**VISUAL VOICES OF THE PRISONS
MEMORY ARCHIVE:
PRESERVATION, ACCESS
AND ENGAGEMENT**
END OF PROJECT EVALUATION

INDEPENDENT REPORT PRODUCED BY KAREN MCMINN
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I began to realise that as Prison Officers and prisoners we shared much of the same thing. There is very little that separates us as human beings… A lot of families suffered through the Troubles, including mine. From the Prisons Memory Archive experience, I came out the other side… for the first time as a joined up human being. I don't know where else anything like this could have happened.

PMA Participant

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Executive Summary

In 2006 and 2007, the Prisons Memory Archive (PMA) made contact with an inclusive range of people – loyalist and republican former prisoners and internees, prison officers and governors, visitors, educators, journalists, probation officers, welfare workers, and chaplains – to revisit the sites of Maze Long Kesh (MLK) prison and Armagh Gaol. They were invited to recount their experiences of the prisons based on their memories recalled while visiting the prison sites, using the oral history tradition of life-storytelling, to create an archive of stories. In the recordings, participants recalled numerous aspects of the prison life during the years of political and violent conflict in Northern Ireland. Themes include the experience of internment, everyday life for prisoners and prison officers, the culture of different organisations in the prisons, key events such as the hunger strikes of 1981, and the role of education in the prisons.

The result of this work is the Prisons Memory Archive. It created 175 audio-visual digital recordings from 191 participants who provide some deeply personal recollections and insights about the impact of the conflict on individuals, communities and the wider political landscape. The Archive also included site footage of the prisons, administrative records and over 1000 photographs.

From 2016 to 2020, the Visual Voices (VV) project of the Prisons Memory Archive worked to preserve, catalogue, curate and build public engagement with its oral history archive and to facilitate the installation of the Archive to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). The VV project was based at Queen's University Belfast (QUB), with PRONI as a formal project partner, and was supported by a Heritage Grant of £750,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The VV project sought to deliver an ambitious range of outcomes working with politically diverse constituent groups, public bodies and local communities.

Political Context

The development of the VV project has taken place in a problematic political context in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Many legacy aspects of the conflict

remain unresolved, particularly in relation to definitions of victims and compensation, historical inquiries and flags, emblems and parades. The Stormont House Agreement (2015) included a commitment to set up an oral history archive, recognising that conflict-related oral histories – individuals' own stories reflecting their lived experiences – can provide a mechanism by which to address the past. However, the absence of political will to progress an oral history archive has meant there has been no government support to embark on this work.

Key Evaluation Findings

The findings of this evaluation present clear, compelling evidence that the VV project has been extremely successful in delivering on its core aims of preservation of the Archive materials, increasing digital access to, and public engagement with, the Archive.

The findings further demonstrate the positive impact of the project in enriching heritage and culture in Northern Ireland, in deepening understanding in local communities and in supporting the development of knowledge and skills in people. Data collected during this evaluation indicates overwhelmingly positive feedback from respondents on the value of the project in creating new spaces and opportunities for reflection, dialogue and education. In increasing public access to different perspectives and knowledge about the conflict in Northern Ireland, the VV project has helped to expand the concept and nature of heritage in Northern Ireland, based on an inclusive approach to dealing with the past.

The approach of the PMA has set new standards in the practice of Oral History and Storytelling within the context of a conflict. The PMA's Ethical Framework has been a best practice defining standard for the work undertaken in delivery of the VV project. The commitment to building inclusivity has been apparent at every level of the project's processes and practices, from the design of educational material and glossary for the website, to testing user access to services, building engagement with local communities and in the operation of its governance structures. The trust and relationships built with participants underpinned by the principles of co-

ownership at the outset of the PMA has created a legacy of respectful engagement which has guided the work of the VV project.

Preservation, Access and Engagement

The VV project delivered a wide range of preservation, digital access and engagement outputs and activities over the four-year period.

The principal goal of the VV project to preserve the Archive Collection of the PMA for future generations has been successfully achieved, despite delays in staff appointments, substantial technical challenges and lockdown due to COVID-19. The digital preservation of the PMA recordings and their transfer to PRONI represents a hugely significant milestone in the journey of the PMA from its origins in 2003/04, when the idea of an archive was first conceived. The PMA is now part of the public archive of Northern Ireland. The PMA collection complements existing Northern Ireland conflict-related archives at PRONI, offering onsite and online users an audio-visual record of the experiences of political prisoners, prison staff and various others in the tradition of storytelling and oral history.

Of the original 191 participants who were recorded, 15 participants withdrew from the project – the right to withdraw had been established from the outset and was an important factor in securing participation from several constituent groups. Through the VV project, permissions were secured from **141 participants** to transfer their recordings to PRONI. A total of **158** recordings have been reviewed, preserved and transferred to PRONI (this figure includes recordings without permissions, which will be stored securely, but it excludes the recordings of the 15 participants who have explicitly withdrawn); by March 2021, 115 recordings should be fully accessible at PRONI.

In terms of the breakdown of participants per constituent group, the Archive attracted a much larger proportion of republican ex-prisoners than loyalist ex-prisoners: 46% (65) republican ex-prisoners compared with 7% (11) loyalist ex-prisoners. Findings from the evaluation indicate that the engagement of loyalist participants was an on-going challenge for the PMA but one that staff and Advisory Group members dealt

with in an effective and sensitive way. Additional "re-balancing" recordings, to include more loyalists and deal with gaps caused by withdrawals, were being made at the time of writing.

Expanding Perspectives: Deepening Understanding, Learning and Awareness

The PMA website has been expanded to include a dedicated educational portal aimed at young people and teachers of history, politics and culture. The educational materials were highly regarded in terms of the quality of the materials and their digital accessibility which will be increasingly important as the education sector adjusts to teaching in the post-pandemic environment. The improved digital access will help to maximise access to Archive materials for a wide range of audiences and users including young people, academics and researchers (local and global), teachers, local historians, and local communities of interest.

The VV project has demonstrated the potential for the PMA's positive engagement with local communities, schools and institutions. The evidence from this evaluation provides many examples of the ways in which the VV project has developed and deepened understanding of the conflict in Northern Ireland, its history and context. Engagement with PMA materials has also supported learning beyond history and politics in local communities.

Evaluation data indicates overwhelmingly positive feedback from consultees on the impact of the project in enhancing awareness through its community engagement programme. This was further validated from the feedback from internal monitoring data collected at VV events.

Key messages from the feedback from events was how listening to and watching both materials from the Archive and panel discussions with participants had helped to humanise PMA participants – particularly ex-prisoners and prison officers – and helped people to be empathic to perspectives of 'the other'. In the context of a post-conflict society this is an important process which can help to remove barriers to engagement. The PMA is engaged in sensitive work in building understanding between diverse constituent groups in a politically complex context and not all engagements had positive results. The occasions where people had a hostile response to the materials or panellists have been recognised as providing an

important learning for the PMA and staff, who showed a determination to ensure that engagement with the Archive minimises the risk of re-traumatising people.

One of the greatest strengths of the PMA is that is has created a space where different and contrary narratives and ideologies about the conflict can co-exist. For some participants, particularly loyalist and women political prisoners, engagement in the PMA and in the VV project has provided an opportunity for their voices to be heard. For other participants the PMA offered the opportunity to listen to a particular constituency that had been largely silent during the conflict – the experiences of Prison Officers and their families. The PMA has helped to equalise the experiences of these particular constituent groups and their wider communities and provides another example of the PMA's commitment to be truly inclusive. The VV project has also enabled the PMA to expand its audience base to key target groups – young people, teachers and educational organisations.

Expanding Heritage in Northern Ireland

A core purpose of any archive is to improve knowledge and understanding of the past. Part of the uniqueness of the PMA as a heritage project is that is has consciously sought to gather multiple narratives of the experiences of political and violent conflict in Northern Ireland. Much of the heritage created by wars and conflict and within post conflict societies commemorates and valorises partisan groups and communities, often in an exclusive way. The PMA has taken a radically different approach.

The PMA has helped to broaden perceptions of what heritage is. It has promoted storytelling and intangible heritage, building more inclusive models ways to celebrate and memorialise political and cultural events and traditions. The PMA has expanded heritage on the conflict in NI in partnership with PRONI with the combined PRONI-PMA Archives offering more complex and diverse narratives of that period in history. With PRONI holding official state records, the PMA adds a new layer and richness to that public record combining a mostly a top-down official history with the PMA's bottom-up narrative, countering and completing what PRONI already holds.

Management, Partnership Working and Challenges

The extent of collaboration, mutual support and respect between the PMA staff based at QUB and the staff at PRONI as partners has been a critical factor in the overall success of the VV project, with a high level of commitment between them at strategic, operational and technical levels. PRONI and PMA staff established a very collaborative approach to problem solving and dealing with technical challenges. Engagement in the PMA has also brought added value to a range of partner organisations, in particular to PRONI which has built its knowledge and skills base in the development of audio-visual digital archives, which were previously limited.

PMA management and communication systems have been effective and efficient and PMA staff were highly regarded for their skills and consistent levels of commitment to the VV project which faced a number of significant challenges during the delivery. Governance of the VV project by the VV Steering Group and PMA Advisory Group was also of an exceptionally high standard and benefited from the expertise and leadership of the chairpersons and the contributions of a diverse constituent group which included loyalist and republican ex-prisoners, former probation officers, tutors and senior civil servants. The commitment from PRONI to both the Steering Group and Advisory Group at the senior level was very affirming for the work of project. Various QUB staff in different departments provided valuable expertise and support to the project.

The VV project faced a number of operational challenges during the delivery of the project including engagement with administrative systems in QUB, which caused long delays to the recruitment of key staff which impacted on project delivery. A second challenge, noted earlier, has been to maintain inclusivity in terms of two particular constituencies – loyalist ex-prisoners and Prison Officers. Through the VV project, the PMA was able to rebalance the contributions of both groups in the Archive.

The VV project, and the PMA project as a whole, has provided a model of best practice and ethical practice not only in its approach to oral history and participatory documentary-making but in its commitment to inclusive management, development and engagement practices.

The Strategic Value of the PMA

The work of the PMA and the VV project has also demonstrated its value strategically in supporting the work of its partner organisations, PRONI and QUB, and in strengthening the role of the NLHF in using heritage and culture to create positive change and learning for people and local communities.

Within the context of the lack of political will to adequately address legacy issues, NLHF's commitment to supporting oral history / storytelling work as a mechanism for addressing the past in Northern Ireland is to be commended. The NLHF is enabling heritage on the Northern Ireland conflict in many ways – seeking to fill gaps in historical records, bringing new perspectives from people whose voices have sometimes been excluded from the past and challenging the legitimacy of a single narrative to explain a difficult period of conflict in Northern Ireland.

Future Sustainability of the PMA

With the ending of the VV project funding, a number of mechanisms have been developed to support the long-term sustainability of the PMA in its location at PRONI. There is an ongoing commitment from QUB to support the project through a 5-year management and maintenance plan following the completion of the NLHF grant funding. The PMA Advisory Group will continue to guide and make decisions about access to the Archive and ways to continue the operation of the PMA's ethical framework going forward.

The current political context for the resolution of legacy issues in Northern Ireland is deeply complex. The PMA will continue to operate in a context where the legacy of past issues remains unresolved, with contested positions on who should be included in processes and how they should be addressed. Conflict-related oral history archives, holding the lived experiences of people, can provide a pathway to addressing the past; the PMA is only one of many such projects that have developed in Northern Ireland in recent years.

The value of the inclusive approach of the PMA has been not only to create an archive where different narratives can co-exist but to create public spaces where

those different narratives can be articulated and listened to. The findings from the evaluation reflect both the achievements of this work but also the deeply challenging nature of engagement in post-conflict Northern Ireland. In the absence of a political resolution for dealing with the past, the creation of the PMA as part of heritage in Northern Ireland has proven itself to be valuable mechanism to broaden our understanding of history, identity and cultures and one that merits continued support and recognition.

Chapter One   Introduction

This report presents the findings of an independent evaluation undertaken to critically assess the performance of the Visual Voices (VV) project of the Prisons Memory Archive (PMA). The evaluation was commissioned by the PMA and is an end-of-project evaluation. This chapter describes the aims and objectives of the PMA and the VV project, sets out the scope and methodology of the evaluation process and outlines the structure of this report.

1.1   The Prisons Memory Archive

In 2006 and 2007, the PMA invited an inclusive range of people – including loyalist and republican former prisoners and internees,[1] prison officers and governors, visitors, educators, journalists, probation officers, welfare workers, and chaplains – to revisit the sites of Maze and Long Kesh (MLK) and Armagh Gaol. Recordings at Armagh Gaol took place in 2006, and in MLK in 2007, with a small number of recordings made later. Participants were invited to recount their experiences of the prisons based on their memories recalled while visiting the prison sites, using the oral history tradition of life-storytelling to create an archive of stories. In the recordings, participants recalled numerous aspects of the prison life during the years of political and violent conflict in Northern Ireland. Themes they discussed included the experience of internment; everyday life for prisoners and prison officers; the culture of different organisations in the prisons; education, art and crafts; and the architecture of the prisons. The Archive was initially established with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (at the time called the Heritage Lottery Fund).

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[1] It is difficult to verify the precise numbers of political prisoners imprisoned / interned as a result of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Professor Sean McConville, Professor of Law and Public Policy at Queen Mary University of London, and published academic on Irish Political Prisoners, was consulted for the purposes of this evaluation. He advised that *reliable figures are not available because a significant amount of work would be needed to arrive at even reasonably accurate totals*. (Email correspondence with the author, 12 August 2020).

Information provided by the umbrella organization for republican former prisoner groups, Coiste na n-Iarchimí, estimates that Long Kesh/Maze housed some 25,000 republican and loyalist prisoners during their joint history. Coiste also estimates that 15,000 prison officers and staff worked there, meaning that the prison touched on the lives of some 40,000 families in total.

The result of this work was a collection of approximately 175 audio-visual digital recordings from 191 participants,[2] who provided some deeply personal recollections and insights about the impact of the conflict on individuals, communities and the wider political landscape. These recordings form the basis of the Prisons Memory Archive. The Archive also includes footage of the prison sites, historical records and over 1000 photographs. In addition to the digital recordings with approximately 300 hours of footage, the PMA has created an interactive website[3] and supported the production of three feature-length films[4] and five short films. The Archive also provides a valuable architectural element with visual records of the built environment of both MLK and Armagh Gaol, much of which has either been demolished or is now inaccessible.

The PMA is overseen by the PMA Advisory Group, (formerly the Management Group).[5] After moving from the University of Ulster, the PMA is based at the School of Arts, English and Languages at QUB, under the supervision of the PMA Project Director. The Director's work is recognised as leading the field of participatory practice in recording memories from conflict, with a focus on creating relationship of trust between film makers and participants, in an approach which challenges the principles and practices of the mainstream broadcast media.

PMA's Ethical Framework

Since its inception, the work of the PMA has been underpinned and guided by its Ethical Framework. The PMA's ethical framework combines three distinctive and complementary elements: ***inclusivity, life storytelling and co-ownership*** of the Archive materials. These are defined by the PMA as follows:[6]

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[2] Until the VV project, many PMA recordings had not been fully preserved (or even viewed since they had been made) due to limited project resources. Some participants appeared in more than one recording, for example as an individual and as part of a group. Therefore, while the number of participants is correct (191), the approximate figure of 175 recordings was a "best estimate" used by the project team, subject to confirmation through the preservation work of the VV project. See Chapter 2 for a breakdown of the final number of recordings preserved, which also accounts for withdrawals and issues relating to participant consent.

[3] https://www.prisonsmemoryarchive.com/

[4] *Inside Stories: Memories from the Maze and Long Kesh Prison* (2005); *We Were There: The Women of the Maze and Long Kesh Prison* (2014), and *Armagh Stories: Voices from the Gaol* (2015).

[5] A list of all contributors to the Advisory Group is detailed in Appendix 2.

[6] https://www.prisonsmemoryarchive.com/ethical-framework/ Accessed 27/08/2020

Inclusivity

Where contestation over narratives from the past remains, it is important to hear and see the story from many perspectives. The PMA includes stories from as wide a range of constituencies as was possible during filming: including prison staff, prisoners, visitors, educators and chaplains. This encourages viewers to regard others as 'ourselves in other circumstances' and to witness not only contrasts, but also parallels, in the participants' experiences. While the material offers validation of each story and participant, at the same time it also challenges our assumptions about the past.

Life Storytelling

Drawing on the oral-history tradition of life-storytelling, with its open-ended approach as opposed to leading questions, the PMA attempts to minimise the levels of mediation between participant and filmmaker and viewer. In creating the Archive, participants were brought back to the empty sites of the Maze and Long Kesh Prison and Armagh Gaol, where a fifteen-minute briefing before the recording discussed the process and what issues they wished to cover. The sites' architecture and artefacts influenced the participants' structuring of remembering and helped trigger their memories according to what they encountered.

Co-ownership

The PMA shares ownership of the recordings with the participants. This means that participants are involved at all stages of production and exhibition: they ultimately have the power of veto over material. This co-ownership approach generally contrasts with mainstream models of documentary filmmaking where the subjects relinquish ownership of recorded material to the production company or broadcaster. This ethical protocol is primarily intended to establish trust between participants and the PMA in a society emerging from violence where political and personal sensitivities remain delicate.

This ethical framework has guided the production and dissemination of the audio-visual recordings as well as all aspects of its work including active participant engagement in the management and delivery of the PMA's work.

1.2   Background to the Visual Voices Project: Aim, Objectives and Outcomes

Despite the success of the PMA in creating the Archive during 2006-07, and in subsequently working to promote access to and engagement with the Archive during 2008-2014, the collection faced a range of challenging circumstances and an uncertain future. Public access to the Archive was limited to 25% of recordings, with only piecemeal funding to support the development of greater access. The broader political context for engagement was not conducive to supporting the work of the Archive. Issues relating to dealing with the past and with legacy issues remained unresolved, impacting on the capacity of communities to listen to or engage with each other, and on the potential for funders and hosts to consider supporting the project. Despite proposals from government-commissioned investigations on the value of oral history archives in dealing with the past,[7] there was little recognition or support for the potential of the PMA as a tool for deepening a shared understanding of the past.

Meanwhile, with the passing of time there was a growing concern that the quality of the recorded materials of the Archive was at risk from being degraded.

During 2014-15 the PMA worked to secure funding to preserve the Archive and increase access to and engagement with it. Following an initial development grant, which allowed piloting and scoping to take place, in 2016 the PMA secured a heritage grant of £750,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for its Visual Voices project. Part of this grant included an in-kind contribution from both QUB and PRONI. The VV project operated from December 2016 to September 2020, led by the PMA director with a staff team consisting of a Project Manager, Project Archivist and Assistant Archivist, Archival Film Editor, Project Assistant and an Outreach and

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[7] These reports included Bloomfield (1998), Eames-Bradley (2009), Hass-O'Sullivan (2013), and the Stormont House Agreement (SHA) (2015). All proposed that an archive for conflict-related oral histories should be established in order to provide a shared understanding of the past. The SHA included a commitment to set up an oral history archive.

Communications Officer. QUB was the administrative home of the project, and PRONI came on board as a formal project partner.

Visual Voices Project Purpose and Aims

The VV project was a partnership project governed by a Steering Group, made up of representatives from QUB, PRONI and the PMA Advisory Group. The purpose of the VV project was "***to preserve and make accessible a diverse and inclusive range of oral histories relating to the conflict in Northern Ireland for future generations".*** The project aims were structured across four key themes: Preservation; Access; Engagement; and Developing and Manging the VV Project and the PMA Collection.

1. **Preserving and Processing the PMA collection** for access at PRONI: The preservation of all material recorded for the Prisons Memory Archive, including 175 audio-visual digital recordings of prison staff, prisoners, and many others who passed through Armagh Gaol and the Maze and Long Kesh Prison.

2. **Maximising Digital Accessibility to the PMA Collection:** Through the transfer of the Archive to PRONI, the project will increase accessibility to the recordings, which document some of the most difficult times in our shared history. By maximising accessibility through digital innovation, we will contribute to participatory dialogue around history and heritage.

3. **Engaging Audiences with the PMA Collection:** Community engagement is a central tenet of the project as we will help people learn about, and contribute to, shared heritage. Through people having an active role in the project we will better understand the different ways in which the material can be interpreted and this in turn will help develop community resilience and the sustainability of the Prisons Memory Archive for future generations.

4. **Developing and Managing the VV Project and the PMA Collection:** Management of the PMA Collection requires a participatory approach from the project partners and contributors. By taking part in this process, partners and participants will increase their knowledge and understanding of their own and other peoples' heritage.

The VV project also committed to the delivery of a wide number of anticipated outcomes (83) in relation to Heritage, People and Communities. These include ways to create a more inclusive concept of heritage, to broaden access to heritage and history and to improve the skills and understanding of people and communities.

1.3   Evaluation Context and Aims

In June 2020, as part of its commitment to good practice and shared learning, the PMA commissioned a summative evaluation to document and evaluate the impact and performance of the VV Project, focusing on the experience of project participants and partner organisations. Although the VV project concluded in September 2020, the PMA will continue as a partnership between the PMA Advisory Group, QUB, and PRONI. In this context the evaluation can provide a valuable source of learning to support the future development of the PMA.

The key aim of the evaluation is: *to provide an independent assessment of how successful the VV PMA project has been in achieving its intended aims and outcomes in relation to Preservation and Processing of the Archive; Increasing Access to and Engagement in the Archive; and, Governance.*

The evaluation also considers more discretely a number of other issues including: the complexities and challenges encountered in such oral history work; the PMA/VV Project as a model of best practice within the field of oral history projects, including recommendations for other projects that intend to engage participants and audiences in oral history in a post-conflict context; and, recommendations for future custodians of the PMA to ensure the long-term sustainability of the PMA.

1.4   Scope and Challenges of the Evaluation

The evaluation process faced a number of challenges, notably limited resources for the evaluation scope, limited timeframe and COVID-19 restrictions.

The scope of this evaluation has been determined by the key evaluation aims; however, the limited resources available and timescale for completion have also influenced the range of investigation. Sample size of consultation and data collection have been comprehensive whilst the focus of themes has needed to be strategic.

The primary focus of the evaluation has been to measure performance across the four stated themes. It is not within the capacity of this assignment to measure progress on all 83 stated outcomes of the VV project, but analysis has drawn on of a smaller number of NLHF outcomes relating to Heritage, People and Communities.

1.5   Evaluation Methodology

The methodology used to collect data for this evaluation included documentary review, analysis of monitoring and evaluation data and consultation with PMA participants, staff and programme partners.

A range of selected documents and monitoring materials were appraised as part of the documentary review. These included: VV Project Aims and Objectives; Funding Proposal; viewing of Archive recordings, film and PMA Website Launch webinar; research reports and papers; internal monitoring data including feedback from participants at public events and screenings; and progress reports to NLHF.

Qualitative data was collated through face to face interviews with 21 consultees through Zoom and phone interviews:

- Nine PMA participants from a wide range of constituent groups including five former prisoners, a prison officer, a probation officer and two tutors. The tutors also provided feedback as PMA Advisory Group members

- Eight face to face interviews with PMA / VV project staff and project partners

- Three interviews with representatives of the History Teachers' Association Northern Ireland (HTANI)[8] and Into Film,[9] two educational organisations

The information gathered through documentary review and interviews was analysed across the key evaluation themes.

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[8] HTANI is a membership led organisation of history teachers that protects and promotes history education: https://www.htani.org/

[9] Into Film puts film at the heart of children and young people's education, helping to support their academic, cultural, and social development: https://www.intofilm.org/northern-ireland

1.6   Report Structure

Evaluation findings are presented in the following chapters. Chapter Two details key activities and outputs delivered by the VV project. Chapter Three examines the project's approach to building inclusive engagement. Chapter Four presents the substantive findings on the outcomes for people, communities and heritage and the impact of the project in deepening awareness and understanding of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Chapter Five assesses the effectiveness of management systems and partnership working. Chapter Six considers oral history / life storytelling best practice. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Two   Preservation of the Archive and Increasing Digital Access to Archive Materials

This chapter presents findings on the key activities and outputs delivered by the VV project in preserving and processing Archive materials for transfer to PRONI and the challenges of that work. It also examines the mechanisms developed to increase digital access to the Archive through a variety of platforms.

2.1   Preserving and Processing the PMA collection for access at PRONI

These recordings have been sitting on a shelf for 12 years - if we had not got funding to preserve the materials, we were at serious risk of losing them.

PMA Project Director

The preservation of the Archive materials, particularly the recordings of 191 PMA participants, and their transfer to PRONI was the principal aim of the VV project. The work undertaken by VV PMA and PRONI staff to achieve this was both labour- and time-intensive, technically demanding, and required a forensic attention to detail.

Processing of the audio-visual recordings took place across two sites: preparation of the files by VV PMA staff at QUB and processing of the files by PRONI staff for digital preservation at the PRONI repository. This was the installation of the first audio-visual digital archive at PRONI and required the design and set up of a range of data mechanisms to deal with the capacity of PMA digital files. Staff from both organisations independently reviewed all 175 individual recordings and processed them for a variety of reasons, including: data protection issues, participants' concerns, and to authenticate and ensure the integrity of the digital files.[10] The VV PMA Film Archive Editor also reviewed each recording to check sound and visual quality and made any necessary adjustments. The VV PMA Archivists were

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[10] *Data integrity refers to maintaining and assuring the accuracy and consistency of data over the research lifecycle. Checksums provide a way to monitor the integrity of data. Like a fingerprint of a file, they are used to verify whether two copies of a file are identical*: *https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/622361/storingyourdata_checksumexercise.pdf* (Accessed 13/08/2020)

responsible for creating detailed catalogue descriptions and also for carrying out data protection checks for each recording. The catalogue descriptions enable potential archive users to navigate the range of materials easily by subject matter, community of interest or time period, for example.

2.2   Securing Participants' Consent for Transfer of Recordings to PRONI

The transfer of the PMA Collection from QUB to PRONI was not solely a matter of technical processing. In keeping with the PMA's Ethical Framework, new consent and permissions agreements from all 191 individual PMA participants were required for their recordings to be transferred and accessed at PRONI. The issue of consent from participants had been an ongoing administrative challenge for the PMA, given difficulties in maintaining up to date contact mechanisms for participants over a 12-year period, during periods when the PMA had little funding or staff resources.

The PMA Advisory Group set up a Participant Comms Working Group to secure consents during the final year of the project. Contacting participants was not simply a bureaucratic process - to access some participants, it required the knowledge and networks of Advisory Group members who had had a past connection with participants. The work was also labour and time-intensive. Initially, agreements were obtained through posting out hard copies of the agreements for participants to sign and return. However, lockdown as a result of COVID-19 severely impacted on this work. In light of lockdown and the restrictions on postal services, QUB legal advisers were able to approve typed signatures as consent on digital forms. Reaching out through personal contacts of the Advisory Group also proved critical to securing consents. By the close of the VV project, Final Participant Agreements had been secured from **141 participants** or their next-of-kin (this is discussed further in the presentation of data on outputs delivered by the project in section 2.4).

2.3   Challenges in Archive Preservation, Processing and Consents

In addition to the difficulties in securing participants' consents, problematic engagement with administrative systems in QUB did, on occasion, cause delays to the recruitment of contract staff, especially at the beginning of the project. This impacted on the capacity of the project to progress at critical points in the Archive

preservation, processing and transfer processes. A key post - VV's Film Archive Editor - was vacant for a year, which "*put a total pause on processing recordings*" (VV Staff member).

Further delays and disruption to archival transfers were compounded with lockdown as a result of COVID-19. What had previously been relatively straightforward technical processes in shared office environments at QUB or PRONI were beset with difficulties as staff no longer could access the IT equipment and resources of their respective institutions. With all staff working from home, they had to rely on domestic broadband systems for the sharing, editing and transfer of large video files and data. VV PMA and PRONI staff worked hard to find solutions, such as upgrading broadband capacity at the home of VV's film editor. QUB Information Services also provided valuable support at this time. Nonetheless, in the early days of lockdown, this took some time to resolve. The subsequent delays impacted significantly on the capacity of VV and PRONI staff to maintain progress on transfer and processing of recordings to PRONI. These delays happened only six months before the end of the project and put staff under pressure to complete the transfers within a much-reduced timescale.

Staff at PRONI and the VV project also had to address the complexity of copyright in relation to the PMA Collection, where legislative ownership and participatory co-ownership are not entirely complementary. The challenge of finding ways to fulfil copyright protocols within the PMA's ethical framework illustrates not only the unique challenges faced by the VV project and PRONI staff teams but also the pioneering work that the PMA is engaged in. The copyright issues were successfully resolved under the guidance of Professor Ronan Deazley, specialist in copyright law at QUB whose expertise was described as having been invaluable to the project.

It is evident that staff at the PMA and at PRONI worked diligently, collaboratively and creatively to address these significant challenges and to moderate their impact. As a result, by the end of the project, 90% of recordings had been processed by VV staff, transferred to PRONI (see the following section for more detailed analysis of outputs). This is a very good outcome given the level of difficulties encountered by the project at such a critical point in the complex process of the transfer of recordings.

2.4   Key Outputs: Recordings, Withdrawals and Preservation

As a result of the work on preservation, processing and consents, the VV project has successfully delivered a wide range of outputs, detailed below.

Table 1: Number of PMA Participants, Participants Withdrawals and Participant Agreements

Category	Total Participants
Number of PMA participants engaged in the 2006/07 recordings	**191 participants featured in the original recordings**. The majority (140) appeared in solo recordings; 44 appeared in group recordings; 6 appeared in both a solo and group recording.
Number of participants who withdrew from the PMA (2007 – 2020)	Out of the original 191 participants, **15 have withdrawn from the project** – representing only 8% of all participants. Of those who withdrew: • 8 were loyalist ex-prisoners • 4 were Prison Officers • 1 was a Chaplain • 1 was a Probation Officer • 1 was a republican ex-prisoner
Final Participant Agreements secured	By the close of the VV project, Final Participant Agreements had been secured from **141 participants** or their next-of-kin.
Constituent breakdown	Of the 141 participants who have signed over permissions, there are: • 4 academics / researchers • 2 artists • 11 chaplains (including traditional churches as well as Salvation Army and Quaker Service) • 3 contractors • 1 doctor • 9 educators • 1 government minister • 3 journalists • 2 legal advisors • 11 loyalist ex-prisoners / internees • 2 prison governors • 6 prison officers • 4 probation officers • 65 republican ex-prisoners / internees • 11 visitors • 4 welfare / human rights workers • 2 others (one was an internee before the 'Troubles' era; the other is a representative of the Ulster Aviation Society which has been using the MLK site following the closure of the prison).
Participants per prison site	Of the 141 participants who have signed over permissions, **24 appear at Armagh Gaol, 115 appear at Maze and Long Kesh**, and 2 appear at both sites.

A total of 191 participants contributed to the original 2006/07 recordings. 15 participants withdrew from the project – representing only 8% of all participants. The right to withdraw was an important means of securing participation from some constituent groups. Eight loyalist ex-prisoners withdrew, several of them as a result of the repercussions of the Boston College 'Belfast Project' controversy[11] and during the Flags protest when there was a withdrawal of some loyalists from public bodies in 2012-13. Four Prison Officers withdrew when Prison Officer David Black was shot dead in 2012.

Of the remaining 176 participants, **agreements from 80% (141) were secured for the transfer of their recording to PRONI as a result of the VV project, representing a very successful output of the project.** An analysis of the breakdown of participants per constituent group for these participants indicates a much larger proportion of republican ex-prisoners than loyalist ex-prisoners engaged with the PMA, with 46% (65) republican ex-prisoners compared with 7% (11) loyalist ex-prisoners. This demonstrates the challenge of inclusivity for the PMA which consultees highlighted as an ongoing issue. This theme is further explored in section 3.4 of this report.

Of the 141 participants, 80% were recorded at MLK and 20% at Armagh Gaol. In terms of gender breakdown, 64% (91) were men and 36% (50) were women. Of the 91 men, four were recorded at Armagh Gaol, 86 at Maze and Long Kesh, and one at both sites. Of the 50 women, 20 were recorded at Armagh Gaol, 29 at Maze and Long Kesh, and one at both sites.

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[11] The release of recordings from the Boston College 'Belfast Project', which recorded oral history testimonies from those involved in the conflict, has led to criminal prosecutions, or the threat of prosecutions, for contributors to the project: http://oralhistory.columbia.edu/blog-posts/lessons-from-the-belfast-project (accessed 06/09/2020). However, it is important to note that Prisons Memory Archive recordings will not be subject to the same legal threat. The aim of the recordings was to capture personal perspectives of the prison experience, and key to the PMA's approach was that participants were reminded before their recording not to incriminate themselves or anyone else. The protection of participants, their relatives and third parties has been a key part of the PMA's recording and editing process.

Table 2: Number of PMA Recordings Processed, Preserved and Transferred to PRONI

Category	Total
Number of Recordings Completed in 2006/07	**175 recordings** (approximately – see note at Section 1.1). All of the original recordings were conserved from 2006/07. However, not all of these can be made publicly available. Recordings of participants who withdrew from the project have been destroyed. Some recordings cannot be made publicly accessible until permissions have been secured and/or a certain amount of time has passed. Some recordings are subject to a moratorium requested by the participant.
Number of Recordings Processed by VV staff and Transferred to PRONI	**158 recordings**
Number of Recordings Accessible by the Public (March 2021)	**115 recordings processed by PRONI staff** and due to be publicly available for access at PRONI site or online by March 2021.
Number of Recordings Not Accessible: Moratoriums	**6 recordings are subject to moratoriums** and therefore inaccessible to the public. In these cases, participants have requested public access to be withheld for a specific period, ranging from 1-2 years to 20 years.
Number of Recordings Not Accessible: Permissions or Data Protection Issues	**37 recordings remain inaccessible** by the public due to absence of consent / verification of data protection These recordings will be stored securely at PRONI until outstanding permissions can be secured and/or data protection issues can be resolved.

A total of 158 recordings have been reviewed, preserved and transferred to PRONI, representing 90% of all recordings, representing a significant output of the VV project. Almost three quarters of these recordings (73%) should be fully accessible to the public at PRONI by March 2021.

A group of six recordings will be subject to a moratorium at PRONI, restricting public access until a certain date specified by the participants. A further group of 37 recordings will remain currently inaccessible, either because consent is pending from a participant, or because of outstanding technical or data protection issues.

The project also put contingency plans in place with proposals to invite postgraduate students at QUB to finalise work on the completion of these outstanding tasks with

the intention of completing all outstanding tasks for the proper verification and transfer of all recordings to PRONI within six months of the closure of the project.

2.5   Maximising Digital Accessibility to the PMA Collection

This section of the report focuses on the ways the VV project enhanced digital access to the Archive materials onsite and online at PRONI, through the PRONI catalogue, the PRONI website and the PMA website. The section opens by outlining the rationale of the PMA to locate its Archive at PRONI.

Feedback from evaluation consultees indicates that the decision to locate the PMA Collection at Northern Ireland's Public Records Office has been a good one. PRONI was described as a "*neutral holding ground"* for the PMA Collection. The neutrality of PRONI as a public archive has been the issue of debate within wider constituent groups of the PMA; some within the republican community were wary of engagement in an institution which has statutory responsibilities relating to government records, for example. However, the debate in the PMA would seem to have been resolved and feedback from republican consultees to this evaluation was consistently positive about the role and contributions that PRONI had made to the project.

Full public access is guaranteed free of charge at PRONI in ways that would not be possible with other public institutions such as QUB. Senior PMA staff described this degree of accessibility as *"…one of the reasons we went with PRONI – it is a place where people can come to listen to one or two specific stories or embark on more in-depth academic research".* PRONI provides the advantage of offering other archival material, such as government / official records on prisons and individual prisoners, which, combined with the PMA Collection, provides a more expanded narrative of prisons during the years of conflict in Northern Ireland.

A total of 24 digital recordings were transferred to PRONI in the pilot phase of the VV project as a first step in expanding digital and public access to the recordings and enabling users at PRONI to view and listen to PMA materials. Registered PRONI readers onsite were able to access the PMA recordings through four dedicated PCs in the PRONI search room during opening hours. In terms of public access to the files, **there were 343 viewings of PMA materials by 24 researchers/visitors**

onsite at PRONI during a 15-month period (2018-2020); 13.5% of all viewings of digital items through the PRONI catalogue carried out in the public search room related to PMA recordings. This represents a good output for the project as PMA viewings made up a significant proportion of onsite access to digital items and illustrates the potential value of the PMA at PRONI for the future.

In terms of measuring engagement in the PMA materials at PRONI, it should be noted that the transfer and processing of records is still ongoing and as indicated earlier, the full collection of materials will not be publicly available until March 2021. In a more recent phase of development of the VV project, a limited number of PMA participants agreed for their recordings to be made available online through the PRONI catalogue and the digital preservation team is currently testing to determine if this is possible.

The PMA has also been the specific focus of a number of public workshops and tours for university students at PRONI including students from the Universities of North Carolina, Williamsburg and Florida. One student commented: "*The session on Visual Voices was quite powerful – the tour of the facility and engagement in the project were all a great capstone to our visit to Belfast and will leave a lasting impression on students*". A PhD student from Edinburgh University studying loyalist prisoners accessed five recordings and wrote: "*The opportunity to access these was highly important to my research … These first-hand accounts from former prisoners will greatly enhance my research*".

PRONI has also been involved in supporting the VV's Outreach Programme by hosting a number of events onsite and contributing to events at different venues throughout Northern Ireland (discussed in the following section). The PMA collection is also mentioned as part of group tours at PRONI.

The VV PMA project also delivered the following outputs to increase digital and public accessibility:

- Cataloguing and catalogue descriptions of the archive materials provided another mechanism to increase public access by streamlining search functions within the Collection. Each recording was assigned a top-level catalogue description to enable users to pinpoint their particular area of

interest more easily whether onsite or online at PRONI or on the PMA website. Cataloguing assists with a more leisurely search of the Archive by providing users with a snapshot of the details of the individual recording.

- Audio descriptions for blind and partially sighted people for some sections of the materials were trialled of part of improving the accessibility of people with disabilities to the Archive. This work is an example of the contribution of VV project interns to the PMA.

2.6   Re-design of the PMA website

In addition to expanded digital and public access to the PMA at PRONI, a newly designed PMA website (replacing the previous site dating from 2012) has provided a critical component to expanding digital and public access to the Archive materials. The PMA website was re-designed in conjunction with website development professionals, a graphic design company and a website development company, who worked together as the project Technical Partner. The process for the re-design demonstrated good practice in inclusivity and integrating user testing feedback[12] into the final product, with positive results. These consultations and events provided some key messages which informed the final website design and the development of content including:

- The need to encourage young people as a priority target group to be able to access the collection as a means of understanding peacebuilding and the legacy of the past; and including the need for education packs and related teachers' resources on the website.
- The need for more information to contextualise the recordings in terms of specific issues and events. This informed the project's content development approach and the graphic design of the website, which prioritised clear, thorough information and contextual background readings including essays and a glossary.
- The need to make the site easier to navigate and more user friendly.

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[12] The consultations with users on the website design and content involved 4 elements: Pre-design idea collection; pre-design user experience (based on user experience of the existing website); website content development; and, pre-launch final user testing.

2.7   Key Outputs: PMA Website Content

Using the feedback from testers and participants, the VV project invested a significant amount of energy in developing new website content to expand digital and public access to the Archive for new and existing audiences.

The development of additional content for the PMA website posed a dilemma for the project. The approach of the PMA generally had been to resist providing supplementary information to the recordings, based on its commitment to the principles of life storytelling. This enables the voices and stories of participants to stand alone, without interpretation or being placed within a particular context. It is evident that, having listened to and considered the feedback gathered by the VV PMA staff and consultants from prospective audiences, the PMA Advisory Group and participants recognised the need to provide a discrete amount of context for the PMA recordings to enhance their effectiveness as an educational resource as well as maintaining the commitment to the ethos of life storytelling.

The results of the work on the website, including the addition of educational resources, are impressive. The VV project has created a greatly expanded PMA website, which launched in August 2020, with a comprehensive range of media and resources including:

- 99 extracts from full recordings including brief quotes and contextual information
- 14 full recordings
- 3 feature films (previously only available on DVD or at special screenings)
- 5 short films
- Two newly designed interactive maps (one of the Maze and Long Kesh and one of Armagh Gaol) featuring text, recordings and photographs from the collection plus archival photographs of various prison locations provided by PRONI
- Showcase for an archive of photos of the sites and buildings collected during filming
- Extensive range of educational resource materials including resources for teachers and tutors

- PMA Glossary, developed with input from participants

- Links throughout the site to encourage users to look further afield for further contextual information and other relevant projects (for example, the Open University *Time to Think Archive[13]*)

The PMA's website provides a valuable complement to PRONI's onsite and online resources. The website provides a different portal to the PMA with a distinctive user experience, which can provide very accessible materials on a wide range of topics for a diverse range of constituent groups. This is a key output of the VV project.

2.8   The Development of Contextual and Educational Resources: An Inclusive Process

An important part of the website content included the development of educational resources. This process provides a good example of the inclusive and participatory principles to which the PMA is committed.

The development of contextual and educational resources has been an inclusive process. The PMA Advisory Group, participants and VV staff have, along with the technical partner, produced a highly accessible website with a range of valuable tools and features. These include an educational platform aimed at communities, students and teachers; a glossary of terms; and interactive maps of the Maze and Long Kesh and Armagh Gaol.

Two former prisoners (loyalist and republican), two educators, a prison officer and a prison governor were engaged in the development of the glossary, education pages and maps. This was a crucial part of the content development overall, because it ensured that the project used inclusive language and terminology, reflecting the range of opinion of constituent groups of participants. The fact that project staff and PMA participants from different constituent groups were able to agree a range of

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[13] Time to Think: Open University Journeys in British and Irish prisons during the years of conflict 1972-2000 is an Open University Ireland oral history collection. The collection contains interviews with Loyalist and Republican ex-prisoners who studied in prison, Open University tutors and staff, prison education staff and Open University students who worked in the prisons.
https://www.open.ac.uk/library/digital-archive/exhibition/152

terms, whose definitions are contested by different ideologies and perspectives, is in itself a significant achievement.

A range of digital educational resources were designed to deepen understanding about the Northern Ireland conflict and its origins within communities, schools and other learning environments. Key features include:

- Selected extracts from recordings appropriate to different age groups.

- Specially designed lessons for students and educators relating to nine specific themes including: internment; life in the compounds and cages; the impact on families; the H-Blocks; the hunger strikes; education and art in the prisons; life 'outside'; and the role of MLK in the peace process. Each theme features suggested activities and exam-type questions.

- A 'Parallel Stories' portal which focuses on each of the nine themes using recordings to reflect the diversity of voices and experiences from a range of PMA participants to give a sense of the complexity of the issues involved in the conflict and how they resonated within prisons.

- An accompanying teachers' educational pack developed in partnership with Into Film.

User consultancy on the education resources included a session testing the material with young people facilitated by the VV PMA's Outreach and Communications Officer through the Northern Ireland Youth Council. The pack contains resources for teachers to download in pdf and PowerPoint formats and lesson plans for use in the classroom, based on the Northern Ireland History and Politics curriculums at Key Stage 3, GSCE and A Level. Feedback from Into Film and HTANI on the value of the materials was highly complimentary.

Regarding the number of visits to the PMA website, due to delays in the set-up of the new website as a result of COVID-19 and lockdown, the PMA's website was launched just prior to the ending of the project. Hence no data was able on the numbers of users to the site as yet. Similarly, PRONI were unable as yet to provide an up-to-date figure for the number of visitors specifically searching for PMA materials on their website.

An additional output of the VV project was meeting its target of volunteer engagement, with 34 volunteers and interns active in the project. The project also developed a social media profile with the set-up of a PMA Facebook page and an Instagram account.

2.9   Installation of the PMA Collection across Northern Ireland

The planned installation of the Archive at six local sites across Northern Ireland did not take place, for several reasons. First, the staff shortages the project experienced, and the knock-on delays to appointment of a Technical Partner, severely reduced the available time for planning and development of the kiosks in the first few years of work. Secondly, finding suitable public venues willing to host the kiosks - ensuring an even geographical spread and an inclusive demographic spread - proved more challenging than expected. There was also a concern that the technical requirement for hosts would be onerous in the period of austerity at the beginning of the project and more latterly, because of cutbacks due to C19; the risk of breakdown could reduce the positive impact of the installations. Finally, it was felt that the limited time available for the Technical Partner would be better spent focusing on the development of the new PMA website, rather than the kiosks.

In spite of the removal of this element, the project team does not feel outreach potential of the project has diminished. The VV PMA team worked to mitigate this in two ways: (1) through the provision of more online resources for the new website, including new extracts, contextual information and essays, for example; and (2) through the specially-developed themed events held in 2019-20 (and the postponed remainder of which will be programmed in future under the auspices of the PMA Advisory Group). In addition, PRONI has also committed to providing full-length recordings on its website allowing a further method of access; the majority of participants confirmed they are happy to be featured on the PRONI website in their Final Participant Agreements.

Chapter Three   Building Active Engagement with the PMA Collection

The PMA was designed to be an accessible archive. Preservation of the Archive alone, whilst a great achievement, has very limited value if people do not access it and engage with it. This chapter considers the extent of engagement through the VV's Outreach Programme. It examines the range of events developed to increase public access to the Archive and the challenges of that work.

3.1   Levels of Engagement in VV's Outreach Programme

The VV's Outreach Programme was designed to target a range of different constituent groups to build engagement with new and existing audiences. The original Programme proposed three elements: an Engagement Plan; an Insight Series; and a Roadmap for Storytelling in the Digital Age. The design and delivery of the Engagement Plan was the major element in the Programme. Building community engagement was a significant driver of the Engagement Plan.

During the early phase of delivery, the VV project delivered a large number of events screening PMA films and Archive Materials. A full list of the events VV PMA engaged in is included in Appendix 2. Workshops included the *Story-telling from Conflict: Lost and Found Stories* workshop at PRONI to test audio descriptions of the video tours of the prison sites. The workshop included a large number of attendees who had hearing difficulties and who were partially sighted or blind and was described by the PRONI Director as "a powerful example of a truly inclusive event".

VV PMA and PRONI staff also contributed to and participated in a wide range of workshops, conferences and seminars including *Virtual Zones of Peace and Conflict* workshop, Denmark; *Black Mountain Shared Space* workshop, Belfast; *Peacebuilding and Participation* Conference, Durham; *Irish Prisons Conference*, Belfast; *Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities* conference, Manchester, as well as events hosted at PRONI such as those on Conflict Research and an *Explore Your Archive* workshop.

A further phase of delivery of screenings and workshops were developed and delivered with the appointment of the VV's Outreach and Communications Officer in the last year of the project. The table below outlines the key events delivered during this period. As with the processing and transfer of the Archive, the impact of COVID-19 meant that nine scheduled events had to be cancelled, including those at Hillsborough castle and the Tower Museum, Derry/Londonderry.

Table 1: VV Project Outreach Events/ Theme/ Participant Numbers/ Feedback

Venue	Date	Event	Details/ Community Partner Organisation	Participant Numbers	Number Feedback Completed
PRONI	22-Aug-19	Archives Uncovered workshop	'Archives Uncovered' event	20	18
PRONI	29-Aug-19	Screening and discussion	North Down group	49	36
PRONI	24-Oct-19	Archives of Internment	PMA Advisory Group initiative	42	27
Skainos Centre Belfast	30-Jan-20	Life in the Compounds/ Cages	PMA Advisory Group initiative	52	30
Armagh Marketplace	05-Feb-20	Screening of Armagh Stories	Screening and Q & As	300	88
PRONI	07-Feb-20	School event	Collaboration with INTO Film	65	52
Ranfurly House Dungannon	20-Feb-20	Screening of Armagh Stories	Screening and Q & As with Dungannon film Club	60	37
Newry and Mourne Museum	07-Mar-20	Archiving the Conflict	Presentations from PRONI and PMA	54	3
Online event	22 July	PMA Website Launch and Celebration Event	Preview of the new PMA website by VV staff plus participants Q&A and speeches of support from key stakeholders	90	19
TOTAL				**732**	**310**

During the period August 2019 to March 2020 – approximately 6 months – the VV project delivered 8 public events at a variety of venues thorough Northern Ireland, attracting 732 participants. Four events were hosted at PRONI, with others in Belfast, Armagh, Dungannon and Newry. The website launch attended by 90 people was delivered online. The programme involved a variety of formats and audiences including a range of screenings of extracts from Archive materials and

films, workshops on specific themes such as *Internment* and *Life in the Compounds and Cages* and on *Archiving the Conflict*. The majority of events targeted local community audiences with one event specifically programmed for students and teachers of GSCE history from a grammar school in Bangor. Project staff commented positively on the capacity of the project to reach new audiences and users: not always the *"usual suspects"*. Screenings of *Armagh Stories* and *We Were There* on QFT Player during August 2020 brought in figures of 638 audience viewings in 11 countries worldwide for *We Were There* (which showed from 10-31 August); and 320 audience viewings in 10 countries worldwide for *Armagh Stories* (which showed from 24-31 August).

Despite a relatively modest number of events being delivered, the majority of events attracted a high level of interest and attendance. One event in Armagh attracted a capacity crowd of 300 participants with other events engaging an average of 80 participants. These outputs, whilst demonstrating success in building engagement with a modest number of organisations, suggests that the full potential of the PMA for engagement with community-based groups, schools and institutions has yet to be fulfilled.

3.2   The Importance of an Inclusive Approach to Engagement

Senior staff highlighted the importance of inclusivity as an overall principle in guiding the engagement programme defining PMA's curatorial approach as "*always to be inclusive and allow parallel voices to emerge who might reflect different or similar experiences".* The PMA Director and VV PMA Project Manager talked about the importance of consciously removing barriers to widen engagement with the project as a critical dimension in planning successful events, and the value of this in terms of building understanding towards a shared heritage. Citing the example of the event in the Skainos centre, a venue in a loyalist area of east Belfast, Senior Staff commented:

> *Barrier removal was important part of the engagement strategy – we are not like other heritage projects where we just open the doors and let people in … a lot of thought and discussion went into the planning of events… Where*

should we go? Who is ready for this material? How do we frame the material in terms of inclusivity?

The event at the Skainos centre provided the Loyalist community the opportunity to engage with the PMA material – 95% of the audience identified as loyalist at that event but what we presented in terms of the short film on the prison cages and compounds included republican voices and the stories from Prison Officers and educators as well as a republican ex-prisoner on the panel.

<div align="right">PMA Senior Staff</div>

The Skainos event worked well in terms of engagement with the local community. However, some consultees noted that there were concerns raised from some republican ex-prisoner PMA participants that the location of the venue had excluded their engagement due to concerns for their security; the venue is seen as shared, but the location more problematic.

Feedback from PRONI representatives also reflected on how engagement in the VV project was breaking down perceptions and barriers about PRONI and the importance of the PMA participants as advocates in developing interest in the Archive Collection and in the broader aspects of the conflict:

The PMA participants can reach audiences that have previously been suspicious of PRONI in its role as the official archive for Northern Ireland and feedback from them on their interaction with PRONI has been very positive. The PMA has helped us broaden our audience base engaging with the participants and the different constituent groups and communities they represent and allows them to see other archives and records relating to the conflict. We have a limited ability to organise events ourselves so it was good to do it with a partner, engage with schools and local communities and we would be keen to explore that in the future.

<div align="right">PRONI Senior Staff</div>

3.3   The Challenge of Building Inclusivity

Not all responses to the Archive materials were positive. These experiences have provided some important lessons for the VV project and the PMA going forward, most notably that individuals viewing the materials need to have some capacity to listen to narratives counter to their own beliefs and perspectives without it having a traumatic effect on them.

The PMA Director described a number of events where this had been problematic:

> *A group of ex-service people wanted to start a storytelling project – the co-coordinator approached us and wanted us to screen a film. In retrospect, we chose the wrong film. The response from audience members was anger – to the degree that they were unable to see or hear the different constituent groups in the film including Prison Officers… All they saw were republican women prisoners – one of whom was at the time of the screening a Government minister… Their responses were … "You are giving these people space' … "We have sacrificed our comrades to put these people in government".*

> *This was a real lesson learned – that care and attention are needed when people are viewing this material so that people do not become re-traumatised. The other side of anger is pain and as a group they felt bypassed and that the government had sold them out… for example, in the context of the contested debate about compensation for victims, which has become very polarised.*

> *In another screening of Armagh Stories, a police officer came to the screening and was critical of the content… Similarly, in events with some local councils, in these environments, often what it is about is concern for the victims … and you are perceived to be telling the stories of the perpetrators … Our response is that this is about the prison system and the experiences of people from different constituencies during a period of enormous social and political unrest.*

The issue of how to maintain inclusivity in engaging with groups speaks to the broader challenge that the PMA has faced with the withdrawal of some representatives of constituent groups from the PMA including the withdrawal of their consent for access to their recordings. It is examined briefly in the following section.

3.4　Maintaining Inclusivity of Constituent Groups within the PMA

The PMA does not operate in a political vacuum but mirrors the broader challenges of building an inclusive society in the absence of the political resolution of dealing with the past. As noted earlier, the breakdown of constituent groups engaged in the PMA indicates a much larger proportion of republican ex-prisoners (46%) than loyalist ex-prisoners (7%). The withdrawals of 8 loyalist ex-prisoners over the duration of the project exacerbated an imbalance that existed from the time the recordings were made. However, PMA staff noted that the imbalance also reflected the larger number of republican prisoners during the conflict and more willingness on the part of republican ex-prisoners generally to share their experiences publicly. Efforts to ensure inclusivity by VV staff and Advisory Group have been meticulous, with the broadest possible range of voices represented in every aspect of the new website and all short films, for example – irrespective of number of participants per constituent group. Staff and Advisory Group members also felt the ongoing engagement from loyalist participants in the project (for example as Advisory Group members and in providing feedback on the PMA website) had been very positive.

Meanwhile, anecdotal evidence about engagement in the VV project's public events suggests that there was a greater level of engagement from nationalist / republican communities than from loyalist / unionist communities. In this context, VV PMA staff felt the event at Skainos, which attracted an audience primarily of a loyalist background, including loyalist ex-prisoners who were not PMA participants, was a particularly important one in terms of barrier removal. Partly thanks to that event, additional recordings with loyalist ex-prisoners had been secured by the close of the project.

The PMA Director talked about the challenges for the PMA in engaging and maintaining engagement with a sufficiently wide range of constituent groups as an ongoing concern. The PMA encountered difficulties in getting prison medical staff and prison governors to contribute to the recordings to the Archive at the outset of the PMA. However, in terms of the Archive materials, he felt that this was not a significant problem, "*given the depth and richness of the materials and the range of political representation*".

More problematic were the difficulties faced by individuals within constituent groups as a result of a number of specific events that had prompted the withdrawal of some loyalist ex-prisoners and Prison Officers from the PMA. As noted earlier, a total of 15 participants withdrew from the PMA including eight loyalist ex-prisoners and four Prison Officers.

The impact of the withdrawal of these participants and the absence of their materials was an ongoing concern of PMA Advisory Group members and the Director. However, the VV project provided the PMA with the opportunity to 'rebalance' Archive recordings to address the gaps in the Archive as a result of the withdrawals. Agreements from four ex-prisoners and two Prison Officers to contribute to the Archive were obtained in 2020 and these recordings were completed in August and September 2020.[14]

Feedback from the PRONI staff affirmed the ways in which PMA staff had responded to the challenges faced as a result of the withdrawal of participants with the PRONI director observing that "*the PMA did everything in their power to ensure participants remained engaged and that concerns were adequately addressed*".

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[14] It should be noted that these six recordings are additional to the total number of recordings detailed in Table 2 (158). The final figure of "rebalancing" recordings has not been included here because negotiations are ongoing to secure agreements from another two participants for their recordings, which are expected to take place in the immediate future.

3.5 The Impact of Staff Shortages in the Delivery of the Outreach Programme

Staff shortages and delays in recruitment meant that the PMA Insight Series as a discrete programme of events did not happen as originally intended. However, the idea behind the PMA Insight Series – to encourage learning and reflection on approaches to oral history in a context of conflict transformation and transitional justice – was carried through into various events and workshops during the VV project. In addition to their main purpose of showcasing the PMA collection to diverse audiences, these events allowed different groups to hear the perspectives of PMA participants and project staff, and gave the opportunity to discuss the ethics and challenges of this approach to oral history. Further events planned for summer 2020 were cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis. The new project website has provided an alternative platform for the ideas behind the Insight Series, in particular through six specially commissioned essays and a collection of testimonials from participants on their involvement in the project.

Delays in the appointment of staff also impacted on the capacity of the project to progress the development of the engagement strategies in a timely manner, particularly in the development of the educational resources, with staff feeling increasingly under pressure as the project drew to the final stages of completion.

Chapter Four   Impact of the Visual Voices Project: Outcomes and Benefits for People, Communities and Heritage

This chapter presents the substantive findings from the evaluation on the outcomes for People, Communities and Heritage. It assesses the value of the non-judgemental and inclusive approach of the PMA and describes the ways in which engagement in the Archive has deepened understanding and knowledge within local communities. The findings are structured across six themes: Participants' Experience of Storytelling and Participation in the PMA; Including Unheard Voices and Narratives; Humanising, Validating and Equalising Participants; Deepening Knowledge and Understanding; Contributing to Learning in Schools; Benefits for Local Communities.

4.1   Participants' Experience of Storytelling and Participation in the PMA

All participants consulted greatly valued the opportunity to share their memories and experiences of the prisons and to contribute to the PMA Collection. Revisiting the MLK and Armagh Gaol invoked a range of responses and emotions in participants. Reflecting on their experiences of storytelling with the hindsight of twelve years, all participants described it as a positive experience and one that they would engage in again, within a similar PMA framework.

Initially some participants were apprehensive and ambivalent about sharing their story:

> *I was very nervous – self-conscious of how I would sound and the words to say – and then I relaxed. As it is has evolved it's been good to listen to the experiences of priests, artists and teachers and their perspectives of us.*

> Ex-prisoner, Armagh Gaol

Other participants faced the dilemma of stepping outside the norms of their constituent group, reflected in the experience of one Prison Officer who was a contributor to the Archive:

> *Sometimes it felt a little scary… Some colleagues were unhappy about my participation in the PMA… even apart from the security concerns... there was a culture (within the Prison Service) that you should not talk about things… but until we talk things will not change. Through the PMA I was able to face a lot of issues and compare my experiences to others. It became a life changer for me.*

Prison Officer

Several participants talked about the risks of coming into the public arena and telling your story: "*It takes courage – you are leaving yourself open to public scrutiny*". Another participant talked about how that apprehension continued as a panellist on public events, because she considered the possibility that her engagement could impact negatively on her family:

> *I am a mother and grandmother. I would never want to embarrass my children… this is my history and you are exposing your children to things that are buried.*

Ex-prisoner, Armagh Gaol

However, for this participant the benefits of the Archive and its potential to bring about changes in attitudes and understanding warranted her continued participation in the PMA. Although she did not want to cause any stress to her children, she was determined that her children should not "*go through what I went through*".

Despite these risks and concerns, for many participants there was something healing and cathartic in the telling of their stories. All participants remarked on the ways in which being onsite was a critical part of the experience which had acted as a catalyst for their memories and reflections:

Being transported back invoked a lot of memories for me… you needed no prompting... the memories can come flooding back…. you remembered the camaraderie in the blocks…Being in that place invoked in me a lot that had previously been unshared. I never talked to my wife or sons about being in jail … it was easier to tell a stranger.

Ex-prisoner, MLK

Telling my story was a cathartic experience. I remembered the solidarity and support of the team (within Probation) as well as the unevenness of the relationships with prison staff – some who were very dismissive of our roles.

Probation Officer

I remembered the good memories of comradeship and the friendships that have endured. I also remembered the ordinary / non-political prisoners and how their experience contrasted with ours. Women who had been imprisoned for prostitution or shoplifting … and how marginalised they were by society. They did not have food parcels, toiletries or cigarettes and we assisted them.

Ex-prisoner, Armagh Gaol

Some memories were difficult. Prison and Probation staff reflected on the intensity and the challenges of the environment in which they had worked:

The place that gave me the most difficulty was the hospital – the rawness of what happened there hit me… I think we had shielded ourselves from that before. But the PMA supported me through that. I began to realise that as Prison Officers and prisoners we shared much of the same thing. There is very little that separates us as human beings… A lot of families suffered through the Troubles, including mine. From the PMA experience, I came out the other side… for the first time as a joined up human being. I don't know where else anything like this could have happened.

Prison Officer

You remembered the positives and the negatives – the bleakness of the place… MLK was a very male environment and not a comfortable one for women. It was challenging for us in our role as probation officers in engaging with political prisoners. I would have seen my role primarily working with ordinary, non-political prisoners, but they were lost in that system and environment.

Probation Officer

A key message that came from participants was that they felt safe: "*There was no manipulation of your story… no pressure… Other organisations have had their own agenda but not the PMA*".

All consultees valued the non-intrusive approach of the filming process guided by the PMA's ethical framework. It is evident that PMA staff and Board members had worked hard to build up the trust and confidence of participants and participants commented on the professionalism and transparency of the film process which gave complete ownership of the recording to participants:

When you walked into MLK you just spoke… you were not railroaded… there were no trick questions. Even though I was telling my story to a stranger, I trusted that stranger. It was an honourable engagement.

Transparency of the process and where materials are going – I have done hundreds of interviews with PhD students, academia, media, you don't know where they have gone… with the PMA I know where they are going… and there is no dodgy editing.

Trust was established from the outset and co-ownership gives the person confidence – you haven't stepped over a cliff; you still have control – and PMA's governance of that has been critical and it's been handled so well.

PMA Participants

4.2   Including Unheard Voices and Narratives

One of the greatest strengths of the PMA is that is has created a space where different and contrary narratives and ideologies about the conflict can co-exist. For some participants, particularly loyalist and women political prisoners, engagement in the PMA and in the VV project has provided an opportunity for their voices to be heard. Loyalist ex-prisoners felt that their experiences of the conflict had been largely excluded and unexamined within the broader mainstream culture (research, films, books) which they felt was dominated by republican narratives. One loyalist participant described the '*cottage industry*' that had developed around conflict transformation in Northern Ireland post-conflict and the concern that understanding of the loyalist narrative was largely excluded in the mainstream media and the international research community: "*The notion that there is a dual narrative does not exist because not enough is explored around Loyalist perspectives, particularly a progressive Loyalist perspective whose origins are rooted in Long Kesh".*

For republican women ex-prisoners, the PMA offered the opportunity to rebalance the republican narrative and to acknowledge the stories and contributions of women to the conflict, which "*had always been underplayed".* One woman ex-prisoner talked about attending the screening of *We Were There* at the Belfast Film Festival and how being on the panel with 12 other women participants was empowering for her. Another participant described the value of talking at a public event and being heard "…*and being given the same status of anyone who had experienced the Troubles".* For republican participants more generally part of their rationale for having engaged with the PMA was to challenge the narrative of the state about the causes of the conflict which they defined as an anti-colonial struggle, and of the need to encourage critical thinking around that.

For other participants the PMA offered the opportunity to listen to a particular constituency that had been largely silent during the conflict and indeed post conflict – the experiences of prison officers and their families. Feedback from audience members and consultees highlighted the very valuable contributions of prison officers to the Archive:

I had never heard a Prison Officer speaking about their experiences… or considered the families of Prison Officers. When I heard the story of the wife of a prison officer… I had never known how stressful and how hard it was for families on a human level bringing up children during those times. What I learnt was to expand my awareness of different realities… and that there are multiple realities – some not always sympathetic to mine or ones that I am comfortable with in terms of own aspirations, but important to understand.

PMA Participant

4.3 Increasing Knowledge and Understanding to Build a Shared Heritage

What have people learnt? How have attitudes changed?

Having detailed the impact of engagement on PMA participants, the following section assesses the impact of the VV project on local communities and young people who engaged with the project. It presents feedback on the ways in which individuals and groups have benefited from watching / listening to Archive materials; and contributions from PMA participants at public events and how that has deepened understanding and knowledge. The VV project has been diligent in collecting feedback from audiences at events and the findings in this section are based on a combination of this data plus feedback from evaluation consultees. It should be noted that the nature of engagement of audience members / project users is normally on a one-off basis therefore no baseline data has been used to measure the extent to which skills and knowledge has increased. These comments reflect both the responses of people to both the Archive Materials as well as the contributions from PMA participants at live events.

4.3.1 Humanising, Validating and Equalising Experience

Feedback from audience members, PMA participants, VV project staff and PMA Advisory Group members and partners was overwhelmingly positive about the ways in which the project has developed and deepened understanding of the political conflict in Northern Ireland, its history and context. There was a consistently positive

response to the materials presented across audiences from local communities, schools or professional institutions.

However, the value of the PMA also goes beyond history and politics. Some audience members highlighted the ways in which engagement had provided a space for reflection on the past and provided an opportunity to experience and understand the perspectives on the experiences of '*the other'* in a non-judgemental way.

Many people felt that their engagement with the materials had helped to humanise the PMA participants – particularly political prisoners and prison staff – and had helped to change their attitudes and perceptions of them. One participant commented:

> *The Archive allows people to be empathetic and connect – it can make people look differently at things. It presents common themes and shows the shared experiences of prison life such as the stress and anxiety of both prisoners and staff who worked there.*

Another participant described the PMA as providing "*a window into a wide range of unheard stories"* and how that had created empathy and understanding of people "*who are different from me".*

The roles and contributions of the mainstream media and academia in documenting the conflict in Northern Ireland have often been problematic, with researchers and journalists stereotyping and exploiting the experiences of key actors in the conflict. Consultees felt that PMA materials provided a much more informed exploration of the circumstances and views of people who had been directly affected by the conflict. Many consultees to the evaluation recognised the ways in which the PMA has helped to validate and equalise the experiences of prison staff and prisoners and create a space in which "*everyone's story is heard, respected and valued".* The inclusive approach of the PMA has helped to affirm the experiences of a number of constituent groups whose voices have previously been excluded from the dominant discourses on the conflict. These include women political prisoners, loyalist political prisoners as well as prison staff. Indeed, the inclusion of prison staff was seen by many as an important step in articulating the impact of the conflict on a group of

people whose experiences have been largely absent from analysis and debate. Their contributions provide the voice of '*the other'* to people, as they are rarely heard.

4.3.2 Deepening Knowledge and Understanding with Communities

Engagement with the PMA has also deepened knowledge and understanding of the past in Northern Ireland and helped people unravel the complexities of history and events. Much of the audience feedback commented on the extent of the similarities of experience amongst the PMA participants despite the differences in ideologies and beliefs. One consultee described the Collection *as "a prism to view history"*. PMA staff and participants observed the different responses to the Archive in terms of generations, with young people generally much more neutral and open in their approach to the materials and older generations generally more conditioned by their lived experience of the conflict. One member of the audience at a community-based screening described the archive as "*a rich raw history source for young people with no previous knowledge or experience of such happenings".*

Although lockdown prevented the full delivery of the engagement programme, the VV project has impacted and benefited local communities, increasing knowledge, understanding and debate about the conflict in Northern Ireland and the extent to which we need to learn from the past.

There was broad agreement from consultees that the Archive was a valuable mechanism that could deepen understanding of the past and encourage people to be more open minded and less judgemental about particular constituent groups such as republican / loyalist political prisoners or prison officers. Consultees' feedback once again highlighted ways in which the Archive could broaden horizons within local communities, and across communities:

> *It humanises people who were involved in the Troubles who you may not agree with but who you can respect as humans and learn from. They are more than their past. They are more than just their opinions.*

Many felt that the Archive had a role in helping to open up channels of information that may not have been available in local communities at the time. They stressed the importance of learning from the past rather than "*glorifying the Troubles*".

Participants welcomed and appreciated the ways in which both the Archive and public engagement in screenings and discussions provided an opportunity to challenge the stereotyping and demonising around political prisons that has been prevalent in mainstream media. The PMA is a challenge to such stereotypes highlighting the intellect and achievements of prisoners and the transformative role that education played within the prisons during the conflict:

> *These materials can change the perception of people (of prisoners) … that we were not Neanderthals… It can demonstrate the power of education in prisons which changed the journey for many political prisoners.*

> Ex-prisoner, MLK

The connections to the prisoner experiences resonates widely in some local communities and PMA staff felt that the VV public engagement events have been particularly affirming for local communities providing a bridge between the PMA participants who were ex-prisoners and their local communities:

> *People watching the screen can see their community / constituency represented and see people from their community telling their experience.*

The contribution to public events, whether at PRONI or in local communities, was also an affirming experience for PMA participants who described those events as very positive: "*You are in a public space and being listened to".*

Many ex-prisoner PMA participants have taken on community development type engagements in their communities and the PMA has provided another mechanism for engagement within and beyond their local community including another forum for ex- prisoners to work and engage together.

4.4   Legacy Issues

There was a variety of views regarding the extent to which the PMA had the potential to act as a mechanism for reconciliation or contribute to the resolution of contested legacy issues which remain key political challenges in Northern Ireland. Whilst some consultees felt that PMA could have a small-scale impact on strengthening relationships between communities, the majority of people felt that the continuing political divisions in Northern Ireland were a barrier to this and the broader context for the resolution of legacy issues was a *"massively political sphere"*. PMA participants consulted were generally pessimistic about the prospect of political resolution of legacy issues. The emerging view was that the most valuable context for the PMA was as an educational and community resource and that to use the PMA to engage at an overtly political level – *"where the Archive would get lost"* – would risk losing both the effectiveness of the Archive as well its ethical framework.

The feelings of many were summed up in the words of one PMA Advisory Group member who had great clarity about the remit of the PMA:

> *It is not about acceptance… mutual understanding… reconciliation or forgiveness. It is much more about mutual recognition of difference – acknowledging difference without losing your own ground… There is a possibility of co-existence there.*

> PMA Advisory Group member

She stressed the importance of building a compassionate approach at a human level as one of her greatest learnings from experience in the PMA: *"What is important is to have compassion for other people – to observe and to listen without judgement".*

4.5   Benefiting Young People: Expanding the PMA's Audience Base

As a result of the VV project, the Archive has evolved and expanded its audience base with the engagement of young people, teachers and educational groups and organisations. Feedback from PMA staff and VV partners and project users

consistently highlighted the potential for the Archive as a very valuable educational resource.

School students and teachers who had attended the VV project event at PRONI affirmed a number of ways in which they had found the materials educationally useful. For many pupils it was the first time they have seen this type and content of materials. Many identified the highlight of the event as the contributions from PMA participants on the panel, "…*because you got to hear the views of people who experienced it 'first-hand'*". They felt that those materials offered a lot of key information about "*the events and effects of the Troubles*" that was not available in text books and in schools. Some pupils particularly liked the audio-visual aspect of the Archive and felt that the recordings helped them "*see the effects more intensely of the traumatic reality of the prison,*" and that it was *"great to see with your own eyes the events in the past".*

Representatives of two stakeholder organisations, HTANI and Into Film, further highlighted the value of the Archive across a range of educational levels. Both organisations were engaged in the VV project, providing feedback and guidance on the development of the educational resources on the PMA website.

The history teachers described the current educational context for the use of Archives like the PMA as extremely favourable with teachers of history "*crying out for resources like this*". They felt that already prior to lockdown there was an increasing movement away from "*old fashioned textbooks*" to audio visual interactive resources and that lockdown and the need for home learning had only served to accelerate this trend further. "*Home learning provides the scope to do more interactive study and encourage individual research and study and the PMA is a perfect resource in this environment. This trend is not going to go away".* Into Film also confirmed a significant increase of downloads of educational materials from their website during lockdown with a 189% rise in resource downloads with a global total of 38,789 for 2020 over lockdown period (23 March to 31 May) compared with 13,441 for 2019[15].

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[15] Data provided by Into Film evaluation consultee

4.6   The Archive Materials as an Educational Resource

The PMA has huge potential as an educational resource within the formal schools' setting. Educational partners highlighted a range of strengths for a range of pupils and curricula:

- **The value of Oral History and Life Storytelling as a tool for teaching history and politics and how the PMA offers a much broader perspective:** The stories from participants would be particularly valuable for Key Stage 3 pupils (aged 11- 14 years): *"At 14 years students love to hear anecdotes … for example the story of how a woman prisoner was isolated on her wing or how another prisoner never had to worry about looking for babysitters because all the other prisoners wanted to look after her baby. Pupils will remember that forever and it helps them to remember the factual stuff as well".*

- **The value of the PMA as a tool to encourage critical thinking for GSCE students (aged 15-16 years):** *"We see this as a really good resource at GSCE stage – it is perfect for teaching history during the 1960s-70s period and the 1968-98 period. It gives pupils an opportunity to learn about the big events during those years such as Internment, to hear and see people talking candidly about the consequences of their actions and to learn about prisons. The focus on Armagh Gaol is very useful in portraying how women were impacted and involved in the conflict".*

- **The accessibility and relevance of the educational materials and how they have been constructed on the PMA website**: *"I can see a lot of work has gone into tailoring the clips to different parts of the GSCE curriculum … there are 8-10 episodes that teachers can go straight into and find quality clips and resources'. There is also a good range of interactive materials targeted at key Stage 3 pupils which are also excellent".*

- **The extent to which PMA has changed the perceptions of what a Film Archive is**: Traditionally a film archive associated with black and white images from past periods of history. *"The PMA offers a model that is a living archive – it is about a current issue that still affects us today. Having that resource and participants talk about the issues in a balanced way is something we want to direct students and teachers towards".*

4.7   Introducing the PMA into History and Politics Curricula

HTANI consultees felt there was flexibly in the current history and politics curricula to include a resource like the PMA. They felt that prior to lockdown some teachers may have felt restricted in in terms of the demands of their timetable and what resources they could use but post lockdown different forms of teaching and learning would be needed.

The upgrading of the PMA website has enabled the Archive to be more orientated towards educational resource and feedback from the website launch reflected its strengths as an accessible educational resource: "*I loved the fact that the website seems so accessible, and has age-appropriate sections for students to learn about the Troubles*".

There was shared agreement from all stakeholders of the importance for young people and future generations to learn about this aspect of the conflict and its legacy. Schools and colleges of further education were identified as a key target constituency for future engagement. Consultees were confident of the value of the materials: "*It will be thought-provoking not just for the subject they are learning, but also for personal growth and understanding of the local area. It will encourage young people to probe the past and draw out parallels between different groups*".

4.8   Heritage: The Extent to which Heritage has been Strengthened

Part of the uniqueness of the PMA as a heritage project is that is has consciously sought to gather multiple narratives of the experience of political and violent conflict in Northern Ireland. Much of the heritage created by wars and conflict and within post conflict societies commemorates and valorises partisan groups and communities, often in an exclusive way. The PMA has taken a radically different approach. It is not a memorial to a particular loss or act of violence perpetrated by or impacting on a specific constituent group, nor does it commemorate a single ideology. Although it focuses on two particular institutions within the criminal justice system – MLK and Armagh Gaol – the PMA provides a complex representation of history and heritage through the diversity of voices and narratives of people who suffered directly during the conflict.

Consultees identified a wide range of ways in which the PMA and the VV project have enriched heritage and expanded the concept of what heritage represents.

The PMA has helped to changed perceptions of what heritage is: The PMA and the VV project have expanded the perceptions and experience of what people associate heritage to be. Traditionally many think of heritage as historical buildings or archives such as 17th diaries or family correspondence or government records. Political discourse is part of heritage and in an increasing digital age, heritage can include a digital diary or a blog or an audio-visual archive of stories and memories from a recent conflict:

> *This is not easy content… it is a long way from 19th family histories of partition – it is a really raw and ongoing issue for people in Northern Ireland, but it's important that our archives are representative of the communities and what they have gone through…*

PRONI Director

The PMA is an interactive multimedia archive, offering a range of heritage materials from audio-visual recordings, photos, interactive maps, educational resources. It is also an important source of architectural heritage which has documented prisons as historically important sites of the conflict that are either demolished (MLK) or in a very poor state of repair and inaccessible (Armagh Gaol*).*

The PMA promotes the value of storytelling and intangible heritage, building more inclusive ways to celebrate and memorialise political and cultural events and traditions: The PMA provides a model of best practice in terms of Storytelling both in practice and underpinning principles (discussed in a later section of the report). Although part of the PMA has documented the architectural heritage of the prisons, the primary materials of the PMA recordings are the voices and stories of its participants. Stories that were previously unheard from participants who were invisible or excluded from historical or official accounts have now been captured for posterity. The recordings are not factual accounts of prison life but memories and reflections created as participants reconnected with the physical landscape, buildings and artefacts of the prisons.

Within the PMA, "*both those telling the stories and those listening… can interpret what is being said as well as where is it said and that's an important part of heritage… everyone's story contributes to some degree of truth of what happened"* (PMA Director). In the absence of any other mechanisms for truth recovery, the PMA can be important resource.

The PMA has expanded heritage on the conflict in NI in partnership with PRONI: As a heritage organisation, PRONI holds both government and private records dating back 900 years on a wide range of topics, mostly text-based records. It has specific statutory duties in the management of official records. PRONI is seeking to broaden its role beyond that of official government archivist to strengthen the archive as a mechanism for "*community memory".* PRONI staff highlighted the ways in which the PMA has complemented the existing heritage held in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland, describing the Collection as *"a very valuable asset"* to the existing official and private records held. It viewed the recordings from participants and their narratives "*as equally important, and as special"* as the historical and official documents held, and has recognised the need to value the experiences of local communities.

PMA participants, particularly political prisoners, have also donated artefacts and papers to PRONI, further enriching the broader heritage and materials relating to the conflict, and indicate the strengthening of connections between PRONI, local communities and different constituent groups, some of whom would have been reluctant to engage with PRONI. The combined PRONI-PMA Archives give a much fuller picture of those years of conflict and is an important asset for the National Archive of Northern Ireland.

The PMA: Using Heritage as a Mechanism for Social Change

Heritage is as much about the future as it is about the past. We are using the PMA as a foundation to unlock the future potential, inspire and lead to change communities.

PMA Staff

The PMA also provides a contemporary and interactive example of heritage which seeks to use an Archive built on multiple narratives to create social change and encourage a shared ownership of heritage about the conflict in Northern Ireland. The VV's programme of community engagement and public events has demonstrated the value of the Archive in deepening people's understanding of the conflict and building a space for contested narratives to co-exist. The educational resources targeted at schools, teachers and young people can help to ensure future generations are more fully informed about history, heritage and the complexities of the conflict. The PMA has also become recognised as a learning resource for organisations and individuals seeking to explore oral history based heritage: during the project's operation, other oral history projects consulted the VV PMA staff for its expertise on a range of topics such as ethical issues, moratoriums, data protection, and technical and copyright issues. The PMA has generated an extensive range of journal articles, theses and book chapters about the PMA collection and oral history practice that have been published by PMA staff and other academics (see Appendix 4 for a detailed list).

The VV PMA project provides a potential model of engagement on how one might begin to build an inclusive process to address dealing with the past. The PMA has deepened debate and understanding about the concept and nature of heritage, oral history and life story telling within the academic and research communities locally and internationally.

Chapter Five   Management, Partnership and Challenges of Delivering the VV Project

This chapter summarises the key strengths and achievements of the VV project in relation to management and partnerships and outlines the key challenges faced by the project. It details key ways in which PMA and PRONI staff and PMA Advisory Group members strengthened their skills and knowledge as a result of the project.

5.1   Assessment of PMA's Organisational Management Systems

PRONI, PMA's key partner, assessed PMA management and communication systems as effective and efficient with good documentation of meetings, minutes, project plans, audits trail and financial papers prepared in advance for Steering Group and Advisory Group meetings. They indicated reporting mechanisms and monitoring of targets for events as reliable and found staff at all levels to be professional, approachable and highly motivated. There was a strong commitment to partnership working across the PMA and PRONI to deliver a successful project. Communications both within the staff teams and governance structures and with partners were reported as good, including during the critical period of the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, when PMA staff and PRONI staff were all working from home. PRONI's Director commented on the quality of the engagement with PMA's Director and the Co-Chairs of the Advisory Board: "*What struck me was the interest of people in what they were doing. They had a very obvious detailed knowledge of their subject matter and genuinely wanted to build and work in a mutually beneficial partnership*".

Staff Expertise and Skills have been a key strength in the management and delivery of the VV project: PMA staff were highly regarded for the consistent levels of commitment to the VV project which faced a number of significant challenges during the delivery. Staff brought a diverse skill set and a wide range of expertise which has benefited the successful management and delivery of a technically complex oral history project. Project management has been skilful and, despite significant delays in staff appointments, has delivered successfully on all three core goals of Archive preservation, access and engagement.

The personal values and attributes that people bring to an organisation also determine its success. There was particular praise for the PMA's Director from project staff, PMA Advisory Group members, participants and partners – for his leadership, wisdom and long-standing belief and commitment not only in the VV project but in the PMA and its ethical framework. Comments included: *"The ethics of the PMA flow from him; he embodies its principles of inclusivity and collaboration"* (Advisory Group member). *"He is very patient, unassuming and a very gifted individual."… "He listens and has a lot of empathy"* (PMA Participants). *"He is an excellent thinker – the observations he makes are very constructive. As a film maker it has been a real privilege to work with the PMA Director in terms of his technical creativity and in his level of support to staff"* (VV PMA staff technical team member).

Former and existing Project Managers, who had to deal with the day to day impacts of the challenges of limited staff resources, issues of consent, technical difficulties – and more latterly COVID-19 – were greatly valued for their exceptional organisational skills and problem-solving abilities. The previous Project Manager was praised for co-planning the VV project, securing funding and implementing its early successes. The current Project Manager was considered to be a huge asset to the organisation, helping to guide the VV project successfully through an extremely pressurised and challenging period in the final year of delivery: *"The Project Manager has been outstanding … he has turned around so many of the challenges we have faced in this last year"* (Advisory Group members). He was also valued for his expertise on audio quality. The technical team further appreciated his approach to management, commenting: *"We were supported but not micro managed… we were encouraged to share ideas and given freedom and space to try different things"* (Member of VV PMA technical staff).

The technical staff who have worked assiduously displaying great attention to detail have delivered a high quality professional Archive which has been thoughtfully and skilfully promoted by the PMA's Outreach Officer. Senior management described the work of the technical team as a real success: *"Before VV the status of the recordings was unclear – they undertook really detailed complex work of untangling the archive into a coherent and accessible resource – they should be really proud of what they have done".* The Outreach and Communications Officer was valued for her thoughtful approach to engagement and inclusion, for her skills in the development

of the educational materials, and in building critical relationships with participants, event partners and project partners such as HTANI and Into Film.

Student placement staff, interns and volunteers have also been an invaluable resource for the PMA and the VV project and have also increased their skills based on video editing, project and event coordination, research and presentation skills.

5.2 The Effectiveness of PMA Governance

There was a good level of engagement between the senior staff team and other staff members and all staff consulted reported a very respectful and collaborative working culture in which members felt valued and supported, despite the diversity of roles and tasks of individual members. The culture and practice of collaborative and inclusive working also informed PMA governance structures. Both the PMA Management Group (and the PMA Advisory Group it later became) have benefited immensely from the expertise and skills base of their chairpersons who created *"open, fluid relationships with participants"* and guided best practice in organisational development and in building consensus and agreements with a widely diverse constituent group.

Maintaining long term relationships with participants with diverging ideological positions has been an integral part of the PMA and a significant amount of time and energy was invested in this by VV PMA staff at all levels and by the co-chairs of the PMA Advisory Group and its members.

PRONI staff further reiterated the high level of engagement with PMA participants throughout the project. They felt the inclusive nature of the PMA and the continuing support of many participants strengthen the project's broader engagement with local communities. The broad representation in the PMA Advisory Group "*benefited the exchange of information and an appreciation of the perspective of each partner".*

5.3 Weaknesses and Gaps in Management Systems

A number of gaps / weaknesses in the management and delivery of the project were identified (these are in additional to the specific challenges faced by the project outlined earlier). Whilst the high level of collaborative working was a strength of the project, this also resulted in lengthy decision-making processes which impacted on the delivery of the project. Some staff also felt it was difficult to get clear guidance and effective decision making at times, particularly during the period when the Project Manager's post was vacant. As a result, "*a lot of stuff was put on hold at times*" (VV PMA Technical Staff member). This was especially frustrating when working to a tight timescale. The process of repeatedly having to secure consents and agreements from individual participants also was seen as a weakness which further caused delays, prompting one participant to comment, "*It shouldn't have taken 13 years to make the Archive public".* However, the slow pace of development of the PMA's journey to this point, has, in many ways, enhanced the quality of the relationships both within the PMA and with partner organisations such as PRONI.

As previously noted, problematic engagement with administrative systems in QUB did, on occasion, cause delays to the recruitment of contract staff and this had an impact on project delivery. There was a considerable period of time when the project did not have the technical expertise of a video editor – a role which is indispensable for a project of this kind – which caused delays in locating and editing the final versions of the recordings. The post of Project Manager was also vacant for six months in 2019, which impacted negatively on the smooth running of the project – as did repeated delays in the extensions of contracts of existing staff. PRONI staff reflected on the learning from these challenges, suggesting that the need for additional staff resources (Archivist and Film Editor) to help progress the transfer of files could have been identified earlier but also noted that "*the project team did their utmost to work with us to ensure we were informed".*

5.4   The Development of Partnership Working: Partner Benefits and Contributions

The VV PMA project was delivered by two key partners – QUB and PRONI. QUB was the lead partner: it provided an institutional home for the VV project and various services to the VV PMA staff and the project more broadly. PRONI was the supporting partner for the VV project: it engaged in the day to day work of preservation and access and worked as an active partner in the development of the project's engagement and outreach activities.

The partnership working with PRONI was an unqualified success. Feedback from PMA consultees (VV PMA staff and Advisory Group members) highlighted the following ways in the partnership was successful:

- **High level of commitment from staff across PRONI, at strategic, operational and technical   levels.** This resulted in very good working relationships between staff at all levels which supported good communication. The chair of the PMA Advisory Group commented*: "There was unfailing support from PRONI. We were able to discuss issues in an open and honest way. They benefited from some funds but went way beyond that".*

- **PRONI and PMA staff established a very collaborative approach to problem solving and dealing with technical challenges.** PMA technical staff described very positive working relationships with PRONI staff, reflecting a team approach to the work: "*This was a steep learning curve for us all… especially for PRONI as it was their first time dealing with creating an audio-visual archive and they were out of their comfort zone. But there was a really high level of engagement… they constantly made time for us, were very adaptive with issues and always sought to find solutions".*

- **The executive support and PRONI's engagement in the PMA Advisory Group was affirming for the VV PMA project and helped to facilitate good decision making on strategic and operational issues with contributions from PRONI at the highest level**. Advisory Group meetings were described as focused, pragmatic and effective in managing the development of the project and dealing with challenges faced by the two

partner organisations. PRONI's approach was described as inventive, flexible and committed.

- **The partners were able to establish professional and open working relationships from the outset based on mutual respect**. The PMA Director reflected on the value of this to the project: "*From the very beginning PRONI saw the potential of the PMA. Their support for it has eased our work. They have shared responsibility for the work of the project and been generous with space and resources".* PRONI's response to the issue of mistrust from some participants was dealt with in an "*open and honest way that clarified what details of records they could (and could not) reveal".*

- **PRONI investment in the project has delivered gains for both partners in terms of learning and skills development** with the PMA Director observing: "*In some ways PRONI have come farther than us in learning how to address the problems central to this project – understanding ethical issues, dealing with political sensitivities and different constituent groups".*

The infrastructure of QUB provided an institutional home for the PMA and gave the VV project access to technical equipment, support staff and expertise on legal issues such as copyright law. The NLHF grant was administered through QUB; the university contracted staff and provided the project team with office space in the School of Arts, English and Languages (AEL), as well as access to facilities, meeting space and equipment; and it gave day-to-day administrative support through relevant financial systems such as procurement, finance and payments, and technical and professional support through IT services and in-house training. Several academic and professional staff members in QUB contributed significant time and expertise to the VV project, including staff from AEL, the School of Law, the School of Education and the Mitchell Institute. Professional staff from various departments in QUB also proved unfailingly helpful and supportive of the project, especially technical and clerical staff in AEL, the Information Services department and the Payments Office.

However, some day to day working relationships within QUB were challenging and beset by institutional cultural differences and financial reporting differences between QUB and the funders, which led to occasional poor communication with some QUB departments. Both the Advisory Group chairs described the challenging impact this had on the smooth development and management of the project: "*They were slow*

moving, delaying the appointments of staff which meant that the VV project only had the full complement of staff in post for one year over the three year life of the project. Individual staff have been supportive but institutionally QUB is a monolith."

Senior project staff highlighted the flexible response of the NLHF as extremely helpful in the context of the challenges created by QUB, commenting that their approach as a funder was exemplary, demonstrating an underlying belief in the value of the PMA.

5.5   Added Value for PRONI, QUB, HTANI and Into Film as Project Partners

Benefits for PRONI

The delivery of the VV project has also brought added value to a range of partner organisations, in particular PRONI.

PRONI and PMA consultees to the evaluation highlighted a wide range of benefits that have enhanced PRONI's capacity and skills and build a more inclusive audience base.

- **The PMA presents a new and distinctive type of Archive collection at PRONI** offering users a broader range of engagement and learning. This makes PRONI a much more contemporary archival institution. Although it has an extensive range of materials relating to the conflict, they are very text based and government oriented. The PMA complements and expands the range of narratives on the conflict.
- **The acquisition of new skills and knowledge**. PRONI is generally associated with document and text-based archives. The opportunity to work with the VV PMA project, with academics, experts and technical staff in Oral History, digital preservation and cataloguing of recordings has enhanced the skillset of PRONI staff in those fields.
- **PRONI felt they were now much better placed in terms of the development of newer technologies to enable access to digital materials onsite and online**. With an anticipated shift in digital related skills in archiving coming to the fore this is a significant benefit for PRONI whereby access to

PRONI archives will be significantly extended to a much larger online audience.

- **VV PMA enabled the testing of procedures developed for the digital repository** and challenged a number of assumptions in relation to processing digital records and access through the PRONI catalogue.

- **Increased understanding of working with oral history and storytelling within the context of contested narratives.** Prior to engagement with the PMA, PRONI had limited experience of this. The project has enabled PRONI to appreciate the complexity and challenges of this work. Engagement in the PMA Advisory Group provided PRONI staff an opportunity to establish relationships and trust with PMA participants.

- **Increased knowledge and understanding of copyright laws** relating to consent as a result of a session for PRONI staff.

- **Improved understanding of different approaches to facilitating agreement and management of meetings as a result of the expertise of Chairs of the PMA Advisory Group.** PRONI staff described their engagement in the Advisory Group as **"***a really positive opportunity to learn from individuals – in terms of the design of meetings and ways to build collaboration as well as confidence and skills to deal sensitivity with any people who were potentially distressed as a result of viewing the materials.***"**

- **Engagement in VV project provided a tangible example of PRONI's efforts to make its archive more inclusive and more representative of a broad range of experiences**.

- **The project has helped PRONI to widen its audience base.** The partnership approach enabled PRONI to host and participate in a number of well-received events with a wide reach in terms of audiences representing local communities and schools and young people.

- **PRONI staff were also able to highlight their role in the project at a number of archival conferences nationally**.

- **Experience in the PMA has benefited involvement in other PRONI projects** such as the possibility of building an archive based on a large collection of UTV tapes and one with the Nerve Centre and the Linenhall Library.

Benefits for QUB

QUB has also benefited as a result of the VV PMA project. **As a research project, the PMA represents a valuable narrative for QUB, illustrating its commitment to, and reputation for, research excellence.** The PMA represents a research heritage project which enables and facilitates social and educational impact, knowledge exchange and partnership working. The PMA demonstrates ways in which QUB can contribute more broadly to improving the social and political landscape in Northern Ireland through engagement with local communities. Furthermore, the PMA provides a cogent example of best practice in modelling a culture of research integrity through its ethical framework and value base. These PMA elements are congruent with assessment criteria outlined in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 guidelines which provide quality standards for research excellence for UK universities.[16]

In addition, as previously noted, the PMA has generated a wide range of research materials including articles for research journals, theses and research presentations to the wider academic and research communities both locally and globally, strengthening the research base and profile of QUB (see Appendix 4). As an additional research output, a peer-reviewed edited volume focused on the PMA will be published in 2021 by Vernon Press. It will feature contributions from PMA staff, participants and international researchers, and will include reflections on the work of the VV project, and the PMA more broadly.

The University has also benefited from the community engagement dimension of PMA, helping to break barriers between academia and society, and contributing to the delivery of its environment and social responsibilities.

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[16] The REF is the UK's system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. It first took place in 2014. The next exercise will be conducted in 2021. Annex A: Supplementary guidance for Institutions in preparing their institutional-level environment statement (REF5a) outlines a range of indicators and evidence markers for the 2021 assessment process (Sections 1& 2, p.8)
https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1195/ref-2019_06-institutional-level-environment-pilot-guidance.pdf
Accessed 06/09/2020

Benefits for Into Film and HTANI

Into Film and HTANI rated the quality of the engagement with the VV project and its staff and the value of the PMA as an archive very highly, describing the PMA as very professional and inclusive**. Into Film's work with the project in developing educational resources had added value to their work generally, noting that although it was a small project it has had a big impact,** raising the profile within the national organisation and with their funder, the British Film Institute.

HTANI praised the PMA for its pioneering role in advancing the practice of Storytelling as a way of learning about history, and the value of that to education: "*There is a massive interest in learning from stories form the past – we have been waiting for years for politicians to do this but the PMA forged ahead. There is real value in the PMA with key elements of archive relevant to schools*". They described the PMA educational resources as providing a well organised finished product. Representatives were "*blown away by how the materials link archive with GSCE curriculum*" and greatly valued the engagement with the PMA.

5.7   Increasing Staff Skills and Knowledge Development within the PMA

VV PMA Staff identified a range of ways in which they had benefited in terms of skills development and knowledge.

- Many of the VV PMA team valued the opportunity **to learn about the conflict in Northern Ireland from a range of perspectives,** including staff and student volunteers who were not native to Northern Ireland who had little previous knowledge of the conflict. Even for staff who had some knowledge of the main events of the conflict, the PMA deepened their understanding of its complexity and origins. "*It was a real privilege to sit and listen to people's stories – you felt you got to know them through their stories… It was an incredible opportunity to have that time… There was a huge amount of learning for all of us working on the recordings*" (Technical staff member)*.*
- **Learning to use innovative Archive editing techniques**: Most film editors edit films, not archives, and editing practice in films is to cut footage. In archives, especially those based on life storytelling, the opposite is the goal.

For the VV editor, this introduced "*a whole new way of editing.... it was great to rip up the rule book on editing and liberating to show the transparency of the process*".

- **Learning to trust in the primacy of the stories of participants and let them stand alone.** There was a debate about how much context to provide to deepen the understanding of those unfamiliar with the history of the conflict. PMA's ground rule to staff articulated by its Director was: "*It's not our job to interpret; we can provide background context that is agreed that doesn't seek to influence opinions*".

- **Increased technical skills for the preservation and access of recording and their handover to PRONI:** The Archivist team had to grapple with a very complex set of recordings on a case by case basis. This included ensuring good standards of data protection to protect participants, third parties and PMA staff.

- **The VV PMA Outreach worker increased skills in the design and programming of public events,** designing online events such as webinars and Zoom chats; and curating the materials for events and the website.

- **For the VV PMA Project Manager, delivering a complex, multi-faceted project** under a significant time pressure within the confines of sometimes bureaucratic university systems strengthened his organisational and financial management skills. He also found the experience of delivering a large range of outputs in partnership with a diverse project team and stakeholder group, while maintaining the ethical principles of the project, to be challenging but ultimately very rewarding.

5.8   Key Challenges in the Delivery of the VV Project

Key challenges encountered during the delivery of the VV project are summarised below.

1. **Ensuring that groups and individuals engaging with the PMA are aware of the inclusive range of narratives and have the capacity to engage with the materials.** Being mindful that care and attention are

needed when people are viewing this material so that people do not become re-traumatised.

2. **Maintaining contact with participants** over a period of 13 years with an ageing participant community.

3. **Keeping participants on board**: prolonged and necessary negotiations with participants to keep them on board at management meetings and at an individual level.

4. **Ownership, copyright and permissions:** securing the consent of participants for the transfer of copyright to QUB and transfer of their recording to PRONI and agreements regarding access was very time-consuming and took place in the latter phase of project delivery.

5. **Inclusivity**: The challenge was to ensure the PMA is not dominated by one constituency; to find ways to rebalance the Archive following the withdrawal of loyalists and prison officers; and to accept the limitations of working with a wide range of constituent groups while building maximum participation.

6. **Curating materials for public engagement:** Inclusivity is an important practice including how to frame and provide contexts for topics and recordings. The challenge was to balance the need to provide context and encourage understanding whilst respecting the right of each participant voice to tell their own story without interpretation or censorship.

7. **Technical challenges**: the time-consuming nature of processing of large format audio-visual files for access via the PRONI catalogue; cataloguing and data protection: cataloguing recordings appropriately in line with oral history guidelines and developing an appropriate style guide for the collection; identifying data protection issues within each recording. The project initially under-estimated how time- and resource-intensive an oral history audio-visual archive is, including the time to view and to catalogue.

8. **QUB administrative systems (such as HR, finance and procurement) proved more challenging than expected** for project staff to negotiate, especially at the outset. Project staff felt there was insufficient induction to these systems from the university, and that communication with these departments was often unclear and assumed prior knowledge from project staff of the university's administrative processes. This meant that VV staff

spent a significant amount of time focused on administration that ought to have been spent focused on project outputs, especially at the outset of the VV project. It also resulted in significant delays in the appointment of key staff.

9. **Insecurity for staff in the extension of their contracts** was a key feature throughout the project and the university more than once risked losing valuable staff members, in spite of staff extensions having been confirmed and approved by the funder. Such administrative challenges are likely a feature of any complex institutional environment, but VV staff felt that the integration of research projects within the university is something that could be improved in future, for example by having a liaison officer who could smooth the interactions between research projects and the various university departments that provide administrative support.

10. **Following initial delays, the pressure of project delivery in a very constrained time period was a challenge for staff,** which was compounded by delays in appointment of staff and then COVID-19.

11. **COVID-19 lockdown created technical challenges for staff** working at home on domestic broadband resulted in delays in the processing and transfer of files to PRONI at a critical time in the final months of the project and the suspension of public engagement events.

12. **The perception that PRONI is not an easily-accessible space for a community archive such as the PMA.** However, the experience of holding PMA events at PRONI, including taking attendees through the process of accessing archives, and taking PMA participants on tours of the facilities has softened that perception for communities and individuals.

Chapter Six   Distilling the Learning on Oral History / Life Storytelling Work: Best Practice and Lessons Learnt

This chapter examines the complexities and challenges of oral history and life storytelling work and presents a *Best Practice Framework* based on the expertise that the PMA has built over the years. The chapter concludes by sharing some *Lessons Learned* for groups and organisations embarking on oral history / life storytelling projects.

The findings in following section explore the complexities and challenges of oral history and life storytelling work and are based primarily on a conversation with the PMA Director, who shared his expertise on the nature and process of life storytelling. He described storytelling as a *visceral experience* which celebrates learning and the experience received from intuition, rather than rational learning or intellect.

6.1   The Complexities and Challenges in Oral History and Life Storytelling Work

I have chosen to identify these recordings as memories rather than testimonies and have chosen a life story methodology over a historical one, not because I doubt the veracity of the stories, but because a life story approach allows room for contradiction, a holistic richness and complexity.[17]

PMA Director

The VV PMA project has effectively demonstrated the value of an oral history/life storytelling approach for people, communities and heritage. This approach recognises the value of both telling one's own story and listening to other stories in creating an archive on the past. Telling and listening that happens at the same time gives an opportunity for people to tell their story and listen to story of the other and get public acknowledgment, which has been recognised as a very valuable for people and societies coming out of conflict. The storytellers are not experts – they

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[17] McLaughlin, C. (2006). 'Inside stories, memories from the Maze and Long Kesh Prison'. *Journal of Media Practice*, vol. 7, no. 2.

are 'ordinary people' sharing their memories and experiences during the period of violent conflict in Northern Ireland.

All participants were recorded separately. This approach supports the validity of the narrative of each participant and avoids the victim-perpetrator paradigm / spectrum. Unlike broadcast journalism, there is no persistent interrogation, no criticising of motives. The participants guide the recording by speaking only when they wish. In this case, the agreement beforehand was that the primary stimulant for their memories was to be the materiality of the landscape. The PMA Director outlined the importance and extent to which spatial locations can become a part of the stories being told:

> *They're crucial. Often stories have a rich cultural context. For example, the Maze/Long Kesh Prison was a very violent prison, and when participants return to that site, the site of their stories, several things are happening. The first is that the participant is having his or her memory stimulated in a way that doesn't happen in any other normal interview situation. It's been said to us, "it's amazing what you remember when you go back." And, the second is that it guides the chronology, but in a different way. Narratives are time based, but what happens here, instead, is that there's a motivation for memory that's not chronological.*[18]

It is evident from the recordings of participants that revisiting sites of the prisons provoked many memories for participants as they traced their steps around buildings on a once familiar landscape. The PMA Director recalled a particularly memorable example of this. It concerned the response of an ex-prisoner, recalling the memory of being called to the Governor's office to be told of the death of his father and that he was being refused permission to attend his funeral. The PMA Director commented: "*It is almost as if you are there with him revisiting that experience. What we have done is link people's memories to a physical landscape… now you can see people*

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[18] Side, K. (2016). "Many of Those Stories Don't Sit Easily Next to Each Other", *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2016), p.67.

back in that space – a space that no longer exists. In this sense the PMA is unrepeatable – you cannot do this again… It's not like going back to the site of a memorial like the Cenotaph or to an historical building like Castle Ward".

The PMA Director highlighted a number of challenges encountered in the processes of oral history and memory work:

- **Encouraging participants to feel comfortable with the concept and practice of memory work as part of building an oral history archive**. "*Participants found this quite difficult – sometimes people remembered things they didn't want to, or forgot things they wanted to include, and asked to repeat the recording (which was not able to be done, unless there was a technical problem)".*

- **Encouraging people to accept the legitimacy of storytelling / memory work as part of building an archive on the past**. "*The important thing is that memories are remembered at a particular time in someone's life in a period of society's development – it is not the truth or historical record – it is a memory that will contribute to an historical record. We have to remember the complexity of memory itself. The PMA is a one of many narratives of the past in Northern Ireland – it is not a definitive history of the prisons but a contribution to that.*"

- **The complexity of the issues associated with the legacy of the past in Northern Ireland: engaging in storytelling and memory work relating to prisons reflects on the complexity legacy issues. "***This is precarious and difficult work which requires careful navigation and negotiation.*"

- **The challenge is to allow people to talk about what they want to talk about, and again, contrary to mainstream / broadcast journalism, remove 'the script' and allow yourself to hear what is being offered**. "*If you listen to the stories of PMA participants you realise that people are already self-editing – leaving out details or information that you as an archive or filmmaker might want to include. Don't push or provoke the participants".*

6.2   A Best Practice Framework: Oral History and Life Storytelling Work

The table below summarises some of the key elements that define the PMA/VV project in terms of best practice. PMA's Ethical Framework based on Co-ownership, Inclusivity and Storytelling is a core aspect of its commitment to best practice standards. Building an ongoing relationship with participants based on trust and respect for their contribution is another essential practice.

Table 3: PMA: Best Practice Elements

Best Practice Standard / Element	Description / Learning Point / Rationale
Co-Ownership of Participant Contributions	PMA Participants have control over their contribution to the Archive and retain a veto over the materials and where it can be shown. Public access to the materials is determined by the wishes of each individual participant. They can choose to retain copyright if they so wish. If you share ownership with people they are more likely to trust you and tell you difficult and important aspects of their experiences.
Inclusivity	Takes a significant investment in time and energy in building relationships and trust with constituent groups to ensure a good range of participants. Ensure that groups and individuals engaged are aware of the range of narratives and have the capacity to engage with the materials. Being mindful that care and attention are needed when people are viewing this material so that people's risk of being re-traumatised is minimised.
Oral History / Life Storytelling	The life story approach allows room for contradiction, a holistic richness and complexity. This approach recognises the value of both the telling of your story and the listening to other stories in creating an archive on the past.

Best Practice Standard / Element	Description / Learning Point / Rationale
Spatial Locations / Sites as Stimulus for Storytelling / Memory Work	Memory can be stimulated and transformed when participants are reconnected to the site of their experiences.
One Participant; One Narrative; One Recording; One Recording Technician	Almost all participants recorded separately, although some choose small groups, e.g. a family or comrade. This approach supports the validity of the narrative of each participant in a non-judgemental way and avoids the victim: perpetrator paradigm / spectrum. There is no persistent interrogation, no criticising of motives. The participants guide the recording by speaking only when they wish. The narratives do not compete with each other. People can reveal much more about themselves on a personal level rather than on a political level.
Transparency of the recording process, ownership, copyright, access and location of archival materials	Build clear agreements with participants with regard to recording process, ownership, copyright, access and location of archival materials.
Trust in the Storytelling and follow the practice of Minimum Editing of Materials	Let the stories stand alone and provide context that is agreed that doesn't seek to influence opinions
Public Acknowledgement through Public and Community Engagement	The VV project included a public and community engagement programme to promote the Archive materials. This supported and invited reflection and discussion on the content and issues. Public acknowledgment of the stories and memories of the Archive's participants has been recognised as a very valuable for people and societies coming out of conflict[19] The VV project was guided by the PMA's ethical framework in all its public engagement work.

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[19] Dawson, G. (2007) *Making Peace with the Past: Memory, Trauma, and the Irish Troubles.* Manchester University Press (p23)

Best Practice Standard / Element	Description / Learning Point / Rationale
Include ways to maximise access to materials for people with Disabilities	For example, PMA developed audio description options for online materials.
Participatory Management practices and Structures	Participatory management and governance can engage Archive participants in the development of the Archive project. Ensure a minimum number of places for participants in decision-making structures.
Maximise public access by partnering with appropriate and credible organisations	Create ongoing relationships with partner organisations (such as archival / heritage / community / educational organisations) to ensure good management of archival materials.

6.3 Lessons Learnt: Guidance on Oral History / Storytelling Work

PMA consultees offered a range of suggestions for groups contemplating engagement through oral history / storytelling archive work:

1. **Be clear about your motivation and principles and what you are trying to achieve**. Develop an ethical framework to guide the development of the archive, drawing on standard of good practice such as inclusivity and co-ownership. Establish the parameters and implications of inclusivity and co-ownership and how that would operate for your constituent groups.

2. **Development of the Archive needs to be based on good and mutually beneficial relationships with constituent groups.**

3. **Have a sound understanding of your potential participants and their constituent groups**: Build ongoing relationship and trust with them; create conducive environments for them to share their stories and memories; ensure their safety and wellbeing; establish principles and practices regarding confidentiality. Ensure participants can speak freely and are not at risk from legal action.

4. **Work backwards from where the archive will be permanently located.** Be clear about the principle aim of the oral history work and where it will be housed. If it is not possible to know, consider whether it will be a collection that is

accessible through one organisation / institution or more than one? Will it be accessible online? The final organisation and format determines and informs technical aspects, protocols and processes of cataloguing and access.

5. **Establish a participatory management structure to ensure participants / constituent groups are represented on decision-making / management groups.**

6. **Obtaining consent and agreements from participants, and sometimes their relatives, is critical:** Ensure a mechanism for regularly updating contact details.

7. **Consider the audience for the materials:** This can inform where the archive may be hosted.

8. **Be mindful of your audiences and participants**. In dealing with memories from the past, it is important to think through the issue of re-traumatisation and ensure you have a range of support resources appropriate to your constituent groups.

Chapter Seven Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the main conclusions emerging from the evaluation findings in respect of the impact and performance of the VV PMA project and presents a number of recommendations for the future sustainability of the PMA in its next stage of development.

7.1 Conclusions

The findings of this evaluation present clear, compelling evidence that the VV project has been extremely successful in delivering on its core aims of preservation, access and engagement with regard to the Prisons Memory Archive. The findings further demonstrate the positive impact of the project in enriching heritage and culture in Northern Ireland, in deepening understanding in local communities and in supporting the development of knowledge and skills in people.

PMA's Ethical Framework

The PMA's Ethical Framework has been a defining standard for the work undertaken in delivery of the VV project. The commitment to building inclusivity has been apparent at every level of the VV project's processes and practices, from the design of materials for the website, to testing user access to services, to building engagement in local communities, to the operation of its governance structures. The trust and relationships built with participants, guided by the principles of co-ownership at the outset of the PMA, have created a legacy of respectful engagement which has guided the work of the VV project.

The Strategic Value of the Work of the PMA

The work of the PMA and the VV project has demonstrated its value strategically in supporting the work of its partner organisations, PRONI and QUB, and in strengthening the role of the NLHF in using heritage and culture to create positive change and learning for people and local communities.

Engagement in the VV project has contributed to a number of PRONI's strategic priorities. The project has played an important role in creating a more inclusive audience / user base for PRONI, it has improved community engagement and

helped staff engage directly with underrepresented constituent groups, strengthening PRONI's ambition for its archives to act as a *community memory* for future generations. The QUB-PRONI partnership has created a very successful example of collaborative working with new archival materials using innovative approaches; the PMA collection at PRONI has enhanced existing archives enabling individuals and communities have the opportunity to reflect upon how their heritage sits alongside other stories from different backgrounds within an archival institution.

The PMA's focus on using heritage as a mechanism for social, community and educational impact is congruent with university quality assurance standards and engagement in the project has added value to QUB's reputation for research excellence. The VV project has provided ways in which QUB can contribute more broadly to improving the social and political landscape in Northern Ireland through engagement with local communities. Furthermore, the PMA provides a cogent example of best practice in modelling a culture of research integrity through its ethical framework and value base.

NLHF Support for Oral History: The Political Context in Northern Ireland

The development of the VV project has taken place in a problematic political context in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Many legacy aspects of the conflict in Northern Ireland remain unresolved, particularly in relation to definitions of victims and compensation, historical inquiries and flags, emblems and parades. The Stormont House Agreement (2015) included a commitment to set up an oral history archive, recognising that conflict-related oral histories, based on individuals' own stories reflecting their lived experiences, can provide a mechanism by which to address the past. However, the absence of political will to progress an oral history archive has meant there has been no government support to embark on this work.

Within the context of the lack of political will to adequately address legacy issues, NLHF's commitment to supporting oral history and storytelling work as a mechanism for addressing the past in Northern Ireland is to be commended. The NLHF is enabling heritage on the Northern Ireland conflict in many ways: seeking to fill gaps in historical records, bringing new perspectives from people whose voices have

sometimes been excluded from the past, and challenging the legitimacy of a single narrative to explain a difficult period of conflict in Northern Ireland. The PMA-PRONI combined archives provide a rounded and substantial record of the past which can be used as an educational resource and for community engagement for future generations. The PMA is representative of many community-based initiatives which have sought to build oral history archives in recent years and validates the NLHF's role in supporting the value of *intangible heritage* as an important dimension of heritage within the context of post conflict societies. It is evident that the PMA as an oral history archive offers a highly relevant model of best practice within the broader political and policy contexts and offers a benchmark on how one might begin to build an inclusive process to address dealing with the past.

The Archive as Public Heritage

The principal goal of the VV project – to preserve the Archive Collection of the PMA for future generations – has been successfully achieved, despite delays in staff appointments, substantial technical challenges and lockdown due to COVID-19. The digital preservation of the PMA recordings and their transfer to PRONI represents a hugely significant milestone in the journey of the PMA from its origins in 2003/04 when the idea of an archive was first conceived. The collection will be securely stored in PRONI's Digital Repository, thereby ensuring that this valuable resource will be safeguarded for future generations.

The PMA now has a physical home and now forms part of PRONI's community archive with free public access. The transfer of the Archive to the digital repository at PRONI has provided a crucial access point for widening public engagement in the materials. The PMA Collection complements existing Northern Ireland conflict related archives at PRONI, offering onsite and online users an audio-visual record of the experiences of political prisoners, prison staff and others in the tradition of storytelling and oral history. Despite public access to PMA still in the preliminary phase, the level of interest in the Archive materials both onsite and online have been encouraging, with engagement from researchers and public visitor both locally and internationally.

Permissions have been secured from 141 participants to transfer their recordings to PRONI and total of **158 recordings have been reviewed, preserved and transferred to PRONI, of which 115 should be fully accessible by March 2021**. A further group of 37 recordings will remain currently inaccessible, either because consent is pending from a participant, or because of outstanding technical or data protection issues.

Improving Access to Quality Archive Materials

Digital access to the Archive materials has also been enhanced through the re-design of the PMA's own website. This provides a valuable complement to PRONI providing a different portal to the PMA with a distinctive user experience which can provide very accessible materials on a wide range of topics for a diverse range of constituent groups. This work has delivered an impressive range of both outputs and outcomes and demonstrates a highly dynamic and creative dimension of the project in building engagement in a unique aspect of heritage in Northern Ireland.

An innovative part of the website content included the development of a dedicated educational platform aimed at young people and teachers. This includes materials for different age groups on a variety of themes such as Internment, the Hunger Strikes and the Impact on Families. The educational materials, along with a PMA Glossary and interactive maps of the sites of MLK and Armagh Gaol were developed in consultation with PMA participants and represent the commitment of the VV project to the practice of inclusivity that underpins the PMA. The educational materials were highly regarded in terms of the quality of the materials and their digital accessibility which will be increasingly important as remote teaching becomes more common post lockdown.

The glossary, combined with additional context materials, will be of particular value to those users from a young generation or international audiences whose knowledge of the Northern Ireland conflict may be limited. The improved digital access will help to maximise access to Archive materials from a wide range of audiences and users including young people, academics and researchers (local and global), teachers, local historians, and local communities of interest.

Benefits for People and Communities

The VV project has demonstrated the potential for the PMA's positive engagement with local communities, schools and institutions. The VV project delivered a variety of public events throughout Northern Ireland with lockdown restrictions resulting in the cancellation of a number of planned events. Events mostly targeted local communities where the levels of engagement were high, with an average of 80 people per event. The evidence from this evaluation provides many examples of the ways in which the VV project has developed and deepened understanding of the conflict in Northern Ireland, its history and context. Engagement with the PMA has also supported learning beyond history and politics in local communities. Key messages from the feedback from events included how listening to and watching both the Archive and the panel discussions had helped to humanise PMA participants – particularly ex-prisoners and prison officers – and helped people to be empathetic to perspectives of 'the other'. In the context of a post-conflict society this is an important process which can help to remove barriers to engagement.

The PMA is engaged in sensitive work in building understanding between diverse constituent groups in a politically complex context and not all engagements had positive results. The occasions where people had a hostile response to the materials or panellists have been recognised as providing an important learning for the PMA and staff showed a determination to ensure that engagement with the Archive minimises the risk of re-traumatising people.

PMA participants themselves have benefited in their engagement in the VV project, participating in public events and in the development of Archive materials. As ambassadors of the PMA they have demonstrated the vital and powerful contributions they can make to changing perceptions and to demonstrating the integrity of the work of the Archive.

One of the greatest strengths of the PMA is that is has created a space where different and contrary narratives and ideologies about the conflict can co-exist. For some participants, particularly loyalist and women political prisoners, engagement in the PMA and in the VV project has provided an opportunity for their voices to be heard. For other participants the PMA offered the opportunity to listen to a particular

constituency that had been largely silent during the conflict - the experiences of prison officers and their families. The PMA has helped to equalise the experiences of these particular constituent groups and their wider communities and provides another example of the PMA's commitment to be truly inclusive. The VV project has also enabled the PMA to expand its engagement to key target groups – young people, teachers and educational organisations.

Benefits for Heritage

Part of the uniqueness of the PMA as a heritage project is that is has consciously sought to gather multiple narratives of the experience of political and violent conflict in Northern Ireland. Much of the heritage created by wars and conflict, and within post-conflict societies, commemorates and valorises partisan groups and communities, often in an exclusive way. The PMA has taken a radically different approach. It is not a memorial to a particular loss or act of violence perpetrated by or impacting on a specific constituent group, nor does it commemorate a single ideology. Although it focuses on two particular institutions within the criminal justice system – MLK and Armagh Gaol – the PMA provides a complex representation of history and heritage through the diversity of voices and narratives of people who suffered directly during the conflict.

The evaluation identified a wide range of ways in which the PMA and the VV project have enriched heritage and expanded the concept of what heritage represents. The PMA has helped to broaden perceptions of what heritage is. It has promoted storytelling and intangible heritage, building more inclusive models to celebrate and memorialise political and cultural events and traditions. The PMA has expanded heritage on the conflict in NI in partnership with PRONI with the combined PRONI-PMA Archives offering more complex and diverse narratives of that period in history. With PRONI holding official state records, the PMA adds a new layer and richness to that public record combining a mostly a 'top-down' official history with the PMA's 'bottom-up' narrative, countering and completing what PRONI already holds.

The PMA provides a contemporary and interactive example of heritage which seeks to use an Archive built on multiple narratives to create social change and encourage a shared ownership of heritage about the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Effective Management and Partnership Working

The extent of collaboration, mutual support and respect between the VV PMA staff, the PMA Advisory Group and PRONI has been a critical factor in the overall success of the VV project. Indeed, one could argue that, without such a successful partnership, the project would not have developed to the extent it did.

In addition to providing the institutional home for VV PMA and contracting staff, QUB made significant in-kind contributions towards the project. While there were some challenges, noted further below, many university staff members – academic, professional and administrative – in different departments across the university offered invaluable support at critical stages in the project delivery.

PMA management and communication systems have been effective and efficient. PMA staff were highly regarded for the consistent levels of commitment to the VV project which faced a number of significant challenges during the delivery. Staff brought a diverse skill set and a wide range of expertise which has benefited the successful management and delivery of a technically complex oral history project. Governance of the VV project by the VV Steering Group, the PMA Management Group and its successor, the PMA Advisory Group has been of an exceptionally high standard and benefited from the expertise and leadership of chairpersons and the contributions of a diverse constituent group which included loyalist and republican ex-prisoners, former probation officers and Open University tutors, and senior civil servants. The commitment from PRONI to both the VV Steering Group and the PMA Advisory Group at the senior level was very affirming for the work of project.

The partnership working with PRONI was an unqualified success with a high level of commitment between staff at the PMA and PRONI, at strategic, operational and technical levels. PRONI and PMA staff established a very collaborative approach to problem solving and dealing with technical challenges. Engagement in the PMA has also brought added value to a range of partner organisations, in particular to PRONI.

Senior project staff noted that the NLHF as funders had proven to be extremely approachable, flexible and understanding in the context of the various challenges that emerged in the delivery of the project.

Challenges

Maintaining contact with participants over a period of 14 years with an ageing participant community proved difficult, particularly when seeking agreements on ownership, copyright and permissions. Participant contact is essential to any participatory project and particularly so in the VV project, when a new agreement had been developed that superseded the original paperwork. Participant contact required much more time and resources in the VV project than had been anticipated, with much of the work only able to be carried out with a full project team in the final year.

A major operational challenge in the delivery of the VV project was problematic engagement with administrative systems in QUB, especially in the critical early days of the project. This caused long delays to the recruitment of key staff which impacted significantly on project delivery. There were considerable periods of time when the project did not have key staff in post, which hampered all aspects of project delivery. This was compounded by the later impact of COVID-19, which added further considerable delays. While many staff across the university did provide crucial support to the project, it was felt that integration of research projects within the university is something that could be improved in future.

On a broader level, a further challenge has been to maintain inclusivity in terms of the contributions from constituent groups within the PMA. The obstacles to building inclusive participation in the PMA are complex and reflect the wider challenges of living in a post conflict society unable to share space, to listen to other perspectives. The PMA has faced challenges in maintaining the engagement of two particular constituencies – loyalist ex-prisoners and prisoner officers. Through the VV project, the PMA was able rebalance the contributions of loyalist ex-prisoners and prisoner offices in the Archive. However, this may continue to be a challenge going forward and will need to be monitored.

Best practice

The PMA has provided a model of best practice and ethical practice not only in its approach to oral history and participatory documentary-making but in its commitment to inclusive management, development and engagement practices. The work of the

PMA through the VV project has set new standards in the practice of oral history and life storytelling within the context of a conflict.

7.2   Recommendations: Ensuring the Long-term Sustainability of the PMA

With the ending of the VV project funding, a number of mechanisms have been developed to support the long-term sustainability of the PMA in its location at PRONI. The PMA Advisory Group will continue to guide and make decisions about access to the Archive and ways to continue the operation of the PMA's ethical framework going forward. QUB and PRONI will continue to provide ongoing support. The PMA collection, the project website and possible future outreach activities will be managed and maintained by a continuing partnership between the PMA Advisory Group, QUB, and PRONI for at least five years from the end of the VV PMA project. This is set out in a budgeted five-year *Management and Maintenance Plan*, with specific areas of in-kind support from QUB outlined. Meanwhile, PRONI has committed to a 20-year *Preservation Plan* for the PMA collection to ensure the preservation of, and public access to, the archive indefinitely into the future.

The PMA Advisory Group should consider the following actions and guidance:

1. The Advisory Group should ensure that the PMA's ethical framework and values continue to guide and underpin the development of the PMA going forward. The Advisory group should be vigilant of the risks to dilute the PMA's ethical framework and should ensure that access to materials is through channels that will not discredit participants or the work of the PMA, and monitor access to the Archive to ensure the materials are not used for commercial purposes or gain.
2. Consider ways to broaden audiences for the PMA.
3. Promote the PMA materials as an educational tool. The learning environment post lockdown provides a positive context for this to be developed. Teachers and educational bodies are seeking new sources for relevant materials. Actions to consider:
    a. Target information to history and politics teachers: Use History Teacher forums – and social media to inform teachers in Northern Ireland
    b. Consider the roll out of PMA information sessions to teachers

    c. Support KS3 / GCSE groups to visit PRONI to include a focus on PMA materials

    d. Encourage educational take-up through community groups

4. Consider ways to secure new funding to continue outreach work / engagement with the Archive with specific target community-based groups such as cross community groups and women's groups, and organisations that had committed to collaboration before lockdown, e.g. the Open University and the Ulster Museum.

5. Consider ways to secure new funding to continue educational work and engagement with the Archive with specific target groups such as young people and schools. Into Film may be a potential partner organisation.

6. Encourage and support the development of PMA outreach and educational work by PRONI. The Archive can be used in a variety of contexts unrelated to prisons such as family life, women's issues, education as well as a focus on specific themes such as *Internment* and *Life After Prison*. PRONI can also support promotion of the PMA through workshops and seminars and conferences for researchers, students as well as specific events such as Good Relations Week.

7. Consider ways to promote the Archive as a resource for academics and researchers, using QUB resources.

8. Consider ways to secure funding to produce more recordings (one priority might be to re-balance engagement from Prison Officers and loyalist ex-prisoners) as well the experiences of ordinary prisoners from that period.

9. Consider the production of an additional feature film on a different constituent group – e.g. Prison Officers, a group where inclusivity has been an issue.

10. Maintain the PMA's commitment to inclusivity:

    a. Consider the merits of neutral v. single identity venues to build greater engagement in the PMA.

    b. Monitor the engagement of constituent groups to ensure an inclusive balance of groups is maintained.

11. Raise the profile the PMA through social media to inform young people about the work of the Archive.

12. Consider an all-Ireland PMA Roadshow.

Resources will be required for some of this work and the Advisory Group should explore potential sources of funding, support and collaboration with partners.

Appendix 1   VV and PMA Project Team

List of VV PMA Project Team (2016-2020)

Director	Cahal McLaughlin
Project Manager	Conor McCafferty
Project Manager | 2016 – 2018	Lorraine Dennis
Project Archivist	Kate Keane
Assistant Archivist	Annie Russell
Outreach and Communications Officer	Rosie Hickey
Archival Film Editors	Kevin McSorley
	Danny Meegan
	Rob Wilkie
Project Assistants	Gillian Myles
	Rachael Stevenson-Reynolds
	Conan Hickland
Researchers	Frank Adrain
	Michael Burns
	Sarah McDonagh
	Jamie McRoberts
	Amy Mehta
	Laura Murphy
Technical Partners	Profile Tree (Web Development)
	Sean Greer Design (Graphic Design)
Copyright Advisor	Ronan Deazley
Technical Advisor	Fabian Campbell-West
Independent Project Evaluator	Karen McMinn

PMA Film Crew and Initial Post-Production (2006-2016)

Director	Cahal McLaughlin
Production Manager	Lorraine Dennis
Camera Operators	Ray Carlin
	Michael Doyle
	Brian Drysdale
	Chris Martin
	Cahal McLaughlin
	Deirdre Noonan
	Paddy Stevenson
Assistants	Darcy Alexandra
	Veronica Carson
	Larry Cowan
	Brian Jeffers
	Andrea Kilpatrick
	Dominic McAleer
	Dom McAteer
	Greg McGuinness
	Brigid McLaughlin Barnett
	Oscar McLaughlin Barnett
	Rian McLaughlin Holland
	Jennifer Toman
Researchers	Laura Aguiar
	Federica Bonacini
	Sarah Feinstein
	Jolene Mairs-Dyer
	Jamie McRoberts
	Michelle Moloney
Editors	Laura Aguiar
	Jolene Mairs-Dyer
	Danny Meegan
Web Developer (2012)	Peter Keighron

Appendix 2 VV PMA Steering Group and PMA Advisory Group

VV PMA Steering Group

The Steering Group governed the VV PMA Project. Its members received reports from project staff and provided advice on various issues.

Chair: Cahal McLaughlin, PMA Director and Professor of Film Studies, QUB

David Huddleston, Head of Records Management, Cataloguing and Access, PRONI

Jenny Meegan, PMA Participant, PMA Advisory Group Co-Chair

Joanna McMinn, PMA Advisory Group, PMA Participant, PMA Advisory Group Co-Chair

Michael Willis, Director and Deputy Keeper of the Records, PRONI

PMA Advisory Group

The main role of the PMA Advisory Group, previously the PMA Management Group, is to allow participants to oversee the development of the PMA in line with its ethical principles. All PMA participants are automatically members of the Advisory Group. Some members have been involved throughout the project, others attend on occasion to discuss particular issues. Below are listed regular attendees to the Advisory Group.

Co-Chair: Joanna McMinn, PMA Participant

Co-Chair: Jenny Meegan, PMA Participant

Larry Carragher, PMA Participant

Michael Culbert, PMA Participant

Angela Devlin, PMA Participant

Harry Donaghy, PMA Participant

Janet Hancock, Archivist and Deputy Head of Public Services, PRONI

David Huddleston, Head of Records Management, Cataloguing and Access, PRONI

Pat Jess, PMA Participant

Conor McCafferty, VV PMA Project Manager

Cahal McLaughlin, PMA Director

Eleanor Mulligan, PMA Participant

Gerard Murray, PMA Participant

William Murphy, PMA Participant

Valerie Owens, PMA Participant

William 'Plum' Smith, PMA Participant

Paddy Smyth, PMA Participant

Dee Stitt, PMA Participant

Appendix 3   VV PMA Events 2016-2020

2016: Virtual Zones of Peace and Conflict workshop - Lund University - Denmark

2016: Black Mountain Shared Space - Belfast

2016: Conflict Research event - PRONI

2016: Rath Mór Centre - Derry/Londonderry City

2016: Irish Studies - Glucksman House – NYU – New York

2016: Hans Boeckler Foundation - Cologne

2016: Notre Dame University - North American Irish Studies Association – Indiana

2016: Civil Servants Week - PRONI

2017: Irish Prisons Conference - Crumlin Road Gaol - Belfast

2017: Political Imagination Laboratory - University of Perugia - Italy

2017: University of La Rioja - Spain

2017: University of Sao Paolo - Irish Studies Association of South America

2017: Stellenbosch University Museum - South Africa

2017: University of Cape Town - South Africa

2017: 'The past in the present: examining the role of personal testimony from conflict' as part of the annual Spring Festival of Events organised by the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice

2017: Workshop with Minnesota State University – PRONI

2017: PMA Visual Voices Launch – PRONI

2017: Workshop with students from MA Conflict Transformation and Social Justice – QUB

2017: 'Story-telling from Conflict- Lost and Found Stories' at the Being Human Festival – PRONI

2017: Discovering Collections Discovering Communities Conference – Manchester

2018: Workshop with students from Luther College, USA – QUB

2018: Dangerous Oral Histories Conference – Belfast

2018: 'Explore Your Archive' – PRONI

2018: Workshop with students from MA Conflict Transformation and Social Justice – QUB

2018: Peacebuilding and Participation MA - Durham University

2018: Contemporary Irish History Research Seminar - Trinity College Dublin

2018: Workshop with intercultural communications undergraduate students, QUB

2018: Workshop with undergraduate students studying criminal justice and social work – PRONI

2018: Workshop with higher education graduates – PRONI

2019: Archives Uncovered workshop – PRONI

2019: Screening and panel with PMA participants, with North Down group – PRONI

2019: Archives of Internment, screening and panel with PMA participants – PRONI

2020: Life in the Compounds / Cages of Long Kesh, screening and panel with PMA participants – Skainos Centre, Belfast

2020: Armagh Stories, screening and panel with PMA participants – Armagh Marketplace Theatre

2020: Schools Event, introducing the PMA and panel with PMA participants, collaboration with Into Film – PRONI

2020: Armagh Stories, screening and Q&A with Cahal McLaughlin, collaboration with Dungannon Film Club – Ranfurly House, Dungannon

2020: Archiving the Conflict, presentations and screenings from PRONI and PMA – Newry Museum

2020: PMA Website Launch and Celebration Event – online

2020: Armagh Stories and We Were There, screening on QFTPlayer, August 2020 (online)

Appendix 4   PMA Bibliography

The list below includes journal articles, theses and book chapters about the PMA collection that have been published by PMA staff and other academics. The list also includes reviews, research presentations, news stories and podcasts relating specifically to the PMA. As an additional research output, a peer-reviewed edited volume focused on the PMA will be published in 2021 by Vernon Press. It will feature contributions from PMA staff, participants and international researchers, and will include reflections on the work of the VV project, and the PMA more broadly.

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