

**The Commemorative Activity at the Grave of Munich Air  
Disaster Victim, Duncan Edwards:  
*A Social and Cultural Analysis of the Commemorative  
Networks of a Local Sporting Hero***

**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Commemorative Activity at the Grave of Munich Air Disaster Victim, Duncan Edwards: A Social and Cultural Analysis of the Commemorative Networks of a Local Sporting Hero**

The Munich Air Disaster claimed the lives of 23 people in a plane crash in Munich in 1958. It is a significant event within modern England's cultural history as a number of Manchester United footballers, known as the Busby Babes were amongst the dead. The players who died have continued to be extensively commemorated, especially Duncan Edwards.

This research considers the commemorative activity associated with Edwards since his death and was initiated when the researcher pondered the extensive commemorative activity by strangers that she encountered at the family grave of her cousin Edwards. The commemoration of the Disaster and of Edwards has been persistent and various with new acts of commemoration continuing conspicuously even after fifty years since the event. Such unique activity particularly demonstrated at Edwards' grave was considered worthy of further investigation to ascertain why such activity was occurring at such a volume. Although general historical and biographical accounts of the Disaster and Edwards are apparent, specific research concerning the commemoration of the event was not evident. The researcher set out to identify who the commemorators were, why they were undertaking dedicatory acts and what those acts manifest as. At Edwards' grave the offerings left upon it were regularly documented from 2010-2014 and analysed. Interviews with identified significant commemorators were undertaken including Edwards' family members and fans. A comprehensive literature review was undertaken and relevant online sources and data were also examined in order to inform a distinct social and cultural analysis of the event within the context of its commemoration. The study focussed upon the researcher's connection to the subject, commemorators, memorials, commemorative objects and sites. Although there was a distinct personal element to the research, the data collected was analysed in the wider context of commemoration, the perception of heroes and attitudes towards the dead, death and dying. This research

specifically considers the commemoration of Disaster victim Duncan Edwards as a local sporting hero.

The unique contribution to the knowledge and understanding of this research topic is principally through the generation and interrogation of new research data, created from fieldwork undertaken at Edwards' grave and from interviews with significant commemorators. The interview-generated research data from certain Edwards' family members was only possible to attain because of the researcher's particular ancestral link to the interviewees.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH**

The 1958 Munich Air Disaster<sup>1</sup> is widely acknowledged as a significant event within modern England's cultural history. It is distinct from other football-related disasters such as the Heysel Tragedy<sup>2</sup> and the Hillsborough Disaster<sup>3</sup> (discussed further in Chapter 7iii) because the Munich Air Disaster caused the death of players and staff of a football team rather than fans of a team.

The Munich Air Disaster has inspired numerous 'popular' general texts and a number of biographical accounts have also chronicled the event. However, a socio-cultural based academic study of the Disaster and its commemoration has yet to be undertaken.

The researcher has an ancestral link to Duncan Edwards, a Manchester United and England footballer who died as a result of injuries sustained in the Munich Air Disaster. This particular link to the research subject is discussed in further detail in Chapter 1.

### **INSPIRATION FOR THE RESEARCH**

The researcher's familial connection to the research is underpinned by the researcher's broader interest in death, dying and commemoration. It is acknowledged that this interest may have been influenced by growing up with such a distinct ancestral heritage. However, this interest manifested in the development of the researcher's career as an artist and designer, leading to studies in funerary design and memorial art and commemoration as an artistic concept or construct.

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<sup>1</sup> On 6 February 1958 a British European Airways plane crashed whilst attempting to take off in Munich, Germany. 23 out of the 44 people on board died as a result of injuries sustained in the crash. Several others were badly injured and amongst the injured and fatalities were a number of Manchester United football team players (see Appendix A for further detail).

<sup>2</sup> The Heysel Tragedy occurred during a match between Liverpool Football Club and Juventus (an Italian football club) at Heysel Stadium in Brussels in 1985. 39 people (predominantly Juventus fans) were fatally injured when a perimeter wall collapsed.

<sup>3</sup> In the 1989 Hillsborough Disaster 96 Liverpool Football Club fans were killed in a crush at the Hillsborough Football Stadium in Sheffield.

The researcher has distinct recollections of visiting Edwards' grave with family members and being puzzled as to why so many strangers left offerings at her relative's grave for so many years after his death. This puzzlement kindled a significant curiosity into commemoration and specifically why and how people commemorate the dead. This led to research that considered the impact of social media on commemorative practices, gift giving ritual to the dead, the concept of dead heroes and the remembrance of the war dead.

It became apparent during the early stages of research that the issue of gender should be acknowledged. Research revealed that the majority of sports-related data available on the subject (including biographical and football-related historical accounts) were overwhelming about and by men. The researcher in contrast is a woman and her interest and connection to Edwards is through her mother. The researcher was working within the predominantly masculinised field of sport and football research. However, this research is not a gender-specific study but throughout the thesis the issue of gender is raised when it is considered significant to the subject matter. Most prominently in this regard gender and the gendered nature of heroes are discussed in Chapter 3.

Although the significance of the familial connection to Edwards is explicitly made and discussed in Chapter 1 the concept of 'family' within the research is discussed throughout the study. Football fandom is often rooted in family tradition, demonstrated by the inheritance of a parent's football team fandom by their offspring (usually from father to son). The researcher did not adopt her father's professed but latent fandom of Aston Villa nor does she have any personal affiliation to any other club. Fandom is a 'life-long project' (2010; 277) that was not part of the researcher's family history. The nature of fandom is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4iv and although the researcher is interested and related to the 'football family' of Manchester United and England she is not a football fan of any kind.

## **RESEARCH AIMS**

This study is a social and cultural analysis of the Munich Air Disaster within the context of the commemorative activity that has installed Disaster victim Duncan Edwards as a local sporting hero. In order to analyse this commemorative

activity, those who undertake such acts are identified as commemorators and they are examined as such, within a commemorative network construct. This construct is used to analyse commemorator activity at significant sites. As Edwards' commemorative network is inherently connected to the commemoration of the Munich Air Disaster, the analysis of commemorative activity of these two entities was undertaken consecutively.

The retrospective nature of studying the 1950s era when the Disaster occurred from a twenty first century gaze requires an awareness of the differences in socio-cultural attitudes, practices and ideas about life, death and commemoration. In particular the impact of social media on how death and disasters are discussed and figured almost instantaneously on a global platform is in stark contrast to the 1950s where the latest news was slower to emerge via radio and newspaper reports, with television still in its infancy. The impact of technology and social media on Edward's commemoration and commemorative activity as a whole is further discussed in Chapter 5iii.

Within the context of the era of the late 1950s, those who died as a result of the 1958 crash were and still are venerated as white working class heroes, defined as heroes predominantly for their masculine prowess. The concept of them as working class sporting heroes is discussed further in Chapter 3 and how their perception as heroes compares to the celebrity status of some players today is specifically considered in Chapter 3iv.

Research methodology was on a qualitative basis, principally desk-based but also included fieldwork research including interviews and site visits. The research methodology is found in Appendices C, D and E rather than within the main body of the thesis. This is to distinguish the collated data as self-generated reference material that relates to the bibliographical and historical summary resources. This also reflects the researcher's background in art and design whereby research is undertaken predominantly through sketchbooks which are then set aside from the final resultant artwork.

The interviews undertaken predominantly with members of the researcher's family embed the familial connection of the researcher as central to the

research. This familial connection is discussed in further detail in Chapter 1 and Appendix D.

The documentation and study of the commemorative activity at Edwards' grave undertaken from 2010 to 2014 recorded the appearance of the grave and the offerings upon it at given intervals. This was undertaken in order to determine the nature and persistency of commemorative activity at the grave. The photographic documentation of the memorial enabled the offerings left by commemorators to be logged and analysed. This revealed how and why people actively commemorated Edwards through gift giving and sometimes it identified who these commemorators were and how they were connected to Edwards.

Research then took a theoretical approach through the examination, disassembly and analysis of data, memorials and artefacts assembled and collected from the commemorative networks of the Disaster. A comprehensive literature review was undertaken and relevant online sources and data were also examined.

The unique contribution to the knowledge and understanding of this particular research area was principally through the generation and interrogation of new data created from fieldwork undertaken at Edwards' grave and through recording interviews with significant commemorators, including members of the Edwards family.

Although Edwards' grave was the significant focus for the four year (2010-2014) fieldwork research project<sup>4</sup>, the study also considers a number of other significant memorials, sites and objects. Commemorative activity is further analysed through the consideration of data collected from interviews of significant active and 'non-active' commemorators<sup>5</sup>. This activity is further considered within the wider context of the study of commemoration as a distinct social and cultural activity.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C

<sup>5</sup> See Appendices D & E

## **THESIS STRUCTURE**

This study is divided into eight chapters with five appendices. Each chapter discusses a particular research area and ends with a chapter summary of findings. An overall thesis conclusion is found in the final chapter (Chapter 8).

Chapter 1 introduces the dichotomy of ‘researcher as commemorator’ and ‘commemorator as researcher’ particularly focussing on the researcher’s ancestral link to the research subject. Chapter 2 is a review of related literature including that which is concerned with the Busby Babes, Duncan Edwards, the Munich Air Disaster and Manchester United. It also reviews literature concerned with death, dying and commemoration and that which informed the theoretical construct of commemorative networks. Chapter 3 is concerned with the notion of hero, specifically within the commemorative network of Duncan Edwards. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 consider aspects of commemoration and specifically commemorators, commemorative objects, memorials and commemorative sites, respectively. The eighth chapter forms the overall thesis conclusion.

Appendices A and B are a historical summary of the Munich Air Disaster and a biographical summary of Duncan Edwards, respectively. Appendix C summarises the fieldwork research undertaken at Duncan Edwards’ grave, with findings and documentary photographs. Appendices D and E summarise the interviews of commemorators undertaken during the research including a précis of interview methodology, interviewee details and a number of interview summaries and transcripts.

## **1: RESEARCHER AS COMMEMORATOR AND COMMEMORATOR AS RESEARCHER**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is distinctly written from the first person perspective. This demonstrates the researcher's personal connection to the research subject as a member of the Edwards family. Such a particular connection to Duncan Edwards is examined through personal reflection and the analysis of family commemorative activity.

As a blood relative of Edwards, I was born connected to his commemorative network. It is a connection that I became aware of in my mid-teens in the 1980s but I have no clear memory of exactly when or how I first discovered the link. I am neither a football player nor a fan and I have no association with the world of football beyond my ancestral connection to Edwards. Unlike him, my mother and several members of my close family, I was not born in Dudley but moved there when I was three years old. Although I left the area in my early twenties, I have retained a great affection for Dudley and consider it to be my hometown. Being related to Edwards intensifies my sense of connection to Dudley as my hometown, because his commemoration as a local hero there is profound<sup>6</sup>.

My ancestral link to Edwards also appears to have initiated my interest in commemoration in general and this in turn has influenced my work as an artist and designer undertaking death-related projects and research. As a furniture design student I considered the impact of AIDS on funerary design: specifically coffin design. My studio space was filled with images of graveyards, coffins and the dead as well as many comic and humorous depictions of mortality. I have always felt comfortable discussing death and the dead and this is probably attributable to having grown up in a family with a famous dead relative.

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<sup>6</sup> Several memorials to Duncan Edwards exist in Dudley including an exhibition of his former belongings and memorabilia in the local museum, his grave, a statue, dedicatory stained glass windows in a church and two road dedications. These are further discussed in chapters five, six and seven.

Edwards has been part of my life and family for as long as I can remember. He existed primarily as a memory of my mother but also through the artefacts I saw on display at the local sports centre<sup>7</sup> and museum, at the grave in the cemetery shared with my grandparents and other family members and in the newspaper cuttings that I had made and kept of him in my teens. When it was first suggested that my cousin Edwards was the reason for my fascination with death, I had to almost remind myself that Edwards had been dead before I was even born. He was always present in my family in some commemorative capacity.

This chapter explores my personal connection to Edwards and the impact that that has on my role as a researcher. I refer to Edwards as Duncan from hereon in because that most accurately and succinctly represents the nature of our relationship specific to this personal narrative. It is a device which distinguishes the Duncan that is my family member from his persona within the remainder of the research; that of a research subject defined as Edwards or Duncan Edwards. To refer to Duncan as Edwards within this chapter would instil a sense of detachment that would be inappropriate.

### **1i: MY DUNCAN**

My first commemorative act relating to Duncan was listening to my mother's reminiscences about him as a young child. She has always chosen not to be a publicly active commemorator and her recollections of Duncan were always transmitted to me through informal oral accounts. The details of these accounts were remembered by me and I have regularly re-told them to others through my own commemorative practices. My mother's and my dedicatory networks have become woven together by the act of passing memories from one generation to the next.

In her reminiscences my mother remembered that her cousin Duncan 'was such a big chap' (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;2) who would walk with her on the way to school. She recalled how, in the streets of Dudley, everyone wanted him to be

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<sup>7</sup> Duncan Edward's caps and memorabilia were displayed at Dudley Leisure Centre from 1986 until 2006 when they were moved to the Dudley Museum and Art Gallery.

on their team when they played football because of his exceptional talent as a player. She remembered creating her own commemorative artefact recalling that 'he definitely did do an advert for a watch. I kept this book, it was a little magazine...and there was an advert in there. I remember putting it away at mom's, in a great big case' (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;8). Although this artefact had since been lost her vivid recollection of it suggests she considered it a significant commemorative act.

My mother's narratives inspired me to create my own commemorative acts, most notably my first: the creation of a commemorative object. I took a cutting of an article about Duncan from the local newspaper and this became a tangible artefact and a commemorative object of such importance to me that I still have today. It had been created from the dissection of a mass-produced object to become a unique family artefact that evidences a link between me and Duncan that spans over 30 years. It remains a significant and treasured commemorative artefact of 'my Duncan', although it is essentially created from a mass-produced article. The cutting has not been fully preserved in the physical sense because it has altered over time to become faded and discoloured. As it has aged it has acquired an appearance that is a manifestation of how time ages and alters objects, although the image of Duncan it depicts remains forever youthful in appearance.

As my bloodline is connected to Duncan's, some of my commemorative acts specific to other family members are part of Duncan's extended family history. I 'saw' Duncan at my grandmother's funeral, or rather a representation of him through a commemorative memorial. My grandmother, Doris Daniels née Edwards, was one of Duncan's first cousins and she lived near Duncan in Dudley. My grandmother's funeral was conducted at St Francis' Church in Dudley 42 years after Duncan's was held there. His funeral had taken place in this church and it was this church that I knew well from my childhood, passing it at least twice a week as we were driven past it en route to my grandmother's house a few streets away. When I attended my grandmother's funeral I saw the commemorative stained glass windows<sup>8</sup> dedicated to Duncan installed there for

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<sup>8</sup> Dedicatory stained glass windows depicting Duncan Edwards were unveiled by Matt Busby on 27th August 1961 in St Francis' Church, Laurel Road, Dudley.

the first time. I knew they were there and that they depicted Duncan because my mother had told me so during her reminiscences. My first encounter with them was at a family funeral and the only times I have seen the windows since have been at the funerals of other family members.

These windows link Duncan to Dudley, my grandmother to Duncan and Duncan to me. They reinforce my family commemorative network as they are not only representative of Duncan's death but for me they are associated to the deaths of other members of my family. I have never attended the church for anything other than a family funeral and it is a commemorative site for me, one where I always encounter Duncan. The windows are a memorial but also a tourist attraction and many 'pilgrims' paying their respects to Duncan in the church photographically record their trip and share the images of these windows across the internet. I have never felt compelled to photograph the windows when I have visited because my visits have always been in the context of a family funeral. However, I have a very different commemorative association with Duncan's grave.

I visited Duncan's grave for the first time in the mid nineties. When I visited Dudley Cemetery to place flowers on my grandmother's grave, I asked my mother about Duncan and she showed me to his grave. I placed a flower from the bunch that we had brought for grandmother's grave on his grave. The single flower lay alongside recently installed football scarves, other flowers and handwritten notes. My mother told me that she and her mother had often seen Duncan's parents at the cemetery when they had been visiting my grandfather's grave. I can remember looking around at older graves and seeing the lack of tending and offerings placed there and thinking that Duncan's grave would look much the same in a few years. I was assuming that the offerings at Duncan's grave would diminish because once his parents were dead he would have no wife or child left to commemorate him. I could not have predicted that nearly 15 years later I would be undertaking fieldwork research at Duncan's grave (from 2010 – 2014)<sup>9</sup> because of evidence to the contrary. My fieldwork research and photographic documentation of the grave evidenced ongoing commemorative activity by individuals from outside of his immediate family.

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C

After my first visit to Duncan's grave I have never left another offering. I have not felt compelled to do so as it seems an impersonal act when it is alongside so many others left by those I see as strangers. My photographic documentation of Duncan's grave was a method of data collection, yet it also became a commemorative act that appears to be an alternative to leaving an offering at his grave. After embarking on the four year documentation project I felt compelled to continue photographing the grave. The purpose of the photographs has shifted to become solely to accumulate commemorative artefacts through a dedicatory act. My photographing of Duncan's grave has replaced a more traditional family gift-giving of floral tributes. I take from Duncan's grave rather than leave a gift for him. I retain these images no longer for academic purposes but as a personal record of surveillance, almost as a portrait of him through time. Being a 'researcher as commemorator' and a 'commemorator as researcher' has redefined not only how I research the commemorative network, but also how I commemorate Duncan as a family member. My interaction with Duncan's grave appears to have evolved to the point that I am almost tending it by recording its appearance. I have taken a traditional family grave-tending ritual and subverted it as a result of undertaking my research and my roles of commemorator and researcher have become an evolved hybrid. My photographic documentation of Duncan's grave necessitates regular visits to Dudley and these visits reinforce my association with Duncan, Dudley and those family members who still live in my adopted hometown.

In Dudley, being related to Duncan was something that I felt I could exploit to my advantage as a teenager. To be a relative of the renowned footballer Duncan Edwards was something that impressed others, but only those who knew and revered him. I knew that for some people my ancestral link to Duncan made me uniquely special by my undisputable ancestral link to him. I found that when I moved away from Dudley in my twenties my connection to Duncan appeared only to be of interest to some Manchester United and football fans.

### **1ii: MY ANCESTRAL CONNECTION**

My genealogical connection to Duncan appears to reveal as much of a distance between us as to reveal a closeness. My great grandfather and Duncan's father were brothers and therefore my grandmother was his first cousin and she knew Duncan as a boy. My mother was Duncan's second cousin and grew up with him and I am one of Duncan's third cousins; of which he has several. Having no surviving sibling<sup>10</sup> or children of his own, Duncan has no direct descendants. His parents are both dead and therefore the majority of family members alive are related to him as a cousin. Although third cousins, Duncan and I are not genealogically that close, our genealogical connection still acknowledges an undisputable connection, however distant.

I regularly observe commemorators declaring their genealogical links to Duncan on tribute pages and websites within the commemorative network. There is an apparent sense of pleasure and pride for those who openly and publically declare their ancestral link to the footballer. One relative shared a tribute on her own Facebook page on the anniversary of Edwards' death in 2014 stating that she is 'proud to be related to the famous Duncan Edwards' (Sharrat a) and then added a comment to another dedicated tribute page stating 'so proud I am related to Duncan, he was the best & always will be' (Sharrat b). Others publically declare their connection to and veneration of Duncan with restraint, seemingly as not to appear to claim too great a connection to the footballer. On Twitter one relative professed to be 'extremely proud to be related (albeit distantly) to this footballing [sic] legend' (Paco 2014) whereby a special connection to Duncan is clearly stated but in a guarded manner.

Aware of my lack of 'specialness' as a third cousin and the diminishing uniqueness of being a cousin of Duncan, I have adapted my own narrative to afford a greater sense of authentic connection between us. I have been asked and even challenged on several occasions to provide proof of authenticity as a relative within a burgeoning ancestral hierarchy. My explanation is now given as a standard that states that my Grandmother's dad and Duncan's dad were brothers. It is a description of a relationship that does not include me, yet it conveys what I consider to be the appropriate description of our relationship. To

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<sup>10</sup> Duncan Edwards' sister Carol Ann died at 14 weeks old and Duncan was buried in 'her grave'.

simply state that I am Duncan's third cousin seems to define a relationship that is unrepresentatively distant from the actual relationship that I feel that I have with him. The relationship of a brother with a brother is usually a strong one defined by a powerful close family bond. My relationship to Duncan feels more meaningful and authentic when defined through a brotherhood than as a third placed cousin.

I acknowledge that by constructing a commemorative narrative that connects me to Duncan by two brothers I am attempting to make myself more significant than just a cousin, whilst remaining the cousin that I will always be. I often make the point that my mother grew up with Duncan in Dudley and knew him personally. I feel that this connection to Duncan through my mother is the truer and more authentic description of my connection to him. I am aware that I have constructed my connection to Duncan as a personal interpretation formed by my own preferred version of the truth. This demonstrates that I feel a stronger connection to Duncan than would be assumed between third cousins who never knew one another.

In my definition of my place within the Edwards family, I am aligned to the side of Duncan's family who have remained generally 'private' in their commemoration. This too has influenced my construction of a connection to Duncan that appears more robust because I do not have the visible public commemorators to substantiate my claim to an ancestral link. My declaration of blood relation is in some part to celebrate the uncelebrated and to make my faction of the family commemorative network stronger. My public declaration of my ancestral connection to Duncan is in marked contrast to the majority of my close blood relatives, who have persistently chosen not to publically venerate Duncan. My ancestral declarations give their connections to Duncan a public face by association as by creating my own commemorative narratives I am revealing the previously unseen. Through my activity in the network I am making some commemorators publically visible for the first time, initiating a public persona for them not only within Duncan's commemorative network but also that of the Munich Air Disaster. Although my research is a new commemorative act, it does rely heavily on the older and established private practices of others, such as my mother. That I feel a compulsion to include my

close family members, significantly my mother's recollections of Duncan, in my research demonstrates a desire to connect Duncan back to my publically hidden family and vice versa. This commemorative act is part of a wider concept of second generation commemoration. My commemorative acts are influenced by and represented through my research. My attempt to reveal and preserve the memories of other members of my family within a wider family commemorative network expands the notion of my own family commemorative network beyond that of Duncan's.

### **1iii: MY SECOND GENERATION COMMEMORATION**

My connection to Duncan is significantly embodied by my mother's connection to him. It is through her memories of being with Duncan whilst they grew up in Dudley that my interest was initiated in him and my understanding of him as a family member. I am therefore a second generation commemorator, listening to firsthand accounts of his life through my mother's recollections, albeit from the stance of a third cousin.

In 2014 my mother agreed to be formally interviewed about her connection to Duncan, specifically to help inform my research. I had been re-telling my mother's reminiscences of Duncan both formally and informally, verbally and on paper for many years prior to this date. These retellings have always been formed solely by my recollections of her firsthand memories. When I hear her describe the moment she received the news of Duncan's death I do experience a sense of loss through the empathy for my mother's bereavement. However, my mother's personal perspective on loss is defined in part through her experience of loss and that of her family. She is the child of a post war generation of parents who became accustomed to the loss of young men in distant lands. My mother's naming was an act of commemoration by her father, who requested, via a telegram sent whilst he was stationed in France, that she be named after the French village where he had lost a close friend in battle. The connections between parents and their offspring are strong. Acts of commemoration and the representation of a parent's trauma can have a profound effect on them both. The children of parents who have experienced particular traumas can acquire their parents' memories as their own distinctly

potent memories. The impact of a traumatic event can demonstrate such transference of memory in that

Descendants of survivors ...of massive traumatic events connect so deeply to the previous generation's remembrances of the past that they need to call that connection memory and thus that, in certain extreme circumstances, memory can be transmitted to those who were not actually there to live an event (Hirsch, 2008;107).

Although Hirsch is discussing the transmission of memories of the trauma of the Holocaust there is a precedent here of a 'parental past described, evoked, and analysed in these works' (2008;105). My preservation of Duncan's memory is essentially the preservation my mother's memories of him and her response to his loss. This loss was transmitted from mother to daughter as 'postmemory', a 'powerful' transmission of a memory that can be felt so strongly by the second generation as to form an actual memory in itself (2008;103). This particular form of memory transmission makes my mother's memories of Duncan my own. Because my mother's memories have not been publically available within the commemorative network of Duncan this makes them particularly potent for me. They are intensified by their intimate transmission and yet as a second generation commemorator I am compelled to preserve the memory and transmit it within the network. As I have no offspring to pass my memories onto, my research has by default become my conduit for second generation memories. In order to preserve my mother's and my own second generation memories I have to transmit them through the wider public networks of Duncan and the Disaster to ensure they are preserved beyond my lifetime.

Until the formal interview, my mother's actual memories had not been fixed as a record and she had never been interviewed or been asked to contribute to any public commemorative activity relating to Duncan. She has never attended a formal memorial service or taken part in a similar event in the capacity of a family member, nor has she any commemorative artefact or heirloom attributable to Duncan. She is one of a diminishing number of family members who knew Duncan and therefore her memories and their transmission to me are her only publically visible commemorative acts. The transcript of her interview

serves as a record but also a commemorative act created by her and me as a second generation commemorator<sup>11</sup>. However, no close family member (including my mother) has ever approached me to request an interview to preserve their memories. The interviews were the result of an imperative I felt to collect unique research data that might have otherwise been lost, but this is also an act of commemoration by a second generation commemorator.

The Munich Air Disaster is not on the scale of the suffering of the Holocaust, yet my concern to preserve the memories of my family appears to match those of some of the children of Holocaust survivors. Eva Hoffman, a child of such survivors, describes her intentions to protect the essence of the survivors' accounts as a second generation 'witness'. As the survivors of the Holocaust began to diminish in number (as they began to die) she describes how she felt compelled to act as collector of first-hand memories:

We were the closest to its memories; we had touched upon its horror and its human scars. If I did not want the 'memory' of the Holocaust to be flattened out by distance or ignorance, if I wanted to preserve some of the pulsing complexity I had felt in survivor's own perceptions, then it was up to me (Hoffman, 2004;xi).

A similar compulsion and sense of duty has pervaded the latter stages of my research as two members of my family who knew Edwards recently died. I have felt a responsibility to undertake interviews because I am the only family member in a position to do so. That I have chosen to preserve and disseminate these 'private' memories within a formal academic structure suggests that I feel a responsibility to formalise my second generation memories publically. My preservation of my family's memories of Duncan is a self-initiated project and although they will be shared within the wider commemorative network, they are presented within an analytical framework, not as a biographical account. I have not sought to replicate the many popular texts that seek to describe Edwards' life from a historical or biographical perspective. I have chosen to share these memories in order to interrogate them within a wider social and cultural analysis of commemoration. Within Duncan's commemorative network, their analysis

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix Eviii.

strives to develop an understanding of their significance in preserving Duncan's memory. However, I acknowledge that such analysis enables me to preserve the memory not only of Duncan but ultimately the memories of my mother and other family members. From a wider perspective, the research will ultimately contribute to an understanding of how and why we commemorate our dead.

My contribution to the network as a second generation memory preserver is distinct within the commemorative narrative. By acknowledging my role as 'memory preserver' here in the text I am written into the process as a part of it. Being part of such a process reflects in the work of Art Spiegelman in his graphic novel 'The Complete Maus' (Spiegelman, 2003). Spiegelman is an artist and second generation Holocaust 'survivor' who represents his father's experience of the Holocaust through his novel. Spiegelman himself appears within the novel, both with his father and within his father's story. The son and father are depicted discussing personal issues and the process of writing the novel; this gives some insight into the relationship between them. It also explores the unique role of the second generation commemorator as researcher and it implies to the reader that the process of creating the work is a fundamental part of the preservation of memory. The novel is a biographical account of the experiences of family members, but also it describes the process and challenges of memory preservation for second generation commemorators. In Young's analysis of the work, he considers the novel as a portrayal of the past uniquely framed within the experience of creating it in the present:

Through its narrative, Maus presumes a particular paradigm for history itself, a conception of past historical events that includes the present conditions under which they are being remembered (Young, 2000;24).

Spiegelman conceives a creative device that enables him to explore and reveal memories and historical facts, whilst considering and revealing the process of memory making. He is aware of his role as a memory preserver and a memory maker and he places himself within the commemorative narrative within a book that is in itself a commemorative object. I am similarly aware of my role as commemorator being significant to the process of memory preservation and creation. Unlike Spiegelman I have used an academic text rather than a graphic

novel to explore the notion of second generation commemorative activity. My unique connection to the research subject was the initial inspiration for it, but ultimately my role in its development is part of the research itself. The act of compiling the research is a commemorative act itself because it extends the commemorative narrative of my family through me.

My connection to Duncan is centred on my mother's memories of him but my understanding and subsequent representation of 'my Duncan' is a negotiation of family reminiscences and his depiction across a wider public network. I cannot be simply considered as a family commemorator because I have consumed and in part created a 'public Duncan' beyond my family unit. As a descendant of Duncan I am influenced by the memories and accounts of others beyond my ancestral narratives. As a researcher this is a requirement for a thorough and comprehensive analysis, but it is also necessary to establish my own commemorative narrative since 'the scholarly and artistic work of these descendants also makes clear that even the most intimate familial knowledge of the past is mediated by broadly available public images and narratives' (Hirsch, 2008;122).

'My Duncan' is defined through my own commemorative narrative, which is influenced by my family connections but also the wider commemorative network. I was drawn into Duncan's network only because of my ancestral link and it is that which has compelled me to develop this research. When Hoffman was asked about her 'unusual' perspective on the Holocaust as a second generation commemorator she explained 'we were much closer to it, so the human realities of those events are more evident. The tendency to view the Holocaust as sacred is not as strong' (Beliefnet 2004). Why my mother has not felt the need to venerate her ancestor in the hallowed way that many others appear to have done so may be for a similar reason. Her memories of Duncan are of his ordinary daily life that made him real to me in a way that reverential accounts of his heroism and talent made him inaccessible. I have been granted a privileged perspective that suggests that I am more able to negotiate the 'sacredness' of Duncan with an authoritative objectivity.

Second generation commemoration restates the facts and first-hand accounts of a time or event, yet with a closeness that paradoxically allows for impartiality. Those second generation commemorators, who by their actions become custodians and preservers of certain first-hand ‘truths’ are still able to deconstruct these narratives by constructing their own personal perspectives. Although the witnesses or first generation commemorators may relate truthful narratives, the role of the second generation commemorator is to install those truths within the commemorative network in a present day context using their own methods of transmission and translation.

I both create memory and preserve memory simultaneously and as Hirsch states in regard to such second generation activity ‘If this sounds like a contradiction, it is, indeed, one, and I believe it is inherent to this phenomenon’ (Hirsch, 2008;106). As a second generation commemorator, I am tasked with reinforcing the past within the present, whilst considering the past from the present day. My role of commemorator as researcher enables me to interrogate this phenomenon from a unique perspective.

## SUMMARY

I am ‘commemorator as researcher’ and ‘researcher as commemorator’. I acknowledge that this is potentially a contradictory phenomenon, but one that can be explored from within the commemorative networks of Duncan Edwards, as a unique element of the research itself.

My connection to Duncan has greatly influenced my identification with and affection for my adopted hometown of Dudley. This has been reinforced through my research that has necessitated frequent visits to the town but also through the persistent referencing of the town within the commemorative network. The significance of Dudley to Duncan’s commemorative network will be explored further within Chapter Three and also within Chapter Seven as an area where many of his memorials are sited.

As a researcher I have to acknowledge that although my research is fundamentally a social and cultural analysis of Duncan’s commemorative network it is also a commemorative act in itself. As my research is primarily

concerned with commemoration, my role as a commemorator requires not only scrutiny, but also to be acknowledged as being distinct to the process. Establishing myself as a second generation commemorator, the commemorative network of Duncan gives me a unique perspective of the network, from within the network. The concept of second generation commemoration implies an imperative for family-led memory preservation and the concept of family as key commemorators will be discussed further in Chapter Four. That I have sought to represent my connection to Duncan through the bond of brothers, in order to more authentically represent my association with him, demonstrates an understanding of the notion of 'specialness by association' and the significance of family to the network.

It was not until I undertook this research formally, that I came to fully appreciate the extent to which my ancestor had influenced many of my life choices. Through the analysis of my own practices, I have been able to identify that Duncan has been a major factor in developing my interest creative and academic studies of commemoration, death and dying. This pervading interest has been a lifetime project that has been fully exploited within the research to develop an understanding and critical enquiry that goes beyond the consideration of family commemoration.

My personal connection to Duncan is significant to this research and has given me access to unique data. It has afforded me the opportunity to interrogate a number of publicly non-active commemorators within my family. This has enabled me to explore the commemoration of Duncan from a privileged perspective. Having access to non-active commemorators (otherwise hidden within the commemorative network) I am able to make a comprehensive analysis of their private preservation of Duncan's memory. Their participation in the research affords a unique insight into why some family members have purposefully remained outside of the formal and public commemorative network of their close relative. This in turn informs the social and cultural analysis of commemoration and the perception of family within commemorative networks. However, prior to this commemorator-focussed research a comprehensive review of literature specific to the Disaster, Manchester United and the Busby Babes (including Duncan specifically) was undertaken. Alongside this a review

of relevant literature concerned with death, dying, commemoration and commemorative networks was also undertaken. These can be found in the following Chapter, Chapter 2.

## **2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

A review of literature was undertaken within the following categories:

- 2i: The Munich Air Disaster, Manchester United and the Busby Babes
- 2ii: Duncan Edwards
- 2iii: Death, Dying and Commemoration
- 2iv: The Commemorative Networks

The most significant texts are précised and discussed for their influence on and contribution to the overall research project. A comprehensive bibliography, an appendix<sup>12</sup> detailing interview summaries and transcripts and emails, and an appendix<sup>13</sup> summarising fieldwork undertaken and subsequent findings are included within this study.

### **2i: THE MUNICH AIR DISASTER, MANCHESTER UNITED AND THE BUSBY BABES**

#### **Munich Air Disaster**

The Munich Air Disaster is widely acknowledged as a significant event within modern England's cultural history and it is referenced in general historical texts and sport histories (Tyler, 1976; Ward & Williams, 2010). It is comprehensively referenced in texts that consider the history of Manchester United football club as an important part of the club's history (Bellers, Absalom & Spinks, 2001; Kelly, 1990; Tyrrell & Meek, 1994). Accounts of the history of the Busby Babes (Arthur, 2008; Roberts, 2008) persistently reference the Disaster because of its immutable association with the football collective.

The Munich Air Disaster has inspired non-fiction texts that describe the Disaster and relevant events leading up to and after the crash (Hall, 2008; Morrin, 2007). Significant academic writing on the subject is generally focussed on the event's impact on Manchester United as a club and brand (Andrews, ed., 2004). Although essentially regarded as factual accounts the majority of historical texts

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix E

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix D

that reference the Disaster convey or acknowledge an emotive response to the resultant loss of life (Tyrell & Meek, 1994). Historical accounts describe and acknowledge the event's catastrophic decimation of a team as 'those who came afterwards perhaps failed to understand the magnitude of the club's loss but have absorbed the meaning of Munich' (1994;41). Within a self-defined historical text, such conjecture suggests a shifting, less sympathetic perception of the Disaster in more recent times. Historical texts overwhelming take a sympathetic view of the event as an 'appalling tragedy' (Bellers, Absalom & Spinks, 1999;38). Nonetheless, such empathetic consideration is not universal across accounts of the Disaster's impact within academic texts. Those texts concerned with the impact of the Disaster on the perception of Manchester United have a less sympathetic view of the event and its wider social and cultural impact (Wagg, 2004; Mellor, 2004). The view of the club's entrepreneurial use of the Disaster for financial benefit (Wagg, 2004;26) and the 'sense that the club had exploited the Munich Disaster to accrue an unfair advantage over other clubs' (Mellor, 2004;40) is a statement inferred and variously made throughout modern accounts of the Disaster, from a predominantly non-fan perspective.

As a news event, coverage and reporting of the Disaster in newspapers and on television is now viewed from a historical context and accounts can be sourced from historical archives (British Pathé, 1958; BBC News, 1958). These initial reports were predominantly focused on reports of who died and who survived the crash (Manchester Evening News 1958).

Most historical and general texts regarding the Disaster describe the facts of the event but there is an inferred assumption that it is a well-known incident. It is described as only one of a few 'momentous world events' experienced globally that left people 'stunned' when they heard the news (Kelly, 1990;114). Kelly assimilates the impact of hearing the news of the Disaster with that experienced by those who heard the news of President Kennedy's assassination (1990;114). This appears to overstate the global response to the Disaster at the time. The overwhelming majority of all other similar texts and news archive sources suggest a more UK and 'football-world' focus for its perceived impact.

There is a pervading sense of a tragedy throughout most historical accounts that resonate with the sense that readers will or should have empathy for the victims of the Disaster and the club. Firsthand testimonies are used to represent the response to the news of the crash, where in Manchester ‘men wept openly in the streets’ (Arthur, 2008; 26) and generally ‘there was enormous public sympathy for Manchester United Football Club. Complete strangers thought they had lost part of their family in the tragedy’ (Ward & Williams, 2010;77). Through the embedding of these accounts within historical and academic texts, the Disaster ‘added an emotional charisma’ (2010;77) to the perception of Manchester United as a club.

### **Post-Disaster**

The phoenix rising from the ashes is an analogy that is often used within texts to describe how Manchester United transformed their fortunes after the Disaster (Arthur, 2008:190). In his autobiography Disaster survivor Harry Gregg includes his poem about the event called ‘The Phoenix’ (Gregg, 2002:191). He describes a Manchester United rebuilt after Munich as ‘then Fergie came and fanned the flames... my nightmare’s gone, my dream moves on, again I see the phoenix’ (2002;192). These texts describe the variously referenced ‘death and resurrection’ (Hall, 2008;282) of the Manchester United team. The rising phoenix of Manchester United is however in stark contrast to the perception of the event’s impact on the England Team, depleted by the loss of Busby Babes Edwards, Byrne and Taylor described as ‘the spine of the England team’ (Morse, 2013; xvi). Although it is acknowledged within several texts that the England squad was impacted by the Disaster, this has been considered secondary to the impact on Manchester United generally across all texts.

The majority of historical texts that reference the Disaster focus on the crash and the loss of the lives of the players, however Tyler’s football history book ‘Great Moments in Football’ (Tyler,1976) is exceptional in that it focuses on the first match played after the Disaster at Old Trafford, between Manchester United and Sheffield Wednesday. The ‘great moment’ match where ‘Manchester United picked up the pieces’ (1976:70) describes a Manchester United team which held its own against its opponents, less than two weeks after the Disaster. However, when this event is referenced in other texts it is more the

presence of a replacement team being put together so quickly, rather than an heralding of its performance (Gregg, 2002:99, Hall, 2008:125, Morrin, 2007:146).

Hall's account of the Disaster is self-defined as 'about family and community and the links that bind them together through shared allegiance to a football team' (Hall, 2008:9). However, he infers a discord of alliances between the fans and the Manchester United club, a discord that is felt post-Disaster, towards the club and referenced in other texts (Connor, 2010; Morrin, 2007). Hall attributes the Busby Babes legendary status in large part to the Disaster but he also attributes the crash as the reason why Manchester United became 'an international brand which gradually, in the eyes of many people, became distanced from the very community it was part of' (Hall, 2008:9). His book infers a critical stance that reflects a disquiet expressed by some of the 'football community' towards the club post-Disaster.

In Morrin's book there is a statement of intent to reveal a true account of the Disaster and its legacy, inferring other accounts are less than factually true. From the outset, he states his intention to give 'a clear and definitive account of the events before, during and in the aftermath of the disaster' (Morrin, 2007:xiv). These include a detailed examination of Captain James Thain's<sup>14</sup> campaign to clear his name of any blame in regard to the cause of the crash. Morrin identifies the pilot as another victim of the Disaster due to his treatment as a 'scapegoat' for its cause. His book is therefore distinct from the majority of texts in this genre, in that he shifts the focus to the crash and the subsequent aviation investigations, rather than predominantly considering the players and Manchester United.

Connor takes a similarly sympathetic view of Captain Thain and his damaged reputation (Connor, 2010:138) and he is unambiguously critical of Manchester United's 'oddly ambivalent' (2010:225) attitude towards the families of the victims and survivors of the Disaster. Connor's narrative is reverential of 'the essence of the Lost Babes; that their purity, innocence and beauty mirrored something irretrievable within us all' (2010:286). His narrative is from this

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<sup>14</sup> Thain was the pilot of the plane that crashed in Munich.

nostalgic perspective which is also evident in other texts that overtly revere the Busby Babes and that particular pre-celebrity era of football (Connor, 2010; Hall, 2008).

In his chapter ‘40 Years On’ Connor explores the commoditisation of the Disaster and the response to this by some survivors and families of the victims. The issue of the morality of financial gain arising from the exploitation of a tragedy is considered as it is speculated that some individuals made ‘a fortune out of Munich’ (Connor, 2010;213). Connor himself admits that he abstained from the writing of his own book for some time because of his own concerns he would personally benefit from the tragedy, through income from the sale of his book. However, he states that he overcame this concern in order to tell the truth about the Disaster (2010;xii). This reveals ‘truth telling’ as a theme for some popular texts where authors feel a sense of responsibility to reveal a truth. Gregg disputes accounts within other books including ‘When a Team Died’ (Taylor, 2008) and ‘The Team That Would Not Die’ (Roberts, 2008). He makes reference to the latter as ‘tinkering with the truth’ (Gregg, 2002;48), Gregg reveals that he never spoke to the author yet he is quoted within the book (2002;48). Gregg gives accounts of the challenges he has made directly to those who he knew did not tell a truthful account of the Disaster. His auto-biographical intentions are clearly stated that ‘it is vital that the truth doesn’t become buried. We owe it to the memory of those left behind on that runway to tell it like it was’ (2002;51).

### **Autobiographical and Biographical Accounts**

A number of autobiographical texts (Charlton, 2008; Foulkes, 2008; Gregg, 2002) present the reader with authors who are survivors of the Disaster. As survivors these accounts are distinct from the biographical accounts of Busby (Dunphy, 1991; Glanvill, 1995) in the regard that they are firsthand testimonies. Both structures present a biographical narrative with an assumed authenticity. They are essentially written chronologically as reflective accounts of the survivors’ lives which include their experiences of and reflections on the Disaster. Without exception they place the plane crash at the centre of, or very prominently within their narrative. However, Gregg’s account is distinct in that it attests to his attempt to resist the Disaster from being his ‘life defining’ moment

(Gregg, 2002). In contrast survivor Bobby Charlton conveys the impact of the Disaster on his life explicitly as life defining as ‘everything that has happened in the last fifty years of my life has been conditioned in some way by that tragedy’ (Charlton, 2008;391).

Manchester United player and Disaster survivor Bill Foulkes continued playing for the club after Munich but stated that ‘the images of that day never, never leave me’ (Foulkes, 2008;93). His autobiography is explicit in conveying the significance of the plane crash to his life. The book cover is a photograph of Foulkes standing besides the wreckage of the plane at the Disaster crash site in February 1958. He describes this image as capturing ‘the sickening depression which swept over me beside the broken body of our Elizabethan airliner...the day after the crash’ (2008: image caption). The expectation that this text will draw significantly on Foulkes’ experience of the Munich Air Disaster is met as the book contains many references to it, all expressed with a sense of profound trauma. Another survivor, Gregg’s account of his state of mind shortly after the crash also describes a similar state of shock ‘bewildered by what had just happened’ (Gregg, 2002;35).

Specific individual victims are commemorated in these survivors’ autobiographical accounts, such as Charlton’s declaration about his friend and fellow player Duncan Edwards stating ‘he was fantastic and I loved him’ (Charlton, 2008;159). Such a statement transcends the historical accounting of Charlton’s life to be a public declaration of love for his dead friend.

Autobiographical accounts for this reason are unique texts within the accounts of the Disaster. Charlton’s declaration of love for his friend is printed in a stand-alone paragraph. This gives the statement a purposeful significance and emphasises the sense of loss felt by Charlton after Edwards’ death. For those who admire Charlton, his admiration for Edwards is bound to them through his testimony.

Biographical accounts from Manchester United players and teammates Wilf McGuinness and Foulkes also express an admiration for Edwards, as a person and player, but neither expresses this as love, as Charlton’s testimony does. Gregg states that the news of the death of Edwards had ‘devastated’ him but ‘it

wasn't that Duncan meant more to me than any of the others who had lost their lives, it was just that he had been alive when I'd left Munich' (Gregg, 2002:39). Edwards' death days after the crash meant that he was mourned separately to other victims and his survival, however short, had extended the Disaster's narrative and highlighted Edwards as a survivor then victim within historical accounts and biographical accounts.

Charlton is quoted within several Disaster-related accounts and books about Manchester United, the Busby Babes and Duncan Edwards (Arthur, 2008; Burn, 2007; Connor, 2010; Leighton 2013; McCartney & Cavanagh, 1998). In regard to his admiration of Edwards as a player he is quoted as saying 'I've never seen anyone greater than Duncan Edwards, and I know I never will' (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1999:89). Authors use Charlton's testimony to endorse the 'greatness' of Edwards that they themselves testify to. This is a dual endorsement because of Charlton's status as a 'Munich survivor' and his standing as a world class player. Accounts that quote Charlton's testimony of the prowess of Edwards are considered by other writers as authentication by association.

Autobiographical accounts of the survivors of the Disaster are commemorative by nature as they preserve the memory of the dead through firsthand accounts. Biographies and autobiographies are in part firsthand witness accounts and part survivor accounts. Without exception these accounts remember the dead through fond recollections and through personal expressions of grief. Both Charlton's and Foulkes' books were written nearly 50 years after the Disaster (published around the fiftieth anniversary of the Disaster) yet the sense of loss they articulate is still vividly expressed. These testimonies are a significant part of the commemorative network of the Munich Air Disaster because as texts they discuss the dead and preserve their memory. Charlton's is particularly significant to the commemoration of Edwards. It is these witness accounts that testify (as fact) to the skill of those lost and the impact of their deaths on those left behind. The survivors are self-defined as friends and colleagues of the dead and this reinforces the dual significance of them in their lives, but also creates a personalised commemorative narrative that has pervaded the commemorative network since the Disaster happened.

With the acknowledgement that the Munich Air Disaster was a ‘disaster paralleled only by the crash at Superga in 1949 which wiped out the Italian League Champions, Torino’ (Tyler, 1976:70-71) the lasting legacy is unprecedented. The collective loss of so many young men overseas draws comparisons to the loss of soldiers in World War II. Although in Superga the whole team was killed, suggesting a more profound loss of life, what appeared to capture empathy for the Munich Air Disaster was the survivor testimonies and the rebuilding of a team from those players left behind. As the Superga were completely wiped out in the crash there were no survivors to give testimony or accounts of the event from a personal perspective. This obvious difference suggests that it is the survivors and their testimonies that greatly preserve the memory of the dead.

### **Manchester United**

Those within the Manchester United club, such as assistant manager Jimmy Murphy ‘had been through a war when men had to live with the loss of so many comrades, had to fight on through the suffering and live with what was left to them’ (Charlton, 2008;158). Whilst Busby recovered from his injuries, Murphy is credited by Foulkes as having ‘almost superhuman strength and resilience’ (Foulkes, 2008;95) in the aftermath of the Disaster, as he rebuilt the team. In turn McGuinness describes Foulkes ‘as a tower of strength as Manchester United tried to pick up the threads of playing football again’ (McGuinness, 2008;11). The reverence of fellow colleagues permeates biographical and autobiographical accounts that describe the after-effects of the Disaster that bind them together as Manchester United players. These accounts portray those actively involved in the rebuilding of the team as strong individuals.

Within Charlton’s, Foulkes’ and Gregg’s autobiographies the post-Disaster period shifts focus to Manchester and to the re-building of Manchester United. The team was greatly depleted of players and is described by Foulkes as a ‘threadbare side’ (Foulkes, 2008:101). Yet such inferred fragility sits within a chapter almost defiantly called ‘Rising from the Ashes’ (2008;94). Chapter twelve of Charlton’s autobiography describes a similarly defiant post-Disaster Manchester United ‘who would not go down easily’ (Charlton, 2008;176). Gregg

attests to his own resilience at the end of the season as ‘at least I’d proved to myself that Harry Gregg was alive and kicking’ (Gregg, 2002:42).

Within these biographical accounts the ‘team’ is personified as another casualty of the Disaster. The ‘team’ did not experience a biological death, yet it is often inferred to be ‘dying’ and is subsequently mourned and commemorated as a collective of individuals.

Journalist Frank Taylor’s own account as a survivor of the Munich Air Disaster is called ‘The Day a Team Died’ (Taylor, 2008). Taylor’s book was reprinted in 2008 as a fiftieth anniversary special issue, reinforcing the team as a commemorated entity. This perpetuation of the 1958 Busby Babes team as a distinct entity within Manchester United’s history has persisted beyond the point of the crash and it is evident in many accounts. When Manchester United won the European Cup in 1968, the win was said to define two Manchester United teams at the time, one of 1958 European pioneers and one of 1968 champions. The win appeared to merge the two teams together in perpetuity. In part the teams were linked by Charlton and Foulkes who were players for both squads, but the win has in great part been attributed to the efforts and the memory of the 1958 team. Foulkes described the win as ‘the only fitting tribute to the victims of Munich’ (Foulkes, 2008:142) as ‘the greatest day in Manchester United’s history’ (2008:144). Yet although success in Europe had been attributed to a post-Munich aspiration of the fulfilment of the Busby Babes team, Dunphy states that ‘Europe was not a crusade for Matt [Busby]’ (Dunphy, 1991:310) himself. McGuinness described the win as ‘something noble which he [Busby] had started’ that had come ‘to glorious fruition’ (McGuinness, 2008:188). McGuinness refers to the win as a prize at the end of the rainbow suggesting that something impossible had been achieved (2008:189). The referencing of the European Cup win, places Manchester United back into the narrative of the Disaster as a rebuilt post-Disaster team. Winning the European Cup is inferred as ending the task initiated by the 1958 team within several texts (Foulkes, 2008; McGuinness, 2008; Dewhurst, 2009). As Busby retired as manager a year later, 1968 and not 1958 was perceived by some as the end of the Busby Babes legacy. The significance of the success of the team that won the 1968 European Cup, defined in many ways an ensuing decline of the clubs fortunes.

Foulkes describes ‘the prevailing air of ‘job finished’’ at Manchester United after the win and speculated how this adversely affected players such as George Best (Foulkes, 2008:145). That Manchester United went into a documented decline for a period after 1968 heightens the significance of the aspirations of the Busby Babes team, that were carried to fulfilment, albeit by proxy. The legacy of the Disaster appears to be underpinned by the success of the 1968 team managed by Busby.

Beyond the families and survivors, the club and the team, the nature of football as a spectator sport inevitably begets fans. In 1958 the fans of Manchester United and other teams alike, describe a collective and individual grief in response to Munich (Hall, 2008; Andrews, ed., 2004; Schindler, 1998). The city of Manchester and the country was said to grieve for those lost in the Disaster. Hall describes the event as a Disaster that ‘broke the heart of a great city [Manchester]’ (Hall, 2008; book subtitle). Accounts of how those affected heard the news of the crash can be found in several books. Hall recalls his response to hearing the news of the crash on the radio with his father as upsetting ‘you felt you knew all of those players. They brought us joy and pleasure and excitement on the football field every week; the sense of loss was indescribable’ (Hall, 2008:26). Within these personal fan responses to the Disaster, there is a sense that they felt that the team could be re-established. The reverence of the sport as ‘the beautiful football would conquer, because it was the soul of our city’ (Dewhurst, 2009:65) was made. A sense of hope permeated expressions of personal and collective grief, however the aspirations of Manchester United (the club) had grown beyond this victory as ‘the dream was about domination and would have to go on’ (Dewhurst, 2009:244). Within fan-based texts some fans express distaste for some of the clubs’ aspirations that appear to be commercially, rather than football driven (Dewhurst, 2009; Connor, 2007). The relationship between fans and their clubs has been analysed through the concept of fandom (Cleland, 2010; Porat, 2010) and club rivalries (Warner, 2011).

An academic anthology (Andrews, ed., 2004) considers the negative impact of the Disaster on the perception of the club as part of a general consideration of the ‘spectacle’ of Manchester United (2004:11). The anthology aims to consider

Manchester United's 'boundary between cultural and commercial concerns' (2004; foreword) which it goes on to imply is a shifting. Yet those chapters that consider the club in the context of the Munich Air Disaster seem to define a boundary between commemoration and regeneration. A line at which two Manchester United clubs appear to distinctly have existed as one club was a pre-Disaster club aligned with the Busby Babes phenomenon and the current post-Disaster global entity that is experienced as the club today.

A distinctly defined pre and post-Disaster Manchester United is also referenced by players Charlton, Foulkes and Gregg (Charlton, 2008; Foulkes, 2008; Gregg, 2002) as a shift in the spirit of the club. Some texts criticise the club's handling of the aftermath of the Disaster, specifically in regard to their treatment of the victims' families and those survivors whose footballer prowess was compromised by the crash (Connor, 2007; Morrin, 2007). Connor's book is subtitled 'Manchester United and the Forgotten Victims of Munich' and is unambiguous in its contempt for the club's treatment of some of the victims and survivors of the crash. Much of the contempt is expressed through criticism of the club's handling of the period in the weeks immediately after the crash (Connor, 2007).

Connor also attests to a distaste for any commemorative activity that could be motivated by, or result in financial gain by anyone other than the victims, survivors and their families (2007:248). The Disaster 'created a trail of religious-type relics that eventually led to a memorabilia trade' (Ward & Williams, 2010:79). Burn & Connor are amongst a number of authors who reference the trade in Munich-related memorabilia (Burn, 2006; Connor, 2007). The monetary value of commemorative objects, activities and events is considered along with the lack of financial support given to the families after the crash. There is a sense of injustice to this that is articulated by Morrin and Connor that only those with the means can buy commemorative items, which they can then charge others to view (Connor, 2007; Morrin, 2007). This distaste is directed at the club's Old Trafford Museum that has an entrance fee to view a number of artefacts including former personal belongings of victims of the Disaster.

Literature about the Disaster and the Busby Babes appears to have been undertaken with an almost universal respect and reverence to the Busby Babes, yet tensions regarding Manchester United's post-Munich treatment of victims' families and certain survivors, the shift towards a global brand and certain commemorative activities are very apparent.

## **2ii: DUNCAN EDWARDS**

### **Edwards the Player**

Edwards is significantly discussed within a variety of football autobiographies and biographies (Charlton, 2008; Dunphy, 1991; Foulkes, 2008; Glanvill, 1995; Gregg, 2002; McGuiness, 2008) including Edwards-specific biographies (Doughan, 1988; Leighton, 2013; McCartney & Cavanagh, 1988). He is the subject of a commemorative leaflet (Johnston, 2008) and a tribute leaflet incorporating details of his life and football career and the sites of significant memorials to him (Dudley Council, 2014). He is also referenced within commemorative and historical accounts of the Busby Babes and the Munich Air Disaster, with universal reverence. These accounts do not infer but clearly state the veneration of Edwards as a player as 'the stuff that dreams are made of...as close to perfection as a footballer as it is possible to be' (Arthur, 2008;169), 'he could do anything on a football field' (Hall, 2008; 213) and 'at twenty-one he already had everything as a footballer' (Ward & Williams, 2010;77). Within general Munich-related texts and those that are concerned with Edwards specifically as the subject, two descriptions of Edwards are constantly made: that of Edwards as 'the greatest' (Leighton, 2012) and Edwards as 'the legend' (Johnston, 2008;12). Leighton introduces Edwards as 'the greatest player this world has ever seen' (Leighton, 2012;50). Edwards is described as 'Dudley's football legend' (Johnston, 2008) and 'a football legend' (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1998;93). The memorial erected to commemorate Edwards and his legendary status (see Chapter 6iv) is in the representational genre of British sporting hero statues of the era. In 2011 the 52 UK football statues logged to be in existence (Stride, Wilson & Thomas, 2013; 160) were all of male players. Therefore Edwards' representation as a hero or legend throughout literature is further demonstrated through commemorative acts which underpin an apparently exclusively male-gendered notion of football heroism.

His legendary status appears to mirror those of other sporting legends who died prematurely due to accidental deaths. The loss of sporting legends Roberto Clemente<sup>15</sup> (Maraniss, 2007) and Ayrton Senna<sup>16</sup> in accidents are similarly revered. Clemente was exemplified as an example to others of ‘what you can be’ (2007;354) and Senna is persistently referred to as ‘the greatest driver of all time’ (Hilton, 1995;17). Hilton’s book about Senna is described as being ‘written with affection’ (1995;6) for Senna. Similarly all of Edwards’ biographies, references to him in Disaster-related texts and tribute leaflets, appear to be written with affection and reverence for him.

Descriptions of Edwards’ affable personality and unassuming character are continually made within these texts. He is described as a ‘quiet, fun-loving man’ (Arthur, 2008;169), who ‘made friends easily’ (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1998;40). There are several references to Edwards’ working class Black Country origins as he is described as ‘a simple boy who loved his family and loved his football’ (Leighton, 2012;267) affectionately known as ‘Big Dunc’ (Burn, 2006;53). His physical prowess is described through several accounts with his style of play depicted as ‘swashbuckling’ (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1998;72). The significance of his physicality as a player is underpinned by the vast majority of texts concerned with him having covers that depict him ‘in action’ as a footballer. He is the most frequently portrayed player on the covers of Munich-related texts (Arthur, 2008; Connor, 2010; Hall, 2008; Morrin, 2007).

Edwards was commissioned to write an instructional football book called ‘Tackle Soccer This Way’ just before he died and it was posthumously published in the summer of 1958 (Edwards, 1958). It was reissued in 2010 due to demand and in a review of Edwards’ reissued book, Edwards’ character is celebrated as ‘the quaint language and sportsmanship makes it feel like a chat with a pensioner, not a young star of the day...it is warm informative and forthright’ (Crampin, 2010). Although an instructional book on how to approach and play football it has autobiographical anecdotes and as it is written from Edwards’ own

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<sup>15</sup> Clemente was a Major League Baseball player who died in a plane crash in 1972, whilst part of a group of volunteers delivering supplies to an earthquake hit region of Nicaragua.

<sup>16</sup> Formula One racing driver Ayrton Senna died in a racing accident at the San Marino Grand Prix, Imola, Italy in 1994.

perspective of football, it is unique. The first edition cover shows Edwards at a 1957 England team training session with footballers Stanley Matthews and Billy Wright. Both Matthews and Wright were accomplished and revered England team players at the time. Their presence on the cover of the book alongside Edwards installs him as a great player by association with the established players of the national squad. As Burn states ‘Wright was the player Duncan Edwards was expected to succeed as national-team captain. The FA apprenticed him to Wright’ (Burn, 2006:245). Several speculative accounts regarding how the England team would have looked if Edwards had survived the Munich Air Disaster are apparent. Leighton considers, England international Colin Harvey’s belief that Edwards would have played alongside Bobby Charlton in the England side, taking Bobby Moore’s place (Leighton, 2012:259). Jimmy Armfield, who met and became friends with Edwards during his National Service, speculated that if Edwards had not died, his team would have ‘at least reached the final of the 1958 World Cup’ (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1998:93). Although speculative in nature such documented beliefs reinforce an almost universal portrayal of Edwards as ‘the’ player who could have altered national and world football history, had he survived and been able to play at his former level. This scale of speculation has not been applied to any other footballer of his generation who died as a result of the crash. Within historical and ‘popular’ texts regarding the Disaster, Manchester United and the Busby Babes, Edwards is the most referenced, revered and discussed victim (Connor, 2010; Hall, 2008).

Direct comparative analysis of Edwards as a player is made in two distinct texts with comparisons to George Best (Burn, 2007) and to Wayne Rooney (Malam, 2006). These texts both explore the changes in football across a 50 year period since Edwards’ death in 1958. However, Burn’s text considers the contrasting personalities and lifestyles of Best and Edwards whilst Malam’s text draws on the similarities between Edwards’ and Rooney’s playing style and physical build. All three players played for Manchester United and are revered for their outstanding football skills. To an extent these texts consider Edwards’ from the perspective of ‘modern football’ which takes him outside of the context of the majority of Disaster-related texts he is mentioned in. However they do reinforce

his identity as a Manchester United player through their comparison to Best and Rooney.

As Edwards is defined greatly by the circumstances of his death such retrospective narratives could be considered commemorative in nature. However, no general texts specifically considering death, dying and commemoration were not found that reference Edwards, although an Edwards-specific commemorative leaflet was evident (Johnston, 2008).

### **2iii: DEATH, DYING AND COMMEMORATION**

General non-fiction and non-academic texts regarding death, dying and commemoration are evident across several categories. Although this study is predominantly concerned with the academic study of death and death-related literature, non-academic texts are also considered. Accounts of personal loss, grief management texts, texts that consider death-related objects as eccentric curios (Secretan, 1995) or those that attest to a macabre or bizarre fascination with death and the dead (Lindsey, 2006; Roach, 2004) are also considered to be relevant to the research.

#### **The Academic Study of Death, Dying and Commemoration**

The academic study of death, dying and commemoration is now extensive and can be found within a wide range of disciplines which consider the social, economic, historical and cultural significance of death and dying. Those texts from within the studies of medicine, health, social and palliative care and the funerary profession have been omitted from this study, as lacking in specific relevancy to the overall research project.

A review of literature across scholastic disciplines identified significant texts considering the academic study of death, dying and commemoration from a social, cultural and historical perspective. The establishment of death and dying as a distinct academic field of socio-cultural study is relatively new and only significantly developed as such within the last twenty years. As the commemorative network of Edwards span these years, the emergence of such an academic field is significant to this study.

Within the context of sociology & the study of cultural history significant texts have been identified that consider commemoration and bereavement, the body and dying (Hallam, Hockey & Howarth, 1999; Howarth, 2000; Kellehear, 2007; Walter, 1994; Walter, 2001) and the visual representation of the dead (Llewellyn, 1997; Sontag, 1979 & 2004).

In 2005 University of Bath established the Centre for Death and Society (University of Bath 2016) as ‘the first Academic Centre devoted to the study of Death and Dying in the UK’ (University of Bath 2015). Within the centre’s definitions of what areas their research relates to, they include ‘relationships between the living and the dead’ (University of Bath 2016). The centre has defined areas of research which include end-of-life care, planning for an ageing society, bereavement, and policy relating to death and dying (2016). However, research is not exclusively restricted to these specific areas and includes academic pathways for funeral directors.

Thanatology<sup>17</sup> as an academic discipline is also an emergent field with the study of death mediated in a social and cultural context as a distinct academic discipline in its own right. Thanatology aims ‘to construct a scientific comprehension of death, its rites, and its meanings’ (Fonseca & Testoni, 2011;157). An overriding theme across recent ‘thanatological’ academic texts is ‘a modern separation from death’ (Stone, 2007) this is not to infer that modern societies are separated from ‘the dead’, but rather death and dying. A number of texts consider Thanatology and Dark Tourism (Sharpley & Stone eds., 2009; Stone, 2007 & 2012; Walter, 2009) which have a significance to the consideration of the tourist aspect of visits to Edwards’ memorials.

In 2012 the University of Central Lancashire launched the ‘world’s first academic centre for dark tourism research’ (University of Central Lancashire 2012) called the Institute for Dark Tourism Research described as an emerging global centre for research ‘into places or areas that are visited because of their association with death, dying or suffering’ considering these sites ‘from how

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17 Thanatology is a word is derived from Greek mythology where the name ‘Thanatos’ was given to the son of ‘Night’ and ‘Time’. ‘Thanatos’ evolved as the Greek word for death and is where the word thanatology originates from (Fonseca & Testoni, 2011).

they are managed and marketed to how they are consumed' (University of Central Lancashire 2015).

Within academic death-related studies the impact of the media, social media and the internet as both a subject and resource for research analysis is apparent (Parr, 2008; Hallam, Hockey & Howarth, 1999; Kellehear, 2007; Walter, 2009). The most distinctly virtually mediated death in modern times is the death and funeral of Princess Diana in 1997 (British Pathé, 1997). It is credited with significantly shifting social and cultural death rituals. The scale of grief was considered to be that of formerly unseen proportions as 'a few hundred thousand attended the funeral of Princess Diana, several thousand watched it on a huge TV screen in Hyde Park, many millions around the world watched it at home on TV' (Walter, 2009). This event's significance to academic study of death, dying and commemoration is discussed within academic texts and general death-related texts (Berridge, 2002; Walter, 2009). Due to the nature of Princess Diana's death (prematurely in an accident) this event is significant to the study of Edwards' death and commemoration. However that she and Edwards were famous and as such 'significant dead' also necessitates the consideration of her death within the context of this study, as:

The dead, especially the significant dead, have long been mediated or filtered to the living through literature, folklore, architecture, the arts, archaeology, religion, and more recently through popular culture, the mass media and the internet (Stone, 2012;1574).

These 'significant dead' have their significant status extended in death particularly if they suffered an 'unusual, untimely or violent' (2012;1574). However, such 'significant dead' may also emerge because of the collective nature of their death. As Edwards' died as part of a distinct collective the consideration of 'significant dead collectives' is necessary. These include consideration of texts that consider:

The unquiet dead...memories of murdered individuals or groups of the collective dead who die in tragedies can haunt society. For instance, the atrocities of 9/11 represented at Ground Zero or the Holocaust at

Auschwitz-Birkenau need to be incorporated into a collective narrative with which individuals may identify (2012;1578).

Such texts that consider the commemoration of these ‘unquiet dead’ include the study of events such as the Holocaust (Hirsch, 2008; Wolin,1997; Young,2000), the Vietnam War (Allen,1995; Swerdlow, 1985) and other war dead (Berridge, 2002; Jalland,2010).

### **The Culture of Grief**

At the time of the Munich Air Disaster ‘the culture of grief was characterized by silence’ (Oliver, 2013). Oliver describes the period from 1945 to 1960 where ‘psychiatrists had not yet constructed theories of grief helpful to the wider society, and there were no bereavement counsellors or advice books explaining what to expect and how to cope’ (2013). At the time of the Munich Air Disaster ‘self-help’ analysis was in its infancy therefore such texts were considered to be relevant to this study as an emergent social and cultural practice (see ‘Grief Management’ below). It was the death rituals of their Christian faith that led the Edwards’ family in the course of their grief, through funeral rituals and a belief in an afterlife. Both of Edward’s parents would have experienced the prevailing response to death at that time, of ‘silence and stoicism’ (Jalland, 2010;121) which remained pervasive throughout English society permeating from the ‘stiff upper lip’ principle adopted during the war effort , apparent as necessary for ‘the interests of morale’ during the Second World War (2010;121). Such suppression of grief was expected and considered to be part of the war effort at the time. Yet in 1958 the impact and reality of this dictated response to grief was being medically and socially re-examined. Grief as a process was beginning to be researched as a distinct life passage and process.

In 1958, Peter Marris published what Jalland calls a ‘landmark in early research into experiences of grief and loss in England’ (2012;202). Marris interviewed several widows about their experiences of grief through their own accounts of the personal, financial and psychological impact of the death of their spouse on their daily lives. The general consensus amongst specialists at this time was that grief was ‘a psychological disorder’ and in its severest form was actually a form of mental illness (2012;202). What Marris’ research revealed were aspects

of grief and widowhood that affected the individual and their family, but also the community, on a social and economic level too. The grief described by widows that Marris interviewed went beyond the somewhat expected emotional implications to include accounts of financial hardship and the dependency on relatives and friends for child-care. Widowhood had practical and social implications beyond what was simply considered as a ‘psychological disorder’ (2012;202).

Within Marris’ research expressions of grief by widows included those who gave accounts of sensing or even seeing their dead husbands. What made Marris’ research unique was that it was a ‘social investigation’ undertaken in the community and not ‘a clinical study of psychiatric or hospitalized patients’ and Marris’ study was of working class rather than middle and upper class women (2012;204).

The significant changing attitudes towards the bereaved in the 1950s can also be demonstrated by the establishment of Cruse in 1959, which is now the leading worldwide bereavement charity (Cruse Bereavement Care). The significance of the development of a predominantly localised support and advice system is demonstrated by the growth of Cruse in the UK. Now known as Cruse Bereavement Care the organisation offers ‘support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies and work to enhance society’s care of bereaved people’ (Cruse Bereavement Care) at a local and national level. Although the emergence and evolution of such organisations demonstrates a shift in the perception of bereavement, other societal and historical factors also affected how people grieved and how that grief was viewed.

The secularisation of British society is cited as the most significant factor in changing the way society grieved publically (Walter, 1994). This ‘secularisation theory’ is explored by Jalland as a ‘gradual secularisation of society since the eighteenth century’ which she states is described by sociologists as a time when religion declined and ‘science, industrialization and urbanization’ prevailed (Jalland, 2012;225). Jalland’s hypothesis that this is an oversimplification of events is based on historians whom she argues ‘resist’ this diminishing interest

in religion based on the fact that religion saw something of a revival during the Industrial Revolution. As Edwards' death and subsequent commemoration has fallen across this era and period of change, it is considered significant to the research project.

### **Accounts of Personal Loss**

Published accounts of personal loss are principally individual narratives that describe the experience of being bereaved. As in Nicholson's account of the impact of her daughter's death in the 7/7 bombings<sup>18</sup> on her own life (Nicholson, 2001) these texts convey a sense of profound and life-changing loss. In the context of autobiographical and biographical accounts that relate to the Munich Air Disaster and Edwards, they provide data for comparative analysis. There is a pervading voyeuristic element that is inferred by the consumption of these personal loss accounts. Those accounts such as Nicholson's which explore death by extraordinary circumstances, rather than natural death from old age or prolonged illness, are particularly of interest in the context of Edwards' similarly 'unexpected' death.

Most readers buying books about historical events such as the Munich Air Disaster and the 7/7 bombings, will have some knowledge of the event but conversely they usually have no personal connection to those killed by the events. The general reader is connected to the narrative by the knowledge of the event happening yet they are also connected through the universal nature of death and subsequently grief. The personalisation of a national or global tragedy is often used to market such accounts. They are reviewed for marketing rather than academic purposes by booksellers such as Amazon and they are part of a defined genre of 'real life tragedy biographies'. Nicholson's book (Nicholson, 2011) is described as having 'heartbreaking honesty and integrity' (Amazon 2011) and Debnam's account (Debnam, 2007) of his personal experience of being a rapid response officer in the immediate aftermath of the 7/7 bombings is described as having 'the power of this story will change your life' (Amazon 2007). Ultimately these accounts are stories from a singular perspective sometimes brought together as collections as in '102 Minutes' (Dwyer & Flynn, 2011): a collection of accounts of the 9/11 terrorists

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<sup>18</sup> On 7 July 2005, 52 people were killed in terrorist attacks in London.

attack in New York. Originally published in 2005, a tenth anniversary of 9/11 edition of this book was published, demonstrating a continued commemoration of the event. Within the ‘Authors Notes’ it is stated that the personal accounts of survivors or witnesses to the events of 9/11 ‘gave us the history of these 102 minutes’ (Dwyer & Flynn, 2011;xxiv) and there is an assumption by the authors that such accounts persist as factual. These firsthand accounts are afforded an authenticity, accuracy and truth, yet the reliability of such personal accounts as ‘public record’ is significant to the representation of the Munich Air Disaster and this research project. The accounts of personal sacrifice, heroism and humanity may be compelling to readers, yet to define them as historical accounts and infer that they are factual history takes them outside of their genre. This is not to say that such accounts are purposefully inaccurate or inaccurate at all, although such cases are found of blatant fabrication<sup>19</sup>. These personal accounts are sometimes contestable when compared to other accounts where details, dates and historical facts seem to vary. As all accounts are dependant on individual perspective, memory and personal circumstances, there will always be a degree of interpretation of the truth. The concept of a singular truth and fully aligned firsthand accounts is significant to the research project in relation to the Munich Air Disaster in particular.

### **Grief Management**

Grief by its very nature is a form of commemoration. As a deep sorrow manifested by actions or feelings in response to loss, the potential for grief to be life-changing is widely acknowledged across society. Yet the articulation of grief in public is a relatively recent phenomenon as a ‘natural’ response to the death of a loved one. Although acknowledged as a universal experience, grief is also considered a very personal experience depending on the connection of the bereaved to the deceased. In more recent times grief has been become a life process that is ‘managed’. A vast number of ‘self-help’ style publications give guidance on how to cope with grief or bereavement.

One unifying theme of the majority of grief management texts is definable distinct stages of grief. However, as these stages apparently range from five

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<sup>19</sup> A supposed survivor of the 9/11 bombing of the Twin Towers known as Tania Head (who headed survivor groups and campaigns) was later discovered not to have even been in the country during the time of the attack (Gatton, 2008)

(Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2014) to nine (Bishop, 2015) depending on the book, it seems to imply the idea of a universal system for processing grief is not achievable. The stages within these texts imply a universally conformity that may prevent the expression of individual grief. As Walter states ‘we still do not know whether overall the famous meta-story of the five stages [of grief management] has helped or hindered the process of listening’ (Walter, 1994;78). How personal accounts delivered through stages of grief are conveyed, referenced and to some extent ‘followed’ by professionals and the grieved is dependant on the context, individual circumstance and the perceived audience for the text.

How commemorative narratives are constructed may be influenced by such self-help books, therefore their existence and genre is significant to the research of commemoration and bereavement. Particularly as these ‘self-help’ books, although often marketed as universal in their appeal and effectiveness are rarely the objective directives implied by their titles, such as ‘You Can Heal Your Broken Heart’ (Bishop, 2015) or ‘Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss’ (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2014). On further scrutiny a considerable number, rather than being objective texts by experienced ‘professionals’ are subjective ‘self-help’ books by the bereaved themselves. These texts convey lessons learnt from a personal perspective which may be from a religious perspective or personal experience of loss. Some accounts are written as ‘survivor’ accounts such as ‘Surviving the Death of a Child’ (Munday, 1989) describing bereaved parents as survivors.

Edward’s parents lost both of their children: a daughter of a few weeks old to illness and their son due to an accident. The death of a child is described as that which ‘brings grief that comes like ocean waves in a ferocious storm. At first the pain is unbearable, and then it gets worse’ (1998;5). Research considering the loss of a child does not signify any greater loss felt by a parent if their child dies unexpectedly, or from an illness (Rogers et al., 2008). The cause of the death of a child does not determine the sense or profundity of the loss felt. Research reveals that it is not how a child dies that dictates how intensely they are mourned by their parents. It is ‘the level of preexisting problems and the psychological resources that parents bring to the situation of coping with

bereavement' (2008) that determines how profoundly the loss is felt and ultimately how it is manifested through grief.

It should not therefore be considered that Edwards' accidental death would have been more profoundly felt by his parents than the death of his sister. As the Child Bereavement UK website states 'no-one expects their child to die before them. It is out of the natural order of things' (Child Bereavement Trust). That Edwards was years, rather than weeks old (as his sister was) would not have lessen or hardened the sense of loss according to research. The loss of a child is considered to be a break in the 'normal order' of life, as a child is expected to outlive their parents. The complexity of Edwards' father, Gladstone Edwards' grief is illustrated in part by the 'public sharing' of his memories of his son with others whilst simultaneously drawing back to his private grief. Burn describes Gladstone's experiences working as a cemetery grounds man 'while always happy to point visitors in the direction of Duncan's grave, he never announced himself' (Burn, 2006;13). In an interview with family member Colin Daniels, he recalled evenings in the pub with Gladstone 'and somebody would stand up and say we have a person in the pub – we have Duncan's father in the pub, and he used to lap it up but at the same time he'd say he didn't like it' (Rogers and Daniels, 2014;3). Gladstone's seemingly contradictory commemoration suggests that grief is a complex private and public process.

The 'survival' of loss suggests a strong emotional response to grief, yet several texts offer 'coping' rather than survival strategies (Morris, 2010; Leigh, 2012). Although this demonstrates diversity in the approach to managing grief, these texts are unified in their intention to assist the reader in understanding grief. Although through their sometimes conflicting advice, presented from differing perspectives, these texts appear only unified in their intention to inform and to help the bereaved.

### **Popular Non-Fiction Texts: Fascination with the Dead and Death**

Non-fiction texts regarding death include those that take what may be considered by some to be a provocative or disrespectful view of the subject. Lindsay's 'And in the End' is described as 'a hilarious romp through the past, present and future of the funeral' (Lindsay, 2006; back cover). Roach explores

'the already dead' in her book 'Stiff' and describes how human cadavers are used for a variety of activities including as crash test dummies and for decomposition research. Her descriptions of the uses of human cadavers celebrate 'death. It doesn't have to be boring' (Roach, 2004;11). She encourages the reader to 'have fun!' as a human cadaver (2004;304).

Such texts appear to be satisfying a general and growing interest in death, or more specifically in an 'after-life' for the dead body. 'Stiff' was a New York Times bestseller and such interest seems to substantiates Berridge's idea of an 'impoverished' version of modern death (Berridge, 2002;22). This modern death Berridge states has become detached from the rarely experienced 'real dead bodies' and where 'remoteness from death is at one level the privilege of greatly improved healthcare' (2002;18). Lindsay's and Roach's texts in someway re-introduce those real dead bodies, yet they are portrayed surreally and humorously which perpetuates a remoteness, albeit it through a different notion of detachment. However, what runs through these texts is a shifting perception of death and the dead body within modern society.

This is not to say that a preoccupation with the dead does not extend back into human history. Relics and artefacts of early humans that are connected to death and the dead are evident in museum collections across the globe. These are documented, catalogued and discussed in a number of scholarly tomes and predominantly explore the relationship between the living and the dead through shared belief structures (Allen, 1995; Llewellyn, 1997; Sheridan, 2000; Wolin, 1997). These structures are diverse and range from religious and spiritual beliefs to individual convictions regarding the supernatural; yet all centre on a belief in some presence of life after death as 'from an early stage in our emergence as definable human beings, it is clear that some kind of belief in an afterlife has existed' (Sheridan, 2000;7).

The belief in an afterlife assumes a line of communication between the dead and the living and this is evidenced by the ritualistic, widely undertaken burning of paper offerings at an ancestor's grave in China and Hong Kong<sup>20</sup>. However,

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<sup>20</sup> As witnessed by the researcher in Hong Kong, summer 2007. The burning of paper offerings representational of objects and buildings including a large paper model of a house and fake

in the UK where this study is focussed, a more secularised view of death is considered to be prevalent (Walter, 1994) which Sheridan describes as a conviction that ‘one may live on through one’s genes, achievements or in the memory of others, but those properties which defined each individual die along with the body’ (Sheridan, 2000:83). However, the Christian constructs of death rituals and commemoration are still predominantly apparent in the UK (Connerton, 1989; Johnston, 2008).

### **Commemorative Objects, Memorials and Sites**

The consideration of commemorative objects, memorials and sites is undertaken through analysis of their creation, appearance and use. Predominantly academic studies of these objects, memorials and sites are undertaken from within an art, architectural or historical context. As examples of the commemorative arts they are mainly considered from a commemorative art perspective (Kidd & Murdoch, 2004; Llewellyn, 1997). However, the grave specifically has more recently been analysed as a site of social discourse (Hallam & Hockey 2001, Howarth, 2000; Huggins, 2012) as formal academic studies of the sites of death, commemorative objects and memorials to the dead. The analysis of these sites and commemorative activities to be ‘negotiated’ has been considered by a number of significant academic studies (Berridge, 2002; Hallam & Hockey, 2001; Huggins, 2012; Jalland, 2010; Kidd, 2004; Walter, 1994).

The theoretical analysis of the commemorative activity at the graves of sporting heroes has been undertaken (Huggins, 2012) and the consideration of the notion of hero (Womack, 2003) and sporting hero (Hughson, 2009; Smith, 1973) is emphasised by this distinction of a memorial for a specific type of hero. However, no academic study of Edwards’ grave as the grave of a sporting hero has been undertaken. Yet his statue is listed and referred to in an academic paper on football statuary (Stride, Wilson & Thomas, 2003) where it is considered most significant as a rare example of a coloured bronze statue.

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money was observed. These are burnt as an act of ancestor veneration in the belief that the ashes and smoke will carry these objects up to their ancestors to be used in the afterlife.

## **Imaging the Dead**

All non-academic texts relating to Edwards' include illustrations which are usually photographs of Edwards' playing football. A photograph of the dead may be considered as memento mori (Walter, 2009;3) if taken and retained by the family or the bereaved. As a record, photographs are essentially taken from a non-interventionist standpoint but they do change how the subjects of photographs are seen as 'photographs alter and enlarge our notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe' (Sontag, 1979;3).

When considering the small numbers of photographs that have persisted of Edwards, those consistently reproduced are of Edwards as a footballer on the pitch, playing football or training with his team. Although other images exist of Edwards in his army uniform and in his everyday clothes they are far fewer in number and less frequently utilised within his commemorative network. The most persistently used in books are a photograph of him training with Stanley Matthews and Billy Wright<sup>21</sup> (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1988; Edwards, 1958; Leighton, 2012) and a photograph of Edwards' on the pitch signing an autograph for a young fan<sup>22</sup> (Connor, 2007; Edwards, 1958; McCartney & Cavanagh, 1988). Certain photographs have been used to create memorials including a photograph of him about to pass the ball, upon which his statue is based (Arthur, 2008; McCartney & Cavanagh, 1988; Leighton, 2012). A team photograph that is commonly referred to as 'the last line up'<sup>23</sup> (Leighton, 2012; McCartney & Cavanagh, 1988; Morrin, 2007) is frequently referenced in historical accounts and a large scale and coloured version was reproduced as a commemorative decal memorial on the façade of Old Trafford in 2008.

Photographs are processed by the viewer in relation to feelings and memory as 'the eye is connected with the brain; the brain with the nervous system. That system sends its messages in a flash through every past memory and present feeling' (Woolfe in Sontag 2004;23). Those who experience the images of the Munich Air Disaster several years after the event may not experience the 'shock' that those who initially saw the images as news did. However, images of

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<sup>21</sup> April 1957, in training prior to an England 'v' Scotland match at Wembley (Getty Images)

<sup>22</sup> 1 February 1958, Highbury. Photograph taken five minutes before kick off (Getty Images)

<sup>23</sup> 5 February 1958. Image of the team line up, prior to the Manchester United 'v' Red Star, Belgrade match. (Getty Images)

the Disaster victims are perpetually imbedded within a commemorative context as photographs. These photographs are the principle visual language of the commemorative networks of the Munich Air Disaster and Edwards. This is due, in part, to the lack of film and documentary footage generated in the 1950s by comparison.

Photographs of Edwards' memorials are also significantly apparent across his commemorative network. These images are included in a number of texts (Dudley Council, 2014; Johnston, 2008; McCartney & Cavanagh, 1988; Leighton, 2012) and online sources and new images continue to be recorded and made.

## **2iv: THE COMMEMORATIVE NETWORK**

### **Actor Network Theory**

It has been acknowledged that Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 2007) was a useful theoretical framework for initial investigations as it gave a structural dimension commemorative activity whereby all activity is interconnected. The concept of a commemorative 'network' within this study enabled the researcher to identify individual dedicatory acts whilst being able to analyse them as they appeared within areas of interconnected activity. The concept that individual commemorators as 'actors' within a wider network is influenced by ideas explored through taking an ANT perspective. By using an ANT perspective the researcher's initial curiosity as to why strangers visited and left offerings at Edwards' grave is vastly expanded. An ANT perspective enables a wider analysis of commemorative activity at Edwards' grave within the context of Edwards' commemoration at other sites by other commemorators but also commemoration in a wider context.

The consideration of a commemorative network enables commemorators and commemorative activity to be analysed from a broader social and cultural perspective. Within ANT, the activity and the actors within a network are traceable only through activity, in that 'if a given ensemble simply lies there, then it is invisible and nothing can be said about it' (Latour, 2007;31). An active network, such as that of the commemorative network of Edwards, is 'visible'

(2007;31) with commemorators leaving ‘traces’ (2007;31) of associations across the network. As the network of Edwards’ commemoration is active, these associations between what may be considered unremarkable ‘customs’ by ordinary people can be dissected. Although the study is not exclusively seen through the ANT gaze, it applies the impartiality that ANT assumes whereby acts are not routine or mundane but remarkable.

ANT simply claims that once we are accustomed to these many shifting frames of reference a very good grasp of how the social is generated can be provided, since a relativist connection between frames of reference offers a better source of objective judgement than the absolute (this is arbitrary) settings suggested by common sense (2007;31).

However, to adopt such an objective theoretical viewpoint is not an attempt to define the network. It is an attempt to stabilise it and acknowledge it as mutable.

### **Boundary Work**

Studies by Star & Griesemer (Star & Griesemer, 1989) acknowledge ANT in their work and this is significant to this study of Edwards’ commemorative network. The theoretical constructs of systems of hierarchy and systems of impedance and alliance have been developed in recognition of the research by Star & Griesemer (1989), particularly their consideration of ‘boundary work’(1989).

Star and Griesemer consider the ‘diverse intersecting social worlds’ through their study of a ‘collective network of science’ (1989;388). The commonality of the network for their study is the identification and presence of ‘boundary objects’ (1989;393). Within the commemorative networks of Edwards such objects and how they are made, managed and maintained define in the most part how Edwards is remembered. If ‘boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites’ (1989;393) then several significant ones can be identified and analysed in Edwards’ network.

Star and Griesemer state that ‘these objects may be abstract or concrete’ (1989;393) and within Edwards’ network his grave and statue are literally in part concrete, yet their representation through photographs and stories in print and virtually makes them simultaneously abstract. Being recognisable as commemorative objects means they can be translated through their commonality within the network. It is how this commonality is consumed and expressed that defines how the network functions across ‘intersecting social worlds’ (1989;393).

Boundary objects like Edwards’ grave remain robust and relatively unchanged. Since the inception of the gravestone memorial, apart from minor repair work to address recent subsidence issues the grave has been stable. However, the transient nature of offerings of flowers, football scarves or notes, transform the grave. They do not change the physical state of the grave yet the grave is modified by them. The experience and acts of visitors to Edwards’ grave observed during fieldwork research allows them to be studied via the analysis of data collected. The grave remains ‘plastic’ (1989) enough to accommodate the numerous and diverse offerings placed on it, but robust enough to retain the memorial’s fundamental appearance. Despite so many different concurrent needs, uses, users and limitations due to its fixed position Edwards’ grave persists as a resilient but accommodating boundary object. Consideration of the complexity of the dedicatory creation, use and appropriation of Edwards’ commemorative objects and memorials, is assisted through their consideration as boundary objects (1989).

### **Notions of Hierarchy**

The notion of a hierarchy across the commemorative network is evident and used as a strategy by some commemorators to define ‘truths’ about the dead or to justify commemorative activity as authentic & appropriate. Therefore hierarchy is an important network strategy, that involves human and non-human (such as Edwards’ grave) ‘actors’ (Latour, 2007) in the negotiation and mediation of Edwards’ memory.

By specifically exploring the notion of hierarchy within the commemorative networks of Edwards we reveal these ‘rituals’ as ‘heterogeneous assemblages’

(Leigh & Griesemer, 1989) within a perceived commemorator ranking system. Alliance and impedance rely heavily on this system of hierarchy for authenticity, meaning and network authority. Hierarchy for the purposes of this thesis is defined as a perceived ‘ranking’ which places those with greater perceived commemorative authority at the top of a sliding scale.

There appears to be two distinct areas of hierarchy within the networks; the hierarchy of the dead and the hierarchy of commemorators of Munich Air Disaster, the Busby Babes and Edwards.

### **Ancestral Hierarchy**

It is important to signify that a genealogical ancestral link to a person can be proven through the evidence of historical records such as birth and marriage certificates. Within the notion of hierarchy it is those linked by ancestral links that are perceived as more significant in commemorative networks. However, those links must be considered and demonstrated to be authentic close family connections to be meaningful and revered. Systems of commemorative hierarchy are discussed through a notion of key commemorators by Walter (2009).

A number of interviews with significance ancestors of Edwards were made and the transcripts of these and further details of their collection can be found in the appendices. This data is unique to this study and is a substantial resource in defining and analysing hierarchy and the significant of family to the commemorative network.

An ancestral link to the dead may not by definition describe a family member as an active commemorator. The link is only a tangible association as it requires public activity for it to be apparent within the commemorative network as a hierarchical device. The transcripts of interviews undertaken with family members publically active and those who are publically non-active provide data for this theory to be uniquely scrutinised.

## **SUMMARY**

A review of literature was undertaken that considered the Munich Air Disaster, Manchester United, the Busby Babes and Duncan Edwards, as well as death, dying and commemoration.

No significant academic studies regarding Edwards, or his commemoration were identified. No significant academic analysis of the commemoration of the Munich Air Disaster or the Busby Babes was found, although considerable evidence of commemorative activity in both regards was evident. Academic texts were found that considered death, dying and commemoration however, none of these texts considered Edwards, the Munich Air Disaster or the Busby babes specifically in that context.

The adoption of an ANT perspective initially evolved beyond an ANT specific analysis of the research subject enabling a broader analysis of Edwards' commemoration, yet inspiring the concept of a network as a useful and coherent framework for research analysis of burgeoning activity. Using an ANT perspective as expanded by Star and Griesemer (1989) also facilitates the consideration of memorial objects, not as inert artefacts but as artefacts with agency that exert influence on commemorative activity. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

However compelling this network perspective is, the focus of the commemoration is always upon Edwards and the perception and representation of him by commemorators. A biographical summary of Edwards is made in Appendix B which when read prior to the next Chapter (Chapter 3) gives context for his representation as a hero by the majority of his commemorators. The nature of Edwards' death, combined with his sporting prowess, appear to affirm him as a hero into perpetuity. Yet the perception of Edwards as a 'hero' is more complex than simply being a hero. This begotten status has to be considered within the wider context of what being a hero means and the notions of him as a 'dead hero', a 'sporting hero' and a 'local hero'. This in some degree addresses the question as to why 'strangers' are motivated to commemorate individuals like Edwards.

### **3: THE NOTION OF HERO WITHIN THE COMMEMORATIVE NETWORK OF DUNCAN EDWARDS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The notion of hero is considered in its wider context and specifically in the context of the Munich Air Disaster and Duncan Edwards. The significance of Edwards being perceived and described as a hero is variously evidenced throughout his commemorative network. His status as a hero is persistent through the personal and biographical accounts of footballers and managers, across related social media from various sources, in reference books, in general texts and documentaries and through a variety of commemorative acts.

There appear to be three distinct facets to Edwards' hero status whereby he is referenced as a 'dead hero', a 'sporting hero' and a 'local hero'. These heroic descriptors inform how he is classified within a pantheon of dead heroes defined as such because of their sporting abilities, the nature of their death and their strong connections to their local community.

Revered as a Busby Babe & England footballer who died 'following a heroic fight for life' (The Busby Babes), his veneration has persisted to the present day where he continues to be referenced as a local hero as 'Dudley's much loved footballing [sic] hero' (Express and Star 2015).

Edwards' multifaceted hero status appears to signify him as a multiple hero of differing types, yet conversely he is instilled with a general heroic quality. Therefore the complex nature of Edwards' hero status is worthy of exploration in order to understand its significance to how and why he is commemorated and to decipher how being perceived as a hero has influenced his commemoration.

#### **3i: THE CONCEPT OF HERO**

As Womack suggests 'heroes are bigger than life' (Womack, 2003;20) and the consideration of them goes beyond the scale of normal daily life. A hero surpasses the ordinary by extraordinary actions or achievements to become elevated in status. A hero by definition has surpassed being a human to become god-like or immortal and to be revered or even worshipped as such. In

ancient times ‘the mythical hero served a valuable function as a medium through which culture was transmitted from generation to generation’ (Smith, 1973;59). Although not a mythical hero Edwards’ persistent hero status can be explored through such functional terms, yet what defines him as a hero will define in part his ‘function’ (1973;59).

To characterise a hero through the dictionary definition of the word as a ‘person admired for courage, outstanding achievements, etc’ (Elliot, 1997:348) acknowledges that the title of hero may be applied to those who perform a courageous act or exceptional feat. However, the addition of ‘etc’ suggests that the definition is vastly expansive rather than definitively specific. There is an implication that the definition of a hero is open to interpretation and the significant positive actions or achievements that bestow someone with the status of hero are ultimately subjective. Yet, the definition of hero appears to be a notion based on one particular gender; that of the male gender and the concept of masculinity as the defining nature of heroism (Blue, 1987; Hughson, Williams, 2003). Any assertion of women’s sporting prowess and heroic status as equal to that of men like Edwards appear to reinforce the male concept of heroism as ‘the nature of equality is...twisted to mean something like protecting women from male play, which in practice defends and privileges masculinity’ (Williams, 2003;184). The perception of Edwards and the players who either died or survived the air crash is as heroes of a distinct maleness defined by their prowess and masculinity. The notion of hero and its significance to Edwards’ commemoration is further discussed in Chapter 3.

An individual may have their own ‘personal hero’ distinct to themselves, who may be someone who has helped or inspired them exclusively as ‘my hero’. Yet one person can be a hero to many for the same heroic act or achievement, albeit interpreted from different individual perspectives. Therefore the status of hero is in essence defined and bestowed by one individual to another individual. The potential for heroic status therefore is not merely through exceptional attainment, demonstration or achievement it also requires an expression of admiration by others. Heroes are defined by their heroic acts or achievements but they are constructed by the demonstrations of admiration made by others.

The expression of admiration for heroes is manifest in veneration or ‘hero worship’ and in its simplest form such veneration is a statement of opinion in that he or she, is or was, a hero. Formal collectives or institutions such as museums acknowledge heroes through special ceremonies, by awarding prizes or medals, or through the installation of heroes within formal collections.

Edwards is installed as a hero within the Duncan Edwards and Local Sporting Heroes Gallery in the Dudley Museum and Art Gallery (Dudley Council 2008). However, some institutions formally recognise and acknowledge acts or deeds as a heroic, but it is the act or deed that is described as heroic, rather than the individual. The British Army and Ministry of Defence acknowledge those within military service as well as civilians for ‘acts of gallantry’ (gov.uk 2012) through the awarding of specific medals. This formal acknowledgement of ‘hugely courageous acts’ (2012), defines the recipient for many as a hero but the word hero is never used by the British Army or Ministry of Defence. The medal recipients are branded as heroes by others predominantly through news articles that read ‘George Cross for Hero’ (Camber 2008) or ‘HEROES awarded the highest honours for military and civilian bravery’ (Hall 2015). As such these individuals are made heroes within a wider community, beyond the institutions that bestow formal awards for the heroic acts of gallantry, bravery or endurance.

However, not all heroes are defined by heroic acts of gallantry or endurance and not all heroes are brave or courageous. A hero may be awarded heroic status as an honour bestowed with or without formalised structure. The dead hero appears to be intrinsically a brave hero, if their death is viewed as self-sacrifice for the good of others. The sporting hero may bravely pursue and attain outstanding athletic achievements, or the local hero may courageously achieve more than was expected for someone of their background. Some of these achievements may be courageous in nature, but not all heroes are heroes because they demonstrate bravery, fortitude or gallantry.

How the war dead of the First World War were commemorated concealed ‘the grim reality of slow, painful death in the primordial conditions at the front’ (Berridge, 2002;4) as commemorative activities masked the horrific truth with a ‘glorification of death in youth’ (2002;38). Edwards’ commemorators rarely detail the extent of his injuries and no account of his personal reflection on his

suffering can be found. After the crash he was revered for his two weeks of ‘brave fight’ (Leighton, 2012;245) where his parents were told by doctors that ‘anyone else would be dead by now’ (2012;246). Such accounts of Edwards’ final days of bravery and of his ability to endure suffering appear to bestow him with a super-human strength and make his fight for life heroic. When the moment of his actual death comes it is described as ‘the lion-hearted Edwards died peacefully in his sleep with no pain’ (2012;248). This suggests a dignified death of a valiant and strong man but Edwards’ final days were punctuated with ‘intense pain’ (2012;243) yet commemorators predominantly focus on his bravery and endurance. His death was unfathomable for some who played alongside him. He was considered a ‘seemingly indestructible young giant’ (Foulkes, 2008;95) by his teammate Bill Foulkes. Fellow player Wilf McGuinness recalled ‘we all knew he was a fighter and I had it in my head that, despite his devastating injuries, somehow he would pull through’ (McGuinness, 2008;105). There was anticipation of Edwards’ recovery because of his previously evidenced physical strength and fighting spirit. Although Edwards was revered for his extraordinary strength, his referenced stoicism appears to reflect the perception of all English footballers at the time.

Bobby Charlton recalls Johan Cruyff<sup>24</sup> some years after the Disaster saying ‘that in club football the English player was always hugely respected for his willingness – and ability – to fight until the last kick of the game’ (Charlton, 2007;152). Cruyff added that although they were met with trepidation due to their skill and ‘tactical nous’ mostly they were feared because ‘an English team would never know when it was time to quit’ (2007;152). To ascribe such characteristics to a group of players from one country in a particular era is to stereotype a nation of players at a time in history. That Charlton reinforces this view by sharing Cruyff’s comments in his autobiography suggests that he believes the statement to be true. The perception of English players abroad as determined to fight beyond reason reinforces the perception of individual heroes such as Edwards who is professed to be the greatest ‘fighter’ of them all both on and off the football field. An analogy of young soldiers dying in battle on foreign soil during World War One and World War Two and the deaths of the young Busby Babes in Munich can be made. Assimilated as soldiers, the young

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<sup>24</sup> Revered Dutch footballer (1947-2016)

players who died in Munich are as fighting heroes of the country they represented.

The impact of the deaths of England players Roger Byrne, Tommy Taylor and Edwards were considered a national tragedy for English football. Terry Venables, professional footballer and England manager from 1994-6 revered Edwards as his ‘hero and inspiration’ (Connor, 2007;125) and he predicted that Edwards would have been a significant member of the England team if he had not died. Venables asserts a belief, shared by a number of football aficionados that if Edwards had not died in 1958 he, rather than Bobby Moore would have captained the World Cup winning team of 1966 as ‘how could you pick Moore, great player though he was, ahead of Duncan?’ (2007;125). Moore shared Venables’ admiration for Edwards stating that his ‘death was the greatest tragedy of the United air crash’ (2007;126). So great was Edwards’ stature that he ‘touched the psyche of every generation and, seemingly every nationality, often in inexplicable fashion’ (2007;129). His appeal for commemorators is clearly underpinned by a notion of him as a heroic figure of national and international football, asserted by those who played the game at the highest level. His heroic status is amplified by his peers and potential peers but it is also emblematic of the heroic status of the Busby Babes as a collective of football heroes.

### **3ii: THE HERO AND DEATH**

#### **The Dead Hero**

Heroes are individuals whom others perceive to be heroic through action or achievement, yet the title is often used posthumously to acknowledge the act of simply dying. Although such a statement may seem insensitive it demonstrates the complexity of the definition of hero and how it is applied to the dead.

For this study the ‘dead hero’ becomes hero only at the point of their death, because of their death. Whereby the ‘dead hero’ becomes immortal at the point of their death in that it is death that makes the ‘dead hero’ heroic. This is distinctly different to a hero, who is a hero in life, who dies and becomes a deceased hero.

### **The Dead Sporting Hero**

Heroism is amplified in death, the inferred immortality of a hero is enhanced absurdly by death, yet the death of sporting heroes is seldom an act of heroic self sacrifice for others. Unlike the soldier who may act to protect others by sacrificing his or her own life, the sporting requirement or situation where a sportsman or woman must give his or her life for others is rare. Dangerous sports such as mountaineering or motorsports present a greater risk of death for the sportsman or woman. Death within these sporting disciplines is usually due to accident or an underlying condition rather than self sacrifice to save others.

The act of dying a heroic death ‘for sport’ is relatively infrequent. In January 2016 adventurer Henry Worsley died as a result of an infection during his failed attempt to make a crossing of Antarctica unaided. Inspired by Ernest Shackleton whom he described as ‘my hero’ (BBC News 2016) his veneration of Shackleton inspired his own heroic actions, but ultimately he met the same fate as his hero who also died in a similar attempt in 1909. Worsley was said to have ‘lived and died like a hero from another age’ (Pendlebury 2016) clearly aligning him with heroes of the past, likening his heroic spirit to that of historic expedition pioneers. There is a sense of nostalgia about Worsley and he is often referenced as an ‘adventurer’ (2016) rather than a sportsman. However, his Antarctica crossing attempt utilised the social media tools of the modern age as he extensively documented his journey via Twitter feeds and through online live streams. Worsley was a hero who was accessible via social media yet he was framed as a hero within a legacy deeply imbedded in the past.

Jules Bianchi, a 25 year old racing driver for the Marussia team, died from head injuries sustained after an accident during the 2014 Japanese Grand Prix. Due to Bianchi’s young age his ‘untimely death’ (Richards 2015) came at a time when he was yet to achieve his full potential in the sport. As such some comparisons to Edwards’ death in his twenties could be made. Bianchi never regained consciousness after the crash and he died nine months after his accident. However, unlike Edwards’ publically heralded heroic ‘battle for life’, Bianchi’s inability to awake from his coma was described by his father as ‘daily torture’ (2015). Within the many articles that document Bianchi’s accident, his survival and his ultimately his death, the word hero or heroic are elusive.

Bianchi's death was described as 'obviously tragic' and he was not heralded as an idol or legend but as 'a much-loved young driver' (Riley 2015).

Bianchi was the first Formula One driver to die whilst racing since the death of 'legendary Brazilian driver Ayrton Senna' (Riley 2015) at Imola in the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix. Bianchi's death although described as 'tragic' was not perceived as the death of a hero. That Bianchi had not established himself as a driver with a heroic or legendary status appears to be due to the assertion that he had not yet demonstrated his true potential. Senna, 34 years old at the time of his death was a three times world champion and was already described as a hero. He continues to be venerated by visitors to his grave and his memorial statue, whilst other drivers such as world champion British driver Lewis Hamilton describe him as an 'idol' (Tremayne 2015). On the twentieth anniversary of Senna's death he was cited in a survey of his home nation as 'Brazil's favourite sporting son' (Lang 2014) above fellow sportsman and world famous footballer Pele.

Like Senna, Edwards had achieved a local hero status and a nationally acknowledged degree of success as a sporting hero. The legacy of Bianchi's death reveals that sporting heroes generally require the highest degree of achievement in their chosen sport in order to be considered legends or heroes. Both Senna and Edwards were associated with winning teams, McLaren and Manchester United respectively. Such association reinforces their sporting hero status and although Bianchi had been successful at Formula Three his best result for his Formula One team was a ninth place in a Grand Prix.

### **The Dying Hero**

Both Edwards and Bianchi are consistently referred to as being 'young' and 'lost' before their time. Footage exists of Edwards in his hospital bed post-crash, although footage of Bianchi's crash is available; no publically available images exist of him after his admission to hospital. In the most part this contrast is probably due to a cultural shift and recent legal safeguards that preserve the privacy of patients during medical treatment today. Although potentially distressing to watch, the footage of Edwards in his hospital bed enable the viewer to more easily empathise and relate to his situation. With the addition of

accounts from those who spoke to Edwards at his bedside, Edwards' final days were and remain accessible. Whether this voyeurism is appropriate is never formally discussed within the commemorative network.

The black and white footage of Edwards on the hospital ward shows Edwards in the background in his hospital bed (British Pathé 2011). He has a tube inserted and taped to his nose and he can be seen to be lifting his head briefly. After a presentation in 2015 two viewers expressed an immediate empathy with Edwards on seeing him in the footage, describing it as 'touching' and 'sad' (Robert Basini at Rogers 2015) which seems at odds with what is described as Edwards' 'heroic fight for life' (The Busby Babes). Edwards the hero, fighting for his life seems to contradict the image of Edwards lying awkwardly in a hospital bed, in a corner of a room. It is known that due to his failing internal organs 'he suffered from increasing periods of unconsciousness' with pain and periods of confusion because of the build up of nitrogen in his body 'from severe haemorrhages, which the medical staff could not stop' (Leighton, 2012;246). Edwards' fallibility is evidenced by his ultimate death, yet his demise however 'sad' it appeared, reinforced rather than diminished his hero status. Edwards as a hero is less likely to disappoint his hero worshippers as death has intervened:

From a modern perspective the elevation of the hero to godlike status is problematic for both the secular humanist and the religious believer. For both, the 'exaggerated veneration' of the hero can lead to the abnegation of human responsibility and, at the very least, profound disappointment for the hero-worshipper once the fallibility of the idol is eventually revealed (Hughson, 2009;89).

The 'disappointment' that Hughson references, is dependant on the shortcomings of a hero, yet for Edwards his death has made him, or rather the memory of him flawless. There is no evidence of a significant 'abnegation of human responsibility' or any substantial immoral behaviour to tarnish Edwards' image as an 'idol' (2009;89). Notably Edwards is never found to be significantly fallible in character or ability in terms of his consideration as a hero. His inability to survive the injuries that he sustained in the crash could be considered his only fallibility, yet this ultimately demonstrates his mortality which connects him

to the ‘ordinary man’. Yet it is this mortality that contributes greatly to his constructed immortality. That someone of his heroic status and greatly attested strength was unable to survive his injuries infers that they were of an extreme nature. He died the death of a mortal and as such is allied to the ‘ordinary man’, yet he did not simply die, he persisted for a number of days demonstrating heroic will and strength. His survival beyond the crash is revered as a superhuman feat yet ultimately Edwards succumbed to severe injuries and died. Edwards’ mortality gives him immortality as a sporting hero defined in part by his youth and his inability to survive. He is revered as an example of what youth can achieve, yet being 21 years old at the time of his death he could have been considered to have passed into manhood, leaving his youth behind.

### **3iii: THE SPORTING HERO**

When the footballer Michael Owen broke Edwards’ record of being the youngest player to ever play for England<sup>25</sup>, Edwards became ‘fallible’ and his hero worshippers may have experienced a ‘disappointment’ (Hughson, 2009;89). However, such disenchantment would only apply in the context that Hughson defines if Edwards had been responsible for his own usurpation. That Owen took Edward’s record appears to reinforce Edwards’ former achievement and remind others of his heroic status, rather than diminish it. Although Owen was the new record breaker many references to Edwards holding the record for 40 years served to amplify the greatness of Owen’s achievement, by referencing Edwards’ achievement. Owen’s achievement brings Edwards’ hero status to a new generation whereby Edwards is not demoted to second place by Owen, but appears to be sharing the accolade with Owen.

Sporting heroes are heroes predominantly for their sporting achievements and athletic abilities. Empirical evidence of sporting achievement underpins the sporting hero status as indisputable confirmation of success, the ‘youngest ever’ record defines Owen and Edwards as heroes. That Edwards’ record stood for several years appears to be celebrated more than the fact that Owen took the record. Owen’s achievement seems to be underplayed by the majority of press reports that revere Edwards as ‘incredibly, that record was to last 40 years

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<sup>25</sup> Edwards’ record stood for over 40 years until Michael Owen played for England in 1998 at the age of 18 years and 59 days<sup>25</sup>.

before being beaten by a mere 124 days by a certain striker called Michael Owen in February 1998' (goal.com). That Edwards' achievement does not appear to be diminished by Owen suggests that Edwards' hero status is robust. The previous holder prior to Edwards is neither mentioned nor referenced and this suggests that Edwards' achievement was so exemplary that it obliterated the previous records, if there were any set as a benchmark. Edwards achievement appears to represent a generation of youth that only someone of, or beyond the next generation could surpass.

If 'the past is used as an index of achievement to be exceeded, and measurement rather than aesthetics becomes the paramount concern of sporting performance' (Hughson, 2009;87) then sporting heroes can be identified through their measurable elite performance. The personal rankings for football players such as 'goals scored' or 'appearances for' enable individual players to be compared and graded against one another. Within other sports such as athletics, individuals may be ranked according to how quickly they can run a particular distance, how far they can throw a specific object or how high they can jump. Sporting heroes are usually those who rank at the top of these tables and as such demonstrate a quantifiable significant ability.

Sixteen years after breaking Edwards' record Owen joined other 'legends in the National Football Museum Hall of Fame' (Arrowsmith 2014) in 2014, inaugurated alongside other players including Edwards. The word legend is distinct to particular types of heroes described in the vernacular to mean a 'famous or remarkable person' (Elliot, 1997;430). The words legend and hero appear in most instances to be interchangeable and this suggests that a legend is considered by default to be a hero. A legend is usually a public figure with an endorsed heroic status, revered by a considerable number of people. Legends may be installed and certified within a collective such as a 'Hall of Fame' as Owen and Edwards are installed within the National Football Museum Hall of Fame. If as Walter states 'the modern state creates and re-creates sacred ancestors, bestowing immortality on its heroes' (Walter, 2009;3) then individuals such as Edwards who are 'recreated' as Hall of Fame legends are heroes into perpetuity.

Once installed as a legend or identified as a hero an individual is depicted almost exclusively through that ‘identifier’. However, the word hero is never used within the National Football Museum Hall of Fame, which states that it seeks ‘to celebrate and highlight the achievements of the all-time top talents to grace the game in England’ (National Football Museum 2015). With 139 individuals inducted from 2002 to the beginning of 2016 and ‘further profiles being added all the time’ (2015) there is a suggestion that ‘top talents’ are being monitored and identified on a regular basis. There is an implied assumption that each generation will have its own ‘top talents’. These anticipated additions reinforce collective achievement which can be demonstrated and measured. Yet in addition to talent further strict criteria define the eligibility of inductees who are ultimately inducted as legends. Edwards was one of the inaugural inductees into the Museum’s Hall of Fame in 2002, inducted alongside individuals such as Stanley Matthews, George Best, Bobby Charlton, Tom Finney and Kevin Keegan. Each Hall of Fame legend is equal in this status whilst being made more legendary by association to the other high achievers within the group.

As no other victim of the Munich Air Disaster has been inducted into the Hall of Fame, Edwards is unique in this regard. He was heralded by his team mate Charlton as ‘the greatest of them all’ (Leighton, 2012;264). Yet it is not this perceived superiority that define Edwards as a legend in regard to the Hall of Fame induction. This is due in the most part to the youth of those who died in the crash being unable to meet the criteria of ‘all inductees must also have played/managed for at least five years in England’ (National Football Museum 2015). That Edwards met the criteria at the age of 21 does reinforce the uniqueness of his achievement, when his youthful teammates could not match his experience playing for England. The only other individuals within the current inductee group who experienced the crash are former player Bobby Charlton & former manager Sir Matt Busby. Inducted in part for their post-Munich achievements, Edwards distinctly represents the Busby Babes era as the sole legend for that 1950s collective.

That the inductee criteria states that inductees be ‘either retired or, in exceptional cases where a playing career is still ongoing, be at least 30 years of

age' (2015) actually technically negates Edwards from inclusion. The word dead or deceased is not used in the criteria and as Edwards never retired his inclusion in the Hall of Fame suggests he is presumed '*retired*'; in that his death retired him. To insist that a differentiation between retirement and death be made would probably be considered pedantic. Yet to consider Edwards' death as a retirement underpins his identity as a footballer, in that only his death could retire him from the game. This underpins a singular identity for Edwards as a sporting hero.

Speculation about how he would have coped with debilitating injuries that would have prevented him from playing football again further reinforces his identity as a sporting hero. Opinions shared by his mother infer that if Edwards was unable to play football he would not have wanted such a life. Edwards' second cousin testified to the fact that Edwards' mother was concerned that if Edwards lived 'you know, I dunno [sic] what I'm gonna [sic] do if he survives because he'll never play football again because of his injuries' (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;5). Rogers, the second cousin, substantiates this by recalling a conversation with Edwards' mother after Edwards' death, whereby 'he wouldn't have been able to live with the fact that he couldn't play football because that was his life. Sarah [Edwards' mother] did say that after he'd died' (2014;5). The father of injured Formula One driver Jules Bianchi also attests to a similar notion 'he [Jules Bianchi] told us that if he had an accident and was left like Michael Schumacher<sup>26</sup> the additional handicap of not being able to race would have been difficult to keep on living with. It was his life' (Young 2015).

On considering heroes, Womack defines four definitive types of hero 'Paragon, the Rogue, the Outlaw and the Rebel' (Womack, 2003;17). Edwards is defined as a Paragon as he fits Womack's definition in that he (the Paragon) 'exemplifies social virtues. He is cited as an example to youth and is considered the ultimate in human achievement. The role of the Paragon is to abide by the rules and embody social values' (2003;17). Yet the suggestion by Edwards' family members that he would rather die than live a life without football does not seem to reflect his own Christian beliefs and values. As a regular church goer to

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<sup>26</sup> Former Formula One champion who sustained severe brain injuries in a skiing accident in 2014.

St Francis Church, Dudley his local church, Edwards had religious beliefs holding all life to be sacred. This church was where his funeral was held and where stained glass windows dedicated to him were installed after his death. To infer that his beliefs would have been surpassed by his passion for playing football, in that he would rather die than live a physically diminished life, is impossible to verify. Although as a Paragon hero Edwards embodies 'social values' (Womack, 2003;17) the implications of a life with disability for someone so intrinsically defined by their physical abilities may disrupt the definitions and the boundaries of the shared values of a society that bestow their sporting heroes with this status.

In the case of Edwards it would appear that his prowess as a hero defines him to a greater degree than his moral heroics. This appears to substantiate Hughson's suggestion that:

Moral heroics in, or associated with, sport need not have any association with prowess heroism. While both heroic dimensions are important to sport heroism, prowess heroism enjoys primacy because of the particularity of prowess in given sports (Hughson, 2009;96).

Unlike Bianchi we have no evidence from Edwards' family to suggest that he stated that he would not want to live if he could not play football. Speculation of what or who he would have become if he had survived perhaps serves only to make his death more tolerable for those who survived him. Edwards' mother believed that her son's identity was so profoundly defined by playing football that 'he wouldn't have been able to live with the fact' (Rogers and Rogers, 2015;6). To imply that an Edwards that could not play football could never exist is considered an extreme point of view by other family members. His cousin Rogers was more optimistic for a potential future for Edwards as a non-player after the crash as 'I think they [Manchester United] would have looked after him and give him something, because everyone had got him on such a high pedestal. I mean he was at the peak they wouldn't just let him fall to the wayside' (2015;6). That Rogers believes that Edwards' prowess and promise would endear him to his employers suggests that Edwards was already established as a Manchester United sporting hero. Rogers references his

employers rather than his family as the custodians of his future and this reinforces his identity as a footballer. As heroic status is afforded to heroes by others, Edwards' own opinion of himself and how he saw his own prowess could be viewed as irrelevant in this regard. What is significant is that Edwards' identity as a hero is predominantly defined by his prowess as a sportsman, even by his close family members.

### **3iv: THE HERO AND THE CELEBRITY**

Edwards and the Busby Babes are remembered through a filter of nostalgia where celebrity culture seemed very distant, when 'the lives of players were more in touch with the mainly working class support that football enjoyed' (Hall, 2008;8). In terms of nostalgic representations of the past 'there has been an enormous rise in the commitment to remembrance...and an effort to reconstruct the past in order to instil remembrance in new generations (Berridge, 2002;65). Therefore commemorating the dead transcends the concept of perhaps a wistful nostalgia to actively remember the dead to guide the living on how to behave today. 'Remembrance...has metamorphosed into an important form of morality, extending the eighteenth century idea of the grave as the cradle of civilised society' (2002;65). Those heroic figures of the past, often the dead of war or those killed unexpectedly are elevated in the hierarchy of the dead as more worthy of remembrance. Therefore it is them and their commemoration that most greatly defines notions of morality, rather than a notion of thereal nostalgia.

Yet Edwards appears to sit at the top of the hierarchy for the dead of the Disaster, as his loss is considered by many to be the greatest loss as 'the greatest footballer of his generation' (Doughan, Jamieson & Taylor, 1988) most poignantly described by Frank Taylor, a survivor of the Disaster. Edwards' veneration by survivors and in particular Bobby Charlton 'the chief memory-keeper' (Burn, 2006;247) runs through many threads of the commemorative network of Edwards and the Disaster.

Edwards is set apart and above his peers, yet shoulder to shoulder with the 'ordinary man' through his definition as a sporting hero. He played football in an

era in which ‘reporters were fans of the club and friendly with the staff’ and they wrote ‘stories in a more restrained manner’ (Ward & Williams, 2010:81). Several leading football journalists were killed in the Munich Air Disaster and those who replaced them appeared to have formed ‘a new generation of reporters’ and these reporters ‘became more aggressive in the coverage of the sport’ (2010:81). This more assertive reporting may have been due to the lack of sport reporter experience or lack of personal connection to the teams and players which made their reporting seem less ‘friendly’ than previously experienced. It may have been in response to a growing interest in the off-the-field and behind-the-scenes activity of players, as they began to emerge as potential celebrities. Whatever the reason it became apparent that ‘the days of sympathetic journalism were about to disappear’ (2010:81) and it is significant that this shift started just after the time of the Disaster and Edwards’ death.

This shift is most evident through the incessant reporting of Manchester United player George Best’s lifestyle and off-the-pitch activities. The public identities of heroes such as Best and Edwards are greatly defined by their public persona as it is portrayed in the media. A shift towards a more hostile press ultimately impacts on how heroes are described and how they are scrutinised. That Edwards and his death were before this shift may explain in part why his hero status remains steadfast. Best and his celebrity lifestyle meanwhile became the focus for a ‘more scandal-mongering’ (2010: 81) press that evolved in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In stark contrast Edwards’ public image was predominantly through black and white images capturing a restrained, pre-celebrity era lacking in glamour and scandal. The eras in which both Edwards and Best lived have passed and the Manchester United of their respective generations has been replaced by a Manchester United that has installed them both as legends (Manchester United). They are both dead sporting heroes of the past but Edwards’ is from a 1950s monochrome era at a time when ‘colour television, the swinging Sixties, soccer hooliganism and George Best were just around the corner’ (Connor, 2007:286).

As Wagg acknowledges ‘in the Munich literature and discourse, the deceased footballers emerge as heroes, as opposed to celebrities.’(Wagg in Andrews, 2004:22). This references a time before ‘celebrity footballers’, however within

Edwards' lifetime there was a shift towards players actively being sought to develop careers that exploited their revered status. As 'no one ever questioned how Duncan Edwards, a working-class boy of twenty-one on a basic wage of seventeen pounds a week, came when he died to leave ten thousand' (Dewhurst, 2009;98) suggests that Edwards was being paid for non-football playing activities. These activities included an advance on writing a book, fees for product endorsements and there is an inference of additional club payments as at that time young players 'had begun to expect inducements as a matter of course' (2009;98). Yet the era of the Busby Babes appears to be imbedded in a non-commercial world where 'the essence of the Lost Babes; that their purity, innocence and beauty mirrored something irretrievable within us all' (Connor, 2007;286).

The public appeared to relate to the young Busby Babes and their almost saintly persona, yet this was the time when players as celebrities were beginning to emerge. The revered Busby Babes were famous figures but they were not described as celebrities, but as heroes of a tragedy that 'ensured that the individuals that died, such as Duncan Edwards, subsequently gained a legendary status, and those that survived, notably Bobby Charlton and Matt Bubby, gained enormous respect, sympathy and public attention' (Rosaaen & Amis in Andrews, 2004;54).

The word hero and celebrity are not as interchangeable as the words hero and legend, if they are at all. Manchester United player George Best attracted wide public attention as a player and 'by 1969, Best had crossed over to a level of celebrity no sportsman in Britain had ever experienced before, and it was a lonely place' (Burn, 2006;82). When Best purchased a mansion as his family home in 1969 as a decision 'to disappear in plain sight' (2006;80) he was besieged by sightseers and 'crowds swarmed' (2006;81) him whenever he left the house. Best was created as the epitome of the celebrity footballer although surpassed in celebrity status by players such as Eric Cantona 'however, it was David Beckham who really took the Best mantle of celebrity as much embedded in mainstream popular culture as he is in English football' (Rosaaen & Amis in Andrews, 2004;49).

Beckham played for Manchester United until 2001 after signing to the club in 1991 (Manchester United) and he was appointed as England captain in 2001. His marriage to Victoria Adams, a member of the internationally famous Spice Girls amplified his celebrity status. Like Beckham, Best was venerated for his world class abilities as a footballer whilst both their accompanying extravagant lifestyles generated great interest.

Best attracted great public attention as a celebrity, yet he appeared isolated by his fame. As alcoholism and a ‘playboy’ lifestyle impacted on his reliability as a player and his football career diminished, he became a celebrity and an ‘anti-hero’. The hero, as Best’s case demonstrates can be regenerated as an ‘anti-hero’ when as Hughson predicts fans profess ‘profound disappointment’ when ‘the fallibility’ of their heroes becomes evident (2009,89). Best disappointed his fans through his off-the-pitch behaviour and his alcoholism demonstrating a weakness and unreliability unbefitting of a hero of the ‘ordinary man’. Through the unification of Edwards sporting prowess and his unblemished reputation Edwards is uniquely pre-celebrity and ‘via the reconciliation of prowess and morality the sporting hero stands simultaneously above and with the people’ (Hughson, 2009;97).

Harry Gregg a fellow player and friend of Best describes a meeting with him where he asks why Best ‘didn’t show the real George Best’ (Gregg, 2002;125). Gregg implies that the publically facing celebrity persona was a false but uncontested representation. Best responded ‘It’s too late, Greggy. They see me as they want to see me’ (2002;125). This infers that Best believed his public status was contrived by others over whom he had no control, in that his identity was not defined by him, but by others. That Best appeared unable or unwilling to challenge the public opinion of him suggests a sense of helplessness, yet Gregg is clear that the description of Best’s life as a tragedy in the media is falsely sentimental. He challenges this description in that ‘tragedy is a death in the family, the loss of a loved one, not the decline of a once great sporting talent’ (2002:125).

Gregg as a survivor of the Munich Air Disaster is himself the recipient of a publically constructed identity. Although consistent in his rejection of the status

he is described as a hero for his efforts to help the injured in the immediate aftermath of the Disaster. He is heralded for his heroic actions as when asked about the hero status of Edwards, football fan Mike Thomas stated that ‘I would say people who were more like heroes were people like Bill Foulkes and Harry Gregg of course who ran back into the plane to rescue people’ (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;3).

That Best and Gregg are both referenced as sporting heroes revered for their achievements on the pitch, does not negate their actions off the pitch from defining them too. Gregg exalted by many as the hero of the Munich Air Disaster, sees his hero status underpinned and reinforced, yet Best’s status has been irrevocably shifted to that of ‘anti-hero’. Beckham too had also experienced a period of denigration as an anti-hero ‘following his sending off in the 1998 World Cup Finals match against Argentina’ (Rosaaen & Amis in Andrews 2004;49). Yet his hero status appeared to be quickly restored and has persisted into recent times. Beckham’s selection as the athlete to light the London 2012 Olympics torch when the ceremonial flame reached the UK demonstrates his perception as a national hero (BBC News 2012). As Gregg laments that ‘there’s no doubt it’s a shame that his [Best’s] life style infringed on that rare gift he had to play football’ (Gregg, 2002,:25) he clearly acknowledges that an individual’s identity is intrinsically multi-faceted and heroes can be made and unmade, on and off the pitch.

### **3v: THE LOCAL HERO**

As ‘victorious athletes were immortalized in statues, on vases, in poems and songs’ (Womack, 2003;21) such immortalisation through artefacts and memorials is an established practice that continues to present day, with many sporting heroes ‘resuscitated’ through memorials. Edwards is most significantly immortalised as a local hero by the statue of him installed in the centre of his hometown of Dudley. During the rededication of this statue in 2015 (after it was moved to make way for a new market development) the Mayor of Dudley ‘said the service was fitting for a legend of football’ (Express & Star 2015).

That ‘the statue now takes pride of place in the town centre in recognition of Duncan’s achievements for both England and Manchester United’ (2015)

suggests that Edwards is at the centre of the town literally and metaphorically (this is discussed further in Chapter Six). The significance of the reinstallation of Edwards' statue and the popularity of the rededication event underpins an enduring affection for and veneration of Edwards as 'Dudley remains so proud of its soccer hero' (2015). The Mayor reinforces Edwards' hero status and the town's custodianship of his memory, but also the statue and rededication event are commemorative acts that inspire hero worship.

Edwards is also 'installed' within the Dudley Museum and Art Gallery along with geological artefacts 'local heroes like footballing [sic] legend Duncan Edwards can be seen side by side the museum's geological collection' (Dudley Council 2008). This suggests that Dudley does not have a football hero legacy beyond that of Edwards as the other local heroes displayed in the 'Local Heroes Gallery' include a boxer and a tennis player.<sup>27</sup> The memorials dedicated to Edwards in Dudley continue to proliferate from the dedication of road names and bus names to the re-naming of sport centres and sporting awards. Such activity reinforces the connection between Edwards and Dudley and Edwards as a local hero. These commemorative acts inspire public veneration of Edwards but also publically venerate him as the local hero. Although those hero worshippers may come from all over the world to pay their respects and leave offerings at his statue or grave, or leave entries in a visitor book, these items remain in and become part of the memorial fabric of Dudley. They constitute part of the local infrastructure and public appearance of the town and therefore Edwards' memory becomes embedded in the streetscape of the town.

As the sporting hero competes for his given team or nation he or she may be adopted by a collective of supporters as 'one of us' or as 'one of ours'. The sporting hero can be defined through his or her success or the success of the nation that they represent or embody by association or by birth. As Edwards is often referenced as the 'one of our most famous sons of Dudley' (Gibbons 2013), the baseball player Roberto Clemente is also defined as a beloved descendant. In Maraniss' account of Clemente's life (Maraniss, 2007) he reveals this similarity between Clemente and Edwards, with Clemente being

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<sup>27</sup> The exhibition also includes a former boxer and tennis player, Joe Darby and Dorothy Round respectively.

called ‘Carolina’s favorite [sic] son’ (2007;1). Clemente was claimed by the inhabitants of his birthplace as their own. This seems to be a reciprocated reverence as he was described as being ‘Intensely proud of everything about his native land, including himself.’ (2007;2) Clemente self-identified as poor ‘I am of the minority. I am from the poor people. I represent the poor people. I represent the common people of America’ (2007;71) to the extent that he embodies what in British Society would probably be defined as the working class. Seemingly powerless in their poverty, yet representative of a large part of the population ‘the working class can be said to have gained cultural control over the sport [football] partly through the power of numbers’. (Hughson, 2009;63). Where Clemente and Edwards appear to differentiate is on two counts in that Edwards does not appear to revere Dudley in such an overt way and that Clemente was not revered as ‘the greatest player’ in the way that Edwards was. Yet both died prematurely in plane crashes as sporting heroes, variously memorialised and commemorated.

### National Heroes

In America a news report of the Munich Air Disaster showed the team as they are about to board a plane as the voice-over states ‘they were national heroes every man’ (Universal International News 1958). This statement was in the context of the team qualifying for the next stage of the European Cup as the UK’s only team participating. The status of ‘national heroes’ (1958), although the players were from the divisional team of Manchester United, further elevates their hero status to a national level. There were a number of national players including Edwards who died, however the Manchester United team appear to have been adopted as a national team casting the nation into mourning. For an American audience, less acquainted with football than they were with baseball, the report emphasises the impact of the event to be ‘as if the Milwaukee Braves<sup>28</sup> had been aboard’ (1958).

Manchester United’s participation and success in the European Cup is documented through records and ‘sporting records provide a constant reminder

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<sup>28</sup> The Milwaukee Braves were the national league champions of American Baseball in 1958 and finalists in the World Series.

of the past as participants and spectators are alerted by the holders of ‘expert’ knowledge when a new height is within reach’ (Hughson, 2009;87). The team were successful at a divisional and cup level at home and as such had achieved measurable success. As heroes their collective achievements had a factual, evidential and indisputable basis whilst individual players also demonstrated their own quantified success. Such quantifiable heroes can then be measured against one another and as a collective. The Busby Babes Manchester United team were surpassed in their tally of wins, championships achievements and awards by other Manchester United teams, yet their hero status remains in tact, suspended like their youth by the Disaster as pioneers of Europe. The Busby Babes remain heroes and legends cumulatively for their measurable achievements yet paradoxically for their inability to fulfil their potential and surpass their own sporting achievements.

## **SUMMARY**

Edwards’ hero status is significant in defining how and why he is commemorated. He is referenced within his commemorative network as a local hero, a dead hero and a sporting hero and his fight to survive his ultimately fatal injuries are described as heroic. He is consistently referenced as a hero within his own and the wider commemorative networks of the Busby Babes and the Munich Air Disaster.

The status of hero is bestowed by individuals to an individual for acts of courage or outstanding achievements or feats. Edwards’ achievements as a footballer inspire commemorators to perceive and reference him as a sporting hero. For the residents of Dudley his achievements as a former resident define his as a local hero. Although his hero status may be due to his exceptional achievements, his status as a hero is constructed by the demonstrations of admiration and veneration. Heroes are defined by their heroic acts or achievements but as with Edwards they are made heroes by the expression of admiration of others. In Edwards’ case such veneration is apparent as commemorative acts within his commemorative network.

Edwards has been constructed as a hero by individual acts of veneration but also through the acts of formal collectives and institutions. Dudley Museum and

Art Gallery has installed Edwards as a local hero and the National Football Museum has inducted him as a legend into their Hall of Fame. Such acts amplify the notion of Edwards as formal acknowledgements of his local and sporting hero status.

Edwards does not fit the notion of a dead hero, although he is a hero who died and one who fought an apparently heroic fight for life. As the definition of a dead hero (for this study) is a person made as hero at the point of death, specifically because of their death, Edwards is more accurately defined as a deceased hero. However, because of the nature of his death his status as a hero has been made more heroic by his fight for life. Absurdly he is bestowed an inferred immortality as a hero because he died. His death also ensured that his reputation and defining persona as a footballer remained in tact and was never diminished by old age or time. Unlike George Best and David Beckham Edwards' reputation has remained untarnished as the potential for him to disappoint his fans died with him. Edwards was not responsible for his usurpation as the youngest ever player for England by Michael Owen and Owen's achievements appeared only to amplify Edwards' heroic status as the previous record holder. Edwards' sporting hero status is robust and appears to be firmly embedded and reinforced within English football.

Edwards' sporting hero status is emblematic of a general heroic status bestowed to the Busby Babes as a collective of English football heroes. As no other victim of the Munich Air Disaster has been inducted into the Hall of Fame, Edwards is unique in this regard. His induction underpins not only his single heroic status but also is symbolic of the heroic collective of the Busby Babes. As the only inducted legend for that 1950s collective his legendary status represents a heightened sense of heroism drawn from the collective loss of other heroes.

So defined is Edwards as a sporting hero that without the ability to play his life may be considered by some to be something he would have rejected. If he had survived his injuries would have left him disabled and this would have disrupted his heroic sporting status. Yet the suggestion by a family member that Edwards would prefer to die than live a life without football is hearsay and conjecture.

Such a view does not seem to reflect his Christian beliefs and values and his response to living such a life, is impossible to verify. Although what is significant is that Edwards' identity as a sporting hero remains intact predominantly and paradoxically because his prowess as a sportsman was never diminished by life.

Edwards was also a sporting and local hero at a time when celebrity footballers had not yet emerged. Although Edwards was undertaking work 'off the pitch' that was dependent on his status as a sporting hero he was never considered to be a celebrity in the modern sense of the word. He was paid to endorse products and write a book but he was still considered part of an era of 'innocence' (Connor, 2007:286) and representative of the 'ordinary man'. In modern football players identities are intrinsically multi-faceted and their perception as heroes can be made and unmade, on and off the pitch. The timing of Edwards' death ensured that he was definitively a sporting hero and his off the pitch activities are rarely mentioned.

Edwards' local hero status is underpinned by the numerous memorials, events and sites dedicated to him in his hometown. His statue installs him at the very centre of his hometown as a hero and it provides an opportunity for local hero worship. The connection between Edwards and Dudley is memorialised persistently and this is through the representation of Edwards as a local hero. His statue inspires public veneration of Edwards but also publicly venerates him as the local hero. Edwards' status as a local hero is embedded in the streetscape of the town through his localised memorialisation. However, any reciprocal reverence of Dudley by Edwards has not been found, unlike other local sporting heroes such as Roberto Clemente who celebrate their affection for their hometown. That Edwards did not appear to revere his hometown has not prevented the locality from revering him.

Perhaps Edwards identified himself as a Manchester United and England player which negated some of his identity as a former Dudley resident. In the aftermath of the Disaster the Busby Babes were portrayed as national heroes who were pioneering club footballers in Europe. Although these Manchester United players were participating as a club and not as the national team, there were

national players like Edwards who died as a result if the Disaster. Yet Edwards' national hero status does not appear to have diminished his local hero, but rather enhance it through his presentation as a national team player as embodied by his statue in Dudley marketplace.

His premature death is a significant factor in enhancing his hero status, as is the fact that he initially survived his injuries. His association with the Busby Babes, the England football team, the Munich Air Disaster and his hometown of Dudley are all significant factors in defining his hero status. Therefore the notion of Edwards as a hero is multifaceted and perpetuated across his commemorative network by a number of dedicatory acts, memorials and events. He is not simply 'a hero' but a constructed sporting and local hero defined within a wider heroic framework that defines the collective of the Busby Babes and the victims of the Munich Air Disaster.

As Edwards' heroic status is constructed within his commemorative network the further analysis of his commemoration explores further the significance of this status to how he is remembered. By analysing commemorators and their commemorative activity and the commemorative objects, memorials and sites within Edwards' commemorative network a greater understanding of how Edwards is 'constructed' by others can be made.

## **4: COMMEMORATION: COMMEMORATORS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter and chapters Five, Six and Seven examine the commemorative aspects of this research and this chapter specifically examines commemorators and their commemorative activity. This includes the examination of individual commemorators as well as collective commemorative cohorts, in order to identify how their activity defines the commemorative network and ultimately the preservation of Edwards' memory.

The nature of commemorative activity is such that it can be constructed by anyone at anytime in remembrance of anyone. As this study is focussed on the commemoration of Edwards, the consideration of commemorators identified as being within that network only serves to identify the 'object' of remembrance. Edwards' commemorators are from various demographics, undertaking differing degrees of dedicatory activity across many years. Although Edwards' commemorative network is conceived as a fixed research construct it is an ever changing network of emerging and converging activity.

### **4i: COMMEMORATION**

The concept of preservation implies an activity whereby something or someone is safeguarded or protected from deterioration. The preservers of memories are herein referred to as commemorators whose activities are defined as acts of commemoration. Such acts are usually undertaken at traditional or unconventional sites responding to, appropriating or creating material objects and memorials. These commemorative objects, memorials and sites will be considered specifically in Chapters Five, Six and Seven respectively, whereas this chapter is particularly concerned with commemorators as memory preservers and the dedicatory activity they undertake.

The concept of memory preservation implies an activity whereby memories are sustained as they are conceived. Memories are by their very nature 'of the past' yet their preservation bestows them the currency of the present. Beyond the paradoxical nature of memory preservation, memories themselves are complex entities to interrogate as Hallam & Hockey consider:

'Memory' is commonly envisaged as both the facility to remember and as the mental representation or trace of that which is remembered, both of which are crucially mediated by a variety of cultural forms. In contemporary Western societies, 'memories' are often conceived as possessions: we 'keep' and 'preserve' our memories almost as though they are objects in a personal museum (Hallam & Hockey, 2001;3).

The preceding dictionary definition of commemoration therefore belies the complexity of how commemorators individually and collectively undertake dedicatory activities to form a commemorative network.

### **Individual Perspectives on Death**

An individual's perspective of death relies on how that individual perceives its impact on their daily life as 'human nature, including the fear of oblivion, the desire to maintain social order and the need to make sense of the world, accounts for much' (Sheridan, 2000;7). Whilst any dedicatory act undertaken by an individual in Edwards' network is defined by a commemorator's association to Edwards, it must be acknowledged that each act is constructed to some extent from an individual's perspective on death. This perspective is influenced by an individual's experience of loss as well as their cultural background and their religious or spiritual beliefs. Therefore commemorators' individual dedicatory activity is informed by embodied social and cultural values in conjunction with personal experience and an understanding of their own, and others' mortality.

An individual's perspective on death may be a distinct belief in an afterlife based on a religious or spiritual basis, whereby the dead are considered to exist in a heaven or as a soul or spirit on Earth. Such beliefs may vary in intensity from an all pervading religious principle to a wanton desire. The expression of these beliefs through commemorative activity may merely reflect an individual perspective, but they may also be an attempt to coerce others to appropriate these beliefs. Dedicatory acts persistently appear to convey a notion of immortality whereby the dead are addressed as if they coexist with the living. For example, in a note left by a young fan at Edwards' grave, the fan writes to

Edwards to request that Edwards ‘watch’ his next match<sup>29</sup>. In another note left at the grave the same young fan mentions his father in a note (See Appendix C16) that infers the young boy’s fandom is rooted in his father’s fandom. This concept of fandom of a specific club and its player as a family tradition perpetuates across UK football. Fans usually self-identify alliance to a club at an early age. As fandom research revealed fans are on average affiliated with their club ‘approximately at the age of 10’ and they had ‘been a fan ever since’ (Porat, 2010; 284). (Fandom is explored further in chapter 4iv).

In a tribute book entry on a website dedicated to Edwards a commemorator addresses Edwards directly beginning ‘Dear Duncan, thank you so much for letting me come into your beautiful church last week’ (Thomas 2015). The commemorator does not mention faith or religion in her tribute beyond citing the Church as the focus of her visit. Although it is acknowledged that a belief in an afterlife is inferred rather than explicitly made, it is significant that Edwards is sensed as still being present amongst the living in some ethereal way. If ‘anyone’ can be affected by grief, and the definition of that grief is as an ‘individual concept’ (Walter 1994;158) then the proliferation of individual perspectives on the death of Edwards is potentially various and infinitely expansive. Therefore a commemorative network construct is a theoretical device that enables such expansive activity to be ‘contained’ and examined.

### **Commemorative Network**

The consideration of commemorative activity as a network is an acknowledgment of the significance of theoretical investigations undertaken from an Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 2007) perspective. ANT is an established theoretical framework devised by the social theorist Bruno Latour, which has inspired the adoption herein of the commemorative network as a construct. Within the ANT theoretical framework commemorators as ‘actors’ are engaging in commemorative activity across a network. By employing ANT, seemingly mundane commemorative activity can begin to be translated into innovative, commemorative practices which form a coherent network. Although ANT has informed this study’s theoretical investigations, the study does not consider the network from a distinct ANT perspective. Primarily this is to enable

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<sup>29</sup> See Appendix C p.16

the study to consider Edwards' commemorative network with a wider cultural and social analytical gaze, to explore fully other constructs and elements that are not considered to be network-centric.

By acknowledging that a commemorative network for Edwards exists is not to infer that a formal structure to neatly frame the memory of Edwards has been consciously created by commemorators. As a construct the network allows for the examination of the social and cultural practices of commemoration and a wide range of activities which follow biological death to produce a networked 'immortality' for Edwards.

Due to the nature and timing of his death, Edward's commemoration is inextricably linked to the commemorative networks of the Busby Babes and the Munich Air Disaster, whilst also being generally associated to the commemoration of all dead people. Edwards' network is formed by acts of commemoration and the interaction of commemorators. These individuals demonstrate acts of commemoration that may demonstrate a convergence of opinion whilst others may be divergent in nature yet all are connected through their preservation of the memory of Edwards.

### **Categories of Commemorative Activity and Commemorators**

Within the commemorative network of Edwards' all dedicatory activity can be identified within one or more of the following categories:

1. The undertaking of traditional or unconventional death-related rituals
2. The collection, creation, distribution or consumption of commemorative material objects, facts, experience or opinions
3. The undertaking of personal (not intend for sharing beyond a specified group) dedicatory practices
4. The observance of significant dates and anniversaries
5. The making of permanent or temporary memorials (real or virtual)
6. Visits or 'pilgrimages' to memorials or other significant commemorative sites

Dedicatory acts of cohesion, where individuals come together to share or reinforce a specific commemorative act such as the attending of a

commemorative event, are present in the network. Simultaneously acts that are disrupted and impeded by the actions of other commemorators also exist. The varied nature of commemorative activities requires the identification of commemorative cohorts but also individual commemorators. Within these subgroups a small number of cohorts and individuals were found to be significant due to their unique association to Edwards.

A number of individual commemorators within Edwards' network were identified as significant to the research and they were subsequently interviewed, where possible. For the purpose of this study significant commemorators were identified from the following cohorts:

- Edwards Family members
- Fans of Edwards and/or Manchester United and/or the England football team
- Friends and colleagues of Edwards
- Manchester United Football Club

Individuals who were interviewed, talked to or emailed were:

#### Edwards Family members

- Colin Daniels (Second cousin/knew Edwards)
- Joey Edwards (First cousin/knew Edwards)
- John Edwards (First cousin/knew Edwards)
- Keith Edwards (First cousin/knew Edwards)
- Laurence Brownhill (Nephew of John and Keith Edwards/knew Edwards)
- Loraine Rogers (Second cousin/knew Edwards)
- Maurice Perry (Son of Edwards' mother's step-sister)

#### Fans of Edwards and/or Manchester United

- Mike Thomas (website creator and webmaster/did not know Edwards)
- Phil Maddison (Fan who undertook several commemorative pilgrimages/did not know Edwards)

The transcripts of these and other interviews and email correspondence can be found at Appendix E. Those significant individuals and collectives who were not interviewed are represented through evidence gathered from a wide range of sources including biographical accounts.

Although the focus for analysis is essentially concerned with commemorators operating from within the public realm, significant Edwards family members who previously chose not to commemorate Edwards publicly also participated in the study. Loraine Rogers, Colin Daniels and Joey Edwards had never been interviewed about Edwards' commemoration before and they all considered themselves to be non-active in the network. Mike Thomas had not previously been interviewed about his commemorative activity specifically before. Their participation in this research project created new unique research data which has previously been unobtainable.

### **Commemorator Hierarchy**

All commemorators ultimately act as individuals with their own perspective on death yet through their association to the subject of commemoration (in this case Edwards) their dedicatory activity may be viewed collectively. Within a perceived collective, commemorators may be identified or self identified as belonging to specific subgroups, such as a Manchester United fan cohort or as an Edwards family member. Therefore their self perception and how they are perceived by others within the network, profoundly affects their commemorative hierarchy status.

To represent any commemorator as 'significant' acknowledges a perceived hierarchy of commemorators within the network. The concept of hierarchy within Edwards' network is essentially based on Edwards himself. Although deceased, Edwards has the highest status within the hierarchy of his own commemoration. The more closely associated a commemorator is to him, the higher they are on the perceived scale of hierarchy. In order for a hierarchy to be perceived, commemorators need to be identifiable through their association with Edwards. This identification can be through others or it can be self-made and is explored through the examination of significant commemorators such as Bobby Charlton, members of Edward's family and specific fans.

Those commemorators, who have no memory of their own to preserve, often express or even confess their lack of ‘commemorative credentials’. They formally acknowledge that they have no true memory of the event or the victims and in doing so they acknowledge a functioning hierarchy. They express a reverence to the true memory holders such as family members and place them at the top of a hierarchy of commemorators. These memory holders are considered as significant commemorators by other commemorators across the network. Hierarchy is examined as a significant factor in how commemorators interact and respond to each other within Edwards’ commemorative network.

### **Commemorator Alliance and Impedance**

Commemorators undertake commemorative activity which is intended to preserve memory within a construct defined as a commemorative network which acknowledges a hierarchy of commemorators. The analysis of how and why commemorators are coerced, inspired or impeded in their efforts to preserve Edwards’ memory simultaneously is an analysis of the network itself. Commemorative activity often converges at points that are significant as points of ‘localised passage’ (Star & Griesemer, 1989). These points may underpin an alliance between commemorators or challenge them by impedance. There may be ‘tension’ (1989) within the commemorative network between ‘allies’ (1989) and at these points of tension the justification or vilification of an act intensifies the relationships between commemorators. Therefore the study of these tensions is crucial to the understanding of how commemorators interact with each other within a commemorative network. The themes of alliance and impedance draw predominantly from the work of Star and Griesemer (1989) around ‘boundary work’<sup>30</sup>. In part they are derived from ANT and Latour’s exploration of the definition of social ‘by redefining sociology not as the ‘science of the social’, but as the tracing of associations’ (Latour, 2007;5). The commemorative network can be considered in simple terms as interconnected interested parties unified by a shared intention or objectives; primarily shaped by those actively involved. However, following Star and Griesemer (1989) this unification may be through an alliance which is artificial and without formalised shared intent.

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<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 2 p.27 ‘Boundary Work’

Edwards' commemorative network could be considered as a shared democratic space, yet a functioning hierarchy is apparent which defines greatly how, where and when Edwards is commemorated. There is no formalised system of hierarchy inscribed at any juncture within the network and the network itself has no formally defined parameters. The perception of hierarchy within the commemorative network of Edwards includes the acknowledgement of the significant commemorators including Bobby Charlton and Edwards' family members.

#### **4ii: SIGNIFICANT COMMEMORATORS**

##### **Family Commemorators**

When the relatives of Edwards are referenced within his commemorative network they are predominantly called 'family' or 'relatives'. The general use of the words 'family' or 'relatives' is reflected in the wider commemorative network of the Munich Air Disaster. There are occasionally more specific references to individual family members such as 'mother' or 'cousin' but often there is no specific reference to the family member's related status. This constructs the concept of a homogeneous family cohort however it is a collective that is more individually representative than collectively. It is a simple word that belies the reality of Edwards' expanding, complex ancestral collective.

Not one single family member as an individual has represented the Edwards' family since his mother's death in 2003. The reference of family within Edwards' network could mean any number or any combination of family members depending on the source of the reference. There are instances of individual family members requesting evidence or clarification from other family members self identified across social media. In response to a blog post by the researcher whereby a family link to Edwards was articulated, two individuals left responses on the blog identifying themselves as Edwards' family members (Charlie 2014 & Kirtsy 2014). The first responder went into some detail about their genealogical connection to Edwards stating 'I have took [sic] my mothers surname but my dad's surname is Edwards. I believe Duncan was my great, great uncle But I'm not too sure' (Charlie 2014). This demonstrates a desire by a family member to

assert their own connection to Edwards, but also to articulate a lack of knowledge about the Edwards family.

A second respondent was also from a person claiming to be a relative of Edwards seeking further details about the researcher's family connection 'could you send me an email or something please because my dad is related to Duncan Edwards, I would love to know how you are related etc' (Kirsty 2014). This second respondent then emailed the researcher through a contact she acquired from someone who ran an Edwards' dedicatory website<sup>31</sup>, again requesting further details specifically about the researcher's ancestral credentials. However, the blog clearly stated the researchers ancestral link to Edwards 'My grandmother was an Edwards, her father and Duncan's father were brothers' (Rogers 2011) with the grandmother identifiable by name on an image of her grave, depicted in the blog.

It appeared that this commenter wanted verification of ancestry to such a degree that they recruited the help of another commemorator in order to achieve their goal. This demonstrates the burgeoning complexity of Edwards' ancestry, felt even by those who consider themselves embedded within it. These family members who respond to commemorative activity by other family members demonstrate the lack of genealogical knowledge between members of the same family. These members are not always aware of other family members, but they seek out those who say that they are family to connect with them or interrogate their claims. This reveals a family of dispersed individuals who have a limited understanding of what Edwards' family now looks like, and who many of their own relatives are. This challenges the all pervasive concept of the homogenous 'family' within the commemorative network of Edwards.

It was not possible to compile comprehensively the entire family tree of Duncan Edwards without lengthy genealogical research. The benefits of a detailed family tree to this research in this regard, negated its undertaking. As Edwards had no surviving siblings nor was he married he did not have any direct descendants when he died. His parents were his only direct next of kin although he did have several aunties, uncles and cousins who survived him.

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<sup>31</sup> Mike Thomas is the creator and webmaster of [www.duncanedwards.co.uk](http://www.duncanedwards.co.uk)

In order for family members to be consulted or referenced in commemorative activity they must be publically identifiable and accessible. Therefore references to family within commemorative networks can only accurately describe those family members who make themselves visible through acts of accessible commemoration.

Such is the regard for the role of the family within the network by others that the majority of references made to the family are made by other commemorators and rarely by the family members themselves. There is an element of ‘specialness by association’ and most family members are referenced or discussed with respect within the network.

The elevated and incontestable status of a family member within the network is apparent across many parts of the network; however this is rarely substantiated by their own actual presence. For instance a commemorative activity may state that members of the family were consulted and had no objections to the activity, giving the activity an endorsement as official family approval however, the integrity of that endorsement does not appear to be interrogated in depth by the network. It would appear that ‘family’ can be represented by a number of disparate members of a genealogical group with nothing more than the trust of their word that they are in fact related to Edwards. The dispersion of family connections to Edwards by marriage and birth creates a burgeoning genealogical link to Edwards, yet simultaneously those linked by blood who also knew him personally is diminishing because of deaths in the family.

There does appear to be discontent from those who knew and are related to Edwards by blood who could be more specifically described as family members as ‘the bereaved’ towards those with lesser connections who make their claims of association to Edwards publically. Associations by marriage or through a step-lineage are discounted in the most part by those with direct bloodline lineage who reference these individuals as jumping on the ‘bandwagon’ (Rogers and Rogers, 2014:7). Those within the bloodline consider themselves to be the true family, seeing those outside of this direct lineage as related, but not part of ‘real’ Edwards’ family.

## **Family Members as ‘The Bereaved’**

As grief is manifest in acts or emotions as responses to loss then grief can be expressed or experienced by anyone. How profoundly this grief is expressed is depends on the closeness of association of the person experiencing grief and those that they are grieving. The general consensus is that the closer the association between the grieving and the subject of their grieving, the more acutely grief is felt. Therefore within Edwards’ commemorative network those who knew and were related to him or those who were close friends with him are acknowledged as being most profoundly affected by his death. These individuals are bestowed a greater ‘right’ to being bereaved than individuals with a less immediate connection. Within an assumed hierarchy of commemorators immediate family are referenced as the bereaved, and to a lesser extent close family and friends. Those who knew the deceased personally in some capacity are also part of the bereaved collective. However, as grief is considered a universal concept that anyone can experience, a third, fourth or even fifth cousin of Edwards born today may experience a sense of grief regarding the loss of their albeit distant relative. Yet such grief would not be considered to be as acute as that felt by family members who knew Edwards. Extended family members may undertake acts of commemoration that perpetuate an established family presence within Edwards’ commemorative network, but they are not the bereaved. Although commemorative acts undertaken by any family members will always be considered significant because family commemorators are distinctly considered to be higher in the commemorative hierarchy than the ‘lay’ mourner.

Seeking to define ‘the bereaved’ Walter suggests ‘definitions are being expanded so that ‘the bereaved’ are perceived as potentially more than just the next of kin’ (Walter 1994;157). This expansion of the definition of the bereaved in the modern era means the way in which family members are perceived and how they act in commemorative networks has, and continues to shift (1994;157). In Victorian times a classification for how and for how long a family member was expected to grieve was clearly defined depending on the members’ relationship to the deceased (1994;157). There was also a gender split across the bereaved whereby women’s attendance at funerals was neither

commonplace nor encouraged ‘lest they show their feelings in public in an unseemly way’ (Berridge 2002;141). What appears convoluted and prescriptive mourning by modern standards, in the 1800s ‘second wives were required to don mourning clothes for three months when their husband’s first wife’s parents died’ (2002;139). Such formally defined periods of mourning especially for women were socially expected as an observance of strictly structured bereavement protocol. Such protocols were apparent, albeit to a lessening degree, into the 1950s, 1960s & 1970s. One of Edwards’ female relatives attests to the persistence of the gendered nature of specific bereavement protocols. In 1958 she recalls that the male son rather than the wife of a deceased brother of Edwards’ father was called upon as an official mourner (See Appendix Eiii;5).

Queen Victoria is famous for her prolonged state of visible widowhood through the mourning of her husband Prince Albert. She abided by the social rules of wearing mourning black after her husband died, yet she extended the practice beyond its prescribed timeline until her death. She gratified those who followed ritual yet took the role of widowhood further than was required by etiquette. In lengthening her formal mourning period she publically emphasised her sense of acute loss. Yet wearing black for such an extended period meant that her grief dictated her physical persona. The wearing of black ‘was a powerful symbol of social segregation’ (Berridge, 2002;144) in a way that may be difficult for modern society to comprehend today. Although Edwards’ commemorators may not be steeped in black apparel his mother did continue to actively publically commemorate him until her own death. His mother did not continually wear black but she commemorated him through formal and informal dedicatory acts that reflect an extended public mourning. This demonstrates a shift towards grief being considered as more of an individual process, rather a prescribed set of bereavement rituals. Although this shift towards personal expressions of grief is apparent and was discussed in Chapter Two at the time of Edwards’ death certain prescriptive bereavement protocols were still in place.

Time may have altered bereavement practices and protocol but change appears to have been relatively slow in changing family mourning protocols for the Edwards family. In 1958, Rogers (Edwards’ second cousin who knew and

grew up with Edwards) recalled that she did not attend Edwards' funeral. She recalled that her uncle Joey did attend the funeral (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;5). As Edwards' father Gladstone's brother Joseph had died, it fell to his son Joey to officially represent Joseph's immediate family at the funeral. It was not Joseph's widow who represented the family but Joey his only male descendant. Whilst Joey's sisters may have attended the ceremony, it was their brother who officially represented the family member in church. Although since Victorian times, the mourning 'rules' had changed and women were now 'allowed' to attend funerals, in regard to Edwards' funeral their formal attendance was still considered as not being required. Rogers recalled however that, women had a big presence at the funeral, lining the road to the cemetery, but that she herself did not go 'I don't know why I didn't... everybody who lived round by here [Dudley] especially the women, all the women went. Oh some of the men were at work' (2014;5). This defines a social structure whereby married men predominantly worked whilst their female counterparts stayed at home and this is substantiated by archive press photographs from Edwards' funeral (Dudley Archives) whereby the majority of those shown lining the funeral cortege route were women, with the 'working men' notably absent, or perhaps already ensconced in the church.

Rogers had not felt the need to go to the funeral nor had her attendance been requested, coupled with her brother's less formal reason for going along on the day 'we went to see the crowds you know' (Rogers and Daniels, 2014;2) this reveals that the Edwards' family appears not to have been particularly close, yet they still upheld a systemised ritual whereby men rather than women represented family groups. In an interview in 2011, John Edwards a first cousin to Edwards recalled not being able to attend the funeral because he could not afford to travel from Nuneaton, some thirty five miles away. He recalled in a newspaper interview that 'those were tough times... I was so sad that I was unable to say goodbye because we had been so close' (Greatrex 2011) and this raises the issue of how close family members can stay, as they disperse beyond their hometowns.

The homogenous family inferred and referenced within the commemorative networks of Edwards appears to have not been in place as far back as the time

of his funeral. Therefore the requested presence of family members at commemorative events for Edwards is in direct contrast to the lack of requests for certain family members to attend his funeral. However, attendance requests for commemorative events can only be sent to those who are self-identified as family members.

Family members Daniels and Rogers, appear to be demonstrating an ongoing sense of bereavement protocol whereby they do not formally attend commemorative events for Edwards publically. They remain publically inactive in the commemorative network of Edwards and although bereaved family members, they are not the identifiable family that commemorators reference. It falls to other family members who are self- identified and visible in the network to transform to become the recognised family commemorative cohort. Edwards' family is currently publically represented in Dudley by Laurence Brownhill, and his uncles Keith and John Edwards (Edwards' first cousins). Self-identified as the bereaved family not through the wearing black, but through testimony in newspaper articles in which Keith and John Edwards identify themselves as family members. Brownhill described how the local council consulted him and his uncles, in regard to the moving and remodelling of Edwards' statue in 2012. He confirmed that they as 'the family' had endorsed the proposal but it is not clear what would have happened if they had opposed it.

Brownhill, John and Keith Edwards have established themselves as the family in the commemorative network of Edwards. This mantle has not so much been passed down from Edwards' mother in 2003, but emerged to fill a void some years later. This mantle has predominantly been taken up through contact via newspapers and journalists (with Keith and John responding to a newspaper article to become the current family representatives). As commemoration across social media and the internet are now powerful tools of commemoration, the 'family' will need to be visible online, in order to be significant to Edwards' commemorative virtual network.

The internet is a public and social platform across which words and images can be actively created and consumed. With such a global communication network any family member active within the network becomes potentially more widely

visible and known. If they are related to a person with an elevated public profile, their grief is proportionally amplified by the fame of the dead person that they are related to. If as Walter suggests ‘other kin and friends’ are ‘claiming the right to grieve, and experts are reconstructing them as potential grievers’ (Walter, 1994;158), then the family of Edwards has a changing role to play within his commemorative network. This appears to necessitate that some family members need to be visible online in order to endorse activity and maintain the elevated status of the family within the hierarchy of commemorators.

Commemorative activity that is visible online has elevated the status of those who produce and control it within the commemorative networks of Edwards and the Munich Air Disaster. This will be discussed further in this chapter in specific regard to Mike Thomas (a Manchester United fan who created dedicated tribute sites to Edwards and the Disaster).

The bereaved family members who choose to remain predominantly publically inactive in Edwards’ network online; or otherwise, do privately question and contest the authenticity of those family members who publically commemorate Edwards. Comments made by family members about some other family members who have adopted a public role in Edwards’ commemoration were predominantly guarded. Some publically visible commemorators were considered to be trying to jump ‘on the bandwagon now’ in order to ‘look good’ (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;5). The phrase ‘coming out the woodwork’ was used on two occasions by Daniels to describe ‘these others’ (Rogers and Daniels, 2014;4). Anecdotal evidence from beyond newspaper reports include Daniels’ recollection whereby ‘you were in a pub and you’d hear oh he’s my relation. I heard loads claiming they were relations’ (2014;4). There is an acknowledgment of a fragmented Edwards family and Daniels does not dispute their connection to Edwards but rather the volume of ‘new’ family members publicising their link to Edwards as ‘there are so many cousins coming out the woodwork it is unbelievable’ (2014;4). It did not seem that Daniels disputed their authenticity but rather the significance of their connection to the Edwards family he knows.

### **Family Members as Commemorators**

Although Daniels and Rogers may question the motivation of more distant family members being part of the visible commemorative network of Edwards,

they are not active disputants. As the Edwards family evolves links to deceased ancestors becomes more complex as death, divorce and movement away from Dudley creates a dispersed family group. Disputes over who has the rightful claim as the ‘key commemorator’ to Edwards can become ‘intra-family disputes’ (Walter, 1994;158). Yet Rogers and Daniels express no desire to challenge family members for the key commemorator mantel, but family disputes over their dead are not uncommon.<sup>32</sup> Yet in Edwards’ network potential family disputes are muted because disputants see no benefit in challenging other commemorators because they see no point ‘what good is it going to do you?’ (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;15) Rogers asked in her interview. The reticence felt by Rogers to publicise her family connection to Edwards was expressed through her sense, that although they grew up together and were cousins of a similar age, they were not close. She considered to publically state her connection to Edwards would be to overstate it as ‘he [Edwards] was ... I wouldn’t say part of the family – but he was in the family’ (2014;7). This perception that her own connection being a second cousin who grew up with and who knew Edwards was not strong enough for her to feel justified in making a public genealogical claim, also means that she may not look favourably on those with what she perceives as less of a connection, that do so.

However, there is one next of kin dispute that can be found in the public commemorative network of Edwards, whereby John and Keith Edwards disputed a local newspaper article by someone claiming to be the ‘last Edwards’ in the Edwards’ lineage. Their public dispute was manifest by contacting the newspaper and having a ‘correction’ article written about them being the closest surviving relations of Edwards. Subsequently this asserted them as the new public key family commemorators by the local press who interviewed them. This new key commemorator status has persisted and their attendance at local commemorative events as representatives of Edwards’ family is documented as well as their endorsement of certain subsequent commemorative activities.

References to specific relatives of Edwards are apparent in the network, as well as general references to the Edwards family. Over the last 10 years those most

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<sup>32</sup> As cemetery administrator I witnessed several on-site disputes amongst family members regarding the appropriateness of offerings on family graves

frequently referenced are Edwards' parents and first cousins John and Keith Edwards. The references to Edwards' parents, mostly his mother, are usually made in the context of publications, documentaries and across some social media platforms. References to John and Keith Edwards are predominantly within news reports across social media and in the press; mainly about their involvement in current or pending commemorative activities or events.

### **Edwards' Parents**

Edwards' father (Gladstone Edwards) and his mother (Sarah Edwards) passed away in 1978 and 2003, respectively. Edwards' mother was the most frequently specified family member to be referenced in Edwards' commemorative network by the press, historians, authors, filmmakers, researchers and the local council until her death. Evidence from family testimonies suggests that Gladstone seemed unable to resolve how to publically commemorate his son. Daniels a close friend and relative recalls 'Funny thing about him [Gladstone] he said 'I don't like folks recognising me' and he used to wear a blazer with Manchester United [on it]' (Rogers and Daniels, 2014;3). It appears that Gladstone voiced a reticence about being identified as Edwards' father, whilst at the same time he created an opportunity to be recognised. This seems to tally with his insistence that he did not take up a role in the cemetery where his son was buried, yet nevertheless he did direct visitors to his son's grave whilst working there (Burn, 2006;13). Gladstone's intentions and actions appear to be contradictory yet they may simply demonstrate that his grief process is complex. Gladstone was remembered by family as being a quiet man and this appears to have meant that Gladstone's wife took a commemorative lead. Daniels reiterates this as 'he [Gladstone] never used to talk much... seems like Sarah led the memorial stuff' (2014;6). However, many of her commemorative acts were undertaken with Bobby Charlton.

### **Bobby Charlton**

Bobby Charlton is a historically important commemorator in the network of the Munich Air Disaster, as a survivor. Within the commemorative network of Edwards he is significant as a close former friend and colleague of Edwards, who retained a strong and persistent bond to Edwards' memory through his friendship with Edwards' mother.

Charlton is distinctly revered as a man and footballer as ‘few professionals remain untarnished, Bobby [Charlton] was one of the few, Pele perhaps the other’ (Dunphy, 1991;379). A prominent Manchester United fan Mike Thomas quotes Charlton eulogising about Edwards’ abilities adding ‘If someone like Bobby Charlton would say that then that tells you what he had as a footballer’ (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;2). This demonstrates not only a veneration of Edwards by Charlton but also admiration of Charlton by Manchester United fans.

Although no longer playing professionally, Charlton is a venerated international footballer who won a World Cup medal in 1966 and went on to be knighted in 1994 for services to football. He has remained a prominent advocate of Manchester United through a formal alliance to the club on the pitch and later at board level. Therefore his position within the commemorative network of Edwards and the Munich Air Disaster is distinctly unique and persistent. His significance within and to the network is reinforced with each new dedicatory act he undertakes. He embodies a commemorative continuity in regard to the Busby Babes, Manchester United and Edwards which is unequalled by any other survivor. His prominence across Edwards’ network is distinctively unmatched by any other survivor.

Charlton has remained an active commemorator since the time of the Disaster to present day, in part because his life was ‘strongly interwoven with Manchester United’ (Charlton, 2008;388). He clearly defines the personal significance of the Disaster as ‘everything that has happened in the last fifty years of my life has been conditioned in some way by that tragedy’ (2008;391). He considers himself ‘very lucky’ to have survived the Disaster and it was an experience that has defined his way of life in regard to ‘a certain duty to remember and cherish all the best of what you have felt and seen’ (2008;391). Such a personal connection to the Disaster appears to define his commemorative activity as sense of ‘duty’ but also underpins his belief in the significance of football to have ‘the power to bring happiness to ordinary people’ (2008;392).

He describes the ‘unbreakable pride’ (2008;392) he feels as a Manchester United player and this strongly allies him to the club. This is unique in that it is not an alliance mirrored by any other player who survived. When Charlton’s commemorative activities are compared to that of Harry Gregg (the only other surviving player at the time of writing) Charlton is a far more prolific and conspicuous commemorator of the Disaster and Edwards. In some part this is a reflection of Edwards’ and Charlton’s close friendship and Charlton’s extended relationship with Manchester United. However, the most significant difference between the two survivors appears to be that Charlton and Gregg preserved the memory of the Disaster in distinctly different ways. In his autobiography Gregg recalls how, when asked about the Disaster, he ‘told the assembled press that I tried not to think about it every day (for the sake of my sanity)’ (Gregg, 2001;143). Whilst Gregg recalled that when Charlton was asked the same question Charlton replied ‘I’m not like Harry,’ and that every morning in life he thought about the crash and the lads who died’ (Gregg, 2001;143).

Charlton also had a strong and endearing bond to Edwards’ mother Sarah enhanced by the commemorative activities which they shared and experienced together. Beyond her family connection to Edwards, Sarah’s visibility in the commemorative network was intensified through her alliance with Charlton.

### **Charlton and the Edwards Family**

Family members Joey Edwards, Colin Daniels and Loraine Rogers all testified to Charlton’s support of Sarah beyond their public shared acts of commemoration. Joey Edwards confirmed that Sarah told him that ‘Bobby Charlton used to go down regular, down the house’ (Rogers and Edwards, 2014;2). Daniels describes Charlton as ‘a nice bloke’ (Rogers and Daniels, 2014;5) and Rogers recalled how Charlton ‘did look after Sarah and he kept in touch...he did do a lot for her’ (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;15). It is apparent that Charlton had a special relationship with Sarah which manifested itself through his regular contact with her, long after Edwards died. Within the commemorative hierarchy of Edwards, Charlton and Sarah remained at the top of the hierarchy for many years. They attended events together including their joint official unveiling of a commemorative statue to Edwards, in Dudley in 1999. With Sarah’s death in 2003 Charlton is now the ‘key commemorator’ of Edwards and

the Munich Air Disaster. In 2002 Sarah's ill health meant she was unable to attend the inaugural National Football Museum Hall of Fame Awards Ceremony and Charlton accepted the Award inducting Edwards into the Hall of Fame on her behalf. At the ceremony 'he spoke in glowing terms about both Sarah and Duncan'<sup>33</sup> which reinforced their commemorative alliance.

The connection between Charlton and Sarah was significant because it marked a discernible link between the Edwards' family and the Manchester United Football Club. Notably Charlton and Sarah's friendship extended for almost 50 years whilst Charlton's friendship with her son had only spanned a fraction of that time. Charlton has continued to actively commemorate Edwards since Sarah's death but without any tangibly significant links to the remaining Edwards' family members. Since Sarah's death the link between the Edwards' family and the club appears to have disappeared. References to family in regard to a consultation by the Manchester United Club over the erection of the AIG fiftieth anniversary memorial at Old Trafford did not specify if a member of Edwards' family was consulted (Taylor 2008). The commemorative partnership between Charlton and Sarah was unique and their alliance was due to a personal bond manifest in their commemoration of Edwards.

Rogers suggests the close friendship with Charlton was because he was 'the closest link' (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;15) to her son. Charlton had first met Sarah 'as a skinny schoolboy' and 'after herself [Sarah], he had been the chief memory-keeper' (Burn, 2006;247). Their combined efforts to keep Edwards' memory alive were fundamentally based on their mutual love for him, as Charlton expressed a love for Edwards in his autobiography (Charlton, 2008:159).

In one of his many conspicuous acts of formal commemoration of Edwards, Charlton gave a speech at the unveiling of Edwards' statue in Dudley in 1999. His speech formed an extended 'obituary' to Edwards:

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<sup>33</sup> Kevin Moore (Director of the National Football Museum) stated during Skype conversation with researcher on 4 August 2015.

Sometimes I fear there is danger that people will think that we who knew him and saw him in action boost him because he is dead...I am not a person to dramatise things or dispense fulsome praise...a few are great, and they deserve respect. But Duncan Edwards was the greatest (Burn, 2006;14).

At the time of writing Edward's cousins Keith and John have become the most publically visible and most frequently quoted family members. In response to a local newspaper article about someone claiming to be the last of the Edwards family, Keith had felt compelled to contact the newspaper to challenge the claim as a living relative of Edwards. Keith recalled how he 'called the editor to put them right. We were then invited to a football pitch opening dedicated to Duncan Edwards and I met Bobby Charlton there' (Rogers and Brownhill, Edwards & Edwards, 2012;2). Significantly, Charlton is mentioned by Keith as an active and noteworthy commemorator. It would seem unlikely that the newspaper editor was rededicating the football pitch himself and this suggests that Keith and his brother were invited by another party as representatives of the Edwards' family. This marks the point at which Keith and his brother John have become publically self-identified as Edwards family members and received public acknowledgement as 'official' family members.

Their invitation to a commemorative event to specifically represent Edwards' family suggests that their presence was considered significant and important to that commemorative activity. The fact that Keith felt compelled to contact the newspaper, and then compelled to attend the event demonstrates a desire on his part to be an active family commemorator. His profile also appears to have ensured his status within the network to the point that he was given access to Charlton as a 'key commemorator'. The benefit of having high profile commemorators and family members at commemorative events is that they give those events authenticity by association. Although this is not explicitly stated, the presence of such associated commemorators suggests an assumed endorsement of the dedicatory activity.

Keith had not been publically active in the network until the point at which he made the call to the newspaper editor. He had attended the official unveiling of

Edwards' statue in 1999 but not in an official capacity as an invited family member, yet in 2016 he and his brother were guests of honour at the rededication of the same statue which demonstrates their key commemorator status. Whilst those inactive family members cite their invisibility as the reason that they are never invited to formal commemorative events.

Although Edwards' family appears to have split into two after Edwards' death with one ancestral line 'the Edwards' from his father Gladstone and another from his mother Sarah, there is no animosity expressed publically between them. It seems that what has stabilised Edwards' commemorative network, through its family members is 'a more social understanding of grief that can be popularly appropriated' (Walter, 1994;161). Such an understanding is an aspiration required by society in order for 'models of family dynamics' to be understood within the wider 'grief process' (1994;161). Within Edwards' family, some family members do appear confused about how and who they are related to, yet this confusion does not create conflict. The potential for conflict particularly after Edwards' mother passed away and the role of key family commemorator passed to Keith and John Edwards has not led to any public family disputes. That is not to say that conflict will never occur. As Edwards' family grave continues to be managed as a democratically public commemorative space by members of his mother's extended family and whilst other relatives of Edwards represent the family at events, 'the family' appear to be peacefully sharing the family's commemorative responsibilities.

In their interviews the predominantly non-active commemorators Daniels, Joey Edwards and Rogers disputed any closeness of Duncan Edwards to any family members beyond his parents, particularly after the point at which he left Dudley and moved to Manchester in 1952. Edwards lived away from his family's hometown of Dudley for all of his adult life. He moved to Manchester after signing with Manchester United just before his sixteenth birthday in July 1952 in a 'tearful' farewell with his mother and father (Leighton 2012;59). He undertook two years of National Service near Shrewsbury (see Appendix B) during which time he travelled nationally and internationally due to his football commitments. Therefore the Edwards remembered in Dudley was principally Edwards as a young boy.

## **Edwards Commemorated as a Boy**

In the years after Edwards left Dudley, Rogers recalled seeing his mother regularly in town whilst out shopping with her own mother. Sarah was remembered often complaining that she saw little of her son since his move ‘oh I never see him, you know never see him at all’ and Rogers puts this lack of contact in the context of the time ‘I mean there was no phones or anything like that then’ (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;3). Joey Edwards confirmed this lack of contact with Edwards after he joined Manchester United and Daniels also stated the same ‘No. No. No never heard from him again’ (Rogers and Daniels, 2014;6). Although Edwards and his father Gladstone had been a regular weekly visitor to Daniels’ family home, after Edwards left for Manchester it seems that he only returned to visit his own parents. Daniels suggested that Edwards would have been keen not to return because ‘where he came from he was probably glad to get away’ citing the poverty of Edwards’ family life as the main reason (2014;6).

Essentially the descriptions of Edwards by his family members are of a boy prior to his professional football career. They are of memories of Edwards’ as a boy rather than as a man and those family members, specifically Daniels and Rogers recall Edwards through the recollections of their own childhoods. They both profess a lack of knowledge of Edwards’ life once he had left Dudley and confess that their memories may be hazy or partial at some times.

Yet it is not their reliability as witnesses to Edwards’ life that seems of importance to those who are active in Edwards’ commemorative network. What these commemorators appear to seek from family members is primarily their endorsement of their own commemorative activity but also the occasional anecdote about Edwards’ life. What necessitates the presence of those family members by non-family members is the desire for the non-family member commemorative activity to be officially appropriated & authenticated by ancestral association. However, the inferred gravitas of such a family endorsement is not matched by most living family members who knew little about Edwards after he departed for Manchester. As Rogers states once Edwards moved away ‘no one knew him after that. Not really. It wasn’t very

often that he would come home' (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;3). The apparent lack of closeness between Sarah Edwards' family and her husband's side of the family seemed to become more expansive after Gladstone's death in 1978 but 'there was no animosity. It was just the way the families were' (2014;4). Edwards and his family have a bond that is revered within his commemorative network as significant, close and all pervasive. Yet by their own testimonies the 'family was never close to one another really' (Rogers and Edwards, 2014;7) and Edwards was distanced from them when he essentially moved to Manchester. He was not the only family member to leave Dudley as Rogers recalls 'all the family seemed to be spread all over the place' (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;3).

This and other family testimonies describe a family that saw little of Edwards after he reached adulthood. This appears to be reflected in local references to him as being a 'wonder boy' (Taylor 2015) because the Edwards recollected by those in Dudley was Edwards as a boy. The recollections of Edwards by family members often reference his prowess as a footballer but they also describe Edwards in the context of family life. Through their family-based anecdotes Edwards is made ordinary within a network that persistently reveres him as extra-ordinary. Therefore the testimonies of family members are crucial to the commemorative network because they help construct his local working class narrative. This narrative creates a persona for Edwards as a boy rather than as Edwards' the footballer. Although similar narratives can be referenced from his friends, his family have a greater authenticity and insight into Edwards' role within the family.

As the surviving family members who knew Edwards personally begin to diminish in number, the imperative to collect such family testimonies is time-crucial and during the research process two of Edwards' first cousins passed away; one only a few weeks after being interviewed. Fundamentally family members will still be referenced through their personal recollections of Edwards, but by capturing this particular research data through the interviews of previously silent family members, a more robust and truer representation of the young Edwards and his family has been preserved.

Family will still be defined through ancestral association to Edwards, yet for the most part those family members who choose to actively commemorate him today, Edwards is someone they will never know personally. Unless family diaries are uncovered or previously unknown relatives come forward to offer new stories of Edwards, the essence of Edwards in the context of his family will soon plateau because family members are gradually dying. Some new family data has been collected herein for this research but this will be amongst the last testimonies made by those family members who knew him.

Over recent times, these firsthand or first generation commemorators have died or left Edwards' commemorative network. Paradoxically their 'shared' firsthand memories have often remained and multiplied within the network. For example, a quote regarding Edwards by Jimmy Murphy as a 'visionary recruiter of young players' (Ward & Williams, 2010;74) and assistant to Matt Busby in 1958, can be found in many guises across the network. Murphy is classified as a commemorator who was significant as a friend and colleague of Edwards and through his role as temporary Manchester United manager post-Disaster.

He was not on the plane in Munich due to commitments elsewhere as the Welsh Football Team coach. He died in 1989 but his quote about Edwards 'when I used to hear Muhammad Ali proclaim to the world that he was the greatest, I would always smile. The greatest of them all was a footballer named Duncan Edwards' (Taylor 2015) is sustained within the commemorative networks of Edwards and the Disaster. His words have been appropriated on merchandise and included in several books and multiple articles, and now here within this text. However vicariously the text is used the authenticity of the quote remains intact because of Murphy's perceived status and significance within the network. As his words shift further away from his original context, the significance of Murphy to the network needs to be more explicitly stated for an emerging network, to acknowledge their significance. However, without attribution to Murphy his quote although powerful has less credence. Detached from Murphy and immersed into the commemorative network, his quote begins to be ascribed to the network rather than one person. As Hallam and Hockey identify 'Memory practices and experiences shift over time as perceptions of the past are reworked in the context of the present and in anticipation of the future'

(Hallam & Hockey, 2001:3) so the network shifts. This gives rise to activities of alliance and impedance specifically in relation to certain high profile activities which often reference key commemorators.

#### **4iii: THEMES OF ALLIANCE, IMPEDANCE AND HIERARCHY**

##### **Alliance and Impedance**

An alliance may be sought and activated between commemorators in order to maintain a 'social order' (Sheridan, 2000:7). The same act may unify commemorators by association, such as the laying of floral tributes at Edwards' grave. However, such acts may be undertaken by individuals each with their own motivation for laying particular flowers, at particular moments in a particular way. Although associated by action at a commemorative site acts such as the laying of flowers at Edwards' grave are not necessarily allied by intention.

Within the network, association is predominantly a passive assumption, whereas an alliance is a purposeful collaboration or endorsement. Alliances by commemorators may be sought for support of their own activity or the acts of others. If a commemorator secures an alliance their commemorative activity is endorsed and made 'stable' (Star & Bowker, 2000:7) within the network.

Adversely without alliance the commemorator's acts may become transient, 'decaying' (2000:7) or unstable.

Allies reinforce commemorative acts by endorsement and often act to dissipate them across the network. This may be a comment made on a Facebook page by a commemorator that is simply 'liked' by another commemorator, or it may be an act on a bigger scale. Examination of the response to a Manchester United commemorative memorial installed at Old Trafford (Manchester United football ground) in 2008 reveals acts of impedance and alliance. The response to the memorial demonstrates a '4-dimensional archaeology' (2000:7), whereby acts of alliance and impedance, sought to transform the commemorative acts of others.

##### **Alliance and Impedance: The AIG Munich Memorial, Old Trafford 2008**

It would not be too contentious to assume that a football club and the fans of that club may form an alliance. The Manchester United Football club and its fans have a dedicatory alliance in the commemorative networks of the Munich Air Disaster. There have been various memorials<sup>34</sup> and dedicatory events created at the club's grounds. However, the installation of a temporary memorial to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Disaster at Old Trafford provoked a tension in the dedicatory alliance between the club and some fans.

In January 2008 a large temporary decal was installed on the glazed façade at the shop entrance of Old Trafford. It was funded by American International Group (AIG) an American insurance company who were the major sponsors of the club at the time. The memorial combined a photograph of the Busby Babes team at the match played before the Disaster commonly referenced as 'the last line up' and text from a calypso song<sup>35</sup>. The decal was placed behind the statue of Matt Busby, reinforcing the memorial to the former manager by association<sup>36</sup>. Some fans expressed concern about the memorial on three major points. Firstly that the text on the memorial a calypso about the Busby Babes sung by fans was transcribed inaccurately from its original source (Connor, 2007;541). Secondly, that the omission of Busby's name on the transcribed calypso was seen as a particular affront to the memory of Busby and thirdly that the sponsors AIG logo on the memorial was 'vulgar' (Taylor 2008) inappropriate advertising. In response to concerns the calypso was adjusted and the word 'Busby' was re-instated in the text but the AIG logo remained.

Previously allied commemorators were split as some approved the inclusion of the sponsor's logo on the memorial whilst others did not, but it is an oversimplification to say that all commemorators were distinctly for or against the logo's inclusion. There were a sufficient number of fans who publically campaigned for the logo's removal as to inspire significant acts of impedance against its appearance. Initially those against the logo's inclusion posted their opposition opinions across social media, creating and sharing a petition calling for the logo's removal. This act of impedance of another cohort's

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<sup>34</sup> Memorials include the Munich Clock, Munich Tunnel, Munich Plaque & AIG Munich Memorial.

<sup>35</sup> Manchester United Calypso was recorded in 1955 by Edric Connor, with the backing of Ken Jones and His Music. (Connor, 2007;154)

<sup>36</sup> Busby's statue was erected 12 years earlier in 1996 to commemorate Busby's life after his death in 1994. (The Busby Way)

commemorative activity was then reacted to. One fan articulated a stable alliance between the fans and the club and ultimately to its sponsor AIG stating 'if you don't want their advertising then don't take their money. Simple' (Taylor 2008). This infers an alliance between the sponsors, the club and the fans.

That sponsorship decisions lie with the club owners not the fans implies that in this regard fans must ally themselves to the sponsors through their alliance to the club. Yet this implies that some fans believe that the fans and the club are allied, rather than simply associated. Those fans seeking to impede the logo's inclusion appear to see their relationship with the club as an association but not necessarily an alliance. It would be difficult to substantiate that fans have any direct influence over sponsorship deals, yet the statement seems to imply that because they benefit from sponsorship they must ally themselves to the club and the sponsors.

The inclusion of the AIG logo could be seen as a reflection of the emerging historical reality of premier league football in the UK at the time. Income from large sponsorship deals gives a club such as Manchester United 'a sustained and significant advantage over its rivals' (Gerrard in Andrews, 2004;75). In 2015 Manchester United was valued at 3.1 billion dollars as the third richest club in the world (The Telegraph 2015). The club was also in third place<sup>37</sup> worldwide for global popularity at that time, based on figures for followers on social media with over 71 million twitter followers (Talksport). Therefore the alliances of club, fans and sponsors are collectively significant factors in the sustainable prominence and wealth of the club. The club's 'brand is largely, if not entirely, derived from MU's image and reputation' (Rosaen & Amis in Andrews, 2004;58) and therefore the fans and sponsors have a defining role to play as allies of the club. If 'the image and reputation' of the club is called into question by the allied fans then the club risk damaging their brand status (2004;58). In 2000 a number of fans criticised the club's 'blatant commercialisation' for changing their shirt designs for the nineteen times since 1992 (2004;56). The regular changes were criticised by parents of young supporters who felt compelled to continually purchase new replica football kits for their children. The club responded in part

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<sup>37</sup> Manchester United were behind 103 million for Real Madrid and 106 million for Barcelona football clubs.

to those criticisms by making ‘high profile contributions to charities such as UNICEF and several community programmes’ (2004:56). In 2000, the club appeared to respond to criticism in order to preserve its reputation and ally with the fans. However, in 2008 the dispute over the inclusion of the AIG logo on the memorial provoked a very different defiance. The memorial formed part of the official anniversary commemorations led by the club that week which also included a memorial service held at Old Trafford and a special local derby memorial match. Notably all sponsorship logos including the AIG logo were removed from the shirts of both Manchester teams playing in the memorial match as a mark of respect. The removal of all sponsor logos on the shirts and also the boots of some players during the match seemed to contradict the inclusion of the AIG logo on the memorial. This perceived contradiction was discussed across fan forums and in the comments sections of some online newspapers. Some fans questioned the club’s behaviour, ‘if the blues [Manchester City players] can wear a shirt without sponsorship as a mark of respect then surely the powers that be at Old Trafford can drop the logo out of respect’ (Taylor 2008). The concept of an opposing team removing sponsorship on their shirts and wearing black armbands, whilst the club retained a logo on its own memorial was considered by some as inappropriate commemorative behaviour.

What sets the Old Trafford memorial and the memorial derby match apart is the audience for which they were intended. The memorial match was a spectacle witnessed live by thousands of people and transmitted through television networks to many more. It was an event of which the club was in the business of making – ultimately ‘football’ for the fans. However, the memorial had a smaller audience, predominantly visitors to Old Trafford. That certain fans believed that they were better placed than the club to formulate the appearance of a memorial, suggests that they felt the club lacked sufficient memorial making skills.

That the text of the memorial was altered suggests that removing the logo could have as easily been undertaken. Change would not have been so easy on a more permanent memorial in bronze or stone for instance. That the memorial was perceived as mutable gives more credence to the call for it to be altered,

yet at the same time its impermanence may explain why some commemorators felt it was not worth protesting over. (Memorials will be more fully explored in Chapter Six).

As a temporary memorial the decal reflected the era in which it was created as ‘both a monument and its significance are constructed in particular times and places, contingent on the political, historical, and aesthetic realities’ (Young, 2000:95). The dispute across the network between fans and the club is historically at odds with the actions of both, in the immediate aftermath of the Disaster. In 1958, on the Saturday after the crash the planned Manchester United game was postponed and the stands were empty yet:

Outside stood small groups of supporters, not sure where it was appropriate to be but drawn to the ground to make a tangible expression of their grief. Young and old stood with tears streaming down their faces (Hall, 2008:138).

50 years on and the commemorative dimension of the space was being contested by fans. On a supporters website a fan declared ‘to me its plain wrong to have a corporate logo on a tribute, however philanthropic they may be (Red Ranter 2008). Whilst acknowledging AIG’s benevolence, the fan asserts his own ethical values to state that any logo on a tribute is ‘wrong’ (2008). These concerned fans became self-appointed commemorative network gatekeepers expected no benevolent gesture from AIG, in regard to the memorial stating ‘in this case, I am pretty sure insurance companies don’t rank too high on the goodwill scale’ (Redrants). That the company later in the same year were ‘discredited’ requiring a substantial taxpayer bailout could be said to substantiate the unethical claims made by the fans (football.co.uk).

The call to impede the logo’s inclusion is titled the ‘Glazers’ Busby Babes Tribute Madness’ (Redrants) and specifically calls into question the commemorative acts of the Glazers the then owners of the club. There is evidence of historical animosity between the allied club and fans which permeated and influenced the commemorative network, particularly at points

where the fans and the club intersected. The club's response to the call for the logo's removal was issued in an official statement:

The commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Munich air crash has involved many different groups including the club's partners. It is entirely appropriate that a partner as closely involved with the club as AIG would want to remember that extraordinary team... Key figures were consulted before the project was agreed, including the Busby family... all were supportive (Taylor 2008).

The club identifies AIG as a commemorative ally whereby AIG are a 'partner' and not a 'sponsor'. The word 'partner' suggests a closer relationship between the club and AIG. As an American based company with no direct links to the Disaster the suggestion that their desire 'to remember' the Disaster be 'entirely appropriate' is difficult to substantiate beyond the fact that they are the sponsors of the club. Although a reference to 'key figures' suggests significant commemorators were consulted, 'including the Busby family' no other families are specified by name. The significance of family to the commemorative networks of the Disaster has been established as family members rank highly in the commemorative network hierarchy. In this context the alliance of family and club appear skewed. In the context of the commemoration of the Busby Babes, Busby and his family do have an obvious relevance as the cohort bears the family names. However, as Busby did not die as a result of the Disaster and this memorial was specifically to commemorate those who died in the Disaster the referencing of his family as 'key figures' is arbitrary in the commemorative sense.

Referencing 'key figures' demonstrates the club acknowledges and reinforces a perceived commemorative network hierarchy. By referring to the relatives of a survivor of the crash and the 'creator' of the Babes, the club is endorsing its own actions. However, the club do not state that the family endorsed the inclusion of the logo. The memorial has a greater assumed legitimacy, through family endorsement, yet this is inferred rather than stated. The response of one fan reinforces the concept of commemorative hierarchy stating 'While I'm not a fan of the move, if it has been cleared off with people such as the Busby family

then who are we to argue?' (Redrants). This demonstrates deference to the concept of family members as key commemorators yet fails to acknowledge Busby's family was not bereaved due to the Disaster. They may be perceived as historically dedicatory 'monarchy' in regard to Manchester United and Busby, but they are not apparent as such in the specific commemoration of the Disaster.

The club statement motivated some fans to take the dispute further through a commemorative act of impedance. On the evening prior to the official opening of the memorial the AIG logo was paint-balled. As the memorial had been fenced off and secured prior to its official opening, balls of paint had been shot at the memorial in the region of the logo. Although relatively unsuccessful in obscuring or damaging the logo, it was clear that this area had been the shooter's target. The action was described by the club as 'vandalism' of a memorial. The act of impedance attempting to change the memorial's appearance and to make it more appropriate did little to obscure the logo. However, the intent was obvious to those who were active in the commemorative network.

The paint was removed before the official opening of the memorial in an act of impedance, this time by the club against the protesters. Evidence of the act of paint-ball as the act of impedance was recorded through media reports and articles. Commemorators and the general public responded to the paint-ball on comments pages of these online reports and forums, but as the media almost exclusively reported the paint-ball as an act of vandalism the general response was as condemnation of an inappropriate act.

On one fan forum a contributor appears to take credit for the paint-ball, however, it emerges that several potential allies of the paint-ballers who 'detested' the logo, denounced what they saw as an act of disrespectful vandalism of a memorial. One posting 'I'm more humiliated by the vandalism than I am by the logo' (Republik of Mancunia). Although allied with many in the objection to the logo's presence, the paint-ballers lost the support of some allies due to their actions being seen as too destructive. Rather than a commemorative act of impedance, the paint-ball was seen predominantly as

unjustifiable and inappropriate as it did not ‘maintain the integrity’ that it sought to preserve (Star & Griesemer, 1989). This demonstrates a complex commemorative network defined greatly by the acts of alliance and impedance in it.

Within the commemorative network the club and fans can impede or ally themselves to the commemorative acts of others. Such acts of impedance or alliances may be less to do with the Disaster than with the relationship between two groups based on a number of factors defining their association. Although fans and clubs may be allied through football and ultimately the team, within a commemorative network such as that of the Disaster other social and cultural beliefs come into play. These may be as individuals or as fan or club cohorts defined outside of the football arena.

Such differences in commemorative behaviour extend beyond the fan and club relationship whilst ultimately seeking to define it. Again in 2008 a commemorative dispute between Manchester United the club and the British Broadcasting Association (BBC) occurred. The BBC inferred that Manchester United Television (MUTV)<sup>38</sup> was ‘looking to benefit from Munich 50 years on’ in an act that ‘ran against every convention’ governing TV news access’ (Daily Mail b). This was in response to MUTV stating that they intended to charge the BBC £5 000 for footage of their forthcoming memorial event. MUTV stated that they had made the charge in retaliation for the BBC charging MUTV for rights to the footage of George Best’s<sup>39</sup> funeral in 2006 (Belfast Jack 2014). However, MUTV later withdrew the charge fee but continued to challenge the BBC for the funeral footage charges made in 2006. The BBC’s response that the fee had been donated to charity was challenged by a third party (Daily Mail) who suggested that both parties appeared to be ‘attempting to profit from two sensitive and emotional occasions’ (Daily Mail b). This demonstrates that the commemorative network of the Disaster is being constantly monitored and that commemorators are being judged on the appropriateness of their dedicatory acts.

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<sup>38</sup> MUTV is Manchester United’s own television channel.

<sup>39</sup> George Best (1964-2005) was a revered Irish footballer who played for Manchester United and Northern Ireland. His funeral was held on 3 December 2005 in Belfast. (Belfast Jack 2014)

By paying for the rights of George Best's funeral MUTV acted as commemorative gatekeepers allowing access to commemorative activity to their subscribers. By proposing to charge the BBC to the rights of the club's 2008 memorial event they were able to assert their control of aspects of the commemorative network, yet appeared to some to be profiteering from another's suffering. The dispute inspired a fan on a Leeds United forum to suggest that 'their own fans are even disgusted with them' (Leeds Service Crew Forum). Although a fan of a rival club such condemnation may be, to be expected, however such behaviour appears to be fuelled by the dislike of a 'shameless' (Leeds Service Crew Forum) club which ultimately allies the rival fans with some of the club's own fans. The club has inspired an unexpected alliance within the commemorative network that transcends fan rivalries. This demonstrates that the moral and ethical values of commemorators can transcend, as well as reflect their own personal prejudices and preferences based on their fandom. Through the commemorative network fans of different clubs are unified when in all other aspects they seem totally opposed.

An examination of the implications of fandom to the dedicatory activities by commemorators self-identified as fans is made through the study of a significant 'fan commemorator'.

#### **4iv: FANS AS COMMEMORATORS**

##### **Significant Fan Commemorator Case Study**

Mike Thomas was primarily identified as a significant commemorator because he created the high profile tribute websites to Edwards and the Munich Air Disaster:

- [www.duncanedwards.co.uk](http://www.duncanedwards.co.uk)
- [www.munich58.co.uk](http://www.munich58.co.uk)
- [www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk](http://www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk)

As the websites were frequently referenced in the network from a variety of sources, they are established portals for ongoing commemorative activity.

Thomas was included in this research as his role within the network is significant and unique. He identifies himself as a Manchester United fan and cites this as the reason for creating these websites. Through these websites Thomas has become established as one of the most significant and accessible fan commemorators in the network of the Disaster and of Edwards. He has no personal link to the Disaster or Edwards but he has developed several contacts that span the commemorative network by becoming an initial point of contact for many commemorators seeking information about Edwards and the Busby Babes.

Thomas was contacted by email to make him aware of the research project and to provide information on the inspiration for his commemorative activity. Primarily Thomas' role as a commemorator is through the creation and hosting of his dedicatory websites. His identity as a Manchester United fan and his role at an annual commemorative event by fans at Old Trafford is also significant.

### **Dedicatory Websites**

There are other commemorators within the network who have established dedicatory websites such as a Facebook page called 'Duncan Edwards 1936-1958: The greatest footballer who ever lived' (Unknown, 2012). However, Thomas' websites have an apparent legitimacy demonstrated by the fact that his websites are formally referenced by the Manchester United Club official website, several supporters clubs and Dudley Metropolitan Council. The popularity of his websites is evidenced by their frequent referencing in the commemorative network and their established prominence at or near the top of results for Google searches for Edwards or the Munich Air Disaster.

Thomas retains the sole responsibility for all content and he does not share the management of the websites with anyone else. His three dedicatory websites represent different aspects of the Munich Air Disaster but they have a similarly sombre appearance; predominantly black, white and red and they contain links to each other within the texts.

Thomas created his first dedicatory website in 1999 as [www.munich58.co.uk](http://www.munich58.co.uk) which he describes as a tribute page in 'memory of those who died' (Thomas,

1999). He then developed a second website in the same year specifically about Duncan Edwards because he felt ‘Duncan was probably the most famous and I would say because of that, there was that aura about that... him... people wanted to know so I put together this site [[www.duncan-edwards.co.uk](http://www.duncan-edwards.co.uk)]’ (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;1). In 2008 he created [www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk](http://www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk) as he describes that he ‘bought the domain name and wasn't sure what to do with it’ (Rogers and Thomas, 2011). However, he decided to ‘put all the videos and photos that we've taken over the past few years when we've been to Old Trafford to commemorate the crash and remember the victims’ (2011). This event is an annual fan-led commemoration beneath the Munich Air Disaster Memorial Plaque at Old Trafford. It takes place on the anniversary of the Disaster each year and fans congregate at the area to meet, talk and to sing the Flowers of Manchester’ (Hall, 2008;1); an anonymous dedicatory poem set to music and sung to commemorate those victims of the crash. Thomas has regularly took part in and promoted this event as a fan.

The progressive proliferation of websites demonstrates that Thomas has a burgeoning amount of commemorative data to share online. His tribute websites have become a place to access information, leave dedications and share commemorative activity. His Edwards specific website has persisted and although virtual, there is a sense of permanency whereby Thomas has created a memorial to Edwards. The website is monitored, updated and augmented by Thomas and visitors (through an online visitor book) adding new content. Fixed yet simultaneously changing, as Edwards' grave is fixed but is altered by offerings left upon it, his website is altered by comments left on an online tribute book.

The creation and management of Thomas' websites are as dedicatory practices whereby Thomas has become a significant facilitator and philanthropist. He has undertaken a commemorative act that he both created and maintains. This is a distinct form of commemorative activity as memorials to Edwards such as his statue and grave will have been commissioned by a commemorator but created by an artist or maker and maintained by someone else. Thomas is a creator, commissioner and maintainer and therefore his commemorative act is an individual commemorative act but its explicit purpose is to be shared.

He does not present himself as an expert and acknowledges his short comings in terms of him not being alive at the time of the Disaster, but he does control the content of the website. Thomas in this regard is a facilitator and gatekeeper for a memorial to Edwards as he appears within his dedicatory site. This sense of a memorial is amplified by Thomas' lack of visible personal presence on the website. He is not identifiable on his websites and the only specific reference to him across all his websites is on the 'About' page of [www.munich58.co.uk](http://www.munich58.co.uk) where he states he is one of two Manchester United fans who started the website (Thomas, 1999). The other person who assisted the website creation was his fiancée. He does not appear to differentiate himself from other commemorators and specifically acknowledges the contributions of others to the Disaster-specific website:

Born in 1967, we have no personal memories of Munich and therefore the majority of the information on the site was initially obtained from books and videos. However, the growth in popularity of the site has resulted in offers of help and subsequently, information has been supplied by others (Reds and non-Reds alike) (Thomas, 1999).

Thomas clearly references that some of the content within the website was provided by Manchester United fans (Reds) and those non-Manchester United fans (non-Reds) which he obviously feels to be significant. He reiterates the importance for him that his websites content is both by and for Manchester United supporters and non-Manchester United supporters alike. Although a professed Manchester United supporter Thomas articulates a desire to bring together a wider audience for his websites. When asked in 2011 about the motivation for setting up his first website he stated that he 'set up the munich58 website as an online memorial to the people who died in the crash and to educate the new breed of football fans (both United and non-United) about the accident' (Rogers and Thomas, 2011). Thomas considers the Disaster to transcend club affiliation as a football related event that transcends any club rivalries, however he provides information 'to educate the new breed of United fans' (2011) akin to the provision of a public service.

The appeal of his websites may be due to an interest in Edwards and the Busby Babes, but also appears to reflect a cultural shift that appears to reflect ‘a society which has for so long averted its gaze from death cannot stop staring at it’ (Berridge, 2002;255). Thomas’ websites allow the visitor to ‘gaze’ upon the dead of the Disaster and the demand to view such content appears to be persistent. Edwards and the Busby Babes have become as a spectacle of death that can be accessed by those who may not be able to access the memorials of his grave or statue. The dead can be gazed upon through their virtual representations on Thomas’ website facilitating commemoration at a virtual memorial from the confines of their own homes.

### **Fandom**

Thomas defines his commemorative identity consistently as a fan and he has a strong affinity to the fan collective of Manchester United. It is this fandom that defines his commemorative practices to the most part. When asked if he would have accepted an invitation to the club’s memorial service he replied ‘I’d have turned it down because I wanted to be outside with the fans’ (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;10). This sense of self-defining fandom is not unique to Thomas as Porat observes ‘football fandom is a significant component of identity: it is stable and effective’ (Porat, 2010;277). It is also a ‘life-long project that begins at an early age and ends with the life of the fan’ (2010; 277). When asked about the future of his websites Thomas confirmed that he had no plans to pass the management of them on to others. If he were unable to update a website he said that he ‘would just leave it there and not update it’ (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;4). His ‘life-long project’ would therefore end when he died or if he were unable to update the websites for some reason. The websites would then become monuments to Edwards but also monuments to Thomas; specifically Thomas, the football fan. Thomas’ fandom is ‘self constructed’ (Porat, 2010;288) and he has an emotional connection to the club but significantly to the Munich Air Disaster and in particular to the era of the Busby Babes. This is what Gerrard calls ‘the glory of the Busby era’ (Andrews, 2004;85) and as such is a distinct period of the club’s history.

That Thomas also undertakes commemorative activities at the club’s stadium is not a startling revelation as fans perceive their club stadiums ultimately to be

their home; a place where home and football are unified (Porat, 2010:285). However, what marks out Thomas' commemorative activities at Old Trafford from his online commemorative activities, is the lifting of his anonymity in order to connect with other commemorators. He recalls that 'people know who I am because down at Old Trafford in February, I wear a 'Munich58' t-shirt and I've got little business cards that I hand out' (Rogers and Thomas, 2014:11). By consciously being conspicuous he makes him identifiable to other fans as different yet one of the same within the fan cohort. During the memorial events on the Disaster's anniversary each February he seeks a connection to other commemorators to 'get myself known and people come and have a chat to me and say I really like your site' (2014:8). This was the only time Thomas acknowledged his own elevated status within the commemorative network and the only time that he articulated any desire for recognition from others of his status.

Yet, if 'the football club is a symbol by which the fan signifies and identifies himself to various close or distant collectives' (Porat, 2010:286) what may at first appear to be out of character for Thomas is in fact a demonstration of his true fandom. Within the context of a fan-led event at his club's home Thomas could be seen as simply embodying a symbolic experience whereby he, as a fan is able 'to differentiate, to compare himself with others, to be unique, to indicate that football fandom is a critical component of his identity' (2010:287).

That he may differ from other fans through his virtual commemorative acts actually allies him to other fans at the stadium and validates his fandom. Thomas' connection to the event is reassembled into new commemorative acts by his posting of photographs and videos from the event on to his Flowers of Manchester website. The annual memorial event is a commemorative act that Thomas participates in but also that he shares and reassembles post-event. He expresses a strong belief that the memorial event will continue into the future specifically because it is a fan-led event. Yet he acknowledges that not all fans, but rather certain fans with a particular interest in the Disaster, will continue to commemorate the dead in this way stating 'I think as long as there are people like myself and other fans who are there to keep the memory of the Busby Babes alive, even when all the people who are left have died- the fans will be

there to remember' (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;14). Thomas acknowledges and expects such commemorative activity to persist beyond his lifetime and this is a belief in the commemorative authority of his fellow fans. Yet he has taken his own measures to try and ensure that this memorial event and the commemoration of those who died are remembered. By professing his desire to educate younger fans about the Disaster, Thomas' websites stand as commemorative embodiments of intent, beyond the simple presentation of facts, towards the fulfilment of an aspiration for memory preservation into the future. His commemorative acts have created an information portal but his underlying intent is for commemorative longevity. This is only possible on Thomas' remit through the adoption of his 'memorial scheme' by the next generation of fan commemorators. That he attempts to make this commemorative imperative a matter for the fans, articulates his strong sense of identity as a fan. He is giving the next generation the commemorative tools by which to preserve the memory of the Disaster, but he is also controlling how that memory is preserved.

Thomas reiterates the objectives for setting up his websites 'with the intention of keeping alive the memory of the people who died' (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;1). He expresses a need to teach others about the event 'educating them to understand' (2014;1). Thomas states that 'I try and help people where I can' (2014;8). He gives examples of where he has tried to assist enquirers and answer questions, acknowledging that he has the capacity to help others to commemorate. It would seem that he seeks not only to provide information as knowledge but also to affect insight. His self-initiated educational project is unambiguous and a constant for Thomas, yet his websites are a hobby that are 'a labour of love' (2014;12). Yet their humble intention belies the lasting impact they have made on the commemorative activity of others.

### **The Manchester United Commemorative Cohort**

Thomas is aware of the arch-rivalry between the Manchester United and Manchester City supporters which has persisted in more recent times. Within his remit of educating people about the Disaster he includes his aspiration to educate some of those arch-rival fans. He specifically notes that there are several fans including 'many supporters who had never heard about the crash

and there's also a lot of ignorance about it, many Man City fans wind United fans up about it but forget that an ex-player Frank Swift was killed' (Rogers and Thomas, 2011). This apparent widening of his educational remit to include Manchester City fans suggests that he feels the Disaster has a greater dimension to it, beyond his club to the wider football community. However, a deep rivalry between the two Manchester clubs is acutely evident.

Although support of Manchester United from many Manchester City fans emerged immediately after the Disaster, a growing resentment from some of those City fans emerged as it became 'clear that many non-Manchester United supporters from the late 1950s regard the Munich Disaster as an event that was accorded too much attention' (Mellor in Andrews, 2004;37). Immediately after the Disaster, a local politician in Bolton is quoted as saying 'I thought people were getting tired of all the tremendous amount of publicity concerning Manchester United' (2004;36) suggesting that a deep animosity between the fans was developing. Simultaneously the emergence of Manchester United as a 'super-club' post-Disaster and 'the emergence of sharper rivalries between football supporters in England in the 1950s and 1960s' (2004;37) was also happening. This suggests that the heightened profile of Manchester United due to the Disaster, gave them a perceived advantage over other clubs, in that 'they were different and 'bigger' than all others, but not, according to many fans, because they deserved to be: it was all because of Munich' (2004;41). This makes Thomas' aspiration to educate and appeal to non-Manchester United fans through a remit centred on the Disaster, a potential challenge.

Thomas' self-initiated task to educate Manchester United and non-Manchester United fans alike centres on the presentation of historical accounts, facts and details of commemorative acts and activities. That such a task is taken on and remains within the fan cohort demonstrates that the Disaster and those who died as a result is seen as part of the inheritance of the fans. Yet, the Disaster's link with the club and the fans of Manchester United is something that Thomas sees as 'a key part of the club's history' (Rogers and Thomas, 2011) but he is keen not to overstate the Disaster as 'the' defining moment for the club. He states 'undoubtedly, it had an impact and contributed to the popularity of the club but I don't think that it was the sole reason' (2011). This demonstrates that

he is not solely defining the club through the Disaster and that he has a current interest and wider knowledge and appreciation of the club.

His reference to current Manchester United players at the time demonstrates his interest in the club goes beyond the Busby Babes era to extend also to players from other teams. On the 2014 anniversary of the Disaster he recalls ‘there were thousands and thousands of tweets from all around the world even from players like Michael Owen, Gary Neville, Rio Ferdinand, Norman Whiteside, Robbie Fowler from Liverpool’ and he observes that ‘I’ve had a lot of re-tweets this year’ (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;4). This not only demonstrates the global interest in the Disaster and the fact that others want to be associated with the anniversary of the event, but also that Thomas’ commemorative activities permeate beyond the UK. He is actively seeking other commemorative activity across the network whilst being sought out by others. His commemorative activities extend beyond social media to meetings with commemorators in person, as Thomas recalls meeting relatives of Edwards ‘I met his [Edwards’] cousins Keith and John at Old Trafford’ (2014;12). Yet so closely associated are the virtual and ‘real-life’ facets of the network for those deeply immersed commemorators like Thomas, differentiating the two can be a challenge. When considering his relationship to a commemorator who regularly tends Edwards’ grave, the complexity of their association becomes apparent, ‘I know Jan – Jan Hickman– well I don’t know her I never met her. She contacted me a couple of years ago. She posts regularly to Duncan’s tribute book’ (2014;12). Thomas redefines associations of closeness where there is a sense of ‘knowing’ another commemorator and then describes his relationship to her through the activities she undertakes at his website’s tribute page. This reveals that Thomas’ association with some commemorators may be exclusively online. As commemorators like Hickman make multiple tributes, which Thomas approves and posts, they form a timeline of dedicatory activity which forms part of Thomas’ collective commemorative acts.

He asks visitors to his Duncan Edwards tribute book to ‘please browse the book and add your own tribute’ (Thomas, 1999). He actively encourages guests to engage with other commemorator’s comments and then to leave their own tribute or ‘memories’ (1999). He is a commemorative facilitator who enables

acts of commemoration by others, by their submission to him as the commemorative gatekeeper. Thomas' approval is from within his accepted position within the commemorative 'social order' and those commemorators who are 'approved' become commemorative allies. Thomas outlines his expectation for the nature of the comments to be left at his website. He requires them to be marks of respect or reminiscences and he personally reviews and selects them for inclusion. If those commemorators leaving tributes are allies, they are allied to Thomas because they agree with the way in which he commemorates Edwards and they invest in his activity through written contributions. Thomas' websites embody a commemorative alliance formed individually but collectively reinforced by accepted and shared concepts of respectfulness and decency.

### **Fans as Commemorative Network Gatekeepers**

Thomas does not financially benefit from his websites, considering such a benefit to be inappropriate. Although he did offer his own design of 'Munich58' t-shirts for sale on his website they were sold at cost price. This appears to reflect a fan ethos expressed by those concerned about the inclusion of the AIG sponsor logo on the Old Trafford memorial in 2008 and sale of memorial scarves on eBay. Activity that is considered to be profiteering from the Munich Air Disaster deaths is actively discouraged within the commemorative network and sometimes prohibited. When free scarves were distributed by Manchester United at a commemorative match to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Disaster, some were taken and posted for sale on eBay (the online auction and market place). All sales of the scarves were subsequently prohibited by eBay and offending listings were withdrawn in response to complaints. This official decision was said to be 'taken in line with the policy not to allow users to profit from human tragedy' (The Sun, 2008). Some fans took direct action and placed bogus bids for thousands of pounds on the scarves being auctioned off. Whilst these commemorators led a campaign against the sale of the scarves on eBay, other commemorators questioned the sacredness of the scarves 'made in China' (Redcafe, 2008) to warrant such a response.

The embodiment of a sacred commemorative capacity for the scarves as dedicatory objects, allies with the perception of the significance of the

commemorative match and the football scarf as the symbol of the Disaster, but ultimately of the club. The significance of a club scarf cannot be underestimated as Bill Shankly, footballer and previous manager of Liverpool is famously quoted when a fan threw a scarf at him during a lap of honour. As a policeman threw it aside Shankly said ‘it’s only a scarf to you, but it’s the boy’s life’ Shankly then picked up the scarf and tied it round his neck’ (LFCHistory.net). Such objects are ‘boundary objects’ that are not inert but exert agency as ‘they are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual-site use’ (Star & Griesemer, 1989;393). Whether they are used to exert the notion of fandom or commemoration these objects such as club scarves are recognisable as scarves yet function as expressions of a fan’s identity when worn or as commemorative artefact upon a grave. ‘The creation and management of boundary objects is a key process in developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting social worlds’ (1989;393). These seemingly mundane objects have multiple functions within the commemorative network as multifaceted boundary objects. (Commemorative objects will be discussed further in Chapter 5).

Sales of these banned scarves have since re-appeared as listings on eBay, alongside several other Munich Air Disaster related products. Listings for these scarves indicate that the eBay policies gatekeepers are either no longer vigilant, or commemorators are no longer monitoring the website. The sales appear to be no longer disputed or they suggest that those listing the scarves are unaware of the item being banned. This is a demonstration of a commemorative network ‘in motion’ where some commemorative practices appear to be ‘decaying’ (Bowker & Star, 2000;7). Such commercial activity makes Thomas’ uncompromising ‘not for profit’ commemorative acts appear more legitimate and respectful by comparison, giving him a greater sense of credibility as a commemorator with ‘dedicatory stamina’.

As commemorators appeared not to continue their monitoring of eBay whilst Thomas retains his not for profit stance he appears consistently respectful to the memory of the dead. That he has mediated the content and controls the appearance of the site from his own ethical and moral stance for over 15 years, demonstrates his dedicatory stamina. That the websites have continued to be

accessed and referenced by many other commemorators suggests that they are allied to his dedicatory ethical and moral beliefs. By his own admission he does not need to generate an income from his websites and as such he does not have the financial imperative eBay as a business for profit has. Thomas' websites are driven by a commemorative imperative and although eBay have policies regarding commemorative activity they are clearly not a commemorative website.

When many blogs and websites have imbedded advertising Thomas' [www.duncanedwards.co.uk](http://www.duncanedwards.co.uk) website is particularly distinct in the lack of advertising. The design of the official Manchester United page dedicated to Edwards is in a subdued monotone similar to that of Thomas' website however the club website displays sponsorship logos and full colour advertising promoting ticket sales and gifts. 'The Munich Remembered' (Manchester United) club website pages dedicated to the Disaster have had sponsors logos and adverts removed, yet the ticket booking background 'wallpaper' remains. Thomas confirmed that he had been approached by advertisers looking to have a presence on his dedicatory websites, but he has never allowed it as 'I have always said that the tribute site is a memorial site' (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;9). He has a disregard for those who appear to profit from the Disaster and his website embodies his sense of a dedicatory decency. Thomas states 'you know there are plenty of people who have written books about the crash and they are benefitting that way, which I don't agree with' (2014;9).

Within the virtual commemorative network Thomas' websites have remained a constant, in intent and accessibility. More information has been added to the websites by Thomas and others over the years, with generated content from others formally acknowledged. However, Thomas is the only person able to authorise the posting of content. Although a virtual tribute book gives others the opportunity to leave comments, these are not posted on the page until Thomas approves them and posts them himself. The exclusive editorial control of his websites allows him to maintain his own level of integrity without pressure from piers, advertisers or sponsors.

Thomas' significance as a commemorator is greatly dependant on his role as the creator of a portal of relevant commemorative truths, facts and references. Present only through his commemorative activity, he acknowledges his lack of 'personal memories' (Thomas, 1999) and the support and help of others to provide the websites with content. This need to acknowledge his lack of personal connection to the dead is not uncommon and serves to reinforce the networks of those who have a memory or closer link to Edwards. Through his anonymity Thomas demonstrates a commemorative network that has a perceived hierarchy. This hierarchy is asserted by commemorators who feel the need to explicitly state their non-connection to Edwards, in order to show their respect to those who have a direct link to him. Thomas' acknowledgement of those within the network, who have greater dedicatory credentials than him, shows that he has knowledge of their existence, but also a conceptual understanding of notions of commemorative hierarchy. This furthers his sense of authenticity within the network because he acknowledges an afforded a higher status of other commemorators, but asserts his own through primarily anonymous acts.

Thomas is clear that he sees his role as being an educator and a preserver of memory for the enlightenment of others. His accessibility and willingness to help those seeking information about the Disaster is central to his commemorative activity. However, through the creation of his websites he has attained an elevated status within the commemorative hierarchy, whether that was his intention or not.

## **SUMMARY**

The commemorative network of Edwards preserves his memory through the actions of commemorators. They may be coerced, inspired or impeded in their efforts to resuscitate Edwards, or they create opportunities to interlink commemorative acts to make new or reinforce existing dedicatory acts. Within all this network activity lies the intention and motivation to preserve Edwards' memory in the way that each commemorator deems appropriate.

As the perception of what is appropriate is dependant on an individual's perspective of death a consensus across the commemorative network may be

difficult to universally establish. As such commemorative activity may be impeded by opposing commemorative acts as commemorators ally themselves to certain collectives. However, assumptions cannot be made that alliances are perpetually maintained even when they appear to be ‘natural’ allies, as demonstrated by the dispute between some fans and the Manchester United club over the AIG memorial.

The actions of commemorators may initially appear to be mundane individual or collective dedicatory rituals. The distribution of scarves at a memorial match may be viewed as unremarkable, yet such mundane activity can be transformed within the network to become complex commemorative acts. This is due to the commemorative network being mediated and monitored by commemorators, as the memories of the dead are preserved and monitored by a system codified by self appointed guardians. The prevalent dedicatory practices that prevail or are rejected are measured by a series of inferred standards of truth and appropriateness.

Yet within the network itself the commemorators are also monitored and mediated through a system of hierarchy, particularly within Edwards' commemorative network. Hierarchy defines the status, inferred, bestowed or asserted by active commemorators. Hierarchy within Edwards' commemorative network is evidenced in its simplest form as a perceived ranking system which places those commemorators with greater authority at the top of a sliding scale. How commemorators are ranked is dependent on multiple factors, but fundamentally the closer the association of the commemorator to Edwards and the Disaster, the higher up the scale they are. It is apparent that most family members knew Edwards only as a boy and this has significantly permeated how he is commemorated within Dudley. Those commemorators ranking consistently highly within Edwards' commemorative hierarchy are generally a collective cohort referenced as ‘family’. However, on examination the concept of ‘family’ within the network is less cohesive and robust than it appears or is implied to be.

The majority of those who now seek to commemorate Edwards (and in the wider context the Busby Babes and the Munich Air Disaster) have no firsthand

knowledge of Edwards, the Busby Babes or the Disaster. At the time of writing, Harry Gregg and Bobby Charlton are the only two players from the crash who are still alive. Only a handful of Edwards' relatives who knew him are still alive and it is apparent that the time is fast approaching when the first generation of commemorators will soon be gone. This creates a sense of inevitability but also suggests a new dimension to the network that will soon be all pervading.

Although Edwards' commemorative network appears to be inevitably shifting from a first generation commemorator perspective, the commemorative objects, memorials and sites within the network appear to represent a persisting presence. However, the assumption that these facets of Edwards' network are more permanent or inert than commemorators suggest is challenged within the following chapters.

## **5: COMMEMORATION: COMMEMORATIVE OBJECTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Commemorative objects, memorials and sites are examined within individual distinct chapters but they are variously interrelated through commemorative activity. For instance objects placed as offerings on the memorial that is Edwards' grave, within the commemorative site of Dudley Cemetery interconnect as commemorative objects, a memorial and a commemorative site.

Analysis of how the dead are commemorated at certain sites and through memorials and objects was made in Chapter Four, with the focus on commemorators. This chapter and chapters six and seven examine the concept of commemorative objects, memorials and sites respectively. They are considered within a diverse visual culture of death and dying and examined through examples of objects, memorials and sites that include the commemorative networks of the Munich Air Disaster and Duncan Edwards.

Commemorative objects, memorials and sites are generally places, structures or objects notable because they either inspire commemorative activity or have been created or appropriated by acts of commemoration, or both. As death instigates commemoration, the dead are the focus of and inspiration for commemoration. Simultaneously the visual culture of death becomes apparent through places, memorials and objects and may also be defined as examples of the commemorative arts (discussed further in Chapter Six). Consideration of commemorative objects, memorials and sites from an historical perspective allies these structures and objects almost exclusively to the undertaking of death rituals. Such rituals include funerals, pilgrimages, visits to graves, memorial events and the observation of significant anniversaries relating to the dead. Therefore the appearance and perceived function of significant commemorative objects, memorials and sites in relation to the Munich Air Disaster and specifically Duncan Edwards will be explored within an aesthetic, historical and cultural framework.

This chapter explores the notion of commemorative objects within a general sense as well as examining the function of commemorative objects within

Edwards' commemorative network and specifically those left as offerings at his grave.

### **5i: DEFINING COMMEMORATIVE OBJECTS**

Commemorative objects are dedicatory objects that honour, remember or celebrate the dead; usually a specific person who is deceased. The consideration of memento mori as a commemorative object can be difficult because of an 'ambiguity of intention' for the objects interpretation may be encountered. Such ambiguity may be due to the appropriation of everyday objects for commemorative practices. Memento mori describes 'an object kept as a reminder of the inevitability of death, such as a skull' (Oxford Dictionaries) and may be objects created as pieces of commemorative art, or interpreted as being closely associated with this art form. The emphasis on death as something that is unavoidable embodies memento mori as 'souvenirs' of death rather than as distinctly commemorative objects. The specific task of memento mori is to remind the living of their mortality by communicating the presence of an inescapable death as 'the central message of memento mori is that the material life including the body and all worldly possessions, will inevitably decay' (Hallam & Hockey, 2001;75). The difference between the intention of memento mori and the intention of commemorative objects, although often subtle, is defined at their stage of creation. However, through their sharing and consumption within a commemorative network the initial intention for their making may be lost, or reinterpreted.

Memorials such as graves and statues are usually created with a clear specific commemorative dimension however the existence of memento mori makes commemorative objects harder to definitively characterise. This is compounded by the status of an object being altered or reinterpreted by each person who encounters it. For instance, within the context of a cemetery a bunch of flowers may have an inferred commemorative intention however because the flowers are cut and essentially dying they also embody death and could be considered as memento mori. Objects may have a perceived primary non-commemorative function yet when used for commemorative ritual the object may be commemorative or memento mori. They may be removed from their original context, for instance as a cutting of an article about Edwards was taken from a

daily newspaper to be preserved as a commemorative object (as discussed in Chapter 1).

En masse such objects placed individually, yet encountered within a commemorative setting are subsumed by their association with other nearby objects to form part of a collective memorial. Individual objects that are then considered collectively can transform the singular dedicatory object to become a facet of a collective commemorative memorial. For example, in 1989 when football scarves were individually placed at the Shankly Gates of Liverpool Football Club (Anfield) in an act of remembrance to those killed in the Hillsborough Disaster they formed a collective temporary memorial to the dead. The scarves were not 'dead' but they may have belonged to the dead and been brought there by friends or relatives as memento mori. Individual commemorative objects and memento mori were collectively reinterpreted as a temporary memorial in a way that embodies the complexity of commemoration, commemorative acts and the objects, memorials and sites that they define.

The sight of several scarves tied to the Shankly Gates in acts of remembrance for those who died, simultaneously gives a sense of the individual, but also the scale of the collective sense of loss. The images of piles of shoes belonging to Holocaust victims of World War Two, displayed at museums such as the Imperial War Museum in London are often considered amongst the most poignant of exhibits. They appear to represent the loss of individual human life on a colossal scale. As visitors testify to the impact of seeing the exhibit stating 'a simple display of shoes made me tear up' (Joanne H in Tripadvisor 2016) and 'the holocaust section, especially the piles of shoes is almost incomprehensible' (Jane C in Tripadvisor 2015). The presentation of objects as historical artefacts further alter the commemorative dimension of specifically collected, preserved and displayed objects within museums or similar institutions.

### **Family Heirlooms**

Family heirlooms are objects or artefacts passed down through generations of families for 'safe-keeping' as significant or precious artefacts to a family group or history. Many of Edwards' personal football-related belongings, perhaps most significantly his England caps, have been loaned to the local council by

Edwards' mother before her death. Laurence Brownhill a relative of Edwards recalled discussing with Edwards' mother how his possessions should be preserved stating that she wanted them placed in a glass case in Dudley Museum and Art Gallery. All family members interviewed as part of the research were aware of the display of Edwards' artefacts in the museum but none had any mementos of Edwards, nor were any of his possessions passed on to them except for Maurice Perry, son of Edwards' mother's stepsister. Keith Edwards, Edwards' first cousin recalled that 'Duncan gave me his pads and socks – but later I gave them away' (Rogers and Brownhill, Edwards & Edwards, 2014) and he stated that this was something that he regretted.

Therefore the collection of Edwards' belongings loaned to the local council is the most significant and comprehensive collection of his personal belongings. Yet these items may never have been loaned to the museum as Colin Daniels, third cousin of Edwards recalled. During a discussion with Edwards' father Gladstone Edwards 'He [Gladstone Edwards] turned round once and said I wish someone would look after our Duncan's caps and that. And I thought I don't bloody want them – I wish I'd have had them now' (Rogers and Daniels, 2014:4). This demonstrates Gladstone's concern to preserve his son's legacy but also how the perception of Edwards' memory and how it should be commemorated, changes over time. That Daniels and Keith Edwards regret not retaining heirlooms suggests that such objects only gain a commemorative dimension when bestowed one by the owners, former owners or potential owners many years after a relative's death. That Daniels was not keen to take on the custodianship at the time suggests that this was a responsibility he felt that he did not want or could not take on.

It was obvious that Gladstone felt that his son's caps were worth preserving and had significance, yet he understood that this was a responsibility that he had to pass on. There is a sense that he acknowledges his own mortality but simultaneously his role as a bereaved parent in possession of items that are personal, yet with a potentially wider historical and cultural value. The potential cultural and historical value of football related objects is more closely monitored today by museums such as the National Football Museum. Nevertheless, the museum was not set up until 1995, nearly ten years after Edwards' artefacts

were loaned to the local council. Edwards' first cousin Joey Edwards, when looking at photographs of Edwards' trophies commented 'all these trophies and we never saw a thing of Duncan's' confirmed that Edwards' parents had given all his football-related belongings for public preservation and display. As such no significant football-related artefacts are believed to exist within the family and Edwards' former belongings are almost exclusively museum artefacts rather than family heirlooms. This disassociates these objects from Edwards' family and exposes his more intimate belongings to a wider audience. In this regard these objects are detached from his family history and become part of the history of Dudley.

### **5ii: DEFINING COMMEMORATION AS AN ACTIVE PROCESS**

#### **Introduction**

Those objects which are publically accessible can be examined within the study more easily than those created or preserved by privately undertaken commemorative activity. As such objects do exist and several sources have attested to having personal commemorative objects related to Edwards and his commemoration these are included in the study when it is relevant and possible to do so. However, it is acknowledged that certain private acts create commemorative objects that are not intended to be shared although a number of commemorative objects are apparent within Edwards' public commemorative network. They include offerings of flowers, football shirts, notes and scarves left at Edwards' grave and items on display in the Duncan Edwards and Local Sporting Heroes Gallery at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery such as books, football programmes and some personal belongings.

A number of offerings at Edwards' grave were observed and recorded during field research undertaken from 2010 to 2014 (see Appendix C). The personal artefacts displayed at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery, specifically his England Football caps were observed and recorded in situ on two occasions<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> As observed during fieldwork research on 4 January 2012 and 17 May 2013. For further details see Appendix C.

## Museum Artefacts

The preservation of the memory and artefacts relating to the Munich Air Disaster is formalised within museums, although there is an acknowledged ‘trade’ in Munich-related memorabilia (Burn, 2006:218). In the UK references to the Busby Babes can be found at the National Football Museum and Old Trafford Museum. A number of artefacts relating to Edwards are displayed in a dedicated Duncan Edwards and Local Heroes Gallery, in Dudley Museum and Art Gallery. However, these displays of objects are distinctly different from those objects found at Edwards’ grave, in that they are constructed through an obligation of preservation-led custodianship, as historically significant artefacts.

The displayed artefacts are not created as either commemorative objects or as memento mori and there is no evidence that they have inspired commemorators to leave dedicatory offerings, such as flowers, at the sites. However, formalised commemorative activity may sometimes be encouraged at museums, for instance inviting visitors to write in tribute books to the deceased (Moore, 2015). Although in Dudley, formal anniversary events relating to the Munich Air Disaster and Edwards are usually organised at the site of his statue.

A number of Edwards’ belongings including his England Football caps, his match football shirts and those he swapped with other players at matches are displayed as significant historical artefacts in Dudley Museum and Art Gallery (Dudley Council 2008). From 1986, initially most of these were displayed in the foyer of Dudley Leisure Centre. They were moved to the local museum in 2006 and finally installed within a local sports dedicated gallery in May 2008.

Edwards’ former belongings were loaned to the local council by his mother. They are exhibited alongside other items of ‘football memorabilia’ (2008) including football emblem textile badges, medals, trophies, magazine and newspaper articles and photographs. Also on display is a maquette of his statue which stands in front of a set of mini goalposts beneath a screen showing a short documentary film about Edwards. There are also a number of football programmes and books on display including a copy of Edwards’ book ‘Tackle Soccer This Way’ (Edwards, 1958). The artefacts are predominantly displayed under glass and they are labelled and ordered as museum objects as a ‘collection of classic artefacts’ (Dudley News 2008). Edwards shares the gallery

space with two other local sporting heroes; tennis player Dorothy Round (1908-1982) and boxer Joe Darby (1861-1937). Their displays are much smaller than the display dedicated to Edwards.

Edwards' England team caps are arguably the most impressive and significant of the displayed artefacts in the gallery. Each footballer who plays for their country in an international match is awarded a cap. They are embedded in tradition through initial practical use to differentiate players from opposing teams (Cox et al., 2002;50). From 1886 they then shifted to a more symbolic commemorative function; awarded to players as recognition of their selection for their national squad. Although their design has altered slightly overtime they have essentially remained as established commemorative artefacts for approximately 130 years. They are emblematic of achievement at the highest level of the game. They embody a sense of historical significance, like a medal or trophy do, yet they are more personalised through their reference to the human form as an item of clothing. However, created in luxurious materials their appropriation of the 'humble' cap elevates the object to become almost crown-like.

The display of Edwards' caps represents his multiple achievements of representing his country as a footballer on 18 occasions from 1954 to 1958. His caps are commemorative objects that have been appropriated as museum artefacts. Although items of clothing they are no longer worn whilst playing football and they were not designed to be worn for any extended period. Although a newspaper image of Edwards exists in which he is wearing his England schoolboy international cap (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1988;17) the images of Edwards' caps are overwhelming seen within his commemorative network as historical artefacts. They are mostly referenced on display as a collective within a cabinet at the home of his parents or on exhibition at the local sports centre or museum. This reinforces the collective significance of the caps to underpin his national sporting achievements as a definable quantity.

In the museum's gallery Edwards' caps are displayed together in two vertically adjoining wall mounted display cases. Apart from two of the caps that are dark blue with golden trim and tassels, they are all pale blue velvet with silver trims

and tassels. Changes to the design of caps was evident during Edwards career but generally they are adorned with the ‘three lions’ emblem of the England football team on the front. Embroidered on the peak is a ‘V’ as a précis for versus, the name of the country played against and the year. Although they all appear virtually the same on first viewing the wording on the peaks gives them an individuality which references them to a particular game. Displayed collectively the achievements that they represent are amplified and the repetitive image of each cap suggests a consistency of excellence. However, due to their person-specific nature they also evoke a sense of the individual. A visitor testified to the impact of the display as ‘quite emotional to view his [Duncan Edwards’] England caps & football shirts’ (Southwell in Tripadvisor 2014) in that they belonged to him as personal items. Although several of the other artefacts were also owned by him, such as medals and trophies, it appears that it is the items of clothing that evoke the greatest sense of connection for visitors.

The Dudley Museum and Art Gallery is due to be closed in response to recent austerity driven budget cuts and the museum objects, including Edwards’ belongings are being prepared for relocation or for return to their loaners. Although accredited museums have policies that protect how and where an object can be stored or displayed, these protect the object rather than guarantee its continued public display. Many artefacts can be lawfully removed and put into storage but this alters their role within commemorative networks. If Edwards’ artefacts cannot be viewed by commemorators then their role within his commemorative network is compromised. The lack of presence of the objects within the commemorative network greatly diminishes their appropriated dedicatory function. Although large proportions of museums’ collection are in storage, the collection artefacts that relate to Edwards have been publically accessible for several years. His caps and football shirts have been publically displayed for 30 years and their disappearance from public view, even temporarily will disrupt commemorative activity. Edwards’ artefacts are set to be relocated to an archives centre on the edge of the town centre meaning they will no longer be in walking distance of his statue, grave and windows in St Francis Church. How this will impact on visitors who come to Dudley to commemorate

Edwards and how they will function as objects within the wider commemorative network of the Munich Air Disaster is yet to be seen.

## Offerings

Offerings constitute a form of communication with the dead, whereby commemorators leave objects such as gifts, toys, flowers or written notes to and for the dead, at specific memorials or sites. When placed upon a grave these objects exert a commemorative function that is 'a means of translation' (Star & Griesemer, 1989;393). An object such as a stuffed toy is defined by its commemorative setting upon a grave as a dedicatory object yet its connection to everyday life as a child's toy connects it to the living world. Offerings are a physical embodiment of a commemorative 'conversation' between the living and the dead, albeit evidently one-sided in nature. The assumption by the living that the dead are consciously receiving the gifts left for them, through an ethereal awareness of the living world, seems to contradict the construct of the soul that is purported to leave the body to ascend into heaven, as per the Christian doctrine. If 'it is believed that, upon death, the soul leaves the body and departs on a kind of journey' (Sheridan, 2000;124) any act of gift-giving could appear to contradict this belief. As prayers are undertaken on behalf of the deceased to assist their journey to and into heaven, any effort to engage them in the world of the living could potentially jeopardise or delay their ascension. Yet such gift-giving 'may be purely commemorative, but with many there is a hope, or expectation, that the deceased may participate or at least be aware of what is happening' (Sheridan, 2000;109). Memorials and commemorative sites are distinctly an acknowledgement of death. Commemorative objects as offerings, suggest that there is a state between life and death which can be shared by the living and the deceased. On notes left at Edwards' grave four out of the six observed (during the field research period) were addressed to Edwards as the recipient as 'Duncan' or 'Duncan Edwards'<sup>41</sup>. One was addressed to 'the great man'<sup>42</sup> and yet every note was placed facing outwards towards the front edge of the grave and not in towards Edwards' headstone. This suggests that although

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<sup>41</sup> For further details see Appendix C

<sup>42</sup> Handwritten note in potted plant on grave documented 7 March 2014 'to the great man from David Barratt WBA fan'. See Appendix C for further details

they were addressed to Edwards they were in fact intended for public consumption, as a gift that commemorators want to be seen to be giving.

Fieldwork research undertaken as Edwards' grave revealed the leaving of offerings to be a persistent activity. In a four year period offerings were observed at Edwards' grave at every one of the eight visits. From 2010 to 2104 the number of offerings observed on the grave ranged from a maximum of 26 to a minimum of 15 objects per visit. Further details of this research can be found in Appendix C.

The offerings left at Edwards' grave are established as an integral part of the appearance of his grave and they are significant to his commemorative network. They evidence repetitive dedicatory activity that reinforces the commemorative acts of others, with each new floral tribute reinforcing the one before as the gift-giving assimilates acts of the past to form new commemorative acts. Every offering may be a personal and individual gift but collectively they transform the appearance of Edwards' grave to such a degree as to define how the grave is publicly perceived. They also evidence what commemorative acts of 'gift-giving' are permitted or welcomed at his grave.

There is no reference to Edwards playing football beyond that of an engraved depiction of him at head and shoulders height throwing in a football on his headstone. That Edwards' headstone has reference to his sporting status is unusual within the graves of sporting men and women as only 'circa 5%' have been documented as having 'some inscriptive acknowledgement of sporting involvement, about 5% included sporting images and about 2% had both' (Huggins, 2012;3). Huggins' research project examined over 800 graves of 'leading sports figures' buried in England and concluded that the majority of 'many former stars died poor or long past their active sporting involvement'. This goes some way to explaining the omission of their former sporting status on their graves and makes Edwards' headstone exceptional within this memorial research. The graves of Geoff Bent<sup>43</sup> and Eddie Colman<sup>44</sup> victims of

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<sup>43</sup> Bent's grave is in the churchyard of St John the Evangelist, Bolton Road, Pendlebury, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M27 8XR. See Appendix C for further details.

<sup>44</sup> Weaste Cemetery, Cemetery Road, Weaste, Salford, M5 5NR. See Appendix C for further details.

the Disaster and survivor Matt Busby<sup>45</sup> were visited and documented as part of field research undertaken for this thesis (see Appendix C). Both Bent and Colman's epitaphs reference the Munich Air Disaster stating them to be victims of the crash. Like Edwards' grave Bent's headstone includes the depiction of a footballer whilst Colman's headstone had also depicted a footballer but the figure was removed after it was vandalised (Redcafe 2011). Matt Busby's grave does not reference his football career which evidences the general trend of graves of sportsmen and women to not referencing their sporting careers.

As part of the research study a comparative documentation of the graves of Bent, Busby, Colman and Edwards were made within a 24 hour period from 6 - 7 March 2014. In this specific research period Bent's grave was observed to have one Manchester United football scarf and two of the five floral tributes were red and white. Colman's and Busby's graves had offerings but none were scarves or red and white bunches of flowers. Edward's grave was observed to have included seven red and white floral tributes and three Manchester United football scarves. Although notably similar in their visual reference to football through the inclusion of a footballer on the memorial itself, Edwards' grave is distinctly different to Bent's and Colman's graves because of the proliferation of observed offerings that referenced football left upon it.

Offerings at Edwards' grave are predominantly football related with Manchester United football scarves the most commonly observed type of offering on the grave. Red and white bouquets of flowers were the second most observed type of offering and they could be interpreted as intentionally representational of the Manchester United or England team football colours. Yet as Edwards died whilst representing Manchester United within the Busby Babes cohort, an assumption can be made that the red and white offerings on his grave are most likely to be referencing Manchester United, rather than the England team. As the shirts observed on his grave were overwhelming of Manchester United then his significance to commemorators as a Manchester United player dominates activity at his grave. Half of the notes observed at Edwards' grave mention Manchester United, further reinforcing his connection to the club.

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<sup>45</sup> Southern Cemetery, Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, M21 7GL. See Appendix C for further details.

Edwards' grave references football but it does not state his team or his status as a player, but it does reference the Munich Air Disaster as the cause of his death. His statue distinctly represents him as an England player, which elevates his football status to a national level. The representation of him as a Manchester United player would be inappropriate for a 'local hero' of Dudley, yet as an England player he is more appropriately geographically located. Although his statue was appropriated by fans in 2008, when they temporarily fixed a Manchester United shirt over his statue (Daily Mail a). This temporary transition to a Manchester United player was undertaken the day before the fiftieth anniversary of the Munich Air Disaster. The team shirt obliterated Edwards' appearance as an England player in a commemorative act that embedded his connection to the club and the Disaster by adorning him with a club shirt that bore the words 'Legend Never Forgotten'. However, Edwards' representation as an England player was fully restored when the Manchester United shirt was removed. At his grave Edwards appears to be represented and commemorated significantly as a Manchester United footballer, rather than a player for England. Therefore Edwards' identity as a Manchester player is defined predominantly through commemorative objects brought to the sites in Dudley.

Although he is buried with his sister and therefore the grave is a 'family plot' the grave could be considered as an overtly sport-referenced grave. Football is referenced on Edwards' headstone in the image of him throwing in a football on his headstone and additionally by a football-shaped flower holder in the centre of his plot. It has become a place where Edwards' sporting achievements are celebrated. Yet the 'active texts, heavily laden with cultural value, providing yet another social construction of a star's sporting 'identity' (Huggins, 2012;4) are significantly apparent through his headstone depiction as a player and the proliferation of football-related offerings upon his grave. Both the memorial and offerings interconnect at the gravesite to preserve his memory as a footballer.

Whilst modern football-related objects may be considered out of context to traditional floral commemorative offerings, they connect Edwards the footballer of the past, to the football supporters of the present. These objects 'might be

drawn from a spectrum of ‘ephemeral’ consumer items, they are positioned at sites of burials as markers of endurance and connection with lives past’ (Hallam & Hockey, 2001:211) and as such are bestowed with commemorative meaning. In a football match a team scarf is worn as a declaration of allegiance to a club, on a grave the same scarf is an alliance with the dead and other commemorators. The scarf is removed from the arena of football to become an object to preserve memory. Inevitably as it deteriorates through exposure to the weather it will pass into memory itself. Degraded due to exposure to an environment that objects are never intended to endure, such offerings as scarves however seemingly robust cannot permanently prevail. Obviously Edwards does not require a scarf and he cannot wear it. Yet as a gift it symbolically links him with the living and the Manchester United fan cohort.

That commemorators respond to death by preserving memory through the appropriation or creation of material objects ‘ensures that persons are given a place within the present to fashion memories in material forms constitutes gestures that grant the deceased a future often possessed of a powerful physicality’ (2001:214). There is an inherent understanding that the offerings of clothing are not to be worn. Yet items of clothing are deemed suitable gifts for the dead Edwards, because they represent a notion of an alliance to Manchester United and serve to adorn the dead as current members of the club cohort. As several of the football shirts are from former year’s kits they also embody a sense of past and legacy. As designs of the past they are commemorative objects akin to those displayed within Dudley Museum and Art Gallery, but without the personal connection of once being Edwards’ belongings. However, in some regard these offerings become essentially Edwards’ belongings and this marks them out as unique and ultimately significant to his memory preservation. As they are gifted to Edwards and left at his grave they have an appropriated connection to him.

The members of Edwards’ family that maintain his grave as the family tenders of the plot have become curators of the site. They stated that they do preserve some offerings deemed to be of special significance or worth, at another location (Rogers and Perry, 2012). These artefacts are obviously considered by the family to be significant however they also hold a historical significant. The

director of the NFM expressed an interest in formally retaining an example of these ‘saved’ offerings as part of an historical record of the ongoing commemorative activity at Edwards’ grave<sup>46</sup>. That the museum would seek a donation of such an object as ‘an important part of football history’ demonstrates the significant meaning of commemorative objects. That those tasked with preserving significant historical artefacts consider commemorative objects to be of significance, underpins the importance of commemoration to humanity. That a simple object left as a gift to a dead player would be considered worthy of national preservation, reinforces the significance of Edwards’ commemorative network within the history of national football.

### **The Persistence of Commemorative Objects**

Edwards’ grave is continually adorned by commemorative objects of which some are modified to preserve them beyond their normal lifespan. These objects may be cellophane-wrapped or encapsulated in taped bags to resist weathering. As such these objects, usually notes, drawings or collages are given as gifts to Edwards yet through their weather-proofing they transcend their everyday appearance and demonstrate a desire to be seen by others for an extended period. Weather-proofing is generally through the augmentation of paper to give it an existence beyond its normal faculty. The observed cling-film wrapped photograph of the Busby Babes left at Edwards’ grave becomes an example of ‘the extensive reach of contemporary artefactual [sic] domains mobilized in response to death.’ (Hallam & Hockey, 2001;210). The use of cling film as a form of preservative is as a material ‘fully exploited as a means to convey the notion of ‘the ever lasting’ ’ (2001;210). Within a society where cling film, cellophane and plastic signify disposability, the appropriation of such materials reverses the notion of expendability to exploit their preservative qualities for immortality.

The predominance of Manchester United football scarves at Edwards’ grave as offerings, suggests such aspirations for longevity is generally outweighed by the desire to connect to the memory of Edwards as a footballer. The scarf offerings are unlikely to have been selected as appropriate memorial objects on the basis

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<sup>46</sup> Mentioned in a telephone conversation, between researcher and Kevin Moore (Director of the National Football Museum), on 20 June 2016.

of their durability. As a wearable ‘flag of allegiance’ to a particular club ‘the scarf effectively stood for the club, which was the love of every fan’s life’ (Edge, 2012) and through the installation of scarves at Edwards’ grave that ‘love’ is declared and bestowed upon Edwards. Each scarf design is emblematic of the era it was designed and worn within, as symbols not only of fandom but also references to a particular season or time in the club’s history.

As Womack describes the raising of the American flag over the rubble of the world trade centre ruins after the terrorist attack of 2001 as ‘evoking crises of the past that had been overcome and signalling hope for the future’ (Womack, 2003;13). The presence of replica scarves of Edwards’ era and the scarves designed for the 2008 memorial event at Old Trafford embed Edwards within the history of the club. For fans making the trip to Edwards’ grave he is forever identified and installed at the club through a significant event in its history.

However, Edwards is installed in the present through fan’s commemorative activity that aligns him with the Manchester United of the present day. In this regard Edwards’ headstone embodies the loss of the past, whilst the offerings of scarves physically and metaphorically tie him to the Manchester United of the present. Like flags the scarves mark ownership of the grave site. Their presence demonstrates that the anticipation and hope that the club would recover after the Disaster was ultimately fulfilled. The objects which reference Manchester United overwhelming are mass-produced items which demonstrate the magnitude of fandom that requires such mass production. The emblem of Manchester United repeatedly seen through these objects represents a defiance that was symbolised by the ‘flag’ of America hoisted above the rubble of Ground Zero. Therefore the offerings at Edwards’ grave embody a sense of defiance and endurance albeit on a grave that simultaneously embodies loss and mortality.

### **Mediated Spaces Occupied by Commemorative Objects**

Edwards’ grave appears to be a place of implied ‘consensus, closed and simple, with no reflection or complexity’ (Huggins, 2012;7) as individual offerings appears to co-exist alongside one another. Generally offerings on Edwards’ grave are placed so that they do not obscure others within the space. Scarves left at Edwards’ grave although predominantly representing

Manchester United (but never of the England team) also were observed to occasionally represent other clubs. These ‘rival’ club scarves are left on the grave and appear to represent the essence of football fandom transcending club affiliation. This suggests that visitors to the grave are from a wider football cohort than the Manchester United club and that their commemorative acts are unified through the admiration of Edwards as a player, rather than simply as a Manchester United team player.

The family grave tenders confirmed that they monitored and tidied the offerings but only removed those that were considered too precious for public display. They only discarded offerings that were considered to be badly deteriorated (Rogers and Perry, 2012). They removed, reorganised and discarded offerings regularly as their right as the deed holders for the plot. The standard practice at cemeteries in the UK is to leave the tending of individual graves to the deed holders. Although this happens at Edwards’ grave the local council have made an investment in the promotion of Edwards’ grave as a tourist attraction, so they do retain a unique vested interest in the plot. The visitor trail leaflet (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, 2015) that distinctly markets Edwards’ grave as a site for tourism, does so as a site of dark or morbid tourism.<sup>47</sup> As ‘gravestones and burial grounds have immediate relevance for some forms of dark tourism’ (Walter, 1999). Edwards’ grave is not unique in this regard however it is not a site that is formally managed as a ‘destination’ in the way that Princess Diana’s final resting place<sup>48</sup> is by those who own it (Althorp).

Although Edwards’ grave may be considered a tourist site it remains a sacred family space. For it to pass into public ownership or management would only arise if the family were unable to care for it. How that would impact on how offerings were managed at the grave is difficult to predict. Whoever officially tends the grave has the assumed role of regularly managing and monitoring the offerings left on it.

During interviews with Edwards’ family members, they were asked who they thought should look after Edwards’ grave if his family became unable to so.

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<sup>47</sup> The study of morbid tourism was discussed in Chapter 2iii.

<sup>48</sup> Princess Diana is buried on a private island in the Althorp estate, but this is not accessible to the general public. There is an exhibition about her within the publicly accessible parts of the estate, which is by paid admission.

Rogers suggested that the local council and Manchester United had an obligation to maintain the grave in that ‘the responsibility is with that town who wants to push the fame – what they call ‘their son’ sort of thing’ and ‘I’m sure that the club would donate’ (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;21). Yet Rogers made a distinction between the tending of the grave and maintaining it. She expressed a belief that the tenders should remain within the family, but that the maintenance of the grave was the council’s or the club’s responsibility. The distinction seems to be based on the fact that tending a grave is a family ‘no cost’ commemorative activity whereas maintenance requires funding. When asked about the future of Edwards’ grave, the current tender of the grave said that he hoped that his son would take on the responsibility (Rogers and Perry, 2012). Whilst the family remain in charge of the space, the grave remains accessible and commemorative activity appears allied. How the transition to the next generation of family grave tenders is managed could potentially change the appearance of the grave, including how objects on it are displayed.

### **Offerings at Edwards’ Grave as Significant to Negating his Social Death**

Offerings at Edwards’ grave evidence a ‘continuing bond with the dead’ (Walter, 1999;49) which Walter considers through his examination of bereavement. His description of social death and physical death as two separate entities explores how being deceased physically does not simultaneously affect a social death; where the deceased may be ‘physically dead, socially they may still be very much alive’ (1999;49). Physical death is the death of the body, whilst social death is dependant on the preservation of the deceased’s memory, as ‘in societies in which the ancestors play a significant role, social death may not occur until there is no one left alive who remembers the deceased, that is, another couple of generations or so’ (1999;50). The activity evident at Edwards’ grave resists his social death as Edwards is proclaimed to be ‘never forgotten’ (Daily Mail a) literally and metaphorically. However, if as Walter suggests such death potentially occurs beyond the second generation of commemorators, his social immortality is yet to be tested.

A lack of observable offerings at a grave may suggest a social death for the deceased and memorials that do not allow for the depositing of offerings, may suggest that the dead are both physically and socially dead. The minimal

plaques most frequently used to mark the burial sites of cremated remains generally allow little or no space for individual offerings to be left beside or around them. A burial site or grave without offerings implies that the dead have been forgotten. Although a plot that has no space for offerings articulates more about how the bereaved are expected to behave in that space, than whether social death has occurred. Commemorative activity may be undertaken without the evidence of offerings or it may be undertaken at other sites beyond the cemetery landscape.

Footballer and former captain of England Bobby Moore was cremated in 1993 and his ashes were interred with his parents in gardens of remembrance in Newham, London<sup>49</sup> (Findagrave). A plaque marks the burial site beneath a tree and within a planted bed. Photographs of the plaque taken by visitors predominantly show either no offerings placed upon it or individual 'loose' flowers scattered across it. There is no reference to Moore's status as a footballer on the plaque. As offerings represent a public demonstration of the postponing of social death, in that they convey memory through objects, Moore appears to be still remembered however the volume of tributes to him is far fewer than those left for Edwards at his grave. Although it could be argued that Moore and Edwards are similar significant figures of English football the sites where they are buried show very different levels of commemorator activity. This could be due to of the lack of suitable space at Moore's site for offerings, but the difference between the types of burial plots makes an accurate comparative study difficult.

The leaving of offerings at Edwards' grave requires a degree of preparation and planning, whereby the offerings must be created or obtained before the visit is made. The cemetery where Edwards' grave is installed has strict daylight-only opening hours, so visits must be undertaken within those hours whereas Edwards' statue is accessible 24 hours a day in the town centre's marketplace. Offerings have been observed at the statue during commemorative events and one bunch of flowers was observed on the ledge of the plinth on 6 February

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<sup>49</sup> Bobby Moore died at his home in 1993. His ashes are buried in a plot with his father Robert Edward Moore and his mother Doris Joyce Moore in Putney Vale Crematorium, Stag Lane, Putney SW15 3DZ

2014 (anniversary of the Munich Air Disaster). In comparison to the grave the volume of offerings is inconsistent and very small in number. Although the statue is more accessible it appears that it is not considered an appropriate place for offerings by the majority of commemorators. There is no receptacle for floral offerings at the statue and it is seldom observed with offerings on or near to it. On Edwards' grave three vases for flowers act as functional objects specifically designed and intended for floral offerings. The vases on Edwards' grave are intended for the living to use for flower offerings, whilst the offerings placed within them are intended for the dead. As such the living and dead co-exist as gift-givers at Edwards' grave. Unlike a simple plaque on the ground, Edwards' plot functions as a repository for offerings with three flower vases installed there. When commemorators stop visiting a grave and stop leaving offerings the grave appears unused, and more so if these graves have empty vases upon them. Floral tributes are the most significant type of offerings for sustaining the social existence of Edwards because of this.

Floral tributes are traditional offerings which can be traced back to ancient Roman practices where they were placed at graves of significant people (Reference.com). Flowers 'were used to appease ancestors under the belief that the spirit continued to dwell around the site after death... and were often used to mask the smell of death before preservation was a common practice' (Reference.com). However, the tying of scarves around vases on Edwards' grave demonstrates a commemorative appropriation of the vases as receptacles for scarves, as well as for flowers. The appropriation of the vases by commemorators who bring offerings of scarves connects them more closely to the dead and the tying of the scarves suggests a strong physical and psychological 'continuing bond with the dead' (Walter, 1999;49).

#### **5iii: PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VIRTUAL COMMEMORATIVE OBJECTS**

##### **Introduction**

The fact that commemorators take photographs of Edwards' grave and themselves at the graveside, demonstrates a paradox in dedicatory activity transmitted by technology. As technology creates a 'false intimacy' (Berridge, 2002;93) it also reinforces the intimacy of an individual experience by capturing

a specific moment in time. The image of Edwards' grave as soon as it is taken, falls into the past and is part of Edwards' commemorative network, but also of history. The photographs of Edwards' grave fix the offerings upon the grave and they are as representative of the appearance of the grave at that moment as the 'permanent' memorial is in itself.

These photographs are taken primarily as a record of a visit to preserve in memory and, or to transmit to others. They represent Edwards' grave and the offerings upon it and extend Edwards' presence into the world of the living beyond the grave site. He is not only resuscitated by these photographs but also transported to a world, albeit it virtual, that did not exist when Edwards was alive. As such Edwards is born into a new world as a youthful 21 year old footballer but it is his grave and the offerings upon it that represents his identity. These photographs are significant evidence of active memory preservation and they facilitate the negation of a social death for Edwards.

### **Photographing Edwards' Museum Artefacts**

Those who visit and view the exhibition dedicated to Edwards may do so as part of a commemorative act, as active commemorators. Yet not all visitors to the exhibition will be there in a commemorative capacity and may be general visitors or tourists. Those who consider the objects on show to have a commemorative function may photograph the objects in a commemorative act. These photographs in themselves may become commemorative objects which are retained or shared across Edwards' commemorative network. These images and the experience of seeing the objects may be shared on social media, or through oral accounts. This mimics the way in which commemorators generally respond to other commemorative objects found at memorials or commemorative sites. However, commemorators do not leave objects as offerings at museum sites as they might do at Edwards' grave.

Therefore museum artefacts can be interpreted as commemorative objects and photographed to be used to create commemorative objects beyond the space in which they are installed. As 'the spatial contexts of objects, together with spatially located social practices, are important interrelated dimensions in the formation of lived material cultures' (Hallam & Hockey, 2001;78) photography

makes preserved objects ‘portable’. The association between commemorative objects and the sites in which they exist within may shift with time, but photography immediately displaces them within a virtual space. However, the way in which an object is placed and displayed cannot categorically define how they are viewed or interpreted, but their display will have intent and a significant bearing on their interpretation. Photographs of museum objects can only replicate the museum’s presentation of those objects and therefore they will always be present, even in the virtual world as such.

### **Photographing Edwards’ Grave**

On one fieldwork research visit to Edwards’ grave a woman tending a grave nearby was observed to walk over to Edwards’ grave. She took out her mobile phone and took a photograph of Edwards’ grave saying to her friend nearby ‘take this to show them at work<sup>50</sup>. As Sontag suggests ‘photographs, which turn the past into a consumable object, are a short cut’ (Sontag, 1979;68). The photograph taken by the grave tender would enable her work colleagues to see Edwards’ grave without her needing to describe its appearance, or them having to visit. Her photograph was a view that she had devised and selected to document Edwards’ grave and was specifically intended for consumption by others. Photographs taken as snapshots in this way, as amateur photography not as professional photojournalism, have an added legitimacy and sense of intimacy. As Sontag suggests ‘such pictures are thought to be less manipulative’ and they have ‘a special kind of authenticity’ (1979;24). The act of photographing Edwards’ grave could be considered a commemorative act in its own right, yet it also captures a commemorative visit to the grave and records the grave and the offerings upon it. As almost every shared photograph of Edwards’ grave across social media includes the offerings upon it, the resulting photograph is a complex commemorative object of multiple dimensions.

The repetitive imagery of offerings on Edwards’ grave as seen through the sharing of photographs of the grave reinforces the practice of visiting the grave but also the leaving of offerings upon it. Offerings create a lingering sense of the dead remaining within the social discourse of the living and their portrayal in

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<sup>50</sup> Observations of a visitor at Edwards grave on 19 May 2013.

photographs is suggestive to others as an acceptable and common commemorative practice.

### **Significance of Offerings to Virtual Commemoration**

Commemorators do not need to make a pilgrimage to Edwards' grave to see it but a visit is required if they want to 'experience' it through all senses. Virtual commemorators can view the grave and commemorate Edwards anywhere that they have internet access and at anytime of the day by the consumption of visitor accounts and photographs of Edwards' grave. To view the offerings left by others on Edwards' grave through images of them on the internet, creates a sense of intimacy whereby the viewer is face-to-face with the grave and the offerings upon it. Edwards is brought into the virtual world through devices in the home, public spaces or the workplace. His grave and its offerings become handheld virtual commemorative objects through devices such as smart phones. This can only occur because of the generation of the images and accounts by commemorators who choose to share their commemorative acts with others. In this regard accessible technology becomes a tool for the commemorator to generate commemorative activity but also to consume such activity as:

Binding people across time is the drive to mark, mourn and remember the deaths of others, although the expressions of these impulses varies as religious and social codes wax and wane, and as technological advances alter our commemorative capability (Berridge, 2002:98).

Virtual commemorative objects, memorials or sites are not substitutes for the 'real' commemorative objects, memorials or sites of Edwards but rather technology affords the commemorator with a greater commemorative capacity. Virtual commemoration creates forms of commemorative objects, memorials and sites that are more portable. Akin to an urn that allows the remains of a loved one to be transportable, virtual commemoration can take the fixed grave and transfer it from place to place. It can make temporary offerings permanent by capturing them through photographic technology and giving them a 'life' within the virtual world as virtual commemorative objects. All virtual commemorative acts extend Edwards' commemorative network and through

their representation of ‘temporary’ offerings these offerings enjoy a ‘technology-wrapped’ rather than cellophane wrapped extended existence.

Internet references to Edwards’ grave create a new kind of existence for Edwards, whereby technology transforms his resting place to a type of ‘portable’ universally available memorial which is fixed in reality but portable in the virtual world. His remains have become as, if not more ‘portable’ than an urn of cremated remains, which can be taken to different venues at different times. The offerings on his grave are visually fused to the grave and they are a dimension of the memorial that once photographed cannot be separated from it. Therefore Edwards’ grave has a virtual dimension which creates and re-creates the site of his memorial and the offerings upon it across a worldwide network.

Commemorators who produce maps and directions to Edwards’ grave on the internet facilitate commemorative activity as virtual tour guides (Thomas 1999). Their activities reinforce a seemingly infinite loop of commemorative activity whereby visits are made to the grave, the experience is shared and this inspires and assists others to seek advice on how to visit the grave and they in turn share their own experiences. Edwards and the offerings on his grave are resuscitated by this continuous commemorative activity. Through the persistent presence of offerings upon Edwards’ grave in the virtual world, offerings have become permanent commemorative objects on a par with the permanency of the grave itself.

### **The Co-existence of the Living and the Dead in the Virtual World**

The image of Edwards’ grave clearly places Edwards in the living world as a dead person. This is distinct from the images and videos of Edwards playing football which represent his life. Images of Edwards’ memorials such as his grave, statue and dedicatory stained glass window on the internet represent a dead Edwards. Internet images of his grave have a dual commemorative function in that they evidence commemorative activity that resists his social death whilst defining him as physically dead. The sharing of images of Edwards’ life may be shared as commemorative acts but they do not have that extra dimension of depicting commemorative activity, as images of commemorative objects, memorials and sites do. Images of Edwards’ grave and the offerings

upon it reveal multiple commemorative acts in one single image. Therefore these images constitute a reinforced commemorative network of Edwards that emphasises the preservation of his memory but also a wider concept of how commemoration is undertaken virtually.

Edwards' grave is transported into a 'living space' that liberates it from the confines of the cemetery landscape, yet represented through images of his grave, Edwards is identifiable as dead. That images of the offerings upon Edwards' grave show items from the present day including fresh flowers, modern football shirts and scarves, reinforces the grave as a space of the dead but occupied and used by the living. Edwards' grave can be visited in a commemorative cyberspace and then the grave can be bookmarked, made a 'favourite', sent to a friend and saved. As such Edwards' grave has a cyber existence that literally becomes part of those commemorators own legacy through their own browsing and posting 'history'. This significantly utilises Edwards' grave as a space to defy Edwards' social death. Paradoxically it is these modern technology-equipped commemorators who reinforce the traditional commemorative function of Edwards' grave and the offerings upon it.

Although Edwards died years before social media and the internet became commonplace, he has acquired a 'virtual life'. The internet is a global technology in which the living and the dead can co-exist. The virtual world does not always distinguish between the living and the dead and they may be impossible to differentiate from one another. A virtual life that is intrinsically part of a physical life through activity on social media can experience a virtual death when a person dies a physical death. Companies that manage social network sites such as Facebook accommodate the dead within their virtual community. Facebook operate a death policy where 'legacy contacts' can be appointed by Facebook users prior to their death, to tend to their virtual existence after death. These contacts have the permission 'to share a final message on your behalf or provide information about a memorial service... respond to new friend requests... update your profile picture' (Facebook a). The dead in the virtual world of Facebook can still retain an existence; accept 'new friends' and converse with the living. The only distinction visually is 'the word Remembering will be shown next to the person's name on their profile' (Facebook b). The

option to delete or download parts of the deceased's profile also exists for 'legacy contacts' as they become tenders of a virtual memorial plot. Visitors new and old can visit the pages of the deceased and leave messages as well as explore the deceased profile and the commemorative activity of others. In this regard the profile becomes grave-like and a site that can be returned to regularly as a fixed memorial to the dead, albeit virtual. Not all online social platforms accommodate the dead in such a way as to negate the sense of social death. Twitter as a company opt to 'deactivate' accounts when they are informed of a user's death (Twitter). However, such differing policies in relation to the virtual dead define a complexity by which social death is negotiated. Edwards never had his own Facebook page or Twitter account although memorial Edwards accounts on Facebook exist. Visitors to these pages and to dedicated websites only encounter the commemorative acts of commemorators and not his self-generated virtual existence. Therefore his virtual existence has only ever been commemoratively constructed.

Within an era of online commemoration and virtual memorial making, technology is intensifying rather than replacing the significance of physical memorials such as graves. However, as people die and their virtual lives are revisited by commemorators, their online life is almost unaltered by death. However, Edwards had no living virtual life to extend beyond his death, yet if 'as the technology has improved, so has the quality and quantity of false intimacy in our daily lives' (Berridge, 2002;93) then Edwards may appear more alive virtually and for a longer period than the 21 years that he actually lived. As the persistence of offerings at Edwards' grave attests there is still a 'need to act' (2002;93) for those commemorators of Edwards who feel compelled to visit his grave. Yet there is an added compulsion to share such acts on social media.

Commemoration is simply another act of life that is shared on personal profiles, like a holiday or news of a new job. Increasingly unified by the use of technology to mark the event of a visit to a victims' grave, Mike Thomas' dedicatory websites to Edwards, the Munich Air Disaster and the Busby

Babes<sup>51</sup> are in part tools to enable what some describe as morbid tourism. Thomas includes directions to the graves of Munich Air Disaster victims on his website in response to requests and he also posts photographs of the graves on these sites sent in by fans (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;12).

Although Thomas acknowledges that some fans will make ‘pilgrimages’ to grave sites there is greater evidence to suggest that most visits are due to commemorators being in the locality for other reasons. For instance fans may be attending a local Manchester United match, visiting the local area for work or leisure or visiting other graves. Thomas himself attests to an unplanned visit to the grave stating ‘I don’t think we went there deliberately – we were on our way somewhere so we stopped off. We also went to the statue and the sport centre’ (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;13). A number of Manchester United fans were observed visiting Edwards’ grave on the morning of a match day between Manchester United and West Bromwich Albion<sup>52</sup> (a nearby club). This further suggests that visits to the grave are usually incorporated in other activities and Edwards is not the sole focus for a visit to the area.

Edwards’ grave, or a notion of it can, be accessed 24 hours a day virtually but this online commemoration is predominantly consuming others commemorative activities rather than initializing it. However, the virtual commemorative world can sustain a level of unprecedented commemorative activity which the grave could not generate due to its fixed and controlled state. When considering the number of intentional visits to Edwards’ grave in comparison to unplanned specific visits, it appears they are in the minority. Therefore the generation of images and accounts of his grave that exist on the internet constitute visits made predominantly ‘in-passing’. Yet photographic images of Edwards’ grave appear the same if they are taken as part of a planned specific visit or not. The assumption that visitors to Dudley visit to commemorate Edwards is true,

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<sup>51</sup> The websites created by Thomas are [www.duncanedwards.co.uk](http://www.duncanedwards.co.uk) (1999), [www.munich58.co.uk](http://www.munich58.co.uk) (1999) & [www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk](http://www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk) (2008)

<sup>52</sup> During fieldwork research on 19 May 2013 a group of seven men self-identified as Manchester United supporters arrived at the grave mid-morning. They confirmed that none of them had made a special trip specifically to see Edwards’ grave. They included a visit to the grave because they were in the area to attend an away match at West Bromwich Albion football ground.

however that commemoration is the main purpose for visiting the area is debatable.

Photographic evidence of visits to Edwards' grave attests to ongoing commemorative activity at the memorial. These images are multiple across Edwards' social commemorative network however the significance and volume of dedicated pilgrimages to his grave may be overstated. This is not to say that pilgrimages to Edward's grave do not occur, to the contrary they appear to occur in number. However, these visits appear to be in conjunction with other activities such as attending a match nearby or visiting another grave in the proximity. My first visit to Edwards' grave was 'in passing' after I had visited my grandparents grave, therefore commemorative acts at Edwards' grave appear to be more integrated into people's daily life than may be initially apparent. Generally it appears that visitors make time, or create a detour to visit his grave and leave offerings. This type of commemorative activity is potentially more sustainable as it is a dedicatory task incorporated into everyday life, further imbedding Edwards into the world of the living and contributing more fully to negating his social death. However, the element of any forward planning appears to be predominantly through the preparation of offerings to leave at the site. The visit may not be a single dedicated journey but it is still a singularly dedicatory act.

## **SUMMARY**

Commemorative objects are made or appropriated objects created by, or used for commemorative acts. Although memorials may be considered as commemorative objects for the purpose of this study they are differentiated as a particular type of memorials and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Commemorative objects may be purpose made objects with a specific dedicatory function, appropriated everyday objects with a commemorative dimension or they may be memento mori. Family heirlooms and the former belongings of the deceased may also be interpreted as commemorative objects. Therefore the consideration of an object as a commemorative is dependant upon how it is made, utilised, interpreted or appropriated and where it is located.

The commemorative objects identified within Edwards' commemorative network are similarly diverse in their creation, use, placing, interpretation and appropriation. Those objects identified as significant to his commemoration are the offerings left at his grave and his previous belongings on display at the Dudley Museum and Art Gallery. Through their examination aspects of Edwards' commemorative network can be defined and interrogated.

Objects preserved and presented as historical artefacts within museums and galleries are altered by their formal display. Edwards' personal artefacts on display at Dudley Museum and Gallery are not commemorative objects but they have a commemorative dimension when they are interpreted as such by commemorators. Museum artefacts such as Edwards' caps are specifically collected, preserved and displayed as historical artefacts. Yet their presence in the museum was as a result of a commemorative act as they were loaned by Edwards' mother to the local council to be preserved and displayed. Interviews of family members revealed that Edwards' father had pre-empted such an act. He understood that his son's artefacts had a potentially wider historical and cultural value, beyond that of family heirlooms. He acknowledged his own mortality through his desire to safeguard his son's football-related belongings after his own death. By seeking to preserve his son's immortality he was seeking to undertake a commemorative act that he thought would secure the preservation of his son's belongings. Yet by becoming museum artefacts Edwards' belongings are preserved but they are displaced as commemorative objects as they are disassociated from his family's commemorative cohort. They are an example of commemorative objects being appropriated for historical preservation, whereby Edwards' former belongings shift from being commemorative objects to museum artefacts. Through these artefacts Edwards is absorbed within the history of his hometown of Dudley, but disengaged from his own family history. These artefacts are referenced within Edwards' commemorative network because they have a commemorative dimension.

Football shirts that relate to Edwards are found at both the museum and the grave. As Edwards' mother loaned his shirts to the museum in a commemorative act, commemorators leave shirts as offerings at Edwards'

grave. However, Edwards' mother was loaning his shirts as an act to ensure their formal preservation as historically significant artefacts. Whereas commemorators who leave shirts at Edwards grave as offerings have a tacit understanding that they are objects that will ultimately perish. Such is the complexity of the commemorative appropriation of objects where intention and location can define their use and their longevity. The preservation of memory through objects can be undertaken as an act to preserve an artefact into perpetuity or as an acceptance of unavoidable loss and obliteration.

The collective significance of Edwards' caps displayed in his local museum evidence his multiple national sporting achievements. Each cap amplifies the achievement of the next and collectively they verify Edwards' sporting ability to a higher degree than an individual cap would represent. An individual football shirt upon Edwards' grave is commemoratively amplified by other similar shirt offerings, as individual acts are collectively transformed to have a greater visual and dedicatory impact. As individual shirts suggest a personal act of commemoration, en masse such offerings suggest an intense sense of personal loss on a greater scale. Although not created collectively the collective appearance of multiple individual offerings intensifies the commemorative dimension of all offerings present on Edwards' grave. Data collected from fieldwork research revealed a persistently high volume of offerings were left at Edwards' grave. However, the offerings examined were found to be individually made and not collectively constructed, although they are encountered as a collective.

The offerings at Edwards' grave were found to predominantly preserve his memory as a footballer through their association or representation of Manchester United. Offerings particularly of football of scarves and shirts are predominantly those of Manchester United. Edwards' association with Manchester United appears to dominate how he is preserved in memory by commemorative activity at his grave. His statue however preserves his memory as an England team player as a national player who is a local hero (discussed in Chapter Three). Both sites preserve his memory as a footballer but he is distinctly allied to different teams at his grave and statue. However, it is only the objects that reference Manchester United on his grave that preserve his

memory as a Manchester United player. His grave does not reference any team affiliation but the team-related offerings on it connect Edwards the footballer of Manchester United's past, to the team and supporters of the present. The presence of the mass produced club scarves and shirts attests to the club's ultimate recovery post-Disaster and this infers a sense of the club's resurrection after the crash. Mass produced shirts and scarves are bestowed with commemorative meaning and link Edwards and the Disaster to the living Manchester United cohort.

These offerings become in essence Edwards' belongings, making them unique and like his former belongings are maintained by the local council, family grave tenders become curators of these offerings, confirming that they do preserve some significant offerings. That the National Football Museum expressed an interest in acquiring an example of these significant offerings demonstrates the significance of commemorative objects. That Edwards' grave offerings are considered to be of national historical significance underpins the importance of commemoration to our cultural history and Edwards' significance to the culture and history of football in this country.

However, a few non-Manchester United referenced scarves and offerings were observed on his grave. This evidences a wider admiration for and commemoration of Edwards beyond his persona as a Manchester United team player, yet proportionally these offerings are small in number.

Offerings at Edwards' grave evidence appear to greatly negate his social death (Walter, 1999;49) whereby Edwards is deceased and physically dead but he is preserved in memory and 'socially' alive. The commemorative activity evidenced by offerings at Edwards' grave help to resist his social death. Although the creation of his grave and statue also negate social death the offerings on his grave distinctly represent current and recent memory preservation. The creation of Edwards' grave was a commemorative act undertaken over 50 years ago whilst the offerings upon it represent current commemorative activity. If commemorators stop leaving offerings on his grave he may appear to have been forgotten, the lack of offerings will evidence his social death. Offerings on his grave sustain Edwards' 'social life' particularly

through floral tributes as they have a limited life themselves the presence of fresh flowers most significantly represent current commemorative acts.

Although commemorators may take and share photographs of Edwards' grave and the fresh flower offerings upon it, these evidence a paradox in technologically transmitted commemorative activity. A photograph of offerings on Edwards' grave becomes an act of the past as soon as it is taken. The photograph preserves fresh flower offerings through a photographic immortality. Through photographs these offerings evidence a current activity at the time the image was taken, but perpetually represent it as an act of the past. Therefore photographs of commemorative objects on Edwards' grave can afford them a complex commemorative dimension that transmits them and Edwards as distinctly 'of the past' yet apparent 'in the present'. Such a complex virtual existence is reliant on the initial act of leaving an offering on Edwards' grave however. Therefore Edwards' virtual commemoration is concerned in part with transmitting the commemorative acts of others including images of commemorative objects.

Commemorative objects exist within the virtual world and are accessible via the internet and such technology becomes a tool for the commemorator to consume commemorative activity. This technology bestows commemorators with the tools to give commemorative objects a greater commemorative capacity. Commemorative objects that are captured photographically and virtually are given immortality within the virtual world, as virtual commemorative objects. They extend across Edwards' commemorative network as 'technologically preserved' but perpetually merged into Edwards' grave. Therefore the offerings of Edwards' grave have a potential virtual existence as part of a fixed memorial even though they are considered to be temporary and transient in nature.

As Edwards died before social media and the internet became commonplace, he has not been resurrected by this technology but he has acquired a new virtual life. His virtual life is therefore commemoratively constructed for him by commemorators. This is distinctly different to those who have constructed their own virtual existence during their life, on Facebook for instance. Edwards'

virtual life was created some time after his death as a dedicatory construct of him.

How Edwards will be commemorated in the future can only be speculated. Any speculation of how commemorative objects across his commemorative network will be created, translated and located in the future is also only based on conjecture. Recent changes in Dudley whereby Edwards' artefacts are set for relocation due to the proposed closure of the local museum, suggest that objects with significance to Edwards' commemoration may have that commemorative significance compromised.

Many artefacts within museums are not on display but stored and if Edwards' artefacts are put into storage their role within his commemorative network will be compromised. If these objects are not present within the commemorative network any appropriated dedicatory function will be diminished but they also will not serve as evidence to his sporting achievements. After his caps and football shirts have been on public display for over 30 years their disappearance from public view, even if temporary, will disrupt commemorative activity and memory preservation.

The relocation of Edwards' artefacts to an out of town location disassociates them from the centre of Dudley. They will no longer be in close proximity to his statue, grave and windows in St Francis Church. How they will function as objects within a new display or in storage, at a new venue is difficult to predict. That they have been moved to three different venues in only 30 years suggests that their preservation is ongoing but their appropriation and display as objects is persistently changing. It could be fairly predicted that such re-appropriation and relocation of these objects would be repeated in the future.

Edwards' artefacts are to be moved because the museum in which they are located is to be closed due to local council budget cuts. Edwards' statue was enhanced and relocated within the same period due to the acquisition of local council and European regeneration funding. This does highlight the significance of funding to commemorative activity at a corporate level however there is an important distinction to be noted. Edwards' statue as a memorial is a

commemorative structure, whereas his artefacts are non-commemorative objects preserved for their historical and cultural significance. Funding was made available to enhance his commemoration through his statue yet simultaneously the preservation and display of his personal artefacts were under threat due to funding cuts. This suggests that Edwards' commemorative network is a construct that is not coherently managed and dedicatory acts can be simultaneously impeded and emergent even within a small geographical area. That funding is available to enhance Edwards' memorial whilst his former belongings are compromised by budgetary constraints further suggests that Edwards' commemoration is defined significantly in Dudley by access to suitable funding. That such an external monetary consideration can have such an impact on Edwards' commemorative network, suggests that his memory preservation is more subsumed within the daily lives of the living than may be initially apparent.

As discussed in this chapter some of Edwards' memorials are intrinsically associated to certain commemorative objects through the dedicatory acts of commemorators such as offerings placed on Edwards' grave. Although memorials such as Edwards' grave and his statue could be considered as commemorative objects, their size, professional fabrication and composite materials sets them apart from the commemorative objects category. How and why this is the case will be explored further in the next chapter where a socio-cultural analysis of the creation, installation and nature of memorials will be made.

## **6: COMMEMORATION: MEMORIALS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the role that memorials play in commemoration of the dead generally, as well as specifically in regard to the commemoration of Duncan Edwards and the Munich Air Disaster.

As discussed in Chapter Five commemorative objects, sites and memorials may reference each other or be in close proximity to one another. Memorials may define a site as commemorative simply through their installation within that space. They may be of a permanent nature, as in the placement of a bronze statue or be a temporary construction, as in a roadside memorial. Nevertheless notions of what defines a memorial as temporary or permanent varies through interpretation, use and appropriation.

The creation, association and appropriation of significant memorials to the active commemoration of Edwards and the Munich Air Disaster are examined in order to define a memorial's individual dedicatory function. The memorials most persistently promoted or referenced within these commemorative networks were identified. Within the commemorative network of Edwards his most significant memorials are all installed in his hometown of Dudley. They are dedicatory stained glass windows in St Francis Parish Church, Edwards' grave, Edwards' statue and two road name dedications. Yet Edwards' grave is the most significant and most referenced memorial within his commemorative network. It inspires the greatest quantifiable degree of commemorative activity definitively across his network.

Edwards is also specifically referenced within two significant memorial plaques that commemorate the Munich Air Disaster including a plaque erected on the exterior of Old Trafford and a similar memorial near to the site of the former Munich Airport in Kirchtrudering, Munich. In the wider commemorative network of the Disaster the temporary 2008 AIG sponsored decal and the Munich Clock erected within Old Trafford football ground were also identified as noteworthy memorials.

## **The Commemorative Arts**

By establishing an understanding of, and definition for, the commemorative arts all memorials could be considered to be examples of this specific art form.

However, this all-inclusive assertion can be problematic because it belies the complexity of certain memorial making activity that is not formalised, such as the creation of roadside memorials. Furthermore not all memorials are created or consumed as an art form. The commemorative arts is generally used to describe three dimensional dedicatory structures, but the art form also includes the literary arts, film making and two dimensional visual arts such as photographs and paintings. In the UK, commemorative art is predominantly commissioned formal memorials such as monuments, statues and gravestones usually created by professional artists or makers.

As ‘commemorative art both describes the past life of the deceased and establishes the person’s future reputation’ (Llewellyn, 1997;101) the role of commemorative art is to enhance the physicality of the dead as a tribute to their former living self. These memorials represent the dead through a ‘monumental body’ (Llewellyn, 1997;101). In essence such tributes appear to be artistic interpretations of the dead and their development is often tightly defined and closely monitored by those commissioning the artwork. From bespoke post-Reformation memorials ‘in which patrons exercised close controls on the designer and on the sculptors, masons and painters who realised their plans’ (Llewellyn, 1997;102) to a present day ‘public preference for figurative art’ (Stride, Wilson & Thomas, 2013;160) specifically for sporting hero memorials, commemorative art appears to have remained patron-led and controlled.

The football statuary would appear to be of importance within the context of modern figurative sculpture, in both rehabilitating what has previously been a marginalised art form and bringing art to the people (2013;160).

There appears to be a patron-led preference for memorials to be of a traditional figurative form, however more symbolic and abstracted renderings have emerged but these are very small in number. Within football-related memorials, the figurative sculpture remains the established and dominant format and the depiction of men, predominantly white men is seemingly all pervasive (Stride,

Wilson & Thomas, 2013). However, this gender disparity is also reflected across the commemorative statuary landscape of the UK. In Parliament Square in London there are 11 statues but none is of a woman (Criado-Perez, 2016) which campaigners for a monument to women suffragettes draw attention to.

## **6i: THE GRAVE OF DUNCAN EDWARDS**

### **Introduction**

Since its installation in 1958, the appearance of Edwards' grave has not been significantly altered. It has been partly restored in response to normal settlement and subsidence commensurate with a memorial of its age, but this has not altered its overall appearance. Although the grave has not radically altered over time, the offerings left at the site by visitors, continue to be constantly changing and varied. The significance of Edwards' grave to his commemorative network was established through the analysis of fieldwork research undertaken at the site. This four year fieldwork research project established the nature of commemorative activity evident at the grave between 2010 and 2014 (see Appendix C). This fieldwork research documented the appearance of the grave, commemorative activity undertaken there (such as the leaving of offerings) and observations of visitor activity at the grave. A summary of this research can be found in Appendix C including a selection of images of the grave during this period.

Edwards' grave is the most persistently referenced and most stable of all of his memorials. It was established as a memorial when it was installed in Dudley Cemetery in February 1958. Unlike his statue and the collection of items loaned to the local council (including most notably his England caps) it has never been moved. Unlike the dedicatory stained windows in his local church, the dedication of road names and numerous other memorials specific to him, the grave was created within days of his death; in the same month that he died.

## Description of Edwards' Grave

Edwards' grave<sup>53</sup> is in Dudley Cemetery in his hometown of Dudley in the West Midlands and he was buried there on 26 February 1958. Edwards' plot is shared with his younger sister and it is marked by a mounted headstone on a slab. The headstone is in black polished granite on a matching plinth and a grey polished stone slab which is edged in black granite demarcates the plot (see Appendix Ci). Due to its size and its elevation on a plinth, the headstone stands just above the majority of headstones in the immediate vicinity.

Although accessed by numerous commemorators, Edwards' grave has always been tended as a family plot, albeit by a number of different family members over time. It is not as some have suggested 'maintained by members of the Manchester United family' (Johnston, 2008;14) meaning that it is tended by the club or the fans.

There are three 'free-standing' stone flower holders in the centre of the grave and one is in the shape of a football. Engraved on the headstone is an image which appears to depict Edwards' head and shoulders as he throws in a ball during a football match. The epitaph below is in gilded writing:

A Day of Memory Sad to recall, Without Farewell He left us all, In Loving  
Memory of our dear son DUNCAN EDWARDS who died Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> 1958  
from Injuries received in an air Crash at Munich AGED 21 YEARS. At this  
Shrine of Reward and Rest Memory Honours those we love best

His sister's epitaph is also inscribed in gold at the foot of the plot and reads 'Also Carol Anne Aged 14 weeks'.

The grave is easily reached by foot or car from the main road and due to its position in the cemetery it can be easily accessed from the adjacent path and walked around. It is within a row of similarly single-sized plots, with his parent's grave installed a few plots to the right, in the same row. Other members of the Edwards family are also buried nearby in established family plots. The location

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<sup>53</sup> Edwards' Grave Reference is plot 72 2 Section C in Dudley Cemetery, Stourbridge Rd, Dudley, West Midlands, DY1 2DA.

and reference number of Edwards' grave within the cemetery is easily obtainable through internet searches, from the local council and on a dedicated page on the tribute website [www.duncan-edwards.co.uk](http://www.duncan-edwards.co.uk) (Thomas 1999).

### **The Significance of Edwards' Grave to his Commemorative Network**

Walter suggests that shrines, memorials and heritage sites have distinctly different functions within the commemorative network 'put perhaps oversimply, shrines are where care, guidance and prayer take place; memorials are where remembrance takes place; museums and heritage sites are where edutainment takes place'. (Walter, 2009;9). Although acknowledging the oversimplification of these definitions Walter does not explicitly mention graves. Edwards' grave is used as a site of remembrance and it appears to function as both a shrine and a memorial. Although it could not be considered as a museum site, it is referenced by the local council in a way that potentially signifies it as a heritage site. Within a visitor trail leaflet created by the local council 'to help share the story of one of the country's finest ever footballers...to show where various landmarks are located to pay tribute to Duncan' (Dudley Council 2014), Edwards' grave is included as an important site for visitors. Created specifically to assist commemorative activity, the leaflet outlines Edwards' achievements whilst providing a practical map of a visitor trail. His grave is referenced as a 'landmark' and described within a leaflet that could be described as 'edutainment' (Walter, 2009;9). It is described as 'still a shrine for pilgrimage by football supporters' (2014) suggesting a legacy of commemorative significance not only to his family but also to football fans and supporters over an extended period of time. As a functioning shrine, family plot and tourist attraction Edwards' grave is multifunctional and as such could potentially be a disputed and contested memorial. Disputes and contestations over how memorials are used are not uncommon, although not apparent at Edwards' grave. Within the wider commemorative network of the Munich Air Disaster an example of a high profile dispute over a memorial at Old Trafford was evident. This dispute is discussed in a previous chapter (see Chapter 4iii) regarding the appropriateness of the AIG logo on a decal on the façade of Old Trafford in 2008. However, Edwards' grave remains apparently undisputed by its various users.

Due to the number of offerings left at Edwards' grave the view of the actual memorial is always impeded to some degree. This in itself could be cause for dispute amongst different commemorators, particularly between family members and non-family members. However, the presence of these offerings appears to be celebrated by family members, general visitors and football fans alike, as they evidence that Edwards is highly regarded and remembered. These offerings demonstrate that the commemorative network is active and dedicatory acts are prolific at the memorial site. Although these offerings are extensive in number they are placed and tended in a relatively ordered way and the headstone is always left visible. During fieldwork research Edwards' headstone and his epitaph were never observed to be impeded by offerings. This suggests that a commemorative etiquette is being kept whereby offerings are left in a similar way on the same area of the memorial. During one fieldwork research visit, a visitor was observed tidying the grave, by moving a scarf fringe (see Appendix C p.12). He explained that he was moving the scarf fringe because it had fallen across the front of the grave edge covering Edwards' sister's epitaph. He explained that he was making it visible again, out of respect to her. The visitor was a football fan unrelated to Edwards' sister yet he was compelled to tend the memorial and felt comfortable in doing so. On another occasion, family members arrived to tend to the grave, and carefully cleared fallen leaves and dead flowers (see Appendix C p.12). They then placed their own new floral offerings in spaces between the existing offerings.

On another occasion on the same day a cemetery worker expressed concern at the slight subsidence evident at Edwards' plot. On a return visit a few weeks later Edwards' grave had been repaired, in stark contrast to a number of other long-time subsided plots in the cemetery, including some graves of Edwards' extended family. This infers that the appearance of Edwards' grave is considered more important than those left in disrepair. That the cemetery management responded quickly to changes in the appearance of his grave suggests that they are monitoring and maintaining it as an important public monument. In this regard the upkeep of Edwards' grave is considered to be public responsibility, not just the responsibility of the family tenders.

## **Graves and Memorials of Sporting Heroes**

The appearance of Edwards' grave has not significantly deteriorated over its lifetime and this suggests that it is regularly visited and maintained to a high standard. Although those who currently tend the grave are not direct blood relatives, they are part of Edwards' family (see Appendix D). However, not all Disaster victim graves are as well maintained and tended. When the grave of Geoff Bent, a player killed in the Disaster, was found by a supporter of Manchester United with 'weeds choking the last resting place' the incident was reported in the local press with the headline 'Forgotten grave of a Busby Babe' (Manchester Evening News 2005). The supporter who discovered the dilapidated plot suggested that the care of the grave was the responsibility of Manchester United. They stated 'I think it is disgusting that his grave should have been allowed to get into this state. It should have been a matter of pride for the club to keep it neat and tidy' (2005). The local headline that suggested that Bent had been forgotten is substantiated by the comparison to how the same local community responded in the immediate aftermath of his death. In 1958 a local works manager was quoted as saying 'we had a collection for wreaths for Bent and Colman and the works flag has been flying at half-mast ever since the disaster' (Hall, 2008;179). Yet by 2005 it appeared that Bent had been forgotten. In response to the article a Manchester United club official stated that they would 'look into the matter and do something to keep the grave tidy on a permanent basis' (2005). Such an inferred long term commitment suggests that the club do feel a responsibility to officially care for the graves of the Disasters' dead, if it is apparent that no family member is able to tend the grave or there is a public call for the club's input. The fan's expectation that the club should be the custodian of former players' graves suggests that being a club player is potentially a lifetime and beyond project.

For the football club to commit to tending the graves of those killed due to the Munich Air Disaster into perpetuity (should their own family be unable to care for them) is testament to the notion of the football club as a type of family. However, some fans like Mike Thomas<sup>54</sup> state that the club has a responsibility to those players killed in the Disaster as 'I think that the club should contribute. They gave their lives for the club' (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;8).

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<sup>54</sup> Mike Thomas is a Manchester United fan and the creator and webmaster of [www.duncanedwards.co.uk](http://www.duncanedwards.co.uk) (1999) [www.munich58.co.uk](http://www.munich58.co.uk) & [www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk](http://www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk)

A 1980 appeal for funds from ‘a member of the Parochial Church Council wrote to Manchester United, who then put a copy of the letter in the match-day programme’ (Johnston, 2008;1) towards the repair of the stained glass windows dedicated to Edwards in St Francis Parish Church. Just over £400 was raised from fans from this programme appeal, however it is notable that Manchester United Football Club did not formally contribute to the funds, but facilitated the appeal. The original funds for the creation and installation of the windows also came as a result of an appeal by Edwards’ former local church. The majority of sources suggest that Brentford Football Club and Crystal Palace Football Club were ‘the only clubs who donated money towards the £300 cost’ (Burn, 2006;74), however St Francis Parish Church state that Manchester United Football Club were the original funders (Johnston, 2008;13) but clarity sought on this issue has not been forthcoming from the church.

The Reverend Sue Timmins of the church where Bent is buried confirmed that ‘it is usual for the families to be responsible for the graves of their relatives. Where this is not possible, because of age or infirmity, we do our best to help but we can only do so much’ (2005). The maintenance of ageing cemeteries and churchyards is an ongoing widespread problem. Groups raising funds for the restoration and renovation of whole gravesites seek funds for memorial restoration and grounds maintenance. Some cemeteries and churchyards are maintained by volunteers who acknowledge that relatives are less able to care for family graves due to family members moving away from hometowns, or because of the deaths of family grave tenders themselves. A group campaigning for funds for the restoration of a cemetery near to Dudley Cemetery discovered the graves of former footballers Billy Bassett and George ‘Spry’ Woodhall. They ‘both made names for themselves playing for West Bromwich Albion before winning caps for England’ (Express & Star 2015 c). The Facebook page for the campaign group states their aim is ‘to reinstate a safe and peaceful environment to pay your respects’ (Friends of Old Church Cemetery West Bromwich 2015).

The leader of the group is a ‘lifelong Baggies<sup>55</sup> fan... now trying to get the club involved in the project’. He added ‘we have informed West Bromwich Albion and they have asked us to give them a wish list to present to the board’ (Express & Star 2015 c). The campaigners had also approached supporters groups and stated that they felt that being a supporter meant that they ‘should take on the responsibility of restoring the graves...as well as those of others in the churchyard’ (2015). This holistic approach to the restoration of the cemetery suggests that the motivation for the restoration is essentially to improve the cemetery landscape as a whole. As with the regeneration of Dudley marketplace which included the relocation of Edwards’ statue, the churchyard renovations appear to also rely on the ‘resuscitation’ of dead football heroes. However, it also implies a hierarchy of the dead whereby ‘famous’ footballers are singled out as the more special and significant dead. Whether the motivation for this is for fundraising or to draw attention to campaigns, it is clear that some dead appear to be more important and useful to such causes than some others. If appropriated by campaigners the potential for the achievements of footballers to sustain their elevated status in life in death, is high.

The deterioration of cemeteries is a growing problem as ‘overgrown graves are a sorry testament to the fragmentation of contemporary society and the short-term interest of relations in the earlier offshoots of the family tree’ (Berridge, 2002;149). To discover a grave of a famous or significant sportsman or woman within a cemetery offers an opportunity for raising awareness and potential renovation and regeneration funds. The ‘famous dead’ become a potentially valuable asset to preservation and restoration campaigners. By singling out the graves of historically significant players, football fans become potential donors to the fundraising cause. If graves of sporting heroes are ‘to construct particular forms of cultural memory, glorifying individuals’ standing and achievements and highlighting distinctive feats or sporting titles’ (Huggins, 2012;7) then campaigners have found a new restorative function for them. Amongst the dead sporting heroes can elevate a whole cemetery or churchyard to a higher status, as their presence makes it more worthy for preservation. Players Bassett and Woodhall are buried within a site that does not reference football and both are buried with their respective wives. In this regard they are not distinct from the

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<sup>55</sup> The colloquial name for a West Bromwich Albion fan.

other family graves around them. However, these graves are appropriated and professed to be of special significance. In this way a hierarchy of the cemetery's memorials and subsequently the deceased is established. The footballers' graves appear to be of greater commemorative significance than the other graves and football fame becomes a significant commemorative device for the whole cemetery and potentially its future.

### **The Graves of Disaster Victims and Survivors**

In the commemorative networks of the Munich Air Disaster there appears to be no greater authentic commemorative memorials than the graves of the victims. Whilst undertaking fieldwork research in 2014, the graves of Geoff Bent, Matt Busby, and Eddie Colman were found to be in good repair and well tended (see Appendix Ci 5). Bent and Colman died as a result of the Disaster and Busby, although badly injured survived the crash and died in 1994. The graves of a survivor and two victims were selected in order to make comparative analysis of the memorials. These were further compared to Edwards' grave for the context of this overall research project.

Bent's grave includes a reference to the cause of his death on his headstone epitaph stating 'who died in the aircraft disaster at Munich'. Offerings left at his grave were observed to be floral tributes and one football-related Manchester United scarf. Bent does not share his grave with anyone else, whilst Colman shares his with his parents. Colman's epitaph also references his death as someone 'who died in the Munich Air Disaster'. The offerings at his grave were not found to be football-related, being predominantly floral tributes.

The graves of Bent, Colman and Edwards reference their deaths at a relatively young age due to the Munich Air Disaster. However, Edwards' grave is less explicit in that it references 'an air Crash at Munich' rather than the 'the' of 'the Munich Air Disaster' or 'the aircraft disaster at Munich' of Colman and Bent epitaphs respectively. This slight differentiation is perhaps due to Edwards' post-crash death, as opposed to Bent and Colman's deaths in the crash. Bent and Edwards are both portrayed as football players on their gravestones and this reinforces their footballer and sporting status. Such explicit football

references and mention of the Munich Air Disaster means that their graves represent them as players in death. Such graves are ‘where they died relatively young, or had a special resonance with the public, they sometimes long continued to hold a special place in British sporting culture and in collective memories’ (Huggins, 2012;4). Being part of the celebrated Busby Babes collective, all three have a ‘special resonance’ for the public which amplifies their commemorative potential in conjunction with their death at a young age. If as Huggins suggests ‘memorials say something about the perceived personal identity of the commemorated sporting hero’ (Huggins, 2012;7) then the graves of the Munich victims (which were observed) define them as individuals.

However, collectively their loss was felt or conveyed, each grave is distinctly individual. This is in contrast to the uniform gravestones erected during the First World War by the War Graves Commission. This uniformity was a state controlled ‘democratic approach to death’ (Berridge, 2002;53). The young soldiers who died abroad were buried under identical headstones, in regimented rows. Monuments to the war dead that expressed differences in social status or ranking were banned, making death ‘truly the great leveller’ (2002;53). Such a veto on individual monuments often went against the wishes of families, many of whom who tried unsuccessfully to repatriate the bodies of their lost sons and fathers (2002;53). The democratisation of the war dead was sought to defy a hierarchy in death. Although in essence the victims of the Munich Air Disaster died together and overseas as part of a collective of the Busby Babes and Manchester United, they were not equal in death. Their bodies were repatriated for family burials and their graves are markedly individualistic. The design of the memorials to them were not censored and allowed for individual expressions of grief. As these graves, particularly Edwards’ grave appear to be used by many commemorators these memorials appear to embody the individuality that many families of the war dead sought for their relatives. Although something is made of the collective nature of the Disaster’s dead, their graves are within family plots and they were removed from the site of their death, in a way that so many war dead were never to be buried.

Matt Busby, a survivor of the Disaster is interned in his wife's grave. He is referenced on the shared headstone as a dead husband and father, with no mention of his career in football. The offerings at his grave were observed to be predominantly floral and not affiliated to any football club by colour combination (see Appendix Ci 5). Busby's grave appears to be an example of the majority of sporting hero graves where 'many once-famous stars were laid to rest in their family graves, with texts bearing only personal and familial affiliations' (Huggins, 2012:3). The graves of Bent and Edwards suggest this may have been different if he had died in the Disaster.

The comparative study of the graves of Bent, Busby, Colman and Edwards evidences Edwards' grave as the most visited, based on the evidence of comparatively higher number of offerings observed at his grave. Yet recent commemorative activity was evidenced at all the gravesites. This suggests that all four sportsmen are still actively commemorated. However, in the case of Bent and Edwards there is evidence that they are remembered specifically through offerings that reference their connection to Manchester United (through offerings of the club football scarves predominantly). This demonstrates ongoing commemorative activity specifically because of their footballer status. The proliferation of football-related offerings at Edwards' grave that vastly outnumbered those observed at the other graves, suggests that he is predominantly commemorated as a player, at a level unmatched by the activity at other victims' graves.

### **The Impact of Secularisation, Cremation and Green Burials on the Cemetery Landscape**

Like the majority of those who died in the 1950s, Edwards was buried in his hometown's cemetery and his plot marked with a headstone. In this regard, Edwards' subsequent burial was not unusual. When dead bodies are buried in cemeteries or churchyards the fixed and permanent nature of a gravestone becomes a reflection of the times that it is erected in. The preference for cremation rather than burial grew steadily after the time of Edwards' death and by 1970 over half of those who died in the UK were cremated (European Federation of Funeral Services 2012). Statistics evidence this continuing shift in the UK where in 1960 34.7% of the dead were cremated to 2012 when 74.28%

were cremated (2012). Edwards' grave could have no influence on such a cultural shift yet it is viewed today within that altered state.

His grave is publically accessible and those who visit it bring with them their own personal beliefs and opinions about death and the dead. That commemorative activity has persisted at Edwards' grave for over 50 years demonstrates that commemorators continue to actively venerate Edwards and that his grave remains a significant undisputed site within his commemorative network. As Berridge states 'consideration for the dead is at the root of our humanity. The grave is, in this regard, the cradle of civilisation' (Berridge, 2002:98). If humanity is defined in essence by how a society commemorates and 'cares' for its dead, then graves are spaces where the living demonstrate what it means to be civilised. Within the UK this 'cradle of civilisation' (2002:98) appears to be shifting as graves appear to be changing. There are a number of factors affecting this shift. The cemetery grave where the dead body is buried by default is a usurped notion, as in the UK the majority of the bereaved now opt for cremation rather burial. The option for cremation negates the need for a burial plot. Although a traditional grave may still be used to bury cremated remains, a venue to scatter ashes beyond the confines of a cemetery can be sought. Several alternatives for memorials now exist beyond the cemetery landscape as death rituals frequently have been adapted for scattering rather than burial ceremonies.

If Edwards had been cremated and his ashes scattered or buried outside of the cemetery landscape, the immutable presence of his grave could not be reproduced. It could be predicted that Edwards would still be remembered as 'it is reassuring to be reminded that, irrespective of the medical and industrial changes which are the flux of history, there is stability in the sentiments of the sympathy we feel for the dead' (Berridge, 2002:98). However, without a grave the concept of the 'dead' Edwards would be represented by other memorials or activity. These potentially offer less opportunity for the leaving of offerings and a less authentic connection to Edwards' dead body. That Edwards was buried and has a headstone creates an opportunity for commemorators to visit 'him' by visiting his grave. He was buried in an era when the dead were predominantly interned in family plots in a formalised cemetery or graveyard setting. With the

rising costs of burial plots<sup>56</sup> (Womack 2006) and the critical shortage of space in many UK cemeteries, the gravestone metaphorically and literally appears set to become an extraordinary relic.

Edwards' grave is created from durable materials within a controlled and monitored space. The cemetery landscape where his gravestone is erected appears to be stable however there is a pervading sense of inevitable obsolescence for cemeteries across the UK. Approximately 600 000 people die in Britain each year and although almost 75% are cremated approximately 150 000 bodies still require a burial plot. This equates to an impending and serious burial space crisis across the UK as many of the 25 000 burial sites across the country are either full, no longer in use or over-crowded (House of Commons 2001). However, there is an apparent 'rural versus urban divide' (Berridge, 2002;187) whereby in rural areas burial is still common and 'burial rates remain high in rural Ireland, while cremation is the norm on the south coast of England' (2002;187). In practical terms it appears that cremation's speed and efficiency is 'accommodating the dead in places where land for the living is at a premium' (2002;187) significantly within the urban landscape. Traditional headstones may continue to mark the individual burial sites of dead bodies; however the scattering of ashes within cemeteries is predominantly undertaken in shared remembrance gardens. Remains are also buried individually within smaller plots marked by recessed plaques, not headstones. Such plaques mean that the areas are smaller, easier to maintain and cheaper to purchase. They utilise less of the precious cemetery space than traditional burial plots but they do not represent the body of the deceased in the same way. Ashes are transient and symbolic and therefore a cremation burial plot is often described as the place where the ashes of the deceased are, rather than the place where the deceased is. In this regard cremation displaces the dead body and the deceased from the living in a way that burial does not.

Burial plots suggest the body of the deceased is lying down within a bed-like space as Walter describes 'well worn images are of the dead as sleeping and of the grave as a bed' (Walter, 1999;48). Cremation does not require a burial plot

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<sup>56</sup> A survey of funeral costs by American Life (2006) found the average price for burial was £3 307 (61% rise in five years) with funeral costs greatly exceeding rises in inflation. (Womack 2006)

and ashes are portable and can be moved, retained indoors or scattered almost anywhere. Ashes can be split and shared amongst family and friends as the deceased is dispersed across more than one site. They can be retained at football-related sites such as the ashes of the player and Hall of Fame inductee Tommy Lawton which are held at the National Football Museum (Prudames 2003). The ashes of some football fans are scattered at football grounds and memorial gardens have been installed at some sites (see Chapter 7ii). Therefore separation of the living and the dead body has gradually widened over the years, due in the most part to an increase in the uptake of cremation over burial.

Although new graves continue to be installed within cemeteries, the trend towards a more secularised commemoration of the dead such as green burials in woodlands, are redefining the concept of the grave. However, woodland burials still account for a very small proportion of burials in the UK. Although cremation has diminished the demand for burial space to a degree, it has not eradicated it. In the latter part of the nineteenth century in the UK, the suggestion of cremation was generally considered to be 'a subversive practice' which undermined 'the doctrine of the resurrection of the body' (Berridge, 2002;194). Accusations that the practice was 'anti-religious' (2002;194) were intensely debated by 'scientists and sanitarians who promoted it primarily as a public health benefit' (2002;194). Berridge suggests that it was the impact of the First World War that provoked 'an increasingly receptive attitude to cremation' (2002;211).

Those who died on the battlefield of the First World War were not accessible to the bereaved because they died overseas. The destructive or collective nature of death on the battlefield also meant that for some the dead would never be found or identified. The lack of a body to bury and mourn meant that the consideration of cremation was a little more palatable during the First World War, than during the pre-war era. It is ultimately a destructive method of cadaver disposal but during the First World War a new response to death was being developed. Cremation became 'a socially sanctioned form of the obliteration of corporeal identity and the annihilation of individuals in the First World War' (2002;211). This approved 'obliteration' of human identity removed

the body from death, and death from the grave. ‘Cremation, by challenging the necessity of a grave as a fixed reference for grief, contributed to the sense of death disappearing’ (2002;211) with no identifiable shrine to undertake pilgrimages to.

Cremation therefore created a scenario where society saw ‘death disappearing from public view’ (2002;211). This is more apparent in a predominantly Christian society like the UK where burial rather than cremation was traditionally undertaken. However, the overriding Christian constructs for the dead are becoming less mainstream as ‘concern with environmental issues, allied with a continuing drift from conventional religions to embrace new faiths or no faith, has led to a rise in ‘eco-burial’ and alternative funerary ceremonies’ (Sheridan, 2000;158). As environmental considerations have come to the fore in the production and consumption of energy, transportation, manufacturing and waste disposal, how ‘green’ a process is, has become a matter of greater concern nationally and globally. Although to discuss human cadavers as ‘waste’ may seem inappropriate, their disposal mirrors the consideration of how waste is managed within the UK.

Essentially waste management comprises the collection and disposal of waste by burial, incineration or recycling. The environmental implications of all of these methods are scrutinised on economic, sustainability and health grounds (Berridge, 2002;219). Cremation is essentially incineration and this process is destructive, uses proportionally higher levels of energy than burial and creates toxic pollutants. Burial usually involves the embalming of the body which has environmental implications due to the use of hazardous chemicals. Additionally the metal content of medical procedures such as hip and knee replacements, pacemakers and some dental fillings also have an adverse impact both above and below ground during decomposition. Coffins used in burial are generally not inherently biodegradable and contain chemicals and metals that do not degrade or take several years to do so.

Space used for burials within cemeteries cannot as a rule be utilised for any other purpose, although plots can be ‘reused’ this is a contentious policy which is seldom implemented in the UK. The necessity and ability for local authorities

to legally re-use graves of over 100 years old is inferred as ‘the consent of the next of kin is usually dispensed with where the remains were buried 100 years or more previously’ (Home Office, 2004;12). This recycling of graves may not only be practically required but also be a way to maintain cemeteries as relevant places for the living. Highgate Cemetery’s Chief Executive<sup>57</sup> states that cemeteries are ‘animated by grief and loss’ (Greaves 2013) and ‘rely on a connection with the neighbourhood’ because ‘the more they get separated from the local community the more irrelevant they become’ (2013). As Edwards’ grave continues to be visited and tended, its presence in Dudley Cemetery and its promotion as a visitor attraction reinforces the cemetery as a place that connects the living and the dead. Visitors using the cemetery to see Edwards’ grave make the cemetery a place for the living.

Green burials offer a more environmentally sensitive alternative to the cemetery burial and they account for a growing but still very small number of burials in the UK. They are an attempt to liberate the spaces occupied by the dead and make them functioning spaces for the living. Bodies buried in woodlands sites are not usually embalmed and no coffins are used. The sites are accessible for leisure activity as:

Woodland burial signifies a natural version of identity that cremation achieves with an industrial process. They both express anonymity and fragment the traditional unity of body, grave, memorial – rejecting the site specific remembrance of the dead (Berridge, 2002;219).

The significance of the grave as a place where the body of the deceased lies and is remembered, is displaced by green burial and cremation. Within this context, Edwards’ grave is conspicuously about his memorial being the embodiment of his body. As a traditional, yet potentially ‘unnatural representation’ of death, Edwards’ grave resists the anonymity bestowed by woodland burial or cremation. Although green burial sites are growing in number, change in ‘greener’ death rituals remains slow and will probably be

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<sup>57</sup> Ian Dungavell.

dependant on a seismic shift in attitudes such as that brought about by the influence of the First World War for the acceptance of cremation.

Rather than stone headstones these green burial sites like Westall Park Woodland Burial (not far from Dudley) state 'our guiding policy is of a 'return to nature', where the natural beauty of the developing wood on the landscape is the enduring memorial' (Westall Park Woodland Burial). Commemorators and site management for these woodlands are complicit in dedicatory activity that makes the burial plot indistinguishable from the surroundings. The management state that the aim 'is that all graves will be grassed over level in time, and in the long term burial areas will progressively return to natures own cycle of care and renewal' (Westall Park Woodland Burial). In stark contrast to the immutable headstone of Edwards' grave with its cellophane wrapped offerings, these green burial plots are 'marked with an optional wooden plaque and visitors are encouraged to plant wildflower seeds and bulbs' (Westall Park Woodland Burial). Although headstones are usually made from 'natural materials' these materials are out of context in the cemetery and often not indigenous to the country in which they are erected. This imported stone is in sharp contrast to the indigenous wildflowers and trees that replace them in green burial sites.

The cost of traditional burial is substantially more than the cost of cremation. Figures by the Money Advice Service state that cremation fees are around £660 whereas burial fees are nearly three times higher at £1 750 at 2014 costs (Money Advice Service 2015). The cost of a green burial is generally difficult to pinpoint however the Green Funeral Company advertise a plot and grave preparation in England for £1 380 (The Green Funeral Company), whilst the website woodlands.co.uk suggests the cost is 'from about £200 to about £2,000, but the average cost is about £700' (Woodlands.co.uk). Although the decision to bury or cremate a body may be dictated by cost, the bereaved have a number of other factors to consider when making the decision including the wishes of the dead, family members and friends. Issues of beliefs or religion, the place and nature of the death, as well as accommodating the dead within existing family plots all have a bearing on how a cadaver is ultimately disposed of. That Edwards' body was interned in his sister's grave suggests a tradition within the family for internment in family plots. Edwards' parents also share a

plot with each other nearby and other relatives of Edwards have shared family plots within the same cemetery. All of Edwards' immediate family members are interned within the same area of the local cemetery, which places him with his family into perpetuity.

### **Significance of Edwards' Headstone to his Commemoration**

Some visitors to Edwards' grave seek to converse with Edwards and appear to speak to his headstone. Cousins of Edwards were observed on arrival at his grave to say 'Hello Dunc' and 'Alright Duncan?' directly addressing Edwards' headstone<sup>58</sup>. Walter attests to mourners talking to the dead as something that 'regularly happens in Britain' (Walter, 1999;48). That some bereaved appear to converse with the dead was not interrogated during commemorator interviews, however, Walter suggests that reasons for discourse includes seeking 'moral guidance from the dead', working out matters concerned with the commemorators identity, continuing a former everyday conversation or to 'create the conversation that sadly never existed' (1999;61). Both cousins used familiar greetings in their discourse with Edwards and they appeared to be having a convivial everyday conversation with Edwards'. These 'conversations' underpin the perception of him as an accessible family member.

There is an inherent understanding that Edwards' is deceased and 'gone' and yet a seemingly paradoxical acknowledgement that he is accessible and 'there'. As his epitaph describes his grave as 'this Shrine of Reward and Rest' the friendly greetings by commemorators appear to attest to how 'most cultures allow for the belief that life after death will be eternal bliss' (Dekkers, 1997;223). Through whatever context this eternity is contextualised by commemorators, those observed talking to Edwards, talked to him as if he were chanced upon in the street. They were not angst conversations nor expressions of grief, but simple, mundane 'chats', almost indistinct from the everyday language of the living. When the tenders of the grave were observed during the same grave visit, one of them greeted Edwards as 'Duncan' and continued a conversation with him whilst tidying the offerings on his grave. Unable to hear the specific words spoken the general tone and rhythm of speech indicated a general 'chat'. Whether those observed speaking to the dead imagined replies was not

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<sup>58</sup> Visit to Edwards' grave on 22 February 2012 (See Appendix C for further details).

interrogated, because such conversations were considered to be private and personal, although undertaken publically in front of others.

The cousins who were observed greeting Edwards, both appeared to converse with Edwards' headstone, looking towards where his name and likeness are inscribed. Although headstones are essentially practical markers to indicate where a body lies, their commemorative functionality is more complex. Due to their position, design, size, composite materials and epitaphs, gravestones reflect something of the commemorators who define and commission them. Edwards' grave is highly polished and the epitaph is in gold using high quality materials. The quality of the materials it is made from contributes to its resistance to weathering and its representation of his enduring presence. That Edwards' gravestone has a pictorial representation of him on it reinforces Edwards' preservation in memory as a player. As 'displaying a living likeness at the grave sustains a publicly visible face that has been selected as the preferred memory form by those involved in the rituals surrounding death' (Hallam & Hockey, 2001;147). Edwards is preserved as the youthful footballer he was. The image of him on his headstone shows him throwing in a football and it places him at the centre of play but simultaneously places him outside of it, beyond the boundaries of the pitch looking in. It is a 'replacement image fixed at a previous time' from Edwards' life as a player, an image 'obscuring the painful phases of dying and death' (2001;147) where Edwards has the ball and he is in control of play. Essentially his headstone is a memorial as 'commemorative art' which 'describes the past life of the deceased and establishes the person's future reputation' (Llewellyn, 1997;101). This is demonstrated by Edwards' portrayal as a footballer and the football-referencing offerings left at his grave. Edwards remains a footballer in death sustained as such by his grave and visiting commemorators.

Although 'deaths open up spaces in social and personal relations' subsequently 'cultures are vulnerable to fragmentation and individuals may be alienated by countless events, of which death may be inevitable but no less traumatic for that' (1997;101). That death can create a sense of 'cultural fragmentation' is acknowledged and frequently addressed by religions. By establishing and practising death rituals, such as funerals, commemorative ceremonies and the

creation of memorials, the impact of death on ‘cultural fragmentation’ is partially abated. That ‘commemorative art played a central role in combating fragmentation’ for our ancestors, set the precedent for a similar role for more current memorial art (1997;101). Edwards’ headstone is a manifestation of a fragmentation combatant through its depiction of Edwards as a player. However, the gravestone remains a physical manifestation of Edwards’ dead body as a necessity ‘to sustain social differentiation’ between the living and the dead (1997;104). Edwards’ epitaph is also a significant combatant as it attests to his relative youth at the time of his death. Commemorators do not have to determine his age from calculations based on his dates of his birth and death, as gravestones often require. His age is declared in capital letters as ‘AGED 21 YEARS’ in a font size larger than almost every other part of the epitaph, bar his name. This gives his age a distinct significance and draws attention to his relatively young age at the time of his death. That his grave bears the epitaph to his sister and her life that amounted to only a few weeks lived, further attests to premature death. The epitaphs are visual reminders that the ‘natural order’ of death, where the elders die before their offspring, cannot be assumed (Berridge, 2002;100).

The young deaths of both siblings from one family amplifies a break in the ‘natural order’ of death within a family plot and serves to challenge ‘a false sense of security’ (2002;100) that pervades modern society. The expectation that today children will outlive their parents is based on improved infant mortality rates and life extending medical interventions. That society appears to have subsequently ‘put death out of our minds’ (2002;100) is challenged by the death of the young, unexpectedly dying outside of the ‘natural order’ of life (2002;100). Edwards’ grave is therefore a memorial to loss that has been amplified by his youth. This amplification is a loss rooted within a viewer’s ability to empathise with the personal sense of grief felt by Edwards’ family. His epitaph is their declaration of loss but also affection for their son ‘Without Farewell He left us all, In Loving Memory of our dear son... Memory Honours those we love best’. The words suggest that Edwards’ death was a sudden and unexpected departure that affected not only the immediate family but all of us. This reflects his national footballer status at the time of his death, which gave his death significance to a wider population.

That Edwards' personal abilities and achievements as a footballer defined him as a unique individual, made his loss appear more deeply felt as 'the greater the celebration of individuality, the sharper death's sting has become' (2002;181). His epitaph does not mention his role as a footballer for Manchester United or for England and he is described simply as a 'son' and not a player. Yet the commemorative art on his memorial depicts him as a footballer and this underpins his individuality as a player. Edwards is presented in death by his family as a son and footballer and he is subsumed by commemorators as part of a football club, yet with an understanding that he was a much loved son.

### **6ii: THE DEAD BODY AND THE PRESENCE OF THE DEAD**

#### **The Dead Body: The Grave as a Barrier between the Living and Dead**

Although graves bring the dead and living together they also separate the dead from the living, or more simplistically a grave hides the stages of decomposition of the dead body from the living.

Graves like coffins and cremation urns act as containers for the dead that provide a physical barrier between the living and the remains of the dead. This physical barrier acts as a filter for death and enables the living to engage with the dead, without actually seeing them. As 'the personal has become professional' the care of the dead body has moved from the family to the funeral director and through this process the cadaver has become 'as toxic waste' (Berridge, 2002;107). This is a cultural shift within the UK as 'from 1900 to 1940 death, like birth, remained in the experienced care of female family members and their helpful neighbours, while male undertakers merely transported the body' (Jalland, 2010;97).

Distaste for seeing the dead body in modern times may be considered to reflect an inherent cultural and societal aversion that universally permeates the human condition. However, prior to the First World War the focus for death was the body and this only shifted to the focus on memory when the distance of corpses and the destruction of bodies through violent war necessitated a shift from the absent body (Berridge, 2002;9).

As Edwards died away from his local community in a hospital, at a time when funerals were managed by professionals, his body was separated from his family by his coffin on its arrival back to the UK. The requirement for coffins to be hermetically sealed and lined for air freight also determined the type of coffin Edwards could have. His cousins recalled the German casket as being large and heavy 'I dunno [sic] whether they took him into the house because the coffin was that big because German coffins then were really, really heavy coffins. Somebody said that they couldn't get him through the door' (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;5).

As Edwards' parents would have been of a generation that attended to their dead within their own homes, the inability to bring their son's body into the home marks a significant change to their established family death rituals. Edwards' body was disconnected from his home, as well as his immediate family, by his coffin. Considering the book by Elizabeth Roberts 'A Woman's Place 1890-1940' Jalland defines the roles and attitudes of working class women in Lancashire to the dead (Jalland, 2010;96-7). As 'death helped socialize children who learned early that death was natural and inevitable, as they encountered it frequently, often at home' (2010;97). Between 1890 and 1940 it would appear that dead bodies would be encountered within the home and local community, by all members of the family. Those bodies not encountered were those predominantly of men lost through war overseas or at sea.

In the UK, the majority of funerals are performed with the coffin or casket closed and the dead body, although viewable by request, is not typically seen by mourners during the funeral. Death is present and obvious but disguised and sanitised by the coffin and later by the grave or the urn. The words dead or death have become taboo and are words actively avoided as society has developed euphemisms such as 'kicked the bucket' or 'passed away' to not have to speak of death (Berridge, 2002;8). Yet upon a gravestone the word 'died' is regularly used as it is used on Edwards' gravestone. However, he is also described as someone who simply 'left us' and this implies an attempt to disguise death.

Yet conversely the dead have become almost a daily obsession, entering homes on a weekly basis, invited in by a seemingly eager viewing public. At the time of writing the most popular television series in the UK is 'The Walking Dead' (IMBD.com) based on a long running comic book (Skybound LLC). The premise of a post-apocalyptic world where the dead, infected by a virus are reborn as flesh eating zombies suggests society has a taste for, rather than distaste of, the dead body.

Such an interest in the fictional living dead Lowder suggests is inherent to the human condition and 'it goes way back... there's a line in Gilgamesh, the oldest written story we know of, about the hungry dead, how they will come back from hell, or its equivalent, to smack teeth on raw flesh' (Lowder, 2011;ix) . However, he states that these 'hungry dead' are only compelling to the viewer because the 'living characters are so believable'. The Walking Dead is a survivor story of the living as they battle the dead in order to stay alive. That the viewers accept the notion of the walking dead is reliant on the suspension of 'our disbelief of something we know is frankly impossible' (2011;ix). The series is not concerned with the apparent immortality of the walking dead but is centred on the plight of the living, faced with a grotesque death represented by rotting corpses that seek to feed upon them. The symbolism of the zombie horde collectively 'marked by loss of agency, control or consciousness of their actual state of being: they are dead but don't know it, living on as automata' is what Luckhurst calls 'a perfect emblem' of a western world averse to acknowledging that its power has peaked' (Luckhurst, 2015;2). That a case for the zombie horde being emblematic of a declining power of the western society could be made, is intriguing but not as visually compelling, as the zombie horde as a representation of an unavoidable universal physical degeneration.

Decomposition and decay when visually represented evidence a biological death that is undeniable. Zombies personify this abhorrent state which forces the viewer to consider the space between the living and the dead. That zombies are found in groups also challenges the modern concept of individuality in death. Zombies represent 'the pressing problem of the modern world's sheer number of people, the population explosion, bodies crammed into supercities [sic] and suburban sprawls demanding satiation beyond any plan for

sustainable living' (2015;2). This mirrors the burial space crisis currently being experienced across the UK, where space for the dead is as finite as space available for the living, particularly in urban areas.

Monuments such as Edwards' grave attest to individuality in death but their size, longevity and use of limited space place Edwards firmly in the category of the dead, of a dead past. This 'dead past' allowed for monuments and individuality through commemorative art, but this is now at odds with a society whose concerns appear to be shifting. Concerns over the impact on the environment and the lack of space for today's living, notwithstanding the dead and dying, alter how monuments to the dead are perceived. The cemetery where Edwards' is buried is a landscape that distils a sense of individuality in death; subjugating a zombie-like existence after death. To see Edwards' body at any stage of decomposition would have undermined his image as the youthful, athletic prowess hero he is defined as. With his physical decline through old age never reached and the masking of his dead body by his coffin and grave he is suspended in perpetual youth.

Edwards' grave has a distinct function not only as a practical marker but also as a representation of a different era. At the time of Edwards' death the 'undead' were not predominantly portrayed as masses of zombies. Although these existed the 'grazing undead' were predominantly individual vampires, with desires, consciousness and distinct personalities who generally took what they needed for their own survival and pleasure. These individuals still exist and are represented through the arts but they seem to be less compelling to modern audiences than the mobs of brain-dead zombies. Within the global phenomena of the books and films of the *Twilight*<sup>59</sup> Saga, vampires live within family-like communities alongside humans, less a threat to the human condition than a lifestyle choice that offers anti-aging immortality. The zombie existence in comparison lacks individuality within its mob structure and continued physical demise. The immortality bestowed to zombies offers no defiance of decay or resistance against an aging biological and mental state. Therefore zombies could be seen collectively as a metaphor for an old age that brings with it physical and mental decrepitude. Although neither zombie nor vampire,

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<sup>59</sup> A globally popular vampire young adult fiction 'Twilight' trilogy by Stephenie Meyer.

Edwards has retained an enviable youthfulness in death, whereby his commemorators have made him vampire-like. As death give vampires' strength, power and immortality, Edwards has been given his youthful heroic status, magnified rather than diminished by death. His grave is a physical barrier between the living and the dead that facilitates the preservation of his immortality but also his youthfulness.

### **The Presence of the Dead**

In the creation of the memorial to soldiers who died in the First World War, The Cenotaph<sup>60</sup> in London was created as 'an empty tomb which commemorates a body buried elsewhere' (Berridge,2002 ;54). The site is nationally significant as the focus for the annual National Service of Remembrance of the war dead. The Cenotaph was installed as a permanent memorial in 1920, as a World War One memorial. It is a relatively minimalist structure with two wreaths carved on its main faces. 'The glorious dead' and the dates of the two world wars are carved into the stone. Initially created as a temporary structure the government were inspired by public support to upgrade its materials to form a permanent public memorial. The symbolism of the empty tomb signifies 'classical connotations and is associated with the absence of the body' (2002;55). Although originally a memorial to the war dead of the First World War, the memorial is used as the focus of the national Remembrance Day in an extended remit 'to honour all who have suffered or died in war' (Royal British Legion a).

The appropriation of World War One memorials for the commemoration of those who died in subsequent wars further displaces the dead body from commemoration. The appropriation of war memorials for those killed in other wars, underpins the symbolism of the universally applicable, symbolically empty tomb. That The Cenotaph has an extended commemorative function to include those who 'suffered' and not just those killed in war, places the consideration of the living within the company of the dead. The creation of memorials to collectives, appear to demonstrate a recent further shift away from the individual dead body, towards the memorialisation of the living and dead together. In this way the event itself, rather than the simply 'the dead' are preserved in memory.

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<sup>60</sup> Designed by Edwin Lutyens.

Those who died as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York are collectivised in this way in some recent memorials. Although a memorial to the 343 fire-fighters killed in the 9/11 terrorist attacks was dedicated to the dead, it also memorialised the living as ‘dedicated to those who fell and to those who carry on. May we never forget’ (FDNY Engine Co. 10 & FDNY Ladder Co. 10). The dedication acknowledges the living and the dead within a physical memorial, whereby they are subsumed together. If memorials are created in memory of the dead then the presence of the living suggests formal commemorative practice has shifted to memory preservation of the event. However, the 9/11 memorial’s dedication to include the living left behind to ‘carry on’ suggests an epic scale of dedication that will extend across the lifetimes of the living left behind. As in the memorial to the 9/11 terrorist attacks is extended to the living, this appears to take the precedence set by the empty Cenotaph to a new genre of memorial making.

Memorial making is centred on the event that created death and suffering, rather than the dead specifically. Such a shift towards the living revives memorials as artefacts of the past, appropriated for the honouring of the living. The Cenotaph’s representation of the collective loss of ‘the legendary dead’ (Berridge, 2002:68) through absence, is mirrored in part by the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. This Tomb is distinct in that the identity of the body within it is unknown. It contains the symbolic remains of one unidentified British soldier killed in Europe in World War One (Royal British Legion b). The dead body is conceptually abstracted as an emblem for all the war dead, yet due to its selection process the identification of the Unknown Warrior is broadly achievable, belying something of its anonymous symbolism as ‘it is almost certain that the Unknown Warrior was a soldier serving in Britain’s pre-war regular army and not a sailor, territorial, airman, or Empire Serviceman’ (Royal British Legion b).

The Cenotaph and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior were formally installed in a joint ritual. The funeral cortege of the Unknown Warrior was taken to the unveiling ceremony of the Cenotaph before it continued on to Westminster Abbey where a funeral attended by the royal family, war widows and politicians was held:

The conjunction of the two ceremonies in 1920 signified the psychological transfer from the body as the focus of the death ritual and the grave as a site of mourning, to the memorials, monuments and rituals of remembrance (Berridge, 2002;56).

If there is no dead body present for a death ritual then the abstraction of the dead body through memory becomes symbolically representative of the dead. The Cenotaph and Tomb of the Unknown Warrior retain a symbolic integrity that commemorators of the war dead from conflicts post World War One can, and do appropriate. The commemorative liberation that symbolic memory-based memorials embody enables commemorators to appropriate them for rituals for the dead of later generations. The dedicatory possibility for these symbolic memorials becomes infinite because the commemorative dimensions have been established as explicitly universal. The commemoration of smaller collectives without the potential for additionally such as those who died as a result of the Munich Air Disaster relies on a less symbolic narrative.

### **The Munich Memorial Plaques**

Both of the Munich Air Disaster memorial plaques at Munich and at Old Trafford name the dead victims of the crash, whilst those who suffered as a result of the crash are not mentioned. The victims of the Disaster are explicitly considered to be the dead and they are individually mentioned on the plaques by name.

Symbolism is apparent in these memorials as the dead are 'returned' to a football pitch, whereby the pitch outline engraved on the plaques symbolically places them perpetually within play. However, the two Munich plaques although strikingly similar in design are commemorating different collectives. Although they are both funded by the Manchester United Football Club and look almost identical, their differences demonstrate most notably the changes in how commemorators remember their dead over time and how the site where they are installed influences design.

The Old Trafford plaque is dedicated to the memory of 'the officials and players who lost their lives' however in Munich the dedication is 'of all those who lost

'their lives here' (Getty Images). As the Old Trafford plaque is explicitly within a football context and the other is not, the football emphasis of the Old Trafford plaque is to be expected. The plaque has a depiction of a football at its centre reinforcing the football motif, whereas the Munich plaque does not. This may be a concession to the dead who were not football staff or players, however if this was a concession, then the retaining of the football pitch motif on the Munich memorial seems an unnecessary embellishment.

The memorial plaque in Munich includes the names of all those who died as a result of the crash, but the Manchester United players and staff are separated from and above the names of all the other victims. The separation of the dead represents the dead as two distinct collectives. The way in which the names are engraved at the top and at the bottom of the pitch motif creates a sense of detachment and disassociation, even evoking a sense of two opposing teams. Whether the dead were intentionally divided to make the Manchester United collective more distinct, the division infers a hierarchy. Such an inferred hierarchy in a memorial suggests a greater perceived sense of loss for the Manchester United dead, than the 'other dead'. The separation of the dead into groups and the retention of the football pitch motif, suggest that the overriding purpose of both memorials is to remember the dead players and staff of Manchester United. Although 12 of the 23 victims of the Disaster were not Manchester United affiliates, they did include sport journalists including Frank Swift who was also a former Manchester City goalkeeper. The football pitch motif therefore has significance for the majority but not all the victims.

The Munich plaque is bilingual (in English and German) and is installed on a low concrete plinth, whilst the Old Trafford memorial is in English only and installed on a wall. Being on a plinth the Munich plaque is transformed into a monument whereas the Old Trafford plaque has less physical presence. Although both plaques have other extraneous features and additional embellishments around them, these do little to shift the focus of the memorials' focal point on 'the pitch'. It is this pitch, populated only by the dead, that forms the overriding symbolism of both memorials. Both were funded by Manchester United and therefore the football pitch motif is almost as a commemorative branding. It suggests an influence that funders and owners have over

commemoration and memorial making, in a way similar to Mohamed Al Fayed's appropriation of the Fulham Club grounds for his statue of Michael Jackson (discussed further below).

The Munich plaque is further commemoratively endorsed by its installation within a small square renamed as Manchesterplatz described as 'a corner of Munich that is forever Manchester' (Germany TOTAL Munich 2014). A road sign behind the memorial marks the spot as 'Manchesterplatz' designating the commemorative site almost as a displaced part of Manchester itself. Therefore both plaques appear to be installed in Manchester, although a Manchester separated by some distance. Such association and adoption of German soil as a part of Manchester creates a sense that the memorial is specifically to the Manchester United dead. Both memorials are localised to Manchester unlike The Cenotaph that symbolically represents the nation's war dead. In the capitol, The Cenotaph symbolically achieves a national significance by its associated disassociation to the individual and the dead body. This national remit is in direct contrast to the war memorials erected in many smaller towns and villages to local war dead. These local memorials often seek to list and identify the war dead with a local significance.

The symbolism of The Cenotaph to anonymously and collectively remember the war dead is conversely underpinned by the specific referencing of the individual dead in local town and cities. The plaques in Old Trafford and Munich although separated by geography appear to create a sense of individual loss and localism. The dead are named and 'present' although their dead bodies are interred elsewhere, and they retain an individualism that underpins localised memorialisation. Commemorators are able to see the names of the dead and although collectivised, they remain as identifiable individuals.

#### **6iii: THE UNIQUE CANONISATION OF DUNCAN EDWARDS**

In 1961 stained glass windows dedicated to Edwards were unveiled in his former church of St Francis Parish Church, Dudley. Matt Busby unveiled the windows on behalf of Manchester United and in his unveiling speech, he stated that 'these windows should keep alive his name forever, and they will shine always as monuments and examples to the youth of Dudley and the youth of

England' (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1999;5). In his dedication of the windows the Bishop of Worcester, Mervin Charles Edwards cited Edwards as being 'on a goodwill tour when he died' and described him as 'a fine example of an individualist who could fit into a team, for he had learned the Christian law of unselfishness' (1999;5). To consider Edwards' visit to Belgrade to play football as an act of 'goodwill' and the basis for his selfless actions as being his Christian faith create a persona for Edwards that is seldom referenced within the accounts of his life. That the congregation and leaders of his local Church felt compelled to commemorate him within the fabric of a sacred church is not an act that appears to have been replicated by any other church for any other British footballer. Although examples of stained glass windows depicting football and figures playing football can be found, they are usually general depictions of the sport and any specific references to players are usually as historic representations (Her Campus, date unknown) by institutions or within municipal buildings. The individual memorial to a dead footballer within a Church as depicted by Edwards' windows appears to be the only example of a footballer canonised as a footballer, who died whilst on a 'goodwill' mission to be revered alongside conventional saints.

That Edwards is canonised by these windows is substantiated by his depiction alongside other saints. Depicted in two dedicated windows on the left hand panel Edwards is depicted in a Manchester United football strip with St Francis standing above him. On the right hand side panel Edwards is shown in his England football strip below St George. Both depictions of Edwards show him kneeling on one knee and the inscriptions that he holds state 'God is with us for our captain' and 'though there may be many members yet there is one body'<sup>61</sup> (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1999;5). That a footballer can be memorialised within a church window suggests that the notion of commemorative memorialisation within structured religion can be reinterpreted in a localised way if an individual is considered exceptional enough. Edwards although canonised within the windows, the representation of his physical and masculine prowess echoes his memorialisation as a hero (as discussed in Chapter 3). As 'the idea of the hero

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<sup>61</sup> Below the figures is written 'thanking God for the life of Duncan Edwards, died at Munich, February 1958' & 'Manchester United Football Club and England 1953-1958 (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1999;5).

has been framed in the image of man' (Hughson, 2009;95) rather than 'of woman' even though Edwards is depicted subserviently kneeling to God he remains a masculine representation of a hero.

Regardless of the personal connection to the church, Edwards' installation amongst saints is a departure from tradition of epic proportions. Notwithstanding that the church is small and serves a small local community, by installing a local footballer as a saint the notion of canonisation for only certified saints of the Christian faith has been corrupted. Yet the realms of Christianity and football may not be as distinctly different as they appear. If the context of saints within a place of worship can be applied as an analogy to football then football could be considered as a religion of sorts. The fans of football and footballers become worshippers at the churches or stadia of their chosen football team. These stadia when considered as churches are adorned with key figures and the symbols and narratives of the football faith, albeit statues of players, emblems and football programmes. Yet a case can be made that these are of great similarity to religious icons, crosses and hymn books respectively. As the cross represents the Christian faith, then the football club emblem represents the club. The saints of the stadia are the footballers and managers and the fans as the disciples or followers. The football programme and the hymn book lead the followers through their worship. Therefore any deviation beyond the memorialisation of the players and managers at a football ground may be seen as potentially corrupting the sacred iconography of the ground. In 2011, when the manager of Fulham Football Club installed a statue of deceased musician Michael Jackson in the club grounds, this was seen by many fans as a corruption of the 'sacred' football ground.

Considered an unacceptable deviation from the subtext of football worship such a response is at odds with the accepted presence of Edwards in his former church. Jackson 'was installed in 2011 by the Premier League club's former owner, Al Fayed - a friend of the late pop star - but removed by his successor Shahid Khan two years later' (BBC News 2014). The presence of Jackson within the Fulham 'church of football' was criticised by the majority of the established football-worshipping congregation. Jackson was neither born in Fulham nor did he play or manage the club, although he did attend matches as

a close friend of its former owner. Therefore Jackson's connections with the club and football were only as part of his connection to Al Fayed. As all statues at football grounds in the UK are football-specific, Jackson's statue corrupts a commemorative tradition. The installation of Jackson's statue demonstrates how Al Fayed's ownership of the club essentially affords him with the right to use it as he sees fit.

By placing Jackson's statue within the grounds of his football club, Al Fayed defines that space ultimately as his own private space and one that has a commemorative dimension for him. However, these grounds are interpreted by fans as their place of worship and they assert a sense of ownership over them too. Al Fayed and the fans are not allied as commemorators of Jackson. Al Fayed commissioned and paid for the statue of Jackson and therefore it is a very personal commemorative act of memorial making, albeit installed in a publically accessible space. When Al Fayed's connection to the club as owner ended, the next owner quickly removed Jackson's memorial as he considered it inappropriate for the space.

However, the memorial was bestowed an inferred good luck talisman function, as Al Fayed and others believed that it had special qualities because of its connection to Jackson. This assumed lucky talisman role was developed after the memorial was installed. When the fortunes of the club took a downward turn after the memorial was removed, a number of people cited the cause as the removal of Jackson's memorial. Although Jackson's connection to the club may have been tenuous prior to its installation, once removed it actually appears to have been considered of inherent significance to the club and its fortunes through appropriation as a talisman.

The statue of Jackson embodies a narrative about the complexity of club ownership in modern football. It is a high profile example of how the owners and the ownership of modern clubs can define the appearance and essence of a football club. The commemorative statue of Jackson (although not depicting an aspect of football in its rendering) embodies an important socially and culturally significant historical narrative. Al Fayed donated the statue to the National Football Museum in 2014 as a new museum artefact that made 'for a thought-

'provoking addition' (Rice 2014) to the national collection. Installed in the museum this example of commemorative art is elevated to the status of museum exhibit, as an artefact considered of great national significance. The National Football Museum's director Kevin Moore stated that the statue's induction into the National Football Museum's collection was not because of any commemorative notions, but specifically because of its historical significance.<sup>62</sup> Acknowledging that the subsequent popularity of Jackson's statue for the museum's visitors is essentially due to the musician's global popularity as a musician, the commemorative dimension of the artefact is not altered by its relocation. However, the location of memorials to Edwards specifically in Dudley appears key to his commemoration and preserved identity as a local hero. With the installation of his grave in Dudley Cemetery and then in 1961 within his local church, the significance of Dudley to Edwards' commemoration was established soon after his death. Although his statue in Dudley was not proposed until 40 years after his death.

At the time of Edwards' windows being unveiled only one statue existed in the UK that was dedicated to a footballer of Harold Fleming whose statue was installed at Swindon Town football ground (Stride, Wilson & Thomas, 2013;161). This suggests that Edwards' canonisation in his local church was a unique historical event within the history of commemoration and of football. In 1961 the public commemoration of footballers because of their achievements as footballers, was extremely rare in the UK. The second recorded football statue in the UK was in 1987 of Stanley Matthews which was installed in his hometown of Hanley (2013;161). Although the UK has seen a considerable increase in the creation of commemorative statues representing players, the number of stained glass tributes like Edwards' has not.

From 1956 to 1987 only two footballer statues are recorded, yet in the period between 1991 and 2010, 48 footballers or football managers had statues created of them (2013;161). Edwards' statue was unveiled in 1999 within the era in which football statues were evolving to become part of a commemorative landscape across the football grounds and some players' hometowns of the UK.

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<sup>62</sup> During a telephone conversation between the researcher & Kevin Moore on 20 June 2016.

This ‘accumulation is both sudden and a football-specific phenomenon; statues celebrating performers of other popular spectator sports such as rugby union, rugby league and cricket are increasing but remain low in number’ (2013:161). In 2015, 39 of the 52 football-specific statues identified were within football grounds related to the player or member of staff, whilst only 8 were in hometowns (2013:161). That Edwards’ statue was in his hometown reinforces its significance to his commemorative network and the preservation of his memory as a footballer in his hometown.

#### **6iv: THE STATUE OF DUNCAN EDWARDS**

##### **Introduction**

A statue of Edwards was installed in Dudley marketplace and unveiled in October 1999 by Bobby Charlton and Edwards’ mother (PMSA). The original project proposed was to be jointly financed by Centro (the local transport provider) and Dudley Council in 1998. This agreement was ended when Centro pulled out of the project when the proposed site for the statue was changed. Originally proposed for installation near to the bus station’s public conveniences, the marketplace was deemed a more appropriate place for a statue. The subsequent shortfall in funding required for the statue was secured from estate agents Chelsfield, the Professional Footballer’s Association and local properties developers the Richardson Brothers (PMSA).

After a redevelopment of the marketplace site Edwards’ statue was moved, and reinstalled on a larger plinth structure with integrated lighting. This renovation was funded by Dudley Council and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The statue was rededicated in its new location (at the other end of the marketplace) on the anniversary of what would have been Edwards’ 79th birthday in October 2015.

##### **Description of Edwards’ Statue**

Edwards’ coloured bronze statue is just over three and a half metres high and is by sculptor James Butler. It depicts Edwards with his left arm outstretched in an action pose and lifting his right leg up about to kick the football at his feet. The

statue was initially installed on a two metre high stone plinth which was inscribed by Malcolm Sier in blue:

BORN IN DUDLEY

The Most Complete Footballer I Have Ever Seen

Jimmy Murphy Assistant Manager

DUNCAN EDWARDS

1936 – 1958

England International Honours

18 Appearances – 5 Goals

Manchester United Career

175 Appearances – 21 Goals

2 League Championship Medals

Edwards' statue is installed in the centre of Dudley and it has been the focus of collective and individual commemorative activity. Initially installed on a stone rectangular plinth, the statue was cleaned and restored in 2015 and additional stone platforms were added 'to give it more prominence' (Whatdotheyknow 2011). By increasing the footprint of the statue to at least five times its original size, adding lighting and raising the plinth higher on a two tiered platform, the statue itself has become more a commemorative installation that includes his statue, than simply a statue on a plinth.

Initially a memorial, the statue is now a memorial within a designated commemorative space. In its new site on a newly commissioned supporting structure, the statue appears more prominent and subsequently its commemorative potential is amplified.

## **Football Statuary and Memorials**

Studies of how football statues come to bear assign the six stages of development as 'project instigation; sourcing of funding; commissioning of a sculptor; the design, sculpting and production of the statue; location selection; and finally erection and unveiling' (Stride, Wilson & Thomas, 2013:151). Although this may designate each stage as separate entities and suggest a linear chronological process from idea to installation, the process can be erratic.

As with Edwards' statue the location of the sculpture may be agreed only to change at a later date, impacting on funding and creating the need to establish new funding partners and new installation sites.

If the statue is well received it may like Edwards' statue and Busby's statue at Old Trafford attain a persistent commemorative relevance. Both statues were not left behind in the renovation of the spaces that they originally occupied and they were relocated to more prominent positions during regeneration of the spaces<sup>63</sup>. Relocation is not always possible when the memorial is integral to the fabric of the building. As with St Francis Parish Church, the removal or relocation of Edwards' dedicatory windows would leave large holes within the wall, which would suggest that they will only be removed in an act of preservation, should the church be remodelled or demolished. If the memorial is so embedded into the fabric of a building, the building's renovation may have to destroy a memorial. When renovations occurred at Old Trafford in the 1970s the construction team were unable to move the Munich Memorial Plaque without destroying it (Thomas 1999). In 1960 this wall plaque (in the design of a football pitch outline with the names of the victims of the Disaster from the club) was installed above the entrance to the Director's Box. After it was damaged during construction work, it was left within the fabric of the building and sealed away as a partial relic to the past (1999). A replacement plaque was made in 1976 which was also removed due to building work and it is now in museum storage at Old Trafford. A third plaque that replaced it was created and installed on the exterior of the building in 1996 (1999).

The Munich Clock was installed at the Old Trafford ground in February 1960 to commemorate the Munich Air Disaster<sup>64</sup>. It has a white square face with black numerals and fingers and 'Feb 6th 1958' above the clock dial and 'MUNICH' below it. The clock is a working clock and not an obsolete fixed memorial, yet on many images and articles found within the commemorative network it is presented as permanently frozen at the time of the crash at 3.04pm (Hughes 2008). However, this is an appropriation of the memorial to create a memorial

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<sup>63</sup> The statue of Matt Busby at Old Trafford was installed in the East Stand (north side) in 1996 and moved to the front of the East Stand in 2000 (Stride, Thomas & Wilson, 2012).

<sup>64</sup> The Munich Clock was funded by the Ground Committee and was installed near the photographers entrance (Thomas 1999).

that amplifies the sense of tragedy. The images and accounts of the stopped clock perpetuate a myth that the clock is permanently and purposefully stopped in a gesture by the club. It is a fabrication of the truth but it has been widely adopted as a fact. A stopped clock does reference traditional death rituals whereby clocks were stopped in a house to mark a death, or to prevent further death (White, 1977;79). These rituals were undertaken to prevent bad luck and as part of pre-funeral ceremonies. The ritual of stopping a clock after death may therefore have been appropriated for the Munich Clock memorial by a number of sources as an obvious and appropriate tribute.

Those commemorators who know the ‘truth’ about the clock may publically declare the perpetuation of its frozen status as bogus and challenge the commemorative acts of others in doing so. On the website [www.munich58.co.uk](http://www.munich58.co.uk) it explicitly states that the clock is a working clock and is not frozen in time (Thomas 1999). Although such a declaration is not an act of direct impedance to another’s commemorative act, it is an assertion of hierachal status. By challenging the inaccuracies within the commemorative network, commemorators assert their authoritative knowledge of the commemorative network over others. That Thomas created his website in part to ‘educate’ others, means that accuracy and facts are important to him (Rogers and Thomas, 2014;2). That inaccuracy persists, and in the case of the frozen clock appears to even proliferate, suggests that commemorators can appropriate and corrupt memorials to create what they see as more fitting tributes. This however may lead to disputes and acts of impedance across the network. If the authenticity of a commemorative act is challenged that act may not cease simply because it is not a ‘truth’. An act may be discredited, but such myths such as the stopped Munich Clock are actually simple constructed commemorative acts that are believable. Their believability means they are deemed as appropriately commemorative and they persist in the network, even though they are not factually correct. Therefore what is deemed appropriate, rather than what is correct, may be the barometer for which acts prevail across the commemorative network. Although the virtual reinterpretation of the Munich Clock does not alter its actual appearance, physical reinterpretations or interventions of memorials are not uncommon. Some commemorative

interventions may fundamentally alter the actual appearance of a memorial and therefore become more avidly contested amongst commemorators.

## **6v: THE PERMANENCY AND LONGEVITY OF MEMORIALISATION**

### **Commemorative Acts of Reinterpretation**

In the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris a commemorative ‘graffiti epidemic’ (Lichfield 2011) proliferated on graves that appeared after messages and drawings were inscribed directly on to the grave of The Doors singer, Jim Morrison by visitors. Graves en route to the grave were also drawn upon to give others directions to Morrison’s grave. The ‘graffiti’ then spread to the nearby grave of Irish writer Oscar Wilde. In the 1990s inspired by a passage of the writer ‘alleged fans of Oscar Wilde’ demonstrated what was called ‘a craze’ (2011) of kissing Wilde’s tomb and leaving kisses or messages in lipstick on it. What could be considered as a commemorative ritual by pilgrims was instead widely interpreted as disrespectful vandalism.

The scale of the ‘graffiti’ became so vast and persistent that threats of fines for such activity were introduced. This proved ineffective as ‘most culprits were tourists’ (Amusing Planet 2014) and therefore difficult to apprehend and prosecute. At the peak of activity it was observed that ‘thousands of lipstick kisses and graffiti messages cover the bottom half of the tomb’ (2014). That tourists were implicated in the acts suggests that the grave had become primarily an interactive tourist attraction (2014). However, the touching and kissing of a memorial is not an uncommon commemorative act and it is not always seen as destructive. It is worthy of note that no such activity has been observed in Dudley cemetery or at Edwards’ grave, although both memorials are promoted by the local council as tourist attractions (Dudley Council 2014).

Some memorials inspire and encourage such physical interaction, like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington where ‘everyone, including those who knew no one who served in Vietnam, seems to touch the stone. Lips say a name over and over, and then stretch up to kiss it. Fingertips trace letters’ (Swerdlow, 1985;573). The damage to Wilde’s tomb evidences the potentially destructive impact of some commemorative activity. This is different from an

intentionally destructive commemorative act such as the paintballing of the AIG logo on the decal memorial at Old Trafford (discussed in Chapter Four). The paintballing was an intentionally destructive act to modify a memorial in order to make it more appropriate. Those who sought to commemorate Wilde by kissing his tomb were not trying to destroy it, but they were attempting to modify it. Viewed as destructive by some because ‘the grease in the lipstick and the oil in the paint threatened to destroy the limestone of the tomb, including a celebrated image of a ‘flying angel-demon’ by the Anglo-American sculptor Jacob Epstein’ (Lichfield 2011) such activity appears to be an automated response to the acts of others. ‘The ritual is the truth of graffiti, and that shines bright when one performs the rituals correctly’ (Bristol, 2009; preface). If the act of creating graffiti is embedded within a deep human ritualistic need then it could be said that it is a more authentic and appropriate commemorative act, than the making of his tomb. If this is the case then it is the material from which the monument is made from, not the act of kissing it that has created a problem for commemorators.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Edwards’ headstone are both made of robust black granite whilst the limestone of Wilde’s tomb is more fragile. Attempts at graffiti removal on the tomb raised concerns as ‘every cleaning eroded a layer of stone rendering it even more porous, so the next cleaning had to go even deeper and wear away the stone even more’ (Amusing Planet 2014). The restoration of the stonework of Wilde’s monument and the erection of a glass screen were both a reaction to the acts of commemorative graffiti and an attempt to deter such activity. The installation the protective glass screen in 2011 was to prevent certain types of commemorative activity as ‘Wilde was given sanctuary from those who claim to love him’ (Lichfield 2011). Yet the glass wall around the tomb has become a new memorial to Wilde as it is appropriated as a commemorative graffiti wall.

The glass wall amplifies and assists persistent, repetitive cumulative commemorative activity. The erectors of the wall have been successful in deterring graffiti and lipstick kisses upon the memorial itself however, the screen has become an interactive extension of Wilde’s memorial. That a glass wall installed within a commemorative space is then interpreted as a memorial itself is perhaps unsurprising, given that the space is a formal commemorative space.

It would appear that to prevent such commemorative activity completely, other interventions would be required. The recent lack of graffiti on Jim Morrison's grave is attributed to the fact that his grave now has a full-time guard, whilst Wilde's does not (Lichfield, 2012).

The preservation of Wilde's tomb was essentially to protect Wilde's memorial but also to preserve an ancient monument and work of commemorative art. As Wilde's tomb was created by renowned British sculptor Jacob Epstein<sup>65</sup> the monument has an additional layer of meaning as a work of art. This means that tourists may visit the tomb to alternatively experience it as a sculpture or as a commemorative act, not to Wilde but to Epstein. The appeal of fine art, Epstein or Wilde coupled with the appeal of observing and partaking in a graffiti-based activity make Wilde's tomb a compelling commemorative enigma. Whether Wilde's tomb would be visited so frequently and be the recipient of so much visible commemorative activity without the presence of the graffiti, is difficult to definitely determine. Wilde's tomb is made unique within a formalised commemorative site and is a compelling memorial for a wide range of visitors. If visitors are not visiting Wilde's tomb primarily for commemorative reasons, then the expectation that their behaviour will be commensurate to that expected of commemorators cannot be expected. This suggests that some commemorative sites, even those that are formally presented and managed as such, do not function exclusively as such. This is another example of the complexity of how commemorative spaces are used and appropriated by commemorators and non-commemorators alike.

Whether in the future Edwards' statue by Royal Academy sculptor James Butler<sup>66</sup> will attract tourists because of the perceived importance of Butler as a sculptor remains to be seen. Butler is still alive and his work is not held to the same esteem or historic significance as the deceased sculptor Epstein. Epstein's work could also be considered as having a greater general appeal as it is a generic representation of an angel and has historic relevance as an ancient monument. Butler's work is specifically a representation of Edwards and this may limit its capacity to appeal to tourists of a wider demographic and

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<sup>65</sup> Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) was born in New York but became a British citizen in 1907 (Tate).

<sup>66</sup> John Butler (1931-) (RBA)

interest base. Also the Père Lachaise Cemetery where Wilde is buried is an established tourist attraction within a capital city, in contrast to the town of Dudley where Edwards' statue is installed.

### **Fundraising for the Dead**

As the recent fundraising attempt to raise £2 000 for a blue plaque at Priory Park dedicated to Edwards (Express & Star 2016) perhaps demonstrates, finding funding for memorials can be a long and slow process. Without necessary funds projects cannot become memorials but rather than abandon plans because funds are not immediately forthcoming, often those leading initiatives appear to submit to years of slow fundraising. The recent installation of a statue of Mary Seacole, a nurse of the Crimean War was only possible after a 12 year fundraising campaign (Hajibagheri 2016). Even when funds are secured for a statue, finding further funding for installation costs can be difficult to secure. In the case of that of Roy Sproson's statue at Port Vale Football Club, the statue was 'kept in bubble wrap for over two years as the fundraisers [sought] a further £8000 for the plinth, erection process and associated groundwork and landscaping' (Stride, Wilson & Thomas, 2013:157). It seems unlikely that the relocation and renovation of Edwards' statue would have been undertaken if funding had not been secured for a wider social and economic remit.

When investigating the permanency of commemorative sites relating to Edwards it is apparent that the assumption of permanency can never be made. Even established 'formal' commemorative sites with an inferred permanency can be displaced.

That memorials can be created, destroyed, moved, remade and appropriated for non-commemorative acts suggests that the description of even the most robustly constructed permanent memorials can be mistaken. Ultimately all memorials are temporary in nature. Property development and regeneration projects can see memorials such as Edwards' statue regenerated and amplified but they may also destroy memorials and necessitate re-making as in the Munich Memorial Plaque at Old Trafford. The sites where memorials are installed can be a potential problem for the modern day commemorator, as the

preservation of the memory of the dead is challenged by the economic and social demands on space and land. That Edwards' statue has been moved after only 16 years since its initial installation suggests that his seemingly permanent memorials can never truly be described as such.

### **The Significance of Sites for Memorials**

The commemorative function of memorials and sites dedicated to the war dead across the UK could be said to be as permanent reminders to the living of sacrifice. Local memorials to the war dead are predominantly in memory of specific individuals from the locality and community where they are installed. The names of those killed in battle from towns and cities where the memorial is placed, attests to a localised representation of the war dead. How relevant these memorials are to the current local communities appears to vary greatly.

The installation within prominent central positions in the hub of towns and villages has ultimately meant that many memorials have had to be moved or have become isolated from the passing public, as sites have been developed. War memorials that are moved or displaced from centralised sites, suggest that the dead have become an obstruction to living. As local war memorials are relocated, the commemorative dimension that they embody within a town centre space is displaced. War memorials that are usurped by urban redevelopment appear as appropriated public art often demarcating roundabouts as isolated commemorative islands. Seldom are these memorials re-installed as Edwards' statue has been, in a more prominent and larger commemorative space. Many local war memorials and even the national monument The Cenotaph itself are now on busy and noisy main roads where access to them is compromised. Edwards however is considered an integral part of a regenerative process and is installed with an apparent great local relevancy. That is not to say that the regenerated Edwards' has not been subsumed by the living for the demands of a busy urban life.

Edwards although a local hero cannot be elevated beyond the busy day-to-day activities of the local marketplace he now permanently frequents. Only days after his re-installation into the marketplace, the needs of the living quickly asserted themselves upon the dead. The commemorative site where Edwards'

memorial was installed was appropriated for refuse storage ‘Jeff Smith, who works in Dudley and took the photo of the rubbish next to the statue, said: ‘I find it insensitive two or three weeks later for Dudley Council to locate their rubbish area right up against the statue’ ’ (Express & Star 2015 d). As the living seizes a claim on the physical space they use, the regard for its commemorative function may be greatly diminished.

Regardless of how or why a memorial is put within the centre of busy towns, the demands of the living will always create tensions and exert demands on a space. These demands may be at odds with a commemorative narrative. A commemorative narrative whether publically or privately implied cannot conclusively determine how all members of the public will use or translate a public space. The installation of memorials such as Edwards’ statue can create a dedicatory challenge if their installation is within an everyday space. In order for a site to retain its commemorative function the space it occupies must be translated as such by the majority of the users of the space, for the majority of the time.

The ceremonial commemorative acts of unveiling and re-dedicating Edwards’ statue or the observance of Remembrance Day at The Cenotaph amplify the memorials’ dedicatory dimensions, but also underpin the site’s appropriation as commemorative. However permanent a memorial is made or described as, it is how that memorial is used as a focus and inspiration for commemorative activity that defines its perceived ‘commemorative permanency’. Within the urban landscape permanent memorials may retain a commemorative narrative through their appearance and subject matter, but they may fail to inspire commemorative activity. Without such activity their function may shift to become merely decorative or they may be considered as unnecessary obstructions to the living of daily life.

Although Edwards’ statue was relocated to increase its visibility and size, such enhanced relocation for local war memorials in the UK is seldom instigated. The war dead are more likely to be relocated to less prominent positions in order to make way for redevelopments or because the environment that they now

occupy is inaccessible or inappropriate as a commemorative space. Memorials and the spaces they occupy are evolving and this is not only throughout individual towns and villages but also on a national level. In 2001 the National Memorial Arboretum opened in Staffordshire, defining itself as ‘the UK’s year-round centre of Remembrance’ (NMA). The arboretum is an evolving woodland site where over 300 memorials have been installed and its focus is the memorialisation of servicemen and women. As ‘the 150-acre site is a living, growing tribute to those who have served and continue to serve our country’ (NMA) the site is evolving and expanding. Unlike the majority of individual local war memorials throughout the villages and towns of the UK, the memorials within the Arboretum are collective and within a natural setting.

The Arboretum defines itself as a place distinctly for the living as ‘it’s not a cemetery. It’s a place of life’ (NMA). The designation of a formal commemorative site of this size which has multiple memorials but no burial purpose is unprecedented in the UK. The site’s disassociation with the dead body and focus on memorialisation is an extension of the commemorative memory-based narrative of The Cenotaph in Whitehall. The inference that cemeteries are separated from the living or that they are a place of death is difficult to dispute. However, to suggest that a memorial site is concerned only with life is problematic, as memorials by their very nature are linked to death.

Although memorial sites may not be linked to the dead body but rather the memory of the dead, they are still essentially concerned with the dead. Life may be symbolically represented within the site through the presence of the woodland, but ultimately all memorials are shaped by the commemoration of death and without a commemorative aspect they would simply be translated as sculptures or works of art. Nature may offer a sanitisation of memorialisation by its embodiment of life. However, it could be said that such representation of life is of no greater relevancy than the life depicted within urban streetscapes.

The memory-based memorials that have been installed en masse within the Arboretum’s rural site suggest a national trend away from urban commemorative sites for the war dead. In 2016, within the town of Llantrisant, Wales proposals to erect a new local memorial to the war dead of the town in

the main Bull Ring area was contested by several local people. A petition was created calling for the memorial not to be placed in the town centre, with comments suggesting an alternative location as ‘the bull ring is no place for a war memorial, the castle green is a far more peaceful and suitable location’ (Smith 2016). The petition was unsuccessful and the chair of the memorial committee stated ‘the Royal British Legion, the chairman<sup>67</sup> of the South East area, has made it clear that the Bull Ring is the correct site. It follows the position of war memorials up and down the country’ (Wales Online 2016). That the Chair allies the Committee’s decision with that of the Royal British Legion but also implies that such a centralised installation is in line with an inferred national tradition. However, if the National Memorial Arboretum is a reflection of current commemorative trends towards a non-urban space, then the Committee’s view is now outdated.

As the National Memorial Arboretum is part of the Royal British Legion it would seem that the organisation is establishing a new definition for appropriate commemorative sites (NMA). That new national war memorials are not being installed in urban landscapes but rather away from the living in a dedicated rural location, suggests a perceived need and desire for such a space. Yet localised memorials within the communities that they are created to serve, do appear to be continuing. As the new Llantrisant War Memorial demonstrates there remains a desire by communities to commemorate ‘their’ dead within their local area.

That Edwards’ statue is localised memorialisation is demonstrated by its installation in his hometown. During the public consultation regarding the relocation of the statue in Dudley marketplace in 2011, there were similarly opposing views that suggested alternative quieter sites for the statue. Some respondents suggested that the statue be turned to face the traffic to make it more visible to passing cars (whatdotheyknow 2011). The statue appears to have been predominantly considered in terms of its visibility and the interaction between it and the living. These considerations were in the context of a proposed relocation for Edwards’ statue. It is apparent that respondents considered how Edwards’ statue was to be placed was of great commemorative

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<sup>67</sup> Councillor Glynne Holmes of Llantristant Town Council.

significance. The site of a memorial is significant for those that install them and those that encounter them. However, if the proposed site is within an area populated with permanent and temporary structures, buildings or objects, and it is near a thoroughfare for pedestrians or traffic, the memorial makers must negotiate a space for their monument. Urban spaces will generally require negotiation as commemoration can disrupt a space but it can also be disrupted. Therefore Edwards' statue will have to be negotiated and negotiate the living landscape it has been placed within.

## **SUMMARY**

Memorials have a key role to play in the commemoration of the dead and specifically within the commemoration of Duncan Edwards and the Munich Air Disaster. Through the analysis of the commemorative activities of memorial making and commemorative activity inspired by these memorials, a comprehensive understanding of their role within the commemorative networks of Edwards' and the Disaster is established. The wider social and cultural implications and history of memorial making have a bearing on how Edwards' memorials are created, installed and utilised.

As all the significant memorials to Edwards are in his former hometown, the preservation of his memory is greatly allied to Dudley. This defines Edwards but Edwards also appears to define the town in some aspects. The road name dedications to him actually fuse Edwards and his hometown together, whereby he becomes part of the town itself.

There are many memorials to Edwards however Edwards' grave, Edwards' statue, his dedicatory windows and his road name dedications were identified as the most commemoratively significant. This was established through the analysis of the sizeable and important commemorative activity they inspire and represent.

The four year fieldwork research project undertaken at Edwards' grave evidenced this memorial as a functioning shrine, family grave and tourist attraction. The grave was observed to be used by commemorators who were family members, friends, fans and members of the general public. As such the

memorial has a personal, historical and general appeal for multiple users. This variety of use is potentially problematic as the needs and demands of different commemorators can create conflict. However, there was no evidence that the memorial has been disputed or contested through commemorative acts.

The research revealed that Edwards is predominantly commemorated at his grave as a Manchester United footballer. That family members tending the grave have accommodated the commemorative acts of others and created a memorial which presents offerings equitably, suggests the memorial represents a consensus of how Edwards' memory is preserved. It is a memorial that evidently inspires substantial and ongoing commemorative activity that is exceptional within the commemoration of other victims of the Munich Air Disaster.

Edwards' burial in a family plot in his local cemetery marked with a headstone, is not unique and reflected the tradition of the majority of those who died in the 1950s. Had Edwards had been cremated (as is now the norm in the UK) his ashes could have been scattered or buried outside a cemetery landscape. Without his grave being installed in a formal cemetery in his hometown the perception of the 'dead' Edwards would be different. The dedicatory authenticity of his grave as a memorial directly connected to Edwards' by the presence of his dead body is incontestable. Such a memorial creates an opportunity for commemorators to visit 'him', whilst his cremation would have displaced his body and potentially a desire for commemorators to 'visit him'. Edwards' grave is evidently about his body as the embodiment of his very self. His grave is a conspicuous memorial made from durable materials which reinforces a sense of permanency which commemorators appear to find compelling.

Cremation has facilitated a cultural shift from the emphasis for commemorators to preserve the site of the dead body, to the preservation of the memory of the dead instead. Through a precedence set most significantly by The Cenotaph as a memorial to the dead where no body is present, acts of memorial making have altered. Commemorative activity as memorial making appears to have shifted towards symbolic memory-based memorials. A recent commemorative aversion from the 'dead body' reflects an inherent cultural and societal distaste

for death, but more significantly the processes of ageing and dying. However, equally the dead appear to be a burgeoning obsession as the rise in popularity of zombie and vampire films, books and programmes appear to attest to. The overwhelming appetite for the cultural representations of worlds occupied by the dead suggests that the living, rather than being repulsed by the dead are enchanted by them. However, the representation of the dead as zombies in these narratives is a metaphor for physical and mental decrepitude in old age, resisted by a defiant living cohort of ‘survivors’.

The depiction of vampires, presents a death that perversely results in youthful immortality. Although neither a zombie nor a vampire, Edwards has retained youthfulness in death akin to a vampire. As death gives vampires immortality, Edwards is made immortal by a death at his physical peak. His grave acts to preserve his youthfulness by masking the realities of the state of his dead body. His grave is an important physical barrier between his living commemorators and his dead body that assists in the perpetuation of the ageless sporting hero.

The exceptional nature of the harmonious commemorative activity across Edwards’ memorials is most uniquely evidenced by the installation of his dedicatory windows in St Francis Parish Church, Dudley. They are unique in regard to them being the only example of a footballer canonised as a footballer in a church. They also uniquely fuse the realms of Christianity and football distinctly as one. The assertion of the analogy of football as a religion of sorts is made extreme through Edwards’ installation as a saint. This is an exceptional historical event within the history of both commemoration and of football. When Edwards’ dedicatory windows were unveiled in 1961, memorial making practices that publically commemorated footballers was extraordinarily rare with only one footballer statue recorded in the UK at that time. Therefore Edward’s dedicatory windows attest to his commemoration being exceptional in nature and in act. Although these windows are considered as a permanent memorial they have required maintenance and funds to finance their preservation for over 50 years. This raises the issue of the realities of longevity and permanency for enduring memorials. Specifically in regard to Edwards’ memorials, such issues are pertinent in that seemingly permanent memorials embody an element of impermanence, to a greater degree than may be expected. Edwards’ dedicatory

windows are fragile and they required urgent repairs which required funding to preserve them. His statue, like that of Matt Busby has been moved and renovated less than 20 years since its installation, with funding allocated for economic regeneration and commercial development. Whilst fundraising for a blue plaque at a local park to be dedicated to him is evolving to be a long and slow process. Edwards' grave has recently been repaired due to subsidence and other memorials such as the Munich Memorial plaque at Old Trafford have been moved and remade on more than one occasion.

The assumption of permanency can never be made even for memorials created from 'permanent' materials. Memorials require maintenance, ongoing funding and even those established at dedicated and protected commemorative sites considered to be their permanent home, can be displaced. Ultimately it appears that Edwards' permanent memorials are actually more temporary in nature.

Property development and regeneration projects appear to threaten memorials because these memorials occupy spaces that the living exerts economic and social demands upon. The dead therefore may be displaced by the living although memorials appear to 'permanently' install the dead.

Within the commemorative art of football-related memorials the dominant established visual narrative is the figurative bronze sculpture and Edwards' statue is unexceptional in this regard as it is created within this dominant figurative genre. Unlike his grave Edwards is represented in his statue as an England player, rather than a Manchester United player. The significance of his birth and residency in Dudley is explicitly made on the inscription of the statue and its installation in the heart of the town further reinforces his identity as a local hero.

Regardless of the commemorative intent which memorial makers instil in the memorials they create, they are always open to a degree of interpretation and re-appropriation. The representation of the working timepiece of the Munich Clock as a fixed memorial, permanently stopped at the time of the crash is a virtual commemorative appropriation of a memorial. This appropriation acts to amplify the memorial's connection to the Disaster however, such appropriation is a false representation of the memorial. However, it appears to persist in the

commemorative network, because it is considered to be a more appropriate memorial.

The contestation of memorials creates tension within commemorative networks that reveal how complex dedicatory activity is. The ‘graffiti’ on Oscar Wilde’s tomb is condemned by some commemorators as destructive, yet for others it evidences the deep ritualistic compulsions felt by commemorators to commemorate the dead. That the custodians of this memorial sought to protect it and to impede the acts of others reveals that those who own memorials can exert that ownership as a power and control over others and the space. The installation of a glass wall around Wilde’s tomb did not deter graffiti, it simply displaced it from the tomb itself. Therefore this demonstrates that views as to what constitutes appropriate commemorative activity at, on or around memorials can create perpetual tension and dispute. It also asserts the consensus of commemorative activity at Edwards’ grave as exceptional.

In order for a memorial to retain its dedicatory function the site it occupies must be translated as commemorative by those that use it. It may be within an urban landscape like Dudley’s marketplace in a space used for a number of social and economic activities. However permanent Edwards’ statue is made or described as, it is how it is used that defines its perceived ‘commemorative permanency’. Within the urban landscape it may retain a commemorative narrative through the depiction of Edwards and the inscription however this may be insufficient to inspire commemorative activity. Without such activity Edwards’ statue may become purely decorative, as street furniture or even simply an obsolete obstruction. Regardless of the permanency of its installation, its ‘commemorative permanency’ can only be retained within the marketplace if its dedicatory function is not lost. As Edwards’ is memorialised by memorial makers he is further resuscitated through activities at these sites such as the leaving of offerings at his grave and the attendance of memorial events at his statue and dedicatory windows. His memorials are only functional and sustained within his commemorative network, if they are appropriated by persistent commemorative acts. Their permanency cannot be assumed but it is apparent that they currently inspire persistent and noteworthy commemorative activity, with some functioning as such for over 50 years.

When Disaster victim Geoff Bent's grave was considered by fans to be neglected, Manchester United were called upon to become the official tenders through a perceived responsibility of the club to the crash victims. That the club took on this long term commitment when called upon to do so, suggests the Disaster victims are perpetually linked to the club in life and death. That the fans assert this belief through their call for the club to fulfil a commemorative responsibility defines the significance of the dead to the fan's and the club's identity. This underpins a notion that the achievement of footballers can sustain and further elevate their status in death. In this regard Edwards' death in particular is persistently referenced as the greatest loss of all the 'Munich dead' and perpetuated as such through the commemorative activity at his grave being vastly more prolific than other victims such as Geoff Bent and Eddie Colman.

Edwards' grave, his statue, his dedicatory windows and road name dedications evidence his persistent and varied commemoration. Yet the permanency of these memorials may be implied through the selection of materials for their construction, it is the unique activity these memorials represent and inspire that sustains them as such. That new memorials to Edwards will be created, such as the plaque currently being campaigned for at Priory Park in Dudley suggest that memorial making remains a significant part of Edwards' commemorative network. These dedicatory activities in turn create new sites which are occupied by commemorative objects or memorials to become designated commemorative sites. These sites such as cemeteries or churchyards are places where commemorative objects and memorials are generally expected and catered for. Such objects and memorials reinforce the dedicatory function of such commemorative sites. However, sites are also appropriated as dedicatory in function by other commemorative acts. They may be created through the leaving of offerings (such as those left at the site of a fatal road collision) or by a dedicatory ritual (such as the scattering of cremated remains). The negotiation of these formal and appropriated commemorative sites by those who own, manage or use them is worthy of further analysis in order to understand how objects and memorials can define a space, or influence

commemorative acts within them. The concept of commemorative sites is therefore explored in further detail in the next chapter.

## **7: COMMEMORATION: COMMEMORATIVE SITES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Commemorative sites are spaces that have a commemorative dimension. They are places of augmented memories made apparent through commemorative acts. The dedicatory dimension of a space is defined by the commemorative activity that occurs there as ‘space, whether public or private, can be regarded as a cultural representation that is socially produced – its meanings are negotiated through social action’ (Hallam & Hockey, 2001;77). Commemorative sites therefore are defined as such by commemorative ‘social’ actions that occur at the site. They may be designated commemorative sites on a temporary or permanent basis.

A site can only acquire its commemorative status through commemorative acts which can be individually or collectively manifest. Commemorative sites that are dedicated to the dead in the UK are primarily cemeteries, churchyards and places where memorials to the dead are installed. These commemorative sites are defined and structured to be explicit in their primary dedicatory status which is usually apparent through descriptive plaques, signage, formal demarcation or memorial installation.

Other commemorative sites may be appropriated sites that are defined as commemorative in nature by their appropriation by commemorative acts. For instance, a roadway can be appropriated as a commemorative site as a roadside memorial site, if it is where a fatal road collision occurred. Therefore all sites have commemorative potential and can be appropriated as such on a long or short term basis by commemorators.

In regard to the commemoration of Edwards and the Munich Air Disaster a number of sites were identified as significant commemorative sites. The two most significant sites within the commemorative network of Edwards are Dudley Cemetery and the area of Dudley’s marketplace where Edwards’ statue is installed. The cemetery is significant as the site of Edwards’ grave and it is a place visited regularly by commemorators. Dudley marketplace is significant as an appropriated site where Edwards’ statue is installed and as a focus for

commemorative anniversary events. Sites in Munich where memorials are installed near to the crash site and Manchester United's Old Trafford football ground are considered to be significant commemorative sites for commemoration of the Munich Air Disaster. These will be examined within the wider context of how and why commemorative sites are created and how such sites are defined as dedicatory in function.

## **7i: NEGOTIATING COMMEMORATIVE SITES**

### **Managing Commemorative Sites**

The management of commemorative sites is often conveyed as necessary to preserve the appearance and sometimes safety of a public space. However, the appropriateness of activity at these sites remains the most disputed factor. The often subjective notion of appropriateness may be influenced by aesthetic considerations and implications for public safety. There are commemorative sites that are controlled or managed by rules about how commemorators should and can engage with a space. These rules can create tension that can lead to disputes amongst commemorators and managers of sites as well as between commemorators and other users of the space.

Disputes that occur between management and commemorators appear to focus overwhelming on the appropriateness of items left within a site, their impact on other commemorators and the ability of the space to be safely and easily managed. Commemorative activity within a cemetery or churchyard may contravene the regulations of these managed commemorative sites. When disputes occur it is 'here the progressive accumulation of 'personal memorabilia' that reconstitutes the social lives of the deceased individuals is seen to threaten the overall 'health' of the cemetery' (Hallam & Hockey, 2001;152). However, the concern over the impact on people's 'health' can be found on multiple occasions in regard to the management of commemorative sites. Unstable and unsafe monuments within some commemorative sites do pose an obvious and immediate threat to the public, as potential falling hazards. Some roadside memorials may be created at sites that are on busy roads, making them potentially dangerous to access and tend. Yet beyond these examples, specific threats to physical health are rarely, if at all evident. The concern for the health

of a site of its users appears to be overwhelming centred on mental health however the word ‘mental’ is seldom used.

There is evidence that some managers attempt to preserve commemorator’s health by suppressing individualised grief manifested through the ‘gift giving’ of personal items to the dead. Surrey County Council explicitly states that ‘there is a view that placing memorials on the highway is maudlin and unhealthy’ (Surrey County Council 2015). The idea that the expression of grief through the appropriation of material objects and spaces by the bereaved requires suppression because it is not a healthy practice, demonstrates an attempt to censor certain expressions of grief considered harmful. An attempt to suppress any expression of grief could be viewed as an attempt to suppress free speech or a person’s human rights. When it is a censorship purportedly created to preserve health there is an implication that commemoration is a potentially hazardous and harmful activity. That those who manage commemorative spaces consider interventions on the basis of the preservation of good health, suggests a profoundly complex relationship between the custodians and users of commemorative spaces. That items left at Edwards’ grave are never disputed in this way suggests that the offerings at his grave are considered to be healthy expressions of grief by the management, the family tenders and other commemorators. There appears to be a consensus at the grave that does not require the removal of ‘inappropriate’ dedicatory offerings and other commemorators who use the cemetery have not contested activity at Edwards’ grave.

When commemorators are requested to adjust their behaviour within a commemorative site, although the requests may come from the managers of the site, the offending commemorators may seek to challenge perceptions of appropriateness rather than comply. They may approach others with concerns that their commemorative rights are being unfairly repressed and look for allies to support their view. Allies are sought generally through requests for support for the rights of the bereaved to commemorate their dead as they, and not the managers of the site, see fit. The assertion of such perceived commemorative rights provokes the consideration of what is currently an undefined legislative area. Predictions that such assertions of commemorative rights may proliferate

suggests that ‘perhaps in the near future there will be a popular uprising on behalf of commemorative rights’ (Berridge, 2002;235). However, it is not only the health of the bereaved that is a concern for the managers of commemorative spaces, they are also concerned with the ‘health’ of the sites themselves.

The bereavement services who manage Dudley Cemetery where Edwards is buried request that commemorators ‘please help the Council to provide a safe cemetery and one in which is an attractive and peaceful place to visit. As a responsible grave owner you have your part to play’ (Dudley Metropolitan Council, 2005;14). To suggest that commemorators have a shared responsibility in maintaining the cemetery to a safe and healthy standard suggests that management acknowledge that they do not have the resources to monitor and enforce their rules over a large area of diverse plots. In this regard they explicitly request that commemorators be active allies in the provision of a safe and attractive place. Yet if the maintenance of a space is a shared responsibility between users and managers then notions of beauty and attractiveness will be as disparate as the backgrounds, cultures and beliefs of all those who use the space. A universal consensus on appropriateness is difficult if not impossible to establish and sustain and therefore by implication compromise is required for consensus. Edwards’ grave was observed to be an example of such compromised compliance in that a range of offerings from people including family members, friends and fans are communally apparent. This implies that the different groups and individuals that utilise Edwards’ grave for their commemorative activity accommodate the activity of others by compromising their individual notions of appropriateness. That an Edwards’ family member who tends his plot would accommodate the offerings on the family grave from strangers and tend them in the same way as their own, demonstrates consensus through compromise and alliance. The implication of allied commemorators infers that memorials and commemorative sites are not only monitored and controlled by the management but also through a compromised compliance amongst commemorators.

## **Disputes within Commemorative Sites**

During the field studies research no evidence of disputes over how Edwards' grave or statue were being used by commemorators was apparent. However, disputes at commemorative sites do occur and reveal the complex nature of commemorative site management. The relatively high volume of commemorators accessing Edwards' grave could raise the potential for dispute, however no evidence of disputes was found. That the site of Edwards' grave is not disputed is exceptional as exponentially the potential for disputes is high, due to the number of commemorators who utilise the space. Disputes can and do arise within the cemetery landscape and can be between individuals initially but escalate to involve other individuals or groups. They may centre on one individual or one commemorative act, which is why the consensus at Edwards' grave is exceptional.

In a cemetery near to Dudley a dispute over the erection of a memorial to a child demonstrates how such disputes can develop exponentially. In June 2015 a news report summarised a dispute between the cemetery management of Great Malvern Cemetery (Worcestershire) and a lady who had installed a new memorial to her young son in the cemetery (Baker 2015). The memorial in the shape of a star and teddy bear was said to breach the rules defining permitted memorial shapes for that area of the cemetery. The management had removed the memorial in response to a complaint from another bereaved family but the mother wanted the memorial to her son reinstalled. The shape of the memorial would have been appropriate in the children's section of the cemetery but as the mother had requested that her son be buried next to relatives in the adult section of the cemetery, the memorial was not of a permitted design. The mother who installed the disputed memorial attempted to overturn its removal by calling for support via a petition, which over 33 000 people signed (Corbett-Weeks 2015). This demonstrates that members of the public, many with no obvious personal connection to the deceased or the commemorative site feel compelled to support others who they feel have had their commemorative rights ignored. There is an assumed commemorative right that those who signed the petition appear to evoke, but the petition was not explicit and did not give a full explanation for the reason for the headstone being removed. The stonemason who installed the memorial without the management's consent was also

implicated as causing the unnecessary dispute through his unauthorised actions. Such complex multiple interactions between managers and users of a commemorative site are typified in one example of a dispute over the installation and removal of a single memorial. The general public, the press, the cemetery management, the local council, a stone mason, family members and individual commemorators all have assumed or implicated roles in how a commemorative site is maintained and managed. This is an example of the complexity of commemorative site management and the potential for commemorative activity to be disputed at such sites.

Although there is an assertion that the cemetery management are in control of a commemorative site there is also an implied accountability for the commemorators who use the site to maintain it to a prescribed standard. The bereaved and their supporters may feel that the space should be used for acts of memory preservation they define as ‘the bereaved see these practices as essential to memory maintenance’ (Hallam & Hockey, 2001:154). Yet notions of what are ‘essential’ and permissible acts of memory preservation vary not only from person to person, but also across designated areas of some commemorative sites. The formation of designated infant and child sections in some cemeteries authorise a greater diversity and freedom in memorial making than is allowed in adult sections. This demonstrates that management of such spaces assume that the death of a child and the death of an adult require different types of commemorative spaces. The dispute over the inappropriate memorial to a child was due to its installation in the adult section, but the assurance that such a memorial would have been appropriate in the children’s section, demonstrates how commemorative spaces can be divisibly managed for different categories of the dead. Certain religious denominations that dictate the position of a plot may be granted special dispensation within multi-faith cemeteries, for instance those of Muslim faith are buried within plots orientated in the direction of Mecca. This raises the issue of equality in death whereby certain groups of the dead are provided for in a personalised way, whilst others may be prevented from personalising the designated plot of ‘their’ dead. Often the ‘war dead’ have been set aside space for them within cemeteries that differentiates their loss to the loss of others through a system of demarcation that implies a system of hierarchy. The dead appears to be defined within a

hierarchy in some cemeteries whereby those who die fighting in war are worthy of a special resting place apparently preferentially over those who did not. That the headstones of the war dead in the UK are predominantly collectivised to be of the same simple design to subjugate personalisation, their collective presence within a designated area of a public graveyard or cemetery actually makes them stand out as more significant in death than other individuals buried in the same place. Standardisation can only assert the notion of equality in death when it is universally applied across a whole commemorative site. Even then, it is how the site is interpreted by commemorators, managers and visitors that define how it functions.

## Hierarchy

Hierarchy may be perceived, demonstrated or enforced within a commemorative site and may dictate aspects of its appearance, function and use by commemorators. As a device to assert authority over others, hierarchy is imbued by the actions of commemorators, memorial makers and those that manage commemorative spaces, but it can be challenged and may alter over time. Fundamentally those at the top of a hierarchy assert the greatest power and set the 'rules', in regard to how a memorial or site appears. Compliance to these rules usually created to maintain the ordered appearance of a shared commemorative site can be dictated by hierarchy or the perception of a hierarchy. The collective integrity and appearance of a public commemorative site may be preserved by commemorators who choose not to challenge the acts of others they perceive to be higher up in the hierarchy of commemorators. They may elect to self-suppress their desires for individualised commemorative acts in order to maintain consensus. However, this suppression may transmute to become repressed tension. Such tension may exist at Edwards' grave but it is not evident.

Offerings at Edwards' grave co-exist in close proximity from a number of different commemorators including family members, friends and football fans. There appears to be a consensus that the offerings on Edwards' grave of scarves, flowers and football shirts are irrefutably inoffensive to those commemorators who visit the grave. The four year documentation of Edwards' grave reveals conformity of the styles, size and medium of the offerings left.

With only minimal variation in the types of offerings such as an occasional stuffed toy or football medal, a consensus is apparent. Each offering appears to underpin the accepted appearance and appropriateness of the former. Such compliance appears to be based on the acceptance of a system of hierarchy, whereby the gift giver only leaves gifts that they believe will be acceptable to the family members who tend the grave. However, such compliance does not eradicate the desire for individual expressions of grief, it may only be an expression of self-control.

Commemorators who act without such self-control are considered to disrupt the commemorative hierarchy and they are seldom tolerated by those who practice self-suppression. If fellow commemorators are perceived to indulge in individual expressions of grief that break the system of the controlled commemorative space, those who are compliant may consider this an act of intolerable selfishness to be swiftly nullified. In this regard the management may be called upon to restore commemorative order, as the objecting commemorators do not have the power to do so. During a dispute over a child's memorial being removed from a cemetery, the managers of the site stated 'we have a conformity of shapes in our lawn cemetery. We were contacted by people who objected to the shape' (McCarthy 2015). This demonstrates how commemorators call upon those above them in the commemorative hierarchy, to act on their behalf. Acknowledging that the management had the power to remedy the situation, reveals a functioning hierarchy that can be utilised to control commemorative acts and facilitate commemorative alliances. The reserved right of the cemetery management to act as they see fit is from their privileged position at the top of a commemorative hierarchy. In this regard swift removal of an offending memorial or offerings demonstrates the ultimate authority of the management; however that 'offending' activities persist suggests that the rules of the space are wilfully ignored by some commemorators.

The demonstration of concern regarding the maintenance of a peaceful space extends to the swiftness of the management's removal of the disputed memorial, as 'the longer it stayed up, the harder the process would have been. It was a very difficult decision to remove it but one we had to make straight

away' (2015). Although unclear as to how, or for whom any delay in the removal would have been 'harder' for them, the statement does infer that removal of inappropriate memorials should be executed quickly however 'difficult' this may be. How any difficulty would manifest itself is not detailed yet the spokesman appears to then contradict the reason for removing the memorial by stating 'it wasn't necessarily an objection to the shape but why we appeared to be applying one rule to one family and other rules to another' (2015). The implication is that other commemorators instigated the removal of the memorial and the management was simply abiding by their own rules. Preferential treatment to any particular bereaved family potentially establishes a precedent and breaks down the system of commemorative hierarchy, required to maintain consensus.

The similar appearance of memorials in most sacred sites suggests conformity, yet compromise, censorship and discipline required to maintain such order are reliant on an assumed sometimes intangible hierarchy. The complex nature of bereavement and whether there can ever be consensus on whether memorials and commemorative activity is universally appropriate in a commemorative site suggests that management of such spaces relies heavily upon hierarchy and self suppression. Therefore in consideration of the apparent conformity of offerings and lack of disputes at Edwards' grave it could be suggested that the perception of a functioning hierarchy and the suppression of certain activities are happening. Although no evidence exists of disputes or suppression this apparent harmony could demonstrate that forces of hierarchy are significant to how Edwards is commemorated at his grave.

### **7ii: APPROPRIATION OF SITES FOR COMMEMORATION**

Commemorative sites made so by appropriation may be 'everyday' spaces that have a perceived dedicatory function, relevance or appeal. Such sites may be experienced as they were initially intended with a non-commemorative element, as in a local beauty spot, yet because of their connection to an event or person they have developed an associated commemorative dimension. For example such sites may be a roadside near a fatal crash site or the former residence of a deceased person. The appropriated commemorative status of such places alters these sites on a temporary or permanent basis with varying degrees of

appropriation. The secondary commemorative dimensions of such appropriated places are always due to a perceived dedicatory relevance that inspires commemorative activity at the site.

Appropriated public spaces can be commemorative sites that are connected to sudden or unexpected deaths. When the loss of life is multiple as in the fatal terrorist attacks in Oslo in 2011<sup>68</sup>, the commemorative response to such incidents is similarly manifold. After attending a conference in Oslo, Norway<sup>69</sup> in August 2011, a few days after the attacks I observed that the centre of the capital had been appropriated as commemorative site. Multiple offerings left within the capital's central area immediately after the attacks which were so numerous that they overwhelmed the streets and prevented vehicular access to some areas. The offerings included flowers, football shirts and scarves, candles, notes and various other small objects. Traffic lights were observed changing in fixed sequence, yet no traffic could reach them to be directed as commemorative activity had overwhelmed and appropriated the space.

Officials erected barricades around the perimeter of the collective offerings to formally demarcate the site as a temporary commemorative site which stretched out across the roadway for several metres. By the acts of many commemorators the central area of the capital had become a commemorative site and this dedicatory role had usurped its intended everyday function. The capital was later cleared of offerings to enable the area to return to a useable public right of way for cars and pedestrians.

### **Commemorative Sites Established Through Death**

Sites at or near to where fatalities occur are often photographed and filmed to be transmitted through breaking news reports. Sometimes these reports and images are transmitted only minutes after a death has occurred and sometimes even before death has been formally verified. Due to the nature of the Munich Air Disaster and the time and place at which it occurred initial news of fatalities was significantly slower and less detailed. Telephones were used to convey the news of the crash back to the UK but as many bereaved families had no

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<sup>68</sup> 77 people were killed in bomb and shooting attacks by Anders Breivik on 22 July 2011.

<sup>69</sup> ISCH 2011 annual conference: History – memory – myth: Re-presenting the past.  
Oslo, Norway 3-6 August

television or telephones they were dependant on word of mouth or the following day's newspapers for news. As Rogers recalls she heard of her cousins Edwards' death via a work colleague who had seen it reported in a paper he bought at lunchtime (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;4). Today a space is usually created very soon after death has occurred and officials allow access to it for the bereaved family to leave tributes near or at the site of the fatality. The name of the deceased is seldom released publically before the next of kin have been informed of the death. As the families of the survivors and victims of the Munich Air Disaster were many miles away from the crash site, this meant initial personalised family tributes and offerings could not be made. Survivors like player Bill Foulkes actively discouraged family members from coming to Munich post-crash, concerned for the suffering they may see but also because of the potential risk of flying. Foulkes recalled 'I was desperately afraid of them [his family] coming over on a plane. I couldn't face the prospect of it' (Foulkes, 2008;89). Those family members who did travel to Munich immediately after the crash were relatives of the survivors and not the bereaved and their focus was on the hospital, not the crash site.

However, the site was visited by survivors including Foulkes who returned there 'to have a look around the wreckage, which was strewn over a wide area' along with 'Jimmy, Duncan's friend' who had accompanied Edwards' fiancée over from Manchester (2008;90) as Edwards had survived the crash. They found a number of personal items and jewellery and the discovery of valuables in the wreckage prompted concern and Foulkes recalled that a local official then posted an armed guard at the site. This suggests that access to the site from this point onwards would have been restricted and considered a suspicious activity. A commemorative dimension for the site in the hours immediately after the crash therefore appears not to have emerged. The site was managed for the retrieval and protection of property as well as the focus for the aviation investigation team and public commemorative activity was not apparent.

If images in new reports of a crash site include imagery of flowers or tributes left at the site, it is publically represented with a primary commemorative dimension. The only visual indicators within these images for the actual loss of life at such sites are either the presence of offerings by commemorators or police signs

requesting help regarding a fatal accident. Images of police signage, damaged vehicles, crash debris or street furniture may evidence the event, but it is essentially the commemorative tributes that reference the loss of life. If these tributes are removed and the road is returned to its previous state, only preserved memories of the site can define it as commemorative. This is because the transient commemorative dimension of a site which has an established non-commemorative function requires dedicatory activity to define and sustain it in order for it to be permanently commemorative in function. Yet some site-specific memorials may initially be of a temporary nature to be later developed into more permanent memorials by commemorators. They may be sites perpetually temporary in appearance yet permanent through subsequent commemorative activity. Like the offerings left at Edwards' grave, temporary offerings can define and evidence regular and constant commemorative activity as to appear permanent in nature.

In the UK official response to roadside memorials is sporadic with varying degrees of hierarchical systems invoked. Specific guidelines have been developed by some organisations which consider the appropriateness and appearance of memorials and issues of permanency and safety, but any official national policy appears to be anticipated but is not forthcoming. In November 2015 Surrey County Council issued an official document that outlines the arguments for and against roadside memorials, stating decisions on their installation would be made by the Council, as 'the final decision about any roadside memorials, in close liaison with Surrey Police' (Surrey County Council 2015).

As the primary function of a roadway is not commemorative, roadside memorials are an additional facet to road management. As such their presence cannot redefine the space as a commemorative site without some impact of the site's use as a road. Significantly the council acknowledges the 'conflicting issues involved and differing views' (2015) in regard to roadside memorials however they explicitly state an overwhelming argument against their installation. The council state 'roadside memorials are a relatively recent development in the UK, there is no tradition or deep cultural reason supporting this practice' (2015). However, it could be argued that there is precedence for

roadside memorials in that the practice has existed across the world for many years as a persistent traditional and cultural act.

Memorials at the sites of fatal accidents are an appropriation of everyday space and although a relatively new phenomena in the UK, 'roadside memorials arose in Latin-American culture' and have persisted 'for nearly 200 years' (Corr, Nabe & Corr, eds., 2009;283). Academics have traced the 'genesis' of the phenomena to the placing of crosses by 'early Christian travellers who erected the crosses as acts of devotion and were to become places for rest and meditation for the traveller' (Backhaus & Murungi, eds., 2008;164). Yet such a traditional legacy is disputed by others.

Roadside or crash site memorials have an inherent link to the dead body of the deceased often as the place where the deceased passed from a living to dead state. In this regard the traditional essence of a roadside or crash site memorial reinforces its integrity as a commemorative site. However, as the appropriateness of such memorials is the issue primarily being contested, the site of death could appear to be considered as an inappropriate place for commemoration. Within a contemporary culture that commemorates the dead primarily through engagement with the memory of the dead and less so with regard to the dead body, any references or reminders of death itself may be considered inappropriately macabre. The proliferation of offerings at a memorial sustains the memory of the dead whilst such offerings at a roadside or crash site sustain the memory of a usually violent and sudden death and the dead body.

Currently, the appropriation by commemorators of everyday spaces such as roads to create roadside memorials demonstrates not only the complex nature of what constitutes a commemorative site, but also what constitutes a memorial. Due to the nature of the crash site of the Munich Air Disaster a site-specific memorial on the run off of the runway was neither temporarily or permanently practical nor possible. The majority of victims were not local so their bereaved friends and relatives were unable to visit the site soon after the crash, as may have been possible in the case of a road fatality. The close proximity of the crash site to the runway would have made it a dangerous space to access and

the heavy snow and unstable wreckage on site would have also hampered safe access to the area for commemorators. As the site of a fatality only becomes a commemorative site when it is translated as such, the crash site although referenced in some commemorative activity was not appropriated as a commemorative site. It is a significant site to the commemorative narrative as the site of several deaths, but not as a site where commemorative acts were undertaken. That the leaving of flowers and tributes at such sites was not common practice in the 1950s in Germany may be true, however this is difficult to substantiate. The specific commemorative traditions of the generally rural population of this part of Germany where the crash occurred are not known. Therefore site inaccessibility is assumed to be the main reason for the site not being appropriated as a commemorative site.

The remoteness of the crash site within a small farming village called Kirchtrudering meant that several local farmers were the first people at the scene of the crash. Harry Gregg, a Manchester United player and survivor recalled local people arriving in the aftermath of the crash ‘the people on the scene now were ordinary folk, not firemen or ambulance crews. Eventually one local turned up in a Volkswagen coal lorry’ (Gregg, 2002;34). At no point does Foulkes (like Gregg another player and survivor at the scene) reference flowers or offerings left at the site. Photographs taken of the post-crash site whilst Foulkes was there give no indication that any such items were left there. The poor weather at the time would have also hampered access, should anyone had intended to leave offerings there. As survivor Gregg described the scene from his hotel window shortly after the crash ‘bewildered by what had just happened, I stared as the cars in the street below gradually disappeared under a blanket of snow’ (2002;35). Therefore the weather at, and the location of the crash site were significant factors in negating the appropriation of the site for commemorative activity.

### **Commemorative Sites Established Through Life**

Although Snowdon is the tallest mountain in Wales its summit is relatively easy to access due to its favourable terrain and an onsite mountain railway. Makeshift memorials and floral offerings can be found across a number of vantage points in Snowdon and across other national parks and ‘beauty spots’

in the UK marking the site of scattered ashes. These sites have an inferred connection to the deceased often as a space the dead regularly visited or lived near. Those who scatter the ashes describe the significance of the connections such as 'It's keeping them close to home. My grandfather was from this area but moved to Brighton. He had climbed Snowdon' (Clark 2013). There is a sense of local appropriation and appropriation of the 'local' whereby the dead are returned to their 'home'. This is apparent in the commemoration of Edwards through the installation of his life-like figurative statue 'in pride of place in town's heart' (Cosgrove 2015) in the centre of his hometown of Dudley. There is a physical local connection that is exploited by commemorators but by referencing 'the heart', there is an additional suggestion of a significant emotive connection.

In respect to a petition calling for the Mayor of London to install a memorial to the suffragette movement, the petitioners actually detail the site that they feel is the most appropriate as 'they deserve to be commemorated at the heart of our democracy. Give them a statue in Parliament Square' (Criado-Perez 2016). The use of the word 'heart' again underpins the significance of the placing of memorials such as Edwards' statue, to be placed not only in a specific area but also in a special place therein.

Appropriated commemorative sites often evoke or represent a love of a space that is either exclusive to or shared with the deceased. The potential environmental damage of scattering ashes within spaces like mountain peaks is a concern for the managers of the space. Snowdon has become a popular commemorative site for the scattering of ashes. This practice has become so prolific that the presence of so many ashes threatens to displace the natural PH balance of the soil. The presence of the dead, embodied in their ashes is considered a threat to the delicate environment at the mountain's peak as 'repeated addition of human ashes changes the soil's acidity and makes it more fertile, potentially altering the type and volume of vegetation' (Clark 2013). Ecological concerns appear negated however by a greater anxiety of site managers concerned that they may upset commemorators who scatter ashes on the mountain. A Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA) spokesperson voiced the dilemma as 'when a person has lost someone, it's hard for us to say you can or can't do something...we would appreciate it if people did consult with

us first. Perhaps we could suggest somewhere else for them' (2015). However, there appears to be a misunderstanding regarding the significance of the site to commemorators in suggesting that another space might be considered more appropriate for the bereaved.

A tacit understanding that the SNPA is essentially unable to prevent or monitor the scattering of ashes specifically on the popular summit of Snowdon is reflected in the use of such phrases as 'we would appreciate' and 'it's hard for us to say'. However, the challenge to preserve a site whilst accommodating commemorative activity appears a substantial and persistent dilemma. The 'frequently asked questions' section of the SNPA website suggests that the public do consider the National Park as a commemorative site and this may be the primary reason for their visit to the area. Of the 14 frequently asked questions created by the SNPA on their website, four are specifically concerned with commemorative activity (Snowdonia National Park Authority), alongside individual questions about fishing, camping and car parking. The SNPA suggest that those visitors interested in the memorialisation of the dead within the Park, might alternatively consider that 'the Authority can accept donations specifically to help with the upkeep of such areas' (Snowdonia National Park Authority). This attempt by the SNPA to promote a commemorative activity that they feel may benefit the commemorators, could be seen as opportunistic or inappropriate. A donation may be attributed to the deceased and the results of the donation may be apparent in the preservation of the site, however this appears to disregard a 'personalised' aspiration for the memory of the dead. That an interest in a site could be channelled into supporting the management's own mission to preserve and maintain the area as they see fit, suggests commemorators are being encouraged to realign their commemorative acts to those considered more appropriate.

As a woodland burial offers a potentially lower environmental impact than a burial in a formal cemetery, a financial donation rather than the scattering of ashes in a National Park may offer a 'greener' commemorative solution. However, this alternative act is not as straightforward as the alternative between a burial in one space or another. A financial donation to the SNPA does not negate the existence of ashes which still require disposal or retention.

A donation also does not require a ritual for its dispersal and it is not an event or social action.

Although the allure of a commemorative site considered to be beautiful and natural may be compelling, essentially it is the association the space has to the dead that inspires its appropriation. That commemorators are appropriating Snowdon simply because it is picturesque is an oversimplification. That the SNPA professes to 'appreciate that people can develop a great attachment for particular places' (Snowdonia National Park Authority) implies that they understand that it is the connection between a place and the living before they died that compels commemorative appropriation. The commemorative association of a site may be established in life, but it is appropriated as commemorative after death.

The scattering of ashes at the peak of Snowdon has been undertaken by commemorators since at least the 1970s (Clark 2013) and the evidence at the peak suggests that the practice has increased dramatically in recent years. The ritual scattering of ashes at such places, accompanied by the creation of temporary or permanent memorials alters the appearance and meaning of a space. By the SNPA's own admission the space is uncensored and relatively easy and free to access as a commemorative space. Commemorative activity may change the appearance of the mountain but it does not prevent its primary function for use as a place of work and leisure.

Other managed outdoor spaces that are appropriated for the scattering of ashes include football grounds. The rules for the scattering of ashes at club grounds vary greatly from club to club in the UK and globally. Although some clubs have gone further than the SNPA and they have banned the scattering of ashes at their grounds. Reasons for such policies of prohibition vary from regarding the presence of ashes as having a negative affect on visitors to the ashes being hazardous. Tottenham Hotspur does not allow ashes to be scattered on the pitch 'due to the chemical reaction caused with the ashes and mixture of fertilisers and pesticides used on the playing surface' (Scattering Ashes 2010). Manchester United state that they do consider requests for ashes scattering at their stadium, regarding each request on its own merit (2010). Manchester City has a dedicated memorial garden in the stadium for the formal scattering of

ashes and other clubs intern partial ashes when pitches are dug over at certain times of the year (2010).

It is apparent that there is a demand for commemorative space within football grounds to scatter ashes because of the significance of the club to the lives of many fans. As one bereaved family member posted on a Manchester United site ‘I would like to have my fathers spread in his home from home in old trafford’ (Manchester United 2010) the significance of the football ground in her father’s life directly dictated his aspiration of his final resting place in death. That some football grounds have a formal commemorative dimension whereby they offer onsite memorial services by their dedicated grounds chaplain (Scattering Ashes 2010) reinforces the sense of the stadium as a place of focus for their fandom and club worship.

Conversely St Francis Church, Dudley (Edwards’ former local church where his dedicatory stained glass windows are installed) welcomes and encourages football fans to the church to visit Edwards’ memorial and encourages visitors to leave tributes to Edwards in their visitor book. The church have also produced a commemorative leaflet about Edwards (Johnston, 2008) and held memorial services to him over the years. Edwards and his ‘followers’ appear to coexist peacefully with the saints and followers of Christianity, as the two groups are bound by Edwards’ own faith. That some football grounds have their own dedicated chaplain suggests that the link between religious institutions and football is not as tenuous as the uniqueness of Edwards’ dedicated windows might suggest. Rather than emulating a religious construct of a club as a church and fans as followers there appears to be a fundamental link between religious beliefs and fandom. The link appears most strongly demonstrated by commemorators through commemorative acts at football stadia.

That the scattering of ashes has become popular at sites such as Snowdon and at certain football stadiums suggests these sites are considered to have a significant commemorative dimension. Although the links to these sites is established through their significance to the lives of the now dead, in death the sites and the dead become fused. Ashes scattered on or into a specific environment combine the dead body and the commemorative site, whereby the site and the dead are unified. The fan’s remains are absorbed by the site and

the preservation of memory shifts towards a preservation of the commemorative site which ultimately embodies the deceased.

Within a formalised commemorative site such as a cemetery the visual language of commemoration is inherently inferred because the site is a formally designed as a commemorative site. Within these formalised commemorative sites the majority of structures and objects have an inferred commemorative function. Any uncertainty regarding the commemorative essence of an object or structure is negated by its presence in the site. What may be contested within such formalised sites is not whether the structures or objects are commemorative in nature but whether they are appropriate to the space.

However, when a site is appropriated as a commemorative, as in the scattering of ashes at a football ground, that commemorative function may only be asserted at the moment of the scattering of the ashes. Any evidence of the scattering is lost beyond the preservation of the memory of the event. If a football club resists the appropriation of its ground as a commemorative site, the bereaved may be unable to scatter ashes or leave or create a memorial there to their dead. The bond between the deceased and the club in life will persist in the memory of the bereaved but the site will not evidence nor embody that bond.

When a site such as Old Trafford has such commemorative potential for so many fans the club's decision to control access to the grounds for dedicatory acts such as the scattering of fans' ashes is perhaps to be expected. The number of Manchester United fans who may wish to have their ashes scattered there could be overwhelming in number and potentially run into the millions (Talksport). As demonstrated by the popularity of Snowdon as a site for ashes scattering, the commemorative act itself changes the notion of the space and the physical environment. However, those considered to have a special connection to the club such as the Munich Air Disaster victims are formally commemorated on site. As discussed in Chapter Six the permanent memorialisation of the Disaster victims from the club are commemorated through the installation of the Munich Plaque and the Munich Clock. Commemorative events are also undertaken or supported at the site such as memorial matches and a fan-led annual memorial event beneath the Munich

Plaque. A bronze statue of Matt Busby and 'The United Trinity' a statue of players George Best, Dennis Law and Bobby Charlton are also installed at the club's ground. This statue was erected in 2008 to commemorate Manchester United becoming the first English club to win the European Cup (in 1968), which demonstrates that the commemorative dimension of the site is not solely defined through the Disaster or death. However, as Charlton and Busby were both survivors of the Disaster there is a significant link to the event through these statues. One account of the statue unveiling describe it incorrectly as a statue of the Busby Babes (Ellis 2008), further demonstrating the assumed all pervasive nature of the Disaster to any commemorative activity at the site. Manchester United have embedded and preserved the memory of the victims of the Disaster at the site but they have also undertaken the commemorative acts outside the grounds of Old Trafford, near the site of the crash in Munich. This demonstrates that the club are memorial makers with a unique national and international commemorative portfolio.

### **7iii: THE LOCALISATION OF COMMEMORATIVE SITES**

#### **Munich and Munich Airport**

In order for a commemorative site to act as place for commemorative activity it must be relevant, identifiable and accessible. Within the commemorative network of the Munich Air Disaster the Reim Airport is a significant commemorative site as the place where the crash occurred. Originally Reim was Munich's Airport and it was situated in the German village of Kirchtrudering, however the site was redeveloped and it is no longer an airport. Therefore the site's function as a commemorative site is compromised. Some commemorators seek to remember the Disaster by flying from Manchester via Belgrade to Munich on a date as close to the day in February as possible. These are attempts to emulate the last journey of the 1958 team, but the journey can no longer include Reim Airport. Phil Maddison<sup>70</sup> identified himself as a fan that had made such a journey. He described what his journey meant to him stating that 'it was magic to make my 'Busby Babes Pilgrimage'' (Rogers and Maddison, 2012). Although such pilgrimages now land and take off from the new nearby Munich Airport the commemorative act still appears to have a strong resonance

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<sup>70</sup> Originally contacted via Twitter on 24 March 2012.

for pilgrims such as Maddison. His pilgrimage to Munich was the pinnacle of a bigger commemorative act that saw him visit what he considered as significant sites and memorials over a number of years:

That completes my personal journey to honour that great team, a journey which has taken me to pay my respects at the graves in Dublin, Dudley, South Yorkshire and Salford, plus of course the visits to Munich and Belgrade (2012).

The numerous sites and memorials that Maddison has visited on his 'personal journey' suggest that there are several sites that have retained a commemorative dimension for such pilgrims. The act of making a pilgrimage to another country to 'complete' a pilgrimage suggests that Munich remains a significant commemorative site, even though the crash site cannot be accessed. When asked about his visit to Munich Maddison focussed on his visits to two memorials nearby the former Reim Airport site. During his time in Munich he visited the memorial in Kirchtrudering and the Munich Plaque near Munich Airport in a space called 'Manchester Platz'. This suggests that Reim Airport has been displaced as a commemorative site yet the general area around it retains a commemorative dimension.

When he visited the Munich Plaque he recalled meeting a local man with a connection to the Disaster 'we met a chap at Manchester Platz who is the son-in-law of Hans Wieser, the local farmer who was the first to arrive at the crash scene in 1958. He still lives in the same neighbourhood, now aged 88' (2012). The appropriation of nearby places for memorials is not unusual and does not appear to dilute the commemorative essence of the sites that they occupy. American visitors to Plymouth, Devon seek out the site of the former Mayflower Steps, from where their pilgrim forefathers were documented to have departed from on the Mayflower ship travelling to America. A portico was erected in the 1930s that marks the general area of the steps however the actual steps are now only partially visible in an adjacent pub. The portico has become more commemoratively significant than the actual steps as it is appropriated as an

official memorial that symbolically represents the ancestral departure<sup>71</sup>. That the portico is not authentic in that it does not mark the actual Mayflower Steps appears to be irrelevant for the majority of commemorators. As in the case of the Manchesterplatz memorial its close proximity and formal installation as a memorial is enough to be acceptable to the commemorators to be considered an appropriate dedicatory site.

Although in the Munich Air Disaster all the bodies of the deceased were recovered, this is not always the case in aviation disasters and this impacts on how and where such dead are commemorated. On 11 September 2001 four airplanes were hijacked in a terrorist attack in the USA and ‘two of the planes were flown into the towers of the World Trade Center [sic] in New York City, a third plane hit the Pentagon just outside Washington, D.C., and the fourth plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania’ (History.com 2010). In what became known as 9/11 approximately 3000 people died as a result of the planes attacks including all passengers and crew on the four planes. When loss of life is multiple and simultaneous the dead are often referenced as a collective as individual deaths are unified in the memory of one fatal event. The players who died as a result of the Munich Air Disaster are often referenced as a collective as ‘the lost babes’ (Connor, 2007). A bereaved collective is then established and although memorials to the dead are created individually, there is also a sense that a collective memorial is needed to remember the deaths as a significant event.

Thomas J Kinton<sup>72</sup> speaking about the Boston Logan International Airport Memorial 9/11 Memorial described the collective aspiration to create a memorial. He recalled ‘overtime consensus began to grow almost spontaneously that we needed a permanent memorial that told the story of the tragic loss of that day here at Logan Airport’ (Massport). The inference that such a proposal appeared instinctively across a number of the bereaved suggests an inherent desire for shared loss to be acknowledged and expressed, collectively.

The glass sculptural memorial created was etched with the names of those who

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<sup>71</sup> The researcher worked near to the Mayflower Steps from 1996 – 2002 on a number of local public art and community projects and is familiar with the area and its local history.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas J Kinton Jr, CEO/Executive Director, Massachusetts Port Authority.

died on American Flight 11 and United Flight 175 when they hit and destroyed the Twin Towers in New York on 11 September 2001. As both flights had originated from the Boston Logan International Airport the site was considered commemoratively appropriate. The memorial is set within a park in the airport grounds and acts as a memorial specifically to those on the flights, although those individuals are referenced within a collective memorial at the crash site of the former Twin Towers. As demonstrated by the designation of areas to certain dead, such as the war dead in cemeteries, the dead are persistently categorised and grouped by the nature of their death.

### **The Hillsborough Disaster**

If a bereaved collective is formed because of a shared interest or geographical connection, memorials can also be more intimate and localised. In the Hillsborough Disaster in 1989 Liverpool Football Club fans were killed whilst attending an away game in Sheffield. 96 fans were fatally injured in a crush inside the Hillsborough Football Stadium. As such the bereaved relatives of victims had to travel some distance from Liverpool to Sheffield to identify the bodies of their family members. The bodies of the victims were removed from the site of the death and placed in a makeshift mortuary in the Stadium gym. The Disaster was captured as it unfolded live on television and transmitted across the media in real time. Not as a report on a disaster as in the 9/11 Attacks, but because the event happened during a scheduled televised match the disaster unfolded on television similarly in real-time. As with the images of the disaster site at Munich Airport the site, images of the stadium site as a site of death were relayed across a television network and later through the press to represent a site of death. However, the official club memorial to the victims of the Disaster was installed at the Liverpool football club ground because of the connection of the deceased to this club, rather than their connection to a rival club's ground in Hillsborough. In this way the victims are retained within the 'home' of Liverpool Football and amongst the fans and club they were associated with in life. Nevertheless the Disaster at Hillsborough did create a perpetual commemorative dimension for the stadium.

Although a functioning stadium for the playing of football Hillsborough Stadium is associated with death and referenced within commemorative networks. This

connection to death may be the sole interpretation by those who have never encountered the site for any other reason. In this regard a geographical area can have inferred commemorative functionality. In the same way that Munich has become a metaphor for death for Manchester United supporters, Hillsborough has for Liverpool fans. The name of the area as in Hillsborough (a Yorkshire suburb) and Munich (a city in Germany) have become synonymous with death and football.

For local people or those familiar with these geographical areas and places such primary commemorative memory fixing is replaced with the addition of a commemorative layer to their own notion of the known site. Such localised memory fixing is apparent through the referring of such disasters simply as 'Hillsborough' or 'Munich' in that the place is greatly defined and known as a site of death. Such appropriation of language acts as shorthand for the word Disaster and demonstrates the rarity of such events. The appropriation of geographical descriptors by commemorators suggests that an entire area can be requisitioned for the dead into perpetuity as a commemorative act.

Contemporary notions of what constitutes an appropriate expression of collective loss appear to focus on memorial making at appropriate sites. These memorials are greatly defined and determined by the death they represent but also the commemorative spaces they are intended for 'in our mind's eye, reinforced by the weight of tradition, our idealised mental picture of the landscape of death tends to take the shape of a memorial over an individual grave' (Berridge, 2002;183). However, the scale and impact of some disasters are considered so overwhelming that a simple word embodies their commemorative dimension. This localises commemoration and makes location names appear as cerebral memorials to the dead.

### **Dudley as a Commemorative Site**

The dedication of a small residential cul-de-sac called 'Duncan Edwards Close' in 1993 and the renaming of the Dudley Southern Bypass to 'Duncan Edwards Way' in his hometown of Dudley in 2008 are roadside memorials of a kind. These road name memorials have a practical function in providing a name for a roadway but as road dedication they are formal memorials. Governed by local

councils, roads can be dedicated to the dead but ‘the name(s) will have a proven historical connection to the land intended for development’ (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council) and require approval by them in consultation with the Royal Mail. In Dudley a road name ‘will not be a living persons name nor a deceased person unless there is a historical connection to the land intended for development’ (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council). In this regard the historical connection between Edwards and Dudley is asserted and reinforced through the approval of two road name dedications.

Commemorative pilgrims can detect these memorials virtually through maps and satellite navigation systems. Evidence of visits to the road can be found as photographs usually through self-portraits or fan snapshots of pilgrims standing beside the road sign. The site of Duncan Edwards Close is a relatively quiet and accessible cul-de-sac near Dudley cemetery. The close proximity of other memorials such as Edwards’ statue and his grave embed the Duncan Edwards Close road name within Edwards’ localised commemorative network. Dudley may not be a word that is a metaphor for Edwards and his commemoration, but Edwards is subsumed within the geography of the town.

The more recent dedication of a larger road called Duncan Edwards Way that actually bypasses Dudley seems to offer pilgrims a less accessible commemorative destination. As a very busy dual carriageway that is not pedestrian-friendly opportunities for dedicatory acts at this road sign are diminished. However, due to the greater scale of the road compared to that of the cul-de-sac Duncan Edwards Close, the Way is celebrated as more appropriate by its proposer Councillor Ray Burston, the then Mayor of Dudley. He put forward the dedication of Duncan Edwards Way for consideration and he attests to the appropriateness of such a commemorative act ‘We are immensely proud of Duncan Edwards in Dudley and what better way to honour his memory than naming one of the busiest roads in the borough after him’ (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council 2008). That the road is busy and therefore a more appropriate commemorative site than a quieter, smaller close suggests Burston believes that the more people who see Edwards’ name the more commemorated and remembered he will be. That the road actually bypasses Edwards’ hometown where several of his commemorative memorials are seems

to challenge the notion of Dudley as the collective commemorative site for Edwards and the Duncan Edwards Visitor Trail created by the council.

The use or appropriation of roads as commemorative sites is underpinned by the implied relevance of the site to the deceased. Without a proven historical and local connection neither the living nor the dead can be embedded within the transport infrastructure. A formal collective consensus and endorsement is also required via approval by the relevant organisations. The notion and significance of 'localness' has been discussed within Chapter Three, in regard to Edwards' local hero status in Dudley. The reinterpretation of local roads in Dudley, by their dedication to Edwards has bestowed areas of Dudley with an additional commemorative layer. Those unfamiliar with the area and Edwards may perceive a commemorative aspect to the road dedications by assuming that Duncan Edwards has a local significance because a road bears his name. Without a notion as to who Edwards was or his connection to Dudley, those without local knowledge simply consume Edwards' name as part of the typography of the area. Edwards and Dudley are integrated within local road maps and satellite navigation systems whereby Edwards is part of Dudley itself. His roadside memorialisation through two local road name dedications means his commemoration has subsumed him within the very infrastructure of the town. As the ashes of fans are scattered and absorbed within the fabric of football grounds, Edwards is absorbed into the fabric of Dudley.

The road dedications to Edwards demonstrate how one person's commemorative activity can be reinforced by associated collectives or organisations. Burston's role as a councillor enabled him to propose his commemorative roadside memorial. Dudley Council developed the commemorative network of Edwards through committee approval and the funding of the road sign as memorial making. Edwards' commemoration is officially endorsed by the Council through this act which creates a new commemorative site.

The commemorative appropriation of Dudley through a number of sites, memorials and objects dedicated to Edwards seems endemic. Edwards' profound significance to Dudley embeds him within the local

community but also sets him apart from other Dudley residents because of his unique national status. Depicted in an England football strip upon a plinth Edwards' statue embodies and commemorates his national footballer status. The historical objects related to him within the Dudley Museum and Art Gallery including books, football shirts and caps also evidence his national football status. In 2016 a new blue plaque at Priory Park in Dudley where Edwards played as a young boy has been proposed as the site for the latest commemorative memorial to Edwards in his hometown. A fundraising website is being used to raise money for the proposed project which is being led again by a local councillor (Express & Star 2016). Unlike the individuals who have appropriated Snowdon, Dudley has been appropriated predominantly by the councillor collective. As Dudley promotes itself as a tourist attraction through a dedicated Duncan Edwards' visitor trail and local memorial making, the town defines itself as a site with a persistent commemorative narrative and appearance. Across the commemorative networks of the Busby Babes, the Munich Air Disaster and Manchester United, such localised commemorative appropriation for one individual is unmatched. This suggests that Dudley have uniquely established Edwards almost as a mascot for the town through commemoration which embeds him in the town's past but projects him through current activity into the future prospects for the borough. The town itself could therefore be considered to represent a commemorative landscape of Edwards.

### **The Urban Commemorative Landscape of Edwards**

The significant commemorative sites that relate specifically to Edwards are exclusively within the urban environment. Edwards' grave is installed alongside other dead in the local cemetery, his statue is installed in a busy marketplace and one of his road re-dedications is to one of the busiest local by-passes. The dedicatory stained glass windows within his former church and a dedicated gallery within the local museum are also installed in the same urban landscape of Dudley.

Edwards' connection to nature and the natural world is seldom if at all referenced within historical accounts or texts. Only three distinct images of

Edwards within a countryside setting were found<sup>73</sup>. Aside from these three exceptions, photographs of Edwards appear to depict a life spent within an urban setting. Even as a child in Dudley Edwards is placed within the streets of his hometown through recollections of those who saw him as ‘the sight of Duncan dribbling a ball to and from school was a common one’ (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1999;13). His later move to Manchester again saw him embedded within an urban environment and a blue plaque memorial to him and former players commemorates his lodging in a former guest house there in July 2011 (Blueplaqueplaces 2011). The dedication of a local playing field in Dudley to Edwards is currently calling for funding and although it is a recreational space it is still within an urban environment (Express & Star 2016).

Although Edwards is revered for his outdoor physical prowess he is preserved within an urban framework. This reinforces a strong physical connection to everyday settings in his hometown. That his passion and talent for football were publically witnessed in such a setting by local people underpins his local hero status. That his statue was placed in the marketplace of his hometown and the pose of the statue is Edwards in the act of playing football reinforces the notion of him as a local still playing football on the streets. His statue however raises Edwards up on a plinth above the everyday streetscape and inserts him back into the street. Yet he is returned as a former resident now of an elevated status as one set to ‘play’ perpetually in the streets of his hometown. His statue is a spectacle of Edwards’ physical prowess, a work of art through which Edwards is ascending from the mundane everyday existence around him as a vision of physical magnificence. The mundane quality of the urban streetscape serves to further elevate the compelling physicality of Edwards. Although it is Edwards’ legacy that inspires visitors as ‘nowadays, it could be argued that Duncan Edwards is Dudley’s main tourist attraction’ (Connor, 2007;131) it is perhaps the fact that the environment he is imbedded in is so ordinary that it makes his appearance the more extraordinary.

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<sup>73</sup> Three images were found in Wilf McGuinness’ biography. They appear to be in relation to a brief visit to Bray, Northern Ireland<sup>73</sup> with Edwards and Jimmy Murphy (McGuinness, 2008; pp. 36 & 49).

Descriptions of Edwards' hometown within books and the media are generally unfavourable and uncomplimentary. Described in books that relate to Edwards as a place that 'even the residents will admit that Dudley has seen better days' (2007,129) where 'Dudley now is a depressed and depressing area of run-down corner pubs, low-grade supermarkets, high-rise blocks of flats and shops that offer to cash DHS cheques' (2007,129). The appearance of Dudley has been greatly defined by the impact of the Industrial Revolution upon its landscape. Burn describes how J.B. Priestley represented Dudley in 1933, three years prior to Edwards' birth:

No doubt at all that the region had a sombre beauty of its own. I thought so then, and I thought so later, when I had seen far more of its iron face lit with hell fire. But it was a beauty you could appreciate chiefly because you were not condemned to live there (Burn, 2006;26).

Yet the regeneration of the marketplace where Edwards' statue has recently been reinstalled suggests that Edwards' presence has restorative qualities. The re-modelling of his statue has created a commemorative site larger than has ever been created for him before. His statue now expands across the urban environment to become part street furniture and part memorial offering a new functionality beyond that of its primary commemorative purpose. The extended plinth of the statue can be used by visitors to sit on and as well as being a focus for commemorative activity. This recent dual functionality embeds Edwards so profoundly within the urban landscape that it becomes difficult to define where the landscaping of the environment ends and the memorial to Edwards begins. Whether Edward's statue is set for a future whereby its memorial functions are surpassed by its function as street furniture remains to be seen. Yet it is clear that Edwards appears to be defining the urban environment that years ago defined him.

Edwards' statue was initially installed in Dudley in October 1999 and officially rededicated by Steve Waltho, Mayor of Dudley when it was moved in 2015, as part of a larger renovation scheme of the town's marketplace. This demonstrates the local council have sought to invest in Edwards as an emblem of a past that is considered relevant and significant to the future of the town.

That Dudley's future is defined in part by its past suggests that Edwards' commemoration is considered to be culturally and historically relevant and locally significant. However, that his statue's relocation and renovation was funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Dudley Council suggests that he is considered to have an additional role in improving the economic prospects of the area. Edwards' memorials are physically imbedded within the town. He is referenced within the Dudley Market Place Consultation May 2011 as one of the top ten topics most referenced along with trees, toilets, shops and parking (Whatdotheyknow 2011). The preservation of Edwards' memory within Dudley has become a symbol for the potential for success for Dudley as a site to live and work in but also to visit. His integration back into his hometown is not only metaphorical but also literal as he is subsumed into the infrastructure of the town and even into the fabric of some of the streets and buildings. In St Francis Church his dedicated stained glass windows integrate his image into the structure and appearance of the building. Edwards is such a part of Dudley's landscape as to potentially define it as a town that has a commemorative notion of Edwards at its central core.

The appropriation of Dudley's marketplace as a commemorative site is a formalised and endorsed council activity, however not all such appropriations of sites are considered appropriate or acceptable. Commemorative activity redefines urban space and the most contentiously challenging memorials in council managed urban spaces are roadside memorials. As 'the national charity for road crash victims' RoadPeace advocates for and supports road traffic victims, campaigns for improvements to road safety and the installation of memorials at sites of fatal collisions (RoadPeace a). RoadPeace advocate that 'where a fatal crash has occurred there is a need for a memorial in response to private grief and raising public awareness' (RoadPeace b). Memorial making is defined by them as a necessity for the bereaved individuals but also used as a way of promoting public safety to represent the RoadPeace agenda. This additional agenda goes beyond the need of the bereaved to commemorate their dead to demonstrate how organisations utilise acts of commemoration to promote non-commemorative agendas. As Dudley council utilise Edwards' memory to promote a regeneration agenda, RoadPeace uses the commemoration of traffic victims to promote road safety. What commemorative

spaces mean or embody may in fact have no or only a partial commemorative dimension for some as ‘in both mundane and abject space...death has the power to create a heterotopia, that is, the layering of meanings at a single material site.’ (Hallam & Hockey, 2001:84). When death is commemorated at an appropriated site, that site is transformed in function and purpose more complexly than may initially be apparent. That appropriation may instigate new non-commemorative acts suggests that acts of commemoration have wider social and cultural applications for how spaces are accessed and utilised.

Sites appropriated as commemorative can also be used for their potential to improve the living environment and to provoke change. The potential for improvement is embodied in respect to a more prosperous and enhanced marketplace as through the installation of Edwards’ statue Dudley, or for a safer road in respect to the installation of a RoadPeace memorial. Urban spaces that become commemorative sites whereby ‘practices usually confined within cemetery walls spill out into public space’ (2001:100) create sites with dedicatory narratives that also seek to enhance the prospects of the living. It appears that the dead are installed outside of the formalised commemorative landscape to paradoxically revitalise the living. Edwards’ revitalising prospects appear to be no different from those expected of other dead who are installed within an urban everyday environment. Edwards’ potential power as a presence that is a tool for revitalisation appears to be repeatedly exploited by, for and within his hometown of Dudley.

## **SUMMARY**

Commemorative sites can be dedicated formal sites or appropriated sites, but all are defined as commemorative through commemorative acts undertaken there. Dedicatory activity defines sites as commemorative, but such activity must be witnessed and be ongoing in order to sustain the dedicatory function of sites.

To be considered as commemorative sites the spaces must have a dedicatory dimension that is relevant to memory preservation. However, not all relevant sites are accessible to commemorators and therefore their dedicatory potential is compromised. For instance the Munich Air Disaster crash site was

inaccessible to commemorators immediately after the crash and again when the Reim Airport was redeveloped. Yet a perceived dedicatory relevance was transmitted to nearby sites through the installation of memorials and these sites were bestowed commemorative relevance by their close proximity and association to the crash site.

Appropriated and formal commemorative sites are managed to some degree either by the owners of the site or those who are considered to be the custodians of the site. The management of these sites is predominantly to maintain the appearance of the site, to ensure they are safe places to encounter and that activity at the site is appropriate for the space. However, as these sites are usually accessed by a diverse range of users, including commemorators, opinions on what is consider attractive, safe and appropriate is highly contestable. Disputes at sites are usually disagreements over what is considered to be appropriate commemorative activity. In formal dedicated spaces such as Dudley Cemetery, regulations appear to be abided by, however this may simply demonstrate a self-suppression by commemorators rather than compliance to regulations. Acts whereby commemorators have sought to assert their assumed commemorative rights in violation of regulations demonstrate that self-suppression may not always be possible. Although, there appears to be continuing compliance amongst commemorators and managers at the site of Edwards' grave because the activity at his grave is not contested.

The potential for disputes at Edwards' grave is high due to the number of different users of the site and the diverse ways the site is used from being a family grave, to a tourist destination. As so many different commemorators use Edwards' grave without dispute, this suggests that there is a functioning compliance amongst commemorators. Family members accommodate and even tend the offerings of strangers upon Edwards' grave and the site is promoted as a visitor destination by the council but a commemorative compliance is established and has been apparent on a grand scale for a number of years. Whether as an apparent growing desire for individualism in commemoration will challenge such compliance at Edwards' grave and other sites such as St Francis Church or his statue, is yet to be seen.

As individuals seek out unregulated and free-to-use spaces for commemorative activity, such as scattering ashes at Snowdon and other national parks, the idea that any space can be appropriated for commemorative activity suggests the dead are becoming more closely installed in the everyday lives of the living. Through the commemorative appropriation of everyday sites Edwards is already installed within the urban landscape of his hometown, particularly through the installation of his statue in the marketplace and road name dedications to him. His commemoration is not only an appropriation of everyday sites for memory preservation but it is also as an attempt to revitalise the prospects of the area and its residents and visitors. Edwards' presence at sites in Dudley is perceived to have the potential to improve the environment for the living. Although his presence is always defined as a commemorative act, this is one layer of the meaning for his installation at a site.

Through regeneration projects and infrastructure developments, Dudley has appropriated the commemoratively appropriated sites of Edwards. This means that the preservation of his memory in his hometown is now subsumed as a physical part of the urban landscape. Edwards and Dudley are becoming as one entity to a point in the future that perhaps they will be one and the same, interchangeable as the words Munich and disaster.

Commemorative sites are persistently defined and redefined, created and re-created, visited and re-visited by commemorators seeking to remember Edwards. The social and cultural interplay of commemorative acts, memorials, objects and sites related to Edwards, describe and form his commemorative network and ultimately Edwards as a local sporting hero.

The following chapter, Chapter 8 will summarise the significant findings of the research as discussed in this and all preceding chapters.

## **8: THESIS CONCLUSION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The primary inspiration for this body of research was the moment when the researcher first wondered why so many strangers were being inspired to visit and leave offerings at the grave of her cousin, Duncan Edwards. Although the researcher was aware of Edwards' status as a renowned footballer and the impact of his unexpected death on his family, the persistent commemorative activity at his grave that she observed seemed disproportionately excessive and puzzling.

By investigating the activity at Edwards' grave the researcher's established genealogical connection to Edwards and her interest in death-related artefacts and practices, specifically explored through her chosen art and design profession, came to the fore. This investigation evolved into a formal socio-cultural analysis of the commemorative network of Munich Air Disaster victim Duncan Edwards.

Although the research has a distinct personal aspect the study of Edwards' commemoration was also undertaken as a broader study of commemorative networks, commemorators and their commemorative activity. The Munich Air Disaster was an important event within modern England's history and the history of English football. Although extensively referenced in historical accounts of the period and through biographical accounts of survivors, this study focussed on the academic analysis of its commemoration from 1958 to the present day.

Evidence found in identified resources including relevant books, websites and news reports, as well as those created through unique field research and interviews with commemorators, describe not only the commemorative network of Edwards but also that of the Munich Air Disaster. As these networks have been active for over 50 years, the study of them also revealed significant changes in death-related practices and attitudes towards death, dying and the dead during that time. Indeed the thesis concludes with the prediction of further imminent and significant changes in the commemorative practices across

Edwards' and the Disaster's networks. Therefore commemoration was proven to be a mutable practice undertaken by a variety of different commemorators across networks in a state of constant flux. By initially focussing on the commemorative activity at Edwards' grave this research explored specific activity that could then be analysed within the wider context of commemoration, memorialisation and death. The research findings have significance to scholars of death, dying and commemoration as well as those studying memorialisation, football history and the concept of heroism.

#### **8i: RESEARCHER AS COMMEMORATOR, COMMEMORATOR AS RESEARCHER**

The researcher's familial connection to the research subject was a unique element of the study. This connection was explicitly stated throughout the research as a significant factor in the initiation and undertaking of the study. The role and perception of family within Edwards' commemorative network was in part considered from the researcher's second generation commemorator perspective. This 'privileged' perspective allowed for the documentation and preservation of new and unique first generation commemorator testimonies via interviews with Edwards family members (see Appendix D).

Undertaking the research changed the relationship between the researcher and the research subject and the researcher and other commemorators. However, certain aspects of the personal impact of undertaking such research as a bereaved family member are too personal to articulate within a text such as this. Yet other aspects are evident and continuing to emerge.

Initially the researcher had to coerce reluctant family members to be involved with the work. Those family members who were interviewed agreed to being interviewed in order to help the researcher. These interviews initiated some dialogues which have evolved and persisted as a shared interest in a common ancestry. Initially a relative and student seeking more information from relatives about Edwards, the researcher is now perceived by those relatives as being the family expert on Edwards' life and death. This has elevated the researcher's status within parts of the commemorative network. Some family commemorators consider her to be a legitimate and learned point of contact for

family-related issues in regard to Edwards. The researcher sought out relatives that had known Edwards, to understand and learn more about her relative. Through that endeavour and the resultant discoveries she made, conversely she became perceived by them as more knowledgeable about Edwards than them. Yet she maintained their experiences of knowing Edwards actually elevates them above her in any perceived commemorative hierarchy. There are however other family members who continue to question the nature and legitimacy of the researcher's connection to and the motivation for the research. They have asked for clarification on how the researcher is related to Edwards or ignored requests for interviews.

As this research was undertaken at a time prior to the death of a number of first generation and key commemorators, it has captured a uniquely specific point within Edwards' and the Disaster's commemorative network. During the research period some survivors and first generation family members died and this demonstrated the inevitability of change across the network defined by the acts of commemorators. The majority of commemorators of the Munich Air Disaster now have no firsthand knowledge of Edwards, the Busby Babes or the Disaster. At the time of writing, the only two players who were on the plane who are still alive were Harry Gregg and Bobby Charlton.

Second generation commemorators do not have the firsthand knowledge of the dead that the first generation commemorators have. However, those second generation commemorators with an ancestral link to the dead had an intensified experience of commemoration because of their intimate relationship with the first generation commemorators. The transmission of memory from parents to their children can be intensely felt and is referenced as such by the second generation holocaust survivors (as discussed in Chapter 1). The sense of compulsion for second generation commemorators to preserve the memory of their close relatives, usually their parents, was felt by the researcher in relation to her mother's memories of Edwards. These memories were often preserved in tact and transmitted with ancestral authority and a reverence that is acknowledged as significant and authentic within commemorative networks. Second generation commemorators often used the commemorative network to transmit their ancestors' memories to ensure their preservation beyond the

second generation commemorator's lifetime. In this regard the researcher preserved and transmitted her mother's memories within and through this study. The imperative to preserve memory can be so profoundly felt by second generation commemorators that it becomes a defining aspect of their identity. As the researcher is now viewed by some commemorators as an expert on Edwards demonstrates the significance of second generation commemorators to the network. Undertaking the research changed the researchers' relationship with the commemorative network and several commemorators. When the research thesis is in the public domain there is an expectation that its presence within the commemorative network will affect the network in some way. How this affect will manifest itself within the network and to what degree, is difficult to predict as the network is a complexly emerging and converging entity.

However, the shift to a second generation commemoration for the Munich Air Disaster and Edwards' network is not expected immediately, but it is inevitable in the next few years. Such a significant commemorative shift will certainly provoke change; however how that change will manifest itself through commemorative activity is yet to be seen.

### **8ii: COMMEMORATORS, FAMILY & HIERARCHY**

The research articulated a uniquely personalised commemorative narrative, founded upon the curiosity to search out and understand the dedicatory narratives of others. The study revealed that within recent grief management studies an acknowledgement that anyone can be affected by death and subsequently be grieving, expands the notion of 'the bereaved' exponentially. Therefore the cohort of commemorators for any deceased individual can be vast, as was observed in Edwards' case. The traditional perception of the family as the main or only cohort to be 'legitimately' grieving for the dead is challenged in modern society.

Family members with the closest and most incontestable association to the dead are considered to be 'the bereaved'. They are a collective considered to be the most profoundly affected by the death of those in the Disaster because of their close relationship to the deceased. Within Edwards' network no immediate family members remain since the death of his mother in 2003. The

significance of family commemorators to Edwards' network could therefore have been expected to diminish through natural genealogical distancing. Yet family as it is perceived within Edwards' network appears to remain at the top of the commemorative hierarchy as a unified ancestral cohort referenced as 'the family'. This belies the individualistic and disparate nature of family members now apparent in Edwards' network, whereby relatives of Edwards are mainly distant third cousins with no personal knowledge of each other or Edwards. The most accurate description of family within Edwards' network is those relatives who make themselves publically visible and accessible to the network.

Interviews with Edwards family members, self-identified as non-active commemorators, were only possible because of the privileged family connection of the researcher to them. Such a connection facilitated access to previously inaccessible and imperceptible data. Through interviews with Edwards' family members new research data was generated. How these 'hidden' family members perceive themselves and others within Edwards' commemorative network was possible to study for the first time. As the role and perception of family within the commemorative networks of Edwards and the Disaster is high in the commemorator hierarchy, the lack of presence of some closely related family members is distinct and significant. When 'the family' were quoted or referenced to justify an act or verify a fact, it was found that 'the family' were often not those most closely related to Edwards. As the number of family members who knew Edwards and who are closely related to him is diminishing the concept of Edwards' family continues to change. The new data generated by the interviews revealed that the role of family within a commemorative network can only be asserted as hierarchical if they insert themselves publically within that network. Some non-publically active family commemorators appeared to privately question the motivation and appropriateness of other family members publically installed as Edwards' 'official family'. These clandestine family members however did not seek to impede the acts of other family members. They appeared to question why some family members' sought to publically commemorate Edwards, when in their belief, such public visibility was not fundamental for appropriate commemoration.

As those Edwards family members who publically asserted themselves initially did so as a challenge to other family members attesting to be the last living close relative of Edwards, this reveals that the family cohort is not a cohesive collective. Simultaneously those publically non-active family members appear to be extending a bereavement protocol established at the time of Edwards' death to remain respectfully outside of the publically bereaved family cohort. Despite being close family members these clandestine commemorators were not formally invited to attend Edwards' funeral and appear to have adopted and perpetuated a respectful distance from Edwards' public memory preservation. Such an act of self restraint allows other less closely related family members to persist as the publically representational 'family' within Edwards' network. Much of the assertion of Edwards' family as referenced in the press or by the local council is those family members who have the inherited deeds to the grave or ownership of Edwards' artefacts. Although no public animosity between family members is evident, the notion of 'the Edwards family' is merely a partial representation of a larger and disparate collective. The perception and public assertion of 'family' as a coherent homogenous group within Edwards' commemorative network is therefore a contestable notion.

Nevertheless the family collective is still referenced as the most authentic commemorative cohort of Edwards' network. The concept of family is used as a device defined by others to appropriate and endorse commemorative behaviour. The family cohort is used by some commemorators as a device of endorsement for their own dedicatory acts, because family have a perceived enhanced commemorative authority within the network. For example, family members were consulted in regard to the recent moving of Edwards' statue and their approval as 'family' was used to endorse the act as appropriate to others. Such family commemorative authority is only possible through a universal understanding of a notion of dedicatory hierarchy and an adherence to such a notion by the majority of commemorators. Therefore the notion is potentially contestable and fragile as it has no legal or enforceable basis.

The apparently incontestable high commemorator status of Disaster victims' family members is asserted by other commemorators and elevates certain commemorators through their perceived higher association to the dead. In

Edwards' and the Munich Air Disaster commemorative networks however the one key significant commemorator is not a family member.

As a survivor of the Disaster and close former friend of Edwards, Bobby Charlton is installed within both commemorative networks as the significant commemorator. Although an individual commemorator Charlton is part of the Manchester United collective, continuing to play for the club after the Disaster with an extended association to the club throughout his life. He has represented the club at several Disaster-related memorial events, including the unveiling of Edwards' statue in 1999. Therefore Charlton reinforces the commemorative network of Edwards through his connection with him as a Manchester United player. His testimony of Edwards' prowess as a player is used by fans to endorse their commemorative acts of veneration of Edwards, because it is considered incontestable and authentic.

Charlton is part of the 'football family' of Manchester United whereby the club, its players and fans are allied through immutable association. Yet his close friendship with Edwards' mother tied him to Edwards' biological family, linking the club and family until Edwards' mother's death in 2003. This was a unique link and although the families of the victims play a part in certain areas of the Disasters' network, this appeared to be predominantly constructed by the club or the fans or an alliance of both.

The notion that a club and its fans may appear to be 'naturally' allied as commemorators of the Disaster could be made. However, this notion is challenged by evidence that elements of these two cohorts appear to act in isolation from each other with any alliance sometimes invoked through protest. Fans of Manchester United were found to perceive the Old Trafford Football Ground site as their 'football home'. The Old Trafford football ground was an appropriated site used for the installation of memorials and has been and continues to be a place to hold commemorative events. Memorial making at the site is led and regulated by the club (or more accurately its owners) as the Disaster is widely perceived to be a significant part of the club's history. This perception was found to be held by fans and by the club, yet how this event was and is commemorated by these two cohorts is not always aligned. It is a place

where some football fans spend a great deal of their lives and some aspire to have their ashes scattered there, to remain there in their death. The potential for conflict or tensions to occur between the two cohorts was observed, however a fan-led annual commemorative gathering to remember those killed as a result of the Munich Air Disaster held below a memorial on the outside of Old Trafford has evolved in recent years to be officially supported by the club. The club most recently sent officials to be part of the event and officials met the fan commemorators. However the dispute over the inclusion of a sponsor's logo on an official memorial at Old Trafford led some fans to 'attack' the memorial as it included what they perceived to be inappropriate advertising. The dispute centred on what certain commemorators felt constituted appropriate commemorative activity.

That some fans sought to impede the commemorative acts of their own club suggested that assumed dedicatory alliances are fragile and constantly in flux. That two cohorts considered allies can be opposed through commemorative action suggests commemoration is defined and redefined by each commemorative act that in turn define and redefine dedicatory associations and allegiances.

A call for the club to commit to the maintenance of Disaster victim Geoff Bent's grave suggests that fans see the Disaster victims as linked to the club in life and death, for all eternity. An obligation inferred by fans that the club had to commemorating those Manchester United players and staff killed as a result of the Disaster, infers that such obligation is expected into perpetuity. Fans sought to define the role of Manchester United club in the commemoration of the Disasters' victims outside of the club grounds. That these fans assert this belief through their call for the club to fulfil a commemorative responsibility defines the significance of the Disaster's dead to the fan's and the club's identity.

A sustained perceived commemorative hierarchy is evident through commemorative acts endorsed or made by key commemorators considered to be the most appropriate and authentic. Yet appropriateness and authenticity in the commemorative network were found to be based more on individualistic notions derived from a persons own beliefs and experiences of death and

dying, than a hierarchical concept. The assimilation of what constitutes acceptable commemorative behaviour from within whichever commemorative cohort the commemorator chose to ally themselves to could however influence individualistic notions in regard to the commemorative networks of Edwards and the Disaster. Hierarchy was used or inferred predominantly to underpin notions of appropriateness and authenticity of acts. This demonstrates the constant flux within the commemorative networks whereby commemoration by an individual level utilises notions of appropriateness through reinforcing a collectively acknowledged functioning commemorative hierarchy. This required knowledge of the subject of commemoration, the identities of significant commemorators and the acts of others in the network. Therefore the concept of a network and awareness of a network was found to be significant for ongoing commemorative activity.

### **8iii: THE COMMEMORATIVE NETWORK**

The examination of the commemorative networks unique to Edwards and the Disaster was made within the context of the passing of over 50 years. The theoretical construct of a commemorative network was adopted as a stabilised notion that enabled dedicatory activity to be identified and studied across a number of physical and virtual sites.

The examination of how and why commemorators are coerced or inspired or impeded in their efforts to preserve memory revealed commemorative activity as it connected at certain points within a commemorative network. Points where acts of alliance or impedance were evident defined the network as an interconnected emerging and converging entity. Acts of alliance or impedance defined how commemorators interacted with each but these acts were always unified in their intention to preserve memory in an appropriate way. Within this study non-action publically was also identified as a significant response of impedance and alliance.

Initially the commemorative networks studied appeared to be ‘democratic spaces’ of burgeoning activity; equally shared by commemorators albeit that a functioning hierarchy of commemorators was apparent. The assumption of the

commemorative network as a democratic space was challenged by the notion of commemorative hierarchy.

A universal compliance across Edwards' and the Disaster's network would require ubiquitous commemorator consensus. Such consensus required the approval of acts as appropriate to the preservation of the memory of the dead. For such a consensus to be perpetuated the monitoring of commemorative activity was required along with mediation between commemorators and a system of enforcement. Commemorators 'appointed' those deemed appropriately qualified to codify and enforce this consensus view, but this is not by formal appointment as no commemorator had such an official governing capacity. There was no formalised structure of control within the commemorative network, although such control by consensus was both inferred and apparent through commemorative acts. Acts of impedance were usually as efforts to readjust or deter what was deemed inappropriate activity. Alliance was evidence when a commemorative consensus was evoked but consensus across the network at all intersections, at all times would be difficult to achieve. Essentially each commemorator had an individual perspective on how the dead should be appropriately commemorated based on their own perception of death, dying and the dead. A uniquely functioning commemorative consensus appeared to be apparent across Edwards' commemorative network particularly at his grave. The existence of several offerings, from many different commemorators upon Edwards' grave appeared to evidence a commemorative consensus.

Through the analysis of these offerings left at Edwards' grave, this commemorative consensus was evident, whereby the acceptance of others commemorative acts within a shared space appeared to be established. Offerings upon Edwards' grave appeared to be deemed as appropriate and uncontested, with several types of offerings co-existing. This was considered remarkable due to the potential for tensions at a shared space, used by a high number of commemorators with differing motivations for leaving offerings. This perceived consensus at Edwards' grave also appears remarkable because the grave was perceived as an accessible public memorial, although it was a private family plot monitored and cared for by family members.

It was identified that there were three possible outcomes that can be potentially activated when a commemorator sees another's commemorative act. Either the commemorator would ally with or impede the commemorator making the act, or they would choose to make no act of impedance or endorsement. A non-response to another's act may have inferred consensus because no impedance is visible. However, it may also have inferred that an act of self-controlled suppression or a general lack of engagement with another's commemorative act is invisible and thus infers consensus. The universal consensus that permeated Edwards' network could therefore be more accurately described as an assumed consensus.

The publically non-active family members in Edwards' network attested to the notion of assumed consensus. Their non-action was manifest in their not challenging the acts of active family members. This non-action gives credence to the notion that Edwards' network is stable. Yet this universal consensus may be assumed consensus. That non-action evidenced such a consensus suggested that the network may be significantly defined by non-active commemorators, rather than the active ones.

The most significant example of active commemorator consensus was found at Edward's grave. The four years of fieldwork research undertaken at Edwards' grave produced substantial evidence of ongoing commemorative activity at the memorial (2010-2014). The quantitative and qualitative research that identified significant commemorative activity at the grave included the logging of grave visits and a documentation of commemorative objects left as offerings. The research evidenced that Edwards was principally commemorated at his grave as a Manchester United player. Although his grave was a family plot still tended by family members, offerings from fans and the general public were accommodated on the grave alongside tributes from family and friends. The offerings were equitably displayed and this suggested that the grave was a site of commemorative consensus. Other graves of famous people such as that of Oscar Wilde were found to be highly contested spaces where tensions between commemorative cohorts had led to acts of impedance. The erection of a glass wall at Wilde's grave to prevent the monument being 'kissed' only served to

displace such activity on to the wall rather than prevent it completely. Such intervention had not been required at Edwards' grave, although his grave is made of more robust material and it had never been marked or drawn up.

The substantial and ongoing commemorative activity at Edwards' grave was exceptional within the commemoration of other victims of the Munich Air Disaster. Further fieldwork studies of graves of other Munich Air Disaster victims and a survivor of the Disaster, provided evidence for a comparative analysis of the graves. This revealed Edwards' grave to be exceptional in the high volume of activity and offerings left at the grave. Within a hierarchy of the Disaster's dead therefore Edwards appeared to be at the top as the most revered and most frequently and actively commemorated. His identity as a victim was embedded within the wider commemorative network of the Disaster, yet individually he was installed as a 'hero' distinctly in his own right and within his own commemorative network.

#### **8iv: EDWARDS THE LOCAL SPORTING HERO**

The notion of Edwards as a local sporting hero was of great significance to his commemoration. His sporting hero status was underpinned by his identity as a heralded Busby Babe, England player and Manchester United footballer. He was identified within these cohorts and embedded within the football-associated sporting culture of the nation. As a former resident of Dudley, his identity as a local hero was however distinct amongst other Disaster victims. No other victims had statues in their former hometowns or were venerated in the volume and intensity as Edwards was. His localised memorialisation sustained him as a local hero and it continues to actively commemorate him. At the time of writing this research, proposals for a new documentary about Edwards early life, an honorary gala dinner to celebrate what would have been his eightieth birthday and a re-dedication of a local park to him were three commemorative acts currently being planned in his hometown.

The perception and description of Edwards as a hero was extensive across his commemorative network. However, he was designated his hero status distinctly as a 'local hero', a 'sporting hero' and 'local sporting hero'. Although he could also be considered as a dead hero, he was more accurately described as a

deceased hero within the definitions used in this study<sup>74</sup>. Edwards was preserved in memory as a heroic figure, overwhelmingly because of his sporting achievements which aligned him perfectly with the predominant masculinised notion of heroism perpetuated today. Yet within his hometown of Dudley he was distinctly revered as a local hero through memorials installed there that included a statue, dedicatory windows and two road name dedications.

The status of hero is applied to individuals for acts of courage or outstanding achievements. Edwards was revered as a hero because of his sporting achievements rather than for any courageous acts. Although, the nature of his death did appear to amplify his heroic status because he was considered to have shown great courage in his dying days. As Edwards lived for several days, after sustaining ultimately fatal injuries in the Disaster, his sporting hero status was extended by some to include this endurance of his injuries as a heroic act. However, evidence suggests that Edwards was heavily medicated and mostly unconscious throughout this time. It was more likely that his fitness and physical strength allied with medical interventions kept him alive for so many days. However, as the status of hero was found to be a predominantly masculinised preserve, any evidence of fortitude and strength underpinned the gendered notion of heroism. A hero can only be bestowed heroic status by the reverence of another. Those who bestowed Edwards with his hero status based on a perceived heroic fight for life installed him as such in history. Although facts can define achievements upon which heroic status can be based, interpretation is as equally valid in defining heroic status. That the facts of the number of games Edwards played and the number of goals he scored formed the basis of his sporting hero status further emphasised the gendered notion of heroism.

Edwards' heroic status in death was further amplified by his association with the Munich Air Disaster and the Busby Babes collective. The Disaster obliterated the Busby Babes cohort of young players of which Edwards was a well-known member. As the Busby Babes are a sacred heroic collective, because of their combined sporting achievements, their gender and youth, Edwards' is heroic by association, although also individually revered as a sporting hero. He was

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<sup>74</sup> For the purposes of this study a dead hero is distinctly defined as a person made a hero at the point of his or her death and not before.

ensconced as a hero within a collective of heroes who were installed and preserved within the history of Manchester United and English football. Edwards was persistently referenced as the greatest singular loss of the crash which amplified his heroic status further, as the hero of heroes. This was further demonstrated by his induction (as the only Munich Air Disaster victim at the time of writing) as a legend into the National Football Museum's Hall of Fame. Through his uniquely representative induction as a national legend he was made the emblematic hero of the Busby Babes collective and era, as well as the Disaster itself.

Edwards and the Busby Babes who died in Munich retain a hero status that is uniquely robust within the realms of sporting heroes. This could be attributed predominantly to the era in which they died, an era just prior to the 'celebrity age', before players like George Best were publically scrutinised for their off-pitch activities as much as for their performance on the pitch. The timing of their deaths was greatly significant in retaining their sporting hero status because it installed them within an age when footballers were considered part of the cohort of 'ordinary men'.

The shift towards a more hostile style of reporting of sport emerged just after the Disaster and the timing of this shift appeared to explain, in part, why the hero status of the 'Munich dead' has remained almost sacredly in tact. Edwards' status as a hero was emphasised and underpinned by the masculinised notion of a hero, his physical prowess and sporting achievements, his untimely death in youth, his humble roots and the era in which he lived and died. By bringing these aspects of his multi-faceted and constructed heroic status together, it was clear from the research that the perception of Edwards as a local sporting hero had a persistent all-pervading basis. At his grave the multiple offerings left there, including notes of reverence for Edwards evidenced how substantial his capacity for heroism was and is perceived. The comparative analysis of Edwards' grave with those of other victims revealed Edwards was actively commemorated by more people, more often than his former teammates. From the analysis of the frequency and quantity of offerings at Edwards' grave alone he could be defined as a hero of heroes.

## **8V: SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL SHIFTS IN COMMEMORATIVE PRACTICES SINCE 1958**

The research identified a number of cultural shifts within death-related commemorative activity in the UK that were considered significant to this study. The preference for cremation over burial emerged after the Munich Air Disaster occurred in 1958. The era in which the 'Munich dead' died was also significant to how they were commemorated because it marks a time prior to the ascendancy of cremation over burial as the preferred process for the internment of the dead. Cremation emerged and influenced the current funeral practices that evidenced a shift towards a subjugation of the dead body. The modern reality of death, specifically the encountering of dead bodies, displaced the body from the centre of commemorative activity. Edwards' body is masked by his grave which acts as a physical barrier that disguises the reality of his dead body. Yet the presence of his body at his grave validated its commemorative authenticity.

Edwards' grave had a commemorative authority that legitimises the space for commemorators, in a way that exemplifies it above all other memorials. It also acted to preserve his youthfulness and any physical demise in his body was hidden from view by a memorial that marks his 21 years of age through inscription. His body and his gravestone were combined as a memorial to Edwards within the sacred setting of a cemetery. Such memorials create opportunity for commemorators to visit and commemorate the dead. If Edwards had been cremated and his ashes scattered elsewhere or in an undisclosed or unmarked location such focussed commemorative activity would have been difficult to replicate. Edwards' grave was visited by commemorators who left offerings for him, yet often they were placed on the grave in a way to communicate to other commemorators. Notes were left facing towards visitors or turned outwards and this suggested that the grave was a place for sharing commemorative activity as much as undertaking it. This reinforced the collective sense of the commemorative network. The desire to communicate or reach other commemorators was felt by the researcher and this experience instigated the curiosity that lead to this research. Therefore the grave was a receptacle and display area for commemorative activity as well as a family memorial and marker and masker of the deceased's body.

The national preference for cremation displaced and continues to displace the focus for commemoration from the actual dead body to the preservation of the memory of the dead. Since the mid to late 1950s a cultural shift toward a more secularised commemoration of the dead was found to be evident. The overriding conformation to religious constructs for the dead had been declining since then with death and funerary rituals becoming more individualistic. When cremated the dead become portable as their ashes can be scattered almost anywhere. This negates the need for traditional burial plots within a cemetery or graveyard and displaces the dead body as the centralised focus for commemorators.

As environmental concerns and financial constraints have begun to impact on the way human remains are disposed of, options such as green burials in woodlands and the scattering of ashes for 'free' in public spaces are redefining the concept of the funeral and the grave. Less formal rituals at sites deemed significant to the memory of the dead are becoming increasingly popular and appropriated as commemorative spaces. Subsequently sites such as national parks or football grounds have a new commemorative potential and appeal as places that had meaning for the deceased. The prediction that commemorators will begin to assert their 'commemorative rights' to sites is apparent as the cremated and 'portable' dead are being taken to sites, such as Snowdon although the managers of the site make attempts to deter such activity. The management of publicly accessible sites were found to have responded to such commemorative appropriation in varying degrees, from removal of memorials and suggestions for alternative practices, to toleration of acts. Grief and its subsequent commemorative activity was so individualistic that those who manage formal and appropriated commemorative sites faced an ongoing challenge from its users. Football fandom is akin to a religious belief and the analogy of a football ground as a place of worship for fans allied to their club means that a ground can be appropriated as a commemorative space. As Christians are allied to the Christian faith, fans are allied to their club. In the football ground saints are replaced by players as key figures of worship and iconography. The installation of statues of these players within the grounds further emphasised this analogy and the potential for worship. Through his

canonisation in dedicatory windows within his former local church Edwards , , is a uniquely formed a juncture whereby Christians and fans are allied in his ‘worship’. Fans of Manchester United and Edwards attended his former church to view his dedicatory windows and adopt an alliance with a faith unified by the veneration of Edwards. This was an exceptional alliance within the commemorative network of Edwards and the Disaster which is not replicated anywhere else in English football fandom and football history. It was due to the perceived notion that Edwards’ Christian faith and his local church was integral to his life as a footballer. However, Edwards’ faith was rarely mentioned within the commemorative network and usually only mentioned in reference to the dedicatory windows or visits to it by commemorators. As the dedicatory windows were found to be so profoundly unique within English history and football history the reason why the religious aspect of Edwards’ persona is then so underplayed in comparison is puzzling. The assumption of why this may be was that it was a reflection of the increasing secularisation of society. Also their depiction of Edwards on one knee declaring his reverence for God did not tally with the masculinised prowess of the heroic Edwards which most commemorators aspire to remember.

The commemorative potential for football grounds was explored as places to potentially hold memorial events or scatter ashes (if the club approves this). Some clubs exploited the commemorative potential for their grounds through the commissioning and erection of statues of players and staff they perceived as worthy of memorialisation. A significant surge of commemorative football statuary at grounds in the UK was identified, appropriating these grounds as commemorative sites. Such statues were considered to be permanent memorials to the dead (and sometimes living) however such memorials were found to have a greater temporary status than may be expected or was intended.

## **8vi: MEMORIALS AND COMMEMORATIVE OBJECTS**

The significant increase in the number of player and manager statues at football grounds from the early 1990s, only recently slowed because of the downturn in the global economy. Memorial making of this kind is a long and costly commitment and therefore access to suitable funding is always required. A

small number of player and manager statues, including a statue of Edwards were also installed within individual hometowns during this period. Although most football statuary commissioning was found to be predominantly undertaken by clubs and fans for installation in football grounds, Edwards' statue was commissioned by the local council. Embodied as a 21 year old player in his statue, Edwards was liberated from his grave through his youthful representation as a bronze effigy which installed him amongst the living in Dudley's marketplace. He was installed within its cemetery (his grave), its marketplace (his statue), a local church (dedicatory windows), its museum (an exhibition of his former belongings and memorabilia) and its roads (Duncan Edwards Close and Duncan Edwards Close). His statue and two Edwards' road name dedications embed him into the fabric of his hometown which has become his commemorative landscape. Although all the victims of the Disaster are embedded in memorials at their 'football home' of Old Trafford through the Munich Clock and the Munich Memorial plaque, Edwards' memory was further preserved through memorials installed within his hometown. This scale of localised commemoration has afforded his hometown a significant and unique commemorative capacity and appearance.

Edwards' grave had not been significantly altered since it was installed in 1958 and the temporary nature of the offerings placed upon it actually enhances its sense of permanency and significance and sustain Edwards' 'social life' (Walter, 1999). These offerings evidenced prolific commemorative activity at his grave and gave the memorial a dedicatory purpose beyond that of marker for the site of his buried body. That Edwards' statue was enhanced and relocated within the centre of Dudley, as a part of an economic and social regeneration project, suggests his presence was perceived as having regenerative properties. Absurdly as his statue appeared to resuscitate him, the expectations that he would, as the resuscitated dead, revive the local economy and society become starkly apparent. Edwards' statue so profoundly embedded him within the landscape and the aspirations of his hometown that he appeared to be defining the town that once could be said to have defined him. However, he was not immune in death from the impact of current austerity-driven budget cuts and measures that are imposed on the living. His personal belongings were installed

within a local museum set for closure and therefore his commemorative network will be disrupted, whilst they are relocated to another venue.

Although he appears to be absorbed and permanently embedded as a local hero within his former hometown, incidents such as the relocation of his belongings suggest that any semblance of commemorative permanency can never be assumed. That Edwards' belongings will be moving for the third time in the 30 years since their loan to the local council suggests his local hero status in some aspects is declining, whilst in others it is being enhanced. That Edwards' statue can be preserved and augmented whilst simultaneously his former belongings were removed from permanent public exhibition, suggested that the preservation of his memory in Dudley is in a state of constant flux. Yet he was not unique in this regard, as the Munich Memorial plaque at Old Trafford is in its third adaptation and Matt Busby's statue also installed at the ground has been in two different locations since its inception. Therefore the installation of permanent memorials appeared more temporary than suggested by the robust materials they were fabricated from.

Yet what signified the greatest sense of permanency across Edwards' commemorative network were in fact temporary commemorative objects. The temporary nature of offerings left at Edwards' grave appeared to be more resilient and demonstrably permanent in nature. Such assumed permanency was asserted through the constant replenishment and installation of temporary offerings at Edwards' grave. Such 'permanency' may be a better fit for the commemorator of the modern age, whereby cremation and the environmental considerations of how we ethically dispose of and remember the dead, requires a more ethereal or symbolic dedicatory permanency. It was the experience of seeing the persistent offerings at Edwards' grave that inspired this research and this demonstrates their temporal influence on commemorators and commemorative activity. Offerings such as flowers were identified as commemorative objects which exert powerful agency individually and collectively. They represented and embodied a commemorative act but also convey that act in such a way as to define a space as commemorative. That these objects have an obvious finite lifespan amplifies death whilst offerings

such as football scarves represent club alliance at an individualistic level. These scarves defined the space where Edwards the footballer, friend and relative intersect as personal tributes are left within a public space. It is through the agency of offerings at Edwards' grave that his commemoration appeared to be ubiquitous and eternal. This apparent commemorative immortality at the site of his dead body was the compelling motivation for this research. Yet Edwards' immortality had been instilled across the network beyond the physical memorials and commemorative acts at specific sites to a virtual network that was not present when he died.

The recent onset of the internet and social media has afforded commemorators a powerful dedicatory tool for temporal dedicatory permanency. Many of Edwards' commemorators utilised this tool, as it offered a national and global reach for commemorative activities that would otherwise be localised. However, Edwards' virtual life is not a revivalist tactic as he never had a virtual existence when he was alive. His virtual life had been fabricated entirely from commemorative activity and represented him as being dead. This new virtual life may have helped to negate Edwards' 'social death' (Walter, 1999) as his memory is preserved, but this existence appeared to be based on the virtual reinterpretation of commemorative acts undertaken in the 'real world'. Therefore Edwards' virtual existence could only be perpetuated by commemorative acts that were virtually translated and transmitted. His virtual existence was an extension, not a substitute for physical 'on-site' commemorative activity and his new virtual life expands his commemorative network exponentially. Although today most individuals have some form of a virtual existence, Edwards was born into the virtual world as a dead being. Tribute websites such as those created by fans and commemorators like Mike Thomas (see Chapter 4iv) were created and maintained as dedicatory acts. In the same way as a family member tends Edwards' grave, Thomas maintains his tribute sites as a dedicated fan. As fandom is a 'life-long project' (Porat, 2010;277) the commemoration of former players such as Edwards is an ongoing project for some fans. Although Thomas did acknowledge that the memory of Edwards and those who died as a result of the Disaster, required commemorative acts as a reminder or as an education for new or younger fans to sustain them. Thomas attested to a need to reinforce the 'Disaster's dead' within the history of

Manchester United for new fans or fans of the future. This need to preserve the memory of the dead was wholly derived from Thomas' self-identification as a fan, his role as a commemorator and his sense of duty to the dead. This mirrored the necessity and duty felt by second generation commemorators to preserve the dead in memory for the generations before and after them. Therefore commemorative activity motivated by fandom or ancestral heritage was and is rooted within a sense of 'family' and the passing of a commemorative legacy from one generation to the next, into perpetuity. Such ongoing activity was found to give the network a greater sense of enduring permanency than predicted. Such acts appeared to install and preserve the memory of Edwards with a greater sense of stability than so called 'permanent' memorials.

That the site for Edwards' statue had changed three times since its initial proposal evidenced the temporary nature of supposedly permanent memorialisation. Edwards' dedicatory windows and his grave had both required work to repair and restore them during their lifetime. The church sought donations from football fans to maintain his dedicatory windows, whilst it appeared that the council covered the grave restoration costs. Therefore sufficient funding was found to be a major issue when considering the permanency of Edwards' ongoing memorialisation and commemoration, specifically as a local sporting hero in Dudley. Temporary offerings or memorial websites require little or no funding, yet substantial funding was required to build and maintain physical monuments and to display and store historical artefacts. However, funding can be secured because of the presence of the dead such as Edwards, because of an assumed regenerative power. Such regenerative power is embedded within the emblematic nature of Edwards' death which had preserved him as the purest vision of the masculinised hero. The coloured bronze statue of Edwards represented him as a player of obvious physical prowess and youthfulness. Unlike his grave masking his decayed body, his statue was a monumental embodiment of perpetual youthfulness; a state that resonates with great appeal for present day society. An abiding aspiration for eternal youth and an aversion for the effects of ageing appear to dominate the occupation of present day society. Although consumed by the zombie apocalyptic tales of survival on television and film, 'real death' is often

masked or sanitised. An apparent cultural preoccupation with a fear of growing old appears to be greater than a fear of death itself. This fear of decrepitude and ageing appears to have replaced a fear of death, with a fascination of death. The ambition for perpetual youth, akin to that of a vampire, belies the reality of an aspiration that can only be achieved through death. The seeking of youthful immortality of which Edwards and the other deceased Busby Babes have conspicuously achieved is perversely immortality only achievable through early death. The promise of youthful everlasting life as embodied by the 'lost' Busby Babes was apparent only through acts of commemoration by the living for the dead. Edwards was only sustained in youthful immortality through the preservation of his memory as a young dead footballer. The acts of commemorators appeared to resuscitate him into the world of the living yet, such resuscitation required his initial physical death.

That Edwards is considered to have immortality suggested that his commemoration is an emerging project, even after 58 years. Edwards had 'experienced' a life that has extended for nearly three times longer than his 21 years of actual life. This suggested that the living have adapted a notion of Edwards that has come to define him to a greater extent than the years he actually lived. In this regard the preservation of Edwards' memory by commemorators gives him life. Although he had experienced a physical death his commemoration negates his 'social death' (Walter, 1999). In fact the researcher had a notion of Edwards being a dead relative yet experienced him as a resuscitated and youthful 21 year old 'living' beside her in her own youth. Edwards had remained a constant within a fluctuating family tree altered by the deaths, marriages and births of other relatives and her ageing.

Edwards' and the Disaster's commemoration were unique in combined longevity, diversity and intensity. Edwards' association with Dudley, the Munich Air Disaster and Manchester United greatly define him commemoratively. Through examination of these considerable commemorative networks a greater understanding of how and why Edwards and the Disaster continued to be commemorated has been made. However, it is the examination of

commemorators, and their acts that revealed them to be the most controlling element of this diverse, persistent and intensive commemoration.

Although it is acknowledged that the exceptional nature of Edwards' death and his immutable sporting achievements had inspired others to install him as a hero, this alone was not sufficient to sustain his unique commemoration. It was wholly the interpretation of his exceptionality by others and his association with the Busby Babes, Dudley, the Munich Air Disaster and Manchester United that installed him as a local sporting hero and sustained him as such through uniquely diverse, persistent and intensive activity.

Such is the nature of commemoration that it is the acts of the living that resuscitate the Disaster's dead, specifically and most notably Duncan Edwards by negating their 'social death' (Walter, 1999), whilst bestowing the dead a youthful immortality that the living appeared to aspire to. Commemoration is therefore 'life giving' although wholly defined by the living to preserve the dead in memory, as the dead.

#### **8vii: PREDICTED CHANGES WITHIN EDWARDS' COMMEMORATIVE NETWORK**

The preservation of Edwards' memory was through the construct of Edwards by ongoing commemorative activity apparent for over 50 years. There appeared to be no significant diminishment of such activity. As the sixtieth anniversary of the Munich Air Disaster is set to be in 2018 and other significant anniversaries such as the fiftieth anniversary have generated peaks in commemorative activity, such a peak in 2018 could be predicted. It is predicted that such activity would be led by Manchester United and fans of the club, but include activity by survivors and friends and family members of those who died as a result of the crash.

At the time of writing Edwards' former belongings currently loaned as artefacts to Dudley Council have been recalled by the family members who now own them. After the museum where they were housed and displayed was closed it is apparent that the family members who own Edwards' artefacts are now seeking to sell them to Old Trafford Museum. Whether Dudley Council will be able to

negotiate a loan agreement with Old Trafford Museum for some artefacts to remain in Dudley is yet to be verified. Potentially Edwards' artefacts are set to be displaced from his hometown to be embedded within a football ground in Manchester. Whether this will impact on his commemoration as a local sporting hero in Dudley is yet to be seen. Whether Edwards' presence in Manchester and within the club's history will be enhanced is also unknown.

It can be predicted that Edwards will continue to be commemorated for at least the lifetimes of significant commemorators such as Bobby Charlton, first generation and second generation Edwards family members and certain dedicated fans and former friends. However, the deaths of these individuals will change the commemorative network as they have significantly defined, maintained and monitored activity over the last fifty-plus years. Their deaths can be predicted to mark significant changes to the commemorative cohort but exactly how these changes will manifest cannot be known.

Through this study the researcher did answer their initial question as to why so many strangers chose to visit Edwards' grave. She discovered why so many strangers were motivated to commemorate Edwards but also how her connection to Edwards has helped to explain why and how families commemorate their dead from generation to generation. The significance of the dead to the living was found to be universally compelling, yet individualistically demonstrated through acts of memory preservation. How Edwards' memory will be preserved in the future is ultimately down to how, why and where commemorators commemorate him. Although this research set out to investigate Edwards' commemorative network it has, by this act, become part of the network. Although it is predicted that the research findings will have significance for the study of death, dying, commemoration, memorialisation, football history and the concept of heroism, its impact on the researcher as perceived within the network is yet to be seen. The expectation is that the dissemination of the research will validate and emphasize the researcher's familial connection to Edwards. How other commemorators respond to this assertion of an ancestral connection to Edwards and the socio-cultural analysis of the network will be worthy of further investigation.





## **APPENDIX A**

### **MUNICH AIR DISASTER: A Factual and Historical Summary**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This is a brief factual summary of the Munich Air Disaster as an historical event. The summary includes the details surrounding the chartering of the plane by Manchester United, the crash itself, those who died and the subsequent aviation investigations and inquiries. The event is referenced as the Munich Air Disaster exclusively within this thesis. The referencing of this event as such reflects the use of the phrase most frequently used to describe the event within popular culture and historical accounts. However it is noted that within historical and general literature the event is also known as Munich, the Munich Air Crash and the Munich Air Tragedy. The word tragedy was considered too emotive for use in this thesis and the singular use of the word Munich was considered to be too generalised. The word crash is used occasionally to describe the specific moment at which the plane made impact and most of the subsequent deaths occurred.

#### **BACKGROUND**

On February 6, 1958 a British European Airways (BEA) 47 seater Airspeed Ambassador plane crashed whilst attempting to take off in Munich, Germany. 23 out of the 44 people on board died as a result of injuries sustained in the crash and several others were badly injured. Amongst the injured and fatalities were a number of players from the Manchester United football team. The team was predominantly made up of young players known collectively and affectionately as the Busby Babes. Their manager Matt Busby had purposefully recruited young players at a time when his 'Babes' were significantly younger than most professional footballers. The loss of so many promising & prominent young Manchester United players in the crash ultimately obliterated the team. The Busby Babes fortified a team that were the British pioneers of European club football, as the first team from Britain to participate in the European Cup.

## **THE DEAD**

Seven Manchester United players died in the crash (listed here with their ages in brackets): Geoff Bent (25), Roger Byrne (28), Eddie Colman (21), Mark Jones (24), David Pegg (22), Tommy Taylor (26) and Billy Whelan (22). An eighth player Duncan Edwards (21) died 15 days later from his injuries.

Eight journalists including a former Manchester City player (Frank Swift) and three Manchester United officials including the trainer, coach & secretary were also killed. In addition the co-pilot, a steward, a travel agent and a Manchester United supporter also died.

The impact of the players deaths were also felt at a national level with the loss of Byrne, Edwards, Pegg and Taylor as four England players and the Irish national Bill Whelan. Not all the surviving players were able to return to, or sustain their football careers at Manchester United after the crash. Some surviving players never recovered their form due to the physical or psychological injuries caused by the crash. Player, Jackie Blanchflower sustained ‘fearful injuries: smashed pelvis, serious kidney damage and almost the loss of his right arm’ (Morrin, 2007;200) and he never played football again. Survivors Ray Wood, Albert Scanlon and Kenny Morgans were moved from Manchester United to other clubs a few months after the Disaster. Only Harry Gregg, Bobby Charlton, Bill Foulkes and Dennis Viollet remained as Manchester United players. Therefore only four of the 17 footballers who were on the plane continued to play long term for Manchester United. The impact on the team was evident, however the club were able to field a makeshift team and they were runners up in the first division of the Football League in 1958-59.

## **REASON FOR THE FLIGHT**

A return flight from Manchester to Belgrade had been privately chartered for the Manchester United club by its directors. Travel from the team’s previous European match against Czechoslovakia had been hampered by poor weather, necessitating extended travel via plane, ferry and train and ‘the players were shattered by the nightmare journey’ (2007;68) which was followed by a league match that evening. Fatigued players did not perform well but more significantly any delays in returning from European matches could potentially damage the

clubs ability to fulfil home league match commitments. This would leave Manchester United open to being fined or docked of points. Chartering a plane for their next European match in February 1958 was considered to be the best way to avoid transport delays and problems. Flying was considered by the directors to be the only way to ensure that their players could participate in European matches and be back in time to fulfil their home league commitments comfortably.

The team needed to be in Belgrade on 5 February 1958 to play their European Cup tie match against Red Star Belgrade. They were then required to be back for a weekend league match against Wolverhampton Wanders that Saturday.

The chartered plane was a BEA 47 seater Elizabethan and the pilots were Captain James Thain & co-pilot Captain Kenneth Rayment. Both pilots were trained in the RAF and although Rayment was the more experienced pilot Thain was designated as the commanding officer, as Rayment had been recovering from a hernia operation and had not flown for sometime. They agreed that Thain would fly the outgoing leg of the journey and Rayment the return.

On 3 February 1958, the plane flew from Manchester to Belgrade with a refuelling stop in Munich. The team trained on the following day and played their match against Red Star on 5 February. The match was a 3-3 draw with Manchester United winning the match 5-4 on aggregate. The next morning the plane left on its journey home to Manchester via Munich, leaving Belgrade for the Munich-Reim Airport. The weather report was not good and on approaching Munich the weather was ‘something approaching a blizzard’ (2007;93).

### **TAKE OFF FROM MUNICH**

After a short refuelling stop at the Munich-Reim Airport the crew and passengers re-boarded the plane and prepared for take off. The first attempt was abandoned when the port engine suffered ‘boost surging’. This problem meant that the engine would run unevenly due to the combination of high altitude and a rich fuel mix. It was a problem known to affect the Elizabethan aircraft. Thain and Rayment discussed a remedy for the boost surging and attempted to take off a second time, however the attempt had to be aborted.

The decision was then made that all passengers should disembark whilst the pilots consulted with Bill Black, the BEA engineer at the airport about the problem. Outside, the weather was still poor and the runway had not been cleared of snow.

The third take off attempt was made at 3.03pm and although boost surging was experienced, it was quickly remedied by Thain. However the speed required for take off was never reached and the plane began to roll as it over-ran the runway. It broke through the border fence and over a road. After hitting a house the plane began to break up until it hit a tree and an oil storage compound. The plane's ruptured fuel tanks and the oil in storage then caused the plane to explode at 3.04pm a mile from the Munich terminal (Morrin, 2007;310).

Rescue crews arrived at the scene but they were underprepared for the scale of the crash. For instance, seat covers from cars parked in the terminal's car park had to be removed and used to shroud bodies because the fireman did not have enough blankets (2007;121). The injured were transported for treatment to the Rechts der Isar Hospital; the nearest hospital.

## **THE AVIATION INVESTIGATION**

The investigation into the crash began whilst the injured were being treated. Representatives of the German investigation team arrived in Munich that evening. As Rayment had been fatally injured, Thain was the only pilot available for interview by the investigation team. The Chief Inspector of Accidents, Captain Hans J. Riechel led the aviation investigation. He concluded at that point that the cause of the crash was wing icing, although the official enquiry was legally undertaken by the team led by Riechel, a separate BEA investigation team also arrived at the airport the same evening.

The initial public statement from German officials stated that the cause of the crash was ice on the wings. Evidence did not exist to support such a statement but Thain was suspended on full pay until the BEA investigation was completed.

The commission for the German inquiry began in April 1958 and it found ice on the wings to be the cause of the crash. Thain was blamed for the crash because

he did not order the wings to be de-iced prior to the final take off. Although evidence to the contrary was produced by Thain and a number of scientific reports and expert testimony pointing to slush on the runway as the major cause of the crash, this was dismissed by the inquiry and officially ‘ice on the wings’ was given as the ‘preventable’ cause of the crash.

In March 1959 the BEA Air Safety Committee issued a statement that failed to pinpoint the cause of the crash. In considering the ice on the wings and the slush on the runway the committee felt ‘it was not possible to evaluate the exact degree of importance attributable to these two factors, either singly or in combination’ (2007;172). A few days later Thain received official papers declaring that his licence to fly would not be renewed because he had ‘failed in his duty as the person-in-command’ (2007;173) specifically because he had failed to have the wings de-iced.

It took 11 years for Thain to clear his name of blame and in the meantime the devastating affect of slush on runways only gradually began to emerge and be acknowledged more widely. Clear guidelines for taking off in such conditions are now established and ‘today even aircraft as big as Boeing 747s are prohibited from taking off if there is 0.4 inches of slush or more on a runway or 1.5 inches of dry snow’ (Adams in Palmer, ed., 2011;130).

New evidence regarding the danger associated with slush on runways began to come to light in the late fifties and early sixties. Thain lobbied MPs about his campaign but it took ten years for Harold Wilson (the then prime minister) to raise the issue in parliament. A new British hearing into the crash was announced and it subsequently cleared Thain of all blame. However the German inquiry refused to amend their now discredited ‘ice on the wing’ judgment. Thain was never allowed to fly again after the Munich crash and he was sacked by BEA on a company policy contravention in 1960<sup>1</sup>. Thain’s death at 54 years old was attributed to the crash by Morrin quoting a aviation axiom that ‘if the accident doesn’t kill the pilot, the inquiry will’. There were twenty-

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<sup>1</sup> By allowing Rayment to fly as the lead pilot on the return leg of the flight Thain was found to have contravened company policy.

three victims at Munich; Captain James Thain became the twenty-fourth' (Morrin, 2007;210).

The aviation inquiry and the campaign to clear Thain's name served to extend the Disaster as an event across another decade, beyond the spectacle of football. Intermittent news coverage of the campaign and subsequent hearings and inquiries were public reminders of the Disaster.

## **SUMMARY**

The events leading up to the Disaster and the subsequent aviation crash investigation appear to add to the pathos of the Disaster. The multiple attempts at a take-off, the poor weather conditions and the lengthy battle to contest the official cause of the crash, all seem to amplify and compound the Disaster.

Survivors of the crash have told and retold of their experiences of the day and the impact that it had on their lives (Charlton, 2008; Foulkes, 2008; Gregg, 2002). Other accounts are of a national or global perspective of the impact on the club and British football as a whole (Andrews, 2008; Connor, 2010; Dewhurst, 2009; Morrin, 2007). New accounts are written every year on the anniversary of the event as 'news stories'. All are rooted in an incident that took less than a minute to happen and which took place over 55 years ago.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **DUNCAN EDWARDS: Biographical Summary of Duncan Edwards**

#### **SUMMARY**

Duncan Edwards was born in Dudley, West Midlands, England, on 1 October 1936. As a schoolboy his excellent football skills led to him being scouted in his teens and he went on to be selected for the England national schoolboys and later the first team. He signed for Manchester United at the age of 15 and became part of a collective of Manchester United players known as the Busby Babes, so-called because of their youth and manager Matt Busby's custodianship of them. It was unprecedented at the time to have players of such a young age playing for club first teams, so the 'Babes' were something of an anomaly.

Edwards died on 21 February 1958 as a result of injuries sustained in the Munich Air Disaster, five years after signing with Manchester United. He is widely revered as one of the greatest footballers of all time.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Edwards was born in Dudley in 1936 to parents Gladstone and Sarah Ann Edwards. He was a single child until his sister Carol Anne was born when he was a young boy. His sister died of meningitis at 14 weeks old leaving Edwards as the couple's only child.

There are many derogatory, if not accurate, descriptions of the area where Edwards was raised. The area was known as the Black Country, a name that succinctly described its heavily industrialised smoke-filled landscape. Born into living standards described as 'dismal' (Leighton, 2012;15) the Edwards family were relocated to a new housing estate in Dudley when Edwards was very young. The accommodation was an improvement on their previous home but it was still very basic council housing.

Although the Black Country label for the area had negative connotations, the name has persisted and still designates a specific geographical area. The name

has evolved beyond geography and has been adopted by the local communities and residents. Being of, or from the Black Country is a considered by most residents to be a positive attribute as the association is synonymous with a proud hard-working industrial heritage and a profound sense of humour in the face of adversity. This spirit is now celebrated on 14 July as the Black Country Day (Edwards 2014). The area has its own nationally renowned Black Country Living Museum which markets itself on the area's unique heritage as 'its impact was felt the world over, as modernity took hold, creating fame and admiration for the Black Country' (Black Country Living Museum Trust).

When Duncan was born as a 'Black Country lad', the area was largely populated by large working class families on low incomes which predominantly came from foundry and factory. Accounts from relatives who knew the Edwards family describe them as living like many others on a very modest income. Edwards' father Gladstone was a factory worker and relatives remember the Edwards' living standards to be on a par with their own, yet some suggested that the family seemed a little poorer than most. One relative recalled the regular weekly visits by Gladstone and his son Duncan to their home for 'tea'. This 'tea' was little more than a bowl of salad from the garden, a bowl of dipping vinegar and a small amount of bread and butter. In an interview, one of Edwards' relatives recalled a visit in the 1940s when the pair would regularly drop in to his family home on the Priory Estate, Dudley, 'they never had got [sic] anything. I think that's why we used to invite them to tea- as they never got [sic] anything to eat either' (Rogers and Daniels, 2014;6). Although this serves to demonstrate the financial constraints the family were under, it also expresses something of the extended family support that was common throughout the local community at that time.

## **SCHOOLBOY FOOTBALLER**

Relatives and friends who recall Edwards as a schoolboy consistently reference his considerable physical presence and his formidable size for his age. His cousin Colin Daniels recalls Edwards at six or seven years of age as 'a big boy [laughs] he'd got some mate [meat] on him' (2014;7). Edwards was physically taller and wider than most of his peers throughout his early life. This may have explained why family members often recalled him as being hungry all the time

as a child, taking more than was considered to be his fair share of food at family gatherings.

However his physical size in relation to his peers was diminished as he began to play schoolboy football. Such was his prowess as a footballer that he found himself playing against boys several years older than him. Eric Booth, secretary of the Dudley Schools Football Association recalls Edwards' first appearance for Dudley Schoolboys at the age of 11 'he came up against boys of fifteen. For the first time in his life he looked a comparative midget alongside them, but he was still a wonderful player for his age' (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1999;14).

Edwards attended school in Dudley, firstly the Priory Road Junior School and then from 1948 the Wolverhampton Street Secondary School. In school, he was an average pupil who stood out at school only for his physicality. At 11 years of age he came to the attention of his teachers and Booth for his prowess on the football field. Most friends and relatives were aware of his passion for football as he would be seen kicking a ball round the local streets whenever he could and 'the sight of Duncan dribbling a ball to and from school was a common one' (1999;14). At the age of 12 he was selected to play for the England under 14s team. He went on to captain the England Schoolboy Team, playing his first international game in May 1950 against Ireland (1999;14). Notably in the team with him at that time was David Pegg, who would go on to be his Manchester United team mate until Pegg's death in the Munich Air Disaster.

## **LIFE AS A FOOTBALLER**

On seeing him in his teens, several clubs had become interested in Edwards as a potential professional player. It has been widely reported that several clubs were keen on signing Edwards including West Bromwich Albion and Bolton Wanderers. Some reported that to secure Edwards for Manchester United, Busby had driven through the night to sign him on the morning of his sixteenth birthday. However these accounts contradict Manchester United's own official records of the signing which states 'Duncan signed as an amateur for United following a personal visit from Matt Busby on 31 May 1952' (Manchester United). Edwards was signed for Manchester United by assistant manager Jimmy Murphy and coach Bert Whalley. Once signed to Manchester United on

1 June 1952 at the age of 15 he moved to Manchester and lived in a busy boarding house in Stretford, lodging alongside other players of a similarly young age such as a young Bobby Charlton.

Edwards made his league debut with Manchester United on 4 April 1953 against Cardiff City at Ninian Park, Cardiff (Arthur, 2008;170). He went on to make 177 appearances and to score 21 goals for his club (Manchester United). Although he settled into the half-back position with Manchester United, his versatility as a player was something that enabled him to play across and beyond the midfield to score several goals, filling in any position as required by his team on the day.

As a half back he achieved 18 England caps, the first at the age of 18 years and 183 days when in April 1955 he became the youngest ever player for England. His record stood for over 40 years until Michael Owen played for England in 1998 at the age of 18 years and 59 days.

## **OFF THE FIELD**

As a player for Manchester United, Edwards earned between £14 and £16 per week (Morrin, 2007;47) but he supplemented his income with other ventures. Edwards was part of an advertising campaign for Dextrosol; a brand of glucose tablets and he had a column in the Manchester Evening Chronicle on football. The fact that Edwards could afford to buy a car (although he did not drive) belies something of the poor working class persona for which he is often celebrated (2007;48). Indeed his upbringing was 'a humble start' (Leighton, 2012;13) yet if he had survived to continue to play it would not be profligate to speculate that he would have continued to develop profitable business opportunities. At the time of his death, he was finalising his own instructional football book 'Tackle Soccer This Way' with his publishers Stanley Paul (Edwards, 1958). Some relatives continue to be bemused by this fact, particularly because the Duncan they knew was as 'thick as two short planks' (Rogers and Daniels, 2014;1) yet Edwards is credited as the author of a published book that he was commissioned and paid to write. The book went on to be published a few months after his death and was recently re-printed.

Relatives when asked about Edwards having acumen for financial matters were genuinely surprised that he appeared relatively well off. One of his cousins suggested that any money-sense would have been under the direction of his father Gladstone (Rogers and Rogers, 2014;12). Associated with a poor working class background Edwards appears to have been accruing savings and to be making profitable business transactions prior to his death. His business skills were perhaps something that would have become more prevalent had he survived.

On the football field, teammate Wilf McGuinness recalled Edwards as a friend and a player of ‘supreme self-confidence’ (McGuinness, 2008;48) yet in social situations he recollects a ‘modest, unassuming fellow...he wasn’t particularly assertive in a social group, especially among strangers’ (2008;48). However, Edwards through mutual friends met and later became engaged to a local Manchester girl called Molly Leach someone that his friend Gordon Clayton called ‘a nice girl, very nice but a bit up-market for us’ (Burn, 2007;73). As Edwards became recognised by fans during social events, he is said to have sought refuge in quiet nights in with his fiancée. He did however leave his fiancée behind in Manchester to undertake two years of compulsory National Service in 1955, working eventually as an ammunition store-man in barracks near Shrewsbury. As teammate Bill Foulkes described the difficulties Edwards faced as a well-known conscript ‘because of who he was there was always someone trying to bring him down, to make life difficult for him. He told me ‘I’ll be bloody glad to get out of this, the sooner the better’ ’ (Leighton, 2012;138).

Bobby Charlton another teammate joined Edwards at the barracks a few months later and their experience of National Service was made slightly more bearable because they were chosen to play for the army football team and granted leave to play for their club. Being able to play for Manchester United meant trips to Manchester for Edwards and this meant opportunities to see his fiancée.

Undertaking National Service and playing for the army team, whilst still fulfilling his commitments to his club, meant that this two year period was extremely busy for Edwards. His reputation as a world class player was growing and in

1957 he was voted third place in the European Footballer of the Year competition aged 20. He was behind only Billy Wright and the winner Alfredo di Stefano. Plaudits from sports reporters and fellow players, as well as football fans were of constant praise and even awe at Edwards' abilities.

The Busby Babes took Manchester United on to become Football League Division One Champions in 1955/56 & 1956/57 and semi-finalists of the 1957 Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Champions League. The Busby Babes appeared almost invincible and Edwards was it seemed universally celebrated as their brightest star as McGuinness recalled 'anywhere on the field Duncan Edwards was gold dust' (McGuinness, 2008;51). It was the club's pursuit of the 1958 UEFA title that found them in Munich after playing Red Star Belgrade on 5 February 1958. The crash at Munich during the return flight from Belgrade to Manchester the next day ended the lives and careers of several players, including Edwards.

## **HIS DEATH**

Edwards died at the age of 21 as a result of injuries sustained in the Disaster at Munich. He spent 15 days in intensive care at the Rechts der Isar Hospital after the crash. On 12 February the Evening Chronicle headlines read 'artificial kidney rushed 200 miles to save United star; Edwards fights for life: Dash by parents' (McCartney & Cavanagh, 1999;81). His damaged kidneys failed and in spite of the use of an artificial kidney, concerted efforts from the medical team and several blood transfusions, he died on 21 February 1958 (Bellers, Absalom & Spinks, 2001;33). His body was flown back to the UK and his funeral was held in his hometown of Dudley on 26 February 1958. 300 people attended his funeral at St Francis Parish Church, Dudley whilst 5 000 people were estimated to have lined the route of his funeral cortege (Leighton, 2012;254). He was buried in Dudley Cemetery in a plot with his sister who had died when he was a young boy. His parents were later buried only a few graves away; Gladstone his father in 1978 and his mother Sarah-Ann in 2003. Various other members of the Edwards family are also buried within the same cemetery.

Edwards' grave is now on an official Dudley Council 'Tribute to Duncan Edwards' Visitor Trail (Dudley Council 2014) which also includes dedicated stained glass windows in St Francis Parish Church, Dudley where his funeral took place.

### **EDWARDS' COMMEMORATION**

Since his death Edwards has been commemorated through a growing number of local, national and international memorials, memorial events and dedications. He is the subject of a number of dedicated online tribute pages and websites and his life has been recorded in a documentary film. He is the subject of, and referenced in, a number of publications and books, films and other documentaries. He is featured in a permanent display as a 'local hero' at the Dudley Museum and Art Gallery and has been inducted into the Hall of Fame at the National Football Museum, Manchester. His grave continues to be a memorial which is regularly visited by people from all walks of life, from across the world. He is widely commemorated as one of the greatest footballers of all time.



## **APPENDIX C**

### **FIELDWORK UNDERTAKEN AT DUNCAN EDWARDS' GRAVE: Summary of Research Undertaken and Findings**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In order to assess the level and nature of commemorative activity at Edward's grave fieldwork research was undertaken at the site. This is a summary of that research undertaken at Edwards Grave, over a four year period from February 2010 to March 2014. I undertook fieldwork research at the grave of Duncan Edwards, Dudley Cemetery<sup>2</sup>. During that period, eight site visits were made which entailed photographically recording the grave's appearance and noting observations of, or discussions with visitors. I usually carried out the field research at the grave alone due to the secluded nature of the site and for safety reasons a family member was always nearby. However on one occasion I arranged to formally meet family members and commemorators at the graveside.

The photographic evidence of 'offerings' left at the grave, enabled me to assess the level and nature of commemorative activity at the site. Notes of any audible comments about the grave by visitors, or conversations that I had with visitors were made. These notes were included as part of the fieldwork research data.

At the end of the field research period all the documented data collected was collated to interrogate its content. The main focus was on the offerings left at the grave by visitors and this was on a principally quantitative basis, in terms of how many offerings were left. Due to the nature of the offerings categorisation based on the offering types was necessary for analysis.

#### **Fieldwork Research Timeline**

The fieldwork research at Edwards' Grave was undertaken on eight occasions from 15 February 2010 to 7 March 2014.

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<sup>2</sup> Dudley Cemetery, Stourbridge Road, Dudley, West Midlands, England, DY1 2DA.  
Appendix C1

The dates for the fieldwork research at Edwards' grave were predominantly set to coincide with potentially significant dates (see TABLE A) to collect data that was 'fresh' and not compromised by weathering or other visitors. Plus dates without significance were also selected to provide non-significant dates for comparative analysis.

Each fieldwork visit was for one to three hours depending on the weather and volume of visitors.

**TABLE A**

<b>DATES OF FIELDWORK RESEARCH VISITS</b>	
<b>Date of Visit</b>	<b>Significance of date</b>
15/02/10	Few days after the anniversary of the Munich Air Disaster
08/09/11	None
27/12/11	Christmas period
22/02/12*	Day after the anniversary of Edwards' death (and 2 weeks after the anniversary of the Munich Air Disaster) *Arranged date to meet with family members at the grave <sup>3</sup>
19/05/13	West Bromwich Albion v Manchester United match – the last with Alex Ferguson as manager of Manchester United (West Bromwich Albion ground near to Dudley)
27/12/13	Christmas period
06/02/14	Anniversary of the Munich Air Disaster
07/03/14	None

### **Maintaining the Integrity of Offerings**

To maintain the integrity of the photographic data collected articles left at the site were not re-arranged or moved. As the weather had caused damage to some of the offerings and some were partially obscured by other offerings this

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<sup>3</sup> Family Visit with Loraine Rogers (second cousin to Edwards), Keith Edwards (first cousin to Edwards), John Edwards (first cousin to Edwards) and Lawrence Brownhill (Nephew to Keith & John Edwards).

meant that I was only able to record what was visible and some details could not be fully recorded. It is acknowledged that other visitors and those who tend the grave may have moved or removed offerings during their visits and therefore any integrity inferred has to be considered within this context.

Visitors were interviewed if the opportunity arose and it seemed appropriate. Visitors would be asked the reason for their visit and their connection to Edwards. I would make notes of the conversations and also my observations of how visitors acted at the grave. If it did not seem appropriate to approach visitors, I would simply observe them. I assessed the suitability of an approach on based on individual circumstances erring on the more cautious side and experience as former cemetery administrator and as an experienced research assistant.

## **DUNCAN EDWARDS' GRAVE**

### **Location**

The grave<sup>4</sup> of Duncan Edwards is situated in Dudley Cemetery not far from the centre of the town of Dudley in the West Midlands. The cemetery has been open since 1904<sup>5</sup> and it covers just over fourteen acres which are situated within a mainly residential area. It is gated and is easily accessible by foot and partially visible from the main road (A4101).

Edwards' grave is near a corner and a large tree and as such relatively easy to find and access. It is a plot shared with his only sibling, his sister Carol-Ann. Carol-Ann died at 14 weeks of age and was buried in the plot in 1947. Edwards was buried with her on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1958. Edwards' parents are buried in a separate grave a few metres to the right of his grave, in the same row and section.

### **Appearance**

The gravestone is a black polished headstone elevated on a black plinth with

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<sup>4</sup> Edwards' Grave Reference is plot 72 2 Section C in Dudley Cemetery, Stourbridge Rd, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 2DA

<sup>5</sup> Reference for date etc <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/living/deaths-funerals-cremations/cemeteries-crematoriums-within-the-borough/dudley-cemetery/>

black kerb stone edgings elevated on a grey plinth, surrounding a grey polished slab. It faces directly to the path in front of it and is easily accessible by foot from the path.

There is an image on the headstone engraved or sandblasted in grey above the gilded lettering of the epitaph. The image depicts Edwards' head and shoulders as he appears to be preparing to throw a ball over his head. The image and epitaph are set within an open ended rectangle with a gilded double-lined edging. On the grey slab there is a leather football-shaped flower vase in black and two black square flower vases set in a vertical row.

The epitaph reads as follows:

A Day of Memory Sad to recall  
Without Farewell He left us all  
In Loving Memory of  
our dear son  
DUNCAN EDWARDS  
who died Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> 1958  
from Injuries received  
in an air Crash at Munich  
AGED 21 YEARS  
At this Shrine of Reward and Rest  
Memory Honours those we love best

His sister's epitaph is at the foot of the grave inscribed in gold it reads:

Also Carol Anne Aged 14 weeks

On the viewer's left the corner block of the kerb edging inscribed in gold it reads:

RL Jones and Sons Dudley<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> RL Jones and Sons Dudley were a memorials company established in 1881, becoming Jones Memorials (Dudley) Ltd in 2006.

## **OFFERINGS: Summary of Documented Offerings on Edwards' Grave**

### **Categorisation of Offerings**

I catalogued the types of offerings left at the grave into six main categories:

- Flowers (artificial and real)
- Wreaths
- Scarves
- Notes
- Shirts
- Other

### **Definition of Categories**

#### **Flowers Category**

For the purpose of this study flowers were defined as a collection of cut flowers, potted plants or collections of flowers with leaves and/or branches that were not in a ring or circular arrangement. Each bunch (gathered collection), bouquet (wrapped collected) or spray (small grouping) was counted as one unit. Only distinct individual flowers (such as a single red rose) were counted as one unit, individual flowers that appeared to have been separated from an existing bunch by degradation or the weather were not counted in the total. Flowers were documented as offerings if they were placed in flowers vases or placed on the slab of the grave. Where possible flowers were identified as real or artificial and their colour recorded (if they were not dead or too badly faded).

#### **Wreaths Category**

Wreaths were identified as floral arrangements (real or artificial) in a ring or circle to form a recognisable wreath shape; specifically as offerings for the dead.

#### **Scarves Category**

As a category scarves includes a length of material that appears to be for wearing around the neck. Most scarves were found to be football scarves of a specific colour combination or with a specific football team logo name on. The colour combination of each scarf was noted as a sub-category. As the majority of scarves were tied to vases and placed over and under each other scarves and other offerings, the distinguishing of exact wording and designs on some scarves was not always completely possible.

### **Notes Category**

This category includes legible handwritten or printed paper items left on the grave or on offerings, including letters, notes and labels on flowers. Although some notes were made weather resistant to a degree (encased in a plastic cover for instance) some labels on flowers could not be included as they were illegible or appeared to be blank. Notes that were legible had text, any images and the position on the grave recorded.

### **Shirts Category**

All shirts left on the grave included football related shirts including sweatshirts and football shirts. These were catalogued by type, colour and club affiliation (if possible). Other than scarves, no other items of clothing were documented.

### **‘Other’ Category**

This category includes commemorative items left at the grave which could not be catalogued elsewhere. These items include soft toys, a candle and a medal or pendant.

## **QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS**

### **Summary of Quantitative Findings**

The field research quantitative findings are summarised in the table below TABLE B and in further detail in TABLE C.

**TABLE B****SUMMARY OF OFFERINGS AS OBSERVED AT EDWARDS' GRAVE**

Date	Total Offerings	Flowers	Wreaths	Scarves	Notes	Shirts	Other
<b>15/02/10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
08/09/11	15	3	0	10	1	1	0
<b>27/12/11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
22/02/12	21	8	4	6	1	1	1
<b>19/05/13</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
27/12/13	15	4	2	8	0	1	0
<b>06/02/14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
07/03/14	18	12	2	3	1	0	0

<b>TABLE C SUMMARY OF OFFERINGS WITH SIGNIFICANT DETAILS OF OFFERINGS</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>Flowers</b>	<b>Scarves</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Shirts</b>	<b>Other</b>
15/02/10	5 2 dead 1 red rose 1 red/white	10 6 Red/white/black 2 Red/white 1 Red/black 1 Blue/yel/black	2 1 Handwritten 1 printout and handwritten	0	0
08/09/11	3 2 various 1 red	10 9 red 1 green/yellow	1 Handwritten	1 <b>MU<sup>7</sup> shirt red, white piping collar &amp; cuffs</b>	0
27/12/11	4 1 white 1 red/white 2 various	5 3 red/white/black 2 red/white	2 1 Handwritten label with photographs 1 handwritten label	1 MU shirt red, white piping	2 1 Mini soft toy reindeer with red/white scarf 1 Manchester United emblem medal
22/02/12	7 4 red/white 3 various	8 5 red/white/black 2 red/white 1 blue/white	1 Handwritten label with photographs	1 MU shirt red, white piping	1 <b>Mini soft toy reindeer with red/white scarf</b>
19/05/13	6 1 red 5 various	14 1 red fleece 7 red/white/black 3 red/white 2 red/yellow/black 1 yellow/green	0	3 1 red & white sport shirt 1 red MU shirt with black trim 1 sweatshirt black MU on	2 1 Mini soft toy reindeer with red/white scarf 1 Mini red teddy with MU embroidered emblem 1 mini candle in glass container
27/12/13	4 1 holly 3 red/white	8 5 red/white/black 1 red/yellow/black 1 red/yellow 1 yellow/green	0	1 <b>MU shirt red AIG logo</b>	0
06/02/14	4 1 holly 3 red/white	8 5 red/white/black 1 red/black 1 red/white 1 yellow/green	0	1 MU shirt red AIG logo	0
07/03/14	12 7 red/white 3 various 2 various potted	3 2 red/white/black 1 red/white/yellow	1 Handwritten label on plant	0	0

<sup>7</sup> Manchester United Football Club

## **OFFERINGS: FINDINGS**

### **Introduction**

On all visits to the grave offerings were present. During the research period the number of offerings visible was between fifteen and twenty six at any one visit with a total of one hundred and forty seven documented. The offerings were always a variety of different types attached to or placed upon the grave slab or in the flower vases. Although some offerings were propped up against the bottom of the headstone, no offering was placed over or directly onto the headstone. The Edwards' epitaph was always visible on the headstone however his sister's epitaph at the foot of the grave was sometimes obscured. Offerings were often overlaid with some offerings being partially hidden from view, whilst others were partly degraded by exposure to the weather.

Some offerings persisted on the grave for several months and were recorded on multiple occasions whilst others were short lived. For instance, real flowers with a finite lifespan quickly deteriorated, whilst artificial flowers, some scarves, soft toys and some evergreens found in wreaths persisted and were documented on more than one visit. To give a running cumulative total for offerings at the grave would therefore be misleading. The research was simply to indentify and calculate the number and type of offerings at the grave, during visits.

Based on the counts of types of offerings at the grave during each visit, scarves were the most common offering at the grave. On six out of the eight field study visits, scarves outnumbered all other categories of offerings. On the remaining two occasions, flowers were the most prevalent type of offering recorded.

Anecdotal evidence taken from a very small number of offerings or via interviews with a handful of visitors enabled the origin of some offerings to be identified. However, the majority of offerings left at the grave could not be referenced back to the commemorator who left them. The vast majority of offerings at the grave are football related in some way.

## **Flowers Category: Summary of Findings**

Flowers were placed on the grave slab or in the flower vases. The flower category is predominantly of real cut flowers, with only two potted plants and a handful of artificial flowers recorded. Dead flowers were only found at the grave on one occasion (in February 2010) during the four years of research and this suggests that the grave is regularly tended.

Flowers were found at the grave on every visit from a minimum of three to maximum of fourteen recorded per visit. The majority of flower offerings made were a combination of red and white flowers with a total of nineteen out of forty five flower offerings matching this description. Seventeen flower offerings were of a various mixture of colours with the remainder tending to be single colours of red or white.

The prevalence of red and white flowers above all other colour combinations seems to suggest these colours to be significant and a colour choice made to represent the Manchester United team colours. This colour combination is considered to be purposefully acknowledging Edwards' link to Manchester United, yet without evidence from those who left the offerings to support this supposition, this significance has to be a tentative one.

Several flower offerings were left in the wrappings that they were purchased in. Price, shop and care labels as well as taped-on plant food sachets were noted on some offerings. This suggests that the emphasis for these commemorators was the act of leaving an offering, rather than how the offering appeared. This seems in contrast to notes offerings which were placed 'to be seen' as objects of commemoration. Some flowers were labelled but only two labels were legible and the content of these notes is discussed below in the notes category. The notes offerings summary below considers this further.

Some flowers were placed directly into one of three flower vases on the grave. These appear to remain as separate sprays or bunches that share a vase, rather than being gathered together and re-arranged as a group. This suggests that individual offerings are 'left alone' by visitors who make room for their own offerings alongside those already put in place.

On two of the eight study visits flowers outnumbered other offerings with the most being documented on 7 March 2014 with fourteen in total. The next highest number of offerings found was seven on 22 February 2013. Both these dates are the nearest to the anniversary of Edwards' death on 21 February in the study. On 7 March 2014 seven of the flower offerings were red and white – the highest number for this colour combination in the study, with the second date being 22 February 2013. This suggests that the anniversary of Edwards' death is a significant date for commemorators and the preferred offering type to mark that anniversary is flowers.

### **Scarves Category: Summary of Findings**

Scarves were documented on the grave 57 times with 56 of the scarves identified as football scarves and the remaining one being a plain red fleece scarf. The dominant colour for the scarves was red with fifty scarves having this colour to some degree. The majority of scarves (27) were red, white and black in colour, ten were red, eight were red and white, and three were red, with a mixture of other colours across the remainder of scarves. A yellow and green scarf was documented on four occasions. The colours of this scarf were a combination adopted by Manchester United fans in early 2010 as a protest of the club being taken over by the Glazers family<sup>8</sup>.

It would appear that 54 of the 56 documented scarves could be attributed to Manchester United with one scarf not being a football scarf and the remainder being a scarf for Dynamo Kyiv a Ukrainian football team. Further investigation of this scarf's origin revealed that this team from Ukraine were in the UK and in Manchester in March 2011, six months before the field visit. However Dynamo Kyiv played Manchester City and not United but the origin of this scarf could perhaps be traced back to that visit.

Interrogating the photographic data over the research period it appears that the scarves were usually tied to the flower vases on the grave, with several tied over the top of previously placed scarves. On some occasions the logo at the end of the scarves appeared to be laid purposefully flat to be clearly visible.

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<sup>8</sup> The gold and green colours were adopted by some fans as the colours of the Newton Heath the club that became Manchester United.

These scarves are placed to show the logo or design conspicuously however on 19 May 2014 a scarf with its ends placed up and out to the viewer was carefully moved back by a visitor. The fringes of the scarf were obstructing the epitaph for Edwards' sister and I witnessed a visitor carefully lift the scarf edges to reveal the epitaph. He commented that he believed that the epitaph should not be covered as a mark of respect, but he also moved the scarf in a measured way to ensure that it lay as it was initially placed with the logos facing up. This demonstrated a reverence for Edwards' sister but also for other commemorators and for the Manchester United club. He was the only visitor I ever saw who touched offerings left by others. The visitor identified himself as a Manchester United fan who had decided to visit the grave with a group of friends and fans prior to a match that day against West Bromwich Albion.

The study of the photographs reveals that scarves do not deteriorate as quickly and dramatically as fresh flowers and several scarves remained on the grave for extended periods. For example, a green and yellow scarf is visible on the grave from 19 May 2013 to 6 February 2014 yet it does not appear in situ on 7 March 2014. It would appear that scarves do not completely deteriorate whilst in situ but that their absence is due to their removal. On 22 February 2012 Jan Hickman and Maurice Perry (see appendix Ev) who tend the grave agreed to talk to me briefly. Perry confirmed that they removed any items that appeared badly weathered or untidy during their visits. These items were either discarded at the cemetery or taken home to be stored.

It appears that some time after 6 February 2014 but before 7 March 2014 several older scarves were removed. As the anniversary of Edwards' death is 21 February it would not be unreasonable to assume that the tenders of the grave had visited the grave during this period and tidied the offerings for this special anniversary. Of course, 'theft' of offerings from the grave cannot be ruled out, but it seems unlikely that sodden scarves would be coveted by thieves. New scarves are usually tied over the top of older ones and this overlaying and tying means that scarves are often twisted or stretched so that any logo or wording is distorted or indecipherable. The tying of the scarves secures them in place and also demonstrates the use of vases made for flowers being used for the display of scarves. As very few scarves were laid or tied

elsewhere on the grave it would seem that the vases serve a dual display purpose for flowers and scarves. Visitors have appropriated the vases for another use. It would be difficult to tie scarves to the gravestone itself due to its width and although the front corners of the grave kerbing have been used for tying scarves to they are not tied as securely. There may also be an element of visitors following an unspoken etiquette in that they place offerings of a similar type together in a similar way that appears accepted. The tying of scarves to vases has been evident during the whole of the study and this would suggest it is an accepted way to leave this type of offering. The length of a scarf and the size of the vases seem to fit perfectly to allow the scarves to be tied yet still allow logos at the end of the scarves to be visible.

### **Shirts Category: Summary of Findings**

The category of shirts is almost exclusively that of Manchester United football shirts. There is one black sweatshirt with Manchester United on it but otherwise seven of the eight documented shirt offerings were red football shirts. Six of those seven are Manchester United football shirts, one is possibly of Manchester United<sup>9</sup> but it is partially covered so it is difficult to distinguish it categorically as such.

Shirts were always folded to fit within the confines of the grave slab and in a way that revealed the front of the shirt and subsequent logo. The AIG sponsor logo on a shirt can be clearly seen during a visit in 2011 and the Manchester United emblem can be seen on another shirt clearly in 2013. Shirts are usually placed to the centre and back of the grave slab along the sides or in between the flower vases. Shirts are the only type of offering which are weighted down by stones and unlike scarves they are made from a lightweight material necessitating the need to be weighed down in the notoriously windy cemetery. As shirts cannot be tied to the vases the shirts visitors have considered the longevity of their offering and took an action to ensure the offering stays in place. The ‘anti-weather’ action of using a stone as a weight appears on three occasions, with one stone appearing to remain on the grave after the shirt had been removed. As stones are sometimes left on graves as markers or evidence

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<sup>9</sup> A red shirt with what appears to have a white shirt collar is rolled up behind a flower vase, documented on 19/05/13

of a visit by people it could be that this stone is such an offering. A stone on its own was only seen on one visit which would suggest that it was probably left after it was used to weigh down a shirt and not as an offering.

On 19 May 2013 I interviewed a visitor to the grave and asked him if he had left an offering. It was obvious that this was not something that they had considered doing up to that point. However, due to my enquiry he began searching his vehicle and another person from his group eventually emerged from the vehicle with a Manchester United sweatshirt. He placed this on the grave slab carefully folding it so the Manchester United lettering could be seen. I am sure that this offering was only left because I had made the enquiry and planted the seed of 'suggestion'. I realised that any conversation however measured by me would have an implication on my findings and this was a clear demonstration of how a researcher can inadvertently influence the outcome of their research. The sweatshirt was the only shirt to be documented in my research that was not a football shirt. It stands out as something of an anomaly which I have to claim was caused by my interference in what would otherwise have been a visit without an offering.

Whether these shirts were purchased specifically to place on the grave or have been worn and now 'donated' to the grave is difficult to say. It would be relatively safe to assume that those who purchased or acquired them would be Manchester United supporters.

### **Notes Category: Summary of Findings**

Notes left at the grave that were legible and therefore could be included in the research were all written or typed in English. Notes were recorded six times during the research period with three including images and one containing the words to a song. Five of the notes were handwritten with the sixth mainly printed but with a detail of writing by hand. The notes documented offer an additional insight to the commemorators leaving them, particularly as they articulate something more about the connection between the commemorator and the commemorated.

Four of the notes identified Edwards as the recipient as ‘Duncan’ or ‘Duncan Edwards’ with one scribed to ‘the great man’<sup>10</sup>. Five out of the six notes also gave the identity of the sender, with four giving their full names and one signed as being ‘from a party of Man United supporters from Eccles’. This reference to a place made by visitors in relation to themselves was the only reliable geographical reference giving an insight into where visitors had travelled from made throughout the research period.

Every note documented faced out toward the viewer with the front edge of the grave being the most popular platform for placement. There may of course have been private or hidden notes left at the grave but these would be difficult or impossible to document. Four out of the six notes were placed at the front edge of the grave facing the viewer, with two taped to the grave.

All notes recorded referenced football on some way, with references applied to Edwards’ status as a player of the game, as a mention of the commemorator’s fandom, the Busby Babes, the Munich Air Disaster or Manchester United. The dominant football reference was to Manchester United with half the notes mentioning the football club. A mention of the England football team was made on two occasions and the West Bromwich Albion (WBA) football team was mentioned once.

Three notes included images, two of which were drawings with the third being what appeared to be a page from a book or a magazine. The drawings appear to be by a child and both appear to be renderings of Edwards, one standing in a football kit and the second of his head and shoulders with him holding a trophy aloft. The two notes with drawings appear to be left by the same commemorator called Connor Williams who identify himself and his father. He left a drawing and note on 15 February 2010 and another note on 9 August 2011. Both were made weather resistant by being sealed in plastic sleeves and both were placed at the front edge of the grave.

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<sup>10</sup> Handwritten note on grave documented 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014 in potted plant ‘To the great man from David Barratt WBA fan’.

Four notes in total were modified to be ‘weather-resistant’ by encapsulation in clear plastic, by placement in sleeves, lamination or wrapping and taping into cellophane. This did not prevent weathering completely and all notes showed a degree of weathering.

Three notes (as two labels and a larger note with images) were attached to accompanying floral offerings; a potted plant, a spray of artificial flowers and a wreath respectively.

Immortality or a life beyond death was a theme that ran through the notes. In the note left by ‘a party of Man United supporters from Eccles.’ it states that Edwards ‘will never be forgotten’<sup>11</sup>, whilst another note describes Edwards as ‘the legend you are and the legend you will always be.’<sup>12</sup> Connor Williams declares in his first documented note ‘long live the busby babes’<sup>13</sup> and requests Edwards watches his next match in a note 15 February 2010<sup>14</sup>.

The mainly printed note is the words to a song ‘Flowers of Manchester’ (Thomas, 1999) which was written in 1958 and has persisted in the commemorative networks of the Munich Air Disaster since then. It is about the crash and its victims the ‘flowers’ of Manchester. Edwards is mentioned in the lyrics of the song ‘Big Duncan he went too, with an injury to his brain’ and handwritten beneath the song in capitals are the words ‘Munich 58 RIP’. This was the only note documented that was not on the grave slab but secured with tape to the front of the kerb edging, placed like a formal epitaph.

The handwritten white card pushed into a potted plant on Edwards’ grave from David Barratt reads ‘to the great man...from David Barratt WBA fan’<sup>15</sup> and it

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<sup>11</sup> Hand written note found on grave 27 December 2011 ‘In loving memory of Duncan Edwards England and Man United. Greatest [sic] ever player he will never be forgotten from a party of Man United supporters from Eccles’.

<sup>12</sup> Handwritten note found on grave 27 December 2011 ‘In memory of Duncan the greatest football player of them all the legend you were, the legend you are and the legend you will always be. Rest in Peace. Jan Hickman’.

<sup>13</sup> Note found on grave 8 September 2011 which included a drawing of Edwards in a football kit with the handwritten words ‘long live the busby babes Edwards by Connor Williams’

<sup>14</sup> Note on Edwards’ grave 15 February 2010 ‘To the best Football Player in the world DUCAN EDWARDS. I may never see [sic] you play but my dad Mark Williams and I am Connor Williams I am a the biggest [sic] Fan in the world so I perform two matches for you so Monday and Friday so watch [sic] me please [sic] thanks for supporting [sic] DUNC – I think you would have won the champions league from Connor Williams.

<sup>15</sup> Note on Edwards’ grave on 7 March 2014 ‘To the great man from David Barratt WBA fan’

would be relatively safe to assume that this label was from a local West Bromwich Albion fan, and as such he is a football- inspired commemorator, probably living locally, as many fans support their local team. In truth we cannot be sure that he is not from further afield and although labelled his offering still presents ambiguous data. However it would seem unlikely that David Barratt the signatory is a relative or someone known to Edwards because he has given his surname on the note. Yet again a categorical assumption that he is not a relative cannot be made, as inclusion of his full name may be a declaration of a connection in that the Barratt family maybe ‘known’ to be connected to the Edwards family.

All the notes show a degree of preparation in their writing, printing, presentation or encapsulation which demonstrates the visits were planned to include offerings. They also demonstrate a desire for the commemorators to be publically identified or identifiable, however only five of the one hundred and forty eight offerings documented have a reference directly to the commemorators who left them. This is where the notes category differs from all other categories, in that they are identifiable.

### **Other Category: Summary of Findings**

Four offerings left at the grave did not fall into the main categories and these included two soft toys, a candle and a medal or pendant. These offerings were found at the grave on three of the eight study visits.

A soft toy brown reindeer with a red and white mini scarf was documented on three occasions and originally appeared during Christmas time. About fifteen centimetres high, it persisted on the grave beyond the Christmas period from 27 December 2011 to 19 May 2013. During this time the position of the offering changed which suggests that the tenders of the graves repositioned it. It was initially found tied to the centre flower vases with a scarf, then on the second sighting it was tied to the same vase with two different scarves to the one originally used to hold it in place. Lastly it was document behind the back vase and not attached by a scarf. The final sighting of the reindeer showed it to be very dirty and weather-worn.

The second soft toy to be documented was a red teddy bear with a Manchester United emblem about fifteen centimetres in height. Like the reindeer it was tied to a vase by a scarf and facing out to the viewer, but it was tied to the front football-shaped vase. This soft toy was only documented on one occasion on 19 May 2013.

A red and white metal pendant or medal approximately four centimetres square in the shape of the Manchester United emblem was documented placed on the top the rear flower vase. The medal was only documented on one occasion on 27 December 2011 and clearly demonstrates a link to the Manchester United club.

A small candle in a glass holder was documented on one occasion on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2013. It was placed at the right hand back of the grave slab against the gravestone. There was no flame present during the study visit and the wick had not burnt down to any degree. The wick was black showing it had at some point been lit but whether the candle was lit on the grave is not possible to determine.

Two of the four offerings in this category have a Manchester United logo and could be defined as a branded 'souvenir' of the club. As one of the other offerings (the reindeer) has a red and white scarf it could be considered another direct reference to Manchester United, but this could not be explicitly claimed.

### **Overall Summary of findings from fieldwork research undertaken at Edwards Grave**

- Offerings were present at every visit
- Items left at the grave are predominantly related to Manchester United football club and football in general.
- Traditional offerings of wreaths and flowers were prominent at every study visit
- Notes left by visitors were usually addressed to Edwards but placed for other visitors to read
- Offerings other than flowers are usually secured to the grave. In the case of scarves and soft toys they are usually tied to vases with notes taped or attached to offerings.

## **WIDER RESEARCH CONTEXT**

### **Introduction**

To put my field study into a wider research context I undertook two further investigations. These were a review of other photographs and accounts of visits by others to Edwards' grave and visits to other graves including two graves of Munich Air Disaster victims and one grave of a survivor.

### **Other Documentation of Visits to Edwards' Grave**

I reviewed a selection of online photographs and accounts made by other visitors to Edwards' grave. This data reflected the photographs and accounts I had collected. This revealed that my fieldwork study data reflected the same frequency of offerings as other visitor accounts and photographs evidenced.

### **Other Munich Air Disaster- related Graves**

In the context of the wider commemorative network of the Munich Air Disaster, I also visited the graves of Geoff Bent & Eddie Colman, victims of the disaster and the grave of Matt Busby, a survivor of the crash. This was undertaken to compare the appearance and offerings left at Edwards' grave to the graves of other Munich Air Disaster victims and to one survivor grave.

### **The Grave Visits**

A summary of the appearance of the graves, in the order that they were visited on 6 March 2014 (1 month after the 56th anniversary of the Munich Air Disaster) is give below.

#### **Geoff Bent**

The grave of Geoff Bent is in a church graveyard<sup>16</sup> in Pendlebury, Greater Manchester. His epitaph reads:

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<sup>16</sup> Bent's grave is in the churchyard of St John the Evangelist, Bolton Road, Pendlebury, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M27 8XR

Bent in Treasured memory of Geoff the beloved husband of Marion and  
dear daddy of Karen who died in the aircraft disaster at Munich February  
6th 1958 in his 26th year

His grave is a white headstone which includes a small figure of a footballer in relief below a leaf motif and a cross. Next to the 'kicking' figure is a three dimensional representation of an open book.

In addition there is a white flower square vase with the text 'in loving memory of... our dear son Geoff' over 2 sides. The grave has white kerb surrounds and the area contained is finished with white chippings, with the vase placed in the centre of the chippings area.

At the time of the research visit the following 7 offerings were on the grave:

- 5 different bunches of flowers (not fresh; 2 red and white 3 various colours)
- 1 potted plant (fresh)
- 1 Manchester United football scarf (Red, black and white)

### **Eddie Colman**

Eddie Colman is also buried in Greater Manchester but in a grave in Weaste Cemetery<sup>17</sup> with his mother and father who died in 1971 and 1986 respectively.

The grave is a black polished headstone with a black flower vase inscribed 'Eddie and Mother'. There is a second flower vase below it inscribed 'Our loving nephew' and a white open book stone memorial in front of the headstone on a scattering of white chippings. The book's inscription has weathered but it can still be read to say 'happy memories of Eddie from the neighbours and friends'. The epitaph on his grave is inscribed next to a tall cross and wreath motif and reads:

In loving memory of our dear son Edward Colman, who died in the  
Munich Air Disaster on Feb. 6th 1958, aged 21 years.

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<sup>17</sup> Weaste Cemetery, Cemetery Road, Weaste, Salford, M5 5NR

Also Elizabeth, devoted mother of Edward and beloved wife of Richard Colman who died Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> 1971, aged 62 years.

Also Richard, beloved husband of the above and devoted father of Edward who died Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1986, aged 76 years.

The 3 offerings at the grave on the day of the research were:

- 1 ceramic tea-light holder in an open book memorial shape (no candle)
- 2 bunches of identical artificial flowers in various vibrant colours and white (one bunch in each flower vase).

### **Matt Busby**

Matt Busby, who died in 1994, is buried in Southern Cemetery<sup>18</sup>, Manchester with his wife Jean who died in 1988.

His grave is black polished headstone with a black round flower vase and wooden curb edging containing white and brown chippings. The headstone is flanked left and right by patches of variegated ivy with a third patch of the ivy at the foot of the plot.

On the day of the research visit the following 11 offerings were found:

- 4 wreaths (1 of predominantly artificial poinsettias and a red star and 3 with ribbons and artificial white flowers predominantly real leaves including holly and other evergreens)
- 1 bunch of artificial red roses
- 1 small wooden cross with an artificial poppy
- 2 narcissi planted into the left hand area near to the headstone
- 1 red rose in the flower vase
- 2 'stray flowers' to the right of the headstone

There are also 3 bunches of flowers to the side and back of the gravestone. It is difficult to tell if they are from the grave behind or whether they have been blown across from another grave.

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<sup>18</sup> Southern Cemetery, Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, M21 7GL  
Appendix C21

The inscription of the headstone reads:

In loving memory of Lady Jean Busby the beloved wife of Sir Matt Busby  
much loved mother of Sheena and Sandy and a dear nanna died 19<sup>th</sup>  
Dec 1988 aged 80 years forever in our hearts and her devoted husband  
Sir Matt Busby C.B.E., K.C.St.G loving father of Sheena and Sandy and  
a dear granddad Matt died 20<sup>th</sup> January 1994 aged 84 years  
No longer in our lives to share but in our hearts you are always there

There is a simple cross and flower motif inscribed at the bottom left hand corner of the headstone.

### **Duncan Edwards**

I photographed Edward's grave on the following day on 7 March 2014 and the following offerings were found:

- 2 artificial flower wreaths (various colours)
- 10 different bunches of real flowers (all fresh, 7 red and white bunches, 3 of varied colours)
- 2 potted plants (fresh)
- 3 Manchester United football scarf (2 red, black and white striped & 1 red)

Considering and drawing any real conclusions from the comparison of offerings using the table below should be done with caution. What the exercise reveals is that commemorative activity continues at the graves and from this we can conclude that they are still being actively commemorated through purposeful acts of commemoration and that the grave remains a place for active commemoration.

TABLE D SUMMARY OF OFFERINGS AS OBSERVED AT GRAVES 6 & 7 MARCH 2014					
Grave of/ Offerings	Flowers (Bunch or single bloom)	Wreaths	Potted or planted plant	Other	scarf
Geoff Bent	5		1	0	1
<b>Matt Busby</b>	<b>4-7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 (wooden remembrance cross)</b>	<b>0</b>
Duncan Edwards	10	2	2	0	3
<b>Eddie Colman</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1 (tea-light holder)</b>	<b>0</b>

### Factors Affecting Conclusions

It has to be acknowledged that there are a number of factors that affect the comparative analysis of all four graves in the context of the Munich Air Disaster.

Firstly, I visited the graves in Manchester early to mid-afternoon whilst I visited Edwards' grave the day after. It would have been very difficult to visit all four graves on the same day due to the distance between the cemeteries in the Manchester area and Dudley cemetery. This difference in time has to be taken into consideration should a claim be made that Edwards' grave appeared to have more attention because it had more offerings. A number of commemorators could have visited any of the graves in Manchester and left offerings in the late afternoon or on the following day.

Secondly, the research was undertaken a month after the anniversary of the Munich Air Disaster. I would have to assume that the anniversary of the crash in relation to Bent and Colman would be more significant for their commemorators as it was the anniversary of the day they died. Edwards unlike Bent and Colman who died on the day of the crash, died from injuries on 21 February, just over two weeks later. This difference in dates gives the commemorators of Edwards an additional anniversary some days later.

Although Busby experienced the crash, it can be assumed that for his commemorators the significance of the date of the crash is far less, than for those commemorating Bent, Colman and Edwards.

Comparative analysis of the four graves also becomes more complex as three out of four of the graves are for more than one person. It cannot be assumed that all offerings at the graves are for those with a connection to the Munich Air Disaster, unless they are marked or labelled as such. For whom the offerings are left 'for' can be difficult or impossible to determine.

The graves (Bent & Edwards) that have football scarves as offerings do impart the acknowledgement of them as Manchester United football players but as to whether everyone of these scarves were left by fans or others commemorators is not possible to verify photographically. What the presence of the scarves signifies is a link between commemorative activity and football and Manchester United. The numerous red and white bunches of flowers left at Edwards grave could also signify such a connection to the red and white colours of Manchester United. However again we cannot claim such a connection simply by the photographic documentation, but in comparison to other graves in close proximity his was the only grave with a red and white only mix of flowers.

What the case study can serve to do is to provide evidence for the commemorative activity observed and the activity described by commemorators. It also provides proof that commemorative activity is continuing 56 years after the crash and that the graves of those who died as a result of the crash and particularly the grave of Edwards appear to be a significant focus for such activity. From the evidence of other visitor accounts and their photographs the act of commemoration by visiting the grave and leaving offerings has continued for several years.

### **Other Graves: Summary**

The graves of Bent, Colman and Busby all have floral tributes but only Bent's has any football memorabilia in the guise of a football scarf. His is also the only grave with an existing football motif. Both Bent and Colman's epitaphs

reference the Munich Air Disaster as victims of the crash, yet Bent's references it as an 'aircraft disaster' which is not a phrase I have seen or heard anywhere else. Busby and Colman's graves are shared with other members of their family, whilst Bent is buried alone. Both Bent and Colman have flower vases with dedications, whilst Busby's flower vase carries no dedication.

### **Final Note**

The fieldwork research was important to undertake as assumptions made about commemorator activity at the graves had to be underpinned by evidence. It can be clearly demonstrated that Edwards and other victims of the Munich Air Disaster continue to be commemorated at their graves.

The grave of Edwards remains a significant place for commemorators and commemorative activity. Such activity is evident by the offerings visitors leave at the grave such as traditional offerings of flowers and wreaths as well as a large number of football related items, predominantly referencing the Manchester United football club.







FIGURE 1 Duncan Edwards' Grave (8/9/2011) © Gayle Rogers









FIGURE 2 Duncan Edwards' Grave (22/2/2012) © Gayle Rogers









FIGURE 3 Duncan Edwards' Grave (19/5/13) © Gayle Rogers









FIGURE 4 Duncan Edwards' Grave (7/3/2013) © Gayle Rogers









FIGURE 5 Graves of Matt Busby (top L) Eddie Colman (top R) and Geoff Bent (bottom) (6/3/2014) © Gayle Rogers









## **APPENDIX D**

### **FAMILY COMMEMORATOR INTERVIEWS: Summary of Methodology and Interviewee Details**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Undertaking interviews with family members provided the basis for the case studies that explore the ‘family’ element of Edwards’ commemorative network. As almost half of the testimonies were on a first-time commemorative basis, the data collected is new and exclusive to this body of research. The case studies aimed to capture a snapshot of the Edwards’ family over a two year period.

A number of case studies based on commemorator interviews were undertaken between 2012 and 2014. Those interviews were undertaken by telephone or face-to-face on a one-to-one basis with the researcher or within a group setting. For the purpose of these case studies a ‘family member’ is defined as an individual relation of Edwards, who is descended from his ancestral lineage.

Those family members taking part in the case studies were invited to do so with no incentive given beyond that of helping the researcher undertake their research.

Interviews were undertaken with family members who professed an ancestral link to Edwards however no genealogical investigations into formal records to verify their authenticity were undertaken. It was deemed unnecessary to procure family death and birth certificates, as each participant was able to verify their status by association to one verified source (the researcher’s mother). Requesting proof of an ancestral link to Edwards was deemed as a potential deterrent to some participants who may not have such records to hand, or who may feel that such verification questioned their integrity and potentially their willingness to participate. All family members participating were self identified as Edwards’ ancestors and their testimonies were additionally cross-referenced with other testimonies of previously authenticated family members.

## METHODOLOGY

All interviews and conversations were undertaken on a one-to-one basis or in a group setting and they centred on Edwards and their connection to and commemoration of him. How Edwards' ancestors saw their position in his commemorative network was discussed and recorded. Some interviews were as short as twenty minutes, whilst the longest was approximately one and a half hours long. The length of an interview was entirely dependent on the interviewee's preference and availability. The health of the interviewees and the time that they had available for the interview were the main factors in how long, or short these interviews were.

The testimonies gathered were recorded and transcribed verbatim (when possible) or notes were taken that paraphrased responses and comments (see appendices Ei – Exi). It was not always possible to record interviews verbatim due to the confines of the situation, for example if the meeting took place outside in poor weather, such as at Edwards' grave.

An imperative for data collection through interviews was to collect information directly from elderly family members who knew Edwards personally, before they were unable to participate due to illness or death. An Edwards' family member who was interviewed for this study has since died and this demonstrates the timely significance of gathering such data.

Initially all interviews with Edwards' family members were specifically with those who considered themselves inactive in Edwards' commemoration. As these 'self-confessed' inactive commemorators had never spoken 'on the record' before, their interview transcripts provide new research data. In the case of interviewees Colin Daniels, Joey Edwards and Loraine Rogers such an interview was only possible to attain due to the researcher's genealogical connection to the interviewees (as discussed in Chapter One).

During the development of this research project, the remit of the interviews extended from capturing new data from inactive commemorators, to other family members and commemorators who had undertaken varying degrees of 'public' commemorative activity. This development was in order to make an informed

comparative analysis of inactive and active family commemorators, in order to fully understand the role and perception of ‘family’ by family members themselves, within Edwards’ network.

Beyond those with a genealogical connection to Edwards further interviews were undertaken with two Manchester United fans<sup>19</sup> and Edwards’ first girlfriend<sup>20</sup>.

## THE EDWARDS GENEALOGY

Whilst undertaking the interviews, the family relationship of the interviewee with Edwards and other family members were established. Family relationships were not verified through in-depth genealogical research or medical testing. However all family connections were verified against Loraine Rogers (a verified relation of Edwards). The significance of ancestral connection to Edwards within the context of the commemorative network has been explored in Chapter Four.

There appears to be no financial motivation for such claims as Edwards’ modest estate was settled with his parents on his death.

### The Edwards Bloodline

The Edwards’ family referenced within this research is predominantly cited within the Edwards bloodline from Duncan Edwards’ father Gladstone. In summary Duncan Edwards was the son of Gladstone and Sarah Edwards and this research considers Gladstone and his blood relatives, some of whom carry the direct ancestral Edwards name. Gladstone had at least three brothers that the family can recall (George, Joseph and Trevor) and it would seem one sister known as ‘Bea’, all of whom carried the Edwards name and bloodline.

Details on the brother called George were sketchy and conflictingly represented across sources. Trevor, another of Gladstone’s brothers, appears to have had at least two sons (John and Keith Edwards) who were interviewed as part of this

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<sup>19</sup> Mike Thomas (selected for interview as significant commemorator as dedicatory website master for [www.munich58.co.uk](http://www.munich58.co.uk) [www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk](http://www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk) & [www.duncanedwards.co.uk](http://www.duncanedwards.co.uk)). See Appendices Ei & Evix.

Phil Maddison (selected for email interview regarding pilgrimages to significant Munich Air Disaster memorials across the world and the UK). See appendix Ei

<sup>20</sup> Pauline Lamb (selected as a respondent to a call for contributors to the research project who had not been interviewed before). See Appendix Eiii.

study. Joseph, the third brother appears to have had four daughters (Betty, Doris, Nora and Olive) and one son (Joey). All of the sisters have died but the one surviving son (who knew Edwards) was interviewed for this study. Doris (now deceased) had three children Colin and twins Leonard and Loraine. Colin & Loraine were interviewed for this research in their capacity as second cousins to Edwards, who knew him personally.

In 2015 it was estimated that, along the Edwards family bloodline there were approximately sixty cousins living who are related to Edwards. These relations are first, second, third or fourth cousins across the Edwards family tree. The number of first cousins still alive has diminished to approximately three relatives along the ancestral bloodline. Those relatives who knew Edwards personally have diminished in number to approximately less than ten. The number of people now related to Edwards by marriage, or as step relations, appears to be increasing in number by birth and marriage exponentially.

## **INTERVIEWS**

### **Selection of Interviewees**

The promotion of the research through two newspaper articles was made in order to identify family members interested in taking part in this study, a number of people came forward with a claim to some family connection to Edwards. The use of newspaper articles rather than a 'call out' on social media was made because it was apparent that those old enough to remember and be related to Edwards seldom used social media.

Several people responded to the article who had known Edwards or who were interested in the research, but only one family member, Laurence Brownhill came forward. He emailed and telephoned the researcher regarding himself and also his uncles Keith and John Edwards. Arrangements were made for the researcher to meet them all during their next commemorative visit to Edwards' grave in 2012.

## **Interviewees**

Seven face-to-face interviews or conversations with Edwards' family members were undertaken from 2012 - 2014. All had been pre-arranged except for one impromptu interview with Maurice Perry, who attended Edwards' grave at a time the researcher was meeting other family members there.

Four interviewees (Laurence Brownhill, John Edwards, Keith Edwards and Maurice Perry) could be considered as active commemorators, two (Joey Edwards and Loraine Rogers) as inactive and one (Colin Daniels) as active to a very small degree.

### **1. Laurence Brownhill (Active Commemorator)**

Brownhill describes his family connection to Edwards as 'my granddad Trevor was one of Gladstone's brothers' (Rogers & Brownhill, Edwards & Edwards, 2012) and as such he is a second cousin to Duncan Edwards. Brownhill resides in the West Midlands close to Dudley and he knew and played with Edwards as a child.

Brownhill responded to an article in a local newspaper about this research in 2012. He was subsequently interviewed in person. He visits Edwards' grave on a regular basis and has done so for a number of years, usually in the company of his two uncles John and Keith Edwards (see below).

### **2. John Edwards (Active Commemorator)**

John and Duncan Edwards were first cousins as John's father (Trevor) was one of Gladstone's brothers. John Edwards knew Duncan Edwards as a boy. John lives in Warwickshire but he visits Edwards' grave at least once a year if he is well enough to do so. He has been invited as a relative of Duncan's to represent the Edwards family on a number of occasions. He has attended several events in a 'family member' capacity and he has been interviewed about Duncan several times in the local press.

John Edwards has a brother called Keith (see below) and a nephew called Laurence Brownhill (see above).

### **3. Keith Edwards (Active Commemorator)**

Keith Edwards' father (Trevor) was one of Gladstone's brothers, so consequently Keith and Duncan Edwards were first cousins. Keith resides in Warwickshire but along with his brother John and nephew Laurence Brownhill he visits Edwards' grave at least once a year, when able. He knew Duncan Edwards and has been invited to represent the Edwards family at a number of official memorial events.

Both John and Keith were included in the research through their connection to Brownhill and his response to the researcher's article in the local newspaper.

### **4. Maurice Perry (Active Commemorator)**

Perry tends Edwards' grave as a role 'passed down' to him by his mother and as such he is a regular visitor to it. Perry's mother (Marjorie Perry) and Edwards' mother (Sarah Edwards) were step-sisters. Perry is therefore a step-cousin to Duncan Edwards. When Sarah died, Marjorie tended Edwards' grave and on her death her son Perry took on the role. He lives in the West Midlands very near to Dudley and he and his partner tend the grave. He did not know other family members Keith & John Edwards, Loraine Rogers or Colin Daniels. He did not confirm if he knew Edwards in person. He was not formally interviewed but verbally agreed to his general comments from an unplanned conversation being used for this study<sup>21</sup>.

### **5. Loraine Rogers (Inactive Commemorator)**

Rogers' grandfather and Duncan Edwards' father were brothers and therefore she and Duncan were second cousins. Rogers knew and grew up with Edwards and she resides in the West Midlands, in Dudley.

She has not been an active commemorator except for her participation in this research. She has a brother called Colin Daniels and an uncle called Joey Edwards (see below) both of whom she encouraged to be part of this research. She did not meet John and Keith Edwards, or Laurence Brownhill until seeing them at a pre-arranged meeting at Edwards' grave for this research in February 2012. She was aware that a member of Sarah's family tended the grave but had

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<sup>21</sup> Date of discussion 22 February 2012 at Duncan Edwards' Grave.

not met Perry until a chance meeting at Edwards' grave also at the pre-arranged meeting in 2012.

### **6. Joey Edwards (Inactive Commemorator)**

Joey's father (Joseph) and Duncan's father (Gladstone) were brothers and as such Joey and Duncan were first cousins. Joey knew Duncan as a boy and was uncle to Daniels (see below) and Rogers (see above) who visited him and his family on a regular basis. He had not met any of the other interviewees nor had he participated in any commemorative events in regard to Edwards.

Joey lived on the same estate that Edwards was bought up in, until Joey died in 2015, a short time after being interviewed for this research.

### **7. Colin Daniels (Active/Inactive Commemorator)**

Daniels' grandfather and Duncan Edwards' father were brothers and therefore he and Edwards were second cousins. Daniels grew up with Duncan and knew him and particularly his father Gladstone well.

He lives in the West Midlands, in Dudley. He has written an entry for a commemorative leaflet about Edwards produced by St Francis Parish Church (Edwards' former Church and place where his commemorative stained glass windows are). This was his only public commemorative act as a family member and it was at the personal request of the vicar of St Francis Parish Church who discovered Daniels' connection during a conversation at the church. He has never been invited to attend events as a member of the Edwards' family, but he has attended some as a member of the general public.

His sister is Loraine Rogers and his uncle was Joey Edwards (see above) and it was the former who asked him to participate in this research. He sees his sister regularly, knew Joey well and he had met Keith & John Edwards at a commemorative event. He was aware that a member of Sarah's family tends the grave but he has not met Perry.

## **RECORDS OF INTERVIEWS AND CONVERSATIONS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS**

Transcripts and summaries of the conversations and interviews with the family members detailed above can be found in Appendix E (Eiv-Eix). These detail the date of the meetings, where they took place and what was discussed.

## **APPENDIX Ei**

### **PHIL MADDISON**

**TYPE:** Email

**DATE:** 24 March 2012

**VENUE:** N/A

**INTERVIEWEE:** Phil Maddison

**INTERVIEWER:** Gayle Rogers

**OTHERS PRESENT:** N/A

**NOTES:** Manchester United fan who responded to the call out for Manchester United fans to describe their commemoration of the Munich Air Disaster.

**KEY:** N/A

### **SUMMARY OF EMAILS**

Date: Sat, 24 Mar 2012 15:53

From: Phil Maddison

Subject: Munich Memorials & Crash Site

To: Gayle Rogers

Gayle,

Following our dialogue on Twitter, here are some photos that may be of interest to you.

Regards,

Subject: Munich Memorials & Crash Site

Here are a few photos from Friday's visit to Munich. It's a very respectful and affluent neighbourhood around the area of the crash site thankfully, so the memorials are well looked after. Ferguson and Charlton officially opened the "Manchester Platz" memorial in 2004, and it was part funded by Bayern Munchen, which I thought was a nice touch. We met a chap at Manchester Platz who is the son-in-law of Hans Wieser, the local farmer who was the first to arrive at the crash scene in 1958. He still lives in the same neighbourhood, now aged 88.

Cheers,

Phil

From: Phil Maddison

Sent: 4/4/12

To: Gayle Rogers

Subject: fan visit to Belgrade this weekend

Gayle,

It was magic to make my "Busby Babes Pilgrimage" to Belgrade, and I even got on the pitch at Partizan Stadion where the 3-3 game was played out in 1958 on the night before the air crash. The whole trip meant so much. That completes my personal journey to honour that great team, a journey which has taken me to pay my respects at the graves in Dublin, Dudley, South Yorkshire and Salford, plus of course the visits to Munich and Belgrade. If you would like any information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards to you both.

Thanks,

Phil

## **APPENDIX Eii**

### **MIKE THOMAS**

**Type:** Email

**Date:** 07 March 2011

**Venue:** N/A

**Interviewee:** Mike Thomas

**Interviewer:** Gayle Rogers

**Others Present:** N/A

**Notes:** Mike Thomas

Manchester United Fan and website master of [www.munich58.co.uk](http://www.munich58.co.uk) & [www.duncanedwards.co.uk](http://www.duncanedwards.co.uk)

**Key:** N/A

### **SUMMARY OF EMAILS**

07 03 2011 Email

From: Mike Thomas

To: Gayle Rogers

Hi Gayle

Apologies for the delay in replying, I've been busy with work and other projects, but here goes...

From my point of view, I set up the munich58 website as an online memorial to the people who died in the crash and to educate the new breed of football fans (both United and non-United) about the accident. With the explosion in the global appeal of football over the past few years, there's many supporters who had never heard about the crash and there's also a lot of ignorance about it (many Man City fans wind United fans up about it but forget that an ex-player Frank Swift was killed).

As with a disaster, there will always be people who want to remember and commemorate it. Whether it be Hillsborough disaster, Diana's death, world wars, to name but a few. At United, it's a key part of the club's history. Many argue that it "made the club what it is today". Undoubtedly it had an impact and contributed to the popularity of the club but I don't think that it was the sole reason.

I'm too young to remember Duncan but from talking to people who were around at the time he was the best player in the team. They'll always be one player who stands out in a team - for example, Cantona, Ronaldo, Rooney (to a lesser degree) and in the pre-Munich team it was Duncan. That was the reason for also building a site dedicated to Duncan (as opposed to any of the other players).

Someone else who I strongly suggest that you contact is a friend of mine called Tom Clare. He's written a book on the subject of Munich and Duncan was his hero. He's a Mancunian by birth but now lives in Texas, USA and I'm sure he'll provide you with lots more information (he was about 10 years old when the crash happened so can provide you with first hand experiences)

Hope I've been some help to you

Regards Mike

09/03/2011

Email

From: Mike Thomas

To: Gayle Rogers

As United and tech/web development are my 2 passions, I don't see a time when I'll stop working on/monitoring the site. It started as just a couple of pages

- "there as an air crash and these are the people that died". It was really the emails from people that made me add new content to it. The tribute book allows people to make comments and share them, people have sent me information about the graves and others asked me about where players were buried.

I put a lot of effort in 3 years ago for the 50th anniversary but now due to time constraints, I don't do as much, but I do try and reply to every email. I get emails from families of those involved and for the 50th there was a lot of press attention.

By the way did I send you the link to another of my sites? [www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk](http://www.theflowersofmanchester.co.uk)

I bought the domain name and wasn't sure what to do with it so I've put all the videos and photos that we've taken over the past few years when we've been to Old Trafford to commemorate the crash and remember the victims

And yes, when I see inaccurate information about the crash I do feel as if I have to respond and correct them.

I'm sure Tom will be happy to help you. I know he's got a few health issues at the moment so he might not reply straight away.

Good luck with your conferences

Mike



## **APPENDIX Eiii**

### **PAULINE LAMB**

**TYPE:** Summary

**DATE:** 16 March 2013

**VENUE:** N/A

**INTERVIEWEE:** Pauline Lamb (age 75) Duncan's first girlfriend

**INTERVIEWER:** Gayle Rogers

**OTHERS PRESENT:** N/A

**NOTES:** She responded to an article about my research in the local paper and we were able to do a short telephone interview/chat.

**KEY:** DE=Duncan Edwards, PL=Pauline Lamb

### **SUMMARY OF TELEPHONE INTERVIEW**

PL stated that she was Duncan's girlfriend at the Priory School in Dudley. They were together for six years- although he went to the Wolverhampton Street School and she went to Parks School.

She had seen the article in the paper as she has recently (three months ago) returned from America. After marrying a German pilot she moved to America with him where she lived for the last 30 years. She was keen to visit his grave and had intended to meet others there this week- but times were altered and she could not make it.

When she was 'courting' DE he would call at the house and her father would not be very impressed and he would say 'Big Ed outside with his football after ya'. It was summer and she and DE both loved to play sport. When DE was receiving

a lot of attention for his football skills her father seemed to warm more to him and it was more 'Come in my son' then.

When she was eight she remembers being at her aunt's house in Elm Road, Priory Estate Dudley, chalking on the footpath and being with DE.

On the day of DE's funeral she was working in Dudley but she was given the day off to go and watch the coffin go by.

She recalled how severe his injuries were at the time – 'his kidneys crushed – his legs- would have killed him if he survived- not being able to play football'.

DE had given her a gift of 3 rows of pearls – and she had kept these.

She had heard from a friend, at a dance that DE had got engaged to a manager's daughter in Manchester. She herself had gotten engaged.

## **APPENDIX Eiv**

### **LAYRENCE BROWNHILL, JOHN & KEITH EDWARDS**

**TYPE:** Summary

**DATE:** 22 February 2012

**VENUE:** Public House, Netherton, Dudley

**INTERVIEWEE:** Laurence Brownhill (Nephew of John and Keith Edwards), John Edwards and Keith Edwards (First cousin's of Duncan Edwards)

**INTERVIEWER:** Gayle Rogers

**OTHERS PRESENT:** N/A

**NOTES:** N/A

**KEY:** DE=Duncan Edwards, JE=John Edwards, KE=Keith Edwards, LB=Laurence Brownhill

#### **Summary of Group Interview**

**LB:** My relation to DE? Well my granddad Trevor was one of Gladstone's brothers. I am Keith and John's nephew.

I myself go to the grave with my Uncles John and Keith Edwards – usually on 21 February [DE's day he died] and on DE's birthday 1 October. We usually take a wreath or a bouquet.

**DE:** was about seven to six years older than me and I used to play with him – we'd be with Sarah [DE's mom] in the park.

Last time I saw him was in a match against Wolves and we saw the players in the entrance in 1957 and we shook hands.

I found out the news in the paper as I was doing a paper round. I went round to see Sarah. When DE was in Manchester he used to come home once a month but he had England matches too.

My uncles were involved with the modelling for DE's statue and now the council want to shift it. They contacted us and we said that it was OK to go ahead with the move. We are looking to see what happens. I'm an Albion supporter.

I've been carrying on going to the grave from years ago.

We used to go fishing together at Himley Hall (large country home/estate in Dudley).

Sarah had boxes and balls and shoes. They were at the Leisure Centre. She said that she wanted them in a glass case- in the Art Gallery- she said that was a good place to be.

**KE:** My Dad Trevor was Gladstone's brother. Gladstone was six feet and four inches tall.

I've been living the last few years in Warwickshire.

I read one day in the Sunday Mercury and article called 'Last of the Edwards' about someone who said that they were last relative of Duncan Edwards. I called the editor to put them right. We were then invited to a football pitch opening dedicated to DE and I met Bobby Charlton there. When I was a boy 23-24 years old I was playing football with hard back books down my socks. DE gave me his pads and socks – but later I gave them away.

Sarah said that the statue was a good likeness and when she saw it she said 'that's my Duncan'.

Have you heard the Flowers of Manchester? And the Caribbean calypso?

**JE:** I can remember being in Top Church & seeing Aunty Bea- Gladstone's sister. We went to a Happy Birthday event at St Francis Church [where DE's stained glass windows are].  
My Dad supported Manchester United.



## **APPENDIX Ev**

### **MAURICE PERRY**

**TYPE:** Summary Interview

**DATE:** 24 February 2012

**VENUE:** Duncan Edwards Grave

**INTERVIEWEE:** Maurice Perry

**INTERVIEWER:** Gayle Rogers

**OTHERS PRESENT:** N/A

**NOTES:** Perry is a step-cousin of Edwards and the official family tender of his grave. Not a formally pre-planned but chance conversation undertaken during a visit to Edwards' grave.

**KEY:** N/A

### **Conversation Summary**

Perry explained that he was related to Edwards by his mother who was Edwards' mothers' step sister. His mother took on the tending of Edwards' grave after Edwards' mother passed away. Perry took on the tending of Edwards' grave after his own mother (Marjorie Perry) passed away. Perry stated that he hoped his son would take on the tending of the grave if he became unable to do so. Perry confirmed that he felt a family duty to tend the grave. He confirmed that he removed certain objects left there if they were deemed too precious to be left outside. He said that these items were then put into safe storage.

Perry confirmed that he had a small number of Edwards' personal belongings which had been passed on to him through his family connections. These included Edwards' passport.

He and his partner regularly visit and tend the grave. They were bringing flowers at the time of their visit when this conversation took place. He confirmed that he lived locally but had not visited the grave as often as he would have liked recently as he had been unwell.



## **APPENDIX Evi**

### **COLIN DANIELS**

**TYPE:** Interview Very little activity as commemorator: Blood relative.

**DATE:** 03 March 2014

**VENUE:** Family home, Dudley

**INTERVIEWEE:** Colin Daniels

**INTERVIEWER:** Gayle Rogers

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Lorraine Rogers

**NOTES:** Lorraine Rogers' brother, my uncle, Duncan's second cousin knew of Duncan.

**KEY:** GR=Gayle Rogers, CD=Colin Daniels, LR=Lorraine Rogers

### **Verbatim Interview Transcript**

**GR:** Went to see Joey...somebody mentioned Sidney Edwards as a brother.

**CD:** Is that the one from Wolverhampton.

**GR:** He said he lived in Wales now. He mentioned George

**LR:** Colin wouldn't know him

**CD:** No

...discussed family...

**LR:** Sam Garrett was aunty beets second husband. ...

**CD:** All the time we were going out with him he never ever mentioned his family.

**LR:** Who

**CD:** Gladstone.

**LR:** Cos he was always on Sarah's side wan he?

**CD:** Let's face it Lane ( Mom's nickname) They never had a penny until Duncan died they were still as poor as they were before.

( LR leaves)

**GR:** So you remember Duncan?

**CD:** I can remember, remember bloody Duncan Jesus Christ. He was a thick as two short planks you know when he was young.

**GR:** Joey said he was cheeky.

**CD:** No I said he bosted my cricket bat once when we were playing cricket outside once.

**GR:** How'd he do that?

**CD:** He wrapped it round the lamppost. Cos my mate Kenny bowled him out first time. He got savage day he.

**GR:** Got a temper had he?

**CD:** O ar I ran him up Ash Road – if I'd a caught him he'd wouldn't played bloody football. He day come up our house for about 3 Sundays ....cos they used to come up our house on a Sunday - and Gladstone cos they used to have their Sunday tea with us you know

**GR:** So you known him since he was growing up

**CD:** well actually he went to a different school than us you know – he went to Wolverhampton School. He day mix with us after that. They all came out of school at the same time you know and you'd walk down the road with him and all that but that was about it. As regards when he started to play football for the schools and all that yowd never see him. Never see nothing on him. When he used to play over the Priory Park - that's the only time we used to see him on a Sunday when he used to come up with his father.

**GR:** I was looking into his grave ... (discuss grave and Sarah side of family)

**CD:** I can remember going over to their relations in Wolverhampton – they had a big bonfire over there.

Loads of bloody relations living in Wolverhampton you know. That many relations – who were related to like the Shakespeare's big families – most of them were bought up with 12 kids living in the same house.

I don't think there is anything I can tell you about them, more or less. Going back a while my memory is not as good as it used to be.

**GR:** Do you remember about the crash?

**CD:** o r yes went about the priory like a flash that news. They were all talking about it wherever you went you know. Church had a remembrance.

**GR:** Did you go to the funeral?

**CD:** We went to see the crowds you know. And I always thought Joey was one of the carriers of the coffin – but I was wrong.

**GR:** Joey said this morning that he did go to the funeral and then he went to the wrens nest pub after.

Has anybody ever contacted you as a relative to ask you anything?

**CD:** no I wrote a piece for Francis' Church. They bought out a little booklet.

Wrote that story about playing cricket you know.

**GR:** That's in the leaflet

**CD:** I still got that book cos the vicar gave me it

**GR:** And how did he find out about you then?

I think to went to a wedding there and I was talking to the vicar there cos they got a stained glass window there.

**GR:** He asked you do a piece

**CD:** You know they got a room in the museum with all Duncan's stuff. That must have been what Sarah give them. ...talked about Sarah the painted lady...

Gladstone used to come out with me on a night time and used to go to the pubs. Funny thing about him, he said I don't like folks recognising me and he used wear a blazer with Manchester United (gesture pocket badge) and you'd go in a place and somebody would notice and somebody would stand up and say we have a person in the pub – we have Duncan's father in the pub and he used to lap it up but at the same time he'd say he didn't like it.

**GR:** Cos he got a job in the cemetery

**CD:** Oh yeah I used to take him to work every morning. ...

**GR:** Where was he living then?

**CD:** He had a bungalow down Lower Gornal. Out of the money they made. All of sudden these two people turned up and I'd never seen them before. And they started to go to their house. I think they might have been someone on Sarah's side.

**GR:** Might have been this Maurice Perry – Jan Hickman.

**CD:** They were taking them out everywhere on rides and a Sunday and that , and he seemed to draw back into the background and I never saw him after that.

**GR:** When we that

**CD:** About 40 years ago. They must have made a pot of money after his death you know.

Did you notice them buying stuff then?

Oh arh they had a luxury bloody bungalow well I think they did move somewhere else. But I'd love to know who them two people were. He turned round once and said I wish someone would look after our Duncan's caps and that. And I thought I don't bloody want them – I wish I'd have had 'em now.

**GR:** Do you go to the grave?

**CD:** Are we used to go and have a look at it - cos my mothers buried there me mother and father are buried there.

**GR:** So what did Gladstone die of?

**CD:** Cancer of the back passage – he was 44 when he died. Used to have to sit up night times – that death rattle he'd got it all the while. Send you home with a packet of pills. The doc used call occasionally but that's about it.

But when these others started coming out of the wood work - I'd never heard of them. Never heard nobody mention them. They'm invited to the mayor's dos and the statue opening they live miles away, there are so many cousins coming out the woodwork it's unbelievable. When he died it was the same. You were in a pub and you'd hear oh he's my relation. I heard loads claiming they were relation.

**GR:** and you didn't know any of them?

**CD:** Ar no

**GR:** Why do you think that nobody like or mom – why nobody approached you about it?

**CD:** in one way I used to go mad over Joey Edwards – you know he knows a lot. And Bet as well , but they didn't want to talk about it.

**GR:** Why was that then?

**CD:** I've no idea. I mean joe was a good footballer – I mean he broke his leg in 3 places.

**GR:** He said that. He was in the RAF team. Tony his son played football too didn't he?

**CD:** I dunno. Our family never kept close anyway. When my grandmother died – that was it. Used to be a really close family.

...discussed welsh family tree...

**GR:** Grandfather owned a cinema and ran a dairy?

**CD:** Going back to Duncan- We were all in gangs and he lived on the wrens nest estate and we lived on the priory estate.

**GR:** So when he came up on Sunday it was just with Gladstone

**CD:** Ar Sunday afternoon. Cos my mother used to do a big bowl and used to put everything in that bowl you know cucumbers, onions, radishes – young onions cut em all up. He used to get his bread and dip it in all the vinegar. You sit all at the same table. He was pig ignorant – but he was a big lad.

**GR:** ...told story of John and Keith responding to the 'last Edwards' article

**CD:** See what I don't really understand is. See my grandmother- ok his husband was an Edwards – whether they were brothers.

**GR:** Joseph was the brother.

**CD:** – yes he'd gotta be the brother hadn't he.

You see they all used to go to the old labour club up Dudley – all the family would be there – they'd take the whole bloody table up.

Used to be a long wooden shed up Top Church – it's a big car park now. Used to be a huge wooden shed. ...discuss area...

One relation used to keep the pub at the bottom – I think it was the green man or something. Other relative used to live in the terraced houses. ...enamel buckets of beer being taken back to houses

**GR:** Joey said he saw Duncan up there with his dad.

**CD:** I couldn't say that he had an interest much in life until he got with Manchester United. I know he had a girl friend and they cut her dead after he died. I know he said he'd bought her necklace. Then he got killed not long after and you never heard her get mentioned at all. I don't think she got invited to the funeral – it's all about money ay it?

**GR:** Was that Sarah and Gladstone

**CD:** Yes never had nothing to do with her – none of them.

**GR:** Everybody said that Bobby Charlton came down to see her

**CD:** O arh loads yes. PR for himself wasn't it – he was a nice bloke.

When they unveiled the statute and these two appeared

**GR:** You'd never seen them before.

**CD:** Never seen them before in my like and never heard anybody mention them either. Do you know?

**GR:** How does that make you feel?

**CD:** I just think 'they'm' coming out the woodwork. Don't worry me I mean. I got on ever so well with Gladstone the father.

I always wonder what happened to that bungalow

**GR:** Cos she had a sister – he said he'd got stuff in the house – they have the deeds and look after the grave.

**CD:** I can see him now like it was yesterday- playing all kind of gangs like kick the can.

**GR:** So he was always playing football- did you know he was gonna be good then.

**CD:** Well everybody used to praise him up like – everybody said they wanted to have him on their side when we were playing football. Cos we used have games over the Wrenner (Wren's Nest) 5-a-side or something like that, they always wanted him on their side.

**GR:** When he went to Manchester did you see him much after that?

**CD:** No, no, no, never heard of him again mind you – where he come from he was probably glad to get away.

**GR:** Were they really poor

**CD:** They never got nothing. I think that why we used to invite them to tea- as they never got anything to eat either.

...discussed Gladstone...

I liked Gladstone.

**GR:** Did he ever talk about Duncan?

**CD:** He never used to talk much, seems like Sarah lead the memorial stuff.

**GR:** How do you feel about then naming all the roads and stuff after him?

**CD:** I suppose no reason why they shouldn't I mean he's a local lad. I mean they got the tennis player statue in the park – Mary Round ay they?

**GR:** They got her stuff in the museum in with Duncan's stuff, what do you think about who should look after the grave then?

**CD:** well I mean in a way they used t employ people to look after the gravestones and there used to be a little chapel – keeping the ground clear. But all of a sudden some parts of the graves are overgrown and everything. I mean they've even got the statue of the unknown soldier – that was run down. You would have thought they would have kept that up.

I don't think I can enlighten you much about Duncan what happened after , used to go out on your bikes playing on the swings you know playing football or cricket, kick the can or rounders. Yes our house was ideal you see. Our house was on Linden Road and the lamp post was right out side. Right up ash rd we'd use the lamppost as a wicket. My mate Ken bowled him out, he wouldn't have it

[makes grumbling noises] – I would say he was about six or seven but he was still a big boy [laughs] he'd got some mate on him. We'd used to do runs for fun, we had a month for everything one would be marbles the next would be kick the can or sword fitting or something like that. Nearly every month – I mean we used to make fire cans

**GR:** What was that?

**CD:** You used to get a can bolt holes in the side of it and fill it with wood and make a fire and just hook it round. Mainly of a night time- everybody got them. Something every month. That's what life was like. Nobody thought about vandalising. No respect for anything now.

...discussed family.

I wish I knew more about Duncan – I wish I'd have taken more notice of him but you didn't know he was gonna become famous – no body from up the priory. I mean when you think of his fame occurring cos he died sort of thing.

**GR:** it makes you wonder what happened what would have happened if he'd carried on.

**CD:** mind you he did win some caps for England you cor take that away from him.

A lot of them wanted to play for united or a Birmingham team. Today if the parents have got money they'll get a place.



## **APPENDIX Evii**

### **JOEY EDWARDS**

**TYPE:** Interview In-active Commemorator: Blood relative.

**DATE:** 03 August 2014

**VENUE:** Joey Edwards home, Dudley

**INTERVIEWEE:** Joey Edwards

**INTERVIEWER:** Gayle Rogers

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Loraine Rogers and Gwen Edwards

**NOTES:** Joey is my great uncle (Duncan's cousin as Joey's father and Duncan's father were brothers) He knew Duncan and attended his funeral to represent his father. Joey and his son and subsequent relatives played football in different capacities.

**KEY:** GE= Gwen Edwards (Joey's wife) GR=Gayle Rogers, LR=Lorraine Rogers, JE=Joey Edwards

### **Verbatim Interview Transcript**

**GR:** I got Trevor, Joseph, Gladstone – they are all brothers is that right?

**LR:** There's another one ain't there?

**JE:** The brothers – there was my dad anyway Joe – there was Trev.

**LR:** Was he in the oldest?

**JE:** Couldn't say- couldn't say who was the eldest.

**LR:** Because Trevor's sons who we met they didn't know that their father had a brother who was buried in that cemetery. Till told 'em

**JE:** There was Joe Glad Trev George that's the four I know. George lived down Russel Hall

Oh ok

Go down Himley Road and you turn on to the estate, you know – he lived down there.

**LR:** I never heard of Uncle George

**JE:** Oh ah

**GE:** Yes I've heard of George

**JE:** His wife was Polly and her was me auntie they had a daughter – God knows what her name was.

**LR:** Well who's the one – is there one that lives abroad?

**JE:** They had somebody down Wales – might have been another brother I couldn't say.

**GR:** Somebody mentioned Sidney

**JE:** Ah! Me mother always used to mention Sidney but whether he was a brother to me father I never knew if he was a brother or what - he'd be down – the only place you'd get to find out about him would be down Wales somewhere. Where he lived you know.

**GR:** Oh OK

**LR:** Well these two brothers – well where do they live Gayle Coventry and Nuneaton

**JE:** Yeah that would be Trev's family – well some of them. The Edwards name will carry on a bit.

**LR:** Do you know what Aunty Beets? Bea? Married name was

**JE:** Yeah. There was Keith – there was 2 children by each marriages – there was Keith and Betty – think they were a Garret. There was Harry and whoever the other girl was – Andrews

**LR:** Cos none of them would carry the Edwards name cos they go by her husband name wouldn't they?

**GR:** Cos they've got a nephew called Lawrence...

**LR:** who would he be? He wouldn't be an Edwards in his family. They nothing about Sarah's side of the family – cos her never really had anything to do with the family did she.

**JE:** No even after glad died we she was in town she talked to you. Bobby Charlton used to go down regular down the house. That's all she ever told me. When I used

**LR:** When I used to bump into her in Sedgley I used to say that I was Doris' daughter and she say oh I remember. Cos we always used to bump into her, into the town.

**JE:** Yeah that's what I say.

**GR:** Did anybody get in touch with you about any of Duncan's stuff?

**JE:** No nobody has been in touch at all.

**GR:** They've never asked you to go to any events or anything like that?

**JE:** Went to his funeral that all there was to it.

**GR:** Oh did you?

**JE:** Yes I went to the funeral in my dad's place – you know representing me Dad you know. Me dad was dead and went in his place.

**GR:** Do you remember anything about that then

**JE:** Not a lot I mean the road was lined with people- never seen so many people in my life – everywhere you know the way the funeral went thems streets were lined everywhere and down by the cemetery you couldn't get by it.

You know after the funeral we – I was aunt Bea's second husband uncle Sam - well we went into the pub – that would be Sam Garrett – her second husband

**LR:** you know the houses that used to be opposite the cemetery – well who lived in them?

**JE:** Granddad and granny Edwards.

**LR:** So there was an Edwards who lived there.

**JE:** Yes that where they all lived – 7 children in that house. Granddad and granny Edwards – they had 7 but we can only account for 5.

**GR:** Did they loose 2?

**JE:** There were 5 brothers and aunty Bea – so that 6 but who was the other one.

**LR:** Gayle's research said Duncan was born in Holly Hall

**JE:** Yeah that's right

...they were little houses

Then they moved to Elm Road aver the priory.

**LR:** Well these people who know him say oh he was born opposite the cemetery – but he wasn't

**JE:** I couldn't say where he was- I know the house that they used to live.

**JE:** *It is a situation when you look back and you cor fathom it out can you?*

**LR:** what is annoying is that all these people keep writing about him – they don't even know him. Say they related but they're not. Like the one who looks after the grave – they're not related. Not related at all – it's just Sarah's side of the family and he's her step sisters step son. They all get invited to the council and stuff – but nobody on this side.

They've never really interviewed anyone on this side at all.

Nobody that I know of – all them relatives. Do you remember Duncan?

**JE:** No – I used to see him when we used to go round darts and dominoes pubs- and used to be in the club up Stafford Street but it's not there now. Used to in there with his father.

**LR:** well we used to stop at aunt Beas when everyone went up the club and he used to stop with us.

**JE & GE:** that's right

**LR:** They had gas light then they used to pop down form the labour club with a Vimto.

Any anniversary or weddings that they held I mean they were mostly – mostly people went to pubs

**JE:** It's a pity the shop – remember Loren shop – on the corner by the park? He was agents – now he used to go about with Duncan's father. Now I do know that he went to Germany when they had the accident. You know whether he's alive – I don't know. He was Glad's best friend.

**GR:** Do you remember how you heard how he died?

**JE:** Yeah I was in Broom and Wades Hostel down somewhere– we were away we were putting the street lighting up and we were lodging in there and that's how we heard the news. I was just going in for my tea – Jim Fisher and he come in walked in and he come and said oh there's been a right crash with Manchester United football team – biggest part of them been killed. I start to laugh at it – we didn't believe it but that's where it happened. But it was 1958.

**GR:** He survived the crash didn't he?

**JE:** Yes he went about over a fortnight. I remember Joe ward come to stairs and shouted Duncan had died – it had come through on the radio, that's all I remember about it but as I say we were never close – never close. Like that all he wanted to do was kick a ball...

**LR:** He did morris dancing

**JE:** He ay that light on his feet.

**JE:** He was a cheeky lad – I can tell you that. He was a cheeky lad

**LR:** he wasn't very clever- but he didn't need to be clever cos all he wanted to do was play football.

**GR:** I spoke to a lady...who was Duncan's first girlfriend and she said when she started courting Duncan her dad thought he was a bit of a thug

**JE:** Oh yeah I can imagine that. Cos his attitude he wouldn't care cos I mean he was always up that labour club and he was sitting there with his dad you know

with his feet up on the table . Colin and him would make a good pair-they would

**GE:** He was a good footballer though wasn't he?

**LR:** Oh yeah no doubt about it.

**JE:** All these trophies (looking through a book) and we never sid a thing of Duncan's

**GR:** quite a lot up in the museum – that they moved from the leisure centre.

**JE:** I had a word with the mayor – I shall have a talk to him today. The Mayor of Dudley – great friend of ours.

**LR:** Why don't you have a word with him – you know the next time they move the statue. You wanna be there at front Av you a wheelchair right at the front and have a picture took. ...

**JE:** Albert Finch.

...discuss renaming road.

**JE:** Those flats yeah they got a bad reputation for some reason or other. Wellington Road, on the corner.

**LR:** They called the road Duncan Edwards Close – but there were drugs and everything round there. They called the ring road after him as well

**JE:** Well I wouldn't know about that.

**GR:** Everything in Dudley is named after him now [LAUGHING] I can't keep up.

**JE:** and the family don't know anything about it.

...discuss the moving of the statue...

**LR:** They are moving it and they haven't asked the family's permission have they?

**GR:** Yeah I think they asked Keith and John.

**LR:** Oh they always go to the council

**GR:** Keith said that someone wrote something in the paper that said they were the last Edwards alive still. Keith and John got really annoyed and said that s not right. So the newspaper guy said, well come and talk to us then. I dunno who it was that originally wrote the article. Well they did an article on John and Keith and every time they do something about Duncan they contact them – they've been up to Manchester ...they get invited to everything now.

**LR:** They on a par with Joey

**JE:** My dad was born 1895 so whether

**LR:** I reckon your dad was the oldest.

**GR:** I don't know about this Sidney? When were you born then?

**JE:** 1927 (9 years older than DE- 31 when DE died).

**GR:** Nobody in your family that gets asked about Duncan- is that because people don't know?

**JE:** I think it is.

**LR:** He's got a son Tony that carries the name Edwards you see if they don't want Joe involved Tony could be the next one up the ladder so to speak

**JE:** I got a grandson called Edwards an all

**LR:** O Steve.

**JE:** They've just had a grand daughter - trouble was I was praying for a boy to carry the Edwards name on.

**GR:** So that's Tony's son that's had a son.

**JE:** Tony's son had a daughter. ... (discuss family)

...all we can hope for now if that they'll have another kid and it's a boy.

**LR:** If Tony's kid don't have a boy the Edwards' name will disappear

**GE:** That's right.

**GR:** (To Joey) Cos you had all sisters

**JE:** that's right

**JE:** I had a one (broken leg) for 13 month – I had to wait 13 month

**LR:** That was through playing football Gayle

He was a good footballer.

**GR:** You were a good footballer were you?

**JE:** When I was in the RAF I was alright you know. Used to play when I was in Palestine – I was in Jerusalem for quite a while you know. We'd got our own club. We had two that played for the Albion when we come home.

**LR:** Tony was a good footballer if you look through the archive sand look through the Herald. He was headline in the Dudley Herald 'New Duncan Edwards' cos he used to play football. The best ones were the twins – they were brilliant at football (Wayne and Warren Totney)

**GE:** They were all football weren't they?

**JE:** They were good footballers but they was rough you know. They'd play dirty.

**LR:** They do now don't they

**JE:** They'd bounce off Duncan as I say he would have a quite a few at different ages and he would play for different teams, the team he played for the Dudley Boys they'd go as far as Oldham.

**GR:** Did you ever see Duncan play

**JE:** Never seen him play professionally or anything like that but I sid him kick around over the park. That's about it – it's...don't mean nothing. It's a pity I cor help you, you know.

I cor really say nothing

**GE:** Cos you were in the Air force

**JE:** Well he wouldn't have been born then

**LR:** No

**JE:** Oh he would arh

**LR:** You'd be working by then – I mean I was still at school. He's only 3 years only than me.

**JE:** We were away when it happened. I wore told nothing.

**LR:** Never had much to do with

**JE:** Family was never close to one another really as the brothers go cos we all lived.

**LR:** I mean it different now with phones and things

...discussed my grandfather 'fish and chips' sketch & illness

**LR:** Nobody knew anything about Duncan cos he was never here was he

**JE:** No

He mixed with everybody else when he went to the Parks School but he went to Wolverhampton St School.

**GR:** you welcome to borrow the book (Leighton's book about DE) if you want to.

**LR:** You give that to Steve and he won't be able to put it down it tells you everything in there.

**GR:** I've got about a year and a half to go.



## **APPENDIX Eviii**

### **LORAIN ROGERS**

**TYPE:** Interview. In-active Commemorator: Blood relative.

**DATE:** 06 February 2014

**VENUE:** Family home, Dudley

**INTERVIEWEE:** Loraine Rogers

**INTERVIEWER:** Gayle Rogers

**OTHERS PRESENT:** N/A

**NOTES:** Taped interview: Consent given to use transcript. Relation: 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin to Duncan Edwards

**KEY:** GR=Gayle Rogers, LR=Lorraine Rogers, DE=Duncan Edwards, D=Duncan

### **Verbatim Interview Transcript**

**GR:** This is to chat through & ask few questions

How it is that you know of DE – what your connection to D?

**LR:** My grandfather was his father's brother. Although D wouldn't have known my grandfather because he died about 42 when we were only babies, that's probably why people in the family don't know my grandfather.

**GR:** Would Nan - your mother would she have known D?

**LR:** Oh yeah because with our mom's family – they were big families- she had several siblings- the males carried the names Edwards and D's family was quite a big family as well because his father had 3 brothers and his mother had sisters. The 2 families if ever there was any parties or get-togethers or weddings - everybody went, but we were only kids then really.

I mean everybody went to the pub or club weekends and we would all stop in a relative's of D on his side- stop in the house while everybody went in the pub. They used to bring us crisps and Vimtos and us kids used to sit in this tiny house and I can remember the table with a big red tapestry tablecloth and they'd got one of them old fashioned fires with the kettle hanging – it was gas lighting then – you can't believe that can you?

And I mean us kids used to sit there and they used to go to the club – and our dad used to sing at the club. Then it would be different relatives that would pop in and we were part of two big families.

But we went to the same school and he [Duncan] only lived 3 streets away from me and he went to the same school so I used to see him every day at school. Then he'd come to our house most weekends and he'd wanna play football, but if it was in the Summer we used to try and get him to play cricket but he wouldn't have it. He didn't like cricket at all. A lot of the kids in the street used to bully him because he was so good at football and he was so well known at school and even at school people used to bully him – it was just jealousy really.

**GR:** People talked about how he physically looked and how he had 'legs like tree trunks'

**LR:** Oh yeah because I mean I used to regularly- and his mom and dad would regularly go up Dudley shopping and we used to bump into them. And she was so tiny and he was massive his dad.

But with D when I was at school these girls they were bullying me and he used to say I'll meet you at the school gates and says and I'll walk part of the way home with you – cos he towered over me – once they knew- they just used to leave me alone, they never used to bother. Of course when he left the Priory School [Primary School in Dudley] I passed my 11+ and went to grammar school and he didn't go to the school that everybody else went to – you know the secondary modern- he didn't go to that one- for some unknown reason he went to that one in

Wolverhampton St. A small school. And that was on, more or less on, the way I went to school. I used to leave him at the school and carry on to my school but I used walk with him because I used to wear a uniform and you'd got to wear your beret with your school badge on and you used to have to walk past the secondary modern and they used to really take the mickey out of you and I used to try to hide my hat. But if they saw you without your hat you used to get into trouble at school for not wearing it, but if I walked with him nobody bothered because he was such a big chap. But he wasn't very intelligent actually, he was a nice lad but he wasn't...all he ever wanted to do was play football.

**GR:** Was that from a really, really early age? His mom said he could kick a ball before he could walk?

**LR:** Oh yeah it was always football. When I sort of went to grammar school and he went to the one in Wolverhampton St I only ever used to see him if we went the same way – I never saw him coming back because I used to come back through Dudley.

After that everything went so fast and whenever we used to see his mom and dad we always used to ask how he was getting on. She always used to be '*Oh I never see him, you know never see him at all*' and I mean there was no phones or anything like that then. She didn't really see much of him. I think he was close to his mom because of losing his sister but after that, that was it.

No one knew him after that.

Not really.

It wasn't very often that he would come home. If he did we won't know anything about it, I mean we were sort of grown up then and everybody was doing their own thing. All the family seemed to be spread all over the place.

But I mean he used to come to our place on a weekend and our mom used to do like a Sunday tea- God he used to ... I mean, she used to do sandwiches and she used to pile them up high and he used to [laughs] eat the lot- he would. They'd be gone in no time.

As for his character I don't know. He was just a nice chap. He was just one of the gang.

**GR:** Do you remember anything about when he got signed for Manchester? Was it a big deal in the family?

**LR:** No ... well we heard...well we used to talk to his mom and Gladstone- his Dad. Well you see well... he was more forthcoming than she was- she didn't really have anything to do with our side of the family, but Gladstone he was alright. We just heard that he was going to go to Manchester and he was going to play football. After that I used to go to Joey Edwards [first cousin of D's] and if he was playing or anything like that – I don't think he'd got a TV – not everyone had a television. I had seen him on the television in black and white. But it was very you know – it never bothered anybody you know- wasn't something that was – by then we'd left school we were getting a job and he was doing a job and playing football and that's how we looked on it. It didn't mean anything to us really.

**GR:** He wasn't like a star or celebrity?

**LR:** Oh no. Nothing like that. Nothing at all. Nobody envied anyone then. They used to cos he was so popular – I dunno about popular... but everybody... if he used to play football and you'd know if anybody getting on or anything like that. When he went to Manchester I don't think anybody bothered. If they did I didn't know about it. Football wasn't my thing anyway [laughs]

**GR:** Do you remember anything around the time of the crash? Do you remember how you heard about the plane crashing?

**LR:** Well I worked in Birmingham then on the Hagley Road. I didn't know anything about it and then at the dinner time this chap went out to get his newspaper and he come straight to me and he said to me '*Have a look at these headlines*' and it said that he was seriously injured . He said '*Oh I've got some bad news*' cos they all

knew that I knew him, sort of thing, and after that my mom used to talk to the family and that and find out how he was going on. I dunno. She [D's mom] went over there and I thought Joey Edwards did, but he said that he didn't. I think that there was some suggestion that he should go because he was the only male Edwards really. As I say she never had anything to do with us, so we just sort of found out with the rest of the family. I mean it was more to do with the adults than with us I was only about 18 because he was 21 wasn't he? And he was 3 years older than me. Then the next thing was- they were having his funeral. Well they took... I dunno whether they took him into the house because the coffin was that big because German coffins then were really, really heavy coffins. Somebody said that they couldn't get him through the door- I dunno whether that was right or not, but then you didn't ask questions did you? You were always in the background and there was no televisions. There was no telephones, so you just listened to what people were saying in the family.

**GR:** When the guy showed you the paper and that said that he was still alive but ill, did you expect him to survive?

**LR:** Er... I got to be honest it never – I suppose really it was a long time ago I suppose I thought oh he's gonna be alright and I mean you know, I didn't know the ins and outs. I know more now, in the years that have gone by, than I did when what went on there and then. Because that was the way that everything was because it was all hearsay. Cos I don't think we ever had a newspaper- I didn't think that we could afford one

**GR:** There was an expectation that he would survive by some people because they thought he was superhuman- almost.

**LR:** Yeah I think people thought that he was such a big chap that if he had survived that he would be alright. But I remember from Sarah his mom-I don't know if she was talking to our mom or his gran – cos our gran was granny Edwards, and she said, '*You know, I dunno what I'm gonna do if he survives because he'll never play football again because of his injuries*'. I think either- was something said that

when he did die that he wouldn't have been able to live with the fact that he couldn't play football because that was his life. Sarah did say that after he'd died.

**GR:** Knowing him do you think that would have been the case?

**LR:** Well I think he would have been really depressed and that. Now, if it had been now, because they can do such a lot for you, he would have still stopped in football and would probably have done something. They would have helped him a lot. It's just a possibility that he would have never have played again but nobody knows. But with all the technology now, footballers are injured and stuff like that and have gone on to be managers. But he was so young- but saying that he was still in his 20s and most footballers are in their prime in their 20s. He might have been able to set things up. I think Manchester United would have looked after him – especially Bobby Charlton because Bobby Charlton was his best mate. He looked up to him BC did. Cos they used to take the mickey out of him something terrible because he had a proper Black Country accent – proper Black Country accent - and unless you came from the Black Country you wouldn't understand what he was saying  
[laughs]

I think they would have looked after him and there might have been a future for him. But she always used to, said that if he couldn't play football – she didn't say that it was the best thing that happened you know-but I think they would have looked after him and give him something, because everyone had got him on such a high pedestal. I mean he was at the peak they wouldn't just let him fall to the wayside. Whether that's going by the modern tendencies now, but I think people were closer and together and helped each other more than they do now. But I don't think Manchester United would have let him down. I think that they would have done everything that they could.

And he was engaged at the time so whether he would have had a future I don't know.

**GR:** Part of the aftermath was that the bodies had to be shipped back and there had to be funerals. Do you remember that? Do you know anybody that went to the

funeral? Do you remember the day of the funeral?

**LR:** To be honest with you Gayle everybody got on with their life and everybody – practically everybody- the adult population- they were all there, but the kids went to school, you went to work, and I never went- Nikki's mother [LR's daughter in law's mother ] went but I worked in Birmingham and I was more... my life was more over Birmingham way . I never went. I don't know why I didn't. I dunno, but there was ...everybody who lived round by here- especially the women- all the women went. Oh some of the men were at work. I think people just got on with their lives.

**GR:** We saw the pictures of the funeral in the archive and there were masses and masses of people outside the church. Was that what you imaged it to look like with so many people?

**LR:** I thought that's what it would be and we would never get a look in and we never jumped on the band wagon and thought of -oh we got a famous footballer it was just that he was gifted with it and he got on with it. And he was ...I wouldn't say part of the family- but he was in the family. We grew up with him when we were young but after that once he went there – he was only 16, we were teenagers. Teenagers then were seen and not heard. Nobody discussed things like that. But everybody where I lived on the estate- everybody went to the funeral. I don't know whether because ...there were some television people there- but you couldn't get near the church anyway.

**GR:** You mentioned that you never jumped on the 'bandwagon' can you talk a little bit about what you mean by that? In respect of that there are people saying that they knew or were related to Duncan and you were a little bit surprised because you'd never heard of them? There is this perception...

**LR:** We just took it – oh good luck to him, he's doing what he wants to do. Football then, you got a different outlook to it then- to what it is now cos you weren't somebody famous you were just doing a job that you were good at . And he was going places. And nobody went to newspapers and I dunno about television- I don't

know how television was then. I can't remember. They didn't go-like they do now oh we went to school with him and we knew this and knew that. And none of our family have ever done that. None of them have ever been interviewed they never felt that it was their business really.

**GR:** When you say 'none of our family' do you mean the Edwards's?

**LR:** Gladstone— his father – like the Edwards. They might have done if Gladstone's brother had lived, we might have been more involved, cos he would have been with them- the father. But our granny Edwards she wasn't a blood relative she was only an Edwards by marriage and all her siblings. She only had one son that was called Edwards but nobody ever pushed the fact that yeah we're part of the Edwards family we never even felt the fact that we needed to tell people that yeah we're an Edwards sort of thing cos I mean cos you were young then. Then nowadays they tend to go on the television and have these stories about people. But I mean most of the people that really knew them like our granny Edwards— she's dead. Now the ones remaining – I was the oldest grandchild. Now the ones jumping on the bandwagon now - they are first cousins second cousin. Now I'm his second cousin, now our mom was his first cousin – you're his third cousin but you never felt that you should go to the newspapers and discuss anything with them. It wasn't done then.

I don't think none of there side of the family went – I mean the ones that you see – they did go to live football matches, but our family didn't seem to be bothered – cos they were all women- didn't seem to be bothered about football. Gladstone's other brother and his son's and that, they would go to the matches but them blokes that you see [3 relatives that are Edwards' nephews] they are a lot younger than me. They would have probably have known him for a short time – but they never knew him at school or anything like that.

**GR:** Now that we are in this position – if it is my correct understanding – Duncan's mom's step-sister's son or her sister's stepson – someone who is not a blood relative that looks after the grave – does that bother you ?

**LR:** The thing was that with Duncan's mother our mom and sisters and brother and that – they never really got on with her – she was a funny woman. But no if they want to do it – as long as somebody's doing it. If there is a case where nobody wants to do it, then I'm sure that they could find somebody that is a blood relative or part of the family. It's only right really.

**GR:** In terms of the grave – it's still sliding a bit on the side and it's beginning to look like it needs some work on it – things like that – you need money to repair a grave- as tending it as it is now, you don't really need money to do that.

**LR:** Well I don't know who is responsible for that – I have no idea, Apparently Sarah left everything to this step sister of hers – and this sister or whoever it is died and it's her son that's taken it on. She asked him to- to make sure that someone is looking after it.

My father died at 44 and he's buried not far from Duncan and me and mother used to go down quite regularly. And every time we used to go down, Sarah and Gladstone were there. And we used to go and talk to them and then if you'd got any flowers over you'd put some flowers on the grave. But they weren't... my side of the family weren't really close to Sarah. You know what families are like. They were two big families really. There is an awful lot on Duncan's side and on our side but most of them have died. You're talking about somebody like you – like everybody died off – well you Gayle because you got interest in him – do you want to look after his grave? But Sarah must have left something written down because he [Maurice Perry – the current tender of the grave] said that he hoped that his children would look after them. He said he hoped that they would – but would they?

Would they want to? Because they don't go to the Council House and have dinner with the Mayor and that – them other 2 do. [the two nephews referred to earlier]

**GR:** Those are the nephews?

**LR:** It was Sarah who gave the permission to the family – she never gave permission to the Edward's side of the family.

Cos she was closer to her side of the family. I mean Gladstone knew everybody on our side. Sarah was more or less her own side and cos she only had that one sister- so it must have been arranged. She's left a lot of memorabilia with him and he promised that he would look after it. So if there are any repairs to it – you have more or less got to ask him what – how far does he go looking after the grave. Who's responsible? He's responsible she's given him the ..she's never spoke to anyone on our family. I mean even at the church [St Francis Church in Dudley where 3 stained glass windows of Duncan are in situ] I mean there was no representation , I mean after they did that stained glass window and that the church did a magazine about him- there's no representation from anybody in our side of the family 'til Colin [ Colin Daniels; Loraine's younger brother ] opened his mouth [laughs]

There was no animosity. It was just the way that families were. They tend to go one side or the other- that's the way people were then. But it's just this idea of people jumping on the bandwagon and saying they knew him. It annoys me to say that they knew him – how can they know him when he was only around 16 years round here- they probably went to school with him – played in the street. We played in the street we played cricket with him in the street but he was hopeless [laughs] but he used to get annoyed so he used to come to our house with his football and we used to play football. Oh the kids really had a go at him but they didn't get very far- cos he was a big chap.

**GR:** He wrote a book about how to play football?

**LR:** I got no idea about that.

**GR:** Uncle Colin saying that he was quite shocked because he thought Duncan could hardly read and write properly.

**LR:** Our Colin always says that – but I don't know how our Colin knew cos our Colin was 3 years younger than me so he'd be 6 years younger than Duncan I dunno how he can remember. I know he can remember him coming to our house at weekends scoffing all the sandwiches but our Colin tends to surmise things. But to say that about somebody, I don't think that he... well what do you term as clever?

**GR:** Well, I think there was this perception that he was not particularly bright but when he died he had written a book about it and got it published and he'd also at that point got a lot of money [referenced in 2 books – need to verify this if taking point further] but he wasn't the poor working class boy...

**LR:** Didn't know nothing about that side of it because we never got involved. Once he'd gone to Manchester the only time we ever saw Sarah or Gladstone is when they were shopping. They never used to visit our side of the family. Our granny Edwards used to keep everyone together but once she's gone- that's what happens in families. I know our Colin always said he was thick.

He definitely did do an advert for a watch. I kept this book it was a little magazine – like a girls' magazine and they did one for boys and there was an advert in there. I remember putting it away at mom's in a great big case. Used to keep all my cuttings and everything in there- and I think she threw them all away. I definitely remember that.

**GR:** That was advertising a watch?

**LR:** Yes

**GR:** Cos I remember this is the interesting thing ...

**LR:** How many watches were around then?

Timex?

Was only ... I dunno...

We never had a watch... I dunno.

**GR:** This romantic idea that he was a working class poor hero. Actually it seemed that he was a bit savvier

**LR:** but that would down to the club wouldn't it? I'll tell you Gladstone wasn't stupid and Gladstone helped him a lot. I think with Sarah she just wanted her little boy at home, but Gladstone would push it. So I don't about that side. But I'm not surprised. I mean he wasn't – when you say he wasn't thick he probably wasn't academically at school – he wasn't stupid. He set his mind that he was gonna play football.

**GR:** and he did

LR: When he played at the Priory School there was always blokes in these trilby hats and these long coats on the field watching him. Nobody knew who they were – kids weren't bothered then.

**GR:** Do you think he was head and shoulders above everyone in terms of his football skills from what you saw? Was he untouchable?

**LR:** Oh yeah, Nobody could. We never lost a match at all when he played it was unbelievable.

**GR:** So were people saying- saying then – he could have been the greatest ever-better than Pele?

**LR:** I don't think people did then- not the kids, the kids were didn't take any notice of it. It didn't mean anything to us we thought oh – he's a great footballer for us and we're winning.

**GR:** Did you think he'd stay in the Midlands?

**LR:** Never thought about it – never thought that he'd be something famous. Never ever.

Just thought he was good at football. And then when they said – you know these people when they were coming and watching them, you knew they were gonna sign him up for a club. It could have been Dudley football club for all I knew. Except you knew that his career was sorted out because you knew that he was gonna play football for the rest of his life. To become famous? I don't think that entered into anyone's head. It's only the people who were interested in him.

**GR:** When he died & after that point – there were statues...

**LR:** It took a long time for that statue though didn't it ?

**GR:** Yes how did you feel about that?

**LR:** That hasn't been such a long time ago and don't you find that these towns now are trying to find people that was actually born in that particular town so they can say '*he was one of us*'? And yet when he was alive nobody really bothered with him. You just looked on him as 'oh he's a good footballer' and that was one of the biggest pastimes in people's lives then. As there was no television then as there is now. And I mean sports and stuff was the only thing that people did then that they could excel at. I mean you know apart from going to the cinema or skating or playing in the street that was about all there was. From my point of view I never looked on him as being anything special as just that he was a good footballer.

**GR:** Have you been surprised at the continual memorial making?

**LR:** I think so because I don't know whether it's people that want to make money out of it. They didn't bother when he was actually playing football when he was dead they all want to jump on his grave , and they don't know anything about him

and it's all sort of myths that go round. I think it's most unfair cos he's not here to answer it and say 'oh yeah we used to do that together- and used to do that. I dunno that he did. Sounds stupid- nobody in the family never really bothered. Didn't bother- too busy getting on with their lives. Today now they'd be knocking on the door – 'Oh yeah you knew him – you used to go to school with him? What can you tell us about him? I just hate this where people coming out the woodwork. I guess his neighbours would know more about him as a child than I would really.

**GR:** So the people doing these memorials – do you think it will ever stop?

**LR:** I think it's like these memorials they do like you know, they're coming out with the statues for the First World War and they're bringing them to the fore and they're unearthing them now. And they want to know about that particular person and it's part of the history- of that particular town. It's a tourist thing isn't really? It's about football and they think let's go to the town and see his statue and stuff like that. Whether it's good for the town and that I dunno – if it's good for the town good! But I mean it took a long time. A lot of these towns are doing this now. Like they doing up the war memorials. And it sells papers cos it's history. This is what happened in such and such a year.

When I've gone – there'll only be your generation that knows him – but after that there wouldn't be anyone. But the town would always want to be acknowledged. And yet the town didn't do anything for him when he was a kid – he did it all for himself. It's human nature. I do hate this thing about 'Oh we used to play football in the street with him and we knew he was great then' that's a myth they were only kids – what do they know about football?

**GR:** You've never been so incensed that you would write to the papers? I know that the nephews got involved when they called the papers because they ran a story about a man who said that he was the last remaining relative of Duncan.

**LR:** It's understandable that they'd do that, that papers do want to write things to sell papers. You're trying to make yourself look good – and coming up with lies and

part of the family is saying that this isn't true. You could say that about anything that you read in the paper. With me it never bothered me – because if people want to believe that – then let them believe it. You know better than you do. What good is it them saying 'Oh you've got it wrong?' The relatives are still here. What good is it going to do you? You know that you're here and that's it.

**GR:** Have you got any mementos? Any pictures of Duncan?

**LR:** Nothing at all. Nobody had cameras then. Nobody had nothing. I don't know in the family when we'd go to the pub – people wouldn't take your photograph which they would now. There was a couple of weddings we went to – on the Edwards side or gran's side. I can remember the weddings and take you to the church- there would have been wedding photographs. They've never come forward and said oh look this is Duncan at our wedding. Probably wouldn't cos they dead now anyway. All this paraphernalia since the statue was put up jumping on the bandwagon. There have got to be wedding photographs in the family somewhere.

**GR:** What's interesting for me- there seems to be a number of people who are 'rolled out' at these events such as Bobby Charlton – Manchester United have still got an investment in them

**LR:** Yes but Bobby Charlton was one of his best mates and he was devastated and he did look after Sarah and he kept in touch with her whether at times when she wasn't very pleased with him. But he did do a lot for her I don't think she would have been able to cope. Like he got the money and all that for the grave & stuff like that.

**GR:** Did he raise the money for it?

**LR:** No he didn't raise it, but I mean he – it was through him sort of thing. Cos they raised all this money didn't they? He must have been in charge somehow- Sarah wouldn't have done it. He was the closest link he really helped and looked after her.

**GR:** The grave would have had to replace the grave of Carolyn Ann his sister [she had died at 14 weeks old prior to Duncan's death and they share 'his' grave]

**LR:** That's why the plot is there.

**GR:** Did you know his sister?

**LR:** Oh no no. I don't nothing about that at all. My mom would have known about it- and granny Edwards – two different generations. Us kids wouldn't. Our mom always said she lost her first child. We were only kids it was nothing to do with us you mind your own business- then.

**GR:** When Sarah passed away – did you know about that?

**LR:** I heard about it and that was about all. We never- she got to the stage after Gladstone died she was more or less with her sister all the time. I don't know.

**GR:** Being related to Duncan is it something that you are proud of? Because you have never been interviewed or been part of any of the events?

**LR:** I suppose anyone can say that they were proud of him but how can I be proud of him when I never really knew him? I think it was great that he was part of the family and that you were involved with him as a child. What he did with his life – good luck to him – he did alright. We never envied him everyone was too busy getting a job and getting on with life. He was doing the same thing – but it was football. I mean football was a big pastime then. But that's all it was. Now it's adoration and fame – and I mean there was no money in it. Ok I mean he probably earned more than I did but it was just a job.

**GR:** Was it your twin cousins- Wayne & Warren that went on to be professional footballers? They did a little bit of...

**LR:** But they were a 'Totney' – the one that the press did pick up on was Joey Edwards' son Tony – and he was called Tony Edwards . I don't know if he played for Dudley but he did play for a team and he was good. There are – they used to have the newspaper called the Dudley Herald then and he was on the front of the Dudley Herald once and they said 'Was this the new Duncan Edwards?' but other than that that was it. I don't know why he stopped playing- but the twins were really good. Twins were really good – well their mother was an Edwards.

**GR:** Before Duncan had there been anyone in the family who had been good at sport?

**LR:** I don't know I wasn't around. I think it was because he was such a big chap- you know. If you'd had seen Gladstone – oh he was lovely he was. She [Sarah his wife- Duncan's mother] she was down here and he was up here. He was tall and really broad- he was a gentle bloke, really nice.

**GR:** Gladstone worked at the cemetery after Duncan died didn't he?

**LR:** I don't know. When he retired sort of thing? They were sort of people we saw now and then. We were kids when they were talking – I was more or less the same age as Duncan. That's why I've never jumped on the bandwagon- it's like a relation we knew in the family and you just grew up with them.

**GR:** Can you see what's going to happen in the future? I think you said there will less people who are interested. In terms of me visiting the grave regularly, there doesn't seem to be a drop in the interest in Duncan.

**LR:** I don't think there should. As long as Manchester City is going – I think there always be- you know the fans – cos nobody knew what his potential was – he may have been great but who knows he might have had an accident and it would have been cut short- who knows. He was really good for his age. I think that people should still remember him- but I think that there should be something out there – to see if will be kept up whether it would be on either side of the family – Manchester

City [GR: United?] United? Or the council should be responsible. Or Dudley Council if they got a statue in the town – shouldn't they be responsible for the grave?

**GR:** Is that because you feel that...

**LR:** Well he's given something to Dudley hasn't he? Dudley's more or less now famous for something apart from the Wrens Nest [Area of Dudley designated as a SSSI next to/in one of the largest council housing estates in the UK]. The Wrens Nest has been there all my childhood and it's only been recently that people have jumped on that bandwagon- and started doing the Wrens Nest– they haven't come to ordinary people that were bought up on the Wrens Nest and asked them what they would like the Wrens Nest to be.

**GR:** That's the plans to make part of the Wrens Nest into a nature reserve?

**LR:** Yeah but why now [laughs] it's been there – you know

**GR:** Who do you think should be responsible for the grave in the future?

**LR:** I think the council are getting all the glory. The council put that – Manchester didn't pay for that statue did they? Who paid for the statue?

**GR:** Think it was the local council.

**LR:** Well if the local council want to push him as part of the history of Dudley - shouldn't they be responsible for his grave? You see the councils used to be responsible for all these soldiers graves, they've just let them go haven't they – after so long. You see the thing is with people dying now there won't be any graves. So if there is a grave there- when you go people's history and they can go to an old church and go back to the 1700s and see somebody that's related to them – that's in that grave with their name on a stone. But now because nobody is being buried and having headstones – unless they're famous. I mean if they are

famous- would they have? If it had have been now, would they have had him cremated? and would they have... with a grave? He only went in that grave because his sister was in there. And if the truth is known there is probably room for his mom and dad – but his mom and dad are a couple of graves away. I think if the council wants all the glory I think they should and they could possibly- well I don't ...they are getting the money for them aren't they? I think when you go back to the 1700s and 1800s you can see these people and see how young they were when they died and even soldiers and stuff like that. I think all those things should be kept. And if they are part of that actual town they should be respected for it. And if the council want to push him – and respected for what he did it's a story cos he got killed so young. He wasn't on his own there were loads of other people as well. If it brings ...if they are thinking of his memory they should start thinking of the memory of all the other people that died with him. He wasn't the only one- he just happened to be one from Dudley. I mean there were other footballers as good as him but I mean if I was in charge of the grave then I would be going to the council – look you want all the glory can't you help us out – there is nothing to repair on that grave.

**GR:** The side is falling in

**LR:** Yes cos they are on slabs it's high up and all the concrete that was on there...

**GR:** It was a lot worse today the grave maintenance guys asked me how long it had been like that. I said that it was about a year ago when it started looking bad. It's already been repaired once.

**LR:** They did it – the couple [Jan Hickman & Maurice Perry who tend the grave] that were there- she said to me we've done our best and tried to do it up but it needs major work now. Needs all lifting off

**GR:** It's cos the rain washes down the side

**LR:** They don't know that he has a brother of Gladstone's- you want to see how that has fallen in. All in the middle is two slabs over the years – it's all disintegrated

and by rights...if they want to keep history – they should look at the relatives' graves – Gladstone's brother. I can't understand with graves now. Everyone who is born they gonna die and everybody scatters the ashes and there won't be any graves anymore. Is that's what it's about?

**GR:** I don't know. You think it's important to have a gravestone- not specifically for Duncan but for anyone? That there is some kind of place...

**LR:** Personally yes but it's not feasible is it – they want the space don't they?

**GR:** I guess that they are under pressure and you get a sort of hierarchy in that if you are important or you can afford it you get a gravestone – if you haven't got any money you can't

**LR:** But they're getting people to bury them in their gardens now. You can actually bury a coffin in the garden. If you are buried – you've got a number – that part isn't so important. At least they should have something written down to say that person's ashes- where they are– do they keep notes? I suppose it doesn't matter.

Would they ever move Duncan's grave? If it falls to pieces will they just take the back off and stick it in a filed somewhere? But if they council want to keep it like that then. Ok so they might say- oh we haven't got the money- but if all these fans want to go and visit his grave and everybody wants to remember him then I'm sure if everybody was to put something towards it – wouldn't cost that much would it? That's another alternative if the council don't want to do it?

**GR:** What about the club? Do the club have a responsibility?

**LR:** No I don't think so unless they want to really push it. I'm sure that if they wanted to do a collection to say we want to keep the grave up and keep it nice as it is, I'm sure that the club would donate- they could have a testimonial day- but then again where does it stop? Are they going to do it for everybody that died on that plane? So I think the responsibility is with that town who wants to push the fame –

what they call ‘their son’ sort of thing. And it’s interesting, it is history and its nice to think- I mean most people in Dudley have heard of Duncan Edwards. And his statue and sort of thing and we’re proud to live in Dudley – you know where Duncan Edwards who died is. I mean who else have we got? We haven’t got anyone else? Have we? They can always do a statue for me if they want to.



## **APPENDIX Eix**

### **MIKE THOMAS**

**TYPE:** Skype Interview

**DATE:** 19 March 2014

**VENUE:** N/A

**INTERVIEWEE:** Mike Thomas

**INTERVIEWER:** Gayle Rogers

**OTHERS PRESENT:** N/A

**NOTES:** Lives in Manchester, in his 40s. Creator of websites relating to the Munich air disaster: <http://duncan-edwards.co.uk/>, <http://munich58.co.uk> and <http://theflowersofmanchester.co.uk>

**KEY:** DE=Duncan Edwards, GR=Gayle Rogers, MT=Mike Thomas

### **Verbatim Interview Transcript**

**GR:** Really I'm looking at DE now and his grave mainly & trying to talk to people like yourself – active commemorators. It would help me to make a note of what is your connection with DE and how did you first become aware of him?

**MT:** I am a Man United fan and set up a website about 15 years ago- the [munich58.co.uk](http://munich58.co.uk) and really with the intention of keeping alive the memory of the people who died. Educating them to understand- because it's 56 years now.

Duncan was probably the most famous victim of the crash but I don't remember it - I'm not that old, but everybody said that he was what you might call a complete player. So yes there were 8 players that died and yes there were other people that in the crash but Duncan was probably the most famous and I would say because of that, there was that aura about that him people wanted to know so I put together

this site [www.duncan-edwards.co.uk]. Because you've got things like- there wasn't there wasn't well... when I set it up but you've got like the museum and the statue I don't think was there when I started the site but people wanted to know and there was Duncan himself of course. People wanted to know. So there was enough there to populate an online memorial.

**GR:** When you say you wanted to educate people – and that you were being asked things by people is that UK based or internationally?

**MT:** Its world wide- it's world wide you know I get people in the comments and emails – on the Duncan site and the Munich of all ages. You know some are younger and say I wasn't around at the time but my grandfather or father talked about him. It is world wide.

**GR:** More men than women?

**MT:** Probably is.

**GR:** Does that reflect the general football going public do you think?

**MT:** I don't know I guess so, but I think things are changing in the last 20 -30 years.

**GR:** What seems to come up a lot is his ability- which you have sort of spoken about and his physical prowess. I think he stood out when he was younger – but he kind of got caught up with as other players got older. Could you talk a little bit about that – his physicality as a player? And why that made him stand out.

**MT:** Yeah like you say, he was called colossus and he was also called the Tank- I found out. And I don't know a great deal about that – I just know that he was a giant of a man – a giant of a lad. He had this this ... I think Matt Busby called him the biggest footballer in Britain – possibly the world.

Bobby Charlton said [reads from something] I felt really inferior to him I've never felt inferior to anyone... so gifted, young and powerful with the presence that he had. If someone like Bobby Charlton would say that- then that tells you what he had as a footballer.

**GR:** Bobby Charlton appears to be the most significant commemorator within this big network. If there was a sort of hierarchy of commemorators where would he be, would you say?

**MT:** I think he's commemorator because he was involved in the crash and he dealt with it and I think if there is anyone- there were other people who survived the crash. I would say people who were more like heroes were people like Bill Foulkes and Harry Gregg of course who ran back into the plane to rescue people.

**GR:** How do you feel about the fact that there is only Bobby Charlton and Harry Gregg left now?

**MT:** There is.

**GR:** What do you think will happen when they eventually both pass away do you think that that will have an impact on the commemoration?

**MT:** I don't know because I think that the club remember it. I mean they had a minutes silence at the game this year- that was the closest to the anniversary [9<sup>th</sup> Feb] and the fans certainly will remember it. I think I probably told you – what goes on at old Trafford.

**GR:** Yes I saw the footage of this year- it was amazing. Is it increasing or levelling out this sort of interest from people?

**MT:** I think its increasing. I mean if you go back to before the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary – probably a 100 people would gather at around 3 o'clock on the 6<sup>th</sup> and on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the so much press coverage. The amount of interest since the

50<sup>th</sup> has dropped but I mean there is still a group of us loyal people that met out there every February just to remember – remembering what went on.

**GR:** Do you feel that you have actively encouraged people to be there. Are there certain things that you do?

**MT:** Definitely yeah. I always advertising on the web and the week leading up to it I regularly retweet it on the Munich twitter account. And I also put it on the Munich tribute page.

**GR:** And do twitter & Facebook make an impact?

**MT:** They have. And there is another lad that we meet up with who started a Facebook tribute page. I can't remember what it is called but he has 50 000 followers on that site. Definitely the [social] media has had a big impact on publicising it and keeping alive the memory.

**GR:** Do you find that people tend to retweet you or respond to your tweets?

**MT:** I've had a lot of retweets this year. Really what I did was tweet that we were meeting up at 3 o clock. That we were meeting up on 9<sup>th</sup>. What I did on the 5<sup>th</sup> is actually go on to twitter and do a search on the hashtag munich58 or busby babes and there were 1000 and 1000s of tweets from all around the world and even from non United fans and even from players like Michael Owen, Gary Neville, Rio Ferdinand, Norman Whiteside, Robbie Fowler from Liverpool so I don't know if they were bandwagon jumping or whether they were- it was a bit of PR or whether you know... I think the united ones were.

**GR:** One of the things that came up I think it is different with twitter – there is a dialogue there. Where as newspapers are harder to have a conversation with. I know that there is a frustration. How do deal with people who approach you with wrong information?

**MT:** If I know that they are wrong, they have the wrong information – then I will put them right.

**GR:** Do you have go to people – you have people- like Tom Clare that you can go to verify things if you are not sure.

**MT:** Yes I have a couple of people one is somebody who I think is the curator at the museum [Old Trafford].

**GR:** I guess Man United have an interest in the website that you look after- what is the relationship between you and the club.

**MT:** I wouldn't say that there was a great one – well –when I say that it sounds like we don't get on. They acknowledge the website they put it on their website about 6 years ago.

**GR:** People have said that Man United is quite a protected brand. Do you feel it is difficult to get information from them?

**MT:** No actually I haven't found that – I found that if I have needed some information and I've contacted the club and they have been able to help me – then they have.

**GR:** Do you think that is because of position with the website – or because you are a united fan?

**MT:** Probably the former.

**GR:** I was watching the videos from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Feb [<http://theflowersofmanchester.co.uk/video-6th-february-2014/>] – how do they interact with what you as the fans are doing? Is there an element of control there?

**MT:** Not at all, no. They leave us to get on with it.

**GR:** In terms of the mikes that you used – did you take these along yourself – were they prepared?

**MT:** That was organised by another group of fans. They have dialogue with the club and they sorted it out for us.

**GR:** There is a degree of preparation. Do you feel obligation to carry on this annual celebration?

**MT:** Commemoration. Yes I guess- do we feel obliged? I think if we stopped going down there, it would carry on no doubt about it. It was happening before we started and it will happen after we have gone.

**GR:** Relaying that back to your website- is that something that you will just carry on doing for ever and ever?

**MT:** Yeah! [laughs]

**GR:** Do you share the responsibility of the web content with anyone.

**MT:** I don't, no.

**GR:** At the point where maybe you wouldn't be able to carry on – would there be someone that you could hand it over to?

**MT:** I would just leave it there and not update it.

**GR:** On the subject of memorials- How many of the memorial sites relating to Duncan have you actually been to?

**MT:** Statue, the old display at the leisure centre. Is the one at Dudley museum still there?

**GR:** Yes [briefly described it] I'm going to the grave for about 4 years now. It's usually around the times like the 6<sup>th</sup> February on his birthday. I try to talk to people at the grave but it's very difficult because of the protocol around bereavement – I mean do you find it difficult how you approach somebody who is grieving – do you find the subject matter around death more difficult to represent through your website.

**MT:** Not really no.

**GR:** I find it difficult sometimes when family who knew him get upset. Do you find people get upset?

**MT:** They do, they do. Particularly the older ones – there are a lot of tears around when we are meeting up at the ground.

**GR:** Is that something that is respectfully passed over?

**MT:** Yeah

**GR:** In terms of who looks after Duncan's memory – you obviously have a responsibility that you have kind of given to yourself by default. How do you see yourself say in comparison to somebody like the curator of Dudley museum lets say?

**MT:** For them I think it's probably a job- for me it's more of a passion.

**GR:** Do you think that you do a better job then?

**MT:** I don't know

**GR:** I haven't found anything about DE that negates all the positive things that people say. Is that generally he is seen almost as 'perfection'. Do you think that?

**MT:** Yes.

**GR:** Do you get annoyed when he is compared to other people? Because of how they play or look? Some people find that disrespectful? Have you come across that?

**MT:** Not at all. I do hear various people comparisons. The ones that stand out for me are Wayne Rooney, but that is probably because of his age and build. Phil Jones – I wouldn't compare him to Duncan because he's just not as good a player.

**GR:** I think that you have put my mind at rest about the future of the website but I do have a concern about Duncan's grave. The grave is starting to slide

**MT:** Is it [sounded very concerned] is it? I'd not heard that.

**GR:** Yes it has been for a couple of years. I know the people who are looking after it have had a go but it needs proper work done on it now and I just wondered who you thought should be responsible for that?

**MT:** Very good question. It's not the only grave to go like that – Geoff Bent had gone that way. I think from memory that a couple of local lads tidied it up. I think that the club should contribute. They gave their lives for the club.

**GR:** someone said that the local council had a responsibility

**MT:** Yes that is a good point.

**GR:** The 60th anniversary that will be coming up - can you predict what will be done for that?

**MT:** I don't know.

**GR:** What did you feel about the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary decal on the side of Old Trafford and the mess up with the words and AIG logo [AIG logo was paintballed & the initial wording of the banner was incorrect and had to be changed]

**MT:** That was just silly.

**GR:** I wouldn't imagine that they would do a sponsored memorial again.

**MT:** I wouldn't have thought so.

**GR:** Is advertising something you have been approached about on the site.

**MT:** I think I have once or twice but I have always said that the tribute site is a memorial site.

**GR:** I see a lot of things on eBay- like the scarves from the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary scarves that were given away free. When you talk to people about that- where people are benefitting financially- is there a general feeling about that?

**MT:** I think there is, you know there are plenty of people who have written books about the crash and they are benefitting that way- which I don't agree with.

**GR:** For me it's difficult – my research will be 'public' once it's done- I won't financially gain from that – I guess it's the same for the website.

**MT:** That costs time and money every year yes.

**GR:** Do you just say it's a hobby?

**MT:** Yes exactly, I see it like that.

**GR:** It's not something that you have ever struggled to maintain. If you did struggle in the future- where would you go for help?

**MT:** I don't know- I don't know.

**GR:** The information about Duncan – does it happen very often that people have something that you have not seen before? Do you definitively have pretty much everything about him.

**MT:** I think I have quite a lot but there is still quite a lot of stuff tha I find from people. Or people ask me questions that I don't have the answers to.

**GR:** Is that that people ask you awkward questions.

**MT:** The questions are usually when people have tried to find things on the internet and they haven't and they find the website near the top and email me. Something like they say my brother's friend's next door neighbour says that when Duncan played as a school boy...can you confirm this?

**GR:** Most of the people I talk to speak very highly of the website and- particularly the Duncan one, I guess because that is my interest, that you have been approachable and that you have been able to pass things on quite quickly. This seems to fit in with what you were staying about wanting to set the record straight.

**MT:** That's right.

**GR:** Other sites are not as exalted. Is that your ethos coming?

**MT:** Definitely- I try and help people where I can.

**GR:** It must take a huge amount of your time? How much time do you think you spend on it per week?

**MT:** I mean yes. Don't know to be honest. I mean yes in February there is lot going on. I mean I've got tribute books on there- you probably have seen them and it's a

case of reading them and approving them. That's probably the most time it case and as I say people ask me questions and I either try to answer them – if I don't know the answer then I did a quick Google to see if I can find anything – other wise I pass them on to the club or other people – it would be Tom [Tom Clare]

**GR:** Have you started collecting any memorabilia yourself or any artefacts?

**MT:** I've got bits and pieces I not bought any thing for a while or had anything for a while. I got some of the newspapers and just bits and pieces over the year.

**GR:** Have those things been something that you have gone out specifically and bought?

**MT:** No, no I've just got them on eBay or wherever I've got old programmes and things like that.

**GR:** Do you take them out and look at them?

**MT:** Must admit I rarely do.

**GR:** Do you get any official invitations to attend memorial events in your capacity as website 'master' for want of a better word?

**MT:** No not at all.

**GR:** Do you feel like you are quite anonymous behind the pages?

**MT:** People know who I am because down at Old Trafford in February, I wear a Munich58 t-shirt and I've got little business cards that I hand out. I do get myself known and people come and have a chat to me and say I really like your site. If I'd had an invitation to the 50<sup>th</sup> memorial service I'd have turned it down because I wanted to be outside with the fans.

**GR:** You do go back to 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary a lot- is that the big thing within your memory.

**MT:** Only because of the TV coverage.

**GR:** Is there one stand out event?

**MT:** Don't think so?

**GR:** Do they stand out – are they distinctive events in your mind?

**MT:** It's mainly Old Trafford in February to be honest.

**GR:** Do you think if you didn't live so close to Old Trafford do you think that you would still go?

**MT:** That's a very good question. I'm only 5 miles up the road. I don't know.

**GR:** You have a lot of pictures of graves on your site – why do feel that is important that people see the pictures? And know where the graves are.

**MT:** From a focal point for me there is that. And also other people have asked me – asking the direction of where the graves are- so I decided to try and find as much information- where they were buried cremated or whatever and put that on the site. I was getting all these emails -do you know where they are buried? There are a lot of fans who will go round and visit all the graves.

**GR:** We don't generally take photos of graves. You have a lot of pictures of the graves on your site. Is that a more recent phenomena or has that always been happening?

**MT:** Probably more recent to be honest. A lot of the pictures of the graves – I'm just firing up the website- some of the pictures of the graves Tom [Tom Clare] sent to me. The others are by fans.

**GR:** I don't see many shared on twitter. The need to take the photograph – is it something that people do look at on the site?

**MT:** I think it is. People send me photos. I'm looking at Whelan grave now I mean there are about 5 pictures that people willing sent me to put up on the site. I think they do.

**GR:** The graves have become destinations- when it really came to a point when people wanted to actually share their photos with other. Take a picture to share rather than keep. That is quite a significant part of the site –that people want to contribute to and take from. Have you been to many of the graves?

**MT:** The only one I have been to is Duncan's.

**GR:** Did you take anything to leave?

**MT:** No

**GR:** Did you photograph it?

**MT:** We did yeah.

**GR:** for the website or for you?

**MT:** Both. I don't think we went there deliberately – we were on our way somewhere so we stopped off. We also went to the statue and the sport centre. The one thing we haven't seen is the stained glass window.

**GR:** They are amazing. I saw them at my Nan's funeral service.

**MT:** do you know Rose Cook? [filmmaker of film about Duncan] She got married there.

**GR:** I'm waiting to hear back from her. Do you know any other people like that?

**MT:** I met his cousins Keith and John at Old Trafford. I know Jan – Jan Hickman– well I don't her I never met her. She contacted me a couple of years ago. She posts regularly to Duncan's tribute book.

**GR:** I met her at the grave last year.

**MT:** I call them all the Dudley mafia [laughs] [briefly chat about people we both know of]

**GR:** Have you any plans to expand what you do?

**MT:** No- it's a labour of love.

**GR:** We talked about books briefly – has anyone approached about writing a book?

**MT:** no

**GR:** Going into the future – regarding Duncan's memory that would concern you? Any group of people that you would 'protect him' from.

**MT:** No I think as long as there are people like myself and other fans who are there to keep the memory of the Busby babes alive, even when all the people who are left have died- the fans will there to remember.

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