Thinking with stories of suffering: towards a living theory of response-ability

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ABSTRACT

In the thesis I develop a living theory of responsibility, movement, engagement, withdrawal, and self care with a living standard of judgement of response-ability toward the other. I use a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to develop a dynamic, relational understanding, where social constructions are discussed and refined using cycles of loose and strict thinking, an inter-play of emotion and intellect, and a combination of intuitive and analytic reasoning. This is underpinned by an extended epistemology embracing experiential learning, documentary and textual analysis, presentational knowing, dialogue, narrative and photographic inquiry. I address the essence of inquiry with people who have difficult stories to tell and for us to comprehend: narratives which emerge from episodes of chaos and suffering, interspersed with occasional glimpses of the inter-human. Within this context I explore responsibility [response-ability] to ‘the Other’ as subject, and the ethical obligations implied in that relationship.

My and others’ narratives, through space and over time, are researched using an extended epistemology and inquiry cycles across two interwoven strands. I look back over a long career and ‘epiphanous’ moments as a social worker and academic in the field of child protection and children and families work; and as the child of a war veteran, I reflect on World War II narratives of suffering, changing identity, and the inter-human. This first and second person inquiry extends outwards through cycles of dialogue with ex European prisoners of war and relation with landscape across Europe and Russia. In these reflections I clarify my meanings of chaos, suffering and responsibility [response-ability]. The learning from this extended inquiry and the contribution to knowledge are reflected on within my current practice as a participative researcher who is expressing response-ability toward the other. Finally, I consider implications for improving practice and organizational climate in children and families work.
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2. ‘KINDNESS IN DAILY LIFE’ RELAXATION – QUIET PLACE, MAT & BLANKET NEEDED (15 MINUTES)
3. DWARF CHORUS IN JOCELYN’S GARDEN, 21ST JUNE 2007 (21 MINUTES)
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Standards of Judgement

For me trust and integrity are central to our lives as human beings and become manifest through the choices, and changes to our practice that we make on a daily and sometimes hourly or even minute-by-minute basis. In my view, there is a core morality within each of us, which can be influenced positively or negatively by changing circumstances; our morality is exercised through our values. These values, in turn, guide our thoughts and actions.

It follows that my values have influenced the content and structure of this thesis, and are clarified in the course of their emergence through the narratives. The authenticity of this research account is judged through my ontology, that is, the way I am in the world (Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001, 2004): my thoughts reflect how I interpret the world and my values, which guide my responses, prompt me to act.

If this PhD is to be distinguished or differentiated as a research process then, as examiners, you will need to consider whether the methodology is underpinned by the values I, as a researcher, bring to my practice (Hartog, 2004). Applying Habermas’ standards of ‘truth claims’ (Habermas, 1976), the following questions need to be considered:

Is the account comprehensible?

Does it ring true? Is there congruence with what I espouse in my living theory and how I act?

Has the account been crafted in a way that promotes understanding? Is it appropriate?

In addition the following prompts might be of some help in appraising my interpretations and responses, and whether the criteria for a Doctoral thesis have been met in the research account that follows:

Is the subject matter important in relation to contemporary research in my field of inquiry?

Do I sufficiently question my interpretations and actions?

Are my values articulated?

Do I act responsibly [response-ably]?

Is the research account convincing and trustworthy?

Over time do I show the stories and images presented on the pages of this thesis affecting my life and type of person I wish to become?

Does my inquiry account sufficiently demonstrate improved practice?

Do I pay attention to explicating editorial decisions in deciding who and what is given voice?
Do I contribute to the learning of others?

Do I link my ideas to others in a way that shows both their influence in my own theorising and my critical evaluation of their limitations?

Do I show originality of mind and critical judgment?

Have my validation processes enabled me to reveal gaps and contradictions in my initial awareness?
Introduction

Nearly four years ago I set up an organisational development and participative research company, Mindful Practice. Much of the work I undertake now draws on the experiential knowledge and lived values of practice built up in a long career in children’s services as a social worker and manager, and then as a social work academic. I am frequently called upon to design projects which improve practice or service delivery in one form or another. This thesis is an account of the development and application of my knowledge and practice in this field; it also addresses issues within my own childhood and the influence of World War II on me as a child growing up and as an adult now.

Personal and professional learning are intertwined; the shape of the thesis takes the form of cycles of action and reflection within and between chapters, which alternate between and draw out the learning across these two interwoven strands. This alternative approach to thesis structure is congruent with the way my living theory of inquiry evolved (Fisher and Phelps, 2006): from experience, to representations of that experience as forms of intuitive reasoning and loose thinking; to propositional knowledge in the form of theory and research as forms of analytic reasoning and strict thinking (Munro, 1999, 2002; Bateson, 1972). I describe and explain my own educational development and my living theory of responsibility [response-ability] (Levinas, 1969, 1989; Whitehead, 1989; Moran, 2000; Oliver, 2001; Biesta, 2006; McNiff, 2007).

The research seeks to balance first, second and third person inquiry (Reason and Torbert, 2001), which reflects an enduring interest in responding to the narratives of others; checking out my understanding and interpretations with them through dialogue; and disseminating them in a form that both respects their narratives and promotes others’ engagement. I see stories as precious gifts. When a person has agreed to participate and share something very important about their life with me then I, as a fellow human being, have a responsibility to share it with others in a form that does justice to the original narrative in my interpretation of that narrative. I explore, through a storied web, the essence of inquiry with people who, for various reasons, have difficulty in expressing their experiences and being understood. When the Object becomes Subject, responsibility [response-ability] towards the ‘Other’; and the ethical obligations implied in that relationship are all considered (Levinas, 1991; Oliver, 2001): compassion for and being able to respond to each other is the healthy state of being human. The research draws on this value base, and also considers compassion for and care of self (Foucault, 1986).

At times it has been challenging to strike the right balance between my identity as the child of a former prisoner of war, growing up with my father’s narratives of suffering and making sense of them as an adult; and my professional identity as a children and families’ social worker and participative researcher listening to intimate and sometimes harrowing accounts of people’s lives. In both instances, I have felt the weight of responsibility in how the narrative accounts, and the learning derived from them, are represented within the public domain. This touches on the profound sense of privilege and responsibility which I grew up with as a child; which I felt as a social worker working in some of the most deprived areas of the Midlands; and which is always there with me in the work I do now.

Through the narratives, I clarify the meanings of the relational dynamic values as they emerge in my inquiry, and form them into the standards of judgment that constitute my
accounting for myself and to others, which includes my responsibility [response-ability] towards the other. It is the narrative inquiries that show the dynamic relationships between my ontology, my epistemology and my methodology and their contribution to the original expression of a responsibility [response-ability] towards the other in what I am referring to as the inter-human. The meaning within a narrative or narratives constitutes a lesson in living, where openings to others are created through suffering. In the last part of the thesis I address what can be learnt from the narratives, and how to act in the world.

Rather than learning being about acquisition, learning here is about response (Biesta, 2006). Conceived this way, learning focuses on our personhood and coming into a world of difference and plurality as unique beings, where all the time we question our responsibility for and towards others: where we find our own voice and presence in that accountability and act in a worldly space. The account that follows is a narrative inquiry of challenges and responsibility, of profound encounters in the worldly space of otherness.

**Scoping the terrain: the experiences and stories that the set the scene**

First there is the childhood that shaped me. At the time growing up in a home which was in effect a memorial to my father’s fallen comrades in World War II did not seem at all strange. I grew up with a sense that ‘doing death well’ was important: something which is denied soldiers with the imperative to move forward rapidly under attack; it was also denied people in concentration camps, who worked as slave labourers and were effectively being starved to death or, in some instances, shot because the person holding the gun felt like it. These penetrating accounts formed the substance of my father’s war stories, which were balanced by some very entertaining narratives of the ridiculousness of army life. However the effects of living with a person with some symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder were always there in the background: irrational outbursts over what seemed to be trivia to other members of the family, such as the tiniest scrap of food left on the dinner plate. This led to a degree of vigilance on my part as I scanned for changes in his mood, and adapted my behaviour accordingly. Perhaps it was this attention to the non verbal in my own childhood home, which eventually became a distinct advantage in my professional career as I scanned for the non-verbal in other children’s homes.

Turning to my career in children and families work, many children and young people and their families have had an impact on me. However, when I am asked to identify the nodal points in my career that have changed my thinking and practice, times when I have experienced a breakthrough in communication or felt intensely uncomfortable and perhaps even fearful, this reduces the number to perhaps five or so. Some of these experiences influenced my writing on competence, reflective practice and power relationships in the 1990s, and others have waited for this opportunity to be written up and reflected upon. Three children’s lives had a profound effect on my professional development and their stories are given more attention within the thesis.

Third, there is the experience of being in Russia, working on an evaluation project at a children’s therapeutic community 200 km south east of Moscow. Many of the children were there because they had been orphaned, most often through parental death from drug or alcohol abuse, or their parent(s) were addicted to drugs or alcohol and they had compulsorily been removed. Physically this was one of the toughest places to be, and one
where my value base received a challenge which altered how I judged the behaviour of and inquired with others who have faced extreme hardship. At the same time this was one of the most beautiful, wild places I have ever been; the abundance of nature in the form of wild berries, flowers and miles and miles of birch forest punctuated by heathland and lakes, called ‘ponds’ by the Russians to reflect the difference in their reading of the scale of terrain before us. The landscape had an intense, healing-like effect on me, and yet it hid unimaginable suffering in the verdant mounds of earth, now moulded into the landscape and softened over time, but which signified old trenches and shell holes. During World War II some of the bitterest fighting on Russian soil took place here as the Germans repeatedly advanced and then retreated between the summers and winters of 1941 and 1944. It was in this part of Russia that “the Germans stood the longest”, as one person there said of that time.

The children’s community in Russia is the place where the two strands in this thesis meet: the impact of World War II on my life and a deepening interest in understanding my father’s wartime experiences after his death in 1999; and my professional career as a practitioner, manager, academic and consultant in children and families work. The link is through the way in which we open up the space to relate to ‘the Other’ as Subject rather than an object of concern, and how we then interpret and respond to the stories people tell us. In this case children who have been abused have narratives that are very difficult to tell and for us to hear and understand as many abuse survivors have testified. Men who have been in combat situations, perhaps wounded and then taken prisoner like my father, experience similar difficulties because we, who have not been there, cannot comprehend what it is like: we are often quick to judge and ask the wrong questions like “Why didn’t you escape”? For the ordinary serviceman who was taken prisoner, this was rarely a possibility: the prolonged effects of hard labour and malnourishment affected mind, body and spirit.

Six months later in January 2002, I joined the CARPP programme at Bath and, as part of the first day, I was asked to put together a visual representation of my potential inquiry. I chose to make a collage (see Figure One, p.10). The process of setting down my knowledge in this visual way really tested me: I was aware of deliberate procrastination which normally signifies some sort of fear. My daughters supported me by going through old magazines looking for suitable images and cutting them out. Then when it came to designing the collage, my brain felt exhausted like never before: I realised that it was normally the left, verbal, rational, side of my brain that was dominant and that now the right, non-verbal, intuitive side of my brain was being engaged as I grappled with representing my inquiry as presentational form (Heron, 1992; Reason, 1994; Heron and Reason, 2001; Edwards, 2001). Much of my life had been influenced by World War II, signified by the War Memorial in the middle of a copse of silver birch trees in Russia and the words ‘Of love and loss’. There was a tacit, troubling awareness, as I glued those words onto the collage. Did I dare to delve beneath those four words?
Figure One
Through the action/ reflection cycles presented in the chapters that follow, I refer to different parts of the collage to track the links between the various parts of the whole and the deepening of my inquiry. Within the narrative form of the thesis I explain the educational influences in my learning. My story is my living educational theory in which I show the meanings of responsibility [response-ability] toward others; it also forms a healing quest narrative (Frank, 1995).

Abram (1996, p. ix) discusses the role of the senses in this interrelated world: ‘Humans are tuned for relationship. The eyes the skin, the tongue, ears and nostrils – all are gates where our body receives the nourishment of otherness’. It was the sensory nature of the world we inhabit, represented in the top right of the collage (Figure One), which profoundly influenced my assessment of a child’s home circumstances in a case where I was acting as his Guardian ad Litem1: I began to question the current emphasis on ‘evidence-based practice’ which was largely based on propositional knowledge (Reason, 1994; Heron and Reason, 1997, 2001). Working with a severely neglected child who had lived in this home for over seven years, was one of the saddest and richest learning experiences in my professional career as a social work practitioner. In Chapter Four I use presentational form to deepen the learning from a visit to his home, where I describe my sensual response to the environment in which he grew up.

It was this thinking about assessment, derived primarily from my experiential knowledge and applying it in teaching sessions, which informed an action research project proposal at the end of 2002 to improve the quality of family placement assessments. This was based on my enduring interest in how workers formulate hypotheses in assessment, using both head and heart, which is represented in the top left hand corner of the collage (Figure One). During this study I worked with a group of social workers looking at how they could improve their assessments of potential foster carers and adopters. I also wanted to find out how they ‘managed’ emotions in their work, for example, when a placement breaks down. There is resonance here with the way practitioners are judged and blamed, particularly by the media, during and after a child death inquiry, such as that of Victoria Climbié (Lord Laming, 2003). In Chapter Four I include a paper I wrote on the Victoria Climbié Inquiry, which describes the highly charged landscape of child welfare and the issues I believe are central, one of which is responsibility.

The emotional terrain of child protection is represented in the bottom left of the collage (Figure One). Victoria’s picture has a veil over it to represent the tendency of unsupported practitioners to separate themselves emotionally from an abused child and objectify him/her, thus keeping the child and her/his suffering at a safe distance (Ferguson, 2004, 2005). A similar process was in evidence in the family placement assessment study: the adopters discussed how ‘looked after’ children [children in the care of the local authority] were talked about by social workers as if they were “second hand cars”, not people: children and young people viewed as objects at a safe distance as opposed to subjects.

It was the family placement assessment study which was the catalyst for the extended first person inquiry into my father’s war time experiences when I posed to myself the same question that social workers asked potential adopters and foster carers: Why do you think your parent behaved the way s/he did? Also as I have mentioned previously, there was a parallel with the way children and former prisoners of war, as people who have had

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1 An independent social worker appointed by the Court in care and related proceedings.
traumatic experiences, can be objectified. I wanted to understand more about the experiences of combat and the transition into becoming and being a prisoner of war.

A poignant journey ‘Of love and loss’, the words by the memorial on the collage, commenced when I conducted my father’s funeral in 1999; and deepened in 2005, when I started to relate to his war diaries and other memorabilia and reflected on my evolving understanding of the impact of World War II on both him and me. It is the process of this first person inquiry which is described in Chapters Two and Five: what I did, how I did it, how I felt about what I found out, and how I interpreted it are all considered.

The inquiry with ex Prisoners of War, described in Chapter Six, occurred over a two year period between 2005 and 2007, and involved group conversations at their annual reunion on the south coast of England and at other venues chosen by the men on an individual or group basis. I also conversed through email and telephone (Skype and landline) with a former German soldier who was captured by the Russians in 1945 and subsequently escaped. Our conversations challenged my pre-existing frameworks of understanding: I began to realise that the particular historical and cultural context in which I had grown up was limiting my perception of his narrative. During this action reflection cycle, understanding of my living theory (Whitehead, 1989; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006; McNiff, 2007) deepened as I engaged with and responded to the different narratives. I learnt more about how I built respect and trust; and how I responded to the different narratives and to myself: the ethical imperative of being and acting in the world.

As part of the inquiry into my father’s prisoner of war diary and his stories, I engaged with the landscape of war and visited the war tunnels in Jersey, built by slave labour, and British, German and Russian war cemeteries and sites of former prisoner of war camps in Germany. These were photographed and the visual representations are also included in Chapter Six to acknowledge my relationship with those places and the people who lived and died there; this engagement with place and the way nature is beginning to heal the scars on the landscape had a profound influence on me.

The last part of the thesis refocuses on my professional career in children and families work, and a participative evaluation of integrated working where I interviewed parents and children/young people individually and the practitioners working with them in focus groups about how the model was working from their point of view. In the design, conduct, and dissemination of this project, I was strongly influenced by the inquiry with ex Prisoners of War and the work of Thomas Schwandt (2002) on evaluation practice, which sees evaluation as an educational experience: an understanding of self in action (Habermas, 1988) , where the Being of the evaluator is central.

Referring to the design, management and findings of the study, and a reflective supplementary report on the evaluation, written in the first person, I discuss the influence on me of some of the interviews, how I responded to participants' narratives, and how I took care of myself. I develop my living theory of responsibility [response-ability], extending notions of responsibility and response-ability as they relate to narratives of suffering (Levinas, 1988, 1989, 1991; Frank, 1995; Oliver, 2001; Biesta, 2006) to one which encompasses practical, trust-building, appreciative, and participant-affirming responses. I consider in more detail theoretical influences on my living educational theory where I articulate my meaning of responsibility [response-ability] towards the Other as distinct from Levinas’ insight of responsibility for the Other (Levinas, 1989; Biesta, 2006). I link my living theory to wider debates on dehumanization in public services, and to
Crafting the research account

When crafting an account of a research process, it is difficult to know quite where to begin and how to frame the journey. A form is needed that will allow readers to feel the moral dilemmas and join with the ‘nodal moments’ which define an ethnographic project (Graham, 1989; Ellis and Bochner, 2003). A ‘neat’ way of telling the story would have been chronologically starting with re-telling some childhood experiences and then steadily moving forward, but this does not feel right as it was only through later experiences in my life that I had the capacity to reflect on my childhood and adolescence and some of the people I met in a professional capacity.

I have therefore broken with the more usual form of a doctoral thesis, typically a five chapter model, comprising introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis and conclusions. Rather I have chosen to view the research process and writing as ‘performing art’ rather than ‘recipe’ as implied in the more traditional approach to writing a doctoral thesis: the literature which has informed the inquiries is placed temporally within the relevant action research cycles, in some instances supporting my actions and at other times challenging my perspectives and assumptions (Fisher and Phelps, 2006). In the earlier chapters as a general rule, I have tended to use references which influenced my thinking and professional practice at the time, rather than more recently published texts, which I have referred to in the last two chapters of the thesis as my practice, theoretical engagement, and reflective capacities developed during the research. In my view, this emergent approach within the research account promotes greater congruence between the epistemological, methodological and ethical aspects of action research.

Ethical responsibilities

As this is my narrative account, I take full responsibility for what I have chosen to put in the public domain about my life; and I indicate from time to time my rationale for what I include and what I exclude. My narrative also includes and refers to many others’ accounts. After the circulation of earlier drafts, further correspondence and discussion by phone over the past few months, all the adult participants are content for their names to be in the public domain. Following the usual ethical conventions, all the children I met in a professional or research capacity are referred to by pseudonyms.

At this point it may be appropriate to caution the reader as part of my responsibility towards you: at times this may not be an easy read, but it is hard for me to judge which aspects of the inquiry might challenge or even disturb you. Note your responses, perhaps jot down what resonates, what troubles, and take time out when you feel the need. The choice is yours. At the same time, I aspire to engage you in an interesting read where I articulate and inquire into significant moments in my life and the lives of others.

As part of the thesis, I have included some self care resources on the accompanying CD to support engagement with the narrative, and for those times when you might feel the need to take a break and switch off. They are offered on an entirely optional basis - to be ignored, explored, and if thought helpful, used.
A preliminary introduction to key ideas used in the thesis

One challenge posed by seeing the research process and writing as ‘performing art’ rather than ‘recipe’ is that meanings emerge and change through experience and the narratives which represent that experience. In order to help signpost the reader, I refer here to some of the key ideas within the research account, which are elaborated upon towards the end of the thesis when their significance becomes apparent through the process of narrative inquiry.

**Action research and living theory**

In action research the focus shifts from the more conventional spectator approach of the social sciences, where theory is generated through observation and descriptions of other people’s actions, to one where the researcher or practitioner generates new knowledge and/or theorises about her own learning, which is derived from experience and cycles of action/reflection (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). This approach uses an inductive approach to theory building; and draws on an extended epistemology where all people have the capacity to create their own knowledge or ‘living theory’ in different ways from a range of experiences and different ways of knowing.

As a practitioner researcher I am influencing and influenced by the knowledge creation, often in narrative form, of all those in dialogue with me. In this thesis the notions of response, responsiveness and responsibility are explored and developed into a living theory of reponse-ability, with an emphasis on the dynamic, action-oriented and practical nature of response. This is combined with a philosophical discussion on narratives which derive from episodes of chaos, loss and suffering and what can be learnt from them at a deeper level (Frank, 1995; Levinas, 1991; Oliver, 2001).

**Relationship of ‘disciplined narrative inquiry’ to action research and living theory**

I have arrived at a notion of research as disciplined narrative inquiry (McNiff, 2007), which you, the reader, engage with as I weave together my narrative with the narratives of others. As my own narrative of learning develops, it is challenged and influenced by the narratives of others, in this instance the hidden or silent voices of people who have difficult stories to tell - children who have been abused and neglected, and men, like my father, who became prisoners of war. Iterative learning takes place over time and within the narrative accounts: in this approach action, reflection and learning can occur more or less simultaneously or it may develop subtly over several months or even years. The thesis focuses on the transformational nature of stories, in which, over time, I think with different stories and find them influencing the kind of person I wish to become. This is different to thinking about stories, which is to reduce a story to content followed by an analysis of that content (Frank, 1995).

The inquiry is also influenced by the interrogation and evolving interpretation of artefacts; movement between and within places e.g. visits to former prisoner of war camps and battlefields; and photography as a means of holding an experience and bringing the visual into narrative inquiry (Bach, 2007). As such the research moves around and situates itself temporally and spatially within the three dimensional inquiry space: inward and outward, balancing the personal and social; backward and forward attending to the past, present and future; and focusing on specific places and their significance (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000). This framework of inner and outer movement, place and time is used in Chapters
Five and Six to show the dynamic nature of evolving interpretations in my inquiry as the child of a war veteran and former prisoner of war.

**Extended epistemology and methodology**

I draw on the extended epistemology or multiple ways of knowing in action research referred to as experiential knowing, presentational knowing; propositional knowing; and practical knowing (Heron, 1996; Heron and Reason, 1997; Heron and Reason, 2001; Reason and Torbert, 2001): I have direct in depth encounters with persons, places or objects; I draw on different forms of artistic expression to represent this knowing in action; I use journal writing and photographic inquiry to re-story my relationship with place e.g. when visiting the war sites in Germany where photographic inquiry is used to hold experiences which signify the passing of time between 1944/5 and 2006; I work with concepts and ideas to theorise about my knowing; and I apply these different types of knowing as practical knowledge about the nature of responsibility which, informed by my values, guides how I act in the world.

My epistemology stems from a participatory world-view where the natural world is a dynamic presence which draws us into relation, thus influencing what can be known (Dewey, 1981; Abram, 1996; Reason, 1994; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Thayer-Bacon, 2003). A relational epistemology stands to be corrected because of the socially constructed nature of knowledge; a core belief being that we are all one with the universe. We live in a unified, connected world that is alive, dynamic and constantly changing where appearances are not permanent or separate from us: ‘It is a complementary, complex world that we can only begin to understand if we approach our inquiring with compassion and humility, in cooperation with each other’ (Thayer-Bacon, 2003, p.242). As I more fully embrace a participatory world-view and encounter otherness, I reflect on evolving interpretations using ideas from hermeneutics and phenomenology.

I use mind and body to support my engagement during various phases of the research. I identify ways of being; and use different patterns of thinking, as I seek to understand people, objects and the world around me. I use loose thinking and intuitive reasoning to speculate and imagine; strict thinking and analytic reasoning to evidence and ground. I also practice care of the self to promote engagement with otherness and critical reflection (Foucault, 1986).

The writing and selection of images for this thesis seek to make external what is internal: the ontological values I bring to my professional practice are clarified in the course of their emergence through narrative inquiry, and formed into living, relationally dynamic standards of judgement. The epistemological and methodological contribution of the thesis is to show the development of my living theory of inquiry in the hope that it might benefit others’ responses, particularly in children and families work.

**Outline of chapters**

Chapter One describes the professional foundation of my practice. Drawing on the narrative accounts of three children who influenced my professional development in different ways and early published work, I discuss the nature of child abuse, power relationships and competence in this field.
Chapter Two sets out the early ethical and methodological considerations in this research account as I begin to consider the meaning of ‘love and loss’ within my personal life. The narrative account, which draws on correspondence and the speech I gave at my father’s funeral, forms the beginning of a first person inquiry into my father’s wartime experiences.

Chapter Three outlines my introduction to action research after a long period of being seeped in more traditional approaches to research. I draw on the participatory world-view and extended epistemology of action research; and show a deepening understanding of the complexity of child protection practice where workers’ emotions and senses are more fully taken into consideration.

In Chapter Four I more consciously develop my living theory of responsibility, movement, engagement, withdrawal and self care. I address issues concerning ‘distance’ and ‘relation’ in social work assessments of children and families, and emphasise the importance of emotions in hypothesis formulation. I link feelings to responsibility, the imperative to act; and to a practice of self care. Finally as part of self care and self discovery, I acknowledge the need to address issues within my own childhood emanating from World War II.

Chapter Five marks a deepening in my first person inquiry practice where I open the World War II Pandora’s Box ‘Of love and loss’ sitting beneath the Russian War Memorial on the collage (Figure One). I track the influence on me of my father’s war narratives, my childhood home and his war memorabilia. I describe a deepening sensuous involvement with my immediate environment; craft imagining and grounding methods of inquiry; and track a process of self care. These methods form part of my living theory of inquiry.

Chapter Six describes an intense period of first and second person inquiry in which I immerse myself in dialogue with those who experienced World War II at first hand, and with the landscape of war now; I use photography, as visual narrative inquiry, to add another layer to narrative inquiry to show the process of my understanding and revisions to my interpretations; and I address the process of inquiry with people who have difficult stories to tell and for us to comprehend: narratives which emerge from episodes of chaos, interspersed with occasional glimpses of the inter-human. Through the narratives I clarify my meanings of suffering, chaos, loss and change; our inter-relatedness as human beings; and our responsibility towards each other. I show that learning can be at its most profound when seen as a response to what is different or other.

In Chapter Seven I apply the embodied learning from the narrative inquiry research account, outlined in earlier chapters, to the professional sphere and to children and families work in particular. Referring to the design, management and findings of an evaluation of service delivery to children and families, and to sections of a reflective supplementary report, I develop my living theory of responsibility [response-ability] in professional practice (Whitehead 1999, Whitehead and McNiff 2006; McNiff 2007). I show a practice characterised by responsiveness and response-ability throughout the ‘Team around the Child’ evaluation; and extend Levinas’ notion of responsibility as it relates to stories of suffering to one which is far more extensive, encompassing practical, trust-building, appreciative and participant-affirming responses in daily practice.
Chapter Eight summarises how the ideas of others have influenced my living theory. I critique Levinas’ notion of responsibility for the Other and his conception of ‘facehood’ (Levinas, 1969, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1991). I argue that the crucial issue is how the status of personhood or subjecthood is accorded; understanding of diversity and difference, of the Other as another person or being like me, only occurs through dialogue. I address issues that arise when our environment changes, that is, when and how we move in the world. I link my living theory to self/employee care in human service organizations to slow down perception so that the Other might be seen and responded to, and to wider debates on dehumanization in public services; and I address implications for children and families work. Finally, I share the healing aspects of the research process through presentational form (Figure Two, p.272).

Text formats

This thesis includes various types of text, which are identified by different typefaces. Within the field texts a distinction is made between writings, such as stories, unpublished reports, narrative accounts and reflections; journal entries; verbatim accounts of dialogue; and quotes from published sources:

Writings use this font and are not indented.

Journal entries use this font and are in a text box

Verbatim accounts of dialogue use this font and are not indented

Quotes from published sources normally use this font and are indented.

On one occasion at the beginning of Chapter Four I include a short published article I wrote in 2003 as part of the thesis itself (Jones, 2003a): this uses the thesis font, Arial 11, and is not indented.

Photographs

I started to take photographs as part of this inquiry in 2006. As a general rule I have included most images to accompany text which relates to the time when I took the pictures. However in a few instances, I have made a judgment to include an image at an earlier point, for example, when I talk about the process of engaging with my father’s war diaries in May 2005, so that you, the reader, might also benefit from the visual impact of the objects that are reflected upon in the accompanying journal entries and writings.

The photographic inquiry undertaken between June and September 2006 into Second World War sites in Germany and the Netherlands signified a new relation to the passing of time, and the landscape of my father’s narratives. Physically re-treading that ground and taking photographs some 60 years later helped me form my own relationship with the landscape, and perhaps most importantly to generate a new narrative of reconciliation and right response from the people I met and the stories I heard along the way.

Finally, the selection of images for this thesis has been shaped by my values in much the same way as the editorial decisions about who and what is given voice.
Chapter One: The Professional Foundation

Introduction

This first chapter of the thesis outlines the development of my knowledge and values as a child care social worker and social work academic with responsibility for the education and training of qualifying and post qualifying students. I begin with narrative accounts of three children who influenced my professional development in various ways; their stories depict the powerlessness of children who are or have been abused and the responsibility of practitioners who undertake this challenging work. Later as a social work academic, I refer to my published work and theorise about child abuse, power relationships and the nature of competence in this field.

Many of the ‘nodal moments’ in my professional career led to profound learning, as I struggled to resolve complex ethical dilemmas and intense feelings about the rights, interests and needs of the different people involved. At the heart of these dilemmas were issues of power and powerlessness, who is given voice, and notions of personal and professional responsibility. Learning conceived of in this way both stretches and challenges, because it centres on identifying one’s own unique response and then acting (Biesta, 2006).

Reflections on the early development of child-centred practice in my career

As a child I feared children and adults with learning difficulties and made my mother walk on the other side of the road or bullied her into not shopping in the local village on a Wednesday afternoon when we might meet them out on a group outing. My first job after my degree in Sociology was a timely, direct challenge to this deep-seated prejudice.

When I was 22 years old, I was offered a job as an unqualified social worker and Coordinator in a multi-disciplinary Child Development Centre. At the time and given my fears, I did not realise the invaluable grounding this work would give me in the contribution that I could expect (and therefore request) other professionals to make in promoting a child’s development. I also gained skills in talking to parents and I understood from their stories the impact that having a child with development delay had on their lives: the grief and life change associated with the loss of a ‘normal’ child. My MA dissertation on radical social work practice with parents and handicapped children was written as part of my social work course in 1977 and based on a survey of 61 parents who attended the Child Development Centre over a one-year period between July 1976 and July 1977. In the dissertation I argued strongly for the integration of disabled children within mainstream education so that ‘they are children first and handicapped second [in order] to break the ideology that treats a handicapped child as a second class, imperfect commodity and his [sic] parents as responsible for manufacturing a failure’ (Read, 1977, p. 10).

But more importantly, I started to see beyond the disability to the child. This happened slowly at first, as I began playing with the children in my breaks. Through this process, I started to relate to individual children without the disability, and my associated fear of it,

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2 This was one of the terms used in the 1970s for children with learning difficulties.
which had blocked my perception of them as children first. I stopped replacing percepts with concepts, through the over activity of the linguistic-conceptual mind, and started experiencing reality, i.e. the child as a person, a feeling and perceiving being (Bai, 2001).

A referral on a sunny Monday in the summer of 1978

In 1977, after a period of working in a very deprived area on a student placement, I decided to apply for a social work position there. A key influence in that choice was the vitality of the team. Marsh and Triseliotis's (1996) study of social workers in the period immediately following qualification found that induction, in-service training and good supervision all played a significant part in a social worker’s early career. I was very fortunate in having all three. I also had wonderful supportive, colleagues, and no staff changes in my first year.

I returned from a week’s holiday on this sunny Monday; the exact date is etched on my mind. But I can’t remember where I’d been on holiday, which is unusual, because I can remember virtually all the holidays that I ever had and where I went.

The office was quiet: it was high summer and half my colleagues were on holiday. At less than a year qualified, I was the most senior person in charge of the Intake Team: the Senior Caseworker, who was normally in charge had left for holiday on the Friday as had the District Manager. That left me to sort through the referrals in the basket and then discuss them with the Senior Social Worker, who was deputising for the Manager. There were two that troubled me: one was a single woman with mental health problems; and the other was a young couple, Alan and Stella Green, who had a three year old child and an eight week old baby.

The three year old, Jason, was the male partner’s stepson; the baby, Tracey, had recently been diagnosed with a congenital heart problem. We had somehow lost the file and so we only had referrals since May, and we knew we had another file because the mother had been known to us previously. There was something about those referrals: there were a lot of them. The couple had come in on a few occasions with different financial queries regarding their benefits. There was also concern about Jason from the health visitor and his attendance at nursery; and more recently, about the baby. When Tracey had recently been diagnosed with a heart problem, her father had become very aggressive on the hospital ward.

Because we were short-staffed, the couple had been written to the previous week, asking them to contact us and then to come to the office. They hadn’t been in touch at all. A visit was called for.

On that warm summer’s day, I had to work on another case, which involved a planned move for two children to their natural father and his second wife. They had been burned by their mother, and were in foster care. This was a very important visit, because I needed to find out their wishes and feelings about the planned move, which had to be approved by the Social Services Committee later that month in order for the brothers to start school at the beginning of the new school year.

So I discussed the two cases with the Senior Social Worker. We agreed that a visit to Jason and Tracey’s family was necessary, but who could do it? I was the only qualified
Social Worker in the office during that week. When could I do it? The planned visit was some 15 miles away and would take me the rest of the day into the early evening. So we agreed that I would miss the Tuesday team meeting and visit the Greens the next morning.

I drove to work that Tuesday morning thinking about the planned visit to the couple, what I needed to cover and the open-ended questions I might ask at the beginning of the interview: Why I’ve come? How is Tracey’s health now? How is Jason getting on at nursery? How are your finances now? All the time I would be watching and noting family relationships. I felt apprehensive.

I breezed into the office, not intending to stop for long. Joan, our wonderful, calm receptionist looked worried. My dominant memory is of the vivid pinkness of the form, which she handed to me personally: Emergency Duty Team referrals were pink and normally signified some disruption to whatever you had planned for that day. My other memory is that the writing was in blue biro and the first scan of the content went something like this:

‘Fractured skull . . . baby had been crying . . . father had hit her head against the coffee table . . . in intensive care . . . unlikely to survive . . . mother out working that evening . . . father in police custody’.

That case was a turning point in my early career: I understood the seriousness of the job I was employed to do and the life endangering consequences when you did not get it quite right. This case and what I learnt from it provided the energy and passion that drove my career for the next 20 years.

Fortunately for me, unlike numerous other social workers involved in child death inquiries a few years later (see, for example, London Borough of Brent, 1985; London Borough of Greenwich, 1987; London Borough of Lambeth, 1987), I was not blamed for Tracey’s death. I was less than one year qualified and had, at least, recognised that a home visit was necessary. I had agreed with a senior social worker, who was the line manager on duty at the time, the course of that action i.e. the visit on the Tuesday morning, just over 14 hours after the fatal injury to Tracey, as opposed to the Monday afternoon. In a hard-pressed social services department, it is always much easier to focus responsibility for a child’s death on front line staff, rather than the managers or councillors who are responsible for the resources and infrastructure. In this regard, the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié was unusual in departing from the normal practice of exclusively blaming front-line staff (Lord Laming, 2003).

A few months later, I witnessed at first hand the paralysing effect on two of my friends who were the social workers for the mother and father in another child death case. I remember them sitting in my house going over and over the scenario leading up to the baby’s death: when the files were called in their recording was not up to date. Wishing that somehow the clock could be turned back to this time last week, they were vulnerable and they knew it. I had been more fortunate, and because I was not fearful, I could reflect on this case and the wider context from a position of respect from my employers, job security, and support from my colleagues.
Thus I was able to think about the organisational context over that summer which led to reduced staffing; the competing demands on my time on the day; what we knew and did not know when the file was found just a day later, filed under the mother’s maiden name (so simple to find, if someone had asked); what I found out and what happened later, and whether a home visit would have made any difference to the outcome. The territory of child welfare is the ‘swampy lowland’, where the ‘indeterminate zones’ of everyday practice are preoccupied with ‘the problems of greatest human concern’ (Schön, 1987, pp. 3-6). Above all, it is the domain of the unpredictable and can be life threatening for all those involved (Stanley and Goddard, 2002).

So I found strategies to make this serious and risky job safer. I allowed time before a visit, either in the office or in my car, to work out exactly what the purpose of the session was and made brief notes of the areas I needed to cover. I always turned up on time so that I could be child-focused and therefore not defensive with reluctant and resistant carers, and I developed a system of recording as soon as possible after a visit in the relative safety and calm of my car. I would drive to the edge of the city boundary where there were some playing fields and long horizons to help me recall details and process the information. I began to understand how important it was to centre myself in this work so that I remained firmly focused on the child and his/her welfare. With young parents who are clearly struggling, some of whom may have been or are in care themselves, and some of whom may also be disabled, you have to be very careful not to lose sight of the child as the primary client. Essentially, this was what had happened to my two friends. I learnt to practice safely from the fear that I witnessed in my front room: the father in this case also fatally injured the baby, and both parents were teenagers and in care themselves at the time.

**In Mandy’s best interests**

One long term case that I held for two and a half years created some particular challenges: I had to balance the different parties’ competing rights, needs and interests, as through time we journeyed through the ‘swampy lowland’ referred to above (Schön, 1987). Above all, it taught me about people’s feelings as an explanation for why they behave as they do: it made me realise that what can be seen as downright awkwardness, may in fact be the need for acceptance, as in the case of Mandy and her discreetly controlled double incontinence, or a demonstration of love coupled with guilt and the pain of loss, as in the case of her mother who refused to consent to her adoption.

And so one night in 1980, I stayed up until dawn and wrote Mandy’s story, as a nine-year-old abused and disabled child who was fostered and eventually adopted after a long period in residential care (Jones, 1980). The story charts the dilemmas involved in placing Mandy; and describes the competing interests and the emotional attachments of her foster/adoptive parents and birth family.

Mandy was described by staff at the children’s home as “the most institutionalised child” that they had ever known. Against the odds, she was placed with the foster carers and eventually her behaviour problems subsided. And then her parents wanted her back and so began a very difficult period in which I had to assess their claim to be able to offer her safety and stability after an earlier removal due to an incident of child abuse. It was what Mandy told me ‘about her terror of the whole process’ that made me realise that ‘I had
completely overlooked her own need to discuss these strangers’ [her proposed foster carers] (Jones, 1980, p.24).

Together, Mandy and I sought to make some sense of what had happened to her, and her wishes and feelings about the proposed return home:

With Mandy settled, my next task was to discover her explanation of why she had to be in care. One evening a conversation arose when Mandy spotted a map in my briefcase. It was the map of her home town. Mandy spread it out on the dining room table and systematically identified the children’s homes, the hospitals, her brother’s school and her home. She started talking about her memories and her friends. I pushed the conversation towards her interpretation of the event which led to the place of safety order [compulsory removal from home].

“It wasn’t really my fault, I was trying to make Simon get back into bed and be quiet. Mum came upstairs and thought I was making a noise so she hit me.” Even the catch-all explanation, “Your Mum couldn’t really cope,” did not explain why she had to be in care and her brothers and sisters were still at home.

The introductory period taught me as an ideal the need to plan actively with the child for the future, to build in disappointment and rejection as real possibilities. The past was different. My aim was to be as open as possible. (Jones, 1980, p. 25)

I was only able to consider writing up Mandy’s story when I was in a new less pressured job involving direct work with children, which I had taken as a result of working with her. Mandy taught me that a social worker needs good skills in communicating with children, and that I needed to improve mine by more direct work.

The next year I went on a study trip to Sweden to look at the concept of ‘normalisation’ and the integration of disabled children within mainstream education (Jones, 1982): the separation of disabled children into ‘special schools’ had troubled me in my first job and as a student social worker. Mandy taught me that she, and multiply marginalised people like her, had as much right to a ‘normal life’ as any person. The problem lay with society and how people who departed from the norm were considered. Rather than being respected as individuals, as subjects with distinct rights, disabled children are treated as objects, as children to be ignored or looked after and pitied; this all too frequently makes the person doing the pitying feel better and more powerful about him or herself.

**Graham**

Several years later I worked with Graham as his Guardian ad Litem.³ Of all the children I met during my career as a social worker, Graham and the chronology of his life had the most impact on me. In order for you, the reader, to engage with the circumstances of his life and his narrative, I present a completely anonymised chronology below in which key identifying factors and all dates have been changed.

³ An independent social worker, appointed by the Court in care and related proceedings, to act in the child’s best interests.
The Family

Father – Harold Alfred Henry Coyle D.O.B. 11.1.21

Mother – Mary Florence Reeves/Coyle (nee Gray) D.O.B. 25.5.52  
Died at home 2.4.89 – Pneumonia.

Subject – Graham Derek Anthony Coyle D.O.B. 28.2.83

Present addresses:

i) Graham is in the care of the local authority and is living in a small children’s home in St.  
   Stephens Road Fairham. This is situated close to the family home.

ii) Mr Coyle is living at Flat 3, 258 Fircroft Ave, Fairham.

Housing

I have visited 3/258 Faircroft Ave on six occasions, with entry to the flat on four occasions.

The property is a two bedroomed ground floor council flat. Mr Coyle, Mrs Reeves/Coyle, and  
Graham moved to this address in July 1987; and Mrs Reeves/Coyle died at this address on 2 April  
1989.

I understand that Graham has generally slept with one or both of his parents in their bed, with the  
small bedroom being unoccupied when I saw it. I have not seen Mr Coyle’s bedroom or the  
toilet/bathroom.

There is no light in the hall/corridor. The sitting room is heated by a one bar electric fire situated in  
a wooden fire place surround, where cigarette ash is deposited; the room was exceptionally cold  
when I visited on 7th February. The three piece suite is badly damaged, and the walls are covered  
in a yellowish paper, torn and nicotine stained. There is a television in the room, and on one  
ocasion I saw a doll’s pram with which a neighbour’s child was playing; I saw no other toys. The  
curtains have always been partly drawn so I have not had a full view of any garden area. The area I  
did see looked overgrown and unsuitable for a child to play in. Mr Coyle offered to show me the  
kitchen which was reasonably well stocked with tins of food. The floor was dirty and sticky, and  
there were a lot of plates and cutlery waiting to be washed up, some having dried food stuck to  
them whilst others were soaking in the sink.

I understand from Mrs Wendy Green, Home Care Organiser, Southfields, that Mr Coyle receives a  
total of three hours home care service in the week, one and a half hours on a Monday and one and  
a half hours on Thursday; this level of service has been provided since September 1989. From  
April to September 1989, two home carers worked together in the flat, and there were two major  
“spring cleans” in April and August 1989. On these occasions a team of four or five workers  
wearing the maximum level of protective clothing cleaned the property. Mrs Green, herself, led this  
team, and I shall include her description of the conditions she found in the flat under Calendar of  
Main Events and Decisions.

Her impression was that prior to Graham’s removal on 2nd October 1990, there was no effort to  
maintain the cleaning between visits. Mrs Green reported a vast improvement in the standard of  
the kitchen and sitting room when she visited on 18th December 1990. Mr Coyle apparently said to
her that he was making the effort in order to keep Graham, but that he would still like the services of a home carer.

**Calendar of Main Events and Decisions**

The histories of Mr Harold Coyle, Mrs Mary Florence Reeves/Coyle (nee Gray), Mr and Mrs Gray, parents of Mrs Reeves/Coyle, and Mrs Stevens (nee Gray), sister of Mrs Reeves/Coyle, will be found under the relevant sections of this report.

For the purposes of appreciating the historical, social and legal context surrounding the birth of Graham on 28th February 1983, I commence this section of the report from the marriage of Alec and Mary Reeves (nee Gray) in 1974:-

25.7.74  Alec Reeves and Mary Gray married at Anytown Registry Office

5.8.76  Sandra and Amanda Reeves born. Family living in a flat in Hamblefields.

22.11.76  Baby Amanda reported to have bruising on the chest. No satisfactory explanation given.

1977  Home and child care standards noted to be extremely low by social services.

Nov 1977  Family aide introduced.

24.5.78  Nursery reported suspected sexual assault on both Sandra and Amanda. Medical examination revealed abrasions inside their vaginas, but medical view was that assaults had not taken place.

29.6.78  Case Conference. Increasing concern being expressed for the welfare and safety of both Sandra and Amanda by agencies involved with the family. Home circumstances noted to be deteriorating even further.

7.7.78  Incident where a friend washed Sandra’s hair and the child was nearly drowned. Some bruising noted on Amanda’s chest. No explanation given. Care proceedings commenced.

4.9.78  Care Orders made in respect of Sandra and Amanda.

16.10.78  Rehabilitation plan commenced, but eventually abandoned due to lack of progress.

Jan 1979  Alec Reeves convicted of a sexual offence (indecent exposure) against two teenage girls.

2.3.80  Access to Sandra and Amanda by parents denied.

Aug 80  Sandra and Amanda placed with long term foster parents. Parents subsequently made application for revocation of the Care Orders. First dealt with at Anytown Juvenile Court.

5.8.80  Appeal at the Crown Court; Care Order upheld.

Nov 81  Mr and Mrs Reeves met Harold Coyle.
March 82  Mr and Mrs Reeves indicated to social services that they would be moving to live with an “Uncle” in Acacia Avenue, the home of Mr Harold Coyle.

May 82  Mrs Reeves notified social services that her husband had left and she was filing for divorce.

July 82  Mrs Reeves (nee Gray) told social services that she and her “Father” (Mr Harold Coyle), with whom she was living, wished to discuss the possibility of having Sandra & Amanda returned home. Mr Harold Coyle, assuming the name “Mr Gray” and therefore purporting to be Mary Reeves’ father, stated that with his support he felt Mary Reeves could care adequately for Sandra and Amanda.

Home conditions noted to be much improved, but both girls to remain with foster parents. “Mr Gray” (i.e. Mr Coyle) said he would take the matter through the Courts; refused contact with social workers.

Aug 82  Mrs Reeves still saying that Mr Coyle was her father.

13.1.83  Case Conference. Mrs Reeves pregnant. Social work staff not told of pregnancy and refused access to the home. Key decision to seek the advice of the Local Authority Solicitor regarding protection of the new born child. Case conference to be reconvened if not possible for the child to be kept in a place of safety. Report for conference by Ms.A. Owen, Social Worker indicated that ‘Alec Reeves is said to be the father of the child’.

Early 83  Mrs Reeves and Mr Coyle moved to 1 Wilfred Dickson House, St Saviours Rd, Queensbridge. Mr Coyle now apparently more willing to co-operate.

2.2.83  Case Conference. “Mr Gray” now recognised not to be Mary Reeves’ father, but Mr Harold Coyle. Moreover Mr Coyle now indicating that he is the father of the expected baby.

Mr Coyle’s age noted as 57 when, in fact, he was 62 years old (D.O.B. 11.1.21). Social Worker unable to gain any further information from any sources about Mr Coyle’s history. Care proceedings, not a Place of Safety Order (due to Mr Coyle’s willingness to co-operate), to commence when the child is born, with immediate home-on-trial.

28.2.83  Graham Coyle (then known as Gray) born at Anytown Maternity Hospital. Condition at birth noted to be excellent.

5.4.83  Graham discharged from hospital with his mother to Mr Coyle’s and Mrs Reeves’s flat in Queensbridge.

7.4.83  Anytown Juvenile Court, case adjourned.

11.4.83  Alec Reeves to social services. Asking about court case in respect of Graham. Said he was not the father of the child.

21.4.83  Anytown Juvenile Court, case adjourned.

29.4.83  During a home visit to the child Ms Young, Health Visitor, met Alec Reeves and his new partner, Barbara Jones. Ms Young told me of a mental note she had made at the time that Graham bore a marked resemblance to Alec Reeves.

12.5.83  Anytown Juvenile Court, case adjourned.
2.6.83 Anytown Juvenile Court, case adjourned.

20.6.83 Anytown Juvenile Court. Special Hearing. Local Authority wanting a Supervision Order in respect of Graham. Legal submissions.

28.6.83 Medication examination of Graham by Dr Harris, Consultant Paediatrician. Noted to be ‘a healthy looking and apparently well cared for baby whose development was appropriate for his age’.

11.7.83 Anytown Juvenile Court – legal submissions. Decision to hear the evidence. Indication that judicial review might be sought.

9.8.83 Local authority solicitor served with an order for the High Court of Justice: proceedings stopped in Juvenile Court.

Oct 83 Wardship considered as an option, but decision not to initiate.

22.2.84 Case heard at the High Court. Appeal dismissed. Child’s solicitor indicated he intended to refer the matter to the Court of Appeal.

27.3.84 Medical examination of Graham by Dr Lorca, S.C.M.O., Anytime Hospital. Graham now aged just over one year old. Description of development appropriate for his age. Suggestion re offer of playgroup – not acted upon. Discharged from clinic.

May 84 Social services closed the case; decision not to pursue a Supervision Order. Play therapist to visit once a week. Health Visitor informed.

2.7.84 Child’s solicitor, withdrew the appeal. Summons to be withdrawn in Juvenile Court.

1.8.84 Care proceedings withdrawn.

Nov 84 Letter from Mrs Reeves’s solicitors re Mrs Reeves’s wish to have access to Sandra and Amanda reinstated.

27.2.85 Contact resumed with Amanda and Sandra. Mr Coyle did not want Graham to attend a mother and toddler group; did not want other children hitting Graham.

1.3.85 Graham completely failed his two year developmental screening. Only words noted to be “Woof”, “Bugger” and “Fuck”. Mr Coyle reluctant to allow Graham to go to playgroup.

1.7.85 Mr Coyle noted to be reluctant to send Graham to playgroup; he thought that he might still be aggressive to other children.

15.11.85 Anytown Juvenile Court. Access Hearing. Parental access to Sandra and Amanda not granted.

12.3.86 Graham completely failed his three year developmental screening. Noted to be globally delayed, particularly speech and language.

April 86 Both parents noted to be willing re a nursery place for Graham.
2.5.86 Case Conference. Concerns about Graham’s development and the reluctance of Mr & Mrs Reeves/Coyle to provide appropriate stimulation themselves. Recommendations centred around pre-school provision.

14.5.86 Graham started Freshfields Nursery three days a week. Taxi arranged.

26.6.86 Attendance at nursery noted to be poor.

29.9.86 Graham noted to behave much more normally at nursery than in the home.

19.1.87 Mr and Mrs Reeves/Coyle cancelled taxi and place at Freshfields Nursery.

18.3.87 Mr and Mrs Reeves/Coyle refused to let Graham go to Freshfields unless he could have a taxi both ways.

7.4.87 Graham attended a Child and Family Centre for developmental assessment. Mr & Mrs Reeves/Coyle failed to co-operate and send Graham to Monday am play therapy sessions there after the assessment.

July 87 Family moved from Queensbridge to 3/258 Fircroft Ave, Fairham.

Sept 87 Mr and Mrs Reeves/Coyle asked about school for Graham. Wanted him to attend local school; did not want him to be statemented. Graham noted to be on reins, now aged 4½ years.

Oct 87 Statementing process began.

Nov 87 Statementing process halted: parents wanted Graham to receive mainstream education.

Dec 87 Arrangement made for Graham to go to Graceworthy Family Centre two half days per week until Easter. Bus fares to be paid.

28.2.88 Graham’s fifth birthday; had now reached statutory school age.

April 88 Mr Coyle still expressing doubts about special schooling for Graham.

27.6.88 Graham, now aged 5 years and 5 months, started at Hundred Acre School.

20.10.88 Small bruise noted on Graham’s back; said by Mrs Reeves/Coyle to have been caused by caning at school; said by Graham to have been caused by his Dad. No recorded follow up, although intention to do so noted.

17.11.88 Argument between Mr Coyle and Mrs Reeves/Coyle. Mary Reeves/Coyle, accompanied by Graham, left Mr Coyle. They went to stay at her sister’s.

30.11.88 School nurse referred to GP re medicine sent in with child. Graham noted to have persistent diarrhoea (ref. a previous letter home re diarrhoea 7.9.88) Medicine (Dioralyte) was deemed by the GP to be thoroughly inappropriate.

5.12.88 Mary Reeves/Coyle forced to return home with Graham. Her sister and partner could not tolerate the demands made on them any longer.
1.2.89 Transfer to Fairham. Social Worker – Mrs T. Carpenter. No recording on file from 1.2.89 to 2.4.89. I therefore presume there was no contact.

2.4.89 Mrs Reeves/Coyle died at home from pneumonia. No medical attention sought.

7.4.89 Case referred to Mrs W. Green, Home Care Organiser by Social Worker.

10.4.89 Visit by Mrs Green. Mrs Green described the condition of the flat as “appalling”: it was the worst case she had come across in 15 years. Every part of the flat was “filthy”.

12.4.89 Graham being looked after by Mrs Joan Busby, a friend of Mr Coyle’s. All six of Mrs Busby’s children have been or are in the care of the local authority. Tracey (D.O.B. 6.2.85) is currently living with her mother ‘home on trial’.

24.4.89 Visit to clean flat; Mrs Green and four home carers wore maximum level of protective clothing. A detailed description of the condition of the flat on this occasion will be outlined under Graham Derek Anthony Coyle

3.5.89 Mr Coyle refusing home help; apparently suspicious that they were there to ‘snoop’. No detailed recording on file during the last six months about Graham, his well-being and reaction to the death of his mother; but noted to be very boisterous in April.

11.5.89 Graham lacerated his chin at school. Taken home by Mr Forsyth, Head Teacher. Mr Coyle had apparently been drinking, and was angry. Graham was frightened. Graham taken by Mrs Busby to Hazleton Hospital for treatment. Whilst there she alleged that Mr Coyle hits Graham daily with his fist or a dog lead. Subsequent referral letter to social services and follow up by Social Worker; no evidence of abuse which would lead Social Services to consider statutory action ‘at this stage’.

May – Aug 89

Two home carers, to give support to each other, given the task of cleaning the flat together on a regular basis.

23.8.89 Mrs Green, Home Care Organiser, with a small team of home carers completed another “spring-clean” on the flat: condition said to be deteriorating, although not to the level found in April 1989.

6.10.89 Case Discussion. To try day care for Graham ‘with a view to building Mr Coyle’s confidence to accept short stay care should his health deteriorate further’.

21.11.89 Graham diagnosed by Mrs F. MacInniss, School Nurse, as having an infection in his big toe, left foot and in his finger.

12.3.90 NSPCC Anytown received phone call from a woman caller who reported physical abuse of Graham by Mr Coyle. Alleging Graham hurt every week; also not fed properly.

27.3.90 Case Discussion. Purpose of meeting to discuss relief care for Graham, and how this might possibly lead to a long term placement should Mr Coyle be unable to care for him. Main conclusion – to continue in the search for foster parents who would be willing to offer respite care in the short term, with the potential for a long term placement. ‘This idea can only be slowly developed in order not to lose the family’s confidence’.

April 90 Ms S. Morris, current Social Worker, became involved.
From the chronology you can see how, as a severely neglected and abused child, Graham was allowed to slip through the net designed specifically for children like him. Whenever I read this chronology I feel very sad about the loss of Graham’s potential as a human being: perhaps you too want the clock to stop when he was a small baby with the usual needs for relationship and love (Gerhardt, 2003). This extract from my report gives an idea of the kind of child Graham was when I met him, aged 7:

Graham was always enthusiastic whether it was a trip to “MacDonalds”, the play people, opening my car doors with the keys, carrying the toys, reading books, drawing, playing with puppets or doing jigsaws. He demonstrated a concern about my needs e.g. passing me my seat belt after I had secured him in his, offering me “fries”, or asking me if I wanted to eat when he was having his tea.

So why did nobody see what was going on in this household? There were, for example, the early pathetic lies about family relationships and who Graham’s father was which should have raised concerns. However, one key factor was that this was not a ‘nice’
household to visit. When I asked the main workers involved with this family how they each felt about visiting the flat, quite independently each practitioner said that they hated visiting it more than any other house. Quite simply they did not stay around long enough to engage with the squalor of the child’s circumstances; and they were manipulated and possibly intimidated by the main carer, Mr Coyle, who persistently sought to further isolate Graham from the services that were there to help children like him. For example, he used his age and state of health to throw workers off the child’s agenda when they made visits to investigate safeguarding concerns, thus ensuring they went away feeling sorry for him.

Another factor was that when assessing child neglect, it is difficult for workers, to stand back from what they have been doing and reflect on whether the child’s circumstances have actually improved or not (Jones and Gupta, 1998). Finally and perhaps most importantly, I realised how difficult it was for Graham’s voice, as a young child with learning difficulties, to be heard amongst all the adults. He became almost invisible and unheard in a chaotic household and fragmented community; and the professional system mirrored this chaos (Reder, Duncan and Gray, 1993). In short, the adults did not see him as a person with his own needs, interests and rights (Myers, O’Neill and Jones, 1999). I will show in Chapter Four, using presentational form, how I deepened my understanding of Graham’s circumstances.

The next section of this chapter looks at the nature of personhood and how people from marginalised groups are potentially multiply disadvantaged through the inter-locking nature of oppression. By contrast, those who have many of the dominant characteristics may hold undue power and influence, especially in cases of child abuse. A power relationships’ analysis makes such power differences explicit. Graham, and abused children like him, provided the experience from which I developed this theory in the early 1990s: the framework seeks to make the power differences between the child and the adults more explicit.

**Respect for persons and understanding power relationships in practice**

Respect for persons is considered a pre-requisite for ethical social work practice, and yet the social construction of personhood must be fully understood: ‘... it has to be seen that personhood is socially defined and that no individual becomes a person without going through a social process of identification and ascription’ (Clark with Asquith, 1985, p.16). Thus in the UK, Mandy was seen as a lesser person: she was a disabled child who was totally dependent on the adults around her, reflected in her ‘terror of the whole [fostering] process. Mandy’s physical dependence on adults literally did not allow her the freedom to run away’ (Jones, 1980, p.24). Such dependence frequently encourages paternalism, with adults making up the child’s mind for them and not considering their wishes and feelings.

In the late 1980s I had a secondment to a private agency which specialised in child sexual abuse; this was an emerging issue in the UK as survivors’ accounts were being published and given a higher profile in the media. Reading these accounts of ‘trusted’ adults’ abuse of children, I began to understand the process of grooming and the powerlessness of child victims (Summit, 1983; Finkelhor and Browne, 1986). Some of my fears about what might have happened to Graham related to such concerns and the fact that as a child with learning difficulties his narratives about alleged abuse were not listened to. It is also
important to note here that at birth Graham was a healthy, normal baby. His early development was within normal limits, but by the age of two he had completely failed his developmental screening and by the age of three his development was globally delayed, particularly in speech and language. Because his mother had learning difficulties there was perhaps an assumption amongst workers that he was “slow” like her. This was not the case.

As a lecturer working in multi-cultural Birmingham and Leicester in the 1980s and 1990s, I was also influenced by the work of an African American feminist, Patricia Hill Collins, who played an important role in drawing attention to the different dimensions of oppression such as race, gender, class, age, etc. and their interconnectedness:

Although most individuals have little difficulty identifying their own victimisation within some major system of oppression . . . they typically fail to see how their thoughts and actions uphold somebody else’s subordination . . . In essence, each group identifies the oppression with which it feels most comfortable as being fundamental and classifies others as being of lesser importance. Oppression is filled with such contradictions because these approaches fail to recognize that a matrix of domination contains few pure victims or oppressors. Each individual derives varying amounts of penalty and privilege from the multiple systems of oppression which frame everybody’s lives. (Collins, 1990, p.229)

Understanding the inter-locking nature of oppression proved crucial to my appreciation of the power of abusers and the powerlessness of their victims; more importantly, it also offered me an understanding of my own relative power or powerlessness to change a given situation. The power relationships framework identifies dominant and subordinate groups in British society. It enables individuals to understand their own capacity to dominate, or to be victimised, depending on who they are relating to, whether it is a girl who has been sexually victimised, a colleague, a manager or a member of the judiciary.

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<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Dominant Group</th>
<th>Subordinate Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Non-white &amp; divisions within</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>‘Queen’s English’</td>
<td>Non-English and/or Regional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>Non-Christian or Fringe Christian</td>
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<td>Class</td>
<td>Social classes 1-3</td>
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<td>Ownership of wealth</td>
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<td>Employment status</td>
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<td>Unwaged and unemployed people and Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Homosexual Bi-sexual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>25-35 years</td>
<td>Children and young adults</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
<td>Men</td>
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<td>Ability/health</td>
<td>Able-bodied</td>
<td>People with disabilities and learning difficulties. Fat people.</td>
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<td>Fit, slim</td>
<td>People with mental illness. Those without access to better</td>
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<td>Intellectual</td>
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<td>Those with access to better education</td>
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The framework invites people to position themselves on the matrix and to analyse relationships where they may need to consider more consciously how they relate to the other(s). It has proved to be very useful in encouraging social work students to think strategically about who has power and why in a given situation, and when they might need help from higher status professionals or take the time to build a relationship with, for example, a severely disabled child.

From 1993 to 1995 I used this framework and the work of the sociologist, Max Weber, on authority and domination (Bendix, 1966) to analyse power relationships in institutions where physical and sexual abuse of children had been perpetrated by paedophiles masquerading in a caring role as Head Teacher or Head of Home (Jones, 1993, 1994, 1995a). Once again I started from listening to the voices of survivors of abuse and/or attempting to imagine what life was really like for them in the closed world of the institution on a day to day basis and why they couldn’t speak out and, if they did, why they had not been believed. As one survivor of institutional abuse put it:

“Morris [the Head Teacher] had more hold over our lives at school, at home, the lot. He had us right where he wanted us under his thumb. He was a very convincing man.” Richard (Yorkshire Television, 1991)

I sought to answer the following questions (Jones, 1994): How was such domination by the adult abuser constructed? How were victims selected? How was domination maintained? How were relationships with the world outside the institution managed such that the abuse went undetected? Why did it take such a long time for the boys and young men to be believed? I concluded by saying that we needed to address the problem of institutional abuse from the inside looking outwards through ascertaining the views of survivors of institutional abuse, particularly those who now use their experience in a professional capacity to select safe placements for children and young people: ‘It is only when we begin to understand the nature and effect of total control from the child’s perspective that we can begin the task of detecting and preventing institutional abuse’ (Jones, 1995a, p.92).

Appreciating child abuse as an abuse of power provided the theoretical framework for the Diploma/MA in Child Protection Studies at the University of Leicester, which I taught on from 1990 to 2000. During this time I had the privilege to meet and discuss with many committed and experienced practitioners. From their practice narratives and our conversations, I reflected on the nature of competence in children and families work.

‘Professional Artistry’ and Child Protection

In 1995 I wrote two book chapters on competence and child protection (Jones 1995b, Jones 1995c). Using accounts from a practitioner and the young person she worked with, I used Donald Schön’s term ‘professional artistry’ (Schön, 1987) to argue for a notion of competence that captured the holistic and reflective nature of highly skilled practitioners, a ‘whole person in action’ concept (Issitt and Woodward, 1992, p.48) where practitioners understand the serious nature of the job they are asked to carry out on behalf of society:

In order to protect children from permanent psychological harm or death, front-line workers have to develop an holistic practice which goes beyond the procedures and adult explanations of a child’s injuries or ‘disturbed behaviour’, however plausible or authoritative. Such a practice connects intuitively with the world as experienced by the child, and requires a child-
centred practice philosophy, theoretical knowledge of all types of abuse and skills and experience built up over several years. It is the analysis and synthesis of these elements and how they are then applied in assessment which distinguishes outstanding practitioners from average practitioners, and ultimately a child’s life from death. (Jones, 1995b, p.88)

Even at this early stage I was interested in the contribution of intuition and analysis, and experiential and theoretical knowledge to competent practice. I return to this again in Chapters Three and Four.

However, individual competence also needs to reflect the multi-agency nature of child welfare and promote improved co-operation across organisational boundaries: the notion of competence and its assessment must transcend a narrow, mechanistic and individualistic context:

Better practice in child protection cannot be derived from narrowly defined competences and a controlling managerialism. Practice in this complex field raises many moral, ethical and emotive issues, and workers are often desperate to receive personal and professional support . . . ‘The more human the action, the more likely it is that the action will require creative thought and understanding, and involve a team rather than an individual alone’ (Ashworth, 1992, p.16). Those employed in the education and training of child protection professionals need to collaborate now in the interests of learning, so that the holistic and collective nature of critical practice is not lost forever. (Jones, 1995c, p.490)

Re-reading these chapters over 12 years after they were written, I am interested in how I argued for a creative and multi agency approach in the development of learning opportunities for child protection practitioners. This is a thread which is also developed in later chapters of this thesis (Treseder, Jones and Glennie, 2003; Jones, 2007).

To end

This chapter has mapped the early foundations of my professional practice as a social worker and social work academic. The narrative that I have recounted so far forms part of a self-study in my transition from practitioner to social work academic: ‘Self-study points to a simple truth, that to study practice is simultaneously to study self: a study of self-in-relation to other’ (Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001, p. 14). In order to make a claim to quality and validity I have chosen to use narrative in an account of my professional life, but Bullough and Pinnegar ask what makes a piece of self-writing research?

A self-study is a good read, attends to “nodal moments” . . . and thereby enables insight or understanding into self, reveals a lively conscience and balanced senses of self-importance, tells a recognizable [professional] . . . story, portrays character development in the face of serious issues within a complex setting, gives place to the dramatic struggle of living life whole, and offers new perspective. (Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001, p. 19)

At this stage I would say that I have provided some ground work and made a modest beginning on some of the criteria, which I go on to address in the research account that follows. The ‘nodal moments’ I have described address issues which strike at the core of the human condition, such as child abuse, the misuse of power, who is listened to and
heard, and competence to respond appropriately. However the analysis is predominantly static and fails to take into consideration a participatory world-view (Reason, 1994).

A more dynamic, relational and reflective approach to professional understanding is developed in Chapters Three, Four, Seven and Eight of the thesis (Dewey, 1981; Thayer-Bacon, 2003; Urry, 2000, 2003; Ferguson, 2006; Fook, 2002; Fook and Gardner, 2007). I now turn to the reflect on the personal and the life events that trouble us as human beings, and which many of the people I met as a social worker were dealing with: the loss of a loved one(s) or loving relationship, the lack of any stability, and the impact of substantial change. The times when life feels chaotic with no fixed reference point.
Chapter Two: Of Love and Loss I

Introduction
This chapter sets out the early ethical and methodological considerations in this research account as I begin to consider the meaning of ‘love and loss’, the words by the photo on the collage of the War Memorial in Russia within my personal life (Figure One).

I describe in more detail the methodology and ethics of narrative inquiry. As I engage with narrative, I consider the responsibility I hold towards others as a disposition of ‘caring or being for’ (Schwandt, 2000, p.205); and as a first step I show my understandings of care of the self using the work of Foucault (1986). This analysis sets the context for a first person inquiry into two of my early writings: the first is a letter written to my father after the funeral of his brother in February 1992; and the second is the speech I wrote and gave at my father’s funeral in May 1999. These two writings form my initial interpretations of the unresolved grief and loss my father felt about the comrades he left behind and the events he witnessed as a prisoner of war. They were also profoundly influenced by my own reactions to grief, loss and change: despite being nearly 40 years old, Uncle Jack’s was the first funeral I had attended; and when my father died of cancer, I had recently gone through a period of unprecedented loss and change in my own life. I show how my interpretations and reactions to these two events were influenced by my emotions at the time.

Thinking narratively
So far I have laid out the foundation of my professional practice, but as we know there is much more to the self than the man or woman who walks into the office each day. It is far easier to talk about perceived professional successes, like promotions and publications, than personal failures or disappointments, and yet I have learnt perhaps most from the
times when my values were compromised or I cried those really deep sobs which signify massive loss and change in a life.

Morwenna Griffiths (1995) introduces the metaphor of a spider’s web and draws on personal experiences – her own and others - to discuss what the consequences of ‘being ourselves’ might be:

The metaphor of the web can throw light on the idea of the self and its politics. It, too, is made of nearly invisible, very strong threads, attached to the circumstances of its making and under the control of the maker. It too, is made to suit the purposes of its maker, but the circumstances of the making are not under her control. It, too, can be thought of as fragments of a conglomeration, or as a unitary whole; though whether it is a whole, or which whole it is, depends on the viewer as much as on its own constitution. It, too, is intricate, entangled and interlaced, with each part connected to other parts. A value of this metaphor is its flexibility. Looked at some ways the self is like the whole web. Looked at in others, it is more like the nodes where the lines cross, or where the individual stitches resolve themselves into patterns and pictures as a result of the other individual stitches.(Griffiths, 1995, p. 2)

Thus I am conscious in using narrative in self study research that I am both in and of this web; I am also affected by the webs of others. This web, my web, has sometimes seemed intensely fragile, perhaps held by just one thread, and other times like one of those nature photographs taken of a spider’s web on a frosty morning – well spun and almost perfect.

Moreover my experiences, reflected in the constantly evolving structure of the web, are storied because of the way we understand human actions as being organised in time, for example as time goes by, events happen, but these events form a chain of actions and counteractions with consequences. Thus human time is very much a storied affair (McAdams, 1993):

Stories help us organise our thoughts, providing a narrative for human intentions and interpersonal events that is remembered and readily told. In some instances, stories may also mend us when we are broken, heal us when we are sick, and even move us to psychological fulfilment and maturity. (McAdams, 1993, p. 31)

Clandinin and Connolly (2000, p. 49), building on the work of John Dewey, a preeminent thinker in education, pose the question, What do narrative inquirers do? In seeking to answer this question they introduce the notion of the three dimensional inquiry space and the directions this framework allows narratives to move in – inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within place: any particular inquiry is defined by this three dimensional space: ‘studies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters; they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequences of places’ (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000, p. 50). In an earlier paper Clandinin and Connolly (1994) write about two of these interactive dimensions or directions in any inquiry: inward and outward, and backward and forward. To do research narratively, that is, into an experience, is to experience it simultaneously in these four ways, asking questions which point in each direction. Place assumes greater significance in their later work when it moves from just being within the environment to the third dimension, which focuses on the physical boundaries of inquiry landscapes.
I am mindful of this three dimensional space in the framing of this narrative inquiry which travels back and forth in time; moves inwards and outwards between personal reflection and inquiry with others; and travels to countries in Europe and Russia where my engagement with place is of paramount importance. It also considers places of importance to me in the UK such as the home of my childhood and the spaces which sustain me now.

**Initial ethical considerations**

So where and how then do I begin this narrative inquiry? A time of transition or nodal moment offers a way in: often learning is at its most profound during such times so we’ll start at the beginning of the 21st century with the usual clinking of champagne glasses, feelings of promise in the air and good wishes from family and friends; a few days later all this dissolved again in the darkness of the long winter evenings. I felt troubled: professionally I had climbed the career ladder to where I wanted to be, and yet something was not right.

The passion and creativity that had driven my writing in the 1990s had simply dried up. I was disillusioned. This feeling was not entirely new to me: when I was 18 years old I was studying all science A levels with the intention to train as a Pharmacist. In the final year of my A levels, I realised that I was no longer curious. Maths, Physics and Chemistry did not ignite the neural pathways in my brain or the fire in my belly. So I changed my Degree choice at University to Sociology, and when I started the course I knew that I had made the right choice. I was looking for something similar at this point in my career. William Bridges describes this period of transition as the neutral zone:

> It is a season of dormancy when life withdraws back to the root to get ready for a long, cold season without whatever had given warmth and meaning to life-before-the-ending. It is a strange no man’s land between one world and the next. It is a zone where you pick up mixed signals, some coming from the past and some from the future . . . It is a dark night of the heart – or, maybe, a long dark twilight that refuses to resolve itself into real day or true night. (Bridges 2001, p.156)

I had also gone through a number of life changes, including separation, divorce, the end of another relationship, two house moves, changes at work, the serious illness of my sister and the death of my father all in a three year period. I would say that this time was the most difficult in my life: Geertz (1995, p. 2), reflecting on his forty years of anthropological inquiry, captures how this instability and change felt to me: ‘When everything changes . . . there seems to be no place to stand so as to locate just what has altered and how’. If I had written a story about that period in my life then, it would have been very different from the narrative of this thesis, written several years later: using a term derived from Frank (1995, p. 97) I would have been a ‘Wounded Storyteller’, writing a chaos narrative about how readily any of us can be sucked under, where the teller of the story is deemed not to be living a decent or ‘proper’ life and where the story is hard to hear.

When you are that close to a chaos narrative, where emotions are still very raw, it is also hard to stand back and consider the ethical and personal considerations of putting your life on the line. The narrative in this thesis, although it draws on stories emanating from chaos in some instances, is written as a quest. Quest stories use suffering to show that something can be gained or learnt through the experiences (Frank, 1995).
This is where the web and my narrative start to become more interesting and far complex: what and how much of myself do I write about in a PhD thesis which will be in the public domain and potentially available to anyone in the world who wants to read it. Looking back over what I have written in the previous chapter I notice that I did not write about the times when I came home and cried about work or even cried at work, or when I could not sleep because I was agonising over something that had happened or I feared would happen. Most often that was when I encountered issues relating to grief, loss and change in the lives of the people I was working with, which were essentially chaos stories at that time. In some instances, people re-fashioned their lives; for others there was a downward spiral into yet more chaos.

Besides making decisions about what of both my personal and professional story I include in this narrative inquiry, I need to consider how much and what of other people’s stories I include. In his discussion of ethical and political considerations, Schwandt (2000, p.203) argues that:


Social inquiry is a practice, not simply a way of knowing. Understanding what others are doing or saying and transforming that knowledge into a public form involves moral-political commitments. Moral issues arise from the fact that a theory of knowledge is supported by a particular view of human agency.

In particular I have to make choices about how I refer to people in my personal life, whether they are dead or still living and connected to me by family relationships. I cannot anonymise these people, because our lives and stories about our lives are inextricably bound up with each other. As I have loved or still love these people, I must do nothing that could potentially jeopardise those relationships: in saying this I am acknowledging that there will inevitably be many sides to the same story, my interpretation is mine at this point in my life.

How should I be towards myself, the people who are connected to me and my story in this way, and the people I inquire with, such as children and young people in need, their parents, practitioners or former Prisoners of War? Schwandt (2000, p. 205) describes this ethical orientation as ‘Caring or being-for’ which is ‘a kind of responsibility that is prevoluntary, unremovable, non-contractual, non-reciprocal, and asymmetrical’: in this way, I, as a social inquirer, am confronted with moral choices about whether and under what circumstances I set about inquiring with others (see, for example, Chapter Six where I describe my decision to not to use a phone interview with Gerd, a former German soldier, to discuss the deaths of close relatives in a bombing raid in 1943, when he was just 16 years old; see also Chapter Seven in which I discuss my response to Suzie when she asked to listen to the sound file of the interview).

**Care of the self**

My first consideration is how I should be towards myself in inquiring with others and in writing this thesis: if I cannot care for myself then I will not be able to care for others. One of the first inquiries I did at Bath in May 2002 highlighted the importance of self care in the kind of work that I was involved in at that time. The group set me a challenging yet essential inquiry question:
This inquiry was the catalyst for my return to practising yoga after many years as I sought to take care of and, more recently, cultivate the self in my inquiry practice. Foucault (1986, p.43) in his essay ‘The Cultivation of the Self’ says that the art of existence is dominated by the principle that a person should take care of him or herself: ‘It is this principle of the care of the self that establishes its necessity, presides over its development, and organizes its practice’.

He uses Greek culture to show that this idea has developed from a very ancient theme, citing Apuleius, at the end of the God of Socrates:

All men should desire to live most happily, and should know that they cannot so live in any other way than by cultivating the soul, and yet leave the soul uncultivated [animum suum non colunt]. If, however, anyone wishes to see acutely, it is requisite that he should pay attention to his eyes, through which he sees; if you desire to run with celerity, attention must be paid to the feet, by which you run ... in a similar manner, in all the other members, attention must be paid according to one’s preferences. (p.45)

Citing other Greek philosophers such as Epictetus and Epicurus, Foucault argues that care of the self ensures freedom for the individual whilst requiring that s/he take her/himself as the object of all diligence, and there is no right age for attending to oneself: ‘It is never too early or too late to care for the well-being of the soul’ (Epicurus cited in Foucault, 1986, p. 48).

But as Foucault notes this practice takes time: How much of the day and of one’s life should one devote to this? This ‘retreat within oneself’ is a time intensive activity:

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Extract from “How much did I love my self today?” Reflections on the task given at the April supervision group: Self Protection

I listened to the tape [of the group session at Bath] two or three times in the car, and bought a beautiful book and raffia ribbons in complimentary colours – pale lilac and silver grey. So all I needed to do was start my inquiry. Simple. It could help me love myself more as I started to change my behaviour and practice the art of self-loving on a daily basis.

But there was a deep-seated fear, almost a terror, of even untwining the ribbons. I was paralysed. I could complete the task, but it would be purely cosmetic with idyllic descriptions of candlelit baths, long walks in the woods, delicious meals, massages, whatever . . .

As the group identified, sometimes first person inquiry can be extremely difficult and painful, sending you into areas where more than the support of the group is needed. I was in one of the situations, and I needed help. I’ve experienced a lot of change in my life over the past six or so years and I’m a very different person to the one I was in early 1996. But there are some old coping strategies, ways of relating to the world, mindsets, call them what you will, that need to be understood and changed. They are holding me back, causing confusion, I don’t know, but I need to move on.
There are . . . the talks that one has with a confidant, with friends, with a guide or director. Add to this the correspondence in which one reveals the state of one’s soul, solicits advice, gives advice to anyone who needs it – which for that matter constitutes a beneficial exercise for the giver, who is called the preceptor, because he thereby reactualises it for himself. (Seneca cited in Foucault, 1986, p.51)

However this practice is not characterised as a solitary, navel gazing exercise but seen as a true social practice. Schools, lectures and professionals of a spiritual disposition provided support for this practice. However, this also operated at a more informal level as part of the customary relations of friendship, kinship, and obligation: as part of the care of oneself one had a right to seek guidance from a person with aptitude in the area in which help or advice was needed. Correspondingly, it was a duty to either offer that assistance to the other or to receive the wisdom of the helper. Foucault (1986, p. 53) rightly points out that it is sometimes the case that:

The interplay of the care of the self and the help of the other blends into pre-existing relations giving them a new coloration and greater warmth. The care of the self – or attention one devotes to the care that others should take of themselves – appears then as an intensification of social relations.

In this approach the care of the self can become a ‘soul service’, where there might be several rounds of exchanges with the other founded on reciprocity and a sense of obligation to the other. This could translate to a form of second person inquiry practice or co-operative inquiry (Reason and Torbert, 2001).

Besides the notion of a social and reciprocal practice in the care of the self, Foucault also identifies concern for the body in the practices of the self within ancient philosophical traditions, and within that the prevention of disease of both the body and the soul. In taking care of oneself, self knowledge occupies a central place. The ancient philosophers, such as Epicurus and Seneca, advocated practical tests where privation might make one begin to suffer. These were practical tests, but they were supplemented by a self-examination: rather than a person occupying the role of judge and accused to determine guilt or innocence, it is more like an act of inspection, where a piece of work is examined by the evaluator. Foucault uses the work of Epictetus to make this point:

The examination Epictetus talks about . . . deals with representations, [and] aims to “test” them, to “distinguish” (diakrinein) one from another and thus to prevent one from accepting the “first arrival.” “We ought not to accept a mental representation unsubjected to examination, but should say, “Wait, allow me to see who you are and whence you came. (Foucault, 1986, pp. 63-4).

In practical terms this means that the relation of oneself to oneself and activities that support this should be the prime objective in cultivation of the self. This is a form of first person inquiry, defined as the ability of the researcher to deploy an inquiring orientation to her/his life, to act out of awareness and choice, and to examine the impacts or effects on the world while acting (Reason and Torbert, 2001). For Foucault ‘the task of testing oneself, examining oneself, monitoring oneself in a series of clearly defined exercises, makes the question of truth – the truth concerning what one is capable of doing – central to the formation of the ethical subject’ (1986, p.68); and it is to my own first person inquiry that I now turn.

42
Early inquiries into love and loss

Uncle Jack’s funeral

As a child my parents attempted to protect me from the sadness of death: although I was told that my grandparents had died I was not allowed to go to their funerals: it all happened very quietly in the background, perhaps when I was at school and nobody spoke much about the funerals in front of me.

My grandfather died in 1966 when I was 13. He was the local village Blacksmith and worked right up until a couple of months before he died, aged 86. I knew he was seriously ill, but unlike my older sister I did not see my grandparents when they were critically ill and close to dying. So I never went to a funeral until I was 39 years old when my uncle Jack, who was also a Blacksmith and who had lived and worked with my Grandfather at the Forge, died very suddenly at home in the same bed that he had been born into.

Although I was fond of Uncle Jack, I was aware that a lot of my feelings about his death related to my Grandfather. The letter written to my father the day after the funeral represents an early processing of those feelings (see Appendix One).

As I read the letter again, I am interested how as a family we used nature to ground and heal us after the funeral, and how the next morning I went for a run to ‘make sense’ of my feelings and the idea to write the letter came to me. As Abram (1996, p. 268) says, ‘... It is only at the scale of our direct, sensory interactions with the land around us that we can appropriately notice and respond to the immediate needs of the living world’:

The letter gave my father great comfort and he kept it by his bedside until his own death seven years later. I was very moved by the fact that he treasured it so much and I wondered later whether the letter spoke to other losses that he had experienced, perhaps during the war when his comrades were killed and there was no proper funeral or burial. During that time we also cremated two more uncles and an aunt, leaving only my parents as the surviving siblings in their respective families. All the funerals were token affairs led by someone who had no knowledge of the deceased.

Conducting my father’s funeral

In autumn 1998 my father became terminally ill with stomach cancer and was given six months to live. Because of my experiences as a child and of the impersonal and perfunctory funerals that I had attended, I was determined to do justice to my father’s life and his death so I told him not to worry, that I would give him a “good send off”. I knew at an experiential level the importance of doing death well, and wanted to conduct a good funeral for the family.

Just after he had received the diagnosis, my father and I drove out to the cliffs overlooking the Isle of Wight so that I could run back along the cliff tops to my parents’ bungalow. We parked up next to the cliff path and sat quietly in the car overlooking the Needles, the chalk rocks that jut out of the sea at the western end of the Isle of Wight. My father then asked for “Red Sails in the Sunset”, sung by Anne Shelton on the troop ship going out to North Africa in 1942, to be played at his funeral. And he just sobbed and sobbed as he described the journey in the dark across the Mediterranean as the troop ships turned off to their respective ports – Oran was one he mentioned. I distinctly remember coming in too quickly with my own story of crossing the Mediterranean from Gibraltar to Tangiers,
Morocco. Yes, there was a real feeling of the strangeness crossing from one continent to another: the Muslim crew kneeling and saying their prayers on deck against a spectacular sunset; and the beauty of a school of dolphins swimming through azure waters. But my father’s choice of song was not at all related to my experience of crossing the Mediterranean to North Africa in peacetime some thirty five years later, nor was my interpretation of his choice of song quite correct as I found out later during further inquiry in 2006.

Another nodal moment was when he phoned on a Saturday morning at home, perhaps two months before his death. He was very matter of fact this time: “Joce, I’d like my ashes to go on the grave of a boy soldier, an orphan, Geoffrey Dunning, in the cemetery at Arnhem”. I knew that he had been with or perhaps the phrase was “comforted” a young soldier when he died in Oosterbeek at the Battle of Arnhem in 1944, and I knew instinctively that this was the young man’s grave.

Whilst it is impossible for me to understand my father’s wartime experiences because they are his, not mine, the funeral speech I wrote in 1999 was my best effort at the time to put my father’s life, a life lived through a very different historical period, into some sort of context. I was aware that I was influenced by my emotions at the time, and by history and tradition:

The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to tradition. But this commonality is constantly being formed in relation to tradition. Tradition is not simply a permanent precondition; rather we produce it ourselves, inasmuch as we understand, participate in the evolution of tradition, and hence further determine it ourselves. (Gadamer, 1989, p.293)

At this point it is timely to address the meaning of ‘understanding’, and the context I am using it at this point within the thesis. Drawing on the German language, Schwandt (2002, p. 78) argues that understanding, ‘Verständnis, means comprehension, insight, appreciation for something, to comprehend it – für etwas Verständnis haben’ . . . in life we are engaged in trying to make something of whatever it is we seek to understand, that is we are always trying to construe the meaning of something. This is interpretative or hermeneutical understanding. The term hermeneutics means “the art and science of interpretation” and derives from Hermes, who was a Greek god and messenger to the gods, and was killed when he brought unwelcome news (Bentz and Shapiro, 1998). Thus we encounter things as already interpreted: ‘this interpretation is grounded in something we have in advance – in a fore-having (Vorhaben)’ (Heidegger, 1962, cited in Moran, 2000, p. 277). It is therefore impossible to transcend tradition and the historical epoch in which we find ourselves.

When I wrote my father’s funeral speech, I had in the previous three years gone through unprecedented change in my own life and what I wrote was guided by the intense feelings I had about that loss and change: I did not really appreciate that at the time because everything was too close. Not only were my own emotions very much on the surface, but I wrote the speech within the post war tradition that I was born into and grew up in.
Please sit down. Thank you for coming to Vic's funeral.

Firstly, I would like to say a few words about this service and to place Vic's death in the context of his life and recent national and international events.

Vic was 79 years old when he died of pneumonia, a natural and peaceful death for a very natural, brave and fulfilled person. The weather over the Bank Holiday weekend was glorious with the birds singing in the warm sunshine. Lynn, my sister Wendy, who isn't able to be with us today because of her operation last week (we miss you, Wend), Robbie, Vic's friend for 56 years, and I were able to enjoy the beautiful hospice gardens in between sitting with Vic. We also received tremendous support from the hospice staff. It was a very natural, gentle and beautiful way for a person to cease living.

When we knew of Vic's terminal illness in the autumn and he was given six months to live, it gave us an opportunity to talk in that very intimate way which so often eludes us in our daily pre-occupations of living. He told me that he wouldn't have missed the war for anything, and that he had looked upon the years since September 1944, when he was wounded and narrowly missed death from a sniper's bullet as added value in terms of living. Despite his, to us, quite hard childhood with his two brothers in Odiham in the depression which followed the First World War, the forfeiting of a grammar school place in order to go out to work in a mushroom farm when he was 14, and his wartime experiences, he said that he wouldn't have wanted any other life and wouldn't have wished to be anybody but himself.

Current events in former Yugoslavia serve as a constant reminder of the effects of war on generations of men, women and children. And given other recent deaths in London from bombing and shooting, we have to count ourselves fortunate to be here today saying good-bye to a dear husband, father, grandfather, relative, comrade and friend who was more than satisfied with his lot and who had lived well beyond the three score years and ten. And who was surrounded by family and friends when his body gently gave up on life. Unlike some of the relatives of his comrades who died at the ill-fated Battle of Arnhem in September 1944, we at least have had and now have the opportunity to say good-bye to him properly.

So how can and should we do this? In the course of my work, I have been fortunate to come across the work of an African American woman writer called Maya Angelou. One book entitled Wouldn't take nothing for my journey now is a collection of lessons in living. When Vic went into hospital in October, I gave him my own copy which I had taken to Glenavon, my parents' home, to give me inner strength at that difficult time. Vic

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4 The guidance in capital letters is for the crematorium assistant who helped with the sound recordings.

found inspiration and comfort from some of the essays, three of which I will refer to in this service.

The first is entitled ‘Death and the legacy’ and it provides those of us who are still living with ideas on how we can employ the legacies of our loved ones to help us in the art of living. Maya Angelou writes ‘...When I sense myself filling with rage at the absence of my beloved, I try as soon as possible to remember that my concerns and questions, my efforts and answers should be focused on what I did or can learn from the departed love. What legacy was left which can help me in the art of living a good life?’ So what messages from Vic's life can we the living take forward? The words of his own mother passed on to him and in turn to Wendy, me and our children provide a good starting point on the avoidance of complaining or whingeing.

‘Here we suffer grief and pain. Up the road they suffer the same. Next door they suffer more. Oh isn’t it awful, awful, awful?!”

Maya Angelou too alerts us to the dangers of becoming a complainer, also through the words of her own grandmother who raised her. “Sister did you hear what Brother So-and-so or Sister Much to Do complained about? You heard that?” and I would nod. Mamma would continue, “Sister, there are people who went to sleep all over the world last night, rich and poor and white and black, but they will never wake again. Sister, those who expected to rise did not, their beds became their cooling boards and their blankets became their winding sheets. And those dead folks would give anything, anything at all for just five minutes of this weather or ten minutes of that plowing that person was grumbling about. So watch yourself about complaining, sister. What you're supposed to do when you don’t like a thing is change it. If you can’t change it then change the way you think about it. Don’t complain.”

When faced with situations which Vic could well have complained about, including some aspects of his own life such as the deprivation and malnourishment he experienced as a prisoner of war, he changed the way he thought about it by employing his wonderful and sometimes wicked sense of humour. One story which springs to mind is his release from prison camp and the long traipse across Germany with his war-time friend Smudger into the hands of the Americans whose rich food they promptly sicked up after several months of semi-starvation. He then told of his so-called hero’s journey back to England with a double delousing on both sides of the Channel just for good measure! How he walked down Odiham High St expecting the hero’s welcome from the village only to be met by the mother of another prisoner of war who promptly told him “My Arthur was captured much earlier than you and so why have you been released before him! It isn’t fair.” So much for the hero's welcome!

It’s undoubtedly true that some of his wartime experiences left their own psychological scars. Those of us who have not lived through war have difficulty relating to what happens when our own and others’ lives are under threat and when we witness the deaths of those who were part of a closely knit group of comrades who ultimately relied on each other for survival. Although not wishing to exclude any of Vic’s comrades, I think particularly of the three wireless operators Alec Reece, Don Collins and Alex Kean who worked alongside him in North Africa in his role as an electrician signals in J section of the 1st Parachute Brigade which was attached to 1st Battalion of the Parachute regiment. These comrades trained together at Bulford Camp in Wiltshire and worked together for about a year in North Africa, being responsible for communications between the front line and Brigade headquarters: their ‘well deserved rest’ was mentioned by their Captain George Rowland in the section’s records now held in the Imperial War Museum in London. They also played together, skinny dipping in the warm waters off the Tunisian
coast. Something which Vic continued to enjoy later in his life with holidays in Yugoslavia.

Through the experience of these young men, I began to realise the closeness of the relationships formed at that age under those circumstances. I also remember my own father’s grief in January 1982 at the death of his close friend Smudger with whom he ended up, by a sheer stroke of good fortune, sharing a cattle truck on the uncertain journey to prisoner of war camp in the Autumn of 1944. Vic and Smudger shared the deprivations of those camps and their liberation and eventual return to England. They experienced constant hunger, and shared rations and the contents of their Red Cross parcels. Just over the barbed wire they witnessed the starvation of the Russian POWs and the brutal treatment of political prisoners at the hands of one particular sadistic guard. These experiences went over and over in Vic’s mind, who likened one middle-aged woman he saw tiring under slave-like conditions as just like his own mother.

These experiences taught him and us to be grateful for the opportunities and experiences in our own lives, to share and above all not to whinge.

It also taught us about taking pleasure from the simple and natural things in life like the sounds of the dawn chorus in Spring, Nature’s natural alarm clock. When Wendy and I were children, he would insist about once a year on waking us up to hear it. Of course as sleepy teenagers we thought he was mad!

For my sister and I some thirty five years later, it was so beautiful and comforting to hear those birds in the hospice garden as we tossed around in the early hours waiting for death to embrace him.

During the last time Vic was conscious, Wendy and I shared a joke with him about getting us up to listen to those birds and to collect field mushrooms on the pretence that they disappeared into the ground again if we left any later than the crack of dawn! Anyhow, they certainly tasted delicious, fried maggots and all!

So there was the pleasure to be derived from the simple things in life, including Lynn our mother’s excellent cooking and baking which was a course of constant enjoyment for Vic until he lost his sense of taste and smell nearly two years ago. Good food and plenty of it were very important to him, and stemmed from his experiences as a child in the decade following the First World War and from the prisoner of war camp where no scrap was wasted and where a loaf of bread was meticulously shared right down to the last crumb.

What then can we learn from these experiences? There is the power of not complaining, of thinking positively when a group of people with a sense of humour come together to share whatever food they have brought with them. There is also the power of forgiveness. Vic’s temper was quick to ignite, but within minutes he either apologised or the matter was quickly forgotten. Maya Angelou’s essay ‘Living Well. Living Good’ offers some guidance to us on the art of living well. She describes the emotionally impoverished life of a wealthy Californian couple and compares this to the simple joys, such as playing cards with friends, to be found in the very modest household of her Aunt Tee who was the housekeeper for this couple.
“...My dears, I draw the picture of the wealthy couple standing in a darkened hallway, peering into a lighted room where black servants were lifting their voices in merriment and comradery, and I realize that living well is an art which can be developed. Of course, you will need the basic talents to build upon: They are a love of life and an ability to take great pleasure from small offerings, an assurance that the world owes you nothing and that every gift is exactly that, a gift. That people who may differ from you in political stance, sexual persuasion, and racial inheritance can be founts of fun, and if you are lucky, they can become even convivial comrades.

Living life as an art requires a readiness to forgive. I do not mean that you should suffer fools gladly, but rather remember our own shortcomings, and when you encounter another with flaws, don’t be eager to righteously seal yourself away from the offender forever. Take a few breaths and imagine yourself having just committed the action which has set you at odds.

Because of the routines we follow, we often forget that life is an ongoing adventure. We leave our homes for work, acting and even believing that we will reach our destinations with no unusual event startling us out of our set expectations. The truth is we know nothing, not where our cars will fail or when our buses will stall, whether our places of employment will be there when we arrive, or whether, in fact, we ourselves will arrive whole and alive at the end of our journeys. Life is pure adventure, and the sooner we realize that, the quicker we will be able to treat life as art: to bring all our energies to each encounter, to remain flexible enough to notice and admit when what we expected to happen did not happen. We need to remember that we are created creative and can invent new scenarios as frequently as they are needed.

Life seems to love the liver of it. Money and power can liberate only if they are used to do so. They can imprison and inhibit more finally than barred windows and iron chains.”

When I first read this essay some time ago, I realised that our own family shared these sentiments and the natural delights when a group of people who enjoy each other’s company come together. I thought back to the days some forty years ago when Granddad Read would visit our house, Bellerophon’ in North Warnborough, painted in the regimental colours of maroon and blue, and aptly named after the Greek warrior who rode Pegasus, the winged horse who is the symbol of the [Airborne Forces]. On Boxing Days Granddad Read would come down from his home ‘The Forge’ in Odiham, his silver topped walking stick carefully placed by the boiler in the kitchen, to join us in enjoying our Mum’s carefully crafted lunch and tea. This would be followed by an evening of fun playing pontoon for pennies. A tradition developed of lively chatter, laughter and the occasional huff which carried on at Glenavon with the grandchildren and involved much consumption of chocolate in various forms. More recently we had the celebration of Lynn and Vic’s birthday’s, where we all made the most of the opportunity to be together at home in Glenavon with food that Vic could manage. What was interesting to both my sister and me was that it was the coming together of the family and the easy relationships between the grandchildren and their grandparents that was of importance not the venue and the price of the bill. Those birthdays were enjoyed probably even more than some of the earlier ones as we savoured the last times that we would all be together.

Vic was a very sensitive and caring person who was always there looking out for you, whether it was sharing in your success without a trace of envy of pressure, or ensuring the birthday card would arrive at least one day early before everybody else’s, or waiting patiently for you, hands behind his back at the railway station or giving you directions in the minutest detail to ensure that you arrived from A to B safely to avoid whatever traffic jam there might be ready to ensnare you. In fact one of his excellent short cuts served us well on the evening of the Bank Holiday Monday, the day he died, when we returned
home from New Milton and the M27 was slowing down ominously with the 50 signs flashing at us miles ahead of the junction with the M3. We were grateful to you, Dad. When we did the directions for the funeral today, I was mindful of the high standard Vic has set us in this department so Merlin, Rhiannon and I did your journey as if we were strangers with Rhiannon carefully noting down the signs as Merlin read them out. I’m glad you got here safely and that we at least don’t have to eat all the puddings at Ryton Gardens!

So attention to detail, at times quite irritating when Vic could not accept another point of view, was a very important part of his watching out and caring for us. His detailed advice was offered and then action on it was monitored to see if it had been heeded. However, there were no sanctions or no withdrawal of support and love if you chose to ignore his advice or events overtook you. An example of this was a letter written to me last September on the important subject of shoe racks which I have to say are still not fixed to the wall! Fortunately I kept the letter because it struck me and the girls as quintessentially Vic, combining his sense of humour with practical details and his love for us. Robbie Robinson, one of Vic’s closest friends and comrades, who was just behind him when he was wounded at Arnhem and who accompanied him on several reunions, is going to read it for us.

ROBBIE TO READ LETTER

YOU KNOW WHERE
15/9/98

DEAR JOCE,

HERE AS PROMISED ARE 14 CLIPS & SCREWS TO FIX YOUR WIREWORK SHOE RACKS, YOU MAY ONLY NEED TWO TO SECURE THEM TO THE WALL, IT DEPENDS ON HOW GOOD THE FIXTURES ARE, THAT CAN BE LEFT UP TO THE PERSON WHO DOES THE FIXING.

THE SCREWS I AM SENDING ARE MADE OF BRASS AND THEN CHROMIUM PLATED SO DON’T JUST THROW THEM AWAY IF NOT USED, PUT THEM IN YOUR ODDS AND SODS BOX.

SORRY I DID NOT DROP IN ON THE WAY BACK FROM CAYTHORPE, ROBBY DID SAY HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET YOU AGAIN, IT WAS AT CAROLINE’S IN HOLLAND IN 1969 I THINK IT WAS MAYBE NEXT YEAR.

WE SHALL BE RINGING YOU TOMORROW WED TO GET ALL THE LATEST LOTS OF LOVE JOCE AND THE GIRLS

DAD XXX ONE EACH

Thank you

Vic was a very bright man who used his mind and excellent memory to good effect for most of his life. From Odiham he went down to Barry Island in South Wales to train as an electrician, a trade which he used in the war and at which he excelled throughout his life. He spoke very fondly of his time in South Wales before the war and loved the sounds of the Gavioli fairground organ there which he wanted played today. The piece we have chosen is ‘There’s something about a soldier’ which is very apt because it was whilst working in an aircraft hangar there as an electrician that he signed up.

GAVIOLI TAPE WHICH IS JUST OVER THREE MINUTES LONG TO THE END
There was clearly something about him as a soldier which persuaded Lynn to share that bag of crisps in 1940 in Parkgate on the Wirral, and which began a relationship which lasted for 59 years. On his part there was something rather lovely about her gorgeous legs in those cycling shorts! Their marriage of 52 years holds many happy memories for Lynn, for which she is very thankful. One of his comrades last week remarked on Vic’s sentimentality as he and Lynn would squeeze into their wedding clothes on each anniversary when we were children. Only three years ago Merlin, Rhiannon and I followed the unfolding of the romance with them, celebrating the spot with the sharing of a packet of Walkers Ready Salted. No little blue salt bags this time where the salt plops out in a damp ball and disappears to the bottom of the bag, I’m afraid!

So to return to the subject of Vic’s memory which, on a lighter note, forced his exclusion from the weekly wartime ‘Spot the Aircraft’ competition on the grounds that he won it every week and that some other poor bloke deserved a win. More seriously his intelligence and attention to detail ensured that mistakes were kept to an absolute minimum. This was essential in the tricky business of wartime communications. It was also vital for his trade where he rose to becoming a master electrician. His electrical work was perfection itself, and much of it endures to this day in homes and farm buildings in Hampshire and in our homes. Provided he had a good lunch and the odd jam doughnut and cup of tea or two, Vic could undertake the most complex wiring job working from memory with no diagrams whatsoever.

We now need to move towards saying our final farewells to Vic, whose training to become a paratrooper began at Bulford Camp in Wiltshire and was followed by his memorable and mysterious trip by convoy through the Straights of Gibraltar to the North African coast in 1942, listening to the sounds of the ships’ engines and Ann Shelton singing ‘Red Sails in the Sunset’, the song which began this service and which had touched Vic’s emotions – love and fear – as he thought about the uncertainty ahead, our mother Lynn, and whether he would indeed return home to see her and his family again. Other memorable trips which fortunately he and those with him survived include the theft of a German motorbike in North Africa, (motorbikes were a passion for Vic) and riding it across a minefield, and throwing live grenades from the back of a lorry to see if they still worked!

Now is the time for Vic’s last journey to come to an end so that he can be with his comrades from the Parachute Regiment in Oosterbeek Cemetery, near Arnhem in Holland. The place where he nearly lost his life in 1944. He particularly wanted his ashes to be sprinkled by the grave of a boy soldier [Geoffrey] Dunning 6 who was an orphan, and was described to me as a tall and thin man by one of Vic’s comrades. [Geoffrey] Dunning’s life was cut short in its prime. This gesture sums up the kind of man Vic was, variously described to us as a good chap, man or bloke by his comrades. My sister, Wendy, and I are very pleased and proud to carry out Vic’s last wishes. To conclude this service and to offer comfort to those of us who are here, Robbie has kindly offered to read this short piece which may be familiar to many of us here today.

‘Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I, and you are you. Whatever we were to each other, that we still are. Call me by my old familiar name, speak to me in the easy way you always used. Put no difference in your tone, wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at little jokes we enjoyed

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6 In the original text I had spelt Geoffrey as Jeffrey. I have altered the text here to use the correct spelling of his forename as indicated in the Register of Graves at Arnhem-Oosterbeek War Cemetery.
together. Pray, smile, think of me, pray for me. Let my name be ever the household word that it always was, let it be spoken without effect, without the trace of a shadow on it. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was; there is unbroken continuity. Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? I am waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just round the corner. All is well.’

Henry Scott Holland
1847 – 1918
Canon of St Paul’s Cathedral

Please stand. I would now like to call upon Corporal Pope from the 2nd Battalion, the Light Infantry, currently based at Bulford, where Vic, his comrades including Ray, Robbie’s brother-in-law who was killed at Arnhem, and Robbie began their training, to play the Last Post. We say good-bye to Vic, loving husband, Dad, and Grandpa, Brother of Philip, Jack and Tom, Uncle, Cousin, Private Read, comrade, mate, friend, electrician signals and master electrician. We’ll miss you and the inner strength you gave us from your experiences of life.

PUSH BUTTON TO COMMIT. THE LAST POST. ‘RED SAILS IN THE SUNSET’, QUIETLY TO BEGIN WITH FOR PEOPLE TO WALK OUTSIDE TO. APPROX 2 MINUTES AND 34 SECS. DO NOT PLAY VERA LYNN TALKING AT END (0.22 STOP!)

As I have mentioned earlier, the funeral speech was influenced by the recent and unprecedented change which had taken place in my own life. What I wrote was guided by the intense feelings I had about that loss and change, which involved the indirect impact of the Holocaust on my life through my marriage to David and our divorce. His Jewish grandparents, our children’s great grandparents’ died in Dachau and Buchenwald Concentration Camps. I really wanted to include the poem at the beginning of Primo Levi’s book If this is a Man (Levi, 1987, p.17), written by a survivor of Auschwitz Concentration Camp, to remember them and all the other people who were killed in those camps, but was persuaded that it did not really relate to my father’s experiences so I left it out. But as part of this thesis I include the poem here because my father’s stories were told in this spirit and influenced me as a child growing up in the 1950s and 1960s. Primo Levi compels us not to forget:

You who live safe
In your warm houses
You who find, returning in the evening
Hot food and friendly faces:
Consider if this is a man
Who works in the mud
Who does not know peace
Who fights for a scrap of bread
Who dies because of a yes or no
Consider if this is a woman,
Without hair and without name
With no more strength to remember,
Her eyes empty and her womb cold
Like a frog in winter.
Meditate that this came about:
I commend these words to you.
Carve them in your hearts
At home, in the street,
Going to bed, rising;
Repeat them to your children,
Or may your house fall apart,
May illness impede you,
May your children turn their faces from you.

© The Bodley Head, 1965

So when the champagne glasses chinked some seven months later at the beginning of the next millennium, I was still reflecting on the loss of my father: our first Christmas and New Year without him. Perhaps with my father’s death I was beginning to face my own mortality during that transitional time? The next eight years were to offer a way of creating my own narrative from the influence of World War II on my life, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapters Five and Six.

To end

This chapter has introduced how I conceive of ‘self care’ in inquiry practice, and shown my early understandings of ‘love and loss’ in the two writings I have presented and discussed. This analysis forms the seeds of a living theory of inquiry which I craft, using ideas from hermeneutics and phenomenology, in later chapters of the thesis. The impact of World War II on my life, through my father in particular and then in my decision to divorce, has been discussed within the ethical parameters I have set out regarding my past and present personal relationships with those still living.

During 2001, marking the end of a substantial period of upheaval in my life, I started a new job and found myself directing an action research study for the first time. I also had the opportunity to work in Russia, a country about which I knew little except from the stories my father had told me about starving Russian Prisoners of War. The next chapter explores these experiences and the deepening of my inquiry when I joined the programme at Bath in January 2002.
Chapter Three: Deepening professional understanding

Introduction

This chapter outlines my introduction to action research and how I became drawn to the method after a long period of being seeped in more traditional approaches to research. The way the chapter is presented, compared to Chapter One in particular, represents a shift in my way of being in the world: I start to draw on the extended epistemology of action research to deepen professional understanding. I use story to describe a situation in Russia where I experienced myself as a living contradiction (Whitehead, 2000): the child-centred value base, which I claimed to hold, evaporated in hard physically challenging conditions. I was confronted with a fragile and self-interested part of myself, which shaped how I acted under pressure: in the face of bodily privations my integrity crumbled. This learning also influenced both how I interpreted my father’s prisoner of war narratives, and the responses I made to the narratives of the ex prisoners of war I met later, all of whom had experienced far more testing situations than I could barely imagine. These are described in Chapters Five and Six of the thesis.

At the same time being in the vast beauty of the Russian landscape reminded me of the world being a sacred place (Reason, 1994); I became more aware of the participatory nature of perception (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Abram, 1996), and the participatory worldview which underpins action research (Reason, 1994; Reason and Bradbury, 2001). I describe my desire to become an Action Researcher; my decision to join the Diploma in Action Research programme at Bath; the process of putting together the collage (Figure One); my first inquiry on self care, written as a story about ‘Jocelyn’s Garden’; and my decision to withdraw from a project as an act of self care.

In the final part of the chapter, I refer to the Serious Case Review on the children of Fred and Rosemary West (Bridge Child Care Consultancy, 1995) to show a deepening understanding of the complexity of child protection practice where workers’ emotions and senses are more fully taken into consideration. I pose the following questions: How can my/our participatory worldview be enhanced so that we open up to ‘the Other’? At the same time as part of self care, how can I/we support ourselves when witnessing another’s traumatic narrative? I go on to address these questions in subsequent chapters of the thesis.

A paradigm shift begins . . .

It was a timely and inspiring conversation with a social work manager after a seminar in early 2000 that led to the first action research project that I worked on with Dr Jill Treseder and Sara Glennie, both members of the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP) network at the University of Bath. I am now used to that feeling of lightness in the area between my navel and heart which tells me that what I am doing is worthwhile; it was this project which broke the feeling of disillusionment which I had been experiencing in my career.

This was a two year action research project to improve service delivery to families with complex needs. The main aims of the project were to: understand more about the
characteristics of the sample families; ensure that the response to families’ needs was preventative rather than reactive; explore methods of integrated intervention across a range of agencies; and develop better information sharing capability across public agencies (Jones, Treseder and Glennie, 2002; Treseder, Jones and Glennie, 2003). This remit found resonance with my professional values: I particularly liked the focus on practitioners working together in a more integrated and preventative way to improve service delivery to families with complex needs. The children living in such families are amongst the most disadvantaged in the UK. This was worthwhile work.

Up until this point in my career as a social work academic, I had been inducted into rather more post positivistic ways of ranking studies and undertaking research. Guba and Lincoln (1994) analyse four key paradigms which inform and guide qualitative inquiry of which post positivism is one. A paradigm may be defined as set of basic beliefs which deals with first principles; as such it represents a worldview for the holder which carries different responses to the following ontological, epistemological and methodological questions:

The ontological question. What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?

The epistemological question. What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?

The methodological question. How can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known? (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 108)

They argue that in post positivism, reality is assumed to exist but can only be known imperfectly; and that it should be subjected to the widest possible critical examination so that it can be understood as closely as possible. It is also important to check whether findings fit with pre-existing knowledge and to refer to professional peers within a community which sets the standards. The methodology places emphasis on ‘critical multiplism’, a form of triangulation, as falsifying rather than verifying, hypotheses. In their critique of the received view of scientific research, that is positivism and more recently post positivism, they comment on the construction of facts as facts:

*The theory-ladenness of facts.* Conventional approaches to research involving the verification or falsification of hypotheses assume the independence of theoretical and observational languages. If an inquiry is to be objective, hypotheses must be stated in ways that are independent of the way in which the facts needed to test them are collected. But it now seems established beyond objection that theories and facts are quite interdependent – that is, that facts are facts only within some theoretical framework. Thus a fundamental assumption of the received view is exposed as dubious. If hypotheses and observations are not independent, “facts” can be viewed only through a theoretical “window” and objectivity is undermined.

*The value-ladenness of facts.* Just as theories and facts are not independent, neither are values and facts. Indeed, it can be argued that theories are themselves value statements. Thus “putative” facts are viewed not only through a theory window as well. The value-free posture of the received view is compromised. (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107)
When I worked as a Lecturer at Birmingham Polytechnic in the 1980s (now Birmingham City University), I led a module called ‘Facts and Values’ which addressed some of these difficulties when applied to social work assessment. I was therefore aware of the limitations of post positivistic approaches but had no alternative paradigm to propose. The multi-agency action research project offered an innovative approach to conducting research which was entirely new to me: at that time I was particularly drawn to Heron’s (1996, p.19) argument for co-operative inquiry:

Co-operative inquiry is a form of participative, person-centred inquiry which does research *with* people not *on* them or *about* them. It breaks down the old paradigm separation between the roles of researcher and subject . . . this division is replaced by a participative relationship with all those involved.

However my appreciation of the underlying features of the participative paradigm and the extended epistemology of action research (Heron, 1996; Heron and Reason, 1997; Heron and Reason 2001) was to come later; and coincided with a trip to Russia and facilitation of the Family Placement Assessment Project (Jones, 2004).

**Stepping outside my comfort zone**

During the time of the multi agency action research project I was working with a colleague on an evaluation of therapeutic training and educational consultancy undertaken in a Children’s Community, about 300km south west of Moscow. In July 2001 I flew to Moscow with my younger daughter, who was going to a student summer camp at the community while I worked. I was anxious: Russia was somewhere I had never been before and I was relying on being met at the airport. This dependence did not sit easily with my desire for certainty and a comfortable hotel room for the night. My journal indicates some of my fearfulness on the day we landed, and the confusion as I encountered a language I could not speak and a completely ‘other’ culture. Our first night in Russia was spent in a busy, stifling Moscow suburb:

10th July  Arrival in Moscow. We were met at the airport! However, I had no idea where we were going and when we arrived at our destination we went through a double front door into what seemed a fridge or a warehouse or a prison! Who knows? The stairway was completely in darkness with a dog barking at the top. Anyway, we arrived at the flat, settled in and went looking for somewhere to eat . . . alas no places open so ended up with bread and salami. I caused much amusement at the shop by taking the priced and wrapped loaf to pay for it at the counter. This is not the way things are done here – you ask for the thing and they fetch it! Mosquitoes plagued us on our first night with their whining and ominous sounds close to unprotected flesh!

This was just the very beginning of my understanding of the impact a very different culture could have on me: two weeks later at the children’s community I was to be severely tested. This is a little story about integrity. There are other examples I might have chosen to show my fragility as a human being, but this one seemed the most appropriate because it also made me think more deeply about the human will to survive; and how accounting for one’s responses, when tested in an unfamiliar context, did not translate that well when told to the ‘folks back home’.
**Sweeties in Russia**

The food was like nothing we had ever experienced before: this was subsistence.

Here’s the ‘diet plan’:

**Breakfast:** Kasha (buckwheat porridge) or semolina with dry black bread, no butter. A slice of dry white bread as the occasional treat washed down with black tea and sugar, no milk.

**Lunchtime:** Watery potato soup with the odd piece of puckered chicken skin or a vertebra floating around, dry black bread, overcooked pasta with a blob of tomato ketchup. Water.

**Supper:** More dry black bread, buckwheat and perhaps a spoon of thin brown stew made of chicken skin and bones. Water.

And so it went on . . . every day a variation on the same basic theme of very low fat and high carbohydrate. Grey and brown. This was fuel. Nothing more. Nothing less.

During the first week we visited different foster families’ homes and they offered us soft unappetising biscuits, the type that my Mum bought in the 1950s from the damp Post Office Stores over the road, and black tea with spoons of jam. I gingerly tried the black tea and politely passed on the jam and biscuits.

By the second week I ate anything that was offered to me.

Every day the temperature was in well in excess of 30˚C. It was hot by 10.00am. Huge biting flies landed softly on any piece of exposed flesh so we swatted them incessantly. By week two if one fell in our soup, we simply flicked it out onto the floor and carried on eating.

By the beginning of the third week thoughts of what we would eat when we returned to Moscow dominated our conversations. Fat in any form was what we craved.

Madge and I, the two children’s rights’ aficionados, were lying around on our narrow hard mattresses in the stifling bedroom. Biting flies going off shift. Mozzies coming on shift. Stifling summer evening. No energy to do anything. We compared insect bites, gossiped and dozed.

One of us started rummaging through a suitcase, and held up a packet of mini M&Ms which had been brought over for the children at the community. Many were orphans and had been neglected in orphanages over Russia. Sweetie presents for Russian orphan children. A ‘polishing halo’ story to tell over dinner or drinks back home. A few Brownie points in that one, Jossie.

Now just take a real good look at the brightness and roundness of each one of those little sweeties.
We pawed the unopened pack, passed gingerly between us. Fingers feeling the firm roundness of each sweet. The brightness of the packaging dazzled our eyes.

The smell of vanilla and sweetness overpowering as it hit our nostrils. Saliva began to flow in anticipation.

“Well the children wouldn’t know anyway”.

Bag ripped open. We giggled on our beds but were silent in our complicity. No words. Just teeth crunching small handfuls of sweeties. Chocolate melting and filling our mouths.

And it didn’t stop there.

That hot summer evening we ate all the sweets for the Russian orphan children.

Three packs of mini M&Ms to be precise. Delicious.

Later we wondered what we might say back home . . . and when I did tell a few carefully selected colleagues or close friends I could see them judging me, “Jocelyn, how could you eat Russian orphan children sweeties”? I judged me.

But they didn’t know what just the teeniest bit of hunger and temptation could do. How it could change you and your values in a matter of days. We knew it was wrong but we did it, and enjoyed it.

It is interesting that, although I kept a research journal of the trip, it focuses much more on researching on the children and foster families in the community: questions to ask and tasks to be done. This was reflected in the evaluation report which used ‘Jocelyn Jones’ i.e. the third person rather than the first person voice.

At that time I thought I could neatly split the personal from the professional. I wrote nothing about the ‘sweeties’ episode despite the learning it generated when I considered how I felt about myself afterwards.

In their discussion of autoethnography and researcher as subject, Ellis and Bochner (2003) discuss the need for a form which will allow people to really feel the moral dilemmas as they read a story, that is think with the story and nodal moments rather than about it. That is why I chose to write the ‘Sweeties in Russia’ story. It shows my fragility and vulnerability as a human being, but at the same time there is a very real risk of being judged by the reader, perhaps even shunned.

Whitehead (2000, p.93) discusses this inclusion of ‘I’ as a living contradiction as the nucleus of an epistemology of practice:

All I am meaning by ‘I’ as a living contradiction is the experience of holding together two mutually exclusive opposite values. I am thinking of values such as freedom, fairness, and enquiry. I experience myself as a living contradiction when I recognise that I hold a value such as fairness, yet deny it in my practice.

Thus in terms of addressing how I improve my response to others’ narratives, how I act with integrity in practice is identified as a key issue in this thesis. Chapter One has set out the foundation or baseline of my professional practice, what I have aspired to and what matters to me. Now I have shown how easily my child-centred value base, as exemplified
in many of my earlier papers, could be pushed completely aside to reveal human self interest and self preservation. It was this nugget of learning, of appreciating my vulnerable side, and how I could act under pressure that I started to consider: the influence of mind on body and body on mind, the capacity of each to affect the other for better or worse, is raised here.

The Healing Power of Nature: Beginnings of a Participatory Worldview

As the ‘Sweeties’ narrative indicates, being at the Community during the hottest July in Russia for decades, was physically very hard. It was also emotionally challenging at many different levels: although most children were making very good progress now, they had had tough and sad lives and many had substantial additional needs; and there were the usual testing dynamics of a several adults with different agendas together with foster and birth children, all living at close quarters in a residential community.

The landscape was breathtakingly beautiful, vast birch forests, heathland, and lakes, called ‘ponds’ by the Russians, to signify the difference in the way we measured scale. The lake below was the ‘pond’ we swam in most days in that hot summer.

The Community lived in harmony with nature and virtually every day children asked me if I wanted to collect wild berries with them; we would have little expeditions into the dense green undergrowth in search of wild strawberries or bilberries, using our shared relationship with the natural world as a means of bridging linguistic differences. Despite barriers to more sophisticated communication, there was a passion and directness in the children and adults that helped me appreciate, in our relation with and through the natural world, our interconnectedness as human beings.
Just being in that place with those people had a healing effect on me: somehow the loss and change I had experienced in recent years ceased being so highly charged and so faded into the past. Reason (1994, p. 10) defines to heal as ‘to make whole’. He goes on to say:

Making whole necessarily implies participation: one characteristic of a participative world-view is that the individual person is restored to the circle of community and the human community to the context of the wider natural world. To make whole also means to make holy; another characteristic of a participatory world-view is that meaning and mystery are restored to human experience, so that the world is once again experienced as a sacred place.

This magical wild place changed the way that I viewed nature and my relationship with it. I started to feel the connection to the earth beneath my feet and the presence of the landscape around me. At this point I had no knowledge of the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and the participatory nature of perception, and yet this was what I was beginning to notice:

. . . in so far as my hand knows hardness and softness, and my gaze knows the moon's light, it is as a certain way of linking with the phenomenon and communicating with it. Hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, moonlight and sunlight, present themselves in our recollection not pre-eminently as sensory contents but as certain kinds of symbioses, certain ways the outside has of invading us, and certain ways we have of meeting that invasion. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.317)

The act of perception is like a dance between the active sensible world and our bodies, where otherness expresses itself directly to our senses.

Our most immediate experience of things, according to Merleau-Ponty, is necessarily an experience of reciprocal encounter – of tension, communication, and commingling. From within the depths of this encounter, we know the thing or phenomenon only as our interlocutor – as a dynamic presence that confronts us and draws us into relation. We conceptually immobilize or objectify the phenomenon only by mentally absenting from this relation, by forgetting or repressing our sensuous involvement. To define another being as an inert or passive object is to deny its ability to actively engage us and to provoke our senses, we thus block our perceptual reciprocity with that being. By linguistically defining the surrounding world as a determinate set of objects, we cut our conscious, speaking selves off from the spontaneous life of our sensing bodies. (Abram 1996, p.56)

This sensuous experience in Russia introduced me to the participatory world-view which underpins action research (Reason 1994; Reason and Bradbury 2001).

**Becoming an Action Researcher**

In the spring of 2001 I had applied to join to the Diploma in Action Research programme (CARPP 7) at Bath, starting in 2002. I had a tremendous feeling of positive energy when I wrote the application and attended the interview in the autumn. After the ‘stuckness’ of a long period of transition, early beginnings of a participatory worldview reunited me with a sense of purpose:
Just as we have learned to separate ourselves from each other and from the environment, we now need to learn how to reunite ourselves with other entities around us without losing our hard-won individuality. The most promising faith for the future might be based on the realization that the entire universe is a system related to common laws and that it makes no sense to impose our dreams and desires on nature without taking them into account. Recognizing the limitations of human will, accepting a cooperative rather than a ruling role in the universe, we should feel the relief of the exile who is finally returning home. The problem of meaning will then be resolved as the individual’s purpose merges with the universal flow. (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, p. 240)

During 2001 I became increasing interested in the practice of action research: as well as my involvement in the multi-agency action research project, we were also using action learning groups on the post qualifying child care programme at the University of Nottingham (Kember, 2000). I decided that rather than just managing action research projects or programmes that used these methods, I wanted to become an action researcher.

The first task on the Diploma (CARPP 7) programme in January 2002 offered me a timely opportunity to test out the ‘problem of meaning’, which Csikszentmihalyi raises. We were asked to produce the collage, which I have referred to previously, to represent our research interests to the group at the first session (Figure One). The process of putting this visual representation together shocked me: I noticed that I was very uncomfortable, even agitated, with this visual way of representing knowledge. At that time just before the programme commenced, I was not very familiar with the notion of an extended epistemology or multiple ways of knowing in action research (Heron, 1996; Heron and Reason, 1997; Heron and Reason, 2001; Reason and Torbert, 2001):

Experiential knowing is through direct face-to-face encounter with person, place or thing . . . Presentational knowing emerges from experiential knowing, and provides the first form of expressing meaning and significance through drawing on expressive forms of imagery . . . Propositional knowing ‘about’ something, is knowing through ideas and theories . . . Practical knowing is knowing how to do something and is expressed in skill, knack or competence. (Heron, 1992 &1996 cited in Heron and Reason, 2001, p.183)

My professional life in child care social work and social work education had, until that point, been largely dominated by propositional knowing: the safety and respectability of theory, logic, fact and opinion, and more conventional qualitative research methodologies. Although I was aware of the power of my intuitive ‘third eye’, which nudged me to ask the right questions in social work assessment and to notice and listen, I looked to finding evidence in the form of theory and research to present my findings in a report and orally.

Perhaps if the work of Damasio on emotion, reason and the human brain (1994, 2000) had been published ten years earlier and I had read it, I would have had the theoretical underpinning to argue for the intuitive grasp of situations to be given higher prominence in social work assessments. Damasio (1994, p. 247) suggests that feelings are a crucial influence on reason, and that the brain systems required for both are inextricably linked and interwoven with those that perform the regulation of the body. In order to strengthen rationality, he argues for more attention to be paid to the ‘vulnerability of the world within’.
The collage offered a way into the vulnerability of my world within, hence why I was reluctant to sit down and face the A1 sheet of card: it was easier to present an acceptable and credible professional image when I was using reason rather than emotion. There was also the difficulty of engaging the intuitive right side of my brain to re-experience past knowledge, frequently gained through emotionally challenging situations, and then to present this visually: I had followed an academic path from 14 years of age where Art and related subjects had to be dropped in favour of Science, Mathematics, English, Languages and History.

Self care surfaces for the first time

In the middle of the collage there is a picture of my garden in Leicester, which is taken from the far end near the summer house (Figure One). This part of the garden acts as a sanctuary in the midst of city life, and is a haven for birds. The first inquiry question the group asked me to explore, based on discussion of the collage, was: ‘How do I stay whole and fully in touch with my emotions in the work I do, and yet which requires the establishment of boundaries for self-protection’? This question is highly relevant to all those who, like practitioners, work directly with human trauma; and those who work more indirectly, offering supervision and developing services, such as their managers.

This is the first piece of writing I did, which reminded me of the importance of self care in the field of child protection, and how I used nature to restore a sense of balance in my life:

Jocelyn’s Garden

The first garden

There was a little girl who remembers following her mother as she wound a way in wellington boots through a wild, untamed garden of stinging nettles.

And there is the same garden, as tamed as any garden could be, a few years later. Immaculate and warm in the afternoon summer sunshine. [At the same time as the years passed] the garden increasingly became a burden . . . so as the little girl grew up [she decided to steer] clear of gardens.

Other gardens

The little girl grew into a woman and bought a house with a garden, but she had nothing or as little to do with it as possible . . . so in her relationship, she organised things carefully. Jobs were neatly carved up and the garden was not her responsibility. This seemed a good solution and avoided any conflict. But what she didn’t realise was that anger and conflict are part of good as well as unhappy relationships.

When her relationship of 26 years ended she bought a new house and garden . . .

My garden

I was so nervous: a house and garden that needed to be completely overhauled, but I didn’t ‘do’ decorating or gardening!

My friend Kate came to my aid. She had been my Practice Teacher when I had trained as a student Social Worker some twenty years previously, and now in her 50s she was a student of

7 I have made some minor edits to the original in order to put this piece of writing into the public domain.
garden design. I was at that time the Director of the School of Social Work where Kate had trained some twenty five to thirty years previously. So with our shared history as teachers and learners, Kate tackled my garden as her student design project. Patiently, she listened and made notes of what we wanted; plants were chosen from a fat encyclopaedia. Plans were drawn up and changed, and so my garden in three separate, but linked sections took shape.

Kate took on the major planting role and I developed confidence by working alongside her: I had to learn the basics. Last year was my second summer in the ‘new’ garden, and it was time to experiment. I began by going to a Sunday plant market in May, which featured ‘growers’ and their wares from some far-flung place in Lincolnshire. I was overcome by the choice and how I could possibly make any sense of what to buy and then what to do with it! So I decided that honesty (i.e. admitting quite openly that I was a complete beginner) was the best policy; this then paved the way for those far more experienced to guide me. The strategy worked and I came home with a car full of busy lizzies, petunias, fuchsias and Heaven knows what else, and a huge bag of compost!! Two Sundays later eight pots were planted and I went back for more plants, but this time I chose them all myself and those two pots which were planted at the end of May were my selection and I loved looking at them the whole summer.

Last summer saw my garden mature and I added several plants that I had chosen. A fragrant honeysuckle over one of my arches and the fruiting passionflower at the front of the house gave me and my children such pleasure.

With the autumn came the temptation of Sainsbury’s multi-buys and the purchase of 180 daffodil bulbs to go under my sycamore tree at the end of the garden. It was hard work on a dull October Sunday afternoon, but when the first daffodil bloomed last week I felt differently. I am waiting now for all the others to follow . . .

Then came the winter pots, left almost too late but even more satisfying than the summer ones. I chose all the plants by myself, but it was the sight of them on my patio throughout the winter and the distinct characteristics of each pot that I loved. Sometimes, I couldn’t wait for it to get light in the mornings.

So my garden has helped to heal some of the anxiety that I felt earlier in my life. Whilst it is a place to be busy, it does not overwhelm me. It is also a haven with three different places to sit . . . to catch the sun or the shade . . . to be alone or sharing a meal or drink with others. It has been designed with the senses in mind.

The little girl loves to dig and move earth, carry watering cans and spades around with her: she talks to herself and is purposeful in the same way she was all those years ago when worms and mud were her major preoccupation. Gardening empties and calms her chattering mind and in so doing she focuses on the task at hand and the plants and animals around her.
Later that year, following the inquiry into loving myself I had to make a tough decision to withdraw from a project, which really mattered to me, as an act of self-love. This was when I began to realise that keeping my integrity in tact was central to my well-being, and when this was not the case I felt unbalanced and became physically unwell. Below are two extracts from different inquiries.  

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**Extract from ‘Improving how I manage conflict’ May 2002**

I would like to use the group this time to look at conflict and a situation that has arisen in my work. I will bring copies of an anonymised letter with me to the group for circulation rather than send it by e-mail as an attachment and then speak to it at the group. The question I would like to look at it is, How can I avoid this type of situation developing in the future? What can I learn from this? How can I behave differently in the future? . . . I had to take an extremely difficult decision to withdraw from a project in order to safeguard my value base and professional integrity. In that regard, the act was a form of self-loving.

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8 For reasons of confidentiality I have not included the resignation letter.
So by the middle of 2002, just six months after joining CARPP, I was more consciously being assertive as an act of self love. But why is self care important in safeguarding children? In order to be assertive and safeguard the child’s rights, needs and interests, practitioners need to have a strong sense of self and self worth as adults: they are frequently tested as human beings, perhaps grappling with complex ethical dilemmas, being intimidated or even physically assaulted. The complexity of practice is something which is completely glossed over by the media in their rush to apportion blame and grab headlines. Being a social worker or a social work manager is challenging: the role carries substantial responsibilities and requires constant vigilance. At the same time doing good assessments and making the right decisions can be immensely rewarding, for example when supporting young parents to care for their children or placing a child for adoption.

**Some early reflections on hypothesis formulation**

Reading a child’s file or a child death inquiry can have similar effects as a home visit to a child who is being abused. As a social worker I remember reading a file of the two boys who had been pushed into the fire by their mother; these were the two boys I was visiting on the day I returned from holiday and the baby, Tracey, in the other family was fatally injured by her father, Alan Green (see Chapter One). The younger boy, only a toddler at the time of the abuse, had a malformed hand as a result of the fire incident, and I could not stop thinking about the pain he must have experienced when I read the account of the incident in the file and whenever I saw his withered hand.

Building on the work of Reder, Duncan and Gray (1993) and Reder and Duncan (1999) on interactional patterns and psychological processes in child abuse tragedies, I started considering the effects of emotion on hypothesis formulation, and how emotions could either help or hinder an assessment. I referred to the work of Sheppard (1995), who draws strong parallels between hypothesis testing in qualitative research and social work assessment; Drury-Hudson (1999) on the types of knowledge used in child protection decision making – theoretical, empirical, procedural, personal and experiential; and Scott (1998) on the cognitive schema used by social workers in cases of alleged abuse. Scott (1998, p.75) poses the following key question for social work practice and research: ‘What constitutes the cognitive schema used by social workers in assessment and how such schemas come to exist?’

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**Extract from ‘Reflections on the May tape’ June 2002**

Yes, it is extremely important for me to act from a position of integrity in difficult circumstances. Most of my life I have managed to do this, and reflecting on the more painful times when I haven’t, it has inevitably led to disharmony and at times extreme anxiety. Why was withdrawal from [the project] an act of self-love? Because to collude in the practices . . . would have caused immense conflict within my soul. This has led to me, as I put it, practising being “more tetchy” earlier. So I have been more assertive with my children and at work, and I have noticed that people have responded. Small arguments that I wouldn’t have entered into previously have been resolved to my satisfaction. It’s only a small change, but nevertheless it is a change in my behaviour. Like doing things for people in order to be loved, being unduly conciliatory also comes from the same place.
However, the focus of these researchers was more on cognition, with less attention paid specifically to practitioners’ emotions and senses in assessment. My practice experience had taught me that my own emotions could be of great value when reflected upon, and could guide me to generate alternative hypotheses which I then used to search for disconfirming evidence from the files and interviews. These ideas started to form more clearly during a teaching session on child abuse in 2001.

In the session I began by talking about the children of Fred and Rosemary West, until Harold Shipman, Britain’s most notorious serial killers; and what life must have been like for their children living at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester. I used documentary and archive accounts of three of the children to imagine the incredible circumstances in which they lived. The oldest surviving child of Fred West, Anne Marie, when rescued from trying to commit suicide in the River Severn, said “People can say I am lucky to have survived, but I wish I had died. I can still taste the fear. Still feel the pain. It’s like going back to being a child again” (Gerrard, 1999). The article about Anne Marie gives a graphic account of her abuse, and makes an important observation about the emotional saturation of the general public, ‘Many people stopped reading about the West story in their newspapers. They couldn’t bear it. Journalists were asked to tone it down’. Although the West case was extreme, this is the point I am making about practitioners sometimes ‘switching off’ emotionally when they read a file or a child starts to reveal ‘the tip of the iceberg’ concerning her/his abuse. We are only human.

Nevertheless it was perhaps the documentary of Stephen and Mae West, as young adults, talking about their childhood home, which subsequently influenced my professional understanding of child abuse in the 1990s (BBC, 1995). They talk about sleeping in the cellar where the bodies of their parents’ victims had been buried. The cellar periodically flooded because Fred West had inadvertently gone through a sewer when he was digging a hole for one of his victims. Stephen and Mae describe the logistics of getting out of bed in the morning using a small dinghy between their beds in order to get up the cellar steps, the water being an indescribable mixture of sewage including material from the bodies in the ground. It was the way that they told the story of getting up in the morning which struck me. It was a bit like an adventure but so matter of fact. If you knew no different as a child, why would this strike you as odd? We are talking about a concept of childhood here which is virtually impossible to relate to.
When the NSPCC visited the house in 1989 following a referral that Stephen had been hit by his father with a mallet, rather than considering the case as requiring further investigation, a recommendation of counselling and support for the family was offered (Bridge Child Care Consultancy Service, 1995). I asked students to consider what it must have been like, from a sensory perspective, to be the practitioner following up that allegation in the West household. For example, might it even have been possible to smell the decomposition of the bodies in the cellar? One thing is certain there would have been intimidation of one sort or another to ensure that the worker(s) backed off.

On a positive note, it was workers listening to the younger West children, who had been removed on an Emergency Protection Order in August 1992, which built up momentum for the eventual police investigation. The children mentioned a family ‘joke’ that their sister Heather was under the patio during the initial interviews in August 1992. The Serious Case Review (Bridge Child Care Consultancy Service, 1995, p. 19) comments: ‘As a potential childhood fantasy this must rate high on anybody’s list as not credible’. Care orders in respect of the children were granted in November 1992; and repeated comments by some of the children about Heather being under the patio led to Social Services becoming
increasingly concerned. A police investigation followed with the now infamous search in
the garden and cellar at 25 Cromwell Street. The Serious Care Review (1995, p. 12) also
comments on the impact of reading some of the descriptions the children gave of their
lives: ‘The detailed descriptions given by some of the children about their lives to date makes
painful reading and, in fact, is quite appalling’.

The report concludes:

The tragedy of 12 murders, however, should not overshadow the fact that the
surviving children have had the most dreadful experiences, of a kind which is
quite beyond the comprehension of professionals and the general public alike.
They have also lived in the shadow of the murder of two sisters and 10 other
people. It should be remembered that it was the prompt action of Social
Services and Police in 1992 which removed the children from those appalling
circumstances. (Bridge Child Care Consultancy Service, 1995, p. 21)

Within the literature on child abuse there is much written about the importance of listening
to children, for example the Report of the Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in Cleveland
1987 reminds us that ‘The child is a person not and an object of concern’ (Secretary of State for
Social Services, 1988, p.245), and yet in virtually every child death inquiry the children are
largely invisible as persons.

I started to reflect on the circumstances under which children are listened to: what is it that
practitioners need to do to open up to difficult and sometimes bizarre narratives? How can
a participatory worldview be enhanced so that an opening up to ‘the Other’ is created? At
the same time, how can those who witness another’s narrative support themselves and be
supported within the workplace to undertake this challenging work?

Martin Buber argues in his essay ‘Distance and Relation’ that human life is based on a
twofold movement: the first being ‘the primal setting at a distance’ and the other ‘entering into
relation’: that the first movement is the presupposition of the other is plain from the fact that
one can enter into relation only with being that has been set at a distance (Buber 1965, p.
60). Reason (1994) uses Buber’s ideas to argue that the setting at a distance of the self
suggests a boundary to the self but one through which ‘the Other’ can be reached. The
knower and the known are distinct centres of beings, but most importantly are not
separate. Deep connection with other human beings and the planet as a whole is possible
with this form of consciousness, which I explore more fully in a professional capacity in the
next chapter.

To end

This chapter has shown a deepening of my learning, using the extended epistemology of
action research; the adoption of a participatory world-view; and an emerging practice of
self care. I have shown how easy it is not to behave responsibly, according to espoused
values, in challenging situations; and I have raised the positive influence of emotions and
senses on rationality to assess a child’s circumstances. One of the central concerns
identified thus far is how I/we might become more attuned to what is going on in our
immediate environment to support ‘distance’ and ‘relation’ with the Other; and how then
I/we respond. In child protection, the practitioner’s responsibility to engage with the child,
assess appropriately, and act can be the difference between life and serious injury or
death as I will show in the next chapter.
Chapter Four: Deepening Professional Understanding II

Introduction

In this chapter my understandings of my living theory of responsibility, movement, engagement, withdrawal and self care deepen. I include, as part of this thesis, a paper I wrote in early 2003 on the Victoria Climbié Inquiry (Jones, 2003a; Lord Laming, 2003), because it represents an ‘epiphany’ in my thinking about key issues concerning ‘distance’ and ‘relation’ with children who might being abused: I emphasise the importance of emotions in hypothesis formulation and pose the crucial empathic question, which acts as a potential bridge to the Other, such as an abused child: “If I feel like this, what is it like for this child living here?” I adopt a participatory world-view in which the immediate environment is sensed using both mind and body.

I link feelings to responsibility, and the imperative to act. Competence, conceived of in this way, builds on the dynamism of ‘whole person in action’ competence used in an earlier paper on ‘professional artistry’, referred to in Chapter One (Jones, 1995b). This requires an attentive, 100% focused practice when engaging with the family, and the child in particular; reflection in and on action (Schön 1987, 1991); and awareness of the right response or responses, both in the moment and afterwards.

However writing these words on the page does not quite convey the sense of priority, and complexity of decision making that might be necessary to respond appropriately. I reflect again on self care, this time the process of writing the Climbié paper itself; and I use story to show the feeling of entering the home of an abused child as I leave the comparative safety of my car. This was Graham’s home, the child whose chronology of neglect and isolation I included in Chapter One. Finally I discuss the difficulty I had in relating to one particularly traumatic narrative of Graham’s at a time when I least wanted to hear it, and what I learnt about the nature of my response.

The second half of the chapter focuses on a different type of work in children’s services – assessing potential applicants to foster and adopt. In contrast to child protection, this work is seen by some as “a bit cushy” and done by members of the “Laura Ashley Brigade” or the “Cardigan Squad”! The stereotype relates to upper/middle class social workers working with upper/middle class childless couples who want to adopt working class children. However, the assessment issues are every bit as challenging and can raise complex emotional issues, around attachment, grief, loss and change for all the different parties – adopters, children, birth parents and social workers.

I use my framing of and practice on the study to show how I begin working with emergence as an action researcher. As part of this emergence, the study invites me to consider my father’s influence on my life, which I discuss in Chapters Five and Six entitled ‘Of love and loss II’ and ‘Of love and loss III’. I also raise concerns about the dissemination and implementation of the study’s findings.
The Climbié Inquiry: what being ‘mindful’ in child protection really means in practice

The long-awaited report of the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié was published on 28th January 2003. Lord Laming’s report comes thirty years after the death of Maria Colwell, another child ‘tortured to death by her carers’; and follows 70 previous public inquiries into ‘child protection tragedies’. It runs to over 400 pages and contains 108 recommendations. This article begins by looking at the focus of criticism in the report and Lord Laming’s proposals for structural change. It then considers the implications for practice, in particular what being ‘mindful’ in child protection actually means in practice for the staff themselves and for the organisations that employ them.

Victoria’s Brief History

Victoria Climbié came to England with her great-aunt, Marie Therese Kouao in April 1999. Within a year, she was dead. On 25th February 2000, Victoria died of hypothermia at St Mary’s Hospital, Paddington. She was just eight years old and had 128 separate injuries to her body. On 12th January 2001, her great-aunt Kouao and her boyfriend, Carl Manning, were convicted of her murder. The level of cruelty experienced by Victoria was truly horrific, with daily beatings using several different implements. Her final days were spent living and sleeping in an unheated bathroom in the middle of winter, where she was bound hand and foot, lying in her own urine and faeces in a bin bag in the bath. The Independent Statutory Inquiry into her death, under the Chairmanship of Lord Laming, was set up by the Secretary of State for Health and the Home Secretary in April 2001.

Whilst the appalling abuse she suffered was hidden from view, what makes the case quite remarkable was that Victoria was known to three housing authorities, four social services departments, two police child protection teams, an NSPCC family centre, and two hospitals. As Lord Laming’s report says:

‘The dreadful reality was that these services knew little or nothing more about Victoria at the end of the process than they did when she was first referred to Ealing Social Services by the Homeless Persons’ Unit in April 1999. The final irony was that Haringey Social Services formally closed Victoria’s case on the very day she died.’

There were at least 12 key opportunities for the different agencies to intervene to prevent her maltreatment and death.

The Focus of Criticism and Key Structural Recommendations

Several of the report’s findings, especially around the lamentable way in which agencies failed to share their concerns about Victoria, and the recommendations are depressingly familiar. In chapter after chapter of the report, one gains an overwhelming sense of a vulnerable, isolated child, free-falling through professional system after professional system, all of which should have been able to assess her needs, and record and monitor them in order to protect her. Lord Laming attributes this failure to ‘widespread organisational malaise’, and departs from the usual practice of child abuse inquiry reports that normally reserve their blame for the front-line workers and their individual failings.

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9 This paper is set out in the thesis font rather than in the quote or writings style. The image on the next page did not form part of the original paper.
In contrast, he directs his main criticism at the managers and senior members of the authorities who should have ensured that the services for children, like Victoria, were able to operate effectively. He describes the agencies in which the staff operated as ‘under-funded, inadequately staffed and poorly led.’

Section on the organisational context of child protection practice in the collage with Victoria’s face masked by a thin veil of cotton muslin to denote the child as object—see Figure One

In Lord Laming’s opinion, the answer lies in:

‘...a clear line of accountability from top to bottom, without doubt or ambiguity about who is responsible at every level for the well-being of vulnerable children...[and] managers with a clear set of values about the role of public services, particularly in addressing the needs of vulnerable people, combined with an ability to ‘lead from the front’.

At the highest level, he proposes a Children and Families Board chaired by a Cabinet minister and serviced by a national children and families agency, which will operate through a regional structure and be headed by a Children’s Commissioner for England. Local authority chief executives will chair new management boards for services to children and families, which will comprise senior officers from social services, probation, the police, health and housing. These boards will:

- replace area child protection committees;
- appoint a director to oversee the development of effective inter-agency practice;
- advise on the development of services to meet local need; and
- identify the budget, contributed by each of the key agencies, to support vulnerable children and their families so that staff and resources can be used flexibly and effectively.

Boards will report to a Local Member Committee for Children and Families with lay members drawn from the management committees of each of the key services. These committees must ensure the effective inter-agency co-ordination of services for children and families. These recommendations will be given careful consideration as the Government prepares its response to the report in the form of the forthcoming green paper Children at risk.
What Being ‘Mindful’ Really Means In Practice

Whilst clear accountability from top to bottom should go some way to tackling the ‘organisational malaise’ referred to by Lord Laming, there are other comments on practice in the report which merit closer scrutiny. Although the absence of a ‘presence of mind’ to follow straightforward procedures and the need for professionals to keep an ‘open mind’ in assessment are mentioned, the report fails to grasp the sheer complexity of practice: what it takes to demonstrate ‘respectful uncertainty’ with families, and, more importantly, to be inquisitive each and every day when dealing with chronic human suffering, grief and loss. Lord Laming’s somewhat simplistic answer lies in ‘doing the relatively straightforward things well.’ The report gets closer to the key issues when witnesses indicate their instinctive reactions to Kouao as ‘forceful’ and ‘manipulative’ and their observations of the relationship between Kouao and Victoria as lacking parental warmth. Intuitively, they were on the right lines and yet their feelings were rarely committed to paper, and, more crucially, were not tested out and followed through to a clear conclusion.

A more positive and interesting question to focus on is: faced with potentially devious and/or intimidating carers, what motivates staff to undertake skilled child-centred assessments, to liaise appropriately with other professionals, to record them fully and promptly, to follow up recommendations and monitor inconsistencies? The answer lies in using both sides of the brain and in having a clear appreciation of the influence of our feelings on reason. This starts with reading through the file at the office, when the purpose of the visit is planned, and continues as you turn up smartly and on time so as not to be on the defensive. It remains with you as you park your car between two abandoned, wrecked vehicles; as you look at the boarded up windows of the flat you are about to visit; as the door is not answered on the first occasion and the light goes out in the stairwell, as it did to Victoria’s social worker; and it ensures that you stay there and knock louder in order to gain access or pursue the referral back at the office with dogged determination. The point is that these feelings, perhaps of fear and/or intimidation, let you know that you have to fight your normal response to stressful, unpleasant situations every inch of the way. When you finally gain access to the child in the home, if you feel intimidated, then the key question to ask is, ‘If I feel like this, what is it like for this child living here?’

The unequivocal focus on the child leads on to the next point, which is having a clear and enduring understanding of the seriousness of the job you and your agency are employed to do. This means ensuring that your recording is always up-to-date, and before you go home each night asking yourself the question of each and every child on your caseload, ‘how would my practice be judged if X or Y or Z were to die tonight?’

What was frightening about the majority of professionals who were involved in Victoria’s case was that they simply did not appreciate the seriousness and responsibility of their jobs, whether they were senior managers or front-line staff. They went through the motions of responding to a referral, in several instances failing to make an adequate record of, indeed, any record at all. The over-stretched, stressful, and sometimes unhappy working conditions may explain why they chose to engage at such a superficial level or interpret the allegations of child maltreatment as a child in need referral. If staff feel unsupported and undervalued, they are much less likely to pursue a case in the rigorous and challenging manner that is necessary.

The next area to consider is that people lie and this capacity is not restricted to service users; some lies have very serious consequences. Indeed, during the Inquiry significant inconsistencies developed in the course of some professionals giving their evidence. With regard to Kouao’s deception, Victoria’s social worker, did not believe she would harm Victoria: ‘I am not a detective. I had no reason to question what I saw and what I was being told at that point.’
This is to miss the point of what assessment is all about. There is a growing literature on reflection, reflexivity, and the generation of multiple hypotheses around a particular case, where a careful chronology is constructed and data are collected along different lines of inquiry, checked and corroborated if necessary, until one or two particular hypotheses win out. Research skills need to be learned or re-learned, but with the added ‘feelings’ dimension given careful consideration. All staff employed in child welfare/protection work need to understand the processes through which their brain, their reason and emotions acting together, have led them to a particular hypothesis and perhaps, more importantly, why others have been discounted. This is the meaning of ‘mindful’ practice.

**Conclusion**

Finally, as both carers and staff can lie, so can they under-perform, which was so tragically evident in Kouao and Manning’s care of Victoria and the inability of several managers to deal with conflict and the under-performance of their staff. The workplace dynamics that Victoria’s social worker experienced should not have been allowed:

‘The basis of the split was the headmistress and the head girls against the social workers...It was very difficult to rebel among the schoolgirls because we were regarded as children who should be seen and not heard.’

It is small wonder then that Victoria’s lowly status and silencing mirrored that of her social worker.

Whilst Lord Laming’s proposals for structural change can go so far, they will not achieve the desired changes for vulnerable children unless and until all staff appreciate the serious nature of the role that they are asked to fulfil on behalf of society. In this regard, one particular finding from the Phase Two seminars deserves closer attention: a healthy workplace culture where managers listen to the concerns facing front-line staff and staff are encouraged to learn from their mistakes. What is needed is a much greater focus on the emotional health of organisations and the people within them such that people can learn from practice, and where conflict can be resolved constructively in the interests of better co-ordinated services for children and families. A healthy workplace will lead to staff feeling valued and supported so that they are able to work effectively, and, if necessary, assertively with other professionals. They will be able to demonstrate the ‘inquisitiveness’ and ‘mindful’ child-centred practice so lacking in Victoria’s case.

The report identifies that:

‘The future lies with those managers who can work effectively across organisational boundaries.’

However, working in the new structures will be a considerable challenge to Committee and Board members as they deal with sharing budgets, conflict and change, and other senior managers and elected members who may be as self-interested and impervious to taking responsibility as those identified in the Inquiry report itself. These senior management teams, in the words of the Inquiry report, will need to ‘walk the talk’ and be in touch with the issues facing front-line staff. Their leadership and emotional health will be crucial to the development of positive workplace cultures which support staff in providing quality services for vulnerable children and their families.

Self care surfaces for the second time

The paper represents the foundation of my inquiry into relation with ‘Otherness’; the early development of a living theory of responsibility, movement, engagement, withdrawal and self care. So far I have shown that working in the field of child abuse, and engaging with children who might be being abused is not at all easy; neither is reading or writing about it straightforward. When I read children’s files as a social worker and some of the major child death inquiries (London Borough of Brent, 1985; London Borough of Greenwich, 1987; London Borough of Lambeth, 1987), I noticed that if I read late at night I could not sleep. Over and over I would replay the chronology of events and wish that the clock would stop just before the fateful incident. I found myself becoming angry with the practitioners, and yet I knew that their workplaces, like that of Victoria Climbié’s social worker, were frequently unsupportive and that the professionals principally involved carried high caseloads.

When I was asked to write the ‘Mindful Practice’ article for childRIGHT in early 2003 (Jones, 2003a), the request coincided with writing my CARPP Diploma paper, a first person inquiry into a research proposal I had written on hypothesis formulation in family placement assessment (Jones, 2003b). I was aware that self care was an important issue for me so when I was approached by the journal to write the paper, I was assertive about what interested me about the Inquiry Report (Lord Laming, 2003). I indicated that I was not interested in writing a more mainstream, conventional review of the Inquiry based on propositional knowledge. Rather I wished to use an extended epistemology incorporating experiential and practical knowledge (Heron and Reason, 2001; Reason and Heron, 2001). The Editor gave me her full support and we negotiated a three week period to write the paper.

The first change I made to the way I read the Inquiry Report was to have a designated, comfortable place in my house to read it. This overlooked my garden so I was able to see nature when I wanted time out. Each evening at around 6.00pm I would put the report and my notes away in another room that I was not using at the time. This helped me manage the flow of engagement and withdrawal with the unfolding scenarios in Victoria’s life. Wherever possible I tried to think myself into the positions of the main people involved, and also read many of the witness statements to the Inquiry.

At the time a neighbour who had just had a baby invited me to join her on some visits to a sensory baby room set up by local health visitors. One of the difficulties of working in the field of child abuse is that you can easily become saturated with pathology. This time I wanted to balance the brutality to Victoria by her great-aunt and her great-aunt’s boyfriend, who were convicted of her murder, with seeing babies and toddlers who were
thriving in their parents’ care. Visiting the sensory baby room and being with the parents and their babies in that magical space provided the normalising experience I needed to read the Inquiry and write the article. When it was published I received a lot of positive feedback.

The section of the paper on a home visit engendering feelings of fear and/or intimidation was based on the first time I encountered the home of Graham, the child whose story I introduced in Chapter One. That visit had a profound effect on me and I used it with students to discuss the importance of feelings on home visits. It was in this context that I also used the documentary of the West children.

After the CARPP Diploma paper, I started to experiment with story, which followed a long period of writing mainly for academic publication. I realised that presentational form offered a potentially more powerful way of accessing the experiential knowledge derived from feelings. Heron and Reason (1997, p. 281) describe presentational knowing as both emerging from and being grounded in experiential knowing:

> It is evident in an intuitive grasp of the significance of our resonance with and imaging of our world as this grasp is symbolized in graphic, plastic, musical, vocal and verbal art forms. It clothes our experiential knowing of the world in the metaphors of aesthetic creation, in expressive spatiotemporal forms of imagery.

When I was asked to do a key note address at a safeguarding children conference in 2005, this was the essence of the story I told to access the feeling of that home visit.

**Entering the Child’s World**

Now it’s time to join me in my boring little car on a depressingly grey and wet afternoon, where you really don’t quite know what you will face:

> It was damp, dull October afternoon with a veil of fine rain. As I turned off the main road onto the housing estate, I entered a labyrinth of ever smaller and rougher roads which led to deep ‘pockets of deprivation’, discreetly hidden from the smart cars that sped up and down the highway.

> I was getting closer to the address, and as I turned the corner, my heartbeat quickened: I saw the block of flats that had ‘225-245’ above the front door. There were three windows on the ground floor to the right of the entrance that caught my eye: one was boarded up and two had rags for curtains, which looked like they had been carefully coated in dirty chip fat. I prayed it would not be that flat.

> My mouth seemed strangely dry. I needed somewhere to park. The car in front was a burnt out wreck and the one behind was abandoned. What would happen to my car, carefully chosen to be boring for this very reason? Would it still be here when I came out? I carefully parked it between the two and hoped that somehow it would dissolve into the misty greyness of the afternoon.

> I gathered my recording book and other details of the case, which I had been allocated to me by the Court as the child’s Guardian ad litem. A quick glance at my watch told me I had a minute or two to go until the appointed time: it was essential not to be late. Lateness can put you on ‘the back foot’ as you start by

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10 Some factual details have been changed to match the anonymised chronology in Chapter One and protect the identity of Graham. The learning from the home visit is unchanged.
apologising to the carer(s); it also signifies a lack of respect. Deep breath out. A further glance at the watch and it’s time to go. Another deep breath out.

A brisk walk down the concrete path with worn patches of grass on either side, dotted with discarded cigarette ends; I enter the hall of the flats. In that moment I catch the number of the flat on the battered door. It is that flat. A quick glance around the grey concrete stairwell and I scan the graffiti on the wall to the left of the door, “Harold is a wanker”.

So why is Harold a wanker according to the author of the scrawl?

He is the child’s father and the person I have come to see.

The battered door has what looks like dog shit smeared over it; and I have to knock on it. A feeling of revulsion and dread wells up in the pit of my stomach. My lips and mouth are now completely dry and taste like cardboard. I brace myself. Somewhat gingerly, I knock the door going for the cracked dirty cream paintwork between the brown crescent-shaped smears. The lesser of two evils, perhaps?

Darkness as the light in the stairwell goes out. Silence from the flat inside.

A sigh of relief, albeit temporary; my shoulders drop slightly. A temporary thought flashes across my brain: “Thank goodness there’s nobody in; I could leave right now and wouldn’t have to do the visit.” It’s tempting but I’ve been here before: “Jocelyn, you need to stick it out.”

So there is no easy escape into the relative safety of my boring little car.

I press the switch in the hall again. The light comes on. I sense that there is somebody in. Are they pretending to be out?

I knock louder. A shuffling sound from inside. Some muffled voices. The door opens slowly an inch or two and I introduce myself. Identification is demanded of me. Strange? This is the first time I’ve ever been asked for ID and I had sent a letter on headed stationery in advance and I’m exactly on time. Anyhow, it’s no problem and I am permitted a view down the corridor to the room where the voices are coming from.

There is no light bulb in the corridor and a thick, yellow smoky haze is all that can be seen at the end. I panic. As an asthma sufferer, the thought of sitting in a smoke-filled room with those strangers brings still more dread. Will I be able to breathe? Why are they there?

The short walk down the dark corridor feels like a descent into another, as yet unknown world. All my natural instincts are telling me to get the hell out of here. And yet I have to fight them every inch of the way, whilst not directly exposing myself to overt danger. I ask Harold to lead the way so that my exit is clear.

The sitting room, if that’s what you would call it, is overwhelmingly a dirty yellow brown and smoke-filled. The wallpaper is torn and there are brown smears which look like shit all over it at a child’s height. The once beige synthetic carpet is matted together into a dirty blackness: years of ingrained filth have found their niche and give a sticky matt black charcoal finish in the most worn areas. Between Harold’s armchair and the fire and in the fire there is a light dusting of cigarette ash. Hasn’t anybody pointed out that the fire is electric coal effect, not the real thing?

So I am directed to the brown plastic sofa next to a woman with false teeth and shrunken gums, probably in her late thirties. The sofa plastic has been shredded and sticks into the back of my thighs. I am beginning to feel sore after
only a few minutes. How long can I endure this? I want to leave, but I cannot and will not: I have a job to do.

And so the verbal assault on me starts, perhaps even intimidation. A concerted effort from the pair of them to get me to back off and to force my gaze towards the adult agenda: “How dreadful of them police and social services to take my Graham away to that children’s home.”

Well, I think to myself, he is only eight, has learning difficulties and a history of neglect and was found at the home of a convicted paedophile, a near neighbour.

Eventually, the woman gets bored and leaves after saying her piece. She lives just down the road with another convicted sex offender.

Now it’s just the two of us.

I notice the way Harold wheezes and hobbles every time I move to the child’s agenda. He’s in his sixties and makes sure I am fully aware of his seemingly endless list of health problems. When I start focusing on him and his problems, the wheezing, spluttering and staggering miraculously stop. Interesting. There is some stage-managing going on here.

Yes, Graham did smear on the walls, but predictably it’s all the child’s fault: “He’s a bugger, you know.”

I force myself to look around the rest of the flat. The kitchen has plates piled up to shoulder height in the sink. Scraps of mouldy food wedged to white plastic. A frying pan with a cooked egg immortalised in a solid white fat speckled with black flecks of burnt food from a prior age.

The bath is filled with soiled clothes. The white of pyjama stripes barely discernable in a brown putrid soup. The edge of the toilet is cracked. I dare not even look.

The beds have no sheets or pillows on them, just dirty eiderdowns.

The first visit almost done. I linger a moment longer. I feel dreadful. If I feel like this, what do I think it was like for Graham living here for eight years of his life? Graham, whose mother died of pneumonia on that very bed when he was just five.

Remember this.

As I leave, my mind is full. Of intimidation, of manipulation, of poverty and deprivation, of child neglect, of possible child sexual abuse and just who is this man who says he’s Graham’s father?

There is darkness outside now, but I can breathe again. The cool of the rain and the freshness of the damp air hit my face. My exit is clear: nobody seems to have tampered with my boring little car.

The backs of my sore thighs sink with relief into the synthetic smoothness of the driver’s seat. The engine starts and I speed away onto the main road. So for a few days, I leave behind what was Graham’s home for a world that is more familiar. I return to the giggles and capers of my two daughters in their nightclothes, fresh from their bath. An early evening disco in front of the open fire in a ‘normal’ front room, soft shadows dancing on the walls in the warm glow of the flickering heat.

After story and bedtime, I record more details of the visit. The question uppermost in my mind, the question I need to answer is: What was it like for
Graham to live in that flat in that neighbourhood with sex offenders as his near neighbours? Other questions surface and buzz around my brain: Why was this child not removed earlier? What did the various professionals involved think they were doing? What does Graham understand about his mother and her death . . . at home? Why didn’t his alleged father seek medical help for his mother when she was seriously ill? Is this man really his father or did he seek to exploit the vulnerability of Graham’s mother, a woman with learning difficulties who had already lost her twin daughters to social services because the children’s father was a Schedule one offender?

Reflection

Whenever I tell this story to a professional audience, there is always a giggle right round the room when I describe my internal dialogue around the first knock on the door, and the temptation to disappear as fast as I could ‘into the safety of my boring little car’. Virtually all practitioners have been there, perhaps slightly ‘off-colour’ that day or pressed for time or just plain scared. And yet, it is very difficult to reveal vulnerability, the effects of stress, or plain disgust about a family home within a ‘caring’ profession such as social work. This point is well made by Tony Morrison (Morrison, 1990, p.255): ‘Many of the fundamental survival messages have been along the lines of ‘don’t feel, be strong, don’t admit mistakes and coping is professional’ . . . It is precisely these messages that create added stress to staff.’ More recently, Harry Ferguson reflects on the dynamics in the Climbié case, and argues that the psychological and emotional aspects of child protection work require organisational climates that support workers ‘to take care of body and soul’ (Ferguson, 2005, p.794).

Presentational form, as this story shows, can take us much deeper into experiential knowledge of the type that is rarely found in text books on social work or child protection practice. Winter et al. (1999, p.180) discuss the importance of the creative imagination within professional education: ‘We possess a general capacity for representing our experience in artistic form; we suggest that in order to realise our capacity for reflection we can (and should) draw upon our intuitive grasp of aesthetic processes as well as our capacity for conceptual and logical analysis’.

It was talking about this home visit and then the process of writing a story about it over 10 years later that made me more consciously aware of how I used my emotions and senses in an assessment of a child’s circumstances. How the rational part of my mind was influenced, frequently for the better, by really ‘feeling’ a child’s circumstances (see Figure One for the visual representation of this learning).

My heightened level of consciousness, fuelled by what I had seen, smelt, tasted, heard and felt, propelled me into a deep concern for Graham, as a vulnerable and neglected child who had been largely invisible to previous professionals: ‘Consciousness is, in effect, the key to a life examined . . . at its most complex and elaborate level, consciousness helps us develop a concern for other selves and improve the art of life’ (Damasio, 2000, p.5).

At the end of the visit I came away with a determination to ‘get to the bottom’ of Graham’s circumstances and to understand why none of the professionals had intervened earlier. You may recall in Chapter One how I asked the key practitioners how they each felt about visiting his home. They replied that they hated going there, more so than any other house.

I formed a close relationship with Graham, where he started to reveal some of the experiences he had witnessed. I now see this relationship as based on Martin Buber’s twofold attitude to being. An attitude to relation that comes from a fragmented sense of self Buber calls I-It. This is where a person, for whatever reasons, distances her/himself
from the other. The interpersonal is characterised by a stress on difference. In the I-You mode of existence the interpersonal is permeated: ‘This constitutes a movement to relation and establishes in the interpersonal space a quality Buber refers to as “the between”. “The between” then, belongs to the I-You relation’ (Avnon, 1993, p.57). Buber also develops the notion of the “basic word”; “basic words” project into the external world the state of a person’s inner being. As such they reflect the underlying attitude or inner state of a person as they enunciate rather than merely the words s/he utters (Avnon, 1993).

However the I-You attitude to relation cannot be kept up indefinitely. People move between states of being, between fragmentation and inner unity. Buber draws a distinction between two different attitudes to being: the “ego oriented I” and the “person oriented I”:

For an ego oriented I, self-knowledge is knowledge of a limited, partial aspect of one’s existence yet considering it the whole; for the person-oriented I, self-knowledge is knowledge of self as being. The person-oriented I is one who can shift from an erroneous perception of him- or herself as the center of being, to a recognition of relation as the center of being. (Avnon 1993, p.58)

During one session with Graham, which happened to be on my birthday, he started to describe and draw a violent scene which he had witnessed. As he talked and drew vigorously using mainly a thick red pen, I was aware of the energy between us and in the room as I helped him tell me what had happened. After what seemed a long time to me, although perhaps not longer than an hour or so, I began wishing that Graham would become tired thus bringing the session to a natural close. I had reached saturation point: it was my birthday after all and a celebration awaited. I wanted to go home.

I motioned to Graham that perhaps it was time to start putting things away, but he said “You’re not going. Want you to play.” 11 I realised that birthday or no birthday I had to stay to help ease him out of the traumatic experience he had described. I regretted upon that occasion holding the session in his bedroom at the Children’s Home, because he had to sleep in that space after I left him, alone with the memories of what he had told me. This was one of the first times when I really appreciated the importance of the right physical space to promote relation and yet provide safe boundaries for me and the other person.

For various reasons prior to the Care Order being granted, Graham was not placed with foster parents, and yet finding, assessing and supporting foster carers and adopters is vital: looked after children (or children in care), like Graham, often have complex needs due to earlier child abuse and neglect and deserve the very best subsequent start in life.

Towards the end of 2002, as a result of a student on the post qualifying programme enthusing about the teaching session on hypothesis formulation using the West children documentary (BBC 1, 1995) and Graham’s story, I was asked to put together a proposal to improve the quality of family placement (foster carer and adopter) assessments in a council’s social services department. This was written about three months prior to the Mindful Practice paper (Jones, 2003a). The proposal was based on my interest in the use of qualitative research methods and hypothesis formulation in assessing children and families, and formed part of the Diploma transfer paper ‘What lies beneath a research proposal’ (Jones, 2003b). It brought together my desire to be facilitate a Cooperative

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11 Quote taken from my contemporaneous notes of the interview.
Inquiry group with first person reflection on the text highlighted in bold within the proposal (see Appendix Two).

Looking at the proposal again now some four years later, it seems conservatively expressed, for example, I did not make reference to the sensory nature of social work assessments, to intuition or to the extended epistemology of action research. At the time I was still working as an academic and I perhaps took refuge in more familiar, and as I saw it then, ‘respectable’ territory to argue the case for the study. However, I note how I ensured the care of participants in the study, and included ethical guidelines for data collection and storage.

The project took a long time to be approved and I had lost attachment to it after the Diploma paper, because the process of first person inquiry around the proposal had significantly increased my awareness of epistemological and ontological questions; my ethical orientation in the world; and matters which required deeper inquiry and which I address in later ‘Of love and loss’ chapters (see Chapters Five and Six). Although I still wanted to do the project I was accepting of a ‘No’ decision, because I was grateful to have had the opportunity to write the Diploma paper around the key issues within the proposal.

In the middle of 2003 the project was approved for an autumn start. However, this coincided with the beginning of a period of substantial transition for me when my job came under threat of redundancy, something I had never imagined could or would ever happen to me. For the seven or so months of uncertainty until I left academic life, my confidence was very low; I used two different mentors to support me during the early stages of the project. It was when I left the regulated world of academia in 2004 that I began to open up to emergence more fully within a participatory worldview.

During January 2004, part way through the project, I made one key change to promote increased ownership of findings; this was to co-facilitate the two focus groups, one with approved foster carers and the other with approved adopters. Two members of the action research group, both of whom had no previous involvement with those in the focus groups, put themselves forward, and we arranged to meet at the end of February. This coincided with a long awaited break just after I had left academia.

First steps in embracing emergence

It was just three weeks after I had been made redundant. Within 24 hours of the settlement I went down with flu after months of holding myself together, feeling the tension of bracing myself every day as I faced the unknown. My body was crying out to be taken care of. But more than that I was beginning to reclaim my self from 15 years working as a university academic, where I had fitted my experiential knowledge into an accepted theoretical discourse for peer review journals.

Given the unprecedented stress I had been under and the financial insecurity I was facing as a single parent, I am only too well aware that my story at that time could have easily degenerated into a chaos narrative where I became more unwell. Through a process of what Frank (1995, p. 65) calls ‘reflexive monitoring’, where the past and the present are continually readjusted to create a coherent self story, I started to sew the seeds of a healing quest narrative referred to earlier (Frank, 1995). So towards the end of February 2004 I took myself off for a few days. The journey did not start well: I was already late
leaving home and had not bought the right map of the route. Now I was travelling in the darkness of early evening across unfamiliar terrain.


I got lost on a tiny single carriageway lane as a crescent moon darkness descended on the landscape, and then took at least three other wrong turns before I found the tiny lane leading to the house. I was cross with myself for being so disorganised; arriving in the dark is not a good idea when you’ve never been in the area before. And then something amazing happened. A grey shape flew low over my car: an owl. But this time it stopped and then flew even lower over the hedgerow to my right, just two to three metres from my car; stationery from time to time, hovering over some petrified mammal or bird below, and perfectly illuminated in the full beam of my headlights. After a couple of minutes it disappeared and then returned even closer into the bright light of the headlamps . . .

If I hadn’t been so disorganised, I might never have seen that owl. Perhaps I was meant to experience the chaos of that beautiful early evening, of taking risks and it not quite turning out as I had planned. And then in the end experiencing something very special, which I would not have seen if I had left on time and, with a good map, arrived in daylight.

Is this a metaphor for facilitation in cooperative inquiry?

As ever I had planned to do too much that night by way of preparation for the meeting with Helen and Kate, the two family placement workers: we were due to meet the next morning to discuss how we would facilitate the sessions with the foster carers and adopters. I had not had enough time to read the three research reviews on adoption and foster care thoroughly, and then Helen arrived half an hour early.

26th February 2004, written 27th February

I didn’t have time to see if there should be any questions arising from them [the research reviews] that we should be asking foster carers and adopters. Again things hadn’t quite gone according to plan so I had to think carefully how we, rather than I, could glean information from the research reviews. Helen and I chatted and I gave her the review on adoption to flick through while I read the draft foster care review. Kate arrived. She was tense and apologised for having to keep her mobile on for a while to receive an important call. Two or three phone calls later the phones were switched off and we started to talk. Stories about cases and how they recorded their thoughts and feelings emerged. I gradually stopped feeling so responsible (and guilty) and realised that this task could be shared with Helen and Kate. They were pleased to have the reviews and suggested copying them for the three [geographical] areas [represented in the group]. And then we discussed the co-facilitation; the conversation moved around a bit, but there was a flow, with the energy of chaos at times, [and yet it was effortless]. As we meandered in dialogue, we covered all the areas we needed to cover. Was this another sign that I should trust in the process of dialogue and exchange? That out of what seems like chaos and being out of control, good things emerge: ideas, plans and owls hunting in the darkness.

That meeting with Helen and Kate in that place was a turning point in my understanding of process, dialogue and ownership: I had started the process of loosening tightly held beliefs about having a defined agenda and maintaining control; a new way seeing, inquiring and acting was beginning to emerge (Rudolph, Taylor and Goody, 2001).
That afternoon I slept, and in the evening I quietly observed my surroundings:

26th February 2004

It’s a long time since I’ve experienced a sunset; really experienced it. To watch the beauty unfolding and the light and landscape changing minute by minute is a meditation on the beauty of the universe. So I sat and watched for half an hour, an hour, I don’t know, as the light gradually left this patch of the world to be shared with others. And then I did half an hour of yoga, stretching and relaxing my body at the end of the day.

And so to bed . . . the delight of leaving the blinds open so that I could see the stars twinkling in the dark, clear sky . . . and in the morning waking to horizontal blizzards along the river . . .

The next morning I put on my boots, fleece and anorak to walk in the snow: my body pushing against the power of the wind in one direction, the snow flakes icy and sharp as they pressed into my cheeks; and then as I returned along the river bank, the wind gripping round my back like a vice and propelling me forward. Once again in a special wild place, I sensed the importance of my connection with nature, being blown about by the wind, and embracing the unexpected:

As we return to our senses, we gradually discover our sensory perceptions to be simply our part of a vast, interpenetrating webwork of perceptions and sensations borne by countless other bodies – supported, that is, not just by ourselves, but by icy streams tumbling down granite slopes, by owl wings and lichens, and by the unseen, imperturbable wind.(Abram 1996, p. 65)

I returned from that short break with a new found sense of confidence in my ability to be receptive to emergence and the natural world around me. I resumed practising yoga regularly again, incorporating additional breathing exercises to support and focus my facilitation practice in the second half of the project (Agombar, 1999).

During the co-facilitation of the focus groups with foster carers and adopters, Helen, Kate and I began to discover how workers deal with their emotions when placing looked after children in permanent placements.

Mapping the emotional terrain of family placement assessment

One of the key findings of the family placement assessment study was the way social workers negotiate the object/ subject divide in relation to the children they are seeking to place. In order to distance themselves from the child as a person and their particular life history and pain, they objectify him/her.

This objectification of the children was summed up in a conversation between the adopters in their focus group:

It's just about the way the children . . . are discussed.

Yes. As if they're cars or they're objects. I mean social workers . . . can't get emotionally tied to children because it would destroy them . . .
It's like a second hand car really. You know "If this child isn't the one for you, you can say no and we won't hold it against you."

Yes . . . it was a bit of a shock really . . . how the children were almost described . . . I mean foster carers were absolutely brilliant, but it's as if they weren't personalities. But I suppose they're not, I suppose they're not to the social workers, they can't be.

When we think of children, we think of little children you know, not objects. It's possibly like being a doctor or surgeon. (Jones, 2004, p. 16)

As I have mentioned previously, many looked after children have had troubled or abusive childhoods which can create particularly challenging or disturbed behaviour. There is also the question of reading about the childhoods of these children as they unfold in their files, (see, for example, Graham's chronology in Chapter One). These factors, taken together, can erect defensive barriers in which practitioners simply go ‘through the motions’ rather than really engage with the child and her/his circumstances.

Conducting the adult attachment interview (George, Kaplan and Main, 1985) with applicants similarly impacted on the personal lives of some of the family placement workers; these interviews assessed the applicants’ attachment style to generate a better fit between them and the child (Howe et al, 1999; Bifulco, 2002). As applicants’ childhood memories of their relationships with their own parents were probed, workers struggled to maintain their own professional boundaries: the subject-object divide was crossed as the act of the asking the questions pierced the normal defences each worker had in place.

One practitioner put it this way:

I said to my husband I just feel like I’ve been eaten alive, I need some space, so just gave myself space doing the chores and other things I needed to do. And just space out, like I sat in the car park here, I arrived early to at least dictate half of that visit . . . But that’s not recognised in our work that we need space after a home visit and space to offload. (Jones, 2004, p. 26)

The consequences of mismatching a child with adopters, referred to as a disruption or placement breakdown, were agreed as potentially devastating and had the power to numb a worker’s emotions. Several practitioners spoke about their concerns when a placement broke down:

...For the first time I’ve had this breakdown of the introduction of an eight month old baby with a childless couple. And I’m just absolutely gob-smacked. I couldn’t have foreseen this coming ... any way . . . which way . . . I couldn’t believe it could happen. (Jones, 2004, p. 22)

Could I just say about disruptions generally that the impact on you as a worker if you have them or if you have more than one quickly because . . . it's a time when you need . . . an awful lot of support because you do look to yourself, you do blame yourself, you do feel a lot of guilt and it's a very difficult position to be in, to support people. And actually you might be quite angry with them and upset with them. And if they haven't been honest with you or truthful with you that hurts as well.
How I’ve coped with it is I’ve spent less time in the office . . . I’m doing that extra bit at home so I’m just away from the pressure and the hassle. And I’m working slower there’s no doubt about it, I’ve got people I should’ve contacted yonks ago and I haven’t . . . So you actually have to . . . take the time yourself, don’t you?

Another person said they “crawled into a corner”. (Jones, 2004, p. 32)

Their words reinforce the earlier point I have made about the importance of self care in this kind of work and support to manage professional engagement where the ‘Other’ is reached but not at personal expense. Where a person is unsupported, work can become psychologically consuming. Fineman (2003, p. 145) refers to this condition as a state of burnout: ‘a condition of physical and emotional exhaustion combined with feelings of hopelessness and futility about work’. In my experience, this reaction to stress is common in social work. It explains why workers often have higher sickness records than other local authority staff, and go ‘through the motions’ of home visits: to engage with chronic human pain and suffering on a daily basis would challenge any one of us.

**Ethical issues**

Within the proposal I had addressed the main ethical issues relating to group members (see Appendix Two), but I had perhaps underestimated how applicants might view their family relationships, defined by social workers and in the public domain. Prior to publication of the report I took particular care, through the family placement workers, to ensure that the two male applicants, whose relationships with their mothers came under scrutiny by the practitioners, were content for their relationships to be described in this way. The relevant sections of the report are included below:

One member of the group had received training on the AAI [Adult Attachment Interview]; and she reported back on how she had used the five memories exercise with a couple: each person was asked to give five adjectives to describe their relationship with each parent. The male applicant struggled with this task and the FPW [Family Placement Worker] was given vague words to describe his mother; this was in sharp contrast to the female applicant’s memory of her childhood relationships with her parents. The FPW decided to conclude the AAI interview at that point and take it up again on the next visit. On this visit she moved onto other areas: significant previous relationships and present relationship. She then moved back into the AAI on a subsequent visit starting with, “How has childhood influenced the kind of person you are today?” and then asked, “Why do you think your parents behaved the way that they did?” This generated valuable information from the female applicant, where she reflected on her parents’ marriage and family relationships. The male applicant became much more engaged and, just as the FPW was leaving, “dropped in” that his mother had had a breakdown, which had not been mentioned during the individual history gathering. The FPW returned two days later to probe more deeply. The information she gained offered an insight into family relationships around the time he was eleven years old, and generated different hypotheses to explain the relationship between him and his mother, her breakdown, his behaviour at the time and if it was a problem now. Her view was that the issue was now irrelevant, but had the couple shared this information and should she include the information in the report? If so, how might it be viewed by others reading it? Could it be wrongly construed and therefore potentially stigmatising?
The FPW used her supervision sessions to address these questions. The detail of the male applicant’s early history was not included in the final report as it was not felt to be of relevance now; in addition the FPW was able to confirm that his partner was well aware of his early and subsequent history. She confirmed that she had known about this beforehand.

The FPW thought that the AAI had helped her understand the male applicant’s avoidant attachment; she found that sometimes it was more difficult to access the emotional, reflective side of men, who frequently remembered activities with a parent such as fishing, but not a lot else . . . Following this feedback others have been encouraged to experiment with this tool. One FPW used it very effectively with another male applicant to find out about his relationship with his mother:

‘I tried the five adjectives and it was quite interesting because the male partner had a very sort of closed off view of his mother because of his experiences as a child. She was quite distant and . . . they lived on a sheep station . . . [on another continent] and they moved back to England. But his mother was originally from [the other continent] and I think by the sounds of it was culturally isolated. She’d gone from like a . . . rural, in the middle of nowhere space to . . . a country that . . . operates differently. And she had mental health problems and she was so, therefore . . . distanced and flat in her emotion towards the children . . . His parents . . . divorced and the children chose to go and live with their father until the time they went to boarding school . . . Unfortunately his mother died last year and . . . he was disappointed in his relationship with his mother, he, you know it was more he went to see her out of a duty and not out of a love or a compassion for her as she got older and . . . more ill. And it opened all of that up, those five adjectives, it was just really useful.’

But the FPW urged caution in where to place the tool in the interview:

‘. . . I didn't do it as a first off, I did their individual history gathering, then I did that. So I'd actually got lots of information about childhood, mum, dad, granny, granddad, all the other stuff you gather and then I did the questions. And that actually gave me a mental map of where they were to start with and it gave them sufficient time to be in the frame of mind to be thinking on that area. So although the questions themselves came as a bit of "Oh," because they need to be, it's supposed to be a surprise to the unconscious, the questions. They were actually mentally in that space in time and thinking about their past, their childhoods, their family experiences . . .' (Jones 2004, pp. 25-27)

Although I had the informed consent of all the applicants whose assessments were discussed in the group, I was aware that the report was going to be in the public domain and the men would recognise the discussions about their relationships even though they had been anonymised and other key identifying characteristics changed. I asked the two practitioners to check the draft extracts of the report with the men prior to publication. In both instances they were content with how their relationships with their mothers had been described. For something personally as important this, I, as the person responsible for the well-being of all participants in the study, even those I had not met, needed to act in their interests. As Reason and Torbert (2001, p.6) remind us: ‘. . . We would argue that the most significant question any human being faces is not how to construct and deconstruct formal research projects and texts, but rather how to act in daily life, whether or not the questions or the
evidence is clear'. This theme of ‘right’ action in the moment is one which I will return to in the remaining chapters of the thesis when I consider meanings of response and responsibility [response-ability] within my living theory.

Reflection on response to findings

As an action researcher I was disappointed with the response of the commissioning council to the family placement study’s findings. There was a one-off dissemination event built into the study design, which was co-hosted with members of the inquiry group. A number of the key messages indicated the need for a more child-centred and co-ordinated inter-agency & intra-agency effort to meet the needs of the council’s most vulnerable children & young people, and yet after the dissemination event the impetus at middle and senior management levels seemed to tail off despite ongoing enthusiasm and commitment from members of the action research group. The manager who had commissioned the study left to go to another position towards the end of the project and the person who took over from her as Chair of the Advisory Group retired around the time the report was published. I knew, from a previous piece of research, that the departure of key personnel part way through a project could jeopardise confidence in the study and how the findings were responded to. Despite phone conversations and email correspondence with the new manager, I was unable to influence how the findings from the study were responded to and most importantly acted upon to improve services to looked after children & young people who are fostered and/or adopted. The concluding paragraph of the report indicates some of my frustration at this lack of action:

Implementation and Dissemination

The Advisory group has operated at the interface between the Project and the Department. Thus far it has played a pivotal role in discussing and acknowledging the messages contained in this study at the interim stage. It is now timely for an Implementation group, involving senior management, to perhaps replace the Advisory Group, in order to prioritise, endorse and progress the recommendations contained in the report and agree a dissemination strategy. As part of the dissemination strategy it is recommended that those members of the Inquiry group who have expressed an interest in dissemination are given the opportunity to take the project out to those who have not been directly involved with it. This is commensurate with the methodology of the project, which promotes participation and ownership of findings at local level. (Jones, 2004, p.51)

Some key learning for me was to build wider ownership at the outset of a project, and to be more assertive about what I expected from a commissioning council at the end. Why did I do participative research? There was a clear sense of accountability to the people who contributed to any project: in this case many had shared their professional and personal vulnerabilities and disappointments in narrative form. This was rich qualitative data which went beyond surface issues and had the potential to transform services for looked after children and young people. At the very least all contributors deserved to know the council’s response to the study’s findings.
To end

This chapter has tracked my evolving living theory of responsibility, movement, engagement, withdrawal and self care through the writing of the paper on the Victoria Climbié Inquiry; addressing the learning from Graham’s story at a deeper level using presentational form; and working on the Family Placement Assessment Study. I have explored ways of approaching and thinking about assessment. I have also shown a more conscious practice as an action researcher in care of the self; how I began to work with emergence and awareness of relation with the natural environment; and how I was beginning to think about dissemination and implementation of research findings as being fundamentally about respecting participants’ contributions, followed by a swift response and action on the part of the commissioning council. What were they going to do differently, why and by when?

Through the narratives of the family placement workers, I began to appreciate the power of the Adult Attachment Interview to access childhood memories. The project caused me to reflect on my father’s war narratives; their influence on me at different stages of my life; and to revisit the sense I had made of his life at his funeral in May 1999. Over and over in mind turned the question, “Why do you think your father behaved the way he did?” This also coincided with the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II, which offered an unparalleled opportunity to engage with surviving soldiers’ stories from that time. This extended first person inquiry is the subject of the next chapter, which returns to the Russian landscape, 200 km south east of Moscow.
Chapter Five: Of Love and Loss II – inward, backward & reflection on place

‘... War is about people, those who survive and those who don’t’.  
(Selwyn, 1995, Dedication)

... Now in my dial of glass appears  
the soldier who is going to die.  
He smiles and moves about in ways,  
his mother knows, habits of his.  
The wires touch his face; I cry NOW.  
Death like a familiar hears

and look, has made a man of dust  
of a man of flesh. This sorcery  
I do. Being damned I am amused  
to see the centre of love diffused  
and the waves of love travel into vacancy.  
How easy it is to make a ghost . . .  
Tunisia-Cairo, 1943

Keith Douglas, killed in action, Normandy, 9th June 1944  
(Selwyn, 1995, p.34)

Introduction

This chapter marks a deepening in my first person inquiry practice when I open the World War II Pandora’s Box ‘Of love and loss’ sitting beneath the Russian War Memorial on the collage (see Figure One). I track the influence on me of my father’s war narratives, his war memorabilia, and growing up in a household with a father who had some symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). I begin by describing my sensuous involvement with the landscape of war in Russia, and then in the Danube river valley a year later. This bodily engagement with place deepens my understanding of the impact of World War II beyond the biased historical perspective I had grown up with. It also helps me understand the union of mind and body, and relation with the natural world: I become more aware of a sensuous reciprocal relationship with my immediate environment.

Coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the end of the war, I fire my imagination by watching and reading survivors’ accounts of the war; I alternate by grounding my interpretations in historical accounts; and I track the process of inquiry and self care. These methods form part of my living theory of inquiry. My writings during this time show the imprecise nature of sense making as my emotions, necessary to make connections and to imagine, were balanced by a sifting, analytic process of understanding.

I use story to invite you, the reader, to visit my childhood home called ‘Bellerophon’, named after the Greek warrior who rode Pegasus, the symbol of the Airborne Forces. I follow with a theoretical discussion of PTSD and reflect on whether my responses to my father’s killing in war are normal. Finally, I recognise the need to check out my
assumptions about becoming and being a prisoner of war as part of a second person inquiry which I describe in the next chapter of the thesis 'Of love and loss III'.

Self-reflective inquiry practices

I have indicated that one of my main concerns was to understand more about why my father behaved the way he did. Within that I knew that I had his war narratives etched on my brain from a very early age. When I constructed the collage in January 2002 I was aware that, under the cut out newspaper headline ‘Of love and loss’ by the War Memorial in Russia, there was the potential for an extensive inquiry into these war narratives. This is my attempt to make sense of these narratives and the home I grew up in.

During the inquiry I used many of the suggestions put forward by Marshall (1999, 2001) on living life as inquiry and self-reflective inquiry practices. She reminds us that:

Each person’s inquiry approach will be distinctive; disciplines cannot be cloned or copied. Rather, each person must identify and craft his or her own qualities and practices. The questioning then becomes how to do them well, how to conduct them with quality and rigour appropriate to their forms, and how to articulate the inquiry processes and sense making richly and non-defensively. (Marshall 2001, p. 433)

During this phase I made much more extensive use of my handwritten research journal, and meditation journal. I also generated what I term ‘writings’ onto the computer to track my sense making as events unfolded. This kind of research holds open the boundary between personal and professional, which may become overly confessional to no purpose or generative (Marshall, 1999). Marshall (2001) describes this self-reflective process as working with inner arcs of attention; this part of my inquiry, drawing on the work of Clandinin and Connolly (1994, 2000) is very much about a focus *inwards* and *backwards* with attention to *place*. In the next chapter I use the learning to pursue outer arcs of attention which reach out to others to check out my assumptions, whilst simultaneously pursuing inner arcs of attention to alter these assumptions in the light of further conversation (Marshall, 2001).

Reviewing the self-reflective notes and journal entries I made during this first phase on some challenging personal issues, I needed to make editorial decisions about what to put in the public domain and what to exclude. Marshall (2001, p. 433) refers to this first person analysis as a further ‘process of self-talk’ in the sifting of ‘noted and remembered array’. As I have indicated in Chapter Two, these decisions are guided by an ethics of self care and concern for those who I love or have loved.

Inquiry into the landscape of war

When you look at the beautiful lake (or ‘pond’ as the Russians called it) where we swam in that hot summer of 2001 or the delicate pink flowers and fluffy seed heads of Rosebay Willowherb in the evening sunshine, it is difficult to imagine what took place there over 60 years earlier.
Just behind the house to the left in the group photograph, there is a path which runs through the woodland to the lake, a distance of perhaps just over a kilometre.

When I walked there the first day I was aware that there were trenches to my right: the ground, now heavily cloaked in undergrowth, rose in a line for several metres and then fell away quite abruptly. I had walked in a battlefield before when I had visited Oosterbeek, near Arnhem, in September 1974; it was then the 30th anniversary. This was the place where my father was wounded and captured in September 1944. If you look carefully in Oosterbeek, you can see the impact of shell holes on the shape of the landscape and sometimes scars on the trees from shrapnel wounds.

In Russia the unnatural shapes of war ravaged landscape were instantly recognisable to me. At the end of the path, you cross a gravel road, and almost opposite is a small wooded clearing. The ‘pond’ is now in view across the wildflower meadow leading down to the water. In the middle of the clearing there is a picnic table, not unusual you think, but then there is also a monument with flowers in the middle and around it large metal tablets with hundreds of names carved into them. The one nearest has a red star on it. I imagine the families that have come and sat here over the months and years, all they have left of their loved ones whose remains are scattered all over this place.

Some of the memorials in this area have old machine guns on them with the helmets of the fallen placed on top of them; somebody’s son wore that helmet and the loss suddenly hits you. Between vast birch forests there are swathes of heathland punctuated by the occasional large red metal star, perhaps on a mound of long straw like grass, to signify where a battle took place and the loss of life.
But now let’s return to the gravel track by the “pond”. Just down the track, there is a small hamlet of three or perhaps four wooden houses. Some days we visit a woman, perhaps in her sixties, who lives in one of the houses. It’s late morning. As we approach her front door we see several empty vodka bottles, which have been slung onto the ground. At this point it is easy to judge and the label “alcoholic” instantly comes to mind.

We knock and nobody comes at first. Then we knock again, louder this time, and she comes to the door looking very tired and hung over. Nevertheless we are welcomed in and as she cups our faces in her hands and kisses us all over our cheeks, I am struck by the softness of her skin and the tenderness of her welcome. I learn about her story: as a very young child she had to endure living in a hole in the ground for three years during the fierce fighting across this landscape. This woman lost all her family in World War II: her brothers, one killed at the Battle of Stalingrad, and her parents.

At the end of our visit I feel nothing but compassion for her, and I will always remember the touch of her silky soft skin against mine as she embraced me and welcomed me into her home.

On another occasion, I was asked by one of the young Science students at the University summer camp in the community what my father did in the war. Initially this seemed to me such a strange question from a young man who was not more than 20 years old. How many 20 year olds in the UK would ask this question of a foreigner? We sat and talked for a long time, and I told him some of my father’s stories about the Russian Prisoners of War (PoWs) in the next compound at Stalag XIB, Fallingbostel, near Hannover. I had grown up with these stories of starving Russian men who fought each other for a piece of chocolate thrown over the wire by the British Prisoners of War, and who had food scraps tipped onto the bare earth and ate them like animals from the ground. I don’t remember whether I sanitised the stories for him. Probably.

We talked about the immense sacrifice of the Russian people: 29 million were lost in World War II. I was interested in why the Russians had boycotted the 50th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy in June 1994: history had taught me up until that point that we, the British, with some last minute help from the Americans, had won the war. I was wrong: the significance of the Eastern front in weakening the German army had been airbrushed from our war history. I told him this. That evening I remembered a D Day anniversary stamp I had kept in my purse from 1994, still in mint condition. The next morning at breakfast, in a moment of stillness, I gifted the stamp, a symbol of remembrance, love and peace, to this young Russian man.

The experience at the Children’s Community also signified embodied knowing in another way, which I have touched on in the ‘Sweeties in Russia’ story in Chapter Three and the effect just the teeniest bit of hunger had on my integrity. When I ate in the dining area in the community, it was the first time in my life I was aware of food as mere fuel: there was no pleasure in eating at all. I was also struck by the similarity of some of the meals we ate to the food my father had as a prisoner of war: the thin potato soup and the dry black rye bread in particular. When he had recounted his ‘food stories’, I had not appreciated their significance and could frequently be quite dismissive: hunger is a wretched experience.

12 In March 2006 when I visited the Jersey War Tunnels, built by slave labourers, I noted down the following losses in my journal from the Garden of Reflection: 29 million Russians, 5.5 million Germans, 388,000 British, 300,000 US, 400,000 Italians.
and forces human beings to act in self preserving ways. The effect of hunger on the body completely changes the ethical context within which people act. Coupled with extreme cold or extreme heat, as in our case, and being endlessly attacked by biting flies in the day and mosquitoes through the evening and night, pushed our bodies into a continuous state of restlessness. Prisoners of war faced bodily privations on a massive scale: long hours of work, often dangerous and sometimes in prime enemy targets; hunger and starvation; persistent attacks from body lice; and extreme heat or cold in the camps, as they worked, and when they were on forced marches or in transit by railway in closed cattle trucks.

Although I have made some attempt at comparison, I fully acknowledge that my experience at the community in Russia occurred at a different historical time and was of a totally different order: my physical survival was not threatened, neither was anybody else’s. Rather this discussion is my best effort to set the value base for the stories that follow, especially in the next chapter: it is easy for us to judge behaviour, but as human beings we are programmed for survival. You and I would act similarly, but sometimes human suffering and degradation can bring out the best in human nature, as well as the worst – on all sides.

After visiting Russia, I read Antony Beevor’s book on the Battle of Stalingrad (Beevor, 1999) in an attempt to refine my interpretative understanding of World War II and engage at an intellectual level with the terrible loss of life on the Eastern Front. The account of this battle and its aftermath, for example the conditions in the hospitals after the German surrender on 31st January 1943 and the treatment of German prisoners of war by the Russians (see Chapter 12, the City of the Dead), are almost unbearable to read but were a necessary part of my engagement with narratives from all sides.13

In 1986 I had seen Elem Klimov’s devastating war film ‘Come and See’ about a boy in Belarus in 1943, and how his and so many others’ lives were irrevocably changed by World War II. I viewed the film again when I returned from working in Russia, and during the final editing of this thesis I watched it again on a rented DVD to fire my imagination (Klimov, 1985). It is the most powerful film about war and the terrible things it can do to people and the natural world that I have ever seen: it evokes the senses in a way that makes both mind and body identify with the rite of passage into war of the main character, and the influence of war on people, nature and the landscape.

The summer following the trip to Russia, I went on a cycling holiday in Europe which started in Vienna and ended in Prague. The tour began along the Danube River and on the third day we were scheduled to cycle over 70 miles before crossing over the Sumava

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13 I noticed that it was much harder reading Chapter 12 a second time round in the writing up phase of the thesis. The inquiry into becoming and being a Prisoner of War, of whatever side, had brought those men and the wretchedness of their state into the domain of the inter-human where I could feel nothing but a terrible sadness and compassion for them: of the 91,000 men taken prisoner at the end of the battle of Stalingrad, nearly half had died by spring 1943. '[Moreover] it was impossible to tell how many Germans were shot out of hand during or soon after surrender, often as vengeance for the deaths of relatives or comrades. The death rate in the hospitals was terrifying' (Beevor, 1999, p.408).
Hills into the Czech Republic. At the time I was cycling with two friends enjoying the beautiful scenery:

... The wind in our faces, fit, well fed and in good spirits, we read the directions and the name ‘Mauthausen’ jumped out at me from the page. The ride, already 50 or so miles with another 22 to go, but what would another three or four matter? OK so it was up a steep hill, but we had 18 gears and could freewheel down the hill afterwards. There was a compulsion in me to visit this place of unbelievable cruelty and evil. It enabled me to get closer to my father’s experience and to the untold and unknown experiences of my children’s great grandparents, who as Jews, perished in the concentration camps of Dachau and Buchenwald. (Jones, 2003b, p.11)

Re-reading this extract four years later, I need to clarify that my understanding of my ‘father’s experience’ in this quote was as a witness of the work conditions of concentration camp slave labourers, who were out in parties under armed guard. I was not saying that the conditions in prisoner of war camps were similar to the conditions in which slave labourers were kept. I had always said I would visit a concentration camp at some point in my life, and when this opportunity presented itself I felt an obligation to visit the site to pay respect and remember those who had lived and died in those camps. Not to have visited would have been unthinkable.

Just as you enter the camp at Mauthausen, there is a place where prisoners were chained up and tortured. When I stood in that place, I had a strong sense of the pain and suffering of the people who had stood in that very spot, which came up through my feet and legs from the ground beneath me, and then dispersed through my whole body. As Abram (1996, p. 262) says:

The human mind is not some otherworldly essence that comes to house itself inside our physiology. Rather it is instilled and provoked by the sensorial field itself, induced by the tensions and participations between the human body and the animate earth ... by acknowledging such links between the inner, psychological world and the perceptual terrain that surrounds us, we begin to turn inside-out, loosening the psyche from its confinement within a strictly human sphere, freeing sentience to return to the sensible world that contains us. Intelligence is no longer ours alone but is a property of the earth; we are in it, of it, immersed in its depths. And indeed each terrain, each ecology, seems to have its own particular intelligence, its unique vernacular of soil, leaf and sky.

This was the first time in my life that I had felt a deep resonance with the vibrations emanating from the earth in that particular place:

When my body ... responds to the mute solicitation of another being, that being responds in turn, disclosing to my senses some new aspect or dimension that in turn invites further exploration. By this process my sensing body gradually attunes itself to the style of this other presence – to the way of this stone, or tree, or table – as the other seems to adjust itself to my own style and sensitivity. In this manner the simplest thing may become a world for me, as conversely, the thing or being comes to take its place more deeply in my world. (Abram, 1996, p. 52)
Perception, in the sense that Merleau-Ponty uses the term, is exactly this, a reciprocity or interchange between my body and the entities which surround it. It is a type of wordless dance or silent conversation between my body and the animate landscape that it inhabits.

I now understand more fully why and how standing in that place had such a powerful influence on me. Earlier this year, I bought KZ, a documentary about Mauthausen which uses no archive footage (Bloomstein, 2006). Rather it focuses on groups of tourists as they approach Mauthausen by boat on the Danube and coach, as they then encounter the place; their guides and their relationship with the former camp; and the people who live in Mauthausen, including some older people who lived there in the 1940s. The documentary ends with the coaches leaving. I was intrigued watching the tourists’ faces and reactions as they encountered the place where I had stood and the other sites of unimaginable suffering, such as the shower room, where naked people were blasted with freezing water in the depths of winter. It was as if I had held up a mirror to myself as I sensed my perceptual reciprocity with Mauthausen. Perhaps also the impact of the stories, told to me as a child, finally found some resonance with place.

I wonder now whether the long cycle through beautiful countryside on that day helped to open my body up to experience that place and what happened there. Although the remaining journey to the hotel was tiring, it offered a space for quiet reflection as we pedalled on the cycle way along the banks of the Danube to our destination.

We had caused some worry for the tour organisers, who were anxiously waiting for us when we arrived: from earlier sightings in the day of our small party, they had reckoned we would arrive at the hotel by around 5.00pm at the latest; it was close to 7.30pm when we reached our destination. I noticed people’s reactions when they asked what had kept us. There was a silence, which did not invite any further conversation. We were on holiday after all and about to have dinner. Our narratives would not sit easily at the meal table so we kept quiet, and listened to stories about coffees, cakes and ice creams eaten that afternoon in the Danube river valley.

It was after this experience that I became more attuned to perception of the immediate environment and the way my body sensed a reciprocal relationship with place. I also began to comprehend more clearly the barriers which people, with narratives that are difficult to hear, face being listened to and understood.

**60th Anniversary**

During most of 2004 I was preoccupied with setting up my new consultancy ‘Mindful Practice’, named after the paper on Victoria Climbié (Jones, 2003a) and finishing off the Family Placement Assessment report (Jones, 2004). I remember periods of quiet reflection during the 60th Anniversary of the Battle Arnhem in the period 17th-20th September, which coincided with a weekend. I searched the internet for news from time to time over the Saturday and Sunday, and talked with my mother who sent me some newspaper cuttings. Later that year she gave me a few bags full of my father’s memorabilia and personal effects from the war. I found it hard to be in the same room with them so one day some of the bags were carted up to the loft and put well into the space behind the doors under the eaves. This attention to the physical separation of the memorabilia and personal effects signified a desperate attempt on my part to distance...
myself from Arnhem and what it signified in my family history; but in April 2005 the shadow of the war came back into my life, when I was least expecting it after a supervision session at the University.

**Striding into the past - April 2005**

When I left the room after supervision, I was angry. Why did [my supervisor] suggest that I suspend? I had to leave the university [campus]: plans of visiting the library to check on some references evaporated. I spun left out of the building into the sunshine and my waiting car. I didn’t really know where I was going and quite how I would spend the time between 4.00pm and 6.30pm in Bath when I was due to meet [a friend] for supper outside the Abbey. So I parked my car . . . somewhere familiar with unrestricted parking, and walked quickly into town. About 10 minutes later the clouds came over and I realised the decision to leave my umbrella behind had been rather foolish. I was still angry.

After wasting some time buying a pair of sandals, I noticed Bath library on my left. I wanted to read a newspaper: this week I had missed catching up with the news. So I made my way into the Starbucks type sitting area without the coffee, picked up the Guardian and sat down in a high backed black leather lookalike sofa. The first few pages offered a welcome distraction from my anger, but then it leapt out at me on the page ‘I have never seen such horror in my life’ – an Army Major’s account of liberating Bergen-Belsen concentration camp on April 15th 1945.

I was irritated that I could not escape my father’s history: he had witnessed some of the atrocities at the camp when he was a POW at the nearby camp of Fallingbostel. ¹⁴ By this time I was imprisoned by the now heavy rain outside.

So I searched for other magazines to read and picked up the right wing Spectator. I settled back down on the sofa for a frivolous read, but that too had an eye witness article on the camp’s liberation.

**What was I being told here?**

**When the rain subsided I left and sat pondering this question?**

After supper my stomach felt very upset and I had to rush to the toilet when I got back. This happens when I am very angry and upset about something, which is quite seldom these days.

Reflecting on this account now, I think my anger was centred around having something I needed to say to the world in a narrative form and I saw the thesis as the means to do this. During 2004 I had started a second yoga qualification and had become very interested in the energy centres of the body, known as Chakras, in yoga. I was aware that the Manipura or Solar Plexus Chakra, related to digestive problems and irritable bowel when there is an imbalance of energy. This chakra represents our place of empowerment in the world, which is an expression of our will. It is through human will that both negative and positive change comes into being in the world. Human will, in a positive sense, is essential to human well being and fulfilment, where our innermost nature is translated into outer expression, enabling us to overcome challenging circumstances in our lives and contribute to human flourishing (Ozaniec, 1990).

The juxtaposition of the supervision session questioning why I wanted to do a PhD with the suggestion of suspension, and confronting the 60th anniversary of the liberation of

¹⁴ Later research corrected this assumption about the where my father was when he witnessed the ill treatment and killing of slave labourers. In November 1944 he transferred from Fallingbostel to Arbeitskommando (Work or working party) 7001, Hallendorf-Salzgitter, where he worked at the Hermann Goering Steelworks. There were several concentration camps in the vicinity of the steelworks, and slave labourers were used on a variety of jobs including manufacturing munitions.
Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp in Bath library generated extremely strong feelings. I was aware that my father’s war narratives shaped me as a child and young adult, and I had a strong desire to make sense of and use them to good effect during this phase of my life as an action researcher. Through regular yoga practice and being in nature during this phase of the inquiry during April and May, I was able to channel my energy more effectively, and engage with the contents of those bags, which contained the war memorabilia.

During this period I became totally immersed in the research. In between sense making of the diaries and other personal effects, I watched a number of documentaries which were screened to coincide with the 60th Anniversary of the end of the war (BBC1 2005a, 2005b, 2005c 2005d; ITV 2005). The first of these, entitled D-Day Berlin. The Struggle to Break Out contains some moving quotes from British, American and German soldiers and officers about emotions and war. There was one quote which struck me above all the others:

War does things to you. It makes you so hard you feel you lose your emotions. I’d see guys with their legs blown off, chest wounds, head wounds.

Ted getting killed, my brother getting killed, and I’ve said to myself, “Why didn’t I cry?” (BBC1 2005a, John Burke, Medic, 5th US Ranger Battalion)

I thought back to the time in Autumn 1998 when my father and I were sitting in the car overlooking the sea towards the Isle of Wight in the distance, and he asked for the song ‘Red Sails in the Sunset’, sung by Anne Shelton on the troop ship going to North Africa, to be played at his funeral. And then he started crying; and I struggled at the time to make sense of what those really deep sobs signified.

Earlier in this thesis in Chapter Two, I defined how I am using the term ‘understanding’, and how in life we are always trying to make something of whatever it is we seek to understand. As we encounter things they are already partially interpreted, a combination of fore-sight and pre-grasp of the thing in question. The relation of these advance expectations and future disconfirmations and confirmations add up to the essence of interpretative understanding (Moran, 2000). I now believe that my father’s deep sobs signified the losses he had experienced throughout his war service, and which he had not been able to grieve for at the time or later as the usual pre-occupations of daily life took over in post war Britain.

Although my father tried to appear tough, he was in fact someone who felt things intensely and his narratives about the Russian PoWs and the slave labourers signified just how much some things affected him. My interpretations of his diaries and other memorabilia formed and were then revised and refined within this framework. My writings show the imprecise process of understanding where my own projections were erroneous, such as the assumption that some of his narratives were about people at Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp, when as I have mentioned previously, I now believe they were about people who lived at the concentration camps in the Salzgitter area, and who were forced to work as slave labourers in the steel and armaments’ industries in that region. As Gadamer (1989, p.267) says: ‘Working out appropriate projections, anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed “by the things” themselves, is the constant task of understanding’.

The writings that follow show the imprecise nature of sense making as my emotions, necessary to make connections and to imagine, were balanced by a sifting, analytic process of understanding. Emotion and reason (Goleman, 1996; LeDoux, 1999; Munro, 2002), and loose and strict thinking (Bateson, 1972) were used in unison: emotion and
loose thinking to empathise and imagine; reason and strict thinking to ground, question, and check against historical fact and archive material.

**Human Archaeology – April 2005**

I had carefully hidden my father's POW diary and all his other war artefacts in the loft. The speech I wrote for his funeral service and his maroon parachute regiment beret were also up there stuffed into a padded envelope.

Out of harm’s way.

So I began the search on Sunday in that dusty loft, like a mad woman I threw boxes around. Then I turned to cupboards on the next floor of the house. No luck. And so I stopped and thought; something guided me to a carrier bag tucked behind the collage [in a corner of my study].

I felt nervous.

It is so eerie to handle that diary of thick cardboard which has lived through and witnessed those troubled times. Some words are fading and I cannot make out the sloping hand of my father. Other words are abbreviations and Army slang (see Appendix Three for transcript of “Diary of Signalman Read V.H.W. for period of POW life”).

I will need to ask for help in deciphering this, perhaps from my mother and the Imperial War Museum in London. But I need to do it.

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15 This was written four or five days after the trip into the public library in Bath.
Then my attention turns to the photograph of J section taken in 1944 before they set out on the fateful mission to Arnhem. Each man has his name typed up on a separate sheet of paper with a note to read from left to right; my mother typed this for my Dad. Then my father has written by each name whether they were killed at Arnhem or died, presumably as POWs or perhaps later [of natural causes]. Pink highlighter is used to denote ‘killed’ and green highlighter for ‘died’. The negative is pinned to the photo with a note ‘DO NOT DESTROY’.
I rummage through other stuff: the familiar image of a maroon and pale blue Pegasus, the winged horse of the Parachute regiment and his rider the Greek warrior, Bellerophon.

Then there were the old postcards in another bag, three packs of ten, of Oosterbeek (near Arnhem) where very heavy fighting took place and my father was wounded. I know the road where that happened, just near the church.  

We used to have tea towels with the church on, bought when my parents went back for the anniversaries. And lumps of the old church, duly mounted and labelled as souvenirs, sat on the coffee table along with similar mementos of my Grandfather’s from the First World War.

I began to put things away and I pondered why I had felt so unusually cold in February, particularly in my study. Perhaps it was because I had that diary so near to me, a diary that had witnessed freezing conditions, misery and hunger in the winter of 1944, where bed boards were burnt for firewood? I had confidently assumed that it was safely tucked away upstairs, far away from me. Who knows?

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16 Some years after my father’s death, my mother found three sets of postcards of Oosterbeek, taken in September 1944 just after the battle. They were hidden away in the garage of their retirement home when she cleared it out. In his retirement, my father sometimes went out there for the odd quiet smoke.
Deepening Inquiry

Four weeks 11th April to 8th May 2005

It was just four weeks between when my father was freed and VE Day (11th April and 8th May 1945), which must have been an emotional and cultural rollercoaster between “11/4 YANK TANKS ARRIVED 8AM. JERRY CAPT GOT HIS LOT 10AM . . . 14/4 STARTED HITCHHIKING. MADE HAMM SAME EVENING. . . 17/4 MADE BRUSSELS . . . 19/4 ARRIVED UK . . . 20/4 ARRIVED HOME’ (Read, 1944-1945).17

Some sixty years later my own inquiry has followed a similar rollercoaster, beginning with the forced attention in Bath Public Library on the brutality and degradation at Bergen Belsen concentration camp, reported in The Guardian and The Spectator on 14th April 2005. This camp was just two or so miles away from my father’s POW camp, and some of his stories were about what he had witnessed there.18

17 See Appendix Three for transcript.

18 As I have indicated earlier, I now believe my father’s narratives about the conditions under which slave labourers worked and how they were treated by a guard(s) emanated from his time at Hallendorf-Salzgitter, not Stalag XIB, Fallingbostel.
I had tried to close off my mind to the past since the anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem last September, but it kept coming back. I wonder if this is what it was like for my father?

And then this weekend the muted VE day celebrations in London after a general election in which the Prime Minister was ‘punished’ by the electorate for going to war with Iraq. My own vote was cast in this spirit with a determination to make my views known: war leaves its emotional scars on the generations that follow. Just visit Russia to see what I mean. The unresolved grief and loss leaks and oozes into family relationships through the emotional unavailability of the traumatised person as they recycle events in their mind both consciously through storytelling, and unconsciously through disturbed sleep and nightmares. There is also the fear of a sudden explosion of anger over something seemingly very trivial such as a piece of food left on the plate. But if we’d seen starvation and experienced hunger on the scale my father did then I think we’d understand.

During these four weeks I have summoned up the strength to look at what he kept from his Army days. This has not been easy. I have noticed how each time I delve into the bag I find more things: today was a diary he kept whilst fighting in North Africa. It is a German diary with some entries in pencil in German and then my father’s in ink. I wonder how he came to have this diary and who it belonged to originally. What was his fate? I am curious why I didn’t see this diary earlier, perhaps my mind only allows me a certain amount of attention before I feel overwhelmed.

The POW diary, written in pencil on thick cardboard, was the most difficult to engage with: I kept thinking about the thoughts and feelings that were poured into it and the fact that it had been so close to such suffering. Now I can pick it up and read it, not as easily as a novel but it gets easier each time.

I have also spent a lot of time looking at survivors’ accounts of the Battle of Arnhem, becoming a POW and being imprisoned at Stalag XIB, Fallingbostel.

This can be so compelling: perhaps it is my attempt to become closer to my father in his death by understanding more fully his experiences in 1944/45 and how they affected him.

There are times when I just wish he was just behind my shoulder . . . I am aware that my eyes have started to fill up now typing this . . . so I could just ask him casually “Dad, what exactly happened at this point? What does this mean in your diary?” But I can’t do this because he died six years ago on 3rd May 1999, a beautiful spring day with the birds singing and warm May sunshine. Perhaps this inquiry is about me coming to terms with his death? I don’t know but there is a compulsion and passion to know.

**Taking care at the beginning of writing the thesis – May 2005**

I was mindful of my first inquiry at Bath in 2002: How do I stay whole and fully in touch with my emotions in the work that I do, and yet requires the establishment of boundaries for self-protection? This question was given to me by the group after seeing my collage and listening to the work that I was engaged with.

The same question has surfaced in my thoughts over the past four weeks. It has required much emotional effort to delve into the bag containing my father’s World War Two artefacts; much harder than the almost forensic approach that can be applied to a child death inquiry or when using a video about childhood trauma for a teaching session. I have been surprised at what I have missed when I went through the bag on the first few occasions. Does this mean that my emotions are stopping me from going deeper into the contents?

I realise that if I am to write this thesis, I need to take very good care of myself during the process: being in my garden would need to be supplemented by other forms of self care. I was drawn back to a book I bought last summer *Healing without Freud and Prozac* [Servan-Schreiber, 2004] and this week I started re-reading it by the summerhouse at the end of the garden, the most private and
tranquil part of my garden. I realised that many of the suggestions contained in the book I had already started to do almost spontaneously over the past few weeks: meditation involving breathing through the heart chakra, eating more fish containing Omega 3 fish oils, and exercising regularly especially outdoors. Cycling with a friend, whose enthusiasm for the research I am doing is infectious, and playing tennis at a new friendly club provide invaluable supports. Each day I reflect on what I need to do at a mind-body level to provide a strong foundation for the inquiry. So I listen to the wisdom of the body as I did when I had my operation last year, and invariably it guides me to how I need to take care of myself through nutrition, exercise, relaxation and sleep.

**Mc Conney and the Arab**

Since discovering the North African diary in what I have now called the ‘lucky dip’ bag (interesting use of humour there to distance the contents from me) a few days ago I have looked more closely at other books, papers and stories in the bag and how they might relate to what is written in the diary. Why do I keep missing stuff? It is almost as if someone is putting new material in all the time, but not even I believe this is possible!

I have noticed several correlations between the official history of the Parachute Regiment and what is written in my Dad’s diary, well it’s not really ‘his diary’ but in all probability it originally belonged to a dead German soldier: any identifying characteristics at the front have been torn out. Part of the objectification process, I imagine. I am finding this difficult to deal with.

The soldier’s writing, although not a lot of it and difficult to read, is in pencil; the last entry is on 9th October. I think the diary, which notes days of military and Nazi significance such as the invasion of Poland, the beginning of the World War Two and Hitler’s birthday, is from 1941 because my Dad has put in Wednesday when the original says ‘Montag’, thus signifying that it’s two years later as only 1940 and 1944 were leap years. But this is puzzling because my Dad went to North Africa in November 1942 according to the official history book. Well, how he came by the diary we don’t know!
Two days later I look again at the back of the diary and it has Easters listed from 1941 to 1951, hence confirming my supposition above. Still later on another reading, I notice that it says ‘Januar 1942’ towards the end of the diary, and then I wonder about how and why sections of the diary at the beginning and end have been torn out to obliterate as many personal details of the previous owner as possible. I am beginning to think that the diary might have covered two years from January 1941 to December 1942 because the section from 21st February 1942 onwards has been torn out. What I think now is that the German soldier probably started writing much more in his diary, perhaps in ink, as he went into combat around February 1942 and that sometime between 8th November, when my father landed in North Africa, and 31st December 1942 he was killed and my father took the diary and began using it as his own from January 1943 [writing in the pages Januar 1941 to Februar 1942].

My father always talked about the delight he and his comrades took in nude swimming off the Tunisian coast. On 16th March 1943 his entry reads’ (Rest) Swimming’ On 17th March it reads ‘Murdoch and Wileman. (Martin). (Clark). (Rogers). Rest’. On 18th March ‘Covered withdrawal. Long March to Nifra (just above ?Matin)’. On 19th March. ‘ Martin died, Back at Bde (?Law Commandos?)’ On 20th March (Moved back).

Did talking about the swimming signify a time when Martin was alive? A brief respite from the ‘fair war’, a term my father used to describe the war in North Africa, as distinct from Arnhem where ‘the Paras’ were ‘humiliated’, a term he used to describe that disastrous campaign, according to my Mum when I spoke to her yesterday.

\[19\] I only discovered in December 2007 that the names of the British men on these two pages of the diary signified that they had all been killed or had died from their wounds. An old photograph album turned up in which there were photos of six of the eight men’s graves – Battye, Marson, Martin, Murdoch, Wiseman, and McConney - taken when my father returned to Tunisia in May 1986 on an organised tour.
This is potentially interesting re the elite feel of the 1st Parachute Brigade and how they found it the hardest to adjust to the post-Arnhem and POW experience i.e. the point made in The Last Escape (Nichol and Rennell, 2002, p. 395):

The group suffering the most turned out to be the airborne troops captured at Arnhem. They were characterised as being aggressive and difficult. The explanation appeared to be the short time they had been prisoners. It was generally acknowledged that it took between six months and a year for a man to adapt to Stalag life, and they had been released before they had got through the anger and resentment. Hence they arrived home in that frame of mind. ‘They keep together and resent discipline’, the psychiatrists say.

Anyway back to the North African diary . . .

The official account of the British Airborne Division’s By Air to Battle (HMSO, 1945) talks about a “very villainous-looking Arab” apparently talking with some Germans. In my Dad’s diary the entry for 2nd April reads ‘Arab shot leading Jerry’. The official version smacks of fear and racism, as the officer who was hiding behind a cactus in reality did not know what was being said and the Arab did not lead the Germans to him as he had thought.

There is also an amazing escape story by Cpl JG McConney (Royal Signals) who was injured and managed to kill and escape his Italian captor using a pen knife. The account, which is compelling reading, tells of how he found the way back to his section, which would have been my father’s. At the end of the story there is an editor’s note: Cpl JG McConney was killed on 28th March 1943 and is buried at Tabarka Ras Rajel War Cemetery, Tunisia. The entry for that period in the diary reads ‘26th March (Glider flight) (???? Back); 27th March Para push started 132 guns. 11pm Zero hour. 28th March (Mc’onney killed) (see previous image).

When I read this towards the end of last week, McConney’s name had a familiar ring about it. I woke up much earlier than usual for two mornings running with his name popping into my head first thing and dominating my thoughts for perhaps half an hour or so. Was this what it was like for my Dad? Am I experiencing his trauma at second hand? Both Martin and McConney died within nine days of each other, although one man ‘died’ and the other was ‘killed’.

My father went back to Tunisia in 1986 and as I’ve been writing this journal I’ve looked at the map he took with him and his translations of four place names which have changed since 1942/3. It should be possible to trace some of his movements against the place names cited in the diary if they have not changed too much. On the map he has written 1,610 miles as ‘the total distance covered’ with a measured line indicating 37.5 miles marked to the right of Tunis. Suddenly I see the name ‘Philipville’ in his diary on 11th September and I remember the name and how Dad said he would take us there on holiday when we were sitting round the dining room table one day after lunch when we lived in Bellerophon; we never went there. I look it up on the internet and there is the translation ‘Skikda’ and I can find it on the map on the coast. He has noted on 16th September that he left Philipville. This looks like a period of convalescence perhaps after being in hospital with haemorrhoids from a parachute jump in North Africa and having to march with them.

I feel reluctant to write this entry from 12th August ‘ Kill Grade 7’ because I know at an intellectual level my father killed people, but somehow seeing it there is difficult, really difficult: I feel angry, sad and a bit shameful about this bit of my family history. My Mum once said to him, “I don’t know how you could kill somebody” and he said “Lynn, it’s either him or you and if you were in that

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20 I was not quite sure what ‘Grade 7’ was. With Gerd Wolse’s help and a table of equivalent ranks from one of his books, if the man who was killed was German, he was most probably the equivalent of Regimental Sergeant-Major or Hauptfeldwebel in the German Army. He may also have been Italian depending on where my father was at the time of writing.
situation you’d do the same”. Maybe that’s it . . . I don’t want to face up to that part of myself that would kill somebody to save myself.

This part of my journal was written over a period of five or six days from May 11th to May 16th, and has needed some additions as I’ve delved deeper into the papers and read things more carefully.

I have discussed finding the diary with my sister and she suddenly remembered that Dad had mentioned to her as a little girl that he had kept a diary when he was in North Africa. It’s interesting what is buried so deeply within our brains and then re-surfaces like the name ‘Philipville [sic]’ which was actually an anglicised version of ‘Phillippeville’. I tell her about McConney and the Arab; and she and my nephew, M, would like to see the diary and the other papers. It is lovely to be able to share this with her and to feel the same energy and interest that I have in making sense of all this.

I talked to my Mum who has had a lovely weekend away with a cousin [Uncle Jack’s eldest son] in the area we used to live in north east Hampshire. The name McConney “rings a bell” with her, but she can’t remember any detail. At the beginning of May I had asked her if Dad had any nightmares when they were first married. She had replied “No” then. But she had clearly reflected on it, and during a telephone call around VE Day she had told me that she had cried a lot thinking about the war. She did remember that my father was very restless in bed and would often strike out with his arms and legs; sometimes the bed would shake because his movements were so violent.  

And so to self care: each day I’ve done some exercise sometimes it’s been the gym or cycling and other times playing tennis. I’ve also been out in the garden a lot when it’s been warm and sunny, either reading or having lunch by the summerhouse. After the two early mornings when the name ‘McConney’ burst into my consciousness I went and did an intensive work out in the gym and felt so much better. Essentially I’ve been following the advice in Healing without Freud and Prozac [Servan-Schreiber, 2004].

This last piece was one of the most difficult pieces of writing for me in this intense period of research. There was the use of the verb ‘to kill’, a verb which thankfully is not one I have seen or heard much in my family; to see ‘kill Grade 7’ in my father’s handwriting, the so familiar handwriting seen on birthday cards and caring letters about shoe racks and brass and chromium plated screws (see Chapter Two). I was initially shocked and then felt shame. I deliberated for a long time about whether to write about this diary entry, to

21 This was during the early years of their marriage in the late 1940s.
put this into the public domain. The joint German/English ownership of the diary also became of more concern as I thought about who the other owner might have been. I looked at the handwriting in pencil, and I was taken back to a crude story my father told about sitting on a dead German soldier in an overrun gun emplacement in the Tunisian desert. I remembered the sound he made of the gas coming up from the dead man’s stomach, the coarse Army language he used to set the scene as he laughed a grating, hoarse laugh. Did the diary belong to this man? Probably not.

I realised that the diary was symbolic of the objectification that happens in war to enable human beings to kill each other. I looked for a way to remember this man and the men my father killed, their families, their lovers, and their friends. This is the poem I chose from *The Voice of War. Poems of the Second World War* (Selwyn, 1995), virtually all of which were written whilst still on active duty, giving an immediacy and sensibility to the poet’s perception.

**Elegy for an 88 Gunner** (also published as ‘Vergissmeinicht’

Three weeks gone and the combatants gone,
Returning over the nightmare ground
We found the place again and found
The soldier sprawling in the sun

The frowning barrel of his gun
Overshadows him. As we came on
that day, he hit my tank with one
Like the entry of a demon.

And smiling in the gunpit spoil
Is a picture of his girl
Who has written: *Steffi, Vergissmeinicht*.
In a copybook Gothic script

We see him almost with content,
abased and seeming to have paid,
mocked by his durable equipment
that's hard and good when he’s decayed.

But she would weep to see today
How on his skin the swart flies move,
The dust upon the paper eye
And the burst stomach like a cave.

For here the lover and the killer are mingled
Who had one body and one heart;
And Death, who had the soldier singled
has done the lover mortal hurt.

*Homs, Tripolitania, 1943*

Keith Douglas, killed in action, Normandy, 9th June 1944. (Selwyn 1995, p.36)
© 1995 The Salamander Oasis Trust

22 ‘Forget me not’
Engaging with this poem and other collections of poetry from the Second World War (Selwyn, 1995; Fuller, 1990) helped me begin to process some of the emotions which arose during the research.

During this period as mentioned above, I re-read *The Last Escape: the untold story of allied prisoners of war in Germany 1944-45* (Nichol & Rennell, 2002). Reading the book for a second time helped ground my interpretation of the prisoner of war diary with where it was written and with accounts from other survivors. This book had a profound effect on my understanding of what European prisoners of war went through, and why so many had problems adjusting to life afterwards and talking about what they had experienced. First I had not appreciated that for those who returned, their ordeal was overshadowed by the horrors of the concentration and slave labour camps. By comparison with what had been done to Jews and others on the receiving end of National Socialist hatred, their experience seemed slight and most would fully acknowledge that. Then world attention focused on the ill-treatment of Allied prisoners in the Far East, which made it even harder to talk about their ordeals in Europe. The notion of a swift and easy liberation and smooth return to post war life in the UK was also a fallacy (Nichol and Rennell, 2002). Some partners who had been bombed during the war were just not interested in talking about the war any more; many wanted to put it swiftly behind them and get on with their lives.

This communication from one prisoner of war to another sums up the degree to which the memories are etched on their souls and the difficulty of being understood by the general population:

> There isn’t a day that goes by that I don’t have some thoughts about those difficult days, but I seldom talk about them. The few times that I did, I got the distinct impression that the ordeal I was describing was not fully understood. Only when sharing your experiences with another former POW can you be sure that he knows what you are feeling. You can see it in his eyes. (Ralph Mattera, cited in Nichol and Rennell, 2002, p.xix)\(^{23}\)

\(^{23}\)Ralph Mattera, quoted in Joseph P.O'Donnell, *The Shoe Leather Express* (privately published, undated)

The stigma of being captured also had its own silencing effect: for most it was a humiliating experience and often one for which prisoners were ill prepared: thoughts of death or being wounded had been in men’s minds but not capture. For prisoners of war there was a loss of privacy and dignity, and the feeling of constant hunger. It could be a drab, demoralizing, powerless, fear filled and lonely experience; the ordinary serviceman’s captivity narrative is a far cry from the hero, escape and ‘victory over the enemy’ officer narratives, which came out in the 1950s and which endure in the UK to this day. Social class is a factor here: men who were officers were kept in separate camps to ‘other ranks’. Only a few months ago I was in Birmingham with a group of veterans and the first question a young man in the pub asked them was, “Did you try to escape”? The simple answer is that most were simply too malnourished, far from home, and exhausted on the forced marches westwards in one of the coldest winters of the last century to consider this a viable option.
This then was the context in which I situated the research into the Arnhem memorabilia and the Prisoner of War diary written on Red Cross parcel cardboard. At the same time engaging with other survivors’ accounts was essential but also raised the need for self care.

**Bluebell wood May 2005**

It was a beautiful spring day. I sat indoors and devoured page after page of *The Last Escape*, occasionally glancing out to the flower pots on the patio and the bright colours of the pansies. Despite the lovely weather there was a deep heavy feeling of sadness which I felt somewhere very soft between my navel and my back.

I simply had not appreciated that my father had experienced so much physical and emotional hardship as a prisoner of war. When he was alive I remembered not really wanting to listen to yet more of his stories; and of being rather disappointed when he showed me his POW diary and its obsession with food. But now I understood, as far as it is possible to understand, his experience from 17th September 1944 when his life changed as he entered the debacle at Arnhem . . .

I knew that to take care of myself in this inquiry I had to get out and be in nature. So I closed the book and physically put it away out of sight; and I drove to a bluebell wood on the northern edge of Leicester. The warm breeze and the long horizons across deep green fields provided a sense of calm within minutes. Contented black and white cows lie on the lush grass digesting their lunch. Memories of my childhood talking to them at the end of the garden flooded back.

And so I saw bluebells in full and perfect bloom, just a few here and there at first and then gradually the carpet thickened and I found myself walking in a sea of fragrant blue.

I wandered there for perhaps an hour and all the time I felt myself returning to balance after the heavy day of digesting trauma which happened over sixty years ago, but which had a big impact on my life. Somehow much closer, perhaps too close, than investigating allegations of child abuse or reading child death inquiries.

In order to do this inquiry I need to sustain myself in the same way as I studied the Victoria Climbié Inquiry: being protective of myself and taking breaks that nurture my soul.
In mid May I made the decision to join the National Ex Prisoner of War Association as an Associate Member. I acknowledged that I needed to move the inquiry from being overly personal and in the past, to a wider and eventually more forward looking focus, encompassing new inquiry spaces, such as the ex prisoner of war reunion on the South Coast. I was beginning to re-position my narrative within the ‘metaphorical three dimensional narrative inquiry space, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and social along a second dimension, and place along a third’ (Clandinin and Connolly 2000, p. 50). Anonymised email correspondence during May and June 2005 tracks the beginning of this re-positioning process (see Appendix Four).

During the time I decided to join the Association, I was inspired to write a story about growing up in my childhood home, “Bellerophon”. As a child there are certain things you take for granted like where you live. When I visited other people’s houses I seldom thought about how our house differed from “3 Canal Cottages”, “Meadow View” or “Dunroamin”. But it did.

So now just as you joined me on the visit to Graham’s home, it’s time to visit my childhood home, “Bellerophon”.

**Bellerophon May 2005**

Once upon a time there was a little girl who lived in a house called ‘Bellerophon’. Her Mum and Dad called her Joce and her big sister called her Jossie; everybody else called her Jocelyn.

Joce didn’t think much to the name of her house: it was awful difficult to spell and whenever she had to tell someone where she lived, she had to spell it out letter by letter and then the next place where she lived ‘North Warnborough’ also needed the same boring treatment. So there were quite a few barriers to get over explaining where she lived. Sometimes Joce just wished she was called Ann and lived at Meadowview, The Street, Westborough. It would have made things much easier.

*Bellerophon was painted maroon and light blue – a sky blue. It was a modern solidly built house for the 1950s anyway; and was built by Joce’s Dad with the help of local builders and other tradesmen.*

*Joce didn’t much like the colour scheme and couldn’t understand why the house had to be in those colours. She would have preferred blue and white.*

*But as a child you learn that some things are non-negotiable.*

So Joce found out that the weird name of her house belonged to the Greek warrior who rode Pegasus, the winged horse and symbol of the Airborne Forces; the colours were maroon and blue. Now this started to make a bit more sense to her. Joce’s Dad talked about the war and his time in ‘The Paras’ quite a lot. Sometimes Joce got fed up hearing about it especially those awful stories about the Prisoner of War camp; and the starving Russian soldiers in the next camp; and the poor man who was brutally killed by a German guard when his friends were carrying him back from work between them.

Joce escaped to the patio and played hopscotch with a big stone that thudded on the concrete. This was to drown out the sound coming from behind the French windows, as her Dad continued the account over the tea table to his trapped audience. But she could still hear it as clearly as ever through the window panes.

*Sometimes her Dad did weird stuff: one weekend he broke stones with a big sledgehammer on one side of the house, and then got Joce and her Mum and sister to carry two heavy metal buckets*
each full of small stones to make the foundations for the garage. Joce was maybe about six or seven at the time and she was tired like she’d never felt before and her soft hands were covered in blisters. Next day she ached so much and her Dad made them do it all over again, and her hands got more blisters.

She didn’t understand why her Dad this to her. Weren’t parents supposed to take care of their children and put plasters on blisters? Next day it was time to go to school, and Joce had plasters covering her blisters.

When Joce grew up she remembered her Dad talking about a middle aged woman he’d seen whilst a prisoner who was made to pick up huge pieces of stone and he looked into the woman’s eyes and realised she could have been his mother and yet he was powerless to do anything about it.

Joce started to wonder what was really going on in her Dad’s head.

Inside Bellerophon there were some souvenirs from a place called Oosterbeek, stone from a ruined church and some picture tiles, and tea towels in the kitchen with the ruined church on them. On one of the window sills in the dining room was a wooden carved and painted parachutist.

Joce didn’t like him much because he looked a bit scary.

In the 1970s when the family had won a small concession to replace the sky blue paint by cream, Joce’s Dad bought a picture with the battle for the bridge at Arnhem and this took pride of place in the front room.

The picture moved down with him to Joce’s parents’ retirement bungalow where it occupied the same central place in the sitting room. When Joce’s Dad died, her Mum replaced it with a healing picture of a fast flowing stream running through beautiful countryside.

Understanding “Bellerophon”

Bachelard (1958, p. 15) describes this early relationship of a child with her/his house as ‘a passionate liaison of our bodies, which do not forget, with an unforgettable house’. Perhaps that’s what made me ultra-sensitive, as a social worker, to other children’s homes: my body scanned for the feel of what it was like for the child/ren living in that place; and why I then asked the question, “If I feel like this, what is it like for Graham living here in this place and this neighbourhood”? I chose presentational form to represent this vital, embodied relationship to the home of my childhood: writing a story from Joce’s, the child’s perspective, was the most powerful way for you, the reader, to imagine what living in my home in the 1950s was like. Presentational knowing grows out of experience and the aesthetic imagery of the chosen form, in this case a ‘Once upon a time’ story, provides the first form of expression (Reason, 2006).

After writing the story I felt a need to balance imaginative, presentational knowing of my home with a study of selected literature on post traumatic stress disorder (Foy, 1992; Beal, 1995; Schiraldi, 2000; Jenkins, 2003). With reference to this review, I know my father would not have wished to be labelled as a victim of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Like all the men I have conversed with during the research for this thesis, my father would define himself as a survivor: like them, he got on with his life after the war, made the best of it, and counted himself very fortunate to have survived. As I mentioned in Chapter Two in the funeral speech, when he was terminally ill with cancer he told me
that he wouldn’t have wanted to be anybody else or to have had any other life than the life he had. I need to respect this aspect of his narrative.

Nevertheless my professional training in child abuse in the 1980s and 1990s helped me to appreciate that my father had some symptoms of PTSD, and would have benefitted from treatment had it been available. Research on PTSD and World War Two combat veterans indicates a much higher prevalence of PTSD and other psychological symptoms in those who were prisoners of war with the same combat exposure as non prisoners of war (Beal, 1995). Moreover the large sample in this study was drawn exclusively from those who fought in the 1942 Dieppe raid rather than the South Pacific or Vietnam. Many ex prisoners of war in this study reported experiencing PTSD symptoms fifty years later (Beal, 1995).

PTSD arises from exposure to an overwhelmingly stressful event or events, such as abuse, rape and war. As such it is a normal response by ordinary people to an abnormal or extraordinary situation. The traumatic events which lead to PTSD are so out of the ordinary that they would distress virtually anyone. The events are seen as dangerous to self and others; they are sudden and overwhelm our natural abilities to make an adequate response. These are some of the feelings commonly experienced by people with PTSD:

- Shattered, broken, wounded, ripped, or torn apart
- Like they'll never get put back together
- Bruised to the soul, devastated, fallen apart, crushed
- Shut down, beaten down, beaten up
- Changed: I used to be happy-go-lucky, now I’m serious and quiet. My life seems to be divided into two periods: before the trauma and after; it really threw me; my life was derailed; nothing seems sacred or special anymore.
- As though they are in a deep black hole, damaged, ruined, different from everybody else, losing their mind, going crazy, doomed, dead inside, “on the sidelines of life’s games”. (Scott & Straddling, 1992, p.28, cited in Schiraldi, 2000)

A trauma is a wound; the term PTSD therefore refers to deep emotional wounds. Intrusive memories occur in the form of perceptions, thoughts and images. The person wishes they could put a stop to these unwelcome, uninvited and painful memories. But they have a habit of breaking through, for example, triggered by a smell, a sudden noise or food scraps left by the side of the plate, as in the case of my father. This would elicit an explosion of anger, stories of hunger and starvation, perhaps about the Russian prisoners of war in the next camp. Sometimes, when he had calmed down he would apologise.

In the background there was also the anger about Operation Market Garden 24, or Arnhem as it was known in our house, as an ill-considered highly risky campaign and a terrible waste of life: ‘a central dynamic of war-related PTSD involves anger as a defence against terror, grief, betrayal, and guilt’ (Sipprelle, 1992, p.28). Surrender to more vulnerable feelings in the

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24 In the nine days of Operation Market Garden allied forces suffered more casualties than in the mammoth invasion of Normandy (Ryan, 1974): those killed, wounded or missing amounted to over 17,000. On the German side it is estimated that losses were between 6,315 and 8,925 (Kershaw, 1990/2004). In addition, Dutch civilian casualty figures have been estimated as high as 10,000 in the campaign and as a result of displacement, deprivation and starvation during the severe winter that followed the attack (Ryan, 1974).
field threatened survival. Anger and rage ensured that there was at least a chance of coming through alive.

To help illustrate this last point I am indebted to Thomas Thornborrow, a former member of the Parachute Regiment (Thornborrow, 2005, p.137) for sharing his PhD thesis with me, and for this description of combat:

... My analysis of ‘contact’ stories reveals a huge gulf between the rush of adrenaline during a short exchange of fire whilst on IS [internal security] duties and the sheer numbing brutality of no-holds-barred conflict. The next extract is one of my own. I chose it because out of all the gore-soaked stories I could have used, I feel my account of battle offers a darker take on the reality. It’s not heroic, it’s not romantic, it’s not even epic. It’s a downright nasty experience, in my opinion, an enduring theme in many Paratroopers’ combat stories:

For those of you who have seen all these Saving Private Ryan and Black Hawk Down. Forget it. Because you can’t smell it. You can’t taste it. You don’t know what fear is. You’re sitting there for ‘oohs’ and ‘aahs.’ There ain’t no ‘oohs’ and ‘aahs’ when somebody’s head explodes next to you. Whether he’s your friend or not. Whether he’s the enemy. Doesn’t matter if the guy gets a grenade thrown at him. Doesn’t matter if there’s four or five of them in the trench begging for their lives. The grenade’s going in. Because he’s got a gun. He’s scared. But he’s got that gun and if you don’t neutralise him or take him out he’s going to take you out. But you don’t get that in the cinema. You don’t get that from a book. You don’t get that on DVD. You don’t get that in the [video] arcade. What you get is a third eye if you’re not paying attention. Yeah? And then when the mortar... and the artillery barrage is coming in, you think you are going to die. Three or four times I went through it. By the time you get to the fourth or fifth time. Who gives a shit? I don’t care whether I’m going to die. I just want to get this over with and I’m prepared to do anything to get it over with.

For me and most of my comrades in arms, this type of combat was a brutal experience. In the Falklands I took part in and saw actions carried out that brought the whole history of the Regiment alive. It meant all that I’d read, and all that I’d heard was true. As a friend of mine told me: ‘it was the spirit of Arnhem. We were outgunned, we were outnumbered... in totally open ground. ...You weren’t doing it for yourself, ... as long as you got your mate out of there alive. And that spirit went through the whole Battalion’.

This closeness of Arnhem veterans was obvious to me as a child, particularly when Smudger, who was a member of J section (see earlier image) and a prisoner of war with my father, came to our house in June for the veterans’ annual parade and get together in Aldershot. 25 It was also apparent to me when my father requested that his ashes go on Geoffrey Dunning’s grave at the Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery – a mate who he failed to get out alive.

The emotional truth of war associated trauma is to acknowledge that ‘I and my friends were used terribly in a way that was fundamentally unacceptable. With justification I am bitter and

25 See Appendix Three for my father’s entries about Smudger in his PoW diary – the two men shared everything as prisoners of war including the same bunk, food, and their journey back to England after ‘liberation’.
angry” (Sipprelle, 1992, p. 29). I now see our house “Bellerophon” as my father’s memorial to this pointless loss of life in a fierce and terrible battle; the selection of the Greek warrior represented those who did not return. The memorabilia, pieces of stone from the ruined church at Oosterbeek, just down the road from where my father was wounded by a sniper’s bullet; the tea towels in the kitchen with the old church on them; the picture in the sitting room of the battle for the infamous bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem; and the scary wooden figure of the paratrooper on the windowsill in the dining room were his personal memorial in England.

Although talking about the archaeology of remembering in World War I, Tarlow (1997, p. 105) says that ‘people select monuments, places and ways of remembering for their power to express intense and personal feelings’. Since the First World War there has been a marked shift from the cemetery into the home and the mind of the bereaved. For my father it was just not feasible to go and visit the Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery more than once every five years, hence building our home, painting it in the Airborne colours and naming it after the Greek warrior enabled him to erect his own memorial, which was filled with the chatter, jokes and laughs of his mates each June when they assembled for the annual parade at Aldershot; each man perhaps also remembering in his own way.

And his last request was to be reunited, at the official memorial, with those that had died in the battle and were buried at the Arnhem-Oosterbeek War Cemetery. In August 2000 my sister and I took our father’s ashes, at his request, to the grave of Geoffrey Dunning who died on 18th September 1944, one day after landing. We used our hands to shift the sandy soil into small mounds, thus making small holes to bury the ashes. Finally we swept our palms over the piles of fine soil to return the grave to its former state. At first we bemoaned not bringing a trowel along and the fact that there were an awful lot of those ashes! But there was something so right about the commingling of earth and ashes in our hands and between our fingers. Our sisterhood bonding with the elements and the pasts of two men now united forever.

At this point in the inquiry, some five years after the visit to the war cemetery with my sister, I felt I needed to broaden my understanding beyond my father’s narrative both of the battle itself and the experience of being a prisoner of war, although it is important to say here that each person’s experience and the sense they make of that experience is absolutely unique. Moreover the stories that are told are about lives as they were lived, are not necessarily the lives as they were lived, but rather the stories about those lives: “The truth of stories is not only what was experienced, but equally what becomes experience in the telling and its reception . . . life moves on, stories change with the movement, and experience changes”. (Frank, 1995, p. 22).

In the background, as an enduring image from my childhood, there was the carved wooden parachutist figure, the figurative ‘Bellerophon’, who had stood on the dining room window sill in my childhood home, no longer scaring me but now calling me as an adult.
First of all I turned to survivors’ accounts of the battle to deepen my understanding of the intensity of the conflict and the barrage of emotions which men experienced (Anonymous, 1945; Sims, 1980). Arnhem Lift (Anonymous, 1945, p.11) starts with a self deprecating and moving dedication: ‘Anyone could have told this kind of story. Mine is for the friends and relations of the men who did not come back.’ The author, a glider pilot, vividly describes each day of the battle as he experienced it. There is a passage in the book where he reflects, several days into the conflict, on killing people in war:

One got skilled in avoiding being hit, and as time went on our casualties became fewer, though we were desperately tired and thought less about personal danger. But we had acquired a kind of sixth sense and somehow did the right things automatically. And this feeling of pride and pleasure compensated for the hatefulness of the whole bloody business. I hate war, I can’t stop thinking of the friends and relatives of anyone who has been hit. I know the Germans. I have seen them do the most vile and frightful things. I know they have destroyed millions of Jews and political opponents. But I do not enjoy killing or wounding anyone. Once I am forced to fight, however, the whole affair becomes a matter of skill and a job that needs all my powers of concentration. I no longer consider the effect on my opponent. (Anonymous, 1945, p.39)
The book ends with the author’s withdrawal across the Rhine:

Then we began to see human bodies lying all along the path. As we continued we saw that some of them were moving and heard groans and weak cries for help. A voice in the dark was muttering and talking in delirium. This was more than I could stand and I knelt down by one of the injured men . . . the wounded man begged us not to leave him behind and to help him across the river. We tried to lift him, but he groaned with pain and we had to lay him down again . . . All along the path there were mortar pits and bodies of dead and wounded soldiers.

The mortaring started up again not directly where we were, but near enough to be frightening. After trenches and street fighting, and even the cover of woods we felt helplessly exposed. The thought of those ghostly bodies and the groans of the wounded, lying in the meadows, was in everyone’s minds, but no one said anything. We just crouched there shivering. (Anonymous, 1945, pp.84-85)

This passage represents in my mind the dedication of the book: leaving behind the wounded runs counter to the healthy state of what it means to be human, to be responsible towards each other: the voices, faces and movements of the wounded and dying men haunt the survivor.

*Arnhem Spearhead. A Private Soldier’s Story* (Sims, 1980) contained just the kind of detailed accounts I had heard my father recount so many times: leaving England, the intensity and chaos of the battle, being wounded, hiding in a cellar, being captured, meeting and talking with ‘the enemy’ for the first time, the awful journey in cattle trucks through Holland and Germany to Stalag XIB, Fallingbostel; witnessing the ill treatment of concentration camp and Russian prisoners; and the daily uncertainty and powerlessness of a prisoner of war right up until ‘liberation’ which in itself could be a nerve wracking experience. Would they be shot by the Germans or bombed by their own planes in the closing days of the war. Would they be properly identified by the advancing front line troops? In short, after all they had come through would they survive?

**Space and self care**

In the process of engaging with these narratives, my living theory was challenged. ‘Jocelyn’s Garden’ ceased to offer the tranquil space which it had once provided; and the feeling of ‘invasion’ from new neighbours made me ponder what it was like to be shut up with a group of strangers. As I became more engaged with the inquiry during July and August and I was unable to use my garden in the same way anymore, I started to cycle out in the mornings to countryside on the edge of Leicester:

*Reflection on space July 2005* 26

. . . As I read Jim Sims’ account of Arnhem and his time in Stalag XIB yesterday, I was struck by how little personal space the prisoners had: lice fell on them from the bunks above and there were constant arguments and some fights (according to *The Last Escape*), and the need to accommodate new prisoners, who were coming from the East as the Russians advanced, in already cramped and overcrowded conditions.

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26 Some minor changes have been made to this writing in order to put it into the public domain.
I then reflected on my own feelings towards slight changes in my neighbourhood over the past year or so and how my situation was so much better, and yet I was influenced by the changed circumstances in my immediate environment. What must the privations of a POW have been like? It is too awful to contemplate. How would I have managed?

The last two mornings I have cycled to a beautiful lakeside nature reserve with cool woodland glades on the edge of the city. Whilst sitting there watching and listening to the birds, I realised that ‘Jocelyn’s Garden’ has changed from the tranquil space it was and it will be time to move on to the next phase of my life when I have finished this thesis. I no longer need to live here. A new garden awaits.

So there is a steely determination today to write and finish this PhD as soon as possible. I feel energised.

**Big Brother August 2005**

Watching Big Brother in the evenings is light relief from the PhD: a bonding experience with my two daughters as we bicker over space on the sofa. Cushions are flung on the floor so our bodies fit neatly together. And yet we really love being so squashed up, giggling and gasping in unison at who will do what next, with whom.

But the contestants on Big Brother, when they’re not showing off, show many of the effects of incarceration: constant gossiping amongst the different factions in the house, being two-faced, the hiatus around nominations and who gets evicted each week, persistent bickering over food and cigarettes - especially when they lose a task and the budget is cut to £1.00 per day, threatening behaviour, boredom, and times when they seem to almost break down and want ‘to walk’ as they put it.

I, in my comfortable house with my full belly, must ask: If this is what being incarcerated under these relatively affluent circumstances is like (and with the possibility of winning the £100,000 prize), what must it have been like for POWs with all the privations and uncertainty they faced under the command of the ultimate Big Brother machine, Nazism?

**Taking care of myself August 2005**

It seems so important to me at the moment to be outside, especially when the sun is shining. Pedalling out along the cycle ways of Leicester in the mornings is good for my spirit. The wind in my face, the sun glistening on the canal, brief stops by locks or leafy man-made lakes to absorb nature and the stillness. A glimpse of a family of swans or the drumming sound of green woodpeckers drilling into a tree trunk.

Living in the city I have to seek out this green space. It is particularly important at the moment as I make connections between different parts of the thesis, and how I will present . . . the inquiry.

In September the anniversary of Arnhem came around again and it was interesting to see how I was more deeply affected this time by a re-reading of *Arnhem Spearhead* (Sims, 1980).
17th September 2005

I awoke in C’s flat and lie in bed thinking. One thought I had was of my father going over to Arnhem 61 years ago today and my proposed visit there next month. Given other issues in my life at the moment, I wondered about whether next month is the best time to go. I thought not: I need to protect myself when I do the visual inquiry and there is a lot happening on the work front too. I would prefer to go with somebody and I wondered whether M. might come with me. I need to think this over carefully.

18th September 2005

In the evening I started to re-read James Sims’ book *Arnhem Spearhead*, and was more affected by his descriptions of the fighting this time around, of those who were killed, and of the wounded in the cellars (those like my father); the terrible journey to Fallingbostel and his descriptions of life there. This was the day Geoffrey Dunning died. Perhaps also the day that Allan Westall’s brother was blown to pieces.

19th September 2005

I felt very anxious all day today; unusually tense despite the trip to the gym this morning. This was the day my father was wounded. Is this what he felt on each anniversary? Did all the memories come back again? I resolve to do more yoga in order to cope with this phase of the inquiry.

As I reflect on these journal entries two years later, I note that I have not written about the German soldier my father bayoneted before he was wounded by the sniper: their eyes, the eyes of two very scared and shocked men, suddenly met around a corner in one of the ruined houses in Oosterbeek. Like playing the game ‘Hide and seek’ as a child or like a cop movie, but this was different: the stakes were real and your life depended on it.

I wonder now about the eye contact between the men, the one who killed and the killed, and my father’s words to my mother come to mind again: “It’s either him or you, Lynn and if you were in that situation you’d do the same.” But behind those words are the sights, sounds, taste and smell of killing and death. What were the colour of the man’s eyes? How long did he take to die? Did he cry out? Perhaps he died on 18th or even 19th September, we will never know. Would I have dared to ask my father any of these questions? No.

When I left Oosterbeek in the bus, after taking my father’s ashes to the war cemetery in 2000, I questioned why I had not yet visited a German war cemetery. Was this a delayed mourning response? During this part of the inquiry, now five years down the line, I wondered whether some of my response was actually mourning – not just for my father’s death and the fact that he was no longer over my shoulder to ask questions, but for all the men on both sides, and for the men he killed.

27 Over the summer I had an idea to return to Oosterbeek and take some photographs of the trees with shrapnel wounds. I noticed them on my very first visit there in 1974 when I took our Dutch friend’s dog for a walk in the nearby woods.
Stroebe et al (1993, p.5) define bereavement as 'the objective situation of having lost someone significant; grief is the emotional response to one’s loss; and mourning denotes the actions and manner of expressing grief, which often reflect the mourning practices of one’s culture.' But how do these definitions explain mourning or a feeling of responsibility in a situation like this once the fighting is over? Killing is sanctioned in war, but what happens to the conscience afterwards? My father killed and as the one who pulled the trigger, threw the grenade in or stabbed with his bayonet, caused deaths and generated rivers of tears down the faces of those who loved those men.

Is my response ‘fair’ or ‘normal’ I ask? I acknowledge that I am living at a different historical time and thankfully have never experienced my survival being under threat; I am also not blaming my father for what he and the millions of men like him had to do at that time. Moran (2000) referring to the phenomenological philosophy of Levinas (1969), adds to the argument about the profound effect war has on people: war forces human beings out of the normal pathways of their lives; it disrupts the healthy inter-human response of helping the other, which leads to a destruction of the survivor’s self-identity.

There are two short narratives I would like to cite to illustrate the challenging ethical positions which people are put in as a result of war. Try to imagine yourself in these people’s positions, each on opposing sides of the conflict. The first narrative was told to me by an Arnhem veteran and his wife. Ged and Lily Crowe used to stay with a Dutch family, who lived near the old Church in Oosterbeek. The man who told them the story was a 10 year old boy in September 1944. He and a friend witnessed some German soldiers shooting British Prisoners of War and were spotted. A soldier was ordered to take the children away and shoot them. He told the children that he had children of his own and could not do this. He cut the boy’s leg to draw blood, smeared it on the boy’s coat and then put a bullet through the coat to make it look like he had shot him. He then told the children to get away as fast as possible, and took the coat back as proof that he carried out the order.

The second narrative comes from an unpublished book of a friend of my father’s who was at Arnhem, and who evaded capture for some time afterwards being looked after by members of the Underground (Jukes, undated personal account; Jukes, 1988). Bill Jukes, who I had the pleasure of meeting in the early 1990s, was joined in hiding by a 19 year old British air gunner who had to bail out of his plane on his way back from a raid in Germany. Bear in mind as you read this account that the German deserter may have been suffering from PTSD, which would offer an alternative explanation for his behaviour:

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28 Although this narrative concerns the shooting of British Prisoners of War, it should be acknowledged that the killing of prisoners occurred on all sides, for different reasons. It reflects the reality of the messy and brutal business that war is. I was reminded of this only just a few days ago when a friend told me this story of a former British soldier. The man, who has now passed away, had chosen to tell his story whilst they picked blackcurrants together on an allotment. Well into old age, he remained terribly upset by the killing of German soldiers who were in the process of surrendering or had been captured by the British Army as they advanced through Italy.
To be shot down and find yourself on the run in a strange land must have been like being transported to another planet in a matter of minutes. If the term culture shock can be defined as a state of bewilderment in an individual suddenly exposed to a cultural environment radically different from his own, I couldn't think of a better example.

The Underground had managed to spirit [the air gunner] away before the Germans could get hold of him and hidden him in a barn with three Dutchman also on the run. One day a German deserter had been brought to join them. He kept himself apart from the others spending most of his day looking out of the loft they were in, as if he was expecting someone to come looking for him. The Resistance men, who brought their food every day, didn't know if he could be trusted. They were always on their guard against the Germans playing tricks to infiltrate the movement. One day they must have had a meeting and decided he wasn't worth the risk and one of them brought a pack of cards and a pistol and told the other four it was their job to shoot him. He laid the gun and cards on the table and left. They cut the cards, and like the plot in a second rate spy story, the airman cut the ace of spades. He had never fired a pistol in his life, much less anybody in cold blood. In fact until a few days before, he had never literally set foot outside the British Isles or even seen an enemy soldier.

He said he thought the German knew what was going on and had just kept looking out of the window as he stepped up behind him and shot him in the head. I could see he was still badly shaken by the whole affair and the scene would haunt him for the rest of his life. I hope he found some relief in having someone to unburden himself to. (Jukes, undated personal account, p. 180)

Stroebe et al (1993) say that what is normal or abnormal and pathological bereavement must reflect the wider social and cultural context and customary conceptual themes and practices for that society. Each person's experiences and perceptions of war are distinctive, as is illustrated from the accounts above and in my father's narrative: each has to find his own ethical place whilst simultaneously surviving. Sometimes though this path of relative peace with oneself proves impossible to locate in what is, quite literally, an ethical minefield.

In the aftermath of war what is a normal human response to the death and destruction caused by a close relative, where they are able to reveal it or it is revealed? Stroebe & Gergen et al. (1992) argue for a post modern view of bereavement, one in which different ways of mourning may be expressed, in other words, a multiplicity of responses depending on each person's experience and context. I have chosen to situate my response within this framework:

The empirical reality is that people do not relinquish their ties to the deceased, withdraw their cathexis, or "let them go." What occurs for survivors is a transformation from what had been a relationship operating on several levels of actual, symbolic, internalized and imagined relatedness to one in which the actual ("living and breathing") relationship has been lost, but the other forms remain or may even develop in more elaborate forms. (Shuchter and Zisook, 1993, p.14)
So for the next two years the inquiry took a ‘more elaborate’ outward looking form, moving between different spaces for collaborative and visual inquiry across Europe: conversations with other ex European Prisoners of War at their annual reunions; documentary research at the National Archives; a visit to Jersey to see the world première of the play ‘Walking Wounded’ (Higgins, Undated) and the war tunnels, a huge underground hospital, built by slave labour in the 1940s; a photographic inquiry at the sites of my father’s PoW camps in Germany and German war cemeteries in Germany and England; a return to Oosterbeek in the Netherlands to photograph the landscape and trees; and finally conversations with a former German soldier who fought in Operation Market Garden. When I started this journey in October 2005, I had no expectations that it would change my way of being in the world but it did.

To end
This chapter has tracked the development of my living theory of inquiry, which shows a dynamic relational understanding of my father’s war narratives and memorabilia. My reactions and my evolving interpretative understanding, using cycles of strict and loose thinking and an interplay of intellect and emotion, have been discussed. I have addressed the emotional and ethical complexity that war creates for those who experience it at first hand, and for people of the next generation like myself, who attempt to make sense of it. I have used journal writing to track my reactions, and story to invite you, the reader, into my childhood home in much the same way as I invited you on the visit to Graham’s home. Towards the end of this testing period of first person inquiry, I realise the need for me to check out my assumptions with others in second person inquiry; and to engage or re-engage with place in my father’s war narratives. Perhaps most importantly, I acknowledge my own response as one of bereavement but for people who were strangers.
Chapter Six: Of Love and Loss III – moving in the three dimensional inquiry space

‘A war is a huge fire, the ashes from it drift far and settle slowly’.

(Attwood 2001, p. 587)

Listening is hard, but it also a fundamental moral act . . . in listening for the other, we listen for ourselves. The moment of witness in the story crystallizes a mutuality of need, when each is for the other.

(Frank 1995, p.25)

Introduction

This chapter describes an intense period of first and second person inquiry in which I immersed myself in dialogue with those who had experienced World War II at first hand and with the landscape of war now. I address the process of inquiry with people who have difficult stories to tell and for us to comprehend: narratives which emerge from episodes of chaos, interspersed with occasional glimpses of the inter-human: the recognition in the eyes, the face or the touch of the other that we are related as persons in a worldly space. I think with stories of suffering and find them influencing the kind of person I wish to become. I show that learning can be at its most profound when seen as a response to what is different or other. At the same time I learn more about my own emotional responses throughout the inquiry, and the importance of self care to respond appropriately.

I more consciously and explicitly use the extended epistemology of action research: experiential, presentational, propositional and practical knowing to show the process of my understanding and revisions to my interpretations. I also move around in the worldly space of ‘Otherness’ as I attempt to understand the different positions of people caught up in the brutal, complex and capricious web of World War II and its aftermath. Through the narratives I clarify my meanings of chaos, loss and change; our inter-relatedness as human beings; and our responsibility towards each other. As part of my living theory of responsibility, movement, engagement, withdrawal and self care, I argue that the biggest challenge we face as human beings is how to respond, that is, how to act on a daily basis.

Inquiry with former European Prisoners of War

It was timely to shift my first person, self reflective inquiry into my father’s war diaries to inquiry with others: I needed to check out my assumptions. Second person research and practice starts when we engage with others on a face to face basis to enhance first person inquiry (Reason and Torbert, 2001). However, the necessary move to emergence and presence for participative research required a change in my way of being from a task oriented focus to one of being. Introducing the notion of presence, Heron (1981, pp.29-30) says:
... My fullest encounter with a presence in space and time is when that presence is encountering *me* ... For persons, other persons are the pre-eminent presences in space and time ... when I directly interact with a person, I construe and encounter him or her as present more fully than when I observe a person interacting with someone else. And the more fully I interact the more fully I construe him or her as a presence. I construe a person more fully as a presence when we are in a very aware committed, concerned, exploratory, inquiring relationship.

Immediately prior to the reunion weekend on the south coast, I had been working on a semi structured interview schedule for senior managers to evaluate the early implementation of a performance improvement tool on a government sponsored project. There was a comfort in the structure: logical progression and well honed questions, which acted as a professional security blanket.

I left in the morning so that I would arrive in the early afternoon, well before dinner. I knew from professional experience that it was important not to be rushed; and also to stay for the whole weekend. On the car journey down, I started to question my preparation to interview the men:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7th October 2005 – written the first evening of the reunion</th>
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<td>Had I prepared enough? Should I have my list of questions like the interview schedule I had prepared for [another] project? No, I decided that I should just be: after all I had grown up with an ex prisoner of war and listened to his stories. So I relaxed and engaged with the first group of elderly men in blazers sitting in the corner of the cafeteria. I just said “Hello, are you with the ex Prisoners of War group”? “Yes”, replied the men and their partners, and I said “So am I, my Dad was a PoW”, and then the conversation flowed . . .</td>
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I listened to a number of men’s narratives unfolding as the weekend progressed. Having read *The Last Escape* (Nichol & Rennell, 2002) helped place some of the men’s narratives, for example, I knew the locations of some of the camps where the men had been and the factual circumstances of their liberation. Although not at all done by way of deliberate preparation, this background knowledge helped build credibility, and provided some scaffolding in the early stages of conversation.

I decided not to use recording equipment and to make notes as soon as possible afterwards, normally later that day or at night in my chalet. The advantage of this approach was that our conversations were as natural as possible: there was no gadgetry, however unobtrusive, between us. I could just focus on each man telling his story in his own way. The disadvantage was that it relied on my memory of what they had said. It was also very demanding, especially when I stayed up well into the night making notes after spending most of the day listening and concentrating. Staying up so late after listening to many unique and moving narratives ran counter to self care; I went running every morning before breakfast along the sea front for 40-45 minutes so early nights were essential. My journal entry for Sunday night, the third and final night, reads: ‘I have to stop writing now as it is nearly midnight and I am emotionally and physically exhausted’. The intensity of the experience made finding the right balance between engagement and time out more challenging than I had anticipated.

Although I told the men I was at the reunion as part of my PhD research and would write up their narratives in note form afterwards, I did not have the explicit consent of all the
men to be identified with their narratives. The informal conversational approach I adopted ran counter to the formality of consent forms. However all the men I spoke with were very willing to talk with me either individually or in small groups over a cup of tea, a drink or at dinner. They just told me their stories their way, and I listened, asking only the occasional question. There were several times when tears might come into a man’s eyes “Well, it was quite horrific actually”, then he might look far into the distance and quickly say “Ah, but we had some good times” or simply pause and look downwards through misty eyes. I made a mental note of when this occurred in the men’s narratives.

I also noticed the humorous moments in both the narratives and the interactions between the men, as they enacted scenarios such as quietly pinching a man’s piece of bread, now replaced by a scone, when he was otherwise preoccupied or taking on the role of Regimental Sergeant Major with great relish! This seemed important in terms of making sense of what really matters to us as human beings, and how we might develop resilience out of adversity.

Many men’s survival narratives, like my father’s, derived from episodes of chaos, suffering, kindness, chance and luck, for example, from the battle where they were captured; the disposition of their captors and guards; having friends or comrades for support; the severity and location of any wounds; the treatment of their wounds throughout captivity; unspeakable discomfort in transit to different camps; starvation; highly dangerous work if they were fit to work; witnessing the ill-treatment and death of Russian prisoners of war and slave labourers; being bombed by British and American planes or shot by ‘friendly fire’; and forced marches in the depth of winter, where in one instance, a man had crawled into a ditch to die as exhaustion had taken hold of every part of his frail and starved body. And yet he survived . . . and he had at least two other ‘near death’ experiences before ‘liberation’.

Over the weekend some of the men offered to make enquiries on my behalf in order to find someone who had been at the same camp as my father. In a lakeside conversation with one of the men on my table, two Arnhem veterans, Tom Carpenter and Bob Jones, emerged on the Sunday evening. Throughout this research I have been very touched by the support and encouragement I have been given from so many people. This was one of those instances.

For this thesis I have had to make some very difficult decisions about what and how much of the men’s narratives to include. To begin with I wanted to put in all the narratives that I made of notes of over that weekend: as one man said “We’ve all got a story to tell and they’re all different”, but there were ethical concerns as the uniqueness of each man’s story could be identified with him. Some of my notes were also written in the third person singular rather than in the words of the men themselves, except where I had remembered particular quotes. I have also been mindful of not overburdening the reader with too much harrowing narrative within the main body of the thesis. As one man cautioned, when he spoke of the time when he first started talking about his experiences to one of his children in the 1950s: “You had to be careful what you talked about.” There were still tears in his eyes as he said this; now well into his eighties, he told me he still has flashbacks to his prisoner of war days when he thinks he’s in prison.

At this point in the thesis I have decided to include the narratives of two men, Tom Carpenter (Appendix Five) and Stan Wade (Appendix Six), to whom I am indebted for the many times we have spent together talking in person and on the phone. Both men have
written up their experiences with a clarity and attention to detail, which is necessary to reflect what they witnessed; and both have given permission for their work to be included as part of this thesis.

In order to do justice to the narratives I heard that weekend, in particular what men emphasised, I will draw out some lessons for us as human beings. In so doing, I am using the men’s narratives to begin to form part of my own quest narrative (Frank 1995), in my case, the formulation of a living theory of responsibility, movement, engagement, withdrawal and self care (Whitehead 1989; Whitehead and McNiff 2006; McNiff 2007).

As I have mentioned elsewhere, it is important to acknowledge that people, as they are drawn into the violent upheaval and huge complex structure that war is, no longer remain individuals: the state of nature puts both animal and human survival first. However there is an authenticity and solidity in people who have been tested in this way, and it is evidenced in the ‘inter-human’ in their narratives (Levinas 1988; Frank 1995) – in acts of kindness to them as well as being the cause or witness of suffering: a massage by a Nurse to the muscles of a healing broken arm; a pair of socks passed silently to a prisoner by a camp guard (see Appendix Six); the ill treatment of Russian prisoners of war; looking into the eyes of Russian prisoners of war as they were going to be shot or lie down to die from exhaustion by the roadside (see Appendix Six and discussion at the end of this chapter); the killing of fellow prisoners; the killing of a German guard (see discussion at the end of this chapter); the suffering and death of friends and comrades from untreated wounds and illness; a conversation in the back of an ambulance with a very badly wounded German soldier with a chest wound, reflecting on the fact that you might have been responsible for his injury; and the insistence of the wounded German soldiers, who shared that ambulance, that the wounded British prisoners of war be given the same rations as them (see Appendix Five and discussion at the end of this chapter).29

In his book *The Wounded Storyteller* (Frank 1995) discusses narrative ethics; the story told depends on the teller’s wound or wounds and what is ethical is found within the story. Thus the ethics of a person’s narrative are inextricably related to their wound(s). Drawing on the work of Kleinman (1992) and Cassell (1991), Frank argues that suffering involves whole persons and therefore requires a rejection of the historical dualism of body and mind. The subject who suffers is a ‘body self’ (Kleinman, 1992, cited in Frank 1995, p.169). For example, being seriously wounded or seriously ill affects both mind and body. All are an interruption to the lived flow of experience where there is a distinct possibility of the impending destruction of the person. Witnessing, yet being unable to respond to another’s suffering, can have a similar effect thus highlighting our inter-relatedness as human beings.

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29 I have made an editorial decision to include extracts from some of the narratives that I heard over the two years of this inquiry towards the end of this chapter. In the course of my relationships with the men, they added more detail each time we met or talked on the phone. They are enduring narratives of the inter-human, reflected in both the content and manner in which they were told.
Experiencing the inter-human

As I have already mentioned at the end of the last chapter, I went to the reunion with no expectations of personal change, and yet I experienced profound generosity of spirit, many kind words of support, and a wonderful sense of humour throughout my time at the Reunion and indeed at all the other veterans’ gatherings I have been invited to.

This is an extract from a conference paper I wrote, which refers to how I felt and the care I received at the reunion remembrance service (Jones 2006, p.7):

I was very struck by [the men's] resilience, an enduring sense of humour to see them through darker moments and their compassion for the fragility of others. This revealed itself during the Sunday afternoon service when I started crying. I observed a man immediately in front of me, who I had talked to a couple of times previously, starting to cry during one of the hymns of remembrance. I watched as he brought out a tissue from his pocket, and his wife's arm gently stroked his broad back. I was overcome with a feeling of sadness so deep and wide. The ex PoW sitting next to me noticed my distress. During the end of the service he and his wife were so kind; helping me not to fall apart and plying me with tea and biscuits. I gleaned a sense of the comradeship of PoWs through the inevitable bouts of despair, depression or doubt during captivity.

Within the confines of the 5,000 word conference paper I did not include some of the personal detail from my journal made on that Sunday night as I stayed up into the early hours writing. For example, I noted the way the men laughed as they chimed the German words “Raus! Raus!” (Out! Out!), when it was time to leave the bus for their parade to the war memorial. This command was used by their guards to denote that it was time for them to move (Mackenzie, 2004): a term prisoners heard on a daily basis and which my father used from time to time. Tears came to my eyes as I watched the Parade going past. The men marched so well, with their heads held high, medals on their chests, remembering and honouring all those who did not return; and I thought of what their bodies had been through, particularly for the men who had been on the long forced marches in sub zero temperatures and deep snow in 1945.

I also noted that the ex prisoner of war, sitting next to me, leant over and squeezed my hand and said “Your Dad would be so proud of you, the way you've shown your respect here.” I couldn't stop tears rolling down my cheeks, “It's not because of him” I said, “it's because it's so sad”. The scale of the grief in the men’s stories, and what they will always carry with them in their hearts and minds, revealed itself to me in that moment.

The last morning of the Reunion was still and slightly misty with the promise of a balmy October day and golden early autumnal sunshine. I was due to travel up to the National Archives in Kew. After ‘Goodbyes’ over breakfast, I stayed on for a stroll along the beach to look out to the horizon and the eastern edge of Isle of Wight.
Monday 10th October 2005 It was like a beautiful summer’s day. I decided to walk along the beach and watch the sunlight glistening on the water. I remembered being here all those years ago with the photo of me on a seaside pony. I also remembered being very small, perhaps three or so, and walking on the beach with my mother and my sister. I wondered about that picture of me as a child sitting on a beach ball, my hair falling into ringlets with the salt water on it. Was that taken here? It was the image of myself that I had wanted to return to during my divorce. This time it felt like my life had gone full circle, and I had cleaned out the past in the journey [of] nearly fifty years.

The photo of me remained elusive and I gave up all hope of ever finding it. In February 2006 several photos of me as a baby and toddler fell out of a book, which I had last read in the 1980s and one of my daughters was now reading. The picture represents the ‘seeker’ essence in me, looking out towards the horizon, scanning for new experiences, insights and opportunities.

So after my moving weekend and stroll on the beach I left for two and a half days of archive research in London. It was time to turn to a more disciplined form of inquiry, to check out assumptions with contemporaneous reports and witness statements.

New understandings of parts and the whole

On the journey up to London I reflected on some parallels between the experiences of prisoners of war and children and young people who have been abused in institutions. My earlier research on institutional abuse of children (Jones, 1993, 1994, 1995a) had focussed on the voices of survivors and/or trying to imagine what life was like for them on a daily basis in the closed world of the children’s home or special school, often placed miles from home. I used the work of the German sociologist, Max Weber (Bendix, 1966) on authority and domination to analyse power relationships in the homes, and argued that we needed to look at institutional abuse from children and young people’s perspectives in order to regulate homes and schools effectively, that is to see the problem from the inside looking out: inspections often failed to pick up that children were being abused because of powerful and convincing heads of home. I realised that I was attempting to follow a similar process of understanding in relation to prisoners of war, by listening to their
accounts and then looking at International Red Cross inspection reports on my father’s camp, Stalag XIB, Fallingbostel and Arbeitskommando (work or working party) 7001, Hallendorf. I also wanted to read my father’s original prisoner of war liberation questionnaire, which had recently been declassified and put in the public domain. Kockelmans (1975) describes this process of refining understanding as the hermeneutic circle:

> The hermeneutic circle is essentially a very general mode of the development of all human knowledge, namely, the development through dialectic procedures. It is assumed that there cannot be any development of knowledge without some fore-knowledge. The anticipation of global meaning of an action, a form of life, of a social institution, etc., becomes articulated through a dialectical process in which the meaning of the ‘parts’ or components is determined by the fore-knowledge of the ‘whole’, whereas our knowledge of the ‘whole’ is continuously corrected and deepened by the increase in our knowledge of the components. (Kockelmans, 1975, p. 85)

Understanding is a dialectical process, which could in effect go on for ever, although at some point, as I will need to show in this thesis, we reach a suitable point of intersubjective validity (Rowan and Reason, 1981). It is also a messy business, which does not necessarily follow a logical path:

> . . . The hermeneutic circle is not a vicious circle which we wish to avoid, but it is an essential aspect of understanding; what is important is not to avoid it, but to get into it the right way. In practice, as a researcher approaches a phenomenon for study, he or she will have provisional conceptions of its meaning as a whole; as the parts are examined, the meaning of some of these will come partially clear, and the clarity can be enhanced by relating them each to each other and to the whole. But this process of comparison will usually lead to a new understanding of the components. So there is a perpetual oscillation of interpretations; we have as it were to leap into the circle of understanding before we can start. (Rowan and Reason, 1981, p. 135)

When ‘leaping into the circle of understanding’ I found Gregory Bateson’s views on the nature of thinking offered a helpful and, at times, reassuring guide. Discussing how science advances, he describes an alternating process where two types of thinking are necessary:

> First the loose thinking and the building up of a structure on unsound foundations and then the correction to stricter thinking and the substitution of a new underpinning beneath the already constructed mass . . . And if you ask me for a recipe for speeding up the process, I would say first that we ought to accept and enjoy this dual nature of scientific thought and be willing to value the way the two processes work together to give us advances in understanding of the world. (Bateson, 1972 p. 86)

As a child, listening to my father’s narratives, I leapt into this ‘circle of understanding’. I imagined the scenes, the faces and the eyes of the people he spoke about; these were stories of the inter-human (Levinas, 1988). I then brought these listening skills and my imagination to the people I worked with as a social worker. However, this needed to be grounded by a careful reading of the file(s), talking with other family members, where appropriate, and other professionals, constructing a chronology of the child’s life as far as that was possible, and using appropriate research to assess risk, family strengths and
resilience. I was now following a similar process of understanding, first the diaries, then reading survivors’ accounts (Anonymous, 1945; Sims, 1980), then listening to the narratives of other men who had become prisoners of war; then archive research and then back to the diaries again.

From my perspective Tom Carpenter’s written (Appendix Five) and oral narratives were of particular interest: he had also been wounded at Arnhem and arrived at Stalag XIB, Fallingbostel just a few days before my father in October 1944. It was therefore important to situate both his narrative and my father’s in what was known and reported at the time, hence my visit to the National Archives. Because reciprocity is intrinsic to the state of being human, what I was in effect inquiring into, I also agreed to look out for other men’s liberated prisoner of war interrogation questionnaires (WO344), copy any I found and post them on.

I began by looking for my father’s prisoner of war questionnaire (WO344/264/2; Appendix Seven). It was a very moving experience to be the first member of the family to touch this document since he had filled it out over sixty years before. I have to confess that I really didn’t want to part with it when I came to leave on the Wednesday: each evening I reserved it for the next day so that I could work with it beside me. I thought about what it must have been like for him to complete that form on 18th April 1945, still in Brussels then and only one week after ‘liberation’: the clipped, closed questions which did not invite any narrative; so many experiences and so much witnessed of such intensity condensed into just a few words.

About two months later I was having a conversation with Tom Carpenter on the phone one morning, and he talked to me about being wounded and how he had collapsed on the parade ground at Fallingbostel in late January (see Appendix Five, p.303). As his wound had gone untreated, he had developed a pronounced stoop and blood poisoning due to a large piece of shrapnel lodged in his back/shoulder area. When we finished the conversation something persuaded me to take another look at my father’s questionnaire. This time I noticed something about the handwriting in the answer to question 12 (b) DID YOU RECEIVE ADEQUATE MEDICAL TREATMENT? My father’s response was: IN TRANSIT VERY POOR, but this time I noticed that ‘VERY POOR’, the only qualitative response on the entire form, was written more lightly in pencil than the rest of the document.

I remembered my father’s account of the terrible journey to Limburg and Fallingbostel tightly packed, standing in cattle trucks with only a milk churn in the middle as a toilet, which quickly overflowed (see Sims 1980, pp. 132-135, for a graphic account of his transit to Stalag XIB): my father had to move his battledress round back to front in order to protect the wound just below his right shoulder blade.

In that moment of writing, the experiences of that journey were felt again in my father’s body, perhaps in a slight tremor down the arm into his right hand as he held the pencil.
The fearful experience of being wounded with no proper treatment is something beyond my and probably your comprehension, but listening to Tom's account of his own and others' suffering made me look at the questionnaire and what had been written in another way.

At the reunion in 2006 Tom showed me the picture taken when he formally became *Kriegsgefangener* (Prisoner of War) 117901XIB. The image made a big impression on me at the time, and still does.

![Image of a prisoner of war]

Tom is 19 years old in this photo, taken in December 1944. There is bleakness which I see in his eyes, and in his lips the silent insolence of a Prisoner of War: repressed anger at the lack of medical treatment for him and others, like his friend, Jack Everitt, who has just died. There is a festering wound from a large chunk of shrapnel in his back, which the metal probes in the camp hospital are unable to reach: an operation is required. The material around his neck, which almost looks like a scarf, is actually a sling for his right arm, which was useless; this was made from two bright yellow triangular flags used to direct supplies from the air at Arnhem, most of which fell into German hands in the ensuing chaos. Tom has not been able to cut, wash or comb his hair for nearly three months. His weight is dropping rapidly as the effects of starvation are beginning to take hold. Malnutrition, as for all men taken prisoner, compromises both immune function and physical and mental survival strategies.

If you have already read Tom's account before (see Appendix Five), I suggest you take another look at it with this image in mind.

The correspondence sent to Tom between October 2005 and March 2007 tracks the research I did at the National Archives during this period (see Appendix Eight). Where I found men's prisoner of war questionnaires, I sent photocopies on to them around the same time Tom's letter was written. This was important because of the help and kindness that had been shown to me at the Reunion and afterwards, and because reciprocity matters as does attention to detail. Both are a sign of respect and signify the necessary ethical position of responsibility and care in the ‘inter-human’ (Levinas, 1988; Frank, 1995).
In this phase of the research I have, once again, needed to make some difficult choices about what to put in the thesis to show the importance of strict as well as loose thinking to refine understanding of the inter-human (Levinas, 1988). I have chosen to include two maps of the Fallingbostel/Oerbke area to show the location of the various former PoW camps (Stalags XIB, XID and 357); the Panzer barracks and training camp (Truppenlager Fallingbostel); the Cemetery of No Names (Kriegsgräberstätte Oerbke) which contains the remains of 30,000 Russian Prisoners of War (see Appendix Nine); and an account of the report of the shooting of Sgt. Hollingsworth (Appendix Ten), which was witnessed by Tom Carpenter (see Appendix Five, pp. 298-299 for Tom’s description of arrival at the camp and the shooting of Sgt. Hollingsworth). At the end of Appendix Nine I have added a photograph of Russian Prisoners of War lining up for roll call, taken at Oerbke in 1941, as a gesture of respect and remembrance to the 30,000 men buried there.\(^\text{30}\)

I have also included the testimony given by Major Smith, the medical officer who treated Tom’s wound, to a War Crimes Trial (WO235/231) (Appendix Eleven) and a Red Cross Report on conditions at the camp, dated 9th November 1944 (FO916/836), this visit took place just four days after my father left Stalag XIB to join Arbeitskommando 7001, Hallendorf (Appendix Twelve). This Red Cross report offers a comprehensive description of conditions in the camp at that time. I would like to offer a word of caution here though. You, the reader, need to find your own way through this material in these appendices; you will have your own responses, as I did (see paragraph below). My strong suggestion is, if you do choose to read them, to do so when you have the space to do something else afterwards and well before bedtime (also see resources on accompanying CD).

I had underestimated the impact that reading the various reports would have on me. I began by reading the prisoner of war questionnaires, then the Red Cross reports on Stalag XIB and finally I looked at War Crimes’Trial evidence relating to the camp (WO235/231; WO208/4675; also see Appendix Ten). I noted how I ‘put off’ reading the War Crimes’ file until the last; I knew there were more files of that type that I should read, but I was exhausted and had run out of time to do the necessary searches. My journal entry for the day after I returned home from the Reunion and National Archives reads:

\begin{center}
13\textsuperscript{th} October 2005
A sore throat began later. I have been feeling tired over the past couple of weeks and not sleeping well. In Hayling Island I got into a pattern of waking at 3.30am every morning and not being able to get back to sleep again (similar pattern to Stan). Later I started sneezing. So I decided to take it easy over the next couple of days.
\end{center}

I acknowledged that on my next visit to the National Archives I would take better care of myself in order to support the reading of the war crimes’ files.\(^\text{31}\)

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{30} Reproduced by kind permission of Rolf Keller, Head of Department, \textit{Stiftung Niedersächsische Gedenkstätten}.

\textsuperscript{31} In March 2007 I returned to the National Archives to read the War Crimes’ files relating to the ill treatment of prisoners of war in the Hallendorf-Salzgitter area [where my father’s \textit{Arbeitskommando} was] and the slave labourers who lived at the nearby concentration camps. The accounts of brutality, particularly towards the slave labourers, were horrific, and I include some commentary about this towards the end of this chapter.
\end{flushright}
Suffering and the inter-human: deepening understanding

Although I had not planned it this way, March 2006 proved to be an intense month of inquiry into the nature of suffering and the inter-human. It started with switching the car radio on Friday 10\textsuperscript{th} March 2006 when I was on a long journey to the south coast:

I switched the radio on to catch the 9 o’clock news and then there was ‘Desert Island Discs’ with someone called Jack Higgins, who I may have heard of vaguely sometime in the past. There was something which drew me to listen on: was it the plot behind The Eagle has Landed about German paratroopers landing in Norfolk to kidnap Churchill? I don’t know, but I felt compelled to listen on. Towards the end Harry Patterson, [the author’s] real name because he’d become too prolific a writer as ‘Jack Higgins’, talked about his respect for soldiers and his play ‘Walking Wounded’ and how the soldiers going to the Falklands used to sing ‘Sailing’ by Rod Stewart – an anthem to soldiers. As the song played, I burst into tears. This was the 1980s version of ‘Red Sails in the Sunset’ which my father wanted playing at his funeral, when he [started crying] as we overlooked the Isle of Wight. I knew instinctively it was a song of great significance, and yet at the time I did not understand the real meaning behind the words: at his funeral I interpreted the words quite literally as coming safely home to my sweetheart, not as an anthem for all those who failed to come back and all those men in that boat whose lives were never the same again.

When I returned home I followed up the ‘Walking Wounded’ reference on the internet:

Something compelled me to follow up the play and I put it into Google and up popped a reference to the play and Jersey in a tourist ‘What’s on’ brochure. The world première of the play was on in Jersey 28\textsuperscript{th} March – 1\textsuperscript{st} April. I had to go. The woman who booked my tickets spoke about her father’s experience on a troop ship. Her father fought in North Africa but didn’t speak about it. When they visited the war cemetery at El Alamein, he broke down in tears and told them his best friend was buried there.

On 29\textsuperscript{th} March I flew to Jersey and saw the play that evening. The play centres on the effects of war through the different characters’ narratives. These are my journal entries over this intense four day period (see Appendix Thirteen for accompanying programme to the play ‘Walking Wounded’).

\textbf{Newsnight} I felt very moved by the end of the play and fought back tears as I left the theatre. When I arrived at the hotel I decided to watch the ITV news at 10.30pm, pressed #3 on the remote. A documentary about US soldiers who had fought in Iraq was on. I watched it totally absorbed and only later did I wonder why this was on ITV news, then I realised that #2 on the remote was ITV; #3 was BBC2 Newsnight! I realised, listening to the men’s stories, that each war takes those who have to go into battle into [almost like another] world – a world where such inhumane acts are done to ‘objectified’ human beings. And there is the incongruence when ex-soldiers return to the world we inhabit. How do you live with yourself? The ex Iraq soldiers had chosen Bob Marley’s ‘Redemption’ as their anthem.

The next day I took a bus to the Jersey War Tunnels, dug into the rocks and built by slave labourers in World War II. This place and the accompanying exhibition brought together the physical and psychological effects of occupation from different perspectives: the occupying German soldiers, the inhabitants, the experiences of those who were deported...
and the slave labourers who came from all over Europe and had to work making the tunnels for the huge underground hospital.

One of the ways the curators encouraged visitors to identify with the issues facing people at that time was to issue each person with a replica identity card of a person, of a similar age, features and gender, who was living in Jersey then. I was Maud Elisabeth Otter.

Visitors were then encouraged to go and see what happened to the person whose card they had been given before they left. As an English born citizen, Maud was deported to a German concentration camp in September 1942 and never returned. She was the mother of two sons and one daughter. Perhaps, a similar age to the woman whose eyes my father talked about, eyes that could have been his mother’s.

As I descended into the tunnels and began walking around, two of the unfinished tunnels beckoned me; they had a memorial like quality which commanded a few minutes silent contemplation. As I looked into the dark, cavernous depths I thought about what it must have been like for those slave labourers to face those rock faces day in and day out, malnourished, exhausted, together and yet terribly alone, in an ante-room to death.

One of the exhibition rooms contained Red Cross parcels from different countries and solved a longstanding puzzle about the card that my father had used to write his prisoner of war diary. Stan, one of the prisoners of war (see Appendix Six), had thought it was torn from the top of a Red Cross parcel box, probably Canadian; other men, as they looked at and felt the card between their fingers, agreed.\(^32\) The significance of Red Cross parcels for prisoners of war must not be underestimated; their contents signified the difference between life and death at various stages of the war. Many of my father’s PoW journal entries detail the contents (see Appendix Three).

\(^{32}\) Stan, having received Red Cross parcels over a period of four years from 1941-1945, had an experiential knowledge of the card, its thickness and size. After nearly a year in captivity before the Red Cross parcels came through, prisoners of war like Stan who were captured in 1940, gave themselves a maximum of five years to subsist on their wholly inadequate PoW rations – hence the significance of the parcels as the difference between survival and death.
After the intensity of being underground for two hours and looking into the two unfinished tunnels, I was inspired by these quotes in the final tunnel ‘Towards Tomorrow’:

See yourself in others then who can you hurt, what harm can you do?

Freedom has its life in the hearts, the actions, the spirit of men [sic], and it must be daily earned and refreshed else, when like a flower cut from its life giving roots, it will wither and die.

Humanisation is a reciprocal thing. We cannot know ourselves or declare ourselves human unless we share the humanity of another.

When I emerged into daylight, it was time for a cup of tea. Just near me I saw two women, probably in their eighties, and a woman about my age, who I had noticed, going around the exhibition in a small party. We started talking over tea. One of the women, who is now a widow, asked me to put this story from her husband, an ex prisoner of war, in my PhD. I have included it to respect her wishes and her late husband’s testimony. The story reminds us of the inter-human and how it emerges from narratives of unpardonable suffering (Frank, 1995):

“There were some Polish prisoners and they [the prisoners of war] gave them some bread. The Germans found it and stripped the Poles, and ordered them to stand in the freezing cold all night so they froze to death. He didn’t say much about his time as a PoW but that was one story he had to tell. It was a very sad time: my husband was captured at El Alamein and then two months later my brother, who was an RAF pilot, was shot down.”

I came away from the Jersey War Tunnels with a conviction that the only way to respond to narratives of such cruelty and suffering was to embody, on a daily basis, the inter-human qualities identified in the quotes in that final tunnel.

In the evening I went to the play for a second time and talked with Harry Patterson again. He said, “Did you see the guy from 2nd Para after the performance? He was crying”. I thought back to the man’s tough, quite brusque demeanour in the interval. The main character in the play, Harry Jackson, relives his trauma, killing 14 people, when he is forced to stand by the other characters. He becomes the actor or protagonist again after staying wheelchair bound after the incident, with no medical reason.

After the intensity of the past 36 hours, I was emotionally exhausted:

31st March 2006 day I need some time off today. I need to be in the open, feeling the wind and sun on my face. So I end up in a sleepy fishing village, Rozel, on the north coast. The place is dead but it does me good. Time to sit by the harbour in the warm sunshine, thinking and writing . . . I catch the bus back to St Helier, and decide to go to La Corbière, the lighthouse on the western end of the island. I need space and light around me and to feel the wind in my face. [La Corbière] turns out to be what I need: the tide is out and I am able to walk out across the causeway to the lighthouse, looking at the beautiful rock pools: bright green and pink seaweed fronds on a bed of shells and white sand. At the lighthouse the evidence of World War II is less easy to spot: the ugly concrete bunkers cleverly hidden behind the natural rock formations. I sit for a while enjoying the sun and the wind in my face. I am tired; I go back to the hotel and sleep for an hour before dinner and the play.
31st March 2006 evening The third time I’ve seen the play. I engage in conversation with the woman in the next seat who asks what I’ve been doing in Jersey. I talk about the PhD, my father’s diaries and she tells me about her father’s war diaries and how he describes being torpedoed. She recounts how he felt when they had to leave men in the water, but they were under orders to go full steam ahead. He was on convoys across the Atlantic; of 126 boats that went across, only 56 came back.

This time around I was struck by the relationship between Connie [the Doctor] and Harry [the main character who is in a wheelchair until the last minutes of the play], their arms around each other’s shoulders at the end – Harry standing unsupported. There was a huge energy in the final scene tonight; it was so emotional. All Harry’s comrades are shot and he is the only soldier left. The position is overrun by the Argentine soldiers: “You fucking bastards” he shouts as he goes berserk with a machine gun. He kills 14 and wounds even more. He hears their screams. The play is about the soldier’s struggle to live an ordinary life after killing and wounding people. The song ‘Sailing’ is sung at the end as an anthem to soldiers before going into battle, what the soldiers going to the Falklands sang on the troop ships.

The time in Jersey was an intense period of inquiry. It deepened my understanding of the profound effects of war. As I mentioned previously, war propels human beings out of the normal pathways of their lives, and disrupts healthy forms of responsiveness and relation, which leads to a destruction of self-identity (Levinas, 1969); hence, the significance of ‘anthems’ like ‘Red Sails in the Sunset’, ‘Sailing’ and ‘Redemption’.

There was also the importance of place: the Channel Islands were the only part of the UK occupied by the Germans in the war, and as a British citizen I reflected on this. How it is impossible to judge how I might have behaved? Would I have resisted, co-existed or collaborated, and if so what would have pushed me into this position? However like Maud Otter, as someone born in the UK, I would have been one of the 2,034 people deported to concentration camps in Germany on direct orders of Adolf Hitler (McLoughlin, 2005).

Once again, I thought about how fortunate I was to be living at a different historical time. Since meeting the prisoners of war in October I had been reflecting on the meaning of their narratives for me and for others; the feeling I had when I left the reunion of being bathed in love; and how I could use what they told me to best effect in my own life. The seeds of my own quest narrative were beginning to form (Frank, 1995).

**Reflection, self care and healing**

During early April I increased my yoga practice and prepared for the Real Yoga Diploma practical examination, a second yoga qualification. I used the opportunity to work on one of the main issues which arose for me during the inquiry since joining Bath in 2002: How do I stay whole and fully in touch with my emotions in the work I do, and yet which requires firm boundaries for self-protection? The objective of the class was to be more aware of our emotional energy and our capacity to direct it positively towards ourselves.

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33 My mother, who worked in Liverpool Docks during the war, had told me a similar story of a man she worked with, who was very upset to be given ‘Full Steam Ahead’ orders to leave behind men in the water when, just outside the Mersey Bar, their boat was torpedoed. The image haunted him and also my mother, who was responsible for paying crew members’ wages.
and others. I was deepening understanding and practice of ‘cultivation of the self’ in order to explore the nature of the inter-human (Foucault, 1986; Levinas, 1988).

This shift marked a transition from a predominantly backward focused and historical engagement with my father’s and others’ war and imprisonment narratives to a healing narrative: How do I take care of myself? How do I show compassion to others and yet not become too emotionally involved? How do I find balance in leading a good life? I was particular interested to experiment with some suggestions in a Yoga Journal paper which offered some guidance on finding appropriate empathic responses (Nelson, 2006).

My yoga practice class started with a discussion of the first two limbs of the eight limbs of yoga: the Yamas, universal moral principles which help examine our lives in relation to others; and the Niyamas, observances or personal disciplines which support how we live our lives with regard to ourselves, loving and caring for ourselves so that we might love and care for others (Beeken, 2000). The other limbs of yoga, which are probably more familiar, are:

- **Asana** - the practice of physical postures
- **Pranayama** - the practice of breath control
- **Pratyahara** - the practice of withdrawal of the senses
- **Dharana** - the practice of focused attention
- **Dhyana** - the practice of meditation
- **Samadhi** - self-realisation. Enlightenment. (De Rham and Gill 2001, p.xv)

The eight limbs of yoga are not intended to be worked through sequentially; it is possible to start practising just one and then gradually move onto the others. Regular practice of one will help remove obstacles to practising other limbs of yoga. The first two Yamas and Niyamas are of crucial importance and often overlooked in the Western focus on the Asanas or physical postures to the exclusion of the moral principles and personal disciplines necessary to nurture ourselves and care for others.

There are five Yamas: **Ahimsa** (Non-violence); **Satya** (Truth); **Asteya** (Non-stealing); **Brahmacharya** (Transforming a vital force to a spiritual level/ reverence for the creative life-force within); and **Aparigraha** (Greedlessness/ non-possessiveness) The five Niyamas are: **Saucha** (Purity); **Santosa** (Contentment); **Tapas** (self-discipline/being alive with enthusiasm); **Svadhyaya** (self-study); and **Isvara Pranidhana** (dedicating one’s actions to a higher purpose/ surrender) (Beeken, 2000; De Rham and Gill 2001).

I chose to focus on Satya (Truth) and Saucha (Purity):

**Satya** is about bringing sincerity and integrity to all expressions.
It is about approaching the world with pure intentions.
It means to speak the truth from a spirit of kindness.
It means communicating from the heart. (De Rham and Gill 2001, p.10)

**Saucha**, like all practices of the eightfold path, is experienced on different levels. It can mean purity in thought, conversation; how we select, prepare and cook our food; the way we practice asanas, the physical postures; or it can take on a spiritual dimension, such as
after meditation. In effect as we search for our true essence, a process of purification, self-knowledge and healing takes place.34

In terms of asanas, I focused in the class on the Virabhadrasana I (First Warrior) pose. I chose this pose because I felt like a ‘Healing Warrior’, when I practised it:

The Warrior poses embody and encourage all the attributes of the warrior in life – that of determination, strength, courage, steadfastness, and strength in the Inner Self: while softening the outer body so that it is in a relaxed, receptive state. (Beeken, 2000, p.74)

Given that much of my inquiry had been about what war does to those caught up in it, this seemed an important asana for me to practice as I looked to the future and the contribution I wished to make.

For the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh limbs, I adapted the Heart Coherence Method advocated by Servan-Schreiber (2004) into a meditation (see resources on accompanying CD). This simple technique of breathing through the heart acts as bridge, inducing coherence between the brain and the rest of the body and improving overall well-being.

These are two journal entries from this time, which show how I was beginning to heal the past:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16th April 2006 Ludlow</th>
<th>I am aware that I came to Jane's house on the 61st anniversary of my father's liberation and the yoga practice assessment was the next day - 12th April. A day, I think, he describes as a “lovely day”. The lesson I prepared focuses on truth and purity from the Yamas and Niyamas, the first two limbs of yoga. For me there is something about using yoga as a means of cleansing, cleansing from the past. But first to understand and represent [the past] in my own way.</th>
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<tr>
<td>17th April 2006 Ludlow</td>
<td>I sit and write in the same room where my father brought out his maps of Fallingbostel, nearly eight and a half years ago on Christmas Day 1997. I realised then that the memories of that time from September 1944 to April 1945 still haunted him. In order to bring the map and the photographs, taken by another comrade’s son who had visited Fallingbostel, he must have had something in his mind as he packed his case. When I returned from the walk, my mother was busy cooking Christmas Dinner. My father sat at the dining room table, laid up for our approaching meal. The map and photos were carefully [spread] out [on the table], and I realised he needed to talk. I sat down and listened, but now I can’t recall a lot of the conversation or his narrative. At the end I offered to take him back there if he wanted to go. I could speak German; we could hire a car. He said that he’d think about it. Six months later I asked him again, but he was still undecided. By the end of October he wasn’t well and only had six months to live. So I sit writing in this room, reflecting on his decision not to go or perhaps his ambivalence. Perhaps he was frightened of not being able to contain his feelings . . . I realise that my understanding of his experiences in no way penetrates the experiential understanding of someone who has been there, who has witnessed the brutality and human pain and suffering first hand. And yet I feel compelled to return to those places and that landscape, to see it, touch it, smell it, albeit changed, for myself. This is part of the healing process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34 The text for the relaxation on the accompanying CD was inspired by Saucha and Satya.
The discipline of preparing for the yoga practical examination brought a fresh commitment to meditation. By this time too, my friend, Dr Svenja Tams, a member of the same learning group from the Bath Vital Network, had invited me to go to Germany with her in June. With the kind offer of the loan of a car from her parents, we planned to visit the sites of my father’s former prisoner of war camps and the war cemetery where one of her grandfathers was buried. Regular meditation, during this time, and photography supported my engagement and, in some instances, re-engagement with place during the period May-August 2006. I started using a small digital camera as part of this visual, healing inquiry (Cartier-Bresson, 1999; Schnetz, 2005; Bach, 2007):

The Subject

There is subject in all that takes place, as well as in our personal universe. We cannot negate subject. It is everywhere. So we must be lucid toward what is going on in the world, and honest about what we feel.

Subject does not consist of a collection of facts, for facts in themselves offer little interest. Through facts, however, we can reach an understanding of the laws that govern them, and be better able to select the essential ones which communicate reality.

In photography, the smallest thing can be a great subject. The little, human detail can become a leitmotiv. We see and show the world around us, but it is an event itself which provokes the organic rhythm of forms.

There are thousands of ways to distill the essence of something that captivates us; let’s not catalogue them. We will, instead, leave it in all its freshness . . . (Cartier-Bresson 1999, p.29)

During early May I returned to the rural landscape of Eastern England and long horizons. This time I was more conscious of the self care process which sustained my inquiry. When I arrived it was a beautiful spring day, so different to two years ago when I had walked in horizontal blizzards.

| Meditation Journal 4th May 2006 | I arrived yesterday. Wonderful spring weather and the magic of the place began to work its charm: within a few hours I felt so well, calm yet energised. This morning I did a good long yoga session in my sitting room with its huge windows overlooking the river and the flat countryside stretching out into the distance. During the alternate nostril breathing I noticed my mind flitting about, so I did a few more rounds. I used Jean’s CD heart chakra meditation (Danford, 2002), and kept the image of a beautiful pink rose I had bought a couple of weeks ago in my mind.
I found at the end of the meditation I could have gone on for a little longer. I ended the yoga session with cobra, shoulderstand, fish, and rabbit, followed by a short relaxation . . . [Later] I looked back over my PhD meditation journal and the entries I made when I came here for the first time in 2004. Then my yoga practice was almost entirely focused on asanas and a relaxation at the end. I realise that over the past two or so years, I and my practice have changed. I never follow quite the same sequence but listen to and let my body guide me to and through the asanas; this is a more reflective and emergent form of practice. I learn new postures – one at a time – by practising them outside of my usual practice – and then I incorporate them again – one at a time – when I feel like it.
This is so different to two years ago when I came with a rather shallow book called something like Look 20 years younger with yoga! and I went through her recommended sequences for toning different parts of the body. I realise that this focus on outside appearances, the external, doesn’t sit with me anymore. For me, yoga is much more about internal processes; |
the spiritual and ethical world that encircles us and that we co-generate through our thoughts, words and deeds.

Meditation and regular yoga practice can keep me centred, focused on my soul journey, and what I can contribute to other people who share this planet with me right now.

One of the hardest things I find in meditation is not going over the past, but stopping planning what I’m going to do in the future, the next hour, afternoon, next week, next month, next year etc: sometimes, I feel so excited about the possibilities in my life and my work that I move away from the present and the one-pointedness required for meditation. This is my challenge: to lengthen the time that I can meditate, but to do this in an emergent way as has occurred with my yoga practice over the past two years. If I have the intention, then it will happen. I trust in the process.

Each morning I awoke to this glorious view: the morning mist over the river, the majestic horse chestnut tree and the pale lemon of the oilseed rape in the distance. I felt so privileged to be practising yoga here in this place over the five mornings; I made entries in my meditation journal each day as I experimented with different approaches.

On the last day I decided to do some work on my PhD: this had always been a good place to think. I started handling the original photo of my father’s old section, with the negative attached to it (see Chapter Five, p.95). My father had also taken the trouble to have a copy made of the photo with a caption at the bottom which told me where and when the photograph was taken:

Plate 8. 1st Parachute Signal Section (J) – August 1944

*Taken at Barkston, near Grantham, shortly before the Section left England for Arnhem. Seated in the centre on the left is Lt. Cairns and on the right Capt Marquand (OC).*

35 This had been in the bag with the diaries, along with the sheet of paper with the names of all the men who had been killed at Arnhem matched to each row of men in the group photograph.

36 I have since found this photo on the web [http://www.216parasigs.org.uk/history/1ads2.htm](http://www.216parasigs.org.uk/history/1ads2.htm).
Interestingly, I had completely disregarded this replica up until that point. I realised that I was due to go to a meeting in Grantham later that day and Barkston would only be a short detour. Symbolically, it felt important to visit the airfield at Barkston as it was where my father's second transition to war had taken place; although this time the men faced a terrible battle and defeat. Although I have already mentioned the loss of life during the nine days of Operation Market Garden, I will reiterate the losses: over 17,000 Allied soldiers were killed, wounded or missing (Ryan, 1974); German losses were between 6,315 and 8,925 (Kershaw, 1990/2004); and Dutch civilian casualty figures are estimated as high as 10,000 in the campaign and as a result of displacement, deprivation and starvation during the winter following the attack (Ryan, 1974).

9th May 2006 I found my way along the straight Roman road, running through open countryside – lush green interspersed with the yellow of oil seed rape fields. I was struck by how beautiful the English countryside looked. Slowly on my right, as I emerged from a dip, the airfield [came into view]. So I decided to park up and go to the security guard on the gate. He engaged straight away with the subject of the PhD and called Capt McCollum (Ray). Ray was keen to help, and within minutes I found myself in a training school for Army pilots! “We did a PowerPoint presentation last year for an American veteran who flew from here. Both he and his daughter found it quite emotional. You can have a copy.” I was very touched by Ray’s kindness and generosity. He told me that much of the airfield on the other side of the road was largely as it was in 1944. I showed Ray the abstract of my [forthcoming] paper for the World Congress on Action Research in Groningen, and we discussed Gulf War Syndrome and the importance of [acknowledging the trauma that war can cause].

When I viewed the video clip of the troops taking off from Barkston Heath in September 1944, those ‘grey-skinned’ figures, keenly running around and looking efficient, seemed strangely unreal and yet they were real people (see ‘A Bridge too Far - Market Garden’ presentation on accompanying CD). The rallying type music, somehow had a strange, almost sanitising, effect. We didn’t see any signs of ‘the enemy’, neither did we see anybody shot. Just one rough landing for a glider, that's all. What happened to whoever was inside?

As Margaret Attwood says:

> The war takes place in black and white. For those on the sidelines that is. There are many colours, excessive colours, too bright, too red and orange, too liquid and incandescent but for the others the war is like a newsreel – grainy, smeared, with bursts of staccato noise and large numbers of grey skinned people rushing or plodding or falling down, everything elsewhere. (Attwood, 2001, p.566)

Some of those men you saw lived, some did not, some were wounded and some were captured, like the ‘sepia skinned’ men in the J section photo taken in August 1944.

I wonder about the colours, the taste, the sound and the smell of war? What was it really like in those planes and gliders as the men left the safety of English shores, went over the North Sea and then saw the Dutch coast?

Bill Jukes (Jukes, undated personal account; Jukes, 1988) was one of the men at Barkston Heath who boarded a C47 plane, perhaps he was one of the ‘grey skinned men’ in the film? This is his account:
When 17th September dawned, it looked like any other pleasant day in what had been a pleasant summer . . . Reveille was later than usual, it being a Sunday and take-off time not until afternoon. Those of us who felt like it wandered down to breakfast, always the worst of the week. It was boiled finnan haddock that day. Little did we guess it was the last meal in England for many months for most of us, and the last one ever for some . . . Sometime in mid morning we boarded the trucks taking us to the airfield, where we sat beside the planes expectantly waiting for yet another cancellation. The minutes and hours ticked away and [we] filed up the steps into our C47s. I think even then a lot of us still thought there would be a cancellation. But before we knew it we were taxi-ing down the field for take-off. There was a final roar of the engines and we were off. That last gunning of the motors always left me with an empty feeling in my stomach that told me the only way I was going to get out of that plane was at the end of a static line.

We circled several times to get into formation, [then] headed towards the coast, passing over a seaside resort low enough to see the white faces of the holidaymakers looking up at us as they took their afternoon stroll before going back to digs for tea.

Being with the number one brigade set, I was in the same plane as Colonel Frost, who sat next to the door reading from a heavy volume. I found myself speculating what it might be, “Gone with the Wind” seemed appropriate.

Across from me was Sergeant Westall with the radio in a kitbag and sitting next to him was the Colonel’s piper, his bagpipes laid across his lap in a black box . . .

Les Westall and Geoffrey Dunning, J section photograph (see p.99)

37 In the battle at Arnhem Bridge, Bill Jukes found Sergeant Les Westall blown to pieces by a shell from a tank on the third day of the battle (p140). Ironically the radio set was unharmed but proved useless in the communications failure which followed. In 2006 I met up with Les’ brother, Allan. He gave his permission for me to include the J section picture of his brother in the presentation at the World Congress in the Netherlands. The other man is Geoffrey Dunning, on whose grave my father wanted his ashes laid to rest. Les Westall, just above Geoffrey Dunning in the next row, has no known grave.

38 When Jean Jukes, Bill Jukes’ widow, wrote to me in January 2008, she ended the letter with this little memory of Geoffrey Dunning: ‘Geoff Dunning I met briefly once. He met me at Grantham
Since we had to go to war I thought I may as well go in comfort. By the time I had smoked three Woodbines and eaten my cheese roll [bought the previous evening in the canteen] we were over the Dutch coast and the fighter escort was peeling off to take care of the flak batteries before they gave us any trouble. We twisted our heads to look [through] the windows at the flat countryside, slipping quickly beneath us, a great deal of it underwater, and without apparent interference droned steadily on. Within what seemed to me like minutes, came the order to hook-up . . . An unaccustomed silence came over us as we waited. The usual semi-nervous banter, just before jumping, was lacking. Now we all knew this was the real thing . . . (Jukes, undated personal account, pp.130-131; Jukes, 1988)

It was this account I reflected on later in the year when I did a similar journey to stay in Oosterbeek for a few days, and then on to the World Congress on Action Research in Groningen. I took a cheap Easy Jet flight from Luton, landing safely at Schipol Airport, Amsterdam, rather than on a dropping zone too far from the objective, with 9th SS Hohenstaufen Panzer Division in between me and the bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem.

However before I was to re-visit Oosterbeek in August, my next trip over the North Sea was to Germany to do the journey I had suggested to my father on Christmas Day 1997: to visit the sites of his former prisoner of war camps. This was my journey now, and I was doing it with my friend, Svenja.

The diaries return and a new narrative emerges

During the journey around Germany I made extensive notes in my research and meditation journals, which tracked the dialectical process as my knowledge deepened of the different components, and as I stilled myself to reflect, using strict and loose, more imaginative and intuitive ways of thinking. My interpretations continually oscillated back and forth as I engaged with what was around me: the landscape of war, the people I met and narratives exchanged (Reason and Rowan, 1981; Bateson, 1972). Prior to the trip I had practised yoga regularly and meditated almost every day, reflecting on ‘calm positive energy’ flowing within me and from me to others (Macbeth, 1990).

When most people thought of Germany in June 2006, the words ‘World Cup’ and ‘Football’ came to mind. Two women, sitting in Departures at Hamburg airport on Saturday 10th June, reflected on the last five days they had spent together in Germany: not many people could have guessed the number of dead bodies they had sat amongst on those warm sunny days, the different nationalities of the deceased, nor the stories exchanged.

This was a journey of conversations, swopped narratives; ‘being’, respecting and remembering in cemeteries; engaging with landscape and how nature has changed and softened what had once been. The rolling north German landscape of heathland, vast meadows and long horizons, studded with dark forests, looked stunning in the early June sunshine.

The way the trip evolved over the five days, with help from so many different people, emphasised the importance of reciprocity and our inter-connectedness as human beings:

Railway station as I got off the London train to tell me that Bill was on duty and would see me later. How nice of him I thought then and still do’ (Personal correspondence, 7th January 2008).
for example, there was the story of the German soldier who, every year, visited the grave of a British soldier he had shot; the German Naval Prisoner of War of the British who appeared at the place my father had been 'liberated'; and the substantial help offered to us by the German archivists at Bergen Belsen, Celle and Salzgitter-Lebenstedt.

As I have mentioned previously, the landscape of the Second World War spoke to me and I wanted to find a way of recording and then working with this in some way. To accompany my journal entries and narrative inquiry, I chose photography, as a form of visual narrative inquiry. In this regard I found Henri Cartier-Bresson’s advice very useful:

One must always take photographs with the greatest respect for the subject and oneself.

To take photographs is to hold one’s breath when all faculties converge in the face of fleeing reality. It is at that moment that mastering an image becomes a great physical and intellectual joy.

To take photographs means to recognize – simultaneously and within a fraction of a second – both the fact itself and the rigorous organization of visually perceived forms that give it meaning. It is putting one’s head, one’s eye, and one’s heart on the same axis.

As far as I am concerned, taking photographs is a means of understanding which cannot be separated from other means of visual expression. It is a way of shouting, of freeing oneself, not of proving or asserting one’s originality. It is a way of life. (Cartier-Bresson 1999, p.16)

In this quote I was particularly drawn to the enhanced perception or ‘recognition’ of the subject and its meaning, which Cartier-Bresson refers to by putting head, eye and heart ‘on the same axis’. There was also the importance of treading on or re-experiencing that land again, but this time as an adult from my own perspective.

Gibson (1966, cited in Oliver, 2001) argues that perceptual systems are attentive to information in our environments, which are available to us in various energy forms - thermal, chemical, electrical, mechanical, photic, magnetic and so on. The body is receptive to these various energy forms, and the bodies of animals differ from the bodies of humans:

. . . What is seen is determined by the type and placement of eyes but also the movement of the eyes and the body as a whole. Movements of the body attend to the information available as energy. According to Gibson, it is argued that “these adjustments constitute modes of attention, and they are senses only as man in the street uses the term, not as the psychologist does. They serve to explore the information available in sound, mechanical contact, chemical contact, and light” (1966, 58). Energy, then, is the medium through which we perceive the world. (Oliver, 2001, p.192)

Our environment comprises opportunities for information to be registered by the body in the form of available information and potential stimuli. Most importantly, as I found with the inquiry into my father’s memorabilia, things are missed and not all information is grasped. This is where self care is crucial: physically slowing myself down through yoga and meditation served to enhance the manner in which my body and mind engaged with the immediate environment (Macbeth, 1990; Schiffmann, 1996).
Photography offered a way of accessing and capturing a new found attention in this relationship, thus enriching the ‘three dimensional inquiry space’ (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000):

Visual narrative inquiry allows another layer of meaning to narrative inquiry. Experience as a whole includes all that is experienced as well as the experiencer and the way she or he experiences. Experience differs from person to person; each undergoes and acts and reacts differently. Each has an “angle of vision” that touches on a common world. This angle of vision is an important component of visual narrative inquiry. There are no static categories of understanding or static forms of perception – one perception leads to another perception. (Bach, 2007, p.282)

Photography, as visual narrative inquiry, served to represent the healing taking place: a form of interpretative quilting (Schnetz, 2005) around the theme ‘Of love and loss’, the four words which sat by the photo of the Russian War Memorial in the collage for the Bath Diploma programme (Figure One).

Interpretative quilting is a method for arts based research, and draws on hermeneutics and action research as ways of interpreting phenomena and bringing about change; it involves accessing more intuitive ways of being in the world (Schnetz, 2005). A dialogical process was taking place as I worked with spoken and written narratives and the physicality of the landscape the narratives came from. These are some excerpts from my journal of the trip which show how this process unfolded as the week progressed.

It began with the sense that I had two companions at Heathrow Airport, my father and the other man who had once owned the North African diary. Taking the North African diary physically back to Germany, his country, was very important to pay my respects to both him and his family, whoever they were. It was the least I could do.

5th June 2006 Heathrow Airport So here I am sitting here with the diaries in the rucksack beside me. It feels like they are my companions and I am taking them by the hand back to those places . . . But the world has moved on, and the diaries, as representations of what was going on in my father’s head, need to go back to show them the wounds are healing.

Before I left home I packed my sound recording equipment as well as the camera, I felt I wanted to capture the birdsong in one or more of those places, perhaps some running water too. The connection with nature is so important in order to heal the wounds from my father’s past.

On the bus journey down, I got out the maps of Fallingbostel and Sgt. Hollingsworth’s story, both given to me by Tom [Carpenter], in order to reconnect to the journey I am making. I noticed that Tom had advanced along the same street where my father was wounded. I hadn’t noticed that before in the autumn when I read his story quickly before filing it.

In the story about Sgt. Hollingsworth’s murder, I noted a reference to Becklingen War Cemetery on the Lüneburgerheide (Lüneburg Heath): prisoners of war who died at Fallingbostel were re-buried in this cemetery after the war. Again I hadn’t noticed this previously; I need to visit there.

I also noticed, in some of Tom’s papers, reference to a small museum at Fallingbostel and the paper refers to the Arbeitskommandos (work or working parties) attached to Stalag XIB and details. I need to see if we can locate more information re Hallendorf . . .
Meditation Journal 7th June 2006

Yesterday, I visited the site of Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp. I talked with one of the historians there: they are opening a new exhibition centre in April next year and another historian is assembling the material on the Prisoner of War Camp. I am hoping to meet him later this week. Today we are driving to Mönchengladbach where Svenja’s grandfather is buried; he died just five days before the end of the war.

It has been difficult to meditate over the past few days with the pressure of leaving the UK and then getting up early yesterday. Anyway, today I managed 10 minutes on the balcony of the bed and breakfast where we are staying. I started with alternate nostril breathing and then ten minutes focusing on the birdsong, and other external sounds and the breath. This worked quite well, especially towards the end when I managed not to think of anything else for a minute or two. I feel well-grounded during this research which is what matters.

6th June 2006 (written 7th June after meditating)

We arrived at Becklingen War Cemetery and I was irritated that it did not look quite perfect: there were two men mowing the grass on big mowers and there was reconstruction work going on around the memorial. I wanted peace and quiet and to just listen to the bird song but it wasn’t to be like that. There was also the occasional roar of traffic going by on the nearby road . . .

I took photos of the headstones of J.J. [Jack] Everitt (Tom’s friend who died of his wounds and was initially buried on the edge of the Cemetery of No Names at Fallingbostel - see Appendix Nine), where 30,000 Russian Prisoners of War are buried and Sgt. Tom Hollingsworth (see Appendix Ten), and also two other Airborne Forces soldiers about whom I knew nothing; it seemed important to photograph these too, symbolically to represent all the 50 other British prisoners of war who died at Fallingbostel (see Tom Carpenter’s account - Appendix Five).
I then asked Svenja if she could ask the two gardeners to stop work for five minutes while I recorded the bird song. Svenja started to talk to one of the men and when I finished recording I joined them. The man had told Svenja of a conversation he had with a German veteran who came here every year to visit the grave of a soldier whom he had shot. The soldier was part of a tank crew who had been taken prisoner near the end of the war; the British man had pulled a gun when he was captured. The German soldier shot him. Every year he came and talked to the soldier at the grave "Why did you do that? There was no hope. If you hadn't done that, you would have lived." This is what soldiers have to live with after war.
So in my initial irritation at the far from perfect scene, there was a moving conversation about how soldiers have to objectify the enemy in the heat of battle. And afterwards, as soldiers return to ‘normal’ civilian life, they have to live with the awfulness of killing another being just like them, someone’s son, brother, husband . . .

**Bergen Belsen**
A conversation with one of the historians there about my father’s time at Stalag XIB . . . [he gave us] the details of the historian who is working on the Bergen Belsen PoW camps for the opening of the new archive centre in April next year . . .

. . . We break for lunch and there is sporadic sound of ammunition exploding in the background. The army camp up the road which was occupied by the British [after the war], and now the ‘Desert Rats’ (7th Armoured Brigade) train in the area all around here . . . it is strange to have this sound in the background. The sounds in April 1945 would have meant something very different . . .

We walk around the exhibition where there are some photographs of terrible scenes. I am particularly affected by the pictures of Russian Prisoners of War, taken in the late summer 1941: so many died of typhus and spot fever. The photographs of the men naked, waiting to die or be killed, are just awful.

And then the actual site of the camp is beautiful, in some ways, as nature has reclaimed it, and yet I am constantly reminded of walking on the remains of 1000s of people . . . just like me. It is hard to comprehend the awfulness of this, what it [was] like on a day to day basis. I have a feeling of numbness as I walk around the place. We walk towards the site where the Stalag XIB hospital and branch camp were and I think about what the view must have been like from here towards Bergen-Belsen 62 years ago. Nature has been kind to us and makes it difficult to appreciate what it might have been like: the trees, the green and cuckoo song in the background.

There are the foundations to huts 9 & 10 which have been excavated; the site of the former crematorium which could only take 10 bodies and then had to burn day and night in 1945. Eventually more and more people died, their bodies just left to decay where they fell. I take photos, but it is hard to capture the sense of the place . . .
'Here rest 800 dead'

*Picture taken at the site of Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp from Svenja’s collection*
7th June 2006 (written 8th June) Yesterday we visited Svenja’s grandfather’s grave at Mönchengladbach – Emil Romahn 1916-1945. This was the first time I had been to a German War Cemetery. I was struck by the plainness and austerity of the headstones . . .; the fact that sometimes two soldiers were in the same grave, and some had no dates of birth. The date of death on all the graves I saw was ‘1945’. [Earlier] Svenja had bought a plant and she put it by his grave. It was the only grave with flowers on it. An elderly lady was walking round the cemetery with her dog ‘Oskar’ and she came over to talk to us. She told how cemeteries had figured prominently in her life and she now watered the flowers that people left in the cemetery as there was no tap. She offered to look after Svenja’s plant.

After sharing the sadness of Svenja’s grandfather’s death we each took a few photographs, [and also shared some thoughts which caused us both to laugh and would, we thought, have caused the men in the cemetery to smile and laugh along with us if they had still been alive]. It struck me the process we were going through was similar to what happens at a funeral: after the tears, there is sometimes laughter or perhaps even a joke or two about the dead person to celebrate their life.

Picture of Svenja at her grandfather’s grave, reproduced here by kind permission.

And then we sat for [some time] just taking in the graves at their different angles. There was a geometrical beauty in the way they had been laid out . . .
I reflected on the picture of [Svenja’s mother], aged 2, and her sister as a baby, taken in Winter 1944, both being held by their father: a light dusting of snow on their coats; his smiling face; his career as a gardener; his time in London before the war at Kew Gardens; his dreams of going to work in New Zealand. All those men in that cemetery with loved ones, and hopes and dreams, but now just the austerity of the headstone to mark their time on this planet.

Afterwards I felt hungry, the same kind of hunger that I get after a funeral . . . so we went to eat . . . comfort food . . . ice cream, cake and coffee . . .

Section of my PoW diary covering arrival at Stalag XIB and transfer to Arbeitskommando ARB-KDO [work or working party] 7001, Hallendorf.

May 10th 2006

It is hard to describe the feelings of the past two days. It has been very intense and I have been humbled by the fact that we seem to have met the right people at the right time.

At Fallingbostel we came off the motorway and were uncertain whether to go in the direction of Oerbke or Fallingbostel. We ended up rather randomly going in the direction of a military base, and Svenja and I decided that it might be best if I asked the soldier at the gate, who strode towards us in a fluorescent yellow jacket, where the site of the former PoW camp might be. I began by asking if he spoke English or German. A clear English accent returned at the beginning of the dialogue. I then asked where the camp was and told him my father had been a PoW there. “I’m just your man, and I’m going to have my lunch break in 10 minutes. I’ll meet you round at the main gate. See that pile of rubbish down there at the end of the road, that was where the watch tower was at the end of the camp.” So there we were entering what [had been] the Panzer Training ground (see Appendix Nine). The car had to go through the obligatory security check: the bonnet and boot were opened and mirrors put under the car. Then we went in to sign in and had to surrender our passports. And then a journey down some steps into an old cellar/bunker where the museum was kept. It was like a ‘treasure trove’ of things from the past. So much to take in such a short space of time. I spotted Tom Carpenter’s story (Appendix Five) on one of the walls and also RSM Lord’s, which Ken (Kevin Greenhalgh) said he would copy for me. The museum reminded me of a small Roman museum which one of the farmers in my village had set up: you could handle everything. I wanted to stay longer but the hour was nearly up. Ken said he would help in whatever way he could.

We left and drove to the Russian War Cemetery (Cemetery of No Names) (see Appendix Nine for maps and photograph of Russian PoWs); originally I had wanted to walk there by the same route that Tom had spoken of [and drawn for me], but it was very hot and we didn’t have enough time.
The cemetery was on a hill over a little bridge surrounded by trees . . . this was an extraordinarily beautiful place. We sat and ate lunch on the remains of 30,000 dead Russian Prisoners of War, wondering why and how some had headstones and others not; so few headstones, perhaps just 50-100, and the loss for all the relatives of those buried [in this place]. It was difficult to comprehend the scale of such sadness. I also thought about the unmarked graves of the British PoWs who had been there. This was the place where Sgt Tom Hollingsworth’s and Jack Everitt’s, Tom’s friend, bodies were first buried. 39 I wanted to record the peace of the place with bird song in the background, but there was the constant hum of the nearby motorway and the occasional explosion from the military training ground. I reflected as I had done at Bergen Belsen, on the different meaning of those sounds for those here 62 years ago.

39 In a later telephone conversation in 2007, Tom and I returned to a discussion of the pictures I had taken of Germany in June 2006; his memories of 1944/45 are “grey and dismal” in shades of black and white, not colour. After the shock of capture, he was disoriented during the days that followed, days which he described as the “most traumatic”. His perception and memory of the Cemetery of the Nameless, where his friend, Jack Everitt, was buried in late November 1944, were utterly different to mine. Svenja and I visited on a beautiful summer’s day, in a different season and at a very different historical time where my and others’ lives were not threatened by festering wounds, shell shock and malnutrition.
We then went to the memorial gates, erected last year, with what would have been the Panzer barracks in the distance across the railway tracks . . . Before we left I was determined to walk on the site of the camp so I walked up the side of the housing estate, which had been built on much of the site of the former camp. I suddenly noticed that one of the houses had what looked like the original metal fence posts of the camp and some pieces of original barbed wire, all very rusted. This formed the boundary of the bottom of their garden.

![Image of a house and garden with rusted fence posts]

Time was passing and I wanted to walk along the track further but we were already a bit later for our appointment with the historian at Celle who was preparing the archive material for the Bergen Belsen archive centre on PoWs.

I later learnt that the farming families, who had owned and worked the land around here for generations, were displaced around 1936; they went to petition Hitler in small groups to no avail. What happened to them?

**Celle**

Session with Rolf Keller [of the Foundation for Memorials in Lower Saxony - Stiftung niedersächsische Gedenkstätten] who showed me a tray of various documents he had dug out, and we talked about my father's time at Stalag XIIB – the stories he told. Again time was a bit rushed, because we had originally intended to see him at 2.00pm, an hour earlier. We went to sit in one of the document rooms and he offered to copy anything we wanted. The first book contained information on all the camps in the Salzgitter area and he had marked up the information relating to Lager 8 at Salzgitter where my father was. It was strange reading the confirmation in a book about my father's march out of the camp to Schladen and Mattierzoll, and the historical focus on quantitative data [Pischke, 1995]. This does not get to the experiences of the men: the fear and uncertainty during those turbulent days.

There was a very interesting War Office [WO] archive on Hallendorf [WO309/988], which somehow I had missed [at the National Archives]; this described the brutality of one of the guards [on the forced march to Mattierzoll just prior to my father being liberated] . . . Rolf Keller asked if he might have a transcription of my father's diary. However the key focus of the archive was the Russian and Italian PoWs who were treated very badly (the Italians because they were considered traitors when they swopped sides – the PoWs were given a choice about fighting for the Germans and if they chose not to, then they were considered traitors). We also talked about the British PoW museum and how important it would be for the archive centre [to be able] to access some of that information/ those materials if possible.

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40 It was photos of these houses that my father showed me on Christmas Day 1997.
Anyway time to go and we started the drive south east towards Salzgitter, talking about the need for cross-cultural communication across the different nationalities involved with the Bergen Belsen document centre. Essentially you are asking PoWs and KZ [concentration camp] survivors of the different nationalities to give their personal history over to the Germans. This may be too much for some people: a very high level of trust would be needed . . .

Near SZ Lebenstedt, just outside Salzgitter, the evening spent eating out in the warm sunshine until quite late . . . I notice on the map we are near to SZ Hallendorf, and there is a slight flutter in my stomach . . .

At long last I was near the place of my father’s narratives, where he looked into the eyes of the woman slave labourer and saw the eyes of his mother. I also recalled a story he told of the different coloured symbols on the slave labourers’ uniforms. Later I found the key to the colours and symbols in a leaflet given to us the next day on Drütte concentration camp memorial and documentation centre: the majority of prisoners at Drütte, the camp next to the Hermann Goering Steelworks, had to wear triangle badges of different colours: red identified political prisoners. There were also inmates wearing other colours: black (“anti-socials”, green (“criminals”), yellow (“Jews”), brown (“Gypsies”), pink (“homosexuals), and purple (“Jehovah’s witnesses”).

One of the stories my father told me in the last couple of years of his life was of his ‘liberation’ at Mattierzoll, and how there had been a fierce argument between one German officer and another at a level crossing just prior to the American front line coming through. The officer, who was more extreme, apparently blew himself up rather than surrender to the Americans.

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See [http://www.gedenkstaette-salzgitter.de/english/index.htm](http://www.gedenkstaette-salzgitter.de/english/index.htm). In October 1942 Druette (Drütte) concentration camp was established in the town of Watenstedt-Salzgitter, near Brunswick, to provide forced labourers for the Hermann Goering Works, an armaments factory. There were also three other concentration camps in the vicinity. In March 2007 I researched the testimony of camp survivors at the National Archives in War Crimes’ files. As I have mentioned earlier, I now believe my father’s narratives were about people from those camps. I return to what happened in some of those camps at the end of this chapter.
Day of 'liberation', move to Veltheim to stay with the Hupaschs', and the next day

When he told me this story at the time, I did not realise the terrible uncertainty of the march out of the camp eventually into the approaching American forces. I had not appreciated the fear on that march and that last day at the level crossing, in particular. What if the German captain had chosen to fight on? I might not be here.

9th June 2006 Another early start, and we go to see Elke Zacharias, the historian who focuses on all the camps around Salzgitter. There were several PoW camps and three concentration camps around Salzgitter. The history of Salzgitter is fascinating: it was designed as a Nazi 'new town' in 1935/36 with the main street layout being designed around SZ Lebenstedt – the plan was never completed. In effect Salzgitter is an amalgamation of what were villages. She showed us on the map where the camp was and then brought out some photographs. The steelworks are still there today. Many prisoners [said] that the four chimneys near the camps were the main landmark. The PoW camp became a displaced persons camp after the war and then continued until the mid 1960s as a camp for Gästearbeiter (guest or foreign workers) who worked in the factory. There was only one chimney standing at the iron ore works (?). Unfortunately Elke couldn’t find any pictures of British PoWs in camps 8 & 9, but showed me some of French prisoners.

She scanned images onto a disc for me. Again we talked briefly about the problems of different collections in different places. Elke then took us to the site of the [former] camp – part of the car park was made from the foundations of one of the camp huts and walking around you could see what looked like a store or [most probably] an air raid shelter, in another place it looked like there were the original fence posts and some other hut foundations . . .

*Steelworks Salzgitter-Hallendorf undated*
Steelworks Salzgitter-Hallendorf June 2006

Site of former PoW camp, Hallendorf – images from Svenja’s collection
We then went eastwards to Wolfenbüttel, a beautiful old town... I spotted a citrine ring in a jeweller’s shop [my birthstone]. It seemed important to have something from this place and I liked the yellow glow of the stone [said to be a good piece of reconciliation jewellery]... then south east towards Mattierzoll. I could hardly believe I was going there, and I wondered what the road and the landscape had looked like 62 years ago. No modern white windmills that’s for sure.

We came to Mattierzoll and there was a café on the right where we pulled in. We got out and walked up and down the street – it seemed like a ghost village with many deserted old buildings. It had also been an East-West border crossing before reunification and there was evidence of No Man’s Land just beyond the signal box by the crossing. [A woman, who lived opposite the café, confirmed that there had been a PoW camp on the site of the café, next to the signal box [with the name Mattierzoll painted on the side].
Former signal box at Mattierzoll, by the level crossing where the German Captain blew himself up, and former East-West border crossing gate and ‘No Man’s Land’. 
. . . We wandered around some more buildings and I kept wondering in which of the buildings the ration store had been, [which my father and other prisoners had raided immediately after ‘liberation’]? Anyway eventually we went over to the café and there were two women in their late 60s/70s sitting with an elderly man at a table who looked as if he must be a war veteran. I asked Svenja if she could ask him about the PoW camp and the ration store. He confirmed that the PoW camp had been on the site of the café and right opposite us was the ration store. It felt so good to be back there and then the man told his story about being a Naval Prisoner of War himself in the Baltic and Malta, and sang “It’s a long way to Tipperary” for us! He was 84 years old. One of the women talked about the Russians finding dead German soldiers remains with their identity tags and selling their remains on the internet for 2000 Euros. They also talked about the remains of a British pilot being found recently . . . his plane must have crashed.

I sat at the table and read the words in my father’s diary. Finally the diary was back at the point where it had been freed! I looked at my ring and felt the story of my father’s reflected in my story. The diary had returned full circle.
Then onto Veltheim where my father stayed on his first night of freedom. We asked a woman who was walking down the road if she knew where Herman Hupasch’s house was/ had been.

She said he had died in 1981 – hanged himself after his wife had died and they had no children. He had been a farm worker. There was no grave because after 30 years the plot goes to someone else and if there are no relatives then sooner; we were shown the house where he had lived latterly. She thought he had lived near the church . . . we asked another man who lived near the church, and he said he didn't live around there. So the actual house remained elusive . . . and then I noticed the war memorial in the church yard. Somehow that seemed far more important to photograph than the actual house because it showed how many of the men from that [community] never came back from World War II. If things had played out differently at Mattierzoll, just 2km down the road, then my father’s name would have been on a memorial in Odiham [the village he came from in Hampshire]. Somehow this seemed to be the place where the lines of fate from both sides of the war crossed: life or death at the toss of a coin.

‘Veltheim’s fallen sons’
'Veltheim's fallen sons'
When Svenja and I reached Schladen, we had reached saturation point with the intensity of the day. We spotted a shopping centre by the railway crossing at Schladen and quickly made for one of the shops, thus bringing us firmly back in the commercial world of the 21st century! It was a welcome release. After that we made our way back to Lüneburg on a beautiful June evening.

10th June 2006 Meditation Journal
Today in my own room at Svenja's parents' house, I did 10 minutes meditation. It was so hard to stop my mind from jumping from one thought to the next; going over the events of the last few days. I managed some calm towards the end. But I think I need to do a good yoga session before I meditate.

10th June 2006 Reflections on the speed of return
Only 36 hours ago I was in Salzgitter and now I am nearly home. I am still very much immersed in the thoughts and feelings of the past few days. Conversations on my mobile in the coach to Leicester with my Mum and my sister don't do justice to the totality of the experience. What must it have been like for my Dad returning home... from a war ravaged Europe?

12th June Meditation Journal
I am still processing the emotions over the past few days. It has been difficult adjusting back to life here in the present. Thoughts of Drütte Concentration Camp kept coming into my mind.

Reflection
The trip through the German landscape with Svenja marked a shift in my perception of World War II. When Svenja suggested that we might do the trip together, the initial focus was very much on visiting the sites of my father's two prisoner of war camps, in effect doing the trip I had suggested to my father on Christmas Day 1997.
However, the fact of doing the trip with Svenja, who had lost both her grandfathers in 1945, had a profound influence on my perception of place and narrative. When, during my first evening in Germany, Svenja’s mother showed me the photograph of her father, taken during his last leave home from the front, I was very moved. It is an image that found a place in my heart: a proud father holding his two beautiful little daughters in his arms; the intense sense of loss in the room, felt through holding the picture and listening to Svenja’s mother’s narrative of her and her family’s loss, and her life as a child and young person without her father. That narrative remained with me as Svenja and I journeyed across the north German landscape, and visited her grandfather’s grave.

But it did something more than that by shifting my attention away from my father’s and British prisoner of war narratives to narratives of ‘the Other’. Thinking with these stories of otherness, for example, the German soldier who returned to Becklingen war cemetery each year on the anniversary of his killing a British man who had pulled out a gun when he was captured, the former German PoW who emerged at Mattierzoll where my father was ‘liberated’, and the names of ‘fallen sons’ on the war memorial at Veltheim; and photography as visual narrative inquiry helped me relate to the past and the landscape of war in a different way. A new angle of vision was created. As we sat in cemeteries and places of unspeakable suffering during those few days, just being alongside the remains of thousands of people of all different nationalities, an overwhelming sense of suffering, loss and grief came over me, which transcended national boundaries and cultural and historical divides.

Without denying the terrible suffering which once took place on the landscapes, I began to appreciate that the ‘inter-human’ emerged as a theme in the narratives I heard and the cemeteries I visited, regardless of the nationality of the person. Frank (1995) discusses this shift as ‘thinking with stories’ not about stories:

To think about a story is to reduce it to content and then analyze that content. Thinking with stories takes the story as already complete; there is no going beyond it. To think with a story is to experience it affecting one’s own life and to find in the effect a certain truth in one’s life.

My project in clinical ethics is to move ethicists and practitioners in the direction of thinking with stories: to help professionals to recognise ill persons’ stories and all they represent. The complementary project in social science might be called a sociology of witness. I seek to situate both clinical ethics and social science within a more general ethics of the body. Such an ethics develops terms of responsibility through suffering bodies. Being responsible to these stories, thinking with them, depends on telling certain stories over and over, hearing different nuances of potential meaning as the story is told in different circumstances and at different stages of our lives. (Frank, 1995, pp.23-24)

As an adult, I was now finding my own way now through the memorabilia and war stories of my childhood, which I had heard retold by my father in my adult years with new dimensions added by others’ narratives, such as Tom Carpenter’s and the more recent German narratives of place. In dialogue with Svenja and the many people who helped us along the way, narrative and photographic inquiry helped me to think and feel how I might use what the stories told me about the nature of humanity, personhood and the type of person I wished to become. McAdams (1993) frames this fashioning of identity as a ‘life story’ or ‘personal myth’ to provide a person with a unity or purpose, which serves to create
meaning in their life. This, he refers to as the generativity script, citing psychological research which suggests that, as we reach the middle years of adulthood, we focus more on the number of years left rather than concerns about death (Marshall, 1975):

> The generativity script is an adult’s plan for what he or she hopes to do in the future to leave a heroic gift for the next generation. We recast and revise our own life stories so that the past is seen as giving birth to the present and the future, and so that the beginning, middle and end make sense in terms of each other. (McAdams 1993, p. 227)

Thus for me there was a dual process taking place in the cycles of inquiry: a healing script from the past and the writing of a legacy for the future. This is discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

On this trip one of the constraints was time: we covered a lot of ground in a very short space of time as the journal entries show. Whilst this was very productive, for example meeting the German archivists, there is something important about ‘hanging around’ or just ‘being’ in a place. This is when, in my experience, there is likely to be emergence, either in the narratives that come forth from place or in some deeper insight gained.

So when I planned the return trip to Oosterbeek in August, I stayed in the middle of the beautiful Bilderberg Woods, and allowed a few days to slow down and explore the area on foot and by bicycle.

**Return to Oosterbeek: narratives of then and now meet in place**

One of the reasons I wanted to return to Oosterbeek was to look at the trees and landscape there again, to sit amongst those trees, and visually record their wounds by taking photographs as part of my inquiry:

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<th>15th August 2006 (written in the Arnhem-Oosterbeek War Cemetery on 16th August)</th>
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<td>It was strange to be situated so close to where my father dropped and in the middle of the woodland which saw such fierce fighting. The owner of the Bed &amp; Breakfast told me that some of the trees are very old now, but they don’t want to cut them down because there’s so much metal in them. Also she told me that there is a very rare fungus which was growing in one of the trees, and now the tree has had to be cut down but they cut out and left the part of the tree with the fungus in it: the fungus only grows in trees that have been very badly damaged. On my walk this evening, I am struck again by the damage to the bark of the big beech trees. The bullets and shrapnel have left scars . . . there are places where the bark was completely shot away.</td>
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<th>16th August 2006</th>
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<td>I started today with 10 minutes meditation, much needed after the frantic activity of the last few days. At breakfast the B&amp;B owner gave me a personal account of the period 17.09.44 – May 1945, written by the former owner of the house. I am in the right place: stories are beginning to unfold. I am also surrounded by nature: the foliage around the garden and beyond into the wood is dense and many different shades of green. The orange berries on the Rowan tree and the slight dampness in the air give a sense of autumn approaching.</td>
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I have a quick lesson on a Dutch bike and I’m away, pedalling at a leisurely pace towards the war cemetery. Why did I come here first? I love the tranquillity of the place and it grounds me . . . our house, Bellerophon, was my father’s memorial to his comrades who died here. It feels right, as it did six years ago to the day when I came with my sister (a strange coincidence) to lay our father’s ashes on the grave of Geoffrey Dunning. I easily find my way to [the] grave. It’s interesting that my brain has stored the memory of its location.

I am struck by how quiet the cemetery is: a gravestone is an infinitesimally small substitute for the vitality of youth. I think of the men laughing and joking together in England, the life blood flowing through them. And now there is nothing, only the sounds of birds and visitors and the occasional train. I think about the visitors and what has brought them here . . . it would be good to talk with people, to hear their stories, and to de-brief. I miss Svenja.

I ask one of the gardeners where the graves are of the twin brothers who died here on the same day. He knows more or less exactly and points me in the right direction. I remember when I was 21 [the same age as the Gronert twins] being so moved by their graves sitting side by side and of the terrible loss for their family. Then I was unprepared for the emotional effect of coming to a war cemetery: it is the scale of the loss of life and the ages of the [young] men that [hit] you.
An English family strolls around the cemetery. The man notices me writing and engages in conversation: “What brings you here then”? They are fascinated by my story. An intimacy develops: we introduce ourselves. I am struck by how much people love stories. For that family, the gravestones and, more importantly, the people lying beneath them were brought to life. But nevertheless I am careful about not going on too much, although people coming to a war cemetery are likely to be interested!

I had thought there was a German War Cemetery opposite, but it is a civilian cemetery. Where are the soldiers buried? I had wanted to visit the German War Cemetery here, because of the man, who my father came across suddenly in one of the houses and killed with his bayonet. I will ask.

16th August 2006 pm I cycle into town. I need some down time. It is mid afternoon and I need to eat: it is not good to do this research with low blood sugar levels. I then go in search of the places in Weverstraat which correspond to the old photos [the old postcards of Oosterbeek after the battle in September 1944, which had been kept in my father’s garage]. I ask a woman on a bicycle for an opinion about whether a painting and decorating shop in front of me is the building on the post card. She suggests I go into the shop because “there is an old man who works there and he will know”. I go inside and ask one of the younger men at the counter. I can see they are interested so they go and find the older man and he is able to identify all the places where the photos were taken. The younger man marks them on my map with a pencil mark. He asks some more about my father’s experiences . . .

42 In 2007 I found the location, Ysselsteyn, with 31,598 graves and 28 hectares of land. http://www.homepages.hetnet.nl/~pa3geg/CemYsselstein.htm
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KM3wfkUNv8U
http://www.paulcornelissen.nl/Ysselsteyn-cemetery.htm
I immersed myself in stories from people who were resident here in September 1944 (Mekkink, 1944/45; Ter Horst, 1945/1959. I took a book from my father’s ‘Arnhem’ bookshelf in his garage along with me to Oosterbeek (Ter Horst, 1945/1959); I wanted to read it in the place from where the narrative came. After the morning in the cemetery I was drawn, with feelings of great respect and sadness, to reflect on the qualities of the young men sheltering in Kate Ter Horst’s house, next to the Old Church. If you remember, stone from the Old Church stood on our coffee table in ‘Bellerophon’:

It strikes me more and more, how all these young men, most of them not older than twenty or twenty-five, in their voices and gestures but also in their whole attitude, show a self-control and sense of responsibility, a discipline which makes one think of fathers of forty or more, rather than young fellows straight from the school benches . . . There is something decidedly sunny about them, their kindness and gentleness . . . (pp 36-37)

I briefly reflect on these qualities in the reading of the passage, and how I, too, aspire to embody them in my life. The author also tells a story from Weverstraat, where I was that afternoon. This tells a fraction of the terrible reality behind the ruined buildings:

There is Lion, the padre brings him in, he must get out of that hellish noise: ‘Shell shock’. At every new explosion he grips his head, for the violence is unbearable for him. ‘I was on the top of the school, over there’, he points and we see the school in the Weverstraat in our mind’s eye, two minutes’ walk away. ‘An explosion took the roof right away from under me and then I was inside the school!’ He is not wounded, it is only his head that has left him in the lurch . . . He himself is almost a child still, this boy with his shining fair curly hair. (p.46)

I then started to read the story of the house, given to me that morning before I left for the cemetery. The next door neighbour had married Hans; one of the sons of the author, and had given a copy of the journal of the house to the current owners. The journal (Mekkink van den Brink, 1944/5) was originally written in Dutch from the day to day diary, Mrs Mekkink van den Brink, Hans’ mother, kept of that “fateful” time from 17th September 1944 up the liberation of the Netherlands and her return to the house where I was staying. It was later translated into English.

“If only something would happen” was the lament of the whole of the Netherlands, over the last months – that is in the parts of Holland remaining under German occupation. The strain became almost unbearable during the weeks preceding 17 September 1944.

Even we, Uncle Jo, Aunt Tine, the boys, Hans & Joop and I, their mother, had the yearning on this unusually bright sunny Sunday. If only something would happen to end this dreadful situation. (p.1)

19th September

Around noon, an alarming number of shells and bullets made it necessary to cut short our little spell of fresh air and walk around the garden. It was like a hurricane bursting above our heads and made it imperative to return to the shelter. Suddenly, we were startled by the creaking of stairs leading down to our cellar. We were all present – who or what could it be? It was an English soldier, bare-headed, with blood on his face and hands. He could only grasp “cigarette, water”. We gave him both, after which he returned to the surface. A
few minutes later he died, his enemy must have been waiting for him, for we heard one shot. Later that evening we found his body, behind the cellar, his gun at the ready, his large blue eyes staring into infinity. A few minutes after hearing the single shot, we had a second intruder, this time a German. He appeared frightened even "scared to death". We strongly requested him to leave. His presence would only increase our risk. Help or aid to the enemy would be our ruin. Our situation was precarious, to help either side could bring certain revenge from the other. Sensing our problem he left the cellar.

Hours followed, in our underground hide-away, hours of bitter suffering, and deepening fear, unbearable strain and thirst, but most of all the thirst. At any moment a soldier, enemy or friend, might enter, or toss down a grenade. Where so many possibilities threatened to cut off our lives – these hours seemed like days. (p.6)

I chose this extract because the two men could have been interchangeable as the hunter and the hunted: both epitomised the sheer terror that the unnatural state of war creates. I looked out from my balcony and imagined the family in the cellar just to the right in this picture, and the two young men in that garden nearly 62 years earlier (see p. 160). An intense, uncertain, fearful, dark sensory world revealed itself to me, which I could barely relate to as someone who has been fortunate never to experience such life threatening intensity.

On the next two days, I cycled, walked, sat and interacted with the environment around me. I cycled along the route my father took into Arnhem, spotting this old shell hole on the westerly outskirts of Oosterbeek. The water filled hole, looked like something from World War I and yet it stood just by a garish 21st century road sign: part of the modern landscape now, softened by nature, and yet still distinctly unnatural. I was fascinated by the way the trees that caught the blast on the southern side of this old shell hole were growing outwards.

Muted signals from the earth of the blast over sixty years ago, and yet the trees have grown and in the intervening years a sapling or two has sprung up around the edge. If you look closer you can see the road winding away in the distance.

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43 I was curious about where the mortar shell was fired from: I thought from a northerly direction, but Tom Carpenter, being far more expert on such matters as an Arnhem veteran, told me that the shell was probably fired from a southerly direction, that is, from the other side of the Rhine. The terrifying thing about mortar shells is that upon impact the direction and force of the blast is totally unpredictable, hence why a mate standing right next to you one minute can be killed instantly the next . . . and you survive to tell the tale. Mortar shells apparently make a whooshing sound if they’re heading in your direction and a whining noise if they’re not. After this conversation with
Then I pedalled along a kilometre or so to the Old Church, instantly recognising its familiar shape from the tea towels in my childhood home, almost as if it were my local parish church; then under the railway line into Klingelbeekseweg, where, as my father put it, “I copped it”. At the last moment he stumbled in a cabbage patch and the sniper’s bullet, aimed at his chest area, was deflected by a metal tin.

![Bullet holes in the Old Church, Oosterbeek](image)

On the last day I visited the avenue of old beech trees at Sonnenberg, where very heavy fighting took place in September 1944. The trees were the inspiration for this poem (Selwyn 1995, p.227):

**The Weeping Beeches of Sonnenberg**

Ankle deep in old dead leaves
I strode among the stately beech trees of this old battlefield,
Anguish in my heart.
I wept for long dead comrades,
I wept for the peace and silence
In these dark woods where trees, like my soul, are scarred and pitted with old wounds.

The melancholy anguish I have carried these many years
Those boys I killed (shall I ever be forgiven?)
I see these boys every waking day,
The grey green uniforms,
Their white marble, dead faces.
People say ‘why do you grieve, they would have killed first’
Would that I had been killed first,
Than bequeathed with a life of guilt.

Those questions I put to the trees,
they answer, ‘Why do you grieve so?’
Did you not leave us shattered, torn and broken,
Swathes of destruction left through us?

Tom, the idea of being wounded and hence immobile in open ground under shelling became even more terrifying to me (also see Chapter Five, p.112).

44 See [http://www.28chatsworth.fsnet.co.uk/arnhem%20page%203.htm](http://www.28chatsworth.fsnet.co.uk/arnhem%20page%203.htm) for first hand accounts of the battle which occurred in the Sonnenberg area.
But look at us now, Look well my friend
For we are regrown and reborn,
Look closer, see we still carry scars.

Mute and silent I ponder this,
Closer I looked and noticed the trees too were weeping,
But not with my anguished weeping.
They wept for joy
Each nodule a piece of shrapnel ejected and rejected.
As they rejected they wept for joy, reaching up to the sky
And joyfully rejecting the iron from their soul.
And so the trees have repaired, regrown,
Deep and lovely are the groves of weeping beeches at Sonnenberg.

P.A. Hyatt, Military Medal, 4th Ind. Parachute Squadron RE, 1st Airborne Division, North-West Europe, Arnhem/ Oosterbeek 1944. (Selwyn, 1995, p.227)
© 1995 The Salamander Oasis Trust
When I had come to Oosterbeek in 1974 and walked in the woods, first and foremost I saw the destruction to the trees. Now, like the poem’s author, I saw them differently. I, too, could learn something from a changed perception of the trees as repaired, regrown, and healing in their majestic beauty.

As I sat amongst the trees on that afternoon, I felt a deep, yet changed, affinity with the landscape:

To the sensing body all phenomena are animate, actively soliciting the participation of our senses, or else withdrawing from our focus and repelling our involvement. Things disclose themselves to our immediate perception as vectors, as styles of unfolding – not as finished chunks of matter given once and for all, but as dynamic ways of engaging the senses and modulating the body. Each thing, each phenomenon, has the power to reach us and to influence us . . . at the most primordial level of sensuous, bodily experience, we find ourselves in an expressive, gesturing landscape, in a world that speaks. (Abram 1996, p.81)

I left Oosterbeek with a sense of calm, and that I could now easily go there for a holiday. Yes, of course, I would visit the cemetery on the first day, but after that I could enjoy
cycling and walking there in much the same way as perhaps the New Forest in England. Something had shifted in my perception of that very special place over those few days.

**A different relationship to place is formed: thinking with stories and images**

My journey between June and August 2006 through Germany and the Netherlands began with a simple, and perhaps slightly self indulgent aim of following in the footsteps of my father between his capture in September 1944, imprisonment as a PoW at Fallingbostel and Salzgitter-Hallendorf, and ‘liberation’ at Mattierzoll in April 1945. Yet during the process of being in those places - physically retreading the ground of his war stories, listening to and reading narratives of ‘the Other’, journal writing, and taking photographs - a dialogical process or form of interpretative quilting on the page took place (Schnetz, 2005) as I selected the archive images to run alongside the photographs which I had taken, my journal entries and the poem about the Sonnenberg beech trees: ‘Images are an integral part of inquiry and connect us with the world: they aid us in gaining insight and understanding and allow us to deal with experiences that are beyond our control or understandings’ (Schnetz, 2005, p.56). Here I draw the reader’s attention to the gradual way in which the archive images and my father’s journal entries become less dominant between June and August 2006 as I develop my own relationship to the German and Dutch war sites through narrative and photographic inquiry.

I form my own narrative of place which has a very different angle of vision on the Second World War: one which seeks to relate to the suffering of those who experienced that time in a way which transcends national boundaries and cultural divides. Through narrative and photographic inquiry, my father’s ‘chaos’ narrative of nameless suffering is transformed into my ‘quest narrative’, which Levinas refers to as ‘just suffering’ or ‘my own adventure of suffering’ (Levinas, 1988, p.159):

> But the adventure, or journey, is of course not my own. The journey begins as the hero’s [sic] own, but what the hero learns throughout the journey is that she suffers for others. The boon is the vision of the inter-human.

> The journey is a process of learning that their own suffering touches and is touched by the suffering of others. The “inter-human” opens when suffering becomes the call and response implicating self and other. (Frank, 1995, p.178)

In judging the quality of the narrative inquiry, my standard of judgement is the degree to which I have thought and am thinking with the photographic images and the stories and poetry I heard or read. As I stated earlier in the Standards of Judgment section of this thesis, over time do I show the stories and images presented on the pages of this thesis affecting my life and type of person I wish to become?

During autumn 2006 I became increasingly drawn to the narratives of former German soldiers who had been taken prisoner. This led to arguably the richest learning in the whole research process when I sought out the opportunity to ‘dialogue with difference’ in the form of a former member of the 10th SS Panzer Division Frundsberg. This was one of two ‘elite’ German Panzer divisions which successfully counter attacked at Nijmegen and Arnhem in September 1944. Both were very much identified in my childhood war memorial home ‘Bellerophon’ and in my father’s battle narratives as ‘the enemy’, although most blame was directed towards senior Army personnel and their egos.
A narrative of ‘the Other’ is heard

For the workshop at the Action Research Congress in Groningen I had chosen to use archive material from my father’s memorabilia, old photos of Oosterbeek, and the sites Svenja and I visited in Germany alongside recent pictures taken in there in June to show the dialogical process of the visual inquiry into landscape (Jones, 2006). As the presentation and paper were both prepared in advance of my trip to Oosterbeek, I did not include the pictures I had just taken.

To support engagement with the paper, workshop participants were offered a few simple yoga stretches and a short relaxation at the beginning and end of the session, accompanied by one or two English landscape images. During the workshop as I talked about the research, the rest of the slides were displayed on a loop in the background. I also showed the archive footage of troops taking off from Barkston airfield on 17th September 1994 (see accompanying CD to view the archive footage and images used in the Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management (ALARPM) Congress Presentation, Aug 2006).

On the last day of the Congress I sat next to a Dutch woman, Lidwine Janssens. We started talking, as one does at conferences, and I told her about the workshop I had just given. Lidwine responded by telling me a remarkable story about a man, a Second World War veteran, whom she had met in Australia. Whilst on a journey by car and then walking around a lake, he had talked to her at some length about his early life in Europe. His German mother had come to the Netherlands when he was very young and married a Dutch man whom he thought was his father. Some years later the couple split up, and he and his mother returned to Germany when Hitler was in power. He became a soldier in the German Army, fighting in Russia, France, and the Netherlands; and was taken prisoner by the Russians but managed to escape. He returned to the Netherlands after the war, but was not accepted by the Dutch man he had thought to be his father. He then went to work in Sweden where he met his Dutch wife. After their marriage they emigrated to Australia.

When she told me the story, I really felt for the person, an adolescent during the war, caught between two identities and nationalities on opposing sides. For example, how hard must it be to fight in the Netherlands as a German soldier when you think you’re Dutch but you’re actually German? The story stayed in my mind throughout the autumn.

Looked at from the other side of the North Sea: narratives of then and now meet in place

Just a month after visiting Oosterbeek and participating in the World Congress on Action Research in Groningen, I returned to the quiet Lincolnshire countryside of long horizons for a week’s break to work on an outline of my thesis. This time I stayed on a farm near the coast, which by coincidence, had been home to a German prisoner of war, an airman, who spent many of the war years working there. He was one of the first PoWs to be repatriated and returned several years later. Arriving at tea time, he apparently delighted the children by eating an egg whole as he had done during his years on the farm!
Sunday 17th September 2006 (written 20th September) On Sunday morning, less than 12 hours after I had arrived, I started to flick through the tourist brochures in the magazine rack. I came across a copy of The Lincolnshire Poacher. Summer 2005, ‘When the war ended’. Memories from sixty years ago. A story called ‘Afterwards’ caught my eye. It described so vividly the problems survivors have to face when they return from war (see Appendix Fourteen). Tears came into my eyes and then I remembered that 62 years to the morning [also a Sunday] my father left this flat Lincolnshire landscape to be irrevocably changed by what he experienced in the following seven months. My eyes turned to a short poem called ‘Oh Charlie’ which describes the homecoming of soldiers from [a relative’s perspective.

**OH CHARLIE**

No one smiled at the station Charlie
Fatigued faces strained to see beyond the crowd, searching
The bile rose in my throat Charlie, as I stood and stared
At the broken spirits, mutilated limbs

When I didn’t find you there, I walked home in a daze, my mind in a haze.
Oh Charlie,
What have they done to you?
Your hair’s turned grey.
You’re not the boy you were?
You’re older than your father, crippled with arthritis and you’re only twenty-three.
Oh, Charlie.

BY SYLVIA HICKMAN (The Lincolnshire Poacher, Summer 2005, p.12)

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These two pieces serve to fill out the terrible price paid by soldiers. I cry some more and know I need to write something, but it takes three days to finally put pen to paper.

During the time I stayed on the farm, I started to think about German Prisoners of War in this country, and realised how little I knew about their treatment here. I also reflected on the narrative of a British Prisoner of War, Dave Mowat, a Scot, who had lived on a farm in East Prussia, now Poland. Both the German and British PoW had been ‘adopted’ as surrogate sons by their families. Dave felt that he had had a “cushy” time compared to the work many other prisoners of war had to carry out. The farmer had been in the Prussian Army in World War One. He had lost two sons in Russia and the third was a Prisoner of War in Scotland. “He treated me like a son. I wrote to the Commandant of the Camp in Scotland to plead clemency on behalf of his son.” said Dave, who told me he also used to have “a little kiss” with his daughter! “If the war had gone in their favour, I would have had a very different life.” I wondered about the German man’s life working on the land in Lincolnshire during the war? What was his narrative? What was it like returning to a divided Germany, destroyed by bombing? 45 To your whole family being wiped out? To no employment?

45 Although I return to the subject of German PoWs who died in this country at the end of this chapter, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into the experiences of German PoWs in the UK, and their repatriation in any depth, also bearing in mind that each man’s experience was unique. There are, however, three sites which I have found useful by way of background / for further research [poワrs website](http://www.fortunecity.com/campus/dixie/921/PoWs/pows.htm)
Whilst I was working on the thesis outline I walked each day, either in the narrow lanes around where I was staying or by the sea at the nature reserve, Gibraltar Point. As in Jersey, there were still signs of old well hidden World War Two gun emplacements, this time British. Whilst acknowledging the uniqueness of each person’s narrative and the distinctiveness of the landscapes across Europe, it felt in some ways like I was holding a mirror up to the other side of the North Sea or Die Nordsee, depending where you stood.

21st September 2006 A beautiful day. I worked until 3.30pm and then went on a walk at Gibraltar Point [a nature reserve on the Lincolnshire coast]. There was a warm breeze blowing into my face as I walked along the beach. The waves’ white manes crashed as they sped into shore; small waders busied themselves around the water’s edge. Near the dunes, marked by pale green fronds of grass, the sand was so fine and white, nearer the shore it was firm and hardly gave way to the soles of my feet. When I reached the point, the sand became coarser and darker marking the meeting of estuary with sea. I looked over to the sea to the horizon and [imagined] the coast of the Netherlands way beyond. Behind me, carefully hidden in the dunes and marshy landscape was an old World War II gun emplacement for an invasion that never happened. I never saw it when I came yesterday or the day before. It is strange how nature has a habit of making concrete invisible to an untrained eye.

I wrote the thesis outline in the remaining days in Lincolnshire; and prepared myself for finishing the research with the British prisoners of war, and a busy autumn working on four different projects.

More stories of suffering are witnessed

I returned to the Reunion in early October. Over the past year I had developed friendships with some of the men, especially Tom and Stan; and I had corresponded with others, for example where I had or had not found their liberation/interrogation questionnaires. So this time it felt very different driving down the motorway: I was much more relaxed; and when I arrived it was lovely to see them again.

There was some catching up to do with friends over dinner and at the bar afterwards. Tom told me he had managed to find a man, who lived in Wolverhampton, who was in the same Arbeitskommando as my father at the Hermann Goering Steelworks in Salzgitter.

At the Annual General Meeting the next morning, there was some discussion of a successful compensation claim to the International Organization of Migration in Switzerland. A prisoner of war, working as a slave labourer, had been struck in the face by an SS guard and lost an eye as a result of the force of the blow. I offered to assist the men, to substantiate any claims they might have, by locating and copying their liberation questionnaires when I next visited the National Archives. Then I spent time chatting with the men over tea and scones, enjoying each other’s company. The relaxed feeling continued; I noticed that the research carried less of an emotional charge this time. I listened more and asked fewer questions. I also took better care of myself, getting out in the fresh sea air each afternoon and sleeping well.

On the Sunday morning I sat with Tom and showed him the archive footage on my laptop and the photos I took at Fallingbostel and Oerbke in June. He commented on how much

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/RdLeaflet.asp?sLeafletID=7&j=1
work I had done. Later I printed off a set of the photos and also copied the images onto a CD for him. It was important for me to do this: Tom had been so helpful in my research.

At the Reunion Tom also shared with me the letters his wife (then his fiancée) had sent him when he went to Arnhem and was taken prisoner. I had not really considered what it must have been like for family, friends and lovers to wait and worry in such an information vacuum, with the words from a ‘missing in action’ stamp staring up at you from letter after letter: your own anxiety mirrored, magnified and unbearably intensified as each one of those letters was returned:

Sunday 8th October 2006 I was shocked by the starkness of the stamp [on Tom’s fiancée’s returned letters], which said ‘Missing in Action’ and then something to the effect that the letter could not be delivered. How dreadful it must have been to receive that. There were several letters sent immediately after he went to Arnhem, each with this stamp on them. It must have been so hard sending letters into that vacuum, like a black hole . . . I was very touched by Tom offering to share these very personal letters with me, as he put it “from the other side”.

In the afternoon I took photos of the march to the War Memorial so that some of the men could have pictures. At the memorial service afterwards, I noticed that some of the men who had been there the previous year were not with us this time. I wondered if they were too infirm now or had died. In particular I thought of the man with the wide back who had cried silently in the seat in front of me during the service the previous year, his wife’s hand and arm round that wide back supporting him. He had given me a newspaper cutting about the battle in Tunisia where he had been captured in 1942. Of the 689 men, only 184 managed to get back to Brigade Headquarters.

The next day I said to him “You lost an awful lot of men, didn’t you?” He replied:

“Yes. We were ordered to go back a mile in the night. But a man I was with was wounded in one leg by a mortar. He had half his calf muscle shot away . . . it was hopeless across the desert. So in the morning I just put the white flag up. When the Germans came, to give them their due, they put him in the motorbike and side car and we went on the top of the tank.”

What happened to the wounded man and the other 403 men who were killed, wounded and/or captured? But this was only the beginning of one narrative about loss and unimaginable suffering.

What I had learned from the men’s written and oral narratives over that year and a half was an appreciation of the whole traumatic experience of becoming and being a prisoner of war on both mind and body and then adjusting to ‘normal’ life afterwards: the sheer brutality of combat; seeing friends being wounded, killed and blown to pieces; the physical and psychological effects of being wounded; the psychological impact of surrender or defeat and transition to Kriegsgefangener [prisoner of war]; availability of any treatment for wounds; the physical conditions of transit to the camp; experiences at the camp e.g. on Arbeitskommandos [work or working parties]; the threat of disease and trying to avoid it; being injured on work parties; availability of any medical treatment; seeing people dying on work parties; working in sub zero temperatures with insufficient clothing; on a daily basis seeing a cart with the legs and arms of dead Russian prisoners of war sticking out

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46 Tom’s wife had passed away earlier in the year.
and the bodies being tipped into a pit; enduring the forced marches January to April 1945 and seeing others not surviving; being bombed by ‘friendly fire’; seeing the devastation and psychological effects of the bombing on the German people; experiencing the uncertain nature of ‘liberation’; seeing the German guard you had grown very fond of shot by the Russians; returning to a much changed UK, which for some men was five years later; attempting to locate former prisoners of war to be told that they had committed suicide; finding out that a friend had not returned from their distraught relatives; discovering that a partner’s affections had changed during the time away; and finally but not least, attempting to rebuild a ‘normal’ life in post war Britain.

As I drove home from the Reunion this time, I sensed the narrative focus shifting yet again within the three dimensional inquiry space from a predominantly backwards focus to the present as I carved my own narrative and living theory from my father’s and other prisoners’ of war narratives. The research took an unexpected turn later that autumn when I encountered text and narrative of ‘the Other’, which tested my living theory of responsibility.

Narrative of ‘the Other’ emerges

I’m not sure what triggered the email to Lidwine about the story that she had told me at the Action Research Congress in Groningen that summer. Perhaps it was the fact that I had stayed on the farm in Lincolnshire and started wondering about the German Prisoner of War who had lived there? As a child of the 1950s, I had been immersed in 40+ years of ‘victory scripts’ from American and British war films. Perhaps I felt it was time to redress the perception I had grown up with? I was now more aware of my own historical position as an English woman who had grown up listening to her father’s, and other British soldiers’ war narratives; I was also the mother of two children whose great grandparents on their father’s side had been killed in concentration camps.

At the beginning of November I wrote to Lidwine. My initial expectation was to have a contribution from her, by way of the German soldiers’ narratives she had shared with me at the World Congress in Groningen, which showed the impact of World War Two across people of different nationalities all over Europe. I hoped this would redress the predominantly British perspective of this part of the thesis, and extend discussion of the inter-human to include the narratives of German soldiers. About two weeks later she came back to me, having contacted the Dutch man, who had fought as a German soldier and who was now an Australian citizen. He was willing for me to contact him.

In December Gerd and I began an exchange of information by email, interspersed with telephone calls over the next few months:

03 December 2006 23:30

Your story told to me by Lidwine

Dear Gerd,

Lidwine told me of your remarkable story when I met her at a conference in the Netherlands. May I introduce myself. I work in England running my own participative research company called Mindful Practice. If you are interested in seeing anything about me and my work, my website is www.mindfulpractice.co.uk.

Anyway I am the daughter of an Arnhem veteran, Vic Read, who was wounded and captured there and then became a Prisoner of War in Germany (Fallingbostel and then Salzgitter Hallendorf) until April 1945. I think Lidwine said you were also at Arnhem? My father died in 1999 and left behind diaries, photographs and other memorabilia.
I grew up with my father's stories of the war, his imprisonment and time in an Arbeitskommando; and I have written a short story about this myself, which I would be happy to share with you. As part of my research for a Doctorate, I have been researching into my father's two war diaries and memorabilia, and interviewing Prisoners of War at their annual reunions in 2005 and 2006. However I am interested in the far reaching effects of the second world war on all those who experienced it. This June I visited the grave of one of the grandfathers of a German friend as we travelled across Germany making a photographic record of my father's prisoner of war diary. I also met German archivists in Celle and Salzgitter who helped me a lot in the research. This Friday 8th December I have been invited to the Arnhem Veterans’ Christmas Dinner and will be showing them the photographs of the places now where the camps were, and some archive photos given to me as well.

The other diary of my father's was from Tunisia in 1942-3 and originally belonged to a German soldier. This I took with me too, because it seemed important for the diary to return to Germany. I would like to learn more about your story if you would like to tell it. It is a pity you are so far away as it is much easier doing this face to face. Anyway, let me know what would be best for you and if or how you would like to tell your story. I would be pleased to call you on the phone if that would be best for you.

All good wishes
Jocelyn

After this email we had a short telephone conversation and Gerd sent me his memoirs. Before I attempt to summarise some of the key events in Gerd's life as a boy and young man, I need to say something about a document I found amongst my father’s things just before our dialogue commenced.

**Werferführertafel**

In late November my mother, who was by then moving house, gave me yet another bag containing war memorabilia. I shoved the bag into my car and only opened it just before the Arnhem Veterans’ Christmas Dinner. In a brown leather zip bag, I found: my father’s Airborne badges; his Army and Prisoner of War Identification Tags; his medals; two letters sent from Germany when he was a Prisoner of War at Fallingbostel and then Hallendorf; a lot of papers relating to his service in Tunisia, including an annotated list of all the men from his section who had been killed in action there (pink highlighter used to denote who was killed in action); some old British Military, Italian Lire and German Deutschmark notes; either a spent bullet or a piece of shrapnel in a small plastic bag, and a range table for a German 8cm 34 Mortar [Granatwerfer 34 (8cm)].

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47 My mother later confirmed that this was the sniper’s bullet which had wounded my father on 18th September 1944 in Klingelbeekseweg, near the church in Oosterbeek.

It was the *Granatwerfer 34 (8cm)* range table which I took with me to the Arnhem Veterans’ Christmas Dinner in Birmingham. At that point I was uncertain what the document was: my ‘O’ level German not extending to the Gothic script print and vocabulary of war! I knew *werfen* was ‘to throw’ and guessed that *Granat* could be ‘grenade’. I thought one of the men would be able to tell me what the table inside signified.
When I started to handle and really look at the document on the train to Birmingham, I noticed that the front was stained red, whilst the back was a pale green. I then realised that the difference in the colour of the front and the back of the document probably signified the blood of the person who had once held the table in his pocket.

It was at this point I felt sick. I had touched the blood, in all probability, of a dead German soldier. Perhaps this is an over-dramatisation of my reaction, but I felt like Lady Macbeth in William Shakespeare’s play ‘Macbeth’, trying to wash the blood of the murdered King of Scotland from her hands: the words “Out damned spot! Out, I say!” came into my head.

Looked at another way though, it was like handling my father’s ashes in the war cemetery, and perhaps acted as a catalyst to level out my perception of the war from a British perspective. Touching that blood stained table, itself representing the clinical means to maximise the destruction of human beings, created an opening to the inter-human (Levinas, 1988).

Using the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, Abram (1996, p. 68) discusses the participatory nature of touch:

[Merleau-Ponty] calls attention to the obvious but easily overlooked fact that my hand is able to touch things only because my hand is a touchable thing, and thus is entirely part of the tactile world that it explores. Similarly, the eyes, with which I see things are themselves visible . . . We can experience things – can touch, hear and taste things – only because, as bodies, we are ourselves included in the sensible field, and have our own textures, sounds, and tastes. We can perceive things at all because we are only part of the sensible world that we perceive!

I was quite literally touched by this document in a profound way, perhaps even more so than the diary which had once belonged to the German soldier in North Africa.

Early stages and initial constructs

When I had spoken with Lidwine earlier in the year, I had not realised that Gerd had been in the Waffen-SS. Gerd told me in our first conversation, when talking about the 9th and 10th Divisions of the Waffen-SS, “We were no villains and murderers”, making a distinction between those who had joined the SS voluntarily with very firm political convictions, “the early ones”, and those like him who, as boys growing up in the 1940s, were in effect conscripted into the armed divisions of the SS from 1943 onwards. I had by then read and heard enough narratives about war to sense that boys, young men, older men, ordinary ranks and officers in the Waffen-SS, as individuals, would have behaved in different ways depending upon the nature of the battle, the enemy and the aftermath, but I lacked the knowledge to assert such a view.

In doing the research for this part of the thesis, I realised that the UK post war period that I had grown up in made no distinction between men who had joined the SS and Waffen-SS, and the circumstances under which they had joined. Gradually I started to hear or notice narratives which increased my knowledge and changed my perception. The first passage I read in 2006. It was in James Sims’ *Arnhem Spearhead* (Sims, 1980, p.69), in which the battle was intensifying, and yet he was able to see beyond the uniform to the person:
Some of the German casualties were SS men, distinguishable by the runes of their collars. I was curious to see what these supermen looked like but, apart from their uniform, they were just like us.

In a conversation in June 2007, Tom told me that he was captured at Arnhem by two soldiers, one from the Wehrmacht and the other from the Waffen-SS. Tom was very badly wounded and on the ground when he came to and saw the two men above him. As he put it, "They could have finished me off". It is important to remind ourselves that war is a brutal and brutalising experience; the point is that both these men, in their different uniforms, behaved honourably. As Tom told me a few months later when I was checking some details with him on the phone, "The front line troops couldn’t have been fairer".

In the Foreword to Arnhem Spearhead (Sims 1980, p.10), which I read later than the main text of the book, Major-General J D Frost goes further in his view of the 9th SS Hohenstaufen Panzer Division 49: ‘Although at times these men were a bit ‘quick on the draw’, during our battle they were a chivalrous foe. Their sympathy and kindness for us wounded I, for one, will not forget.’ In our second conversation Gerd told me he had personally rescued a number of Russian families, and helped put wounded British soldiers on bicycles after Operation Market Garden.

This then was the context in which I began reading Gerd’s memoirs (Wolse, undated). I found that I needed more time than I had anticipated to read and re-read them; and I became acutely aware that my childhood home and my whole life had been dominated by a particular interpretative stance on Operation Market Garden, where German narratives of the battles north and south of the Rhine did not figure. Interestingly, it was an Arnhem veteran, who recommended the book mentioned below:

11 December 2006 00:08

Dear Gerd,
Thanks for sending through the files I had problems opening. I have just managed to print off all the papers. I have read through them very quickly to check that I have everything, but need more time to read them carefully.
I am working away a lot this week in various parts of England, leaving early tomorrow, so it will be next weekend that I have time to give your story the attention it deserves. I hope that’s OK.
I told some of the Arnhem Veterans at the Xmas Dinner on Friday something about you and your story and they were amazed; one person said a film should be made of your life! Not sure what you think about that?! I’m sure it would be far better than A Bridge too Far. My father, when he was alive, was very critical of the film and said it was nothing like that. Obviously you saw Market Garden and the film from an entirely different point of view and in Australia as well. I would love to talk to you about that at some point. I didn't like the film and have never watched the whole thing. I found it quite trivial.

One of the Arnhem veterans and his wife recommended a book called It never snows in September, which is a German account of Arnhem. I have ordered a copy and it should arrive in the next couple of days. In the meantime, I am sending you something of my story and some of the research I've been doing. I think that’s only fair so you know some more about me too! Although I don’t write about this part of World War II in my research, you probably should also know that my ex husband is half Jewish so my daughters . . . are quarter Jewish . . . His grandparents, my children's great grandparents, died in Dachau and Buchenwald. David and I separated in 1996 and divorced in 1997 - a long time ago - and he now lives with a German partner . . . I thought you should know this by way of my background, although I don’t write about it in the research I do.

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49 This was the sister Division to the 10th SS Frundsberg Panzer Division, in which Gerd was a Signal Operator.
Shall I call you next Sunday? . . . Let me know what would be best for you. I am going to be at home quite a lot from 18th December to 3rd January so there will be other possibilities.

Kind regards

Jocelyn

15/12/2006 09.28

Dear Jocelyn,

Sorry not to answer you sooner after your so interesting email!

I sent you something and I have to make it short as there is coming an electric storm . . .

Well Sunday sounds OK. Make it 8am at you so that is approx 6 pm here? . . .

Looking forward to hear from you,

yours Gerd

I would like to say at the outset that, within the focus and word constraints of this thesis, it is difficult to do full justice to Gerd’s experiences as told in his memoirs and discussed in our phone conversations. Right at the beginning I was concerned that this method of narrative inquiry was limited compared to the face to face conversations I had had with the British men. Moreover, in many instances my conversations with them had occurred over a considerable length of time thus building trust slowly as we exchanged letters, documents and telephone calls.

Gerd’s written narrative

Gerd’s memoirs detail key aspects of a life of ever changing identities within the turbulence of pre and post war Europe, which signified the destruction of home, family and friends for millions of people: his birth and very early years in Germany; his childhood in the Netherlands, thinking his father was Dutch (aged three to 12/13 years); the return to Germany with his mother in early 1939 [his German Grandmother was worried about Gerd and wanted her daughter and grandson home]; aged 13 his compulsory entry, along with all the boys in his class, into the Hitler Youth; the ‘attraction’ of the Hitler Youth for boys in Germany at that time and the feeling of belonging and status it gave them [which I found totally comprehensible given that historical time]; his Land Year service on a farm, then aged just 14/15, where he worked alongside a Polish prisoner of war, whom he describes in his memoirs as ‘a really wonderful man: kind and completely trustworthy, and I was very sorry for him because he had a wife and children back in Poland’ (p. 5); his entry, aged 16, into a military toughing up camp and later that year his compulsory labour service [construction of military fortifications, air raid shelters etc]; and at the same age the loss of his Grandmother, aged 63 years, and his youngest aunt, aged 24 years, who were burned alive in their cellar from phosphor bombs in May 1943. Gerd was the first family member on the scene with everything still burning fiercely and the whole street flattened:

Early in the morning of 31 May we got an announcement from our C.O. [Commanding Officer] – that during the night enemy planes had bombarded Solingen, Wuppertal-Barmen and Elberfeld; and that anyone having family in those cities should go to the main office and get an air-raid leave pass, so they could go home to their families to see what damage the enemy planes had done ... 

I cannot remember the details of the horror that was in front of me. Everywhere there were burning buildings and debris and dead bodies, and panic, terror and confusion was all around. The train we were on could not enter the station because that too was so damaged. I was lucky; I got a lift from a home-guard officer who took me on his motorbike a bit closer to where
my home was. I searched for a while, and finally found it: 1 Wasser Strasse. It was my grandma’s house. The whole street was totally flattened, and there was smoke and fires still burning everywhere. The Yanks had used phosphor bombs, which caused all the bitumen to burn and it was flowing like lava into the windows of the cellars. The cellar windows of the houses were level with the footpath, so the melting bitumen easily came in. My grandma always had her winter supply of heating coal in the cellar, plus there were lots of glass bottles there, filled with home-made fruit and vegetables for the winter.

Everything was burning so fiercely that nobody could enter the cellar. I stood there, not knowing what to do. Then it dawned on me – that I should try to get in contact with my Aunt Grete and Uncle Gunther who lived in Elberfeld. I was lucky enough to get there, and my aunt was greatly pleased to see me. She told me I should stay the night with her and then the next day we would go to check out grandma’s place. She had already notified my Uncle Gunther who was in Hamburg and who would be returning that day.

The next day Uncle Gunther and I returned to grandma’s house. The fires were still burning slowly. We put our gas masks on, and we did enter the cellar. There we discovered the remains of grandma, and her youngest daughter Lotte, and the lady who lived next door.

A few days later we collected the remains. They were buried on the 9th June in the Varresbeck Cemetery. I still have the funeral notice from the local paper as well as their news headline: Wuppertal im Bombenhagel [Wuppertal in bomb hail].

“In the night of May 30 we report lost from an enemy air attack our dear kind-hearted mother, mother-in-law and grandmother

Mrs Theresa Isringhaus, widow

Born, Goldacker

at the age of 63 years

And our dearest, always happy, youngest sister, sister-in-law and aunt, my dearest fiancé

Lisalotte Isringhaus

At the age of 24 years

In deep mourning: the children, brothers and sisters and husband-to-be

[Wuppertal, H.G. Achtmayer, Adolf-Hitlerstrasse 155, on 5.6.1943]

Funeral on 9th June, at the Varresbeck Cemetery chapel. Send wreath offerings to the cemetery.” (Wolse, undated, pp.7-8)

On the same page of his memoirs Gerd goes on to describe the loss of his Aunt’s home in another bombing raid, just after his Grandmother’s and youngest Aunt’s funerals; and then just before his 17th birthday, his entry into the Waffen-SS:
I stayed overnight with my Aunt Grete in Elberfeld. In the meantime my mother had arrived from Hamburg, so we were able to see each other before I had to go back to my unit. I didn’t have many days though, because I had to return to the RAD [Reich Arbeitsdienst or Compulsory Labour Service]. Aunt made me an early birthday cake, so I could take it with me and share it with my mates on my coming birthday . . . But luck was not on our side, neither was God. Normally whenever the first air-raid alarm went off we’d look to the sky, and we’d say to each other, ‘The planes are flying over, so don’t panic!’

And now my mother had a dog, Zita, who had to be taken to the air-raid shelters and this made her nervous. It was always a chaotic situation, with hundreds of people all running to the shelter and many of them carrying babies and pets and suitcases. My aunt and my mother and I went twice that night and when we came home the second time we decided that if there was one more alarm signal then we’d leave the dog behind. Aunt Grete made a joke and said, ‘I’d better put your cake, Gerd, on top of the sideboard so the dog can’t eat it while we’re away’. When we went to the shelters the third time, we could hear the noise of the bombs very close to us and we were all worried and frightened. Then after about two hours, the all-clear sounded and we all hurried home.

Except there was no home. Only burning fires and rubble and stinking fumes. People were screaming and crying and the scene was hard to imagine. It is impossible to describe what it was like unless you had been there. We stood there crying and staring at the place that was once a home. And now there was no dog and no birthday cake.

We found our way eventually to the nearest Red Cross centre, and we tried to come to grips with everything that had happened. That was our home for the next few days. I had to say goodbye to my family then, and I tried to find my way to the military police station to report for return to my unit. They assisted me there and I obtained the necessary papers and travel documents for rail transport back to my unit.

A few days later, back in my RAD unit, we were all ordered to attend a special meeting with officers from the Waffen SS recruiting office. Basically what they told us was that by joining the Waffen SS we would greatly help the war effort, and we’d also be part of an elite military formation. Not long after that, other Waffen SS officers arrived at our barracks, and we were again told to assemble at the parade ground again. We were told that if we volunteered we could choose which branch of the forces we would like to join, and that if we didn’t we would certainly be drafted in the next two months because there was a shortage of manpower in the armed forces.\footnote{Gerd later explained that if you chose to join the Waffen-SS then you could elect for the role you would prefer; he chose Signals. If you waited to be drafted there would be no such choice, not even which branch of the armed forces e.g. Heer [Army], Kriegsmarine [Navy] or Luftwaffe [Air Force] you might join.}

So what choice did we have?

We were told to do the right thing and volunteer so we could do our best for our Fatherland. Being young and stupid, lots of boys stepped forward, saying, ‘What can we lose?’ Then they took our names and details, and we were given a railpass for the next day, with instructions to present ourselves to the Waffen SS Kazerne [barracks] in Unna – Dortmund for a medical and fitness
examination. These tests lasted all day, and of approximately 200 men that
day only 30 were found suitable and accepted. I felt immensely proud and
honoured, because the selection criteria were very strict, and I was happy to
be one of the 30 to be chosen. (Wolse undated, pp.8-9)

When I read these passages of his memoirs, I couldn’t help thinking about Gerd as just a
boy before his Grandmother and youngest Aunt were killed. I saw the annihilation of both
Zita, the dog, and Gerd’s birthday cake as a rite of passage: childhood had abruptly and
traumatically ended and created the ideal conditions for a boy to be persuaded to join the
Waffen-SS. I can’t imagine what it must have been like to witness and then clear up that
scene of devastation in the cellar of his Grandmother’s house.

Gerd’s memoirs go on to describe the esteem with which the Waffen-SS was held by the
German people, and the bullying tactics of a sadistic Sergeant Major during his period of
training.

So my service in the Waffen SS finally started on 4/6/1943 [aged 16 years, 11
months]. I enlisted in the Nachrichten Schule [signal course] to be trained as a
Panzer Signal Operator. Apart from the signal operations we had to learn, we
still had to do all our daily military training – weapon instructions and field
training, and then there were all our daily marches through the town to
highlight to the people that we were the up and coming Elite Force to defend
the Fatherland. I can say one thing – the German people in general were
fascinated with us, and they admired us wherever we went. And that made us
feel strong and proud.

Just to illustrate the tough training we went through, I give you one incident
that was typical in many ways. Our training instructor was a Sergeant Major
who had fought on the Russian front and was injured, so he was assigned to
be our drill sergeant. He was a proper bastard. He used to say on parade:’
Now listen here, you boys! It’s about time I made some men out of you
arseholes!’ That was his favourite term for us. And if ever anyone in our
platoon did something wrong and needed punishing, then the whole platoon
was punished! Well, one night, it was midnight, and he came in and blew his
whistle in our barracks, and ordered us to be on the parade ground in five
minutes, with our gas mask and helmet and our mattress, stark naked! He
yelled out to us then, ‘Put on your gas mask and helmet, and put your
mattress on your back, and run round the barracks fifty times. And if anyone
tries to cheat or drop out, then you can all do another fifty rounds!’ And then
he just sat himself on a chair in the middle of the ground and smoked a cigar,
all the time yelling out instructions: ‘Run, you bastards. I’m going to make the
water in your arse boil.’ (Wolse undated, pp.8-9)

It is this kind of dehumanising, sadistic treatment, which ensures that soldiers
automatically and unquestioningly obey orders, however senseless. The sections of
Gerd’s memoirs which cover the war service years, aged 17 to 19 years, are more factual
by comparison:

In October 1943 they moved us to the South of France.

Early in 1944 we were moved from France to Lemberg (Poland) and saw
action around the Tarnopol, Buczacz, and Bratislava.

After that we were rushed back from the Ukraine to France in June after the
Allies had landed in the Normandy. We saw action in Caen and around Hill
112 as part of the second SS Panzer corps, and in early August we were involved with the British as well as the American Forces in order to allow the trapped German Forces to escape.

There was heavy fighting in the Falaise Pockets, [where] we had to fight our way back through France into the Netherlands. We then took part of ‘Operation Market Garden’ together with our sister Division 9th Panzer division Hohenstaufen against the 82nd US airborne and the British xxx [corps] and also some [units] of Polish paratroopers . . .

In Bautzen, which is near Dresden, I was wounded and landed in a [Military] Field Hospital, [where] the Russian forces moved in and took us POW.

We then got transported by rail to a camp in Vinnystya in the Ukraine, this must have been approx. April 1945.

I and 2 guys from our Unit did manage to escape, and after some weeks of hiding during the day and travelling through the nights, we were lucky to reach the US Army on the border of Bavaria and they then capped us as POWs and released us in January 1946.

PS I just like to mention that during our fighting in France, I lost two Tanks which I was in charge of through enemy [air raids] and me and my [crew] were extremely lucky to get out of it alive.

The previous operations where my division was involved with I have no desire to elaborate any further. I consider my self lucky to be alive and that is for me the most important.

As for my time when I was POW by the USSR, it was horrible and I really don’t wish to be reminded and talk about [it] any more. As for the Yanks (US forces) I have nothing else [than] Praise. (Wolse undated, pp.10-11)

The rest of Gerd’s memoirs detail the difficulties of life, or rather existence, in a divided post war Germany, and trying to settle back in the Netherlands. Eventually Gerd joined his mother, who was working in Sweden by then, and rebuilt his life there in the 1950s. He and his Dutch wife met in Sweden in 1955, married a year later, and then emigrated to Australia.

**Loss, change and identity**

We began by discussing Gerd’s life chronologically with narratives of his early childhood in Germany and the Netherlands, playing with his friends in the Netherlands and going back and forth on the bus to Wuppertal where his Grandmother and youngest aunt lived. It was important to situate him within his family, his aunts and uncles, and cousins, who were his playmates in Germany. We agreed I would send questions relating to each period in advance and he would respond when he was ready, with no requirement to answer any of the questions. We then arranged a follow up telephone call.

In the event, it proved difficult to separate out phases of Gerd’s life before (aged up to 13 years), during (aged 13 to 18 years) and after the war. What became apparent to me very quickly was the degree of loss and change in a teenager’s life: by the end of the war virtually all his German male relatives had perished on the Eastern Front; as I have already mentioned, his Grandmother and youngest Aunt had been burnt alive in a bombing raid; and there was no place to describe as home. One aunt and her daughters...
had been relocated in Bavaria, and two aunts in a small village in what was by then the Russian occupied sector.

Still with no contact with his family, Gerd returned to the Netherlands in early 1946, but was not accepted by his mother’s second Dutch husband, from whom she was estranged, and his family. Gerd was then picked up by the Police in the Netherlands, who questioned him, found out he had been in the German Army and put him in a children’s home so they could make further enquiries. Eventually, Gerd was granted Dutch Citizenship.

Only in 1947 did Gerd finally meet up with his mother, who was by then living with his aunts in the Russian sector of Germany, but he had to find work and alternative accommodation because the place his family was living in was too small. After being rounded up by the Red Army in the local town, as many young men were at that time, Gerd feigned illness to avoid interrogation. He left for a safer life in the American sector, living as a Gypsy, as he put it, until he moved back to the Netherlands and then to Sweden:

> For anyone who has never been involved in postwar Germany has absolutely no idea what it means to survive and have to live without a proper job and no money, is absolute the worse thing that can happen, and to survive you have to do sometimes awful things which today I would not even dream of, let alone thinking about of doing it. (Wolse, undated, p.13)

Very few of us can relate to that sense of loss, rootlessness, and fear which Gerd experienced at that time: it was only four years since Zita, the dog, and his 16th birthday cake had perished in the air raid just after the funeral of his Grandmother and youngest aunt; and we have not even touched on his time in active service and as a prisoner of war, his escape and electric shock treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

**Our conversations**

I have selected some extracts from two of our early conversations, which were recorded and transcribed verbatim. For the most part we talked about Gerd’s life as a child in the Netherlands and Germany, and his family. There were several times when Gerd helped me understand what it was like as a young person growing up in a totalitarian state. Our conversations also altered how I perceived war films, and the victory script that I had grown up with as a child born in the UK in the 1950s. However, I had to do far more background reading than I had anticipated both about Operation Market Garden where Gerd and my father fought on opposite sides, particular from the German perspective (Kershaw, 1990/2004); and about the anatomy of the SS State (Krausnick et al, 1968; Wegner, 1990; Hermand, 1997; Knopp, 2002). This part of the inquiry, which I came to towards the end of the research, was sufficient by itself to form a substantial part of the thesis, but would have changed its focus. I fully acknowledge the complexity of the issues relating to the SS State and would refer readers to Krausnick et al (1968) in the first instance, which is a classic text on the essential elements of National Socialism. Wegner (1990) provides a comprehensive account of all aspects of the Waffen-SS, such as organisational structure, ideology, recruitment and training, and social composition. Knopp (2002) describes, using first hand accounts, the processes by which children and young people were indoctrinated within a totalitarian state through the Hitler Youth Movement and other youth organisations used by the Third Reich. Hermand (1997) focuses on *Kinderlandverschickung* (KLV), the Nazis’ evacuation of children from the larger cities, most at risk from Allied air raids, to camps in rural areas.
thinking came into play in the process of understanding; this groundwork and attention to factual details provided some scaffolding for our initial conversations in which we started to bridge the different socio historical contexts in which we had each grown up.\(^52\)

### Childhood and adolescence in Nazi Germany

G . . . In the early years a typical German upbringing, you were not asked, you were only told what to do. That was in the olden days. I don’t know about your days, but it was the old style.

J Yes, I think it was generally the kind of parenting in the 1920s, 1930s.

G You do as you were told and you be quiet.

( Interview with Gerd, 14\(^{th}\) January 2007, p.2)

G . . . We could never talk to an adult with our hands in our pockets. We were not allowed to stand on street corners with more than two or three and we always had to salute anything above us. We always had to be polite . . .

. . . As far as my childhood goes, I mean, those questions never were asked of anybody. What do you think about this and this? We knew that Uncle Adolf had to go to war, Uncle Max had to go, Gunther [Lotte's, Gerd's youngest aunt's, husband-to-be] you know, Uncle Gunther. We all had to go to war and I had to go to do my duty for the city as a *Hilfschaffner* or a conductor with the *Schwebebahn* or the tram and that was it. You go from there, you do your *Arbeitsdienst* and all that crap and when you come back again and then all of a sudden you’re in the army, you know, whether you want it or not. All they tell you is *antuten*, assemble, you and you left and you and you right and that’s it off you go . . . and say Goodbye.

J So really everybody was in a sense ordered around and they followed those orders

G Yes, that’s right. No choice. No choice at all. And we never even thought about it whether we had a choice or not. It was not even told. Do you think they told us you have a choice either do or don’t. No, it didn’t exist . . .

( Interview with Gerd, 5\(^{th}\) February 2007, pp.5-6)

As a child I had grown up with my father’s stories of the Russian Prisoners of War and the people from the Concentration Camps. However, I had heard many more entertaining stories about the ridiculousness of Army life from my Father, like stealing a German motorbike in North Africa and he and a mate driving it along a mined road, which they only discovered afterwards! He also told a story of throwing a live grenade out of the back of a lorry to see if it worked, and being severely reprimanded: the commanding officer’s vehicle was driving just behind. He had also punched an inexperienced officer who had made a map reference error on a previous occasion: when my father said something like “Make sure that you give me the right reference this time”, the officer replied “Yours is to do and die, not to question why”.

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\(^52\) I would like to stress, on Gerd’s behalf, that if any reader detects any apparent admiration for the National Socialist regime in any of the following dialogues, it must be remembered that such was the opinion of a child and adolescent reared in a totalitarian state and must not be confused with Gerd’s present convictions.
I wanted to know if Gerd had any similar stories from his time in the Hitler Youth. However, I had overlooked quite how young and impressionable Gerd would have been then and the nature of pre military training in the Hitler Youth:

J . . . But I just wondered with the Hitler Youth, just to finish off, were there any stories being in the Hitler Youth that you can remember, any little interesting events that happened or funny stories or anything like that, Gerd?

G Nothing comes to my mind, Jocelyn. Certainly nothing funny. You know. No, nothing funny, because it was all serious business in them days. You know very strict, a lot of learning, a lot of exercise, a lot of drill and a lot of discipline. It was not really funny, you know, sometimes you were more on the brink of crying than laughing. And it was all for a good cause, because we had to be the next elite of the country. So funny stories, no, there was not much funny stories.

(Interview with Gerd, 5th February 2007, p.13)

I had also not appreciated that a child growing up in a totalitarian regime would have a very limited ability to reflect in this way or question. A sense of humour or developing a form of internal commentary requires an ability to distance yourself momentarily from the situation you are in. A similar distancing takes place in the process of writing a diary/journal or in crafting poetry/prose, painting and sketching.

I had asked Gerd a question about whether he remembered when war was declared, where he was and whether he could remember what adults thought about it. The conversation that followed shows how hard it is to separate out events, as a child/young person growing up in a totalitarian regime.

G . . . That’s very strange because I can’t recall anything. There was never any discussion about who started the war and how it started, the war, I mean and so on.

J I wondered whether, you know, as a child in that time whether being a member of the Hitler Youth and like you going to school and all that, that was much more what you remembered, really. . .

G Well, that was all part of daily routine and no questions were asked or anything like that. It’s different today, because it’s all in the past, but somehow in the early days it was just normal, it was accepted . . .

J Yeah

G When you’re not part of it then it was strange, then there might be questions.

J Yes

G While everybody else is in there, you know, so many million people and doing all the same bloody thing at the same time. I mean nobody questioned anything.

J Yeah, maybe the fact that war had been declared in that time, maybe people were anticipating it. You just don’t know, really.
G Yeah. I cannot remember that, I mean they were all anticipating. Because men had to be called, you know into services, and they were all happy to do it and it was all in aid of the Fatherland, you know, and Uncle Adolf. I mean Christ, I don't know, I can't sort of separate anything there.

J No

G It was all in the same spirit. We all thought we were 'It' and we’re going to win, you know.

J Yes, yes

G Because the propaganda was all directed that we would win.

J Yes, yes

G And if you know the history of Goebbels, you know, he was a better speaker than Adolf.

J Yes, yes

G You know it was all part of growing up. Things were not discussed at all really.

J Yes, so it [was] part of the culture, wasn't it really?

G Yeah, that's it. And I'll tell you one thing in as far as the Holocaust, I don't know, I mean, I've only heard about it after the war. Nobody from the family knew anything about it. We knew that there were places, but it was highly secret. They were extremely secret, because nobody had a chance either [to] have a peek or so or look through it or go in or whatever. They were all highly secret and highly guarded, you know.

J Mm

G We didn't know anything and my family, certainly not, you know.

J Mm

G Not that I can remember. I honestly don’t, because you know, that type of thing I would have remembered it when I was young because it was disastrous and it was absolutely shocking, no doubt, but I've all learned that after the war. Not during the war, you know, and then when you're young like that it goes in one ear and the other ear out.

J But round where you lived in Wuppertal were there any concentration camps round there?

G No, no, no, no. They were mainly in the south and in the east from what I know now and from what I've read since then. But at that time when I was young, I never heard anything. Nobody knew about it. I mean there was no TV or radios and as a Kind [child] you don't listen to bloody radios. You go out and play, you know. You either kick the ball or go fishing or pinch some apples next door, or whatever.

J Mm

G [Laughs]

J [Laughs]
G I remember we were fanatic in a way that we used to take the orders and took it for granted that was it, that’s what you do and nothing else. You don’t ask any questions, you do as you’re told.

J I guess in that time too, really we’re talking about the period 1939-1940

G Yes

J I mean well there some labour camps obviously that had been built then, I don’t know enough about the kind of

G No, but like I said I was 14. I didn’t know any bloody thing about it. I did the conductor job with the town transport department and that’s all I remember and that’s all I did, and I was proud of it.

J Yes, yes

G That’s all. You know, I mean I was proud of it.

J I can see that . . .  in your memoirs that you talk about being a *Scharführer [Squad Leader]* in the HJ (Hitler Youth)

G Yes, but that’s normal too.

J Yes, that’s right

G There’s a 100 *Scharführers*, we’re all doing the same damned thing, and we’ve all got groups and we all got a sort of a training. It’s all based on paramilitary training, you know, for the Fatherland and all that crap. But you didn’t question anything, because we enjoyed it. We enjoyed it.

J So in a way was it a bit like a Boy Scout superleague?

G Yeah, well, yes of course, Boy Scouts of course. See you go to a what they call a *Wehrertuchtigungslager [Boot Camp]*. They are camps where you get trained and bullied and they make a man out of a boy, and if you want to be a leader of anything like that in the HJ. Then you go to the camp for three or four weeks, it’s like a Boot Camp, and it’s all very strict and very tough. You cry one day, the next day you’re laughing again and then you cry again. By the time you’re home, it’s all over and you’re very proud of it.

J It’s another stage of like almost brainwashing or preparation.

G Yeah, that’s it. That’s it. Indoctrinated. That’s all. Simple as that, you know. Because we were the future for the Reich, you should know that.

J I think also I mean British soldiers went through not necessarily the same, it wouldn’t be the same, but you know a similar thing to be in the army because you have to have absolute obedience, don’t you, when you’re in the armed forces?

G Yeah, yeah, No like I said we took it for granted and we were proud of it. We were really proud of those things. If you’re picked for something and you complete it and you get your ranks and you get your medals and what more do you want?

J Yeah, yeah

G [Laughs]
G Yeah, of course, and you know you’re part of the upcoming Deutsche Reich. The future leaders and the future people to look up to, which is a lot of crap now, but I mean.

J I can see that when you say about marching through the streets and all the older people would be looking at you.

G Yeah, all the buggers laughing and clapping and shouting, you know. Yeah, I know. We used to love it.

J Yeah, it was like you had some admiration from older people. I mean there’s that sense of family. You talked about it being a sense of family really.

G Yes, of course it is and then again we were sort of supervised and trained by ex front line soldiers who were wounded, you know, type of thing, and instructed in those camps so we looked up to these guys.

J Mm

G They got medals and they’d been in Russia and they’d been there and in Africa and you know we looked up to them and they were our instructors.

J It was very carefully thought through. It seems like it was an ideal process to indoctrinate

( Interview with Gerd, 5th February 2007, pp.2-5)

Doing the necessary groundwork to build our relationship and change my perception of the Waffen-SS

Over the Christmas holidays I had read ‘It never snows in September’ The German View of MARKET-GARDEN and the battle of Arnhem, September 1944 (Kershaw, 1990/2004). I had also viewed the American made TV series Band of Brothers (Hanks and Spielberg, 2001), where I had noticed how biased the series was.

G . . . Ever since I started talking with you now, I’ve been scraping around in my boxes and guess what I found a couple of days ago?

J What?

G I found, you know, I was a member of the RSL [Retired Serviceman’s League] in Germany, the equivalent to the RSL anyway, but not physically, only in writing and they sent me a card from the division with over fifty signatures in it for my 65th Birthday, including the Brigadier General, the Head of the Division.
J Heinz Harmel, you mean?

G Heinz Harmel, yes. I've got his own photo and signature.

J Really! My goodness.

G On my 65th birthday.

J Wow!

G . . . I can ask Mum to make a copy of it and we'll fax it to you . . . or we can send it over the email.

J Yeah, I was reading that book "It never snows" and he contributes a lot in that book.

G He was a wonderful man, an excellent man. He was not a criminal in any shape or form, not like early ones. But isn’t it amazing, after all these years now bringing up some of that stuff from years and years ago that’s always been buried in cardboard boxes and I’ve been going through it, I’ve looked through albums, and I discovered it the other day. But all those signatures, I can’t remember any one of them except Heinz Harmel because he signed with his photograph.

J If you had the photographs with the men, you’d remember them then.

G Yes, but all the other signatures criss-cross on the card there and I can’t remember one single one, but then I told you I had a few shock treatments, that's probably part of it.

J And I suppose to get you out of being as disturbed as you were, shell-shocked, that some of the [other] memories would have to go, wouldn’t they. You can’t selectively treat memories in that way.

G No, but not having a brother in that sense, not having a home for so many years, you turn into a different person altogether, you want to forget one part everything, but it’s not always possible. Then when I went to Sweden I started a complete new life. In one part I was Dutch, in another part I was German, so I had two nationalities actually. It was a bit confusing, but it was handy sometimes. [laughs]

(Interview with Gerd, 14th January 2007, pp.6-7)

J What I will do is over the next week I’ll go and have a look at that period 1939 – 43 and send you some questions on that and then we can arrange another talk maybe two weeks later or something like that.


J Is that OK? Great. What also I’ll do is listen to this and transcribe it and as I said, if you want me to send you copies of the transcripts I’m very happy to do that.

G No, not really. At the end you might scribble a few things together, when we’ve finished with all the crap then I might have a little memory from you then.

J Yeah, okay. I’m very happy to share anything I write with you.
G Don’t make it too explicit so I don’t have to go through all that mumbo-jumbo. I’m fairly ignorant about it, it’s that long ago and I was supposed to forget it and forget it and forget it and my life is so-far-so-good, I’m quite happy.

J What I’m interested in Gerd, still in the UK and America too the German soldier is looked upon in a different way I think and not seen as real people.

G You don’t have to tell me that at all, Jocelyn, I’m aware of that. I’m aware of that.

J I think I haven’t realised that until quite recently, you know, when I was watching this [DVD] with my daughter ‘The Band of Brothers’ and I noticed the way the German soldiers in that film, they were either being taken prisoner or shot at.

G Most of them got killed and the American flag is superior all over. You tell me nothing.

J Because you lived it and I didn’t. But I was saying to my daughter, what would be much more interesting is to have a film where you actually have the stories of the soldiers from the German side and the American or the British side, but they are treated on the same basis. That would be a fair war film, because at the end of the day it doesn’t make any difference which side you’re on.

G You’ll never get that, I think that’s just an impossibility for the simple reason that first of all Britain rules the waves and America rules the world and we are the losers and it will stay like that, I’m afraid . . .

J And that’s very hard for men who fought like you.

G Yeah, but we’ve got over it now, Jocelyn. We’ve got over it. No problem at all.

J Thanks very much Gerd. I’ll get the questions together and send them over and then we can have another chat in two or three weeks time.

G Okay, and I’ll expect your email then.

(Interview with Gerd, 5th January 2007, pp.11-12)

Propaganda
Initially I found it hard to believe that Gerd and his comrades always felt that they would win: I had overlooked the power of propaganda in a totalitarian state and how controlled and potentially isolated the ordinary soldier’s life was:

G . . . Like I said, Australia is pretty up to date we’ve got all the daily news now. But in the early days you only got one sort of news and it was always winning.

J Yes

G We were here, we were there and it was always good even if it was not good, because Goebbels was good at, in telling stories, and pretending it was good.

J Yes

G Even towards the end, when we finally sort of had to fight our way back home. He still said we’re winning the war, the bastard. [laughs]
J [laughs] So this is probably a question for later. Was there a point, you know, when I read the book *It never snows in September*... when you started withdrawing from France into Holland, was that a point when you started to think we might not win this or was it a bit later on?

G There was no point. We never even thought about it. We were still actively engaged and so on, you know, and we’re still on the move. We still had officers letting out screams and demands and orders and so on. That’s it. Yeah. Ah, there was probably a whisper of it now and again, but I mean, then again when you’re on the move with the army you don’t hear any radio or contact. We [didn’t] carry radios.

J No

G At that time I didn’t even have a watch and a camera, I mean. Some people did, some don’t. I mean we still only youngsters, you know.

J Mm

G And as far as remembering things at that age, if I probably would have been four or five years older my brains would have been more developed and I would have looked at it in a different way. While you’re young you’re aggressive, you’re fana... a bit of a fanatic because that’s what they taught you to be, you know.

J Well, you’re more in the moment, I think, when you’re a teenager which is what you were.

G Yes

J You don’t reflect, do you, in the same way?

G No, not at all

J You’re more in it, in that moment.

G If I had to do it all over again now, I would tell them to get stuffed. It was not possible in them days.

J No

G It was impossible, you know, impossible. They would find some sort of a punishment for you.

(Interview with Gerd, 5th February 2007, pp.6-7)

Even after this exchange I still had difficulties believing that there was not a point when Gerd might have felt Germany would lose the war. I returned to this later when we discussed the period just before Gerd was captured by the Russians. Over sixty years later it is obvious to us, with the benefit of hindsight, that from early 1945 onwards defeat was inevitable. However, the soldier and his unit on the ground do not have the benefit of hindsight or the strategic perspective of the higher ranks in the armed forces. Moreover winning battles relies on the belief of each side that they can win, hence the role of propaganda and discipline to encourage seemingly impossible feats against
overwhelming odds. The ordinary soldier’s war is where he is at that moment, and his perspective derives from what he is told and what is expected of him as this conversation illustrates:

J . . . but what I’m interested in was there a point when you kept on withdrawing further and further into Germany, there must have been a point when you started to think actually we’re not going to win this?

G Well y-e-a-h.

J Maybe?

G I got to be honest with . . . No, we were kept so bloody busy I don’t even think we had time to have thoughts of our own.

J No, OK

G Not r-e-a-l-l-y Jocelyn. Not that I can recall.

J No.

G Maybe I’m a dumb arse, I don’t know. The fact is I cannot remember that. N-ah.

J It may be you were so hyped up all the time from having to fight.

G We were kept busy, I mean running around and shifting, marching orders from one place to another and then, you know, I mean there was never a dull moment. I mean we didn’t have any motels to stay in overnight. [Laughs]

J [Laughs] Didn’t you?

G Well, you were always on the bloody go, y’ know and after a time you didn’t even know where you were, bloody well went. You saw signs on the road and railway station when you pass somewhere, I mean, but it doesn’t stick in your mind, not at all, you know. Some people were waving at the railway lines and when we went to villages and towns and they were all waving and, you know, all that crap. I can’t recall anything that, No, we were too busy, you were just moving and doing what we are told. You know. We used to look after our own lives.

J Mm

G That’s all, basically it. Somebody got shot and somebody didn’t return. I mean that’s all part of life, isn’t it? You’re so hardened and so, I don’t know what the proper word is, you sort of get very hard, very what is the word, y’ know, ignorant.

J Ignorant, do you think?

G Is the right word.

J Is that the right word? Do you think?

G Well, I don’t know. I don’t know. You don’t give a . . . You don’t think about anything else, you know. You do as you’re told and that’s it. You look after your own life and you try to please the, the, y’ know, the bosses as much as you can and that’s all you’re doing.
J But I think that it's a survival mode and I think that . . .

G Yeah, survival of the fittest. That's all, y' know I mean. You have to.

J Yeah, I think that for people like me who've not been in that kind of situation [we] find it very difficult to understand why people behave like that, but actually I think we would all do that.

G Well like I said I've had so many questions from people and I always have to apologise when I've said I'd rather not go that line because I cannot remember too much, there are a few snippets here and there which I can recall all of a sudden and then again it's all blank again, you know.

J Mm

G Don't forget . . . I had treatment for that.

J That's right. That's right

[Interview with Gerd, 5th February 2007, pp. 7-9]

**Memory and identity**

I have included the conversation below to show the consequences of the war for Gerd. We discussed the possible effects of shock treatment on memory, which was unselective erasing both traumatic and other memories e.g. the name for his old tank crew, when he was aged 16-18 years; and how he assumed a new identity in Sweden.

G I can't even remember the name for my old tank crew, believe it or not. Maybe I'm senile or getting old age.

J You don't know though, it might be to do with the treatment that you had. You just don't know that.

G Yeah well, some of the doctors in the past since I've been in Australia have been telling me that too. She said you probably forgot most of it with the shocks you've been getting.

J Mm

G Maybe just as well as I wouldn't have had any good time in Sweden and in Sweden I had a wonderful time.

J Yes.

G But not as Gerd Heinz Erich Isringhaus [the names Gerd was registered with after his birth in Germany in 1926].

J No

G That's the difference. I mean, y'know. I was a complete new person.

J Yes, yeah.

G That's another detail.

[Interview with Gerd, 5th February 2007, pp. 14-15]
A final note on resilience, reaching out and rescuing wild birds

It is important to stress that, despite severe odds, Gerd managed to rebuild his life after the war in Sweden and Australia. Like all the men I have spoken to, including my father, he counts himself very fortunate to be alive. Gerd’s memoirs that cover the post war years in the Netherlands and Sweden show the importance of the actions of people who reached out, supported, and encouraged him:

During the time I was in Sittard, I made friends with a nice guy by the name of Jan Eykenboom, whose parents had a fruit shop in town and they offered me to come and live with them as part of their family. Of course I accepted with open arms. It was wonderful to be part of a family . . . (Wolse, undated, p.15)

In Sweden Gerd went to work on a farm and the farmer’s wife, Stina, noticed Gerd’s potential:

Some month later Stina called me in one night after work and asked me would I be interested in going back to school and study. I was really overwhelmed, because she noticed that I was not the type of person who should be milking cows for the rest of his life and that I seriously should learn a trade.(Wolse, undated, pp.15-16)

This reaching out to Gerd proved to be the turning point in his life and led to a high school scholarship, agricultural studies, youth work, and meeting his wife, Anna.

Gerd uses his 100 Australian dollar [approximately £43.00] a year pension from German war service to buy bird seed for the wild birds where he lives; he and his wife also rescue injured birds and nurse them back to health.

G A hundred Australian dollar a year

J [Laughs]

G How’s that? It’s remarkable.

J Don’t spend it all at once [Laughs]

G Well to tell you the truth, I’m going be a bit rude now. I was going to write them a letter tell them to stick it up their arse, but then again somebody else said No, you get some seeds for the birds for that money.

J Yeah [Laughs]

G I gonna buy some bird seeds

J Yes, aaah.

G So I’m not telling them to stick up their bum [Laughs]

J No, no, give it to the birds. I think it’s a very good idea.

G And it’s payable twice a year, every six months 50 dollars, how’s that? Isn’t that wonderful?
J [Laughs] Make sure the birds have . . .

G If I would have been back in Germany at that time, I would have told them something different, I tell you but it's . . . anyway it's all water under the bridge.

(Interview with Gerd, 5th February 2007, pp. 16-17)

After I had talked with Gerd in the early part of 2007, I felt it was important to place our conversations in the wider context of the inter-human. What could I/we learn from our dialogue of difference? What possibility was there to generate new narratives of reconciliation? However before I consider how we might rise above conflict narratives, it is important to share some of the learning from the reading and thinking I did around World War II and prevailing stereotypes.

Removing ‘villains’, ‘heroes’, ‘persecutors’ and ‘victims’ from the scene

Krausnick et al (1968) discuss the complexity of the SS state, issues of responsibility within it, and recruitment into the armed SS formations. The military division of the SS, known as the Waffen-SS from January 1940, gave Hitler a means to confuse allegiances further by driving a wedge into the side of the Wehrmacht, the regular German Army. This confusion suited him because divided allegiances could only unite in his person.

The Waffen-SS men, selected for their toughness and fanaticism, were not dismayed by defeat (Krausnick et al, 1968). This was something I had not fully appreciated when I expressed surprise about Gerd and his unit not considering the possibility of defeat during the months leading up to the end of the war. As previously mentioned, there was a difference between those who joined the Waffen-SS earlier and those who joined later, as adolescents:

Until approximately mid-1942 no one was compelled to join any part of the SS organization; enlistment was entirely voluntary. Moreover it is entirely untrue, as is sometimes pretended today, that the object of every patriotic and military inclined young German was to enter the armed SS formations. (Krausnick et al 1968, p.387)

Children born in the 1920s in Germany, like Gerd, had already gone through the necessary indoctrination in the Hitler Youth for boys [Hitlerjugend] or ‘League of German Lasses’ [Bund Deutscher Madel or BDM]. When I started reading about these organisations I was struck by the similarity with the ‘brainwashing’ processes used with vulnerable children and young people in residential institutions run by paedophiles. These men, who I had studied earlier in my career, established themselves as ‘God-like’ charismatic and patriarchal authority figures with the children (Jones, 1993, 1994, 1995a). The ‘Supreme Father’ [Übervater] status of Hitler within Germany and its impact on the younger generation, in particular, must be more fully understood. In the introduction to the book Hitler’s Children, Knopp (2002, p.vii) writes:

This is the story of a generation who had no choice. They were not the ones who voted for Hitler. Their parents did. Those boys and girls who grew up in the 1930s and 1940s were taken over by the state as no generation of Germans before or since. ‘This youth is ours’, Hitler proclaimed in 1938 with an almost contemptuous undertone, ‘is going to learn nothing but how to think German, how to act German.’ At the age of ten, the dictator went on, they join
the Jungvolk, at fourteen the Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth), then the Party and labour service. ‘And after military service we immediately take them into the SA, the SS and so on, and they are never free again for the rest of their lives.’

On 20 April every year, the Führer’s birthday, millions of young Germans – ‘Hitler’s Children’ – were sworn to follow the Übervater, the ‘Supreme Father’. The writer Erich Loest, born in 1926, recalls how he was ceremonially accepted into the Hitler Youth. ‘I was 10 years old. It said in the papers at the time that the German people had made a gift to the Führer of a year’s crop of children. We were a present for the Führer.’

However in my opinion, to explain the rise of Nazism in Germany one has to go much further back than those who voted for Hitler to the gross ethical violation perpetrated on the people of Germany after World War I, in the form of the Treaty of Versailles.

In his essay Versailles to Cybernetics, the anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972, p. 480) discusses the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which finally brought the First World War to an end, as one of the key events of the last century ‘which led fairly directly and inevitably into World War II [and] also to the total demoralization of German politics’. He describes the damage in the form of human relationships which the violation of trust, within the terms of the Treaty, generated. He expresses this simply and unequivocally:

If you promise your boy something, and renege on him, framing the whole thing on a high ethical plane, you will probably find that not only is he very angry with you, but that his moral attitudes deteriorate as long as he feels the unfair whiplash of what you are doing to him. It’s not only that World War II was the appropriate response of a nation which had been treated in this particular way; what is more important is the fact that the demoralization of that nation was expectable from this sort of treatment. From the demoralization of Germany, we, too, became demoralized (p.480)

Moreover, Bateson argues that trickery in peace making or truce is much worse than trickery in battle: there are two different ethical systems in place. I have chosen to situate the development of my relationship with G within this wider understanding of historical events in the first half of the 20th century: one where ethics are paramount and individualised notions of victim and persecutor and hero and villain are removed.

The ‘conflict narrative’ in the UK
For me to say the letters SS in the UK in the context of this research, almost exclusively draws a sharp intake of breath from the person I am talking to. There are immediate connotations which link any soldier who has served in the Waffen-SS instantly to brutality and the mass murder of Jews and other people who were killed in operations involving mass assembly, deportation, and what happened within concentration camps. The ‘conflict narrative’ from World War Two still persists, and serves to maintain existing stereotypes. It is evidenced in international sporting events and the persistence of jokes like “Don’t mention the war” which surrounded the Football World Cup in Germany in 2006; it is there, alive and kicking, over sixty years later as a barrier to reconciliation.

--53 Gerd was born in the same year as Erich Loest, but returned to live in Germany in 1939, aged 12/13. He therefore went straight into the Hitler Youth.
White (2004) uses the notion of ‘conflict narrative’ in a first person research South African case study to examine practice and theory within the field of conflict resolution. She explores how narrative sustains and maintains conflict within identity-based conflict. Our world is much simpler if we have narratives about ‘goodies’ and ‘baddies’, heroes and villains. However, the actions of individuals under the influence of National Socialism has to be seen in the context of growing up and being part of a totalitarian state (see, for example, Krausnick et al, 1968; Wegner, 1990; Hermand, 1997; Knopp, 2002). When I first started talking with Gerd, I had not fully appreciated this aspect of the inquiry, which demanded that I did far more reading than I had anticipated on growing up in a totalitarian state, and what was required of soldiers in the Waffen-SS. Bearing in mind the all encompassing anatomy and propaganda of the totalitarian state, its effects are difficult to fathom, especially for those of us who have had the privilege to grow up in a democracy. As it is for us living in our own tradition and historical epoch, it is hard to stand back and reflect: when you are immersed in it, it is virtually impossible to separate things out.

Within a conflict narrative (that is, a story about the conflict through which people locate their experience and give meaning to events), narratives sustain and renew identity-based conflict across generations. A central part of the conflict narrative, as we have seen and see in current conflicts in the world today, is the dehumanisation of the enemy: this is essential in order to justify killing. Each side is polarised into ‘victim’ and ‘persecutor’.

Some of the prisoner of war narratives begin to break out of this by stressing the inter-human actions of enemy soldiers or their guards. Nevertheless, counter posing these narratives are the stories of heroes and villains, which prevail in all armed conflicts to the present day and dominate the media. It is my hope that those, who read this part of the thesis, consider the challenges we all face in understanding the other as part of daily life, ultimately to acknowledge and transcend the conflict narrative.

**Responsibility, Learning and the Inter-human**

As we approached May 1943 in our conversations, the date when Gerd’s Grandmother and his Aunt Lotte were killed in the air raid when he was sixteen years old, I became increasingly concerned about the ethics of interviewing Gerd by phone. This email correspondence outlines some of the issues:

**Sent:** Sat 12/05/2007 22:49

Dear Gerd,

... It was lovely to talk to you both again. I have asked my computer chap to find out why I had no pics [on Skype] when he starts back at work on Monday. Hopefully I can get that sorted for the next time we talk.

One thing that troubled me is that it doesn't seem right to ask you questions by email and on the phone about the next period in your life, starting with the death of your Grandma and your Aunt right up to you going to Sweden without doing this on a face to face basis. This way of interviewing does not do justice to you and your memoirs. Neither does it take sufficient account of the impact of the war on you as a boy and young man.

I do hope you can understand these reasons: it is out of respect for you as a person and what happened to you. When I come over to Aus we can take some time to talk, but I will be guided by you on how long you want to talk, where, when etc.
I would like to use some extracts from the interviews we have done so far in the PhD thesis and perhaps parts of some emails. I will check with you nearer the time about this when I have drafted that chapter. I hope that’s OK.

Anyway, it’s late here and you are probably just getting up! Hope you enjoy your Sunday . . . rain forecast here and I have a tennis match!

Love to you both . . .

Jocelyn

From:
Sent: 17 May 2007 12:00
To: Jocelyn Jones
Subject: reply

Dear Jocelyn,

Thank you so much for the email, and hopefully your PC is back to normal because we did see you very clearly.

Very thoughtful to think about my Grandmother’s period etc because I have no problems talking about the past. If you have more questions please do not hesitate as I will answer them as to the best of my ability.

Right now we are very busy on the property with clearing and lobbing tree branches etc.

Lots of greetings and love from here Gerd and Anna

As our relationship deepened, I felt a strong pull to meet with Gerd, even though he now lives on the other side of the world. There was also the issue of balance and voice in the different narratives: I had spent a lot of time seeing and talking with the British men over the past two years, and yet Gerd’s narrative demanded at least the same, if not better consideration, in both the time spent with him and the additional work I needed to do to respond appropriately. I was also grateful for the changes in my perception of the Second World War, which our relationship thus far had brought about and which challenged me at a profound level. I had been brought up as a child in a home which was a memorial to the Airborne Forces, elite British troops like the Waffen-SS; and my children’s Jewish great grandparents had died in National Socialist concentration camps in Germany. If I had been living 60 or so years earlier in Germany or one of the German occupied countries, my ex husband and our two daughters would in all probability have perished in the Holocaust. That was a thought I found unbearable to contemplate.

Now I also saw Gerd’s suffering as a child caught between Dutch and German identities, as an adolescent growing up in a totalitarian state and being indoctrinated, like millions of others, to take his place in the National Socialist war machine. Perhaps most importantly, I was able to relate to “absolutely the worst thing” that happened to him throughout the war years: Gerd later told me that was when, aged 16, his Grandmother and Aunt were burned alive in the Wuppertal bombing raid, which supported my decision not to interview him about this period of life by Skype rather than in person if he chose to talk about it.

The type of learning discussed here often challenges at a profound level; and resides in the essence of our subjectivity, not in our consciousness or rational mind. At its core is how you and I respond as human beings:
Responsibility is not about what we already know. Responsibility excludes and opposes calculation. It is precisely for this reason that responsibility is related to those who have nothing in common. It ultimately is this community which makes our “second birth”, our coming into the world as unique, individual beings, possible. Like our first, physical birth, this is not necessarily a pleasant experience. It can be difficult and painful to come into this world, to take upon us the responsibility that is waiting for us, to expose ourselves to what is other and different. Yet this is what makes us unique and, in a certain sense, human. (Biesta, 2006, pp.70-71)

The journey of landscape, image, people, and narrative across Russia and Europe outlined in the last two chapters helped me to move from the simplicity of classifying people and their responses in terms of black or white. Instead I saw the complex and ever changing shades of grey within each human being’s life and the history and tradition which shapes and prepares the canvas as the context for that life, including my own (Gadamer, 1989). There was only one response and that was to meet and talk with Gerd face to face in the not too distant future – when, where and how he chose.

To draw this chapter to a close I would like to leave you, the reader, with just a few of the many narratives that I have read or heard. I see narratives as precious gifts: when a person has shared something very important about their life or another’s life with me then I, as a fellow human being, have a duty to share it with others in a form that does justice to the original story. This is how this thesis began with narratives of children I had worked with, and my father’s war stories told to me as a child in ‘Bellerophon’.

I made the selection that follows from the narratives and images that have stuck in my head and my heart over the past two years. They reveal various aspects of the inter-human, and most importantly, the circumstances under which ‘the Object’ becomes ‘Subject. I also include an account of the most recent journey I made as part of this inquiry. This was my response to the suffering of Others on British soil.

Genuine compassion and concern for each other, being able to give the right response, is the healthy state of being human: we are social beings primed for relation. These narratives show, in different ways, when this process is interfered with; and when it flourishes and endures in the narrative of the recipient of the response.

The first accounts, taken from War Crimes Trial files at the National Archives in March 2007, helped close a circle for me. You will recall that I began this thesis wondering about who the slave labourers were in my father’s narratives and the place where he had witnessed their suffering. One of these narratives was about seeing a woman, about the age of his mother, doing very heavy work picking up huge rocks or blocks: he said, “I looked into her eyes and saw the eyes of my mother”. This was a scenario which he sought to gain control of in his head: over a weekend in the late 1950s my mother, my sister and I were enlisted to shift heaps of rocks and stones for the foundations of a garage at my childhood home (see ‘Bellerophon’ May 2005 narrative in Chapter Five, pp.106-107). Another narrative concerned a man, who was already very weak and supported by two other people, who was hit in the back by the rifle butt of a camp guard. A third narrative was about a man who was shot in the back by a guard when he went to urinate. As a symbolic gesture of respect and remembrance to the men and women who had to endure
the conditions in those camps, I have chosen to include some of the witness testimony I read at the National Archives in Appendix Fifteen (WO309/200).

Once again before you read these narratives, I would ask you to consider whether and under what circumstances you might read them. Also bear in mind that the testimony was given in 1946, just one year after the war ended, as evidence in war crimes’ trials. I have stressed the need for self-care when reading these accounts, and yet I was unprepared for what I read in one account at the National Archives in February 2007, despite having read some war crimes’ trial evidence on my previous visit. The difference this time was that the files related to the concentration camps in the vicinity of my father’s Arbeitkommando (Work or working party) and the Hermann Goering Works, rather than Stalag XIB at Fallingbostel. That is not to minimise what occurred at Fallingbostel, rather it is make a comment about degrees of inhumane treatment. This is my journal entry:

28th February 2007 Doing the research this time

I allowed more time to do the research at the National Archives this time. Arriving Monday afternoon I called into an amazing organic food shop at Kew Gardens before walking to my accommodation – a self catering little bedsit. A bit more shopping at nearby M&S [Marks & Spencer] and then I spent a cosy Monday evening watching TV and relaxing.

Tuesday was intense – 10am-5pm on PoW questionnaires [for the ex PoWs at the Hayling Island reunion] and war crimes’ trials centred on Drütte and Hallendorf. I was physically shocked, wincing at one description of brutality, in particular. Nevertheless, reading the testimony of the witnesses brought to life the reality of some of the scenes of brutality my father witnessed.

Tuesday evening – another trip to M&S to buy salads, soup and fruit and then a quiet night in watching TV.

I remember actually making a sharp intake of breath, which made a sound deep in my throat; this was quite embarrassing in the silence of the Reading Room. After reading the accounts, I decided to get some fresh air and walk home to my bed sit where I took about two hours off making cups of tea, watching daytime TV and having lunch. I returned later to copy the archive material but did not stay until 7.00pm, which is possible on a Tuesday. So exercise your choice as the reader, and if you do decide to read them, then think about the best time and do something you enjoy to ‘switch off’ afterwards (also see resources on accompanying CD).

The second narrative is from Tom (see Appendix Five, pp.292-294) just after he was captured by two German soldiers, one from the Wehrmacht and the other from the Waffen-SS, mentioned earlier in this chapter:

I came to again and was aware of someone looking down on me. It was daylight, and in what seemed like a frozen moment in time, it dawned on me they were Germans. They uttered some orders to unseen people close by and I was soon being lifted out of a trench and onto a stretcher by two of our own men. This was going on in various parts of this garden of carnage. The movement caused me great pain and my right arm was totally useless . . . As I was carried from this place I could not understand how I or anyone else had survived the past 12 hours . . . As I was placed on a jeep I was aware of the menacing presence of our German captors, and although I was extremely
uneasy some of them were smiling and making friendly gestures towards us. Maybe they were also surprised and pleased to have survived the past few days (p.6, original journal).

Tom was carried into the foyer of St Elizabeth’s Hospital, where there was a chaotic scene with “the flotsam and jetsam of battle”, as Tom put it, strewn over the floor. Next to him was a young German with a chest wound. Moments later they were together with six other men (three German men on stretchers and three British men as sitting passengers) in the back of an ambulance with no windows so they could not see where they going.

One of the German wounded was the young man with the chest wound:

The young German was trying to communicate and was showing me photographs. I was able to understand when he made a point that he had been wounded on the Russian front then pointed to his present wound with the word “Kaput”. The photographs were of his family and girlfriend. The way we were talking, although with difficulty, made it hard to believe that only hours ago we could have been looking at each other down the sights of our weapons and I could possibly be responsible for his present condition. Such were my thoughts, but there was no enmity in his tone.

One of the drivers gave the German wounded a slice of black bread and a piece of something greyish which was supposed to be cheese. There followed a heated argument initiated by the soldier who had been talking to us and the drivers. Two of the other wounded Germans joined in. We hadn’t a clue what it was all about but it led to us receiving the same ration . . . At this time little did we know that, in the following eight months we might beg for what we had just received (pp.7-8, original journal).

Later the wounded German soldiers were dropped off, ‘leaving us with friendly gestures’ (p.8, original journal).

In a conversation with Tom in autumn 2007, when I was discussing with him the inclusion of his journal as an Appendix in this thesis, we discussed this incident again. Tom remarked on the impact of “seeing the people you’ve been shooting eye to eye”: Of the young German he said: “we could have struck up a friendship”. This is the price soldiers pay for killing another as the quote at the beginning of Chapter Five from the poem ‘How to kill’ by Keith Douglas, signifies. It is also the central message in the play ‘Walking Wounded’.

In February this year Tom agreed that I could send a photocopy of his journal to the Prisoner of War archive at Celle, near Fallingbostel/Stalag XIB, thus making a detailed and reflective narrative of a British Prisoner of War available alongside other prisoner narratives emanating from camps in that region of Germany:

Tue 06/03/2007 14:45
Dear Jocelyn,
Thank you very much for the report of Tom Carpenter/Stalag XI B that I received a few days ago - a good contribution to our archive.
Best wishes, Rolf Keller

__________________________________________

54 The author of this poem was himself killed in action on 9th June 1944 in Normandy
The third narrative comes from Bob Jones, a mate of Tom’s, who I first met at the Hayling Island Reunion in October 2005. At the Arnhem Veterans’ Christmas Dinner last year, Bob came and sat beside me at the end of the meal. He brought out some papers, which “the Old Dutch” [his wife] had kept. Giving them to me, he said in his lovely direct way, “It’s the first time I’ve ever given anybody something. You might as well have it after I’ve gone.” I noticed tears in the corners of his eyes.

A bit later he told me the story of his German guard, Willi, who had got frostbite from being in Russia in 1941: “Have you ever seen frostbitten feet? You don’t want to”, Bob shook his head vigorously. Then he talked about ‘liberation’: “When the Russians came they shot the lot, all the German guards”. He went on, “We taught him to speak in English - all the swear words under the sun”. Bob then mimicked Willi speaking in English, “You fuckee bastard” and smiled fondly as he looked into the distance, the smile of a man talking about a real good mate of his. Yet more tears welled up in his eyes.

Amongst the papers was a short article, which Tom and Bob had written a few years ago, about a journey they had made back to the town in Germany where Bob had been a prisoner of war (Jones and Carpenter, 2003). The article is laced with humour about the mysterious disappearance of a very plump cat, which could always be seen draped around the shoulders of the woman who was responsible for supplying and cooking the meagre food rations for prisoners. Shortly after the cat’s disappearance, its skin and head turned up; and after the war the owner was to be seen around the town with the duly stuffed cat around her neck. The culprits who cooked and ate it were never found; neither did anybody smell any cooking!

But hidden amongst the humorous text describing the riddle of the cat, there is pathos: reference to members of a large extended family who were all killed in an air raid, and whose bodies, Bob, as a prisoner of war, had to dig out of a bunker. The person who took them round the now sealed bunkers was seven years old at the time, and knew the family personally. Tom and Bob also visited the cemetery where there were graves of prisoners of war, who were killed in those heavy bombing raids alongside members of the local population.

This is a picture I took of Bob laying a wreath at the War Memorial in Hayling Island in October 2006, all those memories held in his head and heart.

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55 Dave’s wife had recently passed away.

56 Photograph reproduced here by kind permission of Bob Jones.
Next time you see a group of war veterans, perhaps on Remembrance Day, take a while to just stand and be alongside them.

During 2006 and 2007 I had several talks with Stan Wade, both on the phone and in person. In November 2006 I called in to record an interview with him, which we had agreed a while before.

He talked in more detail about witnessing the deaths of Russian Prisoners of War on the forced march westwards from Poland to evade the advancing Russian forces in early 1945 (see Appendix Six). There were 60 British prisoners and 2000 Russians, half starved and exhausted in one of the coldest winters of the last century. It is impossible to imagine what this suffering must have done to the men’s bodies and minds. At the end of the march there were 40 British men left. This discussion came towards the end of the interview, which lasted just over an hour and a half: 57

J . . . So on the march, I think you wrote in your journal that the Russians were put at the front to start with, weren’t they?

S Yeah

J And then they gradually

57 This short piece of dialogue from the interview is available on the accompanying CD by kind permission of Stan Wade.
No they were behind us. [This is crucial because Stan couldn't then avoid seeing the men dying or being killed.]

Oh they were behind, oh were they?

And then they couldn't keep up with us so then they put them up the front, so we were behind them. That's when we used to see them, you know, lying beside the road, sometimes they'd [the guards] put a bullet through them, otherwise they'd leave them to freeze to death.

Again, I mean that must have been very upsetting to see that.

Oh that was terrible. You know I can see their faces now. The way they looked at you, it's something like a dog when it's done something wrong [Stan laughs], and it looked . . . there was a bit on the BBC . . . a woman went to Belsen and she said you know the way these people looked at you and their eyes and that, she said it's their eyes.

Mmm.

And she's quite right.

Mmm. Is it like a terrible sadness [change in my tone of voice as I am affected by the men's suffering] or, what would, how would you describe it?

Well, pleading, I suppose.

Pleading, pleading, yeah, because

You couldn't do anything . . .

Basically they're facing certain death, aren't they? . . .

Mmm?

They were facing certain death, weren't they? The look of a condemned person. And it's not normal, I don't think, as human beings we're meant to help each other, and when you're a prisoner of war in those kind of circumstances it all gets messed up, doesn't it?

. . . Yes, you can't do anything for them.

No. No. Would you say that was one of the worst memories that you had?

Yes, I'd say so. These Russians on the march. [Note use of 'these' rather than 'those' to signify the men as subjects and Stan still seeing their faces and eyes now]

Later I asked Stan about the numbers of Russians who died on a daily basis on that march. It was then and still is difficult for me to comprehend this number of people being killed or 'falling out':

You know when, when the Russians were like, you know, falling out, I mean was it like two or three every day or was it 10 or 20?

Oh no, 10 or 20. Something like that.
J Was it? And that was common place really from what March, February?

S Right through, well February, March to the beginning of April, I suppose.

J Mm. So [that] was quite a lot of people then, wasn’t it?

S Mm. 58

( Interview with Stan, 24th November 2006)

Later Stan loaned me a novel, about a prisoner of war’s experiences and the forced march in early 1945, called The Long Road Home (Vincent, 1956) to show me what he meant by ‘their eyes’:

About midday we caught up with the Russian column. They were like skeletons in scarecrow clothing, their bones poking through their torn and tattered clothes that flapped around them in the wind. Their eyes were big and round, and quite dead as they stared at us from their sunken faces . . . Even as we passed, a Russian prisoner fell out of the column and lay twitching in the snow. (Vincent, 1956, p. 165)

How then should we respond, some sixty years later to these narratives of terrible suffering? As I have mentioned earlier, Frank (1995, p. 177), drawing on the work of Levinas, argues that the ‘remaking begins when suffering becomes an opening to others’:

Is not the evil of suffering – extreme passivity, impotence, abandonment and solitude – also the unassumable and thus the possibility of a half opening, and more precisely, the possibility that wherever a moan, a cry, a groan or a sigh happen there is the original call for aid, for curative help, for exteriority promises salvation? . . . For pure suffering which is intrinsically meaningless and condemned to itself without exit, a beyond takes shape in the inter-human. (Levinas, 1988, p. 158)

Levinas was Jewish and fluent in German and Russian. At the outbreak of World War II he was called up to serve as an interpreter in the French Army. He was captured in 1940, and as a French officer put in a camp for officers, but unlike them, as a Jew he was required to do forced labour. All the members of his immediate family and many of his relatives were murdered during the war in the Ukraine; and in some of his writings there are echoes of ‘survivor guilt’ (Moran, 2000). I am drawn to his phenomenological philosophy because of his experiential knowledge of war and the suffering it causes and to his notions of ‘response’ and ‘responsibility’: as I have mentioned elsewhere war forces us out of the well trodden pathways of our lives and disturbs the normal relations of identity, which in turn leads to a destruction of self-identity (Moran, 2000).

58 After the interview Stan showed me a video with Mary Berrier, a nurse at Belsen, talking to show me what he meant. This is her testimony. “I was totally appalled, the horror of it, you really couldn’t conceive it. You know, it was unbelievable that these people could even survive. But some of them were very emaciated, scars, their eyes, it was their eyes, really, that you could see what their suffering was. Some of them had lots of clumps of hair gone. They were very frightened, anybody in a white coat who suddenly appeared, anybody who looked official in a dark suit or looked official. They would suffer from nightmares or call out. It was support they wanted, it was reassurance they wanted. And they’d just hold your hand and just look at you and smile. But their eyes, they were haunted.” (BBC1, 2005e).
As Levinas (1969, p.21) says:

But violence does not consist so much in injuring and annihilating persons as in interrupting their continuity, making them play roles in which they no longer recognize themselves, making them betray not only commitments but their own substance, making them carry out actions which will destroy every possibility for action.

He argues that it is the presence of the other, which enables me to recognise me and be myself for the first time. The speech or the face or the eyes of the other provokes a response from me. This response, my response is my responsibility, and responsibility equates to accountability (Moran, 2000).

The next two narratives are from Ernie Cox and Ernest Mellett (1970-1980) and I have chosen them because of the enduring nature of right action in the moment. For me these accounts go right to the core of what it means to be human – to respond.

Ernie Cox first told me this just as he was leaving the 2006 Arnhem Veterans’ Christmas Dinner, and I noted down the bare bones of his narrative on the way home on the train. When I met him again at Veterans’ Day in Birmingham six months later, I asked him to tell it to me again. So as we walked around the city centre together, he recounted it once more and I asked him if I could include his narrative in the thesis. He agreed.

“The best shower in my life”

After The Battle of Arnhem, Ernie was hidden by the Dutch. He was captured on the escape route to the river Rhine in December. Two of them were interrogated for a week in solitary confinement in Hengelo.

Initially they were escorted by German guards to Hannover, and then Czech guards took over, who Ernie described as “terrible”: these guards hit them with their rifle butts on a daily basis. Ernie marched all the way to Sagan in the east of Germany: “All we had to eat was beetroots”. He was there about a week then had to march back again across Germany to evade the Russian advance from the east.

On 1st April four of the prisoners managed to escape their guards, but they were so weak: “I got to the Americans, and then they sent out a search party for the others”. One man died that first night. Ernie was so weak he couldn’t stand up. Like many prisoners, he was ill when he ate ‘normal’ food; eggs were too rich for months afterwards.

Ernie told me about this story which happened just after ‘liberation’: “The best shower in my life”. Weighing only six stone and lousy, he was held under a shower in the arms of a big American sergeant who was fully clothed in his uniform. The man knelt with one knee up and Ernie was propped up on the raised knee and cradled in the man’s arms at the same time. After five minutes or so Ernie asked if he could stay under the shower for a bit longer – “it felt so hot”. The two men stayed under that shower for about a quarter of an hour, with Ernie just being supported, like a child, by the man’s knee and held in his arms; then the sergeant wrapped him in a big soft towel. The man and his uniform were absolutely soaked.

The next day when Ernie was in hospital, the sergeant came to see him and he was smiling. He told me that every time he had a shower, he thought back to that shower and the big American sergeant: “I will always remember that shower as long as I live”.

(Written from journal notes made on 27th June 2007)
For a man who had to support his malnourished and exhausted body, marching backwards and forwards across Germany in one of the coldest winters of the last century, this response from the big American sergeant was the essence of the inter-human. Ernie, who like so many other men, all fighting for survival on those terrible marches, was forced onto his own reserves: the American quite literally held and supported his body at a time when his human need for touch and being held was utmost.

A similar story of desperation and survival is told by Ernest Mellett (Mellett, 1970-1980). When a young W.A.A.F. (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) came up to him as he got off the plane at an aerodrome in Aylesbury, she offered to carry his kit bag; and she gave him her arm. 'Up until that moment I hadn’t realised how much I missed the warmth of human compassion and love. I needed it then and I need it now . . . "Take my arm" that W.A.A.F. said, and because she knew what I wanted, I could have cried’ (p.4).

As Levinas says: ‘to recognise the Other is to give’ (Levinas 1969, p. 75). Stan Wade reminds us of the responsibility we have towards the Other in his narrative about the exhausted and severely malnourished Russian men being moved to the front, and made to keep up or die, “You couldn’t do anything . . . you can’t get anything for them”. Ernie’s and Ernest’s narratives are about somebody being able to make the right response at the right time: it shows the enduring power of that response, of a person reaching out when another is at their most vulnerable.

Levinas’ sense of ethics is the recognition that an appropriate response must be provided, but he does not say what that should be. Perhaps quite rightly we are left to ponder this, because it relates to who we perceive as ‘Subject’ and who we perceive as ‘Object’. As human beings we are troubled when we are physically incapable of making a response, such as Stan on the forced march when he looked into the Russian men’s eyes. And my father when he saw the eyes of his mother in that nameless woman’s eyes at Hallendorf, her body and soul slowly expiring from impossibly heavy work and terrible conditions. And yet, our responses in the moment define us, and when we are able to confront, question and understand them, they deepen relation and endure in the narratives of others as lessons in living.

A final response to narratives of suffering. . .

My original intention had been to leave this as the ending to this chapter, but something felt unfinished or unsaid: the experiences of prisoners of war of the British kept coming back into my mind. In October 2007 I found out where most German prisoners, from both wars, who had died on British territory were buried.59

To bring this inquiry which started with my father’s narratives about being a Prisoner of War on German soil, to a more satisfactory resolution, I needed to acknowledge that some, perhaps several, German prisoners of war died lonely and painful deaths on British

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59 http://www.cwgc.org/search/cemetery_details.aspx?cemetery=4007266&mode=1
soil, for example, from wounds. At the same time, in saying this I also recognise that more research at the National Archives is needed to ground my thinking and analysis; and I should meet and talk with some of the men who survived, that is listen and respond to their narratives in much the same way as I have done with Gerd. At this moment I am using my imagination based on what I know about how individuals behave in war and its aftermath, and the likely scale of loss and change the men were dealing with during their imprisonment. This would in all probability include the deaths or serious wounding of comrades; the deaths of relatives, friends and partners/lovers; fears about relatives or partners/lovers being killed and/or raped by advancing troops; fears about their own survival; and through the division of Germany, family members being uprooted and geographically divided as in Gerd’s case. I needed to face some truths, whatever form they might take, as part of my own historical legacy and socio-cultural context.

As my response to what happened on British soil, on the ‘green and pleasant’ England of my birth, I needed to visit that cemetery on Cannock Chase. The cemetery was sited in this area of outstanding natural beauty between Birmingham and Stafford because the wooded landscape looks quite like some parts of Germany. The first time I visited the cemetery was on 9th November to spend a few quiet minutes there en route to work in the West Midlands the next day. When I arrived a beautiful rainbow appeared nearby just by the trees on one side of the lane leading to the cemetery. It seemed at that time like a positive response of light from the natural world.

But on that occasion I had less time to just ‘be’ in the cemetery; and I knew this was important from other journeys for this research. I returned for a weekend break near to Cannock Chase on 9th December, and I spent a couple of hours at the cemetery as part of a long walk that day.

The experience of each PoW, of whatever nationality, would be unique to him: each would have their own story to tell. It must also be said here that many PoWs, of different nationalities and for different reasons, stayed on in the UK after the war and married British women.
This time I looked very carefully at the sculpture of the gaunt prisoner dying an anguished death; his twisted, angular and emaciated body, as a representation of the suffering of those buried here, now honoured by floral tributes from those who were on opposing sides in World Wars I & II, and from old comrades.

I noticed a tiny ladybird walking towards the prisoner’s face, and somehow that seemed so right too as those sad, desperate words of the nursery rhyme came to mind:

Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home, your house is on fire and your children are gone.

All except one and that's little Ann, for she crept under the frying pan.

As I walked around the cemetery, I wondered about the circumstances of a number of men who had died in the years following the war. Why? There were also four names to each grave stone, two on one side and two on the other; and some unmarked graves.
When I returned to the reception room on my way out, I noticed a small display written in German and English on the work of the Deutsche Volksbund Kriegsgräberfürsorge [German War Graves Commission] to maintain the cemetery. In my haste, when I had visited the cemetery the previous month, I missed this quote from Albert Schweitzer written in German and then English:

*Kriegsgräber sind die grossen Prediger des Friedens, und ihre Bedeutung als solche wird immer zunehmen.* [War graves are the great preachers of peace and their significance as such will continue to grow.]

On my walk back that afternoon across Cannock Chase, I reflected on how many graves I had sat amongst in Russia and then Germany, the Netherlands and England, over the past five or so years especially, and the different nationalities of the thousands and tens of thousands of people in those cemeteries. The coming together of that quote, the rainbow, and the stillness in that unique place on English soil represented my and our interconnectedness as human beings; and my and our connection to the natural world summed up by John Donne, writing some 400 years ago:

No man [sic] is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of Continent, a part of the main, if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee. [Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, Meditation xviii, cited in Skevington (1995)]

As Donne so eloquently puts it, we all share in and are affected by each other’s pain and suffering on this planet, and what happens in and to the natural world. How then can this knowledge of our inter-relatedness influence the choices we make and ultimately how we act in daily life?

61 http://www.volksbund.de/
To end

In this chapter I have shown how I leapt into the hermeneutic circle to reach a suitable point of intersubjective validity using the extended epistemology or multiple ways of knowing of action research (Kockelmans, 1975; Rowan and Reason, 1981; Heron and Reason 2001); I moved around the worldly space of ‘Otherness’ by engaging with landscape and reflecting on the different positions and narratives of people who experienced World War II at first hand. I crafted a method of inquiry, which involved a more conscious practice of self care; and I reflected on different ways of thinking. Through thinking *with* stories and images, I sought to clarify my meanings of chaos, loss and change; our inter-relatedness as human beings; and our responsibility towards each other. I have shown that learning can be at its most profound when seen as a response to what is different or other.

The narrative and photographic inquiry described in the last two chapters had a profound influence, helping me to see our interconnectedness as human beings and our reciprocal relationship with the natural world: how as sensing beings we are touching and being touched by Otherness all the time. With this participatory world-view, the crucial question becomes one of response: how to make the right choice and how to act.

Arguably, the biggest challenge we face as human beings is to make the right response in the moment. How do we respond in daily life? This living theory of responsibility, movement, engagement, withdrawal and self care, derived from the personal and professional accounts I have offered thus far, will be discussed and developed in the next chapter of this thesis when I apply it in practice.
Chapter Seven: Living Theory in Professional Practice

“I feel quite sorry for the woman actually putting up with me and Harry [laughs] . . . I love her visits and Harry loves her visits and it’s like I can talk to her about anything, not only Harry . . . I can tell her my life story”.

(Parent talking about her lead professional, Jones, 2007, p.48)

Introduction

Before I begin this chapter I would like to recap on the research journey thus far, to signpost you, the reader, for what follows in this chapter and the final chapter of this thesis. In the previous three chapters, I developed conceptions of response and responsibility (Levinas, 1991; Oliver, 2001), and acknowledged the importance of making an appropriate response to narratives of chaos, loss and change, including my own (White and Epston, 1990; Frank, 1995). I became more aware of our movement as human beings, our ever changing relationship with our immediate environment, and how that influences us (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Dewey, 1981; Reason, 1994; Abram, 1996; Oliver, 2001; Thayer-Bacon, 2003).

I used photography as visual narrative inquiry to generate a new relation to artefacts and place; and I thought with stories of suffering and the photographic images, which influenced the kind of person I wish to become (Frank, 1995; Cartier-Bresson, 1999; Schnetz, 2005; Bach, 2007). I noticed the quality of relation in moments of stillness and space (Schiffman, 1996), and how the I-You relation is compromised in rushed fragments of time, crowded spaces or when the conflict narrative prevails (Buber, 1965; Avnon, 1993; White, 2004).

I used different patterns of thinking in the dialogical process of understanding – loose/imaginative/intuitive and strict/cognitive/analytic (Bateson, 1972; Pendlebury, 1995; Munro 1999, 2002). I showed a more conscious practice of self care and cultivation of the self to support my own responses to stories of suffering (Foucault, 1986).

During much of the extensive inquiry outlined in the previous two chapters, I was working on an evaluation of a ‘Team around the Child’ (TAC) model of early intervention and integrated working (Jones, 2007). This study was commissioned by two councils to improve services under the Every Child Matters policy initiative (Department for Education and Skills, 2003, 2004); and involved individual interviews with children and young people and parents/carers, and focus group interviews with the practitioners who formed each team around the child/ young person and her/his family.

In the analysis that follows, I apply the embodied learning from the narrative inquiry research account, outlined in earlier chapters, to the professional sphere and to children and families work in particular. I develop my living theory of responsibility [response-
ability], movement, engagement, withdrawal and self care in professional practice (Whitehead 1999, Whitehead and McNiff 2006; McNiff 2007). This forms part of the professional contribution I wish to make, based on a relation-based, as distinct from ego-oriented, quest narrative (Thayer-Bacon, 2003; Frank, 1995).

Response and responsibility: review of the learning journey thus far

Thinking with stories of suffering and action research living theory

The thesis has focused on the transformational nature of stories. I have thought with different stories of suffering and, over time, they have influenced the kind of person I wish to become and am becoming. The changes in practice brought about through narrative inquiry are challenging to track in an overt way, because critical reflection and subsequent adjustments in behaviour are often subtle: this is process knowledge derived from experience and narrative inquiry. As Whitehead and McNiff say in their discussion of action research living theory:

> Action, reflection and learning can go on virtually simultaneously, as a person does something, and in so doing thinks, 'I should be doing this differently', and swerves immediately to a new form of action, which, they think as they are doing it, is better than the previous one. Sometimes reflection follows action, as when we sit quietly at home watching television, and go through the events of the day, like an action replay, and comment mentally on what we have done. (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006, pp.117-8)

The deep learning of narrative inquiry and its contribution to action research living theory is critical reflection on both process and outcome: the development of knowledge and understanding through a diverse range of experiences over time. Of central concern in a narrative approach is moral agency: ‘Narratives about experiential learning reveal moral agency and . . . reveal shifts in styles of practice’ (Melynk and Fineout-Overholt, 2005, p.175). As an action researcher, I have investigated my responses to stories of suffering, and thus far have produced a research account which seeks to develop a living theory of response and responsibility in personal and professional life.

As in feminist and postmodern thinking about knowledge - multiple ways of knowing – action research living theory, as a form of reflective thinking and action, draws on knowledge which is contextually based and is mediated through the perspective of the knower (Fook, 2002). My living theory is derived from experience and representations of that experience and is characterised by an inductive approach, hence the way I have chosen to structure this thesis (Fisher and Phelps, 2006). Thus far the theory has been characterised by an interpretive body mind approach; a consciousness about different ways of thinking; and an ethical imperative to respond.

Developing a more conscious responsibility for self

In Chapter Two I raised the issue of how I should be and act towards myself in inquiring with others on the nature of suffering. Drawing on the work of Schwandt (2000, p.205), I aspired to an ethical orientation of ‘Caring or being-for' the Other, at the same time acknowledging the need to apply the same standards of care to myself: the logic being that if I would be unable to care for myself then I would be unable to care for others. However, an early first person inquiry set by the inquiry group at Bath in 2002 ‘How much
did I love myself today?’ proved impossible; this formed the baseline for the development of a more conscious practice of self care, which has been tracked within this research account. ‘Cultivation of the self’ (Foucault, 1986) is a thread to which I have returned at several points to show a more conscious practice of self care.

In Chapter Three I identified Jocelyn’s Garden as an early inquiry into self care and how I use space and relation with the natural world as a way of rebalancing my life. This was in response to the first question set by the inquiry group at Bath: ‘How do I stay whole and fully in touch with my emotions in the work that I do, and yet requires the establishment of boundaries for self-protection’? I then addressed conflict resolution as a form of self-love, and the decision to withdraw from a project to safeguard my value base and professional integrity. In Chapter Four I described a practice of self care in the way I studied and wrote about the Victoria Climbié Inquiry (Lord Laming, 2003; Jones, 2003a). This showed a more conscious practice, which took into consideration the emotional effects of child abuse on self.

In Chapter Five I revisited the first inquiry at Bath three years down the line and realised that being in my garden required supplementation by other forms of self care if I was to engage with the war artefacts and stories of suffering. I showed a deepening practice of self care in several journal entries in 2005 (see, for example, ‘Taking care at the beginning of writing the thesis – May 2005’, ‘Bluebell wood – May 2005’). Later during the trip to Jersey in March 2006, I acknowledged the effects on me of the play ‘Walking Wounded’, and the emotional intensity of the visit to the Jersey War Tunnels. I took time out by the coast and in my hotel room to process feelings associated with what war does to people. This was followed by a long period of reflection and self care back in England (see section on ‘Reflection, self care and healing’ in Chapter Five).

During the visit to war sites in Germany and the Netherlands I showed a developing practice of self care through meditation, and also identified the challenges of finding space for this in a packed schedule, moving from place to place each day. Back in England, I used a period of reflection in September 2006 to make sense of some of my experiences over the previous four months (see section in Chapter Six ‘Looked at from the other side of the North Sea: narratives of then and now meet in place’). At the second PoW reunion in October 2006, I noted that the research carried less of an emotional charge, and that I took better care of myself than the previous year. Finally when I visited the German war graves at Cannock Chase in December 2007, I knew, from the intense experience in Germany in June 2006, that I needed to allow more time to just ‘be’ in the cemetery and in nature. This brought the inquiry into the profound effects of war, in which I discovered our inter-relatedness as human beings who share in and are affected by each other’s pain and suffering, to a close.

The self care practice I developed during the research showed a marked shift from the early inquiries at Bath where I struggled with developing a more compassionate relationship with self. The emotional intensity of much of the narrative inquiry described in Chapters Five and Six helped me develop a more explicit and improved practice of ‘caring or being-for’ (Schwandt, 2000, p205) both myself and others.
Responsibility towards readers of the thesis

In the introduction to this thesis about stories of suffering, I acknowledged that for many this might not be an easy read. As part of my responsibility towards readers, I included some tools on the accompanying CD to support engagement with the contents and promote self care: a meditation, a relaxation and a recording of birdsong. These were offered on an entirely optional basis, acknowledging each reader’s personal preferences and responsibility for her/himself.

Responsibility towards others in professional practice

In Chapter One I drew on my practice as a social worker and my experience of training social workers to take on the onerous professional responsibility of working with children and families where there may be safeguarding concerns. I developed a notion of competence which captures the holistic and reflective nature of practice – a ‘whole person in action’ concept (Issitt and Woodward, 1992, p.48) – in this complex emotional and ethical arena, where making the right response in the moment can be life saving for a child at risk of abuse.

In Chapter Three I used the ‘Sweeties in Russia’ story to show a greedy self interest and professional irresponsibility when I ate the sweets meant for orphaned Russian children in the residential community. I used the work of Whitehead (2000) on ‘living’ educational theory to show myself as a living contradiction: in my efforts to show an improved practice of responsibility in the development of my living theory, I ended up espousing one thing and acting in quite another thus compromising my integrity.

In Chapter Four I showed how hard it was to act in a professionally responsible way when Graham, a neglected and abused child, started to describe and draw a violent scene which he had witnessed, and I was due elsewhere to celebrate my birthday. Instead of staying with his suffering in the ‘I-You’ mode of existence (Avnon, 1993), I distanced myself from Graham’s pain with the intention of bringing the session to a close at the appointed hour so that I could leave on time. In the event I chose a compromise by remaining with him long enough to help ease him out of reliving the trauma of his chaos narrative (Frank, 1995).

Towards the end of Chapter Four I discussed my responsibility as a participative researcher towards the participants in the family placement action research study (Jones, 2004). I checked out with the male applicants, through their Family Placement Worker, the draft narratives in the report which outlined their relationships with their mothers; and I discussed my concern that the findings of the study were not widely disseminated and, in my opinion, not acted upon adequately by the commissioning council. I took this learning about a commissioning body’s responsibility to act on research findings into the Team around the Child evaluation, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Responsibility towards war veterans

The extended inquiry into my father’s wartime experiences began in Chapter Two with a misjudged response to his deep sobs when he described the troop ships moving through the Mediterranean and requested the song “Red Sails in the Sunset” to be played at his funeral (see Chapter Two, section entitled ‘Early inquiries into love and loss’). In Chapters Five and Six I revised my understandings of the significance of this request, and
appreciated the need to listen more to narratives of suffering and allow for periods of silence in the dialogue.

I applied this learning at the first PoW reunion in October 2005 where I simply joined with men at their tables and listened to their conversations. Later I followed this up with more focused attention on different men’s particular narratives. Of crucial importance here was the way I built trust with the men over time by corresponding with them and always following up any actions I had agreed to do, for example, finding their PoW liberation questionnaires (WO344) at the National Archives (see Appendix Eight: Correspondence re National Archives’ Research 2005-2007 as an example of how I build trust with Tom Carpenter). This required a respectful and meticulous response to each man’s request, even if I failed to find their liberation questionnaire or the other information that they had requested about their particular PoW camp or Arbeitskommando (work party). At the core of this response was the ethical orientation I outlined at the beginning of Chapter Two: ‘Caring or being-for’ which is ‘a kind of responsibility that is prevoluntary, unremovable, non-contractual, non-reciprocal and asymmetrical’ (Schwandt, 2000, p.205).

With two of the major contributors to the research, Tom Carpenter and Stan Wade, I showed the building of a deeper relationship over time where each man agreed to their written narrative forming part of the thesis, and revealed more detail of their experiences each time we talked (see, for example, in Chapter Six when I went to the second PoW reunion, the way Tom shared his wife’s unanswered letters with me when he was ‘missing in action’ at Arnhem). Gerd Wolse, a former German soldier, is the other major contributor to this research account. The reader may question why so much attention was paid to his narrative and our dialogue within the previous chapter. Given my family history, Gerd represented difference and with that the potential to stereotype him on my part: I did not know when we started exchanging emails that he had been in the 10th Waffen SS Frundsberg Division, which was one of two Waffen SS divisions resting at Arnhem when Operation Market Garden was launched. It must be remembered here that our home ‘Bellerophon’, built in the 1950s, was a war memorial to the fallen British paratroopers at Arnhem: each downstairs room contained memorabilia signifying the terrible destruction of life in war. It was here that I grew up listening to my father’s stories of suffering. In addition, my children’s Jewish great grandparents had suffered and perished in Nazi concentration camps.

In order to bridge the historical and cultural divide between Gerd and myself, I showed how crucial it is to build trust slowly; to do background research to respond appropriately in a dialogue of difference (see, for example, the email correspondence, and conversation re ‘It never snows in September’ and ‘Band of Brothers’); and to remove ‘villains’, ‘heroes’, ‘persecutors’ and ‘victims’ from the scene in order to transcend the conflict narrative (White, 2004): to see beyond any stereotypes, labels or uniforms to the person.

In terms of improving my response to stories of suffering, I would like to draw attention to the section towards the end of Chapter Six ‘Responsibility, Learning and the Inter-human’. A few months into our conversations, I made the decision on ethical grounds not to interview Gerd on Skype about the deaths of his Grandma and youngest Aunt when he was aged 16, first seeing and then later fetching their remains out of the cellar with his Uncle after the bombing raid.
In a later conversation the same year, Gerd told me that this was “absolutely the worst thing” that happened to him throughout the war years. When I go over to Australia next year, Gerd can choose whether to talk about this, and other memories from his war years, on the same face-to-face basis as the British war veterans. And I will be more able to respond.

‘Response-ability’ and the inter-human within the veterans’ narratives

Towards the end of Chapter Six I drew out an enduring theme in the men’s narratives of suffering: the importance of being able to give or being the recipient of the right response in the moment. I argued that genuine compassion and concern for each other is the healthy state of being human: as human beings we are primed for relation.

In the dialogue with Stan Wade, which is also on the accompanying CD, I showed how I stuck with his narrative of looking into the eyes of the Russian PoWs who were about to be shot or die of exhaustion. The quality of my attention in our conversation illustrated a marked improvement in my practice from the much earlier account of my conversation with my father about the troop ships in the Mediterranean, just before he was about to go into battle for the first time in North Africa.

In listening to the recording of the dialogue with Stan, I was particularly struck by the change in my voice when I asked him what the look in the men’s eyes was like. His is a narrative of terrible suffering, of his suffering for the suffering of the Russian men on that death march. Drawing on the work of Levinas (1988), Frank says this suffering “solicits me and calls me”, eliciting in me “a suffering for the suffering” (Frank, 1995, p. 177).

However in our dialogue about the pleading in the Russian men’s eyes, Stan’s second order suffering elicited a third order suffering in me, hence the constriction in my throat and change in voice tone, for the unjustifiable suffering of the men, which Levinas refers to as ‘just suffering’. This just suffering can “take on meaning”. This meaning is “attention to the Other,” which Levinas calls “the very bond of human subjectivity, even to the point of being raised to the supreme ethical principle” (Levinas, 1988, p.159).

Out of the chaos narrative of nameless, useless suffering, seeds can be sown to generate a quest narrative of just suffering, which Levinas (1988, p. 159) calls “my own adventure of suffering”:

But the adventure or journey is of course not my own. The journey begins as the hero’s own, but what the hero learns through the journey is that she suffers for others. The boon is the vision of the inter-human . . . Most heroes are called to the quest not by their recognition of the suffering of others . . . but by their own suffering. The journey is a process of learning that their suffering touches and is touched by the suffering of others. The “inter-human” opens when suffering becomes the call and response implicating self and other (Frank, 1995, p178).

There are chaos narratives through which the ‘inter-human’ is glimpsed and which can be transformed into quest narratives of just suffering; and there are survivors’ accounts of being the recipient of the right response in the moment. Both serve the same purpose of guiding us to act more responsibly [response-ably] and compassionately in daily life.

Oliver (2001, p. 206) refers to Levinas’ notion of responsibility as meaning ‘for the other’s response: it is response-ability’. On a phenomenological level, the person who constructs
her/his narrative is telling her/himself to the person who bears witness; and in so doing is constructing and reconstructing experiences for another: ‘it is this bearing witness to the other, spoken or not, that gives birth to the I’ (Oliver 2001, p.207). The inner witness can come forth because there is an outer witness who responds (Laub, 1992). This is why face-to-face contact is so important when bearing witness to stories of suffering. It was this thinking which underpinned my decision not to interview Gerd by Skype about the deaths of his close relatives when he was 16 years old.

In my living theory ‘response-ability’ refers to witnessing in the face-to-face contact as well as tracking actions which promote trust and self esteem either side of the actual encounter(s), thus helping to re-story lives (Frank, 1995). If someone has suffered, they are unlikely to tell their story of suffering to someone whom they have yet to trust, because the listener has the crucially important role of ‘bearing witness to’ the other’s suffering (Levinas, 1988; Frank, 1995; Oliver, 2001): as indicated above, the outer witness needs to respond for the inner witness to come forth (Laub, 1992). It is this ‘inter-human’ opening, between the outer witness and those who have experienced terrible suffering that begins the process of transforming narratives and re-storying lives (Frank, 1995). As part of the inductive approach to theory building in living theory action research, I include further discussion and a critique of Levinas’ notion of responsibility in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

In the remainder of this chapter, I illustrate a practice characterised by responsiveness and response-ability throughout the qualitative evaluation of the ‘Team around the Child’ model of early intervention and integrated working. I extend Levinas’ notion of responsibility as it relates to stories of suffering to one which is far more extensive, encompassing practical, trust-building, appreciative and participant-affirming responses in daily practice. I use examples from the project design, my practice on the evaluation, the findings themselves and the reflective supplementary report to show my living theory of response-ability in professional practice.

Overview of the evaluation

This section outlines the context of the ‘Team around the Child’ evaluation, and the attention given to ethical issues in accordance with the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (Department of Health, 2005). This is followed by a reflective commentary, which addresses key features of a response-able evaluation practice – my living theory of response-ability in professional practice.

Policy context

The need to improve multi-agency assessment and intervention for vulnerable children and young people has been recognised for some time: for example a series of high profile child death inquiries (London Borough of Brent, 1985; London Borough of Greenwich, 1987; London Borough of Lambeth, 1987) in the 1980s made repeated recommendations about how child welfare professionals might work together more effectively in cases where a child was considered to be at risk. As a result guidance and inspection were strengthened, and training increased. These inquiries and the Cleveland Inquiry into investigations of child abuse in the North East of England (Secretary of State for Social

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63 This section is an edited version of the protocol for the study which was approved by the Chair of the Local Research Ethics Committee and the Primary Care Trust. The study was also independently reviewed.
In November 2002, cross-Government guidance was issued to local authorities on improvements to be made in the identification, referral and tracking of vulnerable children and young people. This was partly a response to Lord Laming’s report into the death of Victoria Climbié (Lord Laming, 2003), which generated a marked shift in government policy with the publication of the Every Child Matters Green Paper (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) in September 2003 and the Children Act 2004. Information sharing and multi-agency assessment has now been situated very much in the context of early intervention and preventative work to provide services before a child or young person’s problems become complex or acute; and forms part of the government’s commitment to providing effective services to all children. It is estimated that there are three million or so children and young people who have additional needs, which must to be addressed if they are to achieve the five key outcomes the government wants for every child and young person:

Be Healthy,
Stay Safe,
Enjoying and Achieving,
Making a Positive Contribution, and
Achieving Economic Well-being.

(Department for Education and Skills, 2003)

Most children achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes through the care of their families, and the support of a range of universally provided services, for example, schools, primary health care and leisure facilities. However from time to time, some children will have additional needs or become ‘vulnerable’: they may have a difficulty making a transition from primary to secondary school; their development may be delayed; they may break the law; or have emotional difficulties. Others are always vulnerable, because of their own development, any health problems, family circumstances, or environmental factors.

Early identification of children as having additional needs or ‘vulnerable’ is critical in making sure targeted services can intervene early and to promote achievement of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. Intervention is most likely to be effective if it is child-centred and non-stigmatising, and involves and empowers the family. The aim is not to ‘fast track’ children and young people quickly to the specialist services; but to ensure that whatever services are available locally are better coordinated and made more accessible.

The five outcomes form the cornerstone of the information sharing and assessment process. Just as the child’s needs may cover more than one need area, different people with different skills may also be needed. For example, a child with a depressed mother may need services from the health visitor to ensure the child’s safe care, a community mental health worker to support the mother and a child minder, in due course, to provide day care so the mother can work, which would help promote economic well-being and improve self-esteem leading to better life chances. In this example, the people involved may not be based together, but they would form a Team around the Child (TAC) with one
person identified as the Lead Professional for the child. Thus professionals are likely to find themselves working with a range of colleagues to assess and support different children; it is argued that such flexibility is crucial if the diverse needs of each and every child and young person are to be met.

**Aims of the project**

Given such changes in service delivery and practitioners’ roles, it is timely to evaluate the Team Around the Child (TAC) model, which has evolved in Councils A and B since 2004. This local evaluation will also build on the findings from the national evaluation of the ISA pilots (Cleaver et al, 2004), in particular those relating to changes in culture and supporting collaborative practice. These highlight the importance of strong buy-in and engagement from leaders and middle managers to achieve change; effective engagement of children, young people and their families in the multi-agency TAC process; and the challenges in assuming and developing the role of lead professional.

The study will address the cultural change issues involved in this ‘joined up’ way of working and changes, perceived as both positive and negative, in professional practice as a result of the TAC model. A particular focus will be the role of the lead professional. It will also identify future skills and training and development needs to support the evolving model of integrated services. From the families’ perspective it will seek to establish whether the TAC model as defined (role of lead professional, improved professional judgement, sound assessment and early intervention), and practised in Councils A and B makes a difference. Finally as a by product, the study will inform the future content and administration of perception-based questionnaires used for ongoing evaluation of user satisfaction.

**Methods**

This is a qualitative study which will look at the processes and practices concerning the Team around the Child model in the two areas. It is primarily a formative evaluation with the target audience consisting of those who have responsibility for planning, managing and delivering the TAC model (Clarke with Dawson, 1999). The purpose of this approach is to identify ways in which improvements might be made to a social programme or intervention. In a formative evaluation the researcher works closely with project staff to ascertain ‘why certain things are happening, how the parts of the program fit together, and how people perceive the program’ (Patton, 1986). There are compelling reasons for pursuing a collaborative approach and encouraging stakeholder participation: an increased likelihood that findings will be acted upon; an acknowledgement of the views of multiple stakeholders in the interpretation of a particular programme; and the provision of a mechanism through which the least powerful stakeholders can let their views be known (Mark and Shotland, 1985).

In order to promote participation in the study and the eventual ownership of the findings, some informal consultation took place with local stakeholder groups in autumn 2005. These discussions focused on: the membership of the Reference Group for the evaluation; Information Sharing and Assessment Co-ordinators’ (Council A) and

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64 The lead professional co-ordinates support for children, young people and their families who have additional needs which require input from other practitioners. In this way the child and his/her family receive a coherent support package.
Integrated Services Managers’ (Council B) visions of success for the TAC project and the challenges to achieving those visions; and the questions that should be asked of practitioners, parents and carers and children and young people to improve the TAC process.

The study will involve the use of topic guides to facilitate the discussions and interviews with (i) TAC practitioners in focus groups; (ii) parents and/or carers; and (iii) the children and young people themselves in separate interviews. In this way data will be collected from all the main parties in the TAC process to ascertain whether the child or young person’s needs are being or have been met through the support of the practitioners working together and the services provided. Where discrepancies arise in perceptions about type and level of need and the services provided, there will be follow up review of the child/ young person’s case file(s).

User/ carer involvement in the design stage of the evaluation

It is planned to consult with children and young people (cyp) in a local participation forum in May 2006 on the design of the topic guide for children and young people. Piloting of the topic guide for parents/carers will also take place in May with one or two volunteer parents/ carers who have agreed to help with this on an informal basis. Amendments to both topic guides will be made in response to the feedback.

Identification of cases

Both Councils hold comprehensive data on TAC cases since the joint ISA Trailblazer commenced in 2004. The pilot focused initially on the north, central and south areas of Council A, and the south area of Council B. Cases will therefore be drawn mainly from these areas in order to learn from practitioners, parents and carers, and children and young people where the cultural change issues associated with delivering more integrated services have had more time to bed down. Both authorities would like the evaluation to focus on children and young people aged pre-birth to 19 years, and to include those who have a range of needs, and who may have had longer term involvement with different services, perhaps including a child protection case conference in the past. The age range has been widened from 0-14 years in order to generate a more diverse sample, which will include at least one young person with learning disabilities who is 19 years old, and one child/ young person from a Black and Minority Ethnic group. In order to ensure that the assessment process and services offered are relatively fresh in everyone’s minds, particularly for the younger children in the sample, cases will be excluded where at least one TAC meeting has not taken place since 1st January 2006. In the event that insufficient numbers are generated for the sample, the inclusion date will be pushed back by one month intervals to allow for more children and families to fall within the sample.

Sample size

The sample will consist of ten children, their parents/carers and the TAC practitioners from the two authorities, five from Council A and five from Council B.\textsuperscript{65} This will generate a total of twenty five to thirty interviews, depending on the age range of the children in the sample. It is not appropriate in qualitative interview research to carry out quantitative sample size calculations. The emphasis in qualitative interviews is on exploring a wide

\textsuperscript{65} In order to have more teenagers in the sample, twelve families were actually selected in the end - six from each Council.
range of views with the aim of achieving theoretical saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) where each new interview adds little to what is already known from the analysis of previous interviews, that is no new themes are emerging. The number of interviews planned in this project will almost certainly be sufficient to reach this point.

Access and consent

Eligible children will be identified by the relevant area Information Sharing and Assessment (ISA) Co-ordinators, Council A, and the Integrated Services Managers (ISMs), Council B. The research team will work through the ISMs and the ISA Co-ordinators to make contact with the lead professional, the family and the child/young person, and will not have access to any personal data about the professionals, the family and the child/young person until all parties have consented to take part in the evaluation.

The lead professional will be sent a pack with a letter inviting him/her and the parents/carers and child/young person to take part in the study. This will contain information sheets and consent forms for the lead professional and for the parents/carers and child/young person. The consent forms will cover (i) participation in the study through an interview, (ii) permission to contact other professionals involved in the TAC, and (iii) access to files if the researcher needs to follow anything up during or after the interviews.

The lead professional will be asked to visit the family as soon as possible to explain the evaluation and their potential contribution to the parent/carer and the child/young person. Parents/carers will be asked to discuss the evaluation with the child/young person in the intervening time. The lead professional will leave the information packs and consent forms with the family for at least 48 hours before returning to respond to any questions or concerns from the parents/carers and the child/young person, and to collect the consent forms.

In cases where consent has been given by the lead professional and the family, other professionals in the TAC will then be approached by the ISA Co-ordinator (Council A) and the ISM (Council B) for their consent to take part in the study. Only cases where all parties, have agreed to be interviewed will be included in the evaluation; children deemed too young by the lead professional to give informed consent will not be interviewed.

Where necessary other formats such as Braille, tape etc. will be considered for the letters and consent forms. Letters will also be translated into other languages for families where English is not their first language. The arrangements for informed consent comply with Schedules 1, 2 and 3 of the Data Protection Act 1998.

An administrator from the relevant local authority will then telephone to make an appointment with the professionals to meet with the researcher in a focus group. The parents/carers and child/young person will also be contacted, as appropriate, and interviews arranged. Children and families will be given some choice about where and when they would prefer to be interviewed. All interviews will be confirmed by a follow up letter.

At the meetings with both the parents/carers and the child/young person, the researcher will again explain the nature and purpose of the research and check whether they are content to go ahead with the interviews.
Parents/ carers and the child/ young person will also be told that they will be able to stop the interview at any point and will not be obliged to answer all the questions. In order to assist the child/ young person with exercising their rights in this regard, s/he will be given PASS and TIME OUT cards to hold up at any point in the interview.

After the interviews the parents/ carers and the child/ young person will be written to thanking them for participating in the study; the child/ young person will also be given a certificate of participation in the study.

**Data handling, analysis and outputs**

Interviews will be recorded using digital sound recording equipment to ensure high quality; parents/ carers will be assured that the recording will be kept safe and destroyed at the end of the research project. A copy of the sound file will be made by the researcher before the memory card is posted special delivery to the transcriber; and instructions given for changing names and any other identifying characteristics so that the data are anonymised when the transcript is sent by e-mail to the researcher for checking. Special delivery will also be used for the return of the sound file for deletion by the researcher. These arrangements for the secure processing of data comply with Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 1998.

The interview transcripts from each case and across cases will be analysed thematically; and the findings from the study written up to form a research report, executive summary and key findings briefing. In varying depth, depending on purpose and readership these three outputs will cover different aspects of the project. For example, the research report will reflect the aims of the study, and cover the project methodology, local context in each authority, and thematic findings in some depth. The anonymised quotes from professionals and service users will be used to substantiate various points. The executive summary will be a précis of the research report and is unlikely to contain any detailed quotes. The key findings briefing, in particular, will be written up in such a way to make its content accessible to the parents/ carers and children/young people who have taken part in the study and requested a copy.

**Main study outcomes**

The main outcomes for this study will be:

- A description of the cultural change issues involved in the TAC model, and how it works at local level to help children and young people achieve the outcomes identified in Every Child Matters
- Identification of success factors against which performance can be measured in the future
- Identification of future skills, and training and development needs to support the development of integrated services within the two councils.
Ethical issues raised by the study

Disclosure of risk of significant harm by either the parents/carers or the child/young person

It might arise that during the interviews new concerns are raised about any child’s safety, in particular the risk of significant harm. This will be dealt with by the sentence ‘Everything you say will be confidential unless there are any new concerns about any child’s safety’ in the information sheet to parents/carers; the same sentence with ‘private’ substituted for ‘confidential’ will be used for the children and young people. The consent forms will also address this issue: ‘I understand that my identity will remain confidential unless I say anything new that suggest that someone is at risk of significant harm’ [parents/carers] or ‘My name will be kept secret unless I say anything new about someone getting hurt’ [children and young people].

One or more TAC professionals decline to take part in the study

If the Lead Professional declines to take part then the family will be excluded from the study immediately, and will not be approached to take part. The next Lead Professional will then be contacted with a view to giving his/her consent and to approach the family.

If other professionals decline to take part in the study, after the family and Lead Professional have agreed to take part, then the Focus Group will go ahead with those professionals who have agreed to participate. In exceptional circumstances, for example where attendance at a TAC Focus Group would be too low, another family in the sample might be approached; and the reasons explained to the original family in a follow up thank you letter.

Recording of interviews and transcribing

In order to ensure the safe transfer of the sound file, special delivery postal service will be used to minimise the likelihood of data being lost and possibly falling into the wrong hands.

The features of a particular case may make the child and his/her parents or carers identifiable through the unique history and circumstances even though the transcript has been de-identified. In this case some of the key features of the case will be changed so that the case will not be recognisable within the final report or any other publications emanating from the project.

Once the final report has been signed off by the Funders/Sponsors of the Evaluation, the sound files of the research interviews will be erased. Electronic files and paper copies of the anonymised transcripts will be deleted/shredded within three years of the end of the project. This complies with data not being kept for longer than is necessary for the purposes of the research (Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 1998).

Risk of harm to research participants

There is a small chance that participants could suffer adverse consequences as a result of the research process. All participants will be offered a de-brief session after the interviews if they would find that useful. This will be included in the letters for all research participants. For parents/carers and children/young people this will be with a person of their choosing who they can nominate on the consent form. They will either arrange this
themselves or it can be arranged for them by one of the project administrators. For TAC professionals this will normally be with the line manager.

Management of evaluation
The research team has a wealth of experience in conducting and managing research of this nature. At the commissioning stage, the CVs and biographical details of Jocelyn Jones, Director, Mindful Practice Ltd, and Professor Olive Stevenson were forwarded to the Funders/ Sponsors of the evaluation.

In addition a comprehensive Excel spreadsheet and designated administrators in the two authorities will track the consents, fieldwork arrangements and dissemination of the project in the period May to October 2006. This will also serve to reduce some of the risks associated with participants’ requests not being followed through, but most importantly, it will serve to value their contributions and build participant trust in the study.

Reflective commentary
I now discuss some of the key features of my practice on the project, first drawing on the work of Schwandt (2000, 2002) on evaluation practice and then addressing the key features of response-able project design.

Towards response-able evaluation practice
The first reunion with ex Prisoners of War in October 2005 occurred just prior to the launch of the evaluation, and influenced me in several ways. Perhaps it was the apparent ease with which the men talked with me or their warmth and support that touched me that weekend, but I developed a new found confidence in my abilities. I became more relaxed and willing to be experimental. Most importantly, I recognised that I had a role to play in ensuring that minority narratives – ‘silent voices’ – are heard and responded to in the public domain. In the back of my mind were the words of an ex PoW at the first reunion: “There are very few people who could do what you’re doing here.”

In shaping the study, I was also influenced by the work of Thomas Schwandt (2000, 2002) on qualitative evaluation. Schwandt’s reflections on the moral and philosophical nature of evaluation practice helped me develop a more conscious responsive and responsible [response-able] practice on the ‘Team around the Child’ evaluation: a practice which is essentially about acquiring an action-oriented self-understanding. Drawing on ideas from Gadamer, he stresses the ontological nature of understanding:

. . . The knower does not stand as a solitary, subjective spectator over and against a self-contained, self-enclosed object, rather there is a dynamic interaction or transaction between that which is to be known and the knower who participates in it. (Schwandt, 2002, p.67)

Evaluation, conceived this way forms an educational experience, where the Being of the evaluator is central. My core morality as an evaluator, influenced positively or negatively by changing circumstances, needed to be ‘rock solid’. As I have indicated in the Standards of Judgment at the beginning of the thesis, our morality is exercised through our values, which in turn guide our responses, that is, our thoughts and actions.
I therefore looked to *Evaluation practice reconsidered* (Schwandt, 2002) as a theoretical steer and occasional nudge to my integrity throughout the evaluation, in addition to the experiential learning derived from the extended inquiry outlined in previous chapters:

In practical hermeneutics, human Being is a situated, ethical ongoing discussion of what we should, could, must be. Understanding is a way of Being: “The living human being understands the world as he [sic] finds himself already in it, not as an [anaemic] egological entity eruditely confronting an opposing objective entity. Interpretation is not something that I (the epistemological ego) do, but something I am *involved in*” (Gallagher, 1992, emphasis added by Schwandt). (Schwandt, 2002, p.66)

To argue the case for evaluation as practical hermeneutics, Schwandt draws on the work of Heidegger, Husserl, Habermas, Gadamer, Ricouer, Taylor and others (Schwandt, 2002, p.47): a new way of being and acting is called for in evaluation practice, *praxis*.

**Praxis**

In the tradition of philosophical and critical hermeneutics, *praxis* is

>a type of human engagement that is embedded within a tradition of communally shared understandings and values, that remains vitally connected to people’s life-experience, that finds expression in their ordinary linguistic usage, and that, rather than being a means through which they achieve outcomes separate from themselves, is a kind of enactment through which they constitute themselves as persons in a historical community. (Dunne, 1993, p.176)

There are three essential characteristics (Pendlebury, 1995): first *praxis* changes over time, varying from situation to situation and within the institutions which shape and support it. Second action derived from it is contextually relative, relying on particular situations to raise questions of how to act and live well. Third, it is revealed in the particulars of specific situations. *Praxis* requires knowledge of the nature of personhood and how to be a particular kind of person, that is, a form of practical wisdom or *phronesis* (Gadamer, 1977); an ‘action-oriented self-understanding’ as I have indicated above (Habermas, 1988, p.162).

The challenge was to develop a *praxis* or practice wisdom characterised by responsiveness and responsibility [response-ability] throughout the evaluation, not just during the interviews. Here, as I have indicated earlier, I am extending Levinas’ notion of responsibility as it relates to narratives of suffering to one which encompasses practical, trust-building, appreciative and participant-affirming responses throughout an evaluation. This notion is entirely different to the standard ‘avoidance of the risk of harm’ requirements, which characterise traditional research ethics approval processes, including the original protocol for this evaluation referred to earlier in this chapter. As the planning for evaluation got underway, the intention became to use every opportunity possible to build trust and value participants’ contributions, thus helping build self esteem and re-story lives (Frank, 1995).

In the professional sphere, Fook (2002) helpfully offers a checklist to shift discourses to ones which are enabling or empowering, where narratives are reconstructed from a position of agency and power:
From ‘cause’ to ‘effect’: rather than ‘how did I cause this?’ to ‘what effect did this have on me?’.

From ‘blame’ to ‘responsibility’: rather than ‘who can I blame for this in the past?’ to ‘what responsibility can I take now?’.

From ‘guilt’ to ‘care’.

From ‘passive’ to ‘active’.

From ‘failure’ to ‘success’.

From ‘negative’ to ‘positive’.

From ‘weakness’ to ‘strength’. (Fook, 2002, p.140)

It was this kind of positive thinking which underpinned the response-able evaluation design.

During the following analysis, I refer to key features of the design and management of the project; and to key findings and sections of a reflective, supplementary report which I was asked to write following the main evaluation report. The additional report offers some examples of the way in which participants began to re-story their lives during the evaluation. In order to put the report in the public domain, it was read by a critical reader, who works in a professional capacity in children’s services. This reduced the number of identifying characteristics still further, whilst retaining the key learning points.

The infra-structure: management response-ability and ownership in the early stages of the study

Management of the Project

At the end of Chapter Four and at the beginning of this chapter, I raised some concerns about how the findings of the family placement assessment study (Jones, 2004) had been responded to by the commissioning council. In this evaluation I stressed the councils’ and my shared responsibility towards all the participants throughout the project and afterwards.

In essence the parents and children and young people were letting me in to ‘walk over their lives’ and, if they chose, to share their vulnerabilities with me in narrative form. I became both the facilitator and editor of their voices in the evaluation; and I had a duty of care to each and every one of them (Schwandt, 2000, 2002). I was determined that the findings from this evaluation would be acted upon, and took active steps to promote ownership amongst the agencies and dissemination of findings. Both councils responded positively.

I recommended two levels of managing the evaluation rather than just one, as in the family placement study. This made the study much less vulnerable to staff changes within the two councils. The project had a Steering Group, which comprised the two commissioning managers and two other operational managers who were closer to managing ‘Team around the Child’ on the ground. This group addressed some of the more detailed and practical issues relating to the evaluation such as the sample and administrative arrangements.

In between Steering Group meetings, the much larger multi agency Reference Group met five times during 2006. Its main role was to support, promote and disseminate the TAC project evaluation locally, regionally and nationally (see Appendix Sixteen for Terms of 232
Reference). Given the importance of acting on project findings in response-able project design, I asked that dissemination strategies be a rolling item on the agenda. This was agreed. Members also commented on drafts of the protocol for the study, letters to participants and consent forms, and the research outputs; this level of involvement helped promote ownership of the project amongst the agencies.

**Participation and ownership**

One of the changes I made right at the outset in the evaluation was to involve key professional staff across the two councils to generate the questions for the different topic guides for children and young people, parents and carers and the practitioners who worked with them. Drawing on some of the participative, qualitative and practical characteristics of action research methodology (Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Heron and Reason, 2001), I used visual techniques to bring out their visions for integrated working and the challenges as they saw them. These were posted on a photo sharing website, and helped promote ownership of the project throughout the period of the interviews and of the findings themselves. The ‘can do’ child-centred images and captions below, selected by two of the groups, have a great energy about them, which characterised the impressive commitment to improving services for children and young people and their families in the two councils: they show the re-storying of lives as central to the vision.
Building participant care, appreciation and feedback into the project design

In Chapter One I identified respect for persons as being a key ethical principle in professional practice, but what does this mean on the ground? As I have argued elsewhere, this requires a practice, which builds trust through ‘caring or being-for’ the Other (Schwandt, 2000, p.205): often what can seem small, almost trivial details need to be considered here. First there is the nature of respectful communication. Do you need to write a letter, email or text or a combination of all three? Which is the most appropriate, and why? Second there is making the appointment for the visit or interview. Is this done in dialogue with the parent and child? How many times do you re-arrange if it is cancelled? Third there is sound preparation by reading the paperwork or file so you know names, who’s who and important factual details about family members’ lives. Fourth there is good timekeeping, and if you really are running late then call to apologise. Fifth there is follow up and accountability to children and families, that is remembering to do what you said you would do and keeping everybody ‘in the loop’ about progress. It was this approach that I used in Chapter Six with the war veterans (see, for example, how I built trust with Tom Carpenter, Stan Wade, and Gerd Wolse, the three major contributors to the extended narrative inquiry into the profound effects of war).

In Chapter Four I allude to some of the basics of respectful practice again in the story about my first visit to Graham’s house when I make sure I arrive on time. How have I come to know the importance of this type of practice? It derives from working with many people during my career as a social worker who have never been treated as if they matter in anybody’s lives. For example, several parents I worked with were neglected as children: their expectations were low because they had been treated as if they and their opinions did not matter; not surprisingly, some were depressed or had other mental health problems (Bifulco and Moran, 1998).

To build trust and self esteem, the onus shifts to managers, practitioners and researchers, like myself, to practice in a way which uses every opportunity possible to make people matter, and help them re-story their lives; to move from chaos narratives to restitution or quest narratives (Frank, 1995). This is a relationship-based approach which goes beyond being a good listener or responsive counsellor in the allotted time for a home visit. We, as professionals, are responsible for setting and achieving these high standards.

How then was participant care and appreciation built into the project? Appendix Seventeen shows how the two administrators in each of the councils and I managed the project between us: each response was logged on the spreadsheet and the updated information periodically shared to fill in any gaps. This attention to detail ensured that we delivered on everything within the agreed timescales.

Two changes were made to the spreadsheet during the initial stages of the project. Rather than an administrator contacting the families to make the interview appointments, I contacted them directly myself using the project mobile phone. This was a more personal response, and helped reduce participants’ uncertainties and fears as I demystified the interview process during this initial contact. The second change concerned the proposed final ‘Thank you’ letter from the two Directors of Children’s Services. As this could have potentially jeopardised the perceived anonymity of participants, we decided it would be better if I wrote the final ‘Thank you’ letter. I shall say more about the response-able content of the letter in the next section.
Response-able practice in action

In this section I describe my practice on the evaluation. At the end of the study there were the agreed project outputs: the three key findings’ briefings for different audiences, the main report and the executive summary. However at the last Reference Group meeting, I was asked by the two commissioning managers to write a supplementary report, which included my reflections on the interviews. They had found these reflections very helpful during informal discussion at the final two meetings.

The supplementary report was my best effort to help managers and practitioners cultivate their critical subjectivity, and access the I-You mode of existence - seeing the Other as Subject (Avnon, 1993) - in the services they manage and deliver to children and families. In the words on the page I sought to embody an interpretative and ethical form of practice which I hoped would inspire managers and practitioners to respond. During this section, I include parts of the supplementary report to illustrate particular issues and learning points. As writings, the relevant sections are italicised.

When I drafted the correspondence introducing the study to potential participants, I tried to keep the language as simple as possible; I also used a few clip art images to engage children and young people in particular. Appendix Eighteen includes some of the correspondence used during the initial approach to children & young people and their families.

Two families helped pilot the parents’ topic guide, and children and young people on a participation forum gave feedback on the topic guide for their age group. In the pilot, the parents and I found that an opening question along the lines of: “Can you tell me something about how Team around the Child first came into your life/ your and your child’s life?” worked much better than the original more structured questions about the TAC process. I used the topic guide questions to supplement any gaps, but only once participants had told me their story their way. I would characterise my orientation in the interviews as ‘attentive’ and ‘being in dialogue alongside the Other’: a similar disposition to ‘witnessing’ a narrative of suffering (Laub, 1992; Oliver, 2001)

Inevitably, some families cancelled appointments; some more than once. Initially I was very frustrated about this, but I decided to give into the process and allowed each cancelled appointment to be re-arranged twice on the parent’s or child’s terms. In this way I ensured that ‘hard to reach’ voices were included in the study. This is the sense I made of the families giving me ‘the run around’ in the supplementary report:

The nature of the households

Learning point:

Within lead professional training and other professional development forums, the emotional responses (e.g. anger and frustration) to parents and children/young people who are hard to engage need to be raised. It is all too easy to give up. However, taking time to re-arrange meetings and going to the trouble to find the best time and place to see people can really pay off.

Within the main report I allude to the ‘busy’ nature of the households that I visited. Sometimes this seemed to border on ‘chaotic’ when there were also several siblings and half siblings, some of whom had additional needs themselves. Arranging the interviews was not straightforward as parents’ jobs, sudden changes of priorities, other appointments, rapidly changing family circumstances and crises intervened. This meant that some interviews had to be re-arranged,
some more than once. A similar pattern was evident in interviewing the young people. There was a need to be persistent but not too pushy and flexible about times. When finally I did manage to meet the parent(s) and young person, they were very productive interviews.

I therefore reflected on how a combination of persistence and flexibility had paid off in order to reach the parents and young people. In the busy lives of professionals, it is easy to become irritated when interviews are persistently cancelled and have to be re-arranged. These observations, in themselves, can also be potentially diagnostic, that is they may tell you something about the ways in which family members are avoiding contact with each other and/or professionals, as in some serious case reviews.\(^6\)

In the early stages of setting up the interviews, I was annoyed at being ‘messed around’ as I saw it, but later on I took a more ‘laid back’ accommodating perspective. I wondered whether the fact that the people had been so hard to ‘pin down’ led to a feeling of being valued as I re-arranged interviews to fit in with their busy lives. This might be something for lead professionals, in particular, to bear in mind, when engaging parents and children/young people during the CAF/TAC process.

In the interviews themselves I used the approach, which I referred to earlier, of making people matter in the attention I gave to each person’s narrative. This seemed obvious to me from many years’ experience, but it may not be so apparent to hard-pressed practitioners balancing the advantages and demands of modern communications technology to be instantly available.

**Focus within the interviews with parents and young people**

**Learning points:**

Good preparation (e.g. reading the file and being in a calm frame of mind before the interview) is essential.

The physical space for listening matters for professionals and for the people they are seeking to help.

Conveying a clear message that this is “special, dedicated time” for parents and children and young people is also very important.

Given such ‘busy’ family circumstances, I considered that it was essential to focus 100% on the people who I was interviewing: my mobile was switched off for the duration of each interview before I went into the house. I also re-read the CAF/TAC plan(s) just prior to each interview so I had a good idea of who was involved, their names and the names of family members.

In order to put parents and children/young people at their ease, I started with asking a general question along the lines of how Team around the Child had come into their life. Sometimes people’s responses went on for 30 minutes or longer, with only minor prompting from me. The topic guide was then used to fill in any gaps in their narrative for the purposes of the evaluation; this also showed that I had been listening very carefully as I picked up on things they had said and asked further questions. Maintaining good eye contact was also important throughout the evaluation interviews (also see the later discussion on CAFs and TAC plans).

I had the feeling that for many just being listened to for an hour or so, telling their story their way to me, and having it reflected back, was therapeutic. For that time, their story assumed a position of utmost importance.

\(^6\) A similar point is made by Brandon et al (2008) in their analysis of serious case reviews 2003-2005.
The narrative approach made it harder for me to analyse the interviews, but participants relaxed and quickly forgot about the recording equipment; some were very open in expressing their concerns and several reported finding the interviews therapeutic (Monk et al, 1997). The reference in the last paragraph is to the responsibility I felt as the interviewer-listener bearing witness to the other’s narrative: as I have indicated previously, the person who constructs her/his narrative is telling her/himself to the person who bears witness; in this exchange narratives can be constructed and reconstructed and lives restored (Laub, 1992; Frank, 1995; Oliver, 2001).

The following section from the supplementary report illustrates the even-handed, responsive approach I took in the interviews, when children and young people and parents shared their feelings about family conflicts and other aspects of their lives at a deeper level:

**Parental guilt**

Learning points:
Where feelings are running high, the needs of the different parties to defend themselves can take over. This can take the form of blame, “It’s your fault”, scapegoating, or disengagement due to fear, “Why do I have to change? What’s wrong with me?”

Talking about the challenges of parenting in the spirit of “We all make mistakes” and helping parents talk about times when their parenting might have been compromised seemed helpful to some parents and offered a way into engaging them at a deeper level.

Some parents used the interviews to reflect on how changes in their parenting (e.g. a change of job and being less at home) or their behaviour (e.g. domestic abuse) might have inadvertently caused their child’s behavioural problems. Again, it was important to listen and acknowledge what was being said, and the effect it might have had on the child/young person. At the same time, it was important to be non-judgemental, focus on the current situation, and build on the positives. These parents and young people commented in their individual interviews on having TAC meetings where the parent(s) and child/young person might attend separately.

In the early stages of CAF/TAC when blame might be an issue, when to hold separate meetings, when and how to mediate and when to bring the parties together needs careful consideration. This can also be reflected in the CAF where it might be easier to problematise the child’s behaviour rather than address the child’s behaviour in the context of parenting capacity.

For some, participating in the evaluation offered an opportunity to reconstruct passive, negative or blaming narratives referred to earlier (Fook, 2002). One parent, who had parented in very challenging circumstances, put it this way:

“It’s not nice from a parent’s point of view, the way you’re treated by a lot of professionals, not in the TAC meeting. In general your own confidence as a parent goes, your own confidence as a person goes, you doubt your own abilities, you doubt what sort of person you are and there’s a lot of blame, an awful lot of blame, you blame yourself all the time and an awful lot of guilt. And you go through that for years and years and years, and it’s not . . . a healthy thing to go through. You know, it’s detrimental to people’s health so therefore it’s all for a good cause and why I’ve done it.” (Jones, 2007, p.47).
The children and young people I spoke with all felt they had ‘messed up’ in some way and this could threaten their futures, perhaps forever. In the interviews I sought to put across a more realistic view of the episodic highs and lows of life, where lives could be re-built and everything could turn out OK or even better than anticipated.

**Positive role models for children and young people**

**Learning points:**

*Children and young people need to believe in themselves and their capacity to ‘bounce back’ from difficult situations. Positive but ‘real’ person role models are important. These could be drawn from people who, despite challenging circumstances in their lives, have managed to become happy and ‘successful’ on their own terms as adults in a variety of circumstances, and who are able to talk openly and inspire others.*

*Role models can be drawn from all walks of life, and include members of the young person’s family who live elsewhere.*

All four children/young people who I interviewed had experienced problems relating to their education and/or their behaviour. They all knew that this could jeopardise their futures. In some interviews, where appropriate, I shared the fact that I had been a school truant, and had then gone on to have a successful career. The message here was designed to reassure and help them get back on course: “everybody can mess up, but you can bounce back”. It was necessary to acknowledge that, whilst there had been a ‘blip’, there was hope, a vision for the future and positives to be built on (also see Daniel, Wassell and Gilligan, 1999, esp. Chap 4 for a discussion of resilience and vulnerability and the need for a child/young person to develop and re-work a ‘coherent story’ of life events and circumstances).

My view, from their responses and what they said they valued in the adults who had helped them, was that the young people responded to someone who believed in them and role models which were real i.e. adults who might not have had a ‘straightforward’ education and career pathway, but whose lives turned out well in the end. This might be something to consider in mentoring relationships, and when people are selected to give talks or important addresses in school and young people’s forums.

Following the interviews all participants received a ‘Thank you’ letter and the children and young people who took part received a Certificate of Participation as a token of appreciation for their contribution to the evaluation (see Appendix Nineteen for the ‘Thank you’ letter). Thank you letters to all participants were normally sent out within a seven to ten days of the interviews.
Towards the end of the study, I took advice from a children’s participation worker and a special education needs adviser on layout and language so that the Key Messages of children and young people and parents/carers were both appreciative and accessible.
The Key Messages of children and young people were later developed into poster format for the widest possible national dissemination, including the Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families, and the senior civil servant who heads up the Children and Families Directorate at the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Although this was a locally commissioned study, it was one of the first evaluations or the first evaluation of early intervention and integrated working under Every Child Matters (Department for Education and Skills, 2003, 2004), which included the views of children and young people and parents/carers. Their views, in the form of key messages, are discussed in the next section.

At the final Reference Group meeting the two commissioning councils agreed to respond within a specified time period to all the participants on the actions they would be taking with regard to the key messages from the evaluation. We agreed that each council would insert around six bullet points into the final ‘Thank you’ letter to all participants by way of their response (see Appendix Twenty for the key findings letter [p.379] and final ‘Thank you’ letter sent to children and young people [p.380]).

As for the key messages and all other letters, three different versions were sent depending on who the participant was. This final feedback loop built trust between the councils and participants, and valued all their contributions to the evaluation, perhaps helping some to re-story or begin re-storying their lives (Frank, 1995; Fook, 2002).

**Response-ability for self**

Given the commitment to improving self care discussed in earlier chapters, I gave my accommodation for the duration of the evaluation interviews careful consideration, basing myself in a good quality bed & breakfast, which I had used on a previous project. This was well situated and I could come and go as I pleased, with the owners leaving a key out for me if I arrived when they were out. The room was large enough to do a yoga session on my mat; a good sized room is something I now ask for when I am working away so that I can prepare myself well, mentally and physically, either the evening before or in the morning. This care of the self, which focused on enhancing the quality of my energy, was essential (Schiffman, 1996): I was unrushed and generally able to keep to the appointment times except on the odd occasion when a previous interview overran. In those instances, as I have mentioned previously, I used the designated mobile phone for the project to ring the next participants to apologise for running a bit late and to check that it was still alright to come.

**What children and young people and parents valued: response-ability and the inter-human in practice**

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to cover the findings of the evaluation in any depth. However I would like to say something about the way in which good communication and follow through with a small number of respectful, committed practitioners was highly valued by parents and children & young people alike. The key messages from children and young people and parents indicate the range of issues raised.
Your Top Ten Messages

TAC workers need to take time to build the relationship and explain the TAC process with you before the first TAC meeting.

Only have the people who really need to be there at each TAC meeting.

If a worker cannot come to the meeting s/he should send their apologies in advance.

Where and when the meetings are held and how long they go on for need to be agreed and then agreed again as things change.
Talk in simple language at the meeting and make meetings as relaxed and friendly as possible.

You appreciated seeing results from the TAC plans like, “This is what we’ve got for you”.

Being listened to is REALLY important. Counselling, building on good behaviour, and the occasional ‘wake up call’ also helped.

Year 8 and Year 9 were when you needed earlier help.

Sometimes it might be better to have a TAC meeting without a parent(s) there.

Choice about how to take part in future evaluations matters, and needs to be agreed with each child/young person.
What parents thought about TAC

Key Messages from Parents and Carers

✓ Parents saw giving their consent to share information as leading to an improved coordination of services for their child. Many liked the time saving aspects of TAC and not having to repeat their ‘stories’ to many different workers.

✓ Most parents were positive about their TAC meetings. They liked a friendly, relaxed atmosphere and seeing the TAC plan(s) getting things done.

✓ Parents were concerned about:
  • Workers not turning up to meetings and not sending apologies
  • Meetings going on too long
  • Too many people at the meeting
  • The lack of services for children and young people with lots of different needs, such as ADHD and autistic spectrum disorders
  • Where a big family need, such as re-housing, still remained unmet.

✓ One or two parents said that the lead professional running the meeting and taking notes at the same time was too much for one person to do.

✓ Many parents praised the role played by their lead professional and the support they had received: being listened to and good communication featured strongly in the relationship.

✓ Parents appreciated fast practical responses and small gestures of support offered by the lead professional or another TAC worker.

✓ Children who have communication difficulties need a skilled worker who can support them and their parent(s) throughout the TAC process.

✓ Participation of both the parent(s) and the child/young person in a meeting may need to be tailored to particular family circumstances.

✓ For the parents of children and young people in mainstream education without special needs, the ages at which their children needed earlier help were around Year 8 and Year 9.

✓ For the parents of children with special or lots of different needs, help was needed much earlier.

✓ Regarding future evaluations most parents said they would prefer an individual interview; some said they would be happy to complete a postal questionnaire. Choice of method and the independence of the evaluation matter.

Essentially, the personal qualities, processes and outcomes, which the children and young people and parents valued, stemmed primarily from a relationship-based, dialogical orientation throughout the whole Team around the Child process. This is very similar to my conception of response-able practice, which is linked to good preparation, respect, responsive ‘I-You’ communication and dialogue, follow up action and accountability.
I was struck by how small gestures of unsolicited practical support from a practitioner meant so much to some parents, giving them a much-needed lift at the right time; and the way informality was valued alongside getting things done. There was a mirroring in the response-able practice of the best lead professionals and the way the evaluation had sought to build self esteem and value participants’ contributions in every way possible.

Through the development of my living theory of response-ability had I led participants into the areas that I wanted to bring out in the research? The answer is most definitely ‘Yes’. Although I allowed each participant to tell me their story right at the outset about how ‘Team around the Child’ came into their life, and the topic guide questions had been developed with key professionals in both councils, in a participatory world-view we are part of the wider community and in reciprocal encounter (Reason, 1994; Abram, 1996).

As in ethnographic research (Cresswell, 2005), I immersed myself in the interviews and the homes and communities where the families lived, worked and played: in this sense a home visit either by a participative researcher, like myself, or a practitioner may be seen as a type of ethnographic study (Fook, 2002):

The whole area of ethnographic methods raises the issue of reflexivity as a research tool in understanding and making sense of the worlds of service users. To what extent are our own views and perspectives unduly colouring the perspectives of service users, and can such awareness be used to advantage? I think an understanding of how we reflexively create knowledge in a research process has direct application in how we construct a professional narrative in assessment making. (Fook, 2002, p.129)

I agree with Fook on this point and return to this later when I discuss professional narratives in making sense of family circumstances. Citing different forms of participative research design (Reason and Rowan, 1981; Whyte, 1991; Heron, 1996), Fook argues that all allow for collaborative interactions in a joint process of data creation: ‘the object is to co-construct a narrative which ‘works’ for the service user within a professional culture’ (Fook, 2002, p.130).

Fook also stresses the holistic, reflexive and interpretive nature of this type of dialogical practice:

Being reflexive involves a recognition of how we ourselves, as whole people, influence the situations and contexts in which we interact. In ethnographic work, anthropologists have introduced the idea of the researcher as instrument, the whole person as the medium by which information is obtained, selected and interpreted. The idea of the ‘self as instrument’ has application to the ways in which workers might see and use themselves in co-constructing a narrative with service users. (Fook, 2002, p.130)

I return to discuss reflexivity and professional narratives later in this chapter after the next section, which shows narrative reconstruction taking place in practice as a child begins to re-story her life.

**Witnessing the re-storying of a life**

As part of my living theory of response-ability, I now reflect on a conversation I had with one of the children in the study. This was a nodal moment in my learning; at an experiential and practical level it shows my praxis, my living theory, in action short of seeing actual video clips of the two sessions.
In all instances I interviewed parent(s) first, and at the end of the interview I normally made arrangements to interview the children and young people, where consent had been given by all parties, and after the parent(s) had more of an idea about the evaluation and what it involved. This acknowledged the parental gate keeping role and also helped address any fears about me interviewing their child.

The first time I met Suzie was just before the evaluation interview where she had been waiting in anticipation at home. Her parent had arranged to go out to leave us alone for an hour or so, and we agreed that Suzie would ring her/him on the project mobile when the interview was over.

At the beginning of the interview, when I asked if she wanted to draw, she said: “I can’t really draw people . . . I don’t know how to spell properly . . . I don’t know how to spell and draw”. This early focus on deficits, as opposed to strengths, did not get the interview off to a good start.

Later, as both Suzie and I relaxed in each other’s company, she opened out about not having her basic needs met, because the close relative she had lived with previously was alcohol dependent:

“I wanted to go to school, but [s/he] didn’t let me go to bed and go to sleep, [s/he] wanted me to stay up where [at the pub], up with [her/him] and I wanted to go school and have a good education . . . I do care about my school work and everything and the way I react at school and everything.”

Then towards the end of the interview she started to build a form of restitution narrative where, with a change of placement, she was beginning to build self esteem; her body was healing (Frank, 1995; White and Epston, 1990; Daniel et al., 1999):

S And s/he didn’t brush, didn’t make me brush my teeth. But I wanted to brush my teeth to make them nice and clean and healthy.

J Yes it’s very important isn’t it? . . . It’s nice to have good teeth because when you smile

S I’ve got good teeth now.

J You’ve got lovely teeth haven’t you? They’re beautiful Suzie.

S But my teeth ages ago was really yellow and black.

J Were they?

S Yeah, but look [Suzie gets up and comes up to within 40 cm of my face. We make eye contact and she shows me her teeth].

J They’re beautiful now, you take care and love those teeth to bits because they need to see you right through to being a very old lady, don’t they?

S Yeah, because I just had one taken out. [Suzie stays standing, bends closer towards me, opens her mouth and comes up even closer to my face so I can see inside her mouth]

J Oh, down there. [I look right into her mouth and am conscious of the warmth of her breath] Yes you’ve got beautiful teeth. [We make eye contact again as she moves back to sit down] So do you brush them, do you brush them in the morning then and at night time?
A bit later Suzie talked about her diet:

J  So when you, so when you were with [name of relative] then what did you eat because if you were out at the pub all the [time] . . .

S  Chips from the chippy

J  So you just had chips all day?

S  Yes.

J  Oh dear.

S  Oh I had, or I had Chinese or curries or s/he used to, or hardly no times s/he used to cook me something like only a little, some soup once or something like that but fattening soup . . . s/he'd like give me ‘Cup a Soups’ and they're fattening, some fattening.

J  Yes, so now you have healthier food, do you?

S  Yeah, I have salads.

J  Do you? [I remember smiling and nodding at this point]

S  Proper meals and then I have chicken, I have proper drinks or I have coke but that, that's a new one with no sugar in it . . . [Name of new carer] buys me that and s/he buys me Lucozade, what's very good for me as well . . .

J  . . . Oh, that's very good. Okay then, well that's excellent that you're, you know, you're really eating healthily.

S  And I clean my teeth every day.

J  Fantastic.

S  And I have a bath.

J  You look beautiful, darling.

S  And then I have a summer dress [Suzie stands up, puts her arms out and shows me her dress]

J  Yes, you look really beautiful.

When I responded to Suzie with the words “darling” and “really beautiful”, the words just spontaneously came out of my mouth. When I reflected on the interview later, I realised that the point when relation shifted was when Suzie came right up close to my face; we made eye contact; and then she showed me her teeth and then the inside of her mouth where her tooth had been removed. In those few seconds I became aware that Suzie and I were ‘face to face’ and breathing the same air: we were touching each other through air (Oliver, 2001). It was that moment of the ‘inter-human’, which allowed me to touch the embodied nature of child neglect and its corrosive effects on a beautiful person. As a witness to Suzie’s suffering, I suffered for her suffering, like Stan Wade suffered for the
Russian men on the march in 1945. Suzie became Subject, and the inclusion of her narrative is an attempt on my part to use her previously ‘nameless’ suffering as a ‘just suffering’ narrative (Levinas, 1988), which takes on meaning within the public domain, especially for those who are currently working with children and families. In the final chapter of the thesis I link the notion of ‘vision as touch’ to ‘response-ability’ and the ‘inter-human’ at a theoretical level.

When after the interview, Suzie asked to listen to the sound recording, there was only one response (Levinas, 1969). I returned a month later, as promised, and witnessed her restitution narrative again (Frank, 1995), just sitting quietly and being alongside her, as we both listened to her testimony on my laptop and she drew. If you recall, this was something she had told me she could not do at the beginning of the evaluation interview. Suzie drew a beautiful picture of a flower with her name on it and – x – underneath. When I left she gave it to me, and it is here now on the wall in my study.

Professional discourses in early intervention

This section addresses safeguarding issues which were discussed in the ‘Team around the Child’ practitioner focus groups. The questions towards the end of the topic guide specifically probed for general concerns practitioners might have, such as differences in thresholds for referral to children’s social care, and families which worried them.

It is important here to stress that most TAC practitioners were overwhelmingly positive about the TAC process as it operated in the two councils; they thought it helped clarify roles and improve inter-professional relationships; identified unmet needs earlier; and was more solution focused thus promoting greater accountability. However as Brandon et al (2008) point out in their analysis of serious case reviews, effective early intervention will reveal early risks of harm, which then need to be managed by TAC practitioners within the safeguarding continuum rather than referred to children’s social care; or, as part of that continuum, they may need to refer.

In the evaluation, practitioners’ concerns centred on ‘compromised parenting’: where a parent or parents may not perceive that there is a problem, for example, where there may be mental health problems; or where problems had become ‘low level’ and chronic, such as child neglect, parental alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, and emotional abuse thus having a corrosive effect on a child’s ability to achieve outcomes, such as in Suzie’s early life. These children may not hit social care thresholds, although a lead professional may remain concerned with a reduced mandate to express that concern if, following referral, the family has been passed back to the early intervention team (TAC) from children’s social care.

One Area A TAC practitioner put the issue of needs and thresholds this way: “It’s your perception of it being complex, and sometimes Social Services will look at a case and decide it’s not serious enough to get involved, because they are dealing with the most acute cases” (Jones, 2007, p. 57). This experienced professional, who had daily contact with children, raised questions about what to do when there was child neglect. The parents who had “naughty” children wanted help to cope with challenging behaviour, but she added:

“It’s the parents who have got things they just really don’t want people to know . . . they just want to be left alone and that’s the more neglect ones . . . it’s when you see these children . . . they’re not really being cared for. We’ve had
one recently that’s been out and on her own, a very young child, out late at night. That type of parent they’re just saying “No, we’re OK. That’s not happening”. (TAC practitioner, Area A, Jones, 2007, p.58)

Two Area B Integrated Services’ Managers (ISMs) commented on referrals to children’s social care from the early intervention teams, and managing inter-professional relationships:

“I think we need to be much clearer about the interface between safeguarding and ISA [Information Sharing and Assessment or early intervention teams]. . . it’s always been a concern of mine that practitioners will think, ‘Well, we won’t bother’, and I think that is a real concern”. (ISM, Area B, Jones, 2007, p.

“I’ve had a particular child . . . and we’ve been running a TAC meeting and by the very nature of the difficulties that arose in that TAC meeting we had to take it to Social Care. The lead professional then was immediately dismissed by the parent, immediately because they obviously said “You were there to support me, not report me!” and their relationship instantly went down the pan and then I had to step in as the ISM and take some form of control over the situation, while Social Care did their initial assessment and then they took the lead on because it was of a risk nature.” (ISM, Area B, Jones, 2007, p. 58)

When asked about the opportunity for a debrief after the family transferred to children’s social care, she went on to stress the importance of letting the other workers know what had happened and why. The ISM’s support of the practitioner in that forum was important so that they all understood that it was serious enough to go to children’s social care and that the worker had done the right thing:

“We had like . . . a professionals’ TAC meeting around that particular issue whereby we were able to say “OK, the lead professional is no longer working with the case, they shared all of their information that they needed to with Social Care, they’ve handed all their files and paperwork” . . . but [the other practitioners] also understood that that particular worker was no longer part of that team because that was the Mother’s choice.” (ISM, Area B, Jones, 2007, p.58)

As I have mentioned previously, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into a detailed discussion of the findings with regard to the literature on safeguarding children. This discussion has sought to offer a sense of the complexity of children and families work; when and how to raise concerns; and the management of client, inter-professional and inter-agency relationships when family situations move backwards and forwards along the safeguarding continuum.

**Reflection on the professional discourses, assessment and recording tools**

The supplementary report offered an opportunity to set down my interpretation of what the different parties bring to the table. In the following section of the supplementary report I focus on professional decision making, and one focus group where participants discussed an assessment which did not improve outcomes for a young person.

When I visited the household, I was concerned that the parents had, whether intentionally or not, isolated the young person from her/his peer group and services. I also found
myself feeling frustrated about how hard they made it for me to find and gain access to their home, and their endless illness narratives. The TAC practitioners also shared these frustrations and felt the ‘stuck’ family dynamics influenced their ability to be more assertive. I had an overwhelming feeling of being almost anaesthetised after about an hour or so of low energy and negativity in the room. The TAC practitioners reported feeling similarly.

In terms of response-able evaluation practice, I shared the draft section of the supplementary report with members of the focus group, met with them a second time to discuss the assessment, and then sent them the final draft of the section for checking. Given the pressure on councils to come up with ‘success stories’ which show improving performance, I wanted to show what can be learnt from ‘mistakes’ and to commend the practitioners for opening up their practice to scrutiny in this way. This was my way of writing a different professional narrative where emotions, uncertainty and vulnerability can be explored more openly within the workplace.

**Family dynamics and assessment**

**Learning points:**

An explanation needs to be given on the TAC plan about why no further action (NFA) has been agreed. There is a concern that when a parent requests no further involvement, despite unmet needs, a child may by default move up the windscreen [a child’s needs increase] as services cease.

**TAC teams should be encouraged to take a step back and meet for informal professional debriefs without the family from time to time.**

At a more formal level, reflective practice forums need to be designed to encourage TAC practitioners to use them. They should be supported by a culture which promotes learning from ‘mistakes’ as well as good practice and ‘success’ stories.

Consideration needs to be given to the physical space in which these forums take place i.e. away from the demands of the workplace in a quiet, comfortable room.

TAC practitioners need support, through reflective practice forums, to identify and discuss their feelings about home visits, including the approach to the home. This may include, for example, concerns about being ‘stuck’ with a family or worries about risk. Feelings are facts of a particular kind which bear on understanding of the case.

At least one person needs to challenge the assessment.

Within the main report some reference is made to one focus group where the practitioners really began to question what they had delivered in relation to a child (see section 8.5.2). The group enabled the practitioners to take a step back from the family and pose the question, “Can we really say, in any certainty, that we have achieved any of the Every Child Matters priority outcomes for this child”? In terms of where they had got, their response was frank and brutally honest: “Well since you ask, nowhere!” The general recommendations arising from this family and other families and situations discussed in the focus groups are covered within the final section of the main report 10. Conclusion and Implications. What follows here is some of the more subtle learning from this particular family.

The first point to make about the additional learning from this focus group is to thank the practitioners for selecting the child and his/her family to be in the sample: they had a sense they had been ineffective but could not really understand why. This was a highly professional yet
potentially exposing action on their part. The second point is to commend them for the way they engaged in the focus group to unravel their own feelings and frustrations and the complex family dynamics which immobilised them in an ‘unsuccessful’ TAC family. They intuitively had a sense of what the main issues were which had frustrated them, but needed a forum to be able to articulate their views and hypothesise about the situation.

. . . This was an upper class family where ‘chronic ill health’ figured in a parent and the young person. The family appeared to be working on a model of illness or disease as opposed to wellness: symptoms were put down to illness or disease rather than attempting to normalise the situation. The family was described as a ‘bubble’: as one worker put it: “I felt they lived in a bubble, in their own world, didn’t they? They didn’t really come out of the bubble, because they moved as a bubble.”

Much of the literature on identifying safeguarding concerns focuses on the home visit. However in my view, drawing on previous experience, the journey from the worker’s car to the home, particularly on a first home visit, also merits some attention. In this instance, I had struggled to find an address which should have been obvious. The comparative isolation and difficulty in being able to gain independent access to the family home struck me as interesting before the evaluation interview had begun. I also had a sense that, in my struggle to find the right address, I was being watched.

Reflecting on the early TAC meeting in the home, the workers said, “It was very early days and we had a really nice TAC meeting and we were all very nice . . . but we could have been a bit nastier I guess”. Another worker replied, “I would have liked to have maybe seen a ‘bad guy’ in there” or “a challenging one”: “everyone’s approach was quite soft and gentle because s/he’s ill.” Essentially, the TAC workers acknowledged that they had unwittingly colluded with the family and failed to recognise a pattern of disguised compliance coupled with elements of passive aggression: one of the workers said, “I feel as though they manipulated the situation . . . or rather we allowed ourselves to be manipulated”. Despite a review TAC being arranged at the meeting, a parent phoned up and cancelled it: “They chose not to continue with the TAC, they didn’t feel that we could bring anything to them. They were going to manage it themselves.”

Towards the end of the focus group one of the workers summed up their view of what had happened:

“I didn’t feel that the process was supportive of this child’s needs. I felt that the [priority] outcomes were not achieved at all and I think that, in terms of practitioners, it exposed skills around recognising things like collusion and being manipulated and how families can, if they chose, do what they damn well like and send you a lovely big thank you card that makes you feel better.”

The complex family dynamics needed to be explored through taking a much fuller history from the parents, and looking back over the young person’s childhood and attendance pattern in junior school prior to the age when the ‘illness’ developed. The TAC team also needed expertise in unravelling the complex intersection of parent and child mental and physical ill health and family dynamics going beyond the nuclear family in this case.

TAC workers need to feel that they can bring families where there might be a range of borderline safeguarding concerns to a ‘sounding board’ case discussion with expertise drawn, as appropriate, from children’s social care and adult services. The spirit of such a forum needs to be one which is non-stigmatising, safe and yet challenging; and practitioners feel they can use as a matter of routine or as a periodic or built in requirement for the TAC team.

Such a forum would be particularly appropriate in instances where parents had asked for the TAC process to cease, as in this case, despite a review meeting being arranged. This last point is very
important: by default a child can slide into ‘no further action’ (NFA) when there are still unmet needs. There is a clear distinction to be made between NFA as agreed by a TAC team with the parent(s) and child/young person at a TAC meeting because the child’s needs have moved down the windscreen [are being met]; and NFA because parents have decided that TAC is not for their family and have in effect stopped the services for their child.

I was essentially proposing the type of critical reflection advocated by Fook and others using professional narratives and critical incidents (White et al, 2006; Fook and Gardner, 2007), or action learning or co-operative inquiry approaches (Kember, 2000; McGill and Brockbank, 2004; Heron, 1996; Heron and Reason, 2001) using ideas from Bateson and Munro on different types of thinking and reasoning which I have referred to in earlier chapters (Bateson, 1972; Munro, 1999, 2002). As I have said earlier, I wanted to encourage the creation of legitimate reflective spaces within the workplace for emotions, uncertainty and vulnerability to be explored.

I was also asked to look at the paperwork and the extent to which the recording on the different forms represented what was happening in the families. I had a number of reservations, which are outlined below.

**Recording on the CAFs and TAC plans**

**Learning points:**

*The new CAF[Common Assessment form] and the TAC[Team around the Child meeting] form would benefit from a quick reference family composition type box which could link across from the e-CAF to the e-TAC and be updated as family circumstances change. This would help better situate the child’s needs (and other siblings and half siblings strengths and needs where relevant) within the wider family, including the extended family.*

**Completing a CAF is not necessarily a linear process.**

*Making good eye contact with the parent(s) and child/young person is important, both to build the relationship but also to take account of their responses to certain questions (also see earlier section ‘Focus within the interviews with parents and young people’). Good observation skills run alongside good listening skills.*

**Open questions, which access feelings, may need to be asked depending on family circumstances and the assessment.**

I saw 4 CAFs and 28 TAC plans from Council A; and 6 CAFs and 22 TAC plans from Council B. They had all been completed in 2005/6: I had asked for CAFs and TACs from January 2005 onwards so that I was sufficiently briefed prior to each interview.

There was an overall improvement in how the forms were filled out during 2005/6: the later CAFs and TACs, especially the e-CAF and e-TAC plan formats, encouraged a much clearer focus on the domains and elements, objectives, the priority outcomes and actions. As they were typed, they were also easier to read.

*Where both the CAF and TAC plan could be improved was in situating the child within his/her immediate family and extended family, which would improve the all important analysis on both the CAF and TAC plan.*

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67 This is what I did to understand Graham’s situation, and although in a very different context, also Gerd’s early life growing up in the Netherlands and Germany.
A child’s place in the family is important in terms of understanding her/his behaviour in the context of the wider family: details of siblings and half siblings living at the same address; any strengths or additional needs of those children and/or older siblings who with whom the child has contact; relationships with members of the extended family; contact with an absent parent; where other significant people in the child’s life live and so on. The forms also struggled with accommodating situations where several children from the same family had additional needs. A balance needs to be struck between keeping the paperwork easy and straightforward to complete, and not losing sight of actions in relation to siblings with additional needs who might have less overtly demanding behaviour.

To illustrate the points made above, I have reflected on the way I have completed assessments in the past. I would normally start with the family structure, factual details such as names, dates of birth/ages and which schools/nurseries children attend. This is a relatively safe place to start where the family are the experts; it is also a mark of respect to get names right and spell them correctly from the outset.

I would then ask questions to find out more about the relationships of different family members to each other, including the extended family and ‘absent’ parents. At the same time the family and where they live needs to be understood within the community and the services different members of the family access. So I would in effect normally start with the Family and Environmental domain, which comes third on the CAF, and ask relatively ‘safe’ factual opening questions about the family, wider family, strengths in relationships, housing, and social and community elements.

I would then go back to the Child Development and Parenting domains, filling the information in across both domains simultaneously, depending on the responses from the child/young person and their parent(s). I would probably end with the more challenging family history, functioning and well being question in domain three, once I had gained sufficient information to ask the right questions. This would help me build the all important family history and chronology of events to help me understand the possible impact of major events, such as loss and change, on the child’s and family members’ lives (see Stevenson, 1998, 2007; Jack, 2000; Department of Health, 2000, p.18, for developmental and ecological perspectives on assessing children’s needs and child maltreatment; and Brandon, 1998 & Mullender at al., 2003 for making sense of the child’s world and children’s perspectives).

Finally I would do some summing up and checking back, emphasising strengths and positives in the situation in order to leave on a relatively upbeat note. Not everybody thinks in the way the CAF form is constructed: it is important for practitioners to feel alright about not completing it in a linear way.

Of equal importance, in my view, is to look up and make eye contact with the person(s) to whom you are listening and posing the questions. This can really help build a relationship. It can also show when someone is upset or uncomfortable, perhaps evading a question, not making any sense or perhaps even lying. This is the intuitive ‘feeling’ aspect of assessment (Munro, 1999, 2002). As one of the workers, who completed the CAF, said of the situation outlined in the previous section, “We asked the wrong the questions . . . we didn’t really explore feelings.”

In CAF training, it would be sensible to encourage practitioners to follow a dual approach to the assessment, completing the CAF but also pausing from time to time to observe, using their senses, during the conversation. As mentioned previously, the observation starts as you drive down the road and walk to the family home: What did you see? What did you hear? What did you think? What did you feel?
Reviewing what I wrote in this section now, I was trying to adapt my thinking and reasoning to the forms; and that is not the prescriptive way I undertake assessments. I normally take a narrative approach over a number of meetings, because it is how people make sense of their lives over time which can reveal a lot about how best to help them:

The concept of narrative is important in both the fields of practice and research, in that an analysis of narratives is a key avenue towards identifying and understanding how people construct their ‘realities’ and how they then might be changed for therapeutic purposes. (Fook, 2002, p.67)

In a narrative approach there is an emphasis on discourse, subjectivity and meaning (Fook, 2002): as I have discussed elsewhere, Verständnis or interpretive understanding meaning ‘comprehension, insight, appreciation for something, to comprehend it – für etwas Verständnis haben’ (Schwandt, 2002, p. 78) has a crucial role to play in the sense making process.

Brandon et al (2008) advocate a responsive and interpretive stance in making sense of family circumstances, especially where they might be safeguarding concerns.

Psychosocial and developmental theories can help to explain why, for example, young people including parents who have never learnt to trust, will test workers who, in turn, need to prove their reliability and responsiveness. Why families might be avoiding or cancelling appointments also needs to be thought through in the context of other aspects of their lives. Practitioners should be aware of their gut feelings and reflect on what they might mean. If a family makes you feel frightened, what is it like being a child living in this household? (Brandon et al, 2008, p.105)

They argue the case for practitioners and managers to be curious, sceptical, think systematically and critically, and act compassionately. This is a similar reflective approach to the one put forward in the proposal for the family placement assessment study (Appendix Two). However, these qualities place a high demand on practitioners and raise issues relating to the types of organisational climate which promote this level of engagement and thinking skills on a day-to-day basis.

My analysis in the supplementary report also raises concerns about the extent to which a focus on form-filling detracts from building a good relationship with family members. The I-You mode of existence potentially becomes the more distanced I-It mode of existence (Avnon, 1993) as the family is objectified by the need to fragment narratives across several boxes on a form. A similar concern has recently been raised in an evaluation of the Integrated Children’s System (Bell, 2008), which uses a similar assessment tool to that used in early intervention: ‘ICS divided the information into chunks so that the child’s story was difficult to follow’ and ‘the tick boxes were often irrelevant or too imprecise to be useful’. I will return to discuss these issues in the final chapter when I consider the contribution of this thesis to children and families work.

In the conclusion to the supplementary report I made some further points about the need to provide ‘concentration and group reflection’ spaces in the workplace, and for ‘listening spaces’ for children and young people and parents. This was based on my own experience of self care throughout the inquiry, and how this influenced the degree of engagement I was able to sustain when reading or listening to stories of suffering.
New spaces for children, parents and professionals

One of the most important parts of assessment is making the connections across the information you have collected and are collecting, from all the different sources, using a combination of analytic and intuitive reasoning (Munro, 1999, 2002). I have referred to this approach in section 10. Conclusions and Implications within the main report.

Intuitive reasoning involves accessing ‘tacit knowledge’ (Polanyi, 1967), which may have been built up over a person’s lifetime. A key strength is the speed in which people can form a conclusion from a range of variables. This is where reactions or ‘gut feelings’ to home visits and other significant events can be very important.

Analytic reasoning involves such activities as reading the file to generate a chronology of events from the child’s perspective; reading and applying research; and using theory and structured approaches to assessment. In a fast paced office environment with only snatches of time to sit down and read a file and constant interruptions and demands from email and phones, any prolonged period of concentration is not easy to come by.

I believe that special ‘concentration or reading spaces’ for professionals within the workplace are as important as ‘group reflection and thinking spaces’, and the ‘listening spaces’ for parents and children/young people. One of the enduring themes within the evaluation was the need for time and space for all participants to think, listen, and reflect, and for workplace cultures which support this.

One finding from the Phase Two seminars of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry was discussed at the end of my paper on the Inquiry report referred to in Chapter Four (Jones, 2003a): the importance of a healthy workplace learning culture:

A healthy culture begins with high-quality leadership by senior managers willing to ‘walk the talk’ and who are anxious to understand the issues facing front-line staff. It grows once people are willing to analyse their individual practice and contemplate change. That in turn requires management being willing to adopt not a blame-free culture, but a learning culture. Individual responsibility had to be recognised, but there needed to be a willingness to accept that it was possible for teams and individuals to fail, to learn from their mistakes, and to start again. In that context, performance measures become a means to self-improvement. (Lord Laming, 2003, p.358)

This finding influenced how I wrote some of the learning points in the supplementary report, for example, the section which addressed assessment issues recommended reflective, non-stigmatising yet challenging spaces where managers and practitioners share expertise. The final section of the supplementary report highlights the physical characteristics of such spaces for children, parents and professionals.

There are many different activities which, taken together, promote different components of good practice, such as active listening or bearing witness, reading a file or files carefully and analytically, and critical reflection as an individual and in a group. My living theory of response-ability suggests that far more attention needs to be paid to the ‘whole person in action’, meaning how we move and act in the world, the influence of space on us, and how we take care of or are encouraged to take care of ourselves by employing agencies. This is particularly relevant for people working in fast-paced human service organisations, such as those working with children and families. These issues, in the context of organisational climate, are discussed further in the concluding chapter of the thesis.
To end

At the beginning of this chapter I reviewed the learning journey of response and responsibility outlined in earlier chapters, and showed over time a more conscious, improved practice in relation to self and others, characterised by an ethical orientation of ‘caring’ or ‘being for’ the Other. (Schwandt 2000, p.205). I bore witness to and thought with stories of suffering, and found them influencing the kind of person I wished to become; I developed a living theory of response-ability (Levinas,1988; Laub, 1992; Frank, 1995; Oliver, 2001), where the response-able outer witness uses every opportunity possible to promote trust and self esteem throughout the whole process of helping the inner witness come forth. It is in this ‘inter-human’ opening, between the inner witness and the response-able outer witness, that the remaking of lives can begin (Frank, 1995).

I showed a praxis or practice wisdom characterised by responsiveness and response-ability throughout the ‘Team around the Child’ evaluation. I extended Levinas’ notion of responsibility as it relates to stories of suffering to one which is far more extensive, encompassing practical, trust-building, appreciative and participant-affirming responses in daily practice. I used examples from the project design, my practice on the evaluation, the findings themselves and the reflective supplementary report to show my living theory of response-ability in professional practice.

Writing the supplementary report was an opportunity to set down my interpretations of the people I talked with, what was really going on for them, and my responses. I was aware that the way I had talked with participants and framed some of sections of the report had derived from my own childhood experiences; and parenting after separation and divorce whilst holding a full time demanding job. These are narratives which, for ethical reasons, I have chosen not to address in this research account (see Chapter Two, section entitled ‘Initial ethical considerations’). However what I can say is that, like so many others who have directly contributed to or more indirectly influenced this research account, I have experienced the ebb and flow of life: despondency and despair; exhilaration and exuberance; guilt and regret. And I knew others felt likewise from what they said, how they moved when they talked, how I responded and how they in turn responded.

I situated my interpretive understanding within the environments in which we conversed and they lived, learned, parented and worked. I also reflected on others’ interpretations, as shown in the written word of practitioners on the various forms, and I suggested ways the assessments might be improved based on my praxis or practice wisdom. Through the learning points, I sought to embody an interpretative, reflective and response-able practice which I hoped would inspire managers and practitioners to see the Other as Subject, promote individual and group reflection, and improve services.

As the thesis begins to draw to a close in the final chapter, I address in more detail the theoretical influences on my living theory, and implications for children and families work. Finally I reflect on the research journey, where that leaves me now, and what next.
Chapter Eight: Reflections and Concluding Commentary

Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his [sic] whole life; with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds.

(Bakhtin, 1984, p.293)

Introduction

It feels like a long time since I joined the Diploma in Action Research Programme at Bath in 2002, when I felt the nervousness of putting together the collage for that first day. I now recognise, even welcome, the feelings of agitation and absorption as part of my process: of linking thoughts and emotions through the now familiar tussle of analytic and intuitive reasoning, mind and body, reason and emotion, left and right brain, head and heart (see Figure One).

Reviewing the collage almost six years later, I am struck by the dark background; by the physical space that the senses and powerful emotions occupy; and by my own mobility first to Russia and then within Europe in order to delve deeper into my father’s war narratives. When I glued on the cut out newspaper headline ‘Of love and loss’ by the picture of the memorial in a clearing of silver birch trees, I was aware that a whole unexplored area in my life rested beneath those four short words and that image. Am I though that different from anybody else? Yes, there are questions of degree, but life is quintessentially about relation and response; and yet we are often unprepared for the emotional merry-go-round and episodic emergence that living entails, and which I have sought to track through narrative inquiry (Frank, 1995; Clandinin and Connolly 1994, 2000; McNiff, 2007).

As part of the research into the influences of World War II on my life, I bore witness to veterans’ narratives; travelled across Europe to sit in war cemeteries and old battlefields; photographed the landscape of war; and reflected in places of respite and nature. In the previous chapter, through sections of the supplementary report, I drew attention to themes from participants’ narratives, and to the wider context in which they lived, worked, played and learned. So a good place to start bringing this thesis to a conclusion is to theorise about our relationship with our immediate environment, because that is inextricably related to how we define a person or perceive a child’s home or a tree with shrapnel wounds as Subject rather than Object and how we respond.

In this concluding chapter I begin by discussing the contribution of hermeneutics and phenomenology to understanding, and I advocate a sensory approach to recognition and response. I consider our responsibility [response-ability] toward the Other, to act, which follows with a critique of Levinas’ notion of responsibility for the Other and his conception of ‘facehood’. I argue that how the status of personhood or subjecthood is accorded is the crucial issue: understanding of diversity and difference, of the Other as another person or
**being** like me, only occurs through dialogue. I address issues that arise when our environment changes, that is, when and how we move in the world. I link my living theory to self/ employee care in human service organizations to slow down perception so that the Other might be seen and responded to, and to wider debates on dehumanization in public services; and I address implications for children and families work. Finally, I share the healing aspects of the research process through presentational form and I consider where that leaves me now.

**The contribution of hermeneutics and phenomenology**

I have referred throughout to the influence of hermeneutics on my inquiry approach, commencing with Schwandt’s definition of ‘understanding’ in Chapter Two, which draws on the German term *Verständnis*: ‘*Verständnis* means comprehension, insight, appreciation for something, to comprehend it – *für etwas Verständnis haben*’ (Schwandt, 2002, p.78). Thus understanding is distinct from knowing: this acknowledgement of interpretation is expressed in the question ‘What do you make of that?’ as opposed to ‘How do you know that?’ (Schwandt, 2002). In life we are always attempting to construe the meaning of something, to make something of whatever it is we seek to understand. This is interpretative or hermeneutical understanding, and it is has a crucial role to play in helping qualitative researchers, like myself, and practitioners understand how and why they arrived at particular conceptions. As Moran says:

> We grasp and interpret objects in terms of a fore-having, a ‘fore-sight’ (Vorsicht) and a ‘pre-grasp’ or ‘fore-conception’ (Vorgriff) of the thing. The relation between these advance expectations and future confirmations and disconfirmations constitutes the essence of understanding as interpreting (Auslegung). (Moran, 2000, p.277)

Thus all understanding involves self-understanding as we seek to understand the frames that guide our interpretations:

> Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgements, constitute the historical reality of his being. (Gadamer, 1989, p.277)

As I have argued elsewhere, in Chapter Six and within some sections of the supplementary report in the last chapter, to challenge such preconceptions which are the basis for enduring prejudices, and the maintenance of conflict narratives is not easy (see, for example, the sections of the supplementary report on positive role models for children and young people, parental guilt and assessment issues, analysis and recording). It requires each and every one of us, as individuals and in groups, to be able to learn from the shadow side of ourselves and the organisations we work in. Biesta (2006) identifies such learning, not as being able to reproduce something, but when one has to respond to what is unfamiliar, what irritates, what disturbs. In this unfamiliar context learning can become a creation, bringing forth one’s own unique response; and with others, the possibility to create new narratives of reconciliation, cooperation and partnership, such as in cross-cultural, inter-agency and inter-professional relationships.
Ladkin (2005) discusses the contribution of phenomenology in negotiating the relationships between 'self', 'other' and 'truth', which I have alluded to above. People, like me, who aspire to be action researchers, are encouraged to engage with 'critical subjectivity'; and to develop an inquiring practice which notices habitual influences on our frames of reference. Indeed, much of this thesis has been concerned with tracking 'inner' and 'outer' arcs of attention which form our consciousness (Marshall, 2001). Ladkin proposes the phenomenological notion of 'bracketing' as one way of managing our expectations, preconceptions and culturally bound interpretations, all of which influence subjectivity. Through bracketing 'we are more able to look at what we normally look through' (Sokolowski, 2000, p.50, original emphasis, cited in Ladkin (2005, p.120), allowing phenomena to 'speak for themselves'. In practice this means attempting to attend to what is happening in the present right now, without either bringing previous experiences or received knowledge to bear, and not interpreting the phenomenon to fit future expectations or anticipated outcomes. The focus is on the specific attributes of the current encounter and noticing how perceptions, as thoughts, feelings or bodily reactions, occur in the immediate experience of whatever is under consideration. I have found such analysis of reactions, and separation of what I bring to an encounter from the past and what I might expect from it in the future extremely difficult. Acquiring the focus necessary for 'bracketing' can potentially be aided by practising meditation on a regular basis (Macbeth, 1990; Schiffmann, 1996).

A second method is also advocated by Ladkin as a means to attend to 'the things themselves', which is a central concern of phenomenologists and within this thesis: she draws on Goethe's contribution to perceive the other in a pre-interpreted way. Using his notion of 'observation' and the work of Bortoft (following Goethe), she argues that the perceiver should put all of her/his effort into plunging into the qualities of whatever is being observed. In explaining what is required, Bortoft (1996, p.67) says: 'Through trying to direct attention into the act of looking, we can experience for ourselves the gap which there is between our habitual awareness and the direct experience of what is there in front of us'. This kind of consciousness, as I have discussed previously, is a shift away from the analytic mode to a more intuitive, sensory way of seeing: 'This holistic mode of consciousness can be entered by plunging into looking, by redeployment of attention into sense perception, away from the verbal-intellectual mind' (Bortoft, 1996, p.63).

This, I would argue, is what occurred for some of the men whose narratives I included at the end of Chapter Six, when they met the eyes of the Other, such as Tom and the wounded German soldier in the back of the ambulance at Arnhem or Stan with the Russian men on the forced march in 1945. The narratives of Ernie and Ernest concern being a recipient of the Other's response, such as being held or supported at their most vulnerable. My response to Suzie's narrative also potentially falls into this category. In the inter-human moment, the giver is touched by the Other and is called to make a response. This ethical and sensory mode of consciousness is also necessary to perceive 'the Child as a subject not an object of concern' (Secretary of State for Social Services, 1988, p.245) or looked after children, waiting for placements, as subjects, "little children"; rather than objects or like "second hand cars", in the words of approved adopters in the Family Placement Assessment Study (Jones, 2004). However, it is often difficult to slow down sufficiently to generate this quality of receptive consciousness, which is similar to the 'I-Thou' relationship (Buber, 1958, cited in Ladkin, 2005), where the Other is seen as on an equal footing as oneself. In this regard, Ladkin (2005, p.121) argues that
phenomenological methods can offer a means to perceive frames of understanding and habitual responses in slow motion, as they first form in consciousness, and are then enacted. In this way they can be attended to, and deepen interpretative understanding:

What these phenomenological methods are trying to provide, perhaps, is a means by which this interaction can be slowed down and consciously attended to. In doing so, aspects of the other (or even ourselves and our patterns of perception) which are habitually ignored can reveal themselves, leading to the possibility of a fuller knowing of truth arising between us.

Thus the ‘holistic mode of consciousness’ needs to be infused with the capacity to decelerate, employing all the senses in a move away from the incessant chattering of the ‘verbal intellectual mind’. This is where self care techniques, such as being and walking in nature and meditation, as I have mentioned elsewhere, can be used to help move the body into stillness and focus before, during and after engagement (Macbeth, 1990; Schiffmann, 1996):

When you experience your awareness in stillness and feel the peace within you, you will come upon a new awareness of who you are. This new awareness will convince you that “you” are part of a greater whole, that you are not separate energy nor a separate consciousness. (Schiffmann, 1996, p. 31)

Schiffman also emphasises the importance of eye contact, starting with yourself, then with a friend and then with others:

You’re not just connecting with your eyes when you connect in this way. You are connecting mentally. You are becoming one with that “other” one. You’re being in the same world together, acknowledging one another’s existence. You’re looking beyond the surface identification to the real person inside, and you’re learning to see the thing in you that you call “you” in the other person. (Schiffmann, 1996, p.34)

When we are stilled and more attuned to the immediate environment, we are more able to recognise the Other, and most importantly, to connect and respond (Levinas, 1969). It was this kind of thinking that I used to analyse the conversation with Suzie in the previous chapter; and which informed the suggestions about making eye contact with children and parents during assessment, and quality spaces for listening, thinking and reflecting. I discuss the inter-relationship between vision and touch, and recognition and response in the next section.

A sensory approach to recognition and response

 Oliver (2001) referring to the work of Vasseleu (1988) theorises about ‘recognition’ using a notion of vision as touch, where the sensible and intelligible are fused rather than separated:

[Vasseleu] explains that the separation between the sensible and the intelligible, between body and mind or soul, has been constructed around the notion of the mind’s eye and an immaterial seeing cut off from the body and sensation, a more accurate seeing. The split between the mind’s eye and the body’s eye is interlaced with the split between objective theoretical knowledge and subjective personal feeling. Objective theoretical knowledge requires a notion of vision as a distancing sense that separates the mind’s eye from the
body and gives it a privileged perspective devoid of contaminating sentiment.
Information gathered through touch and more proximal senses is thought to provide only subjective feeling and cannot be the grounds for knowledge. (Oliver 2001, p. 212)

If we consider vision as founded on touch, as Vasseleu says, then the split between mind and body, between head and heart, between objective and subjective, can no longer be sustained: ‘The distance and space for reflection and insight that comes with vision through the mediation of light are lost as the sense of sight passes to the sense of touch’ (1998, p.12).

In this conception of vision, which involves touching light, we are touched and are touching everything around us even as we see the distance that there might be between us and our immediate environment and other people around us. The unseen source of light is sensuous: 'Space is not empty, because it is filled with the density of air. And the density of air connects and separates everything on earth. Remembering air and the density of air reminds me that I am both connected to and different from those around me'. (Oliver 2001, p. 213)

I used this conception of vision as touch in understanding the inter-human in narratives about ‘eyes’, which Tom and Stan alluded to when Tom saw the wounded German soldier eye to eye in the back of the ambulance and Stan touched the eyes of the Russian men on the forced march. I applied the same conception in the visual inquiry, when I took photographs of the natural environment, such as the trees in Oosterbeek with their shrapnel wounds. I also developed the notion of ‘vision as touch’ in professional practice during the interview with Suzie when I bore witness to her suffering.

**Narrative, response and response-ability**

In our conversation and in our joint witnessing of her narrative on the sound file, Suzie was re-working her life story. Laub (1992), referring to narratives of extreme human pain, reminds us of the importance of bearing witness, of listening to and hearing the Other; a process of reconstructing a history, re-storying a life, needs to be set in motion for the Other to begin healing. This, Laub argues, involves transferring a story to a person outside of oneself, and then taking it back inside again. This dyadic relation is the recognition that even though our bodies might be physically separate, ‘this other has to do with me as I with it’ (emphasis added by Frank, 1995, p.35; Buber,1958). In that moment of dialogue and touch, I recognised Suzie’s woundedness. Like me, she was re-storying her life and I was called to respond. I was a witness who helped Suzie to re-build, or perhaps even plant for the first time, a seed or sense of self esteem and self love: prolonged neglect, when basic needs are consistently unmet corrodes body, mind and self perception.

When encountering another’s narrative early on, like Suzie’s, we have little preliminary knowledge of the lay of the land. For example, when I listened to my father’s narrative about the troop ships in the Mediterranean and he suddenly started crying, I was taken completely by surprise; and when I had the session with Graham on my birthday, which I recounted in Chapter Four, I had no idea he had witnessed the violent scene he described to me. All I knew then was that Graham had been neglected and that he might have been sexually abused. My initial response was to attempt to leave as soon as I reasonably could, drive home as fast as possible and celebrate my birthday with a waiting family.
In the telling of any narrative which involves trauma, some long buried memories might only return in the telling of the story. Laub (1992) powerfully reminds us what might be at issue here for the listener:

Bearing witness to a trauma is, in fact, a process that includes the listener. For the testimonial process to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of an other – in the position of the one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude. The witnesses are talking to somebody: to somebody they have been waiting for for a long time. (Laub, 1992, pp.70-71)

This discussion raises the issue of response, and the need to reflect on the nature of responsibility (Levinas, 1991; Oliver, 2001). In the previous chapter referring to my practice on the evaluation, I argued for an extension to Levinas’ notion of responsibility, as it relates narratives of suffering, to one which encompasses appreciative and practical, trust-building responses in daily practice, with an emphasis on follow through and accountability. This type of respectful and service-user or participant-affirming orientation from the outer witness helps the inner witness to come forth and begin re-storying her/his life.

However, the obligations which Levinas’ sense of responsibility places upon us and his notion of ‘facehood’ raise some difficulties. For Levinas, insofar as we are Subjects in our relations with otherness and Others, we have an obligation both to and for the Other. The notion of command is inherent in this obligation. Moreover one’s responsibility is not symmetrical or reciprocal:

Responsibility is what is incumbent on me exclusively, and what, humanly, I cannot refuse. I am I in the sole measure that I am responsible, a non-interchangeable I. I can substitute myself for everyone, but no one can substitute himself for me. Such is my inalienable identity of subject. It is in this precise sense that Dostoyevsky said: “We are all responsible for all men [sic] before all, and I more than all the others.” (Levinas, 1985, cited in Oliver, p.234)

To refuse this responsibility is to deny our humanity, and yet infinite responsibility is an ideal as Levinas admits (Levinas, 1989). For Levinas the face of the Other is ‘a demand not a question. The face is a hand in search of recompense, an open hand’ (Bernasconi and Wood, 1988, p.169).

However as Moran (2000) points out, Levinas fails to define the nature of ‘facehood’, or in my terms, ‘personhood’ or ‘subjecthood’. This leaves us with somewhat of an ethical conundrum: for Levinas the nature of the ethical is to offer or provide the appropriate response, whatever that might be. As such he stops short of specifying the manner of response, although there is a responsibility to make one (Moran, 2000), but how facehood or personhood is accorded and to whom remains unanswered.

History teaches us that how we determine personhood is fundamental, as I have argued in earlier chapters. Whenever the right to personhood is being called into question, it is a calling for a dialogue with difference. A genuine event of understanding has the potential for profound learning, but also comes with inherent risks challenging habitual, largely unconscious responses and self-identity:
Historically and culturally conditioned prejudices provide the forestructure that makes [understanding] possible. To listen to others different from ourselves we must remain open and that means parts of our interpretive forestructure is rendered at risk. Said differently, active listening requires personal vulnerability. Risking self-identity is dangerous. Advocates of dialoguing across differences rarely acknowledge this danger. (Garrison, 1996, p.449)

In my conversations with Gerd, I was potentially in this situation and so was he. We built trust and understanding gradually, through our conversations and email, and I reflected on how my perceptions changed and how I could act on the learning.

One of the biggest challenges we face in the world today, along with global warming, is terrorism and the rise of religious extremism: given historical and cultural prejudices, wars of the 21st century will inevitably centre around such extremism, and walls built of fear and misunderstanding on all sides, unless we dialogue with difference in times of peace to prevent to war. So after my conversations with Gerd, I enrolled on a ‘Multicultural Mosaic' extra-mural programme to learn about different faiths in Leicester and visit their places of worship. Taking this course was a modest step towards helping me dialogue with people of different cultures and faiths within the UK; however it is far more than that, it is the commitment that each and every one of us needs to make as we go about our daily business all of our lives (see quotes from the Jersey War Tunnels, Chapter Six, p. 135).

We stand to learn the most when dialoguing with diversity and difference; when we are stretched and challenged in the worldly space of Otherness; when we question self-identity; and when we rise above stereotyping and the conflict narrative to a new understanding of the I-You relation (Biesta, 2006; White, 2004; Buber, 1965; Avnon, 1993). Understanding conceived of in this way happens to us, it is a dialogic event that we take part in as historical beings. Human existence is about dialogue and relation; it is how we learn about each other as ‘faces, using Levinas’ terms, or persons or subjects using my terms. All the time asking ourselves: What is my responsibility towards this person? And how should I act?

In my living theory, the notion of responsibility [response-ability] towards emphasises action on my part, ability, even down to the smallest detail, but also a sense of the Other’s responsibility for themselves. How I respond, how I act in daily life is inextricably linked to my being in the world; it is also related to the power or powerlessness of the person I am responding to (see, for example, Chapter One, section on Respect for persons and understanding power relationships in practice).

I have far more responsibility towards a child who I think is being abused, because their carer may not be acknowledging the child’s needs and exercising their responsibility as an adult for him/her. This is different to Levinas’ notion: in his view, as I have indicated above, I am always responsible for the other’s response, which I would argue places an impossible burden on me: what if the other decides to assume no responsibility for themselves, and yet is capable of taking it? Or consistently fails to assume responsibility for a dependent? It also fails to take sufficient account of the wider systems, such as families, in which most of us live: what is their responsibility?

In any set of circumstances, there needs to be a balance between my responsibility for myself, my responsibility towards the Other, her/his responsibility for her/himself, and for Others, for example children or other dependents, and towards me. This is not to imply
that responsibility is impossible without reciprocity, rather this is an organising framework for dialogue and reflection. One very concrete example of this is determining the limits of family support in families where chronic child neglect is a problem (see, for example, the Chronology of Graham’s early life in Chapter One where services were offered but refused by the adults). Another is making sense of the responsibilities of family members, perhaps where they are from a different culture to one’s own: what is reasonable and how should I respond?

The key issue, as I have discussed in Chapter One, is how a person is accorded the status of personhood; and in order to recognise the Other as a person, we need to be in the right frame of both mind and body to dialogue and respond. This is where self care, awareness of movement, and our mobility as human beings come into the picture.

**Moving between stillness and engagement**

During this inquiry I became far more aware of our movement as human beings in the world and our ever changing relationship with our immediate environment as we travel: a participative world-view which emphasises the dynamic inter-relationship between the environment, the individual and her/his community, and between human communities and the natural world (Reason, 1994). Dewey’s conception of experience (Dewey, 1981) rests on this fluidity of consciousness: the continuous interaction of human thought with our personal, material and social environment, which is, itself, perpetually changing as we, ourselves, move.

Dewey’s ontology is transactional and has far-reaching epistemological implications where the regulative ideal for inquiry is not to produce a faithful representation of reality outside of and independent of the knower (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007):

> Because every experience is constituted by interaction between “subject” and “object”, between a self and its world, it is not itself either merely physical nor merely mental, no matter how much one factor or the other predominates . . . [experiences] are the products of discrimination, and hence can be understood only as we take into account the total normal experience in which both inner and outer factors are so incorporated that each has lost its special character. In an experience, things and events belonging to the world, physical and social, are transformed through the human context they enter, while the live creature is changed and developed through the things previously external to it. (Dewey, 1981, p.251)

I have argued for a transactional or relational ontology (Thayer-Bacon, 2003), where experiences of movement, person and place are interpreted and re-interpreted as the narratives and this account of narrative inquiry illustrate. Many of the men’s stories are about people, travel and movement: the disorientation that continually being on the move can cause (Wolse, Undated); being in the air, physically landing on the ground and finding your way about in a strange land when under attack; the embodied nature of combat; immobility on the battle field (Mellett, 1970-1980; Sims, 1980); movement as a prisoner on foot, by ambulance, in cattle trucks; incarceration in the camp; the ‘liberation’ flight home; and settling back into a changed post war Britain. The embodied experiences behind these narratives only really begin to make sense when they are theorised from the perspective of movement and ‘mobilities’ (Urry, 2000, 2003; Ferguson, 2006): to get close to or rather sense the whole picture as far as that is possible, the narrative accounts need
to begin with the journey into service or battle and end somewhere back home, wherever home is or might be. This is body and mind moving through unfamiliar space.

My own journeys, such as the narratives of my visits to Graham’s home and to the ‘tucked away’ household in the evaluation, and the journeys I made within Europe and Russia have helped form my living theory of response-ability, movement, stillness and engagement. I noticed when I acted out of character within a strange land and my body craved chocolate, and I applied that learning to the otherness of the men’s experiences as they moved on foot and were moved by different forms of transport across Europe in conditions which threatened survival on a daily basis.

In a professional capacity, I tracked the sensory effects of travel in my car (Ferguson, 2006), leaving my car and going into a child’s home; ‘touching’ the child’s world with my senses (Oliver, 2001); when I felt tired, when I disengaged, when I was open. I logged movement, engagement and withdrawal at the reunions and in Jersey; the intense journey by car and on foot around Germany with Svenja in June 2006; and movement by bike and on foot around Oosterbeek in August 2006. I described moments of movement and stillness in the elements and landscape of Eastern England. And finally I reflected on movement, time and space in the additional learning report of the evaluation. In this thesis I have used a phenomenological hermeneutic approach to develop a dynamic, relational understanding of experience, text, and object.

**Self care and cultivation of the self**

In Chapter Two of this thesis I introduced care of the self, and cited Foucault’s essay ‘The Cultivation of the Self’ to argue for the importance of self care in human inquiry (Foucault, 1986): if I cannot care for myself then I will not be able to care for or respond to others.

During this thesis I have tracked the relation of myself to myself as I moved through and within various cycles of action and reflection. I wrote up some of the activities, which supported self care, such as good nutrition, yoga, meditation, being and moving in nature, and the role of more vigorous exercise which I found particularly helpful in times of intense inquiry (Macbeth, 1990; Schiffmann, 1996; Servan-Schreiber, 2004). However, I will resist any temptation to be evangelical or overly prescriptive as to how, you, the reader, and others should practice self care: there is enough of that available through the media, on the Internet and on the lifestyle shelves in large book stores.

What I can say is that we all have to find our own ways of cultivating ourselves and it is not necessary or desirable to punish yourself for not having done what you planned to do last night or this morning: a pattern which I possessed in the early days at Bath but which gradually relaxed and became more emergent with the changing seasons and what I really felt like doing here, right now. There is no magic route map, just to keep experimenting with a range of options to find out what makes you feel most alive, responsive and resilient.

As I have identified in this research account, there are times in our lives when self care can be particularly challenging: when we experience loss and change, and how our response to ourselves clears the way for experiencing both the suffering and the joy of the inter-human. A strand within this thesis has been my evolving adjustment to the death of my father and to the deaths of his comrades in North Africa and at the Battle of Arnhem, and all the nameless others, either as the cause of suffering, the one who killed, or as
witness to the Other’s suffering. An undercurrent, running like a stream or perhaps even a torrent upon occasion, has been loss and change in my own life, particularly over the past 11 or so years. As I mentioned early on in Chapter Two, I made a decision not to include detailed discussion of this within the thesis to protect myself and those I have loved or love: some things, quite rightly, remain private and bound up tightly within the multiple webs of identity we all inhabit (Griffiths, 1995). This may mean that perhaps some of the learning I have drawn on in the chapters is not the best I might have used, however, that is as it is. This forms part of self care, my responsibility for myself, and towards others.

Throughout the inquiry I have had reaffirmed the importance of making an appropriate response to narratives of chaos, loss and change, including my own (White and Epston, 1990; Frank, 1995); processing loss as close as possible to the time, for example, being able to cry and being supported; and the central importance of narrative in the ever evolving web of identity, how self esteem, self love, and resilience are spun together to get us through the hard times. In this conception of our emotional lives, traditional divisions between service users and professionals break down. We are all human beings primed for relation who, consciously or unconsciously, face similar challenges.

**Implications for children and families work**

This thesis has taken an inductive approach to theory building, drawing on multiple ways of knowing across two interwoven strands in my life – the personal and professional. An alternative approach to thesis construction has been used to represent the learning as faithfully as possible (Fisher and Phelps, 2006): from experience, to representations of experience, to propositional knowledge in the form of published research and theoretical influences, to implications.

Given the focus and ‘learning journey’ nature of this thesis, it is beyond the scope here to review the extensive literature on public services, and more specifically children and families work. Rather in this penultimate section of the thesis, I lightly link the findings of the research to wider debates on dehumanization in public services, referring mainly to children and families work and recent relevant research, and I address organizational implications.

**The needs of children and families**

The literature on children and families is replete with qualitative studies which confirm that children and families value and respond to a respectful, relationship-based practice, such as the children and families who were helped by their lead professionals in the Team around the Child evaluation. However more depressingly, the research literature is also full of studies showing that many service users are not treated with kindness, compassion or respect by practitioners and have limited access to services beyond assessment (Brandon et al, 2008).

A qualitative study on good helping relationships in child welfare (de Boer and Coady, 2007) shows the importance of soft, judicious use of practitioner power and a humanistic orientation which extended traditional professional ways-of-being. One of the most interesting findings relates to workers who go out of their way to meet the needs of a family, perhaps extending the boundaries of their more traditionally defined roles like some of the best lead professionals in the evaluation. Being a ‘friend’ to the family, using ‘small talk’, and an ‘informal, conversational style’ characterise this kind of I-You orientation...
(Ribner and Knei-Paz, 2002, p.384; Drake, 1994). However, woven into the infrastructure of such relationships is the requirement to communicate empathically whilst raising child protection concerns with carers (Forrester et al, 2008); differences of opinion need to be worked with on a pro-active basis to overcome potential conflict narratives (White, 2004). This is highly skilled work where positive working relationships are forged with parents, appreciating strengths and positives, whilst raising parenting and child welfare issues in an open manner.

McLeod (2007) uses findings from another qualitative study to discuss ‘power plays’ in relationship-building with looked-after young people. She makes similar points to my own about the need for trust to be built slowly and for response-ability at both the individual and organizational level: in the absence of follow up, listening and consultation exercises can merely be seen as ‘frauds’. These studies highlight the importance of ethics, the positive reading of emotion, acknowledging and seeking to resolve conflict, and right response in the moment. I now address organizational issues to support this compassionate, responsive, curious yet open, and occasionally sceptical orientation in children and families work.

The issues for children and families practitioners

In Chapter One, I used the work of Donald Schön on reflective practice to show that the territory of children and families work is the ‘swampy lowland’, where the ‘indeterminate zones’ of everyday practice are preoccupied with ‘the problems of greatest human concern’ (Schön, 1987, pp. 3-6). It is the domain of the unpredictable, and yet organizational responses typically include a pressure to work to strict timescales, procedures and rules, more paperwork, attention to parts rather the whole and a focus on outcomes (Fook and Gardner, 2007). Within this context Fook and Gardner identify common issues facing those working in human service organizations: increased complexity, fear of risk and a sense of powerlessness derived from uncertainty. The Team around the Child evaluation, particularly later sections of the supplementary report on professional issues, showed how some of these issues influence decision making and recording within the complex arena of integrated working where an electronic assessment tool68 and a national database, ContactPoint69 are seen as the primary means to manage need, risk and information sharing within this complex human and multi-agency environment.

Fook and Gardner argue that the increasing bureaucratisation of public services generates tensions for practitioners forced to apply rules and procedures to solve what are essentially multi-faceted problems. These frustrations are identified in the research by Margaret Bell and colleagues (Bell et al, 2007; Bell, 2008) on the Integrated Children’s System (ICS) – the framework introduced under Every Child Matters (Department for Education and Skills, 2003, 2004) that all English and Welsh children’s services are now required to use when assessing a child’s needs:

We found ICS requires more recording time than previous systems. Earlier this year, the Lifting the Burden Task Force Review noted that local authority staff believed ICS “moves the focus of activity towards compliance with the expectations and needs of a standardised system, which appears chiefly

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68 See www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/TP00004/

69 See www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/contactpoint/
related to data capture, and away from using effective professional approaches and analysis related to meeting the needs of the client family and child”. (Bell, 2008, p.1)

Bell goes on to say that although social workers welcomed the system in theory, they found it difficult to apply in practice: the exemplars were too time-consuming, prescriptive and repetitive; the child’s story was difficult to follow as information was divided into chunks; the tick boxes were often too imprecise or irrelevant to be helpful; and the forms were too cumbersome for effective use with client families (Bell, 2008). I raised similar concerns about the similar assessment tool used in early intervention, the CAF, in the supplementary report. These centred on where and how family composition and family dynamics were recorded on the form; the sense the parent and child/young person made of their lives; completing the form not getting in the way of relationship-building with the family; and the all-important analysis of the information collected leading to hypothesis formulation.

Morrison (2007) writing about emotion and social work raises allied concerns about the use of overly prescriptive assessment frameworks in children and youth justice services (Department of Health, 2000; Youth Justice Board, 2000), which ‘give limited attention to the significance of history, or understanding of the interaction between current problems and experiences of loss, trauma and bereavement’ (Morrison, 2007, p.255). He argues that insufficient attention has been paid to the role of emotion in assessment frameworks, which derives from a poor understanding about ‘feelings’: emotions are more than feelings (Siegal, 1999). As I have shown in this research account, they are as essential as and complementary to the more ‘hard-nosed’ forensic analysis done when sifting through files.

[Emotions] are deep level signals about information that demands attention, as to whether a situation is to be approached or avoided. The rapid appraisal of such signals conveys the meaning of the situation and is often a trigger for action. Emotion, meaning, perception and action cannot be neatly segregated. Needs cannot be elicited or addressed without an appreciation of their emotional and cultural meaning. The result is that workers may see the need, but not the meaning of the need. In failing to elicit the meaning, well intentioned plans may fail. (Morrison, 2007, p.255)

Moreover the suppression of emotional information may stem from either organizational, cultural, personal or professional views which fail to separate our ‘being emotional’ from using emotion constructively at work on a daily basis: ‘Practitioners need to make sense of not only the meaning of emotions in others, but, equally, the meaning for emotions in themselves, in order to make and interpret observations’ (Morrison, 2007, p.255). It was this kind of thinking which was behind my recommendation for reflective spaces in the supplementary report.

Organizational climate has a crucial role to play here. Glisson and Hemmelgarn’s methodologically robust children’s services’ study on organizational climate and inter-organizational co-ordination found an unequivocal link between the caseworker’s rating of their work environment and positive outcomes for the children with whom they were working: improvements in the children’s psychosocial functioning were significantly greater for children and young people served by offices with the most highly rated organizational climates (Glisson and Hemmelgarn, 1998). This relationship between organizational climate and outcomes for children was particularly significant because the research was conducted as two separate studies relying on independent methods. Key characteristics of the offices with positive organizational climates were the ability to be
flexible and use discretion, both of which are essential in the complex terrain of children and families work: ‘effective children’s services require nonroutinized, individualized, service decisions that are tailored to each child’ (Glisson and Hemmelgarn, 1998, p.416).

Taylor et al (2008) in their paper addressing the anxieties and defences of children and families’ social workers involved in care proceedings also highlight the motivational aspects of good practice and the role of organizational climate in facilitating the safe expression of emotion:

Ultimately, it is not procedures which will protect children, but the mobilization of the perceptions and anxieties of individual social workers, other professionals and members of the wider community. This essential process will be best supported by an organizational culture in which anxiety can be expressed and worked through rather than projected elsewhere, and in which uncertainty can be acknowledged and held while also coming to the necessary conclusions to be made without damaging delay. (Taylor et al, 2008, p.31)

A study by Gupta and Blewett (2007), in which they interviewed social workers on a Post Qualifying Child Care Award programme, also raises concerns about increasing paperwork and bureaucracy getting in the way of relationship-building with children and families: many had chosen social work because they wanted to improve the life chances of vulnerable children, however the time available to form good relationships with children and families was becoming increasingly compromised by administrative demands.

Participants also identified resource-dominated decision-making and the threat posed by performance targets as compromising their professional authority. Within their current work contexts, although participants recognised the importance of critical reflection, there was little opportunity to address the very complexity which constitutes the territory of children and families work. This kind of gulf between aspirations and reality goes some way to explaining worker burnout and the current recruitment and retention crisis in the profession:

A consistent problem identified by participants in all the focus groups was the dissonance between their original motivations for entering the profession, their professional knowledge and value base, and the realities of their work, particularly in front-line local authority services. ‘Create more time for relationship-based social work. It is what we and families want.’ (Gupta and Blewett, 2007, p.6)

The focus needs to shift to what really motivates practitioners to do this challenging work well: responding to ‘Otherness’ in this field can engender very strong and painful emotions, sometimes on a daily basis. These need to be acknowledged, worked with, and responded to for the sake of children with additional needs and their families, and for the well-being of practitioners. The supplementary report developed this idea by pointing out the more subtle aspects of what different parties in children and families work - children and young people, parents and carers and the practitioners who work with them - bring to the table, but which are often not apparent.

In the professional sphere, the work of Ferguson on critical best practice (Ferguson, 2001, 2003b), the emotions of child protection and the importance of self care (Ferguson, 2005), and welfare interventions as mobile practices (Ferguson, 2006) is resonant with my own
way of theorising about the challenges of working with children in need as developed in this thesis:

Child protection is not only constituted by administrative power and the law, but by an aesthetic sensibility and an expressive dimension. The ‘aesthetic’ sensibility arises from how it is fundamentally a social practice based on mobility, movement, creativity, involving engagements with time and space (classically, alternating between the office and the homes of children and families). (Ferguson 2005, p.783)

Thinking about practices in terms of mobility can help us develop a theory of practice based on understandings of flows of information and practices, how the (professional) body moves through spaces (such as the home), or becomes immobilized and fails to move (enough). This means focusing on ‘the recentring of the corporeal body as an affective vehicle through which we sense place and movement and construct emotional geographies’ (Sheller and Urry, 2006, p216). (Ferguson 2006, p.11)

I now consider the implications for organizations of dynamic notions of practice where professionals are constantly interacting with and are influenced by the multiple environments they move in and through during each day.

The ‘whole practitioner in action’ and organizational implications

Hermeneutics, phenomenology, the extended epistemology of action research on multiple ways of knowing, and a relational or transactional ontology can, together, yield the kind of learning that is required to unravel complex professional responses: in the office, perhaps reading a file, perhaps not; on the move, perhaps thinking about what to say, perhaps not; at the child’s home, perhaps feeling what it’s like to live here right now as this child, perhaps not; on the move, perhaps time for reflection, perhaps not; back in the office, perhaps time to write up the visit, perhaps not; on the move home, perhaps time to disengage, perhaps not; back home, time to relax, perhaps not and so on and so forth.

As the practitioner moves during the day, s/he needs to ask at various points: What did my senses tell me? How did that feel? What did I notice in my body? How did I respond? What happened? What happened next? This is where presentational form and quality spaces for reflection are essential in facilitating the shift from the verbal-intellectual mind to experience and sense perception (Bortoft, 1996; Winter et al, 1999), what we commonly refer to as more intuitive ways of understanding the world.

The findings from this research elevate both the importance and dynamic nature of the emotional and ethical terrain of children and families work and the ways in which practitioners and managers navigate their way through complexity and uncertainty on a daily basis. It is now timely for the human face of practice to be re-launched in children and families work and for agencies to offer a range of employee care services on a routine basis. This is body-mind work, where all the senses need to work together; and as such it requires quality ‘time out’ in the kinds of reflective spaces I have mentioned earlier.

The degree to which the body-self is cared for influences integrity, sense perception, and our attunement to the multiple environments we move in and through in the course of each day of our lives; and requires a dual responsibility from both employee and employer (Ferguson, 2005).
There is a pressing need to generate new ways of continually developing knowledge and practice, for example through presentational form, to respond to a complex, ever-evolving multi-agency context. Critical reflection, focusing on intellect, emotion, ethics and self-care, has a central role to play in constructively working with uncertainty, risk and complexity and practising response-ably. This needs to be supported by new performance measures, which address how service user responses are obtained and acted upon to improve services for children and families; how reflective capacity is built and promoted, and organizational climate continuously developed to support the ‘whole practitioner in action’.

In this final section, I return to my personal journey as the child of a former prisoner of war to address the process of representing this thesis to the world; and how the research influenced self care, healing and re-storying my own life.

The process of writing and representing this inquiry to the world

At this stage I break off from writing: the light is going and I need to get out and walk.

I return and sit down for a cup of tea and to watch the news. Stan phones and we talk about the reunion last weekend in Hayling Island.

It was lovely weather down south, and I am pleased that the march on Sunday went off well: Stan tells me this year on the march the prisoners of war were joined by the evacuees, who shared the same weekend last year and this time at the holiday camp. I am touched by that image of inter-human solidarity, of evacuees and prisoners of war marching together. I wish I had been there, but I needed to work on the thesis, to finish it. Stan has Dave’s address for me to check the section I’ve written, which includes a bit of his story about working on the farm in Poland. Then we discuss when I will print off and send the draft of their “bits” to Stan and Tom what with the postal strike. We agree on the next draft. I shall call Tom tonight or tomorrow to let him know.

Now back to the writing.

This narrative, a narrative web woven with the narratives of others, is itself an example of the inter-human: what I have written could not have been written without the enthusiasm, generosity, support, contributions and assent from so many people. I am grateful to each and every one of them.

But beyond the people and as part of the natural world we interact with, place has featured strongly: the qualities of place and the impact of places on narratives lived and told are vital: it is that physical, sensuous experience with the earth, nature, landscape and sky that brings into focus the Other beyond humanity:

As places animate the ideas and feelings of persons and feelings animate the places on which attention has bestowed, and the movements of this process – inward toward facets of the self, outward towards aspects of the external world, alternately both together – cannot be known in advance. When places
are actively sensed, the physical landscape becomes wedded to the landscape of the mind, to the roving imagination, and where the latter may lead is anybody's guess. (Basso 1996, p. 107)

In Chapter Six I spoke about the photographic inquiry, which evolved during 2006, as playing a crucial role in developing attentional practices: in the words of Henri Cartier-Bresson I put my head, eye and heart ‘on the same axis’ (Cartier-Bresson, 1999). This led to enhanced perception or recognition of the Subject and its meaning. When I started using my camera, to focus on and interpret the world in this way, I had no idea that its use would help form a healing narrative from the past and write a legacy for the future. I have referred to this elsewhere as the ‘generativity script’ (McAdams, 1993, p.227). The photographs in this thesis represent the interpretative quilting on the page as sense making unfolds, an organic process which draws on hermeneutics and action research as ways of accessing more intuitive ways of being in the world (Schnetz, 2005).

The arts-based research for the thesis included putting together the collage (Figure One), taking photographs, and drawing a mandala to represent the three-dimensional nature of inquiry: backwards, forwards and moving from place to place (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000). Each image and representation beckoned me to form a dynamic relational understanding, to dialogue with it, either as a whole or part of the whole: as such visual inquiry has formed a core component of the research presented here, and will continue as part of my inquiry practice.

To conclude, I present the mandala I drew to represent my evolving sense of self in relation to the environment, which has influenced my inquiry and the process of writing and presenting this thesis (see Figure Two, p.274).

Saraswati (1981) describes a mandala as ‘a form of art, a drawing, an archetype, a tool for working on oneself: it is a mirror of ourselves and of the world’. The word ‘mandala’ means circle in Sanskrit, with the circle being organised around the centre or the seed (bindu). The essence of the mandala lies in this central point with the rest of the mandala flowing from it. Mandalas reflect our perception of our inner and outer worlds and how they interact and intersect; and all the time there is the centre to which we can return:

> Even if everything around us collapses or seems to collapse, when we are aware of a centre from which springs the strength that dwells within us, we stay calm and full of hope. This centre gives value and cohesion to our life. It allows us to draw the energy we need to start and build again. (Saraswati, 1981)

In my mandala, the colour orange is at the centre, which signifies my soul; blue is the colour of running water, crashing waves and the sky; green is the colour of nature, of trees, grass and landscape; yellow signifies the sun’s energy, warmth and positive emotion. The honeycomb like pattern around the centre signifies my mind and body.

The bottom left quadrant represents my father’s experiences, barbed wire for imprisonment, grey signifies ghosts, and red is for blood. The symbol of the Manipura Chakra [Navel or Solar Plexus Chakra], one of the body’s energy centres in yoga, is there to signify powerlessness, a sense of my father’s anger about the war, and the impact of this unresolved anger on his digestive system. Most importantly the ability to grieve, represented by blue tears, is not symbolised in this quadrant because it was so hard for
the men, like my father, who were prisoners to process the degree of human pain and suffering they witnessed when they were on the battlefield and throughout their captivity.

The bottom right quadrant signifies healing from sorrow through crying, which was not represented in the other quadrant: the healthy response of the heart to grief and loss. The warm pink tones in this quadrant and the Anahata Chakra [Heart Chakra] symbol represent heart energy and healing, finding the right balance between compassion for self and others. The dark pink beam of colour emanating from the centre symbolises love nurturing my soul.

The top hemisphere signifies an integration of the energy of the Vishuddha or Vishuddi and Ajna Chakras [Throat and Third Eye or Brow Chakras] ⁷⁰, how I use imagination and concentration to express myself, communicate, and contribute to the world; my soul, signified by orange, permeates my work and is all the while nurtured by nature and the elements, represented by the colours blue, yellow and green. When the Vishuddhi [Throat] Chakra is balanced communication, interaction with the world is enhanced; and when the Ajna [Third Eye or Brow Chakra] Chakra is balanced creative energy flows freely.

Mandalas were experimented with by Carl Jung, the founder of Analytical Psychology. Jung was an expert on symbolism; for him the round shape of a mandala expressed the totality of a person’s psyche or soul. As such making a mandala, as I discovered, was not an arbitrary creation, but came from somewhere deep inside me:

[Mandalas] . . . are all based on the squaring of the circle. Their basic motif is the premonition of a centre of personality, a kind of central point within the psyche, to which everything is arranged, but which is itself a source of energy. The energy of the central point is manifested in the almost irresistible compulsion and urge to become what one is, just as every organism is driven to assume the form that is characteristic of its nature, no matter what the circumstances. The centre is not felt or thought of as the ego but, if one may so express it, as the self. (Jung 1950, p.73)

So a cycle in a journey of discovery of the self, represented in text and image, draws to a close, and remaking begins: one ever evolving web of identity which moves, and in relation, is influenced by the narratives and webs of Others, and the world that we inhabit.

I interact, I respond and I wait for a response in anticipation of what next . . .

⁷⁰ The third eye logo of Mindful Practice is loosely based on the Ajna Chakra, but the colour is blue/green, again loosely related to the blue colour of the Vishuddi Chakra, thus symbolising the influence of the two chakras on how I would like to contribute to the world (see www.mindfulpractice.co.uk).
Appendices

Appendix One: Letter to my father sent after Uncle Jack’s funeral on 11th February 1992

Leamington Spa

12th February 1992

Dear Dad,

I would like to write this letter to you in my own handwriting, but years of marking students’ work and note-taking has made it increasingly indecipherable. Above all I wanted you to be able to read it easily.

I have been thinking a lot about yesterday, my childhood memories, our roots in that part of Hampshire, and our grief about the loss of Jack. I had not realised until yesterday how very close you were to him, and how you must feel a huge chasm in the place he occupied in your emotions and your thoughts. Today I feel a dull aching hole where he once was.

Jack was a man who encompassed all the elements in his life – earth, air, fire and water – his relationship to the land and nature; his work as a blacksmith; his service in the Navy and the “silver-fishing” he survived. You were right that the room we saw him in was “not the right place for him”: he lived much closer to the essence of life, to the elements. ‘All things bright and beautiful’ was exactly the right hymn for us to say ‘Goodbye’ to him.

When you phoned last night, I had been quietly sitting in the front room, with the lights switched off, gazing into a beautiful fire which David had made and thinking about the day. I realised that the day, Jack’s day, has also encompassed the four elements. It was right for the fire, that had once been the source for Jack’s livelihood, to eventually embrace him; and our walk together in the afternoon brought together the other elements to which he had been so close. I’m sure Jack would have liked the way we remembered him yesterday. I’ve thought about it a lot, and there is nothing I would have like to have done differently. Even getting mud on our clothes and shoes and boots, me catching my coat on the brambles were all entirely appropriate; this was the ‘right’ place for Jack, and for us to remember him like this there. For me the walk together, the Whitewater, King John’s Castle and the Basingstoke Canal encompasses the spirituality, the essence, of our time together in that very beautiful part of Hampshire; it was not to be found in what had been “Bellerophon” or the room where we saw Jack in Aldershot [at the Undertaker’s].

As I drove into Tunnel Lane I told Rhiannon about its name, and then she spotted the horses in the field behind our house. Rhiannon, quite spontaneously, said she wanted to feed them. I was quite overcome that she wanted to feed them in the same way that I had loved and fed Tommy Buckland’s ponies (Do you remember their names? Trudy was one); she must have sensed something. To feed those ponies with my own children, with you and Mum there, with their special significance for Jack in his life, gave me such enormous pleasure.

My father corrected my memory of this term, which should have been “tin-fishing”, that is, being hit by a torpedo.
When you showed Merlin and Rhiannon the way the canal was built over the Whitewater, I remembered you showing it to me as a child and how we used to show people who visited us. The trout in the Whitewater were as elusive as ever….no wonder they are so big! It was interesting that my years of standing patiently above those tunnels had paid off – I always managed to spot them before Merlin and Rhiannon!! They’ll have to practice some more!

I wondered about that swan which suddenly appeared on the canal. Where did it come from?

I slipped a piece of flint from the Castle into my pocket; it is going into my study. Rhiannon’s pile of stones from the Whitewater (again, she sensed something about the significance of that water for us) were piled in the middle of the table last night when we had dinner, and today I’ve given them a more permanent home in one of David’s pots, brought out of the fire into the air by Uncle Jack’s tongs.

You thanked me for my support yesterday, but we all supported each other, that is what being a member of a family, whatever age, is all about. Merlin, Rhiannon and I had a bath together last night when we got back (yes, we can still about fit!). I started crying more through happiness than sadness about Rhiannon feeding the ponies, and those tricky trout! I explained to the children about the significance of that place for me and for our family, and I asked them to promise me to take their children there when I die. They understood. Although no words were spoken, we all cried in the bath, hugging and drawing strength from each other to face our own mortality. When I kissed Merlin and Rhiannon ‘Goodnight’, they both reiterated how glad they were to have gone to the funeral, and they said that although it was very sad they felt a lot better.

Today I have decided to stay at home, to begin to make sense of my feelings and to write this letter. Rhiannon wanted to come home after school, not to play with a friend, so we’re all going to spend a quiet afternoon and evening together. When I went for a run early this morning I ran around the top to the golf course high above Leamington, thinking about writing this letter with tears streaming down my face. I knew that you must be feeling Jack’s loss more intensely than me; I knew I had to write this letter to you.

Earlier you spoke about laying Jack’s ashes to rest. What has been decided? If you are the person who is to do this, I would be pleased to be with you (if you would like that, and if Betty, Phillip, Janet or Martin don’t wish to be there with you), wherever it is decided to sprinkle them.

Your wedding anniversary celebration seems a long way off on March 22nd. I would like to see you before that on your birthday with Merlin and Rhiannon. How would you like to celebrate it? One thought that crossed my mind was to meet up in Odiham, to go for a walk around Broad Oak (where I used to yell in my pram with Susan Liddle pushing me!), to have lunch together in a nice pub somewhere, and perhaps to call in on Betty and/or Janet with some clothes for her children in the early evening. This is just a suggestion, I would like you to say how you would like to celebrate it. I am quite happy to come to New Milton on Tuesday evening, and to return Wednesday evening if you would prefer that. I can’t stay over on Wednesday evening, because I have a meeting in Leicester on Thursday morning. Just let me know what you would like to do, and we’ll do it!

72 I handwrote the last part of the letter so I don’t know what that said, probably ‘With all my love, Joce x’ or something similar.
Appendix Two: A research proposal to improve the quality of family placement assessments

Policy context

Following a series of child abuse scandals in residential child care in the 1990s and a media focus on poor outcomes for young people leaving care, the government has turned to adoption as a major plank in their children’s services strategy. A government target to double annual adoption rates of all looked after children has been set; but even if this were to be met there would still be twice that number of children for whom other ways would have to be found to ensure placement and good parenting (Marsh and Thoburn, 2002). However, what is clear from this momentum towards permanence for as many looked after children as possible, is that the services provided by family placement teams will be of paramount importance as they respond to the implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002; and other policy initiatives such as the Department of Health’s review of foster care, which is looking at how recruitment, remuneration training and support are managed by local authorities. The government is also ‘preparing to crackdown on the hidden world of private fostering’ in response to the Victoria Climbié inquiry, which is due to be published early next year (Batty, 2002).

Thus, clear expectations to increase both the quantity and the quality of family placements will be placed on local authorities, with a greater emphasis on transparency in the assessment process and a new independent review mechanism for prospective adopters who feel they have been turned down unjustly (Batty, 2002).

The complexity of family placement assessment

Writing over ten years ago, Ryburn (1991) was one of the first writers to identify the inherent subjectivity in the assessment process of prospective adopters:

> The issue most central to the concept of assessment in adoption is whether there is an independent objective reality against which, through a process of enquiry, prospective adopters (or foster carers for that matter), can be measured, and appropriate placements made (pp. 20-21).

He argued that the conclusions which are reached are related to the individually and collectively held idiosyncratic views of assessing social workers and panel members about the suitability of prospective adopters or a proposed placement. Moreover, these are related to a particular moment in time, and at a different time and with different (or even the same assessors) the assessment could have come to quite a different view of ‘objective reality’ (Ryburn, 1991, p. 21). As an example, Ryburn uses a case study to look at how a couple’s infertility and their response to this loss can be viewed in different ways. Indeed one of the reasons that family placement work is so demanding is the nature of the losses experienced on all sides: loss of the possibility to have a child in the normal way through sexual intercourse; repeated episodes of unsuccessful fertility treatment or the loss of a child for prospective adopters; loss of family relationships (e.g. with parents, siblings etc.) and other relationships (e.g. with foster carers) for the child; and loss of the child/ren for birth parents, many of whom love their children but are unable to care for them. Rachel Foggitt, who set up an innovative foster adoption scheme in the Brighton area, describes her decision to leave after almost 20 years as a social worker. Whilst she identified the joy of assessing and supporting foster-adopters, she acknowledged the ‘emotional roller coaster’ for them: the joy of a long awaited child set against the fear of losing them. But perhaps the most poignant aspect of her article is the description the birth parents’ sadness, ‘In the end I could no longer face such grief, no matter how important I realise the work is and how much I am sure that an outcome is the right one for the child’ (Foggitt, 2002). The Prime Minister’s Review of Adoption: Issues for Consideration (Performance and Innovations Unit, 2000, p.5) sums up the careful attention that has to be paid to all the parties involved in family placement:

> This new approach [to an increase in adoption and a wider strategy to deliver the service which children have a right to expect] must put the needs and rights of the child at the centre of the process. It should reflect the value we place on the commitment

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73 Published on 28th January 2003
and skills of people who are suitable and willing to care for these children, the
Government’s commitment to support them and respect for the rights of birth families.

Thus family placement work is the place where key decisions are made about the future of children
and where the different agendas of the parties come together for resolution in the interests of the
child.

As well as working with grief and loss and the rights and needs of the different parties, family
placement workers have to be very aware of their own value base and the effect of their
upbringing on how they view and assess different family forms, for example, families from minority
ethnic groups, and unmarried and same sex couples, and their motivation to foster or adopt. Bell et
al. (2002, p. 16) outline the challenges of managing such diversity:

The process of recruiting, preparing and assessing applicants from diverse social and
cultural backgrounds in a way which is respectful and encouraging, while at the same
time being rigorous in assessing their capacity to parent often damaged and
emotionally disturbed children, is an increasingly complex process.

In this field of work, critically reflective practice is of paramount importance. As Donald Schön
(1987, p. 3) says, this is the territory of ‘the swamp’ where the ‘the problems of greatest human’
concern reside. ‘These indeterminate zones of practice’ are characterised by ‘uncertainty, uniqueness and value conflict’ (p. 6). Schön argues that when professionals make gross errors of
judgement, the problem normally relates to a failure to respond to value conflicts or to uphold the
ethical standards of their profession. In order to improve the quality of family placement
assessment, a rigorous approach is needed to help workers understand and express the influences
on and evidence base of their assessments, for example, when addressing the impact of repeated
fertility treatment on a couple’s sexual relationship and their motivation to adopt. Thus the
impossibility of an objective assessment is acknowledged, and is substituted by a much fuller
attention to the inherent subjectivity of the process, to the ‘how and why’ of family placement
assessment.

The importance of formulating hypotheses in assessment

Reflection, either within the supervisory relationship or as part of an inquiry group, helps
professionals to generate competing hypotheses about the nature of the problem and what to do
about it; and to define the evidence base from relevant theory and research: the foundation of good
practice which underpins the Assessment Framework (Department of Health, 2000; Department of
Health et al., 2000). As the recent consultation paper on Adopter Preparation and Assessment and
the Operation of Adoption Panels: A Fundamental Review (Department of Health, 2002, p.18)
states, ‘The domains and dimensions of the Assessment Framework have a direct read-across to
the assessment of prospective adopters’. The information thus gathered on prospective adopters,
for example in the domain entitled Family and Environment Factors, will generate useful
information about the prospective adopter’s family, the community in which they live and their
relationships within it. This information will generate valuable knowledge about how the family may
care for a child placed with them. It is in the sifting of the information that different hypotheses are
formed about how the family is likely to cope.

Hypothesis formulation in family assessment can be found in the literature on systemic theory and
practice over the past two decades. Triseliotis et al. (1995, p. 78) see the systemic perspective as

. . . particularly relevant when looking at the structure of the family, its flexibility, its
interactions and how a child may be able, or be enabled to fit in . . . [the] couple
relationships can also be examined using the same framework.

They also argue that the systemic approach goes some way to making the assessment process
more transparent and less dependent on the intuition and judgement of the individual worker.
Reder et al. (1993) and Reder and Duncan (1999) have helpfully used a systemic approach to
analyse child abuse fatalities, and the relationships within families, between family systems and the
professional systems and within the professional systems themselves. Through the construction of
a careful chronology, they indicate that it is possible to identify ‘questions about the meaning of
people’s behaviour and interactions, which in turn, allows hypotheses to be developed. These
hypotheses guide assessments by highlighting areas to be explored . . .’ (Reder and Duncan,
A similar argument is made with regard to foster care assessment by McCracken and Reilly (1998, p. 22):

Systemic hypothesising encourages the worker to make links between different pieces of information, from the overall context to the specifics of behaviour and events. An explanation as to how things are the way they are is developed from all the pieces of information the worker has learned, usually drawing on a mixture of facts, observations and ideas the family have about themselves. Hypothesising is a useful skill for the assessing social worker, testing ideas and revisiting assumptions.

McCracken and Reilly (1998) also recommend that assessment be conducted within the context of a team approach thus allowing material to be brought back for consultation and review. It is such an approach that this study will seek to employ through the application of action research to the inquiry process.

As a powerful reminder to professionals in the family placement field, the Report of the Part 8 Case Review into the care and protection of JAS (aged 4) who died on 24 December 1999 (Brighton and Hove and Leslie, 2001), shows the comparative ease with which a labelling hypothesis can be generated with respect to a powerless child; and the power of damaged adults, in this case J's prospective adopters, to manipulate and deceive professionals. The concluding paragraph of the Report Summary states that ‘to do their job effectively, social workers must, on our behalf, ask awkward questions and always be thinking the unthinkable’ (p. 9).

Aims of the Study
This project seeks to improve the quality of family placement assessment through:

- A literature search of key texts/papers that would act as a developing resource throughout the project to improve the evidence base of practice;

- The methodology of action research (Reason and Bradbury, 2001 and co-operative inquiry (Heron and Reason, 2001) to promote mutual support and group reflection on the formulation of hypotheses in family placement assessment;

- The dissemination of findings to those not directly involved in the project at local and national level within agreed confidentiality protocols.

Methodology
Why action research?

There is a growing literature on action research within professional settings in general (Reason and Bradbury, 2001), and within health and social care settings in particular (Bate, 2000; Randall, Cowley and Tomlinson, 2000; Waterson, 2000; Jones et al., 2002). The advantage of action research is that it is participative, qualitative and practical. As indicated previously, the world of practice is frequently characterised by the unpredictable; the reflective space needs to address why and how people do things as much as what they do. Action research involves people as co-researchers, shaping their inquiry as the group moves between action and reflection, exploring and evaluating ways of improving their practice; it has the potential to provide a supportive, learning environment for the group as a whole and for the individuals within it. In Randall et al.’s action research study, two groups of child care social workers and a group of health visitors looked at overcoming barriers to effective practice. The findings of their study stressed the importance of ‘holding environments to promote effective learning’ and ‘re-invigorating models of supervision that can sustain high quality practice’ (Randall et al. 2000, p.343). In their view action learning offers such a resource to individuals who may feel somewhat isolated and alienated within large-scale organisations as their managers individually and collectively grapple with the pace of the Government’s change agenda.

Another study (Jones et al., 2002) involved five different multi-agency action research groups meeting every two months over the course of a year with the aim of improving service delivery to their particular family; family members chose to participate in a number of ways including attendance at a group meeting. In order to promote evidence-based practice, each action research group was resourced with a set of articles. These were organised around topics that had been identified earlier, though a literature search, as characterising some of the difficulties experienced
by sample families, such as domestic violence, adult mental health, and substance misuse; groups also had access to other key texts.

Rather than a traditional researcher studying people as passive subjects, action research involves people as active agents, co-researchers in a community of inquiry (Heron & Reason, 2001). This ensures ownership, for ‘without ownership firmly placed at the fulcrum, a high level of resistance to change can be expected if not actually predicted’. (Cosier & Glennie, 1994, p. 99) Finally, the emphasis on qualitative data in action research encourages practical outcomes. Action research aims to be creative in exploring how to do things better. The practical nature of the method insists that it should be valid and useful for practitioners, producing outcomes that are actionable and make a difference (Heron & Reason, 2001).

In this Inquiry Group, family placement workers will work together, in depth and over time, to make sense of their experience and assessments of the families. They will cycle between action and reflection, exploring different hypotheses, their evidence base and ways of making changes to improve their practice, which they will then evaluate.

The group will comprise approximately ten participants; and will meet for a half-day session with eight cycles of action and reflection over a period of ten months starting in April 2003. As in the study indicated above (Jones et al., 2002), the group will be resourced by a literature search and key texts to promote the application of the Assessment Framework (Department of Health et al., 2000) and evidence-based practice in the field.

Selection for the inquiry group
An open invitation to family placement practitioners, outlining the rationale for the study and the proposed dates, will be circulated to all potential members in January 2003. Staff will be invited to a half day structured meeting, scheduled for the following month, to discuss the proposed study and the key issues from their perspective. Selection of group members and strategies to promote the involvement of those not coming to the group e.g. ‘buddying’ will be agreed at this meeting.

Confidentiality and staff support
**The Inquiry Group will agree a commitment to confidentiality and other ground rules as appropriate.** In addition, the researcher and secretarial staff will sign confidentiality agreements with respect to data processing.

Staff will be encouraged to use electronic media to communicate about their practice between meetings of the Inquiry Group.

**Members will be supported within the Inquiry Group process.** Where a member needs more extensive help than the Group can provide, s/he will be encouraged to use the council’s own arrangements for confidential counselling.

Recording of sessions, storage of data, data analysis and dissemination
There will be two levels of recording. Group sessions will be tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim with names of staff and service users being changed to ensure anonymity for group members, users and the local authority; the tapes and transcripts will be securely stored by the University and the tapes will be wiped at the end of the project.
Appendix Three: Diary of Signalman Read V.H.W. for period of POW life 17.09.44 – 20.04.45

17-9 Dropped OK
18 Wounded [16 PARA FA74]
19 Evac 181 F.A.
20 Taken P.O.W. arr ZUTPHEN

Left same evening arr ENCHEDE

21 Left by train DUISBURG DUSSELDORF COLOGNE KOBLENZ FRANKFURT
24 Arr DULAG LUFT OBERHUSEL (Oberursel?)
26 Searched and deloused [in pouring rain]

10-10 Left XIIA for XIB
13-10 Arr XIB Fallingbostel
5-11 Left for ARB-KDO 7001
9-11 Arr ARB-KDO
14 Started work
19 Had custard
21 1 Red Cross Parcel
10-12 Card to Mrs Hart + Mrs Cozen
13-12 Went shoe-crank.75 GOOD HOLIDAY. [SCOUNGE76]
17-12 Letter to Mother. Card to Pete

Work for Smudge.

24 XMAS EVE. NOTHING SPECIAL.

---

74 FA - Field Ambulance. My father later transcribed his diary into a second booklet which has one or two more details added. I have included these later additions, denoted by [brackets] in this transcript.

75 Shoe crank [krank being ‘sick’ or ‘ill’ in German] meant that as a PoW you could not work as you did not have suitable footwear. My father took to grinding the soles on his boots on a machine to wear them down, but eventually a perceptive guard discovered what he was doing!

76 This was probably ‘scrounge’ misspelt.
XMAS DAY MENU. Rev 0800HRS. Tea 0830HRS. 2½ slices JERRY BREAD. ½ TIN SARDINES 0900. KLIM TIN \(^7\) SPUDS + ½ TIN SCILLY. SLAB OF CUSTARD + FRUIT JUICE. ½ MUG CIDER 12.30HRS. CAKE OR PUDDING? WITH KLIM SAUCE 1400HRS. THEN CONCERT. 1 SLICE BULLY. 2 MARRMALADE + TEA. 1800. XMAS BOX OF 2 SLICES PUDDING FROM FRANK MEAD. 2130HRS 1 SLICE CHEESE ON TOAST DE??

------------

BOXING DAY[26]  
REV 0800HRS. BREAKFAST 3 SLICES SPAM + 4 POTATOES. I SLICE F.B. 1 SLICE MARMALADE ON TOAST. TEA 09.30. DINNER KLIM TIN SPUDS. ½ TIN RED CABBAGE + GRAVY 1300. TEA. 2 SLICES CHEESE ON TOAST. I MARMALADE ON TOAST.. I BUTTER 1800. SUPPER 1 OF BULLY + 1 MARMALADE ON TOAST.

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END OF A PERFECT YEAR

------------

1/1/45 Went to work for Smudger
4/1/45 XMAS PARCEL (35 CIGS)
5/1/45 XMAS CAKE PORK + STUFFING. B.S.
6/1 Work for Smudge
10/1 50 Jerry Cigs
13/1 Sweat on M of L visit
14/1 YANK EFFORT (DAY) RAF (NIGHT) (SUN)
15/1 “ “ “ “
16/1 “ “ BIG “ “
17/1 YORKSHIRE PUDDING. MUTTON + PEAS
19/1 WORK IN A SNOWSTORM
20/1 Pirge Party

\(^7\) KLIM was American powdered milk (MILK spelt backwards). It came in one pint approx (500-600 ml) tins, which were used for measuring food portions such as ‘scilly’, the thin soup or potatoes (spuds). Klim sauce was a thickened up version to make cream but, according to Tom Carpenter, it did not work! 'Scilly' might have barley in it one day, or sauerkraut, or peas, or swede or “whispering grass” – potato tops and brussel sprout stalks.
22/1 Boot crank + put on 33 party
25/1 Blitzkrieg? on. Boots? Lovely day
2/2 LETTER FROM MARY. GOOD NEWS. GREAT DAY.
3/2 Started work again. BAD DAY.
6/2 BREAD CUT TO 1/6TH LOAF
26/2 SCILLY CUT TO 1 LITRE. SPUDS 500G. BIRTHDAY. WORK IN RAIN. 1 CIG. NOTHING SPECIAL

____________________

1/3 DAY OFF. BATH. HAIR CUT + WASHING
2/3 WORK AGAIN. SNOWSTORM + SUNSHINE
7/3 DAY OFF
14/3 DAY OFF. WASHING. BATH. NEW MOON.
18/3 SUNDAY. NO WORK. NO EXTRA GRUB
21/3 DAY OFF. LOVELY DAY. 29/3 RAID [1630]
30/3 GOOD FRIDAY. WORK. LETTER FROM MARY.
31/3 WORK ON RAILWAY. BIG RAID. GREAT DAY. MEDICAL ½ P/L [½ MED P.]
1/4 EASTER SUNDAY. GOOD BREAKFAST WITH COCOA.
DIN. SPUDS. CABBAGE + GRAVY. TEA.
TEA. RICE + RASPBERRIES. COCOA.
SUPPER. BREAD + CHEESE. HORLICKS.
2/4 EASTER MONDAY. MUCH THE SAME.
3/4 DAY OFF. HAIRCUT. BATH. WASHING.
4/4 DODGED PIRGE. DAY OFF.
5/4 BOOT CRANK AGAIN
7/4 SATURDAY. BIG FLAP ON.
8/4 MOVE. LOVELY DAY 4PM MARCHED 30 KILO. GOT DOWN TO KIP IN BARN 2AM. SCHLADEN.
9/4 DAY SPENT IN BARN. SPUDS. BREW. NIGHT OK.
10/4 MOVED 15 KILOS TO MATTIERZOLL. BAGS OF SPUDS.
11/4  YANK TANKS ARRIVED 9 AM. JERRY CAPT. GOT HIS LOT. 10 AM. RAISED RATION STORE. 1 DOZ LOAVES. HONEY. CHEESE. TREACLE. BUTTER. MEAT. SUGAR. MILK. BIG SCOFF

AFTERNOON. BIG FRY UP. MOVED TO CIVVY BILLETS IN VELTHEIM. FOLKS GAVE US SUPPER. FOUR TYPES OF JERRY SAUSAGE. BREW. GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP.

12/4  UP AT 5.30. 8.30 LOVELY [bowl] PORRIDGE. MILK + SUGAR. 2 BOILED EGGS. B & B [bread butter]. LEMON CURD. 11.30 JERRY STEW, PRETTY GOOD.

13/4  MUCH THE SAME

14/4  STARTED HITCHHIKING MADE HAMM SAME EVENING

15/4  MADE MUNCHEN-GLADBACH [Mönchengladbach]

16/4  STILL M-GLADBACH

17/4  STARTED FOR LIEGE. MADE BRUSSELS

18/4  MISSED PLANE

19/4  ARRIVED UK

20/4  ARRIVED HOME

_____________________

Red Cross Parcels (R.C.P.s)  30th September 1944 - 31st March 1945

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78 Herman Hupasch, Veltheim u/ Fallstein, Kreis Weringerode, Deutschland – written on one reverse face of the diary.

Names and addresses of friends and relatives in the UK are written on another two faces of the diary.

Appendix Four: Correspondence with National Ex PoW Association May - June 2005

----- Original Message -----  
From: Jocelyn Jones  
To:  
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2005 9:34 AM  
Subject: POW

My father Vic Read was captured at Arnhem (J section signals attached to the 3rd Battalion Parachute Reg.) and then sent to Fallingbostel Stalag 11B. As part of my PhD I am researching his wartime experiences: he died six years ago but left a short diary written with a pencil on a piece of cardboard and some other artifacts. He often spoke of his experiences but unfortunately I didn't tape him or make notes at the time.

I have read the book 'The Last Escape' and found that very useful re Fallingbostel; I would like to follow up some references esp. Jim Sims' account 'Scar on the Soul' which is, I understand, available from your association. I also understand that POW questionnaires completed on return to the UK are now available at the National Archive, Kew. What other documents and contacts might be useful for me to read/ follow up? I would also be very pleased to talk to any POWs who were at Fallingbostel.

Thanks for your help,
Kind regards
Jocelyn Jones

----- Original Message -----  
From:  
To: Jocelyn Jones  
Sent: Saturday, May 14, 2005 8:59 PM  
Subject: Re: POW

Hi Jocelyn, suggest you send in £10 and become an associate member. You can then include a request in the next newsletter for anyone who was at Fallingbostel to contact you. In fact why not come down to Hayling Island to our reunion in October. There you will find members who were at that camp at the end of the war. They would be more than willing to talk to you. Best wishes, John

From: Jocelyn Jones  
To:  
Sent: Saturday, May 14, 2005 9.40pm  
Subject: Re: POW

Thank you very much. I've now also discovered a diary he kept in North Africa when he was with the Royal Signals. I was just looking at some history of the North Africa campaign to check against diary entries and a story, also in the bag, about a friend called McConney who was killed on 28th March 2003 and is buried in Tunisia!

I would be delighted to join and come down to Hayling Island in October: my father's family came from Hampshire and we used to go for donkey rides there in the summer! Please remind me of to whom I should make the cheque out and where to send it.

Best wishes
Jocelyn
Newsletters arrived safely today. Thanks. I am quite content for you to draft something about my request for the newsletter (original e-mail to you below with the details - not sure whether my Dad was attached to the 1st Battalion or 3rd, but that may not matter too much). En route to Stalag XIB his diary mentions Dulag Luft Oberhosel and Stalag XIIA as brief stopping places in late Sept and early Oct 1944. He arrived at Stalag XIB on 13.10.1944 and left for ARB KDO 7007\(^{80}\) on 05.11.1944 - not sure what that means? Arbeitskommando? as he writes on 14.11.1944 'Started work'. He was liberated by the Americans on 11.04.1945 during a march to a place called Mattierz???.\(^{81}\) Spent the night of 11/12.04.1945 at Weltheim. Look forward to meeting you and other members of the Association in October.

Kind regards

Jocelyn

\(^{80}\) The actual number of his Arbeitskommando (work party) was 7001: the handwriting in pencil was very difficult to decipher but eventually I found the correct number through the research at the National Archives in October 2005.

\(^{81}\) I later found the correct name ‘Mattierzoll’ when I bought a reasonably detailed map of Germany from a specialist book store in London. I had also misspelt ‘Veltheim’, a nearby village, which was just inside the former East German border prior to reunification.
Two Platoon 9th Field Company, Royal Engineers, Airborne Operations, Arnhem 1944

The platoon took off from Blakehill on Sunday 17th September en route for landing zone Z, Renkum Heath near Wolfheze arriving at about 1300 hours.

After forming up the platoon, less one section under the command of Lt Timmins, moved off with Lt Col Frost's 2nd Battalion through Healsum Hevercorps, lower road of Oosterbeek.

Late afternoon we were within sight of our objective, the railway bridge over the Lower Rhine at Oosterbeek.

No 2 Platoon had been given the task to seize and hold the bridge and during briefings we had been told there was no infantry support. We could see a motionless electric train on the embankment some one hundred yards off the bridge span which we would have to pass under as we moved in. Bren fire was concentrated towards this. We were soon moving on to the first span running over the Polderland and the enemy were withdrawing to the south bank. Other troops were moving onto the bridge alongside us. They turned out to be members of C Company the Second Battalion, who had approached along the line of the river bank. The bridge shook and with a roar the centre and far spans were destroyed. This was about 1800 hours Sunday 17.9.1944. Two Platoon took up defensive positions in a ditch running parallel to the embankment. Captain O'Callaghan reconnoitred for further demolition charges. C Company had sustained casualties but apart from one or two grazes 2 Platoon seemed intact.

As darkness fell we could see and hear the sounds of increasing battle action as veld and crows crossed the sky about a mile to our north over Oosterbeek. O'Callaghan, having failed to make radio contact with company H.Q., decided that the platoon would be of more value deployed in the attack towards Arnhem now that our objective was destroyed.

In gathering darkness we moved back towards the Begendorpsweg and collected our folding bikes. Moving under the arch carrying the railway line across the road we headed in the direction of Arnhem drawing occasional fire from small isolated enemy units. We made steady progress along Klingelbeeks Weg finally joining the Utrechts Weg close by the St Elizabeths Hospital. We were joined here by a Dutch resistance worker who offered to lead us to the bridge along the low road.

As we neared the site of the pontoon bridge and harbour, there was a warning shout from one of our comrades at the rear of our column. Enemy machine gun fire streamed across the square. O'Callaghan and his party took cover in what appeared to be a church doorway, with tracer following them in. After a while we managed to extricate ourselves from our exposed positions, abandoning our bikes as we did so.

O'Callaghan managed to retrieve his jeep. At the pontoon bridge there were a number of enemy dead and wounded, only the landing stage was in position. The centre section had been removed on Friday 15th September. After doing what we could for the wounded we again went on the move towards the main objective, the road bridge. Movement was now becoming more difficult as every side road we had to pass was covered by machine guns firing from the town side at about a metre height. We took a number of these running line abreast and the jeep nearest the
fire. At about midnight we became pinned down by fire covering the junction of Eusebius Plain and Ryn Kade near to the Old Town gate. At about this time there was a massive explosion and the night sky was lit up with tracers and exploding shells as an ammunition shed on the bridge site was hit by a flame thrower in the hands of two sappers from No. 1 Squadron R.E. We all thought that the bridge was gone as it burned.

A Bren gun carrier appeared and attempted to silence the enemy guns. As dawn was breaking on Monday 18th September, we crossed the square at the double drawing fire as we moved rapidly into the cover of the nearest building of the block on Eusebius Plain and prepared to make it a strong point. Captain O’Callaghan decided on reconnoitering along through the rear gardens of the houses towards the bridge, sapper Danny Weddal and myself accompanying him. To do this we had to climb separating walls of about seven feet high. After negotiating about eight of these we were within easy striking distance of the bridge ramp. O’Callaghan ordered me to return and tell Sergeant Gibbons to move up with the platoon which I would imagine at this time was about twenty-five strong. (Lt. Timmins with one section had been ordered to No. 1 platoon to assist in their attack on the Hotel Wolfhoven). 1 platoon had lost 21 men when glider R3113 had crashed at Double Hills near Paulton, Somerset (not known at the time). Lt. Timmins, L/C Tackle, Spr Greig were killed in the attack on the hotel which had been selected as 9th. Field Company H.Q. Lt. Wise, the company intelligence officer was seriously wounded. It was later found that the hotel was defended by some 300 men of Sapp Krafite’s S.S. Trench Grenadiers who were using it as their Battalion H.Q.

At about 08.30 hours on Monday 18th September 2 platoon took up positions in the area containing timber sheds, and a coffin and clog factory. There were water treatment buildings bounded by houses situated on the west side of the ramp. A search was made for wires and demolition charges under and adjacent to the ramp and buildings, and established defensive strongpoints. Some of the lads began to make a brew of tea, the first since our arrival, but this was interrupted by a shout ‘Enemy armour on the bridge and hold your fire.’ It rumbled on close to our position when suddenly all hell broke loose around us.

As our concealed comrades came into action the column received a fusillade of fire from all sides and within minutes was virtually wiped out.

The enemy’s response to this bloody nose soon followed as his mortars found our positions and began a concentrated stonk, during which Lance Corporal Coward, sappers Trouse and Thompson were all seriously wounded.

Later that morning we moved into one of the houses overlooking Eusebiusbinnensingel. Enemy mortar fire was becoming heavy and infantry attacks were now developing to retake these positions. The men now at the bridge had been estimated at about 600 but we were now totally surrounded. We were denying the enemy the use of the bridge, preventing him from getting reinforcements down towards Nijmegen which he so desperately needed to do at this time, so he tried varying tactics to dislodge us. These were proving very costly to him in men and materials but we too were beginning to suffer casualties as his superior firepower began to arrive from other areas of Holland and Germany.
As an infantryman or sapper you can only see your own little area of combat. With radio failure even Battalion command at Arnhem bridge had this same close quarter view with no idea of how the main arena was developing. It was man to man in this closed in perimeter around the bridge ramp. As night fell upon the area and eyes strained into the darkness there was no chance of rest. We had been on the go now for something like thirty eight hours with no respite and there were continuing alerts throughout the night. In the early hours our men situated on the ground floor opened up, killing an English officer who had failed to acknowledge a challenge. It was at a time when the next shape in a doorway was the enemy, such was the proximity of the fighting, and response time was very rapid as a grenade has a short fuse.

During the morning of Tuesday 19th September I was approached by an unknown officer and ordered to collect some P.I.A.T. bombs and follow him. We collected another P.I.A.T. team of two men and moved out around the back of the factory and under the ramp to the east side. Here we engaged at about 25 yards, a number of tanks that were making things tough for the sappers of Captain McKay’s I Para. With three hits they withdrew and on my return O’Callaghan asked “Where the hell have you been?”

The platoon casualties were mounting as a 150 mm. gun had got our range and the house was hit several times, one shell seriously wounding Corporal Evans and killing sappers Close, Russel and Rogers. The buildings we were holding were now well ablaze and it was obvious we had to move or burn to death. On instructions from O’Callaghan we moved to some houses which were not yet on fire, a little way along Eusebius Place. The area around the bridge was becoming a sea of flame, the roar and crackle of burning buildings and the dancing shadows cast by flames was like looking into Dante’s inferno. It soon became apparent we had to move again, this time across the roadway and, under cover of smoke, we went forward. I was with the first group to go and about halfway across we caught up on a low strung tram wire and were thrown back in a heap. With encouragement from O’Callaghan we went on once more, in a crouched run and surprisingly made it with no casualties. We took over a house on the corner which still provided us with a good field of fire towards the ramp, but ammunition was now becoming very scarce and food and water non existant. Our P.I.A.T. had been destroyed in the demolished building. Tanks were moving up and down firing at point blank range their armour piercing rounds, penetrating outer brick walls. 1 platoon held this position until Tuesday night.

With dawn the next day renewed his efforts to dislodge us. We observed enemy engineers tossing demolition charges into basements further up the road. We fired a few rounds and they quickly withdrew. Throughout the day our position was subjected to heavy fire from 88 mm and mortar fire, being hit many times until, during late afternoon it collapsed about us. Myself and others who had been on the upper floors jumped clear and started to dig in. Most of us at this time had superficial wounds and the platoon was at about 14 men. It would be impossible to be certain of numbers due to the speed at which events were now taking place.

We were all looking very much alike after four days of continuous battle and sleeplessness, covered in dust, red mud, and concussed by continuous explosions as our perimeter became smaller. There was still
however, an air of optimism.

At about 16.00 hours during heavy shelling and mortaring I heard a shout. 'We're pulling out.' As I moved to respond my body jerked and I went down as though someone had thrown a housebrick at my back. With blood gushing over my neck and face I tried again to get up but my limbs would not respond. After a time I was aware of Corporal Lancaster cutting at my uniform and placing a shell dressing. Sergeant Bonnor Gibbons was there giving covering fire. They both helped me to my feet and across into a fruit and vegetable warehouse where the remnants of our now depleted force had taken up position. The enemy was following up his attack and grenades followed us into the building.

What remained of the platoon was still functioning well and the enemy were forced to withdraw once again, but kept up his short, sharp incursions to dislodge us. Ammunition was short and some of the defence force was now using enemy weapons which had been captured, including a machine gun.

At about 20.00 hours we vacated the warehouse, crossing a narrow roadway and into the grounds of the Battalion and Brigade headquarters which was engulfed in flames. O'Callaghan ordered the remnants to dig in and Major Gough was moving around giving encouragement. He had taken over earlier in the day after Colonel Frost had been wounded. We were told that the wounded who had been in the basements of the now collapsing burning shell of Headquarters buildings had been removed to safety by German P.O.W.s who had also been held in the area. I found myself in a slit trench with two others with a machine gun. I did not know who they were, possibly 2nd Battalion.

It has always amazed me that even at this time of uncertainty as to the fate of the remnants there was an air of optimism and expectancy that 30 Corps would arrive.

There was an increase in shell fire coming into the area which could have been from 30 Corps artillery south of the river. At about 01.00 hours on Thursday 21st, September Captain O'Callaghan with others fit enough to move unaided, led a patrol out in an attempt to break through the enemy positions. This came to grief in the narrow back streets. With him was Sergeant Gibbons, Corporal Lancaster, Sappers Weddall, Cottle and others who I couldn't readily name. It was the last I saw of them.

My own condition had deteriorated and I was drifting in and out of consciousness. Four days and nights without sleep, I had lost a lot of blood from the wound to my shoulder and back and lack of food and water was taking it's toll. Events taking place around me now were so unreal, remote, like in a dream. I was aware of whistles, explosions and shouts. It was daylight and the Germans were picking up the wounded. I was removed by stretcher first to a local school then, with other wounded, to St. Elizabeth's hospital.

To sum up, Platoon 2's role at Arnhem can be summarised as follows: After it's engineering role at the bridge was removed, also at the ship bridge and again after a search for charges at the northern end of the bridge had been carried out, the platoon reverted to the infantry role for which it was well trained, and proved itself in the close house to house fighting which developed in the area along with the Second Para Battalions and other units that reached Ajax Objective.
Day of Attrition
Wednesday 20th September

As dawn came on Wednesday 20th, the remnants of number 2 platoon, 9th field company, Royal Engineers, were still occupying the large villa situated at the corner of Hofstraat and Eusebius plain, a position which still afforded a reasonable field of fire in the direction of the bridge ramp and the roadway that passed under it.

In one of the bedrooms was a bedridden lady who was obviously too ill to have been moved when the occupants of the villa had been forced to seek shelter from the ever increasing storm of the battle now raging around Arnhem Bridge.

We were taking it in turns to look in on her and share what little we had to eat and drink.

She managed to smile whenever we tried to converse with her, none of us understanding the Dutch language but she seemed content and knew she was with caring people.

We were holding our own against the enemy infantry attack but, with our anti-tank weapons now seriously depleted, their tanks and armoured trucks were now getting bolder moving past blasting away with armour piercing rounds which came right through the outer walls into our positions.

Then as the morning wore on they seemed content to stand off and pound our positions with high explosives. It was during this bombardment that our Dutch lady died when a shell exploded in her room.

Throughout the afternoon, I was at a firing position on the first floor looking towards the bridge ramp and embankment, although from this position I could not see Battalion or Brigade Headquarters which was just around a bend in the road, some sixty yards away, but from the smoke and flames in that direction I knew they were on fire. Our position, although rapidly becoming a heap of rubble after some twenty to thirty hits, was still not on fire.

At about 17:00 hours with the villa now collapsing all around us, Captain O'Callaghan ordered us out to dig in the grounds.

I and another comrade jumped from the first floor into the rubble now surrounding the position, we were now very vulnerable to the incessant rain of mortar fire which was battering the area.

At about this time, as we started to dig in, a brief cheer went up from our position when a Messerschmitt which had been strafing the area, failed to pull out, wrapped a wing around a church spire and crashed into a small lake just beyond brigade headquarters.

Above the crescendo of explosions, I heard someone shout “we're pulling out”. I moved to respond when a blow like a house brick hitting me, knocked me over. I tried to move but my limbs would not respond. I became aware of blood on my neck and face and thought this is it. After what seemed an eternity I was aware of someone at my side placing shell dressings onto a deep penetrating wound to my shoulder and back. It was Sergeant Sonnie Gibbons, with Corporal Alex Lancaster.

With the enemy closing in fast, they got me up onto my feet and half lifting half dragging me, we made for a small warehouse, where the remnants of 2 platoon had established themselves. Enemy fire and grenades followed us in through the doorway. Lancaster turned and fired a burst and this was followed by other platoon members, forcing the enemy to beat a hasty search for cover, and I was placed behind the cover of some cabinets and racking.

At this time I was quite alert but my limbs would not respond. My right arm was useless and was now supported by my yellow I-D panel.

I had a tremendous thirst but no water was available, however one of my mates found some tomatoes which helped moisten my mouth.

The platoon strength was now ten men and most of those were slightly wounded but still responding well to the enemy attacks.

The positions held on the eastern side of the ramp had finally been overrun by the overwhelming enemy forces, who threw vast resources into trying to regain control of Arnhem Bridge. To enable them to move armour south to Nijmegen, the use of phosphorous shells to burn
our defences out was now forcing us out of our defensive positions into the open and exposing us to his heavy mortar bombardment.

Battalion and Bridge headquarters were now blazing infernos, we were told that our wounded comrade who had been in the basement of these buildings had been evacuated when the senior medical officer had negotiated a local cease fire.

At about 2200hrs on this Wednesday 20th September '44 I was moved towards the door onto the Hofstraat side of the warehouse. From here I was assisted by my comrades and covered up as we moved rapidly across the narrow roadway into the grounds which were at the rear of what had been Battalion Headquarters and the houses where the mortar Platoons had been on the corner of Hofstraat.

The position we now found ourselves in was certainly not one of tactical choice, it was an area about forty yards by forty yards bounded on all sides by buildings, which were now burning shells. I was helped into a slit trench which was occupied by two men who I did not know. The trench had been dug close up to a seven foot high brick wall, lower brickwork had been removed to give a limited field of fire along Hofstraat.

At this stage in the battle there was nowhere to evacuate the wounded, as the Regimental aid post had been burnt out. The enemy was now hammering us in on all sides, we could hear them giving orders and hear their mortars which must have been firing almost vertically.

I was becoming very light headed and drifting in and out of consciousness, loss of blood from the wounds coupled with lack of sleep was now taking its toll. In my lucid moments the events of the past few days went racing through my mind.

A crescendo of high explosives pounded the area, some of which I believed were coming from thirty corps who at this time must be just south of the Rhine. There were shrieks of very heavy shells passing overhead to augment the constant crump of mortars. I again was shaken back to alertness by a near direct hit on the trench to find one of my companions had been badly hit and was slumped at the other end of the trench.

In the early hours of Thursday 21st September Major Gough with Captain O'Callaghan and A. Franks took the only decision open to them, to split up into small groups and attempt to break through the enemy, who were now well esconced all around our position, but only those who could move fast and unaided would stand any chance at all.

The more seriously wounded were left in the comparative safety of slit trenches. While all this was going on I was still mercifully drifting and light headed. In my lucid moments I was aware of my wounded comrade who was still in the trench and my thoughts of not seeing daylight again came crashing to the front of my mind.

I could not see any way out of the situation we were now in, short of a miracle in the form of thirty corps arrival, and I again drifted into oblivion, the variable states of consciousness persisted throughout this fearful night.

I came to again and was aware of someone looking down on me. It was daylight, and in what seemed like a frozen moment in time, it dawned on me they were Germans. They uttered some orders to unseen people close by and I was soon being lifted out of a trench and onto a stretcher by two of our own men. This was going on in various parts of this garden of carnage. The movement caused me great pain and my right arm was totally useless.

I feared that my companion of the long night had succumbed to his wounds, as there was no movement from him. I had no way of knowing the exact time but I would think it was about 0900 hours on Thursday 21st September.

As I was carried from this place I could not understand how I or anyone else had survived the past 12 hours and my thoughts then turned to how my comrades of 2 platoon had fared in the break out. There was still the occasional burst of small arms fire locally. As I was placed on a jeep I was aware of the menacing presence of our German captors, and although I was extremely uneasy some of them were smiling and making friendly gestures towards us. Maybe they were also surprised and pleased to have survived the past few days.
We were driven a short distance to a German command post, where an extremely well dressed officer appeared. I thought possibly to question us, but on seeing our condition he made some comment like 'it was a good fight and the war is now over for you', this in perfect English, he then turned to our driver and escort and issued some instructions.

We were then driven another short distance pulling up at what was possibly a school house where some more of our lads were being put on open trucks. As I was placed on one of the vehicles, I was looking and hoping to find some of 2 platoon but as far as I could see there were none about. I knew I was with comrades but didn’t know anyone personally and would have been happier to have seen one of my mates.

We eventually moved off, and this again was a very short journey, being about a mile, before pulling up outside St Elizabeth’s Hospital. There was chaos with heavy anti aircraft fire aimed at incoming resupply drops as my stretcher was carried into the foyer by British medical orderlies. Here was a scene of the fruits of battle, with the whole area of floor space littered with wounded with men and women. German, Dutch and English. I was placed alongside a young German with a chest wound with English, Dutch and German medical orderlies and nurses attempting to deal with this flood of casualties. I was given some coffee by one of the nurses, the first drink in almost thirty hours - it was nectar. I was feeling very vulnerable lying on the floor with all the activity both in and around the building. After about an hour had elapsed a British medic came and asked how long it had been since my wounds were dressed, I explained some twenty hours previously and that it was still the initial dressing which had been applied when I was hit. The medic said he would take a quick look but said the Germans were preparing to move us to another destination. He helped me to my feet in order to remove my Dennison smock and battle dress blouse, but decided to leave them and open up the already slashed clothing which Cpl Lancaster had cut from neck to waist. Any movement was excruciating, so the medic decided that, due to the impending move, he would just place another dressing over the original one without disturbing the package. All my clothing was beginning to feel like stiff board due to the amount of congealed blood.

The medic had hardly begun when the Germans ordered us outside. He finished then assisted me to the door as I told him I felt less insecure on my feet. I was helped out through the doorway and into an ambulance aboard which were four Germans on stretchers and four of us as sitting passengers.

One of the German wounded was the young man with the chest wound. The doors were closed behind us and not long after we were underway, the time was about 1400 hours. Thursday 21st September.

Believing as I did that thirty corps was just across the Rhine, any move towards Germany would reduce any chance we had of a quick end to our captivity. I had already had enough of this present uncertain situation and yearned to be out of it. The ambulance had no windows so we were not able to see where we might be heading.

The young German was trying to communicate and was showing me photographs. I was able to understand when he made a point that he had been wounded on the Russian front then pointed to his present wound with the word ‘Kaput’.

The photographs were of his family and girlfriend. The way we were now talking, although with difficulty, made it hard to believe that only hours ago we could have been looking at each other down the sights of our weapons and I could possibly be responsible for his present condition. Such were my thoughts, but there was no enmity in his tone.

The ambulance pulled up abruptly and we heard the driver and his companion get out fast. There was a lot of air activity possibly due to air resupply drop, and our driver had obviously been scared by a very low flying aircraft.

When they returned to the vehicle the rear doors were opened and we could then see along a straight roadway densely wooded on both sides. One of the drivers gave the German wounded a slice of black bread and a piece of something greyish looking which was supposed to be cheese. There
followed a heated argument initiated by the soldier who had been talking to us and the drivers. Two of the other wounded Germans joined in. We hadn't a clue what it was all about but it led to us receiving the same ration. Being very hungry I tried to eat some of it but found the bread rather hard and bitter tasting, whilst the cheese had a very profound fish-like taste, almost revolting. I slipped most of it into my Dennison smock pocket, looking at the three other British lads who were also grimacing. Oh for the good old British army standby of bully beef. At this time little did we know that, in the following eight months we might beg for what we had just received.

Eventually we were again on the move and proceeded towards our unknown destination. At about 1700 hours, Thursday 21st September '44, the ambulance pulled up again and then reversed. When the doors were opened we could see we were facing a doorway leading into what looked like a barrack type building where there were plenty of guards and medical orderlies around the entrance. Here the German wounded were removed, leaving us with friendly gestures. I thought we might follow and get some treatment, but the doors were again shut on us. After a while we were again on the move, but not very far. When the doors opened this time, a very different scene came into view. We were on a railway siding with cattle trucks lined up. There were a considerable number of our wounded comrades waiting around and a large number of German guards with menacing attitudes, there was certainly no medical treatment available for us here.

At about 1800 hours with a lot of shouting and pushing we were ordered to board the train. With great difficulty we helped each other up on to the wagons. Wounds were varied, smashed limbs, severe head and trunk wounds. We helped each other to settle on the hard wooden floor of these smelly enclosed trucks with just a very small aperture high up on each side. There were about 50 men in our truck and as we all, with much cursing and groaning, tried to get our pain wracked bodies into the best position, the door was slammed shut leaving us in a gloom with just two shafts of light from the apertures close up to the roof. It was most disquieting that up to now no-one had asked for name, rank and number. To the Germans we were nonentities and could be lost on our journey of unknown destination and duration.

Although I was with comrades, I had never met any of them before this time. How I missed the lads of 2 platoon with whom I had been on many a happy occasion. As the time dragged by, the cursing and groans of my companions became more profound as they struggled to ease themselves into more pain free positions. With no movement of the train we could hear the German guards talking and laughing in the darkness outside. We had been sitting or lying in this enclosed cramped truck for about 3½ hours and any bodily function had to be performed in the corners. Anyone having to answer a call of nature was greeted by more abuse and cursing as he staggered and stumbled over the body littered floor in the darkness, towards the selected corner.

With many thoughts tumbling through my mind I drifted into a fitful sleep. I was aroused by a chorus of my companions calling for water and banging on the sides of the truck as everyone was very dry. I'd had a small amount of coffee at about 1300 hours, some ten hours ago, but many of the others had not had a drink for a much longer period. Our demands fell on deaf ears. Soon there was a violent shunt as the engine was coupled up, and this again evoked groans and cursing from the lads around me.

Eventually we were underway again on our journey but to where and what? The chatter in this cattle truck became more subdued as the motion of the train, accompanied by the creaky clack on the track, began to lull me to sleep, but my mind was full of the events of the past few days. What had happened to 30 Corps? We were told at our briefing on Saturday 16th, seize and hold your objective. You will be relieved within 48 hours, you will then march on Amsterdam. We had held for almost double the 48 hours at Arnhem bridge without any immediate support or relief. I had witnessed my comrades maimed and killed at the coffin and clog factory on the Monday morning and again in the White house on Tuesday when the 105mm destroyed our positions there. What, I was wondering, had befallen the remnants of 2 platoon who were in the garden prior to the breakout. There were about 10 of us at that time, Captain E O'Callaghan, Sgt Gibbons, Cpl Lancaster, Sgt Cawood, Sprs Turner, Cottee, Tunney, Donaghy, and Fox. They and a few others from the mixed
units that had reached Arnhem bridge were the last men in the area still resisting at that time and were attempting to break through to friendly forces.

I gradually drifted into a dream state. I could not tell how long we had been moving or how far we had travelled when the train came to a standstill. Then the sound of explosions, mingled with anti aircraft fire and with the flashes punctuating our gloom through the apertures, we quickly realised how vulnerable we were and in danger of being hit by a friendly bomb dropped by the R.A.F or the U.S.A.A.

After about ten minutes things quietened down again but an hour passed before we moved again, very slowly, as though traversing damaged or temporary track. After about thirty minutes we were picking up speed and the motion was having a soothing effect on me and I was soon drifting again as the unseen landscape slipped by. After several more short halts daylight was with us so that we could at least see one another in the gloom. As the day wore on, the train seemed to be travelling very cautiously with stops becoming more frequent so that when, at one of these, the door suddenly opened, we were all surprised with the rush of air and light, and a sudden chorus from the guards of orders which we couldn’t understand, but with great difficulty we were helping each other painfully to our feet and towards the door. I could see we were at a siding in what must be a town with many buildings close by and the guards were ordering us off the train. Close by were a group of civilians, also someone dressed in a colourful civic style uniform. At this time I believed it was organised to hurl abuse at captured British airborne soldiers for propaganda purposes, but when seeing the blood stained condition of us as we struggled to help each other off the high floor level of the truck, many of the onlookers moved to assist us. Two of our companions had succumbed to wounds in the gloom of that long, thirsty, hungry journey. It was Kassel time, about 1500 hours Friday 22 September.

As if in a dream state and still wracked with pain, we moved off on foot. After a very short walk, possibly half a mile, we arrived at a civilian hospital, where we were to receive our first quick medical assessment. Physically we were all nearing total exhaustion with varying degrees of first and secondary shock due to massive blood loss.

It was only a self disciplined state of mind that was going to bring us through our present ordeal.

Most of the guards were posted outside with one or two within the ward areas. When my turn came for assessment: my clothing, which had already been cut from neck to waist, was cut right down and, with great pain, was slipped off my right shoulder and arm, and the shell dressing eased off. There followed the painful removal of the dressing which Cpl Lancaster had packed into the entry wound some 48 hours ago to stem the blood flow. Then came the unpleasant process of having a metal rod pushed into the wound and moved about trying to locate the foreign body bullet or shrapnel. These probes were about 18” long and the process was carried out without any anaesthetic or pain killer of any sort. Failing to locate anything by this method the wound was packed and dressed with a crepe paper type material. They then attended to the flesh wounds on my right leg. A shirt was found for me as mine and my vest were totally ruined with blood. My battle dress blouse and Dennison smock, though a bloody mess and cut right through, would have to serve me for some time yet. I was helped away to a bed and unbelievably a nurse brought me a bowl of barley soup, my first warm food in six days.

Our two 24 hour ration packs had been used up by Wednesday so we were all very hungry, the meagre ration of black bread and small portion of cheese or fish did little to ease our pangs.

After eating the soup I was assisted into bed where, with my mind in a turmoil, I drifted into the sleep of total exhaustion. I had no way of knowing for how long I was asleep when I was dragged back to wakefulness and pain by guards and medical staff shouting and getting everyone out of bed. Then I could hear the howling of air raid sirens. We were assisted down to the basement area and here we met our first Russians who, on seeing us made an effort to sing ‘God Save the King’, recognisable only by the tune. This did not go down well with the German guards who, very menacingly, ordered them to be quiet. This brought the sound of anti aircraft fire and the crump of bombs resounding throughout the building. The raid didn’t last long and we were soon being helped back to the wards where I was again soon cocooned in the safe harbour of sleep.
I do not know for how long I slept but we were dragged reluctantly back to the reality of our situation by the guards shouting out orders. We were ordered to get dressed and to move out into the hospital courtyard where about 30 of us assembled. I had been helped to put my battle dress blouse on, which was now in two pieces pinned together with the Dennison smock pinned at the back. Both of these items were stiff as board where blood had dried through. I'm sure I could see a look of compassion on the faces of some of the medical staff who were watching our departure.

We were once more on the move, dragging and helping each other very painfully along. There were many leg and foot injuries with us so the pace was extremely slow. After about one hour and having covered about two miles, we had a very sobering moment when we were ordered off the road and into a field with the guards watching us from a distance. I'm sure it set many a mind into overdrive as to our fate. We had been kept hanging around with our thoughts for about ⅓ of an hour when a car arrived and a civilian got out and walked over to us. After taking a look at a few of our companions he went back to talk to the guard commander, who had apparently seen the gunpowder rash that was developing on some of us and thought it was typhus, which was prevalent in many parts of Germany at this time. The doctor having satisfied the guard that we were not contagious, we were once more on the move. It was a clear sunny day and high overhead were the vapour trails of many B17 Super Fortress bombers on their way to devastate some target area deep inside Germany. It made me realise what a very dangerous place Germany was right now and whoever was at the receiving end of the fly past we were witnessing would be paying a very heavy price.

We eventually arrived at a narrow gauge railway where we boarded the waiting train of narrow trucks, the air activity high overhead continuing. The train moved off passing small villages which seemed oblivious to what was going on overhead. After about five miles we were passing through a large military cemetery, possibly from 1914/18; it was vast. We eventually stopped short of what was a small prisoner of war camp which I would say was no more than ten miles from Kassel. As we waited outside the wire a brief cheer went up from our motley crowd when a guard in one of the gun towers, having seen a large silvery object hurtling towards earth, jumped from his perch some 25 feet up. We all ducked as the object bounded into a field close by. The object turned out to be a reserve fuel tank jettisoned by one of the many fighter escorts who were covering the air armada overhead. The jump had not done him any good as we saw him stretchered away. We were eventually counted and ordered into one of the huts. The room I now found myself in contained about ten, two-tier bunks, of which I claimed a lower berth as I would not be able to climb up. As it was now getting dark the shutters were closed on the windows and the dimly lit gloom of the place enveloped us. After we had moved around discussing our present unpleasant situation with each other I decided to ease myself onto my chosen bunk. It was a painful exercise in the cramped space and on to bare wooden planking. Fully clothed as no blanket was available, feeling miserable and hungry, I remembered the small piece of black bread and fishy cheese I had put in my pocket in the ambulance days ago. It looked decidedly most unappetising but I started to nibble away.

I was lying there trying to enjoy this small morsel when the hut door opened and in strode a guard with the most viscous looking dog I had ever seen, somewhere between a wolf and a husky. The guard was shouting something like 'Kommen sie essen'. He was followed by another guard carrying two loaves of black bread and two tins of what turned out to be a herring-like fish in oil. I struggled up again in order to get my fair share but the division was a bit of a problem. No one had any implement for cutting the bread so they thought about breaking it into chunks. I then remembered my short hacksaw blade which I had sewn into my battle dress epaulette. These had been issued to us as part of our escape gear with a silk type map and compass in the form of two brass trouser buttons. The saw blade made the issue easier and it also made me aware of the fact that to survive in this austere atmosphere we would be going basic. My small pack had contained mess tins and a combined knife fork and spoon set all lost en route since capture. I soon had one of the fish tins in my pocket and it was a start towards collecting something that would contain liquid foodstuff until we were issued some implements by our host. This in reality never happened as everything in Germany was short, from now on it would be one of scavenge and we would soon learn to pick up anything from rusty wire to removing the odd nail from planking in the huts and the very
bunks we slept on. Everything, however small, had a value in our present surroundings. Having gained my rations, I ate the fish and put most of the bread in my pocket, unknowingly I was developing a habit that continued after the war. I was hoarding something for later. I climbed onto the bunk and when the lights went out had a fitful pain wracked night listening to the sniffing and scuffling of the dogs under the hut blending with the groans and curses of my companions. It was a long night, each man with his own thoughts of happier times and far better billets. At about 0600 hours we were rousted and ordered outside where a head count was made, this was Sunday 24th September. At about 0900 hours our captors provided some warm ersatz coffee made of burnt acorns. This was shared by drinking from a German canteen which was taken from us when it had all gone, these towards the end received it cold. The need for some sort of container became more apparent.

The day dragged on monotonously and I was becoming more pain wracked and stiff, every breath I took was agony. The paper dressings applied at Kassel hospital had by now almost disintegrated. I was getting concerned, most of the lads with leg or arm wounds were able to try and make things easier for themselves. I asked one of my companions if he could help ease my dressing on the back and shoulder. All he was able to do was scrape a couple of handkerchiefs which were placed loosely over the sodden paper with the shirt to keep it in place. It was very much a case of survival of the fittest and fend for yourself as we were all in the same predicament with no help from our captors whatevers, such was our existence at the time, we were nothing. Many years on we hear a lot about P.T.S. (post traumatic stress) I think we all would have been good candidates to have received counselling for P.T.S following the past few days experience.

At about 1700 hours came the sensitive business of dividing black bread again, this time with a small portion of the fishy cheese, followed by an issue of what was called mint tea. It tasted like senna pod, but it was wet, although that's all there was to commend it.

On Monday 25th 0600 hours again head count then ersatz coffee at about 0900 hours still from a shared field canteen mug. Then onto the unknown monotony of the day trudging around the outside of the hut.

At about 1100 hours more guards arrived and we were ordered to form up with a lot of pushing into line, again we were on the move, a very bedraggled group dragging one painful step after another. It wasn't a long haul. Around the back of the camp we approached a railway siding with a raised wooden platform, at which was standing two carriages with windows heavily boarded out, and they were liberally bedecked with the red cross symbol top and sides. When we were ordered to board the carriages we were surprised to find that they had compartments fitted with wooden seating, eventually we were hooked up and following much shouting up and down the line we were on our way again.

The only observation points from our carriage were very narrow windows about 3" wide, one looking forward and one to the rear either side of the carriage. There was an armed guard in each compartment and a sergeant in charge of the carriage.

Progress was very slow with many stops such was the state of the German Railways with the constant air raids both day and night. We had no idea in what direction we were going, North, East or West. The many stops and rattle of anti aircraft fire from passing trains, denoted very much the attention being paid to this area of Germany by the allied airforces this day, and the German trains had at this time flak guns mounted front and rear. At one of our enforced stops the guards quickly vacated the coach and we found ourselves locked in these Red cross bedecked cars. When one of my companions looked through the observation window his cursing and exclamations brought others to view. At some point in our journey the two carriages had been shunted and were now in the middle of a goods train which of course was a legitimate target. We appeared to be in a marshalling yard, probably at Hanover. The roar of low flying aircraft and cannon fire had us all trying to make ourselves very small looking for any available cover which of course was impossible in the enclosed carriages.

The attack went on for minutes which under these conditions seemed like hours. The area soon was quietening down and after a time the guards returned. They had sought cover in shelters at
the side of the track and on their return they were met with a hail of abuse. The guard commander went a bit spare threatening to shoot us all and when he found that someone had been at his kit and some cigarettes were missing it was a bit tense for a while until one of the chaps started to sing "Oh Mr Porter what can I do I wanted to go to Birmingham and they put me off to Crewe." It was a little bit of light relief which got all the British singing and left the Germans dumbstruck, and we were still singing an hour later when the train pulled into Fallingbostel. It was now quite dark as we formed up for the march to Stalag XIB and the unknown, we trudged along again helping each other, passing German troops with their girlfriends in the shadows.

Fallingbostel was a training area for panzer grenadiers and as we trudged up the hill on our left we became aware of goon towers and high barbed wire fences which surrounded very many huts with searchlights panning the area. To say the least, our first impression was one of gloom and certainly not welcoming. We marched in through the first gate and were halted outside what was the administration block. Close by were about 150 more of our walking wounded who had already been counted through. Our party was counted, we then joined the larger group.

We were kept hanging around in the cold night air, very hungry, thirsty and dying on our feet. After some considerable time we were marched to a compound where huts were surrounded by more high wire and goon towers at the gate. We were once again counted, then counted again. All we wanted now was somewhere to get our heads down out of the damp cold night air. We had become accustomed to being deprived of food and drink and didn't expect Stalag XIB to be any different.

Stalag XIB Fallingbostel was an old camp, and when we arrived it already contained Russians, Yugoslavians, Poles, Dutch, French, Serbs, Belgians and Croats to name a few, amongst some 25,000 inmates. At first sight on this dark damp night, to many of us it looked like the end of the world.

When eventually we were ordered into our allocated hut the stench and squalid appearance that met us was unbelievable. Closely packed three tier bunks with wooden slats, no blankets or pillows, very dimly lit along the gangway with the bunks on either side. We were told the lights would be going out almost immediately. I found myself a bottom bunk along side the gangway and, fully dressed, I eased my pain wracked aching limbs onto the wooden boards. The lights went out and we were now in total darkness with our thoughts and the grumbling of our companions. I lay there trying to rest but found it impossible as I was aware of bodies shuffling along the gangway cursing and saying they were being eaten alive. I was also having a scratch. The Russians who had occupied the hut until we arrived had left us lousy, the irritation as these insects burrowed and fed off us was too much for many of us and they continued to walk up and down the aisle throughout this long night. We were all ready when the guards moved in shouting 'raus' 'schnell' etc. to get outside for 'apfel' (roll call).

We were a dishevelled bunch as we shuffled out to form up in five's, then followed the face of the guards counting from both ends of the parade, passing in the middle, comparing numbers present, then starting over again until their two counts balanced. We found to our displeasure this was going to be a ritual that was going to keep us hanging about in the early hours of many a freezing bleak morning to come. Many of our comrades were short of clothing and footwear, sick and wounded alike, but all had to drag themselves out for this mental torture. After roll call on this morning I found that Danny Weddell of 2 Platoon was here with us, both his lower limbs were injured so he was finding it more difficult to move around. At about 11:30 a.m. some watery soup arrived in what I can only describe as a dustbin, we had no utensils to collect it in, until I remembered my fish tin which, though a little battered, allowed me to get a little which I shared with Danny. The issue of rations at this early stage was a shambles, first come first share with those who couldn't move fast enough, going short or even without, my own movement was painful and becoming more laboured but I forced myself to remain independent as possible. Many of our wounds were now infected and the stench of suppurring flesh was nauseating. The only means of personal hygiene was a limited cold water supply with no more means of drying off. There was no heat in anyway and the latrines were broken and blocked.
We still had not been processed for P.O.W. status, so we realised we were just missing in action. The day wore on with groups standing around discussing the events that brought us to our present intolerable situation, and I believe many of us were still in a state of shock and lethargical. Others had already started to look around for anything useful that could be turned into containers or eating implements. There was another roll call at about 1300 hours and we were given certain orders and rules about the issue of rations, also that, during an air raid, all men would go immediately inside their hut, as there were no slit trenches or shelters for protection. Whether the Germans believed we might be able to signal to allied aircraft we could not understand. The wooden huts provided no protection, each man was given a blanket during the afternoon, many were thread-bare and had holes but never the less it was a start. Then at about 1600 hours there was an issue of black bread, eight men to a one 1½ kilo loaf which gave us a thin slice per man, there was a pat of tefal margarine, a watery type margarine. Also an issue of the mint tea, again collected in my prized fish container. This was to be the basic existence of our foreseeable future. There was another roll call at 1800 hours, with the check and double check which would become routine, and after being dismissed, we dragged ourselves back into our billet. None of us looked forward to lights out and the fearsome onslaught from the lice which although present with us during the day seemed less active.

The following day started again with the guard yelling and banging about in an intimidating manner. The roll call force went on far too long and there was an even longer wait for something to eat. Then around mid morning an air raid alarm sounded. I was climbing the steps to get into the hut when a shot rang out hitting a glider pilot sergeant who had hesitated and looked back. He fell down almost on top of me, and we were quickly pulled into the hut where he died within minutes. The shot had been fired by a guard who we all came to know as Hungarian Joe and most hated. Another result of the air raid was no soup as the detail was not allowed out to collect from the cookhouse. This, we were to find, happened more often as the air activity increased and we got hungrier.
Out Of Chaos Comes Order

Soon after our arrival at Stalag XIB, possibly the third morning, we were stumbling out to early morning roll call when we heard an authoritative English voice barking out orders like 'come on chaps, get fell in quickly'. Standing out there taking this morning parade was regimental sergeant Major J.C. Lord. He stood there as though it was his parade ground at home, with the German guard commander to his rear and side. He looked immaculately dressed in battle dress with one sleeve cut back above the elbow of his injured arm neatly sewn, with a sling supporting his arm. He stood us at ease, then called us to attention. Many of the lads mumbled, reluctant to conform. He again stood us at ease then immediately to attention, then smartly turning to the guard commander handed the parade over to him for roll call. After the Germans were satisfied that the numbers were correct R.S.M Lord dismissed the parade. It was a very important start towards getting some sort of control over the running of the British compound. His next move was to sort out the fair distribution of rations by forming small units of eight men, using the not so badly injured to help those who found difficulty in mobility. Two men could easily collect the rations for the eight man section. He then steadily built a team of senior N.C.O's around him, names like R.S.M Bill Kibble and CSM Day came to mind. Many of the senior N.C.O's volunteered to stay at XIB even when they could have moved on to less austere surroundings. XIB was to become known as the hell of Soltau Road and later arrivals at the camp immediately volunteered for "Arbeiter commando groups" (work parties.)

Eventually we were moved into huts which had housed some Polish civilians, men and women, who had been rounded up during the Warsaw uprising in August, September '44. The four huts stood in a larger compound surrounded by the usual barbed wire and goon towers. The parade ground was about the size of an average football pitch, the huts were designed for about two hundred but already there were in excess of four hundred in two of them and this was to get worse in the coming months. In mid October some of us walking wounded were allowed to visit the lagerette. The huts were up close to the main gates in their own compound and housed some four hundred seriously wounded First airborne men who had arrived by hospital train. In the second week of October, the senior medical officer was Major Smith who had a medical team of "Royal Army Medical Corps" personnel. This hospital was without heat or light except for hurricane lamps with very little paraffin available. The conditions were little better than in the main lager at this time, other than for trained medical staff keeping an eye on the wounded, medical supplies were little more than fifty or so paper dressings and bandages per week.

On our walk to the lagerette we were looking forward to getting some medical treatment for our many and varied wounds which had received no treatment, in my case since Kassel almost three weeks ago. My right arm was useless, the intense pain which pulled on my back with every step taken was causing me to stoop in order to try and ease myself. We had to walk under guard about ten of us at a time, and on our arrival we stood around at the entrance to one of the huts waiting to be called in. When my turn came I was first seen by an orderly who took details of when I was hit, when I was last treated, was it bullet or shrapnel etc. He then set about removing what was left, the handkerchiefs and the paper dressings were just a sodden mess. How these R.A.M.C personnel had Steeleed themselves to the job of cleansing the putrefaction of these long unattended wounds I do not know, the vile smell alone was enough to turn the strongest stomach.

After doing his best to clean the entry wound he called for an officer, Captain Green, R.A.M.C who asked a few questions and then did a little probing. With nothing found by the probe he told the orderly to apply an Acqua Flavine dressing. He then looked at my leg wound and prescribed the same treatment and said I should return in two days. Although I felt a little more comfortable on the shoulder, nothing much had changed as the dressings were already becoming soaked as we entered the Lager. It was about this time that a civilian photographer appeared at our compound. We were each given a board and, in turn, our photos were taken with a few details - name, rank and number. On my board was the number 117901. I was now (Kriegs Gefanger) War Prisoner 117901. How
long before the Red Cross people, family and friends at home would have to wait before notifications of this new status we had no idea, but at last we were now on record as a being.

RSM Lord was beginning to instil self pride and discipline into the compound and with the aid of home made brooms made from scronged branches and twigs of trees, the floors of the huts were already looking cleaner. The problem of getting rid of the lice was ongoing and a never ending battle right up to liberation in April 1945, but you would find men everywhere trying to kill the millions of lice eggs which always seemed profuse in the seams of shirts etc. We fully realised our present situation was a world apart from the way we had been raised. Unless someone has lived through such an experience it is not possible to imagine how it was. Men within prison camps made up a culture that could not have existed in any other circumstance. They came from all walks of life and nationality. We shared a close relationship and, as a unit of 8 men, we shared everything - a razor, a bit of soap, even the very elusive toilet paper. We helped each other through bouts of depression or doubt. We laughed together in adversity. One of us could always come up with a light remark to overcome an unpleasant situation of which there were many. Food was always a main topic, always a remark like 'Oh what I could do for a slice of toast and dripping'. Our basic diet had now become, after morning roll call, ersatz coffee (burnt acorns) 1/3rd of a pint at around midday, 1/2 pint of watery soup, either pea, barley, swede, sauerkraut or whispering grass soup, so named by us and which contained all the disposable parts of vegetables. The sauerkraut soup would turn our inside upside down, I for one could not stomach it. At about 1700 hours we would receive an eighth share of a loaf and a halved loaf of black bread with sometimes a spoon of jam followed by a third of a pint of mint tea. All the foregoing was subject to allied air activity so that on many a day we were deprived of at least some of the ration, the effect of the poor rations was starting to show as we were all looking gaunt and pale. In early November the rumour was circulating that Red Cross parcels had arrived and everyone was on a high with anticipation, but nothing arrived that day in the compound. The following day started in the usual way, RSM Lord’s roll call parade at first light followed by the German count which was still the farce of count and double check. Then at about 10 am on my visit to the latrines this day I met Joe Sibley another 9th Field Company man of H.Q platoon. Joe had spent his early years in Germany and so was very fluent with the language. Our meeting was brief but he was able to tell me of two more of our chaps who were in the hospital block, Sappers Jack Everitt of number 2 platoon and Charlie Postans. Joe said he would try and arrange for me to visit them the next time I was at the hospital which would be in two days time. I received my treatment, a cleaned and dry dressing. I knew my condition was worsening by the day and stood no chance of improving until the foreign body was taken out. Once again by the time I had reached the compound gate the dry dressing was saturated with pus. Such condition in any of the limbs led to amputation of which there were many at Stalag XIB during the 8 months we were incarcerated there. On passing into the compound we were met by excited comrades telling us that Red Cross parcels had arrived. Our group had collected two to be shared between four men. On entering the hut it was like waking up on Christmas morning as a child with excited groups of men rummaging through boxes about 10" by 10" by 5". It was an American red cross parcel. There would be a change of diet this day, with an American parcel including an issue of 100 cigarettes.

Along with the arrival of the Red Cross parcels another unexpected development occurred that day. Many of our compound guards were acting furiously, some were concealing leaves of bread, others potatoes, even frying pans, inside their great coats. Our first introduction to the barter system, indeed the first time we had anything that interested our captors, everything was short or even totally unobtainable in Germany by 1944 so the guards seemed willing to take a risk of being caught for genuine coffee, spam, cigarettes etc.

Our group quickly agreed between us to forgo half the cigarettes in order to try for extra bread and potatoes. There were three in our group who were compulsive smokers so we agreed they shared the rest between them. Contact was made and that evening we obtained a 3 kilo civilian loaf and some potatoes, and after our diet of watery soup and black bread the civilian bread was certainly more satisfying and filling. It was of a greyish colour, certainly more doughy, made with rye, l
believe. Every group by this time had home made implements made from scraps of all the items found or scrounged over the previous weeks including Heath Robinson gadgets for heating our acorn coffee or herb tea. I had no idea who was the inventor but they had appeared out of the blue.

The only way to describe the blower as it was called, was that it was like a mini forge. It was mounted on a bed board from one of the bunks and it had an enclosed fan which blew air through a tunnel to the base of a burner pan in which we placed charcoal. It could burn almost anything and bring liquid to boiling very quickly. Another innovation was a very dangerous immersion heater connected through a lamp socket, through insulated wire attached to two pieces of a metal can, each piece of metal being separated by a non conductor piece of electricity i.e wood placed directly into water. It always seemed to work well until someone put tea into the simmering water causing the compound light to dim and flicker and, more often than not, lead to hours spent outside on parade, while the Germans searched for radios. By such methods we were surviving on a day to day basis.

Two days later on my visit for treatment, I did manage a brief visit to see my two ninth field company comrades. At this time Jack Everitt did not seem too ill but Charlie Postans was so bandaged about his face and head, I could not be sure it was him but he seemed to know me. I was told he was caught by a flame thrower.

The days wore on interminably, and it was at least another month before we received any more parcels.

I was just about dragging myself around the compound on our exercise walks ordered by RSM Lord.

It was now becoming much colder and the early morning roll call was the most painful experience standing there undernourished, ill clothed and shoddy, some of us now wearing self made clogs with a square of cloth as socks.

It was about mid November when something happened which helped raise morale. Many times, when heard back in barracks or encampments, the sound of reveille at six in the morning, would have weary troops hurrying abuse at the poor unfortunate bugler, but when heard ringing out over this bleak enemy terrain it was like a voice from home. Other calls were sounded throughout the day which helped us judge the time. Once again, RSM Lord had gained a little bit more from the Germans. This time it was in the shape of an old Belgian bugle and through one of his earlier batmen, who had served with the corps of drums, we were to hear these comforting calls from then on.

Late November at the early morning roll call RSM Lord, who would always pass on any information following the count of heads, announced that Sapper Jack Everitt had succumbed to his wounds in the lazerette and that any comrades wishing to attend his funeral were to report to him at 10:00 hours.

R.S.M Lord had a few battle dresses which he kept in his bed space area, enclosed to form something of an office area and created by panels from the red cross packaging cases. He had drilled men who were to provide the honour party and bearers, these always were turned out as smart as possible under these conditions. I was provided with one of the battle dress and pair of boots and followed the cortège, which was a flat track pulled by two of the trained men. The pine wood coffin was bedecked with a home made union flag.

The honour guard and bearers marching on each side, it was a very moving experience for me, as we passed other compounds, which held Russians, French, Poles etc., to witness them lining the wire, heads bowed in respect. The hillside cemetery was about one mile in total distance and here a brief internment service was held with our German guard watching from a distance, as the bugler sounded last post or reveille.

On our return journey I was beginning to flag a little as my pain increased with each step, but as we neared the main gate R.S.M Lord said, firmly but quietly, 'Come on chaps, march to attention. Show these people what you think of them', as our armed guard ambled along it was good to feel like a soldier again.

I had to return my kit to be made ready for the next burial. There were fifty British burials in our eight months incarceration. Eventually the Germans did forbid the union flag being paraded
through the the camp, but R.S.M Lord would stop the cortège just outside the main gate and there drape the colours over the coffin before continuing to the cemetery as usual.

By mid December we had received letters from home. I had written cards home but never said anything about my wounds so as not to worry them. As my right arm was useless I had to manage using my left which I found out afterwards did cause some concern. Christmas came and Boxing day which was to have been our wedding day and the news reaching us in the camp was a little disquieting as the Germans made the most of the Ardennes offensive and were boasting about pushing the Americans back into the sea. Conditions in the camp were becoming very severe with the sub zero temperatures now persisting and still only one blanket per man. These were extremely cold and long nights and the early morning roll call was a freezing torture, with our extremities ready to drop off. All the guards and goons had extra top coats and wore nose and ear muffls for extra protection.

I had now developed a pronounced stoop and hunch back which was the result of accumulated poisons at the seat of my wound. Although these extreme low temperatures persisted, R.S.M Lord still insisted on the men taking their exercise walks around the compound. This made sense as often it was colder inside than moving outside. At this time Stalag XIIIB had started to receive large numbers of American servicemen who had been captured in the Ardennes offensive, many of them with severe frost bite. Most of them said they had been captured at rest camps some as much as a hundred miles behind their lines, this was most disconcerting to us. Was the war now turning in favour of the Germans as they had been trying to make us believe in recent weeks. Our outlook was very gloomy. It is so easy to see the black side when you are starving, cold and very far from home.

One morning in late January I was struggling around the exercise field with my comrades making an extreme effort to make one painful step follow the other. Gradually becoming more remote and distant from them they were making their usual conversation but I could not hear them, I was gradually enveloped in blackness.

When I came round I was in the lazarette where I became aware of Major Smith and Captain Green discussing my condition with a German officer.

Reasoning prevailed, as I soon found myself with Major Smith being transported to a hospital in Fallegobstal. On arrival I was taken to a room where I was made to stand behind a screen which was part of an early model X ray machine. After a while the medical officer who had been observing with the German operating staff said to me, "that's it, we'll get you back and have that out". On my return to the lazarette I was taken to a small room which had six two-tier bunks, some of which were occupied by Americans. The orderly said he would be back for me as soon as the medical officer was ready.

Some of the Americans started to quiz me about conditions in the lazarette. The picture I painted, whilst being true, was not easily or readily accepted by them and possibly led to some of them trying to pull the wool over the medical officers eyes in an effort to prolong their stay in the lazarette. This discussion helped pass the time and took my mind off my pending ordeal. Although having endured some five months of agony the thought of having an operation to remove the source of my problem was a little disconcerting especially with the very limited resources available to these R.A.M.C personnel. They were all trained to operate in the field under harsh conditions of battle, but after some five months of prison camp medicine, cut off from supplies, their options were primitive.

After about 20 minutes the orderly collected me and we walked to another room where the doctors were waiting. There was a cabinet, a couple of chairs and a white wood trestle table. One of the doctors reassuringly said "we'll soon sort you out". I was told to help get my battle dress blouse and shirt off, then lie face down on the table. I do not recollect any administration of anaesthetic - I felt the first cut. I had a feeling of floating, looking down at the scene. When I came round I was in one of the lower bunk's in the room with the Yanks. The orderly was close by and told me not to move as there was a rubber tube in my back to drain off the poisons. The yanks were shouting "welcome back Tommy". I had no idea how long I was unconscious and I gradually became aware of something in my left hand. Wrapped in a piece of paper dressing was a chunk of shrapnel one and
a half inches by three quarters of an inch, and covered in a green like web, which the doctor later told me was the body trying to seal it off. The immune system I suppose.

I was very ill for many days running high temperatures. The caring attention paid to me by the orderly, who I knew as Butch, and his mates was eventually bringing me through. I was being fed at times with a gruel type substance and drink of horlicks. These came, I was told, from the special Red Cross parcels which were held by Major Smith for the invalids. The lazerette was like an oasis in the midst of the squalid surroundings of the main camp.

The luxury of 2 blankets and sometimes more, and the smaller rooms with up to 12 men as against the cold vast barrack huts now containing well over 400 individuals.

By mid February I was beginning to improve. It was still very cold with plenty of snow about.

I was always thinking of my mates enduring the early morning roll calls and I hated the thought of returning to the compound.

A couple of Americans who had befriended me were about to be discharged to the compound and told me to look them up on my return.

The one who I knew as Pinky was a Sgt. Woody, of North Carolina and the other was Duke, who came from Brooklyn, and both had very outgoing personalities.

Well into February and our area of Germany was receiving increased air activities both by day and night so our daily rations were sometimes late or even totally adrift. On one daylight raid we were all very amused at the antics of one of the lazerette sentries (Postans) who, on hearing and seeing wave after wave of very low flying U.S.A. Thunderbolt aircraft, withdrew his pistol, waved it in the air and then, panic stricken, dived head first into a slit trench feet up. He never lived it down.

On March 1st 1945 I was considered fit enough to return to the compound. As I was leaving the hospital block on this occasion I came across Sergeant Sonnie Gibbons, my platoon sergeant. He was in a terrible state, both feet badly injured. He was sitting in a chair awaiting treatment and he told me he had suffered Diphtheria and Pneumonia. His weight was about half his usual bulk of around 13 stone. Our meeting was brief as my guard had come to collect me. I immediately reported to R.S.M Lord on reaching the compound and he told me to seek out my former group which I did. They were pleased to see me but chided me that they would be on reduced rations again, having shared my allowance. The compound was rife with rumours, there were more tents on the parade area and many more prisoners were arriving daily, many not more than skeletons who had been forced to walk many hundreds of miles from the East as the Russian army relentlessly advanced towards the German borders. Some of these were sleeping in tents on the straw covered ground.

The increase in numbers created all sorts of problems. A large latrine had been dug with sitting panels on the four sides. Dysentery was rife and food allocations were even more of a problem. Many were saying the Germans were trying to congregate as many allied prisoners together as hostages to barter a better cease fire deal.

R.S.M Lord and his team were concerned that the S.S troops stationed in the barracks opposite might do something desperate in their death throes so they had made contingency plans which included having one of our men on duty with the camp guards. This was in agreement with the camp commandant who was already concerned at the possibility of the Russian and other nations compounds erupting into violence.

I still visited the lazerette every other day for dressings but I felt much better. I had lost a lot of weight and what clothing I had was falling off me. I decided to try and find the two Americans. They were billeted in a separate hut within our compound and, true to form, when I did come across them they seemed to have a racket going through bartering with Jerry. Before leaving them they gave me two blankets, a chunk of bread and some potatoes which were more than welcomed by my mates, such was the kind of friendships made at the time.

We could hear gunfire and see the flashes at night. It seemed to be all around us with a continuous rumbling.

Then, early April, a large party of R.A.F prisoners arrived and many of them had to sleep outside even though they were in a dreadful state. These, along with others, were marched out the
following morning. We soon found out that R.S.M Lord had been ordered to go with them but he managed to hide underneath a Belgian hut. We heard that the R.A.F prisoners had been attacked by R.A.F. Typhoons and some 55 had been killed along with some of their guards. Yes, our small area of Germany was becoming most dangerous. About the 8th April 1945 we were on the noon roll call when a couple of 88mm guns started ranging shots over the camp from the high ground.

This led us to believe that the area was to be contested over and quickly had us lime washing roofs with British P.O.W and U.S.A P.O.W. By now R.S.M Lord had re-emerged and there were now 2 of our men close to every German. On April 14th I was wandering around the compound with my mates when we heard a low flying aircraft. On looking up we started waving and cheering as it was an Auster artillery spotting plane. It flew back over us, waggled its wings and was gone. These aircraft, although unarmed, could stall and outmanoeuvre most problems but what courage was needed for such an onerous task, prone to ground fire.

The Auster had obviously done a good job when at 11am we witnessed two low flying Typhoons. We immediately ducked for cover when we saw the incoming rockets which looked as if they were for us but zipped overhead to silence the guns that had been ranging on the previous days.

Many of the guards had disappeared and the remaining ones now had strange bedfellows in the shape of British airborne men armed with instructions to protect the remaining Germans both military and civilian. We were maintaining order throughout the camp.

At about 0900 hours a light armoured vehicle drove slowly up to the camp with a Major Cobbold of 8 Hussars. He was most surprised to be met by the smartly turned out men of the 1st British Airborne Division as he thought that somehow the 6th Airborne had got there in front of the 7th Armoured Brigade.

The news soon spread around the camp that we were liberated, the day, 16th April 1945.

It was to be another 10 days before I left the camp confines, my wound still suppurating, but I was in one piece. On that day we were lined up in the roadway where we were attacked with D.D.T guns in the hands of Royal Army Service Corps Personnel attached to the field hygiene units. Then we were allowed to get on board troop carrying vehicles. In those eight months I had lost 6 stone which was almost half of my weight. It was going to be a long hard road back to fitness.

I mentioned earlier of P.T.S "Post Traumatic Stress", no such condition in those days. The words most bandied about if anyone complained was L.M.F "Lack of Moral Fibre".

It was just great to be free and on our way home!
Appendix Six: Stan’s War – A Prisoner’s Story

On September 3rd, 1939, I was playing golf at Benfleet, Essex, when Chamberlain made his radio broadcast to announce that the nation was now at war with Germany.

It was quite difficult to volunteer my services. I tried to get onto a New Zealand ship as a look-out but I was turned down. I tried to join the RAF but they weren’t recruiting. I tried the Army – they weren’t recruiting either.

Then I read in the newspapers that the Artillery was looking for men and, with memories of the Infantry being slaughtered in the trenches in the Great War still fresh in people’s minds, manning a gun behind the lines seemed a good idea. ‘The further back the better’ said my father!

But it turned out that this, too, was ‘just a newspaper story’ – volunteers were not required. Then I was asked if I had a driving licence. ‘Yes’, I replied. ‘OK, you can go into the Service Corps’.

That was November 14th, 1939. No-one asked to see my driving licence, then or later.

On November 15th I had a medical.

On November 16th, I reported to Aldershot.
Stanley Charles Wade, age 22, Army Number T119582.

November 28th, after a week’s embarkation leave, five of us were picked out on parade for cookhouse fatigue and I spent all day peeling onions. When we came back all the others had gone, all my mates were on draft.

‘Where the ‘ell you been?’ said the Sergeant Major.

‘Cookhouse’, we said.
'What bloody fool sent you down there?'

'You, sir!'

'You'd no business to have gone, you were on draft'

So, I had a week on square-bashing and a fresh intake came in.

On December 5th:

Left Aldershot at 830 in the morning for Southampton...

...arrived Cherbourg...

December 15th. Posted to B Section. Very disappointed because I lost all the others - they went to different sections. Went into Albert for a bath.

So, I was on my own again! But that's the army all over! The first night I was there they put me on 24-hour guard. I had a rifle but no ammunition.

I was given a driving test on a 10-ton diesel. When the Sergeant Major discovered that the biggest thing I had driven before that was a 14hp Morris, he was not prepared to wait until I got the hang of it and I was put on to a van whose driver was going on leave.

When the van driver returned I was posted to the supply section back at the headquarters in Mericourt, as a clerk. Three reservist Sergeants and me in a little house which was both home and office for me. There was Tommo, who was in charge of the loaders, and Ginger Ryan and Jock Wallace. Jock had played football for the Army and had scored a goal against the Arsenal and never stopped talking about it. It was a very bad winter and they couldn't move the lorries because they churned the roads up too much.

December 23rd. Visited Amiens and saw Me and My Girl with Lupino Lane.
December 25\textsuperscript{th}. Each man subbed for 20\textsterling.

Turkey, Pork, strawberries. Disappointing day.

December 28\textsuperscript{st}. Snow fell. About 3 inches.

In March 1940 I had about ten days' leave. Before leaving I was supposed to hand over five rounds of ammunition to my quartermaster and then hand over another five rounds at the port of embarkation. I had to \textit{draw} five rounds from the quartermaster so that I had the five rounds to hand in at the port. Then, when I returned to Boulogne, I picked it up and handed it back to the quartermaster!

While I was home I saw my father and stepmother and Josephine, my new sister who had been born on December 10\textsuperscript{th} 1939 and I also, of course, went to the golf club. There I met a chap who said to me: 'I suppose I mustn't ask you where you're stationed?' to which I replied 'If I told you, you wouldn't know - actually it's a little village called Mericourt.'

'Wouldn't know it!' he said. 'We used to go up the front there!' He was, of course, referring to the Somme front in the Great War.

When I returned to France I took a wireless back with me and a golf club. There was nothing to do all day. The three sergeants and I played cards incessantly. Old Tommo could read tea leaves and one day he picked them up and said: 'We're going to move from here - you and I are going East.' Of course, we pooh-poohed it and he was very upset. But he was right. We were both taken prisoner and ended up in the East.

\textbf{May 10\textsuperscript{th}} Gerry broke through.
Friday, May 17th: we moved out - the headquarters, workshops and all their lorries. One day Tommo said to me: 'You can drive can’t you? Well, they’ve got some Humber Snipe Utilities here'. So we got this Snipe (‘surplus to requirements’) and we knocked off a case of rum, some chickens and whatnot, filled it up and got all our own stuff in the back and tagged along at the back of the convoy.

It was a helluva bloody mess! We had no idea what was going on, didn’t even know what direction we were going in. Travelling was difficult because of refugees on the road, fleeing from the advancing Germans.

After two or three nights on the go - sleeping in ditches - we found ourselves under an avenue of trees just outside Arders with a crossroads at the end: one road went to Dunkerque, one to Calais and one to Boulogne. I was put on guard and took charge of some refugees coming back from the Belgian side - some chaps said they were fifth columnists that they’d arrested. They said that although they had rifles they had no ammunition - little did they know I didn’t have any either! We handed them over to the French police.

A bit later a Gerry motorcycle outfit came along. We opened fire, killed two or three and took three or four prisoners. We thought: 'These guys have got some pluck coming out here!' but we didn’t know that we were surrounded. There was a big field down below us and we saw some vehicles at the bottom of us and they opened up on us. We could tell they were coming up to us from the pooy marks in the earth from the guns. Well, I must have ducked down pretty low because the chap on my right, he got one in the forehead, killed him outright, and the chap on my left, he got a nick on the neck. They killed three or four of our fellows -
funnily enough they were nearly all chaps who'd been in the First World War. And then all of a sudden they stopped and went away; we couldn't make it out. We thought they must have been British and realised what they were doing and cleared off. Then after an hour or two we got orders to move off: we were going to be escorted by three small light tanks, one in the front, one in the middle and one at the back. We'd no idea where they had come from. They said we were going back to Calais and going home to be re-equipped. They took us all round unmade roads and we came out by a kind of a ravine and there were tanks up at the top. We came under fire, jumped out, the order came to get back in again; old Tommo and I went to get in the front (of the Snipe?) but there was already someone sitting there so we had to jump in the back. All of a sudden something burst nearby and I got a bit of stuff on the elbow and Tommo got something up his backside. We jumped out and crawled into a ditch full of water. The (British) tank that was behind us had gone, the one in front was knocked out and the one in the middle went in the ditch and couldn't get out. So we crawled out of this ditch and made our way back - quite a way I suppose. I had to take my soaked great coat off and we cleared off. We came across some Red Cross fellows - RAMC, I don't know what they were doing - and someone put a dressing on my arm. They couldn't do anything for Tommo. We met up with some other fellows and went into a farm. They wouldn't give us any food and we spent the night in a barn. We heard Germans outside during the night and in the morning the French farmer came and said we must go, he couldn't keep us there. We tried to make our way up towards Dunkerque but it was very difficult, it's all ditches and canals along that part and there was no cover and we couldn't travel at night. Eventually a car came up with a German in it and he pointed us to go back to the road.
They put us in a field and gave us some buckets of water.

**In the bag.** It was May 23rd, 1940.

[Nearly sixty years later I discovered what had happened when I read the obituary of Ronald Eastman, a wartime POW who made the forged documents that enabled his fellow prisoners to bluff their way out of camps in Germany. "As a second lieutenant in the 3rd Royal Tank Regiment, Eastman had taken part in the defence of Calais in May 1940 when a mixed British force of fewer than 2,000 was confronted by two Panzer divisions – more than 20,000 men and 550 tanks. (...) Eastman’s troop of three light tanks had been ordered to go to St. Omer(...) to seize vital canal crossings. Near Arques, they encountered German armoured cars firing on an RASC convoy of 25 lorries. Eastman drove off the German armoured cars, destroying two of them. He then tried to escort the RASC convoy back to Calais but German tanks and anti-tank guns blocked the route. Eastman (...) was captured."]

We were among the first to be taken and the numbers gradually built up over the two days we were there. Then we moved off.

*May 26th.* marched 24 'kilos', we had no food.

*May 27th.* marched another 53 kilos to Montreuil, arriving at 1.10 in the morning, left previous camp at 7am... no food that day

...had a bit of stew - bit of horsemeat I expect.

The next day we marched 18 kilos... a packet of biscuits.

The next day we marched 22 kilos to... two packets of biscuits.

While we were on this march you could never get to the front and you could never get to the back. The roads are dead straight in Northern France and there were always people, thousands of French and all the British all going along and we just slept in the fields at night time.
.....we marched 18 kilos to Doolens, a packet of biscuits.
June 1st, we marched 23 kilos to Mondicort, a packet of biscuits. .
June 2nd. we marched to Beque, packet of biscuits and some stew.
Monday June 3rd, we marched to Cambrai, 33 kilos, stew.

We went on into Belgium and on to Luxembourg where we caught a train to Trier.

Arrived 6 in the morning, queued up for food, and at midnight we were still waiting for it.

The Germans discovered that the French were doubling up and keeping us back so they had a bayonet charge and the French all scattered and we went in - at midnight!

The next day, or the day after, they gave us some bread which was to last us three days. I turned round to a chap to borrow his knife so that I could cut it into three portions. I cut it, gave him his knife back and when I turned back the other half had disappeared. That taught me a lesson!

Then we got on the train - 60 to a cattle truck - which we were on for three days. We did stop sometimes when they let us out and the Red Cross there gave us coffee or mint tea - but no food.
Arrival at Lamsdorf

We arrived at Lamsdorf on June 14th. I was just about done in by then but we still had to walk the five miles from the station to the camp.

We were put in stables. We Brits were on one side of the road and on the other side were Poles. They were marvellous, they'd do anything for the British. They would throw food over to us. They used to sing to us and we used to sing to them.

After a couple of days, the Jerries came round and asked if there were any clerks. I was among those who volunteered and we got on with the job of registering all the chaps who'd come in — names, numbers, addresses, next of kin, that sort of thing. At that time we had a curious ration of a loaf of bread between five twice a week and a loaf between seven five times a week. We used to measure it out with a matchbox — lengthways for five times a week and widthways for seven times a week — which worked out perfectly! And we got a bowl of soup and a few potatoes boiled in their jackets, dirt and all. The registration volunteers used to get a bit of extra soup until the Warrant Officers realised what was going on and chucked us off!

After a few days they took us into the de-louser. We hadn't had a wash for a month — we'd had no facilities on the march, no water, no towels and we were sleeping in the open. We were stripped off and our clothes put in a 'gas chamber' while we had a shower. They cut all our hair off, although I had a beard and that was left. Then they put a number on my chest on a board - 9989 - and took my photograph.
The main camp was a huge place. It was all new, built for the army I believe. It must have been 600-700 yards square, divided into six compounds; each compound had four long huts, brick built, in the middle of which were washing facilities and at each end 180-odd beds, a few tables and forms. The latrine was outside.

**Work Party**

On July 28th, I left in a work party of 60 men for Popielow. We were billeted in a large hall attached to an inn, sleeping on straw on three-tiered long slats. Our job was to take bends out of a small river, turfing and trying to deepen it. We stood in water all day long shovelling sand which fell back in as fast as you took it in out - German efficiency! We didn’t work very hard.

*September 5th.* Latest rumour - London kaput - supposed to have been bombed and all on fire. Rations: coffee, teaspoon sugar and slice of bread for breakfast. Lunch - cabbage soup. Evening, coffee, piece of bread, occasionally some butter and a few potatoes.

*September 10th.* Liverpool and Birmingham bombed, also Berlin. Same breakfast, carrot soup for lunch, coffee, bread, potatoes, piece of sausage for supper.

*September 11th.* Went to work in the rain but returned immediately as the river was flooded. Barley soup.

*September 12th.* No work. New Corporal seems very conscious (sic) especially to the sick. Cabbage soup, smelly cheese.

*September 13th.* No work again. Issued with bread which had gone mouldy. Latest rumour - Berlin and Italy kaput. Carrot soup.
September 14th. No work. Pleasant surprise. We had a slice of bread for breakfast. Also heard money and cigarettes had arrived. Potato soup. Wade (Harley) caught with baked potatoes. We used to pinch potatoes and we'd hide them in the ash tray underneath the stove and then put them on wire and hang them on the side of the chimney to cook.

September 15th. Slice of bread again. Big surprise – paid for first time – received 12 marks 60. Pea soup. Tuesday. Won the potatoes. I had brought a pack of cards from France and five of us – Wade Harley, Bill Owen, Max Mark; Earl Bower and I – would play rummy for one very small potato.

September 16th. No work again. Cabbage soup. Loaf of bread given by Raus (one of the guards) – played cards for it and Wade won. My mate!

September 18th. Back to work once more.

September 19th. Some dripping!!

September 21st. Received cigarettes and tobacco from Lamsdorf. Latest rumour – 15 English divisions landed at Dunkirk. No work – I've got a bad foot.

September 22nd. I cut everyone's hair. We all had lice.

My diary records that I barely worked over the next few weeks. We used to get ulcers all down the leg, partially caused by malnutrition, and my boots by then were just about finished. At one time I went to work in bare feet before I got a pair of clogs. My socks were worn out, the foot of them had gone completely, and they gave us some rags to wrap around our feet inside the clogs. One day at work it was particularly cold and – although I was usually with the bad workers – I got stuck in because I was cold and wanted to warm
up. A guard whom we called 'pasty-face' came up and asked everybody what their 'job' was. 'Clerk' he was told. When he got to me he said: 'He's not a clerk, he's a good arbeiter'. We all laughed. A day or two later he brought me a pair of socks! That was the only thing I ever received from the guards.

The German gaffer - we called him Charlie - had been a prisoner in the First World War and he's got a nice scar across his head where they'd hit him. He was all right. He used to come up and yell "Mach, mach, weiter, weiter". 'Oh, fuck off Charlie!', we'd say, to which he'd reply 'You no fuck-a-de-me, you fuck-a-de- turves!' There was a toilet - a shed that had been up - and, of course, we used to go down there six or seven times a day to pay the time and he'd say: 'Kein essen aber viel schießen!' (Nothing to eat but plenty of shit) Some of the guards used to knock us about a bit with a rifle. In those early days they were quite young and very pro Nazi but on the whole it wasn't too bad.

That job finished when it got so cold that the ground was frozen. So we shovelled snow or we chopped wood for the people in the village, and when it really got cold, we went ice-hacking.

One day, when it was blowing a blizzard, we were sent out to clear the railway line. They said the temperature was 50 below. After we'd cleared the line, we went into the boiler house for half-an-hour by which time the snow had covered the tracks again so we had to start again.

During the cold weather we only washed at weekends because we needed the small towel they had issued us with to wrap around our head to keep our ears warm.
My shirt was torn. I was given a French shirt and a French overcoat but it was very thin. We were issued with a bar of soap once, ersatz soap, not much bigger than a match box. It was meant for four men, but one chap, Max, gets hold of the soap, has a wash down and, of course, there’s no bloody soap for anyone else! Well, when we were out ice-hacking one day, this same Max took a step back and fell in the water! We all laughed, but it was freezing cold and he was taken away and kitted out with spare clothes – not only cleaner than us but warmer than us!

March 1941

Another working party at Gogolin. We joined up with two others, a total of 250 men. Slept in a real village hall.

Up at 3.50 am, catch a train at 5 am, a three-hour train journey up to Katowice. We had to get a thick telecommunication cable in a trench. The mud was terrible and the chap in charge had a horse whip and he was whipping us. We worked from 8-5 and then another three-hour journey back home and lights out were at 10 o’clock. We did this job for six or seven weeks. We used to put our picks through the cable – don’t know what happened!

We had our bread ration before we went in the morning – it was my job to cut it up – then soup when we came back in the evening. That was it for the day but by then Red Cross parcels were beginning to come through, erratically at first but eventually about once a week. We got one between two: a tin of meat loaf, some tea, sugar, tin of condensed milk, bar of chocolate, tin of diced carrots, tin of sardines, biscuits, little tin of dried egg, some marmite tablets, a bit of jam.
Then we went to Lapeln/ Opole. There was a special carriage on the back of the train for us - didn’t want us mixing with the civvies. There we were digging out railway sidings, loading up trucks, taking up old railway lines. We’d see all the troops going down to Greece and Crete. One day, when we were unloading sleepers from a truck, I fell and broke my arm.

June 41

It was several days before it was agreed that my arm was actually broken and I went back to Lamsdorf. After a month I was put back on to light duties in the camp which didn’t amount to anything - carrying light stuff about. The Germans had gone into Russia by then. Up at one end of the camp they had a lot of Russian prisoners and we had to take something or other up there. We went into these huts - it was like walking into a brick wall it was so packed with chaps. They were all holding their hands out for cigarettes, food, anything because their rations were half what we were getting. There was another camp further up that we could see in the distance and they used to bring out cartloads of dead - you could see their legs sticking up - and tip them in the pit.

Once I was passed fit for work I got a chit to say I was not for the mines. The party I’d left, when they’d finished on the railways, they did go into a mine. About 30 of us went to a school. Two rooms, size of my dining room, 12 men in each, bunks, one table sat six, rest of you had to sit on your bed if you wanted to eat. There was a stove, the black out was up and if you cooked anything on the stove you were absolutely sweating! Then when the stove died down and the lights went out you’d take the blackout down to get some air in the place and you’d freeze.
Then half us of went to Mittenbruck and forestry. A hard job. I was there for two and a half years. When the temperature dropped to 20 below you didn’t do forestry because it would take the point off the axe and the teeth off the saw so then we had to go snow shovelling or ice-hacking. One year we had a fortnight off when the temperature never even got up to 20 below.

Things improved while we were in that job. We got books through, games, cards, that sort of thing. A chap taught me bridge, another taught me chess - basic chess, basic bridge! We were supposed to get paid but mostly we didn’t. One chap had an accordion, one or two had guitars, so we used to have a sing-song quite often.

**Rations:** We were supposed to get 500 gms of bread a day. Used to get one of these long loaves between three but if you weighed it you’d find it was only 1200 gms instead of 1500. Soup was mostly swede and a bit of potato boiled up. A little bit of sausage or liver sausage. There was no room to move but we had an outhouse and in there was a big stove and a ‘copper’ so that we could boil the water up for tea and coffee and we could put wood under the stove - we were lucky because we could bring in all the wood we wanted and keep the barrack living quarters warm - otherwise you used to get a bucket of coal for a day which wasn’t sufficient to keep the fire going at all.

The only was you could get any time off was by going sick. We had a doctor come round about once a month - a New Zealander - and I thought I’d get him to inject into my varicose veins. Well he did inject but I
only got one day off. I had haemorrhoids too and he cut those but I only got that day off. Bit of a wasted effort. Chaps used to try and work a flanker on him! But he was quite a decent chap. I asked him once if I could go back to Lamsdorf but he wouldn’t wear it. Eventually, he came round one day and said did I still want to go back to Lamsdorf – I was having a bit of back trouble – I said yes, so he let me go.

(After two-and-a-half years)

They had a song there I’ve never heard before:

When I was young and healthy I went looking for a job
The foreman says to me ‘I’ll give you five and twenty bob’
When I saw all the piles of shit I knew that I’d been robbed.

Chorus: I like working down the sewer amongst all the piddle and the poop
Sorting out the shitty bits of paper, polishing the automatic wiper
Working down the sewer that’s where the navvie does his bit
With a ting a ling you hear the shovels ring
Working down the sewer, shovelling up the shit.

The foreman says to me as I came to work rather late
As he grabbed me by the bollocks and slung me through the gate
If you can’t come fucking early then you can’t come fucking late.

Chorus: I like working down the sewer amongst all the piddle and the poop
Sorting out the shitty bits of paper, polishing the automatic wiper
Working down the sewer that’s where the navvie does his bit
With a ting a ling you hear the shovels ring
Working down the sewer, shovelling up the shit.

This was in the Spring of 1944.

When I got back to Lamsdorf, it was a different place. Everything was organised, there were a couple of swap shops. Trade was done in English cigarettes. The swap shops were licensed by the Brits and if you sold anything you paid the chap one cigarette and if he sold you anything you paid him a cigarette so he made two cigarettes on the deal. There was a theatre, a Church and a school – a lot of NCOs were able to go to school – there were several who couldn’t read or write and the Germans allowed them to stay in and learn. We could go all round the other compounds which we couldn’t do before. There was one compound of RAF – other ranks so to speak, ground crew and that sort of
thing— they'd been taught what to do if you were taken prisoner which we never were— we might have thought of getting wounded or killed but you never thought of being taken prisoner. There was a big difference in the intake. A lot of Canadians had come in from Dieppe; pretty well every nation you could think of was in there then— Indians, Pakistanis, Yugoslavs, all sorts. A lot of Kenyans, East African Rifles.

We had football matches, rugby matches. Had a sports meeting one day— it was all organised. Of course the swap shops used to shut if there were no Red Cross parcels coming through because you had nothing to trade with. One night we woke up, all the machine guns were going. They came round about six on the morning— Everybody Out— counted us up, didn't go to work, came round again, checked us again and still kept us in and then they marched everybody out of the camp and then they marched us all back again and counted again. What had happened was that some chaps had gone over the wire during the night and, according to the interpreters, they couldn't make it out because they'd counted more men than there should have been!

Then I got a job— in the barbers shop in the German Barracks. That's when I got into the rackets! I hadn't got a watch, I hadn't got any money, but you could trade with some of the Germans and some of the Russians who were working there. So I borrowed 10 Marks and with that I bought a packet of French cigarettes, took them down there sold them for 50 Marks, came back, got more cigarettes. They had a choice of watches and I was able to buy a watch with the cigarettes and I made enough profit from that to pay back my initial stake. There were four of us in this barbers shop. We only did the Germans' hair. Every time we came back into the camp we were searched so we gave the guards cigarettes so that we had an easy
time – or if there was going to be any particular search they would let us know so that we were ready for it. I used to be able to buy bread, eggs from the Germans – trade with English cigarettes. If you took a can of cocoa down to the Germans you would get about a dozen eggs – bring the eggs back and you could sell them. It was quite easy.

I was barbering for two or three months I suppose. In the meantime, we’d heard that the Allies had landed in France which was a huge relief – we knew that it was the beginning of the end.

The Last Job

Next morning we went to work at Chorzow in a carbide factory. We came under the black shirts in there – and it was shift work – 6-2, 2-10 and 10-6. Carbide is a mixture of chalk and coke which, when you add water to it, gives off a gas and was used, I think, for fertiliser. It was dangerous work and the heat was terrible.

The old Pole we worked with was a decent chap – anything we couldn’t get on with he used to help us out with. The Poles were very good to us on the whole and they had a hell of a time. The Red Cross parcels stopped about the end of November.

The Pole helped us with news. We knew what was happening, the Russians were getting closer and we knew it couldn’t be all that long and we knew that the Allies were up on the Rhine pretty well and we had hoped that they would get over that by Christmas – but then, of course, Arnhem happened. Then we didn’t like it when the Germans went into the Ardennes – got the wind up a bit about that.
The 23rd January, 1945

At 2 o'clock in the morning they marched us out. We'd made a sledge with some old wood to put our kit on - but they took us through a town where the snow had been cleared so that was that - we had to dump the sledge and carry our kit. We kept going 'til about 7 or 8 o'clock that night - we had to sling some of the stuff out of our kit because we couldn't carry it. At that stage there were just sixty of us. We were put in a school that night and joined up with another sixty Greeks. We daren't take our boots off because our feet would have been too swollen in the morning to put them back on again. There was hardly room to sit down on the floor. We carried on with the Greeks the next morning and on the 3rd day we got to Ratibor. A day's rest there but still didn't take our boots off. Our feet were wet and there was snow. Then we crossed the Oder and we picked up 2000 Russians and that was our column for the next three months pretty well.

Sometimes they gave us some bread - to last you two days - and from then on we just slept in barns. Some days all we got was half a raw beetroot, we more or less had to live off the land as best we could. We'd no Red Cross stuff to carry with us - we'd gone through that. We used to march for three days and then have a day's rest. I started off with three blankets - but one of those went. I had a spare suit, battledress, but that went - had to chuck things away, you couldn't carry it. Some chaps had better packs. We went through villages; one day we went into a small town and they put us in the Village Hall and they hadn't noticed that the windows of the toilets weren't barred and we could open the window and we all went out round the village and the locals gave us a bit of food - they
were Czechs, we were in Czechoslovakia by then, going round the mountains. Everybody came back. We'd no idea where we were – they could’ve have cleared off if they wanted to but it was getting near the end of the war and it was better what you knew than what you didn't. Didn't know what sort of a reception you'd get from the Russians – we were only too glad to keep away from them.

I think other working parties joined up as the march went along. We got the rumour, I don't know how, that the Red Cross were sending out white lorries and distributing to these different marches. Certainly when we got on a bit we did see empty Red Cross tins that had been thrown away so we thought, well, some of those chaps were bloody lucky – they'd had the Red Cross which we hadn't.

Then we went right round Czecho near Karlsbad and Marienbad and we came out into Germany at Reiden. Must have been the end of March.

By the way I changed my underclothes at Easter!! Nowhere to wash anything or dry anything – it snowed, it rained, you still kept the same clothes on – don’t remember when Easter was but that was the first time my trousers had been below my knees!! Feet stood up pretty well – I had a spare pair of boots, the old man had sent me a pair of boots.

The Russians had nothing. They used to drop out. Sometimes the Germans put a bullet through them, other times they'd just leave them to freeze to death.

When we got to Reiden we lost the Russians though the Greeks were still with us. They put us on a train - open trucks, could just look over the top. I was in
the last truck; there was a machine gun in the one in front of us with Jerries on it. We were going along merrily and looked up: "Oh look, there's eight planes. Must be ours, we're alright." The train started to slow down and we looked out the back and there were these planes, three of them coming down towards us. The train stopped, they opened up their machine guns and they hit the train engine and we could see the bombs coming down and the trees going up. Three of them came down but the others didn't and we couldn't make out why — maybe they realised we were prisoners. Some wag said they saw the Red Cross parcel — they had delivered us one by then. As soon as the bombardment finished, we were over the top and out and into the woods. Eventually they called us back. One of the funniest sights I've ever seen — there was a ditch in these woods and when you looked up all you could see was bare backsides! Then they got another engine and we got back in and continued on to Regensburg. When we got there we had a helluva job to get out of those trucks — but when we'd stopped during the bombing we were over and out in no trouble at all!

Then they put us in this place called Sing Sing — a few miles outside Regensburg — must have been a big shed of some sort. We used to go back into Regensburg every day clearing up bomb damage. We did that for a week

The next day we didn't go out — maybe it was a Sunday — but during the morning the air raid siren went and a plane came over. They shot that one down but then wave after wave, close on a thousand bombers, came over — marvellous to watch, though terrible. We heard that 200 prisoners were killed in that raid.
The next day we had to march out but we went at night time because it was too dangerous to go during the day. These American planes were all around - anything that moved they were after it. So we marched out, holed up in the day. - Germans were telling us they expected the Americans to come through. We were near Landschutz somewhere. A lot of the guards went - mostly the ones we didn’t like went and the decent ones stayed with us. They said the Americans will be through about 11 o’clock tomorrow morning.

And they were pretty well to time. We didn’t see any German soldiers at all. The Americans came through. They wanted to know what the guards were like, did we want them to shoot them! We said NO, these chaps have been very good. The previous night when they were on guard, what they were frightened of was the SS coming through; they took one or two of our chaps to be with them and handed over their rifles well before the yanks came through.

29th April, 1945

The yanks came through - Patton’s Army. They killed a cow for us and gave us a bit of their K rations. The Americans stopped the night - they had roast chicken, peas and ice-cream - God Almighty, we thought, front line troops.....!

And then they went off.

Another lot came in the next day. They were almost a comfort crowd, doing watch repairs and things, looking after people. We were there a fortnight. They
told us to stop there, didn’t want anyone moving and getting in the way. We went into the village and looted the burgermeisters store – the Germans were doing it as well – we got a bucket of fat which we took back for cooking.

The yanks never told us when the war actually ended. After the fortnight they put us on lorries, took us to an aerodrome – lots of crashed planes, blown up planes – where there were thousands of POWS. We spent the night there and thought we’d be there for days. We were given a list of who was to go with whom and the next morning planes came in one after another and the whole lot was cleared. We landed in Brussels and we were taken into town to an army hostel and told we were to stay there until five o’clock in case they came for us. We were given vouchers and some money. After five we went around Brussels. Hung about next day, we weren’t called and because we’d run out of food vouchers we reported it and discovered they’d forgotten all about us. So they took us off to the airport straight away. Then we came under the RAF. This airfield was covered in prisoners again. They put 33 of us onto one plane – same Dakota as we’d been on with the yanks with just 27. I was one of the last lot and the pilot said ‘How many have I got here? 36? That’s’ too many – six of you will have to get off – I’ve just had the tanks filled up, I’ll never get the tail up.” So off we got. Then he said “hang on a minute”, went off to see someone, then said “OK you can
get on but you’ll have to stand up the front of the plane while I take off”. I would have gladly stayed on the ground! So we took off and came down in Amersham – had to stand up front again.

The end of May 1945. I was home.
## Appendix Seven: Prisoner of War Liberation Questionnaire - Read VHW (WO344/264/2)

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![Image of the questionnaire form](image-url)

### General Questionnaire for British/American Ex-Prisoners of War

1. **No.** 356247  
   **Rank.** S/L  
   **Surname.** READ  
   **Christian Names.** HENRICK WILLIAM  
   **Decorations.**  

2. **Ship (R.N., U.S.N. or Merchant Navy).**  
   **Unit (Army).**  
   **Squadron (R.A.F. or A.A.F.).**  
   **Division (Army), Command (R.A.F. or A.A.F.).**  

3. **Date of Birth.** 26-2-20  
   **Date of Enlistment.** 8-5-39  

4. **Civilian Trade or Profession.** ELECTRICIAN  
   **(or examinations passed while P.O.W.).**  

5. **Private Address.**  
   **The Forge, High Street, Odiham, Hants.**  

6. **Place and Date of Original Capture.** ARNHEIM, HOLLAND, 30-9-44  
   **Were you Wounded when Captured?** YES  

7. **Main Camps or Hospitals in which Imprisoned.**  
   **Camp No.**  
   **Location.**  
   **From:**  
   **To:**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp No.</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOLLGO LFF</td>
<td>HR FRANKFURT</td>
<td>30-9-44</td>
<td>30-9-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHA</td>
<td>LINBURG</td>
<td>27-9-44</td>
<td>10-10-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZL D</td>
<td>FALLENROSTEL</td>
<td>15-10-44</td>
<td>6-11-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKB - KGD</td>
<td>HALLENDORF</td>
<td>8-11-44</td>
<td>8-4-45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **Were you in a Working Camp?** YES  
   **Location.**  
   **From:**  
   **To:**  
   **Nature of Work.**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Nature of Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HALLENDORF</td>
<td>9-11-44</td>
<td>10-4-45</td>
<td>GENERAL IN STEEL WORKS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. **Did you Suffer from any Serious Illnesses while a P.O.W.?** NO  
   **Nature of Illness.**  
   **Cause.**  
   **Duration.**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Illness</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. **Did you Receive Adequate Medical Treatment?** YES  
    **In Transit.** V E N Y A  

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GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE PART II. TOP SECRET.

1. No. 2581242 RANK S.L.O.M. SURNAME READ

CHRISTIAN NAMES VICTOR HENRY WILLIAM

2. LECTURES before Capture:
   a. Were you lectured in your unit on how to behave in the event of capture?
      (State where, when and by whom).
      UNOFFICER ESCAPED CAPTAIN AT GRANTHAM
      IN MAY 1944

   b. Were you lectured on escape and evasion? (State where, when and by whom).
      AS ABOVE

3. INTERROGATION after capture:
   Were you specially interrogated by the enemy? (State where, when and methods employed by enemy).
   DULAG LUFT, ECKHAUSEN, N.R. FRANKFURT ON MAIN
   18-9-41 TO 27-9-41 BY SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

4. ESCAPES attempted:
   Did you make any attempted or partly successful escapes? (Give details of each attempt separately, stating where, when, method employed, names of your companions, where and when captured and by whom. Were you physically fit? What happened to your companions?)
   NC

5. SABOTAGE:
   Did you do any sabotage or destruction of enemy factory plant, war material, communications, etc. when employed on working-parties or during escape? (Give details, places and dates.)
   NC

6. COLLABORATION with enemy:
   Do you know of any British or American personnel who collaborated with the enemy or in any way helped the enemy against other Allied Fighters of War? (Give details, names of persons concerned, camps, dates and manner of collaboration or help given to enemy).
   NC

7. WAR CRIMES:
   If you have any information or evidence of bad treatment by the enemy to yourself or to others, or knowledge of any enemy violation of Geneva Convention you should ask for a copy of "Form Q" on which to make your statement.
   (Note: Form Q is a separate form inquiring information on "War Crimes" and describes the kinds of offences occurring under this title.)
GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE. PART II. TOP SECRET.
(continued).

1. Have you any other matter of any kind you wish to bring to notice?


SECURITY UNDERTAKING.

I fully realise that all information relating to the matters covered by the questions in Part II.
are of a highly secret and official nature.

I have had explained to me and fully understand that under Defence Regulations or
U.S.A.R. 580-5 I am forbidden to publish or communicate any information concerning
these matters.

Date: 18-4-45
Signature: [Signature]

333
Appendix Eight: Correspondence re National Archives’ research 2005-2007

Dear Tom (Handwritten)

Firstly, it was a pleasure and a privilege to meet you at the Reunion. You fleshed out for me the dreadful physical and psychological circumstances during the Battle of Arnhem, in transit and at Fallingbostel, following the mass influx of the wounded Airborne troops from Arnhem during the final stages of WWII when The Third Reich was crumbling.

Secondly, thank you so much for your recent letter and account of your experiences from 17th September 1944 to liberation in April 1945; and for the maps; and article on Sgt. Hollingsworth. I would like to quote extracts from your account and the article in my PhD, if that’s OK. If so, please can you let me have the date that you wrote your account and the date and name of the publication that the Sgt. Hollingsworth article is in so that I can cite these in the references?

I spent two and a half days at the National Archives last week, and photocopied a number of documents. Unfortunately, your PoW liberation questionnaire was not in the alphabetically arranged file CARNACHAN - CARR (WO344/55/2). This might be because (a) you didn’t complete one – only 140,000 were returned; (b) it was mislaid; or (c) it was removed to help formulate the evidence in the War Crimes Trial concerning Sgt. Hollingsworth. I managed to find my father’s and three other men’s who were at the Reunion, but the questionnaires of two other men in my father’s section were also not to be found.

The Forms Q, which accompanied the questionnaires asked for information relating to War Crimes ‘If you have any information or evidence of bad treatment by the enemy to yourself or to others, or knowledge of any enemy violation of Geneva Convention’. But according to the archives, the whereabouts of these is currently unknown, although they were used to amass evidence for war crimes trials.

I looked at a couple of files relating to Operation Market Garden: 21 Army Group report of the Battle of a day-to-day basis 17th-26th September 1944; and Chief Signal Officer’s Report – general conclusions. My dad was in Signals.

Regarding Fallingbostel I looked at the Red Cross reports in autumn 1944/early 1945 on the camp, the camp hospital, and the work parties. I also looked at the War Crimes trial file ‘The Fallingbostel Case’, which is referred to in the article you sent me. I have copies of the Red Cross reports and selected affidavits and evidence from the War Crimes Trial. What I found most interesting was the discrepancy between what the Red Cross inspectors picked up and what the actual conditions were. This comparison will form part of my thesis.

I would be pleased to copy anything for you . . . I’m sending the draft introduction to my PhD so that you can see where the research is heading, although I am likely to rewrite when I’ve finished the thesis: you always end up with some conclusions you didn’t anticipate . . . For my PhD I want to do a visual representation (a collage or similar) of both places from things my father left, your and others’ accounts, maps, Imperial War Museum photos, and my own photography of the landscape and cemeteries. Sometimes, images speak much louder than words.

Anyway, once again sincerest thanks, my good wishes go to you and your wife.

Jocelyn (Handwritten)
I followed this letter up with two further letters in March 2006 and March 2007:

17th March 2006

I’m sorry that it has taken so long to copy these papers from the National Archives for you. There are two sets of papers: one taken from the Red Cross reports of the camp and the hospital; and the other from the War Crimes Trial centred on Fallingbostel, the shooting of Sgt. Hollingsworth and the treatment of PoWs 1944-45. Unfortunately I missed copying one or two pages from a couple of affidavits, but will get these when I return to have another look at the War Crimes Trial file. I have copied all the other pages for you from these affidavits, but only noticed this afternoon when I was compiling everything that my original was incomplete. I have kept those affidavits back to avoid confusion and marked them up as your copies. The (German made!) scanners are very sophisticated and you have to request either a left or right hand side sheet – I must have pressed the wrong button! . . .

3rd March 2007

How are you? I hope you’re well.
Please find attached the missing bits and pieces from the documents I copied at the National Archives last week. I realised when I started to get my head round it that I had copied two pages twice instead of the next two pages! I promised to send these to you ages ago, but I only got down to the National Archives on Tuesday. I hope you find them of interest . . .

____________________________________
Appendix Nine: Former Camps and Cemetery of the Nameless, Fallingbostel/Oerbke – maps and photograph of Russian PoWs
THE CEMETERY OF THE NAMELESS

Russian War Cemetery at Oerbke

In our county Soltau-Fallingbostel there is a war cemetery with about 30,000 graves of Russian prisoners of war. Who really knows this war cemetery, the so-called "cemetery of the Nameless" close to the little town of Oerbke near the Motorway from Hamburg to Hanover?

Map of Oerbke and surrounding (indicating the way to the cemetery)

There are also signposts for this Russian war cemetery at Fallingbostel (Centre) as well as at Oerbke.
“Antreten zum Appell” [Line up for roll call], Oerbke, 1941

Appendix Ten: Article on the shooting of Sgt. Tom Hollingsworth at Stalag XIB, Fallingbostel

The Shooting of Sergeant Hollingsworth, Glider Pilot Regiment, 6th October 1944

Roderick de Norman

Sgt. Tom Hollingsworth, born 1922, died 1944, aged 22 years

By the time Stalag XIB was liberated, on the 16th April 1945, the shooting of an unarmed prisoner should have been a single incident among many horrific tales for Stalag XIB in Germany during the disease-riddenexus period. To the British prisoners, however, the shooting soon symbolised the evil of the Germans. RSM Lord in his reporting in his biography (2) summed up the killing thus:

"POWs are reluctant to move quickly and when an air raid sounded I think three days after we arrived - the men went into their huts, but one glider pilot S/Sgt/Sergeant was rather slow moving in... A German sentry did no less than shoot him, and he died. This had a profound effect on the news spread around and I am quite sure that it steered men’s thoughts towards a decision to withstand such treatment."

There were other shootings in the camp right up to liberation and James Sims, in his excellent book "Auschwitz-Spearhead", notes: "If we were too slow at putting up the blackout boards at night the Germans fired through the walls of the huts."

The treatment of all POWs at Stalag XIB had been so horrendous, especially with regards those who escaped, that the Judges Advocate General’s office commenced inquiries with regards to war crimes. Many of the camp guard staff were, by this time, prisoners themselves - some in England, others in Germany. The inquiry commenced taking formal evidence during the late autumn of 1944, but not finishing until the summer of 1945. Luckily today, the papers from the inquiry can be found in the Public Record Office of London, as was the difficulty the investigators had in trying to bring to justice the guard that shot Sgt. Tom Hollingsworth, indeed, the difficulties in trying to find out in what circumstances he was shot.

One of the first to give evidence was RSM Lord. His sworn statement was used as an annex to that of RSM Wickham. Interestingly enough, RSM Lord made no mention of the shooting, although a copy of a list of complaints was drawn up by him in December 1944, for onward transmission to the Central Committee for POWs and Red Cross. He stated that later it was the death of SSgt Hollingsworth. Not long after this, more direct evidence of the shooting was given by Captain Wells, RAMC, who attended the hospital. He was later shot and killed by a German sentry because he had not entered a shelter during an air raid, owing to his inability to understand the German sentry's orders. It would appear from later reports, that the above evidence was sufficient to bring the shooting of SSgt Hollingsworth to justice. This in turn meant that a separate investigation had to be undertaken.

From all the evidence of the ex-POWs interviewed, a detailed list was produced of the camp's German staff. One of those first interviewed was ex-POW F/M, now a Royal Engineer Officer in charge of General and General duties. The list contained the names of SSgt Hollingsworth, RSM Lord, in his reporting in his biography (2) summed up the killing thus:

"POWs are reluctant to move quickly and when an air raid sounded I think three days after we arrived - the men went into their huts, but one glider pilot S/Sgt/Sergeant was rather slow moving in... A German sentry did no less than shoot him, and he died. This had a profound effect on the news spread around and I am quite sure that it steered men’s thoughts towards a decision to withstand such treatment."

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82 Tom Carpenter and I have not been able to find the proper reference for this article. Tom thinks it was published in the 1990s in the Glider Pilot Regiment magazine, The Eagle. In the event I have been unable to locate the holder of copyright or the author to seek permission to include the paper here, but would wish to formally acknowledge them both.
Langhans was the man who wrote the orders but he was not the man who pulled the trigger. Indeed, the authorities were still not clear why Sgt Hollingsworth had been shot. They continued their questioning, now amongst some of the German NCOs. One of the first was a man named Wordie. He had been a corporal and present at the shooting. He stated in his affidavit, taken on the 8th May, 1946, that there had been an air raid warning and all prisoners had been ordered into their huts as there were no shelters. Three POWs appeared not to do so. "I called to the sentry," Wordie said, "see to it that they all go into the huts. Don't stand there like a crowd of bloody fools." Wordie went on to describe how he turned his head and just after, a shot rang out. "I called at once for medical orderlies and a stretcher in order to take the wounded man to the Russian doctor nearby" he continued. As for the sentry, Wordie described how he just slung his rifle and "continued on his rounds." The Germans, apparently, did hold a brief enquiry, led by the camp's legal officer. Wordie again:

"I reported everything that had happened... and was questioned as to who was the order to bring the guard and the guard had fired correctly."

By this stage of the investigation, the British were treating the shooting as a murder. Information as to the identification of the guard responsible was still not forthcoming. Further leads were obtained however, thanks to a chance remark made by a German prisoner in POW Camp 3226. The prisoner stated that a former company commander of 436 Guard Battalion, formerly stationed at Stalag XIB, mentioned that one of his men had shot a British sergeant. An investigating team eventually tracked down the former commander, Hans Langhans, but the German had denied all knowledge of the matter. He was duly arrested but contemporary records go no further.  

What, then, was the outcome of the investigation? The records of the subsequent military trials concerning Stalag XIB show that the case mainly concerned the inhuman treatment of the Arnhem prisoners, especially those wounded. Only one of the eight defendants, Langhans, was also charged with the murder of Sgt Hollingsworth. He was acquitted. What is evident, however, is that Hollingsworth was probably very badly shell-shocked. Being shouted at in German would probably not have registered. There were probably many like him, suffering the mental exhaustion of the Arnhem battle as well as what is termed today as the Shock of Capture. To the Germans, he was not wounded and therefore had no need to be in the camp hospital. That decision cost Sgt Hollingsworth his life.

NOTES:
(2) See "To Reel in God's Sunlight," Richard Aldred, 1937, p.36.
(3) "Arnhem Spiral" by James Sima. Schone Books Ltd. 1951, p.140.
(4) See Judge Advocate General (JAG) papers PRO-WO206/231.
(5) See above.
(6) See PRO papers WO206/4675.
(7) See PRO papers WO206/4616.

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Since writing this article, the author has been in contact with Peter Hollingsworth, Tom's brother, and would like to record his gratitude for the subsequent help given to him. Thanks must also go to Major John Cross for his assistance.
From October 1944 to the 16th April 1945, Stalag XI B. was used by the Germans as a hospital for British and American P.O.W.s. During this period, with the exception of two weeks, I was the senior British doctor in the camp and, in that capacity, I am writing this account of the "hospital" conditions under which the Germans permitted us to look after the sick and wounded.

In October 1944 approximately 1700 wounded British P.O.W.s arrived. Previous to that there were about 50 British P.O.W.s in the camp and 200 out in working camps in the XI B. area.

From October 1944 to February 1945 inclusive, British and American wounded arrived and on an average 250 per month were admitted to the lazarette and about four times that number of walking wounded had to be accommodated in the "Lager". In February 1945, in addition to wounded, 500 sick, who were considered unfit to march, arrived by train from Götлиц. From March onwards the flow of wounded practically ceased, but sick men who had marched from Poland and East Germany arrived in such numbers that it became impossible to keep any exact record. I know, however, that over 4500 men arrived and that not more than 10% of these were fit men. Almost all suffered from malnutrition and over 2000 from diarrhoea, mostly dysentery. I will describe the hospital conditions under various headings.
1. Medical Staff.

On Oct. 9th 44, there were 7 M.Os, but by the end of that month three had been sent away. The four remaining received no assistance till the end of Feb. 45 when two more British doctors arrived, and one more at the end of March.

Throughout, we had many R.A.M.C. orderlies in the camp, but the Germans only permitted 35 to live and work in the hospital. They did allow us a daily working party of 20 orderlies from the camp, but this was so unsatisfactory that it was discontinued. By admitting fit orderlies to hospital as patients, the number employed was gradually raised to 50. The sergeant-major (not R.A.M.C.) was in this category - diagnosis malaria - and was really excellent.

2. Accommodation.

We had three barrack huts till the end of Feb. 45, when we were given one more. Each barrack had to hold about 130 patients. These barracks were full to capacity all the time and our existence was hand to mouth. Often we had to discharge men long before they were fit in order to make room for worse new arrivals. By March we had just under 600 patients and were also using half of two barracks belonging to the Yugoslavs.

Most wards measured 30 x 17 x 10 feet and held 22 patients in double-bunk beds. This we had to reduce as it was impossible to nurse many of our patients in beds of this type.
Patients were given one blanket each; this was increased to two after three months of argument with the Germans. Each ward had a stove, but fuel was never supplied to last more than one day per week. Wards were never scrubbed owing to lack of utensils and there were no proper brooms either.

Lighting was very poor when the electricity was on and for the first seven weeks the current was turned off centrally at night. Each barrack had one hurricane lamp, but fuel was unobtainable after the second week. No torches were permitted.

There was one ablution room per barrack, but no facilities for hot baths or showers for patients.

Throughout the winter the water and lights were turned off for varying periods every week. No adequate explanation of why or when this was going to occur was ever given by the Germans, but it certainly had no relation to Allied aerial activity.

The British doctors were accommodated in one of the barracks and were locked in every night.

3. Treatment rooms.

Each barrack had one small dressing room in which practically all dressings were done, as there were no facilities in the wards. In addition these rooms were used daily for P.O.P. work and a vast amount of minor surgery. No water was laid on
in these rooms and in only one was there an electric sterilizer or hot plate. These rooms were icy cold throughout the winter, except for occasions when orderlies procured fuel for the stoves by stealing.

The operating theatre, which was in another barrack, was little less primitive. It was, however, electrically heated, had a sterilizer heated on two hot plates, and running water. The French regarded this theatre as primarily theirs and operated on many "cold" cases, considerably hampering us and compelling us to do cases of considerable magnitude in our treatment rooms.

4. Medical Supplies.

The German supplies were utterly inadequate. This was largely due to the attitude of the chefarzt and dispenser. The latter was quite corrupt and the British had insufficient Red Cross material to bid high enough on his black market. At times we received only 100 paper bandages per barrack per week. We ceased dressing wounds at irregular intervals when we had nothing with which to do them. Remedies for dysentery were almost non-existent and consisted of charcoal and tannic acid in very limited supply.

Without such Red Cross supplies as we received — and these were never adequate — our position would have been hopeless.
5. Nursing facilities.

These were appalling. Beds were all wooden with straw palliasses. We had no spring beds and no air-rings, but in February two air-pillows were received from the Red Cross. There were 2 bed-pans, 3 urinals and 2 washing basins per barrack, one of the latter in constant use in the treatment room. Patients had roughly one razor per 20 men, one hair brush per 10 men, one spoon per 4 men and no tooth brushes. We had no back rests and 9 pairs of Red Cross pyjamas. For the first six weeks the Germans refused to supply any clothing for up-patients or potential up-patients till they were due for discharge, despite many of these men being completely naked. There were no facilities for isolating infectious diseases. We had one British Thomas splint for which there was very keen competition. Practically every patient was lousy.

6. Diet and Cooking.

The German diet for P.O.Ws is now sufficiently well known to need no further description. It was certainly not the same as that of the "depot troops". The chefazt refused to let us have any patients on hospital diet excepting post-operation abdominal cases and fractured jaws. This diet differed from the ordinary diet in that the potatoes were mashed, bread was white not brown; one "pudding" per day was supplied but no sugar. New patients arriving in the hospital later than 06.00 hrs. received no ration for the day of their arrival. if this day was a Saturday then they would have to wait till the following Monday before receiving any German ration.
It is not my intention to discuss Red Cross food supplies - in which we were not very lucky - but it must be stated that without them our mortality would have been appalling. Throughout the Germans failed, in spite of frequent requests, to supply any facilities whatsoever for cook or preparing Red Cross food.

V. The Clinical Picture.

Under the above conditions no "cold" surgery was attempted, in spite of the chararst's requests for men with hernia, haemorrhoids, etc. to be radically cured that they might return to working camps: I do not wish to paint an exaggerated picture of the clinical material that we had to deal with, but neither, in all fairness to a small and very hard pressed staff, do I intend to minimise the task. The figures given below are approximate in most cases and conservative. They give an idea of the types of cases we had during six months.

**SURGICAL:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fractures of humerus</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; radius and/or ulna</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; femur</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; fibula and tibia</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; skull (vault)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe wounds of wrist and hand</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; ankle &amp; foot</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe frost-bite of feet</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppurative arthritis of major joints</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphyseas</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major amputations</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(only 10 performed at XI B)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fractures of jaw</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of one or both eyes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anurysems of major vessels .............. 8
Hemiplegias and paraplegias ............. 9
Peripheral nerve injuries ............... 150

**MEDICAL:**

- Pneumonia (excluding terminal) ........ 50
- Diphtheria .................................. 50
- Dysentary (treated in hospital) ........ 250
- Erysipelas (severe) ....................... 15

These were all cases requiring active treatment.

Men arriving in the camp with healed wounds or united fractures are not included. Most surgical cases arrived during the third week after wounding. In addition we had a few cases of bladder and bowel injuries, carcinoma of stomach, intestinal volvulus, appendicitis, severe burns, cerebral abscess, pulmonary tuberculosis, scarlatina, nephritis, meningitis and psychiatric cases. The following points are not irrelevant. Isolation facilities only existed for cases of open pulmonary tuberculosis. Diphtheria throughout was nursed in general wards. Over 90% of patients had body lice and their intolerable activity under plasters was often an indication for changing them. Nearly all fractures of humerus and wounds involving the elbow joint treated by the Germans before arrival had been put in shoulder spicas of monumental thickness and great discomfort. The direct method of blood transfusion was the only German transfusion apparatus available. Adequate treatment of fractures of the femur was impossible, all results of these
were bad, and three involving the hip joint ended fatally.
X-ray plates could only be taken with the chefarzt’s
permission and were limited to one per patient. Such control
of fractures and empyemas as was obtained was done by
screening. We had no lipiodol or equivalent. Bed sores
were always a big problem and utterly unavoidable in many
cases. Operating lists of more than 2 major cases were
impossible due to insufficient towels. We had no jacoast.
All the amputations we performed we deemed necessary to save
life. Apart from splinting we could do nothing for nerve
injuries, and requests for their transfer to an orthopaedic
centre were fruitless. All fractures were compound, except two,
and severe sepsis was the rule. Feeding of advanced cases of
malnutrition was impossible, and 25 died in the last month.
Nursing many cases of diarrhoea was impossible with our small
supply of bed pans. Erysipelas and severe tonsillitis existed
in epidemic form all the winter. All patients gargled b.d.
with pot. permanganate. Anaesthesia used for all operating,
including abdomens, was evipan or pentothal. All patients for
admission and discharge had to be presented to the chefarzt by
an M.O. and during air-raid warnings we were forbidden to go
from one barrack to another—these regulations wasted an untold
amount of our time. In all we lost 30 patients from medical,
and 15 from surgical causes, and 29 of the 30 medical and three
of the 15 surgical were largely due to malnutrition.
SUMMARY.

Under the conditions I have described it was impossible to do much for the patients and our aim throughout was to keep as many alive as possible till we were liberated. Cold, hungry and lousy, many suffered in silence, but more than one was reduced to tears. Making every allowance for the conditions in Germany last winter, there was nothing to excite the way in which they administered this hospital. I should like to express the gratitude of us all to the Yugoslav surgeon, Dr. O'Bradovic, who gave us much advice and every aid within his power at any hour of day or night, and also to Mrs. Bromley-Davenport of the British Red Cross, to whose untiring efforts we owed so much.

I conclude with the closing sentence of my diary of Stalag XII B—"It is hard, even in the hour of our liberation, to see anything good or pardonable in our sadistic detainers."

P. Ride Maj. REN

This is the exhibit marked 'T.32' referred to in the Affidavit of Major P. Smith sworn herein this fourteenth day of November, 1945.

REPORT XV

(Sgd) P. G. Dromgoole

Captain,
Local Staff.
Appendix Twelve: Red Cross Report on Fallingbostel 9th November 1944 (FO916/836)

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Translation by the London Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross

**STALAG XI B.**

Visited by Dr. Thudichum and Mr. W. Kleiner on November 9th, 1944.

**Camp Leaders** - British: R.S.M. Reuben Henry WICKHAY, No. 139106
American: Sgt. Frank BOINER, No. 116056

**Strength** - 44,573 prisoners including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Off. N.C.O.</th>
<th>Private in camp</th>
<th>Doctors</th>
<th>Chaplains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,268 British</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 Irish</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Canadians</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Australians</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1443 New Zealanders</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 South Africans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Fighting French</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Other British</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 Americans</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The British strength given by the Camp Leader differs somewhat from that indicated by the camp authorities:

- 1893 British in camp, including 810 Americans
- 2,870 on working parties

**4,373 Total**

The above figures must be added 200 p.o.w. expected on the day of the visit.

About 1,300 British passed through Stalag XI B during last month before being sent to other camps in Germany.

The aspect of the camp has changed since the last visit. The number of prisoners has greatly increased. A large number of British prisoners arrived direct from the Western Front. Stalag XI B is effectively a transit camp for British and American prisoners. The majority of the fresh p.o.w. (British and Americans) recently arrived in the camp are parachutists. New prisoners arrive daily, including a large proportion of wounded.

Situation and accommodation - For British p.o.w., the situation is very critical. They have been crowded into huge wooden huts under very bad conditions: the great lack of space in camp and the daily arrival of more prisoners from the Western Front cause the housing...
problem to become more acute each day, owing to lack of space
hygiene is bad; there is not sufficient lighting or ventilation.
Wooden beds ranged in three tiers take up all available space and
only allow for a small number of tables and chairs in the
dormitories. The complete absence of study rooms, dining hall etc.
coupled with the bad weather oblige the men to stay in their huts
which are much too overcrowded. In all transit huts, beds have no
mattresses and nearly all the prisoners only have one blanket which
it appears, is the regular issue. The camp authorities assured the
Delegates that mattresses filled with wood shavings would shortly
be supplied.

Clothing - The incessant stream of more British prisoners into
the camp has completely exhausted all clothing reserves. The Camp
Leader urgently requests uniforms, underclothing and boots of
all descriptions and in large quantities as the majority of the new
arrivals are hardly clad or their clothes are all torn. The
Delegates were able to ascertain the bad state of their clothes.
It is absolutely necessary that an important reserve of clothing
should be provided for Stalag XI B which has become a transit camp
for British from the Western Front.

Food - The cooking is done by the prisoners themselves with rations
issued according to regulations; this is to say quite insufficient.

A list of the various rations which should be issued to
prisoners employed in industrial concerns, local trades and crafts
and armament factories is attached herewith.

Personal cooking is possible but fuel is very scarce.

The great diminution in Red Cross consignments, the suppression
even of some, and the almost total disappearance of personal parcel
make the food situation precarious. Consignments from the Red Cross
are urgently awaited.

Hygiene - Sanitary installations are quite insufficient for the
British on account of their too great number. The camp authorities
assured that this situation would be only temporary.

Hot showers may only be taken every four weeks on account of
lack of fuel.

Medical attention - The camp infirmary only admits minor cases,
all others being sent to the Camp Hospital.

All beds are at present occupied by about 500 British or
American wounded recently arrived from Holland (in the infirmary and
in hospital).

There is a limited possibility of proper medical treatment,
all bandaging material and supplies having been exhausted by the new
arrivals. The Detaining Power only supplies a fraction of the
material which is so urgently required. The absence of food parcels
further complicates matters. On the other hand, all purchasing of
medical supplies and bandages has ceased and, after being bombarded
numerous medical centres where the prisoners managed to get supplies
have disappeared.
To sum up, there is an urgent need of medical supplies and specially of bandaging material.

On the other hand, Medical Kites have proved very useful in various working parties which have sustained air raids and are requested by prisoners of all nations working in industrial areas.

Medical advice given by the Senior German Medical Officer is not taken into account by the Labour Organisation which forces prisoners recognised unfit for certain work to undertake labour of all descriptions.

Recreation, intellectual and spiritual needs - Religious services are held regularly for prisoners of all nations.

There are sufficient books and games. The prisoners have lodged a protest against a recent ruling from the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht which provides for all text books (grammars, dictionaries and similar works) gramophone records and song music to be confiscated if not in German or in the prisoners' own languages. This measure greatly upsets mind culture in camps.

Mail - No details were made concerning mail for British P.O.W.

Collective consignments - The British have received no consignments for the last four months. Lately, the German authorities allowed a call for help to be sent by radio to the British Red Cross.

In fact, the situation of British and American P.O.W. at Stalag XI B is tragic; all new arrivals (starved, wounded and the majority dead in regal) cannot possibly be helped. On the other hand, the British were greatly surprised to note that during these last months American and Scandinavian parcels arrived at the camp for prisoners of other nations whereas they received nothing.

Reserves of Red Cross Parcels being nearly exhausted for P.O.W. of various nationalities, the new order concerning stocks has not been applied. The Camp Leaders exercise full control over all consignments received from Geneva.

Work - Working conditions in industrial areas are becoming harder; the greatest majority of prisoners are employed in industrial concerns where working hours have been raised from 56 to 72 hours, without any increase in rations. Further, numerous right witches prevent the men from enjoying proper rest. A great many prisoners are employed in industrial areas which are constantly bombed; damage to working parties is becoming heavier every day but loss of life is relatively small.

Discipline - Discipline is becoming more severe everywhere. During the last six months, the Gestapo has been cross-examining P.O.W. first placed under arrest. The proceeding is as follows: an interrogated is taken away from his cell and disappears completely during a certain lapse of time, during which he remains in prison. His comrades lose all trace of him. Cross-examination goes on for hours (6, 8, 10 hours etc.) and can only be stopped by the strong-minded. The men are frequently very depressed by such treatment which may lead to suicide.

For the last few weeks, the following notice has been posted in
all labour detachments.

The following order of the day is issued by the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht on the 10.1.40 for all prisoners of war in German hands.

Prisoners of war are strictly forbidden to approach German women or girls in any way or to have intercourse with them. This order is issued with the command that any contravention of same will result in a court martial and, besides imprisonment, for serious cases - sexual intercourse for instance - the death penalty will also be imposed.

Interview with Camp Leaders - The interview took place without witnesses and all points mentioned in the report were discussed.

Conclusion - The camp is overcrowded by the constant stream of prisoners captured on the Western Front. Medical supplies, food and clothing are urgently requested for new British and American arrivals and for the numerous p.o.w. in areas damaged by air raids.

Scale of rations for prisoners of war employed in armament factories, industrial concerns and local craftsmen - communal feeding centres.

(a) Normal workers - The quantities allowed for normal civilian consumers for the various distribution periods, without supplements, allowances and with the exception of sugar are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>2,225 gr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>250 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fats</td>
<td>218 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Mehrlitteln&quot;</td>
<td>150 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese or soft cheese</td>
<td>51.25 gr or 52.50 gr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>175 gr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmalade</td>
<td>175 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee substitute</td>
<td>37.50 gr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Potatoes, vegetables and seasoning according to quantities issued to the civilian population.

(b) Workers on prolonged or night service -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>2,900 gr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>380 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fats</td>
<td>230 &quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(other foods as for "a").

(c) Forced labour -
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages XI B</th>
<th>(5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per week</td>
<td>Bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(other foods as for &quot;a&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Forced labour - heavy work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per week</td>
<td>Bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(other foods as for &quot;a&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Miners working down the pits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per week</td>
<td>Bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certified correct.

S. Chancellor Clerk

(Translation of a note handed to the Mission Scipini)
Appendix Thirteen: ‘Walking Wounded’ programme, Jersey Arts Centre, March/April 2006
JACK HIGGINS
Foreword

The Falklands War in 1982 between Britain and the Argentine, in which the British army recaptured the islands, was the most brilliantly successful military operation since the Second World War.

George Orwell once said that “there are men of a rough persuasion who are willing to handle those things that the rest of society cannot. They are called soldiers.” From an ancestor in the Zulu war of the 19th Century in Africa, to my grandfather decorated and wounded in the First World War, to my uncle wounded and imprisoned in the disaster that was Dunkirk, their sacrifice fascinates me.

Raised in Belfast from childhood, one was well used to a violent background and bombs on a regular basis. My military experience later was formed as an N.C.O. in the Household Cavalry, The Blues, patrolling the East German Border in Dingo scout cars and Jeeps when the Cold War was heating up.

As a novelist I developed a reputation for writing about the Second World War, the most famous instance being The Eagle Has Landed. I also wrote for cinema, TV and radio. “Waiting Wounded” was my only theatrical venture. Carefully observed, based on the experience of friends in my old regiment who served in the Falklands, for various reasons, I put it on the shelf for years.

History now, but the Iraq conflict shows us that every war is the same war and it is the soldiers, the Waiting Wounded, who pay the price.

To watch the play come to life in rehearsal has been a huge learning experience for me. I am grateful to the JPC for the opportunity to stage this piece but especially to Jacqui Auden, my director for her enormous contribution and faith in the whole enterprise.
THE FALKLANDS

The Falkland Islands are a small archipelago in the South Atlantic made up of two main islands, East Falkland and West Falkland, and a number of smaller islands. They are a self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom and also administer the British dependent territories of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. However, history has seen this fact in dispute on a number of occasions. Previously Spain and France had claimed them as their own and Argentina had been pushing their rights to the islands since the 1820s but it wasn’t until 1982 that Argentina invaded and declared sovereignty over them.

On 2nd April 1982 the Argentinean Navy, made up of 1000 troops, landed on the Falklands and after brief resistance from a small detachment of Royal Marines claimed the islands as their own. The following day the Argentinean Navy seized South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The United Nations Security Council called for a cessation of Argentinean hostilities and their immediate withdrawal but Argentinean forces on the Falklands soon swelled to over 10,000.

After an attempt at mediation broke down, the British forces launched a commando raid on South Georgia and retook the island forcing an unconditional surrender on April 25th.

On May 21st the British managed to land on East Falkland after a amphibious assault and steadily advanced in order to capture the settlements of Darwin and Goose Green before approaching the capital, Port Stanley. On May 28th the longest and toughest battle of the War took place at Darwin and Goose Green were captured by the British forces. The British progress continued throughout May and into June as they secured Douglas and East Inlet. On June 14th they finally captured Port Stanley forcing an end to hostilities and an Argentine surrender. On June 20th the British reoccupied the South Sandwich Islands and formally declared an end to the war.

The Falklands war lasted 72 days in total and claimed nearly 1000 casualties — 236 British and 655 Argentine.
THE CAST

Staff Sergeant Fergus Le Brocq, Irish Guards ........................................... Terry Arthur
Corporal Harry Jackson, Royal Signals ..................................................... Guy Browning
Corporal Connie Pope, RAMC ................................................................. Andrew Goodyear
Major Ruth Eisenberg, US Army ............................................................... Tessa Coleman
Lance Corporal Owen Thomas, Welsh Guards .......................................... Mark Labey
Private Earl Brady, 2 Para........................................................................... Alistair Frederick
Jean Sugden, Labour MP ........................................................................... Lizzy Coleman
Sandra Walsh ............................................................................................ Gabrielle-Anne Robbé

SCENE SYNOPSIS

The play takes place over a three day period and is set in an army rehabilitation unit sometime after the Falklands War.

Act One

Scene One ................................................................................................. Morning
Scene Two ............................................................................................... Afternoon the same day
Scene Three ............................................................................................ The following afternoon

There will be a 15 minute interval between the Acts.

Act Two

Scene One ................................................................................................. The following morning
Scene Two ............................................................................................... The same afternoon
Scene Three ............................................................................................ The evening of the same day
Appendix Fourteen: ‘Afterwards’ by Fred Walker
© The Lincolnshire Poacher

AFTERWARDS

IT WAS OVER. The war. I had spent several weeks in hospital, ever since I had been wounded in Italy, in the Apennine mountains and now they were sending me home.

Seated in the train memories came flooding back, although the soreness in my head was a constant reminder of the day that the shell blast and the shrapnel struck me.

I was the last one in the carriage, and now, in the solitude I thought of all the others who had been with me at Anzio, on the beach–head south of Rome. I had lost some friends there, one in particular being Joe Bramley, another back-street kid and a school mate. He had lived next door in King Edward Street in Grimsby. I had seen him killed. Joe, the only son of Ada Bramley, and I felt a little more than a boy. Now he was gone, buried somewhere in Italy.

When the train had reached Doncaster almost everyone had changed. People said brief farewells and then hurried eagerly away amid the noise and bustle. There were flags everywhere and civilians were shouting to each other, caught up in the euphoria.

I looked out of the window. One of the soldiers who had shared my compartment walked by. He seemed lost. He paused, then he waved and ran along the platform. Mentally I wished him luck. I wished them all well and my own heart sang with the thought of going home. And yet there was a passionate desire to cling to something of the past, alliances, meetings with new-found friends, a desire to have time stand still, to be able to talk and make promises that might never be honoured.

For the rest of the journey I was on my own. I must have slept because it only seemed like minutes before the train pulled into Grimsby Town station. I went out into the street. A wind was blowing in from the sea. A man I knew went by on a bicycle. He called out “Hello, Fred, home again?”

He spoke as if nothing had happened since we had last met.

As I walked along I was conscious of the quickening beats of my heart. I passed familiar buildings. The Yarborough Hotel and then to the right, Doughty Road and the grey bulk of the Town Hall. One or two people looked at me in vague recognition. They didn’t speak and I crossed the road.

Turning into my own street I was greeted by the smell of fish and soot. It was an odour that came in the aftermath of overnight rain and it lingered over the town. I cherished the smell with a peculiar joy, along with the wind and the welcoming cries of gulls.

An old man approached. His hands were thrust deep into his overcoat pockets, his bony head hunched inside his collar. He paused and then he hurried on. There had
been a look in his eyes that I had seen before, a reflection of the traumas of other days. Perhaps it was in my own face and in my own eyes, a mirror of all that I felt.

I walked on, past the fish house where I once worked. The brick air raid shelter was still there, where so many people had spent sleepless nights; on towards the back houses some of which had slates missing and cardboard panes in the windows.

There was a patch of waste ground and beyond that our house. My mother was in the yard. She was 'poshing' some clothes in a 'dolly' tub. She looked up.

I stopped and waited while she came out of the gate. Then suddenly she embraced me. Mrs Bramley was standing a few yards away. She stood there awkwardly, as if she was interrupting a private ceremony. I could sense how much she was being hurt, of how my homecoming would be reminding her of the fact she would never see her own son again.

Easing myself from my mother's arms I went across to Mrs Bramley. She was near to tears and her blue eyes had neither light or beauty in them. Her grey hair was in disarray. I kissed her on the cheek and let her arms pull me to her heavy, shapeless body.

Tears began to prickle my own eyelids as I turned away, my emotions governed by a power I could not control.

My mother called out, her voice tremulous, "Come on, I'll put the kettle on."

Picking up my haversack I walked over to the house with the two women. I followed them into the little kitchen. It was as I remembered it. There was a new mantle on the gas bracket and I ducked my head to avoid the delicate fabric.

When the tea had been made all three of us were like strangers, sitting in the cool silence, and yet the air was pregnant with feeling.

I knew Mrs Bramley would ask me about Joe. Her lips were trying to form words. I didn't meet her eyes. What could I say? When I did look at her I smiled sadly, as if to let her know that I understood the grief and the pain. And at once my heart was very full, and again I was overwhelmed with remembrances of other days. I knew how the old men from the First World War must have felt. I recognised the traumas of their lives and those of my comrades. I had shared their doubts and their fears, their dreams and their anguish.

I picked up my mug of tea, not knowing how to deal with a sensation of overwhelming relief. I was conscious of my hands shaking and my mother's fingers touching me, and now I was thanking God that I had survived, that I had lived and come home.
Appendix Fifteen: Testimony from War Crimes Trials in the Salzgitter area (WO309/411)

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REPORT
by
WAR CRIMES INVESTIGATION UNIT BACW

PRINCIPAL:

1. In 1943, 1944 and 1945 the NEUHAUSEN Concentration Camp administered approx 50 detached working parties (Aussenkommandos). These working parties were employed either by the government or by civilian firms, whose work was of national importance — i.e. the "Hermann-Goering-Werke".

2. One of the firms who employed NEUHAUSEN Concentration camp labour were the Hermann-Goering-Werke, also called "Reichswerke".

3. These works are situated at LEUTZE near ROYALM and the prisoners were accommodated inside the factory area. (See Exhibit "Plan".)

4. The prisoners were, as usual, guarded by the SS, but the management of the firm was responsible for working conditions.

5. The Hermann-Goering-Werke were constructed during 1938 and 1939, and in November 1942 the first prisoners from NEUHAUSEN started to work there.

6. The employment of concentration camp prisoners in the Hermann-Goering-Werke was decided upon by the Generaldirektor PLEITTER and the Reichsfuehrer SS HIMMLER. The number of prisoners rose from 300 to 3,000.

7. In accordance with the usual customs of concentration camps, prisoners were supervised by kapo's (head prisoners), which were, in LEUTZE, mostly recruited from the ranks of German professional criminals.

8. On April 7th 1945, when Allied troops approached LEUTZE, the prisoners were evacuated to the RUSCHWALDE Concentration Camp. On the journey there their train was heavily bombed by the RAF in Celle station. Many prisoners were killed by the bombing, and many more were shot by SS and the Celles Police, Volkssturm and Hitler-Youth in the ensuing confusion.
TRANSLATION of DEPOSITION
of
DR. KUC, Stefan.

Deposition on oath of DR. KUC, Stefan, male, of 'Hunstorf, Polish Red Cross, UNRAA H.Q., sworn before Capt. E. J. Kelle, General List, of War Crimes Investigation Unit, at Hunstorf on the 26th September 1945.

I am Dr. Stefan Kuc, born on the 20th March 1900 in Katowitz, Poland, Catholic, doctor, of Polish nationality. I was arrested in winter 1942 in Kielce, Poland, as a leader of Polish youth for distributing illegal publications, etc. Then I was in various concentration camps and came in November 1942 into the Arbeitslager Drütte near Brunswick.

Almost right from the beginning I was employed as doctor in the Revier. The most brutal commandant was easily the Hauptsturmführer Forster. He, like the Rapportführer Hecht, beat the prisoners indiscriminately. Once a prisoner was brought into my Revier paralysed as a result of his (Forster's) beating, and later on Forster came himself into the Revier and in spite of my protests continued beating the severely injured man.

An other time a Pole from Posen had escaped. He was recaptured and brought back into the camp. Thereupon Vihagen, Treilmann and Forster beat him publicly half to death. Then Forster stepped with his boots on the throat of the Pole until he was nearly suffocated. In the end Forster put a hose into the Pole's mouth and after, turned on the water and the Pole died. Afterwards he hanged the Pole so that it should look as if he had committed suicide. Also four Germans who once had escaped were killed in this manner. One of them, a Gypsy, who was still alive, was put into a coffin and the coffin was nailed up.

At one period, in February or March 1943, when the SDG Michail was in Dublin, an SDG called "August" (with a big scar on his neck), was employed in the Revier. During the time he was in the Revier, this SDG August gave twice Lysol injections to prisoners (into their necks). Each time he injected about ten tuberculous prisoners, who had died immediately afterwards. He told me too to give injections, but did not force me to do it. Anyway, I have seen him do it both times and am an eyewitness to it.

Signature of witness... (signed) Dr. Stefan Kuc

Sworn by the said deponent, Dr. Stefan Kuc, voluntarily at Hunstorf on the 26th September 1945 before me, Capt. E. J. Kelle, General List, detailed by the C.-in-C. British Army of the Rhine.

Certified that this is a true translation from German into English of the deposition of Dr. Stefan Kuc, marked Deposition No. 4...

Bad Oeynhausen, 29th September 1946,

Captain.
TRANSLATION of DEPOSITION

of

HÖLSCHER, Alois.

Deposition on oath of HÖLSCHER Alois, male, of Lebenstedt near Brunswick, Hinteres Osterlau 79, sworn before Capt. F. J. Kelley, General List, of the Crimes Investigation Unit, at Lebenstedt on the 20th September 1946.

I am Alois Hölscher, born on the 16th April 1915 in Duisburg, of no religion, commercial employee, of German nationality.

The Gestapo arrested me for political reasons in Duisburg in the autumn of 1935, and after eight months in the police prison I was sent to the concentration camp Sachsenhausen. After that I was in many other concentration camps and police prisons, and in March 1943 I came to the Arbeitslager Drütte near Brunswick. At that time the commandant was Förster and the Rapportführer was Hecht.

Hecht was easily one of the most brutal and sadistic men I have come across during my many years in concentration camps. One saw him never without his stick, and he beat continuously and indiscriminately every prisoner who happened to cross his path. Then he counted the prisoners at the three daily parades, he beat them over the heads with his stick, and I am not exaggerating when I say that there were all times 20 to 30 percent of the prisoners running around with head wounds.

One case I remember especially well, when a Russian prisoner escaped in summer 1943. This prisoner was recaptured after two days and brought back into the camp by Hecht. I myself saw how he was put into chains by Hecht and then brought into the solution room. There, on orders of Hecht, he was hung up by his chains by the block-elder, and while he was thus hanging Hecht beat him up terribly. After about three quarters of an hour the Russian was taken down and thrown out onto the parade ground. The man was completely disfigured, but that was not enough for Hecht, because on the parade ground he hung up the Russian again on a window. There he left him to hang in the hot sun for eight to ten hours. Then, after the evening parade, he had the half dead Russian taken down and thrown into the lavatory, from where he was brought out dead the next morning.

Signature of witness... (nd.) Alois Hölscher

Sworn by the said deponent, Alois Hölscher, voluntarily at Lebenstedt on the 20th September 1946, before me, Capt. F. J. Kelley, General List, detailed by the C.-in-C. British Army of the Rhine.

Certified that this is a true translation from German into English of the deposition of Alois Hölscher, marked production No. 9.

Bad Оeynhausen, 25th September 1946.
TRANSLATION OF DEPOSITION
of
HÜLSCHER, Alois.

Deposition on oath of HÜLSCHER Alois, male, of Lebenstedt bei Brunswick, Hinterer Ostertal 79, sworn before Capt. F. J. Kelley, of War Crimes Investigation Unit, at Lebenstedt on the 26th September 1946.

I am Alois Hülischer, born on the 16th April 1915 in Duisburg, of no religion, a commercial employee, of German nationality.

The Gestapo arrested me for political reasons in Duisburg in the autumn of 1935, and after eight months in the police prison I was sent to the concentration camp Gross Rosenau. After that I was in many other concentration camps and police prisons, and in March 1944 I came to the Arbeitslager Brütt near Brunswick. At that time the commandant was Förster and the Kapo, the foreman, was Lecht.

Förster was a typical criminal - brutal and stupid, but easily influenced by intelligent prisoners. But once he lost hold of himself he became a beast and could not be restrained. He always beat with a 50cm long thick length of cable, and he never forwarded reports about prisoners (to Neuengamme) but executed all punishments on his own initiative. I remember one case, when in August or September 1943 a Polish prisoner was missing in the Aktion 88. We had to fall in for search parade and the SS searched the area. One of the 50 men found the Pole in the works, sleeping underneath a press. To start with he was beaten beaten up on the spot by Förster himself, and then at the evening parade, he was brutally illtreated by Förster and Wiehagen in front of the paraded prisoners. During this illtreatment I was standing on the parade ground in the immediate vicinity of Förster and heard how he said: "We can't kill the dog that way!" He ordered me and another prisoner to carry the Pole into the ablution room (Block 2). There Förster connected a length of hose to a hydrant, put the other end of it into the eider of the Pole and had the water turned on. As a result of this illtreatment the Pole died immediately afterwards before my eyes.

Signature of witness...........................................

Worn by the said deponent, Alois Hülischer, voluntarily at Lebenstedt on the 26th September 1946 before me, Capt. F. J. Kelley, General Staff, detailed by the G.-in-C. British Army of the Rhine.

Bad Oeynhausen, 26th September 1946. ...........................

Certified that this is a true translation from German into English of the deposition of Alois Hülischer, marked Production No. 8. .

Bad Oeynhausen, 26th September 1946. ...........................

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Appendix Sixteen: Multi-Agency Reference Group - Terms of Reference

**Purpose**
To support, promote and disseminate the TAC project evaluation locally, regionally and nationally.

**Membership**
Mindful Practice Ltd.
Provider of the TAC Project Evaluation

**Area A**
Head of Service Development, Children & Young People’s Services (CYPS) Directorate (Co-Chair)
Head of Operations, Connexions
Clinical Social Worker, CAMHS
Area Senior Nurse, Area A County PCT
Head of District, Social Care and Safeguards, CYPS Directorate
Assistant Head Teacher, Area A Secondary School
Principal Education Welfare Officer, CYPS Directorate

**Area B**
Senior Manager - Change for Children, Children and Young People's Services (Co-Chair)
Workforce Reform Manager - Change for Children, Children and Young People's Services
Children & Young People's Strategic Manager, Children & Young People's Services
Extended Schools Remodelling Adviser, Children & Young People's Services
Head of Children & Young Peoples Commissioning, Area B PCT
Performance and Best Value Manager, Children & Young People's Services

**Joint Area A and B**
Youth Officer, Intervention Team, Fire Authority

**Strategic and Operational Links**
All members of the group have responsibility for ensuring that appropriate links are made between the group and relevant groups within their own organisation.

**Accountability**
The group will report to the MAT Strategic Group (Council A) Chairs’ Group, Strategic Partnership (Council B).
Members are responsible for ensuring that they progress agreed actions within their own organisations, and that they bring the appropriate issues from their own organisations to the group meetings.

Meeting Frequency
The group will meet four times in the period to 30th September 2006.

Meetings will alternate between the two commissioning authorities who will take it in turn to provide the venue, refreshments, administrative support and a senior manager to act as Convenor and Co-chair.

Tasks
1. To manage the interface between the project and stakeholders
2. Track the progress of the project against the plan
3. Support and promote the evaluation within and across agencies
4. Provide a multi agency forum to discuss and resolve emerging issues and any problems that arise during the evaluation
5. Offer feedback on documentation as requested, especially the draft final report
6. Support and promote local, regional and national dissemination strategies
7. Review quantitative data in respect of TACs, Lead Professionals etc.
### Appendix Seventeen: Excel spreadsheet for managing the Team around the Child evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PC/CYP Details</th>
<th>CYP Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Consent</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PC Name</strong></td>
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<td>Date of Consent</td>
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<td>Date of Decline</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC Telephone (landline and mobile)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
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<td>Date LP, PC and CYP consent forms etc. sent to LP by ISM/ISAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>JJ interview availability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of Interview</td>
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<td>Time of Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location of Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of confirmatory letter to PC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJ Notified (map/directions sent)</td>
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<th>CYP Interview</th>
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<td>CYP location preference</td>
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<td>CYP Transportation (if needed)</td>
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<td>Date of Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time of Interview</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Location of Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of confirmatory letter to PC for CYP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of follow up session with nominated professional for PC (If requested)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of follow up session with nominated professional for CYP (If requested)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thank you letter to PC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you letter/certificate of participation to CYP</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAC Professionals' Participation</td>
<td>Name of LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of Decline</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Contact Details (email/phone number)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LP line manager contact details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of TAC Professional (1)</td>
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<td>Contact Details (email/phone number)</td>
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<td>Date of Consent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of TAC Professional (2)</td>
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<td>Name of TAC Professional (3)</td>
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<td>Date of Consent</td>
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<td>Name of TAC Professional (4)</td>
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<td>Date of Consent</td>
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<td>Name of TAC Professional (5)</td>
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<td>Contact Details (email/phone number)</td>
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<td>Date of Consent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of TAC Professional (6)</td>
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<td>Contact Details (email/phone number)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of Consent</td>
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TAC Professionals who declined
Letter sent to PC/CYP if insufficient participation from TAC professionals

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group Meeting</th>
<th>Preferred dates/times: JJ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferred dates/times: LP</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred dates/times: TACP 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred dates/times: TACP 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Focus Group Follow Up/Dissemination</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferred dates/times: TACP 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferred dates/times: TACP 4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Preferred dates/times: TACP 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferred dates/times: TACP 6</td>
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<td>Venue Booked</td>
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<td>Date of Focus Group</td>
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<td>Time of Focus Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venue of Focus Group</td>
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<td>Notification of Focus Group meeting to JJ/LP/TAC professionals (email or letter)</td>
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<td>Apologies received</td>
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<td>Refreshments ordered</td>
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<td>File reviewed by JJ (date seen if yes)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thank you letter to LP, TAC professionals from JJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>CYP/PC require copy of evaluation findings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date letters, findings and acknowledgement receipts sent to LP (for personal delivery to PC/CYP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date(s) receipts returned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full report posted to PC/CYP (if requested)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies of findings/evaluation report to: LP (see consent form for version(s) requested)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date sent</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Copies of findings/evaluation report to: TACP2 (see consent form etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date sent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copies of findings/evaluation report to: TACP3 (see consent form etc.)</td>
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<td>Copies of findings/evaluation report to: TACP5 (see consent form etc.)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Copies of findings/evaluation report to: TACP6 (see consent form etc.)</td>
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<td>Date sent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thank you letter for taking part from Director to LP, TACP, PC &amp; CYP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date sent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Any other considerations</td>
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PC=Parent/Carer  
CYP=Child  
LP=Lead Professional  
JJ=Jocelyn Jones  
TAC=Team around the Child  
TACP=TAC Professional  
ISM=Integrated Services Manager  
ISAC=Information Sharing and Assessment Co-ordinator
Appendix Eighteen: Information sheets about the evaluation for young people and parents

Child/ Young Person Information Sheet

Your views about Team around the Child

What is this about?

I am a member of an independent evaluation team who have been asked to find out your views on Team around the Child (TAC). We would like to invite you to take part in a study to help us find out about what children and young people think about the help and services they are receiving from the different workers and agencies. Around the same time I will be asking the person who normally looks after you, most probably your Mum and/or Dad, what they think. I will also interview the people who work with you, for example social workers, youth workers or teachers, to find out their views on Team around the Child and how services to children and families could be made better.

What would I have to do?

If you and your Mum and/or your Dad or the person who normally looks after you decide to take part, I will come to your house. I can also see you somewhere else locally, whatever you would like best.

When we meet up, I will ask some questions about the Team around the Child (TAC) meeting, the help you have been given, and what might help you and your family more. This will probably take about an hour or so. If any of the questions are difficult or worry you, it’s okay - you won’t need to answer them. Everything you say will be private unless there are any new concerns about any child’s safety.

After I have seen you, I may also need to look at some of the records kept about you and your family.
Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to be in this study because you are under 14 years old and have had at least one Team around the Child (TAC) meeting this year so things should still be quite fresh in your mind.

Do I have to take part?

If you and the person who normally looks after you don’t want to take part you don’t have to – that’s okay. It’s completely up to you to decide whether to answer the questions. You might decide to be in the study and answer some of the questions but not want to answer all the questions – that’s okay too. There will be some time for you to tell me things in your own way. If you wish, you will also be able to talk to a worker of your choice, like a teacher or Connexions worker, sometime soon after the interview if there are any things still on your mind about the interview.
Parent/ Carer Information Sheet

Your views about ‘Team around the Child’

I am working as a member of a small independent team who have been asked to evaluate the Team around the Child (TAC) model that [Council A and Council B] have been developing over the past three years. I would like to invite you and your child to take part in this small scale evaluation. We would like to find out more about your views on Team around the Child and the help you have received from the different agencies. Your views are very important and could change the way local services are delivered and the way professionals work together in the future.

What is this study about?

We will seek to find out in individual interviews your and your child’s views on the Team around the Child model, for example, how the different workers work together to help you and your family, how the TAC meetings work, and the services you have received. The study will also include group interviews with the professionals in your particular ‘Team around the Child’ to see what they think about this way of working and how things could be improved.

What would I have to do?

This would involve you and, where appropriate, your child, being interviewed. The interview topics include:

- Planning, preparation and support for the Team around the Child (TAC) process
- The TAC meeting(s) and your participation in them
- What happened after the TAC and the services you and your child have received
- The role of the main person who helps you and your child
- Any other views that you and your child might have about TAC, and how it works.

If you decide to be interviewed you will need to give your agreement or consent to take part in the evaluation. You will also need to give your consent for your child to take part, where appropriate, depending on her/his age and understanding. Your child will also be asked to consent to being interviewed. The interviews will each take about an hour or so. Younger children will be interviewed using activities and some drawing. We may need to look at records or files kept on your child, and we ask for your consent to do this too.

Why have we been chosen?

Your child was selected because s/he is under 19 years old, and you have had at least one TAC meeting this year so that children and young people can remember more easily what happened and how they felt.

Do we have to take part?

You DO NOT have to take part. You and your child’s participation are entirely voluntary. However, as your views are very important in shaping the future of local services, we would be grateful if you would consider participating. Even if you and your child say ‘Yes’ now, you can change your mind at any time without giving a reason. If you decide not to participate the help from the different professionals and the services you receive will not be affected in any way.
How will what we say be kept confidential?

Everything you say will be confidential unless there are any new concerns about any child’s safety. No one will be identified individually. The interviews will be recorded and then written down. During this process any names and other details that might identify you and your child will be removed or changed so that the final written copy will only have a number to identify you and your family.

**Will we be able to talk with someone after the evaluation interview if I need to?**

Yes if you would like to do this, you and your child will be able to ask for the worker you would each most like to see to talk through any issues. A place is provided on the consent forms for you and your child to say who this is; they might be different people, which is OK. Either you or we can arrange for the worker(s) to see you and your child as soon as possible after the interview(s). You and your child can let me know what you would prefer when I meet you for the interviews.

**What will we receive at the end of the evaluation?**

You will receive a copy of the key evaluation findings summary in the autumn. Your child will receive a certificate of participation in the study.

**How long will information be kept about my family in this study?**

The sound recording will be destroyed at the end of the project when the final report and key findings summary have been written. The written versions of the interviews, containing no names or other identifying details, will be kept for a maximum of three years so that they might be used by the research team to write journal articles based on the findings. You and your family will not be identifiable in any reports or other written papers arising from this project.

**Who can I contact for further information?**

If you or your child would like further information about this study or to discuss any issues it might raise then please contact Jocelyn Jones on [project mobile number]. She will then call you back to reduce the costs of any phone calls.

**What do I do now?**

If you would like to take part, please complete the enclosed yellow coloured sheet and return it to the person who brought the letter of invitation and this information sheet to you. They will arrange a suitable time to collect it. You will also need to discuss participation in the study with your child, where appropriate, and arrange for their green coloured sheet to be returned at the same time.

Jocelyn Jones

Mindful Practice Ltd

Research and Consultancy
Appendix Nineteen: ‘Thank you’ letter sent to children and young people after the evaluation interviews

Child/ young person name
Child/ young person address
Child/ young person address
Child/ young person address

Date

Dear Forename of Child/ Young person

Your views about ‘Team around the Child’

This is a note to thank you very much for taking part in the Team around the Child evaluation. Your Certificate of Participation is enclosed with this letter – Congratulations! If you have asked for a follow up session with the worker you would most like to see after the evaluation interview, then this will now be arranged.

It is hoped that all the Team around the Child interviews, including the focus groups with the workers involved with your family, will have taken place by the end of this month. The draft report and findings will be written up in October, and your family will receive a copy of the key findings summary by mid December at the latest.

In the meantime if you have any other questions or things on your mind from the interview, please call or text me on [mobile phone number]. I will then text or ring you back to save on your phone bill.

Once again, many thanks for helping with the ‘Team around the Child’ evaluation,

Jocelyn

Jocelyn Jones
Independent Researcher, Mindful Practice Ltd
Research and Consultancy, and Honorary Research Consultant, xxxxxxx Primary Care Trust

Enclosure Certificate of Participation

Copies Name of Lead Professional and ISA Co-ordinator (Council A) or Name of ISM (Council B)
Appendix Twenty: ‘Thank You’ letters sent to children and young people at the end of the evaluation

Child/ young person name
Child/ young person address
Child/ young person address
Child/ young post code

14th December 2006

Dear Forename of Child/ Young person

Your views about ‘Team around the Child’

As promised in my earlier thank you letter sent after our interview in the summer, I am enclosing a copy of your Top Ten Messages from the Team around the Child (TAC) Evaluation.

The report, which includes a lot more about what you said, can be sent to you as well if you would like that. You just need to let me or your lead professional (main TAC worker) know if you would like a copy, and we’ll get one sent to you.

Council A / Council B [delete which does not apply] will be deciding about your messages and the other main messages in the report in the New Year. I will send you a short outline of their feedback and what they are changing about TAC by the end of January 2007 so you can see how what you said has made a difference.

If you have any questions or would like to make some comments on the evaluation please leave a message or text me on [project mobile phone number]. I will then text or call you back as soon as I can. You can also send an email to info@mindfulpractice.co.uk.

Once again, many thanks for helping with this evaluation.

Wishing you and your family a very Happy Christmas and New Year,

Jocelyn Jones
Independent Researcher, Mindful Practice Ltd, Leicester and Honorary Research Consultant, xxxxxxx Primary Care Trust

Enclosure Children and Young People’s Views about Team around the Child
Copy Forename and surname of Lead Professional Tel: Phone number.
Check if they are still the same LP.
29th January 2007

Dear Forename of Child/ Young person

Your views about ‘Team around the Child’

When I wrote to you last month, I said that I would let you know what Council A/Council B [delete which does not apply] have decided to do about your feedback on Team around the Child.

This is what they intend to do:

- List of 4-6 key bullet points in simple language to be inserted by Council A or Council B

If you have any questions about this or would like to ask for a copy of the full report, please leave a message or text me on [project mobile phone number]. I will then text or call you back as soon as I can. You can also send an email to info@mindfulpractice.co.uk.

Many thanks for helping with this evaluation and all good wishes for the future,

Jocelyn Jones
Independent Researcher, Mindful Practice Ltd, Leicester and Honorary Research Consultant, xxxxxxx Primary Care Trust

Copy Forename and surname of Lead Professional
Check if they are still the same LP.
Bibliography

Books, book chapters, journal papers & newspaper articles


British Airborne Division. 1945. *By Air to Battle*. HMSO: London


Gerrard, N. 1999. ‘I can still taste the fear.’ *The Observer*. http://guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,3932834,00.html (accessed 25.02.2001)


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Polanyi M. 1967 The Tacit Dimension. Doubleday: Garden City, NY


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BBC1. 1995. *Interview with Stephen and Mae West*. Inside Story Special, 6th December.


BBC1. 2005d *The Road to VE Day*. 4th May.

BBC1 2005e. *Britain at War*, July.

Bloomstein R. 2006. KZ. Shooting People Films Ltd


ITV. 2005 *Victory in Europe in Colour*. 8th May


**Material held at the National Archives, London**

FO916/836 Foreign Office: Consular (War) Department, later Prisoners of War Department: Registered Files (KW and RD Series). Stalag XIB, XIA. 1944.


**Personal Journals and Diaries**

**Personal journals and diaries of deceased former Prisoners of War and residents of Oosterbeek**


Read VHW. 1943. Personal diary kept in North Africa.


**Personal accounts and journals of major contributors to the research**

