the Secretary of State's assessment of the security situation. (NIO/12/18, PRONI, 1974)

The public denial, but private acceptance, of the de facto political status of some prisoners ensured that government dealings were not often as straightforward as they were portrayed in public. For example, anecdotes regarding the poor treatment of detainees and internees that were known by both local communities and media outlets were vehemently denied in public, but were privately accepted by the authorities as containing some truth (see DEFE70/213, TNA, 1973).

The overriding impression revealed by these files regarding the relationship between the prison authorities and its inhabitants is one of unease. This is evident in the constant attempts to second-guess how the prisoners and public would react to government policy and anxieties about the likelihood of negative media reporting that are a

constant feature throughout the files. The reiteration of the authorities' desire to know and control thoughts, actions, and opinions connected to Long Kesh/Maze confirms Martin Hall's contention that such exaggerated responses do not demonstrate control, rather they reflect instability and fear of violence (2000: 137). The disquiet is confirmed by oral testimonies from FR, an ex-Governor of Long Kesh/Maze, who stated that he believed the authorities only ever reacted to real and perceived threats to the physical and moral integrity of the site rather than actively setting the agenda (FR 2007).

Although the prison authorities concentrated much of their effort on dealing with the actions and intentions of the imprisoned, the government files also highlight a degree of tension between the large number of stakeholder departments and agencies involved in the creation and continued functioning of the site. The files at PRONI show that the Northern Ireland government was in no doubt about the interconnections of the prison with the wider workings of society in Northern Ireland: 'On the one hand it is possible to argue that in the wake of the shooting of the policeman we should show resolution. On the other hand the Province is in a delicate state and the last thing we want is violence in the Maze and perhaps outside.' (NIO/12/18, PRONI, 1975) With the site occupying such a central role in the governance of the province, one would expect that the stakeholders did not always have complementary agendas. The government files often inadvertently reveal the working out of these relationships, and their repercussions. The sheer number of government departments who had an active interest in the running of Long Kesh/Maze, at least five departments held at TNA and four at PRONI (excluding the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, and the Army), gives some indication of the complexity of running the site but also highlights the potential for internal disputes and slowness to react to circumstances as a consequence of the levels of associated bureaucracy.

Problems with a lack of leadership and operational inertia are evident throughout the files and there are many guarded—and occasionally overt—comments both between and within departments. Derogatory references sprinkled throughout the correspondence point to personality conflicts or longstanding difficulties between specific departments with the most obvious tensions surrounding the relationships between the Northern Irish and the UK governments. This can be seen in comments such as:

Now of course the boot is on the other foot with the Northern Ireland Government harrying [UK Department of] Defence instead of vice versa! (CJ 4/174, TNA, 1971); and

Lord Gardiner added that the Committee had heard evidence that the Government was remote in comparison with the NI Government before Direct Rule. There was no resident Minister (as opposed to a duty Minister), and there was no figure such as the Governor who was always accessible (CENT/1/3/7, PRONI, 1975).

Both statements are similar in their criticisms of the 'other' government due to the practical difficulties of controlling a site with the input of more than one administrative system. There are clear indications that policy initiatives were not always openly shared with those involved, with one letter suggesting that: 'it is important at an early stage to take the Governor of the Prison into our confidence and I think the time has now arrived to tell him about this' (CJ4/1026, TNA, 1973). Such an admission highlights that the reverse was the norm—that it was common practice *not* to share information, suggesting a level of secrecy that must have had repercussions in the effective running of the site. Indeed, the politics of government appear to have had negative practical impacts on the running of the site and this is apparent from comments suggesting a difficult relationship between those who had the most direct input into its running—the prison authorities—and the Army:

The Army's insistence on frequent searches is all very well but they [the British Army] must be made to realise that if they are going to conduct searches in such a way as to provoke riot situations they will have to provide a better back-up force for dealing with riots than they so far have been able to offer.' (NIO/10/11/4, PRONI, 1974)

Such statements indicate acknowledgements that there were fundamental differences in the priorities of the two bodies who effectively administered the site. With the Army more concerned with general security and the prison authorities with the peaceful day-to-day functioning of the atypical prison environment of the Compounds, this often led to disputes about the policing and the enforcement of control over the prisoners. One file contained open complaints about the possible prosecution of attempted escapees, with the Army and the prison authorities providing opposing opinions to the Crown Prosecution Service (NIO12/18, PRONI, 1975).

The number of stakeholders involved in the running of the prison blurred any clarity around who had ultimate control of the site:

“In Northern Ireland the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] are responsible for control within the wire at the Long Kesh Internment Camp, but the Army are stationed outside the wire.”

...

2. Our comments are as follows:-

- a. The Northern Ireland Prison Service—not the RUC—are responsible for the internal arrangements at Long Kesh. (CJ4/174, TNA, 1971)

In a situation where the government concerned was unclear as to who had jurisdiction over particular areas, prisoners and those actively interested in subverting the site could exploit such uncertainty. This ability by prisoners to exploit indecision can be seen in questions of legality regarding control of prisoners and prevention of escape in the Compounds. One file highlights in detail the possible adverse legal implications of introducing CR gas and the Army firing on attempted escapees. It notes that one of the possible reasons for no mass escape attempts directly relates to prisoner awareness of these uncertain factors: ‘There has until recently been uncertainty whether or not the military guard would open fire at escapers’ (WO 296/77, TNA, 1973–4).

Although many of the tensions between departments manifest themselves through subtle insinuation rather than explicit statement of problems, there are a number of instances that suggest real ruptures and frustrations that were not hidden. One letter warns of recriminations between departments regarding the responsibility for the initial design of the internment camp:

My purpose in writing to you is to warn you of the situation and to warn you that there has already been a certain amount of back biting about whose error has given rise to the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. It is alleged that the Home Office were consulted about the design of the camp; but that Government Security Unit say that the Home Office were only asked to advise on the adequacy of the standard of accommodation, rather than the standard of security. You may wish to brief yourself on the extent of any Home Office responsibility. (CJ4/449, TNA, 1971)

The real problems inherent in managing the prison populations were exacerbated by the politics, jealousy, secrecy, and an evident lack of

co-operation and goodwill between the numerous government stakeholders. These files highlight a fundamental distrust of motivations and actions, lack of unity in policy-making, and an inability to react to changing circumstances. Constant internal and external pressures ensured that the various departments frequently turned on each other rather than worked together. Those most intimately connected to the running of the prison—the prison officers—felt unable to believe governmental promises or to trust that they would be forewarned about changes in policy. One governor of Long Kesh/Maze, Mr Hilditch, warned of “very deep cynicism” amongst the staff about the Government’s decision on [prisoner] clothing. He estimated that something over 50 per cent of the staff would say that further concessions were forthcoming’ (NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–1981). Information of this type is valuable in providing an overview of the many, often conflicting perspectives of those who governed the site and it also provides a context for understanding how the prisoners could effectively challenge the disjointed and divided prison regime.

Both Northern Irish and UK governments and the prisoners considered Long Kesh/Maze as significant because of its high public profile and the potential repercussions of events within its walls on wider society. One civil servant asserts that whilst it is ‘no ordinary prison’ from their perspective, the PIRA equally ‘look upon the Maze as one of the areas in which to wage their war.’ (WO 296/77, TNA, 1973–74). This ensured that attempts were made to cultivate specific images of the site that could be used for propaganda purposes to wider audiences. Files regarding propaganda fall into two categories: material reacting to specific events—e.g. the introduction of internment in 1971 and the deaths of hunger strikers in 1981—and material concerned with the design and implementation of proactive policies to present a positive government perspective on prison initiatives. Although existing files suggest that government sources were both reactionary and proactive in the use of propaganda, evidence from within the files suggests that despite best intentions the government operated primarily in a reactive mode. There are many explicit admissions detailing a lack of success in attempts to use Long Kesh/Maze as a propaganda tool. Many of the departments admit that the paramilitary organizations were able to utilize the site much more effectively as they courted the local population and a wider international audience:

After the first week of my attachment, Mr Gilliland [Director of Northern Ireland Information Service] went to the United States where he was reported (in the *Irish Times*) as describing the Maze hunger strike as one of the greatest propaganda successes of all time, the most effective medium involved being television. (INF12/1400, TNA, 1981)

Statements such as this suggest that the government accepted that they had problems counteracting paramilitary propaganda success arising from internal, prison situations. Indeed, not only are there examples of senior officials being sent to assess the damage done by such events on international public opinion, there was also discussion around the authorities' lack of ability to counter existing paramilitary propaganda and the need to set out their own agenda rather than reacting to prisoner-led initiatives (INF12/1400, TNA, 1981).

The extended period of international focus on Northern Ireland and its prison system, during the 1981 Hunger Strikes, was viewed as a propaganda battle as much as a military campaign by both the government and Republican Movement. Files from this period concentrate on the need to maintain the appearance of control and stability and to not admit to societal unrest or volatility that would further benefit the Republican cause: 'My own view is that any indication at all from Government that terrorism and/or communal disorders can be blamed for industrial or commercial failures is to play right into the hands of the Provisionals' (CENT/1/10/66, PRONI, 1981). However, the main reason that events inside the prison, especially the hunger strikes, were carefully monitored in terms of propaganda was to focus on their impact on external communities in gaining support for Republicans and alienating it from the government. One report, entitled, 'Local Effects of the Hunger Strike' made an assessment that:

Few Catholics remain entirely unaffected. Out of a community of some half-million, nearly all know families with members in the Maze. Many protestors are from decent homes, and their neighbours find it hard to accept that they are the criminals described by "the Brits". (CENT/1/10/66, PRONI, 1981)

As well as a fear of further alienating Catholics or Protestants, an interest in international opinion is a key concern in policy papers and letters addressing the issue of how to implement a more proactive propaganda policy beyond Northern Ireland. These documents often focus on the American audience—principally because of

the financial and moral support provided by the Irish-American diaspora for the PIRA—and specifically targeted Irish-Americans in ways that, it was thought, they would understand and be sympathetic to, including:

(c) Change of Tone:

- (i) Play more on Americans' respect for democracy and law and order and their anti-Communism. (An FCO paper will issue very shortly on IRA Involvement with international terrorist organisations and unfriendly governments).
- (ii) More emphasis on human interest stories and the victims of terrorism; be less 'gentlemanly' in our publicity, but without departing from the truth?
- (iii) Show that we accept a united Ireland as a respectable political aspiration, if achieved democratically; more publicity for Anglo-Irish discussion, which made a great impression on US opinion. (INF12/1400, TNA, 1981)

Approaches to international influences should be contrasted with a more sophisticated handling of the creation of propaganda for local use. Here there was a nuanced understanding of the complications of the conflict, a longer history of negative relations with the prison and general government policies in dealing with the conflict and very real difficulties of meeting the expectations of two very entrenched, and often opposing, points of view. There was an awareness that there was a need to consider the balance of government statements and policy because of these heightened sensitivities within Northern Ireland: 'Mr White considers that concern for Protestant opinion in Northern Ireland should not be allowed to inhibit publicity for our policies in the USA to the extent that it does at present.' (INF12/1400, TNA, 1981). Such a statement suggests that concern with maintaining the support of the majority Protestant community, with which the security forces had traditionally maintained a good relationship, was an inhibiting factor in courting the traditionally less receptive communities, especially the large Irish diaspora in the United States. Indeed, there are a number of comments that exhibit concern with how one community, usually in direct opposition to another, would react to a specific policy or action connected to the site. That the Northern Ireland government continually emphasizes the need to assess public reactions to their prison initiatives indicates the insecurity of the regime and concern with maintaining an uneasy status quo through attempting impossible balancing acts.

Long Kesh/Maze first came to international prominence with the introduction of internment without trial in 1971. This was a highly controversial policy and was viewed as operating outside of the norms of the conventional legal framework. The Hunger Strikes of 1981 offered another occasion when Long Kesh/Maze became the focus of international media interest and the files held respectively at PRONI and TNA demonstrate different styles and strategies in the formulation of government propaganda around these two events. Although information on the use of propaganda during the 1981 Hunger Strikes is only now emerging from PRONI and TNA files, there is clear evidence of different approaches in the presentation of the site to a wider audience. The TNA files demonstrate that the UK government opted to deal with the 1981 Hunger Strikes by courting the mass media. This strategy included the releasing of specially commissioned videos to British TV channels setting out an official narrative of events and context for the Hunger Strikes (INF 6/2157, TNA, 1981). This approach was an explicit attempt to counter prisoner accusations of mistreatment and inhumane conditions with proactive government propaganda. They also sought to counter emotive hunger-striker propaganda with loaded phrases such as: 'It is a sad reflection that the handful of unfortunate men now fasting inside the prison are of more propaganda value to the IRA dead, than alive' (INF 6/2157, TNA, 1981).

By way of contrast there are a substantial number of files relating to the introduction of internment in 1971 held at PRONI that reveal less proactive presentations. These include cabinet minutes that make clear there was dissent within cabinet at the introduction of such a measure:

The Minister of Community Relations said his earlier reservations about the wisdom of internment were already known to the Cabinet; these had not diminished over the past week and he was now particularly worried about the one-sided nature of the operation and about the divisive effect it could have on political opinion in Britain. (CAB/4/1609, PRONI, 1971)

These comments suggest concern at how policies implemented at Long Kesh/Maze were viewed to those implementing them as much as by the wider British public. It was also noted in the Northern Irish files that tackling negative perceptions of the site amongst the local populations was an important first step in lessening support for paramilitaries, and this concern is absent from the UK government files on the 1981 Hunger Strike:

The major external factors affecting prisons and prisoner is without doubt the public's attitude to the penal system. The fact has to be recognised that there is wide support for the IRA, born of the supposition that their activity protects the minority population. Rejection of their methods, and consequently less readiness to regard Republican detainees and even SC prisoners as prisoners of war can only come if the minority is able to believe that the normal authorities will protect them against aggression. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, on the Loyalist side. It is however to be hoped that continued publicity about the type of man who becomes an SC prisoner would have some effect.' (CJ4/1026, TNA, 1973)

This difference in emphasis between the 1970s and the 1980s reflects changing circumstances but it also illustrates the role of the ideological and personal make-up of specific governments in creating, handling and resolving the situations. Internment was more proactively propagandized as it was *introduced* by the government in 1971 whereas the government was *reacting* to prisoner actions during the 1981 Hunger Strikes. Furthermore, the impact of character becomes particularly significant when one considers the personality and public pronouncements of the British Prime Minister during the 1981 Hunger Strikes. Margaret Thatcher appears to have been considered, even within her government, as a negative factor in heightening tensions and raising distrust amongst the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. In one file a private letter from Archbishop Basil Hume to Humphrey Atkins, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, begins by stating, 'it does occur to me to think that the "tone" of ministerial and official statements ("crime is a crime is a crime") is not always helpful' (NIO/12/197A, PRONI, 1981). A confidential internal note from DES Blatherwick, Political Affairs Division, candidly assesses the effect of a Prime Ministerial visit to Northern Ireland during the 1981 Hunger Strikes in less subtle terms:

The Prime Minister's speech on 28 May has gone down in the Catholic community like a lead balloon. Anyone I have told—Catholic or Protestant—that the chief purpose of the Prime Minister's visit was to reassure Catholic opinion, has been incredulous. All they have seen or heard is the Prime Minister repeating a policy of no surrender to the IRA, and saying again in interviews that a crime is a crime... The [Catholic] hierarchy ostentatiously avoided the Prime Minister, emphasizing further their disagreement with Government policy; and our attempts to get them to see her have reawakened the suspicions at

least of Bishop Daly that we wanted to use them for our own ends. The result of the Prime Minister's visit has been further to alienate Catholics, and to cause even some moderate Protestants to wonder what we are at. . .'

The files also demonstrate how government policy developed over time, specifically with regard to hunger strikes at Long Kesh/Maze. One file held at TNA demonstrates how the government reacted to a small-scale hunger strike by two internees held in the Compounds in 1973. In this early hunger strike they decided that some form of concession must be made to ensure that the respective prisoners did not martyr themselves:

The Provisional IRA had begun to build him [Farrell] up as a folk hero and eventually martyr and marches and demonstrations on his account had brought a danger that some of the support for the SDLP would slip back to the Provisionals. It had become clear to the Government by Wednesday, 8 August, that some action would have to be taken that day to end the strike. (CJ4/456, TNA, 1973)

This approach is quite different to that adopted eight years later during the mass Hunger Strikes of 1981. That the governments chose to release the men early in 1973, rather than compete in a psychological battle as in 1981, shows how context, policies, personalities, and environment had changed over the course of less than a decade. In the early 1970s, hunger strikes were a common form of prisoner protest at the newly opened Long Kesh Internment Camp. This was not confined to Republican prisoners. One file contains a list dating from November 1972 with the names of hunger strikers. At four A4 pages long the list represents a broad collection of the prison population across political and paramilitary affiliation (NIO/12/21 PRONI, 1972-3). In the early 1970s, Long Kesh was still a controversial internment camp. Most of the hunger strikes that occurred were short lived, communal acts directed by individual Compound prisoner hierarchies. There was limited intent to starve until death, and any hunger striker that did appear to be seriously ill was often released so to avoid irrevocable emergencies.

One important factor at play in 1981 was the intransigence of the public personality of the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. This was the subject of frequent comment from her own staff, including a note between civil servants reporting on support for the UK government's position from Dublin: 'But I wonder whether he

has got hold of the wrong end of a stick on Prime Ministerial “flexibility”? If he has, no wonder the Provos misread the Government policy’ (NIO/12/197A, PRONI, 1981). Another factor was the fundamental change to the prisoners’ built environment with the creation of the H-Blocks. These contrasting reactions to hunger strikes suggest the extent that the new prison buildings were considered an articulation of a new regime, a statement of the ability of the prison authorities to control the prison populace, set against an acknowledged powerlessness within the Compounds. The intransigence of the British government in their reactions to the 1981 Hunger Strike might be seen as an indication of a confidence in the new structures and their ability to control the prisoner body. It would appear that the British government underestimated the effectiveness of a politically motivated and organized prisoner population to remobilize and change approaches and their intransigence suggests a (misplaced) confidence that the government could ultimately defeat them in this new and more controlled environment. Oral testimonies conducted with both former prisoners and an ex-prison governor suggest that, within the prison at any rate, all sides accepted that the prisoners were again effectively in control of their environment within a short number of years after the hunger strikes ended in initial defeat for prisoner demands.

The files demonstrate an apparent lack of reticence within government circles about using propaganda to manipulate public perceptions of the site. There appears to be no dissenting voice about using Long Kesh/Maze as a tool of governmental propaganda, rather consideration was concerned with *how*: ‘it seems to me that the British information machine should be going all out for one objective or the other, and I would have thought that showing up the evils of terror tactics was probably more important now than the “normality” angle.’ (INF12/1400, TNA, 1981). A number of asides and marginalia in the documents indicate a recognition that the form and governance of the site had a deep impact on both public perceptions of the site and the ability of the governments to counter them:

The policy stems from the fact that the public—and therefore journalists—tend to think of prisons as ‘secretive’ institutions and in such an atmosphere distortions from outside propagandists tend to flourish, especially where only slight information is given from official sources or when those same sources only confirm that an incident has taken place after it has first been revealed by some outside group. (CJ4/697, TNA, 1973)

Throughout the files there is an underlying acceptance that the government should engage in propaganda activities and that these initiatives should be proactive. There appears to be an emphasis, around the time of the 1981 Hunger Strikes, on a need to do this through more effective exploitation of unexpected occurrences and that initiatives should not be driven by a reaction to paramilitary agenda:

The last meeting took note of some of the effective stories which have been in the media about victims of PIRA, and the desirability of interesting foreign media in this. (INF 12/1400, TNA, 1981); and

You will recall that some days ago there was a suggestion from both the Ministry of Home Affairs and the C/O of the Regiment responsible for Long Kesh that we did not sufficiently grasp initiatives in publicity. The view expressed was that we should take pre-emptive action in cases of trouble or complaints at the camp. (CJ4/697, TNA, 1972)

Whilst there is certainly an awareness of the need to strategize propaganda more effectively, the distance and absence of coordination, and mutual distrust amongst the government stakeholders, ensured that the government usually lost any initiative in their attempts to be proactive. The number of such comments that rue lost opportunities or emphasize the need to be proactive, over a period of years, indicates that there were innate problems in using the site for propaganda purposes and that these were not tackled effectively.

An analysis of the propaganda usage of Long Kesh/Maze is complicated by the changing circumstances and usages of the public image and perception of the site by different government stakeholders and paramilitary bodies. That the government were in the unenviable position of attempting to utilize a difficult site cannot be underestimated—indeed one correspondent writes of the joint burden of having to deal with ‘this dreaded place’ (CJ4/697, TNA, 1974). There was an overwhelming sense that in trying to counteract paramilitary propaganda they were destined to fail. The single-minded determination of paramilitaries to use the site for propaganda regarding specific events or general conditions of imprisonment can only have made the obligations on the government to investigate and verify potential stories, and their private acceptance that many of the prisoners’ claims held a degree of truth, additionally burdensome.

Whilst the number, type and form of government files relating to Long Kesh/Maze will only ever be a small and possibly unrepresentative

sample of those that actually existed, they still reveal a number of narratives. This illustrative sample of government files underlines some of the difficulties inherent in controlling such a site by revealing the underlying mechanisms of governance that are not obviously apparent in its *in situ* material remains. The deficiencies of the regime, as well as the structures, are more easily explained when one has knowledge of the difficulties experienced by various government departments with very different agendas in governing this complicated, contested site. The deficiencies of the prison buildings in controlling prisoner experiences and curtailing their ability to subvert the regime and structures that sought to restrain them is physically manifest in the sheer number of contraband artefacts (Chapter Four), the manipulation of the buildings (Chapter Five) and articulated in oral testimonies. However, the government files reveal the convoluted nature of the governance, levels of secrecy and rivalry within the administration and the constraints on effectively countering prisoner narratives that go some way to explaining this ineffectiveness.

PRISONER COMMUNICATIONS ('COMMS')

The intentional nature of survival that underlies official government records deposited in archives contrasts with inadvertent documentary traces that prisoners have left through the creation and dissemination of 'comms' (communications). Prisoner comms tend to take the form of scraps of paper, covered in personal, propaganda, and organizational information to be forwarded around or beyond the prison. Indeed, one interviewee, who had visited the Compounds in the early 1970s, stated that notes were often swiftly fumbled to unsuspecting visitors to be smuggled to specific individuals or disseminated to named communities with little or no forewarning (LM 2007). Although an estimate of the number of comms that were written and disseminated is impossible to determine, it can only be assumed that they were significant in number due to substantial collections that continue to survive, despite their ephemeral nature, and the references within the comms to the almost industrialized scale of creation and dissemination intention to specific events. As they were considered contraband, there are a small number that were confiscated and survive in government files.

Their subversive intent rather than their content explains why many survive and are retained. Whilst written throughout the life of the site, including during the materially constrained prisoner protests of the late 1970s, they were often created utilizing the raw materials of prison life—cigarette skins and toilet paper, some with ‘government property’ watermarks still visible—covered in tiny handwriting to minimize size and maximize content. These items were smuggled ingeniously—in pockets, under clothing, in mouths—as revealed through oral testimonies and in notes detailing the circumstances of discovery found alongside the confiscated comms in government files (see NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1981).

Comms can reveal the conditions and context of their writing. Paper and handwriting that is incredibly small, utilizing improvised pens and pencil lead scratched on cigarette and toilet paper, reveal the restrictive conditions of being a non-complying (or protesting) prisoner. These raw materials tell of internal relationships within the prison: they reflect a grim reality of little access to writing materials and a penal system determined to prevent their creation and dissemination. Or conversely, they can suggest freer access to materials and little fear of interception, demonstrated by long, detailed letters on A4 lined pages recovered from the Compounds and later H-Blocks. Of course, the absence of comms can link to multiple realities—when the prison regime was least restrictive, searches were infrequent and information dissemination was largely uncontrolled, or when the regime was so restrictive that few comms could be created or forwarded. Therefore, like much material culture of incarceration, the continued existence of comms is connected in different ways to changing prison regimes and priorities. Their mutable categorization as ‘contraband’ or ‘legitimate’ determined whether they were confiscated and retained and they were often used to retrieve prisoner plans by the authorities. Their subversive role was in active non-compliance, circulating information within and beyond the prison, calling for action externally and acting as a structuring device for largely unfilled and unstimulating days for the prisoner.

Two collections of comms will be considered in this section. The first is from a government source. Comms were collected, photocopied and stored in PRONI file NIO 12/160A. These date from 1979–81 and the file was opened to the public in January 2012. The second is a private collection, *Letters from Prisoners of War Armagh Prison and H-Blocks*, which was collected, collated, and continues to be held at a community

centre on Falls Road, Belfast. The government file originated from the Belfast office of the Northern Ireland Office. All of the comms contained within it are photocopies of the originals and a significant number contain marginalia describing their discovery and confiscation. NIO 12/160A is entitled 'Protest Action: Protest Action Arising From Claim To Special Category Status—Hunger Strike'. As is often the case, the title of official files does not always capture or reveal the extent of what is held within them. In addition to the 30–40 photocopied comms, the file also holds a number of commonplace official documents predominately with information about and contingency plans to deal with the first Hunger Strike of 1980. The comms held in this file are held together as a coherent collection but there is no information to contextualize why they were in this file, where the original comms were held or where they were copied from before their deposition. Their existence in this file demonstrates Stoler's concept of 'information out of place' in that their random placement indicates how the actions of the prisoners did not fit into existing governmental classification, and as such reveals as much about a government failure of practice and perception as it does about the contents of the comms (2002: 103).

The comms in the Falls community centre collection ('Falls Collection') are presented as a community archival resource for the predominantly Catholic/Nationalist stronghold of the Falls Road, West Belfast. The Director had been a prisoner held at Long Kesh/Maze, as were a significant number of the centre's employees. These comms were originally forwarded to people within Lenadoon, a working-class Catholic/Nationalist housing estate situated on the periphery of west Belfast, and were later collected and placed in plastic pockets in an A4 file and now reside in the Director's office. Within the file are 31 plastic pockets ('Folders') containing a variety of comms, many originals with some photocopies, placed from reverse to obverse, with six or seven comms placed together on each side. There are also a number of loose papers at the front of the file, including two colour photocopies of a digital photograph of a radio transmitter (supposedly from which the prisoners in the H-Blocks heard of Bobby Sands's election as MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone on April 9, 1981) and seven photocopies of black and white pencil drawings portraying life for the non-complying prisoner in the H-Blocks. The pencil drawings depict scenes, varying from representations of a rat being enticed with objects dropped from prison cell windows

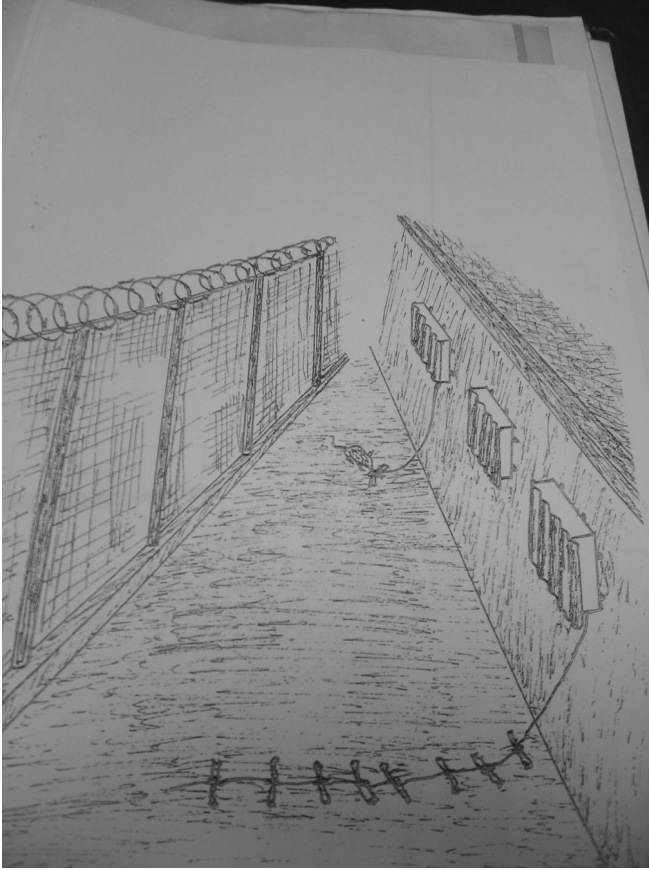


Figure 3.2 Prisoner comm. depicting a rat being enticed with objects dropped from prison window.

(Figure 3.2), to everyday interactions with the site, such as an image of prisoners communicating with their neighbours ‘along the pipes’ (Figure 3.3). Of the comms held in the file, the majority come from the H-Blocks (two originate from women imprisoned in Armagh) and the majority date from the communal Hunger Strikes of 1980 and 1981.

The comms are not placed in any thematic or chronological order in either collection. In both cases one multi-page comm. is split, with other comms placed in between. The only sense of hierarchy in the Falls Collection is that the first comm., the only photocopy, was

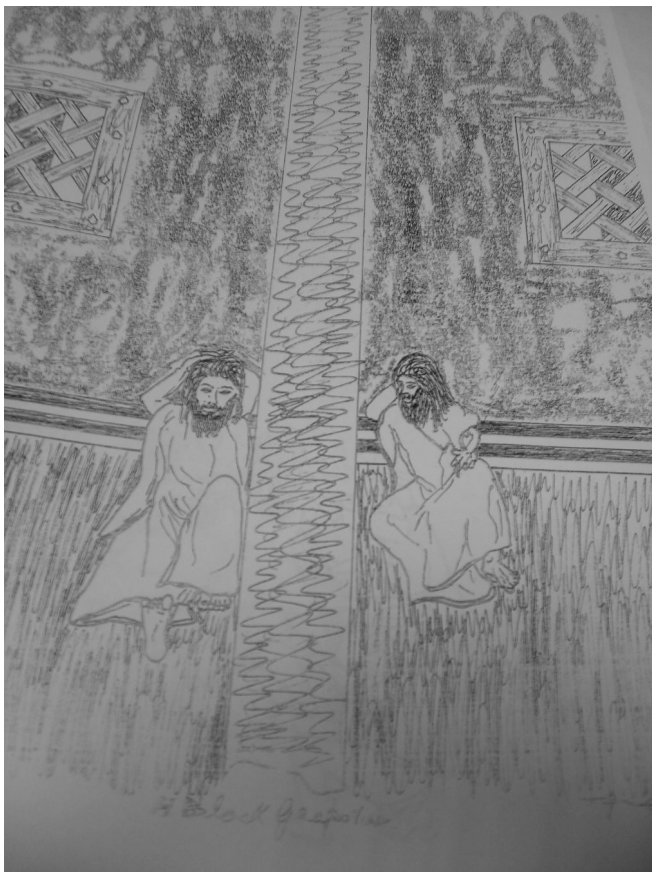


Figure 3.3 Prisoner comm. depicting prisoners communicating ‘along the pipes’ in the H-Blocks, c.1981.

written by Bobby Sands, the first hunger striker to die in 1981 and its placement seems intentional due to his importance. There are two comms in this collection that were written by Bobby Sands—under his pseudonym ‘Marcella’—and these are quite different in content from the rest of the comms and will be discussed in detail. Well-known Republican figures, such as Martin Meehan and Brendan Hughes, have been identified in the NIO collection, although they have also used pseudonyms. These are not accorded any special status through their placement in the government files. Two themes connect the contents of the overwhelming majority of the comms: propaganda and personal.

A smaller third section—directions/information—can be seen in a number of comms held in the NIO collection relating to organizing prisoners on protest and the making of explosive devices. The two collections also reveal differences in focus. The vast majority of the comms from the Falls Collection are external propaganda, written for a broad audience. The collection is representative of both the types of comms that circulated outside the prison, and those which were less personal and therefore most likely to be relinquished to form a collection. In comparison the majority of the comms in the NIO collection are more personal in nature—although there is a significant propaganda aspect to them—and may reflect the types of information circulating within the prison which were considered worth retaining or were serendipitous in being intercepted.

The importance that prisoners placed on presenting their personal prison experiences to an external audience—whether in personal or propaganda comms—is demonstrated by 43 of the 45 comms held in the Falls Collection being directly concerned with sharing prisoners' stories. The vast majority of comms in this collection directly address specific neighbourhoods or media outlets, in order to gain sympathy, empathy and, most importantly, active support for their cause. This mirrors the content of the propaganda comms that are held in the NIO collection, although it is evident that there is a more balanced evaluation within personal comms not intended for public circulation, with one writer stating, 'Anyone that comes off the Blanket always says that it's not too bad down here, you'll hear the same thing from me because its not.' (Comm. dated 03-08-80. NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–1981.) Although the comms intended for public consumption display a variety of styles and content—from militant language to desperate tales of life inside—there are a number of consistent stylistic devices that are evident across both collections.

A significant number of the comms are signed by specific prisoners, which one must assume is a device to provide authenticity for the public/media outlets who are to receive them. They are often addressed to specific neighbourhoods, for example 'To the People of Lenadoon', 'To the children and youth of Andersonstown', and 'To the People of Dungloe Crescent'. Those not addressed to specific communities are usually addressed to newspapers or newsletters. Only one of the examples is addressed to a national newspaper, the British tabloid *The Sun*. The rest are addressed to local, usually Republican newsletters such as *The Local Bulletin*. There is less

evidence of specific addressing in the NIO collections, with the intercepted comms tending to be addressed to international media outlets ('The Sligo Champion') or to international audiences ('our exiled countrymen in America and Australia') (Comm. dated 10-10-1980. NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981). This addressing demonstrates prisoner concerns to address immediate local but also broadly sympathetic international audiences. The very intimate and personal nature of the comm. appears to have been a deliberate choice as the most appropriate style for communicating effectively with all of these potential audiences. Requests for action from various comms also differ in the level of detail. Whilst the comms frequently request active rather than 'fireside supporters' from local areas (see Folder 6 [obverse]), requests intended for international audiences are detailed and specific, including this list of actions sent to members of the Pennsylvania State Senate in the US:

I ask you to do the following: (i) Pass a motion giving support to our first demands and also criticizing British stubbornness [sic] and callousness on the issue. (ii) Advise your fellow Americans to refuse to handle any British made goods in your state. (iii) Expel immediately the British Consul in your state (iv) ask your government to recall the American Ambassador from London: I know I ask a lot but a lot is at stake. (Comm. dated 13-05-1981 NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981).

In the terms of subject matter the comms are very similar in that the majority are pleas for support for the Hunger Strike of 1980 and 1981. However, comms from the period continue to highlight myriad issues relating to prisoner experiences of the prison that are not related to the hunger strikes, even when the comms were written during this period. The issues of political status and the indignities of prison life—especially detailed are the descriptions of forced, internal body searches by prison officers—are common themes:

They'll point to a mirror on the floor and they'll tell me to squat. When I refuse they force me across the mirror and with kicks to the legs, punches to the body and pulling at my hair and beard. I'll be forced down over the mirror, so they can visually search my back passage. Often this search is taken a step further and they actually search inside our bodies by probing and prodding up inside our anus. This search as you can imagine is without equal in its obscenity throughout the world. It's impossible to put a figure on the number of men who have been seriously injured during these searches which are not used to search but to harass blanket men. (Comm. dated 01-12-1980. NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981)

Whilst there are differences in tone and approach in these calls to action they are all fundamentally concerned with motivating members of the public to take to the streets, attend meetings, bombard politicians, and pressurize the UK government, to generate attention in support of the prisoners' claims for political status. Many comms end with motivational statements such as: 'Please listen to this plea for help from the hell Blocks of Long Kesh. Pray for us all.' (Comm. dated 01-12-1980. NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–1981) and 'to march is to support, to do nothing is condone' (Comm. 3, Folder 4 [obverse]). The tone and content of the propaganda comms can vary; some reference a history of 'endless torture' and 'ancient tyranny' (Comm. 1, Folder 3 [obverse]), whilst others question in the marginalia if they need to moderate the tone: 'Martin, the end of this may be a bit to [sic] militant. If you want to omit anything or add, feel free to do so' (Comm. Folder 13 [obverse]).

More subtle approaches can be used to prick consciences into an active support for hunger strikers. This includes evocative descriptions of life in the H-Blocks, such as a comm. that eloquently describes the impact of imprisonment:

I often think that one of the closest things to death is imprisonment. People will argue that jails are a necessary part of any society but I would say that those societies who do provide so much prison accommodation must be confident of filling them and so have little or no intention of reforming themselves or whatever ills they have which created the law breakers. (Comm. Folder 27 [reverse])

Other topics covered include the contradictory feelings of vulnerability and elation surrounding the visiting process, 'Leaving my small cubed shape home wearing only a towel I walk up the small wing which houses 45 of my comrades' (Comm. 5, Folder 2 [obverse]); or obituaries for recently deceased hunger strikers. These missives demonstrate that comms were not just conduits of information but that they carried a strong message of continuing internal support for the ongoing protests and a desire to motivate members of the public who may be wavering in their support. Many obituaries relating to Joe McDonnell discuss him in terms of his work for the Republican cause—'Just because Joe was now in jail didn't mean that the war was over for him. No!' (Comm. 1, Folder 2 [obverse])—rather than in personal terms. One wonders if these overt protestations of support inadvertently reveal internal tensions and increasing defections from

the protests as they took a mental and physical toll on the resolve of non-complying prisoners?

A significant number of comms draw on links to the historical Republican movement. Particularly, within the NIO collection there is an overt comparison to the treatment and fates of the 1916 rebels: ‘The British killed the men of 1916 they now give these men their proper recognition and call them freedom fighters.’ (Comm. dated 01-12-1980. NIO/16/120A, PRONI, 1979–1981). Furthermore, in keeping with that Republican tradition, there are Irish poems and links to Irish mythology:

Songs of Ireland walk on into the grasp of death.
 Carrying the burden of a people under conquest.
 In their hands are keys of freedom. To unlock the long closed ga[te].
 With its rusty foreign bolts + blood stained welds of fate . . .
 (Tony O’Hara, undated comm. NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–1981)

Two comms in the NIO collection are written in Gaelic and are retellings of stories from Irish mythology. Whilst these were probably academic exercises in the gaelic language they perhaps reside in this collection due to the prison service being initially unsure as to their translation and being suspicious that their content was of contemporary relevance.

Alongside these historical and mythological references there are also many allusions to the tensions resulting from the deteriorations and deaths of hunger strikers, such as ‘Another murder for Maggie [Thatcher]’ (Comm. 6, Folder 4 [obverse]). There are also frequent references to the women who were involved in the earlier hunger strike at Armagh Gaol. Sensitivity to nomenclature does not appear to overly concern the men writing these comms as the majority write in slightly patronizing tones of ‘girls’, although one does note in his instructions to those tasked with circulating the comm. on the outside: ‘I wrote girls so change it to women. Tear this up after you write it on paper’ (Undated comm. NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–1981). The direct reference to women in these comms is interesting as their inclusion in the hunger strikes was a contentious issue amongst the predominantly male political prisoner body, and in view of the Provisionals’ publically articulated ideologically positioned left-wing politics and promotion of equality, it could not be easily side-stepped. One comm. writer does note a potential benefit of their inclusion as a way of gaining public support and breaking political deadlock:

'I reckon with the Girls on the Strike, things could be over in a shorter length of time.' (2 December 1980, NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981).

The less personal and even mechanized nature of propaganda comms can be demonstrated in the case of four comms in the Falls Collection (Folders 22, 23, 24, and 28) that employ the same wording and only differ in addressee. These examples show the importance that was placed on ensuring that the message was disseminated to as many potential bases of support at the expense of personalization. A number of names regularly appear in the Falls Collection, including 'Micky Fluff' (four comms), Pat Lavery (seven comms), and Martin Livingstone (five comms), who were all skilled in the crafting of the rousing comm! There is a broader spread of individual authors in the NIO collection. No one voice dominates and this can probably be accounted for by the manner of their recovery. Although there is a consistency around the range of themes, overall approach, and calls to action, there is a greater variation in specific content located in the NIO Collection than in the Falls Collection.

For the comms dating from the 1980 and 1981 Hunger Strikes there are a number of specific differences between the two collections, including detail around the organization of protests, the existence of dissension, pressure felt by individual prisoners to comply with commands issued by prisoner hierarchies, and the existence of comms from Loyalist prisoners. Unlike the comms held in the Falls Collection, there are items in the NIO collection that deal directly with the planning and organization of the 1980 and 1981 Hunger Strikes. These were confiscated before the official announcement of the first hunger strike and were of interest to the prison authorities in that they revealed the plans of rumoured hunger strikes in the prison. This intelligence includes information relating to specific difficulties experienced in coordinating the hunger strikes, both within and between paramilitary organizations within the prison.

Comrade, still have a few Problems. Got our first problem fixed up. Then to-day one of the men withdrew, on top of that I.N.L.A. intend to put 3 men on the same day as the first 7. I was of opinion they would not be taking part as a body. I have now asked them to accept one position on the first 7, and same with other 2 sevens if this is acceptable we will have the 6 counties pretty well covered (Comm. dated 8-10-80. NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981)

A number of comms, particularly those written privately to close friends and family, demonstrate a reticence at becoming involved in protests, and specifically the hunger strikes. One prisoner writing to his daughter states: 'Sometimes we have to do things that we don't want to do, this is one such time. I don't agree with protesting but orders are orders. The safety of my family come first.' (Comm. dated 08-12-80. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1980). This message is a clear and unequivocal confirmation that the participation and communal nature of the prison body was not always voluntary. There was a degree of compulsion and even coercion ensuring support of the protests and prisoners did not all feel at liberty to question communal decisions. Indeed, one prisoner who was involved in the protest states—whilst circulating local gossip from the Strabane area—that the greatest pressure probably emanates from the peer group rather than from the prisoner hierarchies: 'I reckon if we get status a lot of men will stay on the gear, I don't think they could face the lads after putting the gear on during the HS time.' (Comm. dated 02-12-1980. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981). Between these two positions there are a number of prisoners who state in their comms that while they are on protest—including being locked up—they would not be involved in hunger strikes: 'I don't mind being here alive, but no way would I die for this protest for status' (Comm. dated 4-11-80. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981). Within this spectrum of personal opinion the majority of comms confirm that even if they were not participating on hunger strike they were fully supportive of those who were:

I want you to do as much as you can on behalf of the men going on H/S. We know that the BRITS [sic] will let them die. The more people we can get to protest on their behalf the less chance of them dying. Even if men do die we are continuing with our protest (Comm. dated 08-10-80. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1980)

The comms demonstrate a range of individual positions on the hunger strikes. They also indicate that some Republican prisoners opted to support specific aspects of the cause rather than to commit wholeheartedly, whereas others felt compelled to stay on protest regardless of personal preference. This variety of opinion and range of explanations given for actions—although dependent on when the comms were written and who they were written to—indicates that there was considerable diversity of opinion and response to the escalation of the protests within the Republican Movement.

Comms from this period written by Loyalist prisoners, although small in number (only two can be definitively identified), add a perspective that is frequently overlooked regarding their experiences and perspectives during the hunger strikes. These two comms are in the NIO collection and they present two different perspectives. The first comm., written by a prisoner identified as 'Lutton', directly references rumours of escalation of Republican prisoner protests and the impact that this has had on Loyalist experiences of the prison:

There is plenty of speculation and unrest down here at present. Loyalist prisoners are on a 23-hour lock-up and although self-imposed many of us feel it is a situation that we have been forced into. The authorities [sic] and people outside are making such a fuss about these seven hunger-strikers, conforming prisoners think more could be done to make life easier for them without slooping [sic] to any of the low measures taken by the so called dirty protestors. It all leaves us in a precarious position. I under no circumstances wish to identify myself with any of those who are on the dirty protest, that's why I don't want to complain too much until I see what happens, but believe it or not life is not too bad as it is. (Comm. dated 24-11-80. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981)

This comm. indicates the difficult position that Loyalist prisoners found themselves in. Whilst they were aware of the publicity and tensions caused by the escalation of the protest, and felt aggrieved themselves, they did not wish to be seen to support or replicate actions associated with Republican prisoners. It is clear that Loyalist prisoners felt they were in the unenviable position of not wishing to comply with the prison regime, but not wishing to be seen to join with Republican prisoners. The second comm., written by a prisoner identified as 'Murphy', does not comment on the actions of the Republican prisoners at all, but instead he addresses the circumstances of his capture and highlights his disdain for his 'own side' and their lack of resolve in combating Republicans externally:

I've never had any love for the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] or respect, what respect I did have for them faded in nineteen seventy to seventy five when they shot two of my friends dead one year after the other. One was armed, the other was not and neither belonged to any organization whatsoever but still the enemies of Ulster can walk the streets killing innocent men women and children and nothing or no one to touch them. (Comm. dated 23-10-1980. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981)

As a means of disseminating political messages, these comms have multiple usages. The number of comms that are extant from this period, although held in two quite different collections, demonstrate their significance in gaining support for the cause, communicating private feelings, articulating the impact and meaning of the protests to an external audience, and structuring and giving meaning to the prisoners' day. The lists of intended recipients contained in the NIO collection—including media outlets, academics, politicians, and GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) clubs—represent a broad spectrum of organizations. The comms were also a means of defying the regime, trying to subvert the essential powerlessness of their situation, as prisoners were held in isolation for up to 23 hours each day. Comm. writing appears to have fulfilled a role for the non-complying prisoners of the early H-Blocks that had been met by tunnel digging in the Compounds: a means of filling time whilst performing their political status. Although it offered no prospect of escape it was an act of defiance, actively resisting incarceration, communicating to an external audience, and contributing to a subversion of the prison regime.

The comms in these collections also fulfil a secondary function as vehicles for smuggling personal messages to friends and family on the outside. Comms were primarily concerned with spreading propaganda but personal messages appeared as marginalia and postscript, such as 'PS Just like to say hello to Grannie G & Albert. Hope you are keeping well' (Comm. 3, Folder 2 [obverse]). Similar examples are evident throughout the Falls Collection and indicate that although the prisoner's individual, personal concerns were relegated in favour of the communal, political message, they were still present. When set alongside the range of personal comms held in the NIO collection the Falls Collection highlights factors that have determined survival of particular messages. It appears that propaganda comms, rather than those that were more personal in tone, were donated to form this collection. This demonstrates that even historical documentation outside of official channels has been subjected to some determining. The difference between these two collections highlight that one has to be very conscious of the context of survival, selection processes, and reasons for continued presence and how it may impact on the later act of interpretation.

There are a number of personal comms in the NIO collection. The only examples in the Falls Collection are the two photocopied examples written by Bobby Sands. The comms from Bobby Sands are (a) one personal note thanking a group of girls for their support

for the Republican cause and (b) a previously written poem with instructions as to its use for publicity purposes. It is ironic that two short notes by this most public Republican are the most intimate and personal of all the comms in this collection, in contrast to the repetitive propaganda that depersonalizes the comms of a number of the more prolific writers. The first comm. written by Bobby Sands is a short note of little consequence, which probably would not have been retained were it not for the identity of the writer. The tone is both blasé, with comments about hearing the girls were ‘three honeys’, and serious, as the writer undermines previous frivolities by adding the ridiculousness of thinking such things whilst being 33 days into his ‘H/S’ (hunger strike) (Folder 1 [reverse]). It ends with a rather ambiguous phrase, ‘I think duffle coats are bloody marvellous’, which may be a reference to smuggling or concealing items within the garment. The second comm. contains a poem written by Sands, as this was a form for which he was at the time famous. He preambles the comm. with reservations, stating: ‘Gerry, I am not sure just what to write for you but, for posterity, (and indeed something that is worth remembering in these barbaric circumstances) how about a verse from one of the poems that I once wrote’ (Folder 26 [reverse]). Such a note suggests that at this stage, he was aware of his possible fate and how important his role had become in the propaganda war.

The personal notes in the NIO collection cover a broader range of material—from gossip about local girls to reminiscence about the writers’ arrests. Some comms are substantial in length, with one extending over three A4 pages. They reveal a variety of details about the hopes, fears, and emotions of the ordinary prisoner. As they include both Republican and Loyalist perspectives they also add relevant—and often overlooked—information on the conditions and circumstances within the prison by different groups at various times. It is clear from the underlining and notes made on the NIO collection comms that the interest in these intercepted messages is to gauge current feelings and concerns as well as identify plans within the H-Blocks and contacts in the local communities. These confiscated comms are critical in revealing the complexities of prisoner emotions regarding the escalation in protests: the levels of ambivalence and fear as well as sentiments of unquestioning support and outright rejection. One comm., intercepted whilst being passed from one prisoner to another, discusses news on the Blocks and their personal rejection of the protest, whilst providing a detailed account of the day of a complying

prisoner during hunger strike. The comm. provides information representative of the experience of the majority of prisoners, which has been largely forgotten due to the increasing mythologizing of the non-complying prisoner experience during the 1981 Hunger Strikes:

Up at 7.30 Wash and breakfast, Dinner from 12.00 til 12.30 then if you want Yard till 2.00. 2.30 til 4.00 Work, again I'm locked up and then from 4.30 til 8.30 do what you want in that time. Yard or stay in to watch TV or do handicrafts, you can play pool and so on to Saturday, 11.30 and to the yard, in for dinner at 12.30 and we stay in the canteen til 2.00 from 2.00 to 4.30 do whatever you want, 4.30 til 5.30 lock up then 5.30 out til 8.30. Sunday—same routine as Sat. except we are locked up from 12.30 til 2.00. We have got a few films since I came down, most of them were for fuck all excepted for two Cat Balloe and Dog Day Afternoon, the next one is The Street Fights, its supposed to be good, I hope so. We are allowed LPs in, there are a few good ones in the Wing.' (Comm. dated 29-10-1980. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981)

The majority of comms in both collections have at least some propaganda purpose. Personal notes, whether as full comms or as marginalia on propaganda comms, indicate the extent to which the prisoners maintained communications internally and with the outside world even during times of severe protests and tensions. That some of the comms are frivolous in nature suggests that external communication was not so difficult as to confine it to solely messages of high importance. The lack of evidence of covert or coded messages may suggest a lack of fear of confiscation or its consequences. Whilst the propaganda comms contain elements that are designed to be emotive, a number do state prisoners' personal feelings at that time and explore their surroundings and context in some detail. These include quite specific details of their limited material possessions—'3 worn blankets, we must use one of these to cover our bodies, two chamber pots, 1 water jar, and the final object a piece of sponge which we lie on.' (Comm. dated 01-12-1980. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979-81)—and the size of the cells:

I am walking. 1, 2, 3, 4 . . . 1, 2, 3, 4 . . . this is the many footstep I take before turning, and they are not my usual full length steps. As the area in which I walk prevents me from walking normal. You see I am in a small cell that measures 9' x 8'-6. So I must shorten them or painfully hit my toes on the concrete wall. I walk up and down for 3 or 4 hrs everyday. It helps pass the time and it gives the damp sponge that I use as a bed a chance to lose some of its moisture. (Comm. dated 04-11-1980. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979-1981)

Although the purpose of these documents was to generate external support they still contain details of experiences, information on surroundings and material conditions and expressions of raw emotion and articulations of powerlessness that otherwise would be difficult to retrieve materially or orally. These materials offer much more than a means to access propaganda, they tell of men's flirtations, hopes, fears, bitterness, anger, condolences, communality, individuality, and bluffs. Alongside the messages the men wish to forward, the short asides reveal aspects of the personalities behind the rhetoric and their very existence indicates their role as a means of exerting some form of control over their existence through the power to communicate in the face of the unequal relationships at play within the prison. Each comm. that was written, concealed, and smuggled around or out of the prison was a small subversion of, what must have seemed to non-complying prisoners at the time of the hunger strikes, a highly repressive regime.

One final category of comm. appears in the NIO Collection but is not found in the Falls Collection. A number of confiscated comms present evidence of information being passed between non-complying wings and H-Blocks regarding the coordination of communal action to be taken within the prison and anecdotes of external support for these actions beyond the prison. The information being passed concerns details of hunger strikes, including procedures for going on hunger strike, directions for those on hunger strike—'Can you inform the H/Strikers in 5 that they should be taking a pinch of salt in the water everyday.' (Comm. dated 27-10-1980. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979-81)—and directions for those who are expected to join the hunger strikes as strikers die or withdraw. There are also a number of examples of information about external support for the hunger strikes being circulated amongst prisoners and one can only assume that these were used for internal propaganda: to strengthen resolve and heighten spirits. Examples include postscripts of anecdotes of local and broader support: '6 members of Danish Parliament called for support for H/S and B/men. To-night 5000 people in Belfast participated in 10 pickets of all Barracks in _____ [space left] very successful' (Comm. dated 27-10-1980. NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979-81).

It appears from official comments on the NIO collection comms that they were usually confiscated whilst they were being smuggled out of the prison or back in again via visitors: 'Found on 29/79 AG FARRELL NCP H5 after a visit on Wed 29-10-80. Cigarette paper letters presumed to be from MARTIN MEEHAN—It would appear

this was smuggled out by Meehan and re-smuggled back into prison on Farrell's visit' (Comm. dated 29-10-1980. NIO 12/160A, PRONI, 1979–81). It is interesting to note that communications were being maintained internally through using external channels.

CONCLUSIONS

These two forms of documentary sources—official government papers and unofficial prisoner comms—construct very different narratives about how the site was negotiated and experienced at various stages of its operational life. Whether government reports or prisoner communications, public or private, these sources reveal not only what was happening at the site at the time of writing, but they also offer first-hand interpretations, projections, desires, and fears about the present and future. Unintentionally, the government sources reveal a lack of unity and trust, a jealous protection of departmental information as well as a fear of the repercussions of their policies both amongst internal prisoner groups and external communities. Prisoner comms also highlight a range of concerns, aims, and perspectives—whether as a group and or as private individuals—through personal experiences or attempts to determine and co-ordinate communal support. Whilst there are many other sources that could be presented, these documents can only begin to represent the complexity of the relationships and diversity of experiences within the prison site.

As an initial attempt at building an understanding of the experiences and meanings of Long Kesh/Maze, the documentary evidence provides detailed and nuanced perspectives on emotions, intentions, fears, and competition that leave ephemeral, if any, material traces on the site. Government documents are particularly important as they indicate how changes in personnel—as well as broader changes in political, economic, and social contexts—can impact on government intentions and priorities at a policy and implementation level. By way of contrast the unofficial records of prisoner communications are indicators of both communal and individual intentions; they highlight the role of propaganda in sustaining prisoners' resolve and allow their thoughts and feelings to be communicated to wider audiences. They also reveal the fears, and palpable unease that many within the prisoner body felt about the fatal escalation of protests on to hunger strikes. This is true across a range of both Republican and Loyalist

perspectives. The documents provide a nuanced account of life both in the Compounds and on and off the non-conforming wings of the H-Blocks and provide some contradiction of myths that have since developed regarding the prison during this period.

However, there are deficits inherent in using documents alone as a source to access the site. Documents concentrate on the projections, perceptions and thoughts of the government and prisoner bodies that are not always materialized in their behaviours, interactions, and experiences of the site. As such, documents are most effectively used in conjunction with other material forms that are directly linked to the site as they can reveal the inconsistency between thought and action. By examining the material remains of Long Kesh/Maze there remains the potential to add to these written representations and articulations of the prison, its regime, and inmates through the remnants of physical interactions with the site. To add to these documentary understandings of Long Kesh/Maze this study will move to materializations of Long Kesh/Maze that are encompassed in artefacts, buildings, and landscapes before exploring the post-functional—and still emerging—dark heritage of Long Kesh/Maze, all of which will broaden our understandings of the prison.

Artefacts

On closure Long Kesh/Maze became a graveyard of artefacts: significant, worthless, facilitating, debilitating, used, abused, utilized, subverted, negotiated, hidden, discovered, forgotten, remembered, public, private, treasured, despised, loved, hated, but all ultimately discarded. Pre-demolition they scattered the site, lying randomly, deposited haphazardly. Perched conspicuously on a table, abandoned to a sideboard, on top of a cabinet, scattered on the floors, some appeared to lie where they were last used, others moved since closure. Though they were dulled though age and abandonment, they illuminated the gloom; humanizing their surroundings whilst acting as vital clues to how the prison had previously functioned, been experienced and once understood.

As one wandered through the abandoned site, the greyness permeated everything—the walls, the floors, the structures, the skies, the mood. One wonders if this greyness dominated the living site or did it descend as the people left and fresh abandonment became decay, became decrepit, became uninhabitable? On closure human interactions with the site were limited and controlled: piecemeal interventions by contractors and maintenance workers, civil servants guiding groups, and voluntary revisits by former prisoners to what had been their enforced home. For this short period of preserved abandonment artefacts peopled the site. The randomness and sheer chance of their survival, apparently in situ, demanded attention. They added individuality to the mundane uniformity and repetition of the architecture. They allowed the observer to visualize how this site had appeared when it was populated, when it was more than a collection of uninhabited building shells. Artefacts allow us to retrieve individual stories of the buildings and those who inhabited them. They break the silence and sterility, they show how things may have been, they highlight

contradictions and underline inconsistencies. Artefacts in such a context are central to any attempt to understand how the site was, and how it continues, to be experienced.

As one entered a still-standing Nissen hut the collection of artefacts highlighted not only how these huts were lived in, they referenced the palpable absences of other artefacts, now removed. The internal plywood walls, which were belatedly installed to provide a degree of privacy—‘wee boxes, like cells’ (HX 2007)—still stood. Each of these ad hoc, door-less cabins displayed individually painted or wallpapered interiors whose ‘absent presence’ (Buchli and Lucas 2001a) referenced previous adornment. The blank or darkened rectangles that appeared randomly on the walls were a memory of a long-removed picture or poster that had once personalized this space. Many of the beds, tables, chairs and prison-issue furniture had long been removed. The hut was largely empty of those artefacts that filled it whilst it was in use, instead the ever-increasing evidence of decay and debris was omnipresent, but there were clues to its past life. The artefacts ensured the ‘ghosts of place’ still populated the site and hinted at a previous life (Mayerfeld Bell 1997).

My eyes were drawn to brackets, positioned three quarters of the way up a back wall, centrally placed, encasing a slightly lighter shade of wall where a rectangular item had long ago been held in place. As my eyes surveyed the area one of the former prisoners joked about their unevenness. Surely the TV, which he noted the brackets had originally held, would have sat at an angle forcing the viewer to lean to the side (CM 2006)! It was this palpable absence that provoked an unexpected visualization of a very human scene that would have been contemporaneously repeated in more conventional living rooms throughout the land. These small, seemingly inconsequential brackets repopulated the hut. They told of a structure that was more than a theoretical proposition, more than an institution. They materialized the normality and mundanity of living in such a place, the ordinariness and ongoing boredom of imprisonment that could be intermittently broken by the escapism of television. The brackets materialized one partial, everyday reality of being detained in, what is now, an almost mythologized place of incarceration.

In contrast, on walking through the more recent concrete constructions of the H-Blocks the atmosphere of decay and abandonment was not as strong. In part this was due to the relatively recent construction of the H-Blocks but also the more sterile uniformity of their grey,

concrete. The omnipresence of grey, lacking the colourful pointers of ageing of the rusting metal exterior of Nissen huts, belied the disarray of its interior. The greater abundance of in-situ objects in the H-Blocks was significant in allowing artefacts to repopulate the prison. On entering the structure through the metal security gate and door, which were ajar, one was immediately aware of the differences between how the site once was and how it had started to transition. One could walk into the circle—as the rectangular, central administration zone was known—unhindered and be faced with the coldness of an unheated, over-ventilated, waterlogged, damp, and dark interior. The doors of the surrounding offices lay ajar, rather than securely shut as they would have previously been. One could glimpse into offices with haphazard office furniture, tables without paperwork, rooms now alternately empty or acting as furniture stores. These fleeting impressions revealed that the site was not now what it had once been, what it had intended to be. However, the littering detritus of the prison guards' areas provided vivid snapshots of a place swiftly and recently abandoned—sweet wrappers, teacups, and playing cards scattered the interiors. These sights told of a place of comfort and ease rather than control, fear, and intimidation in its final period of function. As one walked from the circle to one of the four adjoining wings, which had once housed the prisoners, one would pass through the now defunct security infrastructure of metal gates, with their locking mechanisms and holding inertias open—toothless and ignored—to the prisoners' domain.

The wings of the H-Blocks were arranged along long, straight corridors with communal areas nearest the circle before reaching the rows of individual cells as one progressed towards the exercise yard. The smaller communal room on the right lay empty except one unexpected piece of equipment, a large grey mini-gym dominating the room (Figure 4.1). 'Obviously a Loyalist wing', the official guide whispered as an aside, reinforcing the stereotype of Loyalist prisoners building muscles whilst Republicans built libraries during their time inside. It sat proudly out of place, without context or explanation. The contradiction of an inessential and expensive piece of leisure equipment dominating an otherwise empty prison cell indicated the relative comfort the prisoners experienced prior to closure. The larger communal room on the other side of the corridor, with a plywood divide allowing kitchen/dining room and TV room to happily co-exist, was dominated by an equally unforeseen addition to a prison wing. A large snooker table dazzled with its still-vibrant green baize, jarring in comparison to



Figure 4.1 Mini-gym located in a small communal room of H-Block, c.2006.

the overwhelming grey that pervaded the room. Visually stimulating the senses through its unexpectedness as much as the brightness of its colour. At what stage was the desolation of the hunger strikes, when men lived with little more than 'a piece of sponge to lie on . . . 3 worn blankets, two chamber pots, 1 gallon of water' (Comm. dated 1–12–80, NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–1981), replaced with the provision of expensive recreational equipment? How far from the all-encompassing control of dangerous and recalcitrant prisoners did the H-Blocks deviate? What can artefacts tell us about how these experiences differed?

Long Kesh/Maze is a site that, although not old by traditional archaeological perspectives, has already been ravaged by time and circumstances. Although it closed and was effectively abandoned in 2000—when the prison emptied with the release of paramilitary prisoners as a condition of the 1998 Agreement—in less than a decade the majority of the Nissen huts and H-Blocks were reduced to foundations. I visited the site on a number of occasions between 2005 and 2011 and by the last occasion only a 'representative sample' of one Nissen hut and one H-Block remained (the processes and meanings of demolition will be discussed in Chapter Seven). With the structures disappearing so too did access to the artefacts that were housed within. While it was apparent the artefacts were being moved around the site prior to demolition and significant numbers were



Figure 4.2 Prison-issue artefacts stored in site aircraft hangar, c.2005.

moved to the defunct aircraft hangars acting as a storage facility (Figure 4.2), effectively, they were decontextualized and removed from view when their display cases—the buildings—were demolished.

Artefacts are seminal to this study as they provide an often-overlooked insight into how the institution was negotiated and used by groups and individuals at specific points in its biography. In particular, the role that different types of artefacts played in the understanding, negotiation, compliance and defiance of expected and proscribed roles within the site makes their presence and interpretation particularly valuable. Archaeology as a discipline has often focused on the spectacular, individual material culture emphasizing craftsmanship, high-status materials, and aesthetic, to the detriment of function, use value, and life biography. There exists within the assemblages associated with Long Kesh/Maze many artefacts that are unusual and in their own way spectacular; however, their aesthetic appeal is only as important as its affective power within the context of the role it played within the prison. The primary role of analysing these artefacts is to provide insights into function, role, meaning, and significance at specific times. The sheer volume of mundane material culture—particularly

the imposed prison-issue artefacts—rather than the more famous prison art artefacts (see Moloney 2009) is central to this study.

Daniel Miller argues that mundane material culture is notable not due to its innate significance but conversely due to its very collective unimportance: ‘stuff achieves its mastery of us precisely because we constantly fail to notice what it does’ (2010: 155). The sheer ubiquity of everyday ‘stuff’ makes it collectively a multilayered, context-specific and ultimately problematic form to interpret but this also means that the largely unconscious role it plays in constructing and revealing the person is of central importance. Miller asserts:

objects are important, not because they are evident and physically constrain or enable, but quite the opposite. It is often precisely because we do not *see* them. The less we are aware of them, the more powerfully they can determine our expectations, by setting the scene and ensuring appropriate behaviour, without being open to challenge. They determine what takes place to the extent that we are unconscious of their capacity to do so. (2010: 50)

The role of artefacts is multifaceted. Though the spectacular and individual object can provide information on individualization, access to resources and their role in proclaiming and constructing group and individual identity, using the mundane and imposed, is perhaps more important in this carceral environment where prisoners actively contested their government categorization. Timothy Edensor has argued for the communicative potentialities of objects, in that they are associated with ‘a host of meanings’ (2002: 104). This chapter will argue that mundane and imposed artefacts are critical in understanding the role of everyday material culture due to these communicative qualities at specific times in their object biographies. This study will highlight their role in constructing the everyday existence, the active delineation of group identities and the negotiation of relationships of compliance and defiance in the controlled environment of Long Kesh/Maze prison.

Walking through the various prison buildings—housing or medical, religious or administrative—testifies to the varying impacts of abandonment on artefacts and buildings across the different structures. Whereas artefacts in the Compounds are revealing in the absences of things that were once present, those in the staff and administration areas often reveal some of the last actions and interactions of those who patrolled the prison until closure: a deck of cards

has been spread across a table, a walking stick is propped against office furniture, an unwashed tea cup sits on the arm of a chair. The artefacts demonstrate inconsistent survival across the site. They represent the life and actions of those who last inhabited the site but not all at the same time. They present a partial biography of the prison's extended life. These mundane artefacts are important, as Miller has stated: 'Memories and aspirations are laid out in photographs and furniture.' (2010: 108). The *in situ* artefacts found in the Compounds—which closed in 1988 despite taking no new prisoners since the mid 1970s—are very different in form, function and quantity from those found in the H-Blocks, which operated until closure in 2000. The artefacts in the Compounds reveal remembrances of slow, longstanding abandonment whereas the more recent use of the H-Blocks leaves a more complete yet often unexpected *in situ* assemblage. The degree of comfort afforded to the inhabitants, access to material culture, mutable categorizations of 'contraband', and ability to subvert the authorities varies greatly at different stages and places of the functional life of Long Kesh/Maze. The dominant narratives of the existing artefactual remains—by the very nature of their different reasons for, and experiences of, abandonment—highlight the prison's various twilights.

What exactly is the relationship between artefact and structure and what can they tell us about the experience of Long Kesh/Maze? Bruno Latour states that non-human actors, such as artefacts, are significant in explaining human action in that they are actors that have power and influence (2004: 226). Indeed, many of these artefacts have had—and some continue to have—an active role in social life. They are mutable entities that are both complex and essential to understanding experience of place. This study follows Alfred Gell's contention that a thing can appear as an agent, temporarily becoming a locus of agency either of its owners or its own, in particular social situations (1998: 18). Therefore, agency is relational and context-dependent (1998: 22). In the context of this study the artefacts are related to understood differently than in a non-institutional context. Whereas the artefacts found in most buildings gain their placement through a variety of routes that generally stem from personal selection, acquisition and preference, the majority of artefacts found in institutions are not there by the users' choice. Prison-issue artefacts are often selected for the inhabitants and not by them. However, we must be careful to remember that 'objects are not what they were made to be but what

they have become' (Thomas 1991: 4). Prison-issue artefacts at Long Kesh/Maze were often used in unintended ways and were frequently actively subverted against the regime that initially distributed them.

Artefacts that are not prison-issue vary from being brought to the site (either legitimately or smuggled), posted in a prisoner parcel, created in the prison and/or smuggled around it. The artefacts that remained on site after closure were insignificant in number compared to the artefacts that had been used, removed, discarded, broken, or confiscated over the life of the site. All *in situ* artefacts have the potential to reveal some aspect of the people who inhabited this place but they do so by reflecting their use and meaning at the particular time of their disposal. This means that the artefact may have had other meanings, uses and relationships that were determined by time, place, access, need and desire that is not set but is contextual and relational within the fluctuations of relationships of power and control. The artefacts that remained in the post-functional institution were either officially created by the authorities, who wanted artefacts that were simple, cost-effective and difficult to subvert (whether this was their actual experience), or they were created through the need and ingenuity of prisoners who desired artefacts that made their life more comfortable, to enable them to subvert the system and/or allow them to pass time. It is probable that those artefacts that remained to populate the site were confiscated, lost, forgotten, abandoned, or discarded rather than active agents at that stage of their object biography.

Artefacts in Long Kesh/Maze were not characterized by static physical forms or meanings. There is substantial oral, photographic, documentary, and artefactual evidence of manipulation of all forms of material culture to effect change to their intended usages and meanings at specific times and places. Highly inventive engagement with a limited range of artefacts bypassed their often-mundane form to create new forms of weaponry, tools, and cultural and social artefacts whilst constituting the self and communal identities of the users as political prisoners. Particularly in such an environment everyday items and mass-produced commodities can have what Edensor calls 'mythic association' (2002: 105). A substantial number of confiscated artefacts held by the Northern Ireland Prison Service reveal the use of imposed material culture in unintended and often ambiguous ways: parts of metal bedsteads, fasteners for windows and parts of door handles make up large, decontextualized assemblage.

In their new situation they appear to be broken, discarded, and useless parts of functional wholes, but their categorization as illicit and confiscated demonstrates a more deviant and even sinister role in their object biography. Complexity is inherent in attempting to interpret material culture in such an environment as meaning and usage can change over time and place and function does not always neatly follow form. In the controlled environment of Long Kesh/Maze, following Victor Buchli's interpretation of the Narmofkin House, the meaning of material culture is 'produced by productive existing relationships, meaning and contingencies that are contested, open-ended and socially negotiated' (1999: 181). As Lynne Meskell has argued, in contemplating the relationships between people and things we can only study specific, cultural moments (2006: 6). This study of artefacts can only aim to provide a glimpse at various specific points in the object biography. We must move beyond viewing the artefacts through functional and ritual dichotomies and follow Meskell in looking to the realities of the enmeshing of 'persons, objects, deities and all manner of immaterial things together in ways that cannot easily be disentangled or separated taxonomically' (2006: 3).

One can take the example of a prison-issue food tray to illustrate these changing meanings, functions, and connections to identity (Figure 4.3). Rectangular, metal food trays were functional kitchen containers used by the prison authorities to distribute cooked and heated food from the central kitchens to individual Compounds and H-Blocks. Once distributed they were, at times, retained by the inmates to use with their own limited kitchen facilities to create, store, and present food. However, the prisoners also used them in a number of unintentional and unforeseen ways. There are numerous examples showing that the trays have been physically altered: including cut in half, with a wooden handle added, to be used as a makeshift shovel for digging escape tunnels under the Nissen huts (Figure 4.4). There are also examples of wheels having been added to their undercarriage and rope attached to a handle to use them as receptacles of soil from the tunnels to be removed and covertly dispersed. As the construction of tunnels to facilitate escape from the Compounds was a fundamental structuring device for many Republican prisoners, and central to their self-identification as political prisoners defying their imprisonment, these food trays became invaluable not only to provide sustenance but also to subvert the prison regime. They also had



Figure 4.3 Prison-issue metal food tray, Northern Ireland Prison Service Collection, Millisle. Undated.



Figure 4.4 Prison-issue metal food tray modified to be used as a shovel, Northern Ireland Prison Service Collection, Millisle. Undated.

cultural uses, with the flat metal underside having been cut to create marching paraphernalia, including ornamental pike tops for displaying flags and banners in Loyalist marches (Figure 4.5). Such uses allowed prisoners to express their ongoing cultural identification with continued traditional rights and obligations whilst imprisoned (Jarman 1998b: 121).

Due to the recent historical nature of Long Kesh/Maze the number and range of artefacts on and connected to the site is overwhelming and ensures that selection has to become a definitive part of the interpretative process. The sheer volume of artefact types and ranges ensures that this process must be overtly acknowledged, as the inability to include every category ensures that exclusions will, by their very nature, skew understandings of the prison. Analysis of specific artefacts and artefact types will form the basis of the understandings of the site, how it functioned and what it meant, whilst others that are ignored, discarded, or categorized as inconsequential or worthless will not contribute to our understandings of the site. This is an inherently problematic situation that most contemporary archaeologists must face. Exclusions, although unavoidable, do not mean that



Figure 4.5 Prison-issue metal food tray modified to be used as a ceremonial pike, Northern Ireland Prison Service Museum Store, Millisle. Undated.

the most revealing artefacts are always included. Often selection is determined by the most visually interesting objects, artefact assemblages that are most easily accessible, or those whose biographies are most easily revealed. In Tom Fisher's study of the (re)use of contemporary packaging—'often designed to be discarded almost as soon as we acquire it' (2011: 52)—he notes that even this most ephemeral and unpromising artefact type has the potential to facilitate various unforeseen uses that can reveal significant 'modifying, customizing and altering' (2011: 58). Therefore, there is a need to carefully consider the range of artefact types and select those that have the greatest ability to reveal a variety of understandings, relationships, and experiences of people and place, however essentially incomplete this will always be.

The artefacts that will be the focus of this study belong to two overarching groups that in different ways illuminate the central relationship of Long Kesh/Maze—between the prison authorities and prisoner bodies. This study will begin with those artefacts that reveal conflict and subversion—including some of the most individual and aesthetically interesting prisoner artefacts—the confiscated artefacts that constitute the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) Collection. This collection contains over 300 artefacts confiscated from the prison across its functional life and includes subverted prison-issue artefacts, prisoner creations, and objects smuggled into the prison. Whilst these artefacts are important in revealing the forms of prisoner subversion and negotiation of the site—as well as the ability of the regime to locate and confiscate this contraband—they will act as a comparative to what I will argue are the most significant objects in demonstrating the importance of artefacts in prison relations of power and control: prison-issue artefacts. This latter category is often neglected and misunderstood due to its mundane form and infrequent survival, but has the potential to reveal the highly significant role imposed material culture played in the ongoing struggles between authorities and prisoners in contesting status, power, and ultimately control at different times at Long Kesh/Maze. In an environment in which the material culture was often limited and strictly controlled, these interactions and meanings and how they change over time are important. Analysis of both the more individual and inventive prisoner creations alongside the seemingly mundane and ordinary prison-issue artefacts will be central to achieving a balanced overview of 'why things matter' (Miller 1998) over time and space at Long Kesh/Maze.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE (NIPS) COLLECTION

Lu Ann DeCunzo has emphasized the need to scour archives, museums and private collections to locate and incorporate the artefacts of institutional inmates, as they are frequently ignored (2006: 84). The NIPS Collection is part of a prison service museum made up of prison issue and confiscated artefacts. The confiscated artefacts illuminate the nature and form material culture played in contesting and subverting intended experiences of imprisonment. Such artefacts were created, changed or smuggled to allow negotiation of surroundings and place, and to impact on the power balances inherent within the prison; as such their form and function fluctuated over time and space. This collection is of particular interest as it reveals which objects were located, confiscated, considered significant enough to retain, and, at some stage, labelled and interpreted by those who did not create them. They provide evidence not only of prisoner activities and the changing nature of contraband throughout the life of the site, but also of how the authorities perceived and valued this material culture. The artefacts held at the NIPS Museum enable a partial, if skewed, portrayal of prisoner negotiations but also regime responses to subversion of the carceral environment.

Physically altered and illegal artefacts reveal the subversion of the prison environment as individual and time/place-specific through the ability of prisoners to access and utilize contraband. The work of Lynn Meskell (2006) is particularly important in placing the relational context of materiality and how artefacts change their context, their usage, and their significance in the lives of those who created and used them. Meskell's view that materiality is contextual but has a propensity 'to forge, shape, interpolate, and possibly even challenge and undermine social relations and experiences' (2006: 6) is a central trope of analysis. Likewise, Chris Gosden's emphasis on the relational significance of artefacts, how 'not all objects are equal in their effectiveness and not all objects attract social relations at the same rate or degree of importance' (2004: 169), is poignant in an institutional context where artefacts are limited in number and scope and can have heightened and unexpected values. Building on these ideas is my contention that the artefacts held in this collection are significant not due to any qualities and meanings inherent in their form but because

they were confiscated at a time in their object biography when they played a role in negotiating power relations between the prisoner and the regime. As manifestations of subversion and non-compliance they materialized the ability and ingenuity of prisoner to challenge and negotiate their surroundings, and the converse success of the authorities in intercepting and removing them from the carceral environment, at specific points in their object lives. These artefacts can tell multiple stories of place: not only of prisoner access to contraband and the ability to negotiate and subvert their surroundings, but also of the power struggles and relations within the site that resulted in their categorization as contraband, retrieval and confiscation.

The confiscated artefacts held in the NIPS Collection are housed within a museum of the Prison Service Training College in the small coastal town of Millisle, Co. Down. The Museum encompasses an exhibition room containing a number of prison-related artefacts, both official and confiscated from prisoners, dating from throughout the history of the Prison Service in Northern Ireland. The selection of artefacts range from the macabre, including a hangman's rope from Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast, to the quirky, such as hollowed out toilet roll used to smuggle a watch into prison. Although the museum collection spans over a century's activities, the vast majority of the artefacts on display and in the museum store relate to the Troubles. The building that houses the museum was originally a high-status family home that was converted into a borstal before being used for prison officer training purposes, and is not purpose-built. The museum store is housed in an attic and is inhospitable for holding and attempting to preserve artefactual remains, due to the fluctuating temperatures and poor state of repair of the roof. However, the inaccessibility of this location, both physically and politically, may have been a major factor in the continued existence of the collection. This isolation has been beneficial in ensuring that these artefacts have been collected, interpreted, and maintained together. Their continued presence is presumably through widespread ignorance of their existence.

The storage of the artefacts in the attic storerooms is of a much more haphazard nature than the ordered cabinets in the small NIPS museum. The smaller artefacts are contained in standard museum boxes in the smaller of the two adjoining attic rooms. This room holds metal shelving with boxes and a small number of larger items—including ceremonial poles for displaying flags and banners and makeshift alcohol stills—scattered around the perimeter of the

room and sitting loose on the shelves. The boxes are separated into the different prisons where the artefacts originated, with the majority labelled 'Maze Compounds' and 'Maze Cellular'. There do not appear to be any artefacts relating to prisons that are currently in use. The majority of the artefacts have a reference number attached or written on acid-free paper, but there are a small number that are unreferenced. A substantial minority of artefacts are held in open containers with no protection from dust or the sea air and there are a smaller number laid on open shelves. There are some artefacts marked 'Maze Compounds' that must have originated in HMP Armagh. Some items have explanatory notes about their origins, including where and when they were found, but the majority have no contextual information. There are also a number of boxes that hold documentary material, often of a very sensitive nature, relating to prisoners from Long Kesh/Maze.

How representative this is of the type and scale of contraband artefacts originally confiscated from the site we cannot tell. There is no record of artefacts that were destroyed, lost, or misplaced since their discovery or of those that escaped discovery and remained at, or were smuggled from, the site. The official catalogue does not always coordinate with what is held in the store. There are a number of items in the catalogue that cannot be located and there are artefacts in the store with reference numbers that do not appear in the catalogue. The official catalogue contains little information other than the form and sometimes presumed function of the artefacts held. Most artefacts have a unique numeric identifier that includes the date of accession; however, the majority of the artefacts were accessioned en masse much later than they were confiscated, as indicated in the two predominant dates of 1992 and 2002. Where the context of discovery is recorded the notes demonstrate that the process of interpretation of these finds was often very subjective and explanations may not be correct. To attempt to counter this potential problem, store catalogues were created that recorded all the artefacts that were held in storage, describing the objects in their most basic form whilst also noting any recorded context of discovery or interpretation. The Collection is most basically delineated as 'Maze Compounds' and 'Maze Cellular', with the vast majority of artefacts having no precise date of confiscation or creation. The small number of artefacts that were confiscated from the Maze but lacked details of which manifestation of the prison they were from were categorized as 'Maze Unknown'.

The most basic statistic—the number of artefacts that were confiscated from both manifestations of the prison—immediately indicates a disparity in the artefactual assemblages from the Compounds and H-Blocks. The store catalogue identifies 199 artefacts that definitively originated from the Compounds, 70 pieces from the H-Blocks and 27 items categorized as ‘Maze Unknown’. This translates to 67 per cent of the artefacts in the store originating from the Compounds with only 24 per cent from the H-Blocks. This disparity cannot be explained by longevity as the Compounds were only fully occupied from 1971 to 1976 (and partially thereafter until closure in 1988), while the H-Blocks were fully occupied from 1976 until closure in 2000. As there are artefacts from all periods of the prison’s occupation one would not expect such vast discrepancies in numbers, despite possible deficiencies in transferral after confiscation. These variations hint at significant differences in prisoner experiences of Long Kesh/Maze regarding the ability to smuggle, create, and secrete contraband, and variations in the use of material culture in non-compliance, as well as the prison officers’ ability to search, locate and retrieve materials.

Explanations for the different scales of artefact confiscation must originate with the prison form and power relationships between authorities and regime inside Long Kesh/Maze. The documentary evidence in Chapter Three has revealed that the Compounds were not purpose-built as a prison and as such were phased out due to the inability of the authorities to effectively control the activities of the prisoners housed in those structures. The building of a new prison, with a more traditional prison form, suggests that the prisoners in the Compounds had a greater ability to control their own activities than is normally acceptable in an institutional environment. This has been confirmed by written and oral testimonies of former prisoners who have emphasized the ‘freedom’ of the Compounds (PK 2006). In the Compounds, the departure from the totalizing gaze of the typical prison regime allowed greater freedom, which extended even further when demands for special category status were granted in 1972. Whilst this status meant that prisoners were granted greater numbers of parcels and visits—and therefore opportunities for smuggling contraband—their exclusion from prison work meant that creating artefacts was a structuring activity for many prisoners. The significant number of both legitimate and contraband artefacts in the Compounds also provided the opportunity for larger numbers to be located and

confiscated by prison authorities. The authorities had little knowledge of the everyday activities of the prisoner and searches were used to check their conditions as well as search for contraband. The searches were sporadic, unannounced and tense affairs that were often confrontational and frequently controlled by the accompanying support of Army personnel (GD 2011). These searches were the focal point of prisoner and prison authority interactions and thus became a high-level game of hide and seek; concealment and retrieval of contraband artefacts was central to negotiating power relationships between the prisoner and the authorities. Following Arjun Appadurai's contention that consumption is eminently social, relational, and active (1986: 31), these artefacts were significant not just for their material form but because of their heightened value in the context of a controlled material environment and the role they played in potentially subverting the intention of imprisonment.

Analysis of artefact typologies demonstrates a substantial difference in the types of artefacts from the two different prison forms that are held in the NIPS Collection. There exists a greater range of artefacts from the Compounds that also incorporate a wider range of materials and have more numerous use values than those from the H-Blocks (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). The two largest groups of artefacts found in the Compounds were multi-purpose in form and were used as tools, weaponry, and for escapes (71) (the majority of these were

Table 4.1 NIPS Collection, artefact categorization

	Maze Compounds	Maze Cellular	Maze Unknown	Maze TOTAL
Communications	8	—	3	11
Cultural	47	1	2	50
Cultural/Social	11	—	—	11
Educational	22	—	—	22
Escape	36	1	3	40
Newspapers	—	2	—	2
Medical	—	5	—	5
Prison Files	13	37	—	50
Prison issue	—	8	—	8
Smuggling	4	3	—	7
Social	22	2	1	25
Tools	6	—	—	6
Weaponry	25	9	17	51
Weaponry/Tools	4	—	—	4
Unknown	1	2	1	4
TOTALS	199	70	27	296

Table 4.2 NIPS Collection, artefact materials

	Maze Compounds	Maze Cellular	Maze Unknown	Maze TOTAL
CD	—	1	—	1
Food	1	—	—	1
Glass	2	—	1	3
Leather	4	1	—	5
Liquid	1	—	—	1
Metal	51	8	8	67
Mixed	27	12	14	53
Paper	19	44	—	63
Plastic/Rubber	6	2	1	9
Rope	4	—	—	4
Textiles	66	1	3	70
Vinyl	1	—	—	1
Wood	17	1	—	18
TOTAL	199	70	27	296

stylistically ambiguous and were probably used in various ways), and cultural artefacts (47). These two groups of artefact types indicate at least two very different activities occurring in the Compounds that resulted from diverse motivations and the availability of various material forms. The range of artefacts from the Compounds demonstrates access to a variety of materials (as evidenced in Table 4.2), the ability to access specialized tools and the possession of skills to create a wide range of artefact types. These materials could be used to fashion metal escape tools, including implements for digging tunnels or cutting wire fences, and also cultural, identity-affirming artefacts such as flags and Orange Order-style collarettes. The sophistication of construction and decoration of some artefacts confiscated from the Compounds necessitated skill, materials and a substantial amount of time. Examples include the many ornate painted and decorated banners that were used by Loyalist prisoners to march in the Compounds. One informant noted that these were replaced on an annual basis and that they were created as a communal effort. Those who had skills on sewing machines and in painting were utilized at different stages to complete them: ‘They were really well made, really good flags. Better than you could buy outside.’ (GD 2011).

It is clear from the notes that accompany some of these artefacts that they were only discovered when the prison authorities raided the Compounds with Army assistance rather than through routine access. For example, the note accompanying artefact 1992/379A-F

states: 'Selection of industrial cutting blades probably smuggled in for use in one of the homemade lathes. Found by Search Team in Compound 10, 11/06/1981.' This note confirms that the cutting blades were discovered by a 'search team'. Of all the 29 notes that detail how the confiscated artefact was found only one example was definitely not found by a search team, but discovered accidentally by contract workers maintaining the site. The existence of a homemade lathe further emphasizes the degree of freedom within the Compounds.

The sheer quantity of cultural items included from the Compounds suggests an experience of prison life that had more freedom of expression and creativity than traditional prison regimes. None of the cultural artefacts held in the collection were traditional prison handicrafts; they were all either flags, banners, or prison handicrafts, the latter having been negotiated in unintended ways to facilitate another use, such as smuggling. The interpretation of cultural artefacts as being evidence of artistic creativity must also be made with care. Whilst some cultural artefacts were creative endeavours to be passed to family and friends, many were created en masse from existing templates, to be raffled and auctioned to raise money and as such were not free creative endeavours. Mike Moloney has asserted that prison art is unusual in that 'your artistic skill is judged on your craft, not on your artistic interpretation' (2009: 4). Skills, not creativity, were paramount attributes in making these cultural artefacts and this interpretation is confirmed by the degree of uniformity of artefact form and type found in the NIPS collection; this resonates with the collections of community museums that now house large quantities of prison art (see Chapter Seven). The production of cultural artefacts was perceived by the prisoner as being important: it demonstrated the atypical nature of the prison population in the Compounds in passing their time creating cultural artefacts rather than partaking in prison work. In the H-Blocks there was not the necessary acquiescence of the regime in providing materials, equipment, and the time to make cultural items. This distinction is supported by the lack of such cultural artefacts from the H-Blocks in the NIPS Collection.

The cultural and social artefacts are the most aesthetically pleasing categories in the NIPS Collection but they are also the most difficult to categorize. The cultural artefacts often reflect an individual or group attempt at materializing an element of their identity as a person and as a member of different communities—both internal

and external to their contemporary prison setting. Loyalist banners are significant not just because of the sheer number in the collection—there are 14 from the Compounds—but also, following Neil Jarman, due to their dual nature as both ‘a traditional artefact and bearer of traditional meaning’ (1998b: 122). Their existence in the NIPS Collection demonstrates this ongoing cultural connection with external formulations of identity within a carceral environment. Examination of the examples of social and cultural artefacts from the Compounds reveal that they are more personalized, technically sophisticated, evidencing a degree of skill and exhibiting a degree of care in their construction than more utilitarian artefacts from the H-Blocks. Cultural artefacts in the NIPS Collection are important not simply due to their aesthetic values but also, following Alfred Gell, their ability to signify meaning and illuminate the characteristics of the material object (1992: 43). They are not only evidence of artistic endeavours but also reveal the availability of various forms of material culture, appropriate equipment, time, and skills. Cultural artefacts from the Maze Compounds predominantly relate to parading and marching activities, with only three cultural artefacts unconnected to the public display of culture and identity.

Of the 49 artefacts relating to marching and parading the vast majority are flags or banners. Within this collection there exists a mixture of manufactured national flags (predominantly Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) and prison-made paramilitary banners. The paramilitary banners demonstrate marked differences between Republican and Loyalist representations. The Loyalist paramilitaries created more ornate flags, with the name and crest of the organization very prominently placed, whereas Republican examples tended to be more abstract with socialist imagery—starry plough—being prominent. Loyalist flags often utilized numerous textiles, inlays, and the extensive use of textile paints, often creating ornate and carefully executed images (Figure 4.6). A number of these examples show signs that they have been treated with some form of adhesive in order to maintain a rigid and weather-proofed form, again indicative—as are the attached loops—that they were to be used as banners to be displayed in public, rather than to be draped. Loyalist banners had extensive ornamentation including the addition of tassels and fringing, which was absent from Republican examples. Loyalist prisoners from the Compounds placed importance on marching and parading, and public displays of communal identity



Figure 4.6 UFF flag used as marching paraphernalia, Northern Ireland Prison Service Collection, Millisle. Undated.

and loyalty that reflected contemporary Unionist and Loyalist culture in Northern Ireland (Jarman 1998a: 121–47). This claim is further substantiated by the significant number of associated artefacts replicating the material culture of the Orange Order, the Protestant cultural organization that is most publicly associated with marching and parading in Northern Ireland. This desire to perform identity would have been enhanced by the layout of the Compounds, which were visually open due to the use of transparent wire fences to delineate Compounds. It could be suggested that the high level of competition between the main Loyalist paramilitary

groupings—especially the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA)—was materially manifest through conspicuous parading in the Compounds. Whilst the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) remained the dominant group within Republicanism, such ostentatious displays to claim primacy were not Nationalist cultural norms or necessary in the context of the Compounds. Cultural artefacts relating to parading were used not only as internal identity-reaffirming activities but also as a means of proclaiming their strength and high morale to surrounding prisoner bodies, but this was not universally utilized across paramilitary organizations.

Confiscated artefacts in the NIPS Collection from the H-Blocks suggest a very different experience of imprisonment. Firstly, the most numerous groups of artefacts in the section are not actually confiscated objects; they are prison files that have been placed with the confiscated artefacts (37). Amongst these files are a number of prisoner communications (comms) that were intercepted by the prison authorities, and as such can be categorized as contraband artefacts. The prisoner comms in this collection are similar to those discussed in Chapter Three, as the majority date from the period of the 1980/1981 Hunger Strikes and are primarily propaganda letters written to bodies such as ‘the State Senate, Minnasota [sic] by Sean Boyle’. They demonstrate Republican prisoner attempts to publicize their existence to an international, and particularly North American, audience. The note attached to one letter (2000/71) states: ‘H6. 7/5/81. On cigarette paper’. There is no reference to ‘search teams’ in any of the confiscated artefacts from this context. The lack of ‘search team’ involvement in locating confiscated artefacts in the H-Blocks confirms the changed relationship between the prison regime and prisoners at this time. The mode of confiscation indicates that there was ongoing access to, and at least theoretical control of, prisoner cells. Within the non-complying wings of the early H-Blocks the smuggled comm. was prominent and gained heightened significance. As noted in Chapter Three, it was used as a means of maintaining prisoner focus, structuring their day and attempting to subvert a repressive regime, similar to the use of tunnelling to escape in the Compounds. The need for only a scrap of paper and a writing implement ensured that the prisoner could partake in this activity without substantial smuggling, the need for special tools or creating complicated, materially diverse artefacts. The artefacts from the H-Blocks in the NIPS Collection show that the prisoner used and interacted with the

available artefacts—including toilet/cigarette paper and smuggled pens/pencils—as their material conditions and level of confinement dictated. The desire to subvert the prison regime did not subside but this materialized in a time and context-specific form.

The most significant number of non-paper artefacts from the H-Blocks relate to weaponry (10). On inspection, although many of these items were attributed as weaponry on the official catalogue they are often pieces of metal removed from prison-issue furniture and associated material culture that could, and probably did, have many uses. With no supporting documentation to tell of their discovery or usage it is difficult to definitively state that they were solely used as weapons but the existence of such crude, scavenged artefacts suggests a lack of access to alternatives. The examples held in the stores are not comparable to the more extensive and sophisticated weaponry confiscated from the Compounds, including wooden cudgels (1992/64, 70–72), thick metal wire (1992/137), a number of bombing devices (including Figure 4.7), a large number of wire cutters (1992/104–106), and tunnelling equipment (including a make-shift lighting systems). The form of ‘weapon’ artefacts from the H-Blocks suggests that they were smuggled from prison workshops or extracted from prison-issue furniture, and thereafter circulated



Figure 4.7 Plastic cup holding a small incendiary device, Northern Ireland Prison Service Collection, Millisle. Undated.

around the prison, rather than smuggled into the prison from outside. This indicates a lack of ability to smuggle such weapons into the H-Blocks but also reveals the role of conforming prisoners in initiating the original subversion of the material from their 'work' environment. One example is a wooden block that has been hollowed out, with an attached note: 'Leg of work bench H5 C Wing 29-9-83' (1992/85). There are a number of handmade knives, which are usually a piece of metal that has been sharpened with a reinforced handle added. Whilst not overtly threatening as weapons—the metal is usually a standard cutlery knife that shows signs of attempted sharpening that was not entirely successful—they undoubtedly could injure. In common with other artefact categories there is a marked decline in number, range, and quality of weaponry artefacts found in the H-Blocks compared to the Compounds. However, the higher proportion of weaponry/escape artefacts compared to cultural/social artefacts suggests the prisoners were concentrating on artefacts of conflict, protest, and non-compliance rather than artefacts used to communicate and reinforce identity at this time. This can be explained by the more controlled range of material culture available, but also by the new building forms preventing parading displays from being visually communicated beyond the wing yard.

It is apparent from prisoner oral and documentary testimonies that there were numerous overriding experiences of the H-Blocks that linked to the period of incarceration and whether the prisoner was complying or not complying with the prison regime. Those prisoners who undertook protest during this period had a much more controlled and scant material world and therefore their subversion of their surroundings often took a more intangible and ephemeral form, including singing or telling stories to each other from behind cell doors and passing tobacco from cell window to window. The lack of material culture and more contained surroundings would no longer allow such obvious physical manifestations of non-cooperation and subversion as before (Campbell et al 1994: 71-8). There is also a noticeable lack of artefacts from the latter, more relaxed periods of life in the H-Blocks that may reflect a lack of contraband being-created—or a lack of transferrals to the NIPS Collection—but probably demonstrates a lack of control by prison authorities of prisoner activities. However, the fluctuating quantity and quality of artefacts from the H-Blocks cannot be simply interpreted as fluctuations in control and power in relations between a steadfast regime and intransigent

non-complying prisoners. Rather it reveals the variable desires of different groups of prisoners at different times to protest or comply, the form that this took and changing policies of the prison authorities throughout a long-running conflict. I suggest that the lack of confiscated artefactual remains from the H-Blocks reflects two different experiences of imprisonment: a repressive regime from the mid 1970s to the early 1980s and a fluctuating, but increasingly, lax regime from the mid 1980s until closure.

The confiscated artefacts from the Compounds and H-Blocks show a marked variation in the quantity, quality, and form of artefacts over time and space and reveal very different circumstances of imprisonment. The majority of the confiscated artefacts that constitute the NIPS Collection date from the earlier manifestations of imprisonment, when the prisoners occupied the Compounds. They reveal a considerable degree of freedom with access to materials and skills to create often sophisticated and highly crafted cultural items and escape tools. The predominance of artefact types relating to very different activities reflects both a freedom to select a form of non-compliance and the desire of the prison authorities to locate them. Firstly, potentially dangerous weapons and escape tools were being created and secreted by prisoners and later uncovered and confiscated by the search teams. Secondly, there were fluctuations in regime rules when initially permitted cultural artefacts were later designated contraband and were subsequently confiscated. This can be seen in the range of highly sophisticated parading paraphernalia included in the collection, which must have been created openly for some time before being confiscated close to completion. In contrast, the lack of artefacts from the H-Blocks suggests very different—and less materially focused—experiences of the new prison environment. These carceral experiences were being dictated by the new structures, associated regime, and the prisoner responses to them. The small number of H-Block artefacts highlights a lack of materials with which the prisoner could subvert or negotiate the site, particularly under non-complying conditions. Artefact types recovered from the H-Blocks emphasize a fundamental shift from communal, identity-enhancing activities of the compounds to relationships with the prison authorities that were based on conflict, with a high degree of prison authorities' knowledge and control of prisoner activities. Prisoners were now divided between those complying and those who actively protested their imprisonment. Non-complying prisoners demonstrated less materially focused defiance as a reformulated

response to a very different form of imprisonment. Their non-compliance was demonstrated by a lack of personal material culture and an enhanced relationship with prison-issue artefacts. The existence of photographic, documentary and oral evidence reveals that the dearth of artefacts from later periods is indicative of a less strict regime, with fewer searches and confiscations and as such the prison experience had more in common with the Compounds, despite the radically different form of imprisonment.

PRISON-ISSUE ARTEFACTS

Harrison and Schofield have stressed that mass-produced goods are particularly important in understanding recent historical contexts as they have ‘the potential to go beyond these traditional concerns to give us an insight into the nature of contemporary societies and their relationship with the material world’ (2010: 157). Prison-issue artefacts in the context of Long Kesh/Maze are critical for two reasons: due to their sheer quantity—they constitute almost the entire artefactual assemblage still *in situ*—and due to their fluctuating importance in negotiating and signifying power relationships between the prisoners and the regime, particularly at times of heightened tensions and conflict. The often mass-produced, cheap, generic artefacts provided for the prisoners allowed a degree of flexible usage that reacted to circumstances and that at times had a heightened importance in a materially restricted carceral context. The form of prison-issue artefacts varied over time and space but during periods of compliance to the prison regime prisoners may have expected to encounter many of the following items: beds, bedroom tables with stool, dining tables, and chairs. Wardrobes, snooker tables, table-tennis tables, book shelves, and mini-gyms were not always present and at the height of H-Block protests furniture was largely absent, although ‘available to any protesting prisoner who will undertake not to destroy it’ (NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–1981). The role of this particular ‘undertaking’ is important and will be discussed in more detail later. More portable personal artefacts such as blankets, bedding, curtains, pinboards, arts and crafts materials, kitchen equipment, and books survive to a lesser extent in the abandoned site.

The levels of comfort and even luxury prisoners encountered varied greatly during the life of the prison. At a basic level experiences could be delineated by the prison form the prisoner was placed in. One ex-Loyalist prisoner stated that there were two types of prisoner within his organization: ‘the Compound men and the H-Blocks men and they are all completely different’ (SU 2011), and this fundamental split reflects not only a change in building but also regime and prisoners’ ability to control their own environment, actions, and discipline. However, there were also differences in experiences within these different prison forms that are often undiscussed. Prison-issue artefacts are an essential indicator of this variability. The artefacts that date from the later periods of the H-Blocks—such as the *in situ* snooker tables—would have been present within the greater freedoms of the internment camp but were not present for non-complying prisoners during the protests that culminated in the 1981 Hunger Strikes. Undoubtedly due to their wider political repercussions, the 1981 Hunger Strikes dominate our understandings of the site and the evidence from prison-issue artefacts demonstrates that this focus needs to be reconsidered. Whilst the experiences of the different manifestations of Long Kesh/Maze are notable for their disparities, there are commonalities that were largely dependent on the relationships between the prisoners and the regime. This important distinction means the Compounds were not always experienced in the same way and likewise neither were the H-Blocks.

As would be expected, many of the artefacts that remained on the site after closure were of recent vintage rather than dating from throughout the site’s history. This is particularly true when one considers the history of protest at Long Kesh/Maze. The H-Blocks were built after Republican prisoners, who were intent on escape in October 1974, rioted and burnt the majority of Compounds. Therefore, most of the Compounds, and their contents on closure, date from after the main period of usage. Likewise, the artefacts that remain within the H-Blocks are not necessarily representative of those provided and used throughout the life of the site. During the most extreme periods of Loyalist and Republican protests, in the late 1970s to mid 1980s, non-complying prisoners lived in isolation, in austere cells with few artefacts and often partook in the mass destruction of prison-issue artefacts as a means of protest. Government files often include communications on the minutiae of prisoner actions that unintentionally reveal the role of material culture in negotiations of relationships within the prison. Photographic evidence of the appearance, use

and alterations of prison-issue artefacts from Long Kesh/Maze are useful in their often-unintentional portrayal of the role of these artefacts. As Layla Renshaw has argued in her work on the Spanish Civil War, the 'power of the photograph' is evident not only in assisting in identification but in revealing the 'visible historical nature' in the style of clothes, hair, décor, and the relatability of their surroundings. Their sheer mundanity establishes a connection between the past and present (2011: 177–84). The use of oral testimonies, documents, and photographs as evidence of the role of artefacts at Long Kesh/Maze adds fresh perspectives on how the now absent prison-issue artefacts often changed meaning, were negotiated, used, and subverted over time and space.

Many oral anecdotes relating to material culture reveal that subversive or unforeseen usages often left ambiguous or no traces on the material object. Prison-issue artefacts were often used in ingenious ways to facilitate a range of actions from light-hearted subversions to sinister activities by the prisoner. One Loyalist former prisoner discussed in detail how *poitín* alcohol was made and stored. He detailed the processes of creating a still through to storing the alcohol for a suitable occasion (generally Christmas and the traditional Loyalist celebrations of 12 July). This included detailing how the prisoners of a Compound would buy large quantities of industrial-sized tinned food from the prison tuck shop then 'we steamed the labels off, then put a hole in them . . . Then we poured all the peas out, poured all the beans out and washed them and then we were able to pour the *poitín* in, solder it and then put the labels back on' (SU 2011). Whilst there was ample material culture and opportunity to improvise in such ways in the Compounds, one former prisoner from the H-Blocks spoke of makeshift exercise equipment created using filled plastic water containers balanced either end of a brush shaft as dumbbells, before mini-gyms were eventually added to the wings in the late 1980s (CM 2006). As one former prisoner stated, 'The ingenuity of the prisoners can never be overestimated' (SU 2011). However, these unintended uses of material culture do not often leave a physical trace for archaeologists to uncover.

Prior to the riots in the Compounds in late 1974, which resulted in the burning of the majority of the camp by Republican prisoners, there was concern within the government about prisoner use of their material environment to escape. A number of government files plainly state how prison-issue artefacts could be broken down and

used by prisoners to exit their Compounds and attempt to scale the perimeter wall of the camp. One letter to the Secretary of State, dating from May 1973, detailed how the material environment and freedom of the prisoners could be used in such a way:

Their present bunk beds, dismantled, could make excellent ladders; their mattresses could be used to surmount barbed wire barriers; and sections of their Nissen huts could make useful shields. The inmates have a considerable number of tools provided for 'recreational' activities, and they have enough time and facilities to plan and to prepare for elaborate escape routes. (WO 296/77, TNA, 1973-4)

An example of a confiscated ladder exists in the NIPS Collection (Figure 4.8). Another letter from 1973 notes how a mixture of dismantled and whole prison-issue artefacts, as well as contraband, had been used to attack prison officers: 'the inmates used weapons ranging from metal bed legs to chisels and knives, and 4 prison officers and 21 inmates were injured' (CJ 4/456, TNA, 1973). Government fears for further use of prison-issue artefacts in confrontations with the prison authorities were confirmed by the interception of a prisoner comm. imparting a detailed escape plan:

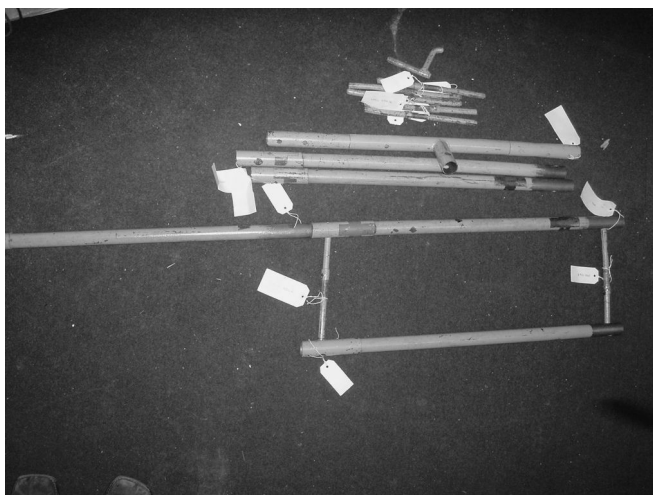


Figure 4.8 Confiscated ladders that had been made from parts of a prison-issue bed-frame Northern Ireland Prison Service Collection, Millisle. Undated.

No 4 Squad would carry 10 lockers to be placed against fence in a series of steps, 4 lockers placed on edge against fence, then three, two and one. When lockers are in position, mattresses would then be placed on barbed wire coils to prevent barbs catching on clothing thus slowing up movement. Mattresses to be weighted down with bricks on road side of fence and tied to lockers on inside to prevent them from falling when men are going over. (CJ 4/456, TNA, 1973)

This documentary evidence of increasing moves by Republican prisoners to overtly secure their escape from the Compounds, rather than the covert tunnelling activities that had been ongoing since the opening of the camp, ensured that the government had to seriously consider the nature of the carceral environment. I argue that the innovative uses of prison-issue material culture within the freedom of the Compounds was a central consideration in government decisions to build an entirely new prison, based on a different material form, when the camp was eventually burnt by prisoners in October 1974.

The most notable differences in the experiences and understandings of the H-Blocks depended on a new distinction as to whether prisoner status was complying or non-complying (or 'protesting'). The move to a cellular carceral environment meant that prisoners could be isolated and controlled on an individual basis and were no longer facilitated in maintaining a communal living environment. The prisoners had to make a decision individually as to whether or not they would comply with the new prison regime. Whilst the prison-issue artefacts from the non-conforming wings of the H-Blocks of the late 1970s through to the early 1980s are no longer in existence, information gleaned from government files, photographs, oral testimonies, and confiscated comms detail their central role in power struggles, degree of material comfort, and identifications with fellow prisoners that differed considerably depending on whether one resided on one of the three protesting or one of the five conforming H-Blocks.

The number of conforming and non-conforming prisoners in the H-Blocks fluctuated on a daily basis. Prisoners continually went 'on' and 'off' protest due to personal decisions or prisoner hierarchies wishing 'to keep track of what is happening on the hunger strike front' (NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–81). There were often disputes regarding exact figures and the location of protesting and complying wings due to these frequent changes. This categorization of prisoners being on protest was especially ambiguous in the early years of the

Compound system, when hunger strikes were frequent—and often short lived—encompassing all political groupings and officially accepted procedures for declaring ‘hunger strike’ were still being negotiated (see NIO 12/21 PRONI 1972–3). By the time the H-Blocks were established, non-complying prisoners were marked by their movement to specifically non-complying Blocks where their sparse material conditions acted as an indicator of their non-compliance with the prison authorities.

Prison-issue artefacts are significant in demonstrating how the seemingly mundane and functional have been physically changed and used in unforeseen or unintended ways—as noted in the examples from the NIPS Collection—including for ideological reasons. In a materially controlled environment unremarkable artefacts were given, and took on, heightened and often overtly political meanings. These artefacts, for short times in their biographies, were no longer unseen and unconsidered but became important. They became active agents in negotiating status and power between prisoner and the regime. Their form was at times significant—in allowing particular usages to take place—but often their imposition or demand was central rather than their material qualities. These artefacts provide insights into how penal material culture was negotiated, manipulated, smuggled and uncovered and how it was used to demonstrate claims of political status, reveal the nature of reciprocal relationships within the prison, and demonstrate hierarchies of control within the prisoner body.

Documentary evidence from government files notes how prison-issue artefacts transformed value and meaning when prisoners used and interacted with them in context-specific ways, particularly during periods of tension and escalating protest. There is evidence in official files that the austere conditions that many prisoners found themselves in—and wrote comms about—were ambiguous in their origins. For while conditions could be extremely restrictive, the prison authorities argued that there was a degree of self-selection as to the extent of material deprivation. They remark in their internal letters that prisoner choices as to whether they acquiesced or rejected the fundamental conditions of the prison regime created these conditions. Complying prisoners ‘undertook to keep their cells clean and to slop out and accordingly their accommodation was re-furnished within 24 hours’ (NIO 10/14/1A PRONI 1979–81), at least in theory.

As self-identifying political prisoners such claims would be considered disingenuous and—particularly at times of heightened protest—the presence, use, and misuse of normally innocuous prison-issue material culture became the focus of power struggles between the prisoner and the regime. Beds, furniture, and even clothing became representative of conditions and levels of acceptance of the regime. Interactions and uses of prison-issue artefacts became physical manifestations of compliance or protest, acquiescing with the regime or defying it. Protesting prisoners would neither compromise their right to protest—nor risk categorization as ‘criminal’ by intentionally breaking undertakings—by making promises to maintain or comply with prison authority demands. Indeed, there seems to be official recognition of this state of affairs. When prisoners did comply and received prison-issue furniture, and then later destroyed it, it was often officially noted that prisoners broke these conditions because they felt they had legitimate grievances, privately confirming that the prisoners were not acting in a dishonourable—or criminal—way. As one official explained: ‘They took this action after being told that they would not be issued with their own clothing until they were conforming completely to the prison rules’ (NIO 10/14/1A PRONI 1979–81).

Non-complying H-Block prisoners had different material surroundings and visual experiences of the prison site due to the policies of the regime to separate complying and non-complying prisoners. Non-complying prisoners were placed into the darkened surroundings of Perspex-windowed cells, where every prison-issue blanket, chair, table, and other artefact became part of the arsenal and materials of compliance or protest. An official detailing the experiences of late August 1979 noted that, ‘Yesterday prisoners who were returned to a clean and newly painted wing in H5 were given clean mattresses, pillows, pillowcases and blankets. However within a short time the pillows were thrown out of the cells’ (NIO 10/14/1A PRONI 1979–81). Another reported in early February 1980: ‘On Tuesday at dinner time the NCP’s (Non Complying Prisoners) in C3 refused to leave their knives, forks, plates etc at their doors for collection. Instead they scattered them in different parts of their cells’ (NIO 10/14/1A PRONI 1979–81). The normative level of control of the material environment ensured prison-issue artefacts became signifiers of compliance and protest and took on heightened significance.

This was not simply confined to prison-issue artefacts but also related to the regime’s interest in the appearance of prisoners and

their activities whilst in their cells. A letter in March 1981 reported that: 'In addition most of them have shaved and have had their haircut. They continue to refuse to work, to take exercise or to wear prison clothing' (NIO 10/14/1A PRONI 1979–81). Not all uses of prison-issue artefacts to signify non-compliance were benign, with a letter noting in February 1981 that the prisoners had 'proceeded to break up their furniture and used it to attack the windows of their cells' (NIO 10/14/1A PRONI 1979–81), reinforcing why Perspex windows were officially justified as a necessary addition to all protesting cells.

The written accounts of prisoners describe the hot-house of Long Kesh/Maze during the blanket protests and the hunger strikes, when furniture was often destroyed not only as a symbol of prisoner non-compliance but also of frustration and annoyance with the prison authorities in this tense situation. The prisoners often channelled the breaking of artefacts as an orchestrated, collective act of defiance and communality: 'it wasn't just the satisfaction of breaking furniture but the message that it would be sending to the Brits' (McCann 1994: 137). The responding prison officers, utilizing the now piecemeal and broken shards and chunks of furniture as *de facto* obstacle courses, could in turn subvert these prisoner acts of defiance. Following Alfred Gell's interpretation of the agency of objects, the furniture retained the potential to act as an 'index' of human action although removed from it (1998). Furniture broken by prisoners could be used to create and compound their injuries as they were trailed 'over broken furniture and beds that lay all over the wing' (Campbell, 1994: 33). In a Memorandum compiled by the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Ireland Tomás Ó'Fiaich, dating from—and responding to—the 1980 Hunger Strike, he remarks: 'Many violent scenes took place between prisoners and warders [underlining and marginalia of "!!" added by recipients hand] in which the furniture in the cells was broken and used in these battles' (NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–81). The Cardinal's assertions that these 'battles' involve action orchestrated from both sides may be contradicted textually and officially by the '!' but this unambiguous statement reveals that the Cardinal believed his statement to be a true reflection of the combative relations between the Prison Officers and prisoners at this time.

Clothing became one of the most intimate battlegrounds in the contestation of political status between prisoners and the prison regime. Whilst efforts were later made by prison authorities to make their imposed prison uniforms look like civilian clothing—including

examples created in denim and tailored in contemporary styles—the fact that they were imposed and did not reflect the free choice of the individual prisoners ensured that this became a major material obstacle in the negotiation of prisoner status. Daniel Miller has highlighted the significance of clothing as identifier of personal individuality and freedom of choice. In his study of Trinidadian culture he links clothing choices and style to conceptions of individuality and freedom that he suggests may reflect a reaction to the previous control of historical memories of slavery (2010: 16). This argument has resonance within a materially controlled political carceral context, with the focus on clothing not merely as a superficial concern but as a material status of political, rather than criminal, imprisonment. Miller states that whilst clothing can be viewed as superficial in a normative UK context, its links to the ability to exercise freedom of choice are paramount. He argues: ‘Clothes are among our most personal possessions. They are the main medium between our sense of our bodies and our sense of the external world’ (2010: 23). This is supported by Laurence McKeown detailing the discomfort he felt at wearing any form of prison clothing when he entered a complying wing after the end of the 1981 Hunger Strike: ‘I was horrified at the thought of wearing prison gear . . . The argument made a lot of sense but for us at that period it still seemed wrong to adopt such a pragmatic outlook in relation to the prison issue clothing’ (2001: 100). The choice, style, or quality of the clothes were not important; their significance lay in the role they played in communicating internal worlds and personal choices to external audiences through the selection of that clothing. In a materially controlled environment clothing choices could be viewed as a major deprivation of personal freedom—a symbol of accepting categorization as a criminal—rather than the superficial afterthought that it was presented as by the government.

Post-closure prison artefacts

Since the site closed as a prison in 2000, and its only human occupants are now short-term visitors, government officials, or contractors, there have developed new sets of human-artefact interactions. The continuous movement of prison-issue artefacts around—and even beyond—the contained prison site suggests the increasing social,

cultural and even spiritual significance of these prison-issue items. For example, whilst conducting on-site oral testimonies, former prisoners frequently attempted, and succeeded, in removing elements of the site as mementos or trophies. Their desire to acquire artefacts relating to the site—even prison-issue and infrastructural ones—can be compared to returning First World War soldiers gathering artefacts as trophies from battlefields and trenches (Saunders 2005: 87). Akin to Saunders’s returning soldiers, at Long Kesh/Maze the process of acquiring this ‘trench art’ is significant rather than its material form or origins (Saunders 2005: 86). The area most obviously pilfered—and by 2011 almost bereft of prison-issue artefacts—was the most unlikely source: the Central Observation Office in the H-Block Administration building. On my first visit to this office it was notable that there were many small items scattered on tables around the room, including pens, cups, paper, and scattered playing cards, which gave the room the appearance of somewhere only recently abandoned (Figure 4.9). However, by 2008 a large proportion of the smaller artefacts had been removed (Figure 4.10). The motivation behind the removal of prison-issue artefacts can vary



Figure 4.9 Central Observation Room of H-Block Administration Block, c.2006.



Figure 4.10 Central Observation Room of H-Block Administration Block, c.2008.

considerably: from gaining personal mementos, a desire to retain a physical remnant from an important period of their lives, ongoing subversion of the site, and even attempts to create their own narrative of what the prison meant outside of the prison context. The dark heritage of the distributed self of Long Kesh/Maze's prison-issue artefacts will be explored in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Post-closure interactions with Long Kesh/Maze are most visually evidenced through the movement of once abandoned artefacts. These negotiations of the site continue and have resulted in artefacts being moved, replaced, taken, hidden, disappeared, or relocated from the site. The mobility of prison-issue artefacts—and unforeseen mutability of their biographies—highlights the continuing contemporary nature of this site and it stresses that no arbitrary end dates for studying or attempting to understand such places can be imposed. This study of prison-issue artefacts also highlights the importance of exploring, analysing, and interpreting mass-produced artefacts of the recent past as the material culture from the site has continually evolved and changed in meaning and/or form, often in unforeseen and context-specific ways. Following Cornelius Holtorf, the artefacts of Long Kesh/Maze highlight the need to study an object in the way that

we study humans, as having a life history that intersects with the people who use them (2005: 79). By understanding these changing uses and contexts we can conclude that the site held, and continues to hold, many prison-issue artefacts that were both used as intended and/or were subverted by individuals and groups within the site at different times. These interactions often left little or no physical trace but extensive negotiation and unexpected meanings and use can be located from oral testimonies, photographic records, and documentary evidence as well as object analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysing the artefactual remains of Long Kesh/Maze is a critical step in attempting to understand the complex experience, negotiations, and meanings of this site. As the first level of an investigation of the material remnants of the *in situ* prison site, the study of artefacts is perhaps the most intimate, individualized, and diverse of a multi-scalar analysis. It provides myriad changing, contextual, and contradictory stories of the experiences of place that were, and remain, in flux. Artefacts not only indicate the degree of access and freedom that the prisoner had in their artefactual holdings, creations, and subversions but they also demonstrate how the material conditions of imprisonment changes often mundane and ordinary artefacts. Following Edensor, 'their ubiquitous presence' demonstrates shared living and common habits (2002: 103) and the central role of prison-issue artefacts in negotiating prisoner identity and power relations can tell us more about experience than the more spectacular and personalized items. As such artefacts are one of the most difficult scales of analysis to definitively discuss, as the extant assemblages reveal very different meanings and usages that reflect interactions, confrontations, and understandings of relationships at the site that fluctuate over time and space.

This investigation was divided into exploring in depth two forms of artefactual remains: confiscated prisoner artefacts that have been recontextualized into the NIPS Collection, and prison-issue artefacts that were imposed by the prison authorities, many of which are no longer in existence. The investigation of these artefacts is significant in that, taken separately and synthesized, they provide a broad picture of the meanings and experiences of place. The prison-issue artefacts

are more complex than their outward mundanity of appearance and conformity of form suggests. Under close examination alongside documentary, photographic, and oral evidence they reveal a number of different uses, meanings, and realities. In the specific settings of material control and deprivation of non-complying H-Block wings, prison-issue artefacts became the weapons of prisoner protest and symbols of status. In other contexts they became evidence of regime laxness and disinterest in controlling prisoner activities. Since the closure of the functional site these artefacts can often be found in contrived settings, as they have been moved, removed, stage-managed, and journeyed around the site to direct narratives of how space was used. The *in situ* remains relate to Long Kesh/Maze in its later period of use and not the disarray of austerity and mass break-ages and burnings from the earlier experiences of the site. As such the interpretation of the prison-issue artefacts of Long Kesh/Maze must also include the no longer existing material culture that has been removed or destroyed but is evidenced through other sources.

The NIPS Collection demonstrates how confiscated artefacts can be used to embody the external and internal relationships, the power fluctuations within the prison, and the need to express individual and communal identity. The existence of cultural artefacts reveals an ability to create, and export, ornate and often highly worked artefacts, highlighting the gaining of skills, the ability to commodify artefacts for external sale, and the fluctuating levels of acquiescence shown by the prison authorities. The confiscated artefacts that are held in the NIPS Collection are significant in demonstrating the ability of the prisoners to subvert and negotiate the prison infrastructure and regime. They do, however, reveal that this ability is inconstant and often suffers from interruptions when the artefacts are removed from their original context and resituated—through various avenues—into this collection. Whilst the artefacts can be interpreted as revealing a highly free or alternatively controlled material environment for prisoners, from the viewpoint of the prison authorities they reveal the ability to locate, extract, and recontextualize these artefacts as trophies of successful searches. Ultimately, the Collection indicates the fluctuating importance of artefacts in being used to openly or more covertly subvert the aims and intentions of the regime and, conversely, the changes over time and space in the desire to control prisoner actions and negotiations.

As with the documentary evidence of Chapter Three, one must view this examination as a stepping-stone in the study of Long Kesh/Maze as a material site. The exploration of artefacts as individualized and intimate or representative of a collective is not complete without considering their wider context of use and meaning. To understand the artefacts from Long Kesh/Maze one must consider Buchli's contention that architecture is the main structuring element of material culture to which smaller objects connect and interact (1999: 1). Artefacts can only be understood as individual interactions within larger, interconnected stories of place. Whereas they are 'things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context' (Appadurai, 1986: 5), and thereby tell us stories of people, the overarching edifices that contain them reveal their context. Architectural structures of various forms at Long Kesh/Maze were deliberately created to be functional, structuring, organizing, and ultimately to curtail the ability of prisoners to individualize and negotiate the surroundings associated with these artefacts. This study of artefacts indicates the degree to which the prison authorities were successful in fulfilling these aims. One must move to the next scale of analysis—standing buildings—in order to add narratives of structure and control to these individualized negotiations of time and place.

Standing buildings

As Daniel Miller has suggested, 'Houses, the elephants of stuff, attract the attention of power' (2010: 90). Buildings are generally the focus of the study of power relations between the prison authorities and the prisoner due to their size, scale, structural qualities and their ambiguous role as simultaneously housing and containing. At the most fundamental level of interpretation they encapsulate the entirety of experience at a prison, the most base level of containment and battleground between regime and prisoner. Eleanor Casella has asserted in her interpretations of female penal institutions in Tasmania, institutional architecture not only shapes and enables some interactions it conversely prevents and discourages others (2001a: 45). The standing buildings of a prison complex are in essence structuring devices; they not only channel experiences but they also choreograph bodily movements and sensory familiarity (2001a: 51). As such the buildings of a prison theoretically act as the ultimate means by which the authorities control prisoners and their experience of the site. They also, conversely, provide evidence of how prisoners respond to these intentions by compliance, negotiation, and/or subversion. An investigation into how the standing buildings of Long Kesh/Maze materially display the negotiated relationships between the regime and prisoner are a crucial scale of analysis.

Prison buildings intend to house, curtail, control, and punish those sentenced to live within them. However, the ability of regimes to fulfil these functions is impacted by the material form of the structures. Although one should dispute the traditional archaeological study of historical buildings that assumes that function solely follows form (see Morriss, 2001: 155), it cannot be doubted that prison regimes are both positively and negatively impacted by their material structures. Human interactions with buildings are time- and place-specific

and are mutable, therefore there can be no totalizing narrative of one experience of prison structures. Following Victor Buchli's argument that the relationship between state manipulation and the individual is local and highly personal (1999: 180), I argue that whilst experiences of the buildings of Long Kesh/Maze are to some extent collective, one cannot delineate all experiences of place as having an essentially communal character. Recent institutional archaeologies have emphasized this need to understand the difference between ideals and reality and thereby unravel complex, mutable experiences of place (DeCunzo 2006: 167). Lu Ann DeCunzo advocates exploring individualized, embodied experience to move beyond an archaeology of place to an archaeology of people (2006: 184). Different individuals and groups of prisoners will have experienced, interacted, negotiated, been curtailed by, and subverted the site in a variety of ways at numerous points in its biography. This approach to interpreting and understanding prison buildings follows Eleanor Casella's contention that the material world simultaneously contains potent signals of 'resistance and compliance, unity and discord' (2001a: 69) rather than traditional dichotomies of domination and resistance.

The archaeological necessity of connecting the theoretical intentions of the regime with the material realities of the prison structures in understanding experience is not located in all studies. Many analyses of prisons discuss regimes without mentioning the actual prison buildings (see Jewkes and Johnston 2006 and Morris and Rothman 1998) or focus on the aesthetics of the buildings without consideration of how they were administered (see Brodie, Croom, and Davies 2002 and Johnston 2000). In exploring the buildings of Long Kesh/Maze there is a need to include the various prison regimes, the physical buildings, and prisoner interactions over time, to avoid what Alan Mayne and Tim Murray call 'the homogenising, universalising and changeless qualities of myth' (2001: 1). Felim O'Hagan, a former prisoner, has addressed the issue of proliferation of mythologized accounts of life within the H-Blocks in similar terms: 'There are tales of certain events of almost mythical status which appear to have taken place in all the Blanket Blocks. It could be a collective mind at work but, me, I reckon the men who were on H3 and H5 are just liars' (1994: 71). The growth of theoretically engaged archaeological treatments of institutions—especially the work of DeCunzo (2006) and DeCunzo and Ernstein (2006) and Casella (2000, 2001a, and 2001b)—which focus on the individuality and peculiarities of

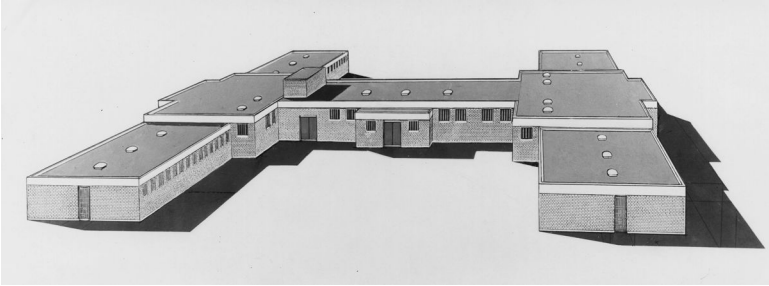


Figure 5.1 Photograph of a plan of a H-Block, Northern Irish Prison Collection, Millisle. Undated.

experience within totalizing institutions, will be central in interpreting the standing buildings of this site. Following DeCunzo's assertions of reciprocity between the ethos of regimes and the interactions of inmates over time (2001: 23) and the active adaptation of inmates to institutions by 'withdrawing, challenging, accepting and/or converting to the institution's view of the self' (2006: 167) this study will highlight the changeable and negotiated experiences of the buildings of Long Kesh/Maze.

When a standing building survey was conducted at Long Kesh/Maze between 2003 and 2004 by the London-based planning consultancy CgMs, they concluded that over 300 standing buildings remained on the site, which ranged in size and function from concrete H-Blocks (Figure 5.1) to temporary, make-shift sheds (Figure 5.2) (Lowe pers. comm. 2005). Examining the standing buildings of Long Kesh/Maze is a vast undertaking due to the scale of the site and the existence of multiple manifestations of prison forms that existed and functioned simultaneously on the same prison landscape. This study will combine various approaches to exploring the standing buildings—through analysis of standing structures, the lasting physical manifestations of change, and the use of oral, documentary, and photographic evidence of more ephemeral interactions—to reveal multiple stories of intention, negotiation, and subversion. Whilst Long Kesh/Maze developed without a master plan and without demolition of defunct elements of the site, the physical remains reveal that there were not a large number of deviations in the style and form of the prison buildings during the course of its life. The physical manifestations of the prison buildings reveal only one major change: when the Nissen huts of the Compounds were phased out with the introduction of the H-Blocks



Figure 5.2 Dilapidated shed, site of Long Kesh/Maze, c.2005.

between 1975 and 1978. This division will dictate the structure of this study whilst the evolving significance of the prison hospital will act as a counterpoint to conclude.

THE COMPOUNDS

The design and structures of the Compounds pre-dated the creation of Long Kesh/Maze and had a lasting impact on how this initial phase was constructed and experienced as a prison site. The initial Nissen huts and associated infrastructure had been used for military purposes during the Second World War, particularly by the Air Force, and were neither reused nor completely disposed of thereafter. Air Force infrastructure, including hangars and runways, had remained at the site since it became defunct before the end of the war. Such a site biography is not unique to Long Kesh/Maze. The next prison that was purpose-built to house paramilitary prisoners in Northern Ireland, HMP Maghaberry, was located in the vicinity and had similarly been a Second World War military airfield. It is noted in research conducted

by William Hull (undated: 1) that a proliferation of war-time Air Force bases occurred in Northern Ireland due to early fears of a 'back door' German invasion of neutral Ireland that would have left Northern Ireland vulnerable. This resulted in an increase from one military airfield predating 1939 to 27 being built by 1944. Military airfields were constructed in this area with considerable difficulty due to soil drainage problems. Ownership of the airfields often passed to the local authorities after the war, despite there being little need for their immediate use. Their government ownership, disused state, history of military usage, rural location, large surface areas, and existing infrastructure made them ideal candidates for emergency places of political incarceration during the prison crisis of the early to mid 1970s.

Hull has noted that there were numerous problems with the development of the sites at Long Kesh/Maze and Maghaberry that have subsequently impacted on their ability to function as prisons. Long Kesh/Maze was not officially opened as an Air Force base until November 1941 due to problems with drainage and the excavation works that were required (Hull, undated: 1). Such problems with drainage had ongoing repercussions for the site as a prison, impacting on the costs to the government of maintaining the structures and on the ability of prisoners to build extensive escape tunnels. However, once it was operational as an Air Force base, the site had an extensive ownership history, having been utilized by the British authorities, the United States Navy, the Coastal Command's No. 17 Group and No. 290 Squadron, and the RAF during the course of the war (Hull, undated: 1-4). In February 1945 the site fell into disuse before finally being abandoned in 1946, not to be used again on a permanent basis until it was reopened as an internment camp in 1971 (Hull, undated: 4).

The site was first utilized as a prisoner holding facility after the existing facilities—Crumlin Road Gaol, a wing of the women's jail at Armagh, and the prison ship *Maidstone* in Belfast Lough—could no longer hold the ever-increasing prison populations that resulted from the introduction of internment in August 1971. Some 342 male members of the Nationalist community were lifted and held without trial on the first night of implementation, which had a substantial impact on the existing prison infrastructure. Long Kesh Internment Camp opened to hold internees in September 1971, with remand prisoners being added to their own Compounds within months. By 1972 further Compounds were being erected for a mass movement of 300-400 convicted prisoners from Crumlin Road Gaol (SU 2011). As government files have

noted, the prison population in Northern Ireland spiralled in a very short period of time:

Five years ago there were little over 500 prisoners in Northern Ireland gaols and, remarkably enough in retrospect, there was not much in the way of organised crime in the Province . . . All this has changed. During the past 5 years there has been a fivefold increase in the prison population and the figure now stands at over 2,700. (CJ4/697, TNA, 1974)

When the site opened as 'Long Kesh Internment Camp', the internees were placed in Compounds (or 'Cages') measuring 70 yards × 30 yards (NIO/10/13/2A, 1981–2, PRONI) with Nissen huts measuring 79 by 24 feet or 60½ by 20 feet, accompanied by smaller Twyneham huts 40 by 20 feet (CJ4/174, TNA, 1971). They were usually arranged with three huts placed alongside each other and one hut across the front, contained in fenced Compounds. The huts were either pre-existing, or replicating pre-existing structures, as they were situated on runways (used as foundations) with the gates on the edge of the runway (Gaynor, 1987: 10). A government letter helpfully described them 'rather like a tennis court' (CJ 4/456, TNA, 1973). Nissen huts were temporary constructions, made from corrugated iron placed over concrete front and rear walls above shallow concrete foundations (Figure 5.3). The interiors were originally open-plan, communal spaces with bunk beds placed along the corrugated iron shell allowing a walkway through the middle of the hut. Communal space was also provided and usually evolved into an educational resource and/or a gym facility.

To facilitate the easy running of the site, prisoners were housed according to their official status and were required to self-identify with their external paramilitary organization. Being housed according to the official designation of status *and* prisoner self-identification was pragmatic but obviously created ambiguity regarding the locale of power and in facilitating the maintenance of external paramilitary relationships within the prison. It was noted in government files at the time that overcrowding in particular Compounds could become a problem if an influx came from a particular type or status of prisoner, because there was a 'need to segregate Protestants from Catholics, detainees from special category, Provisionals from Officials, etc', (NIO/12/30 1973–6 PRONI). With the rapid increase of numbers of prisoners with varying statuses they began to be incorporated into shared Compounds delineated solely by paramilitary affiliation (although with different privileges, including the quality of food they were



Figure 5.3 The exterior of a Nissen hut from the Compounds, c.2005.

provided with [SU 2011]). These Compounds were largely self-governing and prison officers had little control over what happened on a day-to-day basis behind the wire perimeter fences. At its largest extent the Camp held up to 21 of these Compounds, with 1815 inmates (Gaynor 1987: 11).

One must attempt to understand why such structures, which were wholly ill-equipped to hold politicized and potentially non-complying prison populations, were ever utilized by the prison authorities. In the circumstances of the early 1970s, with the burgeoning conflict and swiftly growing prison population, the government was under considerable financial and political pressure to house a swiftly growing population of internees and remand and convicted prisoners. Utilizing this existing site was considered a temporary solution to resolve what was hoped would be a short-term situation. As was secretly accepted at the time by government officials, ‘Temporary prisons, as experience has taught, are at best a necessary evil, but war-time measures are called for in times of emergency’ (CJ4/697, TNA, 1974). This statement also emphasizes a widely accepted difficulty in utilizing this site: the use of Second World War Nissen huts and admittance of ‘war-time measures’ adding credence to prisoner claims of political rather than criminal status. Although government sources admitted in later years

that these facilities were not appropriate for prison use, there were reasons at the time to utilize these Compounds in the face of the large numbers to be held securely:

Whatever its defects, a hutted prison has certain advantages. It can be assembled relatively quickly and cheaply; in fact it costs about a third as much as a permanent prison with the same degree of perimeter security. A reasonable degree of comfort can be provided for so long as those who live in it use it properly. A vital factor is, of course, that given a prison service which is over stretched, fewer staff are required to supervise 60–80 men in compounds than if they had to be accommodated in cells. More important, a hutted prison can be closed down when no longer required and put to other use, it need not remain, with all its inevitable associations, part of the normal prison service. (CJ4/697, TNA, 1974)

The uncertainty of tenure and inappropriateness of material conditions is apparent not only in the material of the structures but also in the site's swift evolution from internment camp to general imprisonment facility. Different categories of prisoner—from internees to remand and convicted prisoners—were introduced to Long Kesh within months of its opening. The nature of this prison population and the physical manifestation of the site had a major impact not only on internal prisoner self-identification as political but also on external public perceptions of the prison. The visual impact of the Nissen huts and wire Compound boundaries that were utilized as an internment camp were aesthetically and practically experienced as a political prison, as the authorities accepted: 'The short point appears to be that the camp was built on a design more appropriate for a prisoner of war camp than an internment camp' (CJ4/449, TNA, 1971). These physical conditions of imprisonment allowed the prisoner to not only be able to negotiate the site in a large number of initially unforeseen and uncontrollable ways, but also gave legitimacy to their claims of being political prisoners. This insight was indeed verified in both the minds of the prisoner and the public as the name 'Long Kesh' quickly became synonymous with internment and prisoner contestation of status. The site's name was officially, if not popularly, changed once convicted prisoners were introduced. The official name 'HMP Maze' was current from 1972 and is still a contentious term, with prisoners continuing to prefer the connotations of the original name 'Long Kesh'.

Prisoner experiences of the Compounds were undoubtedly dictated by the pre-existing, and subsequently replicated, structures of

the Second World War military base. Whilst the security measures were added to and evolved over time—a prison officer later recounted in the early days being called from his bed in the middle of the night to stop inmates ‘going over the wire . . . No walls or inertia guards in those days’ (Gaynor, 1987: 10)—there were no significant deviations. The plan and placement of these structures, as a collection of communal buildings within their own fenced Compound, ensured that the prison authorities had little ability to effectively control the prison population. As such the prisoner had a heightened ability to plan, coordinate and implement disruptive and subversive assaults on the prison infrastructure. The Compounds reveal material evidence of many official and unofficial interactions with the site over the period of its occupation. The official interactions include attempts to not only make habitation of an increasingly long-term residence more hospitable but also to create a more institutional environment. The exteriors of the Nissen huts had a number of additions to the façade over an extended period of time after their initial construction. The most obvious changes were the introduction of security measures to ensure that the Nissen huts contained prisoners within the structures when they were locked in at night. This included the addition of iron bars to the numerous windows that were situated around the hut as well as an overhead security light at the entrance, so that any night-time activity around this area could be seen. One could also suggest that the introduction of internal divisions into the Nissen huts had a dual social and security purpose (Figure 5.4). While such divisions would ensure that the prisoners had a degree of privacy, due to pressure from the International Red Cross to adhere to acceptable space densities (NIO/12/30 PRONI 1973–6), they were also an attempt to replicate the more typical cellular divisions within high-security prisons. This could be interpreted as an attempt to facilitate the breakdown of the overly communal prisoner groupings associated with paramilitary imprisonment in the Compounds.

Other additions were made under duress to alleviate, under increasing local and international pressure, the fairly basic conditions in which the prisoners found themselves indefinitely confined. This included the introduction of a veranda around the front door, which was introduced as a wind-break to prevent cold air entering the already cold interiors. However, it was also used subversively by prisoners. During on-site oral testimonies, the following exchange occurred between two of the former prisoners:



Figure 5.4 Image of interior of Nissen hut with partitions in place.

CM: . . . if you want to know something you see these, those bolts that hold on the [porch] door well the top one and the bottom one points skywards and the middle one points groundwards, what the prisoners done was took the middle one off and turned it around and had it pointing skywards so the screws came along and closed this door at night and the prisoners just came along and took the door off.

PK: Another thing, see this veranda, that wasn't always there, see when we first went in here there was just the doors and you can just imagine opening that door on a windy day and rain hail and snow. Them verandas weren't built for three or four years after . . .

This exchange illuminates two important points: although these additions were supposedly added for the comfort of the prisoners, they were not installed for a considerable period after the Compounds were initially occupied. A possible explanation for this delay is that they

were only added due to external pressure and internal protests about conditions in the temporary structures. The nature of internal protests demonstrates the atypical level of freedom within the Compounds. This includes the throwing of prison food 'over the wire', to protest its poor quality, and the draping of laundry around the fences—preventing the authorities seeing beyond the perimeter—as a protest at poor laundry services. These protests were ongoing throughout the use of the Compounds and were often reported in local media, as was evident in the ongoing coverage given to the escalating protests and disturbances that culminated in the burning of the camp in October 1974. Reluctance by the government to add elements to the Nissen huts can be understood when it is considered that 'the Troubles' were continually conceived as a short-term conflict that did not necessitate long-term financial outlays on security and increasing suspicion regarding how any changes could be used by the prisoners. These negotiated realities confirm Casella's contention that 'neither domination nor resistance can be interpreted as isolated events' (2001a: 62); every action and physical addition had multiple intended and unforeseen positive and negative repercussions and the balance of power constantly shifted.

The introduction of special category status in 1972 ensured prisoners had even more rights to control their daily activities and opt out of prison work and activities. Within the confines of the Compounds former prisoners have described the recreational activities as including gaining educational qualifications, exercise, creating handicrafts, painting murals for the interiors, cleaning duties, watching TV, refining escape plans through creating makeshift wire cutters or digging tunnels, and debating political and social issues. The photographic evidence for murals, particularly in Loyalist Compounds, reflects that this form of identity creation and reaffirmation was borrowed from the wider community. At this time mural painting was fundamentally a Loyalist tradition in wider society, and only became a noticeable presence in Nationalist communities with the 1981 Hunger Strikes (Sluka 1992: 90). However there is extensive photographic evidence held in the NIPS Collection of the murals located in Republican Compounds. This includes images of the interiors of a variety of Republican Nissen huts that inadvertently reveal murals of Che Guevara, the Soviet symbols of the hammer and sickle and more traditional Celtic images in the background. Nuances of political influences within Republicanism were presented in mural form with the Official IRA

displaying '[James] Connolly over [Padraig] Pearse', reflecting the socialist tendencies of the former organization (HX 2007). Throughout the 1970s this cultural phenomenon was replicated within the relatively free conditions of the Compounds as large-scale murals were created on boards and attached to the interior walls in Compounds. The subject of these murals differed depending on the organization, with the UVF creating images connected to the UVF of the early twentieth century, the First World War, paramilitary insignia and even some images of Northern Irish life and well known tourist attractions (see photographic holdings within the NIPS Collection). These murals acted to lift the drab conditions of imprisonment, boost morale and convey to the prisoners the merit of their cause as well as emphasize historical continuities and the steadfastness of their predecessors. The ability to acquire the materials to complete these boards and maintain their placement within the Compounds relied on the maintenance of good relations with the prison authorities, but these mural boards do not appear to have been confiscated at any time (there are no inclusions in the NIPS Collection).

Each Compound contained men who self-identified with specific paramilitary groupings and as such were ultimately subject to the discipline of their organization above and beyond that of the prison regime. Marion Green has highlighted that the UVF's discipline structure in the Compounds, initially under Gusto Spence, reflected the British Army backgrounds of a significant number of their prisoners (1998: 10). This was initially mirrored in many Republican Compounds as a number of early PIRA leaders had similarly had a British Army background (Scullion 2001: 38). There was an initial emphasis on discipline—through the maintenance of strict hierarchies and daily routines—and a communal ethos, with exercise and completing allocated roles being considered fundamental in structuring the day (Green 1998: 10–12). This response to imprisonment reflects how the physical conditions directed interactions with the site. The development of, at least initially, such strict command structures by paramilitary organizations were a response to the essentially free and unstructured nature of imprisonment that could potentially lead to inactivity, lack of purpose and even depression amongst those incarcerated. A number of photographs taken by the prisoners show this discipline in action, including the prisoners marching in parades and performing military drills (Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.5 Photograph of prisoners marching around their Compounds. Undated, Northern Irish Prison Service Collection, Millisle.

The most consistent subversive activity within the Compounds reveals negotiations of the freedom of the structures that allowed highly elaborate efforts to escape. As Republican prisoners did not recognize the right of the British judicial system to imprison them, they saw it as an imperative to plan and initiate escapes. Loyalist prisoners also attempted to escape, but as they did not have such a straightforward relationship with imprisonment—being effectively imprisoned by their own side—their attempts were not as relentless. As one informant pragmatically stated: ‘number one, where can you go?’ He asserted that Loyalist prisoners could not simply ‘cross the border’; they had no networks to facilitate their escape abroad and did not relish a life on the run as they had no experience of going ‘outside the law’ prior to the Troubles (SU 2011). Attempts to escape varied and did include highly innovative and individual ruses such as creating copies of workmen’s or prison officers’ uniforms to attempt to walk out, hiding in lorries visiting the site, or trying to exchange clothes with visitors. The most common escape attempts involved accumulating tools and materials that would allow large numbers of prisoners to ‘go over the wire’ of

their Compounds, often in carefully planned, simultaneous actions. However, digging tunnels under the Nissen huts was by far the most widely used approach and the one that has left the most noticeable material traces in the Compound structures.

The ongoing physical manifestations of escape attempts are most apparent in the large number of tunnels that had been dug and shored up under the huts closest to the perimeter fences. This form of subversion of the prison structure is almost unique to the Compounds section of the prison landscape (although there was at least one tunnel constructed from H7 during the later phases of H-Block usage [McKeown 2001: 210]). An early government file discussing the likelihood of this activity states that the site had been chosen due to expert advice stating that tunnelling activities would be impossible due to the high water table. Therefore, the first tunnel was only found by chance when it subsided as a prison officer walked over the surface (CJ4/724, TNA, 1973). Later government files indicate that the proven ability of prisoners to construct viable tunnels was a salient consideration in the updating of prison defences. The Minister of Defence, writing to the Prime Minister in October 1973, notes the inclusion of ‘a water-filled anti-tunnelling ditch at selected points inside the fences, as well as various further studies of means to deter and detect attempts at tunnelling’ (CJ4/456, TNA, 1973). Due to the high water table these tunnels were precarious to construct and involved intensive labour, materials and some skill and ingenuity. To protect them from collapse, a large quantity of wood—officially sent from friends and family members for handicraft activities—was needed to shore up the roof and sides (PK 2006). Despite the vast number of tunnels dug only a small number ever reached the perimeter fence, with only one tunnel facilitating an actual escape (with one escapee shot dead at the tunnel mouth and one later recaptured). Tunnels often collapsed due to the nature of the ground, a lack of material to shore them up—especially if there was an embargo on receiving parcels during protests—or they were found in planned searches and filled with concrete.

The creation of these tunnels, and the associated paraphernalia needed to create them, had a major impact on the experiences of the structures for a large number of prisoners. Many of the oral testimonies and associated material culture reveal the extent of the web of subterfuge required to create and maintain the tunnels, as they were carefully dug, shored up, concealed, and the resultant soil redistributed. This was a communal activity that consumed the waking hours

of many who lived in the Compounds. Finding ingenious ways of creating tunnels and hiding the remnants of these activities left few physical traces, with many examples only found decades later. Tunnel digging was a time- and labour-intensive activity and equally impacted on the experience of the site for the prison authorities, as much time and energy was employed by the prison officers in trying to locate these tunnels during searches. It is clear that these activities were not only important in attempting to create escape routes, but the creation of a tunnel was an act of active non-compliance and more prosaically structured otherwise uneventful days. The role of tunnelling as a structuring device and act of defiance rather than the most effective means of plotting escapes is illustrated by both artefactual and documentary evidence. Both government and prisoner communications revealed knowledge of the role prison-issue artefacts could play in surmounting Compound fences as a means of mass escape (see Chapter Four). There is even one government report detailing a prison structure being used as a moveable object to attack prison officers during the process of an escape attempt: 'Compound 18 dragged their study hut to the wire, tipped it over and used it as a vantage point from which they bombarded DF' (WO 296/77, TNA, 1973-4). The significant number of wire cutters confiscated from prisoners in the Compounds, which now reside in the NIPS Collection, reveal the existence of implements to cut Compound fences. The devastating impact of concerted attempts at overland escape during the riot of 16 October 1974, when Republican prisoners cut and surmounted the perimeter fences, indicates that tunnelling was not the most effective means of attempting to escape. Tunnel building can best be interpreted as an act of defiance and means of structuring the day rather than a practical means of mass escape.

After the construction of the H-Blocks between 1975 and 1978 the Compounds continued to hold small groups of segregated bodies of prisoners, but these numbers increasingly shrank and there were no new additions after March 1976. In a government report in 1981 it was stated that 300 prisoners remained in the Compounds, with a residual core of 150 expected to remain indefinitely (NIO/12/182A 1979-81 PRONI). In 1988 the site was finally closed and the last prisoners were released or transferred. While public, political, and media attention had long before moved to the mass protests in the H-Blocks, life had continued within the Compounds. The two prison manifestations co-existed separately but in knowledge of the

other for over a decade. The residual core of prisoners, at times, protested in support of their comrades in the H-Blocks but they fell from public view as, indeed, did the prison officers who considered themselves ‘a forgotten army’ (Gaynor 1987: 1). The essential dual nature of the site after the construction of the H-Blocks is emphasized by the prison staff being allocated to either ‘Maze Compounds’ or ‘Maze Cellular’ without crossover between the two manifestations whilst operative. For a time both elements had their own governor (Gaynor 1987). However, ongoing acts of graffiti (Figure 5.6), vandalism, and arson at the Compounds support Casella’s contention that in utilizing specific prison landscapes the authorities ‘constructed an architecture of resistance, a cultural landscape of insubordination’ (2001a: 63), which continued despite the lack of public attention.

The standing buildings of the Compounds reveal that they were initially utilized by the government under pressure of time and resources but were inadequate structures for facilitating control of a collective and politicized prison population. The initial structures were added to and replicated—rather than replaced by more appropriate buildings—and this decision deeply impacted on the prison experience. The use of Nissen huts placed within wire Compounds



Figure 5.6 Incised graffiti ‘UVF’, located on the front exterior of a Nissen hut.

ensured that the prisoners were contained but their interactions with their immediate surroundings was not controlled. They negotiated their environments and subverted the intentions of the regime on an ongoing basis and due to their free, communal conditions the prisoners had little need to make lasting, structural changes. Only spectacular events, such as the burning of the Camp in October 1974, left major marks on the Compounds that were later eradicated with partial rebuilding. The layout and structures of the Compounds ensured that many of the prisoners were able to negotiate deficits in their unusual physical surroundings at will. The repercussions of these arrangements for the prisoner body ensured a multitude of subversions and unforeseen negotiation of their structures and their surroundings with the only effective control being those self-imposed by paramilitary hierarchies. The atypical nature of this prison was frequently commented on through the course of its functional life, with even prison officers mourning 'the passing of what was the most unique prison in the western world' (Gaynor 1987: 10).

For the prison officers and government administrators these unique surroundings initially led to insecurity and lack of control and knowledge of prisoner activities. This lack of day-to-day knowledge of prisoner activity is materialized in the confiscated artefacts located en masse during searches that now reside in the NIPS collection (discussed in Chapter Four). The small number of structural changes made by the prison authorities were primarily to appease campaigners and prevent prisoner protests, but they did sometimes have ambiguous roles in providing not only a degree of material comfort but also creating a more institutional prison experience. This can be seen in the additions of internal partitions, an entrance veranda and an external light to the Nissen huts over time. One manifestation of subversion and negotiation that physically impacted on the structures was the materialization of escape attempts. The planning and covert operation of these attempts to escape was a major structuring device of the Republican prisoner experience in particular. The ongoing creation of multiple tunnels approaching the perimeter walls of the prison landscape demonstrates how prisoners negotiated their material conditions and actively disputed their imprisonment. However, on only a few occasions did they exhibit overt defiance of the prison authorities, including the camp burning of October 1974. Undoubtedly the ease with which the prisoners could subvert the intentions of the institution—and publicly do so—ensured that these conditions of imprisonment could not continue. It was undoubtedly in part a reaction to unrestrainable prisoner negotiations of their

environment and ability to threaten mass escape on an ongoing basis that reveal the background for the introduction of the H-Blocks.

THE H-BLOCKS

The widespread rioting and burning of the Compounds in October 1974—coupled with an emerging government policy of criminalization and ‘ulsterisation’ of the conflict—led to general acceptance that they were not an effective means of holding such a communalized and non-complying body of prisoners. Attempts to counter prisoner claims of political and special status were effectively compromised by their residence in POW-style camps. Allen Feldman has suggested that by the mid 1970s the 1119 men who were categorized as special category prisoners, and held in these conditions, were an embarrassment to the government and needed to be hidden in a more acceptable, high-security prison (1991: 151). The burning of the camp provided an ideal opportunity to economically justify providing a more traditional criminal holding facility. The official investigation into the burning of the Camp—the Gardiner Report (1975)—strongly recommended, amongst other measures, that a new, purpose-built prison was constructed, unambiguously stating that ‘the design of prison compounds should be modified to improve internal security, and their size should be considerably reduced’ (1975: 36). Comparable to Victor Buchli’s view that the architecture of communal housing was the most complete attempt to realize the Soviet system (1999: 63), so too the H-Blocks were not just new prison buildings but were constructed specifically to curtail the subversion of increasingly troublesome politicized prisoners.

The purpose of these new, more permanent buildings was not only to replace the ineffective and increasingly uninhabitable Nissen hut accommodation but also to allow prison authorities to have ultimate control in a more typical relationship with the prisoner. The focus of attempts to govern the prisoners more effectively—in physical, mental, and propaganda terms—was to ensure that convicted paramilitary prisoners were treated as criminal prisoners and held in ordinary, cellular prison surroundings. It was important to refute claims for special category status that were being sustained by the negotiated realities of POW-style camps. The new style of prison buildings aimed to manifest a change in ethos as well as form and structure. In essence, the H-Block structures were to

encompass not only a new regime and a new relationship with the prisoners but also a new meaning to the site that materially denied paramilitary claims of the political nature and legitimacy of their actions.

Phase one of the Maze encompassed H-Blocks 1 and 2 and construction began in 1975. Army personnel slotted ready-made concrete slabs onto quickly set shallow foundations and this first phase was ready for habitation by September 1976. Phase two, containing H-Blocks 3 to 5, was constructed immediately after the first phase and was finished by April 1977. The final phase, encompassing H-Blocks 6 to 8, was separated by an internal wall within the prison landscape (which will be discussed further in Chapter Six) and was completed in 1978 (Purbrick, 2004: 99). At its most contained level—the individual cell—the prisoners were housed within a room that measured 8 ft 3 inches \times 7 feet 1½ inches. This cellular element of the Long Kesh/Maze site covered 150 acres contained within a wall 25 feet high and two miles long (Purbrick in Coiste na n-Iarchimí, 2003: 10). From this time until the prison closed in 2000 there stood eight architecturally identical H-Blocks, which were self-contained but that allowed some intervisibility, with the exception of the internal wall separating the last phase. The experience of everyday interactions within these H-Blocks was to mark a vast change in prisoner relationships with the site, the prison officers, and essentially with each other, although not always in the ways foreseen by the authorities.

Feldman has stated that the prisoners first introduced to the site were initially ill-prepared for these new buildings. The H-Blocks were based on a cellular system of individualization and refusal to recognize any social unit above that of the singular (1991: 152). This use of architecture to attempt to fundamentally change power relations at the prison was evident to the prisoners from their first introduction and they reacted to these changes through immediate protests. This initially took the form of rejection of material manifestations of this change in status, first experienced in the form of the newly introduced prison uniforms. The first Republican prisoner introduced to the H-Blocks, Kieran Nugent, refused to wear a uniform and remains commemorated in wall murals in Nationalist areas due to his role as the ‘first Blanketman’. As the withdrawal of special category status coincided with the introduction of prisoners to the H-Blocks,

they perceived greater brutality and more inhumane conditions due to the desire of the authorities to emphasize these changes in status (Green 1998: 22). One prisoner stated his two overriding memories from his introduction to the H-Blocks were his bafflement at being introduced to this new environment, 'That was it: H Block', and the heightened hostility of the 'screws' (McMullan 1994: 6). Prison officers have also stated that they found the new buildings difficult to adapt to, as they 'came "over the wall" as they say from Compound to Cellular. I found this place so big and strange. At first I thought I would never get used to it' (Stinton 1987: 12). It was universally understood that these new prison structures, manifest in a permanent and more conventional cellular prison design, represented an attempt to change the existing relationship within the prison by using architectural design to control the prisoners' negotiations, interactions, and experiences of the site. What was perhaps not actively considered at the time was that the changes in physical structure, which put the prison officers in increased contact with the prisoners, also altered the relationships of those patrolling the prisoners and placed them as central to the functioning of the new prison.

At a material level the most immediate difference between the Compounds and the H-Blocks was, as a purpose-built facility, these utilitarian structures actually looked like prison buildings. Although they were not classically embellished like earlier, more physically grand, and aesthetically impressive Victorian gaols (McConville 1998: 139), they had institutional characteristics, being grey, linear, utilitarian, and architecturally unadorned. This more permanent and intimidating physical presence confirms Casella's view that the institutional architecture itself demonstrates power, from the large perimeter walls through to the 'dark cells' (2007: 146). Despite their structural deficits, with ongoing issues of flooding and water saturation due to shallow foundations, these manifestations transmitted permanence through their concrete construction, enhanced security measures and controlled access across landscape and building through to individual cells.

The interiors of the H-Blocks reflected new official policies towards the prisoner and their new criminalized status. Those prisoners who were placed in the new facilities—convicted after the date of 1 March 1976 or pre-existing prisoners who chose to leave the Compounds or were convicted of a new offence whilst in the Compounds—immediately experienced a more contained environment. The H-Blocks were designed to allow greater control of

prisoners in relatively small areas. Although a former governor, disputes that ultimately this design was any more effective in controlling prisoners than the Compounds (due to the lack of surveillance inherent in an 'H') (FR 2007), it cannot be doubted that the initial prisoner experience was very different and much more restricted than experiences of the Compounds. The cellular system imposed a new set of realities for the prisoner that initially proved difficult to circumvent. However, it is the interrelationship between the building and the regime, and their need to relentlessly reinforce each other, that presents a potential weakness. A reliance on, and complacency about, the inherent properties of the material environment was revealed by the authorities lack of foresight in preempting of the prisoners targeting relationships with the prison officers and unforeseen interactions with some of the structures. Whilst FR stated that the weak link in governing the prison was always the prison officers (FR 2007), so prisoner experiences of the H-Blocks depended on where and when they were located, and whether they were complying or non-complying prisoners. As one ex-prisoner observed on the simultaneously different experiences of the H-Blocks, H5 was 'like Butlins [holiday camp] compared to the last place' (McMullan, 1994: 19).

As the prisoner arrived at their designated H-Block they were taken into the 'circle', which was the central administration area where all prisoners were processed before being placed on a wing (Figure 5.7). In this area the prisoners were out of their comfort and control zone; they were in the prison officers' domain and surrounded by prison employees and were treated as a transient presence. This was the area where they were separated from fellow inmates, were searched—including, at times, using mirrors to search the prisoner internally, which even a government official recognized as 'degrading and in any event unnecessary' (NIO/12/182A, PRONI, 1980)—and then told which wing they would be placed on before being guided to their cell. The circle, for prisoners, was a liminal space where they did not belong, did not control and only fleetingly—and forcefully—passed through. It was often the site of violent resistance and negative interactions, which the comms discussed in Chapter Three highlight in graphic terms. A significant number of prisoner comms recount in vivid detail the experience of internal searches and the violence that often accompanied them. As the incoming and outgoing prisoner was removed from the other inmates and outnumbered by prison officers in this area he was isolated and at his most vulnerable. During oral testimonies, it was in this area that

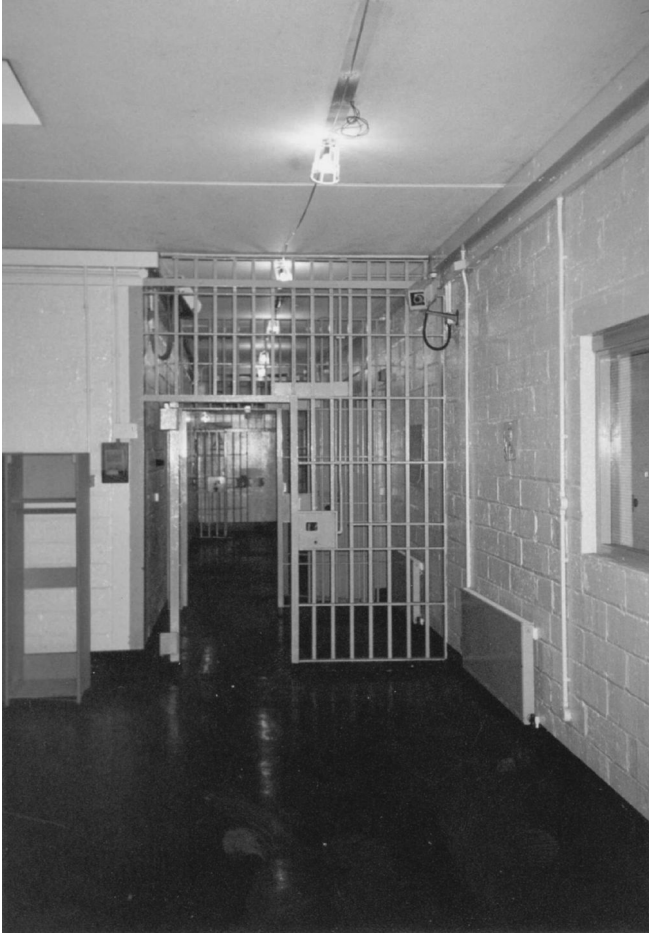


Figure 5.7 View into the H-Block wing from end of the circle, and the security mechanisms, now open, placed between the 'circle' and the wings, c.2005.

former prisoners noted an immediate difference in their experiences compared to their time there as a prisoner. They could stand, look around and venture into the offices around the circle rather than be forced through at the officers' pace and direction (CM 2006).

When the prisoner was introduced to their cell, their first experiences continued this theme of enforced physical separation. Many prisoners have stressed the isolation experienced in these cells, despite a cell often housing multiple prisoners. However, they quickly discovered multiple ways to

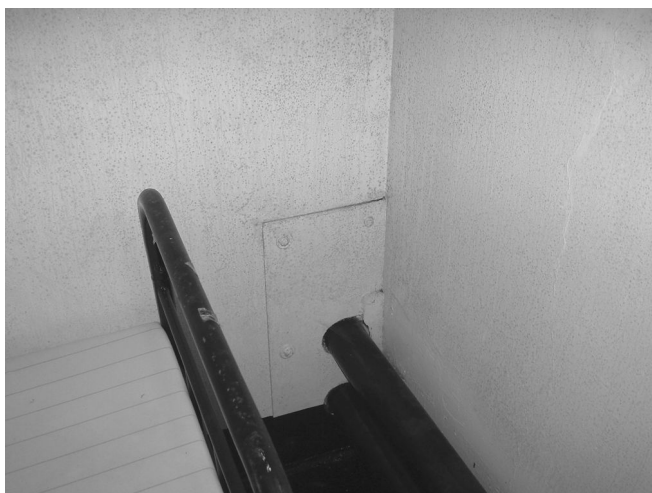


Figure 5.8 Unlagged heating pipe, which runs along each side of each H-Block allowing communication with neighbouring cells, January 2006.

communicate with other prisoners, including talking through windows, doors and along ‘the pipes’ (Figure 5.8). In contrast to the freedom of the Compounds, the isolation was palpable: ‘The circumstances of our confinement meant that each cell and the men within it were on their own: prisons within a prison’ (Whelan 1994: 64). This new form of accommodation demonstrated the fundamental differences in the prisoner experience of imprisonment between the Compounds and H-Blocks. Firstly, they had no choice onto which wing and with which type of prisoner they would be placed. On the introduction of prisoners to the H-Blocks the official policy was of integration and, at times, the wings experienced various degrees of intermingling between Loyalist and Republican prisoners. Segregation swiftly occurred but took various forms. In reaction to prisoner protests—with wings being designated ‘complying’ or ‘non-complying’—the prisoner was segregated by this status rather than the authorities recognizing prisoner self-identifications. Furthermore, the introduction of a cellular system signalled an intention to interrupt, if not completely break, the hitherto established communal nature of the prison populations. A cellular structure ensured that each prisoner could be physically isolated. This was an experience that sharply contrasted with their previous existence of self-regulation within the boundaries of the Compound fences. Cellularization ensured that prisoners were overtly subjected to attempts to individualize and

institutionalize. Each prisoner was now removed to his 'small cube-like cell' (Fusco 1981). The cells had individual locking mechanisms, controlled externally, and had physical access to the communal areas, and association with fellow prisoners, only when permitted.

The use of cellular accommodation accompanied by a more controlling regime indicates the desire of the prison authorities to more completely regulate and counteract the communal nature and high morale of the prisoners from the Compounds. That integration of paramilitary organizations—in defiance of their self-identification—was applied, at least sporadically, in this system. This demonstrates that the authorities wished to ignore the political connotations of the crimes and punishment and treat the prisoners as ordinary criminals. Despite these intentions, the remaining buildings have the potential to reveal how successful these measures were in altering the balance of power and the prisoner experiences of place. Martin Hall's work in South Africa has shown that draconian changes, in legislation and forms of control, were not always a manifestation of power. Indeed, he suggests that often the decision by authorities to utilize their power through overly harsh measures conversely reveals a lack of control (2000: 135–7). Hall states that the architecture of the authorities was read publicly as a transcript of patriarchal control, but privately as a record of anxiety and uncertainty (Hall 2000: 126). Such an analysis resonates with the specificities of Long Kesh/Maze. Prison authorities that felt able to comfortably control paramilitary prisoners and legitimately deny their claims for political status would not need to so restrictively control their inmates. The prison authorities were reacting to the relative freedom of the Compounds by creating structures that attempted to fully control negotiation and deny the reciprocity inherent in most prison regimes. By doing so they inadvertently reveal that this institutional architecture recognized the special nature of the prison population. This view is supported by evidence of how the prisoner experience of this new place was not uniformly one of control, but instead the H-Block structures housed different degrees of conforming and non-conforming prisoners.

Whilst unforeseen interactions with the non-purpose-built facilities of the Compounds were materially evident it is crucial to uncover whether subversions were also decipherable within the purpose-built H-Blocks. In an institutional environment that has heightened political tensions—often correlating to events in wider society—it would be expected that prisoner compliance or resistance would not be constant but

would ebb and flow as will, circumstance, and opportunity allow. The centrality of the physical remains of the standing structures and the memories of those most intimately connected with them can be used to reveal specific moments of negotiation that did not always result in major structural alterations or long lasting physical or structural changes. The combining of oral testimonies retelling experiences of the structures can help pinpoint what Homi Bhabha calls ‘the reality of survival and negotiation that constitutes the moment of resistance’ (1994: 255). As well as the major acts of resistance that left permanent physical traces, the more mundane experiences of small-scale resistances as well as conformity of the prisoner can then be noted.

As one would expect from a site that was purpose-built to hold a communalized and politicized prison population, there are far fewer physical manifestations of unofficial permanent interventions with the buildings in comparison to the Compounds. It appears that most of the negotiations and subversions of these structures were ephemeral in nature and as such left few lasting traces on the standing structures. Indeed, most of the evidence relating to the unforeseen interactions and experiences of the site come from first-hand accounts of former prisoners, who tell of subversions that have left discreet, ephemeral or no physical traces. There is also evidence from various documentary and photographic sources that reveal negotiations of the H-Block that have left no lasting trace on the extant buildings. In the use of later oral testimonies, one can question the accuracy of memory, the presence of hindsight and the impact of mythologizing about the site. However, Adrian Forty argues, remembrance only resides in those impacted by it (2001: 6). Therefore, it is necessary to trace the experiences of place that leave no trace primarily through the oral testimonies of those who lived in these structures.

From 1975 to 1981 prisoner experiences of the H-Blocks were marked by the impact of increasing levels and escalations of protests by groups of prisoners. These protests were against the change in prisoner status manifest in the markedly different physical conditions and relationship with the prison authorities in comparison with the previous freer experiences of the Compounds. Popular protests included breaking all prison-issue artefacts in the cell of the prisoner—resulting in them being less frequently replaced or even in refusals to renew them—and refusal to wear prison clothing or partake in prison work. Such escalating campaigns left many prisoners with little more than a mattress and a blanket in their cell, with ongoing destruction of prison

infrastructure (often focusing on breaking windows) and the smearing of excrement around the walls and roof of their individual cells. The prison authority reaction to each new form of protest was to move prisoners to new, pristine wings while the sullied wings were cleaned and rejuvenated. This policy ensured the need to constantly prepare new wings and move prisoners involved in protests. Therefore, the experiences of the prisoners who partook in the protests, including the constant movement and increasing withdrawal of material resources, were very different to those prisoners who resided on a complying wing. Jackie McMullan recalled his introduction to the H-Blocks when the regime contrived 'all sorts of petty restrictions designed to aid control and discipline' (1994: 7), whilst non-complying prisoners who left the protest were amazed by the richness of the material possessions provided to them (McKeown 2001).

The differences in treatment and experiences between complying and non-complying wings were stark but they were also often used to the advantage of the prisoners. Former prisoners have stated that complying wings often circulated the information they had gained from radios and visits to their more isolated non-complying comrades by continually going on and off protest (Campbell et al. 1994). The prison regime was aware of how frequent changes from compliance to non-compliance had an often strategic purpose: 'Ex-protectors, now conforming, will be returning to the protest at weekly intervals, then abandoning it again' (NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–81). The tense relationship between prison authorities and the prisoners on non-complying wings has dominated the narrative of the early years of occupancy of the H-Blocks but was actually a minority experience of the structures. The majority of prisoners experienced a more relaxed regime that contrasted greatly with the materially deprived and fraught existence of those involved in the increasing escalations of prisoner non-compliance.

Prisoner interactions with H-Block structures left few lasting traces but there is evidence of major changes being made by the prison authorities as a reaction to unforeseen prisoner actions. A number of alterations can be seen in doors and windows, which had initially been part of a symmetrical plan, being later covered over or moved. One example is a window in the room where prisoners were held before proceeding to their designated wing. It's placement allowed a view over the front yard of the H-Block (Figure 5.9) and was later covered due to its positioning being utilized by prisoners to allow identification of who was entering and exiting the H-Blocks and at what times. Such information allowed knowledge of



Figure 5.9 Front of H-Block 4, which shows a window facing into the front yard had been blocked since construction, January 2006.

prison timetables that proved useful when planning escape attempts. It ensured the prisoners knew who was approaching the H-Block before the prison authorities did.

Indeed, windows became a focal point of protest and control within the H-Blocks as they were increasingly targeted by non-complying prisoners, which resulted in all non-complying wings being fitted with Perspex windows prior to the addition of inmates. Many examples of the replacement windows remained *in situ* on the closure of the site. On protesting wings the original glass was found to be easily smashed on being struck by prison-issue furniture and after some experimentation ‘an external weather-shield of Perspex and corrugated translucent material with a steel mesh grille on the inside’ was found to be a suitable replacement (NIO/12/160A PRONI 1979–81). However, by November 1979 it was noted that the prisoners increasingly were able to ‘destroy grilles, sheeting and frames’ of these apparently unbreakable windows (NIO/12/160A PRONI 1979–81). This was discovered when prisoners were issued with new chairs for their cells and the Perspex windows—including frames—had to be replaced quickly afterwards at a considerable cost. These new windows were opaque and therefore prevented natural light, a view from their

windows, and easy communications for non-complying prisoners. The opaque windows effectively creating visual sensory deprivation, a repercussion that could not have been unforeseen by the prison authorities.

Other lasting changes to the structure and layout of the prison is evident in the security mechanisms that were placed between the circle and the prison wings in the mid 1980s (Figure 5.7). In Cahal McLaughlin's documentary, *Inside Stories: memories from the Maze and Long Kesh prison*, a prominent former prisoner, now Sinn Féin politician Gerry Kelly, retold his role in the escape of 25 September 25 1983. The escape attempt resulted in 38 Republican prisoners breaking out from the prison, the largest number in UK history, with one prison officer dying of a heart attack as a result of the event. On discussing the plans and actions on that day he stated that it was difficult to demonstrate how they managed to control the circle as there were fewer security measures in place in 1983 than existed in this later manifestation (McLaughlin 2004). This was confirmed in the resultant Hennessy Report, which highlighted not only a number of procedural deficiencies but security weakness on many scales throughout the site (Hennessy 1984). Whilst this escape was successful in allowing significant numbers of paramilitary prisoners to exit the prison site, planned escape attempts were far fewer in the H-Blocks in comparison to the Compounds. This was due to the cellular format, increased security, lack of necessary equipment, and difficulties tunnelling, even as conditions of imprisonment grew increasingly lax (Kelly 2001). There is evidence from the later periods of imprisonment, when prison officers infrequently accessed the wings, that one tunnel was dug from H7 (Scullion 2001) and one man escaped by changing into women's clothes on a communal visit in 1997 (McKeown 2001: 214). However, escape-attempts were not a mass structuring activity as they had been in the Compounds.

The H-Blocks were often interacted with in ways that subverted their intentions as prison buildings but without the lasting traces of the Compounds. There are many photographs showing examples of graffiti and murals within the cells (Figure 5.10). These had multiple purposes, from a means of maintaining the resolve of prisoners, with phrases such as 'Up the IRA' and 'We are POWs' written on the walls (McQuillan 1994: 4) to wanton vandalism. There is also evidence that even when writing implements were restricted, metal toothpaste



Figure 5.10 Republican mural found in a H-Block, commemorating the 1981 Hunger Strikers, August 2012.

tubes were used to scratch words on walls to enable prisoners to conduct classes including educating Republican prisoners in Irish vocabulary shouted down the corridor by those who were fluent (Campbell 1994: 48). As in the Compounds, the Irish language was not only used to maintain group identity and to communicate without prison authorities intercepting oral messages; it also ‘filled a vacuum and helped cope with incarceration in a small cell 24-hours a day’ (McKeown 2001: 67). From some Loyalist cells there is evidence that there were attempts to make their bare, cellular surroundings more homely and less institutionalized by painting traditional living room scenes, such as adorned fireplaces (Figure 5.11) and adding Orange Order-style triumphal arches across the corridor of the wing (Figure 5.12).

Akin to the Compounds, murals were found in both Republican and Loyalist wings in large quantities but were often painted over between wing moves and on the prison closure. Photographs held in the NIPS Collection were often accompanied by notes stating: ‘Have since been painted over’ within a short time of the photograph being taken. The range of images held by the collection is even broader than the examples from the Compounds, with INLA examples including an image of the Four Courts in Dublin from



Figure 5.11 Photograph from a Loyalist H-Block cell of living room scene, including fireplace with household goods on the mantelpiece. Northern Ireland Prison Service Collection, Millisle. Undated.

1916 with the epitaph 'ICA (Irish Citizens Army) 1916-INLA 2000', a mural of a murdered INLA member, Dominic McGlinchey, murals commemorating the 1981 Hunger Strikes, and images of Che Guevara. The examples of Loyalist murals tend to be more militaristic and reference notorious killings during the Troubles. These include references to attacks on Unionist and Loyalist individuals and communities at 'Greysteele' and 'Shankill Road' and paramilitary attacks on the Nationalist community and suspected Republican sympathizers. Comparable to the McGlinchey mural there are a number of specific commemorations of murdered comrades, including Billy Wright, who was murdered by a group of INLA prisoners in Long Kesh/Maze (one of his attackers was simultaneously commemorated by the INLA). Many of these superficial interactions with, and subversions of, the buildings had various intents and meanings but leave no lasting trace due to repainting or removal. They survive only in photographs and memory.

The lack of foresight by the prison authorities in identifying the ability of the prisoner to subvert the intentions of the new prison structures was particularly evident in the area of communications. The



Figure 5.12 Photograph of a Loyalist Wing complete with Orange Order-style paramilitary triumphal arch. Northern Ireland Prison Service Collection, Millisle. Undated.

introduction of a cellular system at Long Kesh/Maze was an attempt by the prison authorities to effectively end concerted, communal actions by a non-complying prison population. Individual cells, as a manifestation of the 'separate system', were ultimately designed to limit communication between prisoners in order to reform the reformable and prevent the contagion of the incorrigible. However, this attempt to prevent communications was subverted in a number of ways. A number of prison memoirs reveal that due to the large numbers of prisoners and the need to constantly move and deep-clean cells affected by prison protests, many prison cells were inhabited by two

or more prisoners (Campbell et al. 1994). This inability to use the prison in the way it was intended had an obvious impact on the ability to control prisoner communications and this is a constant theme in wider studies of prison design and usage (including Johnston 2000). Due to the design and close proximity of the H-Blocks, prisoners were able to vocalize beyond their cells; they could speak down 'the pipes', 'come to the door' or even orally communicate with parallel wings belonging to the same or a neighbouring Block. There are many stories of morale being maintained by men being invited to 'come to the door' to pass on timely anecdotes, educational information, plots of films, funny stories or to orchestrate sing-songs, through the door vent placed for prison officers to view prisoners (Lennon 1994: 118). Although these negotiations were no longer as free as in the Compounds, the prisoners was able to subvert the system in ways appropriate to their new material surroundings. To maintain their group identity and morale the prisoners often communicated their presence and togetherness through noise, with one ex-prisoner recalling how 'everyone in the wing banged on their doors: no orders, no directives, pure spontaneity' after a particularly harsh search of individual cells (McQuillan 1994: 52).

The heating pipe that ran through each cell down the full length of each H-Block wing was not sealed and the gap around it allowed prisoners to easily communicate with those on each side of their cell. Good relations between prisoners, with a mutual interest in subverting the system, allowed for messages to be exchanged simply by men vocally passing messages either down the wing until it reached its intended recipient or through partially opened visors on the doors (CM 2006). Former prisoners also recalled their ability to pass written communications by taking threads from their blanket, attaching them to a button and throwing them from the gap under their door to a door across the corridor. The button provided weight to allow the comm. to move and the string gave the intended recipient the necessary leeway to pull the comm. under the door (CM 2006). Prisoners could also communicate during the very small number of communal activities; this included the predominantly Roman Catholic Republicans meeting at the weekly mass, as one former prisoner noted: 'The mass was the highlight of the week as we could get talking with our comrades and get the *scéal* [news]' (Campbell et al. 1994: 21). Whilst communications were maintained by prisoners in the H-Blocks they could be disrupted by the level of acquiescence of the authorities. At

times the repercussions from being caught communicating after lock-down varied from isolation to violence (Campbell et al. 1994).

Maintaining communications through prisoner hierarchies was an important form of ongoing non-compliance with the regime. The evidence of how widespread this practice was can be seen in the number of comms—from both Republican and Loyalist prisoners—that had been intercepted and placed in an NIO file by the authorities during the 1981 Hunger Strikes (see NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–81, discussed in Chapter 3). The timing of these interceptions was important. The 1980 and 1981 Hunger Strikes were climactic events in Republican non-compliance with the regime and resulted in the prison authorities' most concerted attempts to control the experiences and interactions of non-complying prisoners. The prisoners were able to subvert this attempt to control their communications, both individually and en masse, both vocally and on paper, and highlight the inability of the regime to completely control defiant and non-complying prisoners. The different forms of interactions and communications were not halted but this new form of prison structure dictated their form. A former prisoner recalled that despite the attention on certain prisoners, even the most high-profile, such as Bobby Sands, were able to smuggle comms and artefacts. He stated that a huge number of communications were sent to Bobby Sands by fellow prisoners to support him during the hunger strike (Lennon, 1994: 118) and that he was able to smuggle a crystal radio set into the hospital to keep abreast of developments (McFarlane, 1994: 121). Government files assessing the aftermath of the death of Bobby Sands reveal that even in the isolation of the prison hospital, hunger strikers were in possession of contraband. One file notes that a camera was found amongst the bed sheets of Raymond Creech whilst hospital orderlies were helping him to find his rosary beads (NIO/12/197A, PRONI, 1981).

Minute interventions with the buildings, which would remain unnoticed by all but the sharpest-eyed archaeologist, allowed the prisoner to negotiate the prison buildings in order to maintain their knowledge of activities on the wing during lock-down. Whilst recording oral testimonies a former prisoner illustrated how the eye vents on the exterior of the cell door had been negotiated to allow visual and verbal communication with others. He explained that during open doors the eye vent was held open whilst the cell door was slammed against the wall. This resulted in the corner closest to the wall being slightly bent, this alteration prevented it from fitting tightly back into place. This intervention meant that when these eye vents were closed during

lock-down a slight gap existed that allowed activities in the corridor to be heard, and even witnessed, by the cell inhabitant (CM 2006). Such small interventions could often be missed or misinterpreted by the archaeologist and as such oral testimonies are particularly valuable in discovering how the prisoner was able to negotiate this new carceral environment by means that left almost unnoticeable material traces.

Those who decided to abandon protests fell into two categories: those who did so strategically in order to gain and disseminate information and those who did so of their own accord. The sense of shame in abandoning protest without the knowledge and support of the prisoner hierarchies was strong. This is apparent through oral testimonies and evidence from confiscated comms. A comm. signed by a prisoner named 'Martin' was intercepted whilst being forwarded to friends who remained on protest on another Block: 'I'm not giving to make any apologies for coming off it, I made the decision and I'll stand by that decision no matter. I don't give two fucks what anyone thinks, or says . . .' (NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–81). The expected reception from fellow prisoners for those who left the protests was undoubtedly magnified by the knowledge that their departure would audibly betray them through unintended physical interactions with the building. The verb to 'squeaky boot' effectively evokes the noise of those who took the prison uniform and walked down the tiled corridor in their new prison-issue footwear, to be taken to a conforming wing (Campbell et al. 1994: 28). The knowledge that this noise would be apparent to the rest of the wing inadvertently ensured that many men who were faltering stayed on protests. To 'squeaky boot' was considered the ultimate betrayal of the cause and your fellow prisoners. That such actions were apparent to the other prisoners whilst they were locked in their cells indicates how sensory perceptions of surroundings were heightened in this environment, and how prisoner interactions with the buildings not only subverted the prison authorities but also ensured the maintenance of group cohesion.

Although protests were better known as a Republican initiative they were also conducted at different times and with varying degrees of support by Loyalist paramilitaries. This was often on a less organized and more individualistic basis but Marion Green has noted that many UVF prisoners similarly went 'on the blanket' and, she emphasizes, without being forced to do so by fellow prisoners (1998: 22). Without the organization and support that the Republican movement had

developed in conducting protests within the H-Blocks, Green asserts that Loyalist prisoners felt a 'double isolation':

They felt badly let down by fellow Loyalist prisoners in the other, 'conforming' H-blocks. The Republican prisoners had the support of their communities, families, and the church and when their protest later developed into 1981 hunger strikes, they gained international support (1998: 23).

Whilst Green's contrast is overstating the levels of support for Republican prisoners, particularly in relation to the church, there was a perceivable difference in the support the Republican paramilitaries received in contrast to their Loyalist contemporaries at Long Kesh/Maze. This was mentioned during oral testimonies with ex-prisoners (SU & GD 2011), and a letter in the *Belfast News-Letter* from 3 October 1974 reveals the criticism publicly articulated at non-complying tactics and politics of the UVF: 'The association between some loyalists (?) [sic] and the [P]IRA makes one wonder if the spirit of Ulster was sacrificed at the Somme' (*Belfast News-Letter* 1974).

The Hunger Strikes of 1981 are often highlighted as a turning point in the relations between prisoners and prison officers. Although the prisoners did not directly win the conditions they sought, as an immediate consequence they began to gain greater control of their surroundings as the prison authorities adopted a more managerial approach (McEvoy 2001: 250–314) in containing rather than confronting imprisoned paramilitaries. The prison authorities may have recorded a Pyrrhic victory when the hunger strikes ended but Republican tactics evolved to challenge the regime from within (McKeown 2001) whilst Loyalist prisoners became more confrontational. Within a short number of years the majority of prisoner demands were granted despite special category status remaining officially revoked. The return of paramilitary segregation was re-introduced on the prisoner abandonment of non-complying status when the prison was significantly unsettled by the influx of Republican prisoners. The prison authorities' eventual acceptance of the need to segregate was the first overt step towards allowing the prisoners to gain fuller control of their wings. The exercise yard of the H-Block wing displaying a painted representation of a soccer/gaelic/rugby post on one wall of the yard indicates the level of official acquiescence with prisoner desires for a more relaxed existence by the time the prison closed (Figure 5.13).

Prisoners continued to use external circumstances, economic pressures, and increasingly dispirited prison officers to incrementally push



Figure 5.13 Sporting posts painted onto the wall of an H-Block exercise yard, c.2005.

for greater control of their surroundings in the post-Hunger Strikes period. The granting of requests for curtains in the bedrooms and mini-gyms and snooker tables in the communal areas of the wings was achieved from the mid 1980s onwards. Such additions led to an increasingly comfortable existence for the men who were imprisoned after the protests had ended (CM 2006). By the mid 1990s the prisoners had effective control of their wings. This vastly changed situation can be explained not only by prisoner actions but also in the change of regime emphasis on confrontation and the lack of acquiescence of prison officers in confronting prisoners. As early as 1974 a government file states that prison officers were already contemplating strikes due to feeling that they were unsupported by the decisions of prison authorities whilst being victims of ‘continual “harassment” from both inmates and visitors’ (WO 296/77, TNA, 1973–4). The lack of major interactions with the contemporary prison structures, but large numbers of contraband artefacts dating from this time (discussed in Chapter Four), can be read as a material repercussion of prisoners having free association and control of their immediate surroundings. Likewise, for the last decade that the prison operated the prisoners were able to live, effectively, as their predecessors had done in the

Compounds (Green 1998: 32). The critical role of the resolve of the prison authorities in being able to control prisoner activities, rather than any innate material qualities of the building itself, were central in understanding the very different prison experiences of the same structures. To further highlight the changing experiences, understandings, and meanings of the materially unchanging buildings this study will conclude by examining the prison hospital of the H-Blocks.

THE H-BLOCK PRISON HOSPITAL

This study has demonstrated how examining the material structures, and how they intersect with the prison regimes, is central in understanding the prisoner experiences and interactions with the site. This final case study will examine one particular building at Long Kesh/Maze that differs from the other structures in transcending its mundane material nature. The prison hospital of the H-Blocks has shaped, if not distorted, many of the prisoner experiences and public perceptions of the prison, often without any physical interaction. The hospital is not an inherently important structure. It is significant due to the activities that took place in the building over the summer of 1981, which culminated in the death of ten Republican hunger strikers within its confines. The events that occurred within the hospital in 1981 dramatically altered the relationship of many of the Republican prisoners with the structure, the prison and the regime—with wider emotional, political, and cultural repercussions—without any physical changes to the material structures of the building.

Undoubtedly the most publicly remembered event that occurred within Long Kesh/Maze, and indeed the most famous, was the Hunger Strikes of 1981. Although hunger strikes are a traditional means of Republican protest—there are numerous examples of this method being used throughout nationalist history and at Long Kesh/Maze prison prior to this occasion—the 1981 Hunger Strikes are especially important. This is due to the organization and intransigence of the men who starved to death demanding conditions of political status and the impact this had, and continues to have, on Northern Irish society. A wider context of this hunger strike is necessary in providing a rationale for its steadfast completion, in contrast to the majority of historical Republican hunger strikes that usually ended prior

to loss of life. By the early 1980s the H-Block protests had been ongoing for nearly half a decade and there was increasing recognition within the prison body that ‘to do more than we had done was a physical impossibility’ (McFarlane 2001: 66). The prisoners had subverted and negotiated their new, cellular prison environment in as many ways as was physically possible and there was a feeling amongst the non-complying prisoners that hunger strikes were inevitable.

The Hunger Strikes of 1981 eventually led to the deaths of ten men, which was unprecedented in Irish Republican history in the intractable implementation of this method of protest. One of the reasons forwarded for the steadfastness of the hunger strikers of 1981 relates to accusations that the British government had broken promises when negotiating the end to the earlier hunger strike in late 1980. Whilst this was denied by the government at the time, in a letter dated 22 December 1980 there is evidence that deliberate miscommunications regarding the granting (or not) of prisoners’ demands did occur. Of the prisoner demands—including the wearing of their own clothes and freedom of association—it is clear that the government negotiators were disingenuous and acknowledged in an internal letter that their promises could be misinterpreted:

The prisoners may seek to argue that we have implied that association within the wings will be free. In fact we meant no more than the continuation of the arrangement which now applied to conforming prisoners in the H-Blocks, who must opt to go to the dining-hall or the handicrafts room or stay in their cells. (NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–81)

Such carefully worded explanations to colleagues were included in relation to three of the prisoner demands, concluding ‘[it] may be over-cautious to mention them: but that is perhaps the best approach as we come to what we hope will be the “winding-down” of the protest’ (NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–81). How wrong they were!

The 1981 Hunger Strikes began within months of this disappointment and by November 1981 it finished, after pressure from the families of dying prisoners, with ten men having starved to death. The most prominent and high-profile of these hunger strikers was the first man to die, Bobby Sands, on 5 May 5 1981 after 66 days

on hunger strike. The prisoners and the wider Republican Movement felt at the time that his death was hugely significant in bringing their prison protests to the notice of the world (McKeown 2001: 78). His significance has continued to grow in Republican tradition and mythology beyond the prison walls throughout the rest of the conflict and into the peace process. The diaries and poetry of Bobby Sands are widely disseminated both in print and on the Internet. He has become one of the most enduring Republican mural subjects since this means of public protest and expression developed in tandem with the hunger strikes in Nationalist areas (Kenney, 1998: 155). The continuing mainstream appeal of the 1981 Hunger Strikes, and Bobby Sands in particular, in wall murals in Nationalist areas of Northern Ireland have multiple roots. They indicate not only their ongoing significance to the Republican Movement but, as Jonathan McCormick and Neil Jarman have argued, murals are part of 'embedding memory' and significantly contribute to the revision of social identity in the wider community (2005: 51). The image and associations of Bobby Sands have evolved to embody wider Nationalist ideals as they have changed in wider society since 1981 (see more detailed discussion of hunger-strike murals in Chapter Six). The nature of his death has been used to simultaneously highlight his dedication to his Irish identity and the untrustworthy and ruthless nature of the UK government but also link to emotional connections with tragic death. The many murals that continue to depict and reflect on the hunger strikes are atypical in this form of cultural representation in that they represent long-term survivals as well as continual additions (Jarman, 2002: 293) and thereby indicate the esteem and importance with which this event has continued to be held by the wider Nationalist community.

The repercussions of Sands's death had wider societal impacts: in the short term they heightened tensions within Nationalist and Loyalist communities, escalated violent interactions between Nationalists and security forces, and reinvigorated support for the Republican Movement. In the long term the 1981 Hunger Strikes facilitated the Republican move into electoral politics (Bobby Sands was elected MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone whilst on hunger strike) and heightened prisoner roles in the long, halting moves towards political resolutions of the conflict. The impacts of the hunger strike continued to ripple throughout Northern Ireland as the nine hunger strikers who died after him were deliberately selected from all areas of the province so as to gain wide geographical support. Such a policy ensured that

support did not wane completely after the first couple of hunger strikers died, but was reinvigorated in different locations through the summer of 1981. The existence of hunger striker memorials in areas as diverse as West Belfast and rural South Armagh (see further discussion of this phenomenon in Chapter Six) indicates the enduring interest in this event throughout the province. Due to the continued prominence of the 1981 Hunger Strikes in Nationalist communal imagination the prison hospital has a heightened significance as a physical entity for both former prisoners and Nationalists who have never physically accessed the site or structure. The prison hospital as a physical and imagined entity intimately connected to the hunger strikes allows it to transcend its material form.

The heightened interest in those who died on hunger strike amongst the Nationalist and Republican communities is a diluted version of the Republican former prisoner community of Long Kesh/Maze. Although the prison authorities were careful to ensure that prisoners were periodically moved so that no organization could associate with any specific area of the site, this policy was interrupted by the actions of the 1981 Hunger Strikes. The existence of only one hospital within the H-Blocks ensured that all the hunger strikers died in that building. It is with this structure that the prisoners, and increasingly the sympathetic public, identify. When one visits the now abandoned hospital, it is difficult to imagine it as more than a materially underwhelming structure. If one did not know the significance of the events that occurred within this building it is probable that it would not be considered of any consequence. However, the prison building was swiftly listed when the site closed. Officially this was in recognition of its significance as an institutional hospital (Masterplanning Consortium 2006), but in reality it was almost certainly due to its immense importance to the Republican Movement.

The hospital is a similar form of building to the H-Blocks and utilizes the same basic structures and materials. The exterior of the hospital is concrete, grey, and utilitarian with little embellishment and ornamentation. Where it differs is in the plan, which is a more straightforward form containing a central administrative area with two corridors radiating either side and with single cells accommodation arranged along these corridors, replicating the H-Block wings. The building is architecturally insignificant but due to the context and impact of those deaths—and what they represent to the Republican Movement and wider Nationalist community—it is central to

understanding the ongoing divisive debates regarding how the site is retained and remembered in the peace process.

Whilst conducting on-site oral testimonies the impact of the building was immediately apparent. It was notable that the words and actions of the former Republican prisoners changed considerably, with an air of reverence and respect replacing jokes and banter, once the hospital was entered. Michael Mayerfeld Bell calls this phenomenon the 'human experience of place' (1997: 813) which is important in making a space a place with reactions being specific and personal. To the former prisoners who had previously lived at the site, this building was obviously no longer functional but was a cultural if not a sacred site. All the surfaces and structures had acquired heightened significance and an air of what Timothy Edensor calls 'the uncanny... wherein the familiar and homely suddenly become strange' (2005: 835). One former prisoner noted, 'The artificial light that shone off the shiny black floor and clean, speckly cream walls created a cold fireless atmosphere. An eerie place' (Gorman 1994: 190). The 'ghosts' of the prison hospital are hard to ignore and following Edensor's description of the 'ghosts' of industrial ruins, which in their decaying state 'extinguish and reveal successive histories as layers peel away and things fall out from their hiding places' (2005: 834), one can discern the affective qualities of this place. This is apparent not only when walking around the building with former prisoners but also as an imagined place when discussing the hospital with those impacted by the hunger strikes in wider society. Public pronouncements at the time of the hunger strikes indicate that this transition in public imagination began even while these events were ongoing and were not just local in context. It was noted in a government file that Fidel Castro had dramatically stated in 1981 that, 'the suffering of the hunger strikers passed that of Christ' (INF 12/1400, TNA, 1978-81).

Unusual interactions with the post-functional prison are especially evident at the hospital. The prison hospital at Long Kesh/Maze has experienced the deliberate deposition of artefacts, rather than just removal, since closure. One of the former prisoners explained during the oral testimony that there had recently been a mass in the prison hospital for the families of the dead hunger strikers to mark an anniversary. As a result of this occasion one hospital cell gained a small floral offering with attached card 'In loving memory of Kieran'. This small offering was placed in the cell where Kieran Doherty had died on 2 August 1981 and remained *in*

situ for a number of years. The focus on the prison hospital as a place of memory and reverence since the death of the hunger strikers has ensured that the building continues to evolve in meaning, more so than any other in the post-closure context. For those who are emotionally connected to the site, the hospital has transcended its functional role to take on a symbolic, almost religious significance. The role of remembrance is continuing to materialize through unofficial interactions with the hospital cells that reveal not only an ‘alternative site of memory’ but highlight the role of memory as a social and political process, ‘a realm of contestation and controversy’ (Edensor 2005: 830). The physical manifestations of these connections to the 1981 Hunger Strikes, including additions of religious cards and flowers, has undoubtedly been affected by the Roman Catholic background of the Republican prisoners and their understanding of how to interact with sacred places. For some former prisoners and families of those who died in this building it is now a place of memory, of reverence, of pilgrimage; a sacred site.

It should be remembered that the prison hospital did not cease to function with the death of the hunger strikers but continued to be used until the prison closed in 2000. However, the ongoing functional utilization of the building has not resulted in the structure being considered as any less significant to those who supported or experienced the hunger strikers. During an exchange between former prisoners one recalled having to spend a night in a hospital cell during his time in the prison in the late 1980s:

CM: That time I done my ankle in when I was playing football I was kept in this side, on this side, but I don’t know what cell but I remember going to sleep that night and thinking, which hunger striker was here? Obviously you didn’t ask the screw or maybe you didn’t have the confidence to ask him or whatever. But I remember, but there was a calm feeling

...

CM: It wasn’t as if you were frightened or anything like that.

TJ: Even in the ordinary blocks, knowing that when you were lying in your cell you thought to yourself was Bobby [Sands] here, was Francie [Hughes] here or whatever.

This exchange reveals the mythology connected to people and place in Long Kesh/Maze began whilst the prison was still in use and was not simply connected to a post-closure intensification of meaning connected to the dark heritage or threats to survival of the site.

This reverence for a place intrinsically connected to highly public and political recent death results from multiple sources; it includes a personal desire to continue remembering those who died but there is also a communal aspect to remembering that is utilized by paramilitary hierarchies. As David Lowenthal has suggested, whereas individual forgetting is largely involuntary, collective remembering is 'mainly deliberate, purposeful and regulated' (2001: xi). The continued presence of hunger striker murals and the increasing development of hunger striker memorials during the peace process reveal ongoing attempts to direct and maintain public memory of the past in the post-Troubles context. These range in motivations from ongoing emotional connections with painful recent pasts to subtle political manipulation. Whilst community acquiescence in the creation and maintenance of these murals and memorials are implicit in their ongoing and unmolested material states, it is clear that they are being used as a means of connecting and directing responses to more contemporary issues impacting on Nationalist communities and Republican politics (see Chapter Seven). On a more personal level, many former prisoners and their communities actively remember the hunger strikers as a personal means of connecting their lives to the wider significance of the Troubles and the peace process. A former prisoner during oral testimonies in the hospital stated: 'I don't want to be melodramatic about it, this is the cell in which an icon died. A person whom, when he died I was 15, I was 15 when he died and I found his death shaped a lot of my life' (CM 2006).

The remaining structures of Long Kesh/Maze have become increasingly important in public debates on dealing with the past since the prison closed and its remains have been placed in a long-term, high-profile limbo. Many Republican former prisoners initially expressed a preference for the entire prison to be maintained as a symbol of their struggle (Coiste na n-Iarchimí 2003), but it became clear that compromise was needed. As the prison has increasingly become understood in political terms connecting to issues of identity, peace dividends and whose past is remembered, the hospital has become central to Republican memories and anathema to Unionist sensibilities. Understandable as the divergent emotional responses to the Hunger Strikes of 1981 are, the resultant overemphasis on this manifestation of the H-Blocks has been detrimental to examining and understanding the wider prison structures of Long Kesh/Maze. The divisive nature of the prison hospital has ensured that many of the emerging narratives related to the prison have been sidelined by Republicans

and ignored by Unionists as the hospital increasingly defines the site to the detriment of more nuanced understandings of the recent past.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of the structures of the Compounds and the H-Blocks that housed and contained prisoners during their time at Long Kesh/Maze show that different experiences were not only structured by the physical manifestations but also by the regime in place. The relative freedom of movement, communality and ability to structure one's day in the Compounds undoubtedly was initially curtailed by the move to more conventional prison buildings of the H-Blocks. However, attempts to break morale, communal experience, and paramilitary control of the prison through a new architectural form was ultimately defeated through evolving policy and a lack of human will. More obvious physical remnants of interactions between the prisoners and the Compounds can be detected by archaeologists, although these were not overly substantial due to the freedom of the inmates to reside in the structures with little interference. There is evidence in both manifestations of additions to the structures by the authorities as they were being used in ways unacceptable, but initially unforeseen, by the prisoners. However, both manifestations of the prison buildings were eventually utilized in ways that were not intended and to the benefit of the prisoner, with no need for the prisoners to make lasting, material changes. The eventual control of the H-Blocks by the prisoner suggests that buildings can impact on experience of place but they cannot halt subversions or bypass the need for a strong and steadfast prison regime.

Although prison buildings are built to hold, control, and punish, this investigation shows, through the prison hospital, how operational functionality does not always dictate how a building is ultimately understood or remembered. Some buildings transcend their physical conditions and take on qualities that were not intended, reflecting the impact of events and emotions that were unforeseen and uncontrollable. The association of the prison hospital with the 1981 Hunger Strikers continues to have meaning in the Nationalist community that has been deliberately enhanced in communal memory beyond the control of the prison authorities and government. Whilst these emotional connections

to the prison hospital began during the functional life of the site, they have been maintained in a way that crystallizes the importance of the building since the events of 1981 but in ways that reference contemporary concerns. The threat—and actuality—of demolition to the wider prison site has added to the significance of the prison hospital, as the only structure on the site that is officially listed. The retention of the prison as a ‘representative sample’ with the hospital as its focus will undoubtedly impact on how the site is materially presented and understood by future generations. This could be to the detriment of other understandings from the various manifestations connected to other, less extreme, experiences of the site that have yet to emerge.

Standing buildings provide evidence of how the individual and communal prison body experienced the prison on a scale that directly relates to the ability to contain and control prisoner interactions with the structures and one another. This chapter adds a structural perspective to the narratives and experiences of place that differs from, but are interrelated with, the previous studies on documents and artefacts. The buildings tell communal stories of structures that were constructed to control, or at least contain, and how they were subverted. They reveal that the prison experience of place is focused by structures but not dictated by them. Institutional standing buildings are most useful to archaeologists in order to explore the intentions, uses, and changes made by those who created them rather than those who were forced to inhabit them. They are problematic archaeological sources in uncovering the intimate and individual experiences of the prisoner, as structures do not always retain minute, superficial, or ambiguous changes without the support of oral testimonies, historic photographs, and contemporary documents. By necessity archaeological investigations concentrate on the structures as they appear on closure and can miss almost hidden interventions and superficial changes eradicating earlier periods. These inherent problems in studying institutional structures can skew the narratives we locate of experiences and interactions that we can reveal. The standing buildings of Long Kesh/Maze highlight the need to interweave their material remains with other sources—particularly the artefactual remains and landscape settings—to reveal the power struggles between agency and structure, and wider contexts rather than rely on standing structures alone.

Landscapes

Long Kesh/Maze prison was the most significant contemporary political landscape, both as a bounded and an interconnected site, during the Northern Irish Troubles. As such it needs to be explored as a landscape with many physical and imaginary realities and boundaries. Archaeological approaches to landscape are useful for exploring the changing and individual nature of relationships with place at various levels. The concept of landscape encapsulates the combination of memory and place as important constituent elements of identities (Stewart and Strathern 2003: 2). Drawing on Barbara Bender's seminal work on landscape, which spearheaded the growing complexity in British archaeological understandings of this scale of analysis, they are conceived as active, political, living entities that are both individual and communal, related to power relations and identity (1993: 1–17). Bender uses V. S. Naipaul's novel *The Enigma of Arrival* to explore the different qualities and perceptions of landscape that mirror themes poignant to the understandings of Long Kesh/Maze. She argues that landscapes are simultaneously spatial and temporal, incorporating change and political action, are imaginary or rooted in memory and are about identity or lack of it (1993: 9). In her co-edited volume on 'contested landscapes' she overtly engages with the negative as well as positive attributes of landscape and emphasizes the need to study all of these aspects because of their multiple meanings: 'it's about the complexity of people's lives, historical contingency, contestation, motion and change' (Bender and Winer 2001: 2). Such a variety of characteristics indicate the myriad levels in which landscapes acquire and develop meaning that add complexity to our understandings of place.

Examining Long Kesh/Maze as a landscape allows us to dissect the interrelationships between the constituent parts of the site that unite

in its wider setting, and the repercussions of its connections with society within and beyond its physical confines. Long Kesh/Maze is part of a more general landscape of the Troubles, exemplifying the militarization of Northern Irish society that was a prominent feature throughout the conflict. Since the 1998 Agreement the official security infrastructure of the Troubles has been swiftly removed. This has been against a backdrop of ongoing controversy about the role of public consultation, access and recording of these prominent remnants of the recent past in the newly created (and fragile) peace process. With little public access to the site since its closure, Long Kesh/Maze has evolved in meaning and physical form but continues to remain a place apart. It remains a liminal place that has been deliberately pushed to the margins of political as well as physical landscapes. However, Long Kesh/Maze continues to have a simultaneous existence as a highly visible, yet deeply secretive place that has ensured it has remained within public and political consciousness. It is visually prominent but remains physically inaccessible. Despite being the most prominent icon of the Troubles, Long Kesh/Maze has been often an imaginary presence without any actual, physical interaction. It is a physical and an imagined landscape and it is through these complementary and contradictory realities that the site will be explored.

The concept of landscape has traditionally been used to evoke static, unchanging entities. This study will use conceptions and methodologies of landscape archaeology that will explore how landscapes are diverse entities constituted by the events of the past, the interventions of the present and the potential of the future. To explore Long Kesh/Maze as an archaeological landscape there is a need to consider its heightened role in recent historical and political developments. Since the Troubles the boundaries of its 'landscape' have been constantly extended, reimagined, and broken down. The physical experience and meaning of the landscape—on both an intimate and mediated level—in the past and the present will be examined alongside the many ways it has been envisaged and understood throughout its life as a prison. This will include after its closure. Whilst accepting the diversity of approaches that mark contemporary landscape archaeologies, this study will embrace three accepted characteristics: 'employ a range of (mainly non-intrusive) methods, operate at multiple scales of analysis, and seek to move beyond a focus upon apparently bounded entities like monuments of "sites"' (Hicks and McAtackney 2007: 14). This

study will use material evidence, oral testimonies, and documentary sources to present a multi-perspective account of how the prison landscape was experienced in the past and remains a physical, imagined, and reproduced landscape. At the crux of interpretation is the idea that landscapes are ideological in that they are used to challenge or reaffirm existing social and political control (Whelan 2005: 62). As such, Long Kesh/Maze provides a powerful example of how contemporary politics shape the understandings of historic landscapes in the present.

Long Kesh/Maze closed at an early stage in the peace process, two years after the signing of the 1998 Agreement in 2000. This was a time when the physical manifestations of the Troubles were still very emotive. One of the major impacts of the peace process on Northern Ireland's landscapes has been the decreasing prominence of security infrastructure as military necessity, and its increased importance as marker of identity and the traumas of the recent history. As society haltingly attempts to extract itself from a generation of sectarian violence these now-defunct security sites have become increasingly important as a coherent landscape of the Troubles. Many police stations, army bases, watch-towers, and security posts have disappeared almost overnight with little discussion of their meanings or recording of their remains prior to destruction. Publicly, there has been a mixed reception to this development. The local media has noted either relief at the removal of any trace of conflict or campaigned for retention as a means of understanding the recent, traumatic past. Long Kesh/Maze has been central to ongoing negotiations over the future life of the now defunct, but still emotive, elements of the physical and political landscapes of Northern Ireland. Due to the general acceptance of its heightened significance, sensitivities about interest in the site have resulted in few independent researchers gaining even limited access to investigate it as a landscape. However, there are many ways to access the site and working around these constraints can more accurately reflect its continued presence and meaning as a defunct but highly-sensitive place.

LONG KESH/MAZE PRISON LANDSCAPE

Long Kesh/Maze belongs to many landscapes: one that is constituted by the boundaries of the walled site, within its local setting, and as an

imagined cultural landscape. Starting with the physical manifestations of the separate, yet overlapping, elements of the prison site they reveal diverse physical remains that provide different challenges to the archaeologist as interpreter of a partial, physical landscape. Problems arise in examining the initial prison landscape, the Compounds, for two reasons: utilization and survival. The Nissen huts—the basic unit of the Compound landscape—were erected as temporary constructions with no intention for long-term retention. Their flexible interior space was deliberately multi-purpose. This combination of random survival and indefinite structural characteristics can make unambiguous interpretation difficult. As the Compounds had suffered ongoing and often abrupt destruction—most notably in the burning of the site in October 1974, large-scale abandonment since the opening of the H-Blocks in 1976, and limited use until closure in 1988—their landscape was already partial on the closure of the wider prison landscape in 2000. On accessing the site for the first time in 2004 there was a diversity of partial remains in the Compounds landscape. The uniformity of the institutional setting was already being challenged and contradicted by inconsistency of survival—‘the fragmentation and decay of some memories and to the capricious persistence of others’ (Edensor 2005: 834). Some Nissen huts stood structurally sound and contained many artefacts abandoned on closure, whilst only concrete foundations referenced others. The ephemeral nature, and diverse survivals, of the temporary structures due to long-term abandonment presents difficulties in unravelling the landscape of the internment camp and understanding how it was experienced.

Long Kesh Internment Camp opened in 1971 as a makeshift solution to what was hoped would be a temporary situation. Government policies were often dictated by necessity, expediency, economics, and the reaction to external pressures rather than following pre-designated plans on how to construct and maintain a prison landscape for a non-compliant population. This short-sightedness mirrors other government actions in attempting to control the initial phases of the conflict. T. G. Fraser suggests that the decision to implement internment in 1971, and thereby necessitate the creation of Long Kesh Internment Camp, reveals the authorities did not consider the very different circumstances of the early 1970s from previous periods of cyclical sectarian violence (2000: 51). It is this lack of understanding of the changing realities of the conflict at societal level—and how it related to

activities and actions within the prison—that is revealed through the development of the Compounds as a prison landscape. The replication of the initial plan, structures, and materials of the internment camp as it grew completely disregarded the ability of the prisoners to exploit and subvert this POW-style prison landscape. The decision to re-utilize a decrepit former military base as an internment camp to hold prisoners ‘unique’ in the British penal system, ‘united in their determination to be treated as political prisoners’ (Hennessy 1984: 10.2), was undoubtedly an error. To then blindly replicate the existing structures, creating a prison landscape of communal Compounds that failed to address the confirmed militancy and determined collective nature of the prison population, was disastrous.

The most basic, contained landscape within the Internment Camp, the Compound, held the personnel of a single paramilitary organization. This arrangement created a landscape of self-contained communities that perpetuated the sectarian divisions of society at large: ‘a green or orange hive’ (Snodden 1996: 26). As other categories of prisoner entered the camp, the numbers being interned, remanded and sentenced continually increased. The Compounds became overcrowded and the need for more Compounds and Nissen huts increased, so that at its greatest extent there were at least 21 Compounds simultaneously in use. These communal Compounds facilitated the maintenance of paramilitary allegiances from wider society, and acted as human containers rather than controlled carceral environments. Each Compound had close neighbours, allowing ongoing visual and oral interactions. The permeable nature of the perimeters of the Compounds facilitated communication between prisoners, ranging from simple vocal exchanges between near neighbours to using semaphore through makeshift flags to communicate with colleagues in distant Compounds. Prisoners could despatch objects from one Compound to another, often using a container as simple as the inside of a slashed tennis ball. Everyday prisoner interactions between neighbouring Compounds were maintained due to the desire to physically smuggle communications and contraband to other Compounds. This necessitated cooperation between innately hostile paramilitary groups (McEvoy 2001: 121).

Visual communications were important not only for passing information but also as a means of projecting images of internal communal identity and high morale. Marching was used as a means of

maintaining identity—especially for Loyalists, for whom such performance played a major role in the community rituals of their wider, largely working-class, communities. Through the course of the twentieth century the right to commemorate historical events through marching had become entwined with a number of contemporary political issues facing the Loyalist community. This included the maintenance of tradition, performance of identity and loyalty, fear of ‘Irish’ integration, and ongoing contemporary tensions (Bryan and Jarman 1997: 211). The visibility of the Compound landscape—the wire fences allowing these demonstrations to be viewed, as well as heard, beyond their own Compound—undoubtedly impacted on the utilization of this form of prisoner expression. Visibility ensured that the prisoners marched and drilled not only for themselves but for a wider audience. The use of such marches is a longstanding Irish tradition in both communities and, as has been noted in studies of the Irish in North America, displays their working-class origins and links to workers’ rights. Marching can be interpreted as subversive and transformative and, ultimately, the exercise and promotion of power (Beaudry and Mrozowski 2001: 128).

By the mid 1970s the creation of a POW landscape—as the temporary, makeshift, and communal nature of the prison accommodation visually referenced—could no longer be ignored. Whilst the authorities began to accept that their temporary solution was not appropriate for an ongoing and escalating situation there was recognition that more permanent prison housing was necessary. Fear of mass escapes became realized when Republican prisoners—aided by the use of prison issue artefacts (see Chapter Four) and smuggled and handmade wire cutters—escaped from their individual Compounds and burnt the majority of the site in October 1974. Although they did not attempt to cross the boundary wall, it was clear that the prison landscape of the Compounds could no longer hold the form of prison population that it had uneasily contained since 1971. Whilst the resultant Gardiner report of 1975 recommended new, purpose-built structures, an ex-Governor also highlighted that even though the decision to replace the Compounds was undoubtedly political, it was also a necessity as the Compounds were ‘literally falling down’ (FR 2007).

From the mid 1970s, the Compounds co-existed with and were overshadowed in the physical and political landscape of the prison by a new addition to the prison site. The building of the H-Blocks, the new cellular

prison constructed in haste between 1975 and 1978, were watched with concern from the men living in the Compounds: 'Here we were in Long Kesh, they were building a wall around us, the H-Blocks were being built and we knew that political status was ending . . . We used to stand on the roofs and watch them building the Blocks. They were working seven days a week' (Kelly 2001: 45). The H-Blocks, in contrast to the Compounds, being more solid and permanent constructions, retained their intended presence in the prison landscape throughout the functional life of the site. The H-Blocks were swiftly built of concrete slabs with each wing separate, ensuring that the H-Blocks had their own individual landscape as well as belonging to a wider prison landscape. These concrete buildings imposed a cellular structure so that the most basic unit of containment shrank from a 37 m × 20 m Nissen hut to an individual 3.5 × 3.0 × 2.2 m cell (NIO/10/13/2A, PRONI, 1981–2). On visiting the site it is the visual containment that is most evident, a shocking transition from the transparent fencing of the Compounds to, at its worst extreme, the 1.0 × 1.0 m opaque Perspex windows in H-Block cells (NIO/10/13/2A, PRONI, 1981–2). Whilst only the complete prison landscape of the Compounds were 'bounded by a concrete wall 5.18 m high' (NIO/10/13/2A, PRONI, 1981–2), each H-Block was surrounded by barbed-wire-topped fences, inertias, and security measures, ensuring that this new prison landscape was visually fractured. This desire to curtail a landscape experience of the H-Block environment was most evident in the placing of a high brick wall to effectively separate phase three from the first two phases of construction.

Simultaneous to the nearly opened H-Blocks, the declining numbers of special category prisoners in the Compounds had a very different existence in their now forgotten prison landscape. Although the Compounds continued to house prisoners for another decade—and in a Red Cross report from 1981 seven compounds holding 317 prisoners were still in use (NIO/10/13/2A, PRONI, 1981–2)—in public and media consciousness the H-Blocks had effectively ensured one prison landscape replaced another. After the burning of the Camp in October 1974, the Compounds experienced their first effective segregation with a wall being constructed to separate Republican and Loyalist prisoners (SU 2011). Although there was an awareness and interest by those who remained in the Compounds in the H-Blocks, they were administered separately

from 1978 and there was very little connection at both governance and prisoner level between the two (Snodden 1996: 26). At times the different prisoner groups held in the Compounds would support their colleagues' protests in the H-Blocks with their own forms of protest but these were often short-lived, controlled (conviction of further offences would ensure an enforced transfer to the H-Blocks), and received little attention. One ex-prisoner noted: 'There was a feeling of impotence among us in relation to the situation in the Blocks' (Kelly 2001: 46) and this feeling of powerlessness intensified as the Compounds' inmates lessened in number. The Compounds eventually closed in 1988 and the last 92 men were transferred to their own area of a H-Block.

On the opening of the new prison structures, interaction throughout the prison landscape of eight H-Blocks was ongoing but inconsistent. Spreading of information between wings and Blocks occurred through a number of media. Prisoners used internal moves by the prison authorities to their advantage, men moved wings voluntarily through going on and off protest, comms were smuggled to different parts of the prison (often through the medium of external visitors), and shouting information to adjacent wings of H-Blocks was also used. Although communication within wings was relatively unproblematic, as discussed in Chapter Five, the importance of sifting fact from fiction, be it accidental or malicious, between Blocks was not always so straightforward. A former prisoner has stated that due to the level of miscommunication, 'reliable news was a valuable commodity' (Holland 1994: 188). The new prison landscape also ensured that information and instructions could be more easily ignored, with the distance between wings and the known unreliability of smuggling comms leading to deliberate as well as unintentional communication breakdowns (McKeown 2001). This new, more divided landscape appears to have exacerbated low-level rivalries between prisoners of the same organization housed on different wings. A former prisoner was disparaging of the 'super wings' of protestors, saying they had a 'slight overestimation of their own importance' and were hated by those who suffered more silently through the protests (MacCormaic 1994: 154). The communality of the Compounds as the basic form of landscape was replaced by the communality of the wing, rather than H-block.

An added division in the H-Block landscape was the separation of groupings of H-Blocks, achieved through the imposition of an internal wall dividing the five H-Blocks of phase one and two from the

latter three Blocks that were built in the last phase. The imposition of the wall created an information barrier that must have been designed to counteract the existing ability of the initial H-Blocks to maintain communication networks despite being housed in separate structures. Former prisoner Brian Campbell noted the seclusion that must have been felt by those prisoners contained in the H-Blocks of phase three due to the unreliable communications with the other phases. He highlighted the issue of effective communications when coordinating protests as they impacted on the ability to maintain control and power over the situation (1994: 86). The ability to spread hierarchically directed 'collective' actions about the timing and form of protests was important. Clearly, from an early stage of habitation the prisoners were able to communicate between H-Blocks, indicating that the new design was not effective in halting prisoner communications. Indeed, far from being one prison landscape, Long Kesh/Maze was simultaneously a number of landscapes that were characterized by the ability to maintain communications. Interruptions to these communications in the overarching landscape did not necessarily affect all co-existing landscapes. The Compounds and the H-Blocks were the most basic landscape levels but the interruptions within these separate landscapes, especially materialized in internal walls, were important.

The experiences of the prison landscape of the H-Blocks during these initial years were not uniform. As explored in Chapter Five, experiences were fundamentally different for those who were categorized as non-complying prisoners—and were isolated and placed on specially adapted wings—and the more free conditions of complying prisoners. These categorizations impacted on the different conditions and experiences of life across the prison landscape. Oral testimonies frequently note that different experiences of specific H-Blocks or Compounds were determined by immaterial variables including status as complying or non-complying prisoners, the specific prisoners held at any given time in the accommodations, treatment by the prison regime, and the prisoners' abilities to communicate with their wider landscape. Whilst understandings of this period have focused on the atypical experiences of the protesting prisoners it must be emphasized that the majority of prisoners conformed to the prison regime and lived a more normalized prisoner existence on conforming wings.

The significance of the events that occurred within the H-Blocks in the prison landscape in the early years as a functioning prison have led to them dominating attention on the specific experiences of non-complying, H-Block residing prisoners. The two Hunger Strikes of

1980 and 1981 coincided with the culmination of media and public interest in the prison. The international nature, and long-term impact, of the media interest in the Hunger Strikes of 1981 ensures that this period and place is incomparable to any other experienced at the prison. On a landscape level the enduring media image of the prison as a landscape of H-Blocks originates from this time. After the Hunger Strikes, the experiences of the H-Block landscape shifted significantly in favour of the prisoners. By 1983 segregation had returned to the wings largely due to Loyalist protests and by the late 1980s the prisoners had fundamentally regained control of their surroundings and communications were maintained with ease. In less than 15 years after the building of the H-Blocks, as a means of imposing a controlling prison regime, this new prison structural form was ineffectual. The imposition of the prisoner into a more contained prison landscape, from the previous open prison landscape, had not been enough by itself to curtail prisoner communications or communal actions. Ultimately, despite the construction of the H-Blocks in order to contain prisoners and prevent the previous interactions of the Compound landscape, the prisoners regained—through various means—similar levels of interaction and control to those they had enjoyed in the Compounds.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE

Long Kesh/Maze prison is set within a wider landscape context of rurality, where there are relatively few surrounding buildings and associated infrastructure. This is not unusual for a prison setting. As Shurmer-Smith and Hannam have highlighted, institutions such as prisons have frequently been placed apart from society to remove what is considered polluting abnormality from clean normality (1994: 176). More specifically this was not unusual for a military installation in Ireland. The establishment of Long Kesh/Maze linked to a long history of implanting military encampments into the rural hinterland of major urban settlements. There are numerous historical precedents for placing a militarized base in such a locality. For example, the use of the Curragh, outside Dublin in Co. Kildare, as a military base that was later reused as an internment camp is an obvious precedent. There are

numerous other examples of largely forgotten military establishments such as Loughlinstown Camp, near Bray, Co. Dublin (Murray 1994–5). It is critical to situate Long Kesh/Maze within such an established tradition as it makes comprehensible not only the precedent of the site in form and function but also its landscape setting. It provides context for why such sites were chosen and how they were perceived and understood against a longstanding backdrop of British colonial placement of military bases.

The nature of this highly politicized prisoner body, who fundamentally rejected the imposition of criminal status and imprisonment and actively planned escapes, made the landscape setting of Long Kesh/Maze particularly desirable. Recent experiences of attempting to control prisoners at the pre-existing Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast ensured that the government was aware of the special difficulties and demands that such a prisoner body presented. The lack of a surrounding urban environment prevented undetected movement around the vicinity. This issue had been particularly problematic at urban gaols such as Crumlin Road Gaol, which had experienced problems with escapees and their accessories utilizing the busy city streets as a cover. As discussed in Chapter Five, during the initial period of occupation attempts to construct tunnels were a constant feature. As a former prisoner noted: ‘You see the escape attempts, there was that many tunnels built in these grounds, in these compounds that even prison officers fell through them as they were walking around on patrol’ (PK 2006). Therefore, the choice of a rural landscape setting ensured that any escapees had as little cover to facilitate effective escape as possible.

Despite its rural setting, Long Kesh/Maze was not completely isolated. The prison was flanked by an accompanying Army base, of which there is little material trace remaining *in situ*. Although the two elements were not officially connected, the situating of the Army base directly adjacent to the prison created a military landscape and coerced the prisoners into compliance under the threat of the imminent arrival of Army personnel. During riot situations the prison relied on the personnel from the adjacent Army base to help quell escalations in violence or attempted scaling of the perimeter walls of the prison. Army personnel were also used in the normal functioning of the prison, being requested to conduct planned searches of individual Compounds and patrolling the wider Compound landscape with dogs. The government documents in Chapter Three reveal

the now forgotten degree of integration between the two sites, with reference to the Army base being an integral part of the wider prison landscape (including NIO10/11/4, PRONI, 1974). These interactions are further confirmed by oral testimonies highlighting the subtle and ongoing nature of the interactions between the two sites as part of a wider security landscape:

'you see in the huts, y'know the corrugated tin? They [Army personnel] used to throw bread up at two or three o'clock in the morning and you see when first light came the pigeons and seagulls would come down onto the top of the tins squacking and squacking, that was them . . . All them wee stupid, stupid things, y'know, to annoy ya'. (PK 2006)

Furthermore, the wider landscape setting of Long Kesh/Maze, located alongside a major road, has ensured that despite a rural location it retained easy access to the city and remained visually prominent. Whilst being a high-security zone and effectively a place apart, Long Kesh/Maze was located alongside the M1 motorway outside the city of Lisburn. The more monumental structures of the H-Blocks were particularly evident from this roadside. This motorway, as its name suggests, is the most prominent arterial road in Northern Ireland, connecting Belfast, the capital city, with Dublin, the capital of the Republic of Ireland. It also continues on to the west of the province before ending in Enniskillen. Vehicles travelling to Belfast from the south and west would pass the lights of Long Kesh/Maze on their way to Belfast. Gerry Adams highlights the prominence of the prison from the road in a poem quoted in his biography: 'the lights of Long Kesh' were noticeable from afar and 'make a false dawn/in the night sky' (1990 vii). However, this presence in the wider landscape was not always so apparent. It developed from an almost unnoticeable collection of inconspicuous Nissen huts to the increasingly prominent militarized site characterized by walls, watch-towers and wires. The prison developed from a low-key POW-style holding centre to an unambiguous manifestation of institutional power and defiance. By developing an increasingly monumentalized prison landscape in a rural setting coupled with excellent access to road networks and a visually prominent situation, the authorities were publically declaring their power and control. Following Hall's interpretation of the South African context, this landscape setting allowed the prison to act as a public statement of control by the authorities whilst being simultaneously a private record

of insecurity and uncertainty (Hall 2000: 126) with largely hidden infrastructural and associated support to try to control inmates.

The wider landscape setting of the prison is significant. As a deliberately isolated, ex-military site with a lack of surrounding communities and associated infrastructure, it mirrored the simultaneous development of other prison sites such as Magilligan, an ex-military site opened as an internment camp in January 1972, and Maghaberry, an ex-military airfield opened as a prison in the mid 1980s. These prisons were all located in a rural landscape setting and with a reliance on past infrastructural remnants and public memory of their previous usages. These particularities of placement shaped a number of very different experiences of the prison landscape: as an isolated prison site that was effectively divided into a number of discrete prison landscapes for the prisoner, as a rural area that allowed easy detection of escapees alongside access to support networks for the authorities, and as an imagined landscape that was simultaneously highly visible whilst being a high-security, secured site in the public imagination.

MEMORIES OF LANDSCAPE

Paul Claval has argued that the contemporary interest in studies of landscape is linked to their role as sites of memory (2007: 85). The landscape of Long Kesh/Maze has provoked a range of responses connected to memories of place that have been impacted by previous and continuing relationships with the site. Variations in memory can be accounted for by factors including the extent of physical access to the prison, whether the access was voluntary or enforced, the duration and status of the access, relationship with others on the site, and the changing nature of the relationship with the prison over time. The impact of continued engagement and connection to the prison—or deliberate disconnection—has a significant impact on how Long Kesh/Maze has been remembered and whether these memories and understandings of landscape remain static or evolve, are positive or negative, or are an ambivalent mixture. These memories are as much dictated by the desire to continue engaging with the prison landscape as previous lived experience of it. Bender has noted how landscapes stay with us and change us: ‘We affect and are affected by the

landscapes we move through. We return home, but not to the same place' (2001: 15). An enduring relationship with this significant landscape is evidenced by a substantial proportion of former prisoners continuing to engage with the site as a place that shaped them and continues to impact on them. However, this is not a universal experience; others have more negative memories and have no wish to revisit the prison. Oral testimonies conducted with ex-Republican prisoners—four PIRA and one OIRA—demonstrate very different memories, conceptions and continued identifications with the prison since release. One former prisoner stated, 'No, I wouldn't go back, no stickies [OIRA] would go back. We like to put it behind us' (HX 2007), in contrast to many former PIRA prisoners, especially those still involved in the Republican Movement. Laurence McKeown has noted that they 'do not feel any shame; quite the opposite' (2001 xiii), and this is supported by many of their memories of the prison landscape being more positive.

Pierre Nora has asserted that 'Memory attaches itself to sites' (1989: 22). As Long Kesh/Maze has not yet been reused and structural and artefactual remnants have continued to scatter it, albeit partially, since the prison closed they provide the ideal backdrop to prompt and evoke memories of place. The memories of different stakeholders are affected by relationships to place that have been shaped by the present as well as constituted by the past. The post-conflict experiences of previous prisoners and prison staff, in particular, can have a significant impact on their memories. The experiences and enduring connections of former prisoners can be conceived as something that positively or negatively defines them. It can be a voluntarily integral part of their post-imprisonment identity or be considered detrimental to their ability to function how they wish after release. Imprisonment experiences differed depending on self-identification (and whether this identification was accepted) as a Republican, Loyalist or ODC ('Ordinary Decent Criminal'). This was further impacted by connection to a specific paramilitary organization and whether they were complying or non-complying with the prison regime and how they fared throughout the peace process. This differentiation between self-identification and acceptance of identification within paramilitary groupings has some importance. Government files have noted cases when prisoners were not accepted by their selected paramilitary grouping and were ostracized. In what was described by civil servants as a 'recent disturbing case', information was provided on a 'Provisional IRA special category prisoner, who had been beaten

up and rejected by his fellow prisoners. He went on hunger and thirst strike seeking what was not in our power to give—re-association with and acceptability by his fellow prisoners' (NIO/12/160A, PRONI, 1979–81). Although this is an aspect of prison life that is not often addressed, the ability of the communal prison 'pack' to turn on individuals was a distinct possibility that occurred intermittently, sometimes with violent and tragic results. The resulting isolation would have created an experience of the prison landscape that was even more stark and isolating than for those who had the collective support of belonging to a communal prisoner body. These various experiences of imprisonment—as it happened and how it was remembered in the context of their post-imprisonment life—directly impacts on the form and type of memories provided during oral testimonies.

Experiences of Long Kesh/Maze prison landscape were not limited to those of the prisoner. Whether the individual had a role as a prison officer, administrator, contractor or visitor, this position would have had a substantial impact on their experience of place. Official roles ranged from the governor down to administrative staff or those who delivered goods or maintained the site. It is important to emphasize that during the functional life of the site all those who were associated with facilitating its purpose, not just prison officers, were considered to be legitimate targets at different times by external paramilitary organizations. Indeed, now that Long Kesh/Maze has ceased to function, prison officers from the remaining prisons that hold paramilitary prisoners are continuing to be targeted by dissident groups. The recent murder of a prison officer driving to Maghaberry has dispelled ideas that the peace process equates to a complete cessation of paramilitary activity and violence. Twenty-nine prison officers were killed during the course of the conflict, a high casualty rate for non-military active service. Sara McDowell argues that there is a continuing lack of recognition of the premature deaths and suffering of prison officers and their families. The only public memorial is located in the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, England. She argues that this absence of local memorialization reflects a continuing displacement of prison officers from the physical landscapes where they served and died. Such exclusions marginalize their narratives from emerging through communal memories of the Troubles (2008a: 346).

The role of memory of the prison landscape has affected how the experiences of various stakeholders have later been remembered and recounted, often at a considerable distance of time and space. Of

particular relevance to the study of communal prison populations and their memories of place is the work of Maurice Halbwachs. He asserts that communal memories stem from individual memories that draw on a specific group context at a specific time (1992: 22). Such a distinction reveals that although memories are essentially personal and unique they draw on collective aspects. Furthermore, the particularly blinkered aspects of memory that are associated with enduring communal identity—as emphasized by Nora, ‘Memory is blind to all but the group it binds’ (1989: 9)—results in the existence of narratives of place that do not always acknowledge multi-perspectives. These collective aspects were particularly strong in the heightened communality of the prisoners and have increasingly displaced the variety and nuances of more individualized experiences. This point is particularly demonstrated by the frequent presentation of similar memories by those imprisoned from the same paramilitary grouping. Whilst there exist substantially different memories and experiences of place, the accounts can become homogenized over time through the acceptance of master narratives that are privately and publicly repeated. Former prisoners have commented on this situation, highlighting multiple re-tellings of the same anecdotes that could not have all manifested independently (O’Hagan 1994: 71). The relationship with these memories and the desire to recount them and place them into a public context is also important in not only proclaiming a previous state of being but in controlling the recounting and accepted experiences of place in a highly politicized post-Troubles context. Long Kesh/Maze, as a prison landscape that is no longer functioning but retains physical presence, has the potential to act as a material foundation to maintain or contradict such narratives.

Substantial numbers of people have directly interacted with the prison landscape since closure. The insights provided by the extensive number of on-site oral testimonies conducted at Long Kesh/Maze could in themselves fill a volume. The recording and collation of oral testimonies has been the subject of an ongoing project directed by Cahal McLaughlin. The ‘Prisons Memory Archive’ has been involved in recording on-site testimonies with people associated with imprisonment during the Troubles, however tangentially (<<http://www.prisonmemoryarchive.com>>, accessed November 2012). The oral testimonies have all been conducted on site, at both Long Kesh/Maze and Armagh Gaol, were video recorded, and have been edited, toured and placed on the Internet. In contrast, for this study a small

sample of oral testimonies was collected. It represents a deliberately contained, yet important element, of this landscape study. The oral testimonies of a number of groups and individuals connected to the site were recorded. Special attention has been given to the narratives of Republican former prisoners of different periods, as they were involved in on-site oral testimonies as a group and were then re-interviewed six months later (January and June 2006). The former PIRA prisoners interviewed were connected to the Republican prisoner group *Coiste na n-Iarchimí*. The most prominent ex-prisoner was PK, who was interned at the Compounds on a number of occasions throughout the 1970s and was sentenced to the H-Blocks during 1980 before being released in February 1994. CM was sentenced to the H-Blocks in 1986 and was released in 1991, and TJ was imprisoned to the H-Blocks in 1987 and was released at Christmas 1990. Their memories of place, landscape and experience will be presented alongside the oral testimonies of prisoners from other groups, including HX, a former OIRA prisoner, who was placed in the Compounds from 1972 to 1977. BE was a now-disillusioned former PIRA prisoner imprisoned from the late 1970s until the late 1990s. GD and SU, both former UVF prisoners, were held in the Compounds. FR was an ex-governor of both the Compounds and cellular prison and LM was a female visitor to the Compounds.

Within these groups the period and duration of contact with the prison was significant as their experiences differed depending on whether their relationship with the site began during the internment period (*c.*1971–*c.*1975), the protests connected to the criminalization process (*c.*1975–*c.*1983) or the later period of the growing ascendancy of the prisoner (*c.*1983–*c.*2000). A former UVF prisoner stated early in the interview: ‘There are a whole lot of things you see, there are different periods, different prisons, different happenings and events there and then you have personal experiences as well’ (SU 2011). One of the defining transitions that impacted on the experiences of the prison centred on the introduction of the cellular prison. All the informants universally acknowledged that the new buildings were not only a new physical form but the imposition of a new regime. Placement within a H-Block was perceived by the prisoner as an opportunity for prison officers to highlight their authority, especially during the processing of the prisoner to their H-Block. Allen Feldman suggests that the role of the prison induction was utilized by prison officers as an ‘identity fixing event’ that was intended to set a precedent for the respective

roles of prisoner and prison officers during the course of the sentence (1991: 155). Perception of this change in treatment was frequently mentioned during the oral testimonies, with a former prisoner stating:

The one thing that struck me was some of the prison officers when they were on the Cages were just like ordinary fellas, there was no big deal, no hassle. But then they were transferred down to the H-Blocks, they were Jekyll and Hyde, you know they were aggressive, arrogant. (PK 2006)

Alongside this perceived defining change in the relationship with the prison authorities, it was also noted that relationships continually changed throughout the life of the site. A former UVF prisoner talked about the 'mercenary screws' who were brought in from the UK to work on the site from its initial inception. 'All they were interested in was 90 people in the Compound and 90 there still when they were locking up' (SU 2011). The changing relationships with the prison officers not only reflected the different prison manifestations but also the regime's emphasis on aspects of control within the prison. One aspect mentioned in the later experiences of imprisonment and the softening of the prison officer relationship with the prisoners was the link made with external attacks on prison officers, with a substantial number targeted and even murdered. This impacted on the relationship of the staff with the prison landscape as it evolved from a place of work where they were in control, to increasingly becoming a place of fear where the prisoner ruled. FR stated that there was a difficulty in controlling staff due to their fear of the prisoners and the potential repercussions of thwarting the paramilitary hierarchies (2007). This change in relationship was most obviously manifest in their everyday interactions and treatment of the prisoners. CM noted:

'Its funny how times change. Cos you see around about '89, '90, when Republicans were more or less running the show, you see when the screws still had to check they would come down on their tiptoes and then lift the flap dead easy cos they didn't want to waken ya, you know.' (2006)

Other sources have revealed fluctuations in prisoner relationships with the prison authorities that varied on an almost individual and daily basis. Oral testimonies demonstrate how mythologizing of particular 'golden' periods has impacted not only on personal memories of imprisonment but on how personal memories are perceived in comparison to the memories of others. The three former

PIRA prisoners who conducted oral testimonies on site recalled different experiences of imprisonment depending on the period of their imprisonment and their status. The oldest and most prominent former prisoner, PK, recalled various harsh realities of life in the prison due to his extended periods of imprisonment in both prison manifestations and his 'red book' status (meaning he was considered a high-risk prisoner and was constantly moved). Hierarchies of experience were evident when popular perceptions of different periods of imprisonment were mentioned:

I always consider myself I went into the prison at an opportune time for want of a better term. Because the blanket was over, the segregation campaign was over, the people who were there before me had won all the conditions that I was walking into. (CM 2006)

BE, who conducted his oral testimony in his home, in contrast, discussed his overwhelming memory of being on the blanket protests in atypical terms. Rather than follow established Republican narratives that emphasize the communal nature and steadfastness of purpose, he stated that his abiding memory was one of unrelenting boredom (BE 2007).

These experiences were also affected by the paramilitary organizations to which former prisoners belonged. The former OIRA prisoner, HX, discussed the difficulties of living in the Compounds as a minority group. He was one of only 130 men imprisoned from OIRA in the Compounds as their organization had rejected violence by 1972. The feeling of being 'completely surrounded' by PIRA prisoners, towards whom they felt a bitter enmity, ensured that they looked to unexpected sources. HX stated that they had more in common with some of the Loyalist paramilitaries. As the OIRA moved away from violence and towards politics, their left-wing ideologies in some ways mirrored Gusty Spence's view of the UVF. HX spoke of the unlikely friendships that were made and maintained from that time (HX 2007). A now-disillusioned former PIRA prisoner, BE, presented a more negative view of PIRA prisoner experiences during the protests. He did admit that as a former 'Blanketman' he still felt a very strong bond with the men who shared that experience. However, he noted that the existence of an organized prisoner hierarchy during all stages of imprisonment ensured that those who did not agree with the leaders' pronouncements were frequently undermined and demonized. He emphasized that the collective nature of Republican

prisoners was enforced through fear and degrees of control of dissent that is often forgotten in collective remembrances of imprisonment (BE 2007).

In comparison, the two former UVF prisoners described the environment of the Compounds as having both negative and positive aspects. During the oral testimony one former prisoner (GD 2011) emphasized the more difficult experiences of imprisonment in comparison to the more jocular tales of the other (SU 2011). They emphasized the role of imprisonment in allowing honest and fruitful discussions of politics, which could not have happened outside. They especially emphasized the widespread cooperation that endured between all the prisoners that existed at the 'Camp Council'. SU considered these early decisions to cooperate and maintain a united front against the prison authorities ensured the prisoners maintained an upper hand in controlling the prison landscape. He also noted that the ability to negotiate and form consensus at these meetings was important for the development of the peace process. Both agreed on the importance of the continuation of communications across paramilitary organizations 'throughout the Compounds throughout the conflict. That for me is the crucial start of the peace process' (GD 2011).

PK had the broadest conception of the interconnections of the site, due to his periods of incarceration straddling both manifestations of the prison landscape and involving frequent moves. Those who had not been imprisoned in both the Compounds and H-Blocks were largely ignorant of the layout and usage of the prison as an overarching landscape. They were only aware of the areas where they had directly resided. When asked about the differences between the two manifestations of the prison, PK was recognized as the most knowledgeable. It was notable that a great amount of respect was afforded to him as someone who had witnessed, and suffered, more than the other prisoners and who had a longer relationship with the prison. Indeed, the physical manifestations of the two prisons were so different that for PK to succinctly articulate how they contrasted he spoke of immaterial concepts. He highlighted the 'freedom' of the Compounds, rather than the physical remains of the buildings as being the defining difference. Experiences of Long Kesh/Maze by the prisoners were greatly impacted by the ability to interact with, and knowledge of, the wider institutional landscapes. Containment of prisoners was considered essential to the security of the H-Blocks.

Prisoners were given very few opportunities to negotiate and be acquainted with areas outside of their actual living quarters. A particularly poignant moment occurred when the oral testimonies moved to the prison hospital (for more in-depth discussion see Chapter 5). This building had a noticeable impact on all the former prisoners as it was the building where the hunger strikers had died in 1981. One of former prisoners entered the prison hospital for the first time during the oral testimony:

I mean standing here and thinking of the people who came in here and died in here whatever . . . a lot of the conditions that we were experiencing at the time are the result of the people who died here that came before then. It is a poignant moment for me, I have never been here.
(TJ 2006)

The oral testimonies of imprisonment, particularly those conducted on-site, revealed that even for those within the same paramilitary organizations, often serving sentences simultaneously, had very different, and individual experiences and memories of this institutional landscape.

Long Kesh/Maze provokes a range of memories of experiences of place that continue to have resonance for the various former inhabitants and visitors of the prison. This includes those who are often ignored in narratives of prisons such as prison officers, and visitors who were otherwise excluded: women and children. Bryonie Reid has discussed the significance of place and identity to the two communities in Northern Ireland in terms of territorial claims 'centred on absolute ownership and mutual exclusion' (2004: 103). Her assertions are relevant in explaining why the narratives surrounding places connected to the conflict, such as Long Kesh/Maze site, are claimed by one side and resultantly rejected by the other. The Republican movement effectively claimed 'absolute ownership' of the prison prior to its closure due to their emotional and political connections with the spectacular events of destruction, protests, hunger strikes and mass escapes that occurred there. Loyalists had a more ambivalent relationship with imprisonment, and therefore with places of incarceration, and have been less vocal in their connections and claims of ownership to the prison. Equally relevant is Reid's examination of interface, and thereby contested, areas of the Belfast cityscape through her discussion of the work of a number of female performative artists. In her study she opens up alternative interpretations

of fundamentally male terrain, while she records reactions that vary from bemusement to aggression from male onlookers (Reid: 2005). Following her emphasis on the complex and often unexpected relationship between gender and place, it is important to include narratives of how Long Kesh/Maze was experienced by females. Women were short-term visitors to the site and their memories and connections to the prison are revealing in how they differ from the dominant perspectives of male prisoners.

LM recalled that she entered the Compounds to visit her brothers, who were interned and imprisoned at the site throughout the early 1970s, on many occasions. In contrast to the bravado that was often exhibited by the male prisoners, who obviously grew accustomed to the institutional surroundings, LM highlighted her abiding memories being of apprehension on entering the prison landscape. Unlike many visitors who wished to actively subvert the prison authorities by receiving and passing comms and contraband, she recalled being incredibly nervous in case anything was passed to her, as she did not want to conceal it and then negotiate the waiting search teams (LM 2007). During the oral testimony she asserted that her apprehension did not allow her to take in and remember her surroundings in detail, although she did recall that despite prisoner high spirits the visiting facilities were physically dark and depressing (LM 2007). The oral testimonies of those who entered the prison for short-term visits will differ considerably from those who were long-term residents. LM's lack of detailed memories demonstrates her essentially uncomfortable experience of Long Kesh/Maze as a short-term visitor. In contrast, her memories of the many artefacts created and passed to her and her family were much clearer, with some still residing in her home. She was happier to retrieve various forms of prison art from hidden places in upstairs bedrooms and attics, a relief to discuss these safe abstractions of imprisonment rather than personal experiences of a prison associated with indistinct, uncomfortable, and predominantly negative memories.

The final memory of Long Kesh/Maze is a crucial inclusion as it relates to the recollections of a member of the prison authorities. FR was an ex-governor of Long Kesh/Maze. A long-term employee of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, he was based at the prison on numerous occasions between 1973 and 1993, including as governor of the entire site from 1991 to 1993. He joined the organization at junior governor level and never experienced life as a prison officer.

During the oral testimony he revealed that despite his higher rank, he was well aware of the tense and even dangerous negotiations the prison officers had to make in manning the prison. He understood the staff as the weakest link in the prison regime as they were more afraid of the prisoners than of the governor (FR 2007). This was a situation that he accepted with some sympathy due to the large number of Troubles-related deaths in the service—eight of the 29 who died were at Long Kesh/Maze (Graham and McDowell, 2007: 352)—and the fact that many of the men came from similar backgrounds and neighbourhoods to those that they tried to control. His experiences of the site as governor were vastly different from those of the front-line prison officer; however, he stated that he chose to interact with the prisoners in a way that set an example for his staff. He recalled pretending to be fearless on entering the prisoner wings of the H-Blocks, even at a time when to do so was considered foolhardy. He stopped his frequent incursions onto wings only after being seriously assaulted by Loyalist prisoners in the early 1990s (FR 2007). FR was very candid in describing his memories of Long Kesh/Maze. He recalled the difficulties of governing a prison where the inmates had withdrawn their consent to be controlled. He stated that it was this lack of acquiescence that made the form of buildings housing the prisoners irrelevant. Alongside contradicting the possibility of ever fully controlling these particular prisoner bodies, he did highlight real differences in the regime's knowledge of the two different manifestations of the prison landscape. For although the H plan was 'just awful', due to its lack of surveillance opportunities, he described life within the self-contained communities of Compounds as essentially 'a great mystery' to the prison authorities (FR 2007). He concluded by saying, 'anyone who said they governed the Maze was a liar, they could only say they tried to govern the Maze . . . The story of the Maze really was that the prisoners were in control' (FR 2007).

These oral testimonies demonstrate that vastly different memories of place exist in regard to Long Kesh/Maze. Whilst the publicly prominent memories of former PIRA prisoners are currently those that correspond with accepted understandings of the site, the emphasis needs to shift from dominant narratives to multi-perspectives that include those whose memories have been ignored or excluded from the story of Long Kesh/Maze. Former prisoners—especially Loyalist and other Republicans but also contradictory remembrances from former PIRA prisoners—prison authorities, auxiliary and contract workers, and visitors to the site can help

to reveal the vastly different experiences of the prison landscape that can undermine totalizing and mythologizing narratives about place. Despite initial difficulties in gaining access to former Loyalist prisoners to record their memories, it is evident that this reluctance to discuss their experiences is increasingly subsiding. When conducting oral testimonies with two former Loyalist prisoners in 2011 one noted that they had been engaging with the regeneration of the site. They wanted their stories to be included: 'It's not just about Republicans, you know' (SU 2011). By including the narratives of a variety of individuals and groups who were connected with the site, an attempt to recreate a complicated and multi-stranded narrative can emerge. To take account of these multi-perspectives allows unearthing of disparate narratives that will in turn allow greater understanding and more nuanced meaning to be uncovered.

REPRESENTING LONG KESH/MAZE: MEDIA, MURALS, AND MEMORIALS

The various ways in which the prison has been represented, imagined and mediated by communities beyond the boundaries of the site will conclude this landscape study of Long Kesh/Maze. Moving beyond conceiving the site as existing only within the confines of the perimeter wall, or as a static physical entity, is important. As David Passmore has suggested, no site is clearly delineated, stable or bounded (2004: 130). As a high-security zone, a status retained even after closure, physical access by the wider community has been highly controlled and there is a need to consider how this entity has been understood as an imagined place. Place can travel with people as inner landscapes that are imagined or remembered (Stewart and Strathern 2003: 5), and as such these landscapes can leave deep impressions and be shared and re-imagined with those who have not physically experienced the prison. Indeed, I argue that a lack of physical interaction with the prison landscape does not mean that Northern Irish society did not have an imagined understanding and experience of this high-profile site. Long Kesh/Maze has retained its prominence and visibility since the early 1970s through many sources including its ongoing high profile in the mass media, its use as a subject in wall

murals, and increasingly as a subject for post-conflict memorials. Through these means Long Kesh/Maze has maintained and evolved its significance to a broad audience as an accessible, imagined landscape and shall be explored as such.

Photographic images of Long Kesh/Maze and its inhabitants began to circulate in the media immediately on the opening of the internment camp. This was due to the public interest and media scrutiny of the implementation of the policy of internment, which was a controversial political attempt to curb the escalating civil conflict. Personalized images appeared of individuals and groups of men contained within wire fencing and housed in Nissen huts, immediately visually mediating their imprisonment conditions as prisoner-of-war. This was an interpretation that the prisoners accepted and continued to perpetrate throughout the life of the prison. The initial media representation of Long Kesh/Maze—centring on a highly unusual prison landscape containing a unique UK prison population—was maintained and reinforced until the construction of the H-Blocks, when it was replaced in the media by the aerial overview of the H-Blocks. With the escalating protests increasingly dominating representations of Long Kesh/Maze, public interest in the prison reached its zenith during the highly mediated Hunger Strikes of 1980 and 1981. It is notable that the site was consistently represented from this time as a series of aerial ‘Hs’, to the exclusion of the still-functioning Compounds. This new perspective of the site points to a change in relationship between the media and the prison landscape that reflected this now very different form of prison that necessitated a new perspective. Gone were the intimate portrayals of ‘political’ prisoners contained in communal, temporary Nissen huts behind wires. With the change in regime and prisoner status, a more distant and contained relationship between the prisoner and the media evolved. However, the representation of Long Kesh/Maze from an aerial perspective allowed the media to continue to emphasize the fundamentally unusual nature of the prison population. Trisha Ziff has suggested that photographs taken in Northern Ireland during the Troubles integrated political events and messages (1991: 187). These distinctive media representations of the prison—as two very different and distinct prison forms—support this contention that different understandings and meanings of the prison were being articulated through these changes in form and style of visual presentation. The role of the media in presenting perspectives and directing understandings of

the prison is important. Following Timothy Edensor's assertion, 'the arena in which contested representations of the nation are fought out is the media' (2002: 141), the media played a central role in explaining the meaning of events that occurred within the prison and linking them to the demands of both communities and to aspects of the wider conflict.

The dominant use of aerial images of the H-Blocks by the media moved the public's consciousness from the Compounds, which swiftly became the forgotten element of the prison landscape, to the more visually impressive H-Blocks. The public perception of the prison site therefore deviated from the actual everyday experience of the site of those incarcerated to a structural overview. This distancing bypassed the significant number of prisoners who continued to reside in the Compounds. By their very nature, aerial photographs of the site ignored the vast areas of the prison landscape that were small, non-specific and did not lend themselves to aerial replication, and therefore presented a misleading overview of the totality of the prison landscape. This presentation was further complicated by the full landscape presentation of the media being contradicted by the increasingly contained lived experience of the prisoners inhabiting the H-Blocks. Their experiences were restricted to interactions limited to their immediate surroundings and increasingly restricted to very specific locales within the prison. Prisoners only had direct experience of the structure in which they were placed. They were swiftly and securely transferred in windowless vans around the prison complex and had no ability to view, or experience, the wider prison landscape. A former prisoner recalled that some of his fellow prisoners who were on 'the red book', were securely moved between H-Blocks up to once a fortnight and became mentally fatigued and disorientated from their lack of connection to people and place within the prison (PK 2006). Despite the media representation moving to overview aerial representations of the H-Block prison landscape, the majority of prisoner interactions with the Long Kesh/Maze were partial. In contrast, the media images of the prison since the mid 1970s—as an expansive and interconnected cellular prison landscape—has come to dominate understandings in popular imagination.

Likewise, Neil Jarman has contrasted two different views of landscape perpetuated during the Troubles: 'the view from outside' and the view from the ground. He asserts that the former was represented by more

simplified media-based constructions and the latter acknowledges the greater complexities of the situation as appreciated within the local context (1993: 109). Whilst 'the view from outside' is represented by media images, it could be argued that the view from the ground is best exemplified in wall murals. Large-scale, longstanding 'painted landscapes' are traditionally located on the gable-end walls of terraced houses in working-class urban areas in Northern Ireland. They are understood as 'collectively emblematic of the segregated and polarized working class areas of Belfast and elsewhere in Northern Ireland' (McCormick and Jarman 2005: 49). They have also been used to gauge and represent opinions and reactions of the wider working-class communities in which they are situated. McCormick's and Jarman's (2005) dissection of the death of a mural highlights these sites as living material entities and evolving markers of identity and ownership, rather than timeless, aesthetic objects. Such an approach pinpoints their importance as signifiers of changing opinions engaged with their landscape setting. These murals are significant in marking working-class areas and can be viewed as 'landscapes' as they are place-based and 'a form of codification of history itself, seen from the viewpoints of personal expression and experience' (Stewart and Strathern 2003: 1). Their power as distributors of often confrontational and even contentious political messages—wall murals traditionally overtly utilize sectarian symbols and identifiers—ensures that they present easily digestible messages to be viewed in passing rather than requiring contemplation and reflection. As Jeremy MacClancy has argued regarding Basque political graffiti, they 'command our attention . . . [as] unofficial means of redefining surfaces and turning public spaces into political ones' (2007: 151).

The existence of wall murals in working-class areas not only signify boundaries in the urban landscape but also address complex issues of identity, which are not simply sectarian but also class-based (Buckley 1998: 6). As these murals tend to be located in the areas that the majority of the paramilitary prisoners—and their victims—originate, it is apt that representations of Long Kesh/Maze and events that occurred therein are popular subjects. Republican murals identify strongly with the uniqueness of the prison and the communal nature of the prison experience. This contrasts with the representations of prisons in the Loyalist tradition, where there are few direct visual references to Long Kesh/Maze specifically. As the more established wall mural tradition, it has been noted that Loyalists have been slower in incorporating recent politics and social commentary than Republicans

(McCormick and Jarman 2005: 51). This lack of political engagement in wall mural subjects is evident in the differences between Republican and Loyalist representations of the site, which also reflect the different relationships that the two traditions have with paramilitary imprisonment and the different contemporary issues current in their communities. To some extent, differences in representations of the site in the wider urban landscape can be used to illustrate contrasting experiences of the two sets of prisoners, and their communities, with Long Kesh/Maze.

Neil Jarman's contention that 'mural painting has developed into one of the most dynamic media for symbolic expression in the north of Ireland' (Jarman 1998a: 81) is central to this examination of Long Kesh/Maze as an imagined landscape. Murals depicting Long Kesh/Maze are external materializations of the prison and identify its many existences as an imagined place apart. Republican representations of the site are increasingly prominent in their number, diversity, longevity, and locations. Jarman has highlighted that the placement—as well as the content—of these murals is significant due to the messages they present to the community, about the community and their possible replication in the media (1998a). Whilst they reflect issues and opinions of the wider society—to an extent—they have been increasingly adopted by the media as undisputed short-hand for community perspectives. Due to the media interest in murals, their placement is significant as high-profile locations demand equally prominent subjects and often frequent replacement. Therefore, it is interesting that the locations of many of the murals representing Long Kesh/Maze in Republican areas are of a longstanding nature and are placed in prominent locations and have continued into the peace process. Within traditional Republican heartlands of West Belfast these murals tend to be concentrated on the busiest arterial roads, particularly at junctions such as between the Falls Road and the Whiterock Road and the 'international wall' at Northumberland Road. Such mural locations ensure representations are semi-official, tightly controlled as to their message and tend to be traditional in subject but creatively innovative in style. The many murals relating to the prison that have appeared during 2006, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Hunger Strikes, include slogans conflating the Hunger Strikes with contemporary imprisonment issues (Figure 6.1), free-standing H-shaped murals placed at busy intersections, and murals containing mosaic elements (Figure 6.2).



Figure 6.1 Slogan conflating the 1981 Hunger Strikes with contemporary imprisonment issues c.2006.



Figure 6.2 H-Block mural, complete with mosaic inlay, located near the Falls Road Belfast, to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1981 Hunger Strike, c.2006.

The presentation of one case study will follow McCormick and Jarman's methodology to reveal the evolving nature of meaning of Long Kesh/Maze through examining changes to a longstanding mural that is unusual both in its location, representation, and maintenance. This particular 'H' mural was originally located in a prominent position on a cleared area of ground on the Falls Road (Figure 6.3). The use of a free-standing wooden structure is unusual for such a longstanding mural. As it was replicated for a short time during the Hunger Strike anniversary of 2006 it is probable that it was a survival from a previous commemoration, the majority of examples having been removed earlier (McCormick and Jarman 2005: 57). Stylistically, the use of the 'H' figure is an obvious replication of media representations of the 'H' blocks, which has come to symbolize more just the physical structure but references the protests and especially the Hunger Strikes (Jarman 1998a). Filling the 'H' with images of the dead hunger strikers from 1981, and flanking them with Republican flags, reaffirms the connection of these figures with Long Kesh/Maze and the Republican movement.

Such a mural is a very popular representation of Long Kesh/Maze for Republicans. It replicates the media's use of the aerial view of the H-Blocks while simultaneously focusing on the human impact of the Hunger Strikes by utilizing images of the ten men who died in 1981. In keeping with memorial traditions that Erika Doss has identified in the American context, these representations tend to grapple with human mortality whilst actual representations of death are absent. Instead the use of photographic images of the dead represent and focus on the men when they were alive and healthy (2010: 101). The use of images of the hunger strikers prior to their self-starvation is common in Long Kesh/Maze wall murals. However, such representations are not exclusive to the Hunger Strikes or indeed to Northern Ireland. Layla Renshaw, in her work on exhuming the Republican dead from the Spanish Civil War, has also noted the prominent use of photographic images of dead men in happier times. She has connected this use of photographs to multiple levels of meaning including the deliberately political act of engendering 'individuation and relatedness' (2011: 130) between the living and dead. She highlights the problematic use of such 'afterimages' that can be emotionally loaded for the older generations but whose meaning can be lost, to a degree, in the assimilation of younger generations who did not live through the



Figure 6.3 Free-standing 'H' Block mural containing images of hunger strikers who died in 1981, located on Falls Road, Belfast, c.2005.

periods of loss (Renshaw 2011: 134). Following Renshaw and Doss, I argue that the use of the stylized image of the H-Block filled with portraits of dead hunger strikers is a powerful device in abstracting and isolating this particular perspective of the prison experience. By utilizing the emotive qualities of the Hunger Strikes—but avoiding over-identification with death by concentrating on earlier images—these murals remain current. They can be conflated and updated by juxtaposing the enduring emotional impact of hunger strikes with ever-changing associations. These are both historical (such as the later inclusion of other Troubles-related hunger-striker deaths in the ‘H’ mural discussed above) and contemporary (including rallies that conflate the Hunger Strikes with early peace process demands for investigations into historic accusations of state collusion [see Figure 6.4]) in nature.



Figure 6.4 Free-standing mural detailing arrangements for a protest rally that conflates an anniversary of the 1981 Hunger Strikes with an anti-collusion rally. Andersonstown Road, Belfast, c.2006.

As Guy Beiner has argued, images of the past are often ‘imperceptibly recharged with contemporary ideological meanings’. (2005: 60)

The maintenance of this particular image has been unusual. Whereas restoration usually maintains the original image with small stylistic deviations (McCormick and Jarman 2005, 68), the replacement of painted wooden panels with printed, weatherproofed plastic sheets in time for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1981 Hunger Strikes in 2006 is a noticeable update (Figure 6.5). A further deviation is found on examining the centre of the ‘H’. This area had contained a quotation by Bobby Sands flanked by hooded gunmen, and has been



Figure 6.5 Free-standing ‘H’ Block mural with replacement printed, weather-proof images. Note changes in central image, c.2006.

replaced by images of two hunger strikers who died at prisons other than Long Kesh/Maze during the Troubles. The updating of this image is poignant in respect of the recent attempts by mainstream Republicanism to refocus from their paramilitary activities to the political ascendancy of Sinn Féin. In this change, Bobby Sands and the hunger strikers of 1981 are not merely being commemorated in Republican historical iconography but their meaning is being repositioned and reaffirmed. In what McCormick and Jarman describe as 'embedding memory' (2005: 51), these changes emphasize their place within the Nationalist canon of uprisings and rebellions whilst addressing revisions to contemporary Nationalist identity. The continued significance of the H-Blocks, and particularly the Hunger Strikes, as a mural subject can be understood through Paul Conner-ton's assertion that 'our images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order' (1989: 3). These images are not just commemorating the past but celebrating the ascendancy of once powerless prisoners to the new political order. As an interesting postscript to this biography of a mural, before the thirtieth anniversary of the Hunger Strikes, in 2011, the land in which the mural stood was used to build a house. Rather than disappear, these more permanent panels were relocated to the upper plane of a wall in a nearby street. They no longer retain their prominence—perhaps reflecting their significance is relying on the interconnections of the image, message, form, and location—but they have been retained in a traditional mural context. Their survival indicates that the Hunger Strikes are still salient symbols to the wider Nationalist communities of West Belfast. Furthermore, this new mural form allows a degree of mutability that was previously impossible and while the subject matter is still important, this specific example is not as significant as it once was (Figure 6.6).

Republican self-confidence in proclaiming their connections to Long Kesh/Maze can be contrasted with the murals relating to imprisonment seen in Loyalist areas. These are both smaller in number and the forms of representation do not promote such a confident self-image in relation to their imprisonment. Andrew Finlay suggests that this lack of confidence in Loyalist identity is indicative of a recent shift in Northern Protestant identity to confusion, alienation and even self-pity and victimhood in the context of political, social and economic changes wrought by the transition to the peace process (2001: 3). An uncomfortable relationship with incarceration continues and is evidenced in the majority of depictions of Long Kesh/Maze placing the



Figure 6.6 Free-standing ‘H’ Block mural transplanted to a nearby wall on the reuse of the site of the original mural, c.2009.

prison as a backdrop to shows of strength, often hooded gunmen surrounded by paramilitary insignias. McCormick and Jarman have noted that peace process Loyalist murals have continued to emphasize the paramilitary facet of conflict whereas Republicans have moved to more political messages (2005: 51). The representations of the prison are more generic—with the use of the aerial view of the H-Blocks largely absent and the most common image being that of an exterior, ground-level view of a watch-tower with surrounding wall and barbed wire (Figure 6.9). These less specific images are not so much representative of the unique conditions of Long Kesh/Maze, rather the prison acts as a generic backdrop that covertly references imprisonment rather than identifying any specific or special relationships with Long Kesh/Maze. Connections with conflict are more comfortably articulated in a common mural theme of Loyalist paramilitaries—the First World War—and in particular the blood sacrifice of Ulster soldiers at the Battle of the Somme in 1916. The commemoration of this battle is a common mural found within Long Kesh/Maze as well as wider society. It connects to earlier

conceptions of the UVF as an anti-Home Rule organization of the early twentieth century and proclaims unambiguous legitimacy of their traditional British loyalty and identity. Poignantly, this theme is common in 're-imagining' projects, which are a Belfast City Council initiative aiming to negotiate with local communities to replace offensive and overly militaristic murals with more broadly acceptable mural themes. The ongoing discomfiture at defying and being imprisoned by the state they profess loyalty to is palpable in the absence of direct representation of Troubles imprisonment.

Wall murals have become an important means by which the wider public can experience and interact with Long Kesh/Maze as an imagined landscape. Not only do such murals maintain the public profile of the prison, they often display highly mediated though intimate portraits of life inside this longstanding high-security zone. Continued visual representations of the site into the peace process connect to the ongoing importance and reconfiguration of events such as the 1981 Hunger Strikes and their acknowledged impact on Republican prisoners, their communities and contemporary politics. Through such innovative replication, key elements of the images become ingrained, and the enduring but flexible relationship between the site and contemporary external communities are solidified. This acts to maintain Troubles hierarchies, interest in the prison and defies the continued lack of physical access. Murals mediate these ongoing communal connections and understandings of Long Kesh/Maze. Mural representations of the prison make the connection between people and place a communal one, connecting those who resided at the site and the communities they came from. However, these mediated imagined relationships are problematic in the representation of the prison landscape, centring on the aerial view of the H-Blocks and the 1981 Hunger Strikes to the detriment of other forms and experiences of imprisonment. This emphasis ignores different periods of occupation, the simultaneous operation of the Compounds and also the experiences of conforming and Loyalist prisoners. The manifestations of these imagined experiences of Long Kesh/Maze present the prison as a partial landscape, a snapshot in time, and they ignore alternative understandings, meanings, and representations of this aspect of the Troubles.

Memorialization of the Troubles, including the Hunger Strikes, has been a noticeable phenomenon during the peace process, particularly in Nationalist and interface communities. At least 30 forms of memorial, plaque or commemorative mural were in existence in West

Belfast up to August 2006 (Viggiani 2006), which has undoubtedly risen as more memorials have been created with every passing anniversary since this time (see McAtackney forthcoming). Memorials are a relatively recent phenomenon in materializing and directing specific memories of the recent past that have increasingly proliferated in the past decade. Doss has highlighted their significance in the American context due to their affective qualities to 'evoke memories, sustain thoughts, constitute political conditions and conjure states of being'. (2010: 71). In what she labels 'memorial mania', she notes their linkage to communal desires to express emotions in the public arena (2010: 2) in a potentially divisive manner as they do not rely on 'a coherent, collective or even consensual ideological framework' (2010: 47). They are used not only to publically express emotional connections to events and places but also proclaim states of being and as such 'shaping and directing perceptions of social order, national identity and political transition' (2010: 10). In the context of a peace process they are incredibly poignant in revealing who and what is being collectively remembered, how this is being articulated, where they are placed and how they are treated. Whilst many examples can be enumerated from an urban context, it is important to explore outside of the city. Beyond Belfast there is evidence of communal remembering and memorializing of Long Kesh/Maze in a wider landscape setting. Whilst the use of murals is not so common in rural spaces in Northern Ireland—emphasizing the importance of their strategic placement for public consumption of their messages—those rural areas that were significantly impacted by the conflict do evidence attempts to memorialize aspects of the Troubles.

The border area, and South Armagh in particular, was deeply affected by the Troubles. Republican paramilitary units were extremely active and many Army bases and fortified police stations were imposed into the largely Nationalist rural populations. South Armagh experienced significant linkages between the locale and the wider Troubles—including the death of local-born Long Kesh/Maze hunger striker, Raymond McCreech. Memorializations of a number of incidents from the conflict dot the rural landscape, including dedications to the 1981 Hunger Strikes. One example is a memorial located on the grass verge of an arterial road along the border. The memorial is dispersed in form but focuses on a granite headstone with the words 'My Brother is Not a Criminal' followed by the names of all the 1981 hunger strikers who died, in order of when they died,

including the number of days they were on hunger strike and their age at death (Figure 6.7). The bottom of the headstone contains a quotation by Bobby Sands: 'H Block is the rock that the British monster shall perish on/For we in the H Block stand upon the imperishable rock of the Irish Socialist Republic'. Ten white Celtic crosses (one for each dead hunger striker) are landscaped down the hill from this headstone memorial in an 'H' formation. They surround an older memorial located under the central stroke of the H, which is dedicated to those who 'made the supreme sacrifice for their country' from 1917 to 1976. A flag-pole with an Irish Tricolour floats in the background on the summit of the grass verge. The Hunger



Figure 6.7 1981 Hunger Strike memorial, South Armagh, July 2011.

Strike memorial builds on existing memorialization of a prominent site and uses the contours of the hill to its advantage. Referencing elements common to memorials in West Belfast—including the ‘H’ forms, focusing on individual hunger strikers and the use of an Irish flag hoisted above the memorial—this location mirrors mural placement in West Belfast due to its prominent and highly visual position, situated appropriately for a rural context.

Another Hunger Strike memorial is located opposite a popular local attraction—a GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) ground—within a semi-circular stone structure in South Armagh (Figure 6.8). Placed between a plaque headed ‘South Armagh Brigade *Óglaigh na hÉireann*’



Figure 6.8 1981 Hunger Strike memorial, South Armagh, July 2011.



Figure 6.9 Loyalist wall mural depicting Long Kesh/Maze prison as a ground-view backdrop to demands for the release of prisoners. Undated.

[the Gaelic name for the PIRA] and a shrine to a local Volunteer who was ‘murdered by criminals’ in 2003, there is a central plaque. It states: ‘Erected in Memory of the Ten Hunger Strikers/Who Died in Long Kesh in 1981 and for all those Republicans/Who Gave Their Lives/For Irish Freedom’. This plaque is comparable to the previous example in listing the names of the men who died in order of when they died, with their year of birth and death. It is noted at the bottom that the plaque was erected by ‘Joe Clarke Cumann Courtbane’ and carved into the bottom plinth are the words ‘Unveiled July 5th, 1987/ Sinn Féin’. This is the oldest plaque in the memorial; the surrounding plaques date to 2004 and can be situated within the context of the peace process. By situating new memorials alongside this significantly older one they are simultaneously recontextualizing the Hunger Strike memorial in a peace process context whilst affirming their legitimacy alongside this enduring trope of Republicanism. Through such contextualization this collection of memorials continually shift in individual and collective meaning and thereby demonstrate the inherently ‘unstable, open-ended and unresolved’ nature of these manifestations (Doss 2010: 49). This central memorial plaque is unusual having been created and placed during the Troubles and by displaying

the names of the group who commissioned it. This indicates a degree of pride and lack of fear—and even defiance—in publicly memorializing this event. Both examples lack photographic images of the dead hunger strikers that are typical in urban murals. They are humble in size and appearance and do not overwhelm their rural setting. Rather, they fit with the landscape while being consciously situated in relatively busy and high-profile locations for their context.

CONCLUSIONS

The idea that the Irish landscape is a 'multilayered, encoded and rewritten text' is evidenced at Long Kesh/Maze in the different layers of meaning that are attached to the prison (Smyth 1993: 399). The study of Long Kesh/Maze as a landscape reveals that not only are there multiple landscapes to be explored, but the prison site is itself implicated in various forms of premeditated and unintentional, bounded and contained landscapes. The prison should not only be explored as a contained landscape, bounded within a perimeter fence, but simultaneously as a number of contained landscapes and as a part of wider landscapes, including as a broadly imagined landscape. Multiple perspectives of the site are not only connected to those who were imprisoned at Long Kesh/Maze but also those who worked there, visited and interacted with the site as an imagined entity. Landscape approaches can be used to reveal the myriad experiences and memories of place of those who resided there and also reveal their continued meanings and uses that connect to the politics of location, utilization and reuse. Such approaches allow us to reveal broader contexts and interconnections but also link to personal and often very individual understandings and remembrances, creating multilayered, emotive and personalized accounts of place.

Because of the complex, contested and contemporary nature of this site it is clear that an objective examination and interpretation of it as a landscape is not possible. As the oral testimonies of former prisoners indicate, the experiences and memories of this landscape can differ depending on a number of variables. One must accept that in such an emotive context as the Troubles and peace process, the immediate and surrounding landscape will have heightened meanings and will be envisaged in diverse and even contradictory ways.

Following Victor Buchli, landscapes never stand still, they are always in the making; but although they are in the present they constantly reference the past. (2002: 136). Examination of Long Kesh/Maze as a contemporary landscape is central to understanding how the site is conceived and what it means to different groups at specific times. There is also a need to articulate that its ephemeral, changeable and often immaterial nature makes its study as a landscape particularly volatile and therefore difficult to pin down meaning.

Following the signing of the 1998 Agreement, the demilitarization of society has ensured that many prominent security sites have become defunct, swiftly demolished, or are areas of contestation. The lack of consensus, both public and political, about what should happen to security infrastructure has increasingly focused on Long Kesh/Maze. This Troubles landscape has continued as a political problem, provoking media debates, cross-party consultation, and highly different sets of proposals regarding its future. Long Kesh/Maze is the obvious landscape to be highlighted in these political negotiations as the container for many of the most prominent paramilitaries active during the Troubles. It is a highly emotive site for former prisoners, prison authorities, victims, and wider Northern Irish society. Long Kesh/Maze is not an inert landscape that things happened to; its meanings remain in flux as interactions between the past, present, and future continue. Whilst it remains publicly inaccessible, this does not mean that it is not presented, remembered, and memorialized throughout Northern Ireland. As an imagined landscape it has been mediated and understood in various ways that have prioritized deliberately partial narratives relating to simplified and specific media representations of the different manifestations of the site. The use of the aerial 'H' has been adapted to fit evolving agendas for Republicans whilst being simultaneously ignored in Loyalist public consciousness. It is this complication, at varying levels of scale, which needs to be incorporated into the stories of place and will be more overtly considered in the final chapter—the dark heritage of Long Kesh/Maze.

Dark heritage

To fully comprehend Long Kesh/Maze prison through time and space, there is a need to broaden the investigation beyond its material confines and setting as a functioning prison to explore its contemporary site as a manifestation of dark heritage. Moving to this broadest and most disparate scale of analysis allows contextualization of how the physical manifestations, structures, philosophy and understandings of the prison have mutated since its closure to an as yet undecided, and increasingly contested cultural entity. As Long Kesh/Maze stands at a crossroads between its past life as a government institution and its uncertain future, its transition is important in highlighting the critical role of prisons in post-conflict, transitional and contested societies. Carolyn Strange and Michael Kempa have specifically explored prisons as a form of dark heritage and have stressed the discomfiture their continued existence can engender as a ‘curious connection between the sad and the bad and their touristic representations [that] has generated academic and ethical debate about the ways in which leisure and pleasure are mixed with tragedy’ (2003: 387). In addition to these issues the ongoing political nature of Long Kesh/Maze adds a further facet to the afterlife of this site. Philip Stone has suggested for dark heritage to exist there is a need to understand its creation as both ‘attraction-supply’ and ‘consumer-demand’ (2006: 146), and as such there is a need to incorporate different perspectives on its evolving meanings and how the dark heritage of Long Kesh/Maze fits into a post-conflict context.

Martin Carver has asserted that archaeological heritage is largely assumed to comprise monumental remains whose value is self-evident and immutable. This ensures that the conception of archaeological heritage tends to self-perpetuate as those elements that are

assigned protection, and therefore are valued, mirror existing heritage (Carver 1996: 50). As such, relatively recently constructed, and abandoned, prisons are not automatic choices as heritage and it is a major statement to accept them as such. Strange and Kempa have highlighted the lack of inevitability in prisons becoming a heritage resource: 'that they have remained historic sites suggests that the cultural and political conditions that contribute to their preservation and historic interpretation remain operative.' (2003: 397). That prisons as heritage exist in particular spatial and temporal contexts suggests the existence of a special relationship between periods and places of incarceration and wider society. In the case of Northern Ireland this is especially true, as Long Kesh/Maze was deeply embedded in the ebbs and flows of the Troubles so the difficult process of gaining consensus as how to deal with this remnant has mirrored the slow, uncertain and often halting transitions to peace. This final study will define the site of Long Kesh/Maze as a place of dark heritage, will examine the post-closure realities of the site and will reveal how elements of dark heritage have been recontextualized in individual and communal settings. Although there is no template for prisons to transition to dark heritage, such explorations of the site and its broader context can perhaps allow its former inhabitants, and indeed the wider society, to be less reverential—or less dismissive—about its significance.

POLITICAL PRISONS AND DARK HERITAGE

Dark heritage, as a concept, has a short but widely debated history. The term 'dark heritage' was coined by John Lennon and Malcolm Foley and is the subject of their seminal volume *Dark Tourism: the Attraction of Death and Disaster*. It specifically links the growing tourist appetite for consuming sites of death and destruction as manifestations of western, global consumerism—and therefore recent vintage—reflecting the circumstances of the late modern world (2000). However, the particulars of this definition have been disputed and whilst the term is used broadly to describe a variety of recent historical sites with links to death and destruction, Philip Stone has noted that the literature remains 'both eclectic and theoretically fragile' (2006: 146). Stone has forwarded the idea of a 'spectrum' of dark

heritage, in which certain categories are lighter (or darker) than others. He highlights the distance of time and space as well as the evolving roles of media, political and social context and mutability of perceptions of place as impacting on the darkness of the site and the need to conceive this category in a 'loose and fluid manner' (2006: 154). This nuance of definition is particularly relevant to a still politically constituted place such as Long Kesh/Maze, in which the changing political engagement and public interest will continue to impact on understandings of it as a place of 'dark heritage'.

The interest in categorizing what is or is not dark heritage has become central to many of the discussions of the phenomenon, including the work of Seaton (1996) and Stone and Sharpley (2008). Whilst there remains a dearth of definitions of what specifically characterizes a 'dark' place and what particularly appeals to a receptive and interested public the question of what defines dark heritage is important. This is especially relevant when considering the ongoing transitions of Long Kesh/Maze, as there exists a lack of consensus as to what it means and how these meanings can be controlled or directed in the future. Now closed for over a decade, Long Kesh/Maze is still categorized as a high-security site with access controlled by government administrators. Its partial demolition has been conducted behind closed doors to facilitate the incorporation of a selection of extant remains into a future site reconfigured to fit internationally-acceptable conceptions of transitioning from conflict to peace. In its current state the material integrity of the site has been compromised and it still remains largely inaccessible to members of the public. Can Long Kesh/Maze be conceived as 'dark heritage' when it is physically inaccessible and its primary objective is not as a tourist attraction? With such extensive interventions and controls on interpretation of the site, what 'darkness' remains?

Bowman and Pezzullo have tried to address this issue of what is so 'dark' about dark heritage by stating, 'By labeling certain tourists or tourist sites "dark", an implicit claim is made that there is something disturbing, troubling, suspicious, weird, morbid, or perverse about them, but what exactly that may be remains elusive and ill-defined because no one has assumed the burden of proving it' (2009, 190). They contend that the labeling of such sites as 'dark' highlights a particular perspective and privilege that can marginalize the importance of such places and deny the potential of places of death and destruction to enact social change that are 'also about shaping the

present and the future' (2009: 194). This issue of the continuing evolving meaning and ability to impact on contemporary understandings is especially pertinent to Long Kesh/Maze. As a recent historical and contested site that remains central to the identities of some whilst being highly repulsive to others, a 'darkness' remains. The perceived growing interest in sites of dark heritage can also be linked to Erika Doss's research on 'memorial mania' in the contemporary United States. She highlights the increasing desire to memorialize negative, 'dark', events—whether natural or manmade disasters, temporary or permanent forms, *in situ* or re-situated to places of political power—as 'an obsession with issues of memory and history and an urgent desire to express and claim those issues in visibly public contexts' (2010: 2). The urgency of contestation over the future existence, meaning and use of Long Kesh/Maze exemplifies these processes of claiming ownership of the past and presenting specific narratives that connect to the dark events of the recent past.

Of most relevance to this study is Strange and Kempa's exploration of prisons as dark heritage using the case studies of Robben Island in South Africa and Alcatraz in the United States (2003). Their study is particularly relevant as they highlight the changing meanings and interpretations of the sites, the enhancing (and masking) of specific narratives, and the role of political (and specifically state) intervention in controlling their meaning. Their central thesis is that prison dark heritage not only has multiple meanings but that these can change over time due to a number of factors including 'the intervention of external stakeholders and storytellers and the pressures of audience expectations' (2003: 388). The acceptance that interpretations are not static and that there is a dynamic between state desires and public expectations that can result in often difficult narratives being increasingly incorporated due to changing political contexts and public demands, may have increasing implications for a site like Long Kesh/Maze. Tunbridge and Ashworth in their volume on 'dissonant heritage' have stated that 'dark' places are especially marketable, particularly if they were notorious and associated with excessive violence, unjust treatment, and sympathetic characters (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 104–5). Media and public interest in Long Kesh/Maze during its functional life as a prison, which has persisted for over a decade since closure, ensures that all these factors can be located at the site. More recently, the consideration of why the consumers—the 'dark tourists'—wish to visit such sites has been

dissected by Stone and Sharpley, who have identified that ‘dark tourists’ motives will certainly vary according to intensities of meanings for various individuals within different social networks. (2008: 589). The knowledge that dark heritage sites can have a variety of meanings for the various publics that wish to consume them can result in contested and politically loaded sites being overly controlled and interpreted through state interventions. These considerations are important in relation to the biography of Long Kesh/Maze and will be used to consider its afterlife as a place of contested, dark heritage in its contemporary context of the peace process in Northern Ireland.

This chapter will explore Long Kesh/Maze as a manifestation of dark heritage due to its role as a Troubles material remnant that has survived into the peace process. It will overtly engage with the numerous political, media, and societal debates regarding the future of the site in order to explore its continuing meanings throughout its transition from a functional to heritage entity. Whilst Long Kesh/Maze remains a contested entity in public and political spheres, decisions have been ongoing ‘below ground’ (Losty 2012) regarding its enduring material presence that have obvious implications for how the site can continue to be understood and how much it can be conceived as a site of dark heritage. This chapter will simultaneously consider the meaning of political negotiations, public debates and the presentation of various proposals for the future of the site whilst the processes of demolition of the majority of the physical structures were ongoing. The often forgotten dark heritage of what I call the ‘distributed self’ of Long Kesh/Maze will then be examined through the movement of objects from the prison to private homes and community museums. This section will argue that such intentional, unofficial dispersals have allowed the prison to exist as a dispersed entity, maintaining and reinforcing human relationships through material networks deliberately circulated outside of state control.

BECOMING DARK HERITAGE AT LONG KESH/MAZE

Hitherto this volume has explored Long Kesh/Maze as an active prison, its post-functional afterlife has only been hinted at in previous

chapters. As one might expect, in the immediate period after its closure, the prison has not simply reverted to a silenced concrete presence. Instead, it has provoked various responses to its continued presence as a material remnant from the Troubles surviving into the peace process. Long Kesh/Maze closed as a direct result of the 1998 Agreement. The majority of prisoners who had been convicted of offences relating to the conflict were released as a specific, albeit contentious, condition of this Agreement. The issue of paramilitary release was a particularly controversial aspect of the Agreement that was insisted upon by Sinn Féin to the evident discomfiture of more mainstream, especially Unionist, political parties. However, the eventual acceptance of the mass release of prisoners ensured that the entity most associated with the paramilitary imprisonment—Long Kesh/Maze—retained its high public profile. By July 2000 the majority of prisoners held at the site were released and by September 2000 the prison closed as a functioning institution, with the transfer of the last prisoners to other carceral institutions within the province. The site did not remain in limbo for long. It was transferred—alongside a number of other high-profile ex-military sites—from the British government to the Northern Ireland Executive in March 2003 as part of a regeneration initiative. This condition of transferral is important. The future of the site, from this time, has consistently been couched in economic terms of regeneration and economic peace dividends rather than in political, social, or emotional terms. A government consultative panel was established prior to its transferral, in January 2003, so that decisions regarding the future development of the site could be initiated immediately (NIAO 2011: 10). What undoubtedly was not foreseen at this time was that the site of Long Kesh/Maze was to be so highly and publicly contested—with passionately opposing perspectives on its future. Almost a decade and at least three proposals later, it is still in the process of actively transitioning from a functional prison.

The continuing political nature of Long Kesh/Maze is confirmed by the tight control that the Northern Ireland Executive has maintained over the site as a material entity since it was transferred to their control. It has remained a high-security zone, with access only granted through application to the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) since this time. Access has been restricted to the general public but a number of interest groups have frequently visited the site, including elected representatives and ex-prisoners, who have special visits and arrangements facilitated. The ability to access the site has

fluctuated over time, often impacted by the ebb and flow of political contestations and public debates about the future of the site. When access has been granted it is usually limited to a structured guided tour, where the visitor is conducted around the site by motorized vehicle and is brought to specific representative structures. These include a Nissen hut (when still standing), H-Block, the central administration building, H-Block prison hospital and even the H-Block church and visitor centre. Apart from the guide there is no other form of interpretation at the site, although this will undoubtedly change if it is opened in a new form. To date, access has not only been denied to the majority of the general public but has been tightly controlled when provided. The still-delicate nature of the peace process and unconsidered questions of responsibilities and remembrances of the past are undoubtedly connected to this reticence to allow public access to Long Kesh/Maze. As Graham and McDowell have argued, Long Kesh/Maze is not only deeply connected to the turbulence of the Troubles, but it is also intimately connected to the peace process. As such it materializes publically unconsidered questions regarding the repercussions, meanings and continuing manifestations of the conflict:

The deliberations concerning the future of the Maze reflect the wider socio-political problems of confronting and dealing with the past in 'post-conflict' Northern Ireland where partisan heritage, memory and practices of commemoration play a prominent role in political contestation at the expense of narratives of recognition, reflection, acceptance and reconciliation' (2007: 349).

To understand the post-institutional afterlife of Long Kesh/Maze one must take a parallel approach. Firstly, there is a need to explore the everyday, mundane realities of the material remnants of the prison as they continue to exist *in situ*. Secondly, this study will examine the parallel high-level political negotiations regarding the future of the site. To date there have been a number of official and unofficial proposals and frameworks regarding the future development and use of Long Kesh/Maze, as well as political statements and public/media reactions. These will be examined in the next section. This section will take a distinctly archaeological approach by focusing on the material remains of Long Kesh/Maze during this extended period of transitional limbo. It will highlight how decisions made regarding the survival of structures at the prison have impacted on the potential of the site to fulfil a variety of futures as featured in the

aforementioned reports and frameworks. It is important to study both perspectives on the prison's post-functional life, as taken simultaneously they can reveal the disjuncture between material realities and political negotiations. By examining the political negotiations and proposals regarding its future we can understand how the site is publically articulated and presented, what areas of the site are contentious, and how its future is being perceived in relation to wider society, whereas by exploring the *material* remains of Long Kesh/Maze, we can understand how the prison has continued to exist as a physical entity. Following Shannon Dawdy, 'Studying why and how ruins are not only made but also erased, commemorated, lived in, commodified, and recycled can tell us at least as much about society as the processes that created the original edifices' (2010: 772).

As previously noted, the prison site of Long Kesh/Maze, when it closed in September 2000, was largely intact. The only demolition that had occurred whilst the site functioned related to deliberate destructions by the prisoners—including the burning of the majority of the Compounds in October 1974—and the collapse of temporary buildings due to their ephemeral nature and lack of ongoing use and maintenance. From closure to present, early 2014, the prison custodians have demolished the majority of the site in a piecemeal but organized fashion whilst the site has remained closed to the public. To give some idea of the scale of demolition of the significant number of Compounds that existed, in varying states of completeness, by 2006 only one Nissen hut had been retained. Of the eight H-Blocks that were standing on closure only one remains. The prison hospital, central administration building, church, visitor centre, a watch-tower and part of an exterior wall of the prison landscape have also been retained. The demolition of the rest of the site has taken place over a number of years, beginning with the temporary structures of the Nissen huts around 2006 before moving on to the decaying H-Blocks and associated infrastructure. It is noted in the recent NIAO report that from closure up to March 2011, £20.8 million has been spent on the site, 'on professional fees, site clearance and decontamination' (2011: 14).

Prior to the first wave of demolition, for up to five years after the site closed it existed in a state of widespread, if selective, accelerated ruination and decay. On closure of Long Kesh/Maze prison in 2000 the transition from abandonment to ruination was hastened by seemingly innocuous decisions made by the custodians of the site. The structures were no longer heated and the resulting dampness from

the high water table of the site made the use of electricity dangerous, hence its supply was cut off. The decision to counteract the dampness by ‘airing’ the buildings—with doors and windows being left permanently ajar—ensured that infiltration from outside and impacts of decay became increasingly noticeable. On entering the site, with often year-long intervals in between visits, the Nissen huts and H-Blocks increasingly revealed heightened levels of decay. Leaves and debris were gathering around open doors, floors were waterlogged and increasingly intricate patterns of damp, moss and lichens were spreading up from the floor, often to the roof. Water infiltration was causing paint to dramatically hang from ceilings (Figure 7.1). These signs of dereliction undoubtedly facilitated a ‘health and safety’ basis for demolishing the site, should it be required. However, there were unintended consequences. Over time, these additions to the site, a patina of the prison’s post-functional afterlife, added to the site biography. They provided what Caitlin DeSilvey has described in her studies of ruin as the ‘curious loveliness to the transformed scene’ (2006: 330). These changes materialized the processes and impacts of post-functional abandonment and deliberate ruination, particularly in comparison to the relatively unchanging appearance of those areas that had been pre-selected to be preserved (for example, the prison chapel).

The aesthetics of the changes and demolitions of the post-closure site have not passed unnoticed. Artistic interpretations and interventions



Figure 7.1 H-Block prison cell with evidence of decay on the walls c.2007.

have occurred at the site with photographers gaining access to record the material presence, ongoing physical demise, and active destruction of the site over a period of years. The work of Donovan Wylie is particularly notable as he has completed two distinct projects on Long Kesh/Maze. The first explored the repetition of design inherent in the prison structures and security installations through recording the prison cells, rusting fences and inertias sprouting blades of grass at the site when it was initially closed (Wylie 2004). He has also engaged with the destruction of the site when he was granted unlimited access to record the final demolitions of the H-Blocks, which now make up an online resource. The photo essay 'Demolishing the Maze' continues Wylie's earlier theme of the sensory impact of the deliberately disorientating architecture and plan of the Maze (2008). He conceives the site as 'an architectural version of a Russian doll'. It could be argued that his creative reconceptualizations of the power of the post-functional site overemphasize the official discourses of control, dominance, and power that this imposing derelict site projects, without considering the ability of human agency to counteract or subvert these intentions when it was in use. Whilst aesthetically interesting and timely such projects ignore the potential to transform our understandings of such sites, both as functional and abandoned places of ongoing interactions, through their removal of the roles of human agency and change.

The work of Alfredo González-Ruibal is perhaps most appropriate in exploring this phenomenon in an engaged and archaeological way. He has exhorted contemporary and historical archaeologists to explore places of 'slow' destruction in current society because 'they manifest something crucial about our era, provide relevant political lessons' (2008: 248). His work reflects an increasing interest in the processes and creation of modern ruination. Writers as diverse as Shannon Dawdy (2010), Alfredo González-Ruibal (2008) and Timothy Edensor (2005) have highlighted the potential of such sites to reveal the political processes involved and actively engage with the nature of their changing meaning. Furthermore, they assert that the continuing material presence of such sites of modern ruin, whilst meant to be forgotten, have a disruptive potential. They reveal 'ghosts' of what the site was, what it is and what it potentially can be (Edensor 2005). I argue that the selective nature of decay, prior to mass-demolition, at Long Kesh/Maze reveals that the partial retention of the site was not an inevitable repercussion of abandonment or an unforeseen act of nature. Rather, it was the result of deliberate decisions to

hasten the processes of dereliction. However, these changes also inadvertently reveal another layer of the site. The Nissen huts and H-Blocks that disappeared by creeping demolition had inadvertently materialized this transitional period. The sensory impacts of decay prior to demolition were adding to the site biography in ways that had the potential to 'contribute to alternative interpretive possibilities' (DeSilvey 2006: 330). Opposite to intention, these ruins had revealed that abandonment did not equate with forgetting or complete erasure. The changes to the post-closure site revealed ongoing interactions, the impacts of political indecision and custodial judgments about what should be retained and why. Following Edensor these structures inadvertently added to our understandings of the site, demonstrating that 'ruins are exemplary alternative sites of memory' (2005: 830).

Wholesale demolition of these decaying, abandoned structures ensured that the post-closure afterlife of the site was actively ignored by the custodians. What Edensor calls the 'multiple, nebulous, and imaginative sense of memory' from 'undervalued, undercoded, mundane spaces' (2005: 834) was discarded in preference to sanitization and reversion to a blank, representative sample of the site. One civil servant talked about demolition of 'buildings that are no longer needed' taking place, without detailing who made these decisions and what criteria was being utilized in deciding what was retained and what was disposed of (Losty 2012). The material result of this apparently empty process of political consensus-building is that the waves of abandonment and ruination were not only tolerated, they were actively encouraged (if in a partial and discriminating way). From the deliberate eradication of the prison landscape—the continuing remnants of H-Blocks being recycled as aggregate to create an on-site car park that is largely unused and a structure for the transplanted Royal Ulster Agricultural Society—the future of the site had been fundamentally decided before the political negotiations were completed and public consensus was reached. These extensive material changes to the prison after its abandonment prompt questions as to its categorization as a dark heritage site due to its now incomplete and, arguably, inauthentic nature. I would argue that whilst the demolitions have had a significant impact on the material integrity of the site the retention of a number of buildings, including the iconic prison hospital, maintains a substantial presence in facilitating possible future engagements and re-imaginings of the prison. Indeed, Strange and Kempa have shown

that eradication of uncomfortable or inconvenient elements is a common reaction to prison sites on closure (2003). It is common practice for sections to be ignored, converted and demolished thereby limiting and directing options for future understandings of the site.

In contrast to the silent, facilitated decay of the physical remains of the prison, its political afterlife has had quite a different trajectory. The Maze Consultation Panel was established on the transfer of the site to the Northern Ireland Executive in 2003 and was given the power to 'make recommendations on appropriate implementation machinery for the development of the site' (MCP 2005: 3). The Panel was originally constituted with government officials and one member of each of the four largest political parties in Northern Ireland (UUP, DUP, SDLP and Sinn Féin—two Unionist parties and two Nationalist parties). The significance of this cross-party make-up—and need for consensus—was not lost on the government or the media and the Panel continued working throughout the extended suspension of devolution when otherwise very little official cross-party contact was ongoing. No archaeologists, heritage or building consultants were included as permanent members of the Panel; its make-up has always been political and increasingly economic in focus. Most recently, members of a 'Maze development corporation' have been appointed, the name alone highlighting the emphasis on economic regeneration as central to the site's future. However, in contrast to the intentions of the Northern Ireland Executive, the ongoing significance of the site and interest in its continuing material remains has resulted in an elevated profile and focused media attention on mechanisms surrounding negotiating the exact nature of this future. It has increasingly been represented in terms of confrontational opposites—solely retention or destruction (Purbrick 2006: 76)—that have contrasted strongly with the more compromising nature of the make-up of the Panel. Such different public and governmental perceptions of the future of the site has resulted in an often fraught process marked by controversies surrounding supposed compromise solutions failing to meet public hopes and expectations on either side of the sectarian divide.

On the transfer of the site in 2003 there was initial engagement with many community collectives, individuals, interest groups, and political parties in determining different visions for the future of the site. Conceptions of the site as a place of dark heritage were evident from the start of this process. The Republican former prisoner group, *Coiste na n-Iarchimí*, held a conference in June 2003 resulting in a report detailing

their case for the site to be preserved as a museum (*Coiste na n-Iarchimí* 2003). In their final 'Five Key Conclusions', the third point overtly engaged with the dark heritage potential of the site: 'Heritage is about sites of importance and not simply about the architectural value of buildings' (*Coiste na n-Iarchimí* 2003: 32). Graham and McDowell counter Republican claims about the site and its exceptionalism but do accept its inherent heritage potential, stating: 'In heritage terms, there is nothing unique about the Maze. Prisons, sites of conscience, sites of pain and atrocity and sites of symbolic value are well-established concepts in heritage lists' (2007: 373). Their concerns regarding the future of the site focus on its potential to maintain, if not enhance, its divisive and singular identities, heritages and claims of victimhood through the material structures. They consider such narratives not to be necessarily intentional but they contend that 'their "sentience" will be represented by meanings and by the hulks of the prison buildings,' (2007: 374) this is a fear mirrored throughout the Unionist and Loyalist communities.

After a limited period of public consultation and behind-the-scenes negotiation, the first report, *A new future for the Maze/Long Kesh*, was released on 24 February 2005. The document focused on changing understandings of the site, which clearly reflected a desire for symbolic change as well as usage, with overt discussion on rebranding and the use of public art to articulate new meanings. In particular, it presented the site as 'a symbol of confidence and hope for the people of Northern Ireland' and recommended the use of iconic artworks to create a 'key brand or recognition symbol' to help it become 'an innovative and internationally recognized beacon for Northern Ireland' (MCP 2005: 31). This new future aimed to displace the negative associations of the site and replace them with 'an internationally recognizable physical expression of the ongoing transformation from conflict to peace' (MCP 2005: 14). This initial attempt to rebrand was problematic. Firstly, official meaning can be imposed but it is not necessarily accepted. Ashworth and Graham have argued that heritage is open to different interpretations within society at any given time (2005: 4). Therefore, whilst official interpretations may be presented, they are always open to subversion. Secondly, there is the danger that attempts to rebrand would mean that the history and significance of the site would be glossed over in an attempt to make the site 'a symbol of the ongoing transformation from conflict to peace' (MCP 2005: 14) and thereby lose any credibility. This first report received mixed reactions and was supplemented by the subsequent publication of *Maze/Long Kesh Masterplan and Implementation Strategy Final*

Report (Masterplan Consortium 2006), which was notable for forwarding similar central proposals but casing them in more sensitive language, generic outcomes and engaging less overtly with the specific dark nature of the site.

The proposals contained in the two documents revealed a series of compromises that attempted to appease the opposing retention and destruction lobbies through de-emphasizing the historical context of the site. The site was to be couched in terms of promoting peace process positivity and international conceptions of peace-building. The first two reports proposed that the site was to be divided into multiple zones: a Sports Zone, the International Centre for Conflict Transformation (hereafter 'ICCT'), the Rural Excellence and Equestrian Zone, and areas relating to local facilities and industrial/private businesses. One zone that completely disappeared between the first and second proposal was the 'Retained Zone', which was to be a substantial area of unallocated land to be 'cleared and decontaminated' (MCP 2005: 29) at an early stage. Proposals relating to sustainability, environmental interconnections and benefits to the local communities were introduced in the second report, which refocused from the specificity of the site to more generic conceptions of economic regeneration and ecological sustainability. The fates of two central elements of the first report and second masterplan will be considered in detail before concluding with discussion of the most recent proposals.

The major government-led elements of the 2005 and 2006 proposals were the Sports Zone and the ICCT. The Sports Zone, at 50–60 acres, was one of the largest and most prominent elements of both proposals. It centred on building a multi-purpose, cross-community sports facility (inclusive in housing football, Gaelic games, and rugby, to be representative of popular sports in both communities). It was to be built on the cleared Army base section of the site. Clearly this proposal was intended to be a sweetener, an uncontentious proposal aimed at gaining maximum support for the partial retention of prison infrastructure and regeneration of the rest of the site. However, this proposal unexpectedly became the most controversial element of the plan. The media focused on political pressure being exerted on the governing bodies of the various sports to accept this proposal regardless of the relatively isolated location being an inconvenient setting for a national stadium. Furthermore, these rather blunt attempts at a cross-community angle

were ridiculed due to the lack of association with sports in the area and the quite different needs and expectations for sports that were to be housed together. The proposals provoked a division in opinion that was not wholly sectarian, as it fundamentally related to whether the location of the national stadium should be imposed by the national executive or chosen at the level of public consensus. The role of politics was central, as noted in one of the Northern Irish weekly newspapers: ‘And in typical Northern Ireland fashion, there will be squabbling and point-scoring over everything from the location and name of the edifice to the colour of the seats’ (*Sunday Life*, May 23, 2004: 14). There also existed uncertainty in both communities as to what this proposal actually represented—whether it was the fundamental dismantling of the site perceived by Nationalists or the back door retention of contentious remains perceived by Unionists.

The lack of public support and sporting goodwill for the national stadium has ultimately led to the dropping of this initial cornerstone element from the most recent proposal for the future of the site. The imposition of a sporting venue into a rural area—in stark contrast to the more recent national stadiums in the UK being centrally located to reinvigorate urban economies—was ultimately dismissed for reasons that were not simply connected to the prison site or sectarianism but to economic and sporting sensibilities. The proposed location for the stadium in an isolated location without associated infrastructure and road networks was increasingly questioned and considered inappropriate. Secondary to these contentions was its placement on an acknowledged dark place, which was unwelcome from both perspectives. Graham and McDowell viewed that such a juxtaposition as ‘distasteful and demeaning’ (2007: 349). The rejection of this imposition also reveals the difficulties inherent in political attempts to completely direct and control meanings of dark places. As Louise Purbrick has highlighted during debates on the future of the site, many members of the public, regardless of their politics, believe that prisoner involvement in interpretation of the prison is central (2006: 79).

The other major government-led proposal was the ICCT (International Centre for Conflict Transformation). It was originally conceived as the smallest area of the site at 15 acres, but potentially the most significant. It was to encompass the only structures that were to be retained from the original site of Long Kesh/Maze:

the World War II aircraft hangars and other structures; one H-Block; the prison hospital; the administration building and emergency control room; a prison chapel; a section of the perimeter wall around Maze cellular; a watchtower; and a cage from Maze compound (MCP 2005:16).

The ICCT was also to include a number of new buildings: a neutral venue with residential and meeting facilities, offices, and an archive and research facility. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the media coverage of this proposal has concentrated on the retained elements with little consideration of the relatively limited nature of this survival and the impact of the new additions. Fears that these retained remnants would become a 'Museum of the Troubles' or a sacred shrine for former Republican prisoners have been a constant source of concern in the Unionist media despite the latter Masterplan using more generic language in defining the significance of these remains (2006: 9). Graham and McDowell have highlighted the link between partial retention of the site and unresolved issues of defining and prioritizing 'victimhood' as being a major problem (2007: 351). Does partial retention allow Republicans, in particular, to emphasize their 'victimhood' as protesting prisoners and thereby eclipse those victims whose deaths and injuries resulted in prisoners being incarcerated at the site? It is difficult to predict how associations and meanings will change but clearly this is a strong possibility. Their ongoing dominant associations with the site, as evidenced in their self-identification with the prison hospital discussed in Chapter Five, indicate their primary position in 'claiming' the site. Since these proposals were unveiled in 2005 and 2006, and then supplemented more recently, there has been intermittent controversy surrounding who identifies most strongly with the *in situ* remnants of the prison and how this might impact on the meanings and understandings of Long Kesh/Maze. An ongoing campaign by the Unionist pressure group FAIR (Families Acting for Innocent Relatives) has been unremitting in its condemnation of the prison as a potential memorial to specific memories and perspectives of the Troubles. They have made particular reference to the retention of the hospital: 'Yes there will be no physical shrine such as a statue, but actually retaining the hospital itself would be there [sic] shrine' (FAIR Press Release, 26 July 2007).

The palpable lack of a strong vision for the interpretation of the site potentially leaves it vulnerable to further incorporation into Republican mythology and resultant alienation from Loyalist communities.

In a society that is attempting to embrace a peace process the uncertainty of past and potential future meaning has been highly problematic for politicians and the government and perhaps best explains the extended processes of the site's post-functional transition. Graham and McDowell have most coherently articulated Loyalist perspectives in their paper exploring the heritage potential of the site, describing the current singular identifications with Long Kesh/Maze as creating 'essentially a sum zero heritage site'. They assert that it is 'claimed' by Republicans and thereby offers little to communal conflict resolution (2007: 363). Although they do acknowledge in their conclusions that meaning can change with time, they stress that present identifications with the site are not conducive to a stable, post-conflict state (2007: 364). Although Graham and McDowell convincingly argue against the retention of Long Kesh/Maze, their negative interpretations of the significance of the site reinforce the simplistic binary oppositions and retention/destruction dichotomies that have appeared in the Northern Irish media. Such an interpretation does not engage with the many latent narratives that the site possesses—and that have been revealed throughout the course of this volume—that can be extrapolated on further engagement. Nor do they consider the potential for meaning to evolve positively within a transitional society.

Despite the controversies surrounding the retention of elements of the site, there are often unconsidered difficulties of partial retention that relate to issues of authenticity and creation of heritage that need consideration. For the archaeologist, the central problem with the plans for the proposed preserved sections of the site is its deliberately piecemeal nature. The surviving elements of Long Kesh/Maze encompass a tiny percentage of the original site and of this area at least one structure will not be *in situ*. The Nissen hut is to be moved so that all the surviving elements reside in the same area, losing any traces of the original landscape setting. Such a proposal has a number of repercussions. By deciding on retaining piecemeal elements of the prison rather than swathes of the landscape, site progression that had been preserved up to this point is lost. The retention of one type of every building does not take into account the role of agency and recognition that buildings of the same plan can be negotiated in different ways, as was evidently the case between complying and non-complying wings of the H-Blocks during protests. Such proposals do not recognize that differences existed in the use, treatment, meaning and survival of different H-Blocks or Nissen huts and the continued existence of

extraordinary survivals—such as paramilitary murals or graffiti—are discarded if not chosen for retention. In this respect, the proposal does not visualize the buildings as constituent elements of a cultural landscape, instead it conceptualizes all examples of institutional structures as being representative. The authenticity of these directed interactions has to be questioned as it will be difficult to avoid skewing memories of Long Kesh/Maze in its new landscape context: the vast, mind-numbing and repetitive continuum of identical buildings, endless systems of interconnecting roadways, the inertias, and the isolation of the setting (as highlighted in Wylie, 2004).

The most recent proposals for the future of the site now focuses on two reworked cornerstone proposals: a reformulated ICCT and a new addition to replace the discarded Sports Zone. European Union funding of £18.2 million, under the Peace III Programme, has been earmarked to create a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre. This will encompass the standing remains at the site and one new purpose-built structure in a combined area of 32 acres (over double the size of the original ICCT). Despite the positive intentions in this name change it is questionable whether the addition can escape the memory and meaning of its location or a fate as a disjointed addition to an already emotionally and politically loaded site. As Graham and McDowell have suggested, such constructions ‘will provide a preserved, material presence abstracted from the decayed, mute and empty physical fabric of the Maze.’ (2007: 360) Simultaneously, the Northern Ireland Executive has granted the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) substantial land to create a new Showground named ‘Balmoral Park’, that will anchor ‘into the wider MLK [Maze Long Kesh] site’ (<<http://egretwest.com>>, accessed November 2012). Note the invention of ‘MLK’, thereby abstracting the name of the site to a further level. The RUAS has held an annual show at the Kings Hall, Balmoral, Belfast for over 100 years and this move is designed to facilitate the development of ‘a world class centre for agricultural excellence in Northern Ireland’ at the defunct prison site (<http://egretwest.com>, accessed November 2012). Discussion on the future of the site by the Committee for OFMDFM in May 2012 also reveals that there are plans to involve the Ulster Aviation Society to develop the Second World War airfield history of the site and that there is a commitment to create a form of ‘community zone’ (terminology borrowed from the 2006 Masterplan) to address local needs (Alexander 2012). The

dark heritage elements of the site, whilst being tightly controlled, still centre on the extant remains to be utilized as a collective in the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre.

The three reports reveal connecting threads, particularly the centrality of the preserved, piecemeal remains being collectivized and recontextualized for a post-conflict context, but there have also been significant changes. This is particularly evident in the dropping of the inadvertently contentious cross-community 'Sports Zone'. The third proposal is less complete than the first two in that there is no attempt to finalize all the 'zones' to cover the entirety of the previous prison site. Rather it has started with two previous proposals, a number of potential future threads and vague attempts to attract other invited interested parties and private investment. The significance increasingly placed on as yet unsecured private investment was evident in minutes of the Committee for OFMDFM in May 2012: 'We are spending now so that we can attract private sector investment. Certainly, the work that we are doing at Maze/Long Kesh suggests that there is scope for £250 million of private sector investment in the site, and that is what we are working towards' (Alexander 2012). It emphasized that the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre has gained international attention and has a unique selling point in its ability to combine four strands: international exchange, education and learning, archives, and significant location. It stresses that 'lots of activities in the area of conflict resolution happen in different countries, but no one has tried to actually land those four strands in one bespoke, particular institute' (McKee 2012). The unique selling point of Long Kesh/Maze, whilst not overtly articulated and despite a decade of attempts to rebrand and eradicate its material basis, remains its history as a prison. However, one positive change between the three proposals is the recognition of the potential multivocality of the narratives emanating from Long Kesh/Maze. This potential has increasingly been accepted by the Northern Ireland Executive; a member of the Strategic Investment Board asserted that there are 'about 33' different narrative strands identified and that each story would be told 'with sensitivity and equality' (McKee 2012).

On the initial transfer of Long Kesh/Maze to the Northern Ireland Executive there was a perceived need to control the meanings, interactions, physical presence, and future of the prison. To maintain selective and representative elements of the site was considered the only way forward. Its material and landscape integrity was deliberately

deconstructed in order to disentangle the material remains from the previous meanings of the site. Whilst this is understandable in terms of consensus-building and attempts to neutralize the meaning of a particularly contested site, it sits uneasily with the increasing acceptance that the best means of averting singular interpretations is to embrace, rather than limit, the narratives emanating from its material remains. The growing acceptance that official interventions, are unable to fully control the meaning and memory of such a highly political site is evident. However, does the exposing of multiple narratives, under tight interpretative control, free the site from its past associations and make it less a place of dark heritage? Do overt political engagements with the site merely highlight its existing meanings? As the recent debates on dark heritage have noted, this phenomenon takes various forms and some are more mediated than others. While the whiff of tragedy, death and suffering continue to appeal to the interested public, sites such as Long Kesh/Maze will retain the resonance of dark heritage. The prison can be highly controlled, mediated, and physically managed but it remains of public interest due to the ongoing memory of significant events that continue to be articulated beyond the site, and the largely unresolved nature of the issue of remembering the past into the peace process. As time passes, one needs to accept that the motives of those who wish to visit Long Kesh/Maze are not singular or related to one-sided political ideals. As noted by Stone and Sharpley, ‘dark tourists’ motives will certainly vary according to intensities of meanings on individual and communal levels (2008: 589). Likewise, the ability of dark tourists to negotiate partial narratives and ‘staged authenticity’ should not be discounted (Beiner 2005: 57). Whilst the site remains politically current, particularly whilst materializing a past that continues to haunt the Northern Irish peace process, its ability to provoke responses and reactions will continue. As it remains closed and access is prohibited to the majority of the Northern Irish public, its dispersed dark heritage will increasingly address desires for physical access to its material remnants.

‘DISTRIBUTED SELF’ OF LONG KESH/MAZE

Over a decade after Long Kesh/Maze last functioned as a high-security prison, a wide variety of associated artefacts continue to exist on

site—*in situ*, circulated, or stored *en masse*—or have been dispersed beyond the prison boundaries. This study loosely borrows from anthropological theorizing of personhood including Andy Jones's synthesis that 'relationally persons are created through networks of relationships and these networks include things as well as people' (2005: 199). In doing so this study visualizes the dispersed material culture of Long Kesh/Maze, particularly in Nationalist communities, as a form of 'distributed self' of the prison that is used to interpret and meaningfully maintain and direct the prison's meaning, profile and understandings beyond state control. This material culture includes prison-issue artefacts, prisoners' personal belongings, prison art and handicrafts, partial structural elements, and illegally created or altered artefacts that were either smuggled in or out of the prison or were confiscated by the authorities and have thus been resettled into new, and often unintended, locations. The confiscated artefacts held at the Northern Ireland Prison Service Museum in Millisle have already been discussed in Chapter Four. This chapter will focus on a category of artefacts and structural remnants that have been passed outside the prison and are reconceptualized as the 'distributed self' of Long Kesh/Maze, recreating and maintaining its dark heritage. Two of the most common re-locations for the 'distributed self' of the prison are in individuals' homes and in community museums. Artefacts displayed in homes or community museums can be defined as dispersed dark heritage of the prison, as they are things of value that have been deliberately recontextualized for public or private display beyond the confines of the site. The existing literature on dark heritage does not overtly engage with artefacts as constituent elements, rather they are conceived as extensions of static dark heritage sites. This oversight is unsurprising when one considers that the vast majority of dark heritage literature emanates from tourism studies, which specifically engages with the relationship between tourist and specific places as the focal point of tourist activity. Furthermore, whilst community museums are not inherently dark places, it is the significance of the artefacts acting as the 'distributed self' of Long Kesh/Maze in particular case studies that ensures their categorization.

The 'distributed self' of Long Kesh/Maze is an often unconsidered aspect of the prison. At the most basic level, these artefacts demonstrate the inability of the prison authorities to separate their inhabitants from wider society and control interactions beyond the prison perimeters. They also reveal the regime's inability to retain the site as an inaccessible place

and thereby ensure its meaning is not controlled but remains in the process of potentially being 'transformed'. Following Lorna Rhodes in the American context, there is a need to critique the traditional view that prisons perform social, economic and political 'magic' by 'disappearing' large numbers of the socially unacceptable (2001: 67). The sheer number of dispersed material remains from Long Kesh/Maze from all periods that continue to circulate in wider society dismisses ideas that prisoners are no longer part of society. This interpretation is supported by Eleanor Casella's study of convict relationships and the trafficking of valued objects across prison boundaries at Ross Female Factory (2000: 217–219). Artefacts at Long Kesh/Maze were handled, created, changed, subverted and despatched, both legitimately and otherwise, between the prison and wider society both during and after the life of the site. They are part of material networks that act as physical manifestations of relationships that reciprocated across the boundary walls. Effectively they have the potential to be recontextualized as the distributed self of the prisoner, his individual and communal identity, and/or of Long Kesh/Maze as a place, in unexpected private and public domains. Whilst Stone and Sharpley have argued that different degrees of 'darkness' of heritage can be impacted by distancing factors (2008: 578), I argue that the curation of a substantial number of prison-related artefacts and structural remnants in one location can facilitate, enduring connections to an inaccessible place such as Long Kesh/Maze. As such the study of the 'distributed self' of Long Kesh/Maze is critical in exploring the evolving relationships between prisoners and their external communities before, during and after the closure of the prison.

As discussed in Chapter Four, creating arts and craft materials was a popular past-time for political prisoners who spent long, largely unstructured days in Long Kesh/Maze. Whilst special category status continued in the Compounds and prisoners were thereby officially exempted from prison-related roles, such activities were one of a number of ways to fill a day that contained no official structure and little input from prison staff. With the removal of special category status and the move of focus to the H-Blocks, the role of such artefacts shifted. In the initial years of the protests the materials and tools for handicrafts were not freely available, thereby enhancing their symbolic connection to Compounds and associated special category status. McKeown has stated that at those times 'we viewed status and the Cages as synonymous' (McKeown 2001: 67). In more relaxed

times, in both the H-Blocks and the Compounds, handicrafts were made in quantity to be passed to family, friends, and supporters or sold as commodities. They also became a means of defying the regime by utilizing prison-issue artefacts: 'Resources originally in the form of prison furniture and such like eventually left the prison in the form of Celtic crosses and harps, jewellery boxes and coffee tables . . . Eventually this consumption of prison resources progressed to the dismantling of doors and door frames, tables and desks' (Green 2001: 105). Undoubtedly the ability to access materials and tools, at different times and contexts either prohibited or permitted by the prison authorities, greatly impacted on the form and number of artefacts. This can be seen in the relative dearth of such artefacts from the early years of the H-Blocks in the NIPS Collection explored in Chapter Four. These artefacts had a number of meanings and uses, from highly prized personal mementos created for specific individuals, to functional objects, weapons, tools and even relatively lucrative commodities. The context of artefactual creation and retention means that makeshift tools and weapons that were physically little more than scrap metal could be prized possessions, and this can be seen in the continued retention of artefacts that are otherwise mundane in appearance (see Figure 7.2). Although not all prisoners spent their days creating prison art—in fact many of those interviewed in the course of this research did not—for those with an artistic inclination or skill it served as a means of structuring the day comparative to the roles of tunnel building, exercise or education for other prisoners.

Prisoners created a variety of artefacts, which fluctuated in quantity and quality through time and space. However, the possession of skills and ability to utilize templates, rather than exercise creativity, were critical. The creation of wooden goods, from using solid oak and mahogany down to lollipop or match sticks—depending on materials moving on and off contraband lists (BE 2007)—were popular. Creations varied depending on the supplies and skill levels from leather wallets and small wooden objects to large-scale artefacts covered in intricate Celtic-style motifs, such as harps, replica thatched cottages, and jewellery boxes with intricate Celtic designs covering their surfaces (Figure 7.3). Loyalist prisoners often made artefacts connected to their British identity, such as Orange Order memorabilia (see Chapter Four) and commemoration of the Battle of the Somme (including a poppy wreath, see Figure 7.4).

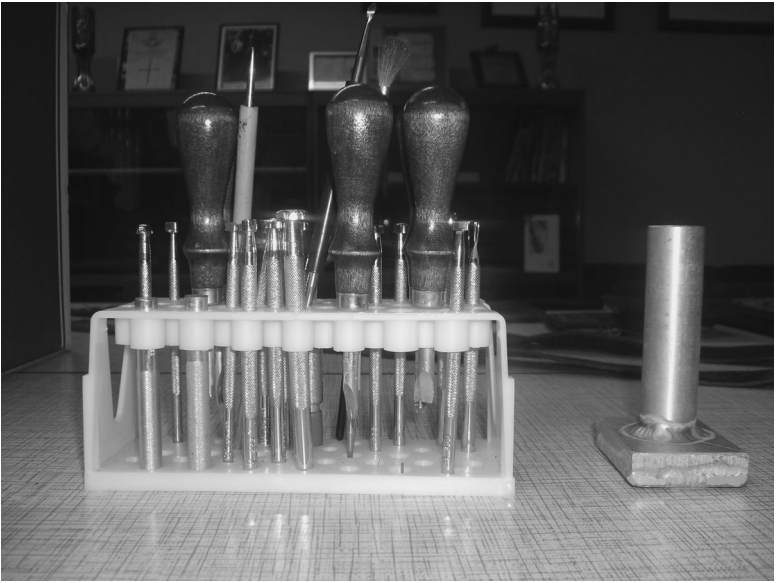


Figure 7.2 Tools that had been used to make prison art and handicrafts in the Compounds, retained by a former prisoner, c.2011.



Figure 7.3 Display case of typical prison art handicrafts, including thatched cottage and wooden jewellery boxes. Irish Republican History Museum, Conway Mill, Belfast, April 2007.



Figure 7.4 Poppy wreath made by Loyalist prisoners in the Compounds. Undated.

The supply of leather to create wallets, bags and even pictures, was dependent on relations with the authorities who gave access to the materials, workshops, and tools. There are also numerous examples of artefacts that were not connected to communal aspects of political/religious identity and were created due to personal preferences and popular culture trends (including a tapestry of a tiger, see Figure 7.5). When relations with the authorities were poor, handkerchiefs adorned with Celtic images, cartoon figures, football teams or imagined, rural scenes, made by pens, felt tips, paint or embroidery, continued to be created when other prison art was no longer feasible. Particularly before the creation of the H-Blocks, large numbers of artefacts of varying quality, shape and size were created and were either retained or traded on site or transported externally as gifts or commodities.

Whilst this study aims to emphasize the individuality and contextualization of the various experiences of the prison, replacing traditional emphasis on spatial control with DeCunzo's primacy of people (2006: 184), one must also consider the importance of intention and context. There is a need to incorporate how intentions are

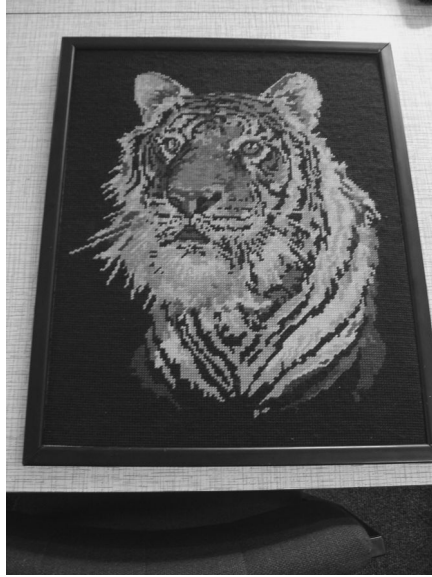


Figure 7.5 Tapestry of a tiger made by Loyalist prisoners in the Compounds. Undated.

not always singular and they can be multiple, interconnecting, and self-serving with regard to the creation, dispersal, regathering and presentation of these artefacts. It is clear from oral testimonies that one must be aware that many handicrafts were mass-produced, following templates, and were not necessarily treasured or retained by those they were intended for, if anyone. Many forms of prison art were intended, and treated, as commodities. That many have been recontextualized in the peace process context into community museums—and how this links into questions of how the past is remembered and what the contemporary role is for many former prisoners—are just some of the issues involved in interpreting the distributed self of such a controversial and mythologized site. As one former prisoner noted: “When this is over, we’ll remember only the good bits.” That’s what we used to tell each other during the Blanket and I suppose in a way it’s true.’ (O’Hagan, 1994: 71). In attempting to understand the continued existence and significance of these artefacts as dark heritage there is a need to consider the original intention of why they were created, understand their dispersal,

recontextualization and contemporary importance as not always following a predicted trajectory. To do so, handicrafts will be examined that are held in two different contexts: in the home of an individual and in a community museum.

Long Kesh/Maze distributed self: personal

To attempt an analysis of survivals of prison arts and handicrafts retained in people's homes, a letter was sent to the 'Letters to the Editor' of three high-circulation Northern Irish newspapers: the *Belfast Telegraph*, *The Irish News* and the *Belfast News-Letter*, asking for members of the public who had such objects in their homes—and were willing to discuss them—to contact the researcher. Such a request provided an opportunity for any member of the public who held such artefacts to present and talk about them and their meanings. Within a number of days six email responses were received, all from individuals from a perceived Nationalist background. These were positive and led to ongoing contacts. Some wished to discuss individual artefacts that they held, whilst others wished to discuss their present day workshops, where they continued using skills honed in prison to create artefacts that remain popular and sellable commodities. Only one negative response was received, an anonymous, typed letter posted from someone who asserted that by conducting such research 'you are of Republican sympathies'. From the comment and tone of this letter it can only be assumed that it was the only contact received from a member of the Loyalist community. Although the Loyalist response was disappointing, it was perhaps to be expected. The study of prison artefacts in people's homes was more likely to appeal to Nationalists due to their more positive relationship with the site, the common use of handicrafts as both personal mementos and commodities and, as Kenney suggests, 'Catholicism has the stronger folklife tradition' (1998: 154), which embraces the retention and display of such objects.

BE was a former PIRA prisoner who since his release from imprisonment had become increasingly disillusioned with the official—Sinn Féin—party line. His memories of imprisonment were quite different in tone and perspective from the former PIRA prisoners who had been interviewed up to that point. Although he had long-standing associations with the Republican movement, including eighteen years of imprisonment at Long Kesh/Maze, he had become

a relatively high profile and vocal critic of mainstream Republicanism. He was keen to provide his candid views on the realities of life in the prison as well as discuss dispersed handicrafts that were displayed in his home. He resided in a Nationalist area of West Belfast with his family and I was led straight to his office in an attic room to conduct the interview and discuss the handicrafts. As well as revealing a more negative point of view than the conventional 'close bond they developed in the course of their enforced lives' (McKeown 2001: 233), he contradicted many of the popular conceptions of the authorized, Republican perspective on imprisonment. These were succinctly encapsulated in the two artefacts from the H-Blocks that resided in his office.

On a small desk by the staircase at the entrance to his office sat a framed colour copy of a drawing of an H-Block yard (Figure 7.6). The composition was interesting in simultaneously confirming and contradicting many of the myths that surround the site. The overwhelmingly dark scene, predominantly greys and purples, reflects the externally held view of the dark ominous walls, wire and



Figure 7.6 Framed image of life in the H-Blocks emphasizing the role of fellow prisoners as well as prison surveillance. Undated.

watch-towers of the H-Blocks depicted in numerous wall murals. The eye is drawn to the relatively lightly coloured elements: oversized surveillance cameras that point towards three figures in the centre of the composition. The subjects are two stylized male figures in t-shirts and shorts who are running together (an activity that was common amongst prisoners). These figures are being trailed by a stick figure with a large ear in place of a head. The connotations are clear: even in leisure time not only were the authorities recording your every move but so too were fellow prisoners. BE stated that the 'ear' figure represented the PIRA hierarchy, who constantly spied on the prisoners to ensure conformity. BE confirmed that a fellow prisoner made the picture while he was imprisoned in the H-Blocks. As it resided in his office I presumed it held some significance for him; however, any attachment or prominence that could be interpreted from its continued retention or location were misplaced as BE insisted that I took it with me.

The other artefact in the office was a framed cartoon (Figure 7.7). Satirical in tone, it pokes fun at one of the pantheon of Irish Republicanism: the Blanketmen. The image is much more light-hearted than the previous example and this is reflected in the bright colour scheme



Figure 7.7 Framed cartoon poking fun at Republican Blanketmen. Undated.

and cartoon quality of the representation. Unlike the highly personal nature of the first image, this appears to have been mass-produced. It has a cheeky, adult theme that strongly contrasts with the subtlety of the previous image. The composition comprises a stereotypical ‘dirty old man’ in a raincoat with dropped trousers accompanied by his plain, unattractive wife and flanked by long-legged, busty girls. It is only identified as Republican by the associated comment, ‘He’s always showing that scar, got it on the blanket ya know!’ Such critical messages and representation are not commonly associated with prisoner creations from Long Kesh/Maze. Both images are framed and are openly displayed in the semi-public office space of the house; however, more conventional Republican artefacts are to be located in the most public area of the house.

The house was a multi-storey, modern terrace with the previous attic having been converted into the aforementioned office. The stairs between all the floors are steep, narrow and have temporary gates to prevent small children from accessing them. This layout means the downstairs space is effectively the only fully public space in the house and it is in this area that more traditional Republican prison art is conspicuously on display. The house is entered through a front door and intermediary hall that leads to a further narrow hall with the kitchen, living room and hall stairs radiating from the far end. The only adornments in the central hall are two large picture frames, both containing highly sophisticated examples of decorated handkerchiefs. One is a multi-coloured, Celtic-motif design, which includes the emblems of the four provinces of Ireland alongside a large Celtic cross with the writing: ‘JOHN MORRIS DETAINED 29-2-1972 PRISON SHIP “MAIDSTONE”’ (Figure 7.8). Although this was a prison ship used to hold detainees in Belfast Lough, rather than at Long Kesh Internment Camp, the artistic representations are similar to those created at Long Kesh/Maze.

The second image is a more stark and figurative composition in black and white (Figure 7.9). There are two figures, the larger on the left is reminiscent of a classical rendering of Prometheus and depicts a heroic man—still holding his sword and shield—tied to a rock and being attacked by a bird of prey as he leans forward, almost lifeless. It is named as ‘Cu-chualin the Brave’, referring to the more commonly spelt *Cuchulain*, the legendary ‘Hound of Ulster’, who is one of the few figures who is a joint symbol, also appearing in Loyalist compositions. The smaller figure on the right is a woman who stands with her



Figure 7.8 Framed example of Republican decorated handkerchief made by a detainee in the Prison Ship *Maidstone*, 1972.



Figure 7.9 Framed example of Republican decorated handkerchief made by an internee in Long Kesh Internment Camp, 1972.

head bowed, surrounded by cross-shaped gravestones. She has her right hand resting on a sword and her wrist encased by a hand-cuff with six links hanging from it. She is named as '*Mise Eire*', literally in Gaelic 'I am Ireland', which is often represented as a female personification. A note above her head states: 'The six remaining links on the chain, represents the six remaining counties of Ireland which are still in bondage'. The image is titled 'Long Kesh 1972', and along the bottom of the handkerchief the artist is given as 'Frank Rafferty Internee Long Kesh 1972'. These handkerchiefs, with their use of Celtic imagery, Irish mythology and traditional Republican ideas are both attractive and a conventional means of expressing Republican identity in Nationalist households. That both examples were well executed, are in good condition, date from the early years of imprisonment (and internment in particular) and are so prominently displayed within the public area of the house immediately highlights the sympathies and pedigree of the household. The contrast of these two images with the two framed images in the office can be interpreted as displaying complicated identifications with historic and contemporary Irish nationalism. The interviewee feels freer to dissent from later Republican imprisonment tropes—such as the communal nature of the PIRA prisoners and heightened status of the blanketmen—in the semi-privacy of his attic office whilst more publicly displaying his connections to traditional Irish Republicanism of the detainees and internees of the early 1970s.

This collection of handicrafts represents the use of distributed elements of Long Kesh/Maze to articulate an ex-prisoner's relationship with imprisonment and contemporary Republicanism, the ongoing interactions between internal prisoners and their external communities, and the recontextualization of handicrafts from the original creator to the current owner. The artefacts date from the early 1970s through to the 1990s and demonstrate changes in the relationships between the prisoner and the Republican Movement and how this is presented to different audiences. The decorated handkerchiefs from the early 1970s utilize traditional and historical Republican imagery that ignore the contemporary socio-political context. They are proudly named, dated and make reference to their place of imprisonment and most importantly their status as detainee and internee. The Celtic symbols on the handkerchiefs link to historic artistic forms, and traditional Republican images and ideals. They are stylized artistic representations that lack individualization, personalization, and

commentary on the contemporary situation. They can be strongly contrasted with the framed images in the semi-private location of the office. These pictures reveal ambivalence based in experience towards the prison and Republican hierarchies but do not identify the creator. Indeed, none of the images or handicrafts were made by the current owner and instead indicate that prison art was redistributed and relocated externally across different periods of imprisonment. These artefacts are revealing not only of their own meanings and contexts of creation and circulation, but also their evolving meaning and the changing relationships between the individual and imprisonment. They present ambivalence: disillusionment with the contemporary Republican leadership and the desire to contradict myths that have been created about the prisoner experiences of Long Kesh/Maze, whilst still retaining commitment to traditional Republican aims from the earlier stages of the conflict.

Long Kesh/Maze distributed self: community

In the past ten years there has been a noticeable growth in community museums as archives of localized, collective memory in Northern Ireland. These have developed predominantly in working-class, and especially Nationalist, areas and correlate to those places most impacted by the conflict. It has been noted by Graham and McDowell that these museums have increasingly diversified and proliferated as they attempt to deal with the more difficult and dark heritage that is frequently ignored or downplayed at official museological level in the province (2007: 351). Elizabeth Crooke has emphasized this role by stating that they have become a means of exploring the unofficial, difficult, and contested history of the conflict (2005). The proliferation of these museums reflects, to varying degrees, a number of contemporary concerns including a desire to deal with the past, a wish to present a relevant history, a degree of distrust and disconnection from official state narratives, and engagement with the economic potential of dark tourism.

With regard to the economic dimensions, Sara McDowell has interpreted the growth in 'Troubles tourism' as a negative phenomenon due to the prominent role of former paramilitaries in directing singular, mediated narratives of a localized Troubles experience. She notes that these museums have increasingly been officially sanctioned

as ‘a central element to the economic prosperity of places like West Belfast’ (2008b: 416). Troubles tourism has proliferated and sectarian geographies—maintained and reinforced during the Troubles—are facilitating skewed interpretations of the complexity of the conflict: ‘Instead of gaining an insight into the multi-faceted nature of the Troubles, tourists are gazing upon conflict heritage through a carefully mediated lens that frames a particular narrative at the expense of others.’ (2008b: 412). Whilst it is clear that community-created and directed heritage does emphasize more singular narratives than, for example national museums, this does not determine how the visitor reads them. As Corinne Fratz has stated, ‘ultimately exhibitions cannot control visitors’ engagements and experience’ (2011: 29). Indeed, I would argue that the proliferation of Troubles tourism within both communities, and the significant number of tours and independent tourists that cross sectarian divides, ensures that only intentionally blinkered or naïve tourists would be unable to locate the multiple narratives materialized throughout current Troubles heritage.

Community museums should be understood as addressing a variety of different needs that are individual to each location and react to evolving political and social dynamics within communities and wider society. Edensor has referred to contemporary collecting as ‘distinctly popular, vernacular modes of remembering’, reflecting a desire to record and classify objects that are contested or unrepresented officially (Edensor 2002: 117). Such collections can have multiple, including overtly political, meanings to those who create and manage them, but these perspectives are often easily identifiable by many tourists who patronize them. The intended meanings have often changed or evolved over time, reflecting and even being curtailed by the initial artefact collections that simultaneously link into changing curatorial aims, tourist feedback, and breakthroughs or crises of the contemporary political context. The role of the dark tourist as active consumer of these heritage sites is also significant. They decide how they wish to engage and participate in the heritage experience and this cannot be completely controlled or its outcome assured by curators. As Stone has noted, the shades of dark tourism are impacted by the degree of management of the site but also ‘the degree of interest and fascination’ of the tourist (2006: 152). So the dark tourist experience is not simply directed by the materials and how they are interpreted but also by the desires, insights, knowledge and background the visitor brings with them. This often includes a tacit understanding by both creator

and consumer that the interpretations represent a singular perspective, without losing the tourist's interest or accepting all they are told as fact or conclusive. Stone notes that such 'political manipulation . . . or selective interpretation' is usually apparent to the dark tourist and often results in an internal shifting in perceived degree of darkness (2006: 158).

Whilst the narratives emanating, and being constructed, from the 'distributed self' of Long Kesh/Maze might represent 'a statistical footnote in the global heritage of pain and injustice' (Graham and McDowell 2007: 358), they do have different degrees of impact and fulfil a variety of functions. The lesser the degree of abstraction—especially in terms of time and space—from the conflict the more effective they are in revealing the dark and often disturbing realities of imprisonment and its link to the wider conflict. Dark tourists are often drawn to sites and their manifestations for a variety of reasons, including academic interest, a box-ticking exercise for the intrepid tourist, and to provide explanations for those who previously left the locality due to the conflict. They also serve a function for the local communities in which they reside. On a community level, they can represent experiences that are ignored at a state-level and connect directly with local political concerns, such as contesting present usage and appropriation of place (Shurmer-Smith and Hannam, 1994: 52). As community museums these sites primarily represent and tell the stories of the community they reside in. They are a resource that is specifically local in form, addressing community concerns but also reflecting universal issues. Following Edensor, their role is contemporary as well as past-orientated, 'in the face of globalization, commonly shared things anchor people to place' (2002: 116). In the context of Northern Ireland the proliferation of these manifestations demonstrate uneasiness with the official remembrance vacuum of the peace process and a desire to articulate community memories and historical losses. They reveal distrust regarding the future of the material integrity, physical accessibility and interpretation of significant elements of the Troubles, and those who choose to interpret them.

A number of museums located in Nationalist West Belfast have opened since 2000. They are unapologetically Republican in their collection of prison art and artefacts as well as remnants from the conflict, and in their conflation of this experience with the endurance of the wider community during the course of the Troubles. Museums housed above the Roddy McCorley's Club in West Belfast, known as

'the Roddys', and the Irish Republican History Museum in the historic Conway Mill site in West Belfast, known as 'Conway Mill' will be used as case studies. Although relatively close in geographic proximity they have been created by different groups and are manifestations of slightly different perceptions of contemporary Republicanism. The Roddys museum belongs to, and is contained within, a Republican club whose membership is determined by previous 'political' imprisonment status (even for members there is limited access as it is housed in locked upstairs rooms in the building). Conway Mill is a community museum that is open to the public and was created by the recently deceased Eileen Hickey, an ex-female OC of the Provisional IRA at Armagh Gaol. Both museums are located in West Belfast and hold similar examples of artefacts that originated from prisons in Northern Ireland. They occupy contained but loaded spaces. The Roddys Museum is spread over two small rooms and the Conway Mill museum is held in a unit of a regenerated industrial mill complex. They are physically insubstantial spaces that were not originally designed to act as museums, but their locations and informal surroundings provide their historic credentials as geographically, socially (and economically, in the case of Conway Mills) connected to specific constituencies. They display artefacts that are often stylistically repetitive or superficially mundane but which hold heightened meaning to local communities in addressing issues of remembering the recent past in personal and localized ways that are largely excluded from state narratives.

Despite holding a number of artefacts made in HMS *Maidstone*, Crumlin Road Gaol, and Armagh Gaol (the latter primarily located at the Conway Mill museum), the majority of artefacts in both museums originated in Long Kesh/Maze. There are a wide range of handicrafts with Celtic motifs and have been made into aesthetically pleasing ornaments. Examples include harps, replica thatched cottages, handkerchiefs and associated wooden memorabilia. To exemplify the repetitive nature of prison art, pencil drawings depicting an aerial view of the Nissen huts of Compound 7—almost identical in representation—reside in both museums. There are similarities in materials, construction, form and commemoration through the use of structural template, recognized Republican motifs and the majority note, in a prominent place on the artefact, who made them, where and when. Such communalities reveal an early recognition of the market for these handicrafts as

keepsakes and commodities as well as prisoner pride in their self-perceived status as a 'prisoner of war'. In keeping with the geographical and chronological concentration noted in the NIPS Collection analysed in Chapter Four, the majority of handicrafts from both museums date from the early years of the Compounds.

There are similarities in the small but significant number of non-prisoner artefacts that have been acquired and are exhibited in both museums. Within the Conway Mills museum there are a number of infrastructural remnants that have been removed and relocated to the museum. These include lights from the H-Blocks as well as medical equipment that purports to have been used in the care of hunger strikers in 1980 and 1981 (Figure 7.10). Their presentation, on par with prison art, suggests that now the prison has closed, and its future material existence is uncertain, both types of artefacts have an equity of heritage value. Indeed, by placing these items in close proximity they reveal what Fratz calls 'judgments that help create hierarchies of merit and importance' (2011: 21). These hierarchies are particularly notable with the treatment and prominence of hunger



Figure 7.10 Blood pressure gauge 'HMP Maze', purported to have been used on the 1981 hunger strikers, Irish Republican History Museum, Conway Mill, Belfast, c.1980–1.

striker memorabilia, which is notable in variety and mundanity of representation in both exhibitions. The Roddys Museum contains two large and memorable artefacts that were not prisoner creations: a bed originally from the Compounds that is now hanging from the roof of one of the rooms (Figure 7.11) and a official scale model of the prison, which sits in the centre of the same room. So exceptional was the acquisition of the scale model of the prison, I was told by my guide, that its existence has entered urban legend. The guide stated that the authorities had discovered its disappearance from the prison after closure but had no idea how it was removed from the site, when and by whom. He joked that although the police had heard that it resided in this community museum they could not gain access to the building to prove this contention (the guide stated that it was acquired by a refuse worker clearing the site who had Republican sympathies). The acquisition, presentation and centrality of prison-issue artefacts and structural pieces in the community museums highlight the importance of any prison-related materializations in articulating understanding of imprisonment and, by extension, the recent conflict. Following Fratz, the very act of placing these



Figure 7.11 Bed from Long Kesh Compounds, Roddys Museum, Glen Road, Belfast.

ordinary objects in a museum is important, as ‘an exhibition marks a topic as worth attention’ (2011: 25). Such objects are central to articulating values and messages that the museum wishes to express, prove, and direct. As Tony Bennett has argued, ‘the artefact, once placed in a museum, itself becomes, inherently and irretrievably, a rhetorical object’ (Bennett 1995: 146). Furthermore, I argue that in the context of Nationalist community museums, the often illicit role and serendipitous processes of acquiring and transferring artefacts from the post-closure site are central to the value of the recontextualized artefact. The role of ongoing subversive and not just aesthetic qualities is central in qualifying these objects as dark heritage.

The recent creation and continued existence of these museums tell us that the ‘distributed self’ of Long Kesh/Maze’s dark heritage retains meaning to former prisoners and their wider communities and is communicated effectively, if partially, through these displaced sites of memory. Community museums in this context indicate a desire, both within the former prisoner groups and in their wider communities, to commemorate and remember their experiences of the recent conflict through a range of material culture, including prisoner handicrafts, prison-issue artefacts, and institutional infrastructure. Whilst such museums are manifestations of growing confidence to contest ‘who controls the story of war and the way it is told to others’ (Ashplant et al. 2004: 72), mundane infrastructural objects displayed alongside prisoner creations suggests that they do not simply aim to present prisoner interpretations. To acquire and present various elements of the militarization of Northern Irish society during the Troubles—in active contestation of the official lack of engagement with difficult aspects of the recent past in wider society—is telling. The existence of community museums, and particularly the materials displayed within them, indicates a desire at community level to engage with and acquire multiple material remains of the past rather than actively forget. As Long Kesh/Maze has been closed since 2000, with restricted public access, these museums are a means of recontextualizing the ‘distributed self’ of the site and interpreting it within the spectrum of dark heritage for local and tourist consumption. These museums exist to actively interpret the material culture of the Troubles as they relate to mass political imprisonment and its continuing impact on their contemporary community, contesting official silences, and remembering the difficult recent past, if in a partial way.

The Conway Mill museum, in particular, highlights the desire for communities to remember, to tell their own stories, and to reacquire a

past that is increasingly being materially eradicated. It displays a distrust of official interpretations and a repudiation of the government's desire to reconstitute the pain, hurt and suffering in solely positive and abstract terms of conflict transformation. Such contestation of current official policies of forgetting or reinterpreting the past with little engaged public consultation is not unique to Northern Ireland. It can be compared to Maritja Anteric's critique of similar initiatives in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina (1998: 181). Whilst these recontextualized dispersed artefacts may aim to actively maintain prisoner narratives, their material integrity—and intermixing with other remnants of the Troubles—ensures that there remains the potential to read them in myriad ways. Furthermore, the lack of overt interpretation and structuring narrative allows the museum visitor to construct their own understandings of the conflict and its connection to Long Kesh/Maze. To this extent, the retention and display of chairs made of the wood of demolished buildings (Figure 7.12) and security lights from demolished Army barracks are not simply examples of ex-paramilitaries cynically attempting to control community memory and tourist understandings of a complicated and contested period of recent history. They materially reveal the desire for some groups and individuals, particularly in areas most impacted by the Troubles, to curate materials that relate to specific experiences and understandings of their recent past. In doing so they act as a means of countering official policies of tearing down, controlling access and active forgetting (or partial remembering) of their experiences of the Troubles.

Long Kesh/Maze is simultaneously a contained and dispersed example of dark heritage. The 'distributed self' of Long Kesh/Maze, as reconstituted in public community museums and private homes, is materialized in remnants that are primarily mundane, with only glimpses of exceptional material survivals. They hint at the mundanity of interactions with structures and regimes as well as the skill, rather than creativity, of prison art. This intermixing of material forms of Long Kesh/Maze intends to direct the understandings of dark tourists towards ex-prisoner perspectives but they inherently retain the potential to contradict mythologizing of Republicans, and as such facilitate a growing acceptance of the variety of narratives emanating from the site. As an ongoing material presence, both *in situ* and beyond the contained prison landscape, Long Kesh/Maze retains the possibility of counter and hidden narratives in the future. Regardless of government intentions, as a dark heritage site and the subject of dispersed dark heritage,



Figure 7.12 Wooden chair made from remnants of Divis Flats after their demolition in the 1980s, Irish Republican History Museum, Conway Mill, Belfast.

its meaning is already being explored and contested within various contexts. As its material culture is already being retained, curated, interpreted and displayed in numerous settings this process is clearly not containable. Government controls of material culture and meaning are limited to the *in situ* structural remains and even then limits on interaction and meaning can never be complete. The current tight access controls, facilitated dereliction, and on-site demolition of Long Kesh/Maze acts only to limit the interpretative possibilities of the site but not its complete material existence and enduring meanings. This is especially true when there exists a public appetite for knowing, understanding, and experiencing this intriguing but dark place.

CONCLUSIONS

The fascination with historic prisons, which has led to the adoption of such sites as dark heritage, can seem inexplicable. Passmore has suggested that 'the resonance of places associated with violence,

trauma and loss' have an emotional impact that appeals and should be acknowledged (2004: 98). Long Kesh/Maze has the added factor of its heightened position during a recent civil conflict and connection to highly public and mediatized events, such as the burning of the Compounds in 1974, the 1980–81 Hunger Strikes and the mass escape of 1983. That these high-profile events are 'a far more potent symbol of resistance for republicans than for loyalists' (Graham and McDowell, 2007: 360) has ensured that the role of the site in a transitional society has become highly contentious. When a place is central to the suffering of some, but is equally a celebratory focal point of others, gaining consensus on its future can seem an impossible task. These oppositional impulses regarding the prison can help to explain the faltering attempts by politicians to locate a suitable proposal for the future of the site.

In the various proposals relating to the regeneration of Long Kesh/Maze there have been underlying political attempts to create a new meaning for the site. The representative nature of building survival has been complemented by recontextualization within a new landscape setting emphasizing international aspects of peace-building. Focus on the future meaning of the site being consensus-based and contextualized beyond the conflict reflects a desire to avoid singular identifications with the site, which in reality already exist and have undoubtedly intensified during the limbo of the peace process. With the clamour to retain being matched by calls to eradicate the prison, a compromise of partial retention satisfies no one. From the first proposals to the current plans, there has evidently been a political will to create a 'genuinely neutral and inclusive' (MCP, 2005: 16) environment, but is this currently possible? Eleanor Casella and Clayton Fredericksen have shown in their examination of heritage landscapes of confinement in Ireland and Australia that different case studies represent 'different narratives of memory, belonging and identity' that reflect local and national needs specific to place (2004: 119). To extrapolate this finding, there is a need to recognize that generic presentations of politically loaded sites that do not address the needs of the specific society at that time can result in it becoming irrelevant, divisive or understood and explored by the public in unforeseen and even unwanted ways.

Added to the complexity of the current situation is the impact of previous decisions that were made regarding retention and/or destruction on the standing structures of the site. Whilst the desire to control the identification and meaning of Long Kesh/Maze is understandable,

physical interventions can have unforeseen consequences. Changes attempting to neutralize and control interpretations of a site can create new identifications that are not always predictable or straightforward, or can limit those that had the potential to emerge. Individual and communal interactions with the site—and the subsequent impact on understanding, identity and meaning that is extracted and imposed on it—are volatile and open to subversion. Long Kesh/Maze is still transitioning in value from a functional prison to site of dark heritage but this process is not uncontested, singular or totalizing. The movement of the ‘distributed self’ of Long Kesh/Maze into the wider community demonstrates that unintended material accumulations and reinterpretations can occur outside of state control. The existence of community museums, proliferating since the peace process began, show that meanings and identities connected to artefacts and infrastructural fragments removed from the site already exist within the wider communities. They are being curated and displayed in a process parallel but separate to the regeneration of the site. The future meanings and understandings of the site are still open to unforeseen changes that could either facilitate its movement into a more collective understanding of the past or further alienate this remnant of the Troubles from those who currently feel disenfranchised. Long Kesh/Maze remains significant, politically contested and continuing to transition from its previous existence as a functional prison due to its ongoing relevance to contemporary societal issues and concerns. Whilst this situation continues the meaning of the site will remain in flux, with few definitive indicators of what its future may be or meanings will encompass.

Conclusions: Bobby Sands's bed and the ghosts of place

Contemporary archaeologies are not only interested in uncovering and recording the remains of the recent past. They are often politically engaged, highly conscious of the unresolved nature of many of their studies and aware of the critical role of selection on their interpretations. This volume has concentrated on the different manifestations of archaeological remains connected to Long Kesh/Maze and has endeavoured to reveal how the material form of the prison—be it manifest in document, artefact, building, landscape or as a form of dark heritage—has a significant impact on the narratives and experiences of place that it reveals. This overarching contention has structured the volume and now the conclusions will build on the examinations of the previous chapters by exploring one final case study. Daniel Miller has suggested that there is a need not only to explore the generalities of material culture but also to specifically analyse particular artefacts as a means of focusing conclusions (1998: 10). Such an approach can reveal the intricacies and complications involved in the study of recent historical institutions. One focal point of the site, which brings together issues of selection, survival, identity, and heritage creation with the interactions between people and place and the past and present, will be dissected before the wider implications of this study are assessed.

THE DEATH BED OF BOBBY SANDS

The most noticeable, and significant, of the ongoing interventions with Long Kesh/Maze since its closure in 2000 centres on the

purported last bed of Bobby Sands that resides in the H-Block prison hospital. Due to its associations with the ten dead hunger strikers, the hospital is undoubtedly the focus of the tour of the prison site (more detailed analysis can be found in Chapter Five). For Republican prisoners, in particular, their link with those who died was not just political but also painfully personal. They have continued to struggle between reconciling the benefits of the Hunger Strikes with this ultimate sacrifice: 'Bobby's election gave world-wide publicity to our protest and struggle but he still died.' (McKeown 2001: 78). The hospital building has the same austere, concrete construction as the H-Blocks, although the less-visible signs of decay speak of an acknowledgement of its retention and a more vigilant approach to its preservation. On entering the corridor that contained individual hospital cells for the first time, in January 2005, my aim was to empirically record the current state of the buildings and artefacts. However, the guide immediately transported me to the second room on the left, the cell in which Bobby Sands had died, as the main point of interest in the building. On entering the room, there were no personalized or identifying features that associated the bare cell—containing only a single, metal bed frame (Figure 8.1)—with the young, smiling man of many media and mural representations.

On my second visit to the hospital, three former PIRA prisoners accompanied me. It was in their company that the building's significance became apparent to me. The transformation in attitude from three acquaintances joking and telling anecdotes in the Compounds and H-Blocks to silent respect and reverence on entering the hospital was palpable. The focus of their discussions moved from humorous stories to contemplation of the drawn-out deaths of the hunger strikers and the impact that their deaths had not only on experiences within the prison but also wider society. There was reflection about how the Hunger Strikes interconnected with their own personal stories, their journeys to imprisonment, and how that time has shaped their lives since. The cell looked identical to the previous visit, with the same single bed and lack of adornment. It was in the reactions of the men to the building, particularly to that cell, which revealed how the emotive quality of place can transcend its physical structures.

My last visit to the prison hospital, in October 2007, was unusual in that I was the interviewee, conducting an oral testimony for a researcher creating a prison memory archive. It was with interest that



Figure 8.1 Metal bed frame in the hospital cell in which Bobby Sands died on hunger strike in 1981, c.2005.

I entered the prison hospital and noticed subtle but important changes since my last visit. My contention that the site was transforming to a place of pilgrimage and memory was confirmed by the continued respect afforded to the now decayed flower left in remembrance of a hunger striker from the previous visit. However, the most important changes focused on Bobby Sands's bed (see Figures 8.2 & 8.3). The room remained unadorned and unchanged in any other respect, but the bed now displayed the extent of numerous, swift, and anonymous interactions with the frame. The wire mesh of the bedsprings was no longer intact, with a substantial number of individual springs having been extracted and secreted from the room. These bedsprings were no longer constituent parts of a bed or functional artefacts. As Nicholas Saunders has suggested in his study of First World War mementos, it is in the specific meanings to the individuals and how they acquire these trophies that they gain importance (2005: 87). Buildings and artefacts most connected to iconic figures such as Sands have heightened significance for specific stakeholders of the prison, former Republican prisoners, while being the



Figure 8.2 Metal bed frame in the hospital cell in which Bobby Sands died on hunger strike in 1981, early 2007.



Figure 8.3 Metal bed frame in the hospital cell in which Bobby Sands died on hunger strike in 1981, late 2007.

source of deep discomfort for others. I suggest that the importance of the bed lies not only in its connection to the dead hunger striker but also in its ordinariness and mundanity. Akin to the elevated importance of prison-issue furniture during prisoner protests—and their inclusion in community museums—these artefacts have transitioned from purely functional to initially unforeseen, cultural meanings. A bed is institutional and practical yet simultaneously domestic, homely and intimately connected to the man who died in this room. It materializes the closest physical link to a long-dead man whose self-sacrifice to some—suicide to others—continues to impact on the society, culture, and politics of the province. In all probability it is not the actual bed where Sands died. The hospital functioned for nearly twenty years after his death and the bed in that cell has probably been moved or replaced a number of times. This is not relevant to those who gain entry to the inaccessible site and surreptitiously remove part of its material remains. Although any materialization of Bobby Sands is precious to hold and retain for many, the pattern of the remaining wire suggests that the springs have been removed sparingly, one by one. In doing so the material integrity of the bed remains; the performance can be repeated by the next visitor; traces of the original bed remain relatively intact in the place of death; the ghosts of place are retained.

Bobby Sands's bed not only reveals how artefactual meaning and agency can be context-specific and relational (Gell 1998: 22), transforming the seemingly banal to the highly significant, but it also connects to wider issues of interactions between people and things. The relationships between people and their environments, as evidenced in Bobby Sands's bed, confirms Lynn Meskell's claim that materiality is 'persons, objects, deities and all manner of immaterial things together in ways that cannot easily be disentangled or separated taxonomically' (2006: 3). One must include the complexities of meaning that can remain static or be transformed by event, time and threat to survival in understanding how certain groups and individuals can connect to unexpected and materially unexceptional things. It is clear that the continued connection between communal popular imagination and the Hunger Strikes, which continues to be explicitly articulated in Nationalist wall murals and memorials, is maintained on many levels throughout society for various reasons. However, it is also harder to dismiss emotional connections as irrational and the result of Nationalist fervour when situated in front of such an artefact. As Patrick Cooke has mused on the impact of another Irish historical

prison, Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin: 'If you stand there, you are confronted less by an idea, than by the meaning of an individual life and its extinction. The situation is more palpably tragic, less glibly amenable to deconstructive analysis' (Undated: 7).

When one considers the affective possibilities and latent power of such a site the apprehension existing at a government level is understandable. Whilst there exists a partial and potentially divisive connection manifest between people and place at Long Kesh/Maze, those enduring bonds are articulating contemporary needs that are still considered too politically sensitive to discuss with a degree of detachment. The connections and meanings continue to exist, are increasingly being presented and interpreted beyond the site (as exemplified by community museums), and demonstrate a desire by some individuals and groups to engage with and remember the difficult recent past that is not being met in the public domain. The reimagining of the meanings of Long Kesh/Maze highlights the continued negotiations and enduring significance of these relationships. The continued existence of Long Kesh/Maze challenges dominant narratives of the peace process but it also harbours the potential for multiple perspectives and hidden narratives to continually evolve and add to the understandings of the Troubles.

LESSONS FROM LONG KESH/MAZE

This study of Long Kesh/Maze has revealed a number of interesting, surprising and even contradictory findings that have implications for the interpretation of the site, the Northern Irish Troubles and peace process, and also the study of recent historical institutions. The sequence of studying the documents, artefacts, standing buildings, landscapes, and dark heritage of the site has ensured that not only has there been an attempt to uncover hidden narratives and multi-perspectives but the analyses have also added to an understanding of how the selection process impacts on the results of such materially rich investigations. Each chapter concentrates on a specific scale of analysis and they have singularly revealed narratives and experiences of place that are specific to the form studied and that, taken together, greatly complicate our understandings of place.

This study began by exploring the most conventional material interrogated in studies of modern prisons: documents. However,

unlike most studies of prisons this chapter did not focus solely on documents originating with the governing body, it also incorporated prisoner communications that have been smuggled or confiscated from the prison. The contexts of these documents were explicitly included in order to highlight the role of survival and selection in what we can uncover about the prison from this source. Beyond using documents to extract facts, they often inadvertently revealed emotions, sensitivities, and politics between government departments and the role of comms in structuring the days of non-complying prisoners, as well as their propaganda roles and more personal perspectives on a range of topics. This chapter is most significant in revealing those aspects of the prison that archaeology has difficulty in uncovering: decision-making processes, mechanisms of politics, intention, emotion, sensitivities and the role of propaganda. Their concentration on the theoretical positions and public pronouncements on imprisonment provide direction on what we should find in the material remains of the prison, which the other chapters of this study frequently contradict.

Artefacts constitute the next scale, with the greatest difficulty in their analysis being the sheer quantity that is connected to such a recent site. Collections of artefacts from different contexts related to the prison were examined and were most revealing in presenting personal interactions between people and their most intimate surroundings. This chapter concentrated on the role of artefactual remains in negotiating relationships between the prisoner, his paramilitary organization, the prison regime, and external communities. Through examination of confiscated artefacts, their contextual nature, being categorized as legitimate or contraband and how this differs in form and quantity over time, was revealed. Likewise the role of negotiation and subversion of chosen and imposed material culture indicates how small interactions with the limited material culture of the prisoner told of ingenuity, communality of purpose, communications, the materialization of non-compliance, and violent intentions as well as a desire for a more comfortable life. Perhaps of greatest significance was the inclusion of the now absent prison-issue artefacts. The elevated importance of furniture and blankets in performing political status and active non-compliance in the early H-Blocks was evidenced in documents, photographs and oral testimonies. That these interactions are revealed through sources other than the material remains indicates the need to 'present absents'

(Buchli and Lucas 2001b) as well as utilizing the extant material culture relating to the site. Ultimately, these artefacts demonstrate complex and even contradictory impulses. They articulate both personal and propaganda meaning in the creation of handicrafts that are now displayed as prison art, whilst the use of imposed, mundane material culture in negotiating prisoner status has left few material traces and is all but forgotten. Artefacts, more so than any other scale of analysis, reveal the most intimate intentions and individual interactions of the prisoner within their carceral environment. The sheer quantity of remains unveils a large number of different and often contradictory experiences of place but the contextual significance and re-use of different forms can make precise interpretation of meaning and function difficult, if not impossible, to definitively ascertain.

The standing buildings of Long Kesh/Maze encompass overarching and structured experiences of the prison site. Changes to the buildings of imprisonment are fundamentally manifest in the move from the Compounds to the H-Blocks in the mid 1970s. The simultaneous functioning of both sites for over a decade after this change is often forgotten in more politically focused studies of the prison but is important to incorporate into an archaeological study. The impact of these structures on the experiences and the ability to negotiate and subvert imprisonment are of central importance. Clearly, the structures did impact on the form of non-compliance and active defiance of imprisonment but not the ability nor desire to do so. The most obvious material traces of non-compliance can be found in the additions that the prison administration had to add to the structures due to unforeseen and unwanted prisoner interactions. This includes bars, porches and internal divisions added to the Nissen huts and the imposition of further security mechanisms within the H-Blocks as a direct result of the mass escape in 1983. Attempts to escape through the creation of tunnels, also used as a communal structuring device in the freer environment of the Compounds, leaves many hidden traces but also has resonance in the later manifestations of the H-Blocks, where a tunnel was located under H7 in the late 1990s. The undeniable impact that the H-Block prison hospital continues to have on those prisoners who closely identify with the hunger strikers who died in 1981 has transformed the meaning of the structure without physical alteration. Therefore it is important to consider how meaning can change without any material modification. Most prisoner interactions with the structures left few or superficial traces or have been

effectively covered, and are problematic to locate without identifications from other sources. As a scale of analysis this is the most difficult to utilize to locate straightforward prisoner interactions; instead one needs to change perspective and use the material changes instigated by the prison authorities, which were often a reaction to unforeseen and unintended prisoner usages.

The landscapes of Long Kesh/Maze reveal myriad experiences and understandings of the site that are not only connected to the inhabitants of the prison but also wider society. Long Kesh/Maze was explored as different landscapes; a contained landscape revealing the physical boundaries within the site that effectively created not one but two very different prison landscapes that co-existed with little sustained interaction. At a wider landscape level, the prison was increasingly visualized by the public from an aerial perspective that revealed a disjuncture between an overview that prioritizes the H-Blocks in media representations, and the latterly 'forgotten' presence of the prisoners held in the Compounds. The central focus of this chapter was to explore the site as an imagined landscape. This was approached through examining the memories of a select number of individuals who had physically accessed the prison, and was then expanded to those in wider society who identified with Long Kesh/Maze through representations in the media, wall murals and memorialization. It is through the examination of these murals and memorials in particular—including their placement, longevity and iconography—that we can understand the evolving understandings of Long Kesh/Maze in wider society. Examination of the myriad landscapes of Long Kesh/Maze reveals broader stories of how the site was experienced and understood on levels that connect to issues of meaning and identity from a communal, public, and personal perspective.

The demolition of the majority of the standing buildings of Long Kesh/Maze and the redevelopment of the retained representative sample is now underpinned by major financial backing from the EU. However, the prison continues to stutteringly transition from a functional institution to a place of dark heritage. For a prison to retain wider significance and recategorize as heritage it must retain meaning that connects to contemporary societal issues. Long Kesh/Maze is central to addressing a number of unanswered questions of the peace process, particularly how we deal with the past and how it is remembered and commemorated (McGrattan 2009: 164) The experiences of Long Kesh/Maze during the peace process highlight the inadequacy,

and indeed impossibility, of attempting to move on without dealing with the past. For Northern Ireland to effectively move to a post-conflict state in ways that are more than superficial, the remnants of this Troubles icon needs to be utilized in order to enable greater understanding. To pretend to forget Long Kesh/Maze is not a viable option. Its continued high-profile status and a public interest in 'experiencing such secret and mysterious worlds for themselves' (Schofield and Anderton 2000: 238) have ensured that the prison remains current in public consciousness. Its multiplicities of meaning should be engaged with as a positive that needs to be embraced and explored rather than denied and played down. Rather than undermine the multiple meanings of this prison, David Uzzell and Roy Ballantyne have suggested that such sites *should* create emotional responses (1998: 152). Such an approach, if sensitively and appropriately considered, can avoid the reopening of old wounds and unhelpful apportioning of blame. Instead, sites can be used as a means of facilitating cross-community dialogues and understanding, international positioning, and a means of questioning deeper issues relating to imprisonment and longstanding repercussions of civil conflict.

This study has taken a distinctly multi-scalar approach to contemporary archaeological studies by engaging, exploring and critiquing the possibilities of selecting different scales of analysis as the focus of each chapter. Unlike Laurie Wilkie and Paul Farnsworth's study of trade and identity in the Bahamas, these scales are not identity-related scales of household to network to diaspora (1999). This volume follows Dan Hicks and Mary Beaudry's call to explicitly consider the material dimensions of scale (2010: 1–21) and is overtly archaeological. This approach has concentrated on the possibilities and limitations of each material form in providing insights into the institutional experience that is unique to Long Kesh/Maze. Therefore, this study has not been simply exploring a historical institution but a contemporary, contested political and cultural entity. Such a methodology has been fruitful in confirming the anticipated, highlighting the unexpected, and revealing many contradictory findings. The methods have been underpinned by selecting both commonplace and unusual material forms and allowing the emergence of narratives that reflect the messiness, contingency and changeability that are appropriate to such a contemporary and political site. There has been no attempt to tie the findings neatly together. Following Martin Hall's dissection of the relationship between documents and objects,

it is in the contradictions of material forms that the most significant truths are revealed (2000).

Through the methods employed in this study there are wider implications for the study of contemporary archaeology. The form and nature of this investigation has shown that our concentration on specific material elements of place can drastically skew the interpretations we derive. This is particularly true if the selection process is not overtly engaged and considered. Our choices in—and between—the materials that we interpret, from often overly rich contemporary reserves, can limit our archaeologies to unintentionally partial stories of time and place. We should be creative, imaginative, and allow unusual perspectives and atypical forms and assemblages to be included in our studies. As proposed by Rodney Harrison, our methodologies should be appropriate to the particularities of our projects (2011), not routinely follow traditional consensus nor fashionable flights of fancy. We need to look for interconnections, explore one material form through another, and ensure we interrelate the materials with the people who are implicated and connected to our projects. This study has attempted to reveal and engage with difficult political issues inherent in conducting contemporary archaeology, whilst simultaneously delving deeper into the complicated meanings of an exceptional, if dark, place. It is this need to challenge our preconceptions, be inventive but appropriate in our methods, considered in our selections, and to engage personally with our studies that is the most lasting lesson of this exploration of Long Kesh/Maze.

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