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This thesis is an archaeological and ethnographic exploration of historic military sites associated with the Cold War. It takes a multi-sited approach to former radar installations in the UK and examines the range of meanings and values that surround them, as well as their mediation, management and curation in the contemporary landscape. This thesis provides a detailed study of a range of related (although not necessarily overlapping) practices, which have accumulated around these places since the 1990s.

Much has been written about the ruined-aesthetic of abandoned military sites. Moreover, conservation professionals have undertaken extensive research and granted heritage status to a number of key sites. However, little academic research has been carried out concerning the contemporary social life of former military installations. Furthermore, despite valuable archaeological research concerning the character and form of Cold War historic sites, little attention has been given to the ways in which they are involved in the production of ideas surrounding the Cold War and Cold War heritage in the present; this thesis aims to cover both of these issues.

Each of the main chapters in this thesis focuses on a particular set of practices or relationships surrounding historic radar sites, which have been treated in a relatively sporadic and uneven fashion – some have been demolished, others left in ruination and limbo, whereas a few have been designated as nationally important heritage sites. Therefore, a number of heritage and memory practices are covered, including conservation management, militarisation and nostalgia, as well as the museumification of Cold War sites and objects and the (often) disparate memory practices of former radar veterans.

Principally, the analysis in this thesis focuses on extensive ethnographic research undertaken by the author at a number of sites in the UK. This includes semi-structured interviews, participant observation and archival research undertaken in England and Scotland. The key case-studies are the listed and scheduled monuments at RAF Neatishead in Norfolk; the Air Defence Radar Museum, which is located on the same site; and a former early warning site at Saxa Vord in Unst,
Shetland. Research conducted at a number of other Cold War sites and museums is also discussed.

The principal aim of this thesis is to contribute a set of nuanced and detailed accounts surrounding the archaeology and heritage of the recent past. The Cold War was a varied and complex phenomenon – one which is much debated. Manifold legacies of the Cold War also continue to shape and influence the contemporary world. In a similar manner, concepts and practices surrounding heritage and memory are widely studied, but remain slippery and resist straightforward interpretation. Therefore, the complexities surrounding these phenomena are magnified when they are combined in the present through the notion of Cold War heritage.

In order to add some specificity to these related issues, this thesis focuses on two main questions (which are really two-sides of the same coin): what kind of heritage emerges in relation to historic Cold War radar sites? And, what kind of Cold War is produced in the context of heritage and memory practices?

Throughout the thesis, it is argued that the Cold War is an uneven, complex and occasionally difficult heritage to deal with in the UK. Mostly, this relates to practical problems such as the complexities surrounding the ownership of former military sites, as well as a number of other conceptual and philosophical issues. For example, in the context of designation and management, this emerges as a tension between the idea of the Cold War as avant-garde heritage and modern conservation principles that underpin contemporary heritage management practices. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on materiality, place and continuity in heritage and memory practices are also brought into relief. At times, these are shown to be complicated by the (at times) elusive, unpredictable and uncertain character of the Cold War in the present.

Using radar sites as a microcosm, it is argued that former Cold War sites are seldom the product of coherent or unified approaches to heritage and memory. Instead, they are often at the centre of a variety of converging, conflicting and confounding agendas. Practices surrounding radar sites also present a number of ethical and political challenges. Moreover, it is also argued that radar sites, despite their billing as Cold War heritage, cannot simply be reduced or collapsed into the concept of the Cold War. Nonetheless, the author argues that this kind of fragmentation and complexity might form the basis of a more comprehensive approach to the Cold War and the recent past in the present. Therefore, in the
conclusions to this thesis, the author presents a number of avenues for future research and examines the implications of his findings.
DECLARATION

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THE AUTHOR

Steven Leech is a postgraduate researcher in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Manchester. He completed his BA (Hons) in Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Manchester in 2009. He also completed an MA in Archaeologies of Identity at the University of Manchester in 2010, his dissertation was entitled “It’s the Nearest Thing to Magic You Can Get: Materiality, Modernity and the Landscape at the Milton Keynes Peace Pagoda”. He is also the co-author of a report, *Valuing the Historic Environment: a critical review of existing approaches to social value* (Jones and Leech 2015), which was part of a wider AHRC project led by Professor Siân Jones. The report was used to inform a heritage policy review in Scotland. Steven considers himself to be a material culture and heritage researcher who combines an interest in the recent past with methodologies and insights from a range of disciplines, such as archaeology, anthropology, sociology and cultural geography.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, around eight thousand military spaces associated with the conflict have been deactivated and abandoned globally. Additionally, a steady stream of documentary and artefactual material has entered the public and academic domain following the, at least partial, cessation of hostilities. New fields of study have developed that seek to understand the character of this percolating material, which has been made available through the declassification of official secrets and the privatisation of military landscapes, opening them up to wider publics.

These bodies of research have attempted to come to terms with, and inform understandings of, the manifold experiences of this complex period and disentangle its pervasive global impact upon late modern society. This has taken the form of empirical histories (e.g. Gaddis 2005), cultural geographies (e.g. MacDonald 2006), anthropological studies (e.g. Gusterson 1996) and archaeological heritage management (e.g. Dobinson et al 1997; Forbes et al 2009; Schofield and Cocroft 2007), amongst other approaches (e.g. Hanson 2010 and 2016; Kinsella 2001).

Moreover, Cold War sites have informed a growing number of artistic and literary responses (e.g. Flint 1998; Kyriakides 2007; Whitfield 1996; Wilson 2006), as well as a burgeoning community of amateurs seeking to engage with these places: such as urban explorers (Bennett 2011) and local military historians (Strange and Walley 2007).

In the UK, military sites associated with the Cold War are relatively well understood in terms of their history, architecture and operational context. However, there is little understanding of how these places are understood in the present and the kinds of meanings and social relationships that surround them in the contemporary landscape. In particular, very little attention has been paid to the relationship between Cold War histories and heritage practice in Britain. This is a potentially contentious connection and one that is complicated by the complex nature of these phenomena.
1.1 – RESEARCH AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS
At the heart of this thesis is a concern with how and why the Cold War has come to be understood in terms of heritage. Therefore, much of the discussion that follows focuses on the various practices and performances in which Cold War pasts are put to work in the present. Adopting an ethnographic approach, I aim to reveal something about the nature of these exchanges and provide a nuanced account of the consequences that flow from them.

In order to do so, I take a multi-sited approach to historic Cold War radar installations in the UK and examine the range of meanings and values that surround them, as well as their mediation, management and curation in the contemporary landscape (see 1.3). Drawing on critical approaches to heritage and memory, I provide a detailed account of a range of related (although not necessarily overlapping) practices, which have taken place around these sites since the early 1990s. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate that such an approach has much to contribute to the understanding of contemporary perceptions of the Cold War, while also offering insights into social relationships and contemporary life of former Cold War installations in the present.

As mentioned above, former Cold War sites are increasingly being thought about and treated as a form of heritage (e.g. through historic environment protections and museum display; see Schofield and Harrison 2010). Given the increasing presence of Cold War narratives and places in the presentation of the past, it is important to get an understanding of how histories, spaces and materialities associated with the conflict are actively produced. For example, this is particularly salient where claims are made about the avant-garde character of Cold War heritage and the experimental nature of practices surrounding the management of former military sites (e.g. see chapter 2).

In this thesis, I am also concerned with extending questions about Cold War heritage to other forms of legacy in the landscape. Working through a range of insights in critical heritage and memory studies I aim to challenge core assumptions about large-scale phenomena such as heritage and the Cold War. Through detailed ethnographic analysis, I will question what it means to think about ideas of heritage in this context. As I will explain below, the Cold War is a complex conflict; one which had a global reach and impacted lives across multiple spheres. In this thesis, therefore, I also want to understand how more elusive or less tangible effects of
militarism might be traced through encounters with the remnant remains and former participants of the Cold War in Britain.

In summary, I am concerned with the kind of Cold War that is produced through the management and constitution of historic objects and places as heritage. At the same time, I am interested in what kinds of pasts, heritage or legacies emerge as a result. To pursue these themes, I will explore the specific biographies, networks and relationships that surround radar sites and consider how these differ from other Cold War military sites. Moreover, I will ascertain whether the particular character of radar sites has a strong bearing on the kind of Cold War that emerges (see 2.2 for a full discussion of Cold War historic sites).

Throughout this thesis, these concerns are framed by a set of questions that are really two sides of the same coin: what kind of Cold War is produced in the context of heritage and what kinds of past or heritage are mobilised in order to say something about (or indeed with) the Cold War? As I will reveal, the simplicity of this line of questioning belies a multitude of complexity and rich ethnographic potential.

1.2 – THE COLD WAR: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

In its narrowest sense, the Cold War refers to an era defining conflict that characterised international relations, culture and politics between the mid-1940s and the early 1990s (Hopkins 2007). For the most part, the Cold War represents an ideological split between communist and capitalist systems of governance. Chiefly, the term highlights the bifurcation of global communities and their separation into competing models of economic development, social organisation and political modernity (Kwon 2010: 1; Loth 2010).

These systems clashed on a global scale following the Second World War when the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the dominant states on either side of this divide. Alongside their allies each side vied for international dominance and influence. This bipolar competition was epitomised, exacerbated and shaped by the race to develop and mobilise nuclear weapons. As a result, any direct conflict between these competing superpowers threatened to bring about worldwide destruction and catastrophe (Gaddis 2005).

Manoeuvring against competing nuclear nations was (and continues to be) a high-risk affair. Therefore, both blocs committed vast resources to surveillance,
obsessively watching and listening-in to one another. Rather than embark upon direct military action, they spread propaganda, fought proxy conflicts, intervened in civil wars and deployed policies of containment, which were designed to maintain the balance of power and keep the ambitions of the opposing side in check (see Westad 2010). For instance, the United States rolled out the Marshall Plan (European Economic Recovery Plan) in 1948 to fund the rebuilding of Western Europe after World War II. This was envisioned as a means of preventing the spread of communism and the potential appeal of collective organisation across the continent (e.g. Castillo 2005).

The Cold War was typified by a protracted stalemate, as neither side wanted to be responsible for triggering a mutually destructive nuclear exchange. As a result, the conflict has come to be understood in certain parts of the world (especially North America and Western Europe) as the war that never was (Dudziak 2012; Gaddis 2005). For the most part, this is due to the absence of direct hostilities within Europe itself (with the exception of the Balkans). However, as many scholars have highlighted, the “cold” war became “hot” in many regions across the world. In particular, major conflicts in Central and Southeast Asia, as well as Africa produced millions of victims and casualties (Deighton 2010; Kwon 2006 and 2008).

Globally, the Cold War has a complex historiography, one that is not easily reduced to a linear chronology (e.g. see Suri 2002). However, there are many key events associated with this conflict. For instance, during my own study, several former military employees associated the beginning of the Cold War with the Berlin Airlift in 1948. The event was the response of the United States and its allies to the Soviet blockade of West Berlin, which prevented the flow of goods and supplies through the city (e.g. see Miller 2000). The Soviet Union prevented access to areas of Berlin under Western control after the Deutsche mark had been introduced. The new currency signalled West Berlin’s transition to a capitalist economy. Over the course of a year, supplies were flown in to the city by Western military aircrews. The Soviet Union chose not interrupt these operations as any intervention had the potential to escalate into a direct conflict (e.g. ibid.).

Another potential flashpoint was the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1963. The United States interpreted the movement of Soviet missiles into Cuba as a direct threat and provocation. The movement of warheads was a response to a failed US intervention in Cuba in 1961 (the so-called Bay of Pigs incident) and the placement of
US ballistic missiles in Italy and Turkey. Over a thirteen-day period, tensions reached boiling point. Disaster was only averted through last minute communications and compromises between then leaders Nikita Khrushchev and John F. Kennedy (Gibson 2012). Many consider this short span of time to have been the closest the world has ever come to all out nuclear war (e.g. George 2003).

Other events such as the Hungarian uprising (1958), the Chinese communist revolution (1949), the Sino-Soviet split (1960) and the Korean (1950 to 1953) and Vietnamese (1954-1975) wars, all had huge consequences at local and global scales. Many of these events were characterised by devastating violence and destruction that was aggravated by Cold War ideologies and antipathies. Much importance has also been given to the end of the Cold War: the destruction of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism between 1989 and 1991 (see Kwon 2010).

Many of these and other Cold War events have ramifications that percolate into the present and continue to inform current local and global economic, social and political realities. As anthropologist Heonik Kwon (2010) has highlighted, there has been a glut of sophisticated historiographical work concerning the Cold War period. However, in contrast, there are comparatively few studies committed to understanding its ongoing impact in a post-Cold War world (although see Kwon 2006; Masco 2006). Therefore, as I will emphasise throughout this thesis, it is necessary to engage in sociological treatments of the conflict if we are to build up a more nuanced understanding of how this complicated and transformative period continues to influence the present in a whole host of ways (see also Gusterson 2004; Kwon 2010).

**1.3 – COLD WAR BRITAIN: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION**

The Cold War had far-reaching impacts in the UK. In response to the conflict, the British government invested incredible sums in defence spending (despite struggling post-war finances). Throughout much of the second half of the twentieth century, successive UK governments pursued national policies that kept the country on a semi-permanent footing for war. This included the development of a nuclear weapons programme from the late 1940s onwards (Grant 2010) and several phases of military rearmament programmes, starting in the 1950s as a response to the perceived Soviet threat (Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 3).

The politics of the Cold War were also closely connected to the loss of Empire in Britain. Domestically, there were political fears about a loss of status on the global
stage, as well as anxiety concerning communist states and their capacity to occupy any power vacuum created by Britain’s departure from the former colonies (e.g. see Deighton 2010). A desire to cling to power and to continue its role as a major international player characterised much of the UK’s policy decisions during the early part of the Cold War.

From the 1960s onwards, participation in NATO operations and the hosting of US military personnel and infrastructure began to define Britain’s Cold War role. Large areas of the UK were used to house vast US military complexes and nuclear technologies (becoming the United States’ “unsinkable aircraft carrier”; see Deighton 2010). This ensured that the UK became a central target during any nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union. However, during the 1980s, anti-nuclear movements such as CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) gained traction and formed a strong public front against the presence of atomic weapons at sites such as Greenham Common (e.g. Schofield and Anderton 2000).

In contrast to the Second World War, Peter Hennessey (2010) has argued, the Cold War failed to garner large swaths of public support in Britain. Despite mobilising large portions of the population through the military, the Cold War was often perceived to be a distant, if not pervasive, threat. It is often assumed that it was understood as an “insider’s” conflict, a war being fought by politicians on the international stage (ibid.: 3; see also Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 3). It was in certain respects a phenomenon over which people had very little control. This appears to have had an impact on the social and cultural memory of the conflict in contemporary Britain (e.g. see chapter 5). However, as I will discuss in chapter 3, these assumptions are not readily applicable to every context and situation.

Nevertheless, in Britain, as elsewhere, the Cold War provided a context for economic, social and political life (see Westad 2010). Historian Tony Shaw (2005), for instance, draws attention to a so-called “cultural turn” in Cold War historiography. This body of work, which emerged in the mid-2000s, argued for an “everyday history” of the Cold War in Britain and beyond. For example, scholars demonstrated the impact of Cold War conflict on consumption practices, literature, the visual arts and music (ibid.: 109). The scholarship of Shaw (2005) and others, also illustrates the ways in which the conflict percolated into the home (e.g. Buchli 2007), the work place and sites of religious practice (e.g. Kirby 2003).
In certain circumstances these effects were rather subtle or suggestive. British juvenile fiction such as novels (Paris 2005), comics (York and York 2012) and cinema (Shaw 2006), for instance, sometimes contained anti-communist sentiments or themes. Government instructions on the preparation for nuclear war also played a role (e.g. through Civil Defence pamphlets and activities), bringing the fearful possibilities of atomic war into the intimate spheres of everyday life (e.g. Oakes 1994). In addition to the spectacle of the atom bomb, however, Cold War politics also influenced the seemingly mundane. Sarah Mills (2011), for example, examines the dismissal of Boy Scouts “who belonged [to] or sympathised with the Young Communist League” in the UK during the 1950s. In instances such as these, the “red scare” (the fear of spreading socialist ideologies) appeared to even frame the politics governing the social lives and experiences of postwar children (see also Delaney 2011).

In my own research, I am interested in drawing on these insights into the Cold War past. These perspectives offer a number of possible considerations for my study of Cold War materials in the landscape. This pervasive social and cultural impact informs, and is inseparable from, people’s interpretation of these pasts in the present. Therefore, despite my focus on specific sites of military activity, I am equally concerned with how these materials and places might act as conduits to a deeper understanding of personal and social memories of the Cold War (for a detailed discussion of social memory see chapter 5).

1.4 – INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT: HERITAGE AND THE RECENT PAST
Cultural theory has indicated that the experience and perception of ever accelerating change in modernity has shaped people’s relationships with the past and the material world (Ferguson et al 2010). For instance, people are increasingly familiar with the rapid rate at which technologies become redundant and obsolete. At the same time, there has been a growing interest in curating and collecting objects that relate to the more recent past. This is a process in which “certain aspects of everyday life that relate to the present are almost immediately conceived of in heritage terms” (Ferguson et al 2010: 280).

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a “heritage boom” that is often interpreted as a response to the character and speed of change in post-industrial and late modern societies (e.g. see Macdonald 2002a and 2013a). Conventionally, heritage protection has been granted to old, grand and historically important monuments and
architecture (see Smith 2006; see also chapter 2). However, since the 1980s and 1990s, conceptions of heritage have expanded and begun to shift. This includes, for example, the emergence of new categories of historic property, such as “digital heritage” (e.g. Ferguson et al 2010; Harrison 2009) and “modern conflict heritage” (e.g. Schofield 2009).

Scholarly interest in the more recent past has reflected these changes. This has meant, for example, recognising the potential cultural and archaeological significance of contemporary structures such as prisons (e.g. Moshenska and Myers 2011), sites of protest (e.g. Schofield 2005) and transport infrastructure (e.g. Penrose 2007), in addition to various, often ephemeral cultural phenomena, such as migration (e.g. Bartolini et al 2016), music and soundscapes (Schofield 2014a), as well as homelessness (e.g. Kiddey 2014).

These topics of concern often exceed the boundaries of discrete sites and objects – a potential challenge to traditional models of historic conservation, which place great weight on the management of rooted heritage sites and the compartmentalisation of historic objects (e.g. Smith 2006: 12). It is these contemporary practices and perceptions that mediate the Cold War as an emerging form of heritage. As such, I take inspiration from studies of the recent past and use them to help orient the original ethnographic material I present here.

With respect to Cold War heritage, a range of scholarly and artistic work has emerged that seeks to interpret the contemporary legacies of places and infrastructure associated with the conflict. For example, some have explored the bulking concrete ambivalence of the bunker hidden from view (e.g. Beck 2011); the dangerous and transmuting radioactivity of fissile materials (e.g. Dunlop 2011; Masco 2006); the sensory and mnemonic traces which linger around Cold War architecture (e.g. Boulton 2009; Burström et al 2009; Wilson 2007), as well as the “ghosts” of difficult and violent pasts (e.g. Bryne 2009; Kwon 2008).

Finally, throughout this thesis, I will also draw upon a growing body of work in archaeology and cultural geography that deals with the legacy of former military practices in the environment (e.g. see Woodward 2014). For instance, research has shed light upon the material composition, military function and past social life of former Cold War bases (e.g. Schofield and Anderton 2000; Cocroft and Thomas 2003; Hanson 2016). My own research will contribute to (and hopefully enhance) this
literature by exploring the relationship between these remnants and their intangible qualities and meanings in the landscape.

1.5 – COLD WAR SITES AND STAKEHOLDERS
The character of the Cold War is extremely complex as it was fought across many “front lines” (e.g. see Szonyi 2008). For instance, recent scholarship has demonstrated that the Cold War was not simply a conventional military struggle (e.g. Kwon 2006; see also Fairclough 2007) or a war of words and diplomacy (e.g. Zubok and Pleshakov 1997) – although it was both of these. Rather, it spread across multiple realms such as intelligence (e.g. Andrew 2010), cultural sectors and practices (e.g. Caute 2003; Cull 2010), education (e.g. Hartman 2008), academia (e.g. Farish 2010) and the new sciences and technology (e.g. Bud and Gummett 1999), a facet that is perhaps best understood in relation to the space race (e.g. Gorman and O’Leary 2007). Therefore, the location and physical space of the Cold War military tensions is difficult to pin down. As I mentioned above, this provides an interesting contrast to heritage management, which is focused upon the remains of the past that are rooted in place (see chapter 2).

Nevertheless, the Cold War has left a huge physical footprint across the global landscape (see chapter 2). For the most part, this is due to the unfathomable resources allocated to the maintenance of national security networks and military infrastructure during this period (Schofield and Cocroft 2007: 13). In Europe, traces of the Cold War are most evident in the manifold concrete remains which reflect the shifting nature of military requirements over time. Many sites in the domestic sphere, for example, were solely focused on maintaining an absolute and comprehensive state of vigilance. Many Cold War activities were about constant preparation and rehearsal for atomic warfare (e.g. see also Dunlop 2013). As a result, the majority of Cold War remains in this region are composed of former military sites located in remote and once restricted areas (e.g. see also Vanderbilt 2002).

In this study I have chosen to focus on the legacy of one specific set of places – radar sites. On more than one occasion, radar sites have been described as being on the “frontline” of Cold War exchanges (e.g. Cocroft 2007; English Heritage 2008c). As part of the “nervous system” of national surveillance (Taussig 1992) radar stations were installed to give early warning of an impending attack. As such, they reflect the anxiety of the Cold War and are a material reminder of the perennial
preparation for war (see DeLanda 1991). This is not to dismiss the relevance or interrelated nature of other Cold War military places and spaces. On the contrary, designing the research in this way is intended to provide an anchor point for further comparison, development and discussion in future research (for an introduction to radar see 1.6).

The aim of my research is not to provide a gazetteer of sites (although these are extremely useful, e.g. see Lowe and Joel 2013; Ozorak 2012). On the contrary, my own approach is to reveal a nuanced picture of the historical and social life of a few specific places. Concentrating on one kind of Cold War infrastructure, therefore, has enabled me to gain a purchase on many of the issues that surround former military sites in the present. Furthermore, honing in on one type of domestic military infrastructure means I am able to dedicate more time and space to the nuances and complexities surrounding particular places (as opposed to providing an overwhelming amount of contextual information regarding the functioning of various kinds of Cold War military sites).

Nonetheless, this does not fully explain why I have chosen to highlight radar sites for study. My reasons are threefold. Firstly, radar sites and technologies hold a particular appeal as they resonate with some of the core debates in critical heritage and conservation studies. For instance, radar sites foreground the nature of relationships between the tangible and the intangible (e.g. see Pétursdóttir 2013; Smith and Akagawa 2009).

Heritage is closely connected to archaeology and other disciplines that focus on material culture. Many heritage professionals, for instance, have training or a background in archaeological theory and practice (e.g. see Jones and Yarrow 2013). As a result, heritage has long been concerned with various material forms, such as monuments (e.g. Jones 2004), architecture (e.g. Herzfeld 1991) and built infrastructure (e.g. Penrose 2007). Through their interest in issues of materiality1, heritage scholars and practitioners have also developed a corresponding interest in the intangible and the immaterial (see also Macdonald 2013a). This is most prominent in the development of

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1 Materiality is a diverse concept and is the subject of much enriching debate and scholarship (e.g. Miller 2005; Olsen 2010). It is rooted in a theory of things: an intellectual interest in what objects permit, mean and do. The term also refers to the mutual impact that objects and non-human elements have upon one another (they are inextricably bound up in one another – e.g. see Latour 1993). In essence, materiality is about thinking through the constellation and properties of the relations that surround anything that inhabits the physical realm (e.g. Henare et al 2007).
“intangible heritage”, particularly within international conservation movements. In various guises, issues surrounding the intangible have been conceived as a means of protecting and understanding elements of the past that are less durable or more transient (although no less present or important) than concrete material forms (see also Jones and Leech 2015). For example, this has included forms of identity, traditional practice, spiritual values, and sensory experience, all of which necessarily invoke the material in some regard (see also Macdonald 2013a: 17).

Within critical heritage studies, recent scholarship has argued for a more integrated or “dialogical” approach to the management of historic places and the legacies of the past (e.g. Harrison and Rose 2010). Rather than create a dichotomy between physical materials and intangible meanings and values (which has been the default mode of practice since the early twentieth century; see chapter 2), such work stresses the mutually constitutive nature of relationships between the tangible and intangible (e.g. Harrison 2015). These debates inform (and are potentially informed by) the treatment of radar sites in the contemporary landscape.

When in operation, ground control radar sites were designed to transduce the intangible, to make the invisible visible so that hostile aircraft could be detected (see below and appendix B). These resonances provide a rich starting point for thinking about the nature of the relationship between the Cold War and heritage. As I hope to demonstrate, radar sites provide an arresting context in which to explore some of these issues. For example, the concrete footings of redundant radar infrastructure, which are valued in the context of heritage conservation (see chapter 2), beg questions about the relative importance of electromagnetic radiation which was used to propagate radar signals in the past (see below). How important are these invisible forces to an understanding of the legacy of radar sites in the present? How were they perceived and understood in the past? Moreover, to what extent do the material remains of radar constitute the legacy of the Cold War in Britain?

Secondly, despite difficulties associated with access (e.g. see chapters 2 and 3), radar sites continue to attract a range of stakeholders in the contemporary environment. For example, heritage professionals, enthusiast groups, art practitioners, former military personnel and communities living in close proximity, all engage with radar sites. This range of practitioners provides fertile ground for understanding the ways in which the Cold War is produced in the landscape. Therefore, much of this thesis focuses on these stakeholders and communities.
Thirdly, radar sites provide stark variations in terms of their treatment and management. For instance, some former sites are afforded significant levels of heritage protection as scheduled monuments in the UK. On the other hand, a number of sites remain in varying states of abandonment, decay and limbo. This disparity between sites opens up discussion about the character and challenges involved in the production of Cold War heritage. Through a comparative multi-sited ethnography (see below), I am able to provide more varied understandings of what Cold War heritage can mean. By focusing on radar sites as local contexts, I hope to contribute to a more complete understanding of the phenomenon as a whole (see 1.7).

Early on in my research I decided to adopt a multi-sited ethnographic approach to the study (see 1.7). Therefore, from the outset, my intention was to identify several places that would effectively demonstrate the current diversity of responses to former Cold War legacies in the UK. After visiting over fifteen military and civilian sites, such as Jodrell Bank, RAF Holmpton and Orford Ness, I decided upon two main case-study locations: former RAF Neatishead in East Anglia (which also includes the Air Defence Radar Museum) and former RAF Saxa Vord in Unst, Shetland (see 1.8). These locations represent contrasting responses to the management and production of Cold War histories in the present. However, in terms of their function (as radar sites), they both performed similar roles, shared communications and personnel and had a similar spatial and architectural layout. As a result, they offered a useful means of comparison.

1.6 – RADAR: SYSTEMS, TECHNOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURE
Since the development of sophisticated flight technologies (and the deployment of aerial bombardment on civilian centres), the airwaves have been a site of military struggle (e.g. see Flintham 2011). So much of the Cold War was about verticality – a battle for the skies. Radar provided early warning of attack from the air such as conventional strikes, nuclear-armed aircraft and long-range ballistic missiles (e.g. see Edmonds 2010; Spinardi 2007). As such, radar systems were central to maintaining a sense of territorial control for insecure nation-states (e.g. see Adey 2012; Williams 2011). This is reflected in the proliferation of early warning networks on both sides of the Iron Curtain.
During the Cold War, radar systems were an integral element in a wider air defence assemblage. As Wayne Cocroft and Roger Thomas (2003: 84) point out, this assemblage had four main constituent elements: “detection systems; command, control and communications centres; airborne interceptors; and ground defences”. These elements combined to identify, monitor and intercept any hostile threats that approached or encroached upon sovereign airspace. With the threat of nuclear weapons the stakes were particular high during this period.

In the UK, the history of Cold War radar can be broken up into several phases of development which were shaped in response to particular kinds of threat (e.g. see Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 84; McCamley 2011 and Appendix B). Over time, these systems evolved and could detect objects in airspace at ever-greater distances and with increasing clarity (although see Clarke and Roberts 2002). Ground radar sites (permanently manned military stations fixed in the landscape) were the most important element in this chain (Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 84).

During the Second World War, Britain had a network of over two hundred sites that were used to detect incoming bombers. In the early postwar period, around thirty of these sites were retained and redeveloped. By the end of the Cold War period, improvements in technology meant that only twelve or so sites were required to provide full coverage of the UK (a number that is even smaller today; see Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 84-5). This includes the two main case study sites in this thesis: RAF Neatishead in East Anglia and RAF Saxa Vord in Shetland (see 1.9)

In principle, radar is a simple proposition. Harnessing a large supply of energy and focusing it through tall conductive antennas, multiple electromagnetic signals are transmitted out into the environment. These invisible signals are sent out at regular intervals and travel at the speed of light. These radio waves pass through the air with little disturbance. However, certain materials and large structures reflect waves in the electromagnetic spectrum. Thus, particular objects produce a trace in the form of a weakened radio wave – an echo (e.g. see Gething 1993; Gough 1993).

Therefore, when signals are radiated out into the ether they are able to pick up an echo from aircraft in flight (and sometimes flocks of birds by mistake).

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2 For a brief history of air defence, air power and early warning detection technologies see Appendix B.
3 Airborne radar, mobile radar units and naval radar all contributed to this wider invisible web of air defence. However, in this thesis my focus is upon ground radar sites and their tangible footprint in the landscape.
Using a receiving antenna (which is often shaped in the form of a parabolic dish to catch the returning waves more effectively), these echoes are then fed back into a mainframe of computer infrastructure (much of which is usually located at a network of sites located in close proximity to one another). This system then translates these echoes into electronic data (e.g. Buderi 1996). This data is then transduced and displayed on a console screen in an operations room, which is ready to be interpreted in real time by operators (all of these processes happen at incredible speeds).

The returning echoes and reflections appear as “blips” on projected or overlaid maps on console screens (and later computer monitors). Every fifteen seconds or so, the screen is refreshed (as the radar rotates three hundred and sixty degrees for full coverage). The distance the “blip” has travelled indicates the speed of the flying object. Distance from the centre, which is the radar antenna itself, is then measured using mapping tools and display indicators (e.g. Buderi 1996).

During the Cold War, central headquarters pooled all of this information to build up a dynamic and live picture of the airspace (e.g. see Watson 2009). Flight controllers working in the operations rooms would also use the data to guide aircraft on intercept missions (to get them close to “enemy” aircraft). They would communicate with pilots via a direct feed and instruct them as they approached “enemy” jets to escort them away from national airspace (e.g. see Bullers 1991).

Despite extensive training, identification was a difficult task – even for skilled operators. It is an interpretive exercise and as such, is open to human error and miscommunication (e.g. see Connor 2002). This is a rather sobering thought considering the potential risks involved in any miscalculation. The identification of aircraft was made somewhat more reliable by secondary surveillance radar: a coded signal that was emitted by “friendly” aircraft so that they could be differentiated from unidentified flying objects (e.g. Gething 1993).

During the Cold War the radar assemblage included a range of concrete architecture. These were constructed using large quantities of earth, steel and concrete and were often based upon a central design (e.g. see Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 90-1). Each site was a variation of a standard layout which was composed of an operations centre, energy generators, engineering equipment and aerials (as well as nearby domestic architecture for personnel and other invisible infrastructure such as electronic cables).
Standard building types were also replicated across many sites and were adapted to suit particular environmental conditions and the lay of the land (e.g. see Bullers 1991; see Appendix B). This included operations blocks (often referred to as the “R” series of buildings: e.g. R1, R10, R30 etc.) which were invariably rectilinear buildings on multiple levels that were made of concrete. Some were situated above ground, whereas others were constructed deep below the surface (the development of the Hydrogen bomb rendered the safety of the bunker obsolete in the 1950s; e.g. see McCamley 2011).

Most radar sites were placed in open landscapes and remote areas to minimise disruption and to ensure wide coverage. Radar sites were also often located high above sea level as a matter of necessity. Mostly, they were situated in restricted bases that were occupied by armed personnel (sometimes upwards of two hundred people on rotation). Moreover, the majority of sites were circumnavigated by heavily guarded and secure boundaries.

Nevertheless, some of the more visible architectural elements became prominent features of the landscape (e.g. see Maus 2012). For example, the steel radar antenna themselves were extremely conspicuous features and could reach as high as sixty feet (see images in Appendix B). According to some former operators that I interviewed, there was little mystery or attempt to hide what these sites were used for. Few radar antennas are still in existence today (most were scrapped). The antenna at RAF Neatishead is the only standing Cold War period radar in the UK (it is now a scheduled monument).

Radar also has some iconic and visible elements in the landscape. For example, in certain climates (or to shield the equipment from surveillance) some radar antennas were also covered by radomes. This portmanteau stands for radar-dome. These are “fungoid” forms that look like “golfballs” from a distance (e.g. see Flintham 2012; Spinardi 2007). Specifically, they are a domed covers made of materials that are not reflective to electromagnetic waves such as fibreglass (often put together using tessellating triangular or hexagonal panels). In areas such as Shetland, radomes were installed to protect the steel radars from the salty sea air. However, several were blown into the sea during powerful wind surges (e.g. see Carle 2010a).
1.7 – METHODOLOGY
Throughout this research, I deploy what I describe as an “archaeological ethnography” (see below) in order to reveal the manifold complexities and nuances surrounding former Cold War radar sites and their production as heritage. This is heavily informed by approaches and techniques used in sociology and social anthropology. This direction was chosen as the most appropriate means of getting at local and grounded understandings of Cold War heritage and legacies.

As Sharon Macdonald (2013a: 8) notes, anthropologically informed approaches are above all a commitment to complexity. By focusing on particular elements of a cultural phenomenon, such as museum visiting or conservation work in the context of heritage, the ethnographer is able to challenge generalising assumptions. In doing so, an anthropologically informed approach can add a degree of nuance to understandings of complex social and cultural categories such as heritage, memory and the Cold War (see also Kwon 2010).

Such an approach is central to my own aims and commitments in this doctoral research. My use of the term “archaeological” ethnography is simply an indication of my focus upon Cold War material culture and a commitment to thinking through the past as it is experienced and related to in a multi-temporal context (e.g. see also Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009 and Meskell 2007).

As with most ethnographic approaches, my own research is focused upon the long-term study of a set of small-scale and interrelated contexts. All of these contexts are connected to the creation, performance and experience of Cold War heritage. In a similar manner to James Young’s conception of multiple “sites of memory” (see also chapter 5), I am also interested in the interrelated nature of multiple fields or “sites” of study. In Young’s (1993) work sites of memory are forms of practice, intangible feelings, as much as concrete monuments.

For example, in this thesis, I treat forms of personal memory tourism, reunions, conservation practices and the ruins of former Cold War radar as my ethnographic “sites” (e.g. see also Marcus 1995; cf. Hage 2005). However, as mentioned above, these are grounded in the context of particular locations such as former military radar complexes. Here, the tangible and concrete location of Cold War militarism is considered alongside the wider and more elusive effects of the conflict.

The term ethnography itself does not refer to a concrete set of methodological techniques. Instead, it is a “commitment to trying to see life-worlds
from the point of view of those who live them and within the context of which they are a part” (Macdonald 2013a: 9). As such, ethnography can encompass a dizzying number of qualitative methods such as visual, sonic and other sensory techniques (e.g. Cox 2014; Pink et al 2010), artefactual analysis (e.g. Henare et al 2007; Hicks 2010) and oral history (e.g. Cruikshank 1990). Therefore, the particular methodologies deployed depend on the social worlds being observed and the kinds of impacts the researcher wants to achieve in terms of their presentation.

In my fieldwork, I came up with a multi-method approach that allowed me to explore the relationships between sites in full. This bespoke methodological tool-kit included participant observation (e.g. see Spradley 2016), which is a form of “deep hanging out” and practice with individuals and communities in order to gain an understanding of their social life (e.g. Wogan 2004). In this study, for instance, this included participating in multiple guided tours of a radar museum and documenting the nature of relationships between visitors, guides and the objects and pasts on display. I also conducted over ninety in-depth “semi-structured” interviews with heritage professionals, former personnel and communities living in close proximity to radar sites. A semi-structured approach takes a conversational approach to interviewing that allows participants to express themselves using their own language and draw on their own concepts (e.g. see Adler and Adler 1987).

A host of other techniques, such as “walking practices” inspired by psychogeographic approaches (e.g. Middleton 2010; Pink et al 2010); museum exhibition analysis (e.g. Rees Leahy 2011) and watching briefs of key features in the landscape are also employed. Perhaps most important in my own research were practices of writing. For example, I produced extensive field note diaries that formed the foundation of my analysis. As I demonstrate in Appendix D, my field notes ranged from descriptive entries, narrative accounts to summaries of interviews and other forms of analysis. As Emerson et al (2011) suggest, the writing of field notes “lies at the core of constructing ethnographic texts”. This patchwork of approaches produced a wide range of insights that I was able to flexibly employ over the course of my fieldwork. During the analysis, I was then able to triangulate the data produced and used it to form a picture of the rich ethnographic details surrounding the sites under study.

As mentioned in the section above, most of my work is carried out in conjunction with a number of key stakeholders surrounding radar sites, for example
heritage managers and former military personnel. These were chosen as they represent the individuals and communities who have a personal and emotional investment in the production of radar sites as heritage. Local resident communities, by way of contrast, were selected due to their proximity to military sites in order to assess the place of the Cold War past within their current social lives. In appendix C, I provide a detailed discussion of my approach to the recruitment of participants and sampling in this study. This includes details about informed consent and the information presented to participants during and after the study (see Appendices E, G and H).

Moreover, in Appendix D, I also provide an extensive breakdown and justification for each technique I have deployed throughout this research. I also give a timeline for my fieldwork and provide a detailed summary of the quantity of work completed, where each activity took place and an assessment of the effectiveness of these methods.

In Appendix D, I also present an indicative sample of my original ethnographic data. This includes field note extracts, archival material and a range of documentary images taken over the course of the fieldwork. As I explain in my research statement (Appendix E), I have been unable to provide complete transcripts of interviews in this thesis. This is mostly due to ethical concerns surrounding the identity and anonymity of participants.

Throughout my study, in order to comply with ethical guidance, I agreed with participants that I would only use anonymous quotes from their interviews and conversations. Therefore, I have been unable to transcribe the complete set of ethnographic interviews. Moreover, it was decided with my supervisory panel that the true value of my ethnographic interviews is only fully revealed when considered in conjunction with my ethnographic field note diaries. Similarly, I am unable to publish these in full as they contain a range of sensitive information and identifiers. Therefore, it is hoped that the indicative sample provides a flavour of my approach to fieldwork.

Finally, the fieldwork methods employed and my selection of particular sites received full approval from the University of Manchester’s Ethical Approval Committee (see Appendix F). I also fully complied with the School of Art’s Languages and Cultures’ guidance and risk assessments concerning qualitative fieldwork for postgraduates. In Appendix E, I have provided a statement on my approach to research ethics, data collection and the presentation of original material in this thesis.
1.8 – CASE STUDIES

Each of the key case study sites offers a range of similarities as well as important differences. This is particularly salient in terms of the practices that surround them and the way in which various stakeholders perceive and apprehend them. In order to bring out the rich ethnographic complexity of these contexts, I have chosen to structure chapters 2, 3 and 4 around each of the case study sites (see 1.8). Presenting the thesis in this way means that the particular qualities as well as any overlapping connections or resonances can be compared with greater ease. Fieldwork undertaken at a number of other sites is also referenced in this thesis. For example, I have included extracts from field notes and interviews produced at RAF Bawdsey and RAF Barnham. Among other locations, these sites were visited with key stakeholders such as heritage professionals and former radar personnel over the course of the study. They do not constitute detailed case studies but they do provide some critical insights into cultural practices surrounding former Cold War facilities in the UK.

In each chapter, I provide a detailed historical background and biography of each case study location. However, here, I present a very brief introduction to the sites.

1.8.1 Neatishead, Norfolk (England) [National Grid Reference: TG 34607 18810]

The former RAF radar site at Neatishead operated as an early warning defence site from 1945 up until its partial closure in 2005. Several hundred military and contracted civilian staff would have been working on site during intensive periods of operation. The site is situated in the North Norfolk Broads, on the fringes of two parish boundaries: the historic tourist village of Horning and the farming and residential community of Neatishead. It is circumvented by a number of other village settlements – Barton Turf, Irstead, Ludham, Hoveton and Wroxham – and is within 10 miles of a former RAF airbase at Coltishall. It is enclosed within a network of agricultural land (now owned by a few families) as well as an ecologically sensitive and heavily managed network of rivers and lakes. The site was once highly restrictive and was heavily guarded and fenced off to the public. This spatial separation remains, as much of the base is still off limits (with the exception of the museum).
The site is divided between continuing RAF communications operations, the Air Defence Radar Museum and private ownership (Style Space Ltd). As a result, issues of access remain problematic and permissions are complex and uncertain. Moreover, the current owners are experiencing difficulties selling their stake in the site. Mostly, this is due to the ongoing military operations in a small area of the site and the designation of heritage status to various pieces of Cold War military architecture. At present, Neatishead is a characterised by a stark contrast: inactivity and ruination in large areas and ongoing flurries of activity in pockets, such as the museum and the small MoD operated area (see 2.8 for a biography of the site and its archaeology).

1.8.2 Air Defence Radar Museum (Neatishead) [NGR: TG 34571 18495]
The Air Defence Radar museum is situated in the south eastern quadrant of the former RAF radar station at Neatishead in Norfolk. The museum buildings are located in a former Second World War command complex, a grade II* listed structure that was later reused as a Cold War operations block and control room between the 1970s and 1990s. Following the end of the Cold War and the relocation of radar operations equipment to a renovated bunker at the north western area of the site, a number of retired and retiring Ministry of Defence employees were encouraged to establish the museum.

In the 1990s, the museum became a charitable trust and held pre-arranged tours of the museum for interested or invited guests. By 2012, the trust had employed a museum professional, assembled a large group of enthusiastic volunteers (many of which had been based at Neatishead with the RAF) and had opened the museum to the public between 9 and 10 days each month between April and October. During the busy summer periods, the museum receives up to 1500 visitors over a four-week period. The museum also contains a large number of objects and archival materials relating to the history of radar operations and military air defence. Up until recently, these have been assembled sporadically and without documentation through bulk donations from a number of decommissioned sites.

1.8.3 Saxa Vord, Unst (Shetland) [NGR: HP 63133 16695]
The former RAF early warning radar station at Saxa Vord is located at the highest and most northerly point in Unst, Shetland (which is also the most northerly point of the
UK). It was one of a number of key sites that extended the range of British and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) military radar networks out beyond the horizon and into the further reaches of the Northern hemisphere. As a result, it was one of the busiest radar sites in the UK as it covered several flight paths frequented by military aircraft from the Soviet Union. The station itself was in operation between 1957 and 2006. During its period of operation, radar site personnel often accounted for over half the entire population of Unst (around 1000 people when the station was open). In contrast to Neatishead, Saxa Vord was an integral part of local social and economic life. In Chapter 3, I provide a detailed account of the impact that the site’s closure has had upon residents.

During the period of my ethnography in 2012 and 2013 the decaying remains of the radar site were in a state of limbo. Some parts of the site, such as those containing a highly visible yet empty radome structure, were still officially owned by the MoD. In 2014, after my field research had finished, the military demolished and removed the last remaining radome structure. As at Neatishead, a local entrepreneur now owns a portion of the site. Despite this change in ownership, during the period of my ethnography it remained inaccessible most of the year and was in a state of advanced ruination. Additionally, some of the architecture was in such poor condition that it was not safe to enter. These structures, unlike those at Neatishead, have not been assessed as part of any formal heritage practices. Nevertheless, enthusiastic former employees and interest groups have sought to reassemble its histories and associated memories bound up in the place through online memorials (e.g. see Carle 2010a).

The Cold War radar station at Saxa Vord was just the latest iteration of a successive network of military surveillance sites installed upon the island since the First World War. For instance, there are well-preserved brick and concrete remains of a Second World War Chain Home radar site at Skaw, the promontory adjacent to Saxa Vord. Unst was also a destination for some of the earliest experimental Naval and Royal Air Force radar sites in the UK and as such, might be considered a veritable radar palimpsest. For instance, there a range of rusting russet-orange fixtures and fittings still anchored in the ground throughout the landscape (some in places that have recently been designated as Sites of Scientific Interest and Sites of Scenic Beauty). A number of other locations were also utilised in the landscape to facilitate “listening-in” activities: an experimental US Admiralty site to track Soviet submarines via sound
waves and a small Cold War period radio station that is still shrouded in secrecy. However, in this thesis, I will focus upon relationships to the remains of the Cold War radar site.

1.9– THESIS STRUCTURE
In chapter 2, I focus on the work of heritage professionals surrounding former radar sites. Following insights from a growing body of research in conservation studies, I draw attention to the complexities and nuances involved in the conservation of Cold War sites. At the heart of this section, is an apparent tension between Cold War heritage as novel or avant-garde and modernist conservation principles. In chapter 3, I explore the legacies of Cold War militarisation in the landscape and how these are manifest in one particular place – the island of Unst in Shetland. In particular, I highlight the ways in which the Cold War is put to work as a usable past, as well as a form of nostalgia in the present.

Chapter 4 provides details of the transformation of a section of RAF Neatishead into the Air Defence Radar Museum. I explore the significance of the radar museum as an independent institution that operates out of a former military site. In particular, I explore a sense of ambivalence that permeates the entire presentation and performance of the past in this setting. Finally, in chapter 5, I focus on the fragmented nature of personal memory surrounding radar sites. In order to do so, I present a number of excerpts and testimonies from my research carried out with former radar personnel. Then in chapter, 6, I reflect on the relationship between these practices and suggest some directions for future research.
CHAPTER 2: CONSERVATION AND COLD WAR HERITAGE

PART ONE: COLD WAR HERITAGE IN CONTEXT

2.1 – INTRODUCTION

In chapter 1, I discussed the growth of scholarly and popular interest in the materiality and archaeology of more recent pasts (e.g. Harrison and Schofield 2010; Ferguson et al 2010). Conservation professionals working for various national and international heritage organisations have also begun to focus on objects and places associated with recent or contemporary histories (e.g. Harwood and Davies 2015; UNESCO 2003a; van den Heuvel 2008). Modern military remains, for example, are now a central agenda item for statutory heritage bodies such as English Heritage (e.g. Schofield 2004). Therefore, in this chapter I will discuss the conservation of Cold War historic sites as part of wider efforts to value, preserve and manage the recent past as heritage. Exploring conservation and heritage activities in this way is critical, as it offers insights into policies and practices that strongly influence how the Cold War and the recent past are encountered and understood (see 2.5).

Since the 1990s, a substantial number of military sites active during the Cold War have been rendered surplus to requirements and have entered a new phase in their biographies (see 2.8). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many former military installations were decommissioned. A large number of these sites have been abandoned and left in varying states of ruination and neglect – a process that is increasingly well documented in Europe and the United States (e.g. Schmidt and von Preuschen 2005; Schofield and Cocroft 2007; Hanson 2016). An important consequence of this phenomenon is the emergence of calls to preserve and manage former military sites as heritage. The physical traces of the Cold War, for example, have become the focus of national and international preservation campaigns, which have sought to protect, designate and conserve a selection of what are judged to be the most important sites (e.g. Baltic Initiate 2009; Department of Defence 1994; English Heritage 1998).

In terms of statutory protection for former Cold War sites, the most substantial programme of designation has been carried out in England. English
Heritage has listed and scheduled structures at over thirty-seven different sites connected to this period (English Heritage 2013a: 63; see figures 2.5 and figure 2.6, as well as appendix A). By way of contrast, only a smattering of later twentieth century military sites have been afforded legal protection under historic environment legislation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (e.g. Cadw 2009), despite being the focus of some detailed research (e.g. Thomas 1994). Therefore, throughout this chapter, I focus mostly on the work of conservation professionals in England—particularly English Heritage. However, I do discuss a range of practices surrounding Scottish sites in detail in later chapters (chapter 3 and chapter 5).

Establishing the Cold War as a form of heritage marks the conflict out as an important past, one worthy of protection, or at the very least, it highlights a set of historic objects and places that require our attention. To designate a particular site as heritage is to accord it special status (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006). Designation also has tangible effects, placing constraints upon what can be done with or to historic places (Harrison 2013a). Fundamentally, it provides a framework through which the historic environment is mediated, managed and negotiated (Jones and Yarrow 2013). Through designation, heritage managers and planning authorities seek to protect valued places through a range of legislative measures, policy guidelines and consent procedures, which are triggered in response to proposed works and interventions. Often, this means weighing up the effects of planned changes against a site’s established values or cultural significance (Jones 2009; Mason 2002; see also 2.7).

It has long been assumed that the goal of conservation is to prevent and arrest the decay of historic structures—“to safeguard monuments for future generations” and to preserve them “as far as possible in their authentic form” (Jones and Yarrow 2013: 4). While a concern with the stabilization of physical materials remains, there is now widespread acceptance amongst many conservation practitioners that the process of change is inevitable (e.g. Fairclough 2009; Jokilehto 2003): materials decay and deteriorate; animals and insects take up residence in buildings and threaten their durability (Jacobs and Merriman 2011; Strebel 2011); even repair and maintenance alter a place (e.g. Edensor 2011; Jones and Yarrow 2013).

The task of contemporary heritage professionals, therefore, is to decide upon acceptable or necessary levels of change (e.g. Muñoz Viñas 2005; Pye and Sully 2007). At the same time, they also have to document, assess and manage the impact
of such changes upon the perceived values and significance of a site. This often means navigating a complex set of professional guidelines, skilled practice and networks of expertise (Jones and Yarrow 2013: 6). As Sian Jones and Thomas Yarrow (2013: 7) put it, the central issue for those working with historic sites and buildings is negotiating the “paradoxes of securing the past while changing it”.

The recent nature of Cold War heritage is also crucial to the arguments outlined in this chapter. As I mentioned in chapter 1, there has been a shift in the “landscape of heritage, to make it into something that embraces both the very old and the comparatively new” (Ferguson et al 2010: 286). For some, the conservation of the recent past provides a much-needed challenge to traditional ways of understanding and doing heritage (e.g. Fairclough 2009; While 2007). For example, the contemporary nature of Cold War remains contrasts with a tendency noted by Laurajane Smith (2006:11), to identify heritage as something “old, grand, monumental and aesthetically pleasing”. However, little is known about the ways in which the tangible and intangible traces of the contemporary past are dealt with and understood in the practice of conservation (2.5).

With these issues in mind and the difficult nature of defining and situating the Cold War, as discussed in chapter 1, I will consider the numerous potential problems Cold War sites pose for conservation professionals. In particular, I want to shed light on some of the complexities that surround the classification and designation (2.9 and 2.10), as well as the management (2.11) and conservation (2.4 and 2.5) of Cold War monuments. How is it that Cold War sites have come to be understood as heritage in the UK? What are the processes involved in the production of Cold War heritage? And, perhaps most importantly, are there any specific tensions, challenges or difficulties associated with the conservation of the recent past and former Cold War military sites in particular? To pose the question another way: in the context of conservation, what kind of heritage is Cold War heritage?

Specifically, I will explore some of these issues by looking closely at the ‘heritageisation’ of a particular radar site – RAF Neatishead (see 2.8) – and other former Cold War infrastructure in the UK. Heritageisation is a phrase coined by David Harvey (2001: 8), which refers to an understanding of heritage “as a process, or a verb”. Thinking about heritage as a set of processes draws attention to the ways in which it is produced through various forms of agency and practice (ibid.: 8; although see Harrison 2013b). Like Harvey (2001), I am also keen to highlight the
temporal nature of heritage practices and the different ways in which heritage objects are constituted over time (see also Macdonald 2012). This means looking at heritage places such as RAF Neatishead as they emerge and tracing the consequences of the practices, discourses and affects that constitute them (Macdonald 2013a: 6).

The central aim of this chapter is to provide a framework for understanding how the Cold War and other elements of the recent past are dealt with in the context of cultural heritage management. This is important, as heritage is a key feature of the wider memory complexes that I discussed in chapter 1. I also want to provide some additional insights from my own historical and ethnographic study of Cold War heritage practices and places. Anthropological and sociological research into heritage practice, for instance, through the works of Michael Herzfeld (1991) and Siân Jones (2004), has highlighted the importance of the historic environment in terms of people’s sense of identity and place, as well as its role in the negotiation of power relations, ownership and value (see also Breglia 2006; Brumann 2009; Jones 2009). Building on these approaches, I offer an examination of the institutions, which set the agenda for Cold War heritage and the work undertaken by conservation professionals in this context.

Ethnography encourages close attention to practice, which can help reveal any tensions or complexities that emerge during processes of heritageisation – particularly those that might otherwise remain hidden or obscured (e.g. see Andrews 2012; Dicks 2008; Handler and Gable 1997; Jones and Yarrow 2013). An “ethnographic approach” to the study of heritage conservation, anthropologist Regina Bendix (2009: 254) argues, “provides a chance to avoid vague and premature appraisals, and focuses instead on the documentation of the processes that foster as well as hinder heritageisation” (see also Brumann 2014: 182). Likewise, Sharon Macdonald (2009: 25) has written, “exploring any heritage practice”, whether historically or ethnographically, “provides an opportunity to examine its epistemological suppositions about such matters as conceptions of time, value, animacy and materiality” (see also Brumann 2014). Exploring conservation in this

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4 In this regard, I am influenced by assemblage and actor network theories, particularly the emphasis they place on complexity and materiality (DeLanda 2006; Latour 1993; Macdonald 2013a: 6-7). However, despite drawing inspiration from the insights they offer, I do not apply the language of these theories directly or give the literature surrounding them any extensive treatment here.
way is central to developing a more nuanced understanding of the conception and constitution of the Cold War and other aspects of the recent past in the present.

As I discussed in chapter 1, due to the fragmented nature of heritage practices surrounding my case study sites, especially RAF Neatishead, many of the insights I present in this chapter come from detailed archival research and semi-structured interviews with heritage professionals (although see 2.9 and 2.10). More traditional ethnographic approaches, such as participant observation, are utilised more comprehensively in each of the subsequent chapters.

Part one of this chapter provides the intellectual context for the interpretation of Cold War conservation in practice. To begin, I will provide a brief overview of the character and condition of Cold War historic sites in the UK (2.2), before moving on to an historical introduction to Cold War heritage practices (2.3). I will then offer a theoretical and historical analysis of modern conservation principles (2.4) and the heritage of the recent past (2.5), which are integral to understanding the key issues at the heart of this chapter. Predominantly, this focuses on the relationship between perceptions of Cold War heritage as novel or avant-garde and the discourses and realities, which underpin conservation in practice. I will end part one with a discussion of complexity and how it shapes perceptions of ongoing heritage work (2.6).

Part two of this chapter provides a detailed analysis of Cold War heritage management in practice. In 2.7, I briefly introduce the concepts of value and significance, as these are mobilised at each stage in the management of historic sites in the UK, as elsewhere. I will then provide a short biography of RAF Neatishead, which as mentioned above, is the main case study site for this chapter (2.8). The next sections provide insights into key stages involved in the production of RAF Neatishead as a heritage site – classification, designation and management (see 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11). Finally, I will conclude the chapter with a discussion of the key themes and issues that emerge (2.12).

2.2 – COLD WAR HISTORIC SITES
In the UK, as I discuss below, Cold War heritage has primarily been conceived as a form of built heritage with a specific emphasis on former military sites (see Cocroft 2014: 1547). Therefore, I will briefly outline the current situation and status of former Cold War military installations in Britain. This background is essential to
developing a fuller understanding of the character and constitution of these places as historic sites.

A large number of British military sites in the UK and Europe were decommissioned following the Options for Change (1990) defence review and ensuing defence disposals programmes (cited in Taylor 2010: 8). Within the UK, over one hundred military-industrial facilities, operational during the latter half of the twentieth century, have closed (Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 3). Since the 1990s, there has also been a significant downscaling of military operations and personnel, as well as a reduction in the size of the “defence estate” (Childs 1998). The defence estate is the collective environment owned, operated and managed by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), which currently covers around 424,000 hectares or 1.8% of UK land mass (MoD 2016: 5).

As a consequence, there are large areas of the environment, which contain the physical remains of domestic military operations. Issues surrounding ownership and the management of these places, as well as wider public responses to them, are complex and extremely varied. Responsibility for dealing with these built legacies, moreover, has fallen to a diverse range of individuals and institutions. Therefore, I will briefly chart the contemporary condition and status of some of these sites and the kinds of strategies adopted to deal with them.

The MoD has attempted to offload many areas of the defence estate, often at relatively low prices, in order to minimise the financial pressures associated with its upkeep (MoD 2016: 1). Since the early 1990s, substantial areas of military land have been divided up and sold-off to private developers. For instance, the Kemball family purchased the former Royal Air Force (RAF) and United States Air Force (USAF) base at Bentwaters in Suffolk, which closed in 1993. It was later re-imagined as Bentwaters Parks: a housing development and business centre accommodating warehouses and television production companies, amongst others (Geater 2015).

Many former military sites are in a state of limbo, however, particularly in places where it has proved difficult to imagine viable solutions for contemporary reuse and redevelopment. At Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire (a vast former USAF base closed in 1994) there is continuing uncertainty over the site’s future. This is due to the exorbitant costs of removing materials and the complexities surrounding the renovation and disposal of utilitarian military structures (Cherwell District Council 2016). In several other instances, developers and local authorities have
declined the opportunity to acquire surplus military land, even at heavily subsidised rates, due to uncertainties surrounding environmental liabilities and planning consent (e.g. Fiorato 2007).

This state of limbo has also resulted in the abandonment of a significant number of installations. Government authorities and departments such as the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), which manages the defence estate for the MoD, still officially own some of these sites. Yet, many former installations have been mothballed and left to decay. As is the case with Saxa Vord in Shetland, where, following the departure of the RAF in 2006, the remains of a radar station have been left to linger for over a decade, with many of the buildings deteriorating to the point where some are now unsafe to enter (figure 2.1; also see chapter 3).

During the immediate post-Cold War period, many landscapes throughout the UK and Europe were also cleared as part of comprehensive programmes of demolition (e.g. Baltic Initiative 2009; Cocroft 2007). This was the case at Tunbridge Wells, where a 1950s concrete “War Room” was bulldozed in 1997 (Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 2-3). The physical traces of later twentieth century military sites continue to be removed, such as the former RAF command and control centre at West Drayton, on the outskirts of London, which was demolished in 2010 and replaced by a residential development.

A number of former military installations have also been transformed into tourist attractions, which are mostly run by charitable trusts and private owners. Few of these buildings have historic designations but some have had minor conservation work. For instance, following the restoration of architectural fixtures and fittings multiple former ROTOR radar bunkers (see Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 87) have been opened to the public and outfitted as museums (see Chapter 4 for Cold War museums): as at Hack Green in Cheshire and Kelvedon Hatch in Essex (Hermann 2012).
In contrast, a number of former military sites from this period have also been registered for protection - as listed buildings and scheduled monuments - under UK planning and heritage legislation. However, as I will explore in the sections that follow, the effects and results of this process have been extremely varied.

A handful of designated sites, have been assimilated into the collection of historic properties in the care of national heritage organisations and trusts. The former Royal Observer Corps bunker at Acomb in York, for example, is currently managed as a flagship museum and a property under the “guardianship” of English Heritage (Thomas 2010). In 1993, the National Trust also took on the management of the former Atomic Weapons Research Establishment site at Orfordness in Suffolk. At Orfordness, the Trust’s heritage managers have taken an experimental approach. Rather than arrest decay or renovate buildings, the site is left in a state of “benign neglect” or “continued ruination” (Wainwright 2009; cf. Davis 2008; DeSilvey 2014). This kind of arrangement is not typical for Cold War historic sites and should be considered exceptional.
Other designated buildings are situated in active military sites. In 2013, for example, English Heritage scheduled the rocket test stands from the former Spadeadam Rocket Establishment site in Cumbria. The site is still occupied by the MOD, currently as an electronic warfare training facility operated by the RAF (see also Cocroft and Wilson 2006). Heritage advisors working for the DIO manage historic features located within the boundaries of the site. However, this is regulated through a management agreement put in place by the MoD in consultation with English Heritage (ibid.: 17).

The majority of designated military sites are currently in private ownership. As an example, former bomb stores at an industrial site in Barnham, Suffolk, were scheduled in 2003. In 2011, ancillary buildings relating to the former use of the site - as a nuclear weapons storage facility - were also listed. These designations are managed through a partnership agreement between English Heritage, the landowner and businesses that currently occupy the site (Cocroft and Gregory 2011; see also 2.9). When English Heritage initiated programmes to protect former Cold War sites, it was envisioned that cooperative agreements with private owners provided the ideal management solution.

The circumstances in which a site is designated, however, means that substantial conservation work is not always carried out. Complex issues surrounding some former Cold War sites can result in unsatisfactory management outcomes – for any or all of the stakeholders involved. At RAF Neatishead, for example, listing and scheduling of structures has not prevented parts of the site from being listed as “heritage at risk” (English Heritage 2016: 48; 2.3). Problems surrounding ownership, redevelopment and a range of other conflicting values have been brought into relief by the designation of historic Cold War features. Stakeholders surrounding the Neatishead site are currently locked into something of a stalemate (2.8). In light of this, I will discuss Neatishead in greater depth in part two of this chapter.

2.3 – COLD WAR HERITAGE IN THE UK: A BRIEF HISTORY

During the mid-1990s, work undertaken by enthusiast organisations – such as the Fortress Studies Group, Subterranea Britannica and the Airfield Research Group – informed and intersected with a burgeoning professional interest in the preservation of “modern military remains” (Schofield 2004: 4; Strange and Walley 2007).
Amateur archaeologists and heritage professionals began to express concern that MoD disposal programmes and natural entropic processes threatened to destroy “many historic defence sites” – including former Cold War installations (Cocroft 2005: 79; English Heritage 1998).

This fear of loss, which was the principal motivation for the designation of structures at RAF Neatishead, was a catalyst for the creation and preservation of Cold War heritage (e.g. Cocroft 2005: 78-9 and 2014: 1548). As archaeologist Rodney Harrison (2013a: 26) has written, “heritage has often been defined in the context of some sort of threat to objects, places or practices that are deemed to have some form of collective value”. This perceived threat relates to potential harm caused by change to the historic environment, which is also understood to damage the communities of people who value them or are connected to them in some way (ibid.). For Harrison (2013a: 27 and 2013b), this idea of threat to heritage is “based on a fundamental notion of risk and uncertainty that…is central to the experience of modernity” (see also Beck 1992; Giddens 1991). This sense of risk brought about by change is sometimes exacerbated with Cold War sites and materials due to their relative scarcity. For example, all historic radar sites associated with the *Linesman* period of structures from the 1960s and 1970s, which includes the Type 84 radar at RAF Neatishead, “…are deemed to be of national importance” – so long as they “retain their structural integrity and internal fixtures” (Cocroft 2001).

As I mentioned above, conservators and heritage advisors in the UK responded to perceived threats (as well as growing public interest in modern military sites) by embarking upon programmes of assessment and eventually designation (Schofield 2012: 37-8). Sociologist Anthony Giddens (1991) argues risk and uncertainty are made manageable through various forms of ordering, collection and classification (Harrison 2013a: 26). This is reflected in a number of institutional practices initiated by English Heritage and others in response to the MoD defence disposals programme.

In 1994, for example, as part of a broad reassessment of the historic landscape in England, English Heritage commissioned extensive research in the National Archives (formerly Public Records Office) in order to create detailed taxonomies of twentieth century fortifications (e.g. Dobinson 1998). Similar projects were also undertaken on a smaller scale for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (Osborne 2011: 9). Following pilot studies carried out by members of the Fortress
Study Group in 1992, national heritage organisations, alongside the Council for British Archaeology, also launched the Defence of Britain project. The project was Heritage Lottery funded and ran between 1995 and 2001 (Saunders 1998; Schofield 2004: 4). Lottery funding appears significant in this context as the provision of resources for this kind of project, also serves as a form of public, as well as academic, legitimation. At its conclusion, professional staff and volunteers working on the project had identified the location of over 13000 military sites and monuments (Osborne 2011: 8).

By 1999, English Heritage had also established the Military and Naval Strategy Group (MNSG) to build on the work of the Defence of Britain project and to consolidate and communicate the expertise they had accumulated as an institution. This group became the driving force behind the establishment of Cold War heritage and the assimilation of former military sites into routine heritage management frameworks and practices. Members of the MNSG - such as archaeologists John Schofield, Wayne Cocroft, Roger Thomas and Colin Dobinson, had all worked in close connection with the projects mentioned above or on related initiatives (e.g. Schofield 2002). The group was relatively small but extremely active for a time. For example, members of the MNSG held regular seminars and conferences concerning the evaluation and interpretation of modern military remains (e.g. English Heritage 1998; Schofield and Cocroft 2007); published academic research (e.g. Dobinson et al 1997; Schofield and Anderton 2000); produced guidance notes on identification and management (e.g. English Heritage 2003); and established a series of influential research agendas for the subject area (e.g. Schofield 2004).

Although some Cold War structures were identified during the Defence of Britain project, most were evaluated through dedicated programmes of assessment. For example, the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments England (RCHME) - prior to their merger with English Heritage in 1999 – setup a “focused project, recording the monuments of the Cold War” in collaboration with the MoD (Thomas 1998: 10). Field visits and desk-based assessments were undertaken by archaeologists Wayne Cocroft and Roger Thomas, which formed the core of their book, Cold War: Building for Nuclear Confrontation 1946-1989 (2003). As a consequence of the defence disposals programme, this small research team was
tasked with documenting an unprecedented volume of historic sites relating to the recent past (Cocroft 2005).

The volume of MoD properties handled by Cocroft and Thomas goes some way to explaining the central focus upon former military installations (see also Cocroft 2014: 1457). Moreover, as a small team they had limited time and resources. Despite lottery funding for the Defence of Britain project, sub-disciplines such as Cold War archaeology remained relatively marginal. Therefore, the researchers had to rely upon pre-existing documents and information surrounding sites such as Neatishead. However, due to the restricted nature of many former Cold War sites, much effort was focused on locating and familiarising themselves with relevant documentation. This had consequences for the development and form of Cold War heritage in the UK. For instance, the RCHME team had to rely on histories, plans and biographies produced by military institutions and former military personnel.

Archaeological reports for radar installations (e.g. Cocroft 1998), for instance, drew heavily upon technical and operational information sourced from an official RAF history published by the Air Historical Branch (Gough 1993) and an unpublished biography of RAF Neatishead written by radar veteran Roy Bullers (1991). These materials undoubtedly shaped Cocroft and Thomas' visits to former Cold War radar stations, which as a consequence influenced the kind of insights they gained and their characterisation of particular values and significance. This will be explored at length in section 2.3, along with the use of traditional methods and approaches to assess and manage historic sites seems to sit uncomfortably (at times) with the representation of Cold War heritage as challenging and unconventional.

Significantly, it was this substantial body of research compiled by the RCHME project team that provided the foundation for the Cold War Monuments Protection Programme (MPP), also led by Wayne Cocroft (2001) for English Heritage. In this project, Cocroft and others carried out further archaeological and architectural surveys of post-war military sites in England. Results from the Cold War MPP were used to create a detailed classificatory system that attempted to differentiate between various types of military installations (see 2.9).

Research and evaluation carried out by members of the MNSG for English Heritage formed the backbone of a large-scale designation and heritage management
programme that was implemented as part of the National Heritage Protection Plan\(^5\) between 2011 and 2015 (English Heritage 2011a and 2013a). Designation of Cold War heritage was one of several key initiatives that looked to promote the heritage of the recent past - alongside activities to assess the significance of historic towns and suburbs, sport and entertainment buildings and landscapes, as well as later-twentieth century public art and architecture (e.g. Historic England 2013).

Therefore, work undertaken by heritage institutions in the UK represents the most comprehensive campaign to assess, designate and manage buildings and places associated with the Cold War in Europe. Despite limited resources and time, the small team of heritage practitioners at English Heritage and the RCHME before them, covered a vast amount of material and managed to lay the groundwork for what appears to be a relatively unconventional form of heritage.

Nonetheless, the scale, scope and character of Cold War heritage in the UK, has been determined by a small number of professional archaeologists as a result. The focus of Cold War heritage closely mirrors the training, expertise and interests of archaeological professionals, whose interests lay firmly in the material fabric of these places (cf. Schofield 2014b; Schofield and Rellensmann 2015; see also 2.11). Although many of those involved with the creation of Cold War heritage have since experimented with alternative approaches and methodologies for independent research projects (e.g. Schofield et al. 2006; Schofield and Cocroft 2016), such as collaborations with contemporary artists (e.g. Schofield et al. 2012), early assessments tended to fall back on familiar summaries and surveys of material composition and architectural form. Principally, I would argue, this is due to the incipient and inchoate nature of this new form of built heritage. Nonetheless, this has ongoing implications for the conservation and management of the Cold War past in the present.

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\(^5\) The National Heritage Protection Plan was a published set of priorities put forward by the Minister for Culture and leading national heritage groups in the UK, concerning the ongoing management and protection of the historic environment (English Heritage 2011a).
FIGURE 2.2 Map of England with designated Cold War sites. Map drawn by Steven Leech.
Listed Sites
1. Alconbury (TL 21880 77147)
2. Brislington War Room (ST 62258 69934)
3. Cambridge War Room (TL 45546 56519)
4. Daws Hill (SU 86692 92135)
5. Fort Halstead (TQ 49914 59168)
6. Frodsham (SJ 51965 76592)
7. Gravesend Bunker (TQ 64452 72889)
8. Harrington (SP 77396 78108)
9. Mill Hill War Room (TQ 24196 92306)
10. Mistley War Office (TM 12189 31353)
11. Norley (SJ 57130 71785)
12. North Luffenham (SK 95044 04596)
13. North Weald Airfield (TL 49279 04359)
14. Nottingham War Room (SK 53949 40932)
15. Reading War Room (SU 74151 71645)
16. South Creake (TF 85094 35075)
17. Pottimore (SX 97186 96006)
18. Staliborough (TA 18355 11782)
19. Westcott (SP 70418 16911)
20. West Raynham (TF 84727 24542)
21. Wittering (TF 01415 01694)

Scheduled Sites
22. Coltishall (TG 26786 23378)
23. Corsham Bunker (ST 85231 69114)
24. Foulness (TQ 97734 91504)
25. Gloucester Lodge Battery (NZ 32048 78530)
26. Halls Green (TL 41748 08730)
27. Sandpit Hill (TQ 79977 86471)
28. Needles Battery (SZ 29930 84733)
29. Portland (SY 69548 73339)

Mixed Designation Sites
30. Barnham (TL 85074 79807)
31. Greenham Common (SU 48556 64514)
32. Neatishead (TG 34607 18810)
33. Orford Ness (TM 43326 48114)
34. Spadeadam (NY 61528 70358)

Listing, Scheduling and Conservation Area Designation
35. Upper Heyford (SP 51224 26394)

Sites in the Care of English Heritage
36. Dover Castle (TR 32641 41807)
37. York Bunker (SE 58080 51547)

TABLE 2.1 Index of designated Cold War sites in England with National Grid References (Grid Reference data sourced from individual English Heritage designation documents)
2.4 – MODERN CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

In this section, I will start to address the practical and material consequences of placing former Cold War military sites within contemporary heritage frameworks. I will begin with an introduction to some theoretical debates that have been critical to the development of heritage studies over the past few decades. This includes a discussion of the concept of authorised heritage discourses and the origins of modern conservation principles. I will then move on to discuss emerging approaches to the heritage of the recent past – including Cold War heritage – and how these are dealt with and understood in current frameworks for the designation, management and conservation of historic objects and places (2.5). In particular, I will draw on the contrast between relatively recent heritage – such as former Cold War sites – and the traditional focus on more conventional objects and places.

Following a discursive turn in heritage studies, scholars identified and heavily critiqued a set of dominant or “authorised heritage discourses” (Smith 2006; see also Harrison 2013a: 110). These discourses have been shown to frame professional policies and practices surrounding the conservation and management of the historic environment (e.g. Pendlebury 2013). In Uses of Heritage, Laurajane Smith (2006: 35) argues that an authorised or authorising discourse permeates what she calls “official” heritage practices. These are a set of ideas that affirm, and are reinforced by, normative assumptions about the meaning of heritage and how it should be practiced (see also Harrison 2013a: 111-2).

Drawing on Michel Foucault’s (1991) thesis on governmentality, Smith (2006: 51) argues that an authorised heritage discourse has supported the creation of a “heritage industry” (see also Hewison 1987; cf. Candlin 2012). She contends that the heritage industry privileges the knowledge and values of professional elites and experts, such as heritage managers and conservation specialists (see also Schofield 2014b). Through various modes of professionalization and bureaucratic processes – for example, the creation of heritage lists and systems of classification – professional institutions and practitioners govern ideas about what is, as well as what is not, considered to valuable, historically significant and worthy of preservation (Harrison 2013a: 112). Up until relatively recently, this has resulted in the exclusion of non-professional and minority perspectives, as well as the rejection of more provocative or challenging historical properties and meanings (Smith 2006; Smith and Waterton 2009; cf. Macdonald 2009).
There are a range of conventions that underpin authorised heritage discourses, according to Smith (2006), which serve to legitimise and constitute orthodox professional perspectives and approaches. For instance, she notes a tendency in traditional Western definitions of heritage to:

“…focus on material and monumental forms of ‘old’, or aesthetically pleasing, tangible heritage, which are all too often used to promote unchallenging consensual [views] of both the past and the present” (Smith 2006: 2).

The origins of these conventions are usually traced back to the modern conservation movement and the debates surrounding the restoration of historic architecture in the nineteenth century (Bell 1997: 7; Wells 2007). In opposition to the practice of restoration, which was in fashion at the time, John Ruskin (1849) and others promoted an appreciation of the aesthetic and historic qualities of monuments and buildings. Rather than replace existing materials, Ruskin advocated the preservation of original fabric, emphasising the importance of patina of age or what Alois Riegl ([1903] 1982) referred to as “age-value”. In The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849: 233), Ruskin argued that the original fabric of historic places facilitate a sense of communion with the past. He stated that the walls of ancient buildings act as historic witnesses, accruing a sense of “voicefulness” through their ongoing encounters with “the passing waves of humanity” (Ruskin 1849: 233-4; see also Jones 2010a). The destruction of physical fabric was framed as an irreparable loss, a severing of intangible historic connections and continuities.

Ruskin’s advocacy for the preservation of original fabric and his emphasis on historic and aesthetic value has proved central to the development of the modern conservation movement; as has his focus on the building or historic object as the “unit of conservation” (Tait and While 2009: 722). William Morris (1877), Ruskin’s friend and collaborator, consolidated these principles in the Manifesto of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. The manifesto was the principal inspiration for a raft of subsequent international heritage instruments, such as the influential Venice Charter (1964), which was adopted as a central point of reference for many national heritage policies and guidelines - including the UK (Bell 1997; Jokilehto 1998). The Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964), and the Athens Charter (International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historical Monuments 1931), for
example, were both primarily concerned with the conservation of original fabric as historical evidence (Waterton et al 2006). An emphasis on preserving physical fabric is also evident in the move to designate former Cold War landscapes such as RAF Neatishead. However, this desire to retain original fabric is complicated by a perception that Cold War sites lack the requisite aesthetic and historic values traditionally associated with heritage.

Ruskin’s ideas continue to be propagated through these instruments and other contemporary conservation frameworks, which have attempted to establish an international consensus, predominantly built upon conservative western approaches to the treatment of original fabric. This includes a moral duty of care for historic materials. As mentioned above, this sense of duty drives the professional response to the disposal of historic military sites. These approaches also tend to encourage the widespread adoption of principles such as minimal intervention (see Muñoz Viñas 2005), “preserve as found” (see Ashworth 2011) and reversibility (see Jones and Yarrow 2013). As with early preservationist philosophies, these principles encourage a cautious approach to change and privilege the maintenance of distinct layers of historic fabric. However, the “voicefulness” and relational qualities of heritage that Ruskin originally described were eventually sidelined by an increasing emphasis upon “genuine” physical fabric and the development of rigorous methods for testing the authenticity, which in materialist approaches is understood to be a latent property of historic materials (Bell 1997: 8; Jones 2010a).

Many of these principles continue to frame the ways in which heritage is conceived and managed in the present. Through adherence to modern conservation principles, for instance, Smith (2006: 31) argues that professionals render heritage as something confined to specific material objects and tightly “bound” sites. According to Smith (2006), this is evident in the contemporary focus on value, significance and tests for importance and authenticity, which are particularly prominent in the legislation and documentary guidance on the protection of historic sites and materials (see also Waterton et al 2006). As a consequence, Laurajane Smith (2006) asserts, the value of the past is something that can only be authorised by a field of experts. Therefore, in Smith’s interpretation of modern heritage frameworks, the power to shape the past in the present, at least in any meaningful way, often resides with (or in opposition to) heritage professionals (see also Byrne 2009).
Again, given the small number of professionals driving the creation of a Cold War heritage, this is an important issue. However, as I described in the section above, the research teams at English Heritage drew openly and extensively upon earlier enthusiast campaigns and collaborated with former military personnel (mostly in the form of accessing written accounts, technical information and obtaining archival documents). As I argue below, application of professional heritage practice is often more complicated than many interpretations allow (see 2.7; see also Brumann 2014; Harrison 2013a: 112-3; Jones and Yarrow 2013).

2.5 – CONSERVATION AND THE RECENT PAST
Building on the section above, I will discuss the “shift” in the “landscape of heritage” (Ferguson et al 2010: 286; see above), which has resulted in the designation, management and conservation of more recent objects and places. This includes an outline of the debates surrounding the impact of the recent past upon conventional heritage frameworks and vice versa (see chapter 1 for clarification on terminology and use of ‘recent’ and ‘contemporary’ pasts). It is important to provide this wider context as modern military and Cold War sites have become a key focus of attention in the archaeology and heritage of the contemporary past (Harrison and Schofield 2010: 42).

It is widely held that the conservation of heritage places is as much about the present as it is the past (e.g. Harrison 2010; Lowenthal 1985; Fairclough et al 2008; Macdonald 2013a). However, as I mentioned in the introduction, it is only relatively recently that ‘late-’ and ‘post-’ modern objects, practices and sites have gained substantial attention in the fields of archaeology and heritage studies (Harrison and Schofield 2010). Scholarly interest in the material culture of the recent past has been mirrored by an increasing (and related) desire to preserve some aspects as heritage (e.g. Birnbaum 2003). For instance, there have been efforts to preserve post-war social housing, office buildings and public art in England (e.g. Historic England 2013; Harwood and Davies 2015).

As mentioned previously, in the context of conservation, the recent and contemporary past appear to represent a challenge to some of the more conventional ways of thinking about and doing heritage. For instance, the value and aesthetics of places associated with more recent histories are sometimes compared with more traditional forms of heritage. The conservation of utilitarian or modernist structures,
for example, has been framed as a critique of professional predilections for “old” and “aesthetically pleasing” heritage (Fairclough 2009: 30; Hatherley 2009; c.f. Farmer and Pendlebury 2013).

This challenging quality of the recent past was explored in a project commissioned by English Heritage, Change and Creation, which took the form of a short pamphlet about the archaeology of the English landscape between 1950 and 2000 (Bradley et al 2004). In Change and Creation, the authors set out to raise a number of questions about contemporary archaeology and conservation. For instance, the authors challenged what they identified as “the current orthodoxy within the heritage industry” concerning conceptions of value, time and notions of objectivity (Bradley et al 2004; Penrose 2007: 9). Rather than lamenting changes brought about by modernity – as is often the case (e.g. Hoskins [1955] 2013) – the authors shifted their focus to the potential social significance of recent transformations in the landscape (see also Penrose 2007).

Cold War historic sites have also been presented as “controversial” and a challenge to more conventional types of heritage (e.g. Fairclough 2007: 26; Uzzell and Ballantyne 2007). Unlike crumbling medieval castles or ancient stone monuments, many contemporary structures and features, such as those located at former Cold War sites, are far from old, grand or (at least to some tastes) aesthetically pleasing (cf. Edensor 2005; Pétursdóttir 2016). Many former Cold War historic installations have been described “stark” and “ugly” by comparison: most are constructed from earth, concrete and steel, are made to a standard and reproducible design and are utilitarian in nature (Cocroft 2007; English Heritage 2011b and 2013b). As such, the designation of places related to the Cold War is also suggested to be risky and potentially “contentious” (Cocroft 2007). Due to their recent nature, they are also perceived as lacking some of the inherent values that are sometimes attributed to much older places and objects. For instance, English Heritage was anxious about the public reception of their Cold War Monument Protection Programme in 2001 (2.6):

“[A] concern was how the public would perceive this work. Was the Cold War too recent to be considered heritage? Cold War sites may be seen to lack conventional aesthetic, but does this alone make them unworthy of preservation, or…do other values need to be explored?”

(Cocroft 2007: 110)
For some heritage practitioners, the tensions and contradictions that surround former Cold War sites are part of their appeal – they symbolise a more expansive form of heritage that includes a wider spectrum of histories, people and places – not all of which are positive or beautiful (Schofield and Cocroft 2007; Fairclough 2007 and 2009).

It is perhaps surprising then, as alluded to in 2.4, that some of the most high profile initiatives to conserve the recent past appear to conform to the main tenets of the modern conservation movement (e.g. UNESCO 2003a). This has been the case with organisations such as the International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement (DoCoMoMo) and the Twentieth Century Society in the UK, which emerged in the 1960s and 70s. These societies coalesced around campaigns to protect twentieth century architecture. Mostly, their efforts have been concentrated on buildings and structures related to the Modern movement (Pendlebury 2008). The work of such organisations appears to reflect many of the features of the authorised heritage discourse.

A similar focus is found in the Montreal Action Plan in 2001, which was outlined by the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) following a series of international conferences calling for the “understanding, conservation and proper recognition” of recent heritage (anything within the last 150 years – see also Ferguson et al 2010: 283). As a result of this and similar ICOMOS initiatives, an increasing number of modern heritage properties have been placed on the World Heritage List.

Primarily this is an attempt to correct a perceived imbalance on the World Heritage List by including a wider range of heritage sites from a broader spectrum of historical periods and geographical locations. This includes the designation of World Heritage status to “urban ensembles” (ICOMOS 2001), such as modernist neighbourhoods in Tel Aviv (Ferguson et al 2010: 284; UNESCO 2008) and large assemblages such as the Grimeton Radio Station complex in Varberg, Sweden (UNESCO 2004; see Error! Reference source not found.). Nevertheless, these cases demonstrate exclusive focus on the survival of key architectural examples. Moreover, as above, their value is derived from close association with prominent modernist architects (Ferguson et al 2010: 286).

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Recent international debates and conferences surrounding the conservation of twentieth century heritage have also been underpinned by modern conservation principles (as above; see also Wells 2007). For example, the first international guidelines created to deal specifically with twentieth century heritage – referred to as the *Madrid Document* (ICOMOS ISC20C 2014) – are wedded to the principles of minimum intervention and the adoption of a “cautious approach to change” (Article 4.1; see also Waterton et al 2006). As Waterton et al (2006: 348) argue with respect to the *Burra Charter* (ICOMOS Australia 1999 [1979]), international heritage instruments such as the *Madrid Document* appear to assume that “cultural significance is inherently fixed within, thus becoming manifested and subject to conservation, management and other technical practice” (*c.f. Brumann 2014: 183*).

The *Madrid Document* does promote a broader understanding of cultural significance in relation to heritage objects and places, which includes:

“…physical location, design (for example, colour schemes), construction systems and technical equipment, fabric, aesthetic
quality and use, and/or intangible values, including historic, social, scientific or spiritual associations”

However, the document applies specifically to architectural heritage and understands this expanded sense of cultural significance to be bound to particular objects and sites (c.f. Burke 2014). An international committee setup to deal with military heritage – ICOFORT – for UNESCO, has also published draft guidelines of its own, focusing on the designation and management of modern military fortifications and defensive sites. At the current stage of its production, the document closely mirrors the approaches outlined in the Madrid Document (Flores Roman 2016; although see Brumann 2014 and 2.7). As Ferguson et al (2010: 286) point out:

“What is interesting about this phenomenon of twentieth-century heritage is that it is, perhaps even more than other forms of contemporary western heritage management, very narrowly focused on what are perceived to be key or seminal works of architecture…Indeed, it appears to be focused on developing a new ‘canon’ of Modernism”.

This is all the more surprising considering the move towards, what Cornelius Holtorf and Graham Fairclough (2013) describe as the ‘new heritage’ (see also Fairclough 2009). The new heritage refers to a more open and expansive form of heritage management, which is supposed to have emerged in response to a sustained critique of dominant western preservation values (what Smith describes as the authorised heritage discourse) and modernist conservation principles. Since the 1990s, there has been a concerted international effort to address the shortcomings of more conventional approaches and to acknowledge a wider range of heritage objects and values.

For instance, in global heritage institutions, there have been moves to designate politically problematic or “difficult heritage” (Macdonald 2009), including sites associated with the testing and deployment of nuclear weapons (e.g. Beazley 2007; Brown 2013); recognise non-western, indigenous and intangible values, traditions and practices (e.g. UNESCO 2003b and 2004b; although see Smith and Akagawa 2009); as well as to engage with ideas about the spirit of place and community and social values at local, national and international levels (e.g. English Heritage 2008a; ICOMOS UK 2009).
However, while a greater diversity of heritage places and values are being factored into the rationale behind heritage conservation, in reality, international heritage movements surrounding the recent past are still closely bound to many of the principles that were central to the emergence and professionalization of modern conservation movements (Smith 2006; see also Jones and Leech 2015: para 2.7). On the surface at least, Smith’s arguments about an authorised heritage discourse seem to have some traction here. This has major implications for the character of Cold War heritage and the relationship between former Cold War sites, heritage frameworks and professional conservation.

2.6 – COMPLEXITY AND HERITAGE PRACTICE
Where these critiques of twentieth century heritage fall short, however, is the lack of attention paid to the complexities of practice. As Eggert (2009) and Jones (2010a) have both argued, a more nuanced understanding of heritage practice has been “undermined by a gulf that opened up between conservation and the direction of cultural theory in the 1960s” (Jones and Yarrow 2013: 6). Scholars influenced by cultural theory have set out to deconstruct the principles of the modern conservation movement. “The chief task of the researcher”, as Brumann (2014: 174) has argued, has been to “tear the mask off the face of heritage and see it for what it really is” (e.g. see Lowenthal 1985 and 1998). Notions such as authenticity, for example, have been argued to be mere cultural constructions and solely products of meaning-making activities in the present (e.g. Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999; cf. Holtorf 2013), as opposed to latent properties of historic objects, as promulgated by generations of conservation professionals (see Jones 2010a; Jones and Yarrow 2013: 27 for an integrated approach to the study of authenticity).

While many of the critiques inspired by cultural theory are illuminating and thought provoking, they have tended to focus, almost exclusively, on discursive analysis; particularly on the language used in institutional guidelines and international instruments (e.g. Waterton and Smith 2006). Problematically, many of these appraisals do not address the often-complex nature of conservation in practice. For example, the production of international heritage documents and guidelines often involves much negotiation and compromise, in order to establish a working consensus (e.g. Brumann 2012; this adds a layer of complexity to the comments about the Madrid Document and ICOFORT above).
As anthropologist Christoph Brumann (2014: 181) writes, “a purely deconstructive approach that dissolves all claims about the past into mere positioned discourse comes at a cost” (see also Harrison 2013a: 112). This cost is a smoothing out of the tensions and paradoxes that people negotiate through everyday encounters and interactions. As a result, Jones and Yarrow (2013: 6) argue, within heritage studies literature, “conservation has been rendered a relatively undifferentiated discursive nexus, flattening out the diverse forms of expertise and skilled practice involved” (see also Brumann 2012). These practical complexities must be acknowledged in order to present a more nuanced understanding of the Cold War past in the present (as well as its difficulties).

Over the past few decades, conservation professionals have responded to these criticisms in a growing body of writing that highlights “the subjective, contingent and historically situated nature of conservation” (Jones and Yarrow 2013: 6). This body of work also points to the complex nature of professional practice and the active role conservation plays in the biography of an object, once it has been constituted as heritage (e.g. Bracker and Richmond 2011; Pye and Sully 2007). This has resonances with some of the issues that I will be discussing in relation to Cold War heritage.

Professionals working on the conservation of the recent past have also created a body of literature that deals with the issue of complexity in conservation practice (e.g. Birnbaum 2003; Farmer and Pendlebury 2013; Macdonald et al 2013). For instance, practitioners have discussed the complex character of modernist architecture and the conflicting ideas that surround the ongoing management of contemporary structures (Macdonald et al 2013). Susan Macdonald (2013b), the head of field projects at the Getty Conservation Institute, for example, charts the developing relationship between the conservation of modern heritage and traditional preservationist paradigms. In particular, she notes the ways in which recurring debates surrounding the treatment of modern heritage are often contested in practice. This includes, for example, differences over the representation and treatment of the recent past (Macdonald 2013b).

In the second part of this chapter, I will explore the tensions surrounding Cold War conservation in practice. In particular, I will highlight the ways in which conservation professionals negotiate the tension between the Cold War as a novel form of heritage and the realities of archaeological heritage management in the UK.
In order to do so, I will highlight some of the specific issues that became apparent during my own historical and ethnographic research and describe the character of conservation surrounding Cold War historic sites, as well as point out some of the surprises, tensions and complexities that I observed. I am not contesting the notion that modernist conservation ontologies and authorised heritage discourses influence or frame contemporary heritage policies and practices. Rather, I want to add an additional layer of nuance to these insights and explore how some of these tensions work out in the complex network of activities, personalities and expertise that surround the conservation of Cold War heritage objects and places.

PART TWO: CONSERVATION IN PRACTICE

2.7 – VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE

To begin, I will briefly introduce some of the key concepts, philosophies and principles – namely value and significance – that underpin contemporary conservation practices. I will then move on to a biography of RAF Neatishead before an analysis of classification practices surrounding Cold War historic sites.

Contemporary heritage conservation, as I noted in 2.1, is focused upon the management of change to historic places. In order to assess appropriate levels of change, heritage professionals place great weight on the identification, documentation and maintenance of a site’s perceived values. This often includes a concern with values that underpin the cultural significance of particular objects, places and practices (Avrami et al. 2000; de la Torre and Mason 2002: 3). As conservation researcher Randall Mason (2002: 5) highlights:

“Conservation decisions – whether they are concerned with giving a building ‘heritage’ status, deciding which building to invest in, planning for the future of an historic site, or applying a treatment to a monument – use an articulation of heritage values (often called ‘cultural significance’) as a reference point”.

These approaches are heavily influenced by the *Charter for the Conservation of Cultural Significance*, which is otherwise known as the *Burra Charter*. It was drafted and adopted by the Australia ICOMOS Committee in 1979 and the latest revised edition was published in 1999. In response to indigenous critique of
conservation practices in Australia and the overwhelming focus on the preservation of historic materials, the Burra Charter shifted emphasis to the notion of cultural significance (see also Harrison 2004). Therefore, much greater attention was granted to a range of values surrounding the historic environment (ICOMOS Australia 1999: 1; c.f. Waterton et al 2006).

In the UK, as elsewhere, national heritage institutions such as English Heritage make decisions about heritage sites based upon assessments of significance. As with the Burra Charter, English Heritage understands cultural significance to be the sum of overlapping values such as spiritual, community, historic and aesthetic (English Heritage 2008a: 7). However, the definition, measurement and application of cultural significance is complicated and contingent upon a range of factors (see Jones and Leech 2015). For example, for a site to be designated, it must adhere to a set of legislative criteria and government policy guidelines (e.g. DCMS 2013). Cold War historic sites, like all forms of built heritage, are subject to these same stipulations.

In England, current legislation for the protection of the historic environment is focused through two different acts: the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990 in England and 1997 in Scotland). There are specific guidelines that accompany statutory instruments (e.g. DCMS 2013). These guidelines provide an indication of the different types of value that are required to meet the benchmark for designation. At the heart of these documents is a concern with the historic and aesthetic value of physical sites and objects. This is not surprising given the foundational link between the creation of UK heritage legislation, the principles of the modern conservation movement and international heritage instruments, such as the Athens and Venice Charters (see 2.4).

In England, for instance, if a site or monument is to be included in the schedule of monuments – under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) – applicants must demonstrate how the heritage place or object meets one specific criterion: ‘national importance’ (cf. Historic Scotland 2011). As with the Venice Charter the notion of national importance is rooted in perceptions that physical sites are capable of acting as historic witnesses to the past. Therefore, as I will detail in the sections that follow, the designation and management of Cold War heritage is structured around the maintenance of these values.
Conventionally, the assessment of national importance is based on evaluations of non-statutory criteria: rarity, survival (e.g. current condition of physical remains), group value (e.g. relationship to adjacent sites or those of a wider class of monuments), surviving documentation and the capacity to establish connections between the past and the present in relation to national consciousness (e.g. through associations with famous national figures of events). Non-statutory criteria such as these are presented as central heritage values and provide a framework for practitioner’s to draw upon when making judgements about a site’s relative importance or significance. Principally, these criteria focus on aesthetic values and historical associations, which, as I mentioned above, are deemed to be intrinsic to (and inalienable from) specific objects and places (2.4).

At RAF Neatishead, for example, the Type 84 monument was scheduled in 2008 as it was deemed to meet the necessary criteria. In the nomination document, the rarity of the structure and its associated features were highlighted as meeting the requirements for national importance (English Heritage 2008b). In the next section, I will describe the issues surrounding Neatishead in more detail. Of course, Neatishead is not representative of all cases and forms of Cold War heritage. However, it can be thought about as a microcosm for a range of issues and challenges that may arise at Cold War historic sites. In addition, a close study of this site can provide a more focused and nuanced perspective on how the concept of the Cold War emerges from this context.

2.8 – RAF NEATISHEAD: A HERITAGE BIOGRAPHY

During its operational period (1941-2004), RAF Neatishead was the longest active military surveillance site of its kind in the world and was at the centre of air defence and fighter control operations in the UK (for a comprehensive operational background see Bullers 1991; Gough 1993). After narrowly avoiding closure in 1999, the site was downgraded to a remote radar head in 2004, which saw the departure of a majority of RAF staff, as operations were moved elsewhere (see also 1.9).

Subsequently, much of the site was divided up into plots (see Error! Reference source not found. see also 1.9), the largest of which, was auctioned off to members of the public in 2006. Prior to the sale of the site, Defence Estates invited English Heritage to present a formal assessment of historic structures
situated within the military compound. Research and designation teams at English
Heritage (and before that the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments England)
had been making visits to RAF Neatishead since 1997 as part of Cold War heritage
assessment programmes – mainly to conduct research at the archive held in the
onsite radar museum (see chapter 4). As a result, practitioners were well aware of
the historic properties at the station and had already prepared documentation and
value assessments for just such an eventuality.

In 2005, English Heritage submitted their intention to designate parts of the
site to the secretary of state for Culture, Media and Sport (see also 2.6). In 2008,
four buildings and interior spaces – an R30 operations room, an R12 radar
equipment block, above ground elements of an R3 bunker and a standby generator
building 2km away – received protection as listed buildings and the Type-84 radar,
the last freestanding structure of its kind in England, was placed on the list of
scheduled monuments (figure 2.2 and 2.3; see Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 88 for a
detailed outline of Cold War radar building types).

The Type-84 radar was a 2.5MW scanner that operated on the L-band of
the electromagnetic spectrum (Gough 1993). It was installed at Neatishead in 1963
and was manufactured by the Marconi Company. Its extant reflectors (or dishes) are
extremely large, measuring around eighteen metres high and about 7 metres wide.
Most of the structure is made of steel and is fixed on top of a rotating cabin. The
radar was designed as part of the Linesman air defence system, which was set to
operate as a dual military-civil radar network (see Gething 1993; Gough 1993). It
was used as part of successive systems for over four decades, providing a
“recognised air picture” to operators at Neatishead and other sites around the UK
(Bullers 1991: 24-5).

It was finally decommissioned in the early 1990s – staff even had a goodbye
party for the structure (which included a radar-themed cake). This echoes Caitlin
DeSilvey’s (2011: 56-7) ideas about “palliative curation”: rituals and events that
“gradually unmake” a place or decaying building and “help [people] bridge the gap
between there and gone”. These practices took place as it was assumed that the Type
84 would be dismantled, as with other radar heads. However, the creation of the
museum on the site created a context for thinking about the structure as historically
significant following the Cold War. In the mid-1990s, the radar structure caught the
attention of heritage conservation workers at the RCHME and English Heritage, eventually being designated as a scheduled monument.

RAF Neatishead was subsequently promoted as the exemplary site for the preservation of Cold War radar and air defence. According to Wayne Cocroft, who led the group of investigators working on the Cold War Monuments Protection Programme at English Heritage (see 2.4), this was part of a wider effort to identify single sites through which the designation, management and conservation of particular classes of monument – in this case Cold War air defence – could be focused (Wayne Cocroft: personal communication 2014). This approach was taken to ensure that a built “national archive” of Cold War monuments could be established from the ground up and that a representative selection of key site types would be included (Cocroft 2007; see 2.5).

Nonetheless, the scheduled components at RAF Neatishead have since been placed on the “heritage at risk” register (English Heritage 2016: 48). The register draws attention to sites and monuments that English Heritage deems to be under threat from neglect or undesirable changes to their physical fabric. The Type 84 monument, for example, is stated to be “declining” and its principle vulnerability is listed as “deterioration – in need of management” (ibid.).

The current situation at Neatishead is related to complex issues surrounding its ownership and complications surrounding applications for planning consent (see 2.11). Public access to the site also remains restricted – beyond the museum (see Chapter 4) – and no formal agreement is in place for its management nor is any conservation work currently scheduled to take place (c.f. DeSilvey 2014; Emerick 2005). This is mostly due to the cost of repair. Conservation professionals at English Heritage have urged immediate intervention to repaint and reinforce the Type-84 radar. However, the current owners – Style Space Ltd. – are unwilling to cover the expense as they are looking to sell their stake – an issue complicated by the legal responsibilities that accompany designated historic structures (see 2.9). As a result, the privately owned sections of the site are currently in a state of disrepair.
RAF Neatishead, therefore, is a useful case study for exploring the processes of heritageisation in more detail and highlighting some of the tensions and complexities that arise when dealing with contemporary heritage such as Cold War historic sites (for a more general overview of Cold War heritage, see Cocroft 2007 and 2014; Harrison and Schofield 2010: 59; Hanson 2016; Schofield 2009: 159).
2.9 – CLASSIFICATION: THE COLD WAR MPP

Classification, as mentioned above, is the bedrock of modern conservation practice and provides a key frame of reference for conservation professionals when making decisions about specific sites and monuments. In order to weigh up the relative significance of an historic place, heritage practitioners often draw upon established taxonomies – especially during process of designation. These categories are used to
isolate the qualities and character of specific sites, so that they can be assessed in relation to the more general criteria, such as rarity, survival etc., as indicated above.

Uniquely, however, conservation professionals had to draw up a list of Cold War sites and objects from scratch (due to the novelty of the period and subject area; see also Cocroft 2007). As I mentioned in 2.4, they did so through large-scale photographic surveys and archival assessments, which were compiled and published as part of the Cold War Monument Protection Plan (see also Cocroft 2001: 2). These practices are closely tied to the emergence of modern conservation movements. However, as I will show, the classification of Cold War sites also represents an attempt to acknowledge complexity.

The MPP is the foundation for designation activity surrounding military sites from this period. In essence, it is a classificatory document to aid the evaluation and organisation of former Cold War period sites as heritage. It sets out a range of categories for historic military installations, as well as identifying priority areas for future designation and management (Cocroft 2001: 2). As part of the MPP, a total of 141 individual sites (incorporating multiple features) received recommendations for some form of designation or further detailed assessment. As RAF Neatishead was not part of the disposals programme at the time, it was not subject to a full assessment (Wayne Cocroft, pers. com). However, the station was earmarked for a number of future designations based on earlier visits and surveys (Cocroft 2001: 20).

The stated aim of the MPP - drawing upon earlier US models (e.g. Department of Defence 1994) – was to create a working typology, in which sites could be physically “located and documented” (Cocroft 2001; Schofield 2009: 160-1). Archaeologists organised Cold War sites according to their military function, architectural type and period of construction (see 4.2 for a reflection on methodologies underpinning contributing research). For example, a broad chronology was adopted, placing sites within three distinct periods: ‘First Cold War’ (1946-62), ‘Sustained Balance/Deterrence’ (1963-79) and ‘Second Cold War’ (1980-89). These temporal categories made references to major events relating to the Cold War, in addition to shifting government defence policies, which had direct impact on the construction of particular kinds of military infrastructure. For example, under the heading First Cold War, it reads, “Korean War; massive rearmament and defence building programme” (Cocroft 2001: 8).
In the MPP, Cold War sites were divided into nine principal categories, such as air defence, nuclear deterrent, defence research establishments and emergency civil government buildings. These categories were then sub-divided into thirty-one different groups. For instance, radar sites are classified as one of five groups in the category of air defence. Finally, these were then sub-divided further into specific monument classes. Radar, for example, is split into three periodic classes: Rotor 1950s; Linesman 1960s-1980s; and Improved UK Air Defence, late 80s (see Cocroft 2001: 5-6 and Cocroft 2007: 112-3).

Radar monument classes are structured around key government initiatives that were implemented to improve air defence capabilities during the Cold War in the UK (see Gething 1993; Agar and Hughes 1999). As with the temporal frameworks mentioned above, the use of these categories indicates an interest in specificity (see also 2.10). Rather than focus on core aesthetics or material properties in isolation, heritage workers have tried to establish relationships between networks of Cold War period sites. These classifications are designed to ensure that a comprehensive and representative “material record” is created (Schofield and Cocroft 2007: 13; cf. Schiffer 1987); one that includes a vast number of places that were integral to the functioning of the Cold War military-industrial complex (see Flintham 2011). These taxonomies are still used in the classification of Cold War heritage sites today.

Nonetheless, this level of detail seems redolent of an insatiable desire to catalogue the Cold War past and fix it in space and time. As Schofield and Cocroft (2007b: 13) put it, to create an archaeological record, “which is essentially complete”. Any effort to classify Cold War sites or any other historic place for that matter, is usually motivated by the idea that heritage is a limited or “non-renewable resource” (Harrisson 2013b; Holtorf 2001). If interpreted in terms of discourse alone, this kind of completist impulse appears to contribute to the “crisis of accumulation” in heritage management (Harrison 2011a); an unsustainable aversion to loss, which Cornelius Holtorf (2015) argues is endemic within an ever-expanding cultural heritage sector. The increasing number of things and temporalities that are

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6 The military-industrial complex refers to a speech made by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1961, as he gave his farewell address to the United States. The term highlights the vested interests and entanglements between the military and quasi-civilian companies involved in the production of arms and the contracted operation of a range of military installations (e.g. see Barnes 2008).
considered to be historically significant exacerbates this issue. Drawing on the work of early heritage scholars (e.g. Nora 1989), researchers have claimed that heritage is in thrall to its archival instincts, an all-consuming compulsion to save everything (e.g. Sørensen 2014; c.f. Morris 2014). Rodney Harrison (2011a), for example, calls for a philosophical adjustment, a need to “remember to forget”.

However, when Cold War classificatory schemes are considered in the context of practice, a more nuanced picture emerges. During an interview with Wayne Cocroft in 2013, he explained the rationale behind the MPP and other Cold War classification projects. He told me that the team at English Heritage established a thorough system of categories in order to make better judgements about what to preserve (and how to manage sites in the future). Rather than reflect a desire to save everything, he argued, the work of the MNSG team reflects an interest in preserving a small number of key sites. As I mentioned in the previous section, places such as RAF Neatishead, for example, were chosen as exemplary sites for particular classes and periods (see also 2.3).

An inspector of ancient monuments at English Heritage put it this way:

“[People working on the MPP] made a strategic decision to try and pick up the best of the best. In the past, there has been criticism that designation is done on the whim of the particular person doing the designation…that’s why we have a profusion of barrows in Wessex for example, above anything else. You get bias creeping in to these kind of things. So there was a strategic effort to try and pin down specifics really…pick up one of everything: one set of blast-walls, one set of bunkers, one set of nuclear pagodas, one set of whatever.”

This approach, Wayne Cocroft tells me, was taken “to avoid stamp collecting…so we don’t end up with too many examples of one particular class of monument”.

The Cold War project, Cocroft argued during our interview, offered a new means of approaching classification and designation – from the ground up. Rather than worrying about the scale of potential losses, he and others were focused on instantiating a more sustainable approach. During my research at English Heritage’s offices in Cambridge, I was also given access to Wayne Cocroft’s personal archive, which documents his activities and that of other MNSG staff on Cold War heritage programmes. In one communication – with a manager at the Defence Infrastructure
Organisation – reference is made to the designation of features at RAF Neatishead. The idea, the correspondence states, was to assign heritage status and protection to one representative air defence site (i.e. Neatishead), which would allow a less restrictive position on other MoD owned radar installations across the UK. In other words, if English Heritage were allowed to dig their heels in about RAF Neatishead, they would be more relaxed about the condition of other (less impressive or complete) historic radar sites.

Practices such as these are still strongly linked to issues surrounding modern conservation principles. After all, conservators were still focused on preserving the physical fabric of RAF Neatishead and treating it as a material and historical witness to the Cold War past. However, these classification activities do represent a more complex and considered approach than the heritage studies literature often permits (see 2.7). For example, rather than contributing to the “crisis of accumulation”, staff on the Cold War project were actively pursuing ways to deal with the issue of heritage sustainability in practice.

Nonetheless, practices of ordering and classification are not arbitrary; they are constitutive and influence the ways in which heritage is treated, as well how it is mediated and understood (Bowker 2005; Law 1994). Sociologist John Law (1994), for example, has observed that classification is not simply an abstract concept; there are tangible consequences to imposing order on things. Categories, Law (1994: 110-1) states, characterise, define and generate “the qualities of different materials…and the patterning of relationships between them”. In this case, classification sets limits and constraints on what can (as well as what cannot) become Cold War heritage. Geographer Gunnar Maus (2012: 205), for instance, has argued that Cold War classification practices reduce “military sites…to their strategic and technological military aspects” (see also Fairclough 2007; Maus 2012).

This argument could be extended further. As Cold War heritage developed out of a burgeoning interest in modern military archaeology and organisational responses to the MoD disposals programme, it has been classified, defined and subsequently materialised (through preservation efforts) as a thoroughly military past (cf. Whitfield 1996). Serendipity also plays a part in what is classified as heritage (and as such, what becomes heritage). For example, the large number of RAF sites mothballed during this period (and as a result, those that got classified) means that the material record of the Cold War (and the places valued in association
with it) is largely focused on the role of the air force. As a result, the built heritage of the Cold War in the UK is primarily focused on issues surrounding military air power and the maintenance and threat of global nuclear arsenals.

Historic classification activities surrounding former Cold War installations continue to play a role in their ongoing designation and management (and thus, their materiality and presentation). Classification processes have produced a number of textual and discursive materials, such as designation documents and statements of significance, which are referenced in the daily management of designated places such as RAF Neatishead.

2.10 – DESIGNATION

In this section, I will examine the particular characteristics of Cold War sites – such as those at Neatishead – and explore how they are dealt with in the context of heritage designation. In particular, I will highlight some of the ways in which conservation professionals situate the materiality of former military installations in relation to the robust value-based criteria, which are required for listing and scheduling (see 2.7).

Designation of Cold War sites began around 2000 with the scheduling of the Royal Observer Corps bunker in York. Over the next ten years, a handful of other Cold War period sites in England were granted heritage status, mostly those considered to be under threat. The majority of listed and scheduled Cold War sites, by way of contrast, were designated as part of a dedicated Cold War project under the national heritage protection plan, which ran from 2011 until 2015 (English Heritage 2011a; refer back to Error! Reference source not found.).

For example, in 2007, large concrete structures at Alconbury in Cambridgeshire, such as the “magic mountain” avionics bunker and hardened aircraft shelters, were listed at Grade II*. These were listed on the basis of their special interest, which focused on their rarity and capacity as surviving structures to “represent the physical manifestation of the global division between capitalism and communism” (English Heritage 2007). The same justifications and assessments of significance were used in the scheduling and listing of sites at Neatishead (e.g. English Heritage 2008b).

It is apparent that the designation of Cold War heritage – through its focus on bounded sites and surviving materials – closely adheres to what Laurajane Smith
(2006) refers to as the authorised heritage discourse. However, this is perhaps not surprising. The strict legislative requirements of the planning system in the UK, as elsewhere, place a strong emphasis on historical and material authenticity. It is widely recognised, therefore, that the discourse surrounding heritage designation is primarily focused on materialist perspectives that have their root in the tenets of the modern conservation movement (see Jones and Leech 2015: para 2.16). As a result, these criteria inevitably become the focus of professional designation practice. As geographer Carol Ludwig (2016: 811) has argued, there are:

“…a variety of contextual factors that constrain radical readjustments of the AHD…These include the struggles over the subjectivity and operationalisation of social and cultural heritage values in rational planning environments. [This means that] wider trends in the heritage discourse cannot be adequately implemented within the current apparatus and mindset of traditional rational planning”.

More nuanced professional opinions and beliefs about the value of historic sites (as well as concerns over the difficulties of preserving Cold War heritage) often remain unacknowledged in most designation documents. For the most part, this is due to the degree of certainty that is required for evidence-based justifications of historical value and cultural significance (Jones and Yarrow 2013).

Some of these complexities are evident in the personal archives of conservation professionals at English Heritage in Cambridge. For instance, in 2000, heritage managers expressed concern over the future of the Type 84 radar at Neatishead. They wrote to an agency involved in the management of the site. They were worried the “Type 84 could be cleared under local initiative without consultation – especially as it is not an obviously ‘historic’ or architectural feature” (Wayne Cocroft, pers. archive reference; emphasis my own). Another exchange between colleagues refers to the difficulty of conveying Neatishead’s significance, particularly through the use of photographs (which are often used in heritage assessments). They also suggest that these images “convey that [the Type 84] has become a local landmark”.

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7 During my ethnographic research with residents at Neatishead, this assertion proved to be more complex. In fact, many stated that they barely noticed the radar station anymore and had
Although much of this complexity is absent in official heritage documentation, it is apparent in a range of listing and scheduling selection guides, which accompany current designation laws (e.g. English Heritage 2011b and 2013b). For instance, the Scheduling Selection Guide: Military Sites Post-1500 (English Heritage 2013b) provides specific advice for evaluating the significance of former Cold War sites. This guide acknowledges the “severely functional appearance” of modern military sites, which impact on the ability of these places to meet the standard requirements (ibid.: 11). Therefore, it also includes a range of extended and modified criteria – for example, *innovation* and *representivity/selectivity* – in addition to concepts such as *rarity* and *survival*.

Cold War sites appeal to a very different aesthetic than those traditionally associated with heritage. For instance, artists, writers and musicians have created a plethora of fascinating works that play on relationship between post-apocalyptic imaginaries and the ruined state of many former Cold War sites in the present (e.g. Schofield et al 2012; Wilson 2006; see also Weston 2011). In a practical sense therefore, the inclusion of characteristics such as innovation allows conservation professionals to make more familiar arguments about special interest or national importance based on the technological histories of modern military objects. For example, in the designation document for scheduled monuments at Neatishead, national importance is identified through connections to “the rapid evolution of information technology and the [subsequent] obsolescence of sites” (English Heritage 2008b). These extended criteria provide a means of assessing the remains of Cold War materialities on their own terms, while connecting them to the requirements of policy and legislation. Therefore, the selection guides represent efforts to modify designation criteria in order to encompass Cold War sites and other non-standard forms of heritage.

Nevertheless, referring back to Carol Ludwig’s (2016) comments above, these modifications are still predominantly focused on the material authenticity of surviving remains. Although elements of wider significance, such as the idea that the Type 84 might be a “local landmark”, do feature in the reasons for designation, they remain a secondary consideration and are directly related to the intrinsic value of the physical structure. Therefore, the modifications in the selection guide do not
reflect a desire to re-evaluate cultural heritage frameworks. Rather, they represent an attempt to fit the character of Cold War sites into current practices and modes of understanding. However, the presence of these sites and materials does provide the impetus for reflection upon professional methodologies (and difficulties) in the context of changing values and perspectives.

2.11 – PRACTICAL PROBLEMS: MANAGING NEATISHEAD
Inspectors of ancient monuments at English Heritage have dealt with a range of difficult issues, which have emerged during its conservation. This section argues that these difficulties are based on practical problems surrounding the ownership of former Cold War sites as well as a set of tensions that arise during everyday decision-making processes. I further argue that these tensions are manifest as a range of paradoxes that conservation professionals must negotiate in order to find a solution to some of the seemingly intractable problems that surround some Cold War sites. In particular, I am going to focus on two key areas – sustainability/durability and authenticity – where the practical realities of conserving material remains conflicts with theoretical understandings of heritage, as the aforementioned range of organisational principles. First, however, I will briefly describe the current scenario at RAF Neatishead.

There are few signs that RRH Neatishead has received heritage protection. Inside the fence, there is little human activity – beyond the small portion dedicated to the museum that is (see chapter 4). The concrete structures look worn and weathered – as does the steel Type 84 radar as it shifts and squeaks in the wind. Rather than the sound of voices or military traffic, it is the sounds of birds and insects that hang in the air. The site is overgrown; grass and ruderal species push through cracks in the concrete – the place has the air of the abandoned. Along the barbed wire fencing, there are faded signs warning people to keep out: MoD property. Next to these are more recent additions, large boards, which are anchored in place. They announce that the former radar station is “for sale” (Steven Leech: Field Notes, May 2013).

The sale of the former radar station has highlighted a set of tensions over the value and significance of remnant structures at Neatishead. These represent pronounced differences between the current owners of the station and heritage professionals. Style Space, a property development company registered in Birmingham, purchased a large portion of the Neatishead site in 2006, which (apparently unbeknown to them)
included several listed buildings and scheduled structures. In 2008 the economic value of the site was affected by the global economic crash and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport’s decision to award heritage status to historic Cold War buildings. Since then, Style Space limited has been trying to sell their stake in the site (to no avail).

In May 2013, I interviewed someone involved in the management of the site for Style Space. They established an unequivocal link between the current economic value of the site and the designation of former Cold War structures. They drew particular attention to differences of opinion over the significance and aesthetics of protected features. For instance, they felt that “the R12 is just a lump of ugly, ghastly concrete. Why list it?” (see Error! Reference source not found.) They felt aggrieved that they had no legal recourse to question the judgement of heritage professionals, referring to heritage managers as “judge and jury”.

FIGURE 2.6 For sale. South side of the perimeter fence at Neatishead. Looking north. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).
FIGURE 2.7 A “lump of ghastly concrete”. The grade II R12 building, view to northwest. Photo: Steven Leech (2012).

On the other hand, English Heritage (e.g. 2016) has raised concerns about the future of historic materials at Neatishead and has placed the Type 84 on the “heritage at risk” register. The register itself has no legislative power but as one heritage manager told me, it is a means of encouraging action by “naming and shaming” owners who refuse to accept responsibility for historic sites. English Heritage staff have also repeatedly issued warnings about the urgent need for remedial work and stabilisation on the structure. However, they are unable to enforce this, as unlike listing, scheduling does not require regular maintenance or conservation. Instead, scheduling provides very strict regulations regarding physical alterations and interventions (any change to a scheduled monument must be approved by senior members of relevant government departments).

Therefore, there is currently something of a stalemate at the former Second World War and Cold War radar station. The sale of Neatishead and the conflict of opinions between heritage professionals and the current owners of the site, means that a range of practical problems complicates the management of historic properties. As a
result, neither party are happy with the present state of affairs and Neatishead remains in limbo (2.2). There is little prospect of an agreement on its future.

2.11.1 – Sustainability and durability

A key tension surrounding the conservation of Neatishead (and other Cold War heritage sites) is the need to find a contemporary use for empty military buildings while retaining a sense of their significance. Jones and Yarrow (2013: 7) refer to this as the “paradox of securing the past while changing it”, which underpins many decisions in contemporary heritage management frameworks. During an interview with James, an inspector of ancient monuments at English Heritage (who is responsible for the Neatishead site), I am told that this is a particularly difficult process. “There is only so much you can do with these buildings”, he argues, due to the nature of the materials used.

This puts James and other heritage workers in an awkward situation at Neatishead, as English Heritage has supported an initiative referred to as “constructive conservation” (e.g. English Heritage 2008d). Constructive conservation encourages a more sustainable approach to managing the historic environment, while allowing development to take place – the preferred solution is the reuse of spaces with funds and resources provided in return for the protection of a site’s significance. At Neatishead, however, there are fundamental differences in the ways in which the owners and heritage experts value these buildings. Moreover, the designation of the site – which was originally conceived as the flagship Cold War radar heritage site – is seen as an obstacle to further and future change.

Therefore, heritage professionals must juggle these positions and contradictory states to find an appropriate management solution. “I don’t want to preserve these sites in aspic”, James tells me, “I’m open to any and all ideas”. However, these ideas “must take significance into account”. As this significance is mainly premised on the materiality of the site, these tensions constantly re-emerge. During a 2011 application for planning permission at Neatishead, for instance, James refused to support the construction of solar panels at the site, as they obscured the view between different designated structures, which he interpreted as a lack of interest in the site’s core values and importance. In his letter to the council however, he did state that he would relax his stance if efforts were made to preserve other
areas of the site (mitigate against the loss caused by change by preserving other areas of the station).

Although this did not take place at Neatishead, the developers took these comments and used them to inform a similar project at nearby RAF Coltishall. In order to gain permission, they contributed tens of thousands of pounds to the conservation of scheduled Cold War blast walls at the site. Therefore, what seems like an intractable problem at Neatishead, informed a solution at another Cold War site, demonstrating that these positions are flexible and dynamic (rather than a static either or) and are worked out in practice over time.

2.11.2 – Authenticity

Not to mark myself out as a cynic, but I felt immediately suspicious; I anticipated a trick of some kind. “Just make sure you get a good feel of the door”, he insisted. Hesitating, I glanced at the surface, all greens, oranges and purples, a picture of decay. As instructed, I moved my hand forward, palm outstretched, anticipating the feeling of icy-cold metal. My skin registered contact. Immediately, I felt a disorientating jolt and snorted in disbelief. In place of sharp flakes of corroded paint and coarse rust, I encountered a smooth vinyl plastic. I was experiencing a moment of “sensorial dissonance”, a perception of the environment that betrayed a “different truth to that suggested by vision” (Irving 2013: 76-77). The site owner, Harold, had commissioned an English Heritage photographer to create a veneer, a high resolution and “convincing” reproduction of the “original” door. “Standing here, I still can’t believe it’s a photograph”, Harold continued, staring admiringly at his entropic imitation. “It fools everybody”.

The façade belonged to a former bomb store that once held the radioactive cores for British nuclear weapons. These innocuous little structures had been a resting point along the “plutonium trail”, one step from the bombers, in a network of atomic materials that flowed through the United Kingdom and many parts of globe during the Cold War (van Wyck 2010). As we ducked our heads inside, there it was – mise en abyme – the “original” door, ‘protected’ by its doppelganger. “We thought that it would deteriorate out of all recognition, so we put it in here”. “It has evidential value”, stressed Wayne, a Senior Investigator from English Heritage (and resident Cold War expert), “in terms of the paint schemes, which you know, will be lost at some point in time”. As I puzzled over the archaeological merits of the layers of paint clinging to the doors and concrete walls, Wayne began to reveal an important tension: “One of my colleagues was really quite offended by that [the door, the trick], she thinks we shouldn’t be doing it”. Laughing he recalls her words, “its fraud, totally fraudulent”. It was quite contentious, he claims, “but she’s quite a purist”. “In many ways, it’s an experiment isn’t it? How do you conserve Cold War sites?” asked Wayne
openly. “Okay, this might not be the accepted way to do things, but we’re trying something new here. It’s an experiment” (Steven Leech Field Notes, October 2013).

This extract was taken from the former bomb store at RAF Barnham, also in East Anglia. Here, the site owner and conservation professionals draw attention to a range of more experimental approaches to Cold War conservation. Issues surrounding authenticity lie at the heart of the internal contest over the most appropriate approach. In this case, a more relaxed approach was permitted but only if measures were taken to ensure the material integrity of the materials. Despite uncertainties over the aesthetic values of Cold War materialities and built heritage, as mentioned above, steps are still taken (even amid talk of experimentation) to preserve the physical integrity of the site.

Thus, the authenticity of the site is still ostensibly located in the physical structure of remnant materials. For instance, at Barnham there was an agreement in place between the site owner and the heritage professionals to permit a number of reconstructions. Several Cold War watch towers have been repainted, for example, as a means of reinstating some of the Cold War atmosphere that is imagined to have been lost following the redevelopment of the site as a business park. This demonstrates a desire to cultivate something less tangible – a feeling or sense of eeriness perhaps, which is difficult to document or manage as part of a straightforward heritage significance assessment.

Therefore, much of the emphasis on conservation is still focused upon the default: the material integrity of materials and the reuse of original fabric “as far as possible” (Wayne Cocroft, personal communication; see also extract above). Nevertheless, there is the potential for change here, as the Barnham case indicates that tensions between the Cold War as avant-garde and conventional heritage principles are something that has to be worked out and negotiated in practice, often through compromise (which are informed by a range of professional and personal beliefs – see also Brumann 2014).

Nonetheless, I would argue that this greater flexibility with regards to material conservation and authenticity is contingent upon the particular circumstances surrounding a site, its management, as well as levels of access. At Neatishead, by way of contrast, the difficulties surrounding its ownership (and the
lack of contact between the owners and English Heritage) prevent an experimental approach to conservation.

Ultimately, the Neatishead case shows that heritage managers are likely to fall back on more conventional ideas about authenticity and integrity if the future of the site or its significance is threatened. Even though one heritage manager referred to the R12 building as a “sodding big empty box”, he still had to make arguments about its authenticity and material value in a recent application for planning consent at the site (e.g. English Heritage 2011c). Personally, he feels that the significance of these places lies in “what they did”, something much less tangible. However, in practice, he is required to make statements that are based on material authenticity, which were attributed during the designation process (even if he is uncertain about these qualities himself).

2.12– CONCLUSIONS
In part one of this chapter, I established that former military sites in the UK, including those associated with the Cold War, are in varying states of management, preservation and decay. Site clearances and the onset of MoD disposals programmes brought these places to the attention of heritage professionals. Motivated by a fear of loss, conservators and amateur enthusiasts campaigned for the recognition of key sites as heritage and set about documenting and identifying historically significant sites around the UK. Due to the recent nature and aesthetic of Cold War installations (as well as their symbolic associations), the remains of these sites are argued to represent an unconventional form of heritage.

However, as I have demonstrated, recent scholarship in heritage studies has recognised the existence of an authorised heritage discourse, as well as modernist conservation principles that underpin all professional heritage frameworks and practices. Therefore, on the surface at least, there is a tension between the Cold War as an avant-garde or novel form of heritage and the discourse surrounding historic environment legislation and professional activities. In 2.6, I highlighted recent work in conservation studies that called for greater attention to conservation in practice.

In part two, I provided a detailed, empirical focus on Cold War conservation. Cold War heritage practices, as with other historic sites, mobilise concepts of value and cultural significance. These ideas, I argued, appear to be heavily linked to the development of modern conservation movements and theories surrounding
authorised heritage discourse. However, as I explored the heritageisation of RAF Neatishead – through classification, designation and management – I revealed that these concepts were more malleable and flexible in reality. For instance, close examination of classification highlighted attempts to add specificity to Cold War heritage categories. Moreover, Cold War designation activities also demonstrated a willingness (if not the resources) to restructure conservation frameworks and principles (even if these changes were relatively superficial).

Nonetheless, in the case of RAF Neatishead I also demonstrated the complex and at times difficult nature of Cold War heritage management. Issues such as ownership impose a range of practical problems and dilemmas that constrain what can be done with and to the site. However, the restrictions imposed by heritage designation also highlighted tensions between owners and conservators in relation to value and significance. At the heart of Cold War heritage practices, as I argued, there are a series of conflicts and tensions – such as the desire to manage the materiality of such sites in an experimental way (e.g. through reconstruction and benign neglect) and the emphasis placed on the intrinsic value of surviving materials in heritage policy and principles. In practice, these are worked out and negotiated as a series of paradoxes by heritage professionals. The outcome and resolution of these tensions is dependent on the particular constellation of the complex issues that surround such sites.

As I mentioned throughout, many conservation professionals involved in the production of RAF Neatishead and other sites as Cold War heritage, recognised a range of wider values and significance. For example, comments were made about the perception of the Type 84 radar as a local landmark. Often, however, these were obscured during the production of heritage documentation or treated as secondary as a consequence of the requirements of current heritage management frameworks (e.g. see Ludwig 2016). In the next chapter, I turn to these wider connections. In particular, I focus on the relationship between military and civilian relationships (past and present) and highlight some of the ways in which these work their way through and around a former radar installation.
CHAPTER 3: MILITARISATION AND NOSTALGIA

3.1 – INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I look at the legacy of military presence surrounding the construction, maintenance and eventual closure of RAF Saxa Vord, a radar station in Unst – the most northerly island in the Shetland group. In particular, I explore the relationship between historic processes of militarisation during the Cold War and contemporary practices of nostalgia. “Militarization”, geographer Sasha Davis (2015: 44) contends, “is the concrete manifestation of military activity in place”. Whereas, nostalgia (media artist Svetlana Boym (2001: 1) points out) is traditionally understood as a romantic “longing for a home that no longer exists or never existed…a sentiment of loss and displacement”. As I will show, these processes and sentiments overlap in Unst. Nostalgic feelings in particular, have been precipitated by significant social and economic changes, including the departure of the RAF in 2006. With recourse to ethnographic observations and semi-structured interviews, I will argue that nostalgia is integral to contemporary conceptions of the Cold War on the island (and beyond).

In doing so, I will draw on recent anthropological scholarship, which has re-evaluated the concept of nostalgia, highlighting its multiple variants, diverse experiences and relativities (e.g. Cashman 2006; Macdonald 2013a: 88). For instance, David Berliner has argued that nostalgia is not merely a passive longing but is something performative, constitutive and works as a “major driving force in heritage-making”. I will argue that, in the absence of formal heritage practices surrounding Cold War pasts in Unst, feelings and performances of nostalgia are most prominently utilised in everyday memory work.

A complex constellation of social, material and economic relations underpin these processes. These tend to be multi-temporal and continue to shape a range of contemporary meanings and experiences in the landscape (sometimes in unexpected and seemingly unrelated ways). This has major implications for the production, negotiation and understanding of the Cold War on the island. However, as I point out in the penultimate section, the Unst case also has resonances for the
archaeology and heritage of the recent past, which reach beyond its immediate context.

3.2 – UNST AND SAXA VORD: SETTING THE SCENE

“The island of Unst is the most northerly one in the Shetland group, some 67 miles north of Lerwick, the only town and the only port in Shetland…Passengers and parcels can reach Unst by an overland route, changing bus four times and using two small ferry-boats that may not operate if the sea is at all rough. In view of the transport cost, there are very few vehicles on Unst and RAF Saxa Vord has to rely on its own military transport. There is no barber or laundry on Unst (actually, there is no laundry at all in Shetland). [In] fact on Unst, there are no trees, no villages, no policemen and no pub (the island being “dry”). [None of this] is relevant in the context [of the operations logbook], [but] it is nevertheless included to complete a sketch of this rolling, peat covered expanse of rock, thinly sprinkled with crofts and peppered with sheep” – J. Grant. Commanding Officer. RAF Saxa Vord. Logbook Entry. August 1960 (RAF Saxa Vord 1960)

Unst (figure 3.2) sits on the border between the North and Norwegian seas - 170 miles north of Thurso (at the tip of mainland Scotland) and around 180 miles west of Bergen on the east coast of Norway. It is the third largest inhabited island in the Shetland group (despite its relatively small size – 45 square miles in total). Given its relative remoteness, Unst has been particularly sensitive to social and economic change and has experienced numerous boom and bust cycles over the years. Partly, this relates to the fragility of the island economy and its reliance on external sources of income.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Unst was at the heart of a “herring boom” in Shetland (Abrams 2005; Coull 1988). Thousands of seasonal workers flocked to Unst to gut and process the fish as they came in off the boats. However, with the onset of the First World War and the establishment of more lucrative fisheries elsewhere, work in Unst dried up (see also Coull 1982). Similarly, the island benefitted from the North Sea “oil boom” in the 1970s and 80s (Wonders 1995). However, the flow of money and investment into the island was stemmed when reserves began to run low (although there remains hope on the island that new terminals will be opened).
Military presence in Shetland (and Unst more specifically) dates back to well before the Cold War. Due to their position in the North Sea, the islands were used as a base for maritime warfare during the First World War. Since then, there has been an intermittent military presence in the landscape and surrounding waters, the remains of which are scattered throughout the environment. In terms of surveillance operations, during the Second World War, the Navy and RAF both established bases on Unst. The RAF conducted experiments with radar on the Keen of Hamar, to the East of the island around 1940, and eventually constructed a Chain Home radar station - RAF Skaw – at Lambaness, a promontory on the northeast coast between 1942 and 1946 (e.g. Sleigh [no date]). They also established Chain Home sites at Sumburgh Head at the south of Mainland and elsewhere in Shetland.

Saxa Vord itself had a previous association with military surveillance; it had been used as a Naval U-boat radar station, operated by a handful of staff searching the seas for hostile submarine movements during the early 1940s. After the Second World War, the RAF and Naval units were disbanded and the navy installation at Saxa Vord – amounting to a few buildings and antennae at the top of the hill - was mothballed until the RAF took control of the site in the 1955 (e.g. RAF Saxa Vord 1957). Therefore, the construction of the Cold War radar station marked a return to the island for the RAF after an absence of only 9 years.

The site reopened as 91 Signals Unit Unst (RAF) in September 1957 and the station, as mentioned above, became a node in the UK and NATO’s early warning radar network (e.g. McCamley 2002: 88). Several command and administrative changes meant a rebranding of the site in 1984, when it officially became known as RAF Saxa Vord. The station, like many others in the UK, was demoted to an RRH (remote radar head) in 2001, as operations at the site were scaled back following the end of the Cold War. It eventually closed for good in 2006.

When the RAF arrived on Unst in the 1950s, the population of the island averaged around 1,100 people. Following the closure of the RAF base, this figure has dwindled to around 600 residents in recent years. In the 1950s, many people were tied to the land working on inherited tenant crofts. A significant number of residents were also working away from the island during the early part of the RAF’s stay, often at sea with the Merchant Navy or on board large fishing vessels.
By the mid-1950s, the RAF had established a significant presence on Unst. In 1955, construction began on the early warning radar station atop the hill at Saxa Vord, the highest (932ft) and most northerly peak on the island. Maps from the 18th and 19th centuries suggest that the area had long been used as pasture, a common grazing spot for sheep. The technical site, housing the radar and modulator buildings, was built at the very summit of Saxa Vord, occupying around 6 acres of land. The operational site – including an above ground rotor operations building (R10) - was constructed a few hundred metres below, part way down the hill. The two were enclosed by high wire fences and connected by an access corridor.

A domestic site was built over 2 miles away from the hill, adjacent to one of the island’s four main villages, Haroldswick. The barracks, billets and messes that made up the complex were built on 10 acres of croft land, which doubled in size, over the course of the RAF’s 50-year stay. This space was home to the steady cycle of service personnel who came to live and work at the station, each completing a tour which amounted to a minimum of 18-months on the island. Throughout most of the operational life of the station, there were between 140 and 190 military personnel stationed at RAF Saxa Vord (nearly a fifth of the entire population). As the military population increased, additional settlements were constructed, such as Settler’s Hill in the 1980s, which was designed to serve as married quarters – in the hope of enticing more military families to Unst.

In terms of its operational history, RAF Saxa Vord was chosen due to its geographical position, which looks out over the North Sea (figure 3.1). Despite being run as an RAF station, it was technically a NATO early warning site and was jointly managed by both organisations (McCamley 2002). The station was responsible for airspace stretching north beyond the Faroe Islands, down to southeast of Scotland, as well as east to the coast of Norway. From the 1950s, up until the late 1970s, the principal radar equipment on site was the Type 80 radar scanner, which was installed during the rotor programme (see Chapter 1; see also Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 86; McCamley 2002). During the late 1970s, the site was subject to a NATO funded overhaul, where much of the core radar equipment and operational infrastructure was replaced (McCamley 2002: 88).
Following the end of the Cold War, the radar site at Saxa Vord was considered to be of reduced military importance. An RAF review, in consultation with NATO military headquarters, decided that the Type 93 radar fleet, deployed on Unst since the 1970s was obsolete and the cost of replacement was prohibitive when weighed up alongside the station’s contemporary strategic value. In effect, there was no longer a national requirement for a radar to be permanently based at RAF Saxa Vord (HC Deb 10 October 2005, c16). A parliamentary announcement was made in October 2005, which outlined intentions to place the station under “care and maintenance” (mothballing) and for the RAF unit attached to the site since the 1950s, to depart and disband. This decision brought an end to the presence of military personnel on the island.

Since the departure of the RAF in 2006, the radar station at Saxa Vord has met a similar fate to many other, now redundant, operational spaces occupied throughout the Cold War. “In the UK”, DeSilvey and Edensor (2013: 473) remind us, “the ambiguous remains of Second World War and Cold War military infrastructure often linger in a state of limbo”. As with other sites in Britain, Saxa Vord wavers indeterminately, between a state of transience and permanence, “not allowed to be demolished but not considered valuable enough to merit expenditure on stabilization” (DeSilvey and Edensor 2013: 473). Although the station is, for all intents and purposes closed, the future of the site remains unresolved. Rather than wholesale demolition or remediation, Defence Estates sub-divided the installations into plots of land, as at Neatishead. Some have been earmarked for sale and disposal, whilst others, at least for now, have been retained.
As for the residents of the island, it has taken people the better part of a decade to recover. The departure of the military resulted in a large decline in the population and amounted to the dislocation of social and economic ties that had been in place since the 1950s (and even earlier for some). One life-long resident of Unst told me that “things are very different but I think people are getting used to it now”.

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Throughout this chapter, I will discuss the ongoing legacy of recent changes in the landscape and how these shape contemporary perceptions and memories of the Cold War in Unst.

FIGURE 3.2 Oblique aerial photograph of Saxa Vord looking east north east. The area to the north is the technical site housing the redundant radome as it stood in 2010. To the south is the former operational site (RCAHMS 2010).
3.3 – TRACKING THE LEGACY OF RADAR IN THE LANDSCAPE

SL: What do people think about the radar equipment and stuff on the top of the hill at Saxa Vord? About it still being there?

Agnes: I don’t think people pay any attention to it. [You know] I never give it a second thought. It’s just there. As far as I know, it’s an empty dome.

This indifferent response is taken from an interview I carried out in 2013 with Agnes, an Unst-born woman in her early 60s. Agnes lives in the north of the island at the foot of a large hill, just a few hundred metres from the former RAF camp and 2 miles from the unoccupied radar station at the top of Saxa Vord. This was one of my first interviews in Shetland and I was apprehensive about the approach I was going to take. My inclination, at least to begin with, was to fall back on my archaeological sensibilities: I would concentrate on engagements with the material remains of the radar station and use this as a springboard (see figure 3.2).

Nearby, the remains of a Second World War radar site – RAF Skaw – had recently been scheduled by Historic Scotland but heritage professionals did not ascribe the Cold War radar station with any heritage value. In the absence of formal conservation practices, I was interested to see how the site was mediated by local residents and what its future might be, in contrast to places such as Neatishead. Yet almost immediately Agnes had brushed my questions aside. Her nonchalant reply was a counterpoint to my own eagerness to investigate the physical space of the site. By remarking that she and others never gave the place a second thought, Agnes cast doubt over the local significance of these Cold War remains.

For Agnes, the ruins at Saxa Vord did not evoke strong connections. But, how many others shared her indifference? A significant number, it turns out. Throughout my time in Unst, I had great difficulty engaging residents in conversation about the site. Most people did not think to bring up the radar station unless prompted. When I did get a response, very few people had much to say. For example, Nora, a resident who still cuts her peats beside the mothballed radar
station, claimed, “people aren’t that bothered. [The ruins] don’t bother anyone”. The limited range of responses I was receiving from otherwise loquacious individuals seemed striking. I was speaking to one resident for several hours, for example, but when I asked him about Saxa Vord, he simply deflected my questions by referring to the site as, “a bunch of old buildings going downhill”. His uncharacteristically laconic reply seemed to suggest that the remains of the radar site were of tangential interest at best. The more people I met in Unst, the more Agnes’ sentiments were echoed back to me, becoming an all too familiar refrain. These dispassionate replies pointed towards a disconnection between the remains of Cold War militarism and the contemporary residents of Unst.8

Since the RAF departed in 2006, very little happens at the radar station on a day-to-day basis. As part of my research, I also carried out a series of observations at the site – sometimes for several hours at a time. I would sit and watch and walk around the old station, looking at how people interacted with it. However, human presence and activity were rarities up on Saxa Vord (my companions were principally birds and sheep). On these occasions, I documented little concrete activity and failed to observe many comings and goings.

During its operational period, a steady stream of traffic would have been in full flow – military jeeps, trucks and supply wagons – trafficking people and things to and from shifts in the operations bunker and radar cabins. Today, Saxa Vord is in a state of limbo (see 5.2). Most days, the only regular sights I witnessed were the caretaker’s red car and a few contractors’ vans, which would travel up to the top every few weeks (to maintain some remotely operated communication masts). This inertia was only occasionally interrupted by return visits from a handful of former personnel on nostalgia trips, something I deal with in detail in chapter 5. For the moment, however, it is sufficient to note that even for military personnel (with strong biographical connections to Saxa Vord), the closed nature of the site leaves little room for any significant interactions.

Initially, it was hard to reconcile what I was observing and what people were telling me, with the physical presence of the remaining site and radome. From various vantages and angles, at least to my mind, the decaying remains of RAF

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8 In 2014 the remaining radome structure was demolished. It is possible that perceptions have been altered by this act.
Saxa Vord seemed to loom over the island – especially in the north (figure 3.1). With respect to this visibility, a resident of Unst speculated, “…people just don’t see it anymore”, as there has been a radar of some kind or other present on that hill for over fifty years. As Agnes had argued, to many residents, “it is just there” (c.f. Maus 2012).

My enquiries into the intangible presence of the radar site – for example, into the potential environmental or epidemiological legacy of continuous military radio transmissions – also yielded similar results. In Latvia, this line of questioning has been successfully pursued by artists, sociologists and epidemiologists, where strong connections have been made between a former Soviet early warning site at Skrunda, near Riga and a raft of health complaints in local communities (e.g. Smits et al 2011). Raitis Smits and others (2011: 87) write that the Skrunda radar station was:

> “…surrounded by myths, local stories and unverified experiences. Local inhabitants made many complaints about their health. They observed a green fluorescent flare over the meadow near the radar in the autumn and had auditory hallucinations during the night”.

However, in Unst, such notions were generally met with bafflement. One woman who had lived near the station for years, for example, responded to such queries incredulously, “you mean did they fry my little sheepies?” Chuckling, she continued, “no, none of that”. Putting on an affected and mysterious tone, “although you never know, we might have been irradiated while we were up there on the hill cutting the peats”, she teased. In this context at least, the physical and intangible legacy of the radar site is attributed little concrete significance in the present.

And yet, on the other hand, residents of Unst were constantly assuring me that relations with the RAF had generally been good. Some, to my initial surprise, even emphasised how much they lamented the military’s absence. A local artist who had moved to the island from East Anglia several years ago, stressed that, although he was personally glad to see the military go (he had dreamed of moving to “an empty, windswept isle”); he was “in a minority”. Many who had lived on the island for a long time, he added, tended to “miss the RAF”. When the RAF left, he told me, they altered social life: “they took the entertainment with them”. This was
evident in everyday conversations where people would talk wistfully to me about a former buzz that used to surround the RAF camp and past sporting events, dances and parties hosted by the military, which many residents were often free to attend and participate in (for more on these examples see 2.7).

In Unst, I was seemingly faced with a discrepancy between the importance local accounts placed on military presence (and now absence) and the lack of value attributed to the materiality of the ruined radar site in the present. As a result, I had to reassess my initial focus on the radar site itself and seek out additional meanings and values in people’s everyday interactions and relationships, and rather ask the question of how one makes sense of these issues. In the next section, I provide a more detailed discussion of an apparent paradox in Unst: the notion that the Cold War, despite its geopolitical uncertainties, provided a sense of security for the residents. This, I argue, underpins many contemporary understandings and memories of the Cold War on the island.

3.4 – NOSTALGIA, SECURITY AND THE COLD WAR

“He won’t know it of course, but Mikhail Gorbachev has a lot to answer for in Unst” (Tait 2006: 3).

In many parts of the world the Cold War period is understood to have engendered immense losses, fear and anxiety (e.g. Dudziak 2012; Kwon 2010). However, in Unst, members of the local community had a personal investment in its continuation. As I will show in this section, the ongoing tensions between superpowers, somewhat paradoxically, were understood to provide source of security to islanders in the form of economic and social stability. In the present, this is expressed as a form of nostalgia surrounding the Cold War period and military presence, which is often contrast with present circumstances and losses in a post-Cold War environment.

The above headline was written in the *Shetland Times* and was appended to their account of the closing ceremony of RAF Saxa Vord. Here, the journalist is making a direct correlation between the contemporary situation in Unst and the policies and politics of the Soviet Union’s final leader. It is widely recognised that *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev’s policies of ‘openness’ and ‘restructuring’, led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980’s (McNair 2006). In this *Shetland Times* article, there is a sense that Gorbachev’s policies, by bringing about an end to the Cold War, have inadvertently contributed to a number of problems in Unst (see below; for access to full article see Carle 2010a).

Throughout much of Western Europe and North America, particularly in nations allied with NATO, geopolitical shifts following the Cold War were celebrated as a victory, ushering in an era of optimism, characterised by talk of peace dividends, the expansion of neoliberal market economies, as well as military and economic security (e.g. Appadurai 1996: 16; Centeno and Cohen 2012). Sociologists Anthony Giddens, for example, refers to the “radically altered nature of states’ sovereignty” following the Cold War era and the leap made by capitalist economies in the post-Cold War world (Giddens and Hutton 1997: 8-9). Capitalism no longer faced competition from other economic models of development, encouraging “a profound sense of encompassment…inevitability” and
triumphalism (Kwon 2010: 20; cf. Wiener 2012). Few places in Britain, however, would be shaped quite so directly as Unst by the cooling of hostilities. In contrast to many places, the end of the Cold War meant a period of insecurity in Unst, the legacies of which continue to influence life on the island to this day (cf. Kwon 2008; Szonyi 2008).

Military installations and the presence of military weapons and personnel were highly controversial in many domestic environments during the Cold War, as archaeologist John Schofield and others have shown. Military sites such as Greenham Common became symbols and gathering places for various social groups who sought an end to the dangers of nuclear posturing and military presence in the landscape. However, in remote rural settings such as Unst, the military were, for the most part, welcomed by local communities and actively encouraged to continue their operations\(^9\) (see also Tivers 1999; Woodward 2004).

Mostly, this was due to a perception that the presence of the military could attenuate social and economic problems that were escalating in places like Unst during and shortly after the Second World War (see also Abrams 2005). In the late 1940s and early 1950s for example, work on the island was scarce. People had begun to leave Unst in droves, particularly men, in order to find jobs. Instead, many chose to work at sea aboard large oceanic fishing vessels or in the merchant navy. According to one Unst-born woman, ‘there was little doing on the island after the war’.

This situation changed to some degree with the onset of the Cold War and the return of the RAF in 1957. In addition to its attendant personnel and architecture, the RAF station brought the prospect of steady employment to the island (and opportunities to stay and work the croft). Hundreds of civilian labourers were required to construct the base and its associated infrastructure. Moreover, following the initial construction, many local residents gained long-term employment as contract workers maintaining the RAF grounds, such as the accommodation blocks and power plant equipment.

\(^9\) The nature of the military presence on Unst also seems to have played a part. As I mentioned above, the operation of the radar site itself was understood to pose little danger to residents and their lives. One woman summed this up, “it was a radar site; it wasn’t as if they were running round with bayonets or anything”. It might have been a different matter entirely if the base contained more dangerous or leaky materials (e.g. see Krupar 2013).
People were encouraged to move to Unst from all over Shetland and parts of mainland UK, in order to fulfil roles at the camp (the RAF’s domestic site) – bringing in an influx of people. As a result, I was often told, military presence provided a boost to the labour market and the island’s previously dwindling population (a concern at the heart of debates about Unst’s long-term future for over a century or more). John, for example, came to the island in the 1950s from Whalsay, to take a job as foreman at the radar station. He and other former employees at the camp often argued that the onset of the Cold War and the construction of the RAF site had “saved” the island:

“The Cold War was a boon for Unst…[it] was a great thing for Unst, oh yeah. [If] there was no Cold War, the station would never have been here and there would have been very little doin’ in Unst. It kept me in work all my life – and a lot of other people too. [Lots of us] left school at 14 or 15 and went to work there [at the camp]. All [our] lives, until [we] retired.”

Interestingly, John’s account demonstrates the social and material importance of the radar camp in the past, even if the physical space of the site holds little significance in terms of contemporary memory work (he told me that there “is not much to see up there now”).

People would repeatedly tell me how “good” the RAF (and by extension) the Cold War had been for Unst. At first, I simply recognised these statements as simple backward glances towards the recent past. However, over time, I came to see them as a platform for thinking about the changing present – as a form of nostalgia. Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley (2006: 920) describe nostalgia as a feeling or longing for things that are “lacking in a changed present”. It is understood to be a reaction against or a yearning for that which is “now unattainable, simply because of the irreversibility of time” (ibid.; see also Boym 2001). Anthropologist David Berliner (2012: 770) provides a slightly modified position on nostalgia, considering it:

“…as a specific posture vis-à-vis the past seen as irreversible, a set of publically displayed discourses, practices and emotions where the [past] is somehow glorified” (cf. Macdonald 2013a: 88).
Nostalgic practices, discourses and emotions were most evident in Unst when residents compared former Cold War era prosperity with perceptions of loss and displacement in the present. “When the RAF were here”, Trevor, a life-long resident told me, “I can’t remember anyone being unemployed who wanted work – they were very happy times”. Now, by way of contrast, there is very little work, he tells me, and chances are limited.

Since the RAF departed, many people – particularly young families – have begun to move away from the island have started new lives elsewhere (many reluctantly). This has created a sense of longing in some remaining residents for the former optimism, abundance and the perceived prosperity of the Cold War period in Unst. “People just got on really well” Trevor reflected, “the atmosphere was just fantastic back then” (see also 3.7).

In early heritage research, nostalgia was understood as a kind of pathology – a naïve longing to return to a past that never was (e.g. Hewison 1987). From this perspective, Sharon Macdonald (2013a: 87) writes, “nostalgia was [interpreted] as a foolish sentimental view that the past had been better and might somehow be returned to”. However, recent anthropological research has re-evaluated the concept through “on-the-ground perspectives, based on lived experience” (Macdonald 2013a: 87). These studies have highlighted the complexity and variety of understandings and experiences of nostalgia, as well as recognising the kinds of work the concept does in the present (e.g. Angé and Berliner 2014; Berdahl 2010; Jepson 2006; Seremetakis 1994).

Nostalgia, therefore, is not a simple reflex. In the case of Trevor for instance, he was not seeking a return to the past. Instead, commenting on recent changes gave him an opportunity to make sense of present difficulties and changes in Unst. Here, nostalgia is being used as a means of making sense of contemporary (and irreversible) post-Cold War changes (see also 3.5). As anthropologist Ray Cashman (2006: 137-8) has demonstrated, nostalgia can be thought about as a “critical” practice, in the sense that people are able to instantiate an “informed evaluation of the present…through selective visions of the past”. In 3.8, I will explore how people like Trevor use nostalgia more “critically” and affectively to engage with contemporary changes and concerns in Unst and elsewhere (see also Macdonald 2013a).
As with other small rural communities, Unst had come to rely on the continuing presence of the military for economic and social support (e.g. Szonyi 2008; Woodward 2004). Therefore, during the latter half of the twentieth century, it was the prospect of an end to the Cold War - and not its continuation – that created a sense of anxiety. For instance, a 1965 report by Phillip T. Wheeler and the Geographical Field Group, warned that the civilian population relied too heavily upon their close economic ties to the military (decades later similar arguments were made about relations to the oil industry). Despite the relative prosperity islanders were enjoying at the time, Wheeler (1965) cautioned, once current hostilities ended or changed, the base could close, which might have serious social and economic ramifications in Unst:

“What would happen if chromite or talc were no longer wanted, if Shetland knitted goods suddenly went out of fashion, or if (most serious and most possible) the RAF installations closed?” (ibid.; emphasis my own)

Wheeler had been rather alarmist in his predictions, suggesting this could lead to the abandonment of Unst. While this has not occurred, in the absence of the RAF, there has been a steep decline in population figures. The RAF accounted for around a quarter of full-time civilian work on the island, moreover, meaning that many people have been forced to retire or find work elsewhere. Additionally, the loss of the RAF presence has also had a detrimental impact on local services such as the inter-island ferry, medical facilities and funding for education (e.g. see Reference Economic Consultants 2005). I will now define the concept of militarisation before moving on to discuss the character of past relationships between the RAF and resident communities in Unst.

3.5 – MILITARISATION

The study of military and civilian relationships has been a central subject in the emergence of critical military studies and empirical research into the history and consequences of militarisation (e.g. Bernazzoli and Flint 2010; Gusterson 2004; Rech et al 2015). Militarisation encompasses a diverse set of legacies that stem from the spatial (e.g. Higate and Henry 2011), material (e.g. Pearson et al 2010)
and discursive (e.g. Gusterson 1999) practices of the military in the environment. For example, this might include an analysis of the ideological impact of military rhetoric upon communities (e.g. Lutz 2002 and 2004), or the environmental and social legacy of military exercises and weapons testing (e.g. Woodward 2004; Davis 2015). As I mentioned in the introduction, geographer Sasha Davis (2015: 44) holds militarisation to be the “concrete manifestation of military activity in place”.

The relationship between military and civilian communities during the Cold War, at least in Britain, is conventionally understood to be characterised by strict separation and segregation. In his Tate Papers article, for instance, Matthew Flintham (2012) asserts that Cold War military sites were “hermetic spaces” that “could be considered parallel to civil society…and to life itself” (see also Hennessy 2010; although cf. Flintham 2010). To extend this logic, the lives of military employees and civilian residents were played out in separate – possibly even antagonistic – domains. Certainly at Neatishead, I found that most members of the public characterised their former relationship with the military as one of separation. Service personnel were bussed into the site and the base was strictly off-limits to most civilians. Historian Peter Hennessy (2010: 3), makes similar arguments, suggesting that the general public were outsiders to Cold War practices and procedures:

“Popular participation [was] considered neither necessary nor desirable…[the] Cold War neither socialized large numbers of people into its disciplines, its rationales and its complexities nor did it…give them a sense of ownership or outcome”.

And, if one were to look at some historical documents relating to RAF experiences in Shetland, it might appear that the Unst-case mirrors some of these interpretations.

For example, during the 1960s and 1970s journalists in the national and military press drew a parallel between the RAF’s cutting-edge technology and the islands’ rural setting. “On the verges of narrow roads”, reads a Scottish Daily Express article from 1969, “stand piles of drying peat and crofters, [who are] not short of thought but scant of comforts” (Scottish Daily Express 1969: 11). Within this and similar reports, Unst and its residents were crudely cast as archetypes of a
pastoral past. On the one hand, islanders were portrayed as penurious crofters that were “slow to adapt to change” (RAF News 1969: 4). On the other, residents were praised for their harmonious sense of community and their close connection to the land – associations, which resemble the simplification and naturalisation of rural labourers in pastoral painting and literature (see 4.3; see also Wells 2001). By way of contrast to these rustic tropes, the military emerges as a cutting-edge, future-oriented organisation. The situation of an RAF radar station in Unst, is stated to “[amount] to an outlandish grafting of a space age community on to an ancient-island background” (RAF News 1969: 4).

During oral history interviews and daily conversations with people in Unst, the modernising influence of the RAF was frequently referred to. “The RAF were the first to bring electricity and piped water to the islands in the 50s”, lifelong resident Agnes told me, as they required it for their own living quarters and operations. Some residents drew on these contributions when comparing life on Unst with that of neighbouring islands, such as Fetlar. John, for example, tells me (with a hint of schadenfreude) that “Fetlar didn’t get electricity for another decade”.

The RAF also started a major road-building project across the island so that materials could be transported from the port in the south of the island with greater ease. As mentioned in the logbook extract in 3.2, there were few cars on the island at this time. Nevertheless, road building provided frequent work for many residents for a number of years. Others talked to me about the “many benefits to the RAF on Unst”, such as the social scene they brought with them, as well as access to emergency services and health care.

However, as is apparent, residents of Unst were heavily involved in the construction and maintenance of “space-age technology” on the island. Rather than being “slow to adapt to change”, residents of the island were quick to take full advantage of the military’s presence. Many well-travelled islanders were ready to take advantage of diasporic connections in Canada and New Zealand to find work before the RAF arrived. However, many chose to stay in Unst when they realised that they would be able to structure their economy and parts of their livelihoods around the regular presence of military people and things.

In Unst, memories of military presence are mostly looked upon favourably. This is particularly the case when residents compare what was once available to
them through the RAF to the resources and infrastructure provided by the Shetland Islands Council (and the organisations that preceded them). A community archaeologist on the Mainland reiterated this to me by claiming that perceptions of distance and disenfranchisement (even from mainland Shetland) are “recurring themes in Unst” (for more on this 3.9). It was even suggested that other islanders in Shetland sometimes considered people in Unst to have been a little “spoiled” by the RAF and the consequences of the Cold War (cf. art project and oral histories reference). Some felt, it was “unrealistic” for residents of Unst to expect the same level of resources now that the military (and oil) have gone.

The longer I spent on the island, the more nuanced the picture of past military presence became. Therefore, overtime, I was increasingly unable to give to accounts of segregation much credibility in this case. Narratives that characterise a strict separation between a “space age” technologies and rustic island community are representative of a pastoral interpretation of island life (see also Gillis 2004; Redfield 2000). Such narratives and surface impressions failed to embrace the richness and complexity of lived experience in Unst. As I delved deeper into the relationships between the RAF, the island and its resident communities, I found a very different story to the conventional understanding of Cold War relations. In the section below, I present a few examples that demonstrate the complexity of these social and economic ties and some of the ways in which they are remembered in the present.

3.6 – UNST AND THE RAF: PAST PRESENCE
In this section, I will provide an interpretation of how histories of military and civilian relations are manifest in everyday “memory work” (see below). In conventional accounts of Cold War militarisation, such as Hennessy’s described above, military personnel and local residents are often understood to carve out parallel lives in the landscape. However, in Unst, I encountered suggestions of much deeper entanglements and interconnections. Life in and around RAF Saxa Vord, as I will argue, was not always subject to such stringent divisions. Here, I will focus on developing this idea through the history of social, spatial and material relations.
Memory work refers to various practices and performances that actively (although not always intentionally) constitute the past in the present (e.g. Hodge 2011). In this case, I will be providing examples of numerous conversations I had with people in Unst where the recent past was invoked, as well as accounts of people’s reminiscences about past military presence. Here, I am looking at the legacies of Cold War militarisation, which emerge in everyday contexts and exchanges – predominantly in discourse and language. Nevertheless, I still pay close attention to the materiality and space of the radar station and other military infrastructures (see also 3.9).

The first examples relate to the availability of work that came with military presence. As mentioned in the sections above, long-term residents were almost unanimous in voicing the importance of available labour, which the RAF provided during the second half of the twentieth century. People were relatively unequivocal about these benefits. One woman for instance, stated simply, “the military brought work and money into the island, so it was good for the economy”. Yet, people were less enamoured with the kind of work that was offered to island residents. In order to stay in Unst, people had to take whatever work was available, for instance, dull work monitoring electricity supplies or hard graft in the military messes and kitchens. “They weren’t really good jobs”, Agnes tells me, “but at least people could stay home [in Unst]”.

People were not necessarily nostalgic for their former roles at the RAF camp. Rather, it was the opportunities such work afforded, as well as the consequences that regular employment had for social life on the island. An Unst-born woman who worked at the local heritage centre, for instance, informed me that the construction of Saxa Vord had prevented her family from having to emigrate:

“My whole family was going to have to emigrate to New Zealand until my father heard about RAF Saxa Vord. He was a joiner you see, he knew he’d get work and that’s the reason we stayed”.

Without necessarily intending to, the military provided people in Unst with a means to stay connected to the island – ensuring continuity of social and familial relations. Which, as elsewhere, is recognised as being central to identity and belonging in Shetland (e.g. Cohen 1982). Anthropologist Anthony Cohen (1982: 2), for example, 106
explored the experience of close social association on the island of Whalsay. He argued that belonging “implies very much more than merely having been born in the place”. Belonging “suggests that one is an integral piece of the marvellously complicated fabric that constitutes the community” (*ibid.*: 2).

In a similar vein, Agnes claims that the flexibility and part-time nature of much of the work also meant that people had time to work their crofts, which were no longer profitable enough to provide a regular income (see Abrams 2005). However, people wanted to carry on working their plots, as I was frequently told, “crofting is in the genes here”. The importance of land was often made explicit to me as residents would stop me and point out the boundaries of their current and old family crofts. Therefore, another unintended consequence of military presence was the ability to carry on working (or at least living) on land that had been tenanted to particular families for generations, allowing for a sense of continuity (although see Macdonald 1997).

These outcomes of military presence, intended or not, demonstrate that the process of Cold War militarisation is perhaps more complicated than is sometimes allowed. In many places, the military are recognised as agents of destruction and disconnection (e.g. Pearson et al 2010). In Joy Parr’s (2010) work, for example, the Canadian military are responsible for historic land clearances that forced generations of farmers off their land. In Gagetown, in New Brunswick, for instance, agricultural producers were displaced to make way for a Cold War “megaproject” – a giant NATO tank training area. The separation from landscapes where people had toiled and “gave material form to their aspirations” had severe consequences:

“For some, this was a connection so visceral that upon their being displaced from the valley [by the Canadian Army], they too withered and died” (Parr 2010: 38).

However, in Unst, the material and labour requirements of the radar station meant that the military occupation of space has come to be associated with *connections* during the Cold War period rather than *disconnections* (at least for the most part). This is also suggests that the military site itself was important in the past, even if it is no longer prominent in contemporary practices and discourse (3.4).

Rather than suggest a direct fondness for the RAF or the Cold War itself, this indicates a kind of nostalgia for a period of abundant and flexible work. For
some people in Unst, the Cold War is representative of past social cohesion and economic possibility (as are other pasts and temporalities). In her study of reinvented mining festivals in northeast England, Susan Wright (1992) highlights the complexities of such a position. Former miners, she points out, would often recollect and draw on memories of more prosperous periods and steady employment during the production and performance of industrial heritage (ibid.: 31). However, these were not simply romantic yearnings. They were a form of practice that gave them an opportunity to make sense of change and critically engage with contemporary social and political circumstances (ibid.; see also 2.8; Macdonald 2013a: 93). People in Unst used the Cold War period in a similar way. Some residents, for example, would contrast the more stable time of military presence with contemporary insecurities. Agnes, for instance, compared the connections afforded by the RAF to the present disruption of her own family ties. She tells me her children now work “away” in England (see also Macdonald 1997).

The second set of examples relate to the development and complexity of personal relationships and social life in Unst during the period of military presence. As I mentioned above, Cold War military sites were often restricted spaces and off limits to civilians. In certain respects, this was upheld in Unst. Local residents working down the bunkers during maintenance periods, for example, were often asked to leave the room if a Soviet aircraft was being tracked or if a confidential transmission was being broadcast. “When there was a radio message coming through”, one former civilian employee of the camp recalled, “I had to go outside. When I came back in, they had covered up a lot of the equipment with white sheets so I didn’t know what was going on”.

Nonetheless, residents and military personnel lived and worked in close proximity and were actively encouraged to interact. One former RAF commanding officer, for instance, claimed that, “things were often done differently in more remote places”. Referring to his own time at RAF Benbecula in the Western Isles of Scotland, he talked about the importance military management placed on good community relations, which were deemed essential in such places due to the propinquity of service people and civilians. Something similar had been at work
here. “Unst accepted the RAF”, Margaret, a woman in her 70s told me, “there was little ill feeling at all”.

Military-civilian relations were close in Unst. Due to the size of the island and the population, they came to rely on one another for various social interactions. Military staff frequented local shops and pubs and locals were given access to the messes and the military clubs, “we used the NAAFI and the Sergeants Mess”, one older resident told me, “those places were just part of the community”\(^{10}\). Given the relatively small number of people on the island, they also relied on each other for participation in charity and sporting events (see figure 3.4). These were mostly organised by the RAF, such as “all night golf games” during the “simmer dim” (the longest day of the year), boat races and dramatic performances in the local village halls. Many people had also been to school with (or taught) a number of children from RAF families. Many residents compare this period of buzz and activity with the present quiet following the RAF’s departure.

This led to many close entanglements between members of both communities. For example, one former military employee told me stories about a number of RAF personnel who fully embraced life on Unst and “went native”. During my time on the island, several people pointed out houses or plots of land where former RAF personnel had decided to live on crofts (“to try to live off the land”) instead of their allocated billets (which was sometimes permitted at Saxa Vord). This was a topic of amusement for some long-term residents.

\(^{10}\) In 4.2, I quoted from the logbook entries written by the Commanding Officer at Saxa Vord. In 1960, James Grant refers to the lack of pubs in Shetland. Shortly after, the prohibition on serving alcohol was lifted on the island and the military contributed to the changing forms of sociality that developed around its consumption.
Mary, a former teacher and the manager of the heritage centre, suggests that living amongst people in Unst gave military personnel a sense of belonging (at least vicariously):

“They could belong and be part of the community. Having to shift so often, most of them didn’t put roots down anywhere. If you
asked them where they came from, they couldn’t tell you. Where do they come from?”

Mary had to admit that this sense of belonging was temporary however, and was only extended for the duration of their stay (usually 18-months). Agnes reiterated this too, telling me that she had only stayed in touch with a few “pals” from the RAF. This was sometimes awkward and difficult to negotiate in the contemporary landscape when former personnel returned to the island for a visit – “especially when they remembered so much about you and the island but you can’t remember them at all”. A common strategy was to play along, Mary told me, “you rack your brains” until a common event or thread from the past emerges. “Some you remember better than others”.

Marriages between military employees and Unst residents were also relatively common – especially during the 1960s. Many joked about a degree of tension surrounding this at the time, which was also alluded to in contemporary press coverage (e.g. Shetland Times 1957). “Think about it”, one resident told me, “you had the quiet young crofter and the young air force man in a fancy uniform with all the lines of chat” – some of the local men felt as if “the air force men were pinching all the women…from under their noses”. Something more was going on here though. Issues of belonging and fears about the depopulation of the island also came to the fore. For instance, one woman described how her sister had “married an air force fellow and disappeared off”. In this regard, despite helping to maintain social relations some also note that the RAF contributed to the dislocation of some by way of their presence. Many of the women who married RAF men followed them to their next posting and did not return. However, on the other hand, a number of these couples eventually came back to retire in Shetland.

Research into the processes of militarisation has increasingly emphasised the problematic nature of separations and dichotomies between military and civilian life (e.g. Farish 2010; Gusterson 2007; Lutz 2004). In this case, Cold War military practices and activities, due to the small area of shared space, spilled over into civilian life. However, rather than environmental spillage, aggressive behaviour or unwanted noise (e.g. Gillem 2007), the unassuming character of radar operations meant that people were more focused on recalling the overlapping and entangled relationships between the two communities.
Due to the proximity of civilian and military lives – coupled with the abundance of work and life that the military camp brought with it – residents of Unst remain relatively nostalgic about this time. However, as I noted, this yearning for the recent past is mostly a longing for a time of economic prosperity and social activity, which is inextricably tied to the Cold War period in Unst. As Jeanette Edwards (1998) has shown in her ethnographic study of historic practices in “Newtown” in northern England, nostalgia does not exist in a critical vacuum. While people may be well aware of the negative or more uncomfortable aspects of the past, they are still able to draw on particular periods as a means of understanding change in the present. In the sections that follow, I will explore some of the ways in which this nostalgia is triggered and stirred through encounters in the landscape.

3.7 – QUIET: NEGOTIATING ABSENCE
Since 2001, the size of RAF operations at Saxa Vord was gradually cut and personnel numbers were reduced to a skeleton staff. However, the closely connected lives of the military and civilians in Unst were finally disentangled following the closure of the radar site in 2006. The economic, social and infrastructural threads mapped out in the previous section, began to fray and snap as the military extricated themselves from the island. These breakages are the starting point for discussion in this section. Here, I will document the changing constellation of these relationships and how they are registered through experiences of absence in the contemporary landscape. As I will point out, absence is also a trigger for nostalgia in Unst.

On an unusually clear morning in July 2013, I galumphed down the road towards Haroldswick beach – my arms were weighed down by half a dozen shopping bags. Smoke was rising from the reconstructed Viking roundhouse and I stood watching costumed volunteers – as part of a weeklong heritage event – taking a group of tourists across the deck of the replica longship, the Skidbladner. “Where are you headed?” Startled, I turned to look at the driver of a car that had pulled up beside me. Leslie, a woman in her early 30s had taken pity on me. She had seen me labouring pathetically with my bags. She ushered me in and we began to talk as she drove me back towards the Saxa Vord Resort. “I’m originally from Unst”, she tells
me, “but now I stay in Lerwick”. She’d come back to visit family on the island. Leslie had decided to return during UnstFest – a three-week festival of music, heritage activities and sporting events. “The festival brings back a buzz to Unst for a few weeks a year: a bit of noise and excitement that’s been missing since the RAF left”.

A few days later, I was sitting in the kitchen of a local artist and sculptor chatting over a steaming mug of green tea. Lumps of metal and junk were sprawled across the kitchen surfaces and a spicy smell of burnt incense lingered in the room. The artist, Tony is in his 40s and originally from East Anglia. He relocated to Unst eight years ago. As we talked, I mentioned what Leslie had said about islanders missing the RAF. “As an incomer I was glad to see them go – but I’m one of the few. I wanted the wild windswept isle”, he said with a wry smile, “an island with not many people on it. The military were screwing that up for me”. This was in contradiction to the majority of the island though: “I think they do kind of miss the RAF”. Many long-term residents have been affected by the change, something he has noticed in his relatively short time on the island. “Think about it”, he urged, “they remember the gigs at the NCO bar; maybe they married someone from the
RAF; the military were the entertainment centre if you like”. A few decades ago, he tells me, “there would have been lots going on. Pretty much everything was coming through the military camp”. Following the closure of the station, all that has changed.

In the contemporary landscape there is evidence of these changing relations everywhere. The mere mention of Saxa Vord, for example, often diverts conversations towards the impact of its closure: the people who have left to find work or the businesses which have folded. Without the military, certain livelihoods are simply no longer viable in Unst. I often saw articles in the local press advertising bargain prices for former RAF houses at upcoming auctions. Many of the buildings have stood empty for the better part of a decade. “Good quality houses”, I was told, “just not enough people to fill ‘em”.

Some residents, to my surprise, were also curating past connections to the station. Jim, for example, had hung a framed image of an intercepted Soviet aircraft above the counter to his shop. He had previously worked as a civilian engineer in a sub-station that provided electricity to the RAF camp. During an interview Jim revealed that the photo was a gift from Saxa Vord’s final Commanding Officer (CO). Through gifting and display Jim and the CO are making a strong statement about the connection between their own biographies, the closure of the radar station and the landscape. Although staff or customers seldom remark upon the photograph its very presence establishes a relationship between the RAF and local community. Practices such as these are a means of documenting, materialising and negotiating the “absent presence” of the RAF (see Hetherington 2004; Meyer 2012). As sociologist Morgan Meyer (2012: 103) argues, “absence [is] not a thing in itself but…something that exists through relations that give absence matter”.

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11 In 3.9, I discuss a number of similar practices in a café to the north where a group of islanders and former personnel have also created a small museum and exhibition (see Macdonald 2002a; see also 3.9).
In her article ‘Relationality, place and absence’, anthropologist Catherine Degnen (2005: 737) argues that the past and memory are rendered in “three dimensions” through “mundane” practices in the landscape. In her research among older residents of Dodworth in northern England, Degnen observed the ways in which long-term residents referenced the past through activities such as walking, taking trips to the shops and gathering in local social spaces. These activities gave people opportunities to note and remark upon physical changes to the space of the village and negotiate shifting perceptions of past and present (see also Irving 2006).

Likewise, for many residents in Unst, the absence of the RAF is most acutely felt though everyday encounters in the landscape. For instance, when cycling or driving along the roads to the north of the island – which are themselves a product of the RAF’s presence – some residents are affected by the lack of traffic, activity and noise. As with Jim’s practice of display these experiences of change and absence are embodied and rooted in the senses. They are experienced through simply living in and being in a dynamic environment (e.g. Macdonald 2013a: 80; Hodges 2010).

During my time in Unst, people would frequently make remarks about recent changes to the environment. As I mentioned above, most people would pass comment on past social relations with the military community. However, there was
also something else going on – a tacit response to change. The departure of the military had enforced a rehabilitation of individual and community sense of place and home (see also Rapport and Dawson 1998). One key expression of these felt absences in Unst relates to a sense of quiet (both sonically and metaphorically), which has descended upon the island after the RAF and the service personnel vacated (see also Leslie above). The lack of certain kinds of noise represents a key expression of the RAF’s absence in Unst.

To be in the landscape of Unst, as anywhere, is to be immersed in sound. The longer I spent in Unst, the better I was able to tune into its contemporary and seasonal frequencies. Even in the summer, the wind is a constant companion. Despite the absence of trees, the constant gales in Unst find no shortage of materials to animate. If it is not creaking and slamming metal gates, it is vibrating overhead power cables (creating a melodic hum); if it is not rattling the wooden panels on abandoned buildings and crofts, it is whispering and sputtering in your ears. Frequent spring and summer downpours rush, bounce and patter on asphalt and stone, whereas they hiss and puddle in the dense peat and grasses. Regular thick fogs muffle noise. The sea roars ceaselessly, wherever you are on the island, transforming into a delicate and ambient sound inland.

Humans and animals also make up a significant layer of Unst’s textured sounds. Some of the most prominent and familiar emanate from birds: skylarks whistle, almost invisible in the grasses; red throated divers wail at high-pitches in the peats; and huge colonies of seabirds such as gannets honk and squeak in a cacophonous frenzy around the cliffs. Sheep and lambs are perhaps the island’s most persistent source of noise – bleating and calling from early morning until late at night. Walking the island, it is possible to go for miles without hearing a human voice – although sometimes thought I could hear soft murmurings in the wind. Walking through the villages – entering the handful of pubs, shops and cafes – and ambling past people’s homes and crofts, the regular hubbub of chattering voices, radios and televisions can be heard. During festivals and parades, the clamour increases tenfold. For the most part, there is very little traffic or industrial noise in Unst. You are more likely to hear the screeching breaks of a bicycle than the rumbling engine of a car or a motorbike. For many, Unst might be a quiet or quieter landscape now, but it is also a place rich with sound.
3.7.1 Anne and Mike: sonic deficit

Epidemiologists and landscape planners have long established connections between environmental “noise pollution” and physical and psychological well-being (e.g. Babisch 2006; Gidlöf-Gunnarsson and Öhrström 2007; see also Maitland 2008: 3). Historian of Science and Technology Karin Bijsterveld (2008), for example, has charted the emergence of “mechanical sound” as a problem in twentieth century public life. The sonic environment underwent major transformations during this period as people moved into ever expanding urban areas that were characterised by noisy technologies and infrastructure (see also Thompson 2004). For the first time, noise abatement laws were instituted to nullify what were deemed to be excessive levels of sound (Bijsterveld 2008; see also Cox 2014).

By way of contrast, quiet is often invoked as a positive quality in many rural landscapes such as Unst. For instance, writer Sara Maitland (2008: 225) suggests that romanticism has made a “particular sort of silence…central to our culture” (one that is suggestive of solitude and space). Part of the appeal of natural and rural environments, according to the author, is their capacity for “silence”. Practices such as walking in the countryside (particularly in romantically inflected landscapes such as the Lake District; see also Edmonds 2006) are understood as beneficial in contrast to noisy urban environments. These kinds of tropes are also evident in Tony’s desire to escape to a quiet windswept isle (see above).

If one was to take such perspectives for granted, one might expect the noise of military presence in Unst to be interpreted in a similar fashion, as something harmful or disturbing (e.g. see Cox 2014). However, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, for some residents the absence of military noise has come to signify the “quiet” that as descended on the island. As I will discuss, these notions of quiet are embedded in culturally and historically specific frameworks of experience and take on a range of symbolic and metaphoric meanings (see also Schwartz 2011: 800). This is especially evident in the case of Anne and Mike, a couple I met in Unst while staying in the north of the island.

Anne worked at the Saxa Vord Resort where I was staying and invited me into her home to interview her and her husband. Sitting with Anne and Mike in their living room, I began to get a sense of the way in which life had changed for them since Saxa Vord closed. Mainly, they tell me, it’s quiet here now. In fact -
Mike is emphatic – ‘it’s silent’. During the course of the interview, they highlight some things that have changed since the RAF left, much of which, at least on first appearances, seems relatively mundane. One example they give is the absent sights and sounds of military movements along the roads. ‘We notice the lack of traffic’, they both tell me. In the past, ‘you would always see the buses, the trucks…and the camouflage vehicles; and ‘at night, you could hear the drone of the land rovers’.

The road by their house was once part of a busy traffic route, which transported people and materials to and from the operational and domestic sites, connecting it to other parts of the island, mainland Shetland and the rest of the UK. ‘Traffic was always on the go’, they tell me; more generally, life on the island ‘was always on the go’. For Anne and Mike, the memory of military noise establishes them as an absent presence in the landscape.

After all the talk of stillness and quiet, the room descended into a bit of a hush – there was a pause in proceedings. A large mechanical clock tick-tocked in the background. I slurped some tea and Mike snapped and chomped on a biscuit. Anne breaks the awkward silence: ‘We’ll be moving to the south of mainland Shetland next year’. They say it’s because their house is too big now, although to some extent, I can’t shake the feeling that their experience of the present is slightly overshadowed by nostalgia for a time when the island was ‘on the go’. ‘We had the best of both worlds’, Mike recalls. They, like many others I interviewed, spoke fondly about the social life that had surrounded the camp. Although Mike was a civilian worker, his position with the company and on site at Saxa Vord meant that he was granted a membership for the Officers’ and Sergeants’ Messes, as well as access to ‘lower ranks’, meaning that they could socialise in areas where locals gathered at the domestic camp. For them, the closure of the site meant a break in social relations. ‘They should never have got rid of it’, Mike assured me, shaking his head. ‘Everyone seemed to work at the station or was related to someone who did. I call it the Saxa Vord connection’, Mike added. ‘That’s the way of life here’ – or at least, he added, it was.

For Anne and Mike, as well as other long-term residents (particularly older islanders), the absence of certain sounds regularly signals the departure of the RAF and the dislocation of previously entangled relationships. As a result of this rupture, they experience a lack, which has altered their everyday sensory
experience. After they moved to the island in the 1980s – both finding work at the station – the military’s presence has always been integral to their sense of place and home. They became habituated to the rhythms and resonances of RAF personnel and machines.

Some people in Unst, therefore, miss the noise of the military: lorry traffic going up and down the hill, or the occasional sublime roar as a jet flew over on course for an interception, the clamour at the many social events, the sound and sensuous hum of activity. In the absence of the RAF, people such as Anne and Mike have struggled to retune and readjust to new social, economic and sensorial realities. Even the most mundane aspects of the remembered past, such as the familiar sound of traffic, when absent, are capable of unsettling people’s sense of being in the landscape (see Seremetakis 1993). Therefore, these echoes and flashes of the Cold War past in Unst appear to chime with what Seremetakis (1993 and 1994) refers to as ‘the memory of the senses’.

FIGURE 3.7 “It’s quiet here now – it’s silent”. Empty road heading out of Baltasound towards the north of the island. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).
3.8 – CRITICAL AND COUNTER-NOSTALGIA

“Come take a step back in time”, Trevor intoned, as I walked through the sliding doors into one of his garages-cum-museums. The rooms were littered with things he had “saved” from destruction: old agricultural machinery, second world war helmets, dolls, a broken light from a Soviet Trawler that ran aground; more things crammed into a space than I think I had ever seen before (it was an amazing sight). For many years, he and his sons had worked on preserving and “fixing up” many of these things. This mainly involved cleaning up and restoring old engines to show interested visitors and residents. They aspired to open a museum of sorts at their home (a passion perhaps inherited from his wife who established the Unst museum and heritage centre).

Trevor’s interest was mainly old farming equipment but he would pull any object with any age to it from skips or anywhere else for that matter (if he felt they had a modicum of value). “Without all this stuff…I just thought, that’s our heritage gone”. One time, he had seen a truck loaded with old tractor parts heading for the dump. He stopped the drivers and traded the old bits for a bottle of whiskey. He was terrified at the thought of these things from the Unst’s past “disappearing”. In her study of folk-museums in the Isle of Skye, Sharon Macdonald (2002) provides examples of people saving “old things” as a means of resisting the accelerated effects of change in the contemporary world. Something similar is occurring with Trevor’s and his journey “back in time”.

Although Trevor did not curate objects related to the period of military presence in Unst, he did use memories of the Cold War as a means of making sense of change. As I mentioned previously, Trevor would often refer to the period of RAF presence rather romantically, “everyone was happy; the atmosphere was fantastic”. Traditionally, it is has been understood as a kind of naïve and even pathological longing to return to the past (e.g. see Hewison 1987). However, as Cashman (2006) has argued, nostalgia is not simply an unreflexive response or yearning for the past. It can be thought about as a “critical” response to the present. For example, Cashman (ibid.) argues that critical nostalgia “provides a substantial number of people critical equipment for living in an unfamiliar present and, as we shall see, for shaping a more desirable future”.

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FIGURE 3.8 Exploring one of Trevor’s garage-museums. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).

FIGURE 3.9 Trevor presenting the light salvaged from the Soviet Trawler that ran aground in Unst in 1967. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).
In Trevor’s case, this desirable future is any form of improvement with regards to the situation in Unst. For him, the absent presence of the RAF evokes memories of better times on the island. Rather than seek a return to these times, however, he is using the Cold War as a reference marker for future developments. For example, he often uses the period of military presence following comments about current political issues or problems surrounding local funding. For instance, on one occasion, he was getting animated about the cuts to the ferry services and the lack of investment in Unst’s boating terminals. As a means of comparison, he spoke to me about the investments the military had made in the landscape, such as the creation of Ordale airport that ran for a number of decades. Other residents also used the Cold War past to make sense of issues and problems in the present. For instance, Agnes talked about the closure of Ordale airport, which was sanctioned by the Shetland Island council. She described it as “a real blow”. Agnes compared this to the RAF’s departure:

“we understood that when they left, it was time, they [the RAF] had little control over it. But the airport, that was worse. It is a bigger blow when it’s your own people making these decisions”.

Here, Agnes, Trevor and others are using the Cold War period as a conduit for evaluating changing relationships between Unst islanders and Mainland Shetlanders. On the surface, these things appear to be completely unrelated. However, here, a connection is made between these things as a means of critical evaluation. As Cashman (2006) notes, critical nostalgia can serve an “existential” purpose as well as an instrumental one, which enables people to understand their place in the world (and in response to its ongoing flux) via “backward glances” towards the past.

An additional thread of nostalgia that I encountered on Unst is what I will call “counter nostalgia” (see also Kannike 2009). Rather than draw upon the Cold War or past relationships to the RAF, some residents have responded to the military’s absence in a manner that does not dwell on the past. For instance, many younger people in Unst, those with young families and those that worked in the schools, were determined to bring back some of the “buzz” to Unst. This was most
evident in the creation of Unstfest, a three-week long festival in the summer that focused on the performance of a plethora of histories and traditions that wend their way through Unst: marching of the Up Helly Aa squads (people dressed up in Viking costume who participate in the annual fire festival); history walks detailing the life of “gutter lasses” from the herring boom and a range of sporting events and tournaments. Although these referenced different pasts, they appeared to be a direct response to the military’s absence (and former presence). Arguably, this was a form of counter-nostalgia that did not directly reference other resident’s laments for the military’s departure, but demonstrated a different (perhaps defiant) approach to the current problems facing Unst. This kind of variation supports anthropologist Matt Hodges (2010) claim that we should critically distinguish between forms of nostalgia. Even in the same place, residents might draw upon differing conceptions of ‘then’ and ‘now’, which has implications for the way in which the past is put to work.

3.9 – COLLECTING AND CURATING MEMORIES OF SAXA VORD
As elsewhere in the UK, since the late 1980s, a number of heritage centres, archaeological reconstructions and museums have been established in Unst - catering to local residents and tourists alike. Most of the exhibits focus on objects of everyday life (crofting, fishing and boating), natural history (mostly seabirds and geology), as well as historic and cultural links to Scandinavia and the ‘Viking’ past. There is also a small exhibition, Memories of Saxa Vord, which is dedicated to the history of the RAF station. This memorial display will be the focus of this section.

Drawing attention to this display is useful for two main reasons. Firstly, the Memories exhibit provides another area to explore historic and contemporary relations between the RAF and civilian communities, this time through historic objects and photographs – providing an additional element to the felt absences and forms of nostalgia discussed in the previous sections. In contrast to Section 4.3, the display also represents a rare context for Unst, a place in which Cold War materialities are presented as a form of heritage. Secondly, the history and location of the exhibition, at least for some residents, provides a space in which authentic relationships to people and place - as well as past military presence - are negotiated and contested (more on this below).
FIGURE 3. Memories of Saxa Vord exhibit. This small space contains salvaged signs and printouts of photographs from various RAF and community events. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).
Memories of Saxa Vord was assembled in 2007, just a year after the radar station closed. It is located in a redundant RAF medical centre, recently repurposed as a café and souvenir shop - part of ongoing refurbishments at the former domestic site. The exhibit consists of a series of work-in-progress displays spread over three rooms, only two of which are currently open to the public. In the first room, visitors are presented with a visual history of RAF Saxa Vord. Primarily, this focuses on aspects of social life surrounding the station (see figure 3.10). This theme spills over into the second exhibition space, which also offers a brief account of Saxa Vord’s operational history. In addition, formal portrait photos of service personnel are situated throughout – images that provide faces and, where possible, names for the now absent radar unit. As for the third room, provisionally labelled ‘Heart of Saxa Vord – Personnel Room’, there are plans to house a growing collection of images donated to the museum by ex-RAF staff.

Most of the exhibits are visual and documentary materials - photographs, newspaper clippings and fragments from logbooks - arranged to tell a somewhat nostalgic story of station life at Saxa Vord. There are few artefacts to speak of: a couple of redundant signs from the operational site and camp areas; some recent RAF uniforms (few, if any, of which were worn by staff at the station); and a series of flags, ceremonial plaques and other paraphernalia such as wooden boards, which list senior officers who have served at Saxa.

One or two randome panels have also been repurposed as display cases, housing information and a series of images relating to the radar equipment and domes that once operated at the site. For the most part, these objects are left to speak for themselves, with very little guidance in terms of historical context or biographical information (display labels are mostly absent; see figure 3.11). Ostensibly, the curators are trying to establish a sense of connection and legitimacy by framing content in these materials from the site – a means of conferring legitimacy on the display. This is important in relation to this site as these collections have a contested biography.
In this regard, the collections are used to draw attention to an institutional past – the RAF’s former presence, as well as the once close relationship between the military and civilian communities in Unst. In contrast, there are very few attempts to contextualise and connect the station to broader historical narratives. For instance, only loose connections are made to the Cold War period, through exhibits such as an ‘honour board’, which records the names of Fighter Controllers who intercepted Soviet aircraft at Saxa Vord between the 1970s and the early 1990s. However, unlike other radar exhibitions, such as those at Hack Green in Cheshire or the Air Defence Radar Museum at Neatishead, no attempt is made to outline or reference a ‘Cold War’ past (see also Chapter 3). Curatorial choices, which we will discuss in more detail below, have led to an impression that it is the personal histories of service people that are valued and objectified here.

At first glance then, Memories of Saxa Vord appears to be a straightforward attempt to represent the experience of former service personnel on Unst. Through this focus on past military employees and their experience of life at the station, it could be argued that the exhibition is an attempt - through amateur practices of collection and display - to re-establish and consolidate fragmented relationships (as well as facilitate ongoing connections) surrounding the island and the station.
principally motivated by the closure of RAF Saxa Vord in 2006. As mentioned above, this is also signalled by the donation of images by former employees (more on this below; see also Chapter 6). Nevertheless, a more detailed exploration of the exhibition’s curatorial history, as well as the somewhat convoluted biography of display materials, highlights a more complex set of meanings and relations, which I will turn to next.

As with many other amateur and independent museums, there are no formal records relating to the acquisition and assembly of the exhibits used in the Memories display (see Candlin 2012; see also Chapter 4). However, oral testimonies provide some insight into the meanings and values surrounding these collections. For instance, some of the photographs and objects used in the Memories museum were collected during the 1990s as part of an earlier exhibition, setup by military and civilian staff at Saxa Vord. The intention was to create a temporary exhibit for visiting station commanders. At the time, the commanding officer at Saxa Vord, one of the exhibitions curators told me, wanted to represent ‘internal life’ at the camp and celebrate the ‘integration of the RAF into [and with] the local community’. Although this original display was never exhibited (the tour of visiting dignitaries was cancelled), some of the individuals involved in the process became known as ‘archivists’ – collectors and gatekeepers of station histories and memorabilia.

Once long-term members of the local community heard about my research and my interest in the exhibit, several people suggested I go and speak with Barbara, a former employee of the camp. On one occasion, I was sat with Barbara and her sister in their family home, sipping tea and chatting about her work at the station. ‘They used to call me the archivist’, she tells me, on account of her assiduous collecting of historic documents and photographs relating to RAF Saxa Vord. ‘The hoarder more like’, her sister interjected, laughing. Barbara shrugged off her sister’s cajoling, looking away - pretending to be offended - she remarked that it was ‘not hoarding’, but rather, ‘it was important work’. During the first (ill-fated) exhibition, Barbara had been tasked with assembling and curating objects for display. Even after the exhibition was shelved, Barbara did not stop collecting. ‘They [the RAF] gave me the biggest office in the entire camp – so I could keep and organise all the paperwork and archives I’d collected’. It was during this
process that she developed a keen interest in the history of the station and began to assemble records and memorabilia en masse, some of which would eventually find its way into the *Memories* museum.

When the station was operational, Barbara was something of a linchpin between the RAF and local communities. After moving to the island from mainland UK, she worked at the station in various capacities over a number of decades – as a property manager, planner, health and safety officer, as well as liaison for civilian workers at Saxa Vord. She is also well connected in the local community and is married to an Unst-born man. Throughout my conversations with Barbara, her former role in both communities was something she held as important, particular her work at Saxa Vord. On several occasions, she made this explicit, describing her job title as being ‘high-rank’. She also stressed that she remains ‘well connected’ with staff currently working within the MOD.

When announcements were made about the station’s closure, Barbara’s practices of collecting only intensified. People in the local community and within the RAF brought their mementos and memorabilia to Barbara, ‘the archivist’, for safekeeping. She recalls the mass of material, ‘boxes and boxes’ of the stuff. At this time, she was anxious to save as much as possible. The future of the objects, as with Barbara’s own position, was increasingly uncertain. Once the military departed, she began to use these objects, particularly the photos, to ‘keep in touch’ with former personnel by sharing images of the station’s past, often through online social networking sites. Historic objects like these, she tells me, ‘have the power to bring people together and remember’. Barbara’s own personal biography, and the unique biographies of the photos and documents she had collected, had become closely intertwined.

During one of our final exchanges, Barbara stressed that ‘it is important not to forget’. However, there appears to be something more going on here than simple memory work. One could argue that Barbara has begun to use these historic materials – the island’s radar past - to renegotiate a sense of identity and social standing following the RAF’s departure. For someone like Barbara, who was so invested in community ties, the absence of the military signals not only a loss in terms of personal security – through jobs or capital, but also a developing sense of insecurity in terms of her social relationships. It could be argued that the historic
objects that she and others collected for exhibitions, as well as for the sake of posterity, have given Barbara a means to mediate and stay connected to past networks of relations (that were predicated on the military’s presence); relationships that were dislocated by the station’s closure. With this in mind, I will now turn to the final stages of the collections biography, before exploring the implications of these histories for perceptions of the *Memories* exhibit.

Saxa Vord’s last commanding officer spoke of his desire to see an exhibition related to the station, during a speech at the site’s closing ceremony in 2006 (see Carle 2010b). Around this time, there were no concrete plans for a museum or display and the documents, photos and objects that Barbara and others had amassed, went into storage. For over a year, they sat in boxes in an empty building in the now vacated camp. After only twelve months, a use for the images and objects was found when a couple in their early 60s, Bob and Helen, who had recently moved to the island from the south of England, setup a business in the old domestic site – they opened a space for tourists selling hot drinks, homemade chocolates and other souvenirs in the refurbished building that had once been the RAF medical centre (although the building itself had only been constructed in 2001). With the boxes of material ostensibly available on site and ample room to erect a small display in the medical building, Mike and Helen, with the help of a former RAF officer, offered to create a memorial to the former RAF station, which later became *Memories of Saxa Vord*.

Once the *Memories* display was opened, some residents (mostly in private) questioned the validity of the display. After exploring Barbara’s case, it is clear that the objects themselves had been highly valued at certain points in their biography. Now however, as far as some residents were concerned, they were being devalued, used to merely “attract tourists”. This appears to be suggestive of the notion that these once valued relationships were being commodified in this context – incorporated into a commercial tourist centre. Traditionally, there has been an assumption that “selling the past” somehow sullies it, makes it inauthentic (e.g. Macdonald 2013a: 135). However, as Regina Bendix (2008) and others have shown (e.g, Bithell 2003), seeking out opportunities to sell the past can also be a means of enhancing significance for some people (a means of conferring legitimacy).
However, in this instance, some residents took a more conventional view of the venue. Although many people appreciated the gesture, some felt that the location of the collections in this space (and by people who had no prior connections to the relationships on display) was problematic. There was evident dissonance between the physical and metaphorical ownership of these objects. Therefore, in this instance, historical materials relating to the radar site and community relations are embroiled in local discourses and power relations concerning a sense of belonging.

3.10 – CONCLUSIONS
In this chapter, I have demonstrated that the legacy of Cold War militarisation is not always a straightforward opposition between military and civilian communities. As a result, I argued, close attention needs to be paid to the dynamic web of relationships that shift and evolve over time. For example, in Unst, the close proximity of the RAF to island residents developed into a series of close entanglements – chiefly in terms of social ties, the local economy and civil-military infrastructure. The nature of these relationships shaped past and present conceptions of the Cold War on the island. For instance, the Cold War period was recognised as bringing a sense of security to the island, somewhat paradoxically, as it kept the military presence in place on the island. Once the drawn out tensions diminished in the 1990s, operations at the site were eventually wound down.

The eventual departure of the military fragmented and frayed these local relationships and left a vacuum on Unst. This created a sense of nostalgia for some residents on the island (and even counter-nostalgia in others), which looked to make sense of and critically evaluate present circumstances. As I noted, the Cold War remains a relatively ethereal concept in these nostalgia practices and is used as a means of making reference to a period of relative prosperity. However, as I mentioned, these pasts are not yearned for – people do not seek a return to the Cold War and its tensions. Instead, the Cold War becomes a temporal marker, a reference point to think about and constitute possible futures for Unst.

Insights in this chapter also have implications for heritage management and the conclusions I drew in the previous chapter. For instance, the Unst case draws attention to the complex nature of relations to the physical space of former Cold War
installations. Despite close personal and working relationships, the surviving remains of the radar site did little to stir the memory or nostalgia practices of the islands residents. As I mentioned, it was only returning personnel who attempted to engage with the place in this manner. To some extent, the issue of access to the site and its current state may have something to do with this. Simply, it affords little interaction. However, this also shows that there is no simple correlation between past relationships to remnant Cold War materialities and places and their present conception and value. Nonetheless, the past presence of these materials were highly significant in the community as they provided new spaces of sociality and interaction on Unst, which transformed life on the island. The construction and maintenance of these buildings also had a range of unintended consequences for island relationships and belonging – the availability of work providing opportunities to stay on the island. This is particular significant in the highlands and islands, where emigration and displacement are acutely felt in relation to the social memory of the Clearances (e.g. see Jones 2010b).

A number of these changing relationships were mediated through images and objects in the small Memories of Saxa Vord exhibit. Again, these particular legacies of militarisation were materialised and curated in this space. In the next chapter, I turn to another independent museum collection and examine the ways in which the Cold War is presented and produced.
CHAPTER 4: PUTTING RADAR ON DISPLAY

4.1 – INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will be focusing on the public exhibition of radar materials and exploring how these are mobilised to produce contemporary understandings of the Cold War. In particular, I am going to focus on small or “micromuseums” (see below), as these are the predominant model for Cold War museums and exhibits in the UK.

Objects and histories associated with the Cold War have been on public display in the United States and Europe since the 1990s (e.g. Gusterson 2004; Hacker 2007; Williams 2008). This includes a handful of temporary and travelling exhibitions, such as Cold War Modern: Design 1945-1970, which was held at the V&A museum in London (e.g. Crowley and Pavitt 2008). Permanent collections have also been assembled in former military installations (e.g. Farbøl 2015), as well as new buildings that were funded and constructed for this purpose (e.g. Lowe and Joel 2013: 172; Weiner 2012).

These museums and exhibitions are connected by a common motivation: to collect and publically display objects of the recent past – specifically those associated with the Cold War. However, museums dealing with the Cold War take many different shapes and forms and seldom conform to singular, cohesive or “authorised” narratives (cf. chapter 2). In reality, Cold War history museums house manifold and varied collections, cover a diverse range of subjects and are curated by disparate groups (mostly amateur historians and enthusiasts), many of whom are engaged in very different practices and are motivated by contrasting agendas (Lowe and Joel 2013; Wiener 2012).

In the UK, most permanent Cold War exhibits are either operated by private enterprises (e.g. Hermann 2011) or independent charities and small trusts established to oversee the running of historic military sites and structures (cf. Emerick 2005; Lowe and Joel 2013: 172). In Britain, as elsewhere in Europe, it is relatively common to assemble collections in environments that are historically contiguous with the objects and narratives on display (e.g. Macdonald 2002a).
Independent Cold War museums are no different in this regard, as many are situated in former military sites. At Bentwaters in Suffolk, for example, former employees and military history enthusiasts have created a Cold War museum within the grounds of a redeveloped RAF base. As is also the case with the “secret Cold War bunkers” at Anstruther in Fife and Hack Green in Cheshire, where small business owners have created heritage attractions within disused rotor radar stations (e.g. Hermann 2011; see also Bennett 2013).

However, there has been little academic research dealing with small and independent museums (Candlin 2012). This is surprising given that independent museums represent a significant proportion of the c.2500 museums in Britain (Geoghegan 2010: 1462). As a consequence, there have been even fewer studies concerning the specific character of museums that deal with the Cold War (cf. Baltic Initiative 2009; Farbøl 2015; Lowe and Joel 2013).

Of the small number available, some key contributions appear to be characterised by what anthropologist Christoph Brumann (2014) has termed “heritage atheism” (e.g. Wiener 2012). Heritage atheism refers to a set of assumptions and fundamental doubts “about the value of specific heritage items or heritage as such” (Brumann 2014: 174). A key facet of heritage atheism, according to Brumann (2014: 173-4), is the notion that heritage practices contribute to the sanitisation or falsification of the past (without empirically investigating if this holds up in practice – see also Brumann 2009).

In relation to Cold War museums, for example, literary scholar John Beck (2011: 95) has argued that the potentially unsettling and violent nature of Cold War histories and places are “pacified” when displayed for public consumption. However, here, I look to provide a more nuanced understanding of the specific practices and performances involved. Therefore, in this chapter, I intend to scrutinise some of these straightforward assumptions and identify how and why accounts of the Cold War are put to work in contemporary museums.

In order to do so, I will document the ‘museumification’ of radar sites and materials (Huyssem 1995). As a concept, museumification is similar to the notion of ‘heritageisation’, which I discussed in chapter 1. Specifically, it refers to the process by which the past is assembled and curated for public consumption, mostly in spaces and institutions created for this purpose (Macdonald 2013a: 138-9). This
involves a detailed examination of the assembly, mediation and display of collections at the Air Defence Radar Museum in Neatishead (see also Chapter 2).

I will argue that the museum is an ambivalent space, which is caught between its identification as a former RAF radar station and an increasing desire to assert itself as an independent and increasingly professional museum. For the visitor without prior connections to the site, the continuities between past and present staff and materialities, heavily mediates their experiences and understandings of the Cold War. This independent nature of these museums is significant as they do not have to conform to recognised standards of ethics and practice. Given that most Cold War museums in the UK are operated by those with close attachments to the military, this has implications for the production of Cold War heritage and memory in the present.

I have split the chapter into three key areas: museum management; representation and display; and a section discussing the wider implications for the public memory of the Cold War. Each of these areas is intended as a focus for evaluating the impact of the radar museum’s independent status and its relationship to the production of Cold War heritage. This will entail a close examination of the characteristics and effects of these practices. Why is it that people have decided to come together to curate Cold War objects and narratives in a former military installation? What is involved in reimagining and repurposing a radar site as a museum? And, what does this mean? What is the impact of the radar museum’s independence, as well as its status and entanglements with contemporary military institutions? How do practices and social performances at the museum affect the ways in which people imagine, consume and conceptualise the Cold War and the recent past in the present?

To investigate these questions further, I use insights gained though participant observation and historical research, which I carried out at the Air Defence Radar Museum (ADRM) between 2012 and 2013. In doing so, I draw on ethnographic and anthropological approaches to collecting (e.g. Macdonald 2002b) and display (e.g. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998), which highlight the status of subject-object relations and how these are assembled and shaped through museum practices (see also Byrne et al 2011; Pinney 2005).
I also take inspiration from museum studies, particularly the work of Fiona Candlin (2015), and her recent studies of small and independent institutions (see also Davies 2010; Redington 2002). Here, I will follow her careful examination of museum displays and curatorial techniques, and respond to her call to attend to the “situation…and conditions established within the museum”; qualities that, she argues, must be teased out, “felt for and noticed” (see also Macdonald 2013a: 140-141).

4.2 - INDEPENDENT MUSEUMS

The independent character of Cold War museums sets them apart from large publically funded institutions. As museologist Fiona Candlin (2012: 37) points out, ‘the majority of new independent museums are small venues, often run on a low income by enthusiasts, groups, or private collectors’. Many ‘micromuseums’, as Candlin (2015) refers to them, are created and arranged by people with close personal ties to the site of the museum, the collections and the pasts on display. Likewise, many Cold War museums are curated by amateur enthusiasts and volunteer groups, which often include a number of former personnel.

The status of these museums has implications for the production and understanding of the Cold War in the present (see also 4.3). For instance, as mentioned above, many small and independent museums are privately funded. Therefore, they tend not to be bound by public policy or guided by the kinds of managerial rationale that guide most public institutions (Candlin 2015: 12; Geoghegan 2008). As a result, Candlin (2015) argues, micromuseums potentially offer a different kind of experience to visitors. In contrast to large public museums, many micromuseums are run by people without professional training, are politically partisan, often focusing on specialist or marginal topics. Therefore, they offer a range of perspectives and approaches that sit outside the mainstream of museum management and display. This is key to understanding Cold War museums in Britain, as ex-military groups and those with strong links to the armed services tend to set the tone and tenor of these exhibits.

Traditionally, national heritage institutions and authoritative public museums set the agenda for the representation of particular pasts in the present (Smith 2006). For example, museologist Beth Lord (2006) argues that some public
museums can be thought about as heterotopic spaces (after Foucault), which are part of the infrastructure of state power. Nonetheless, established municipal museums, for the most part, have shown little interest in the permanent exhibition of Cold War histories and objects (cf. Crowley and Pavitt 2008; Imperial War Museum 2009). As with other specialist subjects, this has created a practical and discursive vacuum, which has ostensibly been filled by communities of independent enthusiasts in the UK (e.g. Geoghegan 2008).

4.3 – (RAF) AIR DEFENCE RADAR MUSEUM

The Air Defence Radar Museum (ADRM) is located in the lower western quadrant of RRH Neatishead in Norfolk. The main exhibit is situated in a cluster of buildings centred upon a former Second World War command complex, a grade II* listed structure that was later reused as a Cold War operations block (Chapter 2). In 1993, after radar operations were relocated to an adjacent bunker, a number of retired and retiring RAF employees, with backing from the MOD, established a museum centring upon the soon-to-be redundant control room – promising members of the public a journey into what was once a “top secret” world.

In 1999, the ADRM became a charitable trust and opened its doors to the public once a month and to interested parties by request. By 2012, after a drawn out campaign, the trust had hired its first full-time professional curator, established a system of guided tours and recruited a group of around twenty ageing but enthusiastic volunteers (mostly men). Additionally, volunteers and curatorial staff had assembled hundreds of objects and dioramas for public display. By this time, the trust had also completed the purchase of the museum site and setup a programme by which the exhibit opened between 9 and 10 days each month, with the season running from April until October. During the period of my ethnographic study, as with most years, the radar museum received around six thousand visitors. Predominantly, these were made up of tourists visiting the Norfolk Broads, in addition to returning “nostalgics” (as ADRM guides refer to them) in the shape of former employees.

This site is particularly significant as it is a central place for many heritage and memory practices that surround former Second World War and Cold War radar sites. As the longest serving site of its kind during its operational period, it was seen
as a fitting location to document and curate the history of radar practices in the UK. Moreover, the survival of key exhibits – such as the Cold War ops room – encouraged RAF staff to create a museum around these objects and spaces at Neatishead.

My own research represents something of a detailed snapshot into this one small museum, which is a dynamic and subject to changing agendas. For example, after my research ended, a new curator was employed and further changes are now underway. However, this ethnographic study of museum practices at the ADRM is useful as it gives insight into these kinds of places. This is important, as there is no municipal agency or heritage body driving Cold War memory in museums. Rather, it is the sum of many independent voices and enthusiasts. Therefore, the work in this chapter serves as a foundation for future studies, which seek to understand the production of the Cold War in museum spaces.

4.4 – MUSEUM MANAGEMENT

4.4.1 – Independence and funding
At the ADRM, the issue of independence has a number of additional meanings and ramifications, particularly for managerial staff. For instance, the museum’s first professional curator Chris makes a comparison with larger publically funded museums. Over time, he tells me, museum staff have come to terms with the fact that:

“We will never become a major museum. We are stuck out in the back of beyond. It might be different if we were on the outskirts of London but we are located in the middle of rural Norfolk. Even then, it would still be unlikely as it is a niche market in terms of interested people”

Instead, those involved with the ADRM have learned to embrace their independent and specialist status. This is reflected in comparisons Chris makes to national institutions such as the Imperial War Museum (IWM). In a small museum, it is a challenge, you have to be creative, he informs me, “you do the best with what you’ve got. What the IWM would spend one million quid on, we’d spend two hundred and fifty pounds”. In some ways, Chris argues, the ADRM is “better off than the nationals as we are privately funded”. On first appearances, this appears
somewhat contradictory, especially in light of the financial constraints Chris emphasises (see also Handler 1993). However, as Fiona Candlin (2012) notes, self-funding sometimes means self-determination for micromuseums – an ability to determine their own style and ethos – something that remains important at the ADRM following their various bids for association and subsequently, autonomy.

Self-determination also means that privately funded museums and exhibits can be as partisan or as controversial as they like. This is most apparent in the stated aims and motivations of the museum. For instance, the curator told me that the ADRM has two main roles. The first is to “preserve the heritage of the air defence organisation for the benefit of the general public”. For him, this entails:

“Looking at radar as an important part of British history that people don’t generally appreciate. Air defence was a part of British history that wasn’t advertised, right the way through the Cold War even. It’s now become more apparent how significant it was. It is a subject that is not covered well elsewhere, even at places like the RAF museum, there is only a passing reference. This [kind of focus] is core to any specialist museum in the world.”

Despite the emphasis placed on education and pedagogy, there is a distinct sense that the museum’s purpose is to gain recognition. Reading between the lines, the ADRM is seeking appreciation for what certain individuals and organisations believe to be unacknowledged national contributions during the Cold War (cf. Wiener 2012).

The museum’s secondary role, Chris contends, is “to promote the RAF, which the taxpayer funds”. This promotion is “with a view to people paying their taxes in a more cheerful manner”. Although, Chris’ comment is relatively tongue-in-cheek, it does stem from a conviction that he and other ex-military personnel at the ADRM feel in terms of ongoing support and solidarity for contemporary military and state institutions (see also Lord 2006). As I will discuss in several of the sections below, Cold War objects and narratives are mobilised in the pursuit of these and similar agendas in the museum (with mixed reception from visitors).

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12 The professional curator Chris actually served in the Fleet Naval Arm on radar related matters.
The ADRM outlines its agendas clearly (although this is sometimes subverted by non-military volunteers – see 5.3; see also Dicks 2000 and 2008). However, this clarity of position, somewhat paradoxically, contributes to further ambiguity surrounding the status and affiliation of the museum. While lacking official connections, staff at the museum still appear to feel closely bound to the RAF in various ways. These kinds of connections provide a significant contrast to the impartiality and detached truths that are promoted and valued in many public museums (e.g. Karp 2012).

This issue relates to the perception of Cold War museums and heritage sites as pacifying the violence of the past. Here, the independent (and partisan) character of voices representing the Cold War in this space, appear to have a different set of motives and agendas, which would be obscured by straightforward arguments about how and why these places exist and function.

4.4.2 – Collection
In this section, I will detail the character of the ADRM’s collection policies and practices and outline the kinds of networks and social relationships that have underpinned the creation of this museum as an assemblage. In 4.6, I will move on to address the legacy and effects of these historic collection activities. In particular, I will document how the museum management and trust have responded to the current state of the collection as they attempt to inculcate professional practices and standards at the ADRM. This has implications for the character and representation of the Cold War and the recent past in this museum (and beyond).

Much of the radar museum is teeming with stuff. The corridors and interstitial spaces between exhibition rooms, for example, are often covered from floor to ceiling with images of aircraft, glass display cases housing neckties (emblazoned with station badges and insignia), in addition to bulletin boards that display the names of former commanding officers from various RAF radar stations from around the UK. Backroom areas are also crammed full of boxes, which overflow with electrical components, RAF paraphernalia, as well as archival collections such as maps, site plans and operational logbooks (some assiduously catalogued and others untouched and gathering dust).
The main exhibits on display are relatively diverse and range from a cohesive Cold War ops room display, to large assemblages such as radar plotting tables and a decommissioned Bloodhound surface-to-air missile, to photographs, scrapbooks and other memorabilia relating to the social and working life of RAF Neatishead and other former radar stations (see also chapter 5). The collection also contains original operational consoles and communications equipment from various military installations and periods, such as the former Ballistic Missile Early Warning Site at RAF Fylingdales, as well as models, dioramas and reconstructions built by volunteers.

In addition, there are also a range of materials that have less obvious connections to the ADRM’s current aims and vision such as a large collection of old telephones, as well as guest collections concerning aerial photography and an exhibition dedicated as a memorial to people who served at the nearby airbase at RAF Coltishall. The manifold objects in the ADRM collection are in varying states of organisation (and disarray). As a result, their current status depends on the area of the museum they occupy and the period in which they were acquisitioned and put on public display – very few new exhibits have been curated over the past five or so years (see also 4.7 and 4.8). Therefore, rather than a straightforward representation of the Cold War, what emerges is a rather disconnected assemblage that has only a loose connection to the ops room.

As I will discuss below, the Cold War ops room is relatively cohesive. However, by way of contrast, the rest of the museum relates to the ad hoc and piecemeal fashion in which parts of the ADRM have been assembled. In many publicly funded institutions (as well as in some larger trustee run organisations), collecting practices are governed by strict collection policies that ensure that any objects acquired relate to the central aims and vision for a given museum (Macdonald 2006). Collection policies and reviews attempt to stabilise museums, which are dynamic and ever changing, through adherence to specific narratives and standards (see Byrne et al 2011).
The Trustees of the Royal Air Force Museum (2014), for example, outline the procedures for disposing of “irrelevant material” and the identification of areas of the collection that require further development. These are practiced in strict accordance with professional guidelines set out by the Museum Association (Trustees of the Royal Air Force Museum 2014: 5) – a professional membership organisation, which provides a platform for consensus on emerging policy issues and legislation surrounding collections management and public exhibition.

However, as Fiona Candlin (2015: 11-12) argues, “shifting the spotlight” to independent museums often highlights a different set of approaches to collecting. Up until very recently, for instance, the ADRM had no formal collection policy to help structure the incomings and outgoings to and from the museum. As a result, the collection was assembled through sporadic networks and modes of acquisition, which were underpinned by various (potentially conflicting) motivations, agendas and visions for the organisation. Below, I will outline some of the main agencies and methods involved.

The personal interests of a handful of volunteers dictated early collecting practices (and thus displays) at the ADRM. Rather than work to a central vision for the museum, during the first couple of years at least, several people were provided...
with the space and opportunity to assemble and curate a set of objects based on their former roles, historical interests and professional expertise. Therefore, a series of loosely connected displays were arranged alongside the ops room, which focused on a range of radar related occupations and operational assemblages, such as engineering and communications equipment.

For instance, volunteers gathered objects for many of the early displays from their own personal collections or sourced them through former work-based connections. One of the original volunteers, a former BT engineer, supplied a large body of material for the Teleprinters and Communications Room, which he had previously stored in his home. This included test equipment he had used when working at Neatishead, basic and specialised tool kits, and power supplies. Many of these items are still on display in that room today. Early on, little thought was given to the kinds of narratives that such objects produced. The volunteers were more interested in salvaging and displaying materials that held personal significance or value (see also Macdonald 2002a). In other words, they were interested in working their own autobiographies into the materiality of the museum (see also 4.8 and 4.9; Candlin 2015).

In this sense, the museum’s early collectors were interested in filling in gaps in the collection. As Museologist Helen Rees Leahy (2012) has demonstrated, perceived absences often drive “acquisitive desire” in museum settings. The Cold War ops room was considered to be present and complete. However, many of the early volunteers had been involved at Neatishead in a number of different capacities and roles (not all centring upon the ops room). In order to reflect their own interests and the diversity of their experiences, a more representative body of objects was deemed to be required. Hence, the museum, which began life as a Cold War exhibit, quickly became a microcosm of the Neatishead site as a whole and the kinds of roles that many of the volunteers had performed there over time, such as radar operators, civilian engineers, security staff and so on (see also chapter 5). Early collecting practices, therefore, are inextricably bound to the priorities, networks and relationships of a small number of people with very close links to the station. This is significant as these objects and displays continue to inform the character and position of Cold War pasts at the ADRM.
Loans from personal collectors and RAF museums also make up a substantial portion of the current collection. The acquisition of loaned objects has met with varying degrees of success at the ADRM. For instance, before the museum opened to the public, staff from the ADRM “raided the reserve collection at RAF Cosford”. Many of these materials were only vaguely connected to the museum’s specialism, a former museum manager informed me; “the Flight Lieutenant who started it off took anything from anybody…anything he could get his hands on”. Lots of this material now sits in storage in the back rooms. As with other forms of acquisition, early approaches to museum loans were sporadic and lacked focus. Again, it was driven by a perception that all available spaces and gaps in the museum needed to be filled. Without considering the wider direction and aims of the ADRM, staff fell back on familiar networks of relationships, such as individuals and places associated with the RAF. Many of the collections currently on display are focused entirely upon this branch of the armed forces. As a result, the presence of these organisational materialities continues to frame and constrain the ADRM and its ongoing narratives and curation.

The main body of the ADRM’s collections is sourced from bulk donations. The main example of this mode of acquisition is the Cold War ops room, which as I mentioned above, was inherited from the RAF. However, large amounts of material also come from decommissioned RAF stations. On several occasions, for example, vast assemblages have been brought to the museum without prior warning or indication. The former curator Doug Robb recalls a day when ‘three eight-tonne trucks’ carrying documents, furniture and display equipment from RAF Fylingdales, ‘turned up at the gate’. As far as Doug was aware, senior officers in the RAF had shut down a small station museum at Fylingdales, which had focused on the history of the Ballistic Missile Early Warning Site. The Fylingdales museum was instructed to send all of their materials to the ADRM – without checking with the ADRM if they wanted to take it.

This kind of practice seems relatively commonplace in the MoD. In the RAF Museums collection policy, for example, curators are expressly forbidden from accepting bulk donations from the MoD without prior notice (Trustees of the RAF Museum 2017: 3):
“Occasionally MoD personnel arrive at the Museum without prior notification wishing to deposit large quantities of material from disbanded RAF units or stations. Potential acquisitions such as this must be assessed in accordance with the Museum’s collecting policies, and it is therefore important for the Museum to gain appraisal of the material in advance”.

At the time, staff at the ADRM had no formal collections policy or professional training in place to guide acquisitions. Any curatorial concerns they may have had about accepting such a large collection of unknown material were overridden by a sense that they were compelled or duty bound to take donations such as these (especially when these were sent to them under direct orders from the RAF or MoD). For example, former manager Doug Robb suggested that to refuse these materials was akin to refusing orders when the museum was part of the RAF site. On the other hand, staff were also pleased that the RAF and MoD considered the ADRM to be a trusted and legitimate home for what they perceived to be relatively important historical assemblages.

While early curatorial staff and volunteers tended to see these occurrences as serendipitous and even fortuitous (if not “hugely challenging”), these bulk donations and the social networks surrounding them, profoundly shaped the materiality of the museum. In this sense, the ADRM collection might be better understood in terms of its ongoing relationships and the networks that surround them (see also Basu 2011; Bell 2012). In this case, for example, external agents (working for the MoD/RAF) – hoping to offload unwanted materials – dictated a sense of what belonged in the museum, rather than a central vision created by the museum community themselves.

However, on the other hand, it could be argued that the very creation of a specialist radar museum associated with the RAF established the conditions for these social and material exchanges. For example, the preservation and presence of the Cold War ops room meant that is became a magnet for similar and related assemblages, as with the fixtures and fittings from Fylingdales. In the next section, I will outline how the museum’s contemporary management team have dealt with the legacy of such practices and what this means for the public presentation of radar and the Cold War in this place.
4.4.3 – Managing ad hoc assemblages
The legacy of ad hoc collection practices effectively illustrates how the ADRM coincides with some of the (many and diverse) characteristics of micromuseums, which I outlined in 4.1. This also extends to the management of objects once they have been acquired by the museum. In most publically funded institutions, objects undergo strict categorisation when entering an institution (e.g. Shelton 2006). Often, they are subject to various accession processes. These processes establish a biography and a paper trail for objects within the collection, which situates them historically and legally (in terms of ownership). Through this work, relationships can be established between objects in the collection as well as those located in other institutions (Svanberg 2015). In other words, they become part of an “audit culture” within and between various organisations through which the museum is managed (Strathern 2000).

Up until very recently, no such audit culture existed at the ADRM. As Candlin (2015: 109-110) notes, the biography of many small and independent collections is “hampered by a widespread indifference to record keeping on the part of micromuseums”. The ADRM is no different in this regard. Much of the collection history of the museum is known to only a handful of people such as former curators and long serving volunteers. Therefore, the biography of the collection is only available to a select few as an oral history, which is difficult to access and utilise for current staff. This was evident when the professional curator Chris deflected any enquiries I had about the history of specific objects to the former manager, Doug. Without documentation he could not be certain about the specific character and modes of acquisition for individual objects, as he had only joined the ADRM a few years before.

Issues such as these have come to be seen as problematic by the museum’s trust and management team and during my ethnographic study, there was an evident and growing concern with professionalization and standardisation. For instance, the professional curator Chris started to create the ADRM’s first museum catalogue when he arrived in 2010, which attempted to document and identify the origins (often unsuccessfully) of the ADRM’s main exhibits. However, the sheer volume of material that is still to be “sorted” and the intangible nature of the collection’s history has hampered these efforts. When I left the museum at the end
of summer 2013, Chris was still grappling with boxes of unaccessioned material of unknown origin. He told me that he was often unable to fulfil his curatorial duties, such as the classification and arrangement of objects, as he was frequently derailed by the overwhelming legacy of ad hoc and uncontrolled collection practices in the past. The sheer amount of radar related objects and the manner of their acquisition have shaped the way in which the collection is animated and presented in the museum (see below).

This is also reflected in comments made to me by various current and former members of staff. Doug Robb, the former manager, for instance, informed me that professional standards were always at the back of his mind during the early years of the museum. However, he argues, his initial priority was always the survival of the ADRM (“making sure we had somewhere to store all these objects”) and running it as a viable business and charity (see also Handler 1993). As a result, issues such as collection and display inevitably took a back seat. After achieving independence, however, he claims that the priority has begun to shift, “it’s time to start looking at what we’ve got and how it’s presented”. In the next section, I will turn my attention to this very issue and interpret the approaches taken to curation and display at the ADRM.

**FIGURE 4.2** Cold War Ops Room. ADRM, Neatishead. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).
4.5 – REPRESENTATION AND DISPLAY

4.5.1 – Presenting the ADRM story: curation and display

In the previous sections, I highlighted the ad hoc nature of the ADRM collection and the difficulties current and former curators have had dealing with the morass of radar and Cold War related objects. In this section, I will turn to the kinds of narratives and meanings that are put to work in the museum and the curatorial strategies and modes of display that are mobilised to support and mediate them. I will also discuss the consequences that flow from these practices for the heritage and memory of the Cold War in the UK.

When the ADRM opened its doors to the public in 1994, no more than five displays had been arranged in addition to the ops room, which I will discuss below. The original displays consisted of a small number of objects and text panels, mostly relating to the station’s function and its history (RAF 2008). At present, there are more than eighteen display areas, which have been built up around the space of the Cold War ops room.
FIGURE 4.4  Site Map of the Air Defence Radar Museum, Neatishead. Drawn by Steven Leech.
This includes exhibits setup by museum’s first group of volunteers such as the BT Frame room and a handful of displays focusing on telecommunications and engineering equipment. Several of these early exhibits are in the annexe building and are treated as ancillary spaces, supplements to the main narratives and chronology. The museum’s central exhibits are those which feature on the guided tour—these are the two reconstructed Second World War filter rooms and the Cold War ops room (see figure 4.4).

The ADRM also contains a number of large thematic display areas: the Space Defence exhibition hall, which accommodates missile tracking assemblages from RAF Fylingdales (figure 4.3); a History Room, packed with a disparate arrangement of objects and dioramas; as well as the Neatishead Rooms, mostly images and text, which focus on the people and things connected to the history of the station. Additionally, the museum is home to a set of independent guest collections, such as the Spirit of Coltishall exhibit, which is run by ex-personnel from another local RAF station, which closed in 2006.

In a similar manner to the collection activities, the radar museum’s displays have been produced in a piecemeal fashion— for most of the museum’s life, there has been no overarching vision or controlling narrative. Many different people have assembled displays over the course of twenty years, mostly without professional curatorial experience. These exhibits are the product of shifting policies, approaches and agendas, encompassing a diverse range of curatorial styles: from the “time-capsule” of the ops room (e.g. Candlin 2013) to typological technology displays (e.g. Fitzgerald 1996); from ‘period rooms’ (e.g. Sparke et al 2006); to cluttered multi-temporal galleries (e.g. Candlin 2015), as well as numerous text-heavy exhibits (see Bennett 1995; Hooper-Greenhill 2000).

Contrasting technologies and strategies of display are also employed; some objects, for example, are free for visitors to handle and engage with, whereas others are presented in glass-cases— with no discernable logic behind which items are displayed in either fashion (e.g. Brumann 2009). Other objects are displayed as set dressing for period rooms, which are mediated using mannequins (e.g. Macdonald 2013a: 149) and guided tours (e.g. Katriel 1997), which are led by docents— some of which are former personnel (e.g. Dicks 2008). Some spaces combine this assortment of styles, which can sometimes confound the visitor. It seems
productive then, to treat the ADRM as a palimpsest, shaped by interweaving, and not always coherent temporalities, narratives and imaginaries, all unfolding into the present space of the museum (Huyssen 2003).

In 4.9, I will describe how the main exhibition spaces are framed on the guided tour, in addition to a detailed account of the curation of the Cold War ops room. However, for now, I will analyse the ADRM’s other exhibition spaces and demonstrate how they influence and relate to the presentation of radar and the Cold War. Predominantly, I will focus on one key example as a microcosm of the rest of the museum – the Space Defence hall. As with the other galleries, it lacks a “pre-packaged narrative” (Macdonald 2013a: 158) and encompasses various themes and presentational styles. The Space Defence room also facilitates a diverse (and sometimes conflicting) set of subject-object relations.

The exhibit is housed in a former air conditioning plant that was formerly connected to the functioning of the Cold War ops room. After receiving the early warning missile tracking systems from RAF Fylingdales, the museum cleared the space and installed the missile tracking equipment, building an exhibition around it. However, it differs from the ops room in terms of its presentation (much like the rest of the museum), as it contains several loosely overlapping narrative threads without a central theme or message. In a similar manner to the entire museum, various histories and objects have been arranged in an ad hoc way around a more or less coherent Cold War radar assemblage. Thus, visitors must negotiate a series of makeshift (but loosely related) displays before arriving at the Cold War materials (which are usually obscured from view).

As the visitor enters the space defence exhibit, for example, they encounter a collection of miniatures setup to depict early radar experiments as well as large replicas of Second World War radar devices. There are also DIY Anderson shelters, which signal the threat of bombs raining down from the sky. Snaking around the exhibits, people then encounter a uniformed dummy (from a John Lewis department store) bunkered-down behind some sandbags. The female-mannequin is dressed as a member of the Royal Observer Corps during an air raid. Behind her is a naively painted background display (with silver painted blimps, which are stuck to the ceiling).
Moving forward, radome panels, uniforms and badges from RAF Fylingdales come into view (figure 4.3). The radome panels are used to display several photographs of Fylingdales during a fire, as well as a text-based history that details the event. The text itself was evidently written by staff at the original Fylingdales museum (reference is made to the BMEWS site in Yorkshire as “our” site).

A jumble of other exhibits are then assembled around the situation display consoles: RAF paraphernalia and crests dot the walls; there are felt display boards narrating bombing campaigns during the Falklands conflict (see also Pollard 2015); the cockpit of a Jaguar fighter jet is tucked in the corner; as well as shrapnel from a V-2 rocket blast; US-built radar equipment and a display board informing visitors about the progress of renovation work at Fylingdales (last updated in 2007).

Text panels do accompany some exhibits to provide context and give an indication of their past use. For instance, in contrast to much of the ops room, labels are used to describe the procedures undertaken in conjunction with the situation display consoles, often using a host of (unexplained) technical terms:

“The Situation Display Console displays information received from the Missile Impact Predictor Computer (MIP). It can display the Threat Summary Message, the Computer Traffic, which shows the amount of data being handled by the MIP, the Data Take Off Reports…being processed by the radar…and the Launch Impact Points of any threat.”

For the visitor, the consequences of this jargon-filled text are twofold. On the one hand, the language serves to distance visitors. They are set apart from the esoteric nature of the equipment. Yet, on the other hand, there is a tacit sense that this material belongs here amongst these people (the volunteers) – those who are ostensibly familiar with its workings and its mysteries – an unspoken process of authentication.
For the most part, however, visitors are left to piece together a narrative amongst the assortment of voices, temporalities and relationships, which is not always a straightforward task. For example, radome panels – used as display boards and as museum objects in their own right – seem to be suggestive of a web of relationships that now converge on the ADRM. However, for many visitors the potential significance of these past and present connections is not immediately clear and is not made apparent. Watching visitors in this space, I was struck by the speed at which people moved through the exhibit. For instance, people would often make a beeline for the Jaguar jet cockpit as it is always attended by a volunteer (of course some people relished the opportunity to play at being a pilot). To me, it appeared as if visitors were seeking out some form of guidance, any kind of mediation amidst the miscellaneous assemblage of objects.

The lack of accompanying forms of mediation also has similar consequences in relation to the exhibits main theme. For example, despite being categorised as space defence, the visitor requires prior knowledge of Fylingdales (and the Cold War) to be able to draw meaningful connections. This can be inferred through the maps displayed on the walls behind the panels (which highlight locations such as
Moscow) or display boards that refer to the “DEFCON level”. This refers to the Defense Readiness Condition, which is a state of alert used by the United States Armed Forces to describe the severity of escalating military situations (e.g. see Lebow and Stein 1994: xiii). However, there is no accompanying context and the visitor has to work hard to establish links between the exhibits and the overall theme. Moreover, there are no mediating devices on hand to provide a historical or philosophical context for this stuff.

Of course, the opportunity to engage with randomly displayed objects can be a rewarding experience, as it permits the visitor to establish their own connections. In relation to other micromuseums, for example, Candlin (2015) has argued that the cluttered nature of display can be enriching and even subversive. For instance, at the Bakelite museum in Somerset, the curator intentionally juxtaposes seemingly unrelated objects in order to create surrealist tableaus (ibid.). Such practices provide a challenge to the consensus surrounding neutral displays in many public exhibitions and spaces.

However, the Fylingdales collection is juxtaposed with the other so many other loosely connected exhibits that the flow of any visitor-created narratives is often disrupted. The most cohesive theme or message comes from the RAF crests situated along the walls, which suggest that the museum is representative (or even constitutive) of the organisation. As such, the ADRM is claiming to have metaphorical ownership over this collection of objects (they are positioning themselves as gatekeepers of these histories).

Nevertheless, some visitors to the museum did speak about the appeal of these kinds of displays during interviews. A returning employee, for instance, compared the ADRM favourably with the official RAF Museum at Hendon: “…at places like this, there is more stuff on display…things for people like me”. Another visitor told me that he came back year on year to poke around the space defence exhibit – wandering through the mish-mash of objects and voices was appealing to him.

For some visitors, the random collection of objects and their disparate placement signalled that many of the staff have little or no professional curatorial training (see also Candlin 2015) This seemed to lend their efforts and intent (sometimes in a condescending manner) with an authenticity and charm.
clutter (unintentionally) heightens the impression of the ops room as a cohesive time-capsule (as it sits in contradistinction to all all other spaces in the museum). Therefore, the organisation of the rest of the museum has had a direct impact on the museumification of the Cold War.

As I mentioned above, the ADRM is an organisation that is increasingly seeking accreditation and professionalization. Therefore, this lack of cohesion and narrative is now recognised as a problem. Kevin, the museum’s chairman, makes the following point: “I think Chris [the curator] would say that we don’t actually tell a story”. Contemporary museums, he tells me, should have an overarching narrative:

“We have lots of stuff, and it’s all very interesting stuff, but there’s not a logical museum story anywhere. We’ve just got bags and bags of stuff kicking around. There needs to be an evolving story that ends up somewhere”.

Ideally, he tells me, he would like to be rid of all the peripheral and disjointed displays and focus on the technological development of radar. He would like the museum to take visitors on a journey that begins with its formation, through the development of innovations such as airborne early warning radar and “end up in the Cold War room”. The idea is to dismantle the ancillary displays and establish a more linear narrative.

4.5.2 – Ops Room: not a Cold War – as it was…

“It’s not a museum. It’s as it was”. Chris the curator tells me. He is taking me on a tour of the ADRM. “This is the most important room”, he continues, “my personal favourite”. Surveying the rows of empty consoles, their radar traces looping *ad infinitum*, Chris suggests that, “…this place really brings it home – it’s what people envisage when you talk about the Cold War”. We are standing in the gloom of ‘ops room’ (Figure 4.2), a former fighter control command centre operated by the RAF between 1973 and 1993. It was the first exhibit in the museum and was donated to the ADRM by the RAF, alongside a range of other organisational artefacts. The ops room has been setup to look and feel as if the operators have just slipped out and might be back any minute - a Cold War time capsule.
The ops room’s arrangement affords a palpable sense of connection for some, especially former operators. This is the case for Kevin, the museum chairman and a former station commander at Neatishead. He echoes the curator’s sentiments. “The ops room”, Kevin tells me, “gives you a whole ambience that you just can’t recreate. There is the spirit of the thing in there”. For Kevin, the ops room “tells a story” that is unique to Neatishead, one that is predicated on surviving materials and intangibles, which are historically embedded in the context of the stations’ practices and its ongoing social life:

“That room was full of adrenaline. You still feel it. If you go into Neatishead Ops Room now and the lights are turned down low and you’ve got that hum. It’s a very exciting thing…very operational. I can’t think of another word for it. But, you are there you know? Lets make a comparison. It’s like a warship, a British warship at night. It is a highly sensual environment. It hums, it hums, and it just, the whole ship hums. The ship hums and the ops room hums, you know? There is this background noise going on. It’s very exciting.”

Other museums, particularly those focusing on the Cold War, Kevin argues, “can’t tell the Neatishead story, because they don’t have an original ops room” (and all that implies). Museums like the National Cold War Exhibit at RAF Cosford or some of the other bunker museums around the UK, he claims, are forced to tell a “more general Cold War story”. Without a surviving or original Cold War exhibit, they have to gather objects and stories from a range of other places. At the radar museum, a different kind of Cold War emerges, one that is rooted and emplaced. For Kevin the museum narrative “is not a Cold War story” as such, but rather something deeply connected to the history of the station and its/his former role. According to Kevin, it is a localised “air defence story of which the Cold War is a part”. Rather than a simple representation or whitewashing of the Cold War then, it is motivated by a deeper sense of connection for certain individuals at the ADRM.

In this way, the Cold War becomes something periodic, arranged as an isolatable point in time that can be stabilised and then subsumed within the context of station histories and practices. Rather than create a “general” Cold War museum, staff at the ADRM have chosen to use the ops room as an authentic focal point for themes and chronologies that tie into the station’s role as part of the RAF’s air defence network. In large part, this is due to the significant presence of former
personnel and RAF employees within the ranks of museum management and volunteers. As such, they have claimed ownership of these materials and positioned the collections and themselves as part of a continuum of air defence workers and operations.

Situating the Cold War ops room in this manner has had an impact on the spatial and material development of the entire museum – this framework is materialised in the layout and collections of the ADRM. There are eighteen other galleries, not including the corridors, which act as additional exhibition spaces. A guided tour has also been established that takes visitors on an historical and technological journey – presented by volunteer guides – from the Battle of Britain and up until the end of the Cold War. In this framework, the Cold War is conceived (and presented) as something coherent and self-contained. This influences the ways in which Cold War heritage is produced and understood at the ADRM. As I will discuss in the next section, the Cold War ops room forms the centre around which the rest of the museum is assembled.

FIGURE 4. 6 Headsets waiting for the operators and illuminated console displays create a sense of atmosphere in the Cold War ops room, ADRM. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).
4.5.3 – Curating the ops room

Despite its representation as an inherited space, over the course of twenty years, the Cold War ops room has been modified and embellished as a site of display. Museum staff have employed a wide range of strategies to maintain the impression that the ops room has been left as it was. These techniques are seldom put to work elsewhere on site and are often setup in contradistinction to other forms of presentation within the ADRM. The ops room is presented through various technologies of display that frame multi-sensory experiences of the space and in turn, interpretations of the Cold War and the history of the site within it.

The architecture of the ops room itself plays an important role in the display of objects, as a form of “embedded” accommodation (Candlin 2013). Such forms of curation attempt to highlight a sense of coherence between the objects on display and the environment in which they are situated (ibid.: 285). This also encourages a sense of authenticity and links between the museum environment, the curators and site users. In this manner, the arrangement of the ops room seeks to establish a coherent space and sets up a different conception of display and museological practice to other parts of the museum.

When crossing the threshold to the ops room, the museum objects take on a different status and dynamic. They are experienced in a different manner. Primarily, this relates to the impression that this is “not a museum”; that it is as it was (see 4.5.2 above). For staff, this is taken to heart. Some even feel that materials that might “belong” thematically to the museum should not be displayed in here. For example, one former radar operator and volunteer informed me that equipment from other sites such as Saxa Vord and Wattisham are considered to be “imposter consoles”. The past embedding of these objects in the social life of another station means that they do not fit in here. This runs counter to the sense that the ops room is emblematic of Cold War operations and the production and maintenance of airpower. There is a tension here between the notion of a unique Neatishead story and the ops rooms’ evocation of other Cold War places and histories.

Text is at a minimum in the ops room. A less is more approach seems to have been taken in order to compliment the sense that the room has been temporarily vacated. Although there are few labels or textual panels, the accompanying information that is presented is done so in a neutral and somewhat
dry tone. Observing visitors in this space, few seemed to bother with the additional information provided in these texts. Their impression of the ops room had already been mediated by the sense that they are walking into a time capsule and also by the performance of the guided tour (which ends in this space; see 4.5.4). Instead, many visitors just took the opportunity to wander around the space (often quietly and contemplatively).

As elsewhere, sound is also an important element in the museum (e.g. see Cox 2008). For instance, an audio recording of operational chatter, taken from a television documentary, is played on a loop. The visitor hears the courtly, if not somewhat distorted, tones of a fighter control operator and a pilot, exchanging code words and military jargon during a mock exercise (“Roger that: you are clear to engage. Over. Ksht.”). In the previous section, Kevin spoke about the ops room as a “humming” and “highly sensual” environment.

Recorded sound provides some compensation for some of the present quiet. As do some of the rewired displays and machines tick and whir (described by some volunteers as a means of keeping the exhibit “alive”). However, for some visitors, this seems inconsequential when held up against the imagined sonority of the ops room in the past. One visitor I encountered, for instance, whispered to her companion, “…what would it have sounded like in here back in the day…can you imagine the atmosphere during operations?” For her, perceptions of this space were more evocatively mediated through an imagined flurry of past activity (something emphasised by the guides during the tour).

Effective presentation of the ops room display is also reliant upon strategic use of lighting. In contrast to the brightly lit rooms throughout most of the museum, the lack of illumination in this space is striking. It is dark, save the soft orange glow of the monitors and fluorescent lights of the backlit totaliser display panels (also known as ‘tote boards’ by former radar personnel). Although the door to the ops room is always left open, entering the darkened space creates something of a threshold.

Apparently, the dimness is carefully managed in order to cultivate the intangible that and recreate the atmosphere of the room’s operational heyday, when

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13 These panels displayed a range of dynamic data such as weather conditions, the location of military aircraft and secret radio channel frequencies.

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staff worked in the gloom by necessity - to better see the glow of targets and the radar trace on their displays. For example, one volunteer, a former operator, argues that the entire ambience of the ops room rests upon the management of its luminosity, “when the lights are on it’s nothing special – just a boring room. The atmosphere is there because the lights are off” (see also Edensor 2010 and 2012). “If you put them back on”, the volunteer continues, “it’s just a very tired, old, dirty looking room”. Museum visitors are more usually accustomed to encountering illuminated objects in glass cases. Letting the shadows run over the ADRM’s most prized exhibits, is an attempt to differentiate the space and to emphasise the “as it was” aesthetic and discourse that surrounds its curation. It authenticates through a sense of continuity to the station and past practices.

However, as is evident in the comments of former personnel, for them, the atmosphere of the ops room is near impossible to recreate. For some former staff “the spirit of the thing” is present but always seems difficult to grasp as it is bound up in the operational life of the station. Following the partial closure of the radar site, the curation of this space and other volunteer led activities can be interpreted as a means of maintaining personal and communal connections to the RAF (as well as the site) through ongoing commemoration of the Cold War.

Finally, in order maintain a frozen-in-time aesthetic, the museum must also negotiate the relative presence and absence of its former occupants (see also Meyer and Woodthrope 2008). This absence and presence is actively mediated through particular curatorial strategies. For example, headsets rest on top of the consoles, apparently waiting for returning workers. This brings the absent bodies of personnel into relief (figure 4.6).

In some of the ADRM’s other rooms, mannequins are sometimes used to account for the absent presence of wartime operators (figure 4.7; see also Sandberg 2005). Here, in the ops room however, the decision was taken not to use them, seemingly to prevent their presence from disturbing the time-capsule aesthetic. As Macdonald (1997b) highlights at the Aros museum in Skye, certain technologies of display, such as mannequins, are associated with “inauthenticity”. This is a critical matter for “time capsule” displays, museologist Fiona Candlin (2013) suggests, as mannequins can have a strong impact on the effectiveness of the display, reminding the visitor of the “simulated quality of the experience”. To feel potent, time-capsule
displays needs to grant visitors a sense of connection between past and present, a live link, which might be facilitated through the arrangement of objects or signs of recent use (Candlin 2013: 294).

In this instance, these curatorial arrangements seem to imply that unlike other spaces in the museum, mannequins are not required because some of the personnel are still present, lingering in the form of the volunteer guides (or even other visitors). These potential encounters contribute to a sense of authenticity. This was a theme that emerged during visitor interviews, where the presence of former operators and staff was frequently commented on. For some visitors, the continuity between volunteer staff and the ops room equipment reassured them that they were receiving a “genuine” history. Given the ADRM’s aims, as well as the political and military background of its creators, this raises a number of potential ethical issues. In particular, it highlights important questions about the balance and representation of Cold War pasts in the UK and how they are constituted in the present (particularly as so many Cold War museums and heritage sites are operated by former military personnel; see 4.5.4).

4.5.4 – Guided tours

During a guided tour, one of the volunteers introduces visitors to the ‘Cold War room’. Everyone has taken a seat in the bridge, along a row of brown leather chairs. The guide stands. As he begins his presentation, the backlit information boards and whirring consoles create a dramatic backdrop behind him. A large perspex screen frames our view of the operations room below. He starts to give us a biography of the space: ‘It’s exactly as it was’, he begins, ‘all the equipment, even down to some of the information on the boards’. In this space claims about historical authenticity become part of the guided performance. The sense that the ops room is frozen in time is supported by the story of its acquisition. ‘It’s as they left it…we inherited it from the RAF as one of the early exhibits in 1994’. As if the room lies unchanged, waiting for the operators to return.

References to external agents bolster these claims: ‘It’s a listed building now’, the guide tells the group. In 2008, English Heritage designated the ops room and its accompanying architecture as a grade II* listed building. They emphasised its material integrity and, in the designation document, describe the ‘operations room at RAF Neatishead…as a uniquely intact electronic ‘frontline’ of the Cold War’ (English Heritage 2008c; see also Chapter 2). In short, the ADRM works hard to establish the ops room as a cohesive space. Its biography however, is a little more complex than is sometimes acknowledged. After it was bequeathed to volunteers and senior RAF staff by the MOD in 1993 (prior to public exhibition from 1994 onwards) this space was altered in order to prepare it for public display. This is sometimes forgotten or is masked by the discourse of ‘inheritance’ that frames the ops room as coherent Cold War assemblage.

Despite overlap between the space and staff at RAF Neatishead, the room is also used to differentiate themselves, as a museum, from the remaining materials and people still working on the base. ‘The vast majority of personnel have left….the equipment has been skipped…and only a small team of engineers are on the team next door’. The implication is that the personnel are here and present within the museum and the preservation of the material contrasts with the ‘skipped’, marking them out as an authentic entity. This is confirmed by a declaration that ‘we bought the museum premises from the MOD last autumn. So
we are now a separate entity [suggesting that they weren’t before]. Hopefully we can keep things going here – no matter what happens next door’.

As I mentioned above the independent status of the museum enables them to present the past in a partisan way. In the Ops room this is done in a relatively subtle way, for example, guides present a fairly basic scripted account of the Cold War which draws attention to the inner working and the operation of their site. The Cold War is presented as a phenomenon which took place within this setting through the network of individuals and equipment on display. However while the guide sometimes go off script to make reference to the Cold War as something that is not quite over, for instance they refer to ongoing geopolitical events such as the conflict in Syria as a continuing legacy and manifestation of the Cold War past. Drawing on and ending the guided tour on this note has the effect of creating a sense of uncertainty. Some guides then use this as an opportunity to promote the museums agenda which, as I mentioned, is related to establishing a basis of support for the British military.

4.6 – INDEPENDENT MUSEUMS: WHAT KIND OF COLD WAR?

4.6.1 – Ambivalent status and continuities

The museum was closed today, as it was every Wednesday, but when I arrive at the front gate, I noticed that the curator had lowered the flag on his way into work. As a very symbolic (and ritualistic) gesture, volunteers raise a Union Jack when occupying the old RAF buildings. It was now flying at half-mast (with few people to see it besides the farmers driving their tractors along the road and passing traffic heading for the houses at Threehammer Common). I walked through the empty corridors of the museum towards the room reserved for management. The curator was alone; I found him sat in his office. He was positioning a small TV and grappling with it to get a decent signal. He had brought it along with him to watch the coverage of Margaret Thatcher’s funeral while he worked – he felt duty bound to watch the procession of mourners (as well as protesters). As with many other small scale and independent museums, the ADRM often wears its politics for all to see. Through everyday
speech and social practices, the ADRM is often unequivocal about where it stands on certain issues, particularly in terms of its support for the British military and state institutions.

For a few minutes, I was puzzled by the personal tribute being paid. However, I soon remembered that Chris had been involved in the Falklands war when a member of the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm. There is a strong association between the figure of Margaret Thatcher and the Falklands/Malvinas conflict. Here, Chris’ biography and personal memory overlapped and comingled with the materiality and presentation of the museum – as well as wider social memory about the Falklands. The fact that there are no direct connections between RAF Neatishead and the Falklands or Thatcher didn’t seem to matter. Rather, the museum was being mobilised around the personal and political connections of its members. By lowering the flag, Chris’ feelings were framed, if only temporarily, as a synecdoche for the institution itself. It is acts such as these that epitomise the character of the ADRM’s status and this duality between its past as an RAF station and its present as a radar and technology museum (as well as its ongoing political life). (Steven Leech – Field Notes, April 2013).

They are never sure if they are an RAF station or a little museum in rural north Norfolk”, a local resident, Bob, tells me. It is the summer of 2013 and we are sipping tea in his sitting room, which faces out onto the banks of the river Bure. He is in his 80s, and is no longer a frequent visitor to the radar museum as his sight is beginning to fade. However, he had occasion to attend recently and recalls numerous other trips to the ADRM, mostly on account of his wife’s previous involvement as a volunteer guide. “The ethos of the place is RAF”, he continues. “It is the way they think. Although, they’d probably fall over themselves to avoid appearing as an RAF station now. I mean the days are long gone since there was an RAF plane mounted on a pedestal just outside the door”.

During my conversation with Bob, he was quick to communicate the ambivalent nature of the museum and its dynamic relationship to the RAF. From the outset, it was uncertain whether the ADRM was an independent organisation or
if it was owned and operated by the military – as it was technically under the jurisdiction of the commanding officer at RAF Neatishead. Moreover, despite the encouragement and logistical support provided by the RAF, as well as permission to use the museum buildings rent-free, the ADRM was largely self-funded and relied upon private donors and benefactors.

The RAF eventually withdrew formal and informal support when the main radar site closed. At this point, it was indicated that the ADRM was not an official representative of the RAF, nor was it an affiliate of the RAF’s larger museum sites at Hendon and Cosford (which now houses the National Cold War Exhibit). This was symbolised, the ADRM’s curator argued, by the requisitioning of numerous official RAF radar station crests that had been on loan to the Neatishead museum for a number of years (the ADRM now display a series of commissioned replicas).

Anecdotal evidence suggests a wider trend in the military which has seen large organisations disassociate (socially and materially) from unofficial museums and

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14 As there are few records pertaining to the history of the ADRM, the account I offer is a composite of documentary accounts in the radar museum archive and oral histories that I gathered from current and former staff at the museum.
refocus their efforts on their own centralised and authorised exhibits (see also Lowe and Joel 2013: 172).

In 2012, the RAF ADRM simply became, the ADRM (although museum curators and docents still use these names interchangeably to this day). This was also the case at HMS Collingwood, where a small and long-established collection of naval radar and communications equipment was instructed to change its name and was stripped of its official title by the National Naval Museum (HMS Collingwood Historic Collection of Naval Radar and Radio 2014). Mostly, as I will argue, this is related to direct and ongoing connections between the museum, its staff and the former operation of the site – this kind of continuity is also a key characteristic of other micromuseums (see below).

Back by the river with Bob, he is telling me about the recent purchase of the RAF site. According to him, there was a long campaign to raise funds so that the museum could achieve full independence and buy their own portion of the site from the MoD. After many years of frugality and fund-raising, the trust setup to maintain the museum (once the RAF had left) was finally able to purchase the land and buildings where the ADRM had been based since the early 1990s. I attended the museum the day after the trust had officially acquired the site and it was presented to me and other visitors as a symbol of their autonomy and independence (a cause for celebration as it was something they had been striving for). Yet, Bob feels that a degree of uncertainty still pervades the museum and its status. “Now they [the museum trust] own the building, you’d think they’re entirely a museum”, but, Bob repeats, “there is still an ethos about the place”.

For Bob and many other visitors, the ADRM is a thoroughly ambiguous place. It is not-quite-a-museum and yet not-quite-a-radar-station either. “Whenever I go”, Bob jokes, “I feel there ought to be a guard yelling at me to stand to attention”. The accommodation of the museum collection within the former operational site at Neatishead and the lingering presence of former military employees (as volunteers and visitors) means that visitors often sense a palpable connection with the past. Here, the recent past is felt to be alive in the present, something that is accentuated at a number of small museums. For instance, this is the case at the Dartmoor Prison Museum, which is also situated in an environment that has strong and continuing connections to the (potentially unsettling) pasts and
materials on display (Candlin 2013). These kinds of connections “are part of the charm” at Neatishead, Bob suggests: a tangible relationship between past and present that, for him at least, is another curious (and enticing) feature of the place.

4.7 – CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have attempted to trace and “feel out” the particular qualities and characteristics of the Air Defence Radar Museum. In doing so, I was able to highlight how the Cold War was conceptualised and produced in this context. Overlapping materialities and personnel generated a sense of atmosphere at the museum that was premised on a sense of ambiguity – people could not make clear distinctions between the site as an RAF radar station or museum. These connections were put to work by staff at the museum (not always intentionally) in order to create a sense of authenticity and legitimacy surrounding their main narratives and message. However, as I highlighted, this is not a straightforward process and it is occasionally undermined by staff themselves or resisted by visitors.

I also discussed the relationship between particular materials and spaces in the museum, such as the ops room and the presentation of the Cold War in this place. For example, I described how the ad hoc nature of assembly contributed to a sometimes chaotic and fragmented narrative throughout much of the museum. However, this (perhaps unintentionally) served to heighten and enhance perceptions of the ops room as an authentic Cold War “time-capsule”. The affective capacities of this space were harnessed by staff at the museum and drawn upon to make partisan statements about the current state of global geopolitics and the place of the British armed forces within ongoing conflicts. Here, the Cold War becomes a usable past for this organisation and the ops room space.

In the next chapter, I will turn to a set of related issues and practices. At the radar museum, I was able to show that the presentation of the Cold War is directly related to the biographies of staff and their past involvement with radar work. Next, I will focus on the range of practices undertaken by former personnel at a number of places related to radar and explore some of the potential ramifications of this for conceptions of the Cold War in the past and present.
CHAPTER 5: PERSONNEL MEMORY

It is often national heritage organisations and influential museum institutions that drive the practices, discourses and agendas surrounding the protection and production of particular pasts or historic sites. However, as I have demonstrated in each of the previous chapters, the Cold War is a complex and challenging form of heritage. For instance, in chapter 2, I highlighted the sporadic and uneven ways in which Cold War sites are managed in the UK. I highlighted the small groups of advocates who have created a strong agenda for the preservation of a number of key objects and places. However, I also established that the majority of former sites, such as Saxa Vord, are left to decay and provide a number of practical challenges in terms of their management and removal. Similarly, in the previous chapter, I argued that few national and large-scale museums have shown great interest in the permanent presentation of Cold War pasts. As a consequence, many of the practices surrounding former Cold War installations are left to people without a professional heritage background (see chapter 2 and 4).

In this chapter, I will discuss the practices of a key set of stakeholders surrounding former Cold War radar sites. Namely, I will explore the “collected memory” surrounding historic sites in relation to the practices of former military personnel (see Young 1993). These, as I will argue, are essential for understanding the legacy of radar installations in the contemporary landscape. To think about memory “at work” is to pay attention to the active production of memory in the present through various forms of media such as texts, memorials and museum collections, which have their own qualities and capacities (Erll 2011; Fabian 2003: 492; Feuchtwang 2003).

The nature of memory practices surrounding radar sites is relatively fragmented. For the most part, they are a disparate collection of engagements and interactions that mediate these places as sites of memory (see discussion of collected memory below). However, as I will show, they seldom overlap. Given the fragmented nature of memory in the landscape, I decided to take an experimental approach to the representation of memory in this chapter.
In what follows, I present a collection of my field notes and interpretations as a “testimony” of these engagements (e.g. Derrida 1996). These represent my close encounters with former personnel. I chose to represent these experiences through a form of “thick description”, (Geertz 1973), as the memory practices of former personnel mostly reflect a personalised form of social and cultural memory (as I explain in 5.2). This means revelling in the rich detail of the ethnographic context. I do so as a means of revealing the complexity of social life and phenomena surrounding former radar sites. In particular, I highlight the nature of relationships between people, places and things. For the most part, this encompasses the presentation of field note extracts and interview material as a means of reflecting on and understanding the various (and sometimes contradictory or paradoxical) processes at work. A mentioned in chapter 1, detailed accounts of the particular help provide a more nuanced understanding of generalised categories such as heritage or the Cold War. The presentation of my research in this chapter draws inspiration from recent anthropological and historical approaches to the documentation of fragmented memory practices (e.g. Basu 2007; van Wyck 2010).

5.1 – JANE: NOT THE COLD WAR, NOT TO US

It is my last night staying at Jane’s place. My bags are packed and I’m ready to head home before travelling up to Unst for the second time. Jane has just ordered in a curry as a farewell meal and we begin to chat as we eat. I have been talking to Jane for several months about her time as a radar operator in the RAF and her return to live near Neatishead a number of years ago. This seems like as good a time as any to consolidate all the things I have learned – it is time to wrap things up. Before I leave, we decide to record a final formal interview and oral history.

She begins by telling me about her childhood, about how she came to sign up with the RAF at the age of seventeen in the mid 1970s and how she left as an officer in 1991. The Women’s Royal Air Force (WRAF) was Jane’s first job out of school. She joined as a 17 year-old in 1974. “I had always wanted to join the forces…but I’m not sure why, there are no historical links to the air force in my family”. After leaving her home in the north west of England, Jane’s training took place in Grantham and
finished in Hereford over the course of six weeks. She had been identified as a “sharpie”, a “clever clogs”, scoring high on aptitude tests and assessments, which meant that all the pathways available to women in the air force at that time had opened up for her. The “top-end” roles in the 1970s were Air Traffic Controllers and “scopies” [radar operators]. Jane elected to work as a scopie.

After an hour or so, I begin to ask Jane about her personal experiences as an operator and her memories of the Cold War. Between dishing out several helpings of rice, she shakes her head and responds: “We never considered ourselves as being in the Cold War to be honest. Yes, we were told that ‘the Russians’ were a threat”, she recalls, “but not that real a threat. To some of us in the military (and to the Russians too), it was all a game, a bit of a joke – they’d come in their planes and take pictures of you and you’d go and take pictures of them”. Most of the training exercises were “based on the Russians until I left in 1991”, but it all seemed so hypothetical. “You didn’t think – Cold War”. To Jane, it had always seemed that the Cold War was an abstract term that referred to other people, or to another time: “we always thought the Cold War was years before...not when we were there...not us” (Summary of Interview with Jane, June 2013, Steven Leech).

Initially, I was somewhat surprised by Jane’s response and by similar exchanges I had with other former personnel. My own introduction to former Cold War installations was through the work of heritage conservation, as well as artistic responses to abandoned military sites. In such approaches, radar sites and military surveillance operations are often unequivocally related to the wider histories of the Cold War, both in Britain and beyond (e.g. see chapter 2). To me and many other people outside of the armed forces, former Cold War installations appear to conjure up almost phantasmagorical images of clandestine military operations and the shadow of the atomic bomb (e.g. Flintham 2010; see also chapter 3). When discussing Patrick Keiller’s film Robinson in Ruins, for instance, Matthew Flintham (2010) writes,
“…there is a pronounced military presence in the British landscape: it is there in the militarism of rusty barbed wire fences and padlocked gates, decaying or re-purposed Second World War airfields, Jerry-built pill boxes, abandoned rocket facilities and sinister Cold War sites. Occasionally the buildings are brutal and iconic: giant hangars hide enormous transporter aircraft and conspicuous fungoid radomes house spinning radars or secret eavesdropping devices”.

However, during my research with Jane and others, it became clear that many former military employees made very different connections to these places and their operational histories, especially in contrast to my own initial impressions. For example, when poring over old photographs with Fred, a former engineer at RAF Coltishall, he told me that “it was the people” he was interested in recalling, “not the places”, as “they were all much the same. For me” Fred avers, “it’s about the people I met there, the ones that I lived and worked with” (see also Jenkins et al 2008). These variances appear to be significant, as former personnel undertake so much of the memory work surrounding former Cold War sites.

People also seemed unsure how to respond when I asked them about their own memories of the Cold War, which is not at all surprising considering the complex nature of the concept. Like Jane, others I met were reluctant to link their own personal biographies to the Cold War past. Mike, a former radar mechanic during the 1970s, for example, told me that he had never really thought about the Cold War very much. “It’s something that you know about”, he continues, “but you don’t actively think oh I used to be part of the Cold War. It never really crosses your mind”. During an interview with Arnold, a former senior officer at RAF Neatishead, I was corrected for using the phrase “Cold War”: “let me stop you there, because of course, at the time, we didn’t think of it as the Cold War or anything like that”. The Cold War, it would appear, is a useful device for framing the wider context of radar for heritage conservation (chapter 2) or public display (chapter 4). However, for certain individuals, especially radar veterans, the concept does not always seem substantive or specific enough to reflect what they wish to convey.

This was, however, by no means a universal position. There were occasions where former personnel would mediate or make reference to the Cold War in relation to specific radar sites. For instance, returning visitors to Saxa Vord would
sometimes tell me that this was the place that “real Cold War stuff happened” (see also chapter 3). During the 1960s and 70s in Unst, there were often Soviet Trawlers and rumours of spy ships in the surrounding waters, which more readily correlates with popular cultural memory of the Cold War (e.g. Whitfield 1996). It was also one of the busiest radar stations in the UK as Soviet aircraft frequently operated in nearby airspace (see RAF Saxa Vord 1960). Therefore, it was an edgier and more exciting post, which alleviated some of the boredom associated with aspects of radar work (something that was often relayed to me).

However, I encountered attitudes similar to Jane or Arthur’s with much greater frequency. For example, I often identified occasions when former radar personnel were unwilling or unable to establish correlations between their own pasts, their work on radar and the wider context of the Cold War. Generally, this did not equate to a reluctance to discuss personal experiences (as is apparent in Jane’s case). Nor did this seem like an attempt to “repress” or forget the Cold War in any determined fashion (e.g. see Wiener 2012; see also Macdonald 2006: 97). Instead, this reticence seemed to point to two major (and overlapping) issues. The first centres on the relationship between the personal memory of former radar operators and what might be termed, the cultural memory of the Cold War (5.2). Danylow et al (2011: 113) for example, argue that the memory and representation of the Cold War is “diverse and contested”. Moreover, the term itself, they point out, is not universally used or adopted and as I discovered, appears to have varying degrees of usefulness for establishing connections to the past in the present (ibid.). By looking more closely at this relationship, I will ask how “useful” the concept of the Cold War is for former personnel, particularly when engaging with radar sites as places and objects of memory (e.g. see Moeller 2003).

In order to explore this relationship, it is critical to pay attention to the particular qualities of radar sites themselves, such as their capacities and materialities. These specific characteristics tend to provide or constrain the various means by which radar sites (or any other objects or places for that matter) can be mediated in order to generate or constitute associations with the Cold War (see also Brumann 2014). In doing so, I will consider practices that mobilise the materiality and history of former radar installations as “sites of memory”. Sites of memory
refer to concrete places and objects, as well as more intangible performances that are associated with practices of remembering and forgetting (Young 1993: 10).

The second and connected issue is related to my own eagerness to apply broad (and potentially problematic) categories such as “memory” and the “Cold War” (especially early on in my research). Anthropologist Sharon Macdonald (2008: 3) refers to memory as a “slippery” concept. On the one hand, it is supported by a vast body of fascinating theory and empirical research. However, on the other, it is such a capacious term that there are times when “we think that we may be talking about the same thing, but we are not”. Or, she continues:

“…we think it is key to what we are looking at, when perhaps it is just a superficial account that is providing answers but which should be used as a prompt for more questions”.

Other anthropologies such as Gable and Handler (2011: 23) have urged researchers to pay critical attention to broad concepts such as “culture” and “memory” and consider them as part of the “native discourse” of particular individuals and communities. In a similar manner, I would also like to extend this critique to the notion of the Cold War and attend to its particular valence and applications in this instance.

5.2 – APPROACHING MEMORY

As the previous section demonstrates, memory is often a slippery concept. It therefore becomes necessary to define my approach and provide some working definitions for the discussion of case studies that follow.

It is widely recognised that there has been something of a “memory boom” in the past few decades (e.g. Berliner 2005; Huyssen 2003). I will not provide a comprehensive discussion of memory studies research here, as this is a topic that would require several volumes of its own and has been written about extensively elsewhere (e.g. Whitehead 2009). However, before moving on to discuss any further examples from my research, it is important to briefly attend to the concept of cultural memory, considering its usefulness in this context, as well as some of the quagmires and potential pitfalls that surround its application.
According to Andreas Huyssen (2003), contemporary western cultures are “obsessed with the issue of memory”. This is reflected in the gargantuan body of scholarship, which surrounds theories of memory, as well as the steady growth in popular memory practices (e.g. Harrison 2011b). Memory studies covers a huge number of topics and criss-crosses an overwhelming number of disciplinary boundaries, such as psychology, literary studies, anthropology, archaeology and sociology (Connerton 2009: 3). As a result of this variety, there is a possibility that when we talk about memory, we cannot always be sure that we are talking about the same thing (Macdonald 2008). Therefore, there is a need to be specific about what we are talking about when we talk about memory and that we are clear about how we are going to do it.

Over recent decades, there has been a veritable “boom” in the social and cultural studies of memory (e.g. see Connerton 2009; Huyssen 2003). The motivations for this explosion of academic research, as well as popular practices, is too broad a topic to discuss here and is adequately addressed in numerous other studies (e.g. Berliner 2005; Erll 2011; Whitehead 2009). Nonetheless, it is important to highlight some of the developments in the social and cultural studies of memory and the key tension between individual and collective forms of memory.

Anthropologist Sharon Macdonald (2008: 5) suggests that social and cultural perspectives have taken memory “out of the head”. Social and cultural perspectives, for example, have highlighted some of the ways in which memory is produced through relationships between people, places and things (e.g. Fentress and Wickham 1982; Irving 2006; Jones 2010b). In this way, it contrasts with more traditional studies of memory – such as psychology and psychoanalysis – that are traditionally interested in how memory is produced by (and within) individuals. This is not to argue that individuals do not produce memory. Instead, notions of cultural or social memory have shifted the focus to how practices of remembering and forgetting are also produced through a range of collective or shared practices.

Instead of thinking purely about cognition, social and cultural perspectives have emphasised the importance of embodied practice (e.g. Connerton 1989) and materiality in the production of memory (e.g. Miller 2008). This reflects a renewed focus on material culture in disciplines such as anthropology (Hicks 2010), as well as the participation of archaeologists in debates surrounding social forms of
memory (e.g. Hamilakis and Labanyi 2008; Jones 2010b: 117; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003).

Here, I will draw on James E. Young’s (1993; see also 2000) concept of “collected memory”. In his work surrounding Holocaust memorials, Young makes a useful distinction between the idea of shared or collective memory and what he terms, collected memory. It is widely recognised that institutions, such as the nation-state, often mobilise collective memory to bind diverse groups of people together into a unified polity or “imagined community” (ibid.; see also Anderson 1983; Winter 2006).

However, in practice, Young (1993) argues, the connections between shared and personal memories (and identities) do not necessarily coincide. Young (ibid.: 279-80) notes, that, in reality, moments of shared or national memory are generally constituted through diverse personal experience. Although people may be inhabiting the same space or mediating similar cues or objects, communal practices of memory might be better regarded as “a shared time of disparate remembrance” (ibid.: 280). “Taken together”, Young argues, “these discrete memories constitute the collected not collective memory”. This is not to say that cultural memories are the sum total of individual memories (the relationship between these rubrics is far more complicated – e.g. Olick 2003). Rather, the collected memory, by way of contrast “is never seamless, but always a montage of collected fragments, recomposed by each person and generation”.

What is so appealing about the idea of collected memory, is the way in which certain memory objects, places or practices “can become the focus for memory-making, for their gathering and accumulating, and production of memories” (Macdonald 2008: 7). Furthermore, “a collected memory approach”, it has been argued, “leaves open the question of whether those engaging in a practice necessarily attribute it with the same meanings” (Macdonald 2013a: 15). The concept is also suggestive of the disparate and potentially fragmented nature of memory work. It also draws attention to the range of practices that converge around particular sites of memory, without assuming that they overlap in any significant way (while not discounting this possibility either).

As there appear to be few master narratives or authorised ways of remembering the Cold War (or memorialising radar sites for that matter), a
collected memory approach seems appropriate. For instance, it permits a focus on relations between different forms of Cold War memory without collapsing individual and social differences into a homogenous collective (ibid.; see also Olick 2003). This is particularly useful for radar sites, which have become the focal point for a range of (potentially competing or at least contrasting) memory practices. As mentioned above, many of these are performed by former personnel (c.f. chapters 2, 3 and 4).

In the next section, I move on to focus on radar and other Cold War places as sites of memory and memorialisation. In particular, I discuss various sites and materials and explore their capacities to mediate personal and social forms of memory in relation to conflict. I will also pay attention to the kinds of experiences and forms of sociality “afforded” by these sites of memory. The notion of affordances is drawn from the work of James Gibson (1979) and refers to the possibilities for action or practice provided by various materialities and environmental relativities.

5.3 – SITES OF COLLECTED MEMORY

Jane got in touch and asked if I would like an invite to Bawdsey manor, the “home of radar” in the UK. Months before, I had asked if I could tag along on one of her reunions as part of my research. During the course of many conversations, she would talk to me about upcoming “scopie reunions” she was planning to attend. She also talked about some of the places she had revisited or old RAF colleagues she had been reacquainted with over the past few years (access to online communities meant that reconnecting was simple).

On the day of the reunion, Jane picked me up from the station in Ipswich, along with her friend Ray, another former radar operator, who was travelling from his home in Edinburgh for the occasion. As a means of maintaining their relationship, they have been attending a number of reunions together over the past few years. Jane and Ray had become friends during their RAF careers. Their paths had crossed several times; they tell me that “the world of radar operators is a very small one, most of us knew one another”. There were only a handful of operator posts at each radar site and people were moved from posting to posting every
couple of years. As such, many of the same faces would be encountered again and again.

We drove along the Suffolk coast and eventually arrived at the manor house – only 10 minutes late. As we walked in, I asked Jane if it was nice to be returning to the building. “This used to be the Officer’s Mess”, Jane tells me. She had completed her training here in the 1970s for several months as a “non-commissioned rank”, a trainee Fighter Control Assistant. “At that time, lower ranks were never allowed in – I’ve only been in the building a few times during reunions”. Ray had been an officer at Bawdsey and was all too familiar with the building. For some at this organised reunion then, access to the manor house was only granted for the first time as a returning veteran of RAF Bawdsey. It appeared as though Bawdsey might hold many different and potentially unexpected resonances for some of the attendees.

Memorialisation of radar sites is not a major practice. At places such as Bawdsey manor, reunions and similar practices were occasional interruptions that cut through a general lack of access or engagement in the landscape. Radar sites, unlike other sites of conflict such as battlefields or war memorials (e.g. see Benton-Short 2006; Carman and Carman 2006; Saunders 2012; although see Maus 2012), are not often mediated for anniversaries and the like, as the Cold War lacks many concrete dates or periods to memorialise. During the reunion ceremony at Bawdsey for example, much was made of its connection to the development of radar and the Battle of Britain. However, there was no reference to the Cold War at all – despite the number of former personnel present who might be associated with this conflict.

There are few attempts to actively memorialise or commemorate specific places associated with radar. At RAF Yatesbury in Wiltshire, a cleared site where former veterans have erected a stone monument to mark the former location of the station. However, when I visited the site and spent an afternoon with Bill, the site’s curator, he took me on a tour of various Second World War locations, such as the graves of pilots that had died in the late 1930s and to a church where he and others attend a ceremony for Remembrance Sunday. However, his former involvement in the Cold War was not subject to the same attention (see also Gegner 2012).
5.4 – PERSONAL MEMORY
Life history and memoir are a popular means of mediating personal memory. The remembrance of radar and the Cold War (as well as their forgetting) are integral elements in autobiographical projects undertaken by former service personnel, as well as people living and working in close proximity to former radar sites. Exploring the ways in which radar roles, sites and technologies are figured in these narratives, in addition to the textual mediation of the Cold War, offers insights into the production of Cold War heritage and social memory. Furthermore, treating the creation of life history texts as memory-props and objects as relational objects, provides an opportunity to explore life writing as a form of practice, a means in which such memory and heritage is negotiated and performed.

Military memoires are widely read and there are a number of autobiographical texts that relate to the experience of working with radar. Predominantly, these relate to early and experimental research practices - often offering insights into personal relations in teams of ‘boffins’ - which led to the use of radar as an operational military technology. Others focus on the experience of WAAFs, female operators who worked in the plotting rooms and command centres during the Second World War. Many of the narratives were written following the lifting of restrictions, which forced hundreds of women to conceal their once secret roles (e.g. see Arnold 2000; Younghusband 2011). Such works often cite a desire to fill in the gaps created by adherence to the Official Secrets Act, as well as to establish the centrality of research and personal involvement in the establishment and operation of a technology that is heavily associated with events such as the Battle of Britain, which feature heavily in production of national imaginaries in the UK.

5.4.1 – Arthur’s History: memory-objects
I seem to recall Arthur describing it as his ‘history book’, which he insisted would tell me all I needed to know about him, or at least all he wanted me to know. He was 86 at the time, a former Squadron Leader in the RAF. Arthur had spent much of his life – around 40 years - working for the airforce on, what he described as “secret air defence matters”. I had wanted to interview him about his long career in radar – which began in the early 1950s - and his subsequent involvement with the
Air Defence Radar Museum, where he volunteered as an archivist, a role he had fulfilled for almost 20 years. As we chatted one day in the museum staff room, sometime in July 2013, I approached him about a formal interview. He agreed, but suggested that before we got started, I should read his “life history book”.

As an assemblage, Arthur’s life history book is unremarkable. The book itself consists of 29 pages, which Arthur had typed-up using a word processor around the time of his 85th birthday. When I received a copy, which I believe was the only physical version at the time, it was printed upon plain white paper, had no cover and was fastened together with a steel clip. On a few of the pages, amongst the occasional inky smudge, a word or grammatical mistake had been underlined in pen or crossed out completely. Here and there, Arthur had made notes to himself in the text - ‘more here’ or ‘proofread to here’ – indicating that the history book was incomplete. When I read it in 2013, there had been no additions to the document for over a year. At the bottom of each sheet of paper, page numbers had been hastily scrawled in black ink. On top of page 1, ‘Arthur’s History’ was written in small bold letters.

Why did Arthur feel compelled to create this life history book? Upon first appearance, the practice of writing an autobiographical narrative might appear somewhat solipsistic. Such practices appear closely related to a tendency, in what Michael Lambek (2003: 210) describes as ‘Western discourse’, to think about memory as the product of autonomous individuals – as something that one possesses or ‘has’, as opposed to something that one does (Smith 2006). However, exploring Arthur’s intentions in creating this memory-object, and looking more closely at what he does with it (and imagines will be done with it), it is possible to get a more nuanced understanding of how radar and the Cold War might feature in the personal relationships of former service personnel. It also offers insight into how the ramifications of past associations with Cold War surveillance practices might erupt into, or get put to work in, the present, as a form of personal memory or heritage.

This copy of the life history book was treated with a surprising amount of care – given that it was a simple printout of a word-processed document. Upon loaning the history book to me, Arthur made it clear that it was mine as long as I needed it, as long as it made its way back to him (which of course it did!). It was
important that he had a tangible copy of the document and he was anxious that it
did not go astray – despite the ease with which he might produce a facsimile.
Perhaps his careful curation of documents and his desire to keep them in place,
relates to his two decades as an archivist for the museum. My sense was that it was
more personal than that. Keeping the physical object in a fixed space in his home, it
would seem, made it more difficult to overlook, in case anything happened to him,
than a digital file left on his computer.

There were no plans to put the history book into wider circulation. It was
only through my interest in his past that the life history text was put to work in the
context of our interview, as a means of mediating his personal memory. For me, it
provided a useful, if not selective context. For Arthur, it helped him to skilfully
negotiate some of our future exchanges. He was able to control the flow of
conversations by referring to the text, for example, by simply remarking, ‘I think I
covered this in my history’, which allowed him to avoid questions that he felt he
had provided an answer for or where he was uncomfortable or not interested in
discussing something.

Although willing to share it with other interested people, for instance
researchers like me, he had no further plans to circulate the document, this despite
being the co-editor of the museum newsletter, alongside a former curator and work
colleague, which often publishes anecdotal stories about radar and service at
Neatishead. Arthur had also read parts of Gordon Carle’s Saxa Vord blog and likely
came across the recollections of other personnel. In this regard, his history book,
somewhat longer than the short pieces written for online consumption, was treated
in a different regard. However, being asked to write shorter memoires for reunion
sites or online site memorials can be the trigger for the creation of more extensive –
family-oriented – biographies. For instance, a former Army engineer at St Kilda
sent me a short piece he had written for a webpage entry, which had spurred him to
write a more detailed account for his young daughter, so she would ‘know
something about [him]’ in later life.

It should be noted that I witnessed a distinct lack of desire to circulate these
kinds of narratives beyond small and intimate circles, despite my occasional access
to them, gives a sense of the memory work they are doing. Eileen Younghusband’s
biographical works (2009 and 2011) are examples of where this kind of activity has
been taken up and circulated widely as part of social memory work. Younghusband and several other former Women’s Auxiliary Air Force employees have provided written accounts of their experience as “secret” radar operators during the Second World War (see also Arnold 2000). However, comparatively few first-hand accounts of Cold War radar operations are available.

Arthur’s desire was to provide a narrative for his adult son and daughter, is main motivation for producing an autobiographical text. Partly, this relates to his frustration at knowing so little about his own father’s past, particularly of his maritime career during the First World War. “I regret years later”, Arthur writes, “that I never interrogated my Father further…this is part of the reason that I have embarked on my life story” (sic). Reading between the lines of the document, he also seems to be providing narratives for parts of his life that his children may not have been aware of (in contrast to other sections where he writes ‘…as I believe you know’). For instance, due to the ‘secret’ nature of his career there were extensive periods in which he and his children were apart as a consequence of the ‘mobile lifestyle’ of military personnel (Urry 2007) – Arthur mentions several occasions when he and his wife had to move abroad and his children were left behind in the UK at boarding school or with his wife’s parents.

The intention was to eventually present a copy of the history book, perhaps this one, to his children. He made no mention however, of how it would be given to them, in what form they would receive it, or in what circumstances this would take place. The creation of a life history narrative, appears to relate closely to cultural assumptions, particularly in ‘Western discourse’ as Michael Lambek (2003) suggests, which see memory as something that belongs to autonomous individuals, as something that a person possesses. Through the process of autobiographical-writing, Arthur is attempting to objectify his own personal past, establishing selected memories as something tangible and inheritable – a narrative and material link he appears to have felt lacking in connection with his own parent.

Although the text may be premised on these problematic notions, relating to the individuation of memory, through the process of assembly and subsequent distribution (even its imagined future distribution), Arthur’s life history becomes a relational object. Arthur’s personal memory project, which is intimately tied to the operation of radar throughout the Cold War period, is mediated as a means of
establishing future relations - even in his absence - with his close family members. This may help explain the lack of detailed engagement with Cold War issues – their lack of perceived relation to family history and personal memory.

5.4.2 – Other life histories and autobiographical projects

The practice of writing life histories was not a rarefied event; it was something I came across relatively frequently. Nor was it the preserve of former service personnel. For instance, Jack, a ‘Neatishead born and bred’ man in his 70s, had written his own ‘history book’. Unlike Arthur’s, despite featuring as the central character, Jack’s narrative seeks to connect himself to the village and to the ‘old characters’ of Neatishead through his childhood memories of the place. This is mediated through personal photographs of Jack and his siblings, anecdotes about the changing seasons, working the fields and old equipment and tools they would use. Jack also creates memory maps, which are printed on the back, drawings of the village as he remembered it in his youth, with the names of previous occupants inscribed on top of dwellings. This relational quality of the content and narrative appears to be linked to attempts to situate himself as a central ‘character’ in the village, somebody who belongs and someone who has the authority to share memories about Neatishead.

Through the circulation of the book, which can be bought from the village shop for a few pounds, the copies themselves become relational objects. On several occasions, people offered to show me or lend me their copies, which had been widely read by long-term residents and relative newcomers alike. As a result, Jack is often referred to as someone you should speak to, if you want to learn more about the history of the village. His autobiographical project is drawn upon in the production of social memory in and of Neatishead. Interestingly, within the book, there is little or no mention of the RAF station, sections of which surround the entire village. Nevertheless, when I spoke to him about the radar, he described it as something he ‘loved’. Carol, Jack’s wife is also both involved in community events – such as a heritage weekend where old photos of the village are put on display in the church.

Since the closure of the station, elements related to RAF Neatishead have begun to seep in. Carol and some friends, for example, have crafted a ‘kneeler’ in
the church with the RAF Neatishead insignia stitched into it – Carol has also been seeking images for future exhibitions. Despite most people’s sense that the station is ‘just there’, the interest of people like Jack and Carol might reshape the future of the past in the village. To a certain extent, this might have something to do with a necessary sense of distance from the past before it is considered heritage (although see chapter 2).

Many book-length memoirs and popular histories of military veterans, including radar operators started out as narratives intended for family use and circulation – without any intention of writing for a wider audience. There are a number of popular biographies of radar operators who worked in command centres during the Second World War, many of which are written by former WAAFs, female operators and plotters working in the late 1930s and 1940s (e.g. Younghusband 2011). Several cite the desire to share a secret part of their past with unsuspecting family members before their memories disappear with them. For example, Eileen Younghusband’s (2009) Not an Ordinary Life, which includes an account of her ‘secret’ life as a female radar officer during the Second World War, was originally written with her family in mind. She wrote her memoirs so she could reveal undisclosed aspects of her personal and military past. Her writing is very much bound up in the notion of salvaging and recovering personal memories of a secret past ‘before it’s too late’.

Since then, Eileen Younghusband has written several book length accounts of her past – touring widely with her book One Woman’s War (2011), that explores her experience as an operator in detail. It was the recipient of the ‘People’s Book Prize’ in 2013. As a result, within the small world of radar enthusiasts, she has become something of a celebrity, and her presence at places such as the radar museum, is often shared by the museum via online media networks. Writing and distributing her ‘secret past’, has resulted in her positioning as an authority on radar related story-telling, her presence a means of validating and authenticating similar projects. Her book, which is often also sold in radar-related museum shops, is mediated as a personal account that connects to wider projects that seek to establish or cement secret wartime radar operations as an integral element in national wartime imaginaries in the UK.
Several life histories and biographies I received from other former service personnel were also often created, or in the process of creation, for family members or children. Nor is this the preserve of ‘wartime’ personnel. For instance, a man in his 40s, a former ‘sapper’, an army engineer at St Kilda in the 1990s, sent me ‘certain memories’ he had begun to write down for his young daughter:

“I’m mainly doing it for my daughter, she is six right now and one thing I know for a fact is that there are no guarantees in life. I want her to know something about me even if I’m not around to tell her. She’s too young to understand at her age, hence my ramblings on the laptop…”

For many of these people, their military past emerges as an important element in personal histories. Furthermore, it is often something that is deemed necessary to explain to close relations. These kinds of practices also seem connected to other forms of memory work that involve positioning the self in relation to significant others, such as return visits with family members.

5.4.3 – Arthur’s History: content
Like many life history narratives, Arthur is creating a bounded, autonomous narrative that belongs to him (this is ‘Arthur’s History; ‘my life history’). As one might expect, he is also the chief protagonist and sole authorial voice, selecting what he deems worthy of recall (or that which he is able to conjure up) and other elements that remain forgotten or perceived as superfluous or inappropriate.

Each section of the narrative is divided into temporal periods, signalled by subtitles. Every marker points to certain junctures in his life and serves to situate his individual biography within the context of widely accepted understandings of the life course, as well as major social and political events: ‘pre-school days’; ‘school days’; ‘the Second World War’; ‘evacuation’; ‘return [home] to London’; ‘peacetime 1945’; ‘joining the Royal Air Force’; ‘retirement’.

From a close reading of Arthur’s history book, it seems as though the mobile lifestyle of military personnel and his ‘secret role’ in radar, may have made it difficult to keep track of, and make sense of, Arthur’s military and personal past – despite his children’s intimate relationship to it at various stages. Towards the end of the document, he uses language that suggests familiarity with certain stories,
particularly after his military career is over, for instance, statements such as “...beyond that I believe you know”. This would suggest that much of what he writes about his career in radar, he believes, remains unknown to his children (or at least unclear). Some of his ‘memories’ and experiences, it would seem, have not been subject to frequent recollection – through regular familial retellings - and may not have been widely shared, even amongst his children and some other members of his family.

So how does the process of remembering and forgetting work in Arthur’s History and what kinds of past does he evoke? The opening section is divided up into ‘pre-school’ and ‘school days’. Primarily, it provides details about his parents and siblings, their childhood home, as well as his father’s role during the First World War. Mostly, he draws on fuzzy first-hand recollections and early memories, such as family day trips or his route to school in a village outside of London. These are used to give a sense of his early life, something he admittedly struggles to recall, as “it was nearly 80 years ago!”

Arthur’s relationship to radar and his role as a Fighter Controller also feature prominently throughout his life history. Early on the text, he writes about his first visit to a radar station in Kent as an Air Training Crops cadet in 1947, when the technology and its operations were still shrouded in secrecy:

“We were probably there for about half an hour and yet how exciting it all was, the dimmed light, men working in the gloom at cathode ray tubes, the warmth exuded from the equipment, the hushed conversations of the controllers as they briefed us while talking on the radio to the fighter aircraft, and the feeling that something important was about to happen”.

Arthur’s description also resonates with fellow museum contributor Kevin’s description of the ops room at Neatishead.

Arthur’s emotional, sensory and affective responses to the atmosphere of the operations room, or at least his transcribed recollections of them, had long lasting ramifications. He describes the visit as “an event, which was to influence my life forever”. In the early 1950s, part way through training as an RAF pilot (on a six-year commission), Arthur had several ‘heavy landings’ and was encouraged by senior staff to find a different role in the airforce or return to civilian life. It was
his memory of the visit to the ops room, which led him to request training as a Fighter Controller (‘…they accepted, but they could not tell me anything about it because it was a secret trade’).

At various points in his narrative, he uses the ops room and its remembered ‘warmth’ as a metaphor for his own personal happiness and security, contrasting this with a range of other directions he might have taken, alternative futures, such as continuing to work in his family business, an iron foundry, with its ‘cold black sand’. It is clear that Arthur has been preoccupied by the consequences of his life choices and has spent time imagining other possible lives. For instance, he writes about a ‘pilgrimage’ he makes to a building in Kent where he was evacuated during the Second World War. A bomb destroyed it two weeks after his move to another area; he goes there to ‘think what might have happened’. Similarly, his choice of a career in radar and his dismissal from the training programme are described in terms of fate: they helped him ‘survive’, in comparison with some of his friends who died during pilot training shortly after he left. Arthur establishes his work on radar as his ‘life saver’.

5.4.4 – Summary
There are two main points emerging from this section: one relating to the Cold War and radar as a narrative device and its negotiation in the narrative and in practice; the second concerns the practical and relational qualities of the memory object itself – how it is put to work and for whom. Arthur’s narrative history, like many other autobiographical projects and processes, is closely related, as discussed in the sections above, to a tendency to see memory as belonging to autonomous individuals, as something that a person possesses. In the process of producing a memory-object, Arthur is apparently trying to create a ‘thing’ that is inheritable.

Life histories and biographies can also be thought of as proxies for more concrete sites of memory. In chapter 2, I noted that many radar sites are remote, no longer accessible and even completely destroyed. In their absence, the production and circulation of textual biographies and narrative recollections can be interpreted as objects of memory. Moreover, as radar sites and Cold War installations are rarely used as spaces of collective congregation or remembering, the collecting of personal stories can be seen as a means of composing a narrative of the self in
relation to a formerly mobile career and the changing environment. For example at RAF Yatesbury, members of the association had amassed a number of anecdotes and published them in a single collection. Without the materiality of the site to converge upon (despite the stone monument at the site), the collection of stories is also tantamount to the collection of people in place.

5.5 – RETURN VISITS: PERSONAL MEMORY TOURISM

I am sat in the Crumbs Café at the Air Defence Radar Museum in Neatishead. Jane, one of the volunteers has just come over to introduce herself to me – she tells me that she used to work at RAF Neatishead as an operator. Today, she is working with the kitchen staff as they are short of personnel. Someone brings over two steaming cups of tea in china cups and places them next to us on the gingham tablecloth. “I’ve been helping out at the museum a bit when I can, but it’s difficult when you work full-time”, she tells me. At some point, probably when she retires, she would like to become a guide – but now is not the time.

Besides volunteering here, Jane also gets involved in the organisation of reunions for former ‘scopies’, a military term that refers to radar operators. I ask her why she thinks that ex-military people return to places like Neatishead. “I visit places for reunions and stuff but I don’t hanker over places … I just like to go back and see people”. She relates this to the changes that have taken place over time: “I like being in the radar museum but I don’t think of it as my home”, Jane continues, “I don’t think of it as when I worked here. It’s a different environment”. She just wants to get involved, she tells me, it doesn’t really matter where. When she lived in Lincolnshire, for example, she used to organise the party following the Battle of Britain memorial. “If I still lived near RAF Coningsby, I’d probably be doing that instead” (Steven Leech, Field Notes, April 2013).

5.5.1 – Mark-making

The practice of return visits first came to my attention through the visitors’ books at the Air Defence Radar Museum in Neatishead. Early on during my fieldwork, I
spent several hours looking over the comments left by visitors. Many entries in the books provide very general, polite and positive feedback about visitor experience (see Katriel 1997; Macdonald 2005; see also Ssorin-Chaikov 2013): how ‘great’ the museum was, or how ‘educational’ it had been. Others reference affective responses, such as a sense of civic or British national ‘pride’, ‘…marvellous and mystifying – great feeling to be British’, or make connections to contemporary concerns surrounding national security or ongoing military-surveillance operations, ‘I feel a lot safer knowing you’re [the RAF] here’. On most pages however, several entries indicate the presence of a different kind of visitor, with an alternative relationship to the museum, the site, its collections and its staff.

Radar veterans returning to the site are frequent contributors to the visitors’ books. They tend to mark their visit, their return, in fairly consistent and unambiguous ways. For instance, many write down their former service identification number (e.g. J8043890) - a number that may not have had any real use or significance for a number of decades but remembered nonetheless - their former rank (e.g. ex SAC), or the kind of radar system they worked on (‘ex radar 80’ - referencing the Type 80 radar installed at Neatishead in the 1950s). Most state either the time that has elapsed since their work at Neatishead, (e.g. ‘return after 46 years’; ‘interesting return after 50 years’) or simply the period and length of their posting (e.g. ‘ex 1955/56’; ‘nice to be here again – 69-76’; ‘Neatishead 1975-77’). Nearly all of these entries make some kind of direct or personal reference to memory, with ‘nostalgic’ being the most popular comment made by returning employees. However, at Neatishead at least, they seldom go into detail about the quality and character of their experiences (past or present). These comments simply highlight an association between the return travel of former personnel and the practice of remembering: ‘a trip down memory lane’; ‘nice to reminisce’; ‘used to work here – nostalgic’; ‘brings back memories’; ‘memories – how things have changed’.

Visitors’ books at other radar exhibitions, such as the Memories display at Saxa Vord (described in Chapter 5), show remarkable similarity. Many comments repeat the same kinds of language and tropes present in the books at Neatishead. ‘RAF Saxa Vord 1961-63. Nostalgia Visiting. What a change. Brings back memories’. As at Neatishead, former service personnel will often leave their names
and service numbers, although here, many also leave contact details. It is unclear whether this is to establish relations with other returnees, to connect to an imagined community of other radar veterans, or the exhibition curators instead. However, comments promising to contribute to the growth of the exhibitions collections (‘It has taken 33 years but we finally made it back – many memories restored. Thanks for the display – I will add to it’) might suggest that it is more likely to be the latter. As I will show in a separate section below, in practice online media and reunion groups more readily facilitate connections and interactions between former personnel).

Most comments in these books relate to individual visitors but occasionally, similar comments will be made on behalf of a visiting RAF veterans association or reunion groups. Visitors with an RAF or radar background, but without a direct connection to Neatishead or Saxa Vord tend not to indicate any sense of ‘returning’ but still refer to the capacity of the museum’s collections and tours to afford certain kinds of remembering and recollection, to ‘bring back memories’. Other visitors also mark out and try to establish personal connections to the military, RAF, the site or to radar. For instance, visitors who worked for other military organisations in the UK (or elsewhere) will sometimes make reference to this (e.g. ‘Ex-Royal Marines 1976-1986’).

Current service personnel visiting from operational bases also point this out (‘RAF Waddington’; ‘RAF Buchan’). Some highlight connections personal connections to former service personnel, such relatives who may have served at this or similar sites, sometimes visiting with them or mentioning others who may have died. For example, ‘Nostalgic. John was on Peveney Chain Home [during the Second World War]’; ‘ex-radar mother – 84th birthday’; ‘Dad came with us – he was based here in 1950’. Very similar associations are inscribed in the visitors’ books at the Memories exhibition at Saxa Vord, ‘Dad was stationed here [RAF Skaw/Unst] as an officer during the 1940s’. Looser connections are also made, ‘Dad in the RAF as an aircraft mechanic during WWII’; ‘My Dad’s friend was stationed here in the 1950s’. As well as more biographical connections, indicating return visits of a slightly different character for some in Unst: ‘lived here from 80-82. Dad was in the RAF.’
At Saxa Vord, within the Memories visitors’ books, returning personnel appear to use their authority as radar/RAF veterans to confer a sense of authenticity upon the exhibit. ‘OCPSF Saxa 74/75. Hope that this history room long continues – many great memories!!’; ‘Well done for keeping the history alive. Many great memories of my two years 75/76. Ex RAF Fireman’. Many other returnees thank the exhibitors for the ‘wonderful exhibition’ and for ‘restoring’ their memories.

Given that so many visitors engage with these emergent texts as part of the ‘ritual of museum exhibiting’, perhaps their relevance lies in their performative qualities, as integral parts of exhibitions and the experience of visiting (see Macdonald 2005). As Katriel (1997: 71) notes in her analysis of Israeli settlement museums in the 1980s, visitors books are often highly constrained and take the form of ‘appreciative responses given out from guests to their hosts’, politely and uncritically ‘affirming that the museum has accomplished its rhetorical mission’ (cf. Reid 2000). Very few offer critical insights into visitor experiences or question the value or relevance of the museum enterprise (Katriel 1997: 71). That the radar museum uses a separate mechanism for visitor feedback might support this assessment. This also suggests that the visitor book plays a different role within this and other exhibits.

However, thinking about these objects as a ‘memory-prop’, as something active in the mediation of social memory, might help elevate their analytical importance. For example, Macdonald (2005: 125) suggests that the position and visibility of visitor books is an important consideration when establishing their importance. For example, at the Documentation Centre in Nuremberg, it was placed at the entrance, available for visitors to leaf through before they enter. She observed that few would do so but a significant number would engage in this activity as an exit ritual. However, only a fifth of these people would write in the book. Others peered over the shoulders of others or wrote entries on behalf of groups. Through various means of performance and mark-making practices, people are able to establish a connection through the act of writing and inscribing in place. In many respects, it is not the range of content that visitor books offer that is of most interest. Rather, it is their capacity to mediate certain connections and relationships (both real and imagined). This is particularly salient for former personnel surrounding radar sites as so many of these places remain of limits.
5.5.2 – Veteran returns

The number of former military personnel who return to places such as Unst is small when compared to the c.6000 people who were posted to Saxa Vord over the years. There are no organised reunions – as at other stations (see above). In the past, personnel have suggested that the long trip to Unst and the lack of overnight accommodation put them off returning. However, since the closure of Saxa Vord in 2006, a rising stream of former RAF staff have appeared in Unst. Partly, this is due to the conversion of the 1980s RAF camp into the Saxa Vord Resort (SVR) - a hostel, bar and restaurant complex situated within former military structures. News of the station’s closure also seems to have generated a desire to return and evaluate personal relationships to the place. As have a series of blogs and social media networks where people share ‘memories’ - stories and images – of postings to Unst.

Gordon, a blogger and former radar operator who moved back to Shetland with his Unst-born wife, told me that since 2006, increasing numbers of people had contacted him about “making the pilgrimage back to Saxa”.

For the majority of returnees, a return trip to Unst is a means of being in and reconnecting with the landscape. Former service personnel often return with a specific itinerary of places and landmarks to visit. These tend to focus on places linked to individual experiences and biographies. For example, Daniel, a former RAF fireman I met was returning to Unst after a period of 37 years. He had planned a tour of his old haunts to reminisce and show his wife where he had spent 18 months of his life. The first destination on his list was an old croft house that had been his home in Unst – he had not lived in the billets. Instead, he had elected to live in a croft ‘like the locals’. He had romantic memories of the life he’d led, where he had learned to grow potatoes and cut his own peats. Revisiting such places carries risks however. Daniel’s pastoralised image was crushed by what he encountered. The current condition of the house, which was now occupied by a relative newcomer to Unst, was poor. The grounds were overgrown and the appearance shabby. At the same time, his reaction appears to validate his own work, attitudes and accomplishments.

A former radar mechanic I interviewed suggests that Saxa Vord is “somewhere [service] people want to come back to. Just to see the old site”. It was,
he avers, “different from all the rest”. For some who served at Saxa, memories of postings to the station are considered to be ‘special’. This appears to relate to what Michael Herzfeld (1997) refers to as “cultural intimacy”: a shared difficulty or embarrassment that becomes the ‘ironic basis of intimacy and affection’, the foundations of ‘a fellowship of the flawed’ within the spaces of military practice and culture at Saxa Vord. In particular, this is expressed through a sense of togetherness many felt as a result of shared experiences of the island’s tumultuous climate and feelings of ‘isolation’ that were prevalent in postings to Unst. It also relates to the arguments that some personnel made about the island as a place where “real Cold War stuff happened”.

First and foremost, a return trip to Unst is a means of being in and reconnecting with the landscape. Former service personnel often return with a specific itinerary of places and landmarks to visit. Frank Strang, the proprietor of the Saxa Vord Resort (SVR) – a hostel, bar and restaurant complex situated in the old RAF camp – has frequent contact with returning personnel. The SVR is based in the same buildings that were used by the RAF, with many of the interiors still intact. He and his wife are ex-military and want to ‘preserve the military culture of the camp’.

Prior to the development of the SVR there were only a handful of places for tourists to stay in Unst. Most visitors to the island had only a few hours to spend on the island as part of daytrips organised from mainland Shetland. Shortly after SVR opened, former service personnel began to return to the island as regular civilian visitors, some staying for several weeks at a time. Once again, these people had begun to establish themselves as a presence in the landscape (if in much smaller numbers and in very different capacities).

Return visits were also central to the museum space discussed in the previous chapter. For example, several return visitors announced their former connections as soon as they opened the museum door. Some would come in chatting to a volunteer they have met outside having a cigarette. If another volunteer was on the reception desk, this might be mentioned to them. Others, usually accompanied by family and friends, would make their former association clear through speech: ‘I can’t believe it’s been 30 years’; ‘It’s changed so much since I was last here’; inviting the volunteers or other visitors to enquire about their
former connection. Gesture was an important mode of announcement for some too – shaking their heads, exaggerating movements in their necks to emphasise that they were really taking the entrance in, drinking it in with their eyes. Over time, I felt that I’d become quite good at spotting them. Whether it was purposeful or not, some spoke quite loudly to the receptionist about their former connection – for some this was due to excitement and the unusual character of their current experience. This contrasts with most other visitors who are usually quieter and slightly more reticent upon entering, particularly in this museum, where a sense of trespass or uncertainty is sometimes palpable due to the previously restricted nature of the site – which is maintained by the remains and maintenance of some of this security apparatus.

Whilst many former employees are oblivious to the initial reactions of staff at the museum, the kind of reception they receive is contingent upon which staff members are working ‘front of house’ or are present that day. Most of the time, the reception was run by a male former RAF National Service volunteer who had no prior experience of radar or connection to Neatishead, or a woman in her late 60s who lives locally and has no former or familial connection to radar or the military. Many of the staff come into weekly contact with returning employees, often over the course of a number of years. To them, it is nothing unusual and sometimes, they seem relatively unimpressed or underwhelmed in comparison with often-excited returnees – particularly in the case of the non-service volunteer. Nevertheless, the reception staff are always polite and at times make reference to a visitors former association. On one occasion, a returnee, before exchanging any greetings, suggested ‘it’s like coming back to work this’. ‘Ex-employee’, a woman next to him announces, rolling her eyes. After giving them the regular museum introduction – here is your map, toilets are here, the café is there etc. – the volunteer tells them that their tour begins at ‘1200 hours’ – joking about still running on military time:

*Volunteer: ‘You’ll need to go down to the briefing room, but you’ll know where that is…’.*

*Returnee: I don’t know, it’s been a few years…*
Volunteer: As you know, we can’t do anything without a briefing.

Returnee: That’s true. [pointing towards the exit of the museum shop]. Through here? This way, is it?

Through such brief exchanges, former connections are acknowledged and insider status immediately conferred. This comes through in terms of language, such as the inclusive ‘we’ (as in ‘we can’t do anything without a briefing’), in which ‘we’ the museum and ‘we’ the RAF are conflated – a potentially awkward interaction for both as the volunteer has no prior connections to the military and the returnee no previous encounters with the museum organisation. However, these attempts to perform past associations to Neatishead are also coupled with bodily uncertainty created by the changes made to the old R10 building, which is now the museum space. Lots of returnees move uncertainly through the space, confused by new layouts (and the disparity between personal memory and present experience) or trying to recall whether this was a space they once worked in or moved through at all. In contrast to most visitors, who seem to pickup the flow of the museum design, despite its ad hoc nature, returnees often appear disorientated at first, with some seeking assurance from volunteers about what these rooms used to be or if they are heading in the right direction.

Before I had spoken to him, I was made aware of his presence. I was sat on a bench in front of the museum conducting an interview with another visitor at the museum. A woman came outside for a cigarette. She just smoked for a while, pretending not to listen. When we started talking about personal connections to the collections, mainly as a consequence of his armed forces background and childhood memories of the Second World War, she entered into the conversation, mentioning her father-in-law. He was once based at Neatishead, billeted at the former airbase at Coltishall. He is a resident of Salford in Greater Manchester but he had come to visit them in Norfolk. Whilst there, he had decided to visit some old haunts from his military career. A conversation ensued between my interviewee and the visitor (who had been in the army working for the ‘Signals’):
A: Well my father-in-law was stationed here, at Coltishall.
B: They've shut that now haven’t they?
A: We took him to look at it the other day and I think he was quite upset really.
B: Oh, well, I can understand that.
A: It's so [stress placed on this word] overgrown and it used to be immaculate
Me: And that upset him?
A: It did a little bit, yeah.
B: When you've been on your hands and knees as an irk, scrubbing floors...
A: The only thing that made him laugh was that you could still see some of the camouflage painted on some of the buildings as you go into the prison bit...

Shortly after, I found the woman with her husband and his father. They were hovering around him as he looked closely at a display of electronic components sat in a glass display cabinet. They were in the ‘engineering room’, perhaps the space that attracted the fewest visitors – people who strayed in there would often walk straight back out again. On the door, there is a sign that highlights the esoteric nature of these exhibits and indicates who it is aimed at and displayed for. I asked if these exhibits were familiar. ‘To him”, the son announced smiling. Shifting his gaze, he pointed towards his father, a short and slightly shaky older man wearing braces. “Especially these bits”, the son stated, now pointing to a glass display cabinet full of components and motherboards.

He had been a ‘radio engineer’ between 1960-1970. Coming back, he told me, so much had changed. Some of the buildings were the same but he was disoriented by the current layout. ‘I barely recognize it, especially the gantry area above the Cold War room setup…I am having trouble remembering’. He did recall being bused in from Coltishall everyday in ‘fairly basic transport’. That place was in a ‘state’ too, he explained, speaking about how ‘sad’ he had been when they returned to Coltishall just a few days previously. It is ‘a bit sad’, he repeated.

This example provides a number of possible insights. One aspect relates to the presence of former Neatishead personnel as cultural capital for a visiting group.
His presence facilitated conversations and connections to the site and other visitors that may not have been open to them if he did not have a past association with the site, if he had not been present, their experience may have been more limited. Interestingly, both the son and the daughter-in-law were very quick to establish his former connection to the site, at times talking over and for him. I had not spent much time with him going around the museum but I did not see him announcing his past connections to Neatishead or swapping stories with the volunteers. They had spent more time than most in the engineering room, where few people visit. Maybe, as with another engineer I met, he was keen to keep his association relatively quiet and, as a result, his family took it upon themselves to establish connections. He had not been back to either Coltishall or Neatishead since 1970.

Encountering the changes that have occurred at Neatishead made this a difficult place for him to remember. On a very basic experiential level, he found it afforded little direct recall for him. His reminiscences were none specific – about transport to the site etc. – and failed conjure up and evoke anything tangible. Perhaps his own memory had been poor, or he may have been suffering from an illness that affected his capacity to remember. However, he spent quite some time looking over the components and ‘gubbins’ he at used while working in the RAF. Perhaps retreating to these familiar objects and items helped settle any uneasy or ‘trouble’ he was having.

By virtue of his former connection, he was able to make a connection to these components in a way that is unavailable to most. For him, and even his son, they were ‘memory-props’. The museums decision to make some of these parts available to touch and feel might also have helped stir memories through contact with these tactile objects. Nonetheless, for this returnee it seems, the trips to Coltishall and Neatishead, despite their very different states of preservation and presentation, were disorientating.

5.5.3 – Gareth’s visit:

Not daring to flick any of the switches, I leafed through the nearby folder and continued to read the notices [and warnings] about operating the set, the need for a license and frequency signatures on the message board. I had no idea that an amateur radio station had been established in the communications room of the
museum – it operated between “1000 and 1500 hours” on the second Saturday of the month. In the gift shop/entrance, I could hear one of the volunteers talking to a male visitor. “This here is my son, one of my twin sons…I brought him to have a look at where I used to work. I was based here on my first posting in the RAF”. He had a soft, pleasant Welsh accent. He wanted to visit the ops room but was on a tight schedule.

I drifted back into the shop in order to introduce myself and asked whether I could accompany them on their visit to the old operations room. Two men were stood in the gift shop area, both smartly dressed in grey suits. The son appeared to be in his early twenties, tall, dark hair, smiling politely. The father was beaming, his eyes shifting across the room excitedly. He was a little shorter than his son, 53 years old (information he volunteered), with a stubbly shaved head and a white and red cheque shirt. Despite fears that I was going to intrude upon a father and son moment, I felt that it was too interesting an encounter to pass up. He smiled and said that it was no problem. The short shrift explanation I gave of my research only seemed to add to his feeling of excitement and possible disorientation. He was distracted anyway and seemed to be on the point of bursting, such was his desire to tell his son about his memories of this place.

It was suggested, due to the date that he served at Neatishead, he might well know some of the other staff members who had been there at the same time (which turned out to be the case). Neil, the volunteer escorting Gareth, ran off to find this person or that, who may have been here at the same time – it felt a little like the return of a long lost son (perhaps I’m exaggerating). Several people suggested that he might remember Phillip, who was taking the tour in the Cold War room, “the name rings a bell” he said.

As we walked down the corridor, Gareth kept making scoffs of disbelief, an unexpected encounter with a place he had not visited for thirty years. He had been a fighter controller here at 19. We walked past the first flight of stairs, “up there” he pointed out, “used to be a toilet”, a place he assured us that he frequented often before controlling some of the “lightning” aircraft, literally “crapping it”, as he put it, due to the fear and pressure that the role induced as a young man. He began to reminisce, predominantly addressing his son. Occasionally, he would put his hand to his mouth as if struggling to remember and would then point at a door and poke
his head into a room. His body would lurch forward, then he’d take a step back and ask Neil whether a particular room had been there or somewhere else – experiencing in an embodied sense, both the familiarity and unfamiliarity of the space; an apparent discordance between his memory and present experience.

Neil led us up the stairs into the operations room, Gareth still talking to his son, telling him that this was the place, this was the place he had worked. Phillip the volunteer that Gareth may or may not know was still giving his presentation to a couple of visitors. Our escort, Neil then decided to “leave them to it”. In the Cold War operations room, we began to move down the steps towards the consoles. Gareth continued to shake his head. “It’s the same as it was, exactly the same”. The remaining equipment, the soft glow of the electronic lights and the darkened room, appeared to transport him a little, a temporal slippage in a sense. “So, where did you sit?” I asked. All of these, he moved his arm up and down to indicate the row that we were stood at, one step down from the glass panelled room above, in which Phillip was still giving his talk.

Environments and certain affordances offered by particular spaces and materials – processes of remembering: Gareth pulled back a chair and sat down in it. “You just adopt the position”. He placed his left hand over the ball used to scroll along the screen and his right hand and fingers over the keypad and enter button. His body appeared to remember the machine and interface, although imperfectly. Some of the buttons and switches he remembered vividly. Such as one of the square LEDs that would light up when the “Master Controller” wanted to speak to you (which was more often than not to admonish the junior controller). This prompted a few stories about his buccaneer attitude and some of the risks he took in his youth, one time he “got a bollocking” for controlling two supersonic flights simultaneously through dense air traffic and continuing with other operations at the same time.

Being back in this space was evidently exciting and potentially disorientating for him. He continued to break off conversations, or took the opportunity between them, to look around the room (to “breathe it in” the nostalgia, as George had said – see Appendix C). “I haven’t been back since I was 21…it’s just like it was…exactly as I remember it”. This is a difficult thing to articulate; it is
even more difficult to try and translate this particular kind of experience (let alone witnessing) into words.

Gareth also said some very interesting things about the organisation of people and space. He claimed that rank was stratified and manifest physically in the space. However, he stated that “many would probably disagree”. At the bottom, were people who sorted out the data and those who wrote on the tote boards (in relation to this particular task he referred to “the girls”) – their role was to decide “who were the good guys and who were the bad guys”. The next row up, and where he had started, were the fighter controllers, often the young “elite” (the staff below were considered to be “failed fighter controllers”). They controlled the aircraft and liaised with them on their flights. They would have an “assistant” in the chair next to them to “talk to the pilots for them” and make their role easier. Again, there are interesting gender roles here, women are invariably cast as “assistants” in the reminiscences of many “scopies”. Behind the glass panels above are a higher grade of staff/senior controllers and then at the top is the “master controller”, who oversees the entire operation. As this room is a refurbishment of the SWW Happidrome, I am not sure to what extent his comments apply elsewhere. Nevertheless, they were enlightening as I hadn’t heard Cold War ops spaces discussed in these terms.

Phillip finished up with his tour and walked down the steps. Gareth was about to say “I don’t know if you remember me”, but Phillip interrupted, calling him “Smith”. “I said to the visitors above, you could always hear Smith in a different room and that I was going to tell him off for disrupting my talk”. They both laughed. They began to share stories and talk about their respective careers in the RAF. Phillip had stayed in; Gareth had left and founded an IT company after they told him that he would “never be a squad commander”. They began to discuss internal RAF politics, about lack of squad positions for promising personnel at the time etc. They talked about the environment, sometimes Phillip addressed me while Gareth spoke with his son – they commented on the rapidity and pace of the work – the information was so dynamic, constantly changing. So much so, that they doubted whether they would have the mental acuity and bodily energy to do the job now. It was a “young man’s” (or did they say person’s?) role. Gareth then began to talk about certain exercises where he would be required to suit up (in hazard and
radiation suits?) and simulate war conditions, sitting at the console for four hours straight at three in the morning. Much of the work would be done by hand, he mentioned, the tracking was fast-paced and hard work they asserted.

Perhaps most unexpectedly, while they discussed the role with Gareth’s son, they mentioned a few “near misses”. This referred to mistakes made by radar operators which results in the near collision of two or more aircraft under their control. Phillip then revealed that he had “lost a Phantom”. Not realising what he had meant initially, I was about to quip about the irony of “losing a phantom”, trying to be smart about the ephemerality hinted at in the name. I’m glad I didn’t wade in, as the pilot involved died. He described a routine exercise, where two planes take a formation: one flies close to and beneath another, becoming one “blob” on the radar screen and another aircraft flying at a greater height. At the point of convergence, he issued three different directions for them to disperse. There were still only two blips on the screen... he radioed the pilot. Nothing. He radioed the other pilots. They hadn’t seen him. He tried again and then informed his seniors. A rescue helicopter was out to sea in a number of minutes. However, there was nothing to be seen, a bit of wreckage turned up the next day. “It is a dangerous job”, he said. Quite unexpectedly, the ops room was transformed into a space of personal tragedy and grief.

5.6 – CONCLUSIONS
In this chapter, I discussed the collection of practices that surround former radar sites. Insights from my ethnographic research have highlighted a number of surprising issues, especially in relation to current conceptions of the Cold War. Chiefly, as I have argued, former personnel carry out heritage and memory practices surrounding the radar sites. One might expect that those with direct involvement to emphasise the conflict in their interactions with radar as a site of memory. However, as I illustrated, the notion of the Cold War does not appear to be particularly useful or substantive in relation to these practices. Using an experimental approach to representing these practices, I showed that this relates to the personalisation of memory surrounding radar sites. By engaging with radar sites, these people were able to establish a sense of self and locate themselves in place and time. This is significant, as it demonstrates the contextual nature of Cold
War memory practices and a range of issues surrounding the association between former military installations and the conflict in the UK.

Next, I will move on to the main conclusions of this thesis and evaluate the relationships between the insights I provided throughout the main body of this work.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 – MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS

In the introduction, I highlighted the disparity between the growing number of heritage and memory practices converging on former Cold War sites and the lack of attention paid to the social life of these places. As I noted, heritage and memory are widely recognised as being as much about the present as they are the past. And yet, despite increased interest in former military places, little is known about how or why people engage with these sites in the contemporary landscape and what meanings and values emerge as a result. This is particularly important, as current practices are integral to the ongoing constitution of the past in the present, as well as the negotiation of relationships between various temporalities.

This is especially salient with regards to the Cold War, as it a capacious and complex phenomena. Moreover, as anthropologist Heonik Kwon (2010) argues, it is a multifaceted conflict that has innumerable dimensions and consequences (as well as legacies), which differ from nation-state to nation-state and from locality to locality (see also Appadurai 1996; Young 1993). Given the complex legacy of the Cold War, it is important to understand how it is used and put to work in the present. Furthermore, as it is often the source of confusion and ambiguity in the UK, as elsewhere, especially in terms of cultural memory (e.g. see Hennessy 2010), charting how it is understood and framed in the present can provide insights into its former working, as well as its continuing (and unfinished) consequences.

My main interest in this thesis then, was to provide a detailed account of this relationship between the Cold War and what Sharon Macdonald (2013a) refers to as the “heritage-memory-identity complex”. What insights could each of these slippery terms and phenomena provide, when they combined and coalesce in various ways in the landscape? In this thesis, I have directed these questions through the relationships between people, objects, places and intangibles, which surround, converge upon and flow from former military sites – radar sites in particular.
In chapter 2, I focused on the work of heritage professionals surrounding former radar sites. Following insights from a growing body of research in conservation studies, I drew attention to the complexities and nuances involved in the conservation of Cold War sites. In particular, I highlighted an apparent tension between Cold War heritage as novel or avant-garde and modernist conservation principles, which are recognised as underpinning contemporary management practices. On the surface, these positions appeared to be contradictory: radar sites simultaneously push the envelope of what is considered as heritage, while adhering to principles for management that are rooted in the nineteenth century.

However, as I noted in practice, negotiating paradoxes and contradictions is a facet of everyday heritage management activities. Practices such as classification, designation and management, despite appearing to be straightforward tasks, involve countless negotiations and compromises. Moreover, heritage workers must make concessions and tack between personal beliefs and professional identities, organisational and occupational requirements and the exigencies of legal, philosophical and political frameworks. For example, I drew attention to these tensions in practice in relation to issues of authenticity, materiality and value (see 2.11).

With regards to RAF Neatishead, I argued that issues surrounding its ownership created a number of practical issues and problems, which made its management more problematic. However, the awkward character of its conservation is also related to the strong emphasis placed upon historic and aesthetic values in contemporary preservation frameworks. As a result, this places constraints upon the production and presentation of Cold War heritage. Given the complex issues surrounding these places, it has proved difficult to establish a consistent approach to their management.

In chapter 3, I shifted my attention to the legacies of Cold War militarisation in the landscape and how these were manifest in one particular place – the island of Unst in Shetland. Drawing on numerous interviews and participant observations, I highlighted the nature of past relationships between civilian and military communities in and around a former radar station and mapped out the changing constellation of relationships in the present (following the military’s departure). In particular, I drew attention to a range of surprising insights, which went against the
grain of conventional understandings of military presence in the landscape. As a result of the remote location of the site and the unusually close proximity of military-civilian lives, a number of close relationships and interdependencies developed.

In particular, I highlighted the ways in which the Cold War past is put to work as a usable past in the present. As a result, the Unst case illustrated the complex nature of the Cold War concept. In many places, the end of the Cold War was assumed to bring a greater sense of security, particularly in the West (c.f. Hecht 2011). However, due to the many entanglements between military and civilian lives in Unst, nostalgia for the Cold War past developed. This multifaceted nostalgia, my ethnography demonstrated, was not a straightforward yearning for the bipolar power relations of the Cold War period. Instead, the period and its association with the military was suggestive of a more prosperous time on the island.

However, this was not a simple backward glance. The practice of looking back to the Cold War was used to critically evaluate people’s changing relationships and material conditions in the present. The concept of the Cold War itself remained ambiguous in this sense and seemed to refer more to military presence in the landscape than anything else. Furthermore, in contrast to heritage practices in chapter 2, few of these practices were focused upon the materiality of the radar station itself. This indicates that a broader consideration of value and character is required when approaching these places as heritage.

Chapter 4 provided details of the transformation of a section of RAF Neatishead into the Air Defence Radar Museum. Despite being an independent museum, close connections remain between the staff, architecture and collections at the ADRM and the RAF (the site’s former occupants). As a consequence, this ambivalence permeates the entire presentation and performance of the past in this setting. This is most pertinent in relation to the Cold War ops room, which is presented as a coherent time-capsule exhibit (“as it was”). Given the continuity between the ops room materials and former operations at the site, arguments are made about the ADRM having a unique and authentic exhibit.

The sense of authenticity attributed to this space is heightened by the ad hoc nature of collections and display in other areas of the museum and the presence of...
former personnel as guides. As a consequence, the ADRM is able to use this authorised space and the spectre of the Cold War to make political arguments (such as drumming up support for the British military in ongoing conflicts). Nonetheless, as I argued, this is not always effective or well received as the presentation of the ops room also facilitates a range of unintended responses that draw on the popular memory of the Cold War. In this sense, the Cold War is always already representational (see also Weston 2010).

This poses several ethical issues and dilemmas surrounding the heritage and memory of the Cold War (and their production through public display). The independent status of Cold War museums in the UK means that they are able to establish continuities and connections (and permit visitors to experience the Cold War vicariously through the guides), which other public institutions may struggle to offer. Moreover, as Fiona Candlin (2015) notes, independence allows these small museums to be partisan and present a wider variety of opinions (and even provocations), which are healthy for expanded democratic debate. Nonetheless, with regards to Cold War museums in the UK, nearly all are operated by people with a connection to the military. This ensures that a relatively one-sided and militaristic view of the Cold War period is promulgated and prioritised. However, over the coming years, as institutions like the ADRM seek greater degrees of professionalization, it will be interesting to see how and if this changes.

Finally, in chapter 5, I concentrated on a number of heritage and memory practices that adopted radar stations as sites of memory. In particular, I focused on the “collected memory” of former radar personnel. I demonstrated that the concept of the Cold War is not always useful, usable or clear, even to those who worked in the military during these times. Additionally, I showed that where the concept was mobilised, in was done so in very particular contexts or circumstances, especially those where its slipperiness was an advantage (e.g. to establish a link or to create a sense of atmosphere). Most of all, however, this chapter – through its focus on many different forms of memory practice – demonstrated the personalised and individualised character of memory surrounding former radar sites. This, I argued, is potentially related to the fragmented nature of the working lives and biographies of former radar workers. This is significant, as a large proportion of memory practices surrounding Cold War sites are undertaken by people with close
connections to them. This alludes to a sense of dissonance or disparity between the cultural memory of the Cold War, which revels in spies and espionage and the realities of personalised memories in the landscape, which tend to reorient their focus to other (perhaps more “usable”) issues, temporalities and histories.

6.2 – FUTURE DIRECTIONS
Throughout the course of this PhD, one of my main aims has been to show the need for focused ethnographic study of former Cold War sites. By focusing on one particular kind of site, I have been able to show that there is significant variation in terms of the impact of military presence and legacy. Furthermore, I have also demonstrated the disparate and sporadic character of Cold War heritage and memory practices surrounding this one particular variety of site. Largely, my intention was to show that in practice, overarching terms such as Cold War heritage often fail to reflect the complexities and exigencies that surround these places and this period. This, I argue, demonstrate the need for more detailed studies of such legacies in the future.

Therefore, in future research, I would like to expand upon this study and make broader comparisons with a range of other landscapes related to the Cold War. This includes a wider variety of military sites and associated materialities and intangibles. A fruitful direction for future research would be comparisons between different spatial, temporal and geographical sites. For instance, there are exciting opportunities to collaborate with researchers in Europe and elsewhere, to make connections between conceptions of the Cold War in small and municipal museums across the continent and make inferences about how this may compare to the situation in the UK.

During the course of my research, I was also struck by the potentially limiting nature of the ‘site’ as a boundary for my own research and for heritage practices more generally. For instance, the emphasis placed upon the site limits heritage conservation in terms of what is deemed significant or worthy of mediating the Cold War past. However, as I have shown, this can be problematic, given the issues surrounding access and ownership to former military installations. Future work might draw on the insights I have gained from my ethnography of Unst – where many Cold War connections and meanings were not intrinsically tied to the
ruined site in the present – and look at additional modes of presenting the legacy of the conflict in the present. For example, James E. Young’s concept of ‘site of memory’, which I drew on in chapter 5, might provide a useful framework for developing research in this area.

Another consequence of focusing on specific types of site in this thesis, has been the neglect of a range of fascinating practices and themes that surround many other Cold War sites. Focusing on radar sites served its purpose as a heuristic device (see comments above). However, they seldom drew responses or interactions from contemporary artists (e.g. Wilson 2006; see also Flintham 2012) or urban explorers (e.g. Bennett 2011; Garrett 2014) for example. These are central to the aestheticisation of Cold War sites and ruins and require further investigation in terms of how these practices actively situate and mediate the Cold War concept. As these practices did not surface surrounding radar sites (which itself offers a tantalising glimpse in terms of future comparisons), I was unable to pursue my interest in this area. Future research could explore the potential for collaborative projects and events that put the Cold War past to work in the present in a range of provocative and interesting ways.

In addition, any future research would be conducted with a renewed focus on methodology. As I intended to get a sense of the broad range of practices and people that worked their way through former Cold War sites, I was only able to dedicate so much time and attention to areas such as conservation or social memory. However, in future, I would like to be able to build upon the foundations I feel I have established here, to make deeper contributions to these fields. For example, I would like to be able to focus more on ethnographies of conservation practice surrounding the Cold War and the recent past. Due to my focus on radar sites, my opportunities were limited in this regard due to the complex situation and stalemate at RAF Neatishead. Such research would be able to provide a richer narrative and understanding of the heritage biographies of these and similar places, as well as provide opportunities to conduct research in conjunction with conservation professionals that informs future practice (e.g. such as incorporating routine social value studies into initiatives such as landscape characterisation).

Lastly, in future research, I would also like to critically examine the notion of the Cold War ‘site’ in relation to ideas about ‘place’. Throughout the thesis, I
touched on the idea that the Cold War was difficult to situate (and that its legacies were not always easy to detect in the landscape). However, I would like to explore this idea further in the future, especially in relation to heritage management, as the concept is so central to conservation practices. The ambiguities surrounding the Cold War and its placement suggest a paradox when combined with the practice of heritage, which often attempts to locate the past in space and time.

In conclusion, throughout the course of this PhD project, I found no straightforward answers to the question I set myself at the beginning of this research: the dual focus on what kind of heritage and what kind of Cold War would emerge in practice. Instead, I discovered that the history and legacy of the Cold War is often difficult to articulate and is sometimes treated sporadically in the UK. However, if one looks close enough, there is evidence of a complex web of consequences that are mobilised and mediated in numerous and often surprising ways in the present. Rather than disentangle these webs, however, heritage managers and public institutions, might draw attention to the character of these threads in order to provoke and question the legacy of this uncertain conflict.
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<td>II</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frodsham</td>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>1950s Anti-Aircraft Operations Room</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravesend Bunker</td>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>1950s Civil Defence Bunker</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE A.1 Cold War Sites in England with Listed structures only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>1950s Atomic Bomb Stores &amp; Cypion Hangar</td>
<td>Cambridgeshire</td>
<td>Cambridge (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Very Heavy Bomber Control Tower</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>North Weald (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>II &amp; II*</td>
<td>1946 &amp; 1950s Rocket Test Beds</td>
<td>Buckinghamshire</td>
<td>Westcott (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Royal Observer Corps Underground Monitoring Post</td>
<td>Lincolnshire</td>
<td>South Creake (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Royal Observer Corps Group Headquarters (Surface)</td>
<td>Devonshire</td>
<td>North Luffenham (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Royal Observer Corps Underground Monitoring Post</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>North Weald Airfield (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>1950s War Room</td>
<td>Berkshire</td>
<td>Stallingborough (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>1950s War Room/1960s Regional Seat of Government</td>
<td>Nottinghamshire</td>
<td>Wittering (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>1950s Control Tower</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>North Weald Airfield (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>II*</td>
<td>Thor Missile Site</td>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>North Luffenham (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>1950s Very Heavy Anti-Aircraft Site</td>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>Wittering (RAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>1951 Anti-Aircraft Operations Room</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>Mistley (War Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Location</td>
<td>Physical Materials</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Scheduled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coltishall (RAF)</td>
<td>1950s Blast Walls</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corsham Bunker</td>
<td>Central Government War Room (Multiple Areas)</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Wiltshire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foulness</td>
<td>1950s Atomic Bomb Assembly (Multiple Areas)</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Wiltshire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester Lodge Battery</td>
<td>Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun &amp; Buildings</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halls Green</td>
<td>1950s Heavy Anti-Aircraft Site</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needles Battery</td>
<td>1950s Heavy Anti-Aircraft Site</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandpit Hill</td>
<td>1950s Heavy Anti-Aircraft Site</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>1950s Civil Defense Bunker</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Dorset</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td></td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Isle of Wight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Dorset</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandpit Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandpit Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandpit Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE A.3  Cold War Sites with multiple designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Physical Material, Status &amp; Date of Designation</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnham (RAF)</td>
<td>Atomic Weapons Research Establishment Test Buildings</td>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>Berkshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Blue Sheet Rocket (Grade II: 2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Atomic Bomb Storage Facilities (Grade II: 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1950s Atomic Bomb Store (Scheduled: 2003)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cold War Radar Facilities (Grade II &amp; II*: 2008)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cruise Missile Shelters (Scheduled: 2003)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1950s Control Tower (Grade II: 2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Atomic Bomb Storage Facilities (Grade II: 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Blue Streak Rocket (Scheduled: 2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bomb Ballistics and Mass Buildings (Grade II: 2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Physical Materials, Status &amp; Date of Designation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Heyford (RAF)</td>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
<td>Conservation Area (2010) – in response to planning enquiry and planned redevelopment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Associated Telephone Exchange, Cruise Missile Shelters (Scheduled 2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Bomb Store, 1980s Hardened Aircraft Shelters, Avions Building, The Command Centre and Controll Tower, Nose Dock Hangars, HQ Building (Grade II: 2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE A.4** Cold War Sites in England multiple designations and a conservation area
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date of Designation</th>
<th>Physical Materials, Status &amp; Date of Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dover Castle</td>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>Regional Seat of Government</td>
<td>Scheduled Guardianship: 1999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table A.5 Cold War Sites in England currently in guardianship with English Heritage.**
APPENDIX B: RADAR ARCHITECTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

In this appendix, I provide contextual and historical information surrounding early warning radar networks in the UK (including a discussion of earlier detection technologies). There are also a series of tables that briefly outline major changes to the radar network in Britain between the 1940s and 1990s as well as a list of standard radar architecture types (drawn up from Cocroft and Thomas 2003; McCamley 2011).

B.1 – EARLY WARNING AND RADAR: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Both Jack Gough’s (1993) *Watching the Skies* and Michael Gething’s (1993) *Sky Guardians*, explicitly point to an uneasy struggle over the sovereignty of air space. Even a superficial reading of the titles alone indicates a significant tension, a desire to monitor and control the infinite and ethereal skies. Ever since the advent of aircraft, the land below has appeared increasingly vulnerable, seemingly helpless and prostrate beneath the sights of the bomber (de Seversky 1942: 104; Kaplan 2007). This is reflected in late 19th century movements which attempted to prohibit the dropping of explosives and projectiles from aircraft (Gething 1993: 22-3) However, despite initial proscriptions, the raining of “death from above” became an all too familiar practice during the 20th century (*ibid*).

Air power rose to prominence following the First World War, with the development of national air forces and improvements in aeronautical design. During the Second World War, iconic aerial attacks, such as the firebombing of Dresden and the use of atomic bombs upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki, only seemed to underline its prominence as a destructive geopolitical tool (Adey 2012; Kaplan 2007; Moshenska 2009). This belief in airborne superiority was only accentuated during the Cold War. After all, it was a period characterised by the threat of the bomb, as well as attempts to propel national sovereignty into outer space vis-à-vis the space race (Arendt 1958: 1; Gorman 2009; Kaplan 2007). The battle to territorialise the skies and the feelings of exposure it precipitated engendered a need for ever more sophisticated forms of defence. It was within this context that radar and its antecedents developed - in order to provide warning of impending aerial attacks.
Prior to the advent of radar, audio location devices were developed in order to provide early warning of incoming aerial threats: such as the Zeppelin blimps used to bomb Britain during the First World War (Gething 1993: 26). The detection of aircraft via sound waves was a means to alert forces on the ground of an incoming attack and to assist air-defence gunners in locating a target before it appeared on the horizon. These ‘acoustic defences’ came in two broad forms: fixed sound mirror sites, such as those at Denge along the East coast of England and portable devices (Scarth 1999). The transportable instruments were mostly experimental in character – idiosyncratic apparatus which attempted to mimic and exaggerate the function of the ear, amplifying and catching the acoustic resonances of as yet invisible aircraft (see fig. 1; Scarth 1999).

Similarly, the fixed sound mirror sites were also modelled upon the human ear and the practice of listening. They consisted of large parabolic concrete structures with microphones placed at their centres designed to pick up any significant vibrations. Audio location was utilised until the beginning of the Second World War but was gradually abandoned after the adoption of radar (although see Edgerton 2006). It is apparent that the efficacy of audible detection devices was severely limited by the increasing swiftness of military aircraft and the difficulties in differentiating between the sound of enemy and allied engines (Gething 1993: 26; Scarth 1999: 40; see also Virilio 1989 on speed and warfare). However, they provide a useful example of a technology which was used to amplify human capacities to mediate and sense the invisible threat of air power.

Despite improvements in the range of audio location technologies (up to 24 miles), in 1935 the British Air Ministry held a committee of scientific research concerning methods of air defence. The ministry consulted Robert Watson-Watt, an expert in wireless telegraphy, as to the feasibility of using electromagnetic radiation to damage or incapacitate aircraft (DeLanda 1991; Gething 1993: 28). Watson-Watt instead suggested that electromagnetism, through the emission of radio waves, could be used to detect airborne objects – a form of radio location (Gething 1993: 28).

With the spectre of another European war looming and the likelihood of a greater role for air power, Watson-Watt and a team of researchers were commissioned to develop a comprehensive radio location defensive network (Gough 1993: 4). Building upon 19th century insights into the reflective properties of radio
waves, work was carried out in secret at Orfordness and Bawdsey Manor in Suffolk. Their experiments during the late 1930s resulted in the emergence of the Chain Home radar system (e.g. see Dobinson 2012). During the course of the Second World War, over two hundred Chain Home radar stations were constructed along the British coast, consisting of 360 ft tall wooden transmission and receiving towers. Regular pulses of radio energy were emitted to provide overlapping air defence coverage up to 40 miles out to sea (Buderi 1996). Any aircraft flying within range of this electromagnetic field could be detected.

Following the surprise test explosion of the first Soviet atomic bomb in 1949, radar’s role in Britain was transformed. The ensuing Cold War power struggles and the constant threat of nuclear annihilation ensured that radar would become a round-the-clock operation. During the late 40s and early 50s, Britain was divided up into regional air space sectors, all of which had respective command centres that processed and mapped out incoming information. Levels of organisation and coordination were also increased and a control and reporting scheme was conceived, in which live location data was distributed to the operational centres from local radar sites around the country (Cocroft and Thomas 2003). Short-range radar sites (also known as Ground Interceptor Radar) were also used to coordinate a jet fighter force which would police the skies and intercept any intruding air force (Cocroft and Thomas 2003: 84; Gough 1993).

In short, radar was subsumed within wider networks of air defence which included: detection systems; command and control mechanisms; airborne interception and ground defence (such as missiles). The air defence system in the UK constituted an increasingly complex web of sites throughout this period, its character and form evolving constantly, responding to economic changes and developing threat perceptions (see Cocroft and Thomas 2003).
B.2 – RADAR TECHNOLOGY AND DEFENCE PLANNING POLICIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Phases</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Key Features</th>
<th>Defence Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chain Home</td>
<td>1938-1950</td>
<td>• 100s of sites&lt;br&gt;• Wooden aerials&lt;br&gt;• Manual plotting using map tables in control rooms</td>
<td>• Second World War&lt;br&gt;• Development of nuclear weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotor</td>
<td>1950-1960s-</td>
<td>• Underground concrete bunkers designed to withstand conventional atomic blast&lt;br&gt; • Vast economic outlay&lt;br&gt; • Built over many wartime radar sites</td>
<td>• Soviet development of H-Bomb (rotor bunkers become obsolete)&lt;br&gt; • Mutually Assured Destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linesman</td>
<td>1960s-1980s</td>
<td>• Integrated with civilian Air Traffic Control&lt;br&gt; • Above ground operations blocks (no longer seeking to avoid a nuclear blast but to provide rapid warning for “response”)</td>
<td>• Protection of nuclear deterrent&lt;br&gt; • Moving towards flexible response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKADGE</td>
<td>1970s-1990s</td>
<td>• Reduction in number of sites&lt;br&gt; • Rationalisation of resources due to technological developments and improved coverage</td>
<td>• Flexible Response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE B.1** Development and policy phases for early warning systems in the UK from 1930s-1990s.
## B.3 – STANDARD BUILDING TYPES: UK RADAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1 Single-storey underground bunker</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 Single-storey underground bunker</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3 Two-storey underground bunker</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4 Four-storey underground bunker</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5 Surface Structure</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6 Two-storey semi-sunken bunker</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7 Underground equipment for aerials</td>
<td>Equipment block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8 Single-storey surface huts</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9 Converted wartime ops block</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10 Single-storey surface version of R1</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R11 Single-storey surface version of R2</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R12 Equipment and plant room</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R15 Data handling equipment block</td>
<td>Electronics block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R17 Equipment room for Type-84 radar</td>
<td>Equipment block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R30 Modified surface wartime radar</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(RAF Neatishead only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additions after 1953**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R10 Single-storey surface version of R1</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R11 Single-storey surface version of R2</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R12 Equipment and plant room</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R15 Data handling equipment block</td>
<td>Electronics block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R17 Equipment room for Type-84 radar</td>
<td>Equipment block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R30 Modified surface wartime radar</td>
<td>Operations block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(RAF Neatishead only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table B. 2** Summary of standard Cold War radar station building types in UK (after Cocroft and Thomas 2003; McCamley 2011).
B.4 – RADAR ARCHITECTURE: RAF NEATISHEAD

- All images in this section were taken by the author across multiple visits to the Neatishead site over the course of two years.

- Photo surveys in 2012 and 2013 were undertaken in order to ascertain the character of the site and any changes taken place since English Heritage designation in 2008.

- Each image depicts remnant features of the landscape within the former military compound.

- For location of each structure consult the Neatishead site map in chapter 2.

- Due to a fatal fire in the operations bunker at Neatishead in the 1960s a decision was made to upgrade the R30 building and use this as the ops room. This architectural feature, which is currently the main exhibit in the ADRM, is unique to RAF Neatishead.

FIGURE B. 1 Entrance to R3 bunker (left) and Type 84 radar and turning gear equipment (centre). North of site looking west. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).
FIGURE B. 2 One of four scheduled radar plinths associated with the Type 84 radar. East of site looking north west. Photo: Steven Leech (2012)

FIGURE B. 3 Earthen mound above R3 bunker. Looking south west. Photo: Steven Leech (2012)
FIGURE B. 4  R12 equipment block. Looking north west. Photo: Steven Leech (2012)

FIGURE B. 5  Sentry post. North west of site looking north west. Photo: Steven Leech (2012)
FIGURE B. 6 Intact security fencing that covers the entire site boundary. South east of site looking north east. Photo: Steven Leech (2012).

FIGURE B. 7 R30 building (now ADRM Cold War exhibit). Internal. Photo: Steven Leech (2013)
APPENDIX C: RESEARCH METHODS

As anthropologist Sharon Macdonald (2013a) indicates, ethnographic approaches do not adhere to a simple formula or framework for carrying out research. Instead, adopting such an approach indicates a commitment to revealing detail, complexity and the relationships between things. The various methods highlighted here were integral to this process. As mentioned in the main body of the text, I deployed a number of overlapping techniques which were refined and readjusted throughout the research process (e.g. see Bryman 2016). This combination of methods and data were then triangulated through a dedicated period of analysis prior to the planning and writing up of the thesis.

This appendix provides a breakdown of the various research methods employed throughout my ethnographic fieldwork. It also gives a sense of how research unfolded in real-time. In particular, it shows where my attention was focused and how it was distributed at different times across the multiple sites.

C.1 – METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

The following recognised qualitative and sociological research techniques were the main methods deployed across the key case study sites (see below for full descriptions):

- Participant observation
- Site observations
- Visitor tracking
- Semi-structured interviews
- Informal interviews and conversation
- Accompanied site walks
- Sensory and sound walks
- Archival research

Some of these techniques overlapped significantly. For instance, some of the accompanied site walks were used as a means of facilitating certain kinds of responses and conversations during interviews. On a single day, multiple techniques
were employed with different individuals and groups depending on the location and the activity at hand.

Similarly, decisions about how to record the fieldwork were made on a case-by-case basis. As a fieldwork event was unfolding, I determined the most appropriate means of documentation. For example, upon meeting a couple in Unst for the first time, I was immediately invited to start asking them questions for my study. Given that I had not anticipated the interview, I asked if I could write brief notes while we talked as a record of our conversation. During ethnographic fieldwork, this kind of flexibility was essential.

For data collection, I used the following main methods of documentation (again, see below for full details):

- Audio recordings
- Field notes
- Photography

C.2 –RESEARCH TECHNIQUES: OVERVIEW AND JUSTIFICATION

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION
This project was centred on a sustained period of ethnographic fieldwork that aimed to trace a corpus of meanings, relationships and values surrounding historic Cold War sites. At the heart of this process was participant observation. This is a technique that is central to ethnography. If the aim of ethnography is to dedicate time to understanding phenomena from a “native point of view”, then participant observation is a primary mode of documenting this process in practice.

Participant observation takes many forms and at its core is about a close recording and detailed analysis of the practices and activities of people in a particular setting (e.g. Spradley 2016). As Spradley (2016: 33) suggests, participant observation “involves the discovery and use of ethnographic questions to guide what you see and hear”. As such, it is a dynamic and flexible methodology. The particular modalities and flavour of ethnographic observations depends entirely on the researcher, the research context, the participants and the topic of study. It is also contingent upon a
whole other set of other (often unpredictable) materialities and conditions such as the weather, which can shape people’s moods and their behaviour in an ethnographic context (e.g. see Macdonald 2009).

Throughout the main text and in Appendix D, I have highlighted examples from many of the practices and exchanges that I observed. I did so in an attempt to understand the perspectives of key stakeholder groups. These differing perspectives (between and within stakeholder communities) were then juxtaposed and compared in the text as forms of the “collected memory” (to use James Young’s phrase 1993). Observation activities helped me understand and reveal the wide range of perspectives that surround historic Cold War radar sites.

With heritage professionals, for example, I observed them during prearranged visits to designated Cold War sites. For instance, I accompanied Wayne Cocroft to RAF Barnham to a meeting with the site owner. I made observations about the relationship between the owner and the conservation professional: how they interacted with the materiality of the site and how each of them understood and approached it from their own perspective (based on their biographies and training etc.).

However, further opportunities to undertake participant observation with heritage professionals at key radar sites were somewhat restricted. In part, this was due to the stalemate at RAF Neatishead, a lack of professional interest in other abandoned stations (after Neatishead had been preserved) and the timing of the research. As much of my fieldworks took place after the Cold War protection and designation programmes had drawn to a close, there was little conservation activity going on. Instead, I had the task of retracing the steps of heritage professionals, analysing their interpretations and interviewing them about their experiences.

At the Air Defence Radar Museum, I observed a number of key practices. For instance, I followed visitors on their guided tours. During this process, I also observed the performances of guides and interpreted the ways in which they animated Cold War and radar histories through their interactions with the space, objects and other people in the museum. In a similar manner to heritage conservation practices, there was not as much active curation activity as I had anticipated. This was due to the nature of the museum and the lack of professional staff on hand to undertake this kind of work (see chapter 3). Nevertheless, I trawled the archives and interviewed key
stakeholders about their approach to the management and presentation of the site. Moreover, this gave me opportunity to observe the practices of volunteers and former personnel in these spaces. Watching and listening carefully, I was able to develop a strong sense of what the experience of returning to a former military site was like for a range of stakeholders and how this, in turn, related to the production of certain ideas about the Cold War in the present.

As there was a lack of activity around the radar site itself, a lot of my observations in Unst came from chance encounters and allowing myself to be a presence in the environment. By going along to events such as Unst Fest and observing the interactions between long term residents and interpreting the ways in which they produced the past and heritage more generally, I was able to make unanticipated connections to the Cold War and its legacy. Participant observation in Unst was also more about listening than anything else. It was about the quiet that had descended upon the island following the RAF’s departure and becoming attuned to this as an embodied and personal experience for various stakeholders.

SITE OBSERVATION
Site observations were a method I developed in relation to the radar sites. In order to get a sense of their presence in the contemporary landscape, I dedicated several hours at each site to watching briefs. I did this by positioning myself at a range of positions in the landscape (in plain site, at a distance and by moving around the perimeter of sites). At Saxa Vord, for instance, I watched the comings and goings (of which there were very few) of people visiting the top-site.

These observations helped support and strengthen my interpretation that the site itself was no longer of particular social relevance (even if it had been in the past). I was able to triangulate these observations with the interview data I collected with local residents on the island. Dedicating time to just watching the sites helped reveal similarities and tensions between what people said about their relationships to historic radar sites and how they interacted with them in reality.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS
Semi-structured interviewing refers to a conversational approach to participant interviews (e.g. see Galletta 2012). Rather than use a fixed line of questioning or
survey, a semi-structured approach uses a loose guide or open-ended set of questions to engage participants in conversation (Adler and Adler 1987). This technique works extremely well in ethnographic research contexts as it encourages interviewees to express themselves using their own language and own concepts. Not only does this provide a more natural flow to the conversation, it also reveals something crucial about the ethnographic context itself. Rather than direct stakeholders, my aim as an ethnographer was to listen to how people talked about the legacy of the Cold War and watch how they engaged with them and put them to work. In a more structured format, these nuances (and any additional connections participants might make) would be lost.

My own approach to interviewing is very relaxed. I often begin an interview session off the record – just taking some scribbled notes to ease the participant into the conversation. Moreover, I also use photographs, archival material or interesting comments I’ve gathered in the process of my research as a means of jumping into a discussion. This allows interviewees to attach to something familiar and gives people something to relate to (often putting them at ease).

My technique is also about allowing the interviewee to lead the conversation and listening intently, leaving pauses to allow them to reveal the connections between their thoughts. In Unst for example, this was particularly useful on occasions when people connected the RAF’s departure with seemingly unrelated historical events such as the Clearances or the closure of the municipal airstrip. Being attentive to these connections helped me highlight the ways in which nostalgia was actively put to work in relation to former military presence and the spectre of the Cold War.

As I mention in the section on participation below, I used a “purposive sampling technique” (e.g. Tongco 2007). It is a form of non-probability sampling, which means that it cannot be fully planned in advance. Therefore, I took great care in selecting participants and often only approached people after different individuals had recommended them to me on more than one occasion (thus ensuring a sense of relevance and reliability).

Using this technique, the ethnographer is often at the mercy of existing social networks and relationships in a particular location. This can be extremely enriching. For instance, in Unst, the people united by the “Saxa Vord connection”
facilitated my interest in quiet and sound. Following the links between these people helped flesh these themes out. However, at times, it can also be limiting (particular if a network of people share similar beliefs, experiences and backgrounds). Therefore, I was also careful to step outside of these established networks in order to ensure that I got as varied a picture as I could possibly achieve in the time I had allocated.

In total I carried out 97 taped interviews with stakeholders. In c.4 below, I provide a breakdown of numbers for each category of stakeholders and how this varied from site to site. I also give details of the length of time taken for each body of interviews.

There is a small degree of overlap in these figures as a handful of individuals were interviewed about two or more roles or relationships to the sites. For example, some volunteers at the Air Defence Radar Museum were also former radar personnel. Therefore, I count such individuals twice as often used a separate set of questions to guide the interviews depending on their relationship to the place. As a result, different parts of these interviews were analysed, approached and compared differently.

These figures do not count the multiple interviews I carried out with certain key participants. For instance, certain heritage professionals were interviewed two or three times, as were some former operators and “gatekeepers” in the local community. On such occasions, I would use a slightly different approach to the interview (such as using a different means of documenting the conversation or by starting with a different kind of object or request for information). However, I have only counted these multiple exchanges as a “single” interview.

INFORMAL INTERVIEWS
“Informal” approaches refer to the method of recording for interviews. For instance, on occasions where I was out walking with a participant in the landscape or undertaking an activity (such as helping a local historian make recordings of a nearby Second World War site), the conditions were not always right for a formal interview or the use of an audio recorder. At times then, I relied upon note making in my journals and even working from recall after the exchange had ended. This worked well in public spaces when meeting local community residents and with people who wanted to talk off the record. Although I did not use direct quotes or include them in
the study, these informal interviews and conservations helped build a more nuanced understanding of the contexts in which I was working and learning. It is difficult to place a formal figure on the number of these interactions but it is a significant amount. These methods are used on location in the field when certain forms of recording are not possible or are inappropriate (e.g. see Wilson and Hutchinson 1992).

**WALKING PRACTICES**

Over the last ten years, scholars in anthropology and cultural geography have begun to adapt artist methodologies as forms of experimental research. One such area is the embodied practice of walking (Pink et al 2010 refer to this as “walking across disciplines”). This seemingly mundane activity has been adopted by researchers in a variety of ways that focus on the production of knowledge, belonging and a sense of place through encounters in and with the environment (e.g. Middleton 2010).

As Tim Ingold (2007) avers in his thesis on “lines”, to walk in the world is a practice of active inscription (a means of understanding places and informing them through your presence). In this sense, I adopted a variety of walking practices and recorded them in my field notebooks as a way of understanding the landscape (on my own and with different stakeholders). This included sound walks in Unst that were inspired by techniques developed for urban psychogeographies such as the dérive (e.g. see Smith 2010).

By travelling the landscape on foot, I followed the pull of different sounds and “walked without purpose” (see chapter 3; Cox 2008). These brought me a more varied understanding of the environment and helped me tune in to the ways in which the senses and memory are engaged in Unst. During other walks, I carried my notebook with me and sometimes setup my audio recorder to catch a snapshot of the sonic landscape. As with photographic images, I listened to these to help create a sense of place in my writing.

Walking with others was also a useful practice. Accompanied forms of visiting establish a dynamic and a connection between participants and myself as the researcher. Being with local residents in the landscape, for example, revealed a plethora of tacit or hidden connections. For instance, skirting the farmland adjacent to Neatishead, one resident recalled a time when she had, to her surprise, found an
“army man” crawling in the ditch in front of us. There was a practice invasion underway. While walking the Broads with another, stories about the secretive nature of the radar site were highlighted through seemingly unrelated monuments in the landscape. These kinds of details reveal something about the nature of involuntary memory and the way landscape features trigger certain kinds of associations that are revealed through the practice of walking (see also Irving 2006).

GUIDING ANALYSIS AND VISITOR TRACKING

At the ADRM I spent a considerable amount of time tracking visitors through the museum. This included a period of observation in every single exhibition space (for at least an hour) and a number of repeat observations in key areas such as the Cold War ops room (e.g. see also Hooper-Greenhill 2006). I made frequent rough maps and sketches of visitor movements through the space, recording where they would dwell and things they drifted past. I also noted the time they spent in certain spaces of with particular objects (recording this on a stopwatch).

This kind of activity might appear to be banal. However, it revealed much about embodied interaction in the museum space and how different modes of the museum presentation was received. This was particular evident in the “time-capsule” of the Cold War ops room, in which visitor behaviour was very different to any other space in the museum.

Drawing on methodologies pioneered by Sharon Macdonald (2006) and Bella Dicks (2008), I also completed a series of participant observations as part of the museum’s series of guided tours. In total I completed more than ten tours of the ADRM (each lasting about an hour and a half). This included making observations about visitor interactions with guides, the response to narratives presented and the varied performance of different guides (see also Candlin 2015). Through multiple participant observations, for instance, I was able to understand how the degree of former connection to the radar site at Neatishead informed the kinds of Cold War narratives that guides presented. Moreover, by establishing and performing a sense of continuity, some guides were able to animate and mediate the collections in a set of exclusive ways; often in an attempt to cultivate a sense of authenticity and gravitas in the eyes and ears of the visitors. These insights were critical to understanding the
production of Cold War heritage in this place, it’s challenges, as well as its relative successes and failures.

COLLECTION ANALYSIS

Another facet of my museum fieldwork was collections analysis. Drawing on museum ethnography and anthropology, I attempted to map out how the museum was used and related to by a range of stakeholders. For example, I used catalogue data to establish where the collections had come from and create a sense of the museum’s reach and network. These insights often fed into ongoing conversations and informal interviews with curatorial staff.

Going “behind the scenes” in this manner (e.g. see Macdonald 2002b), gave a much clearer sense of the institution and how it operated as well as the meanings and values bound up in the collections from a number of different perspectives. In order to contextualise my visitor observations in the museum, I also undertook a meticulous study of every display room and took field notes about the nature and tone of presentation. This practice was invaluable when interpreting the ways in which visitors with various kinds of backgrounds interacted with the Cold War past (e.g. see also Rees Leahy 2011)

Insights from my museum analysis were also bolstered through fieldwork undertaken at a number of other Cold War exhibitions and museums in the UK. For example, I took tours at the bunker museum at RAF Holmpton in Yorkshire and produced an interpretive analysis of the National Cold War exhibit at RAF Cosford. This wider set of museological contexts provided a much-needed sense of perspective when interpreting the ADRM. Without this larger web of sites, my focus may well have been too parochial. Gaining a better understanding of the dynamics of Cold War display allowed me to bring the particularisms and details I was observing into conversation with a broader set of issues and debates (that were not always apparent in the literature).

C.3 – DOCUMENTATION, PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

AUDIO RECORDINGS

The main body of interviews were recorded using a digital sound recorder (see Appendix E for details on data protection and storage).

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INTERVIEW DATA

In Appendix E, I provide details about the presentation of interview data in this thesis. This includes a discussion of transcription and the methods used to record and analyse interview data. Aside from the ethical issues and concerns with full disclosure (as described in Appendix E), full transcription of interviews was not deemed necessary for the analysis.

As many of my interviews spanned a number of hours (rather than the 30 minutes I had originally anticipated), I focused on producing interview summaries for consultation during interpretation and analysis. These provided a breakdown of questions asked, the flow of the conversation, the reactions and behaviour of the interviewee and key themes and quotes. I also noted the precise minutes and seconds (for each audio recording) so that these moments could be easily accessed and revisited during analysis. This worked well as it provided a more dynamic sense of the exchange and the character of the conversation than any full written transcription (where some of the nuance can get lost in translation).

Rather than focus on the interviews as a separate entity for analysis, I triangulated them and used them in conjunction with other methods and data. This is a well-established mode of qualitative analysis within the social sciences (see for example Bryman 2016; Silverman 2013). Overlapping areas and themes that emerged through multiple methodologies and across several sites. These determined my research directions rather than a strict interview guide or an isolated discourse analysis of interview responses (e.g. Starks and Brown-Trinidad 2007).

Again, it is worth reiterating that the interviews were focused on specific activities or stakeholder relationships to other people, places and things. Some of the interviews were not directly comparable and only make sense within the full context of the ethnographic research. As a result, I did not utilise coding software such as Nvivo or any qualitative software that highlights the number of occasions when certain or similar phrases occur. However, I did gather interviews with similar responses and group them according to theme (often listening to extracts from them and interpreting responses to particular themes).

FIELD NOTES

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As Emerson et al (2011) point out, the writing of field notes “lies at the core of constructing ethnographic texts”. As many anthropologists have indicated, the field note diary often becomes the researcher’s most prized possession during the fieldwork stage (e.g. Sanjek 1990). Within it’s pages is a record of all the events and rich complexities that the ethnographer encounters over the course of the project. Without it there would be no context in which to make connections, perform the analysis and provide original insights.

Comprehensive field notes were taken over the course of this ethnographic project. In Appendix D, I provide an indicative sample of these entries. These extracts highlight some of the ways in which the field note diary was used and put to work during my research. Here, I refer to a singular field note diary but in reality they were spread across multiple platforms. Many are handwritten in around six or seven field note diaries, other notes are scrawled hastily on bits of scrap paper or whatever was to hand and some are typed up and archived digitally. In order to organise these notes, I recorded each entry in date order. They were also written at different times: sometimes during or following interviews or an interesting encounter; during observation of ongoing activities; at the end of a day of research and in dedicated slots of time given to reflexive analysis and mid-level interpretation to ensure that I was pursuing themes in a focused manner.

The type of field notes produced was also extremely varied. For example, I produced what I called “scratch notes” – fast scribbles of information that I would use as prompts for writing up in my diary at the end of the day. Other entries focused on providing descriptions of the landscape and orientations for the research that day. Some entries contain key information and impressions of participants, as well as organisational material. The most interesting entries are often the narrative accounts that were usually written up in the evening after a day of observations and interviews. Some of these narrative accounts formed the base of key insights and were consulted when triangulating other research data. Moreover, as is apparent in the text, others provided rich enough information and analytical detail to be included verbatim in the main body of the text. They also contain rough maps, sketches and drawings that I produced to help me recall specific details.

As I mention in Appendix E, these records are not intended for publication or open access at this time. Amongst the field note data they also include sensitive
material and conversations, as well as my own personal impressions, descriptions and honest thoughts about who and what I encountered. Currently, they are stored in a secure location. These field note diaries will continue to form the basis of publications and future research.

PHOTOGRAPHY
I undertook two forms of photography and visual recording. Firstly, where access and permissions were granted, I took images of architectural and material features in the landscape and around key sites. These followed professional guidance for the production of fieldwork images in archaeology. When recording images ethnographically, I took a more informal and artistic approach. Permission was always sought from participants for the use of photography in the thesis and any future publications. However, in order to retain anonymity, I often focused on material forms or produced images that did not readily identify key participants (e.g. see figure D.1; although see figure D.9).

C.4 – PARTICIPATION AND SAMPLING
The main principles for inclusion and participation in this study were determined over the course of the ethnographic research. For example, I identified key stakeholders and “gatekeepers” within English Heritage, as well as at Saxa Vord and the Air Defence Radar Museum. These individuals were often people in senior management positions, local residents with the social and cultural “authority” to talk about the Cold War past (e.g. see Jones 2010b) and heritage professionals with experience of managing these or other key sites.

After making contact with these individuals, I asked for referrals to other people within their networks who they felt would be willing and useful participants for the study. For instance, at Saxa Vord, people who had worked at the camp (the “Saxa Vord connection” mentioned in the main body of the text) would provide lists of others who they had worked with and details of how to contact them. Contacts and interviewees snowballed from there. Other forms of participation came about by chance. Part of the ethnographic ethos and approach is to spend time in a particular environment, to be present in the landscape. As well as making observations, this kind of reflective “hanging out” provides a raft of opportunities to meet potential
participants who may be excluded (or not considered) within the networks of key individuals surrounding a particular site, community or form of practice.

**C.5 – TIMINGS AND METHODS EMPLOYED AT KEY SITES**

Ethnographic fieldwork was completed over the course of a **six-month** period in which I travelled to and lived around each of the key case study sites. This included:

- A period of **six weeks** in **Unst** over two years. I visited for two-weeks in the first instance in 2012 and then four weeks again in the summer 2013. Each time, I stayed close to the radar site and was resident in the former accommodation and domestic blocks of the camp (now a hostel). In the following section, I provide a brief overview of the specific methods I employed at each site.

- A period of **fourteen weeks** at **Neatishead** over the course of two years. In 2012, I made several trips to the museum to visit with heritage professionals and museum staff. Then, in 2013, I began my close study of the museum and the local landscape. In order to undertake this work, I lived in the local community (finding lodgings with a former radar operator who worked at the museum). As a result, I was having ethnographic interviews and encounters over the table at breakfast as much as I was “out in the field “ site. The field site was relatively encompassing in this instance and boundaries blurred between them.

- As part of my time in Neatishead, I dedicated **ten weeks** to research at the ADRM. This included interviews with former personnel, archival research and ethnographic analysis. The further **four weeks** was dedicated to exploring connections between local residents and the remains of the radar site.

- In total, a period of **four weeks** was dedicated to archival research, site visits with heritage professionals and in-depth interviews with stakeholders based across the country, A small amount of ethnography took place online through
email exchanges and the sharing of memory objects such as photos and life histories.

- Additional time was also taken to visit a number of Cold War museums and exhibitions across the country as well as a period of **one week** spent on the island of St Kilda in the Hebrides. This body of related ethnographic research did not find it’s way into the thesis but will be used as the foundation for future research opportunities.

**Heritage Professionals**
- Interviews with staff from English Heritage, the National Trust, Historic Scotland (now Scottish Heritage), the National Trust for Scotland
- Analysis of personal archives and communications
- Site visits (walk and talks) to Orford Ness, RAF Neatishead and RAF Barnham

**RAF Neatishead and Norfolk Broads**
- Driving and walking tours around the village and radar site
- Interviews in people’s homes and local café areas
- Observations of activities surrounding the radar site
- Participant observation of local groups and leisure activities
- Meetings with local farmers and physicians
- Interviews with real estate agents and site owners
- Site and bunker tours with caretaker

This included **fifteen** taped interviews. The following people participated in a taped interview: an estate agent, a site caretaker, two heritage conservation professionals and twelve local residents.

**Air Defence Radar Museum**
- Room by room exhibition analysis (over twenty spaces not including back rooms, storage and archives which were also interpreted)
- Observation of curatorial and management practices
• Stakeholder interviews on site and in people’s homes
• Tracking guided tours
• Accompanying returning employees on tours of the museum
• Collections and archival analysis

This included forty-one taped interviews, which lasted between 30 minutes and 4 hours. The following people participated: three curatorial staff and managers, twelve museum volunteers, ten former radar personnel and twenty-five visitors.

RAF Saxa Vord and Unst
• Participant observation of Unst Fest activities (including historic walking tours)
• Site observations
• Site walks with former employees
• Exhibition analysis and observation
• Archival research in Lerwick (Mainland Shetland)
• Interviews in people’s homes and in public meeting places
• Sensory walks and documentation

This included twenty-five taped semi-structured interviews – all of which lasted between 45 minutes and 4 hours. These were undertaken with a county archaeologist, the radar site caretaker, the owners of the domestic camp, fifteen local residents (long term and recent incomers) and eight former Saxa Vord staff (including three former MOD employees). A number of informal interviews also took place, including 5 that were recorded as interviews in my field book.
APPENDIX D: ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK – INDICATIVE SAMPLE

In this appendix, I will provide an indicative sample of extracts, images and summaries from my ethnographic research. This includes field notes, photography, as well as archival and interview summaries. As I mentioned in chapter 1, due to ethical considerations (and a commitment to the anonymity of research participants), I do not provide an exhaustive breakdown of my fieldwork. Moreover, I do not provide full transcripts of interviews, as these are only fully comprehensible in conjunction with my multiple field note diaries.

As I am not able to present the diaries themselves (as they contain lots of personal information about participants, “off the record” comments and preliminary ideas etc.), I offer this sample of work in their places. My intention here, is to provide a flavour of my methodological process around one particular site – RAF Saxa Vord – and give a sense of how I documented some of my practices. This appendix sheds some light on how these multiple layers came together to form the analysis (I also include some material that did not find its way into the main body of the thesis). This is just a small sample of the material I produced as part of my fieldwork.

D.1 – ORIENTATIONS (DESCRIPTIVE FIELD NOTES: JULY 2013)\textsuperscript{15}

Initial Saxa Notes: Friday 5\textsuperscript{th} July (first entry of current fieldtrip)

Who needs chronological order? I’m going to begin these filed notes in the present and wend my way back through today and write a little about my journey to the island yesterday (that was a longggg trip).

At the moment, I am sat on the sandy beach at Norwick looking out to sea (what a lovely place to be writing). A local resident just pointed out a mound near to me...a few hundred metres back – apparently the former location of a Viking longhouse. This beach is where many believe ancient Nordic communities would land their ships during raids or upon visits to the island (locally there is little consensus about the nature of Viking presence – apart from the attachment that some draw to Scandinavia ancestry).

\textsuperscript{15}To warm up for the day, I would sometimes sit and write out my streams of thoughts and follow that trail wherever it took me. This helped me orient myself and gain an appreciation of the places that I inhabited.
As I sit here, arctic terns dart overhead. I am sat on a patch of sand surrounded by giant smooth pebbles. These act as a witness to the slow passage of geological time here (as everywhere). Just in front of me is an ancient contact point between mantle rock from the earth’s surface and continental stone. Talc form ancient continents sites alongside ophiolite from the mantle that was pushed up to the surface during a collision. It was transformed in the heat of the exchange. The intensity and the violence that facilitates such change speaks to an almost inconceivable passage of time. These temporalities engulf the scale of human habitation on Unst. This adds a different complexion to the period of military presence here. For residents, the RAF’s presence represents the course of a lifetime (and their absence appears to have reshaped the environment). And yet, in light of geological time...it is less than a blink of an eye.

... Walking around and reacquainting myself with the north of the island, I noticed or was confronted by a number of elements that I feel contribute to a sense of place:

- The eerie humming or “singing” of overhead telephone and electronic cables as they vibrate in the strong winds. As I walked the quiet roads, this wind-animated symphony was the most prominent sound (that and sheep).

- The human voice is something I have heard very little on my walk: I came across nobody else on my walk (nobody coming out of houses or driving along) until I got to the shoreline (where some holiday makers were barbequing some fish they’d caught while out on a boat). It is lonelier and quieter here than at Neatishead. I could count on my hands and feet the number of people I’ve encountered today.

When writing field notes I sometimes found it useful to think from the senses. Although a little clunk at times, working in this way encouraged me to stay attuned to the importance of embodied experience and perception and how Cold War legacies might be registered in this way. As part of this process I used techniques such as sound walks to hone in on these elements (the results of which are apparent in the section on absent sound in chapter 3; e.g. see Butler 2007; Pink et al 2010)
- From my room I cannot hear but can see the sea. The opposite is true of the birds. The huge variety of avian life is ever present through sound.

- In terms of colour, the local landscape is dominated by greens and yellows of the treeless grasses that cover the area. Various shades of grey and white from the rocky outcrops. Grey is also the predominant colour of the stone that has been used to construct the crofter’s cottages and bothies (many of which are in a state of picturesque ruination).

- Many contemporary houses have a pebbly-finish that is covered in brown and orange patterns from the effects of the weather and sea salt (as if they are sweating or slowly deliquescing). The skies overhead are a mixture of dull greys and the most piercing spectacular blues. Splashes of brightly painted objects such as roofs, boats and post boxes also emerge.

- Evanescent scents of the sea: the delightful, slightly pungent aroma (as bacteria and microbes excrete?). Very few other strong odours today.

- The sonic composition...

D.2 – NOSTALGIA (NARRATIVE FIELD NOTES: AUGUST 2012)17

George had picked me up in his small red car, half way up the steep road to Saxa Vord, the radar station at the northernmost tip of Shetland on Unst. He had pulled up noisily behind me as I walked (or rather climbed). I had never met or spoken to him before, but he knew I would be here – he had been forewarned of my presence (the power of e-mail)! We got out of the car outside the main gate. From here, the ocean stretched out beyond the horizon on all sides. Shades of purple interrupted the dark green, treeless environment, which was severely scarred by earlier periods of intensive peat cutting (a prime source of fuel before the arrival of the RAF). He tells me that he had served here as a radar operator at the rank of officer.

17 Narrative field notes were usually written up during a dedicated afternoon or evening during the fieldwork. Often, I would set aside time to take stock of my encounters and to write up a narrative based on notes in my diaries, photographs and any recorded sound. These would stoke my memories and help me translate my experiences into prose.
After he had cleaned his glasses and donned his green hat, we began to circumnavigate the complex. It encompassed: an upper and lower site with concrete block buildings; long, tunnel-like pathways; and rectilinear prefab buildings – many still standing from the Cold War. We moved up and down with the uneven surface, apparently heaps of spoil, a physical encounter with the residues of construction. One radome remained; now empty apparently, with khaki coloured material. It was weather-beaten, ripped and torn, the tessellating triangles more visible as a result. A sign at the front gate warned us against trespass, not even accessible to George, a former employee.

**THIS IS A PROBITED PLACE**
**WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE**
**OFFICIAL SECRETS ACTS –**
**UNAUTHORISED PERSONS ENTERING**
**THE AREA MAY BE ARRESTED**
**AND PROSECUTED**

We circumnavigated the barbed fence, which had been plugged with cement to fill in any gaps along the perimeter. George pointed out various buildings (details which faded quickly from my mind) and features in the landscape, such as the experimental submarine listening cables that ran beneath the earth and down into the bay below.

We got back into the car and rolled down one hill and up another towards a relay station. A second vehicle was already parked up and a man, of similar age to George, stood looking out towards the sea. They exchanged smiles (they had met before). We all just stood there, looking through the fence at the junk in the foreground and the inaccessible structures beyond. The other man, Carl, told me that he used to work here as a communications tech. He had decided to come back for a holiday from England (something he did quite often).

Before we left, George turned to Carl, grinned and inhaled deeply. **“Breathe in all that nostalgia”,** he said, no longer addressing me – they both began to laugh. Later, over a drink, George told me that this was a “special place”, where “real Cold War stuff happened”. It was different to his other postings. That is why he moved back to Shetland, he added. This was somewhere “people came back to” – to visit or to live.

...
FIGURE D. 1 Looking through the fence of the relay station. Photo: Steven Leech (2012)

D.3 – MEETING PEOPLE (MARY): INTERVIEW SUMMARY (FIELD NOTES)

7th July 2013

Mary came in to meet me. She was relatively small in stature with white hair and glasses. I explained my project to her as best as I could and she agreed to an interview once she had given herself a chance to prepare. She told me that she had been a teacher at the local school and had worked with a lot of the RAF kids that came through Unst. “It was a real clash of cultures at times”. Accentuating her Unst accent and adding in

18 With ethical concerns in mind I tended to photograph structures and features of the landscape during activities such as my site walk with George and Carl.

19 For each interview, I would write a summary in my field note diaries to record a sense of how the interview went and the context surrounding it (as well as any key themes I felt might be emerging)
some dialect, she gave me an indication of the kinds of language local children used in the classroom which often baffled the English kids: “Has ya been scrennin’ on the beaches this morning (collecting driftwood and flotsam and jetsam along the shore)” As she told me all this, she gave a wicked laugh.


9th July 2013: Interview at the Heritage Centre (Mary)

I sat in a little nook by the door. Large maps of Shetland were displayed behind me. Mary sat opposite, just in front of her desk. She was wearing a red cardigan. Behind her glasses, she looked at me inquisitively and expectantly. She was very comfortable being interviewed (I suspect many of the same residents and gatekeepers get approached anytime a researcher rolls into the village).

Throughout the interview people kept coming through the front door of the heritage centre – unknowingly interrupting the flow of our interview. I felt a little uncomfortable as Mary had insisted on having the conversation in the reception area so she could keep an eye on things. However, when visitors looked at my recording equipment they tended to blush and apologise (as if they had barged into Mary’s home by mistake).

As this was one of my first interviews of this visit to Unst, it took me a while to get back into the flow of interviewing. Despite this, Mary said many things that piqued my interest and that I was able to follow up on. I won’t give a full break down in the summary here as I will make notes direct from the recording. I will also write up a narrative description if necessary. For now, I’ll concentrate on some of the main themes of the interview.
The interview lasted for about an hour before she went to pick up Agnes – she had set up an interview with Agnes for me (I’ll summarise that interview next). Without listening back to the recording, the following themes seemed important:

- **The Clearances**: still took place here but “more humane”. People have moved on. Still, flippant remarks from landowners can still get people’s “hackles up”. Interesting that she saw fit to mention the Clearances in a discussion about Saxa Vord and the RAF (perhaps a link between absences and major changes in the landscape?)

- **Her father the joiner**: there was the possibility of emigration for her family before the RAF came in the Second World War and back again in the 1950s. On both occasions, he found work with the military, which meant that her family was able to remain on the island.

- **Other topics**: gender roles, class, RAF marriages and relationships with local women, belonging and itinerant RAF employees
D.4 – DETAILED NOTES AND INTERVIEW GUIDE FROM RECORDINGS (MARY)

- Date: 9th July 2013
- Location: Unst Heritage Centre
- Length: 1hr 19 minutes
- Audio quality is good
- Profile:
  - Female
  - Born in Unst

- Impact of conflict and the RAF on family (0 minutes)
  - WWII mother in service in London and came home to marry her dad when the blitz started
  - Father assumed he’d be called up (0 minutes 40 seconds)
  - Decision to build Skaw – asked to stay and build it as he was a joiner (0 minutes 45 seconds)
  - After the war little work in Unst (1 minute) and her father was considering emigration
  - Taking walks to Skaw
  - Whole family was going to move to New Zealand until he heard about RAF Saxa Vord (2 minutes and 50 seconds) – reason they stayed/knew he’d get work

- Clearances and exoduses of folk (3 minutes 45 seconds)
  - Mary is making a connection between the RAF camp and the option to stay with previous movements of people to and from the islands, almost as a counterpoint to the Clearances in local social memory
  - Every family in Unst has relatives that emigrated to New Zealand, Canada or Australia or (3 minutes 30 seconds)
  - 1920s depression movement (4 minutes); gold panning in New Zealand

- Mary had taken the time to prepare her thoughts and made a few notes of dates and times before the interview

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20 For all recorded interviews, I produced a guide (reproduced here for Mary’s interview). For each note or facet of the conversation, I give a timing that correlates with the audio file. During analysis and write up, I would consult the guide, listen back to key sequences several times and then work it into the text or my write up plans where necessary. As my interviews were in-depth – some recordings lasting up to 3 or 4 hours, it was more effective to work in this manner.
• 1955 it was under construction (heard about it in the early 50s)
• 1956 water scheme (4 minutes 30)
• 1957 power station – big enough for the rest of the island (4 minutes 40 seconds)
  - some of the benefits of the RAF presence
• 1960 Queen’s visit (5 minutes)
  - constructed a special loo
  - cleared Haroldswick beach of the seaweed and rotting smell (5 minutes 30 seconds)
• 1967 Junior high school (6 minutes)
  - influx of RAF families
  - Baltasound
• 2006 closure

• Interview interrupted – someone who had worked at RAF Saxa Vord had entered the room (6 minutes 30 seconds)
  - Mary explained my research as ‘looking at the effects of the RAF station on the local community’
  - Woman had worked as a cashier and accountant at the site and married one of the personnel (”I found my husband there [A fund ma husband they-re]
    - Lived in Lerwick for 23 years (after her husband had gone to work at the airport after the RAF and moved to Lerwick when the airport closed – “when we saw the writing was on the wall”)
      - Mary: The ups and downs of Unst [laughs again]
    - Enjoyed her work at the station
  - Mary: I was going to say, one of the effects was that the airforce men came and pinched all the local women [both laugh], from under the noses of the crofters

• Muckle Flugga (8 minutes 45 seconds)
  - Bird watching in the cave and a trip out to the cave

• Interview interrupted – Hermaness visitors (French?) (c.10 minutes)

• More on airforce relationships and marriages (11 minutes)
  - Mary’s sister married an ‘airforce fellow’ and disappeared off (11 minutes 30 seconds)
o A bit of resentment (11 minutes 40 seconds): the contrast between the quiet crofter and the young airforce fancy uniform men who could ‘do the line of chat’ (12 minutes)

o The women quite liked it

o First came home and started teaching at the Haroldswick school when they built the airstrip (c. 12 minutes and 10 seconds) – the army in 1968 – Mary was in her twenties
  ▪ Army and RAF ball at the end of the summer
  ▪ Asked to the ball by a young officer
  ▪ Remembers having to wear gloves to shake the hands of all the fancy officers
    • Not within my kind of ken

o School issues (13 minutes 15 seconds)
  ▪ Big boost in numbers
  ▪ Could be quite difficult
    • Several big families who’d known each other from being toddlers and then the RAF kids
    • Some assimilated relatively easily (quietly got on with things, played football, got on)
    • Others came in who couldn’t quite fit in
    • Reading the riot act to the local kids: you don’t have to like people but you have to learn to get on with people
    • Clash of cultures
    • Some lacked confidence because they’d been moved around so much; hard for some children
  ▪ 5-11 year olds all in one room (like juggling)

o Almost two different kinds of airforce families (16 minutes 20 seconds)
  ▪ Happy to be in the community, got involved, discovered the lovely islands off the coast – made the most of their time
    • Liked the small school size
    • Put in extensions for a three year stay
  ▪ Others: whole life on and within the station and the group and that was it. They might as well have been in Timbuktu
I interject with my own observations and comparisons about the difference between relationships at Saxa Vord and Neatishead (and the lack of community relations there) (17 minutes 20 seconds)

Homecoming tourism and belonging (17 mins 35 seconds)

- People coming back who were on RAF Saxa Vord
- Few years ago someone contacted Mary who had been there and taught alongside her (I couldn’t remember her at all)
  - Racked her brain to remember something; she wanted to see Mary when she came back to visit
  - Only thing she could remember was the woman lending her an outfit for the ball she mentioned earlier (felt really bad)
  - Met up and chatted about the school; her husband came into the room and said that he’d have recognised Mary anywhere (I’d have known you anywhere, you haven’t changed a bit) – Mary exasperately tells me she didn’t remember him at all (c. 18 minutes 30 seconds)
  - Some you remember better than others (adults and children)
    - Huh [exasperated], I thought, who are you [when looking at old photos of the school kids]
    - Mostly remember the bad ones [naughty kids] – more fun
- Since Saxa Vord opened as a venue to stay, it’s attracted returning personnel (19 minutes)
- Some have come back to stay permanently (not that many)
- They could belong and be a part of the community. Having to shift so often, most of them didn’t put roots down anywhere. If you asked them where they came from. Where do they come from? Unless they told you where their parents came from. They shifted and shifted and shifted – the kids didn’t have roots anywhere. I’d think that the main thing would be, that they enjoyed being part of a community.
- Is it possible to really belong here after only being here 18 months (my question)? (20 minutes)
  - You’re a stranger ’til you’ve been here 30 years kind of thing [laughs]
  - Depended on the personality. Some you took to because they so appreciated the place
    - Assessing others valuations of Unst
  - Some local people had quite a prejudice (21 minutes)
    - Ob, it’s jus’ a RAF (raff) one (wan)
      - ‘Insular kind of attitude’
• That wasn’t the norm though. Most people appreciated the amount of work and the boost to local businesses

• Mary didn’t appreciate class dynamics brought with the RAF (22 minutes)
  o Knew everyone as people, even the laird, so social positions weren’t as immediately apparent – little awareness of class in her youth (although would have been in the past)
  o When the airforce came they had a structure (e.g. the Officer’s Mess). A three tiered structure (26 minutes)
  o After returning from college, she noticed that they pigeon-holed you into where you fitted in there structure (26 minutes 30 seconds)
    ▪ Teachers, doctors etc. got asked to the Officer’s Mess
    ▪ Airforce strated to make a class structure on the island
      • Mary wanted me to see if others thought that
      • Impact on social relations on the island
      • Didn’t make a difference within the community (‘folk thought that’s just the way they do it’)
      • Mary had been away and come back and saw it happening

• Back to the Clearances (23 minutes 30 seconds) via class dynamics
  o Talk given on the Clearances on Unst (24 minutes)
    ▪ 30 years ago
    ▪ well attended
    ▪ flippant comment from a descendant of one of the land owners and the backles came up and you could feel it right around the room. And, this is three or four generations down
    ▪ surprised at the reaction that evening but it was because of who it was that said it, a descendant (social memory)
    ▪ still a big issue but not as much now
  o Roots and weddings (25 minutes)
  o How did I get on to that, the Clearances, the class-system, that’s what I was talking about (25 minutes 40 seconds)

• Memories of the Cold War (28 minutes 30 seconds)
  o You heard things on the news
  o Kids from the school up on top site (had pictures on the wall of planes coming in)
  o Russian Trawler that wrecked on the rock at Skaw (50 years ago)
- Took ashore and looked after the crew
- Locals descended on it like locusts
  - Unst-men and crofters hobby was ‘to go aboo’ the banks’
  - Westerly winds, would go to westerly beaches to get bits of wood and other flotsam and jetsam (no trees on Unst)
    - Rule: if you picked it out of the water and it was above the shoreline it was yours and nobody else could touch it
    - Anything that was useful
    - Wants to look at collections in the Boat Haven salvaged from wrecks
- Spoons, doors, you name it taken ashore before it was broken up (house at Skaw)
- Russian trawler came and took things from it, equipment, not just a fishing vessel
  - That sort of thing went on around the coast (‘they reckon’)
    - Local men bartering with the Russian fleets (32 minutes)
    - Not seen many MOD materials in people’s homes

- Up-Helly-Aa and beach combing (33 minutes)
  - Ship had lost wood
  - Her husband’s beach
  - Recycling materials as crofters: clothing, materials, etc.

- Crofting and work/economics (35 minutes)
  - People gathering up small portions of land now
  - Bits of family land
  - Very difficult to get a croft (36 minutes)
  - Tennant lands and assigning to family (her husband was given tenure on his cousin’s land) at the Westing (now assigned to a young man living near to the Croft to start him off)
  - Husband only ever wanted to be a crofter
  - Lambing is the heavy work in April/May (39 minutes)
  - Lambing, silage, potatoes etc.
  - Ancient equipment for haymaking (metal detecting for broken parts)
  - Crofting, I think, is just in the genes – but they all have ‘something else’ – not enough to live off (40 minutes); in the blood (42 minutes)
  - Husband’s letters home to his mum when he was at school in Lerwick – concerned with the croft (did you get the hay in mum?)
- Husband had to work in Lerwick and Dundee as a civil servant, didn’t enjoy it but there was no work at home (41 minutes)
- Gap in the Unst population: oldies and the young ones with families (40s and 50 some things are just missing – not sure why particularly) (43 minutes) – a lot of that age group had to go away to work
- Her own girls in their 30s have gone away to work in England (44 minutes)
- A number of young people have planned to come back (45 minutes)

- Oil money and fields via crofting, work and island economics (45 minutes)
  - Negotiated deal/fund which has financed lots of public/community facilities/amenities – including the inter-island ferries
  - Present cuts (been used to high levels of service – hard now)

- Airforce dentist provided free dental care for locals (46 minutes 30 seconds)
  - Removal business was based on Unst (moved every 18 months)
  - Coaching and taxi businesses – did quite well out of that

- Impact of RAF station closure (47 minutes)
  - Big thing when they left; after the airforce pulled out
  - Garage built the shop to try and keep his staff in work (47 minutes)
  - Removal business moved to Lerwick
  - Oil hasn’t made up for that
  - Airstrip connected with oil fields had helped the local economy (hope for new oil field work)

- Went to Lerwick for secondary education (49 minutes)
  - With larger schools, their children could stay on the island until they were 13 before having to go off to school
  - Talk of shutting the junior high and making them go to school on Yell
  - Would make people think twice about staying on the island
  - Lots of young people employed at the school

- You kind of wonder how many more blows Unst can take (49 minutes 30 seconds)
  - Over the centuries life has been up and down
  - Back to the Clearances
  - Larger population before the Clearances (doesn’t know Clearances figures)
Walking the island you can see isolated community homes and the ruins still present in the landscape.

Great-grandmother could remember walking away from her home when they were cleared out.

Story: moving family to another croft on the other side of the island (53 minutes).

Some of the migrations were to do with poverty (56 minutes) (e.g., the depression of the 1920s).

Fishing for the lairds in the sixareens: stories of landlords who demanded payment for a lost boat from the widow of men lost at sea (58 minutes) – that kind of story has come down through the generations.

Slightly more humane Clearances than those in the Highlands (59 minutes).

RAF relationships to crofters was reasonable (59 minutes).

Soon get told for leaving gates open or letting dogs roam.

Somebody probably did quite well out of it.

Navy place at the top of the hill? (1 hour).

Me talking about the listening station.

Exchange: give me the top of the hill.

Access with school kids (1 hour 2 minutes).

Less important by then.

Husband delivering milk in big churns to RAF Saxa Vord.

If on high-alert, they insisted on looking in his van and opening the churns to inspect them (1 hour 2 minutes 30 seconds).

Ridiculous, he came everyday (they went through the motions).

No information was fed to the locals, bits did trickle down.

Remembering the army exercises.

Practice things where the army landed and tried to creep up on them.

Speaking to Haroldswick residents who’d seen these exercises happening (1 hour 3 minutes).

Poor souls (1 hour 4 minutes).

Airforce lads coming by boat and being sick and landing in Lerwick.
o Must have thought, where are we going?

o One lad that came and couldn’t find anyone in the guard room and left his suitcase which was thrown out in a security alert/panic (1 hour 4 minutes)

o Never saw any Soviet aircraft in the skies (1 hour 5 minutes)

• Importance of place names/norse names (1 hour 5 minutes)

• Shetland dialect (1 hour 9 minutes)
  o Diluting (1 hour 10 minutes)
  o Talking with her daughter in dialect
  o Words dying out as they are to do with fishing and crofting – practices
  o RAF site: Da Camp

FIGURE D. 2 Mary leading a walking tour of historic fisheries and their remains in the landscape. Unst Fest 2013. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).
D.5 – ARCHIVE NOTES EXTRACT (SHETLAND MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES: JULY 2013)²¹

- Forms 540 and 541 (AP 3040)
- Source of information on RAF units
- Quality of the content is variable (see interviews from Neatishead)
- Documents the activities of a unit and gives details such as operational sorties
- Official material (formerly “secret” and “restricted”)
- Serve as technical biographies of the radar and communications equipment. These are shown to require constant maintenance and are always breaking down and in need of repair (particularly during the early years of the site between 1957 and 1964).
- Quantifying and summarising station activity

**Operations Record Book 1957-1970**

- Protected under the Official Secrets Act 1911-1939
- Unauthorised retention or distribution was an offence
- Described as a UK national document and not for distribution, even to NATO, without request. Information sharing is described as being on a “need-to-know basis” and permissions had to be sought from the MOD or the creator of the document (RAF?). Specific references to the documents “secret” or “restricted” status were to be read as “UK Secret”, “UK restricted”, etc.
- The document had 5 different “custodians” over the period between 1990 and 1998.
- File was designated as “secret”
- Types of documentation: personnel assignments and numbers; unit medical health records; monthly technical reports; site visitors; administration; operations reports; record of meetings (e.g. with local public sector workers about dumping sites etc.); unit exercises; number of “tracks” recorded; group training hours; system calibrations
- Concerning No.91 Signals Unit
- Operational by late September 1957
- Radar types operational in 1957: 13, 14 & 80

²¹ Archival research was essential as it provided a solid background to military presence on the island and offered unique insights into the past social and operational life of the station from a military perspective.
• First entry in September 1957 refers to the preparations to become a fully operational station - by the 1st October 1957. Remarks are made about the lack of furniture in the Airmen’s Billet and Offices, as well as the small number of spares for the radar installations and low supplies of stationary and publications. Signed by G M Millar, Squadron Leader (Commanding Officer) of RAF Saxa Vord.
• Unit started off with 5 officers and 134 Airmen
• The officers were Fighter Controllers
• A Marconi engineer was resident at the site
• First operational page – (p.112 in Saxa II)22
• Constructed as part of the ROTOR III programme to fulfil NATO commitments (24 hour surveillance)
• Fully Operational, October 1957 - (p.111 in Saxa II) – very little technical trouble
• Difficulties with the weather (e.g. heavy snowfall and wind speed), affecting the 24 hour watch (pp.105-6 in Saxa II)
• Equipment “off the air” between 9th-16th December 1957 due to maintenance work (p.106 in Saxa II)
• T-80 off due to trouble with the flexible waveguide – 214 hours lost (p. 104 in Saxa II)
• 200+ tracks reported, 40 queried with Air Defence Command “because of lack of information” (p.104 in Saxa II)
• Airmen on leave stranded at Lerwick for days due to gales (p. 103 in Saxa II)
• Type 80 technical issues (teething problems) – spare materials supplied by Decca Radar (p.101 in Saxa II). Many monthly reports state that the Type 80 was off air for considerable periods in 1958 (p.96 in Saxa II). Official anxiety about the Type 80s performance at Saxa Vord – metal fragments causing problems (p.95 in Saxa II).
• Starting to have fewer problems with the T-80 by August 1958. Still struggles against the force of the wind and was also making ‘strange noises’ [see also interviews with engineers] (see p.93 in Saxa II). T-14 was off-air quite a lot during this month too.
• Changing magnetron on T-80 – service biography of the equipment (p. 89 in Saxa II)
• Christmas at Saxa Vord – Father Christmas and Party for 90 local children (p.85 in Saxa II)
• Many cooks – throughout most of 1958, service parties from several contractors visited to fix, maintain and upgrade various bits of equipment: Decca, Metro-Vickers, Currans, Marconi etc. (see also p.84 in Saxa II)
• Wind damage (p. 84 in Saxa II)
• “This has been an extremely bad month for serviceability. The Radar Type 80 has been unserviceable for the latter half of the month, and the Radar Type 13 has been off now for more than half the month altogether. In both cases, the high winds and bad weather can be

22 These page numbers refer to my own filing system for archive images and notes.
blamed for these long periods of unserviceability”. Used stand-by equipment for live training (p.80 in Saxa II)

- Servicing hampered by strong winds; IFF flight trials (p.78 in Saxa II)
- Currans vibrational tests for T-80 turntable during high winds and mystery signals/VHF Remote Control installation – forward relay for Buchan (p.73 in Saxa II)
- April 1959 – live training operations speaking to pilots flying to Norway (p.72 in Saxa II)
- Six-monthly services T-80 (p.61 in Saxa II)
- Reporting “interesting Shipping movements” to No.18 Group Intelligence at their request; suspect calibration (p.60 in Saxa II)
- Constant maintenance issues; sapping parts with Killard Point – frequent cycle of materials (p.52 in Saxa II)
- “The gremlins have taken up their winter quarters at Saxa Vord again and for the next few month we can anticipate trouble with the equipment”. (p.51 in Saxa II)
- Wind and flood damage to signals equipment (p.49 in Saxa II)
- Foreign ships at anchor in the nearby Firth – reported to the “appropriate authority” (p.33 in Saxa II)
- Unusually large number of unidentified tracks reported to Air Ministry (p.29 in Saxa II)
- Dedication of the station church (p.25 in Saxa II)
- Preparing for the Queen’s visit (p.24 in Saxa II)
- Winds and thick mists (p.22 in Saxa II)
- 1960: Royal visit in the Shetland Times (pp.6-14 in Saxa II)
- 1960: Queen visits the radar site, surprise at Royal interest and the clear view of Muckle Flugga (p.13 in Saxa II)
- 1960: Geographical Field Group work in Unst (p.10 in Saxa II)
- 1960: Royal visit itinerary including a trip to the operations room (p.4 in Saxa II)
- Photo of the Muckle Flugga view seen by the Queen (p.565 in Saxa I)
- Photos of royal visit to Saxa Vord (pp.561-565 in Saxa I)
- Form 540 from August 1960 (p.560 in Saxa I)
- Squadron Leader’s (J. Grant) description of Unst in 1960, during an account of the royal visit to the site and a discussion of the island’s “dearth of facilities” and it’s geographical isolation – transport issues etc. (“There is no barber nor laundry on Unst (actually, there is no laundry at all in Shetland). Although the fact the on Unst, there are no trees, no villages, no policemen and no pub (the island being “dry”), is not relevant in this context, it is nevertheless included to complete the sketch of this rolling, peat covered expanse of rock, thinly sprinkled with crofts and peppered with sheep”) (p.554 in Saxa I)

23 This quote is used verbatim in the main body of the text in chapter 3.

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FIGURE D. 4 Hastily scrawled page from field note diary. Rapid notes taken during interview with Ian and Barbara.

...”Everybody lived in harmony. [Laughs] Well, some more than others.

...Only one CO didn’t approve of the blending of the communities (banned locals from the bars)

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24 Some interviews were recorded without the use of an audio recorder. This was to put some interviewees at ease and to experiment with different ways of documenting my exchanges with various stakeholders. In this instance, I wrote very brief notes as we spoke and then used them as prompts as I produced a narrative account later on (see brief extracts below).
...v. good relations

...used to drink together in the Penguin club. Dive bar with no windows. Dealt with all sorts. Atmosphere: good night, “loved it”. RAF were “always good at parties”. [Sighs] Not so many of those now.

...Top-site at Saxa Vord abandoned now...”not supposed to go up – not allowed to”.

...Miss the noise of the fly pasts (Ian’s mum has a photo of a Phantom flying over her croft)...

...Barbara has gathered some old photos for me to look through with her...she shares these with former islanders and military staff online. “It’s a means of pulling people together”...Sad about RAF departure: “Once it’s gone, it’s gone”.

...Ian’s dad was part of the team that built the first dome “with his bare hands”...He has just taken me to see some of the “bits and bobs at the back of the house”...old radome panels that he reuses as a material for mending ships (he is a boat builder)...

D.7 – CHATTING ABOUT ABSENCE WITH BARABARA AND IAN
(NARRATIVE FIELD NOTES: JULY 2013)

I walk past what I assume is Barbara and Ian’s house. As things are a lot less formal in Unst than I was used to at Neatishead, people keep reassuring me that residents won’t mind if I knock on doors and talk to them unannounced. Still, I’m nervous (despite all the warm welcomes and the copious amounts of tea I’ve been offered since I got here). Another local told me to speak to them and gave me directions to their house. The building itself is a gleaming white a Shetland flag dangles from a pole. The door is open. I approach it and then chicken out. I walk around the block one or two more times and then pluck up the courage to approach them out of the blue...

...I rapped softly on the open door. Before I knew it, I was being led into the living room and being introduced to Barbara who was sitting snuggly in an armchair. I hadn’t even really explained who I was before I was sat in a chair myself and given tea and biscuits. Barbara introduced herself (she
had an English accent): “I used to work at the camp – at a high grade”. I felt as if I was meeting an integral person in the relationship between the two communities.

A beautiful painting of a boat sits on the wall. On the fire place, a wooden spool is embraced by a coil of rope. There are nautical features throughout the room. The materiality of this living space speaks volumes. I could already guess at Ian’s background as a boat builder before he told me himself...

...Incidentally [as an aside], I love meeting people in this way in retrospect. There is lots of detective work going on. What are their relationships? How did they come together? Who’s tastes are reflected in the choice of décor? Over the few hours of conversation we had, little details get revealed. They really help build a picture of their place in the communities network of relations and I really get a sense of their motivations and beliefs.

As I did not know them beforehand, I didn’t want to thrust a voice recorder under their noses. Therefore, I aske permission to take notes. Here, I just want to sketch out the flow of the conversation, some themes and the details of our chat:

“A lack of activity”: a sense of quiet
The main impact of the RAF’s departure, according to Barbara and Ian, has not been the lack of jobs. After they started to talk about the closure of the camp (they did so of their own accord after I told them about my interest in the physical remains of the radar site at the top of the hill), I asked them what was different now. Was anything lacking? “A lack of population” was the phrase Ian used. Earlier, they had talked in detail about all the parties they had experienced and their bustling social calendar during the period of military presence. This “lack of population” appeared to be a counterpoint to this.
“What we notice in particular”, they tell me, “is the lack of activity”. Here, a lack of activity leads to a discussion of absent sounds. “It is noticeably quieter. There’s no longer any helicopter traffic, no traffic on the roads through Haroldswick – which there would have been all day. Nor are there any signs or sounds of vehicles coming up and down the hill to Saxa. They used to go up and down all the time”. A little taken back by the notion that they missed the sound of military presence, I pressed them for more on this. What was it about the sound of trucks and aircraft that they missed? “Just the lack of activity”, I was told. Absent sounds seem to be used as a means of invoking nostalgia; look at Joy Parr’s work on the yearning for particular sounds through change. A potentially rich direction?

“Very well integrated”: Community relations

Barbara and Ian appear to have had a stake in the close integration between the two communities (perhaps as Ian is a local and Barbara moved to the island for work?). They gave me several examples of...

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25 The sound of helicopters refers to the closure of Ordale airport that was built by the Army to host RAF flights (initially). Later it was used for helicopter traffic to and from the local oil fields. The airstrip closed shortly after RAF Saxa Vord – a controversial move that lends to a sense of absence (and for a few people – abandonment by mainland Shetland and UK).

26 These thoughts led to the development of my section on absent sounds and quiet in chapter 3. They provided a foundation for other exchanges I had with people in Unst, such as Anne and Mike who I discuss in detail in the main body of the thesis.
D.8 – BARABARA AND IAN (INTERVIEW SUMMARY: JULY 2013)²⁷

- Outside the house; shyness; Shetland flag (p. 3)²⁸
- Meeting – attempt number 2 – being led through the house (p.4
- Barbara and Ian description (pp.4-5)
  - Barbara: hinge between the two communities
- Barbara and Ian’s stuff (p.5)
- Methodological approach to the interview – no recorder (p.6)
- RAF Skaw (pp.6-7)
  - Selling the copper wire
  - Sunday walk and poking around with his grandfather
  - Dismantling the masts in 1946
  - Slaughterhouse and butchers post-war
  - Recycling practices on the island
  - Skaw wood
  - Skaw concrete remains: …because you couldn’t move it
- RAF Saxa Vord site (p.8)
  - People didn’t bother with it as it couldn’t be taken away
- Barbara’s climb to the top of the radome (p.9)
- RAF auctions and skips (p.9)
  - Recycling material
- Barbara’s archive (pp.8-11; p.17)
  - Exhibition: COs wanted something on the internal life of the camp and the integration between the station personnel and the local community
  - Exhibition cancelled
  - Someone disposed of the panels she’d made by mistake
  - RAF behaviour – throw away anything
  - Historical research undertaken by Barbara

²⁷ Included here to demonstrate the variety of material discussed and how topics moved relatively seamlessly from one thing to the next. When comparing interviews, I did find that people continued to make similar connections between things that on first impression seem unrelated. For example, the mention of the Clearances in conjunction with the RAF site (there is no direct or obvious connection but they came up time and time again – see Jones 2010b for a discussion of similar encounters with social memory during ethnographic fieldwork).

²⁸ Again, these page number references refer to the pages in my field not diaries for ease of access and retrieval during analysis.
Referral to ex-RAF who is researching and writing a book about the military history of the Shetland Islands

Re-establishing connections between people – lots of ex-service personnel and online groups

Off-record chat about the archive collections used for exhibit
  - Care about the possession and treatment of this material
  - People brought materials of interest to her – *power to bring people together and remember* (p.17)

- Airstrip and it’s closure (p.12)
  - Construction history
  - Flight numbers

- A lack of activity: a quiet (p.13)
  - Population decline
  - A lack of activity – no more traffic – absence of sound and activity
  - Leslie and the “buzz of activity”
  - A felt absence in the landscape? Dislocation?

- RAF and community integration (p.14)
  - Social life (in contrast to present quiet) – activities
  - Class structure and the messes

- Absolutes, belonging and community (p.15)
  - Loved or loathed
  - Had to integrate to enjoy the place
  - Unworkable social policy – one CO (banning local men from the dances)

- RAF a boon for Unst in post-war climate (p.16)
  - Inter-island rivalry

- On-site blacksmiths (p.16)

- Current state and status of the sites (p.17)

- Settling in Shetland (p.17)
  - Ex-military coming to live on the island – alternative/slower way of life

- Gatekeepers (p.18)

- Current people with access to the site and the archives – *don’t know the place* – they *weren’t there* when it was active

- This seems to bring their current associations into conflict with some of the few who feel a sense of attachment to the site

- Legacy (pp.18-9)

- Contamination
o Cold War memories (pp.19-21)
  ▪ Miss the fly pasts – mum’s photo of the Phantoms
  ▪ Local attitudes to the Cold War
  ▪ Russian presence
  ▪ Story: day the station closed
  ▪ Military exercises
  ▪ All of these are about something that was once present – now absent in the landscape

o Military exercise stories

o The radomes (pp.21-23)
  ▪ Got onto this during a discussion about the wind and weather on Unst
  ▪ Blowing down story – his dad’s perspective and his neighbours comments
  ▪ Collecting the debris from the hill
  ▪ His dad’s contract for the dome – boat building skills
  ▪ Norwegian contract
  ▪ Sturdiness of his dad’s work – local environmental knowledge
  ▪ Running joke – dismantling of the radome and the subsequent collapse of the others – wishes they hadn’t dismantled his dad’s work – they didn’t require sophisticated tools, used their bare hands and still did a better job

o Radome recycling (pp.24-5)
  ▪ Radar boats – panels used for boat building materials
  ▪ Materials probably all over the island
  ▪ Radome panel hut

o Identity (p.25)
  ▪ Shetland flags
  ▪ British not Scottish
  ▪ Norse influences

o Sailing on a Norwegian fishing vessel (p.25)
o Sailing and sighting using the Saxa Vord hill (pp.25-26)
  ▪ Norwegians sailors speculating about what the lights on the pimple upon the hill were

Clearances
o Opinions about Scottish lairds
o Egalitarianism – Viking system
o Keeping the lairds at arms length
- RAF never viewed in that way – *they brought work*
- Croft houses (27-8)
  - Former camp worker who lived in a croft with his kids during the 50s
  - Sandy valley – growing grass to stop the shifting sands
  - Ian’s mum’s croft
  - Local landscape weighty with memories
  - Agnes’ comment: the croft is your home for your lifetime (ownership is partible)
  - Spends little time in the croft houses – only to remove sheep
- Unst Heritage centre had been based nearby at first (p.29)
- Land acquisition for Saxa Vord (p.30)
  - Common grazing
- RAF presence bad after all? (p.30)
  - Might have prevented the growth of a local fishing industry
  - Only said this out of earshot of Barbara
- Distinction between homecoming tourists/former personnel and those that *married a local lassie* (p.31)
D.9 – DISTRIBUTED MATERIALITIES: RE-USE OF RADOME PANELS (MULTIPLE METHODS)

FIGURE D. 5  Chicken coop? An animal run constructed using old panels from the first radome structures at RAF Saxa Vord. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).

FIGURE D. 6  The structure stands next to an abandoned house (the occupant had died a few years before I came to Unst and the cottage lies abandoned).
D.10 – FIELD NOTE AND INTERVIEW EXTRACTS CONCERNING RADAR MATERIALS (VARIOUS 2012 AND 2013)

The abandoned house (13th July 2013)

Before I headed over to the Viking longship to speak to the county archaeologist, I stopped by the derelict house that Ian mentioned. Even though it was broad daylight it was still pretty eerie. I had no idea who had lived here and why they were no longer here (were they dead or had they moved away from the island?). The grass at the front of the house was overgrown and waist height, bowing in the strong winds. In the middle of the garden was a wooden table – a bird table? It immediately brought a scene from one of my favourite books to mind – Haruki Murakmi’s Wind Up Bird Chronicles.

The front door had a loose padlock but it seemed to be held shut by a flimsy piece of blue rope. After giving it a little push, I thought better of it and decided to peer in through the mucky windows instead. Shielding my eyes from the light, I could see bin-liners stuffed to the brim and piled on top of one another. The wallpaper behind them was peeling. I was tempted to go in but it seemed like a needless transgression. It was the radar material that I had come in search of and it wasn’t long until I found it.

Passing round the corner, to my surprise, I was confronted with the same fibreglass radome panels from Ian’s garden (the one’s he had used for boar repairs). A chicken coop or back-house had been constructed using the panels – all a musty yellow colour. The bolts that once held the panels together had began to rust and bits of orange bled into the surface.

I began wondering into a back area and some abandoned sheds. Underfoot as I walked in the tall grass, I could feel lumps and bumps as I trod on materials. Upon closer inspection, these were radome panels
piled on top of one another. They were also strewn across the sheds. Where had they been sourced from and were these put aside for another project? I’d like to find out more...

... Radar chicken coop (15th July 2013)

...I have just spoken with John: he tells me that an elderly long term resident used to live at the cottage (he died not too long ago). He was a radio ham enthusiast and the head of the boat club apparently... No one but Ian seemed to have noticed that the shed was made from radar bits. Although, John did have a recollection that people had used them as sheep pens at some point. As these were very visible, RAF personnel apparently came and asked for them back (somebody hadn’t been pleased that military equipment was being used in domestic settings)...

FIGURE D. 7 Radome panels strewn across the floor. Photo: Steven Leech (2013)
Margaret and Trevor (Partial Interview Transcript):
Second World War Huts (Radar Site at Skaw)

SL: I’ve been speaking to Ian and he mentioned that people had reused bits of the old radomes in various places around the island. Have you seen similar things?

T: There were a lot of masts that came down. Steel masts. A lot of that went for scrap. Some boys used to take that to make trailers. Beautiful steel you see. That was all really. That was at Saxa Vord.

SL: Any wood from the Second World War site at Skaw?

T: No, I don’t think so.

M: He said. Skaw. What about the huts?

T: Oh, Skaw. I thought you just meant Saxa Vord.

SL: Both. Definitely both. I’m interested in anything you know...

M: They sold off the stuff at Skaw. The huts.

SL: Who to?

M: Oh, the locals you know.

SL: Are they around still?

M: Very few. One in Norwick with concrete round it. You can’t recognise it. A white house with fairly small windows. It was a Skaw hut. They had to concrete it over as the quality of the wood wasn’t that good. Single storey – not like a croft house.
T: Margaret’s mother’s house was a Skaw hut...

M: No it wasn’t, it was a gutty hut [even older]. The shed was a Skaw hut but it’s all gone now. [Name removed]. His hut is still there. It’s been redone and recovered. There were three men in Uyeasound and they bought the canteen building. It was very difficult to transport. They did it in sections. It was moved to Munness. About three or four sheds were made out of that. They’ve been redone now over the years but they’re basically Skaw huts.

SL: Why go to all the trouble of moving them across the island?

M: At that time there were no huts around here. There was no wood on the island [it was expensive to import]. Unless you found some from shipwrecks.

FIGURE D. 8 Part of the Second World War huts from the radar site at RAF Skaw that had Margaret mentioned? Munness, Unst. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).
Various encounters with the artist (July 2013)

…“Could you just shut the door behind you please? Thanks!” The artist sat in the corner of his studio which he had opened up for a mini-exhibition during Unst Fest. His book was upturned on the desk, as his visitors were disturbing his reading. The studio room was toasty and darkly lit. His medium was clearly sculpture. Abstract pieces were displayed on tables. In the middle of the room was an amalgam of knotted wood, sharp metals and what looked like a metal-cast fish tail that was rusting away. The sculpture looked like a concatenation of flotsam and jetsam that had been forced together – bringing to mind the local practice of beach combing that many had referred to. It appeared to have something of the place about it…

…we began to talk and I was very pleased with myself for recognising a reference to Milan Kundera’s book *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* in one of his displayed works. From what I could recall, it was a book concerned with the experience of personal memory. “Memory is something I am very interested in”, the artist tells me. It feeds into his
practice. “I think objects have residues of memory in them. You can get a much better understanding of them by thinking in this way”…

…In his younger days, he had been a political activist in England – part of the anti-nuclear movement and CND. Living in Norfolk and growing up there as a child he had originally been enamoured with the jet engines and air shows. This changed as he got older. “I used to break into Coltishall and chain myself to the fence”. Provocation and Cold War themes remain part of his work. “I have a persona”, he tells me. “A Russian man. I once used this character to approach the MoD and tried to purchase the mid-site at Saxa Vord (shortly after moving here)” He apparently “just wanted to see what would happen” if a “Russian man” wanted to buy the radar site in a post-war context…”I’m pretty sure they were keen. I think they just wanted to get it off their hands…it’s amazing how quickly all the secretive stuff falls away and capitalism comes back in”…

…”I’m interested in place and the stories of place and letting them shape my work”. His method interests me a lot. He follows the local practice of searching the beaches for things that have been washed out or exposed by the tides (making his work about the materiality and temporality of that particular place). He works with found objects: bone, wood and stone. “I want to reveal the stories imbued in these objects”. After telling him about my own project and my Cold War interest, he tells me about a piece of the submarine cable he has acquired. The US once had a secret listening post installed at Saxa Vord. When the tide is out, it is exposed and he’s used some of these rusty remains in his past work. He has a “lump” of the cable on his kitchen table at the moment that he is thinking of working into something…

…”

Interview (Partial Transcript):
Artist: It was a bit of a farce – people here listening to people there. It was a game. It wasn’t passive. It used up lots of resources and lots of money. It’s ridiculous…anyway. That’s the casing there [holds up the object and then passes it over].


Artist: You can have a direct experience of it [laughs]. That’s what held the cable on the seabed. I’d love an audio recording to go with it. It’s stunning isn’t it? It’s just such a beautiful piece of metal.

SL: It just came out like that?

Artist: That’s been in the water some time to fuse like that. If it’s low tide and you keep walking, you’ll see loads of casing like that. The thing that interested me was all the patina on the metal but the fact that they’ve recorded what that sounds like…recording the signatures in the metal…It would be really nice to have.

All the bits of stone and rust have fused around it – it’s lovely. I don’t even have to weld this piece. I’ll probably use this as a base. It’s almost like a kind of alchemy isn’t it? Taking something that had a fairly destructive purpose (in terms of its wider associations) and then creating something that I think is beautiful or interesting.

SL: [continue to play around with the object and allow the artist to carry on talking and opening up about it]

Artist: That’s the nice thing about found objects. They have a narrative. Not many people get to make sculptures out of old Cold War submarine cables…what a joyous thing. It shows you how things change over
time…the use of things over time…just the fact that they left it here…tonnes of scrap metal. 29

D.11 – THOSE WHO LEAVE AND THOSE WHO STAY – FORMER PERSONNEL (INTERVIEW AND FIELD NOTES FROM MEETING WITH ROBIN: JULY 2013)

I was sat down in the living room. Robin clicked the kettle on. As the ginger biscuits were snapped and the water rumbled and boiled, we began to chat. The room itself was large. He owned a guest house and we were in the sitting area. It had a red carpet and red wallpaper (I felt nice and calm irrespective of what people say about the psychological impact of the colour red!). On the walls were photos of the Up Helly Aa festival – with the burning longship and locals in Viking costumes. Some “Norse” axes lined the walls too and a few wooden shields.

Most of that chat was about his posting. Robin began before I’d even asked him any questions. I just asked if I could record, clicked the button and let him speak. Before coming to Unst, he had not travelled far from Suffolk where he grew up. He spoke to me about the shock of the journey to Saxa Vord and wondering what he had “done wrong”. After a short while though, he fell in love with the place. “None of that hierarchical bull shit that you got at other stations”. It was out of the way enough to relax (nobody arrived here without warning.

He had trained as a radar mechanic in the RAF. He had never heard of Saxa Vord but by some amazing coincidence, his own father had been posted here during the Second World War (working on the radar site at Skaw). His own son ended up working on the radar on oil rigs in Shetland too: “three generations of radar in Unst”. At the end of the interview, he

Encounters like this one really helped me understand how Cold War legacies were distributed in the landscape. For many locals, the remnant objects were less powerful or resonant than embodied memories. However, for those attuned to different meanings and intangibles, these objects still reverberated and acted as conduits for discussions about Cold War politics, aesthetics, local life and a sense of history and place. Beyond their original use, function or purpose.

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brought me his dad’s log book from Skaw. He held it with great reverence. His dad had died a few years back and being in this place, where his dad had once lived in the 1940s, seemed to afford a sense of connection to him. In fact, this is something he stated rather directly: “this is an absolutely precious link with my dad...I look at it often”.

...His job at Saxa was fairly boring at times, he tells me. A lot of sitting around and waiting for things to go wrong. The one thing he recalls with most familiarity is the drone and vibration of the radar head as it spun around. He gave a little hmmm to simulate the sound. Part of his job was to become attuned to this noise. If all was well it would operate at a certain pitch. If it was out of sync or playing up it would make a different kind of whirring noise. To relieve the boredom, he would sometimes fool his co-workers by mimicking the sound of the radar when it was at fault to get them in a panic. You were mostly waiting to hear a problem, he tells me, before you’d ever see it.

FIGURE D. 10  Robin showing me a piece of one of the old radomes he had taken as a memento. “I’d forgotten it was here until you came. I don’t even know why I took it. It’s been here for years”. Photo: Steven Leech (2013).
D.12 – DETAILED NOTES AND INTERVIEW GUIDE FROM RECORDINGS
(ROBIN)

- Length: 1 hour and 38 minutes
- Audio quality is good
- Profile:
  - Robin
    - Runs a bed and breakfast

- Arrival story (3 minutes 30 seconds)
  - Posting – station orders (postings page)
  - Someone told him that he’d been posted – joked about Saxa Vord – about as far flung in the UK as you could get without getting your feet wet
  - Second question when it comes to Saxa Vord – the second question you ask, is what did I do wrong?
  - Father in the airforce during the SWW – a radar man as well – up at Saxa Vord several times (later on he shows me some reports from his father’s logbook – see end of summary sheet) (5 minutes)
  - His dad was responsible for the running of the site; engineering issues too – his dad told him he’d enjoy it
  - Going North itself was unsettling for Robin – never done that before
  - Travel to Saxa Vord (6 minutes)
  - Arrived with two kit bags and a guitar (7 minutes 30 seconds)
  - Shetland travel (8 minutes) – six hour journey
  - May 6th 1970 in a blizzard – what the hell have I come to here (9 minutes)
  - No visible signs of houses – seemed like the middle of nowhere (9 minutes)
  - Old road with no traffic (10 minutes)
  - First impressions (11 minutes)

- Arrival continues/early days at Saxa Vord (12 minutes)
  - Making friends (12 minutes) – being guided through the process
  - Collecting bedding
  - Card that took you around the entire camp – familiarisation (14 minutes)
  - Camp at Wattisham – over 1000 people – Saxa much smaller
  - With Saxa Vord – around 130 serving personnel – a small family unit – you got to know people from every section – went out together at night
• Staffing (16 minutes)
  o Robin was a mechanics (worked with fitters too)

• Informal (17 minutes)
  o First name terms
  o Only using appropriate terms when higher-ups were there
  o In small groups – once again, you were embraced into this small family

• Typical watch (18 minutes)
  o At the radar heads: 2 on a watch; 4 watches; 12(ish) working on the engineering up at the radar head

• Squadrons
  o 91 Signals Unit (Saxa)
  o Radar trades (18 minutes) – 4 groups during basic training (worked for Marconi at one point before training)

• Communications (19 minutes)
  o Ground to aircraft

• Radar range at the time (20 minutes)

• Fighter controlling (21 minutes)

• ACE High (21 minutes)
  o Transferring basic radar data
  o Discussing the chain
  o Microwave line of sight
  o Five Royal Signals staff – lived at the camp – part of the Saxa Vord team (23 minutes) – no animosity

• Robin’s role (24 minutes)
  o Fixing the radar and performing daily checks
  o Worked on the Type-80
  o One of the most reliable he ever came across
- Mentions it’s record of well over 90% (this is apparent in the archival reports too)
- All valves and heavy engineering – remarkably reliable
- Scanner – 188 feet long – massive piece of aluminium and steel

- Decca Radar – major contractor – imported the material to Unst – based in London (25 minutes)
  - Built, tested, dismantled and reassembled on site

- Average shift (25 minutes)
  - Worked shifts
  - Fitter and a mechanic worked together
  - Other staff: NCO; corporal mechanical fitter; electronics guys
  - Daytime – 5 or 6 guys at the top-site
  - 2 designated as watch people
  - About an hour a day on maintenance
  - Fault finding
  - Looked after the T-80, T-13 and the TACAN beacon (making sure its parameters were in place)
  - Most of the checks involved meter readings – no displays (27 minutes)
  - A-type display on the T-13 (28 minutes)
  - Very few problems with the T-80
  - Refers me the radar pages online (did Robin reaffirm his knowledge on there – did others do this for technical stuff)
  - Half 8 in the morning – up to the top (30 minutes)
    - Meals sent up for you
  - Picked up at quarter to 5
  - Night-shift then came on – pretty much watched black and white tv on the night shift (if it was working you left it)
  - Napping and talking (33 minutes)
  - Scrounging food from the mess (34 minutes)

- Mischief making (31 minutes)
  - When you are sitting in there you were in a concrete building and the scanner was going round – it was such a large mass of metal – it used to drone [gives me a hummm hummm to
demonstrate that), I used to sit and go like hhmmm mmm hmmm. I used to just harmonise with the note that it made. By matching that by slightly lowering it or making it higher…

- Fault finding: you get attuned to the noises around you and when something is slightly amiss or is slowing down…you would hear a different noise and you’d go and investigate
- Otherwise – you got a phone call to say there was an issue – e.g. the radar or IFF had gone off

- Radar heads – regarded as slightly different (35 minutes)
  - To the people in the operations block down below – the R10
    - Teams of scopeys
      - Then a Cpl, Sgt., Officer
    - Hierarchies and the ranking system/communication
    - Still had an Officer-NCO-airman separation
  - Much more relaxed (none of the protocol bullshit – just two guys working together) (37 minutes)
  - Discipline not there in the radar heads – out of site and out of mind
  - Seldom went to the Ops Block – you’d try to grow your hair a bit longer – you were there but not there
  - Spent as little time as possible in the Ops block – once was put down to the R10 for a few weeks (stranger atmosphere) (38 minutes)
  - Engineers in the R10 – looked after processing equipment and displays; infrastructure

- Lot of pride went into the 1950s construction and infrastructural projects – work of art (39 minutes)

- Eagle and Dan Dare – Mekon in the T-80 (42 minutes)
  - Glow of the rectifier – mauve
  - Working the power supplies

- Sensation of the rotating cabin (42 minutes)
  - 4 revs a minute
  - dizzying – some could tolerate it more than others
  - hopping on the moving objects
  - 10-15 minutes in there when things needed to be done
- Description of the receiver and its scale (45 minutes)
• Technology and obsolescence (45 minutes)

• Radar maps and traces (46 minutes)
  o Etched into the displays (47 minutes)
  o Mono-colour – orange or green

• Radar and communications at Sullum Voe (46 minutes)
  o Oil tankers
  o Depths and echoes over the top of sea maps
  o 1985-1993; 1997-2011

• Difference between marine and search radar (49 minutes)
  o Not so concerned with land mass and clutter with echoes

• Social side – airforce and locals got on well (50 minutes)
  o Lots of locals working at the camp: stores, maintenance (MT?)
  o Honestly say everyone got on well together
  o Used to come into the NAAFI at night
  o Particularly for the people living at the north end – the camp was really the centre of their existence
    ▪ Shopped at the NAAFI shop
    ▪ Access the bars
    ▪ Worked there
  o Didn’t provide highly paid jobs but provided permanent jobs at the time
    ▪ Part-time crofting
    ▪ Produced a fairly balanced society
  o Sailing and sports – still has an original RAF albacore dinghy (52 minutes)
  o Golf – played at Hamar – out in the field
  o 24 hour golf tournament
  o Fishing (53 minutes)
  o Drinking and driving – minibuses (54 minutes)
  o Everything moved at a much slower speed – car or general life?
  o Bought cars of service personnel who were leaving the island – Robin bought a motorbike

• Amazing characters working in the airmen’s mess (57 minutes)
• Pot washers
  • Remembered everyone
  • Fairly severe drink problems
  • Dossed down anywhere just so they’d be on time
  • Being there for 18 months described as – just passing through

• Apart from Sandison’s – not much work (59 minutes)
  • Quarry
  • Crafts
  • Power house gave locals 6 full-time and a few other part-time roles
    ▪ Robin’s boy worked there
  • Maintenance work too

• You could get a skill and enough to keep a home (1 hour)

• Many people realised the benefits of the camp
  • Brought Unst further – ahead of the other islands
  • RAF helped establish the airstrip – supported it’s construction by the army (1 hour 1 minute)
  • Supported local businesses and shops – boosted the local economy – didn’t go to Lerwick very often (1 hour 2 minutes)

• Leave (1 hour 1 minutes)
  • Sumburgh airport (impersonal nowadays)
  • Flying to Unst

• Lived harmoniously (1 hour 5 minutes)
  • Comparisons to other sites
  • South you just kept to your own kind – perhaps meet a few locals in pubs (1 hour 6 minutes)
  • Wasn’t that close bond

• More social life (1 hour 8 minutes)
  • Sergeants mess invites
  • Bingo on Friday nights
  • People didn’t worry about it – class structure – few grievances
Class invisible for the most part in Unst
Unst and Shetlander is a leveller – *all take the bad weather and things like that*
Football and rugby (1 hour 12 minutes)

- **DVD of life on Unst in the 1970s – RAF perspective (1 hour 11 minutes)**
  - Showed officer’s houses
  - Family life

- **Radiation film badge (1 hour 14 minutes)**
  - Little training
  - Boiler suits
  - More for X-rays – not a lot of use – early attempts at health and safety
  - Under normal circumstances – wouldn’t be stood in front of a transmitting radar – as long as it was rotating, you were generally alright (1 hour 16 minutes)
  - It decays – blips through you
  - If it stops, that’s when it’s dangerous
  - Parameters – couldn’t go above certain heights in the latter days
  - Wasn’t position you could get closed to the radar and get closed to it
  - Leaking radiation – no real concerns (1 hour 17 minutes)
  - People hung the radiation badges over the horn – came back fine
  - Wasn’t a full understanding of the potential risks
  - *Some people can hear a slight pinging or tingling in your ears* (1 hour 19 minutes)
  - *Awareness that long term exposure to radiation might well be problematic – cancer issues etc.* (1 hour 20 minutes)

- **Potential radiation leaks (1 hour 20 minutes)**

- **Saxa Vord radar frequencies (1 hour 23 minutes)**
  - Bands
  - Waveguides

- **Trained at Locking – 16 week course (1 hour 24 minutes)**
  - Basic principles of radar (1 hour 25 minutes)
• Interest relating to his father (1 hour 26 minutes) **intangibles**
  - Radio ham
  - One of the first people in the East Coast of England to have a radio license
  - Baird television
  - Life-long interest
  - Worked for Marconi
  - Natural to be exposed to electrical things
  - Brother is also a radio ham – as is Robin
  - Family tradition
  - Son is a local electrician – some radar work (third generation working in radar)

• Didn’t make the most of his time in the RAF (1 hour 28 minutes)
  - Wouldn’t take the fitters course – 18 months in Locking
  - Newly married at the time

• Skaw visits (1 hour 30 minutes)
  - Worked at Skaw
  - Land-based navigation system
  - Tramping the same ground a my dad
  - *Id like to see – a building out there – a small hut – put up a small, one room museum with pictures of what went on during the war*
    - Couldn’t be left open all the time
  - Navigation stations at Lambaness – so much surveillance equipment there
  - Perfect condition inside some of the buildings – *look in and what you see is the 1940s*
  - No plans to pull them down – they’ll *just be there*
  - Don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone

  - Saxa Vord: wind at the site (1 hour 37 minutes)

• Gordon has researched his father’s notebooks (extensively) (5 minutes)

• Robin’s dad’s journal (separate audio)
  - Description of the site – diary/journal
  - Technical details
  - Not sure what his remit was
o New technology and anxieties surrounding this
o Unhappy about presence of people during confidential reporting
o Conditions of Chain Home workers
o His dad’s own handwriting
o *An absolutely precious link to me with dad* – looks at it often
o Gordon recommended that he should send it to the Radar Museum at Neatishead
APPENDIX E: STATEMENT ON RESEARCH ETHICS, DATA COLLECTION AND PRESENTATION

Full ethical approval was received from the University of Manchester before any ethnographic research was completed. Additionally, I maintained a rolling and up to date risk assessment which was constantly refined throughout. All qualitative research methods used in this doctoral project complied with accepted professional and academic standards (such as the guidelines of the Association of Social Anthropologists – see Appendix D) and were conducted in line with current guidance provided by the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures.

Anonymity
Throughout this thesis, I have adopted the use of pseudonyms for research participants. From the outset I treated the issue of confidentiality seriously. Due to the formerly secretive nature of the sites and the relative size of the communities I was living and working amongst, I was intent on allowing people to retain their anonymity. This included discussing the matter prior to any interviews (where possible, care was also taken to seek permission following some informal discussions). Interview participants were also provided with an information sheet (see Appendix E) and were asked to sign a consent form where they agreed to the use of anonymous quotes (Appendix F).

Of course, there are limits to anonymity however. For instance, there are individuals in certain positions where the retention of anonymity was not possible (at any level). For instance, key heritage professionals working on Cold War matters for English Heritage are very few in number. Similarly, there was only one full time member of staff at the ADRM – the curator. Therefore, I discussed these issues with publically known (or recognisable) individuals and received additional permission to use their actual names and quotes. However, it was agreed that any material used would not directly refer to any other individuals or put them in a compromising or uncomfortable situation.

Informed Consent
Informed consent was acquired in writing from anyone who provided an interview for this project. Extra effort was also made to discuss any issues or concerns
participants might have surrounding the Official Secrets Act and the kind of information they were or were not permitted to divulge (as some participants were former military personnel and were signatories to these laws). Every opportunity was granted to participants to pull out of the research at any stage and consent forms also reiterated to participants that their engagement was voluntary and could be stopped at anytime without the need for any explanation (and without recourse).

Nonetheless, it was not possible to obtain informed consent from people in every circumstance. In particular, it was not possible (nor deemed to be required) during the participant observation phase of the research. For instance, during participant observation in the museum setting (such as guided tours), I was not able to inform all members of the group that I was a researcher. However, efforts were made to signal my position as a researcher (I wore my university identification badge) and placed the participant information sheets detailing the nature of my research in public spaces around the museum (including at the front entrance). I also explained my research project to any members of the public that I approached and told them explicitly that I was making observations and documenting what I encountered.

Data Protection
As is apparent in Appendix D, I have also taken great care to protect participant information and data. Since the research was completed, any personal information that I had on file (with the exception of basic contact details such as email) has been destroyed. The audio from participant interviews is currently stored on a password-protected server and is only accessible to me (or participants by request). Finally, the bread and butter of my field research, my field note diaries, are currently stored in a lockable filing cabinet (I have the only key). These notebooks contain all the details, impressions and descriptions taken from my fieldwork. However, they are not publishable in their current form as they contain many signifiers, identifying information and details of “off-the-record” conversations.

Presenting the Data
In my original proposal to the University of Manchester’s Ethics Committee, I had received support to transcribe my interviews as long as I was able to retain full
anonymity for participants. However, following discussions with my supervisory team, it was decided that full transcription was not the best way to proceed. I had concerns that anonymity could not be reasonably maintained. Once I started to undertake the fieldwork, I was concerned how anonymity could be maintained due to the close nature of many of the communities that I was working with and the connections many of them had. For instance, in Unst – an island of only 500 people – it would have been all too easy for residents to recognise one another’s comments and background information.

Moreover, as the interviews were ethnographic in nature, they did not always make sense as standalone conversations. Without the contextual support of my field note diaries, some of the references made and topics pursued would not be clear (particularly where I have interviewed a person or persons several times before). Therefore, it was decided that I would present an indicative sample of my field research to highlight some of the ways in which the ethnographic data was gathered (see Appendix C). This indicative sample is something of a palimpsest of my research process. It contains a number of images, field note extracts, partial interview transcriptions and archival notes.
APPENDIX F: ETHICAL APPROVAL DOCUMENT

Form submitted to the university ethics committee and approval received in early 2012.

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
COMMITTEE ON THE ETHICS OF RESEARCH
ON HUMAN BEINGS

Application form for approval of a research project for students on a PG programme in the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures

This form should be completed by the Student and the Main Supervisor, after reading the guidance notes. It should then be submitted to the PhD or MA Administrator for pre-screening at School Level before submission to the University Ethics Committee.

Please note that if you feel a question is not relevant to your research it is not sufficient to insert Not Applicable, you must explain why.

1. Title of the research

Full title: Affecting Spaces and Understanding Places: Engaging and Negotiating Identities through Cold War Heritage in Britain

2. a. Chief Investigator

Title: Mr
Forename/Initials: Steven Thomas
Surname: Leech
Post: Doctoral Candidate
Qualifications: BA (Hons) Ancient History & Archaeology; MA Archaeology (University of Manchester)
School/Unit: Archaeology, School of Arts, Histories and Cultures
E-mail: steven.leech@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

2. b. Co-Investigators (Supervisors)

Title: Professor
Forename/Initials: Siân
Surname: Jones
Post: Professor of Archaeology
Qualifications: BA(Hons) Archaeology; PhD in Archaeology (University of Southampton)
School/Unit: Archaeology, School of Arts, Histories and Cultures
E-mail: sian.jones@manchester.ac.uk

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3. Details of Project

3.1 Proposed study dates and duration

Start date: 25/09/2011 (research with human subjects does not start until 01/08/2012)
End date: 01/09/2014 (research with human subjects expected to finish 01/08/2013)

3.2 Is this a student project?

Yes/No.
If so, what degree is it for?

PhD in Archaeology (3 years full-time)

3.3. What is the principal research question/objective? (Must be in language comprehensible to a lay person.)

This project examines the material culture of the Cold War (c.1945-1991) with a specific focus on ground radar sites and the development of surveillance technologies. It aims to highlight the range of meanings, values and perceptions that are generated through an engagement with these places. For instance, it will attempt to illuminate the experience of radar engineers and operators during this time and articulate the network of materials, people and places which supported and maintained this surveillance infrastructure. Additionally, this project will also explore the symbolic impact of radar architecture upon local communities. Furthermore, this thesis will examine the contemporary management and representation of radar materials, now that many of them are no longer in use. For example, it will explore issues surrounding their conservation as heritage, as well as alternative management strategies which involve processes of decommissioning, remediation and demolition. Finally, it will critically investigate the ways in which radar histories – e.g. through art works, museum
exhibitions, etc. – are put to work in the production of contemporary interpretations of the Cold War. In addition to archaeological survey work, ethnographic research will be carried out at the former RAF radar site at Neatishead, Norfolk and RAF Bawdsey and Orfordness in Suffolk. The objectives of this project are:

- Examine the extent to which these places can provide a more nuanced understanding of the lived experience of Cold War power struggles
- To reveal the ways in which radar is implicated in the construction of contemporary narratives about the Cold War
- Understand the ways in which sensory metaphors are put to work when describing the operations performed by radars, such as those relating to the ‘eyes’ and ‘ears’
- To gain greater insight into what happens to these places once they are no longer active and the role of various stakeholders in the (often contested) management of redundant military defence sites
- Assess the impact of surveillance technologies upon local and adjacent communities

3.4. What is the scientific justification for the research? What is the background? Why is this an area of importance / has any similar research been done? (Must be in language comprehensible to a lay person.)

The Cold War period was typified by the consistent production of potentially ‘alien’ and unfamiliar structures and objects, and their resulting proliferation across global networks: from radar stations to monolithic nuclear structures (Maus 2012; Zonabend 1993); from satellites to vacuum cleaners (Buchli 2007; Gorman 2009; Oldenziel & Zachmann 2009); and from vast concrete complexes to subterranean bunkers (Beck 2011). Since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, over 8,000 military sites have been deactivated and abandoned globally - all providing cultural, environmental and social legacies which require our attention. As is noted above, this project seeks to increase our knowledge and understanding of these places, and provide insights into the ways in which people have confronted the spectre of nuclear war and the consequences of the atomic age.

A growing body of literature has emerged which attempts to negotiate the pervasive impact of the Cold War upon the landscape. Within this scholarly work, a significant emphasis is placed upon the preservation of ‘culturally significant’ military sites as heritage monuments for future generations (e.g. Cocroft 2005; Schofield 2005; Strange & Walley 2007). Additionally, research emerging from archaeology and material culture studies has begun to explore the relationship between materiality and modern conflict (e.g. Carman and Carman 2009; Graves-Brown 2007; Moshenka 2009; Saunders 2004; Schofield 2005). However, very little sociological and anthropologically inspired research has been carried out at Cold War sites. As a consequence, the lived experience of this difficult political period is often neglected, as are the socio-political discourses surrounding the structures and materials associated with it. Furthermore, these studies largely overlook the ways in
which Cold War places and artefacts are contested and valued, obscuring the legacy of this period upon various stakeholders and communities. This is problematic given the established links between the Cold War, contemporary social practices, and global geo-politics (e.g. see Kwon 2010).

Despite their central role in surveillance and monitoring during the Cold War, investigations of radar technologies and structures have been almost entirely ignored. Although there a small number of official and technical histories concerning the development of radar during the Second World War (e.g. Brown 1999, Buder 1997; Latham 1996), only a fraction of existing studies engage with Cold War operations (e.g. Getting 1993; Maus 2012). Nevertheless, radar sites appear to offer a particularly salient way to explore some of the abovementioned problems. Radar presents a number of rewarding areas of research relating to: human-technology relationships (a prevalent theme in cultural studies of science and science and technology studies e.g. Latour 1999; Myers 2011; Serres 1985; Suchman 2011); sensory perception (e.g. Bull 2003; Classen 2005; Connor 2007; Howes 2005); the relationship between the tangible and intangible (e.g. Keane 2008; Smith and Akagawa 2009); symbolism, art and architecture (e.g. Rendell 2006); radiation and the body (e.g. Masco 2006), and the relationship between the military, landscape and cultural heritage (e.g. Coates et al 2011). An ethnographic investigation of radar sites will offer new ways of thinking through some of these critical issues.

3.5. How has the scientific quality of the research been assessed? (Tick as appropriate)

☐ Independent external review
☐ Review within a company
☐ Review within a multi–centre research group
☒ Internal review (e.g. involving colleagues, academic supervisor)
☐ None external to the investigator
☒ Other, e.g. methodological guidelines (give details below)

If relevant, describe the review process and outcome. If the review has been undertaken but not seen by the researcher, give details of the body which has undertaken the review:

University of Manchester AHRC award committee (other)

Review Panel and academic supervisors (internal review)
3.6. Give a full summary of the purpose, design and methodology of the planned research, including a brief explanation of the theoretical framework that informs it. It should be clear exactly what will happen to the research participant, how many times and in what order. Describe any involvement of research participants, patient groups or communities in the design of the research.

(This section must be completed in language comprehensible to the lay person.)

The methods I intend to use in my research with human subjects include:

- Observation at Radar Sites
- Participant Observation
- Semi-structured interviews
- Sound Recording

This project will undertake a sustained period of ethnographic fieldwork which traces the range of social meanings, relationships and values which are bound up in these places. For radar sites in particular, this appears pertinent, given their iconic/symbolic status in many landscapes. Furthermore, an examination of these sites will engender a greater level of understanding of wider debates surrounding the Cold War, such as those relating to the development of surveillance and other forms of technology. The Cold War not only witnessed a nuclear arms race, but a technological one too (e.g. Edwards 1996).

Recognised qualitative research techniques, used in sociological and anthropological studies, will be adopted throughout this project. These methods include interviewing and participant observations at each of the case study sites. Participant observation will involve taking part in and critically analysing on-site activities at the radar stations. Permission to conduct this type of research has been provisionally acquired (pending ethical approval). The interviews will take a ‘semi-structured’ format which refers to a conversational approach to participant interviews and discussions. Interviewees will be encouraged to express themselves using their own concepts, permitting a more natural progression of the dialogue and potentially revealing tacit understandings of the subject matter that would not emerge within a more structured format. However, a number of key themes will be identified beforehand in order to provide a flexible structure for the interviews and a point of comparison for post-fieldwork analysis. I will draw on the guidelines of the Association of Social Anthropologists in order to assess any ethical issues which may arise.

The interviewees will be identified through a ‘Purposive Sampling’ technique, in which key informants will be chosen and approached. Key informants at each of the sites are likely to be selected from communities of former radar operators, site managers (such as heritage conservators) and local residents. Interviews and participant observation will also be undertaken with a selection of individuals and stakeholders who are present on-site during the course of the
fieldwork, such as tourists/visitors, artists and other site users. It should be noted that many of the local residents may not engage directly with the sites themselves. Therefore, encounters with them will occur during the period of ethnographic fieldwork, during which I will be living within or close-by communities which are located near radar stations. Many of these engagements will be informal and will develop progressively with community members over the period of study. A form of non-probability sampling, known as ‘Snowball Sampling’, which relies on referrals from initial interviewees, will be used in order to generate additional participants.

Interviews will be recorded using a digital sound recorder and will be transcribed by the author. Comprehensive field notes will also be taken during the participant observation phase of research which will provide a record of these processes. These methods will then be ‘Triangulated’, involving a comparative and reflexive analysis of the data sets in order to produce rigorous and systematic interpretations. These are all standard qualitative methods of research within the social sciences (e.g. see Bryman Social Research Methods; Payne & Payne Key Concepts in Social Research; Silverman Doing Qualitative Research). I have also drawn upon these methods during my MA degree which I undertook at the University, in which ethical considerations played a central role in my approach to the material. Further, I will regularly seek advice from my supervisor Prof Siân Jones. She has conducted ethnographic research at archaeological and heritage sites across the UK and North America (e.g. Canada) and has the expertise to help me negotiate any ethical issues which may arise. As a Social Anthropologist, my co-supervisor Dr Rupert Cox will also provide advice as to best practice and ethical responsibilities when undertaking ethnographic fieldwork.

This project also presents an opportunity to make use of audio, visual and performative research methods which have begun to emerge from art (e.g. Wilson 2006), cultural geography (e.g. Butler 2006; Morton 2005) and social/visual anthropology (e.g. Cox 2005 & 2011). These research methods seek to use new forms of digital media, such as video cameras and sound recorders, as well as collaborative site-specific performances and practices, to interrogate places in a manner which is more sensitive to the sensory aspects of place. Within archaeology, there have been calls to critically re-examine methodological approaches to historical objects and sites (e.g. Cobb et al 2012; Edgeworth 2006). These practice-based methodologies have provided one way of rethinking archaeological surveys and methods (e.g. Witmore 2004 & 2006).

Similarly, I intend to enhance primary survey data (in addition to ethnographic research) by completing both traditional archaeological surveys and multi-media investigations (such as sound recording) which will involve the profiling of sites using these digital recording techniques. For instance, I will use digital sound recording equipment in order to understand the important aural qualities of particular places. Such a method is unlikely to include work with human subjects. Moreover, it is not likely to focus upon human voices or individual subjects. It is my intention to place an emphasis on particular sounds in the environment, such as the way in which the wind reanimates dilapidated or disused architectural spaces in redundant military complexes. This will be conducted in order to build an acoustic profile of these places within the contemporary landscape and may be used to critically analyse characteristics of the sites
through sound: e.g. to document change over time or to draw attention to the absence of particular sounds which may have been prominent, such as the audio feedback from radar signals. However, human subjects could be asked to respond to site-recorded sounds during a formal discussion or interview, but this will be discussed in advance of the meeting/interview and they will not be involved in the sound recording process itself.

The permission to use digital recording methods will be sought from the managers at each of the sites. However, there may be cases where participatory permission cannot be acquired beforehand, for instance, if a visitor to the site is unaware of any on-going sound recording activities. To avoid any potential ethical issues, any audio material which identifies individuals where permission has not been acquired will not feature in any form of public presentation or publication. Notification of on-going recording activities will be advertised at salient points around the sites with the instructions to inform myself or site managers/staff if there are any issues and problems. Finally, it is worth noting that these techniques are recognised as standard methods of investigation within Visual Anthropology (e.g. see Makagon and Neumann Recording Culture: Audio Documentary and the Ethnographic Experience). In relation to the adoption of any of these practiced based methodologies, alongside the more traditional archaeological and ethnographic approaches, I will frequently consult with and seek advice from my supervisor Dr. Rupert Cox. He is the co-director of documentary film company Native Voice Films and is a lecturer based within the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology and is committed to using and producing visual and aural materials as well as academic texts. His knowledge and understanding of using these research methods, in addition to navigating and dealing with any ethical issues they may involve, will be invaluable for this project.

3.6.1. Has the protocol submitted with this application been the subject of review by a statistician independent of the research team? (Select one of the following)

- Yes – copy of review enclosed
- Yes details of review available from the following individual or organisation (give contact details below)
- No – justify below

The project does not involve any statistical data analysis.

3.6.2. If relevant, specify the specific statistical experimental design, and why it was chosen?

N/A

3.6.3. How many participants will be recruited?

If there is more than one group, state how many participants will be recruited in each group. For international studies, say how many participants will be recruited in the UK and in total.
It is not possible to estimate the number of subjects involved in the participant observation aspect of this research as it is dependent upon the number of site managers, visitors, etc. present on-site at any one time.

With regards to the semi-structured interviews, I intend to undertake:

- c.30 taped interviews with former radar operators and site personnel (between 30mins and 2 hours long)
- c.20-30 taped interviews with heritage professionals and site managers (between 30 mins and 2 hours long)
- c.30-40 short interview with local community members (between 20-30 mins long). If some participants information is particularly valuable then extended, taped interviews may be undertaken
- c.30-40 short interviews with tourists, site visitors (between 20-30 mins long)

3.6.4. How was the number of participants decided upon?

As aforementioned, it is difficult to assess the number of participants given the nature of ethnographic fieldwork. It is dependent upon an understanding of the context of research and is not reducible to a particular figure, as is the case for a formal sample size calculation. Statistical modes of analysis are not appropriate for this research.

If a formal sample size calculation was used, indicate how this was done, giving sufficient information to justify and reproduce the calculation.

N/A

3.6.5. Describe the methods of analysis (statistical or other appropriate methods, e.g. for qualitative research) by which the data will be evaluated to meet the study objectives.

The modes of practice and discourse surrounding the radar sites will be observed and analysed during the participant observation phase of the research. These observations and analyses will be written up as ethnographic field notes and will be subjected to reflexive analysis later on. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed by the author, presenting an opportunity to gain greater analytical insight into the discursive responses to the subject matter. Site-specific sound recordings, if adopted, will be made on-site and then analysed to interpret the space and architecture of the radar sites.

3.7. Where will the research take place?
The component which deals with human subjects will take place at the following:

- The radar museum and scheduled ancient monument site at former RAF Neatishead, Norfolk
- The museum and heritage site at former RAF Bawdsey
- Offices and spaces where heritage professionals work
- Local community sites
- The homes of some local residents or former radar operators

Provisional permission has been established with site managers at each of these sites via telephone and e-mail exchanges. However, I will await confirmation of ethical approval until any formal project meetings take place. Also, a list of reserve sites has been drawn up in case, following approval and after initial site visits have been carried out, the sites are not appropriate or access proves difficult/ethical criteria are not able to be met. These potential sites are:

- Former RAF Saxa Vord, Shetlands
- RAF Benbecula, Outer Hebrides
- RAF Holmpton, N. Yorkshire
- RAF Staxton Wold, N. Yorkshire
- RAF Fylingdales, N. Yorkshire
- Menwith Hill, N. Yorkshire
- Radar heads at Stenigot, Lincolnshire
- Jodrell Bank, Cheshire
- Hack Green Rotor radar site and nuclear bunker, Cheshire

3.8. Names of other staff involved.

N/A

3.9. What do you consider to be the main ethical issues which may arise with the proposed study and what steps will be taken to address these?

The main ethical issues arising from this research are mostly typical of those that arise from qualitative social research. For example, potential problems surrounding the acquisition of informed consent, potential discomfort of participants and possible intrusion or inconvenience. There may also be some issues relating to the recording of sound material at the radar sites (as addressed in 3.6 above). There are potential issues relating to the recording of sensitive or secretive materials at
these sites. However, this is highly unlikely given that many of the sites are now open to the public and have been subject to decommissioning by the Ministry of Defence.

With this particular study, there may also issues relating to the Official Secrets Act. Some participants/interviewees may feel unable to answer certain questions as they are bound by the Official Secrets Act. However, I will make it clear to all participants that they are not obliged to answer any questions and may leave the interview situation at any point without having to offer any explanation. In order to help navigate this issue, I have consulted a number of researchers who have conducted interviews with individuals or groups bound by the Official Secrets Act. For instance, members of the English Heritage project who carries out an Oral History of the Secret Government Headquarters at Corsham, Bath. I have also held a meeting with a member of a British Library project National Life Stories who are currently undertaking an ‘Oral History of British Science’. They have had to navigate the Official Secrets Act on numerous occasions and suggest a policy of openness and clarity. For example, asking participants on-tape, whether they are still bound by the Act (to remind the interviewee) and potentially contacting the Ministry of Defence and consulting them over this issue (to date the project have only had one transcript reviewed by the MoD). Furthermore, I will consult my academic advisor and supervision panel member Dr Jeff Hughes on the matter. He is currently undertaking an Oral History project with a former scientist bound by the Official Secrets Act and is able to provide me with advice about the best ways to deal with ethical issues which I may encounter.

3.9.1. Will any intervention or procedure, which would normally be considered a part of routine care, be withheld from the research participants?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, give details and justification

4. Details of Subjects.

4.1. Total Number

110-135 Interviewees

4.2 Sex and Age Range

The people involved will be male and female of an adult age. It is unlikely that children will be involved in the interviews. Where they are, I will only include them alongside responsible adults (e.g. radar site visitors who have children with them). Elderly people will be included in the research.
4.3 Type

- Former radar operators
- Site Managers (such as Heritage conservators)
- Local Residents
- Other site users (such as tourists and artists)

4.4. What are the principal inclusion criteria? *(Please justify)*

The inclusion criteria for this project will be determined ethnographically. The researcher will begin by spending time at each of the sites, identifying stakeholders and persons interested in, and engaging with, the radar stations. Many of those included will be individuals encountered at the site. However, some participants may have to be contacted after initial referrals from site managers. For example, some former radar operators may not have maintained a connection to the radar site. These individuals will be contacted via letter or e-mail to gauge initial interest. If no reply is given, it will be assumed that the individual does not want to participate and no further contact will be made (in order to mitigate any intrusion). As is mentioned above, the inclusion of local residents in the study will be determined by the development of relationships between the researcher and the community members over the course of ethnographic study, in which I will be living within the local area. The principal groups included in this project are the following:

- Former radar operators
- Site Managers (such as Heritage conservators)
- Local Residents
- Other site users (such as tourists and artists)

4.5. What are the principal exclusion criteria? *(Please justify)*

The author will not exercise any particular mode of exclusion. It will also be ensured that any vulnerable individuals who are encountered during the research process will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, the priority being to safeguard them from any potential harm. Sampling will follow the procedures outlined under section 3.6 ‘Methods’. Participants may exclude themselves from the project at any time and without further explanation or discussion.

4.6. Will the participants be from any of the following groups? *(Tick as appropriate)*
Children under 16
- Adults with learning difficulties
- Adults who are unconscious or very severely ill
- Adults who have a terminal illness
- Adults in emergency situations
- Adults with mental illness (particularly if detained under mental health legislation)
- Adults with dementia
- Prisoners
- Young offenders
- Adults in Scotland who are unable to consent for themselves
- Healthy volunteers
- Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator, e.g. those in care homes, medical students.
- Other vulnerable groups

Justify their inclusion

As above, children will only be included in the study where accompanied by a responsible adult upon visiting the sites.

4.7. Will any research participants be recruited who are involved in existing research or have recently been involved in any research prior to recruitment?

- Yes
- No
- Not known

If Yes, give details and justify their inclusion. If Not Known, what steps will you take to find out?

This will be addressed during the process of informed consent (see section 6.2).

4.8 How will potential participants in the study be (i) identified, (ii) approached and (iii) recruited?

Where research participants will be recruited via advertisement, please append a copy to this application

Participants will be identified and recruited using the methods mentioned in 3.6. The author will engage with potential participants at the case study sites and through snowballing. No direct advertising for participants will be undertaken but an information sheet will be distributed to raise awareness of the project (see appendix B).

As aforementioned, the 'purposive sampling' technique will underpin the selection process. Initial and key participants will be drawn from communities of radar operators/former radar operators/heritage professionals. Snowball sampling will be utilised in order to gain referrals from initial interviewees in order to generate further participants. Letters and e-mails may be sent out to former radar operators who are no longer in contact with site managers/caretakers in order to gauge interest in participation.
4.9 Will individual research participants receive reimbursement of expenses or any other incentives or benefits for taking part in this research?

O Yes  ☐ No

If yes, indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided

N/A

5  Details of risks

5.1 Drugs and other substances to be administered

Indicate status, eg full product licence, CTC, CTX. Attach: evidence of status of any unlicensed product; and Martindale's Pharmacopoeia details for licensed products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRUG</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>DOSAGE/FREQUENCY/ROUTE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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5.2 Procedures to be undertaken

Details of any invasive procedures, and any samples or measurements to be taken. Include any questionnaires, psychological tests etc. What is the experience of those administering the procedures?

This project will not involve the use of a questionnaire or any psychological tests. It will use a semi-structured interview technique in order to allow comparison between key research themes. As mentioned in section 3.6, the methods the author intends to use include: direct observation; participant observation; interviews; sound recording.

5.3 Or Activities to be undertaken

Please list the activities to be undertaken by participants and the likely duration of each

N/A
5.4 What are the potential adverse effects, risks or hazards for research participants, including potential for pain, discomfort, distress, inconvenience or changes to lifestyle for research participants?

Although it is unlikely that the methodological approach proposed for this study will result in any direct harm to participants or the researcher, the author acknowledges that participants may feel that they are inconvenient, distracting or intrusive. In order to minimise this, the project will be explained as fully as possible and information will be provided to all participants, detailing what the research entails and the amount of time any involvement may take. This will be outlined on an information sheet (see appendix c) and the principle of informed consent will also be strictly adhered to (see section 6.5 for further details). Every opportunity will be given to potential participants to decline or exclude themselves from the project at any point without reason or explanation.

Due to the nature of ethnographic research, it is not possible to identify any specific harm in advance of the fieldwork. However, the researcher is acutely aware of potential negative repercussions which may arise with regard to participant’s personal and professional relationships as a result of what they might say or disclose. This is perhaps more likely for former radar operators and heritage professionals, as opposed to visitors to the site. Regardless, confidentiality will be used to help to protect all participants from any such issues. Pseudonyms will be used in place of real names, and personal details will be stored in a different location (on different data systems and in physically separate locations) from the interviews. In the presentation of the final thesis and any publications which may arise from this research, pseudonyms will be used in place of real names. The only exception will be for individuals speaking in a professional or official capacity where their job title or status may result in their identification. In such cases, this will be discussed prior to the interview. Furthermore, during any sound recording exercises, the presentation of individual voices will be avoided (unless otherwise expressed by the participants. Any concerns about potential harm relating to aspects of the discussion will be raised with the individual concerned. The researcher will also encourage any participant to speak off the record where they wish.

Nevertheless, it is recognised that it is not always possible to maintain absolute anonymity and that the researcher has a duty to be aware of potentially negative implications for participants when referring to them in published sources. Sources of discomfort and inconvenience will be kept under constant review during the field research and subsequently. The anonymity of participants will be retained during the archiving of this material and any identifying information will be kept separate to avoid any potential harm – this is especially important when dealing with participants who are bound by the Official Secrets Act.

My research design does not involve specifically targeting vulnerable populations, such as people with learning disabilities, children, or anyone whose capacity to give informed consent might be compromised. As mentioned above, any vulnerable people who are encountered in
the research process will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, the priority being to safeguard them from any potential harm.

5.5 Will individual or group interviews/questionnaires discuss any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the study (e.g. during interviews/group discussions, or use of screening tests for drugs)?

☑ Yes ☐ No

*If yes, give details of procedures in place to deal with these issues:*

As mentioned above, some participants may have signed the Official Secrets Act regarding their work within the military – this will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and provisions will be made to ensure that each participant is made aware that their participation is voluntary and they are not required to answer any questions which make them feel uncomfortable or which they fear may reveal sensitive information that they do not wish to disclose. No other topics or issues are likely to present themselves as sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting.

5.6 What is the expected total duration of participation in the study for each participant?

This is difficult to determine. The interviews may last between 20 mins and anything up to 2 hours long. As for the participant observation, all those present at the sites may be involved at any stage during the length of fieldwork conducted by the author. Sound recording will require no direct form of participation.

5.7 What is the potential benefit to research participants?

The benefits to participants are not tangible or economic. However, the radar operators will benefit from a dissemination and greater understanding of the work they carries out during the Cold War and will be presented with a platform to present their understanding of these places and histories in their own way and in their own words. Heritage professionals will benefit from a discussion of the nuanced and complex work which they undertake at these sites.

5.8 What is the potential for adverse effects, risks or hazards, pain, discomfort, distress, or inconvenience to the researchers themselves? (If any)

Negligible. The research will carried out within public spaces and upon defunct and abandoned radar sites which no longer possess operative capabilities. Any research carried out on private land will be undertaken with full permission of site owners/managers and without risk of harm to the researcher nor any other participants.

6. Safeguards
6.1 What precautions have been taken to minimise or mitigate the risks identified above?

The precautions taken are listed above in section 5.4.

If any unforeseen issues arise during this period of fieldwork, I will follow the guidelines of The Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth’s “Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice”. (http://www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.shtml, accessed 03/05/2012). In relation to any sensory/sound recording techniques, I will follow guidelines for practice as outlined by the Society for Visual Anthropology Ethics Committee.

6.2 Will informed consent be obtained from the research participants?

© Yes  ○ No

If Yes, give details of who will take consent and how it will be done. Give details of the experience in taking consent and of any particular steps to provide information (in addition to a written information sheet) e.g. videos, interactive material.

If participants are to be recruited from any of the potentially vulnerable groups listed in Question 4.6, give details of extra steps taken to assure their protection. Describe any arrangements to be made for obtaining consent from a legal representative.

If consent is not to be obtained, please explain why not.

Where relevant the committee must have a copy of the information sheet and consent form.

Potential interviewees will have the project explained to them in clear and simple terms. They will also receive an information sheet to take away with them which will provide all the necessary details about the project and their potential involvement (see appendix B). Prior to any prolonged interaction or discussion, I will explain the following: the research project and subject area/themes; what participants will be asked to do if they agree to take part; an estimation of the time involved; any potential inconveniences and ask for feedback in this regard; the recording of data; what will be done with any data collected; issues surrounding confidentiality; and the fact that they will not receive remuneration for participating. Discussing this range of issues proved to be a successful way to approach this type of fieldwork during previous research for my MA dissertation.

Informed consent will not be obtained during the participant observation phase of the research. It is not always possible to approach every single person on site/at a particular place and thus all participants will not be asked to sign a consent form. The same approach will be taken with regards to on-site sound recording, as the same issues apply. Visitors and local residents will be notified of
sound recording activities via the information sheet, which will be made available to all those who require/request further information about the project or any interested persons. The researcher will also ask that site managers display the information sheet in prominent locations throughout the site to ensure that as many people as possible are aware that the research is being carried out. Visitors will also be asked to notify any member of staff, site managers or myself, if they would like to exclude themselves from the observation/participant observation. All efforts will be taken to explain the research to anyone who engages the researcher in conversation.

Participants selected for interview will be asked again whether they are happy to proceed. It will be made absolutely clear that there is no pressure on those who decline or later change their minds about taking part. Any interviewees who agree will be asked to sign a form granting permission to undertake the interview. The form will also deal with issues surrounding intellectual property rights and archiving (see attached example – appendix A).

Again, it is worth reiterating that the researcher will follow the guidelines of The Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth’s “Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice”, with regards to the issue of informed consent in the context of ethnography. ([http://www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.shtml. accessed 03/05/2012](http://www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.shtml)).

The acquisition of ‘informed consent’ during participant observation is not viewed as a single event that can be dealt with on a single occasion. Rather, consent is viewed as a process and will be under constant review and negotiation during the course of research.

6.3 Will a signed record of consent be obtained?

© Yes  O No

*If not, please explain why not.*

6.4 How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the research?

Former radar operators, heritage professionals and others who have long term engagements with these sites, will be granted as much time as they need to decide whether they wish to participate. However, visitors to the site, such as tourists, will have to make a decision at some point during their visit. Initial permissions to begin research have been agreed with site managers, but it must be recognised that this cannot be taken to represent all individuals present at each site and people must be given all the time possible when making their decision.
6.5 What arrangements have been made for participants who might not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information given in English, or who have special communication needs? (e.g. translation, use of interpreters etc.)

Communication issues will be dealt with on a case by case basis. However, as this project does not target such groups, no special provisions have been put in place. Although these issues may be encountered when interviewing visitors to the radar sites, as mentioned above this will have to be handled responsibly if it arises.

6.6 What arrangements are in place to ensure participants receive any information that becomes available during the course of the research that may be relevant to their continued participation?

As noted above, acquisition of ‘informed consent’ during participant observation is not viewed as a single event that can be dealt with on a single occasion. Rather, consent is viewed as a process and will be under constant review and negotiation during the course of research. Any change in circumstance will be relayed to site managers and custodial staff and will be communicated to participants via mail, e-mail or telephone if necessary.

6.7 Will the research participants’ General Practitioner be informed that they are taking part in the study?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If No, explain why not

N/A

6.8 Will permission be sought from the research participants to inform their GP before this is done?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If No, explain why not

N/A
6.9 What arrangements have been made to provide indemnity and/or compensation in the event of a claim by, or on behalf of, participants for (a) negligent harm and (b) non-negligent harm?

I will apply for the University of Manchester’s insurance cover for research involving human subjects.

7. Data Protection and Confidentiality

7.1 Will the research involve any of the following activities at any stage (including identification of potential research participants)? *(Tick as appropriate)*

- Examination of medical records by those outside the NHS, or within the NHS by those who would not normally have access
- Electronic transfer by magnetic or optical media, e-mail or computer networks
- Sharing of data with other organisations
- Export of data outside the European Union
- Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers
- Publication of direct quotations from respondents
- Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals
- Use of audio/visual recording devices
- Storage of personal data on any of the following:
  - Manual files including X-rays
  - NHS computers
  - Home or other personal computers
  - University computers
  - Private company computers
  - Laptop computers

*Further details:*

Following the acquisition of informed consent, certain biographical details will be collected by the researcher. Contact details will be exchanged with former radar operators, site managers and local residents involved in the study. Personal details of site users and visitors interviewed as part of the project will not be collected. Data will be stored on password protected home and laptop computers as well as a password protected external hard drive. I will be the only person with access to the data, with the possibility that my supervisors may also require access at some point during the research. Direct quotations from respondents will be used for the production of the thesis and during creation of resulting publications. The upmost care will be taken over issues regarding identification with regard to the use of direct quotes.
As mentioned above, I will take all possible measures to ensure the anonymity of participants through the use of pseudonyms and the removal of personal identifiers. However, there are limits to anonymity and there may well be cases in which the identity of a participant is obvious, such as a person in a position of authority or office at a certain time or place. Under such circumstances, the participant will be consulted and permission acquired to use data that may disclose or reveal their identity. If they are not comfortable with its use at any point, or that contact cannot be established, then the material will not be used. Prior to any interview, I will hold a discussion about the possibility of identification and give the participant the opportunity to opt out of the interview at any point. This information will also be provided in writing within the Participant Information Sheet. No data will feature in the thesis or subsequent publications, if there is any reasonable chance of personal discomfort, upset or harm that may result as a consequence of participation in my research.

7.2  What measures have been put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data? Give details of whether any encryption or other anonymisation procedures have been used and at what stage?

Interview data will be transferred to my laptop computer through a secure home connection that is protected by password and anti viral software. Personal data will not be kept alongside the interview data in order to ensure the anonymity of the participants. The only personal data that will be taken is the names of the participants, their age, occupation and gender – this will be processed following the acquisition of informed consent. This information will never be kept alongside the qualitative interview data. All identifiers will be removed and pseudonyms adopted during the transcription and processing of the interview data. The information will also caution that the interviewees may be recognised by other parties given the context and specificity of what they are disclosing. This is especially relevant to professionals when speaking in a public or official capacity; in this case, it will not be possible to retain anonymity.

See 7.1 above for the measures taken in circumstances where anonymity is not possible.

7.3  Where will the analysis of the data from the study take place and by whom will it be undertaken?

The analysis will be taken within a private study and the data utilised will be stored in a lockable environment that no-one but the researcher will have access to (without my presence or consent). The data will be securely locked away in a draw that is also only accessible to the researcher.

7.4  Who will have control of and act as the custodian for the data generated by the study?

I, the researcher, will have control and act as custodian of the data.
7.5 Who will have access to the data generated by the study?

Only the researcher will have access to the full data. Supervisors may also have access to the anonymised data when guiding/advising on the research during meetings.

7.6 For how long will data from the study be stored?

10 Years

Give details of where they will be stored, who will have access and the custodial arrangements for the data:

The data will be stored for no longer than ten years after the confirmation of my degree result. Until that time, any written/transcribed data will be locked away in a secure environment and any electronic data will be secured on a password protected system. Only the researcher will have access.

8. Reporting Arrangements

8.1 Please confirm that any adverse event will be reported to the Committee

Confirmed

8.2. How is it intended the results of the study will be reported and disseminated?

(Tick as appropriate)

- Peer reviewed scientific journals
- Internal report
- Conference presentation
- Thesis/dissertation
- Written feedback to research participants
- Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
- Other/none e.g. Cochrane Review, University Library

8.3 How will the results of research be made available to research participants and communities from which they are drawn?

It is my intention to hold a seminar event in the areas local to my sites of study, in order to disseminate the research and gain valuable feedback.
I will make all possible effort to notify participants of research publications and where possible, complimentary copies will be provided. Copies of my thesis will also be distributed digitally by request and hard copies will be given to local community groups and interest groups where possible.

8.4 Has this or a similar application been previously considered by a Research Ethics Committee in the UK, the European Union or the European Economic Area?

☐ Yes
☑ No

If Yes, give details of each application considered, including:

Name of Research Ethics Committee or regulatory authority:
Decision and date taken:
Research ethics committee reference number:

8.5 What arrangements are in place for monitoring and auditing the conduct of the research?

The supervisors will monitor the conduct of the research

Will a data monitoring committee be convened?

☐ Yes
☑ No

What are the criteria for electively stopping the trial or other research prematurely?

N/A

9. Funding and Sponsorship

9.1 Has external funding for the research been secured?

☑ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, give details of funding organisation(s) and amount secured and duration:
Organisation: AHRC Block Grant, Full Award

UK contact:

Amount (£): Full Fees Bursary and £13,950 stipend per annum
Duration: 3 years Months (36)

9.2 Has the external funder of the research agreed to act as sponsor as set out in the Research Governance Framework?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☑ Not Applicable

9.3 Has the employer of the Chief Investigator agreed to act as sponsor of the research?

☑ Yes ☐ No

9.4 Sponsor (must be completed in all cases where the sponsor is not the University)

Name of organisation which will act as sponsor for the research:

10. Conflict of interest

10.1 Will individual researchers receive any personal payment over and above normal salary and reimbursement of expenses for undertaking this research?

☐ Yes ☑ No

If Yes, indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided:
10.2 Will the host organisation or the researcher’s department(s) or institution(s) receive any payment of benefits in excess of the costs of undertaking the research?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, give details:

10.3 Does the Chief Investigator or any other investigator/collaborator have any direct personal involvement (e.g. financial, share-holding, personal relationship etc.) in the organisation sponsoring or funding the research that may give rise to a possible conflict of interest?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, give details:
APPENDIX G: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Affecting Spaces and Understanding Places: Engaging and Negotiating Identities
Through Cold War Heritage in Britain

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Steven Leech, PhD Research Student (University of Manchester)

Title of the Research

Affecting Spaces and Understanding Places: Engaging and Negotiating Identities Through Cold War Heritage in Britain

What is the aim of the research?

My project examines the material culture of the Cold War (c.1945-1991) with a specific focus on ground radar sites and the development of surveillance technologies. I aim to highlight the range of meanings, values and perceptions that are generated through an engagement with artefacts and structures associated with Cold War radar stations. For example, I will attempt to shed light upon the experience of radar operators, the symbolic impact of radar architecture and issues surrounding the management of these sites, such as their conservation or demolition. Finally, I will critically investigate the ways in which radar histories – e.g. through art works, museum exhibitions, etc. – are put to work in the production of contemporary interpretations of the Cold War. In addition to archaeological survey work, ethnographic research will be carried out at the former RAF radar site at Neatishead, Norfolk and RAF Bawdsey in Suffolk. The objectives of this project are:

• Examine the extent to which these places can provide a greater understanding of the lived experience of the Cold War

• To reveal the ways in which radar is implicated in the construction of contemporary narratives about the Cold War

• Understand the ways in which sensory metaphors are put to work when describing the operations performed by radars, such as those relating to the ‘eyes’ and ‘ears’

• To gain greater insight into what happens to these places once they are no longer active and the role of various stakeholders in the (often contested) management of redundant military defence sites

• Assess the impact of surveillance technologies upon local communities

Why have I been chosen?

312
My research seeks to understand people’s views and understandings of Cold War radar sites, including how they were operated and what happens to these sites after they fall into disuse. You have been chosen because you represent one of these groups and I want to know your views and opinions. I would like to talk to former radar operators, radar site managers, local residents and site visitors/users. I would also like to talk to you if you have any stories or memories to share about these places. Your participation would take the form of either a focused conversation or a more structured interview.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

If I ask to interview you, I will tell you more about the project and what the interview would involve. I will then ask you 1) if you are happy to be interviewed, and 2) if you are happy for your interview to be taped. The interview will be ‘semi-structured’. The length of the interview will therefore depend on how much you have to say and how much time you have to spare. As a rough guide it might last for as little as twenty minutes or up to two hours. You will be under no obligation to answer any of my questions and you can also request to speak off the record at any point.

What happens to the data collected?

It will be secured in a safe location only accessible by the researcher and the researcher’s academic supervisors and will be used to analyse the ways in which radar sites are understood and talked about today. Direct quotations may be used from the interview but your identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms.

If you are concerned that your anonymity may not be maintained, then all personal identifiers will be removed from any information that you disclose. If any data you provide can be linked directly to you or your position of employment/former employment etc, then this material will not be used without prior permission, or at all, if it is deemed to have the potential to cause upset, discomfort or harm. Again, if you would like to withdraw your participation, you can do so at any time without providing any explanation or reason.

How is confidentiality maintained?

All interview recordings and interview transcripts will be anonymous.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

Whilst I greatly value your assistance, there is no provision for payment to any of the participants in this study.

What is the duration of the research?

The main research for this study will be undertaken between (exact dates will be entered here). During this period I will undertake approximately: c 30 interviews with former radar operators; c10 with heritage professionals and site managers; c15 short interviews with local residents; and up to c20 short interviews with other site users – such as tourists and artists.
Where will the research be conducted?

The majority of research will be conducted at the former RAF site at Neatishead Norfolk and the former RAF site at Bawdsey, Suffolk. However, interviews may also be conducted at other locations such as offices, homes or public spaces (such as coffee shops), if this is more convenient for you.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

When I have finished the research I will use the data to answer my research questions. The data will help me to develop academic understanding of the role of radar operators and radar sites, which will help me write a doctoral thesis on this subject. I will disseminate my findings through my doctoral dissertation and subsequently in academic journals and talks within the local communities concerned.

Contact for further information

Steven Leech, School of Arts, Histories and Cultures, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PL. Email: steven.leech@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

What if something goes wrong?

If you want further help or advice contact the researcher named above in the first instance.

If for any reason you want to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the research you should contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.
APPENDIX H: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason

3. I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

5. I agree that any data collected may be passed to the researcher’s academic supervisors

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant __________________ date __________________ signature __________________

____________________________ date __________________ signature __________________

____________________________ date __________________ signature __________________
### General Risk Assessment Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: (1)</th>
<th>Assessed by: (2)</th>
<th>Checked / Validated by: (3)</th>
<th>Location: (4)</th>
<th>Assessment ref no (5)</th>
<th>Review date: (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29/05/2013</td>
<td>Steven Leech</td>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-Sited Ethnography at Former Radar Stations in UK and Surrounding Landscapes:</td>
<td></td>
<td>At the end of each fieldwork phase:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Neatishead, Norfolk</td>
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<td>• First Review:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Saxa Vord, Shetlands</td>
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<td>July 2013</td>
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<td>• St Kilda, Outer Hebrides</td>
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<td>• Second Review:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Bishop’s Court, County Down, N. Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Orford Ness, Suffolk</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Third Review:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Task / premises: (7)
- Ethnographic Fieldwork and Interviews: participant observation; semi-structured interviews; archival research; site-based observations; landscape surveys; collaborative site walks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity (8)</th>
<th>Hazard (9)</th>
<th>Who might be harmed and how (10)</th>
<th>Existing measures to control risk (11)</th>
<th>Risk rating (12)</th>
<th>Result (13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archival Research</td>
<td>Accessing Documents Protected Under the Official Secrets Act</td>
<td>Student/Security</td>
<td>Ensure that documents accessed in the archival centres and museum sites have been declassified. If they remain under the Official Secrets Act, then they cannot be consulted, or permissions must be sought to have them declassified.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Survey</td>
<td>Permission Required to Access and Document the Site</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Acquire prior permission to visit private premises or field sites. This is particularly important for visits to former radar installations as many were sites protected under the Official Secrets Act.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Result**:
- **T** = trivial
- **A** = adequately controlled
- **N** = not adequately controlled
- **U** = unknown risk

University risk assessment form and guidance notes.
Revised Aug07
### University risk assessment form and guidance notes.

**Revised Aug07**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity (8)</th>
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<th>Existing measures to control risk (11)</th>
<th>Risk rating (12)</th>
<th>Result (13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Landscape Survey** | Damage to Sensitive Materials and Landscapes | Student | • Use surveying equipment that does not impact upon the material integrity of the site/landscape  
• Follow industry standard regulations, such as English Heritage’s landscape Archaeology Survey Guide | Low | A |
| **General Off-Campus Ethnographic Work in UK** | Student Health | Student | • Take along emergency contact documents that have telephone numbers for local medical services | Medium | A |
| **General Off-Campus Ethnographic Work in UK** | Lone working | Student and Interviewees | • Most often in public spaces and neutral locations  
• Some interviews may take place in interviewees’ place of residence. Therefore, at such times, local contacts will be informed of the location of the interview and an estimated time of completion – there will also be planned e-mails and face-to-face rendezvous.  
• More generally, local contacts and family members will know my likely whereabouts during working hours and will receive telephone or e-mail communications when working hours are complete. Furthermore, supervisors will get a weekly report of the fieldwork, which may also act as a means to determine safety and wellbeing. | Medium | A |

### Activity (8) | Hazard (9) | Who might be harmed and how (10) | Existing measures to control risk (11) | Risk rating (12) | Result (13) |
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Off-Campus Ethnographic Work in UK</strong></td>
<td>Causing harm to people</td>
<td>Student and Research Participants</td>
<td>• Full ethical approval has been acquired and the recognised standards of the American Anthropological Association for ethnographic fieldwork have been reviewed for this project.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **General Off-Campus Ethnographic Work in UK** | Causing offence to people | Student, Research Participants and Site Visitors/Residents | • Received training in good interview techniques.  
• Most interviews are met in a public place prior to being asked to participate fully. It is also explained to participants that they may withdraw at any time without any further questions or recourse.  
• All required information about the research is available from Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms, which are displayed in prominent locations at each site. | Medium | A |

**Result:**  
T = trivial, A = adequately controlled, N = not adequately controlled, action required, U = unknown risk  

University risk assessment form and guidance notes.  
Revised Aug07
### University risk assessment form and guidance notes.
Revised Aug07

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity (8)</th>
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<th>Who might be harmed and how (10)</th>
<th>Existing measures to control risk (11)</th>
<th>Risk rating (12)</th>
<th>Result (13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| General Off Campus Ethnographic Work in UK | Attacks on people and property | Student | - Plan journey in advance.  
- Carry a mobile phone where possible.  
- Get advice from local people about local conditions.  
- Do not go into people’s homes or areas they may regard as “their space” unless invited. If possible, meet interviewees in public spaces where neither party could be at risk.  
- Where possible avoid walking alone at night and keep to well-lit streets.  
- Don’t flash possessions and/or valuables around. Do not carry more money than I need to.  
- Don’t use personal stereo so I cannot hear what is happening around me.  
- If staying in a hotel, avoid letting other people overhear my name and room number. Do not allow unknown people into my hotel room and do not enter other people’s rooms unless it is safe. | Medium | A |
| General Off Campus Ethnographic Work in UK | Travel | Student | - Not able to use own vehicle so will be travelling on public transport and on foot when in areas local to each site. Only reputable transport companies and approved taxi services will be used.  
- Walking: where appropriate clothing and footwear. Where possible, stick to pedestrian routes. | Medium | A |
| General Off Campus Ethnographic Work in UK | Permission required to work on site from relevant authorities | Student | - Acquire prior permission to visit private premises or field sites. This is particularly important for visits to former radar installations, as many were sites protected under the Official Secrets Act.  
- Follow any health and safety rules in force at the work site. | Low | A |
| General Off Campus Ethnographic Work in UK | Extreme weather | Student | - Listen to weather forecasts and plan work accordingly, including appropriate clothing. | Medium | A |
| General Off Campus Ethnographic Work in UK | Recognised Hazardous Areas | Student | - All sites such as Saxa Vord and St. Kilda have environments that are potentially hazardous, such as cliffs. These areas will not be navigated alone and where possible, they will be avoided entirely. If it is absolutely necessary to visit a hazardous area, a guide will be present and all safety equipment used and regulations followed. | High | A |

Result: T = trivial, A = adequately controlled, N = not adequately controlled, action required, U = unknown risk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action plan (14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ref</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure prior permissions to access sites and conduct research in and around them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquire departmental survey equipment for low impact landscape assessments and recording.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw up a list of emergency contacts and local medical facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result: T = trivial, A = adequately controlled, N = not adequately controlled, action required, U = unknown risk

University risk assessment form and guidance notes.
Revised Aug 07
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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